

ISRAEL NEWS
A collection of the week's news from Israel
A service of the Bet El Twinning Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation

Commentary...

Paid-off 'Settlers' and Other Myths By Jonathan Rosenblum
An army of twenty public relations professionals sold a self-serving message that was (gullibly?) bought hook, line and sinker

In the long span of Jewish history, the uprooting of 8,500 Jews from Gaza will not rank as one of the worst tragedies, though it was unique in that those doing the uprooting were themselves Jews. This was not 1492 and the expulsion from Spain or the Holocaust. And the attempts by some in the settler community to appropriate symbols of those earlier tragedies - yellow Jewish stars, concentration camp uniforms - and by implication, and sometimes explicitly, to cast the soldiers executing the evacuation orders in the role of Hitler's S.S. troops, only infuriated secular Israelis.

Yet if the expulsion from Gaza was not one of the worst tragedies in Jewish history, the trauma inflicted on the Gaza residents and indeed on the entire national religious community, is nevertheless overwhelming. Rarely has a democratically elected government treated a part of its own population so harshly.

The loss for those uprooted from their homes took place on many levels - personal, communal, theological, and sociological. The faith in the imminent redemptive process that has animated the national religious community since Israel's miraculous expansion into the Jewish people's historic heartland in 1967 has now suffered an immense blow.

At the same time, the community's sense of itself as the vanguard of Israel society, widely admired as the exemplars of the true Zionist faith, can no longer be sustained. No longer can the national religious world delude itself that only a handful of narrow societal elites stand between it and the realization of a far more Jewish state in Israel. The settlers feel rejected and spit out by a large portion of Israel. And the sense of betrayal and having been stabbed in the back runs very deep.

Secular journalist Ari Shavit, who views the Gaza settlement as misbegotten from the start, even as he is filled with considerable sympathy and admiration for the settlers, captured their feelings of bewilderment in the face of betrayal: "They have built a kind of model of Zionism in the sand. . . . A cruel and naïve Zionism. A Zionism . . . that protects itself with reckless abandon and buries its dead with deep devotion. And maintains on the dunes of Gaza beach a form of the lost Israeli soul to which Israel is itself already foreign. Israel itself no longer wants it."

The trauma is so much greater for having been inflicted by the state and army in which the settlers so ardently believed. Shavit again: "The soil bound Israelis of Gush Katif could not believe that the digital Israelis of Tel Aviv would throw them out like an object no one wants. And would send against them the army in which they believed so much; would send into their homes people in the uniform they loved so much."

Not only have the Gaza settlers witnessed the destruction of their lives' work, they are without any clue as to what the future holds for them. An army of twenty public relations professionals working for SELA, the body charged with overseeing arrangements with those uprooted from Gaza, has skillfully spread the message in Israel and abroad that all the settlers walked out of Gaza with checks for hundreds of thousands of dollars, an amount sufficient to reestablish themselves anywhere in Israel.

That is a seriously distorted picture. Those who were renting homes are entitled to only modest checks based on the number of years living there. Most of those were teachers or otherwise employed by the Gush Katif Regional Council, and now have neither homes nor jobs. Even those who had large homes - in many cases 250 square meters or more - with lawns and gardens, will, in the best case, be relocated to caravans of 60-90 square meters, for the next two to three years. Those caravans have no room for their ovens or refrigerators, which will be stored for years on Negev army bases, in containers where the internal temperatures are estimated to reach close to 200 degrees Fahrenheit. Far worse, from their point of view, there is no room for their Shabbes (Sabbath) tables or their seforim, holy books. It will be a long time before they can again host for Shabbes their married children and

grandchildren, who, in ט"ב
many cases, were living right next door until last week.

But the image of the generously compensated settlers misses the point in a far more fundamental way. They never wanted the checks in the first place. The idea of providing checks and leaving the former residents of the Gaza Strip to make their own arrangements was to make life easier for the government.

Though the settlers, by and large, refused to carry on individual negotiations with SELA, on the grounds that one does not discuss one's own funeral arrangements, from the beginning they made clear through their legal representative, the Legal Forum for the Land of Israel, that their primary concern was that they be able to remain together with the neighbors with whom they have built their entire lives together over the last 37 years.

