

## One Day Forgotten, Eight Worth Remembering

By Daniel Gordis [DanielGordis.org](http://DanielGordis.org) December 11, 2006

A street named for a date was pretty unusual in the neighborhood in which I grew up. In fact, it was unheard of. We had street names like Pimlico Road, Greenspring Avenue and Woodvalley Drive, but nothing that I can recall that contained a date.

Not far from our apartment in Jerusalem, though, and adjacent to the school our boys attend, there's a street named "the 29th of November." No year in the name, because there doesn't need to be. Everyone here knows, or at least used to know, what "kaf tet be-November" represents. 1947. The date of the UN vote to divide British-ruled Mandatory Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The date that made this enterprise possible.

It was the day of the vote, but of images, too. Of the Jews huddled around radios world-over, holding their breath, waiting to see if perhaps, the twentieth century might also bear some better tidings for the Jews. Of the cheering and the crying when the vote was over. Of the dancing in the streets of Tel Aviv when the roll call had been completed. Of the sense, both in what was then Palestine and in Jewish homes throughout the world, that something had changed, that the tide had shifted. Of the hope that out of the ashes of Europe, something positive might still arise.

It's been 59 years since the vote. Fifty-nine years and a few days, to be precise. But if you missed the anniversary, don't feel too bad. No one here noticed it either. I kept waiting to hear someone mention it. But nothing. Not that day in the paper or at work, and not the next.

Less than six decades after the Jewish world sat holding its breath and waiting to see if history might be changed, no one remembered. No one said anything. How's that possible, for a people that's raised memory to an art form, in a country in which every hiccup seems to elicit some national ceremony? How did it all disappear?

The truth is that I'm not sure. But I have a theory. My theory is that no one talked about November 29 this year because it's simply too painful. Because the optimism of that day, just sixty years ago, has largely disappeared. Because people had hope then, and leaders. And a plan. And because all that's changed.

Because November 1947 was the date on which the world said publicly that we had a right to be, but today, the world's changed its mind. A lot has changed since November 1947. If in November

1947 the world voted and agreed (though certainly not unanimously) that this tiny little country had a right to be, today the UN has effectively decided that it was wrong. One member of the United Nations (Iran) publicly declares that another member (Israel) has no right to exist, and suggests that it ought to be destroyed, and the world basically says nothing. Imagine the outcry if France had said that about Belgium, for example.

But Iran can spout its venom, Jimmy Carter can write a book equating Israel with Apartheid (which rises to the very top of Amazon's list) and can then insist in interviews that no, Israel's Apartheid is actually worse than South Africa's, and very few people get terribly worked up. The world's clearly tired of Israel's conflicts ... and of Israel.

No wonder no one here got terribly excited about November 29. Or maybe it's because in our minds November 1947 was the beginning of the growth of Israel, in every way, including its borders. From the absurd lines of the Partition Plan of 1947, the country expanded to the somewhat better situation at the end of the war in 1949, and then to the dramatic expansion in the early days of June 1967. Those were the days in which challenges were met with resilience.

But the days of growth are over, perhaps for better, perhaps for worse, depending on whom you ask. Now, this is a shrinking country. Out of Lebanon in 2000, which was probably a good thing. But we fled, which was not such a good thing. And that flight, and the notion that "you kill enough of them and they eventually flee" led to the outbreak of the second Intifada in October 2000. And that led to getting out of Gaza, which only confirmed the notion that when the going gets tough, we now get running. Which led to Hamas. And then to Olmert's plan to get out of the West Bank. Backpedaling constantly, in the hope that some line will satisfy the lust to see us gone, we're running backwards so fast it's hard even to remember the days when we doggedly inched forward.

These days, of course, no one's terribly worked up about our immediate borders. The Palestinians are the least of our problems. Iran is the issue. A lot of people here believe Ahmadinejad when he says it's time for Israel to disappear. Even if we struck first, which is a huge question mark, how much of what's here would survive his military response? Saddam, and even Hezbollah, are looking like child's

play compare to what might be coming around the bend.

And what's our educational response? The Ministry of Education announces that Israeli textbooks will once again show the green line, the border right before the 1967 war. Despite the fact that Israel's formally annexed parts of those lands. Despite the fact that no one, left or right, believes we're going back to that line. As if those borders are the real issue today. Or as if returning to them would resolve the conflict, and make Hezbollah or Ahmadinejad go away and suddenly accept a Zionist entity in the heart of the Muslim Middle-East.

The educational objective? Not clear. The response? Predictable. Many on the right insist that they will never use these new textbooks or permit them in their schools. And others, from further on the right, suggested that the catastrophic medical ailment that Sharon suffered (because he dared to give back Gaza) will now also happen to the Minister of Education. The theological sophistication and pedagogical nuance of this country can leave one breathless.

Is it any surprise that we're finding it hard to get worked up about a date in November?

Or maybe it's because the memory of November 1947 evokes the image of Ben Gurion reading the proclamation of Israel's independence, just months later. Or of Menachem Begin insisting that the Altalena, the boat bearing arms for his fighters in besieged Jerusalem, which he was determined to save, would not be surrendered. Or the young commander, Yitchak Rabin, who was ordered to sink the Altalena, and did. And also broke through the siege on Jerusalem.

