



## 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*

In a conversation earlier this week, Dimitri Diliani, the spokesman for PA President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah party in Jerusalem, did not deny his group's involvement in the riots. "Palestinian political factions, including Fatah, are firm on defending

the political, national and religious rights of the Palestinian people," Diliani said, "and it's evident now we will continue defending Al-Aksa Mosque as well as our rights in Jerusalem as a whole."

WE KNOW from history that riots emanating from the Temple Mount traditionally are pre-planned and are part of a larger Palestinian nationalist strategy. For example, in September 2000, the Palestinians started the second intifada by throwing stones at Jewish worshippers after prime-ministerial candidate Ariel Sharon visited the site. At first, the Palestinians claimed the stone-throwing riots were spontaneous. Later, top PA officials, including Yasser Arafat and his deputy, Marwan Barghouti, admitted the Temple Mount clashes were pre-planned.

So why the current clashes?

This all actually began two weeks ago, immediately following a meeting between Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, President Barack Obama and the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. Obama had hoped the meeting would initiate Israeli-Palestinian negotiations aimed at creating a Palestinian state within two years.

During his speech to the UN General Assembly days before the riots, Obama used strongly worded language to call for the creation of a "viable, independent Palestinian state with contiguous territory that ends the occupation that began in 1967."

The term "occupation" routinely is used by the Palestinians as well as some countries hostile to the Jewish state in reference to Israel's presence in the West Bank and Jerusalem. It is unusual for US presidents to use the term, although Jimmy Carter once famously called Israel's presence in the West Bank and east Jerusalem "illegal."

It seems the PA, emboldened by Obama's speech, may be using the riots as a pressure tactic to send a clear message to Israel - if negotiations do not create a state in the near future, expect another intifada. The PA under Arafat was notorious for negotiating on the one hand while leading a violent campaign against Israel on the other.

Already, some of Obama's policies have hardened Palestinian bargaining positions. Most notably, the PA is now demanding a complete halt to Jewish construction in the West Bank and eastern sections of Jerusalem in line with the US president's same demand. The PA never before set a settlement freeze as a prerequisite for talks.

ANOTHER FACTOR may be at play in sparking the recent Jerusalem clashes. The PA's involvement with the Mount riots come after the Palestinian public expressed disapproval with a decision by Abbas to call for the delay of a UN Human Rights Council vote regarding a UN report that accused both Israel and Hamas of war crimes during Israel's defensive war in Gaza in December and January.

That UN report, authored by South African judge Richard Goldstone, has been slammed here as anti-Israel. The report equates Israel, which worked to minimize civilian casualties in Gaza, to Hamas, a terrorist organization that utilized civilians as human shields and fired rockets from Palestinian hospitals and apartment buildings.

Israeli security officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Abbas likely was in part using the Temple Mount clashes to incite against Israel and deflect Palestinian outcry, including from Hamas, stemming from his agreement to delay the UN vote.

## Events...

**Sunday, October 18, 7pm**

*Shilo resident Marc Prowisor of the One Israel Fund will speak on "Judea and Samaria: An Insider's View" at Shaarei Tefillah.*

**Thursday Oct 22, 8pm**

*Jerusalem Post military correspondent and defense analyst Yaakov Katz will be speaking on "Israel, Iran and Obama" at Shaarei Shomayim.*

**December 13-22**

*Join us for BAYT Brotherhood's Eighth Annual Solidarity Mission to Israel. Open to men and women. Call or email Moishe Posner [Moishe@GMDwholdesale.com](mailto:Moishe@GMDwholdesale.com) 416-878-6606 or Larry Zeifman [LWZ@Zeifmans.ca](mailto:LWZ@Zeifmans.ca) 416-256-4000 ext. 239.*

## Commentary...

**The Factor Behind The Temple Mount Riots** By Aaron Klein

With police mobilizing to secure Jerusalem following days of Palestinian rioting, it is instructive to offer some context for clashes that have been taking place on the Temple Mount and at scattered sites throughout east Jerusalem.

On Sunday, Palestinian protesters hurled rocks and bottles at police after Israel barred men between the ages of 18 and 45 from ascending the site. That restrictive order was imposed in response to Palestinian Authority calls for Arabs to flood the holy site to protect Al-Aksa Mosque from so-called Jewish extremists.

The following day, Palestinian and Israeli Arab unrest continued with rock-throwing incidents throughout Jerusalem's Old City and with the stabbing of an Israeli border guard in Shuafat.

