



## 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*

support for an end to the conflict among his own people, even if he wanted to make peace.

Despite repeated Palestinian rejections of peace offers, advocates of a two-state solution still cling to the belief that it is Israel that is inventing conditions designed to ensure that negotiations will fail. But if their goal

is to create a genuine consensus behind peace, then rather than lament Trump's criticisms of Abbas, they ought to hope he will succeed in getting the PA leader to stop the incitement as well as the prisoner payments. If Netanyahu's opponents continue to refuse to take this issue seriously, they will have no one but themselves -- and the Palestinians -- to blame if they continue to be marginalized and peace remains a remote dream. (Israel Hayom Jun 6)

## Commentary...

### The Left's Abbas Problem By Jonathan S. Tobin

For the Israeli Left, talk about Palestinian incitement is nothing more than an excuse invented by the Right to avoid peace. The same largely applies to their views about the Palestinian Authority's payments of more than \$1 billion in just the last four years in salaries to imprisoned terrorists and their families.

The PA's ongoing efforts to inculcate new generations in the ideology of hate that has driven the century-long war on Zionism is itself a barrier to peace. It also ensures that any effort to end the conflict will run counter to notions of Palestinian identity that are inextricably linked to that war.

But if you believe that Israel's chief objective must be to achieve a separation from the Palestinians and an end to its presence in the West Bank and east Jerusalem regardless of what happens or who governs a Palestinian state, you view the issue differently. If you think separation is the only way to preserve a Jewish majority in the Jewish state and to protect both Israelis and Palestinians from the burden of the occupation, statements of support or even subsidies for those who commit violence are side issues or distractions that obscure the big picture.

Yet opponents of the Netanyahu government are making a big mistake when they downplay these issues. Though they doubt the motives of those who point out what the Palestinian Authority have been doing and even agree with PA President Mahmoud Abbas' assertion that both sides incite, they are missing the point. A failure to address these questions has been the Achilles' heel of the Left ever since the Oslo Accords were signed. Doing so is not only political poison, it also sends the wrong message to Palestinians who they insist are, against all evidence, viable partners for peace.

The issue of incitement is at the center of the discussion now because U.S. President Donald Trump has decided it is important. Trump was sufficiently ignorant of the history of the conflict and how the PA operates that he actually seems to have believed Abbas' assurances about not supporting incitement or payments to prisoners that the PA leader made during their initial White House meeting.

But when the Israelis pointed out to him that Abbas was seeking to pull the wool over his eyes, and backed it up with video evidence, he didn't like it. More than that, he rightly understood that this lie was an obstacle to achieving the unlikely diplomatic triumph he craved.

That led to Trump reportedly pounding the table and accusing Abbas of being liar when they met in Bethlehem. Since it would be difficult for Abbas to suddenly alter the nature of what is published in PA newspapers or viewed on PA television to mollify Israeli or Western sensibilities, let alone cease payments to the very same terrorist prisoners who are lauded by Palestinians as heroes, Trump's insistence on these points was no small controversy.

The Left deplors Trump's embrace of this issue and puts it down to a clever strategy implemented by Netanyahu. But if that's all they think there is to it, they're repeating the same mistakes that ensured the failure of peace talks in the past. In the 1990s, both the Clinton administration and Labor-led governments saw PLO leader Yasser Arafat's words and actions as merely fodder for domestic Palestinian political consumption. But the result of that policy was not only to convey to the PA that it could transgress with impunity; this spirit of complacency also materially contributed to the collapse of faith in the peace process once Palestinian actions moved from words to bombs in the Second Intifada.

