



Commentary...

Gaza in the Dark is not So Terrible By Efraim Inbar

The Hamas leadership in Gaza has threatened Israel with "an explosion" if it does not supply electricity to Gaza at the expense of Israeli taxpayers.

Blackmail is, of course, part of the Hamas repertoire. One of the main reasons why Hamas launched thousands of rockets and sent terrorists into Israel via tunnel in the summer of 2014 was to solve its dire economic problem. Hamas needs electricity to build terror tunnels and produce weapons.

Voices in Israel and abroad are advocating "moderation" – meaning capitulation – and insisting that Israel has no interest in an escalation. While Israel naturally prefers quiet along its borders, giving in to Hamas demands and granting it a victory will only lead to further demands. Supplying electricity to Gaza in exchange for a promise that Gazans refrain from shooting at Israeli civilians is no different from paying protection money to the Mafia.

There is no strategic or moral reason why Israel should supply free electricity to Gaza.

While Israel does not desire escalation, it has no reason to fear it. Israel is the stronger side. Moreover, the essence of war is a competition to inflict pain on the opponent in order to change patterns of behavior. Pain has a positive value in that it affects the learning curves of the warring sides. Israel has made use of force to teach the Palestinians that aggression against Israel does not pay, and that continued support for Hamas can be costly.

Another round of violence – one that exacts a high cost from Hamas and the Gazans – may lead them to more peaceful behavior. It is true that it is difficult to influence the learning processes of large collectives, but it is by no means unprecedented. For example, it took much suffering in WWI and WWII to transform Germany into a less militaristic and belligerent society. While not politically correct, such treatment might help turn the Palestinians into peaceful neighbors in the long run.

In any case, it makes no strategic sense to ease the situation of Hamas at just the moment that the Arab Sunni states have put Qatar (the backer of the Muslim Brotherhood, of which Hamas is a part) under diplomatic and economic siege. Moreover, the US seems to support the steps taken by Saudi Arabia and its allies. The Palestinian Authority (PA) itself, which initiated the electricity crisis by refusing to continue to pay for energy supply to Gaza as part of the internal Palestinian struggle for dominance, is unimpressed by warnings of an impending human disaster.

Hamas exploits the suffering of Gazans to extract humanitarian aid and sympathy for their cause. But the Gazans cannot be exempted from responsibility for the consequences of Hamas's actions. Unfortunately, Hamas remains popular in Gaza, and all polls show that Gazans support continued violence against Israel.

The Gazans are, in short, not good neighbors, and they do not deserve Israel's sympathy. What moral justification exists that compels Israelis to assist people who support an organization intent on destroying them?

Moreover, plans to ease the economic situation in Gaza – either by supplying electricity and water or by building a port – send the wrong signals. They tell the Palestinians that their leadership can make grave mistakes, but outsiders with good intentions will bail them out. They also signal to Hamas that it might as well continue shooting at Israel. Why not? If Israel takes military steps in response, merciful donors will repair the damage yet again.

The billions of euros transferred to the Palestinians over the past two decades have been squandered through ineptitude and misappropriated through corruption. Like many Third World countries, Gaza lacks the legal and institutional infrastructure needed for the effective dispersal of economic aid. Very little aid has filtered down to the people. Hamas leadership, however, continues to be enriched by it. Those with arms always get the first and best cut of foreign aid sent to the poor. Humanitarian aid to Gaza is also siphoned off to build better military capabilities with which to fight Israel.

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*

The authoritarian rule of Hamas dooms the Gazans to continuous poverty, ignorance, and protracted war with Israel. Palestinians, particularly in Gaza, are not educated to seek peace, but to make sacrifices and martyr themselves in a holy war against the Jewish state.

