

From the PA Media...

PA Doesn't Call Attack "Terror", VOP Plays Cheerful Music

IMRA asked Dr. Michael Widlanski, an expert in the Arab media and a lecturer at the Rothberg School of the Hebrew University, to comment on the reaction of the PA to the bus bombing yesterday in Jerusalem. The following are his observations:

If the Palestinian Authority, or as they term themselves, the Palestinian leadership, had any intention to convey a message of real condemnation of these attacks they would call them attacks.

The bombing of the bus yesterday is universally termed in the Palestinian press "amaliyya al Quds" - "the Jerusalem operation", rather than as an "attack" or a "terroristic attack". By the way, the "peace process" is also termed the "peace operation" by the Palestinian media.

The "condemnation" broadcast by Voice of Palestine radio never condemned the perpetrators. Interestingly, the reports all act as if the identity of the attacker is not known.

It should also be noted that the attack and the "condemnation" of the attack did not open their news. They opened their news broadcast with reports about the "horrible" things Israelis are doing. - for example the "racist fence". And this morning the top story is Israelis "invading" the Temple Mount.

Voice of Palestine also ran very cheerful music after the bus attack - as they did after the recent Rosh Ha'ayin/Ariel attacks. Unusually light music - as they would play on a holiday.

Al Quds also ran an interesting editorial cartoon - two colored star bursts going off before cameras labeled Baghdad and Jerusalem. (IMRA Aug 20)

Commentary...

Baghdad and Jerusalem Jerusalem Post Editorial

Why was the United Nations headquarters in Iraq, of all places, bombed yesterday? Well, why did a suicide bomber blow himself up inside a crowded Jerusalem bus last night? That the first question is a mystery to many while the second is seen to be too obvious to ask illustrates both how the war against terrorism is misunderstood and how it must be fought.

The UN is not supposed to have enemies. Who could be against its humanitarian mission, or as its slain representative, Sergio Vieira de Mello, expressed its goal, "to make sure that the interests of the Iraqi people come first?"

Actually, one can come up with plenty of reasons why Ba'athist remnants or the terrorist internationale that has gathered in Iraq would target the UN the years of UN sanctions against Iraq, the tentative acceptance by the UN of Iraq's new Governing Council, or the possibility of UN forces assisting the US in stabilizing Iraq.

But all this speculation misses the point, just as it does when the United States or Israel is attacked. The objective of the terrorists is to make us think what we have done wrong, to wonder what we have done to provoke such a heinous crime. And the answer is always the same. It is not what we, the US, or the UN has done wrong, but who we are and what we have done right.

There are two simple lessons from the suicide bombings yesterday in Baghdad and Jerusalem: No one is safe and there is no turning back. Suicide terrorism is the plague of this century. It cannot be escaped, denied, or appeased. It must be defeated.

So far, the terrorists have successfully played divide and conquer. They have first succeeded in convincing the world that terrorism against Israel, while condemnable, is somehow understandable, and that it can be addressed by

ISRAEL NEWS

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Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

delivering on supposed "root causes," such as the call for a Palestinian state. They have also lulled the world into thinking that only those who stand up to them, such as the US and Israel, will be attacked, while those who are willing to resist the war against terrorism will be spared.

Terrorism will be beaten when these twin myths are dispelled. So long as the terrorists see that the world is afraid to take Israel's side against them, why

should they stop? And so long as key European democracies, such as France, will not back concerted action against terrorism-supporting countries in the UN Security Council, why should countries like Iran and Syria change their stripes? We know that Iran, Syria, or both actively support Hizbullah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Fatah, all of which are charter members in the global fraternity of suicide bombers. Without knowing yet who is responsible, we can be sure that the same two countries were either directly behind or not so quietly cheering for the terrorists who slaughtered some of the UN's finest international civil servants in Baghdad.

