

USC STUDENTS FOR JUSTICE IN PALESTINE

Presentation by Dick Platkin

LA Jews for Peace

Feb. 17, 2009

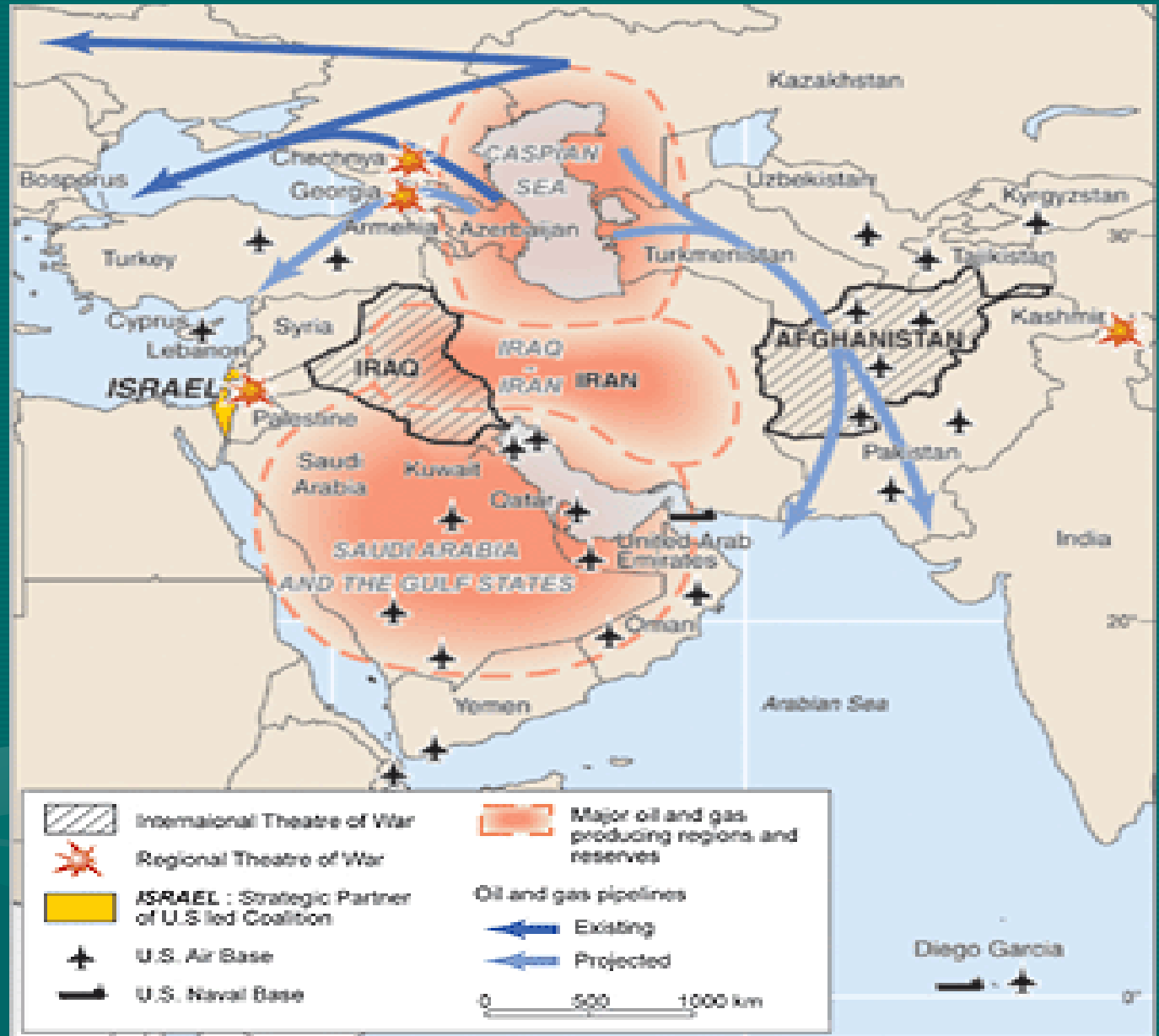
L.A. JEWS FOR PEACE

- **Motto: “Build bridges, not walls.”**
- **Believes U.S. foreign policy should be primary focus of local ME peace activists.**
- **Support for progressive Israeli and Palestinians should be secondary (e.g., ICAHD).**
- **Open-minded on one-state, two-state, and regional solutions, based on social and economic justice.**