Those were days of broken sieges. Of leaders larger than life. Of courage and resolve in the face of aggression, and savoir-faire in the face of complexity. And now ... November 1947 seems like a different country, doesn't it?

Or maybe it's because in 1947 Jews understood that they were going to have to fight for what little territory they had. This country's filled with graves of survivors of Europe's atrocities who were saved from Europe, brought here by boat, and upon disembarking, given a rifle and sent to the front. Lots of them survived, but many didn't. And some were killed before anyone here even knew who they were. So they're-buried in cemeteries across the country, un-named, with nothing on their tombstone but the day that they were killed, and in the name of the battle in which they lost their lives.

The late 40's and the early 50's were years in which Israel's borders were notoriously porous, the IDF largely unable to stop the attacks of the Fedayeen. But no one ran. Kibbutzim guarded. And the IDF, still in its infancy, retaliated as best it could. And eventually, the attacks stopped. Because back then, there was no moving us.

Today, when Kassams rain across the border into Sderot and the other town surrounding the Gaza border, the response is muted. A response here, a response there, always aimed at the (largely) innocent Palestinians from whose neighborhoods the Kassams are being fired, and not at the leadership of Hamas in Gaza City who ordered the firing in the first place. So, eventually, tragedies like Beit Hanun will happen, and when they do, and when Israel is the recipient of the world's opprobrium, the IDF silences its canons. And Hamas learns its lesson – there's no cost to shelling Israeli towns that are in undisputed Israeli territory (unless you're Hamas and the whole thing is disputed). Israel has lost its resoluteness.

Israelis are tired of fighting, Hamas has figured out. Time is on Hamas' side. A few more years of this, a bit more of that, and the Israelis will move again. Out of Lebanon. Out of Gaza. Where will they abandon next? Sderot? Ashkelon? This time, they fled Sderot for Eilat for a few days. But for how long, next time? Sure, they'll respond here and there, but the fire in the belly is gone. Just keep it up, they've decided. It's just a matter of time. Is it possible that Ahmadinejad isn't as wacko as we'd like to think when he says that Zionism is almost over?

Remember all the years when Kiryat Shmona was under Katyusha attack from the North? When kibbutzim were attacked from Syria, Jordan and Egypt? Who ran? Who fled? Who waited for a Russian billionaire to send them to Eilat for a few days?

But who, by the way, can blame the parents and the kids who wanted out? For from their perspective, why should they remain at home like sitting ducks, when the army can't do anything - won't do anything - to protect them? What's the point of being a hero, they probably ask themselves, when the rest of the country's gone soft?

They've read the same articles about which soldiers died in Lebanon II and which didn't. They know that the settlements from the West Bank and religious nationalists, and the Kibbutzim were disproportionately represented among the IDF's 119 dead, because those are the ideological backbones that still remain in this country. The big cities? Those are the places where more and more, kids have figured out how not to go to the army. So why sit in Sderot and just wait for the next Kassam to kill somebody?

The people who watched what happened here in the weeks following November 29 probably wouldn't believe what they see here now, would they? Maybe it's better that we're letting the memory fade. The comparison could make you dizzy.

Some people's memory doesn't fade, of course. On November 30, the day after, Elisheva (my wife) was up at Atlit, a "detention camp" that the British created for Jews who were caught trying to land on

the shores of Palestine after the British had declared that immigration illegal. The camp is still there, and evokes without much imagination other "camps" where Jews were detained, for even more nefarious purposes. Anyway, when Elisheva went there with a friend, the day after the forgotten day, she saw that in the central square of the former detention camp, chairs had been set up for an "event." What's going on?, she wanted to know.

A birthday party, she was told. Exactly sixty years ago, on November 30, 1946, a boat carrying immigrants to Israel landed. Its name was Knesset Yisrael, or "The Assembly of Israel." On the boat, it turns out, 11 babies had been born. One died on board. Ten survived. One died years later. The other nine are all alive, all still living in Israel, and on November 30, each year, they get together at Atlit to celebrate their birthdays. (On the Photos page of my website, [www.danielgordis.org](http://www.danielgordis.org), I've posted a screen shot of a web site where the children and grandchildren of these people, among others, communicate with each other ....)

When Elisheva returned home, she couldn't stop talking about the idea of this party. A party which means that someone still remembers. A party that evokes the sense of purpose that used to pervade this place. A party of grownup babies whose parents were sent from Europe to Cyprus to Palestine to detention, but who persevered, and whose children and grandchildren are still largely here. A party that stirs the embers of the hope that people here used to feel.

We could use a few more of those parties, it seems to me.

Which is why it's good that another one is around the corner. Not a party exactly, of course, but a day worth remembering. Not November 29, and not November 30. But the 25th of Kislev, or Hanukkah, as it's more commonly known. A holiday that we often think of in terms of a miracle of oil, but which is actually a holiday about something much more basic. It's about the days when the foe seemed insurmountable, when Jews in this very place were giving in, but when, even when the odds appeared overwhelming, a new leadership sprung up and decided to take matters into their own hands. A new leadership that got rid of the Syrian Greeks from much of the land, that restored Jewish sovereignty, and that refused to accept that it was all over. A leadership that believed that sometimes when you can identify the problem, you have to take it out. No matter what the risks.

