



ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
A service of the Bet El Twinning Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

innocent Korean shopkeepers and burned sections of the city. The liberal response in America was virtually universal: We must understand the anger of these people at American racism. The daily special section on the riots in the major local newspaper, the Los Angeles Times, was titled, "Understanding the Rage."

Though Thomas Friedman, the New York Times foreign affairs

correspondent, has been among the few prominent liberals to support the Iraq War, he regularly blames Islamic terror on unemployment in the Arab world.

Since examples of liberals refusing to blame criminals and terrorists for their behavior are legion, let's try to figure out why this moral inversion is so common.

Here are three hypotheses:

One is that liberals tend to blame outside forces for evil. This emanates from the secular humanistic view of people as basically good - and therefore human evil must come not from the bad choices and bad values of the evildoer, but from the unfortunate socioeconomic and other circumstances of the person's life.

The second explanation is that as you go further left on the political spectrum, it becomes increasingly difficult to blame the "weak" for any atrocities they commit. The Left does not divide the world between good and evil nearly as much as it does between rich and poor, and between strong and weak. Israel is stronger and richer, so Palestinian terror is excused. White America is stronger and richer than black America, so black violence is excused. The West is stronger and richer than the Muslim world, so Muslim violence is explained accordingly.

And third, liberals tend to be afraid of the truly evil. That's why the liberal newspapers of America refused to publish the Danish cartoons, probably the most newsworthy cartoons ever drawn, but have never had any hesitance about showing cartoons and photos that mock Jewish and Christian symbols. Christians and Jews don't kill editors.

We don't know who will be the next target of Islamic or other murderers from poor or non-Western or non-white groups. All we can know is that liberal and leftist thought will find reasons to hold the targeted group largely responsible. (Jewish World Review Feb 28)

The writer hosts a national daily radio show based in Los Angeles.

Events...

Monday, March 6, 8:00 pm

Jerusalem Post Dep. Managing Editor **Caroline Glick** will speak about "Israel in Dangerous Times" at Shaarei Tefillah, 3600 Bathurst St.

Commentary...

'Blame the Victim' Acceptable When Perpetuated by Islamics

By Dennis Prager

There's a certain consistent pattern regarding the worldwide Left's assessment of culpability for Muslim terror. It is the fault of the murdered.

The most recent example is the blaming of Denmark, or at least the Danish newspaper, for publishing cartoons of Muhammad. From Kofi Annan to The New York Times - and the other American newspapers that declared respect for religious symbols a new journalistic virtue - liberal and leftist opinion always condemns violent Muslim demonstrations, but always with a "but." The "but" is that in the final analysis, it was the Danish and other European papers' faults for insulting the Muslim prophet.

This is only the latest example of finding the victims of Islamic violence responsible for that violence.

For a decade or more, it has been a given on the Left that Israel is to blame for terror committed against Israelis by Palestinian Muslims (Palestinian Christians don't engage in suicide terror). What else are the Palestinians supposed to do? If they had Apache helicopters, the argument goes, they would use them. But they don't, so they use the poor man's nuclear weapon - suicide terror.

The same argument is given to explain 9-11. Three thousand innocent Americans were incinerated by Islamic terrorists because America has been meddling in the Middle East so long. This was bound to happen. And, anyway, don't we support Israel?

And when Muslim terrorists blew up Madrid trains, killing 191 people and injuring 1,500 others, the Left in Spain and elsewhere blamed Spanish foreign policy. After all, the Spanish government had sent troops into Iraq.

When largely Muslim rioters burned and looted for a month in France, who was blamed? France, of course - France doesn't know how to assimilate immigrants, and, as the BBC reported on Nov. 5, 2005, "[Interior Minister Nicolas] Sarkozy's much-quoted description of urban vandals as 'rabble' a few days before the riots began is said by many to have already created tension." Calling rabble "rabble" causes them to act like to rabble.

If you wish to test the thesis that the Left blames those blown up for being blown up by Muslim terrorists, have your son or daughter at college ask some liberal arts professors who is to blame for 9-11 or Muslim suicide bombers in Israel, etc.

In fact, one way to describe the moral divide between conservatives and liberals is whom they blame for acts of evil committed against innocent people, especially when committed by non-whites and non-Westerners. Conservatives blame the perpetrators, and liberals blame either the victims' group or the circumstances.

