



**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*

**Commentary...**

**The New War Against the Jews**

By Hillel Halkin

A man wakes up one morning and thinks he's back in the Middle Ages. Russian State Prosecutor Vladimir Ustinov, the front page of the Russian newspaper Izvestia reports, has decided to launch an official investigation of the Shulhan Arukh, the definitive compendium of Jewish law written in the 16th century by Rabbi Joseph Caro and used to this day - generally in an abbreviated version - as a standard reference book by Orthodox Jews.

Prosecutor Ustinov has already summoned Moscow rabbi Zinovy Kogan, chairman of the Congress of Jewish Organizations, for questioning in order to determine whether the Shulhan Arukh should be banned for "racist incitement." He took this action after receiving a letter last January, signed by 500 patriotic Russians, calling the Jewish religion "anti-Christian and inhumane" and demanding that the Shulhan Arukh be banned.

You read and rub your eyes and read again. And still it's hard to believe.

When did something like this happen before? Well, the first time was in 1240, when Pope Gregory IX, after receiving a formal denunciation of the Talmud as "blasphemous" and "pernicious" from a French Jewish apostate, ordered all copies of it seized and an investigation of it undertaken. At a public inquiry held in Paris in the presence of King Louis IX, the Talmud was found guilty. On June 17, 1242, all confiscated copies of it were burned, as part of 24 cartloads of Jewish books, in a large bonfire.

State Prosecutor Ustinov - indeed, the government of Russia that has not immediately acted to remove him from office - can be proud to belong to a time-honored tradition. Perhaps we can look forward to bonfires in Moscow sometime soon. You rub your eyes and read again.

Not, of course, that the Talmud - or the Shulhan Arukh, for that matter - is entirely free of anti-Gentile remarks. Given the world's treatment of the Jews over the past 1,500 years, it's surprising that there aren't more of these. Yet if we're going to start eliminating religious books for their hateful passages, why start with the minor case of Jewish ones? Let's first burn the New Testament and the Koran for viciously consigning all nonbelievers, Jews included, to the eternal torments of hell. (Which is a punishment, incidentally, that Jewish tradition never invoked on Christians and Muslims.)

But, of course, even to make this kind of argument is to stoop to taking the intellects of State Prosecutor Ustinov and the 500 letter writers - among which were Russian authors, mathematicians, and former international chess champion Boris Spassky - too seriously. One doesn't argue logically with rabid idiots. One fights them as dangerous enemies must be fought, with no holds barred.

The scary thing is that once again, 50 years after the Holocaust, the Jews have so many enemies. And make no mistake about it: They are dangerous.

Nor are all of them primitives out of the Middle Ages. Some are very suave, very cultivated gentlemen. They wear three-piece suits and they speak with Oxonian accents and they say things like "bloody nuisance" and "spot on." Some are even leaders of the Anglican Church.

You may have noticed it. The international advisory body of that church voted last Friday in London to urge its congregations, which have 75 million members worldwide, to disinvest in Israel because of its "oppression" of the Palestinians.

These are not benighted Slavophiles. They are sophisticated High

This week's issue is sponsored by  
Kenny and Reena Greenwald  
to celebrate the upcoming marriage  
of their daughter Shayna to Teddy Kahn,  
son of Gilbert and Bernice Kahn  
Mazel Tov!

Churchmen. With them one can argue. One can say: "Of all the world's 'oppressing' countries - China, which oppresses Tibet; India, which oppresses Kashmir; Russia, which oppresses Chechnya, et cetera, et cetera - the one you've decided to boycott as good Christians is the country of the Jewish people? The country of the same Jews whom you Christians have hounded throughout your history and whom you

Anglicans and Englishmen watched as they were slaughtered by the millions in Europe while you did nothing to rescue them and barred the gates of Palestine and England to those of them who might have fled? Have you no shame? No honor? No awareness of your own appalling hypocrisy?"

