

History: “Operation Justified Vengeance”: A Secret 2001 Plan to Destroy the Palestinian Authority

This article by Ellis Shuman, originally published in the 2002 Spring issue of Global Outlook, sheds light on the "suicide bombings" and the interests they serve within the Sharon government.

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Contrived behind closed doors in July 2001, the Dagan Plan was slated by its IDF and Mossad architects to be “launched immediately following the next high-casualty suicide bombing, would last about a month and is expected to result in the death of hundreds of Israelis and thousands of Palestinians.”

Israeli Defense Force (IDF) Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Shaul Mofaz presented the government [in July 2001] with an updated plan for an all-out attack on the Palestinian Authority. The London-based Foreign Report reported that the plan calls for an invasion of Palestinian-controlled territory by some 30,000 Israeli soldiers, with the clearly defined mission of destroying the infrastructure of the Palestinian leadership and collecting weaponry currently possessed by the various Palestinian forces, and expelling or killing its military leadership. As reported in the Foreign Report and disclosed locally by Maariv, Israel’s invasion plan — reportedly dubbed Justified Vengeance — would be launched immediately following the next high-casualty suicide bombing, would last about a month and is expected to result in the death of hundreds of Israelis and thousands of Palestinians.

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat would no longer be in control in the West Bank and Gaza Strip at the end of the military action, the IDF assumes, according to the London weekly. The report also discloses the assumption that the massive Israeli military action would result in the stationing of an international peacekeeping force in the territories, but by the time that such a force would arrive, facts on the ground would be quite different, with improved security conditions for Israel.

The Foreign Report suggests that the outlook of the top echelon of IDF commanders has changed recently, and reflects the position of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who wants a more active role for the army. While Prime Minister Sharon insists that he is not leading Israel into

war, and that he will continue with Israel's policy of restraint in the face of repeated Palestinian terrorist attacks, he has reportedly been leading an international campaign to discredit Arafat.

Also in July 2001, Knesset Member Michael Kleiner (Herut) called on Israel to either assassinate or topple Arafat. Kleiner's words came in response to a Maariv article that reported Arafat instructing his forces to "kill a settler every day." Kleiner suggested replacing Arafat, even if it meant the Hamas would take his place. According to Kleiner, the entire world recognizes the Hamas as a terrorist organization so Israel's continued efforts against a radical Palestinian leadership would not be condemned.

Commentators have noted similarities between the invasion plan and the one that was implemented by Sharon as Defence Minister in Lebanon during 1982, [which led to the murder of up to 1700 Palestinians]. (See below.) Then, too, the goal was to destroy PLO infrastructure and weapons, and to expel or kill Arafat and his armed forces. The trigger for that invasion was the assassination attempt against Israel's Ambassador in London.

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The Infamous "Dagan Plan"

The so-called "Dagan Plan" which carries the name of its author, Reserve General Meir Dagan had been drawn up prior to Sharon's election as Prime Minister in February 2001. General Meir Dagan, was Sharon's security adviser during his election campaign.[1] According to Alex Fishman writing in Yediot Aharonot, the Dagan Plan consisted in destroying the Palestinian authority and putting Yasser Arafat "out of the game".[2]

"The 'Dagan Plan' was based on two unalterable premises:

"One, Arafat is a murderer, and one doesn't negotiate with a murderer. Two, the Oslo accord [mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO, 1993] is the greatest evil that has ever fallen upon Israel, and everything should be done to destroy it."

Its objective was directed, by means of a vast operation of increasing intensity, toward progressively isolating the Palestinian president just as much domestically as diplomatically."[3]

In the wake of the elections General Dagan was assigned a key role. He became Sharon's "go-between" in security issues with President's Bush's special envoys Zinni and Mitchell.

The Bush Administration was in all likelihood familiar with the Dagan Plan and did nothing to block its implementation.

There were close consultations between US and Israeli military and intelligence officials. In turn, CIA Director George Tenet, had been put in charge of so-called "peace negotiations". The hidden agenda was to stall the peace process and implement the Dagan Plan.

In July 2001, an updated Dagan plan dubbed "Operation Justified Vengeance" was formally presented by the Israeli Defence Force to the government. (See above).

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Ellis Shuman is Israel Insider's Senior Editor. The above text is a shortened version of Ellis Shulman's article "Is Israel preparing to dismantle the Palestinian Authority?" Israel Insider, 12 July 2001 All rights reserved .Copyright Israel Insider, Koret Communications Ltd, 2001. Reprinted with permission.

Notes

1. for further details see, Sylvain Cypel, Sharon's plan for getting rid of Arafat, according to Yediot Aharonot, Le Monde 17 December 2001

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

Featured image: Graffiti on the Israeli separation wall dividing the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Abu Dis (Photo: Ryan Rodrick Beiler via shutterstock.com)

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