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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

land back to Palestine **ט"ב**
rather than a violent threat?"

How indeed? Well, maybe one way to find out is to look at the rest of the speech: "We are in the process of a historical war between the World of Arrogance [the West] and the Islamic world. . . . Is it possible for us to witness a world without America and Zionism? You had best know that this slogan and this goal is attainable, and

Events...

December 4-13

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Commentary...

Meanwhile, Back in the Real World... By Mark Steyn

Suppose a guy yells "Fire!" in a crowded theater, and the audience hisses back, "Shh! We're in the middle of a play about how Bush engaged in a massive conspiracy to use a small chimney fire as a pretext for burning down some other theater three years ago."

That's pretty much what happened the other week. The president of Iran announced that Israel "must be wiped off the map" — and the entire capital city of the world's hyperpower hissed back, "Shh! Patrick Fitzgerald's about to indict Scooter Libby!" Insofar as I understand the Left's three-year investment in Joseph C. Wilson IV, it's that the selfless patriot exposed the Bush administration's rationale for the war — Saddam's WMD — as a lie cooked up by a cabal of sinister neocon warmongers (Clinton, Gore, Kerry, etc). Just for the record, WMD was never my rationale. As I've said on many occasions, when it comes to toppling dictators, there's no such thing as an "illegitimate" rationale. In his obstruction of U.N. weapons inspectors, Saddam certainly acted as if he had WMD and, in his "trade" missions to Niger (principal exports: uranium, goats, cowpeas, and onions), as if he were eager to acquire more. There's something to be said for taking a chap at his word.

Anyway, we now have a chance to go through the whole rigmarole with another four-letter Middle Eastern Muslim country beginning with the letters "I-r-a." Same great runaround, new closing consonant. President Ahmadinejad made his wiping-off-the-map remarks during a conference called "A World Without Zionism," so it seems unlikely this was one of those subtle nuances lost in translation. Furthermore, in the final round of last June's presidential election, both candidates were eager to annihilate the Zionist Entity — Mr. Ahmadinejad's opponent, Hashemi Rafsanjani, having declared that Israel is "the most hideous occurrence in history" which the Muslim world "will vomit out from its midst" with "a single atomic bomb." So wiping Israel off the map would appear to be one of those rare points of bipartisan consensus, as unexceptional as coming out in favor of motherhood and apple pie.

And indeed President Ahmadinejad, speaking a couple of days later at a "Death to Israel" rally, couldn't see what all the fuss was about. Nor could his rival, Mr. Rafsanjani, who pointed out, "Even in Europe, the majority of the population is strongly critical of Israel, but they are afraid to express their views." Judging from the BBC's website, only the first half of that sentence is true. Here's what the Beeb's viewers and listeners had to say:

"Is this story true? The current American regime is expert at creating faked excuses for military and political action. The WMD scam in Iraq for example."

"I'm not sure it's any worse than what Bush said about Iraq, and at least Ahmedinejad is using only words, not bombs."

"According to BBC, this type of comment is commonly made by Iranian politicians. If so, we need to understand this in context."

"Iran's prime minister said 'Israel should be wiped off the map'. How do we know that he wasn't referring to a peaceful arrangement for Israel to give

surely can be achieved."

So, this isn't just the usual itsy-bitsy wipe-Israel-off-the-face-of-the-earth boilerplate that Nasser was doing 40 years ago. The Europeans may be indifferent to the incineration of the Zionists but they surely can't be as relaxed about meeting the same fate themselves. The president's chief strategist, Hassan Abbasi, has come up with a war plan based on the premise that "Britain is the mother of all evils" — the evils being America, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, the Gulf states, and even Canada, all of whom are the malign progeny of the British Empire. "We have a strategy drawn up for the destruction of Anglo-Saxon civilization," says Mr. Abbasi. "There are 29 sensitive sites in the U.S. and in the West. We have already spied on these sites and we know how we are going to attack them. . . . Once we have defeated the Anglo-Saxons, the rest will run for cover."