No, they have no shame, no honor, no awareness of their own appalling hypocrisy. And they are anti-Semites no less than State Prosecutor Ustinov and his 500 imbeciles. In fact, they are State Prosecutor Ustinov's allies.

This cannot be said too often. In an age in which a Jewish state's right to exist is still not recognized by much of the world - in which tens of millions of Arabs and hundreds of millions of Muslims regularly clamor for its destruction - in which a Muslim country now in the process of arming itself with nuclear weapons openly refers to it as an outlaw creation that must be wiped from the face of the earth - anyone deliberately undermining this state's legitimacy, even if he wears a respectable English clergyman's collar, is contributing to another possible genocide of the Jews.

Criticism of Israel? By all means. This is perfectly legitimate. So is concern for the Palestinians. But disinvestment is not criticism. It is an attempt to turn Israel into a pariah state. And Jews, having been treated as pariahs by Christian civilization since the age of Constantine, know exactly what this means.

Half a century after the Holocaust, a new war against the Jews has been declared. We are only now - innocents that we have been, lulled by the world and our own wishful thinking into believing that widespread Jew-hatred is a thing of the past - waking up to its true dimensions.

It is not a war that we Jews will necessarily win, although it is not one that we can afford to lose. But we, too, have our allies and we are fortunate that they are more intelligent than our enemies. We have to impress on them that the fight is not only for us but for a sane world that has not completely lost its

moral and intellectual bearings.

(New York Sun Jun 28)

*The writer is a contributing editor of The New York Sun.*

**Irrelevant "Visions"** By Caroline Glick

During his meeting with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Saturday, PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas told Rice that the PA had ceased all incitement activities against Israel. Yet on the same day that they met, the PA's official news service Wafa "reported" that Israelis were sending hordes of wild pigs to Palestinian villages around Hawarah village in the Nablus district to attack them and destroy their fields. The PA's official news service even interviewed Hawarah Mayor Mansour Dmaid, who backed these ludicrous and incendiary statements.

It is not surprising that Abbas brazenly lied to Rice about PA-sponsored incitement against Israel. After all, he lied to her about everything else. Most importantly, Abbas told Rice that he is opposed to terrorism. And yet, Abbas fervently supports terrorism. Abbas complained to Rice - as he complains to anyone who will listen - that Israel's actions to defend its citizens against terrorism make it impossible for him to fight terrorists. This is a logically unsupportable statement. If Abbas opposes terrorism, then he should support Israel's counterterrorist operations.

Aside from this, the prescriptions for Israeli action which Abbas sets forth on a daily basis are all aimed at strengthening rather than weakening

**Yasher Koach and thank you to our supporters. Thank you also to Continental Press for their ongoing support.**  
**Readers are requested to please mail contributions to: BAYT - re: Israel News, 613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario. L4J 5V3**  
**Annual Rates: Friend - \$36, Supporter - \$50, Benefactor - \$180. Dedications are welcome at \$120/week.**  
**Call (905) 886-3810 for further info. Israel News can be viewed on the internet at [www.bayt.org](http://www.bayt.org) and [www.frumtoronto.com](http://www.frumtoronto.com)**

terrorists. These steps include the release of terrorists from Israeli jails; the elimination of roadblocks meant to intercept terrorists on their way to bombing missions, as happened yet again this week at Hawarah; the re-arming of the Palestinian security services to which he is systematically enlisting terrorists; and a cessation of counterterror operations against all terrorists - to name just a few.

There are two theories running now about the proper interpretation of Abbas's actions. The first is that Abbas is too weak to do anything to end terrorism and has consequently decided to embrace the various groups in the hope that in so doing, they will not assassinate him. The other is that Abbas feigns weakness in order to justify his lack of action against the terrorists whom he, like Arafat before him, supports. In either case, the fact remains, due to weakness or guile, through word and deed Abbas has made it absolutely clear that he has no interest in doing anything against terrorists.

