

For the sake of Palestinians and Israelis alike, the occupation must end.”

While the mainstream American media tried to downplay the importance of the Powell remarks, and in some cases tried to portray them as backing down to Israeli pressure, the Anglo-American/Israeli “geopoliticians” could barely contain their fury at the Secretary’s speech.

Powell announced the appointment of retired Marine Corps Gen. Anthony Zinni as his personal emissary to the Middle East. Earlier this year, General Zinni completed a tour in his capacity as Commander of the U.S. Central Command, which covers the area from Turkey to Afghanistan and Central Asia, including the entire Middle East. He knows every head of state and top military figure in the Arab world, as well as in Israel, on a first-name basis. He is despised by the Israeli right wing and by the American neo-conservatives. This is all the more true, since his devastating insult of the Iraqi National Congress (INC) “Contras.” Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz wish to back this formation in one variant of the war against Saddam Hussein, a favorite trigger for the subversion of the Bush-Putin joint efforts to avert war in the Mideast.

On Nov. 27, General Zinni and Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs William Burns arrived in the Middle East. The two American diplomats further enraged Sharon and the U.S. “neo-cons” by holding a lengthy and cordial meeting with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, following a far stormier session with the Israeli Prime Minister. General Zinni will remain there indefinitely — as a guarantor against an Israeli “breakaway ally” provocation to launch a general war in the region.

Change Is Still Fragile

Lyndon LaRouche has warned that the Bush-Putin war-avoidance partnership is facing formidable attack. The coup d’état against the Bush Administration, on behalf of the “Clash of Civilizations,” has been suppressed but not crushed. Sources report that President Putin faces significant opposition to his bold initiative toward the United States, from within the ranks of the Russian military, as well as from the powerful criminal oligarchs, some of whom, like Boris Berezovsky, are closely allied with the Sharon criminal circles in Israel.

LaRouche has vowed to throw the weight of his political movement — internationally — behind the efforts to forge a revival of the historic Russian-American partnership, that nearly defeated the British and other European imperial forces during the late 19th Century, through precisely the kinds of policies now associated with the LaRouche Eurasian Land-Bridge. For that effort to succeed, many more forces around the globe are going to have to join with LaRouche, to give the kind of backing to the fragile and highly personal effort now being pursued by the Russian and American Presidents and a handful of trusted aides.

Crimes Against Humanity: The Case Of Ariel Sharon

by Elisabeth Hellenbroich

“The fate of the disappeared of Sabra and Chatila will come back to haunt [Israeli Prime Minister Ariel] Sharon when a Belgian court hears a suit brought by their relatives alleging his involvement in the massacres.” This quote is taken from an article in the London *Observer* on Nov. 25. It is one of several such articles in the British press, including the *Independent* and the *Guardian*; the latter published exclusive material that sheds light on the responsibility which Sharon bore 20 years ago when, under his purview as Defense Minister, an atrocious massacre was carried out by the Phalange, Israel’s Lebanese Christian allies, in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Chatila near Beirut, in September 1982.

The massacre was followed by acts of “ethnic cleansing” which the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) committed against hundreds of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, who “disappeared” while in the hands of the Israeli soldiers, and whose fate to this day is unknown. “The people who disappeared during and after the massacre are the forgotten victims of Sabra and Chatila,” writes the *Observer*. “What is crucial is that they disappeared while in the hands of the Israeli army during an operation under the direct control of Israel’s then-Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, now Prime Minister. The fate of the disappeared of Sabra and Chatila will come back to haunt Sharon. . . .”

On Nov. 28, a Belgian appeals court held hearings on the “Sharon case,” in which 23 Palestinian plaintiffs allege he committed crimes against humanity. The case against Sharon was opened on June 18, 2001, before a Belgian court. Now, new material, which had been anonymously placed into the plaintiffs’ lawyers hands, has been obtained by the *Guardian*.

A Devastating Political Flank

This case against Sharon offers a devastating political flanking move against the drive for generalized religious war in the Middle East. It could help tilt the balance in the Mideast in favor of a peace solution — including an independent Palestinian state — which U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and his Mideast envoy, Gen. Anthony Zinni (ret.), are desperately seeking to bring about.

In open defiance of those peace initiatives, which are supported by the European Union, Sharon and the IDF have been staging one provocative act after another, seeking to wreck any peace initiative which is not on Sharon’s terms, and to set

up the Mideast for an even bigger conflict.

The Nov. 28 hearing concluded with the Belgian state prosecutor's decision, that the trial against Sharon should go forward. At the opening session of the appeals hearing on Nov. 28, Pierre Morlet, representing the state prosecutor, argued that a Belgian court could take on the case presented by a group of survivors of the massacre, in which 900 men, women, and children were killed. Morlet rejected the Israeli arguments that Sharon's current position as head of government, confers immunity.

