

Israelis Justify War Crimes, Point to U.S.

by Michele Steinberg

"We would have no problem occupying or conquering all of the Palestinian cities by tomorrow morning. We could take Ramallah . . . without losing one reservist," boasted a "senior Israeli army commander," quoted by reporter Peter Hermann, in the April 6 *Baltimore Sun*. Hermann was reporting that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have been advising the U.S. military on urban warfare, and are gleeful over the U.S. war in Iraq, since the experience with suicide bombers gives the United States "a taste" for what the Israelis have been confronting.

The conduct of the U.S. military in Iraq, including the heavy bombing of civilian centers, the killing of women and children at checkpoints, the killing of journalists with artillery shells fired into the center of a business district of Baghdad, are war crimes that give the Israelis the license to go further than they ever dared before—they are only doing what the U.S. does.

On April 6, the U.S. military newspaper *Stars and Stripes*, reported that new rules of engagement were ordered for the march on Baghdad, to "kill anything that moves," by Lt. Col. John Carlton, commander of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, who said this to his troops just before launching an assault south of Baghdad. A decorated American retired military officer, who served in three wars, told *EIR* that such orders are nothing less than a war crime.

Emboldened by the American example, by April 10, Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz, who ran the reoccupation of the Palestinian territories, was on Israeli radio warning the Palestinians to look carefully at what the United States did to Saddam Hussein to see what could happen to them. Mofaz's ghoulish statements capped a week of brutalities.

It began as a dress rehearsal for the Sharon policy of "mass transfer," i.e., expulsion of the Palestinians. On April 3, Israeli soldiers, backed by tanks and helicopter gunships, marched into the Tulkarm refugee camp on the West Bank, home to 15-20,000 people, and rounded up all males between the ages of 15 and 40. More than 1,000 men and boys were forced onto trucks, and were brought to a village several kilometers away, which had been converted into a prison camp. There, they were interrogated, while the IDF went from house to house in Tulkarm, searching for members of the Tanzim militia.

Yossi Beilin, the architect of the Oslo Accords, and other members of the Knesset (parliament) from the Meretz party, demanded that the government stop the operation immediately. The Tulkarm men were released on April 4, but opera-

tions escalated.

On April 5, American peace volunteer Brian Avery of Albuquerque, New Mexico, had half of his face shot off by an IDF soldier in Nablus. Avery was a member of the International Solidarity Movement, like Rachel Corrie, the young American woman killed by an IDF bulldozer on March 16. He is in critical condition in a Haifa hospital.

On April 7, in village of al-Massader in Gaza, Israeli soldiers in a tank fired on Palestinian schoolboys who were throwing stones. A 13-year-old was killed, and 16 boys under 18 were injured, two critically.

On April 8, the situation really escalated—Baghdad style. Two Israeli F-16 fighter planes attacked a crowded area in the Gaza Strip, in a hunt for a Hamas leader. It was the first Israeli airstrike since the Iraq War began. Seven people were killed, and 50 civilians, ranging from 6- to 75-years-old, were wounded. Hours later, another the IDF armored raid in Gaza killed three Palestinians, including a 16-year-old boy. On April 9, Jewish terrorists calling themselves "Revenge of the Infants," bombed a Palestinian school on the West Bank, wounding 20 students. On April 9-10, IDF hit teams in tanks, vans, and helicopters deployed to kill more Palestinian militants. At least eight were killed, including civilians, with another dozen wounded.

LaRouche Intervenes

Washington sources had warned *EIR* that the Sharon government would escalate attacks on Palestinians in order to spread the conflict in the region. In response to these reports, Democratic Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche said that he would issue a statement on this matter soon. In the meantime, LaRouche stated that he wants the following to be known as his policy:

LaRouche is firmly committed an equitable peace between Israelis and Palestinians, in which both peoples have sovereign states. This solution will only work with the backing of an international consortium of nations that are prepared to *make* it happen—by laying down the law to the Israeli Likudniks. LaRouche will work to bring about that consortium, and to ensure that it acts in the spirit of the 17th-Century Treaty of Westphalia, which calls for mutual respect and forgiveness of the past, toward guaranteeing a stable peace.

LaRouche stressed that the importance of such a move in the Israeli-Palestinian situation is underscored by the fact that the war in Iraq has set elements of the Clash of Civilizations into motion. This must be stopped, but that can only happen with a concrete alternative policy. As in the case of the Treaty of Westphalia, where France's Cardinal Mazarin put together the alternative policy of sovereign nation-states, such a clear intervention is needed now.

LaRouche has created the basis for such an alternative, as reflected in the Declaration of Bad Schwalbach, signed by representatives of 45 countries at the conference of the Schiller Institute on March 21-23 in Germany (see *EIR*, April 4).