



**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*

where they no longer care about the real interests of the Palestinians, namely the need to end the anarchy and lawlessness, and to dismantle all the armed gangs that are responsible for the death of hundreds of innocent Palestinians over the past few years.

## Commentary...

### The Pro-Palestinian's Real Agenda By Khaled Abu Toameh

During a recent visit to several university campuses in the U.S., I discovered that there is more sympathy for Hamas there than there is in Ramallah. Listening to some students and professors on these campuses, for a moment I thought I was sitting opposite a Hamas spokesman or a would-be-suicide bomber.

I was told, for instance, that Israel has no right to exist, that Israel's "apartheid system" is worse than the one that existed in South Africa and that Operation Cast Lead was launched only because Hamas was beginning to show signs that it was interested in making peace and not because of the rockets that the Islamic movement was launching at Israeli communities.

I was also told that top Fatah operative Marwan Barghouti, who is serving five life terms in prison for masterminding terror attacks against Israeli civilians, was thrown behind bars simply because he was trying to promote peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Furthermore, I was told that all the talk about financial corruption in the Palestinian Authority was "Zionist propaganda" and that Yasser Arafat had done wonderful things for his people, including the establishment of schools, hospitals and universities.

The good news is that these remarks were made only by a minority of people on the campuses who describe themselves as "pro-Palestinian," although the overwhelming majority of them are not Palestinians or even Arabs or Muslims. The bad news is that these groups of hard-line activists/thugs are trying to intimidate anyone who dares to say something that they don't like to hear.

When the self-designated "pro-Palestinian" lobbyists are unable to challenge the facts presented by a speaker, they resort to verbal abuse.

On one campus, for example, I was condemned as an "idiot" because I said that a majority of Palestinians voted for Hamas in the January 2006 election because they were fed up with financial corruption in the Palestinian Authority.

On another campus, I was dubbed as a "mouthpiece for the Zionists" because I said that Israel has a free media. There was another campus where someone told me that I was a "liar" because I said that Barghouti was sentenced to five life terms because of his role in terrorism.

And then there was the campus (in Chicago) where I was "greeted" with swastikas that were painted over posters promoting my talk. The perpetrators, of course, never showed up at my event because they would not be able to challenge someone who has been working in the field for nearly 30 years.

What struck me more than anything else was the fact that many of the people I met on the campuses supported Hamas and believed that it had the right to "resist the occupation" even if that meant blowing up children and women on a bus in downtown Jerusalem.

I never imagined that I would need police protection while speaking at a university in the U.S. I have been on many Palestinian campuses in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and I cannot recall one case where I felt intimidated or where someone shouted abuse at me.

Ironically, many of the Arabs and Muslims I met on the campuses were much more understanding and even welcomed my "even-handed analysis" of the Israeli-Arab conflict. After all, the views I voiced were not much different than those made by the leaderships both in Israel and the Palestinian Authority. These views include support for the two-state solution and the idea of coexistence between Jews and Arabs in this part of the world.

The so-called pro-Palestinian "junta" on the campuses has nothing to offer other than hatred and de-legitimization of Israel. If these folks really cared about the Palestinians, they would be campaigning for good government and for the promotion of values of democracy and freedom in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Their hatred for Israel and what it stands for has blinded them to a point

The majority of these activists openly admit that they have never visited Israel or the Palestinian territories. They don't know -and don't want to know - that Jews and Arabs here are still doing business together and studying together and meeting with each other on a daily basis because they are destined to live together in this part of the world. They don't want to hear that despite all the problems life continues and that ordinary Arab and Jewish parents who wake up in the morning just want to send their children to school and go to work before returning home safely and happily.

What is happening on the U.S. campuses is not about supporting the Palestinians as much as it is about promoting hatred for the Jewish state. It is not really about ending the "occupation" as much as it is about ending the existence of Israel.

Many of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas officials I talk to in the context of my work as a journalist sound much more pragmatic than most of the anti-Israel, "pro-Palestinian" folks on the campuses.

