



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*

"kingmaker." Indeed, without Ra'am's agreement to join the coalition that was being cobbled together by Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid and Naftali Bennett's Yamina, Israelis would have been sent back to the polls.

Commentary...

Hamas Widows, Orphans and Ties to the Israeli Coalition

By Ruthie Blum

Given the fact that the Arab-Israeli Ra'am Party is openly Islamist and associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, the revelation on Friday evening by Channel 13's Ayala Hasson that it's been funneling money into Gaza to finance Hamas "widows and orphans" wasn't as shocking as it should have been. Nor did it make sufficient waves.

That rival news outlets didn't wish to pounce on the scoop may be understandable from a commercial standpoint. But had the item been related to a scandal surrounding any member of the opposition—particularly, its leader, former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—bolstering the competition wouldn't have been an editorial concern.

Still, it's the so-called right-wing flank of the government that in this case deserves derision for not causing the kind of stink that that the exposé warrants.

The story exposed by Hasson, based on an in-depth investigation conducted by the pro-Israeli advocacy group Ad Kan and the Choosing Life Forum for bereaved families, was that Ra'am member Razi Issa, who heads an anti-Israel "charity" with direct ties to terrorism—named "48," after the year of the nakba ("catastrophe") of Israel's establishment—has been providing funds to Hamas through the organization. Because Issa was involved in the coalition negotiations relating to Ra'am's budget, it's possible that the Israeli taxpayer is unwittingly footing this literal and figurative "bill of goods."

When asked by Hasson about compliments heaped on him recently by senior Hamas official Razi Hamed, Issa replied, "All of Gaza is grateful for our treatment of widows and orphans."

Without pointing out that many of the women and children in question are in a sorry state due to the terrorist "martyrdom" of the men in their lives, Hasson pressed, "Widows and orphans I can understand, but what's a senior Hamas official thanking you for?"

"How should I know?" he retorted huffily.

Ra'am responded with a statement that the "association [48] is registered and recognized by the United Nations as an organization that provides humanitarian services to the poor, the needy and the victims of wars and disasters all over the world, regardless of race, gender, nationality or religion. ... [It] has an office in Gaza, which operates according to the law to ensure that all aid is transferred to the needy and orphans directly and without intermediaries, [and its] staff takes great care not to conduct any political dialogue with anyone."

It further insisted that Issa "had nothing to do with the negotiations on the formation of the coalition, and his presence was together with many individuals from all the parties who wanted to [take part in] the historic moment of signing the coalition agreements."

Sounds just great. The trouble is that the organization's West Bank branch in Tulkarm is run by Islamic Jihad member Azhar Shaharur, whose brother is serving 29 life sentences in an Israeli prison for his participation in the 2002 Passover massacre at the Park Hotel in Netanya.

That's not all. Issa was revealed to have had talks with finance ministry officials on the amount of coalition money that would be given to Ra'am through the offices of charity 48 in the Arab-Israeli village of Kafr Qassem.

To grasp the gravity of the situation, a bit of memory-refreshing is in order.

Ahead of the last Knesset elections, Ra'am chairman Mansour Abbas decided that it was time for an Arab party to have some political clout in the Jewish state beyond siding with its enemies. To this end, he split from the Joint List bloc and ran on a platform that put the welfare of the country's Arab citizens above the glorification of Palestinians and their terrorist methods.

This is how he put it in Hebrew, at least. When orating in Arabic, he made sure to stress his movement's more radical ideology.

His campaign succeeded. Ra'am garnered four seats, not only crossing the electoral threshold, but becoming a so-called

The rest may be history, but the government is faced with another major hurdle: the state budget. Though it passed its first reading in September, it can only be enacted after two additional readings in the plenum. If the Nov. 14 deadline for final passage is not met, the Knesset will automatically disband, forcing another round of elections.

Nobody in the coalition, from Ra'am to Yamina, wants it to fall, which is why Lapid keeps insisting that all squabbles be kept to a minimum until the budget is a done deal. His investment in "unity" is even more pronounced than that of his partners, of course, since as long as the government remains intact, he stands to replace Bennett as prime minister in 2023.