Iran isn't an impoverished joke-state basketcase like Sierra Leone. It's a major regional power. What should we do? Take them at their word? Or apply the Democrat-media-CIA test and wait till we've got absolute definitive 100 percent proof that they've got WMD — the absolute definitive 100 percent proof being a smoking crater where Tel Aviv used to be, or maybe London. The contrast between the Iranian president's speeches and the worthless piffle of a Beltway non-scandal is very telling — or would be if the parochial U.S. media had any interest in covering it.

How can even the dreariest press in the English-speaking world maintain their interest in the third year of Joe Wilson's 15 minutes? What a pitiful spectacle. If they've a sense of humor, the Iranians will time the mushroom cloud for the first day of the Bush-Cheney impeachment trial. (National Review Nov 21)

The Paris Intifada Jerusalem Post Editorial

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the US media became preoccupied with a key question: "Why do they hate us so much?" A fair-minded people, the Americans believed there must be a good, rational explanation why 19 educated, economically comfortable young men would ram planes into buildings, killing themselves along with thousands of innocents.

Among the many reasons proffered, one that appeared frequently - and drew concern in Jerusalem - was that it was all due to US support for Israel. If the US would only toe a more pro-Arab, pro-Palestinian line, this argument ran, then the Arab and Muslim masses wouldn't hate it so.

The events in Paris over the last 12 days have confirmed the vacuity of this argument.

Since the mid-1960s, France has consistently been among the most pro-Arab countries in western Europe.

Indeed, one can make a compelling argument that one reason French President Jacques Chirac was so opposed to the US war in Iraq was that he believed this would give France special status among the world's Muslims.

France, unlike the US, cannot be accused of a pro-Israeli slant. Nevertheless, its Muslim youth are rioting in the banlieues of Paris. Though it is too early to dissect this ongoing French revolution, one thing that can already be said is that these rioters hate France - otherwise they wouldn't be destroying its property and setting fire to its towns and suburbs.

And this hatred of France has nothing to do with Israel.

Why is this important to state? Because for too long much of the West, with France at the vanguard, has tried to paper over its real conflict with radical Islam with the argument that if only a solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict could be found, then all would be well with the world and Islamic

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enmity would disappear.

Not so. The Muslim youth in France are not rioting as a sign of solidarity with their Palestinian or Iraqi brothers. They are rioting in large part because they feel discriminated against, alienated, and cut out of that great French "liberte, egalite, fraternite" pie.

The French would be wise to pay attention to the fact that these flames of alienation are being fanned and leveraged for their own use by Islamic radicals who - as the homegrown London bombers proved in July - are thriving on the streets of Europe.

Parallels can be found with our reality. At one time the Arab-Israeli conflict looked predominantly like a territorial one. Indeed, this thinking underpinned UN Security Council Resolution 242, which created the territories-for-peace rubric.

What was ignored was the religious and ideological component of the conflict. It is not coincidental that the recent Palestinian paroxysm of violence here goes by the name of al-Aksa Intifada - and not, for instance, the Gaza intifada, or the West Bank intifada.

Naming the violence after the mosque on the Temple Mount, and not one or other of the disputed territories, underlines that religious component, a component that - with the help of Iran, Hizbullah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad - has made the conflict much more violent, volatile and intractable. Land-for-peace, for the radical Islamic groups, has always been obsolete.

France - yes, ironically, France - has now awakened to find itself facing a similar dilemma.

The instinctive reaction in France to the rioting has been twofold: a pledge to restore security and to address the "causes" of the rioting: the deprivation, discrimination, alienation and rootlessness of the rampaging, largely Muslim, youth. One cannot argue with either of these two points.

But French policy makers would be unwise to overlook the religious, ideological dimensions of the battle, and the way Islamic radicals preaching from the mosques and spewing out hatred via the Internet are able to prey on this disaffection and import a toxic ideology into France and the heart of Europe.

True, the current riots in France may be about rootlessness and alienation of minority youth, but they are not only about rootlessness and alienation. Radical Islam is part of the mix as well, and the French will ignore that at their own peril. (Jerusalem Post Nov 7)

Storm Clouds Ahead By Isi Leibler

On the surface, the relationship between the United States and Israel has never been better.

