



Commentary...

An Open Letter to Jared Kushner By Melanie Phillips

Dear Jared,

I have been reading the remarks you made to a group of congressional interns about the difficulties of finding a solution to the Middle East conflict. Among other things, you said this: "We're thinking about what the right end-state is, and we're trying to work with the parties very quietly to see if there's a solution. And there may be no solution, but it's one of the problem sets that the president asked us to focus on. So we're going to focus on it and try to come to the right conclusion in the near future."

It's good that you appreciate the complexities of this situation. The failure to understand the dynamics of this problem and the attempt instead to frame it as Westerners frame all conflicts is one of the reasons why this one remains so intractable.

I'm afraid, though, that you nevertheless fall into precisely the same trap. You said you had spoken to "a lot of people" who were involved in previous negotiations, which had taught you that "this is a very emotionally charged situation."

Well, yes. I think we all kind of knew that already, don't you?

You said: "You know everyone finds an issue, that 'You have to understand what they did then' and 'You have to understand that they did this.'" But how does that help us get peace?

"Let's not focus on that," you add. "We don't want a history lesson. We've read enough books. Let's focus on how do you come up with a conclusion to the situation."

If you really don't think history is important, then you aren't even going to get off the starting block. For heaven's sake, this is all about history. The Jewish people's unique claim to the land is rooted in the history of this land.

Without reference to that history, it is not possible to counter the big lie told by the Arab and Muslim world that fuels their attempt to destroy the State of Israel: that the Jews have no entitlement to the land.

It is history that tells us this is a war of aggression by the Arab and Muslim world against the Jews. And it really matters here who is the aggressor and who the victim.

The Western world dismisses that distinction as unimportant. As a result, it assumes this is a conflict between two warring sides. It is not. It is an attempt to annihilate a country that is defending itself against that onslaught.

History also tells us this has always been at base a war of religion. In the 1920s, the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al Husseini, incited pogroms against the returning Jews by claiming falsely that the Jews intended to destroy al Aksa. Virtually the same words are being used today by the mufti's contemporary cheerleader, Mahmoud Abbas.

What you don't appear to have grasped is that the way this issue has been framed is fundamentally wrong. It is not a "conflict" but a war of annihilation.

There can be no negotiation with the aggressors in a war of annihilation, because any compromise with such a non-negotiable agenda is a form of surrender. Instead, the aggressor has to be defeated.

But you don't seem to understand the Arab and Muslim agenda here at all. You think metal detectors "incited a lot of tension in the streets." Are you really so ignorant? The incitement over the Aksa lie caused the murderous violence that made the metal detectors necessary. And it has continued after their removal.

You claim you were instrumental not only in getting them taken down, but also, "We were able to get the Israelis to take down the different forms of surveillance that the Jordanians were okay with, and we talked with the Palestinians the whole time to try to get their viewpoint on it."

If so, it is astonishing that you pressed the Israelis to remove the surveillance necessary to prevent further acts of terrorism. The issue was not the surveillance apparatus but the refusal by the Arab and Muslim world to acknowledge any rightful Israeli presence on Temple Mount at all.

The correct response to such intimidation would have been to stand firm and denounce it for the act of religious war that it is. Instead, you actually facilitated it in order to appease Arab and Muslim rage.

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*

This relates to the deeper flaw still in the way you are looking at this situation. For it's not so much a question of what needs to be done, but rather what needs to be undone.

Britain, the US and Europe have been rewarding Arab and Muslim aggression in the Land of Israel for almost a century by treating that

agenda as legitimate. This continues today in the West's insistence on treating the Palestinians not as murderous and colonialist pariahs but as statesmen-in-waiting.

What you should be doing instead is stopping US funding of the Palestinian Authority while it continues to incite mass murder and psychotic hatred. And you need to sort out your own State Department's endemic hostility to the state of Israel.

You say there may be no solution. There can be: but only if you first correctly identify the problem. Your heart is in the right place, but you appear to be dangerously naive.

I hope you will take these remarks in the positive spirit in which they are intended. Oh – and please do pass them along to your father-in-law. Doubtless he'd like to reflect on them, too.

