

Arab Leaders Abandon the Palestinians

By Walter Russell Mead

Facing threats from Iran and Turkey, they want peace—and to strangle Hamas.

On the surface it was business as usual in the Gaza Strip. Hamas bussed thousands of residents to the border with Israel to begin a six-week protest campaign ahead of the 70th anniversary of Israel's independence—or, as the Palestinians call it, the nakba, or “catastrophe.” This protest would mark “the beginning of the Palestinians' return to all of Palestine,” according to Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh.

It didn't. Stones were thrown, tires were set aflame, and shots were fired. When the smoke cleared, the borders were still in place and 15 Palestinians lay dead, with three more succumbing later from injuries. While families endured their private tragedies, familiar controversies swirled. The usual people denounced Israel in the usual ways, countered by the usual defenders making the usual arguments.

But what is happening in Gaza today is not business as usual. Tectonic plates are shifting in the Middle East as the Sunni Arab world counts the cost of the failed Arab Spring and the defeat of Sunni Arabs by Iranian-backed forces in Syria.

In headier times, pan-Arab nationalists like Gamal Abdel Nasser and lesser figures like Saddam Hussein dreamed of creating a united pan-Arab state that could hold its own among the world's great powers. When nationalism sputtered out, many Arabs turned to Sunni Islamist movements instead. Those, too, have for the time being failed, and today Arab states seek protection from Israel and the U.S. against an ascendant Iran and a restless, neo-Ottoman Turkey.

But the American protection on which Arabs rely cannot be taken for granted, as President Trump's apparent determination to withdraw U.S. forces from Syria in the near term demonstrates. Under these circumstances, Israel's unmatched access to Washington makes Jerusalem even more important to Arab calculations. Perhaps only Israel can keep the U.S. engaged in the region.

It is against this backdrop that the old Palestinian alliance with the Arab nations has frayed. Most Arab rulers now see Palestinian demands as an inconvenient obstacle to a necessary strategic alliance with Israel. The major Gulf states and Egypt apparently have agreed on two goals. The first is to strangle Hamas in Gaza to restore the authority

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of the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority. The second is to press the authority to accept the kind of peace that Israel has offered repeatedly and that Yasser Arafat and his successor have so far rejected.

Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority are playing for time. They support the first goal by refusing to pay the salaries of government employees in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip even as they resist pressure to make peace with the Jewish State. It is not yet clear what the authority's final response to the peace pressure will be. Even if it ultimately decides to accept an Arab-sponsored compromise, making a show of resistance can improve its credibility with the Palestinian public and, perhaps, extract better terms.

Hamas is in an even more desperate plight. The Arab blockade and donor strike cripples Gaza in ways the Israelis never could. Food is growing scarce, electricity is erratic, unemployment exceeds 40%, and raw sewage runs into the sea. Many Gaza residents presumably want the only thing Hamas can't offer: relief.

Historically Hamas has reacted to this kind of pressure by launching wars against Israel, trusting its friends abroad to force the Jewish state to cease fire before it can inflict serious damage on Hamas' leadership. But in the 2014 war, Arab foot-dragging gave Israel time to deal a serious defeat to Hamas. Another war would be equally ruinous and for the same reason: The Arab governments want Hamas crushed, and they won't stop Israel from doing the job.

The current demonstrations, Hamas hopes, can whip up a global wave of rage and indignation against Israel without provoking a full-on war. That might weaken the Arab coalition against it. But the prime audience for Hamas's performance this time isn't the Arab world; it is Turkey and Iran, whose support Hamas will need to survive if it is driven from Gaza (as Arafat was once driven from Jordan and Lebanon).

Rifts between Palestinians and other Arabs are nothing new. But the collapse of Arab nationalism and the failure of Sunni radicalism have weakened the political forces that rallied Arab support to the Palestinian cause. With millions of new Arab refugees in Syria, and growing threats to Arab independence from powerful neighbors, prioritizing Palestine is a luxury many Arabs feel they can no longer afford.

UNRWA's Shameful System of Apartheid

By Evelyn Gordon

And how a financial “crisis” might end it.

UNRWA, the United Nations agency tasked with

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caring for Palestinian refugees and their descendants in perpetuity, is facing what it terms its worst financial crisis

ever. “Crisis” is an exaggeration, but the agency undoubtedly has less money than it wants. Given Gaza’s multiple woes (which UNRWA’s aid ostensibly alleviates) and Israeli fears that these woes could spark another Hamas-Israel war, this may sound like bad news. In fact, it’s good news for anyone who cares about either Palestinians or Israelis.

Obviously, no one wants a humanitarian crisis, but UNRWA’s budget shortfall won’t cause one. True, the agency is nearly \$350 million short of its \$1.2 billion budget, despite obtaining \$100 million in new pledges at an emergency conference in mid-March, mainly because the Trump administration cut America’s contribution to just \$60 million this year, down from \$364 million last year.

Yet even if additional emergency appeals later this year fail to raise another dime (which is unlikely), UNRWA would still have some \$850 million to help around 5 million Palestinians. By comparison, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has \$7.7 billion to help around 60 million non-Palestinian refugees and displaced people worldwide. In other words, UNRWA can still spend a third more per capita than UNHCR spends—\$170 versus \$128. So if UNHCR’s budget can provide for its refugees’ basic needs, UNRWA’s far more generous one can surely do the same.

Nevertheless, it will face some financial constraints, and such constraints often spur reform. That’s good news because UNRWA’s current modus operandi harms both Israelis and Palestinians.

