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ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
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Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

Commentary...

Are We Our Brothers' Keepers?

Jerusalem Post Editorial

(Last) Thursday night's horrific terror attack in Itamar, near Nablus, was as brutal as it was shocking. In an instant, a large, beautiful, and caring Jewish family was destroyed, when a Palestinian terrorist burst into the Shabu family's residence with one aim in mind: to murder as many Israelis as possible.

Unfortunately, however, many Israelis have become inured to news of such attacks, if only because the frequency and ferocity of Palestinian terrorism over the past 20 months have been so overwhelming. It is perhaps natural that people often don't wish to hear about yet another assault, as the human capacity to absorb what seems like an unending stream of bad news is necessarily finite. Nevertheless, there is something disturbing about the way in which the country reacted to the atrocity in Itamar.

For, rather than evoking the justifiable outrage and indignation that such a murderous assault should have warranted, it seems instead to have left much of the Israeli public, and the media, unmoved. Hence, even though the incident was still in progress, both major television channels swiftly returned to their regularly scheduled programming, failing to give the attack the attention and coverage that it deserved. Nor did the terrorist attack lead to any extraordinary expressions of fury or determination from Israel's usual array of talking-heads. Indeed, it is hard to escape the feeling that had a similar attack occurred in, say, Ramat Gan or Ramat Aviv, rather than a religious settlement in Samaria, the reaction would undoubtedly have been quite different.

And that is truly worrisome, because in times of war, a nation normally puts aside its internal differences and comes together to stave off the external threats that it faces as a society. And if the terrorists themselves do not distinguish between Netanya and Netzarim, or Haifa and Hebron, why then should we? Sadly, however, many Israelis seem unwilling or unable to do so, allowing their political opposition to the settlements to cloud their moral sensitivity even at a time when Jewish settlers are being murdered in cold blood.

Though nearly all of Israel has been hit in one form or another by the wave of Palestinian terrorism, the brunt of the daily violence has been targeted at the over 200,000 Jews who make their homes in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. For many, the morning commute to work has become a hazardous journey, as gunfire attacks on Israeli motorists in the territories are a common occurrence. Jews living in Gaza communities still endure mortar attacks from their Palestinian neighbors, while roadside bombs, as well as terrorist infiltrations, only add to the sense of danger and threat.

Regardless of one's views on the settlements, the fact is that the Israelis who live there are people with the same rights as anyone else. Their communities were built by successive Israeli governments, both Labor and Likud, and now is the time for all of Israeli society to embrace them and assist them, for they are under assault. Just as a country rallies around its troops when they are braving the enemy's gunfire, so too must we rally around the settlers in this, their time of need.

Just recently, in an historic policy change, the United Jewish Communities of North America - the chief fundraising arm of American Jewry - decided to do just that. For the first time in three decades, it has agreed to extend assistance to Jews living in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. This is a welcome decision, one which confirms the organization's commitment to its mandate of assisting Jews in need, regardless of where they may live.

Israelis must now emulate this example as well, opening their homes and their hearts to assist the Jews of the territories. Here and there, local initiatives have been undertaken. As reported in this paper last month, a group of Ra'anana activists has begun organizing commercial fairs for businesses from the territories, enabling them to sell their wares to Israelis at a time when many are too afraid to travel there. Other communities have organized "solidarity visits" to outlying settlements to show support. These efforts, and others like them,

should be expanded.

People familiar with the biblical account of Cain and Abel will no doubt recall Cain's famous assertion when confronted by God over Abel's death. "Am I my brother's keeper?" he said, feebly attempting to shake off his responsibility. But we would do well to remember the answer, too: "The blood of your brother cries out to me from the ground." The settlers of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza are our brothers and sisters. It

is time we started treating them as such. (Jerusalem Post Jun 23)

Democracy for Palestinians: Bush's bold plan for Mideast peace.