We Americans are used to this. For decades, liberals have blamed violent crime in America on racism and poverty, i.e., on American society far more than on the murderers, rapists, arsonists and muggers themselves. Conservatives blame the criminals.

During the Rodney King riots in Los Angeles, black mobs murdered

Kadima: Follow me to the Middle of Nowhere By Naomi Ragen

During dinner one evening at the recent Herzlyia Conference I sat next to a well-fed local businessman, a man of middle-age with an expensive black suit and shiny black hair. We were there to hear Benjamin Netanyahu, so we got to talking politics. Are you going to vote for him? I asked. He shook his head no. "I'm going to vote for Kadima," he said, painting a straight line in the air with his finger. "Right down the middle."

"In what way," I asked him in surprise, "is Kadima in the middle?"

He looked at me blankly, astonished at the question.

Israelis love slogans. Come up with the right slogan, even if it makes no sense, if it's a total lie, and they will support anyone, and any cause. Sell them "Peace Now" wrapped up in little white doves, and they'll vote for that. And if instead they get exploding buses and pizza parlors, dead babies on the streets, they won't stop believing. They won't look back and say: "Gee, those politicians were incompetent liars, let's kick them out of office and keep them there." Not at all. Come up with another slogan and the exact same politicians will get their vote again.

Take Shimon Peres, architect of Oslo. author of the "The New Middle East" which has to go down in history with "Peace in Our Time" as the political blooper of the century. Peres has a new slogan: Kadima! Peres is now "in the center."

Kadima is a great slogan. It's the cry of a general leading men on a battlefield. It means: Forward! Follow me! Don't look around at the fallen and dying all around you! Keep going. Don't look back! Never mind that it was founded by a controversial general known for his impulsiveness and

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determination - qualities sometimes helpful on the battlefield, but quite disastrous in matters of state. Never mind that his greatest accomplishment in office, carried out with bulldozer determination, has in record time already proven an unmitigated disaster: The disengagement provided the Hamas with its successful campaign slogan: "Ten years of negotiation, five years of Intifada." Never mind that daily rockets now land in the Negev and Ashkelon and Ashdod and Sderot. Never mind that for the first time in our history the national consensus towards the IDF has begun to unravel. Never mind that. Kadima!

So the head of the party and its moving force is now incapacitated? Replace him! Never mind that Ehud Olmert was the worst Mayor Jerusalem ever had. A man whose coalition with the haredim turned the city into a filthy, poor backwater full of ugly high-rises. In between his own police investigations, Mr. Olmert has had a chance to totally change his political slogans with the times. He is a man who stands for nothing and has accomplished even less. But never mind that. Kadima!

Never mind that the Party has collected such Israeli political luminaries as Dalia Itzik, Haim Ramon, Ruhama Avraham, and Omri Sharon. Never mind that Tzachi Hanegbi now sits with them, and that Avi Dichter, a former head of intelligence, who said: "The numbers speak for themselves. . . it is clear that disengagement has decreased terror" is number five on their list. Never mind. Give them your vote. Kadima!

The Jews, the bible tells us, are a stiff-necked people. As everyone knows, when you have a stiff-neck, you can't turn around and look behind you. You have to face forward. Those voting Kadima can only do it if they stick with the slogans and don't check them against reality. If you turn around and look at where the party came from and who is in it, you, like my friend in Herzlyia, would be astonished. Why, you would ask yourself, would anyone vote for the biggest collection of losers in Israel's political history all gathered in one spot?

Brothers and sisters, we have a very little country. We have made so many, many mistakes. Isn't it time we stopped electing leaders who blindly put our women and children on the front lines against our enemies? Isn't it time we stopped listening to our not very intelligent journalists and TV news people, clueless leftists all? Isn't it time to look back before we jump over the cliff once more? Kadima is in the middle all right. In the middle of no where. (NaomiRagen.com Mar 1)

Happy Warrior: Jihad, Jihad, Everywhere By Mark Steyn

We may have to change the name of this column to "Unhappy Warrior," or "Reluctant Conscript," or "Impending Deserter." The last few weeks have made me consider not the possibility that we might lose this thing (which I've always weighed) but that we might lose it more easily than even the gloomiest of us thought. The "Cartoon Jihad" might have been explicitly devised as a scientific experiment to provoke the greatest degree of infidel capitulation for the most footling pretext.

