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פרשת וילך

Weighing and Evaluating

American Jewry's Days of Reckoning

Caroline B. Glick

On September 29, President Donald Trump set out his nationalist political philosophy in his address before the UN General Assembly. Arguing that the nation-state is the best guarantor of human freedom and liberty, Trump set up a contrast between "patriots" and "globalists."

"The future does not belong to globalists," he said. "The future belongs to patriots. The future belongs to sovereign and independent nations who protect their citizens, respect their neighbors, and honor the differences that make each country special and unique."

Jewish nationalists, that is, Zionists, could hear their core convictions echoed in Trump's statement. Israeli political philosopher Yoram Hazony made much the same argument in his book, *The Virtue of Nationalism*, which was published last year.

One of the regimes most opposed to nationalism is the Iranian regime. Iran's leaders view the regime not as the government of the nation of Iran, but as the leader of a global jihad, which will end with the regime's domination of the world, in the name of Islam – not Iran.

Anti-Semitism is one of the animating doctrines of Iran's regime. The leaders ascribe to genocidal Jew hatred. They use their commitment to annihilating Israel and war against the Jewish state as a means to build legitimacy for their regime and revolution throughout the Islamic world.

In his speech, Trump highlighted the regime's anti-Semitism and its commitment to annihilate Israel.

Trump also excoriated the Arab world for refusing to recognize Israel's right to exist, saying, "Fanatics have long used hatred of Israel to distract from their own failures." Trump pledged, "America will never tolerate such anti-Semitic hate."

Rather than earning him plaudits, American Jews were caustic in their response to Trump's speech. Britain's Independent reported that several American Jews condemned Trump's speech as anti-Semitic. For instance, Laura Seay, a political science professor in Texas, tweeted, "So... Trump condemns anti-Semitism in the same speech he started with anti-Semitic code language like 'globalism.'"

A couple weeks before Trump delivered his address to the UN, the leaders of the Reform movement published a pre-Rosh Hashana statement on the movement's website. Rather than concern themselves with Jewish continuity or spiritual renewal, the statement was a long diatribe against Trump. Among other things, they alleged, "Since taking office, President Trump's words and actions have sowed division, spread fear, and expressed hateful views that go far beyond the legitimate expressions of policy differences that characterize healthy political debate."

The question is, what has the Reform movement done for American Jews? According to a few hundred Jewish demonstrators who congregated outside New York City Hall on September 22, the answer is: Nothing.

The purpose of the demonstration was to demand that city officials take effective action to stem the rising wave of anti-Semitic attacks in the city.

According to a report published in May by the New York Police Department, from January through May of this year, New York City experienced an 83 percent rise in hate crime. 59 percent of hate crimes in the city are directed against Jews. And anti-Semitic attacks have risen 90 percent in the past year.

Among the participants, Morton Klein, the president of the Zionist Organization of America was the only leader of a major Jewish organization. Aside from two New York city councilmen, no Jewish politicians attended the event. New York Senator Charles Schumer wasn't there. Neither were any of the Jewish representatives from New York.

The Union of Reform Judaism also didn't send a representative.

It isn't difficult to understand why almost every Jewish leader ignored the rally. The Jews under assault aren't their sort of Jews. And the people attacking them aren't their sort of anti-Semites.

The Jewish victims in New York are not Reform Jews. They are ultra-Orthodox Jews. And they don't live in Manhattan. They live in Brooklyn.

Shortly after the NYPD released its hate crimes report, New York's Mayor Bill De Blasio held a press conference in Brooklyn. There he insisted that the anti-Semitic assaults are the work of the far right. In his words, "I think the ideological movement that is anti-Semitic is the right-wing movement."

He added, "I want to be very, very clear, the violent threat, the threat that is ideological is very much from the right."

Unfortunately for De Blasio, there are no neo-Nazis in Crown Heights and Williamsburg. The perpetrators of the attacks against his city's Jewish community are not Trump voters. They are his voters.

Most of the perpetrators are African Americans, and as such, like the Reform Jews, they are members in good standing of the progressive camp in American politics.

גמר חתימה טובה

The liberal Jewish establishment in America is far more comfortable talking about neo-Nazis than black anti-Semites. That is a large part of the reason that in its annual reports on anti-Semitic attacks in the United States in 2017 and 2018, the Anti-Defamation League tried hard to give the impression that most anti-Semitism in the U.S. emanates from the political right, and is inspired by President Trump. But the facts point to a different conclusion.

Last month the Amcha Initiative, which documents, investigates and combats anti-Semitism on college campuses, published its 2018 report on campus anti-Semitism. The report revealed that classic anti-Semitic attacks – that is, right-wing anti-Semitic attacks -- decreased 42 percent. In contrast, 2018 saw a 70 percent increase in leftist anti-Semitic attacks on campuses. The report's most alarming finding is that faculty members are playing a central role in propagating and inciting anti-Semitism on campuses by pushing academic boycotts of Israel. Their decisive role – and the fact that their actions are largely backed by university administrators – indicates that anti-Semitism has become institutionalized in American academia.

