



ISRAEL NEWS

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Commentary...

Israel's New Ruling Party *Who will lead it, Netanyahu or Sharon?*

By Tom Rose

The collapse of Ariel Sharon's national unity government last week revived Henry Kissinger's famous observation that Israel has no national or foreign policy, only domestic politics. Once again, petty political causes have brought down an Israeli government, with potentially far-reaching consequences.

The government of national unity --uniting the two major parties, Likud and Labor--did not dissolve over policy disputes, though the coalition partners are ideological antagonists. It came apart because maintaining it ceased to serve the political interests of its key figures.

Afraid that he might not be able to withstand a challenge from former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the leadership of the conservative Likud party, Sharon saw the preservation of the unity government as his only means of avoiding early retirement at the hands of a man he detests. Meanwhile, the leader of the left-wing Labor party--Sharon's defense minister, Benjamin Ben-Eliezer--found himself confronting the same party dynamics but with far worse prospects. In the Labor party primary slated for November 19, Ben-Eliezer faced not one, but two challengers, both of whom had surged far ahead of him in the polls. With his own party's leadership attacking him in the press and from the Knesset podium, Ben-Eliezer had no choice, he bitterly claims, but to leave the government.

Once Ben-Eliezer pulled Labor out of the government, Sharon was left with only 55 votes in the 120 seat Knesset, less than the majority he needed to survive the no-confidence motions that started pouring in. There were four such motions in the first three days, the most preposterous of which, submitted by the Labor party, condemned the economic record of the government Labor had jointly controlled until just two days before.

At first, Sharon seemed to dismiss the crisis. All he needed to do to establish a new, narrower coalition government was get the leader of the nationalist, right-wing "Israel is our Home" party to sign up. What Sharon seemed to forget was that this party's leader was Avigdor Lieberman, a Netanyahu protégé and one of Israel's shrewdest political minds. With opinion polls showing that new elections could double the size of Lieberman's party, his interest lay in hastening the very election Sharon sought to avoid.

Sharon's hopes of establishing a narrow government were dealt a fatal blow when his effort to undermine Netanyahu by offering him the position of foreign minister blew up in his face. Sharon's aides had convinced themselves and much of Israel's gullible media that this maneuver would end the Netanyahu threat once and for all: No matter how Netanyahu responded, Sharon would come out the winner. If Netanyahu turned down the post, he would reveal himself as the self-interested politician Sharon had long tried to convince the party faithful he was. But if he accepted and became foreign minister in a Sharon-led government, he would become subordinate to the prime minister just weeks before a party leadership election.

Without realizing it, Sharon had given Netanyahu the very platform he needed to showcase his mastery of Israeli media and politics. He would proudly serve as Israel's foreign minister, Netanyahu said: All Sharon had to do was agree to early elections. With polls showing Likud poised to win a massive parliamentary victory, how could the party's leader possibly object?

Thus, just 12 hours after the prime minister appeared with party allies on Sunday, November 3, proclaiming his determination to prevent early elections at any cost, he was forced to make the humiliating journey to the president's residence to formally request the dissolution of parliament. And the duel resulted in a surge of Netanyahu support among Likud primary voters. In a week, Netanyahu went from 10 points behind Sharon to 1 point ahead, according to an

internal party poll.

Both Likud and Labor are slated to hold leadership primaries in the next month. Labor, the party responsible for creating and implementing the Oslo peace process, is largely blamed for Oslo's disastrous consequences. Fearing for their political lives, Labor moderates have fled the party in droves, leaving hard-leftists in firm control, and as a result, Labor is facing electoral collapse. Since more than 80 percent of Israelis

now identify themselves as either "centrist or conservative," the winner of the Likud party primary is likely to command the largest conservative majority in the country's history.

Israeli law requires parliamentary elections to be held no later than 90 days after the establishment of a caretaker government--in this instance, no later than February 4, and probably in late January. Meanwhile, Sharon remains prime minister, which gives him an advantage in the Likud primary, although the latest polls show the two candidates neck and neck.

