



**ISRAEL NEWS**  
*A collection of the week's news from Israel*  
*From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of*  
*Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

restrictions are there solely to prevent more Israelis being murdered - and trying to force it to abandon them. Today comes further news that Obama will also try to force Israel to give up its nuclear weapons - which it only has as a last ditch insurance against the

## Commentary...

### Obama Prepares To Throw Israel Under The Bus By Melanie Phillips

As predicted here repeatedly - Obama is attempting to throw Israel under the Islamist bus, and he's getting American Jews to do his dirty work for him. White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel reportedly told the Israel lobbying group AIPAC on Sunday that efforts to stop Iran hinged on peace talks with the Palestinians. General James Jones, National Security Adviser to Obama, reportedly told a European foreign minister a week ago that unlike the Bush administration, Obama will be 'forceful' with Israel. Ha'aretz reports: "Jones is quoted in the telegram as saying that the United States, European Union and moderate Arab states must redefine 'a satisfactory endgame solution.' The U.S. national security adviser did not mention Israel as party to these consultations."

Of course not. If you are going to throw a country under the bus, you don't invite it to discuss the manner of its destruction with the assassins who are co-ordinating the crime. As I said here months ago, the appointment of Jones and the elevation of his post of National Security Adviser at the expense of the Secretary of State was all part of the strategy to centralise power in the hands of those who want to do Israel harm.

Yesterday Vice-President Joe Biden and Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry turned the thumbscrews tighter, telling Israel to stop building more settlements, dismantle existing outposts and allow Palestinians freedom of movement.

This is all not only evil but exceptionally stupid. The idea that a Palestine state will help build a coalition against Iran is demonstrably absurd. The Arab states are beside themselves with anxiety about Iran. They want it to be attacked and its nuclear programme stopped. They are desperately fearful that the Obama administration might have decided that it can live with a nuclear Iran.

The idea that if a Palestine state comes into being it will be easier to handle Iran is the opposite of the case: a Palestine state will be Iran, in the sense that it will be run by Hamas as a proxy for the Islamic Republic. The idea that a Palestine state will not compromise Israel's security is ludicrous.

It is of course, by any sane standard, quite fantastic that America is behaving as if it is Israel which is holding up a peace settlement when Israel has made concession after concession - giving up Sinai, giving up Gaza, offering all the territories to the Arabs in return for peace in 1967, offering more than 90 per cent of them ditto in 2000, ditto again to Mahmoud Abbas in the past year -- only to be attacked in return by a Palestinian terrorist entity, backed in its continued aggression, let us not forget, by the countries of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, which has made no concessions at all and is not being pressured to do so.

It is not the aggressor here but the victim of aggression that America is now choosing to beat up. In any sane world, one might think the Americans would be piling the pressure on the Palestinians to renounce their genocidal ambitions against Israel, to stop teaching and training their children to hate and kill Jews, to adhere to the primary requirement in the Road Map that they must dismantle their infrastructure of violence as the first step in the peace process; one might think, indeed, that they would view Mahmoud Abbas's repeated statements that the Palestinians will never accept Israel as a Jewish state to be the main impediment to peace.

But no. The repeated professions that America will never jeopardise Israel's security are stomach churning when Obama is actually blaming Israel for measures it has taken to safeguard its security - the settlements were always first and foremost a security measure, and the travel

attempt to annihilate it to which several billion Arabs remain pledged.

Of course Obama doesn't care that Hamas would run any Palestinian state. Of course he doesn't care that Israel would be unable to defend itself against such a terrorist state. Because he regards Israel as at best totally expendable, and at worst as a running sore on the world's body politic that has to be purged altogether (see this bleak assessment by Sultan Knish: <http://sultanknish.blogspot.com/2009/05/obamas-plan-to-destroy-israel.html>). His administration is proceeding on the entirely false analysis that a state of Palestine is the solution to the Middle East impasse and the route to peace in the region. What that state will look like or do is something to which at best the administration's collective mind is shut and at worst makes it a potential cynical accomplice to the unconscionable. So Israel is to be forced out of the West Bank. Far from building a coalition against Iran, Obama is thus doing Iran's work for it.

