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Commentary...

Tough Love from Israel's Friends By Jeff Jacoby

Ehud Olmert's first visit to Washington as Israel's prime minister was not high on the eventful. What with meeting President Bush at the White House, addressing a joint session of Congress, and taking part in all the other social and substantive activities that get packed into a Washington summit, Olmert probably didn't have much time to hang out and watch TV. So he may not have seen a new television ad that takes aim directly at Israel's ongoing campaign of territorial surrender.

The ad pulls no punches. Israeli withdrawals from south Lebanon and Gaza, it says, have played into Al Qaeda's hands and increased the terror threat "for Israel and for us." Olmert's proposed "convergence" program in the West Bank -- a follow-up to last year's unilateral retreat from the Gaza Strip, when 21 communities were destroyed and 9,000 Israelis were expelled -- will only intensify that threat. "Albert Einstein defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results," the ad biting observes. "We cannot afford any more of this insanity."

Condemnation of the Jewish state by its detractors is nothing new, but this TV spot isn't the work of an Israel-basher. It is part of a campaign launched by the Center for Security Policy, a Washington think tank committed to pursuing international peace through American strength. For years, the center has staunchly supported Israel's right to defend itself against its enemies. Why is such a longtime ally so publicly opposing the new prime minister and his signature policy?

The same question might be asked of Joseph Farah, the editor of WorldNetDaily and one of Israel's most outspoken Christian defenders. In a recent column headlined "I give up on Israel," Farah said he was appalled by Olmert's determination to hand over more than 90 percent of the West Bank to the Palestinian Authority, describing it as a "national retreat" and "appeasement of the global jihad." Last summer's evacuation from Gaza, he wrote, was an "unmitigated disaster." Hamas, an Islamist terror organization, now controls the territory and is turning it into a Taliban-style haven to be used as a staging ground for further attacks. To replicate such a debacle on an even larger scale in the West Bank is not statesmanship, but stupidity.

"I'm through making excuses for Israel," a disillusioned Farah declared. "I'm through trying to understand the incomprehensible moves of a self-flagellating nation."

It isn't only in TV spots and on the Internet that Israel's plans for another destabilizing self-expulsion are being blasted. Protesters descended on Capitol Hill yesterday, some traveling hundreds of miles to urge the Bush administration to refuse its support for another Israeli retreat. Writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, former CIA director James Woolsey pointed out that a "West Bank terrorist state" -- the foreseeable result of the Olmert plan -- would mortally threaten not only Israel but its moderate Arab neighbor, Jordan, as well. "Israeli concessions will also make the US look weak," Woolsey warned. Washington's approval of yet another territorial surrender to Hamas and its allies will signal that we are "reverting to earlier behavior patterns -- fleeing Lebanon in 1983, acquiescing in Saddam Hussein's destruction of the Kurdish and Shi'ite rebels in 1991, fleeing Somalia in 1993." Those behavior patterns eventually led to 9/11.

In a democracy, it is said, people get the leaders they deserve. Israeli voters chose Olmert in a free and fair election, knowing full well that he intended to "disengage" from the enemy by giving up more land. If that enemy threatened only the Israel, perhaps a case could be made for letting Israelis lie in the bed they themselves have made.

But Israel's enemy -- a murderous Palestinian regime and the international terror network of which it is a part -- is our enemy, too. "By Allah," proclaimed Sheik Ibrahim Mudayris in a sermon broadcast on Palestinian TV,

ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee
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בס"ד

"the day will come and we will rule America. . . . We shall rule the entire world." When Florida teenager Daniel Wultz was horribly wounded in a recent suicide bombing in Tel Aviv, terrorist leaders rejoiced that an American was among the casualties. After Daniel died of his injuries last week, Abu Nasser of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades cheered the news as "a gift from Allah" and promised Americans "more Daniel Wultzes and

more pain and sorrow."

