

2 Adar II, 5779
March 9, 2019

News Reports and Commentary
Israel and the Jewish World
Published by the TORONTO ZIONIST COUNCIL
Tel: 416 781-3571 e-mail: tzc@torzc.org
More news: www.aftershabbat.com Founding Editor: Yossi Winter

ב"ה שבת שלום
פרשת פקודי

Imagine Israel if these issues had been resolved decades ago by good leadership?

“Palestine” - Time to say “No!”

Martin Sherman

The two-state paradigm's deadly detriments are now so glaringly apparent that it is becoming increasingly difficult to reconcile calls for Palestinian statehood with genuine concern for the well-being of the Jewish nation-state.

Ladies and gentlemen, when the Palestinians say "two states" they do not mean what we mean

—Maj-Gen. (res.) Amos Yadlin, October 2018

With the impending public announcement of the enigmatic “deal of the century”, pledged by the Trump administration, rumors are swirling throughout the Middle East—and beyond—as to what in fact, its real nature might be. This, together with the dramatic rise in the electoral prospects of the newly formed “Blue & White” alliance between Benny Gantz and Yair Lapid, has once again raised the ominous specter of the return of the two-state principle.

Indeed, although no authoritative preview of the detailed content of the “deal” has been provided by the White House, the little that has been released referred to it as including significant Israeli concessions. Moreover, the leaders of “Blue & White” have repeatedly referred to their approval of the principals of the INSS (Institute for National Security Studies) plan for unilateral concessions in Judea-Samaria and the throttling of all Jewish communities beyond the pre-1967 Green Line. Significantly, the INSS plan explicitly defines the “preservation of the two-state option” as its “strategic purpose”—this despite the fact that in presenting the plan at its public launch in October 2018, the head of INSS, Maj-Gen. Amos Yadlin, conceded that the attempt to implement the two-state formula has failed disastrously in the past, is unfeasible in the present, and whose implementation in the future is dangerous.

Indeed, he warned his audience that the two state prescription is “detached from reality,” recounting that “the attempt to implement the two state solution—with the Oslo Accords (1993), the Camp David Summit (2000), the Annapolis process (2008), the Kerry initiative (2014)—has failed completely, and has led [only] to impasse and bloodshed.”

Yadlin proceeded to lay out the reasons for his dismal assessment: “The internal Palestinian divide between Gaza and Ramallah, Palestinian political weakness, and above all the ideological extremism of the Palestinians, make any prospect of signing a comprehensive agreement unrealistic.”

Failed in past, unfeasible in present,

dangerous in future

Echoing precisely what two-state opponents have been insisting on for decades, he pronounced categorically: “There is no-one to agree with, there is nothing to agree on—and the implementation [of any two-state initiative] is dangerous”.

But then, astonishingly, rather than arrive at the rational conclusion that the pursuit of the two-state objective be abandoned and alternative approaches be explored—he did precisely the opposite!

He urged that Israel should undertake a policy, set out in the INSS “plan”, that assumes that there is—or rather that there might be—someone to agree with, and something to agree on—at some unspecified future date and as a result of some unspecified process that would somehow overcome his previously stipulated obstacles of “Palestinian divisiveness, political weakness and ideological extremism.”

Yadlin’s patently perverse and paradoxical position

on the two-state doctrine—or rather dogma—underscores precisely why it must be renounced—unequivocally and irrevocably.

Indeed, its deadly detriments are so glaringly apparent that it is becoming increasingly difficult to reconcile calls for a Palestinian state with genuine concern for the well-being of the Jewish nation-state.

Surely then, when even its most avid adherents are compelled to put it on open-ended life support—with only the most tenuous and nebulous arguments to justify its contrived preservation—the time to admit irredeemable failure has arrived—and to move on to alternative paradigms to approach the Palestinian predicament.

Two statism: Immoral, irrational & irresponsible

Indeed, the two-state endeavor is demonstrably immoral, irrational, and incompatible with the long-term existence of Israel as the Jewish nation-state.

It is immoral because it will create realities that are the absolute negation of the lofty values invoked for its implementation.

It is irrational because it will generate the precise perils it was designed to prevent.

It is incompatible with Israel's long-term existence as the Jewish nation-state because it will almost inevitably culminate in a mega-Gaza on the outskirts of the greater Tel Aviv area.

Why the two-state paradigm is immoral

Typically – indeed, almost invariably – two-state proponents lay claim to the moral high ground, invoking lofty liberal values for their political credo, while impugning their ideological opponents' ethical credentials for opposing it.

The Silent Intifada

Six terror attacks were recorded in Israel over the past week, including a shooting attack and four fire-bombings. There were 11 incidents of stonethrowing. Altogether, there have been 360 incidents of Arab terrorism since the beginning of 2019.

In this week's Weekly Terror Report, Boomerang Fighting for Israel takes a look at the human cost of what has been dubbed the 'Silent Intifada', focusing on the death of Adel Biton, an Israeli three-year-old who was paralyzed in a stonethrowing attack and later died as a result of complications from pneumonia.

