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ב"ה שבת שלום  
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## Policy and Decision Making

### Cracks in the Dome?

Martin Sherman

The huge investments made in defensive systems are slowly emerging as an exorbitant and costly failure—or at best a very partial and temporary success. The time has come to rethink Israel's strategic paradigm.

*...the ability to defeat the enemy means taking the offensive. Standing on the defensive indicates insufficient strength; attacking, a superabundance of strength— Sun Tzu, "The Art of War", circa 400 BC.*

Earlier this week (5/21/2019), both Israel and Hamas denied reports that they had reached an agreement on a six-month cease fire. Irrespective of any credence one wishes to ascribe the denial, it underscored just how fragile the current lull in hostilities is and how easily they could re-ignite.

Although it has been barely two weeks since the violence in the South subsided, public recollection of what transpired has faded rapidly—with the intervening Independence Day celebrations and the Eurovision hullabaloo helping to dull collective memory.

#### A brief—but necessary—reminder

This is unfortunate—and disturbing.

For it is vital to recall that the latest round of fighting between Israel and the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip raised troubling questions as to the soundness of the strategic rationale underpinning Israel's missile defense system—particularly the much vaunted "Iron Dome".

Indeed, even before the heavy barrages that rained down on Israel in early May, doubts began to emerge as to the efficacy of the system, when projectiles launched from Gaza penetrated, un-intercepted, deep into Israel, hitting residences in the city of Beer Sheva and in Mishmeret, a village North of Tel Aviv—and two others landed close to Tel Aviv itself, fortunately causing no damage.

According to Israeli military sources, during the last flare-up, 690 rockets and mortars were fired toward Israeli targets from Gaza by Hamas and Islamic Jihad. About 90 failed to make it across the border. Of those that did, 240 were intercepted by the Iron Dome system, which assesses whether a rocket is likely to strike open ground or needs to be intercepted. The system reportedly had 87% accuracy on attempted interceptions, with 35 rockets striking urban areas. In the barrage, four Israelis were killed and over 200 were treated in Israeli hospitals.

Depressingly, there appears to be wide consensus among pundits that another, probably broader and more intense, round of fighting is merely a matter of time.

Significantly, the number of Israeli civilians killed in the two-day conflict was almost identical to that incurred during 2014's Operation Protective Edge, which lasted nearly two months, when the Gaza-based terror organizations launched more than 4,500 missiles, rockets, and mortar shells at Israeli civilian population centers.

#### Has the "Iron Dome" become the "Iron Sieve"?

One of the reasons advanced for the Iron Dome's ostensibly diminished capacity was the intensity of the barrages fired at Israel concentrated within a short time period. Seemingly affirming that this was a purposeful tactic, a spokesman for Hamas's Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades proclaimed: "The Qassam Brigades, thanks to God, succeeded in overcoming the so-called Iron Dome by adopting the tactic of firing dozens of missiles in one single burst."

These results prompted expressions of skepticism—even unfounded derision—as to the true ability of the Iron Dome system to effectively protect Israel's civilian population—even prompting once source to

claim—somewhat unfairly—"It's not Iron Dome. It's Iron Sieve."

Of course, such censure may be excessively harsh. After all, the Iron Dome is an extraordinary technological achievement, which has in the past greatly reduced loss of life and physical damage that otherwise may have been inflicted on Israel.

Nonetheless, in light of its somewhat spotty performance of late, there certainly appears to be a strong case for critical reexamination of the strategic rationale underlying the use of the Iron Dome.

Indeed, it far from unreasonable to assert that the Iron Dome has, in effect, provided protection for Gazans no less—arguably more—than for Israelis. After all, if the bulk of the on-target rocket barrages had not been intercepted, and had inflicted largescale damage on its cities and casualties among its civilians, Israel would have been compelled to retaliate with massive punitive measures to silence the fire. Inevitably, this would have caused extensive destruction and loss of life in the Gaza Strip—far beyond that which Israel was able to permit itself to inflict with its civilian population relatively protected.



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#### Flawed strategic rationale

Indeed, the adoption of this kind of strategic passivity was confirmed—and endorsed—in a recent paper published by the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), entitled Long-Range Rocket Fire on Israel's Depth: Lessons for Homefront Defense, authored by Meir Elran and Carmit Padan, who write approvingly: "The State of Israel has so far invested significant sums in passive defense and complementary technologies, with the lion's share going to the "Gaza envelope." The main lesson is that existing plans for improving public and private shelters should be implemented in other parts of Israel, as a fatal strike on the civilian space would generate pressure on any Israeli government and reduce its leeway in the face of Hamas ... fire."

But in the context of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian-Arabs, there is a grave strategic flaw in this kind of reasoning.

For it is precisely because the Iron Dome and "passive defense" have given the Israeli government "leeway in the face of Hamas fire", that the fire has continued.

