



## 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*

Hizbullah war's impact on  
Iran's escalating domination of Syria  
was similarly not taken into  
consideration at the time or since.

In an attempt to break through the  
post-Iraq invasion compartmentalization  
of Western discourse on Iran, the  
American Enterprise Institute published  
a 68-page report last week that sets out  
Iran's actions in Syria, Lebanon, the  
Palestinian Authority, Iraq and  
Afghanistan. Authored by Frederick

### Commentary...

#### Iran's Game of Grand Strategy By Caroline Glick

Sunday thousands of IDF and police forces began streaming to the border with Gaza. In a massive show of force, they successfully deterred Gazans from participating in Hamas's first attempt to assault the border with Israel on Monday morning.

Israel's successful response to Hamas's provocation stemmed from the IDF's understanding of the doctrinal source of Hamas's call for tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians to approach the border together.

Just before Israel's precipitous withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000, Hizbullah launched a similar attack on a South Lebanese Army base at Taibe. Back then, Hizbullah organized a crowd of thousands which marched on the base and threatened to overrun it. Not wishing to kill civilians, SLA forces abandoned their post. The move precipitated the collapse of the SLA's lines throughout South Lebanon.

All of Hamas's moves today - from its mortar and missile campaign against Israel, to its use of mass protests, to its weapons buildup, to its political and military humiliation and hamstringing of Fatah, to its tactical doctrines - have Hizbullah written all over them. And when you say Hizbullah - you say Iran.

Any lingering doubts about Hizbullah's intimate connection to the regime in Teheran were dispelled in the aftermath of Imad Mughniyeh's assassination in Damascus this month. The same Hizbullah leaders who for years had denied any connection to Mughniyeh and even denied that he existed - suddenly bemoaned the death of their operational commander. The same Iran which denied any connection to Mughniyeh, sent its foreign minister to his funeral in Beirut. The near identical vitriol calling for Israel's annihilation and likening the Jewish people to pestilence flowing from the mouth of Iranian Supreme leader Ali Khamenei, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Hizbullah chief Hassan Nasrallah expose the simple, self-evident truth that a thousand denials sought to hide: Hizbullah is an Iranian organization.

IN THE WEST, public discussion of Iran is compartmentalized. Most discussion of Iran is focused on its nuclear weapons program. And Iran's nuclear weapons program is presented as separate from its other strategic policies in the region. This compartmentalization of the West's treatment of Iran is the result of the US's misdiagnosis of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs ahead of the 2003 invasion of that country. And while it is understandable, it is also self-defeating and dangerous because the danger posed by Iran's nuclear weapons program, and the obvious intentions of Iran's nuclear efforts can only be fully understood when seen in the context of the war that Iran is waging against the US, Israel and the West through its regional policies.

The linkage between Iran's nuclear program and its other strategic policies in the Middle East was made clear in July 2006. Then, as the G-8 met in Russia and was poised to develop a joint policy for preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, Iran ordered Hizbullah to attack Israel, kidnap soldiers and so precipitate war.

That is, as the world powers were scope-locked on Iran's nuclear weapons program, to divert international attention away from that program at a critical juncture, Iran ordered its proxy to go to war with Israel. Rather than understand the ploy, by and large the international media, and with it, the international policy community completely ignored the connection between Iran's regional policies and its nuclear program. Consequently, in the discussions leading up to the war's inconclusive conclusion, no attention was paid to how the war's outcome would affect either Iran's willingness to set aside its nuclear program or the developments in other Iranian sponsored battlefields in Iraq, the Palestinian Authority, and Afghanistan. The Israel-

Kagan, Kimberly Kagan and Danielle Pletka, the report, "Iranian Influence in the Levant, Iraq and Afghanistan," shows in copiously documented detail how Iran is strengthening its regional posture at the West's expense not only through military actions but also through economic, cultural and infrastructure projects that build bilateral and multilateral relationships with states and terror groups based on dependency on Teheran.

