

25Cheshvan,5779
November 23, 2019

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

ב"ה שבת שלום
פרשת חיי שרה

This Land is Our Land

To Be a Free People in Our Land

Rav Shachar Butzchak

At this moment, I am sitting in our Beit Midrash in the Yeshiva of Sderot, preparing a shiur. And a siren suddenly calls out the phrase that is too familiar "Red Alert!", "Red Alert!". After a few seconds the warning siren sounds again with those same words.

This means that 5 seconds ago, some savages have fired 2 missiles at us, and in 5-10 seconds they will fall somewhere very close to us. A few hundred meters from where I sit, the Iron Dome Battery is firing 2 salvos into the sky to intercept these missiles whose intent is to take as many Jewish lives as possible, simply because they live in the land of Israel. Or perhaps simply because they live.

(By the time I finished writing those words another 4 missiles were fired, besides the 2 I was writing about).

While I am in the Yeshiva, my wife and 5 children are in our home in Moshav Mivtachim, very close to Gaza. Already this morning, they too have had a number of sirens and it is only 11 am. Since yesterday 250 missiles have been fired at our region.

Beside me here in the Beit Midrash, the Yeshiva boys, from age 18 and up, are preparing the material I gave them for the shiur. Their homes are all across Israel. North, Centre, South. But they are here. They did not travel to their quiet homes, far from the missile range. Because they know that their learning provides added protection for the Jewish people.

In these tense times, we live anew the words of the Talmud, Brachot 5a. Rav Shimon Bar Yochai says that there are 3 gifts that the Holy One Blessed be He gave to the Jewish people, but these gifts come with suffering: the Torah, the land of Israel and the world to come.

Many people call the region we live in "Otef Aza – the envelop, the region of Gaza". But my view is that the real name is "Otef Yisrael – the envelop of Israel". We don't envelop Gaza, we envelop the Jewish people living in the Land of Israel. We envelop it like a shield of human armor. We envelop it with love and warmth, with our bodies and our homes. We choose every day to live here, both during run of the mill days and in times of emergency.

No day passes without a call from our family in the North offering us some respite with them until things quiet down. But our response is always the same: our home is here. Our evil enemies will not get the satisfaction of seeing ghost towns empty of residents.

In particular, I, as Rav of the community and a member of the Emergency Squad, feel I shoulder responsibility for my community. Most of the year my focus is on the spiritual life. But now the emphasis is on people's physical and mental well being. The Friday night drasha in shul becomes a motivational address, expressing our privilege in being here to protect the Land of Israel. It was only a few decades ago that our families were slaughtered just for being Jews – and with none to protect them. But today we have a military, a true military power. Even the greatest military power has its front line. We are fortunate to be that front line, G-d's warriors 365 days of the year: we, our wives and children.

At times like this, as a Rav in this area, I deal with unique questions: Women afraid to go to the Mikveh at night, since most mortars are fired in the cover of night as it is harder to intercept these smaller weapons at night than during the day. Or the Bride and Groom who have been told by the army not to have a large gathering and that the wedding hall has been closed – and now have to find any shul or yeshiva that is fortified to allow a small wedding, while still trying not to spoil their simcha.

A fundamental question we deal with is whether it is permissible for people to leave their home to attend minyan when there is a fear of missiles. One is more vulnerable outside than when at home. And many shuls do not have safe rooms that can protect the attendees if there is an attack.

But even with all the difficulties and the complexities, it does not even cross our mind for a moment that perhaps we are in the wrong place. This is our place. This is our purpose. We are soldiers in G-d's army.

You the readers, the Jewish people who are not on the front line, you too need to ask yourselves: "What is our purpose?" No Jew is without a purpose – that just couldn't be. Wherever I am, wherever I decide to live with my family, I must grapple with this fundamental question: "What can I give to the Jewish people, to the Land of Israel and to the Torah?" We don't need you to appreciate our heroism while watching the never ending TV coverage of the hundreds of murderous missiles aimed to kill us. We need you to take that appreciation and to translate it to action, to give it a purpose. To give as much of yourselves as you can to be G-d's messenger in the world. We have a principle: the person's messenger is as him. So if we are His messengers

The eternal people are not afraid of a circuitous path!

With love and respect,
From the front line,
and with prayer for a true peace,
Rav Shachar Butzchak
Rav, Moshav Mivtachim, the Envelop of Israel.
Shacharb4@gmail.com



IDF Major Maayan Maimoni

IDF Major Maayan Maimoni, saved hundreds of lives last week as she commanded the Iron Dome warriors who intercepted most of the rockets fired at Israeli civilians by Islamic Jihad. Major Maimoni is a hero, one of many huge heroes of Israel who we never meet.

