

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...

Sunday May 12, 8:00pm

Journalist David Zev Harris of MediaLine Radio News Service, and formerly with the Jerusalem Post, will speak on "The Palestinian Uprising: A Frontline Journalist's Report", at Shaarei Shomayim.

Commentary...

'Final Solution,' Phase 2 By George F. Will

Such is the richness of European culture, even its decadence is creative. Since 1945 it has produced the truly remarkable phenomenon of anti-Semitism without Jews. How does Europe do that?

Now it offers Christian anti-Semitism without the Christianity. An example of this is the recent cartoon in La Stampa -- a liberal Italian newspaper -- depicting the infant Jesus in a manger, menaced by an Israeli tank and saying "Don't tell me they want to kill me again." This reprise of that hardy perennial, Jews as Christ-killers, clearly still strikes a chord in contemporary Italy, where the culture is as secular as a supermarket.

In Britain the climate created by much of the intelligentsia, including the elite press, is so toxic that the Sun, a tabloid with more readers than any other British newspaper, recently was moved to offer a contrapuntal editorial headline "The Jewish faith is not an evil religion." Contrary to what Europeans are encouraged to think. And Ron Rosenbaum, author of the brilliant book "Explaining Hitler," acidly notes the scandal of European leaders supporting the Palestinians' "right of return" -- the right to inundate and eliminate the state created in response to European genocide -- "when so many Europeans are still living in homes stolen from Jews they helped murder."

It is time to face a sickening fact that is much more obvious today than it was 11 years ago, when Ruth R. Wisse asserted it. In a dark and brilliant essay in Commentary magazine, she argued that anti-Semitism has proved to be "the most durable and successful" ideology of the ideology-besotted 20th century.

Successful? Did not Hitler, the foremost avatar of anti-Semitism, fail? No, he did not. Yes, his 1,000-year Reich fell 988 years short. But its primary work was mostly done. Hitler's primary objective, as he made clear in words and deeds, was the destruction of European Jewry.

Wisse, who in 1991 was a professor of Yiddish literature at McGill University and who now is at Harvard, noted that many fighting faiths, including socialism and communism, had arisen in the 19th century to "explain and to rectify the problems" of modern society. Fascism soon followed. But communism is a cold intellectual corpse. Socialism, born and raised in France, is unpersuasive even to the promiscuously persuadable French: The socialist presidential candidate has suffered the condescending humiliation of failing to qualify for this Sunday's runoff, having been defeated by an anti-Semitic "populist" preaching watery fascism.

Meanwhile, anti-Semitism is a stronger force in world affairs than it has been since it went into a remarkably brief eclipse after the liberation of the Nazi extermination camps in 1945. The United Nations, supposedly an embodiment of lessons learned from the war that ended in 1945, is now the instrument for lending spurious legitimacy to the anti-Semites' war against the Jewish state founded by survivors of that war.

Anti-Semitism's malignant strength derives from its simplicity -- its stupidity, actually. It is a primitivism which, Wisse wrote, makes up in vigor what it lacks in philosophic heft, and does so precisely because it "has no prescription for the improvement of society beyond the elimination of part of society." This howl of negation has no more affirmative content than did the scream of the airliner tearing down the Hudson, heading for the World Trade Center.

Today many people say that the Arabs and their European echoes would be

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mollified if Israel would change its behavior. People who say that do not understand the centrality of anti-Semitism in the current crisis. This crisis has become the second -- and final? -- phase of the struggle for a "final solution to the Jewish question." As Wisse said 11 years ago, and as cannot be said too often, anti-Semitism is not directed against the behavior of the Jews but against the existence of the Jews.

If the percentage of the world's population that was Jewish in the era of the Roman Empire were Jewish today, there would be 200 million Jews. There are 13 million. Five million are clustered in an embattled salient on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, facing hundreds of millions of enemies. Ron Rosenbaum writes, "The concentration of so many Jews in one place -- and I use the word 'concentration' advisedly -- gives the world a chance to kill the Jews en masse again."

