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Speech by the Quartet Representative Tony Blair, Herzliya, 24th August 2010

<http://www.tonyblairoffice.org/news/entry/tony-blair-welcomes-re-start-of-direct-peace-talks-during-herzliya-speech/>

There are two forms of de-legitimisation. One is traditional, obvious and from the quarters it emanates, expected. It is easier to deal with. This is attack from those who openly question Israel's right to exist. It is easier to deal with, because it is so clear. When the President of Iran says he wants Israel wiped off the face of the map, we all know where we are. This is not to minimise the threat of course. It remains and is profound. It is just to say that were this the only form of de-legitimisation, it wouldn't warrant a conference of analysis; simply a course of action.

The other form is more insidious, harder to spot, harder to anticipate and harder to deal with, because many of those engaging in it, will fiercely deny they are doing so. It is this form that is in danger of growing, and whose impact is potentially highly threatening, in part because it isn't obvious.

I would define in it this way: it is a conscious or often unconscious resistance, sometimes bordering on refusal, to accept Israel has a legitimate point of view. Note that I say refusal to accept Israel has a legitimate point of view. I'm not saying refusal to agree with it. People are perfectly entitled to agree or not; but rather an unwillingness to listen to the other side, to acknowledge that Israel has a point, to embrace the notion that this is a complex matter that requires understanding of the other way of looking at it.

The challenge is that this often does not come from ill-intentioned people; but well-intentioned. They would dispute vigorously such a characterisation of their mindset. They would point to the injustice of Palestinian suffering, acts of the Israeli Government or army which are unjustifiable and they would say, rightly, that you cannot say that to criticise Israel is to de-legitimise it. Such minds are often to be found in the west. They will say they advocate a two state solution and they will point to that as proof positive that they accept Israel's existence fully.

The problem is that though this is true in theory, in practice they wear Nelson's eye patch when they lift the telescope of scrutiny to the Israeli case. In a very real sense, they don't see it.

So, for example, on Gaza they won't accept that Israel might have a right to search vessels bringing cargo into Gaza, given that even this year over 100 rockets have been fired from that territory into Israel. Leave aside the multiple investigations relating to the flotilla, upon which there will naturally be heated debate. I mean a refusal to accept that, however handled, no Israeli government could be indifferent to the possibility of weapons and missiles being brought into Gaza.

I often have a conversation about the West Bank which goes like this. Someone says: Israel must lift the occupation. I reply: I agree but it has to be sure that when it does so, there will be security and a Palestinian force capable of preventing terrorism. They say: so you're supporting occupation. I say: I'm not: I'm simply pointing out that if Hamas, with an unchanged position on Israel, were running the West Bank, Israel would have a perfectly legitimate right to be concerned about its security.

A constant conversation I have with some, by no means all, of my European colleagues is to argue to them: don't apply rules to the Government of Israel that you would never dream of applying to your own country. In any of our nations, if there were people firing rockets, committing acts of terrorism and living next door to us, our public opinion would go crazy. And any political leader who took the line that we shouldn't get too excited about it, wouldn't last long as a political leader. This is a democracy. Israel lost 1000 citizens to terrorism in the intifada. That equates in UK population terms to 10,000. I remember the bomb attacks from Republican terrorism in the 1970's. There weren't many arguing for a policy of phlegmatic calm.

So the issue of de-legitimation is not simply about an overt denial of the State of Israel. It is the application of prejudice in not allowing that Israel has a point of view that should be listened to.

One thing I state repeatedly in interviews about Gaza – despite disagreeing with the previous policy on it – is to say to western media outlets: just at least comprehend why Israel feels as it does. In 2005 it got out of Gaza i.e. ceased occupying it, took over 7000 settlers with it and in return got rockets and terror attacks. Now I know all the counter-arguments about the unilateral nature of the withdrawal, the 2005 Access and Movement agreement and the closure of the crossings. But the fact remains: there is another point of view and you can't describe it as illegitimate.

