



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*

Council resolutions, the US, Russia and the EU refused to accept the legitimacy of Iran's uranium enrichment activities. Their refusal stemmed from the fact that by enriching uranium, Iran stands in breach of its commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Wednesday's accord ignores this inconvenient fact and so whitewashes Iran's illicit behavior, effectively accepting Iran's right to enrich uranium.

And that isn't all. According to Washington Post columnist David Ignatius, by agreeing to enrich Iran's uranium from 3.5%, to 19.75%, the US, Russia and France have provided Iran with a solution to its technical deficiencies. Citing a report in the Nucleonics Week trade journal, Ignatius wrote last week that Iran has apparently been unable to enrich uranium beyond 3.5% and its current "supply of low-enriched uranium... appears to have certain 'impurities' that 'could cause centrifuges to fail' if the Iranians try to boost it to weapons grade." Jack Wakeland, an engineer employed in the nuclear power industry, expanded on Ignatius's revelation at The Intellectual Activist Web site. Wakeland explained that the metallic fuel Iran will receive in this deal "can be converted back to highly purified uranium hexafluoride very, very easily."

That is, the deal allows Iran to surmount the scientific hurdles it reportedly now faces, clearing the mullahs' path to acquiring the weapons-grade uranium.

For their part, the Iranians haven't wasted a moment pushing the diplomatic envelop still further. As the Americans, French and Russians were offering them more than they could have ever imagined possible - including the prospect of US personnel serving as human shields against a possible Israeli air strike on Iran's nuclear installations - back in Teheran they ratcheted up their demands.

On Tuesday, Abdolfazl Zohrehvand, who serves as an adviser to Saeed Jalili, Iran's chief negotiator at Geneva, told Iran's IRNA press agency, "Circumstances may arise under which Iran will require uranium enriched to 63%."

Then on Thursday Iran said it isn't willing to accept a deal that would take all of its enriched uranium out of the country. This is not a deal breaker since the accord the US, France and Russia initialized Wednesday only foresees removing 80% of Iran's known supply of enriched uranium to Russia. But still, it signals that the Iranians have only begun extracting concessions from the Americans and their partners. And the Americans will no doubt be willing to concede still more. After all, now President Barack Obama can brag that he has an historic, Nobel Peace Prize-worthy deal with Iran. He cannot be expected to give it up just because the Iranians use it as a new path for building nuclear bombs.

Until Wednesday, Israel refrained from publicly attacking the US's decision to seek an accommodation with Iran. This made sense. Israel had no interest in being perceived as pre-judging the outcome of a process on which the Obama administration staked its prestige. But now that the administration has agreed to an accord that effectively transforms America into a facilitator of Iran's nuclear weapons program, the time has come for Israel to start voicing its objections.

Unlike the Palestinians and the Iranians, Israel has no great diplomatic assets. It can assume that it will always be condemned by the UN.

The EU, with its member-nations' own anti-Jewish baggage, a burgeoning and radicalized Muslim minority, and an addiction to Arab oil cannot be expected to stand with Israel.

Western NGOs are largely funded by anti-Israel governments and leftist philanthropists and so use their resources to advance the causes of Israel's enemies.

Under the Obama administration, the US is charting a diplomatic course that places it directly in the anti-Israel camp. Indeed, while the US voted against the UNHRC's resolution against Israel last week, it made no significant effort to convince other countries to follow suit and had no problem with Britain's and France's decision not to cast a vote despite the dangerous precedent the Goldstone Report and the UNHRC's resolution set for US forces fighting terrorist foes in Iraq, Afghanistan and

Events...

Monday, November 9, 8pm

Harvard Professor Ruth Wisse, author of *"The Liberal Betrayal of the Jews"* will speak on *"Jews and Power: Why and How We Often Get it Wrong"* at Holy Blossom.

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Commentary...

Waging Diplomatic War By Caroline Glick

If, to paraphrase Carl von Clausewitz, diplomacy is war by other means, then just as armies are called upon to concentrate their efforts and resources where they can do the most good for their cause, so governments must utilize their diplomatic resources - whether plentiful or scarce - to advance their most important national interests.

