

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...

Heading for a Failed State

By Efraim Inbar

Much of the international community is expecting that the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza will facilitate the return of the Israeli and Palestinian parties to the negotiating table within the framework of the road map. Moreover, Chairman Mahmoud Abbas is seen as the leader capable of putting an end to Palestinian violence, reforming Palestinian society and making the necessary compromises to reach an agreement with Israel.

It is incredible to see foreign officials, diplomats and the media simply refusing to come to terms with the current harsh reality in the Palestinian Authority. They seem unprepared to digest the bad news that Abbas has failed to achieve his commendable mission. Moreover, the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza will actually strengthen the divisive trends in Palestinian society, making it poorer, more violence-prone and less willing to reach a deal with Israel.

Unfortunately, Abbas cannot transcend Yasser Arafat's political legacy. Arafat's PA was a Byzantine, corrupt system in which he ruled by divide-and-conquer tactics, allowing competition between leaders and agencies, and even militias which left him the ultimate arbiter and dispenser of jobs and remuneration. This decentralized system eventually degenerated into chaos and lack of law and order (fawdah).

Abbas, a man with far less political standing than Arafat among the Palestinians, was elected in January 2005 to head the PA after promising to reform the security organs and enforce law and order. He preferred the incorporation of the armed men into the official security organs over confrontation with the armed gangs, achieving only partial success so far. He has failed miserably in centralizing the security services and in appointing new and loyal officers. Indeed, the fawdah is continuing unabated as the recent armed attacks on PA officials, civilians and other gangs clearly demonstrate.

Moreover, Abbas was capable of negotiating only a fragile truce (tahadiyeh) with some of the militias concerning Israel in March. While the level of Palestinian terrorism declined drastically - primarily because of Israeli counter-terror measures and Palestinian weariness of the conflict - the Palestinian militias, even those party to the tahadiyeh, have intensified their attempts to attack Israeli targets in recent months, thus challenging Abbas's rule.

THE CONTINUING economic crisis in the PA is further weakening Abbas's regime. The lack of law and order is inimical to a climate that encourages regular economic activity and growth. The chaos in the PA also hinders the efforts of the international community to deliver aid to the Palestinians.

The PA is further weakened by the ascendance of Hamas in Palestinian politics. Hamas has succeeded in filling the vacuum left by an inept PA by developing a system of services to the population and an image of an uncorrupt Hamas leadership dedicated to the needs of the people. Abbas's domestic failures are fertile ground for the growing appeal of the Islamists.

Hamas did extremely well in the recent municipal elections and Palestinian pollsters indicate that Hamas enjoys at least a third of popular support. Hamas's growing role in Palestinian politics portends increasing difficulty regarding the dismantling of its armed wing, which will, in turn, make Abbas's quest for monopoly over use of force a more distant goal. Hamas's growing influence will also harden Palestinian positions on the conflict with Israel, making an agreement more difficult to reach. There is little reason to believe that empowerment of radical Islamists leads to moderation.

Finally, the impending Israeli withdrawal from Gaza in August poses a formidable test for Abbas and the Palestinian political system. The PA's ability to prevent the looting of the Israeli property left behind and its ensuring of a smooth takeover of the land evacuated by Israel is far from certain. Efforts to coordinate the withdrawal with the Palestinians are not encouraging and even elicited a visit by Condoleezza Rice to prod the Palestinians into working harder on the issue.

What we may well see is violent exchanges over the control of the newly

available turf. Hamas is stronger in Gaza than in the West Bank and would like to take advantage of its power to further improve its stance vis-a-vis the PA. All Palestinian factions understand that the "facts" established during the "liberation of Gaza" will affect future intra-Palestinian political patterns. Even if Abbas reaches an agreement with the militias on the division of spoils, the basic structural problem of absence of monopoly over the use of force will

remain unsolved. The PA's failure to gain control in Gaza will hinder any reform of the security services and further enhance Hamas's power in Gaza.

The first five months of Abbas's rule have been disappointing, and marked improvement any time soon is unlikely. Therefore the withdrawal from Gaza will probably accentuate the current trends in Palestinian society, making the PA a candidate for the title of "a failed state."

