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JewglePerth.com is an online forum and medium for communication about issues and events that impact the Perth Jewish community from a Modern Orthodox perspective.

This resource summarises some of the articles and content that can be linked from our blog site about the current situation in Israel. We share these perspectives in an effort to counter media bias and to support the case for Israel.

The JewglePerth blog team (Gedalia, Dovid Hamelech, Yitro, Yehudit and Shlomo) stand in prayer and solidarity with Jewish people the world over as Israel defends itself against hatred and terror.

לְשִׁמּוֹמָהּ; אֲשְׁדוֹד, בְּצִהְרֵימָם יִגְרָשׁוּהָ, וְעֶקְרוֹן, תִּעְקַר כִּי עֲזָה עֲזוּבָה תִּהְיֶה, וְאַשְׁקֶלוֹן
For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation; they shall drive out Ashdod at the noonday, and Ekron shall be rooted up (Tzephania 2:4)

מי שברך לחיילי צה"ל :
מי שִׁבְרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב הוּא יִבְרַךְ אֶת
חַיֵּי צָבָא הַגָּנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, הָעוֹמְדִים עַל מִשְׁמַר אֶרְצֵנוּ
וְעָרֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִגְּבוּל הַלְּבָנוֹן וְעַד מִדְּבַר מִצְרַיִם וּמִן הַיָּם
הַגָּדוֹל עַד לְבוֹא הָעֶרְבָה בִּיבֻשָׁה בְּאוִיר וּבָיִם. יִתֵּן יְיָ
אֶת אוֹיְבֵינוּ הַקָּמִים עָלֵינוּ גְּנָפִים לְפָנֵיהֶם. הַקְּדוֹשׁ-בְּרוּךְ-
הוּא יִשְׁמַר וְיִצִּיל אֶת חַיֵּינוּ מִכָּל צָרָה וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל גִּזְע
וּמַחֲלָה וְיִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵיהֶם. יִדְבֵּר
שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ תַחֲתֵיהֶם וְיַעֲטֹרם בְּכֹתֵר יְשׁוּעָה וּבַעֲטֹרֵת נִצְחוֹן.
דְּבָרִים כ' וְיִקְיֵם בָּהֶם הַכְּתוּב: כִּי יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הַהֵלֶךְ עִמָּכֶם לְהִלָּחֵם
לָכֶם עִם אוֹיְבֵיכֶם לְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶתְכֶם: וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן.



Answering Israel's critics - Six clichés you are likely to hear constantly in the coming days, and why they're false

Yigal Walt

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3647296,00.html>

1) "Israel's response in Gaza is disproportionate"

Since when is war a mathematical equation? The basic objective of any warring party is to inflict maximal damage on the enemy while minimizing its own casualties. Was there anything proportional about the US war in Iraq? Or about Iraq's invasion of Kuwait for that matter? Or about Russia's recent war against Georgia? Israel is doing exactly what any other country has done in the past. This is how war works.

Would a British citizen complain that "too few" British soldiers are being killed in Iraq? Probably not.

And on a more elementary note: Palestinian military inferiority is not an indication of moral superiority. Palestinian insistence on resorting to violence despite this military weakness is an indication of poor judgment perhaps – yet it is by no means an indication of moral virtue. Being militarily weak does not make the Palestinians right.

2) "But Qassams don't kill"

Actually, Qassams do kill. Not too often, perhaps, but dozens of Israelis were killed and wounded by rocket fire in recent years. Moreover, at this time the Palestinians are firing long-range Grad rockets with even greater explosive power. Such rockets killed 2 Israelis Monday.

Yet beyond the casualty figures, the psychological damage caused as result of living under an ongoing rocket threat is immeasurable. Would anyone in the West agree to have their family live under constant rocket attacks and be regularly woken up by sirens in the middle of the night? Would anyone living under such conditions appreciate being told that "these rockets don't kill?" Probably not.

3) "It's all because of Israel's siege. Israel should allow aid into Gaza."

Israel has allowed goods into Gaza regularly throughout the "siege". Palestinians have been able to complement these deliveries with supplies smuggled through hundreds of tunnels (of course, they would likely be able to bring in even more food had they not used the tunnels to smuggle in missiles.).

The day before operation "Cast Lead" got underway, Israel allowed dozens of trucks carrying aid to enter the Strip. On Tuesday, another 100 trucks – double the normal number –are expected to enter Gaza after Defense Minister Barak approved the move.

In short, Israel is allowing aid into the Strip (but guess who has kept Gaza crossings mostly closed thus far? That's right, Egypt.)



4) “Why didn’t Israel just agree to renew the Gaza truce?”

First, what truce? Terror groups continued to fire rockets throughout the lull, even if somewhat infrequently, and even if the world didn’t seem to care too much. Nonetheless, Israel clearly declared that it is interested in extending the truce. Our top officials made it clear time and again.

Yet Hamas leaders clearly declared that the truce has ended on December 19th, and proceeded to bombard southern Israeli communities with dozens of rockets daily. In short, it is no wonder that even the Egyptians are blaming Hamas this time.

5) “But Hamas was elected democratically – why can’t Israel accept it?”

Although Hamas won the Palestinian elections, it took Gaza by force, in the process hurling rival Fatah members down to their death from high-rises and shooting others in the knees with the declared aim of maiming them. Some democracy.

In any case, Israel in fact “recognizes,” de facto, Hamas’ rule in Gaza, which is precisely why it is justified in attacking the Hamas-ruled Strip, recognizing that it is indeed being governed by a terror entity. Israel did not launch the operation because Hamas is in power there – rather, it did so because Hamas is a terrorist organization that has deliberately targeted civilians with thousands of rockets over the past 8 years.