May he who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, bless the soldiers of the Israel Defense forces and the security personnel who stand guard over our country and the cities of our God, from the Lebanese border to the Egyptian wilderness and from the Mediterranean Sea to the edges of the desert – or wherever they might be – on land, in the air or at sea.

Pompeo, AIPAC and Jewish

Caroline B. Glick

American Priorities

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made two brief, basic points in his declaration Monday on Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria. He said that those communities are not illegal. And he said that far from facilitating peace, delegitimization of those communities has harmed prospects for peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Israelis were all but unanimous in their praise for Pompeo for speaking these simple truths. From Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to opposition leader Benny Gantz there was an immediate consensus supporting the Trump administration's bold move to reject Barack Obama's truth-impaired, hostile position on those communities and the EU's concomitant absurd and bigoted legal double standard for the Jewish state and its citizens.

Although the Palestinians responded with predictable fury to Pompeo's statement, theirs wasn't the angriest reaction. The angriest responses came from the two parties – the EU and the Democrats -- whose anti-Israel and factually baseless positions Pompeo's statement repudiated.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini issued a condemnatory press release. She and her French, Belgian and German colleagues tried to get a consensual condemnation from all EU member states, but pro-Israel Hungary blocked them.

Democratic presidential candidates lined up to condemn Pompeo's remarks, together with their radical counterparts in Congress. Elizabeth Warren promised to revoke Pompeo's position if elected president.

The reason they were angry is because with his simple, brief statement, Pompeo took away their favorite fig leaf for hiding their hatred for Israel.

For the Europeans and the American Left, the term "settlement" does not connote an Israeli town on the map. For them, "settlement" is a password that opens Pandora's Box of anti-Semitism. When they say "settlement," they mean, "Zionism is racism," or "Israel is an Apartheid state," or "BDS."

The term "settlement" serves for them as a green light for rejecting Israel's right to exist, for denying self-determination to the Jewish people, for embracing anti-Semitism.

With his statement on Monday, Pompeo took their buzzword away.

Now they can't say that they aren't anti-Israel, they simply believe in the importance of upholding international law because the position of the U.S. government is that "settlements" do not violate international law.

They can no longer say that they aren't anti-Israel, they are pro-peace and the "settlements" are an obstacle to peace. The U.S. position is the opposite – opposition to "settlements" is an obstacle to peace.

In short, those most directly harmed by Pompeo's statement are those that use the term "settlements" as the key justification for their anti-Semitic campaigns in the West, and particularly in America.

In light of this, the people most harmed by these anti-Semitic forces, that is, American Jews, could have been expected to be the greatest supporters of Pompeo's statement.

But that isn't what happened. While Israelis across the political spectrum cheered Pompeo for his declaration, the American Jewish community – as represented by its major organizations – had three main responses to what Pompeo said.

The first came from the anti-Zionist or post-Zionist Jewish left. This group is led most notably J Street and the Union of Reform Judaism. Both viciously condemned Pompeo's statement.

The Reform movement stunned Israelis when its leader Rabbi Rick Jacobs called on President Donald

Trump to rescind Pompeo's statement and reinstate the Obama administration's policy of viewing Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria as the great obstacle to peace.

On the other side of the spectrum, groups with traditional Zionist positions were deeply supportive of Pompeo's statement. The Zionist Organization of America, (ZOA) was ecstatic. It specifically noted that the Trump administration's move, "strikes a blow at the hateful, anti-Israel BDS, (boycott, divestment and sanctions) movement, which relies on false claims that Jews are 'illegal occupiers' of the Jewish homeland."

The ZOA also condemned the Reform movement for calling for the administration to rescind the policy.

The Orthodox Union and several smaller groups also greeted Pompeo's remarks with gratitude and support.

Likewise, Christians United for Israel, (CUFI) and other leading Christian Zionist groups and national leaders were thrilled by Pompeo's statement. One evangelical leader enthused that with the move, Trump secured "100 percent" of his evangelical Christian base.

Between the post-Zionists and the Zionists are the bulk of what are normally viewed as mainstream Jewish American groups. These include the American Jewish Committee, (AJC), the Anti-Defamation League, (ADL), the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, (AIPAC), the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the Jewish Federations of North America. Until a decade or so ago, all of these groups could have been expected to respond as the ZOA and CUFI did. But alas, much has changed in the past ten years.

The reactions of these organizations were disappointing, to say the least. The Conference of Presidents refused to release any statement in response to Pompeo's declaration. The Jewish Federations of North America were similarly silent.