Over the past 15 years, much has been written and said about the fact that Palestinian school textbooks don't promote peace and coexistence and that the Palestinian media often publishes anti-Israel material.

While this may be true, there is no ignoring the fact that the anti-Israel campaign on U.S. campuses is not less dangerous. What is happening on these campuses is not in the frame of freedom of speech. Instead, it is the freedom to disseminate hatred and violence. As such, we should not be surprised if the next generation of jihadists comes not from the Gaza Strip or the mountains and mosques of Pakistan and Afghanistan, but from university campuses across the U.S. (Hudson Institute Mar 24)

### Israel's Media Star Chambers By Caroline Glick

By any sane definition of armed conflict, Israel's counter terror operation in Gaza against Hamas in December and January was a fully justified, lawful and moral undertaking. The IDF abided by the laws of war. It took every possible precaution to protect civilians in Gaza. The operation was conducted for the sole purpose of protecting the one million Israeli citizens in the country's south under assault from Palestinian missiles launched by terror operatives in Hamas-ruled Gaza.

Then too, by any sane definition of armed conflict, the missile war that Hamas and its sister terror organizations in Gaza launched against Israel was unjustified, illegal and immoral. The expressed purpose of those projectiles was to kill, maim and terrorize as many Israeli citizens as possible in order to effect a disintegration and collapse of Israeli society. Schools, nurseries, and synagogues were purposely and repeatedly targeted.

The only unjust aspect of Operation Cast Lead was the outgoing Kadima-Labor government's failure to finish what it started. By pulling IDF forces out of Gaza without first overthrowing Hamas's terror regime, the government did two things which are both wholly unjust. It allowed Hamas to survive to fight another day. And by leaving the Hamas regime in place, it indirectly legitimized it.

For Israel's foes - particularly in the West - Hamas's survival has expanded its credibility. Today anti-Israel political activists no longer blink when they equate Israel with Hamas. Every day violent demonstrations are held in one Western city or another where Israel's flag is burned and torn, and the flag of Hamas - a genocidal terror group - is waved proudly. The IDF is daily castigated as a terrorist organization and Hamas upheld as a "resistance movement." Calls are made by political activists and self-declared "human rights" organizations for war crimes charges to be brought against IDF soldiers and commanders as more and more European governments consider following Britain's lead and openly advocate recognizing Hamas.

Until last week, the IDF and the outgoing government were able to minimize the significance of the post-Operation Cast Lead campaign against Israel because the operation enjoyed the support of the Israeli Left

- and particularly of the media. So long as the Left remained loyal, both the outgoing government and the IDF could reasonably assume that the impact of the manufactured allegations against Israel would not harm the IDF's ability to function.

But now the media are beginning to switch sides.

Operation Cast Lead was an unpleasant event for the Israeli Left and particularly for the national media which it controls. There were two main reasons for this.

First, the media were the primary supporter of then prime minister Ariel Sharon's plan to remove all Israeli military personnel and civilians from Gaza in 2005. In the lead-up to the withdrawal, the media demonized all who questioned the wisdom of the plan and who warned that its implementation would expose southern Israel to Palestinian rockets, mortars and missiles. The Palestinians' missile onslaught against the south was incontrovertible proof of their profound stupidity.

Second, Operation Cast Lead was carried out by a leftist government on the eve of the election. Had the media even thought about criticizing it, they would have shown that Kadima leader Tzipi Livni's claim that only a war fought by the Left will be supported was a lie. To shore up votes for Kadima and Labor, the media had to swallow their pacifist pride and rally around the flag. For their efforts, the media found themselves ridiculed by the popular leftist satire program Eretz Nehederet which portrayed them as warmongers.

It is hard to know whether the media would have kept up their vigilant support for Operation Cast Lead if Kadima had won the elections, but now that Kadima has lost, and Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu is forming the government, it is clear that the media no longer feel it is necessary to support the IDF. After all, the next battle will be led by Likud.

