



## ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel  
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of  
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

have a tank to kill. Knives, meat cleavers and grenades do the trick, as Israelis know well. This is Hamas, for goodness sake. Read their Charter. Follow their "media." It's all there. Zero ambiguity. And they mean it.

## Commentary...

### Injustin Trudeau By Vivian Bercovici

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is "appalled." Crowned the "free world's best hope" in 2017 by Rolling Stone, Trudeau has, since then, cut his foreign policy chops: heavy on gender equality, feminism, environmentalism and relatively light on security and geopolitics. He fancies soft-lens moments when he can tear up on cue, fun parades, dress-up extravaganzas and breezy feel-good stuff, all of which is reflected in his photo-posturing and official statements. His election slogan, when running against PM Harper in the 2015 federal election, was to promote "sunny ways."

This naïve cheer has yet to resonate in the Middle East and, in particular along the Israel-Gaza border. Since withdrawing from the Gaza Strip in 2006, Israel has watched the Dante-esque destruction of what was a robust economy. Under Hamas rule, the Strip has become a theocratic terrorist state. Significant sums of foreign cash donated to develop and support civilian infrastructure are diverted to build terror tunnels, pay terrorist salaries, and produce of all manner of weapons. Incitement to violence against Jews and Israelis is fierce, endemic, and unrestrained. And every so often, a full-blown war breaks out.

Perhaps unaware of the long, complex, tragic backstory, Trudeau blasted Israel in a statement issued on May 16: "Canada deplors and is gravely concerned by the violence in the Gaza Strip that has led to a tragic loss of life and injured countless people."

He pulls no punches, focusing on one individual who was injured in both legs by Israeli sniper fire at the border: "We are appalled that Dr. Tarek Loubani, a Canadian citizen, is among the wounded—along with so many unarmed people, including civilians, members of the media, first responders, and children." For a leader who crows about his strong, principle-based support for Israel this is quite the invective. What seems to have stoked his previously dormant ire is the fact that Dr. Loubani was injured by Israeli fire on Monday, May 14, which was a very busy day: the 70th anniversary of the declaration of the state of Israel; the official ceremony opening the American Embassy in Jerusalem; and "Naqba" or "Disaster" Day, commemorated each year by Palestinians.

Each Friday since March, Hamas has staged a "March of Return" at multiple locations along the border fence. Billed as a "peaceful protest," crowds tend to swell to the tens of thousands following midday prayers, during which Imams fire up the men to annihilate the Zionist occupiers and restore Palestinian and Arab honor.

Hamas recruits protest participants onto buses waiting outside mosques, throwing in financial incentives for attending, hoping to draw women and children as "extras" in this macabre, serial event. Many of the men show up with knives, Molotov cocktails, wire cutters, and other weapons and incendiary devices. A recent innovation is fire kites, which are launched and intended to burn Israeli farmers' fields, and do. Pyres of car tires are lit, creating a dense, black, toxic screen to provide cover for physical border breaches and confuse Israeli snipers.

These "peaceful" protesters boast openly about their violent intentions, parroting Hamas leaders who, aside from one or two brief cameos well back from the fence, tuck away in their fortified bunkers under Shifa Hospital in Gaza City and other safe havens in the Strip.

Hamas leaders have exhorted these "peaceful" protesters to tear down the border fence and then proceed to remove various bodily organs from Israelis they kill and eat them. They tell Gazans, and anyone paying attention, of their intention to foment chaos at the border. Ideally, the smoke and confusion would facilitate a goal they commend openly: the capture of one or more Israeli soldiers, and, if things go particularly well, perhaps a murderous romp in one of the many civilian villages within a few hundred meters of the border.

For those martyred in this jihad to murder Jews and destroy Israel, Hamas assures, there is an exalted place in Paradise.

Now, all this bluster may sound and seem "peaceful" to PM Trudeau, but it is quite the opposite. There have been multiple fence breaches by terrorists armed with more and less crude weapons. It isn't necessary to

Why, Trudeau must be asking, does the IDF not resort to less extreme measures? Live ammunition, he has surely been briefed, is a last resort. Tear gas. Rubber bullets. Water cannons. Even leaflets, social media announcements and radio broadcasts warning people to stay well back from the border—all have been ineffective. And, for that, there is one reason: Hamas. Trudeau's rage would more appropriately be directed at Hamas incitement, disregard for civilians and commitment to a hateful, murderous ideology.

