

**Please join Suburban Orthodox, Ner Tamid and the Baltimore Zionist District in welcoming Dr. Daniel Gordis back to Baltimore. His topic is "Not a Moment's regret: Reflections of an Unabashed Zionist" on Saturday night November 14 at 7:00 pm at Suburban Orthodox Synagogue, 7504 Seven Mile Lane, Pikesville – Free, sponsored the Berman family! His latest book will be available for purchase.**

## Anything You Say Can and Will Be Used Against You

By Daniel Gordis The Jerusalem Post November 5, 2009

It's been one of those months, with its renewed call for "balance" and "honesty" in discussion of Israel. First there was the Goldstone report, with its accusations that Israel committed war crimes during Operation Cast Lead in Gaza. Goldstone was followed by the J Street Conference, celebrated by many as an opportunity to demonstrate their devotion to Israel by encouraging the US to get tough with it, to force it out of the militant and pro-occupation mind-set it has allegedly forged for itself.

Then there was the appearance in English of Tel Aviv University Prof. Shlomo Sand's new book, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, with its claim that the concept of a Jewish people was a late invention, which the Zionists cynically manipulated to justify their taking land from the indigenous Arabs. Finally, verging on the surreal, Donald Bostrom, the Swedish journalist who authored the article accusing Israel of harvesting organs from Palestinian victims of Cast Lead, was invited to a conference in the Negev.

The utterly predictable responses are not terribly interesting. On one side of the divide, there are those who assail Goldstone for unfairness, J Street for allowing its campus activists to drop the "pro-Israel" portion of its "pro-Israel, pro-peace" moniker, Shlomo Sand for shoddy and self-hating scholarship and the Dimona Media Conference, which invited Bostrom, for utter naïveté.

There may be much merit to these accusations, but they have a serious downside, as well. Too often, those who rush to Israel's defense have no interest in the undeniable suffering on the other side of the border. In knee-jerk fashion, they strive to silence any criticism, even in cases when its policies might well be wrong.

But no society benefits from an absence of criticism, and no nation improves without vigorous debate. Could we be effective parents without letting our children know when they disappoint us? Citizenship may not be all that different. In the long

run, support that seeks to suppress debate will do us as much harm as good.

But on the other side of the divide is a growing group so insistent on dialogue that it's no longer clear to what they are most fundamentally committed. When a group of American rabbis visited Jerusalem last week, one of them remarked that it was unfortunate that Ramallah wasn't on the itinerary. "Why visit Ramallah?" another member of the group asked. "Because Ramallah is also part of our story," was the response. "More than Holon? Are you distressed that we're not visiting Holon?" was the question that followed. To that, the first rabbi had no response.

Why, indeed, should Ramallah matter to us more than Holon? And why hide our pro-Israel position (if that's really what we are) simply to appeal to more college students? Had Theodor Herzl adopted that stance with the sultan, or had Chaim Weizmann been bashful in London, would we have a state? Had Golda Meir been self-conscious about her convictions in the face of an American community not entirely certain that a Jewish state was a good idea, where would we be? One shudders to imagine.

Have we become so utterly addicted to dialogue with our enemies that we would rather visit their cities than our own? Have we lost the ability to say, "If you breathe new life into the age-old blood libel, we will shun you"? Would we invite Alfred Dreyfus's accusers here for dialogue, were they alive today? We have real enemies. Have we so lost sight of that that we forget that anything we say, to paraphrase Miranda, "can and will be used against us"?

If those who insist on silencing any critique of Israel fail us because their passion threatens to squelch the debate we desperately need, those passionately committed to open debate suffer from the opposite problem - they do not recognize that

they are unwittingly playing right into the hands of those determined to destroy us.

Take Sand's book, *The Invention of the Jewish People*. It is, ostensibly, nothing but an academic hypothesis. Why all the tumult, numerous young American Jews have asked me. Perhaps Sands errs in some of his claims, but so, too, do many academic tomes.

What's so dangerous is clear on the Amazon page for Sand's book. Take a look at the "Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought" section. There's Avi Shlaim, the well known post-Zionist, and his *Israel and Palestine: Reflections, Revisions, Refutations*. Next to it, sporting a cover with both a swastika and a Star of David, *Debating the Holocaust: A New Look at Both Sides*, as if there's actually something to debate. Then, *Israeli Apartheid: A Beginner's Guide*. And *Palestine in Pieces: Graphic Perspectives*.

Surely, Sand must have known how his book would be used.

But there are critics of Israel who genuinely do not wish to do it harm. And these people ought to bear one central fact in mind: In today's climate, anything we say can, and indeed will, be used against us.

Yes, there is moral failure and dangerous shortsightedness in refusing to hold ourselves and our government to standards of which we, and our children, will be proud. Of course Israel needs nuanced moral critique; no true lover of Zion would want that critique silenced.

But there is also suicidal folly in denying what we know: Were the UN to vote today on the creation of Israel, the motion would fail. The outcome of November 29, 1947 would not be repeated, for the world has decided that Israel was a mistake. No other country anywhere is subjected to debate as to whether it should exist. And that is the fact that matters more than any other.

Given that, the ultimate question is the one that the biblical Joshua posed to the angel (Joshua 5:13): "Are you with us, or do you seek our destruction?" It is frustrating, and tragic - but right now, in the world in which we live, those are our only choices.

