

ISRAEL UPDATE from David Dolan

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MASSIVE TERROR IN SINAI

It is after one am, and most Israelis are already asleep after the eight day Succot holiday came to an end at sundown. However some were still awake when the horrible news came in just before midnight that bombs had gone off in three popular tourist resorts in the Sinai Peninsula, just south of Israel. The blasts came just weeks after the radical Hamas terror group—supported by Syria and Iran—vowed to attack Israelis outside of the country.

The worst atrocity was at the Hilton Hotel in the resort of Taba, just south of the Israeli port of Eilat. The hotel was full of Israeli tourists, meaning most of the over 30 dead and over 100 wounded are Israelis, say government officials. Entire families were on Succot vacation in the hotel, built when Israel controlled the area in the 1980's. It is believed that a truck bomb exploded outside the hotel.

An Israeli friend of mine who I saw earlier this week told me he was on his way with his new wife to vacation in Taba, leaving on Wednesday, so I am waiting for news about them while praying that they are ok. The Israeli government has asked for permission to send dozens of buses into the area to immediately evacuate all Israelis who were vacationing there.

All week long, several of us in Jerusalem felt that the Lord was warning that a major attack was imminent. We actually discussed this on Wednesday evening at the home of Israeli author and speaker Lance Lambert. Several of us had sudden and strange things happen to our homes that day, and we were wondering at the "coincidence" of this. We felt a sense of unrest and trauma in the air. Some had received warnings from friends abroad, who felt the Lord had earlier showed them that "something big" was brewing for around the middle of the month concerning Israel. Whether this is that or not, tonight's attacks are extremely grave, and will have huge consequences—apparently being even larger than the worst attack of the Palestinian uprising so far, the 2002 Passover Massacre of 29 Jews in Netanya.

Below is my latest contribution to the World Net Daily web site, written before tonight's attack. I will take this opportunity to send it on to you. It concerns the U.S. election and how that could affect the scheduled Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip next year. As always, we greatly appreciate your prayers in these difficult hours.

MILLION SHEKEL QUESTION

Ariel Sharon will probably be up before dawn on November 3rd to anxiously watch the U.S. election returns on CNN International and Fox. Although the beleaguered Israeli prime minister is wisely taking no public position on the tight presidential race, it is fairly clear he's banking on a second term for George W. Bush.

Unlike tens of thousands of Israelis who hold dual American citizenship, Sharon cannot cast a ballot in the hotly contested election. But he is just as eager as any of them to learn the outcome of the vote, realizing that his controversial Gaza withdrawal plan might be derailed by a John Kerry victory.

How could the Massachusetts senator's triumph possibly thwart Sharon's declared goal to pull all Israeli settlers and soldiers out of the Gaza Strip by late next year, along with four small Jewish communities north of Jerusalem? After all, Bill Clinton amply demonstrated that Kerry's Democratic Party strongly supports the "land for peace" formula in which Israel abandons territory—part of the Jewish biblical heritage, not to mention strategic for modern Israel's defense—in exchange for paper promises of peace from her various Arab enemies.

The portly Israeli leader is under serious siege for having seemingly sold out his right-wing supporter base by unveiling his unilateral evacuation plan early this year. Known for decades as Israel's greatest settlement champion, he won a landslide victory in 2003 against a Labor party opponent who strongly advocated the very withdrawal program that Sharon is now avidly pushing.

What is the Israeli leader's most potent argument against his many critics? It boils down to this: The Most Powerful Man on Earth (although he didn't look like it during the first presidential debate) has pledged to back Israel's consensus desire to annex portions of the disputed territories inside and around Jerusalem's broad municipal boundaries, and also due east of Tel Aviv and other coastal cities. All this is in exchange for a total Gaza pullout and a few other "painful concessions" that Sharon has yet to fully enumerate.

Would President John Kerry honor the Texan's unprecedented pledge—which was alluded to by the American leader, if not fully spelled out when he met Sharon at the White House last April? That is the Million Shekel Question many Israeli journalists would have loved to ask the Democratic challenger during the foreign policy debate.

Given that the dovish senator says he wants to "restore frayed relations" with Europe and "boost American cooperation" with the United Nations and other international institutions, it seems likely he would not endorse Bush's historic pledge, which amounted to a significant US policy shift. That would leave Sharon with greasy falafel on his face, if not flung out of office, before he could implement his emotive pullout plan.

As the current president apparently recognizes, Israeli moral, legal and political arguments for annexing portions of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria captured from Jordan in 1967 are outlandishly strong. To begin with, the holy city was Judaism's heart and soul long before Muhammad and his loyal followers trekked the deserts of Arabia. The same holds true for the rolling hills and valleys of Samaria and Judea where Jacob and kin lived their lives and were buried, where David was crowned king, where Elijah rode a celestial chariot up to heaven, etc.

Legally speaking, Israel's disputed biblical heartland was never recognized as a valid part of Jordan by most UN member states, including all Arab ones, despite Amman's announcement that the territory it occupied in 1948 had magically become "the West Bank of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan." Nor was it ever part of some country called Palestine, despite frequent Arab inferences that it was so.

“Palestine” was simply one of several names for the biblical Holy Land (including Southern Syria) that appeared after the time of Christ; never a sovereign country, nor even an “occupied” one. Indeed, Joshua hardly “Conquered Northern Palestine” as my NASB bible declares in one sectional heading, nor did the warrior ever hear of such a term for Moses’ Promised Land. It first appeared over 1,000 years later when applied by imperial Rome to insult the vanquished and detested Jews, since it was derived from their ancient Philistine enemy.

Israel’s legal claim to the eastern half of Jerusalem (the hallowed part) and surrounding areas is particularly strong given that the League of Nations—the precursor of today’s UN—sanctioned Great Britain to oversee “the establishment of a Jewish homeland” in the historic territory, captured from Ottoman Turkey during World War I. The “Mandate” area included all of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, where thousands of Jews had already been living for centuries.

Of course, Arabs were living there too, and a contemporary solution must obviously be found to their stateless situation and other serious problems. But a total Israeli pullout to the supposedly sacrosanct 1967 “border”—which was in reality just the ceasefire line from the 1948 conflict that was triggered by widespread Arab rejection of the UN partition plan—is neither a workable nor realistic answer, as George Bush apparently recognizes.

Does John Kerry agree with him? That is the big question many Israeli journalists want to ask the Democratic contender. Since the answer is probably no, Ariel Sharon will undoubtedly see red if the TV election maps on November 3rd are predominantly blue.

DAVID DOLAN is a Jerusalem-based author and journalist who has lived in Israel since 1980.

- **HOLY WAR FOR THE PROMISED LAND** (Broadman & Holman), his latest book, is an overview of the history of the Israel and of the bitter Arab-Israeli conflict that rages there, plus some autobiographical details about the author’s experiences living in the land since 1980. It especially examines the important role that militant Islam plays in the conflict.
- **ISRAEL IN CRISIS: WHAT LIES AHEAD?** (Baker/Revell), which examines the political and biblical prospects for a regional attack upon Israel, settlement in the disputed territories, and related topics, is also available for purchase, along with an updated edition of his popular end-time novel, **THE END OF DAYS** (21st Century Press).

You may order these books at a special discount price by visiting his web site at www.ddolan.com, or by phoning 888-890-6938 in North America, or by e mail at: resources@yourisraelconnection.org

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