The Bush Administration is today more understanding of Israel's position than any of its predecessors; the extent of evangelical Christian is unprecedented; and backing for Israel in opinion polls remains solid. Yet having met with a cross section of American Jewish leaders during a recent visit to New York, I fear that there are grounds for serious concern.

The deterioration on the campus continues and the demonization of Israel, frequently accompanied by anti-Semitism, now transcends all other campus political issues. Hostile campaigns are frequently spearheaded by anti-Israeli activists of Jewish origin, and the majority of Jewish students avoid involvement either because they are indifferent, or in many cases simply because they are frightened. Moreover, when these youngsters become older, a substantial proportion of them are unlikely to maintain the same level of support for Israel as their parents.

It should also be noted that anti-Jewish rhetoric is now rapidly penetrating the political mainstream. The recurring tirades against "Jewish neoconservatives" allegedly controlling the White House; Lewis Libby is already being portrayed in anti-Semitic web sites as "one more Jewish Neocon Traitor"; the outrageous behavior of the liberal Protestant denominations engaging in anti-Israel boycotts via divestment; the growing hostility against Israel being displayed in many of the antiwar demonstrations; and the increasing number of liberals, formerly our best friends, who now distance themselves from Israel - all represent grounds for serious concern.

The unprecedented indictments against senior professional AIPAC leaders, Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman, must be viewed as manifestations of ominous winds of change. It is highly disconcerting when leaders of the most powerful Jewish lobbying organization are publicly accused of having "conspired" to obtain improper access to classified information with the obvious intention of exploiting Jewish concerns about association with espionage. This is particularly bizarre in view of the fact that the indicted AIPAC officers merely did what every journalist does every day.

And what was the nature of the "secret" information? Not classified American secrets but a sting operation based on a fabricated story about

Israelis being endangered by terrorists.

Under normal circumstances, if there was a genuine concern that the lobby of an allied power was technically breaching security procedures, a firm reprimand to those involved or their superiors would have been more appropriate than an elaborately engineered trap including wiretaps. It is also disconcerting that the federal prosecutor in this case is a very senior officer and has just been nominated for the post of deputy attorney-general.

The manner in which the AIPAC Board abandoned and distanced themselves from these long standing senior employees is also problematic. Those concerns are further reinforced by the fact that at their last major AIPAC gathering even the customary singing of Hatikva at the close of proceedings was aborted.

THE OTHER burning issue is the Jonathan Pollard case which understandably remains a highly sensitive matter for most American Jews who regard the episode as a blot on their standing. They usually prefer to avoid discussing the issue despite the fact that the responsibility for the entire mess is exclusively due to Israel's bungling.

Pollard is unquestionably guilty of espionage. But even if the accusations about Pollard being his own worst enemy are valid, and even if today he still sounds shrill and hysterical - the fact remains that he has been incarcerated for 20 years for handing over secrets to an ally of the United States. It is now being bandied about that he must serve at least another 10 years before he becomes eligible for parole. Soviet spies, including traitors responsible for the death of allied agents have been treated more humanely.

There are many unanswered questions. Why is Pollard still in prison? Why has his sentence not been commuted on humanitarian grounds? Are the authorities making an example of him? If so, why? To intimidate American Jews? Because of anti-Semitism? What other explanation is there?

The ongoing confrontations with the US Defense Department over the arms deals with India and China are also problematic. While there may well have been legitimate grounds for American irritation with mistakes or heavy handed Israeli practices in the sale of sensitive defense equipment, the needlessly public stance adopted by the Defense Department in this matter was offensive and not what one would expect from an ally.

In conjunction with these negative vibes, there has of late also been a marked erosion in the relationship between Israel and the current administration. Yasser Arafat's successor Mahmoud Abbas is being portrayed by President George W. Bush as a noble partner for peace, despite the fact that to date everything he has said and done points to the contrary.

In fact, President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice have even begun employing Clintonian language of moral equivalency which fails to distinguish between killers and victims. There is renewed talk of "cycles of violence," of the "need for restraint," and continuous references to the road map without emphasis on the fact that it obligates the Palestinians to first dismantle the terrorist infrastructure.

More importantly, Israel is being urged to make further unilateral concessions including the release of more prisoners and providing greater freedom of movement to Palestinians all of which only seem to contribute toward more funerals for Israeli civilians.