Israel holds just one one-thousandth of the world's population, but holds all the hopes for the continuation of the Jewish experience as a portion of the human narrative. Will Israel be more durable than anti-Semitism? Few things have been. (Washington Post May 2)

US must Stand with Israel By William Bennett

The first piece I ever published in the popular press was a 1977 "My Turn" column in Newsweek. There I lamented the fact that children were no longer identifying with heroes. I pointed out that to find a hero, to see heroism, one had to look no farther than Yonatan Netanyahu who died at Entebbe the previous year. Netanyahu was a hero, to be sure - but so, too, is the State of Israel a hero to many of us, even if so many others still think it appropriate to condemn, criticize, and investigate it.

One of the premier political philosophers of our age said that Winston Churchill taught us to "see things as they are, and this means above all in seeing their greatness and their misery, their excellence and their vileness." When one looks at Israel and the Middle East, no task can be more important and, through the lens of moral clarity, no task can be more easily accomplished.

It did not take a great deal to see things as they really were on September 11 nor on the days and weeks that followed.

On September 11, Israelis lowered their flags to half staff in empathy with the US. By contrast, Palestinians in the West Bank were cheering in the streets.

On September 11, we in the United States were forced to stare into the face, and feel the hand, of evil - our very existence demanded that we fight back, not only to punish the wrong done to us, not only to protect our citizens and institutions, but to vindicate our democratic virtues.

Just after the slaughter that took place on September 11, many Israelis said, "We are all Americans now." The truth is, after September 11, we all became Israelis. Israel has been fighting a war against terrorism since the day it was founded, and this has been a war for the state's survival. It is not difficult to see that those who want to do Israel in - from Iran and Iraq to Hamas and the PLO - want to do the US in as well. And, as is true in the case of Israel, our war on terrorism became, had to become, a war for our survival. Israel's war is our war, just as Israel's cause is our cause.

I am a Catholic, and many have speculated that Christian interpretations of the Torah are the reason many Christians support Israel. There may be something to that. But that is not my reason for standing with Israel, nor is it the reason the US does and should stand with Israel.

We stand with Israel because Israel is a beacon of freedom and hope - to the world, generally, and, in a more important sense, to the Middle East. In its very Declaration of Independence, Israel proclaimed that it would ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education, and culture; it will safeguard the holy places of all religions. Israel has kept faith with the promise of its founding, a founding more similar to America's than perhaps any other nation's.

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Israel is the only country in the region that permits citizens of all faiths to worship freely and openly. We need to remember that 20 percent of Israeli citizens are not Jewish. While Jews are not permitted to live in many Arab countries, Arabs are granted full citizenship and have the right to vote in Israel. (Arabs not only comprise a faction within the Knesset, but routinely side with Israel's enemies.) Arabs living in Israel have more rights and are freer than most Arabs living in Arab countries. Israel, in short, has shown the way in the Middle East, it has shown - the way for freedom, for democracy, and for education.

And Israel has done all this while under continued pressure aimed at undermining and extinguishing its very existence. It was invaded by five armies upon its founding and has been threatened with annihilation ever since. Milan Kundera once wrote that a small nation is one "whose very existence may be put into question at any moment; a small nation can disappear, and knows it." Israel is a small nation.

It should not have been surprising or worthy of condemnation that just after Yasser Arafat attempted to smuggle 50 tons of weapons into his Palestinian Authority, and just as his Fatah-affiliated Al-Aksa Martyrs Brigades were perfecting their human-bomb-making capabilities, Israel finally said, "Enough!" Israel then went into the territories to root out terrorists, to do what Arafat over the years had refused to do. That mission was of a piece with what the US did in Afghanistan in rooting out the Taliban and al-Qaida. The pressure on Israel to cease that operation amounted to perhaps the greatest blurring of our moral clarity since September 11. That pressure was imposed on Israel in order to appease nations like Saudi Arabia, a repressive dictatorship that owes the US a great many explanations, that deserves from the US nothing.

