

Smoke and Mirrors

By Dore Gold The Jerusalem Post May 1, 2003

President George W. Bush revolutionized US policy regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict on June 24, 2002, when he declared that a "new and different Palestinian leadership" was required and that the Palestinians must elect "new leaders, leaders not compromised by terror."

Israel had uncovered incontrovertible evidence, months earlier, that Yasser Arafat, the head of the Palestinian Authority, had authorized, in his own handwriting, payments to those who organized suicide bombings against Israeli civilians; he had dispatched emissaries to Iraq, and had purchased weapons from Iran that were intercepted by Israel aboard the *Karine-A* in the Red Sea. Given this background, Bush concluded: "Today, Palestinian authorities are encouraging, not opposing, terrorism."

In order to rectify the situation, Bush insisted that new Palestinian leaders "engage in a sustained fight against the terrorists."

It would not be sufficient for the new Palestinian security forces to just foil attacks against Israel. Bush demanded that they "dismantle their infrastructure" before the US would back the establishment of a Palestinian state.

With the Egyptian-brokered agreement between Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) over the formation of a new Palestinian cabinet, it becomes necessary to give a preliminary assessment as to whether the Palestinian government that is being formed will be able to fulfill the US policy requirements established by Bush.

What are the chances that the new Palestinian government will constitute a real break from the past?

For Israel, the litmus test of the new Palestinian government will be its readiness to fight terrorism, instead of supporting it as it has done in the past. There are a number of reasons for skepticism about this new regime:

Arafat remains the head of the Palestinian Authority. Rather than choosing new leaders who replace those who were "compromised by terror," the Palestinians have created the new position of Palestinian prime minister, to be filled by Abu Mazen, who will share powers with Arafat. Yet Arafat will still control many aspects of Palestinian finances, negotiating strategy, and security organs.

Thus, he has not been sidelined and simply relegated to a largely ceremonial position.

Pro-Arafat forces remain dominant in the new Palestinian cabinet. Arafat has succeeded in retaining powerful ministers in the new Palestinian cabinet. They include Saeb Erekat, Nabil Shaath, and Yasser Abed Rabbo. Erekat, who was originally sidelined as a minister-without-portfolio will be "Minister of Negotiation Affairs." Nasser Yusuf who was slated to be Abu Mazen's deputy, was dropped entirely. It is expected that Abu Mazen will be appointing about four ministers in the new 25-man cabinet, while the majority of ministers will come from the previous Arafat-appointed cabinet.

Despite Abu Mazen's control of the Preventive Security Organization, Arafat still commands other, larger security organizations. Abu Mazen succeeded in bringing his own protégé, Muhammad Dahlan, into his cabinet. But there are still a large number of redundant security services in the Palestinian Authority that owe their loyalty to Arafat. The General Intelligence Organization of Tawfiq Tirawi, as well as the uniformed Palestinian security forces of Haj Ismail (West Bank) and Abed al-Razak al-Majaida (Gaza Strip), are together much larger than Dahlan's Preventive Security Organization. Arafat still controls Force 17, his personal security apparatus. Last June, Bush insisted that the Palestinian security services be reformed and that they have a "unified chain of command." This has not occurred; the other security services have not been disbanded.

In recognition of Arafat's ongoing authority in sensitive areas of security, the Palestinian Authority Web site in fact states that while Abu Mazen is supposed to control the more limited area of "internal security," Arafat is still responsible for overall Palestinian "national security."

Arafat refused to accept Abu Mazen's demand that the armed factions of Fatah be dismantled outside of the Palestinian Authority. Arafat still controls armed groups such as the Tanzim of the Fatah movement and the elite Al-Aksa Martyrs Brigades, both of which have engaged in terrorism against Israel. Moreover, Arafat still controls Palestinian funds that enable him to financially maintain these groups.

Abu Mazen's appointment as Palestinian prime minister is significant largely because he, at least, has

openly expressed his opposition to Arafat's strategy of employing terrorism as a political instrument to advance Palestinian political aims. Yet, in a March 3, 2003, interview, it should be pointed out, he still justified "armed struggle" against Israeli civilians over the "Green Line."

Moreover, Abu Mazen still has hard-line political positions on Palestinian-Israeli final status issues such as the refugees' right of return, borders, and Jerusalem: at Camp David, he even insisted on Palestinian sovereignty over the Western Wall. Israeli negotiators during the Barak government recall that Abu Mazen was not a positive force at the failed 2000 Camp David summit only to make novel concessions.

Despite his being the most personable of the Palestinian leaders, it would be a mistake to assume he is sympathetic to the Israeli view. In fact, back in 1983, just a decade before he signed the Oslo agreements, he wrote an infamous Holocaust-denial book. It is doubtful that Abu Mazen, alone, can or will implement the necessary changes in Palestinian policy that Bush demanded last June. His reputation as a peacemaker has been over-rated, largely through inaccurate historical accounts of the Oslo period; for examples he has repeatedly denied ever signing the so-called 1996 Beilin-Abu Mazen Agreement.

