

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*

Quote of the Week...

"The accomplishments that I will achieve tomorrow. But in the past I would say Dimona [establishing a nuclear reactor in the southern development town] and Oslo [the Oslo accords]. I believe Dimona led to Oslo, because Dimona made an impression on the Arabs that caused them to move to peace. " - Shimon Peres (with full seriousness) in response to a Jerusalem Post interviewer's question "Looking back on 80 years, what do you consider your greatest accomplishment?" (Jerusalem Post Aug 12)

From the PA Media...

PA Music Video Promising "Maidens of Paradise" to Shahids - 2 days before Suicide Bombings

By Itamar Marcus

An integral message of PA social - religious ideology is that great heavenly rewards await those who die the death of the Shahid, meaning they died for Allah. The PA defines all its terrorists, including suicide terrorists, as Shahids. One of the rewards promised the "Shahid" in PA Islamic teaching, is "72 dark eyed virgins" - the "Maidens of Paradise". This week a music video that depicts a Shahid joining beautiful maidens in heaven, broadcast hundreds of times over the past three years, returned to PA TV. [August 10, 2003]

The clip begins with scenes depicting a romance which is cut short when soldiers shoot the woman in the back. The woman goes immediately to heaven, where she joyously joins other young woman all dressed in identical long white gowns - the "Maidens of Paradise". The maidens are dancing in water, a clear depiction of Afterlife in Islamic tradition, said repeatedly in the Koran to have "flowing streams". Later on in the clip, the man visits the woman's grave and the soldiers shoot him in the back as well. At the moment he falls to the ground, he immediately goes up to heaven and joins the "Maidens".

The PA grants Shahid status to all those killed in the war including, suicide bombers and other terrorists. This clip has appeared hundreds of times on Palestinian television since October 2000, as the PA has taught men to believe that they will get these women, possibly as encouragement to would be suicide bombers. Now this clip has come back on the air.

PMW Comment:

Today Israel was attacked by 2 suicide bombers. Whereas there is clearly no causal link between the recent broadcast on PA TV and today's bombing, there may very well be a more important link.

The political forces in the PA that control TV and gave the instruction to rebroadcast this music video encouraging Shahada, are quite possibly the same political forces that gave the okay to go ahead with the attacks. Yesterday, the day before the bombing, in interviews on Israeli TV channel 10 and Galei Zahal [Israeli Army radio], PMW director Itamar Marcus warned about the implications of the return of this music video:

"That this message has returned quickly, after several weeks during which we did not see it, I view as being very serious, as they are showing men once again that it is worthwhile to become a Shahid." [TV -10]

In the past PMW has demonstrated the direct link between PA terrorism and PA broadcasting, and has been able to accurately project PA intentions and actions based on PA media.

To view the "Maidens of Paradise". music video access the following internet site: <http://www.isratv.com/video/twolovers56.asx>

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This promise, of "72 Dark Eyed Virgins" has likewise been taught on PA TV by PA religious leaders: "When the Shahid meets his Maker, all his sins are forgiven from the first gush of blood. He is exempted from the "torments of the grave" (Judgment); he sees his place in paradise, he is shielded from the great shock, and marries 72 Dark Eyed Virgins. He is an heavenly advocate for

70 members of his family, on his head is placed a crown of honor, one stone of which, is worth more than all there is in this world." [Dr. Ismail al-Radouan, PATV August 17, 2001]

To view the religious leader explaining the "72 dark-eyed virgins" reward of the Shahid: <http://www.isratv.com/video/3d256.asx> (PMW Aug 12)

Commentary...

No More 'Let's Pretend' Jerusalem Post Editorial

In the real world, two Israelis were killed in separate suicide bombings yesterday. It is time to stop playing "let's pretend." The road map, in both its conception and implementation, is based on the presumption that if we, the United States and Israel, pretend hard enough then reality will follow. It is not working.

In his June 24 speech last year, US President George W. Bush cut through decades of "let's pretend" when he erected two pillars of moral clarity: first that Arafat must go, and second that the obstacle to a Palestinian state is not Israel, but Palestinian tyranny, corruption, and terrorism.