Israel cannot afford to succumb once again to the delusion that retreating in the face of terror will bring safety and peace of mind. Wars are not won by evacuations, as Winston Churchill told his British countrymen after the rescue from Dunkirk in 1940. Israelis, weary after so many years under siege, wish to pretend otherwise? Then it is up to their friends to tell them the truth.

(Boston Globe May 24)

The writer is a columnist for *The Boston Globe*.

Olmert's Folly By Frank J. Gaffney, Jr.

The Bush administration should tell visiting Israeli prime minister: "Friends don't let friends commit suicide!"

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is in Washington this week on a sales campaign. He hopes to secure the United States' approval and financing (perhaps as much as \$10 billion) for his controversial plan to withdraw unilaterally Israeli civilians and troops from nearly all of the West Bank and even parts of Jerusalem. He would settle, however, for American acquiescence - which he could then use to suppress debate at home about what amounts to state-icide.

The danger arises from the fact that the beneficiary of Israel's proposed surrender of territory will be her Islamofascist enemies. They include Hamas, the terrorist group that came to power in Gaza after Israel withdrew unilaterally last year from that relatively tiny piece of real estate. If the experience with Gaza is any guide, however, Hamas will turn the West Bank into a Taliban-style safe-haven for other terrorists including: al Qaeda, Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard.

From the Gaza Strip, such enemies of Israel have launched daily mortar, rocket and/or artillery attacks, by some counts as many as 500 since the Israelis "disengaged." Fortunately, the areas of the Jewish State thus far within range are largely agricultural and thinly populated - with the notable exception of the important port city of Ashkelon. As a result, there have been no casualties to date, even from attacks on Ashkelon's vital electrical, oil pipeline and water desalination infrastructure.

That will almost certainly change over time, however, as the experience and accuracy of Islamofascist terrorists in Gaza and the range and lethality of their weapons improve. Such improvements are being facilitated by the now-essentially-open border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. The fact that the Mubarak regime in Cairo tolerates, if not enables, the transit of anti-Israel terrorists and their ordinance is just one manifestation of the latter's increasingly overt hostility to the Jewish State, with whom it is nominally at peace.

Even relatively inaccurate gunners and primitive weapons would be capable of inflicting great harm on Israel from the West Bank, however. Every population center, major highway and the country's main civilian airport would be within range. Such attacks would be sure to take a toll, in lives and in economic activity.

Some will argue that it should be up to Israel whether such risks are acceptable or not. The repercussions of Israel's withdrawal will not be hers to bear alone, however. American equities are on the line as well.

For one, the effect of withdrawal is likely to be to weaken Israel considerably, reducing it from a powerful and self-reliant strategic ally to a potential liability, one unduly dependent on the United States for its security. For example, Israel's economy, which is heavily dependent upon trade and tourism, could be severely disrupted by terrorist attacks on aircraft flying to and from Ben Gurion airport and upon other critical infrastructure. For another, some forty percent of the Jewish State's water supply comes from

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West Bank aquifers; a disruption of access to such precious resources in a desert could constitute an existential danger.

A terrorist state on the West Bank will translate, moreover, into a threat to others in the region. It would surely result in the destabilization and quite possibly the end of Hashemite Jordan. The effect would be a combining of Jordan's territory, well-armed military and the 80% of its population that is Palestinian with the radical, Hamas-ruled state next door. The effort to consolidate the liberation of Iraq would also be jeopardized as one of two U.S. re-supply routes into the country - from Israeli ports across Jordan - becomes vulnerable to al Qaeda and others' attacks.

More to the point, the evident strategic retreat in the face of terror that the Israeli withdrawal will represent - not just for the Jewish State, but for the Free World in general and the United States in particular - can only be an encouragement to our enemies and a warning to our friends: The "strong horse," as bin Laden puts it, is the irresistible and growing power of Islamofascism. Those who submit to it will survive; those who resist are doomed to be defeated and destroyed. And al Qaeda and others will be working to effect the latter from their new safe-haven on the West Bank.