And what about the "blockade" of Gaza, attributed solely to Israel? Reality check: Egypt enforces a much stricter blockade on the Strip, allowing almost nothing through. Israel, on the other hand, permits passage of truckloads of goods daily: medical supplies, food, even "dual use" materials like cement, gasoline and tires, which are more often than not taken for civilians and allocated to terrorist infrastructure.

Twice in recent weeks, "peaceful" protesters have torched the border checkpoint in Israel for the transfer of goods. It is destroyed.

The Gaza-Israel border is very hostile. Hamas has, in the last decade or so, dug 32 terror tunnels—complete with AC and internet wiring—with the sole intention of burrowing into Israel to launch murderous terror attacks. Jihad. This is not a nuanced struggle.

On this—all of this—Trudeau is silent.

Which brings us back to Dr. Loubani, the Canadian physician who has had at least one previous brush with misfortune in the region. During the protracted street violence in Egypt in 2013, following the coup in which General Sisi ousted Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohammed Morsi, Dr. Loubani was in Cairo with a film professor from Toronto, who was also a strident anti-Israel activist. En route to Gaza to volunteer in a hospital, the travelers took a travel pause in Cairo. One afternoon, as they tell it, they happened, coincidentally, upon a large, violent demonstration in Cairo's Tahrir Square. Hundreds of protesters were arrested and jailed, among them the two Canadians.

Friends and family of the Canadian duo launched a vigorous public relations campaign to draw attention to their plight and pressure the Canadian government to advocate with Egypt for their release. They went out for a walk, their advocates said, and were enjoying ice cream cones. Before they knew it, were surrounded by mayhem. Once there, they felt compelled to administer first aid to injured protesters.

As they languished in prison, however, the initial version gave way to a more complex story. It seems that Loubani and his friend had sophisticated camera and recording equipment with them. Not necessarily eyebrow-raising for a film professor. More unusual, however, would be that they thought to grab the pro gear when heading out for a jet-lagged stroll to get ice cream. (And then there's the small matter of military dictatorships tending to be sensitive about having violent rallies photographed.)

However, the really interesting part is what Loubani arranged to have his father share with the media while he was still in Cairo's notorious Tora prison: that they were also in possession of drones. Why? To ferry medical supplies to and from hospitals in Gaza, of course. That drone twist certainly piques one's interest. There is only one use for drones in the Gaza Strip, and it is neither peaceful nor in any way related to humanitarian or hospital work.

On Monday, May 14, Naqba Day to Palestinians, Dr. Loubani says that he was standing near the border among a cluster of orange-vested medics during a lull in the chaos. He was wearing green scrubs from the Ontario hospital where he works. After being injured by Israeli sniper fire in both legs, Loubani asserted that he was likely targeted by Israeli snipers. (The IDF advises that it is investigating the incident but has no specific information at the moment.)

In light of this backdrop, Trudeau continued to blast Israel: "Reported use of excessive force and live ammunition is inexcusable. It is imperative we establish the facts of what is happening in Gaza. Canada calls for an immediate independent investigation to thoroughly examine the facts on the ground—including any incitement violence and the excessive use of force."

What we do know is that 50 of the 62 individuals killed that day at the border clash by Israeli sniper were Hamas operatives. We also know that

Hamas regularly uses UNRWA schools, hospitals, and clearly marked ambulances to ferry fighters and weapons around the Strip. This is supported by documentary evidence collected over the years. Trudeau's fury would be more appropriately directed at Hamas for its unconscionable leadership, encouraging extreme terrorist violence, and ongoing incitement against Jews and Israel. Hamas is, after all, listed as a terror organization in Canada and elsewhere for good reason.

The backlash to Trudeau's statement was strong and quick. He seems, perhaps unwittingly, to have stumbled onto a hornet's nest and turned to two Jewish MPs to clean up his mess—Michael Levitt and Anthony Housefather, representing electoral ridings in Toronto and Montreal, respectively, with large Jewish populations. They issued a peculiar statement. While not directly critical of the prime minister, they unequivocally condemned and held Hamas responsible for the deaths and injuries at border clashes.

