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Fair press for peace

Editorial: Jerusalem Post, 29 December 2010

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Editorials/Article.aspx?id=197156>

The vast majority of local and international news outlets have so far refrained from reporting at all on Fatah's hard-line declarations.

The Fifth Fatah Revolutionary Council did not have an auspicious beginning. Participants kicked off discussion by giving special honor to Amin al-Hindi, one of the masterminds of the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre of 11 Israeli athletes, who died earlier this year. What followed was sheer intransigence on the part of the 120-member Palestinian "congress," which represents "moderate" Palestinian opinions – as opposed to the radical Islamic Hamas, which openly calls for using violence to bring about Israel's demise.

After two days of meetings in Ramallah this weekend, Fatah, which makes up the backbone of the Palestinian Authority leadership, issued a resounding "no" to compromise, further dimming even the faintest hopes for a negotiated peace with Israel.

The Fatah council derogatorily rejected recognition of "the so-called Jewish state" or any "racist state based on religion." It reasserted the "right of return" which, if implemented, would facilitate the end of a Jewish majority within the pre-1967 Green Line by allowing about four million Palestinian refugees and their offspring to settle in Israel proper.

Land swaps as part of a peace agreement were ruled out as well. Large settlement blocs in Judea and Samaria, such as Gush Etzion, Ma'aleh Adumim and other cities located just over the Green Line, consisting of no more than five percent of the West Bank, where about 80% around 320,000 Jews live, must be uprooted and settlers must be expelled, it decided.

"Illegal settler gangs can't be put on an equal footing with the owners of the lands and rights," declared the council.

Israeli and US understandings, starting in December 2000 with the "Clinton parameters" and continuing with former US president George Bush's declaration that any permanent peace deal would have to reflect the West Bank's demographic realities, were effectively dismissed.

In what sounded more like a battle cry than a declaration, Fatah essentially articulated its intent to do everything short of relaunching an armed struggle to undermine the existence of the Jewish state.

The Fatah council's articulation of such an extremist position has far-reaching ramifications for the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. That's why Palestinian affairs correspondent Khaled Abu Toameh's report on the council's decisions appeared at the top of this newspaper's front page on Sunday.

By bizarre contrast, the vast majority of local and international news outlets have so far

refrained from reporting at all on Fatah's hard-line declarations. While news media usually respond quickly and amply to steps taken by Israel that are perceived as potentially detrimental to the peace process, the silent treatment of the Fatah decisions reflects a media norm, in which Palestinian incitement and intransigence is often downplayed or completely ignored.

Just last Monday, for instance, this paper was the first to report on the PA Ministry of Information's outlandish "study" aiming that the Western Wall, known to Muslims as Al-Buraq Wall, constitutes Wakf property and that "the Zionist occupation falsely and unjustly claims that it owns this wall." Some other news outlets reported this several days later; others not at all.

Similarly, a survey commissioned by the Israel Project, indicating highly antagonistic Palestinian attitudes toward Israel, barely received media attention when it was released earlier this month.

Two-thirds of Palestinians living on the West Bank and Gaza agreed that "over time, Palestinians must work to get back all the land for a Palestinian state." Sixty percent said that "the real goal should be to start with two states but then move it to all being one Palestinian state." Fifty-six percent agreed that "we will have to resort to armed struggle again."

When news reporters and editors fail to give the proper space to revelations of Palestinian extremism and intransigence, they help perpetuate prejudices against Israel. Not only is skewed journalism a betrayal of the profession and those who rely on it, in this case it hurts the peace process by untenably misrepresenting the imperative for compromise by the Palestinian leadership and their public, thereby dooming hopes for negotiated progress.

Palestinians must come to terms with the legitimacy of Jewish rights to sovereignty in this sliver of land if they are to internalize the need for compromise and thus walk the path to peace. That process of recognition requires the disseminating of an honest narrative by the Palestinian leadership.

And that, in turn, requires the international community to, first, understand accurately the nature of current Palestinian hostility to the notion of a legitimate Israel and, second, to impress on the leadership the need for change.

The extent of the challenge was made perfectly clear over the weekend by Fatah's Revolutionary Council. Too bad that most of the world has not heard about it.

Islamist Turkey vs. Secular Iran?

by Daniel Pipes, The Washington Times, 30 November 2010

<http://www.danielpipes.org/9123/islamist-turkey-secular-iran>

Early in the sixteenth century, as the Ottoman and Safavid empires fought for control of the Middle East, Selim the Grim ruling from Istanbul indulged his artistic side by

composing distinguished poetry in Persian, then the Middle East's language of high culture. Simultaneously, Ismail I ruling from Isfahan wrote poetry in Turkish, his ancestral language.

This juxtaposition comes to mind as the populations of Turkey and Iran now engage in another exchange. As the secular Turkey founded by Atatürk threatens to disappear under a wave of Islamism, the Islamist Iranian state founded by Khomeini apparently teeters, on the brink of secularism. Turks wish to live like Iranians, ironically, and Iranians like Turks.

Turkey and Iran are large, influential, and relatively advanced Muslim-majority countries, historically central, strategically placed, and widely watched; as they cross paths, I predicted back in 1994, racing in opposite directions, their destinies will affect not just the future of the Middle East but potentially the entire Muslim world.

