

## 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*

### Commentary...

#### Opening Remarks by Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the Diplomatic Corps Jerusalem, 17 November 2002

Thank you very much, all of you, for coming in on a Sunday, and I apologize for breaking your weekend. Unfortunately, the terrorists don't care much for Sunday, or Saturday, or Friday night, as you saw.

It is good to see all of you. We are rekindling a tradition I kept as prime minister and foreign minister. We would meet on regular occasions, and I intend to do the same now. I met with many of you during the last three years when I was not in office; in fact, one of the most memorable meetings I had was with Ambassador Shihad of Egypt. The last time we met was on a particular date, it was September 11; and, in the course of our discussion, we received news of the horrific tragedy, the horrific attacks in America. And I remember that I said to Ambassador Shihad that this is an event that would change history.

It has, but history takes time to unfold, and the full consequences of this change are being visited upon us as we speak. Of course, we are all experiencing in Israel, and in other countries as well, the savage attacks of terrorists. In the last 48 hours, Israel has received messages of condolences from many of your governments, and they're deeply appreciated. They are heartfelt, they express utter condemnation for what happened, and our appreciation is equally heartfelt.

But, at the outset, I'd like to make something clear. Israel expects the world not only to support us when we bury our dead; Israel expects the world to support us when we fight to defend our lives against the forces of terror, as is the right of every nation, under the right of self-defense. I think you can imagine what would happen if, in your own countries, worshipers would be killed or wounded, holy sites would be attacked - either churches, or mosques, or synagogues - and if this would be an unrelenting attack that attacks your people day in and day out. So we have to address this in the way any civilized country would do. The first obligation of any civilized government is to protect the lives of its citizens.

In this particular attack in Hebron, the terrorists were en route to Kiryat Arba; this is the best information we have. That is, 12 Israelis were killed and some 15 were wounded near the Tomb of the Patriarchs, the Tomb of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But we have clear information that the terrorists were en route to a mass killing of civilians in Kiryat Arba. The attack in the Hebron area follows the October 25th decision on the part of the Israeli government to vacate positions that were, in fact, taken up, or rather withdrawn by Israel. Israel withdrew from these areas in order to alleviate the pressure on the civilian population. And, in response, what we got was, of course, the massive attack that we have now.

Unfortunately, this is a pattern that is repetitive. We make gestures, we make accommodations, and what we get in return is an escalation of terror, an abuse of Israel's willingness to act in a humanitarian fashion. And this, of course, makes it very difficult to lessen the hardship to the population.

These attacks that we have witnessed in previous months come from all the organizations. Yesterday, or rather two days ago, it was from Islamic Jihad; before that, it was from Fatah-Tanzim, which is headed, of course, by Arafat. Before that, we had attacks from Hamas and other organizations. In other words, everyone is part of this; all of the terrorist organizations are engaged in what they call "the armed struggle." And the chosen sites are everywhere: they could be in the historic city of Hebron, they could be in a kibbutz within the Green Line like Kibbutz Metzger, in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, or anywhere in the country. The objective of these organizations is to kill Israelis, as many as possible. And, if they had the ability - the political and military ability - they would kill Israel altogether.

It is important for me to say that we have unambiguous information that Mr. Arafat is not merely passive; it is not merely that he is not lifting a finger to stop this terrorism. He is actually engaged in lifting a finger, and more often a hand,

in fact, two hands, to torpedo any effort to stop the terrorism. Arafat is actively torpedoing efforts to stop the terrorism, and Arafat himself is often engaged in the financing and the launching of terrorism. He has financed, for example, in July the funding of the person who actually launched the terrorist into Kibbutz Metzger. So, I think this leads to one obvious conclusion: if any of us still clings to the illusion that we can deliver

the task of protecting Israeli lives to the Palestinian Authority, this is an illusion. It's not going to work. It cannot work.