Which makes Hanukkah worth remembering, doesn't it? We could use the reminder that leadership can reappear. That stick-to-itiveness can re-emerge. That it's possible to rekindle the fire in the belly. That the doldrums into which this country's leadership has allowed it to sink need not be permanent. We did it in the past. Maybe we could do it again.

It would be nice to think so, no? I, for one, am going to light those candles and hope, and pray. That the victories of the past can be repeated. That the will to survive has not been depleted. That the desire to stay here has not been exhausted. And that maybe, just maybe, one more miracle is on its way.

From Jerusalem, Happy Hanukkah.

## Hamas should accept Israeli peace overture

By The San Antonio Express-News editorial November 29, 2006

Months of rocket barrages from the Gaza Strip and repeated Israeli incursions to halt the attacks have added new chapters of pain and sorrow to the already lengthy book of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. With weapons pouring into Gaza amid a power struggle between Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah movement and the Hamas-led government of Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, Palestinian society is teetering on the brink of civil war.

So it was a welcome development Monday when Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert attempted to kick-start the moribund peace process by offering a series of Israeli concessions. Olmert proposed to release Palestinian prisoners, lift Israeli checkpoints

and hand over hundreds of millions of dollars in withheld tax revenue collected by Israel that is desperately needed by the Palestinian Authority.

It will be easy for Hamas, which is still officially committed to the destruction of Israel, to reject Olmert's overture. The concessions don't address the nettlesome issues of Israeli settlements on the West Bank, the disposition of Jerusalem or the status of refugees.

But it would also be a fatal mistake to walk away from an offer that would end the pariah status of the Haniyeh government and ultimately lead to the creation of a Palestinian state.

Unfortunately, it's a mistake Palestinian leaders have made before.

## Hamas on trial (Parts I and II)

By The Washington Times editorial December 3 and December 10, 2006

**PART I** In U.S. District Court in Chicago, the U.S. government is prosecuting two men it claims conspired to finance the activities of Hamas -- the organization elected in January to lead the

Palestinian Authority in Gaza. Since Israel withdrew its soldiers and settlers from Gaza last year, Hamas and other terror groups have turned the territory into a base for firing rockets into the Jewish state,

putting the region on a war footing. The two men on trial, Mohammed Salah and Abdelhaleem al-Ashqar, are accused of engaging in a racketeering conspiracy to fund Hamas from the United States for more than a decade.

The government contends that Mr. Salah recruited Hamas members in the United States and trained them in using explosives, and traveled to Israel to deliver hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash to Hamas members. In January 1993, the government charges, Mr. Salah went to Israel to deliver money to Hamas. He was arrested by Israeli security forces, and was tried and convicted for his role in aiding the terrorist group, serving five years in prison.

Mr. Salah claims his confession to Israeli authorities was false because it was obtained through torture. Prosecutors counter that, while in Israeli custody, Mr. Salah, thinking he was communicating with fellow inmates who were Hamas members, wrote a 53-page document describing in detail his work on behalf of Hamas. They say that Mr. Salah offered to provide Israel with the location of the body of Ilan Sa'adon, an Israeli soldier kidnapped and murdered by Hamas in 1989, in exchange for the release from prison of Salah Shehadah, the founder of Hamas' military wing. When the Israelis refused the offer, Mr. Salah changed his demands, insisting on the release of female Palestinian prisoners and the return of \$100,000 that the Israelis confiscated from his hotel room. When the Israelis agreed to the offer, Mr. Salah drew a map which led Israelis to the body of the slain soldier.

In Mr. Ashqar's case, the government was monitoring his telephone and fax machine. Investigators say they intercepted a September 1993 telephone conversation in which Mr. Ashqar and Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi (assassinated by Israel in April 2004) discussed a suicide bombing which occurred the previous day and Rantisi asked Ashqar to put him in touch with the suicide bomber's family. The state is presenting more than 1,000 pages of documents taken from Mr. Ashqar's home, which are said to include minutes of high-level meetings involving Mousa abu Marzouk (a senior Hamas operative now thought to be in Damascus). The documents include notes on meetings between Marzouk and Yasser Arafat; notes of meetings between Hamas and Hezbollah and Hamas and Iran, and aliases of senior Hamas leaders including Mahmoud al-Zahhar (currently Palestinian Authority foreign minister) and Imad al-Alami, a Hamas representative in Tehran. More detailed information on the trial from terrorism expert Steven Emerson can be found at the

Counterterrorism Blog or at [www.investigativeproject.org](http://www.investigativeproject.org).

**PART II** If Americans were polled, we trust that a majority or near-majority of adults would be able to identify Lindsay Lohan, Danny DeVito or Paris Hilton, and a significant minority (amounting to tens of millions of people) could talk at mind-numbing length about boorish celebrity behavior and the latest idiocies recounted in the tabloids. By contrast, an infinitesimal number of Americans know anything about Muhammad Salah or Abdelhaleem al-Ashqar, now on trial in U.S. District Court in Chicago, accused of financing Hamas. Hamas, elected to run the Palestinian Authority in January, is a major player in the transnational jihadist network supported by Iran and Syria, which is systematically working to foment terror and marginalize American influence throughout the Middle East.

