At Last, Some Moral Clarity  

By Amnon Lord

U.S. President Donald Trump’s decision to end funding for UNRWA, the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, brings some much-needed moral clarity to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Many have tried to claim that the roles have been reversed and the Jews have become the Germans and the Germans have become the Jews. Together with the Arabs, of course.

But the German government’s swift decision to increase spending on UNRWA in light of the U.S. budget cuts brings us back to reality: In this performance, the Germans will be playing themselves. They will take care to fund the welfare state established by the United Nations 70 years ago. Never mind that, at the end of the UNRWA process, this same Palestinian U.N. state produces terrorism.

Trump is sticking to his policy of breaking the rules and adhering to the truth. While there are those who keep a running tally of the lies the president tells on a daily basis, Trump is able to correctly grasp the greater truth. UNRWA does not support the Palestinians to undergo an internal and likely contribution to regaining their arsenal includes a bevy of lies and libel.

The American move asserts the exact opposite of what is accepted by the international community and some in the Israeli public: The Palestinians are responsible for the fact that there is no peace or settlement between Israel and the Palestinian side. It is the Palestinians who need to change their outlook and not the Israeli government, regardless of what former Pink Floyd singer and BDS activist Roger Waters’ or singer Lana Del Rey may think on the matter. (Israel Hayom Sep 2)

The White House Handshake that Made Everything Worse

By Jeff Jacoby

Twenty-five years ago next week, on Sept. 13, 1993, the Israeli-Palestinian “peace process” was formally launched with the signing of the Oslo Accords at a White House ceremony hosted by President Bill Clinton. The moment was captured in an epochal photograph of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat shaking hands before a beaming Clinton.

I was there that day, one of many guests on the South Lawn of the White House invited to witness the encounter in person. A quarter of a century later, there are two things about the event I vividly remember — one small but telling, the other overwhelming and pervasive.

The small detail was Rabin’s unwillingness to grasp Arafat’s hand. After the documents were signed, Clinton had reached out to coax the two men into a handshake, his outstretched arms nudging them toward each other. Arafat needed no coaxing: Grinning broadly, he readily extended his hand to Rabin. But the Israeli prime minister, clearly uncomfortable, at first didn’t reciprocate.

Rabin, who detested the PLO chieftain, had deep misgivings about the Oslo deal, which had been engineered by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. “So deep was his loathing of Arafat,” writes historian Efraim Karsh in the fall issue of Middle East Quarterly, “that he planned to shun the Washington signing ceremony altogether” and had to be cajoled into coming by Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Rabin reluctantly agreed to “take an anti-nausea pill” and go to Washington, but he wanted as little contact as possible with Arafat, a homicidal monster with much innocent blood on his hands. Inside the White House, before the signing ceremony, Rabin had deliberately kept his distance to avoid shaking hands with Arafat. But on the South Lawn, with the world watching, Clinton left him no choice.

My other indelible recollection of that day is the jubilation of the lookouts. Longtime observers of the Middle East were transported with elation, ecstatic in the belief that peace was coming to the Holy Land. The giddiness was unreal, in some cases literally driving antagonists into each other’s arms. I was astonished to see the president of the pro-Israel lobby AIPAC embrace the president of the Arab American Institute. Saudi Arabia’s normally serene ambassador to the United States, Prince Bandar ibn Sultan, gushed when I approached him for a comment. “Can you believe it?” he marveled. “A week ago, who could imagine Rabin and Arafat shaking hands?”

From the perspective of 25 years, however, it’s clear that Rabin’s deep skepticism was sound and the public’s euphoria groundless. The Oslo process didn’t lead to peace. Arafat’s pledge to renounce “terrorism and other acts of violence” was a sham. In an Arabic-language broadcast on Jordanian TV the very day of the White House ceremony, he assured Palestinians that he was signing the accords not to end the conflict, but to acquire territory from which the war to “liberate” all of Israel could be pursued.

The Oslo process was the worst self-inflicted wound in Israel’s history. Palestinian terrorism didn’t end, it spiked. In the 24 months following the handshake, more Israelis were killed in bombings and suicide attacks than in any previous 24-month period in the country’s history.

Yet Rabin, of all people, refused to pull the plug. He had declared at first that the Oslo accords were reversible; if Arafat and the new Palestinian Authority didn’t uphold their commitment to halt all violence, Rabin had said, Israel would reoccupy the territory it relinquished.

