

WHAT WILL REALLY HAPPEN WHEN THE JEWS PULL OUT OF GAZA?

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It is one of the most polarizing decisions of Israel's modern history: the evacuation of 26 Israeli communities from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank. The orders were signed immediately after the vote, making the removals possible as of July 20. After the eight weeks allotted for the evictions, it will be illegal for any Israeli to reside in the Gaza Strip. The 8,000 evacuees have been given five months notice to accept the payouts on offer and go quietly or wait to be forcibly evicted under an elaborate evacuation plan requiring 6,000 policemen to remove them bodily, backed by several thousand armed soldiers for security.

The cost of this decision has already been high and we've only just begun. Sharon split his party, fired ministers and divided at least two pro-settlement factions. Only after he built a new government coalition with Labor to neutralize his own party rebels, did he see his way to majority support for his pullout plan in the Knesset and cabinet. By then, two top national security chiefs had also been sidelined: chief of staff Lt. Gen. Moshe Yaalon, and Shin Beit Director Avi Dichter.

The second decision confirmed by Israeli ministers later in the same session approved the southern section of West Bank defense barrier after its route was amended. The revised route encloses only 7% of so-called 'West Bank' territory instead of 16% in the original blueprint. The fence will encircle the Gush Etzion cluster and town of Maale Adummim south and east of Jerusalem. But the city of Ariel further north will be excluded as will the Israeli communities of southern Mt. Hebron where the fence will follow the pre-1967 route. Though this is essentially a 'security fence', the revised route certainly suggests that future negotiations will put these communities in the same boat as their fellow Jews in the Gaza Strip.

NOTE: When the prime minister told the ministers at the critical voting session that disengagement is an "essential step for the state of Israel's future," he did not share with them certain facts that might have altered the way they voted. DEBKAF file and two other intel sources reveal the following:

The Palestinian Front Friday, December 11, three days before the well-publicized Sharm el-Sheikh summit of Israeli, Palestinian, Egyptian and Jordanian leaders, an assembly of 'Who's Who in the Terrorist World' met

secretly on ways to disrupt it at a Hizballah base near Hermel in the Lebanese Beqaa Valley. Organized by the "Palestinian Desk" of Syrian military intelligence, it was attended by the officer who allegedly orchestrated Rafiq Hariri's assassination two months later, General Rustum Ghazallah, as well as, Colonel Askar Assdallahi, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard unit stationed at a secret Syrian military camp in the Zabadni Valley 40 km north of Damascus. (Syria has never admitted to hosting an Iranian Revolutionary Guard force on its soil.) Also present were Palestinian Hamas operations chief and liaison man with Tehran, Imad al Alami, and Ezze-din-al Qassam commander Musbah Abu Huwila, whom Israeli attempted to liquidate in Damascus on December 14, 2004. The two Jihad Islami operatives present were senior recruiter and trainer Akram Ajuri and head of operations in Lebanon Ziyad Nakhla. The two high-ranking Hizballah officers at the meeting were training director Abu Zainab aka Hassan Ali Dib and the undercover liaison with Hamas and Jihad Gaza commands, Kassam Kasir.

On the agenda was the organization of a fresh terrorist offensive to accompany Israel's withdrawals. The secret conclave reached the following decisions: 1. Unanimous rejection of the ceasefire Mahmoud Abbas and Ariel Sharon planned for the Sharm summit. 2. The Hamas, Jihad, Fatah- al Aqsa Brigades and Gaza Strip Popular Committees would lay the groundwork of the terror offensive by planting hundreds of explosive charges along Israeli traffic routes to blow up the Israeli units executing the evacuations. Israeli military sources revealed Sunday, February 20, that in the last two weeks, 22 of these bombs, some as large as 70 kilos, were uncovered before they could do any harm. 3. Every effort would be made to step up the flow of smuggled weapons from Egyptian Sinai into the Gaza Strip, especially missiles of all types including anti-tank and surface-to-air rockets, the latter for shooting down Israeli helicopters and drones deployed to silence concentrated Palestinian Qassam missile assaults on Israeli targets. 4. Hizballah promised to redouble its recruitment of spies and spotters among Israeli Arabs to keep the terrorists abreast of Israeli military movements. 5. Iran's Asdallahi and Syria's Ghazallah announced an extra one-million-dollar allocation each to fund the operation to disrupt the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

This is precisely what General Yaalon was talking about Sunday when he referred to the disengagement operation as "a very vulnerable and fragile process subject to a Hamas and Hizballah veto." He added: "We see that the Palestinians are caught up in internal debate. But there is no change whatever in Hamas thinking; it is exploiting the slowdown of military action to re-arm." This is also why he lost his job.

The American Front. In her latest telephone conversation with Mahmoud Abbas, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice repeated three times: Dismantle,

dismantle, dismantle (the terrorist infrastructure). But during her visit earlier this month she, and subsequently newly appointed US security coordinator Lt.-Gen William E Ward, carried the following message to Sharon:

A. We don't believe Abbas will make it. That is why we haven't set a date for inviting him to the White House and the funds allocated to him will only be forwarded if he takes real action against terror. From what we have seen thus far, he has not done anything at all. He simply hides behind Mohammed Dahlan's talks with your defense minister (Mofaz). Dahlan has not lived up to any of his promises to us. B. We are therefore standing back from your dispute and will confine ourselves to being observers. If there is anything we need to say, we will say it. C. If you need help in implementing your disengagement plan, get back to us and we will see what we can do, but we accept no responsibility for the move. D. So that Washington can keep its distance, an American diplomatic coordinator will soon be appointed to complement General Ward's function in security. According to our sources, a middle-ranking official will be chosen to downgrade the Bush administration's engagement in the dispute and keep it off the desks of the Oval Office and the secretary of state.

The Bush administration has decided to remain aloof, if not quite wash its hands of Abbas, because of his decision to forego any attempt to dismantle or disarm the terrorists, after failing to persuade them even to join a temporary ceasefire. His plan of action only goes as far as absorbing terrorist manpower in the Palestinian Authority's security forces. But every attempt made in the past to turn terrorists into security or police officers and wean them away from terror with new uniforms and paychecks has utterly failed.

Then there's Europe. Following the American step back from the Middle East dispute, Sharon sent his top aide Dov Weisglass to London and Brussels instead of Washington to report on the government's pullback decision despite the fact that the European Union foreign affairs executive Javier Solana conveyed a secret assurance to Abbas. He advised him not to be dismayed by the cool wind blowing from Washington, because immediately after Israel completes its pullback, the EU would stage a big international conference to work on the final- status accord between Israel and the Palestinians. What this means, according to DEBKAfile's Middle East experts, is that the Europeans have given Abu Mazen the means to duck the American demand to dismantle terrorists.

I know this has been a little long but I hope it gives you a better grasp of some of the complexities of this horrific situation we find ourselves in at the moment.