

Events...

Sunday, June 8, 2:45pm

March and rally against anti-Semitism., from the SW corner of Bloor and Avenue Rd to Queens Park.

Thursday June 12, 8:00pm

Bar Ilan's Gerald Steinberg speaks at Beth Tikvah.

Quote of the Week...

"It seems that there is an ambassador sitting in Herzeliyah [US Ambassador Kurtzer] giving us marching orders who doesn't seem to remember that we just celebrated our Independence Day." - Tourism Minister Rav Benny Elon, complaining that calling for a Cabinet vote last Sunday contravened Cabinet procedure that calls for a 48 hour period for ministers to consider such matters.

Commentary...

Place Not Your Trust in Princes By Isi Leibler

President George W. Bush is a friend of Israel and has displayed understanding for our security concerns. Washington is the shield that protects Israel from total isolation in the international community. More than that, the United States is the power that stands between Israel and the abyss.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is therefore to be commended for doing his utmost to maintain that relationship. But having said that, the litmus test of a good relationship cannot be based on being obliged to endorse a blueprint that many experts, including the minister of defense, insist pose grave dangers to Israel's future.

The government's decision is an enormous gamble if it based solely on the vague American understandings we have heard about. It could lead to a historic catastrophe possibly eclipsing anything that the Oslo disaster has wrought.

The potential for disaster is exemplified by recent Kafkaesque State Department outpourings. Example: in the presence of the French foreign minister, Colin Powell pontificated that the road map was "a good document" and insisted that taking account of Israeli government reservations "does not require us to change the road map."

Even were we dealing exclusively with the United States, vague warm words of good intentions would not suffice. But we are dealing with the Quartet.

And three of its members have a long track record of ugly bias against Israel. The European countries continue to publicly pay homage to Yasser Arafat. The perfidious French consider the existing road map to be biased in the interests of Israel! The Middle East coordinator of the dysfunctional United Nations, Terje Larson, has a long history of anti-Israel bias. He even participated in the libel against the IDF over Jenin, insinuating that massacres had taken place despite knowing the truth.

So unless there are secret protocols protecting Israel's interests to which we cannot be privy, Prime Minister Sharon should have told President Bush that he was unable to proceed down a path which could jeopardize Israel's very future.

He was in a strong position to do so. Saddam Hussein's terror regime is no more. The US Congress carried a bipartisan resolution by a huge majority, urging the president not to pressure Israel into a road map that did not satisfy Jerusalem's priorities. The Christian lobby is solidly pressing the president not to coerce Israel.

Given the spate of recent terror bombings, US public opinion is generally sympathetic to Israel's case. Sharon consequently had no cause to "place our faith in princes" no matter how well intentioned or friendly they might be.

Nor did Palestinian behavior oblige Sharon to placate Washington. Mahmoud

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*

Abbas's (Abu Mazen) brief record is outrageous. He made it abundantly clear that Arafat remains the chief Mafioso "For us," he said, "Abu Amar (Arafat) is the president elected by the Palestinian people, and we do not do anything without his approval."

Even Abu Mazen's inaugural speech, hailed for its moderation, reiterated that Palestinians have "fought with honor."

Whilst conceding that violence "has not benefited" the Palestinian cause, all that he has sought is a temporary cease-fire within the Green Line, enabling terror groups to regroup and initiate a new offensive at a time of their choosing.

It all has an eerie dj vu ring to it, a replay of when we resurrected the already marginalized duplicitous murderer at the end of the first Gulf War, brought him into our very midst from Tunis, and transformed him into a Nobel Peace Laureate.

Yes, the road map has all the hallmarks of Oslo Accords Mark II compromises without reciprocity to be hailed by the Quartet, who will replay all the old themes of "moral equivalency" and "cycles of violence" to induce Israel into unilateral concessions.

And this, just when Palestinians were slowly coming to the realization that Israel is here to stay and that Arafat's resort to violence has only inflicted enormous misery on them without dividends.

