



Quote for the Week...

On a Jerusalem Bus

"Every morning I take the 35 bus line to work. It's a quick ride and usually takes no more than 12 minutes. The third stop after I get on by the shuk [Machaneh Yehuda outdoor market] is directly in front of Yeshivat Merkaz HaRav. This morning, I found myself a bit anxious, unsure of what I was going to see as we passed by. As I looked around, I saw death notices pasted all over the street, and flowers that had been brought lined the entrance to the Yeshiva. When the bus pulled up to the stop, the driver shut off the engine and stood. With tears in his eyes, he told everyone on the bus that one of the boys killed on Thursday night was his nephew. He asked if we would mind if he spoke for a few minutes in memory of his nephew and the other boys who were killed. After seeing head nods all over the bus he began to speak.

"With a clear and proud voice, he spoke beautifully about his nephew and said that he was a person who was constantly on the lookout for how to help out anyone in need. He was always searching for a way to make things better. He loved learning, and had a passion for working out the intricacies of the Gemara. He was excited to join the army in a few years, and wanted to eventually work in informal education.

"As he continued to speak, I noticed that the elderly woman sitting next to me was crying. I looked into my bag, reached for a tissue and passed it to her. She looked at me and told me that she too had lost someone she knew in the attack. Her neighbors' child was another one of the boys killed. As she held my hand tightly, she stood up and asked if she too could say a few words in memory of her neighbor. She spoke of a young man filled with a zest for life. Every Friday he would visit her with a few flowers for Shabbat and a short dvar torah [Torah thought] that he had learned that week in Yeshiva. This past Shabbat, she had no flowers...

"...The eight boys who were killed will continue to impact us all individually and as a nation. Each one of us has the ability to make a profound impact on our world. This coming Wednesday morning, I will be at Ben Gurion Airport at 7 AM with Nefesh B'Nefesh welcoming 40 new olim [immigrants] to Israel. We will not be deterred. We cannot give up. We will continue to live our lives and hope and work for change, understanding and peace." - A staffer from the Jerusalem-based Nefesh B'Nefesh organization. (IsraelNationalNews.com Mar 12)

Commentary...

Slaughter and Jubilation By Jeff Jacoby

The slaughter of eight young yeshiva students and the wounding of nine others by an Arab terrorist in Jerusalem last week was a cold-blooded act of evil. It is difficult to make sense of the depraved fanaticism of someone like Ala Abu Dhaim, who calmly entered the school's busy library, took three guns from a box, and sprayed the room with hundreds of bullets, emptying clip after clip until finally being shot dead by an off-duty military officer and a part-time student who heard the gunfire and came running.

Even more perverse and revolting than Abu Dhaim's massacre, however, was the behavior that followed it.

In Gaza, the news that unarmed Jewish students, most of them kids, had been gunned down while at study set off paroxysms of joy. Thousands of jubilant Palestinians whooped it up in Gaza's streets, firing guns in the air to celebrate and distributing candy to passers-by. Many residents went to

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

mosques to offer prayers of thanksgiving before joining the festivities. Television cameras recorded the revelry; you can see it for yourself on YouTube.

Hamas, the terror organization that controls Gaza, issued a statement applauding the bloodshed. "We bless the [Jerusalem] operation," it said. "It will not be the last."

Hamas is monstrous, but give it this much: It makes no secret of its

bloodlust. The same cannot always be said of Fatah, the other main faction in the Palestinian Authority. Fatah is headed by PA President Mahmoud Abbas, whose polished spokesman, Saeb Erekat, was quick to assure journalists -- in English, for Western consumption -- that Abbas condemned the killings and "reiterated his condemnation of all attacks that target civilians, whether they are Palestinians or Israelis."

Yet just a few days before the yeshiva massacre, Abbas had told the Jordanian daily Al-Dustur -- in Arabic, for Arab consumption -- that he is against terrorist attacks only for tactical reasons "at this time" and that "in the future, things may change." He boasted of his long involvement with PLO violence -- "I had the honor of firing the first shot in 1965" -- and claimed with pride that Fatah "taught resistance to everyone, including Hezbollah, who trained in our military camps."

