

## Terror in Black September: An Eyewitness Account

By David Raab Middle East Quarterly Fall 2007

On September 6, 1970, terrorists from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) hijacked TWA flight 741 from Frankfurt to New York and Swiss Air flight 100 from Zurich to New York, diverting them both to a disused airfield in the Jordanian desert. Terrorists also hijacked Pan Am flight 93 from Amsterdam and diverted it to Beirut and then Cairo. El Al officials thwarted another hijacking attempt on their flight from Amsterdam. On September 9, another PFLP sympathizer seized a British Overseas Airways Corporation flight in Bahrain and brought it to the same Jordanian airstrip as the first two. The terrorists removed all hostages, separating fifty-four Jewish and other captives, and blew up the empty planes.

The multiple, coordinated hijackings precipitated a crisis culminating in battles between Palestinian militias and terrorists and the Jordanian army. On September 16, 1970, Jordan's King Hussein declared martial law. Two days later, Syrian-based forces intervened in the name of the Palestine Liberation Army, prompting Israel to mobilize its forces as a warning that Syrian interference could lead to a wider war. President Richard Nixon ordered an aircraft carrier task force to the region to evacuate U.S. citizens and protect U.S. interests and the Jordanian monarchy. The Jordanian military's victory over the Palestinian and Syrian forces, however, averted wider crisis.

Seventeen-year-old David Raab was on the TWA flight as it was hijacked and was later removed by the terrorists with other Jewish passengers to a safe house in a Palestinian refugee camp on the outskirts of Amman. The following account is based on his forthcoming book, *Terror in Black September: The First Eyewitness Account of the Infamous 1970 Hijackings*. -The Editors.

In 1967, King Hussein made a disastrous decision. Jordan was moderate, Western-leaning, and, quietly, even on good terms with Israel. But in June 1967, at the behest and duplicity of Egypt and Syria, Jordan entered the Six-Day War and promptly lost its West Bank. During the fighting, about 200,000 Palestinian Arabs fled to the East Bank, planning to return once Jordan won. It did not, and these refugees instead joined over half a million others who had fled during Israel's 1948 War of Independence and whose descendants lived there, too. By 1970, Palestinians made up over half the population of Jordan's East Bank, mostly

unabsorbed into society, concentrated in refugee camps, awaiting their "return."

After the humiliating Arab defeat in 1967, Palestinians felt abandoned by Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, who now focused on regaining their lost territory rather than destroying Israel. Many Palestinian leaders concluded as well that Arab regimes could not destroy Israel even if their desire to do so resurfaced. They resolved to retake control over their own fate and to promote guerrilla warfare. Guerrilla groups created before the war grew, and new entrepreneurial groups began to proliferate. Some formed around individual leaders or philosophies; others were created by Arab states who wanted to have a hand in the guerrilla movement. Over time, certain groups began to stand out.

Fatah became the largest and most important of the fedayeen organizations. Founded in the late 1950s by Yasir Arafat, Salakh Khalaf (Abu Iyad), and a few colleagues, its message was simple and appealing: Only Palestinians could be entrusted to destroy Israel. In spring 1968, Cairo-born, 37-year-old Yasser Arafat was named Fatah's spokesman.

Probably the second largest organization and certainly the key to the story of the Black September hijackings was the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Unlike Fatah, it was highly ideological, calling not only for the liberation of Palestine but also for the creation of a Marxist-Leninist Arab society. Formed in January 1968 by 41-year-old Dr. George Habash and his second in command, 43-year-old Dr. Wadia Haddad, the PFLP was fiercely independent although it did receive extensive funding from Iraq and had close ties with Red China. The group was militant and radical. "If [it] is the only way to destroy Israel, Zionism, and Arab reaction," Habash asserted in a 1970 interview, "then we want World War III to come." In another he warned, "America is our enemy," and the PFLP was about to "teach the United States a lesson." And, unlike Fatah, which at least officially vowed not to interfere in intra-Arab affairs, the PFLP never hid its intent to replace King Hussein as a first step in liberating Palestine. The group was also fractious, ravaged by intense disputes. Only months after its founding, two important fighters departed to form their own groups. Such disagreements would play an important part in our story, too.

**September 6: Hijacking** TWA Flight 741 took off from Frankfurt, Germany, to New York City as scheduled at 11:45 AM and leveled off. The cabin crew set about their duties. I don't remember exactly what time it was. We were just a few minutes out of Frankfurt, and the captain had just announced that we were passing over Brussels.

Suddenly, a man and woman, in their late twenties or early thirties, started running up the aisle in coach. "Imshi! Imshi!" they yelled in Arabic. "Move it! Move it!" Someone screamed and people started to point. Rudi Swinkels, the purser, immediately turned around and saw a well-built man in a gray suit with black hair and a thin, black mustache rushing up the aisle with long strides. At first Swinkels thought the man was fighting with another passenger, so he ran after him. The woman was ahead of him. She was wearing a whitish dress and white shoes with brass buckles. Passenger Dick Morse thought that the man was angry with his wife and was chasing her. A domestic dispute. But in his right hand the man brandished a shiny, nickel-plated revolver and in his left, a hand grenade; the woman was holding two hand grenades.

Hearing the commotion, Bettie McCarthy, a stewardess, stepped slightly out of the galley and met them head on. The man pointed his gun at her and ordered her to let him into the cockpit. Anxiously, she rapped on the cockpit door. Swinkels was now standing between coach and first class. The hijacker turned around and, pointing his pistol at him, shouted very agitatedly, "Get back! Get back!" Swinkels quickly dove behind the bulkhead.

For the cockpit crew, this was supposed to be the final leg of their thirteen-day round-the-world assignment. Captain Carroll D. Woods, 51, a stocky, gentle Kansan and a veteran World War II pilot who had flown for TWA for many years, was in the pilot's seat on the left. Copilot Jim Majer, 37, tall, thin, blond, handsome, and even tempered, had been flying for fifteen years since his days in the Navy and with TWA for about five-and-a-half years. He was sitting on the right. Flight engineer Al Kiburis, 45, a resourceful, matter-of-fact person, sat behind Majer facing the instrument panel on the right side of the cockpit. He was closest to the door. The three had met only a few weeks before. Having flown in the previous day from Tel Aviv and slept overnight in Frankfurt, they were happy to be flying home. But there was this banging at their door.

Al Kiburis opened the door. "It's a hijacking!" Bettie McCarthy blurted and quickly ducked out of the way. The man and woman both entered. The man immediately pointed his .38 caliber pistol at Jim Majer. He would keep the pistol trained at Majer on and off throughout the flight. Then he said simply, "I want you to turn the plane around."

Majer's first thought was: "Keep him calm, keep him calm. Live to fight another day." The other two

crew members had the same idea. There was no way to subdue the hijackers since they were armed, so the crew put their hands up. The captain calmly told the hijacker, "We can't do that. We're at the wrong altitude and have to advise Brussels air traffic control what we're going to do." The hijacker consented, and the crew contacted air traffic control, changing the plane's call sign at the hijacker's insistence from TWA 741 to "Gaza Strip." The hijackers directed the plane to Jordan.

**September 7: Captive in Jordan** Night was over soon, as dawn arrived at about 4:45 AM. The sun rose on an incredible scene: In a vast, silent void, on a stretch of parched, yellow-brown sand with an occasional pack of camels meandering by, sat two giant airplanes. Ours and Swiss Air 100, which terrorists had hijacked the same day as it flew from Zurich en route to New York. They had landed on the desert floor in the Zarqa province, about thirty-five miles northeast of Amman. The landing strip-mud flats, actually, that harden and crack under the searing summer sun-was known to outsiders as Dawson Field and to local Arabs as Ga Khanna. The PFLP now called it Matar ath-Thawra, Revolution Airport.

Over the next few days, PFLP terrorists began to interrogate passengers, especially those whom they identified as Jews. André Rochat, the general delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to the Middle East, seems not to have reported to the countries the intense and intimidating interrogations of and threats to the Jewish passengers and the confiscation of their personal belongings. Even as we had very little food, he reported that the food condition aboard the plane was "acceptable." Rochat also reported that our morale was "quite high" and that some passengers spoke of being "extremely well treated," obvious fallacies. Rochat asserted that the aircraft were not wired with explosives even though ICRC personnel had no way to closely inspect the planes.

When confronted with TWA vice president Dick Wilson's report that six men who had been taken off the plane were still absent, Rochat replied that he had now been "assured" by the PFLP that the six were well and "simply being questioned" although he was unaware of where they were held or their medical condition. Quite amazingly, too, he had not insisted on a list of hostages and their nationalities though he confessed that compiling such a list was "a basic Red Cross responsibility." And not having resolutely pressed the PFLP for an explanation, he could not account for why so many Swissair passengers had been released while most TWA passengers were still at the site. He should have known that no Jews from the TWA plane had been released.

**September 11: Interrogation** It was 2:30 AM. Nearly a hundred people were asleep aboard the

plane. It was dark all around except up front and in back, where two gas lamps were making a constant hiss and giving off a bright but sinister light. It was deathly still inside the plane except for an occasional sigh of anguish, subconsciously made by a sleeping person after almost a week of constant tension.

Suddenly, a flashlight was shining in my face. I looked up and saw the copilot, Jim Majer, standing over me. His eyes were elongated from lack of sleep. He had a sad look about him. He had had to bear much more than the rest of the passengers because he was a member of the crew and had to look out not only for his own good but also for the good of all the other people on board. Now he was forced to be the bearer of bad news.

"David, they want you up front... for questioning." The terrorists wanted to ask about passengers' citizenship, religion, and relationship to Israel.

Petrified, I quickly came to my senses even though I had just been awakened in the middle of my first decent night's sleep in a week. Immediately, I smelled the foul odors emanating from the hundred human beings who had been living unwashed in these confines for five days, odors that were intensified daily by the heat of the desert and the increasing stench of the plugged-up toilets.

I looked pleadingly at Jim, wanting to ignore what he had just said but knowing that I had no choice but to obey. His answer to me was a look of sympathy that said that he didn't want to have to tell me to go and he didn't want me to go, but that he, too, had to do what he was told.

I thought to myself that it would be better not to think of what might be in store for me. But I knew I would be taken off the plane in a few minutes, never to see it again. What about my mother, three brothers, and sister who were also on the plane, my father at home nervously wondering and waiting? When would I see them all again? I tried to force these thoughts out of my mind.

I started walking up the aisle with my mother close behind. I began to shake. I had lost control over my muscles and was twitching violently all over. But I continued walking. The Arabs would not take this as an excuse for my not getting off the plane. One of the men who had been summoned, and who felt equally as bad as I, saw my condition and put his arm around my shoulder, bringing me close to him and thereby stopping my shaking.