Israel has no choice but to reject Hamas demands, even if that refusal brings about another round of violence that will add to the suffering in Gaza. Even the friends of the Palestinian national movement should realize that it is time for some tough love for Gaza. Maybe a bit of darkness will help the Gazans see the light. (BESA Jun 18)

J Street's Phony Condemnation of Hamas By Stephen M. Flatow

J Street, the pro-Palestinian lobbying group, this week criticized the Hamas regime for building terror tunnels in Gaza. J Street's solution to the problem? Give more money to Gaza!

It's been three years since J Street last put out a press release mentioning the tunnels, and even then it was only in the context of celebrating the fact that Israel had ceased its military operations against Hamas in Gaza.

So if you get your news from J Street, you would assume there hasn't been any tunnel-building going on in Gaza since 2014. But lo and behold, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) this week complained that it found a Hamas terror tunnel running under two of its schools in Gaza. UNRWA, whose schools are notorious for their anti-Israel hate curricula, has never shown much concern when tunnels were built to murder Israelis. But dig a tunnel under UNRWA's own schools - well, that's cause for outrage.

The UNRWA announcement gave J Street an easy way to seem as if it is getting "tough" on Hamas. J Street has nothing to lose by criticizing Hamas. Israel already gave all of Gaza to Hamas. There's no danger that criticizing Hamas will impede Israel FROM handing over territory to Hamas, because there's no territory left in Gaza for J Street to demand that Israel hand over.

By contrast, notice that J Street almost never criticizes the Palestinian Authority - not for its incitement to violence, not for paying salaries to terrorists, not even for its human rights violations against fellow Palestinians. That's because focusing attention on the PA's terrorism and totalitarianism would impede J Street's mission of planting a PA state in Israel's back yard. And J Street is obsessed with creating that state, regardless of what kind of state it will be.

Would "Palestine" be a terrorist regime? Would it be totalitarian? Who cares? Israel will be stuck dealing with those consequences, while the J Streeters return to the comfort of their lives in Beverly Hills, Scarsdale, and Potomac and find some new cause with which to entertain themselves.

Incredibly, even J Street's "condemnation" of Hamas this week came with some strings attached - very big strings. After its pro forma criticism of the tunnels, J Street's press release got to the real issue - what it calls "Gaza's humanitarian crisis."

That's the real problem, in J Street's view:

"The humanitarian crisis and overall status quo in Gaza is totally untenable and continues to deteriorate."

Every few weeks, the Jewish 'peace' camp and ITS allies in the media circulate alarmist reports about how Gaza "is on the edge of collapse" or "just about to explode."

For some reason, though, the only collapses that ever seem to take place in Gaza are when terror tunnels cave in, and the only explosions are when Hamas bomb-makers have work accidents. There has not been a single report of any Gazans dying of starvation, malnutrition, or any of the other afflictions one would expect based on all the claims about imminent disaster there.

What is J Street's "solution" to this "crisis"? Give more American taxpayers' money to Gaza, of course: "We urge the U.S. government and the international community to work with Israeli and Palestinian authorities to find ways to improve the situation on the ground..."

Hamas has proven time and again that it knows how to turn "humanitarian" assistance into weapons of terror. The tunnels are built from concrete that was imported to Gaza after the Obama administration pressured Israel to allow it in, in order to build houses.

Additional "humanitarian" aid will simply relieve Hamas of the

burden of caring for its own population, thus freeing up funds for Hamas to build more tunnels, bombs, and rockets.

J Street's "condemnation," then, is not merely worthless - it's dangerous. Because if J Street's advice is followed, Hamas will have even more funds and materials to build the very terror tunnels J Street claims to oppose.

Beware of Turks Bearing Gifts By Nadav Shragai

Israel should be concerned about the unholy trio that fantasizes about a regional Islamic caliphate with Jerusalem at its center, and sends a great deal of money to the city: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has already made it clear that "every day Jerusalem is occupied offends the Muslims"; Sheikh Raed Salah, head of the outlawed Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement, the perpetual firestarter and spinner of the modern-day blood libel that "Al-Aqsa is in danger" who would wipe the State of Israel off the map if he could; and Ekrima Sabri, former mufti of Jerusalem and today the head preacher at Al-Aqsa mosque, who sees the Jews as sullyng the Muslim character of Jerusalem. Sabri is one of the leading voices in the Palestinian refrain that denies Jewish ties to Jerusalem or the Temple Mount.