The Palestinians and the Iranians have formidable diplomatic resources at their disposal. Both the Palestinians and Iran can expect to receive the support of automatic majorities at the UN for everything they do. And today most international diplomacy is conducted under the aegis of the UN or its affiliated bodies. Understanding their strength, the Palestinians and the Iranians use the UN and its affiliated organs to advance their most important goals. In the Palestinians' case, UN-based diplomacy is used to delegitimize Israel. In the Iranian case, UN-based diplomacy is used to facilitate the mullocracy's acquisition of nuclear weapons. Over the past week, both the Palestinians and the Iranians enjoyed strategic victories in their diplomatic campaigns.

Last Friday, the UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution condemning Israel in every possible way for asserting its sovereignty over its capital city and for defending its citizens against wanton, massive, unprovoked and illegal terror from the skies emanating from Hamas-controlled Gaza. The resolution represented a massive achievement for the Palestinians. It referred Israel to the Security Council with the recommendation that Israel's leaders be tried as war criminals before international tribunals. That is, the UNHRC's resolution effectively delegitimized Israel's right to exist by denying that it has a right to defend its territory and its people from illegal aggression carried out by an illegal terrorist organization.

Then on Wednesday, Mohamed ElBaradei, the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency's virulently anti-Israel chairman, announced a deal has been reached between Iran and the US, Russia and France regarding Iran's nuclear program. The deal - which the parties initialized in Geneva after just three days of talks - legitimizes Iran's nuclear weapons program and effectively transforms the US, the EU and Russia into facilitators rather than opponents of that program. According to news reports of the accord, the US agreed to send American personnel to Iran to upgrade a research reactor in Teheran that was provided to the Shah in the 1960s. Russia agreed to increase enrichment levels of Iranian uranium from their current level of 3.5 percent, to 19.75%. And France agreed to transform the higher-enriched uranium into metallic nuclear fuel.

Until Wednesday, in accordance with three binding UN Security

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throughout the world. Worse still, the US has refused to announce whether it will use its Security Council veto to block a referral of Israel's military and political leaders to the International Criminal Court.

In the current climate, Israel's diplomatic resources are limited to popular opinion in the US, and shared interests on specific issues with a number of governments throughout the world. In light of Israel's diplomatic assets, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, who in recent months has been travelling the globe to cultivate bilateral ties with countries in South America, Africa, Central Asia, and Central Europe, should be congratulated for his efforts.

On the public diplomacy front, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, his cabinet ministers and the Foreign Ministry should use every opportunity to discredit the latest deal with Iran. They should point out its dangers and call for an end to this diplomatic catastrophe before more damage is done to the cause of preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Such a campaign would probably fail to derail the current talks. But if successful, it would prevent the deal from being used as a means to delegitimize Israel's right to militarily strike Iran's nuclear installations.

As for the Palestinians' diplomatic triumph with the risible Goldstone Report and its attendant UNHRC resolution, Israel's response to date has been misguided and self-defeating. This week, the government began considering forming a commission of inquiry into the IDF's handling of Operation Cast Lead. Judge Richard Goldstone has been claiming that if Israel conducts an investigation into his allegations that our soldiers committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, Israel can avoid prosecution of IDF personnel at the International Criminal Court. Lawyers like Attorney-General Menahem Mazuz have latched onto Goldstone's statements and the media are atwitter with rumors that Netanyahu may agree to form such a commission.

That would be a wrong move for several reasons. First of all, Goldstone is in no position to negotiate. Once he submitted his libelous report to the UNHRC, Goldstone's writ of authority was a thing of the past. Even if he now wants to get Israel off the hook he placed it on, he has no power to do so. And the officials at the UNHRC who gave Goldstone the mission of proclaiming that the IDF committed crimes against humanity have no interest whatsoever in crediting any internal Israeli investigation or ending the organization's hounding of the Jewish state.

Beyond that, any investigation Israel could launch into the IDF's conduct of Operation Cast Lead would be perceived internationally as an admission of guilt. If that commission were to conclude truthfully that the IDF conducted its operations in full accordance with international law, its findings would be dismissed as a whitewash.

