



ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

houses, because they understood that the state - the national homeland of the Jewish people, even within limited borders - is still bigger than any mistaken and confused government.

There is no way to know if they will forgive you, but you at least need to ask. (Haaretz Jan 20)

Commentary...

Just Say You're Sorry By Nadav Shragai

Now, after the war and just before the election whirlwind sucks in our politicians once again, it would be appropriate for many of them to go out of their way and visit the mobile-home sites where those uprooted from Gush Katif live. This way they can tell them one small thing: I'm sorry.

Tzipi Livni, Ehud Olmert, Shaul Mofaz and Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israel Defense Forces and the police should do this - they, their agents and everyone else who initiated, implemented and aided in using force to uproot 10,000 people from their homes in Gush Katif and Northern Samaria, maliciously and without any real purpose. Everyone who saw some good in the evil of the disengagement and evil in the good of Gush Katif has turned light into darkness and darkness into light. At the very least, they are obligated to make this small apology.

This includes the judges of the High Court of Justice who did not even bother to visit Gush Katif and made due with defense experts acting on behalf of the state "because that is the position of the court since it was founded." The justices who ruled as they did because they automatically assumed that such a plan "improves the security situation" because "the evacuation reduces the desire of the Palestinians to harm the Israeli population." It would be appropriate for the honorable justices to take a vacation day as an act of forgiveness and go down south for a close-up look at the results of their decisions.

This also includes the media, which provided a challenge for Ariel Sharon and allowed him to turn a prosperous agricultural land, a world full of communities, synagogues, yeshivas and magnificent educational institutions into piles of rubble. Also the heads of the IDF and Shin Bet security service who never spoke in public what they whispered in the backrooms, and the soldiers and policemen who dragged the pioneers of Kfar Darom and Neveh Dekalim from their houses while raining blows on the demonstrators who understood what would come.

The apology must also include everyone who painted those who warned that the rockets from Gaza would reach Sderot, Ashdod and Be'er Sheva as delusional and opponents of peace. Everyone who promised that they would "give it to them" after the first Qassam, but in the end cried about the moral and international constraints that prevented them from doing so, and for years abandoned the south. It must include those who took the name of democracy in vain and aided Sharon in deceiving Likud members and breaking his promises to honor Likud's decisions once it became clear to Sharon that the party's members did not agree with him.

You, too, who paid almost no attention to the hundreds of thousands who tried to stop the evil, who paid no attention to those who internalized the lessons of Oslo and warned that we should not give them land and guns again. You who paid no attention to those who warned of the Hamastan state, foresaw exactly the trajectories of the rockets, and understood that this was something we gave away for free, a further disintegration of our power of deterrence and an adrenaline shot for terror.

Now rise and ask for forgiveness from those who paid the highest price, with their bodies, souls and property for your close-mindedness, arrogance and wickedness. Ask for forgiveness from the Gush Katif expellees, the noble souls who did not steal land from anyone, who made the empty dunes bloom as ambassadors of the State of Israel and who turned into the south's security buffer and absorbed over 6,000 Qassams and mortar shells with their bodies and belongings in the last years of Gush Katif.

Ask for forgiveness from those who swore to "win with love" - who believed and sowed until the very last minute; from those who did not raise a hand against the soldiers. Apologize to those who continued to enlist in the IDF and pay the ultimate price even after they were expelled from their

'Pictures of Victory' By Caroline Glick

On Sunday, Israelis were witness to a cavalcade of European leaders marching to Jerusalem to have their pictures taken with outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. French President Nicolas Sarkozy, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Zapatero, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi came to Jerusalem from Sharm e-Sheikh, where they had their pictures taken with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. In both cities, they expressed their support for Israel's decision to stop fighting the Iranian-armed, financed and trained Hamas terror regime in Gaza.

Olmert greeted the European leaders as great friends of Israel and claimed that their presence demonstrated that Israel's operation against Hamas enjoyed massive international support. Unfortunately, Olmert's statements were wrong on both counts. The leaders who came to Jerusalem are not friends of Israel and their presence in our capital did not demonstrate that Operation Cast Lead enjoyed international backing.