Statements by the AJC and the ADL ignored the substance of Pompeo's declaration. They failed to mention the fact that he repudiated the Obama administration's obsessive and false claim that Israeli communities are an obstacle to peace, despite the fact that this claim has fueled the work of anti-Semites as they spread their hatred of Jews on college campuses across America. The AJC and ADL also didn't thank Pompeo for saying what he said.

Instead, their statements effectively embraced Obama's discriminatory and false position on these Israeli communities. The ADL said (irrelevantly) that it supports the establishment of a Palestinian state. The AJC said it opposes construction in settlements located beyond the large settlement blocs – as if this were at all relevant to Pompeo's statement.

In other words, both groups pretended that what he was saying was directed at Israeli policy, rather than the campaigns by the EU and the American left to demonize and delegitimize Israel and its Jewish supporters in the West.

AIPAC's response to Pompeo's statement was arguably even more shocking. Pompeo's statement rejected fifty years of anti-Israel rhetoric that cultivated and accelerated the rise of anti-Semitism on the American left and gave the EU a fig leaf to excuse its anti-Semitic policies. As the pro-Israel lobby in Washington, AIPAC should have been the first to thank Pompeo, particularly in light of the wall to wall support his statement elicited in Israel.

But AIPAC did not thank Pompeo.

AIPAC's only response to the most significant shift in U.S. Israel policy in since the Six Day War was a post on its twitter feed which read, "AIPAC does not take a position on settlements. We believe settlements should be an issue for direct negotiations between the parties, not something determined by international bodies. The Palestinians must stop their boycott of US and Israeli officials and return to direct talks."

Aside from ignoring Pompeo's statement, and so erasing the context of its remark, the most bizarre aspect of AIPAC's tweet is the position it expressed.

The war against "settlements" is the means through which Israel's detractors seek to delegitimize Israel's

very existence and demonize AIPAC and its members as disloyal to America for their "crime" of caring about Israel.

And AIPAC doesn't have a position on the issue? Can it really not choose a side in the battle between the Israeli consensus and IfNotNow?

What purpose does no-position-on-settlements-AIPAC serve today? What is it there to do?

How are we to understand the tepid-to-non-existent responses of these major Jewish groups to the most supportive statement made by a sitting Secretary of State in history? What stands behind their refusal to respond positively to a statement that undermines the basis for the most politically powerful and fastest growing form of anti-Jewish bigotry in America?

It would seem that there is one explanation. It is called the Democratic Party, circa 2019. Like most of their members, the leaders of these Jewish organizations groups lean Democrat. Their decision to remain in a party that becomes more hostile to Israel and Jewish interests with every passing week carries certain obligations. Quite simply, there is little room in the Democratic party today for fulsome support for Israel and rejection of leftist anti-Semitism. The party they won't leave would in all likelihood leave them if these Jewish groups were to thank Pompeo for rejecting the delegitimization of "settlements" – again, the buzzword used by the likes of John Kerry, Rashida Tlaib, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, Joe Biden and Alexandra Ocasio Cortez to attack Israel and its supporters.

Then there is the issue of the identity of the man who made the statement on Monday.

Pompeo is not merely a Republican. He is President Trump's Secretary of State. And President Trump happens to be the most pro-Israel president in U.S. history. But in today's poisonous political climate, no Democrat can say anything positive about Trump and his administration.

And so, AIPAC's statement never mentioned his name. The AJC and ADL wouldn't say anything positive about Pompeo or his extraordinary statement. And all three of them – together with the silent Conference of Presidents and Jewish Federations of North America – ignored the fact that that the consensus view of Israelis is that Pompeo's statement was a great act of friendship towards Israel and the Jewish people.

For Israel, the lesson from all of this is a sad one. Mainstream American Jewish groups and their leaders are no longer dependable allies and partners. Until ten years ago, these groups and leaders recognized that their freedom and civil rights as Jewish Americans was tied to American support for Israel. Now, as that support for Israel in their political home is collapsing, they won't stand up for their rights in opposition to their party and so they are unable to stand up for Israel or respect the consensus opinion of Israelis.

To date, regardless of the party in power, Israel's governments have gone out of their way to support for these major Jewish organizations. Prime ministers and cabinet ministers have made a point of flying to Washington to participate in the annual AIPAC conference, for instance.

The time has come to end this tradition.

Rather than support groups that are unwilling to stick their necks out to defend either Israel or their own community, the government should support the groups that are willing to do so. Israel should support the Jewish and non-Jewish groups that support Israel in meaningful ways. Those that are willing to stand up to the forces using the term "settlements" to demonize Israel and its American supporters are the ones who Israel should focus its energies on supporting.

Israel should help smaller Zionist groups grow and help larger organizations expand their reach. To this end, Israel would be better served if the Prime Minister skips the AIPAC conference in favor of the CUFI conference in the coming years.