The first sign that the media were turning on the IDF came last month. It followed the well-known pattern: A far left political activist made unsubstantiated allegations against an IDF commander. The media treated the allegations as credible and demanded an investigation. In the event, Tel Aviv University Prof. Haim Ganz, who heads the Minerva Center for Human Rights, informed Ha'aretz that he wrote a letter to Prof. Hanoch Dagan, the dean of Tel Aviv University Law School, protesting his decision to hire retiring IDF Col. Pnina Baruch-Sharvit as an international law lecturer. Baruch-Sharvit was just ending her tour of duty as the commander of the IDF's International Law Division.

Ganz charged that Baruch-Sharvit had committed war crimes by giving legal authorization to IDF forces to carry out missions in Gaza, and that her presence on the law faculty was an insult to the humanitarian values of the university.

Ganz's allegations were patently absurd and libelous. But Ha'aretz was only too happy to give them credence and publish an editorial calling for her contract to be cancelled. In the end, after Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert defended her, Dagan stood by his decision to bring her onto the faculty.

The damage, however, was done. First, Ganz and Ha'aretz gave an Israeli face to the anti-Israel activists claiming that our soldiers and officers are war criminals. And second, their assault on Baruch-Sharvit will be in the minds of other IDF lawyers planning a post-military career. They will now think twice before giving legal approval to clearly legal military missions knowing they are liable to be blacklisted for defending the country.

If the storm over Baruch-Sharvit was the opening salvo, the first major media assault on the IDF came on Thursday. Here too, the campaign was a coproduction of a far-left political activist and far-left reporters.

The Yitzhak Rabin pre-military academy in Jaffa is run by the kibbutz movement. It is the only pre-military academy that is openly and avowedly leftist. Its founder and director Danny Zamir was jailed in 1990 for refusing to serve in Nablus during the height of the Palestinian uprising. In 2004 he allowed his 1990 manifesto calling for soldiers to refuse orders to be reprinted in a book *Refusnik: Israel's Soldiers of Conscience* which was published with a forward by Susan Sontag and a recommendation by Noam Chomsky.

In its year-long program, Rabin academy cadets are subjected to post-Zionist political philosophy that according to sources familiar with the institution indoctrinates them to believe that Israel has no right to exist as a Jewish state. In a recent conference the academy co-hosted with the Druse pre-army military academy, the Druse soldiers expressed their amazement that while they identified themselves with Israel and Zionism, their Jewish counterparts at the Rabin academy were avowedly anti-Israel.

Last month Zamir organized a conference of his former cadets who are now serving in IDF combat units. There, he encouraged these young soldiers to tell him and their war stories. In what can only be compared to a Communist group confessional, Zamir told Channel 10 that young soldiers were encouraged to view their actions in Gaza as immoral. A number of them accepted the terms of debate and described purportedly immoral acts

they alleged were carried out in Gaza. In most cases, Zamir's soldiers acknowledged that they were not present on the scenes in the events they described. These included killing Palestinian women and children who entered fire zones and behaving in an unfriendly manner to Palestinian civilians whose homes the soldiers commandeered during the operation. Others characterized ethical, legal standing orders - such as the requirement for soldiers to value their lives and the lives of their comrades more highly than the lives of terror suspects - as immoral or illegal.

Zamir claims that he took these non-eyewitness accounts to the IDF and asked that they be investigated. Since he refused to provide the names of the soldiers involved in the alleged incidents and his eyewitness accounts were from soldiers who had not witnessed the accounts, the IDF officers he spoke with said they would have a hard time investigating.

Unhappy with this response, Zamir published the unsubstantiated accounts in his school's bulletin and gave the bulletin to two far-left reporters - Ofer Shelach from Channel 10 and Amos Harel from Ha'aretz.