In response to the UNHRC resolution and the Goldstone Report itself, the government announced this week that it will seek changes in international law to strengthen the ability of democracies to fight against terrorism. This move is also deeply misguided. The fact of the matter is that Israel did not break international law in Operation Cast Lead. It is simply the victim of its enemies' cynical use of the rhetoric of international law as part of their diplomatic war against Israel. That is, the problem is not the law. It is the law's distortion for political purposes by Israel's diplomatically powerful foes. By announcing that it plans to work to change the law, the government missed this central point.

Moreover, by ignoring the fact that the problem is not with the law itself but rather with the distortion of international law by hostile actors for political gain, the government failed to recognize that even if it succeeds in changing the law, in all likelihood the new law will be similarly distorted by its enemies to advance their political war against Israel.

For that matter, the government's very announcement that it wishes to change international law will be pounced upon by its enemies as proof that it broke the law.

Israel's enemies are making adept use of their vast diplomatic power to advance their most important goals. Israel should use its meager diplomatic powers to do the same by going on a public diplomacy offensive against the criminalization of Israel and against the international community's surrender to Iran. A good first step in that direction would be to stop using our limited powers in a manner that expands our enemies' advantages over us. (Jerusalem Post Oct 23)

Dare To Dream Of A Rebuilt Temple By Michael Freund

Something astonishing, even alarming, is taking place in the battle over the future of Jerusalem. Even as Palestinian rioters run amok on the Temple Mount, egged on by the radicals of the Islamic Movement, much of the

anger and dismay in the Israeli and international press is being directed, ironically enough, at Jews who merely wish to visit the site.

Mustering all the righteous indignation at their disposal, the media have been filled in recent days with all kinds of pejoratives to describe them, ranging from "extremist" to "fringe" to "ultra-right-wing," as though a Jew's desire to exercise his basic, fundamental rights somehow constitutes an act of provocation.

Local pundits and commentators alike have also joined the fray, going to great lengths to justify the restrictions imposed by the police on Jews wishing to visit the Mount, even accusing the would-be pilgrims of seeking to trigger a firestorm of Islamic fury. It does not seem to bother them one whit that the policy in place today is entirely discriminatory in nature, as the followers of Muhammad are allowed to visit and pray where Solomon's Temple once stood, but not the followers of Moses.

Indeed, all the enlightened defenders of civil rights, and the champions of equality before the law suddenly fall silent when capitulation to Muslim threats is given preference over respecting vital Jewish rights.

And why not, you might be asking. After all, if it is just a bunch of kooks who want to ascend the Mount, why go to all this trouble on their behalf? Needless to say, this approach plays straight into the hands of our foes, whose ultimate goal is to wrestle the holy site away from us by denying its historical and spiritual connection with the Jewish people.

And what a sad and pitiful sight this is to behold. Before our very eyes, we are witnessing a concerted effort to delegitimize and even demonize our people's most cherished dream: the longing for the Temple. The very aspiration that was born in the moments when Roman flames engulfed the Second Temple more than 1,900 years ago, and which was carried in Jewish hearts throughout centuries of exile, has now become an object of scorn, mockery and ridicule.

Make no mistake: This is nothing less than an unbridled assault on Judaism itself, and it is time for the derision and name-calling to stop.

Opine all you want about how to "solve" the Jerusalem issue, but don't belittle the place of the Temple in Jewish eschatology or belief. Like it or not, the longing for a rebuilt Temple is no less central to Judaism than the desire for peace or social justice. And dreaming of a time when the Temple will stand again is no more fanciful or fanatical than hoping for the day when poverty and hunger will be eliminated.

Just open any prayer book and you will see what I mean. Every day, three times a day, Jews conclude the Amida prayer, which is central to our liturgy, with the following plea: "May it be Your will, O Lord our God and the God of our forefathers, that the Holy Temple be rebuilt, speedily in our days."

Does this mean that every Jew who prays daily is a wild-eyed extremist? And just a few weeks ago, in the Musaf prayer recited on the festival of Succot, we implored God to "be compassionate to us and to Your Temple with great mercy, and rebuild it soon and magnify its glory."