That is now happening. Let's review each country's evolution:

Turkey: Atatürk nearly removed Islam from public life in the period 1923-38. Over the decades, however, Islamists fought back and by the 1970s they formed part of a ruling coalition; in 1996-97, they even headed a government. Islamists took power following the strange elections of 2002, when winning a third of the vote secured them two-thirds of the parliamentary seats. Ruling with caution and competence, they got nearly half the vote in 2007, at which point their gloves came off and the bullying began, from a wildly excessive fine levied against a media critic to hare-brained conspiracy theories against the armed forces. Islamists won 58 percent of the vote in a September referendum and appear set to win the next parliamentary election, due by June 2011.

Should Islamists win the next election, that will likely establish the premise for them to remain enduringly in power, during which they will bend the country to fit their will, instituting Islamic law (the Sharia), and building an Islamic order resembling Khomeini's idealized polity.

Iran: Khomeini did the opposite of Atatürk, making Islam politically dominant during his reign, 1979-89, but it soon thereafter began to falter, with discordant factions emerging, the economy failing, and the populace distancing itself from the regime's extremist rule. By the 1990s, foreign observers expected the regime soon to fail. Despite their populace's growing disillusionment, the increased sway of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and the coming to power of hardened veterans of the Iran-Iraq war, as symbolized by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, imbued it with a second wind.

This reassertion of Islamist goals also increased the people's alienation from the regime, including a turn away from Islamic practices and toward secularism. The country's growing pathologies, including rampant drug-taking, pornography and prostitution point to the depths of its problems. Alienation sparked anti-regime demonstrations in the aftermath of fraudulent elections in June 2009. The repression that followed spurred yet more anger at the authorities.

A race is underway. Except it is not an even competition, given that Islamists currently rule in both capitals, Ankara and Tehran.

Looking ahead, Iran represents the Middle East's greatest danger and its greatest hope. Its nuclear buildup, terrorism, ideological aggressiveness, and formation of a "resistance bloc" present a truly global threat, ranging from jumping the price of oil and gas to an electro-magnetic pulse attack on the United States. But if these dangers can be navigated, controlled, and subdued, Iran has a unique potential to lead Muslims out of the dark night of Islamism toward a more modern, moderate, and good neighborly form of Islam. As in 1979, that achievement will likely affect Muslims far and wide.

Contrarily, while the Turkish government presents few immediate dangers, its more subtle application of Islamism's hideous principles makes it loom large as future threat. Long after Khomeini and Osama bin Laden are forgotten, I venture, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his colleagues will be remembered as the inventors of a more lasting and insidious form of Islamism.

Thus may today's most urgent Middle Eastern problem country become tomorrow's leader of sanity and creativity while the West's most stalwart Muslim ally over five decades turn into the greatest source of hostility and reaction. Extrapolation is a mug's game, the wheel turns, and history springs surprises.

WikiLeaks cables: The Middle East fallout could be grave

Alan Dershowitz, Guardian.co.za, 2 December 2010

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/dec/02/wikileaks-arab-iran-nuclear>

Former US secretary of state Henry Stimson famously declared that "gentlemen do not read each other's mail", referring to Japanese diplomatic cables the US had uncovered by breaking Japan's military code. Today, everybody reads everybody else's diplomatic mail, if they can get their hands on it.

Mostly, this is a bad thing because secrecy – when properly used – can serve the interest of peace and security. Nations have the right to keep secrets from other nations, although they generally overdo it. But individuals do not have the right to decide for themselves when to reveal state secrets. The soldier who broke into governmental computers committed a serious crime and will be punished for it. The question is whether those who released the secrets to the press, namely WikiLeaks, are complicit in the crime.

The newspapers that published leaked material make a compelling case for the decision to select certain items for publication while withholding others. The press is, after all, part of our informal system of checks and balances.

But secretary of state Hillary Clinton is surely correct when she warns that WikiLeaks poses a danger not only to the US but to international diplomacy, while at the same time trying to minimize the actual harm done by these particular disclosures.

The disclosure that virtually every Arab country, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia, would favour a military attack, as a last resort, to prevent Iran from developing nuclear

weapons could have a discernible effect on the policies of several countries. Israel, of course, has long insisted that the military option be kept on the table. The disclosure that North Korea has delivered missiles to Iran may well frighten European countries into considering the option of military action, if sanctions don't work.

There is additional information, not revealed by WikiLeaks, suggesting that although sanctions are having some effect on Iran's economy, Tehran has decided to move forward with its nuclear weapons programme. Computer bugs and the assassination of nuclear scientists may be slowing the process, but are not likely to stop it.

The leaks confirm the US has made two disastrous decisions in dealing with Iran. The first came in 2007, when it released a misleading National Intelligence Estimate conveying the impression Iran had stopped its nuclear weapons programme. The second was the more recent statements by secretary of defence Robert Gates that appear to have taken any military option off the table. These mistakes have encouraged Iran to move ahead with its programme.

A third mistake is to believe that there can be real peace in the Middle East with an Iranian nuclear sword of Damocles hanging over the head of Israel. Even if Israel were to continue the settlement freeze and negotiate borders with the Palestinian Authority, the Iranians could ruin any prospect of permanent peace by unleashing Hezbollah and Hamas – which oppose any peace with Israel – to target Israeli civilians.

