



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*

is beginning to raise its בס"ד
head in Judea and Samaria, but an incompetent government continues on its way. We may have to suffer another two-and-a-half years of this government. Israel may be strong, but is our margin of error big enough to handle this? (Haaretz Jan 1)

Commentary...

No Penalty for Failure By Moshe Arens

The Winograd Committee's interim report made it crystal clear: Prime Minister Ehud Olmert had failed in the conduct of the Second Lebanon War. What the committee concluded after months of listening to testimonies and discussions had been obvious to most Israelis immediately after Israel's agreement to the UN-brokered cease-fire - Israel had lost the war.

Not because it was incapable of overpowering a few thousand Hezbollah fighters in south Lebanon, but because of the incompetent way in which the war had been run. Olmert, who some years ago had declared "that we are tired of fighting, tired of defeating our enemies," had delivered the first defeat Israel had suffered in war since its creation.

After issuing its interim report, the Winograd Committee went on to continue holding endless discussions, leaving the nation waiting with bated breath for the final report. This gave Olmert the breathing spell that provided him a second chance because as time went by, the final report became irrelevant, and Olmert went on his merry way.

Now he has the temerity to announce that he has no intention of resigning after the final report is issued. After all, if he was not forced to resign after the interim report's clear-cut verdict, why resign now regardless of the contents of the final report? It looks like he is going to get off scot-free.

A political system in which there is no penalty for failure is liable to lead a nation to disaster. Unlike the presidential system of government, in which the penalty for failure is meted out at the polls only at the end of a four-year tenure, the parliamentary system of government has the ability to be more responsive.

Here a prime minister whose failure has become apparent can be brought down in parliament at any time. So why did this not happen in Israel? Why is Olmert being supported by an iron-clad coalition that does not fracture regardless of his failure?

It is the result of an unfortunate set of circumstances. The largest party in the Knesset and the centerpiece of the coalition is Kadima, a non-existent party, whose Knesset delegation was appointed by Ariel Sharon and Olmert and whose MKs have no chance of appearing again after the next Knesset elections. Their consciences may bother them that they have become the instrument that keeps a failed prime minister in office, but they are in no hurry to put an end to their political careers.

The leader of the senior coalition party, Labor, our new defense minister, who himself has experience paying the penalty for his past performance as prime minister, is in no hurry to return to the political wilderness. He has already declared that it is he who will decide when the Labor Party will leave the coalition, and we can guess what that decision is going to be. And the minister for strategic threats does not want to understand that the major strategic threat facing Israel at this time is the continuance in office of a prime minister who has failed.

Add to this unholy coalition those who have one, and only one, wish - to get Israel to return to the 1967 lines regardless of the consequences - and you have one of the most stable governments in Israel's history. A coalition that has canceled the built-in responsiveness of the parliamentary system.

Olmert, a shrewd politician if there ever was one, understands this coalition arithmetic very well. He has to keep the political left's hopes up that he is leading Israel toward a return to the 1967 lines, and everything else will take care of itself. He has added Mahmoud Abbas to the coalition supporting him. "If there will be no Palestinian state, Israel is finished," he declared. By that he means his political career is finished if his efforts come to naught.

Qassam rockets can keep hitting Sderot, weapons are being smuggled into the Gaza Strip, the terrorists there are gaining strength by the day, terrorism

It's Not Personal, It's War

By Caroline Glick

One of the natural and negative consequences of political assassinations is that they personalize the general and simplify the complex. Policies formed in the aftermath of assassinations are rarely wise and tend to focus on secondary - personal - issues while ignoring larger strategic ones.

It is fairly clear that this is what is happening in the international reaction to last Thursday's assassination of former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto. Bhutto's husband Asif Ali Zadawi and her teenage son have now taken charge of her political party in the interest of maintaining her "legacy." Backed by the Bush administration, they are insisting that Pakistan's parliamentary elections be held on January 8 as scheduled.

