



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*

Commentary...

From Basra to Bethlehem to Beit El By Caroline Glick

Sunday the British military in Iraq transferred security authority over Basra to the Iraqi Army. Although the transfer took place in an orderly fashion, the British leave behind one of the worst security nightmares in that troubled land.

As one senior Iraqi military officer told ABC News, "The British legacy in Basra is criminal gangs, a corrupt and infiltrated police force, and borders open to all." During a visit to Basra on December 9, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown hailed the British training of Iraqi police and security services as one of the greatest accomplishments of the British mission in the province. Iraqi military commanders who are now charged with asserting control over these British trained forces are less sanguine. As one senior commander told ABC, "Out of 17,000 policemen in Basra, some 14,000 are beholden to militias and some to the Iranian secret service." The commander added that the British training of an estimated 10,000 policemen in southern Iraq has done little to alter their loyalties.

Post-British Basra is a frightening place. Some 40 women have been brutally murdered over the past year for failing to wear burkas. The city's Christian minority is being targeted for annihilation. Last week, terrorists in police uniform stormed the house of a Christian family, and abducted and brutally murdered a brother and sister. In response to the attack, the Christian community cancelled all Christmas festivities.

During their disastrous stewardship of the city, the British ignored the primary lesson of al-Qaida's development in post-Soviet withdrawal Afghanistan. The main lesson of al-Qaida's rise from the remnants of the US-supported mujahadeen who fought the Soviets in that country throughout the 1980s is that the enemy of your enemy is not necessarily your friend. By training and arming the mujahadeen in the 1980s, the US may have fomented the defeat of the Red Army, but it also enabled the mujahadeen to gain a victory over a superpower which they used as a basis for building an international terrorist movement that defines the US and the rest of the West as their new targets for destruction.

ACTUALLY, in their mishandling of Basra, the British did not merely ignore the lessons of Afghanistan's al-Qaida blowback, they took that American strategic failure to understand that the mujahadeen were their enemies a step further.

While the Americans and the Afghan jihadists did have a common foe in the Soviet Union, the British actually had no enemy in common with the Iranian-backed jihadists they trained in Basra.

The only thing the Iraqi jihadists they trained had to recommend them was the fact that they are Iraqis. By training them, the British pretended that they were advancing the cause of Iraqi independence when in fact they were working to ensure that Iraq will have a difficult time emerging from their stewardship as a coherent, peaceful multiethnic state.

BRITAIN'S foolish and dangerous actions in Basra are strikingly similar to the international community's policies regarding the Palestinian Authority generally and the PA's security services specifically. And whereas in Iraq there is some chance that the wreck the British have made of Basra can be fixed by the Iraqi military and the US forces in the country, there is no countervailing force to curb the adverse impacts of the international community's treatment of the corrupt, terror supporting, jihadist Palestinian security forces. This is the case because the Israeli government, which is the only countervailing force

בס"ד that could repair the damage, is exacerbating the problem.

Since the PA and its security forces were formed in 1994, they have never once taken serious action against the terror infrastructure in either Judea and Samaria or Gaza. Indeed, the PA and its security services played a central role in building those infrastructures of terror. Beyond that, since 1996, every single time that the PA's security services have been forced to choose between Israel

and the terrorists, they have joined ranks with the terrorists to attack Israel.

In spite of this fact, yesterday representatives of 90 states and organizations convened in Paris and pledged to give the PA \$7.4 billion over the next three years. The PA will receive some \$1.7 billion next year - \$1.2 billion of which will go to funding the PA budget. Most of that money will be spent paying the salaries, arming and training the PA security forces.

As the Jerusalem Post's Khaled Abu Toameh reported last Friday, the commanders of those forces openly acknowledge that in spite of the hundreds of millions of dollars they have already received from the US and the Europeans since the Hamas electoral victory two years ago, and notwithstanding the training and arms they have received from the US, the Europeans and the Russians, the PA's security forces have yet to take the first step towards reforming themselves or combating Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Fatah's own Aksa Martyrs Brigades.

