

# NPK-info

Nederlands Palestina Komitee [www.palestina-komitee.nl](http://www.palestina-komitee.nl)

## Inhoud

### Acties

- \* 30 maart Dag van het Land, boycotactie Amsterdam, Beursplein 14:00 uur Zie ook de NPK-site.
- \* 6 april boycotactie te Den Haag, zie hieronder. pagina 2

*Beide keren wordt ook opgeroepen voor een landelijke demonstratie op*

- \* 13 april - Demonstratie Stop de Oorlog tegen de Palestijnen, te Amsterdam.  
Zie hieronder en let op de NPK-site voor nog te regelen details. pagina 3

### Voorts

- \* Tot 7 april Vrije Academie te Den Haag [Paviljoensgracht 20, 070-3638968]  
Foto-tentoonstelling "Groeten uit Gaza" van de fotojournalist Harry Cock.
- \* Bericht hieronder over wat Den Haag doet met haar vriend Bethlehem [niets].

Statement of President Arafat before the 58th Commission on Human Rights March 26, 2002

Full Article: <http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=680&CategoryId=2>

### Hierna

- \* ISRAEL PLANS BIG ASSAULT IF TRUCE TALKS FAIL, pagina 3  
Lee Hockstader, Washington Post - Jerusalem - March 24
- \* SECRETS, SMOKE AND LIES, Gideon Samet, Ha'aretz - Friday, March 22, 2002 pagina 5
- \* Young Bombers Nurtured by Despair, Daniel Williams, 23-3-2002 pagina 6

De top van Arafat, met of zonder hem Uit <http://www.parool.nl/1017121831368.html>

"Het Palestijnse dagblad Al-Quds vraagt in een hoofdartikel sarcastisch waarom Sharon de speech die Arafat in de Libanese hoofdstad zou moeten houden, niet gewoon zelf schrijft. In dat geval weet hij zeker dat Arafat geen woord verkeerd zal zeggen."

Zie

- \* HDIP [www.hdip.org](http://www.hdip.org)
- \* CMEP <http://www.cmep.org/CMEPpetition.pdf>

NPK/WL, 28-3-2002 ■

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# U I T N O D I G I N G

## TOT OPROEP VAN EEN BOYCOT VAN ISRAEL

### Israël: beëindig NU de bezetting van de Palestijnse Gebieden

Hierbij nodigen we iedereen uit om met ons, op ZATERDAG 6 APRIL VAN 12.00 TOT 13.00 UUR OP "HET PLEIN" IN DEN HAAG een demonstratie te houden. Een demonstratie tegen het escalerende geweld in de Bezette Gebieden en Israël, plus de steeds verdergaande structurele verwoestingen in de Bezette Gebieden.

Naar aanleiding van het niet aflatende, ontembare geweld in de door Israël bezette gebieden, welke zich tot een ware oorlog ontwikkeld heeft, willen wij, aan de samenleving en de Nederlandse regering onze ernstige zorgen kenbaar maken over de toestand in Israël en de Bezette Gebieden.

De situatie van de Palestijnen, welke al meer dan 34 jaar onder Israëlische bezetting leven, wordt steeds hopelozier. Helaas kijkt de wereld de andere kant uit.

Opnieuw valt het Israëlische leger de Westoever en Gaza binnen, en bezet opnieuw de gebieden, die onder controle stonden van de Palestijnse Autoriteit. Daarbij worden stelselmatig Palestijnen gedeporteerd, wordt hun land onteigend, worden huizen en olijfbomgaarden verwoest. Deze, ook economische oorlog, heeft een groot deel van de bevolking brodeloos gemaakt.

Het huidige, staatsterroristische, beleid van de Israëlische regering met z'n dagelijkse grove schendingen van de mensenrechten ten aanzien van de Palestijnse bevolking mogen niet zo langer doorgaan. Verschillende, erkende, organisaties zoals Amnesty International en de UNRWA geven periodiek schrijnende rapporten uit over de situatie in de Bezette Gebieden.

De gruwelijke Palestijnse zelfmoordacties als reactie veroorzaken een groot verlies aan mensenlevens in de Bezette Gebieden en in Israël.