Shabbat shalom, Melanie (MelaniePhillips.cpm Aug 3)

Netanyahu is Different By Amnon Lord

Former Justice Minister Daniel Friedmann wrote a book called "The Purse and the Sword: The Trials of Israel's Legal Revolution." One of Israel's former attorney generals once reportedly said the book should have never been written.

But it was written, and those who read it will be left speechless. The portions relevant to the current era deal with the purges carried out against an elected government by the State Attorney's Office and the police.

"The powers the State Attorney's Office and the attorney general wield are on the scale of a police state," Friedmann wrote. He also wrote about the fear of those two entities among cabinet ministers. Israel's former Civil Service Commissioner Shmuel Hollander is quoted as saying: "Think about this -- a minister who is facing an ongoing investigation or probe or some inquiry is asked to vote on a certain resolution during the weekly cabinet meeting. How will he vote? With or against the State Attorney's Office? He is held hostage. Voting against the State Attorney's Office or the attorney general takes great courage and is tantamount to suicide. I once sat at a special committee tasked with screening potential state attorneys. A whole host of senior officials from the State Attorney's Office testified before the committee and told us that various investigations against ministers are kept open even though everyone knows there is nothing to investigate. We moved uncomfortably in our seats after hearing that."

The so-called "Bibitours" affair -- the alleged double-billing scheme in the airfare and accommodation of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his family overseas when he was finance minister in 2003-2005 -- is a classic example of the regular efforts to neutralize Netanyahu.

The affair was unearthed with much fanfare in March 2008, and it was initially called "Netanyahu's luxury travels." Why was it exposed at that particular time? Because then-Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's term was heading down the drain in the wake of the report on his conduct during the Second Lebanon War and various other scandals.

"The coverage against Netanyahu has no context and lacks proportionality," said journalist Ari Shavit, an expert on the pathological attitude the media adopted toward Netanyahu before his return to power in 2009 and especially since.

"This [anti-Netanyahu coverage] intensifies when he is stronger," Shavit said. "He is the only serious candidate on the Right, and if he could only be neutralized, then the Right will not be able to put up a viable prime ministerial candidate against the Left. This operation runs deep."

In 2008, when it appeared Netanyahu was on his way back to the Prime Minister's Office, Shavit wrote that Netanyahu was receiving extra scrutiny compared to politicians on the Left, including former Prime Minister Ehud Barak and then president Shimon Peres.

"Only when it comes to Netanyahu, do we look at every possible part of his life," Shavit said.

This is clearly evident from the incessant efforts to examine his every expense and purchase: cigars, laundry, furniture, and more.

That is why Netanyahu's voters have no regrets and may even support him more forcefully now. Not only that, it appears he is growing stronger.

The police and the State Attorney's Office are faced with a problem, because people view his actions favorably. There is still also an open question as to the motives behind the various investigations against him.

Before the 2003 election, Attorney Liora Glatt-Berkowitz, then working in the State Attorney's Office, leaked to the press damaging information on Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Glatt-Berkowitz was ultimately convicted in a plea bargain, and later told Haaretz that she did it because she wanted peace and her son was a soldier. About a year later, when Sharon announced that he was going to dismantle settlements in the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria (in what became the 2005 disengagement), the media protected him in bubble wrap and made sure nothing bad was said about him.

Unlike Barak, Olmert and Sharon, Netanyahu has not buckled under the pressure. He has kept his integrity and stuck to his guns on the economy, his policies and his overall strategy, and it appears that he has served Israel well over the past eight years. The proof: People want to take him down. (Israel Hayom Aug 8)

Netanyahu's Strategic Achievements By David M. Weinberg

No one yet knows whether the current police investigations will land Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in court or bring about a change in government. What is intolerable is the false narrative of diplomatic delinquency that is being hurled at Netanyahu, in complete contradiction to the historical record.

Day and night, opposition critics and left-wing ex-security types attack Netanyahu for "doing nothing." They assail his decade-long leadership as having "achieved nothing" and especially for having "missed opportunities for peace."

They claim that Netanyahu has left Israel "isolated." They say that he is driven only by personal calculations, or alternatively, by messianic ideologies – and is thus incapable of protecting Israel's interests.

