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Who What to Vote For

Do Election Results Matter in Israel?

Caroline B. Glick

In a recent conversation with a European ambassador, I asked about the possible consequences of the elections to the European parliament, which are scheduled to take place in May 2019. According to current polls, rightist, pro-Israel parties from a host of EU member nations are projected to win the vote in May.

I was curious about the impact the projected results may have on European Union policies towards Israel.

His answer was straightforward.

"European parliamentary election results aren't particularly significant," he said with a shrug.

"It's true that pro-Israel rightist parties are expected to do very well. But their victories won't impact the EU's foreign policies or any of its substantive policies. All the substantive policy decisions are made by the European Commission in Brussels."

"The European parliament doesn't have influence over what happens in Brussels. Its decisions are basically declarative resolutions and opinions. They have no force of law," he explained.

Formally, the situation in Israel is quite different from the situation in the EU. Unlike the European parliament, the Knesset has the power to legislate laws. And the government, which is comprised mainly of members of Knesset, implements policies it was empowered to adopt by the mandate it received from the voters at the polls.

But in practice, with each passing day, the situation in Israel is becoming more and more similar to the situation in the EU. Every day, Israel's bureaucracy, led by the legal system, seizes more and more powers from the country's elected leaders.

This week we received a glimpse of how this seizure of powers takes place behind closed doors, far from the eyes of the public.

Sunday, Police Major General Halevy, commander of police in the Jerusalem District abruptly submitted his resignation to Internal Security Minister Gilad Erdan. Halevy was the likeliest candidate to serve as the next Inspector General, after Erdan's first choice, Police Maj. General Moshe Edri's candidacy was rejected by the appointment's committee run by former Supreme Court Justice Eliezer Goldberg.

Monday, Hadashot news reported that Halevy resigned following a meeting last week with Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit. Also in attendance at the fateful encounter were Erdan, State Prosecutor Shai Nitzan and Deputy Attorney General Dina Zilber.

Halevy had been under the impression that Mandelblit would defend his appointment before the Goldberg Committee, and if necessary, before the Supreme Court. In his legal opinion regarding Halevy's suitability for the job, Mandelblit concluded that there is no legal basis for preventing Halevy from serving as Police Inspector General.

At the meeting Mandelblit explained to Halevy that law was not the issue. Despite the absence of legal justification for rejecting his appointment, Mandelblit said he would not defend Halevy either before the Goldberg Committee or before the Supreme Court.

What do you mean? Erdan and Halevy asked.

How can you reject Halevy's nomination when there are no legal grounds for doing so?

Mandelblit's reasoning should distress all Israelis who care about democracy.

Many years ago, Halevy committed a serious disciplinary infraction. An inspector general, Mandelblit argued, needs to be "as pure as the driven snow."

Halevy's past infraction made him impure.

So no dice.

There is a legitimate debate to be had about the sort of character you would want in a police chief. On the one hand, you could argue that it is better to have a chief of police with a checkered past. The chief law enforcement officer is well served with some bad behavior in his rearview mirror. It makes him more likely to treat accused lawbreakers with humility.

An equally legitimate argument can be made for having a straight-as-an-arrow lawman fill the top spot in the police. If you want the law enforced without prejudice, hire a chief with unstinting respect for the law who cuts no corners with crooks.

However you come down on the question of the suitable character for a police chief, the question itself has nothing to do with the law. Israeli law is devoid of any mention that the inspector general of police must be as "pure as the driven snow." The issue of character is a normative matter, not a legal one.

The Attorney General has no special qualifications to determine proper norms for public officials. Certainly, he is no better qualified to decide the proper character of the police chief than the Internal Security Minister. And Erdan has the advantage of being an elected official. The public empowered Erdan to make his decisions. Mandelblit, in contrast was chosen by an appointments committee led by a former Supreme Court justice after the committee rejected several other candidates the government had asked it to screen.

Mandelblit's extralegal – indeed lawless – decision on Halevy didn't occur in a vacuum. It occurred in the context of a full-blown bid by Israel's legal fraternity – from the Attorney General and his subordinates to the Supreme Court justices -- to seize the governing and legislative prerogatives of Israel's elected officials in every sector of public life.

Supreme Court justices have arrogated to themselves the power to cancel duly promulgated laws and government decisions. The justices have seized the power to dictate economic and military policies from government ministries and from the IDF. Indeed, the government's decision to move to early elections in April, rather than wait to hold elections in November was fomented by the Supreme Court's seizure of the IDF's power to set draft policies.