And he makes no bones about it. "We should ignore the background noise and continue to move forward. Never to stop. Not take our eyes off the target," he wrote on Facebook on Friday.

In addition, Lapid is on the left side of the coalition. As such, he's far more interested in guaranteeing that Netanyahu never return to the helm than in findings by Ad Kan and the Choosing Life Forum on dubious dealings with NGOs in Gaza.

Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked's reaction to the report is far worthier of note.

"We have looked into the issue," she told Channel 12 on Sunday. "Not a single shekel of state money goes to this association in any way. The state transfers the budget to local authorities and offices, not to the association. The partnership with Ra'am isn't simple. This government was formed because we were stuck in a political quagmire and endless rounds of elections. The State of Israel operates with complete freedom in the Gaza Strip, and we won't hesitate to operate there militarily if it becomes necessary."

What an answer. It's by no means the one that she would have given if she weren't herself waiting with bated breath for the Knesset to approve the budget's final readings.

By that time, within less than two weeks from now, it will be too late to change the clauses relevant to Ra'am's coffers. And Hamas will have the Israeli government to thank for it. (JNS Nov 2)

The Danger to the International Community of the Two-State Solution

By Shmuel Katz

The conflict in the Middle East between some Arab states and the State of Israel did not start yesterday. Unfortunately, people who are not familiar with the reality on the ground may think that there are easy solutions to the conflict.

One of the superficial ideas that was offered to solve the problem was to create two states for two peoples. Drawing such a line in the sand did not solve the problems, however. In fact, this solution had already failed in the past because it did not address the core problems that are at the heart of the conflict. They did not address seriously, for example, radical Islamic fanaticism, self-serving power trips, financial corruption or fearful self-preservation of evil leaders.

The Ottoman Empire, which controlled the Middle East for about 400 years, crumbled during World War I, and the League of Nations created the British and the French mandates, which oversaw the transfer of the land in the Middle East to their rightful owners.

The territory that came under the British Mandate included the land of Israel (including Judea and Samaria), the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people, which had been renamed "Palestina" by Roman invaders about 2,000 years earlier.

The 1917 Balfour Declaration, and the legally binding ruling by the international community at the 1920 San Remo conference, recognized the historical connection of the Jewish people to their ancestral homeland; there was a recommendation to help the Jewish people settle in their ancestral homeland, and at the same time to respect the human rights of all local inhabitants in the land of Israel.

Due to pressure on the British government, the British violated their mandate in 1922 and created a brand-new Arab state—the Hashemite Kingdom of Trans-Jordan—on about 80 percent of the

British Mandate for Palestine, which was supposed to have become a part of the Jewish homeland. This was an attempt to practically solve some of the local disputes in the region via a two-state solution, but it did not solve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Various attempts to reach two-state solutions were made by the British in the years following the 1937 Peel Commission report, and again with the 1947 Partition Plan after United Nations Resolution 181, but all were rejected by the Arabs who continued with their war against the Jews.

Upon the termination of the British Mandate to Palestine, the British left the land of Israel, and the Jews declared their national independence on May 14, 1948, based Resolution 181, but the surrounding Arab countries invaded the State of Israel the very next day, with the intention of destroying it.

The aggressive attempt to destroy the State of Israel repeated itself in the 1967 and 1973 wars. Luckily, the State of Israel managed to prevail on all these occasions.

Despite these conflicts, the State of Israel reached peace agreements with Egypt in 1979, with Jordan in 1994 and with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan in 2020, but the Palestinian Arabs refused any reasonable compromise to settle their dispute with Israel. Even worse, the Palestinian Arabs declared that their solution to the conflict is going to be the destruction of the State of Israel from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, and to replace it with a brand-new Arab state by the name of Palestine, where Jews will not be welcome.