Rather than fight against this dangerous state of affairs, major Jewish groups have been diffident in their responses. While anti-Israel groups like J Street oppose legislative initiatives to penalize companies that boycott Israel, other liberal groups, like the ADL sit on the fence. They give lip service to anti-BDS laws while grousing incoherently that supporting the penalization of those who discriminate against Israeli Jews somehow breaches the First Amendment or otherwise causes undefined harm to the Jewish community.

The frustrating fact is that these liberal Jewish organizations could make a difference if they wished. If major Jewish groups, including the Reform movement, were to wage a serious, sustained campaign against U.S. academia's institutionalization of anti-Semitism, liberal politicians would be doing much more than they have been to combat the phenomenon.

Notably, as they hem and haw, the same Trump administration which the liberal Jewish establishment regularly accuses of unleashing anti-Semitism is taking steps to curtail the scourge of

academic Jew hatred.

Last month for instance, the Department of Education sent warning letters to Duke University and to University of North Carolina after they used federal funds to finance an anti-Semitic conference.

Which brings us to the ultra-Orthodox Jews in Brooklyn. The attacks against the Jews of Crown Heights, Williamsburg and Boro Park are serious and growing more frequent.

Jews walking down the streets, are beset by assailants who call them, "Dirty Jew" and beat them, with sticks and fists. Jews are sideswiped with bricks. Jewish women are assaulted, their head coverings violently removed. Synagogues are vandalized.

The violence against the Jews of Brooklyn is reminiscent of the black community's violent pogrom against the Jews of Crown Heights in 1991. In August 1991, more than 180 members of the Chabad community were injured in a three-day, four-night pogrom carried out by African and Caribbean American rioters. Yankel Rosenbaum, a visiting student from Melbourne, Australia was brutally beaten and stabbed to death.

One of the main black leaders who incited the pogrom was Rev. Al Sharpton, the self-styled civil rights leader. Despite the fact that Sharpton never apologized for stirring up the mass violence against the Jews and then maintaining it for days after it first began, over the past decade, Sharpton has risen in stature in the Democratic party to the point where Democratic presidential hopefuls make pilgrimages to him in the hope of securing his endorsement. MSNBC gave him a show.

And, in recent months, as the Jews of Crown Heights again absorb blows from their African American neighbors, the Reform Jewish movement has joined Sharpton's fan club.

On Rosh Hashana, the tony East Side Synagogue honored Sharpton at its service. In May, the Religious Action Center of the Reform movement held a conference in Washington, DC titled "Consultation on Conscience." They invited Sharpton, whom they touted as a "civil rights leader" to speak.

Rosenbaum's brother Norman Rosenbaum decried the RAC's decision to invite Sharpton in an op-ed in the Washington Examiner. "Sharpton has never apologized or shown any remorse for his actions during the 1991 Crown Heights Pogrom," he noted.

"How pathetic it is that the Religious Action Center's conference is titled 'Consultation on Conscience.' That organization, in having Al Sharpton speak, only demonstrates that it has none," he concluded.

The liberal Jewish leadership's decision to pretend away progressive anti-Semitism is not unhinged. As a decade of survey data has shown conclusively, their communities are in a state of demographic collapse. With the lowest fertility rates in America, with the majority of non-Orthodox Jews intermarrying and with Jewish literacy at an all time low, the liberal Jewish establishment seeks to retain its members by embracing their lowest common denominator. That commonality is not Judaism. It is progressivism. Whereas the 2013 Pew survey of American Jews showed that a mere 19 percent of American Jews believe that observing Jewish law is an essential part of what it means to be Jewish, 56 percent said working for justice and equality is an essential part of Judaism.

In light of the data, facing mass assimilation and a membership with an increasingly weak sense of Jewish identity, many non-Orthodox Jewish communities now conflate progressive politics with Jewish identity. Apparently, the thinking goes, by serving as a political outlet for their members, these non-Orthodox communities hope to retain their members.

The problem with this strategy is that with anti-Semitism rapidly becoming a major component of progressive politics, the more strongly liberal Jews embrace progressivism, the less capable they become of defending their Judaism – much less defending

their fellow Jews who aren't progressive. And if nothing changes in the trajectory of progressive politics, sooner rather than later, liberal Jews will be forced to abandon either their Jewish identity or their progressive identity.

For the American Jewish community to survive this clash, the leaders of the community need to begin fighting for their rights as Jews. Unfortunately, at present, there is little reason for optimism.

Appearing Strong, Facing Risks

Seth J. Frantzman

Israel waltzed into its second election of this year with a kind of malaise and acceptance that all will be well. OK, there is some chaos in the government and the prime minister has dominated many of the central portfolios over recent years, including defense and foreign policy, but all is well. Israelis can take comfort in what seems like decent GDP growth, a burgeoning population and one of the most hi-tech militaries in the world.