Old habits die hard. But the cold responses these major Jewish groups issued in the face of the most significant pro-Israel position the Trump administration has adopted to date show that they have already changed their old habits. Israel needs to recognize what they have done and act accordingly.

The Communities in Judea and Samaria

Victor Rosenthal

"[t]he establishment of Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank is not per se inconsistent with international law."

-US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

Q: Why do you say "Jewish Communities" and not "settlements," and why not "West Bank?"

A: "Settlements" implies that they are outside of Israel. "Communities" is neutral. "West Bank" is a name invented by the Jordanians in 1950, after they ethnically cleansed the area of Jews and illegally annexed it to Jordan, an action recognized only by the UK and possibly Pakistan. "Judea and Samaria" is the traditional name used from biblical times, even by the UN before 1950.

Q: The Arabs, the EU and the UN often say that "settlements" are illegal under international law. What international law are they talking about?

A: Usually they mean the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prescribes conditions for a belligerent occupation. Article 49, paragraph 6 says "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." There are also other limitations on what an occupying power can do in the Geneva Conventions and the Hague Convention of 1907, roughly based on the idea that the territory doesn't belong to the occupier unless or until a formal treaty establishes its status.

Q: Why did the American government agree with them?

A: The State Department had been wedded to the idea that Israel should return to her pre-1967 borders since the oil shock of the 1973 war. The requirement for "secure and recognized boundaries" in UNSC resolution 242 in 1967 receded into the background, disappearing entirely by the time of Barack Obama.

Naturally settlements were a problem. President Carter very much wanted to include Israeli withdrawal from Judea, Samaria and Gaza in the Camp David agreement that returned the Sinai to Egypt, but was unable to do so; the Camp David talks did produce a "Framework for Peace in the Middle East," but it did not mention settlements, and was scuttled anyway by the PLO and the UN. The arguments that settlements were inconsistent with international law were set out in an opinion written for President Carter in 1978 by State Department legal advisor Herbert J. Hansell, and never changed until Pompeo's announcement.

Q: Why do you disagree?

A: Two reasons: first, it is a misapplication of 4th Geneva 49-6, which was intended to prevent forced transfers of population such as Germany's deportation of Jews to occupied Poland, and not the voluntary movement of people. Second, because Israel's legal claim on the territory is stronger than that of any other country, there is no belligerent occupation: the land is more properly considered disputed rather than occupied.

Q: What do you know? You're not an expert in international law!

A: No, but Eugene Kontorovich is. And here is what he said about this issue:

Under international law, occupation occurs when a country takes over the sovereign territory of another country. But the West Bank was never part of Jordan, which seized it in 1949 and ethnically cleansed its entire Jewish population. Nor was it ever the site of an Arab Palestinian state.

Moreover, a country cannot occupy territory to which it has sovereign title, and Israel has the strongest claim to the land. International law holds that a new country inherits the borders of the prior geopolitical unit in that territory. Israel was preceded by the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, whose borders included the West Bank. Hansell's memo fails to discuss this principle for determining borders, which has been applied everywhere from Syria and Lebanon to post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine.

Even on its own terms, [Hansell's 1978] memo's conclusions no longer apply. Because occupation is part of the law of war, Hansell wrote, the state of occupation would end if Israel entered into a peace treaty with Jordan. In 1994 Jerusalem and Amman signed a full and unconditional peace treaty, but the State Department neglected to update the memo.

Even if there were an occupation, the notion that it creates an impermeable demographic bubble around the territory—no Jew can move in—has no basis in

the history or application of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Almost every prolonged occupation since 1949—from the Allies' 40-year administration of West Berlin to Turkey's 2016 occupation of northern Syria—has seen population movement into the occupied territory. In none of these cases has the U.S., or the United Nations, ever claimed a violation of this Geneva Convention provision.

Q: But what about those countless UN resolutions condemning Israel? Didn't the Security Council pass a resolution (2334) that clearly declared Israeli settlements illegal?

A: General Assembly resolutions are non-binding, and even Security Council resolutions do not have the force of international law unless they are passed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, "Action With Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression." Resolution 2334 – which passed because the Obama Administration abstained in December of 2016 – was not such a resolution.

Q: But the UN, the EU, the New York Times, and many other organizations say Jewish communities are "illegal" or (as Obama liked to say) "illegitimate." Doesn't the international consensus count for something?

A: International law isn't a popularity contest, and the UN is not a world government that can make or (except in special circumstances) enforce laws. The fact that many nations and individuals dislike Israel as a result of their religious beliefs, the remnants of cold-war Soviet propaganda, their relationship with oil providers, their desire to stick it to the US, or plain old Jew-hatred, does not matter.

