



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*

דב"ר
destruction of Israel
through violence.

"The constitutional Charter of the PA is available on the web for Paul Martin to read," concluded Gordon. "Instead, our Prime Minister has chosen to purchase international approval with the blood of Israelis, while refusing to tell Canadians what benefit has been derived from nearly one third of a billion tax dollars paid to Arafat and Abbas." (CCD Sep 17)

Events...

Monday September 26, 8:00pm

Paysi Golomb Director of Kehillot Tehilla will speak on "Purchasing a home in Israel, before, during or after your Aliyah: For Olim and investors alike" at 57 Glen Park Ave. The public is welcome.

Wednesday, September 28, 7:30 p.m.

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center presents Dr. Daniel Pipes, Director of Middle East Forum, who will speak on "Radical Islam and the War on Terror" at the Sephardic Kehila Centre.

December 4-13

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Commentary...

Canada Must Stop Funding Palestinian Terrorism

Press Release Canadian Coalition for Democracies

On September 15, Prime Minister Paul Martin announced from New York that Canada will give another \$24.5 million to the Palestinian Authority (PA). This past May, Mr. Martin announced \$12.2 million in aid during the visit to Canada of PA President Mahmoud Abbas, bringing the total Canadian aid to the Palestinians to \$310 million since 1993.

"President Abbas came to office promising (1) to disarm Palestinian militants, (2) to end incitement in schools and media, and (3) to end glorification of suicide bombing," said Alastair Gordon, President of the Canadian Coalition for Democracies (CCD). "On that understanding, Prime Minister Martin promised another \$12.2 million in May of this year."

Since receiving Canadian tax dollars, President Abbas has reneged on all his commitments. Specifically, (1) PA Foreign Minister Nasser al-Kidwa publicly declared in June that the PA will not disarm Hamas and other terrorist groups under its jurisdiction; (2) Not a single textbook denying the existence of Israel and preaching the destruction of "the Zionist entity" has been removed or revised; and (3) Abbas himself, speaking to a group of high school students and educators in Gaza, glorified suicide bombing when he declared, "What has been achieved here [in Gaza] is due to the martyrs."

"When money is given on the understanding that certain commitments to peace will be undertaken, the open declaration by the recipient that those commitments will not be honoured should mean, at a minimum, that funding would stop," said Gordon. "Instead, our Prime Minister rewards bad faith with another \$24.5 million from Canadian taxpayers."

"It is not enough to pretend that the money is allocated to specific projects, because money is fungible," added Gordon. "If Canadians are paying to build a highway, those funds are now freed up for war against Israel, in keeping with the PA's constitutional governing charter and repeated declarations by PA spokespeople."

On behalf of Canadians, CCD is urging Paul Martin to inform President Abbas that he will receive no more Canadian funding until he meets his commitments. Canadians expect that the Palestinian Charter will finally be amended to remove Article 9 that declares "Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine", Article 20 that states "Jews [do not] constitute a single nation with an identity of its own", and other articles that call for the

Arik's Talking Points By Caroline Glick

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's daily talking points are becoming increasingly delusional. Standing before foreign audiences and journalists he libels his political opponents as "radical extremists" who have stolen the Likud from him. Between attacking them personally and deriding Israel's democratic process generally Sharon has launched a weird rhetorical offensive against Hamas.

In New York over the weekend the premier said that Israel would not facilitate the elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council in Judea and Samaria next January if Hamas participates in the poll – although he plans to do nothing in the face of Hamas's ascendancy in Gaza. Sharon argued that to be considered a legitimate political party Hamas would first have to disarm and amend its charter, which calls for the destruction of Israel.

This new plan makes sense on the face of it. After all, Hamas is a deadly terrorist organization and, as a US State Department spokesman noted, there is a "fundamental contradiction of groups wanting to keep one foot in the political process and one foot in the camp of terror."

