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The Israelis are actually showing the entire world how to embrace life, even as they live, trembling, in the shadow of death. They are teaching the world how to "love life more than they fear death."

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Talk about the crisis between Israel and "the Arab world" is anachronistic. Israel has treaties with two Arab nations, Egypt and Jordan, and Israel's most lethal enemy is Iran, which is not an Arab state. It and another non-Arab nation, Turkey, are eclipsing the Arab world.

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There is some cause for optimism regarding these talks, because for the first time in history, most Arab leaders view a Middle Eastern state other than Israel — Iran — as their major enemy.

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Message from the President of the State of Israel, Shimon Peres, to the Jewish Communities in the Diaspora on the occasion of the Jewish New Year 5771

As we embark on the New Year, hope for peace appears tangible. While we focus on the summit meeting in Washington, we pray that it will lead to the signing of a historic peace treaty between Israel and the Palestinians, and bring tranquility, prosperity and security to the peoples of the region.

With a common and better future in mind, the Jewish people in the Diaspora and Israel must work together for the benefit of the generations to come and a brighter tomorrow. In this context, it is imperative that a spirit of brotherhood and a close bond with Israel continue to be a part of the Jewish and Zionist education of Jewish youth in the Diaspora. I believe the first hand experience provided by visits to Israel plays a significant role in achieving this objective.

In a period when attempts to delegitimize Israel as a Jewish state are relentless, it is essential that we, in Israel, and the Jewish people throughout the world, jointly seek to thwart these efforts. We must mobilize our forces to expose the lies and highlight the

values of the Jewish people through the ages, based on the Ten Commandments, as well as the moral and ethical values that constitute the foundations of our country and our people.

It is also vital that we stand alongside the international community in the fight against fanatic leaders, armed with nuclear weapons, and who deny the Holocaust and call for the destruction of the State of Israel.

In a world where science and technology rank high, Israel continues to stand at the forefront of advances in this domain. Indeed, we are proud of Professor Ada Yonath of the Weizmann Institute, who received the Nobel Prize for Chemistry, and Professor Elon Lindenstrauss of the Hebrew University, who was awarded the prestigious Fields Medal for Mathematics, for their achievements and for bringing such credit to Israel and the Jewish people.

Our mission for the coming year is to strengthen our unity in matters that affect the destinies and future of us all. We must work together in harmony and reach agreements through dialogue. Solidarity, brotherhood, tolerance and understanding are the foundations of a strong and secure family. We cannot, and must not, allow disagreements to tear us apart. We must collectively dedicate ourselves to the well-being of the Jewish people.

In this spirit, I convey my best wishes to our brethren throughout the world for a year of peace, joy, good health and prosperity.

Shana Tova U'Metukah
Shimon Peres

Why most Palestinians don't support Israeli-Palestinian talks – or another intifada

Joshua Mitnick, Christian Science Monitor, 2 September 2010

While Washington might be abuzz with the resumption of Israeli-Palestinians peace talks last week after a nearly two-year hiatus, only 1 in 3 Palestinians support the negotiations according to a late August poll by the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion.

Though the 17-year-old peace process has yielded trappings of self-rule amid Israel's military occupation, Palestinians have largely lost hope that summits such as this week's in Washington can deliver on their ultimate goal of Palestinian statehood.

While a majority oppose the armed uprising Hamas has been calling for, pervasive apathy and distrust here highlight the more intangible barriers that Israeli and Palestinian leaders alike must overcome – in addition to final status issues such as Jerusalem, borders, and refugees.

"Had this been the first round of talks, then we would have hoped for a good solution," says Reem Abu Latif, an architectural engineer. "However, this is the 20th time, and we know the result. Now we are expecting nothing. Nor do we care."

In addition, many resent the international pressure that pushed Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas to drop his precondition of an Israeli settlement freeze.

"The Palestinian Authority is very small and very weak, and this is why they decided to accept the negotiations," says shopkeeper Ali Mahmoud. "The more pressure there is on the PA, the more the international community loses credibility [with Palestinians]."

The public's political fatigue after decades of alternating between peace talks and uprising was on display on Wednesday morning in Al Manara Square, Ramallah's commercial core.

