

Jerusalem 6:15
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ISRAEL NEWS

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Bank. But it soon became clear that the story was not Fatah against Hamas, but Fatah against Fatah.

What is at the root of the Fatah problem? Actually, there are two competing Fatahs.

The first consists of the PLO leadership of the "exile," with its

old roots in today's Israel, for whom the formative event was the 1948 nakba. What matters to them is the "right of return" to pre-1967 Israel. Most of them moved to the Palestinian territories after Israel's withdrawals in the wake of the 1994 Oslo Accords, where they established the Muqata, Arafat's administrative center in Ramallah. Their primary audiences were the residents of refugee camps in Arab countries, largely in Lebanon.

The second is made up of the Palestinians in the West Bank, who have little or no attachment to the nakba, and what they want is the stabilization of their lives in the West Bank. Until the appearance of the "Tunisian leaders" of the PLO, the nakba issue was hardly mentioned by Palestinian residents in the West Bank. The nakba gained momentum when the PLO entered the territories, and the famous statues of "keys to the homes they abandoned" began to show up everywhere. This is the ethos of the Tunisians and the bureaucrats in Ramallah, where the PLO veterans landed, not the residents of Nablus, Bethlehem and Hebron.

A year ago, I visited Jenin and met with members of the Tanzim grassroots offshoot of Fatah. I was surprised to hear that they wanted one state with Israel, and had stopped believing in the Palestinian state they had fought for all their lives. The reason: They do not believe the "Tunisians" because they are "foreigners," and the people of Jenin prefer to live with Israel rather than "Ramallah."

The desire for one state is an opinion heard in broad circles in the West Bank. Palestinian writer Hamada Jaber reported that "according to the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, Palestinian support for the two-state solution has declined from 55% in 2011 to 39% in 2020 despite the support it has from all Palestinian parties and movements."

Jaber, who identifies with the Palestinian left, continued, "The depth of the Hamas crisis can be evidenced by its approval of the Fatah movement's project based on the solution of a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, at a time when many leaders of the Fatah movement themselves believe that this solution has become impossible and long dead."

In the past, the idea of one democratic state with the Jews was a ploy to erase Israel via a sophisticated formula, but today, as far as I can understand from conversations on the ground, Israel is a role model in the face of the disappointment from the collapsing Arab countries. We see this phenomenon in eastern Jerusalem, and another aspect of it is the sentiment among Israeli Arabs: "We don't want to destroy Israel, but to benefit from it."

Palestinian elite vs. the 'Tunisians'

A fresh example of the differences between "Tunisians" and locals can be found in an interview given recently by former Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad to the daily al-Quds. He spoke at length about the needs of the Palestinians in the territories but did not mention a word—or half a word—about the "right of return," the "struggle," etc.—slogans propagated by the Tunisians.

The appearance of Fayyad on the political scene is significant. He announced his candidacy as part of an independent list, not in a Fatah context. In fact, even when he was prime minister, he was not a Fatah member. His attempts to get into Fatah failed because the Tunisians accepted into service only locals who bought into the Fatah agenda. They saw Fayyad as an outsider pressed by the donor countries, who did not want to endorse the PLO agenda. Eventually, the Tunisians dumped him.

The phenomenon of an independent list outside of Fatah has more significance: it is the beginning of the end of the PLO's hegemony in political life in the West Bank. A shocking incident occurred on March 11: Fatah expelled Arafat's nephew, Dr. Nasser

Commentary...

Netanyahu has a Lock on the Premiership By Yifat Erlich

After four failed attempts, it's safe to say that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's political rivals cannot depose him. He'll be sticking around for as long as he wants the job. The left-wing camp's struggle to replace him began with the boisterous raising of blue and white flags, and then black flags, and has now ended with the white flag of surrender.

