

Our World: The waning of American will

Caroline Glick , THE JERUSALEM POST

Feb. 5, 2007

Kenyan Foreign Minister Raphael Tuju is on a five-day visit in Israel this week and boy, does Israel have a lot to discuss with him. Unfortunately, it would seem that the Olmert government will fail to recognize this.

The most important question that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and his colleagues should be broaching to their Kenyan guest is how his government is coping with the fact that Washington has apparently lost its will to fight the war against the global jihad.

Last week, under pressure from US Ambassador to Kenya Michael Ranneberger, Kenyan authorities released from prison Sheikh Sharif Ahmad, one of the leaders of the ousted al-Qaida-linked Islamic Courts Union (ICU) in Somalia.

In late December, with US backing and support, Ethiopian forces invaded Somalia with forces from the recognized Somali Transitional Federal Government, (TFG). The invasion came a month after the ICU declared jihad against Ethiopia and Kenya. ICU forces, which had set up a Taliban-style tyranny throughout the country, fled before the Ethiopian advance. In just six days, the ICU was overthrown and the recognized Somali government had retaken control over Mogadishu.

From the outset of the Ethiopian invasion, the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) both demanded an immediate Ethiopian retreat.

This is not surprising because the ICU has been the beneficiary of generous support from Arab League and OIC member states Eritrea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti, Yemen and Libya. According to respected military analyst Bill Roggio, US intelligence officials maintain that the so-called Saudi "Golden Chain" of al-Qaida financiers have given \$200 million to the ICU since last spring. The EU also demanded that Ethiopia withdraw its forces and that the TFG negotiate an accord with al-Qaida's front organization in the Horn of Africa. Today EU humanitarian aid commissioner Louis Michel has linked EU assistance to the TGF to its acceptance of ICU elements in its government.

THE US was the only country that backed Ethiopia, and with good reason. Shortly after Ethiopian forces took control of Mogadishu, US aircraft pursued fleeing al-Qaida terrorists in southern Somalia after intelligence reports indicated that among the fleeing ICU leaders were the masterminds of the 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

Disturbingly, the US seems to have abandoned the fight. The State Department has joined the EU, the Arab League and the OIC in calling for "reconciliation" between the TFG and the ICU and supports the participation of "moderate" jihadists in the Somali government. Speaking to African journalists this week in Addis Ababa, US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer said, "I think the [ICU] was hijacked by the extremists from within. And there are members who want negotiation to participate in national reconciliation."

So it is that the US ambassador in Nairobi, Kenya, forced Kenyan authorities to release Sharif Ahmad from jail. Commenting to the Kenyan media on his release, Prof. Ali Abdiweli, a US-based Somali professor with ties to the TFG said, "I am outraged by the behavior of [the US ambassador] to Kenya. More than 3,000 Somalis died because of Sheikh Sharif and the ICU.

"[Sharif] should be put on trial. Here we go again saying that he is moderate... This is nonsense, and there is no way that Sheikh Sharif will accept any secular government. Actually, the behavior of the ambassador will encourage the remnants of the Islamic Courts."

THE US policy of appeasing jihadists in the Horn of Africa is just one example of the recent turn that US policy has taken regarding the war against the global jihad. On every major front, and particularly in its dealings with Israel, Iraq and Iran, the Bush administration is implementing policies that undermine its allies, strengthen its enemies and consequently harm US national security interests.

While the administration and the new Democratic Congress argue over troop levels and funding for the US military in Iraq, as former CIA analyst Robert Baer wrote last week in *Time* magazine, Iran has effectively taken control of Basra, Iraq's port city and oil hub. The Iranian toman rather than the Iraqi dinar is the currency of trade in the city. The Shi'ite holy city of Najaf is also veering toward becoming a protectorate of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

Although he is far from alone, the central Iraqi leader enabling the Iranian takeover is Abdul Aziz al-Hakim. Hakim, who heads the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) spent the 20 years preceding the US-led invasion of Iraq in Iran. SCIRI's militia - the Badr force - has overt ties to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. Indeed, both the Badr militia and SCIRI were created in Iran in 1982 by the Revolutionary Guards.

SCIRI is the largest faction in the Iraqi parliament today, and Hakim is considered key to ensuring stability in Iraq. To this end, he was brought to Washington last December to meet with President George W. Bush.

But since Hakim is controlled by Iran, by attempting to appease him, the US is effectively attempting to collaborate with Iran in a manner that facilitates the Iranian takeover of Iraq. This move is opposed by US military commanders in the country who are tired of allowing the Iranians to kill US forces at will. Yet while they are reportedly demanding that the authority kill Iranian operatives in Iraq, their moves are being blocked by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her associates at the State Department and the CIA.

THIS CRITICAL dispute currently revolves around the issue of whether or not the White House will publicly reveal evidence of Iran's deep involvement in the war in Iraq generally, and attacks against US forces specifically. Rice and her colleagues argue for suppressing the information. Revealing the depth of Iranian operations against the US, they argue, will force the US to actually fight back.

That is, apparently, Rice and her associates would rather see Iran take control of Iraq, and so bring about the most humiliating defeat of US forces since the Vietnam War, than acknowledge that Iran is fighting the US and its allies.

This preference for appeasement and defeat in Africa and the Persian Gulf is even more apparent in the US dealings with the Palestinians. Ahead of his summit with Hamas terror masters Khaled Mashaal and Ismail Haniyeh today in Mecca, Fatah chief and Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas said, "We must unite the Hamas and Fatah blood in the struggle against Israel as we did at the beginning of the intifada. We want a political partnership with Hamas and we are not only optimistic, but also very serious about this. And

that's why we're going to Mecca."

Fatah forces make no attempt to hide their involvement in terror attacks against Israel. They wear their Aksa Martyr Brigades T-shirts beneath their official uniforms. And yet, this week it was revealed that some \$76.4 million of the \$86.4 million that the US plans to give to Fatah will go to training 13,500 terror forces. That is, the US is now openly involved in training and equipping Palestinian terrorists who, as Abbas makes clear, are seeking to expand their operations to kill Israelis.

Furthermore, last month Rice signaled that the US is easing off its refusal to engage the Hamas terror group. Speaking to European reporters, Rice referred to the jihadist terror group as a "resistance movement."

IN MANY ways it makes sense that Bush has lost his will to fight. Since the September 11 attacks, the president has refused to acknowledge the true nature of the forces arrayed against the US and the rest of the free world. By insisting on referring to the war against Sunni and Shi'ite jihad as a war against terrorism, Bush refused to acknowledge the identity of America's enemies or the scope of their power and ambitions. Consequently, he has approved policies in Iraq, and indeed throughout the world, which are based on a denial of the nature of the enemy and so cannot possibly defeat its forces.

Now, frustrated with the seemingly intractable realities on the ground and in the political battlefield in Washington, Bush is attempting to establish a middle course between victory and surrender. Unfortunately, this course - which involves handing over the fruits of military victories to jihadists and their state sponsors - cannot help but ensure the defeat Bush rightly wishes to avoid.

Were Olmert and his colleagues in the government to recognize this state of affairs, perhaps they could join forces with governments - like the Kenyan government - to persuade Bush of the dangers inherent in his embrace of this recipe for failure. Unfortunately, in light of the Olmert government's own failures to contend with the growing threats to Israel's security, it is difficult to imagine its members acting in such a constructive and prudent manner.



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