



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*

Lebanon. On March 25, 2005 the US and France pushed through UN Security Council Resolution 1695 mandating the establishment of a UN commission to investigate Hariri's assassination. The specter of this commission and the investigation that

ensued served as a sword of Damocles pressing ever closer to Assad's throat.

Finally, Syria was convinced to withdraw due to the US's regional deterrent power. In March 2005 the US's military credibility in the region was at a high point. In January eight million Iraqis had gone to the polls to vote in the first free and open elections in that country's history.

The US's message of resolve against Syria was unequivocal. Appearing with Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir at the White House on March 16, 2005, Bush said, "United States policy is to work with friends and allies to insist that Syria completely leave Lebanon, Syria take all her troops out of Lebanon, Syria take her intelligence services out of Lebanon."

There was no wiggle room for Syria four years ago. There was no appeasement. Assad had one option. He could withdraw his forces and let the Lebanese be free, or he could risk losing his regime. He left Lebanon.

Unfortunately, today this singular achievement is being frittered away. With the evaporation of Western will to confront it, Syria is moving swiftly to reassert its control over Lebanon. The West has allowed the Hariri tribunal to fade away. And today it is effectively supporting Assad as he seeks to determine the character of the next Lebanese government.

In his speech to the Muslim world last month in Cairo, Obama indicated that the US no longer objected to Hizbullah or Hamas as political forces when he said, "America respects the right of all peaceful and law-abiding voices to be heard around the world, even if we disagree with them."

After last month's Lebanese elections in which Hizbullah lost to Sa'ad Hariri's March 14 movement, the administration went a step further. Rather than capitalize on Hizbullah's defeat by strengthening the victorious pro-democracy forces, the White House signaled that it preferred the formation of a unity government with Hizbullah. In a post-election statement, the White House urged the March 14 bloc to "maintain your power through consent."

Whereas the US has merely hinted its support for the inclusion of Hizbullah in the next Lebanese government, Europe has embraced the Iranian proxy terror group explicitly. France, Britain and the EU have all met with Hizbullah members since the elections and have enthusiastically thrown their support behind the Iranian proxy's participation in a "unity" government. Saudi Arabia has similarly come out in support of such a government.

The American and European embrace of Hizbullah is now enabling Syria to reassert its control over the Lebanon under the guise of the new era of engagement. Through its sponsorship of Hizbullah, Syria has become the primary power broker in Lebanon, even as it is heralded by the likes of Kouchner and Solana for its supposed noninterference in Lebanese politics.

Bowing to US, European and Saudi pressure to give Hizbullah in coalition negotiations what it failed to win at the ballot box, Hariri announced shortly after the election that he supports the establishment of a unity government. In so doing, he was forced to accept that the fate of his government now rests in Assad's hands.

With each passing day, it is increasingly clear that Syria means to extract a high price from Hariri in exchange for Hizbullah's sought-after participation in his government. Recognizing the trap, Hariri's supporters are calling for him to form a narrow coalition without Hizbullah and its sister parties. But it is hard to imagine that either the US or Europe would accept such an outcome.

Were Hariri to form a narrow coalition without Hizbullah, he would expose the lie of Syrian goodwill and noninterference in Lebanese affairs. And were he to expose Syria's bad faith, he would demonstrate the folly

Commentary...

Syria's Hour Of Triumph By Caroline Glick

In an interview with Britain's Sky News over the weekend, US President Barack Obama was asked whether he is planning to accept Syrian President Bashar Assad's invitation to visit Damascus. The very fact that an American presidential visit to the Syrian capital is on the international agenda demonstrates how radically US foreign policy has shifted.

Four years ago, president George W. Bush withdrew the US ambassador from Damascus following the regime's suspected role in engineering the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri in February 2005. Last month Obama announced that he is returning the US ambassador to Damascus.

Obama's response to the Sky News query was instructive. "There are aspects of Syrian behavior that trouble us and we think there is a way that Syria can be much more constructive on a whole host of these issues," he began cautiously.

Then came the zinger: "But as you know, I'm a believer in engagement and my hope is that we can continue to see progress on that front."