The Left's problem is not just that serious observers understand the implications of incitement and material support for terror and that not enough people share their belief that Israeli actions are as bad or worse than those of the Palestinians. Nor are most Israelis likely to be persuaded to view actions of self-defense undertaken by their government as morally equivalent to the PA's support for terror. Just as important is that a Palestinian leader who felt constrained to engage in behavior that engendered such deep mistrust among Israelis would be unlikely to muster

### 50 Years of Palestinian Rejection By Evelyn Gordon

The 50th anniversary of the Six-Day War, which fell this week, has sparked much hand-wringing about why Israel still controls the West Bank half a century later. By sheer coincidence, Haaretz reporter Amir Tibon produced a scoop this week answering that question. It detailed the precise offer the Obama administration made to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in the final stages of the peace talks it brokered, and how Abbas, once again, walked away without even deigning to respond.

In early 2014, as the end of the nine months of talks agreed to the previous July were drawing to a close, the administration began drafting a "framework agreement" that would serve as the basis for further talks. Tibon obtained two versions of the administration's proposal.

The first, dating from February 2014, contained a relatively balanced mix of concessions to Israeli and Palestinian demands. For instance, it stipulated a border based on the 1967 lines, as Abbas demanded, but said Palestinian refugees and their descendants would have no "right of return" to Israel, as Israel demanded. It rejected a permanent Israeli military presence in the Jordan Valley, thereby pleasing Abbas. It also pleased Israel by saying the talks must result in a Palestinian state alongside "Israel, the nation-state of the Jewish people." It also left a few issues open: On Jerusalem, for instance, it merely restated both sides' aspirations.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave verbal consent to the document. Then, on February 19, Secretary of State John Kerry presented it to Abbas, who went ballistic. His primary objection, U.S. officials told Tibon, was that the issue of Jerusalem was left open. Abbas wanted the U.S. to commit to giving him half the city.

So the Americans revised the document to accommodate more of Abbas' demands. The new version, written in March, explicitly said East Jerusalem must become the Palestinian capital, thereby prejudging the outcome of one of the talks' most sensitive issues. It also made several other concessions to the Palestinians, such as adding a statement asserting that the talks' goal was "to end the occupation that began in 1967," the implication being that the conflict isn't one for which both sides share blame, but an evil unilaterally perpetrated by Israel against innocent Palestinians.

Similarly, whereas the February document said the border would be based on the 1967 lines with 1:1 land swaps that would "take into account subsequent developments" since 1967, this phrase was dropped in the March version. In other words, the February version said the border would be adjusted to accommodate the major settlement blocs, while the March version allowed Abbas to continue demanding that hundreds of thousands of Israelis be uprooted from their homes.

Thus, what started out as a relatively balanced document in February had morphed by March into one that clearly tilted toward the Palestinians. So how did Abbas respond to these concessions? He neither accepted the document nor rejected it; he "simply didn't respond," Tibon reported.

This, of course, is exactly what happened the last time Abbas received an offer complying with almost all his demands. In 2008, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert offered him 93 percent of the West Bank with 1:1 land swaps for the remainder, plus all of Gaza and most of East Jerusalem, with Muslim control over all the city's holy sites, including the Western Wall (Olmert proposed governing the sites with a five-member committee comprising representatives of Palestine, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and America, thereby guaranteeing the Muslims an automatic majority). But

Abbas never responded; he simply walked away. Only nine months later did he tell the Washington Post's Jackson Diehl that he rejected the offer because "the gaps were wide." Perhaps he would have said the same of Obama's offer had Diehl interviewed him again.

This is also what happened when Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and U.S. President Bill Clinton made a similar offer to Yasser Arafat in 2000-01. Arafat walked away without even making a counterproposal and then launched a lethal terrorist war against Israel, killing over 1,000 Israelis in the next four years.

And that's without even mentioning all the previous examples, like the Arabs' rejection of the UN partition plan in 1947, or their adoption of a policy of "no peace, no recognition and no negotiations" with Israel at the Khartoum summit three months after the Six-Day War.

In other words, there's one very simple reason why Israel still controls the West Bank: The Palestinians have consistently refused repeated offers to give it to them.

But there's an important supporting reason as well: Palestinians feel they can get away with serial rejectionism because the world always responds by blaming Israel, as the Obama Administration did.