Q: What exactly did Pompeo do?

A: Pompeo made it clear that the US did not intend to judge whether any particular community was legal (I presume he meant that one built on land that was privately owned by someone else would be illegal), but that it was no longer the case that the US would consider a Jewish community illegal simply because it was located in Judea/Samaria – or, to put it another way, that a community in Judea/Samaria would be considered illegal simply because it was composed of Jews.

Q: Does this actually matter?

A: Yes, for two reasons. One is that various groups are taking actions (boycotting products from the communities or requiring special labeling on them) on the basis of their opinion that they are illegal. The fact that the US does not agree is a powerful argument that these actions are unfairly discriminatory, and might be a basis for legislation against them in the US.

The other reason is that the idea that these communities are illegal presupposes a certain view of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Arabs, in which land east of the Green Line is "Arab land" rather than a disputed territory on which both sides have claims. This clearly prejudices the outcome of any negotiations, and leads to the Arabs demanding the freezing or evacuation of Jewish communities as a precondition for negotiations. One might reasonably ask how the illegal ethnic cleansing and 19-year occupation of Judea and Samaria by Jordan converted the land set aside for "close settlement" by Jews in the Palestine Mandate into "Arab land."

Here is a special question for extra credit:

Q: What has Trump and his administration done for Israel so far?

A: As of today, the Trump Administration has finally fulfilled the promise of the US Congress to move the US Embassy to our capital and has asserted – as previous administrations would not – that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. It cut funding for the Palestinian Authority while it continues to pay terrorists, and reduced the amount sent to UNRWA, the UN agency that nurtures and perpetuates the Palestinian refugee problem. It recognized Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights. It took the US out of the Iran nuclear deal, and re-imposed sanctions on Israel's most serious enemy. It spoke out strongly for Israel in the UN, in the voice of Ambassador Nikki Haley. Now it has separated America from those who dishonestly accused Israel of violating international law.

All of these actions are reasonable and should have been taken by prior administrations, which often voiced their support of Israel but did little to change wrong or discriminatory policies toward her. It's been suggested that they are all cheap, merely "symbolic," and have little effect on the ground. But if this is so, then why didn't previous presidents act?

A 660 lbs. War Crime

Martin Sherman

The IDF is investigating the incident [in which Arab civilians were hit in the latest round of fighting in Gaza]; Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad are investigating why [Israeli] civilians were NOT hit

– MK Benny Gantz (Blue & White) in an exchange in the Knesset with MK Ahmad Tibi (Joint List)

I have written on Gaza in my last two columns—one just before the latest round of fighting there—and one just after it. So, I guess it would have been reasonable to focus on some other topic this week.

Last Thursday morning...

Indeed, as it happens, there was an abundance of other events that were eminently worthy of attention – such as: The decision to indict Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; the failure to form a governing coalition; the major Israeli airstrike on Iranian targets in Syria; the momentous declaration by Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, stating that the US no longer considers the Jewish communities across the 1967 "Green Line" inconsistent with international law; or the boneheaded denouncement of the Pompeo declaration by the head of US Reform Jewry, Rabbi Rick Jacobs, alleging, perversely, that it somehow undercuts the fight against BDS; or the asinine allegation by the Jewish Democratic Council of America that President Trump is "the biggest threat to American Jews"—blithely ignoring the blatant and burgeoning anti-Semitism in their own party ranks.

However, despite the adequate menu of prospective alternatives, I have decided once again to focus on Gaza, and to highlight an ominous aspect of the recent fighting that I feel merits far greater attention than that which has been accorded it so far.

Last Thursday morning, residents of an unspecified community, near the Gaza border, in the Eshkol region, somewhere between the cities of Ashkelon and Be'er Sheva, awoke to discover a dismaying sight—not far from their homes. All that remained of what once was a modern greenhouse was a gaping crater, over 6 feet deep and over 50ft wide—the result of a single rocket that had landed there at 2 am that same day.

"We need to flee like mice..."

According to Israeli sources, the cause of the unusually large explosion was a relatively new acquisition by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)—a short-range missile with range of reportedly up to five kilometers, but capable of carrying a huge explosive warhead of above 300 kg (660 lbs.). It is believed that Hamas also has similar weaponry. Significantly, these deadly rockets, named "Burkan" and previously used in Syria and Iraq, are now thought to be produced locally in the Gaza Strip.

According to veteran military correspondent, Roni Daniel, "The PIJ is developing capabilities—with Iranian funding and engineers—that to some degree surpass those of Hamas".

The reactions of the residents to the explosion, as reported by Tamir Steinman, Channel 2's correspondent for the South are both alarming and edifying.

