

## Editorial/comment

### Arab MK's remarks went too far

Israel is a bastion of free speech and democracy in a Middle East where dictatorships and government-controlled media reign supreme. But Arab Knesset member Azmi Bishara's call in Damascus this month for the Arab world to "unite against Israel" was a statement that few democratic countries would probably tolerate. Bishara is a hothead known for stirring up Israeli Arab anger against the government, saying "all of Israel should become Palestine", and praising Lebanon's Hezbollah fighters, who continue to threaten Israel on its northern border. But his remarks June 10 at a memorial ceremony for the late Syrian dictator, Hafez Assad were worse than that. He spoke along with such arch-enemies of the Jewish state as Sheik Nasrallah Beshara, leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, who said: "We have nothing for the enemy but blood and rifles." Bishara's entreaty to the Arab world in Damascus to "unite against the warmongering Sharon government", and his open identification

with the Palestinian uprising were not mere criticisms. They were open calls to arms by members of the enemy camp against his own government - the classic textbook definition of treason. The Sharon government has restrained itself from prosecuting Bishara, partly out of fear of making him a martyr in the Israeli Arab public's eyes. Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein insists Bishara is protected, because Israeli laws do not allow prosecution of a Knesset member. Justice Minister Meir Sheerit proposed, instead, that Bishara's remarks be dealt with by the Knesset's Ethics Committee, which can do little but censure him. Only in Israel would a government probably show that kind of restraint, in response to such inflammatory statements by a member of its own parliament - certainly not the government of any other nation still at war. In this case, it may be an example of Israeli democracy going too far.

### Dry Bones



## Comment

### Canada's policy on Israel shameful

Manley's embrace of Arafat a dismaying sight

Remarks by I.H. ASPER, O.C., O.M., Q.C. Executive Chair CanWest Global Communications Corp. Delivered in Toronto, at a dinner in his honor for taking a key role in funding creation of the Asper Centre for Entrepreneurship at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Monday, June 18, 2001 - Toronto

We are here to tangibly support Israel and its leading educational institution, as well as to further cement Canada's ties to that country. It is completely within the ethical, moral, political and cultural interests of not only the Jewish community of Canada, but also the nation of Canada itself, to support and strengthen those ties.

Israel, after 53 years of statehood, remains the only isolated island of democracy, human rights and rule of law - a lonely outpost of western civilization and its values, in a sea of terrorism, corruption, dictatorship and human enslavement. Countries like Canada should therefore be in the vanguard of its support, for mutual economic, military and ethical reasons.

I was there two weeks ago when the 20 innocent youths were mercilessly slaughtered, and dozens of young people maimed and crippled for life in Tel Aviv - all as an expression of Yasser Arafat's unwavering, original and continuing objective of annihilating the state entirely, by any means, however ruthless, savage, barbaric and inhumane, and regardless of how long it takes.

Arafat and his brutal Palestinian colleagues are the voice, the arm and the fist of their terrorist-sponsoring state partners, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Lebanon and Syria, in their deadly 53-year-old campaign to destroy Israel, as well as inflict suffering on other democratic nations. Whether they are aiming their bombs at innocent civilians in Israel, or blowing up planes over Lockerbie, or embassies in Nairobi, or office buildings in New York, they are all cut from the same cloth, using the same pattern and belong to the same school of gangster terrorists. Canada should treat them as such.

It is therefore, a dismaying sight for knowledgeable Canadians to watch our external affairs minister, John Manley, either a prisoner of naiveté, or political opportunism, embracing this war criminal, Arafat, on Mr. Manley's recent visit to the Middle East. Perhaps we shouldn't blame Mr. Manley for Canada's shameful and wrong-headed policy on Israel, as represented by its pro-Palestinian votes at the United Nations. Perhaps we should simply blame his advisors, at the historically anti-Israeli Department of Foreign Affairs, who seem to be bent on re-enacting the pre-war anti-Semitism of the F.C. Blair Department of Immigration.

Only Opposition Leader Stockwell Day and his former affairs commentator, Monte Solberg, have had the courage to tell it as it is; to call a thug a thug, and tell the truth on who are the bad guys in the Middle East volcano of violence.

It remains a task for friends of Israel and friends of the Liberal Party, to appeal to the Liberal government to reverse its anti-Israel position, in its comments and votes at the UN.