President Obama understated the threat when he said a nuclear Iran would be "a game changer". It would be a disaster, threatening Middle East peace, putting an end to any hope of nuclear non-proliferation, and engendering the greatest arms race in modern history.

Now that it has been made public that Arab nations favour a military attack, it will become more difficult for these countries to condemn Israel if it was to decide on a surgical strike. This public disclosure might embolden Israel to consider such a strike as a last resort.

So the leaking of secret information may have grave, even if unintended, consequences. We need new laws and new technologies to cope with the apparent ease with which low-level functionaries can access and download the most secret of information. But there will always be those willing to break the law and suffer the consequences for what they believe is a higher purpose; and it is always just a matter of time until the techno-thieves catch up to the techno-cops. We will have to learn to live with the reality that there is no absolute assurance that "gentlemen" (and others) will not be reading each other's mail.

Why can't Arabs and Iranians just get along?

John Limbert, Foreign Policy, 1 December 2010

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/12/01/why_can_t_arabs_and_iranians_just_get_along

If we believe the recently leaked U.S. State Department messages, some leaders of Arab states harbour unkind thoughts about their Iranian neighbors. In addition to describing them in terms like "liar" and "snake", they have expressed a wish to American visitors that this troublesome neighbor would somehow go away. For his part, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, stung by these harsh epithets, **claims** that the entire WikiLeaks affair is a foreign conspiracy to sow discord between Iranians and Arabs and to strengthen the Americans' claim that Iran has become a diplomatic polecat in its own region.

Arab-Iranian hostility is not uniform. Iranians enjoy correct if not warm relations with their Qatari and Omani neighbors. Relations with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are icy, with the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait falling somewhere in the middle. When pushed to the wall, both sides have been capable of putting aside old prejudices and grievances (real and imagined) and can act in their own interest and maintain cordial state-to-state ties. Nevertheless, the big picture is negative, as the cables dramatically show.

What is going on here? What is behind this intra-Islamic and intraregional strife? Are those Arabs denouncing the Iranians speaking just for themselves or for a broader segment of public opinion? Why do Iranians beat their chests for Palestine, an Arab cause? And despite what they say, do the Saudis and others really want the Americans - and perhaps the Israelis by extension -- to attack Iran?

It belabours the obvious to say Arab-Iranian relations are complicated. Whatever their relations, these two peoples do not suffer from a lack of contact. Where the Iranian and Arab worlds meet -- along both shores of the Persian Gulf, in southwestern Iran, and in Iraq -- there is frequent intermarriage, migration, bilingualism, and commerce. A majority of Arab Bahrainis and Iraqis share the Shiite Islam of the Iranians; millions of Khuzestani Iranians speak Arabic as a mother tongue; an Iranian people (the Kurds) comprise about 20 percent of Iraq's population; and many prominent families of the Arab Gulf states trace their origins to southern Iran.

All this contact, however, has not brought understanding. On both sides, there is mistrust and little appreciation for the "others" and how they view the world. Some of this suspicion comes from religious differences. On the Arab side, the ruling Sunni families (in Bahrain, for example) are wary of their own Shiite communities. Extreme religious ideologues on both sides view the others as heretics and outside the community of believers. Both sides continue to fight the sectarian battles of the seventh century. An Arab visitor to Iran once complained that he was frequently asked, "Sir, are you a Muslim or a Sunni?"

Also in the mix is extreme ethnic and national pride. Iranians are justly proud of their imperial history and of maintaining a distinct identity for more than 2,500 years through an often tragic history of invasions and defeats. Iranians are proud of their national language, their literature, and their achievements in science, scholarship, and the arts. Arabs have a similar pride in their ancient civilization, their traditions, and, in particular, their remarkable language.

Too often, however, this pride has become chauvinism and has made each side look down on the other and denigrate its achievements and civilization. To many Arabs, the Iranians were arrogant, luxury-loving fire-worshippers and pagans until the Arabs

brought them the enlightened message of Islam. To many Iranians, the Arabs were uncultured nomads who destroyed the great Iranian civilization of the ancient Near East. Such stereotypes fly in the face of reality, but they persist and continue to exercise their power.

Mutual ignorance compounds the hostility. Despite centuries of interaction and contact, neither side knows much about the other. What do Arabs and Iranians know of each other's art, literature, history, politics, and traditions? Very little. Perhaps a close parallel is the relations between Mexicans and Americans. As Americans we appreciate Mexican food (or a variety of it) and Mexican music. But what do most of us know of Mexico's culture and history? Very little indeed. So in this mutual ignorance it is easier to dismiss the others as "liars," "snakes," and "heretics" than make the effort required for understanding.