One concerned resident remarked: "This is obviously not an ordinary missile and if something like this were to hit a house, little would remain of it."

Another resident, clearly shaken to her core, exclaimed: "It happened at 2 am. The door of our shelter shook with great force. Against a missile of this sort, our shelter is not worth anything. It cannot cope with this. No matter how protected and calm you think you are, and follow all the safety regulations, under these conditions, we simply need to get into our car and flee like mice."

For almost a decade...

With evident trepidation, she continued: "Such a missile would pulverize a house to dust. It blasted a crater that is impossible to describe—something completely out of the ordinary. There is no protection that can meet these requirements to defend us in the case of missiles like this."

Summing up her concerns, she confessed: "I have lived here all my life. This is the first time I feel exposed, completely unprotected. We are simply dependent on the whims of the other side. If they do something extreme, we will have to flee for our lives."

The emerging use of such high explosive missiles and the reaction of the Gaza-border residents reflect

two disturbing phenomena, of which I have warned—repeatedly—for almost a decade.

The one is that, no matter what ingenious defensive countermeasure Israel manages to devise to deal with each offensive measure that the Palestinian-Arab terror groups employ against it, eventually those terror groups manage to find some measure to circumvent or undermine the effectiveness of Israeli defenses.

The other is that, as long as Gaza remains intact, with a large, inherently hostile Arab population, the aggression against Israeli population centers will continue and Israel will eventually be faced with the specter of Jewish depopulation of the South.

An inconvenient fact

Indeed, it will inevitably have to face the inconvenient fact that there will either be Jews in the Negev or Arabs in Gaza—but, in the long run, there will not be both.

In this regard, see for example:

On Domes and Drones (September 13, 2019)

Will the growing use of drones by the Gaza-based terror groups make the billion-dollar Iron Dome and anti-tunnel barrier useless—or at least irrelevant?

The Deadly Detriments of a Doctrine of Defense (June 18, 2019)

Israel continually backs away from conflicts that it can win and by doing so, backs itself into a conflict that it cannot win or win only at ruinous cost.

Israel's Stark Option: Arabs in Gaza or Jews in Negev (November 16, 2018)

The problem in Gaza is not operational. It is conceptual. The failed formula of self-rule for Gaza must be set aside.

The Ruinous Results of Restraint (July 10, 2014)

Israel can no longer enable its citizens to "live normal lives" without retaking Gaza. "Restraint" and "proportionality" have so degraded its deterrence that it can no longer dissuade enemies from attacking almost at will.

White Flag over Gaza... (August 25, 2011)

Political correctness has precluded the pursuit of strategic imperatives; Israel can no longer credibly deter terrorists.

Iron Dome is "not a hermetic" defense:

Without wishing to detract from the tremendous technological accomplishment of the Iron Dome, it is not—even as its most avid advocates would admit—a totally hermetic defense system. Indeed, according to Aviation Week, the Iron Dome has proved to be impressively 90% effective.

However, given the scope of the new menace of massive warheads, a 10% "leakage", or even less, could have a catastrophic effect in terms of death and damage.

Indeed, as yet another distressed resident of the community, in which the heavy missile landed, stated: "This is something that can change the rules of the game—and we demand answers. This is not just another rocket or mortar shell... We know that this is something extraordinary, something we have not seen before..."

In the past, I have cautioned that as long as the situation in Gaza continues as it is, the terror organizations will continue to hone their Judeocidal capabilities, making the lives of Israeli civilians in the South—and gradually beyond—more and more hazardous and harrowing.

Indeed, we already know that the Palestinian-Arabs are hard at work developing means to render the Iron Dome and other defense systems, designed to intercept high trajectory rockets and missiles, ineffective. These include efforts to procure low flying weapons such as cruise missiles, to develop drones, to produce missiles with non-linear flight paths, (such as the J-80 missile which destroyed a residence in Moshav Mishmeret); to devise multiple warheads for their rockets and missiles and/or coordinate attacks with Hezbollah in the North, in order to overwhelm Israel's anti-missile defenses.

A 660 lbs. war crime

But, apart from all the above, the current configuration of hostilities that Israel has chosen to conduct against the Gazan-based terror groups allows them, among other things, to:

- Tighten their counter-intelligence to constrict information on targets;
- Continue to improve concealment and hardening of targets, allowing them to fire continuous heavy

barrages of missiles, despite Israeli air attacks;

• Progress toward the establishment of an air defense system to curtail the present, largely unrestricted freedom of action of the Israeli Airforce;

All this will, of course, allow them to continue, with relative impunity, to enhance their implements of death and destruction against the Jewish state and its citizens.