With Abu Mazen refusing to destroy the terror infrastructure, the road map could well provide suicide bombers with a new lease on life.

Surely it is time to say enough is enough. The bleeding hearts here and abroad who urged us to negotiate under fire have had their say. Sharon must remain true to his oath not to negotiate under fire. He must remind President Bush of his oath not to entertain any truce with al-Qaida. And that is precisely what Abu Mazen's relations with Hamas and Islamic Jihad amount to.

We must insist that we will continue to confront evil and terror by military force. Indeed, it is time to go after the head of the snake those who incite to murder, and publicly exult when our women and children are blown to pieces. They should be made to realize that their lives, and not only those of the actual killers, are at stake.

We may not be able to totally overcome terror. But despite 100 years of it, we have built up an extraordinary nation. We could not have done so in the absence of tough responses. The last one, Operation Defensive Shield, unquestionably radically reduced the incidence of terror. Our American friends should understand and appreciate that in the current climate, they face the same enemy.

A few weeks ago in the presence of Prime Minister Sharon, I asked the head of his Bureau, Dov Weisglass, why we were not promoting our case more assertively in the United States, especially as we have such strong support in Congress. His response, "leave it to us," was not reassuring. It was reminiscent of remarks we were hearing from Israeli leaders during the Oslo heyday.

The extraordinary haste and unwillingness to provide for a thorough discussion in relation to an issue which could have such enormous ramifications for our future is equally reminiscent of the way the Oslo Accords were rushed through without adequate debate.

So yes, we can only hope and pray that the prime minister did enter into secret agreements with the Bush administration involving more than mere understandings.

If by endorsing this road map we endanger our future, our prime minister must bear the full burden of responsibility. We had a good case with ample time to prepare our friends. Central to that case was Yitzhak Rabin's Oslo gamble, which created a disaster for the nation because we never had a genuine partner. We still don't.

And if our prime minister is leading us to yet another strategic disaster, it will be far worse than Ehud Barak's blindness because at least Barak was negotiating for an end game.

Even now at this late stage, Prime Minister Sharon should avoid adopting the disastrous Napoleonic postures of some of his predecessors and listen carefully to his allies and critics. They will urge him to endorse one thing: the sound principles outlined by President Bush in his June 24, 2002, Middle

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East speech, not the Quartet's corruption of them. To that end, we would indeed be willing to make "painful sacrifices."

The road map as endorsed this week by the Cabinet does not warrant painful sacrifices, for it has the potential of evolving into an inferior recycled version of the Oslo Accords which have already cost us too much blood. (Jerusalem Post May 28)

The writer is senior vice president of the World Jewish Congress

Jerusalem Day Jerusalem Post Editorial

Israel today celebrates the 36th anniversary of its capital's liberation and reunification, but despite Jerusalem Day festivities, never has the future of Jerusalem been as fraught with uncertainty.

The city is ominously threatened with a return to its sad, divided pre-Six-Day-War days. Loud and sincere as official declarations of intent to steadfastly safeguard Jerusalem's status may be, they are less convincing in view of other taboos which have already fallen by the wayside, as the country embarks on the road map to peace.

The road map doesn't chart an auspicious course for Jerusalem. Its future was left to the very end of a problematic peace process. Some perhaps assume that the thorny issue will never be tackled, as the entire road map may be discarded after the first obstacles appear. No less likely, however, is that the Jerusalem land mine will only be encountered at the end of the tortured route, after Israel has made the "painful concessions" foreseen by Ariel Sharon.

Each side will offer different solutions for defusing the device, and it will take a miracle to keep it from exploding.

Moreover, for much of the world, many sections of Jerusalem are settlements no less than Ariel or Ofra. The neighborhood of Gilo, home to more than 45,000 Jerusalemites, is routinely described abroad as "the Gilo settlement." This can impact on the continued development of many city neighborhoods. It's not inconceivable that the Palestinians will decry any development as an infringement of road map strictures and the Quartet, slated to oversee the process, may agree. In fact, the challenge to Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem may come long before final-status negotiations. Provisions for reopening East Jerusalem PLO institutions, including Orient House, are made early on the road map's path.

