

# JERUSALEM LETTER / VIEWPOINTS

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**SPECIAL REPORT**

## ISRAEL UNDER ATTACK

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This Jerusalem Letter is being written on January 21st. Israel has been under threat of attack or attack for five days now. We at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs wanted to bring to our readers some sense of life under attack and threat of attack even while the threat remains.

### Thursday, 10 January

James Baker's meeting with his Iraqi counterpart has failed. Looking at Baker on TV, for the first time what seems to be a bit of anger breaks through his rigidly controlled face. Can one hope that he is beginning to learn what it is like to deal with our neighbors? Israel's great friend George Shultz also started his tour of duty as Secretary of State with a predisposition toward negotiating with the Arabs until he was slapped in the face by the Syrians, after which he became notably more understanding of and friendly toward Israel. Is Baker capable of learning the same lesson?

### Friday, 11 January

The Europeans initiate a last-minute effort to bring about a "peace," an

agreement to be paid for in Israeli coin by "linkage." France and Germany and, it seems, the other EC countries other than Great Britain, seem to be ready to settle for an Iraqi declaration of intention to leave, in return for which the Iraqis will get the promise of an international conference on the Palestinian issue. As I told my students the other day, we are right back at the beginning, not only of this crisis but of the first American intervention in the Middle East. Then, too, the Americans were willing to fight and sent a fleet with Marines, while the Europeans, led by France, wanted to pay off the Arabs with bribes so as not to have their routines disturbed. In those days the Arab enemies were the pirate governments of the Barbary Coast, that is to say, Libya, Tunisia and Algeria, semi-independent sheikhs whose main income came from raiding European and now American commerce in the Mediterranean. The Europeans had paid bribes for centuries. The Americans attacked. That was in 1802. The "shores of Tripoli" in the U.S. Marine Corps hymn refers to the Tripoli in Libya.

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### **Saturday, 12 January**

Perez de Cuellar's mission fails. He has spent a day and a half of humiliation at Iraqi hands. He tries to keep his diplomatic poker face but his rage and disappointment show through and he makes it quite clear in diplomatic language what he thinks. War now seems unstoppable. Israelis buy plastic for sealing a room, sealing tape, beverages in glass bottles, and canned goods and prepare for the worst.

### **Sunday, 13 January**

France and Germany are still ready to try one more time. The feeling in Israel is that the only difference between Mitterand and a Paris streetwalker is that Mitterand talks more. The Germans are beginning to show the wolf that lurks beneath the gemutlicht smile. They have been unified for three months and they are already undermining efforts to establish a peaceful world order. In both cases, money seems to be at the root of things. We discover that Iraq owes the French \$7 billion and certainly its debt to Germany must be equally great since it is German firms that have supplied the gas, the chemicals, and the installations.

The German military-industrial complex has, as usual, been supplying the most terrible weapons to the Iraqis. There are the old familiar names - Krupp, Messerschmidt, I.G. Farben. Naturally they want to continue their experiments and collect what is owed them. I am reminded of how, between World War I and the Nazi takeover, Germany's military-industrial complex avoided the limitations of the Versailles Treaty by experimenting with and developing new weapons in the Soviet Union and Latin America, which they, then, brought back to Germany when Hitler rearmed the country. The thought flashes through my mind -- maybe they are doing the same thing again.

In the meantime, we continue our work. At noon my wife, Harriet, Zvi Marom our Director General, and I go look at our new building to make some decisions about fur-

nishings. Back at the office Miriam Weiss, one of our interns last year, is back in town to be here during the crisis and comes in to say hello. The afternoon is spent working on staffing for our new Institute for the Study of Educational Systems.

In the evening Harriet and I go down to Herzliyya for the opening reception and dinner for a conference on modernization among the Sephardim sponsored by the Jewish Theological Seminary and Ta'ali. It is the only conference of several I was invited to in January that actually is taking place. Everyone is congratulating themselves that twelve of the sixteen overseas participants arrived and that the four who did not simply could not find appropriate transportation arrangements with one foreign airline after another cancelling their service to Israel. The evening goes on as scheduled and we return to Jerusalem late.