The Gaza Strip settlements were not suburban housing developments; they were faith communities of people animated by a shared vision and depth of commitment. Together they built lush, verdant communities out of the sand dunes, and together they mourned many sons and daughters killed in battle and terrorist attacks. Many of the younger generation have never known any other home. And their most fervent wish was that they could remain together.

Those hopes, too, now appear dashed. According to Yitzchak Meron, an attorney with the Legal Forum, less than ten per cent of the Gaza settlers know what their final housing solutions will be. The largest site planned for the refugees on the Nitzanim sand dunes south of Askelon will hold at most 300 (of the 1500 families uprooted from Gaza), and likely take 3 years to complete. In addition, the government inserted a contract clause that if it does not secure all the necessary permits by the end of the year, the whole deal can be cancelled.

Worse, no more than one-third of those removed from their homes even have temporary housing solutions. The government purchased less than 500 caravans all total, and has explicitly said that it will purchase no more.

As of the start of the evacuation, SELA had procured only a thousand hotel rooms around the country for 1,000 families, many of them very large, with no place to go. Only at the last minute, did it scramble to come up with another 1,500 rooms. The exiles from Gaza were shepherded onto busses with no idea where they were going, and, in many cases, when they arrived, they were told that there were no rooms for them. Even at the first stage, the different communities were split up. Residents of Netzarim, for instance, are now housed in eight different hotels in Jerusalem.

Those who did have rooms soon realized that in the haste and circumstances of their departure, they had failed to take even the most basic necessities - soap, toothpaste, diapers - and that they had no place to wash their laundry.

With the school year about to begin, parents have no idea where their children will be attending school. Even if the original ten day stays granted by SELA are extended, families will have to move a number of times in coming months, as the hotels fill up for the Yom Tovim. Those groups that found places for themselves in different dormitories around the country will also have to be relocated at the end of summer vacation. Psychologists have said that each of these moves is a separate trauma for the families already traumatized by the loss of their homes, support groups, and entire way of life.

The recitation of these heart-wrenching facts requires no explanation. Jews must know when other Jews are suffering. And particularly so those who believe in the uniqueness of every Jew and our common mission from Sinai. (Jewish World Review Aug 31)

The End of Mythology By Caroline Glick

The deportation of the Jews from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria over the past week and a half and surrounding events have put paid to two of the foundational myths of the narrative that has been propounded for the past 30 years by the Israeli and international Left. In attempting to analyze these traumatic events in a manner that will - at least to a degree - mitigate the dangers to Israeli security that the expulsions have engendered, it is important to identify these myths and dispel them now. For if we do not do so, we will find ourselves, again, waging an uphill battle to dispel these lies after the next die has been cast in favor of still more Israeli retreats and

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expulsions – this time from Judea and Samaria.

And so, even as our souls cry out in pain as we stare wild-eyed at the sight of 8,000 Jewish patriots, transformed in a moment into homeless, wandering Jews in the Land of Israel, our duty is to soldier on and work to preempt further destruction.

The foundational myth of the Left is that Jewish extremism, not Palestinian terrorism, is the cause of Israel's present security woes and the source of the constant wars that have plagued us since the dawn of modern Zionism. What we saw this week was that these people – whom one British reporter standing outside the synagogue in the now-ruined Neveh Dekalim so eloquently referred to last Thursday as "the hardest of the hard-line settlers" – are anything but extreme.

The expelled residents of Gush Katif – from the farmers of Atzmona, Katif, Netzarim, Netzer Hazani and Kfar Darom, the surfers and fishermen of Shirat Hayam, the Torah scholars of Neveh Dekalim and the mothers of Gadid – are not "hard-line" or "extremists." They are the finest sons and daughters of Israel. They are the bravest soldiers in the IDF and the most patriotic citizens that Israel has produced.

This truth was exposed to all in their darkest hour. As they were physically ejected from their homes and synagogues, they behaved with the most exquisite patriotism, heroism and humility. In combat, heroism is a matter of common sense – of survival. Patriotism on the battlefield of war is everywhere clear and unimpeded. You stand before an enemy bent on your physical destruction and your job is to kill him first while protecting your comrades.

