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A peace seems always out of reach

It's clear where two sides stand

U.S. approach hurts all parties

By Missi Klein Halevi
There is no cycle of violence. One side has religious fanatics who are violent and hateful but discredited by the mainstream public and repudiated by most of its religious leaders. The other side has religious fanatics who are violent and hateful and celebrated by the mainstream as holy men.

The Peel Commission of 1937, through the U.S. partition plan of 1947, through Camp David 2000 and Taba 2000. The other side has responded to each of those compromises with terrorism and war, and their opponents to the world about the injustice of its defeat.

Yousa Klein Halevi is the Israel correspondent for the New Republic and a senior writer for the Jerusalem Report.

By Ali Abunimah

The U.S. policy toward the worsening Israeli-Palestinian conflict has emerged from deliberately ignoring the escalating violence since Sept. 11, to open confrontation with Israel immediately afterward, to complete identification with Ariel Sharon now. Meanwhile, horrifying attacks like the Jan. 17 killing of six Israelis at a bus in the West Bank by a Palestinian, and the deliberate fanning of distrust and fanaticism of Palestinian refugees in Gaza, and indiscriminate killings of Palestinians by the Israeli army continue to take an in-

tolerable toll for both sides. The intransigent present for the latest U.S. shift toward Israel, however, was not any particular act of violence, but the capture Jan. 3 of the Karim, a weapons ship allegedly destined for the Palestinian Authority. In the midst of an open conflict in which Israel has used every conventional weapon available — from M-16 rifles to F-16 warplanes — against Palestinians, who could hardly be surprised if some Palestinians seek to even the playing field by using the Bush administration — riding high on the war on terrorism but increasingly vulnerable due to the recession — simply unwilling to expend any political capital in an election year to challenge the intransigent Israeli lobby?

It will be a disaster if short-term domestic political considerations are used to trump the future of millions of ordinary people and their right to conclude that fulfillment in seeking these peoples at last live together in peace. The current U.S. approach, while seemingly pro-Israeli, will eventually hurt Israel as much as it will hurt the Palestinians.

Even before his latest moves toward Israel, President Bush, many Palestinians openly criticize the Bush administration for compromise without any concrete gains. In 1993 he led the U.S. to recognize Israel's right to secure boundaries and agreed to a series of peace negotiations and settlement construction to acquire to it.

One side is ready to compromise for peace and has abandoned its dream of complete possession of the contested land. The other side insists on absolute sovereignty of the entire land. One side is prepared to step arguing about history and precedents to the future. The other side is still fighting medieval wars against fanatics.

One side teaches its children songs of peace. The other side teaches its children songs of blood and fire. One side maintains free media that criticize their own government and army and report on the other side's repression. The other side maintains controlled media that tell its people the Holocaust never happened. The other side did not incur a blow against the United States.

One side announces and debates when its army commits an immoral act. The other side dances in the street when atrocities are committed in its name. One side tries to prevent civilian deaths during battles. The other side regards the battle as a war against civilians.

One side produces duces mothers who protest their sons into war. The other side produces mothers who protest their sons into war. One side has accepted international agreements for the Middle East conflict, beginning with

Promoting nonviolent means to end conflict

By Raina Awad

One feature of the current intifada in the West Bank and Gaza is the widespread participation of women — Palestinian and Israeli alike — in promoting a peaceful and just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Last week, when a female suicide bomber moved against Israeli troops, analysts were quick to conclude that this incident illustrates how Palestinian women are becoming more radical, creating a larger pool of Palestinian desperate enough to carry out such operations. It is important, however, that this isolated episode not be used to eclipse the substantial movement for nonviolent resistance that Palestinian women have built through the years and turned into a cooperative effort with their Israeli counterparts.

They contrast their legitimate frustrations through creative and nonviolent means. The intifada has also promoted the involvement of Israeli women on both sides of the issue — a significant number have taken a strong stand against the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinians. Some of these women fear the corrosive effect that had a century of occupying another people will have on Israeli society. Others are worried about the employment opportunities for women in the West Bank and Gaza, and filling in trenches. They have placed their own lives in danger by living down in front of army bulldozers or chaining themselves to drive trees to prevent the destruction of Palestinian homes and property.