While both Likud and Labor party activists viewed the national unity government as an impediment to their respective agendas, a huge majority of Israelis supported it because it seemed to foster domestic peace in a fractious nation. Exploiting this popularity is clearly Sharon's best chance to remain his party's leader and thus the country's prime minister.

Sharon will remind voters that he inherited a nation in disarray and stabilized it with remarkable dispatch. He will argue that his incrementalist approach to fighting the war against Palestinian terrorism gave Israel the space it needed to strengthen its relationship with the United States while simultaneously striking devastating blows against Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and his terrorist allies. Why, Sharon will ask, would Israelis want to change horses in midstream, handing the reins of power to a man whose previous tenure as prime minister had led to Likud's worst defeat since it first came to power in 1977?

Netanyahu will readily concede that Sharon did right a sinking ship, and for that he deserves the thanks of every Israeli. But with the ship now righted, shouldn't it start sailing? Should the skipper be a visibly tired 75-year-old man who, after two years in office, has articulated no vision for Israel's future and offered no solution to its mounting political, economic, and social problems? Netanyahu will try to convince Likud voters that Israelis need more than unity to solve their problems. They need solutions, and he is the candidate who can provide them.

For two years, Sharon has employed every tactic to fight Palestinian terror except the one that Netanyahu and most Israelis believe will work: Exile Arafat, dismantle his terrorist militias, and depose his Palestinian Authority. Any policy that tolerates the man who started and directs the terror war that has killed 650 Israelis and injured 8,000 more, Netanyahu will insist, is a policy that tolerates terror. Sharon will respond by reminding voters that it was Netanyahu who ceded 13 percent of the West Bank and the ancient Jewish city of Hebron to Arafat at the Clinton-sponsored Wye River Plantation talks in 1998. Sharon will have to tread carefully, however, since he himself, as Netanyahu's foreign minister, urged even more far-reaching concessions at Wye.

Terrorism isn't all Netanyahu will talk about. Israel faces economic collapse. Its GDP has fallen for three consecutive years. Twelve percent of Israelis are out of work, another 20 percent are underemployed, and the rest have seen an average income decline of 25 percent. A third of Israel's children live below the poverty line. Nearly half depend on some measure of state assistance.

The combined market capitalization of Israel's hi-tech sector, which once accounted for nearly 30 percent of GDP, has declined 90 percent. Tourism, once Israel's leading foreign exchange earner, is down 80 percent. Interest rates are 14 percent and rising, depriving nearly every business of even short-term credit. Investment capital is nonexistent. Capital flight has assumed South American proportions.

Netanyahu's challenge here will be harder than it looks. While the cocktail of misery described above would spell certain defeat for any incumbent in the

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United States or Europe, economic failure has long been accepted by Israelis as the "price" of living under permanent siege. Netanyahu will attempt to break this pattern by arguing that Israel has largely itself to blame for its sorry economic state. Just as bad economic policies have put it through the economic ringer, good ones can restore growth. Taxes are too high and must be cut. Government is too large and must be shrunk. Unions are too strong and must be weakened. While familiar in the United States, this refrain could electrify those Israeli voters it doesn't appall.

As the most popular prime minister in years, Sharon will try to convince Likud voters that the party stands to win more seats in a general election if he leads the ticket than if Netanyahu does. This will be hard for Netanyahu to refute, despite the irony of its coming from the man who tried so hard to avoid elections in the first place. In any case, whoever leads Likud, the party appears to be on the verge of winning a monumental electoral victory that could presage a new era in Israeli politics. (Weekly Standard Nov 18)

The writer is publisher of the Jerusalem Post.

Two Libels and an Escalation By Eliahu Salpeter

In the new Arab anti-Semitism, the Jews are portrayed as enemies of Islam.