BoomerangFight.com

IsraelNationalNews.com

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However, given the socio-cultural conditions in virtually all Arab countries, and the precedents set in Palestinian-administered territories evacuated by Israel, the inevitable outcome of the two-state formula is not difficult to foresee. Indeed, there is little reason to believe (and certainly two-state proponents have never provided anything approaching a persuasive one) that any prospective Palestinian state, established on any territory Israel evacuated, will quickly become anything but yet another homophobic, misogynistic Muslim-majority tyranny.

So, why on earth then would anyone who allegedly subscribes to values of gender equality, tolerance of sexual preferences and political pluralism endorse any policy that would almost certainly obviate the ethical tenets they purport to cherish? On what basis could advocating the establishment of such an entity be considered a valid claim for the moral high ground – or indeed for any moral merit whatsoever?

Why the two-state paradigm is irrational

But it is not only in terms of moral outcomes that the two-state paradigm is a perversely self-obstructive endeavor. The same is true for the practical outcomes that it will almost certainly precipitate.

It is hard to say what has to happen before it is recognized that the land-for-peace doctrine, from which the two-state concept is derived, is a perilously counterproductive endeavor – as it has proven in every instance it was attempted, not only in the Arab-Israeli context, but whenever an effort was made to appease tyranny with political concessions and territorial withdrawals.

For whenever that unfortunate formula has been applied, rather than result in peace, it has—as INSS's Yadlin conceded—produced increased violence and bloodshed. Every time territory has been relinquished to Arab control, that territory has, sooner or later—usually sooner rather than later—become a platform for launching lethal attacks against Israel: Almost immediately in Gaza, within months in Judea and Samaria, within years in South Lebanon and after several decades in Sinai, which is now descending into the depths of depravity and unspeakable brutality – with no good options on the horizon.

In light of the grim precedents provided by previous land-for-peace experiments, together with the no less grim trends in much of Arab society in general and Palestinian society in particular, continued insistence on this fatally flawed formula is both gravely irrational and grossly irresponsible.

Why the two-state paradigm is irresponsible

Accordingly, apart from wishful thinking, dangerously detached from any prevailing (or foreseeable) reality, stubborn adherence to the two-state dogma has no value – neither in terms of its moral merits nor its political pragmatism.

Worse yet, the pursuit of it is totally incompatible with Israel's long-term existence.

To grasp the fundamental validity of this seemingly far-reaching statement, it is necessary to recognize that today, with the changing nature of Arab enmity, the major existential challenge to Israel's existence as the Jewish nation-state is no longer fending off invasion, but resisting attrition.

Nowhere was this more starkly evident than in the 2014 Operation Protective Edge in Gaza, where continued bombardment resulted in the evacuation of entire Jewish communities in Israel's south.

Without compelling evidence to the contrary, there is little reason to believe, and certainly to adopt as a working assumption, that the realities in the south will not be repeated on Israel's eastern border – with several chilling differences.

The most plausible outcome of an Israeli evacuation of Judea-Samaria is the emergence of a mega-Gaza on the very outskirts of the greater Tel Aviv area and other major urban centers in the heavily populated coastal plain. Indeed, just as in Gaza, once Israel evacuates the area, there is no way it can determine who will rule it—certainly not for any length of time.

But unlike Gaza, which has a border of around 50 kilometers and no topographical command of adjacent territory inside the pre-1967 frontiers, the situation in Judea and Samaria would—to understate the case—be alarmingly different.

The "depraved indifference" of the two-state paradigm

Any Arab entity set up there would have a front abutting Israel's most populous area, of about 500 kilometers and total topographical superiority over 80% of the country's civilian population, vital infrastructure systems and 80% of its commercial activity.

All of these will be in range of weapons used against Israel from territory evacuated and transferred to Arab control. Accordingly, this grim caveat cannot be dismissed as “right-wing scaremongering”—for it is merely the empirical precedent.

Any force deployed in these areas – whether regular or renegade – could, with cheap and readily available weapons, disrupt at will, any socio-economic routine in Israel's coastal megalopolis, turning the popular tourist city of Netanya into a Sderot-by-the-sea, and making the attrition in daily life increasingly—perhaps unbearably—onerous.

Of course, no-one can discount the likelihood that if Israel were to evacuate Judea-Samaria, it would fall into the hands of Hamas-like elements, or worse. At the very least, such an outcome is highly plausible. Indeed, the only way to ensure that what happened in Gaza does not happen in Judea-Samaria is for Israel to retain control of this territory – thereby obviating implementation of the two-state formula and the emergence of a Palestinian state.

Surely then, given the grave – indeed, existential – risks inherent in the two-state paradigm, considerably heightened by the precarious position of the current regime in neighboring Jordan, threatened, as it is, by ever-ascendant Islamist elements, would it not be eminently reasonable to consider further advocacy of this perilous prescription as "reckless endangerment" – even "depraved indifference"?