This is particularly significant in view of the fact that the Iraq Study Group (ISG), co-chaired by Jim Baker and Lee Hamilton, has suggested that Washington try to get "A Syrian commitment to help obtain from Hamas an acknowledgement of Israel's right to exist." To put it mildly, this is going to be a very difficult endeavor: In the past few days, senior Hamas representatives in Damascus and Gaza have declared that they will never recognize the Jewish state. And in making their case against Messrs. Salah and Ashqar, prosecutors are implicitly showing just how delusional it is of the ISG to think that Hamas would ever accept Israel.

Mohammed Shorbagi, a mosque leader in Rome, Ga. who pled guilty in April to providing financial support for Hamas, testified about Hamas documents in his home that were sent to him by Mr. Ashqar in 1995. When asked about Mr. Ashqar's role as head of an organization called the Al Aqsa Educational Fund, Shorbagi said Mr. Ashqar's responsibility was "to work toward the destruction of Israel." Also at the trial, FBI Special Agent Jill Pettorelli testified about what appeared to be internal Hamas documents found in Mr. Ashqar's Oxford, Miss. home during a Dec. 26, 1993 FBI search. These documents outlined Hamas's strategy for combatting diplomatic initiatives for Middle East peace -- and in particular, making sure that the 1991 Madrid peace conference which resulted in large part from Mr. Baker's indefatigable diplomatic efforts yielded nothing. Steven Emerson of the Investigative Project, who has been carefully monitoring the trial, reports that other documents submitted into evidence dealt with the importance of building relations between Hamas and other terrorist groups, including Hezbollah and the Damascus-based PFLP. A special investigator with the U.S. attorney's office testified about Mr. Salah's personal finances in late

1992 and early 1993, around the time he was arrested by Israel for his role in financing Hamas. During that period, \$985,000 was deposited into Mr. Salah's account by Musa Abu Marzouk -- a former resident of Northern Virginia who is a senior Hamas leader and an associate. Marzouk, deported from the United States in 1997, is believed to be based in Damascus today.

In 2000, Mr. Salah and several Islamic charities were sued by Stanley and Joyce Boim, whose son

David died in a 1996 Hamas attack on a bus stop in Jerusalem. The Boims held that, because Mr. Salah and the charities financed Hamas, they should be held financially liable for David's slaying. Two years ago, a Chicago jury in that civil case found Mr. Salah and the charities liable and awarded \$156 million to the Boims. More information on the criminal prosecution of Messrs. Salah and Ashqar can be found at the Counterterrorism Blog.

## No more tea with terrorists

By Joseph Farah WorldNetDaily.com December 13, 2006

Former Secretary of State James Baker and his Iraq Study Group strongly urge the U.S. to open up talks with terror-sponsoring Iran and Syria to help solve the quagmire of Iraq. "Important Democrats" reportedly meet with senior officials of the terrorist organization Hamas, sworn to the destruction of Israel and attacks on U.S. interests.

Former President Jimmy Carter, promoting his book labeling Israel as an apartheid state, goes on "The Tonight Show" to explain why Israelis should yield to the demands of Hamas and other Palestinian terror groups.

Even President Bush, who pledged to war with terrorists everywhere after Sept. 11, says he is now open to the idea of talks with them -- and, in fact, has authorized secret meetings with al-Qaida allies in Syria. I keep saying it, but it bears repeating: What a difference five years makes!

Here's what President Bush said Sept. 20, 2001, amid loud applause and the approval of the overwhelming majority of Americans: "Our war on terror begins with al-Qaida, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated."

He understood then, just nine days after the worst attack on the U.S. in history, and so did we why talking with the enemy was futile and, in fact, counterproductive.

"They hate our freedoms -- our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other," the president observed. "They want to overthrow existing governments in many Muslim countries, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. They want to drive Israel out of the Middle East. They want to drive Christians and Jews out of vast regions of Asia and Africa. These terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life. With every atrocity, they hope that America grows fearful, retreating from the world and forsaking our friends. They stand against us, because we stand in their way." May I ask, what has changed since then? Why have so many Americans who saw the conflict

clearly five years ago become confused? Are American lives no longer at risk? Is our way of life no longer threatened?

Many mistakes have been made in the execution of this war. I have been as quick to point them out as anyone. But mistakes have always been made in the execution of wars and other noble causes. How is it possible that we've grown so weak and weary after such a short time?

To his credit, Bush explained from the beginning victory would not come easily -- or swiftly. "This war will not be like the war against Iraq a decade ago, with a decisive liberation of territory and a swift conclusion," he said in that speech to the nation. "It will not look like the air war above Kosovo two years ago, where no ground troops were used and not a single American was lost in combat." He continued: "Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen. It may include dramatic strikes, visible on TV, and covert operations, secret even in success. We will starve terrorists of funding, turn them one against another, drive them from place to place, until there is no refuge or no rest. And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism."

And then the clincher: "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime."

There was more in that speech. Bush said it wasn't just America's fight -- that it wasn't just American freedom at stake. It was a fight for "civilization." He called for "patience in what will be a long struggle."

"Great harm has been done to us," he reminded. "We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment. Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom -- the great achievement of our time, and

the great hope of every time – now depends on us. Our nation – this generation – will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail."

