



Quote for the Week...

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Speech for Israel's 60th Anniversary

Thank you for your warm welcome. Thank you, Ivan, for your kind introduction. Consul General Gissin, Minister Jim Flaherty, Leader of the Opposition John Tory, colleagues from the federal and provincial legislatures, members of the United Jewish Appeal Federation, ladies and gentlemen, I am truly honoured to be part of tonight's celebration marking the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.

All of my life, Israel has been a symbol - a symbol of the triumph of hope and faith. After 1945, our battered world desperately needed to be lifted out of post-war darkness and despair. After so much pain and suffering, humanity needed comfort and optimism. After so much death and destruction, we needed renewal - the renewal of the dream of a better and more civilized world. In short, we needed to be inspired. It was the people who had suffered who most provided that inspiration. By their example, they led the world back to the light. From shattered Europe and other countries near and far, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob made their way home. Their pilgrimage was the culmination of a two-thousand-year-old dream; it is a tribute to the unquenchable human aspiration for freedom, and a testament to the indomitable spirit of the Jewish people.

In the sixty years that followed, Israel blossomed into one of the most successful countries on earth; a land of ingenuity and enterprise, an oasis of agricultural genius, a wellspring of fine art and high culture, a model of democracy. Israel truly is the "miracle in the desert."

But the source of Israel's strength and success, in my view, is its commitment to the universal values of all civilized peoples: freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Soon I hope to have the opportunity to travel to Israel to see the "miracle" with my own eyes; to see how millions of people from all over the earth, with their countless different languages and traditions, came together to build a modern, prosperous, vibrant, democratic country. It is a pilgrimage I have wanted to make for a long time, but my determination to do so was redoubled this spring after I visited Auschwitz. I want to see first-hand what the survivors of the Holocaust and their descendants have accomplished, for theirs is truly an achievement of resilience and renewal unsurpassed in human history. I also want to go to deliver in person the message of Canada's unshakable support for Israel.

Unfortunately, Israel at 60 remains a country under threat - threatened by those groups and regimes who deny to this day its right to exist. And why? Make no mistake; look beyond the thinly-veiled rationalizations: because they hate Israel, just as they hate the Jewish people. Our government believes that those who threaten Israel also threaten Canada, because, as the last world war showed, hate-fuelled bigotry against some is ultimately a threat to us all, and must be resisted wherever it may lurk.

In this ongoing battle, Canada stands side-by-side with the State of Israel, our friend and ally in the democratic family of nations. We have stood with Israel even when it has not been popular to do so, and we will continue to stand with Israel, just as I have always said we would.

I know that we all hope and pray that someday freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law will be a reality for all the peoples of the Middle East.

Enshrining these values is the best way to assure lasting peace for Israelis and Palestinians alike. The foundations for a peaceful future are there. At the individual level, throughout the holy land, people of all faiths only want what all of us want: a safe place to live, a fair opportunity to get ahead, a good life

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*

דב"ר
for their children, a future for their grandchildren. So as we gather tonight to celebrate the first 60 years of the State of Israel, let us resolve as Canadians to do whatever we can to support Israelis and their neighbours in their quest for a better future.

There will be many challenges along the way, but considering how far Israel has come in such a short time, in the face of such seemingly insurmountable odds, I can foresee no

dark force, no matter how strong, that could succeed in dimming the light of freedom and democracy that shines from within Israel.

Thank you very much. Happy 60th anniversary. Shalom.

Commentary...

How Lebanon Was Lost By Caroline Glick

Hizbullah's successful overthrow of the pro-democracy forces in Lebanon this past week was eminently foreseeable. But that doesn't make the violent overthrow of the forces of freedom in that country any less of a tragedy. And the fact that Hizbullah's coup was predictable does not mean that it was inevitable.