This is then hugely heightened by the way things are reported. Here the televisual images – whether in Lebanon, Gaza or indeed any field of conflict – in Afghanistan for example, are so shocking that they tend to overwhelm debate about how or why conflict began. Because Israel – like the US or the UK – has superior force and because in such situations the horrible tragedy is that the innocent die – these images arouse anger, sympathy and a disgust that at one level is completely understandable but at another obscures the difficult choices nations like ours face, when they come under attack.

The combination of all of this is curious disjunction of perception. I spend large amounts of time in Israel, and outside of it in different parts of the world. To those outside, Israel is regularly perceived as arrogant, overbearing and aggressive. To Israelis, there is a sense that the world is isolating it unfairly and perversely refusing to see they too have a right to have their voice heard. Hence this conference.

The issue is how to respond. First, there is a clear and vital principle that needs to be established: to criticise is not per se to de-legitimise. The fact is there are plenty of Israeli and Jewish voices that passionately disagree with Israeli policy. I am a friend of Israel and openly avow it. I have plenty of criticisms. De-legitimation is qualitatively different. It can seem the same sometimes. But it isn't. The one is valid. The other is not. Friends of Israel should be the first to make the distinction.

Having done that, however, we should highlight the fact that de-legitimation is happening, and be vigilant and vigorous about identifying and countering the instances of it. This needn't be done stridently. But it should be done insistently. The aim: not to make people agree necessarily with Israel's point of view; but to insist they listen to it and persuade them at least to the position of understanding. Where there is incitement, expose it. Where there is a one-sided account, argue the other side. Always have a

voice out there – and not just the politicians – but the voices of the people. And do it systematically and with unity.

Second, Israel should always be a staunch and unrelenting advocate and actor for peace. What I mean by this is not that it should simply be for peace; it should advocate it and act to achieve it. Tzipi Livni's and Ehud Olmert's negotiations under the previous Israeli Government and previous US administration, were an immensely important part of showing to the world that whatever else they might say, they had to accept that the Government of Israel was genuinely trying to bring about peace. The re-start of the direct negotiations to be launched next week is important in itself; important because it shows that PM Netanyahu on behalf of the new Government of Israel is an advocate for peace; important because, with a one-year time frame being indicated, it shows that there is a sincere yearning on the part of the people of Israel to live in an enduring and honourable peace with their Palestinian neighbours. I know some are cynical. I know some say it's all for show. I reject that view. I think if Israel can receive real and effective guarantees about its security, then it is willing and ready to include a negotiation for a viable, independent Palestinian state. This is a brave decision by the PM and the right one.

Third, there will be no successful negotiation unless all the final status issues are on the table. I'm not going to try to negotiate solutions here and now. That is for later. We can think creatively and constructively. Indeed we must do so. But proposals on these issues will be a litmus test of seriousness.

Which brings me to a fourth point. A crucial response to de-legitimation is to deal with the legitimate criticism. What is it? Let me answer based on my experience. It is that we can and should do more and more quickly to improve the daily lives of Palestinians. Now there has been real progress here in the past year. We should deepen it. I am a convinced persuader for the bottom up approach – I continue to believe that no top-down negotiation will work without it. I also think we have visible empirical evidence to support it: the improvements in Jenin and the opening of the Jalameh crossing to Israeli Arabs; changes to A & M in response to the hugely improved capability of the PA on security; the very successful PIC in Bethlehem that yielded hundreds of millions of dollars of investment; the modus operandi with the new department under DPM Shalom that has resulted in significant gains; and I hope in time a new approach to tourism and to development for Palestinians in Area C.

Such change does not only lead to improvements to Palestinian lives. It also deals with what is the most potent fuel – especially in Arab media – of hatred against Israel. That is the idea that Palestinians suffer not injustice alone; but a form of humiliation. Dignity is a very important concept. Consistent with security, Israel should be constantly looking for ways to compensate for the indignity which inevitably results from the security measures taken and should seek to avoid any unnecessary indignities.