Daarnaast wordt sinds 1977 een door Sharon voorgesteld masterplan uitgevoerd: 60 % van de Westoever en van Gaza is al in Israëlische handen en bijna ongemerkt wordt de constructie van 450 km snelweg voltooid, een snelweg die 400.000 kolonisten in 200 nederzettingen met elkaar verbindt, terwijl bijna alle wegen naar Palestijnse steden en dorpen zijn geblokkeerd.

De Palestijnen zijn gevangenen in hun eigen huis, en in hun eigen gebied geworden.

Voor meer informatie kunt u contact opnemen met: mevrouw Yaël Singer tel: 06-44240650 ■

### **Beste mensen,**

Naar aanleiding van een bericht in de Haagsche Courant heb ik gisteren een brief geschreven aan burgemeester Deetman van Den Haag. In de krant van afgelopen week stond nl. het bericht dat de Haagse Stadspartij de burgemeester opgeroepen heeft hulp te gaan bieden aan de Palestijnen in Bethlehem, de stad die twee jaar geleden een formele vriendschapsband aanging met Den Haag.

Den Haag heeft tot nog toe vrijwel geen inhoud gegeven aan die vriendschapsband en liet het ook afweten toen Bethlehem bestookt werd met raketten, tanks, infanterie en troepen. Ik vind dat een schande! Ik heb Deetman aangeboden dat ik als lid van het Haagse Palestina Comite wel wil kijken (samen met anderen) in

hoeverre Den Haag inhoud kan geven aan die vriendschapsband. Misschien doen jullie mee? Overigens heb ik de Haagse SP al ruim een jaar geleden verzocht deze zaak aan te kaarten in de gemeenteraad. Helaas zonder resultaat... Ik zal het opnieuw bij hen aankaarten.

Het adres van de Haagse Burgemeester Deetman: Spui 70, 2511 BT Den Haag.

Zegt het voort en stuur deze mail svp. naar vrienden en bekenden, zodat de burgemeester bedolven wordt onder onze post en eindelijk werk maakt van de vriendschapsband met Bethlehem.

*Miriam van der Sangen*  
Den Haag ■

# Stop de Oorlog tegen de Palestijnen

## Landelijke demonstratie 13 april Amsterdam

**14:00 uur: start Dam, slot Museumplein met diverse sprekers**

Al 35 jaar leven Palestijnen op de Westelijke Jordaanoever (inclusief Oost-Jeruzalem) en in de Strook van Gaza onder militaire bezetting. Sinds 1967 zijn in de Bezette Gebieden zo'n 200 nederzettingen en buitenposten uit de grond gestampt, waar inmiddels zo'n 400.000 joodse kolonisten wonen. Sinds het uitbreken van de Tweede Intifada (29 september 2000) zijn er meer dan 1200 Palestijnen gedood (waarvan eenderde jonger dan 18 jaar) en ruim 25.000 gewond geraakt. De helft van de bevolking leeft inmiddels onder de armoedegrens.

Na de aanslagen in de Verenigde Staten en de Oorlog tegen het Terrorisme heeft de onderdrukking door de regering van Ariel Sharon (met Amerikaanse instemming) ongekennd grove vormen aangenomen. De maand maart is nu al de bloedigste sinds het uitbreken van de Tweede Intifada. Sinds het aantreden van Sharon als premier, toont hij de wereld dat hij trouw is gebleven aan een politiek van terreur en onderdrukking jegens de Palestijnen. Vernedering van Palestijnen en vernietiging van de infrastructuur (ziekenhuizen, kantoren, wegen, de waterleiding, de haven en het vliegveld) zijn aan de orde van de dag. Palestijnen worden gevangen genomen, gemarteld of door commando-eenheden uit de weg geruimd. Inmiddels zijn vrouwen, kinderen, artsen en journalisten eveneens doelwit geworden. Daarmee maakt Israël zich schuldig aan oorlogsmisdaden die in de media gebagatelliseerd of genegeerd worden. Het zijn Amerikaanse gevechtsvliegtuigen en helikopters die ingezet worden tegen burgers en de infrastructuur. Het zijn de Verenigde Staten die enerzijds de Palestijnen het recht op vrijheid ontzeggen en anderzijds Israël op grote schaal militair en economische steun blijven verlenen. Door gebruikmaking van haar vetorecht binnen de Verenigde Naties plegen de Verenigde Staten menigmaal obstructie. Zoals zo vaak blijft de Europese Unie aan de zijlijn staan en beperkt zich tot het uitgeven van nietszeggende verklaringen.

