



## **Opinion and Analysis, Week ending 9 April 2014**

### **1. The end of the modern Middle East?**

***Gabriel Scheinmann, inFocus Quarterly Journal, Spring 2014***

Just as the concept of self-determination eventually led to the greatest period of peace in Europe's history, the Balkanization of the Middle East, while violent at present, could lead to a more peaceful region in the future.

[http://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/5206/modern-middle-east?utm\\_source=Copy+of+Spring+2014+inFOCUS+Announcement&utm\\_campaign=iF+Spring+2014&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/5206/modern-middle-east?utm_source=Copy+of+Spring+2014+inFOCUS+Announcement&utm_campaign=iF+Spring+2014&utm_medium=email)

### **2. Blaming Israel for the collapse of the peace negotiations**

***Isi Liebler, Candidly Speaking, 6 April 2014***

Throughout the entire “negotiating” period, the Palestinians refused to make a single concession. Instead, they intensified incitement against Israel by hailing the released mass murderers as national heroes, providing them with pensions and glorifying their ghoulis murders on PA controlled television.

<http://wordfromjerusalem.com/?p=5050>

### **3. South Africa and Israel: A mandate for more engagement**

***Arthur Lenk, Daily Maverick, 6 April 2014***

Spending eight months in South Africa leaves one observing in wonder the similarity between the extreme and often contradictory ways in which South Africa and Israel are often viewed. While much is obviously different between today's South Africa and Israel, in many emotional ways there are similarities. In more concrete ways, too, it is clear that we have much to gain from each other in seeking ways to further develop a relationship that is in reality much deeper and meaningful than some people think.

<http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2014-04-06-south-africa-and-israel-a-mandate-for-more-engagement/#.U0JlqqL-6BI>

### **4. Former Israeli Ambassador pins dead peace process on American wishful thinking; says Kerry is “smothered in a Middle East sandstorm.” (Interview)**

***Algemeiner, 4 April 2014***

“The lesson is very clear. The Palestinian war on Israel is not due to Israel's policy or Israel's size. It has to do with the existence of the Jewish state, which leads to the most fundamental misperception and error here.”

<http://www.algemeiner.com/2014/04/04/former-israeli-ambassador-pins-dead-peace->

[process-on-american-wishful-thinking-says-kerry-smothered-in-a-middle-east-sandstorm-interview/](#)

**5. Anti-Zionism: Heir apparent to Nazism?**  
**Steve Apfel, Jerusalem Post, 4 April 2014**

How far does anti-Zionism depart from a political movement? Does it claim to explain the past and present and predict the future? Has it a body of beliefs, of premises and facts that liberate anti-Zionists from reality? Is it taught ad nauseam?

<http://blogs.ipost.com/content/anti-zionism-heir-apparent-nazism>

**6. Palestine and Israel: two-state, one-state, Jewish state, no state**  
**Abdallah Schleifer, Al-Arabiya, 3 April 2014**

Since Israel to date has recognized the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority only as the voice of the Palestinians and not as representatives of a Palestinian State, demanding recognition in return would be a sly move and the responsibility would then fall in Israel.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/2014/04/03/Palestine-and-Israel-two-state-one-state-Jewish-state-no-state.html>

**7. Twelve questions about the “peace process”**  
**Rich Richmond, Commentary, 2 April 2014**

The history of the “peace process” is now several stages past tragedy and farce. The side that supposedly wants a state won’t discuss one without compensation to do so; won’t accept a state as an end-of-claims solution but only as a stage in a continuing attempt to “return” to the other one; won’t agree that “two states for two peoples” is the goal of the process, much less explicitly recognize a Jewish state.

<http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2014/04/02/twelve-questions-about-the-peace-process/>

**8. The real ‘Jewish State’ story**  
**Ben-Dror Yemini, The Times of Israel, 1 April 2014**

As long as the Palestinians stubbornly demand the ‘right of return’, which is tantamount to an end to the State of Israel, the insistence on recognition of a Jewish state is basically an insistence on the solution of two states for two peoples.

<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-real-jewish-state-story/>

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**1. The end of the modern Middle East?**

Until now, the post-Ottoman Middle Eastern order, fashioned by wartime exigency, imperialist ambitions, and ignorance of local identities, has survived independence, revolutions, and wars. A political map of the region sketched in 1930 looks nearly identical to one drawn in 2010. Even as the ongoing Arab revolt exposes submerged seams, Washington remains committed to defending the cartographic status quo.

In contrast, the geopolitical evolution of modern Europe has entailed the gradual emergence of nation-states out of the ashes of numerous multi-ethnic European empires. Just as the concept of self-determination eventually led to the greatest period of peace in Europe's

history, the Balkanization of the Middle East, while violent at present, could lead to a more peaceful region in the future.

### ***The Post-Ottoman Regime***

As it did in Europe, World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire radically transformed the political geography of the Middle East. Ottoman provinces became Arab kingdoms and Christian and Jewish enclaves were carved out in Lebanon and Palestine, respectively. Syria, Libya, and Palestine were names resurrected from Roman antiquity: Libya reappeared in 1934, Palestine was merely a Syrian appendage, and the French mandate marked the first time Syria had been used as the name of a state. Iraq had been a medieval caliphal province, whereas Lebanon was a mountain and Jordan a river. The new Arabic-speaking states adopted derivations of the Flag of the Arab Revolt, which had been wholly designed by British diplomat Sir Mark Sykes. The four colours of the Arab flag - black, white, green, and red - each represented the standards of different Arab dynasties - Abbasid, Umayyad, Fatimid, and Hashemite - and remain the colours of half of today's Arab states.

Furthermore, the borders of the new states were determined not by demography, but by the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement, which became the blueprint of today's map. A large Kurdish population was divided among four states, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Shiite Arabs were similarly split, running from Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, and the eastern provinces of Saudi Arabia. Alawites, a heterodox Shiite Arab sect, were subdivided, residing today along the northern Lebanese, Syria, and southwestern Turkish coasts. The Druze were distributed between what today is Israel, Lebanon, and Syria. Lebanon, supposedly a Christian redoubt, entailed large Sunni and Shiite Arab populations, as well as Alawi and Druze. At the dawn of the 21st century, minority ethnic groups ruled Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Bahrain, often repressively.

By the 1960s, Arab republics outnumbered Arab monarchies, as coups were common and kingdoms were overthrown. Attempts to merge alien states - such as Syria with Egypt and Iraq with Jordan - were short-lived and repeated failure to excise the Zionist presence marked the end of the endeavour. Arab leaders proved more interested in maintaining their own European-delivered fiefs than in abdicating their cathedra for the greater Arab cause. Through it all, neither independence nor Israel had altered the imperial map.

While the external borders remained unaltered, ethno-religious strife was evident throughout. The creation of Greater Lebanon, turning a once Christian enclave into a multi-communal state, led to decades of discontent that ultimately erupted into a full-blown ethnic civil war, killing over 100,000. In Iraq and Syria, strongmen from minority groups adopted Baathism, a secular Arab nationalist ideology, in order to centralize power and subdue ethnic differences, but to little avail. Sunni Arab uprisings against an Alawite Arab regime in Syria in the 1980s and Shiite Arab uprisings against a Sunni Arab regime in Iraq in the 1990s were squashed. The Sykes-Picot order barely flinched.

Similarly, varied efforts were made to forcefully marginalize Kurdish identity. Kurds were stripped of their Syrian citizenship in 1962 and both the Asad and Hussein regimes attempted to "Arabize" Kurdish areas by expelling local populations and supplanting them with Arabs from elsewhere. Saddam's infamous gassing of large Kurdish populations in Halabja in 1988 and the broader al-Anfal ethnic cleansing campaign mar Kurdish history. In Turkey, Kemalism, also a secular-nationalist ideology, attempted to "Turkify" the country's large population of Kurds, going so far as to denying their existence through the ubiquitous use of the term "Mountain Turks." A Kurdish insurgency has blazed across southeastern Turkey for several decades, with upwards of 50,000 casualties.

