

## Quote of the Week...

"I am not able to grasp how a peace agreement jibes with the release of terrorists and attempted murderers who express no regret over their actions. The only thing that I can do - as a concerned citizen, and not because I am a terror victim's relative - is to cry out my pain at the fact that our country has reached this point. My personal pain is something that no one can share with me, or even understand, as I am realizing more and more; but these protests are something that everyone can and should do, for all of our sakes, and in order to prevent more terrorism in the future... The worst thing that we can do is to be silent at what is happening. The whole world will be watching, and if we simply stand by and do nothing, this will be a terrible message. We must stand and shout out the truth, and the world may be able to appreciate that." - Yifat Alon, whose mother Noa and 5-year-old niece Gal Eisenmann were murdered in a terror attack in Jerusalem last year. She said she believes that her grandmother and niece were killed as the result of a failed "Israeli concession" attempt, in that the attack occurred "the second day after they opened up the closure of Ramallah - and then [after the attack,] they closed it again." She said that Israeli gestures like that one and the release of prisoners are "experimenting with people's lives." (IsraelNationalNews.com Aug 6)

## Commentary...

### Fighting the Same Battle from Europe to the Mideast

By Natan Sharansky

Last week an important step was taken in the battle against anti-Semitism. For the first time, a global forum was convened by the State of Israel to address the dangers posed by the recent explosion of anti-Semitism across the world. This forum was long overdue. Over the last few years anti-Semitism has reached heights not seen since the Holocaust. In Europe, where the wounds of the past are still fresh, Jews have been assaulted, cemeteries have been desecrated, and synagogues have been torched.

The response of European governments to what have largely been attacks by Muslims residing within their borders has been inadequate, to say the least. French diplomats and Belgian jurists have even been brazen enough to bring their anti-Semitism out into the open. In the Arab and Muslim world a long-virulent anti-Semitism is now even more ferocious. Here governments do not merely fail to thwart anti-Semitism, they actively promote it.

In this spirit, Egypt's government formally at peace with Israel saw fit to broadcast during prime time and on state-controlled television a 41-part series based on the infamous Czarist forgery The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Similarly, Syria's president, Bashar Assad, had no qualms about calling Jews "Christ-killers" in front of the pope, and his ministers considered it acceptable to publish articles perpetuating the blood libel myth.

The Palestinians, for their part, have indoctrinated an entire generation with vicious anti-Semitic invective designed to dehumanize Jews and delegitimize the Jewish state.

The extent to which anti-Semitism has returned was on display two years ago in Durban, South Africa. What was billed as an international conference against racism became a veritable carnival of hatred against Jews. Under a false banner of human rights the legitimacy of Israel was subjected to an unprecedented assault. At Durban it became painfully clear that the attempt to deny Jews their legitimate rights as individuals had been replaced by a systematic effort to deny the Jews their legitimate rights as a nation. What had always been a specious distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism was exposed once and for all.

NOW THE State of Israel has decided to take the gloves off. An anti-Semitic disease that has spread like wildfire across the globe demands a global response. I feel privileged, as the minister of diaspora affairs, to have been given responsibility by my government for addressing this pressing issue.

I firmly believe that Israel must play a leading role in the battle against anti-

## ISRAEL NEWS

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Semitism, but I also know that we cannot win that battle alone. I was extremely pleased by the response from many of the leading forces in the struggle against anti-Semitism to my recent invitation to establish a forum that would begin implementing a coordinated counteroffensive.

Participants from abroad included the heads of organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and the World Jewish Congress, and Jewish leaders

from the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Belgium, Austria, Sweden, Russia, Australia and elsewhere, as well as individuals who have devoted much of their time and energy to fighting anti-Semitism.

Israeli participants represented an equally impressive array of individuals and organizations who have been at the forefront of this important struggle.

We all understand that if we hope to defend Jews effectively against anti-Semitism we must show that we are more committed to our mission than our enemies are to theirs. And there should be no doubt that our enemies are committed and sophisticated. With the charge of anti-Semitism still not politically correct, anti-Semites have cleverly continued their assault against the Jews under the guise of advancing human rights.

But the double standards at the UN, the perverted agenda of some NGOs, the warped protests at many anti-globalization rallies, and the inflamed rhetoric on college campuses belie their true intent. It is imperative that this anti-Semitism be exposed for what it is.

