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### RABIN'S 'GREAT ACHIEVEMENT'

YITZHAK Rabin and Shimon Peres are conducting a transparent campaign of obfuscation in order to erase from public consciousness the urgent reasons for the deportation of Hamas terrorists.

Wittingly or not, they are blurring the memory of our anguish at the almost daily murders, and of the growing public anger at this government's manifest failure to combat the perpetrators. They now boast that by watering down the impact of the deportation decision by 70 percent, they have attained a "great achievement" - an improvement in relations with Washington. Rabin's statements of the past week, taken at face value, would suggest that the deportations were, from the beginning, not devised as a serious blow against Hamas but as an exercise designed to improve relations with the US.

The legal warrant for the deportations is contained in the Emergency Regulations promulgated by the British Mandatory authorities in 1945 (under which they summarily deported Jews suspected of being members of the Irgun or the Lehi to barricaded concentration camps in faraway East Africa). Many voices from the raucous defeatist minority in Israel's Jewish community were raised in protest at the Hamas deportations - notwithstanding the prime minister's emphatic declaration that the deportations (to last two years) were vitally necessary for the security of Israel, and the revelation that the deportations had indeed struck a blow at the very heart of Hamas, virtually destroying its infrastructure. Nevertheless, a worldwide campaign was set in motion by the US, the European States and the Arabs, demanding that Israel cancel the deportation orders.

The UN Security Council passed its unanimous resolution (No. 799) to give that demand an international stamp. No sharper example of the "double standard" can be imagined.

Is there a nation in the world which would hesitate for a moment to take drastic action in dealing with a murderous enemy? Could anybody complain at the British application during World War II of its Regulation 18B, under which someone like Oswald Mosley was interned for years outside the British mainland because of his sympathy for Nazism and his own Fascist movement? (Not to mention similar internment of thousands of Jewish refugees - described as "enemy aliens" - from Germany.) It was a British judge, Lord Justice Alfred Denning, one of the great liberal jurists of our time, who in a lecture after World War II gave succinct expression to the urgent principle involved. "In time of peace, of course, a man can only be sent to prison for crimes which he committed in the past.

He cannot be detained by the executive simply because they think he may commit crimes in the future. But in time of war, this rule has to be abrogated. If there are traitors in our midst, we cannot afford to wait until we catch them in the act of blowing up our bridges or giving our military secrets to the enemy.

We cannot run the risk of leaving them at large. We must detain them on suspicion." Consequently, wrote Denning, such a man could be detained if the government "had reasonable cause to believe that he was of hostile origin or of hostile associations." What was more, the decision by the government to imprison a man without trial "could not be

reviewed by the ordinary courts of law" (quoted by Yitzhak Berman, former Knesset speaker and cabinet minister, Ma'ariv, February 8). THE inherent lawless abandon of the Security Council goes much deeper.

Its resolution actually ignores even the text of the Fourth Geneva Convention through which it chose wantonly to pillory Israel. Its Article Five deals with a situation identical in principle with that in which the deportations were ordered: "Where, in the territory of a party to the conflict, the latter is satisfied that an individual protected person is definitely suspected of or engaged in activities hostile to the security of the state, such individual person shall not be entitled to claim such rights and privileges under the present convention as would, if exercised in the favor of such individual person, be prejudiced to the security of such state. "Where, in occupied territory, an individual protected person is detained as a spy or saboteur, or as a person under definite suspicion of activity hostile to the security of the occupying power, such person shall, in those cases where absolute military security so requires, be regarded as having forfeited rights of communication under the present convention." The Rabin government's climb-down raises questions and inevitable fears which go to the root of Israel's existential problem.

Throughout the whole brouhaha around the deportations, it has allowed the war that is being waged against Israel to be all but forgotten. The world's media for the most part and the world's statesmen pretend that all they can see is a cruel edict by a callous government, and the plight of poor deportees on a frozen hillside in Lebanon. Never once has an Israeli official spokesman explained why the Fourth Geneva Convention does not apply to Israel, that Israel is not an "occupying power" in the territory of some other sovereign "High Contracting Party"; nor that Palestine is the Land of Israel, not of Ishmael.

On the contrary. By rushing to UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali to tell him, inter alia, that by agreeing to the phased return of all the deported terrorists Israel has complied with Resolution 799, the foreign minister has affirmed Israel's recognition of the validity of a resolution based on the nonsensical contention that Israel is an "occupying power." Through the ignominious collapse of its briefly vaunted determination to be sovereign arbiter (like every sovereign state) of its vital security interests and to defend those interests, this government has created the presumption that in the future, whatever the provocation, it will not carry out measures which it regards as vital if these do not find favor with the UN Security Council. Specifically, one can expect that if pressed vigorously enough by Washington, it may be expected to surrender vital interests - and translate the surrender as "improving relations with the US." This government has warmed the hearts of Hamas, its Iranian patrons, its Arab allies and all Israel's enemies.

It has pulled the rug out from under the feet of Israel's many friends. A long and arduous pull will be needed to repair the damage that has been wrought these past weeks; and there is no sign that it is in sight. The order of the day is, first of all, to face the truth.