Even after excising themselves from direct regional control, external powers have repeatedly intervened to caulk the cracks exposed by ethnic violence. Twice, first in 1958 and again in 1982, American forces were sent to quell ethnic violence in Lebanon. After the Gulf War, Washington imposed no-fly zones in Iraq to protect the Kurds and Shia respectively from Sunni Baathist attacks. More recently, French and U.S. forces have tried to roll back a secessionist Tuareg state in northern Mali. Meanwhile, Washington flatly opposes Kurdish moves towards independence, chastising KRG-Turkish strategic cooperation and supporting Baghdad. Whatever the outcome in Syria, U.S. and European officials agree on keeping Syria intact. No matter the volatility, Washington, Paris, and London have clung onto the post-war order that they created.

A reluctance to contemplate redrawing the map is understandable. Today's Middle East is itself an example of poorly-executed partitions. Inviolable political borders are the defining characteristic of state sovereignty, without which the modern concept of citizenship or nationality is meaningless. Only in extraordinary circumstances and from positions of power, such as in Kosovo, do states support unilateral partitions. For example, Kosovo remains unrecognized by states that have secessionist movements of their own, such as Spain, Russia, and China. By violating the sanctity of sovereign borders, precedents become set. If Kosovars deserve self-determination, why don't Tibetans, Catalans, or Chechens? In order to maintain global stability, states shy away from fiddling with borders, concerned that the redrawing may never end.

### ***Looking in the Mirror***

Ironically, today's Europe, which also once consisted of multi-ethnic empires, is the result of a century of partitions, secessions, and wars of self-determination. The Ottoman Empire once ruled southeast Europe, including Greece, the Balkans, Romania, and Bulgaria. Prior to World War I, the Russian Empire roosted on eight modern European states. Norway achieved independence from Denmark and then Sweden only in 1905. Austria-Hungary was a conglomeration that has given way to six independent nation-states. Nearly a century after its creation, the dissolution of Yugoslavia - from whence comes "Balkanization" - has resulted, so far, in seven states. Meanwhile, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Belgium may look different in coming years as they grapple with Catalan, Scottish, and Flemish nationalism, respectively. Europe has become a bastion of nation-states - 50 in total - and is a shining example of how squiggly borders can lead to greater peace and stability. Recent events in Ukraine only highlight this dynamic.

With few exceptions, each European state now exclusively consists of a people with a shared ethnicity, a shared language, and a shared religion. The French speak French in France; Germans speak German in Germany. In contrast, the modern Middle East houses only four such entities - Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Turkey - and even these, as renowned Middle Eastern historian Bernard Lewis once wrote, have exceptions. "Iran" is a modern term, Arabic has no word for Arabia, and Israeli Arabs, without including those in the West Bank, comprise nearly 20% of the Jewish State's population. Turkey's supposed ethnic homogeneity ignores its 15-million strong Kurdish population and was achieved only following the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians and forced expulsion of 1.5 million Orthodox Greeks in the aftermath of World War I.

Previous flickers of self-determination were contemplated, but never fully realized. President Wilson's Fourteen Points included a specific reference to self-rule for the Ottoman Empire's non-Turkish minorities, yet was never implemented. After expelling the British-installed Hashemite ruler of Damascus in 1920, France, more aware of the ethnic mosaic than their cross-Channel collaborators, actually created five separate Levantine states based on the Ottoman vilayets: Greater Lebanon, an Alawite mountain state, a Druze mountain state, the State of Aleppo, and the State of Damascus. However, concerned that a rising Germany

was making inroads into its colonies, France acquiesced to a unified Syria in 1936. Only Lebanon survived as an independent entity and, even then, had incorporated large, non-Christian areas over French objections.

Similarly, the 1920 Treaty of Sevres, which ended the war between the Ottomans and the Allies, granted immediate independence to the Hijaz and Ottoman Armenia - sometimes known as "Wilsonian Armenia" after the US drew its borders - and eventual statehood to Ottoman Kurdistan. However, these arrangements were also quickly reversed three years later after Turkish forces smashed the Western-backed Greek and Armenian armies. A renegotiated settlement, the Treaty of Lausanne, ended the dreams of Greater Kurdistan and Greater Armenia and set the boundaries of modern Turkey. Implementation of any of these paths would have dramatically altered the post-Ottoman era.

### **The Identity Revolution**

The map of the modern Middle East is potentially on the cusp of drastic changes. A renaissance in Kurdish nationalism, as a result of the U.S.-led liberation - their word - of Iraq, threatens to dramatically redraw the boundaries in the heart of the region. The semi-autonomous Kurdish Regional Government in northern Iraq issues its own visas, hoists its own flag, and speaks its own language. A recent truce is intended to end the Kurdish armed insurgency in Turkey in return for far greater official Turkish recognition of Kurdish identity. As an outcome of the Syrian conflict, Kurds have declared a provincial government in the northeast corner of Syria, which they've renamed "Rojava" or Western Kurdistan. Kurds now control a 400-mile-wide band of territory, from the Iran-Iraq border to the Syrian town of Ras al-Ain, and are expanding their jurisdiction.

The US-led overthrow of the minority Sunni regime in Iraq marked an etch-a-sketch moment in the modern Middle East. Majority Shiite rule returned to Baghdad for the first time since the seventeenth century, raising the hopes of beleaguered Shiite Arab populations in Kuwait, Bahrain, and eastern Saudi Arabia. A recent Iraqi cabinet statement of support for the creation of three new provinces in western Iraq, giving Turkmen, Christians, and Sunni Arabs a greater share of the federal budget, will likely not satisfy newly dispossessed Sunnis who have demanded greater autonomy from Baghdad.

Likewise, the Syrian uprising has unleashed ethnic sectarianism that claws at the current borders. Iraqi and Lebanese Shiite fighters have poured into Syria to help preserve Alawite rule in Damascus. Ethnic cleansing in coastal Syria has entertained talk of the creation of "Alawitistan", an Alawite enclave protected by the mountains that could eventually stretch into northern Lebanon and Turkey's Hatay province. The trans-national Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) is a key force in the Syrian rebellion and recently took over the major Sunni cities of Ramadi and Fallujah, as violence has spiraled to nearly 2007 levels. A Druze enclave could emerge in southern Syria, containing the nearly 1 million Lebanese and Syrian Druze. In the future, Iraq, Syria, and even Lebanon may only be rump states, as co-nationals seek to consolidate control across existing borders.

While these changes could take decades to play out, new entities have already made their first leaps towards independence. In 2011, South Sudan seceded along ethno-religious lines, marking the first internationally recognized change in the borders of a Middle Eastern state in nearly 80 years. Meanwhile, Ghaddafi's downfall not only threatens to devolve power to Libya's former city-states, but has also impacted the identities of Libya's neighbours. In April 2012, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad declared the independence of northern Mali, setting in motion the French-led intervention to roll back the secession and restore Malian sovereignty last year. The "Arab Spring" has also roused Berber identity in Libya, Algeria, and Morocco, where a Moroccan minister spoke Amazigh, the Berber language, for the first time in parliament.

Ending support for the Sykes-Picot order is not equivalent to unilaterally redrawing the map of the Middle East from Washington. Events on the ground, such as Kurdish nationalism, Alawite retreats, or Sunni Arab brotherhood, will drive these changes. The emergence of Kurdistan or Alawitistan or the shrinking of the Maronite enclave in Lebanon could partition clashing nations and dim long-running ethno-religious violence. Like the Balkanization of Europe, cultures would still compete, but the reduced stakes could ultimately lead to a more stable and peaceful region.

Writing in 1989, historian David Fromkin compared Europe's political evolution to that of the Muslim Middle East. The length of time may be different, "but its issue is the same: how diverse peoples are to regroup to create new political identities for themselves after the collapse of an ages-old imperial order to which they had grown accustomed. The Allies proposed a post-Ottoman design for the region in the early 1920s. The continuing question is whether the peoples of the region will accept it." A quarter-century later, Fromkin's question is in the process of being answered. The peoples of the region no longer accept the post-Ottoman system and their calls for self-determination echo those of European peoples of the last few centuries. Perhaps we should heed their call.

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## **2. Blaming Israel for the collapse of the peace negotiations**

All signs indicate that the moribund peace process has now formally collapsed.

