

SURVEY OF ARAB AFFAIRS

A periodic supplement to Jerusalem Letter/Viewpoints

SAA:25 5 Elul 5751 / 15 August 1991

In this issue:

WHY SYRIA AGREED TO PEACE TALKS

PALESTINIAN PSYCHOLOGY: BELIEVING A DIFFERENT REALITY

HEBRON: A CITY WITH NO POLICE

Data Base: **IMPACT OF THE GULF WAR ON PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES**

WHY SYRIA AGREED TO PEACE TALKS

Raphael Israeli

The entire Western world was exhilarated by the "turnabout" of President Assad during the Gulf War. From a tough pro-Soviet and an avowed supporter of international terrorism, he suddenly became the champion of moderation and of Western interests, all this because he had supposedly joined the American coalition against his worst personal and ideological enemy: Saddam Hussein.

Without being a great strategist, one can look at Syria's long border with Iraq and realize that had the Syrians wished to join the war effort, all they had to do was to mass their troops on the common border, thus forcing the Iraqis to open a second front. Instead, they took a month to haul a division of

13,000 men, not the best in their military array, to Saudi Arabia in a clumsy operation via the Suez Canal, and the moment they landed they announced they were not going to fight. What, then, did they come for?

What the West has failed to understand is that the real cleavage in the Arab world is not between pro-Western or anti-Western, a differentiation that has lost its significance after the demise of the Soviet Union. Nor is it between moderates and extremists, for the former usually align themselves with the latter. The more fundamental split is between those who are powerful militarily but poor economically, like Egypt and Syria, and those who are powerful economically but weak

Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. Daniel J. Elazar, Editor and Publisher; Zvi R. Marom, Executive Editor; Mordechai Abir and Raphael Israeli, Contributing Editors. 13 Tel-Hai St., Jerusalem, 92107, Israel; Tel. 02-639281, Fax 972-2-639286. © Copyright. All rights reserved. ISSN: 0334-4096.

The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

militarily, like Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. Those of the first category cannot resist the perennial temptation to sink their teeth into the juicy pear that is the Arabian Peninsula, but who would let them in? In the context of an American-sponsored coalition that they were invited to join, however, they were happy to oblige, for they knew that on the morrow of the war the Americans would go home and the remaining Arab forces would determine the fate of the Saudi fortunes.

The Syrians, having lost their military and political support in Moscow, had no choice but to turn towards the only remaining superpower. They exerted a heavy price -- they got a free hand in Lebanon which they swallowed completely. Assad also got \$3 billion as a reward for his participation in the war effort where he did not fire one shot, which enabled him to buy missiles from North Korea. He also

gained legitimacy in the Arab and Western worlds where he had been quasi-isolated before. Assad even got assurances from the Americans that he would regain his lost Golan Heights if he deigned to join the peace process.

Under these circumstances, one has to be a fool not to join the negotiations, and Assad is certainly no fool. It is doubtful, however, that he has mellowed and become a moderate. Only time will tell.

* * *

Dr. Raphael Israeli, a senior lecturer in Islamic civilization and Chinese history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is a Fellow of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and Contributing Editor of the Survey of Arab Affairs. He is the author of the forthcoming book, The Palestinian Triangle (Praeger, 1991).

* * *

PALESTINIAN PSYCHOLOGY: BELIEVING A DIFFERENT REALITY

Irwin Cotler

This past spring I attended a seminar in Israel that was part of a Conference on "Children in the Shadow of the Gulf War," focusing on the impact of the war on Israeli and Palestinian children. Both Israeli and Palestinian psychologists gave presentations. The Palestinian psychologists said that during the curfew, and in the midst of the Gulf War, there were rumors that were genuinely believed amongst the residents of the territories to the effect that the Israelis had built mass graves for the Palestinians, that there were concentration camps which had been built, and that there were massive bus transfers across the border. They related that Palestinian children were even describing their experiences in these Israeli concentration camps, having been saved from these mass graves.

Afterwards I raised with the Palestinian interlocutors my concerns -- or that of any human rights lawyer -- investigating allegations of human rights violations in

the territories. I mentioned to them that if they themselves acknowledged that these were not only rumors that were genuinely believed, but children were recalling their experiences as if they had in fact been in the camps, how was one to know what to believe when allegations were made of torture of children or women during the course of the intifada? Could that not also be part of the creative imagination? No reply was given.