The heroism the Jews of Gaza and northern Samaria displayed in the face of their own destruction is of another order altogether. Standing before their own army, on the surface, they were faced with a terrible choice. Do they fight their countrymen to maintain their communities, or do they accept their cruel and inexplicable fate?

Yet the truth of the matter is that this was never their dilemma. A glance at the murals on the walls of the schools in Atzmona and Neveh Dekalim and a look at the faces of these Jews showed clearly that for the residents of Gush Katif, there is no difference between their faith in the God of Israel and their loyalty to the State of Israel. Their dilemma, as events proved, was of a different and more tortuous nature. Given their complete loyalty to the state, how do they abandon their lives' work and still maintain their honor and the honor of the work of their hands for the past three generations?

In this near-surreal mix, the deported Jews found the golden path. The exodus of the Jews of Netzarim from their synagogue, standing behind their menora; the embracing of the IDF and police forces who came to expel them by the residents of Katif and Atzmona, followed by quiet exoduses from their homes – these decisions, and a million smaller and greater ones, belied the propaganda that these Jews are an obstacle to peace. It exposed as a lie the insistent rantings of the Left and the international community that these peaceful patriots, in or out of their communities, manifest in any way, shape or form an obstacle to peace with a credible Arab partner who is willing to accept coexistence with the Jewish state, whatever its borders may be.

WHEN WE contrast the behavior of the expelled residents to that of the Palestinians over the same period, we see, too, that for the Palestinians, terrorism is not a weapon of weakness or evidence of desperation, but rather a strategic choice. It is a weapon that defines them as a society as much as moderation and humility characterize the now homeless Jews of Gaza and northern Samaria.

As the IDF and police passed through the gates of Neveh Dekalim, Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei entered the gates of Damascus. There he met with the heads of Hamas and Islamic Jihad and negotiated an agreement that their forces in Gaza, Judea and Samaria will not be disarmed or harmed in any way. Exiting the meeting with Qurei, the heads of Hamas and Islamic Jihad told reporters that there is no reason for a Palestinian civil war since they share the PA's strategy.

For the past two weeks, Gaza has been one great parade ground, with armed terrorists from all factions walking the streets and declaring victory. The banners and graffiti tell the entire tale: "Four years of intifada: Victory; Ten years of Oslo: Nothing!" The terror leaders themselves have held press conference after press conference saying that they are moving their battle to Judea and Samaria and will transfer their rockets and mortars to the edges of the urban centers of Israel – Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Hadera, Netanya.

PA chieftain Mahmoud Abbas has repeatedly dismissed the Gaza pullout, scoffing that the area comprises "only five percent of Palestine." Like his lieutenants Muhammad Dahlan and Qurei, Abbas has repeatedly threatened that unless Israel immediately follows the withdrawal from Gaza with further withdrawals in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem, the terror will continue. And it already has. On Thursday rockets again rained down on Sderot and Wednesday night Shmuel Mett was stabbed to death in Jerusalem.

All of this is important to note because neither the Israeli Left nor US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice even bothered to wait until the expulsion of Jews from Gaza and northern Samaria was completed before stating outright that the next step must be further expulsions of Jews in Judea and Samaria and further land transfers to the Palestinians. The notion, as former prime minister Ehud Barak said in a radio interview last week, is apparently that since it is so easy to throw Jews out of their homes, we might as well do more of it. The

fact that this logic denies the greater truth that was made clear to one and all this week – that the Jews are not the problem, the Palestinian addiction to terror and destruction is the problem – matters neither to Barak nor to his American and European protean chorus of nincompoops.

BUT BEFORE we find ourselves faced with yet more withdrawals and expulsions, agreed to in backrooms, far from public scrutiny, let us understand that retreats from Judea and Samaria manifest a danger of a magnitude far greater than the ill-conceived retreat from Gaza. And let the facts speak for themselves.

Last Friday, an al-Qaida squad bombed the Eilat airport with Katyusha rockets launched from Jordan. Jordan, as we know, is a country that is actually working to root out terrorist cells. And yet, in spite of the kingdom's best efforts, it has not been successful. In contrast, again, the PA has made its territory one of the safest havens for terrorists in the world. If Kassam and Katyusha rockets in the south from Gaza or Aqaba cause a danger to the life of civilians in the periphery, the danger such weapons will constitute if launched from Judea and Samaria present a strategic threat to the state.