Supposedly, the Turkish money is being donated for innocuous purposes: community activity, charity, Muslim religious and heritage causes, but this ostensibly innocent *modus operandi* was also a hallmark of the Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement in its early years, and look how that ended. The Northern Branch was outlawed for very good reason, but too late, after it had already turned the Temple Mount into a nexus of constant conflict and a ticking bomb.

Turkey is funneling the money directly to the Temple Mount, among other things, without even trying to disguise its main objective: to weaken Israel's status in-, hold on-, and sovereignty over Jerusalem and to glorify Islam in the city, especially on the Mount (the holiest site to Jews and only the third holiest site to Muslims). Salah once had a dream of filling the cisterns on the Temple Mount with water from the Zamzam Well in Mecca. He hoped that by doing so he would make the Temple Mount equal to Mecca in holiness. Israel thwarted the plan, and it's no wonder that the Saudis are having nightmares about the competition Salah represents.

But the Turkish government cannot be outlawed, like Israel did with Salah and his movement. But it is possible to look into whether the Turkish money transfers were legal. TIKA, the Turkish government aid agency works under the auspices of the Turkish prime minister and feeds off of Turkish government money. It sends money to Jerusalem with nary an obstacle. The legality of the purpose, as well as the transfers themselves, should be examined -- the ones from TIKA as well as those from other Turkish institutions.

Another wise way to deal with money Turkish groups are raining down on Jerusalem is for Israel to realize, finally, that the residents of east Jerusalem, which was annexed to Israel, are entitled to the same quality of services and infrastructure as the capital's Jewish neighborhoods. If Israel did the work that the Turkish money is doing, Erdogan and his cash wouldn't be as relevant, and neither would his vision of restoring the Ottoman Empire in Jerusalem. (Israel Hayom Jun 22)

A Young, Determined Heir By Maj. Gen. (ret.) Yaakov Amidror

I recently heard from a foreign expert that the Saudi royal family is undergoing a process of change -- a process that gathered steam after the recent visit by U.S. President Donald Trump. The visit demonstrated to the Saudis that they had the support of the U.S. -- something they did not get from the last president. Indeed, naming the king's son the new heir to the throne on Wednesday represented both the reform process itself and its growing momentum.

It was clear that the process wouldn't be easy, since this is the first time since the founder of the dynasty died in 1953 that the next generation, the grandchildren, are taking over. Thus far, the kings have been the sons of the first king -- six half-brothers who inherited the crown from one another, which naturally led to an increasingly elderly leadership. There are no more of these brothers left, and it was unclear which grandson would become the crown heir. The family decided on Wednesday that it would be Mohammed, the son of the current king, Salman. The man he has displaced as heir publicly swore allegiance to him that very day, a sign that he accepts the new heir's authority even though he himself had been the leading candidate to inherit the throne and is 26 years older than the new 31-year-old heir.

It will be interesting to see whom the new heir to the throne selects as his right-hand man, a role he himself filled until his unexpected promotion. His selection will shed light on the coalition that was recruited to secure a large majority in support of the new nomination in the family council. If the appointment passes quietly, as it appears likely to, it will be a great victory for the king and his son, who wish to enact reforms in at least three key areas:

First, the heir has announced a large-scale plan to overhaul the Saudi

economy, which, among other points, includes reducing its dependence on the price of oil, practically the kingdom's only export, and to bring many more Saudis into the job market, which currently rests on foreign workers.

Second, the immense amounts the Saudis are about to spend on weapons should put them in an entirely different position when it comes to their ability to confront the Iranian threat. Saudi Arabia will have to change its approach to the military challenge to ensure that the efforts bear fruit and don't just end up an expensive and useless endeavor.

