On June 25, speaking before the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency, Defense Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, while praising Bush's speech, lashed out at Iran as posing an existential threat to Israel. "The whole world is sleeping while Iran builds a core nuclear infrastructure that is going to do something bad to the interests of the world."

Ha'aretz reported on June 27 that Ben-Eliezer's comment reflects the intensifying debate within Israel's security establishment on how to respond to Iran's attempts to acquire nuclear weapons. Senior political correspondent Aluf Benn wrote, "A nuclear-empowered Iran is perceived as the main strategic risk to Israel, because it would end [Israel's] presumed [nuclear weapons] monopoly in the region. Most elements in Israel believe that everything should be done, including, if necessary, using force, to prevent Tehran from achieving nuclear weapon capabilities." Benn revealed that Israel's National Security Council is drafting a study on the country's policy toward Iran.

This same threat was further elaborated by Mossad director Ephraim Halevy, who on June 26 briefed a closed-door session of NATO's North Atlantic Council in Brussels, attacking Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Libya, alleging they are conspiring to acquire nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. Among the participants were NATO's highest officials, including Secretary General Lord George Robertson and the chairman of NATO's Military Committee, Italian Adm. Guido Venturi. U.S. Ambassador to NATO Nicholas Burns was at Halevy's side, and made comments in which he quoted extensively from Bush's speech.

Halevy charged that Iran is developing "weapon-grade nuclear capabilities" and missile systems for their delivery. He said Iran's adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention is nothing more than "a cover for construction of a dual-purpose civilian infrastructure which could be converted very speedily into production capabilities of large quantities of VX gas." He also attacked Iraq, claiming it is now doing everything possible to produce weapons of mass destruction. "We have clear indications that this has been and is their unswerving desire. . . . We have partial evidence that they have renewed their production of VX and anthrax."

Halevy then lashed out at Syria—also singled out in President Bush's June 24 speech, thus tightening the trigger for an Israeli military attack—for its possession of Scud missiles and capabilities to produce sarin nerve gas agents.

Halevy threatened that the international community "will have no option but to force" all these countries "to be accountable."

Commenting on this series of leaked reports on Israel nuclear capabilities and intentions, a senior Israeli political analyst told *EIR* that after Bush's speech, the Israeli government feels that it can "defy the whole world." It will all lead, the analyst said, to a disaster: "It is like a Greek drama: You know disaster awaits, but you can't do anything about it."

Denuclearize Mideast To Stop War Threat: LaRouche

by Jeffrey Steinberg

If there is a nation on the planet that deserves to be described and dealt with as a rogue state, armed with weapons of mass destruction and intent on using them, it is Israel under the terror reign of war criminal Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. If this was a matter of assertion or conjecture in the past, statements coming out of top Israeli officials in the past days have eliminated any cause for hesitation.

On June 26, the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* cited top Israeli space scientists declaring publicly that Israel—which has long possessed an arsenal of nuclear weapons—now has the capacity to fire intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) at targets "anywhere on Earth." The scientists were Prof. Moshe Gelman, head of the Asher Institute at Technion-Israel Institute of Technology; and Avi Har-Even, the director-general of the Israeli Space Agency (ISA), which recently launched the Ofek 5 satellite (see preceding article).

Democratic Party Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche reacted strongly to this Israeli announcement of an ICBM capability. He characterized it as a direct threat by Ariel Sharon against any nation that attempts to interfere with Israel's mad drive for its "Greater Israel" permanent annexation of the West Bank and Gaza and the mass expulsion of the 3.5 million Palestinians living in those territories. "Israel is threatening global thermonuclear war," LaRouche warned, and this is unacceptable. He called upon the international community to immediately make the entire Mideast a "denuclearized zone," by forcing Israel to dismantle its nuclear weapons arsenal. LaRouche characterized the announcement of the Israeli ICBM capability as a "phase-change" in a global strategic situation, already driven to the brink of war by the onrushing financial collapse and the June 24 speech by President George W. Bush, which gave Sharon a de facto American "green light" to take any action against the Palestinians which he deems necessary.

Pushing a New Regional War

The Israeli intent to use nuclear weapons was a topic of, at minimum, implicit discussion involving the United States and other NATO nations, at a June 26 Brussels behind-closed-doors meeting of NATO's North Atlantic Council, which was addressed by the current head of the Israeli Mossad intelligence service, Ephraim Halevy.