Speaking at a conference this week, Mandelblit insisted that his legal opinions have the force of law and that ministers are required to abide by them. Given that Mandelblit has also asserted the power to cancel laws and reject the legitimacy of legislative initiatives he doesn't like, his statement signaled that as far as he is concerned, he is Israel's sole legislator. Knesset laws can only be enforced if he agrees to enforce them. His decisions, on the other hand, are final.

Mandelblit strengthened this view this week through his unbridled criticism of government ministers for advancing a bill to expel the families of terrorists from their homes.

Mandelblit said, "The proposed law to expel families of terrorists inside the territories is unconstitutional."

But Israel has no constitution.

He said the bill, "raises difficulties in the international arena."

But the Attorney General has no particular diplomatic qualifications. The government is in a much better position to judge Israel's diplomatic interests than the Attorney General.

Mandelblit insisted, "The argument that my objection [to the proposed law] harms national security is devoid of all foundation."

But the Attorney General has no professional claim to expertise in national security issues. He has no way of knowing that his assertion is true. Indeed, his opinion is no better than the average man on the street's.

Through his actions and statements, Mandelblit has demonstrated over and over that he believes that as the Attorney General, he is the ultimate arbiter of all national policies. He gets to decide normative standards. He gets to decide which laws can pass or be defended. He gets to decide who can serve in senior executive positions. He gets to decide on Israel's foreign and defense policies. And he gets to promulgate laws with a stroke of his pen. What he says goes. What everyone else says, only goes if he says it goes.

And for all of that, making law out of legal briefs and interfering in all aspects of government and Knesset operations is only one part of the Attorney General's job. The other part involves presiding over the state prosecution.

There are two ways to choose a cabinet minister in Israel – through elections and through prosecutions. In 1993, the Supreme Court made what has become known as the "Pinchasi" ruling. The justices ruled that government ministers must resign if the Attorney General indicts them. The Pinchasi ruling transformed the Attorney General from the government's legal advisor in to the ultimate boss of elected leaders.

With his power to indict elected officials, Mandelblit wields the power to decide who gets to serve in government. In the years since the Pinchasi ruling, Mandelblit's predecessors repeatedly abused this power. As former Justice Minister Daniel Friedman wrote in his book, *The Purse and the Sword: The Trials of Israel's Legal Revolution*, attorneys general wrongly indicted then justice minister Yaakov Neeman, then agriculture minister Rafael Eitan and then justice minister Haim Ramon.

This then brings us to the Attorney General's outsized power in the upcoming elections and the coalition talks which will follow them.

Currently, Mandelblit is sitting on three criminal probes of dubious quality against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In a signal to both the public and to the politicians running for office, right after Netanyahu announced Monday that the party heads in his governing coalition had unanimously decided to hold the next elections in April, the State Prosecution announced that the elections will not affect their ongoing investigations of Netanyahu.

Most of the discussions of Mandelblit's likely moves involve the question of whether or not they will impact Netanyahu's ability to win the elections. But the real question is how Mandelblit's decision, whenever he makes it, will impact Netanyahu's ability to govern in

accordance with the will of the voters.

If, as widely anticipated, Netanyahu and Likud win in April, he will need to form a coalition with several smaller parties. Although Likud's natural coalition partners in the right wing and religious parties have stated that they will join a coalition with Likud even if Netanyahu is indicted, those parties together are polling under 61 mandates out of a total of 120.

If this remains the case after the elections, then to form a government, Netanyahu will need to bring in populist or left leaning parties. And the leaders of populist parties and center-left parties have signaled or stated outright that they will not join a coalition with Netanyahu if he is indicted.

In other words, by holding the dangling the Netanyahu probes over the heads of politicians like a sword of Damocles, Mandelblit is effectively threatening to nullify the results of the elections if the public doesn't vote as he and his fellow attorneys wish.

And so we return to the European ambassador's dim assessment of the European parliament. It works out that European voters agree with him. Since 1999, voter turnout has never reached fifty percent and it has dwindled from election to election. A mere 42 percent of voters showed up in 2014.

The Europeans are right. Why vote if your votes are meaningless?

In April, Israelis will choose which party to vote for based on any number of considerations. But in the end, only one central question will be decided on April 9.

Do we want for our votes to matter, or are we prepared to have all aspects of governance dictated to us by unelected bureaucrats governed by unelected lawyers?

Palestine: What if the Six-Day War

Martin Sherman

Never Happened?