The two state paradigm: The imperative to say "No"

Accordingly, with the catastrophic consequences of continued insistence on the quest for a two-state resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict an ever more ominous likelihood, a determined search for plausible and durable alternatives – more moral, more rational and more compatible with the survival of the Jewish nation-state – is now an urgent imperative.

This is the unequivocal position that the Israeli government must convey to the purveyors of the Trump "deal of the century". This is the unequivocal message that the Israeli electorate must convey to the peddlers of the two-state formula—whether postdated in the guise of "separation" or not—in the upcoming elections.

For, when it comes to this immoral, irrational, and irresponsible paradigm, the time to say "no"—resounding, resolutely and irreversibly—has come. Martin Sherman is the founder and executive director of the Israel Institute for Strategic Studies.

Visionaries, not Whiners

Tirael Cohen

Last weekend, an interview with Maj. Gen. (res.) Tal Russo – the Labor Party's "security and defense" guy – was published in which he supposedly criticized the "whining" by residents of Gaza-adjacent communities. The response led to an apology by Yedioth Ahronoth, the newspaper that ran the interview, and a clarification that stated that Russo had never actually made the remarks attributed to him.

But the very discussion about the "whining" by residents of the Gaza periphery reveals a deep lack of understanding about the role of Jewish settlement on the country's borders. Residents of the communities near the Gaza Strip aren't hapless victims of terrorism who burden the defense establishment, but rather the civil front that protects the country's southwest border. The question isn't how much the people near Gaza suffer or what the defense establishment is doing to ease that suffering, but rather how we should defend our border with Gaza. The communities just east of Gaza take a daily part in the country's battle to protect its sovereignty and security. They are the front that protects the center of the country. Remember the days of Operation Protective Edge. The residents of the Galilee communities along the border with Lebanon are Israel's northern line of defense and they are facing the threat of Hezbollah's attack tunnels. The residents of the Jordan Valley, Judea and Samaria do the same on Israel's eastern border. It could be that the daily struggles of the border settlements and communities aren't heard a few dozen kilometers away from central Israel. It's easy to forget what the residents constantly have to deal with and take the relative quiet for granted.

But the security of the nation rests on settlement, on human communities that implement our borders, and have since the days of the "wall and tower" operations. The Zionist choice to protect borders through settlement is an inseparable part of Israel's defense and security creed.

The residents of the communities near Gaza aren't whiners. They explain and describe the challenges of life on the border. Their day-to-day reality exposes an uncomfortable truth about the country's security situation, and it's sometimes easier to dismiss their claims as "whining." But Israel should salute them, and be willing to listen about the challenges of their life.

Other than the distress of the residents of Gaza-adjacent communities, border communities in general are the subject of systemic neglect. The rural settlements on the country's northern, southern, and eastern borders are seen more as a problem and less as a national challenge, with the settlers forming the vanguard.

Strengthening border communities is a national mission: through tourism (the south is red with anemones, and the Galilee and Jordan Valley have never been greener); through agriculture (more hands are always needed); and through the economy (settlement businesses). Brave people have a chance to implement Zionism in the 21st century by joining settlement communities.

Tirael Cohen is a resident of the Jordan Valley and founder and CEO of Kedma, a nonprofit group that encourages settlement by young people.

Anti-Israel AMP's Inadvertent "Truth"

Steven Emerson

Amid the ongoing debate about U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar's repeated references to historic anti-Semitic imagery about Jews and power, money and loyalty, a key ally's fundraising dinner stumbled into an inconvenient truth.

"Speaking truth to power" was the theme Sunday for the American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) Chicago chapter's fundraising dinner. At least five AMP officials and speakers were part of a defunct network created by the Muslim Brotherhood in America called the "Palestine Committee." It was tasked with helping Hamas politically and financially, court records show. An investigation by the Investigative Project on Terrorism also found that the AMP carries out tasks similar to the old Palestine Committee, including fundraising, propaganda and lobbying.

So it was little surprise that the AMP dinner honored Marc Lamont Hill with its "Al Quds [Jerusalem] Award." Hill warned Palestinian supporters last October against adhering to "a civil rights tradition which romanticizes nonviolence." He also falsely accuses Israel of poisoning Palestinian water.

CNN fired him as a pundit last November after he ended a United Nations speech calling for "a free Palestine, from the river to the sea." A Palestinian state stretching from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea would eliminate Israel.

Before receiving the award, AMP showed clips from Russia Today and Al Jazeera news stories about Hill's firing.

The stories cast Hill as the victim of a "mob firing" that was a "seemingly coordinated attack by pro-Israel groups that have come to have a large say over what constitutes acceptable discourse on Palestine in the U.S. by willfully conflating legitimate criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism, and then convincing news outlets to do the same."

