



## Commentary...

### Patriots and Anti-Patriots By Caroline Glick

Two years ago, the North was a war zone. Fields and forests, homes and hospitals were set ablaze by Hizbullah missiles. But on Sunday afternoon, as a tireless patriot was laid to rest in the Jezreel Valley, the ground was not burning with missile fire, it was exploding with fecundity. It filled the air with the aroma of its promise of spring harvests.

A multitude of mourners from all over the country crowded into Moshav Moledet's small cemetery to pay their final respects to 53-year-old Tzafir Ronen, who died of a heart attack on Friday night. The man they mourned had dedicated his life to defending the country. In recent years, Tzafir spent nearly every waking moment fighting for its soul. He sought to educate his fellow Israelis about the threats facing the country generally, and specifically about the existential danger to its viability presented by the Left's defeatist and post-Zionist narrative.

For this son of the Jezreel Valley, who grew up with the land, that narrative - which argues that Israel has neither the ability nor the right to defeat its enemies and to settle its land - was the single greatest threat to the long-term well-being of the country. Over the years, as Tzafir's frustration at the direction the country was taking grew, his message became angrier and more urgent. As each of his successive warnings - about the fraudulent Oslo peace process, the withdrawal from southern Lebanon, the criminalization of Jewish building in Judea and Samaria, the refusal to enforce laws in the Israeli Arab sector, the expulsion of the Jews from Gaza and northern Samaria and the establishment of the Hamas terror state in Gaza - were ignored by successive governments, by the media and, inevitably, by voters, Tzafir, like so many others in his position felt he was shouting into the wind.

Marginalizing and silencing voices like Tzafir's is one of the Israeli Left's greatest achievements. By consistently ignoring or demonizing voices like Tzafir's - who have been correct about every major strategic issue facing the country - while steadfastly legitimizing and lionizing men and women like Amos Oz, Shulamit Aloni, Yossi Beilin and Haim Ramon - who not only have been wrong about every major issue in the past generation, but have also often taken leading roles in our enemies' propaganda campaigns - the Left has managed to remove our most vibrant thinkers and bravest builders and fighters from the national debate.

But the hundreds who crowded into the cemetery on Sunday are proof that the Left's success has been far from complete. The mourners at his funeral included Israelis from all walks of life - religious, secular, farmers, city-dwellers, Jews, non-Jews, new olim, and sabras. The fact that people from such diverse backgrounds and traditions have found the way to work with one another shows that in spite of the demonization of the Right, people are still interested in defending and building the country. They are still drawn to voices in the wilderness, like Tzafir's, which say that we must fight, and win, and that we deserve to win and should feel privileged to fight for what is right.

On the face of it, Tzafir, his colleagues and friends could feel vindicated

## 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*

בס"ד  
by the Olmert-Livni-Barak government's decision to launch Operation Cast Lead against Hamas's regime in Gaza. Since Ariel Sharon, Ehud Olmert and Tzipi Livni first began advocating the surrender of Gaza in late 2003, Tzafir and his colleagues were at the forefront of the protest movement against the giveaway. Not only did they argue that the forcible expulsion and destruction of communities in Gaza was a moral

outrage, they warned that a withdrawal would transform Gaza into the jihadist hub it has become.

And of course, they were right. Far from bringing peace and stability, as they warned the likes of Olmert and Livni, withdrawal from Gaza started the countdown to the war we are now fighting. And as they warned would happen, withdrawal from Gaza allowed Hamas to become an Iranian proxy and build the Iranian-supplied army that now assaults the South with missiles and rockets.

Moreover, the international outcry which has greeted the IDF operation, and the tepid US support it has enjoyed, shows clearly that by "ending the occupation" of Gaza, (which actually ended with the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994), Israel weakened rather than strengthened its international supporters. Today it is being condemned more harshly than it was in 2004 when the IDF nearly destroyed Hamas in Gaza by decapitating its leadership.

On the face of it, Tzafir and his colleagues could pat themselves on the backs and say that by waging Operation Cast Lead, Livni and Olmert and the architect of unilateral surrenders of land to terrorists himself - Defense Minister Ehud Barak, who handed South Lebanon to Hizbullah in 2000 - have finally seen the light. They understand that terrorists have to be defeated and that the country is better off controlling hostile territories than allowing its enemies to control them.

