

Anti-Imperialist News Service

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Israel Assassinates Palestinian Leader

On March 25, the U.S. vetoed a U.N. Security Council resolution condemning Israel's assassination of the Palestinian religious and political leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. In fact, earlier in the week, when George Bush was asked about the assassination he said: "Israel has the right to defend herself from terror."

Yassin was murdered on March 22 when U.S.-supplied helicopters fired missiles into

his neighborhood in Gaza City, killing Yassin and at least 7 other Palestinian civilians. Seventeen more people were wounded. Israeli Prime Minister Sharon admitted to personally authorizing and supervising the assassination.

Peoples and governments throughout the world have denounced Israel's assassination of Yassin.

Yassin's funeral in the Gaza Strip was attended by more than 100,000 Palestinians who denounced the assassination as an attack on the whole Palestinian nation and vowed to carry through to the end the struggle against the Israeli aggressors. Tens of thousands more participated in demonstrations across the occupied West Bank.

Mass demonstrations were also organized in many Arab countries, including Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Sudan, Yemen, etc.

So too, governments throughout the world denounced the assassination and the U.N. Human Rights Commission passed a resolution condemning Israel.

For its part, Israel is continuing its aggression. The day after Yassin's assassination, General Moshe Yaalon, Chief of Staff of Israel's army, warned Yasser Arafat and Hassan Nasrallah, leader of the Shiite organization Hizbollah that "their turn is coming." At the same time, the Israeli army is continuing attacks on refugee camps in Gaza.

For the last 2 and one-half years, Israel, at the instigation of the U.S., has been waging a genocidal war against Palestine.

Israel has repeatedly invaded every Palestinian population center and openly declared war against the Palestinian Authority. It has murdered and wounded thousands of civilians, blockaded towns, arrested tens of thousands and targeted the entire infrastructure of the Palestinian nation, including assassination of

U. S. Proclaims Control Over New "Iraqi" Military

This week, the chief of the U.S. occupation of Iraq, Paul Bremer, issued an edict appointing an American general as commander of the newly created Iraqi army.

Bremer's executive order says that the U.S. will remain the sole military authority in Iraq after June 30, when the U.S. will formally "transfer authority" to a transitional government handpicked by the U.S.

The March 25 executive order unequivocally proclaims "All trained elements of the Iraqi armed forces shall at all times be under the operational control of the commander of coalition forces for the purpose of conducting combined operations." The document also calls for the appointment of an Iraqi forces chief of staff and a national security adviser for three-year terms, and an inspector-general with a five-year term. All Iraqi military authorities will report to the American commander, Lt. General Ricardo S. Sanchez, according to the edict.

The U.S. hopes to train and equip a 40,000-strong Iraqi puppet army within a short period of time. In addition, more than 100,000 U.S. troops will remain in Iraq. Top aides to Mr. Bremer admitted that maintaining military control is "an important guarantor" for the nearly \$20 billion recently invested in the country. Both the U.S. forces and its puppet Iraqi army will continue to wage a counterinsurgency war against the Iraqi people.

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Interview with Venezuela's Army Commander

Below we print excerpts from a March 21, 2004 interview with General Raul Baduel, Commander of the Venezuelan army by Heinz Dieterich, translated with an introductory note by Toni Solo. This interview appeared in Z-Net.

Disturbances of Late February

HD Are the current disturbances a real threat to the stability of the government or the State or are they marginal?

RB To start with I ought to say that resorting to violence is deplorable when participative constitutional democratic mechanisms exist. We're dealing with an irrational use of violence unsupported by a genuine ideal. I am convinced this violence only represents minority cliques.

As a soldier and a follower of the Tao Te Ching of Lao Tze, I know one should never undervalue an adversary because if we undervalue an opponent we lose our greatest asset and strength which is love. I believe that love, civic awareness and participatory awakening prevail throughout a wide segment of the people. In any case, those who reject this reality and believe that with the help of the news media they can try and forge the basis for a different view are just reacting to the loss of perks and privileges.

So I think you can't underestimate the extremists who have fomented the recourse to violent insurrectionism, baseless as it is as I have already said, but neither should one exaggerate their importance. The government and the authorities generally are not going to make the mistake of magnifying the situation and offering them the excuses they unfortunately seek, namely, to cause death and destruction so as to sustain this media campaign not just for internal consumption but internationally too.

The Coup in Haiti

HD: Are there any parallels to be drawn between what happened in Haiti and what's happening in Venezuela?

RB Well, some foreign elements, in my view, in an irresponsible way and ignoring the self-determination of the Haitian people, have tried to take advantage of the extreme circumstances of poverty that country has suffered so as to advance their own interests instead of seeking with other countries to improve conditions in the island.

Rather it seems to me that an attempt is being made to establish a pattern, trying to present a glass showcase to the world to demonstrate that this could extend to other countries and in particular to our country. Because we have seen officials of the State Department and their local ventriloquists' dummies repeating that we should take a good look at Haiti because it could happen here.

And a few of these ventriloquists' dummies say this with such conviction that it seems they had already been given the script of what to say, as if already certain that this is what they are ready to do, make such things happen here in our country.

US Intervention

HD. President Chavez revealed on Sunday that a message had been intercepted mentioning plans to locate US navy ships off the coast of Venezuela in the near future. Is there a real danger of

belligerent hostilities?

RB. I have to say this is a delicate matter because any opinion I offer, especially given my seniority in the Armed Forces, has a lot of weight. But to deal with the question, let's look at the facts of the April 2002 coup d'état. There is irrefutable and categorical evidence that there were warships and military airplanes in Venezuelan territorial waters, some as close as ten miles off shore in the area called Falcón near the north of the Paraguaná peninsula,

And further off at Curaçao and Bonaire there are countries that have military bases (trans. US and Holland) As a military person, I think, speaking in my personal capacity that this type of action could happen, using Plan Colombia instrumentally to try and generate a situation of conflict with the Republic of Colombia which might serve to excuse an intervention. . . .

US Involvement in the April 2002 Coup

HD. The President has said that US military helicopters landed at the Maiquetia airport near Caracas during the April 2002 coup d'état.

RB Some military professionals, mostly from our military aviation forces working in tactical air control centres at the Simon Bolivar International airport at Caracas, have alleged they detected those airplanes. In some cities we combine civilian airport use with military bases. This double usage saves construction costs and also guarantees military security in any situation that merits deployment. On that basis, the presence of US Black Hawk helicopters has been confirmed on April 11th, 12th and 13th during the coup d'état at the Luis del Valle Garcia base which shares a runway with the Barcelona airport here in the state of Anzoátegui. . .

Israel Assassinate Palestinian Leader (from page 1)

Palestinian leaders, destruction of Palestinian schools and governmental agencies, etc. Israel is building a wall across the West Bank as a way to expropriate even more Palestinian land and carve the remainder of the West Bank into tiny cantons, unable to sustain themselves as a viable, independent state. In this way, Israel hopes to liquidate and the Palestinian nation altogether.

However, as the response of the Palestinian people and people throughout the world to the assassination of Yassin again shows, Palestine will not be defeated.

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