**Saving Israel: How the Jewish People Can Win a War That May Never End addresses in much greater detail the issue of creating an ongoing Zionist conversation in the Jewish State.**

## Dazed and Confused

By Elliott Abrams National Review November 10, 2009

**The Israelis can't figure out U.S. policy. For that matter, who can** When I visited Israel in late October, not long before the latest visits of U.S. envoy George Mitchell and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Israelis of all political hues confessed that they were amazed, perplexed, and confused by the policy those two diplomats and President Obama are following.

First came an instant attitude of hostility on the part of the Obama administration toward Israel's new prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, even before he had taken office on March 31 and despite his efforts to create a centrist coalition. Second came its obsession with a "settlement freeze," which in fact was a demand for something that no Israeli prime minister of any party could possibly agree to — a complete and immediate freeze on construction not only in every settlement (including those Israel will obviously keep in any final-status agreement) but also in Israel's capital, Jerusalem. Third came the demand that Arab states reach out to Israel, a demand that the president himself delivered to the king of Saudi Arabia in a visit there in June and that, predictably, was rejected immediately.

Fourth came the administration's handling of the Palestinian leadership, which it pulled out onto the "settlement freeze" limb — for how could any Palestinian leader be less insistent on a total freeze than the Americans were? This meant that when the

Obama team faced reality and dropped the freeze demand in favor of a call for "restraint," the Palestinians out on that limb were simply sawed off. Later, when American diplomats prevailed upon the Palestinian leadership not to ask the U.N. Human Rights Council to approve the Goldstone Report on Israeli conduct during the Gaza War, they added insult to injury. Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas seems to have accepted U.S. demands and instructed his delegation at the Human Rights Council in Geneva to cool it, a move that won him unprecedented unpopularity at home. He should have said no and simply told the U.S. to veto anything that arose in the Security Council, but the U.S. should not have pushed him.

That the administration did so suggests a powerful American desire to avoid a veto, presumably because such actions are so "Cold War," so "George Bush" — and far out of line with the new Obama era of global engagement and multilateral action. So frustrated has Abbas become with all this that he has announced he won't run for reelection in the planned PA voting on January 24. While he may well change his mind, and the election itself is likely to be postponed, the announcement is properly understood as his own protest vote against administration policy. Weakened by the Clinton and Mitchell maneuvers, he has about as much

enthusiasm for Obama's handling of the Middle East as Bibi Netanyahu.

The net result of the administration's approach is a massive policy failure. The Obama administration has weakened the Palestinian leadership it meant to strengthen, weakened the alliance with Israel by its hostility to Israel's government, weakened its own reputation in Arab capitals for strength and reliability, and painted itself into a policy corner. For where does it go now?

It is still possible that Mitchell, who ought to resign or be fired on account of his gross misreading of the situation in the region, will get Netanyahu to sign some sort of construction moratorium. But we know the conditions: It will not apply to Jerusalem, it will be time-limited, it will permit construction of about 2,500 new units in various stages of preparation, and it will not apply to needed public buildings like clinics or schools. The Palestinian leadership will immediately denounce such a deal, which is not what they thought Mitchell and Obama were demanding. They will not agree to commence peace negotiations on such a basis; indeed, on October 31, Abbas so stated when he met with Secretary Clinton in Abu Dhabi. And if they did start such negotiations, which is the fervent desire of the Obama administration, nothing could possibly come of them right now. Abbas is too weak (partly thanks to us) and too close to elections (called for January, though few believe they'll actually take place then) to undertake serious negotiations at the moment. And remember: Last year, Israel's then-prime minister, Ehud Olmert, made Abbas a peace offer that was so generous it probably couldn't have carried in Olmert's own cabinet. Abbas turned that one down, so it's hard to believe that anything Netanyahu offers now might be acceptable to the Palestinians.

So what has Mitchell achieved for all his travel and all his posturing? Nothing. Actually, worse than nothing: Mitchell has managed to obscure the only good news emerging from the area, which is the continuing improvement in life on the West Bank. More jobs, more freedom of movement, more law and order are apparent in 2009. But that's usually mentioned in the fifth paragraph of any administration statement. If Obama had used all his early prestige last winter to ask Arab states to embrace the Palestinians (rather than to embrace Israel, which was an impossible goal), perhaps he'd have gotten somewhere. Perhaps the PA would today have the funds to build more schools and roads and hospitals — and jails, for that matter.

American policy under Obama has aligned itself in a curious and possibly unintended way with the worst elements of Arab policy. Like that of the Arabs, it is cold toward Israel: Despite several visits to the region, the president has skipped Israel, and the White House's aloofness toward Netanyahu is obvious. This posture makes peace far harder to

achieve. Again like Arab policy, it is warm toward the Palestinians in ways that hurt the Palestinian leaders more than help them. That is, the rhetoric is warm but little or nothing is actually done to assist them, and they emerge weaker with every passing month. Again like the Arab approach, it puts a premium on rhetoric, negotiations, and diplomacy, with few sensible concrete steps.

