

**The one option Israel doesn't have in Gaza**

By Evelyn Gordon

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is being assailed by his own base for his restraint last week following Hamas's massive bombardment of southern Israel. But in considering what Israel's policy should be, it's important to realize that for now, the option of permanently ending Hamas terror doesn't exist—not because it's beyond Israel's capability, but because it lacks sufficient public support.

If someone came up with an idea for destroying Hamas that could be executed quickly and with minimal casualties, Israelis obviously would support that, but nobody has. Thus the only plan with proven capability to suppress terror over the long term remains the one Israel executed in the West Bank in 2002 in response to the second intifada: The army goes in, and it never leaves. That's how Israel defeated the second intifada, and how it has kept West Bank terror within tolerable limits ever since.

But doing the same in Gaza would have very high costs—in soldiers' lives, in international opprobrium and possibly in saddling Israel with responsibility for Gaza's civilian problems. It would be far more costly than it was to reoccupy the West Bank because Hamas has used its 11 years of total control over Gaza to become far better armed and far more deeply entrenched than West Bank terrorists were in 2002.

No democracy could undertake such a costly plan without widespread public support, but especially not Israel, because any major military operation requires a massive call-up of reservists, and Israeli reservists tend to vote with their feet. They'll show up in droves for an operation with broad support, but an operation widely considered unjustified will spark major protests.

That's exactly what happened when, during the second intifada, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon thought Israelis' overwhelming support for reoccupying the West Bank created a golden opportunity to do the same in Gaza. He was forced to scrap that idea after a massive public outcry, especially from reservists.

The crucial difference Sharon had overlooked was the level of pain that Israelis were experiencing. The West Bank was wreaking havoc nationwide at that time. A wave of suicide bombings and other attacks in cities throughout Israel killed 452 Israelis in 2002, including 130 in March 2002 alone. But Gaza was causing most Israelis very little pain. Though there were attacks on soldiers and settlers in Gaza itself, there were almost no attacks from Gaza inside Israel. Consequently, most Israelis weren't willing to pay

the price that a major operation in Gaza would have entailed.

And for all the differences in today's situation, that same basic fact remains true: Gaza isn't causing most Israelis enough pain to make them willing to reoccupy the territory. It has made life hell for residents of communities near the border for the last seven months, and it did the same for the entire south during last week's rocket barrage. But the vast majority of Israelis have been completely unaffected. For people in Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem and most other major population centers, life continued as normal.

Hamas understands this very well. That's why it deliberately confined itself to bombarding the south, despite having missiles capable of reaching most of Israel. It wanted to cause as much pain as possible without crossing the threshold that would provoke Israel into war—and it succeeded.

But with the option of reoccupying Gaza unavailable, the two main options left are both short-term fixes.

One is a smaller-scale military operation. The last such operation, in 2014, bought the south three-and-a-half years of almost total quiet, but at a price (for Israel) of 72 dead and massive international opprobrium. Another such operation might buy a similar period of calm, but at a similar or even higher cost. And it would have to be repeated again in another few years, by which time Hamas may be better armed and capable of exacting an even higher price.

The second option, which Netanyahu evidently favors, is to negotiate a long-term ceasefire. This might buy a similar period of quiet, though since it hasn't been tried before, there's no guarantee. And it has several obvious advantages: no deaths, no international opprobrium, and most likely, greater support within Israel (though judging by past experience, not abroad) for a more forceful response once the ceasefire collapses, as it will at some point.

But it also has some obvious downsides. First, it's devastating to Israeli deterrence, since it shows that firing rockets is a good way to get Israel to capitulate to your demands. Second, it ensures that when the inevitable next round arrives, Hamas will be able to inflict much more damage than it could today.

To grasp just how much, consider that since the 2014 war, Hamas has been under a tight Israeli and Egyptian blockade. Yet according to Israeli intelligence, it has nevertheless managed to completely rebuild and perhaps even exceed the arsenal it had then. Indeed, Hamas fired

more than 450 rockets in just two days last week, almost three times the daily average of 85 rockets during the 2014 war. If it managed such a massive rearmament despite the blockade, one can only imagine how much more military materiel it would acquire under a long-term truce that would relax the blockade and pour cash into Gaza (ostensibly for civilian projects, but Hamas makes sure to take a cut of every dollar that enters).

Either of these options would only postpone the inevitable: Barring a miracle, Hamas will eventually become overconfident and cause Israel enough anguish to provoke it to reoccupy Gaza. By postponing that day, and

thereby allowing Hamas to further arm and entrench itself, Israel merely ensures that when it comes, it will come at a much higher price—in Israeli casualties, in Palestinian casualties and in international opprobrium.

But knowing that doesn't change the political reality that such an operation isn't possible now. In today's reality, the most that Netanyahu can do is buy a few more years of quiet. And his only choice is whether to do so via a ceasefire or a limited military operation, each of which carries its own major price tag.

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

## Turkey Is No Longer America's Ally

By Steven A. Cook

But neither is it an enemy.

When Andrew Brunson, the North Carolinian pastor, was released from Turkish custody in October, President Donald J. Trump tweeted that he was looking forward to “good, perhaps great, relations between the United States & Turkey.” The administration then subsequently lifted sanctions it had imposed on Turkey's ministers of interior and justice over Brunson's detention. The Turks responded by lifting sanctions Ankara had imposed on then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions and—not understanding what his portfolio entails—the Secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke. The change in tone between the two governments is a welcome development, but it does not change the alternate directions the two countries are moving. Put simply, the United States and Turkey do not share interests, priorities, or common values.