In November 2006, Syria's parliamentary speaker Mahmoud al Abrash said, "Damascus considers consultation and cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran as a major rule and principle of its foreign policy." The report's authors explain that since Syrian President Bashar Assad replaced his father as the country's leader in 1999, Iran has worked steadily to transform its relationship with Syria from a strategic partnership between two equals to a master-vassal relationship.

Assad has allowed the Syrian economy to become dependent on Iranian investment. Iranian cultural domination of Syria is similarly rising as Iran builds cultural, religious and educational institutions throughout the country. At the same time, Iran has essentially asserted control over the Syrian military and Assad has allowed Iran's Revolutionary Guards not only to operate throughout the country, but to open training bases outside Damascus. As the authors' conclude, "Th[e] growing economic interdependence (with Iran at the center of the dependency network) and the increase in military aid from Iran to Syria risk reducing Damascus to a vassal state that is so tied economically and militarily to its more powerful patron that disobedience may become unthinkable."

SOME ANALYSES of Hizbullah's position in Lebanon in the aftermath of the 2006 war with Israel argue that its decision to go to war weakened its popularity in Lebanon. The destruction caused to Lebanese infrastructure by IDF operations made many Lebanese who had previously supported Hizbullah turn against the organization they believed sacrificed Lebanon's well-being to advance Iran's interests.

While Hizbullah may have suffered some political setbacks as a result of the war, its determined fighting then and Iran's open support for its rearmament since have successfully intimidated its foes in Lebanon. Hizbullah today, acting openly as Iran's agent, has paralyzed Lebanon's political system by blocking the election of a president for three months.

Iran's sponsorship of Palestinian terror groups is longstanding. Islamic Jihad was established by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards in 1988. Hamas leaders have been trained in IRG camps in Iran since the early 1990s. After Israel temporarily deported 415 Hamas leaders to Lebanon in 1992, the operational connection between Hizbullah, Iran and Hamas deepened. And of course, IRG officers received their first terror training at PLO camps in Lebanon in the early 1970s.

AHEAD OF the January 2006 Palestinian elections, Hamas together with Hizbullah and Iran decided to transform Hamas into a Hizbullah-like political and military force in Palestinian society. As the AEI report notes, since Hamas's electoral victory, it has received some \$400 million from Iran. Thousand of Hamas fighters have undergone advanced military training in Iran and IRG and Hizbullah trainers are also active in Gaza. The report's authors explain that Iran's economic assistance to Hamas is not simply aimed at enabling military operations against Israel. Rather, "as in Lebanon, Iran appears to be insinuating itself into the social and economic fabric of the Palestinian areas, making itself an indispensable ally."

IN IRAQ, both through Hizbullah proxies and through its own IRG command structure, Iran has set out not only to sponsor both the Sunni and Shi'ite insurgency, it has also worked to destabilize the Iraqi government

Readers are requested to please mail contributions to: BAYT - re: *Israel News*, 613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario. L4J 5V3  
Annual Rates: Friend - \$36, Supporter - \$50, Benefactor - \$180. Dedications are welcome at \$120/week. Call (905) 886-3810 for further info.

See *Israel News* on the internet at [www.bayt.org](http://www.bayt.org) and [www.frumtoronto.com](http://www.frumtoronto.com)

Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the views of BAYT. Thank you to Continental Press for their ongoing support.

while engendering Iraqi dependence on Iranian economic ties and fragmenting Iraqi society.

The report documents that not only is Iran financing, training and arming the Shi'ite militias, it is also sponsoring elements of al-Qaida in Iraq and the Sunni Ansar al Islam group. In al-Qaida dominated areas in Baghdad for instance, 15-20 percent of improvised explosive devices were made in Iran. The report concludes, "There can be no question that Iran is actively supporting multiple insurgent and terror groups in Iraq, that its efforts began even before the American invasion, that Iranian elements have included the provision of direct support in the form of weapons and advisers, and that they have been involved in the growth of a solid relationship between Lebanese Hizbullah and Iraqi Shi'ite militias."

