



## 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*

radical as the days go by - to surrender the strategic heights that afford us security.

Internal debate is not necessarily an unhealthy thing. We Jews can thrash out, among ourselves, the thorny problems that dot the

landscape. We can search for solutions that will bend, but not break, our safety and security. We can decide, as brothers, where to trust, and where to hang tough. But what we must NOT do is break ranks. That was the (ital)sine qua non of the Black community during its heroic struggle for civil rights, and it must also be the pledge we make to one another.

Obama is going to do what is best for America; we Jews must do what is best for the Jews. (NaomiRagen.com Jun 8)

## Commentary...

### What's Best For The Jews By Rabbi Stewart Weiss

The question on the mind of every Jew today is, "What is Obama up to?" Is he out there trying to forge a real pace - which he sincerely believes will be in our interest and the interest of the entire world - or is he selling us down the river, lock, stock and eternal capital?

I think I have an answer to that probing question.

Back in 1973, I was a young Yeshiva student, searching for God in a turbulent world. The Vietnam War had just ended, and the Yom Kippur War was soon to begin. National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, who had negotiated an ill-fated truce to extricate America from Southeast Asia - at the tragic expense of the hapless South Vietnamese - had been named Secretary of State by President Nixon. He was largely viewed as lukewarm in his love for Israel, and the perception was that he would bend over backwards - in an Arab direction - to show that he was not biased towards his co-religionists. Indeed, it is still an open question as to whether it was Kissinger - or Nixon - who led the charge against re-supplying the IDF during the 1973 war, in an unsuccessful attempt to bring Israel to its knees and force her to make painful concessions in return for a cease-fire.

I vividly recall asking my esteemed Rabbi what he thought of Kissinger. Rabbi Herzl Kaplan had gained the trust of the idealistic boys in our class by speaking out publicly against the War in Vietnam, and had broken with Yeshiva policy by allowing his students to leave class to attend protest rallies. "Protests save lives," he said, "and saving lives is the ultimate Mitzva in Judaism." I trusted him completely, and so his take on Kissinger caught me totally off guard.

"Stop thinking of the Secretary of State as a Jew," he told me. "Henry Kissinger is first and foremost an American, and so he will always do what he thinks is best for America."

There is no doubt that Barack Obama, now that he is President, will also do what HE believes is best for the United States. If he decides that a strong and independent Israel is in America's best interests - as President Bush believed - then he will offer us unwavering support. If he concludes that Arab/Muslim numbers and wealth serve America better, he will lean that way. And if he can somehow keep both sides feeling fulfilled, he will certainly go that route.

But, in my opinion, we have a more important issue to be concerned about. What scares me most about Obama is the wedge that he seems to be driving not between Israel and the rest of the world, but between the Jews themselves. Obama has become a kind of cult figure among American Jewry - who worked tirelessly to see him elected - and his eloquent, Harvard-honed words and wisdom have an almost mesmerizing effect upon them. They accept his world-view at face value. And so, if he says that settlements are the sticking-point and settlers the heart of the problem, then that must be true. If the Palestinians deserve a state, if Jerusalem must again be divided, if the Golan must be given away and Israel dismembered in order to achieve a lasting peace, then that is the Gospel and the way it has to be.

But these issues are far from being one-sided. Millions of Jews completely disagree with Obama's conclusions. For starters, we don't all think the Palestinians deserve a state of their own; their steadfast penchant for violence, incitement and hatred makes them the exact type of neighbors we DON'T want. And we don't think Jerusalem should be either divided or internationalized; Israel is the only party that respects all religions and guarantees equal access to holy sites - something denied by even the "moderate" Jordanians when they occupied the city. And we have not gained sufficient trust in the countries to our north - who become more

### Livni's Loyalties By Caroline Glick

Last week opposition leader and former foreign minister Tzipi Livni published a very odd op-ed in The New York Times. She regurgitated Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's position that there is a difference between democratic processes - like elections - and democratic forces, which are dedicated to liberty and freedom. The latter need democratic processes to rise to power and secure their freedom. But both democrats and tyrants can and do make good use of democratic processes, like elections, to gain power.