Finally, Saudi Arabia wants to change its regional and international status. It realizes that this will hinge on the kingdom's domestic success in the other two areas -- overhauling its economy and refocusing its military efforts.

It is clear to Saudi Arabia that it cannot lead the Sunni Arab world on its own and needs to cooperate with other countries. It appears that the new heir to the throne gets along well with the leader of the United Arab Emirates, and they have already consulted with each other on taking action in the war in Yemen, as well as on the decision to boycott Qatar.

The Sunni Arab nations, including Egypt, are facing big challenges that have to do with a combination of the dramatic drop in oil prices, the rising threat from Iran, the growing strength of Sunni Muslim extremism - such as al-Qaida and the Islamic State group -- and, until recently, diminishing American involvement in the region. The new crown heir is seen as determined to meet these challenges head-on. He will be tested on the results, because he now has all the requisite authority to take them on. (Israel Hayom Jun 22)

No Compassion for the Cruel By Efraim Inbar

The Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip has threatened Israel with "an explosion" if it does not supply electricity to Gaza at the expense of Israeli taxpayers.

Blackmail is, of course, part of the Hamas repertoire. One of the main reasons why Hamas launched thousands of rockets and sent terrorists into Israel through tunnels in the summer of 2014 was to solve its dire economic problems. Hamas needs electricity to build the tunnels and produce weapons.

Voices in Israel and abroad are advocating "moderation" -- meaning capitulation -- and insisting that Israel has no interest in an escalation. While Israel naturally prefers quiet along its borders, giving in to Hamas demands and granting it a victory will only lead to further demands. Supplying electricity to Gaza in exchange for a promise that Gazans refrain from shooting at Israeli civilians is no different from paying protection money to the mafia.

There is no strategic or moral reason why Israel should supply free electricity to Gaza.

While Israel does not desire an escalation, it has no reason to fear it. Israel is the stronger side. Moreover, the essence of war is to inflict pain on the opponent so as to change patterns of behavior. Pain has a positive value in that it affects the learning curves of the warring sides. Israel has used force to teach the Palestinians that aggression against Israel does not pay and that continued support for Hamas can be costly.

Another round of violence -- one that exacts a high cost from Hamas and the Gazans -- may lead them to more peaceful behavior. It is true that it is difficult to influence the learning processes of large collectives, but it is by no means unprecedented. It took much suffering in the two world wars to transform Germany into a less militaristic and belligerent society. While not politically correct, such treatment may help turn the Palestinians into peaceful neighbors in the long run.

In any case, it makes no strategic sense to ease the situation for Hamas just as the Arab Sunni states have put Qatar (the backer of the Muslim Brotherhood, of which Hamas is a part) under diplomatic and economic siege.

Moreover, the U.S. seems to support the steps taken by Saudi Arabia and its allies.

The Palestinian Authority, which initiated the electricity crisis by refusing to continue to pay for the energy supply to Gaza as part of the internal Palestinian struggle for dominance, is unimpressed by warnings of an impending human disaster. So too is neighboring Egypt.

Hamas exploits the suffering of Gazans to extract humanitarian aid and sympathy for their cause. But the Gazans cannot be exempted from responsibility for the consequences of Hamas' actions. Unfortunately, Hamas remains popular in Gaza, and all polls show that Gazans support continued violence against Israel.

In short, the Gazans are not good neighbors, and they do not deserve Israel's sympathy. What moral justification exists to compel Israelis to assist people who support an organization intent on destroying them?

Moreover, plans to ease the economic situation in Gaza -- either by supplying electricity and water or by building a port -- send the wrong signals. They tell the Palestinians that their leadership can make grave mistakes, but outsiders with good intentions will bail them out. They also signal to Hamas that it may as well continue shooting at Israel. Why not?

If Israel takes military steps in response, merciful donors will repair the damage yet again.

