



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*

Gabby miserable.
They would have been
ruthless in their
assaults on the left-wing leaders.

But having the Right stay silent
when Netanyahu is pressured by
Merkel and Trump on such a central
spot in Jerusalem is just beyond the
pale.

Israel has not created any new
neighborhoods in east Jerusalem since Har Homa and Ramat Shlomo were
built two decades ago. It is time to change the paradigm and improve
Israel's position in the fight over the city's boundaries. The reality on the
ground is what will ultimately shape the city's political future. (Israel
Hayom Jan 31)

Commentary...

An Embarrassing Freeze By Nadav Shragai

Optimism abounded at the World Economic Forum in Davos last week
when U.S. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin
Netanyahu met for talks.

But when the two leaders spoke to the cameras, one sentence slipped
under the media's radar: "Israel will pay for that [the U.S. decision to
recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel]," Trump said. Even though he
spoke in the future tense, it was clear we are already paying something.
And who knows, perhaps the price was agreed by both sides in advance.

The fact is that the Trump administration has adopted the previous
president's policy of forcing Israel to slow and effectively freeze
construction in Jerusalem and its environs. Despite Vice President Mike
Pence being Israel's greatest friend at the White House, it is clear that even
under Trump, the U.S. has not changed its views on the core issue of
Jerusalem.

"We're not taking a position on any final status issues, including the
specific boundaries of the Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem or the resolution
of contested borders," Pence said in his Knesset address this month.

The American position is unfortunate, but what is even more troubling
is Israel's resigned approach. After all, it was the Jewish presence that
determined the borders in Jerusalem in the past, and Jewish homes will
ultimately shape its boundaries more than any other variable.

Settlement moratoriums have undermined the notion of Jerusalem as a
united capital. But what is most humiliating is the placing in limbo of plans
to build at Givat Hamatos, a largely empty area in the city's south, because
of this freeze. The area is next to Jerusalem's industrial center and major
neighborhoods, almost on the Green Line that once divided Jerusalem.

Israel has capitulated – there is no other way to describe it – to
international pressure. The fact that the German government and Chancellor
Angela Merkel have been the driving force behind this freeze only makes
this even more infuriating.

This area has strategic importance in the fight over Jerusalem's future as
a united capital. The Palestinians fantasize about a contiguous area under
their sovereignty from Bethlehem through the Arab neighborhood of Beit
Safata, essentially creating a wedge between the Jewish neighborhoods in
the capital's south. Israel wants to fill this gap and create its own area of
contiguous control between the neighborhoods of Gilo and Har Homa.

This does not mean Israel should prevent the Arab residents of the
capital from building homes. They deserve to have a place to live.

But the name of the game is territorial contiguity, and the winner will
ultimately shape the city's boundaries. The more Israel builds there, the
smaller the chance that Jerusalem will be redivided.

The northern Jerusalem neighborhood of Pisgat Zeev now has 40,000
residents. It was built to ensure that the Palestinians would not be able to
build between the neighborhoods of French Hill and Neve Yaakov. The
neighborhood of Homat Shmuel (Har Homa) was built to create a
contiguous urban presence between Gilo and East Talpote and to make sure
Palestinian construction in Bethlehem and nearby villages does not creep
into the city.

Israel also wants to create a similar contiguity northwest of the city, by
connecting the Ramot neighborhood to Givat Zeev.

The Palestinians have competing plans to connect Arab towns in the
area.

Since 1991, Givat Hamatos has been used to house new immigrants and
the homeless in mobile homes. Only a handful of people, on both sides of
the political divide, would oppose permanent construction there. Yesh Atid
leader Yair Lapid and Labor Chairman Avi Gabbay surely support such a
move. Netanyahu also wants to move forward with plans to build there, but
has not done so. In 1998, bowing to pressure from a right-wing Knesset
group, he built Har Homa. Such pressure is needed today too, because the
situation in Givat Hamatos is urgent. Every day that goes by with a
continued freeze there is just embarrassing.

