



## 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*

a strategic solution, we have to undergo a paradigm shift. The events of the past several weeks have shown that Hamas is in dire straits. Now is an opportune moment to try to extract concessions that would herald a long period of calm in the south. (Israel Hayom Jun 11)

### Commentary...

#### Iran is Worried, Disappointed and Afraid By Menashe Amir

The Islamist regime in Iran is very worried over the speed in which U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un reached their agreement. They know the nuclear talks in Singapore will have immense ramifications for the future of Iran's nuclear and missile programs.

Iran's statements ahead of the summit were viewed as an attempt to warn the North Korean leader against trusting the U.S. but its reaction after the summit was full of disappointment.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassem cautioned Kim before the summit not to fall for American promises. Qassem said the U.S. had violated the nuclear deal it had reached with Tehran – the deal that Trump shelved two weeks ago that was negotiated by the Obama administration. Even on the campaign trail, Trump said that if he won the presidency one of his first moves would be to cancel the deal. He made a promise and he kept it. This move by Trump, before the U.S. had even effectively reinstated sanctions, is slowly choking the Iranian economy.

If the talks with North Korea lead Pyongyang to relinquish its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, then Trump, encouraged by the accomplishment, will turn to tackle Iran's nuclear weapon program and missile arsenal. However, even if he fails, Trump will have increased the pressure on Iran to try attaining the same rewards squandered by North Korea.

Regular Iranians understood a long time ago that continuing to pursue nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities will only bring calamity to their country. The Iranian citizen is already asking: How could the toughest communist leader in the world bend to Trump, while we continue burning the American flag?

Hence the twinge of disappointment in the statement issued by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's office, which admonished the North Korean leader for putting his faith in the U.S. and entering nuclear negotiations with Trump.

*The writer is an expert on Iranian affairs and former head of the Israel Broadcasting Authority's Persian language division. (Israel Hayom Jun 13)*

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#### Stop the Absurdity By MK Avi Dichter

There are two ways of finding employment with the Palestinian Authority. The first requires you file an application and take the necessary exams. Assuming the PA decides to hire you, though, the pay is not too good. The other way to find employment with the PA is to carry out a terror attack against Israelis. Ideally, you should kill at least one Israeli, get arrested, stand trial in Israel and be sentenced to prison. Then the moment you are sentenced, the PA will issue your employee card. Your salary is dependent on the length of your prison sentences, with longer sentences commanding higher pay.

All this goes on right under our noses. Under the 2018 budget, authorized by the government in Ramallah just two months ago, 1.2 billion shekels (\$340 million) will go to terrorists convicted by Israeli courts and their families.

The Knesset has decided to put an end to that, at least as far as concerns the tax revenues Israel transfers to the PA. Yesh Atid MK Elazar Stern and I have joined other lawmakers in initiating legislation that will require the government, and in particular, the finance and defense ministers, to deduct the funds Ramallah pays imprisoned terrorists and their relatives from tax revenues Israel transfers to the PA. We must not allow Israel to become a link in the chain of these payments to terrorists.

The fact is that messages are being sent from entities in Israel to entities in various countries who wish to cut off the money routes to the PA, warning them that the PA will collapse if the aid comes to an end. It was only a few days ago that I heard from a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Dutch parliament that Israeli officials had made it clear the Netherlands should not stop funding the PA. We must not resuscitate the PA with the funds that are spent on attacking us. When the PA signs off on salaries to terrorists, it dips the quill of its pen in the blood of our dead who were murdered at the hands of those very same terrorists. (Israel Hayom Jun 11)

*The writer is a Knesset member for the Likud party. He was previously head of the Shin Bet security agency, public security minister and homefront defense minister.*

#### Proof of Israel's Intelligence Reach By Yoav Limor

Calling a Hamas-built makeshift passage from Gaza to the Mediterranean Sea a "naval terror tunnel" is a stretch, considering that it was no more than a hundred feet into the sea and it was not too deep, either. And unlike the overland tunnels, this one did not reach Israeli territory.

This pipe, as it should aptly be called, was designed to give Hamas a path that would be undetected by Israel. The operational rationale behind this project was very simple: to create a land-to-sea path for Hamas commandos that would take them from beneath their training facility to the depth of the sea, and then to a target of their choice: Israel's gas-drilling facilities, Israeli Navy vessels or Israeli beaches.

