

SAZF DATES TO DIARISE

10 October 2010 IDAN RAICHEL: *Rocking in the Gardens at Emmarentia Dam*
20 October 2010 CAROLINE GLICK: *Deputy Editor of the Jerusalem Post*
November 2010 YOM RABIN: *Guest Speaker*
12/13 February 2010 YOUNG ADULT ADVOCACY WEEKEND: *Michelle Rojas, StandWithUs*
26/27 March 2011 47th SAZF CONFERENCE: *International guest speakers*

1. Shlomo Avineri The right questions

Whether the Palestinians accept Israel's right to self-determination, or even its existence, is missing the point of the peace talks, but still raises an important issue.

2. Roger Cohen A test of Israel's character

If there is to be a two-state solution, it cannot be that the physical space for a Palestinian state keeps diminishing, square meter by square meter, as settlements expand. Two plus two cannot equal five.

3. Maurice Ostroff An open letter to NY Times columnist Roger Cohen

Do you reserve your tough aggressive approach for Israel only, or would you ever suggest that Zimbabwe, Sudan, the Taliban or even Ahmedinijad deserve to be spanked or their bones be broken?

4. Chuck Freilich Armageddon and the Threat of Nuclear Terrorism

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The right questions

By Shlomo Avineri, Haaretz, 5 October 2010

<http://www.bicom.org.uk/news/comment-and-opinion/shlomo-avineri---05-10-10>

I am not sure whether it was prudent or right to demand that the Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish nation-state in the framework of peace negotiations. However, since the question has been raised, it is impossible to ignore the absolute, blunt negative responses delivered by Palestinian leaders Mahmoud Abbas and Saeb Erekat and the Arab League. Since the root of the dispute is Arab unwillingness to accept the Jewish people's right to self-determination, or even to recognize the Jewish people's existence, it is clear that this is not a simple problem.

Since the Palestinians are raising questions about the Jews' very right to self-determination, perhaps some questions, however difficult and complex, for the Palestinians might be in order. Let there be no misunderstanding: Just as the question of Jewish self-determination is one for Jews alone to answer, so too is Palestinian self-determination an issue for Palestinians, not Jews, to decide. But Jews have the right to ask some questions in this regard.

The first question is directed at the Palestinian negotiators. I hope that despite all the obstacles, an independent Palestinian state will ultimately arise alongside the State of Israel.

However, since in Arab consciousness the term "Palestine" includes the entire territory from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, and not just the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which will make up the future Palestinian state, Palestinian leaders should be asked whether it is clear to them that the territory of Israel proper is not part of Palestine, and should not be presented as such in the Palestinian narrative and in Palestinian schools. Just as a majority of Israel's Jewish citizens distinguish between "the State of Israel" and "the Land of Israel," it should be clear to us, and to them, that Acre and Jaffa and Be'er Sheva are not part of Palestine.

This is a complicated issue. But if in their independent state, the Palestinians continue to view the territory of the State of Israel as "occupied territory" that belongs to the Palestinian homeland, this will obviously not facilitate the process of mutual reconciliation.

The second question is directed at Israel's Arab citizens. Some of their leaders prefer to refer to themselves as "Palestinian citizens of Israel," and that, of course, is their right. But it is impossible to ignore the fact that following the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, this definition is liable to seem problematic. Does this definition mean they will view the independent state of Palestine as their country and their homeland? Does it also mean that, in the final analysis, they view the areas where they live - the Galilee, Acre, Jaffa and elsewhere - as part of Palestine, which by that point will be a political entity and not just a geographic region?

Granted, the modern liberal world allows multiple identities (as who knows better than the Jews?). But the issue is far from simple. In a climate fraught with historical tensions,

some clarifications could advance Israeli Arabs' acceptance as equal citizens - a challenge that will only become more pressing for Israel after independent Palestine is established, since then, Israel's various security-oriented excuses will no longer have the same weight and validity.

These are difficult questions, and the very fact of raising them could be interpreted as an attempt to complicate the negotiations. But I believe the opposite is the case: Anyone who, like me, supports a solution of two states for two peoples and wants to see Arab citizens of Israel gain full civic equality can, and perhaps even must, pose them.