Topping all these layers of religious and ethnic difference lie harsh political realities. The Arab states of the Persian Gulf are traditional monarchies dominated by ruling families; the Islamic Republic of Iran is a revolutionary, populist state with republican forms resting on a theocratic base. And the last 60 years have not been kind to monarchies. The score card of crashed thrones is dramatic: Egypt (1952), Iraq (1958), Libya (1969), Ethiopia (1974), Afghanistan (1973), and Iran (1979). Who is next? Who can blame Persian Gulf rulers for feeling like an endangered species when their large non-Arab neighbor to the north -- born in a revolution that overthrew an Iranian king of kings -- not only follows what they see as heresy in religion, but espouses a political ideology that rejects the very idea of monarchy? Although the Islamic Republic has never been very good at diplomatic niceties, even those niceties it does practice cannot hide the fact that it rejects monarchs as illegitimate.

Adding to this venomous blend is Iran's own diplomatic ineptitude, which has long fed its neighbors' suspicions. For 30 years the Islamic Republic has shown an ability to make gratuitous enemies both near (e.g., Kuwait) and far (e.g., Argentina). Tehran's charm offensives have been shortlived and too often have degenerated into crude threats and old territorial claims. Deep-seated Iranian prejudices against Arabs may be too strong to suppress for very long.

Perhaps to distract its population from obvious economic and political failures at home, the Islamic Republic has beaten the drum for Arab causes and shown itself more Arab than the Arabs in shouting for oppressed Palestinians at, for example, "Quds Day," which the Iranians tacked into Ramadan. Such action -- seen as an attempt to alienate neighboring governments from their populations -- has not won Iran many friends in Arab capitals. These campaigns from Tehran have raised suspicions that the Iranians' true motive is not to help oppressed Arabs, but to embarrass Arab governments -- which might be more amenable to working with the Israelis than their publics -- and ultimately to re-create the Islamic Revolution on neighboring soil. Under these conditions, it should come as no surprise that rulers in Riyadh and elsewhere might hope someone will "do something" about their troublesome neighbor.

Do the Arabs really want a war with Iran? Probably not, given the potentially disastrous economic and political consequences of such a conflict. But with all their pent-up grievances, both ancient and recent, they are not above sharing frustration, particularly

with those American visitors who might -- for very different reasons -- share their feelings of hostility.

Doing the math in a 'two state solution'

By Jonathan Rosenblum, JWR, 7 December 2010

http://www.jewishworldreview.com/jonathan/rosenblum_two_state_solution.php3

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's June 14, 2009 foreign policy address at Bar Ilan University made headlines around the world for his acceptance of a Palestinian state. Less noticed by the foreign press was the second part of Netanyahu's speech: His demand for reciprocity from the Palestinians. That Palestinian state, he said, would have to recognize Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, it would have to be demilitarized, and Israel's critical security needs would have to be honored.

That reference to Israel's critical security needs represented a return to the traditional Israeli position that peace with its Arab neighbours can only come through secure borders for Israel. The classic statement of that doctrine was the so-called Allon Plan, formulated by Foreign Minister Yigal Allon in the wake of the 1967 Six-Day War. Allon envisioned Israel retaining captured territory in Judea and Samaria vital to Israel's security, especially the Jordan Valley — the entire area from the Jordan River bed to the crest of the eastern slope of the Judean and Samarian mountain ridge facing the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan. In a speech to the Knesset, one month before his assassination, Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin, who served under Allon in the pre-state Palmach, reiterated the vision of his mentor. "The security border of the State of Israel will be located in the Jordan Valley in the broadest meaning of that term," Rabin said, adding that Israel would not return to the 1949 armistice lines, in place until June 5 1967.

From the middle of the Oslo process, however, Israel's traditional security-based diplomacy doctrine began to be replaced by a radically different approach, best describes as diplomacy-based security: the idea that peace is not secured by Israel retaining the ability to defeat any possible combination of enemies, but by entering into diplomatic agreements with the Palestinians and its Arab neighbors. That new approach reached its height under the premiership of Ehud Barak at the 2000 Camp David conference, when Yasir Arafat was offered a state in virtually all the territory Israel captured in 1967.

One analyst who was listening carefully to both parts of Netanyahu's Bar-Ilan speech, was Daniel Diker, a Harvard-trained, foreign policy fellow at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA), and currently Secretary-General designate of the World Jewish Congress. JCPA is headed by Dr. Dore Gold, a former Israeli ambassador to the United Nations. With the backing and direction of Gold, Diker conceived the idea of gathering a group of Israel's leading military strategists to flesh out the comprehensive security analysis behind Netanyahu's Bar-Ilan speech.

The group assembled was exceptionally distinguished by any measure. It included a former chief of staff (and current vice- prime minister) — Lt.-Gen. Moshe (Bogie)

Ya'alon; a former deputy chief of staff — Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan; a former head of IDF Intelligence — Maj.-Gen. Aharon Ze'evi Farkash; two former heads of IDF Intelligence Assessment Division — Maj.-Gen. Yaakov Amidror and Brig.-Gen. Yossi Kuperwasser; a former head of IDF Planning Division — Brig.-Gen. Udi Dekel; and two former national security advisors to the prime minister — Dayan and Maj.-Gen. Giora Eiland. Dekel also headed the unit responsible for negotiations with the Palestinians under Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. Though the participants wrote different chapters of the final report, entitled Israel's Critical Security Needs for a Viable Peace, Diker told me there was consensus among the group on all of the security requirements. The findings were presented at a major conference at Jerusalem's David Citadel Hotel on June 2, at which this writer was present.

