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QUARTERLY

Israel: Flourishing Under Fire



David Wurmser on Israel's War with Hamas | **David M. Weinberg** on the Promise of the Abraham Accords | **Hussain Abdul-Hussain** on Palestinian Statehood | **Yoram Ettinger** on Israel's Demography | **Benjamin Weinthal** on John le Carré | **Stuart Force** and **Sander Gerber** on Enforcing the Taylor Force Act | **Yochanan Visser** on the Failed Lebanese State | **Uri Gabai** on Israel's Innovation Ecosystem | **Michael Eisenstadt** and **David Pollock** on U.S.-Israel Cooperation | **Shoshana Bryen** reviews Three Books on Iran

Featuring an Interview with **Douglas J. Feith**

LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Welcome to our annual “Israel issue.” A few months ago, we planned a look at Israel’s pandemic policies, vaccination policies, and neighbors. We were optimistic about Israel, its people and its society. The recent round of the Hamas war against Israel was a shocker in some ways – number of rockets, scale of damage, riots by Israeli Arabs, and the rise in attacks on American and British Jews. But we also saw strong support from Republicans in Congress, Israel’s Abraham Accords partners, and Central European governments, and surprising support from Germany and France. Egypt was, as it often is, quietly helpful. As we survey the aftermath, and fully cognizant of the fact that this was only one battle in Hamas’s determined war to dismantle the State of Israel, we remain optimistic about Israel, its people, and its society.

David Wurmser explains the origins of the fighting (not what you think), and Douglas Feith explains why it is only one round in a perpetual war. Hussein Abdul-Hussein parses Palestinian politics and Sander Gerber and Stuart Force believe restoring U.S. aid to the PA violates both the spirit and the letter of the Taylor Force Act. Yochanan Visser chronicles the decline of Lebanon under the increasing tight grip of Iran’s proxy Hezbollah.



David Weinberg describes the growth of the Abraham Accords countries’ relations with Israel and why the Hamas war will not collapse the pacts as some fear – and others hope. Yoram Ettinger and Uri Gabai bring us demographics and economics – the latter being somewhat mixed, but with the potential to broaden and deepen Israel’s wealth. U.S.-Israel security cooperation, a mainstay of relations since the Reagan Administration, receives an update from Michael Eisenstadt and David Pollock. And Benjamin Weinthal explores John LeCarre’s relationship with Zionism.

Shoshana Bryen goes to the beach with Ray Takeh’s *The Last Shah: America, Iran, and the Fall of the Pahlavi Dynasty*; Alex Vatanka’s *The Battle of the Ayatollahs in Iran*; and the invaluable *The Fight for Iran: Opposition Politics, Protest, and the Struggle for the Soul of a Nation* by Ilan Berman.

If you appreciate what you’ve read, I encourage you to make a contribution to the Jewish Policy Center. As always, you can use our secure site: <http://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/donate>

Sincerely,

Matthew Brooks,
Publisher

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The Hamas War Against Israel

by DAVID WURMSER

It is important to revisit the source of the Hamas war in May to expose the underlying political and strategic trends that drove the situation to the point of eruption. Moreover, none of these trends are effectively suppressed or resolved as a result of the war that followed, which means that the coming months will quite likely remain tense for Israel, and quite possibly again become very violent.

This dangerous dynamic is exacerbated by the failure of the United States to preemptively and strongly signal that it will not allow a wedge to be driven between Washington and Jerusalem. Instead, there is a strong expectation among various Palestinian factions and their foreign patrons that the opposite will occur and that any further violence will only build greater tension between Israel and the United States. This then would further encourage the eruption of violence which aligns with the underlying interests of the various Palestinian factions and surrounding ambitious Turkish and Persian neighbors.

■ *Orchestrated Violence*

Context is everything.

Early this year, against the advice of most of his closest aides, PA president Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) called for the first Palestinian elections in well over a decade, to be held at the end of May. It appears to have been a horrible miscalculation. By the end of March, it was painfully clear to him and everyone else that not only would he not win, but would be trounced, with both Hamas and Marwan Barghouti's faction of the PLO defeating him.

To avoid such a devastating humiliation, it was clear by very early April that Abu Mazen would have to cancel those elections, which he eventually did the

first week of May. And yet, cancelling the elections was not simple, since both Abu Mazen's aides and Hamas leaders made it clear that the latter would take to the streets in a violent upheaval against the PA and Abu Mazen if he did. Abu Mazen saw no way out except to provoke a series of escalations that would externalize the anticipated violence, and then deflect the blame onto Israel.

As such, the resulting two months of escalation, culminating in war, were set by Abu Mazen, who can properly be labelled as the crisis' original arsonist.

■ *Beginning in April*

Politics among Palestinian factions is often battled out through the currency of Jewish blood. Once the PA embarked on an escalatory path, that escalation multiplied to as many factions as there are among Palestinians and Israeli Arabs. Like the epic art of Middle Eastern storytelling, the singular "umbrella" theme of escalation is actually the product of many separate sub-tales woven into other tales which align into a shell or framework story. In this case, that unifying shell tying these separate tales together represents a very real moment of danger.

Abu Mazen saw no way out except to provoke a series of escalations that would externalize the anticipated violence, and then deflect the blame onto Israel.

In early April, there was a sudden escalation of attacks on Israeli Jews, many of which were serious and violent enough to result in hospitalization.

As the Palestinian Media Watch, and FLAME – an organization dedicated to accuracy in media – noted, the Palestinian official media organs started broadcasting highly inflammatory and bloody rhetoric starting on April 2. Two particularly disturbing attacks, one a beating by three Arab youths of a Rabbi in Jaffa, in the southern part of Tel Aviv, and another when an Arab spilled boiling liquid on a Jew entering the Old City of Jerusalem, were followed by violent Arab demonstrations when police attempted to arrest the perpetrators.

■ *Palestinians Organizing Through Social Media*

Palestinians conducting these attacks in early April filmed their exploits and posted them to TikTok to compete for the greatest number of "likes" and "approvals." This wave of Palestinian attacks on unsuspecting Jews became so prevalent that the escalation was dubbed the "TikTok Intifada."

After two weeks of these violent attacks, a small group of extremist Jews marched in the streets of Jerusalem calling for harming Arabs. Small demonstrations in Jaffa near the area of the April 20 attack on the Rabbi also

took place. There were no similar acts or Jewish demonstrations prior to this. There were also one or two localized acts of anonymous Jewish graffiti-spraying

with hateful slogans, and the destruction of a few trees.

These incidents were isolated and limited. Israeli authorities investigated and will prosecute them. Moreover, subsequent investigations, even by leftist human rights organizations like BeTzelem, have been forced to admit they had been misled and thus must retract some of their accusations of Jewish violence, particularly arson, which turned out to be acts of Palestinian arson. The actual Jewish demonstrations and disturbances were quickly suppressed by Israeli police and largely disappeared.

■ *Escalating Violence*

In contrast, Arab demonstrations accelerated, expanded, broadened geographically, and became increasingly violent. The leadership of the PA continued to use its media outlets not to calm the flames, but to pour high-octane fuel on them. This incitement includes songs and chanting of slogans calling for martyrdom and blood in children's programs across all age groups, even toddlers.

Another series of attacks centered on the Damascus Gate leading into the Old City. This campaign of violence, especially a series of beatings of Jews and riots in Jerusalem, Jaffa and at the Damascus Gate on April 12, led Israel to set up barriers on April 13 to control flow, keep potentially violent Jewish and Arab extremists separated, and maintain pedestrian traffic control to segment and respond quickly to rioting attempts by either side. When a large number of Arab agitators quickly surged toward the area that evening, the barriers proved inadequate, and several days of escalating nightly Arab riots against Israeli police ensued, which eventually provoked a smaller Jewish demonstration and unrest on April 20.

■ *Hamas Joins the Violence*

It was not long before the border with Gaza heated up as well, and rockets were launched into Israel – weeks before anyone noticed Sheikh Jarrah or any Israeli

action on the Temple Mount. One night in late April registered nearly three dozen rocket attacks onto Israeli towns and cities near Gaza. The northern border heated up as well, with an increased pace of activity by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to establish its ability to attack Israel, followed by a series of Israeli strikes in Syria to diminish that capability. After one Israeli strike, a stray Syrian SA-5 missile flew nearly 200 km across Israel and landed near Israel's nuclear reactor in Dimona.

In the first week of May, the escalation continued. The PA then formally canceled its planned elections and blamed Israel, after which the long-silent head of the Hamas military structure, Muhammad Deif, suddenly resurfaced to call for violent attacks, to include also “hit and run” attempts to run over Israelis. On May 2, live-fire weaponry was re-introduced when a Palestinian terrorist, Muntazir Shalabi and a driver, machine-gunned three Israelis waiting at a bus stop at Kfar Tapuah Junction in the territories. One Israeli teenager, Yehuda Guetta, died and another is in serious condition. A third escaped with moderate injuries. Guitta was the first Israeli to die to live-fire in a terror attack in years.

On May 5, Hamas resumed incendiary balloon attacks, which this time included not only incendiary devices attached to set fires in Israeli fields, but also small bombs which could have caused considerable personal injury or death if they landed close to people in Israel.

On Friday May 7, Israeli forces stopped a heavily armed squad originating in Tulkarem that was attempting to enter central Israel. Israeli forces identified the terrorists, who were driven in a minibus with stolen Israeli tags. When stopped, the three terrorists exited the minibus and initiated firing near the Salem military base checkpoint but failed to injure any Israelis, while two of the three terrorists were killed.

Finally, by nightfall on May 7, riots

had erupted on the Temple Mount, with hundreds injured, including many police. Rioters retreated into the mosques on the Temple Mount, and police were forced to take positions up near them. This put Israel in the difficult position of being accused of “aggression” against the Temple Mount and threatening the “status quo.” The concept of status quo itself is odd since over the last two decades it has been fluid rather than static, masking constantly expanding challenges to Israeli sovereignty and Jewish and Christian access to the Temple Mount, at the hands of the increasingly restrictive Muslim Waqf, which at this point answers mostly to the PA.

■ *Outside Parties*

A broader context also intruded. Several parties, both Palestinian factions as well as external actors including Iran and Turkey, see a need and opportunity to incite escalation against Israel on many fronts, of which popular unrest was the first phase. The escalatory interests of the PA, Erdogan's government in Turkey, and the revolutionary regime in Iran emanate from a sense of threat to their regimes from grave crises internally that rattle their governments in dangerous ways. There is also a rising expectation that any increase in violence surrounding Israel will cause tension between Jerusalem and Washington under the Biden administration, thus providing a strategic incentive to engage in just such an escalation. Such a reflexive reaction has been a consistent theme greeting every new administration in which there was hope that it might be less pro-Israel.

■ *The Role of Israeli Arabs*

The internal Israeli Arab dimension is crucial. In the recent elections, an Arab party, the United Arab List (Ra'am) under Mansour Abbas, gained almost as many seats in the Israeli parliament (Knesset) as the traditional leadership represented by the Joint Arab List party led by Ayman Oudeh.



A man in the central Israeli city of Petah Tikva on May 13 checks the damage from a rocket launched from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. (Photo: Gil Cohen-Magen/AFP via Getty Images)

Mansour Abbas' party gained this traction because the Israeli Arab population is facing a series of grave crises in such areas as crime, education, and the economy. There is popular erosion of support for the traditional leadership, since it fails to deliver on issues that are important to average people. And patience is stretched for continued sacrifice for the elites' obsessive, theoretical support for unattainable nationalist aspirations.

Mansour Abbas' party promised to work within the framework of any Israeli government as a normal parliamentary party to secure the interests of its constituents. Rather than respond competitively, the "establishment" the Joint Arab List continued peddling an anti-Zionist, pan-Arab agenda that sacrificed its ability to enter the parliamentary power structure to leverage for constituents' interests. It continued to opt for international applause for its rhetorical and entirely disenfranchising nationalist behavior.

Traditional Israeli Arab leadership, anchored to the Joint Arab List, instigated some of the recent violence in order to embarrass and undermine the rising support for Ra'am. The Joint Arab List under Oudeh even provoked direct violent attacks on Mansour Abbas and some in his party in Um al-Fahm in May, designed to shame Ra'am's leadership enough to force it into expressing support for the unrest, which would sabotage the party's ability to deliver on its promise and enter an Israeli government.

Thus, the Arab rioting, the climate of tension created by the impressive performance of Ra'am in the Israeli election, followed by the violence instigated at the behest of Abu Mazen and then Hamas and Islamic Jihad, were not themselves the whole story. They were a prelude to attempts to lay the groundwork for a more dangerous escalation that erupted at a very high level in the following days and weeks, served not only the

interests of diversion noted regarding Abu Mazen, but foreign actors who seek to drive a wedge between Israel and the United States.

■ A Cheap Shot at Israel

A final, disturbing, and novel dimension of this current escalatory cycle is that it is attended by a considerable footprint from U.S. territory. First is the clearly coordinated advance propaganda campaign to multiply the tensions it would cause in U.S.-Israeli relations. With blazing speed after the PA and Hamas had signaled there would be an escalatory cycle, pro-Palestinian voices in the United States mobilized to secure this narrative. The Middle East Institute's Khaled Elgindy, publishing in *Foreign Policy*, is a revealing example of the effort. He wrote:

The unrest began on April 13 – around the start of Ramadan – when Israeli authorities blocked

off the steps to the Old City's iconic Damascus Gate in Palestinian East Jerusalem. The seemingly arbitrary move sparked several days of clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli security forces.

There was nothing arbitrary about Israel's moves at the Damascus gate on April 13, since for weeks before the restriction, accelerating numbers of unprovoked attacks, incited by Palestinian leaders, occurred on Jews in both Jerusalem and in Jaffa. So why April 13, an arbitrary mile marker midstream in a series of escalating activities? Because it was the start of Ramadan. The implication is insidious: the Israelis chose to out of the blue attack Muslims in Jerusalem on that day of all days since it marked the beginning of the most holy month. Israel is subtly accused of launching a grave religious attack on Islam itself – a highly incendiary implication.

Elgindy's article must be characterized not as an attempt to illuminate, but much more as an attempt to serve as a calculated propaganda offensive coordinated with the determined effort of escalation started by Abu Mazen now joined by Hamas and Islamic Jihad as well as Iran and Turkey. The use of the word "arbitrary" to characterize Israeli actions is a propaganda device to not only to obscure, but to erase the context of Israel's actions rather than effort to bring about understanding.

■ **Sheikh Jarrah as a Flashpoint**

The Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood has deep historical importance to both Jewish and Muslim communities, but there is even more legal and strategic importance.

Sheikh Jarrah is in the strategic triangle between the green line, the French Hill, and Givat Hamifitar connecting Israel to Mount Scopus. In 1948 the neighborhood's three sections housed about 125 Arab families who had moved there in the 1930s and 1940s and about 80 Jewish families who lived in the

neighborhood since the Ottoman era. The area was successfully secured by the Harel brigade of the Haganah in early 1948. British soldiers, not Arabs, attacked and removed the area from Israeli con-

only hope the motivation is ignorance. Nonetheless, these statements greatly inflamed the situation by encouraging Arab rioters to believe their mayhem was gaining traction. The statements by the

Palestinian attacks on unsuspecting Jews became so prevalent that the escalation was dubbed the "TikTok Intifada."

trol, forcing the Jewish families to leave and turning it over to Arab forces.

When Israel reunified Jerusalem and the surrounding areas in 1967, the Jewish families that had been expelled two decades earlier asserted their land deeds. A decision by Israel's Supreme Court in 1972 ruled the Jewish claims were valid, and thus ownership was theirs. But it also ruled that for practical reasons, any Arab family that occupied would be protected from eviction if they agreed to pay rent to the Jewish owners. Recently, Arabs have come forward with counterclaims, all of which are proving to be forgeries.

In 1972, a number of families did accept the Israeli Supreme Court formula and paid rent, but a much larger number of families simply ignored the law and refused to pay. The current issue of eviction is about some of those families that have refused to pay rent since 1972.

American politicians, including Senator Elizabeth Warren, added to tensions with highly incendiary and destabilizing claims that the Jewish land ownership deeds constitute an "abhorrent" and "illegal" act of occupation and settlement. Such statements display such insensitivity to or ignorance of the history of the neighborhood. Or worse, an anti-Semitic outlook that holds that Jewish titles and land deeds simply do not count. One can

U.S. government, while less flagrantly ignorant or prejudicial, have been weak and disturbingly neutral as well, which also enflames the situation.

■ **Conclusion**

The Hamas attacks against Israel were not a mutually reinforcing "cycle of violence" between two sides, but a concerted offensive serving the strategic aims of a number of Israel's enemies. This, then, is the key dynamic: tension, feuds, and violence among Palestinian factions, exacerbated by outside countries with particular interests, and laying blame on Israel for the resulting warfare.

The more the United States tries to accelerate efforts for peace without recognizing the other factors, the more it opens space for distance between Jerusalem and Washington. This weakens Israel, which encourages those who are its enemies to pile on and escalate, and those who sought to make their peace with Israel already – such as the Israel Ra'am party or the UAE – to hunker down and run for cover.

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The Sand Curtain Has Fallen

by **DAVID M. WEINBERG**

The Sand Curtain, like the Iron Curtain 30 years ago, has fallen. Israel and its “Abrahamic” partners are enjoying a lightning-fast peace bonanza. But some Westerners have difficulty rejoicing in the breakthrough. The Left assiduously seeks to poke holes in the Abraham Accords, and makes sourpuss faces whenever advances in Gulf-Israel ties are mentioned. The good news is that the accords easily survived the recent Hamas-Israel conflict. How a renewed JCPOA accord will affect ties remains an open and troubling question.