Since then, the Bush administration has let these pillars crumble, while pretending that they still stand. Rather than the "new leadership, uncompromised by terror" Bush demanded on June 24, we are pretending that Yasser Arafat is gone, and that Mahmoud Abbas is untainted by him.

As fundamentally, the road map, supposedly constructed to implement the June 24 speech, reverts to the same old attempt to pretend that Israel shares responsibility for being attacked, and pretend that Israel, rather than Palestinian behavior, is an equal obstacle to Palestinian statehood.

But this is just the beginning. On top of pretending that Arafat is gone and that Israel must share blame for the transformation of the peace process into a war on terrorism, we are now pretending that the Palestinian Authority is on its way to complying with the road map, and that Israel is somehow in breach.

Why is the PA not mopping up terrorist groups such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the myriad offshoots of Arafat's own Fatah? Let's pretend it is because Israel is building a fence. Or not releasing enough prisoners. Or dismantling enough outposts.

Let's stop pretending. We all know that Israel will never, in the current context, release enough prisoners, dismantle the fence or enough outposts to satisfy the Palestinians and this assumes that it was legitimate for the Palestinians to make demands extraneous to the road map in the first place.

Pretending that Mahmoud Abbas is an independent actor, a democrat, and will wipe out terrorism will not make it so. The "help Abbas" mantra has, if anything, exacerbated the problem by tolerating unending excuses for inaction, even as the infrastructure of terrorism is rebuilt and terrorist attacks increase.

Yesterday's suicide bombings could easily have killed dozens of Israelis, as could have the many similar attack that have been thwarted since the hudna was declared. The game of tolerating missile attacks, suicide bombings, and shootings so long as "only" one or two people are killed is a cynical and bloody one. The lives that are lost and the families destroyed are not pretend they are real and cannot be made whole again.

The US and Israel must speak clearly and with one voice: Either the PA

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crushes the terrorists now, unconditionally, and without excuses, or Israel will do so itself. It should also be understood that if Israel is forced to crush the terrorists by itself, the PA, as a government that harbors terror, will also be replaced.

It is far from clear that such an ultimatum will impel the PA to act decisively; it is clear that absent such a stark proposition it will not.

This is not just a test of whether the US and Israel have embarked on a process that does not repeat the mistakes of its failed predecessors. It is a test of the seriousness of the entire war against terrorism. The terrorists want to destroy Israel, not create a Palestinian state along side Israel. But even if the cause of a peaceful, democratic Palestinian state is legitimate, how does that cause justify tolerance of terrorism? On November 10, 2001, Bush told the United Nations, "There is no such thing as a good terrorist. No national aspiration, no remembered wrong can ever justify the deliberate murder of the innocent. Any government that rejects this principle, trying to pick and choose its terrorist friends, will know the consequences." It is this doctrine that is being put to the test, here and now. (Jerusalem Post Aug 13)

Restoring the Peace of Jerusalem By Gerald M. Steinberg

For three years, the Temple Mount has been closed not only to Israelis and Jews, but also to all non-Muslims. This situation, and the exclusive control exercised by the Islamic religious authorities (the Wakf) over the most sacred site in the Jewish tradition for over 3,000 years, cannot be allowed to continue for much longer.

The challenge is how to insure that Jewish rights are restored without triggering another round in the history of violent conflict. Tisha Be'av serves as a poignant reminder of the catastrophic wars and destruction. While this sacred site must be reopened, the process should be managed carefully.

The framework for nonviolent restoration of Jewish rights in Jerusalem was set in 1967, following the war and the end of the destructive Jordanian/Palestinian occupation that began with the 1948 Arab invasion. At that time Israel broke the 2,000 year-old pattern, set following the Roman destruction. Each conqueror and occupier advertised their his by destroying the previous edifice and putting up his own in this holiest of cities at the center of the world.

In 1948, when the Arab Legion conquered Jerusalem, Jewish access to the Western Wall was blocked, the Jewish Quarter and the cemeteries were desecrated, and for almost two decades the armistice agreement pledging free access to religious sites was ignored. Thus the Muslim residents of Jerusalem expected that in 1967, with the triumphant Jewish and Israeli return to ancient Jerusalem, the Dome of the Rock and the Aksa Mosque would be replaced by the Third Temple.