A great many forces had to turn their backs on Lebanon's democratic forces in order to enable Hizbullah's easy triumph. A great many actors had to turn a blind eye to Hizbullah's Iranian and Syrian-financed rearmament over the past two years. A great many actors had to ignore and so exacerbate the inherent weaknesses of the March 14 movement and the Saniora government it produced. A great many countries and international bodies had to accept the fiction that the Lebanese military takes its orders from the elected Lebanese government.

And alas, over the past two years, most of the supposedly pro-democracy, anti-Iranian, anti-Syrian and anti-Hizbullah governments of the world have turned blind eyes to all these things and so paved the way for Hizbullah's takeover of the country.

Three years ago, backed by the US, the one-and-a-half-million-member strong March 14 movement successfully shamed Syria into withdrawing its military forces from Lebanon and so ended their 18-year occupation of the country. As of Monday morning, the March 14 movement's leaders were effectively Hizbullah prisoners. Sa'ad Hariri and Walid Jumblatt, as well as Prime Minister Fuad Saniora, had publicly submitted to Hizbullah's humiliating conditions for a ceasefire.

Jumblatt has been the March 14 movement's gadfly opposing Lebanon's steady transformation into an Iranian-Syrian proxy through Hizbullah. Sunday he laid bare the powerlessness of the movement when he begged Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah to spare his followers in the Shouf Mountains. Speaking under Hizbullah siege from his home in Beirut, Jumblatt said in a television interview, "Through the LBC I address Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah: If you have a personal issue with me, that's fine. But we cannot allow attacks on the people of Al-Jabel [i.e. Druse villagers in the mountains around the capital city]. We must all work for a ceasefire with the army, and leave personal issues aside."

Jumblatt made his plea for the lives of his people after he was obliged to instruct them to lay down their weapons and place their faith in the Lebanese army on Sunday afternoon. Yet the army, under the command of General Michel Suleiman has refused to protect them. Apparently Hizbullah's campaign against the Druse is a vicious one. For Sunday, even Hizbullah's Druse collaborator Mir Talal Arslan requested that the Lebanese army intervene. For their part, Jumblatt's followers in the Shouf mountains were waging a desperate defense of their villages and pleading with the world for assistance. So far, no one has answered their calls.

OBVIOUSLY, JUMBLATT knew that he couldn't trust Suleiman's army. If he had, he wouldn't have begged Nasrallah to have mercy on his people. And he was right, for since Hizbullah began its violent takeover of Lebanon last Wednesday, it has done so with the full cooperation of the Lebanese

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army. When Hizbullah forces raided, set fire to and destroyed Hariri's Future News newspaper offices and Future TV station, they did so with Lebanese army escort. Suleiman's forces did not reopen Hariri's pro-democracy media outlets after they ordered Hizbullah forces to leave the streets of Beirut over the weekend. They did not confront Hizbullah forces in Tripoli or Tyre. And now they are allowing the Druse to be destroyed.

And of course, the Shi'ite-dominated Lebanese army rendered Hizbullah the victor in its coup when the generals announced they would not carry out the Saniora government's anti-Hizbullah decisions from last Tuesday. The army reinstated sacked Hizbullah agent Brigadier General Wafiq Shuqeir to his position as head of security at Beirut's Hariri International Airport. It similarly bowed to Hizbullah by announcing it would take no action to shut down Hizbullah's independent telecommunications system, which is run by Iran and linked to Syrian intelligence.

Suleiman's collaboration with Hizbullah is not new. It was exposed during the 2006 war with Israel. Lebanese forces actively assisted Hizbullah forces in their war with Israel. They painted Israeli targets for Hizbullah missile squads. They collaborated in Hizbullah's missile attack on the INS Hanit. They paid pensions to the families of Hizbullah fighters killed in the war.

Since 2006, Lebanese military forces deployed along the border with Israel under UN Security Council Resolution 1701 have reported IDF movements to Hizbullah. They have enabled Hizbullah to transfer arms and deploy fighters to the villages bordering Israel. They have permitted Iran and Syria to transfer massive quantities of arms to Hizbullah throughout the country. These arms transfers enabled Hizbullah's missile arsenal to triple in size from pre-war levels.