While in the past PLO adjuncts may have functioned illegally or "unofficially," they might now be protected by international recognition and rendered all but untouchable. Yet while PLO activity in the capital may enjoy immunity, Israel's every move will be subject to strict Quartet scrutiny.

Jerusalem is beset by numerous problems. It's statistically Israel's second poorest city (only Bnei Brak is poorer) and is plagued by communal tensions like no other. This leads inevitably to economic woes, which can only be aggravated by a new formal frontier, rendering it again the same outlying, dead-end town it was 36 years ago.

But the biggest threat to Jerusalem's prospects is its reduction to the status of a de facto international city, much as envisioned by the 1947 UN partition plan. Only by virtue of David Ben-Gurion's defiant perseverance was it declared our capital. All this may be undone by a creeping loss of control, which will usher an informal internationalization process via the back door.

Jerusalem a city with an unequivocal Jewish majority since the mid-19th century could well become a city in which Jewish rule is delegitimized by a world eager to appease the Arabs and give preference to their claims, although Jerusalem was never the capital of any other nation.

Making matters worse is the fact that Israel's Palestinian interlocutor is the very weak Mahmoud Abbas, appointed prime minister by none other than Yasser Arafat, the man with whom our government vowed not to parley. But if any further proof were needed of the extent to which Arafat pulls the strings, it was provided by the postponement of Wednesday's meeting between Abbas and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

The precise pretext for the cancellation and rescheduling details are equally immaterial. What counts is that Abbas isn't his own man and that Arafat calls the shots. He has demonstrated who's boss by preventing Abbas from keeping his original date with Sharon.

With Arafat the real man in charge, it would do us all well to recall who violently scuttled the Camp David deal with Ehud Barak.

Despite Barak's egregious generosity and readiness to accede to nearly every Arafat demand on Jerusalem, Arafat sought to deny any Jewish historic connection to the Temple Mount, maintaining that no temple ever existed there.

Such adherence to falsehoods doesn't augur well. Israel will have to evince the greatest vigilance over even the minutest feature on the road map's route to make sure that there will be many happy returns of Jerusalem Day.

Any untoward interpretations or additions to the map could considerably curtail our sovereignty over our capital. Collectively, we will have to stay faithful to our national anthem's refrain: "to be a free nation in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem." (Jerusalem Post May 29)

The Suffering Palestinians By Mona Charen

In 1867, Mark Twain visited the Holy Land and was dismayed at what he found, "a desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds < a silent, mournful expanse. ... A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and action. ... We never saw a human being on the whole route. ... There was hardly a tree or a shrub anywhere. Even the olive and the cactus, those fast friends of the worthless soil, had almost deserted the country." (From "The Innocents Abroad.")

The land to which Jews began to return in large numbers during the final two decades of the 19th century < the land they transformed from desert to orange groves, cities and kibbutzim < was largely empty, not the thriving "nation of Palestine," as the current myth has it.

One thinks of this because today's news brings fresh reports of the pitiless persecution of the Palestinians < not by Jews, but by their fellow Arabs < which is the true story of Palestinian oppression.

The Lebanese government, the New York Times reports, is considering revoking the citizenship it awarded to about 25,000 Palestinians in 1994, a move that will cost many of them their jobs, schools, homes and access to health care. "They are not welcomed," writes reporter Daniel J. Wakin, "by a government that declares its allegiance to the struggle for a Palestinian right to a homeland."

Lebanon, like Israel's other Arab neighbors, refused to absorb Arab refugees in 1948, placing them in camps instead. (Israel, by contrast, absorbed and made citizens of the 500,000 Jews who fled Arab lands at the same time.) Twelve refugee camps remain housing most of the 400,000 Palestinians who live in Lebanon. Lebanese law declares them to be stateless and, as such, forbidden to own land outside the refugee camps.