They continue to be run by corrupt and criminal commanders. They have failed to abide by their pledge to cut the size of their forces from 70,000 to 35,000. Indeed, despite US prodding and Israel's willingness to allow these forces to deploy in the Palestinian cities and villages of Judea and Samaria, PA forces have taken no action against any terror cells anywhere. As one Palestinian official summed up their operations, "We arrested citizens who stole olive oil three years ago or fired into the air during weddings two years ago."

Of course, PA forces have done more than arrest olive oil thieves. They have also attacked Israeli targets. For instance, last month Palestinian policemen murdered Ido Zoldan. Last summer other US-trained policemen plotted to assassinate Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

A WEEK before Zoldan was murdered by US-funded PA security forces, Olmert approved the shipment of two million bullets for AK-47 assault rifles and 50 advanced Russian armored personnel carriers to those forces in Judea and Samaria. The delivery of the APCs has been delayed because the Palestinians insist that they be deployed with roof mounted machine guns and Israel has refused to accept that demand so far. In the meantime however, the bullets have apparently arrived safe and sound.

In spite of the Olmert government's insistent support for the PA forces, neither the general public nor IDF forces accept their delusions. Immediately after the government decided to approve the shipments, a battalion of reservists from the Alexandroni infantry brigade sent a letter of protest to Olmert. In their letter, signed by the battalion's commanders and 50 soldiers the reservists wrote, "We turn to you at the last minute and call on you to stop the convoy of APCs and the shipments of ammunition to the Palestinians. We have no doubt that the ammunition and the APCs will be used against us, against our comrades and against Israeli civilians just as the arms transferred to the Palestinians in the Oslo process were. It isn't enough that in recent days the government approved the release of hundreds of terrorists from prison. Today you are arming them."

Discussing the letter with Ma'ariv, the battalion commander noted, "The only one making the distinction between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority is Israel. They don't make the distinction and so it is obvious that these weapons will fall into the wrong hands. It is clear to me that one day I will fight against the weapons that my country gave them."

It is impossible to believe that the Olmert government and indeed to the US and the rest of the international community are unaware of the terrorist

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הילד משה בועז ז"ל בן חיים יוסף
Boaz Zeifman z"l

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nature of the PA security forces they support so generously. So why are all concerned parties maintaining the fiction that these forces are credible? The US and European impetus for bucking up terrorists is clear enough: they want to pretend they are advancing peace and Palestinian statehood. But what explains the Olmert government's behavior? Why did Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni tell the audience at Monday's donors' conference that Israel will enable the Europeans to provide advanced military training to the PA militias?

A strong indication of the logic that stands behind the Olmert government's support for the PA security services is found in the policy it is simultaneously enacting towards the self-defense units which provide security for the Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria.

Over the past two months, while arming the PA security forces, the government has been instructing the IDF to place new draconian limitations on the ability of the Israeli communities to protect themselves from attack. In two weeks, the Defense Ministry will disband the civilian units comprised of residents of the most threatened Israeli communities. Since they were established two years ago, these units have borne the brunt of responsibility for defending their communities. Next month too, new regulations will make it more difficult for Israelis to receive weapons permits to participate in guard duty in their communities.

In taking these steps, Olmert and his colleagues demonstrate the perverse lessons they learned from the withdrawal from Gaza. During the period leading up to the withdrawal, the Sharon government scaled back IDF counter-terror operations. They also curtailed the ability of the Israeli residents of Gaza to defend themselves. In so doing, the Sharon government both enabled an increase in terror and successfully portrayed the Israeli residents - shorn of their defensive capabilities - as a security burden. These twin policies secured the support of Israel's governing leftist elites in the media for Sharon and his colleagues.

In repeating the Sharon government's policies towards the Palestinians and the Israeli residents of Judea and Samaria, the Olmert government is similarly receiving the backing of the media.

As the current situation in Gaza shows, although the Olmert government's policies may strengthen it politically, its consequences for Israel's national security will be devastating. If Basra's current security morass is Afghanistan squared, the consequences of Israel's irresponsible actions in Judea and Samaria will make Gaza - and Basra - look like a walk in the park. (Jerusalem Post Dec 17)

The Numbers Don't Lie By Moshe Arens

The Olmert government continues to offer lame excuses to the residents of Sderot and the communities surrounding the Gaza Strip for not providing them the security to which all Israeli citizens are entitled. In answering the petition brought to the High Court of Justice calling for the government to provide protective reinforcement against rockets and mortar shells for buildings in Sderot, the government had the effrontery to plead that it was not obligated to provide security for the citizens of the country.

