

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*

Events...

Monday, August 5th, 8:00 p.m.

Brigadier-General Minister Efraim Eitam (Leader of the National Religious Party) will address the community on the topic of "Israel: Fighting for Her Existence" at the Sephardic Kehila Centre, 7026 Bathurst St. Admission is free.

Commentary...

It All Started When He Hit Me Back Jerusalem Post Editorial

Before our dead have even been buried, recriminations are in the air. What if we had not killed Hamas megaterrorist Salah Shehadeh? Why did we bring upon ourselves a new wave of terrorism?

The more pertinent questions are quite different: Why do the terrorists, and the Palestinian leadership that does nothing to stop them, not ask itself similar questions before attacking Israelis? Why are patently justified and preventive Israeli actions considered provocative, while Palestinian "retaliation" is considered natural?

The idea that Hamas has some right to "retaliate" after Israel kills its terrorist mastermind is a form of the schoolyard logic, "it all started when he hit me back." Such a defense is absurd to the point of being comical, yet it is routinely applied to the current conflict, and even, perhaps unconsciously, internalized by many Israelis. Yesterday UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan reflected this mentality when he reflexively added to his condemnation of terrorism a call to "all concerned to end the cycle of violence, revenge, and retaliation."

The problem is that there is no "cycle of violence" and certainly no "cycle of terror," as a Palestinian Authority statement creatively put it. If anything, this latest gruesome bombing of a cafeteria in Jerusalem's Hebrew University accentuates how little reciprocity there is in this conflict.

Hamas, which has taken responsibility for the bombing, has been trying for almost two years to kill as many Israeli civilians as possible. Terrorism is by definition and design indiscriminate. In this case, the victims were as diverse as Hebrew University's community of students, which includes Jews, Arabs, and visitors from many countries.

In response, Israel would not for a moment dream of retaliating in kind. But Israel not only considers the targeting of civilians an anathema, but severely limits its actions against legitimate terrorist targets in order to minimize civilian casualties. After the relatively high civilian toll that accompanied the killing of Shehadeh, Israel revealed that the strike had been called off many times before because the terrorist was surrounded by civilians, such as his own family. Given the nature of the war we are fighting, it is not clear that we should be so proud of this record. According to Part 3, Article 1, Section 28 of the Fourth Geneva Convention reads, "The presence of a protected person may not be used to render certain points or areas immune from military operations." Translated, this means that, under international law, combatants must not be allowed to protect themselves by hiding among civilians.

Indeed, the Geneva Convention goes further: "The party to the conflict in whose hands protected persons may be is responsible for the treatment accorded to them by its agents." In other words, if a terrorist hides among civilians, it is the terrorist who is responsible for their deaths in any military action.

That the Palestinians violate these provisions wholesale goes without saying.

But Israel must also answer to its citizens for over-complying with international law. The question must be asked: How many Israeli civilians died because Israel refrained from killing Shehadeh and other terrorists because they were hiding among civilians?

The nations that condemned Israel for being "heavy-handed" (in the words of the United States) acted contrary to the letter and spirit of the Geneva Convention by blaming Israel rather than Shehadeh for Palestinian civilian deaths. The international community may well continue in this vein, no matter what Israel says or does. It has come to the point, however, when Israel should consider following, not going beyond, this basic principle of international law.

Israel must continue to attempt to minimize Palestinian civilian casualties, but not to the point that terrorist chieftains have effective immunity. The military pressure on Hamas and Islamic Jihad needs to be relentless. None of their leaders, including their "spiritual" leaders, should feel safe anywhere.

The irony is that, by going beyond the letter of the law, let alone how any other country would behave under such attack, Israel actually invites the world to apply a double standard. If Israel itself waives its rights and lets terrorists use their own families and neighbors as protection, why should the world not hold Israel to that standard? Excessive restraint fails in its own terms – because no one gives us credit. It is also a false form of morality because, by prolonging this war, it increases the number of Israeli and Palestinian civilian casualties alike. (Jerusalem Post Aug 1)

Who's Financing Terror Now?