Immunity from prosecution has been the primary defense of the attorneys representing Sharon. They have argued that Belgium does not have jurisdiction over the case, because Sharon enjoys diplomatic immunity, but also because the crimes he is accused of, were committed before Belgium adopted legislation in 1993, which permits anyone charged with war crimes to be tried in a Belgian court. All these arguments were countered by the prosecution.

The court decided that it would have two more sessions — at the end of December and at the end of January — to continue to hear arguments whether the investigation and trial should take place. A decision is expected by the end of January. "If the appeals court decides to accept the case, Sharon could technically be arrested if he enters Belgium. But if Israel had ignored the case, the Belgian court could have issued an international warrant for his arrest," according to the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*.

New Evidence Comes To Light

Under the headline "Vanished Victims Of Israelis Return To Accuse Sharon," *Observer* correspondent Julie Flint reported how, on Sept. 18, 1982, 36 hours after the closing moments of the Sabra and Chatila massacre — in which Israel's Lebanese Phalange allies slaughtered up to 1,500 Palestinian refugees — eyewitnesses reported that Israeli soldiers ordered the Phalange militia to "give us all the people and leave the camps." The Lebanese obeyed, writes the *Observer*, "and they handed their prisoners over to the Israelis, who then marched them along the main road toward Beirut's sports stadium." In the stadium, women and men were divided into separate groups.

The *Observer* quotes one of the lawyers who told the court: "Hundreds of people were rounded up under the supervision and control and with the involvement of the Israeli forces. . . . They were interrogated, then put on trucks, and a lot of them did not come back. The sports stadium is probably one of the places that carries one of the largest elements of horror. The Israelis were in force there, interrogations took place there, and people were trucked away from there, never to appear again."

Another witness, who lost her uncle, father, and brother, is quoted by the *Observer*: "We went into a stadium and then never saw them again. . . . We asked about them and they said, 'There is no one here.' No one talks about them. No one

knows whether they are alive or dead."

The *Guardian* refers to documents from Appendix B to Israel's Kahan Commission of Inquiry, which probed the massacres in the Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut. In 1983, the Kahan Commission had found that very serious crimes had been committed, and that Sharon bore "personal responsibility." According to *Ha'aretz*, these documents, kept secret for national security reasons, clearly show "that top Israeli officials (among them Amos Yaron, then IDF commander in the Beirut area), including Sharon, knew of Lebanese Phalangist plans for massacring Palestinians and at no point tried to dissuade such action."

Under the headline, "The Sharon Files," the *Guardian* gives an insight into what happened on Sept. 19, 1982. "The day after the Lebanese Forces militia left Beirut's Palestinian camps after a 38-hour orgy of killing, it is finally possible to see what the Israeli soldiers surrounding the camps claimed they had been unable to see: Streets carpeted with bodies. Men, women, and children shot and hacked to death. Pregnant women eviscerated."

At that time, the paper states, "The East Beirut Israeli Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Rafael Eitan, the commander of the Northern District Maj. Gen. Amor Drori, and a senior Mossad officer, Menahem Navot, met the Lebanese Chief of Staff, Antoine Breidi-Toto, and Joseph Abu Kahlil, the men who made contact with the Israelis in March 1976."

The *Guardian* gives the following account of the Sabra and Chatila massacre: The IDF sent "200 Lebanese militiamen into Sabra and Chatila on Sept. 16 to 'mop up' 2,000 terrorists which Ariel Sharon, then Israel's Defense Minister, claimed had remained there after the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] evacuation from Beirut."

The *Guardian* quotes from two almost identical reports of this meeting — "one identified as a transcript of a conversation recorded by an aide to the Commander of the Northern District," General Drori; the other, Mossad minutes of a meeting between Israeli Chief of Staff Eitan and Drori, and Breidi-Toto.

The documents cover a period from June to November 1982, including "a meeting in which the Cabinet decided to have the Lebanese army and the Phalangists participate in the entering of Beirut," and testimony to the Kahan Commission by an intelligence officer, Col. Elkana Harnof.

From the documents that the *Guardian* obtained, it becomes overwhelmingly clear that the IDF had "command responsibility" for the Lebanese forces before and after the massacre. According to minutes referring to a meeting on July 13, 1982 between Eitan and Lebanese force leaders, Eitan explained "that the IDF would provide all necessary support: artillery, air, etc. as if they were regular IDF units."