Few Israelis will be surprised. The Obama administration was repeatedly cautioned that pressurizing of Israel and appeasing the intransigent Palestinians would only result in greater demands on Israel.

That is precisely what happened. After Israel succumbed (unwisely, in my opinion,) to US Secretary of State John Kerry's pressure to release 100 mass murderers in order to "bribe" the Palestinians to merely agree to negotiate, what did we get in return?

The Palestinians immediately demanded that Israel consider the unauthorized offers extended to them by former Prime Minister Olmert (which they had rejected), as an opening benchmark for negotiations.

Throughout the entire "negotiating" period, the Palestinians refused to make a single concession. Instead, they intensified incitement against Israel by hailing the released mass murderers as national heroes, providing them with pensions and glorifying their ghoulis murders on PA controlled television.

This month the Israeli government became exasperated when, after having refused to make a single concession, the PA announced that they would not extend negotiations beyond April and would revert to the United Nations. Pointing out that the release of the terrorists was scheduled as a process to be executed in stages to ensure a quid pro quo and progress in ongoing negotiations, Israel announced that it would not release the final batch unless PA Chairman Abbas undertook to continue the talks.

Desperate to save face, Kerry attempted to bribe the PA with further concessions in order to persuade them to continue "negotiating". Israel would release another four hundred prisoners (not with blood on their hands) and there would be an unspecified freeze on building construction beyond the green line (excluding Jerusalem). To make it difficult for right wing coalition members to oppose the deal, Kerry included the release of Pollard.

The Palestinian response was to apply to join 15 international conventions, some of which were associated with the UN – a fundamental breach of the Oslo Accords. When pleaded by Kerry to halt these applications, Abbas responded that he would rather die as a martyr than do so.

Subsequently, the PA mocked the US by escalating their demands to the most outlandish proportions. These included outright acceptance of the 1949 armistice lines as the final borders – which would mean relinquishing the Western Wall and East Jerusalem Jewish suburbs; a freeze on construction over the green line including east Jerusalem; the release of 1200 additional terrorists including Marwan Barghouti and Ahmad Saadat (the assassin of Minister Rehavam Ze'evi); extending immediate Israeli citizenship to 15,000 Palestinian refugee families under the right of Arab return; and, to top it off, "lifting the siege of Gaza".

For the first time on such an issue, the left and right of the Israeli government responded with one voice.

Tzipi Livni, Israel's negotiator at the peace talks is hardly a hawk. Yet she accused PA of breaching undertakings and questioned their good faith. After a stormy seven hour meeting with Saeb Erekat, who at one stage threatened to charge Israel at The Hague with war crimes, Livni stated that there was nothing more to discuss until the Palestinians withdrew their applications to affiliate with the 15 international conventions. Regrettably, she could not resist subsequently blaming Minister for Housing Uri Ariel for "sabotaging" the talks, by reissuing tenders for 700 housing units in Gilo, an exclusively Jewish suburb of east Jerusalem.

Minister Yair Lapid also protested that Abbas engaged in a "deliberate provocation aimed to blow up the talks", making it impossible to move forward and "raises serious doubt whether he is genuinely interested in reaching an agreement".

The American response was pathetic. Initially Kerry suggested that the PA application to affiliate to international organizations was not necessarily a fundamental breach of the Oslo accords.

Then, as he realized the need to cover himself from the catastrophic fallout from his inept intervention, he resumed his old and discredited routine of applying moral equivalence to the actions of both parties.

He thus accused Israel for being provocative in announcing building construction in Gilo – a Jerusalem suburb which everyone is aware will always remain within Israel. The White House also described Israel's delay in releasing the last 26 prisoners as "problematic".

So far, Prime Minister Netanyahu has remained silent in order not to be blamed for exacerbating the situation.

But once it becomes clear that no further negotiations with the Palestinians will take place, it is imperative that our Prime Minister marshals all our resources to ensure that the United States and democratic countries are confronted with the facts.

The Foreign Ministry will need to prove its mettle by galvanizing a major global initiative to promote Israel's position, ensuring that our ambassadors launch a full scale campaign and actively invite support from Jewish communities and friends of Israel everywhere.

The message to be conveyed is that the majority of Israelis wish to separate themselves from the Palestinians and were willing in the past to forfeit over 90% of the territories occupied by the Jordanian government prior to 1967. Israelis yearn for peace and are willing to negotiate with a reasonable partner who must also be willing to make compromises and accept Israel's need for security in this volatile region.

We must demonstrate the Palestinians unwillingness to concede on any issue – notably their adamant insistence that they will never deviate in relation to the three critical elements which are fundamental to any stable relationship and genuine coexistence: the right of return of Arab refugees, a willingness to accept an end of conflict and recognition of Israel as a Jewish state.

The obvious must be reiterated. It requires two parties to make peace and that further unilateral concessions merely provides an incentive for the Palestinians to make increasingly more outlandish demands. This is not merely the response of the duplicitous Abbas who is weak, corrupt and fears antagonizing Fatah. It is because the end of Jewish sovereignty assumes a far greater priority to the PA than their own statehood. Indeed, Abbas has repeatedly stated that he has no intention of retiring from office as a traitor by compromising Palestinian central objectives such as the right of return.

The Palestinians are now convinced that, their objective of dismantling Israel in stages can be achieved.

They will initiate an intensive global campaign to condemn, criminalize, delegitimize and boycott us. The combination of Islamic states, Third World, and rogue states guarantees a permanent hostile majority against Israel in all UN institutions. The condemnation of Israel this month by the UN Human Rights Council on issues including alleged breaching the human rights of Arab citizens in the Golan (the Europeans abstained) says it all.

We need the support of the American public and Congress to discourage the Obama Administration from abandoning us and ensuring that the Palestinian campaign is restricted to empty resolutions. We need to confront the bias, prejudice and political correctness and encourage global leaders to take a position and not opt for the easy way out and distance themselves from us.

We have real grounds for concern that the Obama Administration may stand aside, fail to employ their veto power at the UN Security Council and unofficially encourage the Europeans to coerce us toward further unilateral concessions.

Today, on this issue we speak with a united voice encompassing the vast majority of Israelis and call on global leaders to be responsible, overcome their traditional bias, prejudice and political correctness and deviate from the easy path of apportioning equal blame for breakdowns on both parties. This is not merely manifestly unjust but makes the possibility of moving towards a settlement even more remote.

In particular, this represents the most important challenge to the American Jewish leadership who must determine whether they are going to stand up and be counted or bury their heads in the sand. This is not a time for ambiguity or exclusive reliance on silent diplomacy. Hopefully, as proud American Jews they will not feel intimidated and should the US apportion equal blame or hold us responsible for the breakdown, they will display the courage to confront the Administration.

On our part, we should make it clear that we do not intend extending further concessions to bribe the PA to negotiate with us. We remain willing to negotiate for the creation of a

Palestinian state without preconditions. When the Palestinians signal willingness to conducting bona fide negotiations, we will respond positively and again demonstrate a willingness to make sacrifices to achieve a genuine peace.

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### **3. South Africa and Israel: A mandate for more engagement**

Both South Africa and Israel are touchstones for many, as both are seen as places born out of great tragedy – democratic South Africa emerging from the horrors of Apartheid and the modern State of Israel from the shadows of the Holocaust, following the Second World War. Both are actually inspirational stories, the stuff of Hollywood movies (for example *Exodus* and *Long Walk to Freedom*) while some insist on prophesising a coming apocalypse. Both have complicated histories and deep domestic and regional challenges. The two countries are vibrant, loud democracies in regions that are not quite known for their liberalism. Our vocal civil societies remind us of shortcomings, challenges and the need to strive to achieve enormous (perhaps unreachable) goals and expectations that have been set for us. Israel and South Africa are clearly imperfect, like everywhere else, but these standards and outsized attention keep our leaders' feet to the fire.

In South Africa, the discussion about my country has often become overly simplistic and often toxic. I understand, and appreciate, the long and emotive connection between many in the ANC with the Palestinians. Nevertheless, the history and circumstances in the two regions are patently different, despite a natural tendency for people to see the world through the prism of our experiences. Israel is so much more than the one (albeit, very important) issue: Israel and our Palestinian neighbours. What remains confounding for many is the willingness for some here to allow a small group of extremists to attempt to hijack South African policy and interests for an agenda of hate, hopelessness and ironic double standards.