He continued: "It is my hope that in the months and years ahead, life will return almost to normal. We'll go back to our lives and routines, and that is good. Even grief recedes with time and grace. But our resolve must not pass. Each of us will remember what happened that day, and to whom it happened.

## Whose War Crimes?

By The Wall Street Journal editorial December 11, 2006

A few scenes from modern warfare: Mohammad Abd al-Hamid Srouf moved missiles across southern Lebanon under cover of a white flag. Hussein Ali Mahmoud Suleiman used the porch of a private home to fire rockets. Maher Hassan Mahmoud Kourani dressed in civilian clothes, hid his Kalashnikov in a tote bag and stored anti-aircraft missiles in the back of a green unmarked Volvo. The three men, all members of Hezbollah, were captured by Israel during last summer's war.

Now their videotaped interviews form part of a remarkable report by retired Lieutenant Colonel Reuven Erlich of Israel's Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center. Relying heavily on captured Hezbollah documents, onsite and aerial photography and other first-hand evidence, the report shows how the Shiite group put innocent civilians at risk by deliberately deploying its forces in cities, towns and often private homes.

Kenneth Roth, the executive director of Human Rights Watch, has accused Israel's military of "indiscriminate warfare" and "a disturbing disregard for the lives of Lebanese civilians." Mr. Erlich demolishes that claim, and in the process shows the asymmetric strategy of Islamist radicals.

The most persuasive evidence here is photographic, so we urge readers to access the report itself on the Web site of the American Jewish Congress ([ajcongress.org](http://ajcongress.org)). Hezbollah's headquarters in Aita al-Shaab, for instance, sits in the heart of the village. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah's office and home are in a densely built neighborhood of Beirut. In the town of Qana -- site of an Israeli bombing on July 30 that killed 28 and that Hezbollah's apologists were quick to label a "massacre" -- an arms warehouse can be seen adjacent to a mosque. There are photographs of rockets in the back seats of cars, missile launchers adjacent to farm houses, storage bunkers hidden beneath homes. There is also a trove of before-and-after photography demonstrating the precision of most Israeli bombing.

We'll remember the moment the news came – where we were and what we were doing. Some will remember an image of a fire, or a story of rescue. Some will carry memories of a face and a voice gone forever."

Yet, it's clear to me the vast majority of Americans don't remember. They have grown tired. And we are about to make a fatal error in Iraq by cutting and running and leaving our friends there to the mercy of the terrorists.

That's bad for our friends – and even worse for us.

The report also shows how the use of civilian cover was explicitly part of Hezbollah's strategy. "[The organization's operatives] live in their houses, in their schools, in their churches, in their fields, in their farms and in their factories," said Mr. Nasrallah in a TV interview on May 27, several weeks before the war. "You can't destroy them in the same way you would destroy an army."

Exactly what Mr. Nasrallah means is illustrated in the testimonials of the captured fighters. Asked why Hezbollah would risk the destruction of civilian areas by firing from them, Mr. Suleiman replied that while in theory private homes belonged to "the residents of the village ... in essence they belong to Hezbollah."

Perhaps that's true; if so, then Human Rights Watch has no grounds to accuse Israel of atrocities when Mr. Nasrallah has effectively declared everyone and everything in southern Lebanon to be his fief. Our sense, however, is that not all southern Lebanese were delighted to have their livelihoods appropriated for Hezbollah's political purposes, even if they were too intimidated to register a protest. Either way, it is Hezbollah, not Israel, that is guilty of war crimes here.

Beyond the war in Lebanon, these images suggest how Islamists seek to use the restraint of Western powers against them. They shoot at our civilians from the safety of their own civilian enclaves that they know we are reluctant to attack. Then if by chance their civilians are killed, they call in CNN and al-Jazeera cameras and wait for the likes of Mr. Roth to denounce America or Israel for war crimes.

None of this means the U.S. shouldn't continue to fight with discrimination and avoid civilian casualties. But it means our political leadership needs to speak as candidly as Israelis now are speaking about this enemy strategy, so the American people can understand and be steeled against this new civilian battleground.

## Israel's nuclear strategy By Louis Rene Beres and Maj. Gen. Paul E. Vallely The Washington Times December 14, 2006

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's explicit reference on Dec. 11 to his country's nuclear weapons was hardly a "slip of the tongue." Rather, it was an intentional attempt to remind Israel's enemies that despite a long-standing policy of "opacity" or "deliberate ambiguity," the Jewish state would make any aggressor pay existentially for launching annihilatory attacks. Nor was Mr. Olmert's lifting of Israel's nuclear veil unprecedented. More than 10 years ago, Shimon Peres had publicly advanced the idea of unilateral denuclearization in exchange for "peace."

But a coherent strategic doctrine is now needed to provide Israel with broad nuclear policy frameworks. In fashioning this essential doctrine, Israel must address these major questions:

Should Israel now begin to identify certain general elements of its nuclear arsenal and nuclear plans? Would it be in Israel's best interests to make certain that others are sufficiently aware of its nuclear targeting doctrine, its retaliatory and counter-retaliatory capacities, its willingness under particular conditions to pre-empt; and its capacities for ballistic missile defense?