BUT THIS is not the case. Olmert, Livni and Barak have made clear that they haven't changed their defeatist and post-Zionist view of Israel's prospects at all. Their current operation in Gaza is not aimed at defeating Hamas. They have uttered no call for victory. To the contrary, as Olmert made clear in his speech on Saturday evening, the goal of the current campaign is simply to "change the situation" in the South. The question is what "change" they have in mind.

For her part, Livni has called for installing the Fatah terror group in Gaza instead of Hamas. But Fatah has been rejected not only by Gazans, but by the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria as well. Bringing Fatah into Gaza would do nothing to stabilize the situation. It would simply be an invitation for Fatah to conduct war against Israel and seek an accommodation with Hamas and Iran.

Barak has claimed that we can no more negotiate a settlement with Hamas than the US can negotiate a settlement with al-Qaida. And this is true in principle. Just as al-Qaida will never live at peace with America, so Hamas will never accept peaceful coexistence with Israel. But Barak has never been one to abide by principles.

He didn't adhere to that principle six months ago when he convinced Livni and Olmert to accept a cease-fire that enabled Hamas to build its army and its missile arsenal without fear of IDF attack. And Barak did not adhere to this principle when as late as last Tuesday he was calling for a renewal of the failed, one-sided cease-fire.

THE FACT of the matter is that the change that the Olmert-Livni-Barak government seeks today has more to do with the public's perception of its

The Editorial Team at *Israel News*  
and the BAYT Israel Action Committee  
congratulate our dear friend  
**Yaakov "Ketzaiah" Katz**  
Hero of the Yom Kippur War,  
Founder of our twin community of Bet El,  
Founder of Arutz Sheva Israel National News, and  
Executive Director of the Bet El Yeshiva Center,  
on his selection as  
**Leader of Israel's National Union Party**  
and wish him much success in all his endeavours.

*In addition to Ketzaiah's regular visits to our  
community, he and his wife Tami were our guests just  
three weeks ago for the Jerusalem Shabbaton of the  
BAYT Brotherhood Solidarity Mission to Israel, where  
Ketzaiah spoke at Shabbat lunch on lessons for Jewish  
leadership from Yaakov Avinu in Parshat Vayishlach.*

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competence than with any interest in changing the situation in Gaza in any fundamental way. During the Second Lebanon War, the government showed that it could not be trusted with the defense of the country and with the proper deployment of IDF soldiers. And in the aftermath of that war, the government lost its moral right to send its forces into battle.

Now it uses its campaign in Gaza as a means of winning back its moral authority. But the problem is that despite its protestations of cunning competence, the government's aims today are the same as they were in 2006. As was the case with Hizbullah, the Olmert-Livni-Barak government is signaling that it seeks a new negotiated settlement with Hamas. The hoped-for settlement, which has been telegraphed to the public through the pro-government media, will leave Hamas in power in Gaza. Although the government claims that the postwar Hamas will be more peaceful than the prewar Hamas, there is no reason to believe this will be the case.

Just as has been the case with Hizbullah since the government failed to destroy the terror army in 2006, so if Hamas remains in control of Gaza after the current war, no matter what its condition, it will be perceived as the winner.

Here it is important to make a sharp distinction between the IDF's clear military successes in Gaza and the political leadership's problematic management of this campaign. In the former case, it is inarguable that by destroying Hamas's military installations, killing its military commanders and incapacitating its weapons smuggling infrastructure, the IDF is weakening Hamas as a military organization. And this is a great and long-awaited achievement.

In contrast, the Olmert-Livni-Barak government's refusal to reconsider its defeatist political philosophy makes it apparent that in the longer term, any strategic advantage enjoyed from the IDF's success will be marginal. Like Hizbullah, Hamas - which enjoys Iranian and Syrian state sponsorship and authentic popularity throughout the Islamic world - does not have to defeat Israel to be perceived as the victor. It merely needs to survive. That is the great difference between jihadist organizations and Western democracies. And by surviving, it will expand its international cachet.

JUST AS the Bush administration seeks to accommodate Hizbullah by selling advanced weapons to the Lebanese government it dominates, so too, in the aftermath of the current campaign, Hamas will be accepted by the West.