FOLLOW-UP TO PRESENTATION FROM LAST YEAR

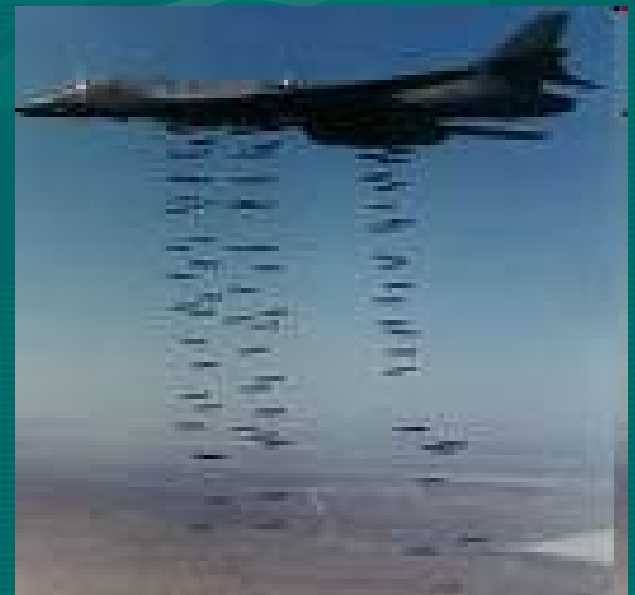
- **Previous discussion focused on the U.S. government's strategic interests in the Middle East and the 2008 presidential election.**
- **The primary focus was the long history of great power competition for the region's oil resources, with the U.S. top dog for the past 40 years, but declining.**

When maps of oil and gas resources, pipe lines, US military installations, and recent or current wars are presented on the same map, the relationship of these factors becomes obvious. Walt and Mearsheimer's claim that they are not connected is simply not credible.



Formal Basis for U.S. Middle East Policy: The Carter Doctrine states the long-term U.S. military-energy agenda for the Persian Gulf

- In his January 23, 1980, State of the Union Address Jimmy Carter declared that access to Persian Gulf oil was a vital U.S. national interest.
- *To protect that interest, the United States was prepared to use “any means necessary, including military force.”*
- As quoted in Blood and Oil, p. 46



Israel's Attack on Gaza compromised the long-term U.S. energy agenda in the Middle East and in Israel-Palestine

- **Hamas was strengthened, not weakened or forced from power.**
- **Tunnels are still working. Rockets are still being fired.**
- **Abu Mazzen, the Palestinian Authority, and Fatah has been weakened.**



MAP OF ISRAEL-PALESTINE

- **Boundary of Israel-Palestine from 1948-48 Armistice**
- **Israel controls all territory from 1967 to date**
- **Palestinian territories under direct or indirect military occupation and settlement**



FURTHER BLOWBACK TO THE U.S. REALIST POSITION

- **Pro-U.S. “moderate” Arab governments have been weakened. They criticized Israel’s 22 day assault on Gaza, but did virtually nothing to stop it.**
- **The right-wing parties in Israel, already strong, did better than expected in Israel’s recent elections.**

Anti-War Sentiment in Israel

- **Over half of the Israel population supports a vaguely defined two state solution**
- **About 5 - 10 % of the Jewish population opposed the attacks on Gaza for a range of reasons. Probably 25 percent of total population.**
- **There were many demonstrations in Israel against the war.**
- **Largest was a march of 10,000 in Tel Aviv.**

Anti-war sentiment in Israel

- **Small leftist groups, such as Anarchists Against the Wall, which means supporters of Palestinian nationalism**
- **Electoral parties: Hadash (Communist Party), Balad, United Arab List**
- **Liberal Zionists of Meretz, Labor, and Peace Now**
- **Sophisticated strategic analysts**

SINCE THEN THE U.S. POSITION HAS WEAKENED FURTHER

- **The Iraq Surge is window dressing.**
- **The Generals want to slow down the transfer of troops to Afghanistan.**
- **Afghanistan and Pakistan are rapidly deteriorating for the United States. Escalation is precarious.**
- **The U.S. economy is crumbling and make foreign wars hard to finance.**

Afghanistan and Pakistan are strategically located

- They are adjacent to Iran and China, two major antagonists of the United States.
- They are near Russia, Iraq, India, the Persian Gulf, and the Caspian Sea states.
- The region is critical for pipeline routes to serve Caspian Sea oil and gas.