I was pleased and heartened when the Government changed policy on Gaza. The truth is you can justify restrictions in Gaza taken for reasons of security. But with a Gazan population, half of whom is under the age of 18 and 300,000 of whom are under the age of 4, security is the only arguable basis upon which to put such restrictions. Of course Gilad Shalit should be released immediately. His detention is a profound denial of

human rights, as is the way he is being treated. But a policy based on threats to Israel's security is the only one its friends can defend.

This leads me to my final point. It is our collective duty – yours and mine – to argue vigorously against the de-legitimisation of Israel. It is also our collective duty to arm ourselves with an argument and a narrative we can defend and with which we can answer the case against Israel, with pride and confidence.

Let me tell you why I am a passionate believer in Israel. This is a democracy. Its Parliament is vibrant. Its politics is, well, not notably restrained, let's say. Its press is free. Its people have rights which are enforced. I had an argument with a friend about Israel. I said: 'ok let's assume you are charged with a crime you didn't commit and the penalty is 20 years in prison. And you're a critic of the Government. Tell me: under which country's legal system, in this region, would you prefer to be tried?' He struggled for a bit and then said: 'that's not the point.' 'But it is' I replied.

Look around the world about what we admire about the Jewish people: their contribution to art, culture, literature, music, business and philanthropy. It's a spirit that is identifiable, open and rather wonderful. Whatever bigotry is, it is the opposite of it. It is a free spirit. On holiday I read the new biography of Einstein. Having in early life taken not much interest in the issue, he became an ardent supporter of Israel. But look at the character of the Israel he supported: like Einstein himself – a free thinker, a rebellious thinker, but one supremely attuned to the future.

That is the Israel people like me support. So guard it; keep it. I am a religious person myself. But the society I want to live in, is one that treats me no better as a result; makes my view one amongst many; and pursues science, technology and progress with vigour and without prejudice. The best answer to the de-legitimisation of Israel lies in the character of Israel itself and in the openness, fair-mindedness and creativity of ordinary Israelis. That character and those people built the State of Israel. They remain its guardians. They are why to de-legitimise Israel is not only an affront to Israelis but to all who share the values of a free human spirit.

Thank you.

Borderline Views: A dangerous political agenda

David Newman, The Jerusalem Post, 24 August 2010

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Article.aspx?id=185763>

Academic politics reached an intense peak last week, first with the circulation of a so-called research report by the self styled Institute for Strategic Zionism (ISZ), followed closely by the well-orchestrated media publication of the letter sent by the right-wing student organization Im Tirtzu to the president of Ben-Gurion University, Prof. Rivka Karmi. The draft ISZ report made a strong attack on the country's sociology departments, accusing them of teaching and researching post-Zionism and anti-state theories. The Im Tirtzu letter accused the Politics Department at BGU of imposing leftwing theories and values on its students, and threatened Karmi that unless the university began to employ right-wing professors, it would persuade donors from abroad – especially North America – to cease donating.

These were not isolated incidents. The past few years have witnessed a growth in right-wing activity aimed at delegitimizing the country's universities and their academic staff. To ISZ and Im Tirtzu can be added Isracampus and NGO Monitor, both of which have targeted academics and NGOs which hold views, or promote projects, which are not in line with their well-funded right-wing agendas.

The objective of these organizations is clear and has nothing to do with academic objectivity or balanced research. They are out to impose their own single-minded view of Israel and Zionism, close down any form of critical discourse and, given the nature of the present government, influence the legislators in the Knesset to support their cause.

The main problem with both the ISZ report and the Im Tirtzu letter is that they are full of false and highly selective information. ISZ, headed by former West Bank settlement leader Yisrael Harel, chose to focus on just a few research projects and courses out of the hundreds which are taught, conveniently ignoring the diversity of research which goes on in the country's sociology and anthropology departments. The Im Tirtzu letter put out false information about a dynamic and highly popular academic department which promotes social and political awareness among its students.

This same department, most of whose faculty are immigrants from the West, who teach air force cadets and who head up the both the university's center for European studies and the recently created African studies center, have been collectively labeled as anti-Zionist and traitors.