(Jerusalem Post Jul 3)

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You've Won, Mr. Sharon. I'm Disengaged By Naomi Ragen

I'm watching the news on television. The screen is filled with a major Israeli security operation. Seven hundred police are involved, with major military backup. Could it be, perhaps, an attack on Hezbollah, which just sent three terrorists to infiltrate Israel, and attacked Har Dov with artillery fire, killing a 20 year old soldier from Beersheva?

No, they are involved in clearing out a bunch of teenagers from an abandoned hotel in Gush Katif!

There are ten soldiers and policemen for every kid. I see them dragging the children by their legs. I see them putting a young girl in a head hold. It takes them twenty minutes, tops, to empty the "right-wing extremist stronghold."

And this is how I feel: Disengaged, in the real sense of the word, not Mr. Sharon's spin. I feel detached, withdrawn, my ties and obligations severed.

Who are these people who are running my country? I didn't elect them. I voted for those who promised to support Gush Katif, to fight terrorism. I sent my son to the army to shoulder arms and risk his young life to protect his people, not drag them kicking and screaming out of their homes. Not to mount a little war against a bunch of miserable teenagers.

Of course, you'd never know this listening to the Israeli media, who have joined forces with European and Palestinian spin doctors to foster anti-Israel propaganda. How many times did I hear the newscaster showing this shameful footage call these kids: "Men of the Right." Men? I didn't see any men. I saw fifteen year-olds, confused and unhappy and hyper.

Now why should that be? I mean, the fact that their government gave out guns to terrorists after signing worthless agreements with them couldn't be a factor, could it? Or the fact that they sat and had bombs thrown at them for four years, while their government was "negotiating." It couldn't be seeing their friends, neighbors, parents, teachers and Rabbis gunned down or blown up in cold blood by their Palestinian neighbors, could it? Or the fact that they are about to lose their homes and have their synagogues, schools and even cemeteries bulldozed? I mean, that's no excuse for sitting on the roads and blocking complacent Tel Aviv home-owners trying to get to their television sets and humus. No, they must be "dangerous criminals who will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law." Bad seeds, "men of the right," violent fanatics who deserve and who will receive, no doubt, long jail terms if Mr. Sharon and his forces get their hands on them.

I saw one of them throw a rock and injure a Palestinian, which was disgusting. This incident is now being denounced as a "lynch" (Lynch? You mean like the two Israeli reservists who were beaten to death by a Palestinian mob, who dipped their hands in the blood? That kind of lynch?)

Let's kill the kids, why don't we? After all, they are worse than terrorists aren't they, with their "lynch" and their desperate, annoying attempts to wake up their fellow citizens, keeping them in traffic jams in hot days. Or like the soldier who cried out: "This is wrong!" during an operation to drag the kids bodily into waiting vans. He was given the maximum jail sentence. Not for refusing orders, mind you. For expressing his feelings. Let's string him up,

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too.

Disengagement: To detach oneself. Free oneself from an obligation or pledge. To withdraw. I guess that's how I feel about my government and the Israeli news media today. I'm disengaged. I think I speak for many. (NaomiRagen.com Jul 1)

The Media Mob By Caroline Glick

So on Wednesday it started. The fight for and against Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to evacuate 8,000 law-abiding Israeli citizens from their homes has begun. There can be no doubt today in anyone's mind that in ignoring the mandate he received from Israeli voters in 2003 to oppose unilateral withdrawal from Gaza and in joining forces with the rejected Left, Sharon made a decision to plunge Israeli society into deep internal crisis.

The dire security and political implications of the plan have been proven beyond doubt. The Palestinians have made clear by word and by deed that they consider Sharon's plan a vindication of their terror war strategy for destroying Israel. As spokesmen for the Palestinian Authority, Hamas, Fatah and Islamic Jihad have stated repeatedly, they will pocket their gains in Gaza and in northern Samaria and launch the next wave of war against Israel from Judea and the rest of Samaria. As the Bush administration and the left wing in Israel have made clear, pressure on Israel to follow up the expulsion of Jews from their homes and communities in Gaza and northern Samaria with more and deeper expulsions in Judea and the rest of Samaria will begin in earnest the moment the operation is completed.