The problem is that this fundamental contradiction describes not only Hamas but every Palestinian political party. Fatah is both the largest terrorist group and the ruling party in the Palestinian Authority. Indeed there are no Palestinian political parties of note that are not terrorist organizations. So why the sudden interest in Hamas?

If anyone had any hope that Sharon would stop appeasing Israel's enemies in the wake of the implementation of his withdrawal and expulsion plan from Gaza, his speech last Thursday at the UN, like his obscene attacks on his political opponents, show clearly that Sharon has no intention of stopping his appeasement bandwagon. If reelected he will make "painful concessions" in Judea and Samaria – meaning further land giveaways to Palestinian terrorists – just as he just did in Gaza.

For Sharon, then, Hamas is a convenient "enemy of peace." As opposed to Fatah, it has never tried to hide the fact that its goal is the liquidation of Israel or obfuscated its ties to state supporters of terrorism like Iran and Syria. For Sharon's campaign advisers, opposing Hamas's participation in the elections is an easy way to hide from Likud voters the fact that Sharon's entire policy is based on appeasing terrorists.

And look at what its implementation in Gaza has brought us. In the space of one week Gaza has been transformed into the largest, best-armed and best-financed terror base in the world.

There were two security justifications for Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza. The first was that by retreating, Israel would be setting the conditions for forcing the Palestinians to fight on a conventional battlefield. The argument was that in Israel's absence, the Palestinians would be in charge of territory and any action against Israel from that territory would be seen by one and all as a clear act of aggression Israel would be perfectly justified in retaliating against.

Unfortunately, this is not true. Since Israel's retreat we see an exact re-enactment along the border with Gaza of Hizbullah's strategy in south Lebanon. There, in the wake of Israel's retreat, Hizbullah deployed along the border as the Lebanese Army stood back. In Gaza, Hamas, Fatah and Islamic Jihad have deployed their terrorists along the border and the PA militias have stood back.

And so the PA has set the conditions for plausible deniability. Mahmoud Abbas can simply say that his forces cannot control the terrorists.

Proponents of Israel's withdrawal also argued that by leaving Gaza, Israel would shorten its defensive lines. This has also worked out to be incorrect.

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Now, rather than securing the 240-km. border with Egypt by controlling Gaza, Israel has to control the entire border directly at the same time that its own border with Gaza remains breached.

Military sources say that building the infrastructure necessary to secure the border with Egypt from terrorist infiltrations and early warning sensors will cost NIS 500 million. To date, the government has allocated nothing.

Aside from this, Gaza itself is becoming a strategic threat in a manner never seen before. In the space of one week, Gaza, with full Egyptian backing, has become the best armed terror base in the world.

The massive build-up in Gaza is – in a word – terrifying. In the one week since IDF forces left the area, thousands of tons of weaponry have been brought into the area. These weapons reportedly include Strella anti-aircraft missiles, Katyusha rockets, anti-tank missiles, hundreds of thousands of rifles and millions of rounds of ammunition.

The result of the massive build-up was evident at Hamas's parade in Gaza City on Sunday. The march of 10,000 uniformed, armed Hamas terrorists was the single largest Palestinian show of force ever. The PA itself has never mounted such a spectacle. Before Israel retreated, Hamas never had more than a few hundred armed terrorists marching in the streets.

And it is not just Hamas that is bringing in weapons. The PA is as well. And it is not just Hamas that is calling for a new round of war. Abbas and his associates have repeatedly threatened us that if the government does not withdraw from yet more areas of Judea and Samaria it will renew the fighting.

It is only a matter of time before an excuse is found to launch a new, even deadlier phase of their terror war.

FOR ITS part, Egypt is not the least embarrassed that it completely failed to secure its border with Gaza and has enabled more than 100,000 people to cross between Gaza and the Sinai – including terrorists from Sudan, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Syria. In fact, Egypt is demanding that Israel allow it to expand its role as mediator between the various Palestinian terror groups by having a military presence in Judea and Samaria.

