

 Jerusalem 4:25; Toronto 6:13

Commentary...

Foreign Policy Freelancers Jerusalem Post Editorial

Any citizen of the United States wherever he may be, who, without authority of the United States, directly or indirectly commences or carries out any correspondence or intercourse with any foreign government or any officer or any agent thereof, with intent to influence the measures or conduct of any foreign government or any official or agent thereof, in relations to any disputes or controversies with the United States, or to defeat the measures of the United States, shall be fined not more than \$5,000 or imprisoned not more than three years, or both.— Logan Act, 1799

It is time for Israel to adopt its own version of the Logan Act. That Israeli governments rarely speak with one voice in foreign policy is bad enough. That delegations of private citizens and members of the opposition negotiate alternative peace deals with Palestinians – under the auspices of a foreign government, no less – makes a mockery of basic democratic processes. Then again, we are familiar with what some Israelis think about democratic processes.

The latest instance of freelance diplomacy is the so-called "Geneva initiative," a draft of which was finalized in Amman over the weekend. Sponsored by the Foreign Ministry of Switzerland, it involved, among others, the participation of former culture minister Yasser Abed Rabbo on the Palestinian side, and of former Israeli justice minister Yossi Beilin, ex-Labor Party leader Amram Mitzna, former Knesset speaker Avraham Burg, and Shinui MK Etti Livni on the Israeli side. A "signing event" is expected sometime in the coming weeks.

Not all the details of the Geneva initiative are clear, but the general outlines are known. Large settlements such as Efrat and Ariel would be evacuated. Palestinians would renounce the so-called right of return, in exchange for which they would gain sovereignty over the Temple Mount.

According to Brig.-Gen. (res.) Giora Inbar, a participant in the talks, the agreement is conditional on a cessation of terrorism. Very nice. But all this is beside the point. Men of good will can always be found on any side of any dispute to make the hard-sought concession. Israel elected such men to high office in 1999 to do just that. Their offers were rebuffed by Palestinians, and that is the essence of the present conflict.

No wonder Ehud Barak calls the initiative "irresponsible and damaging to the State of Israel." But the real problem here isn't one of naivete. In the 1990s, the governments of Rabin, Peres, and Barak reacted angrily to efforts by Right-wing Israelis and American Jews to obstruct the Oslo Accords – efforts that usually amounted to little more than op-ed writing and ad campaigns.

Yet when critics of the current government organize an effort on the scale of the Geneva initiative, not only do they insist it is morally legitimate and "democratic," but that anyone opposed to it "welcomes doubts as to his motives and worldview." Asks Haaretz: "Why are the Mitchell and Tenet plans and the road map acceptable, but the Beilin-Abed Rabbo initiative is not?"

Well, here's one answer: Mitchell, Tenet, and the road map were all agreed by elected Israeli governments. Beilin-Abed Rabbo is a conscious effort – by a man who failed even to win a Knesset seat – to sidestep the elected government (if not actually subvert it), leveraging the resources of a pliable foreign government to do so. The Left may not be able to appreciate this distinction. But it should at least understand that the tactics it embraces now will boomerang once they are adopted by the Right.

In advocating penalties against future Geneva initiators, we are not suggesting that anyone should go to jail. No American has ever been convicted of violating the Logan Act. But this only suggests its soundness, both as a deterrent and as a principle. No sane government can allow its foreign policy to be conducted by unauthorized private citizens, any more than it can allow unauthorized citizens to conduct its police or military responsibilities.

For Messrs. Beilin, Mitzna, and Burg, it comes down to this: If they want to run the affairs of state, first they must win an election. And if they want to know why they can't win an election, they need look no further than the Geneva initiative itself. (Jerusalem Post Oct 14)

ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
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Temple Mount Is More Important than Peace

By Natan Sharansky

Since the existence of the Geneva initiative was publicly announced on Sunday, there has been much criticism of the process that led to the agreement. Once again the same gang of Oslo blazers – a gang not even elected by an Israeli public, who instead denounced it and kicked it out of government and centers of influence for its "amazing successes" of the past. Once more the

same gang is conducting negotiations on its own and committing Israel to far-reaching and irresponsible concessions.

Criticism of the process, although it is correct and justified, is diverting attention from the central and more important contents of the agreement – and primarily from the relinquishing of Jerusalem.