Then too, there was Suleiman's supposedly successful campaign against Syrian-backed al-Qaida forces in Nahar el Bared refugee camp last summer. Suleiman allowed the fighting to go on for 33 days rather than storming the camp. He allowed most of the Syrian-backed, al-Qaida-affiliated Fatah al Islam terrorists - including their commander Shaker al Abssi - to run away to Syria.

WITH THIS history, it should have been clear long ago to anyone paying attention that far from being a national institution which serves Lebanon's democratically elected government, the Lebanese army is just another militia. And it also should have been clear that in the absence of a loyal, subservient army, the Saniora government was little more than a lobbying group.

Yet many colluded to ignore this reality. First of course there is Israel. The Olmert-Livni government has upheld Resolution 1701 and its prescribed deployment of the Lebanese army to the border with Israel as their crowning achievement in office. They have to maintain the fiction that the Shi'ite-dominated Lebanese army opposes Hizbullah control over Lebanon in order to keep up the appearance that Resolution 1701 was a good deal for Israel.

Moreover, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni have upheld the fiction that UNIFIL's 15,000 ground forces and naval detachment are actually deployed in South Lebanon to defend the Lebanese government and Israel from Hizbullah and to prevent Hizbullah's rearmament and redeployment. In line with this fantasy, rather than take effective action to prevent Hizbullah's rolling takeover of Lebanon, Livni and Olmert have sufficed with issuing complaints to the UN regarding Hizbullah's massive rearmament and redeployment along the border. Again, actually contending with reality would involve acknowledging their own incompetence.

At the outset of the war two years ago, Olmert announced rightly that Israel held the Saniora government responsible for Hizbullah's aggression. Olmert's announcement was reasonable because at the time, Hizbullah was a full member of the Saniora government which effectively acted as Hizbullah's mouthpiece. Yet the US would have none of it.

In the early days of the war, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice demanded that Israel take no action against the Saniora government which she claimed - wrongly - was a credible US ally. Largely as a consequence of Rice's demand, and of the Olmert-Livni government's refusal to target Hizbullah and Hamas training and logistical bases in Syria, the Olmert-Livni government's strategy against Hizbullah lost its strategic rationale. From then on, Israel's defeat was just a matter of time.

After the war, the US was given an opportunity to actually support democratic, anti-Iranian-Syrian forces in Lebanon by supporting the Saniora government when Hizbullah abruptly bolted the ruling coalition and backed by Iran and Syria attempted to take control of the government by assassination and terror.

The US could have taken action against Syria or Iran. But instead it sought to appease Iran and Syria in the hopes that they would temper their support for insurgents in Iraq. The pinnacle of this US abandonment of the March 14 movement was Rice's decision to invite Syria to participate in her peace confab at Annapolis last November.

Both the US and Israel's silent acquiescence to Iran's takeover of Lebanon through Hizbullah complements their acceptance of Iran's takeover of Gaza

through Hamas.

Again, in an effort to hide the failure of their signature policy of withdrawing IDF forces from Gaza and expelling 10,000 Israeli civilians from their homes in Gaza and northern Samaria in 2005, the Olmert-Livni government has refused to take action against Hamas's Iranian backed regime in Gaza. Then too, just as it protected Hizbullah during the 2006 war by siding with Saniora, who was then keeping house with Nasrallah, so too, today, the US protects Hamas by siding with Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas who kept house with Hamas until Hamas threw him out of the house last summer and who has been desperately seeking to reunite with Hamas ever since.