Egypt's hutzpa is in keeping with the general international climate regarding the withdrawal from Gaza. Israel has received no support from anyone for its right to build in Judea and Samaria, or to secure borders. From Washington to London to Paris to Cairo, there is a consensus that the withdrawal and expulsion policy in Gaza was merely a first step to Israel's relinquishing of all the areas it entered in 1967.

All this just shows that Israel is in serious trouble. Our borders are less secure than they have been since before the Six Day War. What can we do?

On a remedial level, the IDF has already begun shifting its forces to the Negev. This must be speeded up. Today, in the absence of a secure border perimeter, the only way to protect the Negev is to mass our forces along the border.

But more importantly, we need new elections. Sharon, who is the author of our current crisis, is so invested with the withdrawal and with advancing his platform of appeasement that there is next to no chance he will admit his mistake and take the necessary corrective action.

And even if Sharon were willing to admit he was wrong, his presence at the helm of the government prevents Israel from defending its need to change course to Washington.

Sharon sold his unilateral withdrawal and expulsion plan to a skeptical White House. US President George W. Bush is now personally invested in the policy. He will not accept a retreat from this policy if asked to do so by Sharon – the man who got both Bush and Israel into this mess in the first place. Only a new leader not stained by this preordained disaster has a chance of turning his back on the avenue of appeasement. (Jerusalem Post Sep 20)

The Temple Mount: Getting Serious By Arlene Kushner

News from Palestinian sources protest Jews taking up residence near the Al-Aksa Mosque. Not a new story. Only weeks go, media expert Michael Widlanski reported that Voice of Palestine radio broke into its regular programming to announce that Israeli troops and Jewish extremists were invading Islamic holy places on the Temple Mount.

Following that, came a report that Jordan's Ambassador to Israel, Dr. Marouf Bakhit, had rushed to declare to officials at the Israeli Foreign Ministry that his country was outraged over the "provocative act" of a group of Jews who had the insolence to visit the Temple Mount in commemoration of Jerusalem Day. The official Jordanian news agency declared this "a provocative act that could stir up confrontation and evoke outrage of Muslims around the world."

It has been well documented that in September 2000 the Palestinian Authority used Ariel Sharon's visit to the Mount as a pretense for starting the Intifada they already had planned. This current incitement is bad news. Seems they're revving up the crowds again.

It is time, I suggest, for us to start thinking seriously about the Temple

Mount and our relationship to it as Jews. This is not an issue simply for those advocating building of a Third Temple on the Mount. I advocate nothing of the sort; yet, I see that it affects us all.

It is, after all, the Temple Mount and not the Kotel (Western Wall) that is Judaism's holiest site. The Kotel is a retaining wall that helped to shore up the Mount on which the Temple stood, and so reflects the holiness of the place. But it is the Mount that is not only the site of the two Temples, but traditionally the site of many other momentous events in our history as well. It is identified as Mt. Moriyah, where the akeida (the sacrifice of Isaac) took place.

I am well aware that many think that this is "simply" ancient history and of no particular relevance to modern sensibilities. But this is not so. There is, first, the centrality of this place to our heritage. A people with pride does not lightly dismiss this. And then there is the sanctity that adheres: this is where the Holy of Holies stood, the sacred space the High Priest entered once a year. This is the place where the Jewish people communed with the Sh'khinah - the presence of the Almighty. The sanctity adheres.

About 1,300 years ago, the Muslims - for whom this is sacred territory with regard to Muhammad, said to have ascended to heaven from a rock on the Mount - built the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aksa Mosque nearby on the Mount. These were built on top of the remains of the Temple within the Mount. There is a great deal there, within; a labyrinth of tunnels and archeological remains. Excavations have never been permitted by the rabbis because of the sanctity of the place.