The Wall Street Journal Editorial

So much for all those leaks about President Bush endorsing a new, interim Palestinian state. The long-awaited speech Mr. Bush actually delivered yesterday was far more daring, and potentially a major leap forward in U.S. Middle East diplomacy.

The fear among many, including us, was that after several vicious weeks of suicide bombings, Mr. Bush would seem to be rewarding Palestinian terror. Some in the State Department were pushing a speech that would have done precisely that.

But instead the President broke from the tired Saudi-State diplomacy and made the Palestinians a far more radical offer: U.S. recognition and aid, but only after they've elected new leaders who reject terrorism in deed and word and build institutions worthy of a state.

"Peace requires a new and different Palestinian leadership, so that a Palestinian state can be born. I call on the Palestinian people to elect new leaders not compromised by terror," Mr. Bush said. "When the Palestinian people have new leaders, new institutions, and new security arrangements with their neighbors, the United States of America will support the creation of a Palestinian state."

It's important to understand how radical this idea of democracy is for Palestine. For years the U.S. and Israel both winked at the brutality of Arab leaders, in the Faustian hope that they would provide "stability" and "peace." This was the flaw at the heart of the Oslo peace process, in which the U.S. sub-contracted with Yasser Arafat to stop attacks against Israel. But this was impossible as long as Mr. Arafat and other Palestinian leaders derived all of their political legitimacy from the struggle against Israel.

Yesterday Mr. Bush said this day is over. "Today the elected Palestinian legislature has no authority, and power is concentrated in the hands of an unaccountable few," he said, adding that, "Palestinian authorities are encouraging, not opposing, terrorism. This is unacceptable."

In short, if Palestinians want the world to recognize them as a state, then they need to behave like a civilized one. That means democratic institutions, with leaders who win their legitimacy through the ballot box. It means functioning courts, not summary executions of collaborators. And it also means what Mr. Bush called "an externally supervised effort to rebuild and reform the Palestinian security services."

Perhaps the best part of the speech was the name Mr. Bush never mentioned: Yasser Arafat. By ignoring him, the President was signaling to ordinary Palestinians that their old ways and old leaders will not bring them the freedom they seek. "For decades you've been treated as pawns in the Middle East conflict," Mr. Bush said. "If liberty can blossom in the rocky soil of the West Bank and Gaza, it will inspire millions of men and women around the globe."

We have no illusions that such new leaders or liberty will blossom easily, and we doubt Mr. Bush does either. Ideally brave Palestinians will take it upon themselves to see that elections are held, and that they are free and fair. Having watched Israel's free-wheeling democracy for years, they may be better prepared than American elites weaned on Mr. Arafat give them credit for.

This goes especially for a U.S. State Department that considers its main allies in the region to be Arab dictatorships, especially Saudi Arabia. The Saudis will not be thrilled with the establishment of a democracy in another

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Arab land, especially one that would be an example to their own citizens.

And while yesterday Mr. Bush laid down formidable conditions for a Palestinian state, the diplomatic temptation will be to water them down over time. To turn Mr. Bush's speech into reality, the U.S. will have to insist on elections that are real. This will mean resisting the Saudis, the Europeans and especially the State Department.

We've worried recently that Mr. Bush was losing his way in the Middle East, allowing himself to get bogged down in Palestine instead of focusing on the war on terror. But yesterday's speech lifted him out of that morass and put him firmly on the side of a new and very different Middle East, one with democracy at its core. It's a message we think will have surprising resonance in the Arab world, not least among the people of Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia. (The Wall Street Journal Jun 25)

Who's Facing Reality? Jerusalem Post Editorial

One might think that a speech by the president of the United States conditioning support for Palestinian statehood on the removal of the current Palestinian leadership would spark unmitigated joy from across the Israeli political spectrum. After all, does not the main disagreement over what to do about Yasser Arafat stem from differing assessments over how the world will react, rather than any illusions about Arafat's role?

