



Jerusalem 6:00; Toronto 7:03

Commentary...

The Real Debate Begins

By Barbara Lerner

Israel gets serious. U.S. will soon.

Ten years after Oslo, the real debate in Israel has finally begun, and it's not between the two sides described in the U.S. media: Those who want to expel Arafat, and those who want to kill him. The real debate is between Israelis who still believe that getting rid of Arafat will make peace possible < as the Jerusalem Post argued when it called for killing him in its now-famous editorial of September 10 < and the growing majority of Israelis who say what Michael Freund, Bibi Netanyahu's old communications man said in an op-ed in the same paper on the same day:

"...our leaders still don't get it. They now talk about expelling Arafat but leaving the Palestinian Authority in place, as though installing a new Godfather will make the Mafia less of a criminal organization. They still don't realize that the problem is not just Arafat or Abu Mazen or Abu Whoever; it is the existence of the Palestinian Authority itself, which is little more than a hothouse for terror, corruption and bloodshed."

Freund and a minority of others in Israel and America understood these facts all along, because Palestinian leaders made it plain all along, in Arabic: There are no Palestinian leaders who want peace. There never were. Oslo was a sucker's game from the start, a tactic in what Israeli scholar Joel Fishman calls a Viet Cong style "People's War," and the Palestinian Authority is what it has always been: A terrorist organization at war with Israel and the West, willing to settle for nothing less than total victory, starting with Israel's total destruction. Thus, it's not just Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, and al Qaeda that must be destroyed for Israel to survive and for America to win the broader war on terror: It's the PA itself, and with it, the ultimate Israeli & American Left-lemmings fantasy, the idea that a Palestinian state would ever be anything other than a terror state.

Aside from the fascinating Viet Cong connection that Fishman documents, none of these facts are new. What is new is that after sustaining more casualties in a decade of declared peace than they did in any of their declared wars, a growing majority of Israelis now see the facts clearly, want their leaders to acknowledge them openly, and act on them decisively. Is Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon part of this new, clear-eyed majority? A late convert to the statehood-for-Palestine camp, Sharon has proven himself as stubborn a warrior in the quest for peace as he was in the quest for victory in past wars, but if the New York Post's Uri Dan is to be believed, Michael Freund is unduly pessimistic about Israel's leaders. Even Sharon now sees that only victory can bring peace. Dan is a longtime friend and confidante of Israel's prime minister, and in the Israeli newspaper Maariv on September 11, after returning from India with Sharon in the wake of the two horrendous suicide bombings of September 9, Dan wrote: "...in India, the State of Palestine was buried." The latest wave of Palestinian terror has convinced the prime minister that: "the Palestinian leadership will not get to see a Palestinian state < at least not in this generation. The chance that they were given has expired." The PA "must disappear from the map."

In America, the debate is similar, but at an earlier stage. Our equivalent of Israel's Labor party < the Dean Democrats < haven't yet been reduced to a fringe party, polling less than 20 percent in the last election as the Laborites did, but if President Bush continues to lead as boldly as he has heretofore, they soon will be. The geographically challenged Dr. Dean argues that it was a great mistake for America to liberate Iraq: We should "focus on the Middle East instead," he says, and "be more even-handed." In Dean's eyes, Iraq never had any connection to terrorism until we drove the Iraqi people into bin Laden's arms, creating rage and despair by invading their country and toppling their homegrown leaders. Creating a free and peaceful Iraq under American auspices is a lost cause, as Dean sees it, because the Iraqi people hate us, and want us out. Conversely, those nice, friendly Palestinians are eager to establish a peaceful, democratic state, and would do so tomorrow, if only we forced the Israelis to "give up all those

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*

settlements." Dr. Dean's prescription is to retreat from Iraq, turning the country over to those omniscient folks at the U.N., and focus all our energies on "the peace process," as Bill Clinton did.

It's a prescription for America's defeat, but the Dean Democrats defeat is not yet a done deal, because they do have some advantages. They have the enthusiastic support of America's Left Coast academics, amplified by a media chorus, and they have bipartisan

support from sectors of our State Department, old Europe, U.N. groupies in Congress, and a collection of well-paid Saudi apologists leftover from the failed Clinton and Bush 41 administrations. Given the declining but still potent power of this motley crew, these advantages are nothing to sneeze at, yet. But Dr. Dean and his friends face three great obstacles, in addition to George W. Bush: The American people, the Iraqi people, and the Palestinian people. Just look at the polls.

