



ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
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world is overblown, and in any case, Israel could manage most degrees of negative blowback.

This is not to say that Israel should apply sovereignty now to parts of Judea and Samaria, or that Israel won't be penalized by the international community for

Commentary...

Scaremongering about Sovereignty By David M. Weinberg

Remember the dark days of 2014, when Israel's foreign relations supposedly were "crashing," when the international diplomatic noose purportedly was tightening around Israel's neck?

That was because of the looming Western boycott of Israel. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement was everywhere and overwhelming, we were told. Every day, almost every hour, Israel's then-chief peace negotiator, Tzipi Livni, wailed about Israel's impending isolation.

According to Livni, Israel was about to be hit with unprecedented diplomatic, economic and academic chill, with severe repercussions for business and prosperity, unless, of course, Israel snapped quickly to Livni's tune of withdrawal from the West Bank and conceded a state to the Palestinians.

Then-finance minister Yair Lapid chimed in too with a shabby concocted report that confirmed Livni's premonitions. The pocketbook of every Israeli was going to be hit hard, Lapid warned, by Western BDS activity, unless Israel scurried to then-US secretary of state John Kerry's camp and hurried to cut a deal with the Palestinians.

In fact, the "threat" of a global boycott against Israel was so obsessively talked about those days that you might have thought it a greater threat than the growth of Iranian forces on Israel's borders.

It turned out that this was manifest nonsense. The menace of BDS was deliberately overstated and wildly overestimated. It was largely an artificial threat manufactured by the Israeli Left and magnified 1,000 times over by media repetition.

No wonder that Kerry and other Western leaders took to sternly cautioning Israel about the consequences of a breakdown in Palestinian negotiations. Kerry was merely echoing what he heard from Livni and Lapid, who deliberately prophesied unsubstantiated doom and gloom in an attempt to scare the Israeli public into retreat and withdrawal.

Unfortunately, this has been the modus operandi of the Israeli Left for some years now: Create a bogeyman with which to frighten the Israeli public into adopting a fatalistic narrative.

Time and time again, this trick has been tried. In 2013, former prime ministers Ehud Barak and Ehud Olmert warned of a "diplomatic tsunami" that would befall Israel if the Palestinians went ahead and got their "statehood" approved by the United Nations General Assembly. In panic, they urged Israel to make radical diplomatic concessions to prevent the disaster.

Well, the Palestinians got their vote and their upgraded status, yet the sky did not fall in on Israel.

This is how it works (fill in the blank): Israel had better withdraw from Judea and Samaria, otherwise it will lose... its Jewish and democratic character (Shimon Peres); or... its diplomatic standing (Livni); or... its economic prosperity (Lapid); or... its moral standing (Dan Meridor), and so on.

More recently, there was the "super dangerous" American decision to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Do you remember the scaremongering campaign? Every left-of-center Israeli and global analyst warned in 2018 that if President Trump went ahead with the move, the entire Mideast would erupt in violence, American embassies across the Arab world would be burned to the ground, and so on.

That, too, was nonsense. It did not happen.

Now the same analysts, along with high-minded European officials and Democratic politicians who are still wedded to failed paradigms of the Oslo era (the "Clinton parameters"), bellow from the rooftops that if Israeli law or sovereignty is applied to the Jordan Valley and settlements in Judea and Samaria all hell will break loose.

They warn that the Palestinian Authority will collapse itself (a tired and empty threat), Jordan will cancel its peace treaty with Israel (an unlikely scenario), the European Union will stop buying Israeli technologies (ditto), and American Jews will grow alienated (already happening, mainly for reasons not connected to Israel).

Here again, these prophesies of catastrophe are premeditated manipulation. The specter of Israel's isolation and sequestration by the

doing so; only that Israel should make its decision based on core security and national interests, and not be bullied by inflated intimidations.

If despite all the challenges, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Alternate Prime Minister Benny Gantz decide to proceed with a sovereignty declaration, they should do so with composure, and say something like the following:

"Israel truly desires a negotiated peace with the Palestinians. But since our adversaries are not willing to engage or compromise, and are busy assaulting Israel in international forums while most of the world looks on with equanimity, Israel must reposition, in coordination with the US and in accordance with the Trump administration peace paradigm.