Our government now should know:

1. That Arafat is a pathological liar, who has always sought and will continue to seek not justice for his people, but only the destruction of the State of Israel. Any peace arrangements are only a temporary stop along the way.

2. That contrary to the Oslo alleged peace agreements, whereby Arafat agreed to end the teaching and promotion of hatred and the incitement to violence against Israel, Arafat's schools, mosques, state-owned newspapers and broad-



ISRAEL ASPER speaking at Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University dinner in his honor in Toronto last week, for taking a key role in funding creation of the Asper Centre for Entrepreneurship at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Diaspora Jews who've cancelled or refuse to make trips to Israel now are "fainthearted".

casters continue to preach incitement, hatred, and the benefits of martyrdom in heaven for Palestinians willing to die in his holy cause of killing Israelis and Jews, wherever they may be found.

3. That Arafat continues to refuse to account for how he has spent the billions he's received for humanitarian aid, including money from Canada, even though it has been proven that some has been spent establishing terror-training camps for school children, and that his personal secret bank accounts are reported to be in the billions;

4. That contrary to his protestations to the glib western world, including Canada, that the present uprising was sparked by a provocative visit to the Temple Mount by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, the Intifada had been deliberately planned months before - this, from the mouth of his own minister of communications;

5. That contrary to the Oslo peace agreements, he emptied the jails of all the captured terrorists, to encourage and supply them with arms to make their attacks on Israel from the territory turned over to him by a compliant Israel;

6. That the most virulent of the roadside shootings, ambushes and mortar shelling against Israeli citizens, are carried out by Arafat's personal guard force and militias, entirely within his control.

These and many, many more facts bear witness to the fact that Arafat has declared war and therefore Israel is entitled to conduct itself and its defence accordingly, without the cluck-clucking of sanctimonious Canadian officials. How long would the government of Canada forbear, and tolerate, as it demands of Israel, atrocities against Canadians from bases say, in Quebec? Not a minute - just ask the members of the 1970's Trudeau Cabinet, who invoked the War Measures Act.

No, it is time for a change in Canadian foreign policy. It is not too late to regain our honor and integrity. While my rejection of the government's indefensible policy toward Israel was heightened by my recent visit to Israel, so was my disappointment and disapproval over the faint-heartedness of those Jews living outside Israel, who have cancelled or refused to make their planned trips

to that country, whether as tourists, students or investors.

These fair-weather friends of Israel celebrate and revel in the glory of Israel's accomplishments, when Israel is riding high, but it is no time to run for cover, when Israel is beleaguered, isolated, in pain and at risk. No group's behaviour is more surprising in this respect than the American Reform Synagogue Movement, which cancelled all its youth programs involving travel to Israel this summer.

I'm happy to note that this self-defeating cancer has not invaded Canadian life. Our people are, with pride and distinction, fearlessly and courageously travelling to Israel, in safety, to show their affection and solidarity with their compatriots there, who feel abandoned, and deserted when under brutal attack, even after Arafat claims to have ordered yet another cease fire - a cease fire he has already broken with over 140 Palestinian attacks on Israelis, including over 40 mortar attacks on civilian centres within the last two weeks.

We are here tonight to strengthen the ties of Canada to Israel by supporting and connecting further to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, founded in 1925, in the euphoria of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, under which Britain promised and the League of Nations ratified, a Jewish national home.

By the time Israel had achieved statehood, the Hebrew University was already a centre of excellence, a beacon for research, enlightenment and liberal education on a world scale.

I first became a supporter of this remarkable international university nearly 50 years ago, and have served on its international board of governors for nearly two decades, focusing also on sending Canadian students to study there.

The Centre for Entrepreneurship will not only teach students the science of business, but rather, will specialize in fostering the "art" of business, the magic and the creative genius of entrepreneurship.

This centre for entrepreneurship will bring the world's top entrepreneurial CEO's (especially Canadian), as they come to Israel, to the students to talk about "how they did it." Programs will be developed for young entrepreneurs to get them thinking creatively before they even enroll in the university. Special business camps will be held for disadvantaged and "at risk" inner-city young people, to encourage them to believe in themselves and finish their high school (or go back to high school) and come on to post secondary entrepreneurial education. The endowment I am creating will also have a several million dollar scholarship endowment fund to send Canadian students, and possibly teachers, to both study at and teach in and connect to their Israeli counterparts, and vice versa. As well, we will transfer our Canadian know-how to Israel, and expect more Canadians to learn about doing business in the Middle East, as we Canadians must also globalize our business thrust.