Zonder rechtvaardigheid zal er geen duurzame vrede totstandkomen, hetgeen betekent dat er een einde aan de onderdrukking dient te komen. Om een ontwikkeling in die richting te bevorderen, dient de internationale gemeenschap scherp protest aan te tekenen tegen de Israëlische politiek jegens de Palestijnen. Dat geldt ook voor de Nederlandse regering (die vorig jaar nog besloot Israëlische wapens aan te schaffen).

Bezorgde personen en organisaties hebben besloten in dit protest het voortouw te nemen. Wij roepen iedereen op zijn stem te verheffen tegen de Israëlische politiek van onderdrukking door:

- Deze oproep te ondersteunen (mail [npk@xs4all.nl](mailto:npk@xs4all.nl) met een bevestiging);
- Aanwezig te zijn op de landelijke demonstratie op 13 April te Amsterdam

### **Wij roepen op tot:**

- Onmiddellijke ontruiming van de Bezette Gebieden en alle joodse nederzettingen
- Stopzetting van de landonteigening en de verwoesting van huizen
- Implementatie van het recht op terugkeer van Palestijnse vluchtelingen
- Gelijke rechten voor niet-joodse Israëli's
- Onmiddellijk stop van de wapendeals met Israël

Voor meer informatie: Wim Lankamp (Nederlands Palestina Komitee): 06-28916795, email: [w.lankamp@hccnet.nl](mailto:w.lankamp@hccnet.nl) of Jamal Ftieh (KMAN): 06-10464152, email: [J.Ftieh@rvdk.minjus.nl](mailto:J.Ftieh@rvdk.minjus.nl) ■

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## ISRAEL PLANS BIG ASSAULT IF TRUCE TALKS FAIL

*By Lee Hockstader*

[Washington Post - Jerusalem - March 24]: As the United States tries (MER ed - "allegedly" should have been added here) to mediate a truce in the Middle East, Israeli military planners are preparing for a major assault on Palestinian cities, towns and refugee camps that would be broader and deeper than the offensive undertaken earlier this month, according to Israeli officials.

The officials, speaking on condition they not be identi-

fied, emphasized that they intended to give every chance for the cease-fire negotiations under the U.S. envoy, Anthony C. Zinni, to succeed. But they expressed pessimism that the talks would lead to a durable end to violence and terrorist attacks against Israelis.

If the talks fail as Palestinian violence continues, there is widespread and growing support both in Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government and in the army for what one official called a "comprehensive military confrontation" with the Palestinians.

"The next days might be crucial, because if we don't

succeed [in the cease-fire talks], we may come to the conclusion that there is no hope, and we have to choose the other way," said one highly placed Israeli official. The Israeli warnings seem designed both to prepare domestic and international public opinion for a new round of bloodshed, and to induce the Palestinians to crack down on militant groups and accede to Israel's terms for a truce. However, previous warnings have been met with Palestinian threats and attacks. Western criticism of Israeli aggression has generated sympathy for the Palestinian cause.

Sharon's dilemma is that as Israeli and Palestinian casualties have soared in recent months, his popularity has plummeted. Overwhelmingly, opinion polls show that Israelis do not believe the 74-year-old leader has a strategy to extricate the country from one of its deepest crises. When Sharon pleaded with Israelis last month to prepare for a drawn-out struggle, his ratings dipped further. When he also announced last month that his policy was to inflict heavy losses on the Palestinians so they would drop demands unacceptable to Israel, some moderates in his coalition rebelled. His foreign minister, Shimon Peres, has warned repeatedly that there is no military solution to the conflict.

Still, during the past 18 months of Israeli-Palestinian clashes, which have been characterized by a steady escalation of violence on both sides, Israeli officials have frequently telegraphed their punches, as they appear to be doing again.