However, instead of adding another round, in 1967, Israel's leaders decided to end this cycle. To symbolize this fundamental break with the past, defense minister Moshe Dayan removed the Israeli flag from the Dome of the Rock and returned control of the Muslim holy sites on the Temple Mount (known to Muslims as the Haram e-Sharif) to the Wakf.

The Jewish religious leadership emphasized the tradition that the Third Temple would descend from the heavens, that its construction was not within the province of earthly activity. The religious status quo was respected, with each group managing its own sites on the basis of mutual respect. Despite this bold gesture, the struggle for exclusivity and control of the sacred sites in Jerusalem did not end. The struggle for reassertion of Islamic domination was expressed in periodic outbreaks of Palestinian violence on the Temple Mount and attacks on Jewish worshipers at the Western Wall below.

In July 2000, at the Camp David "permanent status talks," Yasser Arafat denied any Jewish connection with the Temple Mount and Jerusalem, attempting to rewrite 3,000 years of history. Rejecting all proposals for free access and preservation of these sacred sites, Arafat repeated Islamic claims. This led to the Wakf's closure of the Temple Mount area (symbolically backing Arafat's grand fiction), Ariel Sharon's decision to reassert Jewish rights in September 2000, and Arafat's exploitation of these events to launch a campaign of terrorism.

TO AVOID a similar and potentially more deadly round, we need a different approach to restore Jewish rights on this shared sacred site. On the one hand, the Israeli government is right in blocking efforts by political figures to force their way onto the Temple Mount. On the other hand, the longer the Islamic blockade continues, the more difficult it will be to end it peacefully.

Negotiations to reach an agreement on access would be the best solution, but Arafat's policies in July 2000 demonstrated that this approach is useless.

Instead, in this situation, a strategy based on a combination of public relations

and the application of gradually increasing counter-pressure is required. The closure of the Temple Mount to Jews is both discriminatory and also a potential source of explosive violence. This threat to peace should be publicized around the world, including the UN and the Vatican, even if few non-Jews really care about the substantive issue.

For the sake of peace and human rights, and to prevent a dangerous precedent for members of all other religions, the Palestinian and Israeli Arab groups that use the threat of violence to block Jewish and Christian access should be exposed and subject to intense media pressure.

Peaceful demonstrations and protests should be used to focus attention on the dangerous policy of religious exclusion.

In addition, a policy of "tit-for-tat" (reciprocity) is effective in breaking a negative pattern in situations like this. As long as Jewish rights are impaired or denied, the Palestinian and Israeli Arab Islamists should also find increasing difficulty in operating and visiting their sacred sites. The expanded mosques built in the past few years should remain empty and incomplete, and other measures should be taken quietly but forcefully to transmit this message.

When the Muslim groups protest, a joint approach can be offered easing one blockade will lead to similar responses with respect to the others.

This approach, based on equality and reciprocity, will take time to show results. Resistance can be expected, but it is the best available option. The current closure, which goes back to the darkest days following the destruction, when Jews were humiliated and denied access to the Temple Mount, cannot be allowed to stand. (Jerusalem Post Aug 8)

The writer is director of the program on conflict management and negotiation at Bar-Ilan University.

What the Chechens Have Learned By Evelyn Gordon

On August 1, Russia suffered its eighth suicide bombing in less than three months. This time the target was a hospital; 50 patients and hospital staffers were killed. The previous attacks, whose targets included a religious ceremony and a rock concert, killed over 100 people. All were perpetrated by Chechens.

What makes this sudden spate of attacks surprising is that though Russians and Chechens have fought two wars in the last decade, with the current one now in its fourth year, suicide attacks have until recently been almost unknown in Russia. Why, after 10 years of conflict, have the Chechens suddenly turned to suicide bombings?

The classic answer given by Western apologists is "desperation" an irrational, emotional response to an intolerable situation. But suicide bombings are actually far from irrational. They are an eminently rational response to a world in which such bombings pay handsomely.

The Chechens, after all, are not the only people who claim to be fighting for independence against a stronger nation from which they are ethnically and religiously distinct.