Addressing the Senate in April 2014, for instance, Kerry famously declared that Israel's announcement of new construction in Jerusalem had caused the talks to go "poof," carefully neglecting to mention that by this point, the talks were dead anyway since Abbas had already rejected the administration's best offer. The excuses administration officials gave Tibon were equally ridiculous. Abbas, they said, was "disappointed" that Netanyahu had delayed releasing some two dozen Palestinian prisoners—as if that were ample grounds for rejecting an offer of statehood. They also said Abbas wasn't sure Obama could "deliver" Netanyahu. But Netanyahu said yes to the February proposal without being sure Obama could deliver Abbas – which it turns out he couldn't; why was it unreasonable to expect Abbas to go out on a similar limb?

The problem isn't just Palestinian rejectionism. It's that the rest of the world actually encourages this rejectionism by ensuring that the diplomatic price is always paid by Israel, and never the Palestinians themselves. The Palestinians have quite reasonably concluded that they can play this game ad infinitum, until the world eventually pressures Israel to accept even those Palestinian demands that would entail committing national suicide, like the "right of return."

If the Palestinians actually wanted peace, they'd do a deal regardless of how the rest of the world behaved. If the world behaved differently, the Palestinians might eventually conclude that a deal was in their interests. But as long as neither of these two conditions is met, there's every reason to think that in another 50 years, we'll be reading more hand-wringing articles about why Israel still controls the West Bank.

(CommentaryMagazine.com Jun 8)

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### **Welcoming a Friend: Nikki Haley** By Danny Danon

In a sign of the positive state of Israeli foreign relations, the visit this week by United States Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley might mistakenly be viewed as trivial. After all, not a week goes by without Jerusalem hosting leaders from around the world. Nevertheless, Ambassador Haley's visit is significant. By bringing moral clarity and a clear sense of justice to the UN, Ambassador Haley is serving as a model to leaders around the world, proving what can be accomplished when the simple truth serves as our guiding star.

During my time at the UN, I have found the most discouraging aspect of diplomacy to be the gap between private words and public actions. On almost a daily basis, ambassadors from around the world meet with me privately to discuss joint interests and possible areas of cooperation. Yet, when we appear together at public forums, these same diplomats make sure never to let on about our existing relationship. Worse, too often they go on to vote blindly against Israeli interests, and often their own, as they pander to the worst elements of the international community.

Such behavior is almost understandably common among countries with which Israel does not have official diplomatic ties, but sadly it also exists among our allies. On a variety of issues, quiet support expressed for Israel behind closed doors often melts away amid explanations about regional interests or organizational commitments.

As Israelis, we are used to speaking our minds and then acting accordingly, even when it may not be the most popular course of action. This is what makes Ambassador Haley's approach so refreshing.

In March, the UN's Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) issued an infuriating report declaring Israel an apartheid regime.

Unfortunately, such biased and, needless to say, baseless reports are a regular occurrence. In the past, meetings with our colleagues from allied countries on such matters would result in promises to work quietly behind the scenes using the UN system to eventually mitigate some of the damage inflicted on Israel by such lies.

This time was different. Ambassador Haley and I met and it was clear to us both that public outrage was more than warranted by these attempts to libel Israel. In addition to working with our partners from around the world to seek diplomatic remedies, we both issued public statements expressing our outrage. Within hours, UN officialdom had distanced themselves from the report, and two days later Rima Khalaf, the anti-Semitic head of ESCWA, quit.

For years, we have warned our colleagues that the insistence of UN bodies on focusing disproportionately on Israel is not only wrong, but also diverts the international community's limited time and resources from real crises around the globe. A prime example of such absurdness is the regular Security Council meetings on "the situation in the Middle East," which have become regular Israel-bashing gatherings.

When we raise this issue with our counterparts, we are met with nodding heads and promises to debate the matter further. Here again, Ambassador Haley showed the UN that it does not need to adhere to the failed models of the past. During April, when the US held the UNSC presidency, Ambassador Haley insisted that the debate focus on Iran, the real menace to peace and stability in the region.

