



**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*

## Events...

### December 6

**Advance poll date for Canadian federal election. As election day is the first day of Sukkot, be sure to vote at an advance poll on Monday. If you plan to vote at a Returning Office instead, note that Tuesday, December 7 is the last day one can do that.**

### December 7-16

**BAYT Brotherhood Seventh Annual Solidarity Mission to Israel. Based in Jerusalem's Sheraton Plaza Hotel. Visits to Hevron, Sderot and throughout Israel. For info contact Moishe Posner 416-878-6606 or moish@GMDwholesale.com or Larry Zeifman 416-256-4000 ext. 239 or LWZ@Zeifmans.ca**

## Commentary...

### A Welcome Mat for Ahmadinejad By Jeff Jacoby

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's visit to the United States last week was everything he could have hoped for.

At the United Nations, the Iranian president delivered a speech laced with undiluted anti-Semitism, denouncing "people called Zionists" who dominate the world's "financial and monetary centers" and control "the political decision-making centers" in the West through "deceitful, complex, and furtive" means. His remarks were greeted not with jeers or stony silence, but with lusty applause from the delegates and a hug from the president of the General Assembly.

Then CNN provided the hatemongering head of state with another high-profile soapbox -- an interview with Larry King, who warmly shook the Iranian president's hand and tossed him a series of fatuous softballs: \*Where in the US would you like to travel? Would you like to meet Sarah Palin, since you're both former mayors? You don't wish the Jewish people any harm, do you?\*

On Thursday, at New York's Grand Hyatt Hotel, Ahmadinejad was the guest of honor at a dinner and "dialogue" hosted by several left-wing Christian organizations, including the American Friends Service Committee, the Mennonite Central Committee, and the World Council of Churches. The US Commission on International Religious Freedom had urged the organizers not to honor someone who "has manipulated such dialogues repeatedly into a platform for spreading hatred," and warned that lionizing Ahmadinejad would only "burnish the Iranian leader's legitimacy." To no avail. The dinner went ahead despite the protests, amid pious invocations of "engagement" and "discussion." Intoned Mark Graham of the American Friends Service Committee: "You can't just engage with people with whom you agree on all issues. That leads to a very myopic view of the world."

But the high point of Ahmadinejad's week must have been Friday night, after his return to Iran. That was when John McCain and Barack Obama met in Mississippi for their first debate, and Obama reiterated once again his determination to meet Ahmadinejad "without preconditions" if he is elected in November.

## גמר חתימה טובה

"We . . . have to, I believe, engage in tough direct diplomacy with Iran," Obama insisted. "And this is a major difference I have with Senator McCain. This notion -- by not talking to people we are punishing them -- has not worked."

Obama first adopted this stance in July 2007, when he was asked in a Democratic Party debate whether he would agree to meet the rulers of Iran,

Syria, Venezuela, Cuba, and North Korea without preconditions and promptly answered: "I would." His website reinforces that message, promising "direct presidential diplomacy with Iran without preconditions." During Friday's debate, Obama claimed that even Henry Kissinger, a McCain adviser, "just said that we should meet with Iran -- guess what -- without precondition."

Obama was wrong about Kissinger, who rejected Obama's view in a statement after the debate. And he is wrong on the broader issue, for at least three reasons:

First, as McCain argued, an American president's unconditional willingness to negotiate with the head of an outlaw regime gives that regime "more credence in the world arena." The more Ahmadinejad and the mullahs who back him flout fundamental standards of civilized behavior -- by fomenting terrorism, by murdering US peacekeepers, by convening Holocaust-denial conferences, by threatening Israel's extermination -- the more they crave international legitimacy. "You'll sit down across the table from them," McCain told Obama, "and that will legitimize their illegal behavior." Face-to-face talks with the US president can only enhance Ahmadinejad's stature at home and bolster his authority abroad.

Second, far from persuading international villains to end their barbaric behavior, presidential negotiations would embolden them to prolong it. After all, if such behavior can lead to a coveted presidential invitation, it stands to reason that even more rewards can be reaped from behaving even worse.