Though all who attended last week's conference continue to work tirelessly in this struggle, each understands that their important independent work must now be supplemented by a larger, cooperative effort. We agreed that combating this sophisticated and varied anti-Semitism requires a coordinated, systematic and proactive campaign. The State of Israel will not remain on the sidelines during this campaign. It will play, as it always should, a central role in defending the Jewish people. Fortunately, judging from what I saw last week, the forces the Jewish people have at their disposal are just as determined as I am to win this historic battle. (Jerusalem Post Aug 4)

*The writer is minister of Diaspora Affairs and Jerusalem.*

### A 'Road Map' to Nowhere By Jeff Jacoby

The US-sponsored "road map" to peace between Israel and the Palestinians is not a very challenging document. The text, which is posted at the State Department website, is only 4-1/2 pages long, and most of it is written in reasonably clear English. Anyone willing to invest 15 minutes in reading it can glean a pretty good idea of its terms.

And yet a surprising number of people one might expect to be familiar with the road map seem not to know what it says.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, for example. In an interview last week with Lally Weymouth of Newsweek and The Washington Post, Abbas said he had discussed the road map four times with Ariel Sharon and was "waiting to see" if the Israeli prime minister would deliver on his commitments.

"Does that mean freezing settlements?" Weymouth asked.

"Not this only," Abbas answered, "but all the items stipulated in the road map -- freezing the prisoners . . ."

"But the issue of prisoners is not in the road map," Weymouth objected.

"It is in the road map," Abbas insisted.

In fact, it *isn't* in the road map. There is nothing at all in the blueprint that requires or even encourages Israel to release Palestinians arrested for terrorist activities -- not now, not in the future. It is hardly plausible that Abbas didn't know that. More likely, he knew it perfectly well -- but figured most Washington Post and Newsweek readers wouldn't.

After all, in the weeks leading up to President Bush's back-to-back summits with Abbas and Sharon, the media harped incessantly on the release of Palestinian prisoners as a critical step in the latest Middle East peace process. Some reporters noted in passing that the road map doesn't say anything about Palestinian prisoners, but others falsely implied -- or stated outright -- that freeing criminals was an obligation the agreement map imposes on Israel.

The week Abbas arrived in Washington, for example, the Post was reporting that "the road map has stalled over several key issues," including "Palestinian demands for . . . the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners

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from Israeli jails." A few days earlier, the Los Angeles Times informed its readers that Sharon and Abbas were to discuss "ongoing steps under the peace plan known as the 'road map,' including the release of some Palestinian prisoners."

Last week, succumbing to the international pressure, Israel agreed to free 540 prisoners, including 210 members of the terrorist organizations Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The Israeli government promised not to release any prisoners "with blood on their hands," but time and again that is exactly what it has done.

In June, for example, as a goodwill gesture to Abbas, Israel freed more than 100 imprisoned Palestinians. One of them was Ahmed Jbarra, who murdered 14 people and wounded 60 in a horrific bombing in 1975. Upon his release, the unrepentant Jbarra was hailed by Palestinians as a hero and promptly named an "adviser" to Yasser Arafat. Soon after, The Jerusalem Post reported, he was publicly urging Palestinians to kidnap Israelis so they could be exchanged for even more Arab prisoners.

But none of that got much attention outside Israel, where the focus has moved on to what *\*else\** Israel should be doing to keep the road map alive. Much has been made of the security wall Israel is building along the West Bank border. Palestinian demands that Israel demolish the wall have gotten a great deal of attention, as has the Bush administration's public criticism. And yet the wall too is something about which the road map says absolutely nothing.

By contrast, the document says a great deal about what the Palestinian Authority is supposed to do. And the PA's foremost obligation, more critical to the road map's success than anything else, is to crush the terrorists who have shed so much innocent blood.

The language is explicit: The PA must "declare an unequivocal end to violence and terrorism." It must "arrest, disrupt, and restrain individuals and groups conducting and planning violent attacks on Israelis anywhere." It must end "all official...incitement against Israel." Above all, it must carry out the

"dismantlement of terrorist capability and infrastructure." These are not optional goodwill gestures or "confidence-building" suggestions. They are mandatory commitments the Palestinians must fulfill if the road map is to go forward.