Tzafir Ronen, and his colleagues whose strategic wisdom caused them to be banished from the public square, can always depend on hapless, defeatist governments like that of Olmert, Livni, and Barak to remember them in times of crisis. Like a Swiss clock, whenever leaders who preach nothing but defeat and retreat to their countrymen find themselves in a position of having to fight our enemies, they know they can count on men like Tzafir to fight for them. And to date, men like Tzafir, who served in the IDF's elite combat units, and whose sons and daughters continue to bear the greatest burdens in our defense, have answered their calls without hesitation.

Looking at the faces of the mourners on Sunday afternoon and listening to the many eulogies of Tzafir that repeatedly praised his Zionism, there was no room for doubt that again today these people will answer the call. But how long will this state of affairs continue? How long can failed and strategically blind politicians continue to expect the men and women they demonize to save the country after they fail, and then hand it back to them to endanger again? (Jerusalem Post Dec 29)

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### **Us or Them: The Chanukah War** By Naomi Ragen

As night fell, and we lit our Chanukah candles, we were filled with new hope; as our government finally undertook its basic responsibility towards its citizens and launched the long-delayed IDF strike against Hamas terrorists in Gaza.

We were overjoyed that our planes had caught the Hamas murderers completely off-guard. They managed a magnificent coordinated attack on major Hamas military and police outposts that took minutes and did major damage. This included a strike on the swearing-in ceremony at the end of a Hamas military training program, sending all the "graduates" to an early martyrdom before they could use their training to kill more Israeli children. It left us proud and joyful.

Our news program showed us the home of a couple in southern Israel that had been completely destroyed by an unprovoked rocket attack this afternoon. The woman of the house, Aviva, was interviewed. She was asked if she agreed with the IDF strikes on Gaza that would provoke rocket attacks. With complete calm she said if this was the price the citizens of Israel had to pay for bringing peace and security back to southern Israel, it was a price she was willing to pay.

Later, Aviva and her husband, who miraculously escaped injury, lit Chanukah candles in their rubble-filled living room. When they said the

blessing, "He who did miracles in days of old and in our own time," it gave us all a sense of renewed faith.

The map showing which parts of Israel are now endangered, and which residents will have to spend the next few weeks in security rooms, is a startling fulfillment of the predictions of all those who begged that the Disengagement not take place. No longer is it just the citizens of Sderot. With the homes of the brave residents of Gush Katif destroyed, and the Philadelphia corridor no longer patrolled by the IDF, unlimited sophisticated equipment has been pouring into Hamas hands for years. Now, the rockets are falling in Netivot and Ashkelon, and threatening Kiryat Gat.

Just for some masochistic fun, I turned from the Israeli news to BBC. Of course, they were interviewing some Hamas spokesman talking about "Israeli atrocities, massacres, slaughter," etc. etc. But even Fox News had some blond bimbo repeating similar things from her "Palestinian source." It's not Israel's bad PR. It's the desire of the media to listen to the terrorists and sympathize with them. They are the ones who decide who to interview. Just shut off your televisions. Don't read the newspapers. Hopefully, Israel is going to finish them off this time.

Even the leftists, like Amos Oz, who usually lives in the Land of Oz when it comes to fighting against terror, seems to understand this, and has come out in favor of self-defense. Wow. Amazing. A leftist who believes Israel shouldn't commit suicide. That didn't stop three hundred leftists from marching in Tel Aviv to protest. I suggest we send them all to Sderot to live for the next few weeks. I also worry about our other fifth column, Israeli Arabs. There were Molotov cocktails thrown at police patrols in eastern Jerusalem, and Arabs marching in Nazareth and other places. We should send them all to Gaza to be with their "brethren."

Also last night, memorial services were held for the Chabad rabbi and his wife killed in Mumbai. With the recent release of photographs of how Mumbai terrorists sexually mutilated their victims in the hotels, we cannot cry for dead terrorists. Evidence is mounting that the residents of Chabad house were tortured more than other hostages. In light of this, I say with no hesitation that the world would be a better place if every Muslim terrorist - Hamas, PLO, Al-Qaeda, Taliban (who are now threatening to kill any Pakistani girl who goes to school), and Janjaweed (who have slaughtered and raped their way through Darfur) were sent to their Allah and their 72 virgins immediately.

As for civilian casualties, Hamas only targets civilians. And their "civilians" elected them, after all. If their civilians get hurt because their elected government decided to end the ceasefire and put rocket launchers inside their neighborhoods, whose fault is that? In the war that Hamas declared, it remains us or them. I prefer them.