Third, no-strings-attached negotiations consume time -- an invaluable asset to a government like Iran's as it pursues a nuclear bomb. "After five years of negotiations with the Europeans," John Bolton wrote last May, "the only result is that Iran is five years closer to having nuclear weapons."

As a general rule, talking with critics and competitors makes sense, in diplomacy as in daily life. But Obama, like the UN delegates who applauded Ahmadinejad and the Christian groups that invited him to dinner, seems to believe that the welcome mat should always be out. That more dialogue is always called for. That no regime or head of state is ever so abhorrent as to deserve only ostracism. On the campaign trail, such naiveté is distressing. In the Oval Office, it would be alarming.

*The writer is a columnist for The Boston Globe. (Boston Globe Oct 1)*

### The Miracle of Our Return By Yehudit Tayar

We never imagined that we would have the privilege of bearing witness to the return of the Jewish people to Jerusalem, the eternal capital of Israel. Those dreams seemed to be unreachable; and yet, we have returned to the mountains of Jerusalem, to the ancient site of the City of David, to the path of our forefathers from Hevron to Shechem.

Each of us who lived through 1967 - and the excitement of the feeling of awe and disbelief that we actually not only survived this war, but actually returned to reclaim our heritage - will never forget those days. Or will we? Is it only some of us who realize the miracle that we received?

When did Jerusalem become real estate? When did our history become negotiable? When did the governments of Israel begin to ignore our historical heritage and reward the murderers of our people who proclaim their intent

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to destroy our country?

I, for one, will never forget my first visit to Jerusalem on the first Tisha B'Av (the ninth of the month of Av, a day of mourning for the Jewish people throughout our history) following the Six Day War. Back then, the Western Wall was almost buried with rubbish, the narrow strip allowing us to approach this part of our once-glorious Temple was too small to hold the masses pushing to get closer - to touch, to reach, to kiss the stones - and leave perhaps a small note in the cracks.

Even today, after so many years and so many blessed visits to Jerusalem, my heart is lifted when I travel the path to the Kotel, when I see the return of our people to the city and to the Cave of Machpela in Hebron. For me, it is not something to take for granted, but on the contrary, something to cherish, love and appreciate - the miracle that we have been given, the return of our people to these holy sites.

I also am unable to forget the so called "Auschwitz borders" of Israel, as Abba Eban called the pre-1967 borders of Israel. How can the governments of Israel allow themselves to forget? How can these politicians who are so wrapped up in their own ambitions endanger not only these treasures, but indeed our very existence?

We, the simple people who have returned to the ancient homeland of our forefathers, have carved out a new history for our nation. We have returned to the hills and plains of our land, built thriving communities, raised families, and now the fourth generation is continuing to build and reclaim our land.

The incredible nerve of politicians to collaborate with the enemy, allow insurgents to roam freely throughout our land and, on the other hand, instruct the police to arrest loyal Jewish citizens for even merely planning demonstrations is not only unbelievable, it is unacceptable.

Our enemies openly sell T-shirts in the Muslim market in the Old City of Jerusalem decorated with the PLO flag and saying in bold print, "Liberate Palestine" ("Palestine," to them, is the entire State of Israel). This, while Jewish property is destroyed, Jewish residents of Judea, Samaria and Gaza are banned from their homes, and families are imprisoned.

What happened here? Where is the backbone of our nation? Where are our people?

The answer is really more simple than is thought. We, the simple Jews, living in the many communities throughout the Biblical lands of Judea and Samaria, are the answer. We are not afraid of looking back to our history in order to move on to ensure the future of the Jewish people in our land.

We and our children are the hope for the future, and we have emunah - strong belief - in the absolute right of our people to continue to lay claim to our beloved land. We are determined, no matter what, to fight for this, with the planting of our trees, building of our homes, educating our children in the direction we know must be taken.

