

in an attempt to disguise the parties involved. The missiles were to be assembled and tested in Iran whose larger territory provided more space and possibilities for secrecy. In 1978, Iran made its down payment, \$260 million worth of oil, and sent engineers to 'Israel' to begin designing the assembly plant. Though these plans were disrupted by the Shah's overthrow, 'Israel' profited from the contribution to continue its development of the nuclear-tipped Jericho missile which is now stationed in the occupied Golan Heights and Negev.

## STRIKING BACK

Having worked in tandem with the Shah on secret military and intelligence projects, the Zionists reverted to their regional strike force role upon his fall. While US imperialism was caught off-guard by the quick succession of events, Zionist figures took the lead in advocating modes of dealing with revolutionary Iran. Returning to 'Israel', an Israeli who had served as adviser to the Iranian regime, wrote in *Haaretz*, January 10, 1978, that the Shah should have been much tougher, «putting strikers in front of machine guns» because «The Iranian people are not yet ready for democracy.» Israeli General Dan Shamron (now chief of staff) counselled the US on the hostages in Iran: «The fact of liberating them is more important than the cost in human lives.» Labor MK Meir Amit, former Israeli army intelligence and Mossad head, contended that «a clear military option exists, not precisely in order to extricate the hostages who are in the Embassy, but in order to solve a much more extensive problem... The US can and is obligated to insure its supply of oil from Iran by a military action to seize the region... This operation would bring about an American 'new order' in which every crazy nation must submit to the rules of the game» (*Maariv*, November 16, 1979).

In connection with the Irangate hearings, facts have come to light that military action against Iran was in fact seriously contemplated. Retired US Air Force General Secord, a central figure in Irangate, told *Playboy* magazine in an interview that a «small invasion» of Iran was planned after the failure of the US mission in 1980, purportedly to rescue the American hostages in Teheran (*International Herald Tribune*, September 3, 1987). In August this year, the *Washington Post* revealed a joint Israeli-US plan for military action after September 1985, when initial arms shipments to Iran failed to gain the release of all the hostages in Lebanon.

## IRANGATE

Short of conventional aggression, 'Israel' began shipment of US arms to Iran from the early stages of the Gulf war, aiming to make money while detracting Arab and Iranian resources from the main struggle in the area against the Zionist state and imperialist intervention. According to some reports, these arms shipments were quietly approved by the US administration, or parts of it, from the beginning. Other motives played a role as well. The Zionist state used these arms shipments to secure the immigration of Iranian Jews to 'Israel', since according to Zionist ideology all Jews living in 'unfriendly' countries are considered 'hostages'. While the Zionist leadership denied such

cynical games, in 1984 «Israel announced that it was *halting* a 'Jews-for-arms' agreement that had been formally concluded between the two governments in early 1980» (*Israeli Foreign Affairs*, February 1985). In the wake of the Irangate scandal, reports have again surfaced that 'Israel' is offering arms in return for the remaining Iranian Jews' immigration.

The Zionist leadership has also toyed with the idea of trying to subvert the Iranian government from within. According to the testimony of former National Security Council consultant, Michael A. Ledeen, in October 1985 the Israelis were discussing the use of the profits from arms sales to Iran to pay an Iranian official «who wanted to change the government... by parliamentary means...» He had purportedly asked for small arms and silencers in order to «protect him and his allies» (*International Herald Tribune*, September 30, 1987). In an interview with the *Boston Globe*, Moshe Arens, then Israeli ambassador to the US, stated that Israel had provided arms to Iran «in coordination with the US government... at almost the highest of levels... The objective was to see if we could not find some areas of contact with the Iranian military, to bring down the Khomeini regime» (quoted in Chomsky, Noam, *The Fateful Triangle*, 1983, p.457).

Another aim was gaining access to Soviet weapon systems. According to Anthony H. Cordesman, writing in *American-Arab Affairs*, Spring 1987, US and Israeli intelligence officials tried to obtain captured Iraqi weapons such as the T-72 tank, by leading Iran to believe it would receive fighters, tanks and helicopters from private sources; and 'Israel' sought to trade arms for captured Soviet tanks.

With over two decades of experience in infiltrating Iran in line with the periphery orientation, 'Israel' was the ideal partner for the Reagan Administration's ill-fated arms sales to Iran and the diversion of profits to the contras. In effect, 'Israel' and the US teamed up to make the Islamic Republic foot the bill for one of their dirtiest covert operations. It is not the first time the Zionist state had a role in securing arms for forces which US imperialism found it awkward to support openly. Rather, this has often been the case, especially in Latin America.

Moreover, 'Israel' with its long history of covert operations was ideally suited to cooperate with the 'state-within-a-state' created by Reagan and his inner circle to carry out this project without the knowledge of the US Congress and other governmental bodies, not to mention the public. The Zionist state's own arms deals are often based on a circle of 'unofficial' officials - retired generals or arms industrialists who 'privately' sell arms with the permission and consultation of the Israeli Defense Ministry and/or Prime Minister's Office.

It is no coincidence that at the height of the illegal arms shipments to Iran, US Attorney-General Ed Meese made an eight-day visit to 'Israel'. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, May 30, 1986, his visit focused on «sharing of intelligence, doctrine and tactics» and institutionalizing «anti-terrorist» cooperation. If the revelation of the Iran/contragate scandal does, as some predict, result in restrictions on the US National Security Council and CIA activities, then one can only expect greater US reliance on 'Israel' to continue its espionage as the CIA's extended arm in the Middle East.