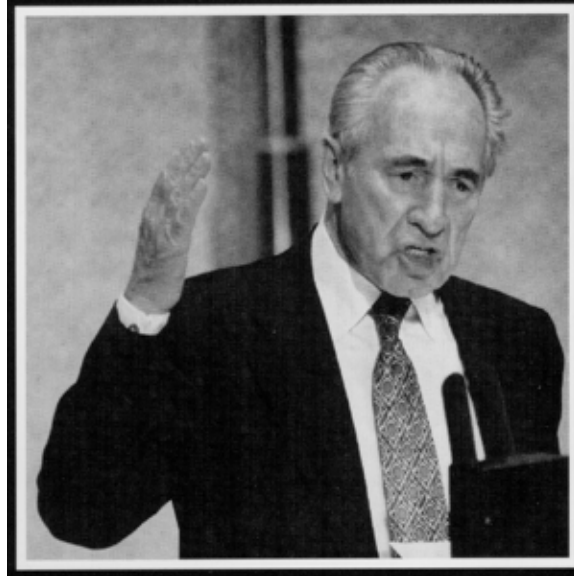


WHAT SHIMON SAYS



Shimon Peres in His Own Words

[Excerpt from an interview with Haaretz journalist Daniel Ben Simon the day following Peres' defeat by Netanyahu in the 1996 election for Prime Minister]

INTERVIEWER: What happened in these elections?

PERES: We lost.

INTERVIEWER: Who is we?

PERES: We, that is the Israelis.

INTERVIEWER: And who won?

PERES: All those who do not have an Israeli mentality.

INTERVIEWER: And who are they?

PERES: Call it the Jews.

Compilation, introduction and comments by
Roger A. Gerber and Rael Jean Isaac

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The great majority of quotations in *What Shimon Says* are subsequent to March 1996 when we published the first *Shimon Says*. We have included some quotations from the earlier publication, most of them to illustrate how Peres recycles the same phrases and ignores new realities. Such quotations are identified with a ☆☆.

Introduction

Early in 1996, we compiled *Shimon Says*, a collection of utterances by Shimon Peres in the three years following the Oslo agreement. Since then, he has mainly recycled them in his speeches and interviews. Why then do we compile another?

The most important reason is that Peres is Israel's Foreign Minister. One of us (Rael Jean Isaac) has argued that Peres' role is even more important than his title suggests, because Prime Minister Sharon has been forced to tailor his own policies to those demanded by Peres as the price for a unity government. When we compiled the first *Shimon Says*, Peres was Prime Minister of a Labor government in the wake of Rabin's assassination. Little did we imagine that a government led by Ariel Sharon, who had strongly opposed Oslo from its inception and had described Peres, its architect, as the man who "has given Israel away," would give him a key role in the cabinet.

Second, Peres has been a purveyor of delusions to a people desperately grasping for hope. His claim that Oslo would usher in an era of peace in a "New Middle East" has been proven to be chimerical to all but those who refuse to see. After Barak's final offer at Taba was rejected — basically to return to the truce lines of 1949 — and Arafat embarked on open warfare, even the eyes of most of the Israeli left were opened. Leaders of the mainstream American Jewish organizations also awakened from their illusion of peace. Leonard Fein, a prominent figure of the left and a founder of Americans for Peace Now, to his credit wrote in *The Forward* (March 16, 2001): ". . . Our mistake was to allow ourselves to be so carried away by the prospect of peace that we chose to close our eyes to the persistent Palestinian violations of the Oslo accords — and to what those violations implied about Palestinian intentions." Nonetheless the events of the past eight years have had no discernible impact on Shimon Peres. He parrots the same phrases, has ever more imaginative excuses for Arafat, and doggedly pursues the same illusions.

Third, the perception of Peres both in Israel and in the diaspora is as remote from reality as is Peres himself. Akiva Eldar, a political columnist for Israel's influential daily *Haaretz*, wrote in August 1999: "Peres is nearly a mythological figure. . . . He is an icon." Columnist Gideon Samet calls Peres "the only hope of Israeli diplomacy." (*Haaretz*, Aug. 10, 2001) And Herb Keinon, a journalist for the *Jerusalem Post* (International Edition, May 24, 1997) describes Peres as "an intellectual leader of huge stature." Even former Defense Minister Moshe Arens, a critic of Peres' policies, writes in the *Wall Street Journal* (August 2, 2000) "Peres is internationally the best known and most admired Israeli politician." Jews abroad treat him with reverence. The Israeli daily *Maariv* (August 18, 1996) reported that, in the year he was out of government following the victory of Benjamin Netanyahu, Peres received \$40,000 a speech from admiring Jewish audiences in the United States, and was expected to earn close to \$400,000 for the year. In the June 1997 *Australia/Israel Review* Michael

Kapel speaks of Peres as a man “responsible for the broad sweep of history” and praises his “almost Shakespearean grasp of the language.” Only in the past few months have there been occasional more realistic public assessments, for example by Norman Podhoretz, who compared Peres — unfavorably — to Neville Chamberlain (*Commentary*, October 2001).

Fourth, although Peres is a satirist’s goldmine, and Israeli television has no lack of satirists (Po-Politica is the most widely watched), neither TV nor other media exploit the rich Peres mine. Every time Peres produced his trite epigrams and played word games that denigrated his high office (and thus his country), Israeli humorists should have been taking notes in the wings. In doing so, they would have performed a vital public service. Had they made Peres a figure of fun, a wise man of Chelm, he would have been unable to damage Israel to the degree he has done — and still does.

Almost half a century ago Moshe Sharett, former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Israel, wrote in his diary: “I totally and utterly reject Peres and consider his rise to prominence a malignant, immoral disgrace. I will rend my clothes in mourning for the State if I see him become a minister in the Israeli government.” Sharett was prescient. For the last decade, Peres has consistently treated his responsibilities with contempt. He goes his own way, indifferent to his accountability as a democratic leader. Indeed Peres boasts “I may not know what the people want; I do know what is good for the people.” (*Jerusalem Post* International Edition, Dec. 23, 1995) As Foreign Minister he has betrayed his obligation to advocate for his own government by continually presenting Arafat’s case to the world media instead. Our section “Spokesman for Arafat,” is so lengthy not by design but because Peres’ speeches, writings and interviews are devoted so overwhelmingly to promoting and defending Arafat.

On October 23, 2001, in a CNN interview, Shimon Peres astonishingly confirmed the Arab canard that the terror attack on America was attributable to the Palestinian-Israel conflict. Despite bin Laden’s own declarations that his principal grievances related to the “infidel” presence in Arabia, “the holiest of [Islamic] territories”, and to the treatment of Iraq, Peres undermined the Jewish community’s vigorous refutation of the Arab propaganda spin. Interviewed by Paula Zahn, Peres was asked to comment on the allegation by Jordanian King Abdullah that the terror attack on America was caused by the Palestinian-Israel conflict. This was the exchange: ZAHN: What do you think of the linkage the King is making to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? PERES: **“I think it’s 100 percent right.”**

Incredibly, given an international platform to enlighten viewers as to the terrorists’ hatred of the “infidel” West, Peres *endorsed* — and thereby gave credence to — the dangerous and incendiary Arab propaganda line. For the Foreign Minister of Israel

to endorse the libelous Arab campaign to blame his own country for the horrific terror attack on America is without parallel in the tragic annals of Jewish history.

And so, because of the failure of Israelis to do the job, we say once again “The emperor has no clothes.” Shimon Peres is Simple Simon — you need only read *What Shimon Says*.

On History

General Comment: Peres says that he is totally uninterested in the past and there is nothing to be learned from it — an amazingly anti-Jewish attitude. Professor Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, Salo W. Baron Professor of Jewish History, Culture and Society at Columbia University, points out that “Only in Israel . . . is the injunction to remember felt as a religious imperative to an entire people.” Yerushalmi also notes that Jewish tradition “assigned a decisive significance to history” (*Zakhor*, Univ of Wash. Press, 1982, pp 8-9). And there is the admonition of the Baal Shem Tov, “Forgetfulness leads to exile, while Remembrance is the secret of redemption.” Nor of course is recognition of the importance of history confined to Jews. Thomas Jefferson said the the basic education of citizens in a democracy should be “chiefly historical.” What makes Peres’ denigration of history particularly bizarre is that he often invokes history as the guarantor of his own forecasts. Peres believes in the Marxist notion of an immanent force that determines how history will unfold (and to which he, Peres, is privy).

““ I think violence is the intervention of the past in the attempt to change the future. (Speech at the Peres Center for Middle East Peace and Economic Cooperation, April 2001)

““ Instead of dwelling in the history of the past, we have to look to the history of the future. (Speech to American Jewish Committee, May 3, 2001)

““ Generally I have very little patience for history. I am bored with history, for the simple reason that you cannot change it. You can analyze it, and people say if you don’t learn the past, you will repeat the mistakes of the past. Okay, learn the past — then you will not repeat the mistakes of the past, you will make new mistakes. (Interview, *The Jerusalem Post*, July 12, 2001)

““ There is no single politician or party or government that can stop the march of history. And history is moving clearly in the direction of peace. (On being given honorary doctors of laws degree from San Diego State University, *San Diego Union Tribune*, August 29, 1997)

““ PERES: I think that a person like me should be completely devoted to the future. The past interests me like last year’s snow.

REPORTER: You certainly know better than all of us that it is possible to learn much from history.

PERES: It is a great mistake to learn from history. There is nothing to learn from history.

REPORTER: How can you say such a thing?

PERES: Human history is built on material rather than intellectual things. We are now going from the material to the intellect in the 21st century. The sources of strength are not territorial, or national, or mineral or numerical. The sources today are science, technology, imagination, creativity, education. This can’t be bought with armies. History is written with the red ink of spilt blood. (Maariv, May 23, 1996)

COMMENT: Compare Peres “There is nothing to learn from history” to Deut. 32:7 “Remember the days of old, consider the years of ages past.”

““ I am totally uninterested in the past. If you wouldn’t ask me I wouldn’t talk about it. The past bores me. Listen, it bores me for two reasons: it never repeats itself and secondly it is unchangeable. So why should I concern myself with it? (Interview with Michael Kapel, *Australia/Israel Review*, June 6-June 26, 1997)

COMMENT: The Hebrew word “zakhor” (remember) appears in the Bible no less than 169 times “in its various declensions” (Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, p. 5).

““ We are in a new age. Nobody can turn his back on history. It is nonsense. (Interview with David Makovsky, *Jerusalem Post International Edition*, April 20, 1996)

COMMENT: Now we have history as “immanent force” with Peres reading the tea leaves on its imperatives.