It was a threat he never carried out. Instead, as terror attacks surged, Rabin grimly repeated that the empowerment of the Palestinians must go forward. “For all his exasperation, he could not bring himself to break with Arafat,” write Karsh. “Acknowledging that Arafat had made no serious effort to fight terrorism or to enforce law and order in Gaza, he nevertheless insisted that ‘there is no other partner. . . . We must abide by our commitments.’ ”

It was as if, having surmounted such a steep psychological barrier and forced himself to publicly shake Arafat’s hand, nothing could ever again induce him to reverse course. Perhaps that would have changed had Rabin not been assassinated, but there’s no way to know.

Twenty-five years on, Oslo is a monument to the folly of magical thinking in diplomacy. Land-for-peace was a deadly delusion. The crowd swooned at the White House that day, but it was Rabin whose instincts were right. He should have trusted his intuition and refused to take that anti-nausea pill. Instead he shook hands with a mass killer, and led his nation into disaster. (Boston Globe Sep 5)

Arab MKs are Spreading Lies in Europe

By Ariel Boltstein

A delegation of Joint Arab List lawmakers is utilizing the Knesset’s summer recess to slander Israel abroad. This time their arrows are aimed at Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People, and their arsenal includes a bevy of lies and libels.

It’s a little ironic that Arab lawmakers are concentrating their propaganda campaign in European Union bodies, the same union comprising member states that self-define as nation-states — similar to Israel. MK Ahmad Tibi and his cohort, however, won’t let the facts confuse them or the people sitting across from them in meetings. They are presenting the law as discriminatory and racist and obscuring its true content.

Although the new nation-state law doesn’t distinguish between Jewish

...
and Arab citizens in any way, Tibi has no qualms labeling it “apartheid legislation.” He is misleading his European audience, feeding them half-truths and painting a heart-rending picture: different roads for Jews and Arabs (as a matter of fact, some of the roads leading into Area A in Judea and Samaria are off-limits to Jews); separate courts for Jews and Arabs (despite the fact that Israeli courts are open to Arabs, even those without residency status in Israel or Judea and Samaria); demolitions of Arab homes (as if illegally built Jewish homes aren’t demolished as well and far more efficiently). Of course, they’re also throwing in the classic historical lie (“Arabs were here before the Jews”), and you get a full picture of the briefings taking place in EU hallways courtesy of our Arab MKs.

According to Tibi, ratifying the Jewish collective’s right to self-determination violates the civil rights of the countries’ Arab residents. This is simply a lie. Arabs have the right to self-determination in more than 20 countries, yet lo and behold – none of them are free and democratic and in each one regular Arab citizens (let alone minorities) lack basic civil rights. In Israel, on the other hand, every citizen’s individual rights – regardless of nationality or religion – are protected and anchored in both law and practice. Even when Tibi mentions “the language of public language” he’s lying. The nation-state law explicitly preserves its practical social status. Tibi’s fellow Arabs living in Europe can only dream of a similar status for their language.

Tibi is also spicing his concoction of fabrications with a speck of conspiracy theory, claiming that the Trump administration prodded Israel to pass the law. Yasser Arafat’s former adviser knows that when slandering Jewishness, conspiracy theory always helps, thus he isn’t squandering this opportunity to ride the wave of animosity that some European states harbor toward the U.S. president.

What’s worse, Tibi and his associates are calling for sanctions against Israel, arguing that Israel as a Jewish state is an illegitimate entity. To be sure, his ambitions have no chance to be realized, but it doesn’t lessen the gravity of his attempt to harm the state along with each and every one of us. Those who can’t bear to see the Jews working to harm it by cynically exploiting their status as members of Knesset. They are blatantly crossing red lines customary in democracies, and their actions pose a reverberating question about their place in Israeli society. (Israel Hayom Sep 6)

Shed the Apathy

By Akiva Bigman

The Left is weak and divided; Zionist Union Chairman Avi Gabbay can’t lead, Yair Lapid isn’t taking off, Meretz and Labor are moving farther left and it all looks like preparation for a landslide defeat in the next election. Amid this backdrop, it’s difficult not to understand the exaggerated declarations of hope from the leaders of the Right – Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Habayit Hayehudi Chairman Naftali Bennet – who want their parties to win half the seats in Knesset in the next election. This euphoria, however, is dangerous, and it’s this atmosphere that should ring the alarm bells.