By "we might lose," I mean "the good guys" — and I define that term expansively. There are plenty of good guys in Australia and Poland and Iraq and even Pakistan. And I'm a little unnerved at the number of readers who seem to think the rest of the world can go hang but America will endure as a lonely candle of liberty in the new dark ages. Think that one through: a totalitarian China, a crumbling Russia, an insane Middle East, a disease-ridden Africa, a civil-war-torn Eurabia — and a country that can't even enforce its borders against two relatively benign states will somehow be able to hold the entire planet at bay? Dream on, "realists."

Still, in the wake of the cartoon crisis and the Hamas victory, several correspondents have argued to me that the Bush Doctrine is a crock: How can liberty save the Muslim world when Muslims are jeopardizing liberty in Europe?

Well, they're not contradictory positions. In the Middle East, it may well be that, as the gnarled old Yankees tell tourists, you can't get there from here. But I'd argue there's a sporting chance of being able to get at least partway there from the here and now of the present Muslim world.

By contrast, Europe is getting there from here in the one-way express lane, and it's not going to like where it ends up. About six months after 9/11, I went on a grand tour of the Continent's Muslim ghettos, and then flew on to the Middle East. The Muslims I met in Europe were, almost to a man, more alienated and angrier than the ones back in Araby. Don't take my word for it. It was a Hamburg cell that pulled off 9/11, a British subject who was the shoe bomber, a Montreal welfare recipient who tried to blow up LAX, a London School of Economics man who had Daniel Pearl executed. . . . At one level, that's just plain operational sense: Al-Qaeda obviously has no shortage of crazy Waziristani goatherds it can recruit but they tend to stand out at the

check-in counter at United. A Western-educated engineering graduate doesn't.

But that in itself doesn't explain why quite so many European Muslims are hot for jihad. In the Muslim ghettos of the Continent, East meets West in a particularly malign form that fuses the worst aspects of both. You can see it in the tattooed pierced Pakistani skinhead gangs swaggering through the streets of northern England: Into rap and drugs and all the rest, they're observant Muslims mainly in their attitude toward women and infidels. The college-educated jihadists who could be pulling down six-figure salaries instead of Manhattan skyscrapers are in some sense merely the middle-class variation on this phenomenon.

Europe's ability to solve the problem is hampered by the fact that its professed "multiculturalism" is in reality mostly bicultural. You have hitherto homogeneous Scandinavian societies whose cities have become 40 percent Muslim in the space of a generation. Imagine colonial New England when it was still the Mayflower crowd and one day they woke up and noticed that all the Aldens and Allertons, Billingtons and Bradfords were in their 50s and 60s and all the young guys were named Ahmed and Mohammed. That's what's happened in Rotterdam and Malmö.

Whatever the virtues of multiculturalism, bicultural societies are the most unstable in the world, whether relatively benignly so (Fiji) or genocidally (Rwanda). The problem Europe faces is that Bosnia's demographic profile is now the model for the entire continent. All those Bush Doctrine naysayers who argue that Iraq is an artificial entity that can never be a functioning state ought to take a look at the Netherlands. You think Kurds and Arabs, Sunnis and Shiites are incompatible? What do you call a jurisdiction split between post-Christian secular gay potheads and anti-whoring anti-sodomite Islamists? If Kurdistan's an awkward fit in Iraq, how well does Pornostan fit in the Islamic Republic of Holland? Europe's problems don't nullify the Bush Doctrine so much as present a more urgent case for it. Indeed, given that the Palestinian Authority is funding-wise the largest EU welfare slum, even the Hamas victory can be seen as more typical of Euro-Muslim alienation than Arab psychoses.

The hyperpower has to be engaged with the world, if only because splendid isolation is rarely seen as such by others. What was the biggest single factor in the radicalization of young British Muslims? The then-Conservative government's conclusion in the 1990s that it had no dog in the Balkans junkyard. As Osama bin Laden put it, "The British are responsible for destroying the Caliphate system. They are the ones who created the Palestinian problem. They are the ones who created the Kashmiri problem. They are the ones who put the arms embargo on the Muslims of Bosnia so that 2 million Muslims were killed."