The US, like Israel, has taken great pains to distinguish Abbas's party, Fatah, from Hamas and Islamic Jihad. We are told that Fatah is secular and pro-peace with Israel, while Hamas and Islamic Jihad are Islamist and wish to destroy Israel. And yet, the day after Rice left Israel, IDF troops intercepted 21-year-old Wafa Samir Ibrahim at Erez checkpoint in Gaza en route to carrying out a suicide bombing at Soroka Hospital, where she was scheduled to receive treatment for burns she had sustained while cooking last year.

Interviewed that evening by Channel 10, Ibrahim announced proudly that she belonged to Fatah and that she wanted to follow the will of Allah by killing Israeli medical personnel and patients. When the Israeli interviewer asked her how she could want to carry out a suicide bombing when Abbas (aka Abu Mazen) has stated that he opposes them, she looked at him blankly and said, "Abu Mazen opposes them? I haven't heard Abu Mazen say that."

And yet, rather than withdraw US support for Abbas as a result of his blatant failure to deliver on even the smallest American expectation from him, during her visit over the weekend, Rice simply shored up US support for him. Rice supports continued Israeli security "gestures" to Abbas, like the release of further prisoners. This, even as the night before she arrived, the IDF arrested Rami Muhammad Hassan Kandil in Jenin. Kandil, a member of Islamic Jihad who was among the 900 terrorists recently released from prison by Israel in order to "strengthen" Abbas, was planning to carry out a suicide bombing in Israel.

Rice also supports the transfer of security authority over additional cities to the PA even as Nablus, Tulkarm and Jericho have been used as safe havens, weapons development centers and terror training camps by Hamas, Fatah and Islamic Jihad cells from the moment the IDF relinquished control over them to PA security forces. As the armed attack on PA Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei by Fatah gunmen in Nablus Wednesday showed, Abbas's claim to have disarmed the terrorists is just another lie.

The reason for Rice's insistent support for Abbas is clear. The US, in committing itself to President George W. Bush's "vision" of the establishment of a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria and Gaza and perhaps Jerusalem, has mortgaged its entire Middle East policy to a "solution" of the Palestinian conflict with Israel that has no relation whatsoever to the realities on the ground. The reality on the ground is that Palestinian society is unified by a dedication to the destruction of Israel, not the establishment of a Palestinian state. Abbas is a reflection of his society.

In backing Abbas, the US is not shoring up a weak leader who wants a different future for the Palestinians. The US is backing one Palestinian terrorist organization - Fatah - against Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Yet since Fatah coexists harmoniously with Hamas and Islamic Jihad, by backing Fatah, the US is effectively backing all Palestinian terror groups. That is, the US commitment to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state as quickly as possible simply blocks its path from developing any strategy for actually addressing the true reality on the ground. And at the same time, by calling for Israeli "confidence-building measures" to strengthen Abbas, the US is effectively weakening its ally.

ONE CANNOT be too harsh with the Americans for acting on their delusions since the policies of Israel's own government are even more hallucinatory - and dangerous.

This week it was announced that during his visit with Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak, Vice Premier Shimon Peres reached an agreement on the deployment of 750-800 Egyptian mechanized infantry forces to the Philadelphia Route, which links Gaza to the Sinai. We were told that Israel has not agreed to the Egyptian demand to deploy a force of 5,000 soldiers along Israel's border with Egypt from Kerem Shalom to Eilat. Nor, we were told has the agreed to Egypt's demand to be allowed to deploy attack helicopters, arm its infantry forces with antitank missiles and heavy guns or anchor missile boats at El-Arish.

Thursday morning a senior diplomatic source told Israel Radio that the decision not to accede to Egypt's demands is not due to the government's

objection to the cancellation of the agreement to demilitarize the Sinai, which was signed together with the peace treaty in 1979. Rather, the government wants to avoid acceding to the Knesset's demand that any substantive change to the 1979 treaty - and a cancellation of the demilitarization agreement certainly constitutes a "substantive" change - must first receive Knesset approval.