By so describing Syria, Obama acknowledged that it hasn't changed. The Syria he seeks to engage is the same Syria that Bush decided to isolate. But facts cannot compete with "hope." Obama is a "believer." He has "hope."

In his move to engage Syria, Obama is enthusiastically joined by France and the rest of Europe as well as by Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Over the past several months, Obama's Middle East envoy George Mitchell, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana and dozens of others have beaten a path to Assad's door. With French President Nicolas Sarkozy leading the charge, all are agreed that Assad is a man they can do business with.

But are they right? In the absence of any change in Damascus's behavior, is there reason to believe that it can be coddled into abandoning its strategic alliance with Iran? Can it be sweet-talked into ending its support for the insurgency in Iraq, or arming Hizbullah and sponsoring Hamas? Can Syria be appeased into ending its nuclear and other nonconventional proliferation activities? Can it be "engaged" into ending its campaign against the pro-Western democrats in Lebanon?

To assess the reasonableness of engagement, it is first necessary to analyze the West's most significant achievements regarding Syria in recent years and consider their origins. Then, too, it is important to consider how these achievements are weathering the US's new commitment to engage Damascus as a strategic partner, and what their current status bodes for the future of the region.

THE WEST has had two significant achievements regarding Syria in recent years. The first came in April 2005 with the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon after a 29-year occupation. The second was Israel's September 6, 2007 attack on Syria's al-Kibar nuclear installation.

Three events precipitated Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon. First there was the Cedar Revolution in which more than a million Lebanese took to the streets beginning on March 14, 2005 to demand that Syria withdraw in the wake of the Hariri assassination. Like the recent revolutionary ferment in Iran, this outpouring of opposition to Syria showed the West the massive dimensions of Lebanese yearning for independence. The Bush and Chirac governments responded with complementary willingness to confront Damascus.

The rare show of Franco-American unity as French president Jacques Chirac joined forces with the Bush administration to punish Assad for murdering Hariri was the second cause of Syria's withdrawal from

and danger of the US-led carnival of engagement. Since this outcome is unacceptable to both Obama and Sarkozy, who have staked their reputations on appeasing Assad where Bush and Chirac isolated him, Hariri will likely have no choice but to surrender his nation's hard earned independence to the same Syrian regime that killed his father four years ago.

WITH THE WEST now actively assisting Syria in reasserting its hegemony over Lebanon, the one achievement that remains in place is Israel's successful removal of the threat of Syria's nuclear program two years ago. But here too, the powerful legacy of that strike is being frittered away in this new era of engagement.

Israel's destruction of Syria's al-Kibar nuclear installation demonstrated three things. First, it revealed that Syria was massively engaged in illicit nuclear proliferation. Second, it showed that the option of striking illicit nuclear programs militarily is a viable option. And third, it exposed the strategic linkages between the Syrian, Iranian and North Korean nuclear weapons programs.

Two years on, due to the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency's institutional hostility toward Israel and the US's unwillingness to confront Syria, Damascus has paid no international price for its rogue nuclear program. Indeed, the main target of the IAEA's investigations of the al-Kibar facility has been Israel. The message sent by UN and US unwillingness to contend with obvious proof of Syria's criminal behavior is obvious: Would-be proliferators have nothing to fear from the international community.

The absence of a reconstituted Syrian nuclear program after two years shows clearing that military strikes can be a very effective tool in preventing rogue states from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Yet rather than internalize this lesson and embrace the deterrent force it provides the West in dealing with Iran and North Korea, the Obama administration has squandered it. By slavishly devoting itself to negotiating with Teheran and Pyongyang, it has removed the West's most effective tool for blocking nuclear proliferation.

Israel's strike exposed an inconvenient reality to the West. It showed that the Syrian, Iranian and North Korean programs are part and parcel of the same program. It is impossible to deal with any one of them in isolation. For two years, the US and its allies have ignored this truth, preferring to pretend that these programs are wholly independent entities rather than acknowledge that - evil or not - a trilateral axis of proliferation among Pyongyang, Teheran and Damascus is a going concern.