I remember a discussion in the Barak government, even before Camp David, in which Yossi Beilin tried to convince us that if we would only reach "some kind of agreement" on the Temple Mount, and give Palestinians the Christian Quarter of the Old City as well, the longed-for peace would come. I asked, why the Christian Quarter? What connection do the Palestinians have to the Christian Quarter? Beilin looked at me in surprise and said, what do you care? That's the Christians' problem. We'll achieve peace and let the Christian world worry about freedom of religion and access to its holy places.

At the time I thought that this was a matter of disdain for the values of other nations and cultures. Beilin didn't mind sacrificing Israel's relations with the Christian world and risking the access of millions of Christians to places that are the cradle of their religion, so long as we could achieve the longed-for peace. (That assumed the Palestinians would respect religious freedom the way they respect other human rights).

Today, after Camp David, Taba, and now the relinquishing of Temple Mount in the framework of the Geneva accord, I understand that Beilin's gang are not necessarily contemptuous of the values of other nations, they are contemptuous of all values. Of all, except one that is – peace.

This gang seems to have forgotten, or hasn't yet understood, that as much as we long and hope for peace, it is not a value that stands by itself. It is an essential condition for the existence of a country that wishes to live, but it isn't the goal. It was not for the sake of peace that the State of Israel was established, and it was not because of peace that millions of Jews gathered here.

Nor was it peace for which the Jewish people prayed for thousands of years. The Jewish people prayed for Jerusalem. Because of Jerusalem, the Jewish people returned to Israel from the four corners of the earth, for it they were willing to make all the necessary sacrifices. For that same dream of a thousand generations – "next year in rebuilt Jerusalem."

It should be noted that if we totally relinquish every value for the sake of peace, we won't have peace either. Just as in the past, this time, too, the Palestinians will interpret such a relinquishing of what constitutes our very identity as a tremendous weakness that calls for war.

The values symbolized by Jerusalem are not only religious in nature. One doesn't have to be religious to understand that without our historical connection to Jerusalem, without the link to the past, without the feeling of continuity with the ancient kingdoms of Israel for whom the Temple Mount was the center of existence, we really are foreign invaders and colonialists in this country.

One doesn't have to be religious in order to understand that relinquishing the Temple Mount is a justification of the Palestinian argument: You have no right to exist in this country, you have no connection to it, get out of here. One doesn't have to be religious in order to understand that relinquishing the Temple Mount is not only relinquishing the past, it is primarily relinquishing the future. The future of all of us, here.

The members of the Hovevei Zion Zionist movement were not religious – they were secular socialists who considered religion a degenerate and sick product of the exile. Despite that they fought with all their might against the Uganda Plan [a 1903 British offer to let the Jews build a homeland in Uganda]. It was clear to them that without a common past, without roots, the Zionist project had no chance of succeeding.

Even today we must understand that without Jerusalem and without our historical roots the Zionist project will not be able to survive. Without Jerusalem Israel will become just another Jewish community, one of many

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in the world, like that of New York, London or Toronto - except more dangerous, less wealthy and less comfortable. It will not be the center of the Jewish world, not the focus of its existence - just one more community. And if that's the case, why continue to live in it? For what? In the name of what? (Haaretz Oct 15)
The writer is Minister for Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs

The Double Standard

By Israel Harel

Imagine the following scenario: A group of officers publishes a letter in which it declares it will refuse to evacuate settlements. The reason: The evacuation of settlements runs counter to Jewish law; it is a form of transfer, a patently illegal and anti-Zionist act that undermines the very pillars of Jewish existence in the land of Israel.

Mutiny - that is what it would be called from all sides. And a mutiny, the media and justice system would respond, must be put down. Collective-ideological organization of any kind is prohibited in the army. And the law professors would likely respond that when any group in the army decides which orders to obey and which to refuse - there is no choice but to court-martial the offenders for sedition, one of the most serious offenses in the military lawbooks.

If any indulgence were shown for their actions, ministers and Knesset members would no doubt warn, the Israeli army would no longer be a people's army, but rather a collection of militias each of which would decide which missions it would carry out. And in the media, they would ask: To whom do they owe their first allegiance, to their officers or rabbis? And retired senior officers would declare that hesder yeshivot - which combine yeshiva studies with army service - should be abolished, hinting that the number of observant soldiers among the officer corps ought to be reduced.