The divergence between these two NATO allies reflects the changes in international politics since the end of the Cold War nearly a generation ago. Absent the common threat posed by the Soviet Union, there is no strategic rationale for the U.S.-Turkey partnership. The sooner American policymakers understand this fact, the greater likelihood that the Washington can pursue a more realistic approach to Ankara, which means working together when possible, working around Turkey when necessary, and publicly opposing the Turks where they seek to undermine American policies and interests.

Ankara wants to be a regional power in its own right and as a result, opposes the U.S.-led regional political order that helps to advance American power and interests in Turkey's neighborhood. Turkey's foreign policy is complicated, but Ankara's desire to be a leader in its region and beyond has compelled the Turkish leadership to improve ties with Russia, cooperate with Iran to evade UN sanctions, and oppose the United States in Syria. It also happens to be good politics for President Erdogan to oppose the United States given the reservoir of anti-Americanism among Turks. Although it is clear that Turkey and the United States differ in important areas, American officials have sought to narrow the divide

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between the governments through intensive diplomacy. These efforts have produced few tangible results. Consequently, it is time for the United States to try a different approach. This includes:

**1. Recognizing that the strategic relationship is a relic of the past.** Going forward U.S. officials should ask for and expect less from their Turkish counterparts. This includes expectations concerning Turkey's involvement in the fight against the Islamic State as well as Turkey's cooperation in adhering to recent U.S. sanctions on Iran.

**2. Developing alternatives to Incirlik Air Base without abandoning it.** While Incirlik was important to the fight against the Islamic State and may be important in future crises, the base has also become useful to Turkey's leaders in domestic politics. Turkish officials have threatened to rescind permission for the anti-ISIS coalition's use of the facility over the U.S. relationship with the YPG—a warning that plays well with nationalists. Options in Greece, Cyprus, Romania, and possibly Jordan or Iraq would insulate the United States from periodic Turkish threats to revoke American access to the base.

**3. Continuing the relationship with the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG).** It is true that the YPG is linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has been waging a terrorist campaign against Turkey for three decades, and it is also true that the YPG and its affiliated political party do not represent all Syrian Kurds. Still, the YPG has been critical in the fight against the self-declared Islamic State in Syria, especially in contrast to the Turks, who have been ambivalent in their involvement.

**4. U.S. officials should take a strong public stand on Turkish policies that undermine U.S. policy.** Private diplomacy and persuasion behind closed doors has little, if any, effect on the policies that Ankara pursues at home and abroad. Toward that end, the United States should end its cooperation with Turkey on the F-35 program, preventing Turkey from accessing the newest high-tech jet in the American military inventory.

The Turkish government simply cannot purchase advanced weapons from Russia, undermine American

efforts and threaten U.S. forces in Syria, aid Iran, arrest American citizens, detain Turkish employees of the U.S. embassy, and carry out repressive rule of its own citizens that violates the principles of Ankara's NATO membership and expect to enjoy the benefits of America's most advanced military aircraft.

Turkey is and will continue to be a member of NATO, but it is not the partner it used to be. In the future, U.S. policy should be based on the fact that while Turkey is not an enemy of the United States, it is also not a friend. Washington can work with Ankara where it remains possible, work around the Turks where it is necessary, and work against them where it has to.

## The Long Struggle for Supremacy in the Muslim World

By Yaroslav Trofimov

wsj.com

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**Turks and Saudis have been enemies for centuries. Now the Khashoggi investigation has rekindled their fierce rivalry—and may upend the politics of the Middle East.**

Two centuries ago, in the fall of 1818, the Saudi monarch was brought to Istanbul in chains. He was displayed in a cage to the cheering crowds outside the Hagia Sophia mosque, and then, amid celebratory fireworks, his head was chopped off.

This gruesome episode in the shared history of Turkey and Saudi Arabia hasn't been mentioned in public as the two countries have clashed over the Oct. 2 killing of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul. But the long legacy of rivalry between the two Sunni Muslim powers—both of them key American allies—has fueled Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's determination to punish the House of Saud for Mr. Khashoggi's death.

In the wake of Mr. Khashoggi's killing, Mr. Erdogan proclaimed that Turkey "is the only country that can lead the Muslim world." This, of course, is also the role that the House of Saud sees as its natural right because of the kingdom's control over Islam's holiest sites in Mecca and Medina, and over the hajj pilgrimage that brings more than two million Muslims there each year.

In this contest, Iran—whose Shiite version of Islam represents a small minority of the predominantly Sunni Muslim world—can't really compete. For now, Tehran is happy to watch from the sidelines as its two main regional rivals undermine each other and leave Western powers with few good options for how to react.

Saudi Arabia's 33-year-old Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has tried to assert Riyadh's ambition to lead the Middle East ever since his father ascended to the throne in 2015. In a major departure from Saudi Arabia's previous policy of behind-the-scenes checkbook diplomacy, Prince Mohammed has built a coalition of Sunni states such as the United Arab Emirates and Egypt to launch a war against Iranian allies in Yemen. He imposed an embargo that unsuccessfully sought regime change in Qatar. He also attempted to meddle in Lebanese politics by forcing that nation's prime minister to announce during a stay in the kingdom that he would resign, a decision that the prime minister rescinded once he was home.

Saudi Arabia and its allies also have relentlessly pursued the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist political

movement hostile to U.S. influence in the region (its affiliates include Hamas). Though professing a commitment to democracy under Islamic law, the Brotherhood has turned autocratic when in power in Egypt and Sudan. Mr. Erdogan has supported the group across the Arab world since the 2011 revolutions of the Arab Spring, and Mr. Khashoggi was sympathetic to some of its aims.