Despite the protests of Jewish groups from all over the Western world, Egyptian Television has announced that during the upcoming month of Ramadan, it will begin airing a 14-part series called "A Rider Without a Horse." The series is based on "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," the anti-Semitic booklet from 1905 written and distributed by the secret police of Russian Czar Nicholas II, which describes a purported Jewish plot to take over the world. The series describes the efforts of an Egyptian journalist to "verify the truth" of the Protocols and, its producers say, their star discovers a "Zionist plot to take over Palestine."

Coincidentally or not, the hottest item at this month's international book fair in Damascus is a book by Syrian Defense Minister Mustafa Tlas. The book, "The Matza of Zion," which is now in its eighth edition, is an Arab version of the medieval Christian blood libel: the Jews use the blood of a Muslim child to bake matzas for Passover.

The origins of both libels and the fact that Arab governments are disseminating them are indications of a dangerous escalation of anti-Semitism in the Arab world. Jewish organizations are increasingly concerned about the fact that even countries that reject Muslim fundamentalism are promoting the anti-Semitic incitement being distributed by reactionary states such as Saudi Arabia.

The phenomenon highlights the changes Arab anti-Semitism has undergone in recent years. Traditionally, Islam believed in coexistence with the Jews, whose religion, unlike Christianity, was not considered a competitor threatening Islam. Islam made do with attributing an inferior status to Judaism, which the prophet Mohammed recognized as a monotheistic religion that predated his faith.

Arab and Muslim anti-Semitism is linked to the struggle with Zionism over the Land of Israel, and recently it has experienced a "reactionary" change. In preceding decades, modern Arab anti-Semitism drew its terms from those of Christian anti-Semitism and European racism. Now, with the surge in Muslim fundamentalism, Arab anti-Semitism has also returned to the Koran. The Jews are no longer an inferior people that should be kept in inferior status and their lives protected; they are enemies of Islam and must be obliterated. Muslim anti-Semitism is thus becoming like the "annihilationist" anti-Semitism of the Nazi era. As a result, a paradox has emerged in which almost the only partners to this kind of anti-Semitism are European Christian neo-Nazis and racists. These are the same groups whose hooligans organize murderous rampages against Muslim immigrants to their countries.

The radicalized return to fundamentalist Muslim roots is described by Dr. Meir Litvak's study in the 2002 report of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism. He notes, among other things, that "Zionism," "Israel" and "Jews" are used interchangeably by the Arabs, not only for tactical propaganda purposes, to argue that they are not anti-Semites, but also for ideological reasons.

They see Zionism and the State of Israel as the modern embodiment of Judaism, which they claim, was the sworn enemy of the prophet, Mohammed. "The centrality of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the lives of the Palestinians has caused anti-Semitism to assume an even more prominent place in the doctrine of the Hamas movement - the Muslim movements now perceive the struggle against Israel and the Jews as part of the broader war between Muslim culture and Western culture."

Litvak notes that there are many concepts that Hamas propaganda has borrowed from "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" about the world media and the establishment of "secret organizations" such as the Rotary Club and the Free Masons in order "to destroy the culture" and "disseminate Jewish vileness." In many respects, the new Muslim anti-Semitism is more dangerous than its

predecessors because it expresses an ideological force. It stems from a deeper popular belief and is less subject to political changes such as peace agreements.

Recently, a new development in Muslim anti-Semitism has emerged - a combination of the ideology of anti-Western globalization movements and Jew hatred. "Many Arab and Muslim writers see globalization as a threat to Arab culture and identity and fear that it will increase Western control of their economies and political systems." Associating globalization with "Jewish intrigues" makes it easier for the Arabs to explain why they lag behind in economics, technology and science, Litvak concludes.