““ “Israeli children should be taught to look to the future, not live in the past. I would rather teach them to imagine than to remember.” (*Jerusalem Post*, May 4, 2000)

COMMENT: History interferes with the free rein of “imagination.” Peres’ style is to “imagine” what suits his fancy (e.g. a new Middle East) and then invoke the alleged forces of history (but not history in the history books) to proclaim that what he imagines is inevitable.

☆☆ **““** I have become totally tired of history, because I feel history is a long misunderstanding (*Wall St. Journal*, September 30, 1994)

☆☆ **““** In almost every foreign war, it (the U.S.) has conquered territories. But in none of them has it even attempted to retain either territories or resources, or to rule over another nation. [*Battling for Peace*, p. 74).

COMMENT: Among the numerous territories retained by the United States as the result of war are (1) West Florida (i.e. parts of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, retained after the war of 1812); East Florida, ceded by Spain in the aftermath of the Seminole War (2) Texas, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah and part of Colorado and Wyoming after wars with Mexico in the 1840s (3) Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines after war with Spain in 1898.

On Geopolitics

““ The world today is no longer connected by sea or land, it's connected by air. In the air, you don't have flags or history or geography or sovereignties or borders; you have real, net competition of brains. And this is the competition that I think Moses was awaiting all his life. So now it came. And we shouldn't lose it. (Speech to American Jewish Committee, May 3, 2001)

COMMENT: What does Moses have to do with it? “So now it came.” What came? “And we shouldn't lose it.” Lose what? Air?

““ Science will replace soil. (Batya Feldman, *The Peres Prophecy*, Globes, published by Israel's Business Arena, January 9, 2000)

COMMENT: This is Peres-shorthand for saying that “science” will replace states.

““ The world is changing from a world of enemies to a world of dangers. Enemies means armies, nations, uniforms, flags and so on. And dangers are floating all over the places. . . . We are in a strange situation in which we have armies without enemies and we have dangers without the military answer. (Transcript of briefing by Peres to foreign press, September 10, 2001, issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

““ I am very concerned that in fact we are going from a world of enemies to a world of dangers. (*Australia/Israel Review*, June 6-26, 1997)

““ When the economy moved from land to science, technology and telecommunications, territories, borders, sea and land lost their importance.

. . . The world is moving from a position of national strategy to a position of global strategy. From a battle between armies, to a fight against dangers. From a world of enemies (nationalistic), to a world of dangers (global). (*Terror, A Global Threat*, October 21, 2001, by Shimon Peres, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website)

“” We think the world is facing a grave danger. As I have said, we have gone over from a world of enemies to a world of dangers. Enemies are national, dangers are global. Enemies are earthly, dangers are floating in the air. (Press conference with Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem in Tel-Aviv, Sept. 21, 2001, transcript by Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

“” [Addressing the terror attack on America of Sept 11, 2001] It’s against the basis of our lives, it’s against the gospels of every believer. Then again, we have to organize ourselves globally, because we are going over from a world of enemies, where we have had armies to face, to a world of global dangers where we don’t have neither [sic] a clear enemy nor an army to stop. (Interview on CNN, Sept. 11, 2001)

COMMENT: While terrorists are harder to track down than foreign armies, it does not follow that dangers have replaced enemies.

“” Dear friends, when I look at all borders I ask what is their value. (Speech to Socialist International, Oslo, May 18, 1998)

“” But in reality, these days, borders between states have lost much of their value. A border cannot protect us from economic flows because the economy is now global, founded on a science and technology devoid of all national character. Markets are more important than states and being a player in these markets means competition that has no respect for national borders. (Shimon Peres, “Why We Need a Palestinian State,” *Le Monde*, Aug. 22, 1999)

“” Borders are not as strong as people think. Borders are important when you have an agreement about borders, but borders without an agreement is a conflict — that’s the whole story. (Transcript of briefing by Peres to the foreign press, September 10, 2001, issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

“” We were used to crime in the streets of the cities; now we have crime in the winds of the globe. (Remarks at National Press Club, Washington, D.C., October 22, 2001)

On Judaism

General Comment: Peres does not identify with Jews or Judaism, of which he shows himself surprisingly ignorant. He subscribes to a form of Marxist universalism, distorting Jewish history to conform to his own views.

“” [Excerpt from an interview with Haaretz journalist Daniel Ben Simon the day following his defeat by Netanyahu in the 1996 election for Prime Minister]

INTERVIEWER: What happened in these elections?

PERES: We lost.

INTERVIEWER: Who is we?

PERES: We, that is the Israelis.

INTERVIEWER: And who won?

PERES: All those who do not have an Israeli mentality.

INTERVIEWER: And who are they?

PERES: Call it the Jews. (Daniel Ben Simon, *Another Land* [in Hebrew], Arieh Nir Publishers, 1997, p. 13.)

COMMENT: Peres views Jews as the antithesis of “real Israelis.”

“” **Judaism, from the very beginning, belongs to the history of the future.** (Speech to annual meeting of American Jewish Committee, May 6, 2001)

“” **There was no greater leftist than Moses. . . . The most socialist of socialists.** (*Jerusalem Post International Edition*, Feb. 26, 1999)

☆☆ “” **There should be another Genesis.** [Speech at White House on signing Oslo I, Sept. 13, 1994]

“” **We are living through a time when there is an unprecedented opportunity to make our region into a good place for our peoples to live in. It is the Genesis.** [Speech at Beit Gabriel, Jan. 10, 1996]

COMMENT: Two years after calling for a new Genesis, Peres announces it has arrived.

“” **In our history, in our 4,000 years of existence, we have never dominated another people.** (Speech at annual meeting of American Jewish Committee, May 3, 2001)

“” **The Oslo process was a moral and a Jewish choice. The late Yitzhak Rabin and I went to Oslo for moral reasons: not because we had no choice, not out of weakness, but with a sense of national mission and historic con-**

science. We went to implement the deep internal desire of our people not to control another people. Throughout all the years of Jewish history, we never controlled another people, and our occupation of the territories was the outcome of a security reality. (*Yediot Achronot*, September 17, 2001)

☆☆ **“”** As a Jew, may I say that the essence of our history since the times of Abraham and the commandments of Moses have been an uncompromising opposition to any form of occupation, of domination, of discrimination. (Address to U.N. General Assembly, September 28, 1993)

COMMENT: The above quotes suggest that Peres has never read the Bible. The Bible chronicles the conquest of Canaan, the partial destruction of various resident nations like the Amalekites, Hittites, Hivites, Amorites, Girgashites, Perizzites and Jebusites and the subjection of populations like the Gibeonites and Moabites.

“” My grandfather taught me Talmud. It was not as easy as it sounds. My home was not an observant one. My parents were not Orthodox but I was hareidi. At one point, I heard my parents listening to the radio on the Sabbath and I smashed it. (Interview with the Israeli magazine *Mishpacha*; quoted on israelwire, February 21, 2000)

COMMENT: Peres apparently defines being “hareidi” as smashing things.

“” [Explaining to the National Religious Party Knesset members why they should vote for him in his failed bid for Israel’s Presidency] **I am not a secular Jew, but a believing Jew who keeps religious tradition.** (*Haaretz*, June 13, 2000)

“” You know the difference between politics and religion. Politics is the art of compromise. Religion is the commitment to reject compromises. (At press conference, National Press Club, Washington D.C., October 22, 2001)

On Israel and Zionism

General Comment: Peres claims Israel’s security problems are behind her and her task is now to become a “spiritual center” of left wing universalism.

“” Until now Israel has been preoccupied with the reestablishment of its territorial center. It is time for us to reestablish our spiritual center. I think that the last 50 years were a compensation for Jewish suffering. The coming

50 years should be an invitation to Jewish existence. What's the difference between compensation and an invitation? With an invitation you must shine. It is a uniqueness. (Australia/Israel Review, June 6-26, 1997)

COMMENT: It is repugnant to call Israel's first 50 years "a compensation" for Jewish suffering. The "invitation to Jewish existence" is a typical Peres obfuscation, the meaning of which is presumably as opaque to him as it is to us.

☆☆ **“”** [To Ruth Matar, a Jerusalem resident who criticized him in American-accented Hebrew] **Go back where you came from (Jerusalem Post International Edition, February 3, 1996)**

COMMENT: 1) Peres himself comes from Poland 2) in his capacity as Foreign Minister, Peres was presumably committed to encouraging aliyah, not emigration from Israel 3) Ruth Matar made aliyah from the United States over 30 years ago.

“” **You cannot have science without scientists, and scientists will not come to raise their children in a country which is financially corrupt or environmentally polluted or governmentally malicious. (Jerusalem Post, May 4, 2000)**

☆☆ **“”** (Speaking to the Labor Party Convention in 1996) **By the year 2000, we will overcome Hamas, Islamic Jihad and terrorism. By then we will bring a comprehensive peace to the Middle East. By then we will establish a just society, with a national income greater than that of England, and greater than that of France. You all know that everything that we say we will do, we will do. (Arutz Sheva News Service, March 25, 1996).**

COMMENT: Not one of the promises so confidently made by Peres five years ago has been fulfilled.

☆☆ **“”** **The security status of the State of Israel is stronger than ever. (IsraelLine, July 7, 1995).**

“” **In order for Israel to remain a Jewish state, Israel needs a Palestinian state and we have to do it right away. (Jerusalem Post, May 19, 1998)**

“” **As far as I'm concerned, it is in the Israeli interest to have a Palestinian state. . . . I would like to see a Palestinian state, and a successful one. (Interview published in Al-Ahram Weekly, December 2-8, 1999)**

COMMENT: A Palestinian state would be an impoverished, radical, irredentist dictatorship threatening both Israel and Jordan.

“” [Speaking of the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] **This is not an American-type system of government; it is Bolshevik.** (*Arutz Sheva News Service*, August 12, 1996)

COMMENT: While Peres never criticizes the Palestinian Authority’s dictatorship, he attacks his own democratic government as “Bolshevik.”

“” [At an informal meeting of Labor members in the Knesset, Peres pointed at his colleagues Chaim Ramon and Hagai Merom] **It’s all because of you and your rotten egos. Your rotten egos. Because of all your rotten egos we look this way and the country is headed for a catastrophe.** (*Haaretz*, January 8, 1998)

Spokesman for Arafat

General Comment: Peres exhibits a flippant attitude toward the most serious subjects. His remarks concerning Arafat reflect this insouciant, devil-may-care approach to the core issues of Israel’s survival. When serious questions concerning Arafat’s behavior are raised, he shrugs them off with frivolous quips. To this day, Peres is unwilling to recognize any serious divergence in goals, values, interests and mode of behavior between Israel and Arafat.