The camps are a disgrace < far worse than anything in the Israeli-administered territories (and Israel surrendered the day-to-day running of civilian life to the Palestinian Authority after the Oslo Accords). "Waste water runs through a trough in the alleys," reports the Times. "Human waste is disposed of in pits beneath homes. Some of the alleys have grown so jumbled that waste-removal trucks cannot get through, and filled-up pits are becoming a problem. ... Residents say the Lebanese army which has a checkpoint at the camp's entrance, sometimes searches cars to make sure no unauthorized building materials enter, so the camp does not become more permanent.

Though the Palestinians are ethnically, culturally, religiously and linguistically indistinguishable from their neighbors in Lebanon, they are rejected and excluded from Lebanese society only to make a point about Lebanon's (read Syria's) total rejection of Israel's existence.

Arab governments deny this and claim that the camps will be closed just as soon as the "right of return" is recognized. But they of course know that the "right of return" would mean that up to 4,500,000 Palestinians living all over the world would have the right to settle in Israel. Israel could never accept nearly 5,000,000 implacably hostile Arabs. Israel is already home to 1,000,000 Arab citizens who can vote and even serve in the Knesset.

The Lebanese, or rather the Syrians, who invaded and control the country, certainly know that the Palestinians living in those camps will never "return" to Israel. So why keep them in such squalid conditions? As a breeding ground for terrorists, perhaps?

Following the Persian Gulf war in 1991, Kuwait simply clapped its hands and expelled up to 300,000 Palestinians. Why? Because Yasser Arafat had sided with Saddam Hussein in the war. The Palestinians had been integrated into Kuwaiti society, working at all kinds of jobs, from engineering to computer to menial work. Many had been born there. But the Kuwaiti royal family had no qualms about uprooting them. Ambassador Saud Nasir Sabah said, "They didn't represent a necessity to us." There was hardly a peep from the world community. Certainly there was no condemnation by the United Nations.

There is very little sincere concern around the world for the "plight" of the Palestinians. If there were, their situation in Arab countries would draw more attention. As it is, Palestinians are only useful as a club with which to beat Israel. It is disgusting that the Arabs are willing to do this to their own cousins, and equally dismaying that world opinion endorses it.

The writer is a nationally syndicated columnist. (Washington Times May 22)

Wrong Direction By Ezra Levant

PLO must follow 'road map' to win more concessions

Phase One of the international Road Map to peace in the Middle East ends Saturday. Here's the "to do list" the Palestinians must complete in five days:

- Issue an "unequivocal statement reiterating Israel's right to exist in peace and security."
- End "incitement against Israel" in PLO schools, TV, radio and newspapers.
- "Arrest, disrupt, and restrain" terrorists.
- Round up all illegal weapons, and purge its security authorities of

corruption.

- Shut down all paramilitary organizations.
- Arab countries must cut off public and private funding of Palestinian terrorism.
- All aid for the Palestinians must go through the Palestinian treasury.
- Draft and circulate for public discussion a new Palestinian constitution.
- Begin "fundamental reform," including an independent judiciary.
- An "independent Palestinian election commission" must be formed and a free, multi-party election campaign begun to choose a new Palestinian government.

Of course, this is absurd. Not one of these items will be done by Saturday, let alone all of them.

If five days sounds hasty, it isn't. These Road Map milestones were agreed to by the Palestinians last year. Over the past 10 years, identical commitments were signed by Yasser Arafat and the PLO at Oslo, Madrid, Washington, and a dozen other "peace summits."

Based on Arab promises at Oslo, Israel made dangerous concessions. It gave PLO terrorists control over much of the West Bank and Gaza. Israel gave billions in financial support to Arafat -- and even armed his "police" forces. For 10 years Israel lived up to its end of the deal, hoping in vain that Arafat would live up to his.