From 1948-1967, when Jordan was in control of the Old City of Jerusalem, no Jews were permitted there. Not at the Kotel, not anywhere in the vicinity.

When we retook the Old City in 1967, the Kotel and the Mount came into our possession. "Har HaBayit byadenu!" (the Temple Mount is in our hands.) went the joyous cry. There was singing at the site then, and praying and blowing of the shofar.

After that momentous capture, however, Moshe Dayan in what was presumed to be an act of tolerant wisdom and generosity - but which I perceive to have been an act of colossal stupidity - took down the Israeli flag from the Mount and called in Muslim religious leaders from the Islamic Trust (Wakf). Israel will retain over-all control, he told them, but he was turning over to them everyday control of the Mount, where they had holy structures. With that act, he took a large step towards surrender of the Mount - our Mount.

The Muslims are not interested in sharing. They are not interested in the kindness of our gestures. They are into taking control and banishing us. They perceive conciliation as weakness.

In recent years, there has been a series of decisions made by Israeli authorities that for me smack of appeasement, backing down that suggests we have no legitimate claim to be on the Mount. A mistake. Sometimes, no Jews are allowed up there at all. When Jews are allowed, they may not pray and must go only in controlled numbers. The point is not to "agitate the Muslim street." But they agitate anyway, and accuse us even of what we do not do.

It is time we maintained our legitimate presence on the Mount, and our right in principle to be there. Education must be done widely and forcefully, so that people understand precisely what this place is for us. It must be clear to all the world that this is not simply a "Muslim" place and that it matters to us, as well.

We in Israel are engaged in a battle for our survival. Let no one imagine that anything else is going on. The Palestinians, sly and crafty, are waging a "people's war", which means it is not waged just with violence, but also with lies and propaganda. One of the weapons they have been using is the fabrication that we do not have a legitimate history in this land, but that they do. We are merely colonial interlopers, occupiers. People believe it.

At the heart of this war is the Temple Mount, for that Mount is both the symbol and the concrete evidence of our ancient presence here. I cannot emphasize this sufficiently. If the Palestinians can convince the world that we did not have a presence on the Mount, then they will have robbed us of our oldest and deepest link to this land and our most solemn claim to it now. If we participate in this theft, by relinquishing what is ours through appeasement, apathy and foolishness, we will have done ourselves enormous harm.

Yasser Arafat told an astonished Bill Clinton that there were never Temples on the Mount. (I have no information on how Clinton responded.) Now Arafat's protege, Mahmoud Abbas, is on record with the same sort of statement. He also consistently calls for us to move back to the pre-'67 lines, which means relinquishing the Mount and the Kotel. There have been very extensive Muslim excavations within the Temple Mount, where they have constructed an interior mosque in an area called Solomon's Stables. In the course of this work, they dumped tons of rubble in a garbage heap; it included priceless archeological artifacts from Temple days. The objective

was clearly to destroy the evidence of our having been there. Luckily, a private archeological venture by Israelis was begun that is sifting through the rubble and recovering the evidence

The Muslim intent and absolute lack of respect are clear.

Strength is required of us before it is too late.

The writer made aliyah from the US and lives in Jerusalem. She has produced three major reports on UNRWA for the Center for Near East Policy Research and is the author of the recent book "Disclosed: Inside the Palestinian Authority and the PLO". (IsraelNationalNews.com Sep 15)

Gaza's Long Shadow By Caroline Glick

Less than a week after the IDF's final retreat from Gaza, Israel's senior military brass found itself warding off attacks on two fronts.

In Gaza, now empty of all Jewish presence, the Palestinians lost no time in taking charge of events in their own special way. First came the firebombing of the synagogues. We were asked indignantly by such paragons of virtue as PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas, "Well, what did you expect to happen?" As if it should go without saying that the Palestinians will exploit any opportunity to show us their contempt for all things Jewish.