How'd a list of imperial interventions wind up with that bit of non-imperial nonintervention? The point is that for great powers detachment from the affairs of the world is not an option: Evenhandedness by Washington will be received as a form of one-handedness by the time its effects are felt in Wackistan or Basketkhaizia. In other words, isolation doesn't travel. (National Review Mar 13)

One Law for Tamra, Another for Amona By Israel Harel

About a day before the mounted policemen swooped down with cudgels on Amona's youngsters, Yesha leaders Bentzi Lieberman and Ze'ev Hever met Ehud Olmert. They asked him in the interest of public order and in an effort not to deepen the rift between the religious-Zionist public and government branches - courts, army and police - to prevent an evacuation by force.

We promise, they declared, that within a week, the houses condemned for demolition will no longer be in Amona. The acting prime minister rejected their request - arrogantly and condescendingly, they said. You want confrontation at any price, they said angrily. You want to turn us into enemies of the people and give yourself an image of a strong leader on the eve of elections. They told him that the situation after the pullout from Gush Katif is extremely sensitive, and should not be put to the test merely for election considerations. It could explode.

In those very days, the Israel Lands Administration's Galilee district began preparations for carrying out court orders to demolish a number of houses in Tamra and other Galilee communities, which were built illegally on state land. The date for demolishing one of the houses in Tamra was set for February 23, about a week before the parliamentary investigation committee began probing the violent events in Amona. But the house, like other condemned houses in Tamra, was not demolished. "Unfortunately, we cannot carry out demolitions in the Arab villages, because the police are not prepared to safeguard the process," ILA Northern District Director Gabi

Weisman told Maariv.

Weisman's candidness tore the mask off the police, revealing that at the government's orders, they acted with violent firmness in Amona, but are abandoning, despite court orders, state lands in the Galilee and Negev to illegal construction. The state comptroller points this out in nearly every annual report. Maariv, which exposed the Tamra affair, quotes a senior ILA official as saying, "It's simply absurd. There is one law for Jews and another for Arabs."

Due to the original sin of failing to enforce the law from the start, even the sticklers say that today, when there are tens of thousands of illegal houses, it is impossible to carry out verdicts without rocking the already sensitive and volatile relations with the Israeli Arab population. Therefore, it makes public and political sense, even if it runs contrary to legal sense, to erase the past.

But this is not case regarding the present and future. That's it, we must say to the Arab population. A state of law, in whose name Olmert was speaking when he ordered the demolition of houses in Amona, cannot exempt some of its citizens from the law forbidding the stealing of land and building illegally on it. The Tamra case is supposed to be the touchstone. Will the law be enforced only in Amona and not in Tamra, or will there be one law for Jews and Arabs?

Another touchstone is whether the police are committed to enforce the law even in cases of political inconvenience, such as Amona, or whether it is a political arm of the government that orders which verdicts to be enforced, like that in Amona for example, and which to ignore, like in the Arab community.

Quite a few organizations like the Movement for Quality of Government frequently petition the High Court of Justice to order the state to enforce Knesset laws. But when it comes to the government's shortcomings in the face of the wholesale violation of planning and construction laws in the Arab sector, all such movements keep quiet. We expect them to act and petition the High Court in this sector too. Then it would be very interesting to see what the High Court will decree. Will it uphold the law in Tamra as it did in Amona? (Haaretz Mar 2)

Ilan Halimi and Israel By Caroline Glick

Ilan Halimi's barbarous murder in France should awaken all Jews to the most significant truth of our times: Today, every Jew in the world is on the front lines of war.

As was the case 70 years ago, every Jew today is a target for our enemies, who shout from every soapbox and prove at every opportunity that their goal is the annihilation of the Jewish people. From 1933-1945, the enemy was Nazi Germany. Today, the enemy is political Islam. Its call for jihad aimed at annihilating the Jews and dominating the world is answered by millions of people throughout the world.

Among the lessons of the Holocaust, there is one that is almost never mentioned. That lesson is that it is possible, and indeed fairly easy to exterminate the Jews. The fact that the Holocaust happened proves that it is absolutely possible for the Jewish people to be wiped off the map - just as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Hamas leader Khaled Mashal promise.

The story of Ilan Halimi's murder at the hands of a terrorist gang of French Muslims brings to the surface the various pathologies now converging to make the prospect of annihilating all Jews seem possible to our enemies. First, there are the murderers who took such apparent pleasure and felt such pride in the fact that for 20 days they tortured their Jewish hostage to death.

