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(TITLE UNKNOWN)

The choice of this criterion opens a window to a host of problems. A spry American heckler might manage to retort: "what about Clinton? Will he send his child to the Israel army? Or Warren Christopher? Do Dennis Ross, or Aron Miller or Dan Kurzer (who are, as it happens, Jewish Americans, just like the members of Hadassah) send their children to Israel's army? All of them not only "pass judgment," but have been playing a major role in shaping Israel's life-and-death policy, as did president Bush and secretary of state Baker (helped by the ubiquitous Ross, Miller, and Kurzer). Did not Mr Rabin claim (in another memorable statement, reported by William Safire in his New York Times column) that the idea of Israeli withdrawal from the Golan came from president Bush, thus nullifying both Rabin's own passionate pledges to the residents of the Golan and overruling the opposition of the huge majority of Israeli citizens who do send their children to the army?

The leaders of most of the bodies represented in the Conference of Presidents appear to have adhered to Rabin's principle, lucidly restated only last week in a letter to The Jerusalem Post (August 14) by Abraham H. Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, "that since Israelis, not American Jews, are the ones who face the life-and-death struggle of war and terrorism, Israelis are the ones who should decide their future on life-and-death matters." But those American Jewish leaders (including Mr Foxman) have sinned grievously. Oddly enough, this was demonstrated recently by the Presidents' Conference itself denouncing Yasser Arafat for his repeated promises of a jihad directed of course at the Jewish people and their state. The presidents actually sensed that there was something incongruous in the declarations by the negotiator for peace that he was in fact planning war.

Why the sudden presidential outburst? Is it only now that the presidents have heard the true voice of Yasser Arafat? In just about every address to Moslem audiences, Arafat assures them that the "peace process" is merely one of the "phases" in the plan originally proclaimed in 1974 (and underwritten by all the Arab states) for the reduction and final elimination of Israel. Is it unfair to suggest that the suddenness of the presidents' statement stems from pressures in the American Jewish community, where uneasiness is spreading about the future of Israel and the real meaning of the "peace process"? Their sin lies not only in their own silence. It lies in their failure to tax the American administration with its silence.

Is it not disturbing, to say the very least, that the administration, a full self-identified partner and an overseer of the peace process, has said not a word about the plethora of known violations by the Arabs? It has ignored the most serious violation of all - the failure of the Arabs to abandon the outrageous Palestinian Covenant which proclaims death to Israel and deportation, or worse, for the bulk of its Jewish inhabitants. That abandonment was to have been the precondition for any negotiations at all and, indeed, it was so promised by Arafat. The administration, moreover, ignores the hutzpa of Arafat's excuses.

First he announces that he cannot command a majority in the governing body of the PLO - in other words, he really had no mandate to conduct honest negotiations. Second, he admits that he doesn't really intend to have the covenant canceled; and third, he promises to cancel it only after Israel agrees to all the crucial concessions he is demanding. And the Presidents' Conference says nothing.

None of this moves it. And that isn't all. Where the State Department has published periodic reports on PLO implementations of its undertakings, they turn out to be fabrications - obvious cover

ups for PLO violations.

Protests have been voiced from many quarters; but not from the presidents. A LARGE group of concerned US legislators, as well as a number of Jewish and Gentile activist friends of Israel, recently tried to ensure that the progressive funding promised to the PLO (\$500 million) be made strictly dependent on the implementation of its undertakings. A thorough investigation, in the US and Europe, carried out under the auspices of Washington's general accounting office, showed that the PLO's record was unsatisfactory, whereupon the administration "classified" (that is, buried) the GAO report.

Arafat, with this kind of US cooperation (be sure he is laughing his head off), can continue spreading his message of jihad-on-the-way through the Moslem world. There is consequently a high measure of uneasiness in the Jewish community and among Israel's many Christian friends. It is evidently not shared by those who claim to be leaders - or they are afraid to exercise their right, as American citizens, to criticize their government.

Maybe they feel they are doing their duty by giving their support to the "peace process" on the grounds that this is the will of the people in Israel who "send their children to the army" and voice this argument of compassion, moreover, to answer critics in America. They are laboring under a misapprehension. There is a quirk in Israel's parliamentary democracy of which they are perhaps unaware.

They know that Israel is "split down the middle" between those who accept Rabin's promise that the "process" will end in peace, and those who are certain that, when carried to its conclusion, the process will bring on war.

The majority of people who send their children to the army and face the life-and-death struggle of war and terrorism are against the Rabin "peace process" policy. This has actually been demonstrated in the Knesset. In the recent vote on the question of a referendum on the Golan, the Labor-Meretz coalition received 59 votes, against 59 votes for the opposition.

But at least five of Rabin's 59 do not, by definition, send their children to the army. They are members representing the Arab community - and Arabs do not serve in the army. Voting for the opposition were 59 Jews and a Druse, whose communities do send their children to the armed forces.

Rabin knows the implications of that vote. He has frequently asserted that he heads a minority government, but refuses to go to the people. American Jews do not vote in Israel, but there are several lessons they can learn about the current dangerous tensions in the Israeli Jewish community.