The only force that can protect Israeli lives is Israel and its army. And therefore, the conclusion that we come to is that we must exercise the right of self-defense against the forces of terror and against the regimes that stand behind them. I use the word "regimes," because what is involved is not only Arafat's regime. Take the case, for example, of the attack in Hebron, of the Islamic Jihad. That organization is based in Damascus. Ramadan Shallah, its leader, in fact enjoys the patronage and the protection of the Syrian government. And therefore, I urge all of you to include in your policies the clear-cut demand that Syria be told to stop this action, be told to close down the offices of the Islamic Jihad and the other terrorist organizations; the clear-cut demand that Hizbullah be declared a terrorist organization. And, indeed, to put pressure not only on Syria but also on Iran, that has been actively supporting these terrorist organizations and others.

I think that only a clear-cut and coherent position by the international community can contribute to putting the pressure on those regimes - Palestinian, Syrian, Iranian, and others - that are supporting this wave of terror. If we are to win the war against terrorism, we have to address this problem indivisibly. Terrorism is a unified problem, it is indivisible. There are not good terrorists and bad terrorists, as President Bush has said, there are only bad terrorists. And those leaders and regimes that are compromised by terror are illegitimate. They cannot be partners for anything.

And the important thing is to use this clarity in your own policies, which is what you would do in your own predicament and what you are doing, those of you who have been unfortunately attacked by terror. It is important to understand that terrorism is indivisible, and therefore the battle against terrorism has to be indivisible. Those who practice terrorism, those who condone, support and encourage terrorism should be attacked diplomatically and, in the case of direct attacks, military attacks, should also be defended against militarily.

Thank you very much. (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Nov 17)

#### Raw Truth in the Kibbutz Slaughter By Jeff Jacoby

His name, it turns out, is Sirhan Sirhan. Unlike his more famous namesake, who is serving a life sentence at Corcoran State Prison in California, this Sirhan Sirhan is reportedly a member of the Tanzim, the armed wing of al-Fatah, Yasser Arafat's faction of the PLO. On Sunday, he entered Kibbutz Metzger in northern Israel and murdered five people.

He began by shooting Tirtza Damari, 42, who was out for a walk with her boyfriend. Then he killed Yitzhak Drori, the head of the kibbutz secretariat, who had heard the first gunshots and rushed over to help. Next he kicked in the door of the Ohayon home, where 34-year-old Revital Ohayon had been reading a bedtime story to her sons Noam, 4, and Matan, 5. He killed her first, riddling her body with bullets as she tried desperately to block the doorway to the children's bedroom. Then he fired at Noam and Matan, shooting them dead as they cowered in their beds. Matan died with two pacifiers he liked to take to bed, one to suck on, one to hold.

Before security officials identified Sirhan and the Tanzim as the killers, a different terror group claimed credit. "In response to the continued Zionist aggression against our people," the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade - another al-Fatah subgroup - said in a statement, "one of our martyrs raided the settlement of Metzger. Five Zionists were killed ... by the bullets of the Brigades. We pledge that there will be more martyrdom attacks until the defeat of the occupation forces."

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It was the usual Palestinian boilerplate, routinely trotted out by those who see heroism in the murder of children. For its part, the official Voice of Palestine Radio aired a report hailing the "operation" in Kibbutz Metzger, which it described as "a colony north of Tulkarm," an Arab city on the West Bank.

But Metzger isn't a "colony" or a "settlement," and it isn't in the West Bank. Nor is it populated by hawkish Israeli hard-liners. Founded nearly 50 years ago by left-wing immigrants from Argentina, Metzger is located inside Israel proper. It is as well known for its dovish politics as for its friendly ties with neighboring Arabs, many of whom streamed into the kibbutz on Monday to offer condolences. In recent months, Metzger residents had even lobbied against a proposed government security fence out of concern that it would cut through olive groves owned by a nearby Arab village.

Some of Metzger's doves are trying to convince themselves that their kibbutz was targeted because of its politics. "It was a planned and deliberate attack on the idea of peace," said Dov Avital, a longtime resident, "because that is what Metzger stands for."