Pakistan's military dictator, President Pervez Musharraf will likely postpone elections for several months. And pushed by Zadawi and the media, the Bush administration will probably strongly object to his decision. Debate over whether or not Musharraf is destroying Pakistan by delaying the vote indefinitely will likely dominate international coverage of the country.

And this is a shame because the issue of elections in Pakistan is irrelevant when seen in the context of the current state that country - and it was irrelevant before Bhutto was murdered. Indeed, since she returned to Pakistan from exile in October, Bhutto herself served merely as a distraction. She focused international attention on her democratic rhetoric and away from the dangers that she was completely incompetent to handle - whether elected or not.

The Pakistan which Bhutto insisted she could save is a pro-jihadist nuclear-armed state. The Pakistani public, military and intelligence services stand in sympathy with al-Qaida and the Taliban. With the support of the public and the collusion of sectors of the military and intelligence services whose ranks they have seamlessly infiltrated, the Taliban and al-Qaida daily extend their control over more and more of the country.

US officials claim that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is secure and under the full control of the military. Yet given the Pakistani military's sympathy for al-Qaida and the Taliban, it is irresponsible not to consider the possibility that at least some of the forces charged with securing Pakistan's nuclear arsenal have operational links to the jihadists.

The Bush administration had hoped that by forcing Musharraf to work with Bhutto, the Pakistani government would be more effective in routing out the jihadists. Yet there was little reason to believe this to be the case. Musharraf's declaration of a state of emergency, his arrest of democracy activists and parallel release of senior al-Qaida terrorists from custody show that he is far more prepared to combat his liberal opponents than the jihadists.

And Bhutto herself was anything but an ideal candidate to change the direction of Pakistan. Bhutto was many things, but she was neither a liberal democrat nor a strong leader. Her two brief tenures in office were marked by corruption. She was ousted from office in 1996 and forced to flee the country due to suspicions that she and her husband had purloined some \$1.5 billion from Pakistan's national treasury.

In addition to racketeering, Bhutto was also suspected of engineering the assassination of her younger brother and political rival Mir Murtaza Bhutto. He was murdered by policemen in 1996 while she was prime minister. Indeed, when judged by her actions, Bhutto appeared less like a Pakistani James Madison, and more like an Al Capone from the Indus.

BEYOND THAT, Bhutto was the godmother of the Taliban and played an important role in Pakistan's nuclear weapons program. It was during Bhutto's terms in office that Pakistan's intelligence service, the ISI formed the Taliban and backed Mullah Omar's war for control of Afghanistan. Bhutto recognized the Taliban government in 1996. Pakistan was one of only three countries to

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do so.

Although she denied any knowledge of Pakistan's nuclear program, it was during her tenure in office that A.Q. Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear project, was most active in proliferating nuclear weapons technology and bomb components to countries like Iran, Libya, Egypt and North Korea. As the New York Times reported on Friday, Khan's associates allege that in one of her visits to North Korea as Pakistani premier, Bhutto picked up missile designs that were supposed to be matched to Pakistani nuclear warheads.

So in pushing for elections and democracy in Pakistan, the US has been ignoring the chief problem that nation poses for global security and focusing its attention on relatively irrelevant side-issues of governing institutions and hoping that two corrupt, ineffective leaders would be better than one.

Pakistan is today the most dangerous country in the world. It is the home base for al-Qaida and the Taliban. Musharraf has failed to take effective action against them just as he has refused to work credibly with the US military. Due to his failures, from their Pakistani sanctuaries, the Taliban and al-Qaida have successfully waged their insurgency in Afghanistan. They now control the majority of Afghan territory and the British, reportedly with some US backing, are apparently negotiating with Mullah Omar's men.

Back in Pakistan, the Taliban and al-Qaida have violently transformed the safe havens Musharraf provided them in 2001 into independent enclaves from which they have launched their campaign to take control of the entire country. The fact that Bhutto was murdered in Rawalpindi - the garrison of the Pakistani security forces - is a testament to the deep tentacles of jihad in the Pakistani establishment.