Thus, paradoxically, because much of their projectiles have indeed been intercepted, the terror organizations have been left intact, enabling them to continue launching further attacks whenever they see fit—typically either when they feel strong enough to do so, or too weak not to.

#### Defensive vs Offensive

The perverse situation is the result of the Iron Dome (and other missile defense systems) being perceived as solely defensive. Indeed, it is precisely this defense oriented strategy that has led to hostilities with Gaza continuing—with no end in sight.

The defining difference between defensive and offensive strategies is twofold:

(a) **The element of surprise:** The first is that relying heavily on defensive measures denies the defender the element of surprise in that, almost by definition, one cannot launch a surprise defense—in the sense

that one can only defend against an attack once launched—often by surprise. So while it is possible that defense systems may comprise elements unexpected by the attacker, typically they can only be deployed against an ongoing attack.

(b) **The damage inflicted:** The second is that defensive measures cannot inflict greater losses than the resources any prospective aggressor is prepared to commit to an assault on his adversary. In the case of the Iron Dome, the maximum damage that can be inflicted is the destruction of the incoming missile, which the aggressor expected to lose anyway. Accordingly, missile defense systems, including the Iron Dome, cannot deter attacks by threatening to wreak unacceptable costs on the attacker and thus dissuade him from any further aggression.

The combination of these two elements—the one allowing Hamas and its terror affiliates to choose the time and scope of any attack; the other, allowing Hamas et al. to determine the limits of the damage wrought on them—provide in large measure the reason why the hostilities in Gaza persist.

#### Change of strategy imperative

The pattern of violence in Gaza is almost monotonously repetitive. Time and again, the Gazan terrorists have developed some offensive tactic to assault Israel. In response, Israel devised some countermeasure to contend with it. However, all these counter measures were designed to thwart the attacks, rather than prevent them being launched in the first place.

Thus, suicide attacks resulted in a security fence and secured crossings; which led to the development of enhanced rocket and missile capabilities; which led to the development of the multimillion dollar Iron Dome; which led to the burrowing of an array of underground attack tunnels; which led to the construction of a billion dollar subterranean barrier; which led to the use of incendiary kites and balloons that, last summer, reduced much of the rural South adjacent to the Gaza border, to blackened charcoal—and look likely to do so again in the coming months.

Indeed, Israel's decade long policy of ceasing fire whenever the other side ceases fire has allowed Hamas, and its terror affiliates, to launch repeated rounds of aggression, determining not only when they are launched and when they end, but also largely controlling the cost incurred for such aggression—ensuring it remains within the range of the "acceptable".

Significantly, after each round of fighting, despite the damage inflicted by the IDF, the Gazan-based terror groups have typically emerged with vastly enhanced military capabilities and political standing.

**Soon drones with biological/chemical payload?**  
This is clearly a recipe for unending and escalating violence—and must be abandoned before it culminates in inevitable tragedy.

After all, the Gazan-based terror groups have shown consistently that they can transform everyday children's playthings, such as kites, into instruments of extensive destruction, and forced Israel to develop hugely expensive defenses (such as Iron-Dome interceptors) to deal with risibly cheap weapons of attack (such as mortar shells).

Indeed, it is hardly beyond the limits of plausibility that Israel might soon have to face incoming missiles with multiple warheads, which disperse just before being intercepted, greatly challenging its missile defense capabilities. Or the development of some kind of anti-aircraft capabilities that could restrict—or at least hamper—Israel's present unlimited freedom of action over the skies of Gaza.

Or worse, will Israel have to contend with the specter of a swarm of drones, possibly armed with biological or chemical payloads, directed at nearby Israeli communities—rendering the billion dollar anti-tunnel barrier entirely moot? For those who might dismiss this as implausible scaremongering—

see here, and here.

Indeed, adhering to a purely defensive/reactive strategy will virtually ensure that some kind of offensive measure will be developed to make it ineffective—at least partially.

**The offensive imperative:** Arabs in Gaza or Jews in Negev

Clearly then, there will be no end to the recurring rounds of violence and the escalating enhancement of the enemies' aggressive capabilities unless Israel undertakes a dramatic change in strategy. Accordingly, instead of focusing on thwarting attacks and limited reprisals for them, Israel must strive to eliminate the ability to launch them.

Rather than employ systems such as the Iron Dome as a purely defensive measure, it should be incorporated as an auxiliary in offensive action—i.e. by minimizing danger and damage to the civilian sector while a large offensive is launched in order to take—and hold—the areas from which attacks were launched—preventing them from being used for future attacks.

This is the only sustainable long-term strategic rationale for a defense system which comprises launching very costly interceptor missiles at very cheap incoming ones.

The compelling imperative for this modus operandi, is of course, reinforced by the prospect of a coordinated attack by Hamas et al. from the South and Hezbollah—with its even more formidable arsenal—in the North.

Clearly, the prospect of Israel retaking and holding the Gaza Strip raises the perennially irksome question of what is to be done regarding the Arab population of Gaza.