Fundamentalist and wealthy Saudi Arabia, the turf that produced Osama bin Laden and his movement, is a hotbed of Muslim anti-Semitism, which often influences Egypt, Syria and other "progressive" Arab states. Saudi Arabian television and newspapers specifically incite to murder Jews, something that especially infuriates American Jews, to whom Saudi Arabia is presented as their loyal ally. Saudi anti-Semitism and its social backwardness have been receiving increasing coverage in the American media since the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in September of last year. The Saudis, for their part, attribute this growing criticism to Jewish influence. Just seeing the number of members of Congress who wear Jewish skullcaps is enough to explain the accusations made against us, the Saudi defense minister, Prince Sultan (father of Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the U.S.) said in an interview with a London-based Arabic newspaper.

The Arabs continue to view the Holocaust and the feelings of guilt stemming from it as one of the main reasons for the establishment of the State of Israel. Holocaust denial is a regular feature of Arab anti-Semitism, and is also echoed in the official Arab media. There are other reasons for it as well: the Arabs understand that the guilt feelings are one of the reasons for Western aid to Israel. They are aware of the great impact that the memory of the Holocaust has on Jewish identity in the diaspora and diaspora support for the Jewish state. The Arabs understand that the Holocaust is the most sensitive point for the Jews and that it can be used to strike at both Zionists and non-Zionists.

The Jews feel physically threatened by Muslim fundamentalist terrorism. They are asking local authorities to help them protect their lives and their institutions. On the other hand, many also expect Israel to act cautiously, lest the way it is portrayed in the international media increase the fervor of the Muslim minority and the criticism coming from the Christian public.

There are Arab intellectuals who understand and appreciate the importance of their Western, liberal, Jewish colleagues' support of the Palestinian cause. However, the Muslim fundamentalists do not differentiate between "the good Jew" and "the bad Jew." Fundamentalist anti-Semitism is directed at both. (Ha'aretz Oct 30)

Arafat's Legacy: A case study in terror funding. By Rachel Ehrenfeld

The U.S. approach to curtail money flow to terrorists is inadequate," an Independent Task Force on Terrorist Financing, sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations, concluded earlier this month. The verdict came on the heels of Finance Committee Chairman Sen. Max Baucus's statement: "I'm getting the feeling that we really don't know the magnitude of the problem."

The fight to stop terrorist financing worldwide can benefit immeasurably from a close look at how these operations have evolved. The model used by today's terrorist groups is, after all, hardly new. In fact, it dates back more than three decades to what was to become the prototype for many of today's terrorist organizations: the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

From its inception in 1964 until the 1993 Oslo Accords, the PLO was classified as a terrorist organization with connections to international criminal organizations, drug cartels, other terrorist groups, and rogue states. Yet, throughout that entire time, it continued to receive financial and political support from the Soviet Union and its satellites in Europe, Latin America, and Africa; from members of the Arab League; and from other third-world countries.

This legitimization — which was accompanied by financial backing — allowed the PLO not only to continue its terrorism and criminal activities with impunity, but also to fund a worldwide propaganda campaign, win great popularity, and increase its influence.

Nor did the PLO's transformation into the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 1993, as a result of the Oslo Accords, impede the organization's illegal activities. On the contrary, it enhanced them. Now granted legitimacy by the entire world, the PA abused this status to expand its illegal activities.

With the current intifada, the PA has undergone another change, incorporating religion into its political rhetoric and adding jihad to its agenda. As a result, like al Qaeda, the PA has gained even more support, both

financially and politically, from the Arab/Muslim world. In fact, in the first year of the current intifada alone, the amount of money officially donated to the PA jumped by 80 percent, from \$555 million to \$1,002 billion.

A well-oiled system that often had other political priorities, in combination with corruption and hypocrisy all over the world, have made illicit funds — including funds for terrorism — easy to launder and to hide. Offshore banking centers from Monaco, Nauru, and Cyprus to Hong Kong and the Bahamas, as well as major international financial organizations, were used not only to launder the money, but also to invest it. At the forefront of the money-laundering activities was the PLO. Similar money-laundering techniques — including the misuse of charitable organizations — are now employed by al Qaeda, and many of the countries that support the PLO seem to be accommodating bin Laden's organization, too.