It might be comforting to think so. But the raw truth is that the massacre in Metzger was an attack not on the idea of peace, but on the idea of Israel.

It was no accident that the terrorists' statement identified Metzger as a "settlement." To Fatah and the Tanzim, to Arafat and Hamas, every Jewish community in Israel is a "settlement," not just those located in the territories Israel seized in self-defense during the 1967 Six Day War. When the Palestine Liberation Organization was founded in 1964, it was not in order to create a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, which were then occupied by Jordan and Egypt respectively. The PLO's mission, then as now, was to "liberate" all of Israel, expel the Jews, and replace it with a new Arab state called Palestine.

It is one of the abiding myths of the Arab-Israel conflict that a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza is the key to peace. But if that were true, peace would have broken out in 2000, when former Prime Minister Ehud Barak proposed a Palestinian state comprising all of Gaza, virtually all of the West Bank, and half of Jerusalem. Arafat responded to Barak's offer by launching a new war of terrorism and bloodshed.

The only surprise is that anyone is still surprised. The al-Fatah constitution has long declared that "this struggle will not cease unless the Zionist state is demolished and Palestine is completely liberated." The Arabs have never made a secret of their aspiration.

A poll on an al-Fatah Web site, [www.fateh.org](http://www.fateh.org), asks visitors whether they favor "martyrdom attacks" - that is, terror attacks - (a) within Israel proper, (b) within the 1967 territories only, (c) within both, or (d) not at all. As of midday Wednesday, 6.9 percent of respondents had chosen (a), 12.5 percent (b), and 69.1 percent (c). Only 11.6 percent favored an end to anti-Israel terrorism altogether. (Translation courtesy of the Israel Resource News Agency.)

It has never been about the '67 territories. From the maps on its walls to the textbooks in its schools to the broadcasts on its airwaves, the Palestinian Authority, like Hamas and Islamic Jihad, has always made clear that it craves much more. Arafat's war is not for a state in which Arabs can live beside their Jewish neighbors. It is for their Jewish neighbors' state. For all of it - including Kibbutz Metzger. (Boston Globe Nov 14)

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### **Retaliation for Me, But Not for Thee** By Max Boot

*A foolish inconsistency is the hobgoblin of the State Department.*

Question: What are the implications of the U.S. government's missile strike [on al Qaeda terrorists in Yemen] yesterday?... I'm sure many Israelis are wondering what the difference is between this and a targeted killing. And me, too....

State Department Spokesman Richard Boucher: Our policy on targeted killings in the Israeli-Palestinian context has not changed. . . .

Question: What, so you have one rule for one conflict and another rule?...

Boucher: I think we all understand the situation with regard to Israeli-Palestinian issues and the prospects of peace and the prospects of negotiation and the prospects of the need to create an atmosphere for progress. A lot of different things come into play there. --State Department briefing, Nov. 5

Truly, whatever Richard Boucher is paid, it's not enough. His ability to advocate a nonsensical State Department line, with a straight face, time and again, is a credit to the diplomatic profession. Ever since the start of the Al Aksa Intifada in 2000, he has repeatedly condemned Israel's practice of killing terrorists and instead called for negotiations to settle the Palestinian-Israeli dispute. A typical comment came on March 8, 2002: "We've made clear that actions like targeted killings need to be halted now and always urged them to follow a path where security can be achieved for both sides through their cooperation."

A very laudable sentiment, except it raises some obvious questions: How is Israel supposed to defend itself if it can't kill the people who are killing its citizens? And how would the United States react if it faced a terrorist threat of

similar magnitude?

The answer to the latter question came last week when a Predator drone over Yemen used a Hellfire missile to incinerate a car carrying Qaed Salim Senyan al-Harathi and five other suspected al Qaeda members. Unlike previous attacks in Afghanistan, this one occurred far from a conventional battlefield. But nobody at the State Department suggested that it disrupted the "prospects of peace" with al Qaeda, or that it impaired America's ability to "create an atmosphere for progress" in dealing with these murderous thugs. The only official to voice such sentiments was, no surprise, the foreign minister of Sweden, who condemned the CIA strike as "a summary execution that violates human rights." "Even terrorists," Anna Lindh explained, unctuously, "must be treated according to international law."