Given all this, the only conclusion that one can reasonably reach is that the decision to forcibly evacuate Israeli citizens from their homes and communities was made with an eye toward fomenting an internal crisis in Israeli society. Some have offered that Sharon desires this crisis because he wishes to demonstrate to the Americans that destroying additional communities in Judea and Samaria as Washington demands will simply be impossible. Whether or not this is the case, there can be no question that if the struggle that is now unfolding is not handled responsibly by all sectors of Israeli society, it will lead to open and violent cleavages across the Right-Left and religious-secular divides, and will set the course for the unraveling of Israeli society in the years to come.

One of the main groups of actors in Israeli society bearing grave responsibility for the Furies that are now upon us is the local media. And, judging by the coverage of the violent events on Wednesday in Gaza and along the highways throughout the country, the radio, television, print media and Internet news portals are poised to guarantee that Israeli society will fall apart completely in the coming months.

In anticipation of the blockage of roads by demonstrators against the expulsion plan during evening rush hour Wednesday, the Walla news portal, which is operated by the left-wing Haaretz group, published an article entitled "How to throw the settlers off the road." The suggested modes of action included "walking onto the Ayalon [highway in Tel Aviv] in large groups with heavy chains, bats for those with a good grip, or just plain fists with the safety lock off, and waiting to see which idiots insist on blocking roads and going crazy in our territory." Other suggestions involved threatening to douse the demonstrators with gasoline, lassoing them and attacking them with pit bulls.

On Wednesday evening, Channel 10 showed irate motorists heading toward the youths sitting on the Ayalon Highway. The Jerusalem Post reported on Thursday, "One motorcyclist took out a heavy metal chain used to lock up a bike and began waving it over the heads of young activists... Another motorist took out a metal pipe and pushed demonstrators to the side of the road." As the Channel 10 reporter noted, it seemed as though they were acting in direct response to the Walla article.

In acting thus, Walla and the Haaretz group are, on the face of it, guilty of solicitation of violence, which is a felony offense. In releasing its instructions for beating demonstrators, when the public had already been riled by the morning papers and radio broadcasts with doomsday scenarios for rush hour traffic, Walla had every reason to believe with near certainty that its readers would act on its suggestions. And so, already on the first day of the official struggle for Gaza and northern Samaria, a major media outlet was engaged in fanning the flames of civil war.

On a non-criminal but still publicly irresponsible and indeed reprehensible level, the local media, from the television commentators and anchors to the morning newsmagazine anchors on Israel Radio and Army Radio to the front page editors of Ma'ariv and Yediot Ahronot, are through their irresponsible and distorted commentary and screaming front-page headlines doing two unforgivable things. First, they are dousing the flames of internecine hatred with gasoline rather than water, and second, they are giving increased political legitimacy to the Palestinians to carry out their plans to murder Israelis.

On Wednesday, a few dozen teenage thugs who had holed up in an abandoned Palestinian building near the Shirat Hayam community on the Gaza sea coast engaged in a rock fight with Palestinian teenagers in a neighboring

building. In the course of the fight, these Israeli hoodlums cornered one of the Palestinian youths and caused him moderate wounds after he was already downed by their initial volley of stones. The IDF, in what can only be referred to as a complete tactical failure by the Gaza division, sent in a tiny group of 30 soldiers and tasked them with ending the fight. And so, before the cameras, the soldiers looked on helplessly as the fighting continued. The IDF came out perceived as incompetent and the stone-throwing Jewish criminals came out looking like what they are – criminals.