With Egypt's Intelligence Minister Omar Suleiman's visit to Israel Monday, the Olmert-Livni government exposed the depth of its recognition of the Hamas regime in Gaza. Suleiman came to present the government with the ceasefire agreement Egypt has negotiated with Hamas. The agreement will bar the IDF from overthrowing Iran's Palestinian proxy and enable Hamas to keep its Iranian armed, trained and funded army. Hamas's Katyusha rocket attack on Ashkelon Monday morning signaled clearly where that ceasefire will lead.

And yet, the Olmert-Livni government embraces it. And the Bush administration supports it.

During his festive visit to Israel this week, President George W. Bush is expected to celebrate the US's strategic alliance with the Jewish state. It is a great tragedy that the strategies this alliance has advanced in recent years have paved the way for Lebanon's demise and for Israel's encirclement by Iranian proxies.

The tragedy is only heightened by the fact that this outcome was eminently avoidable. (Jerusalem Post May 12)

Democracy Demands Transparency By Isi Leibler

Two months ago I predicted that in order to delay as long as possible the drastic military action which will eventually have to be undertaken in Gaza, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert would seek a face-saving formula by which to consummate a truce with Hamas.

Alas, despite the latest allegations of scandal directed against our prime minister, that is precisely what is happening. In the face of repeated and dire warnings by the IDF that a truce now with Hamas will rebound against us with a vengeance, Olmert lurched in this direction as though oblivious to the dangers, dangling before us illusions of the "peace" and "quiet" for which we all desperately yearn.

There is absolutely no basis for suggesting that such a truce will in any way advance our efforts to achieve peace or security. It is no coincidence that the most extreme Palestinian factions - all 12 of them - support the tahadiyeh agreement. To this day, Hamas leaders repeatedly stress that this is merely a short term tactical expedient. They even relate it to a portion in the Koran which recounts how the Prophet Muhammad entered into a temporary pact with the Jews which he subsequently breached in order to vanquish them. They remain adamant that their primary objective remains the annihilation of the Jewish state, a goal which will never be compromised.

The terrorists desperately want this truce. Reeling under the impact of IDF pressure, they are exhausted and require a respite in order to rearm, upgrade their missile infrastructure, send their members for training abroad and prepare for the next round. They consider themselves currently ill-equipped to confront an Israeli invasion of Gaza, fearing a repetition of 2002's Operation Defensive Shield when Israel destroyed the terrorist infrastructure on the West Bank which they have since been unable to replicate. They believe that given time to regroup and acquire more lethal weapons they will be able to inflict far heavier casualties on the IDF.

The Egyptians, who are brokering the deal, want the Palestinian Authority to control the Rafah border crossing between Egypt and Gaza in the presence of European monitors. They promised Hamas that "the siege would be lifted and the border crossings would be reopened." They also had the gall to demand that Israel accept the deal without amending the terms negotiated. However, when questioned about Hamas exploiting the truce to import weapons, they responded that "Egypt does not control the Gaza Strip and is only a neighbor."

In light of the hitherto dismal record of the Egyptians in stemming the flood of weapons to Gaza through their borders, it would surely be lunacy for us to rely on a combination of Palestinians, Egyptians and European "monitors" to prevent Hamas from exploiting the tahadiyeh to construct an offensive Hizbullah-style infrastructure capable of inflicting enormous damage on us.

Besides, it is now increasingly evident that the differences in approach toward Israel between our duplicitous and impotent peace partners and Hamas amount to form rather than substance. Mahmoud Abbas recently

proclaimed that he would not meet anyone who visited Israel for its 60th anniversary celebrations and also warned that he may revert to the "armed struggle." We should entrust our security to such people?

SO LET us be clear. If we agreed to this truce for the sake of a few months of quiet, we would merely be replicating the debacle with Hizbullah in Lebanon by providing the Iranians and their Hamas proxies the opportunity of gearing themselves for a new round of hostilities at a time of their choosing. The likelihood of Lebanon now becoming a Hizbullah state suggests that in the event of a future conflict we could well become involved in simultaneous combat on three fronts.