As a result, "world opinion" toward Israel has gone from cool to frigid — in Europe especially. U.N. actions such as the Goldstone Report are one manifestation of this; denunciations of Israel, not to mention efforts to prevent Israeli officials from speaking on campuses and indeed to jail them if they come to Europe, are others. The cause is clear: As the United States, Israel's closest friend, has backed away from Israel since the Obama inauguration, Europeans have backed even farther. They have seen the American coolness as license, indeed encouragement, to excoriate the Jewish state, and have enthusiastically done so.

Israelis watch all of this and wonder whether it is intended, or rather the product of the Obama team's incompetence. I was asked repeatedly during my visit: What are they doing? What do they think they are doing? Do they realize it isn't working? Is there a learning curve?

Meanwhile, Israelis watch Obama's handling of Iran, which for them is a deadly serious matter. They note that the administration congratulated itself on winning Russian president Dmitry Medvedev's agreement for more sanctions, but they see that there actually was no agreement. They watched as administration spokesmen smugly said they'd gotten more from Iran in just days of talks than Bush had in eight years of hostility, but then saw Iran's "agreement" to export almost all of its low-enriched uranium evaporate over the following weeks.

These episodes do not instill confidence that the mishandling of Israeli-Palestinian affairs is a temporary aberration; instead they make Israelis suspect that the administration's approach to world politics is simply naïve, and more given to self-congratulation than to making tough choices. The president's decision on Afghanistan plays a role here too, for Israelis — like many Americans — wonder whether the dithering of recent weeks bespeaks a lack of "grit." As in Iran, North Korea, Russia, China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and elsewhere, including downtown Washington, an Obama decision to overrule Gen. Stanley McChrystal or to offer him half of what he says he needs will be carefully noted in the Kirya, the headquarters of the Israel Defense Forces. Israelis want a strong, tough America, and they want to be its ally. A weak administration, whose judgment about the Middle East and about world politics is erroneous and often naïve, and that expresses a coolness to Israel and an indifference to the threats it faces, is an Israeli

nightmare. Maybe feeling confused is their way of holding off the conclusion that that's just what they've got in Obama.

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## **Prime Minister's Speech to the Jewish Federation General Assembly**

**By Benjamin Netanyahu Israeli Prime Minister's Office November 9, 2009**

My dear friends, leaders of the Jewish communities of North America,

The history of the Jewish people has been marked by a paradox. We are at once both small and great. We are few in number but luminous in achievement. In the ancient world, the Jews were a small people living on the foothills of Asia touching the Mediterranean. But in Alexandria some 2200 years ago, something happened. The Bible was translated into Greek, and the world has never been the same since.

The Jews brought to civilization at least three big ideas: the idea of monotheism, the belief that all people have innate rights that transcend the power of kings, and a prophetic vision of universal peace. It is impossible to fully describe the revolutionary impact of these ideas throughout history, nor am I able to describe the poetic power of the Biblical stories that overshadowed much of the literature of the ancient world.

As in antiquity so in modernity. Israel is one of the world's smallest countries. But our success in science and technology, in agriculture, in medicine, in the arts, belies our size. And on this continent, the Jewish community accounts for less than 2% of the population, yet its creative accomplishments in every field are legion and legendary. In modern times, Jews everywhere have made extraordinary contributions to humanity.

So, smallness and greatness have accompanied our people throughout nearly 4,000 years of our history. But our conspicuous achievements often masked our small size and the vulnerability that comes from being small. Being prominent but small, we often could not defend ourselves against much larger foes who envied our achievements, despised the ideas we championed, and periodically sought to expel or even annihilate us outright.

The rebirth of Israel did not eliminate such attacks. But it fundamentally changed our ability to repel them. In 1948, some 600,000 Jews, their backs against the sea, fended off the assault of much larger enemies sworn to our destruction. We were aided by many of our fellow American Jews. You gave money, arms, and what is more important, tremendous moral support.

You helped absorb waves of immigrants into Israel, you spearheaded the heroic struggle to free Soviet Jewry and you have since tirelessly worked to strengthen the American-Israeli alliance which is a

cornerstone of Israel's security. Today, you support Birthright, you support Masa you support Nefesh B' Nefesh – these are programs that promote Aliyah and strengthen Jewish identity, thereby ensuring that our numbers do not further diminish and dwindle by the forces of assimilation.

Now, strengthening a Jewish identity I believe can no longer be an exclusive task of the Diaspora. It is increasingly the responsibility of the Jewish State. Over a decade ago, I was proud to be the first Prime Minister to allocate state funds to bolster Jewish identity outside of Israel. And I assure you that in my second term, I intend to do even more.

The result of our joint effort has been a stronger Israel. And only a strong Israel can achieve peace. But even a strong Israel is still a small Israel. And a small Israel demands a secure peace. Peace in our land, the peace of Jerusalem, our eternal capital, is one of our oldest longings, it's expressed in our Psalms, in our prayers: "Ask for the peace of Jerusalem." This is built into our entire tradition, our yearnings, our hope.

Peace between Israel and our Arab neighbors would give us one first and immediate thing. It would spare our children the horrors of war. It would spare our grandchildren the horrors of war. If you have been through the horrors of war, and I have, you understand what a great gift that is to ourselves, to our children, to our neighbor's children.

And peace could also usher in a new era of tremendous economic progress for the benefit of everyone in the Middle East. I think people are beginning to see that - incomplete, beginning, a start, and what is happening in the West Bank - and I'll talk about that in a minute. We have already signed peace agreements, two of them, with Egypt and Jordan. And we are eager to achieve peace with all our other neighbors, especially with the Palestinians.