Such criticism stems from a misreading of Israel's strategic situation and belies a total unwillingness to consider Netanyahu's intelligent, long-term strategy for securing Israel's security and global standing. This is unfortunate, because an honest look at Netanyahu's record suggests significant strategic accomplishment.

As Prime Minister, Netanyahu has been confronted by the following questions: How does Israel steer clear of Arab civilizational chaos while defending its borders in an extremely unstable and unpredictable security environment? How does Israel prevent runaway Palestinian statehood; the emergence of a radical state that prolongs and exacerbates conflict with Israel instead of ending it? How should Israel handle an impatient world community that has gotten into the habit of punishing Israel for the absence of currently unrealistic diplomatic progress with the Palestinians? Perhaps most important, how does Israel stymie the rise of Iranian regional hegemony and prevent its development of nuclear weapons?

Netanyahu's approach to these challenges can be summarized thus: Apply caution alongside creativity. Navigate warily, yet maneuver innovatively.

The prime minister has sought to ride out the Middle East storms by strictly securing Israel's borders; by refraining as much as possible from bloody wars; by seeking out and securing new security and diplomatic alliances; and by forestalling grandiose and dicey diplomatic experiments in Israel's heartland.

At the same time, he has kept all of Israel's options open, while ensuring domestic government stability and the growth of the economy.

Wise and important actors around the world have come to accept Netanyahu's strategic platform: the assertion that the main game in the region is no longer Israel versus the Palestinians or Israel versus the Arabs. Instead, the main basis for defense and diplomatic activity in the Middle East is an unofficial alliance between Israel and most of the Arabs (together with Western powers), against the Iranians and the jihadis. It's the forces of stability and moderation, against the forces of violent and radical Islamic revolution.

Wise and important world actors have come to appreciate Netanyahu as one of the free world's finest statesmen. From China, India, Russia and Africa, in addition to North America and even Europe, they are beating a path to Netanyahu's doorstep seeking opportunities to cooperate with Israel, not to isolate her. Behind the scenes, Israel's relations with Egypt and key Gulf states have never been better, according to all reports.

So there is an Israeli "grand strategy" of sorts and it has been largely successful. It involves steadfastness, patience, and looking over the horizon. It involves being both flexible and firm. It involves positioning Israel as an anchor of sanity and a source of ingenuity.

For many years, it involved bobbing and weaving around then-US president Barack Obama in order to keep America on Israel's side.

Alas, there is a big chink in this contention and in Israel's armor, which is the growing power of Iran and its allies (Hezbollah and Hamas) on Israel's borders. Netanyahu was unable to stop Obama's terrible deal with the mullahs of Tehran, and as a result Iran is more belligerently adventurous than ever. Israel's account with Iran, and with those in Washington and the West that continue to pump for Iran, remains open.

Many liberal circles will acknowledge Netanyahu's acumen in advancing a broad strategic vision, but find it awkward to defend his policy

toward the Palestinians. They fail to understand that the Israeli public elected Netanyahu largely in order to put a brake on the failed Oslo process. Netanyahu represents a majority of Israelis who felt that the repercussions of a breakdown in a bad peace process were incalculably less worse than its continuation.

It's obvious that the Palestinians have been radicalized and suffer from a chronic leadership deficit. Their cloying victimhood clogs their ability to think straight. No Palestinians truly accept Israel's deep historical and religious rights in the Land of Israel.

Gaza seems permanently locked in the jaws of Hamas, and Islamists would capture the West Bank, too, if the IDF halted its nightly raids into Hebron and Nablus. This makes a neat territorial deal and a grand treaty of reconciliation with the Palestinians nearly impossible, and adds to the long-term fragility of Israel's frontiers.

So Netanyahu's go-slow posture in relation to the Palestinians makes a lot of sense. Anyway, the "Palestinian problem" has been marginalized as a priority issue for Middle East Arab leaders. In relative terms, and viewed in a broader context, Palestinian nationalism is one of the more controllable problems that Israel faces. The frictions can and are being managed.