As Pyongyang's recent nuclear and ballistic tests and Iran's recent missile tests all show, the West's refusal to countenance reality has not made it go away or become less dangerous. To the contrary, the West's preference for belief in hope and change has made things more dangerous.

By ignoring the achievements of the Bush administration's policy of isolating and confronting Syria and denying the significance of its unchanged behavior, Obama and his followers are courting disaster. The consequences of their squandering hard-won gains for regional security, freedom and stability will not be long in coming. (Jerusalem Post Jul 13)

The President Met with "The Jews," but Israel Has a Representative Government

The Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs

There was much parsing of the guest list, the questions or lack of questions, whether the President listened or talked, whether "the Jews" liked or didn't like what they heard. As veterans of meetings with Presidents - Democrats and Republicans with whom we agreed and disagreed - let us say, this meeting, like all others, was window dressing for a pre-determined policy.

No President needs input from the American Jewish community except to advance the course he has already determined. Is there anyone out there who doesn't think President Obama has a fully-fashioned plan for Palestinian-Israeli peace? Whether parts of the American Jewish community agree with the plan or don't, give the President credit for knowing what he thinks, or thinking he knows.

This is neither self-abnegation nor sour grapes (in case you didn't guess, JINSA wasn't there) - it is reality and it is appropriate. We in the American Jewish community have varied opinions about Israel, the threats it faces and the options it has to meet the threats. Most of us - liberals, conservatives and those in between - are passionately attached to the wellbeing of the Jewish state. But Israel has a government elected by its people in free and open elections. They choose their government, the government makes

decisions and Israelis live with the consequences. We do not, and our government does not.

It would be a mistake for an American president to ask us what he should be asking the prime minister of Israel. It would be a mistake for an American president to tell us what he should be telling the Government of Israel. It would be a mistake for an American president to ask us to sell his program to the Government of Israel or to support him in pressuring the prime minister. We hope President Obama didn't make that mistake.

There are always people - "The Jews" or a new administration - who think they know better than Israel and think the "judicious" application of pressure "to do what is in Israel's own best interest," will result in "peace." It would be a mistake for us - or any group of us - to ask the President to pressure an Israeli government, or cheer when he chooses to. This is not a new position for JINSA and doesn't stem from policies of the current administration.

JINSA Reports of 2005 show us at odds with both the Bush Administration and Jewish groups who wanted the administration to "force" Prime Minister Sharon to abandon disengagement from Gaza. We had reservations about disengagement, which we expressed to the Government of Israel itself, but we declined to help invite the massive machinery of the American government to substitute its judgment for that of the Government of Israel. We were concerned that American pressure on Israel could become a habit. We still are.

"The Jews" who covet their invitation to this - or any White House - and think they know better than the Government of Israel, do a disservice to Israel, to the White House and to "The Jews."

But mostly to Israel. (JINSA Jul 14)

A National Consensus? By Moshe Arens

"We have achieved a national consensus on the concept of two states for two peoples," announced our prime minister at the opening of last week's cabinet meeting. This "national consensus," achieved after several weeks of intensive intellectual effort by him and his advisers, is now being trumpeted as one of the great achievements of Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

In terms of party politics it, no doubt, dealt a severe blow to the leading opposition party, Kadima, and its leader, Tzipi Livni. She, who for the past few years seemed to have nothing else on her mind than the establishment of a Palestinian state, suddenly had the rug pulled out from under her, and now tries to explain that Netanyahu is not serious when he advocates the establishment of such a state.

Forging a consensus between the coalition and opposition, or bridging the gap that existed between them until now, is easy. The coalition just has to adopt the opposition's position, and presto, there is a national consensus. The other way around is a little more difficult. What if the opposition leader were to declare that Jews have a right to live and settle in the Land of Israel, and that nowhere should the presence of Jews be forbidden? Or that Jewish settlers who established themselves lawfully in Judea and Samaria with the permission and encouragement of Israeli governments should not be uprooted from their homes? Or if she were to emphasize that Israel is a sovereign nation that does not take orders from anyone, not even the president of the United States? We would surely have a national consensus, but the opposition would find itself in deep political trouble.