"Israel need not wait endlessly for miraculous democratic transformations on the Palestinian side. Nor will Israel passively wait for a next round of heightened international pressures to unilaterally withdraw lock-stock-and-barrel from the West Bank; withdrawals that would be suicidal.

"Instead, Israel is acting on the Trump plan because it reflects realism. The territorial contours and security parameters of the plan make eminent sense to most Israelis. The extension of Israeli sovereignty to the approximately 30% of Judea and Samaria where Israelis live and where the IDF regularly patrols will be a rightful and responsible recognition of reality.

"Unlike the stale Clinton parameters, the new situation created after an Israeli declaration of partial sovereignty in Judea and Samaria should provide a baseline for realistic Israeli-Palestinian talks. This is the most likely route toward a true two-state solution. Realistically, the Palestinians will not get a better deal from Israel. Thus, those officials and so-called experts who counsel the Palestinians to reject negotiation based on this initiative are doing the cause of peace and the Palestinians no favor.

"Importantly and usefully, the American 'Vision for Peace' also can spur Palestinians to get their own house in order with leaders ready for real compromise with Israel about the disposition of the remaining territories (70%). To Palestinian leaders we say that time is not on your side. The longer you reject peace with Israel, the less independence you might obtain.

"Israel takes the long view. Its insistence on historical settlement rights, recognition and security in the Land of Israel are solid and sustainable for the long term. Simultaneously, Israel is serious about settling the conflict with peaceful Palestinians through compromise. We will not be deterred." (Jerusalem Post May 27)

חג שמחה

Sovereignty May Prove a Costly Revolution By Dan Schueftan

Everyone is talking about the pros and cons of annexation and applying Israeli sovereignty in Judea and Samaria while ignoring the fact that there are two options, very different in their meaning and impact on Israel's future: One is relatively modest, the other revolutionary in its implications. Trump's "deal of the century" significantly facilitates both. This support should be used as a bargaining chip, but in that use we should focus on one option while recognizing the intolerable historical price of the other.

The revolutionary option involves applying Israeli sovereignty in all of the legal settlements built by Israel in Judea and Samaria, as opposed to the illegal outposts. The plan raises the possibility that all of these settlements, including those located in the very heart of the territory to be placed under Palestinian control, will be designated sovereign Israeli enclaves. The practical implication of applying sovereignty in this format is the absorption of two-and-a-half million Palestinians, endangering Israel's Jewish and democratic character. Even if legal excuses and sophisticated arguments are found for denying the West Bank's Palestinian residents Israeli citizenship and the right to elect their own Knesset members, these arguments will fail to convince the only truly significant factor – the Israeli public.

The sanctimonious core of the European elites and so-called progressive circles (including their Israeli representatives) in any case

accuse Israel of maintaining an apartheid regime, regardless of the circumstances. Although Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip 15 years ago, they continue to argue that it is responsible for the fate of Gaza's residents, claiming that Israel's policing of the Strip's borders – for obvious security reasons – constitutes a "siege."

These arguments cannot be countered, since they are intended to satisfy their holders' psychological needs, and should be ignored by any life-affirming state. The true question is how the incorporation of millions of Palestinians will be seen by the mainstream Israeli public: Not the Right, which is willing to take responsibility for the Palestinian residents of the West Bank in the name of the ancestral rights of the Jewish people in Greater Israel and thereby, in their view, improve the state's security status; nor the Left, which rejects any arrangement that is unpalatable to the Palestinians and discriminates between the two political entities west of the Jordan Valley. The latter public seems to derive emotional satisfaction from their guilt feelings regarding the "occupation."

Those who will decide in the matter are the majority of Israelis. The citizens unwilling to take responsibility for millions of Palestinians, despite their healthy attachment to the land of Israel and its settlement in guarded towns; those Israelis prepared for a historic compromise, though fully aware of the security risks inherent in leaving most of the Judea and Samaria, and although they utterly lack trust in the Palestinians.

These Israelis support strong security arrangements that will deny full sovereignty to the violent and uncompromising Palestinian factions. This public – pillars of that part of Israel that bears the burden of preserving the state – will quickly realize that annexation, i.e. applying Israeli law to the large settlement blocks, welcomes millions of Palestinians into their home.