In addressing this question Israel must face up to—and internalize—the unpalatable, but inevitable, reality that, in the long run, there will either be Arabs in Gaza or Jews in the Negev. Eventually, however, there will not be both.

#### Perhaps the greatest Zionist challenge

Accordingly, then, to prevent the Jewish population being denuded by unabated Arab aggression—whether overhead missiles targeting kindergartens or underground tunnels targeting border communities; whether incendiary balloons or explosive kites or anti-tank rockets on cars buses and trains—the only policy is the evacuation of the Gazan population to third-party countries by means of a large scale initiative of incentivized emigration.

Marshaling the ideological commitment, the political legitimacy and international acceptance for such an initiative is perhaps one of the greatest challenges for Zionism today.

Martin Sherman is the founder and executive director of the Israel Institute for Strategic Studies.

### From Israel: “Ceasefire Magic!”

Arlene Kushner

Magic only in this sense: Now you see it, now you don't. Sort of like the rabbit.

Except that it's not nearly as much fun as the rabbit.

Last night (Monday), news sources announced that Israel and Hamas, with Egypt and the UN mediating, had agreed to a six month “ceasefire.”

My response was pretty straightforward: I was furious.

What happened, I asked rhetorically, to our tough-talking prime minister who told us – when hostilities were halted prematurely before Yom Hazikaron/Yom Ha'atzmaut – that it wasn't over yet?

I also wondered what happened to the people on the right who were just elected to the Knesset but who seem to be unable to get their acts together to form a government to deal with this.

By this morning (Tuesday) there were disclaimers from both sides – denials that there was a “ceasefire.” A statement from Hamas indicated that “contrary to reports, there is no understanding between Israel and Hamas on a six-month truce.” And the prime minister's office released a statement that, “There are no new understandings with Hamas.”

Well, then, this may be good news.

In any event, I want to provide here, briefly, major points arguing against a “ceasefire.” Who knows? Tomorrow we may hear about it all over again.

Here's the catch: this isn't truly a “ceasefire,” no matter how the media may refer to it. Who ever heard of a temporary ceasefire? Except, that is, when dealing with Muslim radicals. It is a Muslim hudna.

And that is what is wrong with it.

A ceasefire is a cessation of hostilities, a preliminary step towards establishing a more permanent peace. It might fail, but it reflects intent to be peaceful.

What we've got here is a situation in which the intent of Hamas to destroy Israel has not changed one iota. It simply suits their purposes to refrain from activity towards that end for a period of time. It gives them an opportunity to increase and improve their weapons cache, further train their terrorist fighters, and build more of those damn tunnels (inside Gaza, for purposes of weapons storage and warfare).

This is why we must oppose to it. We have ample precedent in dealing with them: They will start again when they decide the time is right.

Were they willing to call a halt because they were afraid of us, because we had driven them to submission, it would be a whole other story. But this is not the case.

Nor is it the case that they would be required to partially dismantle their weaponry. This, they adamantly refuse to do, which is the tipoff to their intentions.

Of course, they might also agree to a “ceasefire” because of the multiple benefits that would accrue to them. The catch here is that those benefits do not pacify them or change their ideology. They have said it themselves: they cannot be bought.

But no matter, we try anyway.

Some months ago, when a “ceasefire” was under discussion, Hamas official Mahmoud Zahar said, “We benefit from the truce...Our weapons will remain in our hands and there are no conditions regarding Hamas's right to the resistance.”

In January, when Israel had approved \$15 million in Qatari funds to go into Gaza to pay Hamas salaries, Hamas decided to refuse it because “Gaza will not be subject to extortion by Israeli election theater.”

All of this said and done, this is what I have concluded: There IS an understanding between Israel and Hamas, but of a more informal nature, and without the six month time frame.

The giveaway here is the fact that it has just been announced that COGAT is expanding the fishing zone to 15 nautical miles. The reason given is “to prevent a deterioration in the humanitarian situation.”

But it might just as readily be that this is part of an informal “ceasefire” understanding, disclaimers notwithstanding.

We must watch now and see what other terms of the non-existent agreement are set in place.

From our side it would involve such actions as increasing electricity and opening the crossings further.

From the Hamas side, it would involve halting violent incidents along the border fence, maintaining a buffer zone 300 meters from the border; and ending the launching of incendiary balloons. (All said to be part of the formal six-month agreement when announced.)

Please, do not hold your breath on all of these stipulations. And understand that if it is not a formal “ceasefire” we are looking at, there is always deniability.

But I raise a few final questions here regarding the “ceasefire,” whether formal or not:

Why does our government agree to any benefits for Hamas without demanding the return of the two Israeli civilians and the bodies of the two soldiers, Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul, being held by Hamas?

This is always tabled for later, down the road, and is likely to involve an exchange, with some Hamas prisoners in Israeli prison being released.

□ How will Iran's desire to stir things up, particularly via the renegade Islamic Jihad, play into this?

