



المجموعة السعودية للأبحاث والتسويق
SAUDI RESEARCH & MARKETING GROUP

Established in 1987 by
Prince Ahmad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz



A DAILY INTERNATIONAL
NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED BY



Saudi Research & Publishing Company
Copyright by Saudi Research & Publishing Co. All Rights Reserved.

Founded in 1975 by
Hisham & Muhammad Ali Hafiz

Editor in Chief
Mohammed Fahad Al-Harthi
malharthi@arabnews.com

Extremist settlers are not the only culprits



Israeli settlers will most likely to continue their terrorist acts against Palestinians whenever a change rise.

Hassan Barari

THE Israeli terrorists who burned the 18-month old Palestinian infant Ali Daobash on Friday are not the only culprits.

To be sure, such an unprovoked brutal attack would not have been possible were it not for the tolerance of the subsequent Israeli governments — over the years — with violence of the extreme right. More often than not, Israeli settlers attacked Palestinians and got away.

Tensions were running high for some times across Jordan. Hence, it is not as if the latest attack on the Palestinian family has come out of the blue. Indeed, the most recent political discourse in Israel created an atmosphere conducive to violence.

The implementation of the court order, which is linked to the demolition of some illegal building in settlement, provided the chance for politicians to outbid each other. Even Cabinet members in the government made it perfectly clear that the government would continue building despite the court's order.

It is hard to believe that the incitement against Palestinians that accompanied this political debate did not play a role in the attack on the Palestinian family.

Let's get to the bottom of the issue. For Israel to be able to deal with Jewish terror, the government needs to hold those people accountable.

Settlers have to internalize that their terror acts will not go unchecked. Short of doing that, Israeli settlers will most likely continue their terrorist acts against Palestinians whenever a chance rise. At a deeper level, Israelis should understand that it is hardly possible for them to rein in terrorism without putting a cap on settlement activities.

And yet, it seems that no Israeli government can do that without a price tag imposed by the international community.

Seen from a different angle, Jewish fanatics living in settlements seek to ignite a religious war. They believe that developments unfolded in



the region over the past few years have provided them with a golden opportunity to expand. All in all, they do not abide by even the Israeli law because they deeply believe in their own concept of redemption.

To them, their right in building settlement in all of the occupied territories is a divine right and no government has the right to stop them. Obviously, if the government fails to crack down on them, they will most likely drag Israel in a religious war.

The incidents of last week demonstrate that settlers have a determination to win over all Israelis. It seems as if Israeli politicians have no guts to stand up to settlers even when they commit a course of action that will only aggravate the situation in the occupied territories.

As Gideon Levy from Haartzet succinctly put it, “The politicians too — almost all of them, anyway — have learned that they cannot anger one interest group in this country.

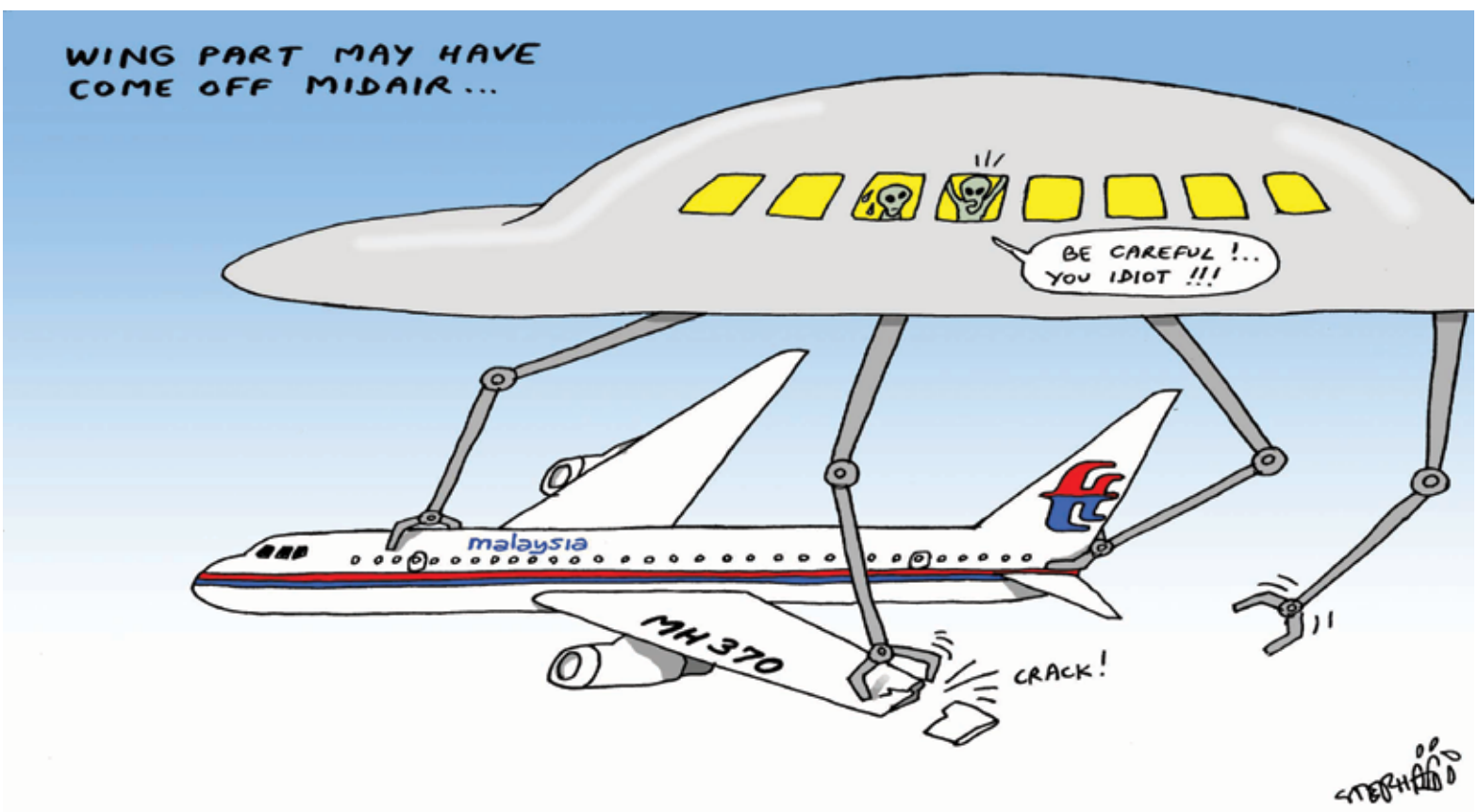
The settlers were the first to catch on to the lobbying and blackmail politics, and all of Israel's governments, particularly those run by the Labor Party, gave in unconditionally.