We were then told to get off the plane. I turned around and looked at my mother with pleading eyes, and she looked at me with sympathetic ones. We condensed into a short moment the lifetime that we deserved to have as mother and child.

Unable to hold back the tears much longer, I left the plane, leaving my family behind on the plane, slowly descending the ladder from the door of the plane, onto a jeep, and then onto the desert floor. I

had a feeling of emptiness-I was being taken away from my family to a place that I didn't know anything about. I had no one to console me except nine other men who felt the same as I did.

Amman, 5:30 AM. And there I was. A seventeen-year-old American kid. An A student, president of my high school honor society, captain of my high school chess team. Supposed to have started college in New York two days earlier. Instead, I was in a minibus in Jordan, huddled with nine other guys, hostage to Palestinian terrorists, being driven in the dead of night to who-knows-where. Scared out of my wits. We were taken to an Arab refugee camp [Wahdat] or, if you will, a refugee section of Amman. We were brought into a small compound.

An urgent cable went out about me from the State Department to Amman:

We understand [that] David Raab, age 17, is among missing male TWA passengers. Father here informs us [that] David boarded aircraft in Tel Aviv wearing uniform of Israeli officer as a joke. Relatives point out David [is a] native born American, not Israeli national, never out of [the] United States before summer visit to Israel this year with family. Father says it [is] ridiculous that he could actually be [an] Israeli officer.

State's cable was clearly a memorable one, though, because Hume Horan, then a U.S. embassy official in Amman, recalled thirty years later: "Among [the hostages] was an American teenager who had decked himself out in the uniform of an Israeli Army major!"[1]

**September 13: Negotiation** Amman, 9:30 AM. The hijackers demanded release of PFLP terrorists held in Israel and European countries. The united front to negotiate jointly was dead. Germany had just struck a bilateral deal for its two hostages, reported Reuters. (Contrary to prior reports, only Swissair copilot Horst Jerosch and TWA passenger Klaus Jeschke remained captive.)

Later in the day, the PFLP also offered Swiss Ambassador Charles-Albert Dubois a bilateral deal. Dubois urged his government to consider the offer. "In the present situation, it is the only way to save the lives of the remaining [Swiss] passengers and crew." The British ambassador, John Phillips, urged his government likewise. "Seeing that the united front seems to be crumbling . . . we should not be left out on a limb." He feared that the British hostages would be lumped with the Israelis and Americans or that the PFLP might "carry out some lunatic action against the hostages." The prospects for us American hostages did not look so good right now.

About a half hour later, in Wahdat, somebody who spoke English pretty well came in and told us to write our names and addresses down and that we could send telegrams.

The U.S. Embassy in Amman refused to receive the letters we wrote to our families claiming, according to the PFLP, that "we do not care about these letters which say that the U.S. subjects are well treated and are living well." The PFLP promised to get the letters to TWA.

My parents received the actual note I had written but didn't believe that it was really from me. They didn't recognize my handwriting, as I had written in block letters for legibility, thinking that it would be transcribed to a telegram. And, not wanting to call attention to myself, I had written "DEAR DAD" rather than referring to my father by the Hebrew Abba, as I always did.

London, 7 PM. The British were becoming increasingly frustrated with an "obdurate" Israel and, as a result, disappointed with a United States unwilling to pressure Israel. Exasperated, Foreign Secretary Alec Douglas-Home cabled Ambassador John Freeman in Washington: "The Prime Minister and I are very concerned at the apparent passivity of the Americans in this ... The situation in Amman is so unstable that there is more urgency in this matter than the Americans think." Did Rogers, he asked, really believe that a comprehensive solution could be attained without an Israeli release of fedayeen prisoners? And how long could the countries stay united without an Israeli contribution?

Meanwhile, tension between the Jordanian army and Palestinian militias increased. On September 16, 1970, King Hussein declared martial law. The next day, fighting erupted across Amman between the Jordanian army and Palestinian fedayeen.

#### **September 18: Held Hostage in Amman**

Amman, 4:40 AM. The night had been quiet, the city totally blacked out except for a pillar of flame still rising from the fuel dump on Ashrafiyeh. But by 5:45 AM both light and medium weapons fire echoed throughout Amman.

Early in the morning on Jordan Radio, Commander in Chief Habis al-Majali gave the fedayeen one last chance to put down their weapons and leave Jordan's towns "for the front" against Israel. There were no takers, and the army resumed its disciplined, methodical, albeit snail-paced advance through the city.

Shooting was particularly intense in the Jabal al-Luweibdeh neighborhood of Amman. The U.S. embassy took rifle shots through the windows of several offices. The British embassy was also "getting rocked now and then." British ambassador John Phillips was "furious and frustrated" that the embassy was cut off from the Foreign Office for almost twenty-four hours because of the power and communications outages. His embassy was also unable to reach King Hussein by phone.

Fighting was severe on Jabal Hussein, downtown, and near the First Circle where massive clouds of black smoke billowed upward. A fierce

battle raged for control of the Second Circle. The Intercontinental Hotel was rocked by numerous explosions, shattering glass all around. The noise was deafening, the din constant.

Irbid-Ramtha, 6 AM. Fighting was intense in the north as well. At 6 AM, tanks of the Jordanian 40th Armored Brigade began shelling Irbid. A tank battalion was also sent to Ramtha, and a violent battle ensued around the town.

The six Americans in Irbid, recalled Jerry Berkowitz, were far from secure. "Our building was strafed daily. ... Schwartz and Woods [claiming that they could differentiate between Jordanian Hunters and Israeli Phantoms] believed that it was the Israelis strafing us. I think the Jordanians shot at us as well from the air. We also were barraged by mortars, etc., from the ground ... I spent a lot of time making clawing marks on the floor as shells exploded around us."

Amman, 11 AM. Confusion over the hostages' whereabouts persisted. One "untested source" reported to the United States that the hostages had been moved near to the Iraqi border. Ambassador Phillips telexed, "I simply do not know anything about the fate of the hostages." Yitzhak Rabin, then Israel's ambassador to the United States, would tell Secretary of State William Rogers that Israel had no information on the hostages' whereabouts. At one point this morning, Hussein's palace thought that some of the hostages had been located. "Special units" were detailed to get them out "if they are still alive."

We were still alive. We were, in fact, sitting in one of the epicenters of the fighting, in great danger of being hit by shells or bullets.

Allenby Bridge across the Jordan River, 11:30 AM. A lone U.S. embassy official walked up to the Allenby Bridge, an unimpressive, steel and wooden structure spanning the Jordan River at a narrow point between Israel and Jordan. He carried a box marked "special foods for [the Red Crescent] Amman." Inside were canned Israeli goods and a note that read "Kosher food for Rabbi Hutner."

Two days earlier, the American embassy in Amman learned that Rabbi Isaac Hutner, "a strict adherent to the dietary laws of Judaism, has refused to accept food which he believes to be not kosher." (In fact, eight other hostages, including me, were doing the same.) The embassy asked other U.S. embassies in the region to "obtain canned kosher items and forward [them] to Amman as soon as possible for relay to the captors." The next day, the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv offered to do so. The Amman embassy advised it to deliver the food in "inconspicuous packages" to the Jordanian police at the Allenby Bridge and request that it be turned over to the ICRC in Amman. Despite a day-long effort, the Amman embassy could not reach the ICRC to alert it to the possible arrival of the food.

Now the official walked across the bridge hoping to find someone on the Jordanian side willing to accept the package. Finding no one at the Jordanian end of the bridge, he walked about a kilometer into Jordan where he finally encountered a group of Jordanian soldiers. The corporal in charge was sympathetic but had no clue what to do; he phoned an officer. Instructed not to accept the parcel, the corporal suggested that it might be possible to deliver it in a couple of days, perhaps on Sunday. So, the official returned to the Israeli side and entrusted the parcel to the bridge commander, one Captain Ilan, who agreed to hold onto it until new arrangements could be made.

The food never reached Rabbi Hutner.

**September 21: In a War Zone** What did we do all day? In the Wahdat refugee camp, Jeffrey Newton and I worked on a little chess set. The doctor had brought medicines and all kinds of stuff in boxes. So we took those boxes, and we made a chessboard out of it. We had pens, and I think somebody even had a magic marker, so we made pieces and a board. It was really, really nice. We had cards, of course. Then in Amman proper, Jeffrey Newton made a Scrabble set. We had a heck of a time trying to figure out how many tiles of each letter there were. So we took a consensus of opinion on each letter, and we got approximately the amount of letters. We played Scrabble with points and passed the time away.

We would sing every once in a while or talk. Some of the kids talked about drugs, and there were many discussions about religion. Al Kiburis who was an admitted atheist got very angry at Yaakov Drillman and Meir Fund about their being religious. He said that when a community is involved, it is better for the community that you not be religious and that kind of stuff. He said that it was causing an extra heavy burden on Sarah Malka who had been cooking for everybody in the apartment. She was cooking non-kosher, and yet several people always wanted kosher. But I think what Al failed to realize was that Sarah Malka herself kept kosher and that it was he and the rest of the group that was causing the trouble for her, not anybody else.

During the war, when it became very bad, and the shells came very close, we were not really afraid of death. And this was one of the things that kept us going. Because we figured-and I spoke to Ben Feinstein about this-we figured that if we were blown up, it would not be in vain. You know, many times we joked around about it: We saw forty caissons, each one pulled by a black horse, down Pennsylvania Avenue in a state funeral, etc. (President Kennedy had been assassinated only seven years earlier; images of his funeral procession were still fresh in our minds.) We figured that if we were to die, Israel and the United States would come in and just wipe out all operations of the guerrillas. We had heard that the Sixth Fleet was off the Israeli

coast, and the guerrillas had told us that the United States was going to invade. We knew that if anything happened to us, they would come in and do something. So we felt that we would be dying for Israel. And that was one of the things that kept us going.

With Israel refusing to release Palestinian terrorists from its prisons, the Swiss accepted a PFLP deal for the release of most but not all hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners in European jails. The Germans followed quickly behind. The international consensus against making concessions to the hijackers was collapsing. As fighting continued in and around Amman, the Swiss and German governments had essentially decided to cut a deal and leave the Jewish hostages to their fate.

**September 24: Freedom?** The previous afternoon, hearing that the Syrian tanks were withdrawing from Jordan after their incursion in support of the Palestinian fedayeen, and satisfied that the United States had broken the back of the crisis, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger noted that "there remained only the pleasant aftermath of success." Nixon marked the day by going golfing with the secretary of state, William Rogers. Historian Alan Dowty wrote: "In the glow of success through which U.S. policy-makers viewed events . . . there seemed to be almost no problems remaining. ... There is a striking lack of references to the hostages during this period."

