



Jerusalem 6:28; Toronto 7:44

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*

Events...

Monday April 19, 8:00pm

Toronto Zionist Council presents an evening for the residents of Gush Katif with Professor Aryeh Eldad MK, Yossi Ben-Aharon, Moshe Sapirstein and Dror Vanunu, at Shaarei Tefillah.

Monday April 26, 7:00pm

Mizrachi's Community Yom Hazikaron commemoration and Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration at BAYT.

Commentary...

Keep the Gloves Off - Destroy Hamas By Ehud Ya'ari

What was the case on the eve of the Yassin assassination is much more true now: Hamas will murder as many Israelis as it can

The Worst mistake that Israel could now make would be to stop pursuit of the terror leaders. It's a mistake Dr. Abd al-Aziz Rantisi and his colleagues apparently believe we will not make: Directly after the ceremonies of mourning for Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and the coronation of Rantisi as his successor in the Gaza stadium, they slipped deep underground and switched off their cellphones.

Hamas's fiery rhetoric of revenge is reaching new peaks, and they will strike to the full extent of their capability; Israel therefore must not ease the pressure. What was the case on the eve of the Yassin assassination is much more true now: They will murder as many Israelis as they can, and they will try as hard as ever, particularly now that the chase is on. This is the simple truth: If Sharon orders a halt to the targeting of the terror contractors, the liquidation of Yassin will come to represent the turning point, at which Hamas realizes its dream of achieving a balance of terror against Israel.

The Hamas leadership well understands that despite all the death and destruction it has sown in Israel, it has not yet succeeded in creating deterrence. It sees that the army doesn't hesitate to send its tanks into the refugee camps of the Gaza Strip, or its Apache attack helicopters to intercept its leaders, who would have liked to think of themselves as immune from attack. In the week that Yassin was killed, the Palestinians lost another 70 lives, most -- though regrettably not all -- from among the armed gangs. As they see it, Sharon has almost unlimited freedom of operation, and therefore it is urgently necessary to find a new method of scaring Israel into restraint. They talk about this incessantly, but by late March had not yet found the answer.

Their fear is a repeat performance in Gaza of what happened to Hamas in the West Bank. There, about 90 percent of the Hamas terrorist infrastructure has been shattered through a combined effort of the army and the Shin Bet security service since the Defensive Shield operation of 2002. Today there is no effective Hamas military apparatus between Hebron and Jenin, but only a handful of isolated cells that have great difficulty launching "quality attacks," as they call them. The West Bank Hamas leadership has either been wiped out in targeted killings. The senior operational echelon is mostly dead, other than one member, Ahmed Badr, who is still in hiding. As a result, Fatah is launching most of the attacks from the West Bank, after a long period when Hamas carried out the most deadly ones.

The fate of Hamas in the West Bank proves that a systematic, uncompromising campaign bears fruit.

It is true that the Gaza Strip is different in many respects. But only one difference really counts: In contrast to the West Bank, in Gaza Hamas has an armed militia, not just terror cells, something along the lines of a "popular army" that is hastily being built. So far Israel has not acted against this militia, whose

cadres are not for the most part involved in serious terror acts. But if the popular army is allowed to develop, it will turn into a parallel, highly-motivated armed force to rival the puny security apparatuses of the Palestinian Authority. From the moment that Hamas achieves its goal of a militia of thousands of fighters, there will be no hope of stopping it from turning the Gaza Strip into "Hamasstan," like the "Hizballahstan" that rose up in the wake of the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

Hamas makes no secret of its plans. For example the Lebanon-based Ossama Hamdan, the main Hamas liaison with Hizballah, spoke in an interview on Hizballah's Radio Nur of recruiting thousands of suicide bombers in order to carry out a large number of attacks simultaneously, perhaps in one location, Al-Qaeda-style. This is not vain talk. Hamas is working flat out towards this end, with the funding, guidance and encouragement of Hizballah's Sheikh Nasrallah. The Hamas leadership's belief is that a series of blows of this kind would "shock" Israel and bring this current round to its end game.

