

SAZF: MAKE A NOTE

4 November 2010 RABIN MEMORIAL: *Wayne Sussman, Guest speaker*
12/13 February 2010 YOUNG ADULT ADVOCACY WEEKEND: *Michelle Rojas, StandWithUs*
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Tutu's fulminations against Jews have a long history. They are so well-documented that one wonders if President Obama can possibly be ignorant of them, especially now that he has a "Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism" named Hannah Rosenthal.

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The Obama administration subscribes to the common fallacy that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict constitutes the root of all evil, and that its resolution will lead to regional peace.

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Obama's Other Anti-Semitic Guru

Edward Alexander, Front Page Magazine, 15 October 2010

<http://frontpagemag.com/2010/10/15/obamas-other-anti-semitic-guru/>

The disclosure, during the 2008 presidential campaign, that Barack Obama had for two decades sat contentedly (perhaps with his cerebral hearing aid turned off) listening to the tirades of his pastor Rev. Jeremiah ("God Damn America") Wright against "them Jews" caused him some brief embarrassment but no harm at the polls, certainly not among Jewish voters. No attention whatever was paid to the possible link between Obama's moral tone-deafness in the presence of clergyman Wright and his intense admiration of another, more unctuous, political clergyman with even less charity toward Jews than Wright: namely, Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Obama and Tutu have long admired each other. They first met in 2006 when then-Senator Obama visited Tutu in South Africa. In August 2009, Obama awarded Tutu the Congressional Medal of Freedom. Earlier this month, on the occasion of the Anglican clergyman's 79th birthday, the president lauded him as "a moral titan - a voice of principle, an unrelenting champion of justice, and a dedicated peacemaker."

In recent months, Tutu has demonstrated his dedication to peace, justice, and principle in the Middle East, in particular, by speaking up for Hamas and supporting the "Freedom Flotilla" of Islamist jihadists and "internationalist" do-gooders (people who confuse doing good with feeling good about what they are doing) who, in the spring, tried to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza. He has also repeatedly endorsed the activities of the BDS (Boycott/Divest/Sanction) movement. This reincarnation of the Nazis' "Kauf nicht beim Juden" campaign of the 1930s constantly invokes Tutu's "authoritative" condemnation of Israel (where Arabs and Jews use the same buses, beaches, clinics, cafes, and soccer fields, and attend the same universities) as an "apartheid" state.

But his fulminations against Jews have a long history. They are so well-documented that one wonders if President Obama can possibly be ignorant of them, especially now that he has a "Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism" named Hannah Rosenthal, who has shown herself adept at spotting that evanescent phenomenon called "Islamophobia" at a distance of ten miles away. Here are just a few examples of Tutu's "moral titanism" on the Jewish question, chosen from the same period in which Obama was attending the sermons of Jeremiah Wright.

On the day after Christmas, 1989, Tutu, standing before the memorial at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem for the millions of Jews murdered by the Nazis, prayed for the murderers and scolded the descendants of their victims. "We pray for those who made it happen, help us to forgive them and help us so that we in our turn will not make others suffer."¹ This, he said, was his "message" to the Israeli children and grandchildren of the dead.

Moral obtuseness, mean spite, and monstrous arrogance do not make for sound ethics and theology. Neither Tutu nor the Israelis he lectured can "forgive" the Nazi murderers. Representatives of an injured group are not licensed (even by the most sanctimonious of preachers) to forgive on behalf of the whole group. In fact, forgiveness issues from God

alone. The forgiveness Tutu offers the Nazis is truly pitiless because it forgets the victims, blurs over suffering, and obliterates the past.

Tutu is always far less moved by the actuality of what the Nazis did ("the gas chambers," he once said, "made for a neater death" than apartheid resettlement policies) than by the hypothetical potentiality of what, in his jaundiced view, Israelis *might* do. His speeches against apartheid returned obsessively to gross, licentious equations between the former South African system and Jewish practices, biblical and modern. "The Jews," Tutu declared in 1984, "thought they had a monopoly on God" and "Jesus was angry that they could shut out other human beings."