Because of the Palestinian Arabs' radical stance, all of the very generous two-state proposals that have been submitted by Israel and supported by the international community were rejected by the Palestinian Arabs in the following years: 1967, 1993, 1997, 2000, 2005, 2008 and 2009-2014. In 2005, Israel even withdrew unilaterally from the Gaza Strip, hoping to move closer to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, but in return, Israel has since received from Hamas barrages of rocket attacks and floating firebombs into its civilian populated areas, including its capital city Jerusalem and the highly populated city Tel Aviv.

Unfortunately, the Palestinian Authority, which controls Judea and Samaria, and Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, continue with malicious deceptive brainwashing of their own populations and that of their oblivious international supporters. In addition to destroying the wellbeing of their own people, these self-serving corrupt leaders use a big part of the financial resources that are provided to them by the international community to support terrorists and their families and to build a strong terror infrastructure that will attack anybody who stands in their way—be they Muslims, Christians or Jews—to gain even more power and personal wealth.

Some politicians and others around the world are known to be vicious anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish operatives for whatever irrational reasons, but it is very difficult to understand why any honorable and good politician would join them in bringing any anti-Israeli resolutions to the table.

We must help the good people understand that forcing Israelis to give up their security, or accept any preconditions to future negotiations, will cause serious damage to the international community and the State of Israel. Israel is known to provide the international community with serious life-saving military intelligence and major benefits from advanced research and development in many essential fields.

Undermining the stability and safety of the only reliable democracy in the Middle East will deprive the free world of the benefits of the Israeli experience, and will empower the enemies of good to solidify their grip on their own people and on their oblivious international supporters, to limit the freedom of women under their domain, and to continue the abuse of their children. It will definitively not bring peace to the region.

It has been said in the past that for evil to prevail good people only need to do nothing, and appeasing evil will bring destruction to the oblivious who did not have the wisdom to correctly assess the situation. We can see classic examples of this dynamic in the early British support of Nazi Germany and in the unopposed and out-of-control ascent of Iran's puppets (Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen).

The free hand that was given to Iran, the biggest supporter of international terrorism, did not bring peace to the region, and the irresponsible disengagement from Afghanistan, which allowed the

powerful reemergence of the radical Muslim Taliban and ISIS, created a time bomb, the eventual consequences of which are still being studied by the intelligence agencies.

It is important to remind the wise that appeasing the bad operatives with financial or political support will not convert them into peace-loving altruistic angels. On the contrary, it will only embolden them to stay their evil course to the detriment of all honorable peace-loving individuals across the globe. (JNS Nov 2)

The Next American Diplomatic Debacle By Yaron Buskila

In 1979, one of the most consequential and significant upheavals in Middle Eastern history swept the former Persian Empire. Just days before the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's triumphant return to his homeland, U.S. President Jimmy Carter asserted, "Iran is an island of stability in the Middle East."

A few days later, a revolution occurred in front of the lingering eyes of the United States and the entire world—one that transformed Iran from an autocratic, pro-Western, monarchical state, under the government of Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, to an Islamic-theocratic republic dominated by a Khomeini-led regime

How is it, then, that the United States comes to find itself in the same position over and over? How does the world's foremost superpower repeatedly fail to comprehend the geopolitical map of the greater Middle East? And why is the current American leadership surprised by the proliferation of black swans in a lagoon that Israel has proven, time and again, to be the sole white swan treading water in their midst?

In September 2020, Azerbaijan attacked Nagorno-Karabakh after months of regional tensions and years of long-standing ethnic struggles. It didn't take Azerbaijan more than 12 days of fighting to achieve a sweeping victory, resulting in its gaining of total control over the area. The attack caught U.S. intelligence off guard. Again, America was surprised by an unsurprising development.

The CIA, despite being deeply involved in Azerbaijan affairs and holding a mission in its territory, failed to come up with a satisfactory explanation for this clearly embarrassing failure.

Exactly one year later, the United States again critically underestimated regional security dynamics. As the world watched in horror, the U.S. left Afghanistan, in what was widely criticized as a hasty retreat. Yet, despite America's having spent more than two decades in the country, its officials failed to anticipate or correctly assess what would transpire there less than 24 hours after their withdrawal from the Southeast Asian behemoth.