There's no other interest group that threatened government ministers more, no group to which the politicians capitulated more. Even the Israel Defense Forces, which knows a thing or two about belligerence and power, rapidly understood the settlers' destructiveness and was quick to act accordingly.”

Perhaps, it is a high time for some political forces to stand up and say something. It is not enough for some leftist writers to criticize the settlers and their attacks on Palestinians.

If Israel is serious about tranquility in the occupied territories — and I am not talking about peace — the government has to prove that it calls the shots. If things continue the way they are, then it will be fair to say that the government is complacent and therefore it should be seen as another culprit in all terror attacks on Palestinians.

Netanyahu has condemned the terrorist attack and promised to take a strong line against the settlers. It remains to be seen however if this is just a normal statement to alleviate the international condemnation or a reflection of a different reading.



Freeing ME region of WMDs



The West has discreetly acknowledged the contention of the Jews that an ethnocratic Israel, situated right in the middle of the Arab world, faces an existential threat from the Arabs and hence have invested a lot on making the Jewish state militarily powerful.

Seema Sengupta

CAN the “breakthrough agreement” reached between Iran and P5+1 group of nations led by America herald lasting peace in the Middle-East and make the world “safer and more secure?”

US President Barack Obama believes the “deal offers an opportunity to move in a new direction,” which the world must seize. Many are however of the opinion that Iran's fairly robust nuclear weapons-making infrastructure will remain untouched by this quid-pro-quo arrangement, even though it pegs the country's uranium enrichment at 3.67 percent, insufficient for weaponization.

Notwithstanding Tehran's integration into global mainstream, the deal might not be enough to make the Middle-East a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

President Obama rightly noted in 2012 that the “dangers of an Iran getting nuclear weapons that leads to a free-for-all in the Middle East” will be nothing but a catastrophe so far as regional peace and stability is concerned. Indeed, the Iranian drive to obtain a nuclear bomb has stimulated a regional race for obtaining nuclear technology to counter the perceived threat, with at least 12 countries either announcing plans to explore atomic energy or signing nuclear cooperation agreements with nuclear supplier countries.

But then, every nation has the right to exploit nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. And when Washington and its allies in the western world remains mum on Israel developing nuclear arsenal surreptitiously, why blame the Arab countries for their zeal to join the nuclear club in order to preserve respective sovereignty?

Tel Aviv, having already developed 200-300 nuclear warheads, with additional capacity to produce more at short notice, has a much bigger arsenal than some of the recognized nuclear weapons states.

Intriguingly, there seems to be a deliberate reluctance on the part of international community to condemn Israel's nuclear malleasance. If Tehran can be persuaded to convert its underground nuclear infrastructure in Fordow into a research facility where Iranian and global scientists will work side by side, what stops the Western diplomatic establishment from forcing Tel Aviv to open up its secretive nuclear installation in Dimona, operating outside the purview of international inspection safeguards?

Is it not an open secret that Israel is the only state in this volatile region that has produced separated plutonium and even highly enriched uranium, both key ingredients for thermonuclear weapons production?

A strategic security expert, with thorough knowledge of Israel's non-civilian

nuclear capability, once told this author “the West has discreetly acknowledged the contention of the Jews that an ethnocratic Israel, situated right in the middle of the Arab world, faces an existential threat from the Arabs and hence have invested a lot on making the Jewish state militarily powerful.”