When I asked Diker, whether there is any chance that the Palestinians, who have not changed their stance on any major issue since 1993, might ever agree to the security arrangements outlined in the report, he implied that the question begs the point. It is not Israel's task to continually retreat from its positions to coax an agreement from the Palestinians. Rather Israel must identify what its basic security needs are. Israel's Critical Security Needs, he explained, represents an attempt to return a basic symmetry of claims to negotiations with the Palestinians, from the current situation that began at Oslo, in which the Palestinians have refused every Israeli offer, while "pocketing" the latest Israeli concessions as the starting point for the next round of negotiations.

"American support for Israel's security needs has always been bi-partisan and rock solid in Congress. It was Israel, under Prime Minister Ehud Barak, that confused matters by taking the position that peace agreements with the Palestinians could, by themselves, create security for Israel," Diker told me. "Netanyahu is now trying to undo the confusion Israel itself sowed among her supporters in Congress and previous administrations."

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MEETING THE CONVENTIONAL THREAT

The classic threat upon which Israeli military planners focused until the beginning of the Oslo process was an attack by multiple Arab armies, such as occurred in 1948, 1967, and 1973. Prior to the successful conclusion of the Six-Day War, Israel's primary vulnerability with respect to such an attack was its narrow coastal plane, in which 70% of its population and 80% of its industrial output is located. At its narrowest point, the distance between the Mediterranean Sea and the 1949 armistice lines was only 9 miles, and at no point was it much more than 15 miles. That lack of strategic depth led the late Foreign Minister Abba Eban to famously refer to the 1949 armistice lines as Israel's "Auschwitz borders."

Israel's lack of strategic depth was compounded by the fact that it faces Arab standing armies many times the size of its own, and depends for its defense for mobilization of reserve units, which takes at least 48 hours to complete. In the meantime, a numerically overwhelming foe could overrun IDF defense positions.

For those reasons, military analysts agree that the borders prior to June 5 1967 were indefensible in the long-run. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara asked General Earl Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, after the Six-Day War, what minimum territory Israel would be justified in retaining. The latter replied that Israel would need to retain some captured Arab territory to achieve militarily defensible borders, and a document prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended "a boundary along the commanding terrain overlooking the Jordan River."

Some argue that in an age of air power and missiles that ground forces, and thus strategic depth, are less important than they once were. Former deputy chief of staff Uzi Dayan disagrees vehemently. He points out that even with overwhelming air power in Iraq in 1991 and 2003, American forces required a massive ground operation to prevail. And Israel learned in Lebanon in 2006 that without an effective ground offensive no amount of air superiority was capable of suppressing Hizbullah missile fire.

To defend against a conventional attack strategic depth is crucial. The Israel Air Forces (IAF's) unquestioned superiority would not be sufficient to stop an enemy attack by itself, since the IAF would have first to destroy enemy states' air defense systems and attack sites of ballistic missiles launched at Israeli cities. In the meantime, Dayan points out, Palestinians using easily available and highly mobile shoulder-held rockets would have the ability to severely disrupt Israel's mobilization of its reserves.

To prevent a Palestinian entity from linking to Arab armies on the other side of the Jordan, Israel, according to all the analysts, would have to retain control from the Jordan River to the eastern crest of the mountain range facing Jordan. In addition, the Palestinian state would have to be demilitarized in the conventional sense — i.e., no tanks, no planes, no military alliances; no stationing of foreign troops; no military infrastructures or defense industries, including those with dual use capacity.

THE TERROR THREAT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE

But even the conventional type of disarmament described above would be completely insufficient, argues former IDF intelligence chief Gen. Aharon Ze'evi Farkash, to deal with the greatest threat to Israel from a Palestinian entity: that a failed Palestinian state would become a safe haven for jihadi terrorists from around the world. Every terrorist group needs a safe haven somewhere, points out Colonel Richard Kemp, who had firsthand experience of such groups as commander of British forces in Afghanistan. The Taliban and Al Qaeda have found such a safe haven in the tribal regions of Pakistan; Sunni insurgents in Iraq operated freely across the border from Syria. And, Kemp predicts, a Palestinian state would likely become such a haven for multiple terrorist groups.

Dan Diker pointed out to me, in our phone conversation, that there are at least 100,000 uncollected weapons in the West Bank from when Yasir Arafat was supporting 60,000 armed men in his various security forces. It is far from clear that the 3,000 American-trained Palestinian security personnel have the ability or political will to rein in potential terrorists, who are in many cases relatives, neighbors and friends of the official Palestinian security services. In the estimation of Israeli security officials, it is only the presence of Israeli troops in the West Bank today that prevents a Hamas takeover of the West Bank, just as it did in Gaza. And, according to former head of IDF Intelligence Gen.

Farkash, only the presence of the IDF has prevented West Bank Palestinians manufacturing short-range rockets, as they do in Gaza.