If this analysis is flawed it is surely incumbent on our prime minister (or his successor) to enlighten the nation and at least provide a broad outline of government strategy instead of making daily contradictory proclamations.

Over the past fortnight, in addition to the Hamas truce imbroglio, we have witnessed yet more chaos as Olmert suddenly reversed his approach to the Syrians and reportedly offered to hand them the entire Golan. He was publicly opposed by Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz, a former Defense Minister, who warned that this would bring Iran to the Golan Heights. More recently, Defense Minister Ehud Barak announced "this is not a time for a cease-fire with Hamas," but as is his custom, soon afterwards contradicted himself. Public Security Minister Avi Dichter, a former head of the Shin Bet, asked "Does the government really want to stop the terror?" and blasted his own prime minister's failure to respond to missiles attacks from Gaza.

What sort of government is it in which senior ministers cannot either commit themselves to supporting their own government or to resigning?

THE OTHER problem is that beyond contradictory rumors about concessions relating to borders, Jerusalem and refugees, nobody is aware of the details of what Olmert and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni are secretly negotiating with the PA. There is an utter lack of transparency. Olmert and Livni, without explicit cabinet approval, are taking it entirely upon themselves to negotiate these crucial issues with the PA.

We should be under no illusions. When these shelf agreements now being secretly consummated with the Palestinians are ultimately tabled to the Knesset, efforts by legislators to reverse or modify any aspect would encounter fierce international censure and accusations of intransigency.

Of course, in light of the enormous personal pressures arising from the latest allegations of impropriety, one would assume regardless of whether there is any merit to the latest accusations, the prime minister is no longer capable of negotiating peace or leading the nation to war. He would therefore be expected to either freeze or at the very least withdraw himself from such negotiations. It would be unprecedented and utterly unconscionable if he intends to tough it out over a potentially lengthy legal process and continue making awesome life and death decisions about our future.

THIS RAISES questions as to whether we can still honestly continue describing ourselves as a genuine democracy. Democracy is more than holding elections. It presupposes a government taking account of and respecting the will of the people. Today, while confronting the most difficult, even existential, threats since statehood, our failed and unpopular leaders continue making crucial life and death decisions without any sense of accountability to the cabinet, Knesset, or the nation. Surely the people are entitled to be informed whether their government has a game plan or is merely responding to pressures as they arise.

In the course of our 60th anniversary celebrations, it would surely be appropriate if our prime minister or his successor, instead of making yet another empty speech, submitted a broad strategic plan (if it exists) for cabinet approval and insisted that ministers cease carrying on as though they were operating their own private fiefdoms. They should either adhere to the policies endorsed by the majority or tender their resignations. The government program should then be submitted and either approved, amended, or rejected by the Knesset. That is how a genuine democracy would function. (Jerusalem Post May 11)

Israeli Success Story Editorial National Review

Just 60 years ago, David Ben-Gurion declared that, after a lapse of two millennia, the state of Israel had resumed its existence. There was dancing in the streets of this revived state. At the time, the Nazi Holocaust had just dealt Jews what was virtually a death-blow, and survivors might have been expected never to recover. In a magnificent, perhaps desperate, assertion of human vitality, they instead came together to create their own state of Israel. Jews were at last in a position to take their future into their own hands. An ancient identity, complete with its long since unspoken language of Hebrew, acquired a modern expression. There is no other example in history of a national comeback like this.

By now, the success of the experiment speaks for itself. Since the state's creation, the number of Israeli Jews has risen tenfold, to some six million

today. The number of Israeli Arabs has increased in similar proportions, to over a million. Here is the one and only democracy in the entire Middle East, which of course is the bedrock of its relationship with the United States. Arabs are represented in parliament and the cabinet, and in the higher ranks of the diplomatic service and the military. Though the country is only about 8,000 square miles and devoid of natural resources, Israel has a first-world economy. The country is a leader in the sciences, in technology and medicine, with more than its fair share of Nobel prizes. Israeli art, music, and literature stand comparison with any elsewhere.