In its preference for democratic processes over counter-jihad campaigns in Pakistan, the Bush administration is following a consistent, generic policy template. From the Palestinian Authority to Iraq and Egypt to Lebanon and now to Pakistan, the Bush administration has studiously ignored popular support for jihad and pushed for elections.

In 2005 the Bush administration's near obsession with elections had yet to be tested against reality. But after the elections in Egypt, the PA, Lebanon and Iraq empowered jihadist forces, the pro-election policy was no longer defensible in the context of the fight against jihad. Then too, the policy which the administration has adopted towards the Palestinians - of empowering a society that openly chose to be led by forces of jihad in Hamas - makes little sense.

The only way to make sense of the Bush administration's advocacy for empowerment of jihadist societies through democratic processes is to see it not as a tool for countering jihad, but rather as a way to ignore jihad and wish away the war.

In the Palestinian case, the administration's decision to react to the Hamas electoral victory in January 2006 and its seizure of power in Gaza in June 2007 by strengthening the terror supporting, yet unpopular Fatah party is a textbook case of a policy based on avoiding difficult realities. The reality is that Palestinian society is the enemy of the US and its stated intention of defeating the forces of jihad and global terror. Rather than account for this and base its policies on an acceptance of this reality, the administration - with the support of the Israeli government - has ignored reality in the hopes that Palestinian jihadism, like Pakistani and Egyptian jihadism can simply be wished away.

In the 1990s, the Clinton administration ignored Pakistan and so enabled it to complete its nuclear weapons program unchallenged. The moment that Pakistan became a nuclear power, the US lost its leverage to influence events in that country. Some of that leverage was regained in the immediate aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks. Fear of the raging American tiger could have been used to force Musharraf to permit US forces to operate inside of Pakistan and so deny al-Qaida and the Taliban safe havens to flee to from Afghanistan. But rather than confront Musharraf for his regime's sponsorship of the Taliban, the US preferred to pretend that he was a reliable ally. And so Musharraf maintained his double game of overtly supporting the US, (and so pocketing some \$25 billion in US financial and military assistance since 2001), and covertly supporting the Taliban and al-Qaida.

Once the US squandered its post-Sept. 11 leverage with Pakistan it was left with only bad options for coping with the nuclear-armed jihadist incubating country. And these too, it has ignored in favor of the chimera of democracy and elections.

After Sept. 11, President George W. Bush declared war on the forces of global terror and their state sponsors. But as the years have passed since then, he has done more to lose the war than he has to win it simply by ignoring it.

Bhutto's murder is not a sign that elections and democracy frighten al-Qaida and therefore must be pursued. It is a sign that the Taliban and al-Qaida - together with their supporters in the Pakistani military and intelligence services and Pakistani society as a whole - don't like people who are supported by the US. Her assassination was yet another act of war by the enemies of the West against the West.

If democracy and freedom are the US's ultimate aims in this war, the only

way to achieve them is to first fight and win the war. Bhutto - like her Palestinian, Egyptian and Lebanese counterparts - was a sideshow. (Jerusalem Post Dec 31)

The Myths of Peace, and the Reality of our Dead Boys By Naomi Ragen

I want to tell you the story of two boys, twenty year olds, both them in the elite of elite army units, both of them from Rabbinical families, both of them living in Kiryat Arba, the Jewish neighborhood of Hebron. Achikam Amichai and David Rubin were out on leave from their IDF units, enjoying a well-earned holiday. They decided this past Friday afternoon to take a little hike in their backyards. Their friend Naama Ohayon went with them. It was a beautiful day, beautiful scenery, wild and open, as it is in that part of the land of Israel. They passed an Arab, who asked them for water. The boys gave it to him, then waved goodbye and went on their way. A short while later, alerted by the Palestinian they had shared water with, three armed terrorists who had been lying in wait for an opportunity to kill Israelis and steal their weapons, drove by and opened fire on the three young people. Our boys, ambushed and badly wounded, nevertheless, began firing, killing the terrorist driver of the car. The other two terrorists then hopped out of the car, put their guns at point blank range to the fatally injured boys and fired. These "big heroes" then threw their dead comrade out of car like so much garbage, and took off, back to Hebron where they live. Hiding in the forest, Naama Ohayon, who had miraculously escaped, used her cell phone to contact Israeli security forces, who praised her unbelievable cool in the face of the horror she had witnessed. Security forces rescued her, but it was too late for the boys.