For all these reasons, Israel is not the only party to have a stake in the question of its continued control over the West Bank. We do, too. As a result, if the surrender of such territory does not make sense to or for us, we should not hesitate to say so.

Yet some would have us believe that, whatever the merits of these and similar concerns about the Israeli withdrawal (which are brilliantly elucidated by my colleague Caroline Glick at http://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/Olmerts_Convergence_Plan.pdf), the decision has already been taken by the recently elected government of Israel. Some assert that it will go forward no matter what we think. Others contend that we have no choice but to go along with whatever Israel decides to do.

In fact, we have an obligation to object. Friends don't let friends commit suicide. That is especially true when, in so doing, they are likely to inflict grave harm on others, including this country and its vital interests. President Bush and the Congress should tell Mr. Olmert during his visit this week: "No more territory for terrorists." (Jewish World Review May 23)

The writer heads the Center for Security Policy.

Operation "Prayer Shield" for Israel By Michael Freund

What a difference a few minutes can make.

That thought must surely be running through the minds of dozens of parents and teenagers at the HaNativ HaYeshivati high school in Sderot, after a Palestinian Kassam rocket slammed through the roof of a classroom there this past Sunday.

The day had started like any other, with students attending morning prayers in an adjacent synagogue and then staying behind to hear their teacher deliver a schmooze - a brief discourse on a Torah-related subject.

The classroom was still locked, and some of the students had begun gathering at the door, where they were waiting for their teacher to bring the key. Suddenly, a loud explosion shook the building, as the uninvited projectile punched its way through the ceiling and detonated inside.

One person on the scene described it as follows: "Some students were waiting outside, and the teacher was on his way up - and that's when all of a sudden the rocket crashed in, hitting the teacher's chair. The teacher was very emotional, seeing that it had crashed exactly where he would have been sitting minutes later."

And so, disaster was just narrowly averted. Had the morning service ended earlier that day, or the schmooze been cut short, Sderot might very well have been plunged into a prolonged period of mourning.

Skeptics will undoubtedly attribute this close call to chance or "good luck", viewing it as just another curious, if inexplicable, twist of fate.

But that explanation just won't do. Far greater forces are at work here, and it is time for all of us to open our eyes and rouse ourselves to action.

Israel is in danger, real danger. The Hamas-controlled Palestinian Authority, Hizbullah terrorists in Lebanon, and the growing Al-Qaeda presence along our borders should be enough to make even the most stubborn of optimists lose sleep.

Add to that the existential threat posed by Iran's homicidal leadership, coupled with growing Islamic fundamentalism throughout the region, and you have a recipe for genuine disaster.

And that is precisely why the Sderot episode should serve as a wake-up call for everyone who loves and supports the Jewish state.

The failed rocket attack on the high school was, in effect, a near-death experience, albeit on a localized scale. And whenever a person, a community or even a nation has a brush with death, it is time to step back and take stock of what is happening.

Simply put, this most recent incident is a miraculous, if somewhat

frightening, reminder of just how much our lives, both as individuals and as a collective, are entirely in the hands of G-d.

I don't presume to speak for Him, but it seems pretty clear that there is a potent lesson to be learned here about the power of prayer.

After all, those kids in Sderot, and their teacher too, are alive today because of it. The headline in Monday's Jerusalem Post said it best, "Miracle in Sderot: Prayers Save Students from Kassam".

The fact of the matter is that for far too long, we have put our faith in man, and in ourselves, convinced that our problems will somehow go away.

But recent years have shown us how wrong we have been. Diplomacy has not brought us comfort, nor have our politicians been a source of relief.

We take pride in our achievements in science, our advancements in knowledge, and our prowess on the battlefield, and rightly so. But with all due respect, has any of that forestalled the current crisis we are in?

The same can be said for our leaders. The right has deceived us, the left has disheartened us, and our enemies show no sign of retreat.

For a country with its back up against the wall, buffeted by danger and beset with hostility, the need to reach upward and outward beyond ourselves has never been more acute.