Actually, in a democratic society there is nothing more natural than the rivalry between political parties and the absence of a consensus between coalition and opposition. That is what democratic politics is all about. And that was the focus of the recent Israeli elections in which the electorate gave its verdict.

As a matter of fact, a national consensus is not in the nature of things in a democratic society, except at a time of national emergency and mortal danger. It is then that ranks have to be closed, with the common enemy facing a united front. And although a nuclear Iran represents a danger to Israelis of all political persuasions, it has nothing to do with the establishment of a Palestinian state or continued construction in the Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria.

As for past commitments by American and Israeli governments, written or unwritten, on settlements and "settlement blocs" in Judea and Samaria, they do not carry the weight of international agreements and are liable to change as new governments take office following elections. This is the case in the United States, where a Democratic candidate has won an election after promising a change from the policies of his Republican

predecessor, and is equally true in Israel, where a Likud candidate has won an election on a promise that he will not follow the policies of the previous Kadima-led government.

The fact of the matter is that there is no national agreement in Israel on the establishment of a Palestinian State at this time, or on the position adopted by Ehud Olmert and parroted by Livni that unless a Palestinian state is established, Israel will cease to exist. Nor for that matter is there general agreement on the urgent need to negotiate with Palestinian representatives an agreement that they currently are in no position to implement, which should be "put on the shelf" while awaiting better times.

At present, with Hamas ruling the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Authority headed by Mahmoud Abbas far from being in control in Judea and Samaria, the Palestinian state is no more than a fantasy. It may or may not become a practical option in the future, and it would be appropriate for the Israeli government to make clear that it does not preclude the establishment of a Palestinian state if and when this becomes possible. By the looks of it, a lot of water will flow down the Jordan River before that happens. (Haaretz Jul 15)

US Middle East Policy: Not As Good As It Sounds By Barry Rubin

A clear US strategy is emerging in the Middle East. Unfortunately, it is a badly flawed one, as the Obama administration will likely find out over the next six months. Hopefully, it will make changes as a result.

Let's consider the interrelated policy regarding Iran and the Arab-Israeli conflict. On Iran, the US plans to build on sanctions, going slowly to keep the Europeans on board and to win assent from Moscow and other countries. A series of international conferences, presidential visits and consultations are one arm of this effort.

The other is a careful attempt to avoid acting in an openly hostile way toward Teheran. There will be attempts at engagement. Some in the administration think this might work; others view it simply as a way to show the world that America has tried and that Iran is intransigent.

Then, the United States will spring its trap! Everything will be ready: allies coordinated, rationale laid.

And here's where the first problem arrives. European allies, Russia and China haven't been unwilling to do much because they disliked George W. Bush or thought Iran hadn't been given ample opportunity to repent. No, they behave the way they do out of simple self-interest.

European countries don't want a confrontation with Iran. Some are eager for the profits to be made from trade; others simply think a nuclear-armed Iran can be managed. As for Russia, it views Iran as an asset. Teheran buys nuclear equipment and weapons from it, and thus helps subvert US policies. In China's case, aside from the profit motive, it fears any tough anti-Iran effort could trigger actions against itself (over human rights, or Taiwan, or Tibet) in the future.

In other words, no matter how charming Obama is, no matter how many concessions he makes (or has Israel make) to the Europeans and Russia, no matter how well he proves himself willing to be friends with Teheran, it will make no difference.

But let's take the best-case outcome. Suppose everyone is ready to agree to some tougher sanctions. By the time all the compromises are made, the level of sanctions would be far too low to bother Iran. Moreover, the new Iranian government is tougher than ever and less inclined not only to doing away with the drive for nuclear weapons but even to slowing it down.

Obama's rhetoric and overall approach convinces Teheran that the West is weak, so it can be ignored. And when Iran actually has nukes, who cares what the West says?

So this Iran policy, though it seems brilliant to its creators, is hopeless.