The inane slogans offered as excuses for not putting a stop to the rocketing of Sderot, such as "there is no magic solution," or there is no "bang, and it's over," may at first have seemed convincing to some, but as the rocketing continues, nobody but fools take them seriously.

The army's chief-of-staff has said what everybody, other than this government's ministers, knows - that the only way to stop the rockets from coming down on the heads of the population living near the Gaza Strip is for the IDF to move in and move the rockets out of range.

So now comes the turn of the lie to excuse the government's inaction. It is said that "even when the IDF was in Gaza, Qassam rockets were raining down on Israel." In other words, what is the use of sending the IDF into Gaza, when our past experience has shown that this was not effective.

But they neglect to inform the public that the IDF left most of the Gaza Strip in the wake of the Oslo agreements, almost 15 years ago, and that from the limited areas in which the IDF was present prior to the disengagement, no rockets were fired against Israel. There is no reason to expect that rockets will be launched from areas which the IDF controls.

What's more, the launching of rockets against Israel has increased drastically since the disengagement. Just look at the graph provided by The Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center on the annual distribution of rocket fire.

These figures don't lie.

Now, so-called "government sources" have added a ludicrous and non-sensical "cost-benefit" analysis, which is presumed to show that when the cost of the IDF's entry into the Gaza Strip is compared to the cost of the continuing rocketing of Israel, the present situation is to be preferred.

Who are the idiots who have concocted this nonsense? What is the true cost of the government not protecting its citizens, or the cost of certain areas in Israel becoming unlivable? As for the presumed cost of the IDF's entry into the Gaza Strip, this is pure speculation. After months of preparation and training, and given the almost unlimited superiority of the IDF over the militants in the Gaza Strip, there is no reason why the cost should turn out to be prohibitive.

In any case, all agree that the cost will only escalate as time goes by. Those who consider it difficult at this time will surely find it impossible in the future. So what they are saying is "get used to it," or "every day brings us closer to the IDF's entry into the Gaza Strip" - another piece of foolishness, that does not seem to impress those launching the rockets.

And finally comes the argument to end all arguments: "We may know how to get in, but we may not know how to get out." It is just this mindset that led to the fiasco of the Second Lebanon War and the rocketing of northern Israel by Hezbollah for more than five weeks.

The prime minister's management of that war was labeled as a "failure" in the Winograd's Committee's interim report. No need to await the final report, the conclusion is clear. But although the government claims to have implemented this report, they seem to have learned nothing. We are seeing daily a repetition of this failure in Sderot. (Haaretz Dec 17)

Introducing George W. Clinton By Michael Freund

Will the real George W. please stand up? After seven years of fearlessly confronting evil, both rhetorically and militarily, the Bush administration in Washington seems to have faded away, replaced instead by a meek shadow of its former self.

Firm resolve has given way to disappointing frailty, as the shape and direction of US foreign policy increasingly resembles something taken straight out of Bill Clinton's playbook.

Across the board, on nearly every major issue of the day, from Iran to Syria to North Korea, the Bush administration is in retreat, abandoning the principled stands of yesteryear and replacing them with the unscrupulous and inexplicable policies now being pursued by the Department of State.

The turnabout is breathtaking in its scope, rivaled only perhaps by Britney Spears' rapid descent from pop superstar to tabloid curiosity. But unlike the blonde starlet's fate, this is something that actually matters.

Take, for example, the donor conference held in Paris this week, where the nations of the world unashamedly gathered to prop up the corrupt, incompetent and ineffectual Palestinian regime headed by Mahmoud Abbas.

Leading the charge, the US pledged more than \$550 million in aid to the Palestinians in 2008. But while American diplomats were busy filling out checks to Abbas, Palestinian terrorists in Gaza continued to target Israeli civilians. On Sunday, they fired a rocket which struck an Israeli home in Kibbutz Zikim and wounded a 2-year old child. Needless to say, neither the toddler nor his parents will be receiving any Western assistance.