The unrest, however, is not spontaneous and is not occurring in a vacuum.

The riots are being directly incited by the PA, whose official media outlets and institutions are stoking Arab flames by claiming right-wing extremist Jews are attempting to threaten Al-Aksa Mosque - a decades-old blood libel that should be easily dismissible in light of heavy Israeli restrictions on Jews and Christians from ascending the Mount during most hours of the day, whereas Muslims are usually free to access the site 24/7.

Indeed, Israeli law prohibits Jews and Christians from praying on the site. If any so-called extremist Jew attempted to enter Al-Aksa, he or she would likely be immediately removed from the Temple Mount by Israeli police, who follow Jewish tour groups very closely and coordinate with the Wakf, the Islamic custodians of the site.

The PA is not just inciting violence; its officials also assist the riots. On Monday Israeli security forces released from custody Jerusalem's senior PA official, Khatem Abed Al-Kadr, who had been detained on suspicion of inciting riots. The PA-aligned Islamic Movement is reportedly even sponsoring buses to transport young, riled-up Israeli Arabs to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount from Umm el-Fahm.

This week's issue  
is dedicated in honour of  
Ruth and Lionel Fisch  
with love from  
the Handelman Family

The writer is Jerusalem bureau chief for WorldNetDaily.com and is author of the recently released *The Late Great State of Israel: How enemies within and without threaten the Jewish country's survival.* (Jerusalem Post Oct. 7)

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**How Israel Was Disarmed** By Bret Stephens  
*News analysis from the near future – January 20, 2010.*

When American diplomats sat down for the first in a series of face-to-face talks with their Iranian counterparts last October in Geneva, few would have predicted that what began as a negotiation over Tehran's nuclear programs would wind up in a stunning demand by the Security Council that Israel give up its atomic weapons.

Yet that's just what the U.N. body did this morning, in a resolution that was as striking for the way member states voted as it was for its substance. All 10 nonpermanent members voted for the resolution, along with permanent members Russia, China and the United Kingdom. France and the United States abstained. By U.N. rules, that means the resolution passes.

The U.S. abstention is sending shock waves through the international community, which has long been accustomed to the U.S. acting as Israel's de facto protector on the Council. It also appears to reverse a decades-old understanding between Washington and Tel Aviv that the U.S. would acquiesce in Israel's nuclear arsenal as long as that arsenal remained undeclared. The Jewish state is believed to possess as many as 200 weapons.

Tehran reacted positively to the U.S. abstention. "For a long time we have said about Mr. Obama that we see change but no improvement," said Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki. "Now we can say there has been an improvement."

The resolution calls for a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East. It also demands that Israel sign the 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and submit its nuclear facilities to international inspection. Two similar, albeit nonbinding, resolutions were approved last September by the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.

At the time, the U.S. opposed a resolution focused on Israel but abstained from a more general motion calling for regional disarmament. "We are very pleased with the agreed approach reflected here today," said then-U.S. Ambassador to the IAEA Glyn Davies.

Since then, however, relations between the Obama administration and the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, never warm to begin with, have cooled dramatically. The administration accused Tel Aviv of using "disproportionate force" following a Nov. 13 Israeli aerial attack on an apparent munitions depot in Gaza City, in which more than a dozen young children were killed.

Mr. Netanyahu also provoked the administration's ire after he was inadvertently caught on an open microphone calling Mr. Obama "worse than Chamberlain." The comment followed the president's historic Dec. 21 summit meeting with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Geneva, the first time leaders of the two countries have met since the Carter administration.

But the factors that chiefly seemed to drive the administration's decision to abstain from this morning's vote were more strategic than personal. Western negotiators have been pressing Iran to make good on its previous agreement in principle to ship its nuclear fuel to third countries so it could be rendered usable in Iran's civilian nuclear facilities. The Iranians, in turn, have been adamant that they would not do so unless progress were made on international disarmament.

"The Iranians have a point," said one senior administration official. "The U.S. can't forever be the enforcer of a double standard where Israel gets a nuclear free ride but Iran has to abide by every letter in the NPT. President Obama has put the issue of nuclear disarmament at the center of his foreign policy agenda. His credibility is at stake and so is U.S. credibility in the Muslim world. How can we tell Tehran that they're better off without nukes if we won't make the same point to our Israeli friends?"