It seems that Trudeau tapped two rookie Liberal MPs, of a total of 184 in his caucus, to be the fig leaves for what seems to be a rather bifurcated and confusing policy on Israel. Some observers speculate that Trudeau hopes to use this clumsy doublespeak to allow him to be "correct," depending on where and how the chips fall. By dereliction, the prime minister has signaled that the Israel-Gaza issue is a "Jewish" one, as opposed to one of the most important geopolitical crises in the world. Hamas, like Hizballah, Syria, the Houthis, is yet another Iranian proxy. It is disturbing that two Jewish MPs, representing "Jewish" ridings, are the only ones in the Trudeau government speaking out in support of Israel.

On social media, Mr. Housefather, in particular, refers to Canada's consistent pattern of supporting Israel in UN votes as clear evidence of the prime minister's true support. Whereas UN votes are important, surely, so are Trudeau's public comments explaining his support for Israel. He tends to express himself in a sweeping, imprecise manner, oft-repeating distaste for the obsessive bullying of Israel in international forums. All of which is laudable. And he likes to say things about what good friends Canada and Israel are, but that even good friends can, sometimes, disagree.

Indeed, and those are likely the lines he trotted out when he spoke on the telephone with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu one day after his written thrashing of Israel following the Loubani incident. Netanyahu's office declined to comment on the exchange, but Trudeau issued a short readout on the call, reporting that he had expressed "thanks for the consular assistance Israel is providing . . . reaffirmed Canada's call for a neutral process to ascertain how the actions of all the parties concerned . . . contributed to the events of May 14, including the reported incitement by Hamas . . ." And that they "agreed on the importance of addressing the economic crisis in Gaza and jointly affirmed the close and abiding friendship between Canada and Israel."

In other words, PM Trudeau did nothing to walk back his perfervid criticism of Israel other than to acknowledge, as a possibility, "reported incitement by Hamas." As if there is any doubt. What Prime Minister Trudeau does not say, in this case, is far more important than what he does. (CommentaryMagazine.com May 23)

### **Investigate Terrorism Inciters, not Israel** By Amnon Lord

The U.N. Human Rights Council has decided to investigate alleged violations of international law during the popular protests in the "occupied Palestinian territories, including east Jerusalem." In other words, this branch of the U.N. has already decided to investigate Israel rather than the Palestinians who are responsible for the riots on the Gaza-Israel border.

What is really bad is that European countries either voted in favor of the decision (Belgium) or abstained (Germany and Britain). The Hungarian abstention also comes as something of a disappointment. But Hungary is not an enemy of Israel, whereas the important European countries can no longer be considered Israel's "friends" – they are in effect "soft" enemies. The U.S., following President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, realized that its European allies were no longer allies and that their interests in the deal always had to do with business profits.

But while the nations of Europe may be trying to torpedo Trump's policy, they aren't really fighting the U.S. On the other hand, the anti-Israel moves by various EU member states are hostile acts in every sense of the word. Israel's Foreign Ministry has been right in its responses to the resolution, but we need to make a countermove that will be more than a condemnation of those who support the UNHRC's decision. A committee should be established to probe the role European countries, the U.N. and international aid organizations play in encouraging Palestinian terrorism, particularly terrorism by Hamas.

The committee should also investigate the conduct of the international media. Hamas knows that all it had to do was press the right buttons and set the scene and the conflagration on the Gaza border would make headlines.

Countries such as Germany and Britain had an obligation to vote against the UNHRC resolution. The fact that they did not shows that media pressure has forced German Chancellor Angela Merkel and British Prime Minister Theresa May to compromise their positions and make Israel the

focus of their countries' diplomatic pressure.