If it had been the Left that was in power and agreed to a freeze in Givat
Hamatos, the Right and Netanyahu would have made the lives of Lapid or

The US Calls a Spade a Spade By Eyal Zisser

If there is anyone who still needed proof of the shift in White House
policies, the U.S. State Department announced Wednesday that it was
designating Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh a terrorist. The move proved
that there really is a new sheriff in town, one who means what he says,
who will not be disrespected, and who shoots first and talks second.

The American move against Haniyeh is largely symbolic, as it is safe
to assume that he has no assets in the U.S. for the administration to seize.

One may wonder why someone like Haniyeh was not placed on the global
terror watch list sooner, but the message from Washington is loud and
clear: Haniyeh and Hamas are part of the problem, not the solution. The
Trump administration has no intention of "embracing" Hamas and
fostering dialogue in hopes that someday the Islamist terrorist group
would change its tune and become moderate.

The Trump administration sees Hamas for what it is – a terrorist
organization that targets civilians and seeks to undermine Washington's
attempts to advance the Middle East peace process.

There seems to be a direct link between the decision to cut American
aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which only
perpetuates the Palestinian refugees' issue and the Israeli-Palestinian
conflict, and Haniyeh's designation.

The U.S. is sending a two-pronged message: first, that those who have
come to see it as little more than an ATM, will from now on be expected
to consider its positions; and second, that the war on terror has no shades
of gray. You either are or are not a terrorist and there is no such thing as a
terrorist organization with a legitimate political arm.

The move also sends a message to Palestinian Authority President
Mahmoud Abbas, who would prefer to appease Hamas with reconciliation
efforts rather than fight it, and who thinks he can trifle with the Trump
administration as he did with its predecessors.

It is safe to assume that, much like following the Dec. 6 recognition of
Jerusalem as Israel's capital, European leaders will rush to criticize and
condemn the U.S. over Haniyeh's designation.

This should not bother Trump too much because the Americans are
the only player in town and nothing will happen without them in terms of
the regional peace process. Trump's challenge is to translate a series of
mainly symbolic statements and moves into comprehensive policy and
practical steps on the ground. This will be the test the American president
will face in his second year at the White House. (Israel Hayom Feb 1)

An Incomparable Comparison By Uri Edelman

I have been trying to understand the handful of Holocaust survivors
who compared the Israeli government's deportation of African work
migrants to Nazi extermination camps. Reporters seeking headlines
pounced on this declaration as if it were a buried treasure, embellishing at
will to titillate their readers' imaginations.

Comparing those who were forced into gas chambers, made to face
firing squads, marched to their deaths or buried alive to the African
infiltrators cheapens the memory of the Holocaust, an unprecedented event
in human history.

Here is just one example of many from that time, when I personally
faced the angel of death. In the camp, children who did not contribute by
working and only consumed resources were put to death immediately
upon discovery. I was found, a 3-year-old boy, and they dragged me into a
line with a large group of men and women – the "daily quota" of the
condemned. I was whipped hard as we were marched out, once across my
back and again across the shoulders, because my small strides were unable
to keep up with the group. The lash across the shoulders hurt most; the

whip wrapped around my emaciated neck and knocked the air out of my tuberculosis-stricken lungs.

Terror gripped me as I stared into the barrel of a machine gun mounted on a tripod. My whole body was overcome by uncontrollable shivers. I had to muster all my strength just to try to stand still, and even that proved impossible. My heart pounded and my limbs trembled from the fear.

I looked at the soldier behind the pitch-black nozzle of the gun, and my eyes were unable to peel themselves away. There were snowflakes on his helmet – it was fiercely cold. When our eyes met for a moment, I thought I saw bewilderment in his eyes, as though he were seeing a baby for the first time. The order to open fire came in a sharp cry. The last thing I remember is the deafening sound of the machine gun in my ears.

I don't know how much time passed, but it was certainly nighttime when, from the depths of the underworld, I heard my mother weeping. I screamed at the top of my lungs that I was still alive, but I was unable to move because of the frozen bodies that covered me. My mother heard me and began moving the dead bodies that enveloped me like a too-heavy funeral shroud.

Apparently I was spared because of the simple fact that the tripod was precisely the same height as I was. With the exception of a bloody scratch left by a bullet that grazed me and sent me falling into the mass grave, I was physically intact.