In an act of unmitigated journalistic malpractice, on Friday night Shelach presented the unattributed testimonials as first-person accounts. He used actors to read out the soldiers' statements as if they were the soldiers themselves, and never told his audience that the voices they were hearing were not the voices of the actual soldiers. Then, he attacked the IDF for refusing to take these accounts seriously and for having the nerve to note that the Rabin pre-military academy is a known leftist institution. He of course didn't mention that Zamir himself served a prison sentence for refusing orders or that as recently as 2004 he contributed to a book explaining why the IDF is an immoral army.

As for Harel, he published the soldiers' statements in Ha'aretz. He then wrote an "analysis" arguing that the IDF cannot discount the statements by these anonymous voices because, in his view, the soldiers have "no reason" to lie. The fact that they present no evidence of their claims is apparently of no importance.

Now by presenting these second hand accounts of battles as fact; by presenting Zamir as a credible and objective observer; and by instructing the IDF to be ashamed of itself and mend its ways, Shelach and Harel are certainly atoning for their "sin" of supporting the army in Operation Cast Lead. Perhaps for them, that was all this was about.

But the consequences of their actions will be devastating for both the IDF and for the country. Just as Ha'aretz's campaign against Baruch-Sharvit will frighten other military lawyers called upon to assess the legality of proposed operations into refusing to make decisions, so incidents like this will make commanders in the field think twice before they tell their soldiers to protect themselves. That is, they will make the IDF a far less effective fighting force.

Internationally, Shelach's and Harel's unattributed and unsubstantiated reports will serve to legitimize the West's move towards Hamas. Already, thousands of news reports parroting theirs have been published throughout the world. And why not? What could be more damning than Israeli press reports citing Israeli soldiers? If these are the people Hamas is fighting, no wonder it wishes to destroy Israel.

Aside from the aid and comfort their reports provide to Western politicians keen to have their pictures taken with Khaled Mashaal, Shelach's and Harel's reports also place every IDF soldier and commander travelling to Europe at risk of arrest and indictment and trial on imaginary war crimes charges before the kangaroo courts springing up all over the continent. No doubt, for their efforts, Shelach and Harel can count on receiving front row tickets to the first star chamber. Lucky them. (Jerusalem Post Mar 23)

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#### **Afraid Of Victory** By Sarah Honig

In 1933 FDR hinged his first inaugural address on his "firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself - nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."

Binyamin Netanyahu should inaugurate his second administration with this exact sentiment, stated as boldly and as unambiguously. Unlike the morale issues of Depression-era America, in our case irrational fear is an existential threat.

Successive governments have been crippled by fear. This already manifest fear - contagious as it is - might also overwhelm Netanyahu's psyche and infect the new Likud-led government. We have every cause to fear the establishment's transmittable fear. We'd be crazy not to fear it. The danger of fear in high places reasserting itself is too palpable to pooh-poo.

Fear has come to dominate our zeitgeist ever since Oslo - perhaps itself born of the fear to defend our interests, if need be, in defiance of a world that keeps turning against us. Our two most recent military showdowns - 2006's Second Lebanon War and Operation Cast Lead -

illustrate the fiascos which fear-engendered inhibition produces. In both campaigns we patently hadn't achieved much of anything. We demonstrated impressive firepower but failure of will to follow through effectively enough to inflict instantly recognizable defeat on the enemy and amend the bad situation which forced us into the battlefield to begin with.

Things look abysmal even without factoring in the thorough diplomatic trashing and disastrous image-tarnishing to which we were subjected. When the deafening din died down, the enemy was left standing upright and ready to fight another day. We didn't eradicate or even significantly reduce its rocket arsenals. Indeed, both Hizbullah in the north and Hamas in the south continue to arm themselves. Hamas, moreover, also continues its intermittent barrages on civilians, with the international community chillingly indifferent and evidently taking no notice.

Action in both cases didn't spring Israeli hostages. In the fighting's aftermath both Hizbullah and Hamas still held out for the entire ransom. Though battered and bruised, they were the ones who strove to dictate terms and impose their will on us and not vice versa. So, with neither Hizbullah nor Hamas prostrate, who's the winner here?