Mr. Erdogan has made several efforts to resist Saudi Arabia's rise. He sent Turkish troops to protect Qatar, ousted Saudi allies from Somalia and announced a deal to lease an island across the Red Sea from Saudi Arabia in Sudan, possibly for a military base. He has also become a vociferous champion of traditional Muslim causes, such as Palestine, and of new ones, such as the suffering of the Rohingya in Myanmar. Istanbul has turned into a favorite hub for Islamist dissidents from across the Arab world.

"The Turkish president's foreign policy strategy aims to make Muslims proud again," said Soner Cagaptay, a scholar at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and the author of a recent biography of Mr. Erdogan, "The New Sultan." "Under this vision, a reimagined and modernized version of the Ottoman past, the Turks are to lead Muslims to greatness."

There is a long history behind that claim. For four centuries, the sultan in Istanbul was also the religious leader, or caliph, of the entire Muslim world. His spiritual authority was recognized well beyond the borders of the Ottoman Empire, which at its peak included parts of central and eastern Europe, north Africa and the Arabian peninsula.

The caliphate was abolished only in 1924, six years after the Ottomans lost control over Mecca and Medina to a British-sponsored Arab revolt during World War I. The modern, secular Turkish Republic, which rose from the remnants of the Ottoman Empire after its defeat by the Allied powers, banished the last sultan, Mehmed VI, to Europe in 1922. With the Ottomans gone, the House of Saud quickly expanded from its desert strongholds to much of the Arabian peninsula, first capturing Mecca and then establishing a powerful new state in 1932.

Mr. Khashoggi, as it happens, hailed from a Turkish family that settled in Arabia in the Ottoman age—which is why Turkish newspapers usually spell his surname the Turkish way as Kasikci, which means a spoon maker, to signal his kinship with the country.

Until Mr. Erdogan's embrace of neo-Ottoman politics—and more authoritarian rule—a decade or so ago, the modern Turkish state wasn't much interested in leading the Muslim world and was content to leave religious proselytizing to Saudi Arabia. Turkey joined NATO, sought membership in the European Union and nurtured close military links with Israel.

Mr. Erdogan's new Turkey, by contrast, presents a major challenge to Saudi Arabia by offering an alternative Islamic model, said Madawi al Rasheed, a Saudi professor at the London School of Economics and the author of a history of Saudi Arabia. "It is an existential threat to Saudi Arabia because of Turkey's combination of Islam and a kind of democracy," she said. "After all, Erdogan is still ruling over a republic that has a parliament, opposition parties and a civil society—while Saudi Arabia has nothing like that."

Indeed, today's kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a monarchy as absolute as they come. It's also the third state run by the House of Saud since the family's alliance with the puritan preacher Mohammed ibn Abdel Wahhab rallied the Bedouin of the Arabian peninsula under the banner of an uncompromising new creed (since known as Wahhabism) in 1745.

Turkey is the main reason that the previous two Saudi states ceased to exist.

The first disappeared when an Ottoman expeditionary corps comprised mostly of Turkish and Albanian soldiers seized the Saudi capital of Diriyah, on the outskirts of Riyadh, on Sept. 11, 1818. The city was razed. According to a Russian diplomatic dispatch, the Turkish sultan then had the captured Saudi ruler, Abdullah bin Saud, escorted to Istanbul, alongside the chief Wahhabi cleric. After the deposed Saudi monarch was beheaded outside the Hagia Sophia, his body was propped up in public for three days with his severed head under his arm. (As for the Wahhabi imam, he was sent to Istanbul's bazaar for beheading, the diplomat reported.)

In Ottoman eyes, the Saudis were bloodthirsty murderers who had plundered the holy city of Karbala in Ottoman Iraq, slaughtering 4,000 civilian inhabitants (most of them Shiite), and later destroyed many shrines in Mecca and Medina. To celebrate the demise of the Saudi state and the liberation of the two holy mosques, the Ottoman sultan even released debtors from jail across his realm.

In the following decades, a different branch of the House of Saud rebuilt Diriyah and reconquered much of the Arabian peninsula, prompting another Ottoman military invasion in 1871. Moving quickly down the Persian Gulf coast, the Ottomans deprived this second Saudi state of much of its territory, seizing the eastern lands that were later found to contain most of the kingdom's oil. Over the next few years, a rival Arabian tribe loyal to Turkey finished off what remained of the second Saudi realm.

All of this is not quite ancient history. The father of Saudi Arabia's current King Salman and the founder of the current Saudi state, King Abdulaziz, went from being a

vassal of the Ottomans to fighting against the Turks during World War I, when he helped to expel them from Arabia for good. Some of Prince Mohammed's uncles took part in those battles against the Turks and their local allies.

The Saudis have worked hard since then to eliminate remaining traces of their country's Ottoman past. In 2002, they razed the historic Ajayd fortress in Mecca, one of many ancient Ottoman buildings that have gone under Saudi bulldozers. "The Saudi royal family will never forget how the Ottoman—the Turkish—soldiers came twice and destroyed their state. People tend to forget it in good times, but it comes back again and again," said Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, a prominent political scientist and former professor in the United Arab Emirates.