Israel is a country which the United Nations voted originally to approve, and there is no other example of that either. What had formerly been the British Mandate of Palestine was henceforth to be Israel and a Palestinian Arab state side by side. At that time after the Second World War, the colonized everywhere were beginning to gain their independence from Western empires. Israel's opportunity was part of that shift in power, but though Jews were victims of murderous European racism they were hardly third worlders. Rejecting Israeli national claims and rights, and misrepresenting Jews as the new colonizers, Arab states ever since 1948 have never concealed their intention to wipe out Israel, and restore its territory to the House of Islam.

Israel's fortunes therefore have a tragic dimension. A million and more Jews were obliged to flee to Israel from Arab lands where their communities had lived from time immemorial. And the Arabs? In one campaign after another, Arab leaders and their armies have been humiliated, and the Palestinians find themselves fragmented and wrecked. A nuclear-armed Iran and its proxies of Hezbollah and Hamas are only the latest in the on-going run of existential threats. Israel has no choice but to defend itself whenever attacked, no matter that often it is irrationally criticized for doing so, and nowhere more maliciously than in the United Nations, its one-time sponsor. Once the Jew was the symbolic outcast in much of the world; now there is a sense in which Israel has become the world's Jew.

No matter. As intended, Israel has served the purpose of placing the future of Jews in Jewish hands. They are probably too grown up at 60 to dance in the streets again, but they could be forgiven if they did. (National Review May 14)

Israel's 'Doom' Could Also Be Europe's By Mark Steyn

Almost everywhere I went last week - TV, radio, speeches - I was asked about the 60th anniversary of the Israeli state. I don't recall being asked about Israel quite so much on its 50th anniversary, which, as a general rule, is a much bigger deal than the 60th. But these days friends and enemies alike smell weakness at the heart of the Zionist Entity.

Assuming Iranian President Ahmadinejad's apocalyptic fancies don't come to pass, Israel will surely make it to its 70th birthday. But a lot of folks don't fancy its prospects for its 80th and beyond. See the Atlantic Monthly cover story: "Is Israel Finished?" Also the cover story in Canada's leading news magazine, Maclean's, which dispenses with the question mark: "Why Israel Can't Survive."

Why? By most measures, the Jewish state is a great success story. The modern Middle East is the misbegotten progeny of the British and French colonial map makers of 1922. All the nation states in that neck of the woods date back a mere 60 or 70 years - Iraq to the Thirties, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel to the Forties. The only difference is that Israel has made a go of it.

Would I rather there were more countries like Israel, or more like Syria? Israel is the only liberal democracy in the Middle East (Iraq may yet prove a second), and its Arab citizens enjoy more rights than they would living under any of the kleptocrat kings and psychotic dictators who otherwise infest the region.

On a tiny strip of land narrower at its narrowest point than many American townships, Israel has built a modern economy with a GDP per capita just shy of \$30,000 - and within striking distance of the European Union average. If you object that that's because it's uniquely blessed by Uncle Sam, well, for the past 30 years the second-largest recipient of U.S. aid has been Egypt: their GDP per capita is \$5,000, and America has nothing to show for its investment other than one-time pilot Mohamed Atta coming at you through the office window.

Jewish success against the odds is nothing new. "Aaron Lazarus the Jew," wrote Anthony Hope in his all but unknown prequel to "The Prisoner Of Zenda," "had made a great business of it, and had spent his savings in buying up the better part of the street; but" - and for Jews there's always a "but" - "since Jews then might hold no property . . ."

Ah, right. Like the Jewish merchants in old Europe, who were tolerated as leaseholders but could never be full property owners, the Israelis are regarded as operating a uniquely conditional sovereignty. Jimmy Carter, just

returned from his squalid suck-up junket to Hamas, is merely the latest Western sophisticate to pronounce triumphantly that he has secured the usual (off-the-record, highly qualified, never to be translated into Arabic and instantly denied) commitment from the Jews' enemies, acknowledging Israel's "right to exist." Well, whoop-de-doo. Would you enter negotiations on such a basis?