The risible Swedish response was almost universally ignored, as it should have been. Everyone--at least everyone outside Western Europe--understands that America is locked in a battle to the death with al Qaeda. The opportunity to arrest terrorists does not always exist; sometimes they must simply be eliminated. That does not make such strikes "assassinations" or "murders" any more than the killing of enemy soldiers would be. In fact there is no difference between the two situations; America is at war right now. Since international law permits the killing of enemy combatants, the United States was acting lawfully when it blasted al-Harathi and company.

So, too, Israel is in the right when it targets terrorists. Between the beginning of the Al Aksa Intifada on September 30, 2000, and September 1, 2002, more than 415 Israeli civilians were murdered and more than 2,000 maimed or injured (figures that don't include soldiers killed, many while engaged in peaceful pursuits). Israel's total population is only 6 million (a symbolic figure, that). If a similar proportion of America's population had been killed, we would have lost more than 19,000 people--the equivalent of six September 11's.

Apologists for Palestinian terror argue that suicide bombings targeting bus stops and cafés are justified because the Palestinians have no alternative means to achieve their political goals. This specious rationale--which ignores Israel's willingness, at Camp David in 2000, to grant practically all of the Palestinians' territorial demands--was exploded in an important report issued last week by Human Rights Watch, hardly a bastion of Israeli apologists.

The Geneva Convention states that the "civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack"--no matter what the rationale. By violating this injunction, Human Rights Watch wrote, the Palestinians had committed "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity." The terror attacks have not been carried out directly by the Palestinian Authority, but, the report found, Yasser Arafat bears "a high degree of responsibility for what occurred" by doing nothing to stop the terrorists and, even, in some instances, providing cash stipends to them.

This is not to suggest that Human Rights Watch has suddenly come out for bumping off terrorist masterminds. Like other human rights organizations, it has dutifully condemned Israel's resort to "extra-judicial killings." But, really, what choice does Israel have? It could try asking Arafat to arrest terrorists, as it has many times, to no avail. It could try arresting the terrorists itself, as it sometimes does, but that puts Israeli soldiers' lives at risk, and might not work anyway with suicidal maniacs. So Israel resorts to snipers, missiles, and the occasional exploding car or cell phone.

At all times, Israel takes great care to minimize the harm to civilians. Sometimes accidents occur, as on July 23, when an Israeli F-16 dropped a 2,000 pound, laser-guided bomb on a Gaza house where Hamas commander Salah Shehada was hiding. Shehada was killed but so were 14 others, including 9 children. This led to what the Guardian gloatingly called "searing international criticism" of Israel, but such is the cruel nature of war.

As long as Israel does not deliberately target civilians (which it does not) and as long as it takes reasonable care to minimize collateral damage (which it does), then it is acting well within the bounds of international law. It's nice if you can catch the bad guys in the middle of a desert, as America did last week in Yemen. But terrorists often hide among civilians precisely because they know that--unlike them--Americans or Israelis shrink from slaughtering innocents, even inadvertently. The ultimate blame for any casualties that result must therefore rest with the terrorists, since by sheltering among civilians they are violating the laws of war.

This is precisely the position we take in our own war on terror: The loss of hundreds of civilian lives in Afghanistan in no way invalidates the moral righteousness of the anti-Taliban campaign. Washington is willing to cut similar slack to other countries engaged in fighting terrorism, even Russia, which has been guilty of undoubted atrocities in Chechnya.

Israel is held to a uniquely high standard. It must watch its children being blown into blood-spattered fragments, and then sit down and share tea and baklava with the murderers. To do otherwise sabotages the prospects of long-term peace. Or so world opinion has it. The record suggests otherwise.