Sooner or later they will turn their backs on this policy. In such a scenario Israel will cease to function both internally and in the face of the expected pressure from the international community. Those familiar with Israeli society know that such a policy is unsustainable. The skeptics should learn from the long-term consequences of the 1982 Lebanon War, and imagine a similar outcome "on steroids."

Applying Israeli sovereignty in the Jordan Valley, on the other hand, is an entirely different matter. Its advantages, political costs, and characteristics should be examined in detail elsewhere, but its principle can be stated in brief.

The valley is a strip along the Jordan River, the Palestinian population of which is small. It separates the Palestinian residents of the West Bank from Israel's Arab and Iranian enemies, in such a way as to prevent the Palestinians from turning the territory under their control into an extension of those enemies' power. For this reason, any possible Israeli government will in any case demand Israeli control of the Valley, to ensure that "Israel's security border is the Jordan River." A debate may ensue regarding the timing of this step, in light of the political necessity of Jordan's king to convincingly protest it before Jordan's radical public opinion. However, in the broader context, and considering the other options, its benefits are clear and its damage can be contained. (Israel Hayom May 27)

The Benefits of Keeping Mum By Oded Granot

Israel's intention to extend sovereignty to parts of Judea and Samaria has been floating in the air for months now. But the Persian Gulf states, it seems, have only awakened in the past few weeks to the irritating sound. The Saudis, and later the United Arab Emirates, only recently joined the voicing of concern over unilateral steps that "could harm the chance for a permanent peace between Israel and the Palestinians."

There are many reasons for the Gulf nations waking up late to the possibility of annexation. We'll mention three of them: First – the global pandemic, which caused deaths in their countries, as well, and forced the Arab regimes to deal extensively with its consequences, including the fear of financial collapse due to the sharp drop in oil prices.

Second – the belief that annexation, as part of Trump's Deal of the Century, is an egg that has yet to hatch. The US government has yet to set its conditions, the map on which experts from both the US and Israel are working on has yet to be completed, and until recently there was doubt that a government would be formed in Israel to execute all these.

And third – the understanding that even if they get over the difficulties and complete the preparations and the train finally leaves the station - even then there will only be a public statement that will cause a media uproar but won't change much on the ground.

What prompted the Gulf states to abandon their "we-don't-care stance" and publish an objection to the planned step was the date set by the prime minister, July 1, and the steps the Palestinian Authority took - for the first time acting and not just talking - towards halting security coordination with Israel and abandoning the Oslo Accords.

It should be mentioned that the relative quiet in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (except for sporadic flare-ups in Gaza) on the one hand, and the increase in the Iranian threat and the danger it poses to the security of Gulf states on the other, are what created a common ground for secret talks between Israel and the moderate states, which only deepened throughout the years.

Furthermore, it seems the effective steps that Israel took to block the Iranian entrenchment in the Middle East encouraged the Gulf states to externalize their covert cooperation with Israel. The first steps of normalization appeared with visits of Israeli statesmen to the Gulf, an Israeli pavilion in the Expo fair in Dubai (which was canceled due to the pandemic), and more.

So, it is reasonable that what made the Gulf states publish this condemnation of the planned annexation is mainly the fear that the wheels may be sent spinning backward and the lull in the conflict with the Palestinians could be replaced with bloodshed that may bring about the collapse of the PA, the entering of the IDF to the territories and a breakdown in relations between Israel and Jordan and Egypt, which would make it difficult for the Gulf states to remain quiet and stand aside.

On the other hand, we should remember that the alliance of interests between Israel and these countries in the face of the Iranian threat is strong, and if the tension between Israel and the Palestinians increases as a result of annexation moves, the relationship will continue below the surface. Only the externalization and normalization will cease. (Israel Hayom May 27)

Would Netanyahu's Trial be Different in an American Court?