* * *

Irwin Cotler, Professor of Law at McGill University, is a Fellow of the Canadian Centre for Jewish Community Studies and an Associate of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. He is a constitutional lawyer who has worked actively for decades on behalf of the human rights movement.

HEBRON: A CITY WITH NO POLICE

Mark Ami-El

[Editor's Note: The author, currently managing editor of the Jerusalem Letter, wrote VP:44, "Hebron: Jewish-Arab Flashpoint" after a stint of army reserve duty in 1985. Back again for a month at the gates of the local Israeli headquarters, he offers a continuing perspective on daily life in traditional Moslem Arab Hebron.]

There are 80,000 Moslem Arabs living in Hebron, with another 40,000 in the greater Hebron area - 120,000 souls who live in a place where there are practically no police. About 80 percent of the Arab policemen in Judea and Samaria resigned at the start of the intifada. There remains only a skeleton staff of Arab and Jewish policemen at every station. Imagine how you would feel if any of the following incidents happened in your neighborhood in Israel or North America?

A worried-looking, middle-aged man comes up to the guardhouse with his teenage son. He shows us a note and an M-16 bullet that he found on his door that morning. The note says the boy has one week to stop "collaborating with the authorities" or the next bullet is for him. He reports his story to the police, but what can they do?

A youth of about 18 comes by on Shabbat wanting to see the police. He had been carrying an identity card from the authorities to get past Israeli checkpoints and had lost it. Now he was afraid to go home for fear that the wrong people would find it and kill him. An Arab policeman told him to go home and come back the next morning.

A middle-aged couple in traditional Arab dress walk up to the guardpost and ask for help because their 16-year-old daughter has been kidnapped. An Arab policeman told them to go home. It was later explained to me that this was a traditional way of courtship in their culture.

At 2 a.m. an army patrol brings a man

into the police station whom they found along the road next to El Arub, a long-settled refugee camp about 10 minutes north of Hebron. The Arab policeman on duty heard his story and literally threw him out of the compound into the street. After a while he came back up to the guardhouse and, seemingly in great distress, explained in Hebrew that he came to headquarters to see the person in charge because he wanted a gun to kill himself. His eldest son had just been killed that night by an Arab motorist in El Arub. The distressed man worked with Jews and thought they would help him so he came here to the authorities in Hebron. We called the night duty officer of the base, who woke up the night duty Jewish police officer, who came out to the guardhouse and heard the man's story. He took him inside and called his family to come get him, which they did within the hour.

A veteran Arab policeman comes by the guardhouse. We ask him if he is not afraid to work for Israel Police. He tells us that the only Arab policeman ever killed in Hebron during the intifada was not for political reasons but for sexual transgressions. He also tells us that he has witnessed brutal violence in his village from a very early age, including the murder of an innocent young girl by her grandfather for an alleged social crime. As a result of another misunderstanding over family honor, he tells us that during a period in the 1980s more than 30 people were killed by their fellow-villagers in Dura, south of Hebron. The threat of the intifada is not much different from what he has always known, and he is careful about women.

Nearly every night someone comes into the police station to report that a large rock was thrown at their vehicle suddenly from ambush, cracking but not shattering the mandatory reinforced windshields.

Sometimes these people are truckdrivers; sometimes they are Jewish mothers with young children who have lived through a nightmare of ambushes, burning barricades, bricks and firebombs for nearly four years. Now there is a reported increase in sniper gunfire incidents against both Jewish civilians and Israeli soldiers. The police take the report so that the complainants can replace their window glass, but they can do nothing to stop it from happening again.

Imagine hearing the sound of gunfire nearly every night in your town. I heard it just as often in Hebron before the intifada when I was stationed here in 1985.

The preceding is just a slice of the day-to-day life at the junction between the Arab population of greater Hebron and the Israeli authorities. The local Arab population's reacceptance of an Israeli-supervised Arab police force will be a sign of their reacceptance of an authority other than their incited youth in order to deal with the anarchic, out-of-control elements in their society. As long as the local political consensus continues to accept a daily world with practically no police, as a result of their own refusal to let the Arab police return to work, as has been proposed, they will pay the price in continued hardship for many of their own people.