Watching the news on television, I thought back to a bright summer day five years ago, on June 1, 2002, when a man named George W. Bush gave a stirring speech to the graduating class at the West Point military academy. In clear and unequivocal terms, the president said, "All nations that decide for aggression and terror will pay a price... We will lift this dark threat from our country and from the world." Then I thought to myself: just what "price" have the Palestinians been made to pay for using violence and terror against the Jewish state? Instead of paying a price, they are being rewarded for their actions with American largesse and support. Isn't that exactly what Bill Clinton sought to do when he convened the Camp David talks at the end of his presidency?

THEN THERE is North Korea. On December 1, Bush took the unusual step of sending a personal letter to Pyongyang's thug-in-chief Kim Jong Il, essentially pleading with him to tell the truth and to disclose all of his country's nuclear programs by the end of the year.

In exchange, the archaic Stalinist regime can expect to receive American recognition and, of course, large infusions of aid.

So once again I turned to Bush's 2002 speech, and there it was in black-and-white: "We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly sign non-proliferation treaties, and then systemically break them."

Yet that is precisely what Bush seems ready to do. He is putting his faith in Kim Jong-Il's promises, just as Clinton did when he signed a similar deal with Pyongyang in October 1994 which later proved worthless.

And what of the regimes in Iran and Syria, which have aided and abetted insurgents in Iraq in their efforts to kill American servicemen? In both instances, the Bush administration has adopted a policy of diplomacy and

talk, rather than action. Indeed, Damascus was even invited to take part in the Annapolis conference, granting further legitimacy to Syrian President Bashar Assad and his repressive regime.

Who said that killers of Americans have anything to fear? What a sharp contrast to that speech five summers ago, when the president enunciated a clear moral vision underlying his policy, which came to be known as the Bush Doctrine. He said at the time, "There can be no neutrality between justice and cruelty, between the innocent and the guilty. We are in a conflict between good and evil, and America will call evil by its name. By confronting evil and lawless regimes, we do not create a problem, we reveal a problem. And we will lead the world in opposing it."

Sadly, Washington now seems all too ready to yield on matters of principle. Or, as former US ambassador to the UN John Bolton told the German magazine *Der Spiegel* this week, American foreign policy "is in free fall. The president is acting against his own judgment and instincts under the influence of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice."

The result has effectively been a quiet coup, as George W. Clinton replaces Bush. And that spells trouble, big trouble, in the War on Terror - not only for Israel, but for America too.

It is not that the Bush Doctrine is dead - it most certainly isn't. But the way things are going of late, it sure seems to be in need of resuscitation. (Jerusalem Post Dec 19)

Not on Our Dime By Frank J. Gaffney Jr.

Few spectacles have more clearly demonstrated what is wrong with the United Nations than the U.N. World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa in September 2001.

Thanks to the domination of that conclave by a substantial majority led by the most despotic - and racist - regimes on the planet, "Durban" became synonymous with unbridled vilification of the United States and Israel. Even the most pro-U.N. secretary of state in memory, Colin Powell, was so infuriated by the proceeding that he felt constrained to walk out.

Ironically, the insights Durban provided into the extraordinary mutation of the United Nations - from an instrument the United States was indispensable to creating after World War II in the hope of preventing future conflicts into what amounts to the diplomatic equivalent of mob-rule in the hands of America's enemies - were obscured by what happened within days of the conference's conclusion: the September 11 attacks. Ironic because, as the most indefatigable journalistic observer of the U.N., Claudia Rosett, has observed, those "hijackings [were] driven by the same kind of hate stoked at the Durban conference."

It may well be that, because of our preoccupation with al Qaeda's acting out the Durban agenda, we failed to respond properly as a nation to this 2001 orgy of anti-Western hate mongering and racism. There is no excuse, however, for what is about to happen: American taxpayers are poised to be charged for the preparation of a follow-on conference that promises, if anything, to be even worse than what is now known as Durban I.

As Mrs. Rosett and the Hudson Institute's indispensable Anne Bayefsky have warned, the U.N. is now launching "Durban II," a conference to be held in 2009 to review "implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action." Given that these products of the first conference were so defective, one might think a review conference could be justified, provided it had any prospect of rectifying their myriad shortcomings.