All it takes is three, perhaps four countries the US, Britain, France, and Germany to agree for the war against terrorism to finally become effectively universal and serious. When France joined the US and Britain to impose stiff sanctions against Libya in the Security Council (because the Libyans had downed both an American and a French airliner), Libya was forced to sharply change its behavior, cough up its agents, admit responsibility, and pay \$2.7 billion in damages. Because there is no similar consensus regarding Iraq and Syria, those two countries continue to literally get away with murder.

Now is a time for unity and determination. The UN must prove that it cannot be bowed or beaten. The diplomats who died were indeed on the side of the Iraqi people, and their desire for freedom. The UN must now redouble its support for a successful transition to democracy and independence in Iraq.

In addition, however, the world must understand that it cannot allow suicide terrorism to succeed anywhere if it is to be beaten everywhere. The Security Council, as it should have, leapt to condemn the Baghdad bombing as a "terrorist criminal attack." If that body had leapt to condemn and take concerted action against every such attack against Israel, those attacks would have ended long ago. Terrorism can and will be beaten, but only when the terrorists and the countries that back them face a united front of free nations determined to give them no quarter. (Jerusalem Post Aug 20)

Tunnel Vision By Jonathan Schanzer

Bad things are happening underground in the Gaza Strip.

With so much recent focus on the West Bank "separation fence," the issue that prompted Israel to build a barrier in the first place has been obscured. But as this week's suicide bombings show, the threat of continued Palestinian terror lingers. And in some cases, that threat literally lingers just beneath the surface.

For a decade now, the arsenals of Palestinian terror groups have been armed and replenished by way of short smuggling tunnels that stretch across Egypt's border with the Gaza Strip. It is this Palestinian-made labyrinth, more than the Israeli-made fence, that poses a long-term threat to Middle East peace.

To be sure, this issue is not new. After the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993, it was reported that the Palestinians had built a network of tunnels for smuggling black market items like cigarettes and drugs, as well as weaponry, explosives, and even people from Egypt to Israel.

In some cases, the tunnels are elaborate; media reports indicate that some have wood paneling, electricity, lighting systems, air ducts, communications equipment, rails, wagons--even elevators. Building them takes less than three months and costs up to \$10,000. The better ones are burrowed well beneath the surface--sometimes more than 50 feet--so as to evade sonar detection by the Israeli engineer corps.

Shockingly, many of the tunnels lead into the homes of Palestinians in Gaza, concealed beneath bedrooms, living rooms, and bathrooms. On October

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12, 2001, the Israeli Defense Forces discovered a tunnel that actually led to a child's bedroom. Indeed, at the risk of putting loved ones in danger of an Israeli bulldozer raid, Gazans operate their tunnels because they are a lucrative source of income. Smuggling a person or an AK-47 rifle can yield \$1,000.

According to one Israeli spokesman, the Palestinians have made "hundreds" of tunnels in recent years. Indeed, more than twenty have been found and destroyed in 2003. Nonetheless, thousands of weapons and much ammunition have passed through, including heavy machine guns, armor piercing weapons, rocket-propelled grenades and, according to a July 30, 2000 Sunday Telegraph report, possibly even SAM-7 antiaircraft missiles. According to the Jerusalem Post, "raw materials necessary to build rockets" are often smuggled below ground to Gaza. Worse still, high explosives for suicide bombings have passed through these caverns.

Some of the tunnels are meant for more than smuggling: In one report, Israeli engineers expressed concerns that the tunnels would be used to transport captured Israeli soldiers. Tunnels can also be used for complicated attacks against Israeli military targets. In September 2001, an explosion in a tunnel along the Egypt-Gaza border injured three Israeli soldiers.

According to Israeli sources, there are always three or four tunnels operational at any one time. They are extremely hard to find without good intelligence, and when soldiers work to locate and destroy the tunnels, they often come under sniper fire.

Meanwhile, Egypt, which claims to be working feverishly to maintain the Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire, is not without blame. After all, that's where the weapons are coming from.