Abu Mazen's key ally in security affairs, Muhammad Dahlan, also has a checkered past when it comes to security issues. It is widely believed that he hid Hamas mastermind, Muhammad Def, for years. Dahlan's deputy, Rashid Abu Shabak, was responsible for a bomb attack on an Israeli school bus in Kfar Darom in November 2000. It is likely that Abu Mazen and Dahlan prefer to achieve a hiatus in armed attacks against Israel by rejuvenating their internal dialogue with Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Cairo, rather than by forcibly disarming these groups.

Nevertheless, the US reportedly intends to publish the "Quartet" road map after Abu Mazen's cabinet is approved by the Palestinian Legislative Council. The road map represents an effort on the part of the European Union, the UN, Russia, and the US to draft a joint policy for implementing

Bush's June 24 vision. It is surprising that the US, at this stage, is incorporating European, Russian, and UN positions in its policy on Israel and the Palestinians after all three utterly failed to deal properly with the crisis over Iraq. If these three were willing to continue inspections of Iraq for months instead of confronting Saddam Hussein, won't they be prone to giving Arafat a passing grade in security affairs, even while he backs ongoing violence?

Bringing into the Israeli-Palestinian equation the parties who let the US down on Iraq is not a recipe for diplomatic success. While Washington has sought to isolate Arafat, European Union representatives have visited him. Given the current state of US-European relations, the US and its diplomatic partners can be expected to continue to work at cross purposes, while the Europeans seek to outflank the Americans and undercut their positions in Arab opinion. It is not wonder that the Quartet suggests that Israel make premature concessions before the Palestinians fully live up to their security commitments. Should Israel follow this advice and pull back from Palestinian cities prior to a demonstrable effort on the part of the Palestinian government to uproot terrorism, then an escalation of terrorist attacks against Israelis could be the result.

The best outcome that can be realistically hoped for after Abu Mazen's appointment as Palestinian prime minister would be an Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire. But a diplomatic breakthrough in peace-making remains unlikely, despite Abu Mazen's tactical flexibility on the issue of violence, as long as Arafat is still pulling the strings of government.

The appointment of the new Abu Mazen cabinet thus will not automatically lead to new Israeli-Palestinian understandings. Only after the Palestinian security organizations demonstrate a sustained fight against terrorism should reciprocal actions on the part of Israel be expected, regardless of the language of the Quartet's road map.

The writer, currently president of the Jerusalem Center for Public affairs, is a former Israeli ambassador to the UN. (He spoke in Baltimore earlier this week.)

Road map is in tatters

By Helle Dale The Washington Times May 7, 2003

Navigating the "Road Map" to Middle East peace will most certainly be more difficult for the Bush administration than going all the way to Baghdad to defeat Iraq and oust Saddam Hussein from power. This week, Secretary of State Colin Powell is back in the Middle East attempting to bring the incessantly derailed "process" back on track.

One hates to be a wet blanket, but when it comes to resolving the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, the record of failed peacemaking

attempts is too long, depressing and blood-soaked to inspire much faith at this stage.

The crux of the matter is readily recognizable — peoples claiming the same parcel of land. The problem is in one way or another found in many of the world's trouble spots — Kosovo or East Timor come to mind. Yet, no other place is quite like the Middle East. Israel contains the holy shrines of three world religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — all intimately interconnected. When you stand in

Jerusalem by the Wailing Wall, at the Great Mosque or in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, it's like standing at the center of the universe. How can mere politicians possibly disentangle this immense paradox?

The Bush administration landed this thankless task as part of the negotiations leading up to the war in Iraq. Other partners in the coalition, most significantly Britain's Tony Blair, insisted that the action against Iraq not be part of a plan to bring peace and stability to the Middle East. In late April, the so-called "Quartet" of international negotiators — consisting of The United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations — handed Israelis and Palestinians a 2,000-word "Road Map" towards peace. This would include a Palestinian state by 2005, and an immediate end to Palestinian violence and Israeli building of settlements. It is the latest in a series of Middle East initiatives from the Bush administration, dating back to June, when President Bush endorsed a Palestinian state, but under new Palestinian leadership.

Success depends primarily on one thing — recognition by both sides of the other's right to exist in peace, secure within the borders of their own state. In fact, most Israelis long ago accepted a two-state solution, including Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Since the beginning of the Oslo process in the early 1990s, following the first Gulf War, Israeli governments have made progressive concessions, offering land for peace.

Unfortunately, the majority of Palestinians have not reached that same conclusion, believing still in a one-state solution. Under PLO leader Yasser Arafat, Palestinians have continued to reject Israel's existence.

Regrettably, Israeli concessions have only led to more violence. The territories in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip handed over to the Palestinian Authority by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in the 1990s became breeding grounds for terrorist attacks. The fear among Israelis is that they would have a Palestinian terrorist state right on their borders. It is an entirely legitimate concern.

In addition, terrorist groups read the unilateral withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon under Prime Minister Ehud Barak as a sign of

weakness. It encouraged hopes among Palestinians for the first time in decades that Israel could be made to withdraw entirely from the West Bank, and maybe disappear altogether from the map of the Middle East.

