



Jerusalem 7:00
Toronto: 8:30

Commentary...

Spitting in the Face of Cooperation with Israel By Ruthie Blum

If further proof were needed to illustrate the futility of diplomatic overtures to the Palestinian Authority, Monday's attack on a pro-Israel Saudi in Jerusalem is a good example.

As part of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's regional strategy to forge ties with formerly hostile Muslim-Arab states, the Israeli Foreign Ministry invited a delegation of six media personalities from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt to see the Jewish state for themselves. Up close and personal.

As a precautionary measure for their safe return home, their identities were not disclosed.

The only exception was Mahmoud Saud, a law student and blogger from Saudi Arabia, who regularly tweets about his unabashed support for Israel in general and the Netanyahu government in particular. This is clearly why Saud not only agreed, but was proud, to be photographed with the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee chairman and Likud Knesset member Avi Dichter.

At a meeting with Dichter at the Knesset on Monday morning, one member of the delegation said, "This visit to Israel is like touring a dreamland. If only we would be able to bring hundreds of people from our countries, so that when they go back they can tell what they saw and felt."

Indeed.

Dichter explained to the group that Israel was moving ahead with its policy to strengthen relations with its neighbors "and not to wait until the Palestinian Authority decides to fight terrorism."

He also pointed out that the P.A. has been forking out more than 1 billion shekels (nearly \$285 million) annually in stipends to terrorists and their families.

Later in the day, the delegation visited the Temple Mount, the location of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, where Saud, a devout Muslim, intended to pray. On the way there, as he walked through the streets of the Old City of Jerusalem (and after he arrived), Saud was accosted verbally and physically by angry Palestinian passers-by.

Calling him a "traitor," an "animal," a "normalizer" and a "Zionist," these violent hecklers cackled at him to "go to synagogue." As if this weren't bad enough, they also spat in his face and threw sticks and chairs at him.

Thanks to a widely circulated video of the incident, one can observe Saud's incredible restraint. Rather than reacting to the slurs, spittle and objects hurled at him, Saud kept his keffiyeh-covered head held high, staring straight ahead, lifting his hands occasionally in self-defense.

Saud might not have been surprised by the aggressive welcome that was extended to him by his so-called "brethren." You know, those about whom the Arab world pays false lip service, pretending to care about their "plight" as a ploy to vent against Israel and the United States.

Ironically, the Temple Mount—the holiest site in Judaism and third holiest in Islam—is one of the issues that many Muslim leaders exploit to promote anti-Semitic propaganda. P.A. chief Mahmoud Abbas certainly uses it as a platform for incitement, claiming that Jews "have no right to defile it with their filthy feet."

Had Saud and the rest of the delegation been in the area a mere two days earlier, they would have encountered bright-red Arabic graffiti spray-painted on the Kotel HaKatan—a portion of the Western Wall on the Temple Mount—calling for the "slaughter of all Jews." Thanks to closed-circuit TV footage, the perpetrators, young women from eastern Jerusalem, were apprehended.

Sadly, however, the larger culprit—the hate-filled poison these girls imbibed with their mothers' milk—is not only still at large; it's purposely and perpetually fostered, as well as heavily funded.

Which brings us to a key factor in the pointlessness of peace deals with the Palestinian leadership. Unlike Israel, which has a burgeoning understanding with many of its Arab neighbors based on a shared interest to prevent the Iranian regime from acquiring nuclear weapons, the Palestinians

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

7"סב

have been kissing up to Tehran.

In a meeting in Tehran on Sunday with the head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, Hamas deputy chief Saleh al-Aroui reportedly said, "We are on the same path as the Islamic Republic—the path of battling the Zionist entity and the arrogant ones."