Livni's article was strange for two reasons. First, throughout her tenure as a senior minister in both the Sharon and Olmert governments, she never distinguished herself as a champion of democratic forces, either in Israel or in the Arab world. As justice minister under Ariel Sharon in the lead up to the mass expulsions of the Jews from their homes and communities in Gaza and Samaria in August 2005, Livni oversaw the enactment of draconian, patently unconstitutional restrictions on the rights of her political opponents to demonstrate their opposition to the government's policies. She approved moves that prohibited lawful protests, arrested without charge and held without bail thousands of lawful citizens simply on the basis of their political convictions and curtailed the freedom of movement and property rights of tens of thousands on the basis of their political views by interdicting private buses and cars on highways and expropriating property.

As for the Arabs, in 2005, Livni had nothing to say in favor of the Lebanese March 14 movement which successfully forced the Syrian military to withdraw from Lebanon. Far from supporting these champions of democracy and freedom, Livni held her tongue and was identified with the Israeli view that we were better off with Syria in charge than with the instability wrought by freedom. By the same token, she also had nothing to say about Syrian dissidents rotting in Syrian prisons for advocating freedom.

Throughout her tenure as foreign minister, Livni never had a word to say about the democratization of Iraq. She never took the time to defend Mithal Alousi, the Iraqi liberal democrat whose sons were assassinated in retribution for his visit to Israel and his outspoken championing of peace between Iraq and Israel. She never said a word to encourage Egypt's democracy forces or to distinguish between Egyptian liberal opponents of President-for-life Hosni Mubarak's regime and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Finally, and most importantly, Livni never discussed or evinced the slightest interest in democracy among the Palestinians. She did not oppose the Bush administration's decision to permit Hamas to participate in the 2006 Palestinian elections. She never seriously objected to Fatah repression of liberal forces in Palestinian society. She never even credibly objected to the rampant anti-Jewish propaganda put out by Fatah-controlled media, mosques, schools or universities.

Livni's decision to pen an article for a major American newspaper about an issue she has never championed was all the more bizarre given the current focus of US-Israel relations. As her article was hitting the presses, the Obama administration had already begun openly denying the existence of one of her self-proclaimed great achievements in office. In

recent years, Livni has repeatedly claimed that as justice minister in Sharon's government, she played a central role in convincing the Bush administration to agree to support the permanent retention of Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria as part of an eventual peace deal with the Palestinians.

The agreement with the administration was publicly announced in May 2004 by then president George W. Bush at the White House following his meeting with Sharon and published in a public letter from Bush to Sharon. Bush's letter recognized that Israel would not return to the 1949 armistice lines and that major communities and blocs of settlements in areas within its domestic consensus like the Adumim bloc, the Ariel bloc and the Etzion bloc would remain under Israeli control in perpetuity. The same is true for areas like the Jordan Valley which are essential for ensuring that our borders are defensible.

Sharon upheld the Bush letter as an "unprecedented achievement" in a speech before the Knesset. And he, his chief of staff Dov Weisglass, Livni, and Ehud Olmert all presented it as the payoff for leaving Gaza.

In recent months, Elliot Abrams, Bush's deputy national security adviser has published several articles making public the fact that Bush's letter formed the basis of a detailed agreement between the administration and Israel relating to construction within the settlement blocs. None of Abrams' colleagues have gone on record to dispute his disclosures.

It was on the basis of both Bush's letter and this more detailed agreement that both the Sharon and Olmert governments agreed to permit the US to act as an arbiter of Israel's implementation the so-called road map peace plan. Based on these side agreements, which were undertaken as formal US commitments, both the Sharon and Olmert governments believed they had secured US backing for further building in Judea and Samaria and the permanent presence of Israeli communities there, even in the event that a Palestinian state is established.

At the time, commentators like myself, and Likud leaders like Netanyahu criticized Sharon, Livni and Olmert as naïve for believing Israel could trust a foreign government - no matter how friendly - to act as a guarantor for its national security. While the Bush administration may have been a trustworthy ally, given the fact that the US is a democracy, there was no way to know that obligations undertaken by the Bush White House would survive Bush's tenure in office. Livni's blindness at the time to the nature of shifting national interests and to the perils of placing our national security in the hands of others bespoke her foolishness.