When those vying for the crown came from the right, Netanyahu was left the central actor in the arena. Many on the right, myself included, thought that Netanyahu, despite his special talents and incredible contribution to the state, had become a burden to the right and the reason for the political instability. Many believed the time had come to pass the torch to a younger leader from the nationalist camp, someone who hadn't had any indictments filed against them and who had the ability to heal the rifts in Israeli society.

New Hope leader Gideon Sa'ar tried and failed to replace Netanyahu from within the Likud, and then tried and failed to do so from outside. Yamina leader Naftali Bennett joined in these attempts. Both of them did exceptionally well in the polls but crashed on election day. They both should be thankful Netanyahu is the leader that earned the most public trust and should cease and desist in their attempts to succeed him.

A very good leader, someone on Netanyahu's scale, can only become great if they are wise enough to train the next generation of leaders. For more than a decade, Netanyahu has tried to push out anyone who shows leadership promise. It was in this way that Yisrael Beiteinu head Avigdor Lieberman, Telem head Moshe Ya'alon, Kulanu leader Moshe Kahlon, Sa'ar, Bennett and his fellow party member, Ayelet Shaked, all of whom came from the Likud and whose ideology matches that of the Likud, were pushed out. They all could have stayed in Likud had Netanyahu wanted them to.

Now with one more term in office ahead of him, the time has come for Netanyahu to conduct himself differently. It will be difficult to bring Sa'ar back to the Likud. He needlessly went on television and signed a contract saying he would not join a Netanyahu-led government. Sa'ar has a few options. He can remain loyal to his contract and warm the benches over on the opposition, he can break his word and follow in Blue and White Party leader Benny Gantz's footsteps, or he can retire from political life once and for all. In my opinion, he will opt for the latter. Once Sa'ar is out of the picture, some New Hope representatives will find themselves connecting to a right-wing coalition headed by Netanyahu.

Yamina's leaders, on the other hand, can and should be brought back into the Likud. Like it or not, Yamina is a second-rate Likud, just as New Hope is a third-rate version. Bennett must admit his dreams of becoming prime minister will only be realized as part of a wider and more established movement such as the Likud. Netanyahu would be wise to open the door to Yamina party heads instead of dwarfing their leadership, while at the same time bringing his potential successors in the Likud into the party leadership. That same developing leadership will be able to lead the State of Israel when the time comes, in precisely another four years.

Don't you dare call us to the ballot box one minute sooner.
(Israel Hayom Mar 25)

שבת שלום וחג כשר ושמה

The End of PLO Political Hegemony in the West Bank

By Pinhas Inbari

When Palestinian elections were first discussed, the spotlight immediately turned to the struggle between Fatah and Hamas and the fear that under cover of the elections, Hamas would infiltrate the West

al-Qudwa, the head of the Yasser Arafat Foundation in Ramallah, over his attempt to organize an independent list for the Palestinian elections in May. The candidates on his list include prominent figures from among the Palestinian society—but not from the PLO.

While Fayyad has always been an independent individual, an independent list headed by al-Qudwa points to the end of the PLO's supreme stature.

I recently received a Fatah document detailing the criteria for candidates to participate in the elections. What caught my eye was the quota set for "locals"—at least a third, with the remaining two-thirds being "representatives of the history of the national struggle," i.e., Tunisians.

Of course, the leading challengers to P.A. leader Mahmoud Abbas represent the internal Tanzim—Marwan Barghouti and Mohammed Dahlan. Jibril Rajoub, another example of the local population (who in the meantime has been enlisted in Qatar's interests), recently said that the criterion for the post-Abbas leadership is to have spent time in an Israeli prison. In other words, whoever replaces Abbas can only come from the ranks of the local Tanzim—which means the end of Tunisians' rule.

Whether there is an election in May or not, the demon is out of the bottle, and the fight will not be between Hamas and Fatah but within Fatah itself. (JNS/Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs Mar 25)

Biden's 'Nine-Miles-Wide Plan' By Stephen M. Flatow

The Biden administration reportedly intends to demand that Israel return to the nine-miles-wide pre-1967 armistice lines. Should we be surprised? How dangerous would that be? And what should American Jews do about it?

