



**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*

and Mubarak's visit in Washington is unlikely to alter this view.

A poll taken by the renown Rasmussen organization between August 5 and 8 found that only 39 percent of the American public consider Egypt a US ally while nine

percent view this state as an enemy. For the other 42%, Egypt falls somewhere in between.

In striking contrast, 70% of the respondents consider Israel a US ally. Only a fourth of the public believes that US relations with the Arab world will improve in the next year, and 81% agree with Netanyahu that the Palestinians must recognize Israel as part of a peace agreement.

Seventy one senators politely wrote Obama on August 10 that he needs to better balance his strategy: they disagreed with his one-sided pressure on Israel, they praised the Netanyahu government for taking positive steps towards peace, and told Obama to obtain similar concessions from the Arab states. Obama has been praising Mubarak but the Egyptian president will have to work much harder to gain credibility and support both in Israel and with the American public.

Obama's intention to formulate and announce yet another American blue print for Arab-Israeli peace would be better served if he listened to American public opinion and to what seventy one senators wrote him just a few weeks ago.

While Mubarak and the officials are reinforcing Obama's failing outlook, the senators, including the most influential from his own party, advised him to rethink and revise his approach. (Jerusalem Post Aug 19)  
*The writer is professor of Political Studies and Communication and senior research associate specializing in US-Israeli relations at the BESA Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University.*

## Commentary...

### Obama's Main Man In The Middle East? By Eytan Gilboa

US President Barack Obama's Middle Eastern strategy isn't working, but his meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Tuesday was unlikely to help him understand why and what was needed to be done to achieve better results.

Obama and Mubarak designed the visit to demonstrate the central place Egypt currently occupies in the US's strategy. Obama delivered his address to the Muslim world in Cairo in June and has already met Mubarak three times since taking office.

Mubarak shares many of Obama's convictions and assumptions about the conditions needed to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Yet, while Obama has called upon the pro-American Arab states, including Egypt, to adopt new confidence-building measures towards Israel such as allowing Israeli airlines to fly over their territories, establishing semi-diplomatic and commercial offices and opening their borders for tourists, Mubarak said that these measure would come only after Israel signs peace agreements with all of its Arab neighbors.

IF THE Arab states don't offer any reciprocal gestures and concessions, Obama's continuing insistence on a settlement freeze will be seen as excessive, one-sided and unfounded.

Obama's Cairo speech and his obsession with the settlements issue to the point of exclusion of all other obstacles to Israeli-Palestinian conflict resolution, led the Arabs to believe that they don't have to contribute anything to the process and that the US will do all the work for them.

Israelis in turn believe that either Obama doesn't understand Middle Eastern politics or that he is seeking a highly-visible confrontation with Israel in order to improve America's image in the Muslim world.

Mubarak carefully rescheduled his visit to Washington in mid-August when Congress is in recess. He probably wanted to avoid sensitive questions about the internal conditions in Egypt, primarily the succession issue and human rights.

Mubarak has ruled Egypt since 1981 and his health is poor. No less than five American presidents have served in the White House during his term. His son, Gamal, is expected to succeed him and this why he was a prominent member of the Egyptian delegation to Washington. The purpose was to reassure the US about stability and policy continuity in post-Mubarak Egypt. Yet, there is substantial opposition to family succession and to Gamal.

The two presidents emphasized the need to resolve the Arab-Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the next two years as Obama is looking for a major success in foreign policy to ensure his reelection in 2012. But this timetable fits the clock of American politics, not the clock of Middle Eastern realities.

The two presidents however, conveniently ignored one of the most serious obstacles to resolving the conflict: Hamas. The challenge is how to ensure that a Palestinian state in the West Bank will not be ruled by an Iranian extremist and fundamentalist terror proxy.

Their solution: a Fatah-Hamas national unity government. They probably assume that such a government would be dominated by Fatah, but the reality is likely to be the exact opposite.