Were Katyusha rockets to start falling on runways at Ben-Gurion Airport or on the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway, Israel's economy would simply cease to function. Given the state of Palestinian society, and simple geography, it is both logically incoherent and strategically ridiculous to think that any withdrawal from Judea and Samaria would do anything other than enable and encourage such attacks.

Furthermore, since the US-led invasion of Iraq, the Left in Israel has been arguing that the threat from the east has disappeared and as a result, Israel no longer needs defensible borders. According to this logic, Israel can and ought to hand the sparsely populated Jordan Valley over to the PLO. But the noise coming from Iraq and Washington these days tells a different tale entirely. While it is true US President George W. Bush has pledged to remain in Iraq until the Iraqi government is able to maintain security, there is no reason to think that such a government will be at peace with Israel.

Since it toppled Saddam's regime, the US has done absolutely nothing to discourage continued Iraqi rejection of Israel's right to exist and bellicose statements in favor of Israel's destruction which have been heard from all quarters.

The best-case scenario for Israel from a post-US withdrawal Iraq is that Iraq will act in a manner similar to Saudi Arabia in its dealings with the Jewish state. That is, it will not actively fight us, but it will fund and train terrorists who will fight Israel and will maintain its stridently anti-Israel position both in international forums and in its own society. In any case, there has been no indication whatsoever that Washington cares about fostering peaceful relations between Israel and post-Saddam Iraq and as a result, it is simply irresponsible for Israeli leaders to consider withdrawing from our eastern border on the Jordan River.

The last two weeks have indeed been illuminating. But it is the responsibility of all who are concerned about Israel's security and future viability both in Israel and internationally to relentlessly point out the truths that have been exposed. For against this self-evident reality, the forces are already lined up to deny them and plow on with the same policies that have been refuted by reality for the past 12 years. The nightmare that Israel has endured with the destruction of Jewish Gaza and northern Samaria must be a starting point for a new period in our history. And this period can only begin with the repudiation of the mythology of the Left. (Jerusalem Post Aug 26)

Murder in Jerusalem By Moshe Simons

I have just witnessed one of the most tragic and traumatic events of my life. A young Jewish man – I later learned his name was Shmuel Mett – died in my arms on Wednesday night.

At about 8:25 we got a call from the MDA dispatcher about a stabbing on Rehov David – the shuk leading from Jaffa Gate to the Western Wall. I immediately left my apartment and sped over to the chaotic scene on a Hatzolah "ambucycle."

I arrived to find Shmuel Mett lying in a pool of blood with a kitchen knife sticking out of his stomach. Despite my previous exposure to traumatic medical events this scene was the worst I can recall.

The victim's skin was very pale and his eyes were half-open. The only people around were police officers, who didn't really know what to do. The young man was not breathing and had no pulse.

This is the nightmare of any Emergency Medical Technician. Alone, as the only person with medical training at the scene, there is only so much you can do. Many things need to be attended to simultaneously: starting CPR, connecting oxygen, beginning numerous IVs to deal with the massive blood loss, trying to stop the bleeding – these are some of the tasks that need to be done. You have to act robot-like, doing whatever can be done as quickly as possible.

First, I called for backup on my MIRS, and then started CPR. I took out my face mask and started mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. I felt his lungs fill up with air, and was slightly encouraged. One of the cops started chest compressions and we continued basic CPR for a minute or two.

At this point an ambulance with a paramedic, Aryeh Yaffe, arrived at the scene, along with Rafi Herbst and another volunteer. We now had four sets of hands. We immediately searched for the wounds and tried to stop the bleeding.

At the same time we tried to start an IV, but were having difficulty due to the massive amounts of blood lost. We continued CPR, this time with a bag-valve mask and good compressions; in the meantime more volunteers from the Jewish Quarter arrived on foot and quickly took my place.

Shortly thereafter an MDA Mobile ICU arrived and continued to work on the patient – the physician on their crew was one of the best I have ever seen working under pressure. He kept his cool and gave fantastic care to the patient.