Unfortunately, in the farce the U.N. has become, the job of preparing to review the Durban I conference is entrusted to Moammar Gadhafi's despotic and Islamofascism-supporting regime. Worse yet, the Libyans are being helped in their work by other preposterous members of the U.N.'s Human Rights Council, including Pakistan, Cuba and Russia, and by non-Council member Iran.

You might be confused by all this if you thought one of the "reforms" the United States wrested a few years back from the would-be "world government" on Turtle Bay was a panel on human rights that actually respected and strengthened them. If so, see former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton's excellent, albeit dispiriting, account in his just-released memoirs, "Surrender is Not an Option: Defending America at the United Nations and Abroad."

Mr. Bolton lays bare how the State Department, Europeans and others hostile to U.S. interests begat a new council essentially indistinguishable from its appallingly bad predecessor.

In the U.N.'s inimitable fashion, there are now no fewer than five organs charged with advancing the Durban agenda. In addition to Col. Qadhafi's preparatory commission, these are the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of

Action; the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent; Five Independent Eminent Experts (I am not making this up) to Follow-up the Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action; and the Ad Hoc Committee of the Human Rights Council on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards.

Even the European Union has begun to balk at this absurd exercise, joining the United States and Israel in a recent vote on a resolution on Durban II promoted by the so-called African Group. As is generally the case in the U.N., though, the U.S. and its friends were simply outvoted by those more-or-less-explicitly hostile to freedom.

Two things are clear: First, as is also generally true of all things related to the United Nations, the costs associated with the countless meetings, meals, perks and logistical requirements of these five, self-important entities and eminent experts are exorbitant. The U.N. secretary-general's office came up with an initial (and probably conservative) estimate of \$7.2 million.

Insult will be added to injury however if oil-rich Durban II promoters like Iran, Libya and Russia and their allies are able to make you pay for the platform with which they intend to revile and hector America and Israel. All other things being equal, they stand to do so if they can get the tab picked up by the U.N.'s regular budget - of which this country underwrites nearly a quarter.

Second, Durban II's architects have in mind making us pay even more dearly in another coin. As Rebecca Tobin put it in a Dec. 8 posting on EyeOnTheUN.org, they seek to "create 'new normative standards aimed at combating all forms of contemporary racism, including incitement to racial and religious hatred' - in other words to turn the alleged defamation of Islam into a global witch hunt in the name of human rights."

Will the Bush administration and Congress allow a new Durban goat-roped at our expense - literally on our dime and to the detriment of our moral standing, security and other interests? Now is the time to say "No" - No to unconclaves that empower and embolden Islamofascists and other racists, and No to any underwriting of them by American taxpayers. (Washington Times Dec 18)

The writer is president of the Center for Security Policy.

Stop Red Cross Visits to Israeli Prisons By Yona Baumel

The tradition of the IDF, inherited from the underground forces that preceded the State of Israel, was never to leave a comrade in the field of battle. This was the strength of the army and each soldier went out to fight secure in the knowledge that his comrades would look after him, even if he made the supreme sacrifice.

This worked as long as there were two elements in place: The Israeli soldiers actually lived up to their creed and the enemy did not excessively use it against individual soldiers.

The first part of the equation went by the boards in the Yom Kippur War. There were many acts of individual heroism but the overall performance was every man for himself. The second part came to an end in the First Lebanon War when Israel traded 1,150 terrorists for three Israeli soldiers held by Ahmed Jibril's PFLP-GC.

At that time it was the relentless pressure of Miriam Grof on Yitzhak Rabin that caused him to enter an agreement that had two long lasting effects. Many of the freed terrorists were permitted to remain in Judea and Samaria. And many of them resumed their violent ways. Relatives of those killed questioned the validity of freeing three soldiers at the expense of so much Jewish blood.

The other aspect was not long in coming. Jibril had set a precedent. It was now clear that any reward could be demanded for the release of an Israeli captive. Too late Rabin realized that he had opened Pandora's box. The first and most visible case to suffer was Ron Arad. If the Arabs would have been content with their usual lopsided exchanges, both sides could have benefited. But they wanted more - something in line with the Jibril exchange. By this time the pendulum had swung to the other extreme and Rabin was doubly careful. The results are known to all.