Nor, by contrast, was it surprising that the first sentences uttered by Arafat upon his release from confinement were libels against Israel as a "terrorist, Nazi, and racist" regime. This is what he always said. Lies pervade his speech, and those lies have trickled down and out into the common criticisms of Israel heard elsewhere. One of them is that the Jewish settlements in the disputed territories are the greatest obstacle to peace in the Middle East. When I hear this, I am reminded of a lie from another context and another time: that blacks living as minorities in all-white neighborhoods in the American South were the cause of racial strife. They weren't - racists were the cause of racial strife.

There is no reason Jews should not be able to live in the West Bank unless there is a reason Arabs should not be able to live in Tel Aviv - which is to say, there is no reason at all. The freedoms to travel and live are fundamental. To claim that certain lands should be free of Jews is to claim that the Third Reich had a moral point.

While many may prefer to forget their ugly history, I think it critical to remember it, for nowhere more than in the Middle East is history a prelude. Because of their animus against Jews, many leaders of the Palestinian cause have long supported our enemies. The grand mufti of Jerusalem allied himself with Adolf Hitler during World War II. Yasser Arafat has repeatedly targeted and killed Americans.

Arafat was very closely aligned with the Soviet Union and other enemies of ours throughout the Cold War. In 1991, during the Gulf War, Arafat aligned himself with Saddam Hussein, whom he praised as "the defender of the Arab nation, of Muslims, and of free men everywhere." Israel, by contrast, has always been on the side of the US, both as a strategic and as a moral ally. And the civilized world will never be able to pay its debt to Israel for bombing Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981.

Today, more than ever, we cannot afford to criticize Israel for its war against terrorism, as we ignominiously did in that episode in 1981. Now more than ever we need to see things for their excellence and for their vileness.² Those searching for heroes of democracy need look no farther than Israel, a country that has done more, for more people, with fewer resources and under greater threat, than almost any other. We must never ignore the fact that if Israel loses its war against terrorism, it will lose its existence. To vindicate our own virtues and cherished beliefs, we should stand foursquare with Israel and apply pressure to the dictatorships in its neighborhood, not the other way around.

Moral clarity demands standing with Israel in its still unfinished war against terrorism, in its still unfinished work for survival. It is for these reasons and more, far more, that I count myself among the millions of Americans who see America's fate and Israel's fate as one.

The writer is a former secretary of education and the author, most recently, of Why We Fight: Moral Clarity and the War on Terrorism. This op-ed is drawn from Chapter 4, "The Case of Israel."

Israel's Phony 'Partner' By Michael Kelly

On June 6, 1967, the second day of the Six Day War, Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban laid before the United Nations Security Council Israel's case for preemptively striking in a war sought and forced by the Arab nations. As the historian Michael Oren describes in his first-rate new account of the conflict, "Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East," Eban

looked at each ambassador before him and said: "Look around this table and imagine a foreign power forcibly closing New York or Montreal, Boston or Marseille, Toulon or Copenhagen, Rio or Tokyo or Bombay Harbor. How would your government react? What would you do? How long would you wait?"

This remains Israel's essential cry, and it comes up again-pressingly-in the matter on the table this week, whether or not Israel must consider Yasser Arafat to be, in that quaint and archaic phrase, "a partner for peace." Officially, at least, the United States still believes this; and so, before Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon arrived in Washington, various senior Bush administration officials were taking to the newspapers and the Sunday public affairs talk shows to pressure Sharon to, as Secretary of State Colin Powell delicately put it, "recognize who the Palestinian people look to as their leader," no matter "how disappointed we've been with him over time."