Actually, the Bush speech serves as a fascinating Rorschach test. It reveals that the prospect of a post-Arafat era causes significant chunks of the Israeli political spectrum from mainstream analysts to most Labor Party leaders to feel anything but gleeful.

Writing in Ma'ariv, columnist Chemi Shalev commented, "So one can be optimistic or, more to the point, naive, and believe that in the wake of Bush's speech the Palestinians will... decry terrorism and vomit it from their midst. Nevertheless, it is more likely that this overtly unbalanced speech will only further complicate the situation.... Bush's speech might have been a giant step for Ariel Sharon, but it was probably a very small step for the chances of peace."

Orly Azulai-Katz, reporting from Washington for Yediot Aharonot, mourned, "Those who dreamed that the president's speech would spark new hope had their dreams dashed: Bush proposed a peace process and buried it with his own speech. Even Arafat's opponents will come to his defense in the face of the American tyranny."

Her colleague Ofer Shelah wrote that Bush "included only a promise that, while the roses in the White House are blooming, the only red we will see in our streets and theirs will not be that of blossoming roses."

Then there were Shimon Peres, Haim Ramon, Shlomo Ben-Ami, and, of course, Yossi Beilin, all of whom regarded the American break with Arafat, as Peres put it, "a fatal mistake."

Until now, one might have thought that the Israeli Left considered the standard strained "evenhandedness" with which the world approached Israel's struggle to be a regrettable fact of life. Now we find some Israelis accusing Bush of being "unbalanced" and hoping for more pressure on Israel and less on Arafat even in the midst of a terrorist onslaught.

How is one to understand the concern within ostensibly mainstream Israelis that the US is pressing for Arafat's removal? Why is this not a cause for celebration, even on the Left? The reason seems to be that much of the Left remains in the grips of a strange form of realism. In this view, Bush is "naive" when he makes anything contingent on Palestinian democracy, and making such demands only condemns the region to more bloodshed.

In reality, however, it is not Bush who is being unrealistic. On the contrary, Bush's speech on Monday was perhaps the greatest injection of realism into US policy in 35 years. If anything has been proved by Oslo's collapse, it is that basing a peace process on an unreconstructed dictatorship was unrealistic, even utopian.

The other beef against Bush's speech, voiced by the British government and other quarters, is that the US is wrong to choose the Palestinians' leaders. But Bush is doing nothing of the sort. All he is saying is that the Palestinians deserve better leaders, and that the US will not help found a state run by leaders who are "compromised by terrorism." In other words, the Palestinians have a right to be led by whomever they want, but their choice has consequences for the legitimacy of their cause.

Bush, contrary to his critics, is among the best friends the Palestinians have ever had. If he is successful, future Palestinians will consider him their liberator. The genius of Bush's speech is that it finally spoke the truth about who is standing in the way of Palestinian liberty and independence. Those who continue to blame Israel for Palestinian suffering are not doing the Palestinians any favors, and they certainly are not realists.

The lesson of September 11, and the core of the still-evolving Bush Doctrine, is that basing peace or stability on belligerent dictatorships is like building on sand. Bush's new emphasis on democracy is not starry-eyed naivete, but realism based on bitter experience. (Jerusalem Post Jun 26)

It's Hope, Cherie, Not Despair By Mark A. Heller

The latest insight into the mind of the Palestinian suicide bomber comes from Cherie Blair. Mrs. Blair is a successful and prominent London lawyer, but her musings on the political psychology of Palestinian terrorists wouldn't merit much attention, were it not for the fact that she also happens to be the wife of Tony, the prime minister of the United Kingdom.

No adult in Britain can have grown up without being exposed to lots of discussions about terrorism. But there weren't many suicide-bombers in the IRA, and the phenomenon is apparently so bizarre that Mrs. Blair can explain it only by falling back on lazy liberal stereotypes. Since we are all humans, the assumption goes, the only explanation for people who act contrary to the most fundamental human instinct - self-preservation - is that they must be driven by an overwhelming sense of despair, deprivation, and desperation. Therefore, Palestinians who indulge in this most extreme sort of behavior must have been forced into it by what Israel has done to them.