Sources that Obama needs to consult about his strategy are right in his backyard: public opinion and congress. American public opinion doesn't support Obama's promotion of Egypt as the key US ally in the Middle East,

### No Second Thoughts By Jonathan Tobin

When asked about whether US President Barack Obama was rethinking his decision to give Mary Robinson his nation's highest civilian award, a spokesman for the White House was quoted as saying that the president "had no second thoughts" about giving the former Irish president the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Indeed, the ceremony went off without a hitch and nary a discouraging word as Robinson and 15 other less controversial recipients got their medals amid a blizzard of presidential praise.

Obama lauded Robinson, the woman who presided over the United Nation's anti-Semitic hate fest at the 2001 Durban Conference on racism, as "an advocate for the hungry and the hunted, the forgotten and the ignored," and ignored the widespread criticism of the honoree from a wide range of Jewish groups as well as some members of Congress.

Robinson is a longtime foe of the Jewish state and even today holds the post of honorary president of Oxfam, an NGO that gained publicity last week for firing actress Kirstin Davis of Sex and the City fame as its spokeswoman because she also represents Ahava, whose Dead Sea cosmetics are considered off-limits by Israel-haters.

Though the dustup over Robinson cast something of a shadow on an event that is almost always non-controversial (because the White House generally eliminates questionable candidates), the dispute did not generate a great deal of publicity. It was Robinson's good fortune that the weeks leading up to the ceremony were dominated by a divisive national debate over health care reform.

Even Obama's most virulent critics on the right were too preoccupied with the debate over the president's massive expansion of government power for it to register much of an impact on the nation's political Richter scale.

But friends of Israel, especially those Jewish Democrats who have been doing their best to ignore the White House's increasingly belligerent tone toward the Jewish state, would do well to note what happened with

Robinson. Obama honored a virulent enemy of Israel, someone who bore a great deal of responsibility for Durban, one of the most disgraceful episodes in the history of an institution - the UN - that is no stranger to disgrace. And he has gotten away with it with hardly a scratch on his reputation.

Though some will dismiss this incident as a minor mistake that will soon be forgotten, the main lesson to be learned here may not be the one about presidential award nominations needing to be more thoroughly vetted. Rather, it may be that as much as this was an unforced error on the part of the White House, what Obama and his advisers may take away from this incident is how easily they were able to dismiss a nearly universal Jewish dismay.

In the weeks to come, the president and his foreign-policy team are said to be preparing what we are told is a new Middle East peace plan. The upshot of this exercise may be some sort of peace conference doomed to certain failure because neither of the two leading Palestinian factions - the supposedly more moderate Fatah that runs the Palestinian Authority and the Islamist terrorists of Hamas - have any real interest in a peace deal with Israel.

As Robert Malley, the former Clinton administration staffer who is a prominent critic of Israel, wrote in *The New York Times* last week, for either group "to accept Israel as a Jewish state would legitimize the Zionist enterprise that brought about their tragedy. It would render the Palestinian national struggle at best meaningless, at worst criminal." Thus, the only possible purpose of the Obama initiative will be to attempt again to bludgeon Israel into making concessions to Palestinians that are uninterested in peace.

The administration is also still committed to "engagement" with Iran's despotic Islamist regime and continues to appear uninterested in any serious effort to stop Teheran from gaining nuclear capability. Though both Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Defense Secretary Robert Gates have talked about giving the Iranians until after the General Assembly of the United Nations meets this fall before attempting to organize more stringent sanctions, this is not a credible stance since such efforts will not only be undermined by lackluster European support and open opposition from China and Russia, they will almost certainly be too late to stop Teheran's nuclear timetable.

On both these issues, despite their hopes that Obama may ultimately step back from a full-throttle battle, the pro-Israel community may soon find itself looking into the business end of a White House propaganda machine that will feel confident about dismissing concerns about Israel's security in much the same way that they have trashed opponents of their health care plan.