For instance, early last year, top Israeli generals and officials began speaking openly about the possibility of thrusts into Palestinian-held territory -- a scenario that was then considered drastic. When Israeli forces made their first incursion, there was an international outcry, including harsh criticism from Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. Over time, however, the incursions became routine.

Early this year, senior officials started talking about raids on Palestinian refugee camps, which until then had been regarded as dangerous and off-limits. On Jan. 21, for instance, Sharon said Israel would adopt "totally different tactics" if the Palestinians fired homemade rockets into Israeli territory, which they did five days later.

On Feb. 28, the army attacked the Balata refugee camp near the northern West Bank city of Nablus. In subsequent days, several other camps were attacked -- including the largest, Jabalya, in the Gaza Strip -- in the widest Israeli offensive in the Palestinian areas since 1967.

The army has acknowledged that the two-week offensive, in which more than 150 Palestinians were killed, achieved at best only part of the desired result.

Although several thousand Palestinians were rounded up, virtually all of the most-wanted militants eluded capture. Some weapons were seized, and suspected rocket-making workshops were destroyed, but the Palestinians still have plenty of arms, and last week

fired a rocket from Gaza into Israeli territory.

The Israeli assault also appeared to do little or nothing to dent the Palestinians' will or ability to attack Israelis. In the week since Israel withdrew from the last major chunks of Palestinian territory it had retaken, there have been almost daily suicide bombings, shootings or attempted terrorist attacks.

Now, the talk is of more aggressive military action.

Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz, the army chief of staff, said Israel's offensive was incomplete. Other officials have noted that the Israeli attacks had an effect in stopping the flow of would-be terrorists out of areas occupied by the army. There is a widely held view in the Israeli army and security circles that the only way to stop terrorist and other attacks on Israelis is to occupy the Palestinian areas where the attackers live and operate -- though even that provides no guarantee, officials acknowledge.

"Let me remind you that during the week of our operation in Ramallah, there was no terrorist attack that came out of Ramallah," said a senior official, referring to the Palestinians' unofficial capital in the West Bank. "And in the days since our withdrawal there have been several attacks [from the city], some of which we succeeded in preventing and some of which we did not."

Officials are reluctant to reveal the details of the military plans, other than to say they could involve the army driving deeper into Palestinian cities, towns and refugee camps than it did this month, staying considerably longer and hunting down more suspected militants.

But the officials are mindful that there are limits. No one in a position of power in Israel is seriously considering a complete and indefinite reoccupation of the West Bank and Gaza, carpet-bombing Ramallah or destroying the Palestinian water and electricity systems, a senior official said. Officials also acknowledged that Israeli planners are sensitive to the political constraints on an all-out offensive, including the fear of igniting a regional war and the likelihood of criticism by the United States.

In Washington, a sharp escalation in Israeli attacks would likely be seen as undermining the Bush administration's efforts to muster Arab support or acquiescence for a campaign against Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq. In Israel, an escalation could destabilize Sharon's coalition government, which includes moderates as well as hard-liners.

Moreover, even some proponents for a major new Israeli offensive say they doubt it would end Palestinian attacks, and could even play into the hands of the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat. "Our dilemma is that all the Palestinians have to do to win is to survive," said one Israeli official. "That makes them a very hard enemy, but it doesn't mean you don't fight them anyway."

Nonetheless, the officials made clear that Israel could not long maintain what they regard as its current posture of restraint, which has been in place for about a week.

Under the informal rules of Israel's restraint, the army has not stopped operating. But Israel has refrained from launching air attacks in retaliation for Palestinian suicide bombings.

Israeli newspapers have also reported in recent days that Sharon has told the Bush administration to expect an escalation if no cease-fire is achieved. For instance, Shimon Schiffer, arguably Israel's best-connected political reporter, wrote in the newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth* today that when Vice President Cheney visited Israel last week, Sharon "reached an agreement" with him that if Zinni's mission fails, Washington would support Israeli strikes on the Palestinians. U.S. officials did not deny the report.

It is unclear when the Israelis would launch a fresh attack, but it probably would not occur while Zinni remains in the region.

Tonight, the fourth meeting in a week of Israeli and Palestinian security commanders under the former Marine Corps general ended without any agreement. Another meeting was scheduled for Monday.