“” **Arafat is no doubt not a Swiss clock, for which you get a three-year guarantee upon purchase.** (*New York Times*, September 1, 2001)

“” **Arafat is our partner. He was elected.** (Speech to Washington Institute for Near East Policy, reported by Associated Press, May 2, 2001)

“” [On being asked if Arafat is an enemy of Israel] **No, he is a partner who is making serious mistakes.** (*Arutz Sheva News Service*, March 29, 2001)

COMMENT: “Yasir Arafat did not prove to be a partner for peace and quite probably will not be one in the future. . . . Mr. Arafat has violated almost every agreement he has signed with Israel in both letter and spirit.” (Op-ed by Ehud Barak in *New York Times*, July 30, 2001)

“” [Asked “Is it fair to say Arafat has not yet made a strategic decision between peace with Israel and peace with Hamas?” Peres replies:] **The choice is not between peace with Israel and peace with Hamas, but peace with himself.** (Interview by David Makovsky, *Jerusalem Post International Edition*, April 20, 1996)

COMMENT: Article 27 of the Hamas Charter states in part: “The PLO is among the closest to Hamas, for it constitutes a father, a brother, a relative, a friend.”

“” [Asked if he believes Arafat] **I don't believe Mr. Arafat, I believe in signed things with American guarantees along with the support of the world.** (*Independent Media Review and Analysis*, Dec. 12, 1997)

COMMENT: If he doesn't believe Arafat, why sign agreements with him?

“” [Challenged as to whether Arafat has any intention of making peace, Peres responded:] **How do they know what is really happening in the heart of a leader? All they have is words, but that is just part of the story.** (Interview with Peres, *The Jerusalem Post*, July 12, 2001)

COMMENT: It is a major responsibility of Israel's Foreign Minister to assess Arafat's intentions, based upon his words and actions.

☆☆ “” **Papers are papers and realities are realities. We cannot judge the PLO and its leader just by what he is saying. Would we do so, we would be completely wrong and we would be in troubles.** (*Heritage*, Los Angeles, June 3, 1994)

☆☆ “” (Responding to Arafat's exhortation of an Arab audience to Jihad against Israel and his praise of suicide bombers as “martyrs and heroes”) **What counts is not the intentions of the Palestinians.** [Pressed by the journalist: Are you saying that it makes no difference whether Arafat genuinely wants peace or just wants to get as much as he can?] **PERES: Yes, I do believe it is irrelevant.** (*Jerusalem Post International Edition*, August 26, 1995)

COMMENT: Note the similarity of these last two statements, made years earlier, to the one made on July 12, 2001 above. For a Foreign Minister to say that the intentions of the opposing party are “irrelevant” boggles the mind.

“” [Asked if he was disappointed by Arafat's violations of Oslo] **I am never disappointed about others. I cannot replace them: but I am disappointed with our government.** (*Australia/Israel Review*, June 6-26, 1997)

COMMENT: Peres turns the question around to attack his own government.

☞☞ “” **Arafat wants one day without funerals. Why can't the IDF do this?** (Mabat, Israel Television Channel One, Nov. 8, 2000)

COMMENT: For Peres the problem is not the ongoing murderous attacks by the P.A., but the IDF's attempts to defend Israel's citizens.

“” We too and not just [the Palestinians] need to lower the level of incitement. When we say we will liquidate them, destroy them, banish them, that is incitement. (*Haaretz*, August 13, 2001)

COMMENT: Peres sets up a phony straw man, an unidentified “we” that calls for destroying and liquidating the Palestinians.

“” [Addressing the Socialist International Meeting in Oslo, May 18, 1998] Thank you, comrade President, my dear friend Yasser Arafat, dear friends! I share the concern of Yasser Arafat in many ways. (Text of speech distributed by Middle East Political Forum)

“” When I am coming to Oslo — I think the same goes for Arafat — this is our first loved place (Speech to Socialist International, Oslo, May 18, 1998)

COMMENT: At that very meeting Arafat viciously assailed Israel.

“” [When TV talk show host Arie Golan pointed out that Arafat calls for implementation of UN Resolutions 181 and 194, i.e. Israel becoming three small islands according to the 1947 partition plan, plus return of the Arab refugees, Peres replied:] So Arafat exaggerates. (*Israel Radio News Magazine*, November 5, 2000)

☆☆ **“” (After Peres briefed American officials on the then secret agreement with the PLO). “Are you sure Arafat will live up to his commitments?” Ross asked. “Yes” I replied. “He conceded on Jerusalem because he wants Gaza.” (Peres, *Battling for Peace*, p. 305)**

“” [French filmmaker Serge Moati, who made a documentary film *Shimon Peres: A Fight for Peace*, recorded an exchange between Peres and Arafat at the Erez checkpoint in 1994. Pulling a letter from Arafat out of his pocket, Peres harangued him:] I suggest not to write letters. Because if you write, we shall have to answer. We shall answer, we shall begin to complain. We shall say you didn’t hand over to us the prisoners, you didn’t do this and that, which will kill the Palestinian story in the American Congress. Because if we shall write a letter like this and it will reach the American press, it will be a catastrophe. And you know we are working today for the Palestinian cause in the American Congress more than you are. (*Jerusalem Post International Edition*, June 1, 1996)

COMMENT: Peres admits that he is working harder for the Palestinian cause in the American Congress than Arafat himself.

☆☆ **“” (In 1993, after Arafat read Peres’s speech to the European Parliament calling for economic aid to the Palestinians) Arafat had said he was not sur-**

prised; he knew, he had explained, that I was capable of saying and doing things on behalf of the Palestinians that many Arab states would neither say nor do. (Peres, *Battling for Peace*, p. 302)

☆☆ “” I think the Palestinian people should be more supportive of Arafat. Arafat brought them a great thing. After 28 years of idling around, of having nothing, he brought them something tangible. . . . Arafat kept the Palestinian issue for 29 years on the agenda, as a leader. (Meeting with Palestinian journalists, Jerusalem, March 8, 1994)

COMMENT: During those 28 years Arafat was murdering Israeli civilians. Yet Peres argues that Arafat has been insufficiently appreciated.

“” The past of Arafat can be praised even if it is a little bit unpleasant. (Speech to the International Jewish Media Conference, January 30, 1996)

“” He [Arafat] fights terror, he changed the covenant exactly as he pledged. Both the fighting of terror and the changing of the covenant is a new development in the last hundred years. (*New York Times*, April 25, 1996)

COMMENT: This is Defense #1. Arafat does all he promises. In fact, Arafat has never changed the Covenant and continues to abet terror.

“” [Asked by an interviewer for the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot if he thinks Arafat will fight terrorism, Peres replies] **It depends on us.** (*Yediot Achronot*, Oct. 1, 2001)

COMMENT: Defense #2: Peres puts the blame on Israel.

“” [After yet another cease-fire agreement negotiated by Peres was violated by the Palestinians, Peres explained:] **“His [Arafat’s] situation is not simple either. He says that there is so much anger and hatred that he has to overcome.”** (*Haaretz*, October 1, 2001)

COMMENT: Defense #3: Arafat is doing the best he can.

“” [When Arafat’s personal security guard organized attacks on Israel, Peres said it was] **without his [Arafat’s] knowledge, but now he should be aware of this.** (*New York Times*, March 30, 2001)

COMMENT: Defense #4: Arafat doesn’t know what his subordinates are doing.

“” [When Sharon blamed Arafat for attacks on Israeli soldiers and civilians] **Some dissident groups and some forces under Arafat participated in the killings without the knowledge of Arafat.** (Speech to Washington Institute for Near East Policy, May 2, 2001)

COMMENT: Former Prime Minister Ehud Barak writes: “During the last 10 months, based on intelligence information, I believe that Mr. Arafat has been guiding terrorism activities and has turned a blind eye to terror attacks by Hamas and Islamic Jihad.” (*New York Times*, July 30, 2001)

“” [Asked on the Larry King show why there has been recent fighting between Israel and the Palestinians] **“I think the story is now revealing itself. There are three or four armed groups among the Palestinians. It is for Mr. Arafat to decide, either he’s going to control all of them or he’ll become a prisoner of them and become a victim of them. Most of the killing and shooting were done by the Jihad and by the Hamas. It’s an assault of private organizations and private arms. Arafat has to decide, either he will control them or be controlled by them”.** (Transcript of Peres interview by Larry King on CNN, October 7, 2001)

COMMENT: Defense #5:Peres shifts the blame to “three or four armed groups,” claiming they threaten Arafat.

“” [At a press conference with the foreign press] **The question was that our Prime Minister sees Arafat as the person who is responsible for terror. Do I share his view? I think where we share our views is that Arafat is the man that should be responsible for stopping terror. We are not looking whom to blame, but we are looking who should be addressed in order to implement what was agreed in Oslo. Namely, that we shall work out our differences peacefully, not by shooting.** (Transcript issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 10, 2001).

COMMENT: Defense #6:Even if Arafat is responsible, it is a bad idea to blame him.

“” **We have to think in alternatives. It is not a beauty contest, where we are going to elect the most beautiful lady.** (*New York Times*, Oct. 21, 2001)

“” **Let’s say that we do finish him [Arafat]. What will happen next? With all of the criticism directed against Arafat, he is the only Palestinian who recognizes the map where Israel and Jordan exist. In fact, Israel’s map doesn’t even appear on new Palestinian textbooks. [If he is gone] Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hizbullah will come in his place. They will try to establish one state between Iraq and the ocean. Arafat wants to speak with us, whereas**

they want to do here what they did in Lebanon. Arafat wishes to be accepted by the West, whereas they could care less about the West. At one point, Arafat wanted to abandon terrorism, whereas they are full-time terrorists. (Interview with Peres, *Yediot Achronot*, Oct. 1, 2001)

COMMENT: Defense #7: The alternatives to Arafat are worse. But if Arafat recognizes the map with Israel on it, why does Israel not appear in the new Arafat-controlled Palestinian textbooks? Never once does Peres consider that Israel would be well-advised to seek alternatives to the entire terror network, Arafat included.

“” PERES: There is no compromise with terrorism.

YEDIOT ACHRONOT INTERVIEWER: And what about the Tanzim?

PERES: I asked Arafat. What about Marwan Bargouti? Instead of answering my question, Arafat asked me about one of the right wing ministers in the Israeli government. (Interview, *Yediot Achronot*, October 1, 2001)

COMMENT: Defense #8: Peres endorses Arafat's game of distancing himself from the terrorism he sponsors by making spurious moral equivalencies.

“” [Told by an interviewer that there is a widespread impression that Peres is always there to rescue Arafat when he gets in trouble, both at the inception of Oslo in 1993 and today, Peres replies:] It is not Arafat who I rescue but rather ourselves. There is also a moral consideration here. We do not need to control another people. (*Yediot Achronot*, Oct. 1, 2001)

COMMENT: Defense #9 is the ultimate one: Arafat serves Israel's highest interest, her moral interest, by relieving her of the burden of ruling another people.