The perception that Israel is on the right track is one that is held in Israel, despite the gloom and doom abroad. It is other Western democracies that have tended to falter in recent years. Instead of Tony Judt's prescription that Israel was an ethnocratic anachronism, the reality is that Israel's version of muscular democracy appears to be securing it better than many other democracies that appear less sure of themselves and have real political chaos in their midst. What comes to mind is the Brexit problems in the UK and the current impeachment crisis in the US.

This optimism in Israel is founded on more than 10 years of security. The wars that made up the post-Second Intifada phase – in 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2014 – have faded a bit from memory. Gaza, which is always a looming disaster, appears to be as far away as the Moon. The West Bank, once home to a massive terrorist infrastructure that caused hundreds of deaths in Israel, is apparently quiet. The peace process is largely over and so are the dreams of the Oslo generation. But that's OK, because Israel thinks it has circumvented this problem and made outreach to the Gulf. No matter that the Kingdom of Jordan is outraged – the kingdom has many other issues to worry about, such as one million Syrian refugees that it is hosting. It pays lip service to anger over the status quo in Jerusalem. Egypt is fighting ISIS in Sinai. It, too, seems reliable.

But Israel has some issues on the horizon that, if they would come together at the wrong time, would be a perfect storm. Among these is the increasing hostility of Turkey. Ankara has become more nationalist and religious-nationalist, a toxic mix. It is flexing its muscles, taking over swathes of northern Syria and seeking to keep on track to totally remove the Americans from the region. That would be a setback for the US – and setbacks for the US also impact Israel. Turkey is buying the S-400, not in itself a problem for Israel. Ostensibly, both Ankara and Jerusalem have an interesting relationship with Moscow today, borne of Russia's increased role in the region, particularly in Syria.

Russia's role in Turkey is strategic and also related to energy and Syria. This can impact Israel in a complex way. Turkey's current government is seeking to take up the mantle of being the main opposition to Israel in the region. It bashes Israel over Jerusalem, and its media run hyperbolic stories about Israeli abuses. Turkey is close to the Muslim Brotherhood today and wants to see Hamas have a more prominent role in Ramallah. Yet Israel can deal with Turkey's anger. The question is whether it can deal with the emerging Turkey-Iran relationship.

Iran has been a challenge for Israel due to a variety of reasons, but lately it is capitalizing on the weakness of its adversaries. That means it is increasingly playing a role in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen. That means it is transferring precision missile technology to Hezbollah.

Iran's IRGC says that it can destroy Israel. It launched an attack on Saudi Arabia on September 14 that has ramifications for Israel. That Riyadh did not respond shows that Israel's supposed common interests with the Gulf are more problematic than in reality. Saudi Arabia won't confront Iran. So who will confront Iran? The US? No. The US has signaled it will not. And the next US administration may be more pro-Iran than this one. That could give Tehran what it wants in Syria, which means a kind of "land bridge" that ends near the Golan and threatens Israel.

What Israel faces today is potentially two strong adversaries in Turkey and Iran, although they are quite different in how they confront Israel. Turkey uses soft power; Iran uses hard power. But Israel, appearing strong, now faces these challenges in some ways alone. It is not like the 1950s, when Israel was truly alone. Israel has made major inroads in India, China and elsewhere. But the immediate challenges are still there. It is dangerous to be too confident and arrogant today, and it is essential that Jerusalem seek to analyze and deal with these challenges in the long-term because short term planning won't work. Iran thinks in the long term – and its role in the region is a long-term role.

[Regime change is an existential and the ultimate variable for Israel.

The regime change in Gaza, shortly after the Israeli expulsion of all Israelis from there is an obvious, but not the only precedent.

Regime change has also occurred in the United States, and Israel may have been a factor, more than once.

Lebanon was stable and there were many factors in the shift and the regime change there, including significant influences from within Israel. One must acknowledge the influence of Women in Black and leftist politicians and the huge cost, in lives and dollars, of their ill-conceived and destructive policies.

Egypt became most hostile under President Morsi when the Muslim Brotherhood took over. Morsi's overthrow by el-Sisi may be a calming at a glance, but given the Lebanon experience one can not dismiss the possibility that Israel was involved in the process, which has still not affected the friction on the street.

Any discussion of agreements must include the certainty that the Israeli reliance on treaties has a fundamental influence on Israel as well as the other parties and a long-term effect on Israeli readiness and willingness to protect Israel's existential realities. In an environment where Israel's enemies are playing a long-term game, Israel must recognize that leveraging their positions through regime change after an agreement has been reached is not a possibility, it is a tactic, a strategy, part of the familiar plan of phases.

Even while working for peace, every agreement must be evaluated as an agreement with a sworn enemy. –ed]

Alternative Jordans?

Martin Sherman

There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact.

–Sherlock Holmes, "The Boscombe Valley Mystery"
Israel must, in the most blunt and clear way possible, illustrate to Washington that the prosperity of Jordan is a first rate Israeli security and strategic interest.