But then the Al Jazeera reporter made a key admission. Hill spent more than 20 minutes bashing alleged Israeli human rights abuses. But that's not what generated controversy: "Had the speech been six words shorter, Marc Lamont Hill would still be employed by CNN."

That's correct. And it demolishes a key talking point about Ilhan Omar.

You CAN question and express "legitimate criticism of Israel" without losing your job as a cable news pundit or sparking a national political controversy. What you can't do is invoke anti-Semitic metaphors or wish for an existing nation to disappear. That's probably true for any existing nation, but the theory hasn't been tested since Israel is the only country in the world in which such calls are defended as legitimate criticism.

The message didn't sink in with AMP. Just 48 hours after its dinner, AMP was urging supporters to lobby against a House resolution that does not name Omar, but condemns anti-Semitism like she has expressed.

"Tell Speaker Pelosi that criticism of Israeli policies and the pro-Israel Lobby is NOT anti-Semitism and to stop conflating the two!" AMP wrote on its Facebook page.

Omar has not criticized Israeli policies. She has accused it of "hypnotizing the world," claimed that Jewish money drives U.S. policy toward Israel and insinuated Israel supporters "push for allegiance to a foreign country."

Hill, meanwhile, ended his AMP speech by

repeating the phrase that started the controversy, saying "we will resist until there is a free Palestine. And we may not see it, our children will see it, our children's children will see it, we will be connected around the world, and once and for all we will have a free Palestine ... [switching to Arabic] from the river to the sea."

It was a defiant act, especially since Hill took to the Philadelphia Inquirer after CNN fired him to apologize, saying he took "seriously the voices of so many Jewish brothers and sisters, who have interpreted my remarks as a call to or endorsement of violence. Rather than hearing a political solution, many heard a dog-whistle that conjured a long and deep history of violence against Jewish people. Although this was the furthest thing from my intent, those particular words clearly caused confusion, anger, fear, and other forms of harm. For that, I am deeply sorry."

Clearly.

The blowback to Hill's UN speech was a sign "from the river to the sea" is an achievable goal, Sheikh Jamal Said of Chicago's Mosque Foundation told the AMP audience. He spoke in Arabic and the Investigative Project on Terrorism translated his remarks.

"This state that is frightened by a man for talking for 10 minutes to the UN – it was frightened, shaken – and kicked him out of his job," Said said, blaming Israel for CNN's personnel decision. "This is not a state that will last. It's a state that will vanish, Allah willing! It will not last."

Other AMP speakers echoed Hill and defended Ilhan Omar. The Omar controversy, said AMP Chicago chair Nida Sahouri, shows that Israel and its supporters "are trembling from our progress. They are facing the challenge by trying to silence any voice that is supporting Palestine. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar is being smeared as an anti-Semite by people in her own party for stating the undeniable truth about AIPAC. Dr. Marc Lamont Hill, our keynote speaker for tonight, was fired from CNN because he called for freedom for all Palestinians, from the river to the sea."

Omar is undergoing "a ruthless onslaught" due to her "warranted criticism of the Israeli lobby, said AMP Chicago media coordinator Deanna Othman. "And of course our guest of honor, Dr. Marc Lamont Hill, who has been a consistent, he has been a consistent, principled and courageous advocate for the Palestinian cause and has bravely suffered the consequences of his activism. We thank him for that."

The AMP dinner made several things clear. Criticizing Israeli policies is not what got Marc Lamont Hill or Ilhan Omar into the headlines no matter how many times that argument is made. And AMP is not interested in a peaceful outcome to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It wants "from the river to the sea," which, as Said made clear, is an Israeli state "that will vanish, Allah willing."

www.investigativeproject.org

Our Strategic Balagan

Victor Rosenthal

Balagan: chaos, total disorder, huge mess. Borrowed from Russian.

The incendiary and explosive balloons continue to be sent across our southern border, and the Hamas special "night unit" continues to burn tires and throw explosives over the fence, as well as to cross over into Israel, attack soldiers, and try to get at civilians. We continue to "respond" by bombing or shelling empty installations.

We are careful not to kill them, because we are told that if we kill them, their honor will require that they kill us in return; this will lead to an escalation. They want that, we are told, because there is humanitarian crisis in Gaza, primarily because their rivals in the Palestinian Authority have been cutting salary payments to PA officials in Gaza who either work for Hamas or don't do anything. If there is an escalation, the crisis will get worse and the UN or other outside forces will step in and give them money, which they will spend on weapons or tunnels anyway.

Until recently, Israel has allowed Qatar to send millions in cash to Hamas, because nothing makes them madder than running out of money.

If there is an escalation, Hamas, Hezbollah, the PLO, and even Iranian forces in Syria will coordinate

their efforts, there will be a two- or three- front war, and we would suffer a lot of casualties although we would "win." That would be giving them what they want, we are told.

There is a news report that is emblematic of the insanity surrounding our relations with our Palestinian Arab enemies. It seems that the Israel Prison Service has been unable to stop the smuggling of cellular phones into facilities where Hamas terrorists have been imprisoned, so they are installing jamming devices. But – get ready for this – the IDF has asked them to suspend the work because of "its possible impact on the situation in the territories."

