

Mossad Chief: U.S. to Be Mired in Middle East in Perpetuity

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According to Ephraim Halevy, former chief of Israel's Mossad intelligence service and current national security adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, plans have been made for a substantial U.S. military presence in the Middle East lasting decades.

"The U.S. campaign in Iraq was perceived [in the Middle East and Washington] as a signal of long-term American commitment to do whatever is required and to 'stay in the neighborhood' for as long as needed," commented Halevy in a lengthy op-ed column carried by the April 24 issue of Ha'aretz. High-ranking U.S. policymakers have "raised the idea of establishing an American trusteeship regime in the areas of the Palestinian Authority, if it should turn out that the Palestinians are not ripe for self-rule. That arrangement would require an American operational military presence along Israel's border with the Palestinian territories."

"Speaking in a semi-closed forum during a visit to Israel a few months ago," continued Halevy, "Bill Kristol, one of the most influential 'neocons' [neoconservatives] in the United States, noted in this connection that the American presence in Europe after World War II lasted for nearly 60 years. Israelis who are trying to promote a role for NATO in the region, in one form or another, are actually promoting a generation-long American presence."

U.S. entanglement in the Middle East in the name of "democracy" has further destabilized the region and made violent fundamentalist revolution more likely, especially in Saudi Arabia. "In [an early April] visit to the United States," comments Halevy, "I was told by several well-informed observers that should one of the more severe scenarios come to pass, the United States will have no choice but to deepen its presence in the Middle East. To that end, it will have to renew the draft, to ensure that there are enough forces to deal with developing situations in countries like Saudi Arabia."

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