Two reforms are particularly essential. First, UNRWA should stop financing Jordan’s outrageous apartheid system, under which 2 million Palestinians registered with the agency receive no services from the Jordanian government, even though most (as UNRWA itself admits) are Jordanian citizens. Instead of using Jordan’s health and education systems, they attend special UNRWA schools and health clinics; many even live in 10 designated refugee camps.

Clearly, people with citizenship in another country shouldn’t be considered refugees at all. Under UNHCR’s definition, which applies to everyone except Palestinians, anyone who obtains citizenship in another country automatically loses his or her refugee status.

But the situation is also unfair to the Palestinians themselves because they are denied the possibility of integrating into the country where they hold citizenship. Nobody can integrate if forced to live in special camps, and attend special schools and clinics, instead of being treated like all other Jordanians. Therefore, beginning a gradual handover of these services to Jordan would save UNRWA money while also helping 2 million people.

Second, UNRWA should stop financing the outrageous apartheid in the West Bank and Gaza—not the nonexistent “Israeli apartheid,” but the very real one imposed on Palestinian refugees by the Palestinian Authority.

After all, the P.A. styles itself the State of Palestine, and has been recognized as such by the U.N. General Assembly and 135 member states. That recognition has enabled it to join U.N. agencies like UNESCO and non-U.N. agencies like the International Criminal Court.

But if you thought a Palestinian state would alleviate the suffering of Palestinian refugees, think again. Like Jordan, the P.A. refuses to provide services to either the 800,000 registered refugees in the West Bank or the 1.3 million in Gaza. In other words, based on the P.A.’s self-reported population of 4.9 million, it’s refusing to provide services to a whopping 43 percent of the residents of its putative state.

These 2.1 million “refugees” live in 27 designated camps. They attend special UNRWA schools and health clinics, instead of the regular Palestinian ones. And senior P.A. officials have said explicitly that they are not and never will be entitled to citizenship in the Palestinian state.

Given that most of the world recognizes the existence of a State of Palestine, it’s ridiculous that 2.1 million Palestinians living in it should still be considered refugees. But it’s also unfair to the “refugees” themselves, who are denied the right to integrate into what’s ostensibly their own country.

And indeed, they abhor this situation. “The P.A. refuses to invest here because they claim it is the responsibility of UNRWA and the U.N.,” one refugee camp resident told the Times of Israel in 2014. “So we get screwed. We have been abandoned. The P.A. supports the residents of the cities and villages. But it ignores us.”

Thus, by beginning a gradual handover of services to the P.A., UNRWA could save money while also helping 2.1 million Palestinians.

The status quo is also bad for Israel—and not just because of the anti-Israel incitement taught in UNRWA schools and Palestinians’ use of UNRWA facilities as weapons depots. By denying Palestinians the ability to assimilate into Jordan and the P.A., UNRWA effectively tells them that “returning” to Israel is their only hope of escaping refugee status. Nurturing such fantasies of mass relocation merely perpetuates the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; peace is obviously impossible if Palestinians condition it on turning Israel into a Palestinian-majority state.

Yet the status quo is even worse for millions of Palestinian “refugees,” who are forced into dead-end lives with no hope of ever integrating into the places they should be able to call home.

Admittedly, there’s no guarantee that UNRWA will implement constructive reforms; it might instead slash essential services to blackmail the world into coughing up more money. But even in this worst-case scenario, at least America will no longer be propping up UNRWA’s shameful apartheid system and its perpetuation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. If European or Arab countries want this abomination to continue, let their taxpayers fund it.

There's also a risk that even constructive reforms could produce enough short-term pain to provoke violence. But Israelis understand that sometimes, you have to do what's right, even if it comes with a price. That's why, in a poll published just last week, 69 percent of Jewish Israelis said the U.S. Embassy should move to

Jerusalem in May as planned, despite the fact that most believed the move would spark violence.

UNRWA reform is no less critical. And after 70 years of stasis, it's clear nothing short of a financial crisis has any chance of bringing it about.

Ms. Gordon is a journalist and commentator living in Israel.

French Jews Face the Hatred That Can't Be Named

By Bari Weiss

nytimes.com

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Where Jewish blood has become cheap.

It's no rare thing for the Israeli prime minister to enrage the Jews of the diaspora. But three years ago, Benjamin Netanyahu delivered a speech that won him near-universal condemnation.

In the aftermath of several deadly attacks in European cities like Paris and Copenhagen, Mr. Netanyahu called on Jews to leave Europe. "Of course, Jews deserve protection in every country. But we say to Jews, to our brothers and sisters: Israel is your home," he said, echoing comments he had made more subtly the month before at Paris's Grand Synagogue.

Mr. Netanyahu's suggestion of "mass immigration" was "unacceptable," said Rabbi Menachem Margolin, the head of the European Jewish Association. Abraham Foxman, then head of the Anti-Defamation League, suggested such a policy would "grant Hitler a posthumous victory." Denmark's chief rabbi, Jair Melchior, said he was "disappointed." Smadar Bar-Akiva, the executive director of JCC Global, said "the calls for French Jews to pack their bags" and move were "disturbing and self-defeating."

François Hollande, then president, echoing a chorus of European leaders, pushed back hard, appealing to his country's Jews: "Your place is here, in your home. France is your country."

Is it?

This is a question worth seriously asking following the barbaric murder last week of Mireille Knoll.

Ms. Knoll, 85, believed Mr. Hollande. France was her place, her home, her country. And Paris was her city.