None of this, however, should come as the slightest surprise to anyone who paid any attention to Obama's background, associations and friendships before he became President and to the cabal of Israel-bashers, appeasers and Jew-haters he appointed to his administration, with a few useful idiots thrown in for plausible deniability.

American Jews, meanwhile, are reacting as predicted - with a total absence of spine. As IsraelMatzav reports, AIPAC was sending delegates to visit Congress to 'convince' Representatives and Senators to sign a petition calling for a two-state solution. Inspired! Almost eighty per cent of American Jews voted for Obama despite the clear and present danger he posed to Israel. They did so because their liberal self-image was and is more important to them than the Jewish state whose existence and security cannot be allowed to jeopardise their standing with America's elite.

But the ordinary American people are a different matter. They do value and support Israel. They do understand that if Israel is thrown under that bus, the west is next. And it is they to whom Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu must now appeal, over the heads of the politicians and the media and certainly America's Jews and everyone else. He must tell the American people the terrible truth, that America is now run by a man who is intent on sacrificing Israel for a reckless and amoral political strategy which will put America and the rest of the free world at risk.

This is shaping up to be the biggest crisis in relations between Israel and America since the foundation of Israel six decades ago. Those who hate Israel and the Jews will be gloating. This after all is precisely what they hoped Obama would do. To any decent person looking on aghast, this is where the moral sickness of the west reaches the critical care ward. (Spectator (UK) May 6)

### Where Is Orthodox Aliya? By Michael Freund

Earlier this year, a crisis erupted among American Orthodox Jewry, one that sent shock waves hurtling from coast to coast.

At the speed of broadband, word spread quickly from one community to another about the budding calamity, which threatened to cast a pall on Jewish life as we know it. Various organizations rushed to issue statements, the Internet was abuzz with rumors and parents from Staten Island to Seattle naturally went into a panic.

And just what, you might be wondering, lay at the heart of all this drama? Well, it had to do with raisins.

Yes, you read that correctly: raisins.

On January 27, New York's K'hal Adath Jeshurun, a prominent Orthodox congregation also known as KAJ, published a statement billed as an "important kashrus notice," which warned readers in grave and no uncertain terms that "due to bug infestation, no raisins of any brand... may

be used at the present time, whether eaten plain or used in cooking or baking." The notice was then hoisted onto the Internet, setting off alarm bells for many Jews because of the Torah's prohibition (in chapter 11 of Leviticus) regarding the consumption of insects.

Obviously, the blanket nature of the ban imposed by KAJ was unnerving, and left many observant Jews wondering if they could still reach for their Raisin Bran in the morning.

But the chaos was short-lived. The tempest in a teacup, or shall we say the racket in a raisin box, quickly proved to be overblown.

As the predicament reached a fever pitch, the venerable Orthodox Union stepped into the fray and reassured the raisin-eating Jewish public "that raisins packed and stored under normal industry conditions do not pose a halachic infestation concern and may be consumed without further checking on the part of the consumer."

The Vaad Harabanim of Queens, an esteemed rabbinical body, also calmed the waters when it declared that the problem of infestation concerned raisins being sold by three specific companies and was not an across-the-board problem.

Now don't get me wrong. I am all in favor of the meticulous observance of Jewish law, which dictates how I live my life from the moment I awaken until I go to sleep. And the Torah's ban on eating bugs or insects is in fact quite serious, with the Talmud in Tractate Makkot (16b) noting that it can involve numerous prohibitions.

But this entire incident says a lot about the present state of American Orthodoxy, where a welcome trend toward greater observance nonetheless often leads people to lose sight of some larger and no less compelling issues of paramount importance.

IT IS TRULY wonderful that Orthodox Jews in America are sincerely concerned about upholding the intricacies of Jewish law. Maintaining the integrity of Halacha and preserving the rites and practices of our ancestors is what Judaism is all about. But what I fail to understand is the selectivity which many American Orthodox Jews seem to apply in this regard.