Indeed, while the Taliban was secretly sealing agreements with a variety of tribes in provinces across Afghanistan, U.S. intelligence agencies generally—the CIA and Defense Intelligence Agency specifically—failed to conduct a fundamental intelligence analysis of the Taliban's intentions, as well as its capacity to quickly and effectively take over Afghanistan in the absence of American patronage.

"The possibility of the Taliban taking over everything and taking over the entire country is very unlikely," the experienced politician yet newly elected President Joe Biden said, not long before he was forced to admit, in a statement to the nation, that the administration had received inaccurate intelligence assessments about the Afghan National Army's resilience.

This self-inflicted embarrassment now turns out, however, to be the least of the U.S.'s concerns. Sunni Gulf states, watching events unfold in the region with grave and legitimate concern, increasingly believe that the U.S. lacks the capacity to retain its former status as the regional security leader. Nor do these Arab states believe anymore that American forces will stand by their side if—not when—the time comes.

Now, barely allowing the United States to finish recovering from the Afghanistan fluster, it appears to be inching ever so closer to its next faux pas: the profound and persistent Palestinian quandary.

Ignoring the sovereignty of Israel in Jerusalem, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced America's intention to reopen a consulate in Jerusalem, mainly focused on Palestinian affairs. This seemingly innocuous statement places Jerusalem squarely back in the center of any future negotiations with the Palestinian Authority—something that the Trump administration flatly refused as a matter of both present and future policy.

At the same time, the Biden administration's plan proves that

U.S. intelligence, defense and foreign-service bureaucracies remain outlandishly ignorant of, or are consciously ignoring, a simple and basic fact: that the P.A.'s ability to lead its people, or control the violent agitators in its midst, is shaky at best and inadequate at worse.

The U.S. publicly expressed concern last July over the precarious situation of the P.A., which led it to a request that Israel to do everything in its power to stabilize floundering P.A. infrastructure.

Jerusalem is first and foremost the eternal and undivided capital of the State of Israel, and no Israeli or American governmental body has the authority to challenge its existence or wholeness. Yet, at the same time, the still-hegemonic United States must concede, before it's too late to do so, that establishing a consulate in Jerusalem is a terrible mistake—not only for its own strategic interests, but for those of its primary regional ally, Israel, and that of any future Palestinian state, which the U.S. remains committed to will into existence.

If America fails to recognize reality, both in the context of its relationship with Israel and to regional security as a whole, the Biden administration will find itself yet again embarrassed. Its detachment from reality and facts on the ground may have grave consequences on the pro-Israel Arab alliance, consisting of states that are vastly more disillusioned with Palestinian statehood than are their Western counterparts.

By opening an American consulate in Jerusalem for the Palestinians, the Biden administration is at risk of having the botched Afghanistan withdrawal be the most negligible of its blunders when history books are written. (JNS Nov 2)

Cyber Warfare: Playing with Fire By Prof. Eyal Zisser

Last week, a cyberattack in Iran paralyzed the government system governing fuel subsidies, causing chaos at some 4,300 gas stations across the country. The attack came on the heels of previous cyberattacks in recent months, which shut down vital services and infrastructure in Iran – from disruptions to traffic lights and train services to water and electric supplies.

Someone apparently decided to make the already difficult lives of Iranian citizens even more miserable. Although the Islamic republic is a touch away from being able to manufacture a nuclear weapon, it is a poor country struggling to provide food, healthcare, and education to its people. Four decades of failed rule under the ayatollahs have turned Iran into a dangerous enemy to the Arabs and to Israel, but the population has become impoverished and bereft of hope for a better future.

No one assumed responsibility for disabling the gas stations or for the previous attacks in Iran. In Tehran, too, officials were careful not to point a finger at the "usual suspects," although Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said that a country with cyber-capabilities wanted to "make people angry by creating disorder and disruption." The foreign and Israeli press has attributed the cyberattacks to Israel, saying their objective was to apply pressure on the Iranian regime and stall its nuclear progress.