Yes, we have been a little disappointed, haven't we? You give a fellow a perfectly good peace process, not to mention the Nobel Peace Prize; award him much of the land he demands and a \$90 million monthly budget; let him build an armed force on Israeli territory; and, finally (as America's former top negotiator, Dennis Ross, recently revealed in a remarkable Fox News interview), get both the president of the United States and the prime minister of Israel to promise him all of Gaza and nearly all of the West Bank as an independent and joined Palestinian state, with a right of Palestinian return to that state, plus a multibillion-dollar reparations fund-and what does he do? He goes to war against you. Yes, a disappointment to us all.

But Sharon and other Israelis have perhaps a closer relationship to this disappointment than does, say, Colin Powell. Our secretary of state can afford to pretend, as our media pretend, that it is still possible to believe the man in the keffiyeh remains our own little peace partner even though, noted the ever-mild Powell, "we all may disagree with what Mr. Arafat had done over time."

Indeed. We may, for instance, disagree with the murder of six people and the wounding of 30 others on Jan. 17 at an Israeli girl's bat mitzvah in the town of Hadera. That is one of the many acts of terrorism directly linked to Arafat's control in documents found by Israeli forces in Palestinian Authority offices. These documents were organized in a 103-page report released by the Israeli government this week to support Sharon's position that Israel cannot proceed with partner Arafat.

The New York Times buried its coverage of the report on A10 and sniffed that the evidence did "not appear to show definitively that the Palestinian leader ordered terror attacks." The Post gave it front-page play but was even more dismissive, treating the Israeli evidence with open disdain. The first "objective" characterization of the material, third paragraph, does not address the documentary evidence at all but in a contrary slant notes that the report contains "a great many assertions and allegations for which no documentary proof is offered." In paragraph 12, after three paragraphs of Palestinian officials and lawyers dismissing the evidence as propaganda, The Post's reporter offers the first and only judgment supporting the Israeli side: "Nevertheless, some of the material in the report appears potentially damaging to the Palestinians, and could hurt their standing in international public opinion."

In media-world, this sort of thing is called balanced reporting. But Sharon and all Israelis live on a more real planet, and in that place, no one has the slightest doubt that the evidence proves that Arafat is architect and field marshal of the terrorist war against Israel.

Imagine that the government of the United States believed, on evidence, that a certain Islamic leader was responsible for directing a campaign of murder against Americans. To ask Abba Eban's question, what would we do?

Actually, the answer doesn't require much imagination, does it? We would mount an army against that leader and all his followers, and we would bomb them and shoot them and chase them and arrest them and ship them to Guantanamo Bay.

If we had the leader in question trapped in a room, we would not let him out and set him up again as a partner for peace. (Washington Post May 8)

Clinging to Arafat The Washington Times Editorial

Yesterday's suicide bombing at a billiards hall in Rishon LeZion, in which at least 16 people were killed and 60 more injured, is just the latest sign that Israel's war against terror is far from over. It remains to be seen whether the latest suicide bombing, which occurred while President Bush and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon were meeting at the White House, will drive home the reality to Mr. Bush that peace, and with it, an improvement in the lives of the Palestinians, is impossible so long as Yasser Arafat is running the Palestinian Authority (PA).

In recent weeks, Mr. Sharon and other senior Israeli officials have arrived in the United States armed with voluminous evidence of the role of Mr.

Arafat and the PA in the brutal wave of terrorist violence that has claimed the lives of at least 486 Israelis since September 2000. To cite but one of many examples, documents seized from Orient House, the PA's former headquarters in Jerusalem, show that Mr. Arafat authorized funding to Atef Abayat, a leader of the Al Aqsa Brigades in Bethlehem who is on Israel's most wanted list, and to 24 other members of Mr. Arafat's Fatah faction of the PLO wanted for carrying out terrorist attacks against Israel.

Equally disturbing is the wealth of information presented by Israel in the past few days showing the large role played by Saudi Arabia in financing Mr. Arafat's Palestinian terrorist infrastructure. Documents captured during Israel's recent military campaign against the Palestinian terror network in the West Bank, Operation Defensive Shield, show that the Saudis have paid \$135 million to terrorists and their families over the past 16 months, Col. Miri Eisen of Israeli Military Intelligence said. An 85-page dossier on the captured documents showed "the systematic and ongoing transfer of large sums of money to the Palestinians by official Saudi institutions for supporting the intifada," the Jerusalem Post reported yesterday.