The two sides disagree over the timetable for a truce, and over Israel's demand that Palestinian militants be arrested. The Palestinians are demanding that any truce

be followed by a swift resumption of political negotiations that would include a freeze on all construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel refuses to tie the truce talks to the prospect of political concessions, which Sharon believes would constitute a reward for 18 months of renewed Palestinian violence over continuing Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

As Israel prepares for the next phase of fighting, many in Sharon's hard-line Likud Party have promoted the option of a devastating attack that would topple Arafat's Palestinian Authority and root out what Israelis call the "infrastructure of terror." Among the advocates is Sharon's foremost rival within Likud, former prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu, a likely challenger for the leadership of the party and the government later this year or next year.

One of Sharon's most important coalition partners, the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, has added its support to a broad assault on the Palestinians. "They need to be the ones who cry uncle, not us," the party leader, Interior Minister Eliahu Yishai, told the newspaper *Maariv*. "I am a moderate person, and if I say this is the solution, then the situation must really be dire." ■

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## Secrets, Smoke & Lies

By *Gideon Samet*

[Ha'aretz - Friday, March 22, 2002]: As if blood were not enough, these gloomy days are clouded with lies. Our conflict is complicated enough when the truth is told. It is particularly difficult to deal with, when each side is constantly lying.

The culture of the political lie is as ancient as politics itself, but there are moments in the life of a nation when only the truth can cope with the gravity of a crisis.

Israel, the Palestinians - and, unfortunately, the Americans - don't cease wrapping their plans to get out of this mess in pillars of smoke. Should we believe, for example, that the U.S. is really and truly trying to reach an agreement between the Palestinians and us in the foreseeable future?

The question is not being asked with impudence toward our American friends. They want peace. However, on their way to achieving that very difficult goal they face more urgent matters. And some of those tasks contradict the purpose of peace. Attacking Iraq, for example.

The Americans must assume that Israel will not agree to a withdrawal to the 1967 borders. Therefore, too early a drafting of the final agreement maps will antagonize the Arab capitals that America needs on board to deliver its blow to Iraq. Why does Washington need that headache? Thus, the impending assault on Iraq is hidden behind a thick curtain of smoke imbued with lies. It is impossible to get a clear picture of what took place during the key conversation this week between Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and U.S. Vice President Richard Cheney.

According to some reports, Cheney outlined the strategic concept, in which Iraq is the main target. Other reports denied that. The discussions went on for three hours. Even the defense minister and foreign minister don't know the real truth. They were kept away. But in addition to a few close aides, and the fly on the wall of the room in the King David Hotel, there was someone else in the room: businessman Arye Genger, confidant of the prime minister. Sharon is ready to trust him, not his most senior ministers, when the naked truth may have been laid out on the table.

It is most important to know if America wants to postpone the political discussions until it finishes with Iraq. If this is so, until it finally turns to deal with us, it cannot offer the Palestinians, and Arab capitals that support them, any form of political horizon. And without such a view, no real cease-fire is possible. It's doubtful that even for the honor of meeting Cheney, Arafat can give the emergency order to cease the violence.

Arafat's lie is that during the entire period he was unable to give the order. The American lie is that even if Arafat does give it, he won't get a solid promise for a political quid pro quo that he could sell to his people. And is it true that Sharon has no intention of making a political move? Or is it just a lie being told by his opponents? Sharon is the personification of post-modernist thinking in which it is impossible to accurately distinguish between truth and falsehood, fact and fiction. Was *Jane's Foreign Report*, the respected journal, accurate this week in its report about Sharon's intentions? There was something familiar in the story: the prime minister has a "grand plan" for war with the Palestinians. It will break out at the same time as the

U.S. attack on Iraq, about which Israel will receive advance warning. After defeating the Palestinians, Sharon will make them a generous political offer. Is there secret coordination between Sharon and the Bush administration over such a horrifying scenario, like there was over Lebanon 20 years ago? We may never know. Nor will we know if the assassinations and incursions into the cities of the West Bank were effective. A Military Intelligence report revealed this week says - somewhat retroactively - that they were not. On the contrary, says the report, the attacks increased the Palestinians' motivation for violence, just as was predicted by a few commentators who dared challenge the stubborn majority.