This straightforwardness of the American ambassador is not limited to areas concerning Israel.

When it comes to the atrocities committed by the Assad regime in Syria, or the aggression by North Korea, Ambassador Haley insists on ending UN double-speak.

As she tours Israel for the first time, Ambassador Haley is sure to be confronted with our trademark honesty head-on. The unequivocal support she has expressed for Israel will only be strengthened by her visit to our special country. I know this because I have witnessed this phenomenon after accompanying scores of ambassadors from around the world on their first encounters with the Holy Land.

When we walk through the Old City of Jerusalem's ancient alleys, Ambassador Haley will hear how steadfast and unwavering our connection to our birthright is, and how countless powers over the millennia failed to sever this bond. When we fly to Israel's northern borders and observe firsthand the unique challenges Israel faces as the outpost of Western democracy in the Middle East, her strong support for Israel to defend itself will only be reinforced. Finally, when we visit the world's leading hi-tech companies and Ambassador Haley hears firsthand from entrepreneurs whose innovations are bettering the world, her appreciation for Israeli ingenuity will only be affirmed.

I know that a first visit to Israel by anyone is a life-changing event. The visit by Ambassador Haley is sure to not only reaffirm her strong support for us at the UN but will hopefully serve as a model to the moral majority in the parliament of nations that the time has come for them to not only speak out in support of Israel but to finally act accordingly. (Jerusalem Post Jun 7)

*The writer is Israel's ambassador to the United Nations.*

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### **'Enough is Enough' is Just not Enough** By Vivian Bercovici

"Enough is enough."

British Prime Minister Teresa May's battle cry to get tougher on terrorism in the UK in the wake of the recent London attacks was less than stirring, but in this topsy turvy world of ours, her comment was singular for, well, saying something more than nothing.

During the past few years, as terrorist attacks on civilians in Europe and elsewhere have become [dare I say] common, we have grown accustomed as well to the formulaic, flaccid responses of political leaders.

"Keep calm, carry on; we will not be defeated."

Whereas most significant terrorist attacks in the West are inspired by an Islamist ideology, Western leaders are loathe to acknowledge that fact openly.

Why? It's not that they have an aversion to facts. There is typically a rush, post-attack, for presidents and prime ministers to declare, emphatically, that even if the terrorists self-identify with a particular organization, like, say, Islamic State (ISIS) or the Muslim Brotherhood, that they only represent a teeny tiny fraction of the Muslim population in the West, or anywhere, for that matter.

Teresa May did it. They all do it. And, you have to ask, where is this vigorously asserted fact from? Is it what they wish to believe? What it is politically correct to believe? Or is it, in fact, a fact? On what information is this fact based? This core fact that defines policy.

I have no idea what this fact is based on. I have yet to see any serious study, or any study, for that matter, consider this issue.

However, I suspect that neither May nor any world leader can shed much light on this.

And I suggest that if the pace of Islamist terrorism keeps up in the West, the public's patience with politically correct platitudes will wear thin. Very, very thin. Very, very quickly.

We hear much about moderate Muslims living in the West, but see

and hear almost nothing from them in the way of protest, or even comment.

Where are the op-eds? Where are the street marches of tens and hundreds of thousands? There is a huge Muslim community in the UK. Millions strong. Aside from a few very moving incidents: an imam paying respects at a memorial site in Manchester with an elderly Holocaust survivor; a photo of a group of 10 or so Muslim women, clustered together in a close-up shot apparently in London, in hijab, looking sombre; another photo post-Manchester of a group of about 15-20 Muslims from “all over” the UK protesting the ISIS-inspired massacre of little girls at a pop concert, I ask: where is the rage? Why is this overwhelming majority silent? In so questioning, not for a moment do I suggest that the Muslim community should protest as a separate social entity. But it is important, perhaps more so now, that they openly and clearly express their outrage at this growing scourge. It is important that the moderate Muslim community tell its compatriots, and the world, that it deplors Islamist terrorism and joins with civil society in combating it.