Beyond this, Netanyahu is essentially making an additional argument on Israel's behalf: that Israel should be judged by its many successes (in promoting regional stability, immigrant absorption, education, democracy, human rights, hi-tech, bio-tech and cyber-tech, etc.), rather than its failures in peacemaking with an intransigent adversary.

Evelyn Gordon wrote last year in Mosaic that, when Israel's left-wing politicians "encourage the world to judge Israel on its peacemaking credentials rather than on the myriad positive goods Israel provides, they invite the perverse and false conclusion that the Jewish state has been a failure rather than a resounding success. Peace is obviously desirable, but Israel doesn't exist to achieve peace. It exists to create a thriving Jewish state in the Jewish people's historic homeland" and by extension to contribute to the world in numerous ways. Israel is doing so famously.

An overwhelming majority of Israelis ascribes the last decade of stability and triumph to Netanyahu's leadership. He may not be the ultimate paragon of virtue – what politician is? But his prudence and professionalism have best served Israel's strategic needs.

Netanyahu has not been "just playing petty politics in order to survive," nor has he mainly spent his time monkeying with the media or smoking cigars and drinking champagne. He has driven Israel forward on the basis of a coherent strategic worldview and improved Israel's fortunes. (Jerusalem Post Aug 10)

Al Jazeera is a Weapon By Ariel Bolstein

The plan to close Al Jazeera's offices in Israel, announced Sunday by Communications Minister Ayoob Kara, is a welcome step.

But it is not enough. The time has come to shed all pretenses. Al Jazeera is not a media outlet, it is a weapon wielded by the emir of Qatar. He takes aim at anything or anyone he wishes to harm or exploit, and fires.

Qatar has and continues to invest a fortune in its broadcasting empire, simply because it understands that in this day and age this is a sophisticated, immensely powerful weapon, more potent than any battleship or tank.

Israel, a democratic society, is already on an uneven playing field in the face of the most repugnant tyrants and human rights violators. While we hold our liberties dear and work to uphold them even when our existence is threatened, the Islamist extremists do not recognize any right other than their "right" to spread destruction and murder.

From their perspective, Israel's democracy and freedoms are weaknesses that can and should be exploited for the purpose of spilling Israeli blood. Essentially, Israel is fighting its enemies with one hand tied behind its back. We avoid instituting many possibly effective measures that could hurt the enemy and curb the threat only because we do not want to infringe the rights of individuals or groups, even those that would happily wipe us off the map if they could.

But Israeli leniency and generosity toward those who wish us harm must also have their limits.

It is unfathomable to allow television networks that serve countries and bodies trying to eradicate or harm the Jewish state to continue working in Israel. Al Jazeera is no different in this than the propaganda machines working for Iran or Hezbollah. True, Al Jazeera tries to hide its venomous messages behind a veil of seemingly Western professionalism, but its content is openly hateful and unabashedly incites to violence against Israel. Its staffers in Israel are not covering news events, they are merely trying to fan the flames, and they should be treated accordingly.

Israel may have been the first and primary victim of "terror channels" disguised as legitimate media networks, but it isn't alone. Propaganda has always been the weapon of choice for evil, murderous regimes. Al Jazeera has illustrated its effectiveness as a powerful, underhanded tool of incitement, and it stands to reason that more and more dictatorships will look to obtain similar "toys" for themselves. Just think of all the magical things totalitarian regimes can do with their own networks: lie, incite, sow

chaos, fan hatred, disseminate "fake news" and even cause bloodshed -- without any risk, without getting dirty, and without ever having to leave the air-conditioned studio.

An increasing number of democracies will find themselves under attack by television stations and will need to think of ways to cope. Currently, the free world is ill-equipped to defend itself from this phenomenon. Moreover, much of the free world does not even recognize the threat. Anti-Israel activists are sure to try to present our fight against Al Jazeera's lies as a violation of free speech. We need to be ready to discredit these accusations. With that, in the wake of Russian propaganda campaigns, some Western countries have recently awoken from their slumbers and have begun to understand the potential damage they too face from pseudo-media outlets.