Jerusalem Post Editorial

In a stunning and inexplicable reversal of policy, Israel decided last week to begin transferring funds to the Palestinian Authority. Acting under intense pressure from the United States, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon authorized the Treasury to hand over NIS 200 million, or approximately 10 percent of the PA's frozen assets.

And so, just several weeks after it justifiably criticized the European Union for continuing to support Yasser Arafat despite

the violence, Israel itself now joins the list of those propping up his terrorist regime with a steady cash flow.

The significance of the decision cannot be understated. Since shortly after the start of the Palestinian terror campaign in September 2000, Israel has refrained from passing along to the PA the monies collected in customs and VAT from Palestinian purchases in Israel or on goods imported through Israel.

As proof of the PA's direct involvement in terror mounted, it was only logical that Israel would choose to desist from financing an entity that was murdering Israeli citizens. To do otherwise would have been unthinkable.

Indeed, as former US secretary of state James Baker once noted, albeit in an entirely different context, money is fungible. Funds provided, say, to help the PA pay clerical salaries will necessarily free up other monies that can then be used for far more devious purposes, such as purchasing weapons, manufacturing explosives, or rewarding the families of suicide bombers.

And, though Sharon reportedly had insisted that no money would be transferred until a mechanism was established to ensure that the funds would go to improve the lives of average Palestinians, even that condition has now apparently fallen by the wayside amid objections by the PA.

Hence, Israel will essentially be giving Yasser Arafat a blank check, with no way of knowing precisely to what use the funds will be put.

Needless to say, there is plenty of good reason to suspect where at least part of it will end up. Shortly after Operation Defensive Shield earlier this year, the government began releasing reams of internal PA documents that

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ר' יצחק זאב בן יהודה צבי הלוי ז"ל

ז"ל
Wolf Woznica, ז"ל
למלאת שלשים

by his loving daughters,
Vicky Levine, Frances Goldstein & Judy Magder
and their families.

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had been discovered by the IDF during its sweep of the Palestinian-controlled areas.

Among the papers were handwritten instructions from Arafat himself ordering the disbursal of money to fund terrorists and their activities and pay for weapons to be used in terror attacks. There is no reason to now believe that the money being transferred will go to purchase butter rather than guns, and the government is therefore making a grave error by handing over the money.

Moreover, even if the dollars do not go to sponsor violence, there is still the issue of PA corruption to contend with. Recent revelations have demonstrated that large sums of money have gone into Arafat's own private accounts or been used to defray the living expenses of a PA minister's son studying at a university overseas.

Hence, pouring additional funds into Arafat's treasury, when even the elementary reforms demanded by outsiders have not been implemented, makes little economic or financial sense.

Nor does it make political sense either. Israel has made clear that Arafat is "irrelevant" and must be replaced, a position that the US has belatedly adopted as well. Nevertheless, the transfer of the NIS 200 million will only serve to strengthen his position, enabling him to buy off opponents and demonstrate a tangible achievement which he did nothing to earn. In so doing, the Sharon government is also unwittingly sending a dangerous message to Arafat, namely that he can engage in terror and do nothing to halt Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and yet he will still get his paycheck at the end of the month.

As admirable as the government's desire to improve the lives of Palestinians might be, sending money to Arafat is hardly the best way to achieve this aim.

After all, the primary reason behind the increasingly dire economic straits in the territories is not Israel's counterterror operations, but the Palestinian terrorism which necessitates them. There would be no need for the closures, checkpoints, and roadblocks if Palestinian suicide bombers and gunmen would lay down their arms and stop murdering innocent men, women, and children.

As long as the PA persists in resorting to terror, it must bear the responsibility for the consequences that result, be they economic or otherwise.