According to numerous media reports, an outline of the Biden plan has been prepared by Hady Amr, the deputy assistant secretary for Israeli and Palestinian Affairs. Amr worked on the same issues during the Obama administration. So, it's hardly surprising that the plan he has drafted reflects the same positions that were taken when Barack Obama was president and Joe Biden was vice president.

The central theme of Biden's Israeli-Palestinian policy in the short term, according to the Amr memo, will be a series of rewards to be given to the Palestinian Authority, even though the P.A. has done absolutely nothing to merit any of them.

Despite the P.A.'s financial support for terrorists, harboring of fugitive terrorists, constant anti-Jewish incitement and unrelenting anti-American propaganda, the Biden administration intends to "reset the U.S. relationship with the Palestinian people and leadership" by:

- Sending the P.A. at least \$15 million monthly (\$180 million annually) as "humanitarian assistance," starting in "late March or early April."
- Soon expanding that P.A. aid package to include "a full range of economic, security and humanitarian assistance," including funds for the corrupt, pro-terrorist UNRWA agency. By "security" aid, Amr undoubtedly means the pro-terrorist, de facto army that the P.A. calls its "security services."
- Resuming diplomatic contacts with P.A. officials by reopening the PLO embassy in Washington, D.C., and using the old (but still functioning) American consulate in Jerusalem as a de facto embassy to the Palestinians.
- Inviting the United Nations and the Quartet, both of which are militantly pro-Palestinian, to "engage" in the diplomatic process.
- Resuming "country of origin labeling," which means declaring that goods made in much of Jerusalem, as well as Judea, Samaria and the Golan Heights, will be forced to carry "Made in Palestine" labels since the Biden administration has decided that all those areas belong to the Palestinian Arabs.

In return, the Biden administration intends to make two laughably inadequate "demands" of the P.A. First, it will seek "to obtain a Palestinian commitment" to stop paying terrorists, which will probably be as genuine and durable as all the previous P.A. commitments to stop aiding terrorists.

Second, Biden will "emphasize to the P.A." the need for "reductions of arrests of bloggers and dissidents." What a joke! The P.A. won't even be expected to stop arresting dissidents; it just has to arrest a few less.

What's most important, however, is the end goal of the Biden plan. Amr's draft says that all of the above steps are "a means to advance the prospects of a negotiated two-state solution ... based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed land swaps."

In plain English, that means a sovereign "State of Palestine" in all, or nearly all, of Judea and Samaria, and the Gaza Strip (and part of Jerusalem). The "land swaps" phrase can be disregarded. It's nonsense; obviously, if Israel and the P.A. ever wanted to "swap land"—which they don't—they don't need a plan by U.S. President Joe Biden to do it.

The plan is, put simply, the "Nine-Miles Wide Plan." It has to be. Because any Palestinian state has to include the third-largest P.A. city, Tulkarm, and the fifth-largest P.A. city, Qalqilya. The P.A. is not going to make those cities part of Israel. So, they will be part of "Palestine." Tulkarm and Qalqilya are nine miles from the Mediterranean Sea. Israel won't even be as wide as Washington, D.C.—or the Bronx, N.Y.

One terrifying anecdote from 1967 tells you all you need to know about the dangers of Biden's "Nine-Miles Wide Plan." On the eve of the Six-Day War, as hostilities seemed increasingly likely, numerous Israeli mothers residing along the coast kept their children home from school. Why? Because they knew that the country could be sliced in two by a Jordanian tank column in a matter of minutes, and they didn't want their children to be trapped on the other side. Imagine living with that kind of fear.