– Former Head of Mossad, Ephraim Halevy, at "Between Jerusalem and Amman: 25 Years since the Signing of the Peace Agreement between Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan", the Institute for National Security Studies, Sept. 25, 2019."

With the media in a furor over the election deadlock and the legal woes of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, some of the other substantive issues looming on Israel's overloaded national agenda naturally tend to be sidelined in the ongoing public discourse.

One such topic, with potentially far reaching significance that received scant media attention, was briefly broached last week: The relationship with Jordan and the rather ominous prospects for the future.

A vital Israeli interest

Undoubtedly, in light of the regular flare-ups of violence, far more focus has been given to Israel's fronts in the North and the South—where in the former, Israel has been engaged in curtailing the Iranian build up in Syria and Lebanon, and, in the latter, in containing the violence on the Gazan border.

This tends to obscure the immense importance of Israel's eastern frontier with Jordan, and, as a direct corollary thereof, the mountain ridge separating that frontier from the country's heavily populated coastal plain.

The potential volatility and impact along Israel's longest border were thrown into sharp relief last week by Ephraim Halevy, former Head of Mossad, at a conference marking a quarter-century since the

signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan.

According to Halevy, Israel should lobby the US on the Hashemite Kingdom's behalf, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the security establishment should be drawing up plans to deal with various possible future alternatives in Jordan. Indeed, he prescribes that "Israel must, in the most blunt and clear way possible, illustrate to Washington that the prosperity of Jordan is a first rate Israeli security and strategic interest."

Thus, in Halevy's view, Jordan's stability and prosperity is a critical Israeli "interest, not a Jordanian one, and it is different from ties with the other countries surrounding us."

"Jordan should be a top Israeli priority..."

Somewhat ironically, Halevy made his plea less than twenty four hours after the Jordanian monarch, King Abdallah, addressed the UN, devoting half of his speech to castigating Israel.

However, despite Abdallah's public display of enmity, it is not difficult to understand Halevy's perspective. After all, under the Hashemite dynasty, Israel's eastern frontier has, for all intents and purposes, been peaceful since the early 1970s.

Indeed, considering the possible Mid-East alternatives, having an ostensibly moderate, pro-Western regime installed in Amman has undeniable appeal.

Accordingly, Halevy bewailed the fact that Washington has now downgraded the importance it once saw in Jordan, lamenting: "The US has turned its back on Jordan... for three years there has been no American ambassador in Jordan!"

He warned ominously; "...the Jordan issue should have top priority because if, God forbid, something should happen in Jordan, and there will be a different situation across the [Jordan] River and we go back to the situation, in which the border is no longer our longest and quietest border, but our longest and most problematic border, it will be too late!"—cautioning that this could occur within the space of one to two years.

Halevy thus urged that Israeli representatives be dispatched to Washington to advocate US aid to ensure the stability of the Hashemite regime in Amman.

Teetering on the brink?

When someone as pro-Jordan and with as close a ties with the monarchy as Halevy issues such a shrill clarion call, it should be treated with the utmost gravity and be clear that the dangers, of which he warns, are indeed imminent.

The Jordanian economy, heavily dependent on imported energy and foreign aid, has been in dire straits for several years now. Dissatisfaction is seething, producing large scale street riots, government reshuffles and erosion of the monarchy's longstanding base of support.

Although the country is straining under the burden of a million (possibly more) refugees, mainly from Syria, "many Jordanians now point to economic mismanagement and an over-reliance on international aid and International Monetary Fund (IMF) assistance, rather than the Syrian crisis, as the fundamental ill plaguing the country".

With unemployment spiraling to almost 20% , and the specter of decreasing foreign aid, the king is even in danger of losing the support of his traditional base—the Jordanian Bedouin tribes, which constitute the backbone of the regime. Thus, in March 2019, a protest movement, identified with Jordan's large Bani Hassan tribe, issued an unusually harsh statement against the King, accusing him and his family of behaving like "demigods" and demanding a change of regime.

Clamor for regime change

In the words of the statement: "The crisis in Jordan is a crisis of the regime, not of [any particular] government. It is a crisis of corruption that stems from allowing the King, his wife and his family...to do as they like and to expand the powers granted them in Jordan's constitution. This has led to the emergence of a sector of powerful people who are corrupt and have sown ruin and destruction throughout the land under the personal patronage of the [King and Queen], and to the neutralizing of the Jordanian people and their exclusion from participation in decision-making and in self-governance. We have therefore shifted from the delusional stage of demanding reforms to demanding a comprehensive change to the system of

government..."

Significantly, other tribes—such as Bani Abbad and Bani Hamida—also reportedly expressed support for the Bani Hassan statement, and although some tribal dignitaries renounced it, declaring support for the king, it caused considerable consternation in official circles.

Moreover, retired regime officials and military personnel, many of them tribe members, who were formerly part of the establishment, also took part in public protests. A group of politicians and retired military officers calling themselves the National Follow-up Committee issued a statement severely criticizing the king and court for abusing their authority, and called to take measures to limit the powers of the monarchy.