The prime minister knows that there is no way that he would receive majority support for enabling the deployment of the Egyptian military, which Yuval Steinitz, the chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, notes "has been training for war against Israel for the past 10 years" along the border. And so, in a bid to prevent Knesset oversight, Peres and Sharon have limited their agreement with Mubarak to the Gaza-Sinai border - although according to the committee's legal adviser, this too is a substantive change in the agreement.

Yet, a senior security source close to the discussions with the Egyptians told me that in fact, Peres did not reject Mubarak's demands. He accepted them. According to the source, "Peres explained to Mubarak that the Knesset won't approve the agreement now, but that next year, after the withdrawal from Gaza, if Egypt renews its demand, Israel will accept it."

In responding to Rice's demands that it coordinate the withdrawal with the Palestinians, Israel has gone back on its previous demand to retain control of the international crossing points to Gaza. Gaza's land passage to Egypt - from which 90 percent of the arms smuggled into the PA emanate - will be controlled by the Egyptians and the Palestinians. The Palestinians will be allowed to build and control a seaport and reopen their airport in Gaza. In addition, Israel has agreed to link Judea and Gaza with either a railroad or a dedicated highway and to ease restrictions on Palestinian entry into Israel.

In transferring control over the international borders to the Palestinians, the government, in time of war, is effectively enabling - indeed inviting - the rapid transformation of the Gaza Strip into a center of global terrorism. In agreeing to link Judea and Gaza, Israel is building the Palestinians' supply lines from a post-withdrawal, arms-flooded Gaza to their new center of effort in Judea and Samaria. In empowering the Egyptians, Israel has agreed to enable the largest, strongest and most overtly hostile Arab military force to perch itself on its border. The collapse of Israeli defense rationality inherent in these moves can only be described as horrific.

In acting thus, Israel is behaving similarly to the Bush administration. If Palestinian statehood is Washington's irrelevant solution to the irrelevant problem of lack of Palestinian sovereignty, empowering a hostile Egypt and transferring Gaza to Abbas is Israel's irrelevant solution to the irrelevant problem of what Vice Premier Ehud Olmert referred to in an interview with The Jerusalem Post Thursday as the "lack of political progress" toward peace. The "lack of political progress" toward peace is irrelevant because the Palestinians are still actively involved in fighting a terror war against Israel.

If either Washington or Jerusalem were willing to base their policies on reality rather than "visions," they would both come up with multiple options for fighting Palestinian terrorism and transforming Palestinian society.

In so doing both would be making a great contribution to the cause of democracy and counterterrorism throughout the Arab world. But since both are committed to "solutions" that have no connection to the real world, the steps they adopt to achieve their goals are both counter-productive and dangerous. (Jerusalem Post Jun 24)

---

### **Springing the Poverty Trap** By Daniel Doron

Lack of full and proper information about Israel has not only limited American Jews' ability to defend Israel in the international arena, it has also caused a serious misunderstanding of Israel's internal problems and what must be done to solve them.

Ever since the 1920s, when Chaim Weizmann's pro-Socialist camp wrested control of the American Zionist Organization, and later of the Jewish Agency, from the pro-private enterprise camp of Justice Louis Brandeis, most of the aid donated by American Jews was spent on collectivist settlements and Labor Federation enterprises that supposedly represented the pioneering spirit of the New Israel.

That these enterprises failed repeatedly, going bankrupt practically every decade since the Twenties, did not deter their supporters from pouring more and more aid into them, despite repeated warnings issued by expert commissions that investigated these failures. It can thus be claimed that funds donated by well-intentioned American Jews helped underwrite the economic failure of Zionism.

The fact that the Yishuv (Jewish community) in Palestine remained economically underdeveloped during the period of the British mandate provided the British with the excuse to limit Jewish pre-Holocaust immigration into Palestine, with all the horrendous consequences.

Economic weakness has, of course, had other negative political, demographic and social consequences.