A test of Israel's Character

Roger Cohen, New York Times, 23 September 2010

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/24/opinion/global/24iht-edcohen.html?_r=1

At a dinner hosted by American Jewish leaders for the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, I was seated with a senior U.S. diplomat to my left, the secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organization to my right, and Abbas opposite.

It was like listening to a rousing peace overture as an ominous leitmotif of disaster keeps returning with ever greater insistence.

While Abbas referred to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as his "partner in peace" and said it would be "criminal" if Palestinian and Jewish leaders failed, the American diplomat and Yasir Abed Rabbo of the P.L.O. kept whispering in my ear that the mother of all train wrecks was looming. "Netanyahu is playing games," Rabbo said.

I came away from the dinner convinced the United States is on the brink of a diplomatic fiasco. Less than a month after President Obama put the imprimatur of a White House ceremony on renewed Israeli-Palestinian talks, the negotiations are close to breakdown. If that happens, as Netanyahu and Abbas know, Obama would look amateurish.

The two leaders need the United States, an incentive to avoid humiliating Obama. But with just a couple of days to the expiration Sunday of an Israeli freeze on settlement construction in the West Bank, both sides are digging in. Despite Obama's public plea to Netanyahu — "It makes sense to extend that moratorium" — the Israeli government seems to have rejected a formal extension.

That would be a terrible mistake. Obama should fight it until the last minute. His international credibility is on the line.

Abbas made nice at the dinner, inching back from earlier statements that he would abandon the talks if settlement construction resumes. He could not say he would walk out but it would be "very difficult for me to resume talks." Bottom line: Renewed building would be a body blow to the latest peace effort.

Why, Abbas asked, could Netanyahu not tell his center-right cabinet he needed a three-month extension because direct talks were at a delicate stage? Good question, in response to which Netanyahu could ask another: Why did the Palestinians wait until the moratorium was about to expire to resume talks? Dan Meridor, Israel's minister of intelligence and atomic energy, got philosophical: "The end of the freeze is a test case for the concept of compromise. Neither side will get all it wants."

Fair enough in principle, but Meridor misses the point. This decision is a symbolic test case of something much deeper. It is a test case of Israeli seriousness about peace. It is a test case of whether the two-state idea really outweighs the lingering Messianic one-state Judea and Samaria illusion.

If there is to be a two-state solution, it cannot be that the physical space for a Palestinian state keeps diminishing, square meter by square meter, as settlements expand. Two plus two cannot equal five.

The 43-year history of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank has been painful and corrosive, a cycle of harsh repression and Palestinian terror. In "The Yellow Wind," the Israeli novelist David Grossman, whose New Yorker profile by George Packer is a must read, put it this way: "I could not understand how an entire nation like mine, an enlightened nation by all accounts, is able to train itself to live as a conqueror without making its own life wretched."

Do Israelis, in their majority, want to continue to lord over another people? Or are they ready, with the right security guarantees, to make the painful choices that would, in restoring dignity to a neighboring people, also confer riveting new dignity on Israel?

I believe they are ready to take that risk — peace is also risk — but Netanyahu has to lead them there. He has not yet made the decision to do so. He's a politician with his finger to the wind. What he senses from within his own Likud party and others further right is that he cannot extend the freeze and hold things together.

Or so it seems. Oh, sure, he'll commit privately to limiting West Bank construction to a bare minimum. But that won't cut it with a Palestinian leadership that has taken courageous steps to stabilize the West Bank and needs a clear signal — now — that Israel understands peace will involve reversing the settlements, not growing them further.

Abbas is serious about peace. His prime minister, Salam Fayyad, is very serious and has done enough on the West Bank to prompt a World Bank statement this week saying: "If the Palestinian Authority maintains its current performance in institution-building and delivery of public services, it is well-positioned for the establishment of a state at any point in the near future." Both men have done an enormous amount to curb violence, renounce it as a method, and establish credible security services. Israel will not find better interlocutors.

But the progress is fragile, as recent clashes have shown. That's why Obama must now break some bones to get his way: "Bibi, read my lips. It makes sense to extend that moratorium by a few months. For Israel and for the United States."