The U.A.E. had its own spat with Mr. Erdogan last December over the Turkish record in Saudi Arabia, after the Emirati foreign minister retweeted a post accusing Fakhreddin Pasha, the last Ottoman governor of Medina, of looting. The governor had the holy city's ancient library shipped to Istanbul before Medina was besieged in the Arab Revolt, then refused to surrender, ordering the starving Turkish soldiers to subsist on grasshoppers even after the Ottoman sultan conceded defeat in 1918. Mr. Erdogan complained of the Emirati minister's "impudence," and Ankara renamed the street on which the U.A.E. embassy is located after the governor, whom Turkey considers a war hero.

Until Mr. Khashoggi's death, the Saudi-led alliance with the U.A.E. and Egypt seemed to be on the winning side across the region, with Turkey able to depend only on Qatar and possibly Sudan. In part that was because of President Donald Trump's early bet on Prince Mohammed—a cornerstone of his strategy to contain Iran. It was also a result of Mr. Erdogan's own moves, such as his overtures to Iran and Russia and his decision to imprison an American pastor, Andrew Brunson, while seeking the extradition of a Pennsylvania-based cleric whom Turkey accuses of organizing the 2016 coup attempt—all of which alienated Washington.

Now, with the Khashoggi affair igniting global outrage, Mr. Erdogan has seized his chance. Turkey's recent release of Mr. Brunson has allowed a thaw in relations with Washington. A series of leaks by Turkish officials, meanwhile, has forced Saudi Arabia—which initially insisted that Mr. Khashoggi had walked out of the consulate alive—to make an embarrassing about-face, admitting that the journalist was indeed killed by a specially dispatched team on its own diplomatic premises. The Saudis have dismissed two senior officials close to the prince over the incident and have continued to backtrack, saying on Thursday that the killing was premeditated and not, as they initially claimed, the accidental outcome of a "brawl."

Mr. Erdogan wants the Saudi suspects to stand trial in Turkey and has pointed his finger at the highest levels of the Saudi state. Though Mr. Erdogan himself hasn't accused Prince Mohammed of killing Mr. Khashoggi, the

Turkish leader's closest aides have done precisely that. Prince Mohammed "is one of the culprits of the murder," and Saudi Arabia is facing "arguably the most difficult process since it was founded," wrote Saadet Oruc, one of Mr. Erdogan's senior advisers, in a Turkish newspaper this week. Prince Mohammed "has Khashoggi's blood on his hands" and the murder will "linger like a curse" over the prince, concurred another adviser, Ilnur Cevik.

Mr. Erdogan's aim seems to be to render Prince Mohammed unrepresentable on the world stage. More ambitiously, he may hope to pressure the prince's father, Saudi Arabia's elderly King Salman, to anoint another successor. "Turkey ultimately wants to erode the influence of MbS internationally, regionally, and to the extent possible, domestically," said Sinan Ulgen, head of the Edam think tank in Istanbul, referring to the crown prince by his initials. "And already, his image as a reformist leader has been tarnished."

Prince Mohammed, who made a phone call to Mr. Erdogan on Wednesday, insisted in his first public appearance since Mr. Khashoggi's death that relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia remain excellent. Prince Mohammed added that as long as he, King Salman and Mr. Erdogan remain in power, nobody would be able to drive a wedge between the two brotherly Muslim nations.

In Ankara, however, memories are still fresh of how Prince Mohammed just a few months ago, on a visit to Egypt, bluntly described Mr. Erdogan as part of a "triangle of evil" alongside Iran and the extremists of Islamic State.

Though Saudi Arabia is far more repressive than Turkey, which does have some independent press and opposition parties, both countries are among the world's worst human-rights abusers—as, of course, is Iran. Turkey under Mr. Erdogan has imprisoned more journalists than any other state, press-freedom groups say. It has also pursued opponents abroad with its own program of renditions, though it doesn't have a death penalty.

Thanks to the Khashoggi affair, however, Mr. Erdogan's Turkey can finally credibly claim the moral high ground—a major boon for Ankara's regional ambitions.

"One of the astonishing ironies of the entire episode is how the leading jailer of journalists in the world is now a paragon of press freedom and protections," said Steven Cook, a senior fellow for the Middle East at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington. "Not only that, but Turkey, which has been a wholly irresponsible actor on Iran, Syria, Middle East peace, even stability in the Horn of Africa, now looks like a source of regional stability in comparison to the reckless Saudis

## The Iron Dome Saves Lives, but It Is No Solution to Hamas's Attacks

By Moshe Arens

haaretz.com

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**So long as Hamas has weapons, Israelis won't be safe.**

The development by RAFAEL of the Iron Dome system for the interception of short-range rockets and some mortar rounds is a great technological achievement that was for many years considered to be beyond engineering capability. But it is not a cure-all for an attack of thousands of such rockets against civilian populations.

Some rockets get through, while others send residents of the south scurrying into bomb shelters. That is the end of normal life and can be achieved by the launching of a few hundred simple cheap rockets. The last few weeks have demonstrated this conclusively.

Also, the Iron Dome system can be saturated by the launching of a number of rockets at the same target, some of which get through. The bombardment overwhelms the interception system. It is not, as many wanted to envisage it, an impenetrable umbrella in the skies of the south, under which life can proceed as usual.

The tremendous difference in the cost of the simple rocket and the expensive system operated to intercept it also makes it financially unsustainable in the long run.

It is true – it saves lives. It has been argued that the Iron Dome provides the government with the time needed to discuss a response to an initial attack. But it does not solve the basic problem: protection of the civilian population in the south.

All this should have been foreseen, and the decision to develop the Iron Dome system should have been

accompanied by a decision to develop a laser interceptor which has many advantages over the Iron Dome system.

