

Declaring Palestine

By Louis Rene Beres *The Washington Times* November 25, 2009

Taking advantage of President Obama's "road map" to peace in the Middle East, Palestinian Authority leaders are now launching a new campaign to create "Palestine." Their plan, a diplomatic end-run around Israel, is to venture unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood in the West Bank (Judea/Samaria), Gaza and East Jerusalem. In essence, this plan would seek to create Palestine by vote of the United Nations Security Council.

Jurisprudentially, this strategy would mock authoritative expectations of the governing treaty on statehood: The Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1934). But leaving aside the generally unacknowledged legal requirements of this "Montevideo Convention," the truly main problem would be Palestinian statehood itself.

Once accepted by the international community, whether lawfully or unlawfully, a Palestinian state would significantly enlarge the risks of worldwide terrorism and regional nuclear war.

Any new state of Palestine would be crudely carved out of the still-living body of Israel. Unhesitatingly, this 23rd Arab state would then quickly seek territorial extension, in unopposed and audacious increments, beyond its already constituted borders, and into the boundaries of Israel proper. At that point, despite obvious Arab aggression, the world would almost certainly look away.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) map presently shows all of Israel as part of Palestine. Ironically, for its part, the United States is accelerating military training of "Palestinian security forces." This means that we Americans are now training future anti-American terrorists.

Credo quia absurdum. "I believe because it is absurd." Any Palestinian state would have a deeply injurious impact on American strategic interests, as well as on Israel's survival. After Palestine, Israel would require greater self-reliance in existential military matters. In turn, such self-reliance would demand: (1) a comprehensive nuclear strategy involving deterrence, pre-emption and war-fighting capabilities; and (2) a corollary and interpenetrating conventional war strategy.

The birth of Palestine would affect these two core strategies in several ways. It would enlarge Israel's need for what military strategists call "escalation dominance." As any Palestinian state would immediately make Israel's conventional capabilities more problematic, the Israeli Defense

Force national command authority would likely make the country's implicit nuclear deterrent less ambiguous.

Taking the Israeli bomb out of the "basement" could enhance Israel's security for a while, but, over time, ending "deliberate ambiguity" could also heighten the chances of nuclear weapons use.

If Iran is allowed to "go nuclear," an increasingly plausible scenario with Barack Obama in the White House, such nuclear violence might not be limited to the immediate areas of Israel and Palestine. It could take the form of a nuclear exchange.

Nuclear war could arrive in Israel not only as a "bolt-from-the-blue" surprise missile attack, but also as a result, intended or inadvertent, of escalation. If an enemy state were to begin "only" conventional and/or biological attacks on Israel, Jerusalem might respond, sooner or later, with fully nuclear reprisals. If this enemy state were to begin with solely conventional attacks upon Israel, Jerusalem's conventional reprisals might still be met, in the future, with enemy nuclear counterstrikes.

For now, this would become possible only if a still-nuclearizing Iran were spared any forms of Israeli or American pre-emptive attack. It follows that a persuasive Israeli conventional deterrent, to the extent it could prevent enemy state conventional and/or biological attacks in the first place, would reduce Israel's risk of escalatory exposure to nuclear war. Why should Israel need a conventional deterrent at all? Even after Palestine, wouldn't rational enemy states desist from launching conventional and/or biological attacks upon Israel for fear of an Israeli nuclear retaliation? Not necessarily. Aware that Israel would cross the nuclear threshold only in extraordinary circumstances, these enemy states could be convinced, rightly or wrongly, that so long as their attacks remained non-nuclear, Israel would respond in kind. After Palestine, the resultant correlation of forces in the region would be less favorable to Israel. The only credible way for Israel to deter large-scale conventional attacks after any such creation would be by maintaining visible and large-scale conventional capabilities. Naturally, enemy states contemplating first-strike attacks upon Israel using chemical and/or biological weapons are apt to take more seriously Israel's nuclear deterrent. Whether or not this nuclear deterrent had remained undisclosed could affect Israel's credibility.

A strong conventional capability is always needed by Israel to deter or to pre-empt conventional attacks - attacks that could lead quickly via escalation to assorted forms of unconventional war. Here, Mr. Obama's preferred "road map" would impair Israel's strategic depth, and consequently, if recognized by enemy states, Israel's capacity to wage conventional warfare. These points should soon be understood in Washington as well as in Jerusalem, not only for Israel's sake, but also because a

Palestinian state would be hospitable to al Qaeda preparations for anti-American terror.

Credo quia absurdum. However the Palestinian Authority might now go about declaring statehood, the resultant strategic consequences would be unfavorable to world peace and regional security. Ultimately, these consequences could include nuclear war in the Middle East.

Louis Rene Beres lectures and publishes widely on Israeli security matters.

The crime of being a Zionist By Karl Pfeifer Haaretz November 27, 2009

I am an 81-year-old survivor of the Holocaust. Strange things happened to me last week in Germany. A journalist, I had been invited by a student organization at Bielefeld University and College to give a lecture on "Racism and Anti-Semitism in Hungary." My host was the left-wing anti-fascist group Antifa AG at the Bielefeld campus, located in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. My lecture was scheduled to take place on November 19 at a youth center that serves as the home of a number of left-wing organizations. The event had been announced in late October, but two days before I was to appear, at a meeting of people who frequent the center, several raised an objection about my speaking there. They said they had received information that during Israel's War of Independence, when I served in the Palmach (the pre-state elite strike force of the Haganah), I had participated in a massacre in a Palestinian village. They went so far as to allege that I myself had actively participated in the killing.