If the "West Bank" was part of the "Hashemite Kingdom" up to 1967, how did it suddenly become the Palestinians' long-yearned-for homeland which, up until then, they were submissively willing to cede to an alien potentate?

Not since the time of Dr. Goebels [Head of the Nazi Propaganda Machine] has there ever been a case in which continual repetition of a lie has born such great fruits...Of all the Palestinian lies, there is no lie greater or more crushing than that which calls for the establishment of a separate Palestinian state in the West Bank... - From "Palestinian Lies" in Ha'aretz, 30-7-76, by former far-Left Meretz Education Minister, Prof. Amnon Rubinstein.

As the new elections approach, the "Palestinian problem" is once again likely to dominate much of the inter-(and intra-) party debate. In many ways this debate is entirely superfluous. After all, a simple mental experiment will suffice to strip away the veil of mendacity shrouding the Palestinian grievances against Israel.

Imagine for a moment...

To demonstrate this, imagine for a moment that the 1967 Six Day War, in which several Arab armies marshalled their forces with the undisguised intention to annihilate Israel, never took place. Imagine that Israel had not been compelled to launch a preemptive strike in self-defense to thwart the Arabs' openly proclaimed aim of total genocide that resulted in it taking over Judea-Samaria (a.k.a. the "West Bank")—which the Palestinians now contend is their long-yearned for homeland.

Then ask yourself: If that war had not occurred, where would "Palestine" be?

After all, but for this war, the "West Bank" would not have fallen under Israeli administration. Surely then, the Palestinians would have no grievances against the Jewish state and there would be no charges of Israel "occupying Palestinian lands" and dispossessing the "Palestinians" from their "homeland".

Sadly, this is not the case. Charges of "occupation" of Palestinian land and dispossession of the Palestinians were widespread long before Israel had control of a square inch of the "West Bank."

"We shall enter Palestine with its soil ...saturated in blood"

Indeed, as early as March 8, 1965, over two years before the Six-Day War, Gamal Abdel Nasser, president of Egypt, proclaimed his bloodcurdling intent: "We shall not enter Palestine with its soil covered in sand, we shall enter it with its soil saturated in blood".

But what "Palestine" was he referring to? It certainly was not the "West Bank" and Gaza, which were under Jordanian and Egyptian rule respectively. It could only be the territory within the pre-1967 borders of Israel—the very borders to which Israel is being pressured to return in order to ensure...peace.

Similarly savage sentiments were expressed by Ahmad Shukeiri, Yasser Arafat's predecessor as chairman of the PLO. Indeed, only days prior to the outbreak of the Six-Day War, in a somewhat premature flush of triumph, he crowed: "D Day is approaching. The Arabs have waited 19 years for this and will not flinch from the war of liberation..."

Ominously, he threatened: "This is a fight for the homeland—it is either us or the Israelis. There is no middle road ... We shall destroy Israel and its inhabitants and as for the survivors—if there are any—the boats are ready to deport them."

An ephemeral "homeland"

Here again, Shukeiri's use of the words "liberation" and "homeland" is revealing...and damning for current Palestinian claims.

After all, they clearly did not apply to the "West Bank" or the Gaza Strip, since both were under Arab rule and certainly not considered the "homeland" towards which Palestinian "liberation" efforts were directed.

The true significance of these terms emerges with stark clarity from the text of the original version of the Palestinian National Charter — formulated in 1964, a full three years before the "West Bank" fell under Israeli administration.

In it, Article 16 states: "The liberation of Palestine... [is] necessitated by the demands of self-defense" and "the Palestinian people look forward to [international] support... in restoring the legitimate situation to Palestine... and enabling its people to exercise national sovereignty and freedom."

But Article 24 stipulates precisely what was not included in the "homeland" of "Palestine" and where sovereignty was not sought to be exercised. Indeed, it unequivocally forswears Palestinian claims to "any territorial sovereignty over the West Bank in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Gaza."

It is difficult to imagine a more authoritative source for exposing as bogus the Palestinian claim that the "West Bank" and Gaza comprise their "ancient homeland."

An anomalous "nation"?

This, of course, creates the remarkably anomalous situation we have today.

On the one hand, the Palestinians profess that they are willing to forego all the territory they claimed as their pre-1967 "homeland", but on the other, obdurately demand for their post-1967 "homeland" a completely different territory, which they explicitly excluded from their previous homeland demands.