The thing of it is that residents of Gush Katif had said for the previous three days, ever since the youths arrived at the scene, that they were dangerous. The residents begged the army and police to remove them from the premises and both services dithered and did nothing. And yet, when the inevitable occurred, the media had a field day. On Wednesday, Channel 2's chief commentator, Amnon Abromovich, breathlessly declared that with the fighting at Shirat Hayam and the blocking of highway traffic, "the war between the State of the Settlers and the State of Israel has begun." Thursday morning, Aryeh Golan of Israel Radio, like the headline writers for Ma'ariv and Yediot, excitedly referred to the fight as a "lynching." Golan, for his part, said the event will be remembered by the Palestinians as an episode on the order of the death of Muhammad a-Dura in September 2000. And through it all, our mainstream media in their power and glory did everything they could to present the image that the actions of these youths are typical of those of all opponents of Sharon's planned expulsions.

One of the greatest lies regarding the planned expulsions is the name that Sharon's publicists have given it: disengagement. As the Palestinians and their friends in the global jihad have repeatedly made clear, they for their part have no intention of disengaging from Israel after the unilateral withdrawal. Rather, they have every intention of continuing to fight us and to kill us in the hope of forcing still more Israeli withdrawals and causing a still deeper erosion of Israel's national will.

Notably, the fighting between teenage gangs of stone throwers in Gaza on Wednesday did not strike the Palestinians as news. The PA's press organs barely reported the story. On the inside pages of their papers, it was merely noted a teenager sustained light to moderate wounds during "clashes" with Jewish settlers. No Palestinian media outlet or PA official referred to the fighting as a "lynching," and certainly no one drew the parallel between Dura and Wednesday's wounded.

But no need to worry, the Palestinians will soon understand its propaganda value and ride the fictional lynching for all it is worth, and then some. After all, whether the Israeli media gurus realize it or not, their reports cater to two audiences, not one. Aside from determining the daily agenda for Israelis, the Israeli press also contributes in large part to the daily talk among the Palestinians.

By acting as though the actions of a few dozen barbarians dressed up as withdrawal opponents characterize the opposition as a whole, the Israeli press is providing political legitimacy to the Palestinians for carrying out their murderous plans. They set up an equivalence between a marginal group of Israelis, rejected by its own camp, and the mainstream Palestinian call for the violent destruction of Israel through terrorism.

Just as the US mainstream media, in characterizing the crimes of a few American soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison as indicative of the US military as a whole, gave political cover to terrorists to continue their attacks against American forces and their Iraqi partners, so the Israeli press provides propaganda value to Israel's enemies when it denigrates opponents of the withdrawal in this manner.

What has gone almost completely unreported by the Israeli press, in its rush to civil war, is the fact that the organized leadership of the opponents of the withdrawal plan – from the residents slated for expulsion, to the leadership of the Jewish communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, to the heads of the Chabad movement – has called for the avoidance of violence at all costs. In the wake of reports that protesters on Wednesday morning blocked the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway by dousing oil on the road and lining it with nails, the leadership immediately condemned the action and Chabad leaders prohibited their followers from participating in blocking traffic. Rather than giving voice to these responsible leaders, the press is chasing after every known hothead and giving him an open microphone through which to convince the general public that he represents the voice of the majority of opponents of the withdrawal plan.

Volumes have already been written about how the leftist "mainstream" media in the West have made countries like the US, Australia and Israel fight the forces of jihad with both hands tied behind their backs. Unfortunately, if the Israeli media do not come to their senses, their criminal, irresponsible and reprehensible behavior will be the subject of many future tomes discussing the reasons for Israel's destruction which, it will be said, began in earnest with the Israeli media's coverage of the events of June 29, 2005. (Jerusalem Post Jun 30)

Friends in High Places By Jonathan Rosenblum

On the face of it, Court President Aharon Barak's determination to thwart Justice Minister Tzippi Livni's desire to appoint Professor Ruth Gavison to the Supreme Court seems natural enough. Gavison has been the most prominent and articulate critic of Barak's judicial activism, accusing the Court of having undermined its own legitimacy by transforming itself from a supreme judicial authority to a supreme moral authority.

Yet Barak is paying a heavy price for his opposition - a fact of which he is doubtless aware. Given Gavison's international stature in constitutional law, her appointment cannot be opposed on grounds of competence. Barak's claim that he opposes academics on the Court won't wash. He recently proposed Professor Nili Cohen for the Court, and once pushed his former Hebrew University colleague and friend Professor Yitzhak Englard onto the Court.