While sufficing with paying the most minimal lip service to Israel's inherent right to defend itself, the leaders who came to Jerusalem have been outspoken in their criticism of Israel's actual efforts to defend its citizens from Hamas aggression. None have publicly recognized that Israel has a duty to its citizens to defeat Hamas. To the contrary, all have claimed that there "is no military solution" to Israel's military conflict with Hamas.

And while these leaders have repeated vacuous bromides about the "tragedy of both sides," their voters have been much less circumspect in telling the Jews what think of us. Over the past three weeks, all of their countries, and indeed, all the countries in Western Europe have hosted large-scale, violent, anti-Semitic demonstrations and riots. And rather than condemn the anti-Jewish violence and incitement at these events, the European leaders who came to Jerusalem have either sought to appease the anti-Semites or ignore them.

German authorities for instance permitted Hamas supporters to wave Hamas flags at their hateful "peace demonstrations" while barring Israel supporters from holding Israeli flags or even displaying them in their windows.

In France, Sarkozy has equated his victimized Jewish community with the French Muslims who have been attacking them by claiming that his government "will not tolerate international tensions mutating into intercommunity violence."

Given their refusal to support Israel in its fight against Hamas and their publics' growing hatred of Israel and the Jews, what made these European leaders come to Jerusalem? As Gordon Brown and French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner made clear in their remarks in Jerusalem, they came here to advance a hostile agenda. They want Israel to acquiesce to Hamas's demand to open its borders with Gaza and to support the opening of Egypt's border crossing with Gaza. They also intend to start giving Hamas hundreds of millions of dollars in "humanitarian aid" to rebuild Gaza.

If Europe gets its way, any gains that Israel made in Operation Cast Lead will quickly be erased. So the question then arises, why did Olmert, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Defense Minister Ehud Barak agree to have them come to Jerusalem?

The short answer to this question is that Olmert, Livni and Barak view the European leaders as stage props. As they explained repeatedly since the outset of Operation Cast Lead, Israel's leaders sought to end the campaign with a "picture of victory." A group photo with Olmert, Sarkozy, Brown, Merkel, Zapatero and Berlusconi was the picture that they felt they needed.

The fact that the picture came with demands that Israel cannot agree to without squandering its hard-earned gains in Gaza, is beside the point.

which brings us to the main point. What the parade of hostile foreigners

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in Jerusalem demonstrated clearly is that while the campaign in Gaza was touted by our leaders as a way to "change the security reality in the South," for our leaders, its most important goal was to change the electoral reality ahead of the February 10 general elections. Indeed, for them, the operation would have more appropriately been named "Operation Cast Ballots."

Olmert, Livni and Barak claimed that by signing a memorandum of understanding with outgoing US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and due to Egyptian good will, Israel succeeded in building an international framework to prevent Hamas from rearming. But the MOU sets out no mechanism whatsoever for interdicting weapons shipments to Gaza on the high seas. And Egypt for its part has refused to agree to take any concerted action to prevent the weapons shipments from docking in its ports and transiting its territory en route to Gaza.

The other operational goal that Livni, Olmert and Barak set for the campaign was to restore Israel's deterrence and so convince Hamas to stop firing its missiles on southern Israel. But, as Hamas's continued firing of missiles at southern Israel after Olmert declared the cease-fire on Saturday night showed, Israel failed to deter Hamas.

But while they failed to accomplish either of Operation Cast Lead's operational goals, they did accomplish - at least for now - their main strategic goal. They succeeded in not losing.

By waging Operation Cast Lead, Olmert, Livni and Barak hoped to turn the absence of military defeat into the building blocks of political triumph. The operation was supposed to secure their political futures in three ways. First, it was supposed to change the subject of the electoral campaign.

As Olmert looks ahead to retirement, and as Livni and Barak vie with Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu to replace him, all three politicians wanted the elections to be about something other than their failures to defeat Hizbullah, their failure to defend the South from Hamas's growing arsenal, and their failure to contend with Iran's nuclear weapons program. This goal was accomplished by Operation Cast Lead.

Their second goal - and perhaps Olmert's primary objective - was to erase the public's memory of Israel's strategic failure in the Second Lebanon War. This goal was partially achieved. The IDF performed with greater competence in Gaza than in Lebanon. And Israel achieved its aim of not being defeated in Gaza. As a result, the nation feels much more confident about the IDF's ability to defend the country.