Another source of criticism is the Muslim Brotherhood. Although the movement has "lost much steam" due to internal dissension and the dismal outcomes in countries where the Muslim Brotherhood held power, the movement still exploits the wave of discontent to score political points. Earlier this year, its political branch, the Islamic Action Front, issued a statement attributing the rising unemployment, especially among young people, to the regime's economic policy and called for changing the political and economic systems.

Limited "shelf life"?

It seems therefore, that Halevy has ample grounds for his concern. However, the fact that his diagnosis—of how tenuous the Hashemite dynasty's hold on power might be—is accurate, this does not necessarily mean that his prescribed remedy—attempting to prop up a floundering monarch—should be adopted.

Although prime facie it might appear eminently plausible, we should not forget the fictional Sherlock Holmes's salutary caveat: There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact.

For as deceptively tempting as the idea might be, Israel cannot take upon itself the responsibility for ensuring the current socio-economic edifice of Jordan.

Indeed, Israel has bitter experience with regime-change in countries once reasonably benignly disposed towards it—such as pre-Erdogan Turkey, Iran under the Shah, Mubarak's Egypt and Lebanon under Bashir Jumaiel.

The latter, in particular, underscores that Israel can do little to ensure the durability of a relatively amiable regime, if domestic forces deem otherwise.

Accordingly, for the authors of Israel's national strategy, the prudent working assumption must be that the Hashemite regime has a limited—albeit not necessarily known—"shelf-life".

It would therefore appear, that the emphasis should be placed on the second part of Halevy's recommendation i.e. that Israel's security establishment should be drawing up plans to deal with various alternatives in the Hashemite Kingdom.

Jordan, regime-change and Trump

The instability in Jordan and the prospect of other "various alternatives" (i.e. regime change) assume heightened importance in light of the rumored publication of the long-awaited Trump administration's "Deal of the Century", purported to bring the century plus old conflict between Jew and Arab over the Holy Land, to an end.

Although the details of the "Deal" are as yet obscure, it would appear the Jordan is slated to play a major role in it—grudgingly or otherwise. Accordingly, the feasibility of the "Deal"—indeed its acceptability—will be dramatically impacted by the nature of the regime east of the Jordan River and its prospective stability (or lack thereof).

After all, although some may hope otherwise, there seems little prospect that any successor regime in Amman will be more favorably disposed toward Israel than the current one.

This takes us back to the crucial strategic importance for Israel of the highlands of Judea-Samaria and the Jordan Valley. As I have been at pains to point out on numerous occasions, not only are these highlands the only topographical barrier between Jordan and the heavily populated coast plain, but any forces—regular or renegade—deployed on them will have complete topographical command and control of virtually all Israel's airfields (military and civilian, including Ben Gurion, the only international airport), its major ports and naval bases, is principal traffic axes (rail and road), vital

infrastructure installations/systems (electrical power, desalination plants and water conveyance), centers of civilian government and military command and 80% of the civilian population and commercial activity.

All of these will be in range of cheap, readily available weapons that have already been used against Israel from areas evacuated by it and transferred to Arab control.

Thus, the rationale of any plan that entails Israeli evacuation of this vital territory will hinge critically on the nature of the regime-type in Jordan, which abuts it from the East.

For whatever other grave detriments their might be in such a plan, it will matter greatly if Jordan is ruled by a government that strives to reign in forces hostile to Israel, or one that is indifferent to their aggressive intent—or worse, is complicit with it.

After all, should the Trump plan entail significant territorial concessions, Israel may well find itself in a situation in which it will have to contend with a huge expanse of hostile territory, stretching from the fringes of Greater Tel Aviv to the border of Iraq—and perhaps beyond.

Accordingly, Israel's security establishment should indeed draw up plans to deal with prospective alternatives in Jordan—not only how to cope with them once they arise, but to prevent them from arising at all.

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"Anti-Normalization"

Bassam Tawil

The presence of Israeli athletes at the World Athletics Championships in Qatar (Sept. 27 - Oct. 6) drew sharp criticism from many Arabs, who expressed outrage on social media through a hashtag titled, "Normalization is Treason." Pictured: Lonah Chemtai Salpeter of Israel (left) and Desi Jisa Mokoini of Bahrain during the Women's Marathon at the World Athletics Championships in Doha, Qatar on September 27, 2019. (Photo by Matthias Hangst/Getty Images)

Arabs who dare to greet Jews in public on the Jewish New Year are being denounced by their fellow Arabs as traitors. Arabs who dare to engage in sports activities with Jews are also being condemned by their fellow Arabs as traitors.

In the past week, many Arabs have taken to social media to express outrage over a Jewish New Year greeting by Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

On September 29, the minister posted on his Twitter account "Shana Tova" ("Good Year" in Hebrew). His greeting to Jews celebrating the Jewish New Year has triggered a wave of condemnations from many Arabs, including Palestinians, who accused the minister of promoting normalization with Israel.