Israeli military intelligence estimates that the families of dead terrorists receive as much as \$33,000 each (an amount equal to what they would earn from roughly six years of work) from a variety of sources, and that Iraq has increased its contribution to each family from \$10,000 to \$25,000, with the Saudis providing \$5,300, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar an additional \$500 and the PA kicking in another \$2,000.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration's response has been hopelessly muddled. Administration officials have yet to question the substance of the Israeli report; instead, they seem determined to ignore evidence of Saudi duplicity and Mr. Arafat's role in terrorism. Secretary of State Colin Powell, for example, continues traipsing around Washington with Saudi officials touting their "peace plan," as if everything is just swell, while White House spokesman Ari Fleischer and other officials made comments prior to yesterday's attack suggesting that Mr. Sharon shouldn't waste Mr. Bush's time with complaints about Mr. Arafat's role in terrorism.

As the horror in Rishon LeZion illustrates, Mr. Bush needs to swiftly repudiate such nonsense: All Mr. Sharon seeks is American support for dealing with the war being waged against his people by the Palestinian version of Osama bin Laden's terror network. He deserves strong American support, not sanctimonious handwringing and demands for more undeserved concessions to Mr. Arafat. (The Washington Times May 8)

What Israelis are Saying By Dennis Prager

I have just returned from a week in Israel. In addition to broadcasting my syndicated radio show, I also brought a crew to make a documentary on Israelis in a time of terror. I asked Israelis of every background these questions:

1. Why do you think that, with the exception of the United States, Israel is alone in the world?
2. Do you walk around afraid?
3. What is your primary feeling with regard to Arabs?

This is what I heard:

With regard to Israel's isolation, there were two overwhelming responses. About half of the respondents said that it is ultimately the fate of Jews to be alone. Religious Israelis attributed this to the burdens of being the Chosen People. One pretty, young, religious woman standing at a bus stop in downtown Jerusalem, the area most hit by terror, just smiled and said matter-of-factly, "We are an *am s'gulah*, a treasured people."

Nor were religious Israelis alone in attributing Israel's aloneness to its being Jewish. Many of the less religious and even secular attributed Israel's isolation to its Jewish nature and the anti-Semitism Israel therefore arouses.

The other half of the respondents said that they could not explain Israel's isolation. One Israeli after another said that the almost universal condemnation of Israel was utterly irrational. "We are one of the smallest countries on earth. What have we done that is so bad?" asked a middle-aged woman, almost begging for an answer.

Your heart has to go out to this undoubtedly large number of Israelis. I have always believed that the only thing worse than suffering is not to understand why you are suffering.

The irony is that both groups of Israelis are right. The intensity of the hatred toward Israel, a particularly decent country whose good deeds far outweigh its bad, does transcend the rational and therefore the transcendent explanations seem to be the most rational ones.

Regarding fear, the Israelis I interviewed acknowledged it openly. But they cope in a way that will one day become the stuff of legend – analogous to, if not surpassing, Londoners' strength under Nazi bombing.

Terror is a part of Israelis' lives that they loathe, but they are more than stoic, most seem actually optimistic. This was not something I expected (perhaps because I am less optimistic).

"It has to end; the only question is when," was said by so many Israelis that you could almost believe the words were rehearsed. It is not possible to spend more than a few days speaking with Israelis and not recognize that the vast majority would give away just about everything for true peace.

As for Israelis' feelings toward Arabs, I was again taken aback. Not one Israeli said he or she hated Arabs. And since I spoke Hebrew and identified myself as a Jew, they had no reason to censor themselves.

This does not mean that no Israelis hate Arabs, nor would such hatred necessarily be an immoral reaction to the terror and anti-Semitism the Arab world directs against them. But it does mean that, unlike their enemies, Israeli Jews are not good at hating.