6) “Israel is targeting civilians”

You mean to say that “one of the most powerful armies in the world” has been bombing Gaza for days, deploying massive air power, dropping hundreds of bombs, and ultimately killing a grand total of 50 civilians or so in the “most crowded place on earth?”

There are two options here: A) The Israeli army is not targeting civilians, or B) Israeli pilots suck. We tend to go with option A.

Indeed, Israel goes to great lengths to avoid civilian casualties, by deploying precise ammunition and specialized techniques. In fact, nobody in the world does this better than the Jewish State.



From Shimon Peres; President of the State of Israel

It is the first time in the history of Israel that we, the Israelis, cannot understand the motives or the purposes of the ones who are shooting at us. It is the most unreasonable war, done by the most unreasonable warriors.

The story is simple. Israel has left Gaza completely, out of our own free will, at a high cost. In Gaza there is no single Israeli civilian or soldier. They were evacuated from Gaza, our settlements, which called for a very expensive cost. We had to mobilize 45,000 policemen to take out our settlers from there. We spent \$2.5 billion. The passages were open. Money was sent to Gaza. We suggested aid in many ways - economically, medically, and otherwise. We were very careful not to make the lives of the civilian people in Gaza difficult. Still I have not heard until now a single person who could explain to us reasonably: why are they firing rockets against Israel? What are the reasons? What is the purpose?

And I must say also that the phenomenon about Israel is the restraint of the army and the unity of the people. The army waited and waited; the Palestinians asked for a ceasefire, and we agreed. They themselves have violated the ceasefire. Again, we didn't know why, until it came to a point where we were left without a choice but to bring an end to it. The operation was planned carefully and the army was true to its principles: namely, to be precise in its targets and careful not to hit civilian life. There is a problem because many of the bombs were stored in private houses. We have contacted the owners of the houses, the people that dwell there, and told them leave it. You can't live with bombs. We have to bring an end to the source of the bombs.

Israel doesn't have any ambition in Gaza. We left out of our free choice. We have never gone back to the idea of returning to Gaza. It's over. But we cannot permit that Gaza will become a permanent base of threatening and even killing children and innocent people in Israel for God knows why. I feel that in our hearts, we don't have any hatred for the Gazan people. Their suffering doesn't carry any joy in our hearts. On the contrary, we feel that the better they will have it, better neighbors we shall have. Now that Hamas is turning to the Arab world for help, the truth is that the Arab world has to turn to Hamas for the help of Hamas. If Hamas will stop it, there is no need for any help. Everything can come again to normalcy. Passages: open; economic life: free; no Israeli intervention; no Israeli participation in any of the turnarounds in Gaza.

As a nation, we feel united. As a nation, there is wholehearted support for the army, the way they handled it, their restraint, their discrimination, and their responsibility. The great winner can be reason, and reason will lead to peace. We are very serious, in a serious mood. Many of our children are still in the shelters, and we would like them, like the children of Gaza, to breathe fresh air again. This is the story, and whoever asks us to stop shooting - they have to change the address. Let them turn to Hamas and ask them to stop shooting, and there won't be shooting. Thank you very much.



Hamas's suicide mission

National Post <http://www.nationalpost.com/news/story.html?id=1121362>

Published: Monday, December 29, 2008

When Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, the Jewish state gave the local Palestinians political autonomy for the first time since the pre-Roman era. The hope was that the Palestinians would use their newfound freedom to build a free and prosperous state — one that would live in peace, if not friendship, with its Jewish neighbour.

That didn't happen. Hamas took over Gaza and renounced all previous Palestinian-Israeli agreements, reiterating its rejection of the Jewish state's right to exist. Rather than build up local infrastructure and a consumer economy, Hamas forged ties with Iran and dug weapons-smuggling tunnels into Egypt. A variety of groups — including Hamas itself — began raining missiles on Israel. Predictably, Israel did what it could to stanch this flow of weaponry, even as it ensured that a baseline of humanitarian supplies made it into Gaza.

Effectively, Hamas turned Gaza into one giant launching pad for jihad, the welfare of the local Palestinian population be damned. It is thus ridiculous — comical, almost — to hear Hamas officials play the pity card in the wake of Israel's ongoing military operation in Gaza. It is Hamas, not Israel, which seeks to “martyr” Palestinians in furtherance of a religious war.

As for the world's leaders — many of whom are balancing their denunciation of Hamas with calls for Israel to halt its allegedly “disproportionate” military operation — may we ask what they would do if their nations were under daily bombardment from a hostile neighbour?

Israel's initial barrage in Gaza killed about 200 Palestinians — most of them Hamas security officials. The fact that just a few dozen civilians were killed, despite Gaza's high population density and Hamas's tendency to embed its jihadis in dense residential areas — is a testament to Israeli military professionalism.

Such a civilian death toll would be a rounding error in any major military operation in Chechnya, Afghanistan or Iraq. And in those cases, you can bet the world's leaders wouldn't line up to wag their fingers. Only Israel gets lectured and condemned when it defends itself against deadly, unambiguous acts of military aggression.

Israel enters 2009 as it seems to enter every year — as a target of unquenchable Arab hatred, and the subject of global hypocrisy. The West can do little about the former pathology. Let us at least have the moral clarity to renounce the latter.



Very Disproportionate, Indeed Marty Peretz 27.12.2008

From January 1 until December 21, Hamas and its allies had launched exactly 1,250 rockets across the border between Gaza and Israel. Then the escalation really started: on Wednesday 70 projectile missiles landed in the Negev and its populated areas. On Thursday, more of the same. On Friday, two Palestinian girls, cousins of 5 and 12 years, were killed by a rocket that was launched in the Strip and landed in the Strip. But these unfortunates were not the targets of fire. It was just another day of blast offs into the Jewish state.

