



Jerusalem 4:19 Toronto 6:04

Events...

Thursday, November 4, 8:00pm

Naomi Ragen speaks at the Toronto Jewish Book Fair, at Leah Posluns Theatre, Bathurst JCC. \$18.

Saturday, November 13, 8:00pm

Stewart Bell speaks on "Our National Security and Terrorists who live amongst us" at the Jewish Book Fair, Leah Posluns Theatre, Bathurst JCC. Sponsored by Bnai Brith Canada. \$10.

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From the PA Media...

Palestinian Children in Terror Support Roles

By Itamar Marcus & Barbara Crook
Behavior mirrors teachings in PA schoolbooks and popular culture

The Palestinian Authority (PA) has revealed that Palestinian children are actively aiding terrorists in Gaza. In a striking example of the way in which the new PA curriculum has indoctrinated children, the children have assumed the exact combat support roles they have been taught in the new PA schoolbooks. This text book indoctrination compliments PA music videos and other forms of popular culture, that aim to convince children that their place is in the heart of battle zones.

This latest revelation of children's active participation in combat coincides with the renewed broadcast (at least 10 times since Oct. 4) of a popular music video that explicitly demands that children participate in combat - even when it may lead to their death.

An article this week in the official PA daily, reported that children are aiding terrorists in the following combat support roles: "In spite of family members' warnings, groups of children are spreading around the [Gaza] camp, both to pass on information to the resistance and to bring them water." (Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, Oct. 11, 2004)

It should be stressed that supplying water and gathering information for terrorists in active combat zones, puts these children in life-threatening situations and has led to the deaths of many children. Note that the term "resistance" is used by the PA leadership and media to refer to all terrorists, including Hamas, Islamic Jihad and others.

These two combat support roles are precisely the roles taught in PA schoolbooks. A 6 th grade schoolbook teaches PA children to follow the example of a young child, who according to Islamic tradition, fulfilled these combat support roles. According to this tradition while Muhammad and his companion Abu Bakr hid in a cave, Abu Bakr's young daughter aided them by passing them information about the enemy and giving them water. The schoolbook teaches children to see themselves in similar roles with such language as: "Asma, Abu Bakr's daughter, was my age when she played a role..." and immediately asks the question: "What role can I play ...?"

The following is the full schoolbook text: "Asma, Abu Bakr's daughter, was my age when she played a role in supplying provisions and water and passing information about Kuraish [Tribe] to the Prophet and his companion during their secret Hegira [emigration] from Mecca to Medina. What role can I play in order to support the national resistance movement against the occupier and colonialist?" [History of the Arabs and Muslims, sixth grade, p. 34, translated by CMIP]

Note also that the PA schoolbook's defining Israel as "colonialist" is an important component of the denial of Israel's right to exist taught in the PA

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*

indeed is reflected in the violent and life threatening behavior of Palestinian children.

It is striking that this report on PA children in combat coincides with a return to PA TV of a insidious music video that demands children participate in combat even if it leads to their death as a Shahid (Martyr for Allah). This clip had not been broadcast on PA TV since this video was shown in a US Senate hearing one year ago, as part of the testimony of PMW director Itamar Marcus. His testimony, exposing the use of PA children in combat roles, and the subsequent media reaction, had brought pressure on the PA to stop indoctrinating children to aspire to Shahada death. This video has now returned and has been broadcast at least 10 times in the last 13 days.

The words of the clip are sung by a woman vocalist wearing an army uniform, and the visuals include children in frenzied war dances, interspaced between scenes of children participating in violence in combat zones.

The following are the words of the music video:

"Shake the earth, raise the stones.

You will not be saved, Oh Zionist, from the volcano of my country's stones,

You will not be saved, Oh Zionist, from the volcano of my country's stones,

You are the target of my eyes, I will even willingly fall as a Shahid [Martyr for Allah].

You are the target of my eyes, I will even willingly fall as a Shahid.

Allah Akbar, Oh the young ones".

The similar messages found in formal PA education and popular culture, together with the reported children's participation in combat roles, are further indication of the child abuse by the PA leadership for political purposes, and the tragedy they have brought on their own children and the entire region. (Palestinian Media Watch Oct 17)

*This week's issue is sponsored by
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Commentary...