The billions of euros transferred to the Palestinians over the past two decades have been squandered through ineptitude and corruption. Like many Third World countries, Gaza lacks the legal and institutional infrastructure needed for the effective dispersal of economic aid. Very little aid has filtered down to the people. Hamas leaders, however, continue to be enriched by it. Those with arms always get the first and best cut of foreign aid sent to the poor. Humanitarian aid to Gaza is also siphoned off to build better military capabilities with which to fight Israel.

The authoritarian rule of Hamas dooms the Gazans to continuous poverty, ignorance, and protracted war with Israel. Palestinians, particularly in Gaza, are not educated to seek peace, but to make sacrifices and martyr themselves in a holy war against the Jewish state.

Israel has no choice but to reject Hamas demands, even if that refusal brings about another round of violence that will add to the suffering in Gaza. Even the friends of the Palestinian national movement should realize that it is time for some tough love for Gaza. Maybe a bit of darkness will help the Gazans see the light. (Israel Hayom Jun 21)

The Palestinian Challenge By Eyal Zisser

U.S. President Donald Trump's opening Middle East move was impressive, and even crushing. His historic visit to the region included a stop in Israel, and his decisive rhetoric was backed up by action -- the airstrike in Syria -- demonstrating that his intentions are serious. He doesn't just talk. He also shoots.

But after the enthusiasm came disillusionment. The situation in Syria remains grim, as Syrian President Bashar Assad continues to maintain his power. In the Persian Gulf, the moderate Sunni states established a united front, not against Iran, as Trump implored them to do, but against Qatar. As for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it seems that every step forward -- such as the promise to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem -- is followed by two steps back.

In this respect, the arrival in Israel of Trump's advisers, son-in-law Jared Kushner and mediator Jason Greenblatt, suggests that the White House does not intend to back down or slow down, but rather remains determined to advance peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

In Israel, many are skeptical of the possibility of a significant diplomatic initiative. Because, despite what Washington may believe, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not a conflict over real estate. Simple compromise on price or plot size will not resolve it.

It seems the ones who are the most disturbed by the American attempts to restart negotiations are actually the Palestinians. They have grown accustomed, over years of successive American administrations, to the U.S. demanding concessions of Israel not in exchange for peace but just to obtain Palestinian willingness to negotiate.

The Palestinians have collected Israeli concessions one by one throughout the years. They have ended up with a great deal of property, which served as something of a deposit or a comfortable starting point for the next round of talks.

This time, the American approach is quite different. It does not make preliminary demands of Israel, but rather of the Palestinians, who must now prove the sincerity of their stated intention to combat terrorism. After all, for Trump, terror is terror, and the salaries and support provided by the Palestinian Authority to the families of attackers are unacceptable.

This poses quite a challenge for the Palestinian leadership as it enters talks with Israel: It must forgo Israeli concessions while simultaneously facing Palestinian public opinion that supports terrorist attacks against Israelis. How will they surmount this challenge? Only Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and U.S. President Donald Trump know the answer. (Israel Hayom Jun 20)

The Saudis Hold the Key By Abraham Ben-Zvi

The focus of the international media has ostensibly shifted away from the Middle East to other parts of the world following U.S. President Donald Trump's visit last month, but the administration has not stopped pushing for renewed peace talks.

The efforts to end the Israeli-Palestinian stalemate by redrawing the fundamental principles so that they satisfy both sides are clearly evident in the decision to send two senior White House officials, senior adviser to the president Jared Kushner and Special Representative for International Negotiations Jason Greenblatt, to the region.

Even though the magic formula that could produce such fundamental principles is not within reach, one fact is abundantly clear: Trump does not consider a permanent agreement between Israel and the Palestinians a necessary stepping stone to a new Middle East under U.S. auspices, unlike his predecessor Barack Obama, who held this belief from the moment he became president.

In fact, Trump believes an Israeli-Palestinian accord is just one issue

that needs to be addressed while he puts together a much wider regional framework. Moreover, Trump has placed a particular emphasis on Saudi Arabia rather than on the Israeli-Palestinian axis. The kingdom, which fears that Iran has become more powerful since the 2015 nuclear deal, has reacted to this renewed threat by abandoning its long-held policy of kowtowing to radical entities and rogues states and has instead embarked on an uncompromising path of containment. This has generated a host of opportunities for the United States.