I believe there is no time to waste. We need to move towards peace with a sense of urgency and a sense of purpose. Now I want to make this clear. My goal is not to have endless negotiations. My goal is not negotiations for the sake of negotiations. My goal is to achieve a permanent peace treaty between Israel and the Palestinians, and soon.

I cannot be more emphatic on this point. But to get to a peace agreement, we have to start negotiating the peace agreement. And it's high time

that we stop negotiating about the negotiations. Let's get on with it. Let's move.

This past June at Bar-Ilan University, I put forward a vision of peace that has united the vast majority of Israelis. In this vision of two states for two peoples, a demilitarized Palestinian state would recognize the Jewish state.

Now, what do I mean by the Jewish state? It is a state in which all individuals and all minorities have equal individual rights. Yet our national symbols, our language our culture spring from the heritage of the Jewish people. And most importantly, any Jew from anywhere in the world has a right to immigrate to Israel and become a citizen. I want to make it clear: Any Jew, of any denomination, will always have a right to come home to the Jewish state. Religious pluralism and tolerance will always guide my policy.

Now what does a Jewish state mean for the Palestinians? It means that they must recognize that the fantasy of flooding Israel with refugees is gone; that they give up irredentist claims to the Negev and to the Galilee, and that they declare unequivocally that the conflict is finally over.

Yet, even after we achieve this peace treaty, we have to be honest and recognize that it may take years for the spirit of peace to permeate most levels of Palestinian society. And therefore, any peace agreement we sign today must include ironclad security measures that will protect the State of Israel and stand the test of time.

Here comes that paradox again. Israel is powerful but it is small. No matter where our final borders are drawn, Israel will remain exceedingly small. I am sure you know it's small. I don't think you know how small it is, and certainly your neighbors don't. Today you think that there are two hundred million Jews in the world and that Israel is the size of half of Europe. It's not. The United States and Canada are roughly 400 times each, the size of Israel. The Arab world is 500 times the size of Israel. Egypt alone is roughly 40 times the size of Israel and even a small country like Jordan, our neighbor to the east, is almost four times as big. Israel is bigger than Rhode Island. That's about it.

Now, mind you, small countries are not necessarily insecure. Belgium and Luxemburg are small but today they are not insecure. Yet if their neighbors included radical regimes bent on their conquest, bent on their destruction; if they feel that terror proxies that fired thousands of missiles on their population, believe me, they too would feel insecure. Anybody would.

Because of our small size and the radical and violent neighborhood in which we live, Israel faces security threats like that of no other nation. Here are two facts from recent days alone that will drive this point home.

A few days ago, the Israeli navy interdicted a ship carrying hundreds of tons of explosives and

rockets shipped from Iran bound for Hezbollah via Syria. Last week, Hamas tested a rocket with a range of nearly 40 miles.

Now, for a large country, that might not be too consequential. But for a tiny country like Israel, this means that both Hamas and Hezbollah now have the power to reach Tel Aviv.

Israel's security therefore requires that any territory vacated in a future peace agreement must be effectively demilitarized.

An effective demilitarization of Palestinian areas is an essential component of peace recognized by successive American presidents. And I want to assure you we're willing to make great concessions for peace. But there is something that I will never compromise on and it's Israel's security. We have to ensure that weapons do not flow into the Palestinian areas in the West Bank, which overlooks Tel Aviv and surrounds Jerusalem.

We cannot permit another Gaza or South Lebanon in the heart of the country. What we want is a durable peace, a peace that will hold, a peace that we can defend. I fervently hope that such a peace will be established. I'm prepared to work for it. I pray that it will hold, but we must be prepared to defend ourselves in case it doesn't.

The UN report on Gaza, which falsely accuses Israel of war crimes for legitimately defending itself against real war criminals, in effect seeks to deprive us of the right of self-defense. This report must be firmly rejected.

We are proud of the Israeli Defense Forces. We are proud of our sons and daughters who are defending our country each day. We know that our army, Israel's army, is as moral as any army on earth. Now in supporting the IDF and rejecting the UN report you're sending a message to terrorists everywhere that they cannot get away with firing on civilians while hiding behind civilians.

And you do something else. You support peace. For only an Israel that can defend itself is an Israel that can take further risks for peace.

I thank President Obama for resolutely opposing this twisted UN resolution. I applaud the overwhelming vote last week in the American Congress condemning this biased report.

I know there are many Canadian friends with us here today. So I want to extend through you my thanks to the Canadian Government and Prime Minister Stephen Harper for his staunch support of Israel's right to self-defense.

Last week, I watched a joint exercise of the IDF and some 1400 American soldiers. The exercise was aimed to improve Israel's air defenses against incoming missiles. I salute these American soldiers, and I thank their President, their Commander in Chief, President Obama for his continued support of Israel's security. On behalf of the people of Israel, I send our condolences to the families of American

servicewomen and servicemen who were killed in Fort Hood last week.

My friends, My government is working to advance peace. We're not just talking peace. We're doing things – things that have not been done for decades.

