

Column One: Privatizing the war of ideas

Caroline Glick , THE JERUSALEM POST

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The domestic and international debate about the Palestinians has become thoroughly detached from reality. On the one hand there are the friendlies. These include the Olmert government, the Israeli media, the Bush administration and some European governments. The friendlies say that the "moderate" Palestinian Authority Chairman and Fatah terror organization commander Mahmoud Abbas is the key to peace. Everything must be done they say, to strengthen Abbas against the Hamas terror organization, which they oppose.

But if this week's bloody battles between Fatah and Hamas terrorists in Gaza showed anything, they showed that Abbas is anything but weak. When he wishes to confront Hamas, he is more than capable of doing so. The reason that peace has eluded us is not because Abbas is weak but because he doesn't want peace with Israel. He will battle Hamas to enhance his power but not to secure chances of peace with Israel. Far from the key to ending the Palestinian jihad against Israel, Abbas is part of the problem.

Pitted against the friendlies, are the unfriendlies. These include people like EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, UN officials, the European press and *Ha'aretz* columnists. Although members of this group adore Abbas, they object to the friendlies' refusal to accept Hamas's rise to power in the PA.

The unfriendlies call for Israel to negotiate with Hamas on the basis of Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh's offer for a cease-fire with Israel in exchange for an Israeli retreat to the 1949 armistice lines. If Israel refuses to accept Hamas's offer, this camp warns, it is liable to find itself facing Al-Qaida rather than Hamas in the future, and that, they claim, would be much worse.

As Johann Hari, from Britain's *Independent* put it this week, "Every time the Israeli government rejects a Palestinian leader because he is too hard-line, they do not get a cuddly Gandhian moderate in his place. They get somebody more hard-line still."

Hari, who went on to advocate that Israel recognize Hamas and give it Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem, wrote these lines after he visited with Al-Qaida terrorists in Gaza and described how these jihadists are terrorizing Gazans into accepting Taliban-like repression of women and modernity.

Both the friendlies and the unfriendlies share a fundamental assumption and acceptance of Palestinian jihadism. They assume that Palestinian society will never be anything but a jihadist society and that the only change it will undergo will be one of further radicalization. By limiting their argument to whether Israel should either give its land to Fatah or Hamas, they accept as legitimate the view that for the Palestinians all roads lead inevitably to Osama bin Laden and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. For both groups, the goal of diplomacy is to arrest, not reverse this trend. And both believe Israel should be willing to pay whatever is necessary to appease those who hate it less, or face those who hate it more.

Although Hari clearly shares this defeatist view, he inadvertently demonstrated that it is wrong and

counterproductive. Hari quoted 29-year-old Basa Abu-Jased, whose Internet caf in Gaza's Jabalya refugee camp was firebombed by jihadists. Abu-Jased expressed his despair and frustration at the emerging Islamist state in Gaza, saying, "Of course women are frightened now. [Even as a man] I am really frightened! I used to sit on the street and talk to women. Now I won't do it. You don't know what's going to happen."

What Abu-Jased and his friends need most desperately is for someone to offer them the opportunity to support something other than competing terrorist organizations. But no one gives them this opportunity.

In the interest of "strengthening" Abbas, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert refuses to take any actions to defend southern Israel from Kassam rocket attacks. Olmert cannot imagine a "peace" policy that doesn't involve Israeli land transfers to terrorists and so is incapable of conceiving of a policy other than the current failed one of embracing the fantasy of Abbas as the key to utopia.

ISRAEL, OF course, has options other than surrendering to either Hamas or Fatah. It could defeat them. A policy aimed at victory would be based first of all on a recognition that today there is no power structure in the PA, including the PA militias, that is not a terrorist organization. It would similarly recognize that there is no such thing as a good terrorist organization. Consequently, a strategy for winning would recognize that Israel must launch a concerted campaign aimed at defeating and dismantling the PA as a whole.

A policy for victory would also start from a recognition that the common thread joining all the Palestinian terror factions together is jihad. In light of the ideological nature of their common war against Israel, a campaign based on military might alone cannot bring about any long-term sociological or political change in Palestinian society. Unless the ideology of jihad is defeated, a new crop of jihadists will rise up to replace the current one.

Since jihadist ideology is what makes the Palestinian war against the Jews intractable and vests it with its central importance to the global jihad, the defeat of this ideology in the marketplace of ideas will go a long way towards defeating the global jihad as a whole. And the ideology of jihad is far from indestructible.