IT IS A sad fact, but since the Jibril exchange in 1985 no live IDF soldier has been returned.

Before I continue I would like to make clear who I am. I am the father of a soldier who has been missing in action since the First Lebanon War. On June 11, 1982 there was a battle at Sultan Yacoub in the Lebanese Beka'a Valley. The top command of the IDF acted in a totally irresponsible manner. There was never a detailed report on the battle issued by the IDF historian.

Over 20 young men were needlessly killed, many more were wounded and three are listed as missing in action to this very day: Zvi Feldman, Yehuda Katz and Zachary Baumel.

Efforts to declare them dead were thwarted by the High Court of Justice. To this day reports are still coming in that some of them are still alive and are being held incommunicado. There is considerable evidence that my son Zack is still alive. I mention this because of what I am about to propose.

It breaks my heart to hear Karnit and Micky Goldwasser plead for information about their husband and son. I know firsthand what the Regev and Schalit families are going through. Unfortunately this just hardens the resolve of the heartless, lawless captors.

It is very difficult trying to negotiate under these circumstances. It is more than difficult - it is impossible.

The first thing that Israel must do is publicly renounce a policy that has not been in existence for over 30 years, namely not leaving a comrade in the field. Israel has always prided itself on living up to international law concerning prisoners. There comes a time when in dealing with terror organizations this is counterproductive, especially to the prisoners. My long experience in dealing with the Arabs has taught me that there is a vast difference between what the leaders proclaim and what the families feel.

I favor humanitarian treatment of prisoners, but not at the expense of our own. If Hizbullah and Hamas do not let the ICRC visit Israeli prisoners we should stop ICRC visits to members of these groups.

If no proof is forthcoming whether a prisoner is dead or alive we should act accordingly. Visits by family members should be suspended, let them pressure their own leaders to provide access to our soldiers.

The Talmud and Jewish medieval law codifiers stated emphatically that hostages and prisoners should not be exchanged beyond their worth. They had daily experience with this problem and knew that it would only breed more cases. Unfortunately modern Israel has yet to learn this lesson.

Very early on the Sultan Yacoub families were told in no uncertain terms that the government was the only power to decide what price to pay. I think the decision was correct. I do not envy those who must make such life or death choices.

In 1989 while I was a guest of the PLO in Tunis I personally brokered the return of the body of an IDF soldier in exchange for one terrorist. This feat was never repeated and the IDF hasn't forgiven me yet. For the future of the State of Israel a new code must be established - one that will give security to our soldiers and security to our people. It can be done. (Jerusalem Post Dec 17) *The writer lives in Jerusalem.*

Palestinian Authority's Tax Payer-funded Open Spigot must Be Closed Now By Daniel Pipes

Lavishing funds on Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority to achieve peace has been a mainstay of Western, including Israeli, policy since Hamas seized Gaza in June. But this open spigot has counterproductive results and urgently must be stopped.

Some background: Paul Morro of the Congressional Research Service reports that, in 2006, the European Union and its member states gave US\$815 million to the Palestinian Authority, while the United States sent it \$468 million. When other donors are included, the total receipts come to about \$1.5 billion.

The windfall keeps growing. President George W. Bush requested a \$410 million supplement in October, beyond a \$77 million donation earlier in the year. The State Department justifies this lordly sum on the grounds that it "supports a critical and immediate need to support a new Palestinian Authority (PA) government that both the U.S. and Israel view as a true ally for peace." At a recent hearing, Gary Ackerman, chairman of the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, endorsed the supplemental donation.

Not content with spending taxpayer money, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice launched a "U.S.-Palestinian Public Private Partnership" on Dec. 3, involving financial heavyweights such as Sandy Weill and Lester Crown, to fund, as Rice put it, "projects that reach young Palestinians directly, that prepare them for responsibilities of citizenship and leadership can have an enormous, positive impact."

One report suggests the European Union has funneled nearly \$2.5 billion to the Palestinians this year.

