



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*

best shown by the refusal to tell Israel's prime minister whether or not the president will see him this coming week when Netanyahu (like the president) addresses the United Jewish Communities annual general assembly in Washington. The Israelis

Events...

Motzei Shabbat, November 21, 8:30pm

Legendary Jerusalem Shabbat Host and Educator **Rabbi Mordechai Machlis** will be speaking on "Yerushalayim Shel Chesed-The singular Synthesis of Jerusalem and Kindness" at the **Sephardic Kehila Centre**.

Monday, November 30, 8pm

Nefesh B'Nefesh Aliyah seminar at BAYT.

December 13-22

Join us for **BAYT Brotherhood's Eighth Annual Solidarity Mission to Israel**. Open to men and women. Call or email **Moishe Posner** Moishe@GMDwholdesale.com 416-878-6606 or **Larry Zeifman** LWZ@Zeifmans.ca 416-256-4000 ext. 239.

December 18-19

Annual Jerusalem Shabbaton for BAYT members studying in Israel or serving in Tzahal, followed by the **Annual Reception for BAYT Members who have made Aliyah**, and **Annual Concert and Kumzitz with Chaim David**, at the **King Solomon Hotel, Jerusalem**.

Commentary...

Next, Locusts? By Elliott Abrams

Can anything else possibly go wrong for the Obama administration's Middle East policy? In the past ten days, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has twice reversed herself publicly on her attitude toward the Israeli settlements. Palestinians have refused her direct request to rejoin peace talks with Israel, and Palestinian Authority president Abbas has said he will not run for reelection. U.S.-Israel relations are in a state of frozen mistrust. The New York Times and Washington Post, among others, are calling Obama's policy a complete failure--in news stories as well as editorials. The only thing missing is a plague of locusts.

The policy is indeed a complete failure. In ten months the administration has managed to offend and demoralize Israelis and Palestinians, lose the support of Arab governments, and reduce previously excellent relations with the government of Israel to levels unmatched since the James Baker days. Meanwhile, George Mitchell's trips to the region are increasingly reminiscent of the Colin Powell visits in 2002 and 2003--producing little but embarrassment. The Israeli "100 percent settlement freeze" and the Arab outreach to Israel, early goals of the Obama team, are now forgotten, as is an early resumption of serious Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

These disasters are mostly the product of an ignorant and belligerent attitude toward Israel and especially its prime minister. The ignorance was most evident in the administration's view that a total construction freeze could be imposed not only in every settlement but in Jerusalem itself. But the U.S. policy was worse: We demanded a freeze that would apply to construction by Jews, but not by Arabs; could any Israeli leader be expected to support such a position? One does not need to be a member of the Knesset to understand that such a freeze was impossible for Benjamin Netanyahu and his coalition as it would have been for any Israeli prime minister--but apparently this fact was beyond the understanding of Mitchell, Rahm Emanuel, and all the other "experts" on the Obama team.

The belligerence toward Netanyahu has been evident all along, but is

gave the White House weeks of notice that Netanyahu had agreed to speak, would be in town, and hoped to see Obama. The White House reaction has been to keep him twisting in the wind, with news stories several days before his arrival saying the president had not decided yet whether to see Netanyahu.

Think of it: Our closest ally in the region, critical issues at stake (from Iran's nuclear program and the recent Israeli seizure of an Iranian arms shipment meant for Hezbollah to Abbas's announcement), yet the Israelis get no answer. Obama and his "experts" may think they are reminding Netanyahu who is boss, but they are in fact reminding all of us why Israelis no longer trust Obama--and making closer cooperation between the two governments that much harder.

The problems Netanyahu has with Obama pale in comparison with those of the Palestinians, and Abbas's announcement reflects their frustrations. The best example: Obama and Clinton lured Abbas out on the settlements-freeze limb and then sawed it off. When they said a total freeze including Jerusalem was necessary, he of course happily agreed. But when they abandoned that doomed policy and instead began talking of "restraint," he could not climb down.