Those accusing me did not name the place where this alleged massacre was committed, or provide any other details, and even acknowledged that their information was incomplete. But when pushed for corroboration, they settled the matter by explaining that "Pfeifer is a Zionist." At the same time, in an apparent - and bizarre - attempt to appear even-handed, those in attendance resolved that they also would not be willing to host someone who had been a member of the militant Palestinian organization Black September in the 1970s.

Of course, no one at the youth center asked me to respond to the accusations before they decided to rescind the invitation. Nor have any of them been willing to answer the questions of German journalists who learned about the incident regarding just why they excluded me. I only learned about what happened because it was reported to someone

in Antifa by two of its members who had been present at the decisive meeting.

Fortunately, my hosts were able to organize an alternate space with limited notice, and I gave my lecture in the end. My subject was Hungary, where a recent resurgence of racist acts and statements can be observed. This includes the murder of eight Roma (Gypsies) in racial attacks during the past two years, and the shocking anti-Jewish verbal attacks in the right-wing media there and on YouTube.

As for me, I did indeed serve in the Palmach and the Israel Defense Forces from 1946 until 1950, after arriving in Mandatory Palestine in 1943. And although I left Israel in 1950, I am proud of my service as a soldier there, when we were defending ourselves against aggression and fighting for the right to have our own state. I did not participate in any massacres, but I know that improper acts were carried out by both sides in the conflict between Israel and its neighbors, as happens during wartime.

But the comparison of the Palmach with Black September, which carried out murderous acts of terrorism against civilians in the name of the Palestinian struggle, is an outrageous and ignorant one. To accuse someone of having participated in a "massacre" - in this case, with no details and no proof - is an act of projection that is unfortunately not unusual in certain European circles. The best-known and by far the most widespread example of projection of guilt is the defamation of Israelis as the "Nazis of today." This is one of the most objectionable forms of anti-Semitism in the era after Auschwitz. As far as I can tell, my real crime apparently is being a "Zionist," which I can only understand as being guilty of being a Jew who defended himself and who favors the existence of a Jewish and democratic state. In Germany, I had the feeling that I was being judged by those arrogant anti-Semites not on the basis of what I have done or am doing, but for what I am.

Please Join the Baltimore Hebrew Institute at Towson University in welcoming Dr. Lawrence H. Schiffman, chair of Judaic Studies at New York University for the Rabbi Dr. Joseph Baumgarten Memorial Lecture. The topic is Decoding Early Judaism. To be held on Sunday December 6 at 4:00 pm at the New Liberal Arts building, Room 4110. RSVP to Michelle Taylor at (410) 704-7118 or mtaylor@towson.edu.

For Israel, Shalit case is personal

By James F. Smith The Boston Globe

Israel's ambassador to the United States, Michael B. Oren, said yesterday that in his first few months on the job, one of his tasks has been to get American military commanders to understand why Israel has become so obsessively focused on winning the release of captured soldier Gilad Shalit, held by Hamas fighters in Gaza since 2006.

In an interview during his first trip to Boston since being appointed ambassador in May, Oren declined to comment on news reports suggesting that Shalit's release could be imminent, in a swap for hundreds or even 1,000 Palestinians held in Israeli jails. Oren said there had been false alarms in the past, and he didn't want to raise any expectations.

A historian with degrees from Princeton and Columbia, Oren said Americans don't always understand why "when we have one prisoner from our military, the country tears its heart over it. To understand Gilad Shalit is to understand the state of Israel, and who we are." Oren, who was born in New Jersey, immigrated to Israel in 1979 and served as a paratrooper in the Israeli military and as a reservist for 30 years. He said two of his children have gone into the army, as do nearly all young Israelis. "It's not just some distant force. It's us, it's our family, it's our kids. The Shalit family is our family," he said. "And even though we may have to release people who may further endanger us, we also have to know that when we send our children out to the battlefield to defend our country, should they fall captive, we're going to do everything possible to secure their release," he added.

"It's a point of weakness that the terrorists know about, and they exploit. But it's also our greatest strength," Oren said, "because when we do have to fight, we fight to defend our families."

The capture of three Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah fighters on the northern border with

November 24, 2009

Lebanon in 2006 triggered Israel's invasion of southern Lebanon that year.

Oren would not speculate about the potential for an improved climate for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations if Shalit were released. He said the Israeli government and the Obama administration are both committed to strengthening the leadership of Mahmoud Abbas, who heads the Fatah government in the West Bank, as the best option for reopening peace negotiations. Oren said the US and Israeli governments have narrowed their differences over Israeli settlements and also are coordinating closely on Iran, thereby reducing tensions on two thorny issues that had strained US-Israeli relations early in President Obama's term.

He said the Obama administration's demand for a halt to any construction within settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank had asked more of Israel than any previous American administration, and effectively was telling "several hundred thousand people that they couldn't build a new room. It was not just a political impossibility but a physical impossibility."

In recent weeks, Oren said, "I think we have come a long way toward working out a workable compromise with the Obama administration. Now it's the problem of selling it to the Palestinians ... to come back to the negotiating table." On Iran, Oren said the administration had sought to engage Iran, but that the crackdown on election demonstrators in Iran had made the United States much more skeptical, and more closely aligned with Israel's approach. Oren spoke yesterday at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard and was also addressing Jewish community groups during his visit to the region.