The use of the illegal drug trade as a weapon was developed by the former Soviet Union as part of its unconventional warfare doctrine. The PLO simply added illicit drugs to its arsenal as another excellent source of funding. Other terrorist organizations — such as the IRA, the Basque ETA, Colombia's FARC, and radical Muslim organizations like Hamas, Hezbollah, and al Qaeda — have understandably followed suit.

The official decision to use the drug trade for funding was made in 1983, under the chairmanship of Yasser Arafat, six months after the PLO was expelled from Lebanon, at a secret emergency session of the Finance Committee in Algiers. Sallah Dabbagh, the PLO's then-treasury chief, declared at the time: "...the entire future of the PLO operation for liberation may hinge on our exporting more drugs throughout the world."

For decades, the West has turned a blind eye to the PLO's fundraising endeavors, allowing it to continue operating both legitimate and illegitimate businesses. These ventures, in turn, laundered money for the organization that used the revenues to further the PLO's terrorist agenda. Their example surely did not escape bin Laden when he set out to create the financial infrastructure of al Qaeda. Indeed, U.S. and British law-enforcement agencies have by now detailed how al Qaeda has also been reaping huge profits from the illicit drug trade and other criminal activities. Last September, U.S. authorities presented evidence that illegal drugs operations in America were funding a host of Middle East terror organizations linked to both Palestinian groups and al Qaeda.

Like the PLO, al Qaeda also has large investments in legitimate businesses from construction to honey production, and heavy investments with international financial institutions. Since money is fungible, the excuses are easy and ready. And — like the PLO — al Qaeda, too, has large investments in illegal businesses, though theirs are more international in scope and include prostitution as well as gold, diamond, and cigarette smuggling.

Clearly, the PLO and its successor, the PA, have played an indispensable role in creating the financial model for today's terrorist organizations. A closer examination of the methods and institutions that made possible the PLO's financial success can help us to better track how al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations operate financially. More importantly, it can ensure that history will not repeat itself. (National Review October 31)

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A Road Map to Perdition? By Zalman Shoval

With the approaching elections, the so-called "road map" for settling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become also a concrete and burning domestic political issue, not least in the leadership contest in the Likud.

Already in his June speech, US President George W. Bush referred to some of the political coordinates of a future settlement. Though neither a fully developed plan nor a precise timetable, the speech listed the stops, as the US administration saw them, on the way to peace.

While the first stops on the map looked reasonable and positive - e.g. the imperative to end terror and violence, the need to change the Palestinian leadership, the elimination of institutional corruption, etc. - it also was clear that some of the ensuing stops could be much more problematic, not least the envisioned end-of-the-line, namely Palestinian statehood. After all, what guarantee is there that the president's vision of a "democratic, stable, Palestinian state, living in peace alongside Israel" won't turn out to be just another aggressive, brutal, undemocratic - probably irredentist - rogue state like so many others in the Arab world?

Still, the Israeli government was right in reacting positively to the speech - not only because of the close relationship with America, but also in assuming that the ideas and principles expressed in it were just that, "ideas and principles," and not concrete proposals.

However, as it turned out, the draft of the road map which the prime minister received during his visit to Washington and which Assistant Secretary of State

Bill Burns brought with him on his recent Middle East tour, was a horse of a different color - eliminating or changing some of the main stops on the way.

Not only are there suddenly strict and quite unrealistic time-tables, but the perhaps most negative aspect of the new draft is that while it expects the Palestinians to "reiterate" their commitment regarding "Israel's right to exist in peace and security" and to "call" for an end to the armed intifada (bullets are out, but apparently not stones) and incitement - without specifying who or how Palestinian compliance would be monitored Israel is asked to pay for this post-dated check in advance: to facilitate travel of Palestinian officials (in effect the current Palestinian leadership) "without restriction"; to lift curfews and end "attacks in civilian areas" (i.e. the very areas out of which the terrorist organizations, particularly Hamas and Islamic Jihad, deliberately concentrate their bases of operation); terminate demolition of Palestinian homes and deportations of terrorists (which is one of the measures employed by Israel to cope with the scourge of suicide bombings); to dismantle some settlement outposts; and hand over large sums of money to the present, corrupt Palestinian Authority.