That Israel discovered this pipe underscores its intelligence reach. The effort launched by the Israel Defense Forces after the 2014 Gaza war has borne fruit, first by detecting overland tunnels and now this. Although in the latest discovery, Israel didn't have to employ its latest technological innovations, the method was similar: pinpointed intelligence followed by airstrikes. This has proven to be an effective means of destroying tunnels.

But Israel must not bask in its success. As someone once said before, intelligence only tells you what you know, it doesn't tell you anything about what you don't know. One of the insights gleaned from this latest discovery is that Hamas is determined to find Israel's soft spots. As far as it is concerned, the maritime platform has great potential.

That is why Hamas is investing heavily in training naval commandos and developing a modus operandi that would challenge Israel. For this reason, the IDF has recently decided to use its overland anti-tunnel technology against maritime tunnels as well. This is aimed at protecting both Israeli beachgoers and the country's strategic maritime installations.

But tactical successes and surgical strikes can only go so far. The IDF has been a great contractor for calm on a tactical level but if we want to find

#### Who Shrank our Extended Jewish Family? By Jonathan S. Tobin

The latest survey of American Jewish and Israeli opinion on the American Jewish Committee has just been published, and the results are not surprising. The gap between the two populations is growing on some important issues. Americans and Israelis are divided by their opinions of U.S. President Donald Trump, as well as by issues relating to the Middle East peace process. But the most noteworthy finding is about family, not politics.

When asked whether they regarded each other as siblings, first cousins, extended family or "not part of my family," the two groups gave very different answers. Some 28 percent of Israelis saw American Jews as siblings, 10 percent answered first cousins, 40 percent saw them as extended family, while only 22 percent said they were not family at all. By contrast, only 12 percent of American Jews said Israelis were siblings, 15 percent said first cousins, 39 percent as extended family and 31 percent not part of the family.

That gap, which shows that American Jews feel less of a connection to Israelis, is far more significant than political differences over Trump and the peace process. The findings, which seem to build on statistics in the 2013 Portrait of Jewish Americans produced by the Pew Survey, show a declining sense of Jewish peoplehood among American Jews.

If so, then the question to be asked is who or what is causing the extended Jewish family to shrink.

To critics of the Israeli government, the alienation that many Americans feel about the Jewish state is directly linked to politics, both American and Israeli.

As the dual survey illustrates, Americans and Israelis see the world very differently.

Chief among those differences is their attitudes towards Trump. A whopping 77 percent of Israelis approve or approve strongly of the way

the president has handled U.S.-Israeli relations. Only 34 percent of American Jews agree. When it comes to his decision to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, which the United States finally recognized as Israel's capital, 48 percent of Americans were opposed while 47 percent supported it. By contrast, a stunning 85 percent of Israelis were in favor of the move with only 7 percent opposed.

Other major differences include the fact that a strong majority of Americans—59 percent—favor the creation of a demilitarized Palestinian state in the West Bank. Only 44 percent of Israelis concur. The same percentage of Americans, 59 percent, also believe that some or all West Bank settlements should be dismantled for peace with the Palestinians, while only 39 percent of Israelis favor such a policy.

Another key point of disagreement was the lack of religious pluralism in Israel. A whopping 80 percent of Americans favor giving non-Orthodox rabbis the right to perform marriages in Israel with 17 percent opposed. Among Israelis, a slight plurality agrees with 49 percent favoring giving them that right and 45 percent opposed. Those numbers are, rather obviously, a function of identification with religious denominations. Only 11 percent of American Jews identify as Orthodox or Haredi, while 21 percent do so in Israel. But while a majority of Israelis see themselves as either traditional/not religious or secular, a miniscule 1 percent identify with the non-Orthodox movements as opposed to 46 percent of Americans.

The twin surveys are interesting reading, but these numbers don't tell us more than we already know about the two communities. There are points of general agreement, such as a belief in both a thriving Israel and Diaspora. But Israeli Jews clearly lean to the right politically, while American Jews are overwhelming liberal in their points of view about a host of issues.