But far worse than her earlier naïve bravado about her supposed diplomatic acumen is her current silence in the face of the Obama administration's dishonest denials of the existence of the agreements she and her colleagues concluded. Today, in the face of repeated and patently false statements by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asserting that no agreements on this issue were ever reached, Livni has opted to say nothing. And here she is not being foolish. She is demonstrating a pernicious opportunism that is frankly dangerous for the well-being of the country.

By refusing to insist on the existence of agreements that just months ago she trumpeted as her great claim to fame, Livni is lining up behind the Obama administration as it seeks to blame the absence of peace in the region on the Netanyahu government's refusal to accept obligations that she herself never accepted. In her bid to destabilize the Netanyahu government in the hopes that by doing so she will advance her own fortunes, Livni is collaborating with an American assault on the democratically elected government of her country in spite of the fact that this assault is predicated on false allegations against her own policies in office.

No less significant than what Livni's perfidious collaboration with the administration against her own government tells us about her character is what the nature of the Obama administration's assault on the Netanyahu government tells us about Livni's central strategic platform.

Both today and during her tenure in power, she has advocated a national security strategy based on subcontracting vital national security interests to outside forces. Just as the US was supposed to act as a guarantor for the settlement blocs, so, from Livni's perspective, Fatah forces and an international force comprised of European and perhaps US military units were supposed to protect Israel from Gaza in the aftermath of withdrawal from the area. This was also her vision for a post-withdrawal Judea and Samaria. It was also her position on how the country should secure its interests regarding Lebanon and Hizbullah. And it is also her position that we should trust the international community to protect us from the specter of a nuclear-armed Iran. As far as Livni is concerned, there is no vital interest that Israel cannot trust outside forces to secure for it.

Both today and during the time she was in office, we have been witness to instance after instance where Livni's strategic rationale was proven wrong. From Hizbullah's postwar emergence not as an international pariah but as a legitimate force in Lebanese politics, recognized by the likes of Britain even as it works to transform Lebanon into an Iranian colony and overthrow the regimes in Egypt and Morocco, to the Obama administration's decision not to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, her view is exposed as folly.

From the administration's acceptance of the Hamas regime in Gaza as manifested by its \$900 million pledge of humanitarian assistance to Gaza and Obama's demand that Israel open its borders with the Iranian proxy terror enclave, Livni's position has been a demonstrated failure.

From the US's commitment to building a Palestinian army to its patently mendacious denial of the Bush administration's formal commitments to Israel's rights in Judea and Samaria, Livni's strategic framework has been shown to be not simply foolish, but dangerous to the country.

All of this is important for both the public and the Netanyahu government to bear in mind in the coming days, weeks and months. Today the local print and broadcast media are putting massive, unrelenting pressure on the government to bow to US pressure and come to some sort of an agreement with the Obama White House. Yet what the administration's denial of previous US commitments and the crisis these denials have provoked show is that such deals and accommodations are completely worthless.

Then too, Livni's own behavior towards both the government and the Obama administration tells both the public and the government something very important about her willingness to behave as the loyal opposition. Very bluntly, Livni's silence in the face of the administration's lies about her own record shows that she is more loyal to her parochial political interests than to national interests.

During his visit to Dresden, Obama remarked that with Jerusalem's current governing coalition, it will be difficult for Netanyahu to bow to his will and stop allowing Jewish building beyond the indefensible 1949 armistice lines. In making this point, Obama was clearly signaling that the White House would be happy to see Kadima join the government and compel Netanyahu to adopt its strategic view that Israel is better off empowering outsiders to secure its national interests. But what Livni has shown - both through her political behavior and her strategic outlook - is that the country and the Netanyahu government are better off without an agreement with the Americans and without Kadima and its leader in the government. (Jerusalem Post Jun 8)

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## **Obama's Stunning Offense To Israel And The Jewish People**

*President yet again makes his intentions clear* By Anne Bayefsky

President Obama's Cairo speech was nothing short of an earthquake - a distortion of history, an insult to the Jewish people, and an abandonment of very real human-rights victims in the Arab and Muslim worlds. It is not surprising that Arabs and Muslims in a position to speak were enthusiastic. It is more surprising that American commentators are praising the speech for its political craftiness, rather than decrying its treachery of historic proportions.