“” In the letter appended to the Oslo agreements, Arafat crossed the Rubicon and committed to move from bullets to words: the PLO recognizes the State of Israel's right to exist in peace and security and commits to resolve problems by peaceful means. It is written. (Article by Peres, *Yediot Achronot*, September 17, 2001)

COMMENT: Peres believes that if something is written, it is real. Yet in 1992, his own Foreign Office had published a document showing that Arafat had violated every single one of the 200 agreements he had entered into with other Arab states!

“” Words nowadays are as dangerous as bullets. And I thought, and still think, that Arafat, by using the right words, can gain much more for his people than by firing bullets or by using bombs or using human bombs. (Interview on CNBC's "Hardball" with Chris Matthews, August 15, 2001)

COMMENT: Here is Peres counseling Arafat to sabotage Israel by a means more effective than bullets.

““ [Praising the Mitchell report as a joint U.S.-European document] **There is harmonization and God bless the harmonization. I think that as long as they work together, the better it will be. What unites them is the fight against terror. What may break this is we shall begin to delegitimize Arafat. For us, the harmonization of Europe and America is more important than to break it in order to single out Arafat.** (Interview, *The Jerusalem Post*, July 12, 2001)

COMMENT: Europe backs Arafat, and should America “harmonize” its policy with that of Europe, Israel’s continued existence is at serious risk. Israel’s best hope is in delegitimizing Arafat, precisely what Peres argues against.

““ **Arafat’s statements in Durban were harsh and disappointing. I was sorry to hear his speech from there, especially because we expect him to end the incitement. But there is a need for meetings with him, and that is why we are making an effort to set a place and time.** (*Jerusalem Post*, September 3, 2001)

COMMENT: How about an end to incitement *before* a meeting?

““ [Describing why a cease-fire would be desirable from the Palestinian viewpoint] **“... Arafat’s greatest gain [over the years] was world recognition of the Palestinian issue and the legitimacy given him. I don’t think he wants to lose that legitimacy.”** (*Jerusalem Post*, August 28, 2001).

COMMENT: Peres admits that Oslo conferred the “greatest gain” upon Arafat and brought “world recognition of the Palestinian issue.” A strange set of achievements for an Israeli Foreign Minister.

““ [In the wake of the horrific terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001, Peres stated] **This is a genuine opportunity for [Arafat] to get out of the world of terrorism, and this is in fact the real test. He cannot hang on to both things at once, no one can, simultaneously busying himself with terror and at the same time being accepted by the world. What happened yesterday in America sharpened this choice into one that can no longer be a matter of compromise.** (*Haaretz*, September 12, 2001)

COMMENT: After 8 years of Oslo, Peres discovers Arafat is still a terrorist!

“” There isn't one thing that has happened in this peace process that those guys . . . in the Mossad predicted, not one. You know, they were telling us that Arafat will never agree to anything. (Reuters, May 6, 1995)

COMMENT: The Mossad was right. Arafat makes agreements — he just never carries them out.

“” [Peres claimed that talking to the Palestinian Authority while it continued murdering Israeli citizens was not negotiating under fire, but rather] **negotiation of a cease-fire. This has to be done with the person who has the most influence on the ground, and that person is Arafat.** (Herb Keinin, *Jerusalem Post Online*, Sept. 26, 2001).

COMMENT: On this reasoning the U.S. should negotiate with Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein.

☆☆ **“”** (Asked about Arafat's Johannesburg speech stating that the peace with Israel is temporary, similar to that between Mohammed and the Quraysh tribe): **I am not certain that Arafat and Mohammed resemble one another . . . I am not their lawyer . . . I have no doubt, however, that he was drawn into a harmful speech.** (Interview on Kol Israel, May 23, 1994).

COMMENT: As for Peres' flippant "I am not their lawyer," he was certainly acting in a manner more appropriate for Arafat's lawyer than for Israel's Foreign Minister.

“” [Asked what it was like to negotiate with Arafat after many years of no communication between Israel and the PLO] **“Well, it was . . . a surprise. All your life you live in a world of images. We saw Arafat so much in films and on television and read so much about him — all of a sudden to encounter a human being with the weaknesses and strengths and the differences and the likes and the dislikes that are part of being human, makes you realize that none of us is perfect”.** (Transcript of interview with Mark Marvel, July, 1995, www.findarticles.com).

COMMENT: It is difficult to imagine an American Secretary of State coming out of a meeting with Saddam Hussein or Osama bin Laden to discover “that none of us is perfect.”

“” [At a press conference with the Norwegian Foreign Minister a reporter asked, “Mr. Sharon has compared Arafat to bin Laden; what's your opinion on that?” Peres responded] **“I am very poor in comparisons. I don't believe that Mr. Arafat is Mr. Bin Laden. These are two things apart. Arafat was elected the leader of**

the Palestinians. . . . In the Oslo agreement we agreed to solve our differences without violence, and our call to Mr. Arafat is to remain true to the Oslo spirit” (Transcript issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 24, 2001)

COMMENT: In the never-never-land occupied by Shimon Peres, Oslo is alive and well and the PA is a democracy.

“” [When an interviewer tells Peres that the Israel Defense Forces Deputy Chief of Staff Moshe Ya’alon “had it with Arafat when he realized that Arafat was lying to his face,” Peres replies] **I don’t know any one person in the Middle East who speaks nothing but the truth. So what do you suggest that we do? Take a vacation, immigrate to Uganda, and wait until they learn to speak the truth?** (Interview, *Yediot Achronot*, October 1, 2001)

COMMENT: Peres assumes that Israel’s choice is either to satisfy Arafat or “move to Uganda.” Apparently it does not occur to Peres that Arafat should move to Uganda.

“” [Asked by the *Yediot Achronot* interviewer if he thought Arafat would abide by the most recent ceasefire agreement he had concluded with him, Peres replies] **What is so bad with the ceasefire that we have reached in Beit Jallah? It has been two months and no shots have been fired on Jerusalem. Even a week would be good. Even one day.** (*Yediot Achronot*, October 1, 2001)

COMMENT: Within two weeks of this statement Arafat’s forces were firing from Beit Jallah.

On the “Peace Process”

General Comment: Like Colonel Nicholson in *The Bridge on the River Kwai* who became obsessed with the mission he was assigned by his Japanese captors, Peres has refused to recognize anything that interferes with his mirage of peace, even if the price is the safety of his nation and its citizenry.

“” **We are learning that the peace process has a strength of its own and that politics cannot stop the peace process.** (*Jerusalem Post Weekly Edition*, January 25, 1997)

“” **We assume that peace is larger than government.** (*Boston Globe*, Oct. 22, 1997)

““ I don’t think there is any government which is stronger than peace. Peace will overcome all governments.

““ (Speech on receiving honorary doctorate, San Diego State University, August 1997) You cannot kill life and you cannot kill peace. So peace is not dead. Peace is not dead even if someone declares it is dead. (Reuters, October 17, 2000)

““ [Asked what would happen if an Arab leader who made peace with Israel was killed] Well, the system of government is transitional, peace is permanent. (Middle East Quarterly, March 1995)

COMMENT: As the five preceding quotations illustrate, Peres frequently treats “peace” as a physical entity, rather than as a term describing a relationship between states or peoples.

““ [Discussing the appointment of Carmi Gillon as Ambassador to Denmark in remarks to the Knesset] “[Gillon] has not lost his faith in peace as the best option for making peace between the peoples and bringing it to each people separately” (Foreign Ministry Bureau, July 24, 2001)

COMMENT: Peres reifies “peace” to such an extent that he can speak of peace itself as an option for peace; to anyone else it is gibberish.

““ [Interviewed on the fourth anniversary of Oslo, and asked whether the peace process could be defeated by its opponents] The Oslo Process will obliterate everybody. (Interview Israeli radio, September 13, 1997)

COMMENT: Peres was corrected by the interviewer who commented that Peres surely meant that Oslo will defeat its adversaries and Peres concurred. But what a Freudian slip!

““ After we won the land that we didn’t intend at all to win, we returned it — we returned the land and the water to Egypt, to Jordan; we withdrew from Lebanon. We offered the Syrians a complete return of the Golan Heights. It’s supposed to be ‘land for peace’ — we gave back all the land, I’m not sure we got back all the peace, to be truthful. (Briefing to Diplomatic Corps, September 4, 2001)

““ We gave back all the land. We are not sure that we got back all the peace. Land is tangible. Peace is airy or, shall I say, moody. So when you give back tangible real estate, that’s it. But when you hang on the return, you have to follow the passing and changing winds, some of them very unpleas-

ant. (Speech, Annual Meeting of the American Jewish Committee, Washington D.C., May 3, 2001)

““ We are trying to negotiate discreetly, because we feel if we shall be able to achieve a cease-fire, then we shall be able to return to the agenda of peace, the sooner the better. (Speech to American Jewish Committee, May 3, 2001)

COMMENT: Peace does not have an agenda; the two parties must have peace on their respective agendas. And even though Peres says in the same speech that Prime Minister Barak offered the Palestinians 99% of the land, and they reacted with violence and terror, Peres will not admit that peace may not be on the Palestinian agenda.

““ In Argentina, the home of the tango, you know that in order to dance well you have to close your eyes and let the romance begin. . . . Peace is a romantic process. (*The Jerusalem Report*, May 1, 1997)

COMMENT: A government leader advocates “closing your eyes” in dealing with existential matters of state.

““ We can overcome terror. We are strong enough. We can reach peace. We are willing enough. (Speech to American Jewish Committee, May 3, 2001)

COMMENT: For Peres it takes only one to tango.

““ We have to replace the fire of hatred with the water of existence. (Peres on “Natural World”, broadcast over New York’s Channel 13 — PBS — on April 10, 1999) .

COMMENT: Apparently Peres hopes to fight terror bombings with water, or perhaps with “existence.”

““ [After nine months of Arafat’s war, Peres says the “emotional gap” between the sides] is deeper than the territorial one. What we have is a crisis of confidence not less than of land — two peoples, each outraged vis-a-vis the other. Each lost a great deal of trust. (*Jerusalem Post*, July 12, 2001)

““ [After eleven months of Arafat’s war, with Arab attacks escalating rapidly, Peres says] It’s an extremely difficult situation. The two peoples are really angry. But you make peace between enemies and you make cease-fire out of fire. (Associated Press, September 6, 2001)

“” Peace is very much like love. It is a romantic process — you have to be living it, you have to invest in it, you have to trust it. As you cannot impose love, so you cannot impose peace. (San Diego Union-Tribune, August 29, 1997)

“” You know, the biggest catastrophe for Israel is the lack of peace. If you don’t have peace you have conflict. (Australia/Israel Review, June 6-26, 1997)

“” Oslo can never die because the Palestinians are free and freedom is never dead. (Australia/Israel Review, June 6-26, 1997)

COMMENT: (i) “Oslo” is presented as a religion that “can never die” (ii) Peres falsely asserts that “the Palestinians are free,” when he knows that they live under the autocratic rule of Arafat and his coterie and (iii) Peres identifies freedom with Oslo. He is unwilling to consider the possibility that Arafat used Oslo as a tactic for Israel’s staged destruction.