Soon we had three IVs running and were trying to restart the young man's heart using various drugs. We had a heart rhythm on the EKG, but no pulse. We moved the patient to the mobile ICU, which transferred him to the trauma center at Hadassah Ein Karem.

Unfortunately, Shmuel Mett was pronounced dead in the operating room.

We had tried everything we could to bring him back – to no avail.

WHY WAS Shmuel Mett murdered? To residents of the Old City such as myself the answer is obvious. The Arabs want us out of Jerusalem – out of Israel. They believe, in the wake of our Gaza withdrawal, that violence and terrorism against Jews works. After five years of violence they see us surrendering Gaza.

Terrorism will continue and may get much worse in Jerusalem. One thing I can say: We won't run. The battle is for the soul of the Land of Israel. Let no one think otherwise.

We must realize that our fate is decided in Heaven. When a decree comes down from God we must take a deeper look at ourselves and try to find what is wrong spiritually. Each of us must make an additional effort to do more mitzvot and study Torah, and through that we may merit the raising of the terrible sword that hangs above our heads.

Let us cry together. Let us understand that a Jew murdered in Jerusalem must have an impact on the entire Jewish nation.

We must realize the depths we have reached. We are a splintered, fragmented people – each finding fault with the other.

At the very least, let us join together in sorrow and cry as one for the blood of a young man, 21, murdered in Jerusalem simply because he was a Jew.

The writer, a resident of Jerusalem's Old City's Jewish Quarter is a volunteer with Hatzolah and MDA. (Jerusalem Post Aug 30)

A Roadmap for the Right By Michael Freund

Hardly a week has passed since Gush Katif was emptied of its Jewish residents, and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is already promising more expulsions of Jews.

In a televised interview with Channel 10 broadcast Monday, Sharon made clear that he plans to uproot additional Jewish communities in the future. "Not all the settlements presently in Judea and Samaria will remain there," he said, adding that "the final map will be presented only at the last stage of negotiations."

So there you have it. Talks with the Palestinians have not even resumed and Sharon is already busy making concessions, effectively promising to dismantle further, as yet unnamed communities as part of a final deal.

As if this wasn't bad enough, Sharon has also done virtually nothing to counter the renewed terrorist onslaught launched by the Palestinians of late.

In just the past few days a Palestinian terrorist stabbed and killed a young Israeli yeshiva student in Jerusalem; an Israeli border policeman was stabbed in the throat in Hebron by a Palestinian attacker; two Kassam rockets were fired from northern Gaza at Sderot; firebombs were thrown at Israeli vehicles in Gush Etzion, and a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up at Beersheba's bus station.

Thus far the government's response to this renewed wave of violence has been limited to verbal denunciations and a bit of finger-wagging, which are hardly likely to be taken very seriously by the gunmen of Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

So not only is Sharon demonstrating weakness at the bargaining table, he is also projecting frailty on the military front, inviting still more violence and pressure in its wake.

This combination of weak knees and feeble muscle poses a grave danger to the country and to its national interests.

As Haifa University Professor Dan Schueftan recently pointed out to The New York Times, the way things are looking now, "The next stage of disengagement is inevitable... We are basically retreating slowly toward the fence."

More than ever, then, it is essential that the Right get its act together and find a way to save the country from the desperate, devious and dithering man who now runs it.

To be sure, the retreat from Gaza and northern Samaria was a terrible blow, but the perils that lie ahead may prove even more ominous. Israel is essentially slouching its way back to the pre-1967 Armistice Lines, which would endanger the state and its interests.

In order to prevent this, the Right must lick its wounds from the Gaza debacle and formulate a strategy aimed at forestalling any future retreats. The

time to do so is now because, with a little foresight, we can and will prevent more Jews from losing their homes.

Such a strategy should encompass a number of key spheres: political, practical and ideological, and it should not be left in the hands of any one organization to implement. Rather, the various forces must combine their efforts and work in tandem to bring it about.

In the political realm, the number-one priority at this stage should be to remove Sharon from power. It is critical that he be punished politically for the Gaza retreat so other politicians will see there is a heavy price to be paid in terms of their careers for daring to expel Jews from their homes.