She believed this despite the fact that it was also the city where, when she was 9 years old, the police rounded up 13,000 of the city's Jews, 4,000 of them children, and crammed them into Vélodrome d'Hiver, a cycling stadium, before shipping them to their deaths at Auschwitz. Ms. Knoll narrowly escaped this largest French deportation of Jews during the Holocaust and fled to Portugal with her mother.

After the war, she married a man who had survived Auschwitz. She returned to her native land where she built a home and raised a family. French to her core, she stayed in Paris even as her grandchildren moved to Israel.

She remained in her apartment in the 11th arrondissement when, suffering from Parkinson's disease, she was stabbed 11 times. Her apartment was then set on fire. Firefighters found the burned body on Friday night.

Parisian authorities are investigating the murder as being motivated by the "membership, real or supposed, of

the victim of a particular religion." But euphemisms should have no place in describing the nature of Mireille Knoll's death. She was murdered by men apparently animated by the same hatred that drove Hitler.

Two suspects, a 29-year-old and a 21-year-old, have been arrested. The older man is a neighbor Ms. Knoll has known since he was a child. The younger, according to reports, is homeless. One of the suspects told the investigators that the other had shouted "Allahu Akbar" while killing Ms. Knoll, according to *Le Monde*. (A lawyer for the Knoll family, Gilles-William Goldnadel, confirmed that in a phone call.) On Tuesday, Gérard Collomb, the interior minister, told Parliament that one of the attackers had told the other: "She's a Jew. She must have money."

In fact, Ms. Knoll was "poor," according to her son, Daniel. She'd lived most of her life in the same apartment in the subsidized housing project where she was killed.

It's a neighborhood that has already borne witness to a nearly identical crime. Almost exactly a year ago, a 65-year-old Jewish widow named Sarah Halimi was murdered by her neighbor, 27-year-old Kobili Traoré. Other neighbors said they heard Mr. Traoré scream "Allahu Akbar" as he beat Ms. Halimi, a retired doctor, to near death in the early hours of April 4, 2017. He then threw her body into the courtyard below.

It took months for Ms. Halimi's murder to be categorized as an anti-Jewish hate crime. "It was scandalous," said Mr. Goldnadel, the lawyer, who also represented the Halimi family.

This time, French authorities have been quick to call the crime by its proper name. On Monday, President Emmanuel Macron tweeted: "I would like to express my shock at the appalling crime committed against Mrs. Knoll. I reaffirm my absolute determination to fight anti-Semitism." On Wednesday, he said that she was murdered "because she was Jewish" at a tribute to a police officer killed in an Islamist attack. Mr. Macron has been widely praised by the country's Jewish community for his moral clarity in describing anti-Zionism as a "reinvented form of anti-Semitism."

Anti-Semitism was supposed to be a disease of the far right. But the people actually killing Jews in France these days are not members of the National Front. They are Islamists.

"The major crimes against the Jewish community — Ilan Halimi, the Toulouse killings, the Hyper Cacher killings, Sarah Halimi — all of them have all been carried out by radicalized Muslims," Robert Ejnes, the executive

director of CRIF, an umbrella organization of French Jewish groups, told me in a call from Paris. "These young people have French identity cards, but they hate what France stands for. This is the nature of the problem we are facing. And it's very hard to talk about."

Here are some facts that are very hard to talk about: Jews represent less than 1 percent of the population in France, yet in 2014, 51 percent of all racist attacks were carried out against them, according to the French Interior Ministry. A survey from that year of about 1,000 French respondents with unknown religious affiliation and 575 self-identified Muslims, conducted by the AJC Paris and the French think tank Fondapol, found that the Muslim respondents were two or three times more likely to have anti-Jewish sentiments than those from the random French group. Nineteen percent of all respondents felt that Jews had "too much" political power. Among Muslims, the number was 51 percent. As for the idea that Zionism "is an international organization that aims to influence the world and society in favor of the Jews," 44 percent of Muslims surveyed approved of this statement. The rest of the survey is just as devastating.

For years now, France has deployed armed troops to protect Jewish synagogues and schools. But the violence on the streets — a 15-year-old girl wearing the uniform of her Jewish school slashed in the face; an 8-year-old boy wearing a kippah assaulted; teenage siblings called "dirty Jews" before being beaten — hasn't abated. On Wednesday, hours before a march in honor of Mireille Knoll, the office of the Union of French Jewish Students at the Sorbonne was ransacked and defaced with graffiti like "Viva Arafat" and "death to Israel."

Whatever else the investigation of Ms. Knoll's murder might reveal, this much we know for certain: The men who are accused of killing her were living in a culture in which Jews are reviled on the far right and, increasingly, on the far left; in which sensitivity toward cultural differences have driven too many for too long to ignore the spread of an ancient hatred in a vicious new form; in which attacks on Jews have been explained away as politically motivated by events in the Middle East. In such a culture, it shouldn't come as a surprise that some would come to the conclusion that Jewish blood is cheap.

In the wake of Ms. Knoll's murder, all of the usual lines are being repeated. Anti-Semitism is the hatred that never dies. Violence that begins with the Jews never ends with them.

All of this is true. What's also true is that anti-Semitism is the oldest hatred in the world because individual people have sustained it in every generation. It cannot be defeated until we look these people and their ideologies in the face.

Every French Jew — like millions of Jews throughout history — will have to make their own choice about whether to leave their homes for safer shores or to stay and fight for their rightful place in a country that prides itself on being a beacon of liberty and fraternity. But perhaps the better part of wisdom is with one of Mireille Knoll's granddaughters, Noa Goldfarb. Following her grandmother's murder, she wrote in a Facebook post from Israel: "Twenty years ago, I left Paris knowing that neither my future nor that of the Jewish People is to be found there."

