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**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*

**Commentary...**

**The Sharansky Moment?** By Caroline Glick

In the history of Israel's relations with the US, there has been no precedent for the influence that Minister-without-Portfolio Natan Sharansky has had on US foreign policy. While in the past Israeli leaders have worked closely with their American counterparts, no one other than Sharansky has managed to actually influence the way that American policymakers think about foreign affairs or perceive the role of the US in the world.

Today it is beyond debate that Sharansky has deeply influenced US President George W. Bush's thinking on international affairs. After reading Sharansky's book, *The Case for Democracy*, Bush told *The New York Times* that Sharansky's worldview "is part of my presidential DNA." This Sharansky-inspired "presidential DNA" posits that the Arab world's conflict with Israel, like its support for global jihad, will end when the Arab world democratizes. In Sharansky's view, once Arabs are governed democratically, they will not wish to sustain the conflict.

If Sharansky and Bush are correct, then the past week has been one of the greatest weeks in the history of the Middle East. Syria's puppet government in Beirut has resigned and Syrian dictator Bashar Assad is being squeezed from all directions. He has declared that he will end Syria's occupation of Lebanon and has turned over Iraqi Ba'athists to American forces in Iraq in the hope of stemming the seemingly inexorable demise of his regime. Egypt's dictator, Hosni Mubarak, under attack from Washington and from his democratic opposition – that for once is being supported by the Western media – has announced that he will enable other candidates to run against him in the upcoming presidential elections.

Empowered by the support they are receiving from the US, rather than declaring victory and quietly going home, democracy advocates in these countries are ratcheting up their pressure and demands. Damascus's announcement that it would withdraw its forces from Lebanon was met by a Lebanese demand that Hizbullah be dismantled.

In an interview Wednesday with Al-Jazeera, Druse opposition leader Walid Jumblatt said of Hizbullah and its claim that Israel is wrongfully controlling the so-called Shaba Farms on the Israeli-Lebanese border, "What are these [Hizbullah] fighters doing for us? They want the Shaba Farms. Let the Syrians present documentation that the farms are even part of Lebanon. The Israelis say that they were taken from Syria and we have no proof of anything. And what will happen after the Shaba situation? Will Hizbullah's people continue to walk around armed in Lebanon and serve the Syrians?"

What is happening in our neighboring lands is nothing short of a revolution. There has never before been a situation in the Arab world where so many people have been willing to stand up to their regimes and demand their freedom. Although the Arab revolution is only in its earliest phases – and it is impossible to foresee what will transpire in the coming days, months and years – the very fact that the Arab world has responded so dramatically to the Iraqi elections at the end of January and to Bush's call for democracy seems to be a full vindication of both Sharansky's political theory and of Bush's decision to graft it onto his genetic code.

But other events from this past week would seem to cast a pall on the excitement. On Tuesday, Israeli Arab MKs Ahmed Tibi and Muhammad Barakei, while participating in an Arab League conference in Abu Dhabi, told their colleagues not to normalize their relations with Israel. According to a report in the London-based *Al-Quds al-Arabi* newspaper, confirmed by the Ynet Web site, at the conference, held under the aegis of the Abu Dhabi Center

normalization. And at this point there is no peace and therefore normalization can wait."

Barakei said, "I said these things in reaction to signs of normalization [between Israel and the Arab world] that is totally unjustified." The fact that these politicians – who owe their positions to the fact that they live in a democracy – have called for the Arab world to continue its rejection of their own country would seem to put a damper on the notion that democracy can bring an end to Arab rejection of Israel. Indeed, as an Arab colleague remarked recently, "The reformers in the Arab world hate Israel just as much as their leaders whom they are trying to overthrow."

It is more than likely that the anti-Semitism with which the Arab world has been inculcated for the past 100 years will not disappear even if the Arab world becomes democratically governed. But that is not the main issue.