In fact, South Africa's formal policy on many issues connected to the Middle East, including the Israel-Palestinian conflict and Iran, are generally in line with much of Europe. For example, last November, SA's government emphasised its support for a negotiated two-state solution by clarifying: "Cabinet recognises the right of Palestinian people for self-determination and the right of Israel to exist alongside a Palestinian state. Their endeavour to find a solution to the conflict which will be just should continue."

Similarly, President Zuma stated at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2012: "We remain committed to the two-state solution based on the 1967 borders with Palestine and Israel co-existing side by side in peace."

This position is not really a subject of actual debate in public life in South Africa. This agreement was emphasised by senior representatives of five South African political parties (the ANC, DA, IFP, COPE and the ACDP) who each stated at a public debate in Johannesburg earlier this month sponsored by the South African Board of Jewish Deputies that their party supported a two-state solution and opposed boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) in the Middle East.

The same is true regarding Iran. Twice, while serving as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, South Africa raised its hand together with the entire Council to support international sanctions against the Islamic Republic. Over the past two years, almost, South Africa has respected those sanctions by diverting all of its oil purchases to other countries. DIRCO officials and other government representatives have emphasised

human rights issues with Iranian interlocutors and, like most of us around the world, remain reasonably cautious of Iran moving forward.

Obviously, Israel has a different view on some of those issues, although in fact the differences are quite a bit less than one might imagine. We see ourselves as the only stable, democratic country in our often explosive region. We are in many ways “ground zero” of the unease and instability that has resulted from the uprisings throughout the Arab world all around us. It has become obvious to any fair-minded person that the region has deep, deep issues far beyond a question of peace or conflict with the Israelis.

We are involved in a complex peace process with our Palestinian neighbours, with American assistance, with regular ups and downs. There are a range of tough issues that will demand compromises and visionary leadership from all sides. We support a two-state solution that offers hope and opportunity for both Palestinians and Israelis. Israel protects rights of all its citizens regardless of race, sexual orientation or religious belief – Jewish, Muslim or Christian. Even those who are not citizens – such as Palestinians – have access to Israel's justly renowned courts. Local and international NGOs have a loud, vibrant voice and a significant impact. We work with the Palestinian Authority on water, agriculture and capacity building programmes – the sides recently signed a long-term contract to supply the Palestinians with natural gas from beneath the Mediterranean Sea.

Israel has made peace with two of its neighbours – Jordan and Egypt. We unilaterally left Gaza in 2006, offering its people a chance for a better life, one that sadly has not come to pass. Instead, rockets continue to be shot regularly by Hamas and Islamic Jihad militants towards civilian areas, in a macabre hope to somehow hit a child, a school or a home. We believe that stronger words and actions against incitement, violence and for mutual recognition should come from the PA and those truly interested in human rights. As for Iran, Israel and most other states in our region remain unconvinced that the danger has passed. Real concerns remain for Iran's citizens and neighbours and regarding the way its Mullahs continue to threaten Israel. We question whether any change has come that might offer benefits for our region.

South Africa, like Israel and nearly all countries, often works to balance out the multiple layers of its interests and concerns on complex international relations dilemmas of our day. Some quibble about nuanced positions that the US takes on complex issues like Ukraine, Syria and a range of conflicts across Africa, but diplomacy is often the art of recognising shades of grey and working to find areas of agreement, as much as pointing out differences in perception.

This type of realistic recognition is, of course, relevant for South African relations with Israel. Israel is already a leading trading partner for South Africa in the Near East with bilateral trade in goods of over eight billion rand in 2013, according to SARS (and billions more in services). More tourists travel between our two countries than any other partner for South Africa from my region. There is a vibrant, creative Jewish diaspora that has historically played a vital and outsized role in SA, who predominantly closely identifies with Israel - and Israel has an important South African community that remains deeply connected here.

South Africa's National Development Plan includes a number of core priorities where Israel is a world leader and can play a significant role in development efforts. In sectors such as rural development, agriculture, water management, cyber technology and scientific R&D, Israel already has a foothold in business and development ties here. I recently visited farms in Mpumalanga where small-scale farmers are using Israeli advice and technologies to create jobs and impact food security. I also travelled to an impressive seedling factory in Limpopo where Israel's world-class advances are being used in an outstanding business

partnership with South Africa's biggest vegetable producer. (Therefore if you **really** want to boycott Israel in SA, it is basically time to stop eating tomatoes). In telecommunications, most SA companies use Israeli systems and innovations (yeah, you'll need to give back those iPhones, too).

For decades, Israel has shared its development experiences with friendly countries across Africa and around the world. In recent years, Israel has reached agreements with India and China, establishing agricultural centres, which serve as a base for joint agriculture R&D, education and economic development on the ground. Israel and India are hoping to establish up to 27 agricultural projects in seven states across India, where Israeli technologies and know-how will be demonstrated to local farmers. In addition, the sides are establishing scholarships for Indian post-doctoral agricultural students to study in Israel.

China also sees Israel as an important development partner. China's Vice Minister of Water Resources was quoted at a conference in Israel, saying: "Israel and China are far away from each other, and the situation of the two countries is different, but for water use and water we have the same target, and we want to use the water for more scientific and industry and environmental purposes. We want to share with Israel to develop this. I hope to enhance cooperation between China and Israel."

Israel has continued in recent years its long tradition of promoting agricultural and development cooperation throughout Africa. Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MASHAV, is active in over 30 countries across the continent, inviting expert participants to programs in Israel, delegating short- and long-term experts, and cooperating with local and international partners. It also looks to promote economic cooperation across Africa. Currently, in addition to food security development efforts here in South Africa, agricultural projects - often together with third parties such as the United Nations or Germany - are being implemented in Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Kenya.

Of course, South Africa has much to offer, too. In its deep relations across Africa, it could be an excellent partner for Israel in humanitarian development projects. While the histories and solutions are patently different, the idea of negotiating to resolve intractable problems and leadership taking brave steps to avoid seemingly inevitable dangers is an important lesson that can be shared with Israelis, Palestinians, Syrians and others in my region. When Nelson Mandela said in 1999, *"I cannot conceive of Israel withdrawing if Arab states do not recognise Israel within secure borders"*, his equally strong criticisms of Israel gained legitimacy that speaking at only one side misses. South Africa could share its experiences with all sides, encouraging dialogue, compromise and rejecting all violence.

Today, for a range of reasons, the credible SA voice, which actually represents government, the various political parties and much of the public, is not actually being heard at all. And that is a loss all around. The moderate, constructive message and actual positions tend to be shouted down. Allowing the BDS circus to have traction here – with antics such as a leader shouting "Shoot the Jew", violent bullies breaking up classical music concerts on university campuses and hosting a bitter ex-Israeli karate teacher spewing hateful language – actually hurts Palestinians who are genuinely looking for peace, weakens South Africa's credibility internationally and insults the memory of those who fought against Apartheid honourably and valiantly.

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**4. Former Israeli Ambassador pins dead peace process on American wishful thinking; says Kerry is "smothered in a Middle East sandstorm." (Interview)**

Yoram Ettinger, the former Israeli Ambassador for US Congressional Affairs, recently had harsh words for US Secretary of State John Kerry, who he said has ignored the lessons of history in favour of “wishful thinking.” Hitting at the heart of Israel's relationship with the US, and informed by his years as Israel's Consul General in Houston, Texas, Ettinger said in an interview that Kerry's refusal to acknowledge the historical facts and realities of the Middle East left America's top diplomat “smothered in a Middle East sandstorm.”

Ettinger said the Obama administration's “Palestine First” mentality was what doomed the nine months of peace talks that collapsed this week between the internationally recognized Jewish state and a group Ettinger insists still be referred to as the PLO, with all of the connotations those initials recall of its long terrorist roots, and showing how far the world is from in its “mistaken conventional wisdom” of a ‘Palestinian Authority’ prepared to govern responsibly beside Israel.