For starters, the American people not only believe that Iraq was a terrorist haven before the war, 70 percent of them believe that Saddam Hussein played a role in the tragedy of September 11 and, smug press-certainties to the contrary notwithstanding, genuine Iraq experts like Laurie Mylroie say they are right. Average Americans are, understandably, somewhat anxious about the situation in Iraq during this difficult, transition phase, but they aren't likely to share the Deanies enthusiasm for seeking salvation from the U.N. A CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll conducted August 25-26 found that 60 percent of Americans rate the job the U.N. is doing as "poor," the highest negative rating Gallup has recorded since it began asking Americans about the U.N. 50 years ago. And, despite the constant drumbeat of defeatism in the press, solid majorities still think over-throwing Saddam Hussein was the right thing to do. All the pro-Palestinian shilling hasn't converted ordinary Americans to their cause either: Only a minority think the Palestinians really want peace.

As for the Iraqi people, we finally have some solid data on their opinions from the first nationally representative sample ever polled there, thanks to

American Enterprise's Karl Zinsmeister and Zogby International. The Z-team interviewed Iraqis in four cities in August: Shiite dominated Basra in the south, Kurdish dominated Kirkuk in the north, Sunni dominated Ramadi in the Baathist resistance triangle, and mixed-bag Mosul in the far north. They found that those obstinate Iraqis simply refuse to conform to the trendy,

politically correct stereotypes about authentic native world views that Dean and company are peddling. Iraqis have not been driven to despair and terrorism by war and occupation < 70 percent express optimism about the future < and, except in the Sunni triangle, lopsided majorities express negative or very negative views of Osama bin Laden. Sixty percent of Iraqis don't want an Islamic government of any stripe, a percentage that rises to 66 percent among the allegedly fanatic Shiite majority. Best of all, most Iraqis don't hate us and want us out, post haste. Some think we should leave after another six months, but many more think we should stay for a year or longer. Iraqis do however, hate the Baathist thugs who ruled them before the liberation < 74 percent don't want to let bygones be bygones. They want to see Saddam's henchmen punished. Of course, not all the news is good: Five out of ten Iraqis say democracy is a Western thing and won't work in their country, but people under the age of 30 are more hopeful, and women are too. All things considered, if George W. Bush can beat back the defeatists at home and convince the American people to stay the course, the odds that the Iraqi people will create a relatively free and peaceful state for themselves in a year or two look pretty good.

Data from a poll of the Palestinian people, also taken in August, show why the odds on achieving anything like a comparable success with a Palestinian state are virtually nil. Palestinians, too, are ruled by gangs of despotic, terrorist thugs, but unlike the Iraqis, the average Palestinian doesn't hate his home-grown oppressors. He admires them inordinately, and identifies with them with a sick passion. Asked whether there should be more terrorist attacks, 60 percent of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza said yes; asked whether the Palestinian Authority should arrest Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists, 88.8 percent said no. The upshot is that when Howard Dean and his domestic look-alikes join with the roadmap's U.N. and

This week's issue is dedicated
in honour of the Bar Mitzvah of
Raphael Yoseph Zeifman

Yasher Koach and thank you to our supporters. Thank you also to Continental Press for their ongoing support.
Readers are requested to please mail contributions to: BAYT - re: Israel News, 613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario, L4J 5V3
Annual Rates: Friend - \$36, Supporter - \$50, Benefactor - \$180. Dedications are welcome at \$120/week.
Call (905) 886-3810 for further info. Israel News can be viewed on the internet at www.bayt.org

EU sponsors, pressing George W. Bush to quit trying to create a peaceful Iraqi state and to redouble his efforts to create a peaceful Palestinian state in-stead, he can tell them, in all honesty, that America cannot create peaceful states. We can only offer people the chance to do that for themselves. We made that offer to the Iraqi people and to the Palestinian people. The Iraqi people accepted our offer, and we won't desert them now. The Palestinian people rejected it, over and over again, for ten long, bloody years, and now, it's time to take that offer off the table.

The writer is a freelance writer in Chicago who spent a month in Israel earlier this year. (National Review Sept 17)

Exit Arafat? By William Kristol
What removing Yasser Arafat would mean.

"We think it would not be helpful to expel him because it would just give him another stage to play on." --State Department spokesman Richard Boucher, after the Israeli government threatened to exile Yasser Arafat, Sept. 11, 2003

all the world's not a stage, the melancholy Jacques of "As You Like It" to the contrary notwithstanding. All the world's real, and too many Israelis' and Palestinians' exits from it have been tragically premature, and horribly violent.