According to Israeli defense minister Shaul Mofaz, the Egyptians "aren't making a 100 percent effort to prevent the smuggling of weapons through the tunnels." Another military official calls Egypt a "central oxygen supply line" for smuggling weapons. According to recent reports, the tunnels coming from Gaza actually lead to Egyptian military guard posts.

Of course the Egyptian government denies this. President Hosni Mubarak insists that Cairo "will not allow such activities, and if we found smuggled weapons, we would confiscate them." Indeed, the Egyptians have blown up a number of tunnels in recent years. But even so, the problem persists. Cairo is not doing enough. And it's probably a matter of will.

The fence? Sure, it's a source of contention. But the Israelis wouldn't want it so badly were it not for the continued importing of weapons that lead to suicide bombings. The one-sided focus on the West Bank fence is nothing but tunnel vision. (Weekly Standard Aug 14)

The writer is a Soref Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

The BBC's Crooked Time-Line By Andrea Levin

It's no secret the BBC has an Israel problem. News reports frequently berate Israel for failing to satisfy Palestinian demands, whether regarding military actions or curfews or prisoners, while Israel's concerns and vulnerabilities are given scant attention, if any.

The prevalence of such one-sided treatment no doubt springs in part from fundamentally skewed views of Middle East history into which daily events are fit. One window on BBC thinking can be found on the network's website, in its permanent background articles, posted there ostensibly to add context to daily reports.

A time-line entitled "A History of Conflict" captures the pervasive endorsement of Arab grievance and Zionist culpability. The introduction explains: "For the Palestinians the last 100 years have brought colonisation, expulsion and military occupation, followed by a long and difficult search for self-determination and for coexistence..."

Among the many tendentious assertions in that single sentence is the curious statement that Palestinians have been engaged in a "difficult search" for "coexistence" with Israel. Difficult, indeed, it has been, when classrooms are filled with maps of Palestine supplanting Israel and children are taught that it is both their right and duty to pursue that country's annihilation, and that they should seek paradise in the honorable act of killing as many Jews as possible. Yet there is no hint in the time-line of the impact of such schooling, or of clerics exhorting the masses to murder, or of Yasir Arafat calling for Jihad.

Sections on the modern era emphasize the "discontent" of Arabs at the arrival of the Zionists. Such "Arab discontent" is cited as the cause of recurring riots in the 1920s and 1930s, without mention of Haj Amin al-Husseini and his key role in fueling propaganda and violence against the Jews. Britain's pliant policy toward the Arabs, and indulgence of both their violence and their demands to penalize the Zionists are, unsurprisingly, omitted.

In the BBC rendition, Arabs are also indigenous to the area, in contrast to Jews. Accordingly, no reference is found to the large immigration of Arabs from across the Middle East to Palestine during the Mandate years. A description of the 1947 UN partition plan avers "the territory was plagued with chronic unrest pitting native Arabs against Jewish immigrants."

To cast Arabs as victims in the Six Day War, all mention of the closure of the Straits of Tiran and the massing of scores of thousands of Egyptian and Syrian troops and tanks is omitted, along with the calls for the destruction of Israel. Instead, the reader is told of "mounting tensions" of unidentified origin that "culminated" in "hostilities."

But little can top BBC's rationalizing of Arab aggression in the Yom Kippur War: "Unable to regain the territory they had lost in 1967 by diplomatic means, Egypt and Syria launched major offensives against Israel on the Jewish festival of the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. The clashes are also known as the Ramadan War." Evidently BBC considers Arab rejectionism, embodied in the "three no's" of Khartoum issued in August 1967 - no recognition, no negotiation and no peace with Israel - a form of "diplomatic" effort.