The potential for terrorism emanating from a Palestinian state in the West Bank is exacerbated by the nature of peace negotiations since Oslo. Vice-Prime Minister Ya'alon describes the entire process as "top-down:" "Leaders have held meetings, shaken hands, attended peace conferences, and even signed agreements with Israeli leaders." But such a process, which "does not sprout from the grassroots of a society," is in Ya'alon's view, "useless." As long as suicide bombers are still lionized in the official Palestinian media as "holy martyrs," and there does not exist on the Palestinian side any movement towards a culture of peace, then the entire process is a sand-castle. The "top-down" approach, suggests Eiland, is a subspecies of a particular form of Israeli hubris that we can completely control everything. In this case that hubris is expressed in the belief that Israel can somehow bring about peace itself, without a fundamental transformation of Palestinian society.

An unstable, terrorist enclave would not only be a mortal threat to Israel, but to the stability of neighbouring Jordan as well, which would be destabilized by the presence of radical Islamic terror groups. Today, Gen. Eiland commented sarcastically, Jordan's King Abdullah has the best of all possible worlds. He can gain street credibility with the Palestinians by "insulting Israel twice a day," while benefitting from Israel keeping a lid on the West Bank.

Conventional deterrence works poorly against terrorist enclaves because the nominal government is not viewed as responsible by the international community, as Israel's Gaza experience demonstrates. Hamas was democratically elected, and yet the international community refuses to hold it accountable for the rockets fired from the Gaza Strip. Even after being hit with thousands of rockets from Gaza, Israel was still condemned for finally entering the Gaza Strip to stop the rocket fire.

The fear that keeps Israeli strategists up at nights is of terrorists in possession of what Gen. Giora Eiland calls the three "game-changers:" anti-tank missiles; anti-aircraft missiles; and short-range rockets, like those in possession of Hamas in the Gaza Strip. For Israel, General Farkash explains, demilitarization of the West Bank means far more than the traditional — no planes, no tanks, etc. It means that absence of any security threat — whether it be symmetrical or asymmetrical, military or terrorist — that poses a threat to disrupt daily life in Israel.

Eiland's "game-changers" represent just such a threat. All are readily available and easily hidden from view. Admiral Brian Peterman, former special assistant to President George W. Bush, spoke to the June 2 conference on film. He noted that there are estimated to be 500,000 shoulder-fired anti-aircraft weapons in the world, and these are easily procured on the black market. Even the most primitive of these weapons, he said, would be capable of bringing down a commercial airliner coming into Ben-Gurion Airport, where many of the landing patterns involve flying over the West Bank. In addition, the West Bank high ground overlooking the airport makes surveillance of flight patterns very easy. Even the threat of attacks on commercial aircraft could effectively cut Israel off from the world.

Intelligence about shadowy terrorist groups deeply embedded in a civilian population is extremely difficult to come by, points out Col. Richard Kemp. Despite all US advanced technology, it barely made a dent on the ability of Al Qaeda to transfer munitions freely in Afghanistan. In the last year of Kemp's service, Al Qaeda and the Taliban increased their attacks on allied forces by 80% and on civilian populations by 70%.

Heightening the danger posed by Eiland's three "game-changers" is the topography of Judea and Samaria: Much of it is 3,000 feet above sea level and Israel's coastal cities. Not only is the entire coastal plane, including Ben-Gurion Airport, exposed from the vantage point of the West Bank's central mountain range, but so is the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem Highway. In the 1967 war, 9,000 mortars rained down on Jerusalem from Jordanian positions in the West Bank. Within a few miles of the West Bank lies much of Israel's most vital infrastructure: the Trans-Israel Highway; the national water carrier, and high voltage electric lines. From the West Bank, even the missiles currently in Hamas's possession, could hit over 70% of Israel, and a much higher percentage of its population.

To have any protection against the threats posed by the "game-changers," Israel would certainly have to maintain the areas overlooking Ben-Gurion Airport, and the strategic high points around Jerusalem, which have been built up since 1967. And it would have to retain the Jordan Valley up to the Jordan River in order to prevent the smuggling of easily transported rockets into the West Bank. Israel has already had bitter experience in Gaza of what a lack of border control means in terms of weapons smuggling. Though home-manufactured rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip took place even prior to the Gaza withdrawal, with the transfer of responsibility over the Philadelphia Corridor from Israel control to Egypt, rocket attacks increased fivefold.

With respect to arms smuggling, the conference discussed only the interdiction of arms coming via Jordan. But what if somehow Fatah and Hamas could reach an agreement that would allow for the reunification of the West Bank and Gaza? Smuggled weapons are pouring into Gaza, and if Gaza were connected to the West Bank via a tunnel or a bridge, as some have proposed, then they could easily enter the West Bank as well. I asked Dan Diker about this possibility. The best he could offer was to express great doubts that Hamas and Fatah will reach a national unification agreement any time in the near future, in light of their mutual loathing and deep suspicion of one another.

INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPERS

The traditional answer given by the Europeans to Israel's fear of the West Bank becoming a terrorist enclave, as soon as Israeli troops withdraw, has been: We will protect you. The Europeans make the same offer with respect to guarding the Jordan River against weapons smuggling.

Israel, however, has always insisted on retaining the ability to defend itself, by itself, against any threat or combination of threats. In President George W. Bush's April 14 2004 letter to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Bush reiterated the US steadfast commitment not only to "secure, defensible borders" for Israel, but also "to preserve and strengthen Israel's capability to deter and defend itself, by itself, against any threat or possible combination of threats." According to Elliot Abrams, Deputy National Security Advisor with responsibility for the Middle East under President Bush, that clause was even more

important to Prime Minister Sharon than Bush's famous commitment to Israel's retention of major population centers built since 1967.