The Palestinians make a similar claim. Indeed, the Palestinian case is far less desperate: Unlike Russia, which has thus far refused to relinquish any part of Chechnya, Israel offered the Palestinians a state on 97 percent of the territory they are demanding; it was the Palestinians who rejected the offer, launching a war instead. Furthermore, the Palestinian death toll after three years of fighting stands at about 2,300, whereas Chechen losses are more than six times higher, at about 15,000.

Yet despite this, it is the Palestinians who have become the world's cause celebre.

There has been an unending stream of UN resolutions condemning Israel, but very few condemning Russia. There have been incessant calls for boycotts against Israel, but no similar calls for boycotting Russia. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is covered daily on the front pages of the world's leading papers and nightly on the world's leading television news shows; the Russian-Chechen conflict is rarely mentioned.

America, the world's only superpower, has declared the establishment of a Palestinian state to be a major foreign policy goal and has joined with the UN, the European Union and Russia to prepare a "road map" leading to this goal; but an independent Chechnya is not a US foreign policy goal, nor is there any international road map for creating such a state.

Under such circumstances how could any semi-intelligent Chechen not wonder: What are the Palestinians doing right that we are doing wrong? One possibility, of course, is that the Palestinians are lucky enough to have Israel for their adversary, while the Chechens are stuck with Russia a difference beyond the Chechens' power to change. But the other major difference is

easily rectified: the fact that the Chechens, until recently, were waging a classic guerrilla war against military targets on their own territory, while the Palestinians' war consisted mainly of terrorist attacks on civilian targets in the heart of Israel.

Since suicide bombings have drawn lip-service condemnations from the entire world, the Chechens might initially have believed this tactic ineffective. But once the road map was drawn up a document that not only exacts no price from the Palestinians for the terrorist war they launched three years ago but even accords them substantial political gains only a fool could avoid the conclusion that terrorism pays. And though in Chechnya, unlike the Palestinian Authority, most people evidently still consider suicide bombings morally repugnant, there are always minorities to whom efficacy is more important than morality.

It is therefore not surprising that the wave of deadly terrorism now afflicting Russia began soon after the road map's publication. The start of this wave the attack on a Moscow theater last October, in which the terrorists threatened to blow themselves up along with 800 hostages came weeks after the first draft of the road map was unveiled.

One of the worst attacks to date the suicide bombing of the government complex in Chechnya's capital, Grozny, which houses the pro-Moscow government the rebels want ousted coincided with the revelation that a "revised" version of the road map differed little from the original version.

And the deadly spate of eight attacks in the last three months coincided directly with the onset of US pressure on Israel to not only begin implementing the map, but also to cave in to numerous additional Palestinian demands that do not even appear in it (prisoner releases, the fence).

Could the timing be coincidental? Only if you believe that actions have no consequences. That, unfortunately, is what most of the world evidently does believe: that it is possible to reward Palestinian terrorism without encouraging other groups to adopt the same tactics.

The Chechens are now trying to teach Russia otherwise. One can only hope that the world will learn its lesson before the terrorism plague spreads even further. (Jerusalem Post Aug 12)

Ariel Sharon Trips on the Road Map By Shmuel Katz

He accepted a document - the road map - made in secret, hostile in purpose, prepared in collusion with some of Israel's worst enemies. It was in 1969, two years after Israel's historic victory in the Six Day War, that foreign minister Abba Eban, in a far-ranging interview with a team of German journalists from Der Spiegel, came out with his reference to Auschwitz. He had been asked "What territory are you prepared to return [to Jordan], and which do you want to retain?"

Eban, one of the foremost doves of his day, replied: "We have said publicly that the map will never be the same as it was on June 4, 1967. The whole issue for us is one of security and of principle; the map of June represents insecurity and danger. I am not exaggerating when I say that for us it contains something of a reminder of Auschwitz."

"For when we recall our situation in June 1967 we shudder to think what would happen to us if we were to be defeated: the situation with the Syrians on the heights and us in the valley, with the Jordanian army in sight of the sea, with the Egyptians in Gaza and their hands at our throats. This is a situation which shall not return to our history." That was 34 years ago. Now a broad, diplomatically coordinated movement led by a so-called Quartet - two governments, the US and Russia, and two international conglomerates, the United Nations and the European Union, volubly supported by Britain - is united in purpose to bring about, inter alia, the compression of Israel into the borders at which Eban shuddered and to which the Jewish people swore we would never return.