Now, let's turn to Arab-Israeli conflict policy. Alexander Pope wrote: "A little learning is a dangerous thing; drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring: There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain, and drinking largely sobers us again." In other words, the Obama administration has learned only part of the truth, and this has made things worse.

What it understands - and, forgive me if I repeat a point I've been pressing for years - is that most Arab regimes (excluding Iran's little buddy, Syria) are more worried about Iran and radical Islamist groups than about Israel. So they have devised a brilliant - in its own mind - plan.

The US will force Israel to freeze construction on existing Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Using this proof of evenhandedness, it will then go to Arab regimes and say: "You see, we are ready to push Israel, now will you show your readiness for peace and press the Palestinian Authority toward compromise?"

Arab rulers will reply - indeed, the Saudis, Egyptians, and Jordanians have already done so - "not by the hairs on your chinny-chin-chin." Or in more scientific language: "You get bukhis!" In part, of course, they know Obama isn't going to huff and puff and blow their houses down. The Iranian regime and their own people are far scarier.

The minor issue of whether Israel builds a few thousand apartments in settlements assumes huge importance because it is the cornerstone of Obama's plan for quickly settling the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and its success is intended to make possible a grand alliance that will stop the spread of Iranian influence, terrorism and radical Islamism. While this is indeed the central task, sweeping away the old conflict to make it easy isn't going to happen.

Think of how an alternative might look. On May 27 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said: "With respect to settlements, the president was very clear... He wants to see a stop to settlements - not some settlements, not outposts, not natural growth exceptions... That is our position. That is what we have communicated very clearly... And we intend to press that point."

Here's what this approach would sound like if applied to Iran's regime: "With respect to nuclear weapons and sponsorship of terrorism, the president was very clear... He wants to see a stop to nuclear weapons - not some nuclear weapons, not just the warheads, not just the missiles... That is our position. That is what we have communicated very clearly... And we intend to press that point."

Or how about Syria's regime? "With respect to Syrian sponsorship of terrorism, the president was very clear... He wants to see a stop to Syrian sponsorship of terrorism - not just training terrorists, not just financing terrorists, not just ordering them to attack, not just giving them safe passage across the border, not just against Lebanon, not just against Iraq, not just against Israel... That is our position. That is what we have communicated very clearly... And we intend to press that point."

But of course such a policy would require real toughness against enemies on real issues, not just empty posturing against an ally on a really small issue. (Jerusalem Post Jul 14)

The Case Against Obama By Isi Leibler

Prior to the election, many traditional Jewish supporters of the Democratic Party were apprehensive of Barack Obama's initially negative attitude to Israel and his troubling association with people like PLO ideologue Rashid Khalidi and the anti-Semitic Rev. Jeremiah Wright. However after aggressively repudiating his earlier policies, Obama convinced most Jews that he would never abandon the Jewish state. Alas, recent developments suggest otherwise.

President Obama is adept at warming the cockles of the hearts of his Jewish constituents, many of whom seem as mesmerized by him as their forebears were by Franklin D Roosevelt. He repeatedly articulates his commitment to the welfare of Israel and admiration for American Jewry.

Yet if one probes beneath the veneer of bonhomie and analyzes the substance of his policies, they reflect an unprecedented downturn in relations towards Israel with hints of worse to come. This was reaffirmed by Obama in the course of his recent meeting with Jewish leaders (which included representatives of extremist fringe groups like Peace Now and J Street but excluded those likely to be critical of his approach). In an extraordinary patronizing manner with his Jewish aides beaming at him he told Israelis to "engage in self reflection" and made it clear that he believed he had a better understanding of what is best for them than their democratically elected government. Alas, with the exception of Malcolm Hoenlein and Abe Foxman, it appears that the majority of the others endorsed his position or remained silent. Yet only a few days earlier even a passionate Democrat like Alan Dershowitz had expressed concern "that the coming changes in the Obama administration's policies could weaken the security of the Jewish state".

This column is a response to American Jews devoted to Israel who remain under the charismatic spell of their president and challenged me to demonstrate how his policies are harming Israel.