It is not enough merely to bring down the government. Rather, Sharon must be seen to suffer a stinging political rebuke, such that it will be obvious to all that the withdrawal led directly to his downfall.

Similarly, it is time for Israel's Right to adopt a modified form of one of the most successful tactics used to date by American Conservatives – the taxpayer protection pledge, which has been championed for some two decades by Americans for Tax Reform, a Washington-based lobbying group.

In the US, the idea is simple: force politicians to live up to their pre-election rhetoric by asking them to sign a short document in which they promise not to support new taxes once they are in office. This effectively binds the signatory, in writing, to live up to his word to the voters.

In America it has come to be known as the "No New Taxes" pledge, and it has proven immensely effective in compelling politicians to take a stand and stick with it. Over 1,200 state officeholders, and nearly 50% of the US Senate and House have signed on, and their adherence to the pledge is duly monitored and reported to the public.

HERE IN Israel, the Right could initiate a "No New Withdrawals" oath which would require politicians to solemnly declare that they will never agree to yield territory or uproot Jewish communities. Anyone refusing to sign, or violating the pledge, would then lose the support of right-wing voters, and would be branded a "pledge-breaker" for all to see.

On the practical front a major push must be made to get more people to settle in Jewish communities that could potentially be on the chopping block should Sharon have his way. Bolstering towns such as Shavei Shomron in Samaria, or Tekoa in Judea will make it harder for any future government to part with them, just as Ariel and Ma'aleh Adumim have been taken off the table thanks to their sizable population growth.

Whether this means encouraging more Israelis to move there, or persuading American Jews to purchase homes in these places, it is crucial to shore up these communities and reinforce their numbers as soon as possible.

Finally, on the ideological front, the Right must not allow its failure to prevent the Gaza withdrawal to lead to despondency or despair. The protests on behalf of Gush Katif may not have achieved their ultimate aim of preventing the pullout, but they did tap into a strong and dynamic undercurrent of enthusiasm and love for the Land of Israel.

That energy must not be allowed to dissipate. It should be marshalled to prepare for the next stage of the struggle, before Israel's dangerous slide toward retreat truly does become a reality. (Jerusalem Post Aug 31)

Farewell to Gaza By Tallie Lipkin-Shahak

In my farewell visit to Gush Katif, before it was destroyed and its residents evicted, I was privileged to see the real Israelis again. Those who held on to their land, made it bloom and, at the same time, defended with their bodies the entire State of Israel despite relentless Palestinian terrorist attacks.

When I saw the residents of the flourishing settlement of Neveh Dekalim being evicted from their homes, I was as horrified as if this terrible experience was happening to me personally.

The evicted settlers, headed by their wives and children, gave those Jews who had lost their sense of direction a real lesson in proud Zionism, in the strength of their belief and optimism. So what if they failed to gain a place in the hearts of the Stock Exchange crowd? It would have been very bad if the destruction of the settlements had ended in sheepish silence. Only deeply rooted Jews such as the residents of the Gaza could have stretched out their necks for the slaughter weapon of Jewish settlement destruction, and for the bulldozer, in order to prevent the danger of a civil war.

If the US Army had appeared among thousands of farmers in Texas to force them to give up their farms to Mexico, as a corrective experience; or if French farmers had been called on to give up their orchards in Alsace to the Germans, I have no doubt of what these Americans and Frenchmen would have done with their double-barreled shotguns.

Unfortunately, Israel has currently created the mistaken impression that it is a Lego state. There can be no greater lie than that it was the IDF that defended the settlements in Gush Katif, and that we can now breathe easily since our soldiers will no longer be required to endanger their lives. The defensive belt was mutual and interwoven, comprising both settlers and soldiers.

FROM THE beginning of the renewal of Jewish settlement generally the idea was that the IDF would operate and defend from the same locations in

which there were Jewish settlers. If there was no Jewish settlement to defend, the army and the government would find any excuse to retreat.

Consequently, 30 years ago the IDF patrolled and set up ambushes in the regions of the kibbutzim in the south, Nahal Oz, Nirim, and others, solely because kibbutznikim, Jewish pioneers, were living there. These settlements also ensured the security of the towns of the south against Fedayeen infiltrators from the Gaza Strip.

