



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*

demands firm enough
to sound like threats.

But even Obama
lost hope and during his recent visit to
Israel he almost left the peace process
off the agenda. His remarks on the
necessity of peace in Jerusalem bore
the mark of a man who has been
defeated but insists on having the last

Events...

Wednesday June 19, 7:30pm

International investigative journalist and talk show host, **Edwin Black** speaks on "Inside Iran's Atomic weapon: Tehran's Plan to Nuke Israel – Step-By-Step" at Shaarei Shomayim. Entrance fee \$15.

Shabbat June 28-29

Dov Lipman, MK (Yesh Atid) will be the guest speaker at BAYT.

Sunday, June 30, 7:30pm

Memorial for **Howard Grief z"l**, expert on Israel's rights under international law to the entire Land of Israel, at the Toronto Zionist Centre.

Commentary...

The Secretary's New Clothes By Daniel Tauber

Someone better tell US Secretary of State John Kerry about his new clothes. That allusion may be overused, but when was there last such a high-ranking politician who pursued so ambitious a policy, parading it before all the world, while just about everyone watching knew he would fail? With most other grandiose political efforts at least some segment of the public believes success is possible, or that the official line is indeed correct. Not so with Kerry's inexplicably frantic push for peace.

Newspaper headlines question whether Kerry is a "lone ranger."

He is said to lack both "buy-in" and faith from Israelis and Palestinians alike. Haaretz characterized Kerry as trying to "push [a] stone up the hill," a metaphor that may have been more apt for the peace process than the editor realized: It derives from the Greek myth of Sisyphus being cursed to push a boulder up a hill in Hades. Upon reaching the top, the giant rock falls back to the bottom and Sisyphus must repeat the process for eternity.

Indeed, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been mostly cool to Kerry's efforts and a large portion of his coalition opposes the two-state solution as such. Most Israelis, as Kerry lamented, are busy enjoying Israel's relative economic strength and the quiet secured by the IDF, and are more concerned with domestic issues.

For their part, the Palestinians refuse to negotiate and are busy blaming Israel for it. As should have been expected, they have taken Kerry's efforts as an opportunity to create such a lengthy list of preconditions it is unclear what issues they expect to deal with in actual negotiations.

Perhaps the party whose buy-in is most noticeably absent, however, is Kerry's boss, President Barack Obama.

Almost every recent peace plan has carried the personal mark of the president of the United States. And typically he has had some reason to believe his investment would pay off. For presidents Carter and Clinton, the parties to the conflict had initiated the process. Both presidents Bush had just demonstrated the extent of American might in the region and had neutralized a top fomenter of regional instability.

President George W. Bush's second-term efforts also came after Israel's Disengagement, and he had Israel's trust and an eager Israeli prime minister telling him a peace agreement could be reached.

President Obama, who came into office intending to make Israeli-Palestinian peace a top priority, was riding a wave of global popularity.

His conciliatory tone to the Muslim world was thought to have garnered him some credibility and he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for the express purpose of encouraging him to pursue peace.

He also had a team of heavy hitters – his secretary of state, vice president, chief of staff, and special envoy – ready to pressure Israel with

word – and even that included an admission that peace was unlikely.

When Obama spoke in Ramallah, he referred to Kerry's upcoming efforts distantly, as though they were Kerry's independent initiative, saying, "And I know that Secretary of State John Kerry intends to spend significant time, effort, and energy in trying to bring about a closing of the gap between the parties."

Even if Kerry is following Obama's orders, the fact that Obama has subcontracted to Kerry what he himself once pursued so vigorously is an indication of how Obama assesses the chances for success.

Beyond Obama's apparent disengagement from the process, the region has changed drastically for the worse. Once reliable Egypt is now ruled by anti-Israel parties.

Syria is in the throes of civil war. It is feared that even Jordan may be susceptible to revolution. And even before the "Arab Spring," Hezbollah was entrenched in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. More than ever before there is reason to believe signing a peace agreement cannot yield peace.

So with Obama divested of the peace process, circumstances particularly ill-suited for peace, and more obviously pressing issues like the Syrian civil war looming, why is Kerry so completely immersing himself in reviving negotiations? What makes him think he'll succeed where Obama failed? The preposterousness of Kerry's efforts begs the question of whether Kerry himself believes he can succeed. One might be led to believe it's just some kind of sideshow to distract from some other policy.