What should American Jews do? Turn to all our tried-and-true methods of lobbying and protest. Write letters. Make phone calls. Urge Jewish organizations to speak out. Do it now—while there is still time. Let the Biden administration see that we will not accept its deadly plan. (JNS Mar 22)

In Israel, Prosecutors Gone Wild By Conrad Black

The Israeli election on Tuesday, the fourth in that country in two years, is generally being portrayed in the Western media as the latest round in the gripping battle for survival of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has established himself as one of the most important figures in the history of the State of Israel, having served as prime minister for 15 years. The real issue, in this and previous Israeli elections, is the continued viability of Israel's democratic institutions. Over the course of the last 25 years, a highly independent, recently a rogue, prosecution service has been assembled by successive attorneys general of Israel in the shadow of the protection of the Supreme Court. Step by step, the power of Israel's attorney general has been augmented and liberated from any supervision or restraint.

The role of the crusading prosecutor has been a politically popular one since Roman times. Famous tribunes, such as Tiberius Gracchus in 133 b.c., through such relentless and fearsome prosecutors as Fouquier-Tinville and Robespierre in the French Revolution, and up to more civilized times and prosecutors such as Thomas E. Dewey (twice Republican candidate for president) and Rudolph Giuliani, have advanced their political careers by punishing the corrupt and authoritarian abusers of public office. There was an element of this in the astounding career of J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI and its predecessor organization for 48 years. He never sought elective office but cultivated a mystique as the scourge of gangsters and then of communist subversives, and was a shadowy and powerful, but generally popular, figure in the land for decades.

Every Israeli prime minister in the last 25 years has been under investigation by the attorney general, and one, Ehud Olmert, as well as one president of Israel, Moshe Katsav, were convicted and imprisoned (and may conceivably have committed offenses, but they were stilted legal proceedings). Prime Minister Netanyahu faces three charges that are styled as "bribery" but consist of his receiving several favorable stories in the media from people whom he is rather sketchily accused of assisting with some unspecified public largesse. By normal standards of jurisdictions that require proof beyond a reasonable doubt of criminal action and criminal intent to convict, the prosecutors have a very weak case. Everybody in Israeli politics pays lip service to the need for legal reforms in some curtailment of the practically unlimited ability that the attorney general possesses to harass and defame even the prime minister. But the opposition

leaders naturally propose that reforms be adopted after Netanyahu has been defeated and prosecuted, and preferably imprisoned, in the current affair (which began with his alleged intervention in the sale of German submarines to Israel and Egypt, of all unlikely subjects). Netanyahu is vulnerable because he long supported the aggrandizement of the attorney general before he was prominent enough to attract such attention himself. He is not immune to charges of hypocrisy and opportunism, but neither are his opponents, who would cheerfully use the system they otherwise denounce as corrupt to dispose of him before modifying it to assist themselves.

Every election since April 2019 has really been fought over the powers of prosecutors, but the media in Israel and abroad have predictably represented them solely as referendums on Netanyahu's performance in office. The present attorney general, Avichai Mandelblit, was himself a victim of spurious investigation and defamation by a preceding attorney general, as were Reuven Rivlin (the current president of Israel) and many prominent former ministers, including former defense minister Avigdor Lieberman. Four justice ministers have been indicted. Mandelblit, having survived his own ordeal, has with biblical grimness turned it against all those, irrespective of party or personality, who would resist the absolute authority of his office.

The initiation of the investigation of the current prime minister was itself a violation of Israel's Basic Law because it has never been formally authorized according to the required criteria. And the claim that receiving positive press stories constitutes a bribe is not only a legal invention in Israel; it was used by Mandelblit as partial grounds for taking over the government's power to appoint the chief prosecutor and for barring the prime minister from having any role in the selection of the chief of Israel's national police. Mandelblit announced his indictment of Netanyahu in a prime-time press conference that took place while Netanyahu was being welcomed at the White House on an official visit. The attorney general purports to believe that his prosecution of the prime minister entitles him to decide whether Netanyahu has the right to try to form a government. Mandelblit has deliberately fomented acute political instability and has exploited it to seek the constant expansion of his own powers.