He didn't.

Take another look at that Palestinian "to do list". Except for recognizing Israel's right to exist, each item is about improving life for ordinary Palestinians.

Rule of law. Economic reforms. An end to violent propaganda. Shutting down rogue armed factions. Writing a constitution. Holding real elections. These aren't concessions from the PLO to Israel. These are concessions from the PLO to the Arabs it claims to represent.

If followed, the Road Map might even work. It would replace Arafat's corrupt and violent personal fiefdom with a peaceful, human rights-respecting polity that was accountable to its citizens.

In that way, the Road Map is brilliant: If the PLO thugs won't even make peace with their own people, we know they'll never make peace with the Jews. If they don't respect their own laws, we know they'll never respect international treaties signed with Israel. If they teach violence to their own children, we know they'll perpetrate violence against Jewish children.

So, on Saturday night when the deadline for Phase One expires, what then?

If the past is any guide, Israel will be asked to proceed to the next phase on its own -- recognizing Palestinian borders, granting Arafat a seat at the UN, etc. Israel will be asked to ignore the PLO's broken promises, or pretend they were fulfilled.

Throughout the 1990s, Bill Clinton bit his lip, felt Israel's pain, and asked them to turn a blind eye to unrepentant terrorists. The resulting 10 years of "peace" were bloodier than the 10 years of war that preceded them. Compromising with Arab terrorists wasn't just a sign of Israel's weakness -- it was a sign of America's weakness, too.

Until the PLO achieves the basic reforms of Phase One of the Road Map, Israel -- and America -- should halt their concessions.

After all, how can you make peace with a regime at war with its own people?

(Calgary Sun May 26)

Not Desperation, Political Horizon or 'Occupation' By Ron Dermer

With pundits trying to make sense of the recent wave of terror attacks, here are three quick reminders that may help you wade through the nonsense.

* It's not about the peace process. According to most reports in the international media, the reason for the attacks is that terrorists are trying to prevent the success of the road map (the latest Middle East peace initiative), and undermine Abu Mazen, the new Palestinian prime minister.

The theory that a political horizon brings Palestinian terrorists out of the woodwork is not new. It was used with great frequency to explain the suicide bombings that were commonplace under prime ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres. As buses were blowing up, Israelis were told by both the world and their own government not to allow the "enemies of peace" to thwart Oslo.

Of course, back then Yasser Arafat was our peace partner. Today he is generally listed alongside Hamas and Islamic Jihad as one of peace's chief opponents (who said nothing ever changes in the Middle East?).

But unfortunately, the enemy-of-peace formula proved inadequate for explaining those suicide bombings that occurred as the peace process was slowing down or when it came to a standstill. Then, conventional wisdom - doing a hardly noticed about-face - blamed terror on the lack of diplomatic progress. Using this logic, each of the three bombings that occurred during Binyamin Netanyahu's tenure as prime minister was widely attributed to Palestinian frustration with the slow pace of diplomacy. Similarly, when Israelis were being killed at a clip of 100 a month last year, many suggested that the reason was the absence of any political horizon for the Palestinians. If only the political process would be revived and negotiations resumed, we were told, all would be well in the Holy Land.

In a world where a sense of history rarely extends past breakfast, and where the laws of logic can be temporarily suspended, one can get away with this sort

of muddle. But for serious people, being told that both the presence of a political horizon and its absence offer a credible explanation for terrorism simply does not compute.

* It's not about the "occupation." Others searching for a more consistent explanation to terror look toward the "occupation" as the determining constant. According to this view, terror attacks will continue as long as the occupation prevails, and only its removal will bring terror to a halt.

Here again, the facts get in the way of a seemingly logical theory.

First, occupations are not automatic breeding grounds for terrorism. Many would consider the Nazi occupation of Europe the most brutal in the history of the world, but one is hard pressed to find examples of occupied European peoples killing German civilians. For its part, the Jewish underground didn't respond to the British occupation of Palestine and the restrictions placed on Jewish immigration by blowing up buses and shopping malls in London.