For Israel, developing new entrepreneurs is a matter of survival, and thus all of us who have contributed to the endowment fund through this dinner and campaign, will be able to take great satisfaction and pleasure from doing something useful and productive. Our endowment fund has started out at \$5 million, but I have no doubt that with your help and the help we expect to receive from others in this campaign, it will reach \$10 million, making it fully effective.

The path to successful entrepreneurship is long and dark but, we, together, tonight, have lit up a few lamp posts along that path.

Once again, my deepest appreciation to all of you for sharing this vision and helping to make it a reality.

## An open letter to the Jews of America

Security threats in U.S. haven't stopped Israelis from visiting your country

Jewish tourism to Israel has dropped very considerably as our brethren in the Diaspora, primarily in the United States, seem to have struck Israel off their travel lists.

### INSIDE ISRAEL



By

CARL ALPERT

We say "Jewish tourism", because the same decline does not seem to have affected

our Christian friends, who continue to come here in considerable numbers as tourists and pilgrims.

Many Israelis are bitter in their criticism of those who have cancelled or deferred their trips at a time when we here are in need of moral support and encouragement. But those of us who are familiar with the American scene are more understanding, and can look at the matter from a different perspective, perhaps even with tongue in cheek. We are aware of the



A scene from the 1995 bombing in Oklahoma City: American Jews have a double standard, when it comes to staying away from Israel, Carl Alpert argues.

dire circumstances in which American Jews find themselves, and we hasten to send them words of comfort and encouragement. We address them directly. We express our sympathy and offer you all physical and moral support. We realize these are difficult days for you in face of the many dangers which await, but we shall not curtail our travel plans, and to the extent that our citizens can afford it, they will continue to come to the U.S. as tourists. Please consider such visits as expressions of identification with you in the traditional spirit that all Jews are responsible for each other.

The execution of Timothy McVeigh has served to bring home to you the dreadful threat of terrorism.

The deaths of 168 Americans in the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City must surely have left a deep scar, and we can well imagine the fears you entertain whenever you enter a federal building anywhere in the country.

But how much worse was the Arab strike against the World Trade Centre towers in New York. Only amateurish bungling by the Arab perpetrators prevented what might have been a catastrophic disaster, as one or both of those tall towers could have collapsed, with the many thousands of occupants.

We are aware of the constant Muslim threats against the U.S. by bin Laden and others. We assume that with memories of the fatal attacks

against U.S. embassies overseas, and against U.S. warships, you must be subject to perpetual fears. Attacks against children in your public schools by demented Americans must also be a source of deep concern. We are aware of the statistics of muggings and murders by the dozens daily in your big cities, and realize the difficulties you must have in conquering your fears when venturing outdoors. There are parts of your own city where you would not venture after dark - isn't that so?

Nature has not been too kind to you, either, as hurricanes and tornadoes take their toll. The terrible flood in Texas is but the latest, as you realize that similar natural disasters are now commonplace.

Yet all of these dangers do not discourage us from coming to visit Disneyland or the Grand Canyon or the other great attractions.

We are aware, too, of the more insidious dangers which face your community, as intermarriage mounts, and the next generation finds little to justify their continued identification with the Jewish people and the Jewish community.

Birtheright Israel is performing a valuable function in sending some thousands of young American Jews to Israel, where they can experience the many-faceted inspirations from contact with life here, but there are tens of thousands more who are not being reached.

Little is said about anti-Semitism these days, but most of you are aware of the movements which continue their hate theories in the underground, awaiting the day when severe economic difficulties in America may open the floodgates. In Brazil there is a 24-hour-a-day guard at all Jewish institutions. In South Africa, our people live in small fortresses, only because they are white.

We admire the way you maintain your spirit of optimism, at least openly. We want to assure you that our thoughts are constantly with you, and should specific need arise, your brethren in Israel will be ready to extend not only encouragement, but all necessary practical help, and even a haven, in case of extreme need.

The writer lives in Haifa, Israel.

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