At the same time the Iranian regime is trying to upgrade Hezbollah's rockets with precision guidance kits. We are acting against it, insofar as the Russians allow, but likely we are simply slowing it down, not stopping it. Iran is also working to establish Shiite militia forces in Syria and Iraq, and of course proceeding with its ballistic missile and nuclear programs. We are certainly taking action, overt and covert, in these areas too, but again these operations are only capable of slowing the process, not stopping it.

Meanwhile, here at home the waqf and radical Muslims are trying to further erode the remains of our sovereignty on the Temple Mount. We proved to them last year that we were not prepared to defend it, when they forced Israel to back down from installing metal detectors and cameras at the entrances to the Mount in order to prevent any more of our policemen from being murdered. My prediction is that we will back down over this latest provocation too.

And then there is the illegal Bedouin encampment of Khan al-Ahmar, which even the Supreme Court says should be removed, which Bibi has solemnly promised to remove, but which we apparently can't demolish because the Europeans wouldn't like it.

Is your head spinning? Mine is. One wonders if we have a plan, or if we only react. One thing stands out in all of this: Israel, supposedly the eighth-strongest power in the world, militarily and economically (after the US, Russia, China, Germany, UK, France, and Japan), acts like she has no better option than to lie down and take it. Little by little, her sovereignty and security erodes. We don't seem to have the will to confront these problems when they are manageable, and they only grow more intractable with time.

There are a number of reasons for this. For one thing, there's the normal human propensity to put off trouble. Dealing with the root of the problems today would be disagreeable, more disagreeable than accepting their manifestations. Of course, tomorrow it will be worse, but tomorrow is not today and maybe something will change before then (someone more cynical than I might say, "it will be someone else's responsibility, tomorrow.")

Our Prime Ministers and their cabinets and generals are not supposed to think this way. They are supposed to think like good chess players, carefully laying the groundwork for their future actions, while systematically evaluating all the paths that the enemy might take, and developing contingency plans for them. Last week I played chess with my 9-year old grandson, and I relieved him of his queen because he was concentrating too hard on what he was about to do to me. By the time he becomes Prime Minister, I hope he will know better.

We can't just blame our leaders. They are operating in a political system that pits an Attorney General and Supreme Court with undefined and arbitrarily broad powers against the PM and his government. So when they try to do something like make a deal with private companies to exploit newly-found and highly strategic natural gas reservoirs, suddenly the Court can stick its nose in and upset everything, as happened in 2016. Or they are stymied when they try to find some solution to deal with an illegal influx of tens of thousands of migrants, as happened in 2014 (most of them are still here, having children whose first language is Hebrew).

But while the legal establishment still hasn't intervened directly in strategic military matters, the Attorney General, State Prosecutors' Office, and police have driven the Prime Minister crazy with criminal investigations for pretty much the past 4 years (he was interrogated by police for several hours at a time at least 12 times in connection with various accusations against him and his wife). The charges

have ranged from stupidly trivial to serious, but the overall impression is that they are out to get him on something, anything. Even apart from the political aspects of the legal assault – the Attorney General announced his intention to hold a pre-indictment hearing last week, a month before the election – it's hard to believe that the PM has had much time to ponder his next moves in the multiple geostrategic games he is playing with Hamas, Iran, and others.

Then there is the perennial problem that minor parties that happen to hold the balance of power in the coalition can paralyze or even bring down a government because of one rabbi who is angry over something.

Other pressing matters, like the massively funded European campaign to intervene in our politics and policies, and to help the Palestinian Arabs create facts on the ground in Judea and Samaria, have proven difficult to deal with decisively, possibly because too many Knesset members benefit directly or indirectly from the influx of Euros.

One thing that we do not seem to have to deal with today is the pressure from an American administration for more and more concessions to the Palestinians, for the sake of an impossible peace. This could change after our election in April, when the Trump megadeal will be revealed. But I don't think so – my feeling is that the Trump Administration is far more sympathetic to Israel than the last few, and will not try to impose a solution that we can't live with.

On the other hand, the American election is not so far off, and the Democratic Party in the US is less friendly toward Israel today than even in the days of Obama. If Trump is not re-elected and the next administration is headed by a left-wing Democrat, the Obama period will look like a picnic in comparison. We'd best end the balagan while we can.

MK's vs Judges

Daniel Siryoti and Yair Altman

By a vote of 17 to 10, the Central Elections Committee voted Wednesday to disqualify the Arab parties Balad and Ra'am from competing in the Knesset election, citing their alleged incitement to terrorism.

The decision now automatically goes to the Supreme Court, in its capacity as an appellate instance, where it is likely to be overturned.