The Arab-Islamic awareness of an Israeli bomb does not automatically imply that Israel has credible nuclear deterrence. If Israel's nuclear arsenal were seen as vulnerable to first-strikes it might not persuade enemy states to resist attacking the Jewish state. Similarly, if Israel's political leadership were seen as unwilling to resort to nuclear weapons in reprisal for anything but unconventional strikes, these enemy states may not be deterred. If Israel's targeting doctrine were judged to be predominantly focused on enemy state weapons and supporting military infrastructures, enemy states could so fear an Israeli first-strike that they would then consider striking first themselves.

How shall enemy states be apprised of Israel's targeting doctrine? It is no longer enough that Israel's enemies merely know that the Jewish state has nuclear weapons. They must also be convinced that these arms are secure and that Israel's leadership is actually willing to launch these weapons against high-value city targets in response to certain first strike and retaliatory attacks.

Israel's strategic doctrine must aim at strengthening nuclear deterrence. It can meet this

objective only by convincing enemy states that a first-strike upon Israel will always be irrational. This means communicating to enemy states that the costs of such a strike will always exceed the benefits. Hence, Israel's strategic doctrine must always convince prospective attackers that their intended victim has both the willingness and the capacity to retaliate with nuclear weapons. If an enemy state considering an attack upon Israel were unconvinced about either or both of these components of nuclear deterrence, it could choose to strike first. This would depend in part upon the particular value it placed upon the expected consequences of such an attack.

Regarding capacity: Even if Israel were to maintain a substantial arsenal of nuclear weapons, it is necessary that enemy states believe these weapons to be distinctly usable. This means that if a first-strike attack were believed capable of sufficiently destroying Israel's atomic arsenal and pertinent infrastructures, that country's nuclear deterrent could be immobilized. Even if Israel's nuclear weapons could not be destroyed by an enemy first-strike, enemy misperceptions or misjudgments about Israeli vulnerability could still bring about the catastrophic failure of Israeli nuclear deterrence.

To the extent that Israel's doctrine actually identifies nuanced and graduated forms of reprisal, more disclosure could contribute to Israeli nuclear deterrence. Without such disclosure, Israel's enemies will be kept guessing about the Jewish state's probable responses, a condition of protracted uncertainty that could serve Israel's survival for a while longer, but — at one time or another — could come apart.

Prime Minister Olmert's public comment on Israel's nuclear capacity was a good first-step to enhanced nuclear deterrence. But it was only a good beginning.

**Louis Rene Beres, who has counseled various government agencies in Washington and Jerusalem, is an author who served as chairman of Project Daniel under former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Maj. Gen. Paul E. Vallely, retired, is a military analyst for Fox News and host of the radio show "Stand Up America."**

## Iran's unholy alliance with Holocaust deniers

By Amiram Barkat Haaretz December 13, 2006

Iran's conference on the Holocaust provoked strong responses in the West yesterday, with the Vatican, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel joining the chorus of

voices expressing disgust for the attempt to deny the Holocaust. The broadcasts from Tehran drew uncharacteristically harsh responses from Europe's usually restrained media outlets. "Criminal Denial"

was the headline of yesterday's editorial in The Times in what may have been a hint to the British legislature to follow in the footsteps of France, Austria and Germany and make denial of the Holocaust a crime.

The international criticism did not deter the Iranians. Yesterday, conference organizers announced that their campaign is only beginning. The next stage is to be an international committee of experts to determine "the true dimensions of the Holocaust." Yehuda Bauer, professor of Holocaust Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has consistently claimed that the Iranians seek to prepare the ground for a second genocide of the Jewish people. He says that on the tactical level they are trying to recruit not only the Muslim world but also the European extreme right. According to Germany's weekly magazine Der Spiegel, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad already has fans among German skinheads, some of whom waved Iranian flags at the World Cup soccer championship held in Germany last summer. Leaders of the German National Party were invited to the Tehran conference but the German government blocked their visit.

Bauer agrees that the wide media coverage of the conference facilitates Iranian efforts to disseminate doubt about the Holocaust. A similar storm erupted after Ahmadinejad called for wiping Israel off the map.

It is the conference participants who are reaping the direct rewards of their media exposure: Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke, former Australian beauty queen Michele Renouf, the ultra-Orthodox followers of Rabbi Moshe Hirsch and of course the professional Holocaust deniers. Until recently it

seemed as if this aging, pathetic gang, consisting of no more than 20 people, was bound for extinction.

"We thought they were finished," staff of the Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism said yesterday. In February, an Austrian court sentenced British historian David Irving to three years in prison. His colleagues Ernst Zuendel and Germar Rudolf are in Germany, waiting for their trials to end. If convicted they could be sentenced to five years in prison. Roger Garaudy is ill and unlikely to recover his strength. Robert Faurisson, the oldest Holocaust denier who is still active, was on the brink of desperation a year ago, when the Iranians tried to interest him in the conference idea.

"Most of my colleagues are in prison, in exile or in a delicate situation," Faurisson wrote to the conference organizers in a letter whose contents were exposed in Haaretz. Faurisson suggested that instead of holding a conference, Ahmadinejad should create an institute for the denial of the Holocaust.