It would be difficult to find any historical precedent of such a dramatic metamorphosis of an envisioned "homeland", in which there is not an overlap of a single square inch between the territory originally claimed and that claimed only a few years later.

This is not a trivial matter. For a sense of Nationalism is driven by a sense of belonging, inextricably associated with geographical sites in the homeland, where great events took place that generated a distinct national historical memory and consequent coherent national

identity.

But if such nation-generating sites were located in pre-1967 Palestine, what such sites could there possibly be in post-1967 Palestine that could generate a sense of nationhood—since the Palestinians themselves conceded that, up to 1967, it did not constitute part of their homeland? Indeed, if the "West Bank" was part of the "Hashemite Kingdom" up to 1967, how did it suddenly become the Palestinians long-yearned-for homeland which, up until then, they were so willing to cede submissively to an alien potentate.

"Liberation of the homeland" means "annihilation of Israel"

Clearly then, the aspirations of the Palestinians have nothing to do with their attachment to the land, but everything to do with the detachment of Jews from the land—i.e. driving the Jews from any portion of the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

Indeed, even within the pre-1967 lines, long before today's alleged "root causes of the conflict" (i.e. "occupation" and "settlements") were part of the discourse, much less facts on the ground, Israel was condemned as a colonial, fascist, expansionist power.

According to Article 19: "Zionism is a colonialist movement in its inception, aggressive and expansionist in its goal, racist in its configurations, and fascist in its means and aims. Israel, in its capacity as the spearhead of this destructive movement and as the pillar of colonialism, is a permanent source of tension and turmoil in the Middle East."

The pre-1967 implication is clear. To remove enduring "tension and turmoil" in the region, their "source" — Israel — must be removed.

Clearly then, the only conceivable "plain-English" translation for the "liberation of the homeland" must be the "annihilation of Israel."

Denying all ties between Jews & "Palestine"
The 1964 Palestinian National Covenant was replaced by a 1968 version, which, in the guise of "the liberation of Palestine," continued to advocate the destruction of Israel as a necessary precursor for Mideast peace—in blatantly explicit terms.

Article 22 states that the "liberation of Palestine will destroy the Zionist and imperialist presence and will contribute to the establishment of peace in the Middle East."

Any thoughts that this reference was to the post-1967 "occupied territories" is quickly dispelled by Article 19, which declares: "The partition of Palestine in 1947, and the establishment of the state of Israel are entirely illegal, regardless of the passage of time..."

Article 20 delves even further back into history — to 1917 — to deny the validity of Jewish statehood in any portion of the Holy Land: "The Balfour Declaration, the Palestine Mandate System, and all that has been based on them are considered null and void. The claims of historic and spiritual ties between Jews and Palestine are not in agreement with the facts of history and the conception of what constitutes statehood."

"Palestine" is where the Jews are

So, going back to our mental experiment and the original question it posed: If the 1967 Six-Day War had never taken place and the "West Bank" had remained under the rule of the Hashemite Kingdom, where would "Palestine" be?

The inevitable answer would be: Wherever the Jews are ...

Is it too much to hope that simple truths will determine attitudes in the next election?

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Israel's Response to Tectonic Shifts

Daniel Pipes

As Arabs and Muslims warm to Israel, the Left grows colder. These shifts imply one great imperative for the Jewish state.

On the first shift: Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently pointed out "a

great change" in the Arab world which has a growing connection to Israeli companies because it needs Israeli "technology and innovation, ... water, electricity, medical care, and high-tech." Explaining this normalization as a result of Arab states "looking for links with the strong," Netanyahu was too tactful of American liberals to add another factor: Barack Obama's policy of appeasing Tehran jolted the Arab states to get serious about the real threats facing them.

It is striking to note that full-scale Arab state warfare versus Israel lasted a mere 25 years (1948-73) and ended 45 long years ago; and that Turkey and Iran have since picked up the anti-Zionist torch.

Nor is it just Israeli companies making inroads into Arab countries. The Israeli minister of sports broke into tears as Hatikvah, Israel's anthem, was played in Abu Dhabi upon the victory of an Israeli athlete. Rumors are swirling about a handshake to come between Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman (MbS) and Israel's prime minister.

That Arab and Muslim enmity has fractured, probably never to be reconstituted, amounts to one tectonic shift in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The second, no less important, involves the global Left's growing hostility to Israel.