Below is the response from Maurice Ostroff to Mr Cohen

An open letter to NY Times columnist Roger Cohen

From Maurice Ostroff, October 5, 2010

Dear Mr. Cohen,

The provocative title of your September 23, NY Times article "A Test of Israel's Character", prompts me to ask why you believe that, among all the parties involved in the mid-East peace talks, only Israel's character is being tested?

The bias in the title could be ignored were it not reinforced by your recommendation to President Obama in the same article, to break some bones and your belief, expressed during a public debate in Doha that, like a naughty child, Israel should be severely spanked. This leads me to ask whether you reserve this tough aggressive approach for Israel only, or whether you would ever suggest that Zimbabwe, Sudan, the Taliban or even Ahmedinijad deserve to be spanked or their bones be broken.

You may recall that when you spoke at a symposium in Israel a short while ago, I asked from the floor whether we could treat your views on Israel as unbiased in view of your call for spanking Israel during that Doha debate. The motion before the debate was "*This House believes Barack Obama is too weak to make peace in the Middle East*". Phillip Weiss spoke for, and you spoke against, the motion ".

As you replied to me that you could not recall using those words, I quote from a verbatim transcript of the debate.

"PHILIP WEISS

Well I think The United States has to take that adult [Israel] across its lap and give it a spanking. And he's not doing it.

TIM SEBASTIAN

Roger Cohen, would you agree with that?

ROGER COHEN

I think that's what we're seeing, I think we're seeing that right now before our eyes. It might not be as severe a spanking as most people in the audience would like to see"

The complete transcript may be viewed on the BBC site at
<http://www.thedohadebates.com/debates/debate.asp?d=76&s=6&mode=transcript>

It is interesting that although you and Weiss were on opposite sides, you found common ground in agreeing that Israel deserved a spanking.

I also refer to your categorical statement that unlike Netanyahu, Abbas is serious about peace and I ask how you reconcile this view with his obstinate refusal to meet with Netanyahu during nine months of the building freeze and his reluctant agreement to engage in indirect talks only when the moratorium was about to expire.

Referring again to the title of your article, will you perhaps agree that Abbas' character and his seriousness about peace are more seriously under test than Israel's in view of his failure to respond to Ehud Olmert's astounding offer of 98 percent of the West Bank, along with a promise to remove all settlers over the border as reported in Al-Manar TV of August 12, 2008?

Mr Abbas himself confirmed that he received and rejected this offer in an interview with Jackson Diehl in the Washington Post of May 29, 2009. The following excerpt of what Diehl wrote cannot be ignored if a serious attempt is made to understand the complex Mid-east peace process

"In our meeting Wednesday, Abbas acknowledged that Olmert had shown him a map proposing a Palestinian state on 97 percent of the West Bank -- though he complained that the Israeli leader refused to give him a copy of the plan. He confirmed that Olmert "accepted the principle" of the "right of return" of Palestinian refugees -- something no previous Israeli prime minister had done -- and offered to resettle thousands in Israel. In all, Olmert's peace offer was more generous to the Palestinians than either that of Bush or Bill Clinton; it's almost impossible to imagine Obama, or any Israeli government, going further.

Abbas turned it down. "The gaps were wide," he said.

Abbas and his team fully expect that Netanyahu will never agree to the full settlement freeze -- if he did, his center-right coalition would almost certainly collapse. So they plan to sit back and watch while U.S. pressure slowly squeezes the Israeli prime minister from office. "It will take a couple of years," one official breezily predicted. Abbas rejects the notion that he should make any comparable concession -- such as recognizing Israel as a Jewish state, which would imply renunciation of any large-scale resettlement of refugees.

Instead, he says, he will remain passive. "I will wait for Hamas to accept international commitments. I will wait for Israel to freeze settlements," he said. "Until then, in the West Bank we have a good reality . . . the people are living a normal life." In the Obama administration, so far, it's easy being Palestinian".