We've removed hundreds of security points, roadblocks and checkpoints in the West Bank. I personally extended the hours of operation on the Allenby Bridge and we've removed bureaucratic hurdles to Palestinian economic development. You may not believe this, but there are still bureaucratic hurdles in Israel and it is a passion of mine to remove them and I'm an equal opportunity bureaucratic remover for Palestinians and Israelis alike. We'll continue to do this.

Now, these measures taken alongside the measures taken by the Palestinian Authority to improve security, have spurred an unmatched boom in the West Bank and this has made life better for ordinary Palestinians. For the first time in years, businesses, banks, industry, is sprouting. Restaurants, theaters, shopping malls – they're overflowing. Thousands and thousands of Palestinian jobs are being created.

I think we can do a lot more and I intend to do a lot more to improve conditions on the ground. I believe that prosperity can help achieve peace – but only so far. To truly resolve the outstanding issues between us, we must begin and complete peace negotiations.

We should not place preconditions for holding talks. Such obstacles to talks were never set in the 16 years of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. From the day my government was sworn in, that was seven months ago, I have been calling for peace negotiations to start.

I said I would go anywhere, anytime, to advance peace. And no Israeli government has been so willing to restrain settlement activities as part of an effort to re-launch peace talks. So I say today to Mahmoud Abbas, the leader of the Palestinian Authority: let us seize the moment to reach an historic agreement. Let us begin talks immediately.

I know there are many skeptics. I'm not one of them. I'll tell you why. Throughout my adult life, I didn't share the skeptics' view. I believed that we could fight terror effectively. I believed we can rescue the Palestinian economy. I believed that we could alert the world to the danger of a nuclear Iran. And sometimes I stood alone. I think, always a realist, and in many ways, always an optimist. Well, I'm a realist and an optimist today, because I believe that peace is possible. And I believe that because I know how committed the people of Israel are to peace, and I know how committed I am to the achievement of peace. But we need a partner. We need a committed partner. We need a Palestinian

partner that is determined to shoulder the risks and burdens of making peace as we are.

And I believe that with good will and with courageous leadership on both sides, and no less important, with the continued support of the United States, peace can become a reality. We can surprise a skeptical world.

Achieving peace is a great challenge facing Israel. At the United Nations in September, I spoke of another great challenge: preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability. The Iranian regime tyrannizes its people, sponsors and supplies terrorists, and openly pledges to wipe Israel off the map. Now just imagine how much more dangerous this regime would be if it had atomic bombs.

The responsible members of the international community must unite to prevent this grave threat to the peace of the entire world. I support President Obama's continued efforts toward these ends, and I appreciate the firm position taken by the leading European governments. We must not succumb to the Iranian regime's cunning and to its deceit. We must stand together to stop Tehran from realizing its nuclear ambitions.

In addition to achieving peace and to prevent a nuclear Iran, there is a third momentous challenge before us – reducing the world's dependence on oil. This would help cleanse our world after more than a century of industrial pollution. It would help our economies by decreasing our dependence on depleting resources. We have growing demand – depleting supply. This would cripple many economies, especially in Asia and Africa. It would send poverty through the roof. So there's an economic and social, as well as an environmental logic to finding alternatives to oil. And of course such a shift would end the massive transfer of wealth to some of the world's most odious exporters of terrorism and fanaticism.

So, here's the question: can we dramatically reduce our dependence on oil?

Remember that sometimes, one or two inventions can change centuries of habit. For many centuries, salt was highly valued for preserving food. Caravans of camels crossed the desert bearing it, and it was nearly worth its weight in gold. The salt trade helped build economic empires, and the world's dependence on salt showed no signs of slackening.

But then came two inventions: canning and refrigeration. And virtually overnight, salt lost its immense value. The same thing may happen to oil. Scientific and technological breakthroughs could dramatically reduce the world's dependence on petroleum. And Israel could play an important role in making that happen.

You know, of course, about our high-tech companies, our venture capital funds, our engineers and scientists, our patents, our Nobel laureates in

biotech and agro-tech, in solar energy and desalination, and in so many other fields. Israeli innovation is transforming the way we live.

Two perceptive writers called us, “The Start-Up Nation”. We are the start-up nation. Now we must use our minds to help achieve breakthroughs in the fields of clean energy. I’ll give you one example: Israel could apply its unique expertise to the juncture of water and energy. The global need for water is rapidly increasing. Yet, a third of the cost of producing clean water is energy. Now sea-water is abundant. There’s an endless supply of it. And it can be readily desalinated in many areas with solar power and then channeled inland.

Israel has mastered both of these technologies, desalination and solar energy and it can make a decisive contribution to alleviating water shortages around the world, especially in the growing economies of Asia and the parched expanses of the Middle East.

I am in the process of establishing a national commission that will bring together Israel’s finest scientists, businessmen and engineers. We hope to work with other governments, with experts around the world. Our plan is to dramatically reduce our dependence on oil in the next decade, providing an example that can be emulated by other countries throughout the world.

I don’t know which technology will prevail, but I know this, if we could cross the oceans, fly the skies, and reach the moon, we surely should be able to harness water, wind and sun to power our world.

My friends, I know that these three enormous challenges – achieving peace, preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and developing alternative energies – I know that these triple tasks seem daunting.

But I want you to remember another mission whose success seemed completely implausible when Theodore Herzl embarked on it over a century ago. The challenges confronting Herzl’s vision of a Jewish state were nothing less than overwhelming. Most of the world’s Jews lived in Europe and had no intention of moving to the barren land of their forefathers.