■ *Falling in Love*

The speed with which Israeli relations with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain have taken off (and with Morocco and Sudan to a degree as well), and the genuine warmth experienced by every Israeli business delegation and tourist group to have visited these countries, is astounding. It is a speed of light peace bonanza, a whirlwind of almost Biblical proportions.

Venture capitalists from Tel Aviv and Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Manama are scouting out joint investment opportunities in cybersecurity, fintech, aggro-tech, food security, educational technology, and healthcare. Bilateral business chambers have been established, including a Jewish-Muslim women’s business council and a youth council. One Emirati investment house executive enthused to *The New York Times*, “It’s like falling in love!”

Trade between Israel and the UAE already has exceeded \$354 million.

According to the Emirati Minister of State for Foreign Trade, Thani bin Ahmed Al-Zayoudi, the two countries have signed approximately 25 agreements in more than 15 sectors. Academics from the Emirates and Israel are participating in each other’s conferences. Israel’s two main strategic think tanks, INSS and JISS, each have signed research partnerships with leading Emirati institutes.

Tourist packages for Israelis and for Jews everywhere to the Gulf are sprouting like mushrooms, and Gulf tourists to Israel are coming soon too. Three Emirati and three Israeli airlines are operating or planning daily flights to Dubai and Abu Dhabi (slowed only by lingering effects of the COVID-19 crisis), as is Bahrain’s Gulf Air. Emirati Airlines times its flights from Ben-Gurion Airport to connect with Emirates flights from the Gulf

mini war that Israel had just fought with Hamas in Gaza and with Palestinian radicals in Jerusalem.

These are the beginnings of real people-to-people engagement; something that Israel has never enjoyed with the publics in Egypt or Jordan. It can be said that the “Sand Curtain” between Israel and the Arab world has fallen, like the fall of the Iron Curtain between the democratic and communist worlds 30 years ago.

It is important to note that the Emirati and Bahraini pursuit of peace with Israel is genuine. It is backed by a discourse of religious moderation and broadmindedness that is deep and admirable; a discourse of reconciliation brought to the fore by the Trump administration-brokered Abraham Accords.

By explicitly referencing the Abrahamic common heritage of

The Emiratis and Bahrainis want to redefine the self-identity and global image of Arab Muslims in a way that blends enlightenment with tradition.

to the Far East, giving Israelis new routes to China, Japan, Thailand and more.

Hundreds of Israelis in kippas and Emiratis in long white robes and kanduras gathered in early June at a Global Investment Forum in Dubai, co-sponsored by *The Jerusalem Post* and *The Khaleej Times*. This, despite the fierce

Moslems and Jews in the foundational document of the normalization process (and deliberately naming it the Abraham Accords), the treaty implicitly acknowledges that Jews are a Biblical people indigenous to the Land of Israel. This is a revolution; it is no less than a blunt rejection of the ongoing Palestinian



President Donald J. Trump, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of Foreign Affairs for the United Arab Emirates Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyani sign the Abraham Accords Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020, on the South Lawn of the White House. (Photo: White House / Shealah Craighead)

campaign to deny and criminalize the Jewish People’s historic rights in Israel.

It goes even deeper. The Emiratis and Bahrainis want to redefine the self-identity and global image of Arab Muslims in a way that blends enlightenment with tradition. Affiliating with Israel fits perfectly into this agenda, aside from the security and economic benefits that will spin off from partnership with Israel.

Indeed, these Gulf Arabs see themselves as people and nations that successfully blend ancient tradition, culture and ethnic identity with modern progress and ambition. That is exactly how they view Israel as well.

The core problem in the Middle East, Emiratis and Bahrainis have told me, is that religious hatred has become the main political currency, a volatile and hypocritically exploited currency.

Iran invests heavily in religious hatred; hatred of Israel, of America and the West, and of other Muslims who do not hew to the radical Shiite line. The Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) relies on religious hatred to mobilize young men to its ranks. So do Turkey and the Muslim Brotherhood, ISIS, and Al-Qaeda.

The Emiratis see themselves and other Sunni Arabs as “victims of decades of media brainwashing” in support of “narrow agendas” (meaning, radical Islamic agendas) and “immature thinking” (meaning, Palestinian thinking). These deleterious discourses always need an “enemy” to hate.

Dr. Ali Al Nuami, chairman of the Defense Affairs, Interior and Foreign Affairs Committee of the Federal National Council for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, says, “The Abraham Accords are

meant to increase tolerance and respect. We in the UAE believe that terrorism and extremism are not a threat to a single nation or to a single region; they are a threat to the whole world.”

In short, the Abraham Accords are meant “to take religious hatred out of the equation,” and move Israel-Arab ties to the level of normal state-to-state relations, hopefully setting an example for other Arab countries in the region. “Hatred is not from God. It does not flow from logic. And hatred is not the future,” a very senior Emirati who is close to UAE Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed told me.

The Emiratis are talking about offering their school curriculums on religious and ethnic tolerance, and the value of scientific and critical humanistic thinking, to Arab schools across the Middle East. They may launch an

Emirati distance-learning program with high school and college courses available to Arab and Muslim students – from Morocco to Iran. Over time, this educational export product could have a real moderating impact.

■ *Sourpuss Reactions*

Unfortunately, some around the world remain begrudging in their embrace of these blessed developments.

For the extreme left, it is hard to swallow the fact that Israel is demonstrably a force for good, knowledge, prosperity, and stability in the Middle East. After all, that is the reason the UAE and Bahrain are collaborating with Israel.

Second, the left has been reluctant to credit Donald Trump or Binyamin Netanyahu for the Accords (or anything else), even when the result obviously is so beneficial.

Third, the left and center-left, including the Biden administration, wishes to reinstate the JCPOA nuclear deal with Iran; a deal to which Israel and its Gulf partners were, and remain, adamantly opposed. In fact, creation of a common front against the nuclear and hegemonic designs of Iran is the main motive underlying Israel-Gulf relations.

The Abraham Accords get in the way of the American rush to reconcile with Iran. Expansion of the “Abrahamic circle of peace” to other countries (say, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Kuwait, and Oman) certainly would anger the Iranians. As a result, it seems that the Biden administration is not prioritizing enlargement of the Accords. In fact, the Biden administration will not even use the term “Abraham Accords,” but rather, “normalization agreements.”

Fourth, some are uncomfortable with the renewed “religious” discourse about Biblical patrimony and rights, as described above. To leftist ears, this smacks of Evangelical Christian and right-wing Orthodox Jewish standpoints. The only type of “rights” they are comfortable with are the liberal, politically-correct, intersectional kind – in

which Palestinian rights are paramount.

Fifth, it seriously upsets progressives that the Abraham Accords sideline the Palestinians and their claims. It is no longer possible to argue that the Palestinian struggle is the “crux” of Middle East conflict. Sunni states partnering with Israel even question whether there is an “urgent need” or sufficient justification for the Palestinians to gain a state of their own.

For the five reasons listed above, left-of-center leaders have been assiduously poking holes in the Abraham Accords and making sourpuss faces whenever the speed of light advances in Gulf-Israel ties are mentioned.

Some American officials prefer to signal disdain for the Abraham Accords, at least indirectly. One way of doing this

should make good on its explicit promise of “full coordination” with Israel and the Saudis regarding the JCPOA talks.

In the Palestinian arena, the Biden administration should be working to build on Abraham Accord dynamics too.

Instead of letting the Palestinian Authority get away with violence (including issuing a fatwa banning Emirati Muslims from visiting or praying on the Temple Mount!), and instead of Washington “working to significantly support urgent humanitarian reconstruction assistance in Gaza” (something that almost assuredly will strengthen Hamas) – the Biden administration should be pressing the PA to welcome the role that the UAE and Bahrain can play in an expanded peace process.

Emiratis and Bahrainis have told me, religious hatred has become the main political currency, a volatile and hypocritically exploited currency. Iran invests heavily in religious hatred...

is giving a cold shoulder to U.S. and Israeli allies in the region, like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, because of their human rights abuses. The Biden administration even dangerously has spoken of “reassessing” U.S. ties to Riyadh. It pulled U.S. support for the Saudi war on the Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen (a terrible strategic mistake). For a while, it held-up the F-35 sale to the Emirates.

■ *Strategic Realities*

Instead of acting to taint the Abraham Accords ecosystem, the left ought to be strengthening the Accords, because they strengthen America and its true regional allies, while weakening Russian, Turkish, and Iranian interests. At the very least, the administration

Gulf colleagues can help PA president-for-life Mahmoud Abbas dial-down his expectations and understand that there will be no reverting to stale and unworkable formulas based on maximalist Palestinian demands and minimalist regard for Israeli security needs and national-historic claims. This refers to discredited formulas involving the uprooting of settlements, Israeli withdrawals from most of Judea and Samaria, and division of Jerusalem.

These are dead proposals – no matter how fiercely Abbas attacks Israel in international forums or how impolitely President Biden presses Israel. They are dead proposals under whatever new – non-Netanyahu – government is formed in Jerusalem, too.

■ *Stress Test*

In this context it is worth noting that the Abraham Accords passed their first stress test during the recent Israeli-Palestinian dust-up in Gaza and Jerusalem. While Gulf and Moroccan leaders issued harsh condemnations of Israel for its tough police response to the Arab riots on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, no Abraham Accords country did more than protest verbally.

None withdrew their ambassadors from Israel, and none slowed the pace of developing economic ties. Compare this with the Second Intifada in 2000, when Tunisia, Morocco, Oman, and Qatar dissolved their less-than-full diplomatic ties with Israel.

Most notable of all, neither the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, or Morocco truly criticized Israel for striking hard at Hamas in Gaza. In fact, they probably cheered this, quietly. Their mild press releases about the fighting resembled standard State Department calls for de-escalation and “restraint.” Emirati foreign minister Abdullah bin Zayed even doubled down

dials back its commitment to countering Iran’s regional hegemonic ambitions, it seems logical that Gulf countries will seek to further strengthen their security and diplomatic ties with Israel. Israel will remain actively engaged in a long-term shadow war, and in an increas-

a key role in cultivating relations between Israel and the UAE and Bahrain, as well as unofficial ties with Saudi Arabia. The leaders of those countries knew Netanyahu well enough to talk to him about key defense and intelligence issues. They knew that his commitment

The real shadow hanging over the future of Abraham Accord-type peace treaties in the region comes from the incipient reconciliation between Washington and Tehran, in the form of a renewed nuclear deal.

Sunni states partnering with Israel even question whether there is an “urgent need” or sufficient justification for the Palestinians to gain a state of their own.

on the Abraham Accords, citing the conflagration as a “somber reminder of the urgent need for peaceful dialogue.”

In sum, none of these Arab countries added to the diplomatic pressure on Israel in any substantive way.

The real shadow hanging over the future of Abraham Accord-type peace treaties in the region comes from the incipient reconciliation between Washington and Tehran in the form of a renewed nuclear deal.

On the one hand, if Washington goes soft on Iran’s nuclear program and

ingly public war against Iran’s designs. And Israel quietly but determinedly will help protect its Gulf allies from Iranian machinations too.

On the other hand, if the U.S. takes itself out of the frontline against Iran, it is perhaps possible that Gulf countries will make the reluctant decision to ally with Iran; or at the very least, to hedge their bets

to aggressively countering Iran was absolute. Will the same level of trust pertain to an Israeli government led by a coalition of Naftali Bennett, Yair Lapid and Benny Gantz?

Lapid has made statements supporting the JCPOA; Gantz has demurred from some of Netanyahu’s recent tough comments about countering Iran should the U.S. decide to back away; and it is unclear whether Bennett will make Abraham Accord partnerships a priority (of course, he should), and whether he can quickly gain the trust of Gulf leaders.

The Israel envoy to the UAE, Ambassador Eitan Naeh, says that it does not matter who is prime minister, foreign minister or defense minister of Israel: “UAE-Israel ties will continue to grow because both countries have essential interests in doing so.” “Essential interests” is certainly true. But the level of cultivation, and whether there will be opportunities to bring more countries into the Abraham Accords given the new governments in Washington and Jerusalem – remains to be seen.

by minimizing open ties to Israel and their full alignment with the United States.

To a certain extent, this process may already be underway. For the first time in many years, the Saudis and Emiratis recently held direct and public talks with Iranian leaders. This could be a signal that Gulf leaders realize Washington will no longer lead a counter-Iran coalition and that allying openly with Israel may no longer be overwhelmingly beneficial.

Then there is the question of Israeli leadership. Netanyahu personally played

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Why There is No Palestinian State

by **HUSSAIN ABDUL-HUSSAIN**

“A land without a people for a people without a land” is a phrase that gets under the skin of most Palestinians, who think that the authors of the phrase looked at Ottoman Palestine, did not see them, and instead saw an empty land. Yet perhaps this phrase would have made sense if we zoomed in on the meaning of the word “people.”

Whoever coined the phrase that became a Zionist slogan did not use the word people to describe a bunch of humans dwelling on a certain land. People, in this phrase, is used to mean a nation, a state or a nation-state.

Before 1948, the Arabs who lived in Palestine had never organized themselves in a state, but had, for centuries, lived as subjects of empires that ruled them from faraway capitals, such as Damascus, Cairo, Baghdad, and Istanbul. In the history of the Arabs, Jerusalem never served as the seat of any dynasty and never practiced sovereignty. At best, the city served as a provincial capital. In this sense, when the Zionists looked at Ottoman Palestine, they did not see a nation-state. They saw Arab provinces of successive empires, Arab or Turkish. This is why the land looked one without a people, that is without a nation state.

■ *The Mandate and Nationalism*

After the British stitched a few Ottoman provinces together to produce Mandatory Palestine in 1920, and with the Zionists putting forward their vision of a country in Palestine with its capital in Jerusalem, Palestinians borrowed elements from both, and made them their

own. Then Palestinians started talking about a Palestinian nation-state whose capital is Jerusalem.

Yet despite the birth of this Palestinian nation overnight, the meaning of independent Palestine remained elusive, especially to Islamists and Arab nationalists, both of which saw the borders drawn by British and French colonials as fake and designed to divide-and-conquer Muslims or Arabs.

But even after Arab nationalists started referring to Palestine as a country with a flag and national emblems, they still criticized Lebanon’s Christians for insisting on an independent Lebanon, saying that Arab countries were fake, and were produced by the colonials to divide the Arab and Muslim nation. Arab nationalists also disapproved of the creation of Jordan and Syria.

Izz-eldeen al-Qassam, the Muslim Imam who died near Haifa while fighting the British in 1935, and whose

defeat of the leader of Arab nationalism, Egypt’s Gamal Abdul-Nasser.

Nasser tried to make up for his defeat by propping up Palestinian nationalism and militias to fight a “war of attrition” against Israel. This war of attrition, now fought by pro-Iran regime militias like Hamas and Lebanese Hezbollah, continues until today.

Even as Palestinians started promoting their local identity, their conflict against the Zionists maintained its pre-Palestinian nationalism format, rendering the conflict with Israel as one over land and sovereignty rather than civil rights, as can be seen in the behavior of Arab Israelis, who claim to be suffering Israeli discrimination, which they counter — not by demanding assimilation — but through Palestinian nationalism.

While insisting on the creation of independent Palestine, a majority of Palestinians seem to think that a state is made of land and people, not of people

... the meaning of independent Palestine remained illusive, especially to Islamists and Arab nationalists, both of which saw the borders drawn by British and French colonials as fake...

name Hamas borrowed for its military wing and locally produced rockets, was Syrian. His coffin was draped in the flags of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Yemen, but not Palestine, which shows that Palestinian nationalism was a late-comer that only surfaced after the 1967

organizing themselves into a successful state. But land alone does not make states. Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq are all sovereign over the land, and yet all three of them are failed states. This is why Israel fears that land concessions to Palestinians will result in a failed state,

and not country in the world wants a failed state — that would turn into a hotbed of terrorism, crime, and illicit trade — on its borders.

■ *Studying Zionism*

Palestinians spent a century trying to learn how the Zionists managed to overpower them. Think tanks were set up to teach Palestinian researchers Hebrew and to monitor Israeli press and literature. The Palestinians drew many lessons, but the only one they never seem to have learned was that Zionists created a state long before they had any land.

In his manuscript on Zionism, written in the 1890s and only published this year, Palestinian Rawhi al-Khalidi was impressed, not only by the good organization of the Zionist movement and its regular elections, but also by the dedication of its rank and file. Al-Khalidi wrote that poor Jewish peasants in Russia or Eastern Europe saved on buying food in order to pay their membership fees to the Zionist organization and elect its officials. Khalidi described the movement as a government without a land. This would have perfectly described a “government (people) without a land for a land without a government (people).”

■ *The “Right of Return”*

Successive rounds of conflict have resulted in the division of the land along the line of the 1948 truce, known as the Green Line. Conflict has forced some pragmatism but neither side is happy about dividing the land into two states. Yasser Arafat and other Arab states agreed to “land-for-peace” in principle, but with the caveat that Arabs who were displaced (or willingly left) the 1948 territories, recognized as the State of Israel, have the right to return to Israel. Palestinians cite a UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution to substantiate their claim, even though unlike the Security Council, UNGA’s resolutions have no legal power.

To Israel, the return of a few million Palestinians to their country would tip the demographic scale drastically and

make the Jews a minority in the country that they have worked hard to create and maintain. This “right of return” is therefore a deal breaker for the Israelis and, so far, for Palestinians as well.

■ *Palestinian Governance*

Even if the two sides manage to separate their respective populations, Palestinians have never demonstrated any ability to govern themselves. While self-determination is a right enshrined in the UN’s founding literature, it is not a guarantee that sovereign nations can create and manage successful states. If other Arab states — including Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq — are any indicator, it is highly likely that the Palestinian state will be a failed state too.

