

# The Oasis Plan: Development Is the Key to Peace in the Middle East

by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

*Mr. LaRouche gave this speech, on his proposal for an “Oasis Plan” of Middle East development, to the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow on April 27, 1994. He was in Russia with his wife, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, for a six-day visit, at the invitation of Russian scientific circles. Subheads have been added.*

I'll give an outline of my background in this area and then focus upon one particular topic, which is a very narrow part of the total Asian picture: the question of Middle East peace, focused upon cooperation at present, however unstable, between Shimon Peres on the Israeli side, and Yasser Arafat on the side of the Palestinians. And there are some other Arab countries, naturally, interested in this.

Relevant parts of my experience bearing on this are two. First, after returning from the Second World War with a very strong impression of my postwar experiences in India, I ran into a book which angered me very much, a book called *Cybernetics*, by Prof. Norbert Wiener, which became famous in later years....

From 1945 through 1963, the world had been dominated by the idea of postwar reconstruction based on scientific and technological progress, but from 1968 on, after the counter-cultural revolution among youth, the result was that we no longer as nations accepted the idea of the right of developing nations to scientific and technological progress. So the period from the First Development Decade and the aborted Second Development Decade, as announced by U Thant in his famous Second Development

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Decade proposal at the U.N.—that was over.

At the same time, there was a destruction of all traditional family and related values within the United States, North America, and western Europe.

As an economist, I had known at the time that if the policies of that period were continued, the international Bretton Woods system in its existing form would cease to exist, would collapse—as it did, over the period 1967 through 1971. Because of my somewhat unique success



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*LaRouche lectures at P.G. Kuznetsov's “President” program, held at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow on April 28, 1994.*

in forecasting the nature of this collapse, I achieved a certain influence; and I faced then the question of the passage of the world from less than two decades of postwar reconstruction, to what have become today three decades of post-reconstruction deconstruction.

If that policy of deconstruction continues, if the policies of the past 30 years continue, then I would say there is no chance for any part of the planet. There will be a general collapse into barbarism.

As a result of that, some friends of mine and I started some publications and set up an intelligence organiza-

Features of the LaRouche 'Oasis Plan'



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tion project. People became specialists in various parts of the world and specialists in various subjects; and, through publications which are the result of that effort, I have been involved in most parts of the world over the past 25 years.

One of my primary concerns was with the crossroads of civilization, the Middle East, which additionally, for geographic and other related reasons, has been the crossroads between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean regions historically, for thousands of years, since at least the time of that ancient civilization we sometimes call Harappa.

For special reasons, I became concerned with the injustice suffered by the Arab people in consequence of British operations in setting up Israel.

In April 1975, in the course of a visit to Iraq for the annual Baath Party session, I proposed to various Arabs who were there, that they consider a new approach to the Israeli-Arab conflict. The idea was not entirely original; there were brief precedents in Israel for this. There were certain Arabs who had confidence in it, particularly after they discovered, in the middle of that meeting, that the Lebanese civil war had broken out. This had been a subject of some debate. At the time, I insisted that it was about to break out; they said no, and when it did, we had some very serious discussions.

What I proposed—and I had ready acceptance from certain circles in Israel and among some Palestinians and other Arabs—was the following thesis. I stated that the efforts to find a political solution to the Middle East conflict would not succeed under any circumstances, because we had extreme bitterness which could not be settled at the political bargaining table. Before we could have a political solution, we had to have an economic self-interest by both parties in a political solution.

Some Israelis, of the type you would associate today with Shimon Peres, agreed. By early 1976, there was a very significant effort to bring this to success; but because of a very radical shift in politics in Israel at that time, our efforts failed. We tried to revive this again with some sympathy from certain circles in the United States in the later 1978 Carter period. But that failed because forces inside Israel at the time wished it to fail.

There was a brief effort to revive that on the Israeli side, as well as ours, when Shimon Peres was prime minister of Israel. What I believe were some very useful plans were brought to agreement; but we were cut off because of the change in government.

The plan, as you know, has been revived recently on the initiative of Shimon Peres in negotiations with Yasser Arafat. It could succeed; though it is very much in jeopardy.

## **Water and Nuclear Power**

The typical axes of the proposal were two things: water and nuclear power. One of the key problems there, of course, is the shortage of water. One cannot meet the indices of water consumption for a modern population, for both the Palestinian and Israeli populations, under present conditions. There is a conflict over water because the Israelis have, frankly, been using their conquests to take water from everybody. It's one of the conflicts with Syria on the Golan Heights issue. It involves, in Lebanon, the Litani River, and things of that sort.

If you look at the aquifers in the region, there is not enough water available for the total population—not for modern life. Therefore a political division of the water as it exists, would be no solution.