Under Basic Law: Knesset, parties and candidates can be barred from competing in elections if their "goals and actions, including direct and indirect statements, reject Israel's democratic and Jewish character, incite to racism, or support armed struggle by enemy states or terrorist groups against the State of Israel."

The Central Elections Committee is headed by a Supreme Court Justice but its other members are MKs, and thus tends to rule on such decisions along ideological lines. The Supreme Court, which under Basic Law: The Knesset has to approve all disqualifications, usually overturns them.

The vote to disqualify the parties, which have submitted a joint candidate list for the Knesset election, followed a heated debate in which right-wing activists showed that past and present Arab lawmakers from the parties praised terrorists and sounded anti-Israeli rhetoric.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose Likud party asked to disqualify the Balad-Ra'am list, praised the committee's decision. "Those who support terrorists will not enter the Israeli Knesset," he said.

Yisrael Beytenu leader Avigdor Lieberman, whose right-wing party has repeatedly criticized Arab MKs for allegedly abusing Israel's democracy in order to bring about its demise, also lauded the committee: "People who accuse Israel of carrying out ethnic cleansing in the Gaza Strip should not be allowed to have a Knesset seat; they should sit in Hamas' parliament or in the Iranian Majles in Tehran."

Ra'am and Balad officials reacted angrily to the decision, calling it a "racist, political and populist decision that is designed to undermine the political agency of Arab citizens."

The decision to disqualify the list came just hours after the committee ruled that Ofer Cassif, from the Jewish-Arab list of Hadash-Ta'al, cannot compete in the election because of controversial statements in

which he allegedly questioned Israel's right to exist and expressed support for terrorism.

(The left's policies have been rejected repeatedly by the electorate, What the left can not achieve for lack of support through the democratic processes of legislation in the Knesset they will try to achieve through the courts where they only have to convince one judge. This is effective only as long as the judicial appointment system remains a leftist domain. For proof just read on.

**Read about the Overrule Clause and
The Legal Forum for Israel
www.alsoaftershabbat.com**

Israel's Deep State Goes All In to Stop Netanyahu's Reelection

Daniel Greenfield

The threat to indict Prime Minister Netanyahu weeks before Israel's election is a desperate stunt by the country's institutional Deep State Left. Israel's law enforcement is a leftist boy's club and had been desperately seeking to indict Netanyahu and his wife on something, anything, for years, with multiple investigations underway into everything, including his wife's bottle receipts.

Gantz and Lapid, two leftists running under the guise of a fake third party that is really just Labor with a new coat of paint, look like the Left's best shot to replace Israel's conservative government. And sell out the country to the terrorists all over again.

This, along with the fake Otzma scandal, looks like the Israeli equivalent of a November surprise.

Israel's conservative parties have been divided by the usual shameless careerism that will waste countless votes. Gantz has been propped up as a fake centrist leader.

The only question is whether Israeli voters will fall for it.

They haven't before. And the timing of the indictment communicates everything about the corruption, not that of Netanyahu, but of the leftist political establishment abusing its power to go after him.

It's a corrupt establishment, a vast and arrogant bureaucracy, that ordinary Israelis encounter every day. And they know that Gantz and Lapid are the beneficiaries of a corrupt "protektsia", the same one that exempts them from the challenges of dealing with that system.

Israelis have repeatedly turned back efforts by the Left to rule openly. But they have been tricked into voting for fake third parties, like Lapid's, operating under the guise of reform.

The question is how much will they be fooled?

The polls, as usual, are meaningless. The question will be once again decided at the ballot box.

Daniel Greenfield, is a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the Freedom Center

The Netanyahu Witch Hunt

Victor Rosenthal

Demonization, double standard, and delegitimization: the famous "Three D's" proposed by Natan Sharansky in 2004 have proven to be a powerful tool to distinguish between legitimate criticism of Israel, and "new antisemitism," in which the Jewish state replaces the individual Jew as a target.

What these criteria do is reveal the irrational basis of the exaggerated charges against Israel, and help show how they are part of an emotional propaganda attack aimed at creating a strong antipathy in the listener which is not justified by facts.

These same propaganda techniques can be deployed in other venues for other purposes, such as in an attempt to damage a democratically elected political leader and influence an election. In a situation like this, the Three D's can help us distinguish between legitimate criticism of policies and behavior – even alleged criminal behavior – and a witch hunt.

Of course I am talking about the witch hunt against PM Binyamin Netanyahu.

The major complaint against Netanyahu today is that he is corrupt, as is charged in the three cases in which the Attorney General has said he will attempt to indict Netanyahu: accepting gifts of cigars and champagne in return for political favors, conspiring

to obtain positive coverage from a newspaper in return for suppressing a competitor, and – most damaging – promoting regulatory actions that provided financial benefits for a media mogul in return for positive coverage on a website he controlled.