There are of course many, far too many, individuals and groups who bear responsibility for the violence that has afflicted the Holy Land. But in the long Middle Eastern roster of ignominy one name stands out: Yasser Arafat. The virtual embodiment of modern terrorism, the main instigator of its resurgence against Israeli civilians in the last three years, the indirect cause therefore of the deaths of innocent Palestinian bystanders as Israel struck back, Arafat certainly deserves exile--or worse. And the people of Israel, and the Palestinians, deserve better, far better, than to be bedeviled by his presence.

Whether it is prudent to remove him is of course another issue. We are inclined to believe it is. But that is admittedly a complicated question, involving on-the-ground calculations of the risks of harm to Arafat, and how damaging that harm would, or would not, turn out to be. But this is clear: Arafat, in Ramallah, has succeeded in torpedoing one peace process after another. He scorned Secretary of State Colin Powell's rather pathetic August 21 plea to work with Prime Minister Abbas and "make available" to Abbas the security forces Arafat controlled. We believe Arafat's ability to deny peace a chance would decrease if he were far away, especially if he were deprived of control of the Palestinian Authority's treasury, its money-making monopolies, and the security services.

But the State Department disagrees. For them, the world is a stage, and the applause of the "international community"--or rather, of other governments, including ones who do not themselves permit the free expression of their own people's opinions--tends to be everything. Expelling Arafat would undoubtedly cause a raucous few days in the territories and in Arab capitals, and much disapproval elsewhere. European chancelleries would be the stages on which Arafat would cavort for a little while afterwards. But then we would all move on. Indeed, there would be, we suspect, much quiet eagerness to do so--much quiet approval--among the Palestinians who have suffered so much as a result of Arafat's disastrous leadership. And there might well be--we think there would be--less death, and more hope for peace, in the Middle East.

The government of Israel will decide whether and how to follow through on its threat to remove Arafat. The American government can and should give the Israeli government our best counsel in private, and perhaps in public as well. But the administration's professed reasons for opposing the removal of Arafat are unimpressive. And they seem altogether de-linked from any underlying moral and strategic judgment of what the war on terror requires, and what those who support and sponsor terror deserve.

Right now, to take just one example, Mullah Omar is hiding in the wilds of Afghanistan or Pakistan, subject to being killed if and when we find him. In what way is Yasser Arafat morally distinguishable from Mullah Omar? Is he less complicit in terror? For a decade, Israel bent over backwards to try to engage in a peace process with the chief terrorist of Palestine. Arafat has succeeded in sabotaging the hopes of peace. Justice demands that he be removed. Prudence may well concur. America is engaged in a war against terror. Surely the honorable course is to be a sympathetic counselor of, not a supercilious lecturer to, an embattled fellow democracy that has suffered more terror--and, yes, has borne it with more forbearance--than even we have.

We suspect Arafat will be removed, sooner rather than later, by the government of Israel. When that happens, the negative consequences can be minimized, and the positive opportunities maximized, only by unequivocal solidarity between the two terror-opposing democracies.

The writer is the editor of the Weekly Standard. (Weekly Standard Sep 22)

End of the Road Map . . . By Tom Rose
And the beginning of a new Israeli strategy.

The Suicide Bombing that killed 22 people including 6 small children in Jerusalem on August 19 ended the so-called "hudna" (cease-fire) between competing Palestinian terror groups and Israel. It also killed any pretense of faith in the "road map." The oversold peace plan collapsed upon and crushed its own creation, the young government of Palestinian prime minister Mahmoud Abbas. Controlling only 3 of Yasser Arafat's 12 "security" organizations, Abbas could not hope to meet Israeli and American demands for a crackdown on terrorists

after the bus bombing, even had he wanted to.

When Arafat loyalists used Arafat-controlled Palestinian television and radio to publicly threaten Abbas with death if he tried to crack down, Abbas got the message and resigned. In the wake of his departure and the resumption of terror in the streets of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Israelis too seemed to acknowledge that they had reached the end of their road. They were left with no choice but to rid themselves and the region of the menace of Yasser Arafat once and for all.

In contrast to the ceremonial installation of Abbas as the first Palestinian prime minister, Arafat's naming of his crony Ahmed Qurei to succeed Abbas was dismissed in Jerusalem. Israeli defense minister Shaul Mofaz, Sharon's most influential and popular minister, called Qurei a lackey whose sole purpose was to find a way to preempt his boss's expulsion.