By Nathan Lewin

The criminal trial of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will begin on May 24. The three Israeli judges who will decide the case have ordered that Netanyahu must personally be in court when the charges against him are read and his anticipated not-guilty plea is entered. The prosecution's lead counsel, Judith Tirosh, had rejected the request of the prime minister's lawyers, Amit Haddad and Micha Fetman, that the prime minister be excused so he could tend to government business. There is precedent in Israeli law for a defendant, and even for counsel, to be absent on the opening day of a complex criminal trial. That is when, as will surely be true of Netanyahu's trial, the charges are read out loud and the following court session concerns scheduling of witnesses and discovery issues. Ms. Tirosh insisted—and the three judges agreed—that there is "legal significance" to an accused's presence at the "reading of charges."

The Israeli court's ruling would surprise an American criminal-defense lawyer. In the United States, indictments are never read in open court. Regardless of how they plead, defendants customarily "waive"—knowingly give up—the right they have to a reading of the formal charge. No American judge gives "legal significance" to a public reading of an indictment or has ever rejected a defendant's waiver of that right.

Americans following Israeli news know that Netanyahu will stand trial on three charges. The media say he has been "indicted" on these offenses. In fact, Israel has no protection like the one provided by the opening words of the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: "No person shall be held to answer for a capital or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury . . ." In Israel, a prosecutor's evidence is not presented to a grand jury—a group of ordinary citizens—before there can be a formal accusation. It is weighed only by a prosecutor; in Netanyahu's case by Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit. It was Mandelblit and his team of prosecutors who, with no check by ordinary citizens on a grand jury, had the power to bring into a criminal court the man who was, and will be for 18 months, Israel's prime minister.

To be sure, in most circumstances today, presentation to a grand jury in America is a formality. Sol Wachtler, formerly chief judge of New York's Court of Appeals, famously said (as quoted by Tom Wolfe) that "a grand jury will indict a ham sandwich." But there was substance to the Founding Fathers' insistence on this procedure, as I learned when I was a lawyer in the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division in 1968. It was hard for us to prosecute local officials, even with evidence of their racial animus, unless we could persuade ordinary local residents sitting on a grand jury that criminal charges

were warranted. The grand jurors to whom we presented our proof were skeptical, and they often voted “no bill” even though all the government’s lawyers who had weighed the evidence, including even the attorney general, were sure that federal crimes had been committed.

No one will ever know whether a randomly selected group of Israelis would have charged Netanyahu with committing crimes if Israel had a grand-jury procedure. Given his current popularity in Israel, such an outcome is surely less than certain.

Nor is there a right in Israel to trial by jury. Netanyahu’s guilt or innocence will be decided by a panel of three district judges. Trial jurors in the United States are directed to avoid publicity, and in high-profile cases jurors may even be sequestered. Criminal convictions have been reversed if the verdict may have been tainted by outside influence. The three judges hearing the evidence in Netanyahu’s case will continue, as the trial progresses, to be well-informed Israelis whose judgments might well be affected, consciously or unconsciously, by public and social media. There is no judicial ethics restraint against their access to opinions expressed in the Israeli press or on TV. And, as might be expected, there has been much speculation about their political leanings.

Although there are many similarities between the Israeli criminal process and the American system, including the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses and the requirement that the prosecution prove the accused’s guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, there are also major differences. The Israeli court’s opening decision regarding the accused’s presence when charges are publicly proclaimed may be a minor one, but it has real practical effect. (JNS May 22)

Demonstrating Against the Forces of Condescension

By Ruthie Blum

Hundreds of demonstrators gathered outside the Jerusalem District Court on Sunday afternoon to express their support for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his arraignment. It was the first hearing of a trial that his champions had hoped would never materialize, and that his enemies had spent the past four years pressing for and salivating over.

The latter also turned out at the courthouse, mainly to gloat. But a greater number preferred to hold their anti-Netanyahu festival—replete with champagne and blessings of l’chaim—in front of his official residence on Balfour Street, a mere mile-and-a-half away.

Finally, after four years of investigations into the activities of their nemesis, they were getting their wish: that the longest-serving prime minister in Israeli history, whom they’ve been unable to beat at the ballot box, will end his career in disgrace, if not in jail.

But their schadenfreude may be short-lived—whatever fate befalls Netanyahu at the hands of the panel of three judges, hand-picked for the purpose of kicking him when he’s up.