The conclusion seems to flow logically from the assumption. The only problem is that Mrs. Blair, like many others who explain (without, God forbid, justifying) these despicable acts, never examines the assumption.

So let's be a bit politically incorrect. The liberal assertion that people are basically the same invariably draws warm murmurs of mushy assent from western audiences. But it is nothing more than an expression of goodwill, without any basis in fact. We are not all the same. We don't speak the same language, dress the same way, or eat the same food.

We don't all pray to the same God, if we pray at all, and those who do pray to the same God don't pray the same way.

We don't all have the same political systems or the same attitudes to relations between the citizen and the state, between men and women, between adults and minors, even between parents and children. In Nazi Germany and Communist Russia, children were encouraged or brainwashed to inform on their parents. And in Islamo-fascist segments of Palestinian society today, young people are encouraged or even brainwashed to blow themselves up in order to kill Israelis (in the same way that Saudi and Egyptian Islamo-fascists - none of them poor or oppressed - blew themselves up in New York and Washington).

Even more alien to the "common humanity" school of thought, some of their mothers publicly glorify the death of their children and welcome their martyrdom.

A western liberal can probably only understand all this through the prism of despair. That still begs the question, even if we are all the same, why the same cause does not always lead to the same effect. After all, there is lots of despair, anger, and frustration in non-Islamic societies, but (except among Tamils) very little of the suicide-bomber phenomenon. More to the point, that explanation doesn't even entertain the possibility that in other societies, made up of people who are not the same as Cherie Blair, the phenomenon can be explained, not by despair, but by hate and hope: of going to paradise, of gaining financial reward for families, even of killing so many Jews and demoralizing so many others that Israel might eventually be destroyed. This hate and these hopes are so alien to Mrs. Blair's world that she can't fathom the possibility, but that doesn't mean that they are equally alien to everyone else.

Recent opinion polls show that about two-thirds of Palestinians approve of suicide bombings against Israeli civilians, and that almost 90 percent oppose the preemptive arrest of the bombers or of those who recruit and send them on their way. It therefore took no little courage for a group of several dozen Palestinian intellectuals to issue a public statement appealing for an end to terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians, even (one presumes) attacks in which the terrorists don't kill themselves. Never mind that the appeal was such a long time coming - 21 months after the outbreak of the so-called intifada and about eight years after the suicide bombings began. Never mind that the appeal applies only to attacks within the Green Line, which presumably means that the bombings this week in Jerusalem's Gilo and French Hill neighborhoods are kosher. Never mind that it is motivated by instrumental considerations of what serves Palestinian national interests, rather than by any moral revulsion. Never mind that the signatories' cause is contaminated by the explanation of CNN/BBC's favorite Palestinian, Hanan Ashrawi, who mounts another excursion into the rhetorical gutter by arguing that Palestinians should avoid murdering civilians in order not to sink to Israel's level. Never mind all this. It's enough that there are still a few people who inhabit Mrs. Blair's cognitive universe - the kind of people who get invited to 10 Downing Street - and yet are willing to speak out against the rising current of Islamo-fascism in Palestinian society. (Jerusalem Post Jun 21)

Defining Terrorism down By Saul Singer

To someone in Washington or London, this week's suicide bombings happened on top of me. On their world maps, Israel is so small its name barely fits inside the country. Jerusalem is a speck, and I am inside that exploding speck.

Even within Israel, people in Tel Aviv call their friends and family in Jerusalem, concerned for their safety.