Also factoring into the administration's thinking are reports that the Israelis are in the final stages of planning an attack on Iran's nuclear

installations. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who met with his Israeli counterpart Ehud Barak in Paris last week, has been outspoken in his opposition to such a strike. The Jerusalem Post has reported that Mr. Gates warned Mr. Barak that the U.S. would "actively stand in the way" of any Israeli strike.

"The Israelis need to look at this U.N. vote as a shot across their bow," said a senior Pentagon official. "If they want to start a shooting war with Iran, we won't have their backs on the Security Council."

An Israeli diplomat observed bitterly that Jan. 20 was the 68th anniversary of the Wannsee conference, which historians believe is where Nazi Germany planned the extermination of European Jewry. An administration spokesman said the timing of the vote was "purely coincidental." (Wall Street Journal Oct 5)

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**Marginalize the Renegades** By Isi Leibler

The exploitation of Judge Goldstone's Jewish background by our enemies intensifies our obligation to confront the enemy within - renegade Jews - including Israelis who stand at the vanguard of global efforts to demonize and delegitimize the Jewish state. Such odious Jews can be traced back to apostates during the Middle Ages who fabricated blood libels and vile distortions of Jewish religious practice for Christian anti-Semites to incite hatred which culminated in massacres. It was in response to these renegades that the herem (excommunication) was introduced.

More recent examples include Jewish communists who, in addition to undermining campaigns to liberate Soviet Jews and defending state-sponsored anti-Semitism, even applauded the Stalinist execution of their kinsmen on bogus charges. Like their contemporary counterparts, some of them attempted to depict themselves as devoted Jews championing "world peace."

In practice they simply advanced the objectives of the Evil Empire. They were regarded as pariahs and isolated from the Jewish mainstream.

Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, took ruthless measures against Israeli renegades, insisting also that Israeli embassies maintain close ties with local Jewish leaders and persuade them to refrain from publicly criticizing policies impinging on security. The consensus was that it would be immoral for Jews abroad to influence decisions that could have life-and-death implications for Israeli citizens.

Unfortunately, in the wake of the Oslo Accords, the massive divisions which tore Israeli society apart shattered this convention, ironically with right-wing politicians encouraging Diaspora leaders to undermine the Rabin government.

This occurred simultaneously with the rise of post-Zionism, vigorously promoted by the daily newspaper Ha'aretz, which published critiques of Zionist doctrine until then considered beyond the pale by the vast majority of Israelis.

Ha'aretz also launched an English internet edition which emboldened Diaspora Jewish extremists and provided a green light to global media outlets to run demonizing articles about Israel on the grounds that they had already appeared in a "reputable" Israeli daily. The most recent example was the Ha'aretz campaign defaming the IDF, which proved to be entirely baseless but created an enormous global upsurge of anti-Israeli hysteria and eased the way for the Goldstone Report.

IN THIS atmosphere, fringe groups of "non-Jewish Jews," many with no prior involvement in Jewish life, exploited their Jewish origins or Israeli nationality to defame Israel. Today, they occupy leading roles fueling global anti-Israel campaigns.

Regrettably, successive Israeli governments failed to respond even when professors at universities funded by Israeli taxpayers and Diaspora Zionists began exploiting their positions to delegitimize their country. They identified with Israel's enemies, calling on the world to boycott Israeli institutions, including their own universities.

Israel prides itself on being the only country in the region in which genuine freedom of expression reigns supreme. But it is also a country under siege, surrounded by neighbors seeking its destruction and confronted by an ever-hostile global community. To tolerate such

abominations in the name of freedom of expression is taking an ideal to a lunatic extreme. Besides, it is hard to visualize the authorities adopting such a laissez faire approach had the offenders been racists, fascists or even radical right-wing extremists.

In fact, when senior academics like Ben-Gurion University's Neve Gordon, call Israel an "apartheid state" and encourage the world to boycott Israeli institutions, they are the ones abusing academic freedom.

It is thus high time for the Knesset to set up a non-partisan commission to recommend legislation to deny tenure at state-sponsored institutions to those indulging in such activities.

The rot has extended to the Diaspora, especially Europe and has also affected the United States. Highly vocal Jewish groups like the recently created J Street describe themselves as 'Zionist' but their prime objective is to pressure the US government to use "tough love" against Israel - a euphemism for demanding that the Jewish state make further unilateral concessions to neighbors pledged to its annihilation.