Such a state next to Israel means that the Jewish state will have to keep tabs on its neighbor, and maybe police it. After all, no state would want to sit adjacent to a failed state that can become a hotbed for terrorism, crime, and illicit trade.

It is unfortunate that Palestinians have yet to recognize these two Israeli prerequisites for a Palestinian state: That Israel’s population remains predominantly Jewish and that a Palestinian state has a good enough government that can

peace, Arafat was either too weak or too unwilling to do so, forcing Israel to do the policing for him, as Palestinians sat back and claimed victimhood, often by depicting Israeli policing as unwillingness to pursue peace.

The way out of stalemate is tied to Palestinians figuring out how to build a state that can represent them, deliver on its security promises, and offer the Palestinians a good government able to grow the economy, decrease poverty and therefore offer them hope that keeps them away from joining suicidal groups like Hamas.

There was one Israeli leader who, despite his reputation of being a right-wing bully, understood the requirements of peace with Palestinians and pursued them.

■ *Ariel Sharon*

Ariel Sharon was Israeli the Arabs hated most. As a general, he was blamed for reversing the Arab tide in the 1973 war and leading Israel’s counterattack across the Suez Canal. As Minister of Defense, he led the Lebanon War that ejected Arafat and his militias from Beirut. As opposition leader, Sharon visited the Al-Aqsa compound in

Sharon hoped that an elected Israeli government and an elected Palestinian government could make comprehensive and lasting peace.

guarantee the security and safety of its neighbors, including Israel.

It is also unfortunate that Palestinians blame the failure of peace on Israel’s expansion of settlements in disputed land. The Palestinians never seem to have noticed that it was Hamas’s suicide bombings the obstructed the peace process, until it killed it. Instead of rein-ing in Hamas and proceeding toward

Jerusalem, giving the brewing Second Intifada its spark. To the Arabs, Sharon was a criminal and a bully. He certainly enjoyed strong credentials with Israel’s Right wing and settler movement.

But when it came to peace with the Arabs, the hawkish Sharon had a vision and a plan, one that was never completed because of a sudden brain hemorrhage that resulted in his incapacitation in



Lines of Israeli soldiers wait to remove settlers from the Tel Katifa Jewish settlement as part of the Israeli disengagement from Gaza. (Photo: Eddie Gerald)

2006. To the late Israeli prime minister, peace was impossible between a democracy, like Israel, and militias, like Arafat's PLO or Lebanon's armed factions.

When Sharon invaded Lebanon in 1982, his plan was to sponsor the election of a president and empower the weak state over the armed militias that had been engaged in civil war since 1975. Sharon ejected Arafat and the Palestinian militias and supervised the election of Bashir Gemayel as president of Lebanon. Sharon reasoned that only then could Israel sign a lasting peace treaty with Lebanon.

Gemayel was elected, but before he could take office, the Syrian regime of Hafez Assad assassinated him. Sharon was also weakened at home amid an unpopular war in Lebanon and atrocities that accompanied the Israeli invasion, especially at the Sabra and Shatila camps in Beirut. With Sharon and Bashir Gemayel out of the picture, Bashir's brother Amin was elected president and tried to carry on with the plan. On May 17, 1983, Lebanon and Israel signed a peace treaty, which was later killed by Assad. Under international pressure, Israel eventually ended its occupation of Lebanon, which became the hotbed of pro-Iran Hezbollah, one of the most

notorious terrorist groups on the planet.

In 2006, Hezbollah started a war with Israel that lasted for 33 days and resulted in death and destruction in Israel, but exponentially much more death and destruction in Lebanon. Today, Hezbollah still dominates Lebanon. Like Hamas, Hezbollah rejects peace wholesale and wants Israel destroyed. It imposes its maximalist view on the Lebanese, forcing them to say that Israel is an illegitimate state, and to refer to the country instead as "Occupied Palestine."

■ Gaza Disengagement

Sharon repeated the same experiment with the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Sharon had given up on Arafat, seeing him as a weak and unreliable peace partner. With American assistance, the Israeli prime minister forced the Palestinian Authority (PA) to elect a prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas, who was supposed to eclipse the wily Arafat. Sharon hoped that an elected Israeli government and an elected Palestinian government could make comprehensive and lasting peace.

Sharon then put his money where his mouth was. In September 2005, amid much anger from settlers, Sharon dismantled the Israeli settlements in Gaza,

and handed the strip over to Abbas, who had been elected president eight months prior, following the death of Arafat. Sharon was probably on his way to do the same in the West Bank when he was suddenly hospitalized.

Sharon was succeeded by Ehud Olmert, a much less charismatic character, who tried to carry on with Sharon's plan by offering Abbas a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in addition to the Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, and a promise to iron the remaining wrinkles. Abbas turned down Olmert's peace proposal, and again turned down a similar offer by Benjamin Netanyahu, which was made under the auspices of the Palestine-friendly American president Barack Obama.

The biggest obstacle to Abbas's ability to say yes to any Israeli offers for a Palestinian state is that he cannot forego the "right of return" of Palestinians to Israel (not to the to-be-created Palestine). He tested the waters by giving an interview in which he said that any peace deal with Israel would not mean his return to his birthplace in Safed, in northern Israel. Palestinians, especially hardliners like Hamas, immediately forced Abbas to retract his statement.

■ Conclusion

Peace between Israel and the Palestinians was not always standing at a dead end like it does today. Some Israelis, like Sharon, understood that Palestinians have to have a representative government that can make peace with Israel, manage Palestinians well, and maintain neighborly relations with Israel. But Sharon's plan died with him. Since then, the Palestinians have yet to understand what it takes for them to get their state, and that does not include destroying Israel or behaving as the victim.

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Arab Demography Westernizes As Jewish Demography Thrives

by YORAM ETTINGER

In defiance of both conventional wisdom and Israel's critics, the highest-ever Arab population growth rate in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) occurred during the period of Israel's full control of the area (1967-1992).

Between 1967 and 1992, the Arab population of Judea and Samaria expanded by 79%, compared to a mere 0.9% growth during the 1950-1967 Jordanian rule. In raw numbers, the population increased from 586,000 to 1,050,000 people.

The unprecedented Arab population growth rate was the outcome of the

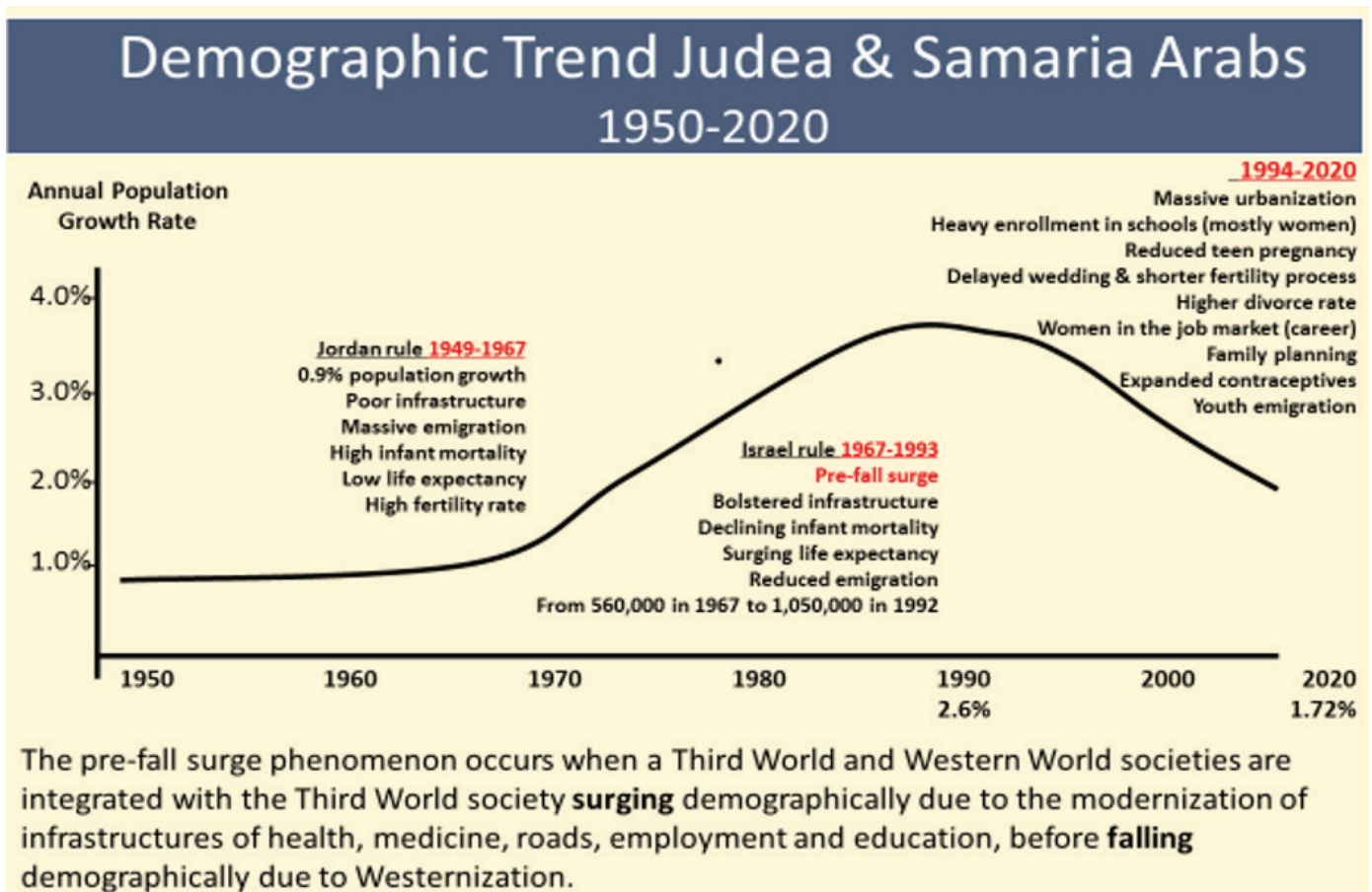
unprecedented Israeli development of health, medical, transportation, education and employment infrastructure in Judea and Samaria, following stagnation during the Jordanian occupation of the area (1948-67). In addition, Israel offered employment opportunities inside its pre-1967 core, to the Arabs of Judea and Samaria, who preferred working in Israel to the distant Arab Gulf states, West Africa or Latin America.

As a result of enhanced medical infrastructure, Arab infant mortality was drastically reduced, so that life

expectancy surged, almost to the Israeli level. Emigration was substantially curtailed due to new opportunities for higher education and employment.

Hence, while net-emigration during the 17 years of Jordan's control was 28,000 annually, it subsided to 7,000 annually during the 25 years of Israel's full-control.

The exceptionally high Arab population growth rate during Israel's full control of Judea and Samaria included 170% growth of the 25-34 age group, which is the bulk of likely emigrants. That they stayed attests to the



unprecedented development of employment opportunities for Arabs by Israel.

Compared to an Arab population growth rate of merely 0.9% during Jordan's rule - when births were almost offset by net emigration - there was a 2.2% average annual population growth rate during Israel's rule. Moreover, 1990 and 1991 featured 4.5% and 5.1% population growth rates.

Arguably, the surge in Arab population growth was misperceived by the demographic establishment, which projected a continued growth at the same rate, ignoring the "pre-fall-surge" syndrome. That phrase characterizes population growth rates of Third World societies, when they more closely resemble Western world societies in certain areas.

When a Third World population is provided with modernized infrastructure, it triggers a surge in the fertility rate some of which attributable to lowered infant mortality). But the surge in population growth tends to

last for one generation, before falling due to other effects of modernization/Westernization, as evidenced in Judea and Samaria:

- Massive urbanization (from 75% rural in 1967 to 77% urban in 2021)
- Reduced emigration.
- Most girls complete high school and increasingly pursue higher education
- Reduced teen pregnancy and increased use of contraceptives (within marriage) (70%)
- Greater female participation in the job market
- Rising marital age of women from 15 years old to 22 and older
- Shorter reproductive period (from 16-55 year old to 23-45 years old)
- Higher divorce rate and youth emigration

Bottom Line: 9 births per Arab woman in the 1960s; 3.02 births in 2021.

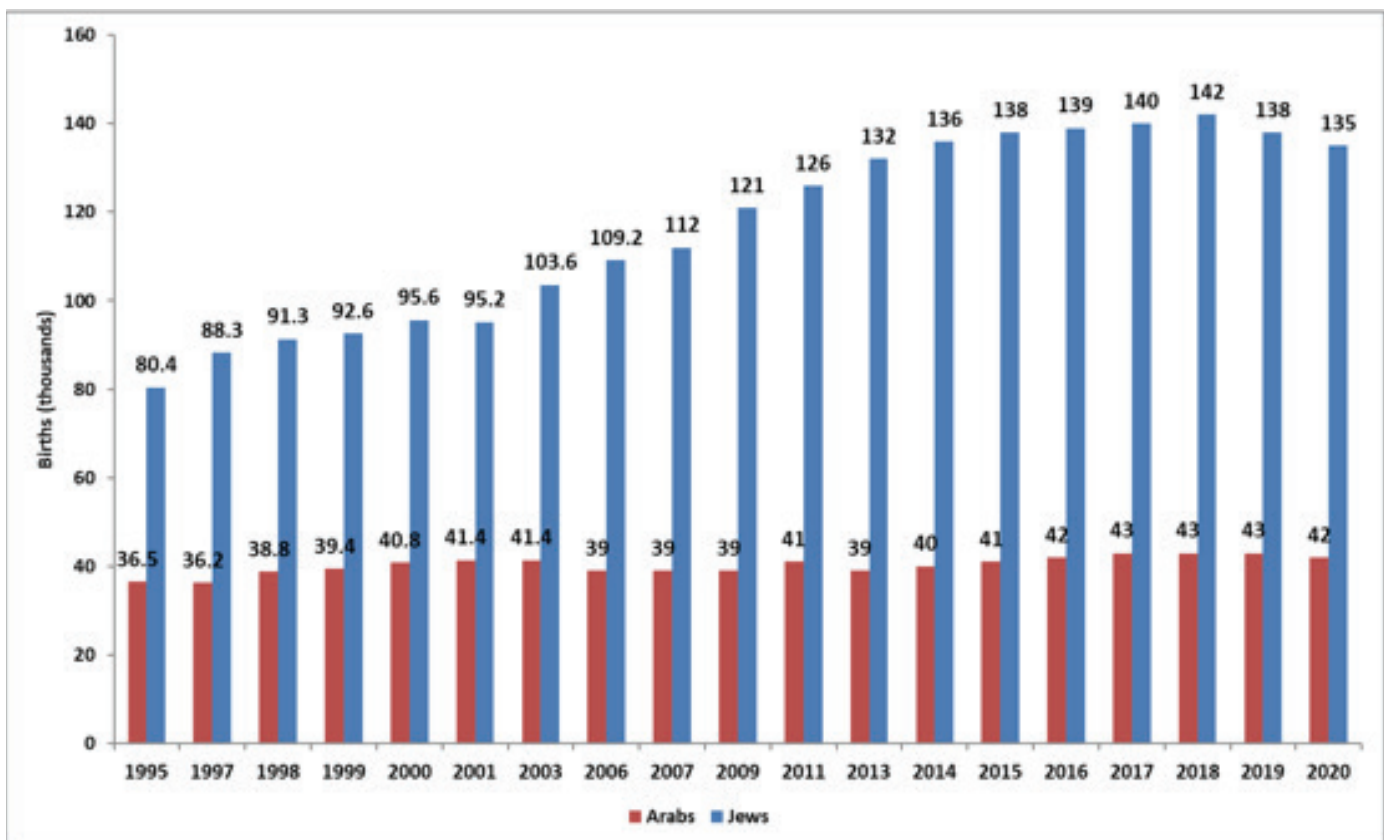
■ Why is Israel's Jewish Fertility Rate Thriving?

Jewish demography has been

impacted by the Israeli state of mind, which is heavy on optimism, faith, patriotism, attachment to roots, collective responsibility, and the centrality of children. The modern Israeli psyche retains elements of a frontier mentality, after centuries of costly Jewish history and contemporary existential threats in the stormy, violently intolerant, unpredictable and anti-"infidel" Middle East.

Unlike the generally pessimistic and less-patriotic European state of mind, which has produced an extremely low fertility rate of 1.5 babies per woman (2.1 is required to sustain an existing level of population), Israelis - left and right, doves and hawks, secular and religious, wealthy and poor - all embrace the Zionist vision to buttress the Jewish State. They consider children a means to enrich their own lives and secure the civilian and military future of the Jewish State.

For these reasons, Israel, with a birthrate of 3.09 per woman, leads the





34 OECD countries in fertility and population growth rates. Israel also leads in the percentage of youth under the age of 15 - at 28% of the population; and the percentage of immigrants, at 23% of the population. Israel's Jewish fertility rate is the highest among the top 100 developed countries in the world.

Moreover, Israel's Jewish fertility rate is unique in the world in the positive correlation between level of education and income on the one hand, and the number of babies per woman on the other hand. Jewish women have sustained their relatively high fertility rate, despite their increasing age at marriage.

It is currently common for a secular, urban, highly-educated, high-income and over-30-year-old working Israeli Jewish woman to have three or four children. This is unheard of elsewhere in the West.

Since 1995, the secular sector has played the key role in Israel's Jewish demographic momentum: there has been a 68% rise in annual Jewish births from 80,400 in 1995 to 134,866 in 2020;

compared to a 16% rise of the annual Israeli Arab births from 36,500 in 1995 to 42,435 in 2020.

Israel's demographic momentum has evolved despite a moderate decrease in the ultra-Orthodox fertility rate, which is a result of the expansion of ultra-Orthodox participation in the job market and higher education - especially for Orthodox women.