Is this scenario possible? The first part - no. Notwithstanding the fact that the vast majority of religious soldiers and officers oppose the evacuation of settlements, to the best of my knowledge and judgment, virtually none would disobey an order. The fact is that despite the dozens of evacuations that have already been ordered - and although there is a rabbinic ruling against the evacuation of settlements and army camps - only one officer has refused.

The public and media reactions described in the above scenario, on the other hand, are not imaginary. In sharp contrast to the equivocal responses to refusal coming from the left, the media would respond to a refusal to evacuate settlements with both barrels blazing. And there is little room for doubt that the media would be leading the demand to court-martial those refusing to evacuate for sedition.

No such demand was made regarding the soldiers that refused to serve during the Defensive Shield campaign, despite the fact that they called upon others - and at the height of the fighting - to refuse to fight. In fact, the section of the law on which they were eventually tried was not refusal to go out to war, for which the punishment is very serious, but rather a technical offense. While a small number were sentenced to time in military prison, not one was drummed out of the army in shame, although there are conscientious objectors that have spent quite a long time in prison.

Three months ago, the Israel Defense Forces evacuated the Adei Ad outpost. For many of the soldiers and officers that participated in the evacuation, it was an emotionally unbearable experience. But all, except for one, obeyed the order. For reasons of conscience, that officer, Yedidya Bar-Nitzan, asked his commanders to send him out on another operational task, against the real enemy. The commanders, displaying sensitivity for his feelings, refused. Bar-Nitzan forbade his soldiers to ask the regiment commander to forgive him. Any organized action, he explained, could be interpreted as sedition. He was sentenced to 28 days in jail and afterward, was dishonorably discharged from the army.

This column unequivocally condemned his refusal. I did, however, say that the army should give him the opportunity to express his remorse. He certainly should not have been humiliated and drummed out of the army. After all, he did not refuse to fight against the enemy, like those who refused from the left, who despite their refusal to fight during wartime were not discharged from the army.

This latest affair has further highlighted the double standard: Some of the pilots, instructors in the air force's flight school, talked other pilots into signing the letter of refusal. And that is sedition. The top brass's tactics to obfuscate the severity of their actions - not a single pilot has been court-martialed either for sedition or for using his uniform for political goals - are sowing the seeds of the next round of refusals. This, in addition to fueling the frustration of officers and ordinary soldiers who understand very well the message that in the army there are those that get preferential treatment.

Grounding the pilots, the most severe punishment so far until they express remorse, is a reflection of the mental and ideological dichotomy with which the army, along with the other elites, relates to the two types of refusal. After all, how can one compare the noble, moral and pardonable initiative of the pilots in their blue flight suits to the contemptuous act of the settler-officer, whose remorse - expressed in letters to the head of the central command and the chief of staff - was rejected, and who - to set an example for others, was thrown out of the army. (Ha'aretz Oct 9)

Call Him Mr. Consistency By Eli Kazhdan

The day Yasser Arafat entered the Gaza Strip - July 1, 1994 - his first actions served to indicate his behavior for years to come: Arafat smuggled two armed PLO operatives in his Mercedes limousine.

Less than two weeks ago, OC Intelligence Maj.-Gen. Aharon Ze'evi (Farkash) disclosed that orders for terrorist attacks are still emanating from Arafat's entourage based in Ramallah's Mukata compound.

These revelations come after the international community decried the cabinet's broadly publicized, and questionably constructive, decision that, in principle, it may exile Arafat. While there is an international consensus that Arafat is an obstacle to peace - even France's President Jacques Chirac recently said "Arafat is responsible for the failure, for all the failures, because he always wanted a little more" - it is far less accepted that Arafat is personally responsible for much of the ongoing terrorism.

A September 18 Los Angeles Times editorial asserted that, "the notion that Arafat is the singular mastermind and his demise would end Palestinian terrorism belies reality." The Economist ran an article on the same day, stating that Arafat is "a pesky, devious autocrat but no evidence has been produced to connect him with the terrorist bombs that have killed so many Israeli civilians."