But by agreeing to join the dubious list of those financing the PA, Israel has effectively conceded the moral high-ground. Sharon is now playing along with the fiction that the PA is a partner with whom business can be done, even as the terrorism continues. So, when the next attack occurs – though we pray that it won't – just bear in mind where the money for carrying it out may have come from. (Jerusalem Post Jul 28)

Eulogy of Eldest Son and Brother for Parents Murdered by Terrorists

Rabbi Yosef and Chana Dickstein, together with their 10-year-old son Shuva'el, were murdered by Arab terrorists on Friday, leaving nine orphans behind. Their oldest child, 21-year-old Tzvi Yehuda, led the weeping crowd of thousands at today's funeral in a tearful recitation of a selichot prayer, beginning with the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy. The speech was accompanied by almost constant weeping from his siblings and many other mourners. In a broken but strong voice, he cried out,

"Abba, Ima [Father, Mother], 'Who were loved and pleasant in their lives, and did not part even in their deaths.' Shuva'el the sweet... What, what can I say now? Which words can describe the magnitude of this calamity? How can I speak in the past tense of all the people who we loved the most? About Abba? About Ima? And Shuva'el? Suddenly, everything has been cut off in the middle. Abba, on Thursday night until 2:30 in the morning, we were working together on the Sukkah, and we were in the middle of a passage in L'Netivot Yisrael. Who will continue this?

Know, Abba and Ima, that we, your children, received a strong education, an education with ideals, and even when you are not here physically, it continues to strengthen us according to your path. You decided to leave the neighborhood of Givat Sha'ul, the easy life, the places of work that were close to home, even though there was nothing pressing. But you still decided, during these difficult times for Am Yisrael [the Nation of Israel] in general, and for Psagot in particular, to move, and to try to strengthen and be strengthened. - to acquire by actions the beloved Land that you so loved, love of which you so transferred to us, with trips - many trips - around the country, and by teaching us. "Beloved Land, do not cover your blood."

All your efforts, all the foundations of our home, everything - drew its spirit and soul from this Beit Medrash [Rabbi Avraham HaKohen Kook's yeshiva], from the worldview that Rav Kook zatzal [of saintly blessed memory] laid out for us, and his son our teacher, Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda zatzal. All the time, Abba, you would tell us stories about them, and you gave me his name. Therefore, it was obvious to all of us, the whole family, that this funeral must begin from the foundations of our home, from this Beit Medrash. I promise you, Abba and Ima, that we will continue in this spirit, in this ideology.

Abba, how happy you were that I am studying in Beit El. We studied together on Fridays. Ima relieved you from all the jobs, and you would come and

we would learn for some two hours. As the time passed, we saw how our spiritual worlds began to take on parallel lines. You saw me walking in the same path that you took 25 years ago, when you started out as a student in Merkaz HaRav. How much joy and satisfaction you had from me. Abba, I so much wanted to be like you. To be "a son like his father..." Last night, we sat together, all the children, and we all recounted how in this last period of your lives, you both felt satisfaction. Tzofiyah said that you told her just a week ago, "We are as if dreaming. We have reached our 'resting place and inheritance.'" You knew that you had found your place. You felt good in Psagot. You succeeded in fulfilling in the best way all of your ideals.

Yes, you reached the mnucha and nachalah. Abba and Ima, and Shuva'el, you have reached it in Psagot. But - what will be with us? Who will be the Ima of Adiel?? Who will be the father to Shir-el?? You so much wanted to see us getting married. Who will walk us down to the marriage canopy??

Everything that you built in the house, was built with the future in mind. You wanted there to be room for everyone - everything on a "large" scale... Now you won't merit seeing your grandchildren... Abba, Ima, Shuva'el: I, Tzvi Yehuda, your oldest son, who you so much counted on, allowed me at every opportunity to be responsible, promise to be a good father, a concerned father.

In my name, and in the name of all the children, we promise to preserve the unity of our family, to stay together, even at the price of giving up personal dreams. This is what you wanted all these years, and this is what we will try to do.