Different Worlds, Different Values Remarks by Brigitte Gabriel
Delivered at the Duke University Counter Terrorism Speak out October 14

I'm proud and honored to stand here today as a Lebanese speaking for Israel the only democracy in the Middle East. As someone who was raised in an Arabic country I want to give you a glimpse into the heart of the Arabic world.

I was raised in Lebanon where I was taught that the Jews were evil, Israel was the devil, and the only time we will have peace in the Middle East is when we kill all the Jews and drive them into the sea.

When the Moslems and Palestinians declared Jihad on the Christians in 1975, they started massacring the Christians City after city. I ended up living in a bomb shelter underground from age 10 to 17 without electricity eating grass to live and crawling under sniper bullets to a spring to get water.

It was Israel who came to help the Christians in Lebanon. My mother was wounded by a Moslems shell and was taken into an Israeli hospital for treatment. When we entered the emergency room I was shocked at what I saw. They were hundreds of people wounded, Moslems, Palestinians, Christian Lebanese and Israeli soldiers lying on the floor. The doctors treated everyone according to their injury. They treated my mother before they treated the Israeli soldier lying next to her. They didn't see religion they didn't see political affiliation, they saw people in need and they helped.

For the first time in my life I experienced a human quality that I know my culture would not have shown to their enemy. I experienced the values

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of the Israelis who were able to love their enemy in their most trying moments. I spent 22 days at that hospital, those days changed my life and the way I believe information, the way I listen to the radio or to television. I realized I was sold a fabricated lie by my government about the Jews and Israel that was so far from reality. I knew for fact that if I was a Jew standing in an Arab hospital I would be lynched and thrown over to the grounds as shouts of joy of Allahu Akbar, God is great would echo through the hospital and the surrounding streets.

I became friends with the families of the Israeli wounded soldiers one in particular Rina, her only child was wounded in his eyes.

One day I was visiting with her and the Israeli army band came to play national songs to lift the spirits of the wounded soldiers. As they surrounded his bed playing a song about Jerusalem Rina and I started crying. I felt out of place and started waking out of the room, and this mother holds my hand and pulls me back in without even looking at me. She holds me crying and says: "it is not your fault". We just stood there crying holding each other's hands.

What a contrast between her, a mother looking at her deformed 19 year old only child, and still able to love me the enemy, and between a Moslem mother who sends her son to blow himself up to smitheereens just to kill a few Jews or Christians.

The difference between the Arabic world and Israel is a difference in values and character. It's barbarism versus civilization. It's democracy versus dictatorship. It's goodness versus evil.

Once upon a time there was a special place in the lowest depths of hell for anyone who would intentionally murder a child. Now, the intentional murder of Israeli children is legitimized as Palestinian "armed struggle". However, once such behavior is legitimized against Israel, it is legitimized every where in the world, constrained by nothing more than the subjective belief of people who would wrap themselves in dynamite and nails for the purpose of killing children in the name of god.

Because the Palestinians have been encouraged to believe that murdering innocent Israeli civilians is a legitimate tactic for advancing their cause, the whole world now suffers from a plague of terrorism, from Nairobi to New York, from Moscow to Madrid, from Bali to Beslan.

They blame suicide bombing on "desperation of occupation" Let me tell you the truth. The first major terror bombing committed by Arabs against the Jewish state occurred ten weeks before Israel even became independent. On Sunday morning, February 22, 1948, in anticipation of Israel's independence, a triple truck bomb was detonated by Arab terrorists on Ben Yehuda Street in what was then the Jewish section of Jerusalem. Fifty-four people were killed and hundreds were wounded. Thus, it is obvious that Arab terrorism is caused not by the "desperation" or "occupation", but by the VERY THOUGHT of a Jewish state.

So many times in history in the last 100 years, citizens have stood by and done nothing allowing evil to prevail. As America stood up against and defeated communism, now it is time to stand up against the terror of religious bigotry and intolerance. It's time to all stand up and support and defend the state of Israel, which is the front line of the war against terrorism.