□ And what influence is it likely that the Trump administration has brought to bear on Israel to keep matters quiet? That quiet, along with some building up of Gaza, would fit in with the soon-to-be-released Deal of the Century. Hostilities would be seen as counterproductive to that major venture.

With regard to the Deal of the Century: Never, ever, do I recall so much hype, so much discussion, about a projected undertaking before it is even unveiled.

But at long last, apparently the economic aspect of the plan will be unveiled at an economic conference to be held on June 25-26 in the Gulf state of Bahrain – in its capital and main city, Manama.

The goal here is to garner support for “economic

initiatives” (infrastructure, industry, etc.) that might be possible within the peace plan. This means it is a bit open-ended, with efforts to entice the fiscal involvement of Arab states. To that end, it is considered by some to be of major importance that Bahrain was ready to host what is being referred to as an “economic workshop.”

Other commentators argue that this “workshop” is likely to fizzle.

Hamas is condemning the effort and the Palestinian Authority is declaring intention to boycott it. The Jordanians – who do not have the largesse to contribute fiscally in any event – are exceedingly nervous about the plan and how it will impact them, while Egypt's al-Sisi is not terribly positive about it either.

Perhaps most significantly, the Gulf States are far too concerned with Iran to focus on issues involving Palestinian Arabs.

The fact that the political aspect of the plan will not be unveiled yet further complicates matters, rendering the Arab states wary about lending support.

Key Trump advisor, Jared Kushner, speaks in general terms about government, civil, and business leaders coming together in order to build “consensus around the best steps the international community can take to develop the foundation for a prosperous future in the region,” particularly for Palestinians.

But he also says, “Economic progress can only be achieved with a solid economic vision and if the core political issues are resolved.” (Emphasis added)

This is a bit of a chicken and egg situation, the way it's being presented.

The Palestinian Authority has been, so to speak, on the back burner, with everything going on. But it's time to take a closer look at what's happening with them.

I have been saying for years that the PA will not agree to terms for a “peace” settlement unless they get everything they want: they will not compromise on Jerusalem as their capital; on the 1949 armistice line, which they call the “67 border,” as their border; on return of “refugees,” etc. And that their goal is, of course, not two states side by side, but the destruction of Israel.

But in point of fact, there is more going on than this. The bottom line is that the erstwhile leaders of the PA cannot agree to a settlement under any terms.

The way in which the Palestinian Authority operates is by presenting itself as a victim, being taken advantage of by the “occupier” Israel, and thus in need of assistance and diplomatic support from the world. They expect to be cut slack. And the world has accommodated them.

Were they to become a full-fledged sovereign state, there would be international expectations that they function responsibly as a state. That image of a “people” denied what it rightfully seeks would be gone, and Palestinian Arabs would be expected to stand on their feet. This role, which they are not equipped or prepared to assume, terrifies them.

I recently consulted with a couple of Arabic-speaking Israelis very much in the know – as academic and as journalist – about the Palestinian Authority. These are my “go-to” people. Although I spoke with them separately, they both told me precisely the same thing: Except for paying salaries, the Palestinian Authority does not exist any longer.

Compare this with the Jewish Yeshuv – the Jewish community of Palestine during Mandate times. The Jews, dedicated to the founding of a Jewish state, did everything possible to prepare for its establishment without outside assistance. They developed a vibrant society, and established national and political institutions. When the time came to declare independence, everything was in place – because the people were dedicated in the most positive sense to building their future.

The history of the Yeshuv is about as different from the functioning of the PA as one could get. And comparing the two makes it very clear indeed – the Palestinian Arabs do not want a state.

Now, if only the world would come to understand this.

As to paying salaries, there is much that is politicized, and a great deal of game-playing transpires.

The PA, and specifically Mahmoud Abbas (looking perhaps a bit confused, below), has withheld salary payments to civil service workers in Gaza in order to



weaken Hamas.

And Abbas insists, before everything else, on paying salaries to terrorists in Israeli prisons, and to the families of terrorists who have been killed “in service.”

Some weeks ago, Israel, by law, began deducting from tax revenues collected on behalf of the PA the amount paid to the prisoners. The remainder was transferred to the PA, but repeatedly, Abbas has returned it, declaring nothing would be accepted if there were improper deductions being made.

This may seem counterintuitive to the Western mind, as the PA is said to be in dire financial straits. But, aside from issues of honor (the PA being part of the honor/shame culture), Abbas, I was given to understand, wanted the world to see that Israel was responsible for Palestinian Arab suffering. Better Palestinian Arabs should suffer (PA civil servants are receiving only a fraction of their salaries), if it made Israel look bad.

Abbas has appealed to Arab states for assistance, but he is now beginning to encounter suggestions that he cooperate with the Trump deal. Perhaps we may be seeing the beginning of the end of the “free lunch” for the Palestinian Authority. If this turns out to be so, we will have President Trump to thank for it.

© Arlene Kushner.