The army's insistence on sticking to the credo of "limited conflict" has determined Israel's response since the beginning of the intifada, meaning restraint in its use of force, and selectivity and caution in its preemptive actions. There are now those in the army questioning this approach, which is the cause of the slow, limping pace of the war on terror. The debate now under way in the army's theoretical monthly journal, Ma'arachot, deals with the argument that it is precisely the credo of limited conflict that is dragging out the bloodshed over time, while this current intifada has in fact been an "all-out confrontation" from the start, with only the means used to fight it limited for the time being.

As for Hamas, it has no limitations. Its terrorists have tried in the past to add cyanide and other poisons to their explosives. They planned to bring down the Shalom Tower in Tel Aviv. They send women and children as suicide bombers, and they are striving to pull off a mega-attack, which they already attempted in Ashdod.

It is impossible to contend with such a danger in a hesitant, halting manner. It is time to keep the gloves off. (Jerusalem Report Apr 19)

Familiar Scene: Feeding Continues, So Terror Continues.

By Rachel Ehrenfeld

"I am the beating arm for Hezbollah and Hamas here in Iraq," declared Muqtada al-Sadr last week. Yet, despite President's Bush's statement Tuesday night that "The violence we are seeing in Iraq is familiar," the U.S. fails to directly acknowledge that there is no difference between the Shiite and Sunni militias in Iraq and Palestinian terrorism. As a matter of fact, it was the Palestinian-Jordanian Musab al-Zarkawi (whose real name is Fedel Nazzel Khalayleh), one of al Qaeda's major operatives in Iraq, helped to coordinate the infiltration of Palestinian, Yemenite, Afghani, North African, and other insurgents, into Iraq.

The horrid pictures of a raging, incited mob, lynching uniformed soldiers in broad daylight, have certainly been seen before — not only in Mogadishu, but also in the Palestinian territories. In October 2002, the Palestinians murdered, dismembered, and dragged the bodies of two Israeli soldiers throughout the streets of Ramallah in the West Bank.

Even the use of mosques as military forts, and ambulances to transport terrorists with their armaments, has been practiced for many years by the Palestinian terrorists. What we see in Iraq is really not much different than what we have been witnessing in the West Bank and Gaza for the last decade, only here, American and Coalition forces are the targets.

The historical and persisting failure of the U.S. and the West to denounce the Palestinian terrorists' atrocities, and to put an end to their activities, was clearly perceived as a weakness by the Islamists. This weakness is now being exploited by al Qaeda and other Muslim fundamentalists, who have taken up arms against the U.S. and Coalition forces.

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Al-Zarkawi, and his group, Anzar al Islam, like Hamas, al Qaeda, and other Muslim fundamentalist terrorists, adhere to the teachings of the Muslim brotherhood, and call upon their followers in Iraq, as in the Palestinian territories, "to burn the earth under the occupiers' feet." Similar statements are made by Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi, who, in a televised address two weeks ago, pointed out the similarities between the U.S. and Israel: "We knew that Bush is the enemy of God, the enemy of Islam and Muslims. America declared war against God. Sharon declared war against God and God declared war against America, Bush and Sharon." He went on to say that, "The war of God continues against them and I can see the victory coming up from the land of Palestine by the hand of Hamas." Now that al-Sadr sees himself as a representative of Hamas, he added Iraq to the equation.

The increasing violence in Iraq, supported by foreign insurgencies from Iran, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, will be as difficult to control as the ongoing terror activities by the Palestinians. As long as tens of millions of dollars in funding from Iran continue to fuel the thousands of unemployed and disenfranchised that have joined al-Sadr's Shiite militia, and as long as tens of millions will continue to flow from Saudi Arabia to Palestinian terror organizations, terrorism will continue.

Despite the Saudi crackdown on dissidents in the Kingdom and their claims that they are taking steps to stop both terrorism and terrorist funding, and even despite Condoleezza Rice's recent praise of the Saudi Kingdom's cooperation in the war on terrorism, Saudi money continues to fuel terrorist activities against the U.S. and Israel.