Tutu has been an avid supporter of the Goebbels-like equation of Zionism with racism. He has alleged that "Jews...think they have cornered the market on suffering" and that Jews are "quick to yell 'Anti-Semitism'" because of "an arrogance of power - because Jews have such a strong lobby in the United States." Jewish power in America is, in fact, a favourite Tutu theme. In late April 2002, he praised his own courage in resisting it. "People are scared in [America] to say wrong is wrong because the Jewish lobby is powerful, *very* powerful. Well, so what? Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin were all powerful, but in the end they bit the dust."

Tutu has repeatedly declared that (as he once told a Jewish Theological Seminary audience) "whether Jews like it or not, they are a peculiar people. They can't ever hope to be judged by the same standards which are used for other people." Certainly Tutu has never judged Jews by the standards he uses for other people. Although South African and American Jews were more, not less, critical of apartheid than the majority of their countrymen, Tutu in 1987 threatened that "in the future, South African Jews will be punished if Israel continues dealing with South Africa." Israel's trade with South Africa was about seven percent of America's, less than a tenth of Japan's, Germany's, or England's. But Tutu never threatened South African or American citizens of Japanese, German, or English extraction with punishment. Citizens of Arab nations supplied 99 percent of the one resource without which apartheid South Africa could not have existed: oil.

Tutu made countless inflammatory remarks about Israel's weapons sales to South Africa (mainly of naval patrol boats) but said almost nothing about South Africa's main Western arms supplier, France, which built two of South Africa's three nuclear reactors - the third being American. He was also silent about Jordan's sale of tanks and missiles to the apartheid regime.

Tutu's insistence on applying a double standard to Jews may explain an otherwise mysterious feature of his anti-Israel rhetoric. He once asked Israel's ambassador to South Africa, Eliahu Lankin, "how it was possible that the Jews, who had suffered so much persecution, could oppress other people." On another occasion, he expressed dismay "that Israel, with the kind of history ... her people have experienced, should make refugees [actually she didn't] of others." In other words, Jews, according to Tutu, have a duty to behave particularly well because Jews have suffered so much persecution. The mad corollary of this proposition is that the descendants of those who have *not* been persecuted do not have a special duty to behave well, and the descendants of the persecutors can be excused altogether for behaviour it would be hard to excuse in other people. This may explain not only Tutu's decision to pray for the

Nazis while berating the descendants of their victims, but also his long and ardent devotion to the PLO, whose leader, Yasser Arafat, was both the biological relative and spiritual descendant of Haj Amin el-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem who actively collaborated with Hitler in the destruction of European Jewry.

Rabbinical tradition, however, provides a simpler explanation of Tutu's eagerness to "forgive" the Nazis while excoriating the descendants of their victims: "Whoever is merciful to the cruel," the rabbis warn, "will end by being indifferent to the innocent." President Obama himself may wish to ponder this warning in his future relations with the archbishop.

Adrift in Arabia

by Efraim Karsh, The Journal of International Security Affairs, Fall 2010

<http://www.meforum.org/2763/obama-adrift-in-arabia>

Transforming America's relations with the Islamic world has been perhaps the foremost foreign policy issue through which President Obama has sought to set himself apart from his immediate predecessor. Having long downplayed his Muslim roots - going so far as to disguise not only his middle name, Hussein, but also to substitute Barack with the less conspicuous Barry early on in his career - Obama has embraced them since taking office. As he explained in his much-ballyhooed June 2009 address to the Muslim World in Cairo:

"I'm a Christian, but my father came from a Kenyan family that includes generations of Muslims. As a boy, I spent several years in Indonesia and heard the call of the azaan at the break of dawn and at the fall of dusk. As a young man, I worked in Chicago communities where many found dignity and peace in their Muslim faith... So I have known Islam on three continents before coming to the region where it was first revealed. That experience guides my conviction that partnership between America and Islam must be based on what Islam is, not what it isn't."