On the more optimistic side, it is true that some things may be changing, creating an auspicious moment. The destruction of the entire Iraqi army by American forces in less than a month created a new respect for U.S. strength and determination in the Arab world. Also, a new Palestinian government under Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas immediately denounced the latest terrorist attack against Israeli civilians at a jazz club close to the U.S. embassy. Such rejection of violence against Israelis must be heard loud and clear from Palestinian leaders.

How far Mr. Abbas will be able to exercise his power, however, is not clear. Mr. Arafat is already attempting to regroup by making himself the head of a new National Security Council, placing himself above Mr. Abbas. As noted by Clinton administration Middle East envoy Martin Indyk, speaking recently at the Council on Foreign Relations, if the "Road Map" fails, "it is because the Palestinians do not have a viable government as a political partner for Israel or the security capability to stop the violence."

Finally, the mediation process itself does not inspire confidence, conducted as it is through the so-called Quartet of international actors. Palestinians may consider the United States biased in favor of Israel, but the European Union is unabashedly biased in favor of the Palestinians and is perceived by Israel as such. One strong mediator would provide a great chance of success. Furthermore, the current arrangement will render negotiations even more fraught with difficulty by adding on the baggage of damaged U.S.-EU relations — as though the Middle East was not difficult enough itself.

All this is not to say that peacemaking is not a worth another try. Only that the odds are very long indeed.

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Sealed With A Kiss - The romance between Bush & Sharon gets Mideast peace halfway there By Zev Chafets **The New York Daily News April 30, 2003**

When Secretary of State Powell arrives in Israel sometime in the next few weeks, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon will greet him with open arms. Powell is the emissary of President Bush, after all, and Sharon loves the American President.

Love is not an entirely new emotion for Sharon - he is famous for his devotion to his late wife, Lilly, and his sons - but in the public arena Sharon has

always been more of a fighter than a lover. Now, at age 75, he has developed a full-blown crush on the President of the United States.

Like all great romances, this one is requited. Sharon, who was persona non grata in Washington for almost 20 years, has a not-at-all-secret admirer in the White House. It is also mutually beneficial. Bush wants - and will get - Sharon's support in 2004. In

return, Sharon is asking Bush himself - not the UN, the European Union or even the State Department - to set the tone for Middle East peacemaking.

That will be a problem for Powell, who sees his mission as selling Sharon on an internationally sponsored road map to peace. The Israeli prime minister is on record as accepting the destination - a Palestinian state next door to Israel - but not necessarily the route or the final shape of the new entity.

Still, Sharon has no intention of quarreling over this - or anything else - with Bush. Which isn't at all the same as saying the prime minister has turned into the Okey-Dokey Kid.

At least four issues already are shaping up as contentious, starting with the question of Palestinian leadership.

If things go according to schedule, a new Palestinian prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas, will introduce a new Palestinian cabinet this week. Abbas, a Palestine Liberation Organization hack also known as Abu Mazen, owes his job to Sharon, who refuses to deal with Yasser Arafat and has persuaded Bush to go along.

The Europeans and the UN - and doubtless the State Department - will be more than satisfied with the new name on the official Palestinian stationery. But Sharon is after more than a nominal change. He wants to keep Arafat out of the decision-making process. But this, despite the new government, is far from a done deal. Arafat doesn't want to relinquish real power, and Mazen already has been forced to put Arafat cronies in important cabinet positions.

Mazen's legitimacy depends on Sharon. If the Israeli prime minister decides that he's an Arafat stooge, he won't get very far. If Sharon pronounces Mazen kosher, the rest of the Israeli establishment will say amen.

The same is true of two other sticking points - terrorism and settlements - that were discussed last week in Washington in a meeting between senior American officials and Sharon advisers. Sharon doesn't want to give up security control over Palestinian territory until he believes the Palestinian Authority will disarm and break up terrorist groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad. He also has a problem with the demand that Israel stop building settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.

Neither of these concerns is a deal breaker. Sharon is correctly regarded by the Israeli public as the ultimate security hawk. Any Palestinian disarmament deal he approves will be generally accepted.

Same for the issue of territorial compromise. Sharon has been the papa of West Bank and Gaza settlements since the mid-'70s. If he says it's all right to stop building, he has the prestige and political clout to get his way. And if he agrees to a map along the lines proposed by his predecessor, Ehud Barak, at Camp David in September 2000 - which called for dismantling some settlements - there won't be many Israelis holier than Pope Ariel.

The one issue Sharon can't finesse - and won't - is the Palestinian so-called right of return. Agreeing that millions of Arab refugees and their descendants will be given the option to resettle in pre-1967 Israel would mean the demographic death of the Jewish State. This is something the Israel public - even the left wing - can't possibly accept. As long as the right of return isn't explicitly renounced by the Palestinians, the road map will lead nowhere.

Sharon both likes and respects Powell, but he doesn't love him - and he doesn't fear him. Last April, in the midst of Israel's Operation Defensive Shield, the secretary of state went to the region and demanded that Israel withdraw its forces from Palestinian cities. Sharon went over Powell's head to Bush. The troops are still there.