It might sound silly, or even naive, but the time has come to turn to G-d. Throughout our history, the Jewish people have always turned toward Heaven in the face of peril, brandishing the most potent of weapons contained in our army: the power of prayer. It is time we do so once more.

If our enemies are intent on waging a holy war against us, shouldn't we deploy our spiritual arsenal too?

As an undergraduate at Princeton University, I took a number of courses in political thought. We were constantly being told that international relations is the sum product of the interplay among the various actors on the world stage, be they people, nations or leaders.

But what the learned professors forgot to mention, of course, is that in addition to the actors, there is also a Director, and it is He who writes the script of what is yet to be.

Prayer gives each of us a chance, a unique opportunity, to appeal to the Director, and to influence the outcome of this production called history.

But we must act quickly, because the clock is ticking, and the danger of a nuclear Iran grows ever more near.

Jews, Christians and others should launch an international campaign of prayer for Israel. We must storm the Heavens, and beseech G-d to intervene at this, the Jewish people's hour of need.

Synagogues, churches and other houses of worship should lead the call, creating a "prayer shield" around the Jewish state. Now, more than ever, we must utilize our faith.

This week's events in Sderot were surely terrifying for all those present, after they barely escaped death by just a matter of seconds.

But for the rest of us, let it serve as a timely reminder that prayer has the power not only to change people's lives, but to save them too. If only we know how to use it. (Jerusalem Post May 24)

The writer served as Deputy Director of Communications & Policy Planning in the Prime Minister's Office under former premier Binyamin Netanyahu. He is currently Chairman of Shavei Israel (www.shavei.org), which assists "lost Jews" seeking to return to the Jewish people.

What Does it Mean to Be a Jew Today? By Miriam Grabovsky

The following is a speech delivered by Hebron resident, Mrs. Miriam Grabovsky, last night (Saturday, May 20) in Fairlawn, N.J. The Grabovsky family was expelled from their home in Mitzpe Shalhevet in Hebron in January and for a second time, from Beit Shapira, two weeks ago.

What does it mean to be a Jew today in Eretz Yisrael? It means to walk with your head high, even when you don't have any strength left. It means to go shopping, even when you are afraid, it means to vote even when there isn't anyone to vote for. To be a Jew today in Eretz Yisrael is to wake up every morning, each day, with a new goal, to see with your own eyes today's miracles. To be a Jew today in Eretz Yisrael means to live the impossible, every single day, and to know that our existence really is a miracle.

To be a Jew in Hebron is to live as close as is possible to the Patriarchs and Matriarchs, and to absorb from them, every day, new strength. To be a Jew in Hebron is to experience exactly what is happening all over Eretz Yisrael, in micro proportions. To understand what it means to be few against many, and to comprehend and witness Divine intervention. To be a Jew in Hebron is, by definition, mesirut nefesh, full, one hundred percent dedication, imbued with joy. It is to feel authentic pride at the fact that we are a free people in our land; a free people in our land without question marks. To continue to try and progress, even when success is not readily visible, and to understand that trying too, has value and significance.

To be a mother in Hebron is pure, infinite faith that this is the way to raise

children. To know and remember that the fundamental requirement is never to fear, ever. To be a mother in Hebron is to know that our prayers arise via Ma'arat HaMachpela, and continue north to Bethlehem, and that the prayers of four mothers escort our prayers to the Holy Throne. To be a mother in Hebron is to be a soldier without a uniform, but to always be present at the front.

I, Miriam Grabovsky, married to Yair, mother of Shachar, Amiad and Shilo, am a resident of Hebron now for almost 5 years. We arrived in Hebron as a young couple a link in a chain of activists, building Hebron. We moved into the old Arab market: three walls, no electricity or water. It wasn't so simple, but we knew we weren't alone. Am Yisrael is with us. Slowly the building progressed, a floor, electricity, water, and even an additional room. We knew, all the time, that an axe was being held above our necks - that the danger of expulsion was real. Why bother, perhaps the time had come to give up, to go elsewhere? Why expend so much energy? But no! We may not succeed, success is not always in our hands, but we must not give up. We must continue, with courage, forward.