While the ultra-Orthodox fertility rate has decreased from 7.5 births per woman in 2000 to 6.5 births in 2020, it is still - by far - the highest fertility rate in Israel. The ultra-Orthodox remain committed to the Torah-driven worldview, which highlights children as a source of divine joy and critical obligation.

The ultra-Orthodox state of mind underscores procreation, as stated in Genesis 1:28: "God blessed them and said to them, 'be fruitful and increase in number...'" It underscores God's blessing of Abraham that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars in the heavens (Genesis 15:5), and the firm belief in Maimonides' assertion:

"For one who adds a soul to Israel is as though he built a whole world...."

Conclusion

- Israel's unique secular and religious fertility rate reflects the sturdy state of mind of the Jewish State in the stormy Middle East, a most challenging region of the world.

- Israel's robust demography refutes the assertion that its Jewish majority is threatened by a supposed Arab demographic time bomb. In fact, well-documented demographic data, since 1900, suggest that policy-makers and public opinion molders, who enunciate such an assertion are either dramatically mistaken, or outrageously misleading.

- Finally, the uniquely optimistic demography of the Jewish State reflects the unique qualities of the Jewish people, which have enabled them to overcome calamities, such as physical destruction, exiles, pogroms, the Holocaust and systemic anti-Semitism.

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The Divided Self of John le Carré

by **BENJAMIN WEINTHAL**

The death of perhaps history's greatest espionage writer John le Carré in December 2020 sparked a series of lively debates about the British novelist's contradictory views toward Zionism, Jews and Israel. *The Times of London* columnist Melanie Phillips asked in her Jewish News Syndicate column after his death: "He remains a product of his time and an enigma. Was he on the side of the Jewish people – or their enemies?" Phillips admits that she could not crack the le Carré enigma. Le Carré, whose birth name was David Cornwell, left an enormous literary output, a great deal of which is peppered with Jewish and Israeli characters. Before delving into his first successful spy tale, which features an East German Jew and British Jew, it is worth noting le Carré's farewell public intellectual act, in which he addressed left-wing antisemitism in the United Kingdom. Shortly before the 2019 British general election, le Carré

leader Jeremy Corbyn. The left-wing *Guardian* paper published the missive, which warned about "the prospect of a prime minister steeped in association with antisemitism." The letter continued, "Mr. Corbyn has a long record of embracing antisemites as comrades" and, "The path to a more tolerant society must encompass Britain's Jews with unwavering solidarity."

The British Left reacted in shock, seemingly ambushed by le Carré's potent opposition to Corbynism, for le Carré, like Corbyn, embodied an anti-Americanism largely animated by a loathing of neo-conservative foreign policies and American dominance of the world stage. Le Carré's worldview remains, however, a mixed bag of philo-semitism, pro-Israel zeal and dangerous anti-Americanism, marred, one could argue, by an atypical spilling over into the realm of contemporary antisemitism in a *Guardian* interview about his 2003 book *Absolute Friends*. The 1963 novel that catapulted le

and Liz Gold, a librarian who is a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, as idealistic devotees to the cause of a building a new society. Of course, the German Democratic Republic was packed with "Red painted fascists," a term coined by a German Social Democrat, and le Carré captures the antisemitism targeting Fiedler in his novel. While many members and politicians from today's German Left party, the current successor to the Party of Democratic Socialism, as the Socialist Unity Party (which was known in English as the East German Communist Party) styled itself from 1989 to 2007, romanticize the communist state, it was without question a deeply antisemitic, totalitarian regime. "We are witnessing the lousy end to a filthy, lousy operation to save Mundt's skin. To save him from a clever little Jew in his own department who had begun to suspect the truth. They made us kill him, d'you see, kill the Jew. Now you know the truth, God help us both," the British spy Alec Leamas says to Gold about Fiedler in the novel. Hans-Dieter Mundt is a double agent who is employed by the East German spy service the Stasi, but secretly works for British intelligence. A former Nazi. Was there ever such a thing as a former Nazi during that period? Mundt's antisemitism is the subject of Fiedler's dialogues with Leamas. In the novel, Fiedler was able to flee Nazi Germany and lived in exile in Canada before he returned to East Germany.

Reports later emerged that le Carré based the character on Markus Wolf, the longtime head of the Stasi's foreign intelligence service, whose father was a prominent German Jewish author. Wolf

Le Carré's worldview remains, however, a mixed bag of philo-semitism, pro-Israel zeal and dangerous anti-Americanism...

joined a group of distinguished writers, artists and campaigners against racism and antisemitism in a public letter urging a vote against Labour party

Carré into international literary stardom, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, depicts two Jewish characters: the East German communist officer Josef Fiedler,

lived in exile in the Soviet Union during WWII.

Wolf, who was known during the Cold War as “the Man Without a Face” due to his success in avoiding being photographed, denied the connection in a conversation with this writer. Le Carré also flatly rejected any link between Fiedler and Wolf. The Israeli journalist and Middle East analyst Dr. Jonathan Spyer wrote as early as 2015 about le Carré’s posture toward Israel. “Outside of ‘The Little Drummer Girl’ le Carré tends to avoid direct reference to Israel in his fiction,” notes Spyer.

A decent size library could be filled with dissertations and books about le Carré’s treatment of Jews, Israel and Zionism in *The Little Drummer* (1983), as well as his other novels that are sprinkled with complex Jewish characters.

Perhaps his best-known work today, *The Little Drummer Girl* covers the Mossad’s recruitment of a British actress

to aid in the capture of a Palestinian master bomb-maker terrorist, Khalil. In the novel, Le Carré demonstrates a profound understanding of post-Holocaust Jew-hatred in continental Europe. Take the example of Khalil, who says, “We have many friends in Germany. But not because they love Palestinians. Only because they hate Jews.”

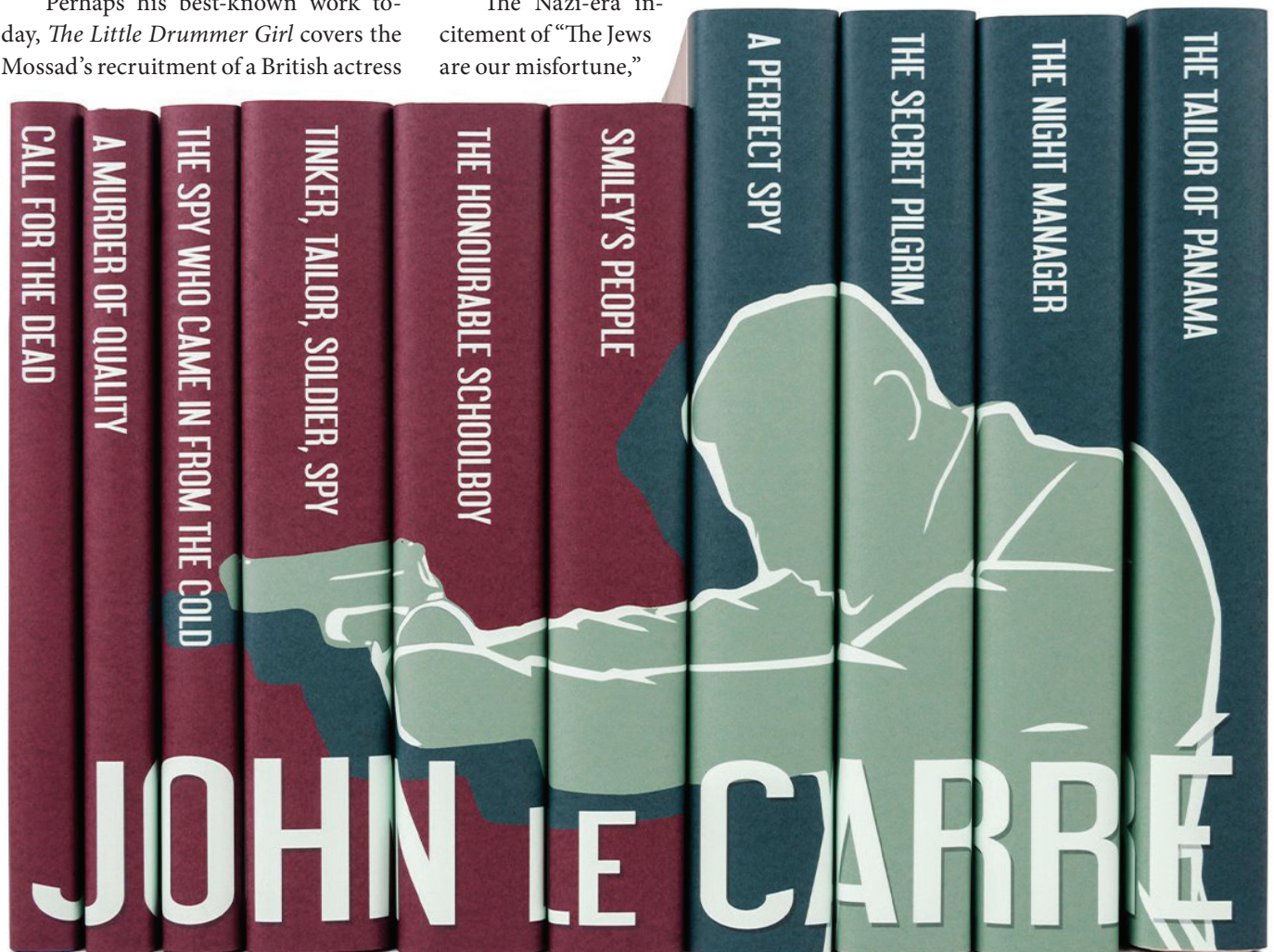
Khalil neatly encapsulates many Germans’ ubiquitous instrumentalization of Israel as the be-all and end-all for evil. The passage reminds one of the dialogue in the late Rainer Werner Fassbinder 1975 play *The Garbage, the City and Death*, in which the antisemitic character Hans von Gluck declares: “And it’s the Jew’s fault, because he makes us feel guilty because he exists. If he’d stayed where he came from, or if they’d gassed him, I would sleep better.”

The Nazi-era incitement of “The Jews are our misfortune,”

to invoke a phrase first popularized by the 19th century antisemitic German historian Heinrich von Treitschke, seamlessly bleeds into “Israel is our misfortune.” Plainly put, le Carré helped to flush out a new form of Jew-hatred in the early 1980s.

While le Carré does not explicitly label this antisemitism as “guilt-defensiveness antisemitism,” to use the phrase of the German-Jewish philosophers Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Khalil’s words conjure up the pathological guilt response to the Shoah that is widespread in today’s German society.

Based on how le Carré informs Khalil’s character, the biting, sarcastic comment attributed to the Israeli psychoanalyst Zvi Rex in the 1980s, that “The Germans will never forgive the



Jews for Auschwitz,” would conform to le Carré’s outlook.

Le Carré, who was fluent in German and infatuated with the language, had a German-Jewish refugee nanny as a young boy. The novelist would portray a sympathetic character, the German-Jewish refugee nanny Annie Lippsie, in his 1986 book *A Perfect Spy*.

To return to his monumental work about Israel, *The Little Drummer Girl*, which was turned into a 1984 film starring Diane Keaton and a 2018 British television series, posits a deeply misguided and nonsensical ethical equiva-

lence between a Palestinian movement animated by terrorism and the democratic State of Israel. happen if we allow present trends to continue to the point of absurdity where corporate media are absolutely at the beck and call in the United States of a neo-conservative group which is commanding the political high ground, calling the shots and appointing the State of Israel as the purpose of all Middle Eastern and practically all global policy.”

Sadly, le Carré invokes a series of antisemitic tropes in his aforesaid comment, lashing out at the United States and Israel. From the suggestion that the Jewish state controls U.S. foreign policy to neo-conservative control over

Maoist ferocity, a nation crackling with debate, rediscovering its past while it fought for its future.”

Davis quoted le Carré: “‘No nation on earth,’ he says passionately, ‘was more deserving of peace – or more condemned to fight for it.’”

A question that frustrates many aficionados of le Carré’s public intellectual life and his oeuvre: Which side was he on with respect to Israel and the Palestinians?

Le Carré’s answer in 1998: “Where I began – only more so. I mean, I stood – and stand – wholeheartedly behind the nation-state of Israel as the homeland and guardian of Jews everywhere. And wholeheartedly behind the peace process as the guarantor not only of Israel’s survival, but of the Palestinian survival also.”

He adds, “I’m afraid the truth is that, in fiction as in politics, the extreme center is a pretty dangerous place to be. It’s where you draw the fire from the fanatics on both sides.”

One can grapple with the layers of le Carré’s divided self toward Jews and Israel ad infinitum. His rejection a year before his death of Jeremy Corbyn, the personification of a movement that seeks the abolition of Israel, suggests le Carré broke with his unsavory post-9/11 comments about the Jewish state.

There is undoubtedly a pressing need for more literary interrogation (and scholarly studies) of le Carré’s books that feature Jewish characters and Israel. Le Carré can be coy, blunt and shield his characters behind appearances. The ethical struggles of many of his Jewish and Israeli characters undoubtedly resonate with his Jewish and Israeli readers.

Absent unpublished archival material about le Carré and Israel, le Carré connoisseurs will be stuck with a spy-master who, like Markus Wolf, is loath to reveal his entire face.

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A question that frustrates many aficionados of le Carré’s public intellectual life and his oeuvre: Which side was he on with respect to Israel and the Palestinians?

lence between a Palestinian movement animated by terrorism and the democratic State of Israel.

Perhaps with the hindsight experience of jihadi terrorism in Britain since 9/11, and the Sunni and Shi’ite terrorism attacks that swept the continent since al-Qaeda’s attacks in the United States there might be fewer attempts by intellectuals to equate democracies with terrorist movements.

As Jonathan Spyer, whose profound knowledge of le Carré is reflected in his article “John Le Carre and the Last of Empire,” notes, “Le Carre’s depictions of Americans seem to me also to be in some way related to his strange and troubled relationship with Israel.... His novels dealing with the 9-11 Wars are filled with American characters of a peculiarly repulsive kind.”

In connection with the U.S. war on terrorism during the post-911 period, le Carré said his book *Absolute Friends* (2003) sought to reveal “what could

American power politics and media, le Carré entered the realm of contemporary antisemitism. As the late columnist and pundit Charles Krauthammer noted, the term “neo-conservative” largely became synonymous with American Jews during the period after 911 (falsely, it should be noted) and devolved into an epithet used by antisemites of all stripes to disguise their Jew-hatred. Hence Krauthammer eschewed the term in his discourse.

Contrast the abovementioned statements with le Carré’s deeply pro-Israel and pro-Jewish statements in his 1998 interview with Douglas Davis for the *Jewish World Review*. During his visit to Israel to conduct research for *The Little Drummer Girl*, le Carré told Davis, he experienced “the most extraordinary carnival of human variety that I have ever set eyes on, a nation in the process of re-assembling itself from the shards of its past, now Oriental, now Western, now secular, now religious, but always anxiously moralizing about itself with

Hamas: Ironic and Perverse

An *in*FOCUS interview with DOUGLAS J. FEITH

Douglas J. Feith is a senior fellow at Hudson Institute, where he works on a range of foreign and defense issues, including terrorism, arms control, alliance relations, national security policy making. He served as undersecretary of defense for policy from July 2001 to August 2005, where he helped devise the U.S. government's strategy for the war on terrorism and contributed to policy for the Afghanistan and Iraq campaigns. He served during the Reagan administration as a Middle East specialist for the National Security Council and then deputy assistant secretary of defense for negotiations policy.

SHOSHANA BRYEN: LET'S JUMP RIGHT IN. YOU WROTE IN AN ARTICLE THAT "KEY BIDEN TEAM MEMBERS SEEM TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAMAS IS." DOUG FEITH, WHAT IS HAMAS?

Douglas Feith: Hamas is the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.

At its founding in 1988, it published a covenant that defines Hamas as an acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement and clarifies its identity, outlines its stand, explains its aims, speaks about its hopes, and calls for its support, adoption, and joining its ranks.

I quote it because there's nothing like quoting the organization directly rather than just characterizing it.

- "Our struggle against the Jews is very great and very serious.
- "There is no solution to the Palestinian problem, except by jihad. The initiatives, operations, and international conferences are a waste of time and a kind of child's play.
- "The Islamic Resistance Movement is an outstanding type of Palestinian movement. It gives its loyalty to Allah, adopts Islam as a system of life, and works toward raising the banner of Allah on every inch of Palestine.
- "As far as the ideology of the Islamic Resistance Movement is concerned, giving up any part of Palestine is like giving up part of its religion.
- "The motto of the Islamic Resistance Movement is, 'Allah is its goal, the

Messenger is its leader, the Koran is its constitution, jihad is its methodology, and death for the sake of Allah is its most coveted desire."

This is the language of the Muslim Brotherhood, which was founded in Egypt in 1928. One reason Israel and Egypt have such a cooperative partnership in dealing with Hamas is that the Egyptian government views the Muslim Brotherhood as one of its main enemies. It therefore recognizes Hamas as a hostile organization.

It's not just Israel that has been blockading Gaza. Gaza also has a land boundary with Egypt, and Egypt is blockading Gaza. And there's substantial Egyptian cooperation in trying to keep Hamas from getting weapons and building up its strengths in Gaza because Hamas supports Muslim Brotherhood elements hostile not just Israel but to the Egyptian regime.

BRYEN: BUT A LOT OF THOSE WEAPONS ACTUALLY DO GET SMUGGLED ACROSS THE EGYPTIAN BORDER INTO GAZA. SO, ALTHOUGH THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT'S POSITION IS IN LINE WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL, THE BORDER ISN'T CLOSED.