While there is reason to be encouraged by these efforts, alliances between Palestinian and Israeli women are still fragile and face constant challenges. Furthermore, women working for a nonviolent end to the conflict enjoy little support — and sometimes even opposition — from those in power. Particularly important for the development of these and similar resistance movements will be the

presence of international observers to protect against retaliation and more universal support for the idea in the rest of the world. Right now, U.S. leaders are debating whether or not to sever ties with the Palestinian leadership. Meanwhile, the United States continues to send billions each year to the Israeli military while still claiming to be an honest broker. It would be wiser to provide financial and other support — beginning with backing an international observer force — to help bolster women's peace movements and other organizations working to promote a nonviolent end to this terrible conflict.

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Falling into Sharon's hands by answering violence with violence

By Wendy Pearlman

No one understands better the current violence in the Middle East — and finds it more infuriating — than Ariel Sharon. Under his leadership, the Israeli army has deployed a range of violent tactics in a premeditated attempt to quell the second Palestinian intifada. Although this campaign has succeeded in making a captive Palestinian population less visible than ever, and Israel can keep circumstances here any more secure. The campaign fails because it does not resolve the causes of Palestinian protest — in fact, it has become one of the causes. The ease with which Israel represses territory, demolishes homes, destroys civilian and health facilities demonstrates that the Oslo peace process did not so much end as prolong the occupation. And as long as that occupation continues, Palestinians will resist and Israel will not be safe.

To cut the West bank off from Jerusalem, including its occupied Jewish settlements, is not the answer. The White House blames itself blaming Ariel for failing to stop the intifada, but the Israeli government is busy redefining the borders. The prohibition of these strikes allows it to buy time in a state of conflict that is still hanging seven years past of nonviolent peace.

In responding to Israel's violence with violence, Palestinians are falling into Sharon's hands. But they are not the only ones. In repeating its empty condemnations of the Yasser Arafat rather than putting pressure on Israel to stop its siege, the White House falls into Sharon's trap. Too, Washington's debate about whether or not to cut ties with Arafat misses the point. Sharon is driving the course of the intifada as much as Arafat is. And both the Israeli and Palestinian people pay the price.

Wendy Pearlman has lived in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and is currently preparing a book of memories with Palestinians about their experiences during the second intifada.

Accl Moore: Urban Perspectives

Creating a healing environment so that men can re-enter the community

Mary Leffridge Byrd, raised in Harrisburg, is the only member of her family to go from Penn State to the state penitentiaries. A smiling Byrd stood in the "restricted housing unit," more commonly known as the "bunkie," at the State Correctional Institution in Chester, the only state prison dedicated solely to drug treatment. She has been warden — or, as she would prefer to be called, superintendent — for four years.

She administers a staff of 347 that includes correctional officers; clerical, medical and maintenance staff; and an additional 98 contract workers in job training, drug treatment, and medical services. "We can't correct people or force people to act as productive citizens," said Byrd. "They have to do that on their own." Like all other prisons, we provide custodial care and control. But equally important, we provide an effective treatment or healing environment so that men will be prepared to re-enter their communities."



Mary Byrd is warden of the state penitentiaries in Harrisburg, Pa.

The drug treatment program at Chester is an intensive 18-month course run by Gaetano Hines, a highly respected institution headquarter in Philadelphia. The men also go through a training program in which they are taught the basic literacy and math skills for their jobs. They attend classes on life skills, and learn how to care for their children and relate to their families. It is not uncommon to see men when an one would mistake for penitentiaries such as Graterford or Dallas.

The Rev. Leonard Small, a priest chaplain for more than 30 years, has been at Chester since its opening and volunteers for counsel inmates. Byrd says, "The discipline of a wardens' heart of a social worker, and the compassion of a priest. I added that if we had more superintendents like her, we would have less crime in the streets." I kept hearing the phrase of change in nature during my visit and I have to say I liked the changes I saw.

Moore's "act of love": Defining America. The new do-it-yourselfers.

Not more a column unity across on "Tomcats" and Thursdays. His e-mail address is thompson@philly.com