In the past two weeks alone, a host of new anti-Israeli initiatives were reported. In Toronto, Jews were at the forefront of a campaign to boycott Israeli films at a film festival because the anniversary of Tel Aviv - 'built on the destroyed villages of Palestinians' - was being celebrated; two Israeli women who evaded national service are conducting a North American campus tour under the auspices of 'Jewish Voice for Peace' to persuade students to intensify their role in the "resistance movement"; in San Francisco the local Jewish Federation is providing funds for a film festival which promotes the vilest anti-Israel films; radical Rabbi Michael Lerner invited a woman who justifies suicide bombings to address his synagogue on Yom Kippur; and so on.

IM EIN ani li mi li? If we are not for ourselves, who will be? We are engaged in a battle against fiendish enemies committed to our destruction. The Israeli government must now take steps to neutralize the impact of renegade Jews who present themselves as legitimate alternative Jewish viewpoints. Such an initiative by a country which provides genuine democratic rights to all its citizens, including Arabs, could hardly be categorized as eradicating freedom of expression. It would rather represent a highly overdue effort to exorcise such odious groups from the mainstream and expose them as unrepresentative fringe groups with no standing.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is currently riding a wave after his superb United Nations address. He should summon a global Jewish solidarity conference encompassing Jewish leaders, opinion makers, philanthropists and activists similar to that organized in 1989 under the auspices of then prime minister Yitzhak Shamir and then defense minister Yitzhak Rabin in order to demonstrate the unity of the Jewish people.

At a time when we desperately seek allies, in addition to encouraging millions of Jews in the Diaspora who remain committed to Israel to become more actively engaged in our struggle, such a gathering would also provide an opportunity to exorcise the renegades from our midst. (Jerusalem Post Oct. 5)

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### **A License to Kill** By Moshe Arens

While the Goldstone report is being eagerly read in Israel and in capitals around the world, it is also being intensively studied by terrorists bent on destroying the State of Israel - and they must be breathing a sigh of relief.

This is not only because the Hamas terrorists in Gaza are in effect getting off scot-free in the report - they, in any case, did not have to be concerned about being brought before the International Court of Justice.

They can also interpret the report as international approbation for carrying out military operations from civilian population centers - schools, hospitals, refugee camps, etc. - as they did in the years when they were launching rockets into Israeli towns and villages in the south of Israel, and as they continued to do during the Israeli military operation in the Gaza Strip.

From the report it is clear to them that establishing military units and rocket launchers in civilian population centers will from now on be an effective military tactic that they can hope to apply with impunity, enjoying

at least partial immunity from an Israeli response. That response is likely to be withheld out of concern that it will lead to Israel being charged with committing a war crime.

The report is in effect a license to kill - for Hamas, for Hezbollah, and for terrorists all over the world. No less.

"The bastards have changed the rules," Spiro Agnew, Richard Nixon's vice president, supposedly said when his wrong-doings caught up with him. He resigned on October 10, 1973. That was 36 years ago, during the Yom Kippur War, a conventional battlefield war, tanks against tanks and soldiers against soldiers, with no civilians in the vicinity. And also no war crime inquiries.

But since that Israeli victory, things have changed. Faced by the overpowering force of the Israel Defense Forces, terror attacks against civilians have become the weapon of choice for Israel's enemies. And here the Goldstone report is changing the rules of warfare so as to favor the terrorists. As long as they operate in civilian surroundings, they should have nothing to worry about.

Hezbollah pioneered this tactic in Southern Lebanon, and put it into practice very effectively during the Second Lebanon War. Hamas in Gaza, tutored by Hezbollah, followed suit. And the Goldstone report has now enshrined it with international legalese, which may very well serve as a precedent in future encounters with terrorists.

This will have far-reaching effects on the war against terror, wherever it is being waged, and it will empower the terrorists, whether Justice Richard Goldstone realizes it or not. It will be especially damaging for Israel, whose civilians are under almost constant threat from terrorists.

During Operation Defensive Shield the IDF showed that the commonly held wisdom that terrorism could not be defeated by military means was dead wrong.

Whereas Palestinian terrorism could not be deterred, it could be physically eliminated by military means. The terrorists could be pursued into their lairs and destroyed, or brought to justice. Since then, terrorism from Judea and Samaria against Israeli civilians has essentially ceased. Now, after the Goldstone report, that kind of operation is going to be difficult to repeat.