So far they have fulfilled none of them. The anti-Israel incitement continues. Terrorism has not stopped. As for the dismantling of terrorist groups, Abbas says bluntly that it will never happen.

"Cracking down on Hamas, [Islamic] Jihad, and the Palestinian organizations," he declared on July 23, "is not an option at all."

It is the Oslo farce all over again: Israel weakens itself through real concessions on the ground, while the Palestinians pocket the concessions and then break their promise of peace.

However well meant, this is a road map to nowhere. It will not lead to genuine peace and security, not so long as the Palestinians are ruled by the likes of Arafat and Abbas. Terrorism made them what they are; it is the taproot of their power and influence. From such men, peace will never come.

The indispensable first step to Mideast peace remains what it always has been: a new and different Palestinian leadership, one not compromised by terror. Until that leadership appears, the violence and bloodshed will go on.

*The writer is a columnist for The Boston Globe.* (Boston Globe Aug 3)

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### **When Bad Neighbors Require Good Fences** By James S. Robbins

The border security fence is comprised of many sections totaling scores of miles. Some sections are concrete, others sheet metal. The barrier is three layers deep in parts, fifteen feet high and surrounded by razor wire. The area around it is lit by spotlights, monitored by cameras, motion detectors and magnetic sensors, and patrolled by armed guards with attack dogs.

But enough about our border with Mexico, let's talk about Israel.

A year ago the Israeli cabinet approved construction of a security fence on the border with the Palestinian Authority. The first phase of the project, dubbed "Another Way," was completed this week, and covers a total of 150km. Other phases of the project are in various stages of execution. When completed, the security barrier will demarcate nearly the entire border between Israel and the purported Palestinian state, and therein lies a problem.

The issue is not the need for the fence, its effectiveness, or its legitimacy. Israel is attempting to regulate access by terrorists to its sovereign territory by erecting a defensible barrier. Similar walls along the Lebanese and Gaza borders have proven useful (though not impregnable). The logic is similar to that which led the United States to begin walling up the border with Mexico in 1991. Our fence restricts the flow of illegal narcotics and illegal immigrants into the country, both of which are issues of national security. Israel faces a graver national-security problem, namely physical assaults on its territory and people by armed suicide terrorists. Imagine how comprehensive the U.S. border-defense system would be if terrorists were coming north to blow up buses and shopping centers to protest the Yanqui occupation of Mexican lands seized in an unjust war of aggression over 150 years ago. One suspects that our response would not be limited to defense - when Mexican bandits made raids into the U.S. in the early 20th century we sent the Army across the border to clean things up.

The Palestinians have showered the security barrier with invective - "apartheid fence," "Berlin Wall" (particularly inapt since the Iron Curtain kept people in, not out), "ethnic cleansing," "terrorism" and so forth. They have raised several specific issues, such as the fact that the wall will disrupt movement - which, yes, is the whole point, but they mean commerce - and fragment existing

communities. However, the fence is not intended to be a hermetic seal. In recognition of the reliance of Israel on Palestinian labor in certain agricultural sectors, 41 access ways have been constructed in the completed section of the fence, or about one every 2.25 miles. (On the U.S. southern border there is on average one port of entry every 50 miles.)

The most-significant problem from the Palestinian point of view is that because the fence will run their entire border with Israel, it will thus define that border, and the precise location of borders has been one of the more contentious issues yet to be negotiated (after they accept the right of Israel to actually have borders, that is). The first phase of "Another Way" was less controversial because its path was close to the "green line," the cease-fire line that defined the Israeli border with Jordan, and which is accepted by most of the international community at least a few Palestinians as the official boundary of Israel. Future phases will deviate by some degree from the green line, encompassing many of the authorized settlements to the east and Israeli suburbs of Jerusalem. The fence will thus achieve by fait accompli what warfare and negotiations have failed to achieve. It will become the ultimate fact on the ground. Yet, like most fences, it has two sides. By defining Israel's border, it will also define Palestine's. The fence will be as much a statement of Palestinian territoriality as Israeli. It will mark the limit of officially sanctioned Israeli settlements, and mean an end to Israeli expansion. In fact, the fence was first proposed by Israeli leftists precisely to detach Israel from the settlement movement, which at its most radical opposes any border west of the Jordan River. Thus while the Palestinians may not be inclined to accept the route the fence takes (which is still largely yet to be determined in planning, let alone construction), the fact is that once completed it will go a long way to end the territorial question.