(The playground noted below is a remarkable JNF project that I saw in Israel last week, editor)

Taking the edge off war, Bringing about peace of mind

By Hugh Dellios The Chicago Tribune

November 22, 2009

The new indoor playground for children in Mayor David Bouskila's town offers unique attributes beyond its horizontal climbing wall, mini-soccer field and convertible disco/movie theater. It also offers six bomb shelters and rocket-proof, anti-shockwave walls. Thanks largely to benefactors in Chicago and the Midwest, the new facility has brought some peace of mind to Sderot, a collection of Jewish immigrants from Morocco, Romania, Russia and Ethiopia who live less than a mile from the border with the Gaza Strip -- and therefore on the frontline of the mind-boggling Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

After Palestinian militants lobbed rockets into Sderot for eight years, killing 10 people, Israel

unleashed its military might on stifling Gaza last December, cutting a swath of destruction, searching out militants and punishing the Islamist Hamas-led government. Ultimately about 1,400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis died in the fighting.

Eleven months later the mayor says Sderot (pronounced "Sder-OHT") is a quieter place, targeted by only one or two rockets a month. But a wrenching debate continues over the ferocity of the Israeli invasion, most recently centering on a U.N. report that accused Israel and Hamas of committing war crimes. Not far away Gazans continue to suffer from the war's damage. A few weeks ago, Bouskila spoke to the Tribune during a trip through the U.S.

to meet donors who paid for his town's heavily fortified, \$5 million indoor children's recreation center, which opened in June. The biggest single donors were from Chicago, and half the money was raised in the Midwest, according to officials from the Jewish National Fund, which spearheaded the project. Of Moroccan descent, born in Sderot five years after it was founded in 1951 near a transit camp for incoming Jewish immigrants, Bouskila shared his gut-level, front-row view of the conflict -- about life with rockets, the Gaza invasion, the seeming disproportion in casualties and why his people don't just pull up stakes and leave. Below are edited excerpts:

Q Eleven months since the Israeli incursion into Gaza, what has changed for Sderot? *A* We don't have Kassam rockets as often as before. It's not normal, but it's much better. The biggest thing is the building of the recreation center. This is something that gives our children for the first time the opportunity to play without fear. You see children smile and laugh. They play and their parents have an idea of safety. You see mothers sitting and drinking coffee. The mayor of Sderot has to be half commander. The situation can change in a minute. We know in Sderot, when you go to sleep, you wish to wake up in the morning and not in the middle of the night.

Q Given the criticism of Israel since the operation, was it worth it? For eight years we (wanted) the army to go into Gaza. No country can let its citizens suffer for eight years. When (U.N. special investigator Richard) Goldstone put out his report, I asked him where he was over the last eight years. Where was the U.N. when children died in Sderot?

Q There were concerns that some soldiers did things that were not proper. You don't believe that? *A* When you send a few thousand soldiers to war,

you cannot be 100 percent sure that they will keep in mind everything that you told them. Maybe there is one or two that did something wrong. But to go from this point to (declaring that) all of the army is guilty of a war crime, this is not something we can accept.

Q What about the question of proportionality? Fourteen hundred Palestinians died and 13 Israelis. *A* This is really disproportionate, but I don't think we have to apologize. I don't know how many people died there because of Hamas and how many because of the Israeli Defense Forces. It was war.

Q You've said you're not sure how long the quiet will last. What is the future of Sderot? *A* The army solved the problem when there were 100 Kassams a month. The army cannot fight against one or two people (launching rockets). This is something you have to solve politically, but I don't think Hamas is ready to do something like this.

Q Why not take away the militants' ability to make trouble for you? Why not move the people out of Sderot? *A* Hamas started with Kassams that traveled three or four kilometers. Now they have rockets that travel 40 kilometers. We have to give them the idea that it's not good for them to launch rockets. They lose more than they win. When the Israelis evacuated Gaza in 2005, they thought if we give all the settlements back to the Palestinians, there will be peace. But instead of launching rockets at Gush Katif, they launch them at Sderot. After that at Ashkelon. After that at Ashdod. We have to be (in Sderot), and we have to be strong enough.

Q All of your people feel this way? *A* Yes. If not they would all have left. There was a time when (the population) was 17,000. Now it is 25,000. It's our country. It's our home.

Hugh Delliou, a Tribune editor, covered the Middle East from 1998 to 2002.

Making Israel disappear

By Vincent Carroll The Denver Post November 22, 2009

If you sit down with Itamar Marcus, you had better brace yourself for a jarring refresher course on Mideast reality. That's especially true if you tend to think like the current administration if you believe, for example, that the Israeli-Palestinian impasse is all about borders and settlements and that the construction of 900 housing units in southern Jerusalem "could end up being very dangerous," as President Barack Obama said last week.

If it's "very dangerous" to construct Jewish housing in a city that Israel will never, ever relinquish, what should we call the effort to brainwash children into believing that Israel itself doesn't exist?

How should we describe the claim that not only East Jerusalem — captured by Israel in the 1967 war

— belongs to the Palestinians, but that every other Israeli city, from Haifa to Ashkelon, belongs to them, too?

"In the world inhabited by Palestinian children," Marcus tells me, "there is no Israel." And if you give him time, the director of Palestinian Media Watch (palwatch.org) in Jerusalem will subject you to a barrage of depressing evidence for his contention.