We, the family, believe that this tremendous sacrifice that we made is not just a personal sacrifice. Our pain is not just a private pain. Abba and Ima were not killed in a gang war, or in a car accident, or because of any sins of theirs. Shuva'el who did not taste the taste of sin certainly was not murdered for that. Abba and Ima and Shuva'el were murdered, in the light of day, in front of their children, by a cruel, debased murderer, because they were Jews who lived freely in their state that they so loved, without fear. Am Yisrael: this sacrifice is for all of us! Everyone must feel this pain. Everyone must understand, know, and feel that they have taken the best sons of our nation.

The Holy One, Blessed be He, is speaking to us via the [day-to-day] reality. He is shaking us and telling us, Wake up! Understand who we are, and what we are doing here in Eretz Yisrael! Why are we here?

Unfortunately, we have been tested with many tragedies of late. To tell others that "the Land of Israel is acquired with tribulation," that that which is acquired with difficulty is an eternal acquisition, that Hashem only tests those who can withstand the ordeals - that's not so hard. But to tell it to ourselves - that's hard. And to really feel it - that's even harder. But no one asked us whether or not we want to be heroes. We didn't want, and no one asked us, and we weren't ready - but we were forced. We were forced to be strong. We will try, with the help of all of you, to be strong. We will add faith, we will add courage, we will add strength. We don't know how we will keep going in this insane situation. We don't know what will be with us - both the little ones, and those of us children who are somewhat older but still feel little. But we know with certainty that we will go on. We will work hard, and we will strive, and we will overcome, and we will go on.

All that we have been saying about accepting the Divine judgment with love, does not take away even a whit of responsibility from those who were supposed to be in charge: The leaders of the state and its ministers, who are abusing their job for which they were elected, and are not doing enough to prevent incidents like this, or to uplift the nation. This is their job. If they don't want to do it, then they should give it to someone else who can do it.

We, the family, decided yesterday to bury you in Psagot, in the land that is precious to you, the place they decided on their own that it would be their place. Abba and Ima spent the last two years, and all their resources, to build this house. The fear never occurred to them that we would not be able to live everywhere in Israel. I heard myself people who tried to weaken them, but Abba and Ima were strong and did not break. Abba and Ima decided that this would be their place, and that of the family. We the children are setting up our base in Psagot.

Residents of Psagot, know that our struggle is that all of Am Yisrael. Am Yisrael throughout the generations is with us. Abba and Ima and Shuva'el are with us. We will continue together, without fear. I want to thank you, residents of Psagot, for all your help when we moved in, starting with the first night. You turned out to be angels, and then, from the minute we learned of this catastrophe, these pure angels - from Psagot and elsewhere - enveloped us, and helped us; there are no words for us to thank you.

Shuva'el, the little one, so cute... I called you Bukish... I remember when you were born. It was Friday. You were born the fastest of all... A boy who was all joy to his parents, a good boy, a good influence to his brothers. Such a good friend to Bnayah and Shlomo. So sweet, a tzaddik [righteous]. You never had to be reminded to study, the one who everyone loved, a smart boy, who reads books. They murdered you when you were reading, and

your head fell on the book. A tzaddik, so pure - you never did bad to anyone.

Abba and Ima and Shuva'el - they let me see you today. You looked so serene. I saw that it was good for you... Please watch over us from where you are, on your sons and daughters: Tzvi Yehuda, Tzofiyah, Ayelet, Didi, Renanah, Shuva - ah, Shlomo. And watch over the little ones, Bnyah, Shir-el, and Adiel, who will not get to know their own parents. Watch over all of us, the orphans - it's hard to digest that we are called orphans - and on Savta Shula, and Saba Aharon and Savta Miriam, and on all your brothers and sisters and the whole family. We know that you are with us, help us be strong.