“” Peace is not the pursuit of war by other means. Peace consists of putting an end to the red ink of past history and starting anew in a different color. (Shimon Peres, “Why We Need a Palestinian State,” *Le Monde*, August 22, 1999)

“” And I do believe that the Socialist International morally and otherwise, can continue the great role to bring an end to those complicated conflicts that have existed in this century. (Speech to Socialist International, May 18, 1998)

COMMENT: The Socialist International is an organization of little influence and less morality. In regard to Israel its main role has been to support Arafat (for decades) and to improperly interfere in Israeli elections by clandestinely funding the Labor Party.

“” The Oslo Process real sin was that the agreement was not upheld. We were left stuck in the middle, with one government [Netanyahu] proposing a too-little alternative and another government [Barak] proposing too much. (Yediot Achronot, Sept. 17, 2001)

“” [Asked by an interviewer if he is sure “everything will be fine once an agreement is reached” Peres says] This will all be a done deal at the moment when there are agreed upon borders. (Yediot Achronot, Oct. 1, 2001)

COMMENT: Peres has complained that Barak offered “too much;” how then does he believe there will be “agreed upon borders?”

““ [When Assad refused to meet with Israel despite U.S. assurances to Assad that Israel was prepared to return the entire Golan Heights] **The season of peace is over. We shall have to wait for a new season. . . . I see Assad all the time buying tickets on the train in order to miss it.** (Reuters, April 30, 2000)

““ I think if the Oslo process would have been implemented, the whole situation would be far better. (Briefing by Peres to Foreign Press, Sept 10, 2001 released by Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

COMMENT: This remark of Peres is reminiscent of the deathbed statement attributed to Chamberlain — “If only Hitler had kept his word.”

““ I think in Oslo we laid the basis for understanding. . . . It has shown the Middle East how the Middle East can be different. . . . I think the hopes and potential of the Oslo agreement is incomparable as a proposal for the people, more than any other process that they know. (Transcript of briefing to Foreign Press, Sept 10, 2001)

““ We achieved unbelievable things. We recognized the PLO, we brought in Arafat, we provided the Palestinians with land and authority. Nobody did it. When you are negotiating about peace, it is more difficult to negotiate with your own people. (Transcript of interview published in *Al-Ahram Weekly*, Cairo, December 2-8, 1999)

““ [Asked whether he will meet with Arafat even if violence continues] **Our meetings are without any prior conditions. I think that putting conditions is contrary to the spirit of negotiations. I don't know for the moment if he did arrest people or not, but I appreciate the fact that we have had another half day with a real cease-fire. And if this will be continued through another sunrise, another sunset, then we shall meet.** (Press conference with Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem, Tel-Aviv, Sept 21, 2001)

COMMENT: For Peres, a half-day elicits gratitude!

““ [Asked if he thought the national unity government would survive long, Peres replied] **Sharon must do some soul-searching, no one can escape the dilemma. There is no substitute for an agreement. Fences will not stop Katyusha missiles or suicide bombers.** (*Yediot Achronot*, Oct. 1, 2001)

““ When the interviewer says he wonders if the Palestinian dreams of returning to Jaffa and Haifa will disappear when an agreement is reached, Peres replies] **On this issue I recommend to kill and annihilate.** (*Yediot Achronot*, Oct. 1, 2001)

COMMENT: Since Arafat continues to insist he will not give up “the right to return,” Peres incongruously seems to be recommending all-out war.

“” In Oslo, for the first time, we embarked on a daring path. We went far, without leaving reality behind. (Article by Peres, *Yediot Achronot*, September 17, 2001)

COMMENT: On September 24, Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking in Washington D.C., called Shimon Peres “the first Israeli astronaut. Peres is in outer space, totally unconnected to what is going on here. He did not learn a thing from the great bloodshed caused by Oslo that he brought us.”

“” It is worth remembering that in order to reach an agreement, one needs a partner, not just a plan. Both of these conditions were created at Oslo. For the first time, there was a Palestinian leader and a Palestinian movement that sufficed with the 1967 map (22% of the entire Land of Israel). Even if we did not like this, there was no ignoring the Palestinian viewpoint, which saw this as a compromise. (Article by Peres, *Yediot Achronot*, September 17, 2001)

COMMENT: Peres echoes the false assertion that Judea, Samaria and Gaza comprise 22% of “the entire Land of Israel.” Moreover, the Palestinians demand the right to return within the 1967 borders.

“” [After Oslo] For the first time the State of Israel was recognized in fact and in deed, and things began to happen on the ground: terror decreased dramatically, the start of self-rule began in Gaza and Jericho, a new mood prevailed in relations between Jews and Arabs, the peak of which was the Casablanca conference, the most impressive conference on peace and economics ever to take place in the Middle East. (Speech by Peres, *Yediot Achronot*, September 17, 2001)

COMMENT: The only “achievement” of the Casablanca conference was the decision to create a regional development bank, which died on the vine. Only Peres perceived the “new mood” between Jews and Arabs.

☆☆ **“”** [Asked why the Rabin cabinet had a dinner party the same day a cab driver was murdered by terrorists] **Almost every day there is an attack.** (Israel Army Radio. Feb. 14, 1995)

COMMENT: Contrast this with the previous quote in which Peres rewrites history to claim “terror decreased dramatically” after Oslo.

““ In my opinion the Oslo agreement was rendered null and void when the government changed in 1996. (*Haaretz*, October 21, 2001)

COMMENT: This is breathtaking. Peres actually blames the government of Israel for the collapse of Oslo. In fact, of course, Netanyahu continued the “peace process,” withdrawing from Hebron and making substantial new concessions at the Clinton-brokered Wye meeting.

““ We have offered the Palestinians full liberty: all of the land, a position in Jerusalem, without any Bin Laden and without any bomb. And even if there is a remaining difference of 1 or 2 percent this doesn’t justify killing thousands of women and men and children in New York or in Washington or elsewhere — no justification. (Remarks by Peres at National Press Club meeting, Washington, D.C., October 22, 2001)

““ [Asked to comment on the Arab claim that the failure to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict was responsible for the terror attack on the U.S. on September 11, Peres replies:] I think it’s 100 percent right. (Interview, CNN, October 23, 2001)

COMMENT: Incredibly, in both the above quotes, Israel’s Foreign Minister (on a mission to bolster Israel’s foreign relations!) endorses the Arab claim that the Arab-Israel conflict is responsible for the huge loss of life in the U.S. Apart from being a terrible blow to Israel’s public relations, the charge is false. In 1998, three years before the World Trade Center bombing, *Foreign Affairs* published an article on Bin Laden by the distinguished Middle Eastern scholar Bernard Lewis entitled “License to Kill.” In it Lewis describes Bin Laden’s motivation, as outlined by Bin Laden himself. His foremost ground for *jihad* was that the United States was occupying Saudi Arabia “the holiest of its [Islam’s] territories.” The second most important ground was the U.S. attacks on Iraq; and third place was U.S. efforts to maintain “the survival of Israel.” The document concluded that it was the duty of every Moslem to “kill Americans and their allies, both civil and military” until “their armies, shattered and broken-winged, depart from all the lands of Islam, incapable of threatening any Muslim.” The last thing a spokesman for Israel should be doing is to foster the false notion that eliminating Israel would end the West’s problems with the Islamic world.

On Israel’s Relations with Arab States

““ [On peace with Jordan] No hurdle could stand in the way of this call. No obstacle could overcome it. It was not a leap into the fiery past, but into the light of the future. Not backward to hatred, but forward to understanding. (Prime Minister Peres at Beit Gabriel, January 10, 1996)

““ Israel and Jordan enjoy a model peace — a warm peace, a potential full of creation and building. Where there was enmity, there is amity. Where there was suspicion, there is cooperation. [Speech at Beit Gabriel, January 10, 1996]

COMMENT: Relations are so “warm” that the anti-normalization movement in Jordan (including the national bar association, leading union, business associations and 13 of Jordan’s 20 political parties) has compiled a registry of 300 Jordanians who consort with “the enemy” (Israel). (*New York Times*, Oct. 15, 1999). Jordan’s press association expelled three journalists who visited Israel for a week in September 1999. (Reuters, Nov. 17, 1999).

““ We entered the real historic trial to bring an end to the conflict in the Middle East. We were successful with the Egyptians. We were successful with the Jordanians. . . . With the Palestinians, it’s complicated. (Remarks at Annual Meeting of the American Jewish Committee, May 3, 2001)

COMMENT: Relations with Egypt are icy and Egypt has failed to honor the vast majority of the provisions of the peace treaty of 1979. At the “anti-racism” conference in Durban in 2001 Egypt was among the worst offenders in encouraging hatred of Israel and the most opposed to any compromise language in labeling Israel as racist.

““ [An interviewer from *Middle East Quarterly* questioned Peres]

MEQ: You recently proposed that Israel would join the Arab League. Do you still think it’s a good idea?

PERES: I think their league should be called Mediterranean League and then Israel can join it. We are not going to become Arabs, but the League must become Mediterranean.

MEQ: The Secretary of the Arab League gave a fairly unflattering answer suggesting that Israeli Jews should become first Muslims and then they would be considered for the Arab League.

PERES: Well, that also shows that it belongs to the past.

MEQ: What belongs to the past?

PERES: This announcement. The Arab League is part of the past. There is no room for an Arab League. (*Middle East Quarterly*, March 1995)

““ The Arab League is made up of 24 countries, 30 nations — totally anti-Israeli, totally against peace, for the renewal of the boycott, for the continuation of the intifada, for the cutting of relations with Israel, and no reason nor justice nor activity can change their position. (Briefing by Peres to the Diplomatic Corps, Tel Aviv, September 4, 2001, released by Israel Government Press Office)

COMMENT: In a lecture at the Islamic College in Western Galilee quoted in *Haaretz*, December 21, 1994, Peres said “No doubt that Israel’s next goal should be to join the Arab League.”

““ [Addressing Jordan’s King Hussein] **Your Majesty, we stand on the edge of the present. We still face all manner of challenges and the greatest is not to let galloping prospects pass us by. This is our resolve. This is our prayer. This is the commitment of the Prophet Isaiah.** (Prime Minister Peres at Beit Gabriel, January 10, 1966)

COMMENT: Peres abandons his favorite, Moses, for Isaiah. He feels an imperative to cite prophets.