The graphic features the Boomerang logo at the top left with the tagline "Fighting for Israel". The main title is "Weekly Terror Report" in large red letters, followed by "In Judea and Samaria" in smaller red letters. Below this, it specifies the time period "16th - 23th of May". A list of statistics is shown: "38 Stone Throwings", "8 Firebombs", "9 Arsons", and "2 Infiltration attempts". A red box at the bottom left contains the text "901 terror attacks". To the right of the text is a photograph of a person in a dark jacket and hood, possibly a militant, with a small fire or explosion visible in the background. At the bottom, it says "From the Beginning of 2019".

Boomerang weekly video  
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## Fear the ‘Stache — A Working Iran Policy

Caroline B. Glick

Former President Barack Obama once accused opponents of the Iran deal of making “common cause” with America’s enemies.

In keeping with his slanderous allegation, since May 5, when National Security Advisor John Bolton announced that the U.S. was deploying the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln carrier group to the Persian Gulf, the Iranian regime and former Obama administration officials have been singing from the same song sheet.

As Matthew Continetti summarized at the Washington Free Beacon, within hours of Bolton’s announcement, former Obama officials and Iranian government leaders began reciting the same talking points. Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, former chief U.S. nuclear negotiator Wendy Sherman, and a host of other Obama administration and Iranian regime officials made the same arguments.

They all set Bolton up as the bogeyman. President Donald Trump may not want to go to war, they allowed, but Bolton does. And Bolton is running Trump, they intoned, each in turn.

And they continued. U.S. war hawks are making allegations against Iran — that it sabotaged oil tankers in the Persian Gulf and attacked them with drones. Iran denies the allegations. And since Iran denies the allegations, they can’t be true.

Finally, they all arrived that the same point. The only way to bring about peace is to restore the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, (JCPOA), otherwise known as the Iranian nuclear deal.

The Obama alumni’s melding of their echo chamber with the Iranian government’s propaganda machine isn’t a surprise. As Lee Smith at Tablet online magazine demonstrated, the purpose of the nuclear

deal was not to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. The purpose of the deal was to realign U.S. Middle East policy away from Israel and the Sunni Arab states and towards Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood. To that end, the U.S. and its partners agreed to legitimize Iran’s nuclear program and to enrich the regime to the tune of \$150 billion. The nuclear deal they concluded with Iran was not a non-proliferation deal. It did not block Iran’s path to a nuclear arsenal. As then-President Barack Obama himself admitted, the deal paved Iran’s path to a nuclear arsenal. And it did so while aligning the Democratic party with the Iranian regime. Along the way, the JCPOA threw 70 years of U.S. non-proliferation policy into the garbage can, and cemented the Democratic party’s hostility to both Israel and its American Jewish supporters.

Given the nuclear deal’s actual purpose, it is no surprise that Obama’s former advisors and flaks have stood with Iran against the Trump administration even as U.S. intelligence agencies and allies have discovered that Iran intends to harm U.S. personnel and interests in the Middle East. Indeed, it is no surprise that former Secretary of State John Kerry is advising the Iranian regime to wait Trump out and hope that the Democrats win the 2020 presidential race.

As they did when they sold the nuclear deal to the U.S. public in 2015, today Ben Rhodes, Sherman, Zarif, and their comrades present U.S. policy towards Iran as a binary choice.

First, they say that the nuclear deal promoted peace and that the U.S. should return to the JCPOA to secure peace. But as its critics warned it would, the JCPOA did the opposite. By empowering and enriching Iran, the world’s largest state sponsor of terrorism, the JCPOA fomented further war and destabilization from Syria to Gaza to Lebanon to Yemen and on to Europe.

Second, they claim that the only option for dealing with Iranian aggression outside the JCPOA is to invade Iran. Obama’s spin master Ben Rhodes explicitly alleged that this is what Trump is planning in an op-ed in the Washington Post last week.

Rhodes wrote, “The Iraq War showed us all what happens when exaggerations and lies are weaponized to justify an ideological push for war... Now a similar cycle of deception may be repeating itself with President Trump’s increasingly belligerent posture on Iran.”

Today, as then, the binary choice Iran and its partners in the Obama echo chamber present — war with Trump or peace with Obama’s nuclear deal — is fiction. These aren’t choices at all. No one in the administration is talking about going to war against Iran. And again, by enriching Iran and guaranteeing it would become a nuclear-armed state within a decade, the JCPOA guaranteed war and instability in the Middle East and Europe.

Trump is not lying his way into an invasion of Iran. He is implementing a realistic strategy for denying Iran the ability to develop nuclear weapons and massively constraining its ability to sow and wage war through its proxies throughout the Middle East. And while Trump’s policy of maximum pressure bears no comparison to George W. Bush’s invasion of Iraq, it does bear striking similarities to America’s policy towards Iraq in the interregnum between the 1991 Persian Gulf War and the 2003 Iraq War.