Sharon's desire to satisfy Bush is understandable. But even under Labor governments, Israel did find it occasionally necessary to adopt independent positions which displeased the US administration. Today, we appear to be in the process of becoming transformed into a US satellite. That was exemplified with Ma'aleh Adumim. Prime Minister Sharon had originally promoted disengagement to Israelis largely on the basis that as a quid pro quo Bush would support Israel's retention of the major settlement blocs.

But now he has apparently capitulated to all American demands and aborted all building activity, including the construction of the road link from Ma'aleh Adumim to the capital. This suggests that Sharon is becoming totally subservient to the administration.

There is of course no disputing that the US as a friendly superpower remains crucial to Israel's security. But it becomes an untenable relationship if Israel is now going to blindly acquiesce to every American request, including matters directly affecting the security of our civilians. (Jerusalem Post Nov 7)

The writer chairs the Diaspora-Israel relations committee of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, and is a veteran Jewish international leader.

What Have We Learned? By Jonathan S. Tobin

In the weeks and months before Israel's ordeal of withdrawal from Gaza, American Jews were bombarded with stories about how Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan was bound to set off a civil war or at least a few incidents which would remind everyone of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin.

Those who sought to make the analogy inevitably invoked Rabin's death as a metaphor for the threat to Israeli democracy. Fortunately, those fears proved overblown if not completely misleading. But as we approach the 10th anniversary of Rabin's murder, it can be expected that the same sermon will be read and re-read from pulpits and community lecture halls as the date is commemorated.

With each passing year Rabin's transfiguration from general/politician into secular saint is further solidified in Jewish culture. A lifetime of military and political achievement - as well as mistakes - has been boiled down to him being remembered solely as a martyr for peace.

The spot in Tel Aviv where he was shot is now a standard stop on any tour of Israel, much like a visit to the new Yad Vashem or the Western Wall.

As much as some US Jews have come to appreciate the nuances of Israeli politics, for many there is still the tendency to boil Israeli leaders down to heroic images. After all, if American Jews still idolize Golda Meir as if she had never been driven from office by the scorn of the Israeli public, how can we expect them to think clearly about Rabin and his tragic fate?

Predictably, Rabin's death has become an all-purpose metaphor of the dangers of out-of-control dissent and violent rhetoric.

Even more to the point, as has been the case in Israel, Rabin's murder has come to serve as a political hobbyhorse for certain Jewish political agendas.

Just as the death of John F. Kennedy allowed some to foolishly spin tales about what might have happened in Vietnam had he lived, so too, does Rabin become the fulcrum on which every possible Oslo scenario unfolds.

The fact that Kennedy helped initiate and escalate the Vietnam War didn't stop some (paging Oliver Stone) from imagining that he would have soon repented. Rabin's passing, coming as it did just as Oslo began to unravel, allows dreamers of every political complexion to similarly use his murder as a metaphor for all that subsequently went wrong for Israel.

IN THE mythology of the Jewish Left, it was Rabin's murder that cut short the peace process. According to that narrative, had Rabin lived, he would have been able to lead Israel's people to accept peace and his strength would have ensured that the Palestinians did the right thing too. This scenario holds Binyamin Netanyahu, who was elected prime minister six months after the murder, responsible for the deterioration in relations and the ultimate doom of Oslo. If only Rabin had lived, peace might have prevailed, we are told.

Others believe that Rabin would have correctly read Arafat's intentions far sooner than his successors and halted the process in its tracks. In this counter-factual tale, a wise Rabin would have forestalled not only the bloodshed of the current war but kept the country united in the process.

Both these scenarios are inherently flawed. Rabin was just starting to realize in the fall of 1995 that his belief in Arafat's ability to deal with rejectionists Palestinians ("without a Supreme Court" to inhibit his tactics as Rabin often said) might have been misplaced. And the "blame Bibi" theory fails to take into account the fact that he actually continued the Oslo pattern of concessions in the Hebron agreement and the Wye Plantation accord.