Further doubt was cast on Abbas' seriousness about peace by co-founder of Fatah, Farouq Kadoumi, when he told journalist Lamis Andoni that Abbas' acceptability to the West would *"spare Fatah a right on collision with Israel and America while giving Fatah a chance to recover from the high costs, in terms of losses of lives and leaders who ended up in Israeli jails, after the Second Intifada"*. (Al Jazerra 1/9/10)

In the face of your apparent prejudiced view of Israel as demonstrated in many of your articles, it is difficult to accept your general views as balanced and unbiased. For instance, in your fine article of September 20, 2010, "Democracy Still Matters", you wrote: *"Democracies seemed blocked, as in Belgium, or corrupted, as in Israel, or parodies, as in Italy, or paralyzed, as in the Netherlands"*. Although Israel unfortunately has its share of corruption, it is certainly not the defining characteristic of Israel's democracy. Rather it is the proportional representation voting system which though fairer than the "winner takes all" system in the USA and Britain, nevertheless creates multi-party problems.

Examination of the facts shows conclusively that Israel is doing more to act against corruption than many other Western countries. For example, former Ehud Olmert's position as PM did not protect him from being indicted for corruption, whereas Jacques Chirac who was dogged by allegations of corruption and nepotism since 1997 was protected by presidential immunity.

On Transparency International's corruption scale, Israel at number 32 ranks above 150 other countries, including Portugal, Jordan, Czech Republic, Poland, Brazil, Lebanon and Syria, none of whom you regard as characteristically corrupt. In the circumstances, I trust you will acknowledge that your damaging allegation that Israeli democracy is characterized by corruption is totally unjustified.

In a September 24, 2008 article in the Guardian the executive director of Transparency International was quoted as saying that public confidence in political office in Britain has been eroded by the 'cash-for-honors' affair and the grudging exposures of MPs' expenses and that Britain had a wretched and woeful record in prosecuting business executives for paying bribes to foreign politicians and officials to win contracts. He said this was epitomized by the government's decision to drop the police investigation into allegations that BAE, Britain's biggest arms company, paid bribes to Saudi royals. The Department for Business said there was an increasing number of UK investigations into foreign bribery, with 20 live cases and almost 50 preliminary enquiries ongoing.

And of course one cannot avoid your own backyard in the USA with the ongoing DOJ scandal and the trial of former governor Rod Blagojevich, the fifth Illinois governor to be charged with criminal conduct over the last 50 years. And of course Enron and Arthur Andersen and the puzzling refusal of the treasury to rescue Lehman Brothers after having bailed out Bear Stearns, Merrill Lynch, AIG, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, leading to the financial meltdown that has crippled the world economy.

In a January 29 2010 article in the Independent, Representative Alan Grayson is quoted as saying about a Supreme Court ruling permitting advertisements by corporations during an election campaign "*It basically institutionalizes and legalizes bribery on the largest scale imaginable. Corporations will now be able to reward the politicians that play ball with them – and beat to death the politicians that don't.*"

And despite all the above, you illogically regard Israel as the corrupt country.

You ask whether Israelis are ready, with the right security guarantees, to make the painful choices leading to peace and unhesitatingly, together with the great majority of Israelis I answer a resounding YES! And in order to make progress, in all sincerity, I ask you in your capacity as an acclaimed observer of the Middle East to elaborate on the "right security guarantees" that you refer to, taking into account the continuing incitement to hatred in Palestinian schools and mosques, the declared intentions to annihilate Israel and the consequences of Israel's evacuation of the Gaza strip.

I hope I am wrong in the impression I have gained from your articles that you are so biased you cannot write objectively about Israel and I would welcome a response from you confirming that I am wrong.

I will be publicizing this letter, as well as the response I hope to receive from you.

Armageddon and the threat of Nuclear Terrorism

Chuck Freilich, inFocus Quarterly, Summer 2010

<http://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/1745/threat-of-nuclear-terrorism>

President Obama recently convened a global summit on the threat of nuclear terrorism, an issue that he considers to be the greatest danger currently facing the U.S. and the international community. Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak similarly believes that the gravest threat is not posed by rogue states, such as Iran, even if it acquires nuclear weapons, but rather "... a nuclear weapon reach[ing] a terrorist group, which will not hesitate to use it immediately. They will send it in a container with a GPS to a leading port in the US, Europe, or Israel."