The government in Jerusalem had made it unmistakably clear that it would no longer tolerate this fire power aimed at innocent civilian life. It had been saying this for months to an increasingly skeptical and apprehensive, not to say, restive public. And to Hamas which didn't seem to care. Instead, it threatened Israel by word and follow-up deeds that confirmed the recklessness - as if confirmation was needed- of also this Palestinian "liberation" movement, the last in the long line of terrorist revolutionaries acting in the name of pathetic and blood-thirsty Palestine.

So at 11:30 on Saturday morning, according to both the Jerusalem Post and Ha'aretz, as well as the New York Times, 50 fighter jets and attack helicopters demolished some 40 to 50 sites in just about three minutes, maybe five. Message: do not fuck with the Jews. At roughly noon, another 60 air-attack vehicles went after other Hamas strategic positions. Israeli intelligence reported 225 people dead, mostly Hamas military leaders with some functionaries, besides, and perhaps 400 wounded. The Palestinians announced 300 dead, probably as a reflex in order to begin their whining about disproportionate Israeli acts of war. And 600 wounded.

Frankly, I am up to my gullet with this reflex criticism of Israel as going beyond proportionality in its responses to war waged against its population with the undisguised intention of putting an end to the political expression of the Jewish nation. Within hours, Nicolas Sarkozy was already taking up the cudgel of French righteousness and pronouncing the actually quite sober Israeli response to the continuous war on its borders "disproportionate." Enough. What would be proportionate, oh, so so proportionate apparently, are those tried-and-true half measures to contain Hamas that have never worked. Remember that in 2005 Israel ceded Gaza to the Palestinians waiting and hoping that they would make something of a civil society of their territory, civil for their own and civil to their neighbors. It was not to be.

There is only small likelihood that Hamas has learned its lesson. These Sunni fanatics are still supported by the Shi'a fanatics in Iran. And they are also backed by the House of Saud which cannot be seen to be turning its back on Sunni piety. Gaza is the only place in the Middle East where Tehran and Riyadh are allied. In both Lebanon and Iraq, they are the bankrollers (and more than bankrollers) of hostile sectarian forces engaged in killing each other. Thus, Hamas has still some rope with which to play. Cash, after all, is a great deluder.

The current warfare will go on a bit longer. If there is a pause and if I were giving advice to the Israelis, this is what I would say to Hamas and to the people of Gaza: "If a rocket or missile is launched against us, if you take captive one of our soldiers (as you have held one for two and a half years), if you raise a new Intifada against us, there will be an immediate response. And it will be very disproportionate. Proportion does not work."

No sooner had I written these last words that Khaled Meshal, the Hamas leader exiled in Damascus (which also apparently pines to make peace with Israel), announced the beginning of the Third Intifada.



DAMNED IF THEY DO - BUT ISRAEL'S DEAD IF THEY DON'T

<http://www.nypost.com/>

Ralph Peters

December 29, 2008

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Israel will have bought time, not peace.

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

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

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

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

Humanity doesn't progress. It just changes clothes.



WHAT I WANT...AND WHAT I'LL DO - PAULA STERN (Israel Insider)

What I want...is to go collect my little boy and bring him home. I want to lock him in a room and tell Israel that no, you can't have him. I've changed my mind. No, I'm sorry. He's not allowed to play with guns and big things that go boom. No, I'm his mother. I gave birth to him and no, you simply can't take him.

What I want...is to call him and make sure he is where I put him, where he told me he was yesterday. Not in the north, where Hizbollah is promising to burn the ground and open a second front and not in the south, where dozens of rockets and mortars have been fired at Israel, where a man was killed and dozens were wounded.

That's what I want...

And what I'll do, is sit here at my desk and keep editing this document for my client. I'll update the copyright statements and change the installation information to reflect the new platforms the product now supports. I'll answer the phone and I'll talk to my accountant. And what I'll do, is tell my heart to settle. I'll tell my eyes to take a moment and look at the next beautiful wave of clouds rolling in over Jerusalem. I'll sign the papers I need to sign; type the words I need to type. I'll tell my younger daughter to clean her room and my younger son that he has to study for his test NOW. I'll tell my middle son he can borrow the car like we agreed, but he has to drive carefully. I won't talk to my daughter because she's old enough to see the cracks in my smile and know that outside, it's all a front.

What I'll do is answer the phone if Elie calls and I'll talk to him calmly. I'll listen if he tells me he's staying where he is. I'll listen if he tells me they are moving him up north. I'll listen if he tells me they are moving him down south near Gaza. I'll listen, I'll tell him to be careful, and call me when he can. I won't for a single moment, tell him that I'm scared, that I have no real experience with this war thing and that I don't really want him to have any experience with it either. What I'll do is continue to listen to the news and pray for our civilians who are under attack, and our soldiers who are risking their lives to defend them.

And most of all, what I will do is dig deep inside where I store my faith in God and in my country and my people. I will do what every Israeli is doing today, hoping this will end soon, but not too soon that we only succeed in putting off to tomorrow what should have been dealt with today. I will do all of this because we are what we have always been, a nation with no choice but to deal with what our enemies choose. They chose to shell our cities with rockets and so we must stop them. They chose the path of war, so we will set the scenery around this path. They chose rockets to attack, and so we will use our air force, our tanks, our ground forces and our artillery to protect.