It's unreasonable to assume that fuel disruptions will cause the Iranian regime to think twice about its nuclear adventure. More painful blows it has sustained in recent years failed in this regard. Around a decade ago, the "Stuxnet" computer virus planted in the country's computer systems destroyed Iran's uranium enrichment centrifuges, stalling the ayatollah's nuclear program but not eliminating it.

And yet, these cyberattacks are not without reason and justification, as their goal is to create a balance of terror and deterrence against a radical regime that can only be stopped by force.

If Israel is indeed behind them, it can be viewed as an extension of the so-called "war between wars" the two enemies have been waging for over a decade. This is a cold war that mostly flies under the radar, and is apparently convenient for both parties as it allows them to avoid an all-out confrontation that neither side wants.

The Iranians are not innocent victims. Iranian hackers attack Israel incessantly, occasionally with lethal repercussions. After all, cyber warfare is not a game. It isn't confined to merely causing traffic jams or even ransomware attacks on hospitals. Cyberattacks can be deadly if they target a county's drinking water – as we saw last year when Iranian hackers attempted to poison Israel's water supply – or cause sensitive operating systems and even weapons systems to malfunction, not to mention planes and vehicles in the future.

Israel is clearly superior to Iran in this field. However, similar to the previous stages of the campaign the two countries have been

fighting, the Iranians are learning, improving, and will ultimately find an answer. Case in point, Israel has stopped attacking Iranian oil tankers on their way to Syria, after Iran began attacking Israeli-owned ships near its shores. These cyber games, therefore, will continue on a low flame, but ultimately won't be the deciding factor in the ongoing tug of war between Jerusalem and Tehran.

(Israel Hayom Oct 31)

At Climate Summit, a Chill Breeze from Biden Ruffles the Israelis By Benny Avni,

There's little difference between President Biden and Mr. Bennett over issues at the center of the Conference of Parties known as COP26. Both leaders flew to Scotland heading oversized delegations. Both took the obligatory photo in between the hosts, Prime Minister Johnson and Secretary General Guterres. Oh, and both vow to reduce emissions and do their utmost to combat climate change.

So why is Bennett conferring with the likes of Mr. Johnson, President Macron, Prime Minister Modi, Australia's Scott Morrison, Italy's Draghi, Bahrain's Al Khalifa, Honduras Hernández, and NATO chief Stoltenberg — and not Mr. Biden?

Mr. Bennett did have a chance to hash over top issues when he visited the White House back in August. Since then high level Israeli envoys have been showing up at Washington on an almost weekly basis.

Also true, the leader of the free world has a schedule at Glasgow that is hectic. Oh, and no one would exclude the possibility of a nod in the hallway, a handshake in passing, or a chance exchange of winks between the Israeli and American leaders.

Yet the omission of a formal meeting is intriguing in light of the noise from the Bennett government about repairing relations between Israel and the Democratic Party. Mr. Bennett and foreign minister, Yair Lapid, are promising to reorient Israel's policies in Washington toward bipartisanship, vowing to turn away from what they paint as their predecessor's uber-Republicanism.

Despite Jerusalem's praise of Mr. Biden's friendship to the Jewish state, though, a chill in relations with Washington is clearly in the air this fall.

Secretary Blinken's State Department, which has been rank with anti-Zionist sentiments since the establishment of the Jewish state, is leading the charge. Jerusalem and Israeli West Bank cities are once again highlighted as top impediments to peace.

Mr. Blinken last week had a "tense" phone call with Israel's defense minister, Benny Gantz, calling his approval of 2,800 new housing units inside existing Jewish settlements "unacceptable." The content of the call was immediately leaked to Israeli and American reporters.

Washington had earlier frowned upon Mr. Gantz's designation as terrorist six Palestinian Arab organizations affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Washington has long recognized the PFLP as a terrorist organization. Yet it insists the six groups are part of Palestinian "civil society" even as evidence of symbiotic ties between them and the terror organization is abundant.

Then there's the push by the Biden administration to reopen an American consulate in Jerusalem to serve Palestinian Arabs. A long time American consulate was shut by Donald Trump when he moved America's embassy to the Israeli capital. A dedicated section at the new embassy currently caters to Palestinian Arabs services.