Meanwhile, Shimon Peres found time for a photo opportunity to shake hands with a member of Abu Maazen's government who expressed his "condolences." This, of course, before it became known that the killers were Abu Maazen's paid employees.

According to Efrat Weiss, writing in YNET, sometime on Friday evening, the Palestinian Authority started the rumor that it wasn't a terrorist attack at all, but a "drug deal" gone bad. This went all over the Israeli news, and you can just imagine how the parents must have felt. Others said the boys had no right to go hiking. (Right, let's all stay in our homes and quake.) Meanwhile, the two murderers, fearing the IDF was closing in on them, turned themselves over to Palestinian security forces, who didn't say a word about this to the Israelis. However, when Israeli security asked them pointedly to turn over the weapons of the murderers and the victims, they did. But they didn't turn over the killers, who they are still "interrogating." Surprise surprise, these weren't Hamas operatives. They were salary-earning members of the Palestinian Authority, paid for by U.S. and European Union donations to Abu Maazen, the "good Palestinian" as opposed to the Hamas, who are terrorists and "bad Palestinians," the ones we need to weaken by supporting Abu Maazen and his gang of thugs.

The names of the murderers are: Omar Badar Ali-Halim Teha, a resident of Hebron, 26, a "soldier" in the Palestinian National Security Forces, and an active member of Fatah; Ali al Hamid Regev Dindis, 24 a Hebron resident who is a clerk in the Sharia court of the Palestinian authority, and also connected to the Palestinian Secret service. The dead driver is 23 year old Radil Abdul Naim Natshe.

There are many conclusions to be drawn from this story. I will leave you to draw them concerning the myths of making peace with the Palestinian Authority. (NaomiRagen Jan 1)

Occupation: The Big Lie By Asher Zelig Fried

Israel stands accused of conducting a brutal military occupation of Arab lands inhabited by an indigenous, peace-seeking Arab population. Repeatedly, in newscasts and the press, Israel is characterized as harshly subjugating another people. These accusations are dangerous, a pervasive lie, and an existential threat to Israel. They are a classic manifestation of a much utilized propaganda tactic known as "The Big Lie."

Accusations resulting from this falsehood exceed all bounds of truth and continue relentlessly. Incredibly, many are now accepted as "articles of faith" by increasing numbers of those who heretofore viewed Israel favorably. These accusations have become the common ground that transforms casual supporters of Israel into vocal Israel-bashers, and the glue that today binds every manner of Israel's enemies.

Israel's "occupation" of the disputed areas began subsequent to its 1967 victory in the Six Day War, when Jewish settlement of Judea and Samaria began in earnest. Initial Arab reactions were positive, as working relationships were maintained between Jewish communities and their Arab neighbors. Jews would regularly visit Arab towns and employ local townspeople. The Arab standard of living improved significantly as its per

capita income increased exponentially. Local roads were modernized, water supplies increased, electricity and telephone communications were developed, and a new tourism industry flourished. With rare exception, there were no road-blocks, lock-downs, or curfews, as Arabs worked and shopped in Haifa and Tel Aviv, and Jews shopped in Ramallah and in local Arab villages.

With the benefits of Arab and Jew living side-by-side and in relative peace apparent through the 1970s and 1980s, there nevertheless were Arab rumblings about Jewish settlement in the land. It received, however, minimal attention; it was perceived to be the sentiment of relatively few Arab dissidents. The improving economic conditions of the local population and its benefits were deemed far more important than the negative potential of a renewal of friction.

These relationships, built over a period of 25 years, were dramatically and irrevocably altered with the signing of the Oslo Accords of 1993. The Accords created an entirely new narrative. The status of Jewish residents changed abruptly from neighbor to occupier, even in their own homes and communities. Arab extremists, emboldened by Oslo's promise of an independent Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, demanded removal of all Jewish communities in areas they now claimed as exclusively their own.