THE MAIN difference between how Operation Cast Lead has ended and how the Second Lebanon War ended has little to do with how the IDF performed. The most important difference is Israel has not agreed to have an international force stationed in Gaza as it accepted (and in Livni's case, championed) the deployment of UNIFIL forced in South Lebanon. Since Hizbullah has used UNIFIL as a screen behind which it has rearmed and reasserted its military control over South Lebanon, the absence of such a force in Gaza is a net gain for Israel.

But again, if Israel permits Europe and the UN to flood Gaza with aid money - which will all go directly to Hamas - it will be enabling a new mechanism to be formed that will shield Hamas from the IDF and enable it to rebuild its arsenals and strengthen its control over Gaza.

This prospect is made all the more dangerous by the fact that Israel ended the campaign without taking control over the Gaza-Egypt border. By leaving the border zone under Hamas control, Israel left the path clear for Iran to resupply Hizbullah's armed forces with missiles and rockets. As Shin Bet Director Yuval Diskin explained on Sunday, under the present circumstances, Hamas can be expected to rebuild its arsenals in as little as three months.

THE THIRD political aim that Olmert, Livni and Barak sought to achieve in waging Operation Cast Lead was to convince the Israeli public that their worldview is correct. That worldview asserts that the world is divided between the extremist Islamic fundamentalists and the moderates. They claim that the latter group includes Arab dictatorships like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and democracies like Turkey, the EU, and Israel. The Kadima-Labor worldview also asserts that by surrendering territory to the Arabs, Israel will receive international legitimacy for any acts of self-defense it is forced to take in the event it is attacked from the territories it vacated.

Although the local media, with their sycophantic celebration of Mubarak and support for Israeli withdrawals have supported this view, it is far from clear that the public has been convinced of its wisdom. Between Turkey's open support for Hamas and vilification of Israel, Egypt's abject refusal to take any concrete action to end weapons smuggling to Gaza, and Fatah's fecklessness and hostility, Israelis have been given ample proof this month that the moderate camp is a fiction.

Moreover, the massive anti-Semitic riots in Europe and the US, and last week's anti-Israeli UN Security Council Resolution 1860 which the US

refused to veto have made quite clear that Israel's withdrawals have brought it no sympathy whatsoever from the "moderate" camp.

Just as the goal of not losing did not bring Israel victory over Hamas, so too, Livni, Olmert and Barak's bid to use the operation to increase their political cache does not seem to have succeeded. Opinion polls taken in the aftermath of Olmert's announcement of the cease-fire on Saturday night showed that Likud has maintained, and even expanded, its lead against Kadima and Labor.

IN SPITE of its obvious limitations, Israelis can be pleased with the results of Operation Cast Lead on two counts. Although Hamas was not defeated, remains in full control of Gaza and has the ability to rebuild its forces, it was harmed. The IDF's operation did knock out its central installations, reduce its capacity to fight and killed some of its key leaders.

The second reason that Israelis can be pleased with the outcome is that it could have been much worse. The fact of the matter is that Operation Cast Lead was the most successful operation that Kadima and Labor are capable of leading.

With their capitulationist world view, they cannot bring Israel victory over our enemies. The most they can deliver is an absence of defeat. And so long as Israel doesn't allow Europe and the UN to begin transferring hundreds of millions of dollars to Hamas, we will remain undefeated by Hamas.

Looking ahead to the challenges Israel's next government will face, Operation Cast Lead gave Israel between three to six months of security in the south before Hamas will be able to renew its missile offensive. It is during that time that the next government will need to contend with Israel's two greatest challenges - preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, and preventing the new Obama administration from undermining Israel's strategic position by selling out Israel's security to buy "pictures of victory" of its own with Iran and Syria. (Jerusalem Post Jan 19)

Save Gaza by Destroying the Heart of Terror: Natan Sharansky

By Natan Sharansky

Israel's war in Gaza has been met with cries of protest around the world. They come from two sources.

First, there are those who oppose any Israeli effort to defend itself, mainly because they don't believe a Jewish state should exist at all. This is a form of anti-Semitism, and such a view should be rejected outright rather than argued with.

Second, there are those who support Israel's existence, but believe it is wrong to wage so harsh an assault on the Gaza Strip. This argument also takes two forms: First, that Israel's response is disproportionate and therefore wrong; and second, that there are less violent ways to handle Hamas -- through international pressure, sanctions or negotiations.