The same disregard for historical fact is apparent in a remarkable statement under the section dealing with Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. The killing of several hundred Palestinians at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camp by Christian Phalangists is said to be "one of the worst atrocities of nearly a century of conflict in the Middle East." The Sabra and Shatila massacre occurred just months after Hafez Assad's slaughter of upwards of 38,000 Syrians in the city of Hama. Still more bloody, the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s took hundreds of thousands of lives, and during these same years, two hundred thousand Kurds were annihilated by Saddam Hussein.

One wonders, what specifically BBC's yardstick is for "worst atrocities"? The phrase is certainly not applied to the terrorist campaigns fomented and underwritten by Yasser Arafat. His seminal role in modern terrorism is hidden in language referring to involvement in "a series of attacks on Israeli and other targets." The only such "attack" noted is that at the 1972 Olympics, which killed 11 Israeli athletes. Rather, Arafat and the Palestinians are cast generally as resistance fighters on the road to peace.

Beyond these and innumerable other serious distortions in the time-line section, there are multiple additional false and misleading articles for Web visitors. One is a "Q & A" piece about the road map. In no part of the article does the word "terror" appear to indicate the central requirement that Palestinian violence be halted. Yet the road map itself uses some form of the word "terror" 10 times, including calling on Palestinians to confiscate illegal weapons and dismantle the terrorist infrastructure.

The BBC is now caught up in a struggle with the British government concerning the network's distortion of events in Iraq, biased attacks on British policy and its possible role in driving a British weapons expert to suicide. Perhaps the British government will now rethink the future of the propagandistic network it has created. (Jerusalem Post Aug 19)

The writer is Executive Director of CAMERA, Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America.

Are US Jewish Leaders Wrong Again? By Morton A. Klein

When the Oslo Accords collapsed three years ago numerous American Jewish leaders publicly admitted that they had been wrong all along. They were wrong to believe the Palestinian Arabs wanted peace, wrong to ignore Arab violations of the accords, and wrong to sit by silently as the US pressured Israel to make more one-sided concessions. Disillusioned Jewish leaders said things in late 2000 and early 2001 that make for fascinating reading today.

The American Jewish Congress took out a full-page ad in The New York Times (November 12, 2000) headlined: "It takes a big organization to admit it was wrong." The text read, in part: "We were persuaded that despite [Arafat's] history of terrorism he had chosen the path to peace. Perhaps we wanted to be persuaded."

Then-president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations Rabbi Eric Yoffie said in his keynote address to the Reform movement's convention on June 1, 2001: "I have been wrong, and I believe our Reform movement has been wrong about a number of things. We misjudged Palestinian intentions and misread Palestinian society... We did not pay nearly enough attention to the culture of hatred created and nourished by Palestinian leaders... the growing use of anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi language in the Palestinian media."

Rabbi Martin Weiner, president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, told the same convention: "Many of us who have supported the Oslo process for the last decade must admit to ourselves that the Palestinians really do not want peace..." (The Jerusalem Post, March 7, 2002) His colleague Rabbi Amiel Hirsch, director of the Association of Reform Zionists of America, was blunt: "I think there is reason to reevaluate the underlying thesis of Oslo." (Forward, October 13, 2000)

Leonard Cole, chairman of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, said that in order for there to be peace there would have to be "a demonstrated effort by the Palestinians by way of what they teach their children, by way of the textbooks, the maps that are shown, that shows that they too are partners

[for peace]." (The Jerusalem Post, October 27, 2000)

YET, INCREDIBLY, many Jewish leaders are now making the exact same mistake about Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) that they made about Yasser Arafat. And now it's even worse because while Arafat publicly made commitments but did not fulfill them, Abu Mazen says openly, "I have no intention to dismantle Hamas and Islamic Jihad" and declares that the PA police "will not go house to house in search of weapons."

Perhaps in another year or two a major Jewish organization will take out yet another ad headlined "It takes a big organization to admit it was wrong." But what in the meantime? How many more one-sided concessions will be squeezed out of Israel? How many more terrorists will Israel be pressured into setting free?