Western leaders love to attribute Islamist terrorism to “lone wolves,” or those with mental health issues.

Enough. Is really. Enough.

These “isolated actors” are anything but. They are inspired by activists in their locale and online. They most often work in small cells with collaborators. Their actions are proudly owned by ISIS, or others of that ilk. And they are, we know, supported by state actors. Pick your poison: Iran. Qatar. Some might even include Turkey. Each one of these countries has their pet terrorist project(s). We have the very recent spectacle of Qatar being isolated diplomatically and economically by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and others. Why? For supporting ISIS and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Newsflash: the more predictable nation-state world order that prevailed in previous decades has been disrupted.

And we, in the West, are in a politically correct deep freeze, incapable of acting, because we might offend.

Who? Who are we so afraid of offending? How many more car ramblings and concert bombings and pub stabbings must we endure until we understand? In the hand-wringing that invariably follows a terrorist attack in the West, there has been much discussion in the UK about how to bolster security, for example, without compromising privacy rights.

Privacy is a relatively new obsession, spurred by Snowden, the digital world and enhanced commerce which thrives on individual information. But, seriously.

Privacy is a privilege. And if we really value personal privacy more than life itself; if we think that the security of citizens out on a summer night is less important than the integrity of a possible terrorist’s telephone or online activity, then we are a doomed civilization.

Liberal democracy is all about compromise, balancing the interest of the individual with the collective interest of broader society. No “rights” are absolute. This is precisely why we elect governments, to manage our broader interests in a way that we, as individuals, cannot. Love and vigils may nourish and embolden the spirit, but they will not defeat terrorism.

Enough is enough. (Jerusalem Post Jun 6)

*The writer, former Canadian ambassador to Israel, is a senior fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute. She resides in Tel Aviv.*

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### **Encouraging Integration in the United Capital** By David M. Weinberg

Last week, this column looked at the growing influence of Erdogan’s Turkey and other radical Islamist groups in eastern Jerusalem political and social affairs, as reported recently in the new Hebrew intellectual journal Hashiloach by Dr. David Koren and Ben Avrahami, advisers on eastern Jerusalem affairs for the Municipality of Jerusalem.

This week, I wish to present the more optimistic side of the situation, focusing on trends among eastern Jerusalem Arabs toward integration with Israeli society, and on the policies being implemented by Mayor Nir Barkat to increase an Arab sense of belonging to united Jerusalem.

To start, one must know the numbers. There are some 320,000 Arab residents in Jerusalem (plus 50,000 residents of Judea and Samaria who reside in the city illegally or by virtue of family reunification). They constitute about 37% of the Jerusalem population and 20% of the Arabs within Israel’s overall borders. About 100,000 of Jerusalem’s Arabs live in chaotic neighborhoods that lie within the municipal boundaries but are on the other side of the security fence.

The Arabs of Jerusalem are relatively young and impoverished. According to the National Insurance Institute, 83% of the children in east Jerusalem live below the poverty line, as against 56% of Israeli Arab children and 39% of Israeli Jewish children in western Jerusalem.

Residents of eastern Jerusalem have the legal status of permanent residents, which in practice is the same as that of foreign nationals who want to live in Israel for a protracted period. This status grants them the right to live and work in Israel without the need for special permits (unlike Palestinians in Judea and Samaria). It also entitles them to benefits under the National Insurance Law and the National Health Insurance Law. As

permanent residents, they are eligible to vote in municipal but not in national elections.

Obviously, these social and health benefits rank high among the reasons for which Palestinians prefer to live within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, even though they could obtain cheaper and better housing elsewhere.