Second, the laws of occupation and terror were seemingly inverted over the past year, when a drastic reduction in terrorism was achieved as a result of the re-occupation of Palestinian-controlled towns and villages. While Operation Defensive Shield and its aftermath did not extinguish Palestinian terror completely, there is no denying that it reduced the number of attacks and casualties.

* It's not about desperation. Some have responded to the ostensible benefits of a military response to terror by noting that while there has been a drop in the number of attacks, there has been no waning in the willingness to commit them. Here it is the motivation to commit terror that is the constant. For many who subscribe to this view, only advancing the peace process and ending the occupation will end the motivation to commit attacks.

Again, this view sounds reasonable. But its honest defenders must admit that it will only work if the motive for terror is indeed desperation. To be sure, if terrorist acts are committed out of desperation and frustration, then political solutions that offer hope are the logical antidote. Indeed, combating terror will necessitate alleviating the desperate conditions that supposedly gave rise to it.

But if the motivation for terror is not desperation, then advancing the peace process and "ending the occupation" will have no impact on terror. In fact, if the motive for terror is a desire for individual glory or collective victory, then political concessions to terror - which further glorify the sacrifice of the individual terrorist and further advance the collective goal in whose name he acted - will only fuel terrorism.

The reason terrorism has been so impervious to explanation is because the motivation for it is terribly misunderstood. Those who have been reared in free societies find it difficult to believe that terrorism can be the product of fervent hope. Those who view suicide as self-negation find it hard to imagine a world where a suicide-bomber is the paradigm of self-assertion.

But the Palestinians have created just such a world - a world where it is cool to die and to take as many Jews with you as you can. For those who cannot fathom such a place, developing a coherent understanding of terror - much less offering any insight on how to fight it - will prove impossible. (Jerusalem Post May 26)

Bush's Middle East "Uganda Plan" By Michael Freund

As a result of this past Sunday's vote in the Israeli cabinet, Zionism now finds itself confronting the gravest identity crisis it has known in the past century.

Not since 1903, when the Sixth Zionist Congress indicated a willingness to consider Great Britain's proposal to create a Jewish national home in Uganda, has the movement come so perilously close to abandoning its ideological moorings.

Indeed, there is a lot of similarity between the Ugandan roadmap and its Palestinian equivalent, and the look at the former provides an intriguing clue as to how best to defeat the latter.

The Uganda plan was born precisely 100 years ago this past summer, when Theodor Herzl, father of political Zionism, was summoned to London for a meeting with British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain.

Chamberlain had just returned from a visit to Africa, and told Herzl that while he was there, "I saw a country for you: Uganda. On the coast it is hot, but in the interior, the climate is excellent for Europeans. I thought to myself: that's just the country for Dr. Herzl."

Herzl, of course, was less than enthused by the idea. After all, Jews throughout the generations had spent the previous 2000 years longing for the hills of Zion, not the jungles of Kampala.

But after the British Foreign Office officially presented the proposal to him in August 1903, Herzl decided to bring the "Uganda Project" to a vote at the upcoming Zionist Congress, which was set to meet in Basel.

Herzl and his allies portrayed the plan as a temporary solution and an "emergency measure", but many of the delegates were outraged, labeling it a betrayal, and a storm of protest quickly ensued.

Eyewitnesses described "tumultuous scenes" which "continued into the small hours of the morning". In the end, it was only due to the personal prestige which Herzl commanded that the Congress voted to send a committee to Uganda to investigate its viability as a possible Jewish national sanctuary.

In both instances, then, we find a superpower putting a plan on the table whose underlying principles run counter to everything Zionism stands for. In 1903, the idea would have meant forgoing the Land of Israel, while in 2003, it means dividing it.

And in both instances, Zionism's ultimate leader, acting under foreign pressure, reluctantly agreed to accept the proposal, although he insisted on attaching conditions to it in the hopes of easing its passage.