AS THE report notes, Iran's multilevel policies aimed at promoting dependence on Teheran play out in Afghanistan as well. In 2007 alone, Iran made low-cost but vital infrastructure investments in Western Afghanistan that worked to economically tie the region to Iran and cut it off from Kabul. It destabilized the Karzai government by forcibly removing more than 100,000 Afghan migrant workers from Iran in a three month period and so fomented the resignation of two Afghan cabinet ministers. It gave sufficient military support to the Taliban at critical junctures to sow Western demoralization and military instability. And it topped off its efforts with information operations aimed at alienating the Afghan people from the West and engendering sympathy with Iran.

What the report shows is that Iran engages in a concerted, multilevel policy of containing, deterring and defeating America, Israel, the West and moderate Muslims throughout the region. At the same time, by refusing to acknowledge the comprehensive or well-considered nature of Iran's strategic policies, the US, Israel and the West bar themselves from constructing a similarly well thought out, comprehensive strategy for containing, deterring and defeating Iran. And as deterrence theory shows, when both sides of a struggle are not equally aware of what is happening, the chances of full-blown war rise.

ISRAEL WAS right to mass its forces along the border with Gaza on Monday. But that was just one small battle in a long war. As one Iran analyst in Washington recently noted, "Iran is playing chess and we're playing backgammon. We have to understand the game they're playing."

The AEI report provides the factual basis for understanding the game. It is the responsibility of policymakers and political leaders to use that understanding to construct a comprehensive policy towards Iran before it is too late. (Jerusalem Post Feb 25)

---

### **Homemade Israel-Bashers** By Amnon Rubinstein

Shortly after I began teaching at Columbia University, I was taken aback to hear that the Iranian ruler Ahmadinejad had been invited to speak on campus. There was hardly any time to organize a protest against the event. Despite this, three kipot-wearing students from Hillel House worked day and night to distribute posters and pamphlets featuring a choice selection of the guest's hate-filled, genocidal invective. They organized a demonstration in front of the hall where the Iranian president was to speak, and all without any outside help.

I spoke at the demonstration, where I discovered that almost all the participants present were local Orthodox Jewish students. The number of secular Israeli students could be counted on the fingers of one hand - with fingers to spare.

Inside the hall sat an Israeli student who applauded Ahmadinejad. I asked another Israeli who witnessed this behavior to tell me about her. I asked: How can she applaud someone that wants to exterminate her?

His matter of fact reply: "She's known to be a leftist."

In other words, "leftists" applaud a tyrant, a Nazi, a persecutor of minorities, oppressor of women, stoner of "adulterers," and executioner of homosexuals. If he protests the oppression of the Palestinians, then he must clearly be a member of the "left" and should therefore be cheered.

Later, I encountered other Israeli academicians at Columbia who added more fuel to the fire of hatred against Israel - all belonged to what is known as the radical Left.

WHEN THE semester ended, my wife and I were invited to a Shabbat meal on Friday night prepared by the organizers of the demonstration.

I am a professed and impassioned secular Jew. My Judaism is national and cultural. I believe that my approach is in no way inferior to the Orthodox or haredi one. It contains neither temptations of paradise, the punishment of hell, nor the revival of the dead. It is filled with a rich, multifaceted and wondrous Jewish-Hebrew culture. I also believe that secular humanism is the right answer for us as individuals and as a nation.

But if I had to choose between the kipa-wearing Jews at Columbia and the

representatives of what is known in Israel as the radical Left - I know where my heart is.

That is the entire story.

No, it is the end of the story.

It is also the end of the story of the anti-Israeli squadrons in the Israeli academia.

For some time, I have been waiting for a hysterical outburst from this direction, one that would bring their claims to such an absurd point, that they would be finished. I always believed that their "post-intelligent" anti-Israeli claptrap would eventually climax in an paroxysm of extremist mumbo-jumbo lunacy, after which there would no longer be anything to argue about. They'd be exposed.