Yet Mr. Biden's push to undo everything Trump now includes the threat of what would be an unprecedented opening of an American consulate at a city where we already have an embassy. Beyond blatant waste of taxpayer money, the move is also a violation of the Vienna Convention of diplomatic relations, which says that a host country has to approve the opening of foreign embassies or consulates within its territory.

The multi-faction Bennett-Lapid government opposes the opening of a consulate, arguing it would signal a division of Israel's united capital. Adding insult to injury, the proposed American consulate would be housed in western Jerusalem.

Most ominously, Bidenites seem giddy for a return to the nuclear deal with Iran. Trying to smooth over disagreements, Messrs. Biden and Bennett came up with a diplomatic formula most recently repeated by Mr. Blinken on the Sunday news shows.

The formula reckons that everyone prefers diplomacy while

vowing to prepare an unspecified “plan B” if talks collapse. Meantime, fuzzy diplomatic language rarely succeeds in hiding disagreements. On the one hand, after a long winks and nods period the Islamic Republic last week announced a plan to return to Vienna by the end of November, to begin indirect talks about talks.

On the other hand, Jerusalem last week publicized a photo of an American B1-b bomber flying over Israel on its way to the Gulf. Escorted by an Israeli F-15, the flight was said to represent a “tacit threat” to Iran.

So even as the two sides use similar words, they quietly disagree over Iran. Mr. Biden clearly believes in “diplomacy” with a regime that leads him by the nose, while Israelis prepare numerous plan Bs.

A diplomatic cold shoulder mightn’t reverse global warming, but despite admirable attempts at friendship, Israelis increasingly feel a chill from Washington. (NY Sun Nov 1)

Unacceptable Settlements By Jerold S. Auerbach

Nothing raises hackles at The New York Times like Israeli settlements in the ancient homeland of the Jewish people. True to form, when Israel recently announced plans for the construction of 3,000 new housing units in settlements scattered across biblical Judea and Samaria, also known as the former “West Bank” of the Kingdom of Jordan, Times Jerusalem Bureau Chief Patrick Kingsley led the way.

Such construction, he wrote (Oct. 27), “would further consolidate the Israeli presence in the West Bank and the barriers to the creation of a geographically contiguous Palestinian state.” It was bad enough for Kingsley that since the Six-Day War in June 1967, Israel has permitted the establishment of more than 100 settlements, now with a total population of 700,000, in “a process that most of the international community considers a breach of international law.” He refers to (unidentified) “critics” who claim that Israel “has effectively stolen land for settlements from Palestinians whose families had long held it but could not prove ownership to Israel’s satisfaction.” In translation, the Palestinians were trespassers.

The New York Times hardly was alone in its displeasure with Israel. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken informed Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz that the location and number of new settlement homes was “unacceptable.” With the U.S. State Department “deeply concerned” over settlement construction, Blinken suggested that in the future, Gantz consider American opposition to settlements before making a decision about them—as if Israel was merely an American clone.

State Department spokesman Ned Price criticized the plan as “completely inconsistent with efforts to lower tensions and to ensure calm, and damages the prospects for a two-state solution.” That solution has long been the fantasy of Washington experts on the Middle East who seem either ignorant or dismissive of repeated refusals by Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas, now in the 18th year of his four-year term, to comply. Indeed, ever since 1937, when the Peel Commission recommended the establishment of two states in Palestine, Palestinian leaders have repeatedly rejected that solution.

Nearly three months ago, Abbas, addressing the U.N. General Assembly, warned that the Palestinian Authority would reverse its recognition of pre-Six-Day War boundaries unless Israel withdrew from biblical Judea and Samaria within a year. It was, to be sure, an empty threat; who cares whether he does or does not recognize Israel’s boundaries? Perhaps it bolstered Abbas’s diminishing support among his own people.