There are those who take the point of view that the willingness of mainstream groups such as the Anti-Defamation League and others to allow any daylight to be seen between themselves and the White House on the Robinson affair is a sign that Jewish spines are stiffening in response to Obama's attitude on Jewish security issues. But that strikes me as over-optimistic at best since left-wing groups with growing clout among administration circles, such as J Street, dutifully supported the president on the issue. So long as his leftist base sticks with him, it's doubtful that the president will worry about support from mainstream liberals who are loathe to make common cause with Obama's critics.

Though they may have been surprised that any major Jewish groups had the chutzpah to oppose the president even on this issue, the nonchalance with which Obama and his apologists road roughshod over any opposition to the award may well have taught the White House that they can get away with anything.

There may have been some who thought Robinson's award would prove to be Obama's Bitburg moment - a symbolic episode that forever tarnished Ronald Reagan's reputation even among his most ardent Jewish supporters. But while Reagan paid a heavy price for offending Jewish sensibilities by honoring dead SS members at a German cemetery, Obama escaped from the Robinson award with few scars and little media attention to the story.

Far from serving as a warning to the White House to tread carefully in the future when it comes to Israel or the Jews, Mary Robinson's medal may turn out instead to be a trial run for far worse outrages yet to come from this president.

The writer is executive editor of *Commentary Magazine* where he contributes to its blog *Contentions* at [www.commentarymagazine.com](http://www.commentarymagazine.com)

## Counterterrorism in Obama's Washington By Daniel Pipes

US President Barack Obama's assistant for homeland security and counterterrorism, John O. Brennan, conveniently outlined the administration's present and future policy mistakes in a speech on August 6, "A New Approach for Safeguarding Americans."

To start with, his address to the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, has an unusual tenor. "Sycophantic" is the word that springs to mind, as Brennan 90 times in 5,000 words invokes either "President Obama," "he," "his" or "the president."

Disturbingly, Brennan ascribes virtually every thought or policy in his speech to the wisdom of the One. This cringe-inducing lecture reminds one of a North Korean functionary paying homage to the Dear Leader.

Specifics are no better. Most fundamentally, Brennan calls for appeasing terrorists: "Even as we condemn and oppose the illegitimate tactics used by terrorists, we need to acknowledge and address the legitimate needs and grievances of ordinary people those terrorists claim to represent." Which legitimate needs and grievances, one wonders, does he think al-Qaida represents?

Brennan carefully delineates a two-fold threat, one being "al-Qaida and its allies" and the other "violent extremism." But the former, self-evidently, is a subset of the latter. This elementary mistake undermines his entire analysis.

He also rejects any connection between "violent extremism" and Islam: "Using the legitimate term jihad, which means to purify oneself or to wage a holy struggle for a moral goal, risks giving these murderers the religious legitimacy they desperately seek but in no way deserve. Worse, it risks reinforcing the idea that the United States is somehow at war with Islam itself."

This passage regurgitates a theory of radical Islam that, according to Lt.-Col. Joseph C. Myers of the US Air Command and Staff College, "is part of a strategic disinformation and denial and deception campaign" developed by the Muslim Brotherhood. Discredited in 2007 by Robert Spencer, the theory distinguishes between good jihad and bad jihad and denies any connection between Islam and terrorism.

It's a deeply deceptive interpretation intended to confuse non-Muslims and win time for Islamists. The George W. Bush administration, for all its mistakes, did not succumb to this ruse. But Brennan informs us that his boss now bases US policy on it.

The speech contains disquieting signs of ineptitude. We learn that Obama considers nuclear weapons in the hands of terrorists to be "the most immediate and extreme threat to global security." Fine. But how does he respond? With three feeble and nearly irrelevant steps: "leading the effort for a stronger global nonproliferation regime, launching an international effort to secure the world's vulnerable nuclear material... and hosting a global nuclear summit."

