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# Ariel Sharon

## Will his "yad chazak", his strong hand, bring peace?

Ariel ("Arik") Sharon has now been elected Prime Minister of Israel. He decisively defeated Ehud Barak, who lost the election even though he had close to 100% support from the Israeli Arabs. Israel's Jews, having at long last understood the futility of the Oslo Accord "peace process" and of the appeasement of the Palestinians, were ready for a radical change. But Ariel Sharon is much maligned, often called a murderer and a war criminal. There are three myths that his detractors propagate.

### What are the facts?

**Myth #1: The war in Lebanon.** Sharon's enemies accuse him of having launched the "Peace for Galilee" War in Lebanon in 1982 unnecessarily and without knowledge or permission from Prime Minister Menachem Begin. But that is nonsense, of course. Israel, in contrast to all Arab states, is a democratic country, governed by civilian authority. Not even a presumed "warlord" (as Sharon is regularly titled) could start any military action, let alone a full-blown war, without the full approval of the government. The war in Lebanon, reviled though it may be now, was at the time an existential necessity for Israel. An intense and vicious civil war between the Moslems and the Christian Maronites was going on in that country, a civil war that began in earnest when the PLO entered Lebanon in 1970. They established their own "mini kingdom" in that unhappy country. Over 100,000 people were killed. From their base in Lebanon, the PLO had launched innumerable terrorist attacks against Israel and was poised for a major invasion. When Israel "invaded" Lebanon, the Lebanese civilians, delighted to be freed from the terror of the PLO, greeted the Israeli soldiers as their liberators, with flowers of happiness and hope. Sharon led his victorious troops to the outskirts of Beirut. He refrained from entering Beirut itself only because of the tens of thousands of casualties it would have caused, most of them Lebanese. Under pressure of world opinion -- mostly, sad to say, that of the United States -- he allowed Arafat and his PLO to escape to Tunis, where they were poised to plan further mischief and destruction that destabilizes the Middle East until today.

**Myth #2: The Massacre of Sabra and Shatilla.** The gravest accusation against Ariel Sharon is that he condoned or perhaps even instigated the massacre of about 800 Lebanese Moslems in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps. The reality is that the perpetrators of this horrific crime were Christian Falangist murderers, who by stealth invaded these camps and acted in

The media is mounting a smear campaign against Ariel Sharon, describing him as an out-of-control warmonger, a man on a perpetual warpath, someone who, if elected, would not hesitate to use troops against the Palestinians and all other Arabs. The reality is that Israel desperately needs Sharon. He is an Israeli hero, who played a decisive role in Israel's brilliant victory against combined Arab might in the Six-Day War, who, with his bold thrust into Egypt, encircled that country's Third Army in the Yom Kippur War and thus turned near-defeat into glorious victory, and who, in his various ministerial roles, has performed fearlessly and most successfully. After the disastrous regime of Ehud Barak, a man who was intimidated by President Clinton and who was putty in the hands of Arafat, the "yad chazak" -- the strong hand of Ariel Sharon -- is needed to bring peace with security to Israel and to the Middle East. The Arabs in Palestine, Syria, and all the rest will know that this is a man that cannot be pushed around, but also that any agreements that he will enter into will be scrupulously kept. Welcome, Arik, as Prime Minister of Israel!

revenge of the assassination of Lebanon's president elect, Bashir Jamayel. Sharon's detractors claim that he should have been aware of this assault or that he was aware and did nothing to prevent it. But nobody outside the camps could have known what was happening, because the invading Christians used no guns -- only knives in perpetrating their crimes. Not a single shot was fired. *Time* magazine published a story on the events, in which it clearly accused Sharon of complicity in this horrendous crime. Sharon sued *Time* for libel -- and won. But the slander that Sharon was responsible for the massacre has not died down and continues to be assiduously propagated in Arab and Moslem media and also in much of the rest of the world.

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**Myth #3: The "Al Aksa Intifada".** The current Intifada -- the bloody uprising of the Palestinians against Israel -- did not, as the media like to report, start with Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. That visit, which had been arranged beforehand and which had been "approved" by the Palestinian Authority, was simply a pretext. This uprising, which could be called the "Rosh Hashanah War of 2000", actually started days earlier, on September 23, 2000, when a Palestinian policeman killed point-blank his Israeli counterpart, with whom he had been on patrol two days earlier. Mr. Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount was simply the signal to start this uprising, which voluminous intelligence proves to have been planned way in advance. And why shouldn't Sharon, why shouldn't any Jew, be allowed to visit the Temple Mount, which, with its Western Wall, is the holiest site for all Jews, the focus of all their longings? Any Arab can visit any place, any holy place, including the Western Wall, in any part of Israel without being questioned and without being molested. What is it with the Moslems that they go berserk if a Jew visits one of their holy sites? To blame Sharon for provoking and starting the Al Aksa Intifada makes as little sense as to believe that World War I would not have started had Arch Duke Ferdinand not been assassinated in Sarajevo.

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