On matters great and small, from Sabbath observance to raisin infestations, it is common practice for religious Jews to ask their local rabbi a question seeking halachic guidance on how to proceed. This is done to ensure that the demands of Jewish law are being met.

But I have yet to meet an observant Jew in New York, London or Paris who has bothered to ask their rabbi a similar question about whether or not they should live in the Diaspora or make aliya. If a person is committed to living according to Halacha, how is it possible not to ask one's rabbi a question of such paramount importance? This "oversight" is especially difficult to grasp given the significance which Jewish sources attach to living in Israel.

The Sifrei on Deuteronomy, for example, states unequivocally that "dwelling in the Land of Israel is the equivalent of all the mitzvot in the Torah." And the Talmud in Tractate Ketubot declares that "he who lives in the Land of Israel is akin to one who has a God, while he who lives outside the Land is similar to one who has no God."

Centuries later, Nachmanides, the great medieval commentator, ruled unambiguously that the commandment to live in Israel is incumbent upon every Jew, and applies even if the land is under foreign control. The Pitchei Teshuva, in his 19th century commentary on the Shulhan Aruch, notes that all the earlier and later authorities agree with Nachmanides that there is a positive Torah commandment to live in Israel.

Israel is described in the Bible (Deuteronomy 11:12) as the land "which the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." And, as the Ohr Hachaim noted in the 18th century, "There is no joy other than in residing in the Land of Israel."

In light of all this, one can not help but wonder: Why isn't there large-scale Orthodox aliya? Sure, Orthodox Jews are said to make up the bulk of new immigrants arriving here each year from the West. But the numbers remain small - just a few thousand annually - and most religious Jews in the Diaspora seem content to remain where they are.

This situation brings to mind the words spoken by Joshua to the people of Israel more than 3,000 years ago, when he asked, "How long will you be remiss in coming to possess the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given to you?" (Joshua 18:3).

Indeed, it has never been easier to move to Israel, now that we have been blessed with the existence of our own sovereign and independent Jewish state.

I don't mean to stand in judgment of anyone's personal decisions. But I do mean to suggest that Orthodox Jews in the West at least need to start

asking themselves, and their rabbis, the question. After all, if they seek halachic guidance about what they put in their mouths, isn't it time they also ask about where they put their lives and bodies as well? (Jerusalem Post May 5)

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### **A Cautionary Tale** By Caroline Glick

Just in time for the annual AIPAC conference, the US Justice Department announced last week it is dismissing its charges against former AIPAC staffers Keith Weissman and Steve Rosen. Their prosecution, and what it exposed about the nature of AIPAC, and the position of Israel, and of pro-Israel Jews and non-Jews in America must serve as a cautionary tale for Israel and its American supporters.

A brief summary of the now five-year-old affair is in order. In August 2004, just as the question of how the Bush administration should contend with Iran's nuclear weapons program was becoming the issue of the day, CBS news reported on an "Israeli spy scandal." According to that report, AIPAC lobbyists were working with a pro-Israel, neo-conservative hawk in the Pentagon and the Israeli embassy in Washington to try to force the Bush administration to adopt a more confrontational policy towards Iran due both to its nuclear weapons development program and to its central role in fomenting the insurgency in Iraq.

At the time, as a New York Times report noted, the Bush administration had yet to adopt a clear policy on Iran. As one government source told the newspaper, "We have an ad hoc policy [on Iran] that we're making up as we go along." The idea behind the AIPAC spy scandal story then was that these nefarious pro-Israel forces were being used by Israel to compel the Bush administration to adopt Jerusalem's preferred policy on Iran.

The truth however, was far less impressive. In the event, Rosen and Weissman were approached by Pentagon analyst Larry Franklin (who happens to be Catholic, not Jewish). Franklin asked them to use their connections with the National Security Council to make then-president George W. Bush aware of Iran's central role in the insurgency in Iraq and of its swift progress in its nuclear program. He felt that this information was being obfuscated by the CIA and the State Department in their briefings to the president.