This followed a visit to Iraq late last month by Nabil Shaath, Abbas's adviser for international relations, during which he told local Shi'ite leaders that "Palestinians don't have a problem with Iran, as Iran has been supporting the Palestinian struggle. We seek to strengthen our relations with Tehran, and we don't consider it an enemy. The enemy is Israel." (JNS Jul 23)

Free Zion! Our New Defiant Slogan By Barry Shaw

I was reading an article in The Jerusalem Post about the newly discovered Pilgrimage Road, a pathway that Jewish pilgrims took to the ancient Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

The site was stumbled upon by accident. A rusty water pipe burst in Silwan, a place where after 1948, Arabs moved into the homes of Yemenite Jews forced to flee by marauding Arab rioters and the invading Jordanian army, while the nascent state of Israel perilously held onto territory by its fingertips from aggressive Arab armies launching a war of annihilation against the new Jewish state.

In the 1880s, Jews from Yemen began to make their way to Jerusalem on foot, a journey drawn by the magnet of the Jewish Temple. The pilgrimage trek took half a year. They arrived destitute, but elated, to make their new homes in Silwan within touching distance of all that was sacred by the Old City walls.

By 1910, these Jews had sufficient money to purchase a scratch of ground on the Mount of Olives to bury their dead. They lived in relative peace alongside their Muslim and Christian neighbors until the deadly Arab pogrom, initiated by the infamous Jew-hating Mufti, Haj Amin al-Husseini. Over a three-year period between 1936-1939, hundreds of Jews were killed and many more injured throughout pre-state Palestine.

Living under threat, the Yemenite community in Silwan were evacuated for safety concerns by the Jewish National Committee, and by 1945, no Jews remained in Silwan.

When the Jordanian Army conquered Jerusalem, they forced Jews out of the Old City, including the Silwan Jews, and destroyed synagogues and yeshivas. The Jordanians dug up the Jewish gravestones on the Mount of Olives and used them as paving stones in Jerusalem.

Arab families began to occupy evacuated Jewish homes, including those in Silwan. Properties and farming land were stolen from absentee Jews by Arabs without registering ownership. The area remained under Jordanian occupation until 1967, when Israel succeeded in liberating the territory during yet another war of Arab aggression forced on the Jewish state.

Today, it remains a contentious area as Jewish organizations fight to reestablish Jewish ownership and a Jewish presence in Silwan. Part of that effort includes extensive archaeological projects that constantly uncover startling evidence of a three-millennial Jewish sovereignty. These projects include the City of David, the residence of King David, the water channels that provided water to the Old City and the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, and the pools that were the cleansing stations for Jewish pilgrims before their ascent to the holy shrine.

The most recent discovery is the Pilgrimage Road, the walkway that led masses from the mikveh in Silwan – known as the Pool of Siloam – up to the Jewish Temple. It was along this road that ancient Jewish scholars strode to fulfill their religious obligations at the Temple. Jesus must have walked along this road.

The site was opened to great fanfare on June 30, 2019. It further reinforces Israel's justified sovereignty over Jerusalem. The archaeological site adds to the abundant evidence of Jewish presence over 2,000 years ago, well before the beginning of Islam in 633 BCE.

Documentary narration of Jewish history has been verified by artifacts found at the site, including catapult projectiles used against Jewish rebels by Romans destroying Judaism's most holy site and killing Jews in the process.

A significant discovery was made at the site in November 2016.

Readers are requested to please mail contributions to: BAYT - re: Israel News, 613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario. L4J 5V3
Annual Rates: Friend - \$36, Supporter - \$50, Benefactor - \$180. Dedications are welcome at \$120/week. Call (905) 886-3810 for further info.
See Israel News on the internet at www.bayt.ca and www.frumtoronto.com or email LWZ@Zeifmans.ca to request to be added to the weekly email.

Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the views of BAYT.

Coins, minted during this period by Jews about to battle mighty Roman invaders, were uncovered. The coins feature a menorah and bear the inscription, "Two years to the Great Revolt," a message that the struggle for Zion was not over. This was the clarion call of the Jewish rebels to defy and oppose the foreign rule of Rome. More such coins have been found recently in the archaeological excavations at this site with the slogan "For the Redemption of Zion" emblazoned on them. The coins have come to be called the "Free Zion" coins.