If Powell comes to the Middle East with a road map that matches Sharon's needs, he will be embraced. If on the other hand, he tries to peddle a Eurocentric version of the plan, he once again will go home disappointed - but not empty-handed. Sharon will give him a message to take with him. It will say:

Dearest, Remember what we mean to each other. You know I'll do whatever I can to make you happy. Just give me a little more time. Trust me as I trust you. And please, please, don't let Colin and his diplomatic busybodies come between us with that damn road map. Sharon's letter will be addressed to the President of the United States. It will be sealed with a kiss. And it will be the end of what could be a promising beginning.

SPECIAL ISRAEL ANNOUNCEMENT

With the goal of assisting hundreds of American families to make aliyah, the Orthodox Union has called upon member shuls to conduct fund-raising campaigns in support of Nefesh B'Nefesh, a foundation that in 2002 sponsored the largest simultaneous relocation of new immigrants from North America in Israel's history. For more information on the program, please go to the following website address: <http://www.ou.org/israel/nbn/default.htm>. Donations from Suburban Orthodox to date total \$1,200, the goal is to raise \$18,000 for Suburban Orthodox. Anyone interested in hearing more about this initiative, or, most importantly, in making a donation to this important cause, please contact Glenn Jasper at 410-415-0464 or gjasper@ciena.com.

The next piece is an interesting view of a segment of Israeli society. (ed)

The haredi road map

By Amotz Asa-El The Jerusalem Post May 1, 2003

Haredism, Judaism's great counter-reformation movement, is at a crossroads. With material circumstances pressing, rabbinical clout diminishing, and acculturation processes accelerating, the second-most dangerous war waged on the Jewish state is finally waning.

Meaning literally "the fearful," haredim - like all ultraconservatives - have indeed been anxious in the face of change. Moreover, originally they really were compelled to respond to astonishing breaks with tradition, like the rescheduling of Shabbat from Saturday to Sunday, the abandonment of circumcision, and the replacement of Hebrew liturgy with German. So shocking were those 19th-century attempts to modify Judaism that one founding father of haredism forbade "anything that is new."

It was in such a setting that haredi leaders came to idealize the ghetto, whose isolation offered an ideal cultural hothouse and social freezer. The more other Jews turned their backs on Jewish law, the more the haredim despaired of reconciliation and embraced seclusion.

Originally, this was also their attitude toward the State of Israel. During its first three decades of existence, haredi leaders showed little interest in shaping the Jewish state. While religious Zionists invested themselves intellectually and politically in reconciling statehood with theology and government with Halacha, the haredim focused on the maintenance of their gated communities.

Paradoxically, the big change in that attitude came after super-nationalist Menachem Begin's rise to power. Having established themselves as indispensable to Begin's grip on power, the haredi parties first obtained a dramatic expansion of their conscription-deferment arrangement, then got yeshiva financing sharply raised, and finally intensified the effort to impose Halacha on the public domain.

Twenty-five years later the haredi world had grown so dramatically in clout and so visibly in size that some suspected it was effectively heralding Zionism's demise. The thought that most of Jerusalem's children are either haredi or Arab; the knowledge that every year the army loses thousands of would-be soldiers to haredi yeshivas; and the realization that the Zionist enterprise has ended up financing an entire society that educates to dismiss Zionism as an anecdote at best, as profanity at worst - have all generated among non-haredim a deep sense of disillusionment, degeneration, and defeat.

Now that sense of degeneration and defeat is fast looming as the lot of haredism.

The recent Council of Sages announcement that it is opposed to the government's economic austerity plan was a telling sign of political vertigo.

For one thing, it was that same body that in the past let its voters back Bibi Netanyahu en masse, despite his confessed adultery. That hypocrisy alone called for the poetic justice of ultimately being screwed by the very same Netanyahu, whose sound economic plan is to haredi leaders a celebration of ingratitude.

Yet beyond that moral dissonance lurks the haredi rabbis' even more embarrassing concession of having maneuvered their flock into a shameful dependency on Zionist favors.

Understandably, some of them equate their impending loss of excessive child allowances, rent aid, property tax breaks, and education budgets to Pharaoh's decrees. What they conveniently forget is that prior to being persecuted our forefathers in Egypt not only worked, but even "excelled there," as we have just read in the Haggada.

In fact, Pharaoh's persecution, much like the haredi rabbis', was about depriving people of the right to work for themselves and accumulate wealth. And the haredi rabbis, much like Pharaoh and all other totalitarians, are afraid that if their flock is freed of the handouts to which they have addicted it and starts working, earning, and prospering on its own, they will ultimately be ignored not just on matters of livelihood, but on everything else as well.

The haredi public itself is ready, and eager, to join mainstream Israel, and their rabbis know it. Their last-ditch struggle to obstruct this trend will fail because the entire situation whereby hundreds of thousands of people are prevented from working in order to study Torah, besides being halachically unprecedented and morally corrupt, is also economically unworkable and politically explosive.

Fortunately, life is stronger than both the haredi rabbis and the anti-religious fanatics, who loathe the sight of haredim in their midst, a phenomenon that will now grow as more haredim will go to work, just like their relatives do in Brooklyn, Antwerp, or London.

One indication of this process is haredi politician Uri Lupolianski's decision to run for Jerusalem's mayoralty. Anti-religious crusaders will see in this a sign of old-style haredi expansionism. Yet that could only be suggested as long as haredi politicians ignored the broader public interest. Now a haredi is eager to build, clean, educate, and represent the country's entire capital, not just its haredi neighborhoods.