In 1993 Arafat insisted that he wanted to live in peace with Israel. Just like Abu Mazen says today. When he signed the Oslo Accords, Arafat pledged to stop all violence against Israel and, for a time, there was indeed a reduction in terrorist attacks. Just as Abu Mazen is doing today.

Arafat's words were pleasant-sounding, like Abu Mazen's. People "wanted to be persuaded," as the AJCongress newspaper ad put it. Today, too, people want to be persuaded.

But to avoid repeating the mistakes of the Oslo years we need to compare Abu Mazen's words to Abu Mazen's deeds.

Just like Arafat, Abu Mazen is required (in this case, by the road map) to confiscate terrorists' weapons. And just like Arafat, he refuses to confiscate them.

Just like Arafat, Abu Mazen is required to "dismantle the terrorists' infrastructure." And just like Arafat, he refuses to dismantle them. Just like Arafat, Abu Mazen is required to stop the vicious anti-Jewish and anti-Israel incitement that appears every day in the official PA media, school books, speeches, and religious sermons. And just like Arafat, he refuses to stop it.

Just like Arafat, Abu Mazen is required to treat Hamas and Islamic Jihad as enemies. And just like Arafat, he demands that Israel free their imprisoned members and calls them "heroes" and "martyrs." Ironically, while many Jewish leaders are championing Abu Mazen as the moderate alternative to Arafat, Abu Mazen himself makes it clear that he is as loyal to Arafat as ever.

The writer is national president, Zionist Organization of America.
(Jerusalem Post Aug 16)

The Refugee Curse By Daniel Pipes

Here's a puzzle: How do Palestinian refugees differ from the other 135 million 20th-century refugees?

Answer: In every other instance, the pain of dispossession, statelessness, and poverty has diminished over time. Refugees eventually either resettled, returned home, or died. Their children whether living in South Korea, Vietnam, Pakistan, Israel, Turkey, Germany or America then shed their refugee status and joined the mainstream.

Not so the Palestinians. For them, refugee status continues from one generation to the next, creating an ever-larger pool of anguish and discontent.

Several factors explain this anomaly, but one key component of all things is the United Nations' bureaucratic structure. It contains two organizations focused on refugee affairs, each with its own definition of "refugee."

The UN High Commission for Refugees applies the term "refugee" worldwide to someone who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted... is outside the country of his nationality." Being outside the country of his nationality implies that descendants of refugees are not refugees. Cubans who flee the Castro regime are refugees, but not so their Florida-born children, who lack Cuban nationality. Afghans who flee their homeland are refugees, but not their Iranian-born children. And so on.

The UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), an organization set up uniquely for Palestinian refugees in 1949, defines Palestinian refugees differently from all other refugees. They are persons who lived in Palestine "between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict." Especially important is that UNRWA extends refugee status to "the descendants of persons who became refugees in 1948." It even considers the children of just one Palestinian refugee parent to be refugees.

The High Commission's definition causes refugee populations to vanish over time; UNRWA's causes them to expand without limit.

Let's apply each definition to the Palestinian refugees of 1948, who by the UN's (inflated) statistics numbered 726,000. (Scholarly estimates of the number range between 420,000 to 539,000.) The High Commission definition would restrict refugee status to those of the 726,000 yet alive. According to a demographer, about 200,000 of those 1948 refugees remain living today.

UNRWA includes the refugees' children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as well as Palestinians who left their homes in 1967, all of whom add up to 4.25 million refugees.

The 200,000 refugees by the global definition make up less than 5 percent of the 4.25 million by the UNRWA definition. By international standards those other 95 percent are not refugees at all. By falsely attaching refugee status to these Palestinians who never fled anywhere, UNRWA condemns a creative and entrepreneurial people to lives of exclusion, self-pity and nihilism. The policies of Arab governments then make things worse by keeping Palestinians locked in an amber-like refugee status. In Lebanon, for instance, the 400,000 stateless Palestinians are not allowed to attend public school, own property or even improve their housing stock.