After the firebombing came the looting of the destroyed Jewish communities. Then came the looting of the hothouses which had been bought for the Palestinians by wealthy Jews in the US who decided to buy them so that the Palestinians could reap what the expelled Israelis had sown.

Sometime between destroying the abandoned synagogues, looting the destroyed Jewish villages, tearing apart the hothouses, throwing grenades at IDF patrols guarding Moshav Netiv Ha'asara and shooting mortars at Sderot, the Palestinians discovered Egypt. At the direction of Hamas, and with the help of PA militias and Egyptian soldiers, thousands of Palestinians crossed the wall separating Palestinian Rafah from Egyptian Rafah. Among the merrymakers, unknown numbers of terrorists crossed back and forth shuttling arms and reinforcements into Gaza in unknown quantities. IDF commanders looked on, and impotently stated that there is a high probability that al-Qaida operatives are among the newcomers. Oh well.

For his part, Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz fecklessly railed against the Palestinians and Egyptians for doing nothing to seal the border. The beautiful agreement he negotiated with Egyptian Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman fell apart in 30 seconds and suddenly Mofaz was faced with the meaning of retreat: When you retreat, others take over and you have no ability to stop them because you are not there. Oh well.

The Palestinians minced no words about their goals for the future. Hamas wants to liquidate all of Israel. Hamas leader Mahmoud al-Zahar said on Tuesday, "We know our nation is expecting us to continue the liberation journey until the flag of Islam is raised over Jerusalem. This land should not have any Zionists on it." That is, Zahar called for genocide. Oh well. As the IDF was attempting to make sense of the new security insanity forced upon it by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Sharon himself was ignoring the reality he created back home as he basked in the glory bestowed upon him in New York by US President George W. Bush for his "courageous" surrender to Palestinian terrorism.

Yet, before our generals had a chance to catch their breath, they received a gut punch from an unforeseen direction. On Tuesday, Maj. Gen. (res.) Doron Almog tried to go to London. But once his El Al plane landed he was alerted by the Israeli embassy that if he alighted at Heathrow he would likely be arrested. An anti-Zionist British-Israeli "human rights" lawyer by the name of Daniel Machover, in cooperation with the anti-Zionist Israeli group Yesh Gvul, filed a lawsuit against Almog charging him with war crimes in a British court. So alerted, Almog stayed on the plane and went home.

Triumphant, Yesh Gvul's spokesmen in Israel announced that in addition to Almog, they were in the midst of filing complaints for war crimes with British courts against eight other senior IDF commanders. Among them are former chief of staff Lt.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon and current Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Dan Halutz. Hearing this, Ya'alon cancelled his plan to fly to London next week.

According to Yediot Aharonot, the Israeli defense establishment is in a state of hysteria over the attacks on its senior officers. Left-wing commentators and Ha'aretz's editorial board are ecstatic. Like Yesh Gvul, these extreme leftist media gurus have been arguing - without legal merit - since the late 1980s that Israel has no right to defend itself in Judea, Samaria or Gaza. Adopting the baseless Palestinian claims, these legalistic deviants say that somehow the fact that the Fourth Geneva Convention states that Israel must protect the rights of non-combatants in these areas means that Israel cannot take military action to secure its nationals and its national interests beyond the 1949 armistice lines. The fact that a simple reading of the texts shows this to be untrue makes no difference to these political radicals masked as bleeding-heart liberals.

In recent years, these anti-Zionist Israelis have received aid and comfort from such organizations as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the UN in their quest to demonize their country and criminalize its right to self-defense. Fabricating the laws of war from whole cloth to advance their political agendas, these organizations have given the weight of law to legally meaningless UN General Assembly resolutions and human rights reports. Assigning legal power to these political groups, the extreme Left in Israel has created a fiction which many American jurists refer to today as "lawfare" or the exploitation of the rhetoric of international law to prosecute a political war against a state to politically deny it its legal right to defend itself.