After that meeting, Franklin was approached by the FBI, which had been wiretapping his conversations, and was compelled to entrap Rosen and Weissman in a sting operation. He was given false information relating to a supposed imminent threat to the lives of Israeli agents operating in Iraqi Kurdistan which he passed to Weissman and Rosen, who in turn, passed it on to Naor Gillon then serving at the Israeli embassy. It was this incident that spurred the CBS report and the accusations that Weissman and Rosen were Israeli spies.

Rosen and Weissman were indicted under the 1918 Espionage Act - a law that had not been enforced since World War I - and accused of "conspiracy to communicate national defense information to people not entitled to receive it." The maximum penalty for this offense is ten years in prison.

Franklin, for his part was sentenced to 12 years in prison for mishandling classified information. For similar offenses, prominent Democrats like former national security advisor Sandy Berger and former CIA director John Deutsch were dispatched with misdemeanor convictions and slaps on their wrists from friendly prosecutors. Franklin's lawyer is now seeking to overturn his conviction.

The decision to prosecute Weissman, Rosen and Franklin was clearly political - and deeply discriminatory. In speaking to Franklin and acting on the information he provided them, Weissman and Rosen did nothing that lobbyists and journalists in Washington don't do every day of the year. By selectively choosing to enforce an arguably defunct law against them - and against no one else - the FBI and the Justice Department and whatever forces in the State Department the CIA and elsewhere that supported them made clear that the US government will treat pro-Israel forces in Washington differently than everyone else.

This politically motivated prosecution was wildly successful. No, it didn't lead to Rosen and Weissman being convicted of anything. But that was never the point. The prosecutors - and those faceless bureaucrats pulling the strings - managed to drag not only Weissman's and Rosen's names through the mud for five years, they managed to cast a pall of criminality and treason on the whole pro-Israel community and the hawks in the Pentagon that tended to agree with them on matters of national security policy.

And having accomplished this goal, the forces behind the Rosen-Weissman-Franklin persecutions went on to intimidate AIPAC into firing Rosen and Weissman. In an act of disgraceful cowardice, AIPAC not only fired the men, they refused to pay their legal fees and so cast them adrift as millions of dollars in legal bills began piling up.

AIPAC was not alone in abandoning these men to their fates. Aside from some lone voices - almost never heard above a whisper - the organized American Jewish community lost its voice when it came to the AIPAC scandal. While behind closed doors everyone was quick to shake their heads and acknowledge the obvious fact that these men were being railroaded in a scandalous abuse of legal power, in public everyone was mute. There were no angry letters to the White House and the Attorney General's office demanding an explanation of how these prosecutions came about. There were no demonstrations outside the Justice Department demanding that the charges be dismissed. There was no media campaign to discredit the decision to abuse legal tools to weaken the pro-Israel community and specifically, to weaken the anti-Iranian hawks in the US. There was silence.

In a perfectly fair world, where people care about both process and outcome, the human rights and specifically the first amendment crowd at places like the American Civil Liberties Union and likeminded institutions, could have been counted on to stand up and denounce the abuse of executive power that stood at the heart of the AIPAC scandal. After all, in transferring a classified memo on Iran to Weissman and Rosen, Franklin was doing something that the ACLU generally supports.

At one of its major 2008 conferences, for instance, the ACLU invited Daniel Ellsberg, the former Rand Corporation official who leaked the top secret Pentagon Papers regarding US involvement in Vietnam to The New York Times in 1971 to serve as its keynote speaker. Both in photocopying the documents and in transferring them to The New York Times, Ellsberg was committing serious criminal offenses. And yet, because he was doing so to advance the cause of the anti-war movement, groups like the ACLU worked to discredit his prosecution. Charges against Ellsberg were dropped in 1973. Ever since, he has enjoyed hero's status in left-wing, first amendment circles in the US.