Perhaps this was so I could advocate for children who weren't as fortunate.

And I ask in the name of all of our people who were murdered: Is any part of what I described here comparable to the plight of migrant workers?! (Israel Hayom Jan 29)

Why Polls on a Palestinian State Are a Mirage

By Stephen M. Flatow

Do you ever wonder why polls consistently show that a large portion of the Israeli public supports creating a Palestinian state?

How can it be that — despite the Palestinian Authority's (PA) support for terrorism, violations of the Oslo Accords and non-stop anti-Israel incitement — so many Israelis seem to be in favor of establishing a Palestinian state next door? Could it be that the answer is found in the asking?

Just last week, newspaper headlines announced that according to a new poll, 47 percent of Israeli Jews still support Palestinian statehood. The poll was carried out by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, at Tel Aviv University.

But as with most news about Israel, you need to dig behind the headlines to find out the real story. In this case, the real story is the wording that the Steinmetz Center used. The question that got that 47 percent figure was loaded with false assumptions and completely unrealistic expectations. In other words, the poll offered a fantasy.

The Steinmetz Center asked respondents if they supported a “two-state solution” that would include:

1. A “permanent settlement.” In reality, nobody can guarantee that any settlement would be “permanent.” The Palestinian leader who signs an agreement could be overthrown the next day. Arab leaders are constantly being ousted and replaced by arch-rivals.

2. The agreement would include “demilitarization of the Palestinian state.” This, despite the fact that every Palestinian leader has rejected the idea of demilitarization. Even if they signed such an agreement, what's the likelihood that they would abide by that? If a “demilitarized” Palestinian state started importing tanks that it claimed were needed for self-defence, Israel would face international condemnation and sanctions if it tried to intervene.

3. There would be “family unification in Israel of 100,000 Palestinian refugees.” Notice the use of the sympathetic term “family unification.” What cruel person would oppose unifying families? More important, the PA's position has always been that millions of Palestinian “refugees” — not a mere 100,000 — must be allowed to settle in Israel. The 100,000 figure is an illusion that supporters of the Palestinians trot out to try to sell their imaginary deal.

4. “The Palestinian state will fight terror against Israelis.” What a joke. The heart and soul of the Oslo Accords was that the PA would stamp out terrorist groups. Yet here we are, 25 years later, and the PA has never disarmed or outlawed any of the terrorist groups, never extradited any terrorists to Israel, never even expelled terror factions from the PLO, etc. But now, when they have a state, they will suddenly “fight terror?”

So there you have it: The “Palestinian state” that 47 percent of Israeli Jews would favor is a creature of the Steinmetz Center's imagination. A permanently peaceful, totally demilitarized, terror-fighting Palestinian state that won't insist on flooding Israel with “refugees.” Who wouldn't want such a neighbor? Frankly, I'm surprised only 47 percent of Israeli Jews voiced their support.

It's not hard to understand why advocates of the Palestinian cause are so enamored of the Steinmetz Center. The center's website reports that its polls of Israeli public opinion are undertaken “with funding from the European Union and the Netherlands Representative Office in Ramallah.” I

guess the EU and the Dutch government, both of which are passionately pro-Palestinian, see the center's work as helpful to the Palestinian cause.

You can bet that the EU and the Dutch would be mighty unhappy if the Steinmetz Center asked questions that included factual statements about Palestinian statehood, such as:

- If a Palestinian state is established, Israel will be nine miles wide at its midsection. Is that a risk you are willing to take?
- If a Palestinian state is established, a terrorist with a shoulder-fired missile, standing inside the borders of “Palestine,” will be able to shoot down a plane taking off from Ben Gurion Airport. Do you believe the PA can be relied upon to stop such attacks?
- The PA has never honored its Oslo obligations to disarm our outlaw terrorist groups. Do you believe that a Palestinian state would take those actions?

Any chance of the Steinmetz Center ever asking such questions? I'm not holding my breath, and you shouldn't either. (Algemeiner Jan 31)

Trump's Jerusalem Statement Shakes Up the System

By Gershon Hacohen

A number of Israeli commentators have sought to reduce the significance of President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and even to warn of the danger inherent therein.