We are, above all things, a nation that chooses life. Today, we choose to protect the lives of our citizens. Maybe deep down, what I want is to hide inside myself, but what I will do is what every Israeli is doing today – having faith that we are bringing a better reality to our country by taking its safety into our hands. Our soldiers have our faith, they have our prayer, and they have our love.

May God protect the soldiers of Israel and watch over them as they do what they must. They cannot be defeated because where they go, they will not be alone. They have with them the Defender of Israel.



On the Ground in Gaza

Barry Rubin

Israel didn't want to attack the Gaza Strip from the ground or from the air. Hamas, which had long broken the ceasefire, canceled it altogether. Then it began large-scale attacks on Israel. This is a war of defense. And it is being conducted just 30 miles from here, Israel's main city.

According to the just-released Israeli government statement on the offensive:

"The objective of this stage is to destroy the terrorist infrastructure of the Hamas in the area of operation, while taking control of some of rocket launching area used by the Hamas, in order to greatly reduce the quantity of rockets fired at Israel and Israeli civilians.

"The operation will...strike a direct and hard blow against the Hamas while increasing the deterrent strength of the Israel Defense Forces, in order to bring about an improved and more stable security situation for residents of southern Israel over the long term."

Even as the 2006 war was continuing, the Israel Defense Force was evaluating the mistakes made in Lebanon—helicopters needed better short-range munitions, improved air-ground coordination, care in using tanks unsupported by infantry, and so on.

But contrary to the insistence of armchair strategists now, it would not be easy to seize control of all the Gaza Strip and govern it for an extended period of time. Hamas is not going to go away. International support for Israel is limited. Fatah and the Palestinian Authority will not react strongly to try to take Gaza back for itself. There are about one million people in the Gaza Strip and Hamas will make every attempt to ensure there are civilian casualties—and pretend there are even more.

So "total victory" is not easy, if it is even possible. The irony is that Israeli policy is based on the idea that there is no military solution to these issues. But since there is no diplomatic solution either, force must be used to protect Israel and its citizens.

It should be remembered that Israel withdrew completely from the Gaza Strip, dismantled all settlements, and wished the Palestinians good luck. The Palestinian Authority (PA) was not up to the challenge. It could and would not change its corrupt and incompetent ways. U.S. policy insisted that Hamas be allowed to run in the elections, even though it did not meet the standard of accepting the 1993 Israel-PLO agreement.

Hamas won.

But Hamas invoked the radical Islamist policy of "one man, one vote, one time." It staged a coup and kicked out its PA and Fatah rivals. Rather than focusing on economic development or even maintaining peace to build up its own power, Hamas pursued its strategy of permanent war against Israel. Children's programs taught the kiddies that they should grow up to be suicide bombers and kill Jews. Hamas soldiers, or their junior allies, fired rockets and mortars at Israel. And of course Hamas staged a cross-border raid and kidnapped an Israeli soldier.

In spite of this, many in the West think Israel has some kind of choice in this matter, that diplomacy was an option, that Hamas could be reasoned with. Those people have clearly never heard a Hamas leader speak or read anything on the group's Arabic-language websites. In a real sense, Hamas is more extreme than Usama bin Ladin, who periodically offers his enemy the chance to repent. Hamas's goal is genocidal. This has nothing to do with being dovish or hawkish, left or right. For those who are the biggest peaceniks—and this is true in Israel—know that Hamas must be defeated if Israel is ever to make peace with the PA.



Even the PA knows it, and that's what they say in private, no matter what they say in public.

The offensive is only going to last so long. It would be nice to believe that Hamas will be overthrown, less extreme Palestinians will take over, or Israel will just sit in the Gaza Strip for months or even years to come without any major problem. These are not real options.

Hamas wants nothing more than to be able to organize an underground to launch daily attacks on Israeli patrols going through the center of refugee camps. It should be remembered that, for better or worse, it was the Israeli military—not the politicians—who wanted to withdraw from the Gaza Strip for tactical reasons. It was easier to hold a defensive line in strength than to play into Hamas's strong points by trying to control all the territory.

Clearly, this didn't take into account the rockets but it is easy to think that if Israeli forces had been in the Gaza Strip every day since the withdrawal, Israeli casualties would have been a lot higher while Fatah and Hamas would be fighting side to side against Israel, and international diplomacy would have been far more hostile to Israel.

No one should have any illusions that this conflict is going to go away. The peace process era, 1993-2000, taught us that Iran, Syria, Hamas, Hizballah, and radical Islamist groups meant what they said. They will never accept peace with Israel. Israel will be involved in a struggle with these extremist groups for decades.

Yet that does not mean Israel cannot—and does not—prevail. It prevails by maintaining good lives for its citizens, developing its economy, and raising living standards, progressing in technology and science and medicine.

In this context, Israel will not listen to those many who counsel it to commit suicide, but it also has no illusions of a victory, of a war that will end all wars. And in a real sense that is Israel's true strength: it is not naive about either concessions or force. If you have realistic expectations, if you aren't disappointed, then you never give up.

Often, nowadays, it seems as if all history is being rewritten when it comes to Israel. In World War Two, allied air forces carpet-bombed cities even though there were no military bases in civilian areas. In France alone, tens of thousands of civilians were killed by allied bombs that fell on their intended targets.

Even the Nazis didn't put ammunition dumps in houses and use human shields. And up until now the blame for doing so would fall on those who deliberately and cynically sought to create civilian casualties in order to gain support for themselves

Up until now, a country whose neighbor fired across the border at its people and even staged cross-border raids had the right of self-defense.