Whether he is capable of such a task is a separate question; what matters is the very inclination, which implies a degree of identification with the Zionist enterprise that until recently was unthinkable.

An even more symbolic proof of haredi transformation will be visible Tuesday night, as haredi maverick Yehuda Meshi-Zahav lights a torch in the traditional ceremony that officially launches Independence Day.

Better-known as the ultra-militant Eda Haredit's "operations officer," this 11th-generation Jerusalemite first earned fame as a rabble-rouser who organized violent rallies against archeological digs, Shabbat traffic, medical autopsies, and whatnot.

In recent years, however, Meshi-Zahav set up the Zaka organization of volunteers who appear at terror-attack sites, where they collect all victims' remains and make sure they are properly buried.

It remains unclear whether, as he kindles the flame, this unpredictable firebrand will actually say in front of the TV cameras the customary "I hereby light this torch for the glory of the State of Israel." However, Meshi-Zahav already did more than that when he recently asked rhetorically and admiringly: "Which other state risks itself for its dead the way Israel does?"

True, the haredim are climbing Mt. Zion their way, but at the end of the day they are doing so amid very familiar rivers of blood, sweat and tears; just like the Zionists.

After the Strongman

By Bret Stephens *The Wall Street Journal* May 1, 2003

All winter long it rained. To the north, in the Galilee, rainfall was 60% above the seasonal average. In Tel Aviv, it rained so hard streets flooded and sewage pipes burst. Lake Kinneret, our chief source of fresh water, rose by nearly five meters -- an estimated 773 million cubic meters in just three months. It will probably overflow its banks within weeks.

It is hard to overstate the sense of excitement this causes among Israelis. The last time Israel had rain like this was in the winter of 1992, after which we had 10 years of a progressively worsening drought. In a way, it was emblematic of the country's general slide: from the giddy promise of the first Gulf War -- when peace with the whole of the Arab world appeared to be within reach -- to the terror and futility of the present Intifada.

Now we're back to the brimming point. Saddam Hussein really is gone, and with a bit of luck an Israeli can drive from Tel Aviv to Baghdad, stopping only to switch cars at the Allenby Bridge. The prewar surge of Arab enthusiasm for Saddam has been replaced with a new surge of Arab self-scrutiny. In the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat has been forced to acquiesce to the appointment of Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (better known as Abu Mazen) and his cabinet. On Monday, Mr. Abbas told a visiting European delegation that he plans to declare an end to the "armed struggle" in his inaugural speech. For his part, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon not only speaks of "painful concessions" but has named some of the settlements from which he intends to withdraw.

The credit for all this goes to the Bush administration, which yesterday unveiled its "road map" for Palestinian reform and statehood. A few weeks ago, while the war was still on, I had dinner with a senior European diplomat who expressed

amazement at the idea that a U.S. triumph in Baghdad could have positive repercussions here. To Israelis this was perfectly obvious. "I can remember when an Iraqi column nearly cut Israel in two during the War of Independence," former Prime Minister Ehud Barak told me this week. A de-Saddamized Iraq now gives Israel the strategic depth within which a Palestinian state can be more safely accommodated. Equally important, victory in Iraq has given President Bush the leverage to impose his will on recalcitrant Arab leaders -- leverage Bill Clinton could have sorely used, but had long before squandered, when he came to the Camp David negotiations in July 2000.

The challenge now for the administration is to use its leverage to accelerate the process of Palestinian reform demanded by the president in last year's June 24 speech. By itself, the rise of Mr. Abbas offers no clear indication that this is what will happen. Mr. Abbas is widely depicted as a moderate for his current opposition to the Intifada: "By resorting to violence," he told a group of Fatah Party activists earlier this year, "we have played into the hands of Ariel Sharon and the Israeli right wing." He is also said to be a firm believer in a two-state solution, and has close links to leading Israeli doves such as Oslo architect Yossi Beilin.

But Mr. Abbas's record is more blemished than these details suggest. He is the author of a 1984 book called "The Other Side: The Secret Relationship Between Nazism and Zionism," which purports to refute "the fantastic lie that six million Jews were killed" in the Holocaust. (Mr. Abbas's figure is 890,000.) During the Oslo years, Mr. Abbas became suspiciously wealthy -- allegedly through kickbacks from the Palestinian Authority's cement monopolies.

As worrisome, Mr. Abbas is a hard-liner on the Palestinians' so-called right of return. "It is only natural that each refugee return to his home," he told an Arab radio station in August 2000. Yet one cannot simultaneously support a two-state solution - one Jewish, the other Palestinian -- while also demanding that the Jewish state open its doors to the three or four million descendants of the original Palestinian refugees, a demand to which no Israeli government, left or right, will ever accede.

That said, it is also important not to write Mr. Abbas off. Whatever his other failings, he has one great, ironic virtue: He is weak. "Everybody knows Abu Mazen can't lead!" a Hamas spokesman once told me. Under the right circumstances, Mr. Abbas's weakness could be a blessing, for Palestinians above all.