The Obama administration, however, has edged ever closer to the European position, with the President's first National Security Advisor, General James Jones an open advocate of a multi-national force as a means of expediting an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. For that reason, no subject received so much attention at the June 2 conference as the viability of multi-national peacekeepers. Two presentations — those of Col. Richard Kemp and Gen. Yaakov Amidror — were almost entirely devoted to the subject.

International peacekeepers have a long history, and, unfortunately, there is little in that history to suggest that such peacekeepers would be effective in preventing terrorism against Israel. For one thing, there is no guarantee how long such peacekeepers would stay or how willing they would be to risk their lives to protect Israelis. Older Israelis have not forgotten how the UN Emergency Forces pulled out of the Sinai, prior to the Six-Day War, at Egyptian president Gamal Nasser's demand, prompting Abba Eban's quip that UN peacekeepers are like an umbrella that closes whenever it rains. British and American peacekeepers left Lebanon in 1983, less than a year after a Hizbullah suicide bombing of a Marine barracks that killed 283. In Afghanistan, the NATO forces are restricted by no less than 83 separate national caveats, many of them designed to keep troops out of harm's way — e.g., national caveats that peacekeepers cannot conduct missions at night.

As General Amidror puts it, "Peacekeepers are not going into the casbah in Nablus to search for terrorists or their weapons caches." Over and over again, UNIFIL peacekeepers have refused to enforce UN Security Council resolutions against Hizbullah or even to risk irritating the terrorist group. For instance, UNIFIL troops filmed Hizbullah kidnapping three Israeli soldiers from Israeli territory. Not only did they not intervene, they never divulged the existence of the film to Israel.

Even under a more robust mandate under UN Security Council Resolution 1701, UNIFIL peacekeepers have done nothing to prevent Hizbullah from amassing 50,000 rockets since the end of the fighting in Lebanon in summer 2006. In fact, there is not a single instance anywhere in the world, General Amidror insists, where UN forces have succeeded where any of the parties have refused to live up to their responsibilities.

At best, peacekeeping forces would be ineffectual; at worse, they could constitute a major impediment to Israeli actions against terrorists. Gen. Amidror cites, for instance, cases where Hizbullah has set up mortars within fifty meters of UNIFIL positions without hindrance. But when Israel returns fire, UNIFIL files a complaint. The presence of peacekeepers would force Israel to always take into account the location of those peacekeepers before responding. The worse nightmare for Israel would be the involvement of American peacekeepers. If an American soldier were ever injured or killed in the course of an IDF action, the damage to American public opinion could be devastating.

Col. Kemp, a veteran of 14 tours of active duty in hotspots around the world, summed up the matter to me in a private phone conversation: "Israel is fully justified in its wariness of relying on NATO or other types of peacekeepers. They can't very well just say, 'Let's try

it and see how it works,' because the experiment might end with many of its citizens dead."

CONTROL OF AIRSPACE AND THE ELECTRO-MAGNETIC SPECTRUM

One area in which conflicts between the Palestinians' desire for full sovereignty and Israel's security needs would inevitably conflict concerns control of the airspace over any potential Palestinian state. Because of the close proximity of Israel and any potential Palestinian state, in a geographically small area, it would not be possible to divide up control of the airspace or of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Israel requires full control of that airspace to protect against potential attack from the air. Gen. Udi Dekel reveals how at Camp David in 2000, Israeli negotiators raised the possibility of a civilian airplane being diverted to a suicide attack as a reason in favor of Israeli control of a unified airspace over the West Bank. American mediators ridiculed the overactive imaginations of the Israelis — at least till 9/11.

The 9/11 scenario means that Israel could not grant the Palestinians a civilian airport anywhere in proximity to Jerusalem. Ideally, such an airport would be located in Jordan. In addition, air control of civilian traffic over the West Bank would have to remain in Israel's hands, though Palestinian air controllers could, according to Dekel, eventually be integrated into the system.

From the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea is only 40 miles, and it takes a fighter aircraft only four minutes to traverse that distance. Less than two minutes separate the Jordan River from Jerusalem, and any attacking plane would have to be shot down at least ten miles east of Jerusalem to avoid grave damage to civilians. To do so, Israel must retain the ability to confront any attacking aircraft as soon as it crossed the Jordan River.

A Palestinian state occupying the central mountain range running north and south through the West Bank would pose other potential security problems for Israel. It could not be allowed any radar or surveillance equipment, such as the advanced Iranian intelligence-gathering systems Israeli troops discovered in Lebanon in 2006. The high ground also makes jamming of communications easier for the Palestinians, one of the reasons Israel must maintain control of a unified electro-magnetic spectrum.

Since Camp David in 2000, the Palestinian Authority has rejected the Israeli requirements with respect to airspace and the electro-magnetic spectrum as non-starters.

WHITHER AMERICA?

Israel's security requirements can never be completely separated from its diplomatic situation, and particularly its relationship with its most important ally, the USA. That is why Israel's Critical Security Needs for a Viable Peace includes a lengthy chapter by Israel's former ambassador to the UN, Dr. Dore Gold, reviewing the history of American commitments on the issues of Israel's borders and security needs. Both Dr. Gold and former US Deputy National Security Advisor Elliot Abrams addressed the issue at the June 2 conference.