Yet if you were looking for an answer to explain that key divergence about seeing each other as part of the same family, it would be a mistake to get lost in the weeds as we delve through the numbers.

A lot of the discrepancies, especially on Trump and Jerusalem, can easily be explained by partisan affiliation rather than fundamental disagreements. A majority of American Jews are liberals and Democrats. They despise Trump and see everything he does in a negative light, even something like moving the embassy, which was once a consensus issue among American Jews. Their attitudes about the Israeli government are similarly influenced by partisanship.

But if American Jews are less inclined to care deeply about the ties that ought to unite these two branches of the Jewish people, it would be foolish to view policy or partisan differences as the main point of contention.

It's true that for some, anger about the "occupation" or resentment about pluralism might be driving some them away from Israel. But at the heart of the matter is a declining sense of Jewish peoplehood on the part of many American Jews, not their views of Trump or Netanyahu.

Novelist Michael Chabon's address to the graduating class of Reform rabbis at the Hebrew Union College-Institute of Religion, in which he blasted not merely Israeli policies but also the whole idea of promoting in-marriage, provoked controversy. But the real problem is that his views reflect the reality first explored by Pew that a growing number of American Jews agree with him about the value of preserving a distinct Jewish people. In an American culture that sees all parochial beliefs as suspect, if not racist, many Jews eye Israel with suspicion or no longer value the connection to a Jewish state. It's not so much that Israel is identified with the right or doing anything that outrages Americans as it is bound up with ideas about nationalism and identity that many Jews have come to revile.

It is this problem rather than mere differences over the peace process, pluralism or even Trump that those who wish to strengthen ties between Israelis and Americans must address. If American Jews truly wish to preserve our extended Jewish family, then they need to look to actions that reinforce their Jewish identity and understanding of the importance of Israel and Zionism, and not be distracted by a partisan divide that, while significant, doesn't get to the heart of the problem. (JNS Jun 12)

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## When Toys Become Weapons and Nobody Notices

By Vivian Bercovici

Now that the lie has been exposed about the "peaceful" protests in Gaza, these latter day Ghandis are reverting to plain old, out-in-the-open crime and terrorism.

Burning kites are the new silent sit-in; torched farm crops and nature reserves along with billows of toxic black smoke, the closed-fist consequence. This is not peaceful, civil disobedience – this is terrorism.

Hamas has clearly become too accustomed to being the darling of an international press corps that is, for the most part, besotted with their particular brand of theocratic terrorism. So taken has the press been, in fact, that they overlook the rather barbaric social and other practices and policies of Hamas.

Among the fundamental and ongoing issues – big issues that the global media ignores – is the known fact that Hamas diverts huge amounts of international aid that flows into Gaza and is intended for civilian use into its impressive terrorist infrastructure. Hamas doesn't deny it. UNRWA doesn't deny it. And most international donors are completely aware of the lies but choose to look the other way – for expedience and, likely, from an understandable degree of exasperation with this situation that just won't go away.

Legitimate international aid to Hamas and the Gaza Strip comes in the

form of goods, primarily, and cash. Things like cement, steel, air conditioning units and all manner of building materials are supplied on the understanding that they will be allocated to improve the desperate living circumstances of many Gazans. These so called "dual use" materials – things which have a legitimate civilian use but are often diverted to support the expansive terrorist infrastructure in the Strip – are an ongoing challenge.

During operation Protective Edge in the summer of 2014, most Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) rockets that hit or were intercepted on their way to Israel, were shot from the back of pickup trucks – gas guzzlers which relied on imports for their fuel supply. And so, there was some discussion at the time, never really serious, about limiting fuel supplies to the Gaza Strip.

During wartime, it seems a rational question: Why provide weapons and key supplies to the adversary? Pretty rudimentary stuff.

Now, there are the kites. Reportedly a gift from Japan for the children of Gaza, Hamas has cleverly adapted the toys for terror. Launched with Molotov cocktails and other flammables attached, many of these crude airborne weapons land in Israeli border communities and amidst farmers' fields, resulting in hundreds of thousands of shekels worth of damage to burned nature reserves and crops, and toxic smoke from the fires.