According to Israeli military historian Martin Van Creveld, who wrote that "Sharon's plan is to drive Palestinians across the Jordan," the intent of the present Israeli government is to seize upon either a U.S. military attack on Iraq, aimed at overthrowing Saddam Hussein, or a serious terrorist incident inside Israel, to launch a "mass transfer" of more than 2 million Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza, across the river into Jordan.

"Should such circumstances arise," Van Creveld wrote in the April 28 issue of Conrad Black's London *Sunday Telegraph*, "then Israel would mobilise with lightning speed—even now, much of its male population is on standby."

He spelled out a precise order of battle for the "mass transfer," although noting his personal opposition to the Sharon scheme: "First, the country's three ultra-modern submarines would take up firing positions out at sea. Borders would be closed, a news blackout imposed, and all foreign journalists rounded up and confined to a hotel as guests of the government. A force of 12 divisions, 11 of them armoured, plus various territorial units suitable for occupation duties, would be deployed: five against Egypt, three against Syria, and one opposite Lebanon. This would leave three to face east as well as enough forces to put a tank inside every Arab-Israeli village just in case their populations get any funny ideas. The expulsion of the Palestinians would require only a few brigades. They would not drag people out of their houses but use heavy artillery to drive them out; the damage caused to Jenin would look like a pinprick in comparison."

Van Creveld estimated that none of the Arab states would respond militarily, adding, "Should Saddam be mad enough to resort to weapons of mass destruction, then Israel's response would be so 'awesome and terrible' (as Yitzhak Shamir, the former Prime Minister once said) as to defy the imagination." This is unquestionably a direct reference to an Israeli use of nuclear weapons against Iraq. He concluded, "Israeli military experts estimate that such a war could be over in just eight days."

Van Creveld concluded that only the United States could stop such an Israeli doomsday scenario from playing out, and right now, chances are slim to nil that America will step in to stop Israel, which is seen by Bush as a major ally in the "war on terrorism." After Bush's June 24 speech, copies of Van Creveld's article were taken from the files and studied intensively, by many Arab military and intelligence commanders, according to a well-informed Egyptian source.

Deadly Arsenal

The scale of the Israeli nuclear weapons program is vast, and has now been qualitatively transformed, by Israel's acquisition of three German-made diesel-powered submarines, which, according to a recent study by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, are armed with nuclear warheads on cruise missiles. Carnegie published a report early in June, detailing the Israeli nuclear weapons program. That book-length report on global nuclear weapons proliferation, *Deadly Arsenals—Tracking Weapons of Mass Destruction*, included a chapter on Israel's nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons program.

While President Bush and other heads of state posed in Canada on June 26, Israel's sudden boasting of its worldwide nuclear-strike capability triggered a phase-shift for the worse in the strategic situation. World leaders have to confront Israel's threat to use nukes, Lyndon LaRouche insisted on June 27.

The authors wrote: "Probably the most important nuclear-related development in Israel is the formation of its sea-based nuclear arm. By July 2000 Israel completed taking delivery of all three of the Dolphin-class submarines it had ordered at the Thyssen-Nordseewerke shipyard in Kiel, Germany. In doing so, it is widely believed, Israel moved significantly toward acquiring a survivable second-strike nuclear capability. All indications are that Israel is on the way to finalizing a restructuring of its nuclear forces into a triad, like the United States.

"Since the early 1980s (and probably even earlier) the Israeli navy (jointly with other governmental agencies) lobbied hard for the notion that Israel should build a small fleet of modern diesel submarines for 'strategic purposes,' an Israeli euphemism for a sea-launched nuclear capability. . . . It is also believed (but not confirmed) that the most sensitive aspect of the project, the cruise-missile technology that renders the diesel submarines nuclear-capable launching platforms, was developed and built in Israel. . . . According to one report in the London *Sunday Times*, by early 2000 Israel had carried out the first launching tests of its cruise missiles."

The Carnegie study concluded, "A fleet of three submarines is believed to be the minimum that Israel needs to have a deployment at sea of one nuclear-armed submarine at all times."

The fact that Israel has achieved a deployable nuclear triad was advertised in a June 15 report in the *Washington Post*, under the headline, "Israel Has Submarine-Based Atomic Arms Capability."