But there is no getting away from it: The only way to stop the launching of rockets against Israel's civilian population is by physically eliminating that capability. That can be achieved only by troops on the ground – through the entry of the Israel Defense Forces into the launching areas and the destruction of the manufacturing and storage facilities. The belief that terrorist organizations pledged to destroy the state of Israel can be inveigled to abstain from attacking Israel has proven to be false and is not likely to be borne out in the long run.

Like the rest of the world, Israel cannot ignore the suffering of the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip. While claiming to be fighting to improve the miserable fate of Gazans, the jihadist organizations ruling the Strip are deliberately perpetuating this misery by urging the population — including women and children — to approach the separation fence and set fire to Israeli targets across the border.

As long as these organizations continue to rule there, nothing will change. Most of the resources supplied to the area will be diverted to the building of attack tunnels and rockets to be used against Israel. Those who are truly seeking to improve the situation of the population in the

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Gaza Strip realize that Hamas and its jihadist allies will not be their partners. This is by now well understood in the international community, in Egypt and hopefully in Israel as well.

It is on such an understanding that the amelioration of the situation in Gaza has to be based — Israel, Egypt, and the international community working together. The IDF can provide the boots on the ground to give the initial

impetus to the change that has to come for the benefit of the civilian population in the south and the Palestinian population suffering under jihadist rule.

Those who insist that there is no solution are just saying that the suffering must continue. They are wrong. There are enough resources — military and economic — to bring about a significant change for the better.

*Mr. Arens served Israel as a Knesset Likud lawmaker, ambassador to the US, as well as defense and foreign minister*

## In Boycotting the West Bank, Airbnb Boycotts Jews

By David Harsanyi

nypost.com

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**In no other region in the world would Americans openly accept this kind of prejudice.**

Airbnb says: No Jews allowed. The apartment-sharing service has sided against Israel by banning and delisting the apartments of peaceful Jewish civilians living in Judea and Samaria. And that's not even the worst part.

Nor is the worst part that Airbnb is helping propel the destructive myth that Jews would abandon their claim to the disputed West Bank if only there were enough international pressure.

No, the worst part is that Airbnb has singled out Jews, and only Jews, as the one group in the world that is worthy of such censure. That's what makes its boycott a naked act of corporate anti-Semitism.

Airbnb says an entire team “struggled to come up with the right approach.” And the right approach evidently was to bar Jews from listing the apartments and homes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Airbnb is only targeting Jews — not the present government of Israel or the “Zionists” or any political entity — who live on disputed land.

“Many in the global community have stated that companies should not do business here because they believe companies should not profit on lands where people have been displaced,” reads an Airbnb blog post that sounds like it was written by some poli-sci freshman who just wrapped up his first Chomsky tome.

The “global community” is a euphemism for a conglomerate of theocrats and authoritarians, who use the Middle East's sole democratic state as a distraction to deflect from their own transgressions. It also includes various Western Israel obsessives with misleading names like Human Rights Watch.

Bravo, Airbnb! You have now adopted the immoral hypocrisy of that community.

Because, don't worry, you can still snag a “modern apartment studio” in the city-center of Sevastopol, Ukraine, annexed by Russia. And Airbnb will hook you up with a “Cozy Studio” near Gulshan-Baridhara in “Tibet, China” — formerly known simply as Tibet. Hey, the Turkish have been depopulating Kurdish towns for decades, but Airbnb is there for you.

If you want a place on the Gaza Strip, where the state fires hundreds of rockets at Jewish civilians to cheers of

the populace, no problem. I mean, Hamas' charter might say that there's “no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad,” but for 55 dollars a night, Airbnb has a solution for the discerning traveler.

The company claims that its decision was evaluated on “whether the existence of listings is contributing to existing human suffering.” Yet in countries with stateless minorities and oppressive regimes, a two-bedroom within walking distance of your favorite tourist attraction is almost surely available.

The notion that a glorified rental board believes it can ease human suffering is amusing. Jews will figure out a way to rent their homes. But the ideas Airbnb is helping normalize — namely, those of the anti-Jewish boycott, divest and sanction movement — are serious. Airbnb wants a Judenfrei West Bank. In no other region in the world, and with no other conflict and no other ethnicity, race or faith, would Americans openly accept this kind of prejudice.

It's a mystery if the crack Airbnb team knows that Jews were forced out of the West Bank when seven Arab armies (and other paramilitary groups) attacked in 1948. It seems unlikely that the firm is aware that hundreds of thousands of Jews were displaced from Muslim nations in the years that followed Israel's creation. Many of those nations continue to oppress and displace indigenous Christians, and Airbnb continues to do business with them.

Jews would retake the West Bank in 1967, after a number of Arab armies gave it another shot. Since that day, Israel has countless times offered autonomy and nationhood to the people living in vast swaths of that land in exchange for peace. The only reason Jews live in self-contained communities in the West Bank is because Palestinian authorities do nothing to stop the violence aimed at civilians. Actually, Palestinian authorities often spur the violence, not only threatening anyone who sells real estate to Jews but rewarding the families of their murderers with cash.

Now, unless you're a Canaanite, your claim to live in the West Bank is a complex one. It's unlikely the team at Airbnb is going to unfurl the problem in any coherent way. So it's probably best to stay out of it. Because you might

end up looking like world-class hypocrites. Or worse, a bunch of anti-Semites.

## Restoring Relations with Chad, Moves Israel a Long Way Toward Restoring Africa Relations Generally

By Eldad Beck

israelhayom.com

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### A Muslim-majority country.