Reverting to standard "post colonial" rhetoric, the president squarely blamed the West for "the great tension between the United States and Muslims around the world." "The relationship between Islam and the West includes centuries of coexistence and cooperation, but also conflict and religious wars," he claimed,

More recently, tension has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims, and a Cold War in which Muslim-majority countries were too often treated as proxies without regard to their own aspirations... Violent extremists have exploited these tensions in a small but potent minority of Muslims... [culminating in] the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the continued efforts of these extremists to engage in violence against civilians."

While there is no denying the widespread appeal of this argument, there is also no way around the fact that, in almost every particular, it is demonstratively, even invidiously, wrong. The depiction of Muslims as hapless victims of the aggressive encroachments of

others is patronizing in the worst tradition of the "white man's burden," which has dismissed regional players as half-witted creatures, too dim to be accountable for their own fate. Moreover, Islamic history has been anything but reactive. From the Prophet Muhammad to the Ottomans, the story of Islam has been the story of the rise and fall of an often-astonishing imperial aggressiveness and, no less important, of never quiescent imperial dreams and repeated fantasies of revenge and restoration. These fantasies gained rapid momentum during the last phases of the Ottoman Empire, culminating in its disastrous decision to enter World War I on the losing side, as well as in the creation of an imperialist dream that would survive the Ottoman era to haunt Islamic and Middle Eastern politics into the 21st century.

To this very day, for example, many Muslims unabashedly pine for the restoration of Spain, and look upon the expulsion of the Moors from that country in 1492 as a grave historical injustice. Osama bin Laden highlighted "the tragedy of Andalusia" in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, while the perpetrators of the subsequent March 2004 Madrid bombings, in which hundreds of people were murdered, mentioned revenge for the loss of Spain as one of the atrocity's "root causes."

Indeed, even countries that have never been under Islamic imperial rule have become legitimate targets of radical Islamic fervor. Since the late 1980s, various Islamist movements have looked upon the growing number of French Muslims as a sign that France, too, has become a potential part of the House of Islam. In Germany, which extended a warm welcome to the scores of Islamists fleeing persecution in their home countries, the radical Muslim Brotherhood has successfully established itself, with ample Saudi financing, as the effective voice of the three million-strong Muslim community. Their British counterparts have followed suit; "We will remodel this country in an Islamic image," London-based preacher Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad told an attentive audience less than two months after 9/11. "We will replace the Bible with the Qur'an."

This goal need not necessarily be pursued by the sword; it can be achieved through demographic growth and steady conversion to Islam. But should peaceful means prove insufficient, physical force can readily be brought to bear.

Nor is this vision confined to a tiny extremist fringe, as President Obama apparently believes. That much is clear from the overwhelming support the 9/11 attacks garnered throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds, the admiring evocations of bin Laden's murderous acts during the 2006 crisis over the Danish cartoons, and polls indicating significant reservoirs of sympathy among Muslims in Britain for the "feelings and motives" of the suicide bombers who attacked London in July 2005.

In the historical imagination of many Muslims, bin Laden represents nothing short of the new incarnation of Saladin, defeater of the Crusaders and conqueror of Jerusalem. In this sense, the House of Islam's war for world mastery is a traditional, indeed venerable, quest that is far from over. If, today, America is reviled in the Muslim world, it is not because of its specific policies but because, as the preeminent world power, it blocks the final realization of this same age-old dream of a universal Islamic community, or *umma*.

It is the failure to recognize this state of affairs that accounts for the resounding failure of Obama's policies toward the Middle East and the Muslim World. For all his hyped outreach to Arabs and Muslims—from the pledged "new way forward" in his inaugural

speech to his first major presidential interview, given to the *al-Arabiya* television network, to his submissive bow to Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, to his instruction to NASA to reach out to the Muslim world - Obama has failed to win the quiescence, let alone the respect and admiration of these societies. On the contrary, in line with Osama bin Laden's handy quip in the immediate wake of the 9/11 attacks that "when people see a strong horse and a weak horse, by nature, they will like the strong horse," his prestige has been on a downward spiral since the first days of his presidency. In the recent words of a Saudi academic, who had been formerly smitten with the first black U.S. president: "He talks too much."