The vicious ad hominem attacks on the UAE foreign minister included prayers that God allow him to burn in hell and several posters comparing him to a monkey. Because of the greeting, the minister is also being denounced as a "Zionist," "war criminal," "dog," "traitor" and "pig."

Some Arabs expressed hope that the UAE will vanish "just like Israel will cease to exist."

Others seized the opportunity to remind the "shameless" minister of the Qur'an verse (Al-Ma'idah, 51) that says:

"O you who believe, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are allies of one to another (when against you), and whoso from amongst you takes them for allies, is indeed one of them."

The attacks on the UAE foreign minister came as many Arab social media users strongly condemned Qatar for allowing Israeli athletes to participate in the 2019 World Athletics Championship, held at the Khalifa International Stadium in Doha from September 27- October 6.

The presence of the Israeli athletes in Qatar drew sharp criticism from many Arabs, who expressed outrage on social media through a hashtag titled, "Normalization is Treason."

Qatar has been accused by its Arab neighbors, including Saudi Arabia and its Gulf allies, of sponsoring and funding the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood and extremist groups such as Hamas, the Palestinian terror group ruling the Gaza Strip.

Qatar's alleged support and financing of extremist groups, however, has not spared it criticism from

Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the second-largest terror group in the Gaza Strip. In recent months, Qatar has been playing a role in preventing all-out war in the Gaza Strip between Israel and Hamas. The Qataris have also been delivering millions of dollars in cash to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip as part of an effort to boost the Palestinian economy there and help poor and unemployed Palestinians.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad now seem to be spearheading the campaign of incitement against Qatar for its decision to allow Israeli athletes to participate in the World Championships in Doha.

Hamas expressed "regret" over Qatar's decision and said it considers the hosting of the Israeli athletes as "a form of normalization that will be used [by Israel] to whitewash its image in front of the world." This is the same Hamas that has been begging Qatar for cash in the past few months.

Similarly, Islamic Jihad issued a statement strongly condemning Qatar and repeating its call for Arabs and Muslims to boycott Israel. The terror group also took Qatar to task for allowing the athletes to raise the Israeli flag in Doha.

Many Arab social media users claimed that the Israeli athletes were "soldiers" serving in the Israel Defense Forces.

Mohammed al-Madhoun, a Palestinian media personality and political activist from the Gaza Strip, commented:

"The presence of an Israeli athletic team in Qatar is a stain of disgrace on the forehead of those who hosted them and allowed to participate. Does the host [Qatar] know that the members of the team are soldiers in the occupation army? I wish you would ask them: Did they participate in the Gaza massacres? How many Palestinians did they kill during their military service? How many times did they storm the Al-Aqsa Mosque [in Jerusalem]?"

Some Arabs posted photos of Israeli runner Adva Cohen, who participated in the World Championships in Qatar, and falsely accused her of "slaughtering" Palestinians. The incitement is directed not only against Qatar, but also against the Israeli athletes who are now being forced to see their photos taken from their own social media accounts in the context of the "Normalization is Treason" online campaign.

Some Palestinians went as far as inciting Arabs to revolt against their leaders for reportedly engaging in normalization with Israel.

The "anti-normalization" campaign is even targeting Jordanian divers who teamed up with Israeli colleagues to clean the beach in the Jordanian Gulf of Aqaba and the Israeli city of Eilat. The divers were participating in the first-ever ecological festival during International Beach Clean-Up Day and the United Nations International Day of Peace.

An anti-Israel group called the Association for Supporting Resistance and Confronting Normalization claimed that Jordanians who work in Eilat and other Israeli cities are often recruited as informants by the Israeli security services. The group accused the Jordanian government of "complying with all the demands of the Zionists on the pretext of cooperation for the sake of peace." The claim that Jordanians who go to work in Israel or help clean the beach are recruited as spies is aimed at painting them as traitors, a charge that is likely to put their lives at risk.

Instead of thanking Israel for allowing Jordanians to come and work in Eilat, the "anti-normalization" activists are inciting the workers to boycott Israel. These activists, of course, are not offering the Jordanian workers jobs and salaries.

In March 2019, Israel agreed to increase by 33% the number of Jordanian day laborers employed at hotels in Eilat from 1,500 to 2,000. The permits for the Jordanians are designed to allow them to work in the hotel industry of Eilat, close to the border with Jordan. The move is part of an agreement signed between Israel and Jordan to advance ties between the two countries through economic and social cooperation initiatives.

As far as the "anti-normalization" activists are concerned, inciting their people against Israel and the Jordanian workers is more important than any economic and social initiatives. These activists hate Israel to a point where they prefer to see 2,000 workers lose their jobs than continue working and earning good salaries in Eilat.

If greeting a Jew on his or her holiday, cleaning the

beach with an Israeli, or working in Israel are considered by many Arabs a "crime," what will be the fate of any Arab who makes peace with Israel?