The feeling continues to grow that in the last analysis Israel stands alone. Fortunately, El Al still flies and increases the number of its flights. Olim are still coming, although in smaller numbers.

### **Monday, 14 January**

The United States and Great Britain shoot down the final French initiative in the United Nations. War now seems certain and we begin counting the hours until the ultimatum deadline expires. Life in Israel goes on as usual. We are all at work. Gideon, our fourteen-year-old son, like other students, is in school.

The day is full. I begin with a meeting of the state investigating committee on the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, of which I am a member, but Arik Sharon, who is supposed to meet with us today, cancels. He is in a meeting of the inner cabinet for security affairs. None of us is surprised. The meeting goes on. We hear our final witness, Gidon Witkon, Director General of the Israel Lands Authority, and I go over to the office. I go down to Bar-Ilan to teach. Back at the office after teaching I have a meeting of the staff working with me on our project "Imagining

Peace in the Middle East by the Year 2020." Cousins come for dinner. I get several business calls from the States including from our Philadelphia office. Late at night we complete preparations to seal our bedroom which we have designated as the required refuge.

### **Tuesday, 15 January**

Deadline day. Up at the usual hour, working at my desk by 7. Down to Bar-Ilan to teach. It is very quiet at the University. Classes are meeting but only about half the students are present. Many are army officers busy elsewhere. Some faculty members also seem not to have shown up. Those of us who are around meet in little groups to talk about the situation when we are not going on with our routine. I teach my 4 o'clock class and release them fifteen minutes early, at 5:15, to their great relief. I dash out to the car to get back to Jerusalem, pick up my wife, and go to help my parents finish the preparations on their apartment.

Tomorrow I am scheduled to speak at the conference in Herzliyya. I am very reluctant to go down to the Tel Aviv area again this week given the situation. At 7:30 p.m. I am called by the chairman of my session and one of the conference organizers who urges me not to make a final decision. I ask him to call me at 7:15 tomorrow morning when we will make an assessment of the situation. That evening Don Landis calls from the States to ask how we are doing and to express his solidarity.

### **Wednesday, 16 January**

We awake to the deteriorating situation. My 7:15 call tells me that they are cancelling the morning session anyhow, that I should not bother to come. I have one more speech to make today -- at an askara (a memorial service) for the son of a friend at which the fund established in his memory will distribute well over 100 grants for needy students. I talk with my friend; we agree that the event will go on. I prepare accordingly.

Work goes on as usual, at home in the morning, in the office from noon. Another former intern, Shai Franklin, shows up. He has come on the special flight of 400 students organized by Yeshiva University. Nervousness grows in the office. Zvi and I agree that the war is likely to start as soon as there is deep darkness over Iraq. The only question is who will start it.

I send the staff home by 5:45, am about to leave for the askara, when CNN calls to set up a televised discussion with me and James Zogby, the chief spokesman for the Arabs in the United States, for tomorrow evening. The air is tense with expectancy.

One more phone conversation with my friend with regard to postponing the askara and he insists that we do not, even if we are the only ones who show up. We get to the neighborhood community center where it is being held and find 100 people in attendance. Back home before 8, more telephone calls back and forth from CNN and the office in Philadelphia. We settle down to a normal Wednesday night of television, to watch another chapter in the series "War and Remembrance," this one on the battle of Midway and the death of one of Pug's sons. My son Tani, a first lieutenant in the medical corps, at home for the evening, is sitting across from me as we wait for a war and watch a war movie to end all war movies.

### **Thursday, 17 January**

I am awakened at 2:30 a.m. by the telephone. It is a call from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in Toronto asking me what I think about the war that has just broken out. Our first word. Somehow within the next hour it seems that all of Israel comes awake. Radio and TV begin to broadcast as planned in case of wartime emergency. All the radio stations merge into one which broadcasts news, updates and music 24 hours a day and Israeli television goes on a 24 hour a day schedule. We go back to sleep but our sleep is punctuated by periodic telephone calls from friends and relatives.