Up until now, there has been a capability of understanding which group is inciting hatred, trying to turn children into robotic terrorists, calling for the extermination of another people, and committing aggression. Many people, many journalists, many governments, and even many intellectuals still understand the most basic principles of right and wrong as well as of the real world. Unfortunately, too many don't or at least don't when Israel is the target.

Finally, it is of the greatest importance to understand that this is not an issue of Gaza or of Israel alone. The great issue of our era, of our remaining lifetimes, is the battle between radical Islamism—whether using the tactic of terrorism or not—and the rest of the world. To isolate this question as merely something about Israel is to misunderstand everything important about the world today.



To my Arab brothers: The War with Israel Is Over — and they won. Now let's finally move forward

By Youssef M. Ibrahim

<http://www.jewishworldreview.com/0706/ibrahim.php3>

With Israel entering its fourth week of an incursion into the same Gaza Strip it voluntarily evacuated a few months ago, a sense of reality among Arabs is spreading through commentary by Arab pundits, letters to the editor, and political talk shows on Arabic-language TV networks. The new views are stunning both in their maturity and in their realism. The best way I can think of to convey them is in the form of a letter to the Palestinian Arabs from their Arab friends:

Dear Palestinian Arab brethren:

The war with Israel is over.

You have lost. Surrender and negotiate to secure a future for your children.

We, your Arab brothers, may say until we are blue in the face that we stand by you, but the wise among you and most of us know that we are moving on, away from the tired old idea of the Palestinian Arab cause and the "eternal struggle" with Israel.

Dear friends, you and your leaders have wasted three generations trying to fight for Palestine, but the truth is the Palestine you could have had in 1948 is much bigger than the one you could have had in 1967, which in turn is much bigger than what you may have to settle for now or in another 10 years. Struggle means less land and more misery and utter loneliness.

At the moment, brothers, you would be lucky to secure a semblance of a state in that Gaza Strip into which you have all crowded, and a small part of the West Bank of the Jordan. It isn't going to get better. Time is running out even for this much land, so here are some facts, figures, and sound advice, friends.

You hold keys, which you drag out for television interviews, to houses that do not exist or are inhabited by Israelis who have no intention of leaving Jaffa, Haifa, Tel Aviv, or West Jerusalem. You shoot old guns at modern Israeli tanks and American-made fighter jets, doing virtually no harm to Israel while bringing the wrath of its mighty army down upon you. You fire ridiculously inept Kassam rockets that cause little destruction and delude yourselves into thinking this is a war of liberation. Your government, your social institutions, your schools, and your economy are all in ruins.

Your young people are growing up illiterate, ill, and bent on rites of death and suicide, while you, in effect, are living on the kindness of foreigners, including



America and the United Nations. Every day your officials must beg for your daily bread, dependent on relief trucks that carry food and medicine into the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, while your criminal Muslim fundamentalist Hamas government continues to fan the flames of a war it can neither fight nor hope to win.

In other words, brothers, you are down, out, and alone in a burnt-out landscape that is shrinking by the day.

What kind of struggle is this? Is it worth waging at all? More important, what kind of miserable future does it portend for your children, the fourth or fifth generation of the Arab world's have-nots?

We, your Arab brothers, have moved on.

Those of us who have oil money are busy accumulating wealth and building housing, luxury developments, state-of-the-art universities and schools, and new highways and byways. Those of us who share borders with Israel, such as Egypt and Jordan, have signed a peace treaty with it and are not going to war for you any time soon. Those of us who are far away, in places like North Africa and Iraq, frankly could not care less about what happens to you.

Only Syria continues to feed your fantasies that someday it will join you in liberating Palestine, even though a huge chunk of its territory, the entire Golan Heights, was taken by Israel in 1967 and annexed. The Syrians, my friends, will gladly fight down to the last Palestinian Arab.

Before you got stuck with this Hamas crowd, another cheating, conniving, leader of yours, Yasser Arafat, sold you a rotten bill of goods — more pain, greater corruption, and millions stolen by his relatives — while your children played in the sewers of Gaza.

The war is over. Why not let a new future begin?



The moral battleground

Melanie Phillips

<http://www.spectator.co.uk/melaniephillips/3204131/the-moral-battleground.html>

Sunday, 4th January 2009

And so now begins the second and most difficult stage. Inside Israel, there is both determination and dread as tens of thousands of Israel's conscript army are called to the front. Untold numbers of these soldiers will lose their lives as the result not merely of the genocidal aims of Hamas (and its Iranian puppet-master) but also the indifference and pusillanimity towards Palestinian terror displayed by world governments over the past six decades of Israel's fight for survival, along with the active encouragement of genocidal Islamists by leftists, Jew-haters, Muslims and useful idiots who were on such thuggish display yesterday in the coordinated demonstrations in British and other western cities.

Such people have made no protest at the bombardment of Israeli towns by more than 6000 rockets in the past six years, deliberately targeting innocent civilians. They have made no protest at the way Hamas has used Gazan civilians as human shields, situating its murderous arsenals beneath apartment blocks, in schools and hospitals and mosques in order to maximise the numbers of civilians killed (in order to manipulate all-too pliable western opinion). No, their protest only starts when Israel finally takes the military action aimed at stopping this genocidal barrage.