Unfortunately, four months ago, it happened and we were evicted from our home, the home we so loved, the home where our three children were born. What can you say to children when they are expelled from their home? How do you smile at a four year old when they ask, "Emma, why are you crying?" And most importantly, how can you think about progress, building your life in Eretz Yisrael, when events make it so difficult?

One week passed, then another, we worshiped at the Ma'ara, and were refreshed with new strength. Yes, we can lift our heads high and smile. The road to progress has not come to a dead end. We don't have the luxury to despair.

And then, a new offer: a new building, another piece of Jewish Eretz Yisrael in our possession. Thank G-d for the opportunity to reach this wonderful occasion!

Darkness falls, the entire community is on standby, ready and raring to go. Hidden smiles and a lot of questions. Really, a new building? After Gush Katif? After Amona? After the Mitzpe Shalhevet neighborhood, the old Arab market, here in Hebron? After all this, a new light shining?

In we went. Mud, filth, mounds of garbage and with that, tons of happiness, immeasurable. Again, no water or electricity, but, who cares? Pesach, Seder night, the Festival of liberation! But no, another trial, how much are we really ready to sacrifice for Eretz Yisrael? One week and another and another, and then, the expulsion begins, for the second time in just over three months. The troops arrive, a night of waiting, and then, it's over. Only questions and pain remain.

But we will not let despair confuse our aims. Am Yisrael is in the midst of a process of geula, of redemption. We don't know how HaShem will bring the final redemption. But the way He chooses, we will be there to participate, from here, from this world, from Eretz Yisrael, from Hebron. All our existence in HaAretz is miraculous. G-d initiates and we are here to do our part. The redemption will continue, one way or another. The real question is: Where will we be? Will we be faithful participants of G-d's Will, each doing whatever they can, or will we be busy trying to convince HaShem to do it our way? As Mordechai said to Esther, "If you keep silent at this time, then relief and deliverance will arise to the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish."

Here, in Hebron, we have chosen to actively participate in the process of redemption. Even if they expel us another ten times, will we return, again and again, 100 times over.

The source of our strength and our privilege to participate, to build, stems from Am Yisrael, from everyone, wherever they are. Such actions are comprised on different levels: the planning stage, the financial stage, and many other phases. Each and every Jew must accept some responsibility, each according to his ability. When we entered Beit Shapira, and many visitors arrived, we felt the strength of Am Yisrael, the unity, the division of labor. I invite you and beseech you: Come to Eretz Yisrael, come to Hebron. Tour the city, worship at Ma'arat HaMachpela. In Shir HaShirim, the Song of songs, we read how G-d is compared to a man, and Am Yisrael to a loving woman. He calls her, "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, my locks with the drops of the night." The woman is too lazy to arise from her bed: I have already undressed, how will I again dress? I washed my feet, how will I again muddy them?"

For fifty eight years He is calling us: He created a state, an army which defeated all Arab armies much larger than ours, He created many communities, yeshivot, educational institutions. We only have to get up and open the door.

May it be His Will that the city of the Patriarchs will continue, together will all Eretz Yisrael, to be the desired 'open door', and that we will be privileged to a total and complete redemption, speedily, in our days, Amen!

(Jewish Community of Hebron May 21)

Saying No to Olmert By Caroline Glick

If all goes as planned, as Prime Minister Ehud Olmert meets today with US President George W. Bush in the White House, several thousand protesters from around the US and Canada will be across the Mall by the US Senate protesting Olmert's visit. These will not be the standard Israel haters from the Left or the Islamist crowd. They will be neither neo-Nazis nor Communists. Rather the planned protest is being organized by Israel's staunchest Jewish and Christian supporters.