Since Israel marked its half-century, the "right to exist" is now routinely denied not just in Gaza and Ramallah and the region's presidential palaces but on every European and Canadian college campus. During the Lebanese incursion of 2006, Matthew Parris wrote in *The Times of London*: "The past 40 years have been a catastrophe, gradual and incremental, for world Jewry. Seldom in history have the name and reputation of a human grouping lost so vast a store of support and sympathy so fast. My opinion - held not passionately but with little personal doubt - is that there is no point in arguing about whether the state of Israel should have been established where and when it was" - which lets you know how he would argue it if he minded to.

Richard Cohen in *The Washington Post* was more straightforward: "Israel itself is a mistake. It is an honest mistake, a well-intentioned mistake, a mistake for which no one is culpable, but the idea of creating a nation of European Jews in an area of Arab Muslims (and some Christians) has produced a century of warfare and terrorism of the sort we are seeing now. Israel fights Hezbollah in the north and Hamas in the south, but its most formidable enemy is history itself."

Cohen and Parris, two famously moderate voices in the leading newspapers of two of the least anti-Israeli capital cities in the West, have nevertheless internalized the same logic as Ahmadinejad: Israel should not be where it is. Whether it's a "stain of shame" or just a "mistake" is the merest detail.

Aaron Lazarus and every other "European Jew" of his time would have had a mirthless chuckle over Cohen's designation. The Jews lived in Europe for centuries but without ever being accepted as "European." To enjoy their belated acceptance as Europeans, they had to move to the Middle East. Reviled on the Continent as sinister rootless cosmopolitans with no conventional national allegiance, they built a conventional nation state, and now they're reviled for that, too. The "oldest hatred" didn't get that way without an ability to adapt.

The Western intellectuals who promote "Israeli Apartheid Week" at this time each year are laying the groundwork for the next stage of Zionist delegitimization. The talk of a "two-state solution" will fade. In the land between the Jordan and the Mediterranean, Jews are barely a majority. Gaza has one of the highest birth rates on the planet: The median age is 15.8 years. Its population is not just literally exploding, at Israeli checkpoints, but also doing so in the less-incendiary but demographically decisive sense. Arabs will soon be demanding one democratic state - Jews and Muslims - from Jordan to the sea. And even those Western leaders who understand that this will mean the death of Israel will find themselves so confounded by the multicultural pieties of their own lands they'll be unable to argue against it. Contemporary Europeans are not exactly known for their moral courage: The reports one hears of schools quietly dropping the Holocaust from their classrooms because it offends their growing numbers of Muslim students suggest that even the pretense of "evenhandedness" in the Israeli-Palestinian "peace process" will be long gone a decade hence.

The joke, of course, is that Israel, despite its demographic challenge, still enjoys a birth rate twice that of the European average. All the reasons for Israel's doom apply to Europe with bells on. And, unlike much of the rest of the West, Israel has the advantage of living on the front line of the existential challenge. "I have a premonition that will not leave me," wrote Eric Hoffer, America's great longshoreman philosopher, after the 1967 war. "As it goes with Israel so will it go with all of us."

Indeed. So, happy 60th birthday. And here's to many more. (*Jewish World Review* May 12)

On Zero Population Growth, Condi & Condoms By Lenny Ben-David

Take your favorite houseplant and do something stupid: put it in the freezer. Within two hours it will be irreversibly dead.

Like plants, human communities and families grow, flower, reproduce and spread their roots. Unless someone does something stupid and attempts to "freeze" them.

On May 2, four ministers of the "Quartet" - comprised of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and representatives from Russia, the United Nations and the European Union - expressed "deep concern at continuing settlement activity and called on Israel to freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth."