It's not that the country under Olmert/Livni couldn't win. It was afraid. We were turned into the unhappy real-life equivalent of the unnerved athletes in a uniquely effective episode of TV's animated Batman series. Aptly entitled "Fear of Victory," this classic features the recurrent villain Scarecrow, who slips star sportsmen an adrenalin-activated fear-toxin. As they gear themselves up for competition, they get scared of winning. Scarecrow then bets against them, sure that, despite these champions' legendary abilities and proven experience, they cannot succeed.

Hamas, Hizbullah and their Iranian/Syrian masters similarly bet against this country, sensing that it's intimidated against going the whole hog and actually trying to crush them. They're not blind to the paradox that the more hi-tech, scientifically advanced and militarily-sophisticated we become, the weaker our leadership's resolve. In the psychological combat zone, the Arabs make mincemeat of us - time and again.

The last thing we should do is belittle our antagonists. They are way shrewder than us and see right through our poses. They remember our spirited stand in the face of their terrorist onslaughts in the 1970s. They remember our refusal to bow to extortion when they hijacked planes and buses, invaded homes and captured children in schools and baby crèches. We were willing to risk casualties but not to yield and thereby enhance terrorist incentives to take more hostages.

Arabs must now be so buoyed by the perverse spectacle of Israelis demonstrating against their own government to free Gilad Schalit. This hostage after all wasn't kidnapped by official Israel but by our enemy. That enemy must be delighted that "useful fools" press its demands for the full exorbitant payoff. Hamas henchmen must be mystified that Israelis clamor to release captive enemies back into the arena to butcher more of us. We've become a timid, compromise-addicted lot. The long-term outcome of the life-and-death conflict foisted upon us no longer takes precedence.

We once mocked terrorist bluster. Today we listen to Nasrallah or Mashaal with trepidation and seek ways to appease them. They know our mind-set has mutated. They know yesteryear's Israelis expected daring commando responses to terrorist outrages, yet today we hesitate to venture out-of-the-box lest we incur wrath abroad. They know that our fallen, once regarded as heroes, are today counted as victims of avoidable slipups. They are aware of the numbing risk-aversion of our politicians, who fear media carping and commissions of inquiry more than genocidal foes.

Above all, our enemies know that they managed to get politically-correct Jews to perceive themselves via the lenses of Arab propaganda. We even resort to the vocabulary of its distortive narrative. In our own school curriculum, we acknowledge that slanderous narrative's depiction of our independence as a Nakba (catastrophe). Like them, we describe their terrorist aggression against ordinary people as an intifada (valiant uprising), a cease-fire as a hudna (a deceptive truce) and a lull as a tahadia (temporary respite of convenience).

We blabber about "occupation" without asking by which line Arabs demarcate areas where a sovereign Jewish existence might possibly be accepted. Is it the 1949 line? 1947? None at all? Does "occupation" refer only to territories we have held since 1967 or also where Jews settled in 1870? By adopting the other side's verbal icons, we buy into its thought manipulation. Without bothering to understand the cultural context and definitions of the jargon we obsequiously borrow, we play the Arab game and forgo the justice of our cause. In this region especially, self-deprecation doesn't improve one's negotiating posture.

On the eve of the Annapolis conference, for instance, PA "moderates" under Mahmoud Abbas vehemently refused that the two-state formulation specify Israel as the national state of the Jewish people. It became an absolute nonstarter. Fearing commotion, Olmert and Livni backed down. The upshot: Israel is tolerated provisionally as some pesky transient evil, with an indeterminate ethnic identity which could be Arabized in future.

In these psycho-political circumstances it would be very gutsy to aim to win instead of insecurely trying to conciliate an in-your-face uncooperative "peace partner." Netanyahu is now tasked with the mission of inducing Israelis to lose their fear of victory, assuming of course that he himself isn't afflicted by that peculiar fear.

If FDR spoke of "efforts to convert retreat into advance," Netanyahu's unparalleled challenge is not to allow collective defeatism to convert advance into yet another retreat. It's now up to Bibi. No Batman will rescue us from the Scarecrow of our own making.

