



Jerusalem 6:56
Toronto 8:23

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*

**Which One-State
Solution are we
Talking About and
Why?** By Steve Frank

Words matter. But like so much of the discourse surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, what one word means to progressive

American Jews often means something entirely different to Palestinians. This can lead to confusion, at best, and bloodshed, at worst.

For example, as previously posted here, most progressive American-Jewish commentators and Palestinians call for an end to the Israeli "occupation."

But by "occupation," most progressive Jews mean Israel's control of Judea and Samaria ("the West Bank"). For most Palestinians, on the other hand, ending the "occupation" means the "liberating" of "historic" Palestine "from the river to the sea" (the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea), in other words, all of present-day Israel. The difference in interpretation of the word "occupation" is of existential significance.

A similar conflict has recently arisen regarding the meaning of the term "one-state solution."

In a shocking op-ed in The New York Times, titled "I No Longer Believe in a Jewish State," Peter Beinart, political commentator and prodigal son of Zionism, suddenly abandoned his long-standing support for a "two-state solution" to the conflict (independent Jewish and Palestinian states). Instead, he called for the replacement of the State of Israel with a bi-national state populated by both Jews and Palestinians living equally, he imagines, in harmony under a benevolent democratic regime.

In a longer article in Jewish Currents—from which the Times op-ed was condensed—Beinart waxes poetic in his portrait of the kumbaya state of Israel-Palestine. He imagines a country where on Holocaust Remembrance Day, Jewish and Palestinian co-presidents lower a flag at Yad Vashem as an imam delivers the Islamic prayer for the dead, while a similar memorial ceremony is held at the site of the future Museum of the "nakba" with a rabbi reciting the Jewish prayer for the dead.

It all sounds so promising.

However, critics, including this author, previously have demonstrated that Beinart's vision of a peaceful bi-national state is delusional, given the more than a century of Arab efforts to annihilate the Jewish State through relentless wars, horrific terrorism and single-minded ethnic cleansing.

This article will focus on the manner in which Beinart's version of a bi-national state differs dramatically from the Palestinian version, just as is the case with the meaning of the term "occupation" discussed above.

In his call for a bi-national state, Beinart references Yousef Munayyer, a Palestinian-American writer based in Washington, D.C. Munayyer has been advocating for a one-state solution long before Beinart awoke to the idea.

In his seminal article—"There Will Be a One-State Solution, But What Kind of State Will It Be?"—Munayyer sets forth his vision for a single state that departs significantly from Beinart's view. Rather than being grounded in "equality," as is Beinart's, Munayyer's state is founded on retribution or what he calls "restorative justice."

He insists on a constitution that would "recognize the wrongs done to Palestinian refugees and begin a process to repatriate and compensate them."

Munayyer emphasizes that "the new state would need a truth-and-reconciliation process focused on restorative justice" and that "for inspiration, it could look to past efforts in South Africa and Rwanda."

Taking the "truth-and-reconciliation process" from South Africa as a model, as Munayyer does, gives serious cause for concern. That process included a "restorative justice" court where victims of human-rights abuses sought reparations, and the alleged perpetrators of abuses could seek amnesty from civil and criminal prosecution.

The results of South Africa's truth-and-reconciliation process are mixed. However, the mere analogizing of Israel's vibrant democracy with the horrific institutional system of apartheid (a common ploy of anti-Zionists) is far-fetched and odious. The prospect of Israeli political leaders, academics and military officers, not to mention ordinary citizens, standing before a South Africa-style truth-and-

Commentary...

More than Meets the Eye By Yoav Limor

Hezbollah's attempt to carry out a terrorist attack on the Israel-Lebanon border on Monday may have been foiled, but the strategic battle Israel is waging against the radical Shi'ite axis forming to its north is far from over, and may even pose new challenges in the next few days.

This is especially true when you consider the conflicting reports on the incident.

The Israel Defense Forces reported that troops in the Har Dov region near the border thwarted an attack by a Hezbollah cell that had crossed the Blue Line—the international demarcation that exists in the area in lieu of a border—but were warded off and fled back to Lebanon before they even opened fire.

Moreover, the military said that the cell did not even try to engage the Israeli troops, which is out of character for Hezbollah operatives.