““ **We don’t want to live with our Arab neighbors back to back and on every back a rifle. We want to live with them face to face.** (Reuters Dispatch, March 11, 2001)

““ **“The young generation of Syrians and Israelis will join the young generations all over the world who gave up hatred. It’s really like being half blind and opening your eyes and seeing new horizons and new potentials.”** (Associated Press, January 3, 2000)

COMMENT: Some of that young generation all over the world — including prosperous young Moslems from England (see the *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 19, 2001) — have been training in Afghan terror camps.

On Nationalism

General Comment: It’s over.

““ **And I think that the world is no longer divided between have and have-nots, but between connected and disconnected.** (Speech at annual meeting of American Jewish Committee, May 3, 2001)

COMMENT: If forced to choose, we would place Peres in the world of the disconnected.

““ **Socialism is civilization — the world is more open today than ever before and countries are no longer linked by the land or sea but by air. In the air, there are no countries and no borders.** (Quoted in *Haaretz*, March 6, 2001)

COMMENT: Remember KAL 007, downed for flying over Soviet airspace? Would Peres fly an El Al plane over Syrian airspace?

“” The world went from a world of land to a world of science, so borders lost their importance, national economies lost their significance and every individual with internet or a computer became automatically part of the globe. (*Jerusalem Post*, May 4, 2000)

COMMENT: The internet enhances communication. It does not make individuals consider themselves global citizens rather than citizens of their own countries.

“” Whoever wants to have something national, they can have national poverty. But if somebody wants to have an economy, it must become global, competitive, innovative, open, integrated and by the way — the same goes for strategy. Whoever wants to live in a state of siege can remain alone. Whoever wants to attain peace must become global because missiles like science and technology does not respect borders. It is either that we should live together economically, strategically and psychologically, because television does not respect borders or we shall return not only to our national habits, but to our national dangerous existence. (Speech to Socialist International, May 18, 1998)

COMMENT: Peres sets up false dichotomies; the United States is a prime example of a country with “something national” which is also a full participant in the global economy.

On the Palestinians

General Comment: As with Arafat, Peres serves as their spokesman. In this case his condescension is especially marked: the Palestinians “don’t understand what they’re doing” (in celebrating Bin Laden’s assault on the U.S.), can’t be expected to handle money competently (and so should be allowed to squander it anyway), “forget” that they originated the violence (and so should not be held accountable for it).

“” Today I believe the Palestinians as well as ourselves are extremely angry at each other. Each of us feel deeply disappointed by the policies or attitudes that we’re shown. What we can say is: we don’t initiate any act of terror; we only react. And what we can say also, that we do not intend to remain the occupier of Palestinian land. (Interview on CNBC, “Hardball” with Chris Matthews, August 15, 2001, transcript issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

COMMENT: Peres is “even handed,” gratuitously portraying Israel as “the occupier of Palestinian land.” He should have said that under the Oslo agreements, which Arafat has violated from Day One, all issues were to be negotiated without resort to violence.

“” [Fifteen months after the Oslo agreements were signed, *Middle East Quarterly* questions Peres on increasing radicalism among the Palestinians.]

MEQ: Wherever Palestinians had elections, in the Gaza Strip or the territories, during the last several weeks, the extremists won. . . .

PERES: That’s not true. No. Just a couple of weeks ago, there were elections near Gaza and the PLO won 76 percent.

MEQ. I beg to differ. I think it was not the PLO but Hamas that won.

PERES: You may beg to differ but it won’t change the fact that the PLO won. (*Middle East Quarterly*, March 1995)

COMMENT: Peres to the contrary, Hamas won a sweeping victory with its candidates receiving 91.48 percent of the votes. (*Maariv*, December 6, 1994)

“” **Because of the Intifada they [the Palestinians] suffered a great deal of loss of life. Although it’s their fault, they would accuse us. When they shoot and we react and people are killed, they forgot that they started the shooting.** (Speech to American Jewish Committee, May 3, 2001)

COMMENT: Peres treats the Palestinians as if they were children: they do not ignore where the responsibility lies to suit their propaganda purposes but “forget” they started the shooting.

“” **I do not believe that we can reach 100% of peace without providing the Palestinians 100% of freedom. That we cannot have 100% of security, without having 100% peace. One depends upon the others.** (Speech to Socialist International, May 18, 1998)

COMMENT: (i) Peres makes the arrogant assumption that Israel can provide freedom to the Palestinians from above (ii) Peres implies that it is up to Israel to achieve “100% peace” without regard to whether the Palestinians seek peace or seek Israel’s destruction, and (iii) Peres sets up a straw man of 100% security, which even countries at peace do not enjoy — Israel’s security was far greater before it embarked upon its present path to “peace.”

“” [When some European leaders ask what happened to the funds given to the Palestinian authority] **The five billion dollars were not invested in war. It were [sic] invested in history to enable a people to build their own autonomy, to build their own administration, to build their own strength. I think it is not**

an investment of lesser importance than the investment in war. We have to continue to invest and do it until the Palestinians will be able to reach what they have lost over a very long period of time. (Speech to Socialist International, May 18, 1998)

COMMENT: Peres again serves as PLO spokesman, defending the PA's squandering (through corruption and ineptitude) billions of dollars in aid. Arafat's war on Israel contradicts Peres' assumption that the aid money was "not invested in war."

““ We want to help the Palestinians. The stronger they will be, the better partner they will be. (Speech to Washington Institute for Near East Policy, quoted by Associated Press, May 2, 2001)

““ Good neighbors are more important than good guns and they don't cost so much, and a successful Palestinian state is the greatest promise for peace and understanding. (*Jerusalem Post*, March 16, 2001)

““ I recognize the Palestinians as partners, and it's better to see the Palestinians in the way of having a partner, than in the way of having a hatred. (Briefing for foreign press, Sept. 10, 2001, transcript issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

COMMENT: Peres claims that it is better to ignore reality. Shades of Colonel Nicholson in *Bridge on the River Kwai*.

““ [Peres chides Prime Minister Sharon for making an analogy between Arafat and the Taliban] What does he want to do, start bombing the Palestinian cities the way the Americans are bombing Afghanistan? (*Jerusalem Post*, October 21, 2001)

COMMENT: In its editorial in the same issue, the *Jerusalem Post* points out that this insults both the U.S. and Israel, making it sound as if the U.S. is bombing Afghan cities and Israel is contemplating such a step.

““ On the Israeli side, we knew that the Palestinians had expectations regarding the right of return, Jerusalem and the map of Israel. However, I believed [at Oslo], and I still believe today, that problems can be resolved without relinquishing dreams. Not all of our dreams can be realized either. (*Yediot Aharonot*, Sept. 17, 2001)

““ . . . we started to negotiate with the Palestinians, their form is to depart from terrorism. They have recognized the State of Israel. They have undertaken to air out our differences in dialogues, in peaceful dialogues. It

takes more time than I hoped at that time it would take. But that's not a reason to get lost or to give up. (Interview on CNBC "Hardball" with Chris Matthews, August 15, 2001)

COMMENT: For Peres (in 2001!) the peace process is alive and well, just a little slower than planned.

“” [Asked if Arafat controls armed groups such as the Tanzim] **I think he should have. A democracy is where you have many voices, but one control over the rifles. If you have many rifles and one voice it's not a real system. Our hope and our purpose are that Arafat will impose his authority over all the armed people and over all the arms. . . . The Palestinians cannot walk to their independence by three or four armed heads, one shooting at the other. A nation means: one democracy, which is freedom, and one army which is security. And you shouldn't confuse the two.** (Press conference with Norwegian Foreign Minister Thorbjom Jagland, Tel-Aviv, Sept. 24, 2001)

COMMENT: Peres to the contrary, the Palestinians are marching to their independence with plenty of armed heads, all coordinated in shooting at Israel.

“” [On being asked, following the terrorist destruction of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, about the rejoicing in the areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority as well as East Jerusalem] **They don't understand what they're doing.** (Interview with Shimon Peres, the Voice of Israel, September 12, 2001)

“” [Asked what the point was of talking to the Palestinian Authority when it was itself taking part in the terrorism against Israel] **But they themselves say that they want to stop the terrorism. That's what we're talking with them about.** (Radio interview on Voice of Israel, September 2, 2001)

“” **The first point is to help the Palestinians to build a state of their own. I am saying it as an Israeli, and it is not because I am serving, or representing the Palestinians.** (Speech to Socialist International, Oslo, May 18, 1998)

“” [After the murder of Tourism Minister Rehavam Zeevi galvanizes the Sharon government to move tanks on several areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority] **It is better to have the Palestinian Authority. I am not a friend of Arafat and I owe him nothing, but it is better to have someone to talk to and to pressure than to have no one.** (*Haaretz*, October 21, 2001)

COMMENT: Peres doth protest too much. In advocating a Palestinian state, without making any demands whatsoever of the Palestinians, he serves as self-appointed representative of Arafat and the Palestinian Authority.

On Economics

“” Economy is a business for people who seek food. And every country that goes from glory to food, from trying to make an impression to render a service, is really leading the people to a new era. (*New York Times*, November 22, 1997)

“” Everything that makes money has been privatized and everything that costs money is being phased out. (*Jerusalem Post Internet Edition*, November 19, 1997)

COMMENT: Peres made this announcement in a speech in which he called for all multinational companies to allocate 0.1 percent of their sales revenues to the Peres Peace Center. That's sales revenue, not profits: giving new meaning to the word chutzpah, Peres is demanding that international corporations be taxed to give him control of untold billions of dollars.

“” You can launder money, but you cannot launder human blood. (*Haaretz*, July 3, 2001)

“” Fundamentalism is a way of protesting against poverty, corruption, ignorance and discrimination. So if you want to bring an end to it, you have to approach the roots of it, the reasons for it. You cannot kill poverty with rifles. You cannot finish discrimination with guns. You have to have a new economy, a higher standard of living. And that is what we are trying to build in the Middle East. (*Middle East Quarterly*, March 1995).

COMMENT: Osama Bin Laden is the son of one of the wealthiest men in Saudi Arabia, and inherited hundreds of millions of dollars. Bin Laden's second in command, reputedly the operational mastermind of his organization, is Ayman al-Sawahiri, who comes from a prominent Egyptian family. Bin Laden's chief lieutenants are upper and middle class, as were most of the suicide bombers of September 11. Poverty is not the "root" of their hatred of the West.

On Terrorism

General Comment: For Peres, terror, like peace, is an abstraction. Terror is something to be fought independent of the terrorists who wage it. And anyway, it is destined to go away of its own accord — the immanent forces of history decree this to be so.