Ms. Weiss is a staff editor and writer for the opinion section.

With the "March of Return," Hamas Finds a New Way to Use Human Shields

By Oded Granot

israelhayom.com

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No peaceful protest.

Hamas has realized it will never achieve a "right of return" for Palestinians, so it decided to challenge Israel on the right to gather along the fence.

This idea is nothing original. Over 50 years ago, Naj Aloush, a Palestinian intellectual and Fatah member, came up with this idea: One morning, he wrote, a million Palestinian refugees would gather on the borders of Israel and then march forward, "into the occupied land."

The calculation is simple. Israel has enough military might to repel any military threat to its borders and sovereignty. But it won't dare slaughter civilians en masse — women and children who are trying to "return to their homes in Haifa, Acre and Ashkelon." And if, heaven forbid, it did, it would be immediately condemned by the international community and accused of harming innocent civilians and of crimes against humanity.

The exact same reasoning guided the Hamas leadership in the meticulous planning that went into organizing the March of Return along the Gaza border fence. About 250 buses brought some 30,000 people to the border area. Some are relatives of Hamas operatives

and public officials. Not everyone participated willingly. Some were forced.

This was no peaceful, popular demonstration, as the organizers promised it would be. This was incitement. Rocks were thrown. Attempts were made to vandalize the border fence, and the demonstrators were used as cover for an attempted attack against IDF forces. When these attempts failed, and 17 people had been killed — including 10 known terrorists — Israel was accused of perpetrating a mass slaughter.

In this sense, Hamas' tactics during Operation Protective Edge in the summer of 2014, in which it located terrorist headquarters and weapons caches in civilian homes, didn't differ much from the events on Friday. In both cases, civilians were forced to serve as human shields.

An initial review of what happened Friday chalks up some significant achievements for Hamas. It succeeded in putting the Palestinian issue back on the international agenda. It turned the area around the border into a violent one, while blaming Israel for the violence and forcing the IDF to keep a heavy contingent of forces on duty on the eve of Passover.

Israel can take comfort in that it managed to prevent the protesters from crossing the border and penetrating our territory, as well as keeping the number of wounded Palestinian civilians to a minimum and making an effort not to harm women or children.

Both sides will need to draw conclusions ahead of two upcoming events: Palestinians Prisoners Day on April 17 and Nakba Day on May 15, an event that is expected to

mark the height of the March of Return. Israel knows how to prevent any violation of its sovereignty but will need to do everything in its power to convince all that it is working to ease the distress of civilians in the Gaza Strip, who are under the control of Hamas.

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An American Retreat from Syria Would Be a Gift to Iran

By Josh Rogin

washingtonpost.com

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The U.S. should leverage oil to its advantage.

There are a lot of good arguments for maintaining an American presence in Syria after the fall of the Islamic State, but President Trump doesn't seem persuaded by any of them. Perhaps he would back off his urge to cut and run if he knew that the United States and its partners control almost all of the oil. And if the United States leaves, that oil will likely fall into the hands of Iran.

It's one feature of a larger U.S. mission in Syria that is really about containing Iranian expansionism, preventing a new refugee crisis, fighting extremism and stopping Russia from exerting influence over the region. The United States has serious national security interests in making sure that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iran don't push America out of Syria and declare total victory.

But Trump has repeatedly said those tasks are not the United States' responsibility. He promised to pull the approximately 2,000 U.S. troops out of Syria at a campaign rally on Thursday in Ohio.

"We're knocking the hell out of ISIS. We'll be coming out of Syria, like, very soon," he said. "Let the other people take care of it now."

It's not an offhand remark. Last month, Trump said that although he thinks the slaughter in eastern Ghouta by Russia, Iran and the Assad regime is "a humanitarian disgrace," he has no intention of doing anything about it, because our mission is to "get rid of ISIS and go home."

Of course, that contradicts his top national security officials. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said late last year that the troops would stay to prevent "ISIS 2.0" and stabilize the situation. In January, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson laid out in a carefully workshopped policy speech five long-term goals for U.S. policy in Syria, including ridding the regime of weapons of mass destruction and solving the political conflict. He promised that the United States "will maintain a military presence in Syria focused on ensuring ISIS cannot re-emerge."

But if Trump disagrees and is looking for a Syria policy that fits his campaign, he might remember that he has constantly complained that in Iraq, "we should have kept the oil." Of course, we can't and shouldn't take or keep Syria's oil. But there's a grain of truth in Trump's

idea. Control over oil is the only influence we have in Syria today.

"We have this 30 percent slice of Syria, which is probably where 90 percent of the pre-war oil production took place," said David Adesnik, director of research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "This is leverage."

The actual people holding the land with the oil are not U.S. troops, but the mostly Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces that were trained and armed by Washington, along with local Sunni Arab leaders who are resisting the ongoing onslaught by government- and Iranian-backed forces.

The Assad regime and Iran have a stated and ongoing strategy to take back all the land that Assad once controlled, including the land containing Syria's most valuable energy resources.

What's more, in May, Trump is expected to pull the United States out of the Iran deal, meaning that he will reimpose U.S. sanctions on Iranian oil. It would be profoundly counterproductive to hand Iran control over a swath of Syria that contains huge amounts of oil at the exact same time.