There are some serious problems for the prosecution in these cases. The first case is both trivial and vague (how many cigars is too many?) In the second, Netanyahu is supposed to have traded support for legislation to ban the free distribution of newspapers – a bill aimed at Israel Hayom – for positive coverage from the publisher of its competitor, Yediot Aharonot. But Netanyahu opposed the legislation, and Yediot didn't support him anyway. In the third, the website that allegedly provided positive coverage did publish several favorable articles, but overall did not change its slant.

In addition, all three accusations are based to some extent on the testimony of state's witnesses – people who have been given immunity from prosecution for their own illegal actions in return for their testimony against the Prime Minister. Testify the way we want, they are told, or you will go to jail! Could there be a greater conflict of interest?

But what I find the most egregious is the way the media – with the cooperation of the police and the prosecutor's office – has been trying Netanyahu in public for at least the last three or four years, in order to demonize and delegitimize him as Prime Minister. Netanyahu has been interrogated by the police at least twelve times for hours at a time in various cases, and each time there were sensational leaks that were gleefully reported on the evening TV news or in the next days' papers. Naturally, the reports stressed the most incriminating material. As far as I know, no one has been disciplined for these leaks.

There is also evidence of double standards. Arnon Milchan, who gave Netanyahu cigars and champagne was also friends with many other Israeli politicians, including Yair Lapid, one of the principals in the Blue and White party that is Netanyahu's main rival in the coming election. Lapid also supported legislation that would have benefited Milchan. But he was not investigated.

Further, 43 members of the Knesset – led by MK Eitan Kibel of the Labor Party – voted to ban the free distribution of newspapers, but none of them were investigated.

Politicians everywhere have always tried to trade favors for media coverage. The legal doctrine that treats this as bribery, however, is something new which seems to have been created just for Netanyahu.

Alan Dershowitz argues that interference by law enforcement in the relationship between politicians and media, except in cases of “clear and unambiguous financial corruption” is extremely dangerous to democracy, because almost every contact between them would be open to legal scrutiny. These questions are highly political, and therefore should be decided by the political process – in other words, the voters.

Avi Bell notes that there is a “new understanding of the traditional crimes of bribery and breach of public trust” in which media coverage is equivalent to a monetary payoff. This either implies that there will have to be “police oversight of nearly all interactions between media and public officials,” or it is a one-time application of special rules to Netanyahu – obviously a serious injustice. Either way, it is a “severe crisis in Israel's democratic governance.” Indeed.

These are not the first allegations against Netanyahu and his family that have been splashed across the media. There was a bribery scandal in connection with the procurement of submarines; it turned out that Netanyahu had no connection with the affair. There was the ludicrous “deposit bottle scandal” in which Sara Netanyahu was accused of keeping the money for bottles that had been returned after their purchase for public functions (she was not charged). She was indicted for misuse of public funds for ordering out for expensive meals when she had a government-paid cook (she is on trial now). There have been lawsuits concerning her alleged ill-treatment of employees and bad temper. And on and on and on.

The Attorney General has announced his intention to hold a hearing on the charges against the PM, after which a formal indictment can be issued. The hearing

would take place after the election. The announcement has no other legal significance, but it certainly will affect the vote and the coalition negotiations after the election. It is very unlikely that the timing of this announcement was accidental!

The American Founding Fathers understood that the removal of a chief executive would be highly charged politically, and they created a political method for dealing with malfeasance or criminal behavior in office: impeachment by the House and conviction by the Senate. They did not leave it to policemen or lawyers, or even the Supreme Court. This has proven to be the right path, and it's unfortunate that Israel does not have something similar.

Netanyahu has been Prime Minister since 2009, and his opposition is frustrated to the point of hysteria. They have been unable to defeat him by the normal political processes, so it seems that they have chosen to tie him down with multiple legal threads, as the Lilliputians did to Gulliver, and stone him to death with innuendos. Bibi claims, and I think he is essentially correct in this, that pressure from media and the legal establishment – groups that are largely opposed to him – forced the hand of the Attorney General in deciding to move forward toward indictment.

Just as Israel's enemies wish to destroy international sympathy for Israel by demonization and delegitimization, Netanyahu's enemies hope to fracture his political support before the election.

Will they succeed? We'll find out after the 9th of April.

The Trojan Horse in Israel's Elections

Ron Jager

To really understand who Benny Gantz is and the type of political leader he might very well be, I want to take us back to October 1, 2000, a day that will forever be remembered as the onset of the Second Intifada.

I was personally there, serving in the IDF as the Divisional Mental Health officer of the Regional Command Headquarters and Brigadier General Gantz was my commander. I was present during these critical hours in the operations room when Joseph's Tomb (Kever Yosef) was under siege and IDF Sergeant Madhat Yusef was shot by Palestinian Arab terrorists.

Madhat Yusef bled to death over a period of three and a half hours during an attack by a mob of Palestinian Arabs at the complex containing Joseph's Tomb on the outskirts of the 'West Bank' City of Nablus. Israeli forces were only a few minutes away and could have saved him and rescued the remaining soldiers. The Israeli forces were never given the order by Benny Gantz, the Regional Commander, to enter Nablus and save Madhat Yusef.