What do they feel toward their Arab enemies? Many actually spoke of the suicide terrorists with understanding – "They are brainwashed from birth" was a frequent response. And anger at Arabs was usually tempered by noting that, of course, many individual Arabs are decent people.

Arafat is universally loathed and held in deep contempt by everyone including members of the peace community. He is regarded as a pathological liar, a gangster who is nothing more than a terrorist. Given these near-universal views, it is difficult to imagine how a peace agreement with Arafat could be reached.

I will never forget this week in Israel. Anyone who wants good to prevail over evil at this time in history should visit this extraordinary little country. Tell them they are not alone.

The writer is the author of several books and a frequent guest on television shows such as Larry King Live, Politically Incorrect, The Late Late Show on CBS, Rivera Live, The Early Show on CBS, Fox Family Network, The O'Reilly Factor and Hannity & Colmes. (WorldNetDaily.com May 7)

Give War a Chance By Frank Gaffney, Jr.

The conventional wisdom has it that the Middle East is a powder keg, poised to explode as Israelis and Palestinians throw around lighted matches with equal irresponsibility.

According to this theory, the United States must intervene at once if calamity is to be avoided.

Specifically, we are told, the Bush administration must force Israel to make concessions required to restart the peace process and bring it to an early and successful conclusion: Arafat must be rehabilitated and his proto-government and army rebuilt. Israeli settlement activity on the West Bank must be halted and dismantled. New negotiations must resume at once, with the starting point being the generous offer Israel's Ehud Barak made - and Arafat rejected - at the end of the Clinton administration.

And American "monitors" must swiftly be emplaced on the ground between the parties.

But what if the conventional wisdom is wrong?

What if, far from preventing conflict, such U.S. intervention would have the effect of preventing Israel from decisively defeating its enemy in the war on terror and emboldening the latter to continue its bloody "jihad" against the Jewish state?

Given the "group-think" that passes these days for informed analysis and opinion about the Middle East in many official and unofficial circles, it will strike some as outlandish that such a question is even being asked.

Yet, as Caroline Glick - a brilliant columnist for the Jerusalem Post who formerly served as an aide to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu - observed in last Friday's paper, this would hardly be the first time that the United States has acted to prevent Israel from "winning the war politically" by consolidating its military victories.

In fact, Washington has repeatedly saved the Jewish state's enemies from the sort of crushing defeat that often changes political and strategic realities - and sometimes the losing sides' leaders, or at least their willingness to make war.

As Ms. Glick recounts, in Arab-Israeli conflicts in 1956, 1967 and 1973, in Lebanon in 1982, and after the Gulf War, American administrations forced Israel to afford the vanquished opportunities to fight another day. Not surprisingly, time and again, they have done just that:

"Throughout this history, the U.S. has justified denying its democratic ally the fruits of its military victories against despotic aggressors 'in the interests of peace.' This policy has never brought peace, nor has it engendered stability. Rather, just as feeding the beast acts not to placate it but to strengthen it, so U.S. placation of the Arab world at Israel's expense has legitimized Arab rejection of Israel."

The ominousness of the Arab behavior encouraged by well-intentioned Americans is hard to overstate. According to Ms. Glick: "Never having to worry about losing irrevocably in their wars against Israel, rogue states like Syria, Iraq, and Iran ostentatiously build up non-conventional capabilities to destroy Israel. For their part, supposedly moderate regimes, like Saudi

Arabia and Egypt, are free to inspire as much anti-Israeli and anti-American sentiment as they wish, knowing there will never be a serious price to pay, even if this hatred foments a war they will lose."

The fact is that successive U.S. demands for Israel prematurely to end or curtail its operations - what might be called "combat-interruptus" - and pursue cease-fire and/or peace negotiations with her enemies have utterly failed to stop Arab aggression towards the Jewish state. Instead, they have given the Arabs the wrong sort of hope, encouraging the belief that the United States will see to it that terror, violence or even war against Israel pays.