Is this utterance the province merely of the "ultra-right-wing"?

The Temple and its sacrificial rites are a core component of our faith, and they play a central role in the Jewish vision of a better world. Vilifying those who uphold this belief is simply an act of small-minded intolerance and bigotry, and it has no place in the current debate.

And denying Jews the right to visit the Temple Mount is no less objectionable, for it tramples upon the principal constitutional values which underpin our democracy. As Thomas Jefferson pointed out some two centuries ago, "The most sacred of the duties of a government is to do equal and impartial justice to all its citizens." That means that when Palestinian Arabs try to prevent Israeli Jews from visiting the Temple Mount, it is the responsibility of the powers that be to come to the defense of the latter, rather than to capitulate to the former.

So let's stop bad-mouthing those who want to visit or pray where our forefathers once stood. And let's bear in mind one very important rule: The real extremism is not to dream of a Temple, but to attempt to silence those who do. (Jerusalem Post Oct. 28)

Turkey: An Ally No More By Daniel Pipes

"There is no doubt he is our friend," Turkey's prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, says of Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, even as he accuses Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman of threatening to use nuclear weapons against Gaza. These outrageous assertions point to the profound change of orientation by Turkey's government - for six decades the West's closest Muslim ally - since Erdogan's AK party came to power in 2002.

Three events this past month reveal the extent of that change. The first came on October 11 with the news that the Turkish military - a long-time bastion of secularism and advocate of cooperation with Israel - abruptly asked Israeli forces not to participate in the annual "Anatolian Eagle" air force exercise.

Erdogan cited "diplomatic sensitivities" for the cancelation, and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu spoke of "sensitivity on Gaza, east Jerusalem and the al-Aksa Mosque." The Turks specifically rejected Israeli planes that may have attacked Hamas during last winter's Gaza Strip operation. While Damascus applauded the disinvitation, it prompted the US and Italian governments to withdraw their forces from Anatolian Eagle, which in turn meant canceling the international exercise.

As for the Israelis, this "sudden and unexpected" shift shook to the core their military alignment with Turkey, in place since 1996. Former air force chief Eitan Ben-Eliahu, for example, called the cancelation "a seriously worrying development." Jerusalem immediately responded by reviewing Israel's practice of supplying Turkey with advanced weapons, such as the recent \$140 million sale to the Turkish air force of targeting pods. The idea also arose to stop helping the Turks defeat the Armenian genocide resolutions that regularly appear before the US Congress.

Barry Rubin of the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya not only argues that "the Israel-Turkey alliance is over," but concludes that Turkey's armed forces no longer guard the secular republic and can no longer intervene if the government becomes too Islamist.

The second event took place two days later, on October 13, when Syria's Foreign Minister Walid Muallem announced that Turkish and Syrian forces had just "carried out maneuvers near Ankara." Muallem rightly called this an important development "because it refutes reports of poor relations between the military and political institutions in Turkey over strategic relations with Syria." Translation: Turkey's armed forces lost out to its politicians.

Thirdly, 10 Turkish ministers, led by Davutoglu, joined their Syrian counterparts on October 13 for talks under the auspices of the just-established "Turkey-Syria High Level Strategic Cooperation Council." The ministers announced having signed almost 40 agreements to be implemented within 10 days; that "a more comprehensive, a bigger" joint land military exercise would be held than the first one in April; and that the two countries' leaders would sign a strategic agreement in November.

The council's concluding joint statement announced the formation of "a long-term strategic partnership" between the two sides "to bolster and expand their cooperation in a wide spectrum of issues of mutual benefit and interest, and strengthen the cultural bonds and solidarity among their peoples." The council's spirit, Davutoglu explained, "is common destiny, history and future; we will build the future together," while Muallem called the get-together a "festival to celebrate" the two peoples.

Bilateral relations have indeed been dramatically reversed from a decade earlier, when Ankara came perilously close to war with Syria. But improved ties with Damascus are only one part of a much larger effort by Ankara to enhance relations with regional and Muslim states - a strategy enunciated by Davutoglu in his influential 2000 book, *Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position*.