But then, apparently, process is not important. For like the organized American Jewish community, the ACLU, The New York Times, The Washington Post and all the other outspoken champions of free speech were silent on - if not supportive of - the Justice Department's case against Franklin and against Rosen and Weissman.

THIS ENTIRE STORY, in all of its disparate parts, holds some very sad lessons for supporters of Israel in the US and beyond as well as for the government of Israel. First, AIPAC's cowardly decision to abandon Weissman and Rosen and the willingness of the overwhelming majority of the organized Jewish community to mutely endorse the move exposes an unpleasant truth about the nature of the American Jewish community. Simply stated, the majority of American Jews are either indifferent to the treatment of Israel and its supporters, or are too frightened to express their concerns.

Second, the fact that the AIPAC scandal unfolded during the Bush administration's tenure shows that even when administrations friendly to Israel are in office, a persistent, powerful group of bureaucrats in the federal government remains ready and able to persecute pro-Israel activists and policymakers. Moreover, members of this group are willing to abuse executive power to achieve their aim of weakening the standing of both Israel and its supporters in the US capital.

One of the disturbing aspects of the AIPAC scandal was the readiness of pro-Palestinian Jewish organizations like the Israel Policy Forum and J Street to defend the persecution. As James Kirchick from The New Republic noted over the weekend, M.J. Rosenberg, the Director of Policy Analysis for the IPF, wrote recently that "as a guy on trial for espionage," Rosen had no right to point out that Charles Freeman, US President Barack Obama's initial choice to serve as Director of the National Intelligence Council, had a record of egregiously anti-Israel behavior and action. What the behavior of the likes of Rosenberg shows is that anti-Israel forces in the

federal bureaucracy can depend on having an anti-Israel American Jewish amen corner backing any decision they take to persecute Israel's supporters.

The silence of the human rights and free speech crowd also provides food for thought. The fourth lesson of the AIPAC affair is that Israel and its supporters can expect to receive absolutely no backing from this policy community. As is the case with the US feminist movement's silence on the plight of women in the Muslim world, and the US human rights community's silence on the plight of human rights activists in places like Iran and Syria, Israel can expect that the American Left - both Jewish and non-Jewish - will be silent about any actions taken against the human rights of Israelis and the civil rights of Israel's supporters in the US.

It is important that these lessons be properly understood by pro-Israel activists in the US. And it is imperative that they be internalized by the Netanyahu government as it crafts its strategy for contending with an openly hostile Obama administration in the months and years to come.

Many in Jerusalem expressed their disappointment that Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu decided not to travel to Washington this week to participate in the AIPAC conference but rather delayed his visit to the US for two weeks to better prepare for his meeting with Obama. But what the AIPAC scandal shows is that it may be advantageous that Netanyahu's first visit to Washington as premier not be conducted as part of the AIPAC conference.

The weaknesses of the pro-Israel community - and first and foremost of AIPAC - which the Rosen-Weissman-Franklin affair exposed show that it is unwise for Israel to rely on pro-Israel organizations to sell its policies to the American people and their elected officials. These groups cannot be trusted to help out in a crisis because they may simply not care that much about Israel's security or because they are too frightened of being persecuted to stick their necks out.

Rather than focus his efforts on rallying the likes of AIPAC, Netanyahu would be better served to bring his message directly to the American people. Only by garnering wide-scale, popular, grassroots support for a strong US-Israel alliance will Netanyahu have a chance of maintaining strong ties with Washington under the Obama administration and beyond.

(Jerusalem Post May 4)

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### **Singing Israel's Praises Abroad** By Herb Keinon

How to sing Israel's praises in a strange land, to paraphrase the well known psalm, came to mind while marking Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut this year not in Israel, the natural place for their commemoration, but rather in the US.

"You are not going to be here for Yom Hashoah," my youngest son asked a few weeks ago when he learned I was going abroad for a couple weeks. "What are you going to do about the siren? Do they sound the siren in the States?"

"No," I replied. "They don't sound the sirens in the States."