To the same degree, the Jewish settlers in the Gaza Strip - for more than 30 years and in cooperation with the IDF - formed a security belt for all the traditional settlements in the Negev, which could develop and prosper quietly and safely after 1967.

The army's general staff will now have to dust off the maps from that period. Despite the electronics and hi-tech gadgetry, Palestinian terrorist attacks will have to be countered on the very approaches to the veteran kibbutzim. The IDF will be back to defending them with their lives.

Meanwhile in the Gaza Strip, Hamas and Islamic Jihad are competing for the honor of carrying out the policy of Mahmoud Abbas, who has publicly called for a "great Jihad."

Deputy Premier Shimon Peres and James Wolfensohn, the Quartet's special envoy, will be unable, even if they live to age 120, to defeat Palestinian corruption. All the signs indicate that the corrupt Palestinian leadership intends, once again, to channel millions of dollars to their own pockets and not construct anything of value in the Gaza Strip.

The sole productive enterprise set up in the territories since the Oslo Accords, in order to draw money from the Jews, was the casino in Jericho, subsequently closed because of the counterproductive Palestinian terror.

THE JOY of myopic Israelis, in politics and in the media, over the destruction of the Gush Katif settlements recalls the joy of people following Oslo that ended in national weeping after the advent of the suicide bombers. The acts of the heroes of Gush Katif will be remembered as a kind of collective Trumpeldor-like behavior.

The proponents of the destruction of these flourishing settlements, turned into heaps of ruins, claim that only in this way will it be possible to better defend Israel's security and political borders, with US support. But in the foreseeable future, I predict, Kassam and mortar attacks from the Gaza Strip will be renewed against Israeli settlements.

If that happens, Israel must exact a price for Palestinian aggression, such as cutting off electricity and water supplies. Perhaps in this way Israel will force the gangs of Muhammad Dahlan & Co. to divert their corruption and terror funds to the financing of enterprises for the production of electricity and water.

If you want disengagement, do it all the way. (Jerusalem Post Aug 29)
The writer, a veteran journalist, is The New York Post correspondent in Israel.

Mystery Solved New York Sun Editorial

One of the little-noticed virtues of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, completed yesterday, is that it puts in sharp relief one of the questions of the Middle East debate that has puzzled us in recent years, centering on the Council on Foreign Relations and Henry Siegman. The council's Web site describes Mr. Siegman as "senior fellow and director, U.S./Middle East Project" and also as "foremost expert on the Middle East peace process ... and U.S. Middle East Policy." Yet his writings over the past few years are hard to distinguish from the hard-line propaganda of the Arab tyrannies.

A visitor to the Council's Web site yesterday could view in its archives an interview with Mr. Siegman by a former foreign editor of the New York Times, Bernard Gwertzman, under the headline, "Siegman: Sharon Unlikely to Carry Out Plans to Withdraw from Gaza." In the interview, Mr. Gwertzman asks Mr. Siegman, "Why won't the withdrawal take place?" Mr. Siegman answers in all apparent seriousness that Mr. Sharon lacks majority support for his plan in the Israeli parliament. It's now clear that Mr. Siegman's assessment in October 2004 was precisely wrong. It's hardly the first time. America's Middle East policy, in Mr. Siegman's analysis, is the result of how "Sharon manipulates Washington," as he put it in an April 26, 2004, article in the International Herald Tribune. A similar theme is conveyed in cartoons in the Arab press, labeled as anti-Semitic by the Anti-Defamation League, depicting Mr. Sharon as a puppeteer manipulating President Bush.

Mr. Siegman has said Israel is worse than the terrorist leader Yasser Arafat. "Surely depriving the freedom of 3.5 million Palestinians and subjugating them to a military occupation for nearly two generations is a more fundamental and egregious offense to basic democratic values than the authoritarianism of Arafat, who at least came to office in a free and democratic internationally supervised election," Mr. Siegman wrote on February 27, 2003, in the International Herald Tribune. He suggested that U.S. policy-makers who think that "our actions in Iraq will inspire admiration and trigger regionwide democratic change better check what they are smoking." The smoke had barely cleared when American actions in Iraq did trigger regionwide democratic change and admiration from Beirut to Cairo and beyond.