Ben-Dror Yemini provided me with just that evidence (Ma'ariv, January 11), in an article in which he tells of a research project carried out by graduate student Tal Nizan at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her research question was: How is it that, contrary to the accepted practice among other occupation armies, the Zionist occupation army does not rape?

The researcher had two explanations: First, IDF soldiers do not rape Palestinian women because for them, these women have been dehumanized, and "consequently, a sexual act cannot be carried out with someone that is perceived as less than human." Second, the soldiers refrained from raping the Palestinian women in the service of a higher, demographic goal, because the rape could cause pregnancies that would subsequently increase the numbers of our enemies. In other words, not only are there no rapes, there are no condoms either.

The significant aspect is not this surreal research project. It is not unusual. Incitement against Israel can be found on the lowest level in some of the social science departments in Israel's universities. A well-known philosopher in Tel Aviv University called Israel the dustbin of Europe - and students, as we know, are influenced by their teachers, even when the latter are seized by a frenzy of hatred toward the state that provides their livelihood, and at the expense of which, thanks to their attacks on it, they make their names.

The interesting thing is that this "research" project won a prize from a sociology association, with a number of distinguished professors voting in favor of granting the researcher a prize.

It would be interesting to hear how these professors propose that Israel amend this serious flaw, that IDF soldiers are not serial rapists. Does that fact that female tourists are not raped mean that they too have been dehumanized?

These professors are wrong. It's not true that there is no rape. There is - the rape of the academia, of science and of the students forced to listen to these professors' drivels. (Jerusalem Post Feb 27)

*The writer is a professor of law at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya, a former minister of education and MK, and the recipient of the 2006 Israel Prize in Law.*

---

### **Dithering on Durban II** By Anne Bayefsky

*Why hasn't the US distanced itself from the UN's platform for anti-Semitism?*

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni announced on Sunday that Israel will not participate in Durban II, the U.N.'s most recent platform for anti-Semitism and the demonization of the Jewish state. Livni called upon the international community to refuse "legitimacy to hatred, extremism, and anti-Semitism, under the banner of the 'fight against racism.'" After announcing Israel's decision to boycott the 2009 conference, she asked "like-minded countries" to do the same.

Three days before 9/11 a United Nations "anti-racism" conference held in Durban, South Africa concluded with a poisonous declaration that Palestinians were victims of Israeli racism — the only state sponsor of racism of which the U.N. was conscious. Durban II is the follow-up conference dedicated to the implementation of that first declaration.

Livni's call for allies is a shameful reminder that the United States has yet to declare that it will not participate in the planning and lead-up to Durban II, which begins in Geneva in a few weeks time. Moreover, the Bush administration has also not made it clear that it expects any future administration will stay away from the conference itself.

On the contrary, Secretary of State Rice responded to a pointed inquiry by Senator Norm Coleman during a Senate hearing on February 13: "We have not tried to make a final decision on this." In Jerusalem on Sunday, Livni was joined on the stage by State Department representative Greg Rickman, who was therefore forced to follow Livni's invitation with an awkward silence and comparatively empty commitment to "confront anti-Semitism head on" before hundreds of Jewish community leaders from 40 countries.

Rice's indecision puzzles, as it follows a six and a half years of univocal

action on the part of the United States. The United States and Israel walked out of Durban I in disgust, and the United States has voted against every Durban "follow-up" resolution at the U.N. ever since. In December the U.S. voted against the entire U.N. budget for 2008-09 because it contained funding for Durban II. If, by her hesitation, Rice had simply wanted to avoid taking the lead, Canada's Foreign Minister Maxime Bernier gave her the out weeks ago by announcing Canada was pulling out of Durban II on January 23.