During these intense and nerve wracking hours, surveillance drones buzzed above Joseph's Tomb broadcasting in real time what was happening below; at the Samarian brigade headquarters, a tank battalion had been assembled and two columns of Merkavot tanks were in place waiting for the order to enter Nablus to rescue Madhat Yusef and the other soldiers under siege in Joseph's Tomb.

The family of Madhat Yusef belong to Israel's Druze Community, and have sent their sons to serve in the IDF throughout Israel's 70 years of existence. They have publicly criticized Benny Gantz and have held him personally responsible for abandoning their son and brother, since he was the senior Commander in place and was ultimately responsible for not giving the order to save Yusef. Why did Brigadier General Gantz not give the order to save Madhat Yusef?

At the time, Ehud Barak, the head of the Israeli Labor Party, was Prime Minister and acting Defense Minister. The Israeli Labor Party, was the chief proponent of the Oslo Agreement, ignoring the dangers and the uptick in Palestinian terror already taking its toll on the Israeli public as a result of the Oslo Agreements. Nablus is part of the Palestinian Authority created by Oslo and in theory, according to those agreements, the Palestinian Arab police force was in charge.

Despite the warnings of Benjamin Netanyahu and the Likud Party, the leftist Labor Party was willing to demand sacrifices from the Israeli public so that the Oslo Agreements would be implemented. Did this willingness to save the Oslo agreement at any cost

permeate the IDF's top brass? Did the withholding of the order to save Madhat Yusef on the part of Brigadier Benny Gantz reflect a politicization of what should have been a purely operational decision?

Gantz had in the past expressed sorrow at Madhat's death, but asserted that dispatching a rapid rescue force would have led to many Palestinian Arab casualties and that only the commanders at the scene could fully grasp all the considerations. Can we and should we assume that “all the considerations” include pressure from Ehud Barak to refrain from any action that could escalate and endanger the Oslo Agreement. In retrospect it seems that giving the order to send in a battalion of tanks or order in Black Hawk Helicopters would most likely have resulted in many Palestinian Arabs wounded and dead, leading to the cessation of the Oslo Agreement and causing Ehud Barak and the Labor Party to lose public support for their leftist agenda.

From this sordid event that has tainted the IDF for close to two decades, we can make reasonable assumptions about Benny Gantz, the politician in the current election cycle, in which he has bent over backwards to present his political party as belonging to the political center. His candidacy has been supported by all of Israel's mainstream media, broadcasted as well as printed. Israel's liberal elite and old guard have all come out in support of Gantz. All bastions of leftist ideology and in direct opposition to Benjamin Netanyahu and the Likud conservative political platform.

In today's political jungle, political policies are expedient and don't really matter. Media advisors help their candidates to present their policies in the same manner as a product is branded, aiming to reach the largest audience of consumers in this case voters. In this election cycle it seems as if Benny Gantz has enabled his PR advisors to operate by guessing what the public want to hear and shaping his political message in accordance to it. In this manner, we get for all intents and purposes, a political candidate who looks majestic like a horse, but in actuality is a Trojan horse of the left.

Benny Gantz has zero experience in statesmanship, no real economic education or understanding of how the global market operates, no real understanding of Israel's role in being a world leader in innovation; technology, food production, medicine, water preservation, and the list goes on and on. One would never know about Benny Gantz's lack of basic knowledge or experience needed to be the leader of Israel by listening to the media. Authenticity is irrelevant, identity politics is a thing of the past, for all intents and purposes those who vote Gantz will be voting for a candidate who has been marketed as sparkling, shiny, and something new for the Israeli public to digest. Nothing like a new and improved product, irresistible!

Benny Gantz the politician does what he is told to do. From speaking with respect for the current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and immediately afterwards condemning Netanyahu who served as an officer in Sayeret Matkal and risked his life many times over in operational missions, and get this; for honing his English while Gantz was laying his life on the line. One could sense the discomfort on the part of Gantz, he knew that he was reading a script written by a media advisor and it had nothing to do with the truth, but he did it anyway.

If elected, Benny Gantz will do what he is told to do. He will play a role dictated by advisors, senior associates, and political partners. Benny Gantz has never been a maverick nor exhibited an ability to dictate policy. He has always been a team player and takes “into consideration” viewpoints of his team who by the way are clearly in the leftist side of the political map. Benny Gantz will abandon any semblance of being in the center soon after the elections and will be only the most recent Trojan horse on behalf of those that who want to oust one and for all Benjamin Netanyahu from power.

The writer, a 25-year veteran of the I.D.F, served as the Commander of the Central Psychiatric Military Clinic for Reserve Soldiers at Tel-Hashomer after being a field mental health officer. Since retiring from active duty in 2005, he consults to NGO's implementing Psycho trauma and Psycho education programs to communities in the North and South of Israel and was the strategic advisor to the Office of the Chief Foreign Envoy of Judea and Samaria.