Thus, any anti-Arafat move by Israel must be seen against a backdrop of cumulative acts Arafat has committed, and not merely the result of his failure to comply with signed commitments or unwillingness to fight terrorism.

Arafat has personally authorized Hamas and Islamic Jihad attacks.

As early as March 1997 - perhaps earlier - Arafat met personally with leaders of Hamas and other rejectionist groups, and gave them the green light to resume attacks. Summarizing the Israeli military's reading of those meetings, former chief of staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak told Israel Radio on March 23, 1997: "Organizations such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad have an understanding from the Palestinian Authority to carry out attacks."

After the launch of the September 2000 intifada, it was therefore not surprising that Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Fatah coordinated their actions under the umbrella of the "Nationalist and Islamic forces," led by Arafat's Fatah.

Arafat funds suicide bombings. In a memorandum captured in Operation Defensive Shield, the secretary-general of the Fatah office in Tulkarm requested that Arafat provide \$2,000 to each of 15 specifically named "Fighting Brethren" of the Tanzim military wing of the PLO. According to Israeli military sources, each of the "fighters" was involved in planning or executing suicide attacks. With his own signature in Arabic, Arafat authorized the payment of \$800 to each of the "fighters," on April 5, 2001.

Arafat has also been involved in providing funds to terrorist operatives subsequent to attacks.

On September 19, 2001, Arafat personally approved a request for \$600 to three people - among them, Raed Karmi, commander of the Tanzim in Tulkarm, personally involved in at least 25 shooting attacks against Israelis.

Arafat funded Karmi even though Israel listed Karmi on its "highly wanted list" provided to Arafat just three months earlier. On the same invoice, Arafat funded Amar Kadan, a member of his own Force-17 "Presidential Guard" who was involved in terrorist operations.

Arafat also provided funds to terrorist operatives prior to attacks.

On January 7, 2002, he personally signed a directive authorizing the payment of money to 12 Tanzim terrorists, each on Israel's wanted list. Ten days later, a Palestinian killed six Israelis and wounded 26 at a bat-mitzva celebration in Hadera. Mansur Saleh Sharim, who planned the attack in Hadera, and additionally is personally responsible for the deaths of at least three Israelis, was among those on Arafat's funding list. Senior Fatah figures in Israeli custody, like Marwan Barghouti, admitted subsequently that Arafat approved funding for Fatah operatives with the knowledge that it would be used to finance terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians.

Arafat is connected to the Al-Aksa Martyrs Brigades. While Israel's critics sometimes draw a distinction between Arafat's Fatah organization and the martyrs brigade, which they view as a renegade element, Palestinians refute such assertions. Indeed, the leader of the brigade in Tulkarm told USA Today, in March 2002: "The truth is, we are Fatah, but we didn't operate under the name of Fatah." He then added: "We are the armed wing of the organization. We receive our instructions from Fatah. Our commander is Yasser Arafat himself." In the early months of 2002, the number of Al-Aksa Martyrs Brigade attacks, including suicide bombings, exceeded the attacks by Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Over the years, Arafat has been a participant in, and supreme commander of, many of the Palestinians' terror activities. He has knowingly funded terrorists, both before and after they committed crimes. He has authorized plans of terror actions. And of course he has not brought to justice those who perpetrated many of the murderous acts.

At Oslo, Arafat committed himself to "put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict and strive to live in peaceful coexistence, mutual dignity and security." In fact, however, he has remained a consistent sponsor of violence and terror. (Jerusalem Post Oct 13)

The writer is a senior researcher at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

Brief to the Security Council By Evelyn Gordon

International hypocrisy with regard to Israel is nothing new, but it has reached new heights over the separation fence that Israel is building in an effort to protect its citizens from suicide bombers. This fence has drawn universal international condemnation, on three main grounds – all of which are patently false.

The first claim, as the European Union's foreign-policy chief, Javier Solana, said last Thursday, is that the fence, which involves the expropriation of property in the West Bank, is not "consistent with international law."

There is no disagreement within the international community that the particular bit of international law governing the West Bank is the Fourth Geneva Convention (though Israel disputes this, it has voluntarily agreed to apply the convention's humanitarian provisions). Yet the convention does not ban the expropriation of land in occupied territory completely; it bans only "extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity" (italics added). In fact, it explicitly permits the occupying power to "subject the population of the occupied territory to provisions which are essential to ensure the security of the Occupying Power, of the members and property of the occupying forces or administration, and likewise of the establishments and lines of communication used by them."