Palestinian politicians, having barely conceded that Israel has a right to exist at all, are not ready for such a concrete resolution of the issue. They would prefer to have open - ambiguous, easier to renounce, more readily penetrated - borders. But the PA cannot reasonably expect Israel to adopt the kind of open-border policy that the United States has with Canada, given the harsh realities of the security situation and the unwillingness of the Palestinian leadership to take concerted action against the terrorists in its midst. So long as the Palestinian Authority refuses to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, the security fence will be necessary. Palestinian Security Minister Muhammad Dahlan has attempted to defeat this reasoning by claiming "there's no such thing as a terrorist infrastructure." Well, that being the case, there's no such thing as a security fence either. Matter solved. (National Review Aug 1)

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### **An Open Letter to Edgar Bronfman** By Isi Leibler Mr. Edgar Bronfman, President World Jewish Congress Dear Edgar,

I write to you as the senior vice president of the World Jewish Congress. Last week you co-signed with Lawrence Eagleburger a letter to President George W. Bush preceding his meeting with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

On a cursory glance your letter reads like an objective "evenhanded" State Department release calling on both Israelis and Palestinians to adhere to their obligations to the road map, taking care not to even hint which party is responsible for the conflict. But buried among these evenhanded platitudes is an intervention by the president of the World Jewish Congress to President George W. Bush, urging him to stand firm on the one critical security issue on which there are serious differences between the policies of the United States and the government of Israel.

You criticize Israel's security fence, describing it in the language of those opposed to the Israeli position as a "separation wall" and assert that it is "complicated and potentially problematic." Furthermore, you urge the president to exert pressure on Israel and apply "the same straightforwardness in his meeting with Prime Minister Sharon" as he did with the Palestinian prime minister.

By this you have initiated an outrageous act that stands in defiance of the broad consensus of the World Jewish Congress constituency, an act unbefitting the president of that organization. Without a doubt that broad consensus seeks to maximize its support of the policies determined by the democratically elected government of Israel during these difficult times.

You have in the past expressed other odd ideas about Israel, but your most recent foray is much more serious. It has crossed every red line.

It would be obscene at any time for the president of the World Jewish Congress, resident in New York, to lobby the president of the United States to resist policies being promoted by the government of Israel. But on a security issue such as the security fence, one that impacts on the life and death of Israelis, your intervention - irrespective of whether you formally used your presidential title or not - can only be described as an act of perfidy which will not be swept under the carpet.

It brings to the fore important issues of principle, such as: Does the president of the World Jewish Congress have any accountability to others in the organization? Is the WJC a personal fiefdom a powerful individual can exploit as he sees fit, as a platform to promote his personal agenda irrespective of the opinion of his colleagues and of other Jewish leaders? Is

such behavior legitimate even when his views are contrary to the policies of the government of Israel, affect the life and death of Israeli citizens and are addressed to the president of the United States? Does the concept of governance have any applicability or relevance whatsoever to the WJC?

Even if I were not now living in Israel, I would be appalled by your act. Indeed, I do not believe you will find a single elected Jewish communal leader who would approve of your deed. Sir, I request you to retract and apologize forthwith. Otherwise, I call on you to resign.

Enough is enough! We have sufficient enemies without a person titled president of the World Jewish Congress undermining policies of the government of Israel on what are indisputably security-related issues enjoying the support of the vast majority of Israelis of all political persuasions.

I write this letter in sadness.

Isi Leibler (Jerusalem Post Aug 6)

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### **The 1002nd Arabian Nights Tale** By Sarah Honig

Anyone familiar with the Arabian Nights tales knows they depict a reality comprised of layer upon shadowy layer, one concealed behind another. Cloaked schemers abound, each exploiting another schemer, each duping someone for secret ends. Life is an interminable complex of conspiracies in which you are better off not trusting anyone and suspecting everyone.

It took George W. Bush a while, following his conquest of the Fertile Crescent, to figure out that in the Middle East everyone assumes you're conning them and you can never prove otherwise. Truth is immaterial.