In 1994, Israel granted the Palestinian National Authority autonomous control of the major Arab cities in Judea and Samaria, and of the surrounding areas. The PNA's corrupt rule and suppression of all opposition resulted in a GDP in 2003 one-tenth of what it had been in 1992. The then-newly-returned Yasser Arafat and his murderous henchmen spread their reign of terror and hostility, while their propagandists introduced a new rallying call, "End the Occupation." Israel's political Left, in support of Oslo, immediately joined the fray.

Incredibly, no one questioned the incongruity of Jews branded occupiers of Judea, the province named for its Jewish residents. No one thought it odd that Jews were now accused of occupying Jerusalem, known historically as "the city of the Jew." Far more vociferous than even the Arab propagandists, the Israeli Left immediately embraced the Arab narrative and intensified their onslaught. They too adopted "End the Occupation" as their rallying call, with which they then pervaded Israeli TV, radio, newspapers, film, literature and the universities. Today, the very words of seditious Israeli university professors, who denigrate Israel in the most perverse manner, are quoted by Israel's enemies across the globe.

Perhaps the greatest irony is that The Big Lie as a tool of propaganda was first introduced by Adolf Hitler in his 1925 autobiography *Mein Kampf*. He states that for the Big Lie to be effective, it "must be so colossal that no one would believe that someone could have the impudence to distort the truth so infamously." He further posits that "in the big lie there is always a certain force of credibility; because the broad masses of a nation are always more easily corrupted in the deeper strata of their emotional nature than consciously or voluntarily." This tactic was utilized by Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Minister of Propaganda, who understood that for the lie to be effective, it must not only be colossal, but also must contain at least a kernel of truth, and be repeated with great frequency. The Arab propagandists, and now enemies of Israel worldwide, have learned well from their murderous Nazi predecessors.

Accusations of occupation by Israel's leftist press, and by Israel's detractors following their lead, are repeated regularly and without respite. The necessary kernel of truth is evident: Israel does, in fact, occupy Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem; much the same way that it occupies Tel Aviv and Haifa, and in much the same way the United States occupies Miami and Los Angeles with their minority Latino populations, and the same way Canada occupies Quebec, with its minority French population.

Jews were sovereign in Judea, Samaria, Jerusalem, and the lands west of the Jordan River for a thousand years, while Arabs were never sovereign in these lands. It was not until the late 19th and early 20th century that the overwhelming majority of Arabs living west of the Jordan River migrated to the area. The land then was ruled by the Ottoman Empire. Subsequently, until the founding of the Jewish State, it was under British control.

With Israel's victory in the Six Day War and subsequent control of these areas, Jordan disavowed any further claim to it. The merit of Israel's claim thus far exceeds any other. By what standard are Jews "occupiers" for striving to settle these areas? By what justification should this land, Israel's ancient heartland, be exclusively Arab and forbidden to Jews?

Branding Israel an "occupier" is designed to engender overwhelming negative reaction to Israel and ultimately to delegitimize her. It places Israel, via comparison, alongside murderous military occupations. Israel's "occupation" is thus similar to Nazi Germany's occupation of eastern Europe, or Japan's occupation of China, or the Soviet Union's occupation of eastern Europe, all of which resulted in millions murdered and enslaved. Perpetrated by cruel and despotic dictators, these occupations were militarily invasions of sovereign countries for the purpose of murder, mayhem and subjugating the citizenry.

Israel's "occupation," by contrast, is led by Jewish families building new communities, schools, and houses of worship. These families have built the area's infrastructure anew and desire only to live in peace with all residents of the area. Comparing such families settling their ancestral homeland to murderous Nazi, Japanese and Soviet armies is more than a lie; it's obscene.

In the final analysis, the lie of Israel as Occupier was created by the Oslo Accords. The Accords transformed Jewish families settling Israel's heartland into pariahs in the eyes of much of the world, and confusion as to where in Israel Jews would be permitted to live. Israel's friends began to wonder why Israel would surrender its heritage to an enemy sworn to destroy it. Most horrifically, Oslo brought about a reign of terror resulting in death and disfigurement to thousands of innocent Jewish men, women and children.