Indeed, as MK Benny Gantz points out (see opening excerpt), the principal targets of the Gazan-based terror groups are civilians. After all, given the short range and inaccuracy of Burkan missiles, it is clear that it is not designed to destroy military installations. Thus, as a YNetnews analysis points out: "The Burkan is meant to be used to rain down destruction on Israeli communities close to the Gaza border."

Accordingly, every time it is deployed against civilian targets in the South, it is in effect a 660 lbs. war crime—and should be treated as such.

Convergence to one conclusion

So, as I have argued repeatedly in the past, it matters little from which aspect the conflict in Gaza is approached. They all converge to one inescapable conclusion, which, as I have detailed in my last two columns, is as follows:

• The only way to ensure who rules – and does not rule – Gaza is for Israel to rule it itself.

• The only way for Israel to do this without "ruling over another people" is to relocate the "other people" outside the territory it is obliged to administer.

• The only way to effect such relocation of the "other people", without forcible kinetic expulsion, is by economic inducements i.e. by means of a comprehensive system of enticing material incentives to leave and daunting disincentives to stay.

Implementing this inescapable conclusion is, without doubt, one of the greatest challenges facing the Zionist endeavor today.

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

Muslim Brotherhood Subversion

Raymond Ibrahim

vs. Jihadist Rage

What do Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri—that is, the late leader of ISIS, and the late and current leaders of al-Qaeda—have in common? That they're among the world's most notorious Islamic terrorists? Yes, but there's something else, something more subtle, that binds them: they all began their careers as members of the Muslim Brotherhood, the oldest and most widespread political Islamic organization in the world.

In a 2014 video interview, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi—a spiritual leader of the Brotherhood whose Al Jazeera program on shari'a is watched by tens of millions of Muslims—asserted that "this youth [al-Baghdadi] was from the start among the top ranks of the Brotherhood, but he was inclined to [positions of] leadership and so forth... Then, after he spent years in prison [for Brotherhood activities] he came out and joined with them [the nascent Islamic State]," eventually becoming first "caliph." (I first discussed this Qaradawi video soon after it appeared in 2014; predictably, YouTube has since taken it down, though Arabic websites still have it.)

In response, Egyptian Minister of Religious Endowments (awqaf), Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar Gom'a had said that "Qaradawi's confession [concerning al-Baghdadi] confirms that the Brotherhood is the spiritual father to every extremist group."

So it would seem: In a 2012 video, Ayman al-Zawahiri, current leader of al-Qaeda, said of his friend and predecessor that "Sheikh Osama bin Laden was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arabian Peninsula," during his youth and in the 1980s.

As for al-Zawahiri himself, his involvement with the Brotherhood in Egypt, where it was founded in 1928, is especially well known. Indeed, he wrote an entire book about it, *The Bitter Harvest: The [Muslim] Brotherhood in Sixty Years* (which first surfaced around 1991; translated portions appear in *The Al Qaeda Reader*). The book is dedicated to demonstrating how and why the Brotherhood had lost its way by choosing to participate in elections instead of waging jihad against the "apostate" government of Egypt.

What's noteworthy here is that al-Baghdadi, bin Laden, and al-Zawahiri all agreed with the overall vision of the Muslim Brotherhood—unsurprisingly so, considering the latter's motto is "Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. The Koran is our law. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope."

What the three jihadist leaders had grown frustrated with is the Brotherhood's patient and nonviolent approach—its willingness to compromise Islam (including jihad) in order to "play the game," as it were. Consider what al-Zawahiri, who had joined the Brotherhood when only fourteen years old, before abandoning it for more militant groups, wrote in *Bitter Harvest*:

[N]ot only have the Brothers been idle from fulfilling their duty of [waging] jihad, but they have gone as far as to describe the infidel governments as legitimate, and have joined ranks with them in the jahiliyya [infidel-style of] governing, that is, democracies, elections, and parliaments. Moreover, they take advantage of the Muslim youths' fervor by bringing them into their fold only to store them in a refrigerator. Then, they steer their onetime passionate Islamic zeal for jihad against tyranny toward conferences and elections.

Interestingly, when all is said and done, the Brotherhood's patient and incremental methodology has proven far more effective than the outright jihad of its terroristic offshoots. Despite Zawahiri's grumblings from the early 1990s, and after decades of grassroots efforts, the previously banned Brotherhood won Egypt's 2012 elections, with one of its members, the late Muhammad Morsi, becoming the nation's first democratically elected president.