Rice and her partners are opposed to all settlement activity, not just the planting of a rickety caravan on some wind-swept hilltop in Samaria. They are opposed to building in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Har Homa, to new

apartments in the city of Ma'aleh Adumim, or new housing in the Gush Etzion town of Efrat. They do not give any dispensation to Jerusalem's new neighborhoods. They are opposed to construction in settlement population centers despite President Bush's assurances of April 14, 2004 when he wrote: "In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli populations centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949 [the 1967 lines]."

How serious is that Bush commitment? National security adviser Stephen J. Hadley admitted in a January briefing that Bush's 2004 letter was aimed at helping prime minister Ariel Sharon win domestic approval for the Gaza withdrawal. "The president obviously still stands by that letter of April 2004, but you need to look at it, obviously, in the context of which it was issued," he said. Is the "context" of 2004 different from the context of 2008?

The Quartet makes clear that the "natural growth" of Jewish communities is taboo. That means Zero Population Growth, or even negative population growth. It is a call for no new apartments for growing families and no construction of health clinics, kindergartens or schools. What would that mean for the ultra-Orthodox Jews in the burgeoning West Bank towns of Betar Illit and Kiryat Sefer, where children under 17 comprise two-thirds of the population? The "knitted kipa" national religious communities are not too far behind in the size of their families. Shas politicians could never accept such a diktat.

How does the Quartet plan to stop the natural growth of these Jewish communities? With procreation police? Campaigns advocating birth control? "Sorry," the religious Jews will respond, "we gave at the ovens." In their case, ZPG stands for "Zionist Population Growth."

A FEW years ago, an imprudent ad agency placed posters of bikini-clad models at bus stations in ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods. Within hours the stations and posters were toast. A few months later, an anti-AIDS poster campaign was launched with a picture of a condom. Incredibly, the posters in the ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods were left unscathed. Why? Probably because the residents had no clue what the product was. These are neighborhoods where televisions are banned and late-night activities do not include watching Jay Leno.

Large families mean larger apartments. Married children mean a demand for nearby housing. The ultra-Orthodox community of Mea She'arim was visited recently by US Ambassador Richard Jones, who showed just how much he was out of touch with his audience when he expressed concern "about where things are built in Jerusalem... Sometimes people do have to move to a different location. They cannot always stay close to their families." Would an American ambassador ever make such a statement in an Arab society where sons traditionally stay close to their fathers and clans?

Incredibly, it is a tragic fact that the government of Israel actually approved the Quartet's road map in 2003, with its restrictions on settlements and natural growth. The Israeli government, which at the time included several right-wing ministers, expressed 14 "reservations," but they have no standing in talks with the US government or the other members of the Quartet. And not one of those reservations included opposition to the "natural growth" restriction.

To use a rabbinic term, the restriction is a *gezera* (decree) that the community cannot bear.

So why did Israel's leaders accept such a decree?

Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that government leaders who supported the road map live primarily in the tony coastal plain, have few children, or have children living on the West Bank of the Hudson, the Rive Gauche of the Seine, a government-granted homestead in the Negev, or eventually in a state correctional facility.

Compare those leaders with two gentlemen very dear to me who passed away last week. Joseph Black, my father-in-law, made aliya at the age of 92 and moved into our home in Efrat. (Is that defined as "natural growth?") When he died at the age of 97, we were comforted by his six grandchildren (our children) and seven great-grandchildren, all of whom live in relatively new homes nearby. Our neighbor, Ernie Alexander, died at age 85 while we were still sitting shiva. His tribe numbers some 60 children, grandchildren and their offspring.

Virtually all live in Israel, and most live "over the Green Line." They prove that "natural growth" is an irrepressible and irresistible force.

The writer served as deputy chief of mission in Israel's embassy in Washington. (Jerusalem Post May 13)

We mourn the passing of Shmuel Katz z"l, a founder of the Herut party in Israel and a fine author whose articles appeared frequently in Israel News.