Eastern Jerusalem Arabs “are entangled in a thicket of contradictions,” write Koren and Avrahami. “They assert their Palestinian national identity alongside an unprecedented demand for Israeli citizenship; throw stones at the light rail while using it; harass visitors to Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus but value the care that Arabs receive in its clinics and wards; protest the enforcement of planning and building laws in Arab neighborhoods while calling for an increased police presence there to maintain public order; campaign against any manifestation of normalization with Israel in tandem with a tremendous interest in learning Hebrew and an increasing preference for the Israeli rather than the Palestinian matriculation certificate...”

Koren and Avrahami believe that more and more residents of eastern Jerusalem understand that there is no alternative to Israeli control of the city on the horizon, and that they will always be better off under Israeli administration. In fact, the last Washington Institute survey in eastern Jerusalem, conducted in June 2015, found that 52% of Arab residents would prefer to become citizens of Israel, whereas only 42% would want to be citizens of the Palestinian state, even after a peace accord.

As mentioned, there is a vast increase in the numbers of eastern Jerusalemites filing applications for Israeli citizenship; more than 1,000 in 2016. Other indicators of belonging are the many programs to learn Hebrew that have been established in eastern Jerusalem in recent years; the mounting preference to send children to schools that lead to Israeli high school matriculation; and the soaring demand in eastern Jerusalem for pre-university preparatory programs subsidized by the Israeli government.

Arab Jerusalemites also have responded enthusiastically to the municipality’s opening in eastern Jerusalem of employment centers, community councils at the neighborhood level, and a hi-tech incubator.

In addition, notice has been taken of the Jerusalem Municipality’s major effort to reduce the disparities and improve the level of services and infrastructure in Arab neighborhoods, with an emphasis on roads (more than NIS 50 million a year) and classrooms (NIS 500m. over the coming decade).

“In our eyes,” write the municipality Arab affairs advisers, “even the protest demonstrations by eastern Jerusalemites in Safra Square, in front of city hall, are not nuisances, but rather a welcome phenomenon that expresses a de facto recognition that the municipality is the appropriate address for solving their problems. This is the fruit of normalization.

“We believe that, despite their Palestinian national identity, broad sectors of the eastern Jerusalem Arab population have come around to a pragmatic attitude about Israeli authorities. Increasingly, they see Israel not only as a culprit to be blamed for their difficulties but as the only possible source for solving their problems and turning their lives around.

“There are many Palestinians in eastern Jerusalem who have reached the instrumental level of exploiting the advantages offered by the western half of the city and would now like to participate in Israeli society at a deeper level – learning from it, mingling with it, and even joining it. An expression of this is the growing number of eastern Jerusalem teenagers who are doing civil service after high school.”

Koren and Avrahami argue that Israel must invest in these propitious trends, for they have strategic implications both for the unity of the city and for its security situation. “In another decade or two, the teenagers who today engage more deeply with Israeli society will be the pragmatists who moderate Palestinian society.”

During recent rounds of violence, they note, teachers and principals went out into the streets to get their pupils to curb their emotions and avoid attacking innocent persons, both Arabs and Jews. “In another decade, perhaps these teachers will be joined by businesspeople, community activists and cultural figures who endeavor to introduce mutual respect and sensitivity to the turbulent reality of Jerusalem.” (Jerusalem Post Jun 8)

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### **The Limits of Israeli Power** By Caroline B. Glick

On Thursday, US President Donald Trump bowed to the foreign policy establishment and betrayed his voters. He signed a presidential waiver postponing the transfer of the US Embassy to Jerusalem for yet another six months.

Ahead of Trump’s move, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a last-ditch bid to convince Trump to move the embassy to Jerusalem. But it was not to be.

Israel’s failure to convince Trump to do what he repeatedly promised US voters he would do during his presidential campaign shows the

disparity in power between Israel and the US.

Israel lacks the power to convince foreign nations to recognize its capital – much less to locate their embassies there. The US, on the other hand, not only has the power to recognize Jerusalem and transfer its embassy to Israel's capital whenever it wishes to do so, it also has the ability to convince dozens of other countries to immediately follow its lead.