The story of Israel-Africa relations is largely a story of betrayal and neglect, or, to put it more precisely, African betrayal and Israeli neglect in response to that betrayal.

In the early years after Israel's founding, ties with African countries, and Chad in particular, flourished.

Many nations that had fought for their independence from colonial rule saw in Israel and its successful struggle against the British and the Arabs, as well as its agricultural and military achievements, a source of inspiration. Those countries sought to learn from Israel and worked to develop close ties with Jerusalem. Four African countries even had embassies in Jerusalem. From Israel's perspective, Africa presented an opportunity to break the Arab political and economic blockade imposed on the Jewish state immediately following its establishment.

This love affair continued until the early 1970s, when the Arab states discovered the power of their oil. Under enormous pressure from the Arabs, who promised Africa generous financial aid, many African countries neglected and downgraded Israel ties.

In Chad's case, this pressure proved to be effective prior to the 1967 Yom Kippur War, when many African countries cut diplomatic ties with Israel. Neighboring Libya played a major role in Muslim-majority Chad's decision to turn its back on Israel. For many years, Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi treated Chad like his country's personal backyard and a center from which to expand Libya's influence throughout Africa. He did this by using internal tensions among the country's various ethnic and religious groups to his advantage.

Chadian President Idriss Déby's visit to Israel and the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations are the culmination of Israel's extensive efforts to court Chad, a country of much importance not only due to its

geographical location in the heart of the African continent, but also due to the fact that it is a Muslim-majority country.

Renewed diplomatic ties had been on the table a decade ago, but were removed from the agenda as a result of pressure from Chad's anti-Israel Arab neighbors, Libya and Sudan. This process, so important to the future of Israel's ties with Muslim Africa, was made possible thanks to the fall of the Gaddafi regime and Libya's decline in that country's civil war, as well as the slow transformation of the Sudanese regime into a more moderate government, under the influence of, among other things, Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf states.

It is quite possible that once Chad restores its relations with Israel, other Muslim-majority countries in Africa will follow.

Israel's welcome return to Africa is made possible thanks to Jerusalem having finally decided to put an end its self-imposed political isolation. The truth must be said: Israel adopted a passive foreign policy that saw Jerusalem concentrate its efforts in convenient regions, including in particular the United States and Europe. The recent improvement in Israel's international standing, completely detached from the lack of progress on any "peace process," has gotten Africa's attention. As has always been the case, Israel has a lot to offer to Africa, and Africa has a lot to offer to Israel in return.

The weakening of the Arab world combined with Israel's more active diplomatic approach opens up new horizons to Israel in Africa and greater cooperation with European countries, who have finally come to realize that in order to keep millions of African migrants from flooding their borders, they must first help Africa solve Africa's problems.

## An In-Flight Haredi Riot That Never Happened, and Israel's Social Divisions

By Liel Leibovitz

tabletmag.com

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### The flight 002 election.

Last Thursday, as New York was struggling with the obstacles presented by 5 mighty inches of snow, El Al Flight 002 to Tel Aviv, scheduled to depart at 6:30 p.m., was delayed. It finally took off at 11:45 p.m., which, ordinarily, is hardly the stuff of front page news. Except that shortly after its landing, the flight became not only the subject of explosive nationwide controversy but also a perfect metaphor for so much that is wrong—and so much that is right—with Israeli society.

The first accounts of Flight 002, appearing in the Israeli press on Saturday, were grim. The snowstorm, in this version of events, caused an inevitable delay, and when the Haredi passengers on board learned that the

flight would arrive in Israel only an hour or so before Shabbat, they began to riot. A poorly lit, grainy video was produced, taken onboard the flight, showing religious men flailing their arms and shouting. And a famous passenger—Shimon Sheves, the former director of the Prime Minister's Office under the late Yitzhak Rabin—posted a widely quoted account of the flight on Facebook featuring "hands raised in the air," as Sheves described it, "hitting stewardesses, who, in turn, burst out crying." El Al's official statement said bluntly that the company will pursue legal charges, "with determination and without compromise," against any passenger behaving violently.

For 24 hours, the impudence of the Orthodox was all many Israelis heard about, online, on air, and in print. But then Shabbat ended, and the religious passengers on board Flight 002 returned from Athens—where the flight eventually made a pit stop to allow those who wished to observe Shabbat to deplane—with a very different story.

So what really happened en route from New York to Tel Aviv? As we now know, three noteworthy things: First, the delay was caused because the crew arrived at the airport three hours late. Sure, it was snowing, and the roads were a slushy hellscape, but virtually all of the flight's 400 passengers realized that and had the good sense to allow plenty of time for travel. The professionals of El Al weren't quite as attentive or wise.

Even more maddening, once the passengers, still on the ground and growing irate, learned that the flight would not land in Israel in time for Shabbat, many asked to return to the gate so that they could leave the plane and spend the weekend stateside before making other travel arrangements. The flight's captain asked everyone to sit down and buckle up, promising his passengers that he was merely taxiing back to the gate. Instead, without providing any further updates, without adhering to the requisite safety protocols, and in blatant violation of his promise, he simply took off for Israel.