Here in Jerusalem itself, when a bomb goes off, the distance scale shifts again. For someone who lives in the south of the city, a bomb in the northern part of the city is far away. Once, a bomb went off in a parking lot a couple of blocks away from me, on a street I drive on daily, about 20 minutes after I passed by. But in my mind this was not a close call, because I didn't hear the bomb go off, and it didn't hurt anyone.

The protective armor of the mind grows closer, tighter. Even if I were to be caught close to an attack, my mind could create distance by arguing that I was lucky not to be wounded, or only to be wounded, as the case may be.

By a strange inversion, the farther one is from terrorism, the closer it seems to people you know; the closer one is, the better one gets at mental distancing. Crazy becomes relative. Americans think visiting Israel is crazy; Tel Avivians stay away from Jerusalem; Jerusalemites from Ariel; Ariel residents from Kiryat Arba; and Kiryat Arba people are probably a bit skittish when visiting Hebron. Just like "fanatic" is defined as anyone who is more religiously observant than you are, "dangerous" is the word for anywhere you don't go, whether or not there is objectively much difference.

A similar process occurs with the definition of a "major" terrorist attack. In 1993, former US Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote a famous article titled, "Defining Deviancy Down" - about how societies can become inured to increasing social decay. In an interview years later, he explained how he got the idea. Moynihan saw an item buried in The New York Times about seven people having been found dead in an apartment. The article noted that a mother had managed to hide her infant under a bed before she was shot. For the newspaper, the mother's desperate act "was sort of interesting," Moynihan wryly observed. "The fact that seven people had been shot in the back of the head was not interesting at all."

In 1929, when Al Capone gunned down seven competing mobsters, Moynihan remembered, it became an American legend dubbed the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. In the 1990s, it took a special twist on seven murders for it to even rate a story on page B14.

The same process has occurred with terrorism. When the PLO captured the Israeli Olympic team in Munich in 1972, German officials appealed to the terrorists to release their hostages because they were creating bad publicity for their own cause. It seemed unthinkable then that the Palestinians would simply murder the Israeli athletes, as they eventually did.

In domestic affairs, the process Moynihan identified happens without any directing hand. Crime rates, for example, do not go up because all the criminals get together and decide it is time to become more active. Terrorism is different - its whole purpose is to shock an entire public, or the world. Terrorists must by definition try to top themselves, in order to overcome the "defining down" of what is considered a major, newsworthy attack.

In this instance, the normally healthy human ability to adapt to almost anything works against us. When we adapt to atrocities, we deny terrorism a victory in one sense, but encourage even more spectacular attacks in another.

So how does a society get out of a destructive spiral of "defining deviancy down"? In the cases of crime and other social maladies, a reversal ultimately comes about when leaders go against the tide and begin to make the acceptable unacceptable.

We have not yet turned such a corner in the fight against terrorism. On the contrary, the level of terrorism that will trigger a given level of military response is continuing to slide upward.

It seems that we are waiting for terrorism to reach a level at which everyone in the world will understand that Yasser Arafat's regime must be replaced. This point may never be reached, however, precisely because the world becomes used to seeing Israel not react decisively to increasing levels of terrorism. Along the way, we are not only defining terrorism down for ourselves, but for the whole world. (Jerusalem Post Jun 21)

A New Birth of Freedom Jerusalem Post Editorial

The Oslo "peace process" was born on the White House lawn on September 13, 1993. It died yesterday in the White House Rose Garden.

From the beginning - and putting aside the palaver about a New Middle East - the strategic calculus that informed Oslo was a simple one: Deputize thugs to take care of thugs. Revive the weakened strongmen of the PLO and they will do Israel's dirty work against Hamas and Islamic Jihad without without fear of cavil from sundry human-rights groups in Israel and beyond. Wash your hands of the Palestinians once and for all, leave them to their squallor, their corruption, and

their tyranny, and they will leave us alone.