Before I conclude, I want to ask, in my name and in the name of all the children, forgiveness from you - for any offense that I did you, or chutzpah, or argument. I beg that you forgive us, holy Abba and Ima, and Shuva'el. "And Hashem will wipe away the tears from every face, and swallow up death forever." (IsraelNationalNews.com Jul 28)

UNdiplomatic Behavior Jerusalem Post Editorial

For all the dramatic changes that have taken place in the world since September 11, there is one global institution that stubbornly persists in excusing and exonerating Palestinian terrorism. With its decades-old tradition of one-sided decisions lambasting Israel, the United Nations has rightly earned the scorn and derision with which it is viewed in many quarters. But now, thanks to a remarkable new policy shift by the United States, the age of lopsided anti-Israel UN Security Council resolutions may finally be coming to an end.

This past Friday, US Ambassador to the UN John Negroponte articulated the Bush administration's new approach when he told a closed-door session of the council that America would no longer tolerate resolutions that fail to condemn Palestinian terrorism and which do not call on both parties to resolve their differences via political means only. Henceforth, Negroponte said, resolutions on the Middle East must contain explicit condemnation of Palestinian terrorism as well as the groups which perpetrate it, such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Yasser Arafat's al-Aksa Martyrs Brigades. He also said that resolutions calling for IDF troop withdrawals to the September 2000 lines must address Israel's security needs, and that both parties must be called upon to return to the negotiating table.

Negroponte's statement followed a draft resolution submitted by Syria, which sought to condemn Israel for last week's killing of Hamas mastermind Salah Shehada in Gaza. Not surprisingly, the Syrian draft was a textbook example of distortion and deceit. It criticized Israeli military actions in the territories without taking into account the context in which such operations are conducted, and called on the IDF to withdraw to the positions it held before the start of the intifada in September 2000. Needless to say, the Syrian text omits any mention of Israeli victims of terrorism, nor does it even refer to the Palestinian attacks that have targeted Israel on a daily basis for nearly two years.

The shift in American policy is a welcome one, as it signifies that the US is no longer willing to turn a blind eye to the shenanigans of the Security Council. For far too long, this august body has served as little more than a platform for the Arab states to demonize and vilify the Jewish state. Indeed, the change in the American position is a sign of just how bad things have gotten at the UN. The fact that the United States would have to insist on such an elementary matter as balance in the formulation of the council's resolutions indicates just how far the UN has strayed from the lofty principles which it claims to uphold.

In recent months, the UN's partiality has been all the more glaring, particularly in light of the ongoing Palestinian terror campaign against Israel. Earlier this year, when IDF troops entered the Palestinian-controlled areas during Operation Defensive Shield, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan publicly berated the Jewish state for having the audacity to defend itself, saying, "The whole world is demanding that Israel withdraw... I don't think the whole world can be wrong." Annan's special Middle East envoy, Terje Larsen, went even further than his boss, arrogantly asserting that "Israel has lost all moral ground in this conflict" after IDF units entered Jenin.

Of course, for all their professed concern for human rights, the UN has yet to take a firm and unambiguous stand against Palestinian terrorism. Within days of the IDF's killing of Shehada in Gaza, the diplomats were hard at work, holding meetings, convening sessions, and drafting documents, all in an attempt to figure out the best way to condemn Israel. And yet, no such alacrity has been shown when Palestinians carry out attacks in the heart of Israel or massacre innocent civilians. In fact, the Security Council has yet to devote even a single session to a discussion of Palestinian suicide bombing attacks, despite their high death toll.

Moreover, the UN itself is actively involved in funding many of the hothouses of hatred and incitement run by the Palestinian Authority. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency is actively involved in assisting and supporting refugee camps throughout the territories, many of which have served as launching pads for terror attacks against Israel. As US Congressman Tom Lantos recently wrote Annan, "My concern is that, for too long, UNRWA has been part of the problem, rather than the solution, in the Middle East... UNRWA

officials have not only failed to prevent their camps from becoming centers of terrorist activity, but have also failed to report these developments to you... It is difficult to escape the painful conclusion that UNRWA, directly or indirectly, is complicit in terrorism."