President Obama's keynote Cairo address included effusive praise for Islam, highlighted Western shortcomings but omitted mention of global jihad and Islamic fundamentalism. It also legitimized the Arab narrative including its malicious and false historical analogies. By alleging that the State of Israel was a by-product of the Holocaust, the president of the United States denied 3,500 years of Jewish history and the central role of Jerusalem in Judaism. He endorsed the Arafat mantra that Israel had been inflicted upon the Arabs by the Europeans to compensate for the

Holocaust, even hinting at equivalence between Jewish and Arab suffering. Obama ignored the rejectionism, ongoing wars and waves of Arab terror directed against the Jewish state since the day of its creation. He also compared the Palestinians to the US civil rights movement. When the president of the world's greatest superpower provides an imprimatur for such a false narrative it represents a major breakthrough for those seeking to delegitimize Israel.

Obama's Cairo address should be viewed as an extension of a calculated policy designed to appease the Arab world by playing hardball with Israel. Obama's response to the brutal Iranian regime's thuggish clampdown on its own people was inordinately restrained. He bowed and scraped to the Saudis, unconditionally renewed diplomatic relations with the Syrians and failed to respond to the latest brazen North Korean missile launches. His "engagement" and benign relationship with corrupt and despotic Arab regimes contrast starkly with the tough diktats conveyed to Israel.

The confrontation with Israel goes far beyond the vexed settlement issue which was wrongly linked with curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions and has been exaggerated totally out of proportion.

Israel endorsed the road map and Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu unequivocally undertook to freeze settlement expansion in areas other than within the settlement blocs which the Bush Administration had implicitly agreed should remain under Israeli sovereignty. Even in these areas Netanyahu undertook to limit growth to "enabling normal life." But either disregarding or cynically abrogating understandings by the former administration, Obama's demands exceeded even those of Arafat's when the 1993 Oslo Accords were negotiated.

Today, no city outside the Islamic world denies Jews the right of residence. Yet Obama is demanding that for the first time since 1967 Jews will no longer be entitled to build a single home beyond the old armistice lines, including Jewish sections of Jerusalem and adjacent areas like Ma'aleh Adumim. No Israeli government of any political composition could conceivably accept such a demand which even opposition Kadima spokesmen condemned as outright "extortion."

Not surprisingly, the Palestinians and Arabs are delighted with Obama's humiliation of Israel. Saeb Erakat, the chief PA negotiator, proclaimed that the Palestinians need make no concessions because the longer the process extended, the more they would benefit from further unilateral Israeli concessions. Washington Post journalist Jackson Diehl, not renowned as a pro-Israel supporter, observed, "[Obama] revived a long-dormant Palestinian fantasy: that the United States will simply force Israel to make critical concessions whether or not its democratic government agrees, while Arabs passively watch and applaud."

The reality is that Arab concerns are not related to settlements or boundaries. Both Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas rejected offers to return virtually all territories Israel gained in the 1967 war - a war initiated by the Arabs to destroy the Jewish state. "The gaps were too wide" said Abbas, after Olmert offered him the equivalent of all territories beyond the Green Line, including joint control of the Temple Mount. They adamantly demand the right of return for Arab refugees, which would effectively bring an end to the Jewish state. Clearly, the overriding objective for the PA, no less than Hamas, remains, not two states but two stages leading to the demise of the Jewish state. In recent weeks there was a spate of Fatah statements on official PA-controlled media brazenly describing the negotiations as a vehicle to destroy Israel. "Peace is a means not a goal. Our goal is all Palestine," said Fatah activist Kifah Radaydeh on PA TV and also affirmed that "armed struggle" is still on the cards.

If Obama was genuinely even-handed, he would urge the "moderate" Palestinians to recognize Israel as a Jewish state. He would make it clear that the US would never support the repatriation of the descendants of the Arab refugees to Israel. Obama would call on Abbas to stop sanctifying martyrs and naming streets, sports teams and other projects (some of which are sponsored by the US) after Palestinian suicide killers and murderers and would monitor anti-Semitic incitement in PA media, mosques, schools and kindergartens. And most importantly, before demanding that Israel remove barriers and downgrade security in Judea and Samaria, the US would insist that the PA curb its military wings and cease all acts of terror.