The *Guardian* also refers to minutes of a meeting which took place on Aug. 21, 1982, at the home of Phalangist Party leader Pierre Gemayel, between Gemayel and Sharon, referred to as "DM." The *Guardian* writes: "Even as the first

PLO fighters left Beirut on Aug. 21, Sharon met Bashir and Pierre Gemayel to demand a new strike against the Palestinian presence in Lebanon.” (Bashir Gemayel, Pierre’s son, was elected President of Lebanon, but was assassinated on Sept. 14, before taking office.)

The *Guardian* account continues: “Minutes of the meeting quote Sharon as saying: ‘A question was raised before, what could happen to the Palestinian camps once the terrorists withdraw. You’ve got to clean the camps.’ Pierre Gemayel prevaricated, ‘. . . We are in the midst of a political process of Presidential elections. . . . Bashir is the nominee. It is very important that calm is kept.’” According to the minutes, Sharon insisted: “What would you do about the camps?” To which Bashir responded: “We are planning a real zoo.”

In his testimony to the Kahan Commission, Sharon claimed that no one imagined the Phalange would carry out a massacre. But, according to the documents in Belgium, Sharon himself complained to Pierre Gemayel, ten weeks before the massacre, that “it is incumbent that we prevent several ugly things which have occurred—murders, rapes, and stealing by some of your men.” In the same month, the *Observer* reported, “in a meeting with American diplomats at the home of Johnny Abdo, Lebanon’s military intelligence chief, Sharon proposed that the PLO fighters in Beirut be given ‘refuge’ in Israel. Although we are at a friend’s house, he said, according to the report of the meeting, ‘rest assured that they would be more secure in our hands.’”

According to testimony before the Kahan Commission on Oct. 22, 1982, Mossad chief Yitzak Hofi said, “The Phalangists talk about solving the Palestinian problem with a hand gesture whose meaning is physical elimination. I don’t think anybody had any doubts about this. . . . They raised the issue of Lebanon being unable to survive as long as this size of [Palestinian] population existed there.” Similarly, Colonel Harnof, in testimony to the Kahan panel, said, “It was possible to surmise from contacts with the Phalange leaders what were their intentions toward the Palestinians: Sabra would become a zoo and Chatila Beirut’s parking place. . . . When they participated in actions East of Bahamdoun (when they operated against the Druze) they ran straight to the villages and committed massacres.”

Ha’aretz quoted unnamed experts vouching for the authenticity of the documents quoted by the *Guardian*. As one of the Belgian lawyers said, if Sharon is put on trial, he will have to respond to these documents, and there is no way “that he could escape justice.”

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Philippines President In Tightrope Diplomacy

by Gail G. Billington

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is known to be an accomplished ballroom dancer, a favorite pastime in the Philippines. She needs all the poise, balance, and deft moves possible in the political balancing act required to retain the office she now holds. In January, President Arroyo expects to observe the first anniversary of her inauguration as President of the Philippines, an archipelagic nation of more than 7,000 islands and 78 million people, which cuts a swathe between the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean.

The Philippines has the closest ties to the United States of any of the Southeast Asian nations. President Arroyo’s state visit with U.S. President George W. Bush on Nov. 19-23 was chosen to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Republic of the Philippines-United States Mutual Defense Treaty, at a time when the Bush Administration is waging its international war on terrorism. The Arroyo government has pledged significant support to that campaign, with serious implications in regard to the several-million-strong indigenous Muslim minority in the southern island of Mindanao, which has been embroiled in a 25-year battle with the Philippines government, at enormous human cost. The various Islamic groups and factions in that struggle have made demands ranging from independence, to regional autonomy and more economic and political rights within the nation.

Hanging over President Arroyo is the questionable legitimacy of the process by which she became President in January 2001. At the time, Arroyo was Vice President to then-President Joseph “Erap” Estrada, who was elected President in 1998 to a one-time, six-year term. However, Estrada was driven from office in January 2001, on the basis of a corruption scandal involving alleged kickbacks from illegal gambling operations.

Estrada’s formal impeachment was aborted by a staged walkout in proceedings held by the Philippines Senate, while outside, mobs of citizens, mobilized with the backing of the country’s political elite, centered in the Makati Business Club and non-governmental organization (NGO) circles linked to former Presidents Corazon Aquino, Fidel Ramos, and others, reenacted the “People’s Power” putsch that drove President Ferdinand Marcos from power in 1986. That 1986 coup, run by the U.S. State Department, became known as “The Edsa Revolution,” in honor of the historical monument which served as the rallying point for the mass protests. For that reason, the 2001 replay which placed Macapagal-Arroyo in the Presidency has been called “Edsa II.” Within one month