

February 5, 1993

## **KEEP THOSE MURDERERS OUT**

HOW kind of President Bill Clinton - or whoever was deputed to twist Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's arm - to allow Rabin to hug the illusion that he had saved some face while capitulating on the issue of the Hamas deportees.

In fact, it transpired on Tuesday that Rabin had added a touch of cosmetic to his statement of Monday night. He concealed the fact that he had agreed that after the immediate return of the first 100 deportees, the remaining 300 would not be returned all at once at the end of the year, but in batches during the year. All in all, in purely mathematical terms, the impact of the original deportation orders on the Hamas and Islamic Jihad manpower-in-action has been reduced by about 70 percent as a result of Rabin's capitulation.

Up to a few hours before the announcement of the "compromise," our government was assuring the world that, in the light of information obtained from the two Arab-American Hamas operatives arrested in Israel, the removal of the 400 terrorists had dealt a most severe blow at the Hamas. Indeed, the organization had been largely disrupted, and its very infrastructure needed to be rebuilt. Now, obviously, the process of rebuilding will be much faster.

The government's report to the High Court showed that the deportation orders were based on the personal files of each of the individuals. These contained a list of his activities, reflecting his danger to the State of Israel and its inhabitants. (When a meticulous recheck was made and some errors were discovered, the deportees involved were immediately returned to Israel.) Now, letting 100 of them return without having to go through the approved appeal procedure will surely be seen as an act of discrimination against the remaining 300.

What a field day their lawyers can have, using this discrimination as new grounds for demanding their return as well. What can the government's answer be - to us, marked potential victims of Hamas terrorists - no less than to their lawyers? That the 100 are not really so dangerous? If so, why was so drastic a punishment as deportation visited on them in the first place? In the meantime, Hamas's recruiting offices are going to be kept very busy. With the added assurance that they now have the approval and authorization of Islam's high religious authorities to kill Jews individually and collectively without fear of deportation, strongly indoctrinated Arab youth will create a broad flow of applicants for membership.

Rabin's surrender will thus not only bring about the restoration of the Hamas structure, it will enhance its rate of growth. Has the prime minister given any thought to the notion, not at all far-fetched, that if the government can be intimidated by the mere mention of "sanctions" into refraining from properly fighting the war which the Arabs in various guises are conducting against us, we stand to lose that war? ISRAEL'S allowing the American president thus to come to the aid of the "extremist" Hamas against us may well establish a presumption: that the territorial demand of the "moderate" Arabs, supported as they are intrinsically by the American administration (and not by it alone) could one day, in the not too distant future, also be reinforced by threats of sanctions. The image of a submissive Israel facing an Arab-oriented (usually Saudi-oriented) US administration

is not new.

It has been lit up dangerously by Rabin's volte-face. In the hurry and flurry of a bevy of world statesmen falling over each other to bully our government into acting against this country's best interests, even against the judgment of our own High Court, nobody seems to have given a thought to what we, the people of Israel, were thinking and feeling. There is little room for doubt.

On Thursday morning last week, several hours before the High Court promulgated its decision, Ma'ariv published the results of a Gallup poll it had commissioned. Eleven percent of those polled said they were in favor of the deportees being returned. Seventy-nine percent were opposed.

Asked what their attitude would be if the High Court ruled the deportations to be legal, 11 percent favored returning them, 81 percent were opposed. Asked how they would vote if the High Court found the deportations were illegal, the replies favoring return were 30 percent, but those opposing return were 62 percent. Then came the question: What if the UN imposed sanctions? The answers revealed that, even then, only 18 percent would favor returning the deportees.

Sixty-five percent were prepared to accept sanctions rather than return the deportees. How is it that the "ordinary" people are braver - and wiser - than their leaders? They are braver and wiser because they evidently have no illusions. They draw conclusions from the facts.

They know that the deportations as a counter-measure were adopted when the Hamas murder campaign had become intolerable. The murder of Nissim Toledano was but the last straw. They believe, Rabin later confirmed, and the subsequent admission of the two Hamas agents from the US underlined, that the deportations were effective, that the Hamas organization had in consequence been thrust into deep crisis - and its murder campaign much weakened.

And thus their instinctive reply: Keep the murderers out, and let us not be diverted by threats of sanctions. We will deal with sanctions when they come - if they come. Rabin was manifestly too busy being upbraided by the Americans to listen to the voice of his own people.

To listen, and to tell the Americans: "The people who elected me, and to whom I am answerable, refuse to accept the idea that we should refrain from taking the measures we deem necessary for defense against the campaign of murder, and thus allow it to continue and escalate. They insist that giving up any element of our defense against the enemy will extract a much higher price than any we are likely to pay if sanctions are imposed." For Rabin's failure to say anything of the sort, for the consequent ignominy, and the inevitable encouragement of the Hamas and their allies, Israel will soon begin paying the price. Surely the time has come for Israel to evolve a sane foreign policy and an adequate policy of information to enable us to wage the hard struggle we face?