That history begins with the Six-Day War and its aftermath. President Lyndon Baines Johnson said shortly after the war, that an Israeli return to its position as of June 4 1967 would not be "a prescription for peace, but for renewed hostilities." UN Security Council Resolution 242, whose principal draftsmen were American ambassador Arthur Goldberg and British ambassador Lord Caradon, deliberately refused to call on Israel to withdraw from "all captured territories," as the Russians demanded, and referred to the right of every state in the area to live in "secure and recognized boundaries."

Subsequent American presidents, until President Barack Obama, stated explicitly that Israel cannot be expected to return to the unstable lines as of June 4 1967. President George W. Bush's April 14 2004 letter to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, which was approved overwhelmingly by a concurrent resolution of both houses of Congress, concretized in a presidential letter for the first time the need for significant border adjustments from the 1949 armistice lines. Bush wrote, "In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect . . . a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949, and all previous efforts to negotiate a two-state solution have reached the same conclusion." That letter, Abrams stresses, was negotiated line-by-line, in conjunction with Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

The Obama administration has taken a radically different approach from its first day in office. It has consistently refused to make any distinction between building in Jerusalem, in areas not under Israeli control prior to the Six-Day War, which today house close to 300,000 Israelis, and building anywhere else. And it has made clear that it does not view the Bush letter as binding upon it. The administration has continually indicated that it views the 1949 armistice lines "with minor adjustments" as forming the basis for the eventual boundaries of the future Palestinian state. Such language has not been heard since the early days of the Nixon years, under Secretary of State William Rogers. And as we have already noted, the administration has moved dramatically closer to the idea that Israel should entrust its basic security to some form of international peacekeepers.

Even the traditional American commitment to maintaining Israel's qualitative military advantage and opposition to unilateral steps by both sides does not appear as firm as formerly. An American promise to exercise its UN Security Council veto of a Palestinian request for recognition of a state based on the 1949 armistice lines is being used as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Israel over an additional settlement freeze. Such a Palestinian attempt to delegitimize Israel and obtain a state without negotiations would have been automatically vetoed by past U.S. administrations.

The Obama administration has just announced a massive \$60 billion arms deal with Saudia Arabia. In the past, Dan Diker said, Israel would surely have received the 20 stealth fighters that are also being used as a bargaining chip, in the wake of such a massive sale to a potential adversary of Israel. It is not even clear what those stealth fighters are contingent upon. Originally, it was reported that they were in exchange for Israel's agreement to a further three-month settlement freeze. But later reports suggest that Israel would only receive the planes if it signs a provisional agreement over borders with the Palestinians, with security arrangements to be worked out later. The vast disparity between the two versions explains why some ministers are demanding to see the American commitments in writing.

I asked Diker whether there could be a bigger contradiction to the security-based diplomacy that Prime Minister Netanyahu outlined in his Bar-Ilan speech, than signing an agreement on borders without all security details in place. "No," he tells me, "and I'm convinced that Netanyahu would never do it."

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

Imra.org, 7 December 2010: November demonstrated a slight increase in the number of terrorist attacks as opposed to October: 52 attacks compared to 44 in October. For the first time since Operation Cast Lead, a Grad rocket was launched towards Ofakim. The increase in the number of attacks was prominent in the area of Jerusalem (10 attacks as opposed to 6 in October) and the Gaza Strip (22 attacks as opposed to 18 in October). The Judea and Samaria area has been maintaining a similar number of attacks (20). With regard to casualties in terror attacks, there were no fatalities in November, as in September and October. One Israeli citizen was injured (November 18) as a result of an object/stone thrown at him in Judea, as in October in which an Israeli officer was injured as a result of a firebomb in Jerusalem.

ICEJ News, 6 December 2010: With the massive wildfires on the Mount Carmel range under control on Monday, several of the international firefighting contingents that had come to Israel's aid diverted this afternoon to Lebanon, where as many as 120 forest fires have erupted over the past week, with 42 still burning. Two Turkish aircraft which had been battling the Carmel fire were among those which flew 50 miles north today to assist Lebanon.

ICEJ News, 6 December 2010: Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yishai has been facing tough questions in the wake of the Carmel fires over the obvious deficiencies in the nationwide fire departments under his ministry's oversight. *The Jerusalem Post* reported that the Shas party chairman has refused donations of state-of-the-art fire trucks and other equipment from Christian groups based on religious objections. The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews donated eight fire trucks to departments in the Galilee after the 2006 Second Lebanon War but according to the group's founder Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, Yishai has refused to acknowledge the donations or accept any more over the past two years.

ICEJ News, 6 December 2010: Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas has threatened to disband the Palestinian Authority and ask Israel to resume full control of the West Bank if US-brokered peace talks remain stalled. The move would mean Israel would have to once again assume the financial burden of providing schools, medical facilities and other social services for the West Bank's 2.2 million Palestinian inhabitants. Additionally, dismantling the PA would mean its 150,000 employees would immediately become unemployed, possibly leading to widespread social chaos.