But the hostages' situation remained as unclear and precarious as before. British Ambassador John Phillips cabled: "As regards the hostages, we really are in a helpless position because the Red Cross here are not dealing with this problem." The previous day, the Quai d'Orsay informed the United States that the hostages had been removed from the Amman area before the fighting broke out, were being held in small groups of about six persons each, and were safe. British sources in Beirut indicated that the PFLP might have transferred the hostages to the Iraqi army headquarters outside of Amman.

At our apartment in Ashrafiyeh, the guerrillas came in frantic. They really looked wild. They came in and said that we could be blown up any second. All along during the war, they had said, "Don't worry, you are in a safe position, you are on a side of a hill, you have houses surrounding you, you'll never be blown up. Don't worry about it." Now, they were telling us that "you can be blown up any second, write to the president, write to the Red Cross, write to anybody!" So we wrote! We wrote telegrams to Nixon; we wrote a telegram to the Red Cross; we wrote a telegram to the five powers who were meeting in Bern. We wrote a telegram to the press. We Jews were so desperate, we even wrote a telegram to the Pope. We didn't know what to expect. They took the crew members outside and showed them the area, and they came back really

shocked. They saw dead bodies here and there; they saw shells all over the place. They were really shaken. But we were still hoping for our release within a short time.

The end came suddenly. The fighting tipped in balance of the Jordanian army, and the fedayeen agreed to a ceasefire although there was still sporadic fighting. Around five o'clock on the 26th, we were told by a guerrilla with a smiling face that we were going to leave. Of course, we all were really happy. He told us that the Red Cross was going to pick us up by car and take us to their headquarters. He told us that our release was unconditional and that we should just impress upon people to make an exchange of prisoners-I don't remember exactly what.

We were taken out into the streets. We were led out behind the house where we were supposed to meet up with the Red Cross cars. Now, of course, in this life-threatening situation, riding on Shabbos would have been completely permissible, but it would have been the first time that I would be desecrating the Sabbath in those three weeks. Of course, it was a matter of necessity, and I had no second thoughts about it. But, for some reason, the Red Cross didn't show up, and we ended up not riding on Shabbos. Apparently, the vehicles that had been sent to our rendezvous point had been fired upon and turned back.

As we walked through the city, we saw fires burning and were told that the bodies of the dead were being burned to halt the threat of disease. George Freda recorded shortly afterward: "We started walking down the hill. I borrowed Rabbi Hutner's cane and converted it to a white flag with a piece of underwear." Our captors marched us to a warehouse and left us. A couple of hours later, the Red Cross appeared.

**Conclusion** When we finally arrived in Trenton on September 28, 1970, we encountered police barricades a few blocks from our home. It turned out that the area had been cordoned off for a huge block party of friends, neighbors, and hundreds of anonymous well-wishers. It was utter pandemonium. When we pulled into our driveway, I got up on top of the car, threw up my arms in greeting, and a great cheer went up! I was home!

In an ironic twist, Israel was a prime beneficiary of the whole episode. Its negotiation strategy of not

offering concessions to terrorists was vindicated. But more importantly, its willingness to engage the Syrian forces who invaded Jordan, though not motivated by pure altruism toward Hussein, enhanced its relationship with both Jordan and the United States. Jordan-Israel relations (though still *sub rosa*) became appreciably warmer. By the beginning of November 1970, Hussein had already held several meetings with Israel in London and Tehran. Three years later, in October 1973, King Hussein secretly flew to Israel to personally warn Prime Minister Golda Meir of the impending attack by Egypt and Syria.

Israel's willingness to cooperate closely with the United States in protecting American interests in the region altered its image in the eyes of many officials in Washington. Israel was now considered a partner, a valuable ally in a vital region during times of crisis. As Rabin later recalled, Kissinger phoned him to convey a message from Nixon. "The president will never forget Israel's role in preventing the deterioration in Jordan and in blocking the attempt to overturn the regime there. He said that the United States is fortunate in having an ally like Israel in the Middle East." Israel's conduct launched a "strategic relationship" with the United States which persists to this day.

The PFLP failed on a personal level, too. At least fifteen of the seventy-eight American Jews who had boarded our plane decided over time to move to Israel. That includes my mother (and father), two siblings, and me. I have lived essentially a normal and successful life, have been married for thirty-three years, have three married children and six grandchildren, but I think about my experience in Jordan almost every day. It bothered me that no book had ever been written fully documenting the month. I have now written that history. It is said that history is written by the victors.

**Based on Terror in Black September by David Raab. Copyright © 2007 by the author and reprinted with permission of Palgrave MacMillan. Available September 2007.**

[1] For Hume Horan's account of Black September, see "Remembering Hume Horan (1934-2004)," *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2004, pp. 53-60.

## Jerusalem Syndrome

By Walter Russell Mead Foreign Affairs  
*The Israel Lobby*.

**John J. Mearsheimer, Stephan M. Walt  
Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2007**

**Summary:** Sloppy execution means "The Israel Lobby," however commendable the intentions of its authors, will have the opposite of its desired effect:

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impeding new thinking about U.S. policy in the Middle East rather than advancing the debate.

John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt claim that they want *The Israel Lobby* and U.S. Foreign Policy "to foster a more clear-eyed and candid discussion of this subject." Unfortunately, that is not going to happen. "The Israel Lobby" will harden and freeze

positions rather than open them up. It will delay rather than hasten the development of new U.S. policies in the Middle East. It will confuse the policy debate not just in the United States but throughout the world as well, while giving aid and comfort to anti-Semites wherever they are found. All of this is deeply contrary to the intentions of the authors; written in haste, the book will be repented at leisure.

That is not to say that *The Israel Lobby* is all bad. Mearsheimer and Walt were previously known as hard-core "realists" who minimized the importance of studying domestic politics and culture to understanding foreign policy. They seem to have abandoned such "structural realism" for what might be called "political realism": the view that the beliefs, values, and interests of various domestic actors shape their perception of the national interest and that the interaction between these domestic forces and international conditions holds the key to understanding policy. This political realism is a significantly richer and more fruitful (if more intellectually demanding and methodologically complex) approach than the structural realism that Mearsheimer, especially, advocated in the past.

One must also commend the two authors for their decision to focus on an important topic that has not received the attention it merits. The politics of U.S. policy in the Middle East is a subject that is not well understood. Pro-Israel organizations, political action committees (PACs), and individuals do play significant roles in the U.S. political process, and they do influence politicians and journalists. Given the importance of the Middle East in U.S. foreign policy and world affairs, these actors and their influence should be explored. Even if *The Israel Lobby* is in the end not as helpful as they hope, Mearsheimer and Walt have admirably and courageously helped to start a much-needed conversation on a controversial and combustible topic. There should be no taboos among students of U.S. foreign policy -- no questions that should not be asked, no issues that should be considered too hot to handle, no relationships or alliances, however deep or enduring, that should not be regularly and searchingly reviewed.

Walt and Mearsheimer's belief that the United States needs to find ways to bridge the gap between its current policies and the national aspirations of Palestinians and other Arabs is correct. But Mearsheimer and Walt have too simplistic and sunny a view of the United States' alternatives in the Middle East -- a fault they share with the "neoconservatives," who serve as the book's bêtes noires. Overcoming the challenges of U.S. policy in the Middle East will not be nearly as easy as Mearsheimer and Walt think, and the route they propose is unlikely to reach the destination they seek, even if some of their concerns about the

United States' current stance in the region are legitimate.

The book's problems start very early and run very deep. Mearsheimer and Walt outline the case they plan to make on page 14: "The United States provides Israel with extraordinary material aid and diplomatic support, the lobby is the principal reason for that support, and this uncritical and unconditional support is not in the national interest." Note the slippage. The "extraordinary" support of the first clause quietly mutates into the "uncritical and unconditional" support of the last. "Extraordinary" is hardly the same thing as "uncritical and unconditional," but the authors proceed as if it were. They claim the clarity and authority of rigorous logic, but their methods are loose and rhetorical. This singularly unhappy marriage -- between the pretensions of serious political analysis and the standards of the casual op-ed -- both undercuts the case they wish to make and gives much of the book a disagreeably disingenuous tone.

Rarely in professional literature does one encounter such a gap between aspiration and performance as there is in *The Israel Lobby*. Mearsheimer and Walt fail to define "the lobby" in a clear way. Their accounts of the ways in which it exercises power, as well as their descriptions of the power it wields, are incoherent. Their use of evidence is uneven. At the level of geopolitics, their handling of the complex realities and crosscurrents of the Middle East fails to establish either the incontestable definition of the national interest that their argument requires or the superiority they claim for the policies they propose.

Beyond these faults, the insensitivity that the authors too frequently display in their handling of difficult topics will leave many readers convinced that, despite their frequent protestations to the contrary, the authors are sly and malicious anti-Semites. These charges -- made inevitable although not accurate by the authors' unwitting and innocent use of certain literary devices that trigger unhappy memories -- are generating an ugly, ill-tempered, and thoroughly pointless debate about the authors' character and intentions. In that debate, at least, I can stand behind Mearsheimer and Walt. This may be a book that anti-Semites will love, but it is not necessarily an anti-Semitic book.

**In Or Out?** The problems start with the definition. The Israel lobby, write Mearsheimer and Walt, is "a convenient shorthand term for the loose coalition of individuals and organizations" working "to shape U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction." The lobby, as they see it, includes both hard-line groups such as AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee) and CUFI (Christians United For Israel) and dovish groups such as the Israel Policy Forum, the Tikkun

Community, and Americans for Peace Now. All of these groups agree that Israel ought to be defended, and the groups and individuals in the lobby work in various ways to shape U.S. policy toward the Jewish state along what they consider to be favorable lines, but they have occasionally deep divisions over exactly what policies are best for Israel.

Mearsheimer and Walt say clearly that the lobby is neither conspiratorial nor antipatriotic. They concede that the overwhelming majority of those involved sincerely believe that what is best for Israel is best for the United States, and vice versa. Moreover, the tendency to reflexively support the Israeli government has diminished over time. And individual groups that are part of the lobby have broken with Israeli policies at various points, even if the largest groups tend to embrace hard-line views.

Still, questions arise. If everyone from AIPAC to Americans for Peace Now is part of the lobby, what, exactly, is the political agenda the lobby supports? And if a variety of U.S. policies are consonant with the different agendas of different components of the lobby, what criteria should be used to measure the impact of the lobby as a whole? What is the relationship between the internal dynamics of this divided lobby and the politics and policies of both Israel and wider American society?