Even more out of character was the fact that Hezbollah, Iran's chief proxy in the Middle East, denied the incident ever happened.

This could, however, speak to the fact that Hezbollah is still looking to retaliate over the death of one of its operatives in an alleged Israeli strike in Syria last week.

If that is the case—and all signs point to that—it would explain a rather cryptic statement by IDF Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Hidai Zilberman, who told reporters Monday that "volatile days lie ahead" for the northern sector.

From a tactical standpoint, the IDF could report an operational success. Troops on the ground were on alert and ready, engaged the enemy immediately, and the protocols cordoning off the sector to civilians were executed smoothly.

Given the IDF's moves, as well as the fact that Defense Minister Benny Gantz and IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi were present at the Northern Command as the event unfolded, it seems that Israel predicted Hezbollah's moves to a T.

Hezbollah, it seems, carried out this failed attack as an ad-hoc mission. Breaking it down, it makes no sense for Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah to send a sizable cell, in broad daylight, to an area practically crawling with Israeli troops.

In the past, Hezbollah would spend weeks on reconnaissance before attempting a cross-border attack. Monday's attempt came across as improvised.

It is possible that the Shi'ite terrorist group felt pressured to mount a reprisal, or perhaps it just wanted the issue of retaliation over and done with before Muslims worldwide mark Eid al-Adha, which this year falls on Thursday. Or perhaps this was a PR stunt, as the very fact it took action allows it to keep fostering the narrative of "defender of Lebanon."

However, the fact it chose to deny the failed attack even took place means it still has a score to settle with Israel, meaning the IDF will remain on high alert in the northern sector until further notice.

Many pundits argue that Israel cannot afford to miss an opportunity to deal Hezbollah a strategic blow, but the IDF was right to contain the incident and avoid escalation.

Israel has no reason to get dragged into a war over a tactical incident on the border. The main battle it is currently waging does not focus on preventing border infiltrations, rather on preventing Iran from entrenching itself militarily in Syria and from providing Hezbollah with advanced weapons and the means to produce precision missiles.

As it doesn't look like Iran plans to change its regional hegemony scheme, Israel is likely to keep insisting on its red lines.

Any border incident could potentially escalate into something much bigger, but if Israel launches a wide-scale military campaign, it must do so only for the right reasons.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz appear to be completely in sync on the issue. They would be wise to carry that through to other areas as well, especially against the backdrop of a potential security escalation. (JNS July 28)

reconciliation court in an effort to “restore justice” does not bode well for the proposed one-state formula.

Of course, at the end of the day, Beinart’s solution to the conflict is nothing more than a progressive Upper West Side Jew’s pipe dream, and would normally warrant little attention. However, his screed has crossed an otherwise impregnable red line that threatens to spread if left un-quarantined.

Prior to Beinart’s conversion, even to question the legitimacy of the Jewish State was considered beyond the pale. Everyone, including Beinart, respected that red line (“questioning Israel’s existence as a Jewish State is ... akin to spitting in the face of people I love”). But Beinart now concedes that he has crossed that red line.

The current question is whether Jewish leaders and organizations will normalize Beinart’s heresy by giving him a platform to spread his message of destruction. Will the matter of Israel’s very survival become part of the normal conversation in civilized discourse?

Shortly after Beinart’s op-ed was published in *The Times*, he appeared in conversation with a leading rabbi on the Jewish Broadcasting Service. The moderator expressly refused “to vilify” Beinart, treating him quite deferentially and inviting him back to discuss his position further.

In sharp contrast, the noted historian Daniel Gordis—who had previously debated Beinart on numerous occasions, and even shared a podcast with him—declared Beinart to be a “traitor to the Jewish people” and a “pariah.”

Gordis stated emphatically, after the *Times* piece appeared, that he would refuse to appear on the same stage with Beinart from now on.

Beinart, of course, is free to say whatever he wants to whomever will listen to him. The rest of us, however, are equally free to refuse to normalize a conversation about terminating the only Jewish state in the world. (JNS July 28)

Sovereignty and Enforcement By Yechiel Shabiy

In recent weeks, a struggle has taken place between supporters and opponents of the extension of Israeli sovereignty over portions of Judea and Samaria. Some believe the measure will spark an Arab uprising, an international pressure campaign against Israel, and boycotts. Others claim that applying sovereignty to about 30 percent of Judea and Samaria is not only essential but does not go far enough.