Qurei quickly announced the formation of a "security government" whose purpose will be to "confront security threats and enforce the rule of law in Palestinian Authority areas." But unlike previous moves designed to generate enough international pressure to preempt Israeli action, Qurei's story had no takers. Not even the Europeans seemed ready to lend assistance.

The Israeli Security Cabinet's statement of September 11 that it had decided in principle to "remove" Arafat was the final acknowledgment that it was no longer possible to ignore the elephant in the living room. Amid all the variables that have attended this murderous conflict, Arafat is the one outstanding constant. For three years, Israelis tried everything short of facing the Arafat question head on. Nothing worked. The Mitchell Plan, the Tenet Plan, the Seven Quiet Days, the Zinni Missions, Bethlehem First, the Wolf's Lair, and finally the road map: all failures. Now, 800 dead Israelis later--15 last week alone--Israelis have concluded that it is more dangerous to host Arafat than to eliminate him.

As if waking from a national coma, Israelis suddenly realized that one man was protecting the Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorist organizations from dismantlement, and he was Arafat. The one man preventing the creation of a consolidated security service capable of fighting terror was Arafat. Arafat was working to kill the road map so that its goal of establishing a Palestinian state at peace with Israel could never be realized. Even the most dovish Israelis no longer seem interested in denying the obvious: It isn't Israel that is preventing the establishment of a Palestinian state. It's Arafat, whose goal is not a Palestine next to Israel, but rather Israel itself. A Palestinian state at peace with Israel is a greater threat to Arafat than it is to Israel. Understanding that makes it easy to see why, given the choice between the road map and Hamas, Arafat chose Hamas. They share the same goal: the destruction of Israel.

Ironically, those who thought supporting Arafat was synonymous with supporting a Palestinian state are the very ones who have helped prevent it. Arafat's supporters at the U.N. and in the E.U. did not remove obstacles to peace between Israelis and Palestinians, they reinforced them. By wedding themselves to Arafat, his international allies allowed the Palestinian dictator to loot and plunder his people. Since Israel brought Arafat back to the West Bank in 1994 as part of the Oslo Accords, Palestinian GDP has declined 70 percent. Think of it: two-thirds of the collective national Palestinian wealth destroyed. During that same period, despite the high-tech bust and the terror war waged against it, Israel's GDP doubled.

An option dismissed in August as the fanciful concoction of an unstable fringe became state policy in September. The Israeli mood was best expressed by a middle-aged woman interviewed in a supermarket who said matter-of-factly that Israel was like the alcoholic no longer able to deny his disease. There are but two choices left: either to conquer the disease or to let it conquer you.

The signals from Washington were mixed. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher, though he called the potential expulsion of Arafat "not helpful," also noted: "We were making progress without dealing with Arafat. When we were dealing with Arafat, we weren't making progress. That is the objective fact. . . . We had a failed leadership that wasn't leading us anywhere. That's been tried. Been there, done that. Road don't lead nowhere."

With Saddam gone, a U.S. administration increasingly disgusted with Arafat, and Europeans demonstrating growing impatience with the whole affair, the international climate for Arafat's expulsion, while not risk-free, is more amenable than it has been.

Neither the road map's collapse nor Israel's looming "removal" of Arafat prompted Morocco or Jordan to alter or condition its decision to reestablish relations with Israel, broken off at the start of Arafat's terror war. Nor did it prevent Prime Minister Sharon from celebrating the tenth anniversary of an extraordinarily significant relationship that Bombay and Jerusalem were calling the "Indo-Israeli Alliance" during his high-profile state visit to India. The growth increment alone in this year's trade between Israel and India will be greater than the entire GDP of the Palestinian Authority.

But Arafat has not yet been completely abandoned. He still has the Saudis. Last week Israeli intelligence revealed that Saudi Arabia has forward-deployed its two most sophisticated battle-ready squadrons of F-15s to the secret Tabuq airfield in the northwest corner of the kingdom, just 90 miles from Israel. Israel warned Saudi Arabia it was fully prepared to defend itself against any aggressor. Compounding the news of the forward deployments, U.S. investigators claim to have confirmed Israeli intelligence about an

advanced al Qaeda plot to use those very bases to stage 9/11-style terror attacks against up to five Tel Aviv skyscrapers.