Indeed, in spite of all the media’s mudslinging and targeting by the judicial system, Netanyahu still holds the reins of the executive branch. In fact, after three rounds of Knesset elections, he remains the leader of the largest party and will continue to be at the helm—in accordance with the coalition agreement that he signed with Blue and White chairman Benny Gantz late last month—for the next 18 months. If the government lasts until then, that is, which is something that voters on both sides of the political spectrum highly doubt. Having a mish mosh of conflicting ideologies in a “unity” coalition will do that.

On the other hand, most Israelis dreaded the thought of a fourth election, partly due to woes born of the coronavirus crisis, and—perhaps even more importantly—because nobody believed that another round of voting would yield different results.

Ironically, Netanyahu’s handling of the COVID-19 pandemic was so popular that polls showed him winning by a landslide in the event of another election.

This only partially explains why people of all ages, ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic levels from around the country came out in droves on Sunday to chant pro-Netanyahu and anti-left-wing slogans, in addition to spewing vitriol at the judicial system.

Protestations on the part of those out to oust Netanyahu to the contrary, the chattering classes in the press, academia and, of course, the courts have been on an endless campaign to delegitimize the right.

It’s nothing new. When the late Menachem Begin became prime minister in 1977—thus ending the long-standing Mapai-turned-Labor rule of the “founding fathers” of the state—the outcry on the left was loud and hysterical. That the right dared to “usurp” their throne was too much for them to bear.

Labeling him a terrorist for having commanded the Irgun and

comparing him to Italian fascist Benito Mussolini for his crowd-rousing oratory, the Israeli intelligentsia proceeded to go after his supporters. Many of these were Mizrahim—immigrants from North Africa, who felt disenfranchised socially by their snobby Ashkenazi (European) counterparts.

One key ideological difference between them was that the former hailed from and fled Muslim-majority Arab countries, and as a result harbored little faith in the possibility of peace with the Palestinians. The latter looked down on this as a “primitive” worldview.

Though many have attributed this air of superiority as stemming from a fairer complexion, the divide existed more along class lines than racial ones.

Begin, an erudite Ashkenazi, was having none of it. He warmly embraced the support of the Mizrahim, whose positions he respected. The feeling was mutual. For them, he represented a tough leader who refused to kowtow to anti-Semites—a proud Jew who believed in Jewish power and rejected dhimmitude (second-class status) in any form.

Unable to attack Begin for lacking class, culture or education, his political foes dismissed his base as ill-bred sheep. The same dismissive approach is employed today in relation to those who back Netanyahu, whether they are Mizrahim, Ashkenazim or a mixture of both, which most Israelis are by now. Siding with Likud supposedly is tantamount to lacking nuance of thought, being swayed by slogans rather than independently contemplating complex issues and weighing their consequences.

Realizing that this attitude towards the hapless herd was having the opposite of the intended effect, the left changed its course. Pretending not to have contempt for Likud voters, it aimed all its arrows at Netanyahu by creating the “anybody but Bibi” camp.

Vilifying the man and not his followers was a neat trick. It was even quite successful, as Gantz’s meteoric rise illustrates. But it went too far, as the left’s machinations often do.

This brings us back to the demonstrators who descended en masse on the courthouse this week.

True, they were thumbing their noses at the prosecutors, the police and the press for hounding Netanyahu with charges that they deem bogus. As he has pointed out and they agree, the idea that he committed bribery, fraud and breach of trust in order to obtain favorable media coverage is beyond ludicrous, especially in his particular case. And the fact that he received gifts from rich acquaintances is negligible, maybe deserving of a fine, at most.

This, however, doesn’t fully answer the question of why they made such an effort to show up—in uncomfortable surgical masks, no less—and protest. No, the reason that Holocaust survivors and teenagers came together with cab drivers and teachers to wave placards and make their voices heard was not solely to bolster Bibi. It was also an act of defiant self-assertion against the forces of condescension. (JNS May 26)

Iran Exploits Pandemic to Increase Misconduct

By Rachel Avraham

At a time when 280 Israelis, close to 100,000 Americans and 342,000 people worldwide have succumbed to the fatal coronavirus, the Islamic Republic of Iran is reported to be exploiting the pandemic in order to increase its human rights violations.