Politics, as we know, is war by other means. As such, it comprises all the elements of a battlefield that make war an exercise in uncertainty: battle fog, “friction” with the enemy, deception and morale. Clausewitz’s trinity of friction – which says that wars are fought in the space between the leaders’ reasoning and planning, the impulses and urges of the masses, and the forces of destruction and violence that have a life of their own – also applies to the political sphere. More abstractly, this set of elements is commonly labeled “emotion-charge-reason.” Similar to war, a politician knows how an election campaign begins, but not how it will end. The boasting we heard last week was typical of the 2013 election campaign, when Likud and Yisrael Beytenu formed what they thought was a right-wing juggernaut. The result was a disappointment. The two parties entered the election with 42 mandates and emerged with only 31. They squandered 11 mandates, effectively sealing the fate of that government from the outset.

An opposite ploy characterized the 2015 election. Although the Zionist Union won an additional 85,000 votes, Likud and Yisrael Beytenu (this time running separately) grew by more than 300,000 votes. It was Netanyahu yet again working his political magic. We remember the grim starting point: The Right entered the election campaign battered and bruised, after control of the coalition had been lost. The election campaign was waged amid an incessant media barrage; a hostile U.S. administration; the controversy surrounding Netanyahu’s speech before Congress; the State Comptroller’s reports about expenditures at the Prime Minister’s Residence and Netanyahu’s trips abroad; and the Left’s massive mobilization, with organizations such as V15, Commanders for Israel’s Security and others.

None of the numbers were in the Likud’s favor, and yet the dynamic created by the election fomented considerable unrest on the ground. Ultimately, it led to a high voter turnout, which usually helps the right-wing parties. The euphoria of 2013 was detrimental to the Right while the sense of desperation in 2015 produced a stunning victory.

Election results in a democratic society comprise millions of personal decisions, made far from the spotlight and separate of the pollsters’ algorithms. People sit at home and must decide whether to even vote, and then who to vote for – the new general, the promising fighter for social justice, or stick with the old and familiar? It’s an infinite computation that no one can predict. The fog of war.

What will the next election campaign look like? If we’re to judge by the current situation, it will be a mix of the previous two. On the one hand, there is euphoria on the Right amid the Left’s weakness, which could lead to power struggles within the Right and general apathy among voters. On the other hand, we could see extensive mobilization from the Left, the media and technocrats eager to depose a prime minister under investigation and a constant barrage of incrimination and condemnation. What will tip the scales? Which events will rouse the masses, and what will be the unexpected consequences of public statements and television appearances? No one can predict.

The Right should take one bit of advice before the next election campaign: Shed the apathy. The fact that the adversary is battered, divided, reveals a strategic weak spot doesn’t mean he cannot win. Under these circumstances, a loss would be far more humiliating and painful. (Israel Hayom Sep 3)

The Oslo Process is a Proven Failure

By Efraim Inbar

The Oslo process, which started between Israel and the Palestinians 25 years ago and was supposed to lead to two independent states, in fact did not result in a peaceful coexistence between the two peoples. The nearly 1,600 Israeli fatalities and thousands of casualties during this period by Palestinian terrorist attacks and rocket fire testify to this failure.

Late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin’s land-for-security formula did not work. Moreover, the Palestinian Authority, established within the framework of the 1993 Oslo Accords, now rules the West Bank and provides anti-Israeli hatred through its education system and controlled media. Its rival, Hamas, an Islamist organization dedicated to the destruction of the Jewish state, rules the Gaza Strip and continues the armed struggle against Israel.

The chances that a new American peace plan will lead to the establishment of a stable, unified and peaceful Palestinian state are nil. The differences in positions, particularly on refugees and Jerusalem, are unbridgeable. Moreover, the PA has displayed colossal difficulties in state building, and the resulting entity borders on a failed state.

The PA has failed to meet the essential test of statehood, namely monopoly over the use of force, and subsequently lost control over part of its territory – Gaza. It is hard to imagine the PA surviving without the infusion of billions of dollars of international aid, as it mirrors the deep socio-economic and political crisis of several Arab states, leaving a big question mark on the capacity of the Arab political culture to sustain modern states.

Finally, both sides of the ethnoreligious conflict still have the energy to fight over the things important to them. Such protracted conflicts usually end only if at least one side displays great weariness of the conflict.