Misreading Iran: Take Iran's quest for nuclear weapons, the foremost threat to Middle Eastern stability, if not to world peace, in the foreseeable future. In a sharp break from the previous administration's attempts to coerce Tehran to abandon its nuclear program, Obama initially chose the road of "engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect."

In his *al-Arabiya* interview, a mere week after his inauguration, Obama already promised that if Iran agreed "to unclench their fist, they will find an extended hand from us." Two months later, in a videotaped greeting on the occasion of the Iranian New Year, he reassured the clerics in Tehran of his absolute commitment "to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us," claiming that this "new beginning" would win Iran substantial economic and political gains, most notably worldwide acceptance of the legitimacy of the Islamic regime derided by the Bush administration as a central part of the "Axis of Evil." This, however, could only be achieved "through peaceful actions that demonstrate the true greatness of the Iranian people and civilization. And the measure of that greatness is not the capacity to destroy, it is your demonstrated ability to build and create."

In his Cairo address, Obama amplified this suggestion. While warning Iran that its nuclear ambitions might lead to "a nuclear arms race in the Middle East that could lead this region and the world down a hugely dangerous path," he made no allusion to the possibility of coercion, going out of his way to show empathize with Iran's supposed sensitivities. "I understand those who protest that some countries have weapons that others do not," he said.

No single nation should pick and choose which nation holds nuclear weapons. And that's why I strongly reaffirmed America's commitment to seek a world in which no nations hold nuclear weapons. And any nation—including Iran—should have the right to access peaceful nuclear power if it complies with its responsibilities under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. That commitment is at the core of the treaty, and it must be kept for all who fully abide by it. And I'm hopeful that all countries in the region can share in this goal.

However appealing as an intellectual sophistry (though China and Russia, among others, have remained conspicuously unimpressed), the framing of Iran's nuclear buildup within the context of the NPT is totally misconceived, for the simple reason that the matter at hand is one of international security rather than international legality. Even if Iran were not a signatory to the NPT, and hence legally free to develop nuclear weapons, it would still be imperative for the international community to prevent this eventuality, since the existence of the deadliest weapons at the hands of a militant

regime driven by messianic zeal and committed to the worldwide export of its radical brand of Islam would be a recipe for disaster.

Nor is Obama's professed commitment to a nuclear-free world likely to impress the clerics in Tehran. Quite the opposite, in fact. Since their nuclear ambitions emanate from imperialist rather than defensive considerations, the disarmament of other nuclear powers (notably Israel) could only whet their appetite by increasing the relative edge of these weapons for the Islamic Republic's quest for regional hegemony, if not the world mastery envisaged by its founding father, the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. As Khomeini put it in his day: "The Iranian revolution is not exclusively that of Iran, because Islam does not belong to any particular people... We will export our revolution throughout the world because it is an Islamic revolution. The struggle will continue until the calls 'there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah' are echoed all over the world."

Moreover, Obama's eagerness to demonstrate his even handedness and goodwill to a regime that views the world in zero sum terms has only served to cast him as weak and indecisive, an image that was further reinforced by the administration's knee jerk response to the Islamic regime's brutal suppression of popular protest over the rigging of the June 2009 presidential elections. That Obama, who had made a point in his inaugural address to warn "those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent" that they were "on the wrong side of history," and who lectured Muslim regimes throughout the world that "you must maintain your power through consent, not coercion," remained conspicuously silent in the face of the flagrant violation of these very principles did not pass unnoticed by the Iranian regime. Iran's leaders responded accordingly; President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad not only demanded that the USA apologize to the Iranian people, but also that it withdraw its troops from conflict zones around the world and "stop supporting the Zionists, outlaws, and criminals."

He reiterated the demand for an American apology five months later, this time for its supposed meddling in the June 2009 Iranian elections, while the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, ridiculed Obama for privately courting Iran while censuring it in public. "The U.S. President said that we were waiting for the day when people would take to the streets," he stated in a Friday sermon. "At the same time they write letters saying that they want to have ties and that they respect the Islamic Republic. Which are we to believe?"