It is difficult to argue that protecting one's own civilian population from brutal suicide attacks is not a legitimate military goal. Indeed, the protection of one's own citizens is universally recognized – except, for some reason, when it comes to Israel – as the most legitimate of all military goals. But the argument is even more absurd given that one of the fence's main "bulges" into the West Bank is designed to keep Ben-Gurion Airport, which handles 99 percent of Israel's aerial traffic, out of the reach of terrorists with shoulder-launched missiles. It is hard to imagine any country that would not define defending its only international airport as a vital military necessity.

The second argument, which US Secretary of State Colin Powell in particular has made repeatedly, is that Israel is building the fence on land that belongs to the Palestinian state-to-be. Yet in fact, the only binding international document that has ever assigned sovereignty over this land is the 1922 League of Nations Mandate for Palestine – which assigned the entirety of what is now the West Bank to the future Jewish state. Not a single binding document has ever assigned the land to the Palestinians.

The 1947 Partition Resolution, though it did call for a Palestinian state in this area, was nonbinding on two counts: because it was a General Assembly rather than a Security Council resolution, and because the Palestinians themselves unequivocally rejected the partition plan, thereby making it null and void.

As for Security Council Resolution 242, passed after Israel conquered the West Bank in 1967, this resolution did call for Israel to withdraw "from territories occupied in the recent conflict," but, notably, not "the territories" – a wording that, far from being accidental, was deliberately chosen by the sponsors (the US and Britain) to allow for the possibility of Israel keeping some of this land under a future peace agreement.

Furthermore, the resolution made no mention of who should receive sovereignty over any portion of the West Bank from which Israel did withdraw. In fact, those lands had no recognized sovereign at the time, since prior to the Israeli conquest, they had been occupied by Jordan – and only two countries in the world (Britain and Pakistan) ever recognized Jordan's occupation as legal.

Thus the claim that this land has been recognized as Palestinian territory has no basis whatsoever under international law.

Finally, there is the claim, to quote Powell again, that construction of the fence would "prejudice subsequent negotiations" over the borders of a Palestinian state. That might actually be a valid argument, had the entire world not already prejudged the negotiations by declaring this land to be Palestinian.

Israel has made no secret of the fact that under any deal, it would like to retain a small amount of the West Bank containing the major settlement blocs, of which Ariel – the most hotly disputed part of the fence – is one. Even former prime minister Ehud Barak, who conceded wholesale to Palestinian demands on Jerusalem, insisted on this, and no subsequent prime minister is likely to be more dovish.

Bill Clinton's December 2000 bridging proposal also assigned this land to Israel, and the Palestinians reportedly consented to this (the talks broke down not over borders, but over the Palestinians' demand for a "right of return" for refugees and their refusal to acknowledge a Jewish connection to the Temple Mount in exchange for receiving full control over the site).

Yet now, with not only Europe but even Powell insisting that this is Palestinian territory, for Israel to stop building the fence would be tantamount to acknowledging that it accepts their definition of these areas as part of the future Palestinian state. Building the fence, in contrast, prejudices nothing, since it can always be moved pursuant to a peace agreement – as Israel proved when it dismantled its Sinai settlements following the agreement with Egypt. Thus the world has created a situation in which not building the fence would prejudice the negotiations' outcome far more than its construction would.

None of the above, however, is likely to be mentioned at today's scheduled UN Security Council debate on the fence. When it comes to Israel, the world does not seem to be overly concerned with facts. (Jerusalem Post Oct 14)

A Message to Sharon By Michael Freund

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is in political trouble. If you don't think so, just ask the parents of David, an 8-year old Israeli boy.

David's parents are beside themselves with worry, because their son lives in constant fear, terrified that he too may fall victim to the "bad guys", as he puts it. David heard about the families that were wiped out entirely in the Haifa massacre last week, the father and daughter who were murdered by a Palestinian suicide bomber at Café Hillel in Jerusalem, and the infant who was slain in her crib in Negohot.