Both of these claims, as logical as they may sound, ignore the lessons of history, including Israel's recent history in fighting terror. In the 10 years I served as a minister in Israel's security cabinet, I learned just how mistaken such arguments can be.

On June 1, 2001, a suicide bomber attacked the entrance to the Dolphinarium discotheque in Tel Aviv. Twenty-one Israelis, mostly young people, were killed, and more than 130 injured. This was the latest in a long string of suicide bombings that had been launched since the start of the Second Intifada in September 2000.

The next day, I took part in a dramatic cabinet meeting to discuss our options -- a Sabbath-day meeting, which only a true emergency could justify. Most of the ministers felt decisive action had to be taken. Military officials presented a plan for uprooting the terror infrastructure, through a complex campaign in the heart of Palestinian cities and refugee camps. Though the attack had been carried out by Hamas, it was clear that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat had given them a green light. We had both the right and the ability to strike back.

Throughout the meeting, though, our foreign minister kept going in and out of the room, talking to world leaders and reporting back. His message was clear: Right now Israel enjoys the sympathy of the international community. As long as we keep our military response to a minimum, the world will continue to be on our side, and increased diplomatic pressure will rein in the terror. But if we launch a full-scale attack on the terrorists, we risk losing the world's support and turning Arafat from an aggressor into a victim.

Eventually the prime minister was convinced of this approach, and the decision was made to stick to a proportionate response -- pinpoint attacks on terror cells, special operations, arrests -- and to allow diplomacy to work its magic.

Over the next nine months, Israel held its fire, and the world indeed condemned terrorism. But the attacks only increased. In the heart of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, suicide bombers blew up coffee shops, buses and hotels. Nightlife ground to a halt, tourism was decimated and hotels had to release most of their workers. One of my colleagues in the government, Rehavam Zeevi, was gunned down by terrorists. In the meantime, the U.S. suffered its own terror attacks on Sept. 11 and put intense pressure on us not to retaliate against the Palestinians, for fear of complicating its own war on al-Qaeda.

The situation came to a head in March 2002, when more than 130 Israelis were killed in a single month alone -- most infamously on March 27, Passover Eve, at the Park Hotel in Netanya. The next day, the cabinet convened -- again, in an extraordinary meeting during a religious holiday. The meeting started at 6 p.m. and lasted the night. This time, however, the government decided to launch Operation Defensive Shield -- the same plan the Israel Defense Forces had offered the previous year.

In the international arena, our worst fears were realized. The United Nations condemned us, and the U.S. dispatched Secretary of State Colin Powell to tell us to stop the assault immediately. The global media mounted a brutal campaign depicting us as war criminals, spreading false rumors of the wholesale butchering of Palestinian civilians, describing the operation as the worst atrocity of modern history.

The most outrageous of these rumors was the Jenin libel, which was portrayed in a film produced largely from the fertile imagination of its director, and then shown around the world. It didn't matter that, in fact, Israel had taken unprecedented measures to minimize civilian casualties, including refraining from using either aerial or artillery bombardment, putting its own soldiers at unprecedented risk; or that the UN commission that was created to investigate Jenin was soon disbanded for lack of evidence; or that the director of the film admitted that he had misled his audience.

For years to come, the "Jenin massacre" was the centerpiece of the anti-Israel propaganda machine, reverberating across Europe and on U.S. campuses as the symbol of Israeli iniquity. Our reputation was in tatters.

Yet all this was a small price to pay for what Israel gained. Within a few weeks, Palestinian terror was rendered ineffective, with the number of Israelis killed falling from hundreds per month to fewer than a dozen over the next year. Life returned to Israeli streets. Tourists returned by the hundreds of thousands. The economy started moving again.

No less important, though, was the effect Defensive Shield had on the Palestinians themselves. With the terror infrastructure removed, Palestinians could begin rebuilding their civic institutions and changing their attitude toward violence. Over time, Arafat's policy of promoting terror was replaced by the far more cautious approach of his successor, Mahmoud Abbas.

