

30 August 2010	"FAMILY IN CAPTIVITY": <i>Documentary on Gilad Shalit</i>
31 August 2010	GILAD SHALIT RALLY: <i>Bus-Cade</i>
20 October 2010	CAROLINE GLICK: <i>Deputy Editor of the Jerusalem Post</i>
November 2010	YOM RABIN: <i>Guest Speaker</i>
26/27 March 2011	47 th SAZF CONFERENCE: <i>International guest speakers</i>

1. *David Frum* The Palestinian 'problem' is an Arab problem
 Palestinian statelessness is not regarded as an outrageous deprivation. It is the recommended policy of the Arab League, maintained supposedly for the Palestinians' own benefit, and massively subsidized by international Aid donors.

2. *Mordechai Kedar* Abbas has other ideas
 Palestinians don't want direct talks to succeed, as they prefer a one-state solution.

3. *Wesley Pruden* The 'Zionist plot' to build a mosque
 The skepticism and hostility in Arabia to building the Ground Zero mosque contrasts sharply with the enthusiasm of Muslims for the project in America. What do Muslims in Arabia know that Muslims in America don't?

4. *Bret Stephens* The twenty years' war
 The Twenty Years' War lasted as long as it did because the first Bush administration failed to finish it when it could, and because the Clinton administration pretended it wasn't happening.

5. *Khaled Abu Toameh* The full-blown Palestinian Civil War
 A series of grave mistakes that were committed by the Americans and Europeans over the past few years. The first mistake was to ignore warnings by Israel and Fatah that a free parliamentary election was likely to lead to a Hamas victory.

The Palestinian ‘problem’ is an Arab problem

David Frum, National Post, 21 August 2010

<http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2010/08/21/david-frum-the-palestinian-problem-is-an-arab-problem/#ixzz0xWXmHvAl>

Lebanon has expanded working rights for 400,000 Palestinian refugees. Fourteen occupations will remain closed to Palestinians, including medicine and law. Otherwise, though, Palestinians can now for the first time work legally inside Lebanon.

Actually, “Palestinians” is a misnomer here. We are talking often about Lebanese-born people, people who would be regarded as citizens in almost any other country. But a person born on Lebanese soil to Palestinian parents — or grandparents! — is an alien forever.

It’s not just Lebanon. Syrian-born, Egyptian-born, Kuwaiti-born Palestinians enjoy fuller legal rights than Lebanese-born Palestinians. Yet they too are denied citizenship in the land of their birth. (Jordan is an honourable exception: It granted citizenship rights to refugees from the 1948 war in 1950. Yet even Jordan puts obstacles in the way of citizenship for refugees from the 1967 war.)

I know I am saying something very obvious. Palestinian statelessness is an accepted fact of international life, too familiar for comment.

Yet think for a moment how extremely strange it is. Palestinian statelessness is not regarded as an outrageous deprivation. It is the recommended policy of the Arab League, maintained supposedly for the Palestinians’ own benefit, and massively subsidized by international Aid donors.

Some years ago, I spoke at Seattle’s University of Washington. I suggested in the speech that it might hasten Middle East peace if all Arab countries followed Jordan and granted full citizenship to descendants of Palestinian refugees living within their borders. After the talk a student approached me, furious. “You are trying to deny Palestinians their nationhood!” He explained that he was Palestinian himself, and the only citizenship Palestinians would accept was the citizenship of an independent Palestine.

I asked: “Do you have a citizenship?” Of course he answered — he was an American. His parents had immigrated in the 1980s, and he had been born here. “Should the United States have refused to recognize your citizenship to preserve your Palestinian nationality?” No, no, he answered, that was completely different!

He was right, too. If born in the West, people of Palestinian origin are recognized as full citizens of their native lands. It’s only Palestinians born in the Arab world who are excluded. In fact this situation has endured for 62 years. It is the essence of the “Palestinian problem.”

This week, Israel and the Palestinian Authority agreed to resume direct talks. Let’s all hope those talks prosper. But if the talks are founded on the assumption that the Palestinian problem is Israel’s to solve, those talks will fail.

More than one million registered Palestinians live in other Arab countries. These people are not returning to "Palestine." They certainly are not returning home to Israel. If they were allowed to settle where they live, the Palestinian problem would suddenly be much smaller and more manageable. Yet that seems to be precisely what many supposed friends of the Palestinians do not want.

Arab governments have some understandable reasons for their mistrust of Palestinian populations. Palestinian terrorist organizations carved out self-ruled enclaves within Lebanon in the 1970s, abusing the local population and ultimately igniting the Lebanese civil war of 1975-1991. Palestinian groups tried to topple the Jordanian government in 1970 and raided Israel from Jordanian territory. The Palestinians are authors of their fate as well as victims of that fate.