Not surprisingly, these horrific events have left an indelible mark on David's young mind, leading him to reconsider just how safe the world is beyond his front door. Compounding his worry is the anxiety he feels that one or both of his parents might be killed, leaving him alone and orphaned, with no one to care for him.

That's pretty heavy stuff for an 8-year old.

But David, it seems, is not alone. In the past year, I have heard several such stories from friends and acquaintances living in various parts of the country. Parents, teachers and principals all seem at a loss as to how to deal with such cases, which has led to numerous lives being disrupted.

A similar level of fear, albeit not as intense, appears to have gripped much of the rest of the country as well.

In a poll published in this past Friday's Maariv, respondents were asked the following question: "Do you personally fear that you or one of your family members will be harmed in a terrorist attack?"

The results, quite simply, were incredible. An astonishing 71% of Israelis said yes, they are afraid, while just 24% said no.

Stop and think about that for a second. Nearly three out of every four Israelis are walking around fearful that they or someone they love might become a victim of terror. You don't need to be a mental health professional to understand what a tremendous psychological burden this amounts to, or what the cumulative impact must be on people's psyches.

The pressures of daily life, such as raising a family, holding down a job, and getting by during tough economic times, present their own set of challenges. But add to that a basic, lurking existential fear, and it's a wonder that more Israelis aren't buckling under the pressure.

But one thing that is most certainly buckling is Ariel Sharon's popularity. According to the Maariv survey, his approval rating has tumbled to 36%, making him only slightly more popular than various forms of dental surgery.

To be fair, Sharon's standing with the public has had its ups and downs over the past couple of years. But even during some of the most difficult periods of the current intifada, he managed to consistently earn approval ratings of 50 or even 60 percent.

The decline in his popularity is almost certainly linked to another key question that was included in the poll. Asked if the current government knows how to fight terror, only 34% of Israelis said yes, while 55% said no.

It is of course his reputation for being tough on terror that brought Sharon to power and preserved his popularity for much of the past two years. But even that seems to be eroding, as the public loses patience with his inability to quash the Palestinian terror campaign.

If, as Sharon said recently, he has every intention of running for office again, then he is unlikely to remain indifferent to these trends in public opinion. Sooner or later, he will have to win back the public's confidence, and the only way to do so at this point is to strike an overwhelming blow against the terrorists.

After all, it is the "fear factor" prompted by terror that has brought down two Israeli premiers in the past decade. In May 1992, the murder of 15-year old Helena Rapp by a knife-wielding Palestinian terrorist shortly before the election contributed, at least in part, to the defeat of Yitzhak Shamir.

And it was the February-March 1996 suicide bombings in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem that helped toss Shimon Peres out of office.

With this in mind, and as he confronts a possible coalition crisis with the National Religious Party and Shinui over control of the rabbinical courts, Sharon may at last decide to salvage his premiership by doing what he should have done long ago: dismantling the Palestinian Authority and eliminating the Palestinian terrorist threat once and for all.

Of course, he has refrained from doing so thus far, despite the ongoing murder of Israeli citizens. Instead, Sharon has preferred to rely on a mix of tactical military moves while remaining strategically committed to establishing a Palestinian state.

But the failure of this approach, and the public's increasing apprehension about it, may leave Sharon with little choice in the matter. He may finally have to give the public what they want, and so truly deserve: a life free of daily Palestinian attacks.

As US Vice President Dick Cheney said in a speech last Friday to the Heritage Foundation, "Strategies of containment will not assure our security either... There is only one way to protect ourselves against catastrophic terrorist violence, and that is to destroy the terrorists before they can launch further attacks."

With an increasing number of Israelis like 10-year old David living in fear

for their safety and their future, Sharon may at last be forced to embrace the wisdom in Cheney's approach, and order the inevitable reconquest of the Palestinian-controlled areas. After ten years of Palestinian terror and bloodshed, it is an order that is long overdue. (Jerusalem Post Oct 15)

On Bashing Bashar By William Safire

At a sandwich lunch at The Times, Howard Dean was asked what his message would have been to Israelis about their recent strike into Syria to destroy a terrorist camp after a suicide bomber's atrocity in Haifa.

The candidate for the Democratic nomination had a carefully prepared reply: "I don't have any access to intelligence to know whether that was a terrorist camp or not. If it was, they're justified. They have a right to defend themselves."