However, if we look at the current state of affairs in Judea and Samaria, we find that Israeli “sovereignty” is devoid of meaning. The situation on the ground is utter chaos. The prevailing anarchy and accompanying complete loss of deterrence are apparent in many aspects:

- Under the cover of firecrackers, set off to celebrate various festivities (most recently passing matriculation exams), Palestinians in the region habitually shoot at neighboring Israeli localities while the Israeli authorities turn a blind eye to this dangerous, criminal practice. This willful ignorance must stop on both the municipal and the national levels.

- Pirate incinerators operate intensively despite the determined efforts of the Environmental Protection Ministry and the Civil Administration. Incinerators are shut down and then reopen at the same location.

- The security fence is regularly breached in multiple locations. Along the roadsides, “central stations” spring up for Palestinian taxis and transporters that ferry infiltrators and illegal workers into Israel and back. This is often done right in front of Israeli soldiers, who stand aside and watch. There is little, after all, that they can do. How can a handful of soldiers handle hundreds of infiltrators at every point?

- West Bank checkpoints have become white elephants that mainly serve drivers who can’t get through the fence breaches. Gravest of all, they serve those transporting the thousands who stay in Israel illegally and infiltrate through the breaches.

- Illegal roads are being readied, often just a stone’s throw from Jewish communities and the main transportation arteries serving Israelis and Palestinians. No one knows what is being transported on those roads.

- In every open space, including state land and lands of Jewish regional councils, the Palestinians plant thousands of dunams of olive trees that preclude Jewish construction, hinder IDF soldiers from providing security to Jewish residents of the area, and enable terrorists to potentially attack Israeli targets very easily. Former Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad strove to take control of the open parts of Area C, which are officially under full Israeli control. Current P.A. Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh is much more militant and supports terrorists and their families fearlessly and

blatantly.

- At all hours of the day, the calls of the muezzins issue from powerful speakers. This is not always for purposes of prayer. To a great extent, and particularly these days, this is being done to incite against and vilify Israel.

- Throughout the West Bank there are countless archaeological relics of the area’s ancient Jewish history. Systematic acts of Palestinian vandalism and robbery (such as destroying mikvehs and stealing stones from olive presses) are steadily erasing these testaments to the ancient Jewish presence in the region.

- Likewise, the COVID-19 crisis is being exploited to take over Jewish sites of antiquity (such as the Hasmonean fortress at Tel Aroma) and convert them into Palestinian “heritage” sites. Even Joshua’s altar on Mount Ebal is being used to serve the Palestinians’ fabricated narrative.

This cannot go on. Israel should unequivocally enforce its authority in the territories under its control while laying out a clear and uncompromising penal code to address any acts of lawlessness.

Anyone who illegally plants olive groves on state land, for example, should know he is liable to a substantial fine and will have to remove the trees himself. Religious preachers who incite violence should be incarcerated, as should anyone who builds illegally. Illegal structures should be demolished, with the demolition costs borne by their builders. Restrictions on movement should be imposed on those Palestinian leaders who support terror.

The more Israel continues to ignore this anarchy and lawlessness, the higher the price it will pay. For proof, we need look no further than the Negev, where Israel is impotent in the face of mounting lawlessness and serious violence among its Bedouin citizens.

(JNS/BESA July 27)

Camp David 20 Years Later: The Oslo Delusion

By Jonathan S. Tobin

It’s one anniversary that no one is celebrating. Twenty years ago this month, President Bill Clinton welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to a peace summit at Camp David. Looking back on it now, even Clinton administration veterans understand that it was an act of monumental folly. As former State Department Middle East peace processor Aaron David Miller wrote, the effort was doomed even before it began.