Nor can Brennan think straight. One example, requiring a lengthy quote. "Poverty does not cause violence and terrorism. Lack of education does not cause terrorism. But just as there is no excuse for the wanton slaughter of innocents, there is no denying that when children have no hope for an education, when young people have no hope for a job and feel disconnected from the modern world, when governments fail to provide for the basic needs of their people, then people become more susceptible to ideologies of violence and death."

Summary: Poverty and a lack of education do not cause terrorism, but a lack of education and a job make people more susceptible to the ideas leading to terrorism. What is the distinction? Woe on us when the White House accepts illogic as analysis.

Further, let's focus on the statement "when governments fail to provide for the basic needs of their people, then people become more susceptible to ideologies of violence and death," for it contains two stunning errors. First, it assumes the socialist fiction that governments provide basic needs. No. Other than in a few commodity-rich states, governments protect and offer legal structures, while the market provides.

Second, every study on the subject finds no connection between personal stress (poverty, lack of education, unemployment) and attraction to radical Islam. If anything, massive transfers of wealth to the Middle East since 1970 contributed to the rise of radical Islam. The administration is basing its policy on a falsehood.

Where, as they say, is the adult supervision? Implementation of the inept policies outlined by Brennan spells danger for Americans, American

interests and American allies. The bitter consequences of these mistakes soon enough will become apparent. (Jerusalem Post Aug 18)

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### **Evangelicals: An Appreciation** By Isi Leibler

A prominent American Jewish leader recently told me that the passionate standing ovation he received after addressing 4,000 participants at John Hagee's Christians United for Israel rally in Washington was reminiscent of the fervent Zionist gatherings he attended as a youngster. The two-day Evangelical Christian parley was designed to express support for Israel, receive updates on the current challenges facing the Jewish state and lobby congressmen in support of Israel. They heard addresses from Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu via satellite, Sen. Joe Lieberman, Ambassador Michael Oren, Malcolm Hoenlein of the Presidents' Conference and others.

At a time when much of global public opinion views Israel through the distorted lenses of Arab and anti-Semitic defamation, millions of Evangelicals have emerged as our most devoted supporters.

The evolution of this relationship is extraordinary and defies logic. It is only over the past three decades that support for Israel assumed such a high priority among this Christian denomination, which is rapidly expanding at a time when other churches are in dramatic decline.

Until recently, most Jews regarded Evangelicals as zealots obsessed with a desire to convert everyone. They also believed that their philo-Semitism was not "genuine" because it was based on an eschatology which predicted that the second coming of the messiah would only come after the Jewish people had returned to Israel and brought about the end of days.

In addition, the strongly liberal American Jewish community, obsessed with separation of church and state, gay rights and abortion, regarded Evangelicals as dangerous right-wing extremists and until recently were complaining that politicians like Netanyahu, who addressed their gatherings, embarrassed them.

Yet despite this hostility, the Evangelicals continued to upgrade support for Israel, to the point where it is now a central feature of their world outlook.

As though divine providence had intervened, the change took place precisely when liberals, the traditional supporters of the Jews, embraced postmodernism and began turning against Israel, which was no longer an underdog. Alas, today, many liberals engage in campaigns demonizing and delegitimizing the Jewish state.

Evangelical support for Israel is not matched by other Christian denominations. Many Protestant churches have in fact transformed their antipathy toward Israel into hatred. The Catholic Church made enormous progress identifying the evil of anti-Semitism, but due to a combination of realpolitik and an unwillingness to swallow the bitter theological pill of recognizing Jewish statehood, it is still far from evenhanded in relation to the Arab-Israel conflict.

The truth is that Evangelicals are no more monolithic than Jews. They do include fringe groups who are fanatics, believers in the apocalyptic end of the Jewish people, missionaries and even anti-Semites. But the vast majority are God-fearing people who pray for the welfare of Israel and share an unconditional love for Jews as God's chosen people.