This, after all, is the region that regarded Gamal Abdel Nasser as a victor following his 1956 and 1967 debacles. This is the region that spawned the Palestinian victimization scam and lately convinced its masses that Israel was behind the destruction of the Twin Towers.

Using this fanciful yardstick, it's no stretch for Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) to claim that he is honoring his undertaking to eradicate Hamas by making cozy, affable deals with it.

With fact and fiction indistinguishable, it was hard to convince Iraqis that Saddam's sons had bit the dust. Even pictures of the corpses couldn't quite erase doubts. The stills were too bloody for positive identification and the videos too prettied-up to inspire trust. Besides, the dead may have been doubles. Baghdad is rife with rumor of the boys living it up in Monte Carlo and their dad enjoying American hospitality in Nevada, Morocco, or even Tel Aviv.

As latter-day Scheherazades tell it, Saddam was an undercover American implant all along. His agents sabotaged Iraqi power lines and oil pipes to provide his American masters with the pretext to sink their hooks deeper into the country.

All that left its mark on the American president. Experience, even if bizarre, is an incomparable teacher.

To judge by Bush's amazingly astute maneuverings in the matter of Israel's security fence, he successfully underwent a speedy process of acculturation. It may be that, having picked up a smattering of Baghdad bazaar smarts, he only pretends the fence rubbed him the wrong way. In actual fact, he was converted to the fence's cause upon realizing that many in Israel's national camp abhor it because, while no barrier ever hindered sufficiently determined malefactors, this fence marks a boundary that excludes most of Judea and Samaria from the State of Israel. That last bit especially suits Bush just fine.

Had he sided with Haim Ramon, Dalia Itzik and other assorted fence advocates, he'd have doomed the project. But feigning displeasure, frowning on the fence and calling it a wall was as good as rubbing Aladdin's lamp.

Though original fence enthusiasts became a tad edgy, the fence's right-wing opponents were magically transformed into its diehard adherents. Not capitulating to yet another American dictate is a matter of national pride.

Of course it could all be Ariel Sharon's manipulation masquerading as Bush's machination. The only way Sharon could sell his Oslo-like solutions to several components of his party and government was to get them to clamor for these very solutions. The more Bush disapproves of the fence, the more they insist on it.

Sharon's wiles mustn't be underestimated. Look at how he got the cabinet to okay the release of 210 Hamas and Jihad terrorists. At first he lent the impression that letting them loose was unthinkable.

A week later only 110 were to be set free; but within a few hours the number nearly doubled. Now Sharon assures his coalition partners that at most there'll only be a temporary slowdown in fence construction around Ariel and similar "controversial areas." It's safe to assume that in no time the fence will straddle the old Green Line, leaving all settlements on the other side.

That's what Bush and the Israeli Left desire. The fence was never the problem. In effect Israel is being told already prior to any negotiations that the territorial question has been decided, to its detriment. Willy-nilly, indelicately, with no discussion or right of appeal, Israel is shoved behind what dovish Abba Eban dubbed "the Auschwitz lines." Sharon's alacrity to appease populist opinion via the fence forced the issue, just as the Left perhaps wished it might.

Sharon may kid himself that his options remain open and he can still simultaneously bamboozle Bush and hoodwink his hawks. Fat chance. Neither he nor Bush is in control not even Abu Mazen, who seems to have affected Bush deeply with his whining-weakling act.

The real master manipulators in this Arabian Nights episode are the Hamas

sorcerers, who know that a few months down the road map, all that now gets Bush and Sharon so hot and bothered will evaporate into irrelevance. The only constant regional reality will remain irredentist Arab designs to shrink Israel inside insecure lines, thereby intensifying its vulnerability. That's why Hamas countenanced the hudna.

Hamas plays everyone for a sucker. Bush will get an Arab Palestine and he will get Sharon off its back. Sharon will prop up Abu Mazen, who'll legitimize the terrorists to get them off his back. New Palestinian Authority elections are charted along the road map's course. With the Fatah debilitated as never before, Hamas is emerging as the most cohesive force, with the potential to win control of the new Palestinian state. The terrorist outfit, outlawed by America and Israel, already enjoys de-facto recognition from both. That means immunity. By playing Bush's road map game, Hamas is making sure it won't be disarmed, as the road map mandates. The ironic fact is that the cease-fire legitimizes terror. The hudna's limited duration presupposes the inevitable renewal of attacks on Israeli noncombatants whenever Hamas deems it expedient. Meanwhile it's upping the ante and Sharon, prodded by the Americans, is paying through the nose to facilitate Abu Mazen's survival and secure Hamas cooperation to make the region safe for democracy, as prescribed by the Bush vision.

Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Aziz Rantisi must be rubbing their hands with glee and laughing all the way to the next intifada. Scheherazade herself couldn't have come up with a more convoluted plot for the 1002nd tale. Its fantastic twists and turns won't lead where Bush and Sharon, road map in hand, expect it to. (Jerusalem Post Aug 5)

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### **Israel's Constitution Writing it Won't Be Easy** By Evelyn Gordon

If anyone still had any doubts, Israel's government once again proved last week that it has no concept of what a constitution is or what function it is supposed to serve. It did so by appointing a panel to formulate, within six months, the Basic Laws needed to "complete" Israel's constitution.

That might sound innocuous until one examines the mechanism of the panel's appointment. Each political party in the government was entitled to appoint representatives, but parties outside the coalition will not be represented at all. That means that several major segments of Israeli society including the haredim, the Arabs and, to some extent, the Jewish Left (which Shinui represents on some issues, but not all) are being given no voice in formulating the document that will, if approved by the Knesset, eventually govern their lives.

This is extremely problematic, because the point of a constitution is to create a framework an agreed-upon set of rules governing how decisions are made and how power is exercised that enables different sectors of society to live together despite often radically different interests.

And as Professor Ruth Gavison, one of Israel's leading constitutional scholars, pointed out in her introduction to the Hebrew translation of *The Federalist* (later adapted and reprinted in the Shalem Center's journal *Azure*), what makes a constitution function effectively as such a framework is the fact that it contains a series of trade-offs in which every sector of the population has sacrificed certain issues of importance to it in exchange for guarantees on other issues it deems even more important.

These trade-offs mean every sector has an interest in upholding the constitution, because it offers them advantages that, in their own eyes, compensate for its disadvantages.

This, however, will only be true if all sectors are involved in formulating these ground rules, rather than being presented with a fait accompli on which they can at most vote "yes" or "no" in the Knesset. If a particular group has not had any input into the drafting process, not only are its particular concerns likely to be objectively neglected, it will also lack any subjective sense of having gained benefits that compensate for elements of the document it dislikes. And since no group is likely to feel any commitment to rules that it not only has had no say in drafting, but that may not even meet its minimum requirements, such a constitution, rather than being a unifying document, will be a divisive and alienating one, perceived by those not involved in its formulation as simply one more tool through which the majority can oppress them.

But the lack of representation is not the only serious problem afflicting the new panel. Equally problematic is the decision to continue with the current flawed system of creating a "constitution" by legislating a series of individual Basic Laws rather than a complete package that would be accepted or rejected as a whole. Again, the problem stems from the fact that a constitution's essence is the mutual trade-offs it entails. Such trade-offs are much harder to achieve when each law is considered individually rather than as part of a package, since this mitigates against deals that involve several laws at once for instance, concessions by one group on the mechanism for Knesset elections (one Basic Law) in exchange for concessions by another on the method of judicial appointments (a separate law).

But even if such deals are formulated, the process of enacting individual laws rather than a complete package means that many of them might not be preserved in the final document. All it takes is a majority in the Knesset to reject or significantly modify one law and the whole package has been gutted for whatever group favored that law. And precisely because each group

agreed to make sacrifices only in exchange for certain achievements, if those achievements are not preserved in the final document, that group's commitment to the constitution will dissipate.

Furthermore, since the panel's mandate is strictly to formulate new Basic Laws rather than examining those that have already been approved, many of the most important constitutional arrangements Knesset elections, judicial selection, the package of constitutionally protected civil rights, and more will not be up for discussion at all. But since to many groups, these are precisely the issues most in need of serious revision, a constitutional process that sets them outside the boundaries of the discussion is almost guaranteed not to produce a document that all groups will consider an acceptable compromise.