(National Review Mar 23)

The US Should Avoid the Mistake of Adopting the Arab Interpretation of UN Resolution 242

As the Biden administration weighs its Mideast diplomatic options, it ought to avoid one major and dangerous historical mistake: adoption of the so-called "Everybody Knows" paradigm. This is the all-too-familiar "international consensus" position whereby Israel is expected to withdraw to pre-Six-Day War borders based on the June 4, 1967, lines (i.e., the 1949 armistice lines), with a few minor and equal swaps of land with the Palestinians.

This position ignores irreversible facts on the ground, contradicts Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's original vision for a settlement with the Palestinians, and would be politically unacceptable to any Israeli government of the foreseeable future.

Adoption of this paradigm would feed unrealistic Palestinian expectations, which is bound to vitiate future peace efforts. The same goes for the International Criminal Court's new "criminal investigation" of Israel. While some American gestures towards the Palestinian Authority may be understood as an attempt to be rid of Trump's shadow, abandoning the healthy logic underlying the 2020 "Peace to Prosperity" plan would do more harm than good.

Misreading of 242 in its historical context

Until the Trump administration team put forward an alternative framework, a common assumption among policy planners in Washington was that "everybody knows" what the outcome of an Israeli-Palestinian peace process must be. This is even more true in Europe, where the EKP ("Everybody Knows Paradigm") acquired the force of a zealously guarded ideological orthodoxy. Essentially, the EKP rests upon a slightly modified Arab interpretation of U.N. Security Resolution 242 of November 1967.

However, this is a false reading of that famous formative text. It assumes that a total withdrawal to the June 4, 1967 lines—possibly with some minimal and equal land swaps—is mandated by the

resolution, as if it were under Chapter 7 of the U.N. charter (Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression). However, Resolution 242 is obviously, albeit not explicitly, under Chapter 6 (The Pacific Settlement of Disputes). It took more than five months after the Six-Day War for it to be finally endorsed, precisely because Arab and Soviet efforts to define that war as an act of Israeli aggression failed again and again, even in the General Assembly.

Moreover, the language of Resolution 242 clearly points in the direction of a territorial compromise. This is indicated by the well-known omission of the definite article regarding withdrawals (withdrawal from "territories," not from "the territories"), and the reference to "secure and recognized borders." The 1949 armistice lines are neither.

President George H. W. Bush—no blind supporter of Israeli positions—said as much at the opening session of the Madrid Conference in 1991. (During the Kuwait crisis, he explicitly argued that while the resolutions against Saddam's aggression were under Chapter 7, Resolution 242 clearly was not).

When Israel undertook to negotiate with the PLO in the framework of the Oslo process, it was never Rabin's intention to allow a return to the 1967 lines—not in the Jordan Valley and not elsewhere, and certainly not in Jerusalem. This point was made very forcefully when he presented that second stage of implementation to the Knesset in October 1995, which was Rabin's last speech in Knesset before he was assassinated.

Nor did Ehud Barak agree to total withdrawal, or to the Arab interpretation of Resolution 242—not with Syria and not with the Palestinians. Even the so-called "Clinton Parameters," presented in 2000 after the failure of the Camp David talks between Barak and Yasser Arafat left room for a "less-than-100 percent withdrawal" territorial outcome.

The same could be said about President George W. Bush's exchange of letters with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on April 14, 2004. However, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice later did come close to enunciating a "100 percent with swaps" withdrawal paradigm, given the breathtaking sweep of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's willingness to offer concessions.

Alongside the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002, and fervent European espousal of these ideas, it gradually became a broadly held belief that a full withdrawal was the "minimal" Palestinian requirement for peace. (This, even though in 2000 Arafat and members of his team were willing to settle for 92 percent or so. Talks broke down over Jerusalem, not over the demand for total Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank).

In May 2011, President Obama publicly espoused the 100 percent withdrawal concept, leading to an unpleasant exchange in the White House between Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu. In doing so, Obama (and his Secretary of State John Kerry) doomed peace efforts to failure. And note, Israel nevertheless agreed in March 2013 to negotiate based on the American plan.