The majority of Arab countries also understand that Israel's actions against Al Jazeera are justified and appropriate. No prominent Arab figures or bodies have sided with the station, and for good reason. Now is a propitious time to set new rules and put an end to our enemies' freedom of propaganda and incitement. Just as we would be appalled to find Islamic State's channel on our cable box, so too is there no place for Al Jazeera or other such hate networks. If the law needs to be changed, then lawmakers need to get to work so that these vile broadcasts can be taken off the air and Israeli citizens can be protected. (Israel Hayom Aug 8)

Democrats Who Want to Be President Back Away from Israel

By Jonathan S. Tobin

The shift to the left by Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York demonstrates the power of a party base that is abandoning the Jewish state.

Both were once rock-solid supporters of Israel. But both have other priorities these days — they are thinking about running for president in 2020. Their problem is that no one who plans to compete in future Democratic primaries can ignore the growing power of their party's left wing, which has grown increasingly hostile to Israel.

The influence of the far left is the only thing that might explain why Booker and Gillibrand are presenting themselves to their party's base as less than fully supportive of Israel. The context for this development is a sea change in the Democratic party that has been taking shape over the past two decades. Where once the Democrats were the lockstep pro-Israel party and Republicans were divided about backing Israel, the parties' positions are now reversed. Republicans today are nearly unanimous in their enthusiastic support for the Jewish state, and they oppose all measures that endanger its security. Now it is the Democrats who are split, with polls showing that those who identify with the party are far less likely to back Israel than Republicans are.

The left-wing grass roots of the Democratic party are increasingly hostile to Israel, something that became clear in 2012 when the delegates at the Democratic National Convention revolted against their leadership's efforts to include in the party platform a recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The delegates booed loudly and rejected the measure in a voice vote while the convention chairman ignored the crowd and declared that the measure had passed. The spectacle was a benchmark moment. Congressional Democrats also demonstrated the limits of their sympathy for Israel during the debate over the Iran nuclear deal. When President Obama declared that support for the agreement was a litmus test of party loyalty, few Democrats bucked him. Both Gillibrand and Booker supported the deal's ratification by the backhanded method the administration employed rather than by gaining the support of two-thirds of the Senate — which the Constitution requires for treaties.

In 2016, Democrats growing split over Israel was evident in the Clinton and Sanders campaigns. The candidates disagreed over Israel's right of self-defense and over support for Palestinian ambitions — one of the few areas where they differed substantively. The Clinton forces were able to quash any potential revolt over the issue, but the presence on the platform committee of Sanders delegates such as Representative Keith Ellison and Cornel West — prominent supporters of anti-Israel measures — was a harbinger of the growing animosity toward Israel.

Loyalty to Obama might explain if not excuse why Booker and Gillibrand abandoned their past promises to be tough on Iran, but they have no compelling excuse about their recent departures from pro-Israel positions.

In Booker's case, it was an astonishing vote against the Taylor Force Act in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. For Gillibrand, it was an announcement that she will oppose the Israel Anti-Boycott Act. Yet while both Booker and Gillibrand rationalized their positions as being related to supposed flaws in the bills, the subtext was a not-so-subtle signal that they are edging away from Israel in order to be more attractive to the voters who might decide the next Democratic presidential nomination.

The Taylor Force Act is a straightforward effort to hold the Palestinian Authority accountable for its financing of terrorism. The PA pays salaries and pensions to the families of all those who commit acts of violence against Israelis and Americans. The PA thereby financially rewards terrorists, paying the most money to those who commit the bloodiest crimes. Worse than that, most of the money to pay for this outrage comes

from foreign donations. The PA has spent more than \$1.1 billion on this "pay for slay" scheme over the past four years and has budgeted half of the foreign aid it will get next year for the same purpose. The law, named after Taylor Force — a non-Jewish American former member of the U.S. armed forces who was murdered by a Palestinian terrorist — would require the PA, as a condition of future aid, to stop rewarding terrorists' families.

Yet Booker — considered very close to the Jewish community before he was elevated to the Senate — was one of four committee Democrats (out of ten) to oppose the Taylor Force Act. His explanation was that he wanted the aid money to be held in escrow for more than a year. A more likely reason is that he is signaling to the left that he wants to be considered as more sympathetic to the Palestinians.