It's high time to help these generations of non-refugees escape refugee status so they can become citizens, assume self-responsibility and build for the future. Best for them would be for UNRWA to close its doors and the UN High Commission to absorb the dwindling number of true Palestinian refugees.

That will only happen if the US government recognizes UNRWA's role in perpetuating Palestinian misery. In a misguided spirit of "deep commitment to the welfare of Palestinian refugees," Washington currently provides 40 percent of UNRWA's \$306 million annual budget; it should be zeroed out.

Fortunately, the US Congress is waking up. Chris Smith, a Republican on the House International Relations Committee, recently called for expanding the General Accounting Office's investigation into US funding for UNRWA.

Tom Lantos, the ranking Democratic member on that same committee, goes further. Criticizing the "privileged and prolonged manner" of dealing with Palestinian refugees, he calls for shuttering UNRWA and transferring its responsibilities to the High Commission.

Other Western governments should join with Washington to solve the Palestinian refugee problem by withholding authorization for UNRWA when it next comes up for renewal in June 2005.

Now is the time to lay the groundwork to eliminate this malign institution, its mischievous definition, and its monstrous works.

The writer is the director of the Middle East Forum. (Jerusalem Post Aug 20)

Do Gooders on the Moral High Ground By Sarah Honig

As the world proletarian revolution expired with a whimper, well-heeled Western radicals discovered the Third World - downtrodden, but, as stylish mythology would have it, spiritually superior.

The sufferings of the Jewish people, it goes without saying, never aroused significant sympathy. Far from it. As ever, Jews constituted fashionable foes, whereas pro-Arab sentiments, especially under the Palestinian label, became de rigueur. Trendy Israeli left-wingers eagerly jumped at the opportunity of luxuriating in the ambiance of European enlightenment and winning coveted approval and acceptance.

If their own country is denigrated as uncool and oppressive, then local leftists must dissociate themselves from its cause as vociferously and militantly as can be, lest they be suspected of allegiance to the forces of darkness.

Thus originated Israel's unique brand of post-modern universalism. It evinces no qualms about jeopardizing the self-determination of the ancient Jewish people, while at the same time espousing the ideal of self-determination for Palestinians, whose nationhood is a recent invention cynically calculated to counterbalance renascent Jewish national independence.

The unadorned bottom line is that for these Israeli progressives, who freely avail themselves of the benefits of Jewish tolerance and democracy, anything that basically furthers the interests of the Jewish state, and steels it against unmitigated assaults, is anathema.

Hence their heart-rendering outcry against legislation which curbs burgeoning Arab migration into the Jewish state under the guise of family reunions - another of the blessings showered upon us by the Oslo process.

During the Oslo decade, over 200,000 Arabs moved willy-nilly into Israel.

The "right of return" is unofficially and furtively being implemented under our very noses. This, coupled with an incredible birthrate and inordinately generous welfare allotments, promises to overrun even Green-Line Israel with Arabs and tip the demographic scales against the Jews. Such danger hardly flusters champions of "a state of all its citizens" as distinct from those who benightedly cling to outmoded aspirations for a Jewish state. Belated attempts to defend that state against encroaching conquest are an obvious target for sanctimonious denunciations.

It was hardly surprising that an enraged Yossi Sarid fumed against what he called "racism," resorting to inflammatory vocabulary that invites international pressure. It was only to be expected that guardians of our morality would seek redress from the Supreme Court, where Jewish survival often takes a back seat to universalist niceties.

It's no wonder so many crocodile tears were shed for mixed Israeli-Arab

and Palestinian-Arab couples, who'll have to set up households east of the Green Line. Conjugal bliss is apparently only possible on Israel's turf.

THOUGH THE European Union lodged a formal complaint against the new law, the problem isn't uniquely Israeli. According to demographic predictions, Copenhagen will have a Muslim majority in 30 years - a fact which impelled the Danes to get tougher with nuptial immigration. The danger in our case is existential and of incomparable severity.