When we were negotiating with the Peres government in Israel in the early 1980s, they came up with a plan which was called the Canal-Tunnel Plan, to bring seawater from the Mediterranean, through Beersheba, and to cut a tunnel in the mountains, into the Dead Sea, which would be partly, in their view, a power-generating project, which would stabilize the aquifers in the vicinity of the Dead Sea.

I suggested that that was not adequate; it was good, but not adequate. We focused on the Gaza area as a key area to look at, in terms of shaping a possible policy. We found the Israelis had done all the paperwork and planning necessary for the development of infrastructure in that region. My friends made an effort to involve some Japanese interests in actually constructing the project and financing it according to these plans.

My particular version of it came in two parts. Of course, the Jordanians and the Palestinians were very interested in that version of the plan, which was to make another cut from the Gulf of Aqaba toward the Dead Sea, which would be largely a Jordanian project, to link the two canals by a cross-canal.

My point was to increase the size of the canals adequately to permit a large-scale desalination project along the banks of the canal. Our concern also was that, since this required nuclear energy, to avoid the problems of nuclear proliferation.

As you may know, back some years ago, at the German nuclear research center at Jülich, a new type of high-temperature reactor was developed, which is sometimes called the Pebble Reactor. It is a fully designed system. It has never been installed due to economic and political reasons. It is the type of reactor which I would recommend to the attention of certain Russian circles as well. It was developed under the direction of a group headed by Professor Schulten of the Jülich Center. At that time, initially Brown Boveri was to be the contractor to build these types of reactors.

My view was to build a series of 300 megawatt electricity plants and put them in blocks of four, to build what was called, in the 1950s, nuplexes.

Although the cost of producing fresh water from salt water by nuclear energy is high, the availability of usable fresh water is such a bottleneck in the region, and fresh water is at such a cost in the region, that the high cost of fresh water or brackish water produced by nuclear desalination or nuclear-assisted desalination, would be perfectly acceptable economically. You could in fact build up a supply of water by such methods which would be the equivalent of a new, added river in the region, which would mean the possibility of creating new cities and recapturing the desert for industry and agriculture. As I'm sure you know, there were plans in Egypt along similar lines which were aborted on orders of international financial institutions.

I merely cite this as an illustration of what can be done. We have the technology available and obviously, in the unused potential of Russia's scientific-military-aerospace research capabilities, there is a capability from this nation, if there were some credit available, to participate in assisting in such projects, for this case or other cases where development would become the key to peace.

### **The Way Out of the Current Crisis**

In conclusion, let me state what the issue is, I believe, here.

The issue with the present countercultural trends in economy is obvious; but I can assure you that within a relatively short period of time, the existing global financial and monetary system will collapse. It is finished; it is unstable. What has been seen in the past six weeks on international financial markets is only an advance rumble of much larger financial disruptions to come.

So, soon those problems will be the music of the past.

The question will be: how to keep economies going *despite* the collapse. And policies to accomplish that, I think, are the only important policies.

In this case, I propose we drop the sociological or often-accepted sociological view of negotiations and grand politics. I propose that not only the material but the psychological effect of development upon the state of the individual mind is the key to peaceful development of this planet in the coming period. We have been worse than a failure. For example I know intimately most of the countries of Central and South America; and I can assure you that in those countries, those sociological methods have been proven to be worse than nothing.

To me, the key is the fact that man is not an animal. If humanity were an animal, it would be in the same category as the higher primate species, which means that the human population would never have exceeded, in the past 2-3 million years, more than 10 million individuals at any one time on this planet. Man has already shown, many centuries ago, that he can increase willfully the potential population density, that is, the power of man over nature, which no animal can do. We reached the level of several hundred millions during a period of the Roman Empire and afterward. The productive power of man has increased most greatly in the past 600 years than in the millions of years of human existence prior to that time. The secret of it is that we have developed science as a tool of human development. No longer does 95% or more of the population labor in the brutality of rural life—or if they do, they need not, if we use modern technologies.

We have elevated man by making possible a society which required an education in ideas. The cruelest thing I have seen on this planet, is to see a human being, and looking into their eyes, expecting to find humanity reflected there, to find a person instead who has been bestialized. The essential thing is what we used to hear and accept up until the mid-1960s. I'm sure all of us who were adults then, or who were growing up in that period, would think about justice for the developing nations, and providing them access to technology to solve their problems.

The tendency now, is to look at those faces and say, "The problem is, there are too many people."

I would suggest that if we do not change our policy to foster in the individual a sense of his identity as a human being, through access to scientific and other creativity, that we shall bring barbarism upon ourselves.