He pointed to the common misunderstanding of the role of the United Nations, where PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas has already launched his next battle, but Ettinger was confident that the powerful, though under-appreciated, role of the U.S. Congress in foreign affairs would allow Israel's position to prevail.

“The ‘Palestine Firsters’ are those who believe that this is the centre of everything,” Ettinger told *The Algemeiner*. “It's part of an overall worldview – these are the same people who also believe that the UN is the quarterback of international relations. The UN assumes that the Palestinian issue is the centre, so if the quarterback is telling you that the entire game plan has to be based on the Palestinian issue, you go with the quarterback.”

“They genuinely believe an Israeli concession — the establishment of a Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria — is going to do the trick, and thereby they ignore the roughly 100 years of conflict that sends a very clear message to the contrary.”

“In the 1920s and 1930s and 1940s, during the pogroms of those years, there was no independent Jewish state. There was no ‘Israeli occupation’, but still there was a war on the Jewish communities in the land of Israel,” he said. “Until 1967, Israel was not in Judea and Samaria, or Gaza.”

That begs the question: If history shows that war predated the “occupation,” how could the “occupation” be the cause of the war?

“And the same thing with the ‘settlements,’” Ettinger said.

“The lesson is very clear. The Palestinian war on Israel is not due to Israel's policy or Israel's size. It has to do with the existence of the Jewish state, which leads to the most fundamental misperception and error here.”

Rather than looking toward history or understanding how religion impacts decision making in the Middle East, because those concepts are too complicated to paint a simple picture, Ettinger said the US sees every question through the lens of secular nationalism that can be swayed with the capitalist's carrot of throwing money at the problem. In this case, Kerry offered \$4 billion of aid to the PA to reach a deal.

If it were about money, the oil producing Arab states could come up with even more, he said; “that's petty cash for them.”

The other tack the US took in the peace talks was to insist on “Palestinian human rights,” with the notion of any group of people being able to choose their destiny through free, frequent and fair elections. But in that case, asked Ettinger, how could Kerry invite Abbas to the table, when he was elected for a four-year term, 10 years ago? Rather than nine months of fruitless negotiations, wouldn't Kerry's time have been better spent pursuing “Palestinian human rights” by demanding those people, too, have the chance to choose their destiny through a democratic election?

In Ettinger's view, rather than face any of the underlying issues, the U.S. approach was to focus on multi-lateral and multi-national ways of solving problems, ultimately accepting the world view of the UN, where Israel's enemies imagine that the Jewish state is the world's leading tyranny against human rights.

“You have a world view of [U.S. President Barack] Obama — John Kerry's is basically Obama's, Obama calls the shots,” he said. “They are determined to subordinate reality to that world view, irrespective of the fact that the world view has nothing to do with the reality, and that's typical of John Kerry's speech, which is replete with the word ‘imagine.’”

“‘Imagine what would happen if?’ And ‘imagine’, and ‘imagine’, and ‘imagine’, and ‘imagine’...”

“And you wonder, why is the supposed architect of foreign policy dealing with imagination rather than reality?”

“He is assuming you can coerce reality to be subordinated to wishful thinking, to whims.”

“Again, it goes back to John Kerry,” he said. “This is the same John Kerry, together with [Defence Secretary] Chuck Hagel and [former Secretary of State] Hilary Clinton, who belonged to a very small club in the U.S. Senate which referred to [Syrian President] Bashar al Assad as a ‘constructive’, ‘reformist’, ‘potentially peaceful’ leader of Syria, this is before the civil war in Syria that has claimed 150,000 Syrian lives.”

“By the way, John Kerry had the same attitude toward Hafez al Assad, also, proclaimed him to be a ‘constructive leader’, and thus one should not be surprised that he focuses on the wrong items when it comes to the Arab-Israeli conflict.”

When the US declines to act against Syria for completely abrogating the human rights of Syrians, even after two generations of brutal dictatorships, Ettinger wanted to know why Kerry “imagines” that what's happening in Israel is somehow more urgent than the hundreds of thousands of Arabs dying in various levels of civil war across the Middle East.

As he thought of the appropriate analogy to express his exasperation with the US Secretary of State, Ettinger, dressed in a suit and black snakeskin cowboy boots, admitted his fondness for Texans and their sensibilities.

“I spent years in Texas, as an undergraduate and then as Consul General, and I now visit Texas sometimes four times a year, and there is a Texan colloquialism: When you drive in West Texas, and you're smothered by a lethal West Texas sandstorm, don't be pre-occupied by the tumbleweeds on the road. So, here is John Kerry, driving in the Middle East, and he's smothered by a Libyan sandstorm, by a Tunisian sandstorm, an Egyptian sandstorm, a Syrian sandstorm, a Yemenite sandstorm, an Iranian sandstorm, and an Islamic terrorist sandstorm, and what is he doing?”

“Focusing on the Palestinian tumbleweed on the road, which could face him with a very, very lethal fate. Because when you don’t focus on the sandstorm, you may be thrown off the road. And, unfortunately, this is exactly what John Kerry is doing right now in the Middle East.”

“This is Kerry’s 12th or the 13th visit to Ramallah and Jerusalem,” Ettinger said, throwing up his hands, baffled. Rather than focus on the external forces that Israel cannot change, his approach is to focus on the areas where Israel, and Israelis, can make a difference, constructively, and independently of the “whims” of the world powers.

Retired from the foreign ministry for two decades, Ettinger, a former journalist, publisher and communications expert, now runs a foundation, ‘Second Thought,’ which provides lectures and material to help re-write myths about the Middle East with fresh thinking, aiming to replace the “conventional wisdom” with knowledge based on fact and history. There are two areas, specifically, where his expertise is adding tremendous value to the debate.

The first, which is the topic of his current lecture tour at Jewish organizations across the U.S. this month, is the truth behind the so-called demographic threat. Using real Israeli census data, rather than just conventional wisdom, Ettinger debunks the “myth” that Jews could become a minority within Israel.

In fact, Ettinger’s research contends that not only do the real numbers show the opposite is happening, but that all the anecdotes used to support the “conventional wisdom” are also wrong. In his presentation, Ettinger says that those “Yuppy Jews” in secular Tel Aviv now, and for more than a decade, have taken on their patriotic duty to bear more children than ever before. Meanwhile, the supposedly sky high Arab birth rate has fallen far behind, as young Arabs grapple with the common woes of entering the middle class, not bearing children.

His hard numbers (see below) have made many Israel supporters “sleep easy,” as one said, Ettinger recites many anecdotes of his own personal meetings with young Arabs he “interviews” in gas stations and cafes as he travels around Israel. Members of his audience at a presentation this week were surprised to learn that rather than spurning formal education, many live in towns with near-full high school participation, attend community colleges (mostly, the men) and universities (usually, the women, the better students in the Arab world) and how they repeat the tropes familiar in today’s America, where “maybe one child, maybe two, but definitely after my education, after I get a good job, buy a house, much later in life,” Ettinger said he is told frequently by Arabs today.

Ettinger’s other specialty is interpreting U.S. policy towards Israel. Rather than exclusively believing that what’s being said by the Executive Branch will come to pass in the Middle East, and in light of his experience on Capitol Hill, where he returns on each trip to stay current with the contacts he built when stationed at the Israeli Embassy as an Ambassador whose portfolio was, simply, all of Congress. In some ways, Ettinger’s role was to be a one-man Israel lobby.

It is with a great understanding of how the US Congress functions that he feels the “PLO’s” fallback position of haranguing the UN into validating its claims against Israel will certainly backfire.

“There are some people who assume that the PLO could be granted a ‘state’ status by the UN and the international organizations would then be much more vindictive towards Israel,” Ettinger said. “This is because the vast, vast, vast majority of people, policy makers,

definitely in Israel, but also in the U.S., are not familiar with the power of the U.S. Congress to set the agenda here.”

“Namely, while the President or the Secretary of State may want to punish Israel to facilitate the emergence of the Palestinian state, this is not the position of the overwhelming majority on Capitol Hill. And, I am certain that if the legislators would be approached by constituents with their requests to deny the Palestinians adequate support, and to exercise the veto at the UN Security Council, the U.S. can do it.”