Nearly nine years later, the results of Oslo are in. The creation of a Palestinian Authority has indeed led to Palestinian immiseration at the hands of their thuggish leaders. But it has not given Israel the peace it thought it would gain in the process. Instead, we have the French Hill bombing, and the Egged bus bombing, and the Meggido Junction bombings, and the Park Hotel bombing, and the Moment cafe bombing, and the Haifa bombings, and Sbarro bombing, and the Dolphinarium bombing, and the Ramallah lynchings; an endless succession of genocides in miniature committed by the very regime Israel gave birth to on that fateful and awful day in September, 1993.

All this has been allowed to continue, through the Hebron Accords, and the Wye River Plantation agreement, and the Mitchell Plan, and the Tenet Plan, because the whole world - Israel too - believed that thugs could be entrusted with the care of Jewish lives.

What a strange idea.

To appreciate the power of President Bush's historic address yesterday, note first its plain-spokenness. "Today, Palestinian authorities are encouraging, not opposing, terrorism" - a statement made all the more impressive by the very adamancy with which it has been denied by every Western government, up to and including the State Department's report on global terrorism issued last month. "Today, the Palestinian people live in economic stagnation, made worse by official corruption" - a fact that has been overlooked by spendthrift aid givers too willing to close their eyes to the regime in which they had invested every false hope. "Today, the elected Palestinian legislature has no authority, and power is concentrated in the hands of the unaccountable few" - a truth ostensible champions of democracy repeatedly contradicted with bizarre references to the "elected Palestinian leadership." To conduct a statesmanlike diplomacy, one must first look reality in the face. This the President has done.

Then too, the significance of Bush's speech is not its promise of Palestinian statehood, but its transformation of that promise from axiomatic to conditional. In essence, Bush is requiring that his doctrine be applied to a Palestinian state before it is established.

Again, look at the President's language. "If the Palestinians actively pursue these goals, America and the world will actively support their efforts. If the Palestinian people meet these goals, they will be able to reach agreement with Israel.... If they energetically take the path of reform, the rewards can come quickly. If Palestinians embrace democracy, confront corruption and firmly reject terror, they can count on American support...." (Emphases added.) If the President follows through with these words, it will mark a fundamental shift in the thinking that has dominated American Mideast diplomacy for the last 35 years. Never before has the US committed itself to Palestinian statehood in such time-specific terms, but never before has statehood become so contingent on Palestinian, rather than Israeli actions.

While never mentioning Yasser Arafat, Bush could not have been clearer that Arafat has to go. Nor could he have been more emphatic in rejecting the idea of cosmetic reforms that would simply re-enforce the existing regime. This too, marks a historic departure from the "let's pretend" universe in which previous diplomatic initiatives took place.

Bush also paired his expressions of solidarity with Israeli suffering under terrorist attack - noting that even Israeli kindergartens are now under armed guard - with sympathy for Palestinian suffering under their own regime. He described Palestinians, accurately, as "pawns" in the conflict whose dreams of democracy and independence were dashed, not only by the corruption of their leaders, but by their leaders' rejection of the hand Israel stretched out in peace.

For years, the US acted as if the real obstacle to peace was Israel's reluctance to give up land. The great breakthrough in this speech was the unmistakable shift in the US interpretation of the "root causes" of the conflict. The concept of land for peace has been relegated to where it should have been all along: a reflection or ratification of peace, rather than its source or cause.

In all history, no two mature democracies have ever warred with each other, an axiom that applies to the Middle East no less than to Europe or the Americas. Now the President has noted this fact, and embraced its wisdom. For this alone, he stands at the cusp of greatness. (Jerusalem Post Jun 25)

Honor to Gila By Gabriel Danzig

Last week, we heard the kind of news thousands of us have heard over the past few years, that one of our very dearest, most cherished friends had been killed by a Palestinian terrorist.

We had known Gila Kessler since she was a girl of eight or nine. Even then her beautiful smile and charm made everyone love her, and as she grew up she lost none of her charm. She visited our house often, babysitting for our kids, borrowing our car, or talking with us about her plans and dreams

and worries.