The problem is that even those who have, in retrospect, acknowledged that they were mistaken still cling to the delusion that smarter diplomacy and different American, Israeli, and Palestinian leaders might still produce a different outcome. Even those who are striving to be self-critical about being, as Miller noted, “lost in the woods” at Camp David in July 2000, are only gradually coming to grips with the fact that some problems have no solution. Even worse, some of those who followed them, like White House senior adviser and presidential son-in-law Jared Kushner, who was in charge of President Donald Trump’s Mideast peace efforts, seem to have failed to learn all of the appropriate lessons from the Camp David fiasco, even as he strove to do better than his predecessors.

Unlike the backdrop to the signing of the Oslo Accords seven years earlier, the circumstances that led the events of July 2000 are no longer much discussed. The famous photo-op on the White House lawn in September 1993 is still celebrated by some as a historic triumph, despite the catastrophic consequences of that agreement. But the ignominious conclusion to the 2000 summit has largely been thrown down the Orwellian memory hole by the foreign-policy establishment and the mainstream media.

They don’t want to draw appropriate conclusions from these events because the conclave exposed the entire concept behind the Oslo process from which it sprang as based on a myth. The assumption on the part of all those involved in that effort was that the divide between Israelis and Palestinians could be bridged by painful compromises and smart, patient diplomacy based on developing relationships.

They all believed that if the Israelis were willing to make the tangible concessions in terms of territory and endangering their security — and the Palestinians were truly willing to finally accept that the long war against Zionism was over — then two states coexisting in peace alongside each other was possible.

But by the summer of 2000, sensible observers had already figured out that the Palestinians had no such intentions. Arafat was not interested — as the assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin hoped he would be — in fighting the terrorists who threatened

peace. He was still planning and paying for terrorism, while both the American and Israeli governments ignored or covered up the truth about his actions and non-compliance with the terms of the accords, because they thought doing so would advance the cause of peace.

Even worse, Barak was a man in a hurry. After a failed attempt to trade the Golan Heights to the Hafez Assad regime in Syria (a stroke of luck for Israel considering the chaos and bloodshed that have destroyed that country since then), Barak turned to Arafat. Throwing caution to the winds, he discarded the red lines that had guided both Rabin and Benjamin Netanyahu (who is often wrongly blamed for the failure of a peace process he actually tried to advance during his term as prime minister from 1996 to 1999) by offering to divide Jerusalem and hand over almost all of the West Bank and Gaza to create a Palestinian state.

But not even this grandiose gesture was enough to tempt Arafat.

The veteran terrorist walked away from an offer that gave him more or less everything Palestinian advocates said they wanted. Two months later, convinced of Barak's weakness and thinking bloody attacks on Israel would produce even more such suicidal concessions, he launched a terror war of attrition known as the Second Intifada. That traumatic conflict, which took the lives of more than 1,000 Israelis and many more Palestinians, blew up any remaining support for Oslo. It set in place a broad consensus among Israelis — further reinforced by the disastrous results of former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, which led to a Hamas-run terrorist state in the Strip, as well as the refusals of Arafat's successor Mahmoud Abbas to negotiate in good faith — that peace is out of reach in the foreseeable future.

As Miller now concedes, the summit didn't have any of the elements that could lead to success, such as "strong leaders," a "workable deal," and "effective US mediation." Barak's desperation and the Clinton administration's poor planning made things worse. Miller is also correct in pointing out that Clinton's belief that trying and failing was better than not trying at all was horribly wrong. The consequences of his hubris were paid in the blood of those slaughtered in Arafat's intifada.

Nevertheless, Miller still holds on to the delusion that more American pressure on the Jewish state, coupled with a set of parameters for a deal that would have given the Israelis no wriggle room on Jerusalem and other intractable issues, might have made a difference. He disdains the efforts of the Trump administration to advance peace, thinking its leaders are far too close to Israel. But although Kushner seems to have tried to avoid making the same mistakes as Clinton, he too doesn't seem to fully understand why even his more realistic "Prosperity to Peace" vision had as little chance of achieving an agreement as the 2000 summit.

In an interview with Newsweek, Kushner exhibited some magical thinking of his own. Kushner believes that the key to peace is pushing the Arab states closer to Israel. Doing so is a good thing in and of itself, but like every other formula for a settlement, it failed because the Palestinians just aren't interested.