The political agenda of these organizations has become even clearer this past week as it has been revealed that, among other foreign donors, the ISZ has been funded by the right-wing Hudson Institute in the US, which has also funded activities of Prime Minister Netanyahu's special security adviser and well-known political hawk, Dr. Uzi Arad. Im Tirtzu has been receiving designated financial aid from right-wing Christian Evangelist pastor John Hagee, channeled through the due diligence of the Jewish Agency who do not see this as problematic.

Right-wing groups do not like it when they are accused of McCarthyism. But when you

try to influence the hiring (and firing) policy of universities based on political views, that is McCarthyism. And when you plant people in classes and at conferences to write false reports about what is discussed to further your political agenda and create a sense of fear among students, this is McCarthyism. And when you try to intervene in the curriculum in a highly selective fashion, this is McCarthyism. When you portray anyone who doesn't agree with you as being anti-state, abetting the enemy and not sufficiently patriotic, this is McCarthyism – pure and simple.

The senior academic establishment has finally awakened to the danger. Clear statements have been made by the rectors and presidents of Haifa, Tel Aviv and Ben-Gurion universities. Over the weekend, the Joint University Committee of Academic Faculty, along with the Basha'ar think tank, both of which represent a wide range of academics with political views across the spectrum condemned the threat tactics of ISZ and Im Tirtzu and restated the basic principles of academic freedom.

And there is more to come. It is understood that now that the sociologists and political scientists have been dealt with, the next targeted groups are philosophers and Israeli historians. And there are plenty of journalists out there who are quite happy to publish this information without checking any of the facts, as has been so evident during the past week.

Universities exist not only to teach a profession. They also exist to make their students socially and politically aware, and actively involved in the debates concerning the society and state in which they live.

Without critical discourse and constant challenging of accepted theories, there would be little point in having social science and humanities faculties. And as long as the views which are taught do not break the law and do not incite violence, it is incumbent on our students and researchers to cover the broadest possible spectrum of views.

The fact that the country's universities also house some of the most extreme right-wing professors, under the guise of the Professors for a Strong Israel organization, is conveniently forgotten by ISZ, Im Tirtzu and like-minded organizations. If you agree with them, you are a patriot (self-appointed), but if you hold a different opinion you are a traitor and should be fired.

Their assertion that only like-minded people are hired for academic positions is not only nonsensical, it is insulting to the country's universities and research centers, which enjoy international prestige for the high quality of their research.

Over a period of almost 15 years I have been involved in the hiring and promotion of many academics, and I can state categorically that at no time has the political preferences or opinions of a candidate ever been part of the decision-making process. The quality of a person's research, his/her international prestige and the recommendations received from academic peers are the sole criteria, and it is harmful and damaging to suggest anything else. It would indeed behoove our academic institutions to become more transparent about the promotion and tenure process so that this false argument could be buried once and for all.

Not only do ISZ and Im Tirtzu threaten freedom of expression and academic freedom, they are doing great harm to Israel's reputation as a place of open debate and diversity

of opinion. This damage is far greater than that caused by a small number of Israeli professors who have supported an academic boycott – a stance rejected by 99 percent of Israel's academic community regardless of their political positions and opinions.

Of even greater concern is the fact that their activities are creating an environment in which both students and faculty, by their own admission, are beginning to feel afraid of voicing their own opinions and to feel physically threatened as well.

It is time for all those who believe in freedom of speech to stand up and voice their clear opposition to those who would try to deny it. The use of false and selective information by ISZ, Im Tirtzu and Isracampus, the atmosphere of threat which they are creating and their use of misinformed foreign donors to promote their political cause is finally being exposed for what it really is – a threat to the democratic fabric of a vibrant and dynamic State of Israel.

Before we talk to Hamas

Ron Proser (Israeli Ambassador to London); Guardian.co.za; 20 August 2010

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/aug/20/israel-hamas-peace-talks-gaza>

Groucho Marx famously quipped: "Those are my principles, and if you don't like them ... well, I have others." The International Quartet (the US, the UN, Russia and the EU) has long applied three principles Hamas must adopt to take part in negotiations. It must renounce violence, recognise Israel and abide by previous agreements between Israel and the Palestinians. At no point has Hamas satisfied these conditions – or indicated any intention to do so.

