

## 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...

**Thursday May 22, 8:00pm**

*State of Israel Bonds presents Naomi Ragen at Adath Israel. For tickets, \$25, call 416-781-3351, ext. 126.*

### Commentary...

**The Roadblock on the Road Map** By Charles Krauthammer

Last June 24 President Bush announced a radical departure in American Middle East policy. He expressed strong support for Palestinian statehood, but only under a new, reformed Palestinian leadership that did not include Yasser Arafat.

The reason is uncomplicated: As long as Yasser Arafat wields power, there can and will be no peace between Israel and the Palestinians. In 2000 the most dovish Israeli government in history presented Arafat with the most generous offer the Palestinians have gotten from anyone -- a Palestinian state on 97 percent of the West Bank, with its capital in a shared Jerusalem. Arafat, intent on getting land without peace, responded by starting a now 31-month-old bloodbath.

For a long time, there was no Palestinian alternative to Arafat. Now there is. Abu Mazen, a close comrade of Arafat for 40 years, wanted to accept the Camp David 2000 deal. Moreover, Abu Mazen has spoken out against the intifada as a terrible historical mistake. Is he sincere? No one knows for sure, but his courage entitles him to at least a test of his sincerity.

On April 30, Abu Mazen was sworn in as prime minister by the Palestinian Legislative Council. The United States and its peace partners then released the "road map" to Palestinian statehood by 2005. The problem is that Abu Mazen is not yet in control. And he may never be.

The consistent and principled American policy had been that the road map and the push to statehood would occur only when a Palestinian government dedicated to real reform and real peace replaced the violent and corrupt Arafat regime. That has not occurred.

During the decade of the phony Oslo peace, Arafat had set up seven "security organizations" -- private militias and secret police -- under his command. They were supposed to be transferred to Abu Mazen's control. They have not been. Arafat still controls five of the seven, including Force 17, which is actively involved in terrorism.

And Arafat controls more than guns. In pre-confirmation backroom maneuvering, Arafat managed to pack the ostensible Abu Mazen cabinet with a dozen Arafat loyalists. Indeed, the crucial portfolios of foreign affairs and peace negotiations were given not to Abu Mazen's people but to Arafat's old guard.

The Bush administration can pretend that none of this has happened. It can pretend that Abu Mazen is really in control. It can pretend that Abu Mazen, without control of the security apparatus, is somehow going to stop the violence. That would be a precise repetition of the disaster of the Oslo "peace process," in which the United States willfully and repeatedly ignored the realities on the ground -- Arafat's corruption, incitement and support of terrorism -- until all hell broke loose in September 2000, and it could pretend no more.

To publish the road map with Arafat still wielding enormous power over security, terrorism and negotiations is simply to step back into the Oslo morass. It can end only as Oslo did.

What to do? The only way peace will be possible is if we stick to the June 24 principle that Arafat must go. That means freezing the road map until Abu Mazen is ceded real control. This is a strategic decision the Palestinians themselves must make. But the United States should not be inducing them to make the wrong one.

The shunning of Arafat by the Bush administration helped bring Abu Mazen out of nowhere. To relax that shunning now, to reward the Palestinians by

demanding Israeli concessions and by encouraging negotiations while the violence continues with the support and cooperation of Arafat, will do nothing but strengthen Arafat and doom any chance for a real transfer of power.

But that is precisely what our road map partners, the Europeans, are doing. They insist on having some pompous official -- the latest is German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer --

ostentatiously visit Arafat in his compound, keeping alive his claim to "international legitimacy." Even Britain's Jack Straw, foreign secretary of our closest and warmest ally, said: "Arafat is still the person who we are dealing with." (Asharq al-Awsat, May 1.)