Those who think Rabin would have eventually shut the process down don't take into account the pressure he would have faced to keep it going no matter how high the number of casualties from Palestinian terror that never really ceased even during the height of the Oslo euphoria. Nor would it have been easy for even a strong personality like Rabin to change directions on Oslo having put so much effort into changing the national conversation about peace.

AS MUCH as we American Jews should admire his life's work, all of the speculation about the impact of Rabin's death is an intellectual dead-end. The fate of the peace process was always in someone else's hands, not his. That person was Arafat and if there is anything that we should have learned from Arafat's behavior in the years after Rabin's murder, it is that he was always uninterested in the sort of peace that Rabin advocated.

It may be that the memory of Rabin's murder, restrained some protesters against Ariel Sharon, especially here in the United States. The vitriol that was unleashed against Rabin as well as Sharon was despicable. But blaming the huge numbers of ordinary Israelis who opposed Oslo from the start for the actions of one extremist was always unfair and itself an attempt to restrain democratic dissent. Those still bent on using Rabin's murder to prove the "original sin" of the Jewish Right are hardly promoting communal peace.

In the end, the impressive achievements as well as the complex and often contradictory policies of Yitzhak Rabin will remain for historians to pick over. As for the rest of us here, all we are left with is a stained-glass image of a martyr for peace.

As such, the date of Rabin's death has already become yet another lesson for Diaspora Jews to learn about in synagogue Hebrew schools. It may well be that future generations of Jewish children will continue to draw Yitzhak Rabin peace pictures just as they will do some of the heroic Maccabees a few weeks later.

Such a symbol isn't particularly helpful to those who wonder whether a renewed search for peace with the Palestinians will prove as futile as Rabin's hopes for Arafat. But the Rabin icon isn't a bad lesson for the kids.

Nor is it one that I suspect even the flinty Rabin would have terribly minded. (Jerusalem Post Nov 9)

The writer is executive editor of the Jewish Exponent in Philadelphia.

OK, Enough Is Enough. By Joseph Farah

It's clear France is no longer in control of its population.

It's clear millions within its borders are struggling for freedom and independence.

It's clear that these people are not rioting for the sake of rioting, they are responding to oppression from French authorities.

It's clear that their uprising cannot be met with state violence, because that would only lead to a cycle of violence.

It's clear that these freedom-fighters whom I have dubbed "Paristinians" want a state of their own. (Farah is an Arab Christian)

It's clear that the international community must force France to the negotiating table with these freedom fighters to begin the peace process that will inevitably lead to the creation of an autonomous, independent state of "Paristine."

If it's good enough for Israel, it's good enough for the French surrender monkeys who have been leaders of the global movement to force the Jewish state into appeasement of terrorists.

We've got to stop referring to this "intifada" in France as "riots." This is a movement for self-determination. This is a movement for independence. This is a movement for freedom from imperialism.

The analogy is apt.

That's not "Frre Jacques" they're singing in France. It's "Fire Jacques."

The president of France can see the cinder in the eye of others, but is missing the beam in his own.

What's good for the goose liver is good for the gander liver.

The chicken cordon bleu has come home to roost.

It's time for France to stop the hypocrisy.

It's time for the French to take a dose of the medicine they have been handing out to the Jews of Israel.

It's time to end the apartheid within its population. It's time for France to stop treating those poor, Muslim immigrants as second-class citizens. It's time to accept the only permanent solution that can address the root problem in French society . the recognition of the Paristinians as a legitimate negotiating partner.

Enough rubber bullets!

Enough police repression!

Enough calls for restraint!

Enough with the threats!

Before this cycle of violence spreads throughout all of Europe, France needs to do the right thing.

The French have been speaking out of both sides of their mouths for too long. They've been speaking out of both of their nostrils for too long, too. If appeasement was the solution in Iraq, it's the solution for the "Paristinian" revolt. If appeasement was the solution for Hitler, it's the solution for the "Paristinian" revolt. If appeasement was the solution for Israel in dealing with its "Palestinian" problem, it's the solution for France's "Paristinian" uprising.

As I mentioned yesterday in my column, if France has these kinds of systemic problems with its Muslim population, then it is time to partition France. It's time for an independent Muslim state to be created. After all, isn't that what France and other European nations have determined is the proper solution for Israel?