It would, of course, be naive to think that, following the US decision, the UN will shift gears and radically change its approach to Israel. No such turnabout would seem to be in the offing. But however one looks at it, the change in US policy is a welcome injection of realism and fair play into an institution obviously suffering from a shortage of both. One can only hope this trend will continue. (Jerusalem Post Jul 31)

Education May Be Key to Extremist Actions By David Walker

Terrorism has little or nothing to do with economics, according to a new analysis of the social background of Hizbullah militants in Lebanon. After also examining the income and education of Palestinian suicide bombers and Israelis implicated in civilian assassinations and attacks, the study concludes: "Any connection between poverty, education and terrorism is indirect and probably quite weak".

The report, Education, Poverty, Political Violence and Terrorism, Is there a Causal Connection? is from the National Bureau of Economic Research in Cambridge, Massachusetts, an independent body highly respected for its quantitative work in economic and social policy.

Alan Kreuger of Princeton University and Jitka Maleckova of Charles University in Prague, examined the jobs, educational level and family circumstances of 129 Hizbullah militants killed in operations against Israel in the past 20 years.

As the graphic shows, compared with the Lebanese population as a whole, Hizbullah members were less likely to come from poor families and were significantly more likely to have completed secondary education.

A similar pattern holds for Palestinian suicide bombers. Though the data are less extensive, the authors found a positive link between taking part in "terrorism" and educational attainment.

Israeli citizens engaged in bombing and assassination attempts in the occupied territories in recent years have also tended to be drawn from better-off backgrounds, and have often been highly educated.

The study also looked at the timing of past upsurges in violence in the Middle East and sought to relate them to cycles of economic growth. No correlation was found between participation in violence and economic depression: violence seems to have increased when local economic conditions were getting better.

The latest intifada began when economic optimism among Palestinians was rising and after a period during which education levels among young Palestinians had risen remarkably.

Thus the latest outbreak of violence, the paper says, cannot be blamed on deteriorating economic conditions. Drawing on opinion polls conducted by the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah, the authors point out that the support for violent action against Israel, including suicide bombing, does not vary much according to social background. Well-educated and affluent Palestinians are as likely to back attacks as the unemployed and poor.

"If poverty were the wellspring of support for terrorism or politically motivated violence, one would have expected the unemployed to be more supportive of armed attacks than merchants and professionals, not less," the study says.

It goes on to say that drawing a connection between poverty and terrorism could inhibit assistance to poor countries.

The international aid community, by associating violence and poverty, "may lose interest in providing support to developing nations when the imminent threat of terrorism recedes", it concludes. (The Guardian July 29)

Who Needs War? By Gabriel Danzig

In a recent interview with Der Spiegel, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres expressed the opinion that the war currently being waged between Palestinian terror groups and the Israeli government is a foolish waste of time. This war has cost the lives of innumerable civilians on both sides, and has seemingly accomplished nothing for either. It has ruined the economies of both, and led to a situation in which compromise and peaceful coexistence seem out of the question.

But in order to put an end to the conflict, it is important to understand that there is a certain logic behind war. War, after all, is coeval with human existence. For thousands of years, peace has been just over the horizon, and it has always remained there. The prophets of the Jewish tradition were infatuated with peace, but even they were realistic enough to see it as a Messianic dream, a break from human nature.

War has always been around, and it probably always will. It is possible to delay war, to ensure that one is prepared for it, and of course it is possible to win war. But it is impossible to put an end to war as a part of human existence.

The reason for that is not hard to see. War becomes unavoidable or necessary whenever the other paths to conflict resolution are unworkable.