This pattern can be found consistently from South Korea to Thailand to South Africa to Sweden to Brazil. The Durban conference of 2001 initially brought this phenomenon to light. Among many other examples, the Black Lives Matter platform accuses Israel of "apartheid" and "genocide." A communist labor union in India representing 16 million farmers, apparently joined the boycott, divestment, and sanction (BDS) movement.

Attitudes toward the Jewish state follow an almost linear progression of growing negativity as one goes from right to left. A 2012 Pew Research Center survey of American adults found 75 percent of conservative Republicans sympathize more with Israel than with the Palestinians, followed by 60 percent of moderate and liberal Republicans, 47 percent of Independents, 46 percent of conservative and moderate Democrats, and 33 percent of liberal Democrats.

It was not always thus. Joseph Stalin was so instrumental to Israel's birth in 1947-49 by providing diplomatic support and armaments that Abba Eban, Israel's first UN ambassador, observed that "we couldn't have made it, either diplomatically or militarily," if not for Soviet help. Democrats Harry Truman and John F. Kennedy rank among the most pro-Israel of American presidents, but Republican Dwight Eisenhower was unquestionably the most antagonistic.

MbS versus Jeremy Corbyn symbolizes these two tectonic shifts, as does Israel now enjoying better relations with Egypt than with Sweden. The president of Chad turns up in Israel but a singer from New Zealand does not. Israel's athletes compete in the United Arab Emirates but get banned in Spain. Muslims show increasing indifference to the breakdown in Palestinian-Israeli diplomacy, but Leftists express growing anger over it.

This last point has great importance: the rage against Israel is not about Ashkenazi-Sephardi relations, tensions on the Temple Mount, a possible attack on Iran's nuclear infrastructure, or Israel's own nuclear weapons. Rather, it almost exclusively concerns the status of some 3 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Thanks to a mix of Palestinian public relations expertise and continued antisemitism, the welfare of this small and powerless but fanatical population has transmogrified into the premier global issue of human rights, getting endlessly more attention than, say, Ethiopia – and motivates nearly all denunciations of Israel.

Therefore, when the Left, now largely excluded from power, eventually returns to office in countries like Japan, India, Germany,

France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, Israel will face a crisis due to the unresolved situations in the West Bank and Gaza.

Accordingly, a resolution of this issue should be an utmost priority for Israelis.

That does not mean touting yet another "peace plan" doomed to crash on the hard rock of Palestinian intransigence. It does mean, whatever one's favored plan might be, the need to end Palestinian aggression toward Israel: no more suicide attacks, kite bombings, and rockets. Only this will soothe the Leftist rage.

Only an Israel victory and a Palestinian defeat will achieve this. In other words, getting the Palestinians to cry uncle is an urgent priority for Israel and its supporters.

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Past US Mideast blunders - repeated or avoided?

Ambassador (ret.) Yoram Ettinger

Western policy in the Middle East – from Iran, the Arabian Peninsula, through Jordan, Egypt and North Africa - has largely failed due to a multitude of erroneous assessments made by well-intentioned policy-makers, researchers, academicians and journalists.

The track record of past blunders

For example, the State Department "wise men" opposed the 1948 establishment of the Jewish State - which they viewed as a potential ally of the Soviet Bloc - contending that it was doomed militarily, demographically, and economically. In 1977-79, the US foreign policy establishment courted Ayatollah Khomeini and deserted a critical strategic ally, the Shah of Iran, assuming that Khomeini was seeking human rights and peaceful-coexistence. In 1981, the US punished Israel – militarily, economically and diplomatically - for destroying Iraq's nuclear reactor, which spared the US a potential nuclear confrontation in the 1991 Gulf War. Until Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the US showered the ruthless Iraqi dictator with intelligence-sharing and commercial agreements. In 1993 and 2005 the US embraced the Israel-PLO Oslo Accord and Israel's disengagement from Gaza, maintaining that they would advance peace, while in fact they fueled Palestinian hate-education and terrorism.

The 2010-11 eruption of the still-raging Arab Tsunami was greeted as an "Arab Spring," "Facebook Revolution" and "Youth Revolution," supposedly, leading Arab societies closer to democracy. During 2009-11, the US sacrificed pro-US Egyptian President Mubarak on the altar of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, the largest Sunni-Muslim terrorist conglomerate. In 2011, the US led the NATO toppling of Libya's Qaddafi - who previously surrendered his infrastructure of weapons-of-mass-destruction to the US and systematically fought Islamic terrorism – contending that a post-Qaddafi Libya would be more democratic and pro-Western. In 2018, Libya is one of the largest platforms of Islamic terrorism. In 2015, the US led the JCPOA accord with Iran's Ayatollahs, which provided the inherently anti-US rogue regime with an unprecedented tailwind to topple all pro-US Arab regimes, intensify terrorism in the Middle East and Africa, and try to push the US out of the Persian Gulf.