It is time to consider a different approach: The Bush administration should not oppose Israel using its military might decisively for the purpose of eliminating, once and for all, Arafat's corrupt despotism - a precondition to the emergence of a new generation of Palestinian leaders who understand and genuinely accept that there really is no alternative to coexistence with Israel. Only then would a so-called "two-state" solution remotely be conducive to peace.

Could this prescription risk the wider war we are so anxious to avoid? It could, but so does the present approach. In fact, the danger of such a regional conflict is much greater if - thanks to American intervention - Israel is perceived by her enemies to lack freedom of action.

Even more perilous would be the all-too-correct perception that Israel has made itself vulnerable to a new, final Arab onslaught if it were to accede under present circumstances to U.S. and international pressure to relinquish the strategic depth and high ground of the West Bank.

Besides the fact that it has been an abject failure, there is one other argument for abandoning the policy of American hamstringing of Israel: Supporting "regime change" in the interest of permanently destroying terrorist infrastructures and the culture of rabid hostility towards Western democracies that they foment happens to be the explicit policy of the U.S. government in Afghanistan, Iraq and presumably beyond.

For Israel, as for this country, the only way to a real peace lies through prosecution of an effective, if discriminate, war on those who aid and abet terror. *The writer held senior positions in the Reagan Defense Department. He is currently president of the Center for Security Policy.* (Fox News May 8)

Ambassador of Death By Shlomo Avineri

Dr. Ghazi Algosaihi is one of the most accomplished contemporary poets in the Arabic language, and a few years ago he was a serious contender for the post of Director-General of UNESCO. For the past 10 years he has also been Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the Court of St. James, and has conducted himself with aplomb and style.

After September 11, he issued a statement strongly condemning the terrorist attacks, though not mentioning that 15 out of the 19 suicide murderers were Saudis. He added that "Islam is a religion of tolerance and no real Muslim can tolerate such horrendous crimes." So far so good.

Yet apparently Ambassador Algosaihi thinks that there are also good terrorists. On the front page of the London-based, Saudi-financed newspaper Al-Hayat, he recently published a poem in the form of an "Ode to a Martyr." In it he praises the 18-year-old suicide bomber Ayat Akhras, who on March 29 blew herself up in a Jerusalem supermarket, killing two people and wounding 25.

In this poem, Algosaihi writes: "Tell Ayat, the Sublime Bride/ That she embraced death with a smile,/ While the leaders are running away from death...Doors of heaven are open for her."

That this fascist-like fascination with death has now become the dominant political cult in much of the Arab world is one of the most despicable recent developments in Arab political culture. Yet, for an ambassador to compose an ode to a murderer is indeed beyond the pale.

According to any international standards - and certainly according to the Vienna Convention, which regulates the privileges and duties of diplomatic representatives - the British government should have declared Ambassador Algosaihi persona non grata and demanded his recall. But all that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office did was send a mild protest to the Saudi Embassy. Case closed.

This is beneath contempt. For a government of a democratic country to countenance the continued service on its soil of an ambassador praising murder and suicide attacks is an example of shameful cowardice and moral turpitude.

One would also expect a more robust response from the Israeli Foreign Ministry: Why has Foreign Minister Shimon Peres not used his famously close contacts with British Prime Minister Tony Blair to call upon Her Majesty's Government to demand the recall of Algosaihi?

Finally, there is the shameful, almost complete silence of the British Jewish community. The Board of Deputies of British Jews indeed has protested (mildly) to the British authorities, but there have been no public protests in front of the Saudi Embassy or the Foreign Office demanding the recall of the Poet-Ambassador of Death. Instead, the Board's director general, Neville Nagler,

has been engaged in a useless exchange with Algosaihi, in which the latter said he would not apologize for his poem unless the Board of Deputies condemns Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir, and Ariel Sharon as terrorists.