Therefore, 25 years after Oslo we are left with two revisionist Palestinian national movements, one traditional and one Islamist, controlling parts of which will be eventually recognized as Palestinian-Ruled territories constitute local terrorism bases against Israel, yet Palestinian terror has largely been contained and more vigorous Israeli actions could further limit its impact on Israeli lives.

The Palestinian ability to exact great political cost is limited, particularly if Israeli benefits from moderate American diplomatic support. Appeals to ineffective international forums can be ignored, while some international institutions have only marginal impact. Similarly, the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign has largely failed, although some of its long-range ramifications should be a cause for concern.

Significantly, most world states conduct their relations with Israel, paying little attention to the oscillations in Israeli-Palestinian nexus. Moreover, the awareness that the Palestinians are not ready for statehood has slowly spread into foreign policy decision-making fora. Subsequently, a greater international indifference to the Palestinian issue has developed, even among Arab states, as plenty of crises in the Middle East and elsewhere attract greater attention. The Trump administration’s decisions to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, and the cuts in funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East and to the PA reflect as well, the decreased appeal of the Palestinian cause in the international arena.

While the conflict with the Palestinians will not end any time soon, Israel is blooming. Israel’s cautious strategy of conflict management (rather than conflict resolution) of recent years has been successful in minimizing the domestic and international damage from the continuous Palestinian hostility.
Israel's willingness to make concessions is useful for retaining social cohesion at home and for gaining points among friends abroad. At the international level, Israel nourishes its relations with its main ally, the U.S., and has developed strategic partnerships with many important states. The continuous turmoil in the Middle East and Iranian behavior sensitizes the international community to Israel’s security needs, which reduces pressures for meeting unrealistic Palestinian demands.

The Oslo process amounted to a partition of from the would-be Palestinian state because it led to a situation where more than 95% of the Palestinians in the West Bank and all Palestinians in Gaza live under Palestinian rule. As we have seen in other parts of the world, partitions can be messy and without clear-cut political outcomes. Indeed, the Oslo process failed to attain peace and security for Israel, but it much relieved the Jewish State of the Palestinian burden. The limited Israeli military presence in the West Bank is only marginally concerned with the welfare of the Palestinians; the security of the Israelis is its main goal. Israel is no longer responsible for the Palestinians and they are on their own. Despite the anti-Israel rhetoric, the “occupation” of the Palestinians has practically ended. Anyone visiting Ramallah, with its cafes and shopping centers, can see it for himself.

Most Israelis have supported the traditional Zionist position that led to the Oslo Accords, although misgivings about the wisdom of choosing them-Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat as a partner were widespread. Israelis also supported the 2005 withdrawal from Gaza and the establishment of a security barrier that signal a desire to disengage from territories heavily populated by Arabs.

While Israeli society paid dearly for the Oslo experiment, it can honestly say, “We tried to make peace with the Palestinians.” Such a feeling is a prerequisite for treating future armed conflict as a “no-choice war.” This attitude, prevalent since the Palestinian terrorist campaign that started in 2000, has been central in forging great Israeli resilience to withstand protracted conflict, and an unwillingness to make dangerous concessions. (Israel Hayom Sep 4)

Sacrificing Israel’s Long-Term Interests for Short-Term Gains

By Evelyn Gordon

With the Trump Administration reportedly planning various steps against UNRWA—the U.N. agency devoted solely to Palestinian refugees—Israel’s defense officials have declared UNRWA’s defense a top priority. But that is especially true given that defense officials think war will happen anyway. They merely seek to postpone it so that Israel can finish building its anti-tunnel barrier. And for a few months (or even years) of delay and the minor tactical advantage of an anti-tunnel barrier, they’re willing to sacrifice an existential Israeli interest.

It’s foolish beyond belief. But unfortunately, it’s not surprising. As Einat Wilf and Adi Schwartz argue in a new book, the defense establishment has been UNRWA’s top lobbyist for decades. All this merely proves a point I’ve made before: Military men are good at solving militarily problems, but they’re no better than anyone else, and often worse, at understanding political problems. Yet their expertise often cows politicians into deferring to them. Let’s hope Israel’s current government resists this temptation and takes full advantage of Washington’s plan. It’s an opportunity that may not recur for a very long time. (JNS Sep 2)

AIPAC Loses the Script

By Caroline B. Glick

By the time the British Labour Party finally bowed to public pressure and adopted the full definition of antisemitism determined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance on Wednesday, the move was no longer meaningful. After a summer of insisting that it’s okay to say Zionism is Nazism and that Zionists have no sense of irony, no one is so deluded as to believe that Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn or his supporters are anything but Jew-hating bigots.