Recent revelations about the transfer of millions of dollars in suspicious transactions by the Saudis through Riggs Bank in Washington, D.C., including to some Muslim charities that have been identified as fronts for al Qaeda, cast doubt on the sincerity of Saudi cooperation in stopping the funds for terrorism.

Similarly, of all the Arab League countries, Saudi Arabia is the only one that continues to fund the Palestinian Authority, led by Yasser Arafat, who, as a U.S. investigation just concluded, approved the attack on a U.S. embassy convoy in which three Americans were killed in 2003. The Saudi contribution, even before latest "reforms" in the PA were announced, amounts to \$15.4 million every two months, and at least \$50 million continues to flow to Hamas "charities" in the West Bank and Gaza.

The jihadist ideology, both on the Sunni and Shiite fronts, will not be easy to change. And despite the president's assertion that we have deprived the terrorists of their shelter and many of their leaders, we could do much more to prevent them from carrying out their "holy war" against us — we should do more to cut off their funds. (National Review Apr 14)

The writer, author of Funding Evil; How Terrorism is Financed — and How to Stop It, is director of the New York-based American Center for Democracy.

No Nuance By Steven Zak

Nicholas Goldberg says that Israel and the US see the world "without nuance."

In a recent commentary in the Sunday Los Angeles Times, Goldberg takes Israel — along with the big Satan — to task for their inability "to make distinctions among terrorists." An example of the sort of nuance that Goldberg thinks Israelis and Americans are unable to see is that while one Hamas thug, Abdulaziz Rantisi, is "loud, bitter and fiery," another — the recently departed Hamas "spiritual leader" Sheik Ahmed Yassin — had a voice that was "soft, almost childlike."

One might be tempted to believe that Goldberg is being ironic, but he's as literal as a truck bomb. He notes with perfect seriousness that Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, "has a chubby, babyish face and unusually twinkly eyes," while the late Yassin "had limp hands and sad eyes." All of this jaw-dropping nonsense is a prelude to Goldberg's declaration that Israel's failure to — in some unspecified way — respect and act on such nuances among terrorists is "worrisome."

What significance should one take from the appearance of such a bizarre analysis in one of the nation's major papers? Well, first off, it is yet one more bit of evidence that leftists will always blame anyone but the terrorists for terrorism. Just as Richard Clark denounces George W. Bush, not Atta and company, for September 11, and Howard Dean holds Bush, not the Madrid bombers, accountable for March 11, Goldberg blames Israel and the US, not Hamas, for the elusiveness of Middle East peace.

Such inverted left-thought is a matter of habit and instinct. Thus, Goldberg doesn't flinch in writing that it is simplistic to view the likes of Rantisi and Yassin "as Bush sees them" — as mere "brutal and wanton killers." Let's back that up and run it by again: for Goldberg, men whose reason for being is to kill Jews ought to be seen with nuance, as three-dimensional human beings. But George W. Bush, for his view that a terrorist is a terrorist, is a one-dimensional, unnuanced dunce.

Goldberg's upside-down thinking is just one more instance of the left's unwavering instinct to criticize Israel and the US, even on crazy, inconsistent grounds: for targeting terrorists and for attempting to fence them out; for rushing to war and for failing to send off troops even sooner. Likewise, Goldberg doesn't "feel sympathy for Yassin" yet thinks Israel's elimination of the terror kingpin was "provocative, macho and arguably illegal."

Goldberg's argument, though incoherent, manages to encapsulate a great deal of leftist gut-level sentiment: the unshakable belief that standing up to terrorists will only provoke them; the feeling that "macho" is bad; that the powerful are by definition the wrongdoers. Goldberg's characterization of Israel's defensive measures as "arguably illegal" — unaccompanied by even a scintilla of legal analysis — demonstrates too, that for the left-thinker, supporting arguments are unnecessary clutter.