The disparity between what the Americans can do and what Israel can do was on display on Monday evening in a glittering hall at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. There, Bar-Ilan University conferred its Guardian of Zion award on former US ambassador to the UN John Bolton. In his acceptance speech, Bolton presented his vision for the resolution of the Palestinian conflict with Israel.

Bolton's views are important not merely because his past work at the State Department and the UN brought the US some of its only diplomatic victories in recent decades. His views are important as well because of his close relationship with Trump.

Bolton began his discussion Monday evening by rejecting the "two-state solution." The two-state model, he noted, has been tried and has failed repeatedly for the past 70 years. There is no reason to believe that it will succeed now. This is particularly true, he said, given the lack of Palestinian social cohesion.

Hamas controls Gaza. The PLO, which is supposed to be Israel's peace partner, barely controls parts of Judea and Samaria. At a time when more cohesive Arab societies are unraveling, the notion that a Palestinian state would survive and advance regional peace and stability is laughable, Bolton argued.

Bolton then turned to his preferred policy for resolving the Palestinian conflict with Israel, which he dubbed "the three-state solution." Under his plan, Egypt and Jordan would work with Israel to solve the Palestinian conflict. Egypt would take over the Gaza Strip and Jordan would negotiate the status of Judea and Samaria with Israel.

The crowd at the King David responded enthusiastically to Bolton's proposal. This is not surprising.

Since 1967, Israelis have hoped for Jordan and Egypt to work with them to solve the problem of the Arabs of Judea, Samaria and Gaza who lived under Jordanian and Egyptian occupation from 1949-1967.

Unfortunately, Israel's support for Bolton's plan is irrelevant. Israel is powerless to advance it. Israel cannot convince Arab nations to help it resolve the Palestinian conflict any more than it can convince the PLO to cut a peace deal with it.

Like PLO leaders, the leaders of the Arab world know that they cannot help Israel with the Palestinians.

Doing so would involve disowning the Palestinian narrative.

The Palestinian narrative claims that the Jews of Israel are colonialist interlopers who stole the land from the Palestinians, its rightful owners. The narrative makes no distinction between Tel Aviv and Hebron. All of Israel is a crime against the Arab world. All of Israel is illegitimate.

The overwhelming majority of the Arab world believes the Palestinian narrative. For an Arab leader to walk away from it or even to signal an attenuation of his fealty to it in the interest of regional peace would be the riskiest of moves.

Israel has nothing to offer Arab leaders that could induce them to take that risk.

Although it is far from certain, the US may very well have the ability to convince Arab leaders to do so. If Trump decided that this is the way to advance peace in the Arab world, chances are he would make some headway. In other words, Bolton's three-state plan is a plan that only America can adopt. It cannot be an Israeli plan no matter how enthusiastically the public supports involving Jordan and Egypt in solving the conflict.

Given Israel's inability to offer the Arabs anything valuable enough for Arab leaders to risk life and limb to accept in exchange for helping to solve the Palestinian conflict, as Israel considers its own options in relation to the Palestinians, it needs to limit its goals to things that it can achieve without them. In other words, the only steps that Israel can take in relation to the Palestinians are unilateral steps.

For the past 50 years, hoping that the Arabs – and since 1993, the PLO – would finally make peace with it and so settle the permanent status of Judea and Samaria, Israel refused to take any unilateral actions in relation to its permanent interests in Judea and Samaria. Rather than apply its legal code to Judea and Samaria, it opted for the stop-gap measure of installing a military government to run the areas on the basis of Jordanian law.

Between 1994 and 1996, Israel canceled the military government in the Palestinian population centers in Judea and Samaria and Gaza. In 2005, when it withdrew, it canceled the residual military government in the rest of Gaza. Since then, the only area that remains under the Israeli military government is Area C in Judea and Samaria. Area C includes all of the Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria, and strategically critical areas including the Jordan Valley, the Samaria mountain range and the south Hebron Hills.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Netanyahu gave an interview with Army Radio where he set out part of his vision for the permanent status of Judea and Samaria. He limited his statement to the military status of the areas. He said that under any possible future scenario, Israel must retain full security control of the areas. This, he said, is the lesson of Israel's 2005 withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

That pullout led to the transformation of Gaza into a Hamas-controlled hub of global jihad. Moreover, under Hamas, the Palestinians turned Gaza into one big, densely populated missile-launching pad against Israel.