Nothing could be worse for peace. On June 24, 2002, the United States told the Palestinians: If you want a state, we will get you one. But you won't get there with Arafat, who has led you into a wilderness of blood and with whom we cannot deal because he will never make peace. This brought ferment among the Palestinians and brought Abu Mazen to the fore. But it is diplomatic suicide to stop that reform process now by proceeding along the road map as if Arafat didn't exist, when he is in fact still pulling levers. And triggers. (Washington Post May 9)

**Where's Our Diplomatic Horizon?** Jerusalem Post Editorial

US Secretary of State Colin Powell's message here can be summarized in two words: Get started. The destination of the road map for Palestinians is clear a state. But why should we get started when the destination for Israel is deliberately left murky?

This is the imbalance that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon sought to address when he stated that Israel will not move forward to create a provisional Palestinian state unless the Palestinians renounce the "right of return" to Israel.

Powell's response to this idea has been chilly. In the air on the way here he said, "If [requiring such a Palestinian commitment] becomes an initial upfront issue, then it will complicate progress." In his press conference with Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom on Saturday night he said, "I think we should get started now, recognizing how difficult issues such as the right of return are... But let's not let it be a roadblock now to getting started."

Let's get this straight. The right of return is not just a difficult issue, it is the show-stopper for Israel. It is the negation of every Palestinian promise to recognize Israel's right to exist. So unless this part of the end point is settled now, there is nothing to start.

This is not to say that the fate of the Palestinian diaspora should not be on the final-status negotiating table. It is to say that Israel must know going in that the right of return is limited to a Palestinian state and not to Israel itself.

Israel's position on this has become somewhat difficult to understand given how effectively the Palestinians have captured the terminology of this issue. The fact is that the terms "right," "return," and "refugees" are all largely lies built on kernels of truth.

Yes, there are UN resolutions that touch on the issue, but the famous Resolution 194 is, first, non-binding and, second, does not require Israel to take back anyone contrary to Israeli interests. There is then no right, only a demand that Palestinians make.

Yes, some Palestinians personally left Israel in 1948 (such as Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas) and therefore can speak of return to Israel, but this is just a fraction of the 4 million Palestinians. Applying the term "return" to all Palestinians is therefore grossly misleading. And yes, there were Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war, but Palestinians are the only people who are considered refugees generations later, regardless of how settled they become. Millions of refugees from World War II and countless conflicts that followed are no longer called refugees why Palestinians?

But terminology is not the main problem here, but what is behind it. The Palestinians must get used to the idea that they cannot stake a claim to Palestine and Israel at the same time, while pretending they are for a two-state solution. They cannot say that want every Israeli booted out of their territory, while retaining the right to move to Israel.

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The United States knows this. Many Palestinians know this. But there is no advantage to postponing the job of admitting it, and great disadvantages in leaving the matter ambiguous.

There is great understanding that the Palestinians need constant reminders of their diplomatic horizon, namely, that in the end they will have a state. This is so important that the road map requires an "unequivocal" Israeli commitment to an "independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian state" at the outset, despite the fact that statehood is a final-status issue.

There is almost no understanding that this same need for a diplomatic horizon exists on the Israeli side, arguably more so. It is Israelis, after all who have been victims of a wave of terrorism from the people they are being told want to live peacefully beside them. And it is the Palestinians who, even as Israelis increasingly came to back the idea of a Palestinian state, have not begun to abandon their demand to achieve demographically what they have failed to achieve through terrorism.

The road map is essentially a continuation of the presumed-dead Oslo agreement, both in letter and in spirit. That Israel would entertain returning to the path of Oslo is itself remarkable. That it would do so as if the last 30 months of terror had no meaning is not realistic.

The new Israeli requirement that the Palestinians renounce all demands to return to Israel proper, as opposed to their own state, is essentially the only formal amendment that Israel is asking to make in the Oslo paradigm.