This is the spirit in which the Pilgrimage Road, and everything connected to the contemporary Jewish struggle of re-constituting Jewish sovereignty on this land and capital city, is based. It is the cry for the battle against contemporary delegitimizers of Jewish history and the state of Israel.

This is evidence of Jews dating back three millennia to today and evidence that we were the ones that created, not conquered or destroyed, ancient artifacts as the Jordanians and the Palestinian Arabs have done in Jerusalem. We cherished and preserved them, no matter what dynasty they are.

The Palestinians, despite their bluster, have no history of sovereignty and no ancient deeds of ownership. Their "history" is a myth; a fiction dredged up by dark malevolent minds to block the light of inspection onto genuine Jewish legitimacy and heritage.

Today, there is a call to "Free Palestine." They advance the argument that this Palestine must be "from the river to the sea." Yet they cannot find one ancient coin, one artefact, one proven fact to show that a sovereign Palestine ever existed, anywhere.

Against their history bluster there is only one crystal clear answer. Prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, going back in history as far as you can go, there was only one other legitimate sovereignty in the land of Israel, and that was Judea. Judea, where the word Jews derives. So today, we must raise the cry that is found on that tiny coin that speaks to us from two thousand years ago.

Free Zion!

I propose that a banner is raised. A banner carrying the image of that defiant Jewish coin and the words "Free Zion!"

This banner, badge, flag, emblem, icon, should be displayed by every Zionist, and every pro-Israel activist be they Jewish, Christian, Muslim, or secular supporters of truth. The truth of the legitimacy of Jewish self-determination and the right of Israel to exist in peace in our historic and legitimate land. (Jerusalem Post Jul 21)

The writer is the International Public Diplomacy Director at the Israel Institute for Strategic Studies. He is a writer, speaker and author of 'Fighting Hamas, BDS and Anti-Semitism,' 'BDS for IDIOTS,' and '1917, From Palestine to the Land of Israel.'

Netanyahu's Accomplishments Will Stand for Decades

By Alex Traiman

Currently at the head of a caretaker government between two elections in the same year, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has become the longest-serving prime minister in Israeli history, breaking the record set by founding father and first prime minister David Ben-Gurion.

Netanyahu has never been friendly to the media, and in return, the media has never taken to the man they often call by his less-than-flattering childhood nickname of "Bibi."

So many of the articles about Netanyahu's 13-plus years tenure (10 of them consecutive) in one of the world's most difficult jobs focus on the coalition impasse he encountered after winning an impressive fifth democratic election, on the upcoming hearings that will determine whether or not he will be formally indicted in three separate breach of trust cases, or on the global issue of political polarization, to which Israel has not been immune.

Yet the challenges Netanyahu currently faces, as well as the numerous socio-economic and religious challenges faced by the country as a whole, say little about Netanyahu's terms in office.

Israel is stronger today than at any point in its history. The once-floundering Jewish state is exponentially better-equipped to face nearly any challenge than it was when Netanyahu took office for his second stint as premier in 2009.

First, Israel is wealthier. While critics suggest that Netanyahu is popular because he has led during a period of economic prosperity, a cursory examination shows that Israel's constant economic growth trajectory is due to Netanyahu's policies.

As CEO of the startup nation, Netanyahu has opened up export channels across the world for Israel's high-tech innovators, and has encouraged the world's technology giants to invest hundreds of billions in R&D centers in what has quickly become the world's largest technological sector outside of Silicon Valley.

The significant GDP growth that has resulted has made both Israelis and the country richer—and Netanyahu has invested tax revenues wisely,

turning the Israel Defense Forces into one of the world's largest, most battle-ready militaries with state-of-the-art weaponry and defense systems.

Netanyahu has also invested heavily in infrastructure. He has signed commercial deals, which he was heavily criticized for, to explore and exploit natural gas off the coast that turned Israel from a resource-poor enclave into an energy exporter. His governments have developed seaports, airports and trains, and have turned dangerous and insufficient two-lane roads into smooth four-, six- and eight-lane highways.