Even to the civilian amateur, a survey of Israel's geopolitical neighborhood will demonstrate the combined pan-Arab potential for war on Israel. As for motive - he will need no deep study to discover the persistent unmitigated all-Arab passion for Israel's annihilation.

Ironically enough, a catalyst for the international ganging-up with its road map for a Palestinian state within those borders has been precisely Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who publicly announced that he favored the creation of a Palestinian state. True, the road map was accepted by his party and the Knesset only after he had submitted 14 amendments to it - amendments that have not been published.

There are also numerous difficulties on the Arab side, so that nothing may come of the plan. With Sharon's affirmation, however, the sponsors of the road map can claim that they have been given a green light for its implementation.

How come the Americans forged an alliance with the forces that so fiercely

opposed the US war on Iraq, and that amid much derogatory criticism of President George W. Bush?

As a matter of fact, this is easily understood. The American State Department has approximately the same attitude toward the Arab-Israeli dispute as the other components of the Quartet and its supporters. These all favor the Arabs; and the only adjustment the Americans had to make in order to feel comfortable in their company was to start asserting that the Arab murder campaign against Israel must not be treated as part of The Terror against which the US was pledged to fight.

It emerges that President Bush's much-acclaimed speech of June 24, 2002, that seemed to have all the hallmarks of inspiration for universal resistance to terror, was not to be taken literally.

The proponents of the road map were, moreover, in a great hurry to get started on its implementation. The war with Iraq was still in progress when British Prime Minister Tony Blair urged that the Palestinian conflict be tackled as soon as the war came to an end.

Why the special hurry? There was a reason for that too.

It had become urgent to rescue the Palestinian Arabs. Their intifada had failed in its immediate purpose. The campaign of murder of Jewish men, women, and children, preferably - though not exclusively - in public places where the toll was highest, was designed to bring Israel to its knees. But despite the near-unbearable distress and unprecedentedly severe economic damage, Israel remained unbowed.

The IDF began delivering powerful counter-blows at the terror organizations, and economic life in the Arab community was almost completely disrupted. The whole fabric of Arab organized society was in danger of destruction. The new "prime minister" of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), told an internal conference in mid-July that 75 percent of the PA institutions in Gaza had been destroyed, and in the West Bank - Judea and Samaria - it was 100 percent.

The optimistic statements by some Israeli leaders that Israel had "won" have, however, been very premature. Yasser Arafat, who had planned the intifada for half a year before it broke out, knew perfectly well that the Jewish response would be hard; consequently he devoted much effort to bringing about international intervention. He knew from experience with the US that intervention would dictate a moral equivalence to "both sides," and then would come down on Israel with demands for concessions and withdrawals.

Arafat was not mistaken. It was only the Iraq war that delayed the coming of the intervention: the road map.

There is a precedent to the road map phenomenon. In the Yom Kippur War Israel had turned the tables on the Egyptian aggressor. It was on the brink of a tremendous victory. Its armies stood poised at the gates of both Cairo and Damascus. Secretary of state Henry Kissinger, engaged in an anxious courtship of Egypt, rushed to Moscow, where it was agreed that they would ask the UN to declare an immediate cease-fire. A stunned Israel government obeyed the order.

From that moment, Kissinger launched a campaign of pressure - including threats of Soviet military intervention (which he himself had invented) - to bring about a series of withdrawals that finally landed Israel even beyond the lines at which it had been attacked by Egypt.

Golda Meir and defense minister Moshe Dayan (who a year later publicly described how Kissinger had bluffed him) at least had the excuse of the tensions of a war situation and their inability to judge, under pressure, how serious the threats of America's master-manipulator - Kissinger - were. No such excuse is available to Sharon for accepting a document made in secret, hostile in purpose, prepared in collusion with some of Israel's worst enemies.

In rejecting such cavalier treatment Sharon would have gained the support and respect of most Americans. Moreover, Israel is now experiencing the most solid Congressional support it has ever had. Instead Israel has been maneuvered into an Oslo-like position. It is Israel that is being called upon to make concessions.