Sixty years after the end of the Holocaust, anti-Semitism is still a potent force in Europe and yet Europeans, whose countries are now entrenched democracies, are not planning to go to war against Israel. Their national identities are not defined by their hatred of Jews or of the Jewish state.

The reason Arab anti-Semitism is so powerful a political force today is because the Arab world is ruled by dictators. These men need an external bogeyman to excuse their failure to bring freedom and prosperity to their people. If Arabs are afforded the freedom to determine how they wish to live their lives, it is likely that social anti-Semitism will not be sufficiently powerful to provoke them into going to war against Israel.

Aside from anti-Semitism's apparent incurability, the fact of the matter is that in Israel's immediate vicinity, the democratic revolution now sweeping neighboring states has been smothered. Tibi and Barakei's statements may seem out of place during this revolutionary moment, but what they represent more than anything else is the failure to apply the Bush-Sharansky Doctrine to the Palestinian Authority.

The Palestinians today, four months after Yasser Arafat's death, perceive Israel as weak. In a recent poll conducted by the Palestinian

Center for Policy and Survey Research, 74 percent of Palestinians said that they see Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to destroy the Israeli communities in Gaza and northern Samaria as a vindication of terrorism as a national strategy. The Palestinians stated that they do not believe that Sharon would have ever presented the plan if it hadn't been for the Palestinian terror war against Israel.

It is this perception of Israeli weakness and terrorist strength that undoubtedly prompts the opportunistic likes of Tibi and Barakei to side with them against Israel. Just as every time Israel opens negotiations with the Ba'athists in Damascus, the Druse on the Golan Heights hold parades in honor of the Assads, so today, when Israel looks weak, Israeli Arabs want to make sure that the PA sees them as loyal to the cause. While they can rest assured that a democratic but weak Israel will do nothing to punish them for their treachery, they cannot risk supporting Israel as it strengthens and legitimizes the terror-supporting, quasi-tyranny next door in the PA.

Ironically, it is Israel's democratically elected leadership that has been most opposed to the notion of Arab democracy. Sharon and Vice Premier Shimon Peres have passively and actively colluded with those who reject the Bush-Sharansky Doctrine in the US State Department to ensure it remains unapplied among the Palestinians.

Sharansky wrote in his book that when he presented his ideas to Sharon, the prime minister told him that they "have no place in the Middle East." One of Sharon's advisers reportedly said that Sharon "views Sharansky's ideas

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with scorn." Peres, the father of the idea of replacing Israel's Civil Administration in the territories with a PLO dictatorship imported from Tunis, has spoken vacuously of the need to build an "economic democracy" – rather than a political democracy – among the Palestinians.

And the result of Israel's rejection of Palestinian democracy and its consequent effective abandonment by the Bush administration is the continuation of Arafat's dictatorial and terror-supporting regime in the territories. On Thursday, Yemen's news agency reported that PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas is scheduled to meet with Hamas kingpin Khaled Mashal in the coming weeks.

Abbas's decision to engage rather than fight terrorists has enabled a precipitous rise in the terror threat to Israel's population centers around Judea and Samaria. During his election campaign, Abbas embraced Fatah terrorists in Jenin led by Zakariya Zubeidi. Two months ago, the IDF arrested Zubeidi's brother, Jibril, who is a member of Islamic Jihad. The arrest led to the uncovering of a Hamas factory in the Jenin area for the manufacture of Kassam rockets that Jibril and his associates had planned to fire on Afula. And Abbas plans to enlist these men into his "reformed" security services that are set to be trained and equipped by the US, Jordan, Egypt, Russia and the EU.

Israel's decision to prefer the rule of Arafat's deputy to genuine democratic transformation in the PA has paved the way for the international community's embrace of Abbas. Rather than demand an accounting for the billions of dollars in international aid that were stolen by Arafat (and by Abbas and PA Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei and their associates), in London this week the international community pledged to transfer more than a billion additional dollars to the PA.