If Goldberg's piece reveals much about left-thought generally, it speaks volumes about the Los Angeles Times. Goldberg is the paper's op-ed editor. No wonder, then, that an unnuanced thinker like Robert Scheer has free reign there. And that academically-dressed neo-Nazi arguments like that of New York University's Tony Judt — calling for the termination of the Jewish State — are welcome on the Times op-ed page, as if within the scope of reasonable discourse.

A newspaper that descends that far into the moral and intellectual abyss in one section may be expected to lose its way in others as well. And so it has. An example was the recent Times front-page story of a teenage Arab boy caught by the Israelis wearing a vest with an 18-pound bomb. The incident was, by any objective measure, an attempted mass murder. It was possibly also child abuse, as the boy was reportedly retarded. But the Times, locked into its tunnel-vision demonization of Israel, focused instead on that country's supposed Machiavellian plans to use the incident for P.R..

Yet again in the Times' morally inverted universe, the victim becomes the villain. And yet again the paper demonstrates a worldview that is anything but nuanced. (NaomiRagen.com Apr 13)

The writer is an attorney and writer in California

An Overrated Virtue By Jonathan Tobin

There's no such thing as an intellectual justification for Palestinian murderers

A long time ago, when I was a freshman in college, I sat in a classroom at Columbia University and learned why intellectuals are so dangerous.

The course was the second semester of Contemporary Civilization, or "C.C.," as we called it, the heart of the school's vaunted undergraduate core curriculum that mandated the study of the great books of Western civilization — aka the works of dead, white European males.

But the course also covered the work of Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), the German-born philosopher who became the intellectual hero of the New Left of the 1960s.

Marcuse, a Jew who came to America after Adolf Hitler's rise to power, styled himself a "Marxist humanist," whose work in "critical theory" provided an intellectual framework for attacks on capitalism. But Marcuse is remembered because he set out to "prove" that basic freedoms, such as the right to free speech, ought to be denied to those who opposed the cause of "progressive" movements.

These thoughts were set down in a famous and disastrously influential collection of essays titled "Critique of Pure Tolerance," published in 1965. Anyone who wants to understand the violent student protesters of that era needs to come to grips with Marcuse.

In his essay "Repressive Tolerance," Marcuse laid out the case for the repression of all nonleftist thought. This was music to the ears of radicals, who wanted to not merely debate their opponents but shut them down. Marcuse wound up being an apologist for not just a failed economic theory, but for violence in the name of left-wing "ideals" by groups such as the Weathermen.

Unfortunately, my C.C. instructor was a passionate follower of Marcuse and eager to indoctrinate the impressionable minds in his charge. Schooled in the dialectic of both Karl Marx and Marcuse, this teacher was none too pleased with me when I piped up and pointed out that what he was teaching us was nothing more than an argument for dictatorship.

Though he charted out the "logic" of this theory on the blackboard, I still demanded to know the difference between the Nazi claim to a monopoly on power, and that claimed by those whom Marcuse approved of? Eventually, the class moved on, with the teacher letting me know in no uncertain terms that I was obviously too stupid to grasp such a high-flown concept.

Maybe he was right about me, but the history of the last century should have soured all thinking persons on the idea that repression was a good

thing. It's a memory that sticks in my craw, but I count it as one of the most important lessons I've learned.

I was reminded of this incident when reading an essay in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* on March 31 by writer Crispin Sartwell, in which he defended suicide bombers as being selfless and virtuous.

A philosophy professor and nationally syndicated columnist, Sartwell makes the case that those who commit violence for what they believe is a good cause are not merely "heroic," but better than the rest of us, as it shows they're able to rise above petty self-interest.

In a piece so morally obtuse that only someone with a Ph.D. in philosophy could have written it, Sartwell links suicide bombers with the moral heroism of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and President Abraham Lincoln.

In a telling passage, Sartwell describes how as a youth, he, too, was "willing to commit acts of violence to show the seriousness" of his beliefs. "In fact," he writes, "I did blow up some things (but no persons). And even if what I did was wrong, I did it to show my moral commitment."