The President of the Board, Mrs. Jo Wagerman, has declined to answer appeals to her for a more assertive approach, preferring exchanges of letters with the Foreign Office to vociferous public demonstrations. Do she and her colleagues feel comfortable living in a country which tolerates an ambassador who praises murder?

There are legitimate ways of making an ambassador's life uncomfortable - as were employed against Soviet ambassadors during the years of repression of Jews in the USSR. Algosaihi is one ambassador who should not be allowed to have a moment's peace and quiet. Both Her Majesty's Government and British Jewry have a lot to answer for. (Jerusalem Post May 6)

The author is a former director-general of the Foreign Ministry. He is currently a visiting fellow at Collegium Budapest.

The 'D' Word Jerusalem Post Editorial

Just as Prime Minister Ariel Sharon arrives in Washington, a new and wonderful word has entered America's vocabulary on the Middle East: democracy.

After meeting with European leaders on Thursday, US President George W. Bush declared, "A Palestinian state... cannot be based on a foundation of terror or corruption. A Palestinian state must be based on the principles that are critical to freedom and prosperity: democracy and open markets, the rule of law, transparent and accountable administration, and respect for individual liberties and civil society." Bush continued, "We want... a Palestinian state that both lives at peace with Israel and lives up to the best hopes of its people." With these words, we see the moral clarity returning to Bush's presidency. Once said, these truths seem so simple and self-evident, but until now the world's beacon of democracy has refused to square its dream of a Palestinian state with the nightmare created by Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat. Finally, and before even Israel's government has said so in so many words, the US is admitting that the attempt to build peace upon a corrupt thugocracy is hopeless, and that peace and democracy must be pursued hand in hand.

Israel, to be sure, has never argued more strongly that Arafat is not a partner. But there is a difference between demonstrating, as Israel has, that Arafat's regime is hopelessly infected with terrorism, and making the connection between peace and democracy. Israeli leaders, from Yitzhak Rabin to Ariel Sharon, have argued vociferously over whether Arafat could be trusted to use his power to fight terrorism, but no sitting Israel prime minister has drawn the connection between dictatorship and aggression.

Natan Sharansky, who not coincidentally is the only Israeli leader who cut his teeth on the front lines of the Cold War, has been making this point for years. On Friday, in these pages, Sharansky revealed his plan for democratizing the Palestinian Authority, which, as he explained, "is based on the premise that only democracy and economic prosperity for the Palestinian people can bring security for Israel." Now Sharansky is in good company. Yesterday, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice forthrightly continued Bush's theme on Fox News: "We are going to be very clear that the Palestinian leadership that is there now, the authority, is not the kind of leadership that can lead the kind of Palestinian state we need." In other words, our problem with Arafat is not just that he is a terrorist (you don't have to prove that to us), but that a regime like his will never make peace with Israel.

True to form, Secretary of State Colin Powell is not yet singing off the same songsheet. Powell is insisting the US will resist Israeli proposals to sideline Arafat, and - incredibly even for him - is contending he's found the real problem. "Something has to be done about the problem of the settlements," Powell told NBC's Meet the Press, "settlements continue to grow and continue to expand." Even as a sop to the Arab states, it is embarrassing that the US secretary of state would talk as if Israel had not offered to withdraw from 97 percent of the territories in dispute, and as if Israelis were running to live over the Green Line. It is also repulsive that Powell feels the need to parrot the Palestinian attempt to draw some symmetry between terrorism and building houses.

But even if the American discovery of the need for Palestinian democracy has not sunken in everywhere, a truth has been uttered that has the power to change history. Proving the obvious - that Arafat is a terrorist - is all well and good, and not unrelated to the American revelation. But what is even more desperately needed now is for Israel to help Bush translate his new insight into a concrete policy. Purging Arafat, in other words, is not an end in itself, but a means to helping the Palestinians transform themselves from a nation dedicated to destroying Israel to a nation working to build itself. (Jerusalem Post May 6)