Zvi Bar'el, for example, claimed that “Trump's decision and the severe defeat in the UN leaves Israel with Jerusalem in hand but with nothing in the long run.” Eitan Haber warned that “the friend in the White House does not work for us” and that in time a Big Plan will be laid on the table — one whose details will be a great embarrassment to Jerusalem.

One might ask why this declaration was viewed as novel, as it was preceded in April 2017 by Moscow's recognition of West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, alongside East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine. The prevailing view is that Trump's statement was intended to say to Israel: “You have now received a gift. Henceforth, do not foil the Big Deal.”

The Trump declaration should be examined from a point of view that extends beyond the standard question of what Israel gained and what it will need to give in return. That conventional interpretation is trapped in a Western rational perception of the nature and logic of the strategic process.

Western approaches — subjugated as they are to a production-line management model — expect strategic planning to mark a target as a desired end and to take planned steps to reach it. By that standard, Trump's statement and its repercussions can indeed be construed as dangerous: as a seductive introduction to an enforced process whose end is predetermined, or as a reckless step towards the unknown.

But the key to Trump's logic is in a different strategic planning model — one very close to the Russian way of thinking.

After a year in office, during which Jason Greenblatt and Jared Kushner served as his emissaries to the Middle East, President Trump apparently realized that the Israeli-Palestinian relationship has become paralyzed and deadlocked. With this understanding, he applied a Russian way of thinking that reflects his experience as a businessman. To break out of the standstill, he consciously sought to shake up the system. His object was to bring about a new occurrence in relation to which he would then calculate his next steps.

That was the purpose of the Jerusalem declaration, and it was fully achieved. It was much like throwing a stone into a puddle and watching the mud rise from the bottom.

The Russian approach to strategic planning assumes that with the start of action, the system in which it operates varies and fluctuates to the point of reincarnation. The recognition of systemic change forces one to acknowledge that the plan one is embarking upon must be subjected to complete re-examination, not just to minor adjustments. There is, of course, a strategic goal that serves as a compass from the start, but one embarks upon a path without a final plan for each stage along the way towards that goal. One recognizes that this is a process, a sequence of dynamic systems, through which one will clarify not only the way to achieve the end goal but also the ability to achieve it.

A Western rational approach does not begin a journey until the ability to reach the goal is guaranteed. In this respect, Trump's move seems irresponsible. The Russian approach, on the other hand, starts the process in full knowledge that for the time being, there is no way to assess the likelihood that the goal will be reached.

In this rational format, Trump's move takes on a different meaning. Calculated steps into the unknown can be likened to the advance of a reconnaissance force sent into battle in a threatened area in order to draw fire and thus discover the enemy's military deployment while the rest of the force remains secured behind, waiting for the situation to become clearer.

In recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, Trump expressed reservations in the interests of maintaining a stable footing that will allow for retreat if necessary. At the same time, he explicitly mentioned the two-state plan and emphasized that the borders of Jerusalem would be

determined in negotiations. In fact, nothing new was said. It is precisely because of this that the ensuing uproar was so significant. It exposed the reality of Palestinian demands.

For those hoping for an Israeli-Palestinian agreement at almost any price, the Palestinian response led by Mahmoud Abbas, including a questioning of the US's ability to be a fair mediator, appears to be another obstacle — possibly an insurmountable one.

The logic of the two-state solution cannot explain what prevented Abbas from calculatingly accepting the declaration. He could have emphasized that it referred to West Jerusalem, which he also recognizes, as long as it is clear and agreed that East Jerusalem is the capital of the Palestinian state.

Rather, his response gave grist to those members of the Israeli leadership who are interested in extricating Israel from the format of the Clinton outline for a solution to the conflict, as agreed by Prime Minister Ehud Barak and adopted by Ehud Olmert, in his last, exceedingly generous proposal to Abbas in 2007-8. Netanyahu has been fighting this outline since he took office as prime minister in 2009. Instead of Abbas's insistence on continuing the negotiations from the place where he left off with Olmert, Netanyahu presented his willingness to negotiate without preconditions.