Arguments that exile would only give Arafat a bigger stage were drowned out by reminders that Arafat's last exile, between 1982 and 1993, saw the emergence of an alternative Palestinian leadership. It wasn't the world stage that made Arafat globally relevant, it was Israel. Opponents used to argue that Arafat only needs a cell phone to stay in control of "his people." Advocates of expulsion say that depriving Arafat of physical centrality deprives him of the ability to lead, which in turn will force the creation of a new Palestinian leadership.

Whether this new leadership will be better or worse than the malignant one that is about to be removed is a question Israelis and Palestinians will soon see answered. One way or another. (Weekly Standard Sep 22)

The writer is publisher of the Jerusalem Post.

Dedicated to the Memory of Dr. David Applebaum

By Dr. Jay Wohlgeleinter

It has been a long time since I've written about life here. There have been ups and downs in peace initiatives, waves of terrorism, moments of relative quiet, and life goes on. Two months ago my girlfriend, Sharon, became my wife and we have begun building a new life together. Unfortunately, the terror attacks this week have hit very close to home and I could no longer push off writing.

The other night I was out with Sharon at a production of the 1970s children's classic "Free to Be You and Me." We went out for burgers after the show on a street called Emek Refaim. The narrow street lined with cafés and restaurants was really alive that night.

Joining us was a friend who had recently come in from Toronto. I told him that Emek Refaim has benefited from the past three years of terror as it is perceived as a safer area than the rest of Jerusalem. I remember telling him that it was likely a false sense of security.

About 10 minutes after we left we heard sirens. My pager started beeping saying that there was a blast on Emek Refaim, two blocks from where we had been.

Almost immediately I got a phone call from Dr. Jonah Kruger, a fellow Canadian who had just spent a year as a doctor in the army. He heard the explosion and asked what happened. I told him to wait outside and I would be right over to pick him up. Within minutes we were back on Emek Refaim trying unsuccessfully to resuscitate a woman with part of her head blown off.

Jerusalem Magen David Adom (MDA - Red Star of David) is internationally known to be the most experienced and efficient ambulance service in dealing with mass casualty traumas. Within 10-15 minutes all moderately to seriously wounded victims had been evacuated.

At that point I received some very frightening news. Another doctor on the scene asked me if I had seen Dr. David Applebaum, the chief of the ER in Shaare Tzedek Hospital in Jerusalem, in charge of the doctors on the ambulances, and founder of the clinic where I work. He was always first on the scene of a terror attack. He would quickly take one the most seriously wounded in an ambulance and treat him or her on the way to the hospital. Once in the ER, he would be responsible for all of the patients.

However, tonight he still hadn't arrived at the hospital. His family was frantic. He had taken his 20-year-old daughter, Nava, for coffee. It was meant to be a final father-daughter bonding before her wedding, which was to take place the following day. They went to Emek Refaim. They were standing behind the bomber when he declared "Allah Akhbar (God is great)." David will never be able to treat another victim and Nava will never get married.

Jonah and I stayed by a makeshift first aid station to treat the less seriously wounded while the other doctor went back in to look for David and Nava. At the same time Dr. Salaam Dana, a senior physician at the clinic, an Arab and a longtime friend of David, returned to the scene to look for him.

After discovering this terrible loss, the ambulance teams continued to treat the wounded and the ER staff continued to care for the stream of victims flowing in. The head had been cut from our collective body yet we continued to function in the way he had taught us and according to how he would have wanted.

Only after getting home to my quiet apartment did I begin to think about the magnitude of the tragedy and I allowed myself to cry. A beautiful young girl out with her father hours before her wedding... I couldn't help but think of the night before my own wedding two months ago and how I had gone out with my brother.

I thought about David: my boss, my mentor and a friend. He had been so happy to celebrate our wedding with us. This brilliant physician and administrator was also an ordained rabbi and humanitarian par excellence.

He started the clinic after seeing how patients in the ER suffered needlessly from long waits and cold treatment. He realized his vision of a patient-centred emergency clinic where all people were treated as human beings and given state-of-the-art medical care.

I was thrilled when the medical establishment recognized his worth and he was asked to become head of one of the major ERs in the city. I was amazed at how much he had improved the ER after only a few weeks on the job. David proudly showed me how a few small changes brought down waiting time from a few hours to a few minutes. Patients were treated better and felt better. At the funeral, a few of us estimated that David had directly or indirectly taken care of over a million people.

The more I write about this great man the more I realize that words are inadequate. Every person living in this area of the world, Arab and Jew alike, will suffer from this irreplaceable loss.

Everyone in the clinic is walking around in a daze. A few candles are lit by the door to Dr. Applebaum's office. Life goes on, but nothing will be the same without him.