While justified, Netanyahu's position obscures more than it illuminates about his long-term vision for Judea and Samaria.

What does he mean by security control? Would the IDF remain in sole control over Israel's eastern boundaries or would it serve as an overall coordinator of foreign forces operating along the border? Would IDF forces be confined to fortified positions while the Palestinians reign free in the open areas, as was the case in southern Lebanon in the years leading up to Israel's disastrous withdrawal in 2000? Or would the IDF have freedom of action and maintain the initiative throughout Judea and Samaria? Moreover, does Netanyahu envision the IDF remaining the only military organization operating in Judea and Samaria in the long term?

Beyond the security issues that require clarification, Netanyahu's statements make no mention of the rights of Jews to live in Judea and Samaria.

Does he believe that Jews should be permitted to live permanently in the areas that Israel controls?

If so, why are they subjected to the Jordanian legal code used by the military government which limits their rights to purchase land and register land sales?

This brings us to the issue of governance.

What does Netanyahu think about the military government in Area C?

Does he believe that the 50-year reign of generals should continue until the Arabs choose to resolve the Palestinian conflict with Israel? What if this means that the generals will continue to rule over hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens for another 50 or 100 or 150 years?

Does he, on the other hand, prefer to transfer governance responsibility in Area C to the Palestinians and place the nearly 500,000 Israelis in the area under Palestinian control?

In the course of his remarks, Bolton noted that if Jordan is responsible for the Palestinians of Judea and Samaria, the issue of Jerusalem will be removed from the equation. After all, if their capital is Amman, Israel has no reason to divide its capital city.

And this brings us back to Jerusalem, which Trump spurned on Thursday.

As is the case today, 50 years ago Israel had no power to influence the positions of foreign governments regarding its capital city. But in contrast to its decision to establish a military government in Judea and Samaria, Israel didn't wait for foreigners to give it permission to act where it had the power to act in order to change the status of the city and ensure its ability to govern and control its capital for generations to come.

In 1967, the government voted to expand the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem to include the eastern, northern and southern quarters that had been under Jordanian occupation since 1949.

Everyone benefited from the move – including the foreign powers that still refuse to recognize the simple fact that Jerusalem is Israel's capital.

Washington and the rest of the governments of the world know that their refusal to recognize Israel's capital does not endanger Israel or its control of Jerusalem. They are free to bow to Arab pressure, safe in the knowledge that Israel will continue to protect the unified city.

Trump's decision to sign the waiver delaying the embassy move is a betrayal of his campaign promise, but it doesn't change the situation in Jerusalem. Last week, Israel celebrated 50 years of sovereignty over its united capital. Jerusalem will be neither more nor less united if and when the US moves its embassy to the capital.

Perhaps Trump will eventually keep his word and move the embassy. Perhaps he will continue to breach his promise. And as far as the Palestinians are concerned, perhaps Trump adopts Bolton's three-state plan in relation to Judea, Samaria and Gaza. Perhaps he will maintain his predecessors' slavish devotion to the establishment of a PLO state.

But whatever he does, it will be his decision. Israel can't control what Trump will do any more than it can influence what the Arabs will do. And so it needs to take a lesson not only from its bitter experience of withdrawing from Gaza, but from its positive experience of taking matters into its own hands in Jerusalem.

The time has come, at the outset of the second 50 years of Israeli control over Judea and Samaria, for Israel to take matters into its own hands. Our leaders must stop beating around the bush. They need to use the powers they have to secure Israel's military and civilian interests in Judea and Samaria for the next 50 years as best they can. And they need to stop waiting for someone else to solve our problems for us. (Jerusalem Post Jun 6)