The order comes through over the radio that all Israelis except for those engaged in designated vital services are to remain at home and to make sure that all of their preparations are completed. I go to my study to work. The morning is punctuated with phone calls back and forth. Swedish TV calls at 10:30 to come over to interview me. The reporter and his cameraman are both impressed with how well Israelis are prepared and how well we are acting. There is no panic, only quiet. The streets remind one of Yom Kippur, no traffic except for an occasional emergency vehicle. Everyone is following instructions. Most of my appointments are assumed by both sides to be automatically cancelled. One or two do call to make it formal. The day passes at work, working at home, punctuated by an occasional business call from overseas or the call of a friend inquiring how we are.

8:30 p.m.: Some of our neighbors come in and together we watch the extended evening news describe the power of the first blow of the Americans and British against the Iraqis in the Gulf. We disperse to our apartments and I take one more call from the States.

### Friday, 18 January

2:20 a.m.: We are awakened by the air raid alarm, turn on the radio, and are told to take shelter in our sealed rooms and put on our gas masks, that a missile attack on Israel is in progress. Prior to this, discussion had been about how long a warning time we would receive with estimates ranging up to 5 hours, the time it took for the Iraqi missile launchers to fuel the missiles they were launching. Even the pessimists assumed an hour or two. Instead, the sirens and the first missiles sound simultaneously. (We still do not know why they could not be spotted beforehand but at no time were they ever spotted more than 5 minutes ahead of time.)

We carry out our instructions and, except for looking like a family from the planet of the apes, the gas masks do not

feel as unpleasant as we thought. They are far from being comfortable but can be managed. After about an hour the all-clear is sounded. The radio and television announcers are wonderful -- calm, relaxed, with just that light touch that has a calming effect on listeners. So, too, is the IDF spokesman, Nachman Shai, a former student of mine many years ago. His name is to become a household word in the next few days.

Telephone calls to all the various members of the immediate family, parents and children; everyone is fine. We learn that the Tel Aviv area has been hit. Miraculously, not only has no one been killed but injuries are so light that only minimal hospitalization is required. Property damage is more extensive, however. Again, there is no panic. The municipality steps in, finds housing for those who have been bombed out in the local hotels.

The government decides not to retaliate and the public, understanding the situation, support them. Life goes on. Plans for family coming to dinner Friday night are hastily cancelled. Everyone is confined to their respective homes. The day passes quietly. Harriet prepares for Shabbat. I work. All of us have the radio and TV on. Israel's Chief Rabbis issue some important halakhic decisions. Sabbath observers are authorized to listen to radio and television on Shabbat. They are to leave on their receivers so they can be informed of developments that might affect their safety. Synagogue-goers are told to pray at home. Critical services are to continue and even the most observant Jews who have emergency responsibilities are to carry them out fully. The radio and television are asking the people to ease off on telephoning because the connections are beginning to be damaged from overuse. One final round of phone calls before Shabbat, though it is agreed that we will answer the telephone on Shabbat as well.

Our across-the-hall neighbors have invited us for dinner at the last minute. After praying at home we go across and have a leisurely dinner and are sitting and

talking. I suggest that we say Birkat Hamazon now, just in case. We do. Five minutes after we finish the sirens go off. This time four of us go into our bedroom since both of our sons are with us. The alarm is short and fortunately there is no attack. We decide that as long as it is night and we are already sealed in, we will simply stay in our room until morning. The night is punctuated by another false alarm.

### Shabbat, 19 January

Then at 7:15 a.m., the alarm goes off and we are told again that Israel is definitely under missile attack, more missiles, this time hitting more widely around the Tel Aviv area. For the third time since the previous night we don our masks. With the all-clear we open the room and go out to get some air. Word comes in that while damage is more extensive, once again -- miraculously -- injuries are so light that by afternoon all the injured are released from the hospital to go home. Any thought of going out is dropped. We say our prayers at home.

At 11 there is a knock on the door and Professor Dan Segre, JCPA Fellow and best-selling author (Memoirs of a Fortunate Jew) enters jauntily, looking as dapper as ever and carrying his gas mask with him. He has just walked down from the Sheraton Plaza Hotel. He had gone to services earlier in the morning and is now going to kiddush at a friend's, having just come back for the war from a sabbatical at Stanford. We had not seen each other, so he decided to stop in. He is one of the few out on the streets, though a number did go to synagogue in any case and a few like him carry on their business with aplomb. The rest of us stay home, follow developments, and wait.