Thus the only basis for the opposition to Gavison by the Court-bloc on the judicial appointments committee and their loyal factotums from the Bar Association is philosophical. For an intellectual heavyweight like Barak to appear to flee intellectual debate in this fashion must be galling.

Even worse than the personal humiliation, Barak, the master strategist, is providing powerful ammunition to critics of the current judicial appointments process. The primary criticism of the judicial appointments process is that the large voice given to sitting Supreme Court justices in the selection process fosters an unduly homogenous Court. There are three justices on the nine-member appointments committee, who traditionally vote as a bloc, and can generally count on the loyal support of the two Bar Association representatives. No candidate has ever been appointed without the unanimous assent of the three justices.

Ironically, no one has been a sharper critic of this selection process than Gavison herself. She has described the Court as "a kind of closed sect, which is too uniform and which effectively perpetuates itself" through the judicial appointments process. In opposing Gavison on ideological grounds, the justices on the appointments committee have demonstrated that the critics are right: the Court uses the judicial appointments process to perpetuate its own judicial philosophy.

Once Barak could have gotten away with this. In the old days, the media could be counted on to repeat Barak's mantra that Israel's unique method of judicial selection is the envy of the entire world, and to ignore dissenting views in the legal profession and academia. By sharply limiting the input of the elected branches, the appointments process was said to ensure an independent judiciary of the highest quality.

That aura of perfection has long since worn thin. Knesset Law Committee chairman Miki Eitan's characterization of the judicial appointments process -- "a friend brings a friend" -- stuck. A number of recent legislative initiatives have been aimed at limiting the power of the Supreme Court bloc. Last year, the Knesset passed a law forbidding the three justices from agreeing on their own list of candidates in advance of meetings of the appointments committee. And prior to the appointment of Edna Arbel to the Court, the Knesset Law Committee took the unprecedented step of holding public hearings on the nomination.

A new bill introduced by Coalition Whip Gidon Saar and Labor MK Yuli Tamir calls for public hearings on nominees and for a secret ballot in the appointments committee. The latter proposal is designed, *inter alia*, to limit the intimidation factor of the Supreme Court bloc on the Bar Association representatives, and is considered likely to pass.

Tel Aviv University law professor Daniel Friedman goes even further. He proposes excluding all currently sitting justices from the being members of the judicial appointments committee and having a separate body prepare a list of nominees.

If opposition to the Gavison appointment strengthens the hand of opponents of the current judicial selection process, why is Barak being so obstinate in opposing her? After all, Gavison would be one of only 14 justices on the Supreme Court. Barak would surely have many means at his disposal to neutralize her influence. And in some ways she poses as great a threat to Barak's constitutional vision in her position as the primary consultant to the Knesset Law Committee's constitution-drafting efforts.

Clearly Barak is concerned about protecting his judicial legacy. Though he will leave behind a number of ideological clones on the Court, none of them possess anything like his towering intellect or international reputation. In recent years, the Court-bloc on the appointments committee has had to engage in more horse-trading than formerly to secure the appointment of its preferred candidates. As a result, a number of the recent appointments to the Court show more interest in traditional legal subjects than in governing the country from the bench under the slogan "everything is justiciable."

After Barak's slated retirement next year, Gavison would likely emerge as the most formidable thinker on the Court, and she might well attract to her banner a number of the more technocratic justices. To perpetuate judicial rule of "the enlightened public," whose values he has made the guiding star for Israeli judges, Barak has no choice but to oppose Gavison -- no matter how

high the price. (Jerusalem Post Jul 1)

Terrorism's Young Victims By Joel Mowbray

When we think of Palestinian terrorism, often forgotten are its other victims. For most, it is an unintentional oversight; for terror's apologists, it is an absolute necessity. For terror's avowed supporters, however, the other victims are not considered victims at all; they are thought of as heroes.