Following Marcuse's lead, Sartwell thought his righteousness gave him the right to act violently. But he is not repentant. Instead, he sees himself as "more mediocre" for having packed his bomb-making kit away with his college yearbook.

Sartwell's defense of suicide bombing, and, in particular, the enormities of the Palestinian terrorist organizations, is not incidental to his philosophy. The writer thinks the Palestinian cause can "demand and justify selfless action."

Using the same twisted logic that my prof tried out decades ago, Sartwell claims there's a big difference between Hitler-types and the Palestinians who plot the mass murder of Jews in Israel. Though he concedes that the results of suicide bombing are "monstrous," it is, in his bizzaro universe, an act of "moral heroism." These killers are good, because they are sincere and want to help their people, he would tell us. But what he forgets is that - as the Nazis, Communists, contemporary Islamo-fascists and all others who thought they had a monopoly on the truth proved - sincerity is a very overrated virtue. At the bottom of his fatuous philosophizing are a few sentences that assert that Israel's "military and political machine" is a "direct instrument of repression" of Palestinian culture. Too busy branding Israel with the sort of agitprop labels the leftists of the '60s applied to America, he applies no intellectual rigor to determining whether Palestinian propaganda is based in fact, or is, in reality, a jihad to wipe out the Jewish presence in the country.

Sartwell is not interested in the facts about the Mideast conflict, which stem from repeated Palestinian rejections of peace or compromise. He cares nothing about the gist of the intifada, which was chosen by Palestinian leadership in 2000 as a ploy to avoid a two-state solution.

Having branded the Israeli people as criminal oppressors and subtly linked Israeli leaders to Hitler, Sartwell waxes lyrical about the willingness of some to sacrifice their lives to oppose it. Though he throws in a weasel-word disclaimer that he opposes the death of innocents on buses, he's still prepared to declare the suicide bomber a "saint," albeit a "monstrous saint."

To defend himself against the inevitable opprobrium, Sartwell is quick to point out that he's Jewish. To which I answer: So what? Those who claim to wish Israel or the Jewish people well cannot at the same time be neutral about their right to defend themselves.

It is even more infuriating when a piece such as Sartwell's appears in a newspaper such as the *Inquirer* that highlights misleading coverage of Israel's measures of self-defense against terror while downplaying stories about the Palestinians use of children as suicide bombers.

The moral of this story is that clever people can always be relied upon to provide a justification for the indefensible. Far from being harmless intellectual musings, the defense of murder can never be condoned by a truly moral person. (Jewish World Review Apr 8)

The writer is executive editor of the Philadelphia Jewish Exponent.

The Ethos of Islam By Mordechai Nisan

In 1992, the socialist government in Madrid promoted legislation that recognized Islam's ancient tradition in the country, considering Spanish identity harmoniously interwoven with the Koranic religion.

But the Muslim interpretation of Islam in Spain, beginning with conquest in 711 and ending in 1492, had a more militant twist. Scholar M. Amir Ali commented that Spain had actually been liberated by Muslim forces and its tyrants removed. Reflecting on March 11, as Muslim terrorism killed 200 and wounded 1,400 in Madrid, one wonders whether one day this event will also not be commemorated as a liberating moment.

Central to the attitude in the West concerning Islam is the fear to define global terrorism as Muslim terrorism. US President George W. Bush's reticence, a combination of caution and error, has been representative of all Western leaders.

Islam's conceptual lexicon and emotional code are radically different from that

conventionally understood and practiced in the West. Yasser Arafat and Ahmed Yassin, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and Hassan Nasrallah, and Osama bin Laden, register as dramatic personae who relentlessly link religion with war against Jews and Christians, devoid of any remorse or shame.

The mind-set of Islam was etched into theological axioms with the appearance of the Koran in the seventh century. This book is its explicit and enduring guide.