Suicide bombings in Israel peaked in March 2002, when at least 80 Israeli civilians were killed and 420 injured in 12 attacks. The Israel Defense Forces then occupied six West Bank cities. After the IDF pulled out in early May, suicide bombings resumed, leading to Israeli reoccupation of seven of eight major West Bank cities in June. The conventional wisdom was that this tough response would only further inflame the situation. It's true that the occupation did not end all suicide attacks, but it did dramatically diminish them.

Israeli leaders have never claimed that targeted killings would end the threat overnight; they have argued that it would reduce the danger over the long term, and the evidence so far supports that contention. Only when the Palestinians have been beaten militarily will they come to see the futility of violence and reach a *modus vivendi* with the Jews next door. Any attempt to short-circuit the process, as Bill Clinton and Ehud Barak tried to do, will only prolong the bloodshed.

Yet to judge from Richard Boucher's comments, the State Department remains convinced that if only Israel would stop shooting back, peace would somehow break out. It is hard to believe this naive faith could survive the failure of the Oslo "peace process." It is even harder to believe that it has survived more than a year after 9/11. (Weekly Standard Nov 18)

*The writer, a Weekly Standard contributing editor, is the Olin senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and author of "The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power."*

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### **The Jews Took No One's Land** By Joseph Farrah

As the most visible Arab-American critic of Yasser Arafat and the phony "Palestinian" agenda, I get a lot of hate mail. I've even received more than my share of death threats. Most of those who attack me - at least those who bother to get beyond the four-letter words and insults - say I just don't understand or have sympathy for these poor Arabs who were displaced, chased out of their homes and turned into refugees by the Israelis.

Let me state this plainly and clearly: The Jews in Israel took no one's land.

When Mark Twain visited the Holy Land in the 19th century, he was greatly disappointed. He didn't see any people. He referred to it as a vast wasteland. The land we now know as Israel was practically deserted. By the beginning of the 20th century, that began to change. Jews from all over the world began to return to their ancestral homeland - the Promised Land Moses and Joshua had conquered millennia earlier, Christians and Jews believe, on the direct orders of God. That's not to say there wasn't always a strong Jewish presence in the land - particularly in and around Jerusalem. In 1854, according to a report in the New York Tribune, Jews constituted two-thirds of the population of that holy city. The source for that statistic? A journalist on assignment in the Middle East that year for the Tribune. His name was Karl Marx. Yes, that Karl Marx.

A travel guide to Palestine and Syria, published in 1906 by Karl Baedeker, illustrates the fact that, even when the Islamic Ottoman Empire ruled the region, the Muslim population in Jerusalem was minimal. The book estimates the total population of the city at 60,000, of whom 7,000 were Muslims, 13,000 were Christians and 40,000 were Jews. "The number of Jews has greatly risen in the last few decades, in spite of the fact that they are forbidden to immigrate or to possess landed property," the book states. Even though the Jews were persecuted, still they came to Jerusalem and represented the overwhelming majority of the population as early as 1906. And even though Muslims today claim Jerusalem as the third holiest site in Islam, when the city was under Islamic rule, they had little interest in it.

As the Jews came, drained the swamps and made the deserts bloom, something interesting began to happen. Arabs followed. I don't blame them. They had good reason to come. They came for jobs. They came for prosperity. They came for freedom. And they came in large numbers.

Winston Churchill observed in 1939: "So far from being persecuted, the Arabs have crowded into the country and multiplied till their population has increased more than even all world Jewry could lift up the Jewish population." Then came 1948 and the great partition. The United Nations proposed the creation of two states in the region - one Jewish, one Arab. The Jews accepted it gratefully. The Arabs rejected it with a vengeance and declared war.

Arab leaders urged Arabs to leave the area so they would not be caught in the crossfire. They could return to their homes, they were told, after Israel was crushed and the Jews destroyed. It didn't work out that way. By most counts, several hundred thousand Arabs were displaced by this war - not by Israeli aggression, not by some Jewish real-estate grab, not by Israeli expansionism. In fact, there are many historical records showing the Jews urged the Arabs to stay and live with them in peace. But, tragically, they chose to leave.