In brief, Davutoglu envisions reduced conflict with neighbors and Turkey emerging as a regional power, a sort of modernized Ottoman Empire. Implicit in this strategy is a distancing of Turkey from the West in general and from Israel in particular. Although not presented in Islamist terms, "strategic depth" closely fits the AK party's Islamist world view.

As Barry Rubin notes, "The Turkish government is closer politically to Iran and Syria than to the United States and Israel." Caroline Glick, a Jerusalem Post columnist, goes further: Ankara has already "left the Western alliance and became a full member of the Iranian axis."

But officials in the West seem nearly oblivious to this momentous change in Turkey's allegiance, and its implications. The cost of this error will soon become evident. (Jerusalem Post Oct. 27)

Investigating The IDF Would Be The Real War Crime By Shahar Ilan

There are positions which are difficult to understand anybody wanting to hold. One of these is a commander in the army. During every military campaign, we place them on a pedestal, send them to fight in our name and (supposedly) give them the backing of 90 percent of the public.

Each time, we lead them to believe that the support they received was so widespread that perhaps they would no longer be asked to pay the price

for fighting our wars for us. And each time we betray them anew and abandon them on the battlefield to the devices of commissions of inquiry.

It is important to remember this: A commission of inquiry is not an entity whose purpose is to get to the truth. A commission of inquiry is an entity whose very existence affirms the fact that there was an oversight and a crime was perpetrated.

The commission's very being gives rise to an oversight. There has yet to be one commission of inquiry that was formed and failed to find any flaws, nor has there been one panel created only to dissolve with the following statement: "Sorry, you appointed us for no reason. You just wasted hundreds of thousands of shekels to subsidize our time and our wonderful sandwiches, and the real mistake was in our very formation."

Whoever thinks that such an inquiry does not have an impact on the willingness of quality, upstanding people to pursue a military career and the readiness of senior officers to make proper decisions in the field is burying their head deep in a jug of military camouflage face paint.

Every time the standing of the military's senior echelon of officers is discussed, one ought to bring up the question of why Lt. Col. Roi Klein, who jumped on a grenade during battle in Bint Jbeil in the Second Lebanon War and as a result saved the lives of his soldiers, has not been mythologized (and perhaps encouraged the mythologizing of others).

There was a time when we considered officers worthy of adulation. Today, we haul them before committees of inquiry. There was a time we feted acts of heroism and sacrifice, a time when we hailed those who won the battles for us. Today we consider them suckers.

During the Second Lebanon War, perhaps it was possible to claim that the war was not a rousing success and that this justified an investigation. It was certainly not a failure, but Israel's strategic predicament does not allow for anything less than a decisive victory. This was something the Israel Defense Forces should have taken into consideration.

But Operation Cast Lead was a resounding military success. It put a stop to the Qassam rocket fire in the south and we sustained few casualties. Yet even this success does not relieve the commanders of the need to go into battle with a lawyer in tow.

There is no way to wage combat in Gaza without harming the civilian population, and it is obvious that the IDF did much to avoid this. We are essentially telling our commanders: Your war is never over, and even if your life was saved, your career is in danger. No deed geared toward Israel's defense will go unpunished.

IDF officers and their charges are not the only ones whose faces we are spitting in by entertaining the very idea of establishing a commission of inquiry. What message are we sending to the residents of the south? That we accept the claim that firing thousands of Qassam rockets on their heads is not a war crime, but our operation is?

One needs to be blind not to recognize the fact that the world is judging us by a double standard. It does not change the fact that the world is stronger, and sometimes we need to put our heads down and play their game.

But there also comes a time when we need to say "enough is enough." If the officers who led Operation Cast Lead end up paying for it with their careers, or even if they do not pay but their appearances before a commission of inquiry become nightmarish, this will be the real crime.

All of us will bear responsibility for it, and all of us will pay the price during the next war. (Haaretz Oct 26)

Why J Street Jeopardizes Jews By Martin Sherman

J Street is a dangerous organization - it is dangerous because prima facie it appears quite plausible. However, its policy proposals for American appeasement and Israeli retreat harbor grave consequences for both countries.