He'll show you snippets from TV quiz shows for Palestinian kids predicated on the non-existence of Israel. Host: "Which mountain is the tallest in Palestine? ..." Child contestant: "Mount Meron (in Israel)." On another show, a host asks, "Which Palestinian city is called 'the flower of Galilee?'" and then names three Israeli cities! Then Marcus will

show you school geography lessons that use maps on which Israel is missing.

Do any Palestinian textbooks acknowledge the existence of Israel, I wonder. "No," Marcus replies.

The anti-Israeli content of Palestinian textbooks has been a longstanding concern for anyone who yearns for a permanent political settlement, but surely those books have improved since Yasser Arafat's death in 2004. Not really, says Marcus. If anything, he says, they devote more space than ever to depicting conflict with Israel as a solemn religious duty aimed at liberating a Muslim land.

Remember, we're talking about textbooks chosen by the Palestinian government led by the allegedly moderate President Mahmoud Abbas, not the overtly jihadist Hamas. The Palestinian Authority media, meanwhile, are full of similar Islamist references that offer no room for compromise, and that honor terrorists and suicide bombers as national heroes.

No less ominous is what Marcus describes as the Palestinian Authority's "infrastructure of hate,"

Getting it started

By Clifford D. May The Washington Times November 7, 2009

People forget how small Israel is. Its entire population is a little over 7 million - smaller than Lima, Peru. Its land area is about 8,000 square miles, smaller than New Jersey. By comparison, Jordan, its neighbor to the east, occupies 35,000 square miles; Egypt, to the west, covers 386,000 square miles.

There are more than 20 Arab states with a combined population of 325 million and more than 50 majority-Muslim states with a combined population of well over a billion. By contrast, Israel is the world's only Jewish-majority state - and 20 percent of its population is Arab, most of them Muslim. So why is so much attention - and firepower - focused on this tiny nation? Israel's critics say it is because the Jewish state has deprived Palestinians of a homeland. But Jordan, situated on the three-quarters of historic Palestine lying east of the River Jordan, from which the country took its name when it was created in the 1920s, is populated, not surprisingly, mostly by Palestinians.

Palestinians also inhabit Gaza, from which Israel withdrew every settler four years ago. And, under various peace proposals, Israel has offered to remove its citizens from more than 90 percent of the West Bank, a territory occupied in 1967 at the end of a war with Egypt, from which it took Gaza, Jordan, from which it took the West Bank, and other Arab neighbors whose stated goal was Israel's eradication.

Defenders of Israel argue that it is despised for different reasons, not least because it is an outpost of Western values in a region, the broader Middle East, engaged in a long-term project of religious and ethnic cleansing. One country after another has become inhospitable toward its minorities. As a

the relentless depiction of Jews as sinister and evil — as conspirators spreading AIDS, for example, or undermining the very foundations of the Al-Aqsa mosque. Naturally, Jews poisoned Yasser Arafat, too — or at least that is what children are told.

In a TV tribute to Arafat earlier this month, one youngster unconsciously presented the essence of this paranoid vision: "He died from poisoning by the Jews. Well, I don't know what he died from, but I know it was by the Jews."

"In 2008," the State Department boasted this summer in a press release, "the U.S. was the single largest national donor to the Palestinian Authority .. committing more than \$600 million in assistance"

And the fruits of this investment? A Palestinian public that remains in resolute denial about the reality of Israel more than 60 years after its founding. Surely that should worry us more than the expansion of a Jewish neighborhood in a capital whose Jewish roots extend back several thousand years.

result, Jews, Christians, Baha'is and Zoroastrians are among the minority groups that have been eliminated, decimated or compelled to flee to more tolerant corners of the world.

There also is the fact that, economically, Israel punches way above its weight. As Dan Senor and Saul Singer describe and document in "Start-Up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle," the "greatest concentration of innovation and entrepreneurship in the world today" is found in the Jewish state: a higher percentage of GDP devoted to research and development than anywhere else in the world; more high-tech start-ups per capita than any other country; 80 times as much venture capital investment per capita as in China; more companies on NASDAQ than all of Europe combined.

What's more, Mr. Senor and Mr. Singer believe the conventional and sometimes stereotypical explanations for this success - e.g., Jews work hard, Jews are smart - are either wrong or insufficient.

A key factor, they theorize, is that virtually all Israelis serve in the military where a specific set of skills and values are pounded into them. They learn, for example, "that you must complete your mission, but that the only way to do that is as a team. The battle cry is 'After me': there is no leadership without personal example and without inspiring your team to charge together and with you." The Israeli military encourages a kind of entrepreneurship: the assumption of both responsibility and risk at a young age, coupled with on-the-job experience making life-and-death decisions.

In recent years, American military men and women have been facing and overcoming daunting

challenges. Mr. Senor and Mr. Singer suggest that upon return to civilian life they should not "deemphasize their military experience when applying for jobs" and that employers should recognize the skills and habits that young Americans are now acquiring while fighting for their country.

That is not an argument in favor of war. But war has been both declared against us and thrust upon us. Those who believe otherwise indulge a dangerous delusion. What's more, the inconvenient truth is that war, not peace, has been the norm throughout

history. And reports of history's death have been exaggerated.

Israel may be a "start-up nation," but it also is an upstart nation. It defies the "international community" by daring to defend itself, and it prospers even while under attack. For much of the world, such behavior is unforgivable.