I have one wish: that every reporter, every pundit, every media outlet presenting Israel's just and long-delayed war against terrorists in Gaza as a brutal, unjustified "slaughter of innocents" find themselves personally involved with terrorists at some point in their lives. (IsraelNN.com Dec 28)  
*The writer is a best-selling novelist and columnist.*

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### **Damned If They Do, But Israel's Dead If They Don't.** By Ralph Peters

Dead Jews aren't news, but killing terrorists outrages global activists. On Saturday, Israel struck back powerfully against its tormentors. Now Israel's the villain. Again.

How long will it be until the UN General Assembly passes a resolution creating an international Holocaust Appreciation Day?

Israel's airstrikes against confirmed Hamas terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip were overdue, discriminating and skillful. So far, this retaliatory campaign has been a superb example of how to employ postmodern airpower.

Instead of bombing empty buildings in the dead of night in the hope of convincing bloodthirsty monsters to become peace-loving floral arrangers - the US Air Force version of "Shock and Awe" - the Israeli Defense Force aimed to kill terrorists.

Israel's attack aircraft appear to have accomplished that part of the mission. As I write, some 300 terrorist dead have been reported in Gaza, while the propaganda-savvy information office of Hamas has struggled to prove that 20 civilians died.

Given the fact that Hamas adheres to the terrorist practice of locating command sites, arsenals and training facilities in heavily populated areas, the results suggest that the IDF - supported by first-rate intelligence work - may have executed the most accurate wave of airstrikes in history, with a 15-to-1 terrorist-to-civilian kill ratio.

The bad news is that it still won't be enough. While Israel has delivered a painful blow against Hamas, it's still not a paralyzing hit. The only way to neuter such a terror threat - even temporarily - is to go in on the ground and scour every room, basement and underground tunnel in a region.

That would mean high Israeli casualties and, of course, condemnation of Israel's self-defense efforts by every self-righteous, corrupt and bigoted organization and government on earth, from Turtle Bay to Tehran.

What have been Israel's "crimes?" Not "stealing Palestinian land," but making that land productive, while exposing the incompetence and sloth of Arab culture.

Israel's crime isn't striking back at terror, but demonstrating, year after year, that a country in the Middle East can be governed without resort to terror. Israel's crime hasn't been denying Arab rights, but insisting on human rights for women and minorities.

Israel's crime has been making democracy work where tyranny prevailed for 5,000 years. Israel's crime has been survival against overwhelming odds, while legions of Arab nationalists, Islamist extremists and Western leftists want every Jew dead.

But Israel's greatest crime was to expose the global cult of victimhood, to prove that hard work, fortitude and courage could overcome even history's grimmest disaster.

Was it a crime to hand Gaza back to Palestinian authorities, to give peace a chance? Look what Israel received in return for trading land for peace.

Let us never forget the fundamental truth that, while Israel longs to live in peace with its neighbors, those neighbors openly profess the desire to eliminate Israel and exterminate its people.

Indeed, Arab and regional jealousy toward Israel is so all-consuming, so necessary to excuse the Arab art of failure, that even these judicious airstrikes will hardly make a dent in the terrorist threat.

Unless Israel sends in ground forces for the long haul - and thousands of IDF reservists are being mobilized - there will be, at best, a temporary respite from terror attacks. Even a new occupation of Gaza would not fully solve the problem.

A crucial point about interfaith and interethnic conflicts that we sheltered Americans refuse to understand is that, all too often, there's just no good solution - and not even a bad solution, short of acts of barbarism.

It's a rare conflict that results in an enduring peace. Unintended consequences abound. At times, you fight just to buy time, to gain breathing space - or merely to frustrate an enemy's designs for a limited period.

That's the situation Israel faces: No hope of an ultimate victory, but a constant fight to survive. Enemies who believe their god ordains their actions can't be placated. For faith-fueled terrorists, such as the core members of Hamas, the struggle with Israel's a zero-sum game. Compromise is, at most, an expedient tool, never an acceptable end state.

What will we see in the coming days? Much depends on Israel's resolve. The most probable scenario is that Hamas will continue launching terror rockets for a few weeks to salve its wounded vanity and maintain the image of "resistance," but will ultimately reduce its attacks against Israel - while it rebuilds its cadres and restocks its arsenal.