The most difficult issue facing Israel today is that of a hostile minority population, resentful of and refusing to live in peace with the ruling Jewish majority. Believing the surrender of Israel's heartland will bring peace is delusional. The issue will be resolved only when Israel's minority population recognizes the myriad advantages of living together peacefully with the Jewish majority. Israel needs new leadership with a new vision, one that is ready to proclaim Jewish sovereignty over all of Jerusalem and over Israel's historic heartland. (IsraelNN.com Dec 30)

On the Rights of 'Settlers' By Shmuel Katz

US Ambassador Richard Jones was recently reported to have asked Supreme Court President Dorit Beinisch about the legal status of the "settlements."

This is indeed a subject which has long been neglected - or simply ignored. The answer to the question is a simple one, but in view of the obfuscation which has for years gathered around it, it is essential to examine its roots. They lie comfortably in the text of the Mandate for Palestine which was conferred on Britain in 1922 by the League of Nations.

The Mandate's objective was to facilitate the "reconstitution" of the Jewish National Home in Palestine. It was intended to serve as the legal instrument for implementing Britain's 1917 Balfour Declaration. The essential obligations of the mandatory were to facilitate the immigration of Jews and encourage their "close settlement" on the land, including state and waste lands. (In accordance with the Balfour Declaration, "the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities" were to be protected.)

The vision of the Balfour Declaration was encapsulated a couple of years later by cabinet minister Winston Churchill, who wrote that "a Jewish state will arise in our day on the banks of the Jordan."

At that time, too, the League of Nations conferred on Britain a Mandate for Mesopotamia (Iraq); and Mandates for Syria and Lebanon were conferred on France, presaging the establishment of sovereign Arab states. Thus did the Allied nations complete the sharing out of the territories they had captured from the Turks in the Great War of 1914-1918.

ADDED UP, these Arab states-to-be accounted for some 99 percent of the total conquered area. In its capture during the war it may be said the Arabs themselves played practically no part. The so-called Arab Revolt against the Turks, heavily financed by Britain and brilliantly portrayed by T.E. Lawrence (of Arabia), did not in fact take place at all. Eighty percent of the Arabs who fought in the war did so on the side of the Turks. The Jewish people not only fielded a Jewish fighting legion in Palestine, but also a most effective intelligence service in Palestine and Syria.

Nevertheless, when peace came Arab voices were raised against the British undertaking to the Jews. Balfour admonished them. He pointed out that it was the British who had established an independent sovereignty in Hejaz (the Mandates came two years later), and he added: "I hope they will remember that it is we who desire in Mesopotamia to prepare the way for the future of a self-governing Arab state and I hope that, understanding all that, they will not grudge that small notch being given to the people who for all these hundreds of years have been separated from it."

Yet - in 1922 at the last moment, the British inserted a clause (Number 25) excluding the provision of the Jewish National Home from the area east of the Jordan River. Zionist protest went unheeded; and so the almost-empty eastern Palestine, renamed Transjordan, ultimately became the Kingdom of Jordan, adding another state to the tremendous Arab domain. The fact that it was a Palestinian state could not be erased, nor that the majority of its inhabitants have come from western Palestine. Thus was executed the first partition of the Land of Israel.

THE STATUS of Jewish settlement in what remained of Palestine remained unaffected. But as the years went by, the steady British retreat from their obligations, particularly by severe limitations on Jewish immigration, finally led to the White Paper of 1939. Apart from new land laws, it projected that Jewish immigration would be allowed at 15,000 souls a year for five years and then completely frozen. There would be no Jewish National Home.

There would be an Arab majority, and some form of British overlordship to protect Jewish minority interests.