Obama equated the Holocaust to Palestinian "dislocation." In his words: "The Jewish people were persecuted. ...anti-Semitism ...culminated in an unprecedented Holocaust.... Six million Jews were killed.... On the other hand, it is also undeniable that the Palestinian people - Muslims and Christians - have suffered in pursuit of a homeland." This parallelism amounts to the fictitious Arab narrative that the deliberate mass murder of six million Jews for the crime of being Jewish is analogous to a Jewish-driven violation of Palestinian rights.

Speaking in an Arab country to Arabs and Muslims, Obama pointedly singled out European responsibility for the Holocaust - "anti-Semitism in Europe culminated in an unprecedented Holocaust." In other contexts, the European emphasis would be a curiosity. In Egypt, it was no accident. The Arab storyline has always been that Arabs have been forced to suffer the creation of Israel for a European crime. In fact, Obama's Egyptian hosts would have been only too familiar with Arab anti-Semitism during World War II (and beyond). After all, Obama was speaking in the country that schooled and later welcomed back Grand Mufti Haj Muhammed Amin al-Husseini as a national hero. This was the man who spent the war years in Berlin as Hitler's guest facilitating the murder of Jews.

Obama thought he would prove his even-handedness towards Israel by boasting of Friday's trip to a concentration camp and rejecting Holocaust denial. In this context, however, the move of doing Jews these supposed favors appears to be cynical political opportunism, especially having just set the Holocaust side-by-side with the "suffering" and "pain" of Palestinians "for more than 60 years." After all, the president made no emotive references to the "intolerable" "suffering" of Israeli victims of Arab terror "for more than 60 years." The word "terrorism" never left his lips. Far from bolstering the fight against terror and the anti-Semitism driving it, such maneuvers embolden more hate and violence against Israelis.

Instead, Obama sought Arab and Muslim approbation by drawing a moral equivalence between those who have rejected Israel from the outset (and still seek its outright destruction or a "right of return" intended to terminate a Jewish majority) and the Jews who have kept them at bay since May 14, 1948. In his words: "There has been a stalemate: two peoples with legitimate aspirations, each with a painful history.... It's easy to point fingers - for Palestinians to point to the displacement brought about by Israel's founding, and for Israelis to point to the constant hostility and attacks." Calling the Israeli-Arab conflict a "stalemate" represents an abysmal failure to acknowledge historical reality. The modern state of Israel emerged after an internationally approved partition plan of November 1947 that would have created two states, one Jewish and one Arab; this plan was accepted by Jews and rejected by Arabs. One people has always been prepared to live in peace, and the other has chosen war in 1948 and 1956 and 1967 and 1973 and 1982, and renewed terrorism after its every loss.

Bereft of the most basic understanding of Judaism and Jewish history, Obama claimed that "the aspiration for a Jewish homeland is rooted in a tragic history that cannot be denied," for "around the world, the Jewish people were persecuted for centuries." A Jewish homeland in Israel is not rooted in tragedy or in centuries of persecution around the world. It is rooted in a wondrous, unbroken, and spiritual relationship to the land of Israel and to Jerusalem for thousands of years. Coupled with the president's stress on "European responsibility" for the Holocaust, his words reinforced the lethal belief that Israel is the creature of transplanted, alien Jews.

Obama's stunning offense to Israel and the Jewish people went farther. Israelis have come to occupy territory in response to Arab-initiated wars of intended annihilation, but Obama analogized Palestinian "daily humiliations ...that come with occupation" to the "humiliation of segregation" of black slaves in America and the "moral authority" of "people from South Africa." His Arab audience understood that the president of the United States had just given a nod to the single most potent defamation of the Jewish state today - the allegation that Israel is a racist, apartheid state.

After expressing his belief in a moral equivalence between the claims of Palestinians and the claims of the victims of slavery and apartheid, Obama juxtaposed his admission of Israel's "right to exist" with his assertion that "the United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements." Every word of this speech was carefully weighed. It was therefore no mishap that for the first time a U.S. president has denied the legitimacy of Israeli settlements, period. Such an assertion abrogates every agreement between Arabs and Israelis, which have always left the ultimate determination of which settlements will stay or go to a bilateral peace process and final status negotiations. Even the Roadmap reads: "Phase III: Permanent Status Agreement and End of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict ...a final, permanent status resolution ...on borders, Jerusalem, refugees, settlements."