Speaking at a conference on Islam and Democracy in April, journalist Anisa Mehdi suggested that the only reason we consider Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah terrorists is because Americans aren't "pro-Palestinian." She added that if we were, we would call them "Palestinian partisans," not terrorists.

After her speech, I asked Mehdi what she would call a 12-year-old strapping on a bomb and killing a dozen civilians in a cafe. As she sat stunned by the question, the luncheon's other speaker, Abdullah Schleifer (executive producer of the documentary "Control Room"), leapt to the podium and said, "Of course it is. And in fact, it's terrorism against the 12-year-old."

Although 12-year-olds are on the young end of children converted into suicide bombers, the terrorism perpetrated by the likes of Hamas and Islamic Jihad against young Palestinians is real - and growing.

Roughly one month after this luncheon, Israeli soldiers at the Hawara checkpoint in Nablus stopped two teenagers attempting to smuggle explosives under their clothes. One was 15, the other 14.

When interviewed by NBC News' Martin Fletcher, the 15-year-old, Mohammed Mustafa al-Nadi, said that he was recruited to "kill the Jews" by al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, which was formerly under the thumb of Yasser Arafat. The boy said he only agreed to become a suicide bomber after being asked five times.

Young Mohammed is, sadly, more the rule than the exception. Already this year, more than 50 Palestinians under the age of 18 have been apprehended attempting to smuggle bombs into Israel, and at least six have been under 16.

Additionally, it was announced this week that Israel's Shin Bet security force arrested a terror cell just outside of Nablus last month and four of the eight taken into custody were 15 or 16 years old.

Just more than a year ago, the entire world witnessed a frightened 15-year-old at the Hawara checkpoint who decided he couldn't go through with blowing himself up. Israeli soldiers cleared the area, used a robot to remove the bomb strapped to his chest and then safely detonated it.

Talking to the BBC a few months later from his jail cell, Hussam Abdo said that although he was glad to be alive and wouldn't tell his friends to become suicide bombers, he nonetheless still viewed the act he failed to commit as a glorious one. He said blowing yourself up in order to kill Jews is "better than being a singer or a footballer. It's better than everything." In an earlier interview with an Israeli newspaper, Hussam revealed where his mind had become so twisted: in Palestinian school. The 15-year-old said that "paradise" was "a river of honey, a river of wine and 72 virgins. Since I have been studying Quran I know about the sweet life that waits there."

As easy as it would be to chalk up the recruitment of children to the evil deeds of terrorists, both Mohammed's and Hussam's experiences demonstrate that the terrorists had help. The kids, like many others their age, are primed for jihad long before they have the mental capacity to fully comprehend what they're being spoon-fed.

The indoctrination that nearly claimed Hussam's life permeates Palestinian society, from government-controlled media to the culture at large that exalts suicide bombers as "martyrs" or "shahids."

Because of the invaluable Palestinian Media Watch, we know that glorification of suicide bombing - even to small children - continues to this day on Palestinian television, from talking puppets that extol the virtues of violence to preteen girls telling an adult that "martyrdom" is the greatest success one could ever achieve.

Even at a grassroots level, suicide bombings enjoy popular support. Sports teams, schools and streets are named after terrorists, and many families of suicide bombers claim that they enjoy immediately increased standing in the community.

Arafat is largely responsible for poisoning the well, but his death alone does not remove the poison. His successor and longtime right-hand man, Mahmoud Abbas, in fact, has yet to take a significant step in that direction. But even once he does, wholesale change can't happen overnight.

In the meantime, more children will be sent off to kill - and die. Children who lack any rational conception of death, who are coaxed into evil with the false promise of paradise. These are the other victims of Palestinian terrorism, and they should never be forgotten. (The Washington Examiner Jun 28)

Who Loves Ya', Arik? By Rabbi Stewart Weiss

Inquiring minds want to know, "Why?" That is the question the whole nation is asking as Disengagement creeps ever closer: Why? Why would Ariel Sharon risk igniting a civil war among his own people? Why would he repudiate the will of the right-leaning constituents who brought him to power and his own Likud party? Why would he make a 180-degree turn on a hard-fought career of resolute toughness towards the Arabs and deliver them Gaza gratis, receiving virtually nothing in return?