In more than six years since the operation, the West Bank's economy has boomed. If there is hope in the West Bank today, it is because Israel abandoned the ideas of proportionality and diplomacy in handling terror. The West Bank Palestinians know this; for this reason, they have not joined in the world's rampant condemnation of Israel in the current war. While tens of thousands protest in Europe, West Bankers are mostly silent.

Understanding the war in Gaza means recognizing the lessons of 2002. During the three years that passed after pulling out all troops and settlements from the Gaza Strip in 2005, Israel chose to respond to Hamas's deadly, daily rocket attacks with proportionality and diplomacy. The result? More rockets, more missiles, more misery for Palestinians -- and enough breathing space for Hamas to take over the Gaza Strip, devastate its society, build a much more powerful arsenal than it had in 2005 and become the vanguard of Iranian expansionism in the region.

Terrorism is a cancer that can't be cured through "proportional" treatments. It requires invasive surgery. It threatens not only democratic states that are its target, but also -- foremost -- the local civilians who are forced into its fanatical ranks, deployed as human shields, and devastated by its tyranny.

The longer one waits to treat it, the worse it gets, and the harsher the treatment required to defeat it. In southern Lebanon, where Israel failed to defeat the terrorists in 2006, the disease has only spread: Hezbollah now has three times the missiles it had before, and the terrorists have gained a stranglehold on the Lebanese government. Israel is determined not to repeat this mistake in Gaza.

Just as in 2002, Israel has chosen to fight the heart of terror, in the face of worldwide denunciation, mass demonstrations, UN resolutions, and talk of crimes against humanity. Now, as then, it is the right decision.

The operation is painful: The number of civilians hurt and killed, while far fewer than in comparable operations around the world, is still intolerably high -- a reflection of the size and depth of the terror infrastructure that has grown there over the last three years.

As in 2002, the real beneficiaries of a successful Israeli campaign will be the Palestinians themselves. Peace can be found only when Palestinians are given the freedom to build real civic institutions, and a leadership can emerge unafraid of telling its own citizens that violence, fanaticism and martyrdom aren't the Palestinian way. But this can happen only once the malignancy of terror is removed from their midst. As ugly as it sounds, it is the only source of hope for Gaza. (Bloomberg Jan 15)

Disconnected from Reality By Shlomo Engel

Israel's most prominent writers cling to peace rhetoric despite its resounding failure

Amos Oz, just like other prominent writers such as David Grossman, A.B. Yehoshua, and Meir Shalev use their special status in order to instruct the people of Israel on the appropriate conduct in respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict. For many years they have been preaching to us about the need for peace, the Arabs' desire for peace, the viability of peace treaties with the Palestinians, the injustices of occupation, and the inability to secure a military victory.

Yet even a cursory examination of these statements vis-à-vis the bleeding reality that is our life shows that these great writers imagine reality instead of seeing it as it is. In the 15 years that have passed since the Oslo Accords, Israel's citizens have become the guinea pigs of these peace prophets, and in this lab, the dead guinea pigs - that is, the killed and wounded citizens - proved the lie found at the base of this delusional peace statement.

These writers' ability to ignore reality as they see fit was recently manifested in Yoram Kaniuk's article, where he claimed that no state can defeat radical Islam. He of course turned a blind eye to America's victory in Iraq following years of difficult war, as well as Israel's complete victory over terrorists in Judea and Samaria in the wake of Operation Defensive Shield.

We tend to view authors and poets as people of morality and conscience whose statements carry greater moral significance and weight than the declarations of a layman. Yet it appears this tendency is not backed by much. These authors were indeed gifted with the kind of writing ability that penetrates deep into a person's soul, yet this ability does not serve as a basis for unusual moral qualities. In this respect, the views of a great writer on issues of conscience and values, and certainly on matters of security and diplomacy, are no more important than the views of anyone else, be they an engineer, plumber, or shoemaker.

At times we can point to a writer or poet who is at the zenith of human eminence when it comes to moral conduct, yet other times we see writers deep within the realm of injustice and evil - just like we see this among humanity as a whole.

The complete blindness of these men of letters and of their colleagues vis-à-vis disappointing political realities, and their puzzling stubbornness not to change their mind in fact taints their moral standing. As masters of words, they are capable of undertaking any kind of intellectual acrobatics in order to almost always object to any just war embarked on by their countrymen. They are the first ones to carry the name of peace in vain via their desire to end our war against our enemies, even at the price of current or future damage to their own people.