Thank you. (NaomiRagen.com Oct 17)

A Friend down under By Colin Rubenstein

John Howard's stunning, fourth straight election victory is good news for Israel

The Australian people have spoken, and the verdict is in. And for Israel and her supporters in Australia - and indeed for President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair - the news is good.

While the Australian federal election campaign was primarily fought over domestic economic issues, the victory of Liberal Prime Minister John Howard over the Labor Party's Mark Latham sends an important signal. Latham had pledged that if elected he'd bring Australian troops home from Iraq.

The Howard win also ensures that Israel can continue to count on Australia's support at the United Nations and other international venues. We can also expect Australia to maintain its determined stance against terrorist groups such as Hizbullah and Hamas, both banned in Australia in the last year.

Australia is uniquely equipped to recognize a kangaroo court when it sees one. The Australian delegation to the UN took a brave stand in opposition to the one-sided decision by the International Court of Justice in The Hague (ICJ) to order the dismantling of Israel's security barrier.

And along with a handful of other nations, Australia voted against the outrageous General Assembly resolution that called upon Israel to comply with that travesty of justice.

Extreme anti-Israel agitation has become so routine at the UN that the Palestinians and their supporters can fairly be said to have hijacked that entire institution. The obsession with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is so profoundly entrenched that the UN's Department of Political Affairs affords its Division of Palestinian Rights the same organizational status as the Americas and Europe Division.

Australia under John Howard has consistently acted against the demonization of Israel in forums such as the vehemently anti-Israel 2001 Durban conference as well as in the UN General Assembly.

The Australian delegation recently voted to eliminate funding for the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, one of the official UN bodies whose sole function is to lobby for Israel's elimination, and it has abstained on several other anti-Israel votes.

Yet the Howard government's support for Israel is not confined to the realm of diplomacy. During last year's campaign to liberate Iraq, Australia provided aid to Israel of a more tangible type. Australia's elite SAS special forces troopers operated in the western Iraqi desert to prevent any possible recurrence of the missile attacks against Israel that took place during the 1991 Gulf War.

Australia also played an important role in the liberation of Afghanistan and the overthrow of the Taliban regime, leading to the important first-ever elections in that country last weekend, poignantly, as Howard reminded Australians in his victory speech, as Australians also exercised their democratic privilege.

Prime Minister John Howard, who last visited Israel during the Barak government in May 2000, and his Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, who had a successful visit to Israel in January, are both dedicated supporters of Israel and have committed Australia to help defeat terrorism in general.

Moreover, Howard's victory can be seen as an important win for the global war on terrorism.

By endorsing Howard's position on Iraq the Australian people have in effect reversed the achievement gained by the terrorists following the Madrid bombing, when the Spanish elected a government that immediately withdrew its forces from Iraq.

Unlike many European countries Australia has acknowledged that PA Chairman Yasser Arafat is not a partner for peace, and has refused to meet with him. Canberra has also publicly called for the Palestinians to stop their use of terrorism, reform their institutions and run a government independent of Arafat.

Additionally, Australia, under this government, joined the US in outlawing Hizbullah and Hamas as terror organizations and has acted to investigate the broadcast of Hizbullah's AlManar TV in Australia, which has consequently ceased its transmissions down under.

Even as the ballot was being held in Australia last Saturday, Foreign Minister Downer took the time to call his Israeli counterpart and express his condolences to Israel and the families of those killed and injured in the bombings in Sinai.

The reelection of John Howard ensures that one of Israel's best friends will remain a force on the international scene for another three years.

The writer is executive director of Australia-Israel and Jewish Affairs Council. (Jerusalem Post Oct 17)

From Left to 'Wrong' By Yisrael Medad

A political life on the Right has its disadvantages

I admit that in joining the Betar Zionist youth movement when I was 16 I was not aware I was becoming a member of yet another minority within a minority.

The move to Betar was borderline heresy in the black yarmulke world to which I belonged, despite my having only joined it three years previously. I was leaving my childhood friends behind and aligning with the political Right just when the civil rights movement and anti-Vietnam protest movement was about to burst on to the scene.