She always thought that we were too kind to her, but the truth is that she came with such a spirit of warmth, openness and good cheer that there was nothing we wouldn't have done for her. We have lost a great friend.

What can we do for Gila and for the hundreds of other innocent young people slaughtered while waiting for a bus or eating a sandwich or celebrating a holiday? In the culture we live in, there is nothing we can do. The most we can do is to wish or hope that these things will not happen again.

But how likely is that? And is that all we are entitled to wish for? Nothing can bring Gila back now. But what about punishment?

There is a reason why civilized countries punish. It does not bring back the victims, but it does do them honor. But whom do you punish? In a case like this, where the killer was willing to blow himself up, it seems that there is no one left to punish.

Should we punish his family? Should we punish Palestinian leaders? What about innocent Palestinian civilians? It seems to me that a case can be made for all of these, and not just on prudential grounds.

We all know that the only way to preserve peace is through deterrence. Deterrence means convincing the other side that if it performs an act of violence, a far greater act of violence will be done to it.

This was the rationale behind the nuclear deterrence that the US developed during the Cold War. It prevented actual war with the Soviet Union only because the US was ready and willing to use nuclear weapons if pressed: Nuclear weapons are highly imprecise, and cause terrible civilian casualties.

But without that threat and the willingness to act on it, it is doubtful war could have been avoided.

The problem with deterrence is that it cannot be a bluff. When you don't use it for a long enough period of time, you lose it. In order to maintain a plausible threat, one must be willing to use weapons of deterrence once one sees that threats are not working.

This is the situation Israel is facing today. Israeli - and American - threats have been made so frequently and acted on so rarely that they no longer carry any weight.

When was the last time we told Yasser Arafat that this is his last chance? If he thought we were bluffing, he was right; and now he knows he was right, he never can take us seriously again.

In order to restore the peace, we will certainly have to act on our threats - and this means more than just expelling the PA chairman. Unfortunately, it means inflicting casualties.

That is the way you win wars. That is the way that the US beat Japan, and it is the way it beat Germany as well. Neither the French, nor the Dutch, nor the Norwegians - all of whom have plenty of suggestions for Israel today - inflicted many casualties in World War II, and that is why they lost the war.

No one would like to win a war without inflicting casualties more than the Jewish people. But there is no such thing.

The Jewish people have suffered so much from the unprovoked violence of others that they are almost unwilling to reply with violence, even when severely provoked. But this is part of being a sovereign state: You have to be able to decide when to use military force, knowing full well what that means. And in a democratic country, the responsibility for that decision falls inevitably on all of the citizens.

Everyone would like to pinpoint terrorists and cause no damage to civilians. But aside from the fact that this is virtually impossible to do, it is not at all clear that it would put an end to terrorism.

The pool of willing candidates from which terrorist leaders recruit new murderers seems unlimited. Eliminating the present crop of terrorists is like cutting off the heads of the Hydra: For every one we eliminate, two more may well come to replace him. And these new recruits will come precisely from the ranks of those innocent civilians that we are worried about harming.

But is it right to use collective punishment on civilians, if that is the only way to restore peace? Of course it is. In our situation this is especially true, since we are not dealing with innocent civilians.

The idea that collective punishment is off-limits is based on the idea that there is no collective guilt. This idea became popular after World War II, when the Germans claimed that they could not be held responsible for the crimes committed by individuals within their society.

This was a very useful notion because it was clearly impossible to actually punish the entire German people for what they had done - even though they may well have deserved it. So it was convenient to say there is no such thing as collective guilt.

But how true is that? A society which approves of terrorist attacks against civilians to the degree that the Palestinians do (surveys put this support at between 80%-90% percent of the Palestinian population) certainly deserves to be blamed for the outcome of these beliefs and attitudes.