A constitution could be an invaluable tool for helping Israel's fractured society to resolve its differences but only if it is created through a process that allows every sector of society to accept it. Any document created via the flawed process set in motion last week will merely exacerbate existing tensions rather than easing them. (Jerusalem Post Aug 5)

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### **Bush Should Learn from Clinton's Errors** By Mortimer B. Zuckerman

Is George Bush about to fall into the trap that ended Bill Clinton's hopes of a permanent settlement in the Middle East? The trap is that men of goodwill presume there is at least an element of good faith and enlightened self-interest among all the parties--and that is not a prudent assumption with the Palestinian leadership.

When Bush first made Middle East peace an issue, he brought to it the same moral clarity that informs his response to terrorism, creating thereby a strategic and diplomatic clarity. He would, he declared, have no dealings with Yasser Arafat. He saw him clearly as a terrorist who sabotaged the best settlement offer the Palestinians ever had. The president has stuck to his resolve about Arafat, but his administration is failing to demonstrate the same clarity of purpose with the new Palestinian prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas, known as Abu Mazen, who says he can deliver no more than a temporary cease-fire and not the arrest of the terrorists and the closure of their bomb factories.

The Bush administration is misreading the situation in treating Abu Mazen as if he were a victim of Arafat instead of Arafat's longtime colleague and supporter. In the Palestinian community and in Arabic he speaks of his total loyalty to Arafat, and in America he speaks as a victim of Arafat who must be supported by Israeli concessions, some of which would put Israeli lives at risk. This two-tongued approach has been a baleful feature of Palestinian politics for decades, a hypocrisy that has deceived many moderates, as it is designed to do.

No compromise. Abu Mazen's argument for inertia is that given time he will grow strong enough to arrest the killers and shut down their bomb factories. History is instructive here. In its 10 cease-fires since 1993, Hamas used the time to regroup and rearm after an exhausting confrontation with a more powerful foe, usually Israel but on one occasion the Palestinian Authority. Hamas and Islamic Jihad have never accepted Israel. Hamas leader Abdul Aziz Rantissi recently said: "We reject the two-state solution proposed by Bush. There are no ifs and buts about our position. . . . There can be no compromise."

Taking him at his word, Israelis are right to believe that left with their arms the terrorists will sooner or later use them to kill innocent Israeli citizens and will use the temporary cease-fire to regroup, rearm, and re-enlist new suicide bombers. An endorsement of this view comes in a sinister interpretation of Abu Mazen's behavior by no less than Arafat's henchman Saeb Erekat, a Palestinian legislator, who said Abu Mazen is aiming to get Hamas and Islamic Jihad to agree to wait until the Palestinian state is declared before attacking Israeli targets. The sad reality is that Arafat remains the power--the rais--the undisputed ruler with the same kaffiyeh and olive uniform, while Abu Mazen is seen as a lightweight leader imposed from the outside.

Arafat works publicly and behind the scenes to undermine Abu Mazen to prove that nothing can happen without Arafat. Arafat retains control, as noted here before, of most of the government institutions, such as the Palestine Liberation Organization's Executive Committee and the Fatah Central Committee, five of the seven security organizations, including the Army and its commanders, and the fighters of Tanzim, Fatah, and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, and most of the administrators in the region. As one Israeli analyst put it, when Abu Mazen's government was born, Arafat made sure "it would be castrated." No one should doubt that Arafat's means to his political ends include terrorism.

The Israelis have bent to American pressure and accepted the temporary cease-fire, but only as a prelude to a showdown between Abu Mazen and the terrorists. It is understandable that the Bush administration is willing to give Abu Mazen this chance, but it must be with eyes wide open. If the Bush administration lulls itself into accepting the current calm as the equivalent of confronting terrorism, it will reap the whirlwind of an even bloodier scene when the terrorists have recovered their strength.

Another disturbing feature of the administration's current stance is that as well as indulging Abu Mazen, it is exhibiting a lack of understanding about why the Israelis are building a security fence. Bush recently said, "It is very difficult to develop confidence between Palestinians and Israelis, with a wall snaking through the West Bank." What could this mean? Let us make another statement: It is very difficult to develop confidence between the Israelis and the Palestinians when Abu Mazen says that even if the terrorists break their commitment to a

temporary cease-fire he will not confront them, search their houses, or take their weapons. Surely the history of violence and treachery supports Israeli prudence. The Palestinians have never lived up to their promises to confront terrorism. In this, they are supported by popular opinion. More than 60 percent of the Palestinians support violence, and in a recent survey by the Pew Global Attitudes Project, 80 percent asserted they don't believe "that a way can be found for the State of Israel to exist so that the rights and needs of the Palestinian people are met."