The principal reason for Evangelical support is that unlike other Christian groups, they reject replacement theology, which teaches that God forsook the Jews for having rejected Jesus. They respect Judaism as the foundation of Christianity and believe that the Jews will always remain God's chosen people. They believe that the Jewish claim to Israel is based on the biblical promise from God. That may embarrass secular Jews, but for traditional Jews it remains the core of their relationship with the Holy Land.

Evangelicals also believe that when God told Abraham that those who bless the "Children of Israel" will also be blessed (Genesis 12:3) this meant that God would bless Christians who love the Jewish people and support the State of Israel. They also believe that the ingathering of the Jews will precede the return of the messiah, and quote Isaiah 60:14 saying: "The sons of your oppressors will come bowing before you" as a prophecy that righteous gentiles can partake in this process.

These feelings nurtured the early 19th century Christian Zionists and subsequently motivated people like Lord Balfour, who authored the Balfour Declaration; Orde Wingate, who helped create the Hagana; Rev John Stanley Grauel, the hero on board the Exodus, who disclosed what

happened in a firsthand report which had a crucial impact on the UN Special Committee on Palestine; writers like Pierre van Paassen, who promoted the Zionist cause; and many others.

Evangelicals' support for the Jewish state today manifests itself primarily by advocacy for Israel. However, they insist that they will never publicly "pressure or oppose policies adopted by Israel's democratically elected government."

Evangelical political clout with the Democratic administration is considerably weaker than it was under president George W. Bush. Nevertheless, with more than 60 million adherents, they still represent one of the most powerful political forces in the United States. They recently formed a Christian counterpart to AIPAC to lobby congressmen and canvass against legislation hostile to Israel.

Many rank-and-file church-goers donate generously to projects designed to strengthen Israel. For example, the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews initiated by Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein today represents the largest single donor to the Jewish Agency and was among those who contributed seed money to launch Nefesh B'Nefesh.

The 50 dedicated representatives of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, which has branches in 80 nations, spearhead the noble Christian Zionist presence in the Holy Land. They publish and broadcast information about Israel to the world. From generous contributions from members, they fund substantial social programs including assistance to integrate immigrants and support for former Gush Katif residents. They actively promote missions to Israel and host major pilgrim tours. They now represent one of the most dynamic sources of Israeli tourism.

Although most Israelis and Jews now appreciate the enormous value of Evangelical support, some liberal Jews continue to criticize the relationship, and ill-informed Orthodox Jews persist in mistakenly perceiving all Evangelicals as missionaries. It is axiomatic that we differ with Evangelicals over theology. But an alliance based on specific goals does not oblige both parties to adopt each other's approach on broader issues.

On Israel-related issues, a pragmatic cooperation is not a matter of creed but of political common sense. Besides, Evangelical support has never been conditional on a quid pro quo. It is thus surely unbecoming for us to remain passive while misguided Jews behave in a churlish manner to our greatest supporters.

On a personal level, I am proud to be associated with Evangelicals on various projects to promote Israel. I also enjoy being able to discuss political issues with people who still recognize the existence of good and evil instead of dealing with mind-numbing postmodernism and the moral equivalency that one continuously encounters with confused liberals.

The alliance with the Evangelicals represents one of the few bright lights in an otherwise dismal political environment. Indeed, were there more Evangelicals in Protestant/Catholic Europe, the prevailing hostility against Israel in that region might yet be substantially modified.

As an observant Jew, I appreciate their support and hope that they will be blessed for their friendship. (Jerusalem Post Aug 16)

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### **You'll Never Walk Alone** By Yoram Ettinger

The American people display a robust, long-term support of the Jewish state in spite of President Obama's policy and in defiance of the NY Times and Washington Post (which contrast the Wall Street Journal's attitude toward Israel.)