Kites. Toys. The next wave of "dual use" material. The foreign press, it seems, has lost much of its early interest in the whole mess and moved on. No Israelis have actually died from kite attacks, so it becomes irrelevant in their analysis.

And much of the West and the world has retreated into ostrich mode, burying its collective head in the sand and hoping it all just goes away.

As we all know, "it" will not disappear. The pressure cooker that is Gaza will explode and the people who will suffer most are those people living in the Strip.

This seemingly intractable crisis screams for some swift and decisive action. Media and UN bashing of Israel is not a solution.

Following the recent round of Hamas and PIJ rocket attacks on Israel, even the EU and some individual member states condemned Hamas. Perhaps they have yet to receive the memo on the burning kites. Surely, it is time to call Hamas and its benefactors – like Iran and Qatar – on the carpet and for the international community to rap their knuckles. Hard.

Hamas has no interest in peace, but the people of Gaza do need a decent standard of living. Clearly, their so-called "government" could care less about their well-being, making it incumbent upon others to intervene. Egypt should likely lead such an effort: it is in its interest to ensure a degree of calm in Gaza and they have the requisite standing in the Arab world to corral interests and finances, and help Hamas understand that the terror cannot continue.

Hamas will never abandon its commitment to the destruction of Israel, but it is clear that this marathon of violent protests and mass arson does not accrue to the benefit of either side. If Hamas is incapable of seeing and understanding the obvious, which may well be the case, then it is time for other well-meaning countries to intervene and give them remedial lessons in the responsibility of government.

Angela Merkel. Emmanuel Macron. Justin Trudeau. This is your moment.

Tell Hamas what you think of burning kites and environmental terrorism. Tell Hamas how you view their theft of international aid meant for civilian use and relief, and deploying it to enhance their robust terrorist infrastructure in the Strip. Oh. And while you're at it, don't forget to plant a flag for gender equality and LGBTQA rights.

The people of Israel and Gaza need solutions. A precondition to any pragmatic truce is the recognition by this troika of self-anointed liberal leaders of the West to be as bold in their criticisms of Hamas as they are of Israel, and hold Hamas and its benefactors to account. Engage Egypt and Israel in a constructive manner. There are no easy fixes in this region, but any assuaging of the heightened tensions must flow from a realistic, not wishful, assessment of the facts on the ground.

When kites become weapons of war and the world is silent then something is very, very wrong. (Jerusalem Post Jun 8)

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## This Year in Jerusalem? The Plight of the Last Ethiopian Jews

By A.Y. Katsop

On Tuesday, 100 activists, many of them Ethiopian, will turn out for a protest in front of the home of Interior Minister Arye Deri. Their cry ahead of a June 18 ministerial committee meeting that could bring the last 8,000 Jews of Ethiopia to Israel: "Bring them home."

This is the third in a series of protests of this kind. In the protests, the Ethiopians stand on the street with signs of their loved ones in their hands and white masks or face paint covering their dark skin. This is because many of them believe racism is the reason that the 2015 decision by the government to bring the last Jews of Ethiopia to Israel has not been implemented. They know that they have been separated from their families for a decade or more and that their loved ones are living in abject poverty.

As an informed citizen, I had heard many of the above arguments for years but did not know fact from fiction. As such, shortly after Passover, I decided that if bringing the Jews of Ethiopia to Israel is an important religious, spiritual and political issue, I should meet these Jews and see

firsthand how Jewish they are, and in how much poverty they are living.

I arrived in Ethiopia on a Monday morning at the end of April. I found a Jewish community like the one I had always imagined of the Jewish people 2,500 years ago: individuals following the pure Jewish faith straight out of the Bible, completely disconnected from technology and the world.

Families live in one-room mud huts, which serve as bedrooms, living rooms and kitchens for the whole family. There is no running water and there are no toilets. But in almost every house, there is a corner set up separately with Shabbat candles.

In every house, one nail per family member is tapped into the wall. And on those nails hang one garment for every person. Next to those hooks, hang picture frames, and inside them are photographs of their loved ones who have already immigrated to Israel.

"This is my daughter, this is my father, these are my grandchildren who serve as fighters in the Israel Defense Forces, but I was told I could not go with them. Why?" one older woman said to me.