The Labour leader made this point more or less explicitly when on Wednesday he tried to submit a “clarification” of the definition that was itself antisemitic. Corbyn wanted to add a statement to the resolution that stated, among other things, “It cannot be considered racist to... describe Israel, its policies or the circumstances around its foundation as racist because of their discriminatory impact, or to support another settlement of the Israeli-Palestine conflict.”

As Britain’s Jewish Leadership Council’s chief executive Simon Johnson said, Corbyn “attempted shamefully to undermine the entire IHRA definition.”

Corbyn’s caveat, Johnson noted “drives a coach and horses” through that definition. As it stands, due to Corbyn’s protestations that antisemites must be free to state their views, Labour’s decision to adopt the IHRA’s definition of antisemitism was published with a caveat that the decision “will not in
any way undermine freedom of expression on Israel or the rights of the Palestinian.

In other words, the Labour Party simultaneously adopted and rejected the IHRA definition.

As bad as the situation in Britain’s Labour Party is today, in some ways averted emergence situation in the US is worse.

The Jews in Britain are fully awake to the dangers that Corbyn poses to Jewish life in the United Kingdom. Forty percent of British Jews told pollsters that they will consider emigrating if Corbyn is elected. The unwavering stand of the Jewish community against Corbyn has forced even far left media outlets like The Guardian to provide straight coverage of the issue.

The British media’s willingness to report fairly about the Labour Party’s endemic anti-Jewish bigotry in turn neutralizes pressure Conservatives might otherwise have felt to make their peace with Corbyn and legitimize his bigoted supporters.

In the US, the opposite phenomenon is occurring. Radical, anti-Israel and, at least in some cases, virulently anti-Jewish forces are rising in the Democratic Party.

In response to the victories of anti-Israel politicians like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar in the recent Democratic Congressional primaries – and the rising power of antisemitic activists led by Linda Sarsour and Louis Farrakhan in the party – moderate, traditionally pro-Israel Democratic lawmakers are covering in fear. Rather than challenge their new colleagues’ racism, Jewish Democrats along with pro-Israel Democratic lawmakers are denying what is happening while watering down their own support for Israel in the hopes of appeasing the anti-Israel forces rising in their party.

AIPAC, which is supposedly the most powerful pro-Israel lobby in the US, has likewise opted to ignore this turn of events rather than fight it.

Rather than lobbying previously strong Democratic supporters of Israel to stick to their guns, AIPAC is facilitating their retreat.

AIPAC does this in order to maintain the increasingly fictional narrative that Israel enjoys bipartisan support in Congress. Rather than shepherd significant pro-Israel legislation through Congress, it is becoming AIPAC’s practice to gut Republican pro-Israel bills in order to win Democratic support. That is, AIPAC now appeals to the lowest common denominator of Congressional support for Israel.

For their part, rather than stand up to AIPAC and refuse to render their own legislative initiatives meaningless under the name of empty bipartisanship, key Republican lawmakers are going along with this exercise in deceit.

Consider the legislative debate unfolding regarding the AIPAC-led House draft of a bill that is supposed to fight anti-Israel and antisemitic moves by the European Union and the UN to impose anti-Israeli trade barriers on trade with Israel.

To understand the current state of affairs, it is necessary to understand the anti-boycott laws now in force.

In June 2015, South Carolina passed its historic anti-boycott law, banning the state from contracting with companies that boycott Israel. Twenty-four other states have since passed similar legislation. As Joseph Sabag from the Israel Allies Caucus in Washington explains, the sum total of the economic output of these US states has made the economic penalties significant enough to lead government bodies to non-commercially discriminating against the Jewish state and Jews who operate within.

Shortly after then South Carolina governor Nikki Haley signed the bill into law, Congress passed the Trade Promotion Authority. In a bid to respond to EU member states’ enactment of boycotts against Israeli firms, Congress approved an amendment to the TPA that instructed US trade negotiators engaged in free trade discussions with the European Union to make clear that “the principal negotiating objectives of the United States regarding commercial partnerships” include objectives to “discourage actions by potential trading partners that directly or indirectly prejudice or otherwise discourage commercial activity solely between the United States and Israel,” as well as “discourage politically motivated actions to boycott, divest from or sanction Israel and to seek the elimination of politically motivated barriers against Israeli goods, services or other commerce imposed on the State of Israel.”