It makes little difference whether J Street's intentions are sinister or sincere, or whether it is motivated by malice or myopia. For it is the substance of its proposals - not their motivation - that makes J Street such a grim threat to the Jews and the Jewish nation-state.

Indeed, J Street seems committed to method rather than outcomes. Why else would it insist on persisting with failed policies - both vis-à-vis Israel and Teheran?

The Iranian theocracy has proved itself resolutely immune to finger-wagging and moral suasion. Yet J Street insists that - contrary to all available evidence - some yet undiscovered diplomatic formula exists to convince Tehran to abandon its nuclear endeavor. But perhaps more than anything, J Street is associated with its unequivocal endorsement of the

two-state solution for the Israel-Palestinian conflict, apparently seduced by an idyllic vision of "two-states living side-by-side in peace and security."

Before analyzing its political feasibility, one ought to address the indisputable security significance such a solution would have for Israel, if implemented.

A Palestinian state established on the hills overlooking the 1967-frontier, in any configuration even remotely acceptable to even the most moderate Palestinian, would command virtually all the nation's vital infrastructure systems, installations, and major populations centers in the coastal plain. Without exception, they would all be in range of the kind of weapons used today from territory transferred to Palestinian rule.

This is not an expression of political preference - but a factual consequence of topographical elevation and geographical distance. It reflects an ominous prospect which can no longer be dismissed as "right-wing scaremongering," for it articulates precisely past precedents that Israel has encountered on its northern and southern frontiers. Along its eastern frontier, however, the concentration of vulnerable civilian and high-value strategic targets would make the consequences of such an eventuality far more serious.

In this regard it must be remembered that the Gaza disengagement conveyed an unequivocal message to the Palestinians that no quid pro quo on their part is required. If Israel is confronted resolutely enough, it will concede everything for nothing - effectively nullifying the chances of reaching any mutually accommodative arrangement. But even if even a Palestinian leader of standing could be found, willing to risk delegitimization, demonization, and death by agreeing to such a perfidious arrangement with the Zionist entity, there is little reason for optimism.

For if such an agreement is not to critically compromise Israel's national security and Israelis personal security, it must be verifiable, enforceable and durable.

The accumulated experience over the past two post-Osloian decades has underscored the difficulty of achieving the first two. Prudent projection underscores the improbability of attaining the third.

As the Gaza debacle demonstrates, without a permanent, pervasive presence of the IDF there is no way of restricting the flow of armaments into the Palestinian-administered territories or of ensuring that agreed limitations on weapons and forces will be honored. Moreover, even if the official Palestinian military adheres to the agreement there is no way to ensure that renegade forces will not violate it.

However, even if - despite the accumulating evidence to the contrary - it is possible to find genuinely peaceable Palestinian partners who would agree to implement J Street's vision of "two-states living side by side in peace and security," how could their continued incumbency be ensured? Even if J Street is justified in its belief in the sincerity of Palestinian leaders like Fayyad and Abbas, nothing could be more dangerous than basing such a far-reaching proposal on person-specific configurations, whose durability is doubtful, to say the least.

Regime-change in the Palestinian context is not longer a theoretical possibility - it occurred in Gaza! What if it occurs again in the "West Bank," as many knowledgeable experts warn is likely? And what if the "moderates" fall prey to the assassin's bullet rather than the voters' ballot? Or if they succumb to illness? What if, in any of these eminently feasible scenarios, the fruits of far-reaching Israeli concessions fall into the hands of an extremist successor-regime? What conceivable plan does J Street propose to prevent precisely such a situation from arising?

Both Operations Defensive Shield and Cast Lead show that when Israel reacts to protect its citizens from attacks, even after extreme restraint, the result is international censure and Israeli casualties. Why would J Street wish to create conditions which make a repetition of such instances almost inevitable? How does it propose dealing with the consequences of failure? After all, merely hoping dangers will not materialize is not a responsible policy for contending with them.