We are absolutely determined because we know that governments rise and governments fall, but the land stays. Those weak politicians, along with our enemies, may plan to destroy the miracles we received, but our faith is in the eternal promise given to our people by G-d Himself - and we know that it is up to us to ensure the fulfillment of this promise. No matter how many times we are threatened, beaten, arrested, no matter how many one-sided agreements are made by the destructive governments of Israel, we must continue to fight on; and in the end we shall continue to live the miracle of our return to our homeland and heritage. We will not forget the miracle we received and will do all we can to protect this gift forever. (IsraelNationalNews.com Sep 28)

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### **Mr. Olmert Without Tears** By Hillel Halkin

It is hard to feel very sorry for Israel's prime minister, Ehud Olmert, who resigned from his position two days ago. He is said to be a nice person, warm to his friends, and considerate to his staff. This may be true, just as it is true that he is a skillful politician. But he brought about his own downfall — and did it, not, as in a Greek tragedy, by blindly stumbling into it, but by courting it with open eyes.

The politician who makes a habit of lining his pockets illegally because he thinks he can get away with it does not inspire in us, as Aristotle says of the tragic hero, pity and terror. If he makes us feel anything stronger than derision, it is disgust.

Apart from perhaps being the first prime minister of Israel to go to jail, Mr. Olmert will be remembered, certainly for one, and possibly for two, things. The certain thing is the failed 2006 war in Lebanon. The possible thing is the peace negotiations he has been conducting with the Palestinian Authority and

the government of Syria.

And yet, ironically, while Mr. Olmert has been castigated by all for the war in Lebanon and praised by many for his talks with the Palestinians and the Syrians, it should be the other way around. The war was not really his fault. The talks have been a blunder that are entirely his own.

When Mr. Olmert decided to go to war in the summer of 2006, he was acting, within the limits of what he knew, perfectly reasonably. He had been prime minister for only a few months. Hezbollah had delivered an intolerable provocation, crossing the international border to kill and kidnap Israeli soldiers. Here was a chance to teach it, and all of Israel's enemies, a lesson while driving it from southern Lebanon and destroying its infrastructure there.

The army told Mr. Olmert that it would be a cinch. The few hundred irregular fighters manning Hezbollah's positions in the Lebanese south would be crushed by Israel's air power before they could manage to fire many of their Katyusha rockets into northern Israel.

The army turned out to be wrong. Israel's air power couldn't do the job. Military intelligence had underestimated how well dug-in Hezbollah was. The Katyushas rained down day after day. And when the army decided that the only way to root out Hezbollah was to send in ground troops, it again assured Mr. Olmert that it would all be over quickly. The Hezbollah fighters hunkered down in their bunkers might be safe from bombs, but they couldn't hold out against divisions of Israel's infantry.

The army was wrong again. Most of the bunkers held out, the Katyushas kept falling, and the war ended inconclusively, which meant a victory for Hezbollah. Instead of strengthening Israel's deterrent power, it only weakened it, at the cost of over a hundred dead and a demoralized public. It was indeed a disaster — but no one could blame Mr. Olmert for it.

He had no way of knowing that the army was living in a fantasy world. Had he ignored its advice by not reacting powerfully to Hezbollah's provocation, or by calling off the war without sending in infantry, he would have been castigated, too. The only difference is that he would then have been called an indecisive weakling rather than a shoot-from-the-hip adventurer.

But Mr. Olmert's peace talks have been something else. True, they were a result of the 2006 war. Unable, because of its consequences, to continue implementing Ariel Sharon's unilateral disengagement plan, on whose platform he had been elected, Mr. Olmert cast about for an alternative policy and hit upon the pre-Sharon strategy of the Labor Party of trading land for peace.

At first, this was probably a knowing ploy to create an illusion of purposefulness that he, a former right-winger, did not much believe in himself. Yet the deeper into trouble he got because of the corruption charges against him, the more the ploy became a life raft that he clung to in the hope that no one would throw a dedicated peacemaker overboard.

And to keep the raft afloat, he began to make concession after concession on both the Palestinian and Syrian fronts without getting anything substantial in return, while in the bargain helping the Syrian regime to extricate itself from its international isolation.