Those who are calling for boycotts of Israel -- and are threatening and inciting their people against any Arab who dares to host a Jew or send him or her greetings -- are also emphatically opposed to peace with Israel. For them, making peace with the "Zionist entity" is considered an act of treason. They are worried that an Arab who greets a Jew may one day make peace with Israel. They are worried that an Arab state that hosts Israeli athletes may one day make peace with Israel. They are worried that Arabs who go to work in Israel may fall in love with Israelis and stop thinking of ways to kill them or destroy Israel.

Steal Electricity, Then Blame Israel

Bassam Tawil

For a long time now, many Palestinians have refused to pay their bills to the Arab-owned Jerusalem District Electricity Company (JDEC).

Many other Palestinians, taking a more direct line of theft, have been stealing electrical power from their company, a crime punishable by fines and/or incarceration in any country that respects law and order. The thieves do so by directly hooking to the power line ("cable hooking") or tampering with electric meters.

The JDEC purchases electricity from the Israel Electric Corporation (IEC), the largest supplier of electrical power in Israel. However, because of the electricity theft and widespread non-payment of electrical bills, the JDEC has not been able to pay its debts to the Israeli supplier, IEC.

On September 22, the IEC announced that it has begun cutting power supply to some Palestinian villages and cities in the West Bank to put pressure on the Palestinians to pay their debt of 1.7 billion shekels (about \$483 million). The IEC has been trying for years to collect the debt, which over the years has continued to grow. While there has been sporadic payment of some of this debt, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has not forwarded any money to the Israeli company since January 2019, when Israel cut by about half the money it transfers to the Palestinians because of the salaries the PA pays to families of terrorists.

While the Palestinians openly admit that their company loses millions of dollars each year because of the non-payment and electricity theft, they are at the same time claiming to the world that Israel is imposing "collective punishment" on them by cutting the power supply. The Palestinians, in short, are asking the international community to condemn Israel for daring to demand that they pay their debts for the electricity they purchase from the IEC.

This Palestinian audacity ("wakaha" in Arabic) reached its peak when the chairman of the JDEC, Hisham Omari, met this week with United Nations officials in Jerusalem to complain about Israel's decision to cut off the power supply to some Palestinian areas in the West Bank. Omari was quoted as accusing Israel of imposing "collective punishment" on the Palestinians and warning that the Israeli move would have "grave repercussions."

In the eyes of the chairman of the Arab electricity company, his company's failure to pay its debts to Israel is an issue that needs to be brought before the UN. Obviously, Omari did not tell the UN officials he met with about the tens of thousands of Palestinians who have not been paying their bills or who are stealing power from the JDEC. This embarrassing detail might distract from their attempt to blame Israel for daring to demand the payment of the electricity debts.

In the context of the Palestinians' effort to exploit the controversy over their electricity debt to incite their people against Israel, Thafer Milhem, head of the Palestinian Energy and National Resources Authority, went as far as claiming that Israel's attempt to collect the debt was part of the Israeli government's "systematic policy of pressuring President Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian government to comply with Israeli dictates." Milhem said that the Palestinians have contacted several international parties to complain about the Israeli company's decision to cut off power supply to some Palestinians. He, too, accused Israel of imposing "collective punishment" on the Palestinians by insisting that they pay their debt.

The Palestinian officials' attempt to internationalize the controversy over their unpaid debt to the IEC is part of a larger and ongoing effort to deceive the international community into believing that Israel is "punishing" the Palestinians for no good reason. Sadly, the attempt to hold Israel responsible for the crisis is based on lies and deception.

The Palestinians themselves admit that rampant theft of electricity and the widespread failure of Palestinians to pay their bills is the main reason behind the crisis. Yet, the Palestinians feel a bit queasy about telling the world that they are stealing electricity from their own company.

The JDEC chairman, Omari, who demanded UN intervention to force Israel to continue supplying power to the Palestinians despite their debt, was recently quoted as admitting that his company was facing a financial crisis because of its inability to force Palestinians to stop stealing electricity and start paying their bills.

Omari revealed that "large Palestinian consumers" owed his company 100 million shekels (about \$28.6 million). He said that Palestinian consumers' total debts to his company were estimated at 800 million shekels (about \$229 million). More than half of the debt belongs to Palestinians living in refugee camps, where consumers have long been stealing electricity and refusing to pay their bills, he said.

Attempts by the JDEC to collect money for unpaid bills in West Bank refugee camps have been met with violence. JDEC employees who entered the camps to collect debts or cut off power to consumers are often threatened and beaten. The Palestinian security forces have done almost nothing to help the company or its employees.

Omari also criticized Palestinian courts for failing to deal with Palestinians who are stealing electricity and refusing to pay their bills. "Some of the Palestinians [in the refugee camps] place private guards near electricity generators to prevent the company employees from cutting the power," he said. "Others block the panels with chains or rocks so that we cannot open them..." He warned that the continued electricity theft and refusal to pay bills "threatens the existence of the [Arab electricity] company."