This makes sense. Anti-Semitism in the Muslim dominated suburbs of Paris and other French cities is all-encompassing. As Nidra Poller related in Thursday's Wall Street Journal, "One of the most troubling aspects of this affair is the probable involvement of relatives and neighbors, beyond the immediate circle of the gang [of kidnappers], who were told about the Jewish hostage and dropped in to participate in the torture."

It appears that Ilan Halimi's murderers had some connection to Hamas. Tuesday, French Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy said that police found propaganda published by the Palestinian Charity Committee or the CBSP at the home of one of the suspects. The European Jewish Press reported this week that Israel has alleged that the organization is a front group for Palestinian terrorists and that in August 2003 the US government froze the organization's US bank accounts, accusing it of links with Hamas.

Halimi's family alleges that throughout the 20 days of Ilan's captivity, the French police refused to take the anti-Semitic motivations of the kidnappers into account. The investigators insisted on viewing his kidnap as a garden variety kidnap-for-ransom criminal case, which they said generally involves no threat to the life of the captive. The police maintained their refusal to investigate the anti-Semitic motivations of the kidnappers in spite of the fact

that in their e-mail and telephone communications with Ilan's family, his captors repeatedly referred to his Judaism, and on at least one occasion recited verses from the Koran while Ilan was heard screaming in agony in the background. The family alleges that if the police had been willing to acknowledge that Ilan was abducted because he was Jewish, they would have recognized that his life was in clear and immediate danger and acted with greater urgency.

Like the police, the French government waited an entire week after Ilan was found naked, with cuts and burns over 80 percent of his body by a train station in suburban Paris, before acknowledging the anti-Semitic nature of the crime. According to the press reports, the French government was at least partially motivated to suppress the issue of anti-Semitism by its fear of inflaming the passions of the French Muslims who make up between 10 to 13 percent of the French population and comprise a quarter of the population under 25 years old. And yet, now that the French government has acknowledged that the crime was motivated by hatred of Jews, it is behaving responsibly in pursuing the murderers and decrying the attack on French Jewry.

In addition to the exterminationist anti-Semitism of Ilan's murderers and the unwillingness of the French authorities to acknowledge the anti-Semitic nature of the crime until it was too late, there is one more aspect of the case that bears note. That is Israel's reaction to the atrocity. In short, there has been absolutely no official Israeli reaction to the abduction, torture and murder of a Jew in France by a predominantly Muslim terrorist gang that kidnapped, tortured and murdered him because he was a Jew.

No Israeli government minister, official or spokesman has condemned his murder. No Israeli official has demanded that the French authorities investigate why the police refused to take anti-Semitism into account during Ilan's captivity. No Israeli official flew to Paris to participate in Ilan's funeral or any other memorial or demonstration in his memory. The Foreign Ministry's Web site makes no mention of his murder. The Israeli Embassy in Paris - which has been without an ambassador for the past several months - only publicly expressed its condolences to the Halimi family on February 23, 10 days after Ilan was found. This, when the French Jewish community considers Halimi's murder to have been the greatest calamity to have befallen it in recent

years; when aliya rates from France rose 25% last year; and when Ilan's mother has told reporters that her son had planned to make aliya soon and was just staying in France to save money to finance his move to Israel. For its part, as Michelle Mazel pointed out in The Jerusalem Post Thursday, the French press has noted that the Israeli media has not given the story prominent coverage. Halimi's murder has not appeared on the front pages of the papers or at the top of the television or radio broadcasts.

Although appalling, the absence of an official Israeli outcry against Halimi's murder is not the least surprising. Today, the unelected Kadima interim government, like the Israeli media, is doing everything in its power to lull the Israeli people into complacency towards the storm of war raging around us. Against the daily barrages of Kassam rockets on southern Israel; nervous reports of al-Qaida setting up shop in Judea, Samaria and Gaza; the ascension of Hamas to power in the Palestinian Authority; and Iran's threats of nuclear annihilation, Israel's citizenry, under the spell of Kadima and the media, appears intent on ignoring the dangers and pretending that what happens to Jews in France has nothing to do with us.