As Chagai Tzuriel, director general of Israel's Ministry of Intelligence, told me, if the U.S. and its allies intend to stop Iran's regional expansion, that mission must begin in Syria. Also, if there is to be any real peace negotiation, the U.S. military presence is crucial for America having influence there as well.

"If there is a true commitment to counter Iran, it needs to be done in Syria first. If it's not done in Syria, we will lose that campaign," Tzuriel said. "The presence of the American forces is very important ... That buys you a seat at the table that decides the future of Syria."

If the U.S. troops leave, the Kurds are likely to cut a deal with the regime and leave the Sunnis to Assad's cruelty. Then, the Iranians will move into the area, completing their land bridge of control from Tehran to Beirut. If Trump doesn't have a real Syria strategy, he doesn't have a real Iran strategy.

"Iran is turning its proxy network, its axis of resistance, into a region-wide resistance army," said Melissa Dalton, senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. She said Iran now has more than

250,000 proxy forces directly or indirectly under its influence around the region.

Syrian opposition leaders are asking for the United States to work with both the Kurds and the Sunni Arab local leaders to consolidate control in liberated areas and help organize local governance. Those who have fought the Islamic State don't want to live under the rule of Assad and Iran, said Mouaz Moustafa, executive director of the

Syrian Emergency Task Force, a nongovernmental organization that works with the Syrian opposition.

"It's incredibly important that with all these oil-rich areas ... we don't end up in a situation where we do have to pull out and there is some sort of deal that allows Iran to essentially take the land, the oil, and these areas, and empower their land bridge that they've been building inside the country," he said. "We took the oil. We've got to keep the oil."

Saudi Crown Prince: Israelis Have Right to "Their Own Land"

By Staff

thetower.org

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Saudi Arabia's crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud, said Israelis are entitled to live peacefully on their own land in an interview with Jeffrey Goldberg published on Monday in *The Atlantic* magazine. His comments mark another public sign of the growing relationship between the kingdom and the Jewish State.

Reuters reported that when asked if the Israelis have a right to a nation state in their ancient homeland, the Crown Prince replied: "I believe the Palestinians and the Israelis have the right to have their own land." He added that "we have to have a peace agreement to assure the stability for everyone and to have normal relations."

Saudi Arabia, the custodian of Islam's holiest sites, does not recognize the state of Israel and the two countries maintain no official diplomatic ties. However, Iran's rising power in the region — spanning from Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen — have led to shared interests that push Saudi Arabia and Israel to work together against what they perceive as a common Iranian threat.

Prince Mohammed is currently touring the United States to garner support for his efforts to contain Iranian

influence in the Middle East. "There are a lot of interests we share with Israel and if there is peace, there would be a lot of interest between Israel and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries," Prince Mohammed stated.

Last month, the kingdom opened its airspace for the first time to a commercial flight to Israel with the inauguration of an Air India route between New Delhi and Tel Aviv. Flight 139 landed at Ben Gurion Airport after a seven-and-a-half hour journey, marking a historic shift for Riyadh.

While Saudi Arabia opposed the Trump administration's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, Arab officials said at the time that the kingdom is on board with the broader U.S. strategy for an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement.

In November, an Israeli cabinet member disclosed covert contacts between Saudi Arabia and Israel, a rare acknowledgment of long-rumored secret relationship which Riyadh still denies.

Exposed: Jeremy Corbyn's hate factory

By Richard Kerbaj, Gabriel Pogrud, Jon Ungoed-Thomas and Tim Shipman **thetimes.co.uk** **April 1 2018**

Jeremy Corbyn faces a damaging new anti-semitism scandal as a bombshell dossier reveals the full extent of anti-Jewish, violent and abusive comments on Facebook groups mobilising his most fervent supporters.

Twelve senior staff working for the Labour leader and the shadow chancellor, John McDonnell, are members of groups containing anti-semitic and violent comments, including praise for Adolf Hitler and threats to kill Theresa May, the prime minister.

The most comprehensive investigation conducted into 20 of the biggest pro-Corbyn Facebook groups — numbering 400,000 members — found routine attacks on Jewish people, including Holocaust denial.

The dossier was compiled over two months by whistleblowers working with *The Sunday Times* in the groups, who gained access to restricted membership groups. They uncovered more than 2,000 racist, anti-semitic, misogynistic, violent and abusive messages.

Lord Carlile, the former independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, said the comments appeared to breach hate-crime laws.

The investigation found:

- Posts including support for Adolf Hitler, with one saying the Nazi leader "should have finished off the job" and another claiming the deaths of 6m Jews in the Holocaust "was a big lie!"

- A Labour supporter, Patrick Haseldine, who posted an image of the Israeli flag on one Labour group on Facebook, with the swastika replacing the Star of David

- Ian Love, a Momentum organiser on one of the groups, who claimed the former prime minister Tony Blair was "Jewish to the core", and told *The Sunday Times* last week he believed the Rothschild banking family controlled most of the world's finances.

The Facebook groups — which include We Support Jeremy Corbyn, with 68,000 members — have played a key role in helping Corbyn win two leadership contests and boost his performance in the last general election. He is

under strong pressure to confront the anti-semitism in his party.

The abusive messages regularly targeted Jewish public figures, including the Labour MP Luciana Berger and Jonathan Arkush, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. There are also many violent threats against politicians.

Berger said she and her staff had gone to police about the abuse they had received from left-wingers, including one email urging her to kill herself. In an article for *The Sunday Times*, Berger says: “Where people indulge in illegal racist activity I will always use the full force of the law to pursue a prosecution. I will continue to do that even when they are people from the left.”