We won't know the truth about these important matters, nor about smaller, but not less important ones. Did IDF troops, as the Palestinians claim, descend to the level of pillaging during the raids into the West Bank? Or is that just another fantasy? To what extent is Sharon affected

by the competition with Netanyahu, and to what measure does that race influence the prime minister's moves? Again, we may never know if the new theory that predicts a moderation in Sharon is true or false: Knowing that he can't beat Netanyahu from the right, it would be better to overtake him from the center.

Even something that was on TV over and over again, seen by hundreds of millions of viewers is shrouded in fog, dressed in doubt. A German television investigation says now that 12-year-old Mohammed a-Dura was killed on the second day of the intifada by Palestinian fire, not Israeli. The truth won't be helped by the IDF Spokesman's decision this week to cease allowing media crews to accompany military operations. The Falklands War was conducted without the press, except for a few court reporters. Maybe that's how to quietly be victorious. Or maybe the truth is too depressing for a nation in crisis, and it would be best to do without it. ■

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*Washington Post Foreign Service Saturday, March 23, 2002; Page A01*

## **Young Bombers Nurtured by Despair Among Palestinians, a Growing Attitude of Little to Live For**

*By Daniel Williams*

BEIT WAZAN, West Bank -- Before she shopped for someone to supply her with an exploding belt, Dureen Abu Aisheh had a long series of Socratic debates with her uncle, Jasser Khalili, over the rightness and wrongness of suicide bombing. To every argument Khalili made against killing civilians and one's self, Abu Aisheh answered with questions: Aren't we being shot down like dogs? Do you feel like a human being when the Israelis control your every move? Do you believe we have a future? If I'm going to die at their hands anyway, why shouldn't I take some of them with me?

"I admit I had no defenses against some of her words," said Khalili, who was sitting at a wake for her. "I tried to explain to her it was wrong to target other people. In the end, my arguments were weak. And she did what she did." Abu Aisheh, 21, traveled in a car to a military checkpoint near the West Bank settlement of Modiin on Feb. 27 and detonated explosives wrapped around her body. She injured two Palestinians and two Israelis. Only she died. Before that, she had worked hard to find someone to turn her into a human bomb. Two Islamic groups had rejected her, one on the grounds she was female, before al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, an armed offshoot of the Palestine Liberation Organization that is basically secular, provided explosives to strap to her body.

An estimated 59 Palestinian suicide bombers have killed 125 Israelis, in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the nearly 18 months of the uprising against

Israeli occupation in the two territories. The pool of potential bombers seems far from exhausted among despairing, hostile youths in Abu Aisheh's generation. While many Palestinian teenagers and twentysomethings say they would not go so far as to blow themselves up for the cause of independence, their words otherwise closely echo Abu Aisheh's attitude. Conversations with young adult Palestinians throughout the West Bank and Gaza reveal a striking identification with suicide bombers. Palestinian researchers have begun to study the phenomenon. They are discovering a generation of young people who believe they have no future and who feel their lives -- and deaths -- are out of their control. Many respond with empathy to killings of Israelis, including through suicide bombing.

"The suicide bomber is only the extreme case," said Rita Giacaman, a Palestinian public health worker and researcher from Ramallah who is studying attitudes of students at Bir Zeit University, the leading Palestinian institute of higher learning. "We found that our students generally have an inability to dream, or to visualize a better future than their miserable current life."

More than half the students surveyed complain of instability in their lives, she said. About 40 percent report feelings of futility, loss, disappointment or an inability to cope. Symptoms include being unable to concentrate, sleeplessness, trembling, headaches and temperamental outbursts. Suicide bombing is only one aspect of behavior Giacaman qualifies as "para-suicidal," which she believes results from generalized despair. She includes youths who get killed or maimed throwing stones at