Abbas's supposed condemnation notwithstanding, the Palestinian Authority's official daily newspaper, Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, hailed the killer on its front page, prominently displaying his picture and identifying him as a "shahid" -- a term of approval and reverence denoting an Islamic martyr. And the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a violent Fatah subsidiary identified by the US government as a terrorist organization, praised the slaughter as a "heroic operation."

Meanwhile, the family of Abu Dhaim erected a mourning tent near their East Jerusalem home, where, amid banners of Hamas and Hezbollah, visitors came to honor the dead terrorist. Incredibly, the Israeli government made no effort to prevent this public display of respect for a mass-murderer; it insisted only that the Hamas and Hezbollah flags be taken down.

By contrast, when Abu Dhaim's relatives in Jordan put up a similar tent to receive well-wishers, Jordanian officials ordered them to dismantle it immediately. The terrorist's uncle was indignant. "We were hoping that people would come to congratulate us on the martyrdom of my nephew," he said. "This is a heroic operation that must be celebrated by everyone." It is a mark of how feckless the Israeli leadership has become that the Arab government of Jordan shows more common sense than the Jewish state in reacting to those who would lionize the killer of Jewish kids.

And that is indicative of the most perverse behavior of all: the refusal of Israel to face the fact that it is in a war for survival -- a war that it will win only by fighting and defeating its enemy, not by clinging blindly to a phony "peace process" that has brought it nothing but terror, tears, and a mounting toll of death.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's reaction to last week's massacre of the innocents was to announce that he would "not give up on making a tremendous effort to take another significant, important, and dramatic step that might bring us to an opportunity for real reconciliation."

The Israeli Foreign Ministry spouted the same drivel: "These terrorists are trying to destroy the chances of peace," its spokesman said, "but we certainly will continue the peace talks." The White House chimed in too: "The most important thing is that the peace process continue and that the parties are committed to it."

Wrong. The most important thing is to recognize that there is a war against Israel by enemies profoundly committed to its elimination -- enemies who regard negotiations, concessions, and all the trappings of the "peace process" as evidence that the Jews are in retreat, and that hitting them even harder will bring victory even closer. That is why there was such jubilation in Gaza. And why last week's atrocity in Jerusalem was only the latest such horror -- not the last. (Boston Globe Mar 12)

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Cancel the "Peace Process" Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs

Associated Press: Israel won't break off peace talks because of a Palestinian attack in Jerusalem that killed eight students studying the library of a rabbinical seminary, an Israeli official said Friday. Israel will push ahead with talks "so as not to punish moderate Palestinians for actions by people who are not just our enemies but theirs as well," the Israeli official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the government had yet to make an official announcement.

Fully agreeing that Hamas, Fatah's al Aksa Martyrs Brigade, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, et al. pose a threat to Palestinians as well as to Israelis, it would make much more sense to stop all presumed "peace talks" until the radicals have been defeated and defanged. Talking to Abu Mazen while Hamas and offshoots of his own Fatah (the shooting didn't have the hallmarks of Hamas or Hezbollah) are conducting open warfare against the State of Israel is akin to talking to the White Rose while Hitler is running the ovens. It may intellectually be more pleasant, but it ignores where the power and the dangers really lie.

The Palestinians certainly have suffered and are suffering from the failings of their own rotten terrorist leadership. But if you believe there are masses of Palestinians who long for liberation from Hamas; who believe Israel is a legitimate and permanent part of the Middle East; and who want nothing more than to share in the political freedom and economic advancement that association with the region's only full-fledged democracy and liberal society could bring, we respectfully disagree.

It is perfectly possible for Palestinians to want to be left alone to work and raise their children, and at the same time wish for their government to kill Jews. That, in fact, is the message of the Palestinian legislative elections that brought Hamas to power in the first place. Fatah had proven so thoroughly corrupt that, absent Arafat's mythic presence, people simply couldn't vote for it. On the other hand, both Fatah and Hamas believe the creation of Israel was a mistake by the international community. Both believe it needs to disappear - through negotiated salami tactics or by armed revolution, it doesn't matter. The Palestinians voted on domestic policy, not the "peace process."