Buoyed by this unqualified support, Abbas is now demanding that the international community drop the demand that he fight terrorists and enable the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state immediately. The EU's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, has already accepted this position.

So in the space of one week, we see the consequences of both the Bush-Sharansky Doctrine and the appeasement-based status quo in action. While the region's war-torn, radical and terror-engendering history tells us what the ultimate consequences of the status quo will be, we have yet to harvest the fruits of the Bush-Sharansky-inspired revolution.

The main question we should be concerning ourselves with now is whether the revolution will be extended to the Palestinians or whether – once Sharon-Peres-style appeasement is grafted onto its genetic code – the revolution will fade away and be forgotten. (Jerusalem Post Mar 6)

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#### **A Neo-Conservative's Caution** By Daniel Pipes

I have never quite figured out what views define a neo-conservative, and whether I am one or not, but others long ago decided this matter for me. Journalists use "neo-conservative" to describe me, editors include my writings in a neo-conservative anthology, critics plumb my views for insight into neo-conservative thinking, and event hosts invite me to represent the neo-conservative viewpoint. As some of my oldest friends and closest allies are called neo-conservative, I happily accept this appellation. Indeed, it has a certain cachet, given that no more than 50 Americans have been called neoconservative, yet we allegedly drive American foreign policy.

I mention all this because neoconservative policies in the Middle East have been looking pretty good the past two months, as Max Boot amplifies in a column titled "Neocons May Get the Last Laugh":

\* On January 9, Palestinian Arab voters trooped to the polls and chose Mahmoud Abbas, who proclaims his intent to end the armed struggle against Israel.

\* On January 30, 8 million Iraqi voters braved bombs and bullets to cast their ballots.

\* On February 10, Saudi Arabia held its first-ever municipal elections, a crack in the royal family's absolute authority.

\* On February 26, Egypt's president Hosni Mubarak suddenly announced that the forthcoming presidential election will involve candidates other than himself.

\* On February 28, tens of thousands of demonstrators in Beirut forced the resignation of the pro-Syrian government of Prime Minister Omar Karami.

\* If the Lebanese succeed in winning their independence, it could spell the end of Bashar Assad and the Baathist regime in Damascus.

These developments find some neo-conservatives in a state of near-euphoria. Rich Lowry of the National Review calls them "a marvelous thing." Charles Krauthammer of the Washington Post writes that "We are at the dawn of a glorious, delicate, revolutionary moment in the Middle East."

I too welcome these developments, but more warily. Having been trained in Middle Eastern history makes me perhaps more aware of what can go wrong:

\* Yes, Mahmoud Abbas wishes to end the armed struggle against Israel but his call for a greater jihad against the "Zionist enemy" points to his intending another form of war to destroy Israel.

\* The Iraqi elections are bringing Ibrahim al-Jaafari, a pro-Iranian Islamist, to power.

\* Likewise, the Saudi elections proved a boon for the Islamist candidates.

\* Mubarak's promise is purely cosmetic; but should real presidential elections one day come to Egypt, Islamists will probably prevail there too.

\* Removing Syrian control in Lebanon could well lead to Hezbollah, a terrorist group, becoming the dominant power there.

\* Eliminating the hideous Assad dynasty could well bring in its wake an Islamist government in Damascus.

Note a pattern? Other than the sui generis Palestinian case, one main danger threatens to undo the good news: that a too-quick removal of tyranny unleashes Islamist ideologues and opens their way to power. Sadly, Islamists uniquely have what it takes to win elections: the talent to develop a compelling ideology, the energy to found parties, the devotion to win supporters, the money to spend on electoral campaigns, the honesty to appeal to voters, and the will to intimidate rivals.

This drive to power is nothing new. In 1979, Islamists exploited the shah's fall to take power in Iran. In 1992, they were on their way to win elections in Algeria. In 2002, they democratically took over in Turkey and Bangladesh. Removing Saddam Hussein, Hosni Mubarak, Bashar Assad, and the Saudi princes is easier than convincing Middle Eastern Muslim peoples not to replace them with virulent Islamist ideologues.