"Everybody knows"—except the Israeli voting public

Failure to advance peace based on the EKP is rooted in the firm opposition of most Israelis to a "solution" which would require relinquishing key strategic areas of the West Bank; forcibly uprooting hundreds of thousands of people from their homes in Judea and Samaria (Israel's biblical homeland); carving up the living city of Jerusalem; and responding to Palestinian demands for the so-called "Right of Return." Except for a very small minority on the extreme Zionist Jewish left (and obviously, most of the Israeli Arab community), such propositions are unacceptable to a broad consensus of Israeli public opinion, regardless of who wins future Israeli elections.

There also were objections on the Israeli right, and hard left, to the Trump administration's "Peace to Prosperity" plan ("the Trump plan"). There are those who see no need to address any Palestinian concerns, and those who wish to see Palestinian demands met in full. However, the mainstream of Israeli opinion would accept major compromise with the Palestinians (if such were possible) based upon the spirit, if not the letter, of the Trump plan.

Specifically, Israelis would be willing to accept a two-state solution (or a so-called "state-minus" situation) with an emphasis on Palestinian demilitarization if key Israeli security interests were

protected and the dislocation of settlers reduced to a minimum. But such an accommodation seems inconceivable, given that the Palestinians adamantly refuse to consider any Jewish minority in their midst.

In other words, reverting to the Obama language of 2011 would alienate the great majority of Israelis. While some measures designed to distance the Biden administration from the legacy of its predecessor may be understood by Israelis (for example, allowing a P.A. mission to reopen in Washington), a return to the failed American strategy and positions of 2013-2014 would not be. It again would cast a shadow over the mutually beneficial "special relationship" between the two countries. It would complicate further efforts to broaden the scope of the "Abraham Accords," and above all, it simply will not work.

The fruitless efforts of the Obama administration over eight years did not bring with them even an iota of real progress towards peace. This should serve as an object lesson. Trying to put "daylight" (distance) between U.S. and Israeli positions leads only to frustration and failure.

Feeding unrealistic Palestinian expectations

This will continue to be so, because such positions create an altogether unrealistic anticipation on the Palestinian side of a solution imposed by the international community rather than a solution negotiated with Israel. As a result, the likelihood of P.A. leader Mahmoud Abbas or any Palestinian leader offering significant, practical concessions grows even dimmer when they expect an Israeli-American rift and international coercive measures. This is all the truer amid Fatah-Hamas tensions, Palestinian governmental dysfunction and corruption and the transitioning towards a post-Abbas era.

Such expectations are already being fed by the decision of the ICC prosecutor to launch an investigation into the possibility that war crimes have been committed in "Palestine." The timeframe for this investigation is galling. In line with a previous UNHRC resolution, it limits the investigation to the period that begins a day after the abduction and murder by Hamas of three Israeli boys, so that this specific crime would not be covered.

But in the context of the broader debate, what truly matters is the geographical scope of "Palestine" as defined for the investigation—namely, all the territories beyond the June 4, 1967 lines, including parts of Jerusalem. When such a definition is dangled in front of them by an international institution, which Palestinian leaders will be bold enough to settle for less at the negotiating table?

The Biden administration should therefore look at its options very carefully before it leaps and adopts the EKP. Beyond the legal and historical merits of Israel's case, there is also the simple but well-founded observation that it would be unwise, perhaps even dangerous, to feed Palestinian expectations that cannot be delivered on. To do so would inevitably make it impossible to implement practical steps towards peace in the foreseeable future and would ensure continuation of the conflict. (Jerusalem Institute of Strategy and Security Mar 23)

Colin Kahl in the Pentagon Would Be a Disaster for Israel and the Mideast By Gregg Roman

For many years, American and Israeli leaders were rightly proud that the excellent relationship between their two nations was a bipartisan issue in Washington. Obviously, for a variety of reasons, that truism has faltered in recent years even while remaining broadly accurate.