When it comes down to it, Mearsheimer and Walt do not seem to know who, exactly, belongs to this amoebic, engulfing blob they call the lobby and who does not. Take their own case. They describe themselves as pro-Israel, in that they believe in the state's right to exist. They admire its achievements and wish secure and prosperous lives for its citizens. They state categorically that the United States should aid Israel "if its survival is in danger." They frequently argue that current Israeli policies and U.S. support for them are counterproductive -- that is, Washington should make its aid to Israel more conditional not because the two states do not share interests but precisely because they do. Conditional aid, Mearsheimer and Walt believe, will lead Israel to act in ways that ensure its survival while also benefiting the United States. And they care so passionately about this that they have written a long and controversial book on the subject. "We are obviously not part of the Israel lobby," they say. But under their own definition, is that really true?

The argument of *The Israel Lobby* actually seems to boil down to the point that the left wing of the lobby has a better grasp of both the Israeli and the U.S. national interests than the right wing of the lobby does. Mearsheimer and Walt maintain that when U.S. and Israeli national interests come into conflict, the United States should put its own interests first -- but this, too, is a view that, as they concede, most members of the lobby share. So what sets the authors apart from the rest of the large mass of Americans, Jewish and non-Jewish, who want

Israel to exist and care deeply about its fate but disagree and squabble over what the United States should do in the Middle East? Nothing, as far as I can see. Mearsheimer and Walt have come up with a definition of "the Israel lobby" that covers the waterfront, including everyone from Jimmy Carter and George Soros to Paul Wolfowitz and Tom DeLay.

Since virtually every possible policy position is supported by some element of this lobby, the lobby never loses no matter what happens in Washington - like the man who always "wins" at roulette because he puts a chip on every square. President Bill Clinton presses Israel to make far-reaching concessions on the West Bank in a proposal that Mearsheimer and Walt agree should still be the point of departure for U.S. diplomacy in the region: obviously, a triumph for the Israel lobby. The Bush administration then shifts direction and stands by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as he rejects all talk of territorial concessions: another win for the Israel lobby. Red, black, even, odd: the lobby never fails.

**The Wages Of Influence** From a definition like this, no good can come. Unfortunately, Mearsheimer and Walt's account of the U.S. political system is equally vague. Does the lobby use the same techniques or different ones to shape the foreign policy of Democratic and Republican administrations? Does a Labor-based government in Israel have a different relationship with the lobby than a Likud-based one? What mix of political conditions in Israel and the United States makes the lobby's work easier? What political environment poses the greatest challenge? Mearsheimer and Walt have no time for such details.

The book would benefit from a much more rigorous discussion of what the lobby, in its various incarnations and permutations, actually gets. Much of it seems to be straightforward pork-barrel politics: legislation involving foreign aid and arms deals is written so as to benefit Israel, and there is steady pressure on the executive branch to interpret these laws in ways favorable to Israel's interests. But to what real effect? Mearsheimer and Walt provide some estimates about the financial value of these provisions, but it is not clear how important these achievements are, either to Israel's defense strategy or to the politics of the Middle East. They also cite various pro-Israel legislative acts and congressional resolutions that passed by overwhelming margins. A closer analysis of the actual impact of these bills on policy is needed. The U.S. political system is extremely good at providing hollow victories for lobbyists that have little or no real impact on policy - allowing the lobbyists to demonstrate their clout and legislators to score an easy political win. Mearsheimer and Walt never show that the legislative victories represent real control over critical

matters of national policy either in the United States or the Middle East.

Also disappointing is their fairly conventional account of the relationship between neoconservatives and hard-line Israeli thinking. Mearsheimer and Walt present neoconservative thought as entirely in sync with -- and, indeed, at the service of -- Israeli security interests. There are, however, some important differences between neoconservative doctrine and the views of conservative Israelis -- in particular about Arabs. The neoconservative belief that the Arab world teems with Lockean democrats ready to build stable and liberal modern states once the dictators are removed could hardly be further from conventional Israeli views about the political culture and developmental possibilities of their neighbors. The Israeli defense establishment was deeply skeptical of neoconservative hopes for a democratic renaissance in the Middle East following the removal of Saddam Hussein. In short, the relationship between neoconservative thought and the worldview of the Israeli right is much more complex than the simplistic picture painted here.

The book's poor analysis of U.S. domestic politics sometimes involves a remarkably slipshod handling of evidence. One rubs one's eyes, frequently, at the spectacle of these two academics earnestly and solemnly presenting fundraising letters and convention speeches and other materials by paid employees of AIPAC and other such groups as conclusive proof of those groups' power and reach. Pro-Israel groups are hardly unique in their need to tout their clout and use the fabled blue smoke and mirrors to magnify their power. That is what every interest group in the United States does, so as to get more resources for its next "vital battle." Mearsheimer and Walt are so fond of this kind of evidence that significant stretches of the book are devoted to the self-serving promotional statements of the lobby. The authors seem to think that such passages provide incontrovertible proof of the lobby's importance: they convict the lobby out of its own mouth, as it were. Unsophisticated readers may be impressed; those wise in the crooked folkways of Washington will know just how far self-aggrandizing statements by lobbyists can be believed.

The authors' credulity never ceases to inspire. A group of 76 senators signed a pro-Israel open letter to President Gerald Ford. One of the signers, Senator Dick Culver (D-Iowa), later said that he "caved" and signed only because "the pressure was too great." Mearsheimer and Walt are uncritically enthralled and accept the retraction as revealing the true, inner Culver. Perhaps, but all one knows here is that Culver, by his own admission, was willing to say things he did not believe to gain a political advantage. When was he speaking the truth, and when was he seeking approval? Washington is

unfortunately well supplied with loose-lipped opportunists who will say anything an audience -- any audience -- wants them to say. But here and elsewhere, Mearsheimer and Walt seem uncritically and even naively willing to take any statement from any source at face value if it will somehow help make their case.

Mearsheimer and Walt argue that financing campaigns is an important source of the Israel lobby's power, but their analysis of this phenomenon leaves much to be desired. Senator Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.), they breathlessly report, received \$30,000 from pro-Israel PACs for her 2006 reelection campaign. In fact, this figure significantly understates the support she received from what the Center for Responsive Politics calls "pro-Israel" money, which amounted to \$328,000 toward her 2006 campaign. Still, although that number may look impressive, it was less than one percent of the money Clinton raised for her Senate reelection bid. Against the \$328,000 in "pro-Israel" money, she received more than half a million dollars from the printing and publishing industry, \$800,000 from health-care interests, \$1 million from groups and individuals interested in women's issues, \$2 million from donors based in real estate, and more than \$4 million from lawyers and law firms. Had every dime of "pro-Israel" money gone to her opponent, there would have been no significant difference for her campaign.

What was true for Clinton in 2006 was true overall. Pro-Israel PACs contributed slightly more than \$3 million to House and Senate candidates in the 2006 election cycle -- less than one percent of total PAC spending in that cycle. There were a few individual races in which pro-Israel contributions played a significant role -- especially Connecticut Senator Joseph Lieberman's -- but in the overall context of U.S. campaign finance, "pro-Israel" money is a drop in the bucket. Moreover, in both 2000 and 2004, much more "pro-Israel" money went to Democratic candidates than went to Republican candidates, and Jewish voters overwhelmingly opposed George W. Bush. If Jewish voters overwhelmingly voted against Bush in both elections, and pro-Israel political groups gave much more money to Democrats than Republicans, how, exactly, did the lobby later control the Republican Congress it so signally opposed? And why should it bear particular blame for the policies of a president whose election it tried and failed to block?

None of this means that the role of pro-Israel groups in campaign finance should not be studied, or that relatively small amounts of money strategically placed and timed cannot have an impact. But Mearsheimer and Walt do not even list, much less take on, the various topics that an examination of the limited role "pro-Israel" money plays in U.S.

politics would have to address. This is not serious scholarship.

**A Special Relationship** As one might expect from international relations specialists, the book treats the geopolitics of the Middle East more professionally than U.S. domestic politics. Mearsheimer and Walt concede that U.S. and Israeli interests overlapped during the Cold War; for somewhat different reasons, both the United States and Israel wanted to keep the Soviets out of the region. They argue, however, that the strategic link weakened significantly after 1989. They find the close U.S.-Israeli relationship since then increasingly anomalous; the two countries' interests, they believe, are diverging even as U.S. policy remains firmly aligned with Jerusalem. Since this alignment, Mearsheimer and Walt argue, is not driven by common strategic interests or common moral values, it must be driven by the power of the Israel lobby.

Their geopolitical analysis of Israel's position is interesting and in many respects useful. But Mearsheimer and Walt seem not to see how it undercuts the importance of the Israel lobby. According to them, Israel is the dominant regional power, and its enormous advantages in weapons and technology are so great that it has relatively little need for U.S. support at this point. Both the military and the economic aid that the United States offers, Mearsheimer and Walt tell us, can be substantially reduced or even eliminated without undermining Israel's security. But they do not carry this point through to its logical conclusion: if U.S. aid is of relatively limited value to Israel, then threats to trim or withhold that aid will have relatively little impact on Israel's behavior. And if such aid is of relatively little importance in the regional power balance, then the efforts of the Israel lobby to extract more aid from the U.S. Congress are not really that important. In short, U.S. aid does not change the power balance, and withholding that aid would have little impact on Israel's negotiating position -- meaning that the Israel lobby, whatever its makeup or power over the U.S. political system, plays no significant role in determining the course of events in the Middle East.

Mearsheimer and Walt also significantly underestimate the importance of the U.S.-Israeli alliance to the United States. If Israel determined that U.S. foreign policy was shifting in a hostile direction, it would have the option of diversifying its great-power base of support. Given Israel's overwhelming military position in the Middle East, and its ability to provide a new partner with advanced U.S. weapons and intelligence information, China, Russia, and India might find an alliance with Israel well worth the cost in popularity points across the Arab world. Israel has changed partners before: it won the 1948-49 war with weapons from the

Soviet bloc, partnered with France and the United Kingdom in 1956, and considered France (the source of Israel's nuclear technology) its most important ally in 1967. This potential shift is of major concern to the United States. One of the key U.S. objectives in the Middle East since World War II has been to prevent any other outside power from gaining a strategic foothold there. Alliances between other great powers and Israel -- the dominant military power in the world's most vital and crisis-ridden region -- could create major problems for U.S. foreign policy and significantly reduce the United States' ability to advance the Middle East peace process. Accordingly, maintaining the United States' relationship with Israel while managing its costs is the real challenge for U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Mearsheimer and Walt are correct that returning Israelis and Palestinians to the negotiating table -- with proposals based on but in some ways going further than those that President Clinton and Prime Minister Ehud Barak presented at Camp David in 2000 -- is probably the best way to go. But as Mearsheimer and Walt show, Washington cannot simply impose that agenda on Israel by making threats. Israel cannot be compelled to negotiate on U.S. terms; it must be persuaded. Mearsheimer and Walt's goal of a fresh start in the peace process requires carrots, not sticks. And if and when those carrots are put on the table, will Mearsheimer and Walt denounce the offer as yet another triumph for the Israel lobby, or will they see it as an instance of the United States promoting its interests by coordinating policy with an indispensable local power in one of the world's most explosive regions?