Those who advocate talking to Hamas are urging a Groucho-Marxist policy in a complex, unstable region. If Hamas is too extreme to accept these principles, they argue, we must tailor our principles to match Hamas's extremism.

The Hamas Charter advocates the destruction of the state of Israel, the genocidal slaughter of Jews and the imposition of an Islamic state governed by sharia law. When an organisation's constitution venerates your murder, it is difficult to know how negotiations should begin – perhaps with a discussion of the flowers for one's funeral.

This week marks the fifth anniversary of Israel's disengagement from Gaza. We withdrew every Israeli soldier and citizen, gambling on the formula of land for peace. Instead of peace and progress we received missiles and misery. Hamas made Gaza a terrorist enclave, launching thousands of missiles at Israeli civilians.

In 2006 it kidnapped Gilad Shalit, holding him in isolation for four years without a single visit from the Red Cross. In a bloody coup in 2007 Hamas attacked its own people, chasing Fatah out of Gaza and hurling its Palestinian brothers from the rooftops. It imposed an Islamic penal code along with the routine torture and execution of political opponents. Simultaneously it relentlessly attacked Israelis and, with Iranian support, stockpiled weapons that today can hit Tel Aviv.

After years of missiles, the bombardment became unbearable. We targeted the terrorist infrastructure through Operation Cast Lead. Israel has tried to stop the flood of weapons through a naval blockade. When Hamas supporters attempt to break the blockade, as occurred with the Turkish IHH flotilla, Israel's defensive measures must be understood in context. Hamas recently fired a Grad missile at Ashkelon and dispatched a terror cell from Gaza into Sinai that fired missiles at Eilat in Israel, and Aqaba in Jordan: Hamas threatens not only Israel but also Egypt and Jordan.

Some in the west fondly refer to Hamas as the elected representatives of the Palestinians. While Hamas won the Palestinian council elections in 2006, it was not a mandate to violently overthrow the Palestinian Authority. Nor does it justify terror against Israel. Hamas's concept of democracy fits that of all democratically elected dictatorships – "one man, one vote ... once".

Gaza was a golden opportunity tragically missed. Instead of building a Mediterranean Dubai, Hamas diverted every resource to enslaving its people while attacking ours. In

contrast, Israel and the PA have made significant progress in the West Bank, reducing roadblocks, easing access and stimulating economic growth of 8%. The PA should be encouraged to build on these developments at the negotiating table.

Israel has offered direct talks, recognised a two-state solution and introduced an unprecedented moratorium on settlement construction. President Abbas has declined talks, preferring to campaign against Israel internationally. In Palestinian classrooms and civil society incitement against Israel continues.

Our experience following the Gaza pull-out has scarred the Israeli public. Hamas's missiles wounded the concept of land for peace, increasing Israeli fears and scepticism. Of the same voters who elected governments that signed peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan and initiated the Oslo Accords, only 32% believe talks with the Palestinians will lead to peace. More than ever, Israelis require confidence-building measures.

When Israelis feel secure concessions follow. Last weekend Israel dismantled the security barrier in Gilo, a Jerusalem suburb that came under heavy Palestinian sniper fire during the second intifada. If in Gilo no sniper fire means no wall, so in Gaza no missiles would mean no blockade. It is that simple.

Sadly Hamas has always torpedoed peace efforts through suicide bombings, kidnappings and missiles. If further steps towards peace are to win Israeli hearts and minds, the price cannot be missiles and mortars in the heart of Israel.

Will an IDF withdrawal from the West Bank mean a safe haven for extremist groups?