“The American President cannot ignore Congress,” Ettinger said. “Congress usually is reluctant to get involved in foreign policy and national security decisions unless it’s a consensus issue, unless it’s a common denominator issue, unless it’s an issue which benefits from the support of vast majority of the population,” he said. In other words, Congress’s support of Israel is strong. In fact, all but one member of Congress voted to enhance the U.S.-Israel relationship, not work to minimize or destroy it.

“It’s time, I believe, for Israel and its supporters to realize that Congress is not a backseat driver when it comes to foreign or national security policy,” he said.

“Congress can defund foreign aid to the PLO; Congress can suspend foreign aid; Congress can suspend appropriations to the international organizations and UN agencies and that would make it extremely difficult and impossible to reward the PLO,” he said. “Because my assumption is that UN agencies and international organizations would not want to ‘cut their nose to spite their face’ knowing that once they support the PLO they’re going to be denied U.S. financial support which is the biggest chunk of their budget.”

Like his work to debunk conventional wisdom of the “demographic time-bomb,” Ettinger “absolutely” sees a UN gambit as another “false threat.”

But he also points to the power of the “false threat” as a weakness within Israel, and shared by Jews worldwide, who focus on so many “negative myths,” because it is that negativity, rather than the positivity of individual action, that limits the Jewish community’s collective strength. Just as Tel Aviv yuppies can “unilaterally” decide to have more children, as they have done, it is incumbent upon each Jew to “unilaterally” choose to do that which he can, on his own, to help the Jewish state when others speak against Israel, he said.

As Ettinger said to one eager questioner at another Manhattan event this week, “Never mind the mistake of waiting for great powers to come to our rescue, never mind what others could do, what can you do? You, yourself? How can you, on your own, contribute here? Only when each Jew does what is in his power will the Jewish people move forward,” he exhorted to a crowd unaccustomed to such direct calls for personal action.

Ettinger’s endorsement of individualism, personal responsibility, and an independent spirit draw inspiration from his time in Texas. He said the story of Israel in the Middle East is shared by walking a mile in a Texan’s boots:

“When I served in Texas, I used to walk with a ‘Texas’ pin in my lapel. And, many times, Texas ranchers or independent oilmen, who I met, asked me very bluntly: ‘Mr. Ettinger, is there anything in common between us? Why are we meeting at all?’”

“And I said, well, here it is,” as he grabbed at his lapel pin, today the AIPAC-style Israel and American flag pin.

“What do you mean?” his potential contact would ask him. “This is our Texas flag.”

“I said, absolutely. You are the Lone Star State and I come from the State of the Lone Star of David. And both of us are Lone Stars. I said, you’re lucky that your neighbours — New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana — they maybe hate you, they’re envious of you, and they maybe even despise you. In our case, our neighbours want to kill us. But both of us have problems with our neighbours. Both of us have to defy the jagged, cutting edge of nature, and that has made both of us very tenacious people.”

He said, “In most cases, people were turned around completely in a positive manner, for the first time realizing that, in many respects, Israel is the Texas of the MidEast.”

But to extend the analogy, what about the people on the other side of that thousand-mile security fence that protects that border, too? What does Israel share with Texas and its relations with the Mexicans?

Ettinger said, “Those who cross from Mexico, in the vast, vast, vast majority, they want to be integrated into America, they accept the American values. Those across the border from Arab countries want to do away with Israel, to terrorize Israel, there is a big difference here.”

He had another Texan analogy he said he wanted to share with the world powers:

“When Americans, Europeans, urge us to sign an agreement, and through that agreement, to concede, and retreat, and appease,” Ettinger began, “the Texans would tell you, don’t kiss a chicken until it grows lips. At this stage, the Arab chickens in the Middle East have not grown lips yet. As long as they don’t have lips, we should be vigilant, we should be on guard, and we should refrain from kissing them. Once they grow lips, this hawk will gladly and enthusiastically become a dove,” he said.

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## **5. Anti-Zionism: Heir apparent to Nazism?**

What is ideology but a body of beliefs with the power to stir up and mobilize people. The beliefs are not meant to be studied and understood, but to be believed in with a burning faith.

Communism told the faithful to believe in a struggle between classes for political and economic power. Nazism mesmerized Germans to believe in a struggle between pure and impure races for world domination. And then came anti-Zionism...

To be heir-apparent to the earth-shaking isms of the 20th century, anti-Zionism must, as they did, convey a particular world view. For that matter so must Zionism if, as many would argue, it is the vilest ideology of all. It certainly is older than all. As a movement Zionism goes back to the last half of the 19th century, though as a faith, as the unwavering attachment of Jews and Judaism to a homeland, Zionism extends back to biblical days. Whether ideology is the right pigeonhole for it depends on the lessons we learn from anti-Zionism.

*“One who has thought as well as suffered.”* So wrote the New York Times when Hannah Arendt published her seminal work, “The Origins of Totalitarianism” in 1951. One could wish for no better class on ideology than that of the great political scientist Arendt.

Ideology, we learn from her, is first and foremost a body of beliefs. Not just some random beliefs: they must explain past and present, and predict the future, no matter how far removed from reality the beliefs happen to be. Indeed, if they were linked to reality there'd be nothing ideological about them.

As for the tent of followers held enthralled, they must be incapable of learning, from history or from current events. Hence the power and allure of beliefs, of axiomatic premises and made to order facts: they emancipate people from reality. At this point indoctrination takes the lead role, reciting the belief system ad nauseam. In sum, ideology is poles apart from a mere political movement.

And here we leave Arendt, just for a while to compare notes with anti-Zionism. How far does it depart from a political movement? Does it claim to explain the past and present and predict the future? Has it a body of beliefs, of premises and facts that liberate anti-Zionists from reality? Is it taught ad nauseam?

The beliefs of anti-Zionism are a matter of public record. Who has not heard Zionists execrated for the vilest intents or deeds? They pull the levers of power; they've made America beholden to Israel; the media is in their grasp; their occupation of Palestine is uniquely wicked; their creation Israel a foreign colonial enterprise running an Apartheid system and committing crimes against humanity. Even the Arab world meltdown is only because Zionists live (too well) on one hundredth of one percent of a region home to people of another faith. The Middle East would get along fine without the Zionist cancer. Only eradicate it and Sunnis would lie down with Shiites, swords beaten into ploughshares.

If the angry belief system had a core it would subsist in two innocent enough words: 'Occupation' and 'Control.' Yet how those words suffuse every indictment, how they colour every canard. Hardly a day passes without the claim that the Zionist occupation is a crime. No proof is given and, like any rallying cry worth its salt, 'occupation' is kept undefined. Just as Hitler railed against a Jewish conspiracy while not a Jew lived outside ghetto or death camp, so anti-Zionists rail against occupation while not a Jew lives in autonomously-run Palestine. And who except ideologues out of touch with reality would crew a ship to free Gaza from itself.

Then there is control. Zionists are believed to have the malice and wherewithal to control every important thing. Even when they don't, Zionists pull levers to get others to do their bidding. The media is under Zionist control; ditto for American policy making and the special treatment that Israel gets. Down in the engine room Zionist money keeps the wheels turning, and the Holocaust card held for when the engine gets tired, threatening the Zionist enterprise. Then the card is played for all its worth. Such manipulative control and lever pulling is "beyond chutzpah" in the words of Norman Finkelstein the anti-Zionist.

Still, anti-Zionism would fall short of ideology unless its core beliefs were drummed into the hoi polloi. Institutions of learning, like the old Soviet Comintern, play that role. When anti-Zionist tenets are not in the syllabus, they're taught at campus events or summer camps. But remember Hannah Arendt. To be a proper ideology anti-Zionism must go further than learning beliefs by rote. It must explain the past and present, and predict the future. All are key indicators ticked by the narrative so familiar to us.

According to this narrative European Jews came over and stole the land from native Palestinians. Israelis are colonial usurpers and ethnic cleansers. Jackbooted, they oppress harmless Palestinians. What for other people are conscience-free acts (putting up housing, turning on taps, driving on roads, keeping business running) are criminal acts when Zionists engage in them. The anti-Zionist can be neither argued nor shaken out of his credo: Zionists

are never innocent, Palestinians never guilty. Period. The anti-Zionist is there to tell you, not to argue.