Furthermore, the idea that Jews are not permitted to live in any territory that might become part of a future Palestinian state means only one thing: apartheid Palestine. Twenty percent of Israel's population, 1.5 million people, are Arab (with more democratic rights than in any Arab state). But the notion of any Jewish presence in Palestinian territory is allegedly an abomination. Why should a future transfer of governmental authority mean "no Jews allowed"?

But judging by Obama's speech, only one "dislocation" counts. After placing the Holocaust side-by-side with the Palestinian "pain of dislocation," he ignored the dislocation of 800,000 Jewish refugees from all over the Arab Middle East in response to the creation of Israel.

Jewish refugees from Arab intolerance were not the only human-rights casualties the president chose to dismiss. Three different times Obama defended the right of Muslim women to cover up their bodies. Never once did he mention the right of Muslim women to refuse to cover up their bodies - a right denied on pain of arrest and death by many of the very communities he was addressing. In the name of "freedom of religion" he

chose to "welcome efforts like Saudi Arabian King Abdullah's interfaith dialogue." The Saudi Arabian government criminalizes the public practice of any religion but Islam. This manufactured human-rights fantasy has done a tremendous disservice to the oppressed across the Arab and Muslim world.

President Obama's meticulously planned and executed Egyptian speech marks the lowest point in the U.S. presidency's understanding and appreciation of the Jewish state, its history, and its people's future. Added to his administration's evident infirmity on Iran, the speech of June 4, 2009, by the supposed leader of the free world will be remembered as a major decline in human history. (National Review Jun 8)

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### **No Need To Panic** By Yoram Ettinger

President Obama's speech in Cairo intensified psychological pressure on the Jewish State. Obama erodes Israel's special standing in the US. He has adopted evenhandedness and moral equivalence toward Israel (a staunch democratic ally, a role model of counter-terrorism) and toward the Palestinian Authority (an ally of US' enemies, a role model of terrorism and hate-education.) He ignores Israel's ancient history, suggesting

Jerusalem hopes president's speech will promote reconciliation with Arab world, but official says government awaiting speech with 'suspense and embarrassment' due to fears of consequences it may have on US-Israel relations that the justification for its existence is rooted in the Holocaust. And, he has transformed "settlements" into the crux of the Arab-Israel conflict, although Palestinian terrorism and Arab wars against Israel preceded the 1948 establishment of the Jewish State and the 1968 establishment of the first "settlement."

Obama hopes that Prime Minister Netanyahu will succumb to psychological pressure. But, he cannot break Israel's back or sever US-Israel special relationship.

Notwithstanding the Cairo Speech, the resolution of the Palestinian issue is not Obama's top priority. The national security of the US and the political future of Obama do not depend on the fate of the "settlements." Obama was elected, primarily, in order to stop the monthly increase of unemployment by over 500,000 persons, the loss of homes by millions of Americans, the collapse of credit and consumption, the disintegration of American banks and the destruction of large and small American businesses. In addition, President Obama is challenged by the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the potential volcano which could erupt following the evacuation of Iraq, the nuclear threat posed by North Korea and Iran, a potential takeover of nuclear Pakistan by the Taliban, a possible Pakistan-India eruption, imperialist Russia and China, etc. If Obama were practically - and not just rhetorically - preoccupied with the Palestinian issue, then he would resemble a person preoccupied with tumbleweeds, while being smothered by a West Texas sandstorm.

The unique covenant between the US and the Jewish State has never evolved around the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has evolved around shared values (which precede 1948 and even 1776,) joint interests and mutual threats. Between 1948 and 1992, all Israeli prime ministers rejected US prescriptions or ultimatum for the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The 1957 withdrawal from Sinai was an exception. However, US-Israel strategic cooperation catapulted to unprecedented levels, as a result of regional reality and Israel's steadfastness in face of pressure.

