



## Letters

# How Israel Wins

*To the Editor:*

**W**HILE READING Daniel Pipes's article on Israeli defense policy ("A New Strategy for Israeli Victory," January), it occurred to me that much current Israeli deterrence policy focuses on infrastructure and people.

When Gilad Shalit was kidnapped, Israel captured numerous Gazan officials, but this had no impact because Hamas does not care about its people. When Hamas launched a war in 2014 involving kidnapping, rockets, and tunnel attacks, however, Israel responded by destroying Hamas infrastructure. Over time, this had some impact and eventually worked to Israel's benefit.

If Hamas or Hezbollah (the next likely assailants) launches a serious attack, the Israeli response should include confiscation and annexation of territory. This is what the

Palestinians truly care about. They cannot abide a loss of territory. After a few rounds of attack-and-confiscate, they will get the message. It might even be possible to prevail, using this model, with fewer Palestinian fatalities.

WARREN SELTZER  
*Jerusalem, Israel*



*To the Editor:*

**W**HEN IT COMES to analyses of the muddled Middle East, it is difficult to disagree with Daniel Pipes. Israeli victory is a goal we certainly share.

But how you can possibly win a war against a foe who, for fundamental religious reasons, will never accept defeat? Given the radical Islamist underpinning of Arab enmity toward the Jewish state and the fanaticism of its adherents,

there is no Palestinian leader who could agree to any terms that did not inevitably lead to Israel's destruction.

The enemy here is not seeking accommodation but to replace completely an existing nation-state. It's not enough, as Mr. Pipes asserts, for Israel to convince 50 percent of the Palestinians that they have lost. Right now it looks as if Israel must convince closer to 90 percent of the Palestinians. While most Palestinians would benefit from their "defeat," as Pipes points out, this assumes a degree of rationality on their part and the courage to confront well-armed jihadist leaders who glorify death. Any Palestinian leaders who would accept defeat and thus agree to live in peace with an independent Jewish state would not survive politically or physically. Unlike what happened in Germany or Japan, there

is no Palestinian who could sign a surrender document and ensure its implementation.

A less ambitious alternative, given the nature of the enemy, is for Israel to stay strong until that time (hopefully, before the coming of the Messiah) that there are more realistic prospects for peace.

MORRIE AMITAY  
Washington, D.C.



To the Editor:

THE ALWAYS invigorating Daniel Pipes identifies several measures Israel could employ "to break the Palestinian will to fight." But missing from his kit is one of the most potent tools: capital punishment. Arab terrorists who kill Jews in Israel should be put on trial and, if convicted, to death. The benefits will be four-fold. First, instituting capital punishment will convey to the Palestinians that Israel intends to win no matter what, even if it must set aside moral qualms. Second, public trials will be a public-relations bonanza, revealing the infrastructure of hate that riddles Palestinian society and from which its terrorism sprouts. Third, the worst terrorists will no longer be around to induce others into taking Israelis hostage as bargaining chips for their release. And fourth, the terrorists will get what they deserve.

BENJAMIN POLLOCK  
San Francisco, California



To the Editor:

KUDOS TO Daniel Pipes, who finally articulated what has been obvious to realists for the last 23 years. The chimera engendered by the Oslo Agreement should have been dispelled early on. Eight months after signing that

# Commentary

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agreement, Yasser Arafat declared that the jihad to liberate Jerusalem would continue. He compared Oslo to the agreement reached by Muhammad and the Quraysh tribe, which was abrogated at an opportune time and saw all the tribe members slaughtered.

For Israel, land for peace and a two-state solution were strategic decisions. For Arafat and his successor Abbas, these have been tactical matters. There never was a possibility of peace, despite the generous offers by Ehud Barak and Ehud Olmert.

The mistakes made by Israel began much earlier. Shortly after the Six-Day War, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol offered the Arabs the return of almost all the territories captured in the war in exchange for recognition of Israel and peace. The response was no recognition, no negotiation, no peace. Recall that the PLO had been created three years before the war, when the West Bank and East Jerusalem were under Jordanian control and Gaza was ruled by Egypt. There were few calls for a Palestinian state in the 19-year period between 1948 and 1967.

Palestinian children continue to be indoctrinated to kill the Jews, and keys to long-abandoned houses in Talbīyah and Ramle are preserved for the prospect of “return.” Mr. Pipes’s solution to achieve a change from rejectionism to acceptance of the Jewish State will come to fruition only when the Palestinians are totally defeated. All the negotiations, the disengagement from Gaza, and UN resolutions only fanned the flames of hope for Arab domination from the Jordan to the Mediterranean.

Sadat came to Jerusalem after the 1967 and 1973 wars when he realized that a vanquished Israel was unfeasible. We have a democratic Germany and Japan only because

of their total and unconditional surrender more than 70 years ago. Peace between the Palestinian people and Israel requires a similar path. The Israeli people are beginning to recognize this fact. With American backing, this is a solution for this never-ending conflict.

FRED EHRMAN  
New York City



*Daniel Pipes writes:*

**I** APPRECIATE THESE FOUR thoughtful responses and mostly agree with them.

Perhaps Warren Seltzer is right that land is more precious to the Palestinians than lives or property, but I leave such tactical decisions to the Israelis. My goal is to convince Americans to let the Israelis figure this out and act accordingly.

Morrie Amitay might be right that 90 percent of Palestinians must accept Israel; let’s find out. But he misses my point when he writes: “Any Palestinian leaders who would accept defeat and thus

agree to live in peace with an independent Jewish state would not survive politically or physically.” When enough Palestinians give up on their goal to eliminate Israel, they will demand that their leaders end the conflict. That they do not do so now reflects their continued optimism about achieving victory. That optimism is what I wish for Israel to crush.

Benjamin Pollock is correct: Capital punishment should be included in the tool kit of victory.

Finally, I agree with Fred Ehrman. I only note that immediately after the June 1967 war, Jerusalem was somewhat less forthcoming than he indicates. As shown by Avi Raz in *The Bride and the Dowry: Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians in the Aftermath of the June 1967 War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), the Eshkol government offered to negotiate the territories more for show than with a serious intent to reach agreements.



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# The Future of the Gerrymander

*To the Editor:*

**I** APPRECIATE Tara Helfman’s article highlighting recent developments in the complicated struggle over the future of electoral gerrymandering (“Is the Gerrymander on Its Way Out?” January 2017). Some additional facts might help readers cultivate an even better understanding of the issue.

First, Helfman notes U.S. the Supreme Court justices’ “palpable” frustration during oral argument

over recent redistricting cases from Virginia and North Carolina. To some extent, those justices have only themselves to blame. That’s because they have not set a clear standard differentiating an acceptable amount of partisanship in drawing election maps from unconstitutionally excessive partisanship.

Helfman’s article notes that the Supreme Court “declined to invalidate” a “meandering Pennsylvania redistricting map” in 2004. Left