Fortunately, Mr. Olmert, although he will continue to be acting prime minister for several more weeks or months until a successor is chosen, does not have the time or the political leverage to push the peace talks begun by him much further. And yet the concessions that he has already made, and that he may still make before moving out of the prime minister's office, will come back to haunt Israel in the future.

No matter how Israel's governments legitimately try to argue that they are not bound by offers Mr. Olmert has made to re-divide Jerusalem, to give dozens of square kilometers of Israel's territory to a Palestinian state, to re-admit a to-be-negotiated number of Palestinian refugees, and to withdraw from the entire Golan Heights, the international community, let alone the Arab states, will from now on regard these as Israel's positions that must not be backtracked from.

It is indeed hard to feel sorry for him. It is easier to feel sorry for the country that has been led by him. (NY Sun Sep 23)

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### **Israel's Ongoing Oslo Nightmare** By P. David Hornik

Last Monday a Palestinian woman at an Israeli checkpoint outside Nablus on the West Bank threw acid in the face of an Israeli soldier there, who may lose his sight in one eye. The woman, a 19-year-old resident of Nablus, had

perpetrated a similar attack earlier this month and then fled back into the city.

This time she used the “humanitarian lane,” which is for Palestinians who need urgent medical attention and so can bypass inspections in the regular lane. The Israeli army had also eased travel restrictions generally in the West Bank in honor of the month-long Muslim holiday of Ramadan.

Don’t bother searching the media for praise of these Israeli humanitarian measures, criticism of the woman for exploiting them, or homage to the bravery of the soldiers, like the one injured yesterday, who carry out the difficult, dangerous checkpoint duty 24/7 to prevent Palestinians like this woman from getting into Israel and attacking civilians. Instead the checkpoints are, along with Israel’s security fence, the latest cause célèbre of the Israel-bashers, and the Bush administration has exerted major pressure on Israel to curtail their use.

The acid-throwing proved, though, to be only the first terror attack of the day. Monday evening in Jerusalem—roughly concurrent with honored UN guest Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, in New York City, telling the Los Angeles Times that Israel is “an airplane that has lost its engine”—a Palestinian rammed a car into a crowd of off-duty soldiers and others at an intersection, injuring seventeen before being shot dead by one of the soldiers. It was the third such incident in Jerusalem this year, the former two involving tractors, and as in those cases the Palestinian was a young man, apparently acted independently, and was an East Jerusalem resident.

Which means he, too, exploited a good many humanitarian advantages. Although the vast majority of East Jerusalem Arabs rejected the full citizenship Israel offered them upon reunifying the city in 1967, they were granted residency status that entitles them to a range of social benefits as well as full freedom of movement within Israel.

Monday evening’s perpetrator, also 19, also benefited (in his plans) from Israel’s failure to act in the wake of the two previous Jerusalem vehicle attacks. In those cases legal red tape prevented the army from destroying the homes of the terrorists’ families in what is known to be one of the only effective ways to deter those bent on death in any case.

The macro picture of Israel’s security environment isn’t looking much better. On Sunday Brig.-Gen. Yossi Baidatz, head of research for Military Intelligence, told the Israeli cabinet that “the time when [Iran] will have crossed the nuclear point-of-no-return is fast approaching,” that Western determination (never robust, he could have added) to halt the process is flagging, and that Iran is “concentrating on uranium enrichment” and upgrading the performance of its 4,000 centrifuges.

He also said Iran was strengthening its influence in the region via its ties with Syria, Hezbollah, and the Palestinian terror organizations, as well as being “a source of constant attacks on American troops in Iraq.” As for the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, Baidatz said Hamas—as all reasonably cognizant observers predicted—was using it to “rearm and prepare for the next round of fighting, increasing training and continuing to smuggle in raw materials that allow it to increase its rocket arsenal.”

Although Egypt, he said, was doing somewhat better in detecting the smuggling tunnels between Sinai and Gaza, it was “still not dealing with the root of the problem, which was the need to go after Bedouin smugglers in Sinai.”

It was in this situation that last week, in its infinite wisdom, Israel’s left-wing media establishment managed to throw a possible prime-ministerial election in favor of an inexperienced dove and against a richly experienced relative hawk.

