

Evidence Indicates that Ariel Sharon Ordered the Assassination of Yasser Arafat

By Stephen Lendman

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In his final years, Yasser Arafat became a besieged man. In December, 2001 Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) surrounded his Ramallah compound headquarters, destroyed most of it, and held him virtual prisoner inside until he became seriously ill enough to be airlifted to Paris for treatment in October, 2004 that was offered too late to save him. During this time, Arafat feared for his life openly stating he believed Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon intended to kill him. This article will show his fears were justified, and although no smoking gun emerged so far, the evidence presented below comes very close to indicating Yasser Arafat did not die from natural causes and very likely was a victim of poisoning.

Most damning is what now has been revealed by longtime and recently deceased Sharon confidant Uri Dan who published a book in France that may have been his 2006 one titled *Ariel Sharon: An Intimate Portrait* in which he accused the former prime minister of assassinating Palestinian Authority (PA) President Yasser Arafat by poisoning him. Dan claimed Sharon got approval from George Bush by phone early in 2004 to proceed with his plan after he told the US president he was no longer committed to "not" liquidating the Palestinian leader who then was under siege and practically incarcerated in what remained of his Ramallah compound, most of which had already been destroyed by the Israelis in a lawless act of retribution against him.

During this time, the Bush administration became disenchanted with Yasser Arafat clearly indicating it wanted the Palestinian leader removed and replaced, only stopping short of an open approval for his assassination. But no one aware of George Bush's record as Texas governor should doubt this might have been his method of choice. Back then he authorized more death row inmate executions than any US governor in history and was called by some the Texecutioner. And if Ariel Sharon's boast saying "We have the US president under our control" is credible, which is very likely, there's an even stronger reason to believe he got direct approval from the US president to kill Yasser Arafat and then ordered it be done.

Arafat died in Paris on November 11, 2004 at age 75. He was taken there on October 29 that year and hospitalized for treatment for an undiagnosed illness that began developing in April and became serious enough for him to need special care. It may have already been too late when he arrived as he slipped into a coma on November 3 and remained in that state till his death eight days later from what was explained at the time as complications from a blood disorder explained in great detail in a 558 page report on his final illness prepared by his French doctors.

They described a complex disorder they called "disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC)" caused by malignancy and infection. They said his blood vessels were blocked by small blood clots depleting the platelets and clotting factors needed to control bleeding that can result in hemorrhaging and death. They further stated DIC is a secondary condition meaning they thought the underlying cause of Arafat's illness and death was something else that for whatever reason they had no opinion on.

At the least, that judgment seems entirely strange and out of the ordinary especially for man of Arafat's prominence. He may have been the victim of a slow acting and developing hard to detect poison somehow administered to him inside his West Bank compound from which no cure was possible at least once the Palestinian leader arrived in Paris. But nothing was done to prove it conclusively as Arafat's personal physician for over 25 years, Dr. Ashraf Al Kurdi, confirmed explaining his successor as PA president, Mahmoud Abbas, refused to allow an autopsy. He said: "They didn't want to do it. When you talked to them about an autopsy they would get fits. He (Abbas) said it would disturb relations with France."

Dr. Kurdi, in a later interview, called this "stupid," said he didn't believe it would upset the French, and that in Jordan autopsies in suspected criminal cases are mandatory to determine cause of death. Given the strong possibility Arafat was poisoned, French doctors almost certainly would have been willing to conduct one as well, if not deterred, but had it been done, it might have been very disturbing to relations with Israel and the US, and it may be Mahmoud Abbas got his marching orders to participate in a coverup.

It's very possible based this man's willingness past and since to go along with Israeli policy and now has a very cozy partnership relationship with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert opposing the democratically elected Hamas government the Israelis have made determined efforts to destroy. It's clear an autopsy to determine the cause of Arafat's death was warranted and had one have been done it would not have been contrary to Islamic law that permits autopsies to be performed as long as they're done with great respect for the dead and as soon as possible following death as Muslims wish to bury the deceased quickly to avoid the need for embalming or otherwise disturbing the body, unless it's necessary.

Arafat died on November 11, 2004 and was buried on November 12 beside his destroyed Ramallah compound with a ceremonial firing of rifles in the air and outpouring of grief by the crowds attending resulting in a hurried burial not in accordance with Islamic religious rites. It disturbed chief Palestinian religious authority, Sheikh Taissir Tamimi, enough to disinter the coffin for reburial on November 13, this time done properly.

In April, 2005, Dr. Al Kurdi was interviewed by MiddleEast.org answering questions regarding what was termed Yasser Arafat's "Stealth Assassination." Dr. Kurdi stated that: "If someone (of the Islamic faith) dies of unknown causes, it is mandatory to have an autopsy - mandatory. They know the regulations. Here in Jordan, bodies have been exhumed in criminal cases....I suspect Arafat died of a 'killing poison'....The death was due to this."

There were rumors around the time he died that the cause was from AIDS, but Dr. Kurdi said he performed many HIV tests on Arafat, the last one six months before his death, and none were positive. He also confirmed the Palestinian

leader had no longstanding health problems other than a benign tumor manifesting itself as a tremor in his lips and hands. He did not have Parkinson's disease. Dr. Kurdi also stated changes in his mental state and physical condition following his near-fatal plane crash in Libya in 1992 resulted in no complications and had no bearing on the illness causing his death.