Which got me thinking about how my kids have grown up so different than I, and how they grew up believing the natural order of things was for a siren to sound across the country to memorialize 6 million Jews, or commemorate the sacrifice of some 22,000 IDF soldiers. That, actually, was one of my goals when I moved here 27 years ago - to raise kids for whom the "Jewish stuff" was actually the natural order of the universe.

In that, at least, we succeeded.

Some 12 summers ago, when my oldest son was only eight, we spent a couple of weeks in Denver. One stormy Friday night a siren sounded there, and my son - as he was taught in school - got up from the table and stood at rapt attention, not realizing this siren had nothing to do with the Holocaust or Israel's wars, but was rather just a tornado warning. While everyone else was scampering for the basement, he stood with his head slightly bowed, arms at his side. It's all about what you're used to.

TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS is not an insubstantial period of time in my life, nor in the life of this country, and it is how long I've been here - first as tourist/university student, then as yeshiva bocher, employee,

husband, father, homeowner, soldier, father of soldier. Yet I often still feel like an outsider, but that is more a fault of my own than one I can place at the country's doorstep.

Indeed, in these days of retrospectives written about Israel, much of the faults we toss on to the state are really just our own imperfections. The state is a mirror of those who make it up: If the state is shallow, adrift, cynical, it is a reflection of us. If the country is strong, resilient, alive, that, too, is a reflection of us.

My roles have changed during my years here, as has my vision of my adopted land. Indeed, my vision of the country has changed as my roles have changed.

I've gone from starry-eyed tourist soaking up every hike, to weary traveler begrudgingly schlepping the kids on treks because I deem it the Israeli-fatherly thing to do.

I've gone from a spiritually thirsty yeshiva student who loved to roam the alleys of Mea She'arim, to an impatient consumer who goes to the crowded streets of that haredi neighborhood very reluctantly and then only to buy certain items on the cheap, the place no longer having any pull for me.

I've gone from overly romantic idealist seeing pioneer values realized in claiming empty hills in Judea and believing there really could be a way to work things out there with the Palestinians, to tempered pragmatist who sees no way to benignly hold on to those hills, yet realistic enough to understand that giving them up will create as many problems as staying there.

THE DIFFERENT ways I have seen the country, the different ways it has appeared to me, are as much a result of changes I have undergone as the result of changes that have taken place within the the country itself. I have grown older, gained some experience, lost some exuberance, become much more cynical and, as a result, have looked at the country differently.

But certain things have remained constant. I'm still moved by watching soldiers being sworn in at the Western Wall, am filled with pride by acts of Israeli valor - be they military heroics, athletic achievements or even a mundane news report of young technological whiz kids cracking terrorist cells on the Internet.

Sure, the country we live in now is not the same one I came to more than a quarter century ago - it is less idealistic, less of a collective, more materialistic. But so am I.

It is also more efficient, smoother around the edges, not as rude or as brazen. As I am as well.

We've changed, both the country and myself. Not necessarily for better, or for worse, just changed: gotten older, learned, faced more challenges, had to make decisions, made some right choices and some wrong ones.

Much has been written over the last few weeks about a country adrift, one that did not live up to its initial promise. Please. The initial promise was unrealistic, overly idealized.

We face a bitter and often cruel reality here - a reality that forces us at times to compromise some of our values. We are not the pristine vision that was dreamed of 60 years ago - but that vision was just that: a vision. Real life, the day to day, is much more complex, messier, more complicated.

For hundreds of years Jews could only dream of a state, and their dreams were often over-idealized. It is easy to love something that exists only in the mind, it is then possible to idealize it, place it on a pedestal. But when you come face to face with it, the reality often clashes with the vision.

To paraphrase Dostoyevsky, it is easy to love humanity, it is the person coughing next to you on the bus whom it is difficult to like. And in Israel, there are a lot of folks coughing on the buses.

Yet it is within the confines of a very difficult reality, a bitter and cruel reality, that this country has still managed to thrive. This is a country that is vibrant, a country that pulsates with energy, that is alive, very much alive.