Under the amendment’s definitions, “Israel” was defined as all “Israel controlled territory.”

This was necessary, says Prof. Eugene Kontorovich, who heads the international law department of the Kohelet formula, because the EU and the UN Human Rights Committee use boycotts against Jews operating in Judea and Samaria and Jerusalem as a means of promoting direct boycotts against Israel and secondary boycotts against American and other firms that do business with Israel.

Last year, the UN Human Rights Committee voted to publish a “blacklist” of firms that do business in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. Without proper legal protection from Congress, major US firms will be forced to choose between selling their products to Israeli vendors – who in turn sell them countrywide without prejudice – and discriminating against Jews.

To protect US firms from the EU and UN Human Rights Committee’s anti-Jewish commercial practices, AIPAC initiated Congressional action to widen the 1979 Export Administration Act. The EAA bars US firms from participating in the Arab League boycott of Israel. The proposed amendment would expand the prohibition against engaging in anti-Israel commercial boycotts from state-sponsored boycotts, to boycotts promoted by international organizations, including the UN and the EU.

The AIPAC-sponsored amendment of the EAA was submitted in identical draft versions to the House and Senate early last year. It referred to the TPA’s definition of “Israel” to ensure that Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria – the ostensible target of the UN blacklist – would be shielded, so Israeli and American communities would be protected.

Shortly after the bill was submitted to the relevant committees, the American Civil Liberties Union swung into action. Like Corbyn and his supporters, the ACLU argued – obscenely – that a bill that sought to bar discrimination against US manufacturers for doing business with Jews by virtue of their location is a violation of free speech. Rather than reject the ACLU’s contentions – as British Jewry has rejected Corbyn’s – Democratic lawmakers, including Rep. Elliot Engel, the ranking Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, folded. Gillibrand ended her support for the measure.

Engel and House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Ed Royce told AIPAC that they would have to amend the bill to retain Democratic support. And so a long process of watering down the amendment began.

The version of the bill that AIPAC shepherded through the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and is priming for a vote before the full House, no longer contains a reference to the TPA’s definition of Israel as including “Israeli-controlled territory.” Instead, the bill leaves it to the Department of Commerce to decide what “Israel” includes.

As Kontorovich explains, the House version is not simply worthless; it is counterproductive.

The approved draft lowers the bar for how the US fights anti-Israel boycotts. Without the amendment, under existing federal law, the definition of boycotting Israel includes boycotting Jews in communities in Judea and Samaria and in unified Jerusalem. By removing that stipulation, the amendment that was passed through the House Foreign Affairs Committee implicitly endorses boycotting Jews based on where they are located, not in the name of the law.

The approved amendment also sets a low bar for future pro-Israel anti-boycott legislation. If this watered down, counterproductive measure is all that a Republican controlled House and Senate with a Republican White House can pass, what sort of legislation could a Democrat-controlled Congress be expected to approve? In other words, the amended bill gives license to a future Democratic Congress to abandon pro-Israel legislation altogether.

Moreover, as a practical matter, removing the regulatory authority for fighting anti-Israel boycotts from Congress and transferring it to the Commerce Department ensures that there will be a long period during which the law is not enforced. The Commerce Department routinely takes years to determine and publish relevant regulations. And even if the Trump administration defines Israel as the TPA does, future policy on anti-Israel boycotts will be subject to the whims of whomever occupies the White House.

In short, the version of the AIPAC-sponsored anti-BDS bill that is set to be voted on before the full House of Representatives does more to legitimize UN and European Union efforts to economically discriminate against Jews in Israel than it does to counter them. AIPAC and AIPAC-supported Republicans like Rep. Royce opted to gut the bill in order to retain the support of Democratic legislators who have been cowed into ending their substantive protection of Israel by the rising forces in their party that are hostile to Israel.

This dire situation – which foretells a future where, in the interest of preserving the fiction of bipartisan support for Israel, all pro-Israel bills are gutted second to water down initiatives to secure support from their Democratic colleagues who have been cowed into paralysis by the rising anti-Israel forces in their party. After all, if the Democrats retake control of the House in November, they will not lift a finger to secure Republican votes.

AIPAC may have made perpetuating the myth of strong bipartisan support for Israel its cri de couer. But Republicans, who are truly pro-Israel, have no reason to join them. (Jerusalem Post Sep 6)