

ing countries demand it. . . . The United States, however, maintains a certain ambivalence on this question, which can hardly surprise us.”

‘To Help Russia Is Justified’

Védrine distanced himself greatly from the International Monetary Fund’s shock therapy policies, which have brought Russia to the brink of economic annihilation. “To help Russia is totally justified,” he stated, explaining why it is in France’s interest to have a “prosperous and stable neighbor.” But “to help Russia with our eyes closed was a mistake. To incite it to deregulate its economy without restraints, when no modern state was prepared to assume its role there, was a sign of either ideological blindness or evil calculation. France did not push this line, but it was the line universally defended by the West.” Védrine proposed measures aimed at better managing aid to Russia, and better adapting it to help that country erect a rule of law.

“The reception of my proposals was positive among foreign ministers and the heads of state and government,” he said, “but was subdued among finance ministers and the international financial institutions. The European Union largely took up our thesis, but the United States claims that it fears that any reference to the state could be used by President Putin to justify an authoritarian takeover, which a part of the Russian people would not reject.” Our policy toward Russia, he stated, combines aid with a frank dialogue concerning problems such as the need for a political solution for Chechnya.

Eastern Europe

Concerning the Balkans, Védrine raised the problem created by the Western sanctions policy against the Yugoslavia of President Slobodan Milosevic, and denounced the Anglo-American rejection of any alternative approach. “The fact that Milosevic remains in power is an almost caricatured illustration of my thesis regarding the counterproductivity of sanctions (with certain exceptions). More and more Europeans are convinced of this. Our alternative proposals, however, run up against the time-buying maneuvers of the British and the Dutch, inspired by American reticence.”

One would have to look back as far as the Foreign Ministry of Michel Jobert under President Georges Pompidou, in the 1970s, to find such coherent marching orders to French diplomats. Jobert didn’t hesitate to denounce then-State Secretary Henry Kissinger—which no doubt cost him his brilliant career in French politics. Indeed, Védrine was once a political associate of Jobert, in his early days in politics. It is the reemergence of this tradition which is causing fear among those Anglo-Americans, who, like Zbigniew Brzezinski, are terrified that France will organize resistance of the whole of western Europe, to globalization’s assault against the nation-state.

Water Is Necessary for Durable Mideast Peace

by Carl Osgood

In a statement issued on Aug. 6, *EIR* Contributing Editor Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. warned that “without large-scale desalination programs being put immediately into operation, there is no hope for durable peaceful relations among the populations” of the Middle East. LaRouche has been offering plans for such large-scale development of that region, such as the Oasis Plan, for more than 20 years, and these plans have been picked up in one form or another by relevant important circles, including former Israeli Prime Minister and now Minister for Regional Cooperation Shimon Peres, and, from Washington, D.C., the Center for Middle East Peace and Economic Cooperation, headed by former U.S. Rep. Wayne Owens (D-Utah). Peres and Owens’s group have both been lobbying hard for economic infrastructural development for the region as a whole, as a cornerstone for a durable peace.

Perhaps surprisingly, Peres’s formulation was endorsed by a leading member of the Israeli Likud Party, former two-time Israeli Ambassador to the United States, Zalman Shoval, in remarks at the National Press Club in Washington on Aug. 28. Shoval, whose comments came in response to a question from this reporter, said that there is an absolute shortage of water in the region. “I think Shimon Peres said, instead of trying to find a way to share the water, let’s create new water,” he said. Shoval claimed that, during the previous Likud-led government, every meeting that then-Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon had, whether it was with Arab negotiators or in Washington, started out with a discussion of the water issue. While importing water from Turkey or elsewhere may be an interim solution, “the only real solution,” Shoval said, “is desalination, which will need a major international effort.” He added that the regional effort has to include Jordan, the Syrians, and the Palestinians as well as Israel.

Even before *EIR* raised the water issue, Shoval had noted that, while Israelis want to be sure that the other side in peace negotiations regards peace in the same way they do, “the Palestinians will also want to feel that their lives will improve” as a result of the peace process.

The Next Arab-Israeli War?

Shoval’s remarks on the water issue were tinged, however, with pessimism and the usual Likud hard line toward



Former Israeli Ambassador to the United States Zalman Shoval.

the Palestinians and Israel's Arab neighbors. He was very critical of the July 11-24 Camp David negotiations between Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. He argued that the final status of Jerusalem is such an intractable issue, that it should not be on the table, as long as failure to reach agreement on the issue threatens achievements that have been made up until now. Shoval complained that Prime Minister Barak has made too many concessions, and that President Arafat, rather than becoming more conciliatory in response to Israeli concessions, has, instead, become more intractable. Shoval warned that a bad agreement, in the current context, would be worse than no agreement at all, because a bad agreement would lead to continuing conflict and, possibly, a future Arab-Israeli war. He also claimed that the Likud has a better history of making peace agreements than the Labor Party, because "a majority of Israelis will naturally put their trust in agreements, including concessions and compromise, made by a center-right government which is perceived as being more hawkish, rather than by a dovish, leftist government which is perceived as not to be determined enough to protect vital Israeli interests." Finally, Shoval predicted that there's little chance of a national unity government, likely meaning early elections, with a "better than even chance" of a center-right Likud government as the result.

Even more ominous, Shoval clearly indicated that he believes that force, including involving the United States, is the only means to address relations with both Iraq and Iran. He claimed that, without weapons inspections, Iraq will soon be back to the level of threat that it was before the 1991 Gulf War, at least with regard to missiles and so-called weapons

of mass destruction. Shoval complained that the Iranians continue to aggressively pursue their efforts on missiles and nuclear development, aided by Russian companies. He further said that there is "no let up" in Russian assistance to Iran, despite the best efforts of the Clinton Administration.

What all this shows, he said, is that the Middle East is still a "dangerous neighborhood." "If Israel were to give up its security zone in the Jordan Valley," he concluded, "there could be an eastern front stretching from Iraq, through a Palestinian state, all the way to the outskirts of Tel Aviv." He acknowledged that there might not be a high probability of this happening, but "we can't disregard this possibility."

'Reunited by Scientists'

Shoval's views on the security of Israel suggest that, despite his own statements, he, and the Likud Party, now led by Ariel Sharon, may not be willing to engage all sides on the water issue, which will otherwise remain a source of conflict. Peres, on the other hand, has demonstrated such a willingness. In a public appearance, in Washington, on March 30 of this year, Peres emphasized the importance of regional economic development based on science and technology, to include railways, water management, electricity, and related types of hard infrastructure. "The land is divided," he said, "you can't move, you can't communicate." The way this will change, he said, is that the Middle East "will be reunited by scientists."

At the World Water Forum, held in The Hague, the Netherlands last March, Peres reportedly showed strong willingness to engage with his opposite numbers from all over the Middle East, including Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Sudan. When the representatives of Syria and Lebanon, during a ministerial meeting accompanying the water forum, objected that water issues could not be discussed without resolution of certain political issues, Peres declared, "We're not here to talk about politics, but about water. . . . Water concerns everyone."

If the Likud Party, which expects to be leading the next government of Israel, is as committed to the peace process as Shoval claimed, then they must adopt the approach of Peres and LaRouche, otherwise, the peoples of that region will not be able to free themselves from the quagmire of Anglo-American geopolitics.