The Middle East today is not alone in its attraction to a totalitarian movement – think Germany in 1933 or Chile in 1970 – but it is unique in the extent and persistence of this allure. I worry that my fellow neo-conservatives are insufficiently focused on its implications.

President Bush deserves high praise for his steadfast vision of a free Middle East; but his administration should proceed slowly and very carefully about transferring power from autocrats to democrats. The Middle East's totalitarian temptation, with its deep questions of history and identity, needs first to be confronted and managed. To skip these steps could leave the region even worse off than during the era of unelected tyrants.

(New York Sun Mar 8)

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#### **Red Ken Strikes Again** Jerusalem Post Editorial

A few weeks ago London Mayor Ken Livingstone likened a Jewish journalist to a Nazi concentration camp guard because he didn't approve of the reporter's employer. Despite the furor, the mayor remains unrepentant.

Offensive as this comment was, abetted by his lack of minimal remorse, it could have been dismissed as a momentary indiscretion that he was psychologically incapable of retracting. Livingstone, after all, has a long history of putting his foot in his mouth.

But on Friday Livingstone dispelled any lingering doubts. This time his bile couldn't be ascribed to an off-the-cuff gaffe. It was carefully premeditated and formulated in writing for a Guardian op-ed. Among repeated calumnies against the Jewish state, Livingstone opined that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is "a war criminal who should be in prison, not in office."

Not only is Livingstone not seeking to extricate himself from the mess he got himself into last month, but he's clearly out to pick an even greater fight. Moreover, he does so at a time in which Britain's Jews face increased hostility both from homegrown hate-mongers and from the UK's growing, sometimes extreme, Muslim community.

We haven't forgotten the fact that the terrorists who attacked Mike's Place on Tel Aviv's beachfront in 2003 came here from Britain, where they were exposed to anti-Israeli diatribes of the sort Livingstone dispenses so generously. Moreover, recent statistics show that in 2004 anti-Semitic incidents in Britain rose by a whopping 41%.

If he were a responsible politician, Livingstone would spend his energies calming intercommunal tensions and combating anti-Jewish libels, which further feed the blazing fires of anti-Semitism. To refrain from doing so is grossly negligent. To fan the flames – as Livingstone blithely does with no provocation – is outrageous.

The distinction Livingstone presumes to draw between being anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic is itself threadbare.

Anti-Semitism couched in ostensibly anti-Israeli mantras is as commonplace as the "some of my best friends are Jews" affectation – which Livingstone indeed reiterates.

This is not to say that Israel or its leaders are exempt from any criticism. If that were the case every local newspaper, including this one, would be out of business. The test, however, is whether said criticism is reasonable, of the sort that could be addressed to any other country. Minister Natan Sharansky has proposed a "3-D" test.

His D's include Demonization – when, for example, Israel is painted with Nazi images; Double-standards – when Israel is measured by a different yardstick from that applied to other countries; and Delegitimization – when Israel's basic right to exist as a secure Jewish state is denied.

If we apply this test to Livingstone's spoken and written pronouncements, it fast becomes obvious that he fails on all three counts. He has crossed the line of legitimate criticism over to what is effectively anti-Semitism.

Livingstone demonizes, applies double standards and delegitimizes Israel.

Indeed he portrays Israel as "a threat to us all."

He falsely accuses it of "organizing terror" and of persisting in policies of "ethnic cleansing" against Palestinians. This is not even a stone's throw from classic anti-Semitic assertions that Jews are the source of all evil. It is all but indistinguishable, except that instead of individual Jews being assailed, his barbs are aimed at the Jews' state.

Livingstone has basically said that this Jewish state deserves misfortune and bloodshed, that it brings these upon itself and that it destabilizes the rest of the world. And he has automatically made anyone who supports or is presumed to support Israel, such as British Jewry, accessories to a "crime."