**On the Jewish Question** Domestic politics, geopolitics: next is cultural politics -- and especially the question of anti-Semitism. There have already been public charges of anti-Semitism, and more will come. Let me be unambiguously clear: those charges go too far. Mearsheimer and Walt state very clearly that they are not anti-Semites, and nothing in this book proves them wrong.

That said, some of the criticism that they will receive on this score is the result of their own easily avoidable lapses in judgment and expression. A little more care on their part could have done wonders in keeping what was bound to be a very heated discussion focused more tightly on the merits of the case.

The authors do what anti-Semites have always done: they overstate the power of Jews. Although Mearsheimer and Walt make an effort to distinguish their work from anti-Semitic tracts, the picture they paint calls up some of the ugliest stereotypes in anti-Semitic discourse. The Zionist octopus they conjure -- stirring up the Iraq war, manipulating both U.S. political parties, shaping the media, punishing the courageous minority of professors and politicians

who dare to tell the truth -- is depressingly familiar. Some readers will be so overpowered by this familiar bugbear that they will conclude that the authors are deliberately invoking it. In fact, Mearsheimer and Walt have come honestly to a mistaken understanding of the relationship between pro-Israel political activity and U.S. policy and strategic interests. It is no crime to be wrong, and being wrong about Jews does not necessarily make someone an anti-Semite. But rhetorical clumsiness and the occasional unfortunate phrase make their case harder to defend.

One problem is that Mearsheimer and Walt decontextualize the activity of Jews and their allies. Attempts by pro-Zionist students and pressure groups to challenge university decisions to grant tenure or otherwise reward professors deemed too pro-Arab are portrayed as yet another sign of the long reach and dangerous power of the octopus. In fact, these efforts are part of a much broader, and deeply deplorable, trend in American education, by which every ethnic, religious, and sexual group seeks to define the bounds of acceptable discourse. African Americans, Native Americans, feminists, lesbian, gay, and transgendered persons -- organizations purporting to represent these groups and many others have done their best to drive speakers, professors, and textbooks with the "wrong" views out of the academy. Zionists have actually come relatively late to this particular pander fest, and they are notable chiefly for their relatively weak performance in the perverse drive to block free speech on campus.

The authors also end up adopting a widely used tactic that has a special history in anti-Semitic literature. When anti-Semitic writers and politicians make vicious attacks, Jews are in a double bind: refrain from responding with outrage and the charge

becomes accepted as a fact, express utter loathing at the charge and give anti-Semites the opportunity to pose as the victims of a slander campaign by venomous Jews. Nazi propagandists honed this into an effective weapon. Anyone who lived through or has immersed himself in the history of the golden age of European anti-Semitism is keenly aware of this tactic, and when one sees it employed in writing about Israel or the Israel lobby, one naturally assumes the worst: that the use of a tactic long popular among anti-Semites is a sign that a contemporary writer shares their deplorable worldview. The greatest living practitioner of this passive-aggressive form of provocation (and not just against Jews) is former President Jimmy Carter, whose recently published *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* set off a firestorm by implying a parallel between the Israel of today and apartheid South Africa. Mearsheimer and Walt wag their fingers at those awful Jews who "smeared" the meek and innocent Lamb of Georgia. How dare the lobby be provoked by Carter's provocation!

To a certain audience, that chain of events signals a powerful and determined anti-Semitism at work. This is wrong, in both the case of Carter and the case of Mearsheimer and Walt. But paying a little more attention to the ways in which modern history has shaped the emotions and responses of participants in Israel policy debates would have helped Mearsheimer and Walt make their case. The relationship between U.S. domestic politics and U.S. policy in the Middle East is far too complex, emotional, and important a topic to be sidelined by red herrings.

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## Is U.S. Policy Changing on Israel's Rights in a Peace Settlement

By Dore Gold Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs November 23, 2007

After being sworn into office in 2001, the Bush administration informed the Israeli government that the Clinton proposals "were off the table." The Bush Letter of April 14, 2004, received by Israel as a quid pro quo for the Gaza Disengagement, introduced new elements into the Israeli-Palestinian peace process that completely superseded the Clinton proposals.

Prime Minister Sharon explained the significance of the Bush Letter to the Knesset on April 22, 2004: "There is American recognition that in any permanent status arrangement, there will be no return to the '67 borders. This recognition is to be expressed in two ways: understanding that the facts that have been established in the large settlement blocs are such that they do not permit a withdrawal to the '67 borders and implementation of the term 'defensible borders.'"

There is a serious question about the exact standing of the Bush Letter on the eve of Annapolis. Secretary of State Rice stated on November 13, 2007: "I believe that most Israelis are ready to leave most of the - nearly all of the West Bank, just as they were ready to leave Gaza for the sake of peace." Yet all serious public opinion polls actually show strong Israeli support for retaining strategic areas of the West Bank, like the Jordan Valley.

It has been frequently stated, particularly in Washington, that, "We all know what the final outcome of an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement will look like," an assertion usually followed by some reference to the Clinton proposals and the talks at Taba. Such statements try to introduce inevitability into the expected parameters of a peace settlement, even though they are based on a whole series of failed negotiating attempts seven years ago that

cannot possibly bind the State of Israel, and completely ignore the fact of opposition by the General Staff of the Israel Defense Forces to the Clinton proposals as endangering Israel's security.

It is critical for Israeli diplomacy to protect the Bush Letter against those who seek to undercut and replace it with a new set of Israeli-Palestinian documents. Israelis have learned from their experience with Gaza what can happen to their most vital security interests if they are not safeguarded at the same time that far-reaching territorial concessions are made.

**The Changing Purpose of the Annapolis Meeting** It still needs to be explained why the Bush administration decided to launch the Annapolis Peace Conference when so many seasoned observers doubt that it is possible to make any real diplomatic progress between Israel and the Palestinians at this time. The question is even more compelling when the risks of diplomatic failure are measured against the chances of real diplomatic success.

President Bush originally planted the seeds of the Annapolis Conference on July 16, 2007, when he announced that he was calling for convening "an international meeting" that would "review the progress that has been made toward building Palestinian institutions." The meeting was supposed to deal with Palestinian political reform. Finally, Bush proposed that the planned Middle Eastern meeting would "provide diplomatic support for the parties in their bilateral discussions and negotiations."<sup>1</sup> The idea was that the international community would assist the Palestinians in multiple areas to help advance the creation of a Palestinian state.

Since that time, however, the whole idea of the Annapolis meeting changed completely. The focus of diplomacy shifted to the issuance of an agreed Joint Statement by Israel and the Palestinians that would begin to outline, in greater detail than before, the contours of a future Palestinian state by detailing aspects of its borders, the nature of a solution to the Jerusalem issue, and the future of Palestinian refugees. Perhaps it was thought that dramatic Israeli concessions in the Joint Statement would induce pro-Western Arab states, like Saudi Arabia, to attend the planned peace conference even at the level of foreign minister. What would follow the peace conference would be intense, bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians based on the Joint Statement so that the foundations of a Palestinian state could be established within a little over a year.

This newer and more ambitious agenda for Annapolis has run into serious problems on the eve of the meeting. First, from drafts of the Joint Statement that were leaked to Ha'aretz, it is clear that the Palestinians are only willing to talk about "the two-state solution," but refuse to adopt proposed

Israeli language that would add that Israel is the "homeland for the Jewish people and Palestine is the homeland for the Palestinian people." Second, it also appears that the idea of detailing the parameters of a peace settlement by touching on the most contentious "core issues" of Jerusalem, borders, security, and refugees has been dropped entirely. Clearly, the diplomatic gaps between the parties on these critical issues were unbridgeable at this time.

#### **The Bush Letter vs. the Clinton Proposals**

Given these difficulties, one of the options for the U.S. has been to put down its own paper about what would constitute a fair peace settlement in lieu of the Joint Statement. President Bill Clinton did exactly the same thing in January 2001, when his efforts to broker an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement failed. After being sworn into office, the Bush administration informed the newly formed Israeli government of Ariel Sharon that the Clinton proposals "were off the table." Moreover, the Bush administration introduced new elements into the Israeli-Palestinian peace process that completely superseded the Clinton proposals.

On April 14, 2004, Prime Minister Sharon presented his Gaza Disengagement plan to President Bush and received as a quid pro quo a presidential letter with a set of U.S. guarantees about the shape of a future Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement. Sharon appeared before the Knesset on April 22, 2004, and explained the significance of the Bush Letter: There is American recognition that in any permanent status arrangement, there will be no return to the '67 borders. This recognition is to be expressed in two ways: understanding that the facts that have been established in the large settlement blocs are such that they do not permit a withdrawal to the '67 borders and implementation of the term "defensible borders."

The Bush administration did not specifically insist that any additional territory added to Israel would require a land swap whereby Israel forfeits its own previous territory in order to obtain defensible borders. A year later, Sharon detailed his concept of "defensible borders" to Ha'aretz on April 24, 2005, emphasizing that the Jordan Valley was of supreme military importance.

The Bush Letter did not intend to impose the outlines of a peace settlement in lieu of future Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. However, it laid out an updated vision of the U.S. position on a final peace settlement if the U.S. were actually asked to provide these details by the parties, especially if negotiations stalemated. The Bush Letter, moreover, did not represent a sharp break with past U.S. policy; it was fully consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 242. Former President Ronald Reagan used the language of "defensible borders" in September 1982 and it was adopted by former Secretary of State Warren Christopher in January

1997 in his letter of assurances to former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

There is a serious question about the exact standing of the Bush Letter on the eve of Annapolis. Buried in the address by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at the United Jewish Communities General Assembly in Nashville on November 13, 2007, was a surprising sentence: "I believe that most Israelis are ready to leave most of the - nearly all of the West Bank, just as they were ready to leave Gaza for the sake of peace."<sup>2</sup> It is doubtful that Rice was reflecting on the results of any serious Israeli public opinion poll, which actually show strong Israeli support for retaining strategic areas of the West Bank, like the Jordan Valley. And given Israel's bitter experience from unilaterally leaving the Gaza Strip, it is difficult to draw analogies from Israeli positions on Gaza prior to the August 2005 disengagement and Israeli positions, at present, toward withdrawal from the West Bank. It is likely that she carefully chose her language as a trial balloon, couching a new possible U.S. position on borders as a general statement about Israeli public opinion.

Having decided to convene the Annapolis meeting, the Bush administration is under enormous pressure to make sure it succeeds. The situation that has been created provides the Arab states with enormous leverage over Washington to revise its positions on the core issues in order to obtain their attendance at a high enough level. Even if the U.S. does not issue its own statement in lieu of the Joint Statement, a revised U.S. position could come in the form of a presidential address or even private communications from Washington to Arab capitals that erode the Bush Letter and empty it of much of its original content.