Why?

The knee-jerk reaction is to suggest that Sharon sincerely believes that this brash move will enhance our security, that somehow Israel proper will be a safer, gentler place once Gaza is out of our hands.

Unfortunately, the leading military minds and strategic thinkers of the nation do not concur. A host of generals past and present, along with leaders of the Mossad and the Defense Ministry, adamantly insist that the pullback will have the OPPOSITE effect. It will only embolden the most radical elements of the Palestinians and lend support to their "Crime DOES pay" thesis: That Israel reacts only to bloodshed and violence, the more extreme the better.

One of the more outspoken critics of the Disengagement is the man who should know best, immediate past Chief of Staff, Moshe Ya'alon. Always a straight shooter - no pun intended - and certainly never known as a Rightist, "Boogie" predicts an imminent eruption of open warfare in Judea and Samaria in the wake of the Gaza retreat. He warns that the move will emphatically boost the popularity of Hamas, bring Kassam rockets ever closer to our living rooms and seriously cripple our intelligence capacity.

And, if events dictate our re-entry into the Strip, the price will be heavy and the political fallout disastrous.

So, we ask again, "Why?"

I posed to the question to a psychologist friend, who put Arik on the couch. You see," he told me, "one of the fundamental urges of a human being, from his earliest age, is to seek attention, affection and, most of all, acceptance. We all want others to love us, and will go to great extremes to win their love. As Sharon - long the target of bitter attack from within and without his party - nears the end of his career, he craves acceptance and is desperately looking for love."

As understandable as this theory is, I am afraid that Sharon is looking for love in all the wrong places. No romance or lasting love affair will sprout from this Disengagement. The Left, which has harbored a visceral hatred towards Sharon at least since Lebanon, will support the PM only as long as he serves their purpose, then summarily dump him. The Americans - not to mention the Europeans - will grudgingly approve the withdrawal, but as a first step only, a preliminary installment of the "State for Palestine" plan. If "Gaza First" does not give way to "Samaria Second," "Judea Third" and "Jerusalem Fourth," the move will stir no passion at all in Washington or London.

As for the Arabs, whatever tiny amount of goodwill Sharon's move initially created among them, it has already been factored in and left far behind. Not only has their response consistently been, "You can receive no credit for returning stolen land," but already there is open talk of a third Intifada if their maximalist demands are not met. Terror continues unabated and the honeymoon - if ever there was one - is over. Sharon's continued appeasement of the Palestinians - loosening travel restrictions, freeing mass-murderers, turning over cities and villages to their command - will be met not by kisses and love, but by bombs and bullets, as tragically confirmed in the last several days.

Yet there is still one place where Sharon CAN yet find love and acceptance, and that is among the people who supported him throughout the years. The brave pioneers who devoted themselves to reclaiming this Land and defending it - despite the hardships and danger that involved - grew up with Arik as their hero. It was he who both talked the talk AND walked the walk, encouraging settlement of Judea and Samaria and then making it possible through programs of grants, building, and political backing.

In this community, and all who support it, there is abundant love. You can witness it in the way residents of Gaza settlements lovingly built their communities, turning the desert green and absorbing countless terror attacks. You can see it in their steadfast refusal to "take the money and run." You can see it in their absolute commitment to refrain from lifting a hand against another Jew, even as police throw them to the ground and beat them. You can see it in the eyes of the thousands of young people across Israel handing out orange ribbons and making solidarity pilgrimages to Gaza.

And you can see it reflected in the slogan which defines the movement: "With love, we shall prevail."

Ariel Sharon can still be welcomed back by his people, still find lasting love among all those who stuck by him through the years and worked so hard to elect him as Prime Minister. But, there is a condition: We Jews do not believe in "Free Love." To win our affection back, Arik must treat us with respect, not repugnance; with sensitivity, not stone-walling; with dignity and not disdain. If he embraces the principles that defined his career - defense of Jewish rights, love of the Land and no compromise with terror - he will again be embraced by

those who are truly capable of loving him.