Fifty-four years later, the sons and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters of those refugees are all-too-often still living in refugee camps - not because of Israeli intransigence, but because they are misused as a political tool of the Arab powers. Those poor unfortunates could be settled in a week by the rich Arab oil states that control 99.9 percent of the Middle East landmass,

but they are kept as virtual prisoners, filled with misplaced hatred for Jews and armed as suicide martyrs by the Arab power brokers.

This is the modern real history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. At no time did the Jews uproot Arab families from their homes. When there were title deeds to be purchased, they bought them at inflated prices. When there were not, they worked the land so they could have a place to live without the persecution they faced throughout the world.

It's a great big lie that the Israelis displaced anyone - one of a series of lies and myths that have the world on the verge of committing yet another great injustice to the Jews. (WorldNet Daily Nov 19)

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### **15,000 and Counting...** By Michael Freund

Though hardly anyone seems to have noticed, Israel recently set a new world's record. It is unclear when precisely it occurred, or what the exact circumstances were. But at some point earlier this month, Israel became the first country to endure its 15,000th terrorist attack in just over a two-year period.

That's right, you read that correctly. According to statistics compiled by the IDF, as of November 17, 2002, there had been a total of 15,298 Palestinian terror attacks against Israel since the intifada began in September 2000. That works out, on average, to nearly 1 terror attack every hour of every day over 25 consecutive months.

But that is not what qualifies Israel for a place in the record books. After all, many countries have experienced periods of civil unrest, subversive violence and lethal terrorism, albeit not nearly as intense or as prolonged as that which Israel has known of late. What truly puts the Jewish state in a category all its own, however, is its willingness to tolerate this ongoing terror campaign, which should have been defeated long ago.

Everyone, it seems, knows what the answer is to the current predicament. Everyone, that is, except for the government, which has neither the courage nor the vision to move into Judea, Samaria and Gaza and topple the Palestinian Authority once and for all.

Instead, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon prefers to play ping-pong with the terrorists, sending in the army only to withdraw it a few days later, bouncing back and forth with no long-term plan and certainly no clear-cut strategy.

Indeed, much of the military activity undertaken by the army seems purely reactive in nature, coming only after Jews have been killed, rather than before.

Take, for example, the recent IDF response to the terror attack on Kibbutz Metzger, in which a member of Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction murdered five Israelis. Two hours later, Israeli helicopters fired four rockets into a car-repair shop in Gaza City that was being used as a clandestine weapons factory. Army spokesmen said that terrorists were using it to manufacture explosive devices and mortar shells.

If Israel knew that the place was a death factory, one in which the terrorists were actively producing tools to murder the innocent, then why did we wait until after the Metzger attack to knock it out? The minute the intelligence information regarding the garage's true nature was confirmed, why wasn't it taken out of commission forthwith?

Similarly, after last Friday's massacre in Hebron, when terrorists killed 12 Israelis near the Tomb of the Patriarchs, the IDF re-entered Palestinian-controlled portions of the city which it had evacuated just three weeks earlier, on October 25th. According to a statement issued by the IDF Spokesman's Office, the purpose behind retaking the city was "to continue the determined action against the Palestinian terror infrastructure."

That sounds good, except for one nagging question: if Hebron's terrorist infrastructure was still in place, then why did the army withdraw last month? Why did it leave the job only half-finished?

Israel's critics at home and abroad suggest that the government's response to Palestinian terror is immoral because it results in the needless deaths of innocent Arabs. Frankly, I think they have it all wrong. If the government's policy qualifies as immoral, it is because it results in the needless deaths of innocent Jews.

For, by allowing the intifada to continue, and by refraining from taking the necessary steps to dismantle the PA and defeat the terror organizations, the government has undermined Israel's security and that of its citizens, leaving the terrorist threat in place to regroup and fight another day.

But we, the public, must also acknowledge our share of the blame for the current situation. We have been too silent in expressing our outrage over Palestinian terror and the government's feeble response. There have been no demonstrations in the streets, no hunger strikes, no prayer vigils, no mass awakening of indignation or fury.