One popular explanation for the mysterious indecision is that Barack Obama is casting a long shadow over the State Department. The theory is that department officials eagerly anticipate a President Obama whose salutatory gestures toward the U.N. would be something akin to a giant bear hug. The U.N. penchant for combating racism and intolerance by demonizing Jewish self-determination, under this scenario, will be just another inconvenient truth. In the meantime, the bureaucracy is managing to stifle decision-making along any lines a President Obama and other U.N. enthusiasts might abjure.

An additional possible explanation is that U.S. participation in Durban II is being dangled as a carrot for Israel's capitulation on some unrelated demand, as Rice gallops to create a terrorist state on Israel's borders before leaving office. Also possible is an effort to avoid criticism of the U.N. while the administration attempts to get yet another Security Council resolution on Iran. Apparently, they expect someone, somewhere to believe a resolution will prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Whatever the reason, it is a serious mistake to delay a boycott announcement any further. Craig Mohkiber, deputy director of the New York Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, reveals why. On Thursday, February 21 Mohkiber participated in an information session on Durban II between members of the High Commissioner's Office and U.N.-accredited NGOs. Asked about a U.S. pullout he said: "there is a school of thought that says all this is a sham and the U.S.... doesn't want to be subjected to examination of its record re African-Americans and indigenous people." He went on to characterize U.S. and Israeli concerns over Durban I as part of an unsuccessful bullying ploy. Mohkiber claims they tried — "Don't you dare hold the U.S. accountable for slavery we won't let you... Don't you dare to try to hold Israel accountable for the treatment of Palestinians" — and failed. In other words, the closer we get to the planning sessions, the easier it becomes to dismiss legitimate U.S. concerns as just sour grapes.

Mohkiber, who once served as a U.N. adviser to the Palestinian Authority, also presages the substance of Durban II. According to the Sonoma County Free Press, in the late 1980's, while working for an NGO, Mohkiber visited the territories and prepared a report which said: "One of the features of the violence that is perpetrated against the Palestinians is [that it is] random. It is perpetrated against the elderly, the infirm, anyone who happens to be a non-Jewish member of that society. It is very clearly racist violence." True to form, during Thursday's information session he referred to Palestinians as a "persecuted" group with which it was "important" to deal at Durban. He then suggested that Jews were the problem in Durban I, and alleged that for every anti-Semitic incident at the conference there was something "anti-Arab and Islamophobic from the other side."

The Libyan chair, Cuban rapporteur, and an Iranian vice president of Durban II's executive-planning committee will soon be off to a running start on a highway to hell. It is time for the United States to let them go hurtling off the cliff all by themselves. (National Review Feb 25)

*The writer is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. She also serves as the director of the Touro Institute for Human Rights and the Holocaust and as the editor of EYEontheUN.org.*

**[While Ms. Bayefsky doesn't mention Canada, we pay tribute to our Federal Conservative Government, and our Prime Minister Stephen Harper, for being the first government in the world to announce that they will not participate in Durban II, even before Israel did so. Kol Hakavod! -Ed.]**

### **Pathological Culture Kills** By Evelyn Gordon

Yet another study of suicide bombers was published recently, this time by researchers at the University of Toronto. Like almost all its predecessors, the study refuted the theory that such bombers are motivated by poverty and despair; most, it found, were not economically deprived. It also echoed previous studies in concluding that suicide bombers are not psychologically unstable.

But, again like many of its predecessors, it stopped short of the obvious conclusion: that suicide bombings are, overwhelmingly, a product of the surrounding culture.

The study, which focused on Palestinian bombers, concluded that their primary motivation was a desire for personal vengeance against Israel. Yet that

begs an obvious question: If so, why do many violent conflicts not produce suicide bombers? The desire for revenge, after all, is a universal emotion, found in every conflict throughout the ages. Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, for instance, were no less eager to avenge the deaths of loved ones than Palestinians are, yet their conflict produced no suicide bombers. The African National Congress produced no suicide bombers in its battle against apartheid, despite a plethora of victims. Wars have killed millions in other non-Islamic African countries without producing a single suicide bombing. Argentina's "dirty war" produced no suicide bombers despite thousands of governmental murders and kidnappings, nor has any other South American conflict. Nor have there been any Jewish suicide bombers, despite thousands of Israeli victims of Arab terror.