These are not just riots. This is an intifada . just like the one begun in 2000 within and around Israel.

France and other countries, including the United States, have demanded that Israel meet those attacks with land concessions to the rioters and suicide bombers. That is the only viable, long-term solution, they say. They claim this violence will never cease until those oppressed by Israel are granted an independent, autonomous state of their own.

Why should the solution be any different in France?

Stop the violence! Now . not at a snail's pace. The time has come to begin talks with the "Paristinians" about their own future homeland of "Paristine" (WorldNetDaily.com Nov 8)

Jihadism and Denial By Diana West

"We in America know the benevolence that is at the heart of Islam," declared Condoleezza Rice, addressing assembled Muslim dignitaries at the annual Ramadan dinner at the State Department — and provoking a second, consecutive examination in this column of the rhetoric of the most important US official next to the president.

The secretary of state's annual Ramadan dinner at the State Department is not to be confused with the president's annual Ramadan dinner at the White House, although it's easy to get mixed up. The legacy of September 11 has left us with: an open-ended war abroad; the introduction of homeland hyper-insecurity; and the open-ended introduction of Ramadan celebrations all over official Washington. Which is worth a question or two on its own, beginning with: "Why"? Why has it become the post-September 11 function of the U.S. government to celebrate Ramadan? The buzzword of "Muslim outreach" comes to mind, but, as the Judeo-Christian culture hit by Islamikazes on September 11, haven't we got it exactly backward? That is, wouldn't Muslims better outreach themselves if the Saudi Embassy, for example, celebrated Christmas and Hanukah?

But I digress. Getting back to Miss Rice's shindig, Ramadan wouldn't be Ramadan without Nihad Awad, the executive director of the notorious Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). His invitation alone deserves separate mention — and maybe an investigation into whether security concerns arose over bringing into the State Department someone from a Hamas-linked group boasting five current or former officials arrested, convicted or deported on terrorism-related charges. Oh well. In the holiday spirit, let's just recall, as bestselling author Robert Spencer did at www.jihadwatch.com, the words of CAIR's former board chairman, Omar Ahmad: "Islam isn't in American to be equal to any other faiths, but to be dominant." By Washington's Ramadan measure, Mr. Ahmad's wish is America's command. After all, George W. Bush and Condoleezza Rice aren't breaking the fast with Jews on Yom Kippur, supping with Hindus on Diwali, or cavorting with Druids on the Winter Solstice. And they certainly aren't feting official Christendom on Christmas Day — and no, the children's Easter Egg roll doesn't compare.

But I digress again. "We in America know the benevolence that is at the heart of Islam," Miss Rice said. Really? Is that what history tells us? Is that what current events tell us? Miss Rice's speechifying, which included a personal riff on Ramadan as being a time "characterized by sacrifice and abiding faith, by prayer and self-reflection and by compassion and profound joy," makes a wicked contrast to real-live Ramadan headlines. Not the big ones about Scooter and Judy and Matt and Peter; or bird flu; or Charles and Camilla, or even the substantial ones about the new Supreme Court nominee, Samuel Alito.

I'm thinking of the Muslim suicide bombing in Tel Aviv that killed five, and the Hitlerian promise of Iran's Shiite president that "the stain of disgrace"—Israel—will be "purged from the center of the Islamic world." I'm thinking of the week of Muslim rioting in Paris, and the news that a July 7 London suicide bomber was buried in Pakistan (his exploded remains, anyway) at the shrine of an Islamic saint. In New Delhi, Muslims are suspected of killing 60, while actor Omar Sharif has received Internet death threats, thought to come from Muslims in Italy, for playing St. Peter. And I can't stop thinking about the three Christian girls who were beheaded in Indonesia en route to their Christian high school. The killers carried off one of the severed heads to a new church, where they left it.

I could go on about the magazine editor in Afghanistan just sentenced to two years in jail for "blasphemy" — that is, criticizing Sharia law. Then there's Jyllands-Posten, the newspaper in Denmark that has received bomb threats, become a potential terror target on an Al Qaeda Internet list and drawn official diplomatic protests from 11 Muslim ambassadors for having published 12 cartoons of Mohammed. Depictions of the Islamic prophet may be a no-no under Islamic law, but redoubtable Denmark and its free (non-apologizing) newspaper are not under Islamic law.