Notwithstanding the failure of all well-intentioned US initiatives to advance Israel-Arab peaceful-coexistence, the US may introduce another peace initiative, overlooking the fact that the only successful peace initiatives were directly negotiated between Israel-Egypt and Israel-Jordan. And the list goes on....

Assessing the track record of past blunders

Such a track record provoked systematic criticism by "The Gang of Four," who were the leading experts/authors on the Middle East:

Prof. Elie Kedourie (London School of Economics & Political Science), Professor P.J. Vatikiotis (London School of Oriental and African Studies), Prof. Bernard Lewis (Princeton University) and Prof. J.B. Kelly (University of Wisconsin). Their criticism, which has been in publication since the 1960s, has been resoundingly vindicated by the Arab Tsunami, which has traumatized the Middle East, and threatened the West, since 2010.

The four luminaries highlighted the Western tendency to oversimplify the highly-complex, fragmented, unpredictable, unstable, intolerant, violent, frenzied and tenuous inter-Arab reality of the Middle East – irrespective of the Arab-Israeli conflict - which is dominated by ruthless minority-regimes, and is yet to experience inter-Arab peaceful coexistence.

For example, Prof. Elie Kedourie exposed the fumbled US policy which energized Iran's Ayatollahs, stabbed the back of the Shah of Iran – the US Policeman in the Persian Gulf – dealt the US a game-changing setback, and placed a machete at the throat of each pro-US Arab regime in the Middle East: "An emergency was in the making, which involved the regime in Iran, a pillar of US and Western interests. This emergency was the most serious foreign policy test... which President Carter and his leading officials failed.... The Carter Administration was willing to see [the Shah] go because it had persuaded itself that the alternative would institute democracy and human rights.... From Teheran, Ambassador Sullivan argued that Khomeini was anti-Communist, that the young officers were generally pro-Western, that economic ties with the West would subsist, that Khomeini would play a 'grandpa like role', and that election would be likely to produce a pro-Western Islamic republic. In Washington, there was a chorus of academic and official voices singing the praises of Khomeini and the National Front...."

According to Prof. P.J. Vatikiotis: "For the foreseeable future, inter-Arab differences and conflicts will continue.... Inter-Arab relations cannot be placed on a spectrum of linear development... Rather, their course is partly cyclical, partly jerkily spiral and always resting occasionally at some 'grey' area.... What the Arabs want is not always – if ever – what Americans desire; in fact, the two desires may be diametrically opposed.... Even without the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Arab Middle East would have been a conflict-ridden and conflict-generating area.... Arrangements or alliances made by foreign powers with [Arab] regimes are problematic, dangerous, transient and even meaningless...."

Moreover, "a political challenge to any of these [Arab] regimes can come only in the form of a violent confrontation. Opposition is subversion; political disagreement is treason. The tolerance of opposition is scarce – in fact, nonexistent.... Power changes are therefore possible only via rebellion or revolution...."

The litany of books and essays on the Middle East by Prof. Bernard Lewis have exposed a self-defeating Western policy, sacrificing realism on the altar of wishful-thinking and oversimplification. Many of them were authored before the 1979 toppling of the Shah, the bombing of the US Embassy and Marine Headquarters in Beirut in 1983, the 1998 bombing of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the bombing of the USS Cole in 2000, the 2001 Twin Towers devastation and the current proliferation of Islamic terrorism in Europe.

Prof. Lewis highlighted features of Islam, which have not been fully-comprehended by Western policy-makers, who tend to sacrifice reality on the altar of rapprochement with Islam: "[Non-Muslims] may receive the tolerance, even the benevolence, of the Muslim state, provided that they clearly recognize Muslim supremacy.... That Muslim should rule over non-Muslims is right and normal.... That non-

Muslims should rule over Muslims is an offense against the laws of God and nature.... Islam was associated with power from the very beginning.... The world is divided basically into two. One is the community of the Muslims, the other that of the "unbelievers."