Feith: Hamas gets financial support from Iran, among other places. This is an interesting, complex situation because, as a Muslim Brotherhood organization, Hamas has an ideology very hostile to

Shiite Islam. As has been shown frequently in history, however, ideological opponents manage to create strategic alliances against common enemies.

The Shiite Iranians and the Sunni jihadists of Hamas are strategic partners against Israel.

BRYEN: ONE CAN ASSUME THOSE ROCKET AND MISSILE FACTORIES SUPPLIED BY IRAN ARE PART OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE THE ISRAELI AIR FORCE ATTEMPTED TO DESTROY.

Feith: Yes. There is a question about how good the intelligence was. Do the Israelis know the locations of all these key facilities? The ones they know about can be destroyed. But you don't know what you don't know.

■ *Hamas's Moral Depravity*

There's also the problem that Hamas, as a matter of practice, locates its military production facilities and its military operational bases to ensure that when the Israelis attack those facilities, there will inevitably be large civilian casualties. This really deserves attention because it is unique in history. No party to a war has ever before, as an element of its strategy, purposefully arranged to maximize civilian deaths on its own side.

I doubt you can cite another example of a country that makes one of its fundamental strategic planks the maximization of civilian casualties on its own side.

So, Hamas is doing something that is really innovative, morally horrific and...

BRYEN: DISGUSTING. IN JUNE, THE UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE AND SECURITY SAID OPENLY, OVERTLY, UNEQUIVOCALLY, THAT HAMAS LOCATING ITS MILITARY EFFECTS INSIDE OF CIVILIAN NEIGHBORHOODS AND FIRING INTO CIVILIAN NEIGHBORHOODS IN ISRAEL IS A WAR CRIME AND IT NEEDS TO STOP IMMEDIATELY.

Feith: It is surprising, and it may be the first time that a UN official made a statement like that about Hamas and did not balance it to set up a kind of moral equivalency with Israel. It may reflect that what Hamas is doing is even worse than the war crime of using civilians as human shields.

The purpose of using human shields in war is to protect what the human shields are shielding. The purpose is not to kill the human shields. In fact, a war party that uses human shields benefits if those human shields are not killed.

But what Hamas is doing is purposefully maximizing Palestinian civilian casualties. It wants to force Israel to have to kill Palestinian civilians because Hamas can then use the Palestinian corpses to delegitimize Israel – to make the Israelis look brutal and inhumane, to make it appear that the Israelis are war criminals.

Hamas's strategy is deeply ironic, deeply perverse.

The strategy aims to exploit the general respect around the world for the law of war, respect for the principle that civilians should not be targeted. This respect is so widespread and intensely held that Hamas's strategy is to harness it in its ideological war against Israel.

The Hamas strategy therefore is to base its military assets and military operations in civilian areas. That way, when Israel, to defend itself, legitimately attacks Hamas military targets, there inevitably will be large civilian casualties



Douglas J. Feith

on the Palestinian side.

This innovative and evil strategy is a horrifying regression, a repudiation of the absolute heart of the idea of the law of war. People who take the law of war seriously, and UN officials of course say they do, should recognize that what Hamas is doing here is not simply violating the law, but setting it back centuries, to the era before nations acknowledged their obligation to protect civilians in war.

Perhaps this recognition is what accounts for the extraordinary criticism of Hamas by the UN Special Coordinator that you mentioned. We can only hope that that UN official is properly focused on this and understands how outrageous what Hamas is doing is.

Hamas has adopted this strategy for one reason. It gets rewarded politically around the world by people who cite the Palestinian loss of life and limb in Gaza to condemn – not Hamas – but

Israel. The people who do this to deplore Israel often speak as outraged humanitarians, as people who respect the law of war and want to keep civilians safe. But their support for Hamas and denunciations of Israel are rewards for Hamas's anti-civilian strategy.

Here is the irony and the perverseness of it all. When people with humane instincts side with Hamas because they think Palestinian losses in the war are "disproportionate" and greater than Israeli losses in the war, they are in effect paying for – validating and encouraging – the Hamas strategy that is so inhumane, so regressive, so destructive of the very idea of the law of war.

BRYEN: IF HAMAS MAXIMIZES ITS OWN SIDE'S CIVILIAN DEATHS BECAUSE IT UNDERSTANDS IT CAN TURN THE CONVERSATION TO "LOOK AT THOSE HORRIBLE ISRAELIS KILLING OUR CHILDREN," THE QUESTION

IS, DOES IT WORK ON THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION?

Feith: The Biden team put out mixed signals, which may have been a conscious tactic, or may reflect the reality of different points of view within the administration.

Hamas is purposefully maximizing Palestinian civilian casualties. It wants to force Israel to have to kill Palestinian civilians because Hamas can then use the Palestinian corpses to delegitimize Israel...

The Democratic Party right now has a vigorous debate underway between two factions. One wing is represented by “the Squad,” congressional representatives Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and others. It is intensely anti-Israel, anti-semitic, very outspoken, and reasonably influential. The other faction is the more traditional one, which is generally sympathetic to Israel in principle though it strongly favors Israeli politicians on the left over Netanyahu and his Likud and right-of-center colleagues.

The argument between these factions is also going on within the administration. Statements by both the President and Secretary of State Blinken reflected understanding that Israel needed to reestablish deterrence against Hamas. They gave Israel time to punish Hamas for the rocket attacks against Israel and to diminish Hamas’s military capabilities, and the combination could restore deterrence.

It’s worth noting, the last significant war between Israel and Hamas was in 2014. Here we are seven years later. The Israelis, through major operations of the kind that they’re now engaging in, buy a few years of quiet. Then there is a flare-up three, five, seven years down the road, and Israel has to strike back at Hamas all over again. That’s the way the Israelis have been handling Hamas attacks in recent years. And it looks like Biden and

Blinken gave Israel time to do that.

The Biden team was under pressure from abroad and from within the Democratic Party to push Israel harder to stop its military operations. They were trying to have it both ways by giving lip service to the people who demanded a ceasefire, but not actually demanding an

immediate ceasefire and not allowing the UN to pass a resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire.

BRYEN: A CEASEFIRE THAT LEAVES HAMAS IN CONTROL OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF ITS MILITARY SETUP MEANS HAMAS GETS TO DETERMINE THE TIMING OF THE NEXT WAR AS WELL, WHICH IT SEEMS TO ME, IS AN INTOLERABLE BURDEN ON ISRAEL.

Feith: That’s one way of looking at it. There’s a debate in Israel over military strategy. When Prime Minister Ariel Sharon decided that Israel was going to withdraw unilaterally from Gaza in 2005, it was an enormously controver-

The administration sent an unconstructive signal by restoring aid to the Palestinian Authority. Hamas may have read it as a sign of possible sympathy for them.

sial decision. It was so controversial that it lost Sharon his own political party.

Controversial as it was, once Israel got out, there was no substantial political support for Israel re-taking Gaza. You hear hardly anybody in Israel saying, “We wish we controlled Gaza.” And so, the Israelis are constrained. They would like to destroy Hamas and

its capabilities, but they don’t want to pay the price of taking over Gaza again. The question then is, is there a middle ground where the Israelis can go in on the ground, destroy Hamas, destroy the infrastructure, and then leave? There might be large Israeli casualties if they did that, and even larger Palestinian casualties, strong international condemnation and Israel’s position in the world would suffer.

There are other people who say the Israelis should go in on the ground, do the job they need to do, and their position in the world wouldn’t be that much worse than it is now when they get denounced anyway. Maybe they could clean up the Hamas problem to a much greater extent than they can by trying to fight it from outside and from the air.

■ *The Iran Deal*

BRYEN: IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS UNANIMITY IN ISRAEL ABOUT WHAT HAMAS IS, BUT WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT, NOT SO MUCH. YOU MENTIONED IRAN. THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION IS PURSUING A NEW DEAL WITH IRAN, IN THE COURSE OF WHICH THEY HAVE DECIDED, OPENLY, TO LEAVE THINGS OFF THE TABLE: HUMAN RIGHTS, SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM, INCLUDING HAMAS AND HEZBOLLAH BUT ALSO THE HOUGHIS. DOES THAT

STOKE THIS PROBLEM AT THIS TIME? DID HAMAS AND IRAN THINK THEY HAD A CLEAR SHOT AT ISRAEL BECAUSE THE BIDEN PEOPLE WERE MORE INTERESTED IN THE IRAN DEAL?

Feith: I think that is slightly less clear. There are people in the administration at



Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas (Photo: kremlin.ru)

senior levels who are precisely in line with the way you've described the policy. But my sense is there are some people who show at least some awareness that the world has changed in the years since the Obama administration made the Iran deal.

The world has changed, in ways that have made Iran a lot weaker than it was five, six, seven years ago.

America's unilateral sanctions on Iran were far more effective than almost anybody I know believed was possible. Most people, including people who were in favor of a very hard line toward Iran, like myself, believed that to be effective, U.S. sanctions needed to be supported internationally, multilaterally; that the United States by itself would not be able to put a really effective squeeze on Iran. But the squeeze that the Trump administration put on unilaterally turned out to be far more effective than I believed was possible. You have to give the Trump administration credit for having seen that unilateral U.S. sanctions imposed in a very strong fashion could constrain the Iranian economy far more than almost all the experts said was possible.

To give you an example, as a result of the economic sanctions imposed by the Trump administration, Iranian oil exports went down from around 2.9 million barrels a day to 0.5 million barrels a day. That's stunning. It devastated

the value of the Iranian currency. It drove prices up throughout Iran, which created enormous political unhappiness and mass demonstrations against the regime. The Iranians were brought to their knees economically.

As they are trying to revive negotiations with Iran, there are people in the administration who realize that the Iranians are crippled economically. And so that allows for a harder line by the United States.

I do think that the Biden administration is making a terrible mistake in trying to keep a narrow focus on the nuclear program rather than bringing into the dialogue with Iran all of the Iranian activities that are counter to American interests. I also think it's a mistake to talk about relieving the Iranians rapidly from our economic pressure. Whatever hope we have of concessions from the Iranians – agreement to back off on the activities that are harmful to us – come from that enormous economic pressure. We should keep them there. But the Biden administration's strategy seems not to take this properly into account.

Nevertheless, they're not just rushing into a deal. They are not relieving the economic pressure immediately. And it's possible that some top administration officials are just claiming to want to restore the old nuclear deal while

actually focusing on taking advantage of the Iranians' weakened position. So far, we don't have a deal. If the administration maintains the position that they want one, but they can't achieve one, while keeping the Iranians in a severe economic squeeze, that's not a terrible position. I'd feel better if they had a smarter declaratory position, more in line with the more hard-headed position that some hawks are advocating. But you can't expect the Biden people to sound like hawks, that's not their political constituency.

■ **Funding the PA Equals Funding Hamas**

BRYEN: BUT WHETHER THAT GIVES AID AND COMFORT TO HAMAS AND ITS DECISIONS TO FIRE AT ISRAEL IS STILL AN OPEN QUESTION.

Feith: Something that may be encouraging Hamas is the Biden administration's decision to restore economic aid to the Palestinians, despite continuing Palestinian support for terrorists. That could have affected Hamas calculations. It may have led Hamas leaders to think that they would not pay a severe price with the United States by launching their rockets at Israel.

The administration sent an unconstructive signal by restoring aid to the Palestinian Authority. Hamas may have read it as a sign of possible sympathy for them. They got a lot of sympathy from John Kerry last time around, in 2014, and they may have thought that the Kerry team had returned. If they believed that, they're probably now somewhat disappointed.

BRYEN: IT'S OKAY WITH ME IF THEY'RE DISAPPOINTED. HOW MUCH OF THIS HAS TO DO WITH HAMAS-FATAH POLITICAL WARFARE? HAMAS DEMANDS THAT ISRAEL LEAVE THE TEMPLE MOUNT AND STOP EVICTING PEOPLE FROM THE SHEIK JARRAH NEIGHBORHOOD OF JERUSALEM. THIS IS AN

ENTRY BY HAMAS INTO THE POLITICAL WORKINGS OF WHAT HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY'S PURVIEW ON THE EASTERN SIDE AND THE WEST BANK AND IN JERUSALEM. HOW MUCH OF THIS IS VIOLENCE BETWEEN HAMAS AND FATAH FOR CONTROL OF THE PALESTINIAN NARRATIVE?

Feith: To understand a phenomenon as large as war, you have to take a lot of things into account. And certainly, the things that you've just highlighted are an important element of the current politics. They

The Abraham Accords represent a strategic decision by Arab countries that, in the life and death matter of the Iranian threat against them, the Israelis are enormously valuable and effective allies.

provide triggers and political opportunities for action by Hamas to score points against the PA, to make the PA leadership look, not just corrupt, but old and tired and ineffectual. And so, Hamas looks young and vigorous, rising to the defense of Arab interests in Jerusalem. There is political competition between Hamas and the PLO people who run the PA.

■ **Causes and Triggers**

But people, and journalists in particular, often fail to see the forest for the trees by focusing on current political issues – the triggers for current action – rather than the deeper motivations. The dispute over the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of Jerusalem and the clashes between Israeli police and Arab demonstrators on the Temple Mount at the al-Aqsa mosque may be triggers, but they are not the cause of the Hamas-Israel war. When journalists say that those things caused the war, it's as ignorant as believing World War I was caused

by the assassination of the Archduke in Sarajevo. There's a difference between a war's triggering event and a cause. No serious person should believe that the war between Hamas and Israel is about rental payments in Sheikh Jarrah.

And that's why I emphasized the importance of the Hamas Covenant. I want to remind people to take a step back and see the strategic picture and not get lost in the details of the current scene and its particular disputes. Hamas is at war with Israel because its members believe that Israel's existence is an offense against Islam, and against

the Arab and Palestinian people, and the only way to remedy the injustice and dishonor caused by Israel is to end its existence. That's why there's a war between Hamas and Israel.

There is no lack of excuses for Hamas to initiate active combat. There's no shortage of rocks to throw, and there's no shortage of incidents between Israelis and Palestinians that can be used as an excuse – a trigger – for violence.

It's misleading and ignorant for journalists and government officials around the world to believe that what is motivating Hamas, which has a strategic commitment to Israel's destruction, is some petty quarrel that Hamas happens to cite for its own immediate political purposes.

■ **The Abraham Accords**

BRYEN: A CONCLUDING QUESTION: DO YOU THINK ISRAEL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GULF STATES WILL EXTEND BEYOND THE FIGHTING IN

ISRAEL THIS SPRING AND CONTINUE TO PROVIDE BENEFITS FOR BOTH SIDES IN THE FUTURE?

Feith: The Abraham Accords represent a strategic decision by Arab countries that, in the life and death matter of the Iranian threat against them, the Israelis are enormously valuable and effective allies. That is even more important to them than giving support to the long-standing Palestinian war against Israel, especially because Palestinian leaders are generally on the side of Iran. That really antagonizes the Gulf Arabs. And the Palestinian leadership is in any event corrupt and ineffectual.

The UAE and Bahrain were repudiating the idea that the United States and Israel could make substantial diplomatic progress – and increase strategic cooperation – with the Gulf Arabs only after Israel reached a peace settlement with the Palestinians. The idea had dominated U.S. policy for decades. The Gulf Arabs are now saying, however, "It's not true. We're willing to have closer cooperation with Israel and the U.S. to deal with our important strategic problems, even if the Palestinians remain benighted and violent and pro-terrorist and unconstructive." That's what gave rise to the Abraham Accords.

The current fighting with Hamas further shows that Arab parties to the Abraham Accords give more weight to their own particular strategic concerns than to the political preferences of Palestinians. None of those parties cancelled or suspended the Accords as a result of the Hamas-Israel war - further proof that the leaders of the UAE, Bahrain and the other parties are no longer willing to subordinate their national security interests to the policies of Hamas and the PLO.

BRYEN: DOUG FEITH, ON BEHALF OF THE JEWISH POLICY CENTER AND THE READERS OF inFOCUS QUARTERLY, THANK YOU FOR AN ENLIGHTENING CONVERSATION.

By Renewing Palestinian Aid, America Is Funding Terrorism

by **STUART FORCE** and **SANDER GERBER**

Editor's Note: After the 11-day Hamas rocket war on Israel, the Biden administration announced it would send aid to Gaza through UNRWA and the Palestinian Authority (PA). This appears to be a violation of both the letter and the intent of the Taylor Force Act.

Capt. Taylor Force was an Eagle Scout, a West Point graduate who served multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, and an all-around terrific young man. In 2016, on a university study trip to Israel, he was murdered by a Palestinian terrorist on a stabbing rampage near Tel Aviv's beach. He was twenty-eight years old.

Then-Vice President Joe Biden, only minutes away, meeting with Israeli officials, heard the sirens of first responders racing to the scene. His coincidental personal connection to Force's death makes his emerging Palestinian aid policy hard to swallow: the proposed aid will effectively reward such attacks, violating both letter and spirit of an anti-terror-funding law bearing Force's name.

Force's family suffered another blow when Palestinian authorities declared the terrorist, killed mid-attack by police, a "hero" and "martyr." That designation entitled his family to substantial lifetime payments. Incredibly, those special "pay-for-slay" payments to families of such "heroic" terrorists—dozens of whom murdered U.S. citizens like Force—were effectively underwritten by hundreds of millions of dollars in annual U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA). In 2017, those reward payments totaled \$345 million. Is there a more obscene use of

our American taxpayer dollars?

Fortunately, bipartisan support coalesced to re-align misguided U.S. policy. In 2018, the Taylor Force Act became law, prohibiting American economic assistance which "directly benefits the Palestinian Authority" as long as the PA continues to pay financial rewards for terrorism.