Everything seems to be under control. The day passes quietly. We watch the evening news with a plan to play Trivial Pursuit with our neighbors after it is over. We are just about to gather when the siren goes off again. Back into our rooms and into the masks, but less than 5 min-

utes later the all clear sounds. This time we do not stay in the room but go out and play two games. The night passes quietly.

### Sunday, 20 January

Morning: Still no Israeli retaliation. It had become apparent after the first attack that the government was not going to respond automatically but only at a time and place and method of its own choosing. The American government promises to do its utmost to find the missiles that are being launched from western Iraq. But the terrain is difficult; it is not easy to find even the fixed missile sites, much less the mobile ones. Reports come in -- 15, 20, 30, 50 mobile missile launchers. No one knows for sure. The Americans, assisted by the British, are working hard with some success.

Should Israel retaliate immediately? The consensus among the public as well as the government seems to be no, that a more careful strategy is needed. Amazing. At one time Israel would have responded automatically. Now there are larger and more complex calculations. Obviously there is American pressure, but beyond that Israel itself does not want to change the present situation whereby the coalition fighting the war is kept intact and Israel is directly involved at a minimum.

Messages of sympathy pour in from many parts of the world after the first strike. Even the French, though slow, make a statement, although mostly urging restraint upon Israel. The Germans are silent. After the second strike more statements of support, with a lot of comment that suggest that if Israel were to strike back it would be understood even though restraint would be more helpful. Even Egypt and Syria indicate that, while fence-straddling Jordan announces that its airspace will remain closed to both sides, but that it cannot prevent Israel from crossing that airspace if it so chooses.

The Jordanian Parliament passes a resolution calling on Jordan to intervene on the side of Iraq. The little king calls a

news conference to emphasize Jordan's neutrality and how tragic the whole matter is, implicitly blaming the Americans for being too quick on the trigger, leaving an escape hatch as always. He is good at tightrope walking but not convincing anymore.

Israel reiterates its right to reply but again states that it will do so at a time and place and manner of its own choosing. Meanwhile, the U.S. administration promises more batteries of Patriot anti-missile missiles, a wonderful surprise. American C-5 Galaxies land at Ben-Gurion Airport with the first batteries of Patriots. Later we find that they have been flown in from Germany which is why they got here in record time, but, to the Americans' great credit, once the administration made its promise, it really moved and the system moved with it.

Remember the C-5 Galaxy? During the Vietnam War the American liberal establishment attacked the wastefulness of the U.S. government and, of course, the "military-industrial complex" for spending all that money on such an unnecessary monster of a plane. (The reader may recall that one or two Jews were part of that attack.) Then in 1973 the C-5 helped save Israel during the Yom Kippur War. Now 17 years later it is again coming to Israel's rescue. It may be making a critical difference for Israel's civilian population. The Patriots already in Israel from before the war are not yet operational because the Israeli crews learning to use them are still in the States being trained, so the U.S. sends along American crews to "work with and train" local Israeli crews, meaning that the Americans will operate the missiles if it is necessary to use them. Interesting, the GI's disembark from the planes in full battle dress, a clear sign of a new level of Israeli-American cooperation.

A distant memory runs through my mind. At the beginning of the 1980s an astrologer, I believe it was Jeanne Dixon, was asked to make predictions with regard to the decade. One of her predictions was

that by the end of the decade Americans would be fighting in a war in the Middle East in which Israel was not the principal participant and that Americans would be fighting alongside Israel.

I call around to the JCPA staff. Everyone is fine, but two missiles fell between 1,000 and 1,500 yards of Zvi's apartment in the Tel Aviv area. The IDF issues revised instructions. Those living in the Negev can go about their business normally. Only the schools remain closed. Of course everyone has to carry his gas mask. The packaging is terrific. Each gas mask and the necessary equipment comes in a sturdy corrugated box with a strap. It can easily be carried complete. Those of us north of the line are still told to stay home, to go outside only for necessary purchases of food. Most workplaces are to remain closed.