Despite the widespread criticism of Abbas' decision to attend the talks, only a few hundred Palestinians showed up at a rally sponsored by political parties opposed to the current peace process.

"People in Ramallah stopped demonstrating a long time ago," said Diana Bhutto, a former adviser to the government, on the sidelines of the demonstration. "People are now feeling like they don't want any part of it."

To be sure, there is an almost symmetric indifference among Israelis. Most believe that the talks are destined to fail, partly because they believe that Palestinians aren't ready to make the necessary compromises for peace.

A June survey by the Palestinian Center for Public Survey Research found that 71 percent of Palestinians oppose abandoning a two-state solution. A majority also opposes a resumption of the armed uprising against Israel and more than two-thirds doubt that a new nonviolent uprising would achieve their goals either.

The malaise extends to Palestinian domestic politics as well. Though reconciliation between the PA-run West Bank and the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip is considered the top problem facing Palestinians, 8 in 10 Palestinians believe that unity will not happen for a long time or not at all. Palestinian security forces loyal to the PA arrested dozens of Hamas members last week in the wake of a shooting that killed four Israelis – the worst such strike in two years, and part of what Hamas has vowed will be a new wave of violence.

Despite momentary sympathy for the militant Islamists, who are seen as paying the price of the PA's cooperation with Israel, it is not clear that they will benefit from the widespread perception that the PA answers to the US and Israel.

Indeed, even though many criticize Abbas for joining talks that have little chance of success and without guarantees of a settlement freeze, few Palestinians interviewed by the Monitor believed that Hamas' rejection of Israel and peace talks is the solution.

"We tried Hamas and they didn't solve anything," says Zahiya Juma, a health services worker donning a headscarf, who says she sees no leader or party capable of advancing the Palestinian cause right now. "These negotiations have no meaning to us. They are only meaningful to Obama and Abbas," she says. "What are they negotiating about when I can't even get to Jerusalem to pray?"

TIME Magazine's latest blood libel about Israel

Professor Phyllis Chesler, Arutz Sheva, 5 September 2010

The September 13, 2010 issue of *TIME* Magazine arrived yesterday. The cover story is titled "Why Israel Doesn't Care About Peace" and is illustrated by a large Jewish star composed of daisies. Yes, daisies - as in "counting daisies, don't have a care in the world."

This is precisely the point of Karl Vick's article. He writes:

Israelis are no longer preoccupied with the matter [of peace with the Palestinians]. They're otherwise engaged: They're making money; they're enjoying the rays of the late summer ... they have moved on.

Vick quotes an Israeli real estate agent in Ashdod, one Eli, who tells him: People are indifferent. They don't care if there's going to be war. They don't care if there's going to be peace. They don't care. They live in the day.

According to Vick, Israelis don't care about peace, peace negotiations, or about the Palestinians because they are simply having too good a time: sunbathing, swimming, café-hopping, profiting from start-up companies, and, according to polls cited by Vick, utterly disconnected from "politics;" indeed Vick suggests that Israelis resemble Californians more than they resemble Egyptians. These are all points which scream: Israel does not fit in; if Israelis were only more impoverished, more indolent, and paradoxically, even more "laid back," they might be recognizable as indigenous to the region, a true part of the Middle East.

These are Vick's thoughts, not mine.

Of course, Jews are the original Palestinians and the most indigenous of the region's inhabitants; yes, there are many impoverished Israelis, both Jews and non-Jews; and, let's not forget that there are even some Israelis who remain permanently on high alert for the next terrorist attack, permanently scarred by the last ones. For a moment, let's forget about all that. Allow me to ask: Why doesn't Vick also point out that Palestinians are leading the high life on the West Bank and in sumptuous villas on both the West Bank and in Gaza; that they, too, are sunbathing, swimming, shopping, dining out, and relaxing at the beach - at least as much as the Islamist thugs who run the lives of Palestinians will allow it?

Vick and his editors at *TIME* seem to think that showing six photos of Israelis at leisure: blowing smoke on a beach chair, lounging on a beach chair, resting in an army uniform on the beach without a chair, playing with one's baby in a stroller, sitting at a café - are proof that Israelis are engaging in activities which are not admirable, are, in fact, "proof" that they are not suffering but rather, proof that Israelis simply don't care about peace with the Palestinians. And Vick brings in polls as well as expert and person-in-the-street opinions to back up this claim.