Gillibrand's abandonment of the Israel Anti-Boycott Act was just as telling. The measure expands existing legislation dating back to the 1970s that prohibits American companies from complying with the Arab boycott of Israel; if expanded, the measure would apply to those taking an active part in the boycott, divest, and sanction movement that similarly seeks to discriminate against Israel and wage economic war on it.

Anti-Israel groups and the ACLU claim that it will restrict free speech, but, as the bill's lead co-sponsors (Democratic senator Ben Cardin and Republican Rob Portman) explained in a letter to the group, its language clearly targets only those who engage in discriminatory commercial conduct. The courts have already ruled such laws to be constitutional and said that they don't infringe in any way on First Amendment rights to free speech.

But responding to pressure from the ACLU and to hostile left-wing questioners at town-hall meetings, Gillibrand flipped from being a sponsor to an opponent of the legislation, saying that its language needed to be changed before she would consider backing it.

Both Booker and Gillibrand know that it was only the heavy-handed tactics of the Democratic establishment and its super-delegate rules that dragged the more centrist Clinton over the party's finish line in 2016. All the energy within the party was on the left. If Clinton had faced someone who outflanked her to the left (other than a septuagenarian socialist), she would have never have been the Democrats' nominee.

In 2020, no Democrat will have the advantages Clinton possessed heading into 2016. The balance of power among Democrats is almost certainly going to be further to the left. That's why both Booker and Gillibrand are acting as if they know their long-shot hopes depend on being acceptable to anti-Israel radicals. Both have demonstrated their ability to be chameleons in the past — Gillibrand's transformation from a centrist pro-gun "Blue Dog" member in the House to a left-wing senator is an especially egregious example of how one gets ahead in today's Democratic party.

The message Booker and Gillibrand are sending out is clear: If abandoning Israel is part of the price of victory in 2020, they are very willing to pay it. (National Review Aug 7)

Blowing Up in their Faces By Dror Eydar

It's not Benjamin Netanyahu, the private individual, who is under a loud, constant, and unfair onslaught, but Netanyahu the leader of the Likud and the conservative-right camp. Time and again, the Left plays into its opponents' hands, and its long-held hatred actually helps unite the many factions on the Right, which usually do not see eye to eye on most of the issues on Israeli society's agenda.

Just like before the last election, and in fact throughout the entire time Netanyahu has served as prime minister, when the Left smells blood, it increases its public relations pressure so much that the public feels trapped in a pressure cooker that won't let it escape the monotonous message that "Netanyahu is guilty" and "corrupt" and "dissipated" and the other flattering epithets. When they try to dictate what the masses think, the people rise up and revolt. Especially when that same public is insulted as a group that cannot think for themselves (in contrast to Netanyahu's godlike critics, who down to the last man all think as individuals...) Vox populi, vox dei.

Add in the same old responses from any election campaign about the "neanderthalic mob" who have the audacity to decide for themselves to vote otherwise than the dictates that are spouted day and night at thousands of decibels, and you get a repeated attempt to break down democracy in its simplest sense: contempt for the decision of the demos (the people) and cancelling it through means other than an election. After all, we're talking about "fascist mob" who are "a danger to democracy."

It was hard not to notice the amusing discrepancy between what the people watching the pro-Netanyahu rally at the Tel Aviv Exhibition Fairgrounds on Wednesday evening saw and the frigid media soundtrack that went along with it. At the sight of the cheering yesterday, journalist Amnon Abramovich of Channel 2 asked "innocently" if the prime minister was referring to Attorney General Avichai Mendelblit when he talked about a "putsch." Just the opposite: For months now, we have witnessed a group of left-wing protesters who are constantly outside Mendelblit's home and won't accept anything other than the prime minister being

convicted, working to delegitimize Mendelblit to the point of interfering with his private life.

They belong to the same old group that was responsible for the unprecedented blitz that has already judged and shamed and convicted and imprisoned Netanyahu, before the Israel Police are even done with their investigations, to say nothing of the ongoing legal process that hasn't taken place, but "everyone knows" that Netanyahu such-and-such.

We aren't seeing a demand for the truth, or any attempt to reach the truth and burn out corruption -- we're seeing a fairly transparent use of innumerable accusations to achieve old political goals.