But if Israel is to take "risks for peace," so too must Israel's Arab neighbours. Israel is pressed for concessions. Where are the concessions from those who have funded and sustained this long conflict on the Arab side? How many work permits will Saudi Arabia offer to Gazans? How much aid is Qatar offering the Palestinian Authority? How many troops will Egypt contribute to enforcing a Palestinian ceasefire? What will Kuwait do to end the funding of Palestinian terrorist groups?

What Lebanon did last week was a good step, a welcome departure from a long pattern of Arab governments offering Palestinians all aid short of actual help. But actual peace will demand much more. One reason that this conflict has dragged so long is that so many Arab regimes have found it easier and cheaper to continue than to end. If President Obama is serious about his peace-making aspirations, he must act to alter those Arab incentives.

It's time for some of the risks for peace to be risked on the other side of the line — time for lofty slogans of "brotherhood" to be dumped in favour of practical rights of citizenship.

Abbas has other ideas

Mordechai Kedar, ynetnews.com, 23 August 2010

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3942268,00.html>

Anyone familiar with the sly way of thinking characterizing the current Palestinian leadership knows the truth: Following the show in Washington, they shall find a way to thwart the direct negotiations.

Netanyahu scares them, mostly because of his political ability to secure an agreement. He has no meaningful opposition on the Right, and Kadima is just waiting for a sign from him to join the government, embrace him, and support him should the Right quit the coalition. The Palestinians fear exactly that – because they cannot finalize such deal.

The first reason for this is the refugee problem. Any Palestinian or Arab leader who says something that is interpreted as any kind of concession on the right of return – which

would bring millions of Arabs into Israel – knows that he shall immediately be accused of treason, and Hamas will have a field day with it.

Indeed, the education systems in the Palestinian Authority and in refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan continue to perpetrate the notion of return in every possible way.

Moreover, the PLO leadership fears that in the case of an agreement that would include “an end to the conflict” and “no more demands,” it will find itself mixed up with Syria and Lebanon, which are interested in getting rid of the 1948 refugees and their descendents. These two countries may even sabotage an agreement by expelling hundreds of thousands of them to Palestine – this is the last thing the Palestinian leadership wants.

The second reason is Jerusalem. Under the leadership of a rightist Israeli government, partitioning the city appears to be an impossible mission, and the Palestinian leadership cannot present its public with a deal that would include less than the dream outline by Arafat: “One Palestinian state with the holy Jerusalem as its capital.”

Another reason is economic. For some years now, the Palestinian Authority has been making a good living off public and government funds from Europe, the US, and the Arab and Islamic world. This has reached the point where Palestinian per capita disposable income is double that of Egypt’s.

The PA leadership fears that the moment an independent Palestinian state is declared, donations would dry up, as the world will expect the Palestinians to start supporting themselves just like any other independent state. The Palestinians, who got used to living at the expense of others, cannot bear to think about the day where they’ll have to make a living on their own.

Finally, instead of an agreement it does not want, the Palestinian leadership sees an alternative. More and more voices, both Israeli and Arab, are calling for a one-state solution, which will be democratic and enable both people – the Jewish Israelis and the Arab Palestinians – to coexist in line with an agreed-upon arrangement, as is the case in Belgium.

Oddly enough, the one-state solution is endorsed in Israel both by the extreme Right, which still clings to the notion of the Greater Israel, and by the radical Left, which has no problem sharing a home with the Arabs, as long as everyone thinks that it’s being enlightened and liberal.

However, it appears that the one-state solution is to the liking of someone else: The Palestinian leadership, as this would spare it the need to concede something in writing. In one state, the life of Palestinians would be better than today, as they will enjoy civilian rights in a modern state. And if at one point the Jews decide to run away (taking this modern state along with them,) this too would be a blessing – that way, they would gain the entire land without a deal and without concessions. So why enter negotiations?

The 'Zionist plot' to build a mosque

By Wesley Pruden, JWR, 24 August 2010

<http://www.jewishworldreview.com/cols/pruden082410.php3>

The Ground Zero mosque, which is stirring such a sandstorm in New York City, isn't so popular in certain precincts of the Middle East, either. Some Muslims there think President Obama and Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York are nuts. Impotent and irresolute, too.

Some of the true believers in Arabia say the mosque is a conspiracy hatched by the Jews to set out a clear and permanent connection between Sept. 11 and Islam, a constant reminder of an attack on America led by devout Muslims. Dr. Abd al-Muti Bayumi, a prominent fellow of the Islamic Research Academy of Al Azhar, sometimes regarded as "the Vatican of Sunni Islam," says the construction of a mosque anywhere near Ground Zero is the child of a "devious mentality" to connect the dots of Sept. 11 and Islam, to stoke memories of barbarism in the name of Islam.