Unlike in the past, it does not seem that the U.N. investigative committee presents any serious danger to Israel, at least not in comparison to the Goldstone Commission established after Operation Cast Lead in 2009. What is more disturbing is the ability of terrorist leaders like Ismail Haniyeh and Yahya Sinwar to make themselves editors-in-chief of publications like *The New York Times* and influence political systems throughout the world. They provide the fuel that feeds the regime of the head of Turkish fascism, the anti-Semitic President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. On the other hand, the fact that U. S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley (not to mention Israeli envoy Danny Danon) is on alert at the U.N. reflects a shift in values. Maybe we'll see better days than these. (Israel Hayom May 21)

### **Trump Lays Waste to Obama's Amoral Foreign Policy** By Shmuley Boteach

It has been an incredible few weeks for lovers of Israel.

After eight years of tension with the Obama administration, Israel now has a partner in the United States which has killed the Iran deal, defends the Jewish state at the United Nations and has moved the American embassy to from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

US President Donald Trump has rid America of the shame of the Iran nuclear deal, which completely overlooked all of Iran's sins and its promises to annihilate Israel's six million Jews.

In so doing, Trump has created the potential for reining in the vile regime in Tehran, curbing the ascendance of radical Islamists and advancing a foreign policy that recognizes evil and holds belligerent governments accountable. Former president Barack Obama's foreign policy had elements of Kissingerian realpolitik.

America was prepared to engage tyrants so long as it was in America's interest to do so. Trump, by contrast, has put enormous pressure on tyrants like Kim Jong-un of North Korea and Bashar Assad of Syria.

To be sure, Trump has emerged as a great champion of the Jewish people and a protector of Israel, but globally, he has emerged as an American leader who is willing to condemn rather than excuse evil.

The Iran deal was traumatic because it was catastrophic.

It allowed a government which mows down its own citizens in the streets to pocket billions of dollars to finance terrorism, ballistic missile development, and intervention in its neighbors' affairs in exchange for biding its time before building nuclear weapons. Obama promised Iran's behavior would change. Instead Iran's aggression got worse and its threats to US and global interests escalated. President Obama ignored Iran's lies and threats in search of a foreign policy achievement to attach to his legacy.

Personally, it was difficult to accept that my president would overlook repeated Iranian promises to annihilate Israel and perpetrate a second Holocaust. I lost friends in politics whose ambition, unwillingness to stand up to president Obama, and naïveté toward Iranian intentions allowed them to support the Iran nuclear agreement.

As an American and as a Jew I feared we would be forced to live with the prospect of a nuclear Iran. Trump, by contrast, saw Iran for what it is: a brutal government that lied to the world about the intention behind its nuclear program. He made it clear to European companies that if you do business with Iran, you will not be doing business with the United States.

Liberalism has many positive virtues that have moved the world forward, but it suffers from a fatal flaw: a refusal to hate evil. Too many on the Left prefer to excuse monsters when they make genocidal threats, because confronting them might require action rather than appeasement.

President Obama watched Assad gas Arab children and did nothing. As in the case of Iran, Obama preferred to take the easy way out, and made a deal with Russia to remove Assad's chemical weapons. Today, that deal has been exposed a total sham as Assad continues to use his arsenal of poison gas to murder children. Assad lied and did not dispose of the weapons. He undoubtedly took the measure of Obama's naïveté watching him get played by the Iranians.

President Obama's legacy will forever be tarnished by his failure to act when Syrian children were being murdered with sarin gas. Trump, who is daily called an Islamophobe, watched the same thing and said, "The evil and despicable [poison gas] attack left mothers and fathers, infants and children, thrashing in pain and gasping for air. These are not the actions of a man. They are crimes of a monster instead."

President Obama refrained from ever using language like this, preferring instead to use neutral language that would not call out evil.

Supporters of the flawed Iran deal downplayed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent revelations about Iran's past nuclear activities, as if was no great surprise that Iran had been lying all along. But if they knew Iran was lying all along, why didn't they speak up? If they knew about Iran's intentions, why didn't they insist that all Iran's nuclear research data be destroyed and close the loopholes that will allow Iran to ultimately reduce its breakout time – in Obama's words – "almost down to zero" when the nuclear deal expires? TRUMP RIGHTLY pointed out that

Iran is a threat to the United States. Let's not forget, as most people have, that the largest number of Americans murdered by terrorists other than on 9/11 were killed by Iran's terrorist proxy Hezbollah. That organization continues to attack our allies in Syria.