According to an August 10, 2009 poll, conducted by the Rasmussen Reports, one of America's most experienced and reliable pollsters, 70% of American voters view Israel as an ally (66% in a June 2, 2009 Rasmussen poll) and merely 8% consider Israel an enemy. In contrast, only 39%, 23% and 17% believe Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, respectively, are allies of the US. No more than 32% assume that Muslim countries are well-intentioned toward the US, a mere 21% assess that US ties with Muslim countries will be improved in 2010, while 25% assess that ties will deteriorate. Only 34% believe that the Palestinians will recognize Israel's right to exist, while 74% do not believe that a lasting-peace between Israel and the Palestinians is possible during the next 10 years.

A March 3, 2009 Gallup poll ranks Israel as the fourth preferred ally of the US, following Britain, Canada and Japan and ahead of Germany. That is consistent with a March 3, 2008 Gallup poll, ranking Israel fifth

(71% support), following Germany, but ahead of India, France, South Korea, Mexico, etc. The Palestinian Authority (14%) joined North Korea (12%) and Iran (8%) as the least favored by the American electorate.

The aforementioned polls demonstrate that the pro-Arab, pro-Muslim pronouncements by President Obama and his top advisors, and the attempts to denounce Israel as an obstacle to peace, have not eroded the inherent support for Israel and the latent opposition-suspicion-skepticism toward Muslims, including Palestinians.

Israel has been perceived, by the American public, as a role-model of counter-terrorism, helping to prevent a repeat of Sept. 11, while Muslims are perceived as a role-model of anti-US terrorism, threatening a repeat a Sept. 11.

The American taxpayer blames Muslims for the burdensome security constraints at airports, which have taxed the time, pocket and blood pressure of Americans. The Muslim image has also been undermined by daily media reports, from Iraq and Afghanistan, of the killing of American soldiers by Muslim terrorists. On the other hand, the daily US routine, since Sept. 11, has enhanced US empathy towards the daily Israeli routine – and with Israel's mode of combating terrorism – since the 1948 establishment of the Jewish State. While Muslims have been identified – since the establishment of the US and its war against North African Muslim terrorism – with threat, belligerence, injustice, deceit and treachery, Jews and Israel have been identified with compassion, justice, truth, faith, reliability and defiance of threat.

The Jewish State has earned its unique support of the American constituent, and has demonstrated the capability to swiftly rebound from low ebb in public opinion, despite its non-Anglo Saxon origin, notwithstanding its faraway Mideast location and in defiance of US policy makers and public opinion molders. This special attitude toward Israel is the result of Israel's unique contribution to the US commercially, medically, agriculturally and militarily. However, the unique US-Israel relationship is primarily due to American empathy towards the concept of a Jewish State – since the 17th century – culturally, morally and ethically.

The US is the most religious Western democracy (91% believe in God,) which is based on Judeo-Christian values, does not recognize Muslim-Christian values and appreciates the role of Judaism in shaping the US morally, judicially, culturally, as well as politically.

Forty-five percent of US Christians attend Sunday services and listen to Biblical sermons; almost every hotel room in the US displays the Bible; about 15 million copies of the Bible are sold annually in the US; the number of religious TV stations in the US has increased in 30 years from nine to 275; Moses' statue is placed in front of the seat of the House Speaker on Capitol Hill and above the desk of the Supreme Court Justices; a monument of the 10 Commandments is displayed on the grounds of the Texas State Capitol; a similar monument will be shortly displayed on the grounds of the Oklahoma State Capitol; and, the US House of Representatives starts its daily deliberations with a prayer.

Israel benefits from solid, long-term support by American voters, who are at the center of the US political system and who signal to Senators and House Members: "We shall remember in November!" At the same time, the representatives of the American people on Capitol Hill are attuned to their constituents, and therefore are aware of their endemic affinity toward the Jewish State. They would not join an attempt to impose on Israel a retreat from land and principles. Will the Jewish State leverage its significant American population base of support, in order to advance US and Israeli national security interests?