The people getting on buses to travel to Washington to protest Olmert's visit believe that Olmert's planned withdrawal from some 95 percent of Judea and Samaria and partition of Jerusalem are suicidal for Israel and will have a devastating impact on US national security. As they note in their press release, Olmert "seeks to secure the approval of President Bush to carry out more Jewish expulsions and giving over of land to Hamas (a Teheran-sponsored terrorist group), actions that totally undermine America's war on terror."

Voices from inside of the Bush Administration claim that Olmert's planned withdrawal is "a done deal." The relevant administration officials argue there it would be futile for the US to register any objection to Olmert's plan because Olmert and his government are wholly committed to carrying it out.

But the "plan" is anything but a done deal. The mass expulsion of Israelis from their homes in Judea and Samaria has not begun. The security fence whose completion is supposed to precede the enactment of the mass expulsions is far from complete. Indeed its route has yet to be finalized. The IDF has made no plans of any kind for defending Israel from the indefensible 1949 armistice lines. Top level Jordanian government officials have voiced serious concern to US lawmakers, Israeli officials and the media about the ramifications of Olmert's plan for the survivability of the Hashemite regime. It is simply disingenuous to say that it is too late for the US to consider opposing Olmert's plan.

ASIDE FROM that, over the past 58 years, the US has never considered anything that Israel has done to be "a done deal" if it hasn't agreed that it should be a done deal. In 1956 for instance, Israel conquered the Sinai Peninsula. Then prime minister David Ben-Gurion got on the radio and announced joyously that Israel would never leave the Sinai. Washington had other ideas. Several days later, after some overtly hostile strong arming from then president Dwight D. Eisenhower and his advisors, Ben-Gurion got on the radio and announced that Israel would be withdrawing from the Sinai forthwith.

In 1999, Israel finalized an agreement to sell three Phalcon spy planes to China. The Chinese started making their payments. Then president Bill Clinton summoned then prime minister Ehud Barak to the White House for urgent consultations the day before a planned visit to Jerusalem from China's leader, and Barak cancelled the deal. So there is no credibility to the claim that the US cannot stop an Israeli government from doing what it has its heart set on doing.

THE QUESTION is not whether the US can weigh in on the issue. The question is whether the US should intervene. To determine the answer to this question it is important to keep certain truths in mind. First, Olmert maintains that the election results that propelled him to the Prime Minister's Office were proof that he has public support for his planned withdrawal. Yet, as Hillel Halkin pointed out this month in Commentary, the elections were anything but a referendum regarding Olmert's plan. The election results, which gave Olmert's Kadima faction less than a quarter of the seats in the Knesset, were a sign that Israel's body politic is unraveling. The electorate's fragmentation was made clear both by record low voter turnout and by the dismemberment of the major parties like Likud and Labor and even Kadima to the benefit of sectoral parties like Shas, Yisrael Beitenu and the Pensioners Party. During the campaign Kadima registered its greatest losses of support after Olmert began discussing his plan to withdraw from Judea and Samaria.

Yet even if Olmert did not receive a mandate for his withdrawal plan from the Israeli voters, he is the legally elected prime minister. In the eyes of many of Israel's supporters in America, it is wrong for the US to second-guess the wisdom of the Israeli leadership. While in theory this position is correct, it comes apart at the seams when the ramifications of Olmert's plans for US national security are taken into account.

Knowledgeable sources in Washington policy circles maintain that in the two weeks preceding Olmert's visit to Washington, Israeli officials were been asked to allay American concerns regarding the security consequences of Olmert's plan. Specifically, Israeli officials have been called upon to explain how Judea and Samaria will be prevented from following the model set in Gaza when Israel's retreat enabled the transformation of Gaza into a base for international terrorists along similar lines to Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

Israel's military attache in Washington, Maj. Gen. Dan Harel was reportedly sent to the White House to dispel these concerns. It should be

recalled that Harel commanded last summer's retreat from Gaza. Harel was lionized at the time by the Israeli media for successfully implementing the mass expulsion of Israeli civilians from Gaza while averting civil war.