Israel's societal meekness accords well with Kadima's ideology. Its creed was best expressed by Foreign Minister, Justice Minister and Immigration Minister Tzipi Livni last month at the Herzliya Conference and is best characterized as "conditional Zionism." In her speech, Livni explained that Israel's international legitimacy is conditional. Unless a Palestinian state is established in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, she warned, Israel will lose its legitimacy as a Jewish state.

So for Livni, Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Shimon Peres and the rest of the Kadima gang, unlike every other people in the world, the Jewish people does not have an inherent, natural right to exist as a free, sovereign and independent people in its homeland. For Kadima, the Jewish people's right to self-determination in our land is conditional on our enemies' acceptance of our right to be here.

Kadima's conditional Zionism finds expression in its policies in Judea and Samaria. There, the gist of the government's actions is that the only people with inherent human rights in Judea and Samaria are the Arabs.

Throughout the areas, the government, backed by the post-Zionist courts, prohibits Jews from building on land that Jews own. Today, as Moshe Rosenbaum, the mayor of Beit El explains, even receiving a permit to build an extension on a standing house or additional classrooms in a school is all but impossible.

While Olmert and Internal Security Minister Gideon Ezra have repeatedly condemned Jews for allegedly cutting down trees owned by Arabs in Judea and Samaria, the government has said nothing and done nothing to stop the wholesale destruction of Jewish orchards and national forests in the areas by Palestinians. Over the past several months, in the vicinity of Gush Etzion alone, thousands of Jewish-owned trees have been chopped down by Arab vandals. Two national forests have been laid to waste. Busy directing their energies and attentions at delegitimizing the Israelis who live in Judea and Samaria, the government has ignored Israel's enemies.

And so, as Kassam attacks against Israel multiply by the day and Hamas leaders hold Jew-hating love-fests with Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Khamenei in Teheran, Olmert assured us Wednesday that Hamas is not a strategic threat to Israel.

When the Israeli government itself is claiming Jewish rights are not inherent but rather defined and granted by others, it can surprise no one the government has ignored Halimi's murder.

Luckily for both Israel and the Jews around the world, the current leadership is not our only option. We have other leaders, the most prominent among them being Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu and former IDF chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. (res.) Moshe Ya'alon. Both of these men understand well that the two most important lessons for the Jews from the Holocaust are that we must never grant anyone else the authority, legitimacy or power to define who we are or what our rights are, and we are all responsible for one another.

On Tuesday, Ya'alon, who is currently based at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, came to Jerusalem for the day to speak at a conference on the strategic implications of Hamas's takeover of the Palestinian Authority. There Ya'alon explained what he considers to be the key to Israel's security. Israel, he said, has the military capability to defeat its enemies. But for Israel to be able to take the steps it needs to take to win the war being waged for our destruction, first we need to accept the fact that we have an intrinsic, unconditional right to our land and our sovereignty. Once we understand that our rights are unconditional, we will understand that we have an obligation to wage war against those who work for our destruction. That is, Ya'alon explained that for Israel to survive, we need to return to our unconditional Zionism.

Sir Martin Gilbert, perhaps the preeminent British historian of World War II, has said, "The interesting thing about history is that it always repeats itself."

As was the case in World War II, today the Jewish people in Israel and throughout the world is being targeted for annihilation by an enemy bent on world domination. Ilan Halimi's monstrous murder is just the latest sign of this disturbing reality. Today, as 70 years ago, the Jews are disserved by poor and weak leaders who refuse to see the dangers.

But if we learn from history and we assess our options, we will see that history needn't repeat itself. It is within our power to reverse the course of our all too repetitious past. (Jerusalem Post Feb 24)

Targeted Killings, Then & Now By Evelyn Gordon

It is a pity that Steven Spielberg did not read certain Nixon administration papers before making his film Munich. It might have helped him to understand why Israel decided to track down and kill the terrorists who murdered 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics - and why "targeted killings" are still a major part of Israel's counterterrorism repertoire today.

According to the documents, which were declassified last summer, president Nixon was outraged by the Olympics attack and initially proposed both a strong, practical response - cutting off economic support to "any nation that harbors or gives sanctuary to these international outlaws" - and various symbolic gestures, including flying to Israel to personally attend the athletes' funerals.

However, his aides, and particularly then national security adviser Henry Kissinger, quickly talked him out of these ideas.