The security fence is no more than a response by the Israelis to a thousand days of terrorism with over 800 civilians killed--the vast majority women and children. It symbolizes Israeli revulsion at a Palestinian society that turns young people into time bombs and delights in the murder of Jews. Such a fence is hardly unusual. A similar fence has existed at the Gaza Strip, and to date, not one suicide bomber from this area has infiltrated, compared with 300 that over the past three years have simply been able to walk or drive into Israel from the West Bank. Along most of this frontier there are virtually no barriers of any kind. Israel has found it necessary also to fence its frontiers with Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. America has fenced off many parts of the Mexican border to deter illegal immigrants. There is a wall between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, etc.

The Palestinians have challenged this fence as a "racist, Berlin Wall." It is an absurd comparison. The Berlin Wall was imposed on one people, Germans, by an alien power to stop East Germans from fleeing to freedom and democracy in West Germany. The Israeli fence will separate two warring people in order to protect citizens of Israel from being murdered and maimed by Palestinian terrorists. It is a defensive weapon and will undoubtedly be needed whether or not the end of conflict is reached.

And what is this fence? It is a combination of chain-link, barbed wire, and concrete barriers, plus a high-tech system of ground sensors, unmanned aerial vehicles, trenches, land mines, and old-fashioned dirt paths that will be swept clean each day so footsteps will show. Where Jewish and Palestinian population centers are close to each other, it will take the form of a high, concrete wall, not only to prevent infiltration by terrorists but also to give protection against light gunfire from Palestinian towns. Throughout, there will be passages permitted through guarded gates for legitimate Palestinian workers and farmers.

This fence will not be built exclusively along the 1967 borders, for many reasons. Security first: Every Israeli prime minister, from Yitzhak Rabin on, and every military and national security official have agreed that Israel can never go back to the June 4, 1967, borders. Those proved too fatally often that they did not meet the standard of either secure or defensible borders--as called for in United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338.

The political reason for the fence line is that if it followed the 1967 borders, that fact would then become a source of international pressure on Israel in the determination of the final borders. Paradoxically, the Israeli right has long objected to such a fence because it might also convey the political message that Israel is willing to accept a final border quite close to the 1967 "green line," which would leave many Israeli settlements on the wrong side of the fence, vulnerable to Palestinian attacks.

But this may be the best last resort. Every leading Israeli points out that this fence can be moved or torn down in the framework of a permanent agreement. Should the Palestinians choose to live in peace with the Jewish state, Palestinian people and goods could move freely back and forth. But if they remain committed to violence and unwilling to coexist, then the barrier could be sealed. Simultaneously, it might well induce Israeli settlers in isolated settlements on the wrong side of the fence to yield their homes voluntarily, given the new vulnerability these settlements would be facing. Polls show many Israelis are already uneasy with the costs and benefits of these outlying settlements.

Trade-offs. The fence thus imposes security benefits and political costs for the Israelis and some political and diplomatic costs for the Palestinians. The Palestinians have forfeited the right to object since it is no more than the minimum penalty for their unwillingness to live in peace with their neighbor. Far from being criticized by America, the fence deserves U.S. support. President Bush has promised to support Israel's efforts to defend the security of its people. Is it not preferable to the justified but more damaging policy of Israeli counterattack to acts of Palestinian terror? Is it not preferable to Israeli military occupation as the only other alternative to containing Palestinian terrorism? Ten years of funerals are surely enough.

What else is Israel to do?

President Bush has been viewed by many, including this writer, as the best friend Israel ever had in the White House. President Bush's June 24, 2002, Middle East speech, so widely praised as the basis for his policy, has been substantially reversed by the State Department in its "road map" for Mideast peace. A key part of Bush's speech was an unwavering demand for each side to acknowledge the sovereignty of the other. Israel has already accepted Palestinian statehood. But there has been no corresponding acceptance by the Palestinians of a Jewish state.

Where's the reciprocity? Until their right to exist is made clear, the Israelis have a right to be wary. Given the history of the Middle East, Mr. President, whom would you trust with your safety: the Palestinian Authority or an Israeli security fence? (JewishWorldReview.com Aug 6)

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