The same question applies to those who persist - despite all the studies showing that suicide bombers are typically relatively prosperous and well-educated - in deeming poverty the main motivator. Poverty in much of Africa, for instance, is far worse than in the Palestinian Authority; yet suicide bombings are unknown in non-Islamic parts of that continent.

THE ONLY explanation that consistently fits the data is the social and cultural milieu: Invariably, suicide bombers come from societies that view such bombings as an acceptable and even laudable response to grievance. Societies that deem them unacceptable do not produce suicide bombers.

That explains why most such bombers are Muslims: While an increasingly popular strain of Islam deems suicide bombers "holy martyrs" who merit praise on earth and reward in heaven, they have no such status in Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Confucianism or animism. Indeed, most religions deem suicide bombings an abomination.

But Islam alone cannot explain this phenomenon: Some Muslim countries, such as Bosnia and Kosovo, produced no suicide bombings despite suffering atrocities, while the predominantly secular Fatah frequently employs such bombings.

In the PA, however, secular society has reproduced the glorification of suicide bombings that Islamic fervor generates in groups like al-Qaida and Hizbullah. As leading Palestinian psychiatrist Eyad Sarraj told the Los Angeles Times in 2002, suicide bombers have "unparalleled" status in Palestinian society. "Their pictures are plastered on public walls, their funerals are emotional celebrations, their families often receive visits from state officials," the paper reported. "They become almost holy, praised by imams at mosques or over loudspeakers at rallies, where children are often dressed as shrouded dead or as pint-sized suicide bombers." "We have here a cultural glorification of martyrs," Sarraj concluded. "If you asked children 20 years ago what they wanted to be when they grew up, they'd say a doctor or an engineer. Now they say they want to be a martyr."

The Shin Bet security service reached an identical conclusion a few years back, based on interviews with would-be bombers who were caught before blowing themselves up. It found that the primary motivation was the desire to be a hero in society's eyes.

How does that square with the new study's finding that the main factor is a desire for revenge? Because while revenge is a universal emotion, its outlet is strongly influenced by culture. If channeling your desire for revenge into a suicide bombing would make you a hero, this becomes an attractive option. If it would make you a pariah, it looks much less attractive.

FAILED BOMBERS' stories illustrate this dynamic. Arin Ahmed, for instance, described how, two months after her boyfriend Jad was killed, she suddenly told some friends that she wanted to avenge him by becoming a suicide bomber. It was a spur-of-the-moment thought, the 20-year-old said in a published 2002 interview; "a moment earlier, I hadn't thought of anything like that."

Four days later, some Fatah operatives arrived and said her bombing was ready. From then on, they never let her alone. "They didn't let me think about it too much," she said. "They pressured me and persuaded me. They told me: You'll gain a very special status among women suicide bombers. You'll be a real heroine. It's for Jad's memory. You'll be reunited with him in heaven. You'll be with him in paradise."

Contrast this with a scene I witnessed at the shiva for a teenage girl killed in a suicide bombing. Her grief-stricken 17-year-old brother screamed that he wanted to avenge her by killing Palestinians. It was a normal teenage reaction, no different from Ahmed's. But his society's response was very different: Rather than being instantly surrounded by people who promised him honor and glory if he acted on this impulse, his father and others present told him unequivocally that this response was unacceptable. And, as in Ahmed's case, societal pressure had an impact: She set off to kill and landed in jail; he worked through his grief and got on with his life.

UNFORTUNATELY, the world largely ignores this all-important cultural factor, deeming anyone who is not a terrorist an "innocent civilian." That is

why, for instance, it lambastes Israeli sanctions on Gaza even as Gaza's elected government bombards Israel with rockets: Such sanctions "hurt innocent civilians." Yet Gaza's civilians are not exactly innocent: They elected the terrorist Hamas; they overwhelming support attacks on Israeli civilians (as repeated polls show); and they actively participate, as Sarraj noted, in glorifying such attacks, thereby creating the atmosphere in which they flourish.