But it's not, as Kerry displayed the extent of his sincerity with his impassioned speech at the American Jewish Committee's Global Forum. There he pleaded with the audience to use their influence to get Israel to the negotiating table and to not let the figurative door "literally" slam shut on the peace process. In the face of the new regional landscape and understandable skepticism, Kerry declared that he nevertheless "firmly believe[s]" that this is a hopeful time, if we choose to make it so." It is just too hard to fake such naïveté.

That naïveté comes at a particularly dangerous time. The scaling back of the war on terror while al-Qaida rises anew, the withdrawals from Iraq and Afghanistan, the failure to anticipate the "Arab Spring" and the late-in-the-game dumping of ally Hosni Mubarak, and the lynching of the American ambassador in Benghazi have all signaled a decline in US influence in the region.

Beyond that US policy on Syria is indecisive, despite the growing death toll and evidence of chemical weapons use by Bashar Assad.

That indecision is understandable given the Islamist nature of the rebel forces, but the president has already committed the US to a side by calling on Assad to step down and having assisted in supplying the rebels with arms.

At the same time Russia has made it clear that it will back Assad by providing weapons like the S-300 anti-aircraft system meant to deter Western intervention. That the tide seems to be turning in Assad's favor means that for the first time in decades Russian arms might be said to be beating American arms.

If they did, that would be a significant blow to US prestige, at a time when US global leadership is increasingly challenged.

With US influence spiraling downwards and the Hezbollah- Assad-Iran alliance believing itself immune from attack, Hezbollah will be emboldened in igniting another round of conflict with Israel while Iran will be emboldened in its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

So while Kerry's efforts may be laughable, for all of our sakes someone ought to let him in on the joke, so he can concentrate his energy and US attention where they might do some good instead of compounding the problem with another US failure. (Jerusalem Post Jun 11)

Remembering Howard Grief By Yoel Lerner

When I first met Howard Grief, in the Rose Garden adjoining the Knesset in 1995, I had no concept of the amazing person he was going to turn out to be. It didn't take me long to discover that I had had the good fortune to meet "the" expert on the international legal rights of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel. The Canadian attorney, who had immigrated to Israel in 1989 and served as adviser to the late Prof. Yuval Ne'eman, minister of energy and infrastructure in Yitzhak Shamir's government, was a recognized world leader in this field.

This thought, among others, passed through my mind last Monday as I accompanied Howard to his final resting place. In my mind I saw Howard's monumental, 700-page work on The Legal Foundation and Borders of Israel under International Law, a legacy which Howard, basically a very humble man, required months of encouragement – on my part and on the part of others of his close friends – to produce.

But once he became convinced of the need for such a book, there was no stopping him. It took him a good few years to put down in readable form the product of the decades of research he had devoted to the subject. We used to sit at my computer at my home in the Old City of Jerusalem as often as four or five days a week, for two or three hours each session, inching forward on his grand project, the complexity of which would have overwhelmed any normal man. But Howard's spirit was insurmountable. Howard loved his people, the Jewish people, and he loved our land, the Land of Israel, and nothing could stand before that love.

I became familiar with concepts and expressions I had only rarely – if ever – encountered before I began to work with Howard: the Balfour Declaration of November 1917, which Howard viewed as a solemn promise by the United Kingdom to world Jewry (a promise the British apparently took great joy in breaking during the subsequent years up until 1948); the San Remo Peace Conference of April 1920, one of a series of peace conferences that marked the conclusion of the Great War, during which the Principal Allied Powers – Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan – adopted a resolution (the San Remo Resolution) whereby the promise of the Balfour Declaration was transformed into an element of international law; the awarding of a Mandate for Palestine to Great Britain at San Remo, subsequently confirmed unanimously by the Council of the newly-formed League of Nations in July of 1922; followed by the gradual detachment by Great Britain of Eastern Palestine (Trans-Jordan) from the Jewish National Home, effected by a series of "White Papers" – statements of British policy – starting with the Churchill White Paper of 1922 – culminating in the formal recognition of the Hashemite Kingdom of Trans-Jordan in 1946.

I learned from Howard of British perfidy throughout the Mandate for Palestine period, and his conclusion that Winston Churchill donned the guise of an ardent Zionist whenever he was not in power, but that his policies when in power exuded a stench of a different sort altogether.