Yet, even facing an aid cutoff, the cash-strapped PA insists on honoring, subsidizing and rewarding terrorists, condemning efforts to stop the terror-incentive payments as "insane" and "aggression against the Palestinian people."

State Department criteria judge

all assistance represents a direct benefit.

The Biden administration is, nevertheless, forging ahead with new assistance to the Palestinians, notwithstanding the PA's refusal to budge on blood money payments. It has quietly moved to give \$130 million ostensibly for Palestinian law enforcement and civil society. A recently leaked State Department memo implies that the aid will go through various civil society groups and NGOs not officially connected to the PA.

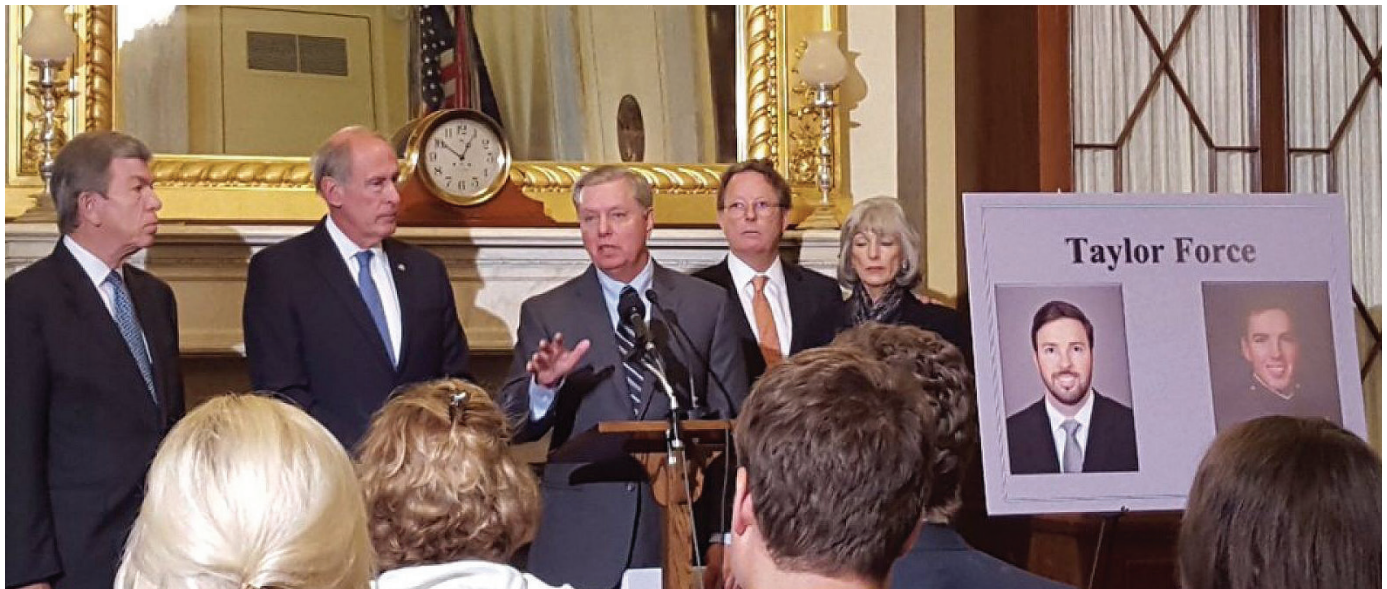
While that sounds theoretically reasonable, practically it merely elevates form over substance. It circumvents U.S.

The Biden administration is... forging ahead with new assistance to the Palestinians, notwithstanding the PA's refusal to budge on blood money payments.

whether aid "directly benefits" the PA by "the extent of ownership or control the PA exerts over...the primary beneficiary or end user of the assistance," and "whether the assistance or services provided directly replace assistance or services provided by the PA." For example, paying the PA's electrical bills frees up PA funds for terror reward payments, and is thus prohibited. The de facto control the authoritarian PA exerts over all Palestinian institutions means almost

law by essentially laundering funds that will still ultimately benefit and fall under the control of an unrepentant PA, still doling out rewards for terror.

A new PA law has effectively nationalized all once-independent civil society groups and NGOs. They now must submit plans and budgets to the PA to review their conformity with the "work plan of the relevant ministry." Additionally, the law gives the PA power to dissolve any organization and seize or transfer



The Taylor Force Act being introduced by Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Sen. Dan Coats (R-Ind.) and Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) in 2016. Taylor Force's father, Stuart Force is pictured at the center-right.

its assets “to a similar Palestinian association or institution.” Aid to “independent” organizations can now be seized by the very PA that the United States is legally prohibited from funding directly.

Meanwhile, a new (nonpartisan) Government Accountability Office audit shows that from 2015 to 2019, the U.S. government could not sufficiently vet aid sub-grantees, as required under U.S. anti-

Proponents insist that funding “clean” entities won’t “directly benefit” the PA or consequently directly fund terror or “pay-for-slay” payments. From a purely legal standpoint, that is debatable; but from a moral standpoint, it is abhorrent: it facilitates “pay-for-slay” through a shell game where the funding ultimately lands in the same pockets. In this case, “benefiting” vs. “directly ben-

The principle behind the Taylor Force Act is morally compelling and transcends partisan politics. Hiding behind semantics to pretend that U.S. tax dollars will not flow to the sponsors and families of the murderers of Force and so many other Americans is cowardly. Could any honorable administration figure look our families in the eye and tell us otherwise?

The same bipartisan consensus which stood behind this principle before must step forward again: the moral calculus is no different today. The administration must not dishonor itself by doing the unconscionable: laundering U.S. tax dollars to the very terror networks responsible for promoting and rewarding the shedding of innocent blood, particularly that of U.S. citizens.

The principle behind the Taylor Force Act is morally compelling and transcends partisan politics. Hiding behind semantics to pretend that U.S. tax dollars will not flow to the sponsors and families of the murderers of Force and so many other Americans is cowardly.

terrorism laws. That giant unaccountability loophole has allowed millions in U.S. taxpayer dollars to flow to terror-supporting sub-grantees, laundered through misleadingly benign-sounding NGOs such as the Palestinian Peace Coalition and Pal-Think for Strategic Studies.

efiting” is a distinction without a moral difference.

However pure our intent, practically, aid we direct to non-terror-connected Palestinians will be intercepted through the thuggish tyranny of a PA still subsidizing “pay-for-slay.”

STUART FORCE is a former US Air Force officer and pilot. He and his wife Robbi were instrumental in the passage of the anti-terror financing law named for their son, Taylor. SANDER GERBER is the CEO of Hudson Bay Capital Management, a distinguished fellow at JINSA, and a fellow at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. This article originally appeared in The National Interest.

Lebanon's Crisis and Its Impact on Israel

by YOCHANAN VISSER

Editor's Note: Since the Port of Beirut explosion in 2020, Lebanese the currency has lost 90 per cent of its value, inflation has driven more than half the population below the poverty line, the country has defaulted on its debts, and banks have all but cut clients off from their dollar deposits. Scenes of shoppers brawling over scarce goods, protesters burning tires to block roads, and hundreds of shuttered businesses are commonplace. And Israel is Lebanon's neighbor.

The unprecedented economic, political, and social crisis in Lebanon seems to worsen every day and the caretaker government of Prime Minister Hassan Diab gives the impression it has no clue what to do to tackle the country's myriad problems.

Lebanon is "in the heart of great danger" and needs friendly countries to save it, Diab said in June in a televised address to the nation. "Either you save it (Lebanon) now before it's too late or else no regrets will help... I call on political powers to present concessions, and those will be small no matter how big they may seem. Only that will alleviate the suffering of the Lebanese and stop this frightening path."

Diab has been leading the caretaker government since his cabinet resigned in the aftermath of the Beirut port blast on August 4, 2020. The giant explosion devastated large swathes of the Lebanese capital and killed hundreds of people while injuring thousands. *To get an idea just how dire the current situation is, you only have to read an interview with Michel Aboud the President of Caritas Lebanon.*

Aboud reported a chronic shortage of medicines and medical equipment in Lebanon. "We can always find a piece of bread – that is not lacking – but not having medicine is terrible. Hospitals can't pay doctors or operate equipment. We are in a critical situation, and we don't want to die while waiting for a solution to our problems."

Aboud's statement about "always finding a piece of bread" must be taken with a grain of salt.

Less than a year ago a food crisis began in the Cedar country, once a hub of prosperity in the Middle East that attracted many tourists and businessmen. The existing food crisis was greatly ex-

acerbated after the government raised the price of bread for the first time in a decade in July 2020. In one fell swoop, bread prices rose 33 percent, causing a run on supermarkets as people tried to stock up on essential food items.

tried to obtain generators but without fuel, it was pointless. Diab then turned to the Iraqi government and asked for help – which he received when Bagdad agreed to deliver a portion of the needed fuel.

This exposed the real problem in Lebanon. Hezbollah.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah is the defacto leader of Lebanon and without his consent nothing happens or will change in the country. Hezbollah's dominance is a huge problem, but the Lebanese government and military don't have the means, or in many cases the will, to act against the heavily armed Iranian proxy.

Nasrallah intervened in the energy

...the Lebanese government and military don't have the means, or in many cases the will, to act against the heavily armed Iranian proxy.

crisis and announced that he would request the necessary oil shipments from the Iranian regime.

■ Israel's Concerns & International Diplomacy

Israel is increasingly concerned that Hezbollah and Iran will use Lebanon's massive economic and social crisis to take over the country completely and then prepare for a massive multi-front attack on the Jewish state. The expanding internal crisis accounts for the Israeli

government's recent diplomatic offensive in Europe and in Russia.

In March, outgoing Israeli President Reuven Rivlin and Aviv Kochavi, Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), arrived in Europe to speak with European leaders about the growing threat from Iran through Hezbollah.

They spoke with German President Frank Walter Steinmeier and Foreign Minister Heiko Maas. The Israeli delegation was also in France, where Rivlin and Kochavi spoke with President Emmanuel Macron. France has a historic role in Lebanon as its colonial ruler, and French governments have maintained close ties with Beirut. Macron has spent months trying to mediate between the parties to establish a stable government in the crisis-ridden country. However, he now gives the impression that he has given up his effort to find a solution.

While Rivlin and Kochavi were in Germany, Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi flew to Moscow to discuss the same subject with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov.

The Russian Foreign Minister had received a high Hezbollah delegation two days before he met with Ashkenazi. He spoke with Mohammed Raad, leader of the Hezbollah bloc in the Lebanese parliament, and urged him to agree to the formation of a new government under the leadership of Sa'ad Hariri, who had previously served as Lebanon's Prime Minister. But it is Raad's Hezbollah bloc that has been blocking the formation of a government since the port explosion.

Hezbollah and its Shiite allies have held up the formation of a technocratic government led by Hariri, a Sunni Muslim, because they do not want to lose control. They continue their obstructionism to this day, putting up new obstacles to undermine any progress made in political discussions. The situation remains stuck now over Shiite opposition to a proposal to appoint two Christian politicians to ministerial posts in the new cabinet.

Influential Lebanese leaders outside



Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon. (Photo: khamenei.ir)

the government have tried to resolve the deadlock by organizing meetings with members of the political parties, but their efforts have been in vain thus far.

■ **Undermining Regional Stability**

Hezbollah's manipulation of this enormous crisis is designed to gain total dominance, threatening not only the Lebanese people and Israel, but also regional stability. This is the conclusion drawn not only by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs but also by the United Nations (UN), which published a comprehensive report on the situation. The report plainly states that Iran is continuing its destructive role in the region by providing financial support to Hezbollah as well as through weapons and training of Hezbollah terrorists.

The UN report further describes the situation in southern Lebanon and criticized Hezbollah for the continued violation of Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended The Second Lebanon War in 2006, and called on the (non-existent) Lebanese government to take measures that will allow the UNIFIL peacekeeping force to do its job. According to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, Hezbollah constantly hinders UNIFIL

in the performance of its duties under Resolution 1701:

I call upon the Government of Lebanon to take all actions necessary to ensure the full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), which require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon so that there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than those of the Lebanese State.

The terror organization uses the pseudo environmental protection organization "Green Without Borders" to block UNIFIL investigations into Hezbollah's illegal activities on the border with Israel. IDF intelligence officers believe Iran and Nasrallah will further exploit the situation in Lebanon to carry out their plan to eventually transform Lebanon into a base from which to attack Israel.

The understanding that Iran and Hezbollah may find no serious international pushback to their attempt to take over Lebanon – and that the catastrophic situation there could end in a scenario like the one that occurred in Syria – was the reason for Rivlin, Kochavi, and

Ashkenazi's trips to Europe and Russia.

As Lebanon continues to slide toward disaster, Iran and Hezbollah make their intention to control the country even more clear and their threats against anyone pushing for reform in Lebanon more obvious. In a recent speech from his bunker, Nasrallah even threatened the Lebanese citizens who have long protested the dire economic situation. It was, therefore, no coincidence that a number of IDF intelligence officers recently published an article in the newspaper *Yediot Aharonot*.

The officers wrote that the IDF knows everything about Nasrallah, and that the Hezbollah leader knows this. The article was clearly intended as a warning to Nasrallah: Do not go too far! According to a description of the article, Nasrallah is "obsessed with reading Israeli media coverage, with his image in Israel and in Lebanon in general and with maintaining extraordinary levels of micromanagement and control of the Lebanese state."

■ **The Hamas War**

The recent war in southern Israel also showed that Iran, via its proxies in Syria, Lebanon, and Gaza, pulled the strings. Hamas receives \$30 million from Iran every month while Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) openly admits that it is a de facto branch of the Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). Both terror organizations in Gaza received sophisticated weapons from Iran and their operatives are trained by Iranian officers in the local production of rockets and missiles. In fact, there was a so-called "war room" in Beirut during the conflict where IRGC officers together with Hezbollah and Hamas operatives coordinated the battle against Israel.

Hezbollah was indeed careful not to go too far by opening a second front in northern Israel, but it was involved in the war effort by shipping weapons and ammunition to Hamas and by provoking Israel via Iranian-backed Palestinian factions in Lebanon and, Syria. Those

militias were responsible for the three times that rockets were fired at northern Israel during the eleven-day war.

Hezbollah operatives, furthermore, led the demonstrations against the IDF near Metullah in northeast Israel. During these clashes, the Israeli army killed one Hezbollah terrorist.

■ **Lebanese Frustration**

The Iranians and Hezbollah are exploiting the crisis by doing nothing to alleviate the dire situation at home and by blocking the formation of a government that could be able to work to put things in order. Such a government is essential to receiving foreign aid and obtaining a gigantic IMF loan, which in turn might "save Lebanon," as Diab put it.

The Lebanese people, meanwhile, are fed up with the total collapse of their country and have taken to the streets again. In June, protesters in various parts of the country blocked roads even amid fears that the Lebanese Army (LAF) would use force or even live fire to reopen the more important intersections. They are becoming more desperate by the day but have no one to turn to.

This leads us to the question where the United States is in this whole drama.

■ **The American Role**

The Trump Administration had wanted to up the pressure on Hezbollah and Iran and so put more sanctions on members of Hezbollah. So far, the Biden Administration has not lifted these sanctions. However, the Biden State Department also expressed the view that it wants to maintain "cordial ties" with Lebanon and appears to have given Europe the lead on how to deal with the Lebanese crisis and "fix" the failed state.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken has been in Europe, where he discussed what to do with Lebanon as long as it has no functioning government. Massive foreign aid is made conditional by both Europe and the U.S. on political and economic reforms – something that will not happen anytime soon.

But while aid appears to be off the table for now and sanctions remain, the Biden Administration has allowed the sale of seven fast patrol boats to Lebanon to go forward. The official explanation for this sale is that it will allow the Lebanese government to "stop smugglers."

It should be understood that the smuggling of goods and medicines is an industry for Hezbollah and that Washington expects that these fast patrol boats will be manned by members of the Lebanese Army (LAF) in opposition to Hezbollah. The LAF, however, cannot be seen as a reliable partner for the United States, as its members have a long history of corruption and collaboration with Hezbollah.

A recent report by The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, furthermore, showed that the LAF has no less than 400 generals who upon retirement "receive a one-time six-figure pension payout, as well as a monthly stipend and a car, driver, and free gas in perpetuity."

Former Assistant Secretary of State David Schenker, who wrote the report, noted that:

Watching Lebanon's continued deterioration is difficult, but the decline is clearly attributable to what the World Bank recently described as 'the disastrous deliberate policy inaction' of Lebanese political elites. Washington and its partners should therefore continue using carrots and sticks to press these elites into putting their country first, while maintaining the international insistence on reform as a prerequisite for a bailout."

In the meantime, Hezbollah gains ground, the Lebanese people suffer, and Israel worries.

YOCHANAN VISSER is Middle East analyst for several Israeli and Dutch news outlets, including Israel Today and Israel National News.

Israel's Innovation Ecosystem Must Evolve

by URI GABAI

“The word ‘impossible’ has ceased to exist in the vocabulary of technical science... We ourselves will use and carry on every new attempt in our Jewish land... making of the new land a land of experiments and a model state.” These words were written more than a 135 years ago by Theodor Herzl about his vision for the Jewish state’s future.

Israel achieved a lot since Herzl wrote these words, but the journey is far from over.

In the past two decades, the mainstream Israeli economy has not caught up with the extraordinary “Start-Up Nation.” Israeli engineers and entrepreneurs are behind some of our most revolutionary smart transportation innovations (e.g., Via, Waze, Mobileye and Moovit), yet Israel has been dragging its feet for decades to adopt the century-

the top tech companies from around the world attest to the Israeli high-tech sector’s unique global attractiveness, yet the productivity level in almost every other sector is significantly lower than the corresponding OECD average.