If the world truly wants to eradicate terror, it must address the culture factor. And that starts with ending the "innocent civilian" myth. Societies that glorify terror must not be given a free pass. (Jerusalem Post Feb 27)

---

### **The State of Jew-Hatred** By Isi Leibler

Almost 300 parliamentarians, academicians, human rights activists and Jewish leaders from all corners of the globe are participating in the Global Forum against Anti-Semitism, held under the auspices of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs. More importantly, at least 45 governments are represented and have pledged meaningful cooperation with Israel to combat the world's oldest hatred.

This commitment, combined with the record number of high-caliber participants, reflects a growing concern about a mushrooming of Judeophobia which would have been deemed inconceivable just over a decade ago, when anti-Semites were considered an almost extinct species. Today the intensity of the hatred has become so fierce that it is ominously reminiscent of previous occasions when demonization preceded Jewish catastrophes.

Paradoxically, setting aside the Arab world, this anti-Semitic tsunami is taking place at a time when Jews have achieved a unique level of equality, freedom and affluence, and annual Holocaust memorials have been institutionalized and elevated to unprecedented status.

Yet it should also be noted that in the post-Holocaust era, overt anti-Semitism tended to rise and decline in tandem with perceptions of strength or weakness on the part of Israel. Anti-Semitism sank to its lowest levels in the wake of the Six Day War, and experienced an exponential increase after the Second Lebanon War, when Israel was perceived as weak.

CONTEMPORARY anti-Semitism differs from the traditional hatred Jews encountered throughout the millennia. But the venom emanating from the Islamic world is no less lethal than the most obscene Nazi variety, even incorporating the notorious medieval blood libel. Islamic Judeophobia combines demonic religious xenophobia and racism; depicts Jews and Israelis as vampires or descendants of apes and pigs; as evil creatures who disseminate AIDS; as conspirators seeking to enslave mankind; and as the real masterminds behind the 9/11 attacks.

In a word, Jews are again being portrayed as the source of all the woes of mankind and presented as cancers that must be excised from humanity.

The electronic age is a boon to these hate-mongers, who, unlike their Nazi predecessors, are today able to globally disseminate their satanic defamation of Jews through the Internet, instantly and effectively.

In the West, Arab Judeophobia has been refined and integrated with the long-standing religious, cultural and racial prejudice which, due to Holocaust reverberations, had been suppressed for over half a century. The newly resurrected blend of anti-Semitism is thus no longer directed primarily against individual Jews. Israel, the "Jew amongst the nations," has become the new vehicle for demonizing Jews.

The symbolic turning point was the cartoon displaying Ariel Sharon as a monster devouring Palestinian children which was awarded the prize for the best cartoon in the UK a few years ago. This approach and other calumnies, especially employing Holocaust inversion by linking Israeli behavior with Nazi crimes, have become staple features of much of the Western media.

The new anti-Semitism depicts Israel as evil incarnate. Even after a rogue state like Iran threatens to wipe Israel off the map and may well unleash a global nuclear catastrophe, most Europeans still regard the Jewish state as the greatest threat to world peace.

MEANWHILE, LEADING human rights groups have been hijacked by anti-Israel bigots shamelessly applying double standards against the Jewish state. Likewise, many traditional liberals and social democrats, formerly allies of the Jewish people, now parade under banners such as "We are all Hizbullah," making a mockery of their purported concern for human rights.

The United Nations Human Rights Council, the World Conference on Racism and any number of NGOs ignore barbaric regimes which deny basic human rights to their citizens and direct their venom against Israel. Whether these hate fests are motivated by anti-Semitism or simply dedicated to delegitimizing the Jewish state is irrelevant.