Howard's book appeared in print in 2008, but he refused to view its publication as the end of his mission. On the contrary, he put together a mailing-list of over 150 names, of people scattered all over the world, and avidly engaged in writing to them and arguing with them over various points of history and law, each of which made up a firm part of his legal-historical view of the Jewish People in the Land of Israel.

Over the years he composed articles on various aspects of his subject, articles published in the main by the Ariel Center for Policy Research in their Nativ Journal, but appearing also on various websites participating in his struggle for the recognition of our legal rights to the Land of Israel.

Following the publication of his book, Howard's expertise and readiness to combat what he viewed as "the forces of evil" attempting to deprive the Jewish people of parts of their legally recognized homeland, became more widely known, and he became recognized as a prominent adviser to various groups, in Israel and more especially in Europe and Canada, who were doing their bit to fight off the would-be "de-legitimizers" of Israel.

It is with great pleasure that I recall a meeting I had over two years ago with the present defense minister, a meeting at which I had intended to convince him of the importance of Howard's work. I was completely and most pleasantly surprised to find that Moshe "Bogie" Ya'alon – whom Howard considered for years to be the future prime minister of the State of Israel – was already very familiar with Howard's work, having met with one of the aforementioned groups (in Canada) on a recent visit to that country and having devoted time and effort to studying Howard's work in depth.

Howard Grief, champion of Israel's legal rights to all Eretz Israel, was plagued over the past decade by deteriorating health, a condition which caused him considerable distress, but had no effect on the clarity of his legal reasoning. Besides his normal work burden, he composed lengthy

petitions to be presented to the Parliament of Canada (already done) and to the United States Congress, calling on these august bodies to reconfirm their earlier support for Jewish legal rights to the entirety of the Land of Israel. His hospitalization over the last few weeks of his life prevented him from completing the two books we had been working on over the past five years, and which will hopefully reach the public over the months to come. *The writer, 72 years old, is a university graduate in Hebrew Language and Semitic Linguistics, and was a close friend and coworker of Howard Grief for almost two decades.* (Jerusalem Post Jun 6)

Why Don't Arabs Give Aid to Palestinians? By Yoram Ettinger

Secretary of State John Kerry's contention that a \$4 billion grant would revitalize both the Palestinian Authority and the peace process ignores the Palestinian track record since the 1993 Oslo Accords.

Kerry overlooks the impact of the \$400 million in annual U.S. aid which has fueled an all-time-high Palestinian corruption -- Palestinian Authority President Mamhoud Abbas' nickname is "Mr. 20%" -- hate education, terrorism, anti-U.S. incitement, general oppression and discrimination against Christians in particular, and the Palestinian affinity toward America's enemies and adversaries: Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, Russia, China, North Korea, Venezuela, Cuba and Iran. The PA follows in the footsteps of previous Palestinian leaders who sided with the Nazis, the communist bloc and Ayatollah Khomeini.

Why don't the Arab oil-producing countries provide the \$4 billion to the PA, which they could easily afford in view of their robust \$100-per-barrel economy?

While Kerry considers the Palestinian issue to be central to Middle East developments and the crown jewel of Arab policy-making, the Arab oil-producing countries shower the PA with rhetoric, but no money. Arab policy-makers are primarily concerned about domestic and regional issues, resulting from the seismic stormy Arab Winter, which supersede the Palestinian issue. They are preoccupied with the threatening Middle Eastern sandstorms, not with tumbleweeds.

Furthermore, Arab regimes view the Palestinians as a potentially subversive, treacherous and destabilizing element, based upon the Palestinian intra-Arab track record since the 1950s, including a trail of subversion and terrorism in Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Kuwait. The Arab Gulf states do not forget or forgive Abbas' and Yasser Arafat's August 1990 back-stabbing of Kuwait and the Gulf States, when they collaborated with Saddam Hussein's invasion and plunder of Kuwait. They betrayed Kuwait, which hosted some 300,000 of their Palestinian allies and relatives, and transferred billions of dollars to their stashed bank accounts.

The Arab states have been known to talk the Palestinian talk, but never walk the walk, while maintaining their mega-billion dollar military acquisitions and lavish lifestyle.

On Dec. 26, 2012, Arab League Secretary-General Nabil Elaraby criticized Arabs for reneging on their financial pledges to the PA. He divulged that "Arab countries pledged a \$100 million monthly safety net to the PA at the March 2012 Baghdad Arab Summit, but none of it has been realized yet."