Kissinger proposed instead that the US "go to the UN and see whether we can get some international rules on harboring guerrillas and so forth." As his deputy, Alexander Haig, noted in a memo, Kissinger acknowledged "that no resolution would be likely to pass," in part because China would probably veto. Then secretary of state William Rogers also informed Nixon "that it would be impossible to get any kind of [UN] action." Kissinger explained: "This was true, but it would serve as a deterrent to Israeli action."

In other words, Kissinger wanted the US both to refrain from taking any meaningful action against anti-Israel terrorism itself, and to restrain Israel from taking such action by placating it with deliberately empty gestures. And he ultimately persuaded Nixon to adopt this course.

THIS, IT must be stressed, was the response not of an enemy, but of Israel's best friend - as became clear during the Yom Kippur War a year later, when invading Arab armies nearly wiped Israel off the map. Desperate for arms, Israel pleaded with its so-called allies, and Nixon responded with an airlift that ultimately helped Israel to win the war. The Europeans, in contrast, would not even allow the arms-bearing American planes to land in their countries for refueling.

Indeed, Kissinger understood that even empty gestures over Munich would be too much for Europe. He therefore suggested that Nixon issue a statement saying that he had "consulted with other governments" on the UN idea, but warned: "Frankly, I wouldn't consult because if you do it, they'll say no."

In short, Kissinger's empty gesture represented the maximum that Jerusalem could expect from the international community. Thus Israel had to fall back on whatever counterterrorism measures it could implement on its own, without international assistance. And targeted killings are one of these.

OPponents of this tactic, such as Spielberg, argue that assassinations cannot end terrorism and are therefore just petty revenge. That, however, is only half true.

Targeted killings are indeed unlikely to end terrorism, since new terrorists can usually be found to replace those who are killed. But by disrupting terrorist networks they can significantly reduce the number of successful attacks.

First, whenever a senior terrorist is killed, the network must find a replacement and reorganize itself accordingly. That takes time, during which its normal operations are suspended. Second, if senior terrorists know that Israel is hunting them, they are forced to devote more time and effort to protecting themselves, which reduces the amount of time and effort they are able to devote to organizing terror attacks.

And third, when senior terrorists are afraid to operate openly, the chain of command of necessity becomes longer and more convoluted, thereby providing more opportunities for Israeli intelligence to penetrate the network and learn about planned attacks.

That such disruptions can indeed reduce the volume of successful attacks is amply demonstrated by the statistics of the last five years. Since April 2002, when Israel started actively fighting Palestinian terror, the number of Israelis killed in Palestinian attacks has dropped by almost 50 percent every year. This decline is obviously not due solely to targeted killings, since Israel also employs other tactics. However, assassinations are an important part of Israel's arsenal.

TODAY, AS then, Israel would gladly exchange such killings for Nixon's original idea - cutting off economic aid to "any nation that harbors or gives sanctuary to these international outlaws" - because that is the most effective anti-terrorist tactic of all. Given money, arms and sanctuary from an independent state or quasi-state (the Palestinian Authority has effectively filled this role ever since its establishment), terrorist organizations can sustain themselves almost indefinitely. But without such support, they can be eradicated relatively easily; this is precisely what happened to European groups such as the Baader-Meinhof gang.

Pressuring other countries to end their support for anti-Israel terrorism, however, is not something Israel can do on its own; it would require a concerted effort by the international community. And such an effort is no more feasible today than it was after Munich, 34 years ago.

The UN still cannot even agree on a definition of terrorism. The European Union actually increased financial support for the PA after the intifada began, even when Yasser Arafat was directly implicated (in the Karine-A affair) in smuggling arms whose sole possible use was in attacks against Israel; it has similarly refused to cut economic ties with Iran despite that nation's well-documented financial support for anti-Israel terror and its president's open threats to "wipe Israel off the map."

And liberal Protestant churches have not only continued supporting the PA; they are divesting from Israel, to boot. Thus Israel is still forced to make do with less effective measures that can be implemented without outside assistance.

But when a single successful suicide bombing can kill dozens of people, even reducing the number of successful attacks can save hundreds of lives every year. That is why Israel has been assassinating terrorists for over 30 years - and why it will continue to do so for as long as the international community refuses to cooperate in more effective counterterrorism measures.

(Jerusalem Post Mar 1)