(IsraelNationalNews.com Jun 30)

The writer is director of the Ohel Ari Jewish Outreach Center in Ra'anana.

Palestinians Who Cling to Israel By Daniel Pipes

Israel's interior minister recently declared that after their release from long jail sentences, four Palestinian Arabs convicted of helping with suicide bombings in 2002, killing 35, will be expelled from Israel. They would, the Associated Press reported, "lose the privileges of permanent residents, such as social security and health insurance."

The minister's decision raises a question: Why would Palestinians engaged in destroying the state of Israel feel punished by losing the right to live in Israel? One would expect that anti-Israel terrorists would prefer to live in the Palestinian Authority (PA).

One would be wrong. Palestinian Arabs - even terrorists - generally prefer life in what they call the "Zionist entity." On two occasions, this pattern became especially clear: when eastern Jerusalem in 2000 and part of the Galilee Triangle in 2004 were slated for transfer to PA control. In both cases, the Palestinians involved clung to Israel.

When Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak's diplomacy raised the prospect, in mid-2000, of some Arab-majority parts of Jerusalem being transferred to the PA, a Palestinian Arab social worker found that "an overwhelming majority" of Jerusalem's 200,000 Arabs chose to remain under Israeli control. A member of the Palestinian National Council, Fadal Tahabub, specified that 70% preferred Israeli sovereignty. Another politician, Husam Watad, described people as "in a panic" at the prospect of finding themselves under PA rule.

Israel's Interior Ministry duly reported a large increase in applications for citizenship and one city councilor, Roni Aloni, reported what he was hearing from Jerusalem Arabs: "we are not like Gaza or the West Bank. We hold Israeli IDs. We are used to a higher standard of living. Even if Israeli rule is not so good, it is still better than that of the PA." A doctor applying for Israeli papers explained, "we want to stay in Israel. At least here I can speak my mind freely without being dumped in prison, as well as having a chance to earn an honest day's wage."

To stop this Palestinian Arab rush for Israeli citizenship, the ranking Islamic official in Jerusalem issued an edict prohibiting it, and the Palestine Liberation Organization's agent in Jerusalem, Faisal al-Husseini, went further, calling this step "treason." This proved ineffective, so al-Husseini threatened that taking out Israeli citizenship would result in the confiscation of one's home.

In the Galilee Triangle, a Palestinian-majority area in the north of the country, just 30% of the Arab population agreed to some of the Galilee Triangle being annexed to a future Palestinian state, according to a May 2001 survey, meaning that a large majority preferred it to remain in Israel. By February 2004, when the Sharon government released a trial balloon about giving the PA control over the Galilee Triangle, the Haifa-based Arab Center for Applied Social Research found the number had jumped to 90%. And 73% of Triangle Arabs said they would use violence to prevent changes in the border.

Local politicians fiercely denounced Israel ceding any part of the Galilee. An Arab member of Israel's parliament who once served as adviser to Yasser Arafat, Ahmed Tibi, called the idea "a dangerous, antidemocratic suggestion." Intense Arab opposition prompted quick abandonment of the transfer idea.

Also in 2004, when Israel's security fence went up, some Palestinian Arabs had to choose on which side of the fence to live. Most, along with Ahmed Jabrin of Umm al-Fahm, had no doubts. "We fought [the Israeli authorities so as] to be inside of the fence, and they moved it so we are still in Israel."

That Palestinian Arabs in large numbers prefer to live under Israeli control appears to result more from practical considerations than from an intent to submerge the Jewish state demographically. They see the PA as impoverished, autocratic, and anarchic. As one Palestinian explained, it is "an unknown state that doesn't have a parliament, or a democracy, or even decent universities."

Palestinian Arabs are not so committed ideologically as to disdain the good life that residence in Israel offers. Two long-term conclusions follow. First, were Palestinian Arab demands for a "right of return" to Israel ever met, a massive population influx into Israel would result. Second, any final-status agreement that requires turning Israeli-ruled land to the Palestinians will be very hard to implement. (New York Sun Jul 6)