Few saw the clouds gathering on the horizon and fewer still saw the need for action. Though with a clear plan and an almost Biblical prophetic sense of urgency, Herzl helped the Jewish people overcome what appeared to be their innate condition of powerlessness.

His implausible idea gathered so much force that within decades our people emerged from the worst massacre in history to establish an independent state in our ancestral homeland. And then our small people set out to dedicate itself to the great task of building a modern Jewish state.

In an understandable moment of frustration, before all this became a reality, Herzl lamented, he said, “The tragedy of the Jewish people is that we do not believe in ourselves.”

But he didn’t lose faith. He said, “We are strong enough to form a state. We possess all the human and material resources for this purpose.”

If we will it, he famously said, it is no dream.

My friends, We have learned from history that if the Jewish people are united and determined, if we harness our hopes and our dreams, the hardest tasks are within our reach.

We are a small people but great people; a people generous enough to forge a lasting peace; a people brave enough to thwart the dangers that confront us; and a people creative enough to once again help steer humanity towards a better future for all.

## At Brandeis, Israel’s guilt and innocence on display

By Jeff Jacoby The Boston Globe November 7, 2009

To Brandeis University last night, South African jurist Richard Goldstone brought his international reputation as a legal scholar, a human rights advocate, and the former chief prosecutor of the United Nations tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Dore Gold, Israel’s former ambassador to the UN, brought facts and figures, maps and photographs, and audio and video in English, Arabic, and Hebrew.

The two men were at Brandeis to discuss Goldstone’s highly controversial UN report on Operation Cast Lead, the Israeli attack in Gaza last winter. The report, written after a fact-finding mission with which Israel refused to cooperate, accuses the Jewish state of committing war crimes by using “disproportionate force” to inflict widespread destruction on Palestinian civilians - a policy that amounted to “collective punishment on the people

of the Gaza Strip.” Last night’s encounter marked the first time since the report was issued that Goldstone publicly debated the report’s merits with a leading Israeli figure. It would not surprise me to learn that he is in no hurry for a second.

That is not to say that Goldstone didn’t speak well, even eloquently, in defending his own integrity and his chagrin at Israel’s refusal to have anything to do with his commission’s inquiry. Nor was there any mistaking his sincere outrage when he itemized the physical devastation he viewed in Gaza - 5,000 homes destroyed, 200 factories disabled, water systems wrecked, poultry farms demolished - or when he denounced the bombing of a mosque during prayers. “If that isn’t collective punishment, what is?” Goldstone asked. Such attacks, he said, “scream out” for investigation by Israel.

But Goldstone spent much of the time talking about himself - he recounted his dealings with the chairman of the UN Human Rights Council, his nightmares about being kidnapped by Hamas, his pleased discovery that ordinary Palestinians were "just like" ordinary Israelis - while his interlocutor focused relentlessly on facts and evidence. Gold played video of Israelis under Hamas rocket attack, and noted that such attacks had increased 500 percent after Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. He displayed aerial photographs of Hamas military installations located amid schools and mosques. He described Israel's extraordinary efforts to avoid civilian casualties, and showed Palestinian TV broadcasts confirming those efforts. He presented images of weapons caches inside Palestinian mosques and homes.

It was a powerful presentation - so powerful, in fact, that Goldstone regretted not having seen it earlier. "The sort of information shown to us by Ambassador Gold," he said, "should have been shown to us during the [UN] investigation."

Yet to my mind, what was most striking of all was Goldstone's inability to give a clear answer to an essential question: What should a law-abiding country do to defend itself against relentless terrorist attacks?

In one form or another, that question came up repeatedly. In his welcoming remarks, Brandeis president Jehuda Reinharz observed that we live in a "new age of warfare," in which civilized nations

confront terrorists able to "mix and melt" into the civilian population. Asked Gold, after describing the thousands of rockets launched by Hamas at Israeli communities: "What would you do if your population was facing repeated attacks for eight years?" During the question-and-answer period, a student asked Goldstone - who had condemned Israel's "disproportionate" attacks - what he would have considered a "proportionate" response.

But the judge, astonishingly, had no answer. He responded that that was a decision for the Israelis to make. He said it was a question that had given him "many sleepless nights." He mused that perhaps undercover "commando attacks" would have been more appropriate. ("Gee, why didn't the Israelis think of that?" murmured a voice in the audience.) He even suggested that it might make a good subject for a Brandeis research paper.

Judge Goldstone uses his international platform to pronounce Israel guilty, in other words, but will not say how Israel could have avoided such a verdict.

For the truth is, no other verdict was possible. Where the UN is involved, the guilt of the Jewish state is always taken for granted. The eminence of its chairman notwithstanding, the Goldstone Commission was a sham, and its bottom line was foreordained. The mystery isn't why the Goldstone Report has been so widely denounced, but why Goldstone agreed to write it in the first place.

## Arabs See U.S. Tilt to Israel

By Jay Solomon The Wall Street Journal

The Obama administration's drive for Middle East peace risked a major setback as Arab nations warned of "failure" after a surprise U.S. shift away from insisting on a total freeze of Israeli settlement-building in disputed areas ahead of peace talks.