Yet Harel has never been called to account for the fact that he made no plans for Israel to defend itself from the threats that - as foreseen - arose from Gaza and from the Sinai in the aftermath of the retreat. Because of his failure, IDF forces in the Southern Command were left without contingency plans for contending with the transformation of Gaza into a base for global jihad and without adequate means to secure Ashkelon and the other communities bordering Gaza from the daily missile, rocket and mortar attacks to which they have been subjected since the retreat.

This is relevant because Harel reportedly told his US interlocutors that they have no reason to worry about the consequences of Olmert's plan because it only involves the mass expulsion of Israeli civilians from Judea and Samaria. The IDF, he said will retain its current positions in the areas.

WHETHER OR not Harel realized it at the time, he was not being wholly truthful to his American audience. Even if the plan today is for the IDF to retain control of the areas in which the civilians are set to be expelled, and to retain their present deployments, any educated observer of Israel's political and cultural dynamics will attest that there is no way that this can happen.

If Olmert expels tens of thousands of Israeli citizens from their homes, he will destroy the entire domestic rationale for the IDF deployment. As was the case in Lebanon, radical leftists within Israel will rise up and demand a full retreat. For its part, the nationalist camp will become so alienated by the expulsions that in the best case scenario, its members will simply cease to identify with the state. They will not support any military activities in the heartland of Jewish civilization that the state ethnically cleansed of all Jewish presence.

Aside from this, whether the IDF remains or not, the Israeli destruction of Israeli towns and villages will be broadcast throughout the world and be celebrated - rightly - as a strategic victory of jihad. Zionism isn't about the IDF, it is about Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel. Israeli destruction of Israeli villages in the Land of Israel is the death of Zionism and our enemies know it even if we insist on denying this basic truth.

AND SO we return to our starting point. Olmert will meet Bush today and present to him a plan that will unravel Israeli society, which was already dangerously fragmented by the withdrawal from Gaza.

He will present to him a plan that is based upon the anti-Semitic notion that Jews should be prohibited from living in certain places because they are Jews, and the perverse notion that a Palestinian state founded on the principle of lebensraum and racial purity because by definition no Jews will be allowed to live in Palestine, will be capable of living at peace one day with the Jewish state.

Olmert will present a plan that provides a strategic victory to the forces of global jihad in a war they wage not only against Israel but against the US and the Western world as a whole because they will see Israel destroying itself under the gun of their terror and enabling the establishment of yet another base for global terrorists.

Given all this, the question of whether or not the US should object to Olmert's plan is superseded by the question of how the US should make its rejection of this plan known to Olmert and whether its objection should similarly be communicated to the Israeli public.

Any ambiguity on this issue to Olmert; any retreat behind disingenuous statements about "done deals," will be nothing less than the revocation of the cardinal US strategies for winning this war: the advance of liberal values and the denial of bases of operation to global terrorists. (Jerusalem Post May 22)

Is There A Diplomatic Solution To The Iranian Nuclear Issue?

By Ephraim Asculai

Last week, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad rejected Europe's most recent offer to halt uranium enrichment in exchange for various incentives, this time including a light-water reactor. "Your incentives," he said, "are definitely not more valuable than nuclear technology. How dare you tell our people to give up its gold in return for chocolate?"

Ahmadinejad's response is but the latest in a series of rebuffs suffered by various parties searching for a diplomatic solution to the Iran nuclear issue. A diplomatic solution to this problem is surely preferable to any alternative outcome and is the declared priority of most of those involved, including the United States, the European Union, and Russia. But the chances of achieving one are virtually non-existent unless there is a radical change in the way the international community approaches Iran.

Stripped down to the bare essentials, the problem is that Iran is conducting a program aimed at producing nuclear weapons. Notwithstanding Iran's vehement denials, that conclusion is sustained by both the IAEA findings and Iran's own actions. Had Iran wanted to prove otherwise, it would have acted

differently, negotiating with the world in good faith, suspending indefinitely its nuclear activities, admitting all past misdeeds and offering complete and unhindered openness to the IAEA inspectors. However, this is not the case. Instead, Iranian tactics have been to toy with the international community and buy time in order to promote its ultimate aim.