Western policy in the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf was severely criticized by

Prof. J.B. Kelly: "While the Russians may have miscalculated at times, they have attempted to ground their policy upon reality, not upon wishful-thinking. Western policy, on the other hand, has been based upon illusions, self-deception and calculations of short-term advantage. Nowhere is this more evident than in the formulation and execution of American policy towards Arabia and the Gulf.... In Arabia and the Gulf the US government allowed itself to be seduced into adoption and implementing ARAMCO's plans and those of its Saudi Arabian clients.... The State Department lent its unobtrusive support.... Just how great a part-illusion, self-deception and willful-obtuseness have played in fostering [this policy] is clearly revealed in the transcripts of hearings on the subject of American relations with the Gulf states held by the Senate Foreign Relations and the House International Relations Committees from 1972 onward.... None of this [former Secretary of State Joseph Sisco's Congressional testimony] bore the remotest resemblance to reality.... It was then, and remains still, a mirage...."

Prof. Fouad Ajami, who was the Director of Middle East Studies at Johns Hopkins University, wrote: "Arabs and Israelis are ready for peace, it is said by many in the US and in the Middle East. The missing ingredient, they argue, is the American role and American peace plan. The other side of this promise is a threat: dire consequences are predicted, for the region and for American interests, if the [US] Administration fails to embark on an activist policy. In reality, the promise is a mirage, the dire consequences an empty threat.... The notion of [the US'] indispensability is a trap. We should not walk into that trap when others set it for us. Certainly, at least, we should be able to avoid entrapping ourselves."

Repeat or avoid past blunders?

Have Western policy-makers learned from precedents by avoiding – or repeating – costly mistakes? Are they aware that unrealistic policies tend to be self-defeating, yielding more injustice and casualties than that which they intend to cure?!

US Should Recognize the Golan as Israeli

Zvi Hauser

The announcement that the United States is withdrawing its forces from Syria should not really have come as a surprise to anyone in Israel's diplomatic-security circles or the media.

But with most of the focus in Israel on tactical steps rather than well-ordered strategies, we once again woke up to a surprise reality that Israel does not want.

From the time the Syrian war broke out in 2011, Israel has chosen to ignore the historic processes taking place on the other side of the border. While Russia, Turkey and Iran spotted the geopolitical opportunities the war presented and adapted their regional activities in accordance, Israel opted to wish all sides involved good luck and preened about tactical military achievements.

Israel had a clear strategic interest in seeing the war end with Syria split into three states, based on the ethnic population distribution: Alawite-Shiite, Sunni, and Kurds. If that had come to pass, it would have been enough to block Iranian expansion, and beyond that, it would have presented a strategic opportunity to redraw a historical border that expressed international recognition of Israeli sovereignty on the Golan Heights, which comprise a mere one percent of Syrian territory. That interest dovetailed with the international desire to prevent mass murder,

uphold human rights, and prevent an exodus of refugees.

Israel missed a historic opportunity to speed vital changes in arranging borders in the Middle East that were drawn up forcibly at the end of World War I. Now, the withdrawal of American forces from Syria demands that Israel exert all its influence to convince its U.S. ally to adopt a "hybrid" mentality on everything having to do with Syria and recognize the Golan Heights as Israeli as the final steps of the pullout.

A move like that would serve long-term U.S. interests in defending Israel's security and the stability of Jordan, without keeping any forces on the ground. The Golan is only viable if it remains in Israeli hands, and any Israeli withdrawal to the shores of the Sea of Galilee would ensure an inherent lack of stability that sooner or later would require U.S. military intervention.

There are no vacuums in the Middle East. In the absence of determined, immediate action by Israel to secure U.S. recognition of Israel's sovereignty on the Golan – before the U.S. withdraws from Syria – Israel could find itself facing international demand for a dream deal for Syrian President Bashar Assad and Iran: Iran would withdraw from Syria – which would remain under the cover of various militias, similar to the Hezbollah model in Lebanon – in exchange for Israel withdrawing from the Golan Heights.

The clouds hanging over international politics could wind up creating a perfect storm, to Israel's detriment. One morning, we could wake up to another, much bigger surprise: unrestrained international pressure to withdraw from the Golan Heights, in the spirit of the "solution" raised before the Syrian war.

Those who see this as a nightmare scenario should ask themselves whether they envisioned that within a few years of the start of the Syrian war, Iranian forces would be a stone's throw from Quneitra, and that Assad would be back in power after hundreds of thousands of his own people were killed and millions more turned into refugees.

Zvi Hauser is a former cabinet secretary.

In Other News...

Herzl's Dream

David Matlow

Why Zionism and its founder are more relevant than ever

"Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start."