After the establishment of the State of Israel, American Jewish aid continued to be channeled – whether as assistance for the absorption of immigrants, or as "development" aid – mostly to Labor's collectivist sector.

But gradually, as Labor's collectivist institutions collapsed under the weight of their growing inefficiency and corruption, aid was redirected to a bureaucratic welfare establishment, both "public" and governmental.

THE ESTABLISHMENT of the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) and the almost total emphasis the American Jewish community placed on charitable fundraising has accelerated the trend of considering Israel solely in terms of being a charity ward, an object of pity that occasionally makes Jews stand taller by performing military stunts such as the Entebbe rescue. Israel's late prime minister Levy Eshkol quipped that Israel was considered a "nebuchadnezzar" (the pitiful Samson) and its citizens a bunch of schnorrers.

Since it is much easier to raise funds by pulling at the heart strings, the Jewish Diaspora establishment persists in treating Israel as the poor and less capable relative, largely ignoring the great talents and ability, even the relative success, of many Israelis. In a two-year course the Jewish Agency holds for promising young Diaspora leaders, all they learn about is welfare, with almost no exposure to Israel's productive side.

Huge amounts of money poured into the country by the Joint, the UJA and dozens of other welfare associations have arguably done a lot to alleviate the short-term suffering of our destitute. But long term they have not been a major factor in building a welfare lobby in Israel that perpetuates a culture of poverty. Its institutions churn out dubious statistics – such as the ones based on a fictitious "poverty line" – that distort the issue of poverty and how it can be resolved by focusing on the marginal problem of hunger while ignoring the widespread problem of destitution for hundreds of thousands of Israeli families which cannot make ends meet because of low wages caused by low productivity.

Such distortions lead to policies that hold a third generation of Israelis in a poverty trap with no exit in sight.

DESPITE ALL the enormous resources poured into welfare by government – 55 percent of GNP is devoted to public expenditures, compared to an average of 41.3% in OECD countries. More than a third of the government's bloated 70 billion plus dollar budget goes to transfer payments, the highest proportion in the Western world.

Between the years 1990 and 2003, the population of Israel grew by 43%, but the number of people receiving guaranteed income from the government grew by 600% (15 times the rate of the population growth). Nevertheless, the modest efforts of Finance Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to cut the bloated welfare lists were characterized by his political enemies, and by some Diaspora leaders as "cruel."

Focusing on welfare, many Diaspora leaders fail to grasp that the only way to liberate the poor from their continuous predicament is to generate economic growth by liberating the Israeli economy from the stifling hand of government and the monopolies that rule it. During a transition period, those capable of working should be helped to acquire the skills that will enable them to replace the almost 300,000 foreign workers currently employed in Israel. Getting those people who can work off the welfare rolls will enable the government to better support those who really deserve help – the sick, the old and the incapacitated.

American Jews can greatly help Israel in making the transition from a low-productivity society that forces so many Israelis to live on measly salaries of \$1,200 a month, unable to make ends meet. They could help them advance from a welfare-dependent society torn by radicalized political strife over the distribution of government hand-outs to a highly productive – yes, even a rich society. They can share with Israelis the secret of their own success and their ability to compete in a highly dynamic free-enterprise system; they can treat them as productive partners rather than as beggars.

But to do so they will have to overcome old habits by getting a better understanding of what really ails Israel, and how it can be cured. (Jerusalem Post Jun 23)

---

### **The Chimera of Security** By Evelyn Gordon

Less than two months before the disengagement, a vital security question remains unanswered: Who will control Gaza's borders after the withdrawal? Two proposals are currently under discussion, but unfortunately, both are delusional.

The first, backed by the Palestinians and the international community, would give the Palestinian Authority full control over the Gazan-Egyptian border. This position was outlined in a report submitted two weeks ago by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Israel's concern is that this would enable a massive flow of arms, and

particularly high-trajectory weapons such as rockets, into Gaza. The report's response, essentially, is that Israel should trust the PA to prevent such smuggling. While it does pay lip service to Israel's fears by proposing mechanisms for Israeli monitoring, even these boil down to trusting the PA. Linking Israeli and Palestinian border control computers, for instance, would not reveal contraband unless PA inspectors record it.