And none other than US Secretary of State John Kerry corroborated the expert's flawless assessment about the false sense of insecurity to which Israelis in general and diaspora Jews are prone. While addressing the Saban Forum at Brookings Institution in the fall season of 2013, Kerry unambiguously disclosed America's longstanding belief that Israel has to be strong to make peace with the Arab world, the reason why Washington pampered Tel Aviv limitlessly. But it is time that the world recognizes the need for enforcing a WMD-free zone (WMDFZ) in the Middle-East as the region has turned into a hotbed of proliferation concern.

Now that the leadership of nations suspected of pursuing clandestine WMD programs in the Middle-East have shown willingness to resolve regional and international anxieties, it is high time to restart serious negotiations for creating a WMDFZ in the Middle-East, as proposed by Egypt in 1990.

And now when new developments on the governance of such destructive weapons in the region has started unfolding, there is a possibility of having a productive dialogue along the lines suggested by an international panel of nuclear experts on fissile material, working with Princeton University's Program on Science and Global Security.

In a thought-provoking report, they called for introduction of collective restraint vis-à-vis fissile material production and usage so as to foster trust among the regional leadership, who in turn can acquire stake in the functioning and expansion of each other's nuclear programs in the larger interest of the Arab world. And the report rightly emphasizes the necessity of Israel taking appropriate initiatives to demonstrate that it is seriously interested in a regional WMDFZ apart from encouraging the formation of a parallel regional verification system, strong enough to provide confidence to the stakeholders about the absence of surreptitious nuclear, chemical and biological weapons development program in Middle-East.

Since, peace is ultimately a “competition between despair and hope,” the Arab leadership can surely usher a new dawn by shedding all hesitancy.

And with India's Narendra Modi-government setting its eyes on Middle-East, New Delhi can hasten WMD-disarmament in West Asia, in accordance with the late Saudi King Abdullah's vision, by exploiting the Non-Aligned Movement forum adequately.

Moving beyond the 2013 election



Muhammad Waqas

THE verdict is finally out. The judicial commission (JC), assigned to probe allegations of massive rigging in Pakistan's 2013 general elections, has declared that

the polls were largely “organized and conducted fairly and in accordance with the law.”

Due to lack of clear evidence, the JC declared that claims of stealing public mandate through a plan to manipulate or influence the elections could not be substantiated.

However, the commission report mentions that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) request for an inquiry was not “entirely unjustified” as there were “some lapses by the Election Commission of Pakistan.”

After the verdict, the PTI has faced heavy criticism from Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for wasting the nation's two years on baseless allegations, while others have raised doubts about the future Imran Khan's political career.

However, the commission's decision has been accepted by Imran Khan's PTI with a heavy heart but his party should not be completely disappointed.

There is no doubt that the party, which led calls for the judicial inquiry, has played a pivotal role in reviving political activism across Pakistan by creating greater political consciousness among the common man. For probably the first time in Pakistan's nascent democracy, people took out to streets in large numbers to show their power for preserving sanctity of the ballot.

It was only after a 123-day long public sit-in protest that the government finally succumbed to demands of conducting an

inquiry into the 2013 general elections.

The public protests, and subsequent formation of a JC, symbolize that people have had enough; that they will no longer be bogged down by the status quo anymore and will stand up to challenge any infringement of their rights.

The post-election struggle should also be seen in the perspective of pushing for reforms in the country's electoral process.

The PTI was highly critical of the role of Returning Officers (RO's) in the elections, claiming that these officers were negligent in their duties and were involved in manipulating the outcome of polls.

In the aftermath of JC report, the good news is that Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has announced that it will soon administratively reshuffle itself by clearly defining the role of each officer and ensure their adequate training.

The ECP will also finalize wider ranging electoral reforms

and a work plan for the next general elections. This is a positive development as the long-awaited overhaul of the balloting process will restore faith of voters in the democratic system and make future elections free from any controversy.

As the election hullabaloo is now finally over, it is time to move on. The PML-N government has been vindicated and now all political forces should join hands to tackle real issues facing the people of Pakistan.

A democracy that does not deliver wishes of the people and share fruits of progress with them is of little value. The political parties must now use Parliament time to show willingness and seriousness in debating issues of the common man.

The government should be supported in expediting completion of mega development projects, like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), to ensure sustainable and inclusive socio-economic progress of Pakistan.

ARAB NEWS WELCOMES FEEDBACK FROM READERS

Letters sent from within the Kingdom should include the writer's name, address, phone and ID numbers. E-mails from readers abroad should include a name and city.

Letters should be mailed to **P.O. Box 10452, Jeddah 21433, Saudi Arabia**
Fax: 012-283-6228 •
E-mail: letters@arabnews.com

TO CONTACT: EDITORIAL: edit@arabnews.com

MARKETING: marketing@arabnews.com

TOLL FREE NUMBER: 8002440076

PRINTED AT: AL-MADINA PRINTING AND PUBLICATION CO., JEDDAH