For example, two unprecedented strategic memoranda of understandings were concluded in November 1983 and April 1988, in spite of brutal US pressure on Israel during the first Intifada and the First Lebanese War. These strategic memoranda were signed due to Israel's unique contribution to vital US national security interests: War on Islamic terrorism, ballistic missile defense, restraining the USSR and regional rogue regimes, sharing of critical intelligence and battle experience, upgrading of defense and commercial industries, etc. In fact, a critical mass among the US public, Congress and even the Administration appreciates the Jewish State - irrespective of "settlements" - for sparing the US the need to deploy tens of thousands of US military personnel and to invest annually mega-billion dollars in the eastern flank of the Mediterranean.

This 2009 psychological pressure is dwarfed by past practical and brutal pressure, which was exerted by the US and by the international community and was fended off by Israel's prime ministers. In 1948, the Department of State and the Pentagon imposed a military embargo and threatened to add economic sanctions, in order to force Ben Gurion to refrain from a declaration of independence and to accept a UN

Trusteeship. The Administration demanded an end to "occupation" in the Negev, the internationalization of Jerusalem and the absorption and compensation of Palestinian refugees.

In 1967, President Johnson warned Prime Minister Eshkol: "If you shall act alone (in pre-empting an Egyptian-Syrian-Jordanian strike) you shall remain alone." In 1981, President Reagan threatened Prime Minister Begin with a military embargo and a severe rupture should Israel bomb Iraq's nuclear reactor. The US was joined by the USSR, Europe, the UN and Israel's own Peres, Weitzman and chiefs of Mossad and Military Intelligence, who all opposed the bombing. Israel's prime ministers withstood massive US and global pressure, with relatively-limited economic, military and diplomatic resources at their disposal.

A US President is a very powerful leader, but he heads one of three branches of government, which are totally independent of each other. The US president is substantially constrained by an elaborate system of checks and balances. He does not appoint congressional leadership or candidates for congressional seats. Congress - which possesses the "Power of the Purse" - has been a consistent bastion of support for the Jewish State. The loyalty of the legislators is first and foremost to their constituents and to the Constitution, including an effective Separation of Power.

Therefore, most Democrats opposed Obama's appointment of Charles Freeman to head the National Intelligence Council. Most Democrats opposed President Clinton's free trade initiatives, and over 30 Democratic House members voted to impeach Clinton. A Democratic majority in both chambers did not prevent a failed 1992-1994 presidency and a Democratic collapse at the 1994 election.

Moreover, the relative weight of Congress rises during economic crises and the assertiveness and independence of legislators grow as congressional campaign season (which will be launched in September 2009) approaches.

Will Prime Minister Netanyahu retreat in the face of President Obama's psychological pressure, or will he leverage the strategic and political reality in the Middle East and in the US for the mutual benefit of both the US and the Jewish State? (Ynet Jun 8)

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### **Bogus 'Zionist' Israel-Bashers** By Isi Leibler

It is ironic that many of the disconcerting themes relating to Israel in US President Barack Obama's Cairo speech replicated those widely promoted for months by a noisy minority of radical American Jews. These "Israel bashers" now proudly proclaim that the new language being employed by Obama "echoes the vocabulary we use."

On the eve of Binyamin Netanyahu's arrival in Washington, a full page advertisement inserted by the Israel Policy Forum (IPF) appeared in The New York Times. Instead of the customary welcome message to a visiting prime minister or expressions of solidarity, it urged Obama to press Israel to make further unilateral concessions to the Palestinians, assuring him that in the event of a confrontation, he would enjoy the backing of most American Jews because "they are not Israelis living in exile." IPF's Washington director, M.J. Rosenberg, issued a call to neutralize "the minority of Jews falsely" purporting to present the Jewish community as "blind supporters" of the Israeli government.

Israel Policy Forum is only one of a cluster of radical left-wing organizations that have the chutzpa to describe themselves as lovers of Israel and even "Zionists," while actively lobbying the Obama administration to pressure Israel. They deviously sugarcoat their anti-Israeli campaigns by comparing themselves to parents whose children are drug addicts requiring "tough love" to force them to change their dangerous habits. These sentiments were effectively replicated in Obama's Cairo speech. They were joined in April last year by J Street, a new group initially funded by the Jewish tycoon George Soros who had achieved notoriety for demonizing successive Israeli governments irrespective of their political leanings. J Street and another radical group, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, proudly announced that they had succeeded in persuading 11,000 of their members to bombard the White House with e-mails urging Obama to stand firm against Netanyahu.