Clifford D. May is president of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a policy institute focusing on terrorism.

How do you say 'chutzpah' in Arabic?

By The Jerusalem Post editorial November 15, 2009

How do you say "chutzpah" in Arabic? Because PLO negotiator Saeb Erekat showed unbelievable gall in telling Army Radio: "We're fed up with your time-wasting. We don't believe that you really want a two-state solution."

Talk about the kettle calling the pot black. The Palestinian idea of negotiations goes something like this: Agree to our position in its entirety and then we can talk about the modalities of implementation. Lo and behold, this approach has not borne fruit so a frustrated PLO may turn to the UN Security Council to ask it to impose Palestinian demands on Israel.

To give Erekat and Mahmoud Abbas their due, today's Palestinian demands sound positively reasonable compared to those of PLO founder Ahmad Shukeiry, who in the days leading up to the 1967 war - when the West Bank and Gaza were in Arab hands - declared: "The Arab people's decision is unfaltering: to wipe Israel off the face of the map..."

And they're an improvement over what Yasser Arafat, post-Oslo, reportedly told a gathering of Arab diplomats in Europe: "We plan to eliminate... Israel and establish a Palestinian state. We will make life unbearable for Jews by psychological warfare..."

Now Erekat and Abbas are wasting time and torpedoing a two-state solution with their intransigence. Successive Israeli governments have offered to recognize a Palestinian state in the West Bank and in Gaza. But Abbas rejected Ehud Olmert's offer of 93 percent of the West Bank, plus additional lands from Israel proper to make up the difference, all of Gaza, and a free passage scheme between the Strip and West Bank. Under Olmert's proposal, Israel would retain its strategic settlement blocs - but all other settlements and outposts on the "Palestine" side of the border would be uprooted.

Ehud Barak made slightly less generous offers to Yasser Arafat at Camp David in July 2000 and at Taba in January 2001. Barak, like Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu in his June 2009 Bar-Ilan address, asked that Palestine be demilitarized so that it does not again become a launching pad for fedayeen attacks or a base for Iranian aggression - a real worry if Palestine falls to the Islamists.

Israel is also asking that Palestine absorb any "returning" Arab refugees within its territory.

Finally, Israel wants the Arabs to recognize it as the homeland of the Jewish people just as Palestine would be recognized as the homeland of the Palestinian people. Any fair-minded observer would acknowledge that the Israeli position is not unreasonable, especially given our awful experience after the Gaza disengagement. As for Jerusalem, the city cannot simply be divided by UN fiat, because north, south, east and west, Jerusalem is an organic whole. It will take tremendous goodwill to come up with a livable compromise.

Today's publication by Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi in cooperation with Al-Quds University of Where Heaven and Earth Meet: Jerusalem's Sacred Esplanade, might have suggested a modicum of helpfulness on the Palestinian side. Unfortunately, that Arab institution is now joining a PLO boycott of Israeli academic institutions.

Back to Erekat's chutzpah. The Palestinians created an artificial deadlock by suddenly insisting that they would not negotiate without a settlement freeze. Now Erekat's self-inflicted stalemate supposedly compels him to lobby the UN Security Council to, in effect, junk Resolution 242 - the edifice upon which the entire peacemaking process is constructed - and give its imprimatur to a new Palestinian declaration of independence claiming 100 percent of the West Bank and Gaza (though the Strip is under Hamas suzerainty) plus all of east Jerusalem including the Jewish holy sites. As it happens, Tuesday is the 21st anniversary of the PLO's unilateral declaration of statehood issued in Algiers.

It's clear why Erekat wants to abandon 242. The resolution's masterfully crafted language insists on an exchange of land for peace using the formula - "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict" - that deliberately does not call for a pullback from all territories.

So rather than bargain in good faith to build a viable accord, Erekat and Abbas are betting on an outside imposed solution. Their way will not bring reconciliation, mutual security and peace, but doom

yet another generation of Israelis and Palestinians to more bloodshed.

The Mideast quagmire

By Asaf Romirowsky The Philadelphia Daily News November 24, 2009

After President Obama's June 4 Cairo speech on U.S.-Muslim concerns, including the Palestinians, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivered his own speech at Bar Ilan University stipulating that Palestinians must recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

He said a "basic condition for the termination of the conflict is honest and public recognition by the Palestinians of Israel as the Jewish people's nation . . . we need the Palestinian leadership to get up and say, 'We've had enough of this conflict.'"

Netanyahu's statement helps explain why the most recent Obama-initiated peace process has seemed to go nowhere. It is notable for the fact that it forces Palestinians to take a good look in the mirror and decide how they'd like to proceed.

Historically, Palestinian society never saw Israel's existence as a "right." The only right in the Palestinian narrative is their own connection to the land, although they do see Israel as a temporary military fact. But there will come a day, the narrative goes, when they will be able to defeat the Israelis.

The notion of an independent, sovereign Palestinian state existing alongside Israel was never part of the Palestinian worldview, and they have also always rejected the notion of a single binational state.

If from the late '80s into the Oslo years it was politically correct to call for a two-state solution, two sides living side by side, many Palestinians now openly call for a one-state solution, a de facto final solution for the state of Israel.

Just look at what Rashid Khalidi, ex-PLO spokesman, now professor at Columbia, writes in his book "The Iron Cage": "among some observers . . . a realization has been growing for years that is increasingly unlikely. This realization has taken shape irrespective of the merits or demerits . . . of the two-state solution, in spite of the long-standing desire of majorities of Palestinians and Israelis for their own state, and notwithstanding the (often grudging and hedged) acceptance by each people of a state for the others."