While the ethos of the New Left beguiled much of my generation, I went down a different road. At Zionist youth council meetings and joint kumzitz evenings as well as at the annual folk dance festival at Madison Square Garden, "fascist" was the epithet hurled at those of us in Betar by members of the pioneering youth movements.

It was they who came to control the Zionist apparatus and its budget within the World Zionist Organization. The pioneers were ostensibly nonpolitical youth groups. In practice, they were partisan and left-wing.

Our movement's ideology, our reading of history, left us convinced that Hashomer Hatzair or Habonim were wrong. Our take on the communist threat to Israel and to the Jews of the Soviet Union left us enthused about the value of linking up with progressive forces.

Four decades later I have the sense that I am still part of a much-maligned minority, and that left-wing ideas shape the political orientation and cultural landscape of Israel's civil society.

GENE SHARP is the doyen of nonviolent direct action strategy at the Albert Einstein Institute in Boston. Recently I wrote him about Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan for unilateral disengagement from Gaza and northern Samaria.

I drew his attention to the draconian elements of the new Disengagement Law being prepared for legislation. Paragraph 27(A) [2-3] decrees up to three years' imprisonment - five years if a policeman is endangered - for those who refuse to leave their homes. Thus employing the tactic of passive resistance, such as a sit-in, is outlawed.

Sharp's reaction was striking. "Such an extreme law against explicitly nonviolent opposition may drive people who prefer to use nonviolent methods instead to use violent methods."

But Israel's Left, in the media, Knesset and other corridors of power seem almost oblivious.

From where I sit, it seems that the Right is a particular target of free-speech restrictions. For example, any national camp figure employing the phrase "Oslo criminals" is excoriated. But when Yossi Sarid wrote in the September 23 edition of Haaretz that "the time has come to admit that the crime of the settlements is the greatest crime in the history of the country"

- inflammatory and inciteful from our point of view - nary a criticism was levied.

And what are we to make of Yahad MK Avshalom Vilan's August 20 interview in Haaretz in which the Peace Now founder said, "I am telling you that the goal of the extreme Right is to create Jewish shaheeds.

"... In the end a situation is liable to be created in which the trigger will have to be squeezed slowly, responsibly, coolly and intelligently."

But when Ofra's Uri Elizur talks about having anti-disengagement demonstrators shoving soldiers trying to remove them, he is targeted as a seditionist.

And what are we to make of the sympathetic treatment Tali Fahima has been getting - at least judging by the advertisements that have appeared in the prestige press, and the talk radio chatter?

She's the activist who was placed in administrative detention for allegedly intending to carry out a terrorist attack inside Israel in conjunction with a Jenin-based terror cell.

Contrast her case with that of far-Right activist Noam Federman, who failed to garner expressions of concern about his eight months in administrative detention from progressive voices concerned with civil liberties.

More recently, rabbis who urge their pupils to talk to their commanders about not taking part in the disengagement plan have been pilloried. But soldiers who refuse to serve in the territories are upheld as paragons of morality.

Haifa University philosopher Ilan Gur-Ze'ev is within his rights in advocating that Israelis embrace an exile-oriented education. But, then, why should talk on the theological Right about a Messianic Zionist education be denigrated?

In September 2003 former Knesset speaker Avraham Burg wrote in Yediot Aharanot that "The Israeli nation today rests on a scaffolding of corruption, and on the foundations of oppression and injustice... [a state] run by an amoral clique of corrupt lawmakers who are deaf both to their citizens and to their enemies. A state lacking justice."

Harsh words. Perhaps as harsh as the words of Nadia Matar, who compared disengagement head Yonatan Bassi to a Judenrat official. The difference is that Matar's remarks landed her an appointment with the police, while Burg's didn't.

Despite all the years that have passed since my decision to align myself with the Zionist Right, I have still not become inured to the sense that my progressive opponents enjoy an unfair advantage. (Jerusalem Post Oct 17)

The writer comments on political, cultural, and media affairs.

Kerry the Clueless By Martin Peretz

Like Carter and Clinton, he's a Democrat who offers Israel nothing but muddled ideas

Like many American Jews, I was brought up to believe that if I pulled the Republican lever on the election machine my right hand would wither and, as the Psalmist says, my tongue would cleave to the roof of my mouth.