The difference between the Rabin outline as presented in his last speech in the Knesset in October 1995 and the Barak-Olmert outline is summed up in three essential elements: Rabin insisted on the integrity of a united Jerusalem in its broad scope, on the preservation of the Jordan Valley "in the broadest interpretation of this concept" as an eastern security border, and the insistence on a Palestinian entity "short of a state." Barak and Olmert gave up all three of these elements and added another condition that was never agreed upon in Rabin's concept — land swaps, or the granting of Israeli territory in return for every piece of land Israel retains in the settlement blocs.

The stone thrown by Trump into the puddle shows us what is going on at the bottom. Here lies the potential strategic significance of the Trump Declaration. By shaking up the system and creating an opportunity to re-examine Palestinian claims as a whole, the declaration might help Israel escape the trap of the Clinton-Barak outline. (Algemeiner Jan 30)

The Predictable Liberal Response to Pence By Isi Leibler

Listening to U.S. Vice President Mike Pence's address to the Knesset was a euphoric experience. Pence is a devout evangelical Christian who regards America's religious commitment as a crucial component of the administration's policy. He genuinely believes that God will bless those who promote the welfare of Israel and the Jewish people.

President Donald Trump's deputy gave an address affirming the United States' love of Israel and vindicating the Jewish people's Zionist vision based on our biblical and historical vision and the spiritual bonds we share.

He stressed that the administration still sought to facilitate a peace settlement but asserted that ultimately, the parties must negotiate directly with each other. He reiterated Trump's warning that if the Palestinians refused to negotiate with Israel, Abbas would not succeed with such behavior. As Trump pointed out, the days of free lunches are over and the Palestinians will no longer be able to take for granted that the billions of dollars of U.S. aid would continue pouring in to support them. More importantly, the entire UNRWA operation was being reviewed on the supposition that vast funds were being channeled into a bottomless pit which was financing incitement against Israel and no effort had been made to integrate the ever-growing number of refugees and their descendants — but instead they had been exploited as a vehicle with which to destroy Israel.

The policy of the Trump administration as expressed by Pence is a stark contrast to the Barack Obama era, when at best Israel and the Palestinians were portrayed in terms of moral equivalence, even as Abbas openly flaunted his incitement by praising and rewarding killers and their families — an abomination simply ignored by the U.S.

Pence declared that "we stand with Israel because we believe your cause is our cause, your values are our values and your fight is our fight. We stand with Israel because we believe in right over wrong, in good over evil, and in liberty over tyranny."

This was accompanied by pledges of support and renewed commitments by the U.S. to opening a Jerusalem embassy next year.

He also guaranteed that the U.S. would never acquiesce to the "disaster" of a nuclear-armed Iran.

No American leader has ever spoken to or about Israel in this manner. It signaled the end, at least for the time being, of the daylight Obama created between the U.S. and Israel. It was thus apt of Pence to recite the blessing "shehecheyanu vekiymanu vehigi'anu lazman hazeh," thanking God for granting us life, sustaining us, and enabling us to reach this occasion.

Setting aside the Joint Arab List MKs who were ejected from the Knesset after trying to provoke an incident with the vice president and Meretz representatives who remained seated, almost the entire Knesset unanimously cheered him and provided repeated standing ovations. Aside from the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it was the first real

instance of a display of near-total unity in the Knesset toward a foreign statesman since the division of the nation over the Oslo Accords.

Throughout the nation, the overwhelming majority are cautiously optimistic about the new administration's policy toward Israel and especially the visit of Pence.

Not so among American Jewry, where polls suggest that 42% (initially including Reform leader Rabbi Rick Jacobs) opposed Trump's recognition of Jerusalem, considering it "premature" and harmful to the peace process. That 70% voted against Trump is no excuse for such behavior, which amounts to a display of contempt for Israel's interests.

Their attitude remained unchanged even after Abbas refused to meet Pence and made it clear that he would never recognize Israel as a Jewish state. In a series of feral anti-Semitic speeches, Abbas cursed the Balfour Declaration, warned of massive terror attacks and lashed out against Trump, insisting that he would not have any future dealings with the administration or Israel until the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital was reversed. Trump responded that Jerusalem was off the table. Needless to say, to the outrage of the delusional Left, Pence also failed to describe the duplicitous Abbas as a "peace partner."