Iran's leaders backed their defiant rhetoric with actions. In a February 2010 visit to Damascus, for example, Ahmadinejad signed a string of agreements with his Syrian counterpart, Bashar Assad, and the two held warm meetings with the leaders of the Lebanese Hezbollah and the Palestinian Hamas Islamist terror groups aimed at underscoring the indivisibility of their alliance. Coming a day after Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged Syria "to begin to move away from the relationship with Iran" and to stop supporting Hezbollah, the summit was a clear slap in the face of the administration - and proof of the abject collapse of Obama's "engagement" policy.

Losing Turkey: So was the Turkish Republic's sudden and dramatic disengagement from the founding principles underpinning its creation in the wake of World War I. This latter setback was particularly galling to the White House, in part because the president had made that country a major cornerstone of his engagement strategy. "This is my first

trip overseas as President of the United States," he told the Turkish parliament on April 6, 2009:

I've been to the G20 summit in London, and the NATO summit in Strasbourg, and the European Union summit in Prague. Some people have asked me if I chose to continue my travels to Ankara and Istanbul to send a message to the world. And my answer is simple: Evet - yes. Turkey is a critical ally... And Turkey and the United States must stand together - and work together - to overcome the challenges of our time.

Having praised Turkey's "strong, vibrant, secular democracy," Obama voiced unequivocal support for the country's incorporation into the European Union - a highly contentious issue among the organization's members. In his opinion, Turkey was "an important part of Europe," which had to be "truly united, peaceful and free" in order to be able to meet the challenges of the 21st century. "Let me be clear," he said:

The United States strongly supports Turkey's bid to become a member of the European Union. We speak not as members of the EU, but as close friends of both Turkey and Europe. Turkey has been a resolute ally and a responsible partner in transatlantic and European institutions. Turkey is bound to Europe by more than the bridges over the Bosphorous. Centuries of shared history, culture, and commerce bring you together. Europe gains by the diversity of ethnicity, tradition and faith - it is not diminished by it. And Turkish membership would broaden and strengthen Europe's foundation once more.

"I know there are those who like to debate Turkey's future," he continued.

They see your country at the crossroads of continents, and touched by the currents of history.... They wonder whether you will be pulled in one direction or another.

But I believe here is what they don't understand: Turkey's greatness lies in your ability to be at the center of things. This is not where East and West divide - this is where they come together.

As with his Cairo speech, Obama's reading of the historic Turkish-Western interaction (and its attendant implications) was disastrously flawed. Far from being a bridge between East and West, the Ottoman Empire was an implacable foe that had steadily encroached on Europe and its way of life. It is true that the 19th century saw numerous instances of Ottoman-European collaboration; but this was merely pragmatic maneuvering aimed at arresting imperial decline and holding on to colonial possessions.

This failed, and from the end of the Napoleonic wars (1815) to the outbreak of World War I, Turkey was the most violent part of the European continent, as the Ottoman Empire's attempt to keep its reluctant European subjects under its domination unleashed a prolonged orgy of bloodletting and mayhem, from the Greek civil war of the 1820s to the Crimean War to the Balkan crisis of the 1870s to the Balkan wars of 1912-13.

Obama's exercise in appeasement was wholly unnecessary. By the time he was addressing the Turkish parliament, the country's "strong and secular democracy," lauded by Obama as Atatürk's foremost and most enduring legacy, was well and truly under siege. In the eight eventful years since it won the November 2002 general elections, the

Islamist Justice and Reconciliation Party (AKP) has transformed Turkey's legal system, suppressed the independent media, and sterilized the political and military systems, even as hundreds of opponents and critics have found themselves inducted on dubious charges of a grand conspiracy to overthrow the Turkish government.