Condoleezza Rice isn't either. But her soft-soap routine comes across as supplication, not statecraft. The United States should never kowtow to the Islamic diplomatic community by pretending that no doctrinal or institutional links exist between the teachings of Islam and the terrorism that has benighted our days. She and they must face facts. An informative place to start would be to challenge these same Ramadan diplomats to denounce, not newspapers that publish funny faces of Mohammed, but anyone who chops a schoolgirl's head off. (Jewish World Review Nov 4)

The writer is a columnist and editorial writer for the Washington Times.

What Has Disengagement Bought? By Ryan Jones

At first, it was touted as a means to freeze the headlong rush to birth a Palestinian Arab state that would certainly endanger Israel's security and even existence.

When it became clear the West would never allow Israel's "disengagement" from Gaza and northern Samaria to serve such a purpose, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon promised Israelis a package of other long-sought benefits they would certainly reap by quitting those areas of their Biblical homeland.

American support for the annexation of more strategically important parts of Judea and Samaria, a major decrease in "Palestinian" terror, a freer hand to war against those terrorists who did continue to attack, and the heading off of an internationally imposed solution were all placed on the table as rewards for surrendering parcels of land the Sharon government insisted were undesirable anyway.

A full month has passed since the last IDF soldier left Gaza and the area reverted to full Arab control.

And yet, those benefits have not even begun to be realized. In fact, the opposite of what Israelis were promised is happening.

Washington has not come out in support of Israel's perpetual retention of large settlement blocs in Judea and Samaria (which in America's view includes eastern Jerusalem), but has rather publicly criticized and condemned the construction of every new Jewish apartment and home in those areas.

Successful "Palestinian" terror attacks — including shootings, "suicide" bombings and artillery bombardments — are actually increasing for the first time in two years.

Security officials report that terrorist efforts to transfer personnel and weapons from Gaza to Judea and Samaria and perpetrate attacks from there are accelerating at a tremendous rate.

Israel's ability to combat this terrorist phenomenon with the kind of force needed to end it has not increased, even after unprecedented rocket barrages. Instead, Israel's hands are more tied than ever as a direct result of its withdrawal from Gaza and northern Samaria.

Washington insists that pullout started fresh momentum towards a final peace settlement, and will not countenance Israel jeopardizing the timetable by unleashing any kind of serious military action to defend its citizens. Recent statements of understanding for Israel's right to defend itself have without fail been accompanied by demands that Israel consider the consequences of its actions and practice unheard of restraint.

As for international efforts to impose the outlines of a final peace upon Israel, the Disengagement has anything but halted those. That became apparent even as the last troops left Gaza, an action Israel insisted it was implementing unilaterally and on its own terms.

Just one month later, Israel has been bullied into accepting the international community's position on freedom of passage through Gaza's borders. No Israeli will directly monitor the Gaza-Sinai border — the primary gateway for "Palestinian" terrorist arms — and Palestinian Arabs will begin traveling between Gaza and Judea even before adequately proving they will not use that freedom of movement to perpetrate additional acts of terrorist aggression.

And already there are among international power brokers voices of support for the PLO claim that Israel's gesture of peace is incomplete without an accompanying withdrawal from Judea and Samaria.

The Gaza retreat resulted in a wave of optimism that a final peace agreement and the birth of Palestine are just around the corner.

With the international community fully aware that the Arabs are not willing to compromise, and armed with new proof that Israel can in fact be made to surrender, guess who is going to have the other's terms imposed upon them for the sake of achieving that "peace"?

For those willing to see reality, none of this comes as a surprise.

The question now is: will all of this serve as the wake up call Israel needs to finally realize it can never satisfy the Arab world or the international community but through its complete surrender and demise? Or will Israelis continue to pay in blood for the shortsightedness and naivete' of their leaders? (IsraelNational News.com Nov 9)

The writer is News Editor of Jerusalem Newswire, the only independent Jerusalem-based, Gentile-operated news service providing daily coverage and commentary on events in and relating to Israel.