Given that most Palestinian opinion leaders, as Haaretz Arab affairs editor Danny Rubinstein noted on Monday, expect the intifada to resume later this year, relying on the PA would seem the height of folly. Yet, even discounting this prediction, the PA's record in the six months since Mahmoud Abbas took power is sufficient to make such reliance ludicrous.

Not only has Abbas failed to collect weapons from the terrorist organizations; recently, he even recanted his pledge to do so. Moreover, he has enrolled dozens of members of terrorist groups in the PA security services, thereby allowing them to possess weapons legally – and making them the people Israel would be relying on to stop the terrorists' arms smuggling.

Abbas has also refused to arrest even active terrorists. Several days ago, for instance, Israel informed the PA, and Abbas himself, of an intelligence tip about a would-be suicide bomber. Yet the woman, whose professed target was a hospital, remained at large until she tried to enter Israel on Monday – when Israel nabbed her.

Similarly, when PA troops caught a Hamas operative last month with a Kassam rocket launcher in his car, near the site where Kassams had been fired at Sderot minutes earlier, he was released on the grounds that no one saw him fire the weapon.

In the PA, Kassam launchers are evidently not illegal weapons whose possession is a crime. And the one time Abbas actually ordered an arrest – of four men involved in January's suicide bombing in Tel Aviv – he released them five months later instead of trying them.

THIS INACTION has led to virtually daily attacks in recent weeks. Just consider the past few days: Tuesday, there was an attempted stabbing, and mortars and Kassams were fired at Gaza settlements. Monday, an Israeli civilian was killed in the West Bank and the hospital bomber tried to enter Israel. Sunday, a soldier was killed in Gaza and a Palestinian tried to smuggle four pipe bombs through a West Bank checkpoint. Saturday, Palestinians shot at Kfar Darom and fired mortars at other Gaza settlements. Thursday and Friday, Kassams were fired at Sderot. And previous weeks have differed only in that the terrorists scored fewer successes. Yet Abbas's sole response has been to declare, once again, that he "will not allow" such behavior.

Given this record, relying on the PA to halt arms smuggling into Gaza would be bad enough. But the IMF-World Bank proposal goes even further: It also demands that the Gaza-Israel customs union, which is supposed to enable the free flow of goods between the two, remain intact post-disengagement. In other words, Israel should also facilitate weapons smuggling from Gaza into Israel by eschewing standard customs checks!

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon understands that PA control of the Gazan-Egyptian border would be disastrous. Yet his counter-proposal – giving Egypt sole control – is equally delusional. Egypt already controls one side of this border, but has yet to lift a finger to prevent arms smuggling across it.

Sharon's response is that Israeli-Egyptian relations have warmed recently, and therefore, Egypt will finally get serious. Yet all the evidence indicates that Egypt remains as hostile as ever.

CONSIDER, FOR instance, the fact that after 25 years of peace, Egyptians still need a special permit from their security services to enter Israel – a fact that goes a long way toward explaining why traffic between Israel and Egypt is strictly one-way. Yet last Wednesday, when Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom once again asked that this restriction be canceled, Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman offered no more than vague promises to "try" to "ease" the problem.

Then there was Egypt's refusal to let playwright Ali Salem come to Israel last month to receive an honorary doctorate from Ben-Gurion University. No explanation was given; Egyptian officials simply refused to allow him through the Taba border crossing. Then, when he tried to fly from Cairo instead, they refused to let him on the plane.

Or consider a new Egyptian television series dealing with the fictional adventures of an Egyptian spy from 1967-1973. Egyptian television critics have commented that unlike previous such series, this one includes some good Jews – "peace-loving Israelis who oppose Zionism." In other words, after 25 years of peace, Egypt's cultural elite still maintains that the only good Jew is one who wants the Jewish state to disappear.