Yesh Gvul is arguably a criminal organization. For years it has been running public campaigns to convince soldiers to refuse to serve in the IDF. This is a criminal offense. And yet, the State Prosecutor's Office has refused to open any investigation against its members.

This is not surprising because for years now, the state prosecution has been led by men and women - many of whom are now Supreme Court justices - who sympathize with the views of those waging "lawfare" against Israel. Attorney-General Menahem Mazuz's latest statements, where he criticized the government for deciding Sunday not to destroy the synagogues in Gaza are a case in point. Where is the legal question here? There is none. But in a legal world where law is just a means to advance a political agenda, no one questions this unelected civil servant's right to weigh in on such issues.

Then there is the Supreme Court's latest outrage. Thursday, in an opinion written by President Aharon Barak, the court determined that the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion last summer on the legality of the security fence should be given legal weight. The fact that there is no basis whatsoever in Israeli law for giving legal weight to an advisory opinion from that politicized court of anti-Israel justices is completely unimportant. The fact that the opinion itself claimed that Israel has no right to self-defense is also irrelevant. Barak claimed that the problem was just that the ICJ hadn't received the evidential basis for Israel's security needs and as a result judged as it did last July.

Within this poisonous legalistic morass, Israel's generals now find themselves under fire. What can be done? The first thing that must be firmly understood is that the battle being launched against them in the British courts has nothing to do with law. It is simply part of the political campaign against Israel that these anti-Zionists wage as an adjunct and a complement to the Palestinian terrorists on the ground. As the Palestinians use bomb belts and rockets, these extremists use politicized courtrooms to wage their campaign for Israel's destruction.

The immediate political response to this offensive was made by Dr. Yuval Steinitz, the chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. This week he submitted a bill to criminalize filing or conspiring to file legal claims in foreign courts against members of Israel's security forces for missions they undertook in defense of the country.

This is a welcome initiative, but it misses the larger point. For the past 12 years, Israel has abandoned the offense in the political war being waged against it. Steinitz's bill is reflective of this trend in two ways. First, without a serious reform of the State Prosecutor's Office and the manner in which justices are chosen, (today they largely select themselves), there is little chance that laws on the books will be enforced against anti-Zionist political activists who seek to destroy Israel's reputation and weaken Israel's social cohesion.

Aside from this, the initiative is defensive in nature. Perhaps these people will be prosecuted, but so what? They will still be setting the political agenda with their wild legal fantasies. Against their onslaught, the time is long past for Israel to go on the offensive. And the laws of war, as they stand are a good place to start.

Zahar's statement, and hundreds like it made by Hamas commanders over that past dozen years, proves unequivocally that the terror group is engaged in a campaign of genocide. According to the International Convention on Genocide, every state signatory must arrest and try any member of Hamas or anyone providing direct or indirect assistance to Hamas that is present on its territory. The PA, for instance, in refusing to take action against Hamas and in paying salaries to Hamas terrorists imprisoned in Israeli jails, is guilty of assisting Hamas in its genocidal campaign against Israel. As a result, any PA functionary found on the territory of any state signatory to the Genocide Convention should be arrested.

If instead of simply collecting photo-opportunities for his campaign for Likud leadership, Sharon had argued this point at the UN, his presence in New York - as Gaza is transformed into Taliban Afghanistan - would have made sense. But the fact that Sharon continues to doggedly refuse to do anything that would actually advance Israel's national interest doesn't mean that others shouldn't take on the task with as much enthusiasm as Yesh Gvul

and its British bedfellows work to undermine Israel's right to exist. It isn't that in the current anti-Israel international climate such arguments - regardless of their legal merit - will make an immediate difference. But that doesn't mean that they shouldn't be made - loudly, at every opportunity.

Israel's military options for dealing with Gaza's rapid transformation into a base for international terrorism are limited in the wake of its self-inflicted defeat. What Yesh Gvul did this week was to point out the path for widening Israel's room for military maneuvering. That path is the path of political warfare.