The war against the Hamas movement and its many supporters in the Gaza Strip is a highly moral and just act undertaken by the State of Israel. Hamas is the spearhead of zealot and murderous global Islam, and therefore the State of Israel is today on the side of the sons of light, who are saving the world from the sons of darkness. The writers and poets who call for an end to the Gaza war are regrettably supporting Hamas, which at this time begs for a ceasefire in order to avoid defeat.

Only two days after the launch of the Gaza operation, the two great priests of the Order of Peace, Oz and Yehoshua, rushed to call for a ceasefire via the Italian press. This absurd state of affairs whereby well-known Israelis preach to their own government, in the foreign media, on the proper conduct during war is unique to the Israeli peace club. It was no coincidence that the writers published their call for a truce outside the borders of their own country.

Sadly, their clean and anti-war image vis-à-vis their European friends is more important to them than the natural and simple solidarity of their countrymen, who are fighting the most justified war possible. (Ynet Jan 16)

Bush Destroyed a Dictator. Clinton Installed One.

Which of our last two presidents made the world safer? By Ruth R. Wisse

As President George W. Bush prepares to leave office amid a media chorus of reproach and derision, there is at least one comparison with his predecessor that speaks greatly in his favor. Mr. Bush removed the most ruthless dictator of his day, Saddam Hussein, thereby offering Iraqi citizens the possibility of self-rule. Bill Clinton's analogous achievement in the Middle East was to help install Yasser Arafat, the greatest terrorist of his day, as head of a proto-Palestinian state.

This is not how these events are generally perceived. The image that still looms in the public mind is that of President Clinton, peacemaker, standing between Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin in the Rose Garden on Sept. 13, 1993. With the best intentions, Mr. Clinton had worked hard for this peace agreement and would continue to strive for its success, hosting the head of the Palestine Liberation Organization at the White House more than any other foreign leader.

But the "peace process" almost immediately reversed its stated expectations. Emboldened by his diplomatic victory, Arafat adopted Islamist terminology and openly preached jihad. The casualties suffered by Israel in the years following the Oslo Accords exceeded those of previous decades, and dangers to Israel and the world have increased exponentially ever since. This so-called peace agreement rewarded terrorist methods as fail-safe instruments of modern warfare, and accelerated terrorist attacks on other democratic countries. Though Mr. Clinton did not foresee these consequences, his speech at the signing ceremony betrayed the self-deception on which the agreement was based.

Throughout the speech, Mr. Clinton invoked the significance of the "sliver of land between the river Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea" to "Jews, Christians, and Muslims throughout the world." He repeatedly linked the "descendants of Isaac and Ishmael," and the "shared future shaped by the values of the Torah, the Koran, and the Bible," as though their "memories and dreams" were all equivalent. But Judaism is quite unlike Islam. The Jews claim solely that "sliver of land" and accept their minority status among the nations. By contrast, Islam seeks religious and territorial hegemony, most especially in the Middle East.

Hence 21 countries descendant from Ishmael have denied the descendants of Isaac their ancestral home. This difference of political visions is precisely what propels the Arab war against Israel.

To be sure, the signing ceremony at the White House may not have been the best time to recall Arafat's complete record as the "father of modern terrorism," a title accorded him by the press for masterminding such acts as the massacre of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics, the murder of a schoolroom of children in northern Israel, and the establishment of a PLO missile base in Lebanon. But some mention of his profession was surely in order.

The PLO was founded, and funded, by Arab leaders as a terrorist proxy before 1967 -- that is, before Israel gained the disputed territory of the West Bank that retroactively served as a Palestinian *casus belli*. Arafat had never been anything other than a terrorist. He had threatened Arab rulers in Jordan and Lebanon no less than the Jews of Israel. Mr. Clinton's speech contained no hint of these facts, concealing the realities it purported to be changing.

To be fair, Israel's role in this self-deception was, if anything, even greater. The Oslo Accords made Israel the first country in history ever to arm its enemy with the expectation of gaining security. The burden of soldiering in a defensive war for the "right to exist" -- which ought to have been theirs from the outset -- understandably saps the morale of Israelis. In this case, it also undermined their common sense.