It becomes necessary when two conditions are met: when there is a conflict concerning matters which are non-negotiable to both sides, and when both sides feel that they have a reasonable chance of prevailing in war. Both of these conditions exist, unfortunately, in the current conflict.

We can debate about what makes the Palestinians unable to accept Israeli compromises. It seems not to be the specific conditions that are proposed, but the very idea of compromise that causes problems. One of the Palestinian delegates to the Sharm e-Sheikh meetings which preceded the current war dismissed the whole conference as *harta-barta* – poppycock, we might say in English.

What is the point of raising all kinds of complex formulas for compromise, he seemed to be saying. It's just a way of getting around the fundamental clash. He may have been right.

Some on the Left believe that if Israel had given just a little bit more, renouncing completely the Temple Mount and all of the settlements, allowing the return of Palestinian refugees, accepting guilt for past wars (however falsely) and undertaking reparations, then we would have had peace.

But these conditions would have ruined the country, and in all likelihood would have caused an increase rather than a diminution of the violence. Even the proposals that Israel did make came dangerously close to self-abnegation.

As they said repeatedly, nothing short of full justice to the Palestinian people, at the expense of Israel, was enough to satisfy the Palestinian negotiators. That is a reasonable-sounding claim, but it is also a vague one that can be interpreted, and clearly was meant, as a demand that Israel cease to exist.

Just as these demands were unacceptable to Israel, so too Israel's demands were unacceptable to the other side. Essentially, Israel demanded the end of hostilities and the recognition of the legitimacy of its existence. Since this conflicts with the demands for "full justice," as the Palestinians see it, it was unacceptable.

Whenever there is a situation in which the minimum demands of both sides are in conflict, there is only one way of resolving the conflict, and that is war. The Palestinians were fully aware of that when they broke off negotiations and began this war. They knew that there is a limit to what one can expect the other side to agree to. No nation, not even Israel, can willfully acquiesce in its own self-destruction, unless it sees that there is no alternative at all. The Palestinians understood that only by raising the level of violence to heights unacceptable to Israel, would their own demands begin to appear as a reasonable alternative to death and destruction. The Israelis played along with this scenario, continuing to ask for peace even as the Palestinians were preparing for war. Paradoxically enough, one of the best ways of avoiding armed conflict is by pursuing it. It was precisely the Israeli demand for peace and quiet which convinced the Palestinians that they could get away with murder.

When we stop referring to war as a silly or unnecessary thing, the Palestinians may begin to grasp that we are willing to fight them to the death. We should take joy in doing so, knowing full well that this is the most just war a Western nation has ever pursued. We should take the initiative in escalating the violence, showing our enemies that we have no reluctance at all to destroy everything that they hold dear.

And we should press the war to complete and unconditional surrender, not allowing our wily enemy to evade punishment at the last minute by raising a deceptive white flag. In this way, and only in this way, will be able to restore peace and order to the region. (Jerusalem Post Jul 29)

The writer is a classicist at Bar-Ilan University, specializing in political thought.

Peres's Missed Opportunity: An Open Letter By Arthur Cohn

Dear Mr. Peres,

Being based in Switzerland, I regularly read the prestigious German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel*, which unfortunately often presents an unbalanced view of Israel. No wonder. Uri Avnery – a schoolfriend of the magazine's editor, Rudolf Augstein – is constantly approached to voice his opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I was therefore pleased that an extremely cultured Israeli personality has been given the chance to express his views in an interview – no less than the foreign minister, who is also a central figure in the Israeli government.

Your interview, however, in *Der Spiegel* was a great disappointment. Anyone reading your article would have to conclude that Israel's position appears rather dubious.

Headlines, as you know, are of crucial importance and are stipulated by the editorial staff. But one cannot blame this headline – "A 100 percent mistake" – on an anti-Israel editor, because it is a direct quote from your interview.

Evidently, you were not concerned by the possibility that your interview, far from being an antidote to widespread criticism of Israel, would be part and parcel of it.