It is an amendment that says, "We were willing to trust you that this was about building your state and not dismantling ours, but now we need more proof." Powell has displayed a tin ear toward this Israeli need. Israelis will be watching closely whether President George W. Bush displays greater understanding. (Jerusalem Post May 11)

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### **Don't Reward Palestinian Terror** By Uzi Landau

The election of Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) as "Palestinian prime minister" raises a number of questions, one of them posed by the Palestinian's Authority Marwan Barghouti, now standing trial for the murder of dozens of civilians: "If Abu Mazen is prime minister, how is it that I am a terrorist?"

Who is the real Abu Mazen? He is author of the PLO's phased plan for the destruction of Israel. He is also a Holocaust denier.

In his book *The Secret Relationship between Zionism and Nazism* he claims that the Zionist movement had an interest in inflating the number of Holocaust victims. In fact, says, Abu Mazen, "only 890,000 Jews were murdered, because there were no gas chambers."

Abu Mazen's opposition to terrorism these past two years relates to the harm it has done to the Palestinian cause. He consistently supports murdering Jews in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, where "it is beneficial."

He insists on appointing Muhammad Dahlan, who as minister of domestic security ordered the blowing up of the children's bus in Kfar Darom. What future government minister would intentionally seek to kill children on their way to school?

And he supports the return of the 1948 refugees.

With his cultivated appearance Abu Mazen serves as a European-manipulated Trojan horse intended to mislead Americans into thinking a new prime minister means a new PA.

But the message he is bringing the Palestinian public is not fundamentally new. As long as there is no essential change in the PA, the question of its leader is merely tactical and cosmetic.

The road map in its current form was born not of President George W. Bush's determination to fight terrorism, but of the defeatist spirit and cynical interests of the Quartet.

Instead of punishing the PA for its blatant violation of Oslo and stipulating that peace hinges on replacing the Palestinian leadership, the road map grants them unprecedented gains. For instance: the establishment of a Palestinian state as a non-negotiable principle; "ending the occupation that began in 1967"; internationalizing the conflict by giving the Quartet monitoring powers; dismantling outposts, and freezing settlements all bonuses the Palestinians didn't even receive in Oslo.

Since September 11, 2001, Americans have viewed terrorism as a great danger to Western civilization. President George W. Bush declared war on countries that support terrorism until it is uprooted. That is what Afghanistan and in Iraq were all about.

According to his June 2002 vision, "Peace demands a new and different Palestinian leadership" and "leaders who were not party to terrorism." That being the case President Bush should not meet Abu Mazen, just as he refused to meet Saddam Hussein's representatives. Bush surely understands that uprooting evil is a precondition to negotiations. Abu Mazen simply does not meet Bush's own criteria. Will the US nevertheless retreat and invite him to Washington?

Moreover, the Palestinian leadership will be "new and different" only if it renounces the return of the refugees, and especially and this is the litmus test for

its desire for peace conveys the value of peace in the Palestinian education system.

This should begin by removing the inciteful textbooks that have educated a generation of suicide bombers.

For Israel and Palestine to "live alongside each other in peace and security," according to Bush's vision, it is vital for Palestine be demilitarized. Moreover, it should be prohibited from signing international defense pacts.

Finally, Israel must have complete control over the airspace west of the Jordan.

None of these prerequisites are even mentioned in the road map. It is not formulated in harmony with Bush's June 24 vision, but as the brainchild of France's Jacques Chirac and Germany's Gerhard Schroeder. The message of the road map even if unintended is troubling. Is it possible that the Palestinians, who gave out candy in the streets on September 11, are now getting candy from the US? How is it that America is appeasing the Europeans who acted to thwart it, and appeasing the Palestinians, Saddam's allies, by badly hurting its own ally, Israel? Won't this double message cause serious damage to the credibility of American policy and its determination to fight terrorism?

Despite all the above, Israel may decide it is tactically desirable to negotiate with Abu Mazen, to offer small gestures and see whether he acts to create a "new and different" PA.

But let us not forget for one minute the nature of Abu Mazen and the PA, and the bitter lessons of Oslo.