As for the Arabs, who were to start the whole road map process by putting an end to the terror, we are told that Abu Mazen is not strong enough to disarm and dismantle the terror groups. He needs "strengthening." This is exactly what we were told about Arafat at Oslo: He did not have the strength to deal with terrorist groups; so we gave him rifles - a most valuable contribution to his intifada.

Consequently, Israel is being called upon to throw Jews out of settlements and most emphatically to release Palestinian prisoners. Having already released some hundreds, it is now under greater pressure to release more and more (and thus provide manpower for the next intifada). Indeed,

Israel's concessions are the only subject under serious discussion.

Meanwhile, Hamas and Islamic Jihad leaders declare repeatedly that they have no intention of giving up their arms. They intend, they say, to use them until Israel is destroyed.

And Arafat remains in his compound at Ramallah, laughing his head off at the stupid Israelis - who are unable to learn, even from 55 years of experience, that the Arabs do not intend to make peace with a living Israel.

The writer, a co-founder with Menachem Begin of the Herut Party and member of the first Knesset, is a biographer and essayist. (Jerusalem Post Aug 7)

America's Stunning Lack of Judgment By Michael Freund

Standing before the Washington press corps on Monday, US State Department Spokesman Philip Reeker set a new departmental record for moral cowardice. Speaking just 24 hours after Hizbullah terrorists killed an Israeli teenager by firing indiscriminately across the Lebanese border, Reeker could not bring himself to explicitly condemn this wanton act of murder.

Instead, in remarks that dare I say it reeked of moral relativism, Reeker stressed it was incumbent upon all parties, Israel included, not to inflame tensions in the region.

"We have been in contact with the Israelis," he said, "and with the other parties, with Lebanon and Syria, urging them to exercise maximum restraint in order to avoid further escalation."

Huh? Apparently, even some of the reporters present could not quite understand the logic of putting Hizbullah child-killers and their Syrian paymasters in the same category as Israeli soldiers defending their country.

According to the official transcript of the press briefing, one of the journalists then asked Reeker, "Phil, the call for maximum restraint last week, and I presume again today, applied solely to Lebanon and Syria, correct? There was no effort to call on Israel to exercise any kind of restraint in retaliating for these attacks?"

Reeker's reply: The call for restraint applied to "all countries."

Perhaps still finding it somewhat hard to digest, another questioner enquired, "Okay, so just to make sure. 'The parties' includes Israel, as well?" Reeker's response: "Right. We have been in touch with everybody there."

Presumably the reason behind the State Department's current bout of displeasure with Israel is that the Jewish state dared to retaliate, however mildly, for this latest Hizbullah outrage.

The fact that Israel's response was limited to bombing the specific cannon used by the terrorists in their assault and did not include a wider array of targets, does not appear to count for much with either Reeker or his boss, Secretary of State Colin Powell. The murder of a Jewish child and the destruction of the cannon that killed him, are apparently viewed with equal alarm in the halls of Foggy Bottom.

Equally astonishing, though, was Reeker's announcement that in the wake of the Hizbullah attack Powell himself had called Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom to convey the need for "restraint." And yet when it came to getting a similar message across to the Syrians and the Lebanese, the secretary of state did not bother to lift the receiver and dial his counterparts.

Instead, as Reeker put it, the message was conveyed to them "through our standard diplomatic channels" clearly implying that in Israel's case nonstandard channels had to be used, i.e. a phone call from Powell.

Essentially, the State Department was making it clear that the party most in need of restraint was you guessed it Israel.

To be fair, Reeker did call in his remarks for Syria and Lebanon to end their support for Hizbullah, and he did label the group a "terrorist organization." But his failure to distinguish between the bad guys and the good guys, and his grouping of Israel in the same league with Syria's thuggish regime, reveals a stunning lack of judgment. In the post-September 11 world it also demonstrates a remarkable level of hypocrisy.

There is no longer any excuse for waffling on the issue of terror, and certainly not when it comes from the chief spokesman of the State Department.