Not only good advice when Maria Von Trapp teaches do-re-mi. It is equally good advice - and especially important - when thinking about Israel, especially when the world demonizes it and questions its right to exist.

There are multiple possible beginnings to the history of modern Israel: the covenant made to Abraham or the exile after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD being possible starting points.

For me, the story begins with Theodor Herzl.

Herzl was born in Hungary in 1860 and died in Austria in 1904. Only the last eight of the forty four years of his life were dedicated to the cause of the Jewish people. However, the fruit of his dreaming, his vision, his effort and his sacrifice is the State of Israel.

Herzl was fixated on the prevalence of anti-Semitism. He concluded that the Jews in Europe were not safe, and that they were living on borrowed time.

In 1902, Herzl wrote *Altneuland* (translated into Hebrew as *Tel Aviv*, the city being named after Herzl's book). In his book, a group of characters was talking about the anti-Semitism they were experiencing when one says: "I can see it coming, we shall all have to wear the yellow patch." Not even Herzl could have imagined the horror that was to follow for the Jews of Europe.

Herzl was right to be worried, but died too early to actualize his plan for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, the ancient homeland of the Jews, which would be secured by international law. He

envisioned receiving a charter from the Ottoman Empire, which was then the ruler of this land.

The Jewish state was not to be created against anybody's will, but with the full consent of those in authority. It was intended to solve the "Jewish problem" which was that wherever Jews live for a while, they succeed and then they are resented by the local population.

When Herzl died, the dream did not die with him. It was an idea that was bigger than one person. Herzl's successors continued to meet, and plan, and prepare. International congresses were held, money was raised, land was bought, towns and villages were established and instruments of a state in formation were founded.

When Israel was established on May 14, 1948 it was the culmination of more than 50 years of effort. The proclamation of the new Jewish state of Israel was authorized by a resolution of the United Nations passed on November 29, 1947, effectively bringing to life the charter that Herzl envisioned.

Based on my experience in giving tours of my Herzl collection at exhibits across Canada, I believe that many people do not understand where Israel came from. They assume that the land was either conquered by a Jewish army, or gifted by the world due to the need to find a place for the displaced Jews of Europe following the Holocaust, or some combination of both - lending to the ongoing lie that Israel is built on "stolen" land which is simply, and historically, not true.

Most people do not understand that Israel was dreamed about and planned for many years preceding its creation, and that the vision of Zion had remained a part of Jewish life and identity through prayer and longing, finding voice throughout the generations by Menasseh ben Israel, Pinsker, Hess, Mohilever, Kalischer and the Chovevei Tzion groups of Eastern Europe that became active supporters of Herzl's practical implementation of this ancient dream of our people.

Most people do not understand that Herzl's vision for the creation of the Jewish state was peaceful, consensual and intended to be beneficial for all.

Most people forget that the dream of a Jewish state arose out of a concern that anti-Semitism would never go away, and that the Jews needed (and are entitled to) at least one place on this planet where they can feel safe, and be at home.

Herzl was right when he concluded that anti-Semitism would not go away. This summer we saw it bubble to the surface across the world. We saw blatant anti-Semitism both overt and more furtive in the form of the demonization of Israel by the press, governments and world bodies.

Herzl believed that the Jewish people were entitled to one place where we can build our own society, and show the world what we can do when our energies and creativity are set free. The innovations in science, technology, medicine and culture emanating from Israel demonstrate what we can do when we are allowed to.

Of course, Israel is not perfect and remains a work in process. That is where we come in.

Standing in Vienna in 1896 when Herzl first published his book *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State), the notion that such a country would come into being was the most preposterous, ridiculous and improbable idea imaginable. But Herzl's motto was "If you will it, it is no dream" and his dream was fulfilled.

I believe that Herzl's dream was fulfilled, but it has not been completed; that he intended the Jewish state to be safe, secure and living in peace.

After the ongoing attacks against Israel, the hateful riots evoking medieval Jew hatred, and 66 years of having to defend our rights to our homeland, the notion of Israel living in peace may be considered to be preposterous, ridiculous and improbable.

However, Herzl showed us that the impossible can come true, and that if we want something badly enough, one day it will cease to be a dream.

It is up to us to make that dream come true. Actualizing that dream will take the same amount of creativity, effort and energy that went into fulfilling the dream of a Jewish state.

David Matlow has the world's largest private collection of Herzl memorabilia and is the producer of *My Herzl*, a 52 minute documentary by Israeli film maker Eli Tal-El.