Of course, a year later Egypt revolted against the Brotherhood, which found itself again labeled a terrorist organization. Even so, the Brotherhood remains alive and well, particularly in the United States of America. According to a 1991 Muslim Brotherhood document written in Arabic and presented as evidence in the 2008 Holy Land Terror Funding Trial, the Brotherhood's purpose in America is to wage a soft and subversive jihad of attrition; in the Brotherhood's own words:

The process of settlement is a "Civilization-Jihadist Process" with all the word means. The Ikhwan [members of the Muslim Brotherhood] must understand that their work in America is a kind of grand jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and "sabotaging" its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers.

Towards the end of the document, "A list of our organizations and the organizations of our friends" appears and includes the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), and the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA).

All of these Brotherhood front groups remain alive, well, and highly influential in America—and therefore pose a greater long term and subversive threat for the security of the United States than ISIS, al-Qaeda, or any other jihadi organization.

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In Other News...

Anti-Israel Editors Unmasked

Adam Kredo

A pro-Israel organization has exposed the identities of top Wikipedia editors who use the online encyclopedia to promote anti-Israel bias and causes, a first-of-its-kind effort that is unmasking a global online network of Israel critics.

The Israel Group, a nonprofit organization that combats anti-Israel bias, is set to launch next year a database that will expose the true identities of many leading Wikipedia editors who harbor anti-Israel bias and have implanted this viewpoint across the website through more than 325,000 edits during the past 10 years. It has already listed the identities of several of these editors.

The new effort, dubbed Wiki-Israel, seeks to provide accountability for the numerous and often anonymous editors who control all of the content that exists on Wikipedia. Leaders of the Israel Group accuse these individuals of acting as "a cabal of

virulently anti-Israel anonymous editors" who are "responsible for decimating virtually the entire pro-Israel editing community." Leaders of the Israel Group view Wikipedia, with its global reach and wide readership, as a central battleground in the fight to combat the anti-Semitic Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement.

"Trying to teach anyone the truth and facts about Israel is a futile effort as long as Wikipedia, the number one online educational resource globally, substantiates the lies and propaganda promulgated by the BDS movement," Jack Saltzberg, founder and president of the Israel Group told the Washington Free Beacon. "Stopping Wikipedia's anti-Israel bias should be the most important battle against BDS. There is no close second."

Wikipedia editors routinely promote falsehoods about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and portray Israel in a negative light, according to the Israel Group.

"For more than a decade, Wikipedia—the number one online educational resource globally—has allowed anonymous anti-Israel editors to falsely and negatively alter Israel's factual history in Wikipedia articles pertaining to the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts," Israel Group said in a statement promoting the new endeavor, which will officially launch in January 2020.

"Volunteer 'administrators' (with lifetime positions), responsible for overseeing the editing process of Wikipedia, have not only allowed anti-Israel editors freedom to take over Wikipedia, they have participated by blocking and banning predominantly Jewish and pro-Israel editors," the group said. "For anyone concerned about the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaigns against Israel, Wikipedia is now the number one global source that actively substantiates the lies and false propaganda being disseminated about Israel."

The organization has been working for years to find the editors responsible for anti-Israel content and unearth details about their identities.

"The Israel Group has been working for many years, under the radar, on a confidential initiative, Wiki-Israel, that combats Wikipedia's antisemitic bias against Israel," the group said. "The initiative includes a dedicated website that, among many other things, shows how anti-Israel editors smear Israel—both subtly and overtly—across hundreds of articles, and how the pro-Israel community can stop it."

Already, the Israel Group has listed the details of the top five editors it deems leaders of the anti-Israel effort.

The number one anti-Israel leader, according to the Israel Group, is an Australian computer scientist named Brendan McKay.

"Brendan McKay, who goes by the Wikipedia username 'Zero0000,' is the Godfather, the unofficial leader of the entire cabal of anti-Israel Wikipedia editors," the Israel Group wrote in a post about McKay. "Although he is not the most prolific or skilled editor among them, one thing separates him from the others: he's a Wikipedia administrator. This means that he has vast powers that regular editors don't have, such as the ability to block and ban regular editors and to delete edits and articles from the historical record. Moreover, administrators are greatly respected, so when they accuse general editors of editing with a pro-Israel point of view—as McKay repeatedly does—other administrators side with him, often blocking or banning pro-Israel editors."

The Israel Group goes on to list as its second leading anti-Israel editor another Australian named Peter Nicholas Dale.

Dale "is undoubtedly the most prolific and proficient of the bunch," according to the Israel Group. "He is an erudite, skilled blowhard who employs his expert Wikipedia editing proficiency to derail and obfuscate discussions."

He has performed more than 60,000 Wikipedia edits and has "never once benefited Israel," the group claims.

When the initiative launches in 2020, the Israel Group will begin posting a more complete list of the editors it claims are responsible for Wikipedia's anti-Israel bias.

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