According to the Iran Human Rights Monitor, while the international community is preoccupied with the humanitarian and economic toll of the pandemic, the Islamic Republic of Iran “executed 32 individuals including juvenile offenders, members of ethnic minorities and drug-related convicts. Many of those executed had participated in protests over conditions in prisons, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the regime’s failure to allow them temporary leave to stop the mass spread of the disease in prisons.”

Among those to be executed was Iranian Kurdish political prisoner Mostafa Salimi, who was among 80 prisoners to escape from Saqqez Prison in Iranian Kurdish following a mass prison protest.

In an interview, Iranian Ahwaz human rights activist Manel Msani concurred that the mullah’s regime is increasingly clamping down upon dissidents amid the pandemic: “What happened on Black Tuesday, 3/31/2020 is a war crime in the full sense of the word and a crime against humanity for the killing of the protesters in the Shiban and Speedar prisons, who were overcrowded by the regime. The prison snipers shot directly at the heads of innocent prisoners, killing at least 30 prisoners, as well as causing the outbreak of fires in large parts of the prisons.”

Around the same time period, as the world is pre-occupied with the pandemic, vandals attacked the Tomb of Queen Esther and her uncle Mordechai, which is a Jewish holy site in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

According to the Times of Israel, although only minor damage was caused to the holy site, graffiti was found showing the picture of slain Iranian Revolutionary Guards Commander Qassem Soleimani with the words "severe revenge" and another one that showed a picture of Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah with the writing "the fulfilled promise."

As the pandemic weakens Iran, the Islamic Republic has become even more aggressive against the Jewish state. In recent times, Iran waged cyber attacks against Israeli websites and an Israeli water facility.

Arutz Sheva reported that the Iranian parliament passed a law where any Iranian who speaks to an Israeli will receive five years imprisonment. And now, Mendi Safadi, who heads the Safadi Center for International Diplomacy, Research, Public Relations and Human Rights, noted that the Islamic Republic, the Iranian militias and Hezbollah have increasingly been involved in the drug trade, both to weaken Israeli society and to finance their terror activities against Israel.

In light of these developments, the United States correctly imposed additional sanctions on the Iranian regime and Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign should be maintained.

To lesson sanctions at this critical juncture like some Democrats want would be a historic mistake. (Israel Hayom May 27)

Iran: The Moral Imperative to Confront Evil By Rob Sobhani

This week's release of an anti-Israel poster by Ali Khamenei Iran's Supreme Leader evoking the Nazi "Final Solution" should not come as a surprise because this career terrorist also organized the gruesome Rex Movie Theater fire in Abadan in 1978 murdering 420 innocent souls. This event was ruefully pinned on the late Shah and the spark that led to the 1979 Revolution.

In fact, murder has been embedded into the fabric of the Islamic regime since it was first established. One of the first edicts Ayatollah Khomeini issued upon his return to Iran in 1979 was the murder of a beloved dentist Dr. Yusef Abbasian. He was forcibly thrown off a helicopter and into a swamp outside Qom and his body was never recovered. His "crime": being a member of the Bahai Faith.

In these interim forty-one years the regime's resort to murder has continued unabated. Whether it has been the regime's "uber terrorist" Qassem Soleimani who planned and organized the murder of Syrians opposed to the Assad regime, or paying Hezbollah to murder American servicemen in Lebanon in 1983, or Jews in Argentina in 1994; this regime thrives on murder. Sprinkled within these acts of mass murder have been select fatwas issued by both Khomeini and Khamenei to murder human rights advocates abroad such as the last prime minister of the ancient Iranian regime, Shapoor Bakhtiyar in France or Fereydoon Farokhzad, an entertainer turned child advocate living in Germany. Both were murdered using a butcher's knife.

And, of course, throughout these forty-one years whenever the Iranian people have tried to challenge the regime they have been brutally suppressed. Even when their acts of murder are not planned, such as the downing of Ukraine Airlines in January of this year by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the regime showed no interest in cooperating with international aviation experts. To date, the family of newlyweds Arash Pourzarabi and Pouneh Gorji who were on that fateful flight have not had any satisfactory answers.