The worst thing is the moral inversion, in which the murderous victimisation of innocent Israelis is ignored while their murderers are described as 'civilians' when they are finally killed by the Israelis -- who are demonstrably taking care to avoid civilian casualties wherever possible. Tragically, civilians always die in wars; and unfortunately there will undoubtedly be more civilian casualties in Gaza -- along with deaths among Israeli troops -- as the war goes on. But the frenzied misrepresentations, double standards and moral inversion fuelling a hysteria in the west which in turn can only incite more genocidal violence are simply depraved. Particularly striking in its malice is the way in which the treatment of wounded Palestinians in Israeli hospitals is ignored -- while news of the barbaric behaviour of Hamas in Gaza's hospitals is airbrushed out of the picture. At WSJ's Opinion Journal, James Taranto noted that a report of this scene in a Gaza hospital briefly appeared in the New York Times a couple of days ago:

Armed Hamas militants in civilian clothes roamed the halls. Asked their function, they said it was to provide security. But there was internal bloodletting under way. In the fourth-floor orthopaedic section, a woman in her late 20s asked a militant to let her see Saleh Hajoj, her 32-year-old husband. She was turned away and left the hospital. Fifteen minutes later, Mr. Hajoj was carried out by young men pretending to transfer him to another ward. As he lay on the stretcher, he was shot in the left side of the head. Mr. Hajoj, like five others killed at the hospital this way in 24 hours, [my emphasis] was accused of collaboration with Israel. He had been in the central prison awaiting trial by Hamas judges; when Israel destroyed the prison on Sunday he and the others were transferred to the hospital. But their trials were short-circuited...

You won't find that passage now on the New York Times website because, soon after it appeared, it unaccountably vanished into the ether*. Nor will many in Britain or the west be aware of this:

Dozens of Gaza Arabs are being treated in Ashkelon's Barzilai Hospital at the same time terrorists are bombarding the city. The medical facility, the largest on the southern coast, is in the line of rocket fire, and medical staff often have to stop caring for patients and run for cover during air raid warnings. The 500-bed Barzilai Hospital has close ties with Gaza City's Shifa Hospital, Barzilai deputy director Dr. Ron Lobel told the Associated Press. 'It might seem completely absurd, but we have the privilege to be doctors. Our medical ethics do not distinguish between patients. We treat whoever needs to be treated,' he said. One Gaza Arab woman refused to identify herself to AP [Associated Press] because of fear of retribution by terrorists if it were known that her two-month-old granddaughter is being treated in an Israeli hospital. 'I am



very sad and hurt. We want peace, not war,' she said as Israel began retaliating after hundreds of Arab rocket and mortar attacks, some of them lethal.

The moral inversion in the west is so egregious, so monstrous, that the better Israel is shown to behave the worse the vilification that rains down upon it. What other country in the world would show such restraint in the face of more than 6000 rocket attacks upon its citizens – 6000! – that it took seven years before going to war to put a stop to it? What other country would treat individuals – including proven terrorists – from that enemy territory in its own hospitals? What other country would continue to provide essential foodstuffs and other supplies to those enemies who continued to fire rockets at it? What other country, when finally forced to go to war to stop the attacks, would show such concern to avoid the loss of civilian life that it contacts the population in enemy territory -- even households containing identified terrorists – to warn them to flee from the imminent bombardment? And what other country would, for showing such unparalleled moral scrupulousness, be vilified and libelled as Israel is? Israel's behaviour is moral, legal and proportionate. This conflict is revealing just who is on the side of morality, decency and sanity and who is not. The President of the Czech Republic, who is also the incoming president of the EU, has emerged in the former camp, declaring stoutly that Israel's behaviour is both just and necessary. France's president Sarkozy, however, has called upon both sides to stop hostilities – a moral equivalence which effectively gives Hamas victory by requiring Israel to abandon the defence of its citizens. Similarly in Britain, Foreign Secretary David Miliband has repeated his call for an immediate cease-fire – while Prime Minister Gordon Brown, according to this Telegraph piece, has apparently complained to Israel's Prime Minister Olmert that too many people have died

Would that be, perhaps, too many Hamas terrorists who have died? Would Brown have preferred that more of them continued to live so that they could carry on murdering more Israelis? In startling contrast Farid Ghadry, President of the Reform Party of Syria, has written:

We Arabs must be the ones to stop Hamas and Hizbullah, rather than support their demonic and twisted logic of resisting development, enlightenment, and progress of the region. Even when development and enlightenment stare them in the face, their instinct is to destroy them pretending to safeguard their honor, the mechanics of which supersede all else including a happy life of fulfillment and accomplishments. So while we abhor violence of all kind, Israel's campaign against Hamas must continue to the bitter end not only for the sake of peace but also to help Arabs realize they have a choice: Destroy like Gaza or develop like Dubai. Will this happen soon? Maybe not, but if a wake-up call and a nudge, once in a while, to pierce through the fog of deceit perpetrated by Syria and Iran is what it takes to see the light, then we stand by the West and Israel in the only hope that an Arab Renaissance in the Levant may actually have a chance of resurrection.

Alas, many in the west don't stand with Farid Ghadry. They stand instead with Hamas. Whatever platitudes they mouthe, it is clear that they really don't want Israel to survive at all. The moral dividing line in this battle is very clear. Those who stand with Israel are on the side of morality, justice, and civilisation. Those in the media and public life who denounce Israel for having the temerity to defend its people are the fellow-travellers of barbarism. Having done so much to embolden and strengthen Hamas and Iran, who are playing them for suckers, they are continuing to stoke the fires of irrational hatred and genocidal hysteria. As Israeli soldiers die, along with the Palestinian victims of Hamas whether as 'collaborators' or human shields, their blood will be on these hypocritical western hands.