The Koran is, among other things, a war tract calling upon "the believers" - there are only Muslim believers - "to fight for the cause of Allah" (4:74-76). This is a war for truth; God is One and Muhammad his true prophet and messenger. The infidels must be punished (16:126-8) for their haughtiness and stubbornness in rejecting Muhammad (6:158), and will burn in the fire of Hell (4:55).

The Muslims must fight the infidels, primarily Jews and Christians, with "the sword of Muhammad." The religion of Muhammad will triumph because the Muslims love death, accepting any individual sacrifice, while the enemy loves life.

At Qadisiyya in 637, Arabs seeking paradise defeated Persians longing for the earth below.

Yet more than the Muslim shahid (martyr) is willing to die, the Muslim mujahid (fighter) has a passion to kill. This is his religious mission and life's purpose. There is no reason to pity the infidel or feel culpable for his demise. The Koran commands the believer not to trust or befriend the humiliated dhimmis, those Jewish and Christian scripturaries, who must suffer timorously the heavenly sanctioned rule of Islam.

Islam's supersessionary religious doctrine catalyzed relentless destruction, oppression, and abuse of Christians in eastern lands. While there were moments of laxity and civility in applying the robust strictures of domination, Islam did not recoil from razing churches in ancient Damascus and slaughtering Christians in Mesopotamia, inflicting atrocities in Aleppo and exterminating Armenians in their homeland.

Arab colonization of the Middle East and the Islamization of its peoples were acts of conquest and conversions that define the region until today.

The 14th-century Muslim theologian Ibn Taimiyya explained the root of this sweeping campaign. "Infidels," he wrote, "forfeit their persons and their belongings which they do not use in Allah's service to the faithful believers who serve Allah and unto whom Allah restitutes what is theirs; thus is restored to a man [Muslim] the inheritance of which he was deprived, even if he had never before gained possession."

THE MUSLIM dehumanization of non-Muslims profoundly colors the problematic relationship wherever the two sides meet.

People who innocently take a train in Madrid, a plane in Washington, a bus in Jerusalem, or go to the theater in Moscow, can be wantonly murdered with no Muslim afterthought.

The Koranic precept "to slay them [infidels] wherever you find them" (2:191) is the religious gunpowder filling mosque sermons in Mecca, Cairo, and Gaza. The believers call upon Allah to help the warriors of Islam in Kashmir and Chechnya, Palestine and Kosovo.

The believer is fortified by the belief that any martyrdom operation against haughty Jews and misguided Christians pleases Allah. It is that act which brings honor to the martyr's family.

This religious delirium, with the Muslim's mental universe pining for the heavenly whorehouse of 72 virgins awaiting him in paradise, cannot be appraised through conventional categories of Western humanism.

The Muslim mosque, for prayer in Bradford, Rennes, and Granada, potentially transforms faith into a closed herd mentality, and spirituality into formulae for ineluctable conquest.

The socio-religious processes of demographic growth and conversion, with more than 15 million Muslims inhabiting Western Europe today, constitute alternative and non-violent modes for the Islamic proliferation in Europe. In two generations, half of Holland will be Muslim and a third of Denmark; more than a tenth of France already is.

During the history of Muslim takeover of the Christian lands in the ancient Middle East - which is now being repeated in the Christian lands of Europe - public space was to be cleansed of infidel presumption, if not presence.

This is a process whose signs are emerging in Western countries, as police protect shoppers and travelers, as strategic targets are endangered. Muslims and their sites are free of menace.

IT FOLLOWS, then, that mourning in Madrid and panic in Paris constitute a thoroughly proper state of affairs. The infidel "domain of war," to use an Islamic legalism for non-Muslim lands, must inevitably fall to Islam.

Sheikh Jamal Shakir, in a mosque harangue in Amman on March 5, said:

"O God destroy your enemies, the Jews and Crusader enemies of Islam."