Histadrut workers went on strike recently over a 2.1% cost of living increase, which amounts to just 70 shekels per month, but many people are unwilling to protest when it comes to the 73 Israelis who have been killed by

terrorists over the past three months.

It is incumbent upon us to wake up from this nightmare. With elections approaching, we have an opportunity to use all the democratic and legal tools at our disposal, and to send a clear signal to those running for office. We must let them know that the people of Israel have had enough, and that we will no longer tolerate a continuation of the current policy, which amounts to little more than a series of tired and half-hearted measures.

The time has come for Israel to sweep into the territories, reassert control, and eliminate the terrorist infrastructure and those who sponsor it. Yasser Arafat should be led away in handcuffs and put on trial, along with the rest of the Palestinian leadership. We must stop being afraid of what the world might say, and start being more concerned about what the terrorists are doing to us, day in and day out.

Israel has already passed the 15,000 mark when it comes to Palestinian terror. If the current trend continues, we will hit the "milestone" of 20,000 some time early next summer. That is one record we can not afford to break.

*The writer served as Deputy Director of Communications & Policy Planning in the Prime Minister's Office from 1996 to 1999. (Jerusalem Post Nov 20)*

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### **Wooing the Arab Electorate** By Y.A. Medved

*The continual courting of the Arab vote has not only brought terrorism into the heart of the country; it has also destroyed the Labor Party.*

Labor first became dependent on the Arab vote in 1977, when the founding Zionists' Mapai Party (Labor today), lost the elections to Menachem Begin's Herut Party (today's Likud).

Mapai, who had been in power since well before the establishment of the state, saw its erstwhile coalition partners, the Religious Zionists (National Religious Party today), cross over to the Likud, their natural allies. Mapai came to the conclusion that in order for it to regain power - that is, win an election or form a government - it would henceforth have to court the Arab electorate.

As of the early 1980s, Israeli Arabs started coordinating with Yasser Arafat and the PLO. In exchange for their vote, they demanded, in addition to vast sums of money, major political concessions. Thus Labor gradually adopted, as an inevitable political expedient, the policies which had until then been the exclusive domain of the Communists and the fringe Left.

The Mapai leaders abandoned their traditional emphasis on security and transformed themselves into the Peace Camp.

They conscripted directors of state-run companies, members of academia and the media - all those who traditionally depended on party patronage - to sell their new peace policies to the general public.

The majority of the Jewish electorate, however, was not persuaded: Over the last two decades, the Israeli Left represented an average of only 42% of Jewish voters.

The Arabs' demands escalated before every election. In 1988, Labor promised them recognition of the PLO. In 1992, it promised them the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Before the 1996 elections, Shimon Peres is reported to have received a list from Arafat of 32,000 Israeli Arabs who were to be paid handsomely to register as Labor members, in order to saturate the Arab sector, and assure Peres's victory. That year, for the first time, the Arab turnout on election day was higher than the Jewish one. Nevertheless, Peres, who was never popular with the Jewish voters, lost again.

In 2001, two days before the elections, Ehud Barak, who after only 17 months in office, had no government left, met with Arafat. By then, Arafat had already started the suicide bombers' war in which Jews were being terrorized, even in Tel Aviv.

Barak wanted to give Arafat everything: Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, 99% of Judea and Samaria and even some areas within Israel proper - if only Arafat would give the Israeli Arabs the order to vote for him, as he had done for Peres. Most Israeli Arabs did not vote that year. Sharon won by a landslide of the Jewish vote.

The continual courting of the Arab vote has not only brought terrorism into the heart of the country's civilian population, it has also destroyed the Labor Party. Nevertheless, in the current election campaign, Labor is again preparing to woo the Arab electorate.

Were Labor not to depend on the Arab vote, would it still support the establishment of a Palestinian state in Israel's midst?

Would it talk of the need to give away Jerusalem for peace?