The Oslo "peace accord" made the world more dangerous and subjected Palestinian Arabs to a rule of violence, corruption and intimidation. Arafat's dictatorship has since been outmatched by an even more brutal Hamas regime that serves as the terrorist outpost of Iran. President Bush's military intervention, by contrast, destroyed a terrorist state and made the world safer for its citizens. (Wall Street Journal Jan 15)

The writer, a professor of Yiddish and comparative literature at Harvard, is the author of "Jews and Power" (Schocken, 2007).

Living Next Door To A Serial Killer By Barry Rubin

Having Hamas as a neighbor is like living next door to a serial killer who abuses his children and threatens to kill them if you go in after him. You can defend yourself, but if the police won't arrest him, the only choices left are to build a wall around him, stop him from getting weapons, and send in food.

This is Israel's dilemma. The world demands peace but isn't prepared to do too much to help. The West's basic stand is to keep Hamas ruling Gaza, comparable to ensuring continued Taliban rule in Afghanistan after the September 11 attacks. Thanks to such international "support," Gaza's people will be able to "enjoy" a dictatorial regime dedicated to spending the next century fighting - and losing - wars.

Remember that the Hamas regime was not elected as such. Yes, it won an election but then seized total power in a bloody coup against the PA. Now it imposes a radical Islamist regime on its unfortunate subjects. Hamas has no policy for creating jobs or raising living standards. Its educational system doesn't teach useful skills or civic virtues but indoctrinates children with the ambition to become suicide bombers.

So the world should consider: Is this the kind of regime you want to save and succor? Do you want to keep Hamas in power when even most Arab states would like to see it fall? Why talk about a peace process while following a policy ensuring no peace process can succeed?

UNDERSTAND THAT Hamas believes the deity insists on its victory. It doesn't matter how long it takes or how many die. Its educational policy isn't aimed at training productive citizens but rather future suicide bombers. Well, it looks like the West is going to make that mistake, the PA itself isn't going to help provide an alternative government, and Israel can't solve this problem by itself.

So the next best thing is a cease-fire that works for a while. What is the basis for such a plan, which recognizes the fact that Israel won the war and that Hamas wants to restart it again? First, Hamas must perceive itself beaten no matter what it says publicly. This doesn't mean it will give up but does mean it will be slower to launch attacks in the future.

Second, Palestinians must perceive that Hamas was beaten so that they follow a more productive path of moderation and diplomacy.

Third, the Arabic-speaking world - or as much of it as possible - must perceive Hamas as beaten so that Arab states are encouraged in their battle against radical Islamism, Iran and Syria, while the flow of recruits to extremist movements declines.

Fourth, Hamas must perceive itself as isolated. If it knows that cross-border terror attacks, firing rockets at civilians and cynically using its own people as human shields brings international sympathy and political profits, these tactics will be used again and be imitated by others elsewhere.

ALL OF these are realizable goals. The West can help by giving Hamas no recognition, no support and no help. A terrorist, genocidal movement which oppresses its own people and uses them as human shields should not be rewarded. That should be obvious.

What about the actual terms? Among the key provisions are these: A seriously effective regime of inspection and blocking smuggling must be put into place on the Egypt-Gaza border. This means Egyptian forces helped by a force which will really act to block tunnels and stop arms from coming in, not just sit and watch the contraband go by. If more weapons get in, that will bring another war.

Israel has the right to maintain sanctions, which means that while humanitarian and necessary goods for Gaza's society it can keep out items that have military applications.

Aid money to rebuild in Gaza and sustain Palestinian society must be kept out of Hamas's hands. Not only would Hamas use such funds for military purposes, it would also steal them from being used for real relief. For example, Hamas cries there is not enough fuel, but that is because it diverts gasoline from civilian purposes for its own use.

Gilad Schalit, a hostage seized by Hamas in a cross-border raid, should be released unconditionally. It is bad enough to reward terrorists for their crimes; it is ridiculous to do so after they have been thoroughly defeated after launching an aggressive war.

Finally, we should remember the aims of the two sides. Israel's goal is very modest: security for its citizens, no cross-border attacks. Hamas's goal is the destruction of Israel, wiping out its citizens, revolution throughout the Middle East, treating women as chattel and the creation of what it considers to be Allah's government on earth.

Knowing that, you can decide which side to support. (Jerusalem Post Jan 21)