Iran could fully resolve the problem by stopping and then dismantling all activities that are related, in any way, to nuclear weapons development programs. Those include any uranium enrichment program, the construction of a heavy-water reactor, and any plutonium-related research and development activities. But anything less than good faith action by Iran, subject to effective verification, would constitute only a partial solution and would probably be counter-productive; as the two temporary suspension agreements have shown, such "solutions" only buy Iran precious development time. In order to assess the possibility of achieving a complete solution through negotiations, Iran's motivations must first be analyzed.

Prior to the change of presidents in Iran in early 2005, four motivations for developing nuclear weapons could be assessed: Iran's threat perceptions; its aspiration to status and regional hegemony; strengthening the regime domestically; and the regime's hatred of Israel. Ahmadinejad's election to the presidency and his rhetoric since then have brought the latter two considerations to the fore. But Iranian nuclear efforts are not just the personal whim of the new president, reflecting his deep religious beliefs; the weapons development program began long before he took office and is part of the Islamic Republic's longstanding policy.

Diplomatic means can prompt Iran to abandon its nuclear weapons program only if they convince it that doing so is more appealing/less unappealing than continuing on its present course. The efforts led by the EU-3 beginning in 2003 clearly failed to produce this cost-benefit calculus. Those efforts confined themselves to economic "carrots" while avoiding any hint of "sticks," and either the "carrots" were insufficient or Iran was simply playing for time and not negotiating in good faith. Although details of the negotiations were not disclosed, the second interpretation appears to be the correct one. In fact, there was no breakthrough in any of the negotiations, either with the EU-3 or with Russia, and any time agreement did seem within reach, Iran immediately pulled back and returned to square one. These tactics were actually encouraged by Russia and China, who voiced their strong opposition to any coercive action against Iran and thereby deprived negotiators of any hypothetical threat of negative consequences for Iran if agreement were not reached. Thus, Iran remains in the enviable position of persisting in "no-cost" rejection of a policy change it wants to avoid.

This situation raises two underlying questions: is there a way to sway Iran by appeals to reason, and is there a way to coerce Iran into accepting a diplomatic, i.e., non-military, solution. Judging from Iran's past record and present behavior, the answer to the first question is probably negative. An answer to the second question can only be tested if those who negotiate with Iran are given coercive tools to use. But if non-military tools such as UN Security Council sanctions are precluded by the threat of vetoes, then such tools must be sought outside the UN realm, in an arena like the IAEA (the stated preference of Russia and China), which has no enforcement authority and is even less likely to produce a solution (which is why it is also preferred by Iran).

Thus, advocating a "diplomatic" solution while coming to the negotiating table with what amounts to an empty hand is almost a contradiction in terms. Were the negotiators to arrive with a strong hand, i.e., agreement among the major international actors that Iran is required immediately and unconditionally to accept the Security Council's demands -- including the open-ended suspension of activities and the return to full-scale inspections -- then awareness of the consequences of refusing to do so might stand a better chance of changing Iran's cost-benefit calculus.

Even at the negotiating table, the vast differences in fundamental beliefs, values and logic between the negotiating sides must be acknowledged and taken into account. These differences probably contributed to the failure of previous negotiations or the breakdown of agreements and the subsequent reactions in the West to these failures. And even if negotiations start from the departure point stipulated above, they will be long and arduous and a successful outcome is not assured.

One cannot fault those who insist on a negotiated solution. A negotiated solution is the best of all options. However, starting the negotiations with what is clearly a losing hand could give Iran all it wants. If those who negotiate with Iran are armed with nothing more than appeals to reason or to the Iranian regime's better nature, there will be no diplomatic solution to the problem, and Iran's nuclear weapons program will be either be stopped by military means or it will not be stopped at all. (Tel Aviv University May 22)