The reaction of much of the Israeli media was astonishing. With the exception of Israel Hayom, most of the media abounded with columns minimizing and mocking Pence's address.

Ha'aretz, which despises the Trump administration, described Pence's speech as "bombast" and accused him of promoting messianic evangelical Zionism and being more Zionist than Israelis.

The Jerusalem Post's political correspondent (in contrast to Herb Keinan's excellent analysis) dismissed the importance of the Pence visit, comparing it to a recent trip by comedian Jerry Seinfeld.

Another Jerusalem Post columnist claimed that Trump, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley and now Pence had given Israel a "get out of jail free" card which would encourage intransigence among Israelis and not make them "take the initiative and search for ways to move forward."

One might ask those calling on Israel to "move forward" to explain what they mean. The implication is that the worse Abbas becomes, the more concessions we should provide. In other words, continue appeasing those seeking our destruction.

Instead of commending Pence for distinguishing between good and evil, the Israeli media condemned him for casting all the blame on the Palestinians and none on Israel. While it is undeniable that on occasion Israel has made mistakes, to suggest that both parties are equally at fault and morally equivalent is utter distortion.

The reality is that for the first time since the creation of the state, we have an American leadership willing to tell the truth.

They have ceased repeating the mantra of equivalence between those striving for peace and separation and those inciting to bloodshed and annihilation.

Above all, for the first time we have an administration distinguishing between good and evil and willing to expose the evil emanating from the Palestinians and their allies.

This is truly a sea change and we should unite to take advantage of this situation which, given the turbulence of American politics, cannot be guaranteed to last forever. (Jerusalem Post Jan 31)

Identifying the enemy as...the enemy By Martin Sherman

"We do not have a "dispute," but a war—and confronting us is an enemy." — Elyakim Haetzni, Arutz 7, January 23, 2018.

"Enemy: [a person or group] that is antagonistic to another; especially: one seeking to injure, overthrow, or confound an opponent." - Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

"D-Day is approaching. The Arabs have waited 19 years for this and will not flinch from the war of liberation...This is a fight for the homeland — it is either us or the Israelis. There is no middle road. The Jews of Palestine will have to leave. We will facilitate their departure to their former homes. Any of the old Palestine Jewish population who survive may stay, but it is my impression that none of them will survive... We shall destroy Israel and its inhabitants and as for the survivors." — if there are any — the boats are ready to deport them - Ahmed Shukeiry, Yasser Arafat's predecessor, in a premature flush of triumph, just days prior to the Arabs' crushing defeat in June 1967, before Israel held a square inch of "occupied territory".

The war between Arab and Jew for control over the Holy Land has dragged on for well over 100 years. For the last seven decades, the Arab effort has focused on an attempt to first thwart the establishment of a sovereign Jewish-nation state, and then, when that failed, to destroy it.

Up until the early 1970s, the Arab war effort principally comprised an endeavor to obliterate the Jewish presence by means of conventional military might, involving frontal assault and invasion by regular armies of sovereign state-actors.

Indeed, this brutal credo is perhaps best illustrated by the late Gamal Abdel Nasser's pre-war bravado, when he threatened the gory obliteration

of Israel—within its 1948 frontiers: “We shall not enter Palestine with its soil covered in sand, we shall enter it with its soil saturated in blood” (March 8, 1965).

With their Judeocidal efforts repeatedly frustrated and after the failure of the coordinated surprise attack against the Jewish state in October 1973, it seems that the Arabs began to despair of this unvarnished and unabashed use of conventional martial force.

Gradually, a more multi-faceted strategy of aggression emerged, which no longer portrayed Israel as easy prey to be crushed by overwhelming Arab might. This time, the major emphasis was on the role of non-state actors (i.e. terror organizations) and offensive diplomacy, designed to isolate Israel in the international arena and portray her as an ogre-like oppressor, whose every action of self-defence to protect its civilian population is excoriated as an unjustified and disproportionate use of force.