**Do We All Really Know What a Final Peace Settlement Will Look Like?** There have been other pressures on the Bush administration to abandon the Bush Letter, as well, from many parts of the foreign policy community. In the last few years, it has been frequently stated in high-level academic conferences as well as by pundits that, "We all know what the final outcome of an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement will look like," and this assertion is usually followed by some reference to the Clinton proposals and the follow-up talks at Taba.<sup>3</sup> The power of this idea cannot be overstated, particularly within the confines of the Capitol Beltway in Washington.

Such statements try to introduce inevitability into the expected parameters of a peace settlement, even though they are based on a whole series of failed negotiating attempts seven years ago that cannot possibly bind the State of Israel. Moreover, those taking this position completely ignore the fact that the Clinton proposals were viewed by the General Staff of the Israel Defense Forces in 2000 as too far reaching and endangering Israel's security, and their position was presented, at the time, by

Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Shaul Mofaz.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, among the Palestinians, the current head of the negotiating team, Abu Ala, stated back in 2001 that even after further Israeli concessions at Taba, beyond the Clinton proposals, the extent of Israeli flexibility was inadequate and that never before had there been "a clearer gap between the two sides."

Nonetheless, this theme that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could be easily solved seems to have permeated some of the elites who have responsibility for the peace process at present. Speaking at the Saban Forum in Jerusalem on November 4, 2007, the Quartet Envoy, former Prime Minister Tony Blair, revealed a similar view to those who believe the outcome of negotiations is already known, when he said:

Truthfully, if you took any group of well-educated Israelis or Palestinians and said to them, describe on two sheets of paper the rough solution to the core final status issues - territory, right of return, Jerusalem - they could probably do it roughly along the same contours of a solution.<sup>5</sup>

The Bush administration recognizes that even if after Annapolis, Israel and the Palestinians reach the outlines of a permanent status government, Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority leader, is too weak to implement it. For that reason, many in Israel call a document of this sort "a shelf agreement," that can only be taken down and used when conditions permit. But how can Israel commit itself to any future borders when the situation in the entire region is so uncertain in the years ahead, since no one can predict what will be the situation in Iraq and whether an empowered Iran will emerge that is armed with nuclear weapons.

At present, it is critical for Israeli diplomacy to protect the Bush Letter and provide countervailing arguments against those who seek to undercut and replace it with a new set of Israeli-Palestinian documents. Israelis have learned from their experience with Gaza what can happen to their most vital security interests if they are not safeguarded at the same time that far-reaching territorial concessions are made. The Philadelphi Corridor, between Palestinian Gaza and Egyptian Sinai, has become an open thoroughfare for smuggling massive amounts of weapons and trained terrorist operatives. An Israeli pullout from the Jordan Valley separating the West Bank from Jordan, would yield similar results, but on a much larger scale and undermine Jordanian stability, as well.

#### Notes

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## Israel's bounty

By Stephen G. Henderson The Baltimore Sun September 19, 2007

**In the Land of Milk and Honey, cooks are turning to light, fresh fare**

Ten days separate the Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashana, which started on Sept. 12, and Yom Kippur, which is observed Friday and Saturday. This week-plus span, known as Teshuvah, is a time of soul-searching and making hopeful resolutions for the future. Because it includes alternate periods of fasting and feasting, some Jews use Teshuvah to reconsider past lapses in healthful eating and commit to a different diet ahead.

I was reminded of Teshuvah earlier this year, when I was shopping for produce at the open-air Carmel Market of Tel Aviv, Israel, with Gil Hovav, a food writer and celebrity chef in Israel. Hovav suggested that many Israelis are resolving to change their tastes -- shifting from hearty meat stews and calorie-laden desserts to lighter fare of the Mediterranean diet.

Hovav appears regularly on television shows in Israel to teach viewers which seasonal fruit and vegetables are available, and the most nutritious ways to cook them. It was Friday when we met -- Carmel's busiest day of the week by far, because everyone is off work and buying provisions for the Saturday Sabbath. Oblivious to the nearly frantic tumult around him, Hovav regarded the towering piles of produce with an almost worshipful gaze.

"Will you just look at this okra? See how delicate and tasty it is?" he said, and then insisted I pop one in my mouth. Even raw, the vegetable was astonishingly crisp and flavorful. A moment later, though, okra was over. Hovav now sang the praises of strawberries, watermelons, figs, dates and pomegranates. Then it was on to golden raisins the size of almonds.

In the Jewish culinary tradition, food preparation is an act of love for one's family and one's religion. But in Israel, I discovered, healthful eating also is becoming an act of patriotism. As Hovav made clear to me, the country is blessed in

that none of Carmel's exemplary fruit or vegetables is imported, but all come from Israel's farms and kibbutzim.

"These tomatoes, for instance, are grown in the Negev Desert. They're a miracle, really," he said as he picked up a brilliant red orb and smiled at it rapturously. "In New York, these would be something like \$5 a pound, but here they are the cheapest vegetable you can buy. They are sweet and great and I just can't tell you how proud I am of them! They are very Israeli!"

**Back to nature** Israel is a small country, barely 300 miles long and less than 70 miles across at the widest point, making it roughly the same size as New Jersey. Though half the land is desert and what's arable has vast differences of soil and climate, Israel cultivates an incredible variety of produce. As people came to its shores from around the world, Israel also cultivated an incredible variety of immigrant recipes.

Ashkenazi Jews arriving from Eastern Europe arrived with a hankering for sweets like cheese-filled blinis and blintzes, as well as cholent -- a rich stew of meat, potatoes, beans and grain. Then, there are the calorie-dense snack foods beloved by Israelis, as well as other nations throughout the Middle East. I'm referring to falafel (deep-fried chickpea balls), kibbe (torpedo-shaped bites of ground meat, grilled or deep-fried) and shawarma, which is grilled meat, such as lamb or turkey, served in pita bread with a variety of piquant sauces.

To be sure, many Israelis still happily consume all of the above. However, during the two weeks I traveled throughout the country, whether I was wandering in groves of date palm trees near the Dead Sea, admiring grape vines in the Golan Heights or sampling grilled fish at a restaurant alongside the Sea of Galilee, I discovered what's currently "very Israeli" -- a rhyming phrase ubiquitous in people's speech here -- are dishes that use the nation's natural bounty in refreshingly simple ways.

"Israelis take tremendous pride in the fact that, for thousands of years, their country has been known as 'the land of milk and honey.' And, it's not just that these foods are found there, but that this is a land which produces these things in great, great abundance," said Leah Waks, a native of Tel Aviv who is director of undergraduate studies at the University of Maryland's department of communication.

Appearing more than 40 times in the Bible, "a land flowing with milk and honey" is perhaps the best-known phrase used to describe the Holy Land. What's intriguing, however, is that Israel, both in ancient times and now, boasts many trees bearing fruit that, when squeezed, gush forth with nectar as sweet if not sweeter than what's found in a beehive. In fact, many biblical scholars and food historians believe the "honey" referred to in Exodus was actually made by macerating dates into a delicious, naturally sugared syrup known today as silan.

**The modern appetite** Some of the biggest agricultural exports of Israel, such as grapefruits and oranges, are still a result of these sweet fruit trees, said Eli W. Schlossberg, a Baltimore-based consultant in the gourmet- and kosher-food businesses who travels there frequently. Schlossberg said the Israelis pioneered the idea of juice bars, which are located all over Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, serving freshly squeezed peach, pear, mango or pineapple drinks.

What's new, too, is an appreciation for recipes brought to Israel by the Sephardim. Hailing from Mediterranean countries, Spain to Morocco, Sephardic Jews immigrated with their unique herbs, spices, flower essences and fruit.

Not only fruit, but vegetables and legumes also are having something of a national renaissance. Eggplant is served in a bewilderingly large number of ways throughout Israel, and there are Israeli restaurants solely devoted to different recipes for hummus (chickpea puree).

Hana Bor, associate professor of Jewish education at Baltimore Hebrew University, spent five weeks in Israel this summer and said she observed a generational difference in appetites. "Israeli food used to be more heavily European -- things like stuffed cabbage and cholent. But younger people are more into spices, and the more sophisticated flavors of Sephardic cuisine. Today, what's most popular in Israel is the Mediterranean

diet, very healthy and fresh; not much meat, lots of seafood."

Nir Zook agrees. He is the chef at Noa Bistro and Cordelia, two of Tel Aviv's most inventive restaurants. One sultry afternoon, we chatted while I sampled a plate of succulent squid he had quickly grilled and sprinkled with a touch of curry.

"It's now very Israeli to use lots of herbs, olive oil and vegetables," Zook said. "Herbs and vegetables here are cheap and of excellent quality. ... Our cuisine is a mixture of immigrant influences -- Morocco, Italy, Poland and Russia. Basically, we mix everything with everything, just as long as the food is light. It is too hot here for heavy food."

It adds up Seduced by this "mix everything" philosophy, I began to think healthful eating, Israeli-style, was a snap. I grew lax in taking notes while I dined, nearly discarding notions of measurement or proportion, and simply listing the sum of ingredients. As I read my jottings, they look less like recipes than mathematical equations. Leeks + orange juice + balsamic vinegar Grilled zucchini + lemon + mint Roasted beets + raisins + caraway seeds Sardines + pomegranate

Bare bones as these instructions are, by following them, I've created some wonderfully vibrant dishes. A few of my experiments fell flat, though, and I couldn't figure out what I'd done wrong.

When I mentioned this mystery to Bor of Baltimore Hebrew University, she laughed and told me how, for her daughter Shira's bat mitzvah held in August in Columbia, she'd arranged to have an Israeli food station as part of the catered celebration. There was falafel and hummus and fresh vegetable salads. To her surprise, these offerings were not a huge hit, and she didn't understand why until she brought some guests who'd come from Israel for the occasion to a U.S. grocery store.

"Israelis eat seasonally, so my friends were amazed, at first, at the variety of produce we have all year long in the United States. But then, they discovered our vegetables don't compare in flavor to what they have at home," Bor said. So if you resolve this Yom Kippur to eat more healthfully, to eat like an Israeli, it may require some extra effort to find the freshest, best vegetables. But maybe you shouldn't be surprised at this. Who said anything worth doing was easy?