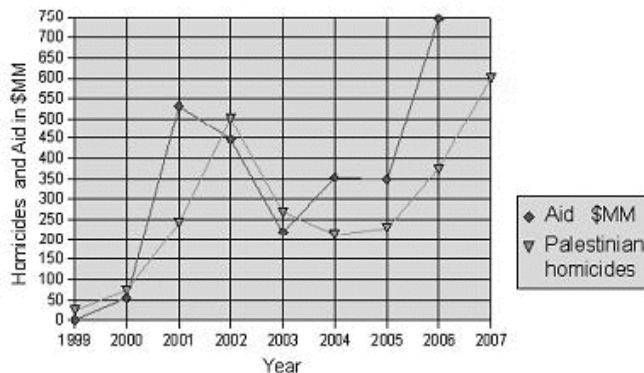
Looking ahead, Abbas announced a goal to collect pledges of \$5.8 billion in aid for a three-year period, 2008-10, at the "Donors' Conference for the Palestinian Authority" attended by over ninety states on Monday in Paris. (Using the best population estimate of 1.35 million Palestinians on the West Bank, this comes to a staggering amount of money: per capita, over \$1,400 per year, or about what an Egyptian earns annually.) Endorsed by the Israeli government, Abbas immediately raised nearly that amount for 2008 at the donors' conference.

Well, it's a bargain if it works, right? A few billion to end a dangerous,

century-old conflict - it's actually a steal.

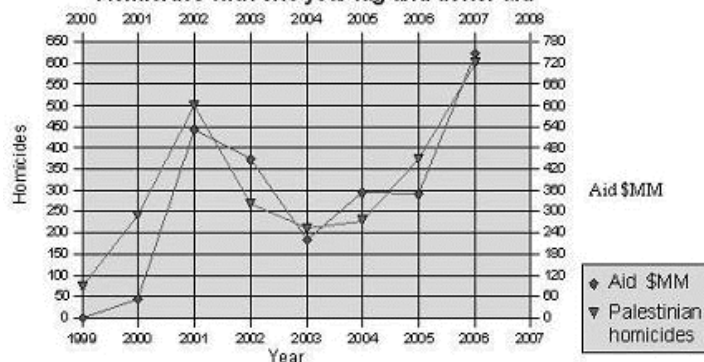
But innovative research by Steven Stotsky, a research analyst for the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA) finds that an influx of money to the Palestinians has had the opposite effect historically. Relying on World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and other official statistics, Stotsky compares two figures since 1999: budgetary support aid provided annually to the Palestinian Authority and the number of Palestinian homicides annually (including both criminal and terrorist activities, and both Israeli and Palestinian victims). Graphed together, the two figures show an uncanny echo:

Palestinian homicides and donor aid



The correlation is even clearer when the aid of one year is superimposed on the homicides of a year later:

Homicides with one year lag and donor aid



In brief, each \$1.25 million or so of budgetary support aid translates into a death within the year. As Stotsky notes, "These statistics do not mean that foreign aid causes violence; but they do raise questions about the effectiveness of using foreign donations to promote moderation and combat terrorism."

The Palestinian record fits a broader pattern, as noted by Jean-Paul Azam and Alexandra Delacroix in a 2006 article, "Aid and the Delegated Fight Against Terrorism." They found "a pretty robust empirical result showing that the supply of terrorist activity by any country is positively correlated with the amount of foreign aid received by that country" - i.e., the more foreign aid, the more terrorism.

If these studies run exactly counter to the conventional supposition that poverty, unemployment, repression, "occupation," and malaise drive Palestinians to lethal violence, they do confirm my long-standing argument about Palestinian exhilaration being the problem. The better funded Palestinians are, the stronger they become, and the more inspired to take up arms.

A topsy-turvy understanding of war economics has prevailed in Israel since the Oslo negotiations began in 1993. Rather than deprive their Palestinian enemies of resources, Israelis have been following Shimon Peres's mystical musings, and especially his 1993 tome, *The New Middle East*, to empower them economically. As I wrote in 2001, this "is tantamount to sending the enemy resources while fighting is still under way - not a hugely bright idea."

Rather than further funding Palestinian bellicosity, Western states, starting with Israel, should cut off all funds to the Palestinian Authority. (Jewish World Review Dec 18)