Hamas has the power to stop the shooting

January 05, 2009

The Australian

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24872283-16741,00.htm>

Gaza's Government must promise to cease its attacks

THERE is no faulting the Israelis for optimism in their incursion into Gaza. The assumption that underwrites the decision to send troops into the unhappy enclave is that the army can finish the job the air force began, by destroying the Hamas terrorist movement's leadership and arsenals. Despite Israel's overwhelming advantages in equipment and expertise, it is impossible to imagine that this move will bring a lasting peace. Hamas is not a normal political party and does not govern Gaza in the interests of its inhabitants. Rather, Hamas sees the people of Gaza as expendable soldiers in its endless campaign to kill as many Israelis as it can. And an enemy that does not care what happens to the people it rules is a hard foe to force to the negotiating table. The risks Israel is incurring are enormous. The 2006 campaign against Hamas's allies in aggression, the Lebanon-based Hezbollah organisation, demonstrated how conventional armies find it hard to deal with terrorists who hide among non combatants. And given the way people are packed into Gaza, civilian casualties are almost inevitable. An area of 360sqkm with a population of 1.4 million is no place for battle tanks and artillery. And while Hamas will do little more than snipe at Israeli soldiers, the Lebanon campaign demonstrated that the Israeli electorate has no stomach for body bags.

Given all this, it is obviously easy to argue that Israel is wilfully putting too many people, particularly Palestinians, at risk in a campaign that will not solve anything. Easy but incorrect. If the Israelis have learned anything from the 2006 campaign to stop Hezbollah's rocket attacks in the north, it is that military force makes a contribution to peace when it is applied carefully, as part of a broader strategy. The Winograd Commission, which was created by Israel to discover lessons from the Lebanon war, concluded in 2007 that short of full-scale fighting, it makes more sense to use the military as one among other weapons in the diplomatic arsenal. This is what it appears the Israeli Government is doing in Gaza. Short of putting a permanent presence back into the enclave, unlikely given that it is less than four years since Israel decided that garrisoning Gaza was pointless, it is likely that this will be a relatively short-term incursion with limited objectives. On the weekend, Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barack defined the operation's objectives as being to stop Hamas firing rockets into Israel. There is no talk of destroying Hamas, or even of removing it as the government of Gaza. Compared to Hamas's rhetoric about ending Israel as a Jewish state, this is less restrained than benign. And if the Israelis go home as soon as they decide they can do no more, it will demonstrate to the people of



Gaza that the best way to ensure the Israeli army leaves them alone is for Hamas to stop firing rockets into Israel.

For all Hamas's hypocrisy that Israel's attack is unprovoked aggression, yesterday's incursion is more like diplomacy with deadly force than an all-out war to the knife. This is not to underestimate the more than miserable situation of ordinary Gazans. At the best of times, they live lives of despair and deprivation. Gaza is subject to an Israeli blockade designed to stop Hamas bringing weaponry in, but one that also stops everything from consumer goods to medical supplies. And a shooting war undoubtedly makes their circumstances even worse. But Israel's objective is not to punish the people of Gaza: it is to send a message to the world that it will not permit attacks that harass and kill its citizens. That means stopping Hamas's military by killing its commanders. And it means making sure that Iran and Syria - the paymasters of many, if not most, of the Middle East's terrorists - understands that Israel will always defend itself. Given that both states have nuclear ambitions, it is a message Israel needs them to hear.

Israel's many enemies argue that none of these reasons justify attacking Gaza, that the existence of the Jewish state, certainly outside its pre-1967 borders, is the catalyst for Hamas's attacks. They say that the attacks come ahead of an election in Israel where ministers are playing politics with Palestinian lives. But arguing about the rights and wrongs of Israel's origins is a waste of time. Islamist ideologues can dream of Israel disappearing, but short of a second holocaust this will not happen. And to argue that Israel's Government is motivated by politics is to criticise ministers for doing what democratically elected leaders always do - protect their people. The challenge for Hamas is to make the best deal it can right now. Instead of fighting for the end of Israel, it should agree to stop the rockets. In return, the Israelis should undertake to improve the rate at which food and fuel, medicines and consumer goods flow into Gaza. Certainly such an arrangement would be grossly inferior to a permanent peace. But for the people of Gaza and the Israeli towns in the range of Hamas rockets, anything that stops the shooting is an improvement on what they are enduring today.



Iran-backed Hamas Rocket, Mortar Attacks and Nuclear Developments

- 9,400+** rockets and mortars fired from Gaza since 2003. [1]
- 3,200+** rockets and mortars fired from Gaza in 2008 alone. [2]
- 6,500+** rockets and mortars fired from Gaza since Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005. [3]
- 543+** rockets and mortars fired from Gaza into Israeli territory during the ceasefire from June 19 to Dec. 19, 2008. [4]
- 28** deaths caused by rockets and mortars fired from Gaza into Israel since 2001. The dead include Israelis, Palestinians and foreign workers. Since the ceasefire ended, Iran-backed Palestinian groups in Gaza fired rockets and mortars that killed an Israeli-Arab construction worker and a mother of four who was seeking shelter in a bus station as a rocket warning siren sounded. [5]
- 1,000+** people in Israel injured from rockets and mortars fired from Gaza since 2001, including Israelis, Palestinians and foreign workers. Since the ceasefire, **44** Israelis have been injured and **200** have been treated for shock. [6]
- 20,000** Hamas troops Israel is targeting as part of "Operation Cast Lead." [7]
- 750,000** number of Israeli civilians Hamas is targeting and can reach. [8]
- 15** seconds Israelis have to get to a bomb shelter once a warning siren has sounded. [9]
- 8** years that Israel has been hit by rockets and mortars from Gaza [10]
- 3** mosques in Gaza used as weapons, ammunitions and explosives depots that were struck by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) during the operation in Gaza. [11]
- 4** UN Security Council resolutions passed since 2006 to try to stop Iran from enriching uranium. [12]
- 5,000+** number of centrifuges operating in Iran to enrich uranium, the material used to produce a nuclear weapon. [13]