And a word about Sara Netanyahu: The crazed hatred many in the media and on the Left hold for her, and the demonization of her that crosses all boundaries, is inhumane. To paraphrase our sages on another matter, it could be said that she is being used to her detriment as a lightning rod for Netanyahu. For 20 years, she has absorbed a significant portion of the hateful energy directed at him. And in this case, too, the attack achieved the opposite of what it intended.

A decade ago, director Anat Goren's film "All the Campaign's Men" illustrated the hubris of the Left when it came to the Netanyahu dybbuk. Goren includes footage shot at the headquarters of the Kadima party in the 2006 election. In a party meeting, strategic advisor Eyal Arad suggests throwing politics and the public into "an organized panic," and in a classic monologue lays out the prototype for everything that has happened since:

"I'm like a shark that smells blood in the water, break down Bibi. ... I want to take him down completely. He's bleeding in the water. What does a shark do when someone is bleeding in the water? Attack! He takes him down. So let's kill him. We'll put our foot here [Arad is seen placing his right hand against his neck] and press. 'Aaah, aaah!' -- like that. Now it's going to become a national sport. They hate Bibi. We have a chance to do the bring-down of all bring-downs." It's doubtful that anything has changed for that crowd. (Israel Hayom Aug 10)

Preparing for the Post-Abbas Era By Caroline B. Glick

Days after the government bowed to his demand and voted to remove the metal detectors from the Temple Mount, Abbas checked into the hospital for tests. The 82-year-old dictator has heart disease and a series of other serious health issues. And he has refused to appoint a successor.

It is widely assumed that once he exits the stage, the situation in the PA-ruled areas in Judea and Samaria -- otherwise known as Areas A and B -- will change in fundamental ways.

This week, two prominent Palestinian advocates, Hussein Agha and Ahmad Samih Khalidi, published an article in *The New Yorker* entitled "The end of this road: The decline of the Palestinian national movement."

Among other things, they explained that Abbas's death will mark the dissolution of the Palestinian national identity. That identity has already been supplanted in Judea and Samaria by local, tribal identities. In their words, "The powerful local ties made it impossible for a Hebronite to have a genuine popular base in Ramallah, or for a Gazan to have a credible say in the West Bank."

It will also be the end of the PLO and its largest faction, Fatah, founded by Yasser Arafat in 1958 and led by Abbas since Arafat's death in 2004.

Fatah, they explain, has "no new leaders, no convincing evidence of validation, no marked success in government, no progress toward peace, fragile links to its original setting abroad and a local environment buffeted by the crosswinds of petty quarrels and regional antagonisms."

One of the reasons the Palestinians have lost interest in being Palestinians is because they have lost their traditional political and financial supporters in the Arab world and the developing world. The Sunni Arab world, led by Saudi Arabia and Egypt, is now willing to publicly extol Israel as a vital ally in its struggle against Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood. The so-called Arab street is increasingly incensed at the Palestinians for monopolizing the world's attention with their never ending list of grievances against Israel even as millions in the Arab world suffer from war, genocide, starvation and other forms of oppression and millions more have been forced to flee their homes.

As for the developing world, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's refusal to visit with Abbas during his recent visit to Israel marked the official end of the Third World's alliance with the PLO.

After Abbas departs, Agha and Khalidi identify three key actors that will seek to fill the military and political void. First and foremost, the Palestinian security services (PSF) will raise its head. The PSF is heavily armed and has been trained by the US military. Agha and Khalidi argue reasonably that as the best armed and best organized group in the area aside from the IDF, the PSF will likely seize power in one form or another.

The Palestinian forces pose a major threat to Israel. It isn't simply that their members have often participated in murderous terrorist attacks against Israel. With their US military training they are capable of launching large-scale assaults on Israeli civilian communities and on IDF forces.

To understand the nature of the threat, consider that last month, a lone terrorist armed with a knife sufficed to massacre the Salomon family in their home in Halamish before he was stopped by an off-duty soldier. Contemplate what a well-armed and trained platoon of Palestinian soldiers

with no clear political constraints could do.