As the shadow of Gaza grows and expands to Judea and Samaria and the rest of the country, Israel is faced with an increasingly dangerous situation. Without a concerted international and domestic campaign to defend its rights, Israel will find itself without the means to justify its right to survive. (Jerusalem Post Sep 15)

Victims Forever? By Itamar Marcus and Barbara Crook

The Palestinian Authority figured out a long time ago that the world loves a victim. Indeed, it has successfully seized the mantle of "victim" as the dominant message to both its people and the outside world.

Teaching its own people that Israel is the source of their suffering creates anger, hatred and a population eager to confront Israel with violence and terror. Presenting itself to the world as the perpetual victim of "Israeli aggression" creates sympathy and, often, understanding of even the most heinous forms of terrorism. Along the way, victimhood has become a dominant component of the developing Palestinian national identity.

The PA-controlled media, schoolbooks and numerous other social-educational frameworks all disseminate the victimhood narrative. By such means the PA has engaged in a wide range of hate promotion - generally called "incitement" - under the umbrella of advancing the victim myth.

PA television, for example, broadcasts "historical" movies that depict rifletoting Zionists chasing Arabs off "Arab" land in before Israel's establishment to teach Palestinians to see themselves as permanent victims of land theft. A PA TV documentary broadcast more than 15 times in 2004 and 2005 presents all of Israel as "Palestine," stolen by the "forces of oppression" who are "still dividing up the world."

Haifa, Jaffa, the Galilee and the Negev are said to be waiting for their rightful owners to return. The Palestinians are taught to see themselves as victims simply by virtue of Israel's existence.

Israel is repeatedly accused of intentionally poisoning land, water and food. Recently the PA issued warnings not to enter Gush Katif until the land had been tested for toxins Israel may have planted in the ground. Israel is often accused of intentionally creating drug networks for Palestinians. Palestinians are said to be victims of Israeli-induced drug addictions and cancers.

Dozens of video clips depicting Israeli soldiers shooting innocent men, women and children have been broadcast many thousands of times on Palestinian Authority TV.

It a short step from such footage to broadcasting calls to murder Israelis, such as "The Muslims will kill the Jews, rejoice! Rejoice in Allah's victory... everything wants vengeance on the Jews, on these pigs on the face of the earth..." (PA TV September 10, 2004).

WE MIGHT have expected all this to end with the swearing in of Mahmoud Abbas as PA leader in January this year. Yet four months later, in June, PA TV was still broadcasting a "history" showed a crying infant shot and murdered in cold blood by actors depicting Israeli soldiers.

Similarly, when the media and even the newest of Palestinian schoolbooks cite the Protocols of the Elders of Zion as an authentic Jewish document planning Jewish world domination, they are presenting themselves as the newest victims of the demonic Jewish plot to rule the world.

Hardly a terror incident is commented on by the PA media without the explanation that it was "in response" either to a specific incident that may have occurred in close proximity to the terror attack or, when no such incident exists, to ongoing Israeli policies such as the "apartheid wall."

The Palestinian narrative plays into the tendency of Western social scientists to explain anti-social actions as direct and understandable responses to a person's or group's victimhood. Western society has adopted the position that a natural response to mistreatment is to assimilate the aggressor's behavior and subsequently strike out at others.

Abused children will later abuse their own, conclude criminal sociologists. Defense lawyers routinely demand and often gain sympathy for some of the gravest offenses if the defendants themselves were previously victims.

Yet as long as the promotion of victimhood is accomplished by stoking the fires of hatred, it is hard to see how it can be consistent with any progress toward a solution to the conflict.

Just last week a video clip broadcast for children included the murder of a Palestinian girl by an Israeli soldier. Also last week, an "educational" program

on PA television showed a map of all of Israel marked with the PLO flag as Palestine, while the narrator stated: "The heart of the Arab homeland is Palestine. The homeland remains whole and healthy if Palestine is whole and healthy. A stab in the heart is a deathblow. Throughout the generations there were those who directed the first stab at the heart of the Arab nation, to Palestine."