Fortunately, in the case of Uganda, the idea went nowhere, but no thanks to the Zionist leadership of the time. As historian Howard Morley Sachar notes in his book, *The Course of Modern Jewish History*, the plan quickly became "academic", since "public opinion in England was running strong against turning 'rich' Uganda over to the Jews." As a result, the British government quietly dropped the proposal.

And therein lies the clue to defeating its modern-day US-backed equivalent: arousing American public opinion against the plan to the point where the Bush Administration has no choice but to drop it.

Make no mistake - by formally approving the road map to establish a Palestinian state in the Land of Israel, the sovereign government of the State of Israel has effectively turned its back on the central tenets of Zionism, making a mockery of the Jewish people's millennial-old yearnings to return to its land.

Look through the writings of Zionism's great modern-day thinkers and proponents, from Moses Hess to Ahad Ha'am to Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai. Read the Biblical prophets' accounts of the ingathering of the exiles and the final redemption of the Jewish people. Open a prayer book and glance at the daily pleas to restore us to our national patrimony.

None of them speak of dividing the Land, or making "painful concessions", or yielding to international pressure or creating a foreign entity in the heart of our ancestral home. Not a single one. They spoke of building Jewish homes, not uprooting them, of settling the Land rather than withdrawing from it. Of creating a Jewish state, not a Palestinian terrorist enclave.

Like the idea of settling Uganda a century ago, adopting the road map is a slap in the face both to Jewish history and to Jewish destiny.

And don't be fooled - the danger is very real. Whatever one thinks of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's intentions, or whether he is serious about implementing the plan, the pressure from America has already yielded enormous results for the Palestinians, even as they continue to engage in terror. And that pressure will only mount as time goes on.

It is therefore time to take off the kid gloves and mobilize now against the road map. Every day that passes brings the danger closer, with the inevitable bloodshed that will almost surely result.

If the writing was on the wall prior to Sunday's vote, it is now on the table, one giant step closer to being implemented on the ground. This cannot be allowed to happen.

To stop the road map, and to save Israel, we must focus our energies and our efforts on staving off American pressure, for that is the driving force behind this dangerous predicament. The address for this campaign is neither Jerusalem nor Ramallah, but 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington.

US President George W. Bush must be made to understand that he will pay a heavy political price for pushing to create Palestine. The road map is a natural consequence of his June 24 speech last year, when he outlined his "vision" of two states, one for Israelis and one for Palestinians.

American Jews and the Christian right must cry out in protest, then, not only against the road map itself, but against the very vision which lay behind it. In retrospect, the June 24 speech was Bush's "original sin", and its embodiment in the form of the road map threatens the future and security of Israel.

Only by putting the President on notice that in the 2004 campaign, American Christians and Jews will forge a direct linkage between how they vote and how he acts in the Middle East, can we hope to thwart this devious plan.

Like anyone else, George W. Bush is a human being endowed by his Creator with the gift of free will. He can choose to do the right thing, and stand by the people of Israel as they seek to preserve their ancestral homeland.

Or, he can choose to do wrong, and accommodate Palestinian terror by pushing to create yet another hostile Arab state alongside a truncated Israel.

If Bush chooses the latter, he will be defying the Divine will, an act unbecoming of a man of faith. Over that, we as people obviously have no control.

But where we do have control is at the ballot box. Our task, then, is to let Bush know that by pressing forward with the road map, he will be doing more than just dividing up G-d's Holy Land. In November 2004, he will be dividing up his electorate, too.

So, like the Uganda plan which fizzled out a century ago, here's hoping that in the case of the road map, history will indeed repeat itself.

The writer served as Deputy Director of Communications & Policy Planning in the Prime Minister's Office. (Jerusalem Post May 28)

Courting Intolerance Jerusalem Post Editorial

The Supreme Court is renowned for its liberal orientation. At the same time, however, it evinces extreme intolerance of any criticism be it of specific decisions or of its highly proactive approach.