## Jerusalem Before Israel

By Amy Dockser Marcus The Wall Street Journal May 8, 2007

WSJ Editor's note: The roots of Arab-Israeli enmity are usually traced to Palestine's administration as a British Mandate (1920-48). But in "Jerusalem 1913," Wall Street Journal reporter Amy Dockser Marcus--the paper's former Middle East correspondent (1991-98) and the winner of a Pulitzer Prize in 2005

for her coverage of improving cancer-survival rates-- finds that the conflict's origins lie deeper in the past, in the Ottoman Empire before World War I. She begins by noting a long period of mutual accommodation that would vanish with the rise of modern nationalism. Some excerpts:

The Ottoman occupation of Jerusalem in the 16th century until the early 20th was often marked by peaceful coexistence: "Twice a year, Jews, Muslims, and Christians celebrated together at the shrine of Simon the Just, a popular biblical figure. For a single coin, you could buy a ride to the tombs on a camel or donkey. Their owners would lead the animals from café to café soliciting business, the colored rocks worn around the beasts' necks to protect them from the evil eye clicking rhythmically as they made their way down the street. During the monthlong Muslim holiday of Ramadan, nighttime shows featured entertainers who would make shadow puppets against the walls of the café, often using the puppets' dialogue to poke fun at local officials or make veiled political commentary on the latest events. During the Jewish holiday of Purim, children from all over the city dressed up in colorful costumes to celebrate and exchange sweets. The Arabs even had a name for Purim in their own language, which translated as 'the sugar holiday.' "

Theodor Herzl, the author of "The Jewish State," which called in 1897 for a Jewish homeland, visited Palestine after the first Zionist Congress that same year had settled on it as the best site for a Jewish home: "Herzl was everywhere greeted as a kind of prophet. Children lined up at the village gates to sing to him, dressed in white, freshly laundered linen and bearing gifts of chocolate. Old men rushed to his side clutching bread and salt, a traditional gesture of hospitality. Groups of farmers left their fields and rode out to meet him on horseback, cheering him on and shooting their rifles in the air as he approached.

"During an appearance at one Jewish settlement, three elderly men trailed behind him as he walked, falling to their knees to kiss the tracks he left in the sand. That incident so unsettled Herzl that afterward he made certain never to be seen riding a white donkey while in the country, for fear that people

would think he considered himself the Messiah and turn him in to the Ottoman authorities."

World War I dissolved the Ottoman Empire, leaving Palestine, the nascent Jewish homeland, in the hands of British administrators for nearly 30 years. After gaining its independence in 1948, the country newly named Israel joined the United Nations the following year: "After the state of Israel had been founded and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was well under way, many looked back, trying to pinpoint the moment when they realized that that conflict was inevitable. David Ben-Gurion, who became Israel's first prime minister, said it was the day in 1915 that he sat on a train waiting to leave Jerusalem at the order of [Ahmed Djemal, the city's Ottoman ruler], who banished many known Zionist activists from the city.

"Ben-Gurion had tried to turn himself into an Ottoman--studying Turkish, attending law school in Constantinople, trying to organize a Jewish legion to fight on behalf of the Ottoman Empire in the war, and even donning a red fez. But all these gestures had been to no avail, for at the end of the day, Djemal had looked at him and seen not an Ottoman but an advocate for a future Jewish state, and had him jailed in Jerusalem. ... Upon his release from jail, he was exiled to Alexandria. Later, in his books and memoirs, he recalled vividly a particular moment on the train, when an Arab acquaintance of his, whom he called Yeya Effendi, walked by and saw him waiting to leave. The men embraced, exchanged news and greetings, and then Yeya Effendi asked him where he was going.

"Ben-Gurion told him that he was being exiled, ordered never to return to Jerusalem. Yeya Effendi held him in the embrace of a true friend, mourning his loss of their shared city. Then he looked at Ben-Gurion and said something that Ben-Gurion pondered for the entire train ride to Alexandria. 'As your friend, I am sad,' Yeya Effendi told him. 'But as an Arab, I rejoice.' "

## Sultan of Swat

By Rafael Medoff The Washington Times

Baseball players using steroids. A star football player jailed for cruelty to dogs. A basketball referee caught changing his calls to suit gamblers.

At a time when prominent sports figures are all too frequently associated with unethical behavior, it is worth recalling that 65 years ago this week, one of the world's most prominent athletes used his fame for a most noble purpose. That athlete was Babe Ruth, and the issue that moved him to make a rare foray into international affairs was the Holocaust.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1942, the Allied leadership received a steady flow of reports about German massacres of tens of thousands of Jewish civilians. Information reaching the Roosevelt administration in August revealed that the killings

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were not random atrocities but part of a Nazi plan to systematically annihilate all of Europe's Jews. In late November, the State Department publicly verified this news and, on Dec. 17, the U.S. and British governments and their allies released a statement acknowledging and condemning the mass murder.

But aside from that Allied statement, there was little indication that the Roosevelt administration intended to do anything in response to the killings. There was no talk of opening America's gates or the gates of British-ruled Palestine to Jewish refugees. There was no talk of taking any steps to rescue the Jews. As quickly as the mass murder had been revealed, it began to fade from the public eye.

Dorothy Thompson was determined to keep that from happening. And Babe Ruth would help her.

Thompson (1893-1961), the first American journalist to be kicked out of Nazi Germany, was once described by Time magazine as one of the two most influential women in the United States, second only to Eleanor Roosevelt. In the autumn of 1942, Thompson contacted the World Jewish Congress with the novel idea of mobilizing German Americans to speak out against the Nazi persecution of the Jews.

As a journalist, Thompson understood the news value of German Americans protesting against Germany, especially in view of the well-publicized pro-Nazi sentiment in some segments of the German-American community. Just a few years earlier, more than 20,000 supporters of the German American Bund had filled Madison Square Garden for a pro-Hitler rally.

The World Jewish Congress agreed to foot the bill for publishing Thompson's anti-Nazi statement as a newspaper advertisement. During the last week of December 1942, the "Christmas Declaration by men and women of German ancestry," appeared as a full-page ad in the New York Times and nine other major daily newspapers.

"[W]e Americans of German descent raise our voices in denunciation of the Hitler policy of cold-blooded extermination of the Jews of Europe and against the barbarities committed by the Nazis against all other innocent peoples under their sway," the declaration began. "These horrors ... are, in particular, a challenge to those who, like ourselves are descendants of the Germany that once stood in the foremost ranks of civilization." The ad went on to "utterly repudiate every thought and deed of Hitler and his Nazis," and urged the people of Germany "to overthrow a regime which is in the infamy of German history."

The names of 50 prominent German-Americans adorned the advertisement. Among them were several notable academics, such as Princeton

University Dean Christian Gauss and University of Maine President Arthur Mauck. Leading Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, news correspondent William Shirer and orchestra conductor Walter Damrosch appeared on the ad, as did Freda Kirchwey, editor of the political newsweekly the Nation, and Oswald Heck, speaker of the New York State Assembly.

But the signatory who was by far the best known to the American public was George Herman "Babe" Ruth.

Widely regarded as the greatest baseball player in the history of the game, Ruth, known as the Sultan of Swat, at that time held the records for the most home runs in a season (60) and most home runs in a career (714) as well as numerous other batting records. Having excelled as a pitcher before switching to the outfield and gaining fame as a hitter, the amazingly versatile Ruth even held the pitching record for the most shutouts in a season by a left-hander. Not surprisingly, Ruth was one of the first players elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

By participating in this German-American protest against the Holocaust, Ruth used his powerful name to help attract public attention to the Jews' plight. Timing is everything, both on the baseball field and beyond, and the timing of Ruth's protest was crucial: Precisely at the moment when U.S. officials were hoping to brush the Jewish refugee problem aside, Babe Ruth helped keep it front and center.

In an era when professional athletes rarely lent their names to political causes, and when most Americans, including those in the Roosevelt administration, took little interest in the mass murder of Europe's Jews, Babe Ruth raised his voice in protest. Ruth's action is all the more memorable when one contrasts it with the kind of behavior that lands athletes on the front pages all too often these days.

**Rafael Medoff is director of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.**

## Israel, the Conflict and Peace: Answers to frequently asked questions

### By The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs Are Israeli settlements legal?

Israeli settlements in the West Bank are legal both under international law and the agreements between Israel and the Palestinians. Claims to the contrary are mere attempts to distort the law for political purposes. Yet whatever the status of the settlements, their existence should never be used to justify terrorism.

The Palestinians often claim that settlement activity is illegal and call on Israel to dismantle every settlement. In effect, they are demanding that every Jew leave the West Bank, a form of ethnic cleansing. By contrast, within Israel, Arabs and Jews live side-

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by-side; indeed, Israeli Arabs, who account for approximately 20% of Israel's population, are citizens of Israel with equal rights.

The Palestinian call to remove all Jewish presence from the disputed territories is not only discriminatory and morally reprehensible; it has no basis either in law or in the agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

The various agreements reached between Israel and the Palestinians since 1993 contain no prohibitions on the building or expansion of settlements. On the contrary, they specifically provide that the issue of settlements is reserved for

permanent status negotiations, which are to take place in the concluding stage of the peace talks. The parties expressly agreed that the Palestinian Authority has no jurisdiction or control over settlements or Israelis, pending the conclusion of a permanent status agreement.

It has been charged that the provision contained in the Israel-Palestinian Interim Agreement prohibiting unilateral steps that alter the status of the West Bank implies a ban on settlement activity. This position is disingenuous. The prohibition on unilateral measures was designed to ensure that neither side take steps that would change the legal status of this territory (such as by annexation or a unilateral declaration of statehood), pending the outcome of permanent status talks. The building of homes has no effect on the final permanent status of the area as a whole. Were this prohibition to be applied to building, it would lead to the unreasonable interpretation that neither side is permitted to build houses to accommodate the needs of their respective communities.

As the Israeli claim to these territories is legally valid, it is just as legitimate for Israelis to build their communities as it is for the Palestinians to build theirs. Yet in the spirit of compromise, successive Israeli governments have indicated their willingness to negotiate the issue and have adopted a voluntary freeze on the building of new settlements as a confidence-building measure.

Furthermore, Israel had established its settlements in the West Bank in accordance with international law. Attempts have been made to claim that the settlements violate Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which forbids a state from deporting or transferring "parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." However, this allegation has no validity in law as Israeli citizens were neither deported nor transferred to the territories.

Although Israel has voluntarily taken upon itself the obligation to uphold the humanitarian provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel maintains that the Convention (which deals with occupied territories) was not applicable to the disputed territory. As there had been no internationally recognized legal sovereign in either the West Bank or Gaza prior to the 1967 Six Day War, they cannot be considered to have become "occupied territory" when control passed into the hands of Israel.

Yet even if the Fourth Geneva Convention were to apply to the territories, Article 49 would not be relevant to the issue of Jewish settlements. The Convention was drafted immediately following the Second World War, against the background of the massive forced population transfers that occurred during that period. As the International Red Cross' authoritative commentary to the Convention confirms, Article 49 (entitled "Deportations, Transfers, Evacuations") was intended to prevent

the forcible transfer of civilians, thereby protecting the local population from displacement. Israel has not forcibly transferred its citizens to the territory and the Convention does not place any prohibition on individuals voluntarily choosing their place of residence. Moreover, the settlements are not intended to displace Arab inhabitants, nor do they do so in practice. According to independent surveys, the built-up areas of the settlements (not including roads or unpopulated adjacent tracts) take up about 3% of the total territory of the West Bank.