While Israel has fought tenaciously against Islamic terrorism, Europe has adopted escapist routes: blaming Israel and its war with the Palestinians as responsible for Muslim terror, and bowing submissively as dhimmis must to Muslim violence, threats, and ultimatums. Witness appropriate European cowardice and venality, with the rise of anti-Semitism and the shameful Spanish election results.

Exhausted by two 20th-century continental wars and the long Cold War, now confronting a multifaceted Islamic War, Europe is deluded and divided.

That the Muslims take their religion seriously and literally appears beyond the grasp of European comprehension. The Americans understand better, and Israel smack in the eye of the storm hits back without remorse or shame. (Jerusalem Post Apr 14)

The writer teaches at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His latest book is Minorities in the Middle East: A History of Struggle and Self-Expression.

Some Good News By Moshe Arens

On April 8, in a front-page article entitled "Victory in Israel-Palestinian war is determined by the other side's mistakes," by military correspondent Amos Harel, Haaretz brought some much-needed good news to its readers. Based on an interview with Brigadier General Eli Yaffe, who has completed a 2.5-year stint as head of the General Staff's Operations Branch in the Israel Defense Forces, the article presents facts and figures on the number of acts of Palestinian terrorism directed against Israeli targets during the past three and a half years, since Arafat initiated the latest war against Israel.

The article refers to the number of attacks each calendar quarter against targets within the "green line," i.e. directed against Israel's population centers, usually causing the largest number of victims. There were 40 such attacks during the first three months of 2002, culminating in the suicide bombing of the seder in Netanyahu's Park Hotel two years ago. Since then, the number of attacks has steadily and dramatically decreased, saving the lives of hundreds of Israelis. One does not have to look far for the cause of this reduction in terrorist attacks - Operation "Defensive Shield," which brought the IDF into Palestinian towns and villages, and the erection during the past 12 months of the security fence bordering Samaria. One can only wonder why the IDF was put into action in the Palestinian towns and villages only after a year and a half of acts of terrorist outrages, while government spokesmen defended inaction by vacuously declaring that "restraint is strength."

Another set of data in Harel's article is even more impressive, showing the number of Palestinian suicide attacks that were carried out, as well as those that were prevented, month by month. March 2002 stands out like a sore thumb, with 17 suicide attacks carried out and another eight prevented. From there, things get steadily better, as the IDF goes to work and the security fence gets built. Two years later, in March 2004, there were two suicide attacks carried out, and 10 such attempted attacks were prevented. Not only has the number of suicide terror attacks come down drastically, but the number of attempted suicide attacks that have been prevented has been cut in half in recent months.

What does all this mean, over and above that the IDF and the security services have been successful in saving the lives of many Israelis during the past two years? What conclusions can be drawn about Israel's ability to contend with and defeat Palestinian terrorism? To those who refuse to be confused by the facts because their mind is made up, these facts and figures are irrelevant. They include the proponents of the "Geneva Accords," as well as the opponents of the security fence on the right and on the left of the political spectrum. But to those who are prepared to look at this data with an open mind, there is much food for thought.

First, Israeli offensive and defensive action against Palestinian terror seems to be far more effective than the opening of "political horizons" called for by politicians on the left. The perpetrators of acts of terror and their supporters seem to be quite unimpressed by the kind of "political horizons" Israelis of all political persuasions are prepared to present.

Second, the measure of success for the Palestinians in the war of terror they have been waging against Israel these past three and a half years is the number of Israeli casualties, and by this measure they are clearly losing the war.

Is the myth that there is no way of defeating terrorism in the process of being destroyed? Can Israel win this war, and further bring down the number of terror attacks and the number of Israeli casualties? At this point, that certainly seems to be the case. Unilateral withdrawals at this time are probably not the way to do it.

And to those who recognize that Palestinian terror is the major obstacle to any progress toward a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that no Palestinian interlocutors are likely to come forward until their fear of assassination by terrorists is laid to rest, Amos Harel's article is really good news. (Haaretz Apr 14)

Washington Post Panders to Palestinian Violence By Andrea Levin

The Washington Post has won itself sorry distinction in recent years as a publication that regularly skews its Middle East news - against Israel. A snapshot of coverage in March captures the problem.