In other words, it's words and declarations against concrete deeds. Words in the Arab world are cheap, and as America's former chief peace negotiator, Dennis Ross, has reminded us, anything Israel gives up is irretrievable; anything the Palestinians concede can be reneged on the very next day. One only has to remember that "annulling" the Palestinian National Charter, in the presence of president Clinton, did not in the least stop the continuation of Palestinian terror attacks nor did it change Arafat's position, as became clear to Clinton and Barak in Camp David and Taba, of denying the Jewish people's right to their homeland, or even of the very existence of a Jewish people.

Hard on the heels of the first stage (which, by the way, doesn't require the Palestinians to hand over illegal arms), comes stage two. This stage, in the proposed wording, in effect puts to naught the previously enunciated principle (including by Bush) that ending terror and violence must be a precondition to further diplomatic engagement.

As the Washington Institute's Rob Satloff has pointed out, if there is "sequencing," it's actually the other way around: Israel is called upon to make substantive and irreversible steps in advance of anything the Palestinians will (or won't) do.

In stage two, divided into two phases, there is to be "continued" (?) Palestinian political reform and "free, open, and fair elections" for the PLC with Israel withdrawing the IDF from the areas it has occupied since September 8, 2000 in response to Arafat's terror offensive - without expressly making said withdrawal contingent on an actual end to Palestinian terror and violence.

Furthermore, Israel should now permit the opening of official Palestinian economic institutions in its capital, Jerusalem. Israel would also have to freeze all settlement activity, "including natural growth of settlements" (one only hopes that this won't require the 250,000 Israelis living in the settlements to agree to compulsory birth-control).

At this point the monitoring mechanism of the "Quartet" (US, EU, UN, Russia) will be established. But it isn't difficult to discern that parts of this mechanism will be driven more by political motives - some of them highly questionable from Israel's and America's traditional point of view - than by concerns about the actual performance of the Palestinians. For instance, the clear implication of the creation of a "permanent" monitoring mechanism by the Quartet is the not overly disguised intention to internationalize the peace process (as Arafat had wanted all along) and perhaps also to push particular political or economic interests by one or more of the parties.

There are several negative implications to this: Israel's freedom of action in matters vital to its security will be severely curtailed, as certain members of the Quartet will tend to prefer putting pressure on Israel rather than on the Arab side.

Israel, thus, must now make it very clear that under no circumstances will it allow outsiders to determine if and when it takes security-related steps against an outside threat.

At this stage, called "transition," the Quartet will also convene an international conference to launch negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians "on the possibility of a state with provisional borders by the end of 2003." This is not what was previously stated by the US, which spoke of a "provisional state," not the same thing as "provisional borders."

Concurrently, there would be "further action on settlements," hinting that at least some settlements are to be removed before a permanent status agreement has been reached or even negotiated. Progress into the third and last phase (2004-2005), based on judgment of the Quartet [author's emphasis], would start with another international conference to launch permanent status negotiations, including on final borders, Jerusalem, refugees and settlements (all or several of which may once again turn out to be deal-

breakers). The Quartet, however, or some of its members, intend to play more than a stage-manager's role in determining the final denouement of the process.

YASSER ARAFAT isn't mentioned in the road map, perhaps because the authors couldn't agree among themselves if or how to deal with him. Be this as it may, his role can hardly be deemed irrelevant, as in more than a few matters the document would rely in practice on his participation and support.

And, as the goings-on of the last few days have shown, he has no intention of leaving the stage - regardless of Bush's call for "new" Palestinian leadership.

One cannot help feeling that this road map was concocted by too many cooks, not all of them using the same recipe.