As Haaretz's Aluf Benn noted (May 10), this is equally true of Egypt's political elite: Even Osama el-Baz, President Hosni Mubarak's long-time

adviser and a staunch supporter of Egyptian-Israeli peace, insists that ultimately, Israel must stop being a Jewish state and become a "state of all its citizens."

Thus, whichever border control proposal is adopted, Israel will effectively be entrusting its security to people with a demonstrated lack of interest in providing it. I'm still waiting for Sharon to explain just how that is supposed to make Israel more secure. (Jerusalem Post Jun 23)

---

### **We Must Have Elections Now** By Isi Leibler

In light of recent events, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon must heed calls to hold national elections: Failure to do so makes a mockery of our parliamentary system.

In a humiliating defeat for the prime minister, the Knesset recently carried three consecutive motions of no confidence against the government. While technically not amounting to the requisite majority to compel Sharon to step down, Knesset Speaker Ruby Rivlin, himself a Likud member, publicly urged him to do so and hold elections.

The nation is at a critical turning point. We have been repeatedly misled and fed half truths. Yet the prime minister still stubbornly refuses to hold a serious discourse on his controversial policies or take counsel from his colleagues. At issue are not the merits of ruling over Palestinians or retaining isolated settlements. That debate ended some time ago and the majority of Israelis now share a broad consensus that their ultimate objective must be to separate themselves from the Palestinians. Nor is the Gaza disengagement the central issue.

In addition to the recent frightening warning conveyed by former chief of general staff Moshe Ya'alon, disaster scenarios are also predicted by a wide range of other distinguished military and security experts, including former Mossad heads Ephraim Halevy and Shabtai Shavit, former intelligence chief Shlomo Gazit, former IDF deputy chief of general staff, Gen. Uzi Dayan and former Air Force commander Gen. Eitan Ben-Eliyahu.

In these circumstances one is left aghast at Sharon's apparent pig-headedness and autocratic behavior.

WE ARE also obliged to assess the new revelations in the book *Boomerang* by Raviv Drucker and Ofer Shelach, who reject the supposition that the disengagement initiative evolved from strategic deliberations at the highest level. They claim it was Sharon's lawyer and current adviser, Dov Weisglass, who persuaded the prime minister that only a dramatic and drastic step of disengagement proportions could deflect criminal charges against him arising from the Greek Island scandal. They say it was Weisglass himself who "sold" the disengagement concept to the Bush administration. One would assume that if such allegations were unfounded, they would surely warrant libel proceedings. Yet, to date, neither the prime minister nor Weisglass have initiated any.

So what is one to make out of all this? The facts on the ground certainly reinforce the critics who predict that our policies are leading towards disaster. This is what is happening:

Terror attacks, attempted suicide bombings and the launching of Kassam rockets continue unabated. Israelis are being killed and the IDF is once again being restrained in order not to undermine the "calm."

Mahmoud Abbas reiterates that he has no intention of curbing the terrorist infrastructure or curtailing their activities. In fact, he proudly announces that he has invited Hamas ghouls to join his administration and brazenly enrolls terrorists in the PA police force which Israel is being urged to rearm!

Like Arafat, Abbas insists that the Arab right of return is non-negotiable. He refuses to take any meaningful steps to rein in the incitement which continues unabated in the schools, the mosques and the media.

There is a general consensus that Hamas is poised to take control of the Palestinian region in the near future.

PA ministers have explicitly threatened to unleash Intifada III unless Israel makes further unilateral concessions after disengagement.

The international scene is equally troublesome. Prior to the implementation of disengagement at a time the US and Europeans are supposedly "displaying restraint" in order not to create political difficulties for a domestically embattled Sharon, the Europeans reinstated ties with the "political" wing of Hamas; Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and the US administration appear to have reverted to Clintonian evenhandedness between Israel and the Palestinians. The US is also pressing Israel to free additional prisoners despite the fact that of the 900 released to date, some have already resumed terrorist activities.