Afternoon: It is announced that the first Patriot batteries are now operational. U.S. and British planes are continuing to pummel western Iraq and it seems that there would have been attempts to fire in the previous night but when they tried to, the planes got them. This evening, however, new launchers are firing at Saudi Arabian cities under a cloud cover that prevents the planes from sighting them soon enough. By midnight we are treated to "a live CNN broadcast of a major missile attack on Riyadh that is stopped cold by Patriot missiles." All this appears on TV at midnight, just as our last sight before going to bed. It is both chilling and reassuring. People are getting tired -- of staying in, of staying up all night to see the movies which Israel TV has begun to show to keep those who are too nervous to sleep relaxed during the night. We sleep.

#### **Monday, 21 January**

The IDF spokesman announces that, except in the immediate Tel Aviv and Haifa areas, we are all to go back to work, carrying our gas masks, of course. School is still closed. Universities in the last week of the fall semester have ended the semester a few days early. What with the

problem of the Tel Aviv area still being closed off and enough of the student body called up for the army, it does not make sense to try to hold one more class in each subject. End of semester exams will be rescheduled. The situation calms down. My son-in-law, an officer of medics and now a medical student in his own right, whose reserve service was extended because of this crisis, and who was worried about missing his exams, will be relieved.

By 9 a.m. the Center is open and over the next two hours the people who are scheduled to come to work come in. Already on Sunday I had gotten a call from one of our Fellows who desperately needed some photocopying done. We will try to oblige him today. We all know that more attacks are possible and that these may include gas attacks.

Our media people have been excellent, extremely responsive and responsible. Part of their time is spent killing rumors broadcast by foreign television reporters in Israel. For Israel as well as the United States this is the first war in which the dominant media instrument is CNN. It is ubiquitous. Those people in Israel with overseas cable connections, of which there is a growing number, receive CNN directly, which is why its rumors are the most devastating for Israelis. (While it may "correct" a story ten minutes later, having seen it on TV is enough to give it a life of its own.) But even those of us who do not have a cable connection see pieces of CNN as part of ITV reports. Not only does ITV use CNN footage as part of its broadcasts but we frequently see live CNN broadcasts during the ITV broadcasts if something important is happening (as in the case of tonight's rocket attack on Riyadh). In Israel, as elsewhere, CNN is one of the clear victors of this war.

Consensus among Israelis of all stripes has been restored -- temporarily. We all stand united against the enemy from the east. On this there is no difference between left and right, doves and hawks, or any other species.

After the government showed its ability

to exercise self-restraint in responding to the Iraqi attacks, the consensus in Israel, if anything, grew stronger. At this point, the public, rather than demanding at least symbolic satisfaction, understands full well why it was important for Israel to hold back for the moment. So the government has received full backing for its stance. One of the "pleasures" of these days is to watch Yosi Sarid and Dedi Zucker of Ratz (the Citizens' Rights Movement), ordinarily two of Prime Minister Shamir's most vociferous opponents, praising him and congratulating him daily on the news. This morning Dedi Zucker said that he can hardly believe that he is hearing himself say this but that Shamir deserves every congratulations for having managed Israeli government policy so well during the entire 5 1/2 months of the crisis and that, while he will again differ with the prime minister after all this is over, right now he cannot find any flaw in what Shamir has done.

Israelis are basking in a little bit of world approval for a change (not that that stopped the United Nations on the very eve of the outbreak of hostilities from condemning Israel again, this time for the deportation of four Hamas leaders). I do not think that many people have any illusions about this. The world's memory is short and Israel will again become the target, probably sooner than later, but the respite is nice and the praise from throughout the world moderately comforting. All of us believe, however, that as soon as it becomes convenient to forget, everyone will; that indeed, what are they praising us for but the willingness to absorb casualties rather than upset their cleverly laid plans. In the case of the Europeans the good words sound even more cynical since they are praising us for using self-restraint that will keep us alive till they sacrifice us, in cooperation with the Arabs. As we have always said, the Christian world gets very sympathetic to Israelis (and perhaps Jews in general) when we act according to their expectations, as long-suffering victims like their Jewish

founder.