☆☆ **“” We are approaching the stage at which it will become clear that terror has no future and is fated to die.** [Speech at Inauguration of Winter Session of the Knesset, October 11, 1993]

COMMENT: Eight years later, Peres' predictive record will turn out to be zero but that will not stop him from plowing ahead, blinders firmly in place.

“” Yesterday the countdown for the end of terrorism began. If the terrorism stops, we will enter into negotiations. We are not interested in violence for its own sake. We are interested in the end of violence in order to resume the contacts. (*Haaretz*, September 12, 2001)

COMMENT: Peres seems to be concerned only with violence in so far as it interferes with the negotiations he pursues as ends-in-themselves. Is he indifferent to the murder of so many innocent civilians?

“” [Asked about continued Palestinian terrorism following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on America] It's like having to quit smoking. You get to the point where you either stop, or fall victim to lung cancer. It's the same with the Palestinians. They should have made a statement last night that they are renouncing terrorism. (Radio interview on Voice of Israel, September 12, 2001)

COMMENT: The day after the World Trade Center bombings, Israel's Foreign Minister flippantly compares terror to smoking.

“” Arafat has to reestablish his credibility in the eyes of Israelis and in the eyes of the United States. . . . Arafat wants to belong to the club that fights terror. . . . But you cannot enter the non-smoking room with a cigar in your mouth. (Peres speaking in U.S., October 21, 2001, on Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs website)

“” Terrorism is the cancer of our age. For the past decade a lot of countries wanted to deny that or make excuses for why they could go on dealing with terrorists. But after what's happened in New York and Washington, now everyone knows. This is a cancer. So every country must now decide

whether it wants to be a smoking or a non-smoking country, a country that supports terrorism or one that doesn't." (*New York Times*, Sept. 14, 2001)

“” [Asked what Israel will do to stop suicide bombings, Peres replied there are two ways, with one being to intercept the terrorist] **The second thing, we have to reduce the motives for terrorism of any sort. And the only way to do so is to renew the negotiations for peace and arrive at peaceful negotiation. You know, in a way, fighting terror is like fighting mosquitos. You cannot chase every mosquito individually. You have to dry the swamps, which means to really change the political situation.** (Interview on CNBC, “Hardball” with Chris Matthews, Aug. 15, 2001)

COMMENT: Just one month later, the United States would also speak of draining the swamp. However, it was referring to military action and financial controls.

“” [Question: The new policy is . . . there must first be an end to the violence and only then a beginning of the dialogue?] **PERES: I didn't say that. I said that the Palestinians themselves have an opportunity to pursue a new policy. If they want to talk about how to end the violence, we are ready to help them end the violence.** (Radio interview with Voice of Israel, September 2, 2001)

COMMENT: The more violence there is, the more Peres wants to negotiate. Peres continues, in the words of Norman Podhoretz, to go “hither and yon begging Arafat to declare yet another farcical ‘cease-fire’ that would precede yet another farcical series of ‘peace’ negotiations.” (*Commentary*, October 2001)

“” **Our struggle is against terror. And if you want to maintain an international united front, the subject must be terror. The subject can't be the Palestinians or Arafat, it must be the menace of terror itself.** (*Jerusalem Post Internet Edition*, August 28, 2001)

COMMENT: Again Peres pulls his verbal trick, separating the act from the actor.

“” **It is necessary to understand that terrorism will not cease until the hand of the last terrorist in the world has been severed.** (*Terror — A Global Threat*, by Shimon Peres, October 21, 2001, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website)

COMMENT: Does this include Arafat?

“” **I told Arik [Sharon]: you say there is no such thing as good terrorism and bad terrorism. That is true, but by the same token there is no such thing as good occupation and bad occupation. No one in the world will be**

prepared to accept the continued occupation of the territories.” (Television interview quoted in *Jerusalem Post* editorial, October 21, 2001)

COMMENT: “It is the job of the foreign minister to explain the truth: Israel has been trying desperately to leave territories to which it also has legitimate claims, and has been prevented from doing so by the lack of a true partner for peace.” (*Jerusalem Post* editorial, Oct. 21, 2001)

““ Without two separate states, a binational state will come into being, to the great frustration of the two peoples. A binational tragedy would ensue which, in the course of time, would force Israel to stay armed against the Palestinians, whose bitterness could lead once more to terrorism. (Shimon Peres, “Why We Need a Palestinian State,” *LeMonde*, August 22, 1999)

COMMENT: When has the terrorism stopped? Will not a Palestinian state produce worse terrorism and irredentism from a more powerful foe?

““ Terrorism knows no borders or identity cards. It floats like clouds in the skies, instead of marching like armies. (From Peres speech at Yale, reported in *Connecticut Jewish Ledger*, Feb. 21, 1997)

COMMENT: Terrorism has state sponsors to provide training, havens, infrastructure, financing, etc. — it does not “float like clouds in the skies,” although Peres seems to.

““ For the first time in this century, Palestinians are combating Palestinian terrorism. For the first time, the Palestinian covenant was changed by the Palestinians. (Speech at AIPAC conference, April 28, 1996, printed in *Near East Report*, May 6, 1996)

““ I want to thank Foreign Minister Cem as the first visitor in this [Jewish] new year, on a day that Israel enjoyed sunshine without a “bomb-shine”. (Press conference, Tel-Aviv, Sept 21, 2001)

““ Arafat himself used to say “I don’t ask for the moon.” He doesn’t have to arrest the moon, he has to arrest 10 or 15 troublemakers who are really initiating most of the terror. (Remarks at National Press Club, Washington, D.C., October 22, 2001)

COMMENT: In the course of a single raid, in October 2001, the Israel Defense Forces arrested 42 terrorists from four different terror organizations.

““ it does not matter what weapons are possessed by the Palestinians

[since] guns don't matter — what matters is suicide bombers. (Israel Radio, November 1, 2001).

COMMENT: On October 28, 2001 two Palestinian “policemen” with automatic rifles murdered four women at a bus stop in Hadera and wounded dozens of other civilians, and Arafat’s Fatah murdered 22 year old Yaniv Levy sitting in his car outside Kibbutz Metzger. To those victims, guns mattered.

On Negotiations

General Comment: For Peres negotiations are the categorical imperative. They are to be pursued under any and all circumstances.

““ I think there is no doubt in the hearts of any of the parties which are today negotiating in the Middle East about the need for a world coalition for peace that will comprise the United States, a United Europe, Russia and, if possible the Egyptians and the Jordanians, where the United States can really bring them together in an agreeable manner. (Peres’ statement at a news conference with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, released by Israel Government Press Office, June 17, 2001)

COMMENT: The Palestinian Authority would doubtless love such a coalition.

““ [After Israel moved into areas of Beit Jallah used to shell the neighboring Israeli community of Gilo, part of Jerusalem] **If we don't leave under fire we will never leave.** (Israel Television Channel One, August 30, 2001)

COMMENT: A backhanded acknowledgment that Arafat has no intention of stopping the violence.

““ [Speaking of those who wanted a pause in peace negotiations after a suicide bombing while Rabin was Prime Minister] **If we would listen to those voices in the opposition, we would in fact be listening to the voices of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad.** (*New York Times*, July 26, 1995)

COMMENT: Peres is quick to accuse his opponents of “incitement,” but here he accuses the political opposition of representing the most vicious terrorist groups openly opposing the existence of Israel.

““ The Middle East is a wild place, and there are many very extreme and terrible people. Should we make our future dependent on every Jihad sniper? (*Arutz Sheva News Service*, September 25, 2001)

““ If we say we won't talk under fire, it means that every gunman can decide there will be no dialogue. (Associated Press, August 9, 2001)

COMMENT: A wild place? Whatever happened to the New Middle East? Peres ignores the fact that negotiating under fire gives Arafat no incentive to cease fire.

““ [Prime Minister Sharon had taken the position that there should be no negotiation under fire] While we say that we should not negotiate under fire, we also understand that we must talk to the Palestinians about how to bring an end to the fire. (New York Times, July 12, 2001)

COMMENT: Stop firing!

““ The food of politicians is frustration. That is our job, to overcome it. We are not invited to Maxim's in Paris. (New York Times, Oct. 7, 2001)

““ The problem is that the solutions are inherent in hidden places and for that reason I believe that negotiating is not a process of bargaining, but of creativity, trying to discover a surprise solution. (Jerusalem Post, May 4, 2000)

COMMENT: It is precisely Peres' "creativity," his free-floating imagination, not tempered by reason, experience, or historical perspective, that has brought Israel to its present terrible situation.

““ [On being told by then U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher that Assad would not meet with him] A girl without a date is like a date without a girl. (Associated Press, January 3, 2000)

““ The nature of small-size issues and medium-size issues is more complicated than large issues. (Associated Press, January 3, 2000)

““ I am not sure if the political agreements will go on as they should, and if it shall not, we will miss a great historic opportunity to conclude a warring chapter, an air of bitterness, a time of deep prejudices and effects upon a very large world, in Muslim towns, in Arab towns and in Jewish towns to really make a real conciliation. (Speech to Socialist International, Oslo, May 18, 1998)

““ [After being defeated in the election for Prime Minister by Benjamin Netanyahu and being accused by him of undermining the elected government by holding negotiations with Arab governments on his own] [I] represent one half of Israel that voted for a continuation of the peace process (Channel 2 TV News, August 20, 1996).

COMMENT: Can one imagine Al Gore running off to Afganistan to make a deal with the Taliban independent of the President on the ground that half the people voted for him?

“” For many years the custom was to negotiate with one’s self. After all, it is easier than to negotiate with another party. The change occurred when both sides recognized that there are two parties to a conflict, and that to negotiate there is a need for a partner. (Speech at AIPAC conference, April 28, 1996, printed in *Near East Report*, May 6, 1996)

“” As you know, I negotiated a cease-fire in Beit Jallah, from where they used to shoot at Jerusalem; in Hebron, in Jericho, now in Rafah. And we are telling the Palestinians in a clear language, where you will take control, we shall be out and enable you to normalize life. And the same goes, hopefully if the tranquillity will continue, in one of the most troublesome places, which is called Rafah, on the southern tip of the Gaza. (Remarks at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., October 22, 2001)

COMMENT: As Peres was speaking, Arafat’s forces (as they had been for days) were firing on Jerusalem from Beit Jallah, on Hebron, and (massively) on Rafah.

“” [Briefing Israeli reporters on his visit to Paris] **They say that there is no cease-fire, but that is not correct. There is a cease-fire in Hebron, Beit Jallah and also other cities.** (*Ha’aretz*, November 8, 2001)

COMMENT: Over 99.9% of the U.S. enjoyed a cease-fire when Bin Laden attacked Manhattan and Washington, D.C.