But as of now, Obama's policy can be summarized as "Israelis should give and Palestinians should take." It amounts to appeasing the Arabs, humiliating Israel and in the process, undermining the security of the Jewish state.

Israel is not a superpower and needs to retain the support of the United States, in the absence of which the United Nations, Europeans and the entire international community would gang up against the Jewish state. It is

no coincidence that Javier Solana, the retiring EU foreign policy chief, has urged the UN to determine the final borders, the status of Jerusalem and resolution of the refugee problem and impose their solution. That the British government has just announced what amounts to a partial arms boycott against Israel is another example.

Netanyahu is doing his utmost to achieve a compromise and has already offered to totally freeze all settlement activity beyond Jerusalem and the major settlement blocs, which the vast majority of Israelis agree must be retained. But if the Americans remain bloody-minded and refuse to compromise, Netanyahu will stand firm on this issue and will be overwhelmingly supported by the people who are outraged by the double standards applied against them.

In the meanwhile, the public reprimands and humiliations already underway are eroding the US-Israel relationship and impacting on American public support for Israel, which polls indicate is plummeting. American Jews who voted overwhelmingly to elect Obama should not remain silent. They are entitled to press him to adhere to his commitment and treat the Jewish state in an even-handed manner. Together with other friends of Israel they should discourage their president from offering Israel as a sacrificial lamb on the altar of Arab appeasement. In urging Obama not to abandon Israel, they would also be promoting the US national interest. History cannot point to a single instance in which appeasement of jihadists or tyrants has ever borne fruit. (Jerusalem Post Jul 15)

Good Zionists, Bad Zionists By Yoel Meltzer

One of the unwritten laws of war is that the winning side is allowed to do as it pleases after the cessation of hostilities. This law is even more relevant when the victor turns out to be the side that didn't initiate the war, or didn't want the war to occur in the first place.

Thus we find Israel, after its victory in a war that it initially tried to avoid in 1948, utilizing its victory to expand its territory. For several years after this war, new communities started to appear on the map, such as Ashdod in 1956, Karmiel in 1964, Dimona in 1955 and Arad in 1962 (to name just a few).

Then, nearly 20 years later and faced with the prospect of an Arab onslaught, Israel was forced to fight another war in 1967, which, like the war in 1948, resulted in a decisive victory for Israel. Then, once again, as it had done after its 1948 victory, Israel utilized this victory to embark on a campaign of expanding its territory. New communities started to dot the map, such as Kiryat Arba in 1972, Kedumim in 1975, Karnei Shomron in 1977 and Efrat in 1983 (to name just a few).

However, this is where the similarities stop. For some reason, the communities that were founded after 1948 have always been considered legitimate by the Israeli public, while the communities that were established after 1967 never quite managed to gain the same degree of legitimacy in the eyes of some sections of the Israeli public and are in fact considered illegitimate by some here in Israel.

The argument that the latter communities were established in the midst of, or near, large Arab population centers, or on "Arab lands", doesn't hold much sway, especially since the same can be said of many "legitimate" communities established after 1948 and even of some communities started before 1948. If this is the case, then what is the reason for this different treatment of post-1967 communities to those of their pre-1967 counterparts?

It seems that the only logical answer is that the earlier communities were founded by the "Good Zionists" (Ben Gurion and friends), while many of the latter post-1967 communities were founded by a different type of Zionist, namely the type that believes settling Eretz Yisrael is a mitzvah and draws the inspiration and motivation for such ideals straight from Judaism. This is the only plausible answer as to why this second group of Zionists and the communities they have built have become stigmatized and deemed illegitimate by so many here in Israel.

Unfortunately, what many here in Israel that deem such post-1967 communities as illegitimate fail, or perhaps refuse, to understand is that in the eyes of the Arabs, all of the communities (pre-1948, post-1948, post-1967) are illegitimate. They don't make such trivial distinctions. Only we, the silly Jews, make such distinctions. (Ynet Jul 15)