Any gestures must take care not to breathe new life into Yasser Arafat or undermine the war against terrorism. For a real chance at peace, Israel must not stray from the central goal: changing the PA's genetic code.

Abu Mazen and his government do not reflect substantial change but only help the Europeans mislead the US in an attempt to impose the road map. Without the basic stipulations outlined earlier, it is absolutely unacceptable.

Let us pray the Bush Administration does not fall into the European trap. Israel certainly cannot afford to. (Jerusalem Post May 11)

*The writer is a minister-without-portfolio in charge of auditing the secret services and strategic relations with the US.*

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### **Overcoming Terror** By Gil Troy

*On Israel's Independence Day, one has to marvel at the country's compulsion to defy violence and get back to normal after attacks*

As we left Ben-Gurion Airport at the start of a recent visit to Israel, my 5-year-old asked: "Where are the ruins?" Alas, he was not looking for the 2,200-year-old archaeological site he and his sister would help excavate a week later; he was searching for the "ruins" from the Palestinians' war of terror against Israel.

My son's question reflected the prevailing misconception about Israel today. Despite enduring years of terror, Israel is not a war zone. On this 55th anniversary of Israel's founding, to focus on the carnage is to miss much of the story. Western democracies should look to Israel as a model for how to cope with terrorism. The true headline should be that Israel continues to thrive, with its first-class universities and cutting-edge technology firms, with its cacophony of cultures and its sometimes chaotic democracy.

One cannot minimize the pain so many individuals have suffered, or the fear lurking in the back of so many minds. Random decisions -- to go to the supermarket rather than to the pharmacy first -- can ruin lives. Yet what most strikes a Western visitor is the Israeli compulsion to defy terror, the Israeli commitment to restoring everything back to "normal" after attacks, as the Pentagon workers did in rushing ahead to rebuild after Sept. 11.

The attacks that "succeed" are tragic anomalies that should not define Israel's image. When suicide bombers penetrate Israel's tightened security net, six million citizens pause, mourn, then resume their routines, showing up for work and school, creating massive traffic jams morning and night, crowding their cafes, restaurants, theatres, symphonies, discos, and synagogues, sometimes with guards posted, sometimes without.

Israelis have developed pet theories to fight their phantom enemy. "Homebodies" trust familiar surroundings and define somewhere they rarely frequent as the danger zone. "Trinitarians" pick three places or activities to avoid -- for those who can afford it, riding buses is the activity most frequently shunned. "Strategists" try to assess whether the site they plan to visit is a worthy target. "Statisticians" balance the relatively few moments of terror that have killed people against the number of potential targets (six million) multiplied by the number of waking moments the individuals have been outside over the past two years. "Fatalists" accept the notion that they cannot control their destinies, maintaining routines with a shrug.

These coping mechanisms keep Israelis moving. In fact, contrary to the terrorists' intentions, the Palestinian onslaught has triggered an ideological revival in a country that in the 1990s seemed to be drifting. Post-Zionism is passé. Some intellectuals distanced themselves from their earlier tendencies

to blame Israel first. An icon of the left, Amos Oz, has excoriated Israel's radical intelligentsia for developing an unprecedented "scale of hatred for the entire self-existence," not just the present government, but the culture itself. "I see sweeping hatred for the architecture, for the music, the folk songs, the memories, for everything," Oz lamented.

In this post-post-Zionist era, patriotism is returning, this famously fractious nation is more united, despite the recent campaign rhetoric. Headlines last spring focused on 300 officers who refused to serve in the disputed territories; the true story was in overwhelming response of civilian reservists to the call-up in April, after terrorists murdered 131 Israelis in March.

While Israelis still proudly maintain their black humor and cynicism, there is a growing fascination with Israeli history and the ideals of yesteryear. Public sing-alongs and Hebrew music, key elements of the nationalist Zionist culture of the 1950s, were mocked in the 1990s, but are enjoying a revival. In a charming mix of the old Israel and the new, every other Thursday night young people crowd into a 49th floor club atop one of Tel Aviv's gleaming Azrieli Towers to sing the old standards. The daily Ha'aretz attributes the resurgence to "the security situation, which has created a longing to curl up in the bosom of familiar, old Israeliness."