What a refreshing change from his previous comment that "it's not our place to take sides" in the dispute between Israelis and Palestinians. Rival candidates may mutter that Dean is now pandering to pro-Israel Democrats, but those of us who believe in the pre-emption of terror welcome all who have policy epiphanies.

Note, however, the big "if" in Dean's answer: the strike into Syria would be justified if the target for Israel's pre-emption had in fact been an Islamic Jihad training camp in Syria.

Israel's government, presumably with sneakers on the ground, claims that its intelligence is rock-solid and that it bombed the Jihad facility "between classes" to minimize casualties while delivering its potent message. Although the White House is in anti-leak lockdown, other U.S. officials let it be known that our satellite surveillance confirmed the Israeli finding and was the factual basis for President Bush's strong public support for the cross-border strike.

But in real presidential life, little intelligence data is certain. What if Mossad informants and C.I.A. evaluators had come up with an estimate of "75 percent likely"? Would a President Dean then find pre-emption justified? Or would he wait until trainees from that camp carried out their missions, perhaps killing thousands, when he could be 100 percent sure?

That is where strategic analysis, past performance and plain logic come into play. Bashar al-Assad, the minority Alawite ruler, is shown by many telephone intercepts to be deeply influenced by Hezbollah's Sheik Hassan Nasrallah in Syrian-occupied Lebanon. Bashar lied in Colin Powell's face last year about cutting off Saddam's illegal oil exports through Syria, and got away with it.

What else goes into the calculation that Syria is terror's friend and the free world's enemy? We suspect, but cannot inspect, weaponry we think was trucked into Syria from Iraq in the weeks before the war.

Beyond suspicion is this fact: A majority of the Saddam die-hards, Al Qaeda and Ansar al-Islam terrorists, and suicide bombers who have turned up in Iraq have been killers who entered from Syria, an infiltration that Bashar did little to stop. On the contrary, he finds it in Syria's strategic interest to aid and abet guerrilla war against the coalition and the nascent Iraqi government. With Saddam gone, Bashar sees Syria as the leader of Arab rejectionism.

How to change regime behavior short of regime change? Turkey showed us one way, when it massed troops on its Syrian border and demanded that Damascus close down the Kurdish P.K.K. terrorist headquarters in Damascus. Bashar yielded promptly, and the terrorist leader is in a Turkish jail.

Demand that Syria repay the Iraqi people the billion-dollar payoff Bashar took from Saddam in the form of cheap oil during the run-up to the war. Put pressure on the long-bamboozled I.M.F. to require Syria to repay Iraq the additional \$3 billion in Saddam's payoffs and blood money that U.S. officials charge is now hidden in Syrian banks. Until that stolen money is returned, do not appoint a new U.S. ambassador or accept the credentials of a new Syrian envoy.

Pass and sign the Syrian Accountability Act, but back up its minor sanctions with inducements for Turkey, Jordan and (Paul Bremer to the contrary) Iraq to minimize trade with a neighbor that abets the training and export of terrorists.

Sponsor an embarrassing U.N. resolution to end Syria's occupation of Lebanon; more than 25,000 soldiers keeping a puppet in place are nobody's "guests." (And why is the Vatican supine in the face of sustained Muslim oppression of Maronite Christians?) Find the European connections to the cocaine trade in the Bekaa Valley that buys rockets for Sheik Nasrallah's Hezbollah.

Repeat forcefully, when we have good data to back up an allied government's stern signal to pre-empt further atrocities, Howard Dean's echo of Bush's policy: "They have a right to defend themselves." (New York Times Oct 15)

Maddening Predictability By Caroline Glick

Did Sunday's bombing of the Ein Saheb terrorist base in Syria turn a new page in Israel's war on terrorism? Both Israel's critics and Israel's friends seem to think it did.

On the critics' side, we have condemnations from Europe and the UN and others who've adopted Damascus's whining and mendacious line. In this version of events, Israel committed naked aggression against an innocent state in an act that could lead the region to all-out war. For this, these critics claim, Israel should be condemned by the Security Council and all right-thinking people.