Livingstone strives hard to portray himself as motivated by the purest and most high-minded of principles. Here also he fits into an all-too-familiar mold.

Livingstone would strenuously deny that he is a Jew-hater. But he cannot deny that he is sowing hatred of Jews and of Israel. For that he should be held accountable, not just by British Jewry, but by all decent Britons, the British government and the Jewish state. (Jerusalem Post Mar 7)

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### A Hospital Meeting By Mike Levine

I recently spent four days in Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem and something important did happen while I was there that I'd like to tell you about. One morning the nurses and a doctor rolled a new patient into our four bed room. He was accompanied by his brother, mother, and sister.

It was obvious from their conversation they were Arabs. His bed was directly across from mine. I said, "Shalom" and they all replied except for the patient who seemed to be sedated. I went back to reading my newspaper.

The patient was a medical Doctor from Gaza, the director of a clinic which treats about 1,500 people a month, you name it, everything from a runny nosed baby to gunshot wounds.

Fifty three years of age, and facing quadruple bypass surgery to replace arteries totally blocked and worn out. He was admitted two days early in order to fortify him with fluids, antibiotics, and medications before the operation.

His brother, who planned to stay with him, sleeping in a chair during the entire hospital stay, is a school principle, well educated, erudite, caring, and communicative.

He and I had several interesting, in depth discussions about relations between Jews and Arabs. We basically agreed that:

- Biblically and genetically we are cousins.
- There is no reason most of us can't get along.
- There is enough of everything-land, food, water-for both peoples.
- The Arab attitudes toward Jews must change.
- The leadership of both sides have made many mistakes.
- We were glad Arafat was gone.
- We can all live in peace if the haters and killers are eliminated.
- Cooperation will bring great benefits to both sides.
- We are both tired of this war that has dragged on for 100 years.

I was curious how someone from Gaza, a hotbed of anti-Israeli terrorism, could manage to get himself admitted into a hospital in Jerusalem.

He told me that there never was hostility between most of the doctors in Gaza and their colleagues in Israel, that in fact, there was constant communication, and that Israeli medical people had often shipped medical supplies and medicines when Gaza had shortages, which was often. He told of numerous children sent to Israel for treatment and surgery impossible to do in Gaza, and that there never was a charge for anything!

Now when was the last time you saw that reported on CNN, or BBC, or in your daily newspaper? When did you hear Kofi Annan stand up in the UN and talk about this?

He told me that most of the educated people in Gaza were more than ready to live in peace with us, but that they were afraid to speak out, fearing a 'collaborators' execution.

What he feared most, he told me, was what would happen the moment the Israeli army left Gaza following the expulsion of the Jews of Gaza! That terrorist groups, Hamas, Jihad, Fatah, Hezbollah, and others were already amassing huge stocks of arms and explosives, most brought in from Egypt, taking advantage of the temporary lull in fighting to build hundreds of Kassam rockets, bigger and more accurate ones, that were now being infiltrated into Samaria and Judea (west bank), close to most Israeli population centers. In his eyes, a much larger, more deadly 'Intifadah' was on its way following Sharon's abandonment of Gaza.

I asked why his family don't all stay in Israel, something they might be able to arrange because of his brothers connections. He said they had discussed it, but his brother would not leave his patients without medical care, and the rest of the family would not abandon the brother.

The next morning, when it was time for me to leave the hospital, we hugged tightly, silently, one Arab, one Jew, each lost in thoughts of what 'could have been', what 'might someday be', but tragically was not yet to be.

(NaomiRagen.com Mar 9)

*The writer is a freelance journalist living in Israel since 1985.*

### Back to Thugocracy Jerusalem Post Editorial

Scant international or even local attention has been accorded news that the Palestinian Authority has decided to resume executions by the end of this month. Of the 15 inmates on death row, none are terrorists, but about half were convicted for "collaborating with Israel." Presumably the latter offense includes helping Israel foil suicide bombings. By our book that not only is the last deed for which one ought to be put to death, but it is precisely what the PA ought to be encouraging.