The second force Agha and Khalidi identify as likely to step into the leadership vacuum is the Israeli Arab political leadership. As Agha and Khalidi note, since the PLO-controlled PA was established in 1994, the Israeli Arab community and the Palestinians of Judea and Samaria have become more familiar with one another.

Due in large part to subversion by the PLO and Hamas and lavish funding of radical Israeli Arab groups and politicians by foreign governments and leftist donors, a generation of radical, anti-Israel Arab politicians has risen to power.

At the same time, since the Arab Spring destabilized all of Israel's neighbors, a cross current of Arab Zionism has captivated the Israeli Arab majority. Recognizing that Israel is their safe port in the storm, Israeli Arabs in increasing numbers are choosing to embrace their Israeli identity, learn Hebrew and join mainstream Israeli society.

Agha and Khalidi signal clearly their hope that the integration of the Palestinians and Israel's Arab minority will enable them to worth together to take over the Jewish state from within.

Finally, Agha and Khalidi note that as support for the Palestinians has waned in the Arab world and the developing world, the West has emerged in recent years as their most stable and enthusiastic political support base. Ethnic Palestinians in the West are more committed to destroying Israel than Palestinians in Syria and Jordan. Western politicians and political activists who support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement are much more committed to the political war against Israel than their counterparts in Asia and Africa.

The Western forces now aligned against Israel in the name of the Palestinians will certainly seek to play a role in shaping events in a post-Abbas world.

This then brings us to Israel and what it must do now and in the immediate aftermath of Abbas's exit from the scene.

The most important thing that Israel can and must do is send a clear message that it will not be walking away from Judea and Samaria. To do so, Israel should end the military government in Area C, where all the Israeli communities and border zones are located, and replace it with its legal code.

Militarily, it is imperative that the IDF be ordered to disarm the PSF as quickly and quietly as possible. Since 2007, Abbas's fear of Hamas has exceeded his hatred for Israel. As a consequence, during this time, the Palestinian security forces have cooperated with the IDF in anti-Hamas operations. There is every likelihood that the forces' calculations in a post-Abbas world will be quite different. Israel cannot afford to have a well-armed force, steeped in anti-Semitic ideology, deployed footsteps from major Israeli population centers.

As for the Israeli Arabs, Israel can empower moderate, integrationist forces to rise to power. To do so, it must enforce its laws against terrorism-sponsoring groups like the Islamic movement and enforce its land and welfare laws toward Arabs with the same vigor it enforces them toward Jews. It must provide support for integrationists to enter the political fray against their anti-Israel rivals.

If Israel fails to take these actions, Agha and Khalidi's dream that the Palestinian war against Israel is taken over by Israeli Arabs supported by the West will become a realistic prospect.

This then brings us to the West.

Economically, Israel has already begun to limit the capacity of anti-Israel forces in the West to wage economic war against it by deepening its economic ties with Asia.

Politically, Israel must reform its legal system to limit the subversive power of the West in its Arab community and more generally in its political system. Foreign governments must be barred from funding political NGOs. Israel should wage a public campaign in the US to discredit foundations and other non-profits in the US that work through Israeli-registered NGOs to undermine its rule of law.

By applying its laws in full to Area C, and by asserting sole security control throughout the areas, while empowering the Israeli Arab majority that wishes to embrace its Israeli identity, Israel will empower the Palestinians in Areas A and B to govern themselves autonomously in a manner that advances the interests of their constituents.

As Agha and Khalidi note, the Palestinians have been in charge of their own governance since 1994. But under the corrupt authoritarianism of the PLO, their governance has been poor and unaccountable. As local identities have superseded the PLO's brand of nationalism borne of terrorism and eternal war against Israel, the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria well positioned to embrace an opportunity to govern themselves under a liberal rule of law without fear of the PLO jackboot.

The post-Abbas era will pose new threats and opportunities for Israel. It is up to Israel to ensure that the opportunities are maximized and the threats are neutralized as quickly as possible. Failing that, Israel can expect to contend with military threats in Judea and Samaria several orders of magnitude greater than what it has dealt with in the past. It can similarly expect to find itself under political assault from a combination of radicalized Israeli Arabs and Western governments that will challenge it in ways it has never been challenged before. (Jerusalem Post Aug 8)