There were Palestinians out there yesterday engaged in celebratory gunfire and passing out sweets; they are out there every day that Israelis die. Yeshiva students, children, fathers, soldiers, it doesn't matter who they were in life - dead Jews are an occasion for Palestinians to hand out treats to children. There are Palestinian mothers who talk about giving their children to martyrdom as an act of religious faith. There are Palestinian fathers who turn on the TV and let their children watch the Hamas bunny eating Jews.

These are not moderate people. These are people sucked into a vortex of ever increasing anarchy, death-worship for themselves and others, poverty, misery and radicalism. "Negotiating" with their "representatives" won't help them or Israel. If the Palestinian territories have become a disaster for their own people and the source of naked aggression against Israel, the better course of action would be to cancel the "peace process" until the "war process" has been addressed - whether by Israel alone or by the international community.

(JINSA Mar 7)

Whither Israeli Arabs? By Caroline Glick

Last Thursday, a 28-year-old IDF non-commissioned officer was killed by a roadside bomb along the border with Gaza. A Beduin from the South, he served as a combat tracker. At his funeral, his cousin said, "He did everything he could to convince [Beduin] youth to enlist in the army to serve the state. He said his service was hard, but he chose to defend his country." Another cousin noted that almost all the men in their family serve in the IDF.

At his family's request, his name was not released to the public. He was buried in a non-military funeral.

The family's request stemmed from fear that the Israeli Arab leadership or terrorists from the Palestinian Authority would take revenge on its members for their service to the State of Israel. Their fear of violent attack outweighed their desire to have their hero receive the public honors he so richly deserved for sacrificing his life for his country.

Contrast the fortunes of this family to those of an Arab family in Jerusalem who also lost a son last Thursday.

Last Friday, hundreds visited a traditional Muslim mourning tent in Jerusalem's Jabel Mukaber neighborhood to pay their respects to the family. The tent was adorned by hundreds of posters of the dead man's face. It also was also decorated with Hizbullah and Hamas banners.

The tent was erected to honor Alaa Abu D'heim. In a scene taken from a Russian pogrom, Thursday night D'heim entered Mercaz Harav Yeshiva and massacred eight boys and young men as they studied Torah.

D'heim's family did not fear retribution from their fellow Arabs. His neighbors did not demonstrate against his crime. The Israeli Arab leadership did not credibly condemn it.

Yet the lack of protests did not necessarily mean that his crime is supported

by all Arabs in Israel. Sunday night, Channel 2's Suleiman Ashafi interviewed a young man outside the tent who said, "If I had known that he was planning to attack people, that he was planning to carry out a terrorist attack, I would have shot him in the head myself." The young man, like the Beduin soldier's family, requested not to be named. He used his hand to hide his face from the camera. He too, was intimidated. He too feared he would be attacked for voicing his condemnation of D'heim and his implied support for Israel.

WHAT IS going on in Israeli Arab society? What are the implications of the tangible fear among those Arabs who support Israel and the unabashed willingness of the Israeli Arab leadership to defend the likes of Hamas, Fatah and D'heim in their terror war against Israel? Is Israel's Arab minority - which comprises 20 percent of the population - lost? In the 1996 electoral campaign which pitted Binyamin Netanyahu against Shimon Peres, Netanyahu appointed former foreign and defense minister Moshe Arens to run the party's campaign for the Arab vote. Arens succeeded in bringing the Likud candidate five percent of the overall Arab vote. His labors were credited with bringing victory to the party in that photo-finish race.

In the aftermath of Thursday's massacre, Arens warns that it is wrong to view Israeli Arabs as a monolithic block. Indeed they are an ethnically and religiously diverse population.