According to the Bible, of course, these are the feared consequences of forgetting Jerusalem. Now although there are many reasons one might want to vote for John F. Kerry, remembering Jerusalem — remembering to stand up for the state of Israel — is not among them.

It is true that Kerry's campaign pronouncements have been unexceptionable from the pro-Zionist point of view. Yes, he flip-flopped on the miles of trenches and fences Israel is building to defend itself from the plague of terrorism, first attacking the structure as "another barrier to peace," then accepting it as "a legitimate act of self-defense."

He has also floundered concerning what can be expected of Yasser Arafat. Just as Arafat was launching the second intifada in 2000, Kerry asserted optimistically that we must "look to Chairman Arafat to exert much greater leadership." Three days later, he portentously declared the obvious on CBS' "Face the Nation," calling the Israel-Palestinian conflict "an extraordinarily complicated, incredibly deep-rooted problem." What made this problem so extraordinary and incredible? "Arafat has forces around him, underneath him, close by him that don't want peace, that are working against what he is doing," Kerry said by way of exoneration. (And, to sustain the moral equivalence of the parties in his head, he added, "The same is true of Prime Minister [Ehud] Barak" — which was nonsense, as there wasn't a single such person in Barak's circle.)

By now, to be sure, Kerry thinks that Arafat's "support" for terrorism has already rendered him unfit as a partner for peace. And his votes in the Senate (like all but a handful of senators) have been routinely friendly to Israel.

So why am I still exercised about John Kerry?

It's the ramifications of his foreign policy in general, especially his fixation on the United Nations as the arbiter of international legitimacy, proctor of that "global test."

Save for the U.S. veto in the Security Council, Israel loses every struggle at the U.N. against lopsided majorities. In the General Assembly and the Human Rights Commission, Muslim states trade their votes to protect aggressors and tyrannies from censure in exchange for libels against the Jewish state. The body's bloated and dishonest bureaucracies are no better, as evidenced most recently by the head of the U.N. Palestine refugee organization, who defended having Hamas militants on his staff.

I've searched to find one time when Kerry — even candidate Kerry — criticized a U.N. action or statement against Israel. I've come up empty. Nor has he defended Israel against the European Union's continuous hectoring. Another thing that bothers me about Kerry is the deus ex machina he has up his

sleeve: the appointment of a presidential envoy. It's hard to count how many special emissaries have been dispatched from Washington to the Middle East to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict. What's easy to see is that none of them has gotten to "yes."

In recent years, both former CIA Director George Tenet and former Marine Gen. Anthony C. Zinni, once the chief of the U.S. Central Command, have served in this meaningless position. And who would Kerry designate? He first suggested the sanctimonious Jimmy Carter and James Baker, Bush 41's secretary of state.

Then he found out — why he didn't know this is another matter — that both Carter and Baker are deeply distrusted by the Israelis, and by American Jews. There was no mystery as to why. Carter (well, how does one say this?) is not exactly a friend to the Jewish nation and, besides, his favorite politician in the Middle East was the mass murderer Hafez Assad, the late president of Syria. A huge beneficiary of Saudi business, Baker was adept at pooh-poohing concerns about Israeli security. So we are left with Kerry's other putative designee, Bill Clinton, whose national security staff was so mesmerized by the mirage of a quickie Israel-Palestinian peace at the end of his term that, according to the Sept. 11 commission report, it couldn't be bothered take out Osama bin Laden after the attack on the U.S. destroyer Cole. Clinton succeeded in squeezing Israel into the extravagant Camp David and Taba formulas but failed to get Arafat to go along. At least for Israel, these proposals are now toast.

For his part, Kerry grabs at any showy idea to demonstrate his sense of urgency. As a response to militant Islam and to encourage moderate Muslims, the presidential aspirant proposed that "the great religious figures of the planet" — he mentioned the pope, the archbishop of Canterbury and the Dalai Lama — hold a summit.

To do exactly ... what?