The White Paper, fiercely attacked in Parliament, was passed - by a reduced majority. But any change in British policy in Mandatory Palestine was subject to the approval of the League of Nations. The League, it was true, had for some years already been seen as an effete body, but its constitutional authority had remained intact. For monitoring the progress of the various mandates it maintained a kind of watchdog commission, and considered any proposed changes in the terms of the Mandate only if approved by the Mandate Commission. When in 1939 the British government submitted the White Paper to the commission, it refused its approval on the grounds that it did not conform to the terms of the Mandate.

Angry British Foreign Office senior officials exchanged notes and discussed among themselves the desperate policy of proposing a change in the Mandate itself. But they were stymied. It was too late - nearly the end of August 1939, and on the first of September World War II broke out. The Council of the League of Nations never met again. With it died the White Paper. The Mandate remained the defining document for governing Palestine.

THE BRITISH government, frustrated, did not relent. It launched a bitter campaign, using diplomatic channels in Europe to prevent Jews escaping and employing the Royal Navy to intercept boats carrying Jewish refugees from Europe and prevent their reaching the Jewish National Home. Indeed, when Churchill was prime minister he wrote in an internal instruction that "the White Paper stands."

The Mandate, however, with its injunction to assist Jewish settlement, remained intact and after World War II was "inherited" by the United Nations. It was a period of considerable unrest which, despite much repressive effort, the British could not subdue. Under the pressure of a highly effective Jewish underground fighting force (and consequent reactive political pressure at home) the Labor government finally returned the Mandate to the UN (in the spring of 1947).

The UN, in a dramatic special session, in effect accepted Britain's resignation and later that year decided to recommend the partition of Palestine between Jews and Arabs. (Not Palestinians. Nobody had heard of such a separate entity.) The Arab states rejected that offer. Thus Palestine, with the rights of Jewish settlement, remained undivided as the Jewish state between the Jordan and the Mediterranean.

The Arab refusal was not a whim. The idea of a non-Arab state (and specifically a hated Jewish state) "in the heart of the Arab world" was anathema to them. It was reflected by a claim of possession of the whole country. Immediately after the UN session, the League of Arab States decided to go to war to destroy the Jewish state at birth.

In the meantime a preliminary campaign of terror was launched against the Jewish community. Then on May 14, 1948, the day the British left, five well-armed Arab states - Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq - invaded the country. The losses Israel sustained in that war of nine months exceeded, in proportion of population, the losses sustained by Britain and America in World War I. The invasion success was limited not only by the inordinate valor of the youth of Israel, but in time by the supply of much-needed arms by Czechoslovakia (with Soviet permission) and France.

HOWEVER, Jordan succeeded in holding on to the eastern highlands (primarily Judea and Samaria) and then even presumptuously announced their annexation. Egypt captured the Gaza "Strip." It is not irrelevant to mention that in the next 19 years of Jordanian and Egyptian occupation, neither Jordan nor Egypt proposed, nor did the Palestinian Arabs demand from Jordan and Egypt, the establishment of a Palestinian state. To the contrary, Palestinian Arab terror continued to operate as before against Israel.

Then in 1967, Egypt, Syria and Jordan again attacked Israel, again with the repeated announcement that the objective was its "annihilation." Israel turned the tables and won the war. Soon after that victory, Israel offered the Arabs to hand them all the territory it had regained, in return for peace. At a conference in Khartoum the unanimous Arab reply was: No negotiations. No peace. No recognition.

So once again Jewish settlement rights had been endangered, and once again had been saved by Arab intransigence.

It was shortly afterward that the movement of Jewish settlers was launched. It is noteworthy that the last defining document that underwrites the legality was the Geneva Convention of 1949. It dealt with occupied territories. Its second clause, stating its scope, makes it clear that it does not apply to the Jewish presence in Judea and Samaria - because Jordan was not a sovereign possessor but an illegal invader, and similarly was Egypt an illegal invader of Gaza. Israel liberated both areas, restoring them to the territory of the Palestine Mandate of 1922.

From the point of view of international law these settlers are as legal as any resident of Manhattan or of Shreveport, Louisiana.

