

## **IF NOT ISRAEL, WHO MAKES THE WORLD MORE DANGEROUS?**

A year and a half ago, United States Secretary of State Colin Powell was indignant at the United Nations because the then government of Iraq would not respect the last two UN resolutions passed against it. “A story of disdain towards the international community represented by the UN”, he said of an institution the Bush administration was going to ignore shortly afterwards in an unprecedented move of arrogance vis-à-vis the rest of the world. But everybody also remembers that he was not taken seriously because the Israeli record of disrespect for resolutions passed against the country was even worse. Israel indeed never cared about resolutions, knowing that they would never be enforced against it. And no one can thus be surprised by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s reaction to the recent non-binding judgement of the International Court of Justice, ICJ, on the Israeli wall: “The construction by Israel, the occupying power, of the barrier on occupied Palestinian territory is illegal. It is a violation of the humanitarian international law because it restricts the freedom of moving of the Palestinians, preventing them from finding a job, medical services or a school for their children. Israel is ordered to stop the construction of the wall in occupied Palestinian territories and may even be asked to pay compensations for the damages caused”. Yet, Israel will not abide, simply because this ruling does not suit it. “This decision is of no importance” said Sharon, “because it does not mention the existence of terrorism”. To average people or states, the ruling of a judge normally applies in its entirety. But the ‘Chosen People’ only accept what suits them. As a ‘unique’ entity, how could Israel behave just like any other country in the world? Actually, nobody would have denied Sharon the right to build new ghettos, protected by six-metre high concrete barriers, behind which his fellow Israelis could hide and live among themselves without any interference from outside – provided that this is built on their own land and not on Palestinian land that is temporarily occupied. This is what the ICJ said, because this is international law. But Sharon knows that the Bush administration and their Zionist, neo-conservative friends will never enforce any resolution against Israel. Why, then, should he care about it?

Sharon was not even ready to give a hand to a friend ‘since the first hour’ in the Iraqi plot, British Prime Minister Tony Blair. As everybody knows, there is one thing that can make Blair the happiest man on earth, the discovery of MDWs in Iraq. But these could not be found, because they did not exist. In fact, Blair will likely stay in the people’s mind as ‘Mr. 45 minutes’ only. It would have been so easy for Sharon to tell Blair where to find MWDs in the Region, something known for years, in Israel. After 17,000 military personnel and civilians were killed, about 40,000 others wounded and US\$ 150 billion spent for the wrong reasons, one could have expected some help from Tel Aviv. But the Sharon government will not confirm or deny the fact it has nuclear weapons. The director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, Mohammad El Baradei, was in Israel two weeks ago. He hoped to meet with Mordechai Vanunu, the Israeli engineer who spent 18 years in jail because he was brave enough to mention the Israeli nuclear site at Dimona as the likely place to find between 200 to 400 nuclear warheads. The nuclear weapons here can be delivered using many of the American provided delivery systems (does anyone remember the British uproar when it was revealed that some of the rockets owned by the former Iraqi regime could go six miles longer than previously thought?). Of course, Vanunu was not allowed to meet El Baradei. The Israeli government refused to recognise it had nuclear arms and it also refused to allow its sites to be visited because ‘Israel is forced to maintain ... all the strength necessary for its defence’. Which is obviously not the case of the rest with the rest of the world, including Iran. Actually, international law clearly doesn’t apply to Israel.

It is widely known that the group of American Zionists that managed to penetrate the US government after the last presidential election was waiting for an opportunity to impose its own agenda on the Middle East. September 11, 2001 could not have come at a better time for them. Whatever the reasons for the attacks, and for sure none of them were good, it is difficult not to see a link between them and America's biased policies in Palestine. That may not have been in Osama bin Laden's mind but surely was in the minds of many in the Arab world when the event occurred. Israel and its friends projected the terrorist threat against the US as a Muslim and, subsequently, as an Arab threat against 'the free world'. That is, a threat against Israel itself. "The fourth World War could well be the war against militant Islam" says Norman Podhoretz, the neo-conservative editor of Commentary magazine in the US, whereas another neo-conservative, historian Bernard Lewis, adds about Muslims: "They have been hating us for centuries". 'Us' refers to the whole world minus the Arabs. Once the Washington hawks start to endorse a vision of a world where 'evil' should be eradicated, what will happen if 'evil' means the Arab world? A recent article about 9/11 in the Washington Post by US yet another neo-conservative Charles Krauthammer is symptomatic of this new line of thought. Islamic militants is the new global threat the US will have to fight, he said, and as this is a product of the Islamic world, the 'Arab world' for short, this is where the fight should be led. We have learnt to live with the delirious vision of these fanatic Zealots for many years now. But when this becomes the vision of the world's strongest military, one has good reasons to start worrying.

Luc Debievre, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004