Such dualities are not uncommon in Israeli society. Though Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East, its political dysfunction dragged citizens through four elections in two years. Israel has a buzzing LGBTQ scene, but no civil marriage. It mishandled many aspects of the battle with coronavirus, yet it led the world’s most successful vaccination campaign, (hopefully) putting the pandemic behind it. Its education system produces Nobel Prize winning scientists and incredible technical minds, but in 2018 it trailed in 41st place in the standardized math test among 79 countries.

post-coronavirus era as the Israeli tech industry is heating up faster than the Negev desert in mid-summer. Despite - or perhaps because of - the pandemic, 2020 was a record-breaking year for the tech industry, with \$10B of equity investments in Israeli startups, up 25% from 2019. Don’t expect this frenzy to calm down in 2021. Investments already reached the \$10B mark in the first five months, as dozens of startups in Fintech, cybersecurity, and enterprise software are raising increasingly bigger rounds (median deal size rose from \$6.8B to \$14B). Assuming this pace continues, it is likely we will surpass \$20B, an unthinkable figure pre-corona (average figure for 2017-2019 was \$6.5B).

True, this isn’t just an Israeli phenomenon. The pandemic has ushered the world into “The New Digital Age” in which digital interaction is the standard. Working and studying remotely, shopping, banking, and checking in with a physician online, and streaming most of entertainment to our living rooms – all became second nature in 2020. Many of these trends are irreversible. And so, we see tech companies all over the world racing forward, disrupting one industry after another while creating an unprecedented amount of wealth.

This hyper-digital disruption changes not just economies, but also geopolitics. A country’s clout no longer depends solely on size and military might. The ability to form a powerful ecosystem that produces cutting-edge technologies and innovative companies is quickly becoming a key trait in the global balance of power. The innovation race has replaced

The gap between the innovation and mainstream economy is becoming one of the most fundamental challenges Israel will face in the next decades.

old subway technology. Israeli Fintech innovators, such as Lemonade, Hypo, Fundbox, and Payoneer are disrupting financial businesses all over the world, yet 2020 was the first time in 40 years that a new bank was registered in Israel. Three hundred seventy R&D centers of

■ *Accelerating the Innovation Economy*

The gap between the innovation and mainstream economy is becoming one of the most fundamental challenges Israel will face in the next decades. This gap is widening even faster in the



The Azrieli Towers a center of commerce in Tel Aviv, Israel (Photo: Zoonar GmbH / Alamy)

last century's nuclear arms race, with aspiring global leaders like China choosing to base their growth strategy on technological innovation, and specifically on artificial intelligence (AI).

Israel's recent diplomatic breakthroughs illustrate this phenomenon. Its new "popularity" in the region is largely due to its technological prowess. The Abraham Accords, normalizing the relationship between Israel and the Gulf countries, represent the shift from oil to data as the sine-qua-non of our era. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and other countries in the region understand that there is much to be gained from forming close ties with the Israeli tech ecosystem. Indeed, these newly formed ties are likely to benefit both sides - from Gulf based companies being first clients of Israeli technologies, through Gulf individuals and funds investing in Israeli start-ups, to Israeli experts helping UAE and other countries in the region strengthen their

own innovation ecosystem.

Yet in order to transform from an ecosystem leader to a leading economy, Israel's innovation capability must transition to its next phase. Forty years into this unprecedented journey, the outcomes of the Israeli model are clear. The entrepreneurial culture and the level of technology are unmatched anywhere in the world outside Silicon Valley - Israel leads the world in R&D investments, in GDP terms, as well as in VC investments and startups per capita. Yet at the same time, the spillovers from this innovation to the mainstream Israeli economy are rather scarce, leading to many of the aforementioned dualities.

Three major goals must be on Israel's innovation agenda.

■ **Maintaining Tech Leadership**

The first and most basic one is to maintain and fortify Israel's tech

leadership in the next decades. This is becoming increasingly difficult as more countries and regions enter the global innovation race. And as artificial intelligence (AI) turns out to be the general-purpose technology of this century, economies with access to big data - AI's "fuel" - have an inherent advantage. This means that Israel, with its nine million people, must be much more innovative, inventive, and agile than big countries whose citizens produce several orders of magnitude more data.

To achieve this, Israel's tech industry, academia, and government must work together to focus and enhance its competitive advantage. Indeed, Israel's biggest achievements in the innovation sphere emerged from such public-private partnerships that paved the way to what became the "Start-Up Nation." Government and academia are especially important in the beginning of an innovation cycle when infrastructure and

regulation play a crucial role. We are currently in such a moment, as economic and social gains from the internet, social networks, and smartphones begin to subside, giving way to the age of smart, and increasingly independent machines.

Israel's biggest achievements in the innovation sphere emerged from such public-private partnerships that paved the way to what became the "Start-Up Nation."

One of the major obstacles to sustaining Israel's tech leadership is the now-chronic shortage of engineers. A May 2021 report, by Start-Up Nation Central, showed that even amidst a once-in-a-century pandemic, the overall appetite for tech talent – estimated at more than ten thousand people – still significantly exceeds the human capital Israel produces on a regular basis – roughly 6,500 high-tech graduates every year.

■ *Expanding and Diversifying the Talent Pool*

The solution to this shortage lies not in middle of Tel Aviv nor in discharged soldiers from the elite intelligence Unit 8200. Those talent pools are already exhausted. To pump more fuel into its innovation engine, Israel must overcome the second challenge in the innovation agenda – integrating untapped wells of talent to the tech scene. This includes women – who currently represent less than 30% of tech employees and only 5% of CTOs – as well as the ultra-Orthodox and Israeli Arab populations. The latter two are growing more rapidly than the rest of the Israeli population, so integrating them into high-productivity industries is absolutely essential to Israel's economic sustainability.

Israeli high-tech is quite

homogenous. The typical tech worker is usually male, secular, from the middle to upper-middle class, and lives in the center of the country or in large metropolitan areas. For many Israelis, high-tech is a closed club reserved for the privileged

few. Remote work is an opportunity to overcome that – cultural, religious, geographical, and work-life issues are much easier to overcome when part of the work can be done from a distance.

Incorporating more people into innovative industries is important for most countries, but it is absolutely essential for Israel. Its size and distance from any substantial market make the innovation economy the only globally competitive industry in which Israel can hold a leadership position. Not surprisingly, it is much more rewarding relative to other industries – Israeli high-tech employees earn on average three times the amount their non-high-tech counterparts do.

■ *What's in It For Me?*

The third challenge goes back to the dualities presented in the beginning of this article. It is not socially sustainable to have a thriving tech industry when the majority of Israelis do not benefit from it. Israeli innovation leadership should not be just about making a small group of people rich and helping global companies develop their tech products. It can and should also be used to improve Israel's public and municipal services.

This is not just wishful thinking. Israeli startups excel in reinventing products, services, and work processes for the entire world. Yet those

capabilities are by and large not being directed to address Israel's societal and economic needs. Linking these together will create opportunities for start-ups to pilot their technologies and solutions, while benefitting wider parts of Israel's society. Edtech start-ups can help the education system pioneer a hybrid learning model, combining human teachers and software-based tutoring; healthtech companies can use the data in health organizations' electric medical records to offer Israeli citizens the most advanced precision-medicine treatments; and fintech companies can help improve and simplify the tax regime while minimizing the black economy.

■ *Conclusion*

In the midst of social tensions and erosion of solidarity, we must not lose sight of the goal. The path toward economic and social prosperity is clear: it is only by embracing science and technology can Israel thrive; it is only by ensuring equal opportunities for all can it do so justly.

It is not an easy path. It takes navigating in the most competitive global landscape through the ever-changing tech environment. To help in that journey, we are establishing an innovation policy institute, Start-Up Nation Policy Institute (SNPI) – co-chaired by Mr. Paul Singer and Prof. Eugene Kandel – which I am privileged to lead. Our goal is to help Israeli policy makers navigate the rough waters of this innovation journey, raising tough questions and offering practical solutions. We plan to partner with all those who have the same goals in mind, and we invite those who share our vision to take part in this journey with us.

And remember Herzl.

URI GABAI is CEO of the new Start-Up Nation economic and research policy institute, a think tank that will focus on sustaining Israel's long-term economic health by helping the country keep its competitive edge in high tech innovation.

The New Strategic Context for the U.S.-Israel Partnership

by **MICHAEL EISENSTADT** and **DAVID POLLOCK**

With the Biden administration now in office, the U.S. “special relationship” with Israel is entering a new phase. But its diverse roots remain firmly in place: common values, democratic politics, and strategic interests, as well as close intelligence, military, economic, scientific-technological, cultural, and people-to-people ties. At the same time, recent years have witnessed some dramatic ups and downs in the relationship, along with significant changes in the broader strategic context.

At the global level, the sharpening U.S.-China – and, to a lesser extent, U.S.-Russia – competition looms larger today than in the past, while Middle East oil and gas have lost their centrality to the American economy. Nevertheless, the Middle East is an important arena in this new Great Power competition due not just to growing Asian demand for its energy resources but also to its geographic location, political and religious significance, and continuing potential to export instability worldwide. To the extent that Great Power competition is increasingly economic and technological as well as military and political, Israel is one Middle East state well-placed to deliver outsize contributions.

Israel is a world-class innovator in technologies that will be critical to meeting future challenges, including artificial intelligence (AI), information technology (IT), and cybersecurity; sustainable water, food, and energy solutions; and high-tech medicine. All these areas are supportive of America’s foreign policy priorities: pursuing peaceful Great

Power competition; restoring global economic competitiveness; and building climate resilience, while addressing development, public health, sustainability, and similar concerns. And in all these areas, the United States is the preferred partner of Israeli firms seeking to expand operations and access to the global market. Furthermore, while Israel maintains ties with China, the latter’s investment in the Israeli high-tech sector, for example, is holding at just around 10 percent, while the remaining 90 percent is overwhelmingly with Western, and especially American, partners.

In the Middle East regional arena, a major recent shift offers new horizons for U.S.-Israel cooperation: the tide of Arab “normalization” with Israel, which has occurred with active American support. This current is embodied by the August 2020 Abraham Accords with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, later joined by Sudan, along with a separate but parallel Israeli deal with Morocco. Saudi Arabia, Oman, and others could follow. This trend overturns the conventional wisdom that the unresolved Palestinian conflict is an insurmountable obstacle to decent relations between Israel and Arab states. Beyond that, it paves the way for U.S.-Arab-Israel collaboration in a host of areas. The recent decision by the U.S. Department of Defense to move Israel from the European Command (EUCOM) to the Middle East–focused Central Command (CENTCOM) was greeted without objections by America’s Arab allies and partners and is another important indicator of this new reality.

Regarding Iran, Washington and

Jerusalem were at odds during President Barack Obama’s second term, then in agreement in the era of President Donald Trump, as he withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as the nuclear deal is known, and reimposed stiff sanctions against Tehran. Renewed disagreement can be expected as the Biden administration seeks to rejoin the nuclear accord in some form. As demonstrated by the controversy surrounding Israel Defense Forces chief of staff Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi’s public criticism of this U.S. plan, it is best to air these differences privately. Future consultations on this matter, moreover, will likely include a number of Israel’s new Gulf Arab partners.

Yet despite the serious Obama-era quarrel, both sides have long understood the value of cooperation against threats from Iran. This has included intelligence sharing, missile defense, joint cyber activities, and covert counterterrorism operations.

In addition, one can readily foresee renewed diplomatic disputes over Israeli-Palestinian issues, including the fate of the two-state solution. Managing, if not resolving, such disputes will pose a complicated challenge for both Washington and Jerusalem. To be sure, resolving the conflict would be best for all parties, but this issue is no longer central to U.S.-Israel bilateral ties or the region’s politics.

In the United States, there is rising partisan polarization regarding Israel (but) American domestic politics is no longer the primary driver of the informal U.S.-Israel alliance. Rather, new



Israeli air defense commander Brig. Gen. Tzvika Haimovitch, right, shakes hands with Lt. Gen. Richard Clark, head of the U.S. delegation to the Juniper Cobra air defense exercise in March 2018. (Photo: Israel Defense Forces)

regional and global realities, along with the tangible benefits to the United States of security and economic partnerships with Israel, now drive the “special relationship” to a greater extent.

■ **The Enduring Strategic Logic of the Alliance**

The U.S.-Israel special relationship has traditionally been defined in terms of a moral obligation, shared values, and common interests. During the Cold War, Israel also came to be seen as a strategic asset that served as a bulwark against Soviet influence and a counter to radical Arab nationalism. U.S. military assistance to Israel contributed to peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan and has deterred the outbreak of major interstate Arab-Israel conflicts since 1982.

Washington has demonstrated a commitment to preserving Israel’s “qualitative military edge,” bolstering Israeli deterrence against hostile state and nonstate actors. The United States has also granted Israel “major non-NATO ally” status, signed a free trade agreement with it, and provided it

with substantial military and economic aid – topping \$146 billion since 1949. Moreover, military equipment prepositioned in Israel, valued at around \$1.2 billion, is available to support U.S. contingencies in the eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf. This assistance has helped Israel build an extremely capable military that can independently ensure the survival of the state, without U.S. military intervention.

Washington, moreover, is still seen as an address for Arabs seeking to influence Israeli policies, while Israel is still seen as an address for Arabs seeking to influence Washington. Indeed, the recent Abraham Accords were at least partly born of these kinds of calculations. And Israel is seen by a number of Arab states as a critical ally in the struggle to contain Iran’s influence, as the United States draws down its military presence in the region.

■ **Countering Traditional and Emerging Military Threats**

To address common traditional hard security threats, the United States

and Israel collaborate in numerous areas: intelligence sharing, rocket and missile defense, military and defense-industrial cooperation, and, since 9/11, homeland security.

- **Intelligence Cooperation:** U.S.-Israel intelligence cooperation dates to the early 1950s and has long been a pillar of the security relationship.

Today, Israeli intelligence remains a major source of information regarding the activities of IS and al-Qaeda and their affiliates, Hezbollah’s global activities, as well as Iran’s nuclear program – as exemplified by its successful heist of Iran’s pre-2003 nuclear archive. Israeli sabotage operations, moreover, have helped delay Iran’s nuclear program. Israel’s comparative advantages include a sustained focus on key hard targets, the development of unique sources and innovative methods, and a willingness to incur risk. And as U.S. intelligence increasingly turns its attention to China, Russia, and North Korea and U.S. intelligence spending likely remains flat or decreases, America will rely more on allies such as Israel to fill capabilities and knowledge gaps, manage risk, and maintain situational awareness in the Middle East.

- **Missile Defense.** Israel – America’s most sophisticated partner in this arena – is the only country worldwide with an operational national missile defense system protecting major population centers. U.S. aid for this program since the early 1990s totals more than \$7 billion. In return, the United States has obtained a deeper understanding of the rocket and missile threat in the Middle East, and lessons drawn from Israel’s extensive operational experience since 1991. Israel’s Iron Dome counter-rocket and mortar system – the most active component of the country’s rocket and missile defenses – is credited with more than 2,400 intercepts and an 85 percent success rate, enabling Israel to act with relative restraint in the face of frequent rocket attacks from Gaza.

In light of this success, the United States has purchased two Iron Dome

batteries – renamed “SkyHunter” by the U.S. Army – to fill an interim cruise missile defense gap, and elements of the system are being considered as a long-term answer to the growing rocket, unmanned aircraft system (UAS), and cruise missile threat. However, interoperability and cyber vulnerability chal-

lenges may preclude their integration into U.S. missile defenses. Looking toward the future, Israel and the United States are discussing joint R&D for laser weapons and hypersonic missile defenses.

The past decade has shown the most promising areas for U.S.-Israel engagement to be in the wider regional and global arenas, rather than the narrow Israeli-Palestinian framework...

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• **Military Cooperation** The U.S. and Israeli armed forces have benefited from decades of extensive collaboration in the fields of counterterrorism, military lessons learned, and UAS employment.

• **Counterterrorism.** The Israeli military conducted the first successful rescue of hostages from a hijacked airplane in 1972 and pioneered many of the tactics eventually adopted by U.S. and allied counterterrorism units.

• **UAS, counter-UAS, and robotics.** Israel is producing robotic systems for use on the land and in the sea, and its military is pushing to rapidly integrate robotic systems into its force structure. The U.S. military is evaluating a number of Israeli robotic systems, including the unmanned Micro Tactical Ground Robot and the manned EZRaider HD4 off-road vehicle.

• **Defense-industrial cooperation.** In the past two decades, Israel has emerged as a major supplier of defense articles to the U.S. military, with sales growing from \$300 million annually in the 1990s to nearly \$1.5 billion annually in 2019 – about 20 percent of Israel’s \$7.2 billion in

arms exports in that year. Israeli firms partner with American counterparts or create U.S. subsidiaries to enhance the prospects of sales to the U.S. military and to third countries, thus preserving or creating American jobs. A number of Israeli firms are also trusted suppliers of major components for U.S. weapons systems.

• **Artificial Intelligence.** The AI revolution promises to transform every aspect of human activity, and Israel is poised to help lead it – ranking first globally in the number of AI companies per capita, and third globally in the number of AI start-ups. Israeli developers and start-ups are teaming up with American partners, from giant corporations to small and medium-size entrepreneurs.

■ **Future Challenges**

While Israeli contributions to U.S. economic, national security, and foreign policy objectives are substantial, achieving the full potential of the partnership will require both sides to address several challenges:

• **Lingering Mistrust.** Despite enjoying intimate ties, an undercurrent of mistrust continues to affect U.S.-Israel relations. This is the result of a number of events, including the 1980s-era Jonathan Pollard espionage affair, secret U.S. nuclear talks with Iran followed by Israel’s open lobbying against the 2015 nuclear deal, and Israel’s commercial ties to China. While differences between even the closest of allies are inevitable, the United States and Israel can do more to avoid or defuse such tensions.