What started happening in the United States after Sept. 11 is happening in Israel as well. A sense of community is being rediscovered. Patriotism, idealism, altruism, and the best kind of nationalist collectivism focused on common values are reviving. The terrorists have indeed terrified millions, and traumatized thousands, but they have not demoralized America or Israel. "We've won," one Israeli war veteran, a produce wholesaler, told me. "Now we just have to shape the peace." To the extent that terrorism is a form of psychological warfare, such ideological resolve, reinforced by military might, offers the only effective response.

Bowing to Israeli resolve, the new Palestinian Prime Minister has declared that "there is no military solution to our conflict." The world awaits evidence that Abu Mazen will reinforce those words with action and begin weaning Palestinian society from the nihilistic cult of terror and murder that has festered over the years. Meanwhile we must applaud the resolute citizens of sister democracies who demonstrate that terrorism is not just evil but unsuccessful. Israelis and Americans are proving that terrorism can kill and terrorism can terrify but terrorism cannot and will not win. (Montreal Gazette May 7)

*The writer is a history professor at McGill University.*

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### Reporters sans Scruples, By Evelyn Gordon

Reporters Sans Frontieres, the international media association, marked UNESCO's World Press Freedom Day on May 3 by adding nine new names to its list of "predators of press freedom," bringing the total to 42.

One of the new additions was Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. According to RSF, "predators" are individuals or organizations who "order violations of press freedom and have others do the deed. All have the power to jail, kidnap, torture and even kill journalists."

Sharon's specific crime, the organization said, is that he "chairs the Israeli Security Cabinet, which has launched several military operations on Palestinian towns since March 2002. The effect of the virtual absence of sanctions against soldiers targeting journalists has been an unprecedented decline of press freedom: Three reporters were killed covering the news [in 2002], eight reporters were wounded by bullets, 70 reporters came under gunfire, and the army has either occupied or destroyed at least 15 foreign or Palestinian media offices."

That RSF's evaluation is hardly unbiased is immediately apparent from the first sentence: its declaration that Sharon is a "predator" because he ordered military incursions into Palestinian towns.

Unless one argues that any military operation by definition violates press freedom which RSF clearly does not, since the leaders of many other countries that conducted military operations last year, including the US and India, are not on its list Sharon's decision to conduct military operations against terrorist organizations is irrelevant to the issue of whether he respects freedom of the press.

Equally astounding is the implication that Sharon is responsible for "the virtual absence of sanctions" against soldiers who killed or injured journalists. As RSF knows perfectly well, Israel has an independent legal system over which Sharon has no control. Decisions on whether to indict soldiers who injure journalists are made by the military prosecution, which, despite being part of the army, is completely autonomous.

In Israel's legal system only two institutions have the power to either dictate to or overrule the military prosecution: the independent attorney-general and the Supreme Court. This power is not granted to either Sharon or the chief of staff.

Then there is the assertion without a shred of proof that the Israel Defense Forces deliberately "target" journalists. According to RSF's own statistics, IDF soldiers were responsible for three of the 26 journalists killed worldwide last year. That is an astonishingly low figure by any standard, given that Israel is host to one of the largest foreign press corps in the world, that it places almost

no restrictions on these journalists' movements, and that most of them opt to report from the Palestinian side of the lines, in areas where there is almost daily fighting.

By comparison, nine journalists were killed in Iraq in just the past two months even though most journalists in that country are "embedded" in coalition forces and thus surrounded by soldiers charged with protecting them.

What makes the allegation of targeting even more ridiculous is that there is a "control group" available for comparison: Palestinian terror organizations, which Israel really does target, suffered hundreds of dead and wounded last year. Had the IDF actually been targeting journalists, press casualties would be far higher than three deaths and eight injuries.