The lessons of the Camp David Summit rest on understanding that better diplomacy, planning, and help from outside parties is never going to be enough. Until the Palestinians give up their vision of a world without a State of Israel — one that is now sadly shared by Jews like Peter Beinart, who think the failure to make peace means that the Zionist project should be discarded in favor of a dangerous utopian vision that will lead to far more bloodshed than any intifada — no peace process, no matter how skillfully conducted, will ever succeed.

Most Israelis understand this bitter truth and have adjusted their expectations accordingly. It is to be hoped that future American governments, including a putative one led by former Vice President Joe Biden, which will likely be staffed by Clinton and Obama administration veterans, will be capable of understanding that in the absence of a sea change in Palestinian political culture, further negotiations are simply a waste of everyone's time.

(Algemeiner July 28)

A Unified Reminder of the Iranian Threat By Ruthie Blum

In a rare moment of unity, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz addressed the nation together on Monday night. Hours earlier, the shaky coalition partners—whose agreement stipulates a rotation of the premiership in November 2021—engaged in a proverbial battle over the budget. If one is not passed by Aug. 25, less than a month from now, the Knesset will dissolve automatically, and new elections will be held.

But the issue of whether to pass the one-year budget that Netanyahu is seeking or the two-year budget on which Gantz is insisting was not the subject of their joint announcement, which they delivered live on prime-time television.

No, the focus of the Netanyahu-Gantz press conference was on a fight of a more literal nature—one involving external enemies, not internecine strife. Earlier in the day, the Israel Defense Forces had thwarted the infiltration of Hezbollah terrorists into the country via Lebanon. Had the border breach not been detected and countered, any number of Israeli soldiers and civilians could have been wounded, kidnapped or killed.

The message that Netanyahu and Gantz conveyed, each in turn, had a double aim: to reassure the Israeli public that the government and the army are in control of the situation, and to warn Tehran and its proxies—housed by Beirut and abetted by Damascus—that Jerusalem is willing and able to deal them a crushing blow.

Ironically, this jolt back to Israel's pre-pandemic reality served as a refreshing break from the incessant coverage of the coronavirus, economic crisis and nationwide protests.

"Israel will continue to take action against Iran's efforts to entrench militarily in our region," Netanyahu began, apparently in a veiled reference to a series of recent "unexplained" and "mysterious" explosions at power plants and industrial facilities across the Islamic Republic.

After giving credit to the IDF for preventing the Hezbollah cell from accomplishing its mission, he said "we view the effort to infiltrate into our territory with utmost gravity. Hezbollah and Lebanon bear full responsibility for this incident and for any attack against the State of Israel emanating from Lebanese territory."

He went on: "Hezbollah needs to understand that it is playing with fire. Any attack against us will be met with great strength."

He concluded by reminding the Shi'ite terror master of the "major mistake" that he made in 2006, when he sparked a war with the Jewish state and "underestimate[d] Israel's determination to defend itself."

This caused Lebanon to "pay a heavy price," he said, suggesting that Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah "not repeat" the error.

Gantz directed his words at the countries harboring Nasrallah's bands of murderers.

"Lebanon and Syria are sovereign states and will bear the painful responsibility for any terrorist act that takes place on their territory," he said. "Anyone who dares to test the power of the IDF will endanger himself and the country from which he operates. Any action against the State of Israel will lead to a powerful, sharp and painful response."

He ended with a promise and a threat. "The IDF is ready to respond; the IDF is prepared for a response," he declared. "The State of Israel, the defense establishment and the IDF will continue to operate wherever it is necessary to so, as near or far as this may be."

The significance of Netanyahu's and Gantz's remarks—exactly 14 years after the Second War in Lebanon—cannot be overstated, particularly in light of their disparate positions on everything else. During that 34-day military conflict in the summer of 2006, which began on July 12 and ended on Aug. 14, then-Prime Minister Ehud Olmert stressed that Israel had "no conflict with Lebanon and its people."

This proved extremely problematic, of course, because Hezbollah, like Hamas in Gaza, used civilians as human shields, and civilian infrastructure for the storage and production of weaponry. Avoiding collateral damage, then, was detrimental to defeating the enemy.

To make matters far worse, the United Nations-brokered "end" to the war—the enactment of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701—was a disaster. In the first place, it was slanted against Israel. No surprise there.