To start with, Israel's 100,000 Druse, who accepted compulsory military service for their young men in 1949, are fully integrated in Israeli society. Indeed, the rate of Druse military service is higher than it is among Jews. Another sign of Druse societal integration is their birthrate. Whereas in 1948, the Druse birthrate was higher than the Muslim birthrate, today it is equal to the Jewish birthrate.

Like the Druse, Arens notes that the Circassians also accepted obligatory military service for their sons and they too are integrated into Israeli society. Many of the members of the Israel-allied South Lebanese Army who fled to Israel in the aftermath of Israel's precipitous withdrawal from south Lebanon in 2000, have been welcomed in Circassian villages in the North even as they were blackballed in Muslim Arab villages.

Then there are the Israeli Beduin. Although Beduin are Muslims, due to their unique cultural traditions, Beduin have historically perceived themselves as distinct from the other Arab Muslims in Israel.

Their unique traditions are in the process of disappearing however. Arens recalls that 20 years ago, most Beduin encampments had no mosques. But today, every encampment has at least one mosque. And they are all run by the pro-Hamas Israeli Islamic movement. Similarly, the teachers in Beduin schools are overwhelmingly non-Beduin Israeli Arabs. Like the preachers in the mosques, they educate the youngsters to view themselves as Palestinian Arabs and to abandon their Israeli identity and loyalty to the state.

Although the Beduin have never been obligated to serve in the IDF, traditionally, the majority of their male youths volunteered for service, both as trackers and as regular combat soldiers. Due mainly to the indoctrination of the Islamic movement, the number of Beduin youth volunteering for military service has been decreasing drastically in recent years. Radical imams and teachers bar IDF recruiters from speaking to the youth.

Numbering 200,000, Beduin comprise some 25 percent of Israel's Muslim population. Most live in the South but some 70,000 live in the North and they have been less affected by the Islamic indoctrination campaign. In the North, traditional levels of Beduin enlistment in the IDF have been maintained.

Then there are the Christian Arabs. As one Israeli Arab colleague, (who also asked not to be identified), notes, Israel's Christian Arab population is the only flourishing Christian community in the Middle East. From Iraq to Syria to Jordan to Egypt to the Palestinian Authority, Christians find themselves under assault by authorities and Islamic gangs. In Israel, in contrast, the Christian population has grown steadily in recent years.

FINALLY THERE are the Israeli Arab Muslims. Since the 1994 establishment of the PA, the Israeli Muslim leadership has been radicalized. That leadership currently consists of Arab members of Knesset, the Israeli Arab Higher Follow-up Committee, the Islamic Movement and so-called Arab human rights organizations. All of these leaders and organizations have worked steadily to undermine the Israeli Arab Muslims' sense of attachment to the State of Israel and to intimidate dissenting voices into silence.

While their intimidation efforts have been successful, it is far from clear that their indoctrination efforts have won over the Israeli Arabs. Recently, the government announced its intention to encourage Israeli Arabs who don't serve in the military to perform national service. The organized Israeli Arab leadership has worked studiously to undermine the program.

Yet a poll carried out by University of Haifa last month revealed that 75 percent of Israeli Arabs between the ages of 16 and 22 support voluntary national service. The poll also found that the vast majority of the Arab public is unaware of the national service. 77.4 percent overall and 79.6 percent of youth said they know little or nothing about the program. Moreover, the poll found that once given basic information about conditions in the national service and its goals, not only were Israeli Arab youth supportive of the idea,

but so were 71.9 percent of all Arab men and 83.8 percent of all Arab women. In contrast, some 80 percent of members of Arab political parties opposed national service.

Arens believes strongly that the government must launch a serious, directed hearts and minds campaign among Israeli Arabs. The very fact that nearly 80 percent of Israeli Arabs know nothing about the government's national service initiative is proof that the government is neglecting the Arab sector.

Arens contends that the place to direct such a campaign, at least in the short term, is among the Beduin. Israeli Beduin are the most impoverished ethnic group in Israel. Particularly in the South, they lack basic sanitation services. Their education system is appalling. And economic and academic opportunities for advancement are largely absent. Beduin who serve in the army receive no post-army assistance from the government.