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### **Holding The Line On Hamas** By: Caroline Glick

Once it is sworn into office, Israel's new government will immediately have to go on a diplomatic offensive.

This month, under Egyptian sponsorship, Hamas and Fatah began negotiating the formation of a Palestinian unity government that, if agreed upon, will run the affairs of the Palestinian Authority. From what can be gleaned from media accounts of the proceedings, it is clear Hamas will control the government and Fatah will operate as a junior partner responsible for keeping up international monetary support for the PA. Hamas will not recognize Israel. And Fatah and Hamas militias will be unified in some manner and end all cooperation and coordination with Israel. In short, if formed, the new Palestinian government will be nothing more than a Hamas-Fatah terror consortium committed to waging continuous war against Israel.

By all accounts, the international community, including the Obama administration, will recognize and support this government if and when it is established. Egypt halted the talks last week and sent emissaries to Washington and Brussels to secure American and European support for it.

General Omar Suleiman, head of Egyptian intelligence, flew to Washington to meet with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit jetted off to Brussels where he made the same case to EU foreign policy boss Javier Solana. That their missions were successful was made clear by the announcement that the Hamas-Fatah negotiations were to resume this week.

Moreover, after meeting with Gheit, Solana threatened the incoming Netanyahu government that it will suffer international isolation if it does not join Europe, the U.S. and the Arab world in embracing the establishment of a Palestinian state as its chief goal in office. In doing so, Solana signaled that as far as Europe is concerned, the nature of the Palestinian government is immaterial. The only side that will be blamed for Palestinian aggression will be Israel.

In Washington too, things are going Hamas's way. President Obama's Middle East mediator, George Mitchell, has called for the administration to support a Hamas-Fatah government. Former senior officials with close ties to the administration like Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brent Scowcroft and Lee Hamilton are publicly calling for U.S. recognition of Hamas.

Given the increased likelihood that the U.S. (and the EU) will recognize Hamas, one of the swiftly emerging challenges for the incoming Netanyahu government will be how to contend with the new reality.

As it stands, the incoming government is operating at a severe deficit. Both outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and outgoing Foreign Minister (and Kadima leader) Tzipi Livni have made it clear they will side with the U.S. and Europe against their own government. Livni joined the campaign to isolate the incoming government when, like Solana, she claimed Netanyahu's refusal to endorse the so-called two-state solution rendered him an extremist with whom she could not cooperate.

On Sunday evening Olmert attacked outgoing Defense Minister (and Labor Party leader) Ehud Barak for his willingness to join the Netanyahu government. In Olmert's words, "Anyone who consciously walks into a government that does not believe in two states for two peoples is likely to force Israel into an isolation it has not seen since its establishment."

Statements like these from Kadima's leaders make it difficult for Netanyahu to withstand claims by the likes of Scowcroft, Mitchell and British Foreign Minister David Miliband that the time has come to recognize Hamas. But even with the likes of Olmert and Livni siding with foreign governments against him, Netanyahu will still have one option -- and he will have to use it.

Netanyahu and his government must exert unrelenting pressure on the U.S. and individual European governments to end their recognition of Hamas. He and his colleagues must make constant reference to Hamas's terror activities and to its genocidal covenant. They must repeatedly recall its ties to Iran and its likeness to al Qaeda. They must condemn calls by the Israeli Left to recognize Hamas and use the bully pulpit in Israel to attack their political opponents for working against the interests of the state.

It should be recalled that we have been here before. In December 1988, prodded by the incoming Bush administration and the American

Jewish Left, the lame duck Reagan administration opened a dialogue with the PLO, which it claimed had accepted Israel's right to exist and foresworn terror. Following the U.S. move, the Shamir government used every opportunity to point out that the PLO had not given up terrorism and had not in fact accepted Israel's right to exist. The pressure the Israeli government exerted on the Bush administration compelled it to break off ties with the PLO in June 1990 after the PLO committed a terror attack in Israel.