Dr. Kurdi indicated he saw Arafat on the 16th day after he became ill and shortly before the Jordanians took him by helicopter to Amman from where the French sent a plane to take him to Paris. He hadn't been called earlier under strict instructions to PA leaders by Arafat's wife, Suha, but when finally called in was there with a group of Tunisian, Egyptian and other Palestinian doctors with him. At that time, he noticed what he believed to be signs of poisoning manifested by a reddish patch on his face and a metallic yellow coloring to his skin. Dr. Kurdi said the last time he saw Yasser Arafat alive in Amman before he was taken to Paris, he'd lost half his body weight and again reddishness covered his face and his coloring was metallic yellow. Then and earlier in Ramallah, Arafat said he thought he'd been poisoned and was dying.

His illness and death should have raised even more suspicions as 14 months earlier (ironically on September 11, 2003) the Israeli security cabinet decided to "remove" the Palestinian leader using deliberately vague language either meaning expulsion or taking his life. Brazenly Ehud Olmert (then Israeli vice prime minister) went public telling Israeli radio after the cabinet decision: "The question is - How are we going to do it (remove him, that is)? Expulsion is certainly one of the options, and killing is also one of the options."

Following these events, thousands of Palestinians rallied in support of their leader outside the Palestinian Authority (PA) Ramallah compound where Arafat was held in virtual captivity for the past 18 months, many volunteering to be human shields including a delegation from the Gush-Shalom peace bloc and its well-known peace activist Uri Avnery who said: "I am willing to put myself at risk and serve as a human shield....to foil....Sharon's intention to assassinate Arafat....So are many of my fellow Israeli peace activists."

At one point Arafat addressed the crowds saying:should the terrorist Sharon (before the onset of his stroke-induced coma disabled him) regime realize its threat to deport me, or assassinate me, the Palestinian people will continue, and even strengthen, the fight for national liberation and the independent statehood." For a time, the Palestinian leader was supported by many governments denouncing the Israeli government's clear threat on his life calling it a gross violation of international law made even more apparent by the fact that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) had already destroyed most of his compound and was holding him under siege.

Israel's Long Disturbing History of Conducting Targeted Assassinations

To those knowledgeable about Israel's history since it became a state in 1948 and earlier, the revelation of targeting Yasser Arafat for elimination, if true, should come as no surprise. All Israeli governments have a long and disturbing record of conducting targeted assassinations in Israel and abroad as it suited them against all persons thought to be a threat to the Jewish state. From his earliest days in 1969 as Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman and President, Arafat went from enemy to ally and back to enemy again under various Israeli governments depending on his willingness to deny his people their rights in service and pledging fealty to Israeli authority as he (and Mahmoud Abbas) did in agreeing to the Oslo Accords, or Declaration of Principles (DOP), signed at a White House ceremony in September, 1993.

This was an agreement from hell, a disgraceful act of surrender, giving Israel what it wanted and Arafat and his cronies a "get-out-of-Tunis-free pass" (where they took refuge when forced out of Lebanon after the 1982 Israeli invasion) to return to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) where he agreed to serve as Israel's enforcer against his own people. As it always was earlier and since that time, the Palestinians got nothing but the right to have their lands stolen and lives immiserated with the help and duplicity of their own leader and those complicit with him (like Abbas) in his Fatah-led government.

They endured this fate until the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Mosque (or Second) Intifada on September 28, 2000 following Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to what Muslims call the Noble Sanctuary in occupied East Jerusalem. It's gone on since unabated up to and following Arafat's death and led to the democratic election of a Hamas government in January, 2006.

Fed up with the corrupted Fatah party under Arafat (now under Palestinian President and longtime loyal Israeli servant Mahmoud Abbas), the long-suffering Palestinian people voted them out in an election the Israelis and Bush administration thought they had "arranged" properly enough to assure their preferred quisling party would remain in power but learned to their dismay it didn't turn out that way. It also didn't turn out as Palestinians hoped either as Israel and the US, with complicity or silence from the West, conducted a scorched earth campaign against a defenseless people through invasions, daily attacks with sophisticated and powerful weapons (supplied by Washington at US taxpayer expense), targeted assassinations and other daily killings, mass arrests and incarcerations, a systemic policy of torture, destruction of property, and denial of the most basic rights and services essential to life and survival. And that leaves out all the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) did to the Lebanese people over the summer that will take a least many years to recover from if Israel will even allow it to happen.

Throughout it all, the courageous Palestinian people continue struggling daily for their freedom and the right to be treated as human beings to live in peace in their own land - against the greatest odds with virtually no outside support or any show of caring about their desperate state even from within the Arab world.

If Ariel Sharon murdered Yasser Arafat, it should surprise no one, and further, if proved beyond dispute, it would never be reported in the US corporate-controlled media even if it made headlines in Israel which might be possible in a country allowing far more press freedom than the total lockdown of it in "the land of the free and home of the brave" where no press freedom is allowed through dominant news and information sources and only is through alternative sources like the one through which readers are now receiving this report. As we begin the new year with the 110th Congress about to convene on January 4, it's one of many issues to reflect on and consider what we ought to be doing about it in our own behalf.

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