Palestinians, moreover, want their territory judenrein. This is what motivates their anti-settlement campaign, in which foolish Jews collaborate so carelessly.

The current Palestinian war against the settlements is the direct heir to their war on aliya in the midst of the Holocaust. Among his other activities, then Palestinian leader Haj Amin el-Husseini scuttled a plan to rescue 10,000 Jewish children from Hitler's gas chambers on the grounds that "little Jews grow to become big Jews."

So much for the moral high ground.

Let there be no mistake. We're still fighting the same fight for our continued existence. The bare, if politically incorrect truth is that Israelis who give succor to the Arab anti-Jewish battle, in whatever mutating form, cross the lines. Those who plan to revive the Voice of Peace from Ramallah do so not only figuratively. It's not for nothing that they are welcomed precisely where two IDF reservists were hideously lynched.

It serves Palestinian interests to tolerate gullible Jews intent on helping them entice Israeli youths with inane music laced with soft-sell propaganda.

It's the same insidious method used by Californian Iva Toguri, who came to be identified as Tokyo Rose and spent 10 years in an American prison for her pro-Japanese World War II broadcasts to American troops. The difference, though, is that she was trapped in Japan at the war's outset and was coerced to speak for the enemy, unlike Brooklyn-born William Joyce, better known as Lord Haw-Haw, who was executed by the British for his pro-German wartime broadcasts, with which he wholeheartedly identified. In both cases, the message was often one of peace (as the Axis envisioned it).

But there will be no horrific consequences in the case of Israelis promoting a vision of peace from Ramallah, sanctioned by Arab nationalists and compatible with their aims. The irony of our existence is that the very Israel so avidly disparaged as racist is actually self-destructively liberal.

Not a hint of criticism was heard in any of our media reports about the projected Ramallah radio venture. Its initiators were, in fact, feted as cultural near-heroes. The accolades accorded them were, needless to stress, in stark contrast to denigrating portrayals of Arutz 7 as the vilest incarnation of wireless piracy.

The voice of Israeli patriotism is condemned, while commendation is bestowed on the lulling and tempting Siren song of implacable enemies masquerading as peace partners. Israeli patriots are shunned and maligned, while the Palestinians' Jewish comrades are popularized.

The latter, incidentally, are financed by (who else?) the EU, which shares the Israeli Left's discomfort with the Jewish state and its "sinful" birth.

Our homemade radicals emulate their European soulmates' desire to atone for the West's transgressions by beating Jewish breasts. Posing before History's mirror, they cast themselves in the role of altruistic do-gooders, suitably ashamed of their country and seeking to cleanse themselves of its collective guilt.

They don't hate themselves, only their nation. Having identified the Palestinian cause with absolute virtue, they have no option but to single out Israel as absolute villain. These high-minded seekers of universalist justice aren't exceedingly likely to deem their own nation worthy of compassion and understanding, even if it again becomes the victim.

Don't underestimate their penchant for blaming the Jews for Jewish misfortunes. (Jerusalem Post Aug 18)

Evangelical Christians, Our New Allies By Isi Leibler

Scarcely a day goes by without a fresh media story in appreciation of our new friends, the Evangelical Christians. Only a few years ago many of us would have been appalled at the prospect of developing warm ties with those we then considered at best eccentrics and more likely anti-Semites obsessed with a fanatical urge to convert us. Indeed, until very recently Binyamin Netanyahu and other politicians who maintained relations with them were subject to ridicule and abuse.

Now it has suddenly dawned on us that there are probably 60 million Evangelical Christians in the United States and that they represent our staunchest supporters and friends. In fact, in recent years concern and devotion for Israel have become one of their highest priorities.

Evangelicals also represent the backbone of the conservative wing of the Republican Party and the central core of support for President George W. Bush. If a significant number of them become sufficiently disillusioned to abstain from voting, it could cost Bush the election.