There is one image that I can't get out of my head: Nava's weeping fiancé placing the wedding ring on his bride-to-be's shrouded body as she was lowered to her final resting place.

May the memory of David and Nava Applebaum be a blessing to us all. *The writer is a BAYT oleh.* (CBC News Viewpoint www.cbc.ca Sep 12)

Oslo's Terrible Toll By Jeff Jacoby

On Sept. 13, 1993, Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin publicly shook hands on the White House lawn. That gesture ushered in the Oslo "peace process," so called after the Norwegian capital where its groundwork had been laid.

The deal that led to the White House handshake had been sealed with an exchange of correspondence four days earlier. On Sept. 9, Arafat had signed a letter declaring that the PLO "recognizes the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security" and "renounces the use of terrorism and acts of violence." He promised to "assume responsibility over all PLO elements and personnel in order to assure their compliance, prevent violations, and discipline violators." Rabin replied that Israel would recognize the PLO as the Palestinians' representative and accept it as a negotiating partner for peace.

But the White House ceremony did not inaugurate an era of peace. It inaugurated instead the worst decade of terrorism in Israel's history.

Just 11 days after the handshake, 22-year-old Yigal Vaknin was stabbed to death in a citrus grove by a Hamas death squad, which left a note boasting of the murder. Vaknin was the first of 1,126 men, women, children, and babies who would lose their lives to Palestinian terror in the 10 years following Arafat's renunciation of violence. Some, like Vaknin, were knifed to death. Others were shot or stoned or bombed. The terrorists have killed their victims at a discotheque and a bat mitzvah party, at a Passover seder and in a pizzeria, on rural roads and in private homes, on a university campus and in a farmer's market, and in dozens of buses and bus stops.

And for every terror victim who has died, six or seven others have been wounded -- often maimed or traumatized for life.

The Palestinians, too, have suffered thousands of casualties. Many have died while planning or carrying out violent attacks; others, smeared as "collaborators," have been lynched by Arafat's cutthroats. Innocent bystanders have lost their lives, tragically killed when Israel has fought in self-defense. They, too, are part of Oslo's terrible toll.

I was on the White House lawn on Sept. 13, 1993, and saw the handshake in person. It was, for me, a surreal and disquieting moment: I had never expected to see the world's most notorious terrorist, the foremost killer of Jews since the death of Stalin, hailed as a peacemaker.

Yet even more surreal and disquieting was the rapture of the audience. People were giddy with happiness, elated that the impossible dream of Arab-Israeli peace was coming true before their eyes. In a commentary that morning I had written: "A reality check is in order. . . . One letter from Arafat does not a Palestinian peace with Israel make. . . . The millennium has not arrived, and there is no cause for euphoria." But that was clearly a minority view, both on the White House lawn and in the media at large.

At the Israeli embassy a few hours later I saw Shimon Peres -- then Israel's foreign minister and a key Oslo architect -- mobbed by a deliriously joyful crowd. Even more than the Washington dignitaries and media talking heads, Israelis and American Jews embraced the new "peace process." Oslo was extolled as the start of a "New Middle East," in which Israel would be smiled on by its neighbors and the Arabs' enmity would give way to tourism and joint ventures.

Oslo quickly became a cult, worshipped with a fervor that brooked no doubts and disdained all skeptics. There was never peace but there was a "peace process," and the more the evidence of its failure mounted, the more fervently it was venerated.

Within a few months it should have been clear to all that Arafat and the PLO leadership had not abandoned terrorism. Empowering them with land and money and authority had inflamed, not quenched, their thirst to "liberate" Israel from the Jews. Buses exploded and funerals proliferated, but Israelis told themselves that they were fashioning a "peace of the brave" and that there was no alternative but to return to the negotiating table and offer new concessions.

Yet each concession only further convinced the Palestinians that the Jews were weakening, and that upping the violence would make them even more desperate for peace. Not until September 2000 did Israel begin to wake from its stupor. That was when Prime Minister Ehud Barak made his unprecedented offer -- a sovereign Palestinian state with shared control of Jerusalem -- and Arafat replied by unleashing the deadliest terror campaign Israelis have ever known.

Oslo was not a good idea that went sour. It was fatally flawed from the

start. The fundamental premise of Oslo -- that the Palestinians were ready to live in peace with Israel -- was always a lie. To Arafat and the PLO, peace was merely a tactic, one step forward in the "liberation" of Palestine. On the very day he shook Rabin's hand, Arafat assured a Jordanian TV audience that the liquidation of Israel was still his goal. It was a message that he and his lieutenants would repeat time and time again.