Last night, Christine Shawcroft resigned from Labour’s national executive committee (NEC) following pressure from Tom Watson, the deputy leader. She had opposed the suspension of a Labour member accused of Holocaust denial. “It is clear that my continued membership of the NEC has become a distraction for the party,” said Shawcroft, who will be replaced by the comedian Eddie Izzard.

David Prescott, Corbyn’s senior political adviser, was a member of We Support Jeremy Corbyn, the biggest group, until last week; Laura Murray, a stakeholder manager in Corbyn’s office, is a member of Supporting Jeremy Corbyn & John McDonnell; and James Meadway, McDonnell’s

economic adviser, is in the groups We Support Jeremy Corbyn and Supporting Jeremy Corbyn & John McDonnell. Labour said no one in Corbyn’s or McDonnell’s office had seen, posted or endorsed anti-semitic or abusive messages.

Some posts decry the lack of availability of “assassins” in Britain for “getting rid of politicians”, with a picture featuring May. Another post, about the former deputy prime minister Damian Green, says “why don’t we just don’t get on with it and lynch him”.

Robert Ford, professor of political science at Manchester University, said “online hate factories” of the type uncovered by the investigation could encourage violent or extreme reactions.

The revelations came as it emerged that MPs who were at a rally to oppose Labour anti-semitism had been told to “explain” themselves to their constituency parties. MPs who joined the rally say they have asked Corbyn to make clear he does not think those who attended were attacking him. He has not done so.

Labour said: “These groups are not officially connected to the party in any way. Labour is committed to challenging and campaigning against anti-semitism.”

■ The women’s parliamentary Labour Party, made up of the party’s female MPs and peers, has demanded Jeremy Corbyn suspend a male MP accused of domestic violence while the allegations were investigated.

Since Jeremy Corbyn Doesn’t Even Believe Anti-Semitism Exists, His Disavowals of It Mean Nothing

By Howard Jacobson

thejc.com

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It must be the image in his head of the Jew as bloodsucker.

The former Labour MP Chris Mullin did Jeremy Corbyn no favours this week when, by way of proving how little antisemitism there is in the Labour Party, he posted an antisemitic tweet.

“Sorry to see Jewish leaders ganging up on Corbyn,” he wrote. “Suspect it has more to do with criticism of Israel than antisemitism.”

Ganging up on! The idea of the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council turning up mob-handed to rough up the leader of a major political party is gloriously absurd given what a small, moderate, not to say timorous force in British society Jews are.

But an accusation can be simultaneously preposterous and malign. In his brief tweet Mullins managed to pack in accusations of Jewish conspiracy, intimidation, bad-faith, duplicity, self-pity and self-interest, just to draw the line there.

The monotonous and insulting libel, that all that drives complaints of antisemitism is the desire to silence criticism of Israel, has been the left’s get-out-of-jail-free card for years and explains Corbyn’s apparent disdain whenever the charge of antisemitism in his party is levelled. The charge itself, in the reasoning of the left, is crooked.

As for the claim made by Corbyn’s supporters that he doesn’t have an antisemitic bone in his body, that is neither here nor there if he doesn’t believe that antisemitism, as a recognisable racism, exists. Only witness the difficulty he has always experienced just saying “antisemitism”. In the parlance of the left, the assertion “I am not a racist” does not mean “I am not an antisemite”.

If there is a change in Corbyn’s normally guarded vocabulary this week, optimists hope it is because even he knows a line has been crossed. Behind every refutation of previous wrong-doing in relation to Jews — his hanging out with representatives of Hamas, his association with rabid Jew-haters and Holocaust deniers, his sharing social media platforms with medievalists who accuse Jews of harvesting the organs of their enemies — there has always been a silent contempt for Jewish motivation. All right, maybe he didn’t check the credentials of his associates as carefully as he should have, but who are Jews with their imperialist Zionist sympathies to point the finger.

But this latest affair of the mural is another ball game. Here, without the distractions of Zionism, is the old, naked Jew-hating thing. The mural which Corbyn went out of his way to champion in 2012 — visiting the artist’s Facebook page and offering his support against the local council’s decision to remove it — shows a conspiracy of

financiers, most of them undisguisedly Jewish in the mode once favoured by the Nazi propagandist Julius Streicher, playing a pitiless game of Monopoly on a board supported by the naked backs of the world's oppressed.

On a second look, years later, Corbyn accepts its antisemitic intent. But he still reverts to his trusted “inadvertence defence”. He hadn't “looked closely” at the image.

An ill-judged gambit at any time — for what is a professional politician doing lending his name to a cause he doesn't bother to investigate? — inadvertence beggars credibility in this instance, so unmistakable is the artist's meaning. Never mind looking closely: to throw the most perfunctory glance at this mural is to be struck by the familiarity of its caricature of Jews conspiring to defraud and exploit.

Corbyn's insistence that he didn't see any of this incriminates him all ways. And in the end there is only one conclusion we can reach: if he saw nothing exceptionally

offensive in this mural it can only be because it mirrored an image of the Jew as bloodsucker he was already carrying in his head.

In order to calm the storm, Corbyn has tried to put blood into his latest expressions of regret by owning up at last to what he calls “pockets of antisemitism” in his party — “more than a few bad apples” he has since expanded, as though a few bad apples was ever anyone's reading of the systemic, ideological problem at the heart of Labour. But yet again, the language of apology falls short of the offence. “Pockets” not only minimises the degree and reach of prejudice on show, it distances Corbyn himself from it.