Another Arab notability, Dr. Amna Nazir, a professor of doctrine and philosophy at Al Azhar, calls "building a mosque on this rubble indicates bad intention — even if we wished to shut our eyes, close our minds and insist on good will." These are not the empty sentiments of good will and sensitivity so beloved of the girly men of the West. They're statements of concern that "Zionist conspiracy" aid in construction of the Ground Zero mosque will ultimately damage Islam. Dr. Bayumi, for one, preaches suicidal jihad to demonstrate that his heart is in the wrong place: "I say in all honesty that we recruit the people of Islam, and instill in them the spirit of the true jihad, which is death for the sake of Allah, for the sake of our faith."

The skepticism and hostility in Arabia to building the Ground Zero mosque — and until recently the proposed mosque was bigger news in the Middle East than in Minneapolis or Memphis — contrasts sharply with the enthusiasm of Muslims for the project in America. What do Muslims in Arabia know that Muslims in America don't?

Sounds like a lot. Raymond Ibrahim, associate director of the Middle East Forum, author of "The Al Qaeda Reader" and guest lecturer at the National Defense Intelligence College, thinks it's a result of culture and geography: "I believe it has to do with the differing mentalities of Western, or 'indigenous,' Muslims. The [indigenous Muslims], who have had little experience of the West, simply cannot believe that Muslims [in America] would be so foolhardy as to pursue such an obvious affront to their host nation." An indigenous Muslim can't believe that even an infidel nation would tolerate the insult. He knows what a similar insult, such as the construction of a Christian chapel in Saudi Arabia, would invite in an Islamic country. Not knowing very much about the world, the indigenous Muslim expects a similar result from the infidels.

Muslims here, on the other hand, have learned to game the system in the West, particularly in America, where the elites' thirst for moonshine is unquenchable. Muslim troublemakers have learned to expect apologies and excuses for anything they do so long as they invoke the right liberal weasel words, such as "tolerance" or "pluralism" or "dialogue." They've learned that talk of "building bridges," particularly if the bridges lead to nowhere, are preferred fare in the salons of the elites. Insulting Americans invites only apologies, accompanied by abundant bowing and curtsying. George W. Bush went to the Islamic Center in Washington only six days after Sept. 11 to preach that "Islam is peace," that "when we think of Islam, we think of a faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world."

Too bad for both George W. and Islam, but that's not what most people here think of Islam. You couldn't expect Michael Bloomberg to understand this, but Barack Obama, the son and stepson of Muslims who received his early education in Islamic schools, must know better. He should be familiar with the Islamic worldview that warm and fuzzy feel-good talk — what we once called "appeasement" — correctly invites contempt from men with strongly held conviction, however evil that conviction might be.

The American elites no longer understand strongly held convictions, good or evil, religious or political. The church and synagogue is only a place for rites and ritual, a place to marry your daughters and bury your dead. But devout Muslims really believe. They never apologize for who they are or what they believe. They have only contempt for the platitudes they have learned to use so effectively in hoodwinking the West — and for presidents who peddle the moonshine.

The twenty years' war

Bret Stephens, Wall Street Journal, August 23, 2010

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703846604575447203550463656.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990. Two decades later, on Aug. 18, 2010, the U.S. withdrew its last combat brigade from Iraq. Throughout those years U.S. military operations went under a variety of names - including Desert Storm, the Gulf War, Operations Northern and Southern Watch, Operation Iraqi Freedom, the War in Iraq - but over time they will be seen as part of an unbroken thread. It ought to be called the Twenty Years' War. That was probably 19 years too long.

It matters what we call our wars, lest we fail to understand them - and lest we repeat them, because we failed to understand. When the Great War came to be spoken of as "the war to end all wars" (a line variously attributed to David Lloyd George, H.G. Wells and Woodrow Wilson) it underscored how ill-prepared that generation was to prevent the next great conflict.

Similarly in Iraq. In 1991, the first Bush administration failed to understand that its war was not against what Saddam had done in Kuwait. It was against Saddam himself, his regime, and the forces of Arab radicalism he typified and championed.... Thus Kuwait was liberated but Saddam stayed on for another 12 years, supposedly - as Madeleine Albright notoriously put it - "in a box"....

All this was war by another name, which meant that when the question of invading Iraq arose after 9/11, the choice was not between war and peace. Rather, as former Democratic Sen. Bob Kerrey wrote in these pages at the time, it was "between sustaining a military effort designed to contain Saddam Hussein and a military effort designed to replace him." For Mr. Kerrey, "the case for the second choice [was] overwhelming."