This is not the first time RSF has exhibited blatant anti-Israel bias. Last October, for instance, it placed Israel 92nd in its rankings of press freedom, 10 places below the Palestinian Authority even though RSF's own report charges that the PA exerted "pressure on Palestinian and foreign journalists to prevent them from covering" certain events, that its state-sponsored media "incit[ed] hatred or murder" which explains why Israel has "occupied or destroyed" Palestinian media offices and that "certain foreign journalists, like their Palestinian confreres, practice self-censorship for fear of threats, intimidation or violence."

These are all genuine violations of press freedom ones, needless to say, of which RSF does not accuse Israel. What RSF's complaint against Israel and Sharon actually boils down to is that neither has been able to solve a problem that has eluded solution since the dawn of human history: how to guarantee the safety noncombatants in a combat zone.

Even with the most sophisticated military equipment, it is not always possible to identify a journalist among a crowd of armed men particularly when the fighters are not in uniform, when the journalist usually physically resembles them (most of the casualties have been Palestinian journalists, sometimes employed by foreign agencies), and when journalistic equipment is not always easily distinguishable from weaponry (the lowly cellular telephone, used by all journalists, is also the terrorist organizations' preferred weapon for detonating bombs).

Nor is it always possible, even with the most sophisticated equipment, for a soldier to ensure that every bullet fired in the heat of combat goes exactly where he wants it: A hairsbreadth's error in aiming can cause the bullet to err by several feet and hit a target the soldier never intended.

There is, of course, one simple solution to the problem: Israel could ban all journalists from any area where its troops are operating. That really would be a violation of press freedom, to which RSF could justly object. But precisely because Israel does respect freedom of the press, it has always permitted foreign journalists to go where they will.

And as long as many of them use that freedom to report from combat zones, casualties will unfortunately be inevitable. (Jerusalem Post May 12)

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### What Grows in Cherie's English Garden By Sarah Honig

I must confess that Cherie Blair from 10 Downing Street Tony's better half had rubbed me the wrong way for quite a while. There was some intangible quality about her which always intuitively made me suspect that she wasn't overly fond of Jews. But then I recalled stories my late mother told me about the British back in Mandatory Palestine. The local "bloody natives," as Yishuv Jews were known to occupying forces, realized that the variety of anti-Semites sent here from the UK was quite different from the vulgar, in-your-face Eastern European model. This was particularly true of higher-class commissioned officers.

To them one was anti-Semitic only if he hated Jews "even when it wasn't absolutely necessary." An anti-Semite was someone whose dislike for Jews was somewhat excessive, beyond the realms of proper taste. This certainly isn't true of Cherie.

I understood this a year or so ago when she argued that suicide bombers act out of utter desperation. Israeli occupation, she intoned, had rendered the poor, hungry, direly-oppressed Palestinian masses, straining piteously under a brutal yoke, so hopeless that they were ready to blow themselves up. She denied she was justifying terror, stressing, with just the right tone of righteous indignation, that we needed to examine what made young people despair so. At that moment I knew that Cherie was no anti-Semite because she had found a reason to be cross with Jews. She basically told us that the slaughter on our streets wasn't terrorism but a legitimate struggle for freedom. A blunter way of putting it would have been that we had it coming and that we brought it on ourselves, but Cherie is too classy for that.

Had she not been out of earshot, I'd have asked her if the 19 plane hijackers who brought down the Twin Towers were also victims of appalling Israeli injustice. They too committed suicide in the course of perpetrating their crime. Did Cherie ever wonder, I wondered, what made all those Saudis and Egyptians lose all hope?

I revisited the subject following reports that journalist Daniel Pearl had been decapitated in Pakistan by a British native who regarded the execution of Jews as morally justified. What troubled me was that this cold-blooded murderer didn't suffer from Jewish repression, but was pampered by Brits.