For 13 years, U.S. policy towards Iraq combined crippling sanctions with intermittent military strikes on regime targets and weapons of mass destruction installations. The success of the policy, and particularly the Clinton administration’s 1998 Operation Desert Fox, only became clear after the U.S. overthrew Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Following the 1991 Gulf War, the U.S. and its allies imposed no-fly zones on northern and southern Iraq to protect the Kurds and the Shiites, who had been ferociously repressed by Saddam following the Gulf War. The UN Security Council placed powerful economic sanctions on Iraq to force it to reveal and hand over its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs and materiel, as well as its ballistic missiles. The UN imposed an inspections regime on Iraq to verify compliance.

In December 1998, after the UN concluded that Saddam was not providing UN inspectors with access to his weapons of mass destruction installations, then-President Bill Clinton, along with then-British

Prime Minister Tony Blair commenced Operation Desert Fox. During the course of the four-day operation, U.S. and British forces targeted Iraq’s WMD facilities and the regime’s capacity to employ domestic terror and coercion against Iraqi citizens. Then-U.S. area commander Gen. Anthony Zinni was convinced that it nearly brought about Saddam’s overthrow.

While panned as a failure at the time, after the U.S. invaded Iraq, the dimensions of Desert Fox’s success were revealed. David Kay, who oversaw the Iraq Survey Group that was deployed to Iraq to locate Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction and assess the status of its WMD capabilities and intentions after Saddam’s overthrow, had been critical of Desert Fox in 1998 because it induced a prolonged suspension of UN inspections. But in October 2003, after returning from Iraq, Kay testified to Congress, “Information found to date suggests that Iraq’s large-scale capability to develop, produce, and fill new CW [chemical weapons] munitions was reduced — if not entirely destroyed — during Operation Desert Storm and Desert Fox, 13 years of UN sanctions and UN inspections.”

Kay also said, “[T]o date, we have not uncovered evidence that Iraq undertook significant post-1998 steps to actually build nuclear weapons or produce fissile material.”

In the present case of Iran, earlier this week Michael Pregent of the Hudson Institute in Washington, DC, posted two graphics on his Twitter page. Together they demonstrated that like the interregnum policy of maximum pressure on Iraq, Trump’s policy of maximum pressure on Iran is similarly squeezing Iran both regionally and domestically.

Together with its allies, the U.S. has checked Iran’s power at home and abroad. Any offensive action Iran takes will reduce its options and weaken it still further. If Iran closes the Straits of Hormuz, the U.S., having defined the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) a terrorist organization, can bomb IRGC naval craft implementing the closure. Moreover, Pregent notes, Iran’s action would foment its abandonment by the EU.

So, too, as the EU’s firm response to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani’s announcement that Iran will begin stockpiling uranium and plutonium in defiance of the JCPOA made clear, if Iran abandons the JCPOA, the EU is likely to join the U.S. in reimposing sanctions on Iran. Russia and China would be unwilling to float Iran’s economy in such a scenario, Pregent concludes.

Before the maximum pressure campaign was implemented, Iran could deter the U.S. and its allies by threatening to attack Israel through its Hezbollah proxy force in Lebanon with its arsenal of 150,000 missiles pointing at Israel. According to the Washington Post, today, due to the U.S. economic sanctions, Hezbollah is cash-strapped and asking the Lebanese people to donate to its coffers while laying off non-essential personnel. Under the circumstances, and with Israel bombing its supply lines through Syria, Pregent contends that Hezbollah will not be able to sustain a prolonged war against Israel.

The actions the U.S. will need to take if its maximum pressure campaign escalates militarily are confined to bombing Iranian military nuclear facilities, naval craft, and proxy forces in Iraq. None of these actions require the U.S. to deploy forces to Iran or increase significantly the number of U.S. forces deployed to Iraq. Israel will continue to bomb IRGC and Iranian proxy forces in Syria and Lebanon. And, as Pregent notes, the main ground action the U.S. may undertake through its forces already on the ground in Iraq is to block Iran’s land bridge across Iraq to Syria.

Like Desert Fox, all the options on the table for the U.S. are limited and achievable with the resources the U.S. now has in the Middle East. Owing to the Trump administration’s policy of maximum pressure, Iran is in an economic crisis that constrains its options and actions at home and abroad. True, Iran’s response to U.S. moves are unknowable. But each successive U.S. move limits Iran’s maneuver room still further.

The Iraq War was such a polarizing undertaking that it made rational analysis of U.S. policy regarding Iran all but impossible. But the fact is that for 13 years, from 1991 through 2003, the U.S. implemented a policy of maximum pressure on Iraq. Like Trump’s

policy regarding Iran, it combined economic sanctions with limited military operations carried out largely from the air. And as the U.S. belatedly learned in 2003, it was successful.

There is every reason to believe that Trump's maximum pressure campaign against Iran will similarly succeed. That is why the Obama alumni and the Iranian regime hate it so much.