Not surprisingly, European Jews in particular feel besieged. Some are in denial or lie low, hoping the hatred will decline of its own accord; most are deeply pessimistic about the future for their children in the continent which

only 60 years ago was soaked in the blood of their forbears. The most severe repercussions are visible at European universities, which have been transformed into centers of Israelphobia. To a lesser extent this is now also emerging on campuses in the United States.

OVER THE past few years, the phenomenon of marginal Jews demonizing the Jewish state has increasingly come to the fore. Jews defaming their people is not a new experience and can be traced back to early antiquity, to Jewish converts to Christianity in the Middle Ages, and to universalists like Karl Marx, who made no effort to conceal loathing for his people. More recently, Jews who embraced Stalinism or became fellow travelers were applauding the murder of their kinsmen and defending the repressive anti-Semitic Soviet regime.

Today, under the guise of promoting human rights, their successors are publicly supporting the most rabid enemies of Israel. Some even have the hutzpa to claim that Jewish moral values impel them to promote the delegitimization of the Jewish state and defend murderers and suicide bombers who target civilians.

Not surprisingly, the jihadists and their allies enthusiastically exploit these people. Whenever challenged, Jewish Israel-bashers complain that they are victims of Zionist McCarthyism and insist they are merely indulging in legitimate criticism of Israeli policies.

This underlines the need to reiterate the distinction between legitimate criticism, as opposed to demonization or delegitimization of the Jewish state, frequently a camouflage for outright anti-Semitism. Some progress has been achieved and bodies like the European Union now publicly caution that anti-Zionism may be employed as a vehicle to promote anti-Semitism.

The reality is that far from being shielded from criticism, the Israel government undergoes more disapproval and criticism from its own people and Jews generally, than any other regime.

IN THE context of confronting Islamic Jew-hatred, the time has come to repudiate the politically correct mantra that, as currently manifested, Islam is a religion of peace. This is arrant nonsense. Judaism, Christianity and Islam all share scriptures and sacred texts which incorporate themes implicitly endorsing violence. But, equally, they provide scope for interpretations promoting tolerance and respect for outsiders.

Today, under the influence of Wahhabi teachings from Saudi Arabia, it cannot be denied that the dominant Islamic bodies, as well as many secular Arabs, if not actively endorsing violence, at best tend to remain silent. To expose this in no way contradicts or inhibits simultaneously reaching out and endeavoring to build bridges with moderate Islamic groups courageous enough to condemn the jihadists.

FINALLY, it is a fact that since the 1993 Oslo Accords, the Jewish state has failed to effectively make its case in the international arena. For political reasons, the government has also tended to understate the criminal anti-Semitic incitement and culture of death and martyrdom that to this day prevails in the areas administered by our purportedly moderate Palestinian peace partner.

In order to create "the right atmosphere" for promoting the peace process, there has been an inclination to understate the fact that kindergartens, mosques, media and all levels of society under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority continue breeding future killers of Jews and sanctifying martyrdom.

The object of the Global Forum is to review these issues and consider policies designed to reverse the tide. My hope is that it will create a standing body to conduct ongoing activities in conjunction with the Israeli government until the next meeting convenes.

The presence of prominent non-Jewish parliamentarians and personalities representing a broad political spectrum suggests that efforts to expand alliances with political and NGO groups genuinely promoting human rights are beginning to bear fruit. Above all, the presence of 45 governments that have pledged to cooperate with the Israeli government to overcome this evil should be interpreted as a signal that the tide may be turning.

Nor should we underestimate the benefit of the extraordinary support Israel now receives from vast numbers of evangelical Christians, whose important contribution many of us are only now beginning to fully appreciate.

CLEARLY the struggle of the Jewish people against the world's oldest hatred will be ongoing. But we have overcome far worse situations. We must now employ our global assets in the most effective manner and join with others to expose, shame and discredit the bigots and barbarians who promote Judeophobia and racism and threaten to pollute the social hygiene of democracies. (Jerusalem Post Feb 24)

---