While infrastructure across America and Europe crumbles, the infrastructure projects built on Netanyahu's watch will support Israel for decades after he has left office.

Yet his masterstroke has been the once unthinkable diplomatic gains he has secured at the international level.

Early into his first term, President Barack Obama called for "daylight" between the United States and Israel and pledged to isolate Israel diplomatically. Those calls continue to echo in the Democratic Party. Netanyahu wisely recognized that Israel could no longer rely on the U.S.-Israel alliance as the sole guarantor of Israel's security.

He embarked on a worldwide campaign to strengthen near non-existent relationships with world powers including China, India, Japan and Russia. In China, India and Japan, Netanyahu has brought Israel closer to a third of the world's population. The relationship with Russia has proven essential in managing the Iranian threat in Syria.

Yet the relationships have not stopped with world powers. As a result of Netanyahu's diplomacy, Israel has made significant gains in once-anti-Semitic countries in Eastern Europe. Israel has successfully engaged nations in South America, Africa and South Asia.

But perhaps most noteworthy have been the gains made across the Arab world. Israel has strengthened its formal relationships with Egypt and Jordan, helping those nations fend off severe security threats, most notably from Islamic State. Other Arab nations, including Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, look to Israel as an island of stability in a chaotic region and a protector against Iranian ambitions across the Middle East.

The stability and growth that Israel has maintained during the past 10 years is particularly impressive, as the "Arab Spring" and developments both before and after have collapsed the governments of Egypt, Libya and Syria. Iraq remains mired in chaos following the deposing of Saddam Hussein, while Jordan and the Palestinian Authority hang on to their rule in no small part due to Israeli assistance.

And when Obama finally left office after a contentious eight-year relationship with Israel, leaving a record of incompetent leadership in the Middle East, Netanyahu worked to ensure that Obama's Republican successor would undo much of Obama's Mideast policy, while extracting significant gains for Israel, including the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, the move of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem and recognition of Israeli sovereignty in the Golan Heights.

Critics of the prime minister note his numerous successes yet fault him for remaining in power too long. Many of those same critics have been opposing him from the moment that he stepped into office.

They are both in awe of and simultaneously disgusted by his uncanny ability to maintain political power.

Yet it is precisely his political acumen that has been necessary for the stability and growth of a state that constantly faces complex security threats and diplomatic double standards. And it is that stability and growth that keep Netanyahu winning at the polls, even as critics bash him and the judicial system attempts to force him out of office.

Netanyahu, now seeking to renew his mandate just six months after voters chose him to lead the country yet again, may very well win September's elections and govern on until the nation is ready for a new leader.

And when the nation finally does select a new prime minister—in September or years from now—Netanyahu's accomplishments will put him down in the history books as not only one of Israel's longest-serving prime ministers, but also as one of the greatest. (JNS Jul 22)

Losing a Child to the BDS Movement By Stacy Gittleman

A lot has been written about how the BDS movement is gaining traction as a mainstream and acceptable cause on American college campuses. In fact, the news is endless.

Here's a recent example: a professor at San Francisco State University is under scrutiny for using the department's official Facebook page to promote BDS, a movement that seeks the destruction of the world's only Jewish state.

But what needs to be examined in all this coverage is just how these organizations influence our brightest students, and encourage the unwitting and well-meaning to join their cause.

A little over a year ago, my family took in a homeless high school senior in the months before he departed for college. He was good friends

with my son, and a good kid who kept his head up and stayed out of trouble — in spite of suffering multiple childhood traumas.

In his short life, he endured his parents' divorce, his mother's death, alleged abuse and neglect at the hands of his father, and finally, being abandoned by his father when he came out as gay at age 17. He is a resilient young man with a cheery, friendly, positive attitude. In high school, he maintained a stellar grade point average, and was a student leader in extracurricular activities.

He had a close circle of friends, many of them Jewish. Though raised in a Christian family, he took much interest in Jewish traditions and culture. He didn't mind moving into our kosher home, and even looked forward to Shabbat dinner, where we placed our hands on his head just as we do our own children to offer the weekly blessing.