Israel will have bought time, not peace.

What might Israel have done better? It's essential to take out the top terrorist leaders. But Israel's government remains reluctant to target the cowardly Hamas leaders hiding in Damascus - or even the top terrorists remaining in Gaza.

For terrorist bosses, the rank-and-file are disposable and replaceable. You can't just kill the gunmen. You have to kill the names.

We may sympathize with the average Palestinian family, exploited by generations of corrupt leaders and now caught in yet another round of violence. But let us never forget that Israel hasn't fired thousands of blind rockets into Palestinian cities, that Israeli suicide bombers don't attack Arab restaurants and bus stops, and that Israel seeks to avoid harming civilians - while Hamas seeks to kill as many civilians as possible.

In a world where there are no good answers, Israel just answered as best it could. The world's response? "How dare Jews defend themselves." (New York Post Dec 29)

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### **Can Israel Win the 'Soft Power' War in Gaza?** By Gerald M. Steinberg

The government's decision to launch a political and media offensive before beginning the major military operation in Gaza was an important and necessary step. The moral case for using force to protect citizens against aggression is clear - the most basic human right is the right to life, and this point needs to be highlighted in every venue. In contrast, there is no moral justification for Hamas's terror and missile attacks, or for remaining silent in the face of the use of human shields in Gaza to protect terrorists from counterattack.

But based on past experience, to make this moral case and to counteract the images from Gaza, carefully considered and professionally implemented strategies are required. For years, Israel has been totally defeated on the "soft

power" battlefields, which are dominated by the UN, the media and powerful nongovernmental organizations funded by European governments that claim to speak in the name of human rights and international morality. In these venues, the most effective weapons have been the words and distorted (or faked) pictures highlighting the illusion of Israeli dominance and Palestinian victimization.

IN THE "soft war" that is accompanying the military operations in Gaza, Israel can expect a repeat of the successful strategies used by Palestinians and Hizbullah. In 2000, the apparently staged killing of 12-year old Muhammad al-Dura, orchestrated by a Palestinian cameraman working for a French television station and amplified by NGOs, was a central event and used to portray Israelis as child-murderers. In 2002, following the Passover night attack in Netanya, the IDF operation in Jenin was immediately countered by the false claims of a "massacre" (initiated by Palestinian officials, and echoed by Amnesty International and the British press, in particular). Campaigns to impose boycotts and sanctions followed, using demonization rhetoric such as "apartheid," in accordance with the strategy adopted by the infamous NGO Forum of the 2001 Durban Conference.

Similarly, the 2006 Second Lebanon War was accompanied by daily condemnations of "indiscriminate attacks" and "war crimes." In one incident, headlines based on a false claim of massive civilian casualties resulting from an air attack led Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to declare a 48-hour halt in air force operations, giving Hizbullah a chance to regroup and extending the war. A few days later, Human Rights Watch issued a minor correction, but by then, no one noticed.

THE PROPAGANDA war in Gaza began more than a year ago, with a steady flow of UN, media and NGO campaigns falsely accusing Israel of "collective punishment," starving the innocent population and preventing Fulbright students from leaving Gaza. In these attacks, the human rights of Israelis are usually ignored. The Hamas leadership provided images of "candlelight vigils" and hungry children, although there was always sufficient electricity and food. On this basis, the NGO "reports," press releases and pseudo-legal claims are repeated verbatim by the media, and then echoed by the UN and diplomats with a strong anti-Israel bias.

To counter this offensive and launch an effective counterattack, the main sources of "soft power" aggression must be confronted. In addition to giving a high priority to exposing the false claims and lack of credibility of many such human rights allegations, the best defense is a good offensive. The propaganda effort is supported by massive budgets, provided directly and indirectly (often through church groups) by the European Commission and member governments, as well as Norway and Switzerland. The funds are justified as support for peace, democracy and human rights, but the evidence shows that these groups use their funds for anti-Israel propaganda.

Similarly, action needs to be taken to prevent groups such as the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, (also funded by the EC) and Relief Web (run by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - OCHA) from using their mandates and funding for anti-Israel political offensives.