One may also assume that the US at this point in time is principally, and rightly, focused on the Iraqi issue, and that not everything in the present draft actually reflects America's intentions. The US probably assesses that the successful conclusion of the Iraqi campaign will create a completely new political situation in the Middle East. This will affect the Palestinians, who will be forced, for their own good, to finally understand that the only way forward for them is by accommodation based on compromise with Israel - not by continuing intransigence and violence.

Israel shares US priorities and has no interest in embarking now on a public debate with the most friendly American administration that ever existed. At the same time, it cannot afford - by not making its position and concerns crystal clear through suitable channels - to risk creating a potentially dangerous momentum later on.

Israel would readily accept a road map leading toward real peace and security - but not one that's a "road to perdition." (Jerusalem Post Nov 11)

The writer is a former ambassador to the United States.

An Apartheid State? Jerusalem Post Editorial

According to Danny Gillerman, what peace between Israel and the Palestinians requires are "leaders like [F.W.] de Klerk and [Nelson] Mandela." Israel, he says, has had three such leaders: Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, and Ehud Barak. And Prime Minister Ariel Sharon "may also be the next de Klerk."

As for the Palestinians, they "have not succeeded in producing a leader like Mandela." Yasser Arafat, he says, "betrayed and deceived his own people."

Unexceptional boilerplate, save in four respects. First, Gillerman is the Israel's next ambassador to the UN. Second, it is odd that a diplomat should stand in critical judgment of his prime minister. Third, it is a slap in the face to the new foreign minister, who alone among Israel's recent prime ministers apparently falls short of Gillerman's de Klerk analogy. Fourth, the comparison to apartheid South Africa, however implicit, is specious and damaging to the country's interests abroad.

The comparison between Israel and South Africa is, of course, nothing new. "Israel and the old South Africa," wrote columnist Liz McGregor in *The Guardian*, "illustrate the dangers of the state based on ethnicity, where there is the notion of a particular ethnic group which prospers at the expense of the perceived lesser races." Former minister Shulamit Aloni of Meretz noted recently that "if we are not an apartheid state, we are getting much, much closer to it." And Amnesty International, in its Durban declaration from last year, called on the international community "to impose a policy of complete and total isolation of Israel as an apartheid state."

These remarks, plainly, are attacks on Israel, two from sources identifiably anti-Israel in their outlook. Gillerman's is a different case. The former head of the Chambers of Commerce was trying to defend Israel, not attack it. To say that the Palestinians need a Mandela - a former terrorist and national leader capable of extending a sincere hand of friendship to his enemies - is one of those clichés that bears repeating. And to point out that Arafat has fallen short of the mark is beyond cavil.

Yet there is danger in facile analogies. If Arafat is to be a Mandela, then he must be operating in a context similar to apartheid South Africa. Is this the case? Legions of Israel's enemies, especially in the Arab states, would have it so. But that ignores the fact that Israeli Arabs, unlike apartheid-era blacks, participate actively in political life; that Palestinians spurned the offer of a state because it failed to meet their maximalist demands; and that Palestinian groups such as Hamas wage war against Israeli civilians with the express purpose of destroying the Jewish state.

The mention of de Klerk only compounds Gillerman's error. If Rabin, Peres, and Barak were all de Klerks, were Binyamin Netanyahu, Yitzhak Shamir, and Menachem Begin - and Rabin and Peres in earlier incarnations - P.W. Bothas? South Africa's apartheid leaders professed a fascist ideology that held that a white minority had a right to dominate its supposed racial inferiors. By contrast, successive Israeli prime ministers have attempted in good conscience to dispose of disputed lands Israel came in possession of during a war of self-defense, not aggression.

We hardly suppose that Gillerman intended his remarks to be taken this way. Asked by *The Jerusalem Post* to clarify his statement, Gillerman said he "in no way" compared Israel to South Africa, "but rather [made] the point that while Israel has produced leaders ready to make sacrifices for peace, it has not met a match on the Palestinian side."