We supported him — advocating for him and his needs before his high school counselor, and helping him make his decision between three prestigious colleges where he had received full scholarships. Whatever expenses he had outside of that scholarship, the wider Jewish village stepped in with gift cards to outfit him and his dorm room. A boy raised thousands of dollars for him with a can collection as part of becoming a bar mitzvah. In this nurturing environment, for the first time in many years, the young man we took in said that he felt happy and at home. We were blessed to have him in our life.

In the months that he lived with us, the topic of Israel did come up. He knew we were ardent Zionists. He shared with us his misconceptions about the situation between Israel and the Palestinians, and we tried to best inform him with books from our family library, including Start-Up Nation and The Case for Israel. A former religious school teacher, I prepared him for what he would experience on campus — just as I had prepared all of my college-bound students. I imparted to him that Israel is far from perfect. Yes, the separation barriers are ugly and unfortunate, but I explained that they were necessary to prevent terror attacks, and have saved lives on both sides since their construction.

He left for college telling me that he could not understand how progressive movements on campus could take an anti-Israel stance — it being the only country in the Middle East that valued freedom and equality for a person, regardless of their race, religion, gender, or sexual identity.

Ten weeks into his first semester at the University of Michigan (UM), his views completely pivoted.

Last fall, UM experienced some of the most blatant anti-Israel activity in the country. Two faculty members refused to write letters of recommendation for students because they wished to study in Israel. A guest lecturer at the art school compared Benjamin Netanyahu to Adolf Hitler. And, just days after the Tree of Life Synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh, several campus departments co-sponsored a one-sided "teach-in" about BDS.

Simultaneously, our young friend began to distance himself from our family. His Facebook feed began to fill with public posts demonizing Israel and praising the actions of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP).

When we finally had some heated exchanges over the phone and via text messages, his tone became hostile. His beef with Israel extended way beyond the building of settlements.

He accused me of "blindly supporting an imperialist Zio-ethno state" with one of the world's worst human rights records.

He accused me of supporting a country with an apartheid government responsible for ethnic cleansing and the genocide of hundreds of Palestinian children and grandmothers every single day.

After further discussion, I learned that the definition of occupation being taught to him on campus was not limited to the West Bank or eastern Jerusalem. No. With the brand of criticizing Israel he had now ascribed to, Haifa and Tel Aviv were just as "illegal" as settlements such as Tekoa or Ariel. Additionally, for there to be peace, one secular country had to be created to also allow five million descendants of Palestinian refugees back to their homes.

After further discussion, he asked me how I — a person so concerned about human rights — could possibly hold up Zionism as an ideal. Didn't I know that Zionism was an ideology that is hinged upon oppressing black and brown people? And, if I was a Zionist, my views must align perfectly with that of the notorious neo-Nazi and white supremacist Richard Spencer.

He paralleled the situation of the Palestinians to Native Americans who had their land stolen. Whatever facts I brought to the discussion — including that SJP was recognized by the ADL as a hate group and that neo-Nazis espouse the same views towards boycotting Israel — he dismissed them as right-wing or corporate-sponsored propaganda.

When I asked him to consider how Jews for centuries were mistreated by Muslims in the Arab world, including the expulsion of nearly one million Jews from Arab lands after the creation of the modern State of Israel, he brushed those examples away by calling me Islamophobic.

All the while, he swore up and down that this had nothing to do with Judaism or Jews. How could he be anti-Semitic? After all, some of his best friends are Jews.

More disturbing was that he could not give me a definitive yes or no when I asked him if Hamas was a terror organization. But most disturbing to me is that this young man has aspirations to become a high school history teacher.

Ultimately, in a heart-wrenching decision, my husband and I told him that if he held these views, if he supported and was active in organizations like SJP, we would need to end our relationship. If he did not believe in the existence of a Jewish homeland, he could not live in our home. This was not a case of political differences. This, to us, was existential.