Indeed preventing terrorism is a commitment the PA itself has formally undertaken, when it signed on to the road map. Yet the PA has been more than remiss in living up to its own most minimal obligations to impose the rule of law, actively combat terrorist incitement and arrest those who oppose its claimed policy of ending attacks. It is obviously not acceptable to leave terrorist organizations intact, allow them to regroup with Israel's military pressure removed and to decide at any moment to begin their attacks again.

When the PA imposes capital punishment on those it charges with helping Israelis root out terror (allegations which are highly dubious in most cases), it only adds insult to the injury inherent in its own inaction. It says the greatest crime, in the PA's eyes, is not terror itself but thwarting terror.

Nor is there any reason to trust the PA judicial system. The last time such "collaborators" were executed officially was on a January morning in 2001. "Trials" are normally brief and haphazard affairs that in no democratic country would be considered due process.

The backlash from the last executions somewhat blemished the PA's image at the time. Since then such official executions were replaced with more creative solutions.

Frequently policemen shoot dead death row inmates, purportedly while they attempt to escape. Alternatively, supposedly indignant vigilantes are allowed into prisons, where they pull out the hapless convicts and slay them before cheering crowds in the streets, sometimes proudly taking care to videotape the atrocity.

Israel, by contrast, doesn't execute even the most heinous of felons or the most bloodthirsty of terrorists or criminals (Adolf Eichmann being the sole exception).

Moreover, Israel's very independent and very liberal judicial system, which bends over backwards to be equitable to all – even to implacable foes – is expected to rubber-stamp the release of thousands of captured, duly tried and convicted terrorists with much innocent blood on their hands. The PA, amplified by the world's media, portrays them with brazen distortion as prisoners of conscience incarcerated by a repressive regime.

The recent release of 500 terrorists was largely downplayed as insufficient as a confidence-building measure.

Yet while Israel is denied credit for its incomparably autonomous and unregimented judiciary, the mockery of what parades as law next door escapes censure. The PA today still tolerates kangaroo courts, where suspects are dragged in because they failed to pay shakedown fees to a local boss, are then accused of "collaboration" with the enemy and summarily sentenced to death.

We agree with Minister Natan Sharansky's urgent plea to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon that Israel immediately demand the PA desist from this travesty-in-the-making.

"It is unacceptable," Sharansky writes, "that the PA demands the release of terrorists from our jails, and we respond affirmatively because of the hope for an opening to peace, while at the same time the PA is about to commit state executions of people accused of helping Israel thwart terror." We fully endorse Sharansky's irrefutable conclusion that "it is impossible to build a peace process based on blood. Such a process can only be based on the goodwill of both sides. The cold-blooded execution of those individuals accused of cooperating to deflect terror is in direct contradiction to the gestures demanded of Israel, tramples human rights, and with it any spark of hope for a better future in the Middle East."

(Jerusalem Post Mar 6)

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### When Will Israel Finally Say 'Enough Is Enough'?

By Mortimer Zuckerman

How long is Israel willing to bleed for Abu Mazen? How long before Syria is stopped in its tracks for its terrorism? The Palestinian suicide attack at the Stage Club on the beach at Tel Aviv was the work of Islamic Jihad but authorized by its leaders in Damascus. This murderous attack, which killed five Israelis and wounded about 50 civilians, highlights the price Israel is paying by reducing its military operations in order to give time to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, to build up his strength. The Israeli Defense Force is so restrained that it is making only about 10 percent of the number of arrests it was making two months ago, limiting its operations to "ticking bombs" or highly wanted men, as opposed to arresting activists from all terrorist organizations – the source of the intelligence that helped Israel prevent so many past attacks.