## America Doesn't Have an Anti-Semitism Problem. American Politics Does

Daniel Greenfield

If anti-Semitism is thriving among Americans, there's no sign of it in any of the latest polls. Americans are the least anti-Semitic people in the world. A 2017 poll, taken at the height of a spike in anti-Semitism, showed that 14% of Americans held anti-Semitic attitudes. That was up from 10% in 2015 and 12% in 2013. That's not a great trend, but it also shows just how narrow the scope of the problem is.

It's also dramatically different than the numbers from similar polls conducted in Europe.

How then can we explain the rise in anti-Semitic violence? What about the increased harassment of Jews on campuses and in major cities? And why is there a rise in anti-Semitic discourse?

There's no climate of hatred in America. The rising anti-Semitic rhetoric and violence are the work of small but highly active political groups who have become disproportionately influential in public life.

The rise in anti-Semitism isn't happening among ordinary Americans, but among a narrow group of influencers. An anti-Semitic cartoon in the New York Times isn't representative of the country. Neither is Rep. Ilhan Omar. Nor are Richard Spencer or the alt-righters who tweet their own anti-Semitic memes.

Anti-Semitic violence is rising. But the total number of incidents remains small. The perpetrators represent a small segment of the population. The violent doesn't come from 'anywhere'. On campuses and in synagogues, it comes from a small radical population of the alt-left and the alt-right. In urban areas, it originates with a slightly larger, but still fairly small population, of neighborhood bigots.

Anti-Semitism is marginal among Americans, but it's increasingly mainstream in political activism.

Anti-Semitic incidents on campuses have doubled for several years in a row. Growing numbers of Jewish students report feeling intimidated and threatened. But the intimidation is the work of a small minority motivated by political ideology. The number of students engaging in campus harassment through hate groups such as Students for Justice in Palestine remains tiny. The real problem is the complicity of identity politics groups in supporting campus hate groups and administrators in turning a blind eye to it.

The harassment is most intense at a handful of top, but not truly elite schools, in a few states. The situation is not representative of the country or even its average campus. Even in the most problematic schools, only a small politically active minority plays any role in the harassment. But that minority dominates campuses and the campuses provide much of the future leadership of the country.

It's the same problem nationwide.

Americans don't have an anti-Semitism problem. American politics has an anti-Semitism problem because, just like on college campuses, small groups are driving an anti-Semitic agenda.

American politics isn't anti-Semitic. But its leadership is becoming complicit in anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism is a function of political radicalism. And very few Americans are political radicals. But the radicals are driving national politics by constantly shattering political norms and normalizing extremism. Hatred of Jews is just one of the radical ideas heading from the political margins into the mainstream. The mainstream of politics though is a very different thing than the mainstream of American values.

Polls show that most Americans still view anti-Semitism as disgusting. But that's no longer the case among political activists and elites as anti-Semitism becomes embedded within political movements.

The anti-Semitic cartoon in the New York Times was not a sign that anti-Semitism had become normalized among Americans, but it had become so normalized in the media that it did not notice when

its language of covert anti-Semitism slurred and crossed the red line into overt anti-Semitism.

America's anti-Semitism problem is worst, not in small rural towns, but in urban media operations.

National politics was radicalized by media operations that took the marginal agendas of fringe groups and mainstreamed them. Anti-Semitism is just another one of those many radical agendas.

The media mainstreamed and normalized radicals like Tamika Mallory and Linda Sarsour while glossing over their hateful agendas. It celebrates and defends Rep. Omar's bigotry. Rep. Omar is one of hundreds of members of the House. She's a freshman with no notable accomplishments. The only reason that everyone in the country knows her name is because the media chose to turn her into a celebrity.

Rep. Omar displays of anti-Semitism aren't surprising. The same ADL poll that found that only 14% of Americans held anti-Semitic beliefs, also found that 34% of Muslims in Americans held those beliefs.

Muslims make up around 1% of the country.

How did a woman who represents 34% of 1% of the country suddenly become the face of a political movement that claims to represent half the country?

And why did Democrats rally behind a bigot who represents a third of a percent of the country?

Most Democrats are not anti-Semitic. Even most of the radicals backing Rep. Omar are not explicitly anti-Semitic. But they're willing to defend anti-Semitism as part of an alliance with that hateful third.

That's also how the anti-Semitic cartoon showed up in the New York Times.

American politics isn't anti-Semitic. But it's full of politically active people who will defend anti-Semites against charges of anti-Semitism because they agree with them on the rest of their political agenda.

Anti-Semitism in American politics is a symptom of this mainstreaming of political radicals.

The media may not be trying to intentionally mainstream anti-Semitism. As in Omar's case, it's collateral damage from mainstreaming radicals. The New York Times editorial staff didn't wake up one morning and decide on the best way to mainstream anti-Semitism by printing a cartoon of Trump in Jewish religious garb. The anti-Semitic cartoon was collateral damage from mainstreaming radicals like Rep. Omar and Linda Sarsour who blurred the line between hatred of Israel and hatred of Jews.