In fact, on the Palestinian street, where things really count, the preference is for a one-state solution - Israel is nowhere to be found.

The Carter Ricochet Effect

By Bret Stephens The Wall Street Journal

Jimmy Carter's presidency offers a lesson in how the purest intentions can lead to the most disastrous results. An idealistic president takes office promising an era of American moral renewal at home and abroad. The effort includes a focus on

Would it not be better if the Palestinians returned to the bargaining table and the sooner the better?

A closer look at the idea of the two-state model as proposed by Palestinian spokesmen reveals that it is actually a camouflage. It lets the Palestinians be perceived as compromising when, in reality, they don't have to. The pro-Palestinian faction loves to quote U.N. resolution 242. It's become the foundation for the land-for-peace formula drafted after the Six Day War, and a superficial reading seemingly places the Palestinian peace-brokers in a position of strength. If Israel valued peace, it would return land. If Arabs wanted land, they would give peace.

But there is dishonesty within 242: On one hand, it talks about the exchange of land for peace with Israel, meaning there's room to negotiate. But although we (naively) believe it also calls for recognition of Israel as the Jewish state, that is not the case. And paying lip service to the two-state idea in reality makes it easier to blame Israel and the U.S. for preventing the creation of a Palestinian state, all while putting off facing up to the responsibilities of governing a state and being accountable for your actions.

Washington, D.C., and Jerusalem should start looking at other options as the Obama administration tries to reignite "peace talks" that have no viable end result. The two-state solution in its current formula is actually just a placebo for those who'd like to believe that peace will come when there are two states living side by side. Absent real acceptance of Israel by the Arabs, this isn't likely to occur - and the probability of Hamas-run Gaza being included in any resolution is slim to none.

For pragmatic reasons, Palestinians may not admit a return to the one-state policy, particularly since American aid and support flows from a peace process based on a two-state solution, but the signs are everywhere.

We need to face the fact that peace and security are not going to come from the "two-state solution," and without understanding that, there can't be a real discussion of what peace and security in the region really looks like.

Asaf Romirowsky is an adjunct fellow at the Middle East Forum.

November 23, 2009

diplomacy and peace-making, an aversion to the use of force, the selling out of old allies. The result is that within a couple of years the U.S. is more suspected, detested and enfeebled than ever.

No, we're not talking about Barack Obama. But since the current administration took office offering roughly the same prescriptions as Jimmy Carter did, it's worth recalling how that worked out.

How it worked out became inescapably apparent 30 years ago this month. On Nov. 20, 1979, Sunni religious fanatics led by a dark-eyed charismatic Saudi named Juhayman bin Seif al Uteybi seized Mecca's Grand Mosque, Islam's holiest site. After a two week siege distinguished mainly by its incompetence, Saudi forces were able to recapture the mosque at a cost of several hundred lives.

By any objective account—the very best of which was offered by Wall Street Journal reporter Yaroslav Trofimov in his 2007 book "The Siege of Mecca"—the battle at the Grand Mosque was a purely Sunni affair pitting a fundamentalist Islamic regime against ultra-fundamentalist renegades. Yet throughout the Muslim world, the Carter administration was viewed as the main culprit. U.S. diplomatic missions in Bangladesh, India, Turkey and Libya were assaulted; in Pakistan, the embassy was burned to the ground. How could that happen to a country whose president was so intent on making his policies as inoffensive as possible?

The answer was, precisely, that Mr. Carter had set out to make America as inoffensive as possible. Two weeks before Juhayman seized the Grand Mosque, Iranian radicals seized the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, taking 66 Americans hostage. They did so after Mr. Carter had refused to bail out the Shah, as the Eisenhower administration had in 1953, and after Andrew Young, Mr. Carter's U.N. ambassador, had described the Ayatollah Khomeini as "somewhat of a saint."

They also did so after Mr. Carter had scored his one diplomatic coup by brokering a peace deal between Egypt and Israel. Today, the consensus view of the Obama administration is that solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would ease tensions throughout the region. But worthy though it was in its own right, peace between Egypt and Israel was also a fillip for Sunni and Shi'ite radicals alike from Tehran to Damascus to Beirut to Gaza. Whatever else the Middle East has been since the signing of the Camp David Accords, it has not been a more peaceful place.

Nor has it been any less inclined to hate the U.S., no matter whether the president is a peace-

loving Democrat or a war-mongering Republican. "Everywhere, there was the same explanation," Mr. Trofimov writes in his account of the attack on the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad. "American institutions, declared a student leader in Lahore, had to be burned down because 'the Holy Kaaba had been occupied by Americans and the Jews.'"

On the other hand, among Muslims inclined to favor the U.S., the Carter administration's instincts for knee-jerk conciliation and panicky withdrawals only had the effect of alienating them from their ostensible protector. Coming as it did so soon after Khomeini's rise to power and the revolutionary fervors which it unleashed, the siege of Mecca carried the real risk of undermining pro-American regimes throughout the region. Yet American embassies were repeatedly instructed not to use their Marines to defend against intruders, as well as to pull their personnel from the country.