Arens spearheaded a private initiative with Ben-Gurion University in the Negev to provide them with post-army educational opportunities, but the program was cancelled. In short, demobilized Beduin soldiers come home with nothing to show for their service to the country and so have no way of countering the Israeli Arabs who indoctrinate the youth to pan-Arabism and jihad. Indeed, often their only choice is to join Beduin crime rings that run smuggling and protection networks throughout the South.

Arens suggests that at a minimum, the IDF should set up day care centers and kindergartens for Beduin children staffed by soldiers from the IDF's soldier-teacher's unit which works in underprivileged communities. As defense minister, Arens sought to make military service compulsory for Beduin and he believes that such an initiative would still meet with success among the northern tribes. But his successors, bowing to the Arab political leadership, scuttled his initiative.

Obviously, for Arabs loyal to Israel to feel comfortable expressing their support for the state, the current atmosphere of intimidation must end. The Knesset must pass laws outlawing the openly treasonous Islamic Movement and Arab political parties that reject the authority and legitimacy of Israel. Arab leaders who incite violence must be dealt with harshly by the legal system.

As Arens notes, the natural pull of Israeli Arabs is towards the Palestinians. But that doesn't mean that their loyalty to Israel has been lost. It has not. To stem the tide, Israel must launch a twin campaign to help those Israeli Arabs who support the state and to encourage them to intensify their integration into Israeli society. And it must take concerted action against those radical leaders and organizations that work to undermine those bonds.

The current situation, in which Israeli Arab heroes fear attack, and Israeli Arab traitors are extolled must be turned on its head. (Jerusalem Post Mar 10)

Hudna? A Prescription for Disaster By Isi Leibler

Today we are threatened with two extremely dangerous situations that must be dealt with speedily and resolutely. The first, already far too advanced, is that the government seems to regard rocket attacks against our civilians as being part of an ongoing - and somehow manageable - war of attrition. Our enemies, for their part, appear to welcome the "martyrdom" of 100 or more Palestinian civilians and gunmen a week to promote their propaganda objectives.

In contrast, as the Mercar Harav massacre exemplified, every Israeli casualty represents a cause for national grief. An ongoing war of attrition would therefore be disastrous. It would in time undermine our stamina and demoralize the nation.

The second danger is that we are being coerced, or seduced, into agreeing to a temporary truce arrangement with Hamas, enabling the organization to upgrade its missile infrastructure, smuggle in more advanced weapons, send its members for training abroad, and renew hostilities at a time of its choosing.

YET AS we lurch rapidly into a new phase of confrontation with the barbarians at our gates, our government is replicating the indecisiveness and absence of strategic planning that characterized its failed management of the Second Lebanon War.

Then, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert indulged in Churchillian bombast. Today, beyond promoting the illusory "peace process," he seems loath to take any major initiatives and merely faithfully implements instructions from US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. He also appears to have concluded that - up to a point - sacrificing the lives and well-being of Israeli civilians is preferable to facing up to casualties arising from an all-out military confrontation.

Regrettably, it is becoming clear that Olmert is desperately seeking a face-saving solution by which he can accept the Hamas offer of a hudna - a temporary cease-fire - without appearing to preside over yet another Israeli debacle. He is already hinting that a truce will come into effect as soon as the missile launches ease, and he obviously welcomes the bizarre American-inspired Egyptian offer to mediate a cease-fire. If that fails, similar offers are already in the pipeline from other dubious intermediaries like former US

president Jimmy Carter and former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan.

A HUDNA would indeed create a temporary period of calm. But in the long term, it is a prescription for catastrophe. Taking advantage of the porous Egyptian border, Hamas and its Iranian and Syrian backers would upgrade and replicate Hizbullah's achievements in Lebanon. That would evolve into a disastrous replay of the Second Lebanon War, with the added handicap this time of the IDF possibly simultaneously being engaged on two fronts.