The government must consistently confront foreign government funders - particularly the Europeans - on these issues. As long as this practice continues, Europe cannot expect to be given a serious role in attempts to reach peace agreements in the region. Foreign government funding for groups that lead campaign to demonize Israel through the false rhetoric of "apartheid," "war crimes" and "collective punishment" is fundamentally immoral. The Knesset can play an important role by investigating this practice, and passing legislation that makes all such political funding from foreign governments entirely transparent, in contrast to the current secrecy in decision making and other details.

Since many of the same organizations also receive generous donations from the private New Israel Fund (which is based in New York and receives money from Jewish federations), Israelis should also begin a dialogue with its donors and officials. Many of them are simply unaware of how their money is being spent. (The EC office in Washington also gives hundreds of thousands of dollars to the NIF - a highly unorthodox practice - which then distributes the money to some of the leading political NGOs.) These are only the first steps in a long war to regain the moral high ground that Israel lost by default, and in the face of a very intensive and professional Arab attacks. To be successful, the efforts require a much wider and highly professional strategy of public diplomacy, involving all of the major officials and government offices. (Jerusalem Post Dec 28)

*The writer is chairman of the Political Science Department at Bar-Ilan University and executive director of NGO Monitor.*

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## **The Power of Dreams** By Moshe Kempinski

Since the first handshake with the arch-terrorist Yasser Arafat on the lawn of the White House we have been living in a strange, almost surrealistic, nightmare. Truthfully, the nightmare has been going on for a very long time. It actually began with the destruction of the Temple and the long night of exile. A long night that included pogroms, crusades, forced conversions, expulsions and gas chambers.

Yet, when an Israeli Prime Minister shook the hand of the devil in Washington, the nightmare became even more intense and frightening. The handshake symbolized the beginning of a time when nothing made sense anymore. The enemy ceased to only lie in waiting outside the ghetto walls or in the other part of the village. The dangers began from within the very body of the Jewish people.

The mystery and power of dreams lies in the fact that all things can coexist in a dream. Emotions that contradict each other can permeate a dream where even the impossible coexists with the possible. They seem to come out of the deepest parts of our souls and whisper of hopes and hidden desires. Yet, at the same time, they rage with the passion of the greatest fears along with the most delicate of hopes.

The first exile of the Jews began with dreams. The dreams of Jacob, followed by the dreams of Joseph and Pharaoh all culminated in the long exile of Egypt. Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the Baal HaTanya, explains that exile was born out of a succession of dreams because exile is the ultimate dream.

It is in this world of spiritual exile that white is seen as black and black is seen as white. It is a situation in which opposites reign, and seven fat cows in Pharaoh's dream can be eaten by seven lean cows and the lean remain lean. It is a state that, in our days, allows a politician whose life has become embroiled in petty theft and illegal activity to continue to believe that he retains the right to be the Prime Minister of this country.

Spiritual exile is exile from simple unadulterated truth, just as it is in a dream. It is a dream that is cluttered with unwarranted exaggeration, muddled and confused metaphors, with consistent inconsistency. In essence, this dream state describes painfully the state of affairs in the world in general and in Israel in particular. In such a state, the Defense Minister of Israel can call the failure to respond to daily acts of violence against Israel's citizens a moral and courageous stance. In such a spiritual environment, the Prime Minister can decry the actions of young people passionately in love with their land, jail them and call them a threat to Israel's democracy, while releasing bloodstained terrorists from jail even though they are a threat to the state's very existence. A woman running for Prime Minister can arrange for a song "Livni-boy" to be created by her staff and not be mortified that it is but a pathetic copy of a successful ploy of Barack Obama's campaign.

Everything is possible in a dream.

Yet, as Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook writes, everything is possible in a dream - both the negative and the positive. A single dream may contain conflicting messages, since it reflects the conflicting qualities within each soul. Such is true of the collective soul of a people as well. When the wine butler tells Pharaoh about the unusual slave he met in prison called Joseph, he says, "Just as he interpreted, so (my dream) came to be." (Genesis 41:13)

This prompted our sages to declare a fact that has been increasingly adopted by modern psychology: "Dreams are fulfilled according to their interpretation." (Berachot 55b)

The interpreter does not refashion the future, rather he reaches into the positive depths of each conflicted dreamer and empowers the dreamer to live up to those qualities. There are those in this country who will interpret the dream that is our reality with predictions of doom and gloom. There are others, though, who will reach deeper and find the qualities of hope and vision that will lead this people into a safe harbor.