Fair enough. Still, if Gillerman is properly to represent Israel at the UN, he must do better than suggest Sharon "may" replicate de Klerk's achievement, as if judgment must be reserved till a future date. The prime minister has not been dealt a hand conducive to peace. It is not for him to be a de Klerk, but rather a David Ben-Gurion, a Levi Eshkol, or a Golda Meir, defending Israel against wanton attack.

The most depressing aspect of this episode is Gillerman's apparent inability to anticipate the damage his remarks may cause, whatever his intention. It has long been a favorite device of Israel's enemies and critics to cite an Israeli - historian Benny Morris is a favorite - to defend themselves against accusations of anti-Semitism. Gillerman's thoughtless remarks will likely serve as another touchstone. Let's hope this ambassador learns from his mistake. (Jerusalem Post Nov 11)

A Lesson in Hate Ottawa Citizen Editorial *How Arab governments feed delusions of a Jewish conspiracy.*

The delusional Jew-hatred in parts of the Arab world is reaching such a fevered pitch that even experienced students of racism shudder. Arab newspapers regularly argue, as Jordan's *Al-Arab Al-Yom* put it, that the "Holocaust is a great lie and a myth that the Zionist mind spread in order to lead the world astray." The Saudi government newspaper *Al-Riyadh* recently published a long article charging that Jews drink the blood of non-Jewish children. In May, an editorial cartoon in a Syrian paper showed a vampire-like Hasidic Jew, a Star of David on his black coat, toppling the Statue of Liberty.

The grotesque nature of this hatred disturbs us but more chilling is that it is coming from the top down -- not bubbling up from the "Arab street" but disseminated by the official political establishment. Apologists say the phenomenon is a byproduct of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and, accordingly, point to messianic Jewish radicals on the West Bank who call Palestinians cockroaches, as though to suggest the hate flows both ways. But in Israeli society and the Jewish world generally, such racism is repudiated by the mainstream. Even Israel's then-prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, publicly apologized when a lone Jewish fanatic distributed a cartoon of a pig named Muhammad.

Not so in the Arab-Muslim world. During Ramadan, Egyptian state television is running an extravaganza produced by and starring one of Egypt's best known actors. The 30-part series is based on the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the notorious anti-Jewish tract. The Protocols first appeared in the early 1900s and purported to be a secret blueprint for a Jewish plot to take over the world. The book was actually penned by Russian secret police in order to blame the Jews for that country's ills and strengthen the position of the czar. Prof. Norman Cohn's definitive history of the Protocols is appropriately titled *Warrant for Genocide*.

The Egyptian mini-series presents the Protocols as authentic. Millions of Egyptian men, women and children are being told that Jews are agents of demonic destruction. Egypt is said to be a moderate Muslim country, one of the few to have a peace treaty with Israel. Some peace.

There are three reasons for the strength of anti-Jewish sentiment in the Arab world. First, modern Arab history is a litany of assassination, coup d'état, inter-tribal conflict and war. Hatred of Jews is the one common denominator, the glue that holds disparate elements together.

Second, anti-Semitism is the primary form of political expression in the Arab world because it is the only political expression permitted. There are no Arab democracies. The poor and illiterate are taught to blame world Jewry for their oppression, rather than the dictators who rule them. That is why anti-Semitism is not simply sanctioned but actively promoted by these regimes.

Third, the military and economic superiority of tiny Israel is a constant reproach to her neighbours. "It was bad enough to be defeated by the great imperial powers of the West," writes historian Bernard Lewis. "To suffer the same fate at the hands of a contemptible gang of Jews was an intolerable humiliation. Anti-Semitism and its demonized picture of the Jews as a scheming, evil monster provided a soothing answer."

Not until their leaders foreswear the blinding hallucinogenic of Jew hatred will Arab nations put themselves on the path toward peace and liberty. (Ottawa Citizen Nov 11)