The strength the U.S. is projecting now (including Trump's willingness to provide Saudi Arabia sophisticated weapons in unprecedented quantities) stands in stark contrast to the weakness during the Obama years, giving Trump a great deal of room to maneuver and influence over Riyadh.

Thus, the key to ending the impasse between the Palestinians and the Israelis is not in Ramallah or in Jerusalem but in the Saudi capital. Saudi Arabia's willingness to publicly take on Iran and its proxies (as well as other regional entities such as Qatar), means that the president can demand confidence-building measures from the Saudis toward Israel.

In light of Riyadh's newfound willingness to take on Hamas and similar organizations, the president's advisers want the Saudis to pressure Ramallah and convince the PA to scale back its demands. In that context, Kushner and Greenblatt's visit is designed to gauge what confidence-building measures Israel and the Palestinians would be willing to offer.

This multi-phased approach is not overly ambitious. It does not seek to solve everything all at once, nor does it impose an agreement on the two parties. Instead, the goal is to reach an agreement on those issues that are less charged, thereby creating an island of relative stability in a chaotic and violent environment. (Israel Hayom Jun 20)

Livni and Dangers of Peace Theater By Caroline B. Glick

The homes of the terrorists who murdered Border Police officer Hadas Malka on Friday evening are now bedecked with Fatah flags and banners reading, "Our heroes."

Far from condemning the terrorist attack, Palestinian Authority chairman and Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas and his comrades are condemning Israel. Its security forces, they allege obscenely, committed a "war crime" when they killed the three terrorists to stop their rampage.

The only reason that these actions are not enough to warrant the US and the rest of the West -- not to mention the Israeli Left -- treating Fatah/PLO as the terrorist group they are and have always been, is because doing so would require them to stop playacting at peace making.

And they couldn't have that.

Instead, they mimic or recycle "peace process" lingo about "windows of opportunity," and reincarnate failed peace processors.

In apparent bid to do the latter, last Friday Channel 10 first reported that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asked MK Tzipi Livni to join his government with her Knesset faction and serve as his foreign minister.

While Likud denied the report, Livni claims Netanyahu made the offer through mediators that have been carrying out indirect negotiations between the two politicians.

Livni also has said that she rejected Netanyahu's offer because she doesn't believe he is willing to adopt her expansively pro-PLO positions.

Assuming that Livni is telling the truth and Likud's denial is false, we need to ask why Netanyahu made the attempt.

There's certainly no love lost between the two. Netanyahu's last campaign centered on Livni's radicalism.

The fact that the Labor Party formed a joint candidates list with Livni radicalized the party, he argued. Livni, for her part, was the main reason Netanyahu's last government fell apart. She was disloyal and subversive throughout her brief tenure as justice minister.

Politically Livni has nothing to offer Netanyahu. As things stand today, Livni has no future in politics. She is unpopular in the Labor Party. And if she as an independent list, she is unlikely to even pass the four-seat threshold to be reelected to Knesset.

Yair Lapid, whose Yesh Atid Party has been leading Labor as the most popular Center-Left political party, has evinced no interest in joining forces with Livni.

So why would Netanyahu be interested in resuscitating her political career by making her his foreign minister? There are, it would seem, three possible explanations for the reported move.

First, Netanyahu may have decided to bring Livni into his government to ensure that he has a Knesset majority for some incipient peace deal with the PLO.

Leaving aside the plausibility of such a deal the fact is that if it were concluded, Netanyahu wouldn't need Livni. Any credible deal with the PLO would receive the support of at least three quarters of the members of Knesset, including that of Livni and her faction members.

So it cannot be that he wants her for political cover.

Then there's the possibility that he wants her because he wants to cut a deal with Abbas the terrorism supporter and Livni has lots of experience

negotiating with Abbas and his deputies.