It is also a country in which kids think marking Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut is the normal thing to do, not the aberration.

And that small thing - amid everything else - is both telling and something not to be taken for granted. (Jerusalem Post May 3)

## Eyes Wide Shut By Moshe Arens

Eyes wide open, but actually shut tight. This is another way of describing denial, a common human phenomenon - preferring the figment of one's imagination to a view of reality. Those who keep repeating the mantra of "two states for two peoples" as if it were a magic formula that could cure all the ills of all the people in the Middle East suffer from this type of obsessive behavior - behavior that leads nowhere and diverts attention from a rational analysis of the real problems.

Those of courageous spirit, who dare to free themselves of this obsession and step back in an attempt to see clearly the problems facing Israel and the Palestinians, will find the following picture: Advertisement

1. The State of Israel has a population that is about 20 percent Palestinian.
2. The Kingdom of Jordan has a population that is 70 percent Palestinian - and if the Bedouin population is included in that category, as it is in Israel, the figure rises to 100 percent Palestinian.
3. The Gaza Strip has a population that is 100 percent Palestinian, ruled by Hamas, a Palestinian terrorist organization supported by Iran that views the destruction of Israel as the only solution to the Palestinians' problems.
4. Judea and Samaria, usually misnamed the West Bank, has a population that is 90 percent Palestinian and 10 percent Jewish. It is essentially controlled by the Israel Defense Forces in cooperation with a dysfunctional layer of Palestinian Authority bureaucracy.
5. The "Palestinian" territories, the West Bank and Gaza, are not contiguous.
6. There is at this time no Palestinian authority capable of implementing any agreement it might sign with Israel.

The origins of this situation can be traced back to the British government's decision in 1922 to separate Transjordan (now the Kingdom of Jordan) from the territories that the League of Nations mandated to Britain for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, as well as the invasion of western Palestine by the Egyptian and Jordanian armies in 1948, which left them in control of Gaza and the West Bank, respectively, after the armistice agreements with Israel in 1949. The origins can also be traced back to the aggression against Israel in 1967, which resulted in these areas coming under Israeli control; and Israel's unilateral evacuation of the Gaza Strip and its uprooting of Gaza's Jewish population in 2005.

After the 1949 armistice agreements, Jordan annexed the West Bank and awarded Jordanian citizenship to its Palestinian population, seeing no need to establish an additional Palestinian state. The Egyptians seemed satisfied with their control of the Gaza Strip and made no move to establish a Palestinian state there. Egyptian and Jordanian aggression against Israel in 1967 brought about the present situation.

Why is a return to the situation that existed before the Six-Day War - the West Bank under Jordanian control and the Gaza Strip under Egyptian control - not being considered as a natural step toward normalizing of the situation of these areas' Palestinian residents? The reason, as everyone knows, is that neither the Jordanians nor the Egyptians currently want control over this population. They consider the Palestinian population of these areas a breeding ground for terrorism that might endanger the stability of the Jordanian and Egyptian regimes were they to be put under Jordanian or Egyptian sovereignty.

The present Jordanian and Egyptian regimes are, aside from Israel, the only ones in the Middle East that have proven themselves capable of effectively combating terrorism. Nevertheless, they do not want to overload the system. And for the very same reason, the establishment of a Palestinian state in these territories, which would be Israel's next-door neighbor, currently represents a serious threat to the State of Israel.

If Palestinian terrorism were to be eliminated, the attitude of the key players - Israel, Jordan and Egypt - would most likely change, and options that are not realistic at this time might become acceptable. The obvious implication of this analysis is that the immediate goal of those who seek to improve the situation should be eliminating Palestinian terrorism, and that no substantial political progress is likely to be achieved until that mission is accomplished. And as the IDF's success in combating terrorism in the West Bank in recent years has shown, this is not an impossible mission.

Imposing a "two-state" solution at this time is not feasible, and stubbornly insisting that it is the only future solution, to the exclusion of all others, could very well be counterproductive. It is time to look at some other paradigms. (Haaretz May 5)