Commentators have been quick to attack Trump's decision based on the opposition of our European allies to withdrawing from the deal. They have largely ignored the Middle Eastern allies who are directly and immediately threatened by Iran.

The Saudis have been calling for tougher action against Iran for years. In fact, they are the only ones to suggest publicly the need to use military force.

Iran not only threatens the Gulf states: it also targets other moderate, pro-Western states. Recently, Morocco cut ties with Iran because Hezbollah sent missiles to the Polisario Front, which is engaged in a terrorist campaign against the kingdom.

There is only one country, however, that Iran has threatened with annihilation, and that is Israel. The mullahs have repeatedly made genocidal threats against the Jewish state.

Iran has also helped Hezbollah amass more than 100,000 rockets in Lebanon, and financed and armed Hamas terrorists in Gaza. Iran is trying to establish bases in Syria from which to threaten Israel, and recently launched a drone from Syria that targeted Israel.

The Trump administration is proving to be Israel's great defender, especially at the UN where morality has seldom had a home since its founding. While the whole world condemned Israel for defending its border against Hamas terrorist assault, US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley said, "I ask my colleagues here in the Security Council: Who among us would accept this type of activity on your border? No one would. No country in this chamber would act with more restraint than Israel has."

US Ambassador to Israel David Friedman and chief Middle East negotiator Jason Greenblatt stood up to the despicable antisemitism of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas when he said that the Jews brought the Holocaust on themselves by charging interest and being bankers. Seldom has anyone so desecrated the sacred memory of the six million.

What emerges from all this is a radical departure from the amorality of Obama foreign policy and an insistence on a new path forward which demands a moral accountability by state actors.

Trump's decision to tear up the Iran deal was bold and courageous. More important, it demonstrated a moral clarity that his predecessor lacked.

One can only hope the Europeans will sacrifice their desire to advance their economic interests in Iran for the greater good of imposing sanctions on a regime that brutalizes gays, stones women to death and swears it will one day enact a second Holocaust. (Jerusalem Post May 23)

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### **Semi-Requiem for a Failed Leader** By Reuven Berko

Those close to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas are going to great lengths to hide the true condition of his health. With his hospitalizations becoming more frequent, many expect him to face the music, declare he is unable to perform his duties and name a successor or, at the very least, delegate his powers in preparations for the future.

Abbas was re-elected as chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization's Executive Committee in early May and named former Nablus Governor Mahmoud Aloul as his deputy, but it is well known that the nomination was a temporary stopgap as Aloul, who lacks charisma as well as mass support among the Palestinians, will be unable to stop the bloody race to power when the time comes.

Palestinian officials expect that the battle for power, in which Israel will strive not to intervene, will pit members of the Palestinian Authority's "founders' order" against the younger generation, as well as against Fatah's own hawkish opposition, of which exiled Fatah strongman Mohammed Dahlan, former head of the Preventive Security Force in the West Bank Jibril Rajoub and head of the Palestinian Authority's General Intelligence Service Majid Faraj have already emerged as the frontrunners.

In these officials' view, the risk of chaos is increasing because of the volatile involvement of Dahlan's well-funded supporters in Gaza, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, Fatah's military wing and even Hamas, which has made no secret of its desire to overrun the West Bank and unite the Palestinians under its rule.

But why does Abbas so vehemently against naming an actual successor and ensuring an orderly transition of power? The answer lies with the murderous historical nature of the terrorist syndicate, which has no clear democratic procedures and where those closest to the leader may end up posing the biggest threat to him. The politically weak Aloul, however, poses no such threat, which is exactly why he was chosen.

The pantheon of aging PLO leaders still enjoys credibility as they all have Jewish blood on their hands, but the same can be said of Barghouti and Dahlan, who also enjoy the support of some of their elders as part of inter-Palestinian ploys.

Overall, however, the PLO is losing its credibility due to its political failures on both the global and Arab arena, culminating in the relocation of

the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. The PLO is also plagued by massive corruption, leading to increased support for Hamas, which is perceived as "corruption-free" despite its defeats in Gaza. As far as many Palestinians are concerned, Hamas is preferable to Fatah because the corrupt PLO's recognition of Israel has done nothing to contribute to the formation of a Palestinian state.