A Dec. 9, 2011 article in Turkey's Hurriyet Daily News highlights a World Bank report: "Arab countries have cut aid to Palestinians substantially, despite their rhetoric of supporting Palestinian rights. ... Arab donors provided less than \$80 million in the first half of 2011, compared to \$231 million in 2010, \$462 million in 2009 and \$446 million in 2008. ... Arab countries have committed to billions in aid in past years that never materialized. ... One reason could be that the Arab world has become fed up with the Palestinian problem."

According to a 2005 report by the Washington Institute for Near East Studies, the United Arab Emirates pledged \$43 million to the PA in 2004, compared with its 2004 oil revenue of \$30 billion. The emirates' actual aid delivery was zero.

"The budget of UNRWA, which has looked after Palestinian refugees since 1950, is financed mainly by Western governments. At \$127 million in 2004, the U.S. is the largest national contributor. ... Arab states pledged \$999 million in aid for 2004, of which \$572 million was pledged by Arab members of OPEC. Only \$107 million of this aid was actually delivered [irrespective of the dramatic hike in the price of oil]."

Demonstrating the secondary role played by the Palestinian issue in the Arab order of priorities, Arab financial support of the PLO, during the 1980s, was less than 10% of Arab financial support of the anti-Soviet Muslims in Afghanistan. Arabs pledged more than \$2 billion in support of the first (1987-1992) and second (2000-2005) Palestinian intifadas against

Israel, but less than \$500 million was delivered. During the October 2010 Arab Summit, Arab leaders pledged \$500 million to the Palestinians, but only 7 percent was delivered.

The Arab League does not discuss the 2013 Syrian retaliation against, and expulsion of, Palestinian supporters of Assad; did not interfere in 2007, when the Lebanese military demolished Palestinian strongholds near Tripoli, Beirut and Sidon which terrorized and murdered Lebanese soldiers; did not stop the 2003 Iraqi reprisals against, and expulsion of, Palestinian allies of Saddam Hussein; did not condemn Kuwait for expelling almost 300,000 Palestinians following their mega-betrayal in 1990; did not attempt to stop the PLO expulsion from Lebanon in 1982 (by Israel), and 1983 (by Syria), following the PLO plunder of Lebanon in the 1970 and 1980s; did not save Abbas and Arafat from the wrath of Jordan's King Hussein in 1970 following the PLO betrayal of their Hashemite host; and did not condemn Egypt and Syria for expelling Abbas and Arafat during the 1950s and 1960s.

Extending a \$4 billion grant, and persisting in annual aid, to the PA would reflect a determination to ignore the costly Arab lessons in dealing with the Palestinians and would repeat, rather than avoid, past traumatic mistakes. (Israel Hayom Jun 9)

Not All Problems Can Be Solved By Dror Eydar

Let Justice Minister Tzipi Livni advance the peace talks with the Palestinians. Let U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry mediate. Convince Europe's prominent figures to pressure Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and talk about peace.

It would be best to send Haaretz reporter Sefi Rachlevsky to mediate the talks (in my opinion, Rachlevsky habitually writes the most zealous, orthodox texts in all of Hebrew journalism. He is a liberal fundamentalist). Invite Hamas to the negotiating table as well. Invite Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh to Jerusalem. Invite Fatah strongman Jibril "nuclear bomb" Rajoub to a Meretz convention. Conduct dialogue with Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah. Go see the butcher from Damascus and exchange ideas with him. Adopt the 2002 Saudi peace initiative.

And once all your hopes are dashed, just withdraw. Stage a unilateral withdrawal. Converge behind walls and fences and convince yourselves that you will now be left alone. From now on, say no to "Danonism" (as in Deputy Defense Minister Danny Danon, who said very recently that Israel is not interested in a two-state solution) and yes to "Tzippism" (as in Tzipi Livni, a long-time advocate of the peace process).

This does not clear the deputy defense minister of responsibility for falling into the trap of making controversial remarks to the media. Wise men watch their tongues.

Within hours of Israel withdrawing from Judea and Samaria, Hamas would try to take over the entire area. Hamas forces would be met with al-Qaida cells already stationed in the region, and together they would laugh at us for being so foolish. Let us keep in mind that all the warnings over previous Israeli withdrawals all came true, one by one. But this knowledge hasn't stopped the peace industry from continuing to preach to us that we should uproot ourselves from our homeland.

