

FORWARD

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A Second *Intifada*

"Barak Pessimistic on Syria," reads your headline (Forward, Feb. 2). May I add this observer's pessimism about the Palestinians, specifically about their amending the Palestine Liberation Organization's repugnant covenant.

Although the Israeli and American governments have read Yasser Arafat the riot act, telling him that the peace process shuts down unless the PLO fulfills its promise to rid its covenant of the anti-Israel phrases, Mr. Arafat has little reason to make these changes and, I predict, will not do so.

Here's why: Mr. Arafat gets control of Hebron in a few weeks, after which he's not scheduled to receive further benefits from Israel or the West (other than money). He does not amend the covenant and swallows the loss of American funds. But, remembering how effective it was the first time around, he gears up a second *intifada* against Israel. This will be especially effective if Prime Minister Peres wins the early elections he called for May. By the summer, Palestinian violence will put tremendous pressure on Israel to make further concessions. At that point, changes to the covenant will appear merely legalistic, and the issue will be dropped, this time for good.

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