Palestinian intellectuals believe that failure to create an agreed-upon political solution for the post-Abbas era will create a power vacuum and place whatever is left of the Palestinian unity in unprecedented danger. In their view, chaos will produce internal bloodshed and prompt terrorism against Israel, which will have no choice but to intervene and eliminate the remnants of that unity.

These intellectuals believe that this historic juncture will test whether the Palestinians have evolved into a people that has the political and social abilities necessary to join the family of nations or whether they are still little more than a corrupt terrorist syndicate. (Israel Hayom May 22)

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### **The Challenge of Gratitude** By Rabbi Steven Pruzansky

The ambivalence of many American Jews to President Trump and his support for Israel is puzzling on one hand and downright churlish on the other.

Consider this: Jews have grown very comfortable with American presidents who promised to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and move the American embassy to Yerushalayim, never fulfilled those promises, and kept making them anyway. It is as if Jews do not expect promises from politicians to be kept (well, maybe that is not so unusual).

But Jews have also grown very comfortable with American presidents who criticize the building of settlements in the heartland of Israel, and some who have even threatened to sanction Israel over it. And they accepted the anomaly of Jews being permitted to build in Bethel, New York or Shiloh, Tennessee but not in the original Bethel or Shiloh. That's just the way it is – but it is strange.

Jews have also grown very comfortable with American presidents who either pay lip service to Israel's right of self-defense or seek to emasculate it entirely. These presidents routinely decried Israel's "use of disproportionate force" or urged Israel to accept with equanimity "sacrifices for peace." The better ones embraced Israel's right to self-defense in theory but not always in practice, urging "restraint," caution, and a limited response so as not to offend the terrorists or jeopardize the possibilities for a lasting peace.

And Jews have grown very comfortable with American presidents who have endorsed and even obsessed over the partition of Israel into two states (another partition, it should be added). These presidents have seemed to feel that only the two-state illusion will bring a just and durable peace to the region. That is, only allowing a hostile and irredentist enemy sovereignty over Israel's heartland and control of its high ground will ensure prosperity and tranquility for the Jews of the truncated State of Israel. Most American Jews were fine with that – because that is what the presidents professed (and some Israeli prime ministers led them to believe) even when the facts on the ground taught the exact opposite.

It bears mentioning that Jews have also grown very comfortable with American presidents who either were troubled by Arab terror (but more troubled by an Israeli response so they drew a moral equivalence between the two) or "understood" Arab terror as emanating from the frustrations of their lives. A State Department spokeswoman once attributed Arab terror to the lack of gainful employment in their communities. So these presidents demanded that Israel should understand it as well, and certainly not "overreact" to the murder and maiming of their own citizens. And we grew very accustomed to the notion that only Israel had to make substantive concessions on the road to "peace," never the enemy who sought Israel's dismemberment and dissolution.

We got used to this type of treatment, so used to it that many Jews today are more troubled by an American president who has renounced each of the approaches outlined above than by the presidents who squeezed, cajoled, threatened, criticized, censured, pressured Israel or otherwise failed to keep their promises. It is as if we feel that we do not deserve fair, decent and supportive treatment coming from a friendly president. Too many Jews find it hard to appreciate our good fortune or otherwise express their gratitude to the incumbent president. Of course, not every American Jew is a supporter of Israel and many agree with each of the disquieting and tendentious policies delineated above that were conventional wisdom for decades. But of those who don't? How do they rationalize their reticence?

However one feels about President Trump, a non-politician to be sure and an individual whose approach to life certainly has its share of idiosyncrasies, the inability of many Jews to show appreciation and gratitude for his current policies towards Israel is inexplicable, even boorish. In their desire to be "super-moral" they have eschewed basic etiquette, something that itself is immoral. And appreciation is also due to his close advisors who share the views of supporters of a strong and proud Israel dwelling in security from sea to river and have been unafraid to

promote and implement them.