Israel's use of land for settlements conforms to all rules and norms of international law. Privately owned lands are not requisitioned for the establishment of settlements. In addition, all settlement activity comes under the supervision of the Supreme Court of Israel (sitting as the High Court of Justice) and every aggrieved inhabitant of the territories, including Palestinian residents, can appeal directly to this Court.

The Fourth Geneva Convention was certainly not intended to prevent individuals from living on their ancestral lands or on property that had been illegally taken from them. Many present-day Israeli settlements have been established on sites that were home to Jewish communities in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) in previous generations, in an expression of the Jewish people's deep historic and religious connection with the land. Many of the most ancient and holy Jewish sites, including the Cave of the Patriarchs (the burial site of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) and Rachel's Tomb, are located in these areas. Jewish communities, such as in Hebron (where Jews lived until they were massacred in 1929), existed throughout the centuries. Other communities, such as the Gush Etzion bloc in Judea, were founded before 1948 under the internationally endorsed British Mandate.

The right of Jews to settle in all parts of the Land of Israel was first recognized by the international community in the 1922 League of Nations Mandate for Palestine. The purpose of the Mandate was to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in the Jewish people's ancient homeland. Indeed, Article 6 of the Mandate provided for "close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands not required for public use."

For more than a thousand years, the only time that Jewish settlement was prohibited in the West Bank was under the Jordanian occupation (1948-1967) that resulted from an armed invasion. During this period of Jordanian rule, which was not internationally recognized, Jordan eliminated the Jewish presence in the West Bank (as Egypt did in the Gaza Strip) and declared that the sale of land to Jews was a capital offense. It is untenable that this outrage could invalidate the right of Jews to establish homes in these areas, and accordingly, the legal titles to land that had already been acquired remain valid to this day.

In conclusion, the oft-repeated claim regarding the illegality' of Israeli settlements has no legal or factual basis under either international law or the agreements between Israel and the Palestinians. Such

charges can only be regarded as politically motivated. Most importantly, any political claim - including the one regarding settlements - should never be used to justify terrorist attacks on innocent civilians.

## Throwing stones at John Hagee

### By Joel Mowbray The Washington Times

May 15, 2008

In a particularly harsh New York Times column, Frank Rich recently painted a persuasive portrayal of high-profile evangelical Christian minister John Hagee as a nutty anti-Catholic bigot who does not like Jews, either. Simply put, it is a lie. Certain facts cited are, in fact, true. The most damning "facts," however, are not. Therein lies the problem.

Mr. Rich flipped the truth on its head — and it would stretch credulity to think he made an honest mistake. In the YouTube video the Times columnist parades as evidence of bigotry, Mr. Hagee is actually doing what he has done for decades: combating anti-Semitism. In other words, Mr. Rich branded Mr. Hagee a bigot when, in fact, he was actually fighting bigotry.

Describing a now-infamous YouTube video clip — which lasts all of one minute and 17 seconds — Mr. Rich wrote: "Wielding a pointer, [Mr. Hagee] pokes at the image of a woman with Pamela Anderson-sized breasts, her hand raising a golden chalice. The woman is 'the Great Whore,' Mr. Hagee explains, and she is drinking 'the blood of the Jewish people.' The Great Whore represents 'the Roman Church,' which, in his view, has thirsted for Jewish blood throughout history, from the Crusades to the Holocaust." What the columnist neglects to note is that "the Great Whore" is not Mr. Hagee's term, but rather the Bible's. And suffice it to say that if Pamela Anderson had the same breast size as the rather plain-looking "Great Whore," then the iconic blond never would have become, well, iconic.

But those are simply deceptive tactics. This is the big lie: Mr. Hagee never said that "the Great Whore" was the "Roman Church." Certainly not in the video, and it appears, not ever. Mr. Hagee quite clearly said that she represented "the Apostate Church."

Later in his monologue, Mr. Hagee cited Adolf Hitler's boast that he was merely following in the footsteps of the "Roman Church." (Many Protestants have used the "Great Whore" to further anti-Catholicism, but Mr. Hagee has not.) So shoddy was Mr. Rich's research that not only did he not call for comment, but he even declined an offer from Mr. Hagee's publicist to answer any questions — an e-mail that was only sent the day before publication, because the publicist had heard that the column was in the works. (Mr. Rich did not respond to a request for an interview for this column.)

Were Mr. Rich interested in being fair, he would have noted that Mr. Hagee, for over a decade, personally supported a San Antonio-area Catholic convent which provided free housing for retired nuns. (Mr. Rich knew this, as it was referenced in the publicist's e-mail.) His failure to adhere to basic journalistic standards might explain why Mr. Rich (perhaps unintentionally) created the impression that Mr. Hagee is, at best, no friend of Jews, or at worst, an anti-Semite. It's an ugly implication — and dead wrong.

Theologically, Mr. Hagee believes that one of the greatest sins a Christian can commit is anti-Semitism — hence the reference in the video to the drinking of the blood of the Jews. He was reminding Christians, as he often does, of the long history of Christian anti-Semitism. Mr. Hagee wastes no opportunity to teach Christians that one of the surest ways for a Christian to become a member of the "apostate church" is to engage in anti-Semitism.

For decades, Mr. Hagee has easily been one of the most prominent Christian leaders fighting anti-Semitism. To him, loving Jews as much as one's Christian neighbors is a core tenet of his faith. In his book "In Defense of Israel," Mr. Hagee wrote, "Show me an anti-Semitic Christian, and I'll show you a spiritually dead Christian whose hatred for other human beings has strangled his faith."

If anything, Mr. Hagee is obsessed with purging anti-Semitism from Christendom. Thus, the book contains a lengthy discussion of the history of Christian anti-Semitism. (It is from this section that his critics have pulled quotes to argue that Mr. Hagee is anti-Catholic. The leading critic, though, the Catholic League's Bill Donohue, this week announced a truce with Mr. Hagee.)

If only Mr. Rich had spent roughly 20 minutes to peruse the relevant chapter, he would have learned two important tidbits: 1) Mr. Hagee's criticism was directed solely at the Catholic Church's past deeds, and 2) Mr. Hagee also attacked Protestant anti-Semitism, with an in-depth exploration of Martin Luther's considerable influence on Nazi ideology.

Throwing stones from inside his glass house, Mr. Rich wrote, "Any 12-year-old with a laptop could have vetted this preacher in 30 seconds, tops." Given how far off the mark he was, it is only fair to ask of Mr. Rich: Could he not find a "12-year-old with a laptop"?

## Will Israel Attack Iran

By Dennis Prager TownHall.com July 22, 2008

It is difficult to imagine Israel attacking Iran.

It is, however, more difficult to imagine Israel not attacking Iran.

Consider three questions: First, does Iran mean what it says about destroying Israel? When its leaders repeatedly call for Israel's annihilation, after referring to it as a cancer and using other rhetoric not heard on a national level since the Nazi regime's depiction of Jews, is this just rhetorical flourish? Or do they really hope and plan to destroy Israel?

Second, can Iran do it? One can hope and even plan to do something outrageous, but that does not necessarily mean that one can accomplish it. So, the second question is whether Iran can destroy Israel or at least murder a high enough percentage of its population and destroy enough of its infrastructure to enable surrounding Arab states to invade and do the rest of the job that the majority of Arabs favor (even if some of their governments have a peace treaty with Israel).

It seems to me that the answers to the first two questions are so obvious that any burden of proof rests on those who argue otherwise. Do they think Iranian leaders are bluffing? Why would these leaders bluff? And why would one think they are bluffing given their faith-based hatred of Israel? I write "faith-based" not to argue that Islam necessarily demands the destruction of the Jewish state, but because that is what the Iranian leaders believe Islam demands.

Iran is ruled by people who believe it is God's will to destroy the Jewish state. It is also a country rapidly acquiring the ability to use nuclear weapons to achieve this goal -- through direct attack, handing nuclear weapons to terrorists or both.

There has never been a hatred as deep as Jew-hatred nor is there one today. And hatred of the Jewish state is similarly unparalleled. The depth of Iran's hatred for Israel was made evident again last week in a story from the Olympic swim trials in Croatia. The Iranian government ordered its athlete not to participate when it learned that one of the other swimmers was a Jew from Israel. There are no nationals other than Israeli Jews with whom nationals of another nation would refuse to enter a swimming pool.

This unique hatred explains why the forms of deterrence that have worked in the past do not seem applicable to the Iranian regime. The most obvious

one, the one that rendered nuclear war highly improbable during the Cold War, was MAD, Mutually Assured Destruction. MAD was so simple a child could understand it: You bomb me; I bomb you. Our people die en masse; your people die en masse. No matter how vile the Soviet regime was, MAD worked because Soviet leaders wanted to live.

But MAD works only with the sane.

We regard a defining element of sanity as the desire to live. And we regard a defining element of morality as the valuing of human life. Neither applies to Islamists such as those who govern Iran. Their motto, as so often expressed by its Hamas and Hezbollah allies, is "We value death as much as you [Jews, Americans, Westerners in general] value life." For people like Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the vision of millions of Iranian Muslims dying from a counterstrike while Israel burns is not frightening; it is a necessary sacrifice.

If the answers to the first two questions are as clearly in the affirmative as I have argued, the only remaining question is whether Israel or anyone else can stop these plans from materializing.

The one nonviolent way of doing so is sanctions. A worldwide vise of economic, social and political sanctions against the Iranian regime should be tried and might work. That is certainly my first choice and, one presumes, Israel's as well.

But it now appears unlikely that the world is willing to suffocate the Iranian regime as it did the South African apartheid regime. Iran has oil; South Africa had none. Iran has worldwide support from Muslim regimes, which do not threaten a fellow Muslim regime, especially over its being too anti-Israel; South Africa had virtually no such allies. Iran has almost automatic support from at least two Security Council members, Russia and China; South Africa had no equivalent support. And much of the world is more exercised about white racism against blacks than about genocidal threats against Jews.

Therefore, if the world does not unite in ostracizing the Iranian regime, there remains only one other way to stop it from attempting to destroy Israel -- destroy its nuclear facilities.

There are strong arguments against Israel doing so. But if Israel believes that Iran will soon have the ability to attack it with nuclear weapons, and that Iran will do so, it is difficult to argue that Israel wait and run the risk of experiencing another Holocaust.

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The editors of the Israel newsletter want to wish all of our readers to have a wonderful, happy and healthy New Year holiday.