The credo is sacred to skinhead and professor alike. Law professor John Dugard got angry with the chairman of the UN-Goldstone team after he decided that the Zionists were innocent after all. Amnesty International Professor Derrick Pounder considered no sign of dead bodies to be proof of dead bodies which the Zionists had somehow secreted away. Haifa Professor Ilan Pappé refused to let go of a fake Zionist massacre long after his student had apologized for inventing one. Come what may, Zionists will be guilty of one thing or another. People emancipated from reality by a belief system, and only such people, can be clownish and contrary to this degree.

What of the predicted future? And how do anti-Zionists work to make it happen?

They predict a one-state outcome – yet another Muslim state, and labour to see it come about. After Palestinian qualifiers crawl out from all corners of the globe to take up their right of return, Palestine will have a Jewish minority. The size of that minority will depend on how many Jews are left alive, and on how many survivors accept dhimmi (third class) status, as Christians ruled by Muslims have done elsewhere. Then the anti-Zionist can take a back seat and wait for the inevitable to take its course. Ethnic cleansing will solve the Jewish problem. Zionists won't last long in Palestine, but share the fate of persecuted Christians. No temple precinct, no patriarchal tomb, no synagogue, will be sacrosanct. Of this mouth-watering prospect the anti-Zionist dream is made.

Could Zionism be more vile? Only if it happens to be a real ideology to begin with

To be one does it have what it takes? Does Zionism boast a solid body of beliefs, a single narrative that claims to explain the past and present, and predict Israel's future? Not according to anti-Zionists, when their mind is on other matters. To verify their claims and calumnies about Israel to whom do anti-Zionists turn, first and foremost? Who but to Zionists of 'conscience'. Disaffected Jews are grist to their mill. The indictments of columnists Robert Fisk or Tom Friedman tap into them on every occasion possible. The books of Israel-hater Norman Finkelstein are filled with source notes from Israeli media, Israeli human rights bodies, Israeli political figures. Boycott Israel platforms are given to professed Zionists.

Inadvertently, anti-Zionists disclose that the Zionism they vilify boasts no body of beliefs. By their own acts they prove that Zionism is anything but ideological. Too clever by half, they disprove that Zionism is one hell bent ideology. Against their better judgment they paint a picture of Zionism as an accommodating tent for divergent leanings. World views as far apart as liberalism, conservatism, socialism, Judaism and neo-Zionism feel comfortable under Zionism's big tent.

No – Zionism is quite unlike its nemesis, that ideology zealously advocating faith in a wicked nation of Jews.

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## **6. Palestine and Israel: two-state, one-state, Jewish state, no state**

As the Israeli- Palestinian peace talks go from a languid lack of accomplishment to the edge of collapse, there is increasing talk about the impossibility of a two-state solution and increasing talk on the Palestinian and pro-Palestinian side of a one-state solution.

Back in the 1930s and 40s noble -minded Jews who connected at some level with Zionism were calling for a bi-national rather than exclusively Jewish state but neither the Zionist leadership nor the Palestinian leadership wanted it which in both cases, figures.

The whole thrust of the Zionist movement for most Zionists, would be a Jewish state theoretically ready to absorb as many Jews from Europe, America, and the Arab world as would be willing and able to immigrate.

And since the overwhelming population in Mandate Palestine was Arab, why would the Arab leadership in Palestine consider a bi-national state as just another way of denying the Palestinians the right to self-determination?

### **One state, two state, no state**

*The one-state solution is more or less the same idea as the bi-national state in Palestine but this time it is coming almost entirely from the Palestinian side, whereas in the 1930s and 40s it was almost entirely from the Jewish side.*

*The one state solution still is a noble idea but noble ideas don't cut much ice without significant power behind it, whether it is the power of popular movements or powerful leaders capable of imposing their vision. Unfortunately, neither a powerful mass movement nor the commitment of strong willed leaders exists as yet for the one state.*

And it is as utopian as it is noble, given the deep suspicion and animosity that prevails in both Israeli and Palestinian Arab societies for each other. The only way to a one state solution is via two states, providing both sides with an opportunity to engage people to people without threats to their respective and very different concerns, apprehensions and fears.

The only other viable option to two states is a right-wing Israeli version of one state based on ethnic cleansing and annexation. In light of the failure of peace talks, the Israeli government, by cabinet realignment or by a new election, will get even more right wing than it is at present. This has been the trend since the 1967 War.

Imagine the current Israeli Minister of Economy Naftali Bennett as a future prime minister. He is opposed to two states, a firm defender of the settlements and their expansion in an area that he will not even refer to as the West Bank.

Given the hopelessness of the situation it is almost inevitable there will be Palestinian jihadi attack killing a large number of Israeli civilians -- like a bomb going off at the western Wailing Wall when the plaza is filled to capacity during key Israeli holidays.

This would provoke a terrible ethnic cleansing of the Arabs of former Jordanian Jerusalem and the West Bank. The ultra right-wing government could then annex all of the West Bank and not worry at all about the "demographic threat."

### **Consequences of a failed deal**

*The latest crisis in the peace talks began with Netanyahu's endlessly repeated insistence over the past few months, as a condition for any deal, that the Palestinian Authority recognize Israel as a Jewish state -- a trap the Palestinians are falling into, as has happened so frequently in the past.*

So as not to take the rap for the imminent collapse of the talks, the Palestinians should take a page from the quite successful Israeli play book of saying "Yes, but.." instead of "No." Why

can't the PA authority bounce back and say, "Yes but – Israel will now recognize us (the PA, with borders yet to be negotiated), as a Palestinian Arab state."

Since Israel to date has recognized the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority only as the voice of the Palestinians and not as representatives of a Palestinian State, demanding recognition in return would be a sly move and the responsibility would then fall in Israel.

Meanwhile, the issue of a Jewish state is still another distraction from the critical issue of the settlements and their growth. As are the more recent measures that have tipped the scale.

Short of more sophisticated Palestinian diplomacy backed by a growing BDS movement, the settlements will continue to grow and more and more Palestinian land will be confiscated and more and more Palestinians will be harassed, if not injured or even murdered by the settlers. And the Palestinians will end up with no state.

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## **7. Twelve questions about the "peace process"**

In last week's *New York Times*, a letter from Dov Bruce Krulwich in Beit Shemesh, Israel, asked two questions about the possible release of Jonathan Pollard to encourage Israel to release Palestinian murderers to convince the Palestinians to discuss a Palestinian state, even though the Palestinians "refuse even to agree that the end game involves two states for two peoples":

"Shouldn't a people who have never had a state be the ones making goodwill gestures to continue a process that will benefit them the most?"

"Why weren't the previous good-will gestures, not to mention all the good-will gestures in the past 20 years, enough to expect the Palestinians to take a step themselves?"

Those questions lead to some of my own:

- Why do people have to be paid - in the form of cash, prisoners, freezes, etc - to convince them to show up to negotiate a state for themselves?
- Why do people who have signed a formal agreement, obligating themselves not to take "any step" outside bilateral negotiations to change the status of the disputed territories, have to be paid to convince them to adhere to their agreement?
- Why are people who have already been offered (and rejected) a state three times in the last decade - with each offer covering substantially all of the disputed territories and a capital in Jerusalem - entitled to a fourth offer?
- Why is a putative Palestinian state, ruled half by a terrorist group and half by a "president" currently in the 10th year of his four-year term, with the two groups unable to live side by side in peace with each other (much less Israel), ready to be a state - even assuming agreement could be reached on its borders or any other issue?
- Why is U.S. foreign policy - with the Arab world in a state of chaos ranging from Libya to Egypt to Syria to Lebanon - fixated on trying to establish another already-failed state right next to Israel?

Which brings one again to the two questions posed by Dennis Ross last month in the course of summarizing the Israeli position in the current impasse:

"[I]f you [the Palestinians] believe in two states, why is it that Israel being the nation-state of the Jewish people is something that you can't accept?"

"Why is it that self-determination for the Jewish people in a part of historic Palestine is something that you [the Palestinians] can't embrace?"