Finally, American Jews have a president who, holding firm against intense pressure from most other American allies, fulfilled his campaign promise, recognized Yerushalayim as Israel's capital and moved the American embassy there – abruptly ending Israel's bizarre status as the only nation on earth not entitled to declare its own capital. The Trump administration has been unabashed in its support of Israel's right of self-defense as real and substantive, and has steadfastly refused to second-guess or micro-manage Israel's defense strategies.

The Trump administration has muted any objection to Israel's settlement policy, a marked change from generations of US opposition and occasionally antagonism to Jews living in Judea (of all imaginable paradoxes) and Samaria, and has even expressed occasional support for those endeavors as Israel's natural right. The Trump administration has abandoned the two-state illusion in favor of the inspired characterization that the United States will support two states "if both parties agree." Of course... The Trump Administration, and the outstanding Ambassador Nikki Haley, have afforded Israel complete protection from the hypocrisies and inverted reality of the United Nations.

This is in addition to the renunciation of the Obama agreement with Iran and the ramping up of pressure, sanctions and who-knows-what-else down the road – all to halt an Iranian nuclear program whose expressed aim is the destruction of Israel.

It is inconceivable that Hillary Clinton, had she been elected, would have done any of these things.

Have Jews become so partisan, or has support for Israel declined so much among American Jews, that simple recognition of these facts eludes us? Have we forsworn elementary *derech erez* because the president is an imperfect man? Are his critics – and were his election opponents – perfect, all paragons of morality and virtue? How have we become so peevish as a people?

Perhaps there is another problem at play here, one that transcends politics and personalities. The great Musarist Rav Shlomo Wolbe wrote that every person has an *erech elyon*, a supreme value that transcends all others. What does it mean to have a supreme value? It means a value that is the measure of everything, the barometer by which every consideration in life has to be assessed, and into which all other values have to fit.

Think, for a moment, of those Jews more than a century ago who made Communism their highest value. They sacrificed their souls, their families, their interests and their purpose in life to see Communism spread and succeed. In the early years, there were some religious Jews who were Communists – but when the contradictions and the challenges to the integration of Torah and Communism arose, it was the Torah that was abandoned, not Communism. It was the Torah that had to bend or break so that Communism could succeed. Whatever part of Torah did not conform to Communist dogma had to be abandoned.

Communism is dead (except on a few American college campuses and in North Korea) but was replaced by several other "–isms." A century ago, secular Zionists made Zionism their primary value, and tossed out parts of the Torah that they felt impeded the realization of the Zionist dream. (That notion still exists but the number of adherents has dramatically fallen) In another iteration of this phenomenon, there are radical feminists today who evaluate and scrutinize every aspect of Torah to ascertain what conforms to feminism and what doesn't – and the latter has to be discarded. That is their *erech elyon*, their supreme value. Rav Wolbe wrote that some people make money their *erech elyon* and for others it is the pursuit of honor or pleasure or children. As if to say, my pursuit of pleasure or my children's happiness comes first – even above the Torah.

It is so difficult to break away from that mindset; but, Rav Wolbe noted, for the faithful Jew there is nothing in the world that we value as much as we value G-d and our relationship with Him and our fidelity to His will. That is always the *erech elyon* of the faithful Jew, who posits that G-d and His Torah are the primary values and every other value is subordinate. G-d is always at the top of our ladder of values, or is at least supposed to be, and whatever else a Jew values in life – justice, peace, wisdom, even feminism and Zionism, etc. – must fit into the hierarchy of values that places the Torah as supreme.

For too many Americans, hatred of Donald Trump has become their *erech elyon* – the one principle that dominates their lives, their every breath, waking moment and productive endeavor. They live to "resist," whatever that means. As Chazal taught us, both love and hatred "disrupt the normal course of things." We act differently, uncharacteristically, and sometimes even perversely, when we love or hate something too much, even irrationally.

But hatred of the President should not trump *derech erez*, and ingratitude has a way of eventually biting the ingrate. Who's to say such pro-Israel policies will continue indefinitely – and who's to say they should, given the ungratefulness of the putative beneficiaries? Many American Jews dreamt that one day a genuinely, no-holds-barred pro-Israel president would emerge and embrace policies that many of us have been advocating for years. And now that it has happened, and while it is happening, isn't elementary appreciation in order?