So, what's it like to lose a kid to BDS, even if he is not your biological child? It hurts. It hurts when you commit to caring for a young adult who so badly needs long-term love and guidance, only to be betrayed in this way.

This is just one example of how the BDS movement sucks in marginalized students who long for a connection to something. There have got to be others.

The BDS movement and those who support it will not destroy Israel. BDS does, however, destroy vital interpersonal relationships. BDS has destroyed something that in time this young man will greatly need — a family bond. (Algemeiner Jul 22)

Who Bombed the Iranian Missile Batteries in Iraq?

By Yoni Ben Menachem

Iraq is back in the headlines. Two weeks after the Iraqi Ambassador to the U.S. Fareed Yaseen made waves by saying that "there are objective reasons that may call for the establishment of relations between Iraq and Israel," some in the Arab world now point to Israel as being behind last week's attack on Iraq's Al-Shuhada military base.

On Friday, the Iraqi army announced that a military base near the town of Amerli in eastern Salahuddin, north of Baghdad, had been bombed by a drone. According to Al Arabiya, at least one person was killed and two wounded in the attack.

The base used by pro-Iranian militias of the Hashd al-Shaabi (Iraqi Popular Mobilization Force), which includes a Shi'ite Turkmen Brigade. The unit recently received Iranian ballistic missiles, hidden inside food-delivery trucks.

According to Arab media reports, Hezbollah fighters and members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) were among the casualties.

Although Arab commentators took the view that it was an American or Israeli drone attack, the Pentagon denied U.S. involvement and Jerusalem kept mum.

Nevertheless, Iraqi airspace is in the U.S. CENTCOM area of control. While initial reports said the strike was carried out by a drone, a Popular Mobilization Force official, Ali al-Husseini, told London-based Arabic daily "Asharq al-Awsat," "We must await the results of the probe to find out what type of aircraft carried out the strike. The strength of the rocket indicates that it was probably not fired by a drone."

According to Western and Israeli intelligence organizations, in recent months Iran has provided the Iraqi Shi'ite militias with dozens of guided ballistic missiles. Tehran's aim is reportedly to build an alternative "missile base" in Iraq following Israel's repeated successful strikes against Iranian targets in Syria. In charge of the missile relocation project is Gen. Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC's Al-Quds Force.

The missiles are reported to be of the Zelzal, Fateh-110 and Zolfaghar types. On August 31, 2018, Reuters reported that the Zolfaghar missiles have a range of up to 700 kilometers, enabling them to reach Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, or Tel Aviv if launched from Iraq. The Fateh-110 missiles have 250-300 km range.

This is not the first time a strike on Iraqi militias loyal to Iran has been attributed to Israel. In June 2018, drones struck an Iraqi militia near the town of Khari southeast of Al-Bukhmal on the Syria-Iraq border, killing 20 to 40 militiamen. The official Syrian news agency blamed the American coalition for the attack, but a senior U.S. official ascribed it to Israel.

The Iraqi base hit last week is relatively close to the border, and Iran may have been planning to move the missiles into Syria.

The Iraqi government has trouble standing up to Iran, which means its territory is prone to U.S. and Israeli attacks. Experience proves that Israel has excellent intelligence information on IRGC activity in Syria and Iraq that it can quickly translate into offensive operational activity.

If Israel is indeed behind last week's attack in Iraq, it is good that it is staying silent. Israel cannot afford to stop hitting Iranian targets intended to open new fronts against it, whether in the Syrian Golan Heights or in Iraq, however, the current period is very sensitive in light of U.S.-Iran tensions. One can only hope that the upcoming Israeli elections will not inspire boastfulness in senior officials.

While there is no proof that this was an Israeli attack, its message was quite clear: There are actors in the region with very effective military capabilities that will not accept the stationing of Iranian ballistic missiles

in Iraq that endanger Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Iran has a major problem: It has been penetrated by foreign intelligence agencies and has a hard time concealing the IRGC's activities in Syria and Iraq. Israel enjoys intelligence and aerial superiority over Iran in Syrian airspace and in the vicinity of Syria's border with Iraq. Iran, however, is persisting in its efforts to open new fronts against Israel.