Under the circumstances, you'd understand why the passengers, having been disrespected and lied to, might be upset. But the best was yet to come: When Yehuda Schlesinger, a passenger aboard Flight 002 and a reporter for *Yisrael Hayom*, returned home from Athens, he saw the viral video that allegedly documented those rascally Haredi men flexing their muscles and threatening violence. He recognized the clip, because he had shot it with his smartphone on Thursday night and shared it on social media. There was only one small problem: The video Schlesinger took was of Haredi men singing and dancing to cheer each other up under difficult circumstances; the video shown on Israeli TV was edited and given a radically different soundtrack, one featuring men shouting in a menacing fashion. When Schlesinger, incensed, pointed this out to Israel's Channel 10, they apologized and claimed that the soundtrack was swapped due to technical trouble. The term for that in Yiddish is fake news.

But while Israel's national airline proved to be incompetent, its media mendacious, and its mandarins seething with contempt for their observant brothers and sisters, there's another side to the story of Flight 002 that deserves to be heard. Far from being uniformly Haredi, as early press reports insisted, the passengers who rushed against the clock in Greece were a wildly diverse bunch: black hatters and wearers of knitted kippot, Ashkenazim and Sephardim, men and women from all across Israel with nothing much in common save for the tradition that has bound us all for millennia. Welcomed by Rav Mendel and Rebbetzin Nechama Hendel, the local Chabad emissaries, these stranded passengers, according to their own accounts, passed a joyous Shabbat, enjoying each

other's company and the spirit of the holy day despite being separated from their luggage and their loved ones waiting at home.

If Israelis are indeed slouching toward elections—as of this week, the government is still teetering on the brink of collapse—you need only look to Flight 002 to discover the nation's real divides. With the Israeli left having eroded into irrelevance by insisting that only further concessions can stop the surge of terror, voters aren't divided by significant ideological differences. Instead, Israelis, like Americans, fall squarely into the two camps visible on board the Boeing that snowy night last week. In one corner are those who keep their faith, who come together in times of crisis, and who expect the conversation to remain respectful and those in power to remain accountable. If you're wondering about their values, just watch Schlesinger's undoctored video and ask yourself when was the last time you reacted to a major inconvenience by finding some stream of inner happiness and bursting into song in public.

The group in the other corner, sadly, isn't quite so cheerful. A former senior government official, news reporters and editors, a major airline: All could've returned quietly to their homes, taken a long shower, brushed off the ordeals of their ill-fated flight and gone on with their lives. Instead, they felt a need to concoct a sickening little story of the religious behaving badly, drawing on very little evidence and a lot of animosity toward the deplorables who dare expect that the national carrier of the world's only Jewish state might show some consideration when it comes to observing Shabbat. There's a term in Yiddish for that, too: It's prejudice.

One group sang songs and broke bread together, grateful for the gift of community. The other wasted not a moment before taking to the media and portraying their fellow passengers as a benighted mob disdainful of all that is enlightened and good.

If you've been paying any attention at all to politics anywhere in the world, you already know which group is likely to prevail in the long run: In Tel Aviv, in Tampa, in Tottenham, and elsewhere, cataclysmic coalitions of tired citizens are coming together, forming movements that are as much personal as they are political. Often, these movements are composed of folks who have no real coherent agenda except the pain of yet again turning on the TV and seeing themselves cast as the butt of the joke, listening to the news and hearing themselves blamed for all ills, reading the paper and learning that their self-appointed moral and intellectual betters have again dug up an opportunity to scorn them. They've had enough, and when they vote, they often just vote against that well-dressed person in the emergency exit seat who gently shook her head at the mere sight of a beard and sidelocks or a covered head.

That's the troubling news. The good news is that while the aircraft of Israeli statehood may, like Flight 002, suffer



some occasional turbulence, it always lands safely, and there's plenty of room onboard for anyone, of any

denomination or disposition, capable of coexistence and respect.

## The Proper Jewish Response to the Pittsburgh Massacre

By Meir Y. Soloveichik

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### May God avenge their blood.

Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, all that were enfeebled in thy rear, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. — Deuteronomy 25

And the LORD said unto Moses: "Write this for a memorial in the book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it "God is my battle-standard [Adonai nissi]."

And he said: "The hand upon the throne of the LORD: the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. — Exodus 17

As the names of the Jews murdered in Pittsburgh were released, many of their co-religionists, responding online to this unthinkable occurrence, looked to Jewish tradition and parlance. "Zichronam Livracha," some of them typed. "May their memories be a blessing." That is indeed the phrase usually utilized to mark the passing of a Jew, and it was heartfelt. But it was also, in this context, insufficient and therefore inappropriate. When Jews are murdered because they are Jews—by a Nazi in Auschwitz, by a terrorist in Netanya, or by an anti-Semite in Pittsburgh—then the traditional phrase we use is different, and starker.

Hashem Yikom Damam, we say.

May God avenge their blood. The phrase draws on several biblical verses, paralleling the 13th-century prayer known as Av HaRachamim, which, commemorating those murdered in the Crusades, cites the Psalms:

**Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?"**

**Let it be known among the nations in our sight that You avenge the spilled blood of Your servants.**

**And it says: "For He who exacts retribution for spilled blood remembers them.**

**He does not forget the cry of the humble."**

Prayers such as these illustrate something fundamental about Judaism. Memory is central to Jewish life; that is why we pray after any death that the one who has passed should be remembered. Yet when it comes to murdered Jews, our recollection of how they died must be joined forever with a prayer for divine vengeance.

Why is this so?

The saying reflects the fact that when it comes to mass murderers, Jews do not believe that we must love the sinner while hating the sin; in the face of egregious evil, we will not say the words ascribed to Jesus on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We believe that a man who shoots up a synagogue knows

well what he does; that a murderer who sheds the blood of helpless elderly men and women knows exactly what he does; that one who brings death to those engaged in celebrating new life knows precisely what he does. To forgive in this context is to absolve; and it is, for Jews, morally unthinkable.