A furor in Arab capitals forced U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to issue a carefully worded statement from Morocco on Monday, asserting that U.S. policy on the settlement issue hadn't changed. That didn't damp the criticism.

Hillary Clinton meets in Marrakech with Bahrain's foreign minister, right, the deputy prime minister of Kuwait, left, and Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, far left.

"The Americans couldn't bring something serious" on the settlement issue, said Amr Moussa, secretary-general of the Arab League and an Egyptian diplomat. "I'm really afraid we're about to see failure....Failure is in the atmosphere."

The disquiet was sparked by comments Mrs. Clinton made over the weekend in Jerusalem. She lauded Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's commitment to a partial freeze of building in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, calling it an

November 3, 2009

"unprecedented" move toward peace that should bring Palestinians to the negotiating table.

The Obama administration had repeatedly described a full freeze as critical to creating the conditions for progress on peace. The White House's point man on the Middle East peace process, former Sen. George Mitchell, has been seeking to get a complete settlement freeze in exchange for Arab governments taking early steps to normalize their relations with Israel, such as establishing trade and telecommunications links.

The inability to secure those moves by either side has stalled one of the White House's signature foreign-policy objects. A breakdown could have wider implications, undercutting President Barack Obama's broader outreach to the Muslim world and potentially diminishing cooperation in areas like counterterrorism and nuclear nonproliferation.

U.S. officials said they are continuing to push ahead with the peace process, and stressing to the Arab states that even a partial freeze is significant and should be seized upon. Mrs. Clinton will travel Tuesday to Cairo, in a hastily scheduled trip to make

the same point to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, a key player in the peace process.

"Successive American administrations of both parties have opposed Israel's settlement policy," Mrs. Clinton told reporters in the resort city of Marrakech, arguing that her comments praising Mr. Netanyahu's position didn't amount to a U.S. reversal. "That is absolutely a fact, and the Obama administration's position on settlements is clear, unequivocal and it has not changed."

U.S. officials weren't able to outline what steps they will take if the Arab governments don't relent and agree to resume negotiations without the freeze. That appeared unlikely Monday. Palestinian officials stressed that they can't be expected to take further steps and expect public support without that concession. Some analysts say the U.S. should wait until the completion of Palestinian elections next year until pushing again.

Despite his criticism of U.S. efforts, Mr. Moussa said he still holds out hope for President Barack Obama pushing the Mideast peace process forward.

Arab leaders who had joined Mrs. Clinton at a regional development conference said there was a growing concern that Mr. Obama's high-profile push for Arab-Israeli peace was veering off track. They said Mr. Obama's election, and his strong statements on Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories, had fed broad hopes in the Middle East -- now being questioned -- that his administration could extract concessions from Israel's government as part of an agreement establishing an independent Palestinian state.

The theatrics in Morocco imperiled a weeklong trip by Mrs. Clinton to the broader Middle East that initially was designed in part to relaunch formal peace talks. On Saturday, Mrs. Clinton met in the United Arab Emirates with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and pressed him to return to negotiations without the complete freeze.

She then met with Mr. Netanyahu in Jerusalem and asserted that Israel's commitment to limiting its settlement activity in the West Bank should be enough to bring the Palestinians back to the negotiating table. The perception she was now siding with Mr. Netanyahu rankled many Arab diplomats, who believe the Israeli leader isn't committed to the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

Mrs. Clinton "can praise Mr. Netanyahu if she wants," said the Arab League's Mr. Moussa, "but we're not impressed. We see the policies of Mr. Netanyahu as a major impediment toward peace."

Other U.S. officials working on the Middle East stressed that Washington hadn't shifted policy. But one official acknowledged that Mrs. Clinton's comments stoked the negative reaction from Arab leaders. Officials said she had taken a tougher line privately Saturday with Israeli officials during her meetings in Jerusalem.

In trying to clarify U.S. policy Monday, Mrs. Clinton said Israel's partial commitment to freeze settlements "falls short" of the Obama administration's desire. But she said it was still an important step.

"If it is acted upon, it will be an unprecedented restriction on settlements and would have a significant and meaningful affect on restraining their growth," Mrs. Clinton said. "This is an opportunity for both sides to try to move forward together, to get into negotiations, and to realize the goal that many of us around this table have supported and worked for many years."

After meeting late Monday with Arab diplomats to try to contain the damage, she said of Israel's proposal, "It is not enough...It is not what many people in the region want to see. But it is fair to call it unprecedented."

The Palestinian Authority's foreign minister, Riad Malki, said Monday in Marrakech that he was "happy" that Mrs. Clinton clarified her statements from Jerusalem. But he said it was still impossible for Mr. Abbas and the Palestinians to return to formal peace negotiations without the settlement freeze. The Palestinian public wouldn't support the peace process without it, he said.

"We should not put the credibility and the legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority again under jeopardy if the Palestinian Authority will accept anything less than a total freeze," said Mr. Malki. "[It] will be detrimental to the future and the existence of the Palestinian authority as a whole."

Mr. Abbas was widely criticized across the Arab world last month by initially agreeing to a U.S. request not to support a United Nations report that alleged Israel committed war crimes during its attack on the Palestinian militant group, Hamas, last year, in the Gaza Strip. Mr. Abbas reversed course, after facing domestic unrest, and ultimately supported pursuing the U.N. investigation. But Mr. Malki said his organization's bending to U.S. pressure on this issue weakened Mr. Abbas.