Unless we have grown so accustomed to maltreatment and criticism that we believe we deserve nothing but perpetual obloquy, it is. And it behooves us to demonstrate it, especially since G-d's will is executed in mysterious ways and often through the most unexpected agents.

Here's one Jew who is immensely grateful to President Trump. May his love of America and Israel continue – to the benefit of both countries. (IsraelNationalNews.com May 23)

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## **Bernie Sanders: An Accessory to Terror at the Gaza Border**

By Stephen M. Flatow

The Gaza border conflict is being fought on two battlefields simultaneously. One is the battle at the border fence, where the aggressors use Molotov cocktails, pipe bombs, rocks, sling shots, burning tires, and flaming kites. The other is the battle for the hearts and minds of the American public, where the aggressors use distortions, omissions, fabrications, and innuendo.

In the battle for public opinion, Israel faces two formidable opponents: the far-left wing of the Democratic Party, and a large number of major news-media outlets. The two work hand in hand, feeding off one another, with belligerent political figures repeatedly appearing as commentators and then in turn issuing statements against Israel, which eager news hounds blast across the headlines.

Israeli Deputy Cabinet Minister Michael Oren had some very interesting things to say about this problem last week in a conference call with pro-Israel activists in the United States. The call was sponsored by American Friends of Likud and the Endowment for Middle East Truth.

Oren served as Israel's ambassador to the United States from 2009 to 2013. He's a political moderate who represents the centrist Kulanu Party in the governing coalition. Over the years, he has emerged as one of Israel's most effective English-language spokesmen, and is known for his measured tone. There are no hysterics when he speaks. He sure didn't mince words, however, in his assessment of those who are misrepresenting and even rationalizing the Gaza mobs. "I am deeply disappointed that Senator Dianne Feinstein is calling for an 'international investigation' into Israel's actions, and that Senator Bernie Sanders has now gone so far as to call for the Palestinian 'right of return' to Israel," said Oren. "Calling for the 'right of return' is essentially calling for the destruction of Israel."

Sanders' office last week circulated a video highlighting the "right of return." When pressed by reporters, he declined to say whether he endorses or opposes it. But if your staff circulates a propaganda video, and you don't specifically disown and condemn it, then that constitutes a de facto endorsement.

Palestinian Arab spokesmen, by the way, are not at all coy about the issue. The say openly that their goal is to have millions of Arabs "return" to Israel in order to become the majority of the population — so that it will no longer be a Jewish state.

Sanders has also rationalized the mass violence. In a May 15 tweet, he declared: "It's important to understand the desperate situation out of which these protests have arisen."

Deputy Minister Oren said that, "the problem is that Senator Sanders, in many ways, is setting the tone for the policies of the entire Democratic Party." This, he warned, should be "a source for acute concern" among Israelis, as well as friends of Israel abroad.

Seeking support for Israel among both Democrats and Republicans should still be Israel's goal, Oren said, noting that "it's important that neither side should assume that they have the Jewish vote in their pocket." He added, "The historical example I always give to illustrate this principle is the fact that Franklin Roosevelt got 90 percent of the Jewish vote, and yet he did absolutely nothing for European Jews during the Holocaust."

Oren acknowledged there are "significant obstacles" to winning over substantial support among Democrats. Part of the problem, in his view, is the "political culture among young Democrats." Some of the values that are very important to Israelis, "such as family, tradition, and the need for a strong military," are "not necessarily prevalent among many younger Democrats."

The Sanders perspective is also being amplified by large segments of the news media, Oren pointed out. "Many news media representatives couldn't care less when Arabs kill Arabs in various countries; they only care about Arab deaths when Jews are forced to kill Arabs in self-defense."

Oren also reminded us that the Western news media seldom report that " Hamas starves its own population, blocks trucks coming from Israel with food, and manipulates young Palestinians to go to the border fence — all for the purpose of getting killed, so that their sympathizers can get on television and accuse the Israelis of being killers."

He said that if the statements made by Sanders and biased media outlets "persuade Hamas that its strategy is working, [and that leads Hamas to send] more young people to the border fence to throw bombs," then those media representatives and political figures will "become accessories to terror, abettors to terror — the blood of those young people will be on their hands." (Algemeiner May 25)