The Israelis knew in their bones that the terrorists might renew their

attacks, as they have done after the 10 prior cease-fires. They were right. Abu Mazen has asserted that he will not disarm Islamic Jihad or Hamas nor target their people, even though he vowed to find out who "planned and financed the attack." But it's not just this attack. The Israelis have had no fewer than 50 terror warnings in the past few weeks, during which time the IDF has stopped at least 10 suicide missions. How much patience will Israelis have if there's another attack, and then another and yet another? Abu Mazen complains that Israeli control of the West Bank is hindering the investigation of the Stage Club attack, but that just won't wash. He must show that he can make good on his protestations of peace and do it not tomorrow or the day after, but now. The terrorists understand only the language of force and can be stopped only by means of force, but force is precisely the tool Abu Mazen declines to use. He has not collected a single weapon from any of the terrorist groups. He has not attacked their military and civilian infrastructure or arrested the list of wanted terrorists provided to him.

Appeasement. Abu Mazen's condemnations of the terrorist attacks appear genuine, but condemnations are not enough. In fact, what Abu Mazen has done to date is to try to appease rather than control the extreme militants. But there can be no appeasing of terrorists and no apologies for states like Syria that coddle them. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said it plain as day during her recent trip to the region. "We now must see actions that send a clear message," she said, "that terror will not be tolerated."

At the London conference, the Palestinians were seeking over \$1 billion in additional aid. Yet Abu Mazen refuses to rein in the Palestinian Authority's anti-Semitic, anti-Israeli rhetoric that spews endlessly from TV and other public platforms. Listen to the words of hate, and you'd never guess there's a cease-fire in place. Palestinian rhetoric leaves no lines to which Israelis can withdraw from the collective Palestinian desire to annihilate the Jewish state.

At the London conference, Israel was ritually asked for unspecified actions "to live up to its obligations." But Israel has withdrawn its military forces, released hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, announced the withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the West Bank, and renewed the political dialogue. What more do the Palestinians want? Israelis may be willing to take their hats off for Abu Mazen, but they will not take their heads off.

It is understandable that Israelis have decided to exclude Islamic Jihad from the cease-fire and go after its leaders. But their efforts are complicated by the fact that another group, Hezbollah, is sponsoring most of the terrorist activity in the West Bank. Like Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah has headquarters in Lebanon and Damascus and is, thus, less susceptible to Israeli pressure. Supported by Iran and Syria, Hezbollah recently increased the bounty for spilling Jewish blood from \$5,000 to \$20,000. That's hardly what one would call progress.

Abu Mazen must be made to understand that the ceasefire will collapse if his policy is limited to depending on the goodwill of extreme militants. Israelis know the extremists will take up terrorism again unless they see that Abu Mazen is willing to enforce the cease-fire in full measure. The Israelis will watch how Abu Mazen consolidates his security services and wait to see whether he really uses them against the terrorists.

Everything good that is happening in the Middle East will be at risk if the terrorists launch more attacks, because Israelis will then have no alternative but to retaliate. If that happens, the whole peace process will unravel.

There is no way of knowing how much time Abu Mazen has to translate words into deeds. Yasser Arafat had the opportunity but not the will. If Abu Mazen has the will but not the capacity, the result will be exactly the same. (Jewish World Review Mar 7)

*The writer is editor-in-chief and publisher of U.S. News and World Report.*

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### **Reaching Out to Our Brothers and Sisters** By Moshe Kempinski

When one is found in the depths of a valley, it is impossible to see into the distance. It is even harder to hear the rallying calls coming from those standing on high, when one is beset by the thorns and jagged stones of the lowlands.

It is very difficult to muster up courage and vision in the hearts of people who only see obstacles; to make people believe in their destiny when they do not believe in themselves.