On the face of it, it would appear that liberalism and intolerance are so contradictory in nature as to be mutually exclusive unless, of course, the court's liberality is selective, partial, and not quite genuine. This would explain its apparent near-imperious conduct in two glaring incidents last week.

One involved the selection of new justices. It followed hot on the heels of yet another installment in the thorny saga of ostensible judicial encroachment on the legislative branch's authority.

Last Thursday, the nine-member panel entrusted with the election of new justices was left with no choice whatsoever. It was handed the names of two candidates Miriam Naoar and Asher Grunis to fill two vacant seats on the court. They were nominated by the court's three representatives on the panel, whose chairman is the justice minister and whose other members are two Bar Association representatives, two MKs, and one minister representing the government.

As it turned out, the panel was reduced to the status of a rubber stamp.

This raised no squawk from Justice Minister Yosef (Tommy) Lapid, but MKs Dalia Itzik and Shaul Yahalom, as well as Tourism Minister Benny Elon boycotted the so-called vote. Their protest was unprecedented, but the unopposed candidates were "elected" nevertheless, without so much as a routine review process.

All this is made possible by the dominant position on the panel of the three justices, who by virtue of an unwritten tradition, may veto candidates not to their liking. The judicial guild can thus promote candidates from a preferred background, who adhere to the same ideologies and outlook.

Members of the academic community or lawyers from private practice are not represented on the court and have scant chance of ever achieving such representation, as long as the present system persists.

Such total disregard even for appearances has given rise to the court's tyrannical reputation. Its judicial activism seems to underscore the assumption that the justices know best. The perception of the court as egregiously high-handed is what led to the other controversy involving it a few days ago. Court President Aharon Barak and Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin were both invited to address a conference organized by the Israel Institute for Democracy at Beit Hanassi.

Rivlin took the opportunity to express concern that the judiciary has become so overbearing that even a magistrate's court judge recently took it upon himself to overturn a law enacted by the Knesset. The danger, according to Rivlin, is that the courts would so erode the legislature's powers as to render it irrelevant.

"The Knesset could be made the inconsequential habitat of 120 unqualified politicians, who have no idea what the country needs. The Knesset is often ridiculed as a bothersome hurdle and its members as undeserving, stupid, primitive, ignorant, and maybe even corrupt," he said.

Barak reacted immediately and took Rivlin severely to task for "delegitimizing the courts." In an urgently summoned press conference, Lapid railed against Rivlin's "dangerous challenge to the rule of law and the balance between the different branches of government," as well as his "vulgar onslaught on the court."

The trouble is that Rivlin's message was anything but a crude populist outburst, as both Barak and Lapid claimed. In fact it was a carefully-crafted, serious lecture, recited in measured tones at a suitable, respectable forum, where thought-provoking polemics should be welcomed rather than denounced. In short, there was nothing wrong with what Rivlin said, how he said it, where, and to whom. He was not engaged in superficial demagoguery, regardless of whether one agrees with him or not. Rivlin was well within his rights to give voice to his apprehensions, and the least they deserve is impartial consideration rather than instant condemnation and dismissive derision.

To accuse him of incitement is to argue that the court is above reproach and that its every word is gospel. If to take issue with judicial practices and decisions is tantamount to delegitimizing and undermining the democratic system, than no dissent can be valid.

In such an intellectual climate, the court would indeed be free to regard legislators as opportunist know-nothings who must be put in their place.

The judiciary's alacrity to prevent legislative tyranny, may well impose its own tyranny on a polarized society.

It is imperative that the court try hard to avoid imparting even the impression of judicial arrogance.

To that end it must evince far more sensitivity to public sentiment than it has hitherto. This would foremost oblige it to treat criticism responsibly and respectfully. The court would thereby enhance democracy rather than compromise it, because to diminish any branch of government is to diminish the entire system. (Jerusalem Post May 25)