Israelis crave peace, and they thought they craved it at any price. But peace at any price leads to war. Ten years after the handshake at the White House, let that be Oslo's epitaph. (The Boston Globe Sep 14)
The writer is a columnist for The Boston Globe.

The No-Answer Answer By Rabbi Stewart Weiss

Over the last several days, I keep asking myself, "What is G-d thinking?" - How does a caring, omnipotent G-d allow such horrible tragedies as we have experienced to transpire?

- How can He permit the murder of a magnificent doctor, a tzadik who saved countless lives in his distinguished medical career - including many victims of similar terror acts?

- How can He take a bride on the eve of her wedding?!

- How can we activate the "merciful and compassionate G-d" to whom we pray each day?

Having gone to the same school as Dr. David Applebaum - my wife also grew up with his wife - this suicide bombing hit especially hard. I have agonized deeply over these deaths, along with that of our son Ari and all the good people who have been killed in more than two years of the Terror War.

Yet I have no answers - not a single one that ameliorates the pain. It is beyond me. I cannot fathom G-d's purpose in these horrendous outrages; I do not know what particular message He is trying to send.

In an age when prophecy is long gone, and Heavenly voices have ceased to rain down, I am at a loss as to what G-d's plan is.

Nor do I believe that ANYONE out there in the mortal world has an inside track to G-d's will. I am wary of self-proclaimed authorities who claim they "know" why this is all happening and what it will take to stop the killings. From the mystic who assured us that Ari would be safe during his service, to the parent who pulled his kid out of the Army and moved him to "safe" California - where he was subsequently killed in a car crash - they are all Pretenders to the Throne.

No one has a clue.

I do know this: Those who preach that G-d is not to be found in the equation leave me totally unsatisfied. They would have us believe that all of this violence is either Man's exercise of free will gone haywire, or the Universe demonstrating it leads a haphazard, random existence with No One running the show. This thesis I reject out of hand, for not only does it create more questions than it answers, it leads us into an existential maelstrom of chaos that is too painful for me to bear.

Knowing that our son, and all the other terror victims, died for a purpose - even if we don't understand that purpose - is infinitely more comforting than believing that they died for no reason at all.

No, I have no answers. That's why I'm down here, and He's up there.

But I suggest to you that, sometimes, no answer can be an answer, too. While I believe in being pro-active in life - working for a living, fighting for Israel, doing all this is humanly possible to advance our cause - I recognize that there is a ceiling to our powers. There comes a point when we must acknowledge that not everything is in our hands, that some decisions are made outside our sphere of influence and beyond our exuberant egos.

A human being is a mighty creature - capable of creating and destroying worlds - but there are times when he must cede control to a greater force in the Universe.

A believing Jew covers his eyes when he declares his faith in One G-d, acknowledging that his field of vision is not unlimited. Perhaps this lesson in humility should not be lost on our political leaders. For more than a decade, since we first engaged the terrorists in "dialogue," we have employed countless strategies in order to "persuade" them to end their war and make peace with us.

With pomp and ceremony, we have turned over huge tracts of land to them. We have given them deadly weapons, showered them with money, even begged other nations of the world to recognize and respect them. Kings, Presidents and Prime Ministers have exhausted millions of man-hours and billions of dollars in "The Process." Yet in return, despite all the effort expended, we have received only abuse. The Palestinians have repaid our desire for co-existence with brutality and bloodshed, using the time and territory we ceded to them to further advance their malevolent designs upon the whole of Israel. They have rejected every overture of friendship. They have virtually begged us to realize that they want neither peace nor prosperity and that they seek only our destruction, even at the expense of their own lives.

So perhaps it is time to admit that, alas, there IS no answer currently at hand, no pie-in-the-sky solution just waiting to be implemented. At least not in the foreseeable future. Despite our excellent Jewish brain-power and all our good intentions, we may have to conclude that the magic formula still eludes us.

Perhaps the time will come when the Palestinians - leaders and laymen alike - will truly desire peace. Perhaps some brilliant strategist will appear in the future with an amazing plan that satisfies all the parties. But until then, maybe the best

solution is to acknowledge that no solution is forthcoming. Our lone option is to maintain courage and steadfastness on the path, to defend our land and attack the forces of evil with all the resources at our command, and to try and carry on with our lives as normally and as meaningfully as possible.