The Holocaust denial conference in Tehran may make it necessary to re-evaluate the effectiveness of criminalizing denial of the Holocaust. The laws passed in Germany, Austria and France in the 1990s made a significant contribution to delegitimizing denial in the West and dealt a serious blow to the activities of Holocaust deniers. They did not succeed, however, and perhaps even encouraged, the unholy alliance between the deniers and the Iranian regime. In addition, these laws aid the deniers in presenting themselves as victims and the dark regime in Iran as the defender of academic freedom of expression.

## **Irans' great pretender By The Boston Globe editorial December 13, 2006**

The conference for Holocaust deniers hosted by Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is a transparent polemical stunt. The guest list, featuring former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke and European apologists for the Third Reich, gives the lie to any pretense of a genuine scholarly exchange of ideas. Nevertheless, Ahmadinejad's ulterior motive for staging his travesty of a conference must be taken seriously.

Ahmadinejad's threadbare brief is that the Nazi annihilation of European Jewry is a myth manipulated by Zionists and the victors of World War II to justify the establishment of Israel and the displacement of Palestinians. And even if many Jews were killed in Europe during the Nazi era, Ahmadinejad has argued on occasion, that was no reason for the West to implant Israel on Muslim land.

In an offensive letter that Ahmadinejad sent last summer to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, he

asserted that the victors in the Second World War used the Holocaust as an "alibi" to keep the defeated nations indebted to them. "In addition to the people of Germany," Ahmadinejad wrote, "the peoples of the Middle East have also borne the brunt of the Holocaust. By raising the necessity of settling the survivors of the Holocaust in the land of Palestine, they have created a permanent threat in the Middle East."

What is important to Ahmadinejad is not any issue of historical truth, or of free speech in parts of Europe where Holocaust denial is illegal. His purpose is to deny the legitimacy of Israel. His reason for presenting himself as the world's foremost denier of Israel's right to exist has less to do with the best interests of the Palestinians than with his strategy for making Iran a regional superpower.

Ahmadinejad wants to cast the debate about Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons as being about

Israel. The aim is to win over Sunni Arab populations, thereby deterring Arab regimes from opposing Iran's nuclear program and resisting the spread of Iranian influence from Baghdad to Beirut.

The absurdity of Ahmadinejad posing as a defender of free speech by giving Holocaust deniers a platform was evident to students in Tehran, who derided him as a dictator Monday when he spoke at their university. Those students know all too well

that he has been closing impertinent newspapers, jailing journalists, and purging outspoken professors.

Ahmadinejad could not pretend to defend freedom of expression if speech and writing denying the Holocaust were not banned in some European countries. Free speech that stops short of incitement to violence ought to be inviolable in a liberal democracy. Ahmadinejad's hypocrisy is feeding on this European lack of courage.

## In Isg's wake By Mark Steyn The Washington Times December 11, 2006

Well, the ISG - the Illustrious Seniors' Group - have released their 79-point plan. How unprecedented is it? Well, it seems Iraq is to come under something called the "Iraq International Support Group." If only Neville Chamberlain had thought to propose a "support group" for Czechoslovakia, he might still be in office. Or guest-hosting for Oprah.

But, alas, such flashes of originality are few and far between in what's otherwise a testament to conventional wisdom. How conventional is the ISG's conventional wisdom? Try Page 49: "Recommendation 5: The Support Group should consist of Iraq and all the states bordering Iraq, including Iran and Syria."

Er, OK. I suppose that's what you famously hardheaded "realists" mean by realism. But wait, we're not done yet. For this "Support Group," we need the extra-large function room. Aside from Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Kuwait, the ISG -- the Iraq Surrender Grandpas -- want also to invite "the key regional states, including Egypt and the Gulf States."

Er, OK. So it's basically an Arab League meeting. Not a "Support Group" I would want to look for support from, but *chaque a son gout*. But wait, Secretary Baker's still warming up: "[T]he five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council." That would be America, Britain, France, Russia, China. A diverse quintet, representing many distinctive approaches to international affairs from stylish *hauteur* to polonium-210. Anybody else?

"The European Union..." Hey, why not? It's not really multilateral unless there's a Belgian on board, right? Oh, and let's not forget: "[T]he Support Group should call on the participation of the United Nations secretary-general in its work. The United Nations secretary-general should designate a special envoy as his representative."

Indeed. But it needs to be someone with real clout, like Benon Sevan, the former head of the Oil for Food Program, who recently, ah, stepped down; or Maurice Strong, the undersecretary-general for U.N. reform and godfather of Kyoto, who for one reason or another is presently on a, shall we say, leave of absence; or Alexander Yakovlev, the senior procurement officer for U.N. peacekeeping, who also finds himself under indictment -- er, I mean

underemployed. There's no end of top-class talent at the United Nations, now that John Bolton's been expelled from its precincts.

So there you have it: an Iraq "Support Group" that brings together the Arab League, the European Union, Iran, Russia, China and the U.N. And with support like that who needs lack of support? It worked in Darfur, where the international community reached unanimous agreement on the urgent need to rent a Zeppelin to fly over the beleaguered region trailing a big banner emblazoned "You're done." For Dar4.1, they can just divert it to Baghdad.