Consider the example of his master. Arafat is the quintessential strongman -- one of the reasons the late Yitzhak Rabin thought he could be relied on to maintain order among Palestinians. In fact, the opposite proved true: His record of misrule never diminished his standing; he could unleash a hurricane yet remain in its eye untouched. He didn't have to deliver positive results to remain in power. Arafat's strength also meant he could dream big: not just of the presidency of a minuscule Palestinian state, but the symbolic leadership of the Arab cause. There is a reason Arafat's portrait always has the Dome of the Rock in the background: It's the iconography of the new Saladin, of the great Islamic redeemer. And it is a source of immense power.

Mr. Abbas, by contrast, can have no such immunity or pretensions. Unlike with Arafat, Palestinians feel entitled to have expectations of him. These expectations are mainly practical: an easing of the curfews and closures and roadblocks; an end to Israeli military occupation; access to the Israeli job market; and so on.

Mr. Abbas knows he will be held to account by Palestinians if he fails. He also knows he can deliver on none of this without the active cooperation of Mr. Sharon. But that requires a sustained crackdown

on terrorist factions (including elements of Arafat's Fatah Party), which is why he insisted on the appointment of crackdown artist Mohammed Dahlan as the new minister for security affairs. It also requires a more orderly and less visibly corrupt administration, a task for which his finance minister Salam Fayyad is relatively well suited.

Put simply, whereas Arafat takes refuge in violence, Mr. Abbas's only security lies in stability. He cannot afford the punitive Israeli measures that invariably follow on terror attacks such as yesterday's suicide bombing in a Tel Aviv nightclub.

In Mr. Abbas's weakness, then, there lies his predictability, his sense of measure, the limit to his radicalism and to his ambition, and thus to his willingness to push for genuine reform. Yet in this weakness there also lies his vulnerability to Arafat, who sees in his prime minister's appointment an avenue to his own rehabilitation and continued grip on power. Arafat has no interest in ceding power to anyone, least of all to Mr. Abbas. To the extent that continued violence against Israel serves this end, Arafat will find ways to encourage it.

For the Bush administration, there can be no finessing this point. Efforts to sideline Arafat by installing him in some symbolic role not only are doomed to failure, but also doom the Palestinian reform efforts on which Mr. Bush's road map hinges. Arafat must be made to depart, ideally by the Palestinians themselves, if necessary by some third party.

If the experience of Oslo holds any lesson, it is that peace in the Middle East is neither the outcome of a "process" nor the result of larger geopolitical forces. Rather, it is always about the man: Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin; King Hussein and Yitzhak Rabin. So it could be too with Mr. Abbas and Mr. Sharon -- provided Mr. Arafat isn't around to sabotage it.

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For a Nonpolicy, It Sure Did Work **By Charles Krauthammer Time Magazine May 12, 2003**

If you thought Bush was disengaged from the Middle East, you missed the point For months conventional wisdom on the Middle East — incessant and universal — has been that 1) the Bush Administration has neglected the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and 2) as a result, things have gone from bad to worse.

This is nonsense squared. If someone had told you at the time of the Passover massacres of 2002 (seven suicide bombings in seven days) that a year

later terrorism deaths would be down more than 80%, Yasser Arafat would be edged aside, a new reformist Palestinian leadership would be approved, Palestinian finances would start to become transparent, and negotiations between the parties would become possible once again, you would have said this is utterly fanciful. But that is exactly what has happened. Why? Because of the radical new policy adopted by President Bush and enunciated last June 24.

Bush was accused of having no policy because he refused to follow the old Clinton doctrine that had made Arafat the center of the universe (he was invited to the Clinton White House more than any other leader on the planet) and made talking an end in itself — even as the blood flowed. The nadir of this obsession with "engagement" was reached the day Madeleine Albright ran through the courtyard of a Paris chateau begging Arafat to return to a negotiation he had just walked out of.

We know what that debased and delusional policy yielded: the bloodiest bout of Palestinian-Israeli violence in history. With the region knee-deep in body parts, the Bush Administration ordered a halt to the insanity. On June 24, 2002, Bush pledged himself to a Palestinian state but told the Palestinians that they will get nothing until they give up this war, crack down on terrorism, democratize their institutions and, most important, strip Arafat of power.

This was key. Arafat is not just the man who refused to make peace with Israel — Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi ambassador to the U.S., has called Arafat's rejection of Israel's peace offer in 2000-01 not just "a tragedy" but "a crime"—he is the man who uses his power to make sure that no one else can make peace with Israel. By demanding new leadership, the Bush Administration was grounding future Middle East diplomacy in realism. Axiom A: Allowing Israel to fight the terrorism would reduce the terrorism. Axiom B: Shunning and thus diminishing Arafat would bring the first openings toward real peace. Both have proved true.

So much for "no policy." So much for "no progress." Bush has provided perhaps the best opportunity for peace in 35 years. But many pitfalls remain. The first is that the transition away from Arafat is incomplete. The new Prime Minister, Abu

Mazen, represents hope. He is the most senior Palestinian leader to declare the intifadeh a mistake and to pledge an end to terrorism. Arafat, however, is doing everything to undermine him. He has portrayed Abu Mazen as an American stooge and is opposing the dismantling of the Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, which just last week took credit for a massacre at a seaside cafe in Tel Aviv.