The report is a blow to the war on terror everywhere and for all nations engaged in fighting terrorism. Hopefully, the nations of the world will have the strength and political will to reject the report, and make it clear to all that terror operations carried out from civilian areas are the war crime, and not the attempt to eliminate these attacks. That using civilians as a shield is a war crime.

If that does not happen, we can expect that areas densely populated by civilians will become the base for terrorist activities in many parts of the world - with the expectation that "international law" will provide them with immunity from counterattacks.

Israel, knowing that its existence is at stake, will find a way to defend itself even under these changed circumstances. But the peace process is bound to be set back. This will not be the time to take big risks.

Thank you Justice Goldstone. The road to hell is paved with good intentions. (Haaretz Oct 7)

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### **You Can't Say That** By Anne Bayefsky

*At the UN, the Obama administration backs limits on free speech.*

The Obama administration has marked its first foray into the UN human rights establishment by backing calls for limits on freedom of expression. The newly-minted American policy was rolled out at the latest session of the UN Human Rights Council, which ended in Geneva on Friday. American diplomats were there for the first time as full Council members and intent on making friends.

President Obama chose to join the Council despite the fact that the Organization of the Islamic Conference holds the balance of power and human rights abusers are among its lead actors, including China, Cuba, and Saudi Arabia. Islamic states quickly interpreted the president's penchant for "engagement" as meaning fundamental rights were now up for grabs. Few would have predicted, however, that the shift would begin with America's most treasured freedom.

For more than a decade, a UN resolution on the freedom of expression was shepherded through the Council, and the now defunct Commission on Human Rights which it replaced, by Canada. Over the years, Canada tried mightily to garner consensus on certain minimum standards, but the "reformed" Council changed the distribution of seats on the UN's lead human rights body. In 2008, against the backdrop of the publication of images of Mohammed in a Danish newspaper, Cuba and various Islamic countries destroyed the consensus and rammed through an amendment which introduced a limit on any speech they claimed was an "abuse . . . [that] constitutes an act of racial or religious discrimination."

The Obama administration decided that a revamped freedom of expression resolution, extracted from Canadian hands, would be an ideal emblem for its new engagement policy. So it cosponsored a resolution on the subject with none other than Egypt--a country characterized by an absence of freedom of expression.

Privately, other Western governments were taken aback and watched the weeks of negotiations with dismay as it became clear that American negotiators wanted consensus at all costs. In introducing the resolution on Thursday, October 1--adopted by consensus the following day--the ranking U.S. diplomat, Chargé d'Affaires Douglas Griffiths, crowed:

"The United States is very pleased to present this joint project with Egypt. This initiative is a manifestation of the Obama administration's commitment to multilateral engagement throughout the United Nations and of our genuine desire to seek and build cooperation based upon mutual interest and mutual respect in pursuit of our shared common principles of tolerance and the dignity of all human beings."

His Egyptian counterpart, Ambassador Hisham Badr, was equally pleased--for all the wrong reasons. He praised the development by telling the Council that "freedom of expression . . . has been sometimes misused," insisting on limits consistent with the "true nature of this right" and demanding that the "the media must . . . conduct . . . itself in a professional and ethical manner."

The new resolution, championed by the Obama administration, has a number of disturbing elements. It emphasizes that "the exercise of the right to freedom of expression carries with it special duties and responsibilities . . ." which include taking action against anything meeting the description of "negative racial and religious stereotyping." It also purports to "recognize . . . the moral and social responsibilities of the media" and supports "the media's elaboration of voluntary codes of professional ethical conduct" in relation to "combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance."

Pakistan's Ambassador Zamir Akram, speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, made it clear that they understand the resolution and its protection against religious stereotyping as allowing free speech to be trumped by anything that defames or negatively stereotypes religion. The idea of protecting the human rights "of religions" instead of individuals is a favorite of those countries that do not protect free speech and which use religion--as defined by government--to curtail it.

Even the normally feeble European Union tried to salvage the American capitulation by expressing the hope that the resolution might be read a different way. Speaking on behalf of the EU following the resolution's adoption, French Ambassador Jean-Baptiste Matthei declared that "human rights law does not, and should not, protect religions or belief systems, hence the language on stereotyping only applies to stereotyping of individuals . . . and not of ideologies, religions or abstract values. The EU rejects the concept of defamation of religions." The EU also distanced itself from the American compromise on the media, declaring that "the notion of a moral and social responsibility of the media" goes "well beyond" existing international law and "the EU cannot subscribe to this concept in such general terms."