It says something that the invasion was called Operation Iraqi Freedom - a better approximation of its aims than the ill-founded claims about WMD that nearly proved the war's political undoing. Still, war aims are not only what a nation fights for, which, as Lincoln discovered, could change with the course of war. War aims are also about what a nation fights against. In that sense, Iraq was invaded so that Saddam and his henchmen, Iraq's ultimate weapons of mass destruction, would hang. To hang them meant serving the interests of justice, and satisfying a justified impulse for revenge. It also meant making an example of a uniquely aggressive Arab tyrant who thought he could defy and manipulate the West with impunity....

[T]he war led to what has been called "the eclipse of the Arab world." Today the world's leading Muslim states - Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey - are all non-Arab. Not since the 1930s have the Arabs counted geopolitically for so little. Ironically, this eclipse has somewhat dimmed the broader significance of Iraq's democracy, at least for the time being. The U.S. has bequeathed Iraqis exactly what the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia bequeathed Americans: A republic, if they can keep it. If they do, it could be a Muslim model of democratic governance and ethnic and sectarian pluralism. It may be

achievement enough to have an Iraqi government that threatens neither its own people nor its neighbors, and for the rest of the Arabs to be on their guard against future Saddams....

The Twenty Years' War lasted as long as it did because the first Bush administration failed to finish it when it could, and because the Clinton administration pretended it wasn't happening. Should we now draw the lesson that hesitation and delay are the best policy? Or that wars are best fought swiftly to their necessary conclusion? The former conclusion did not ultimately spare us the war. The latter would have spared us one of 20 years.

The full-blown Palestinian Civil War

Khaled Abu Toameh, Hudson New York, August 20, 2010

<http://www.hudson-ny.org/1494/palestinian-civil-war>

Before trying to make peace between Israel and the Palestinians, the US Administration might do well to recall that last month marked the third anniversary of the war that erupted between Fatah and Hamas. This war has so far claimed the lives of hundreds of Palestinians and resulted in the emergence of two separate states—one in the Gaza Strip, and another in the West Bank. The Palestinians are probably the only people in the world who have two governments, two prime ministers and almost two of everything. It is a war between a party that won a free election in January 2006, Hamas; and another that lost the vote, Fatah. The war was triggered largely by Fatah's refusal to accept its defeat, and Hamas's insistence on clinging to power.

The infighting is also the result of a series of grave mistakes that were committed by the Americans and Europeans over the past few years. The first mistake was to ignore warnings by Israel and Fatah that a free parliamentary election was likely to lead to a Hamas victory.

Mistake number two was to allow Hamas to participate in the election unconditionally. The Americans and Europeans should have welcomed Hamas's decision to run in the election, but they should also have demanded that the Islamist movement meet three conditions: renounce violence, recognize Israel's right to exist and pledge to respect previous agreements signed between the Palestinians and Israelis.

The third mistake was to support and encourage Fatah's attempts to overthrow the Hamas government. American and European meddling in the internal affairs of the Palestinians backfired, further discrediting Fatah, and boosting Hamas's popularity among Palestinians even more.

The Fatah-Hamas confrontation has been—and remains—an ugly one. It is a war that is being fought on many fronts—in mosques, universities, colleges, hospitals, schools, charities, various professional unions and the media. Prisons run by Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and Fatah in the West Bank, are full of detainees from both sides.... Stories about brutal torture and human rights abuses by both parties have become commonplace.

Both Fatah and Hamas seem to be concerned only about how to tighten their grip on the small piece of land each party controls....

Three years after the Fatah-Hamas War broke out, there are still no signs that it is on its way to subsiding. On the contrary; as time passes, the battle seems to become fiercer. For now, it seems that the Palestinians and the rest of the world will have to live for a long time with the reality in which the Palestinians are divided into two political camps and geographic areas....

Those who are working toward achieving a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians can no longer ignore the fact that their vision has finally been realized, but in a different way. In the end, it is the Palestinians who got two states.

It is hard to understand why the US Administration is bothering at all with "direct" and "proximity" talks between Israel and Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction while ignoring the basic fact that the Palestinian president has no control over 1.5 million residents of the Gaza Strip who make up about half the total population of the Palestinian territories. The Palestinian president cannot even visit his private home in the Gaza Strip. So how and where is he expected to implement any agreement he reaches with Israel?

Decision-makers in Washington and European capitals need to wake up and realize that there can be no progress in the "peace process" when the Palestinians are busy throwing each other from the 15th and 18th floors of buildings, and establishing detention and torture centers for each other. The only way to move forward is by insisting that the Palestinians first get their act together. How can that be achieved? Leave it up to the Palestinians to find a solution. This should be an internal Palestinian and Arab problem, not a matter for US and EU diplomats to tamper with.