The second pitfall is the "road map for peace." Its title insists that it is "performance-based," but the text reveals a timetable that is calendar based. This repeats the mistake of the catastrophic Oslo "peace process," in which Israel acquiesced to the establishment of an Arafat mini-state, without Arafat's being held to his pledges to control weaponry, crack down on terrorism and cease anti-Israel incitement. No one wanted to halt the peace train by demanding compliance. The result was a bloody wreck.

Moreover, the road map is built on simultaneity: Israel pulls back settlements and eases security measures while the Palestinians are supposed to fight terrorism. This contradicts the President's June 24 policy that Israel must make concessions, large concessions, but only after the Palestinians have made a strategic decision to end the bloodshed.

The road map might thus produce a tactical cease-fire. But that would just provide an interval of safety for Palestinian terrorists to rearm, regroup and prepare to fight later on. Publishing the road map with Arafat still clinging to power and with Abu Mazen unproved is a bad omen. By rewarding the Palestinians before Arafat is gone and by demanding Israeli concessions while the violence continues, it belies the very premise of the June 24 policy, the only policy since Oslo that has produced real progress.

Mideast road trap

By Frank J. Gaffney Jr. The Washington Times May 6, 2003

Newt Gingrich recently precipitated a firestorm of controversy when he said the Department of State was working to sabotage President Bush's security policies. As a case in point, he cited the State Department's machinations behind the "road map" for peace between Israel and the Palestinian front in the Arab-Israeli conflict:

"The State Department invention of a Quartet for Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations defies everything the United States has learned about France, Russia and the United Nations. After the bitter lessons of the last five months, it is unimaginable that the United States would voluntarily accept a system in which the U.N., the European Union and Russia could routinely outvote

President Bush's positions by three to one (or four to one if the State Department voted its cultural beliefs against the president's policies)."

"This is a deliberate and systematic effort to undermine the president's policies procedurally by ensuring they will consistently be watered down and distorted by the other three members. This is worse than the U.N. inspections process — a clear disaster for American diplomacy."

The former House speaker is, of course, absolutely correct in warning that the negotiating format the State Department has conjured up over the past year amounts to a stacked deck — stacked against Mr. Bush and the principles and

preconditions for recognition of a Palestinian state that he announced last June.

Unfortunately, the problem is not simply a procedural arrangement whereby four entities profoundly hostile to Israel are in charge — so much so that they are hoping to be able to dictate terms to the Israelis. This assuredly is not the negotiating process Mr. Bush had in mind when he offered his vision for a real Mideast peace nearly a year ago.

Given the quartet's composition and proclivities, however, it is hardly surprising that the content of its road map also deviates profoundly from what Mr. Bush proposed at that time. This is evident in particular on two critical counts:

First, Mr. Bush made very clear last June that a new generation of leaders "untainted by terror" would have to come to the fore in the Palestinian community via democratic means. The clear meaning of this precondition was that neither Yasser Arafat nor anybody associated with his terrorist kleptocracy could be considered a legitimate interlocutor in a new, reformed peace process.

Career bureaucrats — like those running the State Department who, at best, can scarcely conceal their contempt for the people elected to run the country — are fond of saying "What the president meant to say is ..."

In this case, State and its quartet partners have contorted the president's intention so as to enable one of the Palestinian caudillo's most faithful lieutenants, Mahmoud Abbas, to be handpicked by Mr. Arafat but nonetheless represented as a real partner for peace with the Israelis.

Mr. Arafat and Abu Mazen (Mr. Abbas' nom de guerre — it tells you something about this man's commitment to peace with Israel that he has a guerilla nickname) even performed a little drama designed to demonstrate for Western consumption that the lieutenant, not his boss, would now control the official security apparatus and, as a result, be able to crack down on Palestinian terrorists. This gambit was reminiscent of another of Mr. Arafat's theatrical performances a few years back when, to demonstrate his commitment to live in peace with Israel, he was supposed to secure the elimination of dozens of provisions in the Palestinian Charter calling for the destruction of Jews and their state. Just as these provisions remain unchanged to this day, power still

rests in the hands of those who espouse jihad against Israel.

Second, Mr. Bush also indicated last June that Israel would not be expected to accept a Palestinian state unless and until terrorism ceased to be waged against the Jewish state. But the quartet had other plans. It adopted a timetable for recognition of a state of Palestine that was geared, not to an end of the threat to Israel, but to a predetermined calendar: The boundaries of a provisional state to be fixed by as early as the end of 2003; a full-fledged and internationally recognized state not later than 2005. And while the Palestinians would be required to "undertake visible efforts ... to arrest, disrupt and restrain individuals and groups conducting and planning violent attacks on Israelis" ("visible" being the operative term, not "successful"), the Israelis would be obliged from the get-go to make tangible and possibly irreversible steps. For example, they must pull out of forward defensive positions in Palestinian areas, stop further growth of settlements, etc.

In short, the road map offered by the quartet appears more likely to prove a "road trap" for one of the parties, Israel — and for a president who, more than any other in history, has committed himself to the survival and security of the Jewish state. Such a prospect is all the more absurd given the unprecedented opportunities a post-Saddam Hussein Middle East could present for a genuine, just and durable peace between Israel and new, non-radical Arab regimes in the region.