Secondly, it deployed the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to monitor Israel's withdrawal, assist the Lebanese government in deploying its army in the south and keep Hezbollah from rebuilding its arsenal of death.

Well, neither the Lebanese government nor UNIFIL adhered to any of the resolution's clauses. Hezbollah proceeded to rearm unhindered, while increasing its power in the Lebanese Parliament.

Today, it is estimated to possess as many as 120,000 missiles, rockets and mortars that it amassed under UNIFIL's "watchful" eye. Oh, and it constructed several massive, well-equipped terror tunnels extending from Lebanon into Israel, the last of which was sealed off by the IDF in June 2019.

Netanyahu has led the Israeli government since the 2009 elections, following Olmert's resignation and the failure of Tzipi Livni—his successor as the head of the now-defunct Kadima party—to forge a coalition. His lengthy tenure at the helm is due in large measure to the sense of security that he has instilled in a populace faced with mortal enemies along and within its borders.

His initial handling of the coronavirus crisis, too, seemed to be a source of comfort—so much so that even some of his worst detractors grudgingly gave him credit for it. It wasn't until after he and Gantz formed the current national-unity government that the rallies against him turned violent.

Suddenly, mobs began to take to the streets, with rioters demanding that the "crime minister" resign, that restaurants remain open, and that Judea and Samaria not be "annexed," among many other non-related complaints.

One woman, for example, climbed onto a menorah statue near the Knesset and bared her breasts "to put the social workers' strike on the agenda."

There is no doubt that Hezbollah and its puppeteers in Tehran—all of whom have been suffering from their own COVID-19 and economic crises—are observing the chaos in Israel with satisfaction. They undoubtedly interpret it as a sign that Netanyahu is both distracted and weakened, which may help to explain Monday's incident at the northern border.

What neither they nor his domestic rivals seem to take into account is that Israelis waving posters and chanting slogans feel safe—not from the physical and financial ramifications of the virus, but from Iranian aggression. (JNS July 28)

An Alarming Anniversary: The Iran Deal, 5 Years Later

By David M. Weinberg

Hardly any Western media mentioned the fact that last week marked the fifth anniversary of former President Obama's Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the sell-out nuclear accord with Iran.

The accord has emboldened Iran's hegemonic march across the Middle East and has not halted its advance towards nuclear weapons. All of which hastens the day towards all-out Israeli-Iran confrontation.

The JCPOA was based on Western charity for Iranian lies. Back in 2013 when Obama began secretly negotiating with the Iranians, the administration argued that the evidence for Iran's two-decades-long drive for a working nuclear bomb was based on partial information. Nobody really knew for sure; there was no absolute proof.

In this situation, who wanted to be branded an alarmist or pay the price of moral action to truly stop Iran? It was more comfortable to accept then-president Hassan Rouhani's denials and then-foreign minister Javad Zarif's smiles.

Thus, Obama could impute credibility and honesty to the Iranian leadership. As justification for his softball approach to Teheran, Obama referred to a supposed fatwa by the Iranian "Supreme Leader" against the development of nuclear weapons and to Rouhani's "promise that Iran will never develop a nuclear weapon." Then-secretary of state John Kerry similarly testified to Congress in 2015 that he believes in the "sincerity of the Supreme Leader." (Kerry could see no evil in Iran's leaders, only in Israeli settlements).

Consequently, those American leaders forgave Iran on the demand that it come clean on the "possible military dimensions" (PMD) of its previous nuclear program, and decided to forgo the demand that Iran categorically allow anytime-anywhere inspections of its military nuclear installations.

In his brave speech to Congress in March 2015, Prime Minister Netanyahu warned of three dangers stemming from the then-impending deal. He predicted, alas correctly, that Iran would become even more aggressive and sponsor ever more terrorism when sanctions against Iran were lifted. Secondly, he noted that under the terms of the accord, Iran could continue to develop centrifuges for uranium enrichment and ballistic missiles for delivery of nuclear weapons; while waiting 10-15 years for sanctions to lift and limits on high-grade enrichment to expire.

Third, Netanyahu warned that Iran's neighbors would insist on having the same capabilities for themselves, potentially leading to a regional nuclear arms race.