The line between civilians who celebrate terror attacks by handing out candies to their children and to the terrorists themselves is not a line of great moral

significance.

For these reasons, Israel does not have to be particularly concerned about doing what all nations do in order to win war and establish peace. Our only reasons for hesitation should be pragmatic rather than moral.

But here we may be exaggerating the risk. We have to say it again and again: Europe is not a military threat, and neither are the Arab states - at least not yet.

We cannot wait for approval from Europe, or even from the US, but if we act on our own initiative to restore peace, we will quickly see how they come around to our point of view.

And in doing so, we will not only bring peace and stability back to our region, we will also do honor to Gila. (Jerusalem Post Jun 25)

Why Does the Left Support the Palestinians? By Dennis Prager

Why does the left support the Palestinians against Israel?

The question is rarely asked. It is simply taken for granted that the left - Europe, the Western news media, the universities, the liberal churches, the arts world - supports the Palestinians and the larger Arab-Muslim worlds in their war against Israel.

But the question does need to be asked. For it is completely inconsistent with the left's professed values to side with Israel's enemies. Just about every value the left claims to uphold, Israel upholds and its enemies do not.

The left speaks about its passion for democracy ("power to the people"). Yet it is Israel that is a fully functioning democracy, as opposed to all of its Arab and Muslim enemies. Yasser Arafat is precisely the self-aggrandizing, corrupt dictator-type that the left claims to hold in contempt.

The left claims to have particular concern for women's rights. Yet it is Israel that has as highly developed a feminist movement as that of any Western country. It is Israel that conscripted women into its armed forces before almost any Western country. At the same time, the state of women's rights among Israel's Muslim enemies is perhaps the lowest in the world.

The left's greatest current preoccupation is with gay rights. Yet it is Israel that has annual gay-pride days, while Egypt and other Arab and Muslim countries arrest homosexuals.

It is Israel that has an independent and highly liberal judiciary. It is Israel that has a leftist press. It is Israel that has been governed more by leftist, even socialist, parties than by rightist ones. Israel's enemies have none of this.

So, why isn't the left out there leading pro-Israel demonstrations?

The answer is as important as it is contemptible.

In general, the left does not care about women, independent judiciaries, minorities, democracy, gays or almost anything else for which it marches. That is why the left opposed America's war in Afghanistan, which liberated women from being treated like animals.

Nearly all the causes the left speaks for are noble-sounding covers for its real agenda - the overthrowing of Western, especially Judeo-Christian and capitalist, values. Remember the chant at Stanford, "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Western civ has got to go"? That is what animates the left.

In psychoanalytic terms, it is antagonism to one's father and his values. In a commencement speech he gave this year, the former president of Dartmouth College, James O. Freedman, a man of the left, said that the purpose of a college education is "to question your father's values." Those of us not on the left believe that the purpose of a college education is to discover what is true and what is good.

America embodies all that the left dislikes. It is the most religious of the industrialized democracies (proudly and uniquely Judeo-Christian). It is also the most capitalist. And, what drives the left especially crazy is that with all this religion and capitalism, America is the most powerful force on earth - economically, militarily and culturally.

Israel is Little America. It, too, is religious (though a secular state like the United States, it is proudly Jewish). It, too, celebrates capitalism. There are no demonstrations in Israel against McDonald's. On the contrary, even before McDonald's opened there, Hebrew replicas like "McDavid's" were established.

And Israel, like America, celebrates its national identity, not the "world" identity that the left affirms. The left loathes nationalism unless it is anti-Western, like Palestinian or Cuban. America does not jump to attention when world treaties are signed and Israel is the U.N.'s pariah, rendering America and Israel the left's "axis of evil," far more reviled than Iran, Iraq and North Korea.

The question, "Why does the left support the Palestinians?" is an extremely important one. At this time in history nothing so illustrates the left's nihilism as does its support of the Palestinians against Israel. (worldnetdaily.com Jun 25)