Even amid Iran's economic and diplomatic plight, its leadership retains its burning ideological hatred towards Israel; for them, the desire to destroy it outweighs any other consideration. For the time being, this is not going to change, and for Israel, the northern and northeastern fronts will remain an ongoing concern. (JNS / BESA Jul 23)

What the Smuggled Archive Tells Us About Iran's Nuclear Weapons Project By Raphael Ofek

On July 7, 2019, Iran announced that in light of Western countries' reluctance to support it against newly imposed US sanctions, it will enrich uranium above the maximum 3.67 percent level agreed upon in the 2015 nuclear agreement (the JCPOA).

According to Ayatollah Khamenei's aide Ali Akbar Velayati, Iran will enrich uranium to five percent from now on, which is the level of enrichment of nuclear fuel at the Bushehr nuclear power plant. Iranian officials have since signaled that their country might in fact increase uranium enrichment to 20 percent (the level in the fuel of Tehran's research reactor).

This would represent Iran's second violation of the JCPOA. On July 1, it crossed the maximum amount of 300 kg UF₆ (uranium hexafluoride), which, according to the agreement, is allowed to be enriched to 3.67 percent.

Furthermore, on July 11 — 10 months after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu identified the "secret atomic warehouse" at Turqezabad in Tehran — it was reported that soil samples taken from the site by IAEA inspectors were found to contain traces of radioactive material. This proves that the warehouse was indeed a nuclear storage facility, and that Iran's failure to report it to the IAEA was a violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to which it is a signatory.

Despite all this, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini announced at the meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels on July 15 that Iran's recent breaches of the JCPOA are insignificant and can be reversed. The EU ministers, scrambling to salvage the nuclear deal, stressed that it is the only option available by which to curb Iran's nuclear program.

Although Tehran can theoretically break out to produce nuclear weapons within six months or so, it is more inclined to take slow, measured steps to withdraw from the agreement. It threatens Western Europe with its intentions while being careful not to categorically break the rules in the hope that Europe will circumvent Trump's sanctions. This form of brinkmanship is reminiscent of Iran's conduct in 2003 after its military nuclear program was exposed: it cooperated with the IAEA with regard to nuclear facilities that could be presented for civilian purposes, such as the uranium enrichment facilities and the Arak heavy water reactor, while at the same time concealing activities of a nuclear-military nature.

The Iranian nuclear archive that Israel seized at the beginning of 2018 proves that, by 2003, Iran had a well-planned and advanced program of developing nuclear weapons capable of launch via ballistic missile. The bottleneck since then has been to accumulate enough fissile material, high-enriched uranium or plutonium, for nuclear weapons.

The nuclear archive contains a wealth of new information about Iran's accelerated efforts to develop nuclear weapons. Investigation of the information suggests that Iran's nuclear capability had progressed far beyond what the Western intelligence services and the IAEA had estimated so far. This effort was carried out within the framework of the 110 Project of the Amad program. The program began in 1989 with the aim of producing five nuclear bombs at 10 kilotons each that can be installed on ballistic missiles.

In the second half of 2002, Iran violated its commitment to the NPT. This was revealed via the exposure of the uranium enrichment plant that Iran established in Natanz and its plan to build a heavy water reactor for plutonium production near Arak, which Iran had refrained from reporting to the IAEA.

The extensive documentation in the archive indicates that notwithstanding the IAEA's demand for full disclosure of the Iranian nuclear program, senior Iranian defense officials and senior Iranian nuclear scientists were discussing how to proceed with the nuclear weapons program in mid-2003. The most prominent scientists were Mohsen Fakhrizadeh and Dr. Fereydoon Abbasi, former president of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran. They concluded that a complete separation should be made between 1) nuclear R&D activities that could be presented overtly as purely civilian in nature; and 2) nuclear R&D activities that should be camouflaged and kept covert; e.g. neutron physics studies. The activities classified as secret were to be linked to legitimate research at

Iran's universities and technological research institutes.