Col. Richard Kemp, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 22 August 2010

<http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=1&DBID=1&LANGID=1&TMID=111&FID=283&PID=1845&IID=4579&TTL=Will an IDF Withdrawal from the West Bank Mean a Safe Haven for Extremist Groups?>

The Implications for Asymmetrical Activity by Extremist Groups

To stand any real chance of success, every insurgent or terrorist movement needs a safe haven to operate from - one that is outside the control of the state being targeted and preferably in a land that is free from interference by the target state or its allies, whether due to geography, the protection of a friendly regime, or operating within a failed state. The Vietnam conflict was a classic example of the use of a safe haven. More recently, in the Iraq campaign, Sunni extremists had a safe haven in Syria which was their main logistic support base and a pipeline for suicide bombers flowing into Iraq. They also used extensive support networks in Iran, which also provided a safe haven for Shi'ite insurgents attacking coalition forces, as well as through the Iranian Revolutionary Guards and Hizbullah, which provided training, organization, munitions, and direction.

Today the Afghan Taliban's safe haven and support base is in Pakistan, although the second largest extremist group engaged in Afghanistan, Hizb-i-Islami, has its main base in Iran itself. In March, General Petraeus, the Head of U.S. Central Command, in

testimony to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, revealed that Tehran is letting al-Qaeda leaders travel freely between Pakistan and Afghanistan, effectively using Iranian territory as a safe haven, while permitting them also to hold meetings in Iran to plan terrorist attacks against U.S. and other Western targets.

Israel has had more than a flavor of what it can mean to leave hostile groups in control of lands adjacent to its own borders in southern Lebanon and in Gaza. Any similar move to totally cede control to the Palestinians of the West Bank or a part of Jerusalem may have considerable attraction for any peace process, and that is certainly the view of many in the international community. But both prospects would carry immense risk from the perspective of asymmetrical activities against Israel.

Some might argue that a modern high-tech state can monitor hostile activities outside its borders. Yet we've seen many failures of intelligence in relation to offensive activities by conventional forces and war plans by nation-states which are generally relatively easy to identify and monitor. But surveillance and intelligence collection against a deeply embedded, secretive, extremist network operating within a dense civilian population is the most difficult target, and no national intelligence organization can be confident that it will have a high success rate against such a target.

Despite many spectacular successes, including the killing in Pakistan of al-Qaeda's number three, Mustafa Abu al-Yazid, the unrivalled technological supremacy of the U.S. military has failed to effectively dent the Taliban's ability to smuggle munitions and infiltrate large groups of fighters across the Afghan border. I do not for a moment underestimate the difficulties this entails. Jordan's support or effectiveness in countering extremist activity directed at Israel from the West Bank could not be counted upon, and extremists would also seek to destabilize Jordan, an important stepping stone to the destruction of Israel.

We can look again at Pakistan and Afghanistan to get an insight here. NATO puts in a significant effort to coordinate cross-border security measures with the government of Pakistan. Some of this is successful some of the time. Some elements of the Pakistan government have different agendas, supporting the Taliban when it suits them or at least turning a blind eye, but Pakistan itself is suffering a very serious, dangerous, and worsening insurgency from its own Taliban. Despite the contrary views of some, its own Taliban, closely linked to the Afghanistan Taliban, is intent on bringing down Pakistan's government, a goal shared by al-Qaeda leaders in Pakistan, and despite efforts on both sides of the border, insurgents operate with relative freedom. The importance of safe havens to extremists is well understood by the Pakistan military. One of their greatest fears is that NATO forces will withdraw precipitously from Afghanistan, leaving a vacuum from which their own insurgency could be supported and strengthened. That, of course, leaves a prospect of a nuclear-armed state falling into the hands of extremists.

Questions Surrounding a Prospective NATO Peacekeeping Deployment

It has been suggested that an international force, perhaps a NATO force should replace the IDF presence in the West Bank. While I would not exclude that idea in principle, it raises a number of very serious questions. First of all, where are the NATO troops going to come from and how long will they stay? Let us not forget the difficulties that NATO has had for years and still has in mustering forces for the war in Afghanistan - and this is for a campaign that is NATO's declared main effort and its only real, current, live

operation. Many of the troops that are there are restricted by significant national caveats, including restricting deployments to the safest areas. Some nations are simply not prepared to put their troops into undue danger. Unfortunately, undue danger goes hand in glove with war and with the toughest peacekeeping operations, and the West Bank would fall clearly into that category. Some NATO nations can't operate after dark and they leave the insurgents to control the night, with the implications this has.