Oh, but lest you think there are no minimum admission criteria to James Baker's "Support Group", relax, it's a very restricted membership: Arabs, Persians, Chinese commies, French obstructionists, Russian assassination squads. But no Jews. Even though Israel is the only country to be required to make specific concessions -- return the Golan Heights, etc. Indeed, insofar as this document has any novelty value, it's in the Frankenstein-meets-the-Wolfman sense of a boffo convergence of hit franchises: a Vietnam bug-out, but with the Jews as the designated fall guys. Wow. That's what Hollywood would call "high concept."

Why would anyone - even a shortsighted incompetent political fixer whose brilliant advice includes telling the first George Bush no one would care if he abandoned the "Read my lips" pledge - why would even he think it a smart move to mortgage Iraq's future to anything as intractable as the Palestinian "right of return?" And, incidentally, how did that phrase - "the right of return" - get so carelessly inserted into a document signed by two former secretaries of state, two former senators, a former attorney general, Supreme Court justice, defense secretary, member of Congress, etc.

These are by far the most prominent Americans ever to legitimize a concept whose very purpose is to render any Zionist Entity impossible. I'm not one of those who assumes that just because much of James Baker's post-government career has been so lavishly endowed by the Saudis that he must necessarily be a wholly owned subsidiary of King Abdullah, but it's striking how this document frames all the issues within the pathologies of the enemy.

And that's before we get to Iran and Syria. So tough-minded and specific when it comes to the Israelis, Mr. Baker turns to mush when it comes to Bashar Assad assassinating his way through Lebanon's shrinking Christian community or Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the mullahs painting the finish trim on the Iranian nukes. Syria, declare the Surrender Grandpas, "should control its border with Iraq". Gee, who'dda think o' that other than these geniuses?

Actually, Syria doesn't need to "control its border with Iraq." Iraq needs to control its border with Syria. And, as long as the traffic's all one way (because Syria's been allowed to subvert Iraq with impunity for three years), that suits Mr. Assad just fine. The Surrender Grandpas assert Iran and Syria have "an interest in avoiding chaos in Iraq." This, to put it mildly, is news to the Iranians and Syrians, who have concluded that what's in their interest is much more chaos in Iraq. For a start, the Americans get blamed for it, which reduces America's influence in the broader Middle East, not least among Iran and Syria's opposition movements. Furthermore, the fact they're known to be fomenting the chaos gives the

mullahs, Mr. Assad and their proxies tremendous credibility in the rest of the Muslim world. James Baker has achieved the perfect *reductio ad absurdum* of diplomatic self-adulation: he is less rational than Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

If they're lucky, this document will be tossed in the trash and these men and women will be the laughingstocks of posterity. But, if it's not shredded and we embark down this path, the Baker group will be emblematic of something far worse.

The "Support Group" is a "peace conference," and Mr. Baker wants Washington to sue for terms. No wonder Syria is already demanding concessions from America. Which is the superpower and which is the third-rate basket-case state? From the Middle Eastern and European press coverage of the Baker group, it's kinda hard to tell.

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## Holocaust denial can be dangerous

By the Los Angeles Times editorial December 13, 2006

Iran's two-day conference for revisionists can't be shrugged off given its quest for nuclear weapons.

What's the perfect way to top off a Holocaust denial conference featuring input from the likes of such scholars as former KKK Grand Wizard David Duke? Why, calling for Israel's obliteration, of course.

Iran wrapped its two-day gathering of neo-Nazis, hard-line racists and half-baked historians with a rousing speech from Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Tuesday. The man who once called the murder of 6 million European Jews a "myth" cheerfully told delegates from 30 countries that Israel's days were numbered.

"As the Soviet Union disappeared, the Zionist regime will also vanish and humanity will be liberated," Ahmadinejad predicted. Historical analogies aren't his strong suit.

Before the summit, Iranian officials vowed that if the conference, using its doubtlessly rigorous scientific inquiry, should determine that the Holocaust indeed occurred, then Iran would at long last accept it as historical fact. We are not holding our breath.

Although it's tempting to shrug off a gathering of fourth-rate intellects who seethe with contempt even for each other (did Duke discuss his theories about white racial superiority?), the conference illustrated a present and growing danger to the

international community: Iran is on the path to becoming a nuclear power. Any promise to "remove" its neighbors from the map must be taken seriously.

Ahmadinejad's rejection of the thousands of written and oral testimonies of Holocaust survivors, reams of scholarship, films, photographs, diaries and detailed Nazi archives has nothing to do with evidentiary standards and everything to do with playing to the extremists in his regional audience. To Ahmadinejad, attacking the legitimacy of the Holocaust allows him to attack the legitimacy of Israel, which was created by the United Nations as a result of the Holocaust. If the first act didn't happen, then the second act wasn't necessary.

The Iranian president wrapped his hateful nonsense in the false mantle of free speech. Conference delegates, he said, were breaking free from the powerful opposition to critiquing the Holocaust narrative and finally being allowed to say what they pleased.

Except for Khaled Mahameed, an Israeli Arab who tried to attend the conference. Mahameed runs a Holocaust museum in Nazareth geared to Arab audiences and had planned to debate the deniers. But when he tried to get a visa, Iran turned him down.

For Ahmadinejad, there is still at least one powerful taboo: the truth