But then again, Livni's vast experience aside, she's never concluded a deal with the PLO. The only deal she ever concluded was with Hezbollah. And it was terrible for Israel.

As foreign minister during the 2006 war with Hezbollah, Livni negotiated the cease-fire agreement that became UN Security Council resolution 1701.

Her deal was a diplomatic and strategic disaster for Israel. Resolution 1701 legitimized Hezbollah – a terrorist organization and an Iranian proxy army – on the world stage. Resolution 1701 treated Israel and Hezbollah as peers. It also pretended that the Lebanese Armed Forces were a credible military force that operated independently of Hezbollah, when the truth was that Hezbollah worked hand in glove with the LAF during the war.

Even worse, the resolution effectively surrendered south Lebanon to Hezbollah control and paved the way for Hezbollah's open takeover of the Lebanese government – and armed forces – the following year.

Livni claimed she had secured Israel's interests by expanding UNIFIL, the UN forces under whose nose Hezbollah set up its bases in southern Lebanon and opened the war against Israel by killing and abducting the bodies of IDF reservists patrolling the border.

The notion that UNIFIL could be trusted to block Hezbollah from expanding its control over the border with Israel was a ridiculous and dangerous fantasy.

And it was a fantasy Livni enthusiastically embraced.

As for her negotiations with the Palestinians, both prime minister Ehud Olmert and Netanyahu placed her in charge of negotiating a peace deal with the PLO.

She failed to secure a deal despite the fact that she was willing to surrender Israel's strategic interests to achieve one.

Her repeated failures reinforced the already self-evident conclusion, brought home yet again this week with the PA's celebration of Hadas Malka's murderers, that the PLO will not reach an accord with Israel, ever.

Given Livni's serial incompetence and recklessness, it is hard to believe Netanyahu would dare to put the nation at risk by appointing her to head its negotiating team, yet again.

This leaves us with the third and frankly only plausible reason that Netanyahu may have decided to offer Livni the foreign ministry: US pressure.

This week, US President Donald Trump has sent his top negotiations people – Senior Adviser Jared Kushner and Senior Representative for International Negotiations Jason Greenblatt – to Israel to push Israel into negotiations with the PLO.

The White House's press release ahead of their trip proclaimed, "President Trump has made it clear that working towards achieving a lasting peace agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians is a top priority for him. He strongly believes that peace is possible."

Assuming that the White House is serious, it appears Netanyahu has decided to play along with the delusion Trump and his advisers share regarding the prospects of achieving peace.

Recognizing that the same PA that celebrates Hadas Malka's killers' as "heroes" and pays salaries to tens of thousands of other "heroes" every month will never, ever make peace with Israel, Netanyahu has all the same decided to play along with Trump and his advisers.

Doing so, he assumes, is less costly than trying to explain why their belief that a deal is possible is pure delusion.

And so he offered Livni the job.

The problem is that Netanyahu's move – assuming that he did in fact make it – is not risk free. Indeed, it is downright dangerous.

It is dangerous first because it feeds the American delusion that peace is possible. This delusion has caused the US to pretend for 24 years that there is a difference between terrorism directed against Israelis and terrorism directed against the rest of the world.

This delusion has caused the US to fund Palestinian terrorism and train Palestinian terrorists and legitimize the PLO terrorist organization.

This delusion has caused the US to wrongly blame Israel for the absence of peace. And, as has happened hundreds and hundreds of times, last Friday this delusion took a human toll as Malka was murdered by members of Abbas's US-supported Fatah terrorist group.

Hopefully, Likud's denial really was true and Netanyahu never offered Livni the job.

Perhaps Livni made up the story to make herself look relevant at the twilight of her failed political career.

Probably the truth is somewhere in the middle.

But true or false, the story makes clear that Netanyahu has not met the central challenge he faces with the Trump administration.