“You are the pocket, Mr Corbyn,” said a placard at Monday's rally. After years of contemptuous denials, it is hard to resist the logic of that. A predilection for the company of antisemites isn't, after all, a matter of chance. There comes a time when you have to face the possibility that the thing you flirt with, you are.

Caroline Glick: Israel Turns the Corner on Protecting Its Sovereignty

By Caroline Glick

breitbart.com

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Monday may have been a turning point in the global battle between the forces of nationalism and national self-determination on the one hand, and the forces pushing for a post-nationalist world with open borders on the other.

While most eyes were on the U.S., where President Donald Trump used his Twitter feed to force the Mexican government to prevent a “caravan” of approximately 1,100 migrants from Central America from approaching the northern border, an even greater drama was unfolding in Israel.

Whereas Trump's efforts are directed towards stopping the flow of illegal migrants across America's porous southern border, in Israel the flow of illegal aliens into its territory from Africa has already been stopped.

In 2013, Israel completed construction of a barrier along its 150-mile land border with Egypt. In the years before the “wall” was constructed Israel, was flooded with thousands of illegal migrants from Eritrea, Sudan, and Somalia. On a per capita basis, Israel had accepted more illegal aliens than Spain. But by 2017, with the barrier in place, illegal migration ended completely.

After the flow of illegals ended, Israel was left with the issue of how to manage the 40,000 illegal immigrants from Africa who had entered the country before the “wall” was built. Those migrants, who live primarily in the poor neighborhoods of south Tel Aviv, have turned those neighborhoods into violent crime-plagued zones.

The Swiss Federal Administrative Court, and official delegations from Britain and Denmark, have all recently concluded that Eritreans, who comprise three-quarters of the migrants, can return home safely and without fear of punishment.

European courts and the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have both concluded they can return to their countries of origin without fear of punishment.

In light of these basic facts, the Knesset (the Israeli parliament) passed laws mandating the migrants' removal from the country. Unfortunately, a consortium of Israeli and international forces have come together to prevent the government from enforcing those laws.

On Monday, their campaign accomplished its goal. Israel effectively agreed to give up its efforts to remove most of the African migrants.

On Monday afternoon, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Interior Minister Aryeh Deri held a joint press conference where they announced that they had ditched the government's plan to deport illegal aliens from Eritrea, Sudan, and Somalia to other countries in Africa. In its place, they had concluded a deal with the UNHCR that would see 16,250 illegal migrants — or roughly 40 percent of the total — settled in Western countries. Netanyahu mentioned Canada, Germany, and Italy as destinations.

The rest, he said, would remain in Israel for a period of not less than five years.

Netanyahu said the government had no choice but to cut the deal because Rwanda, the country that had agreed to accept the migrants, reneged on the deal. At the same time, he noted, Israel's Supreme Court had blocked every other option the government had developed for expelling them.

Israel's political left, including most of its media organs, responded positively to the news. Like the media in the U.S., they equated citizens' desire to preserve their nation's identity with racism.

Netanyahu, they declared triumphantly, had finally accepted the responsibility of leadership and recognized that leadership means betraying racist voters.

Netanyahu's voters and coalition members, including members of his governing Likud party, were appalled. They condemned the deal as a surrender of Israeli sovereignty. Education Minister Naftali Bennet, who heads the Jewish Home Party (which competes for the same voters as Likud), led the assault against the deal. Bennet charged that the deal "will turn Israel into a paradise for infiltrators."

Gideon Sa'ar, Likud's former interior minister — who many consider Netanyahu's chief rival for his party's leadership — also attacked the deal.

"The agreement to keep most infiltrators in Israel is a grave mistake. It shows weakness, renunciation of [Israeli] sovereignty, and encourages illegal immigration to Israel," Sa'ar said.

In response to the outcry, on late Monday night Netanyahu announced that he was suspending the agreement pending discussions with south Tel Aviv residents the next morning. By Tuesday afternoon, Netanyahu announced that he was cancelling the deal.

Why did Netanyahu feel compelled to accept the UN agreement? Who were the forces that blocked the government from implementing the laws the Knesset had passed, which mandated deporting the migrants who had entered Israel illegally?

As political philosopher Yoram Hazony, author of the soon-to-be-released book *The Virtue of Nationalism*, explains: "The international left has decided to wage war on the idea of borders and idea that states should be able to maintain and defend a unique national identity and heritage.

"The very idea that Israel should be different from other nations is itself seen as troubling, so naturally any policy aimed at protecting such difference is condemned as morally wrong. Liberal imperialists who want to see all countries adopt the same cookie-cutter set of liberal values can't help finding fault with what Israel is."

In Israel's case, the anti-nationalist liberal imperialist coalition has four parts.

First, and most importantly, there is the Israeli judiciary. In the 1990s, Israel's then-Supreme Court President Aharon Barak undertook what he referred to as a "judicial revolution." By applying radical interpretations to a series of basic laws Israel's Knesset had naively passed in the early 1990s, Barak arrogated to the Court the right to abrogate laws that had been duly passed. He also coined the term "Everything is Justicible," and effectively gave the Court the right to rule on any issue it wished by giving legal standing to any party it wished to hear.

These two moves empowered a slew of radical leftist non-governmental organizations (NGOs), financed by foreign money, to petition the Court to overturn not only

laws, but also government policies. Working hand-in-glove with these radical groups, over the past 25 years the Court has overruled government decisions and Knesset laws on everything from the Israeli military's counterterrorism tactics; to the government's right to conclude business deals with international corporations; to the government's prerogative to select the military chief of general staff and the attorney general; to the government's ability to enforce Israel's immigration laws.