* * *

Data Base: IMPACT OF THE GULF WAR ON PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES

In April 1991, the Jerusalem daily Al Nahar published the results of an opinion poll conducted by the Arab Center for Research and Studies both before and after the Gulf War. While the sample may not be demographically reflective of the Arab population in the administered territories, with an overemphasis on the educated sectors, it is significant for its comparative aspect -- asking the same set of questions before and after the war; the large size of the sample population -- 2,869 adults; and the fact that it was done at all.

While the Arab Center pointedly refrained from making any analysis of the results, a number of noteworthy trends may be seen in the data.

How Fares the Intifada?

Here a marked difference in attitudes according to region may be seen, differences which have sharpened since the war. Over 60 percent of East Jerusalem residents agreed that there was a lack of balance between sacrifices and accomplishments in the intifada, along with 46 percent of those in Judea and Samaria, while

only 25 percent of Gazans agreed.

Question: With the start of the uprising's fourth year:

A: Do you believe that it will continue, so as to realize a just and comprehensive peace?

B: Does it represent a means of pressure in favor of the Palestinian side?

C: Is there a lack of balance between the sacrifices/investments made and the accomplishments achieved?

D: No opinion

	Before the war			After the war		
	Judea, Samaria	E Jeru- Gaza	salem	Judea, Samaria	E Jeru- Gaza	salem
A:	23.3	35.3	23.0	25.7	40.2	17.4
B:	32.6	33.5	27.7	24.7	31.0	15.9
C:	39.9	28.7	40.8	45.9	25.4	60.3
D:	4.0	2.4	6.5	3.6	3.3	6.3

Widespread dissatisfaction with the plan of action of the uprising, clearly evident before the war, continued to increase in all regions. About 70 percent believed that the intifada's plan of action was weak and alternative methods should be sought.

Yet there was practically no support for halting the intifada altogether.

Question: After four years of the uprising, is its plan of action...:

- A: Correct, and it should be continued?
- B: Weak, and alternative methods should be sought?
- C: One that should be halted?
- D: No opinion

	Before the war			After the war		
	Judea, Samaria	Gaza	E Jeru-salem	Judea, Samaria	Gaza	E Jeru-salem
A:	27.4	28.7	24.4	22.7	23.4	14.0
B:	67.0	67.3	61.8	69.2	72.7	70.2
C:	1.7	1.1	5.3	4.2	0.7	8.9
D:	3.8	2.9	8.4	3.9	3.0	6.9

Satisfaction with Political Activity

Dissatisfaction with Palestinian political activity was also documented, with certain regional differences in evidence. Before the war, 52-57 percent in all regions thought such activity was unsatisfactory and required a more determined and broad effort. After the war, Gazans felt this even more strongly, with 64 percent agreeing, while 50 percent of residents of Judea and Samaria backed a stronger line of criticism, believing such activity to be passive and not capable of extracting advantages from the achievements of the uprising.

Question: After four years of the uprising, are you satisfied with Palestinian political activity?

- A. It is effective and influential.
- B. Unsatisfactory and requires a more determined and broad effort.
- C. Passive and not capable of extracting advantages from the achievements of the uprising.
- D: Willing to suspend it for six months, in order to give an opportunity for a political solution.
- E: No opinion

	Before the war			After the war		
	Judea, Samaria	Gaza	E Jeru-salem	Judea, Samaria	Gaza	E Jeru-salem
A:	15.5	13.6	5.3	9.2	12.7	5.2
B:	56.7	56.9	52.7	35.3	63.5	48.3
C:	22.2	26.2	29.8	50.7	22.3	31.8
D:	2.0	0.2	2.3	1.9	0	3.4
E:	3.6	3.1	9.9	2.9	1.0	11.3

The Ideal Solution

The war had a major impact on the public's formulation of the ideal solution to the Palestinian problem. In Judea and Samaria, the percentage of those believing the ideal solution to be a Palestinian state on all "Palestinian land" dropped from 46 to 14 percent, while their support for a confederation with Jordan rose from 10 to 55 percent. A similar trend could be seen among residents of East Jerusalem where support for the greater Palestinian state dropped from 39 to 16 percent, while support for a confederation with Jordan rose from 15 to 46 percent. This trend was reflected to a lesser degree in Gaza, where support for a confederation with Jordan rose from 5 to 18 percent.