The country that in the end legitimized the PLO was Israel - with the September 1993 Oslo agreement - not the U.S. When then-prime minister Yitzhak Rabin recognized the PLO and brought Yasir Arafat to Gaza, he did more than pave the road to the White House in gold for Arafat. By telling the U.S. to embrace the PLO, Israel found itself without recourse when -- in the space of just a few weeks from the euphoric signing ceremony in the White House Rose Garden -- the PLO resumed its war against Israel, transforming the areas Israel had transferred to its control into the largest terror training bases in the world.

After Oslo, discrediting the PLO meant discrediting the Israeli Left, which embraced the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians. Since the Left has dominated most Israeli governments since 1993 and has retained control over the media, this was a non-starter. And so even when Fatah - the PLO's governing faction -- openly colludes with Hamas, as it is currently doing in the negotiations toward the formation of a Hamas-dominated government, the Israeli Left feels compelled to uphold it as legitimate and to overlook its hostile behavior.

The most stunning example of the Israeli Left's refusal to criticize Fatah came last week when Fatah security chief Muhammad Dahlan gave an interview to PA television where he explained the nature of the PLO/Fatah's deception of Israel. Fatah, Dahlan explained, has never recognized Israel. In his words, "We [Fatah] are not asking Hamas to recognize Israel's right to exist. Rather, we are asking Hamas not to do so because Fatah never recognized Israel's right to exist."

What Dahlan's remarks made clear is that the PLO's recognition of Israel was an optical illusion. Without its constituent factions, the PLO is an empty shell. And its constituent factions did not recognize Israel. Dahlan then explained that the Hamas-Fatah government will operate under the same principle. Hamas will join the PLO. Hamas will form a government with Fatah. Both terror groups will recognize PLO agreements with Israel and both will continue to wage war against Israel as Hamas and Fatah - rather than as the Palestinian government.

It might be thought that Dahlan's admission of premeditated and continuous bad faith would have elicited a strong reaction from Israel. But no such thing occurred. Aside from the Jerusalem Post, no Israeli media outlet mentioned the interview. Neither did any Israeli leftist politician.

And this makes sense. Acknowledging what Dahlan said would require a parallel Israeli acknowledgement that Israel's strategy for the past 16 years has been based on a complete lie. It would also make Israel even more unpopular internationally since Fatah is the toast of every town in the Western world. It is this state of affairs that must be avoided at all costs with Hamas. Israel must give no quarter in this debate. And who knows -- if it holds the line on Hamas while pointing out the significance of Fatah's collusion with the Iranian proxy, perhaps by the time the next terror campaign inevitably commences Israel will have finally begun to erode Fatah's international reputation.

Offense is a position Israel has rarely played since 1993. The Netanyahu government will have no time to hesitate. It will have to come out attacking or it will find itself on the outside looking in as the likes of Khaled Mashaal dine in the West Wing and have tea and crumpets with the Queen. (Jewish Press Mar 25)

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### **Israel's Christian Friends** By Michael Freund

Tucked away in the southeastern corner of Virginia, the city of Virginia Beach is about the last place one would expect to find a bastion of passionate pro-Israel sentiment.

With its seemingly endless miles of sand, waves and sun, the sprawling resort town, known as the proud host of the annual East Coast Surfing Championships, seems more well-suited to fun and games than to waging a war of ideas on behalf of the Jewish state. Yet it is precisely in this most unexpected of locales that one of Israel's staunchest allies and defenders can be found: Rev. Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network, or CBN.

On a visit to the network's studios last week, I was moved by the level of heartfelt support for the Jewish state among the staff members. Nearly every one had been to Israel numerous times, and they described in great detail, and with genuine passion, their profound love for the country and its people.