Before we even address the issue of territory, there is the question of nationality. Two states for two peoples means that the Palestinians must recognize Israel as the Jewish state. This is the first step on the path to ensuring that the region's Arabs come to terms with the Jewish people's right to at least some of the land. But they don't recognize, and won't recognize, Israel. Can't you hear? They are shouting it from the rooftops.

We are headed for a masquerade ball. With whom do you want to sign a peace agreement? Abbas and his Ramallah gang don't have the authority to sign anything. Even among the Palestinians of the West Bank, Abbas has no support. And we are talking about ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Kerry apparently reads New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman's articles, and that is why he believes that the Arab Spring is in full swing. But Arab nations are collapsing all around us, reverting back to their natural state of tribes, ethnic groups, clans and families. There is no longer a Syria, a Lebanon or even an Iraq. These countries are now merely cardboard sets putting on a play of national fronts, while history laughs backstage, as if saying, "I told you!" The Western model of nationality was artificially imposed on the Middle Eastern social model, which lasted thousands of years. With whom can we sign a peace agreement, now that Arab countries are collapsing before our eyes and religious leaders emerge as the real leaders of Middle Eastern populations?

There are efforts to solve the "problem" coming at us from all

directions. But for the last 100 years, it has been only we who really looked for solutions. The basis of any solution boils down to a territorial compromise, but all attempts at compromise have been shattered on the rock of reality. So what do the disillusioned members of the peace cult do, now that their messiah has let them down? Some of them will sober up, some of them will quit, some will convert, and some -- a particularly vocal and aggressive part of them -- will fashion a new messiah and call out his name on every possible stage, saying, "This time it will work."

"Asshur shall not save us," the prophet Hosea warned. Neither will the U.S., which has lost its influence on the region under the leadership of U.S. President Barack Obama. Just as during the 2005 Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, or during the signing of the 1993 Oslo Accords, the world will cheer us, and then resume attacking and condemning us the moment we try to defend ourselves and enforce the agreements that were signed by one tribe but rejected by another.

The idea that there is a solution to every problem is not universal. It represents a specific school of thought. On the other hand, many people believe that there isn't necessarily a solution to every problem. Just like the geographical borders that were artificially imposed by the West on the Middle East, the endless efforts to solve a problem that has no solution are also bound to fail. These efforts not only manifest a lack of humility toward history and reality but also toward the region.

The Middle East is the cradle of civilization. For 5,000 years the earth here has been breathing cycles of tribal, diplomatic, cultural and religious growth and decline. Not everything can be resolved. What we need is patience. And faith. (Israel Hayom Jun 13)

My Prediction: Please Help Prove it Wrong By Martin Sherman

Four percent of the country's residents [i.e. the settlers] cannot decide that they are the only ones who know what's right... It's hard not to respect those who are willing to risk their lives and future for the sake of a goal they believe in, yet it becomes a whole different story when they risk the lives and future of others. – Yair Lapid, "Do the settlers care about us?" October 2, 2010

... there is room for well-considered, controlled unilateral actions. Such actions, which are not dependent on the standing of negotiations, can mitigate the conflict by creating an evolving reality of two states. They should take place along with consistent efforts to negotiate a permanent arrangement, or at least diplomatic agreements that would ultimately result in a permanent arrangement. – Gilead Sher, "Unilateral withdrawal, by consent," June 27, 2012

You would think that following Israel's ruinous unilateral withdrawals from Lebanon and Gaza, unilateralism would be dead in the water... the political Left is impatient. The same people who once sold us Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas as peace partners are now telling us that peace is impossible yet the existing situation is unacceptable, and therefore the unilateral route is the only remaining course of action for Israel... There is a groundswell of "elite" (read: Leftist) opinion building in favor of unilateral withdrawal in the West Bank. I sense that Prime Minister Netanyahu is being pulled in this direction... – David Weinberg, "The return of unilateralism," May 30, 2013

I have a strong premonition of dire things to come. For there are increasingly frequent signs of the ominous nature of the emerging realities that soon will be upon us – signs clearly visible to all but those who refuse to acknowledge them, and realities which if left unchecked will – with almost deterministic certainty – herald the end of the era of Jewish sovereignty in our time.