In Sefer BaMidbar (Numbers) we learn of the great failure of the children of Israel on the eve of their entry into the land of promise. The people, "lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night" (14:1), when they heard the report of the spies: "We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." (13:31)

Calev tries to encourage them with the declaration, "We should go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." (13:30) And then, together with Yehoshua, he declares the "land, which we passed through to spy it out is an exceeding good land." (14:7)

Their words were not heard and the hearts of the people remained unmoved. At their core, the children of Israel did not believe themselves worthy of G-d's intervention. They cried out in deep pain, "We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." (13:33)

Recently, I joined hundreds of activists of the Cities of Israel (Matot Arim) movement as we went to the homes of members of the Likud Central

Committee to attempt to convince them to demand a national referendum on the Disengagement Plan. As we went from house to house, from door to door, we were impressed by the mirroring of the experiences we have had in general with members of the Israeli population on the central issue of disengagement and retreat from Gush Katif.

We met good, caring people. We met people who love this Land, who were not swayed by the media's almost deliberate program of delegitimizing those who remain faithful to the Land of Israel. We met people who, in their own way, were struggling to continue to maintain their faith and hope.

Inevitably, these discussions with the citizen on the street and Likud members always seem to end with mutually accepted understanding. They all seemed to understand that Ariel Sharon's Disengagement Plan is tantamount to capitulation to terror. They all intuitively understood that all these discussions of hudnas and agreements with the Palestinians are only temporary, and that the coming explosion with the terrorist reality was just beyond the horizon.

They even sensed that there was something deeply wrong and undemocratic with the way this government has been ramming through decisions that run completely counter to the desires of the people, as expressed in the last elections.

Yet, all these points of consensus fall prey to the fear and insecurity that seems to prey on the average Israeli. This sense was best described in the words of one Likud Central Committee member who said, "You're right, but the only thing left holy to me today is life."

They can't believe in much more since they do not believe themselves worthy of much more. As they continue to declare "we were in our own sight as grasshoppers", they seem to aspire to less rather than more. Life and the sanctity of life is paramount in our faith. Yet, filling that life with meaning, purpose and vision is critical for the continuity of a people.

Most of the Israelis we spoke with had an affinity and warmth towards the concepts of the people of Israel, the land of Israel and the G-d of Israel. Yet, most felt uncomfortable even speaking with such lofty terminology. They expressed how those concepts all seemed true, but seemed "beyond" them.

If we truly want to speak panim el panim, face to face, with our brothers and sisters, then we must learn to use the language they do not feel is "beyond them".

Talking to them about the love for this land may move their hearts, but does not stir within them the courage to act according to the heart.

Talking to them about the courage and sacrifice of our brothers and sisters in Judea, Samaria and Gaza may touch them, but in the end, leaves them feeling even more inadequate.

Talking to them about G-d and His promises can tend to frustrate them even more, since deep down, they feel themselves unworthy of those promises.

We need to focus on the sanctity of life. We need to concentrate on the very grave threat to the security of our lives caused by opening the Gaza coast and the border with Egypt to unhindered infiltration of weapons of destruction.

We need to remind them that disengagement is simply expulsion, which is essentially capitulation to terror.

That must be the approach in talking with our fellow Israelis who have momentarily lost hope and strength.

That is how we must talk, yet not the way we must act.

Those fellow Jews who hear G-d's message as a slight breeze in their consciousness can only hear so much. Yet, those who hear G-d's call like a mighty shofar must stand up and act.

Ariel Zilber, an Israeli rock musician, heard the call and left his house in Tel Aviv to live in Gush Katif. The Jews in Gush Katif also listened to the call and are completing the building of their majestic new synagogue within the settlement of Kfar Darom. Tens of young people have already spent nights in the prisons because they committed the terrible crime of crying against the expulsion of Jews in demonstrations in the streets of the city. All these people are not superhuman heroes. They cry at night and look around them for support in the days. They are regular people with regular insecurities and concerns. Yet, like Calev, the spiritual father of the tribe of Yehuda, they have been filled with a ruach acheret - a different spirit.

It is that different spirit that will rekindle the faith of our brothers and sisters in themselves, and in their hope and future. Jews of faith must continue to speak to others in a language that seems more connected to the natural world, but they must act in ways connected to the world above the natural. (IsraelNationalNews.com Mar 9)

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