Thus, although the overriding objective remained the same, i.e. the eradication of the Jewish state, the method by which this was to be achieved shifted from cataclysmic destruction by Arab armies to a process of ongoing attrition by means of political, diplomatic and economic beleaguering; and asymmetrical warfare launched by non-state-actors.

The former was aimed at discrediting and delegitimizing Israel internationally so as to curtail, even cripple, its ability to effectively employ its military prowess to confront the latter, which was aimed at weakening national resolve and undermining national morale.

The clear goal of this was to erode Israel’s national resolve and coerce her into accepting perilous concessions that would make her eventual demise easier to achieve in the future.

(For anyone tempted to believe that the Sunni Arabs have been significantly swayed from this long-term objective because of their fear of ascendant Shia power, I would suggest the astute analysis by the prominent scholar of Islam, Dr. Mordechai Keidar, who cautions against falling prey to this seductive illusion.)

In this ongoing endeavor of attrition, and in which Keidar warns that “For both religious and nationalist reasons, the Arabs...are incapable of accepting Israel as the Jewish State that it is”, a leading role has been assigned to the Palestinian-Arabs.

The notion of a distinct collective identity for the Arabs, whose origins trace (or allegedly trace) to mandatory Palestine (herein under “Palestinian-Arabs”) began to emerge in the mid-1960s. This, according to some senior East European intelligence sources, was the brain child of the now defunct Soviet spy agency, the KGB, with the express purpose of damaging US and Israeli interests. (For some reports on collaboration between the KGB and the PLO—Palestinian Liberation Organization—in Judeocidal terror operations, including the involvement of the previous and present PLO heads, Arafat and Abbas—see for example here, here, and here.)

But, of course, one does not necessarily have to lend credence to allegations of the KGB generated origins of the PLO to grasp that the whole issue of “Palestinian national identity” is a giant hoax, intended to be no more than a temporary ruse, until the Jewish hold on sovereignty in the Holy Land—any part of the Holy Land—is prised loose.

For that, all one needs to do is to examine the deeds, declarations and documents of the Palestinian-Arabs themselves.

Perhaps the most explicit – but certainly by no means, the only – articulation of Arab design was that of the oft-quoted, but ne’er-repudiated, Zuheir Muhsein, former head of the PLO’s Military Department and a member of its Executive Council.

Muhsein underscores, quite unequivocally and unabashedly, that the contrived collective identity of the Palestinian-Arabs as a “national entity” is little more than a flimsy and openly admitted pretext to advance the wider Arab cause of eradicating the “Zionist entity”. He openly confesses: “The creation of a Palestinian state is only a means for continuing our struggle against the state of Israel.... It is only for political and tactical reasons that we speak today about the existence of a Palestinian people, since Arab national interests demand that we posit the existence of a distinct ‘Palestinian people’ to oppose Zionism.”

He then starkly elucidated the rationale for a staged Arab strategy, and the crucial role the fictitious construct of a “Palestinian identity” had to play in implementing it: “For tactical reasons, Jordan, which is a sovereign state with defined borders, cannot raise claims to Haifa and Jaffa, while as a Palestinian, I can undoubtedly demand Haifa, Jaffa, Beersheba and Jerusalem. However, the moment we reclaim our right to all of Palestine, we will not wait even a minute to unite Palestine and Jordan.”

It is thus clear, that as a collective, the Palestinian-Arabs comprise the spearhead in the Arab struggle against Jewish sovereignty.

It would be a grave error to dismiss this as merely the opinion of a single, long-forgotten Palestinian leader. Indeed, it is a view that, over the years, has been expressed by many Arabs, Palestinian or otherwise, from Farouk Kaddoumi to King Hussein.

More recently, it was baldly and brazenly articulated by Mahmoud Abbas himself, in his January 14 tirade before the PLO’s Central Council, where he spewed: “Israel is a colonial project that has nothing to do with Jews”.

But more important, it is a sentiment that permeates the entire

Palestinian National Charter. For example, in Article 22, we read: “Zionism is a political movement organically associated with international imperialism and antagonistic to all action for liberation and to progressive movements in the world. It is racist and fanatic in its nature, aggressive, expansionist, and colonial in its aims, and fascist in its methods.” And of course: “Israel is the instrument of the Zionist movement”.