Even in the article itself, Israel's mistakes are constantly accentuated. Instead of resolutely highlighting Salah Shehadeh's role as arch terrorist and the suffering he brought to so many innocent people – you chose to point out the misery that Israel has inflicted on innocent civilians.

Instead of emphasizing how outrageous and irresponsible it was of Yasser Arafat not to keep this man under arrest as a prevention against further terrorist acts, you pinpoint in the article only the damage that Israel's actions have caused.

Why did you not mention emphatically that terrorists seek out civilians in order to kill them while Israel does its utmost to protect civilians? And why don't you mention that Shin Bet chief Avi Dichter characterized Shehadeh as "Israel's bin Laden"?

If the US would get hold of bin Laden and – of course unintentionally harm civilians in the process, would there also be such an outcry of protest, like now in Israel in general and its foreign minister in particular? The attack on Shehadeh was, according to information from the Defense Ministry, postponed eight times because of the fear of civilian casualties.

Why, in your interview, do you not place great emphasis on the fact that terrorists – in order to escape punishment from Israel – often hide in areas where there are many children, with the sole aim of distracting the humanitarian Israelis from their original intentions?

In your comments on the peace process you find lots of good words for the Palestinians (much fewer for Israel...). Even today you are still saying that Arafat rightly received the Nobel Peace Prize, on the grounds that he wanted to "renounce terror" and only afterwards made "mistakes."

A man like Arafat, who immediately after the Oslo Accords, compared them to the Hudaibiya Agreement signed by the prophet Muhammad as a temporary peace treaty; a man like Arafat who never once officially expressed the desire for peace in Arabic; who deliberately used the years after Oslo to increase his military might far beyond the terms of the Oslo Accords and who fanned the flames with a malicious and hate-filled campaign against Israel in Palestinian schools and in the media – are we to believe that this is a record of unintentional error – an innocent mistake?

And still you speak – as after all your conversations with Arafat in the past – with great satisfaction of your Palestinian negotiating partners. "The talks were positive... good intention is there... the Palestinian finance minister promised there would be much change..." On the Palestinian side everything seems so promising. On the Israeli side, however, according to your interview, it is all considerably more problematic.

In your interview criticism of Israel is accepted, often in a completely unnecessary and therefore incomprehensible manner. "In the occupied territories a humanitarian catastrophe is imminent." No mention about who triggered this, although it is blatantly obvious: The Palestinian Authority, which used relief funds for terrorist activities and, by this action, prevented Israel from offering employment to Palestinians.

But rather than shifting the blame to where it legitimately belongs, you draw up a list of the measures that Israel must take: "We have to improve the lot of the Palestinian people... we have to pay for electricity." Why don't you explain that it is the Palestinians that have resisted and even attacked joint industrial zones created to provide jobs for them? Or that even Arab nations have recently withheld aid because of concerns over corruption? Or that the Palestinians even refused offers of Israeli blood to save their own wounded, during the recent fighting in Jenin?

In no respect do you mention Israel's extremely difficult situation, also economically, all a result of the flagrant violation of the Oslo Accords, which committed the Palestinians to a path of negotiation and non-violence. But the terrorism came anyway – directly after Barak's most far-reaching and sweeping proposals – in other words, in a time of high hopes for the Palestinians.

The Jews in Europe are uneasy. Israel's embassies, which come under the auspices of the Foreign Ministry, do not take any active part in the propaganda war, and all too often refrain from rigorously correcting false reports in the media. It has come to the point that Jewish communities in Europe have to set up their own information centers to deal with the pressingly urgent and obtrusive information war. Mr. Peres, you could have provided a decisively important step in this direction. It is very much to be regretted that you, with your internationally acclaimed name and ability, missed this welcome opportunity. (Jerusalem Post Aug 1)

*The writer is a film producer whose films include *The Garden of The Finzi-Continis*, *Central Station* and *One Day in September*.*