In answer, supporters of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon point out that Syria is the home base of over a dozen Palestinian terrorist organizations; that it is the

primary enabler of the Iranian Hizbullah in Lebanon; and that if it weren't for Syrian support, groups such as Islamic Jihad, which carried out Saturday's massacre in Haifa, or Hamas, which carried out last month's massacres in Jerusalem and Tzrifin, would be hard pressed to operate. Strike Syria, and the terrorists' financial, political, and military bases are dealt a strategic blow.

As for the US, George W. Bush made it clear that his heart is with Israel's supporters. When the president said that, under similar circumstances the US would act as Israel did, he gave the firmest recognition to date that America and Israel are fighting the same war on terrorism. Yet by warning Ariel Sharon to avoid escalation, Bush also signaled that our critics are right to claim that we are responsible for endangering regional stability.

All these reactions – critical, supportive, or hedged – are, of course, utterly predictable. From the UN, the EU, the international Left, and their supporters in the media, one has come to expect condemnation for any step Israel takes to defend itself. These critics usually offer pro forma condemnations of terrorist attacks against Israelis. But they will always leave open the question of whether Israel isn't actually responsible for the murder of its own citizens.

The reaction of Sharon's supporters is also predictable. By bringing its counteroffensive against state sponsors of terrorism, they say, Israel can be viewed as moving in a direction that can bring us victory in this long war of attrition.

From Bush there were no surprises, either. As usual, the president said that Israel is allowed to strike back in a limited manner. And as usual, the president warned Israel that its reactions should not go beyond the point of saber rattling.

In other words, far from turning a new leaf, Israel's war on terrorism stands pretty much exactly where it did before the Haifa massacre.

As the IDF was quick to point out after the strike, Syria is literally chock full of high-impact operational terrorist targets – everything from the homes of terrorist leaders to their headquarters. But instead of attacking actual targets, we went after an empty camp. In the process, we once again demonstrated – to ourselves as well as to our enemies – that we are unwilling to take the steps needed to win this war.

What are those steps?

Terrorists and their state sponsors fight by operating where they are strongest and their enemy is weakest. While the Syrian air force is no match against Israel's, an Islamic Jihad terrorist with an explosive belt strapped to her waist is a match for a security guard in a restaurant. And since terrorists wish to see Israel destroyed, there is no difference to them between an F-16 and a baby. Both are valued targets.

On such a battleground, Israel cannot win. All the security guards in the world cannot prevent a lone bomber from finding a restaurant or a bus to bomb or a home to attack.

What Israel can do is fight the war on a battlefield where it can win. A suicide bomber may indeed be "undeterrable." But his (or her) minders and paymasters and supporters may nonetheless be demoralized if they are hounded and killed, if their safe houses are destroyed, if their financial assets are frozen, and if they lose faith in their own invincibility.

By identifying Syria and Iran and the Palestinian Authority along with Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hizbullah as legitimate targets in the war on terror, the government has shown it knows where to train its sights – in theory.

In practice, however, the government contents itself with sending signals: surrounding but not storming the Mukata, dropping empty munitions on Sheikh Yassin's house, firing missiles at empty camps in Syria, negotiating with Arafat's handpicked emissaries, and so on. According to Sharon's supporters, the value of this is that it simultaneously sends a warning to Israel's enemies while placating the relevant arbiters of Israel's right to self-defense. Such a strategy, they add, allows Israel to ratchet up its responses gradually without losing US support.

But as the reactions to Sunday's air strike show, this strategy brings about precisely the opposite set of results. On the one hand, we placate our enemies by showing exactly where our self-imposed limits lie. On the other, we invite the usual hysterical reactions from our critics and only the tepid support of the Bush administration.

Predictability has many uses in politics, diplomacy, commerce, and friendship. This is not so in the war on terrorism. As we have for over three years – ever since former prime minister Ehud Barak started issuing, and then backing away from, ultimatums to Arafat – we have shown that we will not take the steps that need to be taken; that we will always wait until the next terrorist outrage to act; that we will brandish our big stick but never use it. Far from deterring terrorists, we embolden them.

In the meantime, Israel's enemies blame us for the crime of existing. They continue to indoctrinate, arm, and finance cadres who will soon find their battle in the field of their choosing – a cafe, a school, a hospital, or a home. At least we don't have to scratch our heads about what will happen in the aftermath of the next attack. It is all so maddeningly predictable. (Jerusalem Post Oct 12)