The Labor Party has a unique chance to prove its commitment to the country's national interests: in the coming elections, it could declare that it will only accept being elected by a Jewish majority in the state it was so instrumental in establishing.

In view of the fact that the Arabs already make up 18% of the country's population - and that they have one of the highest birthrates in the world - Israeli leaders, as well as the public, would be well advised not to ignore this critical

problem.

In order for Israel to survive as a Jewish democratic state, legislators must find a way to neutralize the effects of the Arab swing vote, even before the upcoming elections. The Knesset should immediately pass a law requiring a special majority of 70% on all agreements concerning territorial concessions, declarations of war or peace, and other issues of import to national security. This is the practice in most Western democracies, such as the US, France and Germany.

No nation can survive if a minority of its citizens forms an alliance with the representatives of an enemy power who live in its midst. Czechoslovakia was destroyed by the Sudeten Germans who allied themselves with Hitler.

Israel cannot survive if, in order to win an election, the Labor Party forms an alliance with the Palestinian Arabs, whose declared goal is the destruction of the state. (Jerusalem Post Nov 19)

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**Does Sharon Sanction a Palestinian State?** By Yossi Ben-Aharon  
*If it emerges that the prime minister's motive was to attract votes from the Left in the upcoming elections, it would be a betrayal of the trust that his party has placed in him.*

Something happened last week to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon that should cause concern to all of us. In a television interview recently he said that a Palestinian state is already an established fact. He then went on to support his statement by citing the existence of a president (?!), a cabinet and a parliament in that state.

For the Palestinian entity to fulfill the requirements of a state, it has to have recognized borders, a capital, and control over entry and exit to and from its sovereign territory. The Palestinian entity does not meet any of these conditions. It is Sharon himself who once characterized it as a terrorist entity and said that "everyone has his bin Laden," intimating that Yasser Arafat is Israel's Osama.

Sharon's statement is all the more astonishing because, in essence, it is a repetition of a previous expression of support for the idea of a Palestinian state, for which he was roundly reprimanded by the central committee of the Likud. The prime minister's cavalier attitude toward the unanimous opposition to a Palestinian state by his party's membership is unprecedented and alarming.

One wonders what is behind his insistence on publicly and repeatedly sanctioning the idea of a Palestinian state. It contradicts virtually everything he stood for during his entire distinguished career as a senior military figure. It would be a tragic turn of events if, like some generals-turned-politicians before him, he would go to the opposite pole of the political spectrum and offer suicidal concessions to the Palestinians - all in the name of an ephemeral and unachievable peace. If it emerges that Sharon's motive was to attract votes from the Left in the upcoming elections, it would be a betrayal of the trust that his party has placed in him. In addition, it would be a violation of the Likud's constitution and party platform.

Unless Sharon has changed beyond recognition, I suspect that in his heart he is totally opposed to the establishment of a Palestinian state and does not believe it will ever materialize. If so, his statements on this subject seem to be designed to achieve the uncontested leadership of the entire body-politic of Israel, barring the extremes on both sides.

In this case, the price he has chosen to pay is prohibitively and unpardonably high. The Right and right-of-center parties must deliver a message to the prime minister that if he maintains this stance, he will lose the support of his constituency.

Loyal members of the Likud and its leadership should stand up and make their position on this issue crystal clear. Anyone with a sane head on his shoulders should have realized by now that a Palestinian state would be nothing less than a terrorist entity poised against the very heart of Israel. The moment it gains sovereignty, it would be free to conclude military agreements with rogue states such as Iraq, Iran, Libya, Syria and Sudan. Israel will not be able to take measures such as those we are at present taking in Nablus, Jenin and the surrounding villages. Our only option would be to invade and conquer an independent, internationally recognized state and incur the condemnation and wrath of a multitude of governments.

Personally, I do not believe a Palestinian state will ever become a reality. But the difference between my words and those of the prime minister is that his are recorded in every capital in the world and carry the risk of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. (Jerusalem Post Nov 19)

*The writer is a former director-general of the Prime Minister's Office.*

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