The community is deeply committed to Judaism. I heard the children sing "Hatikva" and "Next Year in Jerusalem." On Shabbat, they danced the traditional Ethiopian shoulder dance to the melody of "Lecha Dodi."

Throughout the week, there were Torah classes and minyanim three times a day with Amharic translation.

One day, I climbed a mountain and saw a small crowded cemetery.

"Those are the graves of those who died in the past 20 years, who were waiting here to immigrate to the Land of Israel," one of the community members told me. "We had to open a cemetery for ourselves, because the Christians do not let us be buried in their cemetery. They call us derogatory names for Jews."

In the evening, I would sit among the youth in deep conversation. They spoke to me in Hebrew with a mastery of the language much better than my Hebrew was when I moved to Israel after completing high-tuition Hebrew schools in the United States.

I asked them why they could not immigrate to Israel, the place they pray toward every day from Ethiopia. They would lower their heads and say, "They don't like us in Israel. Maybe it is because we are black."

I would hug them tight.

"We are Jews, we were born Jews, we live as Jews, and we are going to die Jews," one young man said. Then he asked, "How can anyone who does not know us reject our Jewishness?"

Each time, I looked at them and said, "Next year in Jerusalem," with an attempt at confidence.

The people would reply, "No, this year in Jerusalem, God willing. This year in Jerusalem." (Jerusalem Post Jun 11)

*The writer is an IDF captain (res.) and the director of The Heart of Israel, a program of the Binyamin Fund.*

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## The "Trump Doctrine" for the Middle East By Guy Millière

After three successive American Presidents had used a six-month waiver to defer moving the US Embassy to Jerusalem for more than two decades, President Donald J. Trump decided not to wait any longer. On December 7, 2017, he declared that the United States recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel; the official embassy transfer took place on May 14th, the day of Israel's 70th anniversary.

From the moment of Trump's declaration, leaders of the Muslim world expressed anger and announced major trouble. An Islamic summit conference was convened in Istanbul a week later, and ended with statements about a "crime against Palestine". Western European leaders followed suit. Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel said that President Trump's decision was a "serious mistake" and could have huge "consequences". French President Emmanuel Macron, going further, declared that the decision could provoke a "war".

Despite these ominous predictions, trouble remained largely absent. The Istanbul statement remained a statement. The "war" anticipated by Macron did not break out.

The Islamic terrorist organization Hamas sent masses of rioters from Gaza to tear down Israel's border fence and cross over, to force Israeli soldiers to fire, thereby allowing Hamas to have bodies of "martyrs" to show to the cameras. So far, Hamas has sent 62 of its own people to their death. Fifty of them were, by Hamas's own admission, members of Hamas.

Palestinian terrorist groups fired rockets into southern Israel; Israeli jets retaliated with airstrikes. Hamas sent kites, attached to incendiary devices and explosives, over the border to Israel. So far, 200 of the fire-kites that Hamas sent have destroyed 6,200 acres of Israeli forests and farmland.

Pundits who predicted more violent reactions have been surprised by the relatively quiet reaction of the Palestinian and Muslim communities. The reason might be called the "Trump Doctrine for the Middle East".

One element of it consisted of crushing the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. President Trump had promised quickly to clear the world of what had become a main backbone of Islamic terrorism. He kept his promise in less than a year, and without a massive deployment of American troops. Trump has shown the strength of the United States and restored its credibility in a region where strength and force determine credibility.

Another element of it was put in place during President Trump's trip to Saudi Arabia in May 2017. President Trump renewed ties which had seriously deteriorated during the previous 8 years. Trump more broadly laid the foundation for a new alliance of the United States with the Sunni Arab

world, but he put two conditions on it: a cessation of all Sunni Arab support for Islamic terrorism and an openness to the prospect of a regional peace that included Israel.

Both conditions are being gradually fulfilled. In June 2017, Saudi Arabia's King Salman chose his son Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) as heir to the throne. MBS started an internal revolution to impose new directions on the kingdom. The Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition, created on December 15, 2015, was endorsed by the United States; it held its inaugural meeting on November 26, 2017. In addition, links between Israeli and Saudi security services were strengthened and coordination between the Israeli and Egyptian militaries intensified.