In 1992 when the United States ratified the main international law treaty which addresses freedom of expression, the government carefully attached reservations to ensure that the treaty could not "restrict the right of free speech and association protected by the Constitution and laws of the United States."

The Obama administration's debut at the Human Rights Council laid bare its very different priorities. Threatening freedom of expression is a price for engagement with the Islamic world that it is evidently prepared to pay. (Weekly Standard Oct 5)

*The writer is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, a professor at Touro College, and the editor of EYEontheUN.org.*

## **Joined in Prayer** Editorial Jerusalem Post

Israel isn't spoiled for friends in the non-Jewish world, not even among the Christian mainstream. Organized Christianity might be expected to demonstrate solidarity with a Jewish state that stands on the frontline against extreme Islamist expansionism and aggression. This doesn't always happen.

As part of a well-orchestrated campaign to boycott Israel and employ a variety of punitive discriminatory sanctions against it, certain Protestant churches, including some of the most established and prosperous, are increasingly promoting "divestment from Israel." Foremost among denominations dabbling on-and-off in divestment agendas are some of America's Presbyterians and Methodists. For a while their leaderships - often alienated from the actual membership - led the entire divestment-from-Israel onslaught in the US.

The United Church of Christ hasn't lagged far behind. In Britain, the Church of England has sometimes been far from helpful.

The zeal some of these churches expend on anti-Israel drives fits snugly into the framework of spiraling anti-Semitism/anti-Zionism worldwide, the sort which conforms to Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky's 3-Ds test - delegitimization of Israel, demonization and the application of double-standards.

So finding warm, genuine and long-lasting Christian friendship in this near-noxious atmosphere is a rare source of comfort. For 30 years, the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem (ICEJ) has lavished affection upon the Jewish state. Indeed, comfort is its *raison d'être*. It was founded in 1980 as an evangelical response to the anti-Israel hostility already rampant. Its inspiration: Isaiah 40:1-2 - "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem..."

THIRTY YEARS ago Israel's legitimacy in Jerusalem was under intense diplomatic assault, as 13 embassies left the capital to protest the Knesset's adoption of the Jerusalem Law. In a countermove, over 1,000 pilgrims from 40 countries decided to establish a Christian embassy in Jerusalem to affirm the 3,000-year-old immutable Jewish bond to the Jewish capital.

On Succot that year, Jerusalemites were for the first time treated to week-long celebrations of the Feast of Tabernacles by Christians convening from all over the world. This annual convergence was held year in, year out since then, even when suicide bombings on buses, in markets, at malls and in restaurants made Jerusalem a tourist-free zone for just about everybody else.

This year, the potential deterrent was financial, but even the worldwide recession could make no dent in the outpouring of support. Thousands of Christian pilgrims, from an estimated 100 lands, have thronged Jerusalem to ease any sense of isolation.

While certain Jewish groups loudly denounce their ostensible hidden agenda, experience clearly indicates that they are here altruistically. The ICEJ does not engage in proselytizing and discourages pilgrims from disseminating literature and from other activities which could be construed as attempts to win over converts. As distinct from hostile efforts in the past and the present to force or lure Jews away from Judaism, these thousands of Christians congregate here to realize the Prophet Zechariah's vision (14:16) of all nations gathering in Jerusalem during Succot.

The \$12-15 million injected annually into the Israeli economy via this largest of all tourist events is a happy by-product. Most important is the visitors' profound identification with an often beleaguered and defamed Jewish state and its capital.

In an op-ed article in The Jerusalem Post last week, the ICEJ's executive director, Malcolm Hedding, wrote: "Jerusalem was the Royal House of Israel long before London or Paris had regal palaces, and before Berlin or New York even existed. Yet it is these capitals in their arrogance that seek, almost daily, to disinvest the Jewish people from their ancient, biblical claim and connection to Jerusalem."

Hedding, whose ICEJ partners The Jerusalem Post in producing our monthly Christian Edition, also recalled that, "The Psalmist of Israel, King David, looked over the walls and ramparts of Jerusalem and wrote, 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper who love her.' His great prayer was for peace and joy to rain down upon the city as the Jewish worshipers gathered to celebrate their prescribed festivals and as the nations also came to this 'house of prayer for all peoples.' This is our prayer as well," Hedding declared.

We wholeheartedly endorse it. And we commend the ICEJ for 30 years of unswerving friendship. (Jerusalem Post Oct 7)