Minister of Defense Ehud Barak indulges in saber-rattling rhetoric about an impending invasion of Gaza, but invariably contradicts himself a few hours later. He has already earned a reputation for making empty threats, and, like Olmert, lacks any long-term strategy.

In fact, the IDF withdrawal from Gaza after two days begs the question of whether, beyond temporarily placating domestic public opinion, the incursion served any purpose at all. The subsequent Hamas victory parades certainly do not suggest that it strengthened our deterrence.

The apparent lack of a game plan is frightening. Amid all the contradictory government statements, Israelis still remain utterly in the dark as to what is going on. Our dysfunctional government had a clear obligation to formulate options on how to deal with our current, totally predictable crisis. But its members were too obsessed with clinging to their seats of power.

We must now gird ourselves to end the terrorist abominations, lest what we have been facing in the south engulfs even more of the country. Israel must reject efforts by the international community to reconcile us to an indefinite war of attrition.

And this time, our public diplomacy must respond more effectively to those who mindlessly denounce us for reacting "disproportionately" in exercising our right to self-defense. Their condemnations are irrational, unprecedented and unquestionably reflect the application of double standards against us.

When terrorists embed themselves within a civilian cocoon and launch their missiles from dense population centers, strangely, it is Israel's retaliation which is condemned if noncombatants are inadvertently killed or wounded. Whether we respond to attacks with targeted assassinations, take military action on the ground to eliminate missile launchers, or deny electricity to those manufacturing and launching missiles against us - we are condemned, knee-jerk style, on the grounds that any response is "disproportionate."

Yet our critics disingenuously say that a government has an overriding obligation to defend its citizens from external attack. So what are we supposed to do when our neighbors deliberately target our civilians? Appeal for help to the United Nations?

No country under rocket and missile barrages, least of all one which genuinely respects the sanctity of human life, can be expected to sacrifice its citizens in the name of ensuring a spurious proportionality. And if civilian casualties ensue because Palestinian noncombatants are employed as human shields, the blame must be directed toward the Palestinian belligerents, not the Israeli victims.

WE MUST therefore be prepared to defy our critics and swiftly defeat our foes with force. That was the basis on which Israel warded off its enemies in the past, in the days when our leaders still recognized that their prime obligation was to protect their citizens. Nothing has changed since. Preemption was and remains Israel's cardinal strategy of defense.

One need not be a military genius to appreciate what must be done. Launching missiles against our civilians should be declared an act of war. Immediate action should be taken to cut off the head of the snake and methodically target the Hamas military and political leaders who direct the killings.

Should that fail, we must act more drastically. Following ample notice for civilians to evacuate, we should bombard specific areas from where missiles are being launched. When we are condemned for "responding disproportionately," we should remind the United States and its allies that even in the absence of any threat of missile attacks to their civilians, they had no compunctions about carpet-bombing terrorist locations in Afghanistan and Iraq. NATO did likewise in Belgrade, even targeting residential areas during its botched attempt to assassinate Slobodan Milosevic.

If all else fails, recognizing that maintenance of the status quo would genuinely pose an existential threat to us, we would be obliged to launch a full-scale invasion of Gaza. That would be a calculated decision, not a gut reaction, and would be undertaken with the realization that such a conflict will lead to a major toll in lives on all sides.

Clearly, the vast majority of Israelis have no desire to occupy Gaza or rule over Arabs for longer than is absolutely necessary. But suggesting that we take no action at all because the aftermath will be complex is the worst of all options.

The time for words and threats has long passed. We have no reason to harbor any feelings of guilt because we have explored every conceivable venue to attain a peaceful solution. We realize that those confronting us are

more obsessed with achieving our demise than improving their own miserable lot and gaining independence. We must act with determination and take whatever measures are deemed necessary to protect our citizens and the future of this nation.

That will only be achieved if we restore our deterrent abilities. It can be done. (Jerusalem Post Mar 11)

Institute the Death Penalty Now By Rabbi Stewart Weiss

Desperate times call for drastic measures. The savage attack on teenagers studying Torah and celebrating the advent of Adar - by tradition, the happiest month in the Jewish calendar - brings home a terrible reality many of us already knew: the Palestinian terror machine has no red lines. Every gathering of Jews, anytime, anywhere, is a legitimate target for these murderers; on a plane, at a Pesach Seder, in a school library, a kindergarten or a hospital. There is no "Geneva Convention" to restrain them, no moral boundaries in which to confine their crimes.