Thus, in late 2003, the Tehran authorities decided to convert Amad into a smaller, more secretive nuclear weapons program. In 2011, after taking steps to disguise the plan, Tehran assigned it the wonderfully euphemistic name "Organization for Defensive Innovation and Research" (the Persian acronym of which is SPND).

The nuclear archive operation was first exposed by Netanyahu on April 30, 2018. From October 2018 through May 2019, two institutes in Washington, the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) and the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD), presented a series of highly detailed reports on the archival documents, which contained information about secret facilities that had not yet been exposed. (According to the institutes, some of the information in the archive is unpublishable due to rules regarding non-proliferation of nuclear weapons technologies.)

As early as 2004, the IAEA suspected that key elements of the nuclear program were being conducted at the Parchin military site, about 30 km north of Tehran. In May 2012, satellite images detected suspicious activity there: the Iranians destroyed some of the structures previously blocked by IAEA inspectors, and the area around them was completely razed.

Information in the nuclear archive allows us for the first time to correlate the images in the archives of the two main buildings on the site, Taleghan-1 and Taleghan-2, and satellite photographs of the buildings from 2004.

In the Taleghan-1 structure, a huge cylindrical steel cell was installed for explosive detonation experiments that began in February 2003. The purpose of the experiments was to develop a neutron trigger for a nuclear explosive device. (When the nuclear device is imploding, the trigger emits a neutron flux to increase the chain reaction of the uranium core and strengthen the yield of the nuclear explosion.) The archive proves that the Taleghan-1 was designed for neutron trigger development experiments, as it contains images from inside the building of two types of neutron detectors.

A smaller cylindrical steel tank was installed in the Taleghan-2 structure to conduct "cold tests" of the compression of a non-fissile uranium core with explosives for imaging a nuclear-grade uranium-core compression. In addition, the Taleghan-2 contained a huge flash x-ray camera designed to capture the core compression process due to the implosion. Such a camera is designed to shoot with extremely fast and extremely short pulses of 20 to 35 nanoseconds.

In addition, the archive documents uncovered a previously unsuspected subterranean nuclear facility in Parchin known as the Shahid Boroujerdi project. The facility was used to convert the UF₆ compound into metallic uranium, then melt, cast, and machine it into hollow hemispheres designed to train future production of cores.

Another important facility that was unknown until the Iranian archive revelation was Sanjarian, adjacent to Tehran. Initial information on the facility, which has not yet been verified, was reported in 2009 by the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), an organization opposed to the Tehran regime based in Paris. The purpose of the Sanjarian facility was to produce the explosive system that surrounds the uranium core of a nuclear weapon, the function of which is to compress the core through the explosion in order to bring it to super-criticality. This process is called implosion. The explosive system is called MPI (Multi-Point Initiation system) or "Shock Wave Generator." The main explosive in the MPI envelope is Octol, a mixture of HMX and TNT. The channels inside the shell contain special exploding bridgewire (EBW) detonators that are suitable for simultaneous ignition and are ignited only when high voltage is applied.

Another critical activity in Sangjarian was the production of PETN (pentaerythritol tetranitrate), a high-risk, high-impact explosive designed to be installed inside MPI channels. By around 2002, Iran had completed about two-thirds of the tasks required for the MPI project. According to the assessment reflected in the archival documents, the third part was probably completed by the end of 2003.

Other important activities within the framework of the nuclear weapons program included the Midan Project — which involved locating and setting up a nuclear test field, apparently in a desert area in northern Iran southeast of Semnan — and Project 111, which involved integrating a nuclear bomb as the warhead of the Shahab-3 ballistic missile.

The archive revelation exposed Iran's repeated declarations that its nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes as a bald-faced lie, and highlighted the many shortcomings of the nuclear deal. It can be assumed that a surrender by Iran to Trump's demand to reopen the nuclear agreement, which would mean a complete renunciation of its nuclear weapons development, is inconceivable to the Tehran regime. (Algemeiner/BESA Jul 23)