The media’s efforts actually began weeks before last Wednesday’s Kadima Party primaries as it kept trumpeting poll results finding that Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni was leading Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz by huge margins in their contest to replace outgoing prime minister Ehud Olmert.

Livni, a former Likud politician with a right-wing background, had shifted to the left, and Kadima, as justice minister in Ariel Sharon’s disengagement-from-Gaza government. As foreign minister under Olmert she had distinguished herself mainly by championing UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which effectively handed Hezbollah, Syria, and Iran a victory in the 2006 Second Lebanon War, and being one of the staunchest advocates of turning the West Bank—not only Gaza—over to Palestinian control and so putting not only south-western Israel but the center of the country within range of Kassams and Katyushas.

Mofaz didn’t have a sterling record either, having overseen a weakening of the Israel Defense Forces and the country as Sharon’s defense minister and eventually also hopping onto the Kadima train after swearing he would stay in

Likud. But Mofaz had served as chief of staff and other high positions in the IDF before becoming defense minister, had been heading Israel’s strategic dialogue on Iran with the United States, and is generally sophisticated and realistic about Israel’s security threats.

He was, in other words, dramatically better qualified than Livni to lead the country at such a time. Yet, by the night of the Kadima primaries on September 17, the media had the country convinced that Livni was a shoo-in and the elections were little more than an exercise.

As it happened, Livni ended up beating Mofaz by all of 431 votes. She wouldn’t have done even that well without various irregularities—of which the most significant were exit polls by all three of Israel’s main TV channels claiming Livni had such a whopping lead that many Mofaz voters simply turned back and went home. By the time the real results came in, it was too late for them to realize they’d been duped.

So it’s Livni who has assumed the task of trying to form a new governing coalition, and the open questions are: whether she’ll succeed, and if so, whether the new coalition will include enough security expertise and realism to function effectively in the security sphere; or, if she doesn’t succeed and the country goes to general elections, whether the replacement government will be a significant improvement and whether, in any case, it will be formed in time to deal with threats that are dire and imminent.

The larger question is whether Israel has yet emerged from the destructive Olso-era collusion between extrapolitical left-wing establishments and delusionally dovish politicians, and the worrisome answer is no. (FrontPageMagazine.com Sep 25)

*The writer is a freelance writer and translator living in Tel Aviv.*

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#### **Leave the Unsolvable, Target the Possible** By Evelyn Gordon

Two weeks ago, a column by Haaretz diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn offered Ehud Olmert’s replacement the following advice: While negotiations with the Palestinians and Syrians pose difficulties, “an attempt to freeze everything, conduct sterile diplomatic negotiations and focus on domestic issues such as ‘governmental reform’ or ‘the war on corruption’ until the external circumstances change will turn the prime minister into someone who is just whiling away time on the job.”

Benn’s view is hardly unique; virtually all Israeli leftists concur - which makes you wonder whether they inhabit the same country as the rest of us. After all, as Benn himself admitted, “the public does not believe a [Palestinian] deal is possible.” It is equally skeptical about a Syrian deal, though he omitted that detail. Thus to most Israelis, the real waste of time would be for the government to throw itself into trying to solve conflicts they currently deem unsolvable, at the inevitable expense of domestic problems they deem genuinely critical.

For instance, while Benn dismisses “the war on corruption” as “whiling away time,” most Israelis disagree: In a January 2007 Peace Index poll, a large plurality gave this issue top billing, its weighted grade of 31.5 out of 100 compared to 22.1 for the second-place issue (rehabilitating the IDF) and a mere 10.8 for making peace with the Palestinians. And that was before the worst corruption scandals broke, including most of Olmert’s cases, then-finance minister Abraham Hirschson’s alleged embezzlement and the discovery that well-connected businessmen were dictating senior Tax Authority appointments. Thus the issue’s importance has presumably only grown.