But even if - against almost impossible odds - it turns out that a verifiable, enforceable and durable demilitarized arrangement could be attained, thorny questions still exist. Who would be responsible for the national security of the demilitarized Palestinian state? Unless one assumes that it would be state devoid of any enemies in the most enemy-rich region of the world, it would clearly be entitled to some kind of defense. So will the Palestinians be allowed to forge defense pacts with other states - such as Iran or Syria? Or will the IDF be called upon to sacrifice its troops to repel possible assaults on the demilitarized Palestinian state? What is J Street's position on this?

Unless J Street addresses all these issues, and unless it produces a convincing program for contending with situations that would arise if it is proven wrong, it must resign itself to the allegation that J Street jeopardizes Jews. (Ynet Oct 27)

The writer is currently in LA as the visiting Israeli scholar at USC.

Israel's Time Has Come By Shmuley Boteach

Over the weekend I read *Start-Up Nation*, the new book about why Israel has emerged as a global leader in hi-tech. Even if its authors Dan Senor and Saul Singer were not my friends, I would still say this book is the best ad for Israel in recent memory. Sidestepping the usual discussion of Israel as an embattled nation, it focuses instead on the invincible ingenuity of the Israeli people, and their vast technological contribution to the global economy. Where the Israeli army is discussed, the focus is not on soldiers chasing down terrorists but on how the Israeli military serves as a commercial networking tool for soldiers. So the book both informs and inspires.

Am I the only one tired of hearing only bad news about Jews and Israel? Remember the old joke about the Jew who loves reading anti-Semitic magazines? When asked why he says, "When I read Jewish newspapers, all I hear is that we're hated. When I read the anti-Semitic alternatives, they tell me we run the world!"

Israel is not a victim. Less so is it a tragic nation. Rather, as *Start-Up Nation* makes clear, Israel today is one of the most highly educated and technologically advanced nations on Earth, with one of the planet's fastest-growing economies. It's time that Jewish papers and periodicals stop with the tired, worn stories predicting Israel's imminent demise.

True, Israel has implacable, terrorist enemies, and yes, Iran is building a bomb which is an existential threat. That's all mighty serious stuff.

But is that all there is to the modern Jewish story? Is there not also a story of breathtaking success? If only the world could hear about Israeli universities ranking in the top 10, of its growing number of Nobel Prize winners, of Andy Grove, Warren Buffet and Bill Gates rushing to invest in Israel and how a crazy percentage of the world's computer chips are manufactured in the Jewish state.

The time has come for world Jewry to see Israel as the place where the limitless potential of the Jewish people is finally being made manifest. All we needed was for people to get out of our way, and just look at how we thrive. And we prosper not as a self-absorbed nation but as a people who make vast contributions to all of mankind.

In light of this, it is time for Israel to consider forgoing American economic aid. I understand the military aid; the country has an insane number of crazies who wish to destroy it. But the economic aid creates an unnecessary dependency, undermines the perception of Israel as a prosperous country and gives the US undue influence over Israeli policy. Surely we all believe that decisions governing Israel's right to defend itself should be taken by the Israeli prime minister rather than the American president.

There is more.

Many a Jew has wondered aloud why the Arabs got all the oil and Israel got none. What could God have been thinking in making despots and dictators like the Saudis and Libya's Muammar Gaddafi so insanely rich, while Israel has to struggle for every shekel it earns?

Only now do we see the truth. Oil is the greatest curse ever to befall the Arabs. By simply digging a hole and having money flow from the ground, the Arab states had little incentive to build universities or a hi-tech industry. And when the day comes - and it will - when the world finally finds an alternative energy source, these despotic regimes will collapse, returning to the sand from which they arose.

This isn't rocket science. All of us know at least one rich friend whose kids don't have to work, and who consequently became indolent. Israel has had to struggle for everything it has. No country has ever been more unjustly reviled or more continuously attacked.

Conversely, no country better inspires the world to ponder the infinite capacity of humans to rise from the ashes of despair and build a shining state on a hill.

Israel still has a lot of problems and a lot of enemies; it must remain hyper vigilant.

But it is time for the other side of the story to be told as well.

It is time that more books like *Start-Up Nation* begin to focus on Israel's colossal achievements. (Jerusalem Post Oct. 26)