In his inspiring address on the USS Abraham Lincoln last week, Mr. Bush warned that "any person, organization or government that supports, protects or harbors terrorists is complicit in the murder of the innocent, and equally guilty of terrorist crimes."

It can only be hoped that the State Department, the rest of the quartet and the Palestinian sponsors of terrorism on whom they hope to confer a state understood what the president surely meant to say — both now and last June: He will not be party to surrendering Israeli security, any more than our own, to those determined to destroy freedom-loving peoples and societies.

Frank J. Gaffney Jr. is the president of the Center for Security Policy.

SPECIAL ISRAEL ANNOUNCEMENT (2)

The city of Efrat in the Gush Etzion region has faced insurmountable challenges and witnessed true horrors - terrorists have claimed many Jewish lives from that area. An emergency campaign is underway to raise funds for necessary security concerns that cannot be funded by the IDF or by the Israeli government. A fund raising meeting will be held at the home of Sheldon and Ann Berman, 3212 Northbrook Road on Tuesday night, May 20 at 8:00 pm. Your help is needed now. Please come to this meeting and be prepared to hear representatives of the area. For more information – call Sheldon at (410) 581-0800 or e-mail at sheldonb@rsfchart.com.

Please help support this very worthwhile Charity project. (ed)

Special Israel Charity Announcements – a newsletter feature

By Glenn and Gilla Jasper and Aaron and Laura Frank

Having a special-needs child is a full-time, often-times lifelong, job. Having two would be the challenge of a lifetime. How about 48? Read on

Ma'on LaTinok In 1974, Hadassah Levi was running a day care center for children with mental retardation. She became seriously ill, and, during her stay in a local hospital, noticed that the children with Down Syndrome were being neglected, even to the point of either being left near open windows so that they would get sick and die, or were being abandoned by their birth families. Hadassah made a solemn vow. If she were to recover from her illness, she would raise these children. And that is exactly what happened.

Hadassah Levi, of Jerusalem, raised more than forty-eight children with Down Syndrome. While raising these children, Hadassah destroyed many myths about Down Syndrome. Her kids all don't "look" like people with Down Syndrome. "They" are supposed to look stockier, have rounder faces and a certain eye configuration. Hadassah developed a diet for them that helped to change these features. Her "children" didn't die young. She provided them with a proper environment and medical treatment that some deny these "special" cases. Above all else, she offered them love.

Today, "Hadassah's Kids," as she lovingly refers to them, are young adults. Many live in beautiful group homes, go to work every day, and like all of the same things people their age enjoy-CD players, the latest video, make-up, the latest fashions. Hadassah's love and dedication have made all of the difference.

But one thing Hadassah can't do is keep this up by herself indefinitely. She's an older woman now, and doesn't have the strength to continue providing everything her kids need. Some of the kids have menial jobs, but virtually all of them need outside financial support to keep them going. She needs our help. You know what to do

Please click on the following (hyper)link:

https://www.networkforgood.org/makeDonation.g_o?hosection=donate&agency_id=521219427&agency_name=Ziv+Tzedakah+Fund%2C+Inc.&agency_service_code=P99&agency_address1=263+Congressional+Ln&agency_address2=%23708&agency_city=Rockville&agency_state=MD&agency_zip=2085

For the "Designation (Optional)" section, please type in "Imachem-Latinok." That way, you can be sure your donation will go to the cause we described above. May we all have the opportunity to do lots and lots of Mitzvot!

Calendar Of Israel Events

- ❑ **Rabbinic tryout week** Please join us in welcoming Rabbi Shmuel Silber as a Rabbinic candidate at Suburban Orthodox. He will speak on Shabbat morning and give classes at 8:30am and 6:30pm Shabbat and 8:00am Sunday morning.
- ❑ **Hear Boaz Radai, Israeli minister of Economic Affairs** Sponsored by the Baltimore Zionist District, Wednesday, May 14 at 7:30pm at Suburban Orthodox.
- ❑ **“And Now The Good News”** A pro-Israel alliance program featuring Dr. Robert O. Friedman as moderator and speakers from AIPAC as well as the Israeli and Turkish embassy. On Wednesday, May 14 at 7:30pm at Temple Oheb Shalom, 7310 Park Heights Avenue, program is free and open to the public.
- ❑ **Adopt-A-Family** The Shul has adopted the Lieberman family of Elon Moreh that has suffered from terrorism. Please contribute toward our commitment of \$5,000 per year. Contact Avie Rock at (410) 653-1415 or arock@bcpl.net.
- ❑ **Shalom USA Radio Program** Sunday mornings from 8:00am to 10:00am on WJFK 1300AM. Includes news and interviews from Israel.
- ❑ **Help the Efrat Foundation** Parlor meeting planned for May 20th. See Page 9.
- ❑ **Sar-El program update** Sar-El is accepting volunteers for a special one-week period in Israel – May 25th through May 30th. El Al will be offering specially discounted fares and Sar-El has negotiated discounts with hotels. If you are able to participate, please contact Layne or Mike Lowenstein at (410) 484-3884.