Then came the case of Richard Reid, another Muslim with Her Majesty's passport. He tried unsuccessfully to blow up a plane in midair by igniting explosives concealed in his footwear. What was his motive? Was he victimized by Jews?

I was never as much at a loss as when it emerged that the suicide bomber who took three innocent lives at Mike's Place on Tel Aviv's sea front was a London lad, and that his absconded accomplice was born and bred in Derby, went to posh private schools and enjoyed the best Britain could offer.

For the life of me I couldn't figure what depravation and what Jewish transgression had robbed these products of British democracy of the last tatters of joie de vivre. Here, after all, are chaps who had so much of the English good life to look forward to and who enjoyed all the liberties and opportunities, which, according to Cherie, Israelis deny Palestinians.

Could she account for their bloodlust? My perplexity deepened last week when suspected accessories to the Mike's Place atrocity were arrested in Derbyshire, of all places far away from Israeli tanks.

Imagine my bewilderment at The Observer's disclosure that leaflets were circulated in various UK cities calling on local Muslims to join the suicide-bombing fad. The Sunday Telegraph aggravated my confusion a few days ago when it interviewed escaped bomber Omar Sharif's erstwhile neighbor, who explained approvingly that martyrdom was honorable in Islam. He judged it was only a matter of time till the faithful replicated in London their heroic deed at Mike's Place.

The London Times quoted a British Islamic cleric as saying he knew of 50 would-be British martyrs, and on BBC World Tim Sebastian interviewed a fiery-eyed British Muslim lawyer who justified killing Jews in Britain too. "Why just in Israel?" he inquired. He thought Islam should rule the UK and that Muslims were entitled to regain control of Spain. Even Cherie might have trouble connecting this to Israel. Perhaps she'd dismiss the above as insignificant extremist ravings and request that we not cast aspersions on moderate Muslims. My problem, though, is that these judicious middle-of-the-road Muslims are so elusive that I sometimes fear they exist only in theory. Granted, occasionally some Islamic functionary will claim to represent them, but he'll invariably express understanding for his radical co-religionists, while heaping more calumny on Israel.

No such self-proclaimed moderate I ever heard did much to dispel the impression of an aggressive, expansionist, exclusionist, intolerant, fanatical and violent Islam.

It's at such moments that I suspect that the "axis of evil" has taken root in Cherie's own ever-so-pretty English garden. Perhaps Tony needn't have gone all the way to Iraq to fight the good fight. Stuff and nonsense, Cherie would doubtlessly respond, noting that homegrown villains and their sympathizers vote in British elections and it makes jolly good sense not to tangle with them. On the other hand it makes perfect political sense for Tony to press for American pressure on Israel.

Politically Cherie's role can become most useful too. She isn't just running off at the mouth when censuring Israel. She appeases the Blairs' Muslim constituents, who far outnumber Jewish ones. Anyway, Israelis needn't be so petulant. Tony may draw parallels between Israel and Saddam's Iraq, but he often assures us that we couldn't ask for a better friend than him.

It's therefore his friendly prerogative to keep us out of trouble. The most disagreeable thing about Jews is that they're always getting themselves into some scrape or another.

Indeed the Mandate's British non-anti-Semites of my mother's recollections often maintained that "It's not easy to like Jews because they are always connected with unpleasant things, like pogroms." (Jerusalem Post May 15)

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### Many Detours on the Road Map to Peace By Danielle Smith

When the U.S. unveiled its road map for the Middle East on April 30, it was lauded as a proposal that will bring lasting peace to the region. The stated goals of the plan are fine, but achieving them is another matter. Success may already be compromised by the ludicrously short timeline for its implementation, and the fact that many of the corrupt point-men from Yasser Arafat's inner circle are the very people who have been selected to lead the Palestinians to independent statehood.

The road map is endorsed by what has become known as "the quartet" -- the U.S., the European Union, Russia and the United Nations -- with the ambitious intention to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. If it works, by 2005 the region will have an "independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours." Who wouldn't support that?