"The move didn't go unnoticed among Muslim radicals," notes Mr. Trofimov. "A chain of events unleashed by the takeover in Mecca had put America on the run from the lands of Islam. America's foes drew a conclusion that Osama bin Laden would often repeat: when hit hard, America flees, 'dragging its tail in failure, defeat, and ruin, caring for nothing.'" It is no accident, too, that the Soviet Union chose to invade Afghanistan the following month, as it observed a vacillating president who would not defend what previously were thought to be inviolable U.S. strategic interests.

Today, President Obama likes to bemoan the "mess" he inherited overseas, the finger pointed squarely at President Bush. But the real mess he inherited comes straight out of 1979, the serial debacles of which define American challenges in the Middle East just as surely as the triumphs of 1989 define our opportunities in Europe. True, the furies that were unleashed that year in Mecca, Tehran and elsewhere in the Muslim world were not of America's making. But absence of guilt is no excuse for innocence of policy.

Pretty soon, Mr. Obama will have his own Meccas and Tehrans to deal with, perhaps in Jerusalem and Cairo. He would do well to cast a backward glance at the tenure of his fellow Nobel peace laureate, as an object lesson in how even the purest of motives can lead to the most disastrous results.

Whither American Jewry?

By Caroline Glick The Jerusalem Post

During a recent speaking tour in Canada, MK Nahman Shai (Kadima) shocked some of his hosts when he said that his primary goal in politics today is to bring down the Netanyahu government. Although indelicate, Shai's comment was not surprising. Kadima is in the opposition. And like all opposition parties in all parliamentary democracies, the primary

November 19, 2009

goal of its members is to bring down the government so that they can take power.

Given that this is the case, it is unsurprising that until this week, Kadima leader Tzipi Livni tried to blame Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu for US President Barack Obama's hostility towards Israel. Far more newsworthy than her criticism of

Netanyahu was her public rebuke of Obama this week for his attempt to strong-arm Israel into barring Jewish construction in Jerusalem's Gilo neighborhood.

On Wednesday Livni said, "Gilo is part of the Israeli consensus... and it is important to understand this for all discussions of borders in any future agreement." Indeed. There is an Israeli consensus. The Israeli consensus regarding Jerusalem is based among other things on the understanding that no nation can give up its capital city and survive.

Livni wants to be prime minister one day. For that to happen, Israel must survive until she wins an election. And Israel will not long survive if it surrenders its right to its capital. One might have thought that American Jews could be counted on to stand by Israel on this issue. But then, one would be wrong. For the past six years, Republican Senator Sam Brownback has repeatedly submitted a bill to the US Senate that, if passed into law, would revoke the presidential waiver that has allowed successive presidents to refuse to implement the 1995 law requiring the State Department to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem. This year Brownback co-sponsored his bill with Independent Senator Joseph Lieberman. As luck would have it, the Brownback-Lieberman bill was submitted two weeks before Obama launched his latest campaign against Jewish building in Jerusalem.

In the 1980s and 1990s, American Jews lobbied hard to get the embassy moved to Jerusalem. But now some American Jewish leaders recoil at the very notion. In response to the Brownback-Lieberman Jerusalem Embassy Relocation Act of 2009, the Kansas City Jewish Chronicle published an editorial last Friday titled, "Bad move, Senator Brownback."

The newspaper's editors condemned their retiring senator and called his bill, "a cheap, grandstanding move by a conservative Republican on his way out the door, playing to Jews and Christian Zionists while trying to throw a monkey wrench into President Obama's diplomatic spokes."

According to Sen. Brownback's office, the paper never had any criticism of the same bill when he submitted it during president George W. Bush's tenure in office. But now, as Israel's government and opposition stand shoulder to shoulder protecting Israeli control over Jerusalem from assaults by Obama, Kansas City's Jewish newspaper's editorial board willingly bucked what it acknowledged are the wishes of "Jews and Christian Zionists," in order to stand by their man in the Oval Office.

Some of Israel's most high-profile supporters in the US are conservative talk radio and television hosts like Rush Limbaugh, Mark Levin, Sean Hannity and Glenn Beck. But rather than thank them for their support, the Anti-Defamation League, which is supposed to be dedicated first and foremost to defending Jews from anti-Semitism, published a

special report this week where it insinuated that they cultivate a climate of hatred and paranoia which could endanger Jews among others.

The ADL report, "Rage Grows in America: Anti-Government Conspiracies," dubbed Beck the "fearmonger-in-chief," for his opposition to Obama's domestic and foreign policies. It similarly castigated the so-called "tea party" movement which has attracted millions of Americans opposed to high taxes, and the townhall meetings this past summer where millions of Americans peacefully argued against Obama's healthcare policies.

The ADL's decision to issue a special report attacking Obama's political opponents and insinuating that Americans who oppose him cultivate an environment in which paranoid and dangerous fringe groups feel comfortable operating is strange given that the ADL never put out a similar report against parallel anti-Bush movements. As Commentary's Jonathan Tobin noted this week, the ADL was more likely to see overt and vicious anti-Semitic statements and placards being waved around at anti-Iraq war rallies than at anti-Obama healthcare and tax policy demonstrations.

Ironically, the ADL has a specific institutional interest in combating leftist paranoia. A recent movie attacking the ADL called Defamation, by leftist, anti-Israel Israeli filmmaker Yoav Shamir, is currently hitting the film festival circuit in the US and Europe. A major hit among anti-Israel activists and regular anti-Semites on the Left and Right, Defamation accuses the ADL of exaggerating the Holocaust and anti-Semitism to justify what Shamir views as its nefarious aims. Apparently, tribal loyalty to the Left trumps the institutional interests of the ADL.