As the American secretary of state reduces his goal from (a) reaching a peace agreement to (b) reaching a "framework" for an agreement to (c) simply keeping the Palestinian "president" at the negotiating table for six months, to be purchased by more Israeli pre-negotiation concessions, the pertinent questions include those that Elliot Abrams asked last week:

"Where does it stop? What are the limiting principles? ...What will [the secretary of state] want next year [from Israel] when Abbas threatens to leave the table again?"

The history of the "peace process" is now several stages past tragedy and farce. The side that supposedly wants a state won't discuss one without compensation to do so; won't accept a state as an end-of-claims solution but only as a stage in a continuing attempt to "return" to the other one; won't agree that "two states for two peoples" is the goal of the process, much less explicitly recognize a Jewish state; can't even hold an election, much less manage a stable state; ignores obligations under its prior agreement with Israel while asking Israel to believe it would abide by a new one; has already demonstrated three times in less than a decade it will not accept the "Everyone (Supposedly) Knows" peace plan; and does not even have a "president" legally in office, able to negotiate on behalf of all Palestinian groups, much less enforce any agreement he might reach.

Meanwhile, the U.S. leans on Israel, because a Palestinian state remains the central goal of an American foreign policy that long ago lost sight of the fact that - under the above circumstances - a Palestinian state would not be a "solution" to anything.

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## **8. The real 'Jewish state' story**

Israel is a Jewish state — or the nation-state of the Jewish people — by virtue of having been established by a United Nation resolution on two states, one Jewish and one Arab, and because self-determination is rooted in the law of nations, and finally because it's the self-determination of the majority of Israel's citizens. Israel does not need Palestinian recognition of its Jewish character and never made such a demand of Egypt and Jordan. So why has Israel insisted on recognition of its Jewish character by the Palestinians? Is their authorization really necessary?

US Secretary of State John Kerry maintained recently that Arafat had already recognized a Jewish state. Kerry is correct. It was a recognition that is important to understand. In the mid-1970's Henry Kissinger formulated the conditions for dialogue between the PLO and the American administration. They included an explicit and unconditional rejection of terror, acceptance of Resolutions 242 and 388, and recognition of Israel. The issue became relevant only in the late 1980's. The PLO's status was damaged after its expulsion to Tunisia and the outbreak of the first intifada. The PLO attempted to return to centre stage through dialogue with the American administration. Sweden's foreign minister Stan Anderson was enlisted to mediate the dialogue.

In November 1988 the Palestine National Council took place in Algiers. It is remembered primarily for its declarations of independence. The same Council, for the first time, recognized UN Resolutions 181, 242 and 338. The developments were positive, but the decisions made there did not satisfy the US.

Anderson didn't give up. He invited five leading US Jews, led by Attorney Rita Hauser, to Stockholm to meet Arafat. At the press conference held at the conclusion of the meeting, Arafat denounced terrorism and declared his acceptance of the UN resolutions. Apparently this was the first time that the words 'Jewish State' came out of Arafat's mouth, a development the NY Times reported. But the US Administration demanded a much more explicit declaration. To underscore its position, the US refused to grant Arafat a visa to speak before the United Nations, prompting the UN to hold a special session on December 13 in Geneva so that Arafat could speak.

Once again, the US was not satisfied by his declarations. George Shultz, then US Secretary of State, was not prepared to deviate from the explicit wording the US demanded. After two days of consultations, mediated by Anderson, Arafat convened a press conference, where he denounced terrorism and recognized UN resolutions 242 and 338. Arafat also once again declared, in his own voice, that the solution was 'two states for two peoples', and referred to Israel as the 'Jewish state'. Arafat gave his statements in English, reading, in fact, what Shultz had given him. This time he met their demands. On that same day, December 15 1988, Schultz announced that the President of the US had decided to open a dialogue with the PLO..

The dialogue was short and futile. At the first outbreak of terror activity after the declaration, the PLO refused to denounce it. Iraq invaded Kuwait. Arafat supported Saddam Hussein. The dialogue came to an abrupt end. The Madrid Conference convened, and only the Oslo Accords brought the PLO back to centre stage. But the Palestinians returned to their path of refusal. The Fatah Congress in 2009, which Abu Mazen chaired, voted unanimously to reject the idea of a 'Jewish State'. Arafat himself, in another spin, reneged on his recognition of a Jewish state, in a newspaper interview in 2004. But this was a rare remark in a sea of contradictory decisions and declarations.

A number of questions remain. Why was the US government's stubborn insistence on preconditions for talks legitimate, whereas Israel's demands today, which aren't a precondition, are somehow less legitimate? Secondly, if Abu Mazen, the PLO and Fatah retreated from Arafat's consent – which was given publicly to the US administration - it is possible that every Palestinian agreement is in reality a deception. And thirdly, if it's not a deception, and the Palestinians have already recognized a Jewish state, as John Kerry claims, then what's the problem of working this agreement into the outline?

The discussion on this issue has also had a number of foolish claims. Take, for example, the question of what Abe Foxman, executive director of the Anti-Defamation League in the USA, would say if the US declared itself a 'Christian state'? Another one, Efraim Halevi, former director of the Mossad, asked in all seriousness how Israel would react if the Palestinians demanded recognition as a 'Muslim state'.

It's unfortunate that serious individuals, very serious ones, especially from the Israeli side, made such spurious claims. First, the US is one of very few countries that isn't a nation-state. Most countries in the world are nation-states. Yugoslavia split into seven separate entities; Czechoslovakia into two; Pakistan broke off from India. Other states in Europe maintain national identities, even religious identities. In England, the religion of the state is Anglican, and if the next king marries a Jew their children won't be able to inherit the crown.

In Denmark, Article 4 of its constitution establishes the religion of the state as Evangelical – Lutheran, which is granted support and assistance from the state, and its King can only be of that religion. In Lichtenstein, the constitution recognizes Catholicism as the religion of the state. And the list can go on and on to many more states. So the comparison with the US is, to say the least, a bit ridiculous.

Efraim Halevi is a little more worrisome, in that he also served as Israel's ambassador to the European Union. He is supposed to be knowledgeable of the basic facts. He is also supposed to be aware of all the drafts of the Palestinian Constitution that establish 'Islam as the religion of the state'. There is no need to wait for a state with a constitution. That is exactly what Article 4 of the Basic Law of the PA states.

The demand for recognition of a Jewish state is aimed at achieving two things: ending the fantasy of the 'right of return' and bringing an end to the conflict. It's correct that Israel doesn't need Palestinian permission to be the nation-state of the Jewish people. That is self-definition. But Netanyahu's demand is legitimate precisely because the Palestinians themselves have said they oppose the Jewish state as a condition for continuing to demand the right of return of refugees.

It's important to remember three other things. First, at the end the year 2000, it was Bill Clinton, who presented parameters for a peace plan that included the words: "Palestine as the homeland of the Palestinian people and the state of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people." Second, the Geneva Accords, a draft for a peace plan initiated and signed by senior peace activists from both sides, includes in its introduction an agreement of the right of the Jewish people to a state. And third, before Netanyahu, there was Tzipi Livni, and also Ehud Olmert who insisted on this demand, and recently Yitzhak Herzog, the leader of the Labour party, also declared his support for it.

All this is not to say that Israel has kept all its promises within the diplomatic framework with the Palestinians. Take for example the Road Map, in which Israel promised to freeze all building in the settlements and to dismantle outposts which had been built after 2001. That didn't happen and neither did the Palestinian uphold their commitments to take action against terrorism.

As long as we're talking about preparing a framework deal, we need to place the demand for recognition of a Jewish state within its historical context. It wasn't Netanyahu and it was not the Israeli right. It was US administration officials, dovish ones at that, who were adamant about pressuring Arafat to agree to this demand.

As long as the Palestinians stubbornly demand the 'right of return', which is tantamount to an end to the State of Israel, the insistence on recognition of a Jewish state is basically an insistence on the solution of two states for two peoples. And anyone who justifies the Palestinian refusal is not bringing peace any closer, but rather pushing the chances of a two state solution further away. There are other issues on which we need to oppose Netanyahu's policies. On this issue however, he deserves total support. Not to torpedo peace. But just the opposite. To pave the way to peace.

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