Question: What is the ideal solution to the Palestinian problem?

- A: A Palestinian state on all "Palestinian land."
- B: An independent state in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip.
- C: A confederation with Jordan.
- D: A federation with Jordan.
- E: No opinion

	Before the war			After the war		
	Judea, Samaria	Gaza	E Jeru-salem	Judea, Samaria	Gaza	E Jeru-salem
A:	45.6	41.3	38.9	13.7	35.7	15.8
B:	40.0	48.2	32.0	16.8	40.3	21.3
C:	9.8	5.1	15.3	55.3	18.2	46.0
D:	1.2	2.2	1.5	1.2	2.4	9.7
E:	3.5	3.1	12.2	4.0	3.4	7.2

Future of Jewish Settlements

Some interesting regional differences appeared regarding the fate of Jewish settlements. While 90 percent of Gazans called for their total removal, 52 percent of East Jerusalemites preferred to keep them and settle Palestinian refugees in them, an idea whose popularity was seen to rise in Judea and Samaria since the war. Virtually no one was prepared to allow the Jewish settlements to remain under Israeli sovereignty.

Question: Regarding settlements in the "occupied lands," what is preferable?

- A: Their total removal.
- B: Keep them and their residents under Arab sovereignty.
- C: Keep them under Israeli sovereignty.
- D: Keep them and settle Palestinian refugees in them.
- E: No opinion

	Before the war			After the war		
	Judea, Samaria	E Jeru- Gaza	salem	Judea, Samaria	E Jeru- Gaza	salem
A:	53.3	91.3	26.7	47.8	88.5	31.1
B:	10.4	5.0	9.9	6.7	8.7	5.4
C:	3.0	0	0.8	1.0	0	1.3
D:	29.2	0	51.2	40.2	0	52.3
E:	4.2	3.7	11.5	4.3	2.9	9.9

Future of Jerusalem

Attitudes toward the future of Jerusalem saw marked changes since the war. Before the war, a plurality in all regions preferred that both the Arab and Jewish sectors of Jerusalem be internationalized, with about 20 percent calling for Jerusalem's unification under Arab rule. Since the war, 46 percent of those in Judea and Samaria, along with 55 percent of East Jerusalemites, prefer the city's repartition into Arab and Jewish sections. By contrast, the preferred solution among Gazans (34 percent, up from 22 percent) was to unify Jerusalem under Arab rule.

Question: Regarding the future of Jerusalem, what is preferable?

- A: Both parts should be internationalized.

B: The Arab part should be internationalized.

C: The Arab part should be under ethnic rule.

D: It should be repartitioned into Arab and Jewish sections.

E: It should be unified under Arab rule.

F: No opinion

	Before the war			After the war		
	Judea, Samaria	E Jeru- Gaza	salem	Judea, Samaria	E Jeru- Gaza	salem
A:	42.6	36.7	45.0	32.7	30.8	17.2
B:	8.1	7.1	8.0	5.2	6.8	5.6
C:	1.7	2.9	2.3	0.9	1.1	2.7
D:	24.9	27.3	13.0	46.4	24.8	55.4
E:	18.1	22.2	19.1	12.8	33.9	15.7
F:	4.6	3.8	12.2	2.0	2.7	3.3

PLO Aid

Finally, criticism of the flow of PLO aid only increased with the end of the war. While prior to the war some 45-50 percent in all regions considered PLO aid weak and reaching only insiders, a third still chose the less critical response, calling the aid insufficient. After the war, none called the aid merely "insufficient," 50-60 percent termed it "weak," while about 40 percent claimed that it did not arrive at all.

Question: Is PLO aid to the uprising...:

- A: Satisfactory and reaches everyone?
- B: Is not sufficient and reaches only some?
- C: Weak and reaches only insiders?
- D: Does not arrive at all?

	Before the war			After the war		
	Judea, Samaria	E Jeru- Gaza	salem	Judea, Samaria	E Jeru- Gaza	salem
A:	0.9	1.6	0	0	0	0
B:	37.5	34.0	35.9	0	0	0
C:	49.8	44.9	49.6	55.8	50.7	59.0
D:	8.6	16.9	5.3	41.4	46.4	38.3

Note: The above analysis is based on a version of the survey results which appeared in the Australia/Israel Review.

-- Mark Ami-El