Vick writes that real estate is booming, as is business in general, Israeli “brainiacs” have helped their nation avoid the economic disasters that have plunged Europe and America into a recession. He literally writes this. “Israel avoided the debt traps that dragged the U.S. and Europe into recession. It is known as a start-up nation - second only to the U.S. companies listed on the Nasdaq exchange.”

Is Vick aware that, consciously or not, intentionally or not, he is counting on the world's long-held resentment about Jewish creativity, genius, and scientific and economic success - counting on the world's willingness to scapegoat Israel once again for crimes that it has not committed? Or because Jews seem to “know something,” maybe they are channeling God directly and thus, the deck is stacked against non-Jews. Vick presents Israel's “success” as somehow unseemly, because it makes other nations look bad. Does he harbor the suspicion that Jewish prosperity has been “stolen” from non-Jews or is he merely advertising that Jewish gold is there, ripe for the taking?

Buried - but really buried - in Vick's four page cover piece are snippets of true facts: That the Israelis are weary of peace negotiations which never succeed because the Palestinians do not want peace; that Arabs and Palestinians want to destroy the Jewish state and as many Jews as possible.

But Vick fails to convey that negotiations cannot work as long as the ultra-Nazified Arab Islamic propaganda against Jews and Israel continues to turn out children who hate Jews and who become human homicide bombs, snipers, kidnappers, kassam rocket throwers, etc.

Here is what Vick utterly fails to comprehend, namely, that Israelis are not merely tired, disenchanted, living in la-la land a la southern Californians (hence, the Jewish star made of daisies on the cover). The Israelis are actually showing the entire world how to embrace life, even as they live, trembling, in the shadow of death. They are teaching the world how to “love life more than they fear death.”

A new and wonderful book , “*A New Shoah. The Untold Story of Israel's Victims of Terrorism*” by Italian Meotti begins where I began in early 2004, when I wrote about a new Holocaust in the pages of *The Jewish Press*, a Holocaust which is now based in Israel. At the time, I was not heard beyond a small circle. I did what Meotti now does in his opening pages. Meotti fully understands that Israel is the “first country ever to experience suicide terrorism on a mass scale: that more than 150 suicide attacks have been carried out plus 500 have been prevented.” According to Meotti, there have been “1,723 people (murdered) and 10,000 injured” in Israel. Meotti does what I did: He converts these numbers into the demographic equivalent of attacks on Americans. When I did so there were somewhat fewer people in both categories. Thus, Meotti writes that in American population terms, this means that “74,000 Americans” would have been killed and “400,000 injured.”

Vick does not factor this grave reality into his article. Nor does he seem to know how high the Jewish population growth was in the DP camps right after the Holocaust. Can he comprehend that permanently endangered Jews - a people that has survived as a people for nearly six thousand years - the Chosen People - have always chosen life in the moment, have chosen to seize life with both hands, even as they memorialize their

dead and make sense of their persecution in a way that illuminates this particular Hell for all humanity?

What Meotti is doing is remembering the lives and the deaths of the Israeli victims of Palestinian terrorism during the last decade. I have only read the first few chapters but cannot put it down. These are unknown stories, unnamed victims, whose mortal remains have often evaporated, disintegrated as surely as those Jews who literally went up in smoke during the Nazi Holocaust. His stories are mainly of victims who were unarmed and helpless and who, it turns out, were actually exceptionally kind to others, often to the very Arab Palestinians who shot them down, bludgeoned them to death, or blew them up into unrecognizable bone fragments, drops of blood, perhaps a few teeth.

I look forward to completing Meotti's book. I hope people more fully understand that *TIME* Magazine as well as countless other media in the Western world, can no longer be trusted to tell the truth.

The Mideast mirage

By George Will, Jewish World Review, August 26, 2010

Immersion in this region's politics can convince those immersed that history is cyclical rather than linear -- that it is not one thing after another but the same thing over and over. This passes for good news because things that do change, such as weapons, often make matters worse.