"To begin to help the world to see the ways in which Islam is not, in fact, a threat," Kerry said, "and to isolate those who are, and to give people the strength to be able to come together in a global effort to take away their financing, their freedom to move, their sanctuary and so forth."

This muddled foolishness reflects Kerry's sense of politics as desperate theater. Another simply showy idea he proposed (to Tim Russert on NBC's "Meet the Press") was to insert U.S. troops between Israel and the territories, as part "of some kind of very neutral international effort that began to allow Israel itself to disengage and withdraw."

Now, if anything would put U.S. soldiers in harm's way it is such a move, exposing our men and women to fiercely competing gangs of suicide bombers and other killers.

Kerry asserted on "Meet the Press" that it is "Israel's presence [in the territories that] puts Israel in difficult circumstances and obviously creates an enormous handle for Osama bin Laden for all the radicals and extremists to hang on to." But this stands history on its head. It is not the occupation that caused the conflict. It is the very existence of Israel — even within the unbearably narrow 1949 cease-fire lines.

To project his Middle East bona fides, Kerry has bashed President Bush dozens of times for supposedly showing no interest in Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking, for breaking a continuum going back at least 30 years.

"Some cliches," wrote the dovish Israeli journalist Aluf Benn in the even more dovish Israeli newspaper Haaretz, "become permanent features in public until someone takes the trouble to check out their validity."

Which is what Benn did. And what did he find? The Bush administration "has been far more involved than any previous administrations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and has courageously presented the two sides with practical objectives and demands."

Kerry seems to have nostalgia for the peacemaking ways of Clinton. But what Clinton actually bequeathed to George W., says Benn, was "an Israeli-Palestinian war and a total collapse of the hopes that flourished in the 1990s.... The height of the peace process during the Clinton era, the Camp David summit in July 2000, was a classic example of inept diplomacy, an arrogant and rash move whose initiators failed to take into account the realpolitik, misunderstood Arafat and brought upon both Israelis and Palestinians the disaster of the intifada."

By contrast, Bush has committed Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to a Palestinian state and to a withdrawal from some, though certainly not all, of the settlements. In return, the president has recognized that the most populous and strategically pivotal settlements would remain in Israeli hands and has also ruled out what would be suicide for Israel, the return of Palestinian refugees after 56 years. The Palestinians have not yet signed on to these particulars. But they are the future details of any peace.

Bush's empathy for the government in Israel is particularly remarkable, because empathy was altogether foreign to both Bush pere and his secretary of State. One can only imagine the horror of George H.W. and Baker (to whom the current president may actually owe his office) in seeing the inheritor become a true ally of Israel. Yet there it is. And with his understanding of — and sympathy for — the Israeli predicament, Bush has coaxed from Sharon an agreement to withdraw unilaterally from all the Gaza settlements and from four in the West Bank — something even left-wing governments, as Benn puts it, "were afraid to do."

Kerry, meanwhile, appears ready to formulaically follow the failed precepts of the past, complete with photo ops and multiple interlocutors. This is a road map to nowhere. (Los Angeles Times Oct 17)

The writer is editor in chief of the New Republic.

A Mild Sign of Hope in the Media? By Tom Gross

Is the international "media intifada" against Israel, like the intifada on the ground, beginning to run out of steam?

To judge by the reporting of Israel's recent Gaza operation, this just might be the case.

Of course, there is still plenty of negative coverage. There was the usual emotive reporting ("Two girls, two shots to the head," read the Guardian's headline; "The harvest of death in this most dispossessed of refugee camps continued," began Mitch Potter's news report in the Toronto Star.)

And there were also the usual outright lies. Agence France Presse, for example, reported last week (in a story reprinted in newspapers throughout the world) that the majority of the 111 Palestinians killed by Israel in Gaza over the last two weeks were children.

But overall, the reporting on "Operation Days of Penitence" was not nearly as fierce, nor as bad, as it has been on several past occasions.

When, for example, Israel launched a similarly-sized counterterrorist operation in Jenin in 2002 (and actually killed very few civilians in doing so), Israel-baiting in the European media reached hysterical levels. Israel was invariably compared to the Nazis, al Qaeda, Pol Pot's Cambodia, and the Taliban.