Israel's Humanitarian Aid to Gaza

- 179** truckloads of humanitarian aid that have been delivered through Israeli crossings into Gaza since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, including basic food commodities, medication, medical supplies, donations of governments and blood units.
- 106** additional truckloads of humanitarian expected to arrive in Gaza on Jan. 31 [14]
- 6,500** tons of aid transported into Gaza at the request of international organizations, the Palestinian Authority and various governments since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead. The World Food Program informed Israel that it will cease shipment of food to Gaza because warehouses are at full capacity, with enough food to last two weeks. [15]

What Israel Gave Up in Hopes of Peace - Gaza Withdrawal Aug. 2005

- 100%** proportion of the Gaza Strip evacuated and handed over to the Palestinians. [16]
- 300** square miles of the West Bank evacuated. [17]
- 21** Israeli settlements uprooted in the Gaza Strip. [18]
- 4** Israeli settlements uprooted in the West Bank. [19]
- 48** graves uprooted in Gaza's former Gush Katif Cemetery, including six graves of area residents murdered by terrorists. [20]
- 9,000** approximate number of Israelis, including 1,700 families, who lived in Gaza and the northern West Bank. All of them were moved out as part of the withdrawal. [21]
- 38** synagogues dismantled in the Gaza Strip. [22]
- 5,000** school-age children who had to find new schools. [23]
- 42** daycare centers that were closed in the Gaza Strip. [24]



36	kindergartens that were closed in the Gaza Strip. [25]
7	elementary schools that were closed in the Gaza Strip. [26]
3	high schools that were closed in the Gaza Strip. [27]
320	mobile homes, ordered by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, to serve as temporary housing for settlers. [28]
45,000	Israeli soldiers and policemen who participated in the Gaza withdrawal. [29]
\$1.7 billion	the approximate cost to the Israeli government for the withdrawal initiative. [30]
166	Israeli farmers who were moved out of Gaza. [31]
800	cows, which comprised the second largest dairy farm in Israel, moved out of Gaza's Gush Katif community. [32]
\$120 million	value of flowers and produce exported annually from Gush Katif and lost following the evacuation. [33]
1	zoo, the "Katifari," that housed hundreds of animals and was moved. [34]
10,000	people who were employed in agriculture and related industries in Gush Katif, including 5,000 Palestinians. [35]
60%	proportion of Israel's cherry tomato exports that came from the Gaza Strip. Israel's withdrawal from Gaza extinguished this economic resource. [36]
3.5 million	square meters (almost 1,000 acres) of greenhouses abandoned in Gaza. [37]
70	percentage of Israel's organic produce grown in Gaza – another economic resource lost in the evacuation. [38]
60	percentage of herbs exported from Israel that came from Gush Katif. [39]
15	percentage of Israel agricultural exports that originated in Gaza – exports lost following Israel's withdrawal from Gaza. [40]
\$360,000	expected average compensation amount Israel expected to pay to relocate each family. [41]
\$870 million	approximate cost for Israel to facilitate the resettlement of former West Bank and Gaza residents elsewhere in the country. [42]
\$500 million	amount of money Israel's security establishment spent to relocate Israel Defense Forces bases outside the Gaza Strip and build new border crossing facilities. [43]

After Israel's evacuation from Gaza...

430,000	West Bank Palestinians able to move freely within and between Palestinian-controlled areas. [44]
1	Israeli remaining in Gaza. Staff Sgt. Gilad Shalit was abducted from Israel on June 25, 2006 by Hamas in a bloody cross-border raid in which the terrorists also killed two IDF soldiers and wounded four others. [45]
1.2 million	Arabs who remained full and legal citizens of Israel. All Israeli citizens – Christians, Muslims, and Jews – have freedom of speech, religion, press, and the right to vote. [46]
1.3 million	Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip many of them in Palestinian Authority-controlled refugee camps, who live under their own leaders. [47]
820,000	Jewish refugees forced to flee without their belongings from Arab countries between 1947 and 1949, and who have never been compensated by Arab governments for their losses. [48]
650,000	Arab refugees who left Israel from 1947-1949 and still need Palestinian leaders who will end terrorism and the culture of hate. [49]



As the members of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) battle Hamas terrorists and Palestinian militants in Gaza, leading international Torah scholars have launched a worldwide effort aimed at providing them with spiritual support.

"Operation Tefillah, Torah & Troops," which was launched by Rabbi Simcha HaCohen Kook, the Chief Rabbi of Rehovot, Israel, and the Bostoner Rebbe (Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Horowitz) of Har Nof, Israel, partners people from around the world with soldiers in the IDF. Each person who takes part in "Operation Tefillah, Torah & Troops" is paired with an Israeli soldier, and is responsible to say tefillot (prayers), learn Torah, and do special acts of chesed (kindness) on behalf of that soldier.

Rabbi Kook and the Bostoner Rebbe note that this concept is one that has been a part of the Jewish people for thousands of years. When Moshe Rabbeinu (Moses) led the Jewish people to war with the nation of Midyon, for every person who went to battle, there was a designated person who was responsible for praying and learning for him. Throughout his reign, David HaMelech (King David) utilized this practice as well. During the war in Lebanon in the summer of 2006, more than 50,000 people worldwide participated in this initiative spearheaded by Rabbi Kook and the Bostoner Rebbe, and facilitated in North America by the National Council of Young Israel.

To participate in "Operation Tefillah, Torah & Troops" and receive the name of an Israeli soldier who needs your prayers, send an e-mail to the office of Rabbi Kook at maortlmo@gmail.com.

