



# Israel Viewpoint

◆ STEPHEN KRAMER Jewish Times Israel Correspondent



## J Street – A Dead End

What's J Street and why is it heading in the wrong direction? Actually, I include with J Street an entire group of American "peace" organizations, including Americans for Peace Now, Brit Tzekek v'Shalom, and the Israel Policy Forum. Each one of these groups has defended Israel's right of self-defense against Hamas terror attacks. Nevertheless, I object to their call for a hasty cease-fire, which I believe to be totally contrary to Israel's benefit.

According to the above groups, Israel's long-term security is being damaged by its overly militaristic response to Hamas, which is counter-productive to achieving peace. They want to resume the "cease-fire" (calm or lull in Hamas' interpretation) that recently ended. They're anxious to invite the U.S. and the international community to intervene, in order to persuade Israel that an end to using force will be beneficial.

I can't fathom why the peace organizations pursue these tactics to promote peace. Have they forgotten that Israel removed every settler and

soldier from Gaza in 2005, leaving the agricultural infrastructure behind for the Palestinians to utilize? The "J Streeters" (used collectively) were sure then that a Palestinian mini-state would blossom in Gaza, the model for a full peace deal between Israelis and the Palestinians. Instead, misguided prodding by the U.S. produced a "democratic" election among the Palestinians that ended with the Hamas terrorists in charge in Gaza and poised to take over in the West Bank (if not for Israel's protection of Mahmoud Abbas' government).

It's instructive to look at the Hamas Covenant, to see how amenable Hamas may be to negotiations with Israel and the West. From the Preamble: "Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it." From Article 13: "[Peace] initiatives, and so-called peaceful solutions and international conferences are in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement ... Those conferences are no more than a means to appoint the infidels as

arbitrators in the lands of Islam ... There is no solution for the Palestinian problem except by Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are but a waste of time, an exercise in futility."

In the past, totalitarian movements have used well-meaning people, often intellectuals, to promote their "-ism." But the idealists didn't realize the implications of adopting the "-ism." For example, Soviet sympathizers in Western countries were called "useful idiots," a derogatory description usually attributed to Lenin. The phrase implies the cynical use by the Communists of naive people whom they manipulated. I see a similarity between the useful idiots of the post-WWII era and the J Streeters today. The Hamas Covenant is available for them to read, but even if they do take the trouble to read it, they won't believe it. They're adept at making excuses for the enemies of the West. In fact, this attitude is contemptuous of the Muslims in general and the Jihadists in particular, because the J Streeters muddy what the Jihadists make perfectly clear.

Jeremy Ben-Ami, executive director of J Street, said, "... we

believe that real friends of Israel recognize that escalating the conflict will prove counter-productive, igniting further anger in the region and damaging long-term prospects for peace and stability." Israel,

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which has plenty of J Streeters of its own, can't afford this naivete. The anger in the region hasn't increased because Israel is standing up for itself. Muslim anger exists because the Jews dare to have a sovereign country on "Arab land." Nor are prospects for stability in the region damaged by Israel's strong military response; the opposite is closer to the truth.

Stability in the Middle East was undermined by the evacuation of Israeli troops from the Lebanese "security zone" in 2000, shortly after which Hamas began to rocket Israel from Gaza. This tactic was further accelerated by the removal of all Israelis from Gaza in 2005, and the half-hearted war against Hezbollah in 2006. Only a strong Israel can hope to achieve security for its citizens. As Israel's perceived deterrent factor diminishes, violent acts against it increase.

To put the Gaza conflict into perspective, one must realize

that Iran is the puppet master behind Hamas. The Iranians are using sympathetic Arabs to help Iran become the Middle Eastern superpower. They have Syria firmly under their wing through their control of the weak dictator, Bashar Assad. They control Hezbollah in Lebanon, which does Iran's bidding and has veto power over the Lebanese government. They bankroll, arm and train Hamas in Gaza, which subjugates the Gazans who aren't their followers. Meanwhile, Hamas schemes with Iran to take power in the West Bank.

While Israel is criticized wall-to-wall (the US and a few others are exceptions) for using "disproportionate force" against Gaza, the diplomatic offensive against both Hamas and Iran could be a lot stronger. Arab countries, like Saudi Arabia and many of the Western countries, are actually pleased to see Hamas being thrashed. But this attitude is not one that those countries want to publicize. That goes double for Egypt, which borders on Gaza. The irony is that the Arab rulers, who demonize Israel to divert the masses from their benighted condition, are in danger of being overthrown if they show support for Israel's fight against Iran and its puppets.

It's true that, ultimately, a political accommodation will have to be made to avoid the

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