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Arab neighbours. However, both that attitude and Abdel-Shehid's are utterly counter-productive. While it's obvious that history will play a large role in the peace talks, it must not be used to dehumanize the people of any of the nations involved. Israel and its neighbours must sit down and negotiate peace, because it certainly won't come from rhetoric.

Cindy Lauer

Future bright for Peace Talks

Dear Editor,

Re: "Peace talks have little to do with peace", Gamal Abdel-Shehid, Nov. 6, 1991

Because I have faith in the York community's ability to distinguish between facts and historical revisionism without my help, I will not bother to comment on the glaring errors in Mr. Abdel-Shehid's column. I also assume that everyone saw the same coverage of the Madrid peace talks that I did and not the coverage that Mr. Abdel-Shehid obviously saw.

I would like to say that I feel sorry for Mr. Abdel-Shehid because he believes peace to be an impossibility. In the world that Mr. Abdel-Shehid lives in, Israel, the U.S. and the U.N. cannot be involved in the peace process. It would stand to reason, then, that the road to peace cannot be reached unless the Arab nations speak on Israel's behalf.

It is a shame if Mr. Abdel-Shehid is disillusioned by the peace process. Many are encouraged by the first steps taken (including Israel, Palestinians and Jordanians). There is obviously a lot more to be done. Luckily, there are those (on both sides) who do not see things as Mr. Abdel-Shehid does and they are the ones doing the negotiating. These people understand that the region's history is viewed differently by the parties involved. They understand that injustices have been committed by both sides (a point ignored by Mr. Abdel-Shehid). But, most importantly, they understand that the only road to peace lies ahead, by looking at the future, and not behind, by looking at the past. They have lived with war and now they hope for peace. *You*, Mr. Abdel-Shehid, seem to be the one who is, regrettably, not genuinely interested in peace.

Finally, let me say that I have had the good fortune to have lived in Israel. In my short time there, I lived among Jews and Arabs. Regardless of their views on the various issues surrounding relations between Israelis and Palestinians, they share a common desire to stop fighting. Please, Mr. Abdel-Shehid, join those of us who live in 1991, I think you will find the atmosphere much more enjoyable and the outlook much brighter.

Alan Grad

Israel cast in wrong light

Dear Editor,

Re: Gamal Abdel-Shehid's Bearpit article "Peace Talks have little to do with peace."

Mr. Shehid presents a distorted, inflammatory and cynical view of the recent Madrid peace talks, especially with respect to the involvement of the State of Israel.

Mr. Shehid, as if analyzing the situation from inside a vacuum, states that Israel "continues to destabilize

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the region through the use of military force." However, the facts, most of which Shehid neglects, point to different conclusions. In 1967, Israel fought a defensive war against Egypt, Syria and Jordan, all of whom were

out to perpetrate its [Israel's] destruction. In the ensuing six-day battle, Israel captured the Golan, West Bank, Gaza, and the Sinai. Mr. Shehid also forgets to note that Israel immediately offered their return to the Arab aggressors but were met with three *no's*: *no* to peace; *no* to negotiation, and *no* to recognition as proclaimed at the Arab Conference at Khartoum after the 1967 war.

In fact, if one looks at their history, *no* is the favourite word of the Arab world. In 1947, the Arabs said *no* to peace by rejecting Israel's right to

exist as a Jewish state alongside a Palestinian-Arab state and immediately attacked the fledgling nation, again in an attempt to wipe it off the map. They said *no* to peace in 1973 when they attacked Israel on the holiest day of the Jewish calendar. And they said *no* to peace in 1982 when Syrian-baked Palestinians assassinated Lebanese leader Bashir Gemayal for making peace with Israel. Furthermore, where Mr. Shehid obtained the bloated figure of 30,000 killed in Israel's "invasion" of Lebanon is of interest since Arab sources

place the number of dead at 3000, while Israel estimates only 600.

Finally, even at Madrid, Syrian (and its puppet Lebanese) delegates refused to shake hands with a female Israeli delegate whose gesture of friendship was left hanging in the air. Mr. Shehid knows that rejection begs rejection. And if Yizhak Shamir is a rejectionist (and heaven knows he is), then it has evolved as a direct result of 44 years of Arab rejection of Israel's right to exist.

Mr. Shehid's cynical attempt to paint the Madrid talks as an exercise

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