Iran's Influence Continues to Grow - at expense of the United States

- **The U.S. and Israel, the Middle East's two major nuclear powers, are threatening to attack Iran to stop its nuclear program. Iran is militarily encircled, and Israel continues to lobby the U.S. government for a green light to bomb it.**



THE M.E. IS A HIGH PRIORITY FOR THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

- **Council on Foreign Relations devoted major resources to devise and propose “new” policies for the new presidential administration.**
- **Foreign Affairs “Palestinians hold key to peace in the Middle East.”**
- **The journal devotes substantial space to Israeli-Palestinian conflict.**
- **Their approach is naïve and weakened by Israel’s attack on Gaza.**

Foreign Affairs Proposals

- **Break with past and put two state solution – of sorts – on fast track.**
- **More Jordanian trained PA police from present.**
- **Muslim/Arab international force on West Bank at present.**
- **Temporary freeze on new Israeli settlements.**

Foreign Affairs proposals - 2

- **Resumption of settlement activity in West Bank settlement blocks after peace agreement.**
- **Economic development projects in West Bank.**
- **Support from Arab League countries *based on* discussions of the Saudi Peace Plan.**

WHAT ABOUT HAMAS?

- **No direct U.S. relationship with Hamas, but rely on Israel and Egypt to use their carrots and sticks.**
- **Permit low level U.S. contacts with Hamas.**
- **Arab-lead international troops sent to Gaza if fighting resumes.**

The “out there” U.S. proposals

- **Use 1948-9 Green Line as negotiating position, including Israeli withdrawal from settlements and bases.**
- **Compensate refugees, both Palestinian (\$55-85 Billion) and Jewish from Arab countries.**
- **Israeli acknowledgment of 1948 ethnic cleansing.**
- **No stateless Palestinians.**

Missing in Action

- **Political and economic nature of Palestinian state**
- **Conditions on U.S. aid to Israel and Palestinian Authority**
- **Contradictory proposals regarding settlements, cities, and bases on West Bank**
- **Power of Palestinian state over air, land, sea, commerce, foreign and military policy**

REAL STATUS QUO

- **Partial apartheid in Israel.**
- **Full apartheid in occupied territories.**
- **Increasing Israeli matrix of control over West Bank based on military attacks, spying and surveillance, PA collusion, by-pass highways, checkpoints, economic strangulation, NGOs, and joint policing and death squads.**

DISMAL FUTURE

- **Apartheid will solidify and require continuous military and police repression.**
- **Weakened U.S. will have little leverage on Israel in long run.**
- **Israel will paint itself into corner.**
- **Increase war in the Middle East creates high risk, but with opportunities.**

A FEW RAYS OF LIGHT

- **Region's nations and nationalisms are relatively new. 1919 to date.**
- **Increasing contact and similarities throughout the region.**
- **Regionalization is slowly replacing nation states in Europe and South America, and possibly elsewhere.**
- **Needs to be based on economic equity.**

WHAT WE CAN DO TOGETHER

- **Joint vigils, rallies, and forums focused on U.S. foreign policy in whole region, not just Palestine-Israel.**
- **Adopt slogan from anti-war rallies in Israel "WE REFUSE TO BE ENEMIES!"**
- **Statements, columns, and letters to editor.**
- **Visits to public officials, like Mayor.**

BACKGROUND READING **which LA Jews for Peace** **recommends.**

- **Uri Avneri's weekly columns at Counterpunch.**
- **Jeff Halper's An Israeli in Palestine**
- **Simha Flapan's The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities**
- **Michael Klare's Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet**

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