And with cause: In Transparency International’s latest corruption index, published last week, Israel fell to 33rd place, down from 30th last year and an all-time best of 16th in 2001. This leaves us tied with the Dominican Republic, behind Chile and Uruguay and well behind the Western countries that are our main competitors, thereby threatening our long-term economic viability.

OR TAKE another issue Benn dismisses: governmental reform. Nothing endangers democracy more than a public conviction that the system is broken. Yet more and more people feel that way, and are therefore opting out of the democratic process. The evidence is incontrovertible: Voter turnout, after holding steady for decades at about 80 percent, plummeted to 69% in 2003 and 64% in 2006.

This disenchantment stems partly from governmental corruption, but there is another, even more critical factor: We are the last remaining Western democracy where voters elect party slates chosen by party hacks rather than individual parliamentarians. Thus people have no real say over who

represents them; no way to "throw the bums out" (since the "bums" are usually popular enough with the hacks to secure safe seats on their party's slate); and no way to influence their representatives, who answer to the hacks rather than the voters.

Ordinary Israelis understand this: Another poll last year found that 61% want MKs elected directly. But only a very determined government could enact this reform.

THEN THERE are all the issues Benn did not mention - like education, where we are dropping steadily in international rankings. The last international assessment tests ranked Israeli 15-year-olds below 28 of the 30 OECD members in reading, math and science. Incredibly, according to an OECD study published two weeks ago, these poor results occurred even though Israel provides more hours of classroom instruction than 19 of the 22 OECD countries for which data exists.

The gravity of the educational decline (and we have not even mentioned our crisis-ridden universities) cannot be overstated. This country's only natural resource is its citizens' brainpower. Without nurturing this brainpower, our economy will wither, people will flee, we will be unable to finance our defense and the nation's very existence will be imperiled.

Moreover, failing schools perpetuate yawning gaps between rich and poor. The well-off compensate by providing supplemental, private education for their children. But that leaves children of the poor with no chance of escaping the cycle of poverty through the time-honored means of education.

Israelis care about nothing if not their children, and I have yet to meet a parent who is satisfied with his children's public-school education. Thus this issue is of great concern to most Israelis.

OR CONSIDER our dysfunctional police. Underworld assassinations are killing innocent bystanders on the streets, yet police have not managed to indict a single leading gangster: The only underworld kingpins facing charges (the Abergils and Ze'ev Rosenstein) were indicted by US authorities in American courts. Police admit that only one in 100 break-ins results in prosecution; the protection racket is reportedly rampant nationwide; and horrendous snafus are routine, from the 2006 escape of serial rapist Benny Sela to the policeman who stood and watched while a terrorist slaughtered students at a Jerusalem yeshiva this March.

Indeed, it is a standing joke that people file police complaints only to collect their insurance. And since police performance affects everyone's personal security, this clearly matters greatly to most Israelis.

Reforming the police is a complex problem, but there are some obvious starting places. The population has tripled since the 1960s, while the police force has grown by only 50%; consequently, it is now badly understaffed by Western standards. According to Insp.-Gen. David Cohen, Israel has only 2.7 policemen per 1,000 citizens, compared to five per 1,000 in Europe. Moreover, low salaries and long hours make retaining good people difficult. Both are problems only the government can solve.

These are only a few of many pressing domestic issues. But all have a common root: For 15 years, successive governments have devoted themselves mainly to either negotiating with the Palestinians or suppressing the terror that these negotiations produced. Domestic problems were consequently neglected, and they festered.

Tzipi Livni could thus give her country no better gift for the new year that began this week than to ignore the advice of Benn and his ilk, make do with managing the conflict and devote her energies to domestic problems. Unfortunately, nothing in her record suggests that she will do so. Thus most likely, domestic problems will keep right on being neglected. (Jerusalem Post Oct 1)

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### **Jewish Left Wins, Jews and Israel Lose** By Dennis Prager

For decades most of the organized left has fought against Republicans and conservatives more than against the world's greatest evils. During the Cold War, starting in the late 1960s, one heard little if anything from the left about the evils of Communism or of Communist societies such as the Soviet Union or Communist China. But one heard a great deal about the evils of American anti-Communists; Ronald Reagan was vilified much more than Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev.