Like Amalek of old - the archetypal Jew-hater par excellence - these contemporary Hamans prey upon the innocent as their primary targets. They enter hospitals with explosive-belts under their clothes; they lay in wait to shoot at passing cars; they blow up school buses as they load or unload their young passengers. And when they have perpetrated their "courageous" deeds, an ecstatic Palestine dances in the streets and hands out candies, displaying overwhelming, enthusiastic support for the outrage. Even the "good" terrorists like Mahmoud Abbas mutter only the most tepid and half-hearted of condemnations, never declaring that the crime was wrong, saying only that "it harms Palestinian interests."

In such an environment, we must take drastic action. One of the things Israel must do is activate the death penalty - used just once in our history, when architect of the Holocaust Adolf Eichmann was executed by hanging on June 1, 1962 - against any terrorist who survives an attack, or against those who directly assisted him in carrying out his crime.

Capital punishment is not a popular subject these days. The European Union bars member states from using the death penalty, and human rights activists scream "bloody murder" at the prospect of innocent people being wrongfully executed. Some religious leaders decry the unfairness of anyone taking a life other than the G-d who gave it (though they are strangely silent about euthanasia).

Jewish sources, too, tend to lean against capital punishment. The Talmud calls a Jewish court that executes one person in 70 years a "bloody court." And Maimonides writes: "It is better to acquit a thousand guilty persons than to put a single innocent one to death." Yet, the Talmud, not to mention the Torah, cites numerous occasions when criminals were executed, ruling specifically that capital punishment can be instituted "when the times demand it."

And in the United States - which suspended executions in 1973 but resumed them in 1977 - a 2006 Gallup poll found that 60% of the population not only supports the death penalty, but believes the sentence is not being carried out often enough.

There are three compelling reasons why terrorists should be executed and, as in the Eichmann case, they remains cremated and unceremoniously dumped at sea in an unknown location. First and foremost is justice. These animals who target civilians have no right to live. They have forfeited the most basic human right by virtue of their crimes, and any punishment save death is too good for them and is an obscene insult to the grieving victims of terror.

Secondly, killing a terrorist insures that he or she will not be committing any more murders. We have seen all too often how murderers with bloody hands are set free, only to kill many more innocents. As long as we have morally-misguided men like Binyamin Ben-Eliezer - who, incredibly, goes around calling for mass-murderer Marwan Barghouti to be freed - we can never be sure these criminals will stay behind bars.

Unless we execute them.

Finally, there is certainly an element of deterrence created by capital punishment. In America, there is a clear correlation between the number of executions and the decrease in homicides. The most striking example of this is in Texas, which executes more murderers than any other state. According to the Justice for All organization, the Texas murder rate fell by 60 percent after the state began to aggressively enforce capital punishment. And while Mideast terrorists often proclaim their willingness, even zeal, to be martyred, the accomplices to terror, the parents and even some terrorists themselves may certainly be influenced by the knowledge that their lives will be forfeited for their crimes.

Critics may say that executing terrorists will only inflame the situation and endanger Israeli lives even more. But anyone who has an inkling of what Hamas is all about knows the absurdity of that argument.

Judaism, more than any other religion, cherishes the sanctity of life and will go to great lengths to protect it. But that is precisely the point: Anything less than the death penalty for terrorism is an insult to the victim, to society and to life itself. (IsraelNN.com Mar 13)

The Tired Gaza Two-Step By Victor Davis Hanson

Gaza erupted in celebration last week to the news that a Palestinian had murdered Jewish religious students in Jerusalem. And almost daily terrorists send rockets from Gaza into nearby Israeli cities, hoping to kill civilians and provoke Israeli counter-responses -- and perhaps start another Middle East war.