It certainly trumps the interests of New York University's Hillel director Rabbi Yehuda Sarna. As James Taranto reported on Wednesday in The Wall Street Journal, this week Sarna called for NYU's Jewish community to join NYU Muslims at a rally that both commemorated the massacre at Ft. Hood and denounced NYU professor Tunku Varadarajan for writing a column in Forbes magazine. In his article, Varadarajan committed the crime of stating the obvious fact that Ft. Hood terrorist Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan was motivated by his Islamic beliefs when he shouted Allahu Akbar and shot some 40 people, killing 13.

Given that people and groups like al-Qaida and Hamas that share Hasan's views assert that all Jews should be killed, it would seem that the good rabbi would not feel the need to attack professors who point out that Hasan's views are dangerous. But then, it is no longer strange to see Hillels on American university campuses behaving in a manner that is not in line with what might be considered the interests of either the American Jewish community or the Jewish people as a whole.

Take UC Berkeley's Hillel center, for example. Since Ken Kramarz, Hillel's regional director for Northern California, started his job in June 2007, Berkeley's Hillel has adopted a hostile view towards Judaism and Israel. As pro-Israel community activist Natan Nestel notes, in the past year alone, Hillel held a dance party on Yom Hashoah, and it held a Cinco de Mayo barbecue on Remembrance Day for Fallen IDF Soldiers. It has also failed to hold community Seders for the past two years. Instead, last year, its members hung signs in the Hillel building declaring, "Matza sucks."

Beyond its derogatory treatment of Jewish and Israeli holidays, Berkeley's Hillel has allowed an extremist group called Students for Justice for Palestine to participate in its organizational meetings.

SJP calls for Israel's destruction through unlimited Arab immigration. It also advocates for UC Berkeley to divest from Israel. Edgar Bronfman, Hillel's International Chairman, has characterized SJP umbrella organization as "anti-Israel... anti-Semitic [and] alarming..."

No doubt owing in part to Berkeley Hillel's decision to permit SJP members to spread their propaganda at its organizational meetings, Hillel's student leaders and members participated in SJP's Israel Apartheid Week this past March. The student meeting that SJP participated in at Berkeley's Hillel was sponsored by a group called "Keshet Enoshi."

This group describes itself as "a progressive Jewish community that engages directly with Israeli civil society. We do this by educating ourselves and others about the day-to-day struggles of people in Israel by making direct connections with human rights/social change organizations in Israel, linking their struggles with those on campus and in the wider community, and building a community of active participants in social change in Israel."

This mission statement, which says nothing about Zionism, sounds an awful lot like the goal of the New Israel Fund. This month, three Arab "civil society" groups supported to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars by the NIF published a poster depicting an IDF soldier touching the breast of an Arab woman with the caption, "Her husband needs a permit to touch her, the occupation penetrates her life every day."

The poster was issued to publicize a conference in Haifa called "My Land, Space, Body and Sexuality: Palestinians in the Shadow of the Wall," whose purpose was to demonize Israel using post-modern jargon. Unlike Hillel, NIF is widely recognized as a far-left fringe group. But as Arab Israeli NGOs use the dollars of American Jewish NIF donors to advance their "civil society" programs aimed at delegitimizing Israel's right to exist, the Reform Movement - which is not a fringe group - decided

unanimously two weeks ago to criticize and pressure Israel for what its leadership views as Israel's unfair treatment of its Arab citizens.

As this column goes to press, if its board members don't cancel their meeting, the San Francisco Jewish Federation will be grudgingly voting on a resolution that would prohibit it from sponsoring events that denigrate or demonize Israel or supporting organizations that partner with organizations that call for divestment, sanctions or boycotts against Israel.

The resolution follows the Jewish Federation of San Francisco's decision to co-sponsor the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival last summer. That festival featured Shamir's Defamation, and the egregiously anti-Israel film Rachel, about the late pro-terror activist Rachel Corrie. The film festival was also sponsored by the anti-Zionist Jewish Voices for Peace group, the American Friends Service Committee, which hosted a dinner for Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in New York last year, the Rachel Corrie Foundation and other radical anti-Israel groups.

If the vote takes place, it will be a great victory for a small group of local Jewish activists. These individual Jews have banded together because they are deeply disturbed by the federation's willingness to use community funds to advance events whose basic message is that Israel should be destroyed.

Kadima's interests as a political party place it at loggerheads with the government on almost every issue. But its leaders this week were rational enough to recognize that they must support Israel's sovereign rights in Jerusalem despite the fact that doing so placed it on the government's side. Their display of sanity is a clear indication that Israeli society today is healthy and capable of meeting the challenges it faces.

It is clear that most American Jews believe that it is in their interests to support the Democratic Party and the Left. But like the anti-establishment Jewish activists in San Francisco, American Jews ought to realize that on issues like Israel's survival and their own survival as Jews they ought to stand by their interests even when they seem to clash with their leftist and Democratic loyalties. And they ought to stand by their friends on these issues, even when their friends are conservative Republicans. It can only be hoped that the San Francisco pro-Israel upstarts' campaign against the federation was successful yesterday. Then, too, if the American Jewish community is to long survive, these San Francisco Jewish activists' demand that their community support Israel's right to exist must be joined by their fellow American Jews throughout the country.