Five years later, Netanyahu clearly has been proven right. As Yaakov Amidror, Jacob Nagel, and Jonathan Schachter have written (each served Netanyahu in a senior national security position) Iran's aggression throughout the region has never been more audacious. Iran

has stepped-up efforts to sow discord, terror and bloodshed in Gaza, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen, and in the region's waterways. Dr. Yossi Mansharof at JISS has exposed Iran's worldwide network of terrorist groups and alliances, through which it conducts proxy wars against the US and Israel, as well.

Iran's military budget has grown by an estimated 30-40%, two-thirds of which goes to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and quite a bit to Hezbollah, Hamas and other terrorist groups too.

In short, rather than buying Iran's moderation, the JCPOA has funded Iran's aggression.

Two years ago, Israel provided the smoking gun that proves the definite military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program. The Mossad's daring raid on an atomic archive in Teheran produced tens of thousands of official Iranian documents which list the people involved in the Iranian nuclear military effort; locations of hidden nuclear development sites; front organizations Iran set up to pursue nuclear parts and know-how within the framework of the deal; Westerners who collaborated in smuggling components for the nuclear military effort; extensive weaponization efforts, and more.

The International Atomic Energy Agency finally has begun to follow-up (albeit gently) on these findings. It has fingered Iran for enrichment that violates caps written into the accord and has censured Iran for blocking inspection access to two key nuclear sites.

But of course none of the Western figures responsible for the sham nuclear deal subsequently have admitted that they were wrong about Iran's intentions. They will never fess up to being willingly duped by Teheran. They cannot concede the obvious fact that the ayatollahs never took nuclear weapons option off the table.

In the meantime, Netanyahu's third prediction has come true, as well. Countries across the Middle East have begun jockeying for position in anticipation of a nuclear-armed Iran. Turkey boldly has stated its desire for nuclear weapons. Egypt is seeking technologies relevant for nuclear weapons. Saudi Arabia is mulling the idea too.

Now the question is, who will curb Iran's aggression and nuclear progress, and how? US President Trump courageously called the global bluff and reinstated crippling sanctions on Teheran alongside the threat to use military force. He also assassinated IRGC Qods Force leader Qassem Soleimani. He has apparently backed Israel's ongoing "war between the wars" – covert strikes on Iranian sites in Syria and nuclear installations in Iran.

But Trump's isolationist instincts (and his woeful electoral situation) means that he is unlikely to strike directly at Iran with US forces. His inability to work well with Western allies (or with Russia and China) means that the regime of sanctions against Iran remains partial. And even if Trump wins reelection, some observers, like Trump's former national security advisor John Bolton, warn that Trump may be disposed towards another soft accord with Iran.

Indeed, Trump's penchant for grand deals that prove his greatness makes me worry that he could be tempted into a settlement with Iran that falls far short of what is necessary. There is a pattern in Trump's management of American policy towards China, North Korea, the Palestinians, and perhaps also with Iran. First comes economic pressure, then the offer of quickie talks in pursuit of a "historic" agreement; an agreement that could be more nebulous than valuable.

On the other side of the aisle, most Democrats support re-entering the JCPOA and lifting some sanctions against Iran. Their candidate for president, Joe Biden, has said so too, although he would try to renegotiate some of the details of the accord (like its early expiration dates).

Iran must be forced to relent on five key issues: 1. A complete end to its nuclear military program, including all uranium enrichment and plutonium production – with no sunset, ever. 2. A truly intrusive international inspections regime; not the jokingly weak-to-non-existent regime stipulated in the JCPOA. 3. An end to Iran's ballistic missile development program. 4. A retreat from the forward bases in Syria that Iran is building to challenge Israel. 5. Complete cessation of Iranian financing of Hamas and Hezbollah military capabilities.

Short of this, a deal with Iran will be perilous and unsustainable. Yet the Iranians playing are their usual games, offering phony concessions (like an end to their oil tanker interceptions) in exchange for up-front substantive American concessions (like an end to oil export sanctions).

"This is how the Iranians play the game," warned Iran expert Dr. Emily Landau last year before her untimely passing. "This is how they twist things, making it seem there are concessions when there are absolutely no concessions at all." (Israel Hayom July 26)