An alliance between Israel and the main countries of the Sunni Arab world to contain Iran also slowly and unofficially began taking shape. MBS, calling Hamas a terrorist organization, saying that it must "be destroyed". He told representatives of Jewish organizations in New York that Palestinian leaders need to "take the [American] proposals or shut up."

Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas was summoned to Riyadh twice -- in November and December 2017; and it appears he was "asked" to keep quiet. Never has the distance between Palestinian organizations, and Saudi Arabia and the Sunni Arab world, seemed so far. The only Sunni Arab country to have maintained ties with Hamas is Qatar, but the current Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, has been under pressure to change his stance.

Immediately after President Trump left Riyadh, a third element emerged. The US presidential plane went directly from Riyadh to in Israel: for the first time, a direct flight between Saudi Arabia and Israel took place. President Trump went to Jerusalem, where he became the first sitting US President to visit the Western Wall, the only historical remains of a retaining wall from the ancient Temple of King Solomon. During his campaign, Trump had referred to Jerusalem as "the eternal capital of the Jewish people", implicitly acknowledging that the Jews have had their roots there for 3,000 years.

After his visit to the Wall, President Trump went to Bethlehem and told Mahmoud Abbas what no American President had ever said: that Abbas is a liar and that he is personally responsible for the incitement to violence and terror. In the days that followed, the US Congress demanded that the Palestinian Authority renounce incentivizing terrorism by paying cash to imprisoned Palestinian terrorists and families of terrorists killed while carrying out attacks. President Trump's Middle East negotiators, Jared Kushner and Jason Greenblatt made it clear to Palestinian leaders that US aid to the Palestinian Authority could end if the US demand was not met. Nikki Haley told the United Nations that the US could stop funding UNWRA if Palestinian leaders refused to negotiate and accept what the US is asking for. Since it was founded in 1994, the Palestinian Authority has never been subjected to such intense American pressure.

The fourth element was President Trump's decision to leave the Iran nuclear deal. President Trump immediately announced he would restore "the harshest, strongest, most stringent sanctions" to suffocate the mullahs' regime. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has since presented to Iran a list of 12 "basic requirements" for a new agreement.

President Trump's decision came in a context where the Iran regime has just suffered a series of heavy blows: the Israeli Mossad's seizure in Tehran of highly confidential documents showing that Iran has not ceased to lie about its nuclear program; the revelation by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of the Mossad operation, and the Israeli army's decisive response to an Iranian rocket barrage launched from Syrian territory. By it, Israel showed its determination not to allow Russia to support Iran when Iran uses its bases to attack Israel.

Netanyahu was invited by Russian President Vladimir Putin to Moscow on May 9 to commemorate the Soviet victory over Germany in 1945; during that visit, Putin seems to have promised Netanyahu neutrality if Israel were attacked by Iranian forces in Syria. Putin, eager to preserve his Russian bases in Syria, clearly views Israel as a force for stability in the Middle East and Iran as a force for instability -- too big a risk for Russian support.

In recent months, the Iranian regime has become, along with Erdogan's Turkey, one of the main financial supporters of the "Palestinian cause" and Hamas's main backer. It seems that Iran asked Hamas to organize the marches and riots along the Gaza-Israel border. When the violence from Gaza became more intense, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was summoned to Cairo by Egypt's intelligence chief, who told him that if violence does not stop, the Israel military would carry out drastic actions, and Egypt would be silent. It could become difficult for Iran to incite Palestinian organizations to widespread violence in the near future.

It could become extremely difficult for Iran to continue financially to support the "Palestinian cause" in the coming months. It could soon become financially unbearable for Iran to maintain its presence in Syria and provide sophisticated weapons to Hezbollah. Turkish President Erdogan speaks loudly, but he seems to know what lines not to cross.

Protests in Iran have become less intense since January, but the discontent and frustrations of the population persist and could get worse.

The Trump administration undoubtedly realizes that the Iranian regime will not accept the requirements presented by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and that the harsh new sanctions might lead to new major uprisings in Iran, and the fall of the regime. Ambassador John Bolton, now

National Security Advisor, mentioned in January that the "strategic interest of the United States" is to see the regime overthrown.