Palestinian officials are using the electricity issue to incite not only the international community against Israel, but also their own people. These officials are telling Palestinians that Israel is seeking to punish Palestinians for no good reason, and that their anger should be directed against Israel, not against the electricity thieves or the Palestinian leadership.

Addressing its Palestinian customers, the Arab electricity company claimed that Israel's effort to collect the debt is part of an Israeli scheme to take control of the company and "Judaize" the Arab neighborhoods and institutions in east Jerusalem. The Arab company's message to Palestinians who are stealing electricity and refusing to pay their bills is: "If you find yourselves without electricity, you should blame only Israel."

Apparently, the Palestinians believe that they have a "right" to free electricity -- even if that leads to the collapse of their own electric company. This conviction is in keeping with the longstanding Palestinian perception that someone else -- preferably Israel and Western donors, but basically anyone else -- should pay their way in the world, particularly their electricity bills.

The controversy surrounding the unpaid electricity debts is yet another example of the Palestinians' unceasing search for ways to blame Israel for self-inflicted miseries. Instead of assuming responsibility for the electricity theft and unpaid bills and taking punitive measures against the offenders, the Palestinians are doing what they do best: trying their utmost to convince the world that it is all Israel's fault. Bassam Tawil is based in the Middle East Gatestone Institute

In Other News...

Do your Jobs

Victor Rosenthal

Over the coming weeks, 100% of the words uttered by our politicians will be lies, obfuscations, spin, dissimulation, disinformation and other forms of useless verbiage. I'll try not to report on it, because what's the point? -- Ya'akov Lozowick, in a tweet about a week after the recent election

Dear Bibi and Benny:

I've had enough of your egos. All of Am Yisrael has had enough.

Seventy years ago, a Jewish state was re-established in the Land of Israel after thousands of years during which the Jewish people were forced to live under one or another foreign regime; years when they did not know what to expect tomorrow; years when they had to keep their suitcases packed.

After the horrors of war and Holocaust, a remnant of European Jewry was saved, here in Eretz Yisrael. When the Muslim world expelled most of its Jewish population in a paroxysm of Jew-hatred, they came and were brought here. Threatened Jews came from Iraq, Syria, Egypt, North Africa, Yemen, Ethiopia, and other places.

Some people believe that the creation of the state and its survival was a miracle, a gift from Hashem. There is no doubt that it also required a price in blood to be paid by our people, our sons and daughters who fought, and continue to fight for it against ever-changing but also ever-vicious enemies. Almost every day our people make payments in blood, on our borders and even on our streets.

The external threats we face are great. Iran advances its project of encircling us with its rockets and proxy armies in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, while developing nuclear weapons and missiles to deliver them. The Palestinian Arabs continue their project of educating generation after generation of young people so that their greatest ambition will be to shed Jewish blood. Hamas throws its people against our border fence every Friday. This spring and summer, they burned hundreds of acres of agricultural land in the south of the country with arson balloons and murdered our citizens with their rockets and mortars. The home front is unprepared for the next war. And the all-encompassing cognitive struggle, paid for in Arab and Iranian petrodollars and European Euros, marches on, conquering hearts and minds in the universities and even grade schools of the West.

Instead of dealing with any of this, or even the price of apartments for young families in Israel, you two -- followed by your legions of sycophants -- are locked in a struggle for dominance that seems unamenable to compromise. Only total victory will satisfy you. Meanwhile, we've had two elections, and neither of them has produced a result. Our government is non-functional, its ministers primarily concerned about their personal futures and the perquisites thereof.

While you both piously pretend to want to establish a unity government, you insist on conditions that you know the other side will be unable to meet. You use the threat of a third election -- at the cost of additional months of paralysis and more than a billion shekels (including the cost of the mandated day off) of our money -- to play chicken.

We have had enough.

Regarding a third election, know that if -- God forbid -- it should happen, the results will be even worse for both of you. Many Israelis won't vote in protest, some will vote for smaller parties, and the Arabs, who have gotten a taste of the power that it can give them, will vote for Arab parties in even greater numbers.

Be aware that the regard both of you are held in your country is dropping rapidly every day that this farce continues. History will judge both of you harshly, especially if the nation goes to war unprepared because you wasted your own and everyone else's time, money, and attention.

You know what you have to do. Stop lying, obfuscating, spinning, dissimulating, and disinforming. Sit down with the other side and compromise. That means each of you will have to give up the idea that you will get everything, or even most, of what you want.

Tomorrow is Erev Rosh Hashana. The coming week is the perfect time to put aside your egos and your personal considerations and think about what you owe the Jewish people and their state. Perhaps do tshuva [repentance] for some of the ways in which you have not lived up to your obligations to the state and its people.

Think about the thousands that gave their lives in the War of Independence in order to create the state, and of those who died to preserve it. Think about the defenders of the Emek HaBakha on the Golan Heights in 1973, or the battle of Bint Jbeil in 2006. You have it easy. Nobody is asking you to fall on a grenade to save your comrades like Roi Klein at Bint Jbeil. Just do your jobs.