With its call for genocide of Jews and subjugation of all other non-Muslims, and with its demand that Muslims live under a literal interpretation of Shariah law which enslaves women and abolishes the very notion of human freedom - jihad is an inhuman ideology. It is inherently unattractive to people who sanctify life rather than death. So central to a strategy for beating the Palestinian jihad would be an Israeli ideological assault on jihad.

The unattractiveness of the notion of jihad is most apparent to the jihadists themselves. This is why they spend billions of dollars on a never-ending stream of propaganda aimed at brainwashing as many people as possible. The aim of the jihadist mosques, television and radio stations and Internet sites is twofold. First they work to indoctrinate and mobilize supporters. Second they serve to demonize anyone who fights them - be that George W. Bush, Tony Blair, Salman Rushdie, or Israel.

The Olmert government's inability to recognize the actual state of Palestinian society and act accordingly has two major sources. First, the government is incompetent. As with the Palestinians, so with Iran, Syria, and Hizbullah. The Olmert government is simply incapable of conceptualizing policies capable of defending Israel.

Yet, aside from the specific incompetence of the Olmert government, in its inability to contend with the ideological nature of the war being waged against Israel, the Israeli government is little different from Western governments from Washington to Brussels. Six years after the Palestinians launched their jihad, and five years after the jihadist attacks on the US, the governments of the free world remain deeply hesitant about engaging in

a true ideological struggle with jihad.

It is not merely that fearing accusations of racism, the leaders of the world's democracies are averse to noting the monstrous nature of an ideology that marginalizes life and embraces death. Terrified of being falsely labeled fascists, Western leaders, held intellectually hostage by the multicultural police, refuse to assert what ought to be obvious: Liberal, free societies, which uphold human freedom and sanctify life, are superior to jihadist societies that do the opposite. Not only must the free world win the war against the global jihad, we deserve to win it, because we are the good guys and our enemies are the bad guys.

If our leaders are incapable of conceiving a policy for victory or of explaining to either themselves or to our enemies why we must win and they must lose, is there any reason to hope that we can survive, let alone emerge victorious in this war?

THIS WEEK we received a clear sign that indeed, we can win. On Tuesday, Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu embraced an initiative launched last Thursday by the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. Led by former UN ambassador and Netanyahu adviser Dore Gold, the JCPA launched an effort to have Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad indicted under the Genocide Convention and tried as a war criminal at the Hague for his calls to annihilate Israel. This campaign is the first constructive Israeli public relations campaign against Iran. If backed by mass protests of Jews in Israel and in international capitals calling for the overthrow of the genocidal mullahs in Teheran, this initiative could form the basis for an effective Israeli political campaign against Teheran. And it is a completely private initiative.

What the JCPA's campaign shows us clearly is that just as private groups can wage political war against Iran even if Olmert is too incompetent to do so himself, so too, private groups and individuals can wage an ideological war against the ideology of jihad far more effectively than our governments can. For while the Olmert government and its Western counterparts are at the mercy of the multicultural commissars, private citizens are under no such constraints. And Israelis are better positioned than any Western society to launch such a war.

Tens of thousands of anti-jihadists Israelis - both Jewish and Arab - are completely fluent in Arabic, contemporary culture and the Internet. A private initiative to operate hundreds of Arabic language websites with anti-jihadist, liberal, pro-American and (dare we say) Zionist messages would constitute a serious challenge to jihadist predominance over Palestinian and pan-Arab consciousness.

Philanthropists in Israel and worldwide should have no difficulty investing a few million dollars for a project that would do nothing more than state the patently obvious: The path of jihad is immoral, inhuman and no fun at all while the path of human freedom is moral, just and can be highly enjoyable.

After Netanyahu presented the JCPA initiative to indict Ahmadinejad to foreign ambassadors, Defense Minister Amir Peretz was asked if he agrees that Ahmadinejad is a war criminal. Peretz did agree. Although he hadn't considered the issue himself, Peretz could not possibly have opposed what is obviously true and obviously an Israeli interest.

So too, were Olmert asked whether he agrees that Zionism and the notion of human freedom it embodies are superior to the notion of jihad, no doubt, Abbas's most enthusiastic champion would say yes. This is so not simply because Zionism is objectively better than jihad. It is so because it would be politically foolish for Olmert to say otherwise.

Although the dangers our world presents us with mount by the day, much of the power to surmount those

dangers lies in our hands as citizens of Israel and of free societies more generally. By acting privately, we can force our leaders to defend us publicly and to adopt policies based on reality that see victory rather than surrender as our best option moving forward.

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