The sad irony is that the Islamic regime is completely anathema with the soul of Iran. Iranians are heirs to a rich culture that pride themselves on having over 2500 years of history. Men such as Cyrus the Great issued the first proclamation of human rights upon freeing the Jews from their Babylonian captivity. And Iran's poets such as Saadi have written eloquently about compassion and global harmony. Sadly, the murderers holding sway in Iran today have hijacked the essence of a once proud nation.

The weight of forty-one years of murder suggests that for the sake of the civilized world, the US must mobilize the free world to put an immediate and permanent end to the murderous Islamic regime. The moral imperative is clear: a regime whose foundation is based on murder should not last. The US, along with its European, Asian and Middle Eastern allies must lend their unequivocal support to the people of Iran in their quest for fundamental change.

The policy choices for the free world are clear: no military invasion of or conflict with Iran, no more appeasement of the regime

and finally, recognizing the failure of containment as a means to change the "behavior" of the regime. It is now time to rally around the Iranian people and help them get rid of their tormentors once and for all.

The upcoming G7 summit is a good place to start this global campaign against the Islamic regime in Tehran. US President Trump should make it very clear to his G7 colleagues that this is a moment in history where they must decide whether to continue engaging a murderous regime or to side with the freedom-loving people of Iran. He should also explain to the Europeans that a free and economically transparent Iran is also in the economic interests of such companies as Total and Siemens. Most importantly, in view of its rich human capital and vast natural resources, Iran can achieve a GDP close to a \$1.3 trillion in a matter of a few short years.

The end of the Islamic regime will usher in a new and permanent realignment of global and regional geopolitics for many years to come. On the global stage it will mark the beginning of the end of political Islam. Furthermore, it will unleash Iran's massive energy reserves of gas, thus enhancing Europe's energy security. China and Russia, the two countries propping up the regime in Tehran at the expense of the Iranian people will – overnight – be without an ally. And within the region, the Arab neighbors of Iran can focus on investing in projects that have a higher return on human capital as opposed to current wasteful, albeit necessary, spending on arms. Last but not least, Israel can breathe a sigh of relief and establish normal relations with an Iran that once again will respect its 2500 years of friendship with the Jewish people.

Just as the collapse of the Soviet Union cemented the reputation of Ronald Reagan as the man who vanquished the evil of communism, President Trump can go down in history as the man who defeated the evil of Khomeinism. (Jerusalem Post May 25)

High Court is Detached from Reality By Dr. Haim Shine

The ruling rendered by the High Court of Justice on Monday preventing the military from executing a demolition order for the home of one of the terrorists convicted in the murder of yeshiva student Dvir Sorek in Gush Etzion in August 2019, is simply incredible.

For the top judicial authority in a state that for so long has been fighting terrorism – something we can bank on to only increase given Israel's plan to apply sovereignty to large parts of Judea and Samaria and the Jordan Valley – to argue that the time that has elapsed between the murder and the scheduled demolition rendered the deterring factor of such action hollow, and ignore the fact that the delay stemmed from the IDF's own due diligence in pursuing the case until the terrorist was convicted, is inconceivable.

Adding insult to injury, the court's argued that, given the time that has passed, the terrorist's family had "reasonable grounds" to assume that their home will be spared. It never occurred to me that High Court justices are also experts on the subject of military deterrence and that they must take into consideration the expectations and assumptions of terrorists' families.

This ruling joins a long list of decrees in serving as the perfect example to why the public has lost confidence in the judiciary; rulings that are detached from reality; and that reflect the personal and political worldviews of those on the bench.

Former Supreme Court justices-turned-media pundits are proof of the growing part politics play in High Court rulings.

Since the mid-1990s, with the intention of introducing judicial activism and the constitutional revolution, liberal – dare I say, leftist – judges have been consistently selected to serve on the High Court of Justice.

Moreover, the Supreme Court's control of the Judicial Appointments Committee allowed the courts to close ranks and operate, nomination-wise, according to what can only be described as the "buddy system."

Former Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked tried to introduce some diversification to the High Court and was able to get a few conservative judges elected, but Chief Justice Esther Hayut is the one to decide the makeup of the panel hearing petitions and therefore has the last say on the matter.

There is no doubt that if Monday's hearing had included two conservative judges rather than two outspoken liberals, the ruling would have been different. (Israel Hayom May 26)