But last week, a new line seems to have been crossed. The organized Jewish left -- i.e., left-wing Jewish organizations that claim to be committed to the welfare of Jews -- made it clear that even in the fight against the greatest enemy of the Jewish people, the Jewish left prefers to fight what it considers

an even greater enemy -- conservatives and Republicans.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who has repeatedly called for the annihilation of Israel and who denies the Holocaust, came to speak at the United Nations. The day before he was scheduled to speak, Jewish organizations across the religious and political spectrum had organized a "Stop Iran" rally at the Dag Hammarskjold Plaza across from the UN. They had invited Sen. Hillary Clinton, D-N.Y., and then invited Republican vice-presidential nominee Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin.

The intent was to maximize publicity for the anti-Iran cause, the most important Jewish concern (and arguably the most important world concern) today. With Clinton and Palin present, the world press would cover the anti-Iran rally, and the Jewish community could show the world and America that this was one cause that knew no politics -- the most prominent female Democrat and the most prominent female Republican would both lend their names and prestige to this rally.

However, the moment that Clinton learned that the organizers had invited Palin, she withdrew. For Clinton, giving the other most popular woman politician in America publicity was unacceptable -- even among New York Jews, one of the steadfast liberal and Democratic groups in America. The near collapse of the Stop Iran rally was of less consequence to Clinton than denying Palin a public platform.

Not many were surprised by Clinton's action. What was alarming was the realization that for much of the Jewish left -- not leftists who happen to be Jews and for whom the welfare of the Jewish people is not particularly significant, but left-wing Jews who claim to care deeply about Jewish survival -- fighting Palin is of greater importance than fighting Ahmadinejad.

Left-wing Jews and Jewish organizations put intense pressure on the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations to cancel the invitation to Palin. And the pressure worked.

As the liberal editorial page of New York's major Jewish newspaper The Jewish Week put it:

"But somehow, a big-tent cause like Iran as a terrorist power seeking nuclear arms has become so politicized within our community that Monday's rally was more about the non-presence of Gov. Sarah Palin than about the very real presence at the UN of a Holocaust denier whose goal is to destroy our way of life."

Yet, in a rare move, publishing an entire speech that was never given, Ha'aretz, Israel's equivalent to The New York Times in its prestige and in its liberal politics, published the speech that Palin would have given. In Israel, liberal and even many left-wing Jews know that Iran is a greater threat to Israel than American conservatives.

The Palin speech was so good it should be read by every American concerned with Israel's survival. And it was so nonpartisan that it praised Clinton for being at the rally. To say that Palin -- who has the American, Alaskan and Israeli flags in her Juneau office -- is a better friend of the Jews and Israel than much of the American Jewish left sounds odd only to Jewish leftists.

But the Jewish left acts as if it fears and hates her more than it fears and hates Ahmadinejad. That is why within days of her nomination Rep. Robert Wexler, D-Fla., announced that "John McCain's decision to select a vice presidential running mate that endorsed Pat Buchanan for president in 2000 is a direct affront to all Jewish Americans. Pat Buchanan is a Nazi sympathizer with a uniquely atrocious record on Israel. ... It is frightening that John McCain would select someone one heartbeat away from the presidency who supported a man who embodies vitriolic anti-Israel sentiments."

Wexler's statement was false: Palin supported Steve Forbes, not Buchanan. And associating Palin with Nazi or anti-Israel sympathies is morally loathsome, not to mention weakens the struggle against real anti-Semites.

For left-wing Jewish organizations and their supporters -- as opposed to many rank and file liberal Jews -- the real fight is against Republicans and especially Christian conservatives (as a community, the Jews' best friends) more than against a nuclear Iran.

After the cancellation of Palin, a left-wing Jewish organization that was influential in opposing Palin's appearance, an organization called J Street, on whose Board of Advisors sits the executive director of MoveOn.org, headlined on its website: "We Won!"

That is indeed the case. The Jewish left did win. Which is why the Jews and Israel lost. (Townhall.com Sep 30)