The writer, who co-founded the Herut Party with Menachem Begin and was a

member of the first Knesset, is a biographer, essayist and veteran Post contributor. His latest book, The Aaronsohn Saga (Gefen), has just been released. (Jerusalem Post Dec 27)

Palestinians Who Prefer Israel By Daniel Pipes

Palestinians have a hidden history of appreciating Israel that contrasts with their better-known narrative of vilification and irredentism.

The former has been particularly evident of late, especially since Israel's prime minister, Ehud Olmert, floated a trial balloon in October about transferring some Arab-dominated areas of eastern Jerusalem to the Palestinian Authority. As he rhetorically asked about Israeli actions in 1967, "Was it necessary to annex the Shuafat refugee camp, al-Sawahra, Walajeh, and other villages, and then to state that these are part of Jerusalem? One can ask, I admit, some legitimate questions about this."

In one swoop, this statement transformed pro-Israel statements by Palestinians (for a sampling, see my 2005 article, "The Hell of Israel Is Better than the Paradise of Arafat") from the mostly theoretical into the active and political.

Indeed, Olmert's musings prompted some belligerent responses. As the title of a Globe and Mail news item puts it, "Some Palestinians prefer life in Israel: In East Jerusalem, residents say they would fight a handover to Abbas regime." The article offers the example of Nabil Gheit, who, with two stints in Israeli prisons and posters of "the martyr Saddam Hussein" over the cash register in his store, would be expected to cheer the prospect of parts of eastern Jerusalem coming under PA control.

Not so. As mukhtar of Ras Khamis, near Shuafat, Gheit dreads the PA and says he and others would fight a handover. "If there was a referendum here, no one would vote to join the Palestinian Authority... There would be another intifada to defend ourselves from the PA."

Two polls released last week, from Keevoon Research, Strategy & Communications and the Arabic-language newspaper As-Sennara, survey representative samples of adult Israeli Arabs on the issue of joining the PA, and they corroborate what Gheit says. Asked, "Would you prefer to be a citizen of Israel or of a new Palestinian state?" 62 percent want to remain Israeli citizens and 14 percent want to join a future Palestinian state. Asked, "Do you support transferring the Triangle [an Arab-dominated area in northern Israel] to the Palestinian Authority?" 78 percent oppose the idea and 18 percent support it.

IGNORING THE don't-knows/refused, the ratios of respondents are nearly identical preferring to stay within Israel - 82 percent and 81 percent, respectively. Gheit exaggerates that "no one" wants to live in the PA, but not by much. Thousands of Palestinian residents in Jerusalem who, fearful of the PA, have applied for Israeli citizenship since Olmert's statement further corroborate his point.

Why such affection for the state that Palestinians famously revile in the media, in scholarship, classrooms, mosques, and international bodies, that they terrorize on a daily basis? Best to let them explain their motivations in direct quotations.

Financial considerations: "I don't want to have any part in the PA. I want the health insurance, the schools, all the things we get by living here," says Ranya Mohammed. "I'll go and live in Israel before I'll stay here and live under the PA, even if it means taking an Israeli passport. I have seen their suffering in the PA. We have a lot of privileges I'm not ready to give up."

Law and order: Gazans, note Israeli-Arab journalists Faiz Abbas and Muhammad Awwad, now "miss the Israelis, since Israel is more merciful than [the Palestinian gunmen] who do not even know why they are fighting and killing one another. It's like organized crime."

Raising children: "I want to live in peace and to raise my children in an orderly school," says Jamil Sanduqa. "I don't want to raise my child on throwing stones, or on Hamas."

A more predictable future: "I want to keep living here with my wife and child without having to worry about our future. That's why I want Israeli citizenship. I don't know what the future holds," says Samar Qassam, 33.

Others raise concerns about corruption, human rights, and even self-esteem ("When the Jews talk about swapping me, it's as though they are denying my right to be a person").

These earnest views do not repudiate the vicious anti-Zionism that reigns in the Middle East, but they reveal that four-fifths of those Palestinians who know Israel at first-hand understand the attractions of a decent life in a decent country, a fact with important and positive implications.

The writer is director of the Middle East Forum. (Jerusalem Post Jan 1)