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## **Obama Outreach Fails To Move Intransigent Arabs**

By Stephen J. Savitsky

I was most privileged on July 13 to be invited along with 16 other Jewish leaders to meet with President Obama at the White House. Much has been written about this historic meeting; it's hard to believe there have been so many commentaries on a one-hour session.

Everyone who was present has his or her own version of what happened, and I'm no different. For me, the meeting was a chance to dialogue with a new administration and to make certain the views of the Orthodox Union and our constituent body were well represented.

After the meeting, I surmised that the administration was asking a great deal of Israel while requesting little from the Arab world.

President Obama apparently likes the word "recalibrate." I've heard him use it on many occasions. He said, "We have to recalibrate the perception that little is being asked of the Arab world, and specifically the Palestinians."

The president assured us that in private discussions, Arabs have agreed to stop the incitement and to recognize Israel's legitimate right to be a homeland for the Jewish people, but they have yet to express this publicly. We were assured that in the near future there would be significant changes in the news releases and speeches given by moderate Arab leaders.

The president felt that with a more evenhanded diplomatic posture, the Arab world would rise to the occasion.

It is time to look at what has happened since we had our meeting.

I have not heard one Arab leader publicly recognize Israel's legitimate right to be a Jewish homeland and a free democratic society in the Middle East.

I have not heard one Arab leader publicly recognize that Israel is a nation among the nations of the world.

I have not heard one Arab leader call for the elimination of incitement and hatred against the State of Israel.

I have not heard one Arab leader recommend that the educational tools used to indoctrinate hatred against Israel be eliminated and new textbooks published in which the State of Israel is displayed on the map of the Middle East.

Also, I did not hear any words of conciliation and moderation at the recent Fatah convention.

What I did hear were statements praising suicide bombers and threatening violence, as well as the ridiculous claim accusing Israel of assassinating Arafat – although the Fatah delegates acknowledged there was no proof.

What I did hear at the convention is that Palestinians who supposedly were expelled in 1948 should be able to return to their homes.

What I did hear is that Israel had no justification to defend itself after waiting seven years and absorbing tens of thousands of missiles fired at its people.

What I did hear is a Palestinian leader warning the Arab states not to normalize their ties with Israel. ("Normalization of Israel's ties with the Arab countries before the occupation ends in the Palestinian areas is the last thing that the Palestinians should have to experience," said Abu El-Izz Dajani, a former PLO ambassador.)

What I did hear is Jordan calling on Saudi Arabia to publicly reject appeals to improve relations with Israel. (After meeting with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh told her the confidence-building measures the U.S. wants the Arab states to take will not produce a resolution to the conflict.)

So it seems the Arab world has totally rejected President Obama's requests. I therefore eagerly await the change in approach the president promised us on July 13.

In the interim, the Obama administration has continued to press the settlements issue with Israel.

Our meeting with President Obama was the beginning of a dialogue, and so, as president of the Orthodox Union, representing the fastest growing segment of Jewish life, I respectfully ask the president to reconsider his position in relationship to Israel. At that meeting the president was urged that there be no daylight between Israel and United States – the stronger the relationship, the greater the opportunity for peace.

The Arab world has sent a clear message to President Obama: "We will not change our rhetoric and we will not change our positions. Continue to press Israel, force them to give back land and compromise their security in exchange for words of hatred from moderate Arab leaders."

So I now ask you, Mr. President: If you are truly sincere about finding peace in the Middle East, is it not time to recalibrate your position again? May I suggest you make it abundantly clear that the opportunity for peace rests clearly on the shoulders of the Arab world?

Once the Arab world accepts Israel completely and rejects terrorism and incitement, and once the relationship between the U.S. and Israel is solidified to assure the world there is no daylight, then and only then will the seeds of true peace be planted in the Middle East.

*The writer is the president of the Orthodox Union. (Jewish Press Aug 19)*