So why would the Council on Foreign Relations, a New York-based American institution, fund this "expert" at the level of \$204,151 in salary and

benefits, making him, in the most recent year for which tax returns are available, its fourth-highest paid employee? It turns out that much of the funding for the Council's "U.S./Middle East Project" comes from overseas, including the European Commission, the government of Norway, Kuwaiti and Saudi businessmen, a Lebanese politician, and, for one year, an official of the commercial arm of the Palestinian Authority, Munib Masri.

Mr. Siegman tells us that his views have been consistent over his career and that his project's funding sources - which he points out are a matter of public record - haven't influenced his opinions. A spokeswoman for the Council says that there is no connection between funding sources and any scholar's opinions. The editor in charge of the opinion page at the International Herald Tribune, Serge Schmemmann, says that the paper never asked about, and Mr. Siegman never mentioned, where his money was coming from. Editors at the New York Review of Books, where Mr. Siegman also publishes, did not return our phone calls seeking comment.

Why aren't the New York Review of Books and the New York Times-owned IHT disclosing that the man attacking Israel in their pages is being supported by European governments and non-American Arab businessmen? The Times itself has an integrity policy requiring freelance contributors to "avoid conflicts of interest, real or apparent," yet the Times ran an op-ed piece by Mr. Siegman in 2002 identifying him only as "a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations." If the publications had made the disclosure, their readers could draw their own conclusions. (New York Sun Aug 23)

If You Will It... by Hillel Fendel

I was sitting in a fancy television studio, on a distinguished panel of guests for one of the political talk shows. The conversation was animated, with the moderator - a well-known television personality - displaying his usual skill at instigating a fair amount of disagreement and raised voices. The guests presented their views of the world and the situation with certainty, confidence and thinly-disguised contempt for the others.

The discussion turned to the resistance against the expulsion, and on the screen could be seen youths dancing in a synagogue, singing, "Holy One, blessed be He, we love You." The moderator turned to me and, with a light, cynical smile playing on his lips, asked, "Tell me, what is that all about? Loving G-d? And at a time like this?"

Surprised by the question, I hesitated for a second or two - what seemed like an eternity. Then, I said:

"You know, in a moment, you will thank me gracefully and go to a commercial, where some people with a lot of money will try to persuade others, who either have or don't have so much money, to buy some product they don't really need, so they can make even more money. The people on the commercial will be smiling, even though they might not really be happy at all. Then you will return and we will all continue to argue about whether it is really sad that 25 Jewish communities in Israel were erased just like that and that thousands of people were thrown into the streets, or whether it was really their own fault and they deserved it, etc. Then, everyone will go home, some satisfied with their performance, and others to cry about what has happened to us.

"In short, there is really a lot in this world to be sad and negative about. But we don't want to be that way. I think that this song - 'G-d, we love You' - is saying, 'G-d, You are the author of all good and happiness. We want to connect with You and we want to be able to experience goodness.' There is so much that we can be angry and resentful about. But we don't want to be mired in negativity, and cynicism, and deceit, and bickering with our brothers, and wrong priorities, and destruction. We want positive action, and concern one for the other, and mutual respect, and pursuit of spirituality and sanctity."

The moderator was about to interrupt, but I continued on:

"I want to be able to smile at you with sincerity - even though I know you work for a medium that promotes the opposite of what I just spoke about - and realize that you're a person who, basically, wants the same things as we do. When we sing, 'Holy One, we love You,' we are praying and hoping that all of us can finally abandon our one-uppityness against each other, and not be condescending at the sight of settler families living in tents, but rather unite behind the idea that no matter what, we will do all we can to help each other and not cause each other such pain."

I looked over at the moderator, and saw him looking down towards his desk, instead of directly at the camera, with a look of inward contemplation replacing his usual confident smile.

And then I woke up.

If you will it, it is no dream. (Israel National News Aug 29)
The writer, Senior News Editor for Israel National News, is a resident of Bet El and author of One Thing I Ask on the siddur.