Netanyahu's central challenge is not to humor Trump, Greenblatt and Kushner by joining their peace theater. His challenge is to convince them that chances of reaching a deal with those who celebrate and reward Hadas Malka's murderers are even smaller than Livni's chances of getting re-elected to the Knesset. (Jerusalem Post Jun 19)

Effecting Change at the United Nations By David Kramer

American United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley's recent defense of Israel at the UN comes as a breath of fresh air for most Israelis, who for years have been subjected to a twisted and inaccurate understanding of our country and people, created by the international world body.

Today there are more UN resolutions against Israel – 62 – than against all other countries combined.

There are currently only two resolutions critical of Syria, a country whose own government bears responsibility for a genocidal five-year civil war in which over half a million people have been killed and over 1.2 million displaced.

On a personal level, Haley's moral clarity in standing strong against the lies and injustices directed toward Israel reminds me of an experience that I, as a young student, encountered 17 years ago, as I experienced a UN gathering for the first time.

In September 2000, I joined six Israeli students as a participant at the UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa. There were rumors that Israel was going to be a topical issue at the conference, however not one of us anticipated the outcome as it unfolded.

Upon arriving at the conference hall, I noticed someone handing out free T-shirts at the registration table and I took one. I was shocked at what I saw. The shirt, printed with the official logo of the UN Conference Against Racism, had the picture of Muhammad al-Dura and his father, two Palestinians who were caught in a cross-fire between a Palestinian gunman and Israeli soldiers at the outbreak of the second intifada in Israel several months prior.

I knew that an IDF investigation into the incident, made public in the news, had concluded that it was impossible that the two innocent bystanders were shot by Israeli soldiers, a fact later confirmed by several international investigations.

I walked over to the opening ceremony and once again I was stunned. There in Kingsmead Cricket stadium, 20,000-plus people were packed into the designated ceremony area, all wearing their white Muhammad al-Dura T-shirts, standing in unison against the State of Israel. By now, I had located another Israeli participant, Ora, a young Israeli-Ethiopian student, who stood next to me as we took in the outrageous spectacle. In addition to the T-shirts, the stadium was covered in banners with accusations like "Zionism=Racism," "Israel is an Apartheid State" and others equating Israel with Nazism. I took off my kippa for the first time in my life out of fear of the incited crowd that stood before me.

The events of the week continued along the same lines. Our delegation of six students together with the other representatives from Israel were assigned a full security detail that escorted us wherever we went. We were confronted daily by hundreds of protesters who approached our tent to shout us down and try to remove the Israeli flag. They shoved posters in our faces with all sorts of accusations against Israel and handed out anti-Semitic flyers, books and cartoons with Hitler's face staring out at us from the covers.

At one point during the conference, we decided to design and distribute our own T-shirt and through a local sponsor were able to produce thousands of shirts in record time. Our shirt had a blue Star of David on the front with a peace sign in the middle and a quote on the back from Martin Luther King Jr.: "When people criticize Zionism, they mean Jews."

On the way back from fetching the shirts, without our knowledge, one of the largest anti-Israel rallies ever held since Israel's establishment, with over 300,000 people, was making its way toward the conference.

I arrived at the conference's entrance and as a group, we began immediately to distribute our shirts. A few moments later, the anti-Israel rally arrived at the bend of the street close to where we were standing and one of the rally's organizers, an official member of the steering committee of the conference (as was later revealed), directed her followers to "stop the Israelis from handing out their shirts." We were immediately accosted and physically assaulted by the large crowd and were only saved by the South African police who formed a protective circle around us.

The next day, Mary Robinson, the deputy head of the UN at the time, invited our group to the front of the conference and personally apologized to us, which was covered by international press.

Since then, not much has changed at the UN for Israel, but Nikki Haley's brave and just position serves as a light and example for many others who have "had enough," and at least in Israel will not be easily forgotten. (Jerusalem Post Jun 20)

The writer is the author of United Nation (www.unitednationbook.com), a new book which explores Israel's humanitarian efforts around the world.