It is thus no coincidence that the Congressional House Majority leader, Tom

DeLay, a Texas Republican described in the New York Times as a leader of the Christian Zionist Movement, who recently visited Israel, is a committed Evangelical Christian.

Evangelicals' passionate support for a Jewish state also extends beyond the political domain. In what can only be described as surrealistic, one of their offshoots, the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, in addition to donating substantial sums for welfare causes in Israel recently contributed the entire \$2 million required by Nefesh B'Nefesh to provide loans and grants for 1,000 American Jews who made aliya this year.

Over the past year I have become increasingly moved by the consistent flow of encouraging letters I receive from Christians who display such warm support for our position that I have occasionally wished some of our leaders could convey similar passion when they relate to our rights.

This was exemplified by the absolutely marvelous speech Tom DeLay gave at the Knesset during his recent visit.

A few weeks ago I met Gary Bauer, a former US presidential candidate and one of the principal Evangelical leaders. It is symptomatic of the new political alliances that Bauer's visit to Israel was organized by Michael Landau, a prominent New York Aguda-inclined businessman who is also a leading fundraiser for DeLay.

IT WAS clear from our discussions that we will always have differences, major differences. But these people's faith in Israel is uncomplicated, based on religious belief derived from the Bible. And we share a Judeo-Christian heritage that rejects the post-modernism which today prevails throughout so much of the world. It enables us to differentiate between good and evil.

I found it refreshing to discuss the Middle East in a context where terms like justice and injustice and tyranny and freedom are not just political buzz words but meaningful ethical concepts.

Bauer expressed what many Israelis think. He admires and respects President Bush, but cautioned that Israelis would be making a terrible mistake if they took the administration's support for Israel for granted. He was pessimistic about the road map and observed that there were already signs of a drift back to the pre-September 11 State Department approach, which amounted to moral equivalency.

He understood our desperate desire to avoid shouldering the blame should the president's efforts to bring peace to the region founder. But he warned that the window of opportunity was closing and that we faced a potential disaster if we assumed an Oslo-like demeanor and equivocated in our demand that the terror groups be dismantled prior to any further concessions.

The American people could well become exasperated with both sides which would enable the State Department to revert to former policies based on the false belief that the Middle East conflict represents "a cycle of violence" that can be resolved by territorial compromise irrespective of who is right or wrong.

Bauer also made it clear that Christians and other friends of Israel would not remain on the sidelines if unfair pressure were exerted by the administration against Israel. But clearly we cannot expect our Christian friends and supporters in Congress to confront the administration if we ourselves are not willing to be more assertive in relation to policies affecting our vital interests.

Yet despite all the enthusiastic support we receive from Evangelicals, it is important that we do not delude ourselves. In such a wide and diverse group there are bound to be malcontents and deep-seated internal differences. Clearly, under the best of circumstances, we could still encounter problems, possibly unpleasant differences, even outright hostility.

It is therefore very important that the support we receive from our Christian friends in relation to Israel is in no way related to other conditions. Most Evangelicals, especially their leaders, understand and endorse this approach.

But as of now, whilst the chemistry between Jews and Christians has improved, it still remains somewhat unstable. Some Orthodox Jews and many liberal Jews continue to feel uncomfortable about the Christian Zionists' support. They realize that their support for Israel is based upon the belief that the Jews must be sovereign in their land as a precursor to the Second Coming. These and other theological issues should never be explored.

On the other hand, most traditional Jews are pleasantly surprised and encouraged when they learn that there are millions of gentiles who share their conviction that Eretz Yisrael was given to the Jewish people by God and will always remain their land.

It would thus be absurd to reject as allies those whose vision of a messianic future we do not share. Indeed we should make every effort to strengthen the relationship as long as we take care not to become involved in broader areas that would inevitably lead to misunderstandings and conflict. *The writer is senior vice president of the World Jewish Congress.* (Jerusalem Post Aug 17)