The Guardian said Israel's actions were "every bit as repellent" as the 9/11 attacks. The (London) Evening Standard called them acts of "genocide" and, for good measure, accused Israel of the "willful burning of several church buildings." And even supposedly pro-Israel newspapers like Britain's Daily Telegraph said "hundreds of Palestinian victims" had been "buried by bulldozers in mass graves." Palestinians in Jenin, Telegraph readers were told, were "stripped to their underwear, bound hand and foot, placed against a wall and killed with single shots to the head."

During recent weeks, by contrast, not only has there been a slight easing of pressure against Israel in media coverage, but some European reporters have actually taken the unusual step of speaking out against their Israel-hating colleagues.

In Paris on Saturday, several journalists at "Radio France International" slammed the station's news director, Alain Menargues, for his "unacceptable" remarks during an interview concerning his book "Sharon's Wall" on Radio Courtoisie last week.

Menargues told listeners that we knew from the Book of Leviticus and from 2000 years of history that Jews wished to separate themselves from "impure" non-Jews. He added that Jews had deliberately created the world's first ghetto in Venice "to separate themselves off from the rest."

And in London on Sunday, fellow journalists publicly condemned the notorious Robert Fisk, The Independent's Mideast correspondent (and a previous winner of journalist of the year award for, among other things, his anti-Israel tirades). The associate editor of the (London) Times said Fisk's coverage "masquerades as reporting but is, in fact, polemic".

Bill Newman, ombudsman for The Sun, Britain's most popular newspaper, said Fisk's coverage of Israel was so bad that he found it "distasteful."

A further sign of change is the displeasure the terror groups themselves have expressed now that they are no longer automatically getting the sympathetic coverage they have come to expect from western journalists. They have recently started to kidnap journalists (French ones in Iraq, an Israeli Arab working for CNN in Gaza) as a warning to others to "toe the line".

There are several possible reasons why there may have been a slight easing in attacks on Israel recently, at least in some parts of the media:

- * The media are presently preoccupied with the US elections.
- * For the time being, Iraq has become the main focus of Mideast reporting.
- * The ferocious nature of terror attacks like those in Beslan and Madrid might finally have persuaded some European journalists to consider the possibility that Israel is justified in the steps it has taken to defend itself.
- * The recent beheadings perpetrated by hostage-takers in Iraq have, for the time being at least, given their fellow "militants" in Gaza a bad name.
- * Even the most liberal of the pro-Arab media are finally tending to treat Yasser Arafat in a negative light.

* Perhaps commentators realize that Israel is intending to do what the international community has demanded of it for decades and withdraw from Gaza; and yet in response, far from making conciliatory gestures, Palestinian groups have murdered Israeli children in Sderot and Beersheva. Some journalists are now less enamored of Hamas. (There are exceptions, of course; both Orla Guerin of the BBC and Ben Wedeman of CNN have recently started referring to Hamas as "the resistance.")

* Improved public-relations efforts on behalf of Israel: not the lamentable efforts of Gideon Meir, Israel's PR guru at the Foreign Ministry, but those of private groups such as HonestReporting.

* Perhaps, too, there is a belated realization that - even if it isn't acknowledged in public - the Israeli army makes honest and sustained efforts to avoid civilian casualties, of a kind that have very seldom been taken by other armies.

However, experience suggests that this mild improvement in media comment and coverage is likely to prove only temporary. Negative opinion about Israel, especially in Europe, has become so entrenched in broad sections of elitist opinion that there is little chance of Israel receiving fair coverage on a consistent basis - not until there is full recognition in Europe and elsewhere of the nature and threat of Islamic fundamentalist terror. (Jerusalem Post Oct 20)

The writer is a former Middle East foreign correspondent.

Likud's Moment of Truth By Michael Ratzon

As a member of the Likud Party, I recall a wise politician who said that "Anyone who announces, before even entering negotiations, the concessions he is willing to make is an absolute amateur in negotiating."