The three preceding citations aptly illustrate the reasons for my concern and the sense of impending doom that accompanies it.

For they clearly mark out the major lines, along which the thrust of a new domestic effort is being mounted to compress Israel back into its precariously vulnerable pre-1967 frontiers, and to reinstate the validity of the policy of unreciprocated withdrawal, despite the debacle of the disengagement.

It is important to note the metamorphosis that has taken place in the rationale of the two-state doctrine. For in contrast to the not too-distant past, withdrawal from the territories across the 1967 Green Line is now no longer presented – as least not, primarily – as a measure designed to attain a peace accord with the Palestinians. Rather, it is portrayed as a desired value in, and of, itself. Today, territorial retreat is being promoted as a standalone moral imperative which must be aspired to, no matter what the peace negotiations with the Palestinians achieve. Or don't.

Unilateralists employ two ruses to disguise the true nature of their endeavor – one involving semantic cosmetics, the other substantive

camouflage.

They attempt to mask their push for unrequited concessions with misleading, almost Orwellian rhetoric, virtually indistinguishable from the Newspeak slogans in the dystopian realities of 1984, such as “War is peace,” “Freedom is slavery” and “Ignorance is strength.”

This is no exaggeration. For what more fitting epithet could there be to characterize the unilateralists’ bizarre practice of designating their call for complete capitulation as “constructive” (see my “The coming canard: ‘Constructive unilateralism,’” April 19). This could be plausibly construed as prescribing a macabre maxim that could have come directly from the manuals of the Orwellian Ministry of Truth: “Surrender is Victory.”

Together, with this semantic sleight of hand, they continue to insist that their preferred avenue is a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians. But this too is little more than superficial posturing that lacks any credibility.

After all, why would the Palestinians feel the need to negotiate when they are being “threatened” with being given virtually everything that they could get via those negotiations anyway – courtesy of “constructive unilateralism.”

Unless of course one is contemplating offering even more munificent concessions in such negotiations, such as the right of return, east Jerusalem and the Golan, as per the demands of the Arab Peace Initiative.

(From here on, I will denote the advocates of this bizarre doctrine by the acronym CUPs – Constructive unilateralism proponents.)

It is against this ideo-political backdrop that the grim scenario I envisage will unfold.

As the growing specter of international economic, and other, sanctions looms ever-larger and more menacing, public concern will be harnessed to fan the flames of resentment toward the designated cause of these potential punitive measures against the country – the continued Jewish presence across the 1967 Green Line.

Although radical post-/anti-Zionist elements will continue their support for the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement, establishment CUPs will not publicly call for such steps against Israel. Privately, however, they may well let it be known that they feel that tangible threats thereof might have a valuable role to play.

They will write articles and give interviews in the mainstream media, warning that such penalties are imminent, thereby signaling to foreign governments that such action is, in their eyes, understandable, even, regrettably, appropriate.

As such threats become more credibly conveyed and are seen to be more tangibly imminent, they will be brandished domestically by CUPs, and increasingly portrayed as an unwarranted and avoidable punishment brought down on the general public by a handful of recalcitrant, radical ideologues.

Then, a well-orchestrated campaign to discredit the residents of the Jewish communities of Judea and Samaria will begin. They will be portrayed as the source of economic burden and physical danger to the rest of the population living within the pre-1967 frontiers – as reflected in the foregoing Lapid excerpt – and as the sole impediment to a peace accord with the Palestinians.

Although some non-adversarial appeals will be made for “our brothers across the Green Line” to return home, and expressions of understanding, empathy, even identification as to their suffering may be articulated, this will do little to dilute the venom that will be directed at them. The deep-seated, primal distaste for the settlers will soon engender defamatory and demagogic diatribes against them that will range from the distortive, through the deceptive, to the downright deceitful.

In parallel, a drive will be launched – in fact, in large part has already been launched – to accustom the public to the notion of “constructive unilateralism” and to persuade it of its acceptability, indeed, inevitability.

Conferences will be staged with compliant, high-profile participants to impart “intellectual depth” to this shallow, capricious concept; opinion polls will be conducted, with questions carefully crafted to elicit responses that can be portrayed as reflecting widespread public endorsement; opinion pieces will be published/posted and prime time interviews granted in mainstream media channels – at home and abroad – with sympathetic editorial policies, to build up pressure on politicians and policy-makers.