"They started accusing my president and the Palestinian leadership of treason [and] of selling the suffering of the Palestinian people in exchange of one item and another," said Mr. Malki.

Mrs. Clinton also discussed the growing threat of Iran's nuclear program with her Arab counterparts Monday, according to senior U.S. officials. The discussions came as there is growing concern that Tehran will reject an Obama administration proposal to better monitor Iran's fissile material by shipping the majority of Tehran's low-enriched uranium to Russia for reprocessing.

Arab diplomats have repeatedly said their ability to pressure Iran, and support sanctions, could be constrained if there isn't any progress on the Arab-Israeli peace track. They have said Arab governments could be attacked by their publics for

conspiring with Israel against another Muslim nation without getting anything in return.

Mrs. Clinton stressed Monday that the U.S.-backed offer to Iran wouldn't be amended further, as

## Reluctant White House welcome

By Suzanne Fields The Washington Times

If a photograph is worth a thousand words, a sharp newspaper cartoon is often worth the book. One Israeli cartoonist depicts Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the missus arriving at the White House to meet with President Obama. Mrs. Netanyahu knocks at the front door with the explanation: "We just happened to be in the neighborhood." Another cartoon depicts the prime minister pulling up at the White House, and telling the driver to wait: "I'm not sure they're at home."

With a few strokes of pen and brush, the cartoonists capture the prevailing Israeli dismay, frustration and controlled fury at Mr. Obama's reluctance to meet the prime minister, who was in Washington this week. The administration wanted to punish Israel by setting "pre-conditions" for talks and for not having a more "conciliatory" attitude toward those who vow to "wipe the Jewish nation off the map."

On the street and at higher levels, Israelis look back in anger, observing that the president set no "pre-conditions" before he would meet Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the president of Iran, who is on the way to building a nuclear weapon to put Israel in mortal danger. The Israelis say Mr. Obama wants to extract an opening promise to freeze settlements on the West Bank and East Jerusalem, something that's never been a pre-condition for starting talks.

The prime minister was eventually invited into the Oval Office for a brief "low-key" exchange, but without the customary photo-op afterward. This president does not offer the strong handshake of friendship that Bill Clinton and George W. Bush extended to previous Israeli prime ministers. Mr. Obama says, "America's bond with our Israeli allies is unbreakable," but it sounds more like the lip service paid by Jimmy Carter.

Mr. Obama shows none of the instinctive affection for Israel or understanding of the history of the Jewish state. This is not lost on the Israelis, who have to cultivate long memories as a survival strategy. They're not as sanguine as American Jews who voted in enormous numbers for Mr. Obama despite his long associations with those who wish Israel only ill. They remember how Mr. Obama apparently slept through two decades of Sunday-morning rants by the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, citing chapter and verse of his accusations that Israel committed "genocide" against the Palestinians. They remember that the president once cited as his

Tehran has indicated it wants. "We urge Iran to accept the agreement as proposed. We are not changing it," she said at the news briefing.

November 12, 2009

"mentor" Rashid Khalidi, the professor at Columbia University who frequently denounces Israel as "a racist state" and defends Palestinian suicide bombers.

Many Israelis are puzzled by how American Jews give the president a passing grade on the kishke test, using the Yiddish word for "gut." Zbigniew Brzezinski, who worked as a senior campaign adviser to Mr. Obama, even urged the president to shoot down Israeli planes if they fly over Iraq on their way to bomb the Iranian nuclear sites. Sen. John McCain, on the other hand, said, "The only thing worse than bombing Iran is letting Iran get the bomb." Mr. Obama defeated Mr. McCain by 57 percentage points among Jewish voters.

A growing number of Jewish voices are asking how, if Jews are so smart, can this be? Norman Podhoretz, one of the most prominent Jewish voices in America, talked about his new book, "Why Are Jews Liberal?" the other day at the Hudson Institute in Washington. The question is especially timely against the backdrop of the 2008 campaign, given that Mr. Obama captured 78 percent of the Jewish vote, and continues to espouse positions, sometimes subtly and sometimes not so subtly, which conflict sharply with what most American Jews say they want for Israel.

I asked Mr. Podhoretz what the Israeli prime minister might say to the president about the unchecked threat by Iran. "The Jewish people have existed for 3,500 years, a long rich history, and only yesterday overcame a very serious, determined threat to end its existence," he replied, as if channeling Mr. Netanyahu speaking to Mr. Obama. "Now we have another very serious threat to annihilate [the Jews] by a country which is rapidly acquiring the means to make good on that threat. I, as prime minister of Israel, have accepted the intolerably heavy burden of deciding whether I will preside over the end of the Jewish people, the end of this 3,500-year history, and I will take admittedly dangerous and risky steps in order to prevent this. I ask you not to try to prevent me from making this effort if I have to make it, which I fear I might."

Does he think such words, if spoken by the prime minister to the president, would be persuasive? No, he said. Not really. Such words would fall on "deaf ears." And he still wouldn't get his Oval Office photo-op, either.

Please join us in Hearing Dr. Daniel Gordis at Suburban Orthodox in Pikesville on Saturday night November 14 at 7:00 pm. Co-sponsored by Sheldon and Ann Berman, BZD and Ner Tamid.