The three-phase plan even has the right starting point, acknowledging that peace will only be achieved if there is an end to violence and terrorism, if both sides commit to the goal of a negotiated settlement, and if the Palestinians have leaders who act "decisively against terror" and "build a practising democracy based on tolerance and liberty." However, there are good reasons to doubt it will be possible under new Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas. But first, more about the road map.

The goal of Phase I is to end terror and violence, normalize life for the Palestinians and rebuild their institutions. Phase II is a transition period, where a Palestinian state is created with provisional borders, a constitution and some elements of sovereignty. Phase III will bring the conflict to an end and make the borders permanent.

The overly ambitious plan calls for comprehensive political reform, electoral reform, security force consolidation, financial reform, administrative reform, judicial reform and the unconditional cessation of violence -- all to be achieved by the end of May, just three weeks from now. Good luck.

Phase II is supposed to run from June to December, and Phase III in the year to follow. These timeframes are unrealistic, and U.S. President George Bush may soon find himself in the same political quagmire as his predecessors.

Just like the Oslo peace process, this plan leaves all the deal-breakers -- Israeli settlements, borders, control of Jerusalem and the right of return for Palestinian "refugees" -- to be sorted out at the end. These issues should be on the table from the start.

The Palestinians have taken what is viewed to be an important step, establishing an interim government led by Abbas and a new cabinet. But Arafat remains president, and has bragged that he hand-picked Abbas for the job of PM, which raises troubling questions about his independence. The first modest steps toward power-sharing were fraught with crisis. Arafat was prepared to nix Abbas's cabinet, because he objected to Abbas's choice of Mohammed Dahlan for security minister. If not for an 11th-hour intervention by Omar Suleiman, the Egyptian intelligence chief, the entire process would have been derailed.

The cabinet still contains Arafat loyalists, while Abbas and Dahlan are considered "moderates." Just how moderate are they? Abbas is Arafat's deputy in the PLO. In 1983, he received his PhD from Moscow's Oriental University. His dissertation topic was "The Secret Relationship between Nazism and Zionism" -- an offensive tract on Holocaust denial and Jewish conspiracy, which he has only mildly renounced.

Dahlan is no model citizen, either. Three times since 1997, he has been implicated in terrorist attacks on Israeli school buses. The last, in November 2000, killed two adults and injured five children.

In fact, if the U.S. were to create a deck of cards of the most-wanted Palestinian officials, these men might well be in it. In Iraq, the U.S. understood the government institutions had to be "de-Ba'ath'd" to ensure a permanent change. In the Palestinian Authority, the U.S. is content to merely shuffle the deck.

There is no evidence that cultural change is underway. Palestinian Media Watch reports, in the week before the road map was unveiled, the Palestinian Authority TV repeatedly broadcast a music video calling for the murder of Jews in the disputed areas complete with images of masked gunmen firing automatic rifles. The video also contains images of Jewish towns, and civilian Jews going about their everyday lives, implying them as targets. The words of this little ditty say: "Pour over the settlements great flames/Foreigners have no place in this land." Does this sound like a government that's preparing for peace?

The PLO charter still enshrines the destruction of Israel as a goal, for Pete's sake. Even after the Oslo peace process, in which both Israel and the PA committed to working together for a two-state solution, Palestinian textbooks remain riddled with anti-Jewish references, and commercials and children's programs teach Palestinian children the greatest glory is to be a martyr.

Before there can be peace, there needs to be a massive deprogramming campaign for the Palestinian people. For that to happen, the PA must stop inciting violence in the government newspapers, radio and television, in the schools and the mosques, and end the fanatical cult of suicide martyrdom.

Does anyone really believe Abbas and his cabinet full of Arafat sycophants will be the ones who do it? If not, the "quartet" must have the courage to find and support Palestinian leaders who will. (Calgary Herald May 11)

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