Abbas has threatened to leave many times before, and it's worth noting that he did not resign. He said he would not seek reelection next year, in elections scheduled for January 24 but highly unlikely to take place then--if ever. So he will be around for months more, in fact indefinitely if elections keep getting postponed. His statement must be regarded, then, not as a Shermansque personal denial but as a protest against an American policy that has weakened him and left him high and dry.

Israelis and Palestinians when I visited in October had two main questions: Who is making this Middle East policy, and do they not realize by now that it is a disaster? At least in this, one can say the administration has produced Israeli-Palestinian unity. They are also united in watching warily as the president seems unable to make a decision about Afghanistan. For the Palestinians, this suggests he'll never really take on the Israelis for them, as they thought he might back in January. For the Israelis, it means he'll never take on Iran, and that they may in the end face the Iranian nuclear threat on their own.

They all wonder whether to blame Mitchell or Clinton or Dennis Ross or National Security Adviser Jim Jones or the State Department's Near East bureau, and each individual Israeli and Palestinian has a favorite target. But the answers to their questions seem obvious: It is the president's policy, and no, he does not seem to be aware that it has already failed. While he has backed off from the early targets, he has not changed his attitude toward Israel's government, nor altered his basic approach: to push for negotiations over "core issues" as soon as possible.

And this is the fundamental problem with Obama's policy: Like too many of his predecessors he believes that a solution is at hand if only he can force the parties to the table. There, presumably under American tutelage, they will reach American-style compromises (pragmatic, sensible, realistic) and resolve the dispute, with Nobel Peace Prizes for all. The only question is where the table is: Camp David, Taba, Annapolis, Oslo, perhaps this time Chicago.

This approach undermines the one real hope in the region, which is the practical advances being made in the West Bank. There, the economy is improving, law and order are maintained, the Palestinian Authority is fighting Hamas, Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation is growing, and mobility for the population is increasing. In recent months Israel removed more checkpoints and expanded the hours of the Allenby Bridge to Jordan. It isn't paradise, but it isn't Gaza either, and life is better each year. It could be far better if the Obama administration would abandon its doomed

efforts to force an Israeli construction freeze in Jerusalem and an Arab embrace of Israel, and instead ask them all to think of real-world ways to keep improving life in the West Bank. There are many ways this could be done, from further steps to remove Israeli barriers to movement, to reliable and generous Arab financial support.

The way forward does not lie through fancy international conferences, and one idea still mentioned as an Obama option--proposing a final status plan--would be disastrous and unsuccessful. The way for the Palestinians to get a state is to go ahead and build it. If and when the institutions are there and functioning, from police and courts to a parliament, negotiations will reflect that fact. But the argument that settling the borders and removing the Israeli troops must come first is a path to failure. For one thing, Israel will not and should not leave until it is clear that the West Bank can be policed by Palestinians and that the region will not be a source of terrorism against Israel, as Gaza and South Lebanon became when Israel left there. No conference and no treaty can provide such a guarantee; only functioning Palestinian police forces that are already fighting and defeating terror can do so.

Such a practical approach would bring other benefits. It would enhance the status and power of Palestinian moderates who are working to improve life in the West Bank, rather than enhancing the status and power of old PLO officials who thrive on endless, useless negotiating sessions. It would put a premium on practical Israeli-Palestinian cooperation, rather than elevating precisely the final status questions (like Jerusalem or Palestinian refugees) that most bitterly divide them. It would increase the gap between the West Bank and Gaza, thereby showing Palestinians that Hamas rule brings only despair and poverty. It would press the Arab states to help real live Palestinians in the West Bank, rather than the imaginary Palestinians--all either bold jihadists or desperate widows and orphans--whom they see on Al Jazeera. In fact, except for occasional visits by Jordanians and Egyptians (who have peace treaties with Israel already), top Arab officials haven't a clue what's going on in the West Bank, for they've never been there. Not one head of state or government or foreign minister, not once. If George Mitchell wants to do something useful, he could organize a tour; take a few princes and foreign ministers to Ramallah and Jericho and Jenin, where they would find that they are neither in Somalia nor some heroic battle scene against Zionist oppressors.