As Winston Churchill once told the House of Commons, "I decline utterly to be impartial between the fire brigade and the fire." In this case the US should bear in mind the difference between the arsonists (Syria and Lebanon) and the fireman (Israel).

Instead of offering up the standard diplomatic blather about "all parties" showing restraint, here's what Reeker could have said: "The United States condemns Hizbullah's senseless murder of an Israeli youth and demands that the Syrian and Lebanese governments act immediately to disarm and disband this terrorist group. In addition, the United States recognizes Israel's fundamental right to defend itself, its citizens, and its territory, which is a central principle underlying the global war on terror."

Reeker's failure to draw a moral line in the sand, however, is far more than just a question of articulating American policy. It is also a matter of life and death. By muddying the waters, by blurring the line between Hizbullah's assault and Israel's response, the State Department is essentially delegitimizing Israel's efforts to protect itself, making it all the more difficult for Israeli decision-makers to pursue such a course.

That is precisely what the terrorists are hoping for because it weakens Israel's ability and will to strike back at them, allowing them to continue to kill innocent civilians with impunity.

Taken together with Powell's recent suggestion that Israel might face sanctions over the building of a fence to keep out Palestinian terrorists, it is hard to escape the feeling that there is a sinister pattern at work here, one in which the State Department would deny Israel the right to act for its own self-preservation.

If defensive measures, such as building a fence, and offensive measures, such as taking out terrorist positions, are not legitimate, how exactly do they expect Israel to protect itself? Or, to put it even more bluntly: By decrying Israel's attempts to defend itself, the State Department is figuratively hanging up a sign at the entrance to the Middle East that reads, "Jews are fair game."

If that isn't an act of moral cowardice, what is?

The writer served as deputy director of Communications & Policy Planning in the Prime Minister's Office. (Jerusalem Post Aug 13)

Bombing and Revenge The Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs

Today a reporter came and asked whether the homicide bombings in Israel would "derail the Road Map" or whether "the process would continue." He wanted to know how JINSA viewed the Palestinian claim that the bombings were "revenge" for the death of "Hamas bomb makers" in Nablus, and whether the bombings proved Israel's concept of a "security wall" a failure. It's not altogether his fault; he was just repeating what he heard. Secretary Powell did say today, "We will continue to move forward on the road map ... We will not be stopped by this kind of violence."

But two Israelis have been stopped, permanently, so the fallacies here require exposition.

1) The so-called "cease fire" has led to some diminution in the level of violence against Jews--from 50 or more security "incidents" a day to somewhere around 18-20, according to IDF sources. That includes people being stabbed, blown up and shot. In real terms though, this cease-fire exists because the IDF has been largely successful in stopping terrorists, not because terrorists have stopped trying.

2) The Road Map sets out a variety of requirements for the Palestinians, including not only security control and disarmament of terrorists, but also democratic reform. The summary execution in the street of yet another Palestinian accused of "collaborating" with Israel is one sign that a process cannot continue that has not yet begun.

3) And what about the "wall"? The security fence is not a violation of the Road Map; it isn't mentioned. The fence is a reaction to Israeli citizens demanding that their government protect them from terrorists. If Abu Mazen would meet the security requirements of the Road Map, if he would dismantle the terrorist organizations, there would be no wall. This is not chickens and eggs--more than 800 Israelis had already died before the fence became an issue.

4) The "revenge theory" is just disgusting; who calls a 42-year-old father doing his grocery shopping a legitimate target? And here, anyhow, is the rest of that story. Last week, Israel sent soldiers to Nablus to arrest a wanted man. Met with shots coming from the building, the IDF returned fire--but the building housed a bomb factory, which blew up killing four Palestinians.

But don't discount the utility of revenge; it may yet save the "process."

Two Israelis were killed today, but so were two underage Palestinian boys--pushed by their elders into murder and death. Yusra Qteishat demands revenge. According to the news, the mother of bomber Islam Qteishat rejected those who came to call her son a "martyr" and screamed, "I'll kill whoever dispatched my son." To the extent that Palestinian mothers and fathers reject the abduction and brainwashing of their children; to the extent that they make the perpetrators of death pay; to the extent that they turn their anger on Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Fatah and Arafat, hope lives. (JINSA Aug 12)