But the mantra for murdered Jews that is Hashem Yikom damam bears a deeper message. It is a reminder to us to see the slaughter of 11 Jews in Pennsylvania not only as one terrible, tragic moment in time, but as part of the story of our people, who from the very beginning have had enemies that sought our destruction. There exists an eerie parallel between Amalek, the tribe of desert marauders that assaulted Israel immediately after the Exodus, and the Pittsburgh murderer. The Amalekites are singled out by the Bible from among the enemies of ancient Israel because in their hatred for the Chosen people, they attacked the weak, the stragglers, the helpless, those who posed no threat to them in any way. Similarly, many among the dead in Pittsburgh were elderly or disabled; the murderer smote "all that were enfeebled," and he "feared not God." Amalek, for Jewish tradition, embodies evil incarnate in the world; we are commanded to remember Amalek, and the Almighty's enmity for it, because, as Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik explained, the biblical appellation refers not only to one tribe but also to our enemies throughout the ages who will follow the original Amalek's example. To say Hashem Yikom damam is to remind all who hear us that there is a war against Amalek from generation to generation—and we believe that, in this war, God is not neutral.

It is therefore inappropriate to merely say "may their memories be a blessing." We must treat these kinds of murders differently from most deaths; to do otherwise is to ignore Jewish life, Jewish tradition, and the Jewish historical experience. In her Atlantic article "The Jews of Pittsburgh Bury Their Dead," Emma Green describes the process of tahara, the ritual of washing dead bodies before burial, as well as the society known as the chevra kadisha, the "sacred colleagues," members of the Jewish community who answer the call to bury our brethren, as emotionally searing as it may be. She writes:

**When one person dies, members of the Jewish community often step in to care for the body and the family. When 11 people die, the whole community becomes part of the mourning process. The logistics are complicated. Eleven bodies have to be accompanied, washed, and buried. Eleven funerals have to be planned. Families move into an intensive period of mourning, called shiva, that lasts for up to seven days after the burial.**

Green's description is beautiful and her intent admirable, but the picture she paints is incomplete. "If an Israelite is found slain," we are informed by the Shulhan Arukh, the Jewish code of law, "they bury him as they found him, without shrouds, and they do not even remove his shoes." As the Pittsburgh rabbi heading the chevra kadisha told Tablet, "if the bodies are being buried in their original condition, then there is no tahara." Rather, he said, "they are buried in the clothes in which they died." If we are able, if autopsies do not intervene, we bury murdered Jews in the clothes soaked in their blood that was shed.

The intent, in part, is to highlight the fact that they died because they were Jews, and to inspire constant recollection of their murder, to inspire eternal outrage, on the part of the Jewish people—and on the part of God himself. To mark the memory of the murdered as a blessing, without speaking of just and righteous vengeance, is to treat them as anyone else who may have died; it is to forget the fact that they died before their time and that their lives were cruelly cut short solely because of the people and faith to which they belonged.

It is with this in mind that we must mourn the murdered Jews of Pittsburgh—by treating their murder as an act of evil that is an Amalekite example in our age. As my own community, the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue of New York, prepared to memorialize those slaughtered in the attack, it was suggested to me that we utilize the text of a medieval memorial prayer said by Sephardic Jews on behalf of those who died in the Inquisition's auto-da-fé. Thus, one week after Pittsburgh, we used words written to remember Jews burned alive in Toledo 500 years ago to mourn the deaths of Jews shot to death in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in the 21st century. We thereby connected recent deaths of Jews to Amalek's assaults throughout history—from the desert after the Exodus, to Torquemada, to today.

For Jews in America, thank God, the world of the auto-da-fé does not exist, and rarely have Jews been safer in their history than they are at this moment. But Amalek has not been defeated. When the news from Pittsburgh broke, Jewish and Gentile Americans alike invoked George Washington's words to the Jews of Newport: "May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants—while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid."

Washington loved the phrase "under his own vine and fig tree." It is from the Hebrew Bible, and he used it often.

The fact that this country's first president applied imagery from a Jewish text to the people whose ancestors wrote those words tells us a great deal about the blessed home that Jews found, and continue to find, here in America. Yet the context of the quote, from the prophet Micah, reminds us that we do not yet live in an age where nothing can make us afraid:

But in the end of days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established as the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say: "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths"; for out of Zion shall go forth the Torah, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken.

The world Micah describes is not yet upon us. Peace does not reign on earth, and the nations of the world have not all celebrated the Jewish connection to God, to the Torah, to Jerusalem. Nothing could illustrate this better than the fact that Micah's words, paralleled in Isaiah, predicting an age when swords are beaten into plowshares, grace the wall outside the United Nations—while inside the building, dictators and modern Amalekites are welcomed to inveigh from the podium. Evil still exists, and as long as it does, the Lord is still at war—from generation to generation.

We know, and we pray, that the memory of those 11 murdered will be a blessing. The eulogies described remarkable human beings who were dedicated to their people, and to their neighbors. And we must remember their deaths in an exceptional fashion, never forgetting that they were murdered because—and only because—they were Jews. This fact will be forever on our minds, and on our lips, whenever we make mention of Daniel Stein, Joyce Feinberg, Richard Gottfried, Rose Mallinger, Jerry Rabinowitz, Cecil Rosenthal, David Rosenthal, Bernice Simon, Sylvan Simon, Melvin Wax, and Irving Younger.

Hashem Yikom Damam.

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