But thus far, the anniversary of Obama's election appears to have passed with no rethinking of policy. Instead the administration slogs forward, judging itself by its elevated intentions rather than its performance. Clinton's pronouncements--demand a total construction freeze one day, accept Netanyahu's more modest offer the next, then back to the wider demands two days later in Morocco--are increasingly reminiscent of World War I trench warfare: gain a few yards, lose a few more, while the casualties pile up. There will be no progress this way, and the practical efforts that should be at the heart of U.S. policy will instead be undermined as we poison Israeli-Palestinian relations and degrade the trust both parties have in us. (Weekly Standard Nov 16)

'Crystal Night' and Beyond By Robert Wistrich

On November 9, 1938, a massive nationwide anti-Jewish pogrom took place during peacetime across the entire territory of the Third Reich. The pretext for this orgy of violence against German Jews was the shooting in Paris two days earlier of German diplomat Ernst vom Rath by Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year-old Polish-Jewish refugee.

The state-organized pogrom, instigated by Hitler and Joseph Goebbels, resulted in the burning or damaging of more than 1,000 synagogues; the ransacking of about 7,500 businesses; the murder of at least 91 Jews; and the deportation of another 30,000 Jewish males to concentration camps in Dachau, Buchenwald, and Sachsenhausen.

This murderous onslaught against German Jewry, cynically described by the Nazis as the "Night of Broken Glass" (Kristallnacht), was a major turning point on the road to the "Final Solution" of the so-called "Jewish Question." It signified that the Nazi regime had crossed a Rubicon and would no longer be deterred by Western public opinion in its "war against the Jews."

The economic expropriation of German Jewry, its complete social ostracism and public humiliation swiftly followed. Jews were banned from public transport, from frequenting concerts, theaters, cinemas, commercial centers, beaches, or using public benches. Only a fortnight after "Crystal Night," the SS journal, *Das Schwarze Korps*, chillingly prophesied the final

end of German Jewry through "fire and sword" and its imminent complete annihilation.

Today, shocking to relate, the specter of such apocalyptic anti-Semitism has returned to haunt Europe and other continents, while often assuming radically new forms. In the Middle East, it has taken on a particularly dangerous, toxic and potentially genocidal aura of hatred, closely linked to the "mission" of holy war or jihad against the West and the Jews. Islamist anti-Semitism is thoroughly soaked in many of the most inflammatory themes that initially made possible the atrocities of "Crystal Night" and its horrific aftermath during the Holocaust. For example, the pervasive use of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion with its perennial theme of the "Jewish conspiracy for world domination;" or the medieval blood-libel imported to the Muslim world from Christian Europe; or the vile stereotypical image of the Jews as a treacherous, rapacious, and bloodthirsty people engaged in a ceaseless plotting to undermine the world of Islam. To these grotesque inventions one must add such more up-to-date libels like Holocaust denial which has become a state-sponsored project in Ahmadinejad's Iran and is increasingly pervasive in the Arab world.

Equally fashionable (and increasingly popular in Europe) is the slanderous identification of Israel with Nazism or the "ethnic cleansing" of the Palestinians. This modernized version of inverted anti-Semitism which sails under the mask of "anti-Zionism" and anti-Americanism is today a global phenomenon, but it has special resonance in the Middle East as a result of the unresolved "Palestinian question." The scale and extremism of the literature and commentary available in Arab or Muslim newspapers, journals, magazines, caricatures, on Islamist websites, on the Middle Eastern radio and TV news, in documentaries, films, and educational materials, is comparable only to that of Nazi Germany at its worst. Yet the Western world largely turns a blind eye to the likely genocidal consequences of such a culture of hatred, much as it did 70 years ago.