This is not the way some imagined Gaza two and half years after the Israelis withdrew both civilians and soldiers from the territory in September 2005. At the time, the Palestinian Authority controlled Gaza, but in early 2007, Hamas took over in a violent civil war, claiming legitimacy after once winning a popular election.

Gaza has plenty of natural advantages. It enjoys a picturesque coastline on the Mediterranean with sandy beaches and a rich classical history. There is a contiguous border with Egypt, the Arab world's largest country and spiritual home of pan-Arabic solidarity.

The Palestinians are a favorite cause of the oil-rich Middle East, and would seem to be in store for at least a few billions that accrue from \$100 a barrel oil. In short, an autonomous Gaza might have been a test case in which the Palestinians could have crafted their own Singapore, Hong Kong or Dubai.

Instead, despite Palestinian rule of Gaza, Hamas has continued its civil war with the Palestinian Authority, and looters have ruined infrastructure that was left by the United Nations and the Israelis. Mobs crashed the border crossing with Egypt. Hamas-led terrorists have launched over 2,500 mortar rounds into Israel, as well as over 2,000 Qassam rockets.

We all now know the familiar Gaza two-step. The Israeli Defense Forces respond to Hamas rockets with targeted air strikes against terrorist leaders or small-rocket factories. Hamas makes certain both these targets are intermingled with civilians in the hopes of televised collateral damage.

Hamas counts on the usual sympathetic European and Middle Eastern media coverage and commentary. Terrorists deliberately trying to murder Israeli civilians are seen as the moral equivalents of Israeli soldiers trying to target combatants who use civilians as shields. To the extent that the IDF kills more of the terrorists than Hamas kills Israeli civilians, sympathy goes to the "refugees" of Gaza.

This tragic charade continues because Hamas wants it to continue. Its purpose is to make life so unsure and frightening for nearby affluent Israelis that they will grant continual concessions, hopefully leading to such wide-scale demoralization that the Jewish state itself will collapse and disappear. In that regard, the last thing Hamas wants is calm and prosperity in Gaza, which would turn the population's attention toward living rather than killing and dying.

Hamas in Gaza also feels that the war is not static -- and that it is already winning on all fronts. As Europeans, Middle Easterners and the United Nations lecture Israel about "inordinate" or "disproportionate" responses, the terrorists' smuggled missiles increase in range, payload and frequency of attack.

Hamas has gained powerful patrons in Iran and the Lebanese Hezbollah. Both provide terrorist training and weapons as long as Gaza serves as a useful proxy in their own existential struggles against Israel.

On the world front, we've reached a new threshold in which evoking the destruction of Israel and the killing of Jews has become commonplace and almost acceptable. Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, publicly brags about hoarding the body parts of captured Israelis. Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad openly talks of Israelis in Hitlerian terms as "filthy bacteria" that should be wiped off the map.

Palestinians in Gaza can enshrine mass murderers and praise terrorist killers without much worry that the world will be appalled at their grotesque spectacles -- much less cease its sympathy and subsidies.

And what a world it is that enables Gaza! The Russians have fought a dirty war against Muslim separatists in Chechnya. The Chinese have been hunting down Muslim separatist Uighurs who claim Xinjiang Province as their own. India wages bloody periodic wars against Muslim terrorists who claim Kashmir.

Imagine tomorrow that all of the above nations told the Gazans that their dispute is no more or less important to the world than similar land quarrels in Cyprus or Azerbaijan; that they are no more or less deserving of international money and sympathy than are the Chechnyans or Uighurs or the Muslims of Kashmir; or that the Israelis have as much right as the Chinese, Indians or Russians to retaliate and put down neighboring Islamist attacks. Then the crisis would shortly recede from the world's attention.

And Hamas in Gaza would either begin negotiating and building Palestinians' own civil society -- or face the sort of typical Chinese, Russian or Indian retaliation that Israel is quite able to unleash. (Townhall.com Mar 13)

The writer is a classicist and historian at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and author, most recently, of "A War Like No Other: How the Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War."