Take, for example, CBN president and chief operating officer Michael Little, who has been to Israel 47 times and is already making plans for his

next visit. And then there is network CEO Gordon Robertson, who described with great feeling his views on the Jewish roots of Christianity, and how the Bible mandates that one must stand with Israel, come what may. Prior to interviewing me about events in the Middle East for CBN's daily news program, anchorwoman Wendy Griffith did something I never saw a journalist do before. She folded her hands together, bowed her head in prayer and humbly offered a solemn plea: "Bless Your people Israel and keep them safe," she said.

Peering from behind a video camera, one of the cameramen in the studio then quoted verses from Isaiah about the return of the Jewish people to Zion. "I pray about this on a daily basis," he said in earnest.

Where else can one find such a deeply-rooted love and concern for God's chosen people? Of course, the fact that many US Christians support Israel is nothing new. Much has been written in recent years about the closer ties that have been forged between the two - a fact that has generated no small amount of controversy among certain more liberal sectors of US Jewry.

But after my visit to CBN, and based on previous encounters I have had with other pro-Israel evangelical Christians, I am more convinced than ever that the Jewish state needs to undertake a coordinated effort to nurture and broaden this special relationship.

The fact of the matter is that Bible-believing Christians, even more so than US Jews, may represent the best hope for ensuring that long-term American support for Israel remains strong. Like it or not, American Jewry is steadily on the decline, as the realities of mounting intermarriage and assimilation continue to devour untold numbers of young Jews, leaving the community's future viability very much in doubt.

And as the US Jewish community grows smaller in size, its clout and influence will invariably diminish as well. That leaves the tens of millions of evangelical Christians in the US as the best possible vanguard to man the barricades on behalf of defending Israel in Washington.

According to the Pew Center's 2008 Religious Landscape Survey, 26.3 percent of American adults identify themselves as evangelical Christians, making them the largest religious grouping in the US. And a study conducted by Pew three years ago found overwhelming support for Israel among evangelicals, concluding that "seven-in-ten white evangelicals (69%) believe God gave Israel to the Jewish people, and a solid majority (59%) believes Israel is the fulfillment of biblical prophecy." Naturally, these believers "are much more likely than others to sympathize with Israel in its dispute with the Palestinians," said the report.

Indeed, the list of Christian personalities and organizations working on behalf of Israel in fields ranging from social welfare to public affairs is almost dizzying.

The Kansas-based Unity Coalition for Israel, for example, has built an enormous network, utilizing hundreds of organizations, to educate the American public about Israel.

Pastor John Hagee has turned Christians United for Israel into the largest Christian grassroots movement in the US, with state directors in all 50 states, and an annual Washington summit that brings out thousands of people from across the country to speak out on behalf of the Jewish state.

Veteran Christian broadcasters, such as Hal Lindsey, Janet Parshall and Earl Cox, reach tens of millions of viewers and listeners, explaining Israel's case and defending her from the onslaught of the mainstream press.

And then there is the Rev. Robert Stearns, whose New York-based Eagles Wings has for the past seven years organized an annual "Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem" each October. This year, organizers expect more than 200,000 churches in 175 countries to take part in praying for Israel and its welfare.

Locally, organizations such as the International Christian Embassy, Bridges for Peace and Christians for Israel provide aid to new immigrants, promote aliya and bring thousands of Christian pilgrims each year.

This plethora of activities underlines the extent to which evangelical Christians in the US, Europe and elsewhere can be counted on to back the Jewish state across a variety of spheres.

It is therefore essential that the country take additional steps to further strengthen this burgeoning alliance. This could include the appointment of a roving ambassador to the Christian world, tasked with responsibility for reinforcing Israel-Christian relations, and the convening of an annual summit of pro-Israel Christian leaders in Jerusalem under the auspices of the prime minister.

Rather than focusing solely on the solicitation of Christians' dollars, the country should seek to cement their devotion by more actively reaching out and courting their support, prayers and cooperation.

With so many challenges facing the Jewish state, it is time we recognize a clear and cogent fact: There are large numbers of Christians around the world ready and willing to stand with us.

And, I might add, thank G-d for that. (Jerusalem Post Mar 25)