Referring recently to the situation in the Middle East and the need to achieve peace, Pompeo spoke of the "Palestinians", not of the Palestinian Authority, as in Iran, possibly to emphasize the distinction between the people and their leadership, and that the leadership in both situations, may no longer be part of the solution. Hamas, for the US, is clearly not part of any solution.

No one knows exactly what the peace plan to be presented by the Trump administration will contain, but it seems certain that it will not include the "right of return" of so-called "Palestinian refugees" and will not propose East Jerusalem as the "capital of a Palestinian state". The plan will no doubt be rejected by both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas; it already has been, sight unseen.

Netanyahu rightly said that Palestinian leaders, whoever they may be, do not want peace with Israel, but "peace without Israel". What instead could take place would be peace without the Palestinian leaders. What could also take place would be peace without the Iran's mullahs.

It should be noted that on December 7, 2017, when Donald Trump announced the transfer of the United States Embassy to Jerusalem, the leaders of the Muslim world who protested were mostly Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Iran's Hassan Rouhani. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman did not send representatives to the Islamic summit conference in Istanbul. When the US embassy in Jerusalem opened its doors on May 14, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Gulf emirates were quiet.

On that day, Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron repeated what they had said on December 7, 2017: that the embassies of Germany and France in Israel would remain in Tel Aviv. Macron condemned the "heinous acts" committed by the Israeli military on the Gaza border but not aggression of Hamas in urging its people, and even paying them, to storm Gaza's border with Israel.

If current trends continue, Macron and Merkel could be among the last supporters of the "Palestinian cause." They sound as if they will do just about anything to save the corrupt Palestinian Authority.

They are also doing everything to save the moribund Iran "nuclear deal," and are deferential to the mullahs' regime. During a European summit held in Sofia, Bulgaria, on May 16, the Trump administration was harshly criticized by the European heads of state who argued that Europe will "find a way around" US sanctions and "resist" President Trump. European companies are already leaving Iran in droves, evidently convinced that they will be better off cutting their losses and keeping good relations with the United States.

On June 3-5, Benjamin Netanyahu went to Europe to try to persuade Merkel, Macron and British Prime Minister Theresa May to give up backing the Iran nuclear deal. He failed, predictably, but at least had the opportunity to explain the Iranian danger to Europeans and the need to act.

As Iran's nuclear ties to North Korea have intensified in the last two years -- Iran seems to have relied on North Korea to advance its own nuclear projects -- the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula that might have begun with the Donald Trump-Kim Jong-Un meeting in Singapore on June 12, clearly will not strengthen the Iranian position.

European leaders seem not to want to see that a page is turning in the Middle East. They seem not to want to see that, regardless of their mercenary immorality, of their behavior staying on the page of yesterday, is only preventing them from understanding the future. (Gatestone Jun 13)  
*The writer, a professor at the University of Paris, is the author of 27 books on France and Europe.*

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## The Lethal Moral Confusion of Saying Kaddish for Hamas

By Melanie Phillips

The Hamas onslaught against Israel at the Gaza border fence has illustrated a danger for the Jewish people even more fundamental than the declared attempt to invade Israel and slaughter Jews.

This is the fallout among the Jews themselves.

In London, a group of young Jews assembled outside parliament to recite the kaddish prayer for the Hamas terrorists who were killed while attacking the fence in the most violent riots on May 15.

In the US, Jonathan Greenblatt, head of the Anti-Defamation League, wrote: "It is a horrific tragedy that so many people have been killed and wounded at the Gaza border."

Such sentiments produced a visceral reaction. The Jewish mourners-for-Hamas were variously described as disgusting little trolls, repulsive, scumbags, traitors and Kapos.

This reaction in turn produced remonstrance from certain liberal Jews condemning such language and decrying the substitution of insult for civilized debate.

That point in itself is indeed important. Debate should always be reasoned and criticism should be free of gratuitous insults.

It was however, dispiriting that those condemning such insults voiced deep concern over the damage being done to the Jewish community -- not by the mourners-for-Hamas, but only by those who were insulting them.

It was shocking and distressing to witness the Jewish mourners-for-Hamas endorsing the lies being used against Israel and lending succor to the enemies of the Jewish people.