This process was not confined to the domestic scene. Turkey's growing Islamization has been accompanied by a mixture of anti-Western sentiments and reasserted aspirations for regional hegemony, aptly described by a growing number of Turkish and foreign commentators as "Neo-Ottomanism." Hence Turkey's growing alignment with Iran, exemplified most notably in the attempt to avert the imposition of international sanctions on Tehran by signing (with Brazil) a nuclear fuel swap deal in May 2010, which would have provided for the dispatch of low-enriched Iranian uranium to Turkey in return for fuel for one Iranian nuclear reactor. Similarly evocative has been Turkey's eagerness to wrest the mediator's role between Syria and Israel from the West, despite the AKP's overt hostility to Israel and to Jews more generally. Then there is Turkey's embrace of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brothers, better known by its Arabic acronym, Hamas, which reached its peak in May 2010 with the sponsorship of a flotilla aimed at breaking the Israeli blockade of the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

Exacerbating the Arab-Israeli conflict: Instead of backing the Israeli effort to contain a murderous Islamist group, implacably opposed to Western values and ideals and committed to the establishment of "a great Islamic state, be it pan-Arabic or pan-Islamic," on Israel's ruins, the Obama administration viewed the international outcry attending the flotilla incident as a golden opportunity to tighten the noose around Israel - the main, indeed only, defined component of its policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict.

To be sure, in his Cairo address Obama made a point of emphasizing the permanence of "America's strong bonds with Israel." But then, by predicating Israel's right to exist on the Holocaust (which he diluted by putting on a par with Palestinian suffering), he effectively adopted the Palestinian narrative. Under that telling, the Palestinians are the real victims of the Holocaust, forced to foot the bill for the West's presumed desire to atone for its genocidal tendencies and indifference through the establishment of a Jewish state. Never mind that there was no collective sense of guilt among Europeans, many of whom viewed themselves as fellow victims of Nazi aggression. Anti-Semitic sentiments remained as pronounced as ever, especially in Eastern Europe, which witnessed a few vicious pogroms shortly after the end of WWII.

Nor did Obama's succeed in advancing his avowed commitment to the two-state solution of Israel and a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. On the contrary, by putting excessive pressure on Israel and none whatsoever on the Arabs, and by casting the issue of West Bank settlements as the foremost obstacle to peace while turning a blind eye to continued Palestinian and Arab rejection of Israel's right to exist, he managed to alienate the Israeli public and to harden the position of the Palestinian leadership, which watched the recurrent crises in U.S.-Israeli relations with undisguised satisfaction in anticipation of substantial (and unreciprocated) Israeli concessions. Thus, for example, when on June 14, 2009, in an abrupt departure from Likud's foremost ideological precept, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed to the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state provided the Palestinian leadership responded in kind and recognized Israel's Jewish nature, the Obama administration did nothing to disabuse Arab regimes of their adamant rejection of Jewish statehood and instead pressured the

Israeli government for a complete freeze of building activities in the settlements and East Jerusalem.

This behavior is not difficult to understand. Appeasement of one's enemies at the expense of friends, whose loyalty can be taken for granted, is a common - if unsavory - human trait. Rather than reward America's longest and most loyal ally in the Middle East, the Obama administration ruthlessly exploited the Jewish state's growing international isolation for the sake of winning over enemies and critics. It was also a telling affirmation that the Obama administration subscribes to the common fallacy that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict constitutes the root of all evil, and that its resolution will lead to regional peace.

Such a view is wildly inaccurate. For one thing, violence was an integral part of Middle Eastern political culture long before the advent of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and physical force remains today the main if not the sole instrument of regional political discourse. For another, the Arab states have never had any real stake in the "liberation of Palestine." Though anti-Zionism has been the core principle of pan-Arab solidarity since the 1930s, it has almost always served as an instrument for achieving the self-interested ends of those who proclaim it.

Consider, for example, the pan-Arab invasion of the newly proclaimed state of Israel in May 1948. On its face, it was a shining demonstration of solidarity with the Palestinian Arabs. But the invasion had far less to do with winning independence for the indigenous population than with the desire of the Arab regimes for territorial aggrandizement. Transjordan's King Abdullah wanted to incorporate substantial parts of mandatory Palestine, if not the entire country, into the greater Syrian empire he coveted; Egypt wanted to prevent that eventuality by laying its hands on southern Palestine; Syria and Lebanon sought to annex the Galilee; Iraq viewed the 1948 war as a stepping stone in its long-standing ambition to bring the entire Fertile Crescent under its rule. Had the Jewish state lost the war, its territory would not have fallen to the Palestinians but would have been divided among the invading Arab forces.