Soon a “95% Us vs 4% Them” theme will increasingly dominate the public discourse, and a “Pre-1967 Israelis vs Trans-Green Line Settlers” schism will purposely be widened and systematically popularized.

With growing frequency and aggressiveness, elected leaders will find themselves publicly confronted with trenchant, but disingenuous, questions of the kind: “Why should 95% of the population pay the price for, and bear the burden of, the ideological intransigence of a 5% minority?”

And as in the past, the elected leaders will not withstand the pressure.

Recently, pro-settler/anti-withdrawal advocates have pooh-poohed the idea of imminent Israeli withdrawal from Judea-Samaria.

They claim that given the precedent of the disengagement, and of other forced evacuation episodes, no government could countenance the involuntary evacuation of tens – much less hundreds – of thousands of Jews from their homes, and hence withdrawal is not a feasible prospect.

They are right – and they are wrong! It is unlikely that any Israeli government could or would undertake a massive forced evacuation of Jews. But this does not discount the possibility of unilateral withdrawal.

For what was once unthinkable is no longer so.

Under relentless pressure generated by CUPs, their media cohorts, and supportive foreign governments and ministers, the harassed politicians will do the following:

- Announce that Israel has no claims to sovereignty beyond the security barrier – or thereabout.
- Instruct the IDF to prepare for a unilateral withdrawal to that prescribed line within, say, six to nine months.
- Inform the residents of the Jewish communities across the Green Line that the IDF will withdraw in six to nine months, in which time they will have to decide: Either accept a modest relocation compensation package or remain where they are, to live under the rule of whatever regime will assume power in the region.

Unthinkable? I beg to differ.

Sever Plocker, a very well-connected journalist, recently (May 20) wrote: “Sources close to the prime minister... speak of his growing willingness to take a dramatic unilateral step for the Palestinians in case the proposal for temporary borders and an interim agreement does not reach the implementation stage.”

Strongly corroborating the concern expressed by David Weinberg in the introductory except, Plocker continues: “According to the sources, Bibi is closer than ever to reaching a decision on a unilateral withdrawal near the separation fence, without getting anything in return from the Palestinian Authority. He is prepared for a ‘historic act that would surpass the disengagement from Gaza.’”

The history of recent decades is replete with incidents in which the once-taboo has become the accepted policy of the day.

Who, in the 1980s, would have believed that the rugged, hawkish Palmahnik Yitzhak Rabin would embrace and sanitize the arch-terrorist Arafat; who, in the 1990s, would have believed that former right-wing Likudniks like Ehud Olmert would offer to divide Jerusalem; who, in 2000, would have believed that the super-hawk Ariel Sharon would coercively evacuate Gaza, or that Netanyahu would embrace the idea of a Palestinian state.

Time and time again, Israeli leaders have buckled under pressure – perceived or genuine.

Time and time again, they have reneged on electoral pledges and embraced the dovish concessions they previously scorned.

There is little reason to believe – or even to hope – that they will not do so again – especially if confronted with the seeming choice of giving the welfare of a 95% majority precedence over the “ideological excesses” of a 4% minority.

Quite the contrary.

This of course would be a calamitous decision and in all probability, would precipitate a process that, within several decades, culminate in end of the era of Jewish sovereignty.

It would comprise a grotesque inversion of the Zionist ethos, which in essence involves bringing Jews living under alien sovereignty to live under Jewish sovereignty – not abandoning Jews to live under, not only alien, but in all likelihood inimical sovereignty. It would create an insufferable security situation converting Netanya to Sderot-by-the sea...

Proponents of the move would soon find – as with the Oslo debacle – that the euphoria would be rapidly replaced by horror and despair.

But even the more nationalistic elements in the population would begin to drift away with a growing sense of alienation from the country and its fate. Dispirited, despondent and disgusted, people who were prepared to risk and sacrifice much to be a participant in a valiant stirring struggle, but not “patsies” in a patently foolhardy failure of spirit, would seek fulfillment elsewhere...

The preceding scenario is a tangible possibility. But forewarned is forearmed. Help prevent it materializing. Raise your voice in protest. Withdraw support from any elected incumbent who does not actively and effectively oppose its implementation. Help fund countervailing conferences and conduct contradictory surveys.

It is not that much is at stake. Everything is at stake! Please help me to prove my prediction wrong. (Jerusalem Post Jun 6)