Bad enough that the media failed to report that Hamas had pushed Gazan civilians to the front line as cannon fodder and human shields, concealing its weaponry of IEDs (improvised explosive devices), Molotov cocktails, firearms and flaming kites.

Bad enough that the media failed to report that the vast majority of those dead Gazans weren't civilians but Hamas fighters.

But for Jews to regurgitate this cynical and malicious inversion of the facts and blame Israel for defending itself against murderous attack was beyond appalling.

And for some of them to proceed to say kaddish for the Hamas terrorists shot dead to protect Israelis from mass slaughter was felt by many Jews as an obscenity. By hijacking the kaddish in this way, it was more than an unconscionable attack on Israel: it was a desecration of Judaism itself.

Tragically, this moral perversity over Israel is not confined to a few rogue Jews. In Britain, and even more so in the US, an increasing number of young Jews are swallowing the lies and distortions about Israel promulgated by the Muslim world and the Western Left.

The reason for this lies much deeper than the Left's default position which regards Israel as a colonialist project and the "Palestinians" as its victims.

It lies deeper even than the Left's innate hatred of Jews, whom it identifies with money and power -- hatred which now openly struts across the Western stage, wearing the fig leaf of anti-Israelism.

At root lies the article of Leftist faith that to support or promote western culture at all is racist.

Israel itself naturally falls foul of that dogma just by its very existence as the national homeland of the Jewish people (who are viewed, ignorantly, as Western).

But the problem lies deeper still, in how Judaism itself is perceived.

Some 70% of American Jews vote Democrat and are thus on the political Left. Around the same percentage belong to similarly progressive Jewish religious denominations.

Leftism revolves around universalism. It believes Western cultures are in themselves exclusive and therefore discriminatory and racist. It venerates instead transnational institutions and doctrines such as the UN or international human rights law which it believes enshrine values it says are universal such as equality, justice and freedom.

But these are not universal at all. They are particular to Judaism (and later Christianity) because they were given to the world through the Hebrew Bible.

Leftism cannot allow the Jews to stand in the way of its universalizing mantras. Judaism is the quintessential particularizing creed. This of course gives Jews on the Left a big problem. So in order to square their leftwing views with Jewish identity, such Jews pretend through their progressive denominations that universal values are Jewish values.

Yet this isn't so at all. Jews believe everyone is entitled to equal respect as all are made in God's image. Left-wing ideology, however, says equality means having identical outcomes regardless of behavior or circumstances. This undermines the moral responsibility at the heart of Jewish ethics.

Judaism embodies freedom created by rules of behavior which promote justice and the defense of the weak against the strong. Instead, left-wing ideology projects freedom as a kind of social anarchy which enables the strong to destroy or enslave the weak.

Judaism enshrines justice based on holding people to account for their misdeeds. In leftwing ideology, however, justice means dividing the world into Western oppressors and the non-Western oppressed, evening out the score between them by giving the so-called oppressed a free pass while blaming the West for everything -- even when it is attacked by the "oppressed."

In other words, the universalizing agenda of the left is diametrically opposed to Judaism. And in convincing themselves these are Jewish values, left-wing Jews put themselves on the side of those who would attack and destroy Israel and the Jewish people.

Worse still, they actually believe that by doing so they embody true Jewish moral principles and are even expressing their love for Israel -- by saving it from itself.

Ze'ev Maghen wrote his magnificent (and hilarious) book, *Imagine: John Lennon and the Jews*, after he encountered a group of young Israelis dressed in saffron Hare Krishna robes at Los Angeles airport. They tried to convince him that promoting their own Jewish people -- or preferring any nation, culture or ethnic group over another -- was against world peace.

Maghen went away and wrote his book about how rejecting particular cultural, religious or ethnic attachments would produce not a Lennonist utopia but rather a tribal war of all against all. Of the Jewish people, he wrote: "We have perceived ourselves as an 'am, as a nation, as a commonly descended family and naturally-knitted tribal unit, for as far back as anyone can remember."

The problem is far too serious and profound for insults. We need to work out why we are so catastrophically failing to instill in so many of our young people knowledge of and love for what Judaism truly is -- and then, as a matter of the utmost urgency, to put that right. (Jerusalem Post Jun 8)