

Israel Acting On Cheney Gang's Policy From 1996

Excerpts from "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm," the 1996 strategy for Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu's Israeli government, written by a team led by Richard Perle, and including other current Bush Administration officials Douglas Feith and David Wurmser, and Hudson Institute official Meyrav Wurmser. The auspices were the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies in Jerusalem.

Netanyahu, who was supposed to carry out—and draw the United States into—this war strategy to which the neocons could not hope to win over President Bill Clinton, lost power in 1998 to Labor Party Prime Minister Ehud Barak. Netanyahu is now Finance Minister in the government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon which is carrying out the "Clean Break" strategy.

Benjamin Netanyahu's government comes in with a new set of ideas. While there are those who will counsel continuity, Israel has the opportunity to make a *clean break*; it can force a peace process and strategy based on an entirely *new intellectual foundation*, one that restores strategic initiative and provides the nation the room to engage every possible energy on rebuilding Zionism, the starting point of which must be economic reform. To secure the nation's streets and borders in the immediate future, Israel can:

- Work closely with Turkey and Jordan to contain, destabilize, and roll back some of its [Israel's] most dangerous threats. This implies a clean break from the slogan "comprehensive peace" to a traditional concept of strategy based on balance of power.
- Change the nature of its relations with the Palestinians, including upholding the *right of hot pursuit* for self-defense into all Palestinian areas and nurturing alternatives to Arafat's exclusive grip on Palestinian society.
- Forge a new basis for relations with the United States—stressing self-reliance, maturity, strategic cooperation on areas of mutual concern, and furthering values inherent to the West. . . .

Securing the Northern Border

Syria challenges Israel on Lebanese soil. An effective approach, and one with which America can sympathize, would be if Israel seized the strategic initiative along its northern borders by engaging Hezbollah, Syria, and Iran, as the principal agents of aggression in Lebanon, including by:

- Striking Syria's drug-money and counterfeiting infra-

structure in Lebanon, all of which focuses on Razi Qanan.

- Paralleling Syria's behavior by establishing the precedent that Syrian territory is not immune to attacks emanating from Lebanon by Israeli proxy forces.
- Striking Syrian military targets in Lebanon, and should that prove insufficient, *striking at select targets in Syria proper*.

Given the nature of the regime in Damascus, it is both natural and moral that Israel abandon the slogan "comprehensive peace" and move to *contain* Syria, drawing attention to its weapons of mass destruction program, and rejecting "land for peace" deals on the Golan Heights.

Moving to a Traditional Balance of Power Strategy

Israel can shape its strategic environment, in cooperation with Turkey and Jordan, by weakening, containing, and even rolling back Syria. This effort can focus on removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq—an important strategic objective in its own right—as a means of foiling Syria's regional ambitions. Jordan has challenged Syria's regional ambitions recently by suggesting the restoration of the Hashemites in Iraq. . . . Syria recently signaled that it and Iran might prefer a weak, but barely surviving Saddam, if only to undermine and humiliate Jordan in its efforts to remove Saddam.

Most importantly, it is understandable that Israel has an interest in supporting diplomatically, militarily, and operationally Turkey's and Jordan's actions against Syria. . . .

Changing the Nature of Relations With the Palestinians

Israel has a chance to forge a new relationship between itself and the Palestinians. First and foremost, Israel's efforts to secure its streets may require hot pursuit into Palestinian-controlled areas, a justifiable practice with which Americans can sympathize. . . .

We believe that the Palestinian Authority must be held to the same minimal standards of accountability as other recipients of U.S. foreign aid. A firm peace cannot tolerate repression and injustice. A regime that cannot fulfill the most rudimentary obligations to its own people cannot be counted upon to fulfill its obligations to its neighbors.

Israel has no obligations under the Oslo agreements if the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] does not fulfill its obligations. If the PLO cannot comply with these minimal standards, then it can be neither a hope for the future nor a proper interlocutor for the present. To prepare for this, Israel may want to cultivate alternatives to Arafat's base of power.

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