During the decades that followed, the Arab states manipulated the Palestinian national cause for their own ends. Neither Egypt nor Jordan allowed Palestinian self-determination in the parts of Palestine they had occupied during the 1948 war (respectively, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip). Palestinian refugees were kept in squalid camps for decades as a means of derogating Israel and stirring pan-Arab sentiments. "The Palestinians are useful to the Arab states as they are," Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser candidly responded to an inquiring Western reporter in 1956. "We will always see that they do not become too powerful." As late as 1974, Syria's Hafez al-Assad referred to Palestine as being "not only a part of the Arab homeland but a basic part of southern Syria."

If the Arab states have shown little empathy for the plight of ordinary Palestinians, the Islamic connection to the Palestinian problem is even more tenuous. It is not out of concern for a Palestinian right to national self-determination but as part of a holy war to prevent the loss of a part of the "House of Islam" that Islamists inveigh against the Jewish state of Israel. In the words of the Hamas covenant: "The land of Palestine has been an Islamic trust (*waqf*) throughout the generations and until the day of resurrection... When our enemies usurp some Islamic lands, jihad becomes a duty

binding on all Muslims." That current American policy ignores this reality not only serves to weaken Israel and embolden its enemies, but also to make the prospects of Arab-Israeli peace ever more remote.

A new beginning? A year after announcing "a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world," Obama's grandiose outreach lies in tatters. The clerics in Tehran continue their dogged quest for the "bomb" and have intensified arms supplies to their Lebanese terrorist proxy, Hezbollah, with Syria's connivance and support. Turkey persists in its Islamist odyssey, and Hamas continues its military buildup and occasional terror attacks, while at the same time promoting its removal from the EU's list of terror organizations. Nor for that matter has the cold shouldering of Israel enhanced Obama's popularity in the Arab world, as evidenced, *inter alia*, by recent surveys showing a steady decline in his standing and making him only marginally more popular in comparison with his much maligned predecessor, George W. Bush.

Even in Iraq and Afghanistan, Obama has failed to chart a course that is different in any meaningful way from that of the previous administration. On the contrary, while credit for the relative calm in Iraq is undoubtedly due to the Bush-era "surge," which Senator Obama had bitterly opposed at the time, the military situation in Afghanistan - which he has made the edifice of his struggle against violent extremism - has seriously deteriorated, owing to his indecisive and poorly conceived strategy. Particularly damaging was the pronounced intention to withdraw from the country in the summer of 2011, which has left the Taliban in the enviable position of lying low and biding their time until the departure of American forces, or wearing them down in a sustained guerrilla and terror campaign, so as to portray the withdrawal as an ignominious retreat.

The truth of the matter is that in order to have even the slightest chance of success, Obama's "new beginning" must be promptly ended, with appeasement replaced by containment and counterattack. As a first step, the president and his advisers must recognize the Manichean and irreconcilable nature of the challenge posed by their adversaries. There is no peaceful way to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions, stemming as they do from its imperialist brand of Islamism; a military strike must remain a serious option. Turkey's Islamist drift is bound to make it an enemy of the West, rather than the ally it was over the past half-a-century. Hamas and Hezbollah will never reconcile themselves to the existence of a Jewish state on any part of the perceived House of Islam, however tiny. And there is no way for the U.S. to resolve the century-old war between Arabs and Jews unless the Palestinian and Arab leaders eschew their genocidal hopes for Israel's destruction and accept the Jewish right to statehood. Failure to grasp these realities is an assured recipe for disaster.

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

ICEJ News, 27 October, 2010: UN Special Middle East peace envoy Robert H. Serry accompanied Palestinian Authority prime minister Salaam Fayyad on a visit to a West Bank village on Tuesday, where he encouraged the PA to declare an independent state and equated alleged settler vandalism against olive trees to Palestinian terrorism. "All international players are now in agreement that the Palestinians are ready for statehood

at any point in the near future," said Serry. "We are in the homestretch of your [Fayyad's] agenda to reach that point by August next year and you have our full support."