Unlike traditional terrorism, nuclear terrorism would pose a potentially catastrophic threat to states across the world. Even a bomb considered to be relatively small would have devastating consequences, with estimates ranging from tens to hundreds of thousands of dead. Although Israel would survive such a strike as a state, the consequences would be devastating – and this scenario is based on the optimistic assumption that terrorists would detonate only one nuclear bomb. Should nuclear terrorists strike the U.S., the consequences while not existential, would nevertheless be extreme.

Nuclear terrorism poses a unique threat not only because of the magnitude of the destruction, but because those most likely to perpetrate an attack may be fundamentally nihilistic and therefore undeterrable – prepared to pay any cost in loss of life in pursuit of their objectives. As millennial movements for whom the crippling and even destruction of the US and Israel are sacred missions, a nuclear terrorist attack where even a devastating response is assumed may be a worthy means of ushering in a messianic era.

Purpose of Nuclear Terrorism: There are several reasons why nuclear terrorism, whether against the US or Israel, could serve strategic objectives and benefit those states and groups contemplating such actions. First, there is the actual use of nuclear weapons with the designed goal of dealing their victim a devastating blow. However, nuclear possession may also be used as a deterrent against an attack from the US or Israel in order to counter their overwhelming military superiority. In this way, nuclear terrorism would provide an umbrella enabling the state or group to conduct lower level hostilities with the assumption that they would be spared the threat of massive retaliation.

Possessing nuclear weapons would also allow the group or country to exercise decisive influence over US and Israeli decision-making in times of crisis. It could prove to be a deciding factor on fundamental policy issues as the two countries could be held hostage by the very threat of a nuclear terrorist attack. It also would serve to weaken the resilience of American and Israeli society as a result of the need to live under the shadow of nuclear terrorism. In turn, it would severely undermine public confidence in either government's ability to provide a safe environment in which to live.

A nuclear terrorist attack against either the US or Israel could be carried out by sea, air, and land-based operations. Israel, however, faces the additional threat of rocket attacks, such as those already in Hezbollah's possession that could be fitted with nuclear warheads. Though unsuited for ordinary military purposes, these rockets could be effective weapons of terror.

Policy Options: The US and Israel have two policy options - prevention and deterrence - that they can pursue in countering the threat.

Prevention: Prevention is the first measure in the bilateral tool-kit, including heightened intelligence, interdiction cooperation, and a variety of related offensive and defensive measures. Nevertheless, the difficulties the United States has encountered in tracking down bin Laden and other al-Qaeda operatives, as well as the trouble Israel faces in detecting short-range rockets in Lebanon and Gaza, are indicative of the challenges posed by the detection of a terrorist nuclear weapon. Once detected, the problem of eliminating the threat before it could be detonated would remain critical and difficult.

Part of the prevention effort is simply based on already existing U.S. policies and programs designed to deal with the threat on a global scale. Israel, for the most part, is not involved in these efforts, though highly supportive. They include the following:

- Engaging in global diplomacy to further strengthen international resolve to deal with the threat of nuclear terrorism. This includes better utilizing already existing diplomatic tools, such as UNSCR 1540; engaging with rogue states, such as Iran and Syria, on a conditional agreement with severe penalties for failure; and heightening pressure on states to deny assistance and sanctuary to terrorists.
- Creating a variety of programs designed to improve control over nuclear facilities, stockpiles and personnel in a number of countries. This is a "drying up the swamp" type approach – the fewer the number of "loose" nukes, materials, and experts, the lower the risk of nuclear terrorism.
- Heightening international cooperation in the areas of law enforcement, border security, export controls, intelligence, interdiction of WMD, and terrorist related shipments and financial flows.
- Expanding covert operations and, in some cases, a willingness to bring significant military force to bear, over and above special forces, may also be required.

As another source of prevention, Israel has an extensive homeland security system, both active ("Arrow" and "Iron Dome") and passive. Together they provide a modicum of security. However, even one nuclear warhead piercing through the system would constitute a catastrophic failure. Defense is thus not a sufficient option in the case of nuclear threats. At the same time, a potential attacker would have to take the high probability of interception into account and that Israel would presumably retaliate massively.