However, the nomination of Colin Kahl for undersecretary of defense for policy could change that.

Kahl's resume is impressive on paper. His most recent administration appointments were as deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Middle East from 2009 to 2011 and as then-Vice President Biden's national security adviser from 2014 to 2017.

Nonetheless, with so much experience comes little to no achievement, only unmitigated disaster. On his major remit in the Middle East, every policy issue has been shown to be a failure. Whether it was trying to press Israel into concessions during the Obama administration, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or the infamous inaction on Obama's "red line" on Bashar al-Assad's Syria, Kahl was intensely involved — and tried to justify them all.

Now he is on the verge of returning to a prominent policy position, just as the region is moving forward away from conflicts that have raged for a century.

First, there is something incredibly ironic that the same people who sneered at the appointment of Jared Kushner as former President Trump's point person on the Middle East — who ended up brokering four historic Arab-Israeli peace agreements — now cheer the appointment of someone with decades of experience and nothing to show for it except failure.

While failure can be excused, not learning from mistakes should not be.

After returning to the think tank circuit during the past administration, Kahl became a keyboard warrior who slammed decisions the Trump administration made that seemed contrary to his own opinions.

Kahl referred to Republicans who defended Trump's withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria in 2019 as those who "debase themselves at the altar of Trump — they are the party of ethnic cleansing." He said Republicans who upheld Trump's veto in favor of Saudi Arabian arms sales "share ownership of the world's worst humanitarian crisis" in Yemen. In 2018, he tweeted that "we are all going to die" if John Bolton becomes national security adviser.

In other words, here was a man who got hysterical over any issue that seemed to turn against his general policy of appeasing America's enemies and constricting its friends. However, Kahl appears to reserve a special opprobrium for Israel.

When Trump prudently brought the U.S. out of the Iran nuclear deal that was falling apart in the face of Iranian defiance, Kahl tweeted: "So far, Israel's plan has worked perfectly."

Kahl long had been suspected by, among others, Middle East expert Lee Smith, of being the architect of Obama's strategic shift away from prevention of an Iranian nuclear bomb to mere containment, thus allowing the ayatollahs a pathway to make good on their threat of wiping the State of Israel off the map.

Equally egregious is the role Kahl was reported to have played in the short-lived removal of recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital from the Democratic National Convention (DNC) platform. When questioned about this during his recent Senate hearing, Kahl tried to deflect and distract, without answering the question directly.

Recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital long has been a consensus on both sides of the aisle, a few voices notwithstanding. It is not to make a statement about the future of the Israel-Palestinian conflict; it is mere recognition of where a close friend and ally designates its own capital.

Ever since the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 which had overwhelming support in the Senate (93–5) and the House (374–37), U.S. administrations have affirmed the principle of Jerusalem as the capital city of the State of Israel, even while utilizing the built-in veto on moving the American embassy there, until Trump did so.

Ensuring that one party deviated from this bipartisan stand could be seen by many as the beginning of the Democratic move away from Israel. Only a last-minute intervention by former President Obama rectified this glaring error in the DNC platform, but the damage was done.

To now place such a hyper-partisan policy wonk back into a position of authority hurts, first and foremost, U.S. interests. The region is on the precipice of changing over a century of Arab-Israeli conflict into a moderates versus extremists dispute, which pits Israel and the pragmatic Sunni nations against Iran and its murderous proxies.

Kahl seeks to placate Iran, while slapping the face of Israel and the Arab Gulf nations.

With his past policy positions, Kahl appears to want to move the region backward and placate the ravenous Islamic Republic, while constantly slapping the face of allies such as Israel and the Gulf nations.

Four years of having Kahl in a decision-making position could finally end the nature of bipartisan support for Israel, allow for the Iranians to be closer to a nuclear bomb, and consign the Middle East to further bloodletting and needless wars.

This is more than just another appointment. (The Hill Mar 23)