Once the media mainstreamed anti-Semitic radicals, it defended them against charges of anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism may not be growing, but tolerance for it is. And that can be just as dangerous. The things that you justify, whitewash and minimize, can become the things that you eventually get on board with.

Racial supremacism and obsessive hatred of Israel are radical views shared by few Americans. But they are the feverish obsessions of small, determined groups of activists who are defining national politics. As their activists gain traction, anti-Semitism leaks from the fringes and into movement organizations.

Radicals make up an even tinier percentage of the country than the campus. But anyone who reads, listens to and watches the media would think that a minority of radicals have become the majority.

This isn't the Corbynization, but the 'Campusization' of American politics.

American politics have come to resemble the college campus with a small group of radicals calling the shot and a media that hardly anyone pays attention to defending them, while the majority doesn't care.

Campus radicals are no longer just allotting student funds. They're trying to run the country.

The lessons of the battle against anti-Semitism on campuses will need to be applied to national politics. Jewish groups failed to fight the problem on college campuses. The graduates from many of these institutions went on to bigger and better things. And now the problem has gone nationwide.

Anti-Semitism isn't an American problem. It's a radical problem.

The 'Campusization' of American politics is the challenge of fighting to prevent a tiny minority of extremists from doing to the country what they have already done to the college campus.

Daniel Greenfield is a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center.

## In Other News.....

### Burying Herman Wouk With His Zionism

Moshe Phillips

Herman Wouk, the famed novelist who first became a household name for his 1951 Pulitzer Prize winning *The Caine Mutiny* died last week nearly 70 years after achieving fame. Besides his long career as a writer he was also a lifelong Zionist.

This fact of Wouk's love affair with the State of Israel has been completely absent from the many articles celebrating his literary career and marking his passing, less than two weeks before what would have been his 104th birthday.

In this small space we will attempt to rectify that.

Again and again -- from his 1959 first non-fiction work *This is My God: The Jewish Way of Life* through his pair of books about modern Israel *The Hope* (1993) and *The Glory* (1994) until his second nonfiction book, published in 2000, *The Will to Live On: This is Our Heritage* -- Wouk focused much of his literary abilities on Israel.

Perhaps no line in any of his books demonstrates his love of Israel more than this one from *This is My God*: "The first time I saw the lights of the (Israeli) airport in the dusk from the descending plane, I experienced a sense of awe that I do not expect to know again in this life." Wouk, an Orthodox Jew, synthesized his love of Torah with his love of the reborn Jewish state.

And his view of Zionism is also clearly laid out in *This is My God*: "Zionism is a single long action of lifesaving, of snatching great masses of people out of the path of sure extinction."

Forty years later in *The Will to Live On*, Wouk, as he inter-wove Jewish history and shared stories of his personal interaction with David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Rabin, and other leading Israeli generals and politicians, showed that his love of Israel was clearly undiminished. "The resurgence of Jewry in the Holy Land is nothing but phenomenal," he wrote.

Wouk had been a U.S. Naval officer during World War Two and his love of the Israeli military and respect for its accomplishments was a large part of his Israel novels *The Hope* and *The Glory*.

Those two books can be juxtaposed with his pair of famous World War Two novels *The Winds of War* (1971) and *War and Remembrance* (1978). In his Israel novels the heroine Natalie Jastrow undergoes a long and tortured journey from American Jewish girl to Holocaust victim to Zionist.

Herman Wouk penned the introduction to the 1980 English version of *Self Portrait of a Hero: The Letters of Jonathan Netanyahu*. Yoni's brothers, Benjamin and Iddo Netanyahu, put together the book. "My parents like his were Zionists," writes Wouk. Later in the introduction he explains his connection to Israel. "Like most American Jews we believe in Israel and support it, buy Israel Bonds, make frequent trips there; I give speeches for Israeli causes and so forth," and then relates how the book allowed him to better understand his own son's desire to make his home in the modern Jewish state.

The *Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Jerusalem Post* as well as wire services and other newspapers all managed to leave Zionism out of their summations of Wouk's life. Whether deliberate or not, this missing piece of his life surely matters as one simply cannot understand Wouk without realizing the central place Zionism occupied in his life, no less than his love of Torah and his deep faith.

Wouk's passion for the well-being of his fellow Jews and for Israel should serve as a reminder to American Jews of how the Greatest Generation also bore witness to the horrors of the Holocaust and the rebirth of Israel. Those who reflected on what they saw were forever changed. Wouk loved Israel and America and we should emulate that attachment to the Land of the Free as well as to the reborn Jewish State.

Postscript: *Self Portrait of a Hero* is a must read; it contains Yoni Netanyahu's letters to family and friends from 1963 when he first entered high school in the Philadelphia suburbs to just days before the rescue of hostages at Entebbe. His intellect, patriotism, compassion, dedication to duty and leadership are all on full display, amplifying the loss of someone who had just turned 30. The book had a profound effect on Wouk and if you have not read it do yourself a favor and read it and you too will be forever changed by it.