As this most difficult year draws to a close, we should remember that we are not the first Jewish generation to confront evil and battle for our survival; we can only hope that we are the last. (Jerusalem Post Sep 14)
The writer is director of the Jewish Outreach Center of Ra'anana.

Teaching Israeli Arabs to Love Palestine By Itamar Marcus

The following appeared this week in the Palestinian daily Al Hayat al-Jadida: "The teacher wondered how any geography teacher in the Arab schools could convince his students that "Safad" [in Arabic] was changed to "Zefat" [Hebrew] and that Sefuriya [Arabic] had suddenly become "Zipori" [Hebrew]. "He expressed the opinion that the students would rip up these maps and the teacher who would accept them would be considered a traitor... He was reminded of [a recent] distribution of Israeli flags... the students ripped them to pieces and threw them in the garbage...."

These words wouldn't surprise if they were attributed to a teacher in the Palestinian Authority school system. However, the person quoted is an Israeli Arab teacher on salary from the Ministry of Education. The children ripping up Israeli flags are Israeli Arabs.

With the media focus on the Or Commission's criticism of the Israel Police during the Israeli Arab riots, why the police were shooting is virtually forgotten. It was October 2000. The Palestinian Authority had started a war against Israel. Two days into the war, thousands of Israeli Arabs throughout Galilee joined the battle on the side of Israel's enemies, supported vocally by their leaders and passively by the general population.

They threw stones and firebombs, burned tires, killed an Israeli Jew and injured many others, and closed down the main roads of the North for days.

Israel, it seems, has lost the allegiance of 20% of its citizens, who in time of war side with the enemy. How did this happen?

While there are many contributing factors, there is ample evidence that this transfer of allegiance was a primary goal of the Palestinian Authority long before the start of the October 2000 war. The PA implemented a systematic and determined policy toward Israel's Arabs, especially the youth, targeting them continuously with the message that their identity and allegiance should be with the PA alone. At the PA's initiative, there was a never-ending series of PA-Israeli Arab educational, sporting and cultural events. The message - explicit and implicit - was one of joint history, culture, and destiny.

When the PA decided to have a "Miss Palestine" contest in 1999, it included Israeli Arab girls. Moreover, the PA made sure that six out of the 10 finalists, and the winner, were all Israeli Arabs. When the PA set up a national soccer team, the coach was an Israeli Arab from Nazareth.

There are numerous organizations and programs in the PA whose sole purpose is to promote this involvement and identity. These include: Committee for Relations with 1948, Children without Borders, Contacts between the members of a United People, Relations without Borders - all of whose activities are aimed, according to the PA daily: "to increase the contact and affinity between the members of the Palestinian people in the West Bank, inside [Israel] and the Gaza Strip. (Al-Kuds, May 24, 1999).

Arafat's office has a special unit, the Committee for Contacts with the Residents of Occupied Palestine. Terms like "Inside Arabs" and the "Residents of Occupied Palestine" are all PA euphemisms for Israeli Arabs.

The PA has denied the possibility of the existence of an Israeli Arab identity, writing in one 1999 editorial: "How can the executioner and the victim be one?" (Al-Hayat al-Jadida August 18, 1999).

The PA has been careful to send representatives to events internal to Israeli Arabs. Numerous graduation ceremonies in Jerusalem and the Galilee had no representative from the Ministry of Education - but did have a PA representative. For instance, Al-Hayat al-Jadida of May 25 1999 reported: "A year-end ceremony in a Jerusalem school was held in the presence of the PA Ministry of Education representative, and the Palestinian national anthem was sounded."

Such gestures were actively supported by Arab leaders like Knesset member Azmi Bishara, who marched with Israeli Arab youth waving PA flags. Bishara explained that were the young people to lose their Palestinian identity, all that would remain would be family and tribal ties.

"The blue [Israeli ID] card you have in your pocket is not an identity card; it is a residence card."

The PA initiated the process of "de-Israelizing" Israel's Arabs, and found in them willing partners. It happened openly, under the eyes of the government, which did nothing to try to win the allegiance of its citizens.

Today's Israeli Arab attitude might be summed up by the following description, which ran in the April 20, 1999 edition of Al Quds: "[Israel] is not their state, its interests are not their interests, its symbols are not their symbols, its policy is not their policy."

Tragically, even if this does not accurately reflect Israeli Arabs today, it may well in the not-too-distant future. (Jerusalem Post Sep 16)
The writer is director of Palestinian Media Watch.