Rice repeatedly reiterates that, contrary to what Sharon says, the purported commitment by President George W. Bush to support Israel's retention of major settlement blocs is merely a gesture, because it included a caveat that any deviation from the 1949 armistice lines would require Palestinian approval.

The US administration continues showering paeans of praise on Abbas

despite his explicit refusal to dismantle or hinder the terror infrastructure, while even his own Fatah units blatantly continue engaging in suicide bombings and other acts of terror.

It is generally accepted that the government will collapse immediately after the implementation of disengagement. Therefore, although elections will not provide a panacea for our problems, they would at least enable Israelis to review their options before, rather than after, withdrawal. It would also allow the public to express its outrage over the failure of politicians to curb corruption and their predilection to promote personal or sectional interests above those of the nation.

Above all, elections would signal that we are tired of being led by people with Napoleonic delusions and we demand that no future leader be entitled to embark – without prior consultation and public debate – upon a course of action that could have profound repercussions on our future generations and even impact existentially on the state itself.

*The writer chairs the Diaspora-Israel relations committee of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and is a former chairman of the governing board of the World Jewish Congress.* (Jerusalem Post Jun 29)

---

### **We Fear Not** By Yehudit Tayar

"Fear Not Nor Be Dismayed" said the L-rd to Yehoshua (Joshua). I feel very fortunate to be numbered amongst those who are neither afraid nor dismayed. Not afraid of all of the threats publicized by the media, nor by the fact that this anti-democratic, corrupt government is using the courts to take away the most basic civil rights from us. Prime Ministers come and go, governments come and go and the Land of Israel stays.

I have faith, emunah that since we are doing what we are supposed to "yehieh beseder", "it will be o.k." My work with the security officer in Katif and the other security officers in Yesha reveals the true situation to me more than even most of my fellow residents in Yesha. But while we must be pragmatic and plan responsibly for possibly difficult situations, we also plan to continue to remain where we are.

I look at the daily lives of our brave, down-to-earth brothers and sisters in Katif and kvel- rejoice in the simple daily routine. The registration of our children to schools for next fall, the new babies that are blessedly being born, and yes the new homes that are being completed and moved into are a source of enormous gratitude, and pride.

Just the other day when I entered my friend's new home in Neve Dekalim right after they had moved in, and I said the "Shehechianu" prayer with tears of joy and emotion I reconfirmed the constant belief that we are here to stay. These wonderful people with small children took their dream and implemented it by completing their new home and moving in - davka - specifically now. This week Please G-d, when they have their "chanukat bayit" the inauguration of their new home and put up their Mezuzot, it will symbolize to all of us and to the people of Israel that we, the Jewish people have to answer to our G-d and reconfirm our covenant with HIM to protect our Torah our Land and our people.

As I am constantly saying in lectures or interviews with the press, "This is the Land of Israel – G-d's Land – and no logic or reason pertains to what happens here. How could a mere 650,000 people - mostly refugees barely escaping the horrors of the Holocaust, speaking 30 different languages and with not enough weapons and ammunition, overcome the odds of millions attacking us and survive in 1948?"

How did we overcome all of the odds against us in 1967 and succeed in returning to the cradle of Jewish civilization; Yerushalayim, Hevron, Yehudah, Shomron and Gaza?

How do we time and time again survive the overcoming odds against us? There is no logic in our existence but there is emunah and the proof that we, the Jewish people have returned to never be banished again."

Yes we stumble faced with inadequate, weak leadership, but we go on and shall continue to pray for the miracles we know must come in order to fulfill the promise that we shall never again be banished from our Land. "And they shall plant on their Land and will no longer be banished from their Land which I gave them said the L-rd your G-d."

We do not fear and are not dismayed. We are too busy building, planting and protecting our Torah, our Land and our people.

*The writer, who lives in the Shomron with her husband and children, is a veteran spokesperson for the Settlement Movement.*

---