A profound change, however, is this: Talk about the crisis between Israel and "the Arab world" is anachronistic. Israel has treaties with two Arab nations, Egypt and Jordan, and Israel's most lethal enemy is Iran, which is not an Arab state. It and another non-Arab nation, Turkey, are eclipsing the Arab world, where 60 percent of the population of 300 million is under 25, and 26 percent of that cohort is unemployed. The prerequisites for Arab progress -- freedom, education and the emancipation of women -- are not contemplated.

Syria's Bashar al-Assad, a dictator buttressed by torture, recently called Israel a state "based on crime, slaughter." Imagine what Israelis thought when, at about the time Assad was saying this, a State Department ninny visiting Syria was tweeting to the world, "I'm not kidding when I say I just had the greatest frappacino [sic] ever."

Israel has changed what it can, its own near neighborhood. Since 1967, faced with unrelenting Palestinian irredentism, Israel has been weaving the West Bank into a common fabric with the coastal plain, the nation's economic and population center of gravity. Withdrawal from the West Bank would bring Tel Aviv's Ben-Gurion Airport within range of short-range rockets fired by persons overlooking the runways. So, the feasibility of such a withdrawal depends on how much has changed since 1974, when Yasser Arafat received a standing ovation at the United Nations when he said Israel had no right to exist.

Thirty-six years later, Israelis can watch West Bank Palestinian television incessantly inculcating anti-Semitism and denial of Israel's right to exist. Across the fence that has substantially reduced terrorism from the West Bank, Israelis see Ramallah, where

Mahmoud Abbas, head of the Palestinian Authority, lives and where a square was recently named in honor of Dalal Mughrabi. In 1978, she, together with 11 other terrorists, hijacked an Israeli bus and massacred 37 Israelis and one American. Cigarette lighters sold on the West Bank show, when lit, the World Trade Center burning.

The Obama administration, which seems to consider itself too talented to bother with anything but "comprehensive" solutions to problems, may yet make matters worse by presenting its own plan for a final settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian problem. Barack Obama insists that it is "costing us significantly in terms of both blood and treasure," although he does not say how. Gen. David Petraeus says Israeli-Palestinian tensions "have an enormous effect on the strategic context." As though, were the tensions to subside, the hard men managing Iran's decades-long drive for nuclear weapons would then say, "Oh, well, in that case, let's call the whole thing off."

The biggest threat to peace might be the peace process -- or, more precisely, the illusion that there is one. The mirage becomes the reason for maintaining its imaginary "momentum" by extorting concessions from Israel, the only party susceptible to U.S. pressure. Israel is, however, decreasingly susceptible. In one month, history will recycle when the partial 10-month moratorium on Israeli construction on the West Bank expires. Resumption of construction -- even here, in the capital, which was not included in the moratorium -- will be denounced by a fiction, "the international community," as a threat to another fiction, "the peace process."

This, even though no Israeli government of any political hue has ever endorsed a ban on construction in Jewish neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, where about 40 percent of the capital's Jewish population lives. Strategic Affairs Minister Moshe Yaalon, who says "the War of Independence has not ended" 62 years after 1948, says of an extension of the moratorium: "The prime minister is opposed to it. He said that clearly. The decision was for 10 months. [On] Sept. 27, we are immediately going to return" to construction and "Jerusalem is outside the discussion."

Predictably, Palestinian officials are demanding that the moratorium be extended as the price of their willingness to continue direct talks with Israel -- which began Sept. 2 -- beyond Sept. 27. If this demand succeeds, history will remain cyclical: The "peace process" will be sustained by rewarding the Palestinian tactic of making the mere fact of negotiations contingent on Israeli concessions concerning matters that should be settled by negotiations.

Reason for optimism in Mideast talks

Michael B Oren, Jewish World Review, 1 September 2010

Israeli and Palestinian leaders are in Washington in an attempt to make peace — again. This summit marks the latest chapter in a story that began on the White House lawn 17 years ago when Israelis and Palestinians committed themselves to ending the conflict once and for all. Since then, every round has failed and bloodshed has continued. Against the backdrop of Tuesday's Palestinian terrorist attack that left four Israeli

civilians dead, including a pregnant Israeli woman, why should these negotiations be different? Is there any reason for optimism?