There is a significant risk that in trying to develop and maintain good relations with all parties, the peacekeepers would instead become the enemy of both sides. Potential contributors to the international forces would know that. What would happen to those who were prepared to take part when the going got tough, as it inevitably would? Think of Lebanon in 1983 when suicide bomb attacks killed 300 troops and led to the withdrawal of the French and American peacekeeping forces. An extremist with global reach will not have forgotten al-Qaeda's attack in Madrid twenty years later which led to the withdrawal of Spanish forces from the Iraq campaign. And let us not for a moment assume that sinister, yet powerful, hands would not turn their attention onto the peacekeeping forces in the West Bank, especially if they showed signs of succeeding in their mission to bring lasting peace into the region. Iran has a track record of stiffening the resolve of insurgent groups that show any sign of faltering in their aggression against Israel, and a track record of attacking Western forces using their proxies.

Just how sure could we be that the electorates in contributing countries would allow their militaries to remain deployed in the West Bank under these kinds of pressures, and how effective would NATO be as a peacekeeping force in the demanding circumstances that we are considering? The only previous success that NATO is able to claim in this field, and it is by no means uncontroversial, was in Kosovo, which also in practice was a far less complex situation.

NATO is, of course, not peacekeeping in Afghanistan, but we can get some insight from its activities there. I've already mentioned the national caveats. Similar difficulties apply to differing national rules of engagement and tactical procedures, including a very wide variety of constraints on air support. Would a NATO mission be ready and able to take on insurgents, and if not, to what extent would they then get in the way of a vital Israeli effort to do so to protect their own people?

After seven years in Afghanistan, how effectively has NATO taken control of the insurgency there? In the six-month period up to March 2010 the number of attacks against NATO forces increased by over 80 percent over the same period in the previous year, and in the same time frame, attacks on the civilian population in Afghanistan were up by over 70 percent. And how assiduous has NATO been in its civilian reconstruction and governance efforts, a critical element of its role in Afghanistan? Reconstruction has been notable by its relative inability to gain traction and provide essential depth for the military element of the counter-insurgency campaign.

In many ways peacekeeping is far tougher and more challenging than fighting as combatants. It is one thing to act robustly against people that are attacking you and your comrades. It is quite another to put your troops' lives on the line when it is not them but others who are in danger. Dutch forces have fought gallantly and effectively in Afghanistan. They've been brave and they've taken many casualties, but Srebrenica cannot be forgotten. More than 8,000 civilians were massacred there in 1995 under the eyes of Dutch UN peacekeepers.

To conclude, I would neither exclude the possibility of an IDF withdrawal from the West Bank nor their replacement with a NATO force, but before either can be seriously contemplated there are some fundamental questions to be resolved. These issues are critical to NATO, the West as a whole, and the entire Middle East because a failed NATO mission and a West Bank under extremist control, flourishing under a security vacuum there, would encourage and strengthen violent *ihadists* everywhere in the world

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

ICEJ News, 25 August 2010: Iranian military flexes its muscles and continues bellicose threats: In the latest demonstration of its military power, Iran on Wednesday announced that it had successfully tested an upgraded version of a short-range surface-to-surface missile, the Fateh-110. Iranian Defense Minister Gen. Ahmad Vahidi, wanted by Argentinean police for his role in the 1994 terror bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, declared that the missile would enhance the range at which it could effectively engage targets.

ICEJ News, 23 August 2010: Lebanese blockade runner delayed, Israel says it is 'unlikely' to sail: The *Mariam*, a small Bolivian-flagged cargo ship loaded with food, medicine and 50 female activists determined to run the Israeli sea blockade of the Gaza Strip despite assertions by aid agencies and even the UN that there is no need for such gestures, has hit yet another snag. The Lebanese government has informed the organizers of the ship that they cannot sail directly from Lebanon to Gaza because Lebanon and Israel are still technically at war and Cyprus has denied them permission to use their territorial waters for a pit stop. Greece has also so far refused to give them an answer, and Israeli officials are reported to have dismissed the ship as being unlikely to ever fulfill its organizers purpose.