Right now it is to our advantage to do what we are doing. I hope that none of what we are doing is being done in the hopes of winning sympathy per se but rather because we hope to gain some benefit from helping out in this way. None of this sympathy can be put in the bank and we should all know that.

Once again, it is the Americans and the British who lead the world in standing firm. In the last analysis, with all of their faults, it is the English-speaking countries that band together in opposition to appeasement and with a greater or lesser degree of friendship for Israel. Renewal of favorable U.S.-Israel ties, hopefully not just temporary, is gratifying to see. The good words from Britain are also much welcomed. As for the others, the response here is appropriately cynical.

Every country is acting according to the simplest stereotypes of its national character. The French have tried to sell out the West, but once the die was cast and the Americans and British seemed to be making progress, the French jumped on the bandwagon with great fanfare and publicity. To date they have provided more publicity about their small-scale operations in Kuwait than the two major partners have for all of their work in Iraq. As always, the French want to be seen as prominently on the winning side.

The Germans -- whether peaceniks, industrialists selling to Iraq, or the government -- are acting out of pure selfishness, blind to anything that does not serve their self-interest. The Italians behaved like the French and the Germans in the days before the war and made the news once. A flight of six Italian planes entered the battle on the third day of the war. According to reports, one plane was lost, and the other five turned back before reaching their target on the grounds of bad weather. The Spanish are not present at all. The Canadians jumped in only after the Americans took the lead, no doubt strenuously protesting their independence. The Belgians are present but nobody seems to

know it. And so it goes.

What about the peace demonstrations? A common denominator among them seems to be the continuing intense hatred of the United States by what used to be known as the socialist and communist left including the crypto-socialists of the United States. I, for one, am convinced that they cannot stand to see what to them is a crass, money-grubbing, philistine, bourgeois America so successful and indeed so right. The success of simply decent, if non-intellectual or ideological, Americans drives them crazy and stands as a continuing and very successful assault on their own pretensions.

Beyond that, the reasons become more case-specific. In some cases the people involved are looking for perfection in the world and, since there is no perfection, become enemies of the merely good. In this category are many of the church people, especially those who are themselves Americans.

In the case of many Europeans, there is a hatred of America per se: The French establishment because the Americans saved them twice in two world wars and keep them from playing what they believe to be their rightful role as the world's leading power, even though "everyone knows" that they are culturally superior to all others. The German left and right because the Americans beat them twice in two wars and then rebuilt them. (That is enough to make the beneficiaries hate their benefactors.) The Australian left because the United States has ruined their dreams. The younger peaceniks because having no traditional god they have made peace their god. Their song is "Give Peace a Chance" (as if peace were an active power that could by itself curb aggressors).

I close this while we are still very much at the beginning of the war. It has just been announced that 10 more Iraqi missile launchers have been discovered, three of which have been destroyed, and that the Allied pilots captured by Iraq are being placed in strategic installations in the hopes of discouraging Allied bombing.



This is only hours after Saddam Hussein publicly stated in an unsolicited way that Iraq was going to observe the Geneva Convention with regard to prisoners-of-war.

I sit here proud of my fellow Israelis. In such moments we display our finest traits and the best that is in our character, disgusted once again with most of the Europeans, skeptical about the capacity of the West to learn what the Arabs are even after another bitter experience, and cynical about their momentary good will toward Israel. In all of these I hope to be surprised. Perhaps Israel will remain as efficient after the war as it has been in preparing for it. Perhaps the Europeans will discover a conscience. Perhaps the West will learn what it is up against with

regard to the Arabs, and perhaps the United States will remember Israel for the good after the fighting is over. Perhaps the world's good will towards the Jewish state will cease to be based on a love for the Jews as victims. Now what started out as a simple chronicle of events has become a blueprint for utopia.

N.B. Israel is not so fortunate in the next attack; a Scud missile falls on a Ramat Gan neighborhood, three people are killed and over 90 hurt. This war is no joke.

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