The cumulative impact of this judicial tyranny has been the gutting of the powers of the Knesset and the government to fulfill their duty to advance the will of the voters.

The second partner in this assault on Israel's sovereignty is a consortium of radical, anti-Israel NGOs registered in Israel. Together and separately, they frequently petition the court against laws and government policies. Together and separately, they lobby foreign governments to oppose Israel, and run public campaigns in foreign countries to slander Israel and its right to self-determination.

The third partner in the coalition is a consortium of far-left American Jewish groups led by a radical multi-million dollar foundation called the New Israel Fund. The New Israel Fund has been the subject of multiple investigative reports in Israel over the past 15 years. It has become shorthand for radical left political warfare against the state. The NIF supports the operations of Israeli NGOs that commit lawfare and political warfare against the state at home and abroad. According to Im Tirzu, Israel's conservative student organization, NIF has donated \$14.2 million to Israeli-registered NGOs that are campaigning against deporting the illegal migrants.

In his press conference Monday, and in his later statements this week, Netanyahu alleged that the NIF had lobbied European governments to pressure Rwanda to cancel its agreement with Israel to accept the deported migrants.

In other words, the NIF stands accused of deliberately undermining the foreign policy of the government of Israel.

When Netanyahu announced that he was abrogating his agreement with the UN, he called for the establishment of a parliamentary inquiry into the operations of the NIF.

This, then brings us to the fourth partner in the coalition against Israeli sovereignty: the EU.

According to Im Tirtzu, the governments of Europe and the EU have donated \$16.2 million to the Israeli NGOs that ran the campaign against deporting the illegal aliens. And according to Netanyahu, the EU played a central role in forcing Rwanda to renege on its agreement to accept the deportees.

Working together, over the past three years, the four sides of the anti-Israeli sovereignty coalition overturned all three laws the Knesset had passed mandating the

expulsion of the illegal migrants, and they ran a worldwide campaign to demonize Israel for its efforts to deport them.

But this week, the Rubicon was crossed. The public outcry against the deal was so immediate and so overwhelming that it forced two things to happen.

First, Netanyahu cancelled the deal with the UN. Second, and far more significantly, Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon announced he will support a new law that bars the Supreme Court from overturning Knesset legislation on illegal immigration.

Since Netanyahu formed his current government in 2015, Kahlon's soft-right Kulanu party has blocked every effort to reform the judiciary. His announcement signals

that the Court has lost its immunity from Knesset oversight for the first time.

Following Monday's events, many Israeli commentators have noted that the day's drama made clear what the critical issue will be in next year's general elections. The vote will not be about the Palestinians or the economy. The power of the court will be the decisive issue.

And the party that convinces the public it will restore the balance of power between the three branches of government by checking the power of Israel's Supreme Court will win.

Israeli summer will be two months longer by 2100

By Israel21c Staff

israel21c.org

A new study predicts an extended hot season in the eastern Mediterranean that will impact regional ecosystems and human health.

Summer in the eastern Mediterranean is already a brutally hot dry period of four months, with steady temperatures in the high 80s and 90s. Now, a new study says that by 2100, climate changes caused by global warming will extend the region's summer season by two full months.

"Our research shows that the climate changes we are all noticing today are likely to intensify in the coming decades," said Assaf Hochman of Tel Aviv University's School of Geosciences, who led the research. "It is very important to understand this to try to prevent the deterioration as much as possible, or at least prepare for the change."

Winter, which is the region's rainy season, will accordingly shorten from four to two months, the study says. The research is based on global climate models and points to an expected rise in greenhouse gases as the main driving factor of the seasonal changes.

The study, published in the International Journal of Climatology, was overseen by Prof. Pinhas Alpert and conducted by Hochman, Tzvi Harpaz and Prof. Hadas Saaroni, all of TAU's School of Geosciences.

Using an algorithm developed by Alpert, the scientists examined the impact of human behavior on climate in the eastern Mediterranean region – an area that covers Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and southern Turkey – and came to disturbing conclusions.

"Pending no significant change in current human behavior in the region, the summer is expected to extend by 25% by the middle of the century (2046-2065) and by

April 3, 2018

49% until its end (2081-2100)," Hochman said. "The combination of a shorter rainy season and a longer dry season may cause a major water problem in Israel and neighboring countries."

Hochman added that serious consequences are foreseen that have the ability to significantly impact lives: shrinking and degrading of water sources and their quality, increased risk of brushfires, worsening pollution and altered timing and intensity of seasonal illnesses and health hazards.

"One of the main causes of these changes is the growing concentration of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere as a result of human activity. We have sought to examine what is expected in the 21st century as a direct result of the greenhouse effect on the climate," said Hochman.

In an attempt to minimize the effects of climate change on the region, the research team is currently exploring the possibility of establishing a multidisciplinary regional center for climate adaptation.

Alpert's climate-change research projects involving Americans, Europeans, Jordanians and Palestinians have been featured several times in ISRAEL21c.

Already in 2014, Alpert told ISRAEL21c that he was worried about the effects of climate change on sub-tropic areas, including the Mediterranean region. He predicted reduced rainfall and increases in heat and drought.

"Nearly all the models show that rainfall is going down, and at the end of this century we will have reductions, a reduction that we already see here in the last 30 and 40 years. We are just at the beginning and the models predict it will be much worse," Alpert said.

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If you see something, send something" –editor