heavily armed Israeli troops. "These young people are killing themselves, too," she said, by inviting fire from the troops. Giacaman has begun surveying students at Bir Zeit not because they are representative, but because, on the contrary, they reflect the best and the brightest. "There is a myth that only the poorest and uneducated are desperate, but that's not necessarily the case," she said. Abu Aisheh, for instance, was an English major at al-Najah University in Nablus, a West Bank town adjacent to her home village of Beit Wazan. She was active on the student council and in the Islamic Resistance Movement. The group, known by its Arabic-language acronym, Hamas, rejects peace talks with Israel. Its military wing has dispatched numerous suicide bombers to Israel, although it rejected Abu Aisheh's self-recruitment. Relatives said she became angry and depressed by the death of a cousin, Safwad, who blew himself up at a Tel Aviv bus station in January. She wrote articles about the hardships of his life, how he had worked from the age of 10 as a garbage collector and had tried to raise chickens for a living but lost money because of the difficulties delivering them during the conflict. Khalili and Daren's father, Mohammed Abu Aisheh, say they believe she was driven over the brink by the wounding of a pregnant woman at an Israeli military checkpoint near Nablus on Feb. 25. "This was definitely the breaking point," Mohammed said. "She spoke about it constantly." Abu Aisheh left a suicide note in which she imagined the loss felt by mothers whose sons have been killed. In particular, she recalled the death 17 months ago of Mohammed Dura, a young boy shot dead by Israeli soldiers while walking with his father in Gaza. "Our duty is to take the soldier's life," she wrote, "in the same manner they take ours." "She had long stopped talking about the future," Khalili said. "She said she did not concentrate at school. I visited her during a holiday season. I asked her to look to the future. It's a duty to God, children and ourselves. She answered only, 'I'm sure Safwad is having a good holiday.' " It is not hard to come across similar expressions of depression in this generation. Among the most common themes is the contrast between high hopes during the early 1990s, when peace seemed probable, to the decline in confidence after 1996, when Israel all but stopped withdrawals from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Talks stalled until their collapse in the summer of 2000 and the explosion of the intifada in September that year. Viola Raheb, a child development expert who oversees Lutheran Church schools in the West Bank and Jordan, said she sees disturbing symptoms of distress among young teenagers and elementary school students. They are becoming withdrawn and fearful, and have lost faith in the ability of their parents to protect them. Bed-wet-

ting, dizziness and nausea are increasing. Like Giacaman, she has found anecdotal expressions of empathy with suicide bombers. "It is so frightening that very young people already believe that the best they can do is end their lives," Raheb said. "If you don't value your own life, how do you value the life of others?" In the West Bank town of Tulkarm, a 15-year old girl named Noura Shalhoub took a knife from her kitchen last month and rushed a soldier at a checkpoint near her town. The soldiers shot her. She bled to death where she fell. Her father, Jamal Shalhoub, said her mood had changed after a neighbor was killed in an Israeli helicopter attack on the town. Noura began to read political manifestoes over the loudspeaker at school. She also became fatalistic. Once, a blast in the town caused a window to collapse over her bed. She said, "God is great. I feel martyrdom nearing." Shalhoub, who is a veterinarian, lectured his children on the need to keep studying during the conflict. He sent his children to school in a car to make sure they did not wander into trouble on the way to and from home. Noura had never been to the checkpoint outside Tulkarm. "I was overprotective. I felt her anger, but when I heard the news, I was shocked. I learned after that she inquired with her friends and sisters about the checkpoint. She knew what she was going to do," he said. The day before her mission, Noura's mother tried to show her the new bedroom she would have in a house her father was building. Noura refused to go see it. "The whole generation is acting like this. They are withdrawing from life," said Khaled Shalabi, Noura's uncle. Noura left a suicide note. She wrote about avenging "martyrs" and listed several people killed by the Israelis. Publicly, suicide attackers are regaled among Palestinians as war heroes. Yet, simmering beneath the surface is the issue of the role of Palestinian leaders in arranging suicide bombings. Other than exceptional cases, most suicide bombers are outfitted and dispatched by organized groups: Hamas, Islamic Jihad or al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. While it is easy to hear despairing comments about the state of youthful minds, it is harder to find criticism of the agents who, confronted with disturbed persons, send them out to kill and be killed. At Daren Abu Aisheh's wake, a reporter asked for opinions about the people who might have sent her to her death. There was silence for a moment, then random talk about the breakdown of leadership, injustices to Palestinians, large numbers of Palestinian deaths and deep economic problems. In the end, there was no criticism of al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, Hamas or any other group. The flags of each organization waved over the wake, as did the red, green and white Palestinian banner. ■