ISRAEL, WITH a history replete with actual victimhood, has followed the spirit of Jewish tradition and used its suffering not to inspire hatred, but just the opposite: as an engine for the pursuit of social justice. The Palestinians have taken their suffering, most of which is the direct responsibility of their own leadership, and turned "victimhood" into a force for hatred and justification of terror against Israel.

So long as victimhood is the defining pillar of Palestinian national identity, not only are the hopes for coexistence slim, so is the Palestinians' ability to fulfill their own aspirations.

That is, of course, if what they aspire to is a state living peacefully beside Israel. (Jerusalem Post Sep 15)

The writers are, respectively, the director and associate director of Palestinian Media Watch (www.pmw.org.il).

A Brutal Grin, Full of Malice By Emanuel Cohn

Gaza, 1995. Though my tank brigade is stationed in the Jordan Valley, I am deployed to Rafiah. Rafiah lies in the Southern Gaza Strip, on the Israeli-Egyptian border. Together with some of my colleagues, I am charged with the mission of delivering weapons to the Palestinian Authority. Some of my fellow soldiers refuse this job, but I volunteer for it.

Recently immigrated to Israel from Switzerland, bedazzled by Oslo and soaked with hope, I try to comprehend the logic of acting prime minister Shimon Peres, or at least not to question it. Weapons, lots of weapons, are to be handed out to the Palestinians so that they can provide quiet and order in the Territories.

Okay, then.

I try to ignore the fear that these weapons, handed out to the Palestinians in the course of the peace process, might later be used against Israelis.

So I travel to Rafiah in the winter of 1995. Upon our arrival I see Israeli officers and representatives of the Palestinian Authority. I am guided to a huge container that is opened. And I do not believe my eyes. Inside the container are hundreds of guns, all Kalashnikovs, sent from Egypt. "Foreign aid for the little, suffering brother," flashes through my head. The brand new Kalashim, as they are affectionately named, are of Russian origin, deadly accurate in hitting their target.

My duty is to count these guns, lubricate them and hand them over to the newly appointed Palestinian officer waiting next to me.

I start my work, and my hands turn black. "What doesn't one do for peace," I say to myself. After several hours of counting, cleaning, lubricating and, most of all, perspiring, I deliver the last rifle to the Palestinian officer.

And, just then, something happens that I will never be able to erase from my memory. The man looks at the gun, then lifts his head and looks straight at my face. All of a sudden, he starts to grin. It is a brutal grin, full of malice.

My blood runs cold; thoughts flash through my mind: How long will we Israelis play this na ve game? I see the raped innocence of the Jewish people and those Arabs who really want peace. It almost feels as if sympathy for our naive, for our foolishness, also resonated in that grin. In my head it echoes that the Palestinian officer is thinking: "You know very well that this gun, one day, will be pointed against you and your people!"

Paralyzed, I watch the man as he - still grinning to himself - walks to his container, "my" last Kalashnikov in his hands.

ON OUR journey home I cannot speak a word; the following day I cannot eat a bite. In the course of the following months and years there will be nights when I wake up drenched in sweat, seeing the grinning face of that Palestinian officer in front of me. Especially on those days when Jews are shot by murderous Palestinian terrorists, one thought keeps returning: "Perhaps this was your gun? One of your well-lubricated Kalashims?"

GAZA, 2005. In recent years, especially living through the "second intifada," most Israelis have come to understand that weapons must not be placed in the wrong hands. We cannot engage in a mad and recurring cycle of giving guns to the Palestinians, confiscating them in the course of a necessary military operation, and later giving them fresh weapons to replace those we've taken away.

No Israeli officer, ever again, should ever be ordered to face that malicious grin. (Jerusalem Post Sep 16)

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