During the Gaza offensive, J Street condemned the action against Hamas as "disproportionate." Refusing to "pick a side" and identify "who was right and who was wrong," it applied moral equivalency to both parties proclaiming that "we recognize that neither Israelis nor Palestinians have a monopoly on right and wrong... While there is nothing 'right' in raining rockets on Israeli families or dispatching suicide bombers, there is nothing 'right' in punishing a million and a half already suffering Gazans for the actions of the extremists amongst them."

J Street also opposes Israel's efforts to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear power. Despite the fact that Israelis of all political opinions are united on this issue, J Street members were e-mailed and urged to actively lobby against a bipartisan congressional resolution calling for tougher sanctions to be applied against Iran.

The radical groups also resurrected the bogus anti-Semitic charge of "dual loyalties," warning Jews that by continued "blind" support of Israel, they risked alienating the American public and would be condemned for displaying greater loyalty toward Israel than the US. They were almost hysterical in their condemnation of Jews who exercised their rights to protest against the proposed appointment of the fiercely anti-Israel Charles Freeman to head the National Security Agency. IPF spokesmen went so far as to explicitly state that being an anti-Israeli fanatic was insufficient grounds for barring a person from assuming a senior administration role.

If there was any doubt about J Street, its endorsement of the British anti-Semitic play *Seven Jewish Children*, effectively a contemporary blood libel, placed it squarely in the camp of those seeking to demonize the Jewish state. It justified its support on the grounds that the play would promote "rigorous intellectual engagement and civil debate on which our community prides itself." J Street and IPF also seek to slander and undermine AIPAC, the highly effective pro-Israel lobby group, depicting it as an extreme right-wing and hawkish body although it has consistently promoted the policies of all Israeli governments, including the dovish administrations preceding Netanyahu.

In an environment in which global anti-Semitism and demonization of Israel are beginning to make inroads into the United States, the potential of such radical groups to destabilize the standing of Israel should not be underestimated. Never before has the Jewish community faced a situation in which organizations presenting themselves as Zionists shamelessly lobby their president to pressure the democratically elected government of the Jewish state to make concessions which could have life and death implications for its citizens.

Not that anti-Jewish Jews are a new phenomenon. Jewish communists were bitterly opposed to the campaign to liberate Soviet Jewry and defended state-sponsored anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. But they were marginalized and regarded as pariahs by the Jewish community.

The problem in the US is that the established Jewish leaders decided to ignore these organizations, mistakenly believing that confrontations would be construed as attempts to restrict freedom of expression and would transform the radicals into martyrs.

But the issue of freedom of expression is a red herring. Any Jew is entitled to express his beliefs, no matter how nauseating or deviant such views may appear to the majority. That certainly applies to those arguing in favor or in opposition to settlements. Surely the red lines are being crossed when, as distinct from expressing views, American based organizations claiming to "love" Israel aggressively lobby the US government to pressure it to make concessions that could place lives at risk. To tolerate such groups within the framework of the Jewish community provides them with an aura of respectability to which they are not entitled. Alas, today some of these groups already attend administration briefings on a par with the recognized mainstream organizations. Furthermore, failure to confront these Israel bashers has already provided the general media with grounds to suggest that American Jewish support of Israel is collapsing. That has certainly encouraged the Obama administration to intensify its pressure on the Netanyahu government. It may also cause some weak-kneed Jews to distance themselves from Israel to avoid confronting a popular American president.

There are even ominous mutterings predicting a possible replay of what transpired during World War II, when fearing a confrontation and bedazzled by president Franklin Roosevelt, Jewish leaders lacked the courage to protest against the indifference of the US government to the Nazi extermination of the Jews.

Now, as never before, when the beleaguered State of Israel confronts Iran, potentially one of the greatest existential threats since its creation, the support of American Jews is crucial.

A united Jewish community should marginalize the anti-Israeli radicals and urge Obama (who received 80 percent of its votes) to stand by commitments made to Israel by previous US administrations in the same manner as the Netanyahu government is obliged to adhere to undertakings made by previous Israeli governments. A strong Jewish stand in this direction could effectively tip the balance in averting a catastrophic major rift between the US and Israel. (Jerusalem Post Jun 10)