• **Delegitimization.** Israel’s critics and enemies are turning to boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) as a means of

diplomatically isolating the Jewish state, limiting its military and economic options, and pressuring it to unilaterally withdraw from the West Bank – which, for many BDS proponents, is a first step toward dismantling Israel itself. Such efforts have not garnered widespread support in the United States and have had a limited impact thus far. Nevertheless, they could, if successful, harm investment in Israel and hinder collaborative R&D and production efforts that are central to the Israeli economy, to high-tech sectors of the U.S. economy, and to the broader U.S.-Israel relationship.

• **Peace with the Palestinians.** The perception that Israel bears significant responsibility for the impasse with the Palestinian Authority has gained traction in various U.S. circles, and could eventually endanger the U.S.-Israel relationship.

■ **Regional Cooperation: A “New Normal”**

The past decade has shown the most promising areas for U.S.-Israel engagement to be in the wider regional and global arenas, rather than the narrow Israeli-Palestinian framework, based not only on growing, mutually beneficial U.S.-Israel economic partnerships, and on the Arab normalization wave, but also on the closer cooperation between Washington and Jerusalem on other important regional issues – including Syria, Iran, and the eastern Mediterranean.

Accordingly, the United States should work with Israeli and Arab diplomatic partners to create synergies between the normalization process and Palestinian needs. If Palestinians resist joint projects with Israel aimed at enhancing their quality of life, addressing water and food security challenges, and building climate resilience, then perhaps Arab partners can help.

This growing momentum on the regional front, moreover, could prompt Egypt and Jordan to warm up their “cold” peace accords with Israel. While they cooperate closely with Israel on

border and other security issues, and periodically on shared energy or water issues, conspicuously lacking have been the deeper economic, environmental, public health, and other ties that would clearly benefit all three countries.

■ **Hard Security Partnerships**

Despite longstanding U.S.-Israel cooperation on hard security issues, room exists for broader and deeper engagement on several fronts. on projects in the region and beyond. Finally, Israel already participates in several significant UN regional programs, with representatives at the Middle East Desalination

future of both countries. In particular, protecting the fruits of joint U.S.-Israel investments and R&D in cutting-edge proprietary technologies, formulas, and processes – both civilian and military – will be key to preserving U.S. and Israeli global competitiveness. Washington and Jerusalem should therefore tighten and broaden cybersecurity cooperation and seek collaborative cybersecurity ventures with other high-tech democracies. And they should consider creating a joint AI R&D institute, emulating successful entities in other areas, such as the U.S.-Israel Energy Center and the BIRD Foundation.

- Growing the National Technology

In today's global context, Israel is one of America's most valuable strategic partners...

Research Center in Oman (since 1996) and the International Renewable Energy Agency headquarters in the UAE (since 2015). This is the ideal time for the United States to become more engaged in these endeavors, which would serve multiple American and global objectives.

- A drone and missile defense “Manhattan Project.” Increasingly, the United States faces adversaries such as Iran, China, North Korea, and Russia that rely on drones and surface-to surface missile systems as core components of their anti-access/area-denial (A2AD) and warfighting capabilities. Everywhere, expensive U.S. and allied missile defenses risk being overwhelmed by much cheaper and more numerous adversary drones and missiles or defeated by countermeasures.

- Cybersecurity and AI. Protecting intellectual property from theft and industrial espionage, and protecting economic activity and infrastructure from cyber-attack, will be critical to the economic

and Industrial Base. The United States must strengthen technological/industrial cooperation with other states. The ability to do so is one of America's key asymmetric advantages vis-à-vis strategically lonely adversaries such as China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran. To this end, the U.S. should consider expanding the NTIB – a defense technology alliance that currently includes the United States, Canada, Britain, and Australia – to include Israel and other high-tech partners that share U.S. interests and values. President Biden should also consider following up on his proposed “Summit for Democracy” by creating an informal grouping of high-tech democracies to set norms, define a common agenda on emerging issues, Israel should be included as a founding member-state of such a grouping, which would offer new ways to advance the U.S.-Israel relationship in a multilateral framework. This could likewise require hard decisions by Israel regarding its ties to China.

■ **Conclusions**

In today's global context, Israel is one of America's most valuable strategic partners – one that not only shares myriad interests and values with the United States, but also makes unique contributions to addressing common challenges in the military, economic, sustainability, and other domains. The Biden administration, even as it attends to other urgent concerns, should build on the achievements of its predecessors to broaden and deepen this partnership toward achieving its full potential – for the benefit of the people of both countries and of the global community. For the relationship's potential to be fully realized, U.S. commercial, technical, scientific, medical, and aid agencies should take even greater advantage of Israeli expertise – and more actively involve Israel alongside other international partners. And the U.S. private sector, which is already deeply invested in practical partnerships with its Israeli counterparts, should be further incentivized to bring home the benefits of these unusually productive connections.

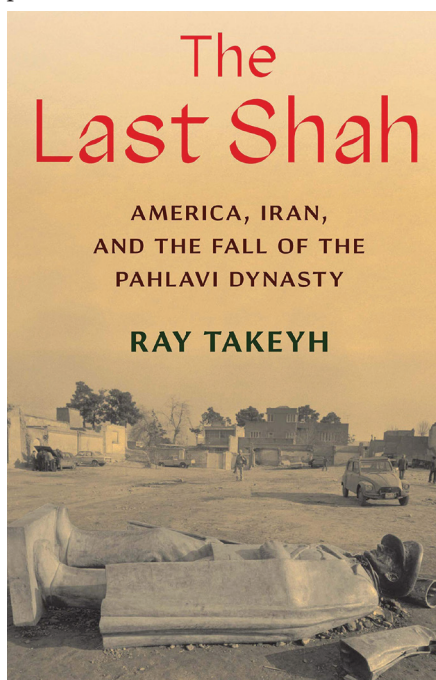
To be sure, even the closest allies occasionally disagree; and some U.S.-Israel disagreements are almost inevitable, regarding both Iran and the Palestinians. Yet as this paper has shown, those issues are no longer the centerpiece of bilateral relations. Instead, a whole web of mutual interests and joint projects – whether security-related, economic/scientific, or some combination thereof – links the two countries, in ways that benefit both. And with the current wave of Arab-Israel normalization, those benefits promise wider sharing across the region as a whole.

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Beach Reading

review by SHOSHANA BRYEN

Take an Iranian to the beach. Take several. Throw in the CIA, State Department, Presidents from FDR to Carter, and shake well. Swallow and digest. These three books will remind you how Shah Reza Pahlavi lost the Peacock Throne (it was a much longer and more interesting process than you might think), how the soap opera of mullahs and seminarians took advantage of the ultimate weakness of the Shah and each other, and enlighten you with the undercurrents of dissent in Iran today. And what America understood, and what it missed, in the process. Read them in order.



Start with *The Last Shah: America, Iran, and the Fall of the Pahlavi Dynasty* by Ray Takeyh of the Council on Foreign Relations. A former State Department official and an Iranian American, Takeyh starts with Reza Shah's attempt to modernize the country prior to World War II. The arrangement was oil for machinery and technology from Germany (which should sound

familiar to post-Shah observers), and a desire to emulate the rapid modernization of Germany in the 1930s. Not quick enough to expel the Nazis, Reza Shah was exiled in 1941 by the British in favor of his 21-year-old son, Crown Prince Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. After WWII, the crises of oil nationalization and Azerbaijan, the departure of the British from the region, and the entry of the United States set the stage. The young Shah was a modernizer as well.

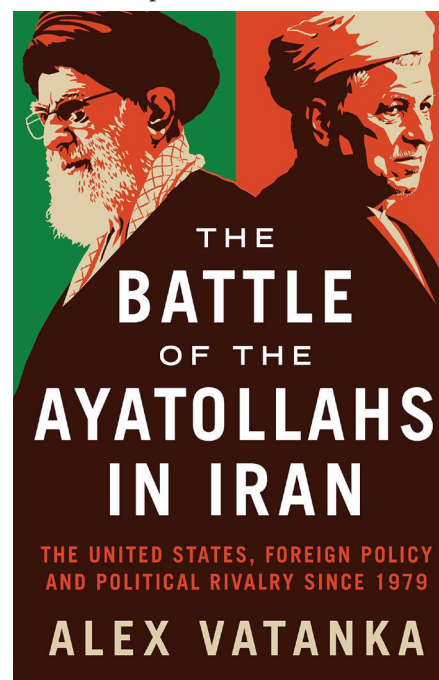
And therein lies the tale.

Takeyh expertly explores – with some sympathy for just about everyone except for the Ayatollah Khomeini – the many threads and personalities in Iran's society over time – mullahs, landlords, bazaar shopkeepers and traders, teachers, student, peasant farmers, the army, and the elites. Communists, socialists, reformers, and traditionalists. They all interacted, made alliances, broke them, and made others. The mullahs had no trouble talking to the communists, the army, and the mullahs, and so on. Interestingly, the CIA comes out looking pretty good, both in the Mosaddeq period (noting that there were two coups, and the CIA was only diffidently engaged in the first, failed one) and in the Carter period. Carter looks stronger than he is often portrayed. Truman and Eisenhower were the last presidents to decline U.S. aid to the Shah on the grounds that there was plenty of revenue available to Tehran if it would solve its own oil nationalization problem – and that American taxpayers would disapprove.

Even the Shah has some good years. His reforms of the 1960s and '70s actually did change the dynamic in society, particularly in the area of land reform, and the 1970s were generally economically and socially positive. But the Shah's increasing interest in dictatorship rather

than constitutional rule soured his relations with several streams of Iranian society, while rapid modernization strained relations among his traditional support groups. His increasingly fearful isolation, leading to the rise of the SAVAK as his protector rather than the army of the state, should be seen as a model for the rise of the IRGC. The ruthless Khomeini was left as the only force able to mobilize the people. Takeyh writes, "No one was willing to die for the Shah."

But where the Shah was unwilling to kill Iranian citizens, Khomeini had no such scruples, nor do his successors.



To better understand the soap opera that was Iran's religious politics, dip into *The Battle of the Ayatollahs in Iran* by Alex Vatanka, who should have had a better English-language editor. Born in Tehran, his family fled, and he spent his youth in Denmark. Educated later in England, he moved to the United States in 2006. Vatanka concentrates on the relationship between Akbar Hashemi

Rafsanjani and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, but the two – alternately partners and rivals – are central to a swirling and ever-changing cast of Iranians who believed the revolution a) could be tamed and b) was getting started in Iran, but had larger, worldwide goals.

The bloody years of 1979-81 ultimately produced an Iranian regime that was closed, radical, and single-minded. Khomeini renounced whatever liberalism he evinced in Paris during his exile. “I said many things in Paris. But I do not consider myself bound by them.” Or anything else. For those who believed Tehran wanted relations with the U.S. and wanted to find a way out of the hostage crisis, the chants of pro-Khomeini demonstrators are instructive. “War, war until the Removal of Intrigue from the Whole World.” And “The road to Jerusalem goes through Karbala (in Iraq).”

It was all there for the U.S. to see and to respond to. Yet, some Americans – including the Obama and (apparently) the Biden administration, through the JCPOA and even now – believe the Islamic Republic can be dealt with. Iranian cheating before and during the JCPOA, the financial and military support for Hezbollah and Hamas (including in the 2021 Hamas rocket war on Israel), the murderous Iranian proxy army war-

Takeyh expertly explores – with some sympathy for just about everyone except for the Ayatollah Khomeini – the many threads and personalities in Iran’s society over time...

fare through the Sunni center of Syria, the Shiite militias of Iraq, the purges of the Iranian Army that killed thousands of officers, the political assassinations, and the religious suffocation of the Iranian people should have told us something.

But no.

The Fight for Iran

Opposition Politics, Protest, and the Struggle for the Soul of a Nation

Ilan Berman



So, you really need *The Fight for Iran: Opposition Politics, Protest, and the Struggle for the Soul of a Nation* by Ilan Berman of the American Foreign Policy Council. By itself, the book is odd. A compendium of Berman’s published columns from 2019 and 2020 defining Iranian opposition groups and their relations with the United States. Or their desired relations with the United States.

I was prepared to dislike it. But I can’t. There is too much important material here – much of it lost in the anti-Trump whirlwind of 2016-2020. In fact,

social opportunities, so *The Fight for Iran* tells the same tale in our own decade. It is a reminder that the people of Iran have been living with upheaval for a very long time. Berman starts with the Trump Administration’s rejection of the 2015 JCPOA (the “Iran deal”), which was coupled with his intention NOT to overthrow the current Islamic government. That was a disappointment to many people – particularly inside Iran and particularly in light of the disintegration of the Iranian economy in 2019 and into the pandemic period of 2020.

This is a roadmap. Former Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, the (reformed?) Mujahedin e-Khalq (MeK) with its violent background, women, particularly Masih Alinejad a former reporter and the women of anti-hijab campaign, and civil society groups and other organizations are all out there, popping up and dropping down. The chapter on ethnic divisions is essential reading – what is the role of the nearly 27 million Azerbaijanis and 8 million Kurds and 5 million Arabs among 42 million Persians?

In the civil society chapter, Berman writes:

According to [activist Marian Memarsadeghi] Iran’s population today is very similar to the captive audience that languished behind the Iron Curtain. It... understands full well the deformities of the current regime, chafes under its increasingly blatant excesses, and has given up hope that any meaningful reform of the existing system is possible. But it is also one that is demoralized by a lack of attention from the outside world and outgunned by the increasingly repressive practices of the ruling regime.

Time does march on, not always as Berman would have it. The chapter on then IRGC posits that the Revolutionary Guard might be the catalyst for overthrowing the regime and notes that some observers thought the death of Soleimani would be the end of the Guard. But no.

At heart, all three books are about America as much as about Iran. Iranians are always asserting their need to be a major power while waiting for someone to rescue them from their internal contradictions. But it is unlikely that anyone will or can. The Americans want to be helpful, even when American “help” makes things worse, as it sometimes did.

Takeyh limns relations between the Shah and Presidents Truman through

in the World: How Jack, Bobby, and Ted Remade America’s Empire by historian Lawrence J. Haas, reviewed in *inFOCUS Quarterly*, Spring 2021]. Nixon and Ford moved closer to the Shah’s view. Carter was surprisingly unhappy with the rise of the mullahs.

Some of Berman’s dissident groups want the United States to overthrow the mullahs and others want Washington to convene a “congress” of change-makers.

that stays inside its boundaries and doesn’t threaten other countries or people of other religions. Nice, idealistic American goals for others and for ourselves. But after the hideous experiences of countries where the U.S. overthrew leaders – Iraq, Libya, Egypt – and waffling on war crimes in Syria – the government doesn’t have any good plans.

So, Berman has prescriptions:

- Make human rights a real issue
- Reach out to the Iranian people through America’s Radio Liberty and Radio Farda, both of which need significant upgrading, and
- Encourage collaboration among opposition groups.

Sigh and reapply your sunscreen. The Biden administration is currently looking for a “peace process” with Iran that involves restoration of the JCPOA and the money. If he succeeds, the dissidents will be further crushed, the region will be in further upheaval with Iranian gains in the Red Sea, North Africa and in countries surrounding Israel. But you will know more.

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... all three books are about America... What does American want? ...for people to have a calm, safe, prosperous life, with a government that stays inside its boundaries and doesn’t threaten other countries...

Carter. The earlier presidents were unwilling to support the Shah’s desire for a bigger and stronger military. Kennedy was a true believer in the power of technology and education coupled with good governance to produce healthy, forward-looking countries in what was then called the Third World [see *The Kennedys*

Some want the U.S. to strangle the economy and others want it to strangle the government. None want a return to the JCPOA or a revival of the money spigot to the mullahs.

What does America want? What we always want – for people to have a calm, safe, prosperous life, with a government



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■ *A Final Thought ...*

U.S. Aid for Terrorists?

Money doesn't care where it's spent – or by whom on what. While we talk about “dirty money” or “laundering money” to make it clean, the morality of money is with the people who spend it. People who spend money doing inoffensive – or even good—things with their money are still behaving immorally if their money helps bad people do bad things with other money.

It's a sort of “money laundering” in reverse. If you can make dirty money clean, you can make clean money dirty. Good money becomes bad by virtue of its impact. And otherwise-good people become tainted by their willingness to help bad people do bad things.

That will be the effect of President Joe Biden's restoration of American funds to the PA. American money will be used for schools, water projects, “civil society” programming and agriculture. But fungibility means that the PA won't have to spend its money on those things and will therefore have more money to pay terrorist salaries. It is a violation in the spirit, if not the letter, of the bipartisan Taylor Force Act.

The PA calls the money paid to terrorists “sacred.” Let's talk about what is sacred and why.

Ehud Fogel, Ruth Fogel and three of their six children – Yoav, 11, Elad, 4, and infant Hadas – are dead, massacred at

home on a Friday night after Sabbath dinner. Palestinian cousins Amjad Mahmad Awad, and Hakim Mazen Awad confessed and there was DNA evidence. Amjad told court reporters: “I don't regret what I did, and I would do it again. I'm proud of what I did, and I'll accept any punishment I get, even death, because I did it all for Palestine.”

Three-month-old Hadas was decapitated.

Having now spent 10 years in an Israeli prison, the Awad cousins are entitled to a 50 percent increase in their PA stipend, a monthly “salary” of \$1,806. They have received more than \$100,000 thus far – and they're only still in their twenties.

Where will that money come from? Possibly, from the U.S. providing “clean” money that the PA will convert into “dirty” money – amounting to laundering money for terrorists.

And just how dirty will it be? Very.

–Shoshana Bryen
Editor, *inFOCUS Quarterly*