Indeed, there is. For the first time in history, most Arab leaders view a Middle Eastern state other than Israel — Iran — as their major enemy. The Israeli government under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is strong, stable and deeply committed to resolving the conflict based on two states for two peoples, Israeli and Palestinian. In the West Bank, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is working to restore law, order and economic prosperity while similarly pledging to pursue the two-state solution. And President Barack Obama has placed achieving peace at the top of his foreign policy agenda. Never before, perhaps, have conditions been so conducive for a breakthrough.

Still, daunting obstacles remain. Nearly half of the territory slated to become part of the future Palestinian state is controlled by Hamas, an Iranian-backed terrorist group dedicated to Israel's destruction. The Palestinian Authority, meanwhile, is insisting that Israel indefinitely freeze all construction in the West Bank Jewish communities. While little can be done at this stage to neutralize the Hamas threat — the hope is that the people of Gaza will someday rid themselves of Hamas and opt for peace — the construction issue need not be a deal breaker. Adding a bedroom for a growing family should not disrupt the peace process.

The West Bank — or, as the Bible calls it, Judea and Samaria — was twice used as a staging ground for wars of annihilation against Israel, which captured the area in 1967. Sacred to the Jewish people for 3,000 years and vital to the defense of Israel's borders which were a mere eight miles wide prior to 1967, the West Bank became the home to hundreds of thousands of Israelis. With the start of the peace process in 1993, successive Israeli governments recognized the need to make painful sacrifices in these crucial territories while upholding the right of Israeli citizens to continue to build there. Palestinian and Israeli leaders agreed that the final status of these settlements would be determined, along with Jerusalem, refugees, and borders, in the peace talks.

Since assuming office a year and a half ago, Prime Minister Netanyahu has made several gestures to the Palestinians to encourage them to return to the negotiating table. In addition to removing hundreds of checkpoints and facilitating the Palestinian economic boom, he refrained from building any new settlements, from acquiring new territory for existing ones, and from incentivizing Israelis to move to them. Finally, in a measure described as "unprecedented" by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Netanyahu froze all new construction within the settlements for a ten-month period.

The Palestinians are now threatening to quit the negotiations unless Netanyahu extends the construction freeze. Israel, of course, is seeking specific goals in the talks, including the demilitarization of the Palestinian state and its recognition of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people. Israel also wants the Palestinians to cease teaching their children that Israel has no right to exist and naming their public squares after terrorists. But we are not insisting that the Palestinians meet these objectives before the talks even begin. We appreciate, therefore, Secretary Clinton's call for "good faith" negotiations "without preconditions."

Settlements have never been an obstacle to peace. Though Israelis account for 17 percent of the West Bank population they inhabit a mere 1.7 percent of the land. The existence of the settlements did not prevent Egypt and Jordan from making peace with Israel or the Palestinians from negotiating with us for nearly two decades. All parties to

negotiations understand that the large settlement clusters will, in any final status treaty, remain part of Israel.

As President Obama launches the direct Israeli-Palestinian talks, there is indeed reason for optimism — despite the obstacles. If the core issues are determined at the table rather than before the negotiations start, PM Netanyahu and President Abbas can move swiftly and confidently toward concluding an historic treaty. Though long overdue, but not too late, the peace we have yearned for may yet be achieved.

***Bits and Pieces* Clips from media in the Middle East and elsewhere**

ICEJ News, 3 September 2010: Egypt has cancelled a visit by Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki to protest comments in which he accused Arab leaders of betrayal for attending the new round of Mideast peace talks in Washington. Iran has had an uneasy relationship with Egypt since it granted asylum to the deposed Shah of Iran in 1979 and Iranian-inspired Egyptian soldiers assassinated president Anwar Sadat in 1982 for signing a peace treaty with Israel. Relations with Egypt and other Sunni Arab states have worsened in recent years due to Tehran's intensified efforts to acquire nuclear weapons, spread its influence through proxies in Syria, Hizbullah and Hamas, and eventually dominate the region.

ICEJ News, 3 September 2010: The Education, Culture and Sport Committee of the Knesset on Thursday voted to condemn a boycott by over 150 prominent Israeli artists and academics of a new culture and arts center in the West Bank community of Ariel. Many of the cultural bodies signing on the boycott receive funding from the government and the Committee reminded them that they are obliged to perform in an equitable manner before all Israeli audiences, regardless of their political beliefs.