On the 17th, many newspapers reported - some on the front page - the story of Abdullah Quran, an 11-year-old Palestinian boy tricked by terrorists into carrying a bomb to an Israeli checkpoint. By luck, the unwitting child accomplice and the intended Israeli victims were spared when the explosive failed to detonate. Even B'Tselem, a human rights group rarely critical of Palestinians, was prompted to denounce the use of the child as "in and of itself a war crime." The page-one Boston Globe story noted the Quran episode "seems likely to revive long-standing concerns on both sides about the willingness of Palestinian terrorists to involve children in their operations." An Israeli official was quoted stating: "Anyone who says that the roadblocks provide no security and only humiliate the Palestinians received proof today just how wrong he is."

The Washington Post omitted the story entirely - along, of course, with such apt observations about the conflict as those in the Globe.

Eight days later, another equally dramatic instance of Palestinian child exploitation made the front pages in other newspapers. A teenaged boy strapped with explosives and promised a quick trip to paradise by his terrorist handlers was caught at a roadblock near Nablus and saved by Israelis. The New York Times ran five color photos of the event on its front page, and an inside story headlined "Israeli Soldiers Thwart A Boy's Suicide Bombing Attempt."

This time the Washington Post carried a short wire service story on page 20 under a headline with no hint of a connection to the Middle East: "Teen With Bomb Sets Off a Tense Encounter."

WHILE THE paper avoids reporting candidly and fully on the savagery Israel faces - as reflected in these incidents - when Israel acts against those who dispatch terrorists, the publication finds its voice. Israel's killing of Hamas founder Ahmed Yassin prompted thousands of words on March 23, along with front-page prominence and eight color photographs (which didn't include scenes of terrorist carnage inflicted by Hamas on Israeli men, women and children).

The focus, as so often in the Post, was on sympathetic rendering of the feelings of the Palestinians and the allegedly lamentable, short-sighted conduct of the Israelis. Multiple stories reiterated the sentiments of Yassin's supporters, who deemed him "charismatic" and "moderate" as well as "a man of peace," "like a prophet" and, of course, a "spiritual leader." A side-bar with "key dates" offered brief mention that Hamas "rejects the existence of Israel," and only a sentence or so in the long text alluded to the annihilationist goals of the group. There were no comments from Israeli survivors of Hamas' terror onslaught.

Policy "experts" quoted on the diplomatic implications included only critics of Israel, one being Robert Malley, a leading proponent of the view that Israel was not sufficiently forthcoming in the Camp David/Taba negotiations of 2000-2001. He contended the assassination of Yassin "has implications" for other nations in the Middle East, as well as Europe and the United States. He claimed "Hamas has not targeted American or other targets outside the occupied territories. That might change..."

In fact, Hamas carried out the terrorist attack on Hebrew University's Frank Sinatra cafeteria in the summer of 2002 that killed mostly Americans. The perpetrator was an Arab handyman and Hamas member employed by the university who knew foreigners, in particular Americans, congregated in the area. Shortly after the event, a team of FBI agents was dispatched to help investigate the attack.

But Malley's distorted observations blaming Israel for some possible new targeting of Americans were printed without Post caveat.

Writing on the death of Yassin, Fouad Ajami, Director of Middle East Studies at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, offered a view of reality absent from the Post's strikingly tilted portrayals of events in March 2004.

Ajami said: "It is easy to see that [Yassin] had no mercy for Israelis. But a harder truth can be read into his life: He had no mercy for his own either. Those children, reading their wills and testaments on their way to homicidal missions, are proof of the cruelty and the indifference and the waste of it all."

The Post can't seem to see it that way. It buries or omits events in which the "cruelty" of the Palestinian war against Israel engulfs the lives of its own young, and it passes over lightly the truth that a supposed "spiritual" leader wrought death and destruction. (Jerusalem Post Apr 14)

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