That person wasn't a Likud Party rebel or a Gush Katif settler, or a Council of Jewish Communities in Judea and Samaria (Yeshua) rabbi. That person was Ariel Sharon. And he made that statement when he was already prime minister. It was Sharon who also said "Unilateral disengagement under fire means we made concessions and got nothing."

Has it been forgotten that during the last elections it was Amram Mitzna who waved the banner of unilateral disengagement, that it was Mitzna's platform, what Mitzna believed in? Ariel Sharon, on the other hand, thought Mitzna was wrong and that his plan was dangerous. That is exactly what the last elections were about. We know the results. The public sent Mitzna packing and elected Sharon as prime minister.

But then, unexpectedly, the prime minister decided to change course. Sharon began singing Mitzna's old, discredited tune.

What's striking is that the reasons Sharon once opposed Mitzna's ideas remain valid today. Mitzna's ideas, today embraced by Sharon, are as illogical as always. Here's why: There is no real disengagement, and there cannot be when the other side is not interested in disengaging.

Don't supporters of the plan like Meir Sheetrit realize that the IDF will have to continue operating in the Gaza Strip even after the disengagement is implemented? As Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz said, "The terror infrastructure in Gaza is so deep that very quickly we are going to find ourselves back there."

In the words of IDF Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon, "As long as there is terrorism and terrorist infrastructures in Gaza of the kind that threaten the surrounding settlements, we will have to operate against them from whatever line."

Then from what, exactly, are we disengaging? From our brothers? Our homes? Our children's graves? The Zionist dream? And what are we getting in return? And what will happen after we're gone?

I hear friends using the "after me the deluge" expression; that whatever chaos which takes over after we exit Gaza will no longer be our business. There could be no bigger mistake. Gaza is not in the Far East but aimed directly at our main population centers.

Anyone who thinks the "deluge" in Gaza will leave us dry is wrong. The Palestinians who are locked into Gaza, without air, sea, or land exits, will stew in their filth, bitterness, and hatred; and the terror organizations will quickly enter a murderous competition as to who can slaughter more Israelis.

At the same time, our ability to control the crossing points - for weapons and explosives - will be considerably weakened.

The bloodbath that will no doubt take place among the Palestinians in Gaza once we exit will also hurt us. For it is Israel that will be held responsible by the international community for everything that goes wrong there.

As long as we remain in some - but not all - of the territories, the world will continue recognizing the legitimacy of the Palestinian struggle, and it will be hard for us to explain why we left Gaza but not, say, east Jerusalem. By leaving Gaza, Israel is setting a precedent, and it will be required to continue operating according to the very same logic.

Nor will we be making the IDF's work any easier by pulling out of Gaza. "Netzarim is the same as Negba and Tel Aviv. Evacuating Netzarim will only encourage terror and increase the pressure on us."

Thus spoke Ariel Sharon on April 24, 2002. And Chief of General Staff Ya'alon said, "The evacuation of Netzarim will not save a battalion but employ a division."

Leaving Gaza will immediately, and unequivocally, be interpreted as an escape, a surrender, to the past four years of terrorism, and thereby increase the motivation of the terrorist organizations.

As for all of those who raise the demographic argument as a reason for the disengagement, I would ask them only to explain where that argument stops.

Should there be an Israeli withdrawal everywhere there is an Arab majority? Is that why we should withdraw from all the territories?

So, what about east Jerusalem with its Arab majority? What about the Galilee Triangle? The Negev? Indeed, what about the entire Middle East? According to Sharon's new-found logic, why don't we withdraw from this Arab region - where we've built our state - since we are a demographic minority?

All in all, the disengagement plan doesn't make sense and is useless. Besides uprooting settlements, driving Jews out of their homes, creating a rift in the nation, and setting a historic precedent by which a Likud government evacuates settlements with nothing in return, this plan will achieve nothing positive.

Anyone who considers this logically should oppose the disengagement plan, whether they are on the Left or on the Right, because there are some circles that no amount of political obfuscation can square.

As Alice in Wonderland said after the Cheshire cat disappeared, leaving only its smile, "Well! I've often seen a cat without a grin," thought Alice; "but a grin without a cat! It's the most curious thing I ever saw in all my life!" (Jerusalem Post Oct 21)

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