“” You can always have the date of birth of a problem, but you cannot have the wedding time of the group. And I feel I am not sure that Jerusalem is really mature for any decision as [is the case with] the refugees. And that is the reason why I advised our former Prime Minister Barak not to ask for the finality of the conflict, because I felt it may raise the issue of Jerusalem and the refugees in the center, and discover that we don’t have a solution, an agreed solution, because every solution must be agreed. (Remarks at National Press Club, Washington, D.C., October 22, 2001)

COMMENT: After eight years of the “peace process,” Peres had concluded it is impossible to settle the conflict with the Palestinians; therefore, Barak should relinquish territory without settling the conflict.

On Military Action

General Comment: For Peres, wars, like borders, represent “the past.”

“” [Arguing military action is not a viable option] **The most important lesson we have learned is that you can’t put out a fire with fire.** (*Jerusalem Post.com Edition*, March 7, 2001)

“” **Today’s armies cannot conquer wisdom nor can they defend science. There is an entirely new challenge, and an entirely new life.** (Speech at Yale, quoted in *Connecticut Jewish Ledger*, Feb. 21, 1997)

COMMENT: Peres tilts at windmills. What armies have ever attempted to “conquer wisdom” (whatever that means) or “defend science” (equally nebulous)? Never one for understatement (he is constantly finding a “new era,” a “New Middle East”), Peres now gives us “an entirely new life.”

“” **We cannot solve anything with force.** (Speech to Washington Institute for Near East Policy, quoted in Associated Press, May 2, 2001)

COMMENT: It is his persistence in this view that has prevented Israel from properly defending itself against its attackers.

On Himself

“” [Following his defeat in the 1996 Prime Ministerial elections, Peres proposed canceling the Labor Party primary elections and instead creating a body of electors to choose candidates] **I have tremendous support in the party, and there is no need for each and every person to support me. In the rank and file I have a massive, undisputed backing.** (*The Jerusalem Post*, July 29, 1996)

“” [At the Labor Party convention following his 1996 defeat, Peres asked the delegates, presumably rhetorically:] **“They call me a loser. I ask you, am I a loser?”** The delegates overwhelming bellowed “Yes”. (*The Jerusalem Report*, June 12, 1997)

“” [Asked why he continues in public life at his advanced age] **Why not? I am healthy. I’m alert. I’m experienced. And I don’t seek power.** (*San Diego Union-Tribune*, August 29, 1997)

COMMENT: Since that assertion, Peres has actively sought the Presidency of Israel (he lost) and the leadership of the Labor Party (he lost). He accepted a minor ministry under Ehud Barak and won the foreign ministry in the Sharon government.

“” [Asked why he did not leave the Barak government in which he complained of the way he was treated, Peres responded] **Political death is more difficult than physical death.** (*New York Times*, August 21, 1999)

“” **The respect for me is larger than for my views.** (*Chicago Tribune*, August 17, 1999)

COMMENT: We publish this collection of Peres’ remarks to help correct this.

“” I’ve reached a stage where I’m really an independent political figure. Nobody can take away from what I’ve done, and nobody can add to what I need. . . . And I think it is for me and for my generation to make the tough decisions and clear the way for a future generation that will not have as many contradictions and dilemmas. . . . In historic terms, we are nearing an end to the season of hunting in human experience and entering the season of creation. (Transcript of interview with Mark Marvel, July, 1995, findarticles.com)

COMMENT: As radical Islam threatens to replace Communism as a threat to Western civilization, it would seem premature to talk of an end to the “season of hunting in human experience.”

“” [On being criticized for an unauthorized meeting with Yasser Arafat in Lisbon] **I didn’t enter this government in order to betray my soul.** (*Jerusalem Post*, July 4, 2001)

COMMENT: In ignoring the decision of the cabinet and undercutting its policy, Peres violated his obligation as Foreign Minister. If he felt he would “betray his soul” in not meeting Arafat, he had the option of resigning to preserve its purity.

“” I have had to battle against opposition. And many people prefer to remember the battles rather than look ahead. What remains are results and leaders should be judged on their records. . . . (*Australia/Israel Review*, June 6-26, 1997)

“” **My proudest moment in my life was Oslo.** (*Australia/Israel Review*, June 6-June 26, 1997)

““ [Asked how he would like to be remembered] I would like to be judged with a single sentence; that here was a man who believed that to save a life of a single person today is more important than to be inscribed in a hundred pages in the history of the world. That’s my feeling. (*Australia/Israel Review*, June 6-26, 1997)

COMMENT: Note that Peres does not refer to being inscribed in 100 pages in a history of Israel, but thinks he might rate 100 pages in the history of the world!

““ I have nothing to regret. We created a revolution which the nation will never forget. (*Jerusalem Post*, June 29, 1996).

COMMENT: The Oslo agreements were supposed to be a policy promulgated by responsible government leaders in a democracy, not “a revolution” from above. In fact, the entire Oslo Process was brought about by stealth and deception on the part of Peres; he is undoubtedly correct that Israel and the Jewish people will never forget his reckless revolution.

““ [Ben Gurion] liked and appreciated my daring approach. Since then, I have never stopped daring. Oslo, too, was a dare! (*Globes* interview, Jan. 9, 2000)

COMMENT: Here Peres’ recklessness is bared for all to see. Oslo was a dare, a game, a gamble, an impulse, an improvisation.

☆☆ **““ As a protégé of David Ben-Gurion, I subscribe to his philosophy that “I may not know what the people want; I do know what is good for the people.” (*Jerusalem Post International Edition*, December 23, 1995)**

COMMENT: And he accuses Netanyahu of being a Bolshevik! (see earlier item in Israel and Zionism)

☆☆ **““ “(In 1967) Ben-Gurion embraced me and said: ‘I know many people who are prepared to work hard and make sacrifices in order to attain their goal, but I know no one like Shimon who will do this so devotedly, without taking into account any personal interest or calculation whatsoever.’ (Peres, *Battling For Peace*, p. 92).**

COMMENT: Either Peres took very detailed notes of Ben-Gurion’s remarks thirty years earlier, or he reconstructed them in a shameless display of egotism.

““ With my experience and connections and imagination, I want to try to do about 10 or 15 different things. The process needs someone who repre-

sents the point of view of peace. I want to represent peace. (*New York Times*, Aug. 21, 1999)

COMMENT: Peres is supposed to represent Israel.

On the New Middle East

“” The dream permits us to change reality but the creation of reality is not like a dream. (*Jerusalem Post*, May 4, 2000)

“” The only thing I believe, you see, is that we had a dream and we thought the dream would never have a reality. Now we have a reality and we have the right to dream again — to create a different reality. (*Jerusalem Post*, May 4, 2000)

COMMENT: Peres continues to dream and as a result, Israel continues to have nightmares.

“” The Dimona reactor created deterrence, eliminating the assumption that Israel could be destroyed. It is no coincidence that we have not been attacked since the Yom Kippur war. Even institutionalized terror backed down. I believe this enabled our neighbors to understand that they had to parley with us. To make peace. (*Globes* interview, Jan. 9, 2000)

COMMENT: To say that “institutionalized terror” backed down is a cruel joke.

“” The old Middle East has not yet disappeared completely and the new Middle East has not fully arrived. We are in the middle of it, so we still suffer from the past, and we still cannot see the fruits of the future. It is a transition. It does not depend upon any person, because there is no hope for wars and winning wars. (Interview, David Makovsky, *Jerusalem Post International Edition*, April 20, 1996)

“” [Asked about the risks of Oslo] I feel very strongly that we are gaining historically but losing politically. Which means that for the fruits of our decisions, which we’ll be seeing in five or ten years, we have to pay the cost now. (Interview with Mark Marvel, July 1995, findarticles.com)

COMMENT: Peres has missed the five year mark. The ten year deadline is coming up.

““ A new Middle East will emerge free of violence, free of tyranny. (Speech at AIPAC conference, April 28, 1996, printed in *Near East Report*, May 6, 1996)

““ Without the engagement of the President [Clinton] and the Secretary of State, the Middle East would have continued to produce files of plans without partners — namely without peace. (Speech at AIPAC conference, April 28, 1996, printed in *Near East Report*, May 6, 1996)

COMMENT: And with the involvement of the Clinton administration, one would be hard pressed to see either partners or peace for Israel.

““ What was sown in Oslo cannot be erased. It began a new chapter, a chapter of hope, a chapter of security, a chapter of good neighbors, a chapter of peace. (Article by Peres, *Yediot Achronot*, September 17, 2001)

COMMENT: Spoken in 2001, these words are truly unbelievable. Peres has gone through the looking glass.

Afterword

Shimon Peres (né Persky) was born in Vishneva, Poland, on August 21, 1923. He emigrated to Palestine with his family in 1934, attended high school in Tel Aviv for three years, and graduated from the Ben-Shemen agricultural youth village. He attended night school for two years at the New School for Social Research in New York City, followed by a four month management program at Harvard University. He is a former member of Kibbutz Alumot, where he resided briefly, and has served in a wide range of government and political party posts in Israel for over fifty years. He was director general of the Defense Ministry from 1953-1959 and has been a member of the Knesset since 1959, during which period he has held numerous ministerial, sub-ministerial and party positions. For many years, he served as a Vice-President of the Socialist International.

Mr. Peres was defeated in five prime ministerial elections, although he twice served as Prime Minister of Israel, once for approximately six months following the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin and once in a rotation agreement with Prime Minister Shamir. Mr. Peres was defeated by Moshe Katsav in the July 2000 election by the Knesset for President of Israel. He served as Minister of Regional Cooperation in the government of Prime Minister Barak and currently serves as Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Israel under Prime Minister Sharon.

The quotations have been compiled primarily from major newspapers, journals, and TV interviews, from speeches published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and from Peres' book "Battling for Peace" (Random House, New York, 1995).

About the Editors

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In the summer of 2000 the Israeli Knesset elected Moshe Katsav as president. The defeated candidate was Shimon Peres.

At the very beginning of the presidential race, polls showed that Mr. Peres was leading two to one amongst the 120 Knesset members. In my opinion, one of the main reasons behind many MK's change of vote in favor of Katsav was the pamphlet "Shimon Says", compiled by Roger A. Gerber and Rael Jean Isaac and distributed by Americans for a Safe Israel. Some of the material from the pamphlet was translated into Hebrew and distributed among the MKs. The numerous quotations of Peres' ridiculous expressions and views as they appeared in the pamphlet most definitely led to the rethinking of many MKs. Many changed their vote and Katsav ultimately won the election 63-57.

In personal talks I had with numerous MKs, many told me that "Shimon Says" had a direct influence on their vote.

-- DR. YITZHAK BEN GAD

Dr. Ben Gad was Israeli consul in Chicago and deputy mayor of Netanya.

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