Moreover, this primal enmity is immutable and immune to the passage of time and predates the 1967 “occupation”. Thus, in Article 19 we read: “The partition of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of the state of Israel are entirely illegal, regardless of the passage of time...”

But no less significant—and revealing—is the proviso, expressed in Article 12, regarding the transient nature of Palestinian-Arab collective identity: “The Palestinian people believe in Arab unity. In order to contribute their share toward the attainment of that objective, however, they must, at the present stage of their struggle, safeguard their Palestinian identity and develop their consciousness of that identity...”

What could be more revealing than that?

After all, what other nation declares that its national identity is merely a temporary ploy to be “safeguarded” and “developed” for the “present stage” alone? Does any other nation view their national identity as so ephemeral and instrumental? The Italians? The Brazilians? The Turks? The Greeks? The Japanese? Of course, none of them do.

It was eminent social psychologist, Kurt Leven, who wisely observed that: “There is nothing so practical as a good theory.” After all, action without comprehension is a little like swinging a hammer without knowing where the nails are—and just as hazardous and harmful. In this regard, good theory creates understanding of cause and effect and hence facilitates effective policy.

Accordingly, to devise effective policy to contend with abiding Arab enmity, Israel must correctly conceptualize the conflict over the issue Jewish sovereignty in Holy Land.

In this regard, it should painfully clear that the conflict is one between two irreconcilable collectives: A Jewish collective and an Arab collective—for which, today, the Palestinian-Arab collective is its operational spearhead.

They are irreconcilable because the *raison d’être* of the one is the preservation of Jewish political sovereignty in the Holy Land, while the *raison d’être* of the other is to annul Jewish political sovereignty in the Holy Land. Therefore, for one to prevail, the other must be prevailed upon. With antithetical and mutually exclusive core objectives, only one can emerge victorious, with the other vanquished.

As a clash of collectives, whose outcome will be determined by collective victory or defeat, it cannot be personalized. The fate of individual members of one collective cannot be a deciding determinant of the policy of the rival collective—and certainly not a consideration that impacts the probability of collective victory or defeat.

To underscore the crucial importance of this seemingly harsh assessment, I would invite any Israeli to consider the consequences of Jewish defeat and Arab victory. A cursory survey of the gory regional realities should suffice to drive home the significance of what would accompany such an outcome. Accordingly, only once a decisive Jewish collective victory has been achieved, can the issue of individual injustice and suffering in the Arab collective be addressed as a policy consideration.

Indeed, had the imperative of collective victory not been the overriding factor of the Allies’ strategy in WWII, despite horrendous civilian casualties that it inflicted on the opposing collective, the world might well have been living in slavery today.

In weighing the question of the fate of individual members of the opposing collective, it is imperative to keep in mind that, while there are doubtless many Palestinian-Arabs with fine personal qualities and who wish no-one any harm, the Palestinian-Arab collective is not the hapless victim of radical terror groups. Quite the opposite. It is, in fact, the societal crucible in which they were forged, and from which they emerged. Its leadership is a reflection of, not an imposition on, Palestinian-Arab society.

The conclusion is thus unavoidable: The Palestinian-Arab collective must be considered an implacable enemy—not a prospective peace partner...and it must be treated as such.

Accordingly, the provision of all goods and services that sustain it must be phased out over a clearly defined period of time. After all, what is the morality of sustaining your enemy if that only sustains its ability to wage war against you—prolonging the suffering on both sides!

These are, of course, harsh policy prescriptions, but at the end of the day, they will be unavoidable. Elsewhere, I have set out the principles for extricating the non-belligerent Palestinian-Arabs from the severe humanitarian predicament they are likely to precipitate—chiefly by means of generous grants for relocation/rehabilitation in third party countries, out of the “circle of violence”.

Of course, the crucial point to realize here is that even the most moral and democratic societies can have enemies.

Recognizing such enmity—and the policies required to repel it—is not racism. It is merely realism. (IsraelNationalNews.com Jan 28)