Among the prospective settlements identified for additional housing units is Ariel (a biblical reference to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount), a secular community midway between Tel Aviv and the Jordan River. Established in 1978, it is home to about 20,000 Israelis, nearly half of whom are Russian immigrants. Its thriving University of Judea and Samaria teaches 10,000 students.

Also chosen for expansion is the largely Orthodox settlement of Beit El (“House of God”), north of Jerusalem and adjacent to Ramallah, with a flourishing yeshivah; and the ultra-Orthodox Beitar Illit in the Gush Etzion settlement bloc south of Jerusalem, with a population nearing 60,000 and more than 100 synagogues. Gush Etzion settlements, tracing their origins to the 1920s, were decimated by rampaging Arabs during Israel’s 1948 War of Independence, when more than 100 residents were massacred and the community collapsed.

Following the Arab-Israeli war in 1948, which gave rise to the birth of the State of Israel, Palestinians failed to establish a state on land that Israel did not control. Their leaders repeated the mantra of “reclaiming all of historic Palestine from the [Jordan] river to the [Mediterranean] sea.” Instead of all, they got nothing.

The Times is pleased that Blinken is free to open a consulate “as part of deepening of ties with the Palestinians,” and to assure Abbas that it will be located in Jerusalem. But it is likely to be an empty gesture that reveals nothing more than Biden administration ignorance of, or indifference to, the enduring Jewish sanctity of Jerusalem, ever since it became the capital of the United Kingdom of Israel under King David 3,000 years ago. There were no Palestinians then.

P.S. Despite its perceived evil by the State Department and The New York Times, Israel has also authorized the construction of 1,300 Palestinian homes in Judea and Samaria. (JNS Nov 3)

Israeli Democracy Needs No Help By Dan Schueftan

Israeli journalist and my friend Yaron London recently presented me with a challenge. Following my remarks on the U.S. administration’s pressure to promote human rights in the region, he wrote: “With the same determination and integrity that characterizes your writing, try to imagine how Israel would behave if human-rights organizations did not exist, or if international groups turned a blind eye. What would happen in the occupied territories, the interrogation rooms, prisons, courts, olive groves and the army?”

I have no difficulty imagining how Israel would behave in such a case.

The United Nations is incapable of ruling credibly and honestly on matters of democracy and human rights. After all, its very composition is undemocratic, and its Human Rights Council boasts leaders from the most despicable of regimes and individuals obsessed with slandering Israel.

In the past, human-rights groups were headed by individuals such as Ruth Gavison, a founding member of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, and Robert Bernstein, who founded the Human Rights Watch. Both organizations were useful at the time.

Since then, however, they have been taken hostage by purists, radicals and individuals who hate Israel and who view the Israel-Palestinian conflict as a one-dimensional “victim vs. the privileged white” situation. Bernstein himself exposed such distortion within HRW in 2009.

Had these organizations remained open, democratic and fair with regard to human rights, they could have contributed to society. In the absence of such balance and reliability, their contribution is marginal.

An unbiased examination of some of Israel’s most serious human-rights groups indicates that these organizations have not contributed in any major way to addressing human rights issues.

In 1956, after the Kafr Qasim massacre, the shame felt by Israel and the condemnation issued by the government did not come about through local or foreign rights groups or international pressure.

Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon was ousted in 1983 regardless of external pressure after he failed to prevent the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre, in which Christian Lebanese Forces slaughtered hundreds of Palestinians.

The Israel Security Agency dismissed its heads in 1984 after two Palestinian bus hijackers were executed by members. This, too, was not the result of outside pressure.

In these and other crucial moments, Israel’s democracy operated through public opinion, the legislature, the media, the Knesset, within the framework of checks and balances. None of these prevented—and based on human experience, could not prevent—serious deviations from the conduct demanded of a multicultural society. But they did prove that lessons can be learned, culprits punished and wrongdoing condemned. Had human-rights organizations been fair in their dealings, they could have contributed to this process as well.

U.S. Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf was asked during the 1991 Gulf War how he would conduct the war without France. “Going to war without France is like going hunting without an accordion,” he said.

The same is true of Israel and the human-rights organization we know today. (Israel Hayom Nov 2)