In a time of elections, when confusion reigns, search out the dreamers who interpret the strengths of this people and not their weaknesses. Reach out not to those who tear down and declaim, even if their motives are pure, but rather to those who have not lost hope. Reach out to leaders, some of whom may not be cognizant of the spiritual heart that burns within them, who nevertheless offer voice to those exact yearnings. Look to the dreamers who may be found in all the various political parties and constellations. People like Yaakov "Ketza'leh" Katz, Uri Ariel, Rabbi Hillel Horowitz, Aryeh Eldad, Benny Begin, Uzi Landau and Uri Bank are deeply aware that the future is all in the hands of the interpreter of the dream.

"A Song of Ascents: When HaShem brought back those that returned to Zion, we were as dreamers." (Psalms 126:1) (IsraelNN.com Dec 28)

*The writer, who made aliyah from Toronto several years ago, is the author of "The Teacher and the Preacher", and co-owner of Shorashim, a Biblical shop and learning center in the Old City of Jerusalem.*

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## **Hamas's Strategy: the Rockets or the Media** By Barry Rubin

Nothing is clearer than Hamas's strategy. It gives Israel the choice between rockets and media, and Hamas thinks it is a situation of "we win or you lose." *The cease-fire*

Hamas ends a cease-fire giving it the peace and quiet it needs to build up its army and consolidate its rule over the Gaza Strip. Israel would deliver supplies as long as there weren't attacks. From a Western-style pragmatic standpoint, this is a great situation.

But Hamas isn't a Western-style pragmatic organization. Peace and quiet is its enemy not only because of its ideology - the deity commands it to destroy Israel - or its self-image as heroic martyrs, but also because battle is needed to recruit the masses for permanent war and unite the population around it.

Hamas has no program of improving the well-being of the people or educating children to be doctors, teachers and engineers. Its platform has but one plank: war, war, endless war, sacrifice, heroism and martyrdom until total victory is achieved.

Thus, it ends the cease-fire.

### *The rockets*

And so Hamas ends the cease-fire and rains rockets down on Israel, accompanied by mortars and the occasional attempt at a cross-border ground attack. Israel does nothing.

Hamas crows: You are weak, you are confused, you are helpless. Come, people, arise and destroy the paper tiger! And so more people are recruited, West Bank Palestinians look on with admiration at those fighting the enemy, and the Arabic-speaking world is impressed.

Remember 2006, they say. It is just like Hizbullah.

Israel is helpless against the rockets. Why don't our governments fight Israel? Let's overthrow them and bring brave, fighting Islamist governments to power.

### *The media*

But then Israel does fight back. Its planes bomb military targets which have been deliberately put amid civilians. If there is a high danger of hitting civilians, Israel doesn't attack. But there is a line below which risk that will be taken, and rightly so.

The smug smiles are wiped off the faces of Hamas leaders. Yet they have one more weapon, their reserves. They call up the media.

Those arrogant, heroic, macho victors of yesterday - literally yesterday as the process takes only a few hours - are transformed into pitiful victims. Casualty figures are announced by Hamas, and accepted by reporters who are not on the spot. Everyone hit is, of course, a civilian. No soldiers here.

And the casualties are disproportionate: Hamas has arranged it that way. If necessary, sympathetic photographers take pictures of children who pretend to be injured, and once they are published in Western newspapers these claims become fact.

Yet there is a problem here. Rockets and mortars may win wars; newspaper articles really don't. Of course, too, material damage is inflicted that sets back Gaza's material development.

Hamas doesn't care about that, but by acting in a way to ensure the destruction of its material base, Hamas does weaken itself. Precisely because Israeli attacks are focussed on military targets, Hamas is weakened.

Conclusion: The problem with no solution.

Of course, Israel does not win a complete victory. Hamas does not fall. The problem is not gone. For Hamas will define survival as victory. Hamas, like the PLO before it, wins one "victory" after another and always ends up worse off.

The conflict will be back, however it ends this round, on whatever day it ends. Quiet will return, the supplies will flow back into Gaza. And so many months in the future the process will be repeated.

There is, however, an important difference. Israel uses its time not only for military preparations but to educate its children, build its infrastructure, raise its living standards. Hamas doesn't.

"We believe in death," Hamas says, "You believe in life." Sometimes you get what you wish for. (Jerusalem Post Dec. 28)

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