Deterrence: It is typically assumed that deterrence is ineffective against nuclear terrorism, due both to the nihilistic nature of the assumed perpetrators and the absence of a return address. However, this is not always the case. While the biggest question mark is al-Qaeda, Hezbollah and Hamas have both proven themselves deterrable over the years. Though certainly extremist, their commitment to their domestic audiences vies

with and at times overrides their commitment to Israel's destruction. This in no way detracts from the extreme severity of the threat that would be posed by their acquisition of a nuclear capability – such as the ability to terrorize Israel's population, conduct large-scale terror attacks with relative impunity, or attempt to dictate terms - but their deterrability does place the threat in an appropriate context.

Similarly, while a precise assessment of Iran's cost-benefit analysis is unknowable, Tehran does appear to be a rational player and thus deterrable. Although Iran would presumably be willing to suffer severe consequences in pursuit of Israel's destruction, Iranian leaders will, of course, take into account that Israel is widely considered by the international community to be a nuclear power and if so, that its actions could lead to a devastating exchange for both. Iran would also have to factor in the possibility of an American response, even if Tehran solely directs its actions against Israel.

Al-Qaeda and its acolytes, on the other hand, are assumed not to be deterrable – and for good reason. Such Islamic extremists view all non-Muslims – and even Muslims that don't adhere to their strict reading of Islam – as infidels, or *kufar*, who must be killed for the sake of Allah. Indeed, al-Qaeda and its followers have proven their willingness, if not desire, to murder and die in order to obtain their ultimate goal of creating an Islamic Caliphate. For this reason, nuclear capabilities in the hands of al-Qaeda would pose an unacceptable danger.

As such, unless virtually irrefutable and immediate evidence exists to the contrary, Israel and the United States should adopt a declared retaliatory policy that holds Iran and/or al-Qaeda responsible for a nuclear attack regardless of the perpetrator's identity. The allies should clarify that its response will be unlimited and include not just their leaders and their families, but major population centers and all sites of value for the Muslim world, including those of major symbolic importance.

Potential perpetrators of nuclear terrorism must be convinced that the US and Israel will both retaliate in a devastating fashion. For Israel, this means a "shoot first, no questions asked" policy, which holds accountable those clearly responsible for the attack (if any) as well as those reasonably suspected of involvement. There will be no room for diplomacy and Israel and the United States must respond with all means at their disposal.

As a global power, the US may not be able to adopt such a "no questions asked" policy and nuclear forensics will be crucial. Nevertheless, American determination to act decisively to prevent a nuclear terrorist threat and to retaliate devastatingly against those found responsible, must be beyond question. US declaratory policy on the nuclear terror threat to Israel would not need to be substantially different from its posture on the issue of nuclear terrorism generally and its commitments to Israel's security, but could be further expanded to specifically include nuclear terrorism.

A Steadfast Approach: While the list of those who might wish to carry out nuclear terrorism against either the US or Israel is not long, it is also not as short as one might hope. It includes al-Qaeda and affiliated jihadi organizations, Hezbollah, Hamas, Iran, and potentially Syria in the future.

To date, none of these players appears to have acquired a nuclear weapon, although Iran is certainly well on its way. To be sure, though the threat probability is considered low at this time, that assessment is likely to change significantly in the coming years. The US and Israel must take into account that a nuclear terrorist threat could emerge in the foreseeable future, and act accordingly to minimize that threat using prevention and deterrence. Indeed, the potential costs of nuclear terrorism are appallingly high.

***Bits and Pieces* Clips from various media in the Middle East and elsewhere**

ICEJ News, 7 October 4, 2010: Opposition figure Mousavi calls for national referendum on Ahmadinejad: In a televised speech on Wednesday, Iranian Defense Minister Ahmad Vahadi boasted of the technological prowess of Iran's military industrial complex, insisting his nation was now self-sufficient in its ability to building weapons systems and was even exporting armaments to some 50 nations.

ICEJ News, 7 October 4, 2010: Arab League may buy time to 'advise' Palestinians on leaving talks: The Arab League is expected to decide by Friday whether to back Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas in his threat to withdraw from direct talks with Israel due to resumed settlement construction, although some Arab leaders, namely from Egypt and Jordan, are urging that both sides show flexibility to keep the negotiations alive.