My own extensive research into this phenomenon has, unfortunately, convinced me that the Holocaust did not truly succeed in neutralizing the scourge of anti-Semitism. In a sinister and sometimes devious manner, the widespread defamation and demonization of Israel has in effect revived fantasies of completing the murderous work of the Third Reich. This is especially palpable in the case of Iran.

Hence, the anniversary of "Crystal Night" raises two fundamental moral questions for the future of human civilization. Are we at all capable of learning from history, and will the Jewish people once again have to stand alone in the face of concrete threats to annihilate it? On the answer to these questions much may depend. (Ynet Nov 9)

The writer is the director of The Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism at Hebrew University and the author of A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad (Random House, January 2010)

The 'Wait And Blame' Game By Barry Rubin

The Obama administration has no idea what is about to happen. After all, it has won hasn't it and done something positive for the Palestinians, right? It demanded that Israel freeze all construction on West Bank settlements. Israel agreed, save only that it finish the approximately 3,000 units already begun. So the US government can deem itself successful, having delivered something along the lines of what it originally promised the Palestinians.

Moreover, this agreement was ultimately gained without any corresponding Palestinian or Arab concessions. It will be remembered that for some months the US tried to get the Arab side to budge. It failed. Nor did the US government give anything to Israel in exchange for the freeze.

So objectively, what happened? Israel made a big concession; Israel got nothing; the Arab side gave nothing. Isn't this a sort of Palestinian or Arab victory, proof of President Barack Obama's leverage with Israel, an example of Israeli flexibility?

And, after all, when the current apartments being constructed are finished, there will be a construction freeze. So all that's necessary is to wait a few months, right?

Take a step back, clear your mind, look at it. Of course that's what happened. The Palestinians and the Arab states "should" be happy. But this is the Middle East, a place where even if all Arab or Iranian demands are met, this only triggers anger, blame, complaint and still more demands.

And you can't solve the problem using Western rules. Hillary Clinton, stung by Arab criticism that she praised Israel's plan too highly, did a bit of a turnaround two days after proclaiming Israel's concession to be

amazing: "This offer falls far short of what we would characterize as our position or what our preference would be. But if it is acted upon, it will be an unprecedented restriction on settlements and would have a significant and meaningful effect on restraining their growth."

Nope, that won't do. You are saying a nice, rational, carefully calibrated Western-style statement: We want more but it's a step in the right direction, so it should be praised and it is a good thing.

That isn't how things work here. In the eyes of the Palestinian and Arab leadership Israel cannot ever do anything good. You can praise Palestinians, Muslims, and Arabs every day of the week but you aren't allowed to ever say anything positive about Israel or do anything for that country.

As for Clinton saying it is a step in the right direction, this is also unacceptable. Israel can make endless concessions and show infinite flexibility but this can never be accepted as such. Each step is portrayed as a trick since not everything is surrendered at once. Every concession is just a reminder that not everything has been handed over.

And what, by Hillary Clinton's behavior, is the US government communicating to Israel? That when Israel makes a big concession and reaches an agreement with the US, should the PA or an Arab state complain about the terms, the US government will then criticize its own deal! So how can Jerusalem trust Washington?

As if in proof, Al-Hayat al-Jadida, the closest thing to an official PA newspaper, attacked Clinton with these words: "Why, Mrs. Hillary? How much did the Zionists pay you as a bribe?" The editorial went on to say that the secretary of state was wallowing in a swamp of lies and ran a cartoon showing Uncle Sam looking into a mirror to see a big-nosed Orthodox Jew wearing a hat with a Star of David on it, as nasty a cartoon as ever graced the pages of a Nazi newspaper in the 1930s.

Indeed, also on the hat is a globe surrounded by barbed wire, indicated that the international Jewish conspiracy holds the entire earth in its evil hands. And this is Fatah, the PA, the people who get all that US aid, military training and diplomatic support. And this is not the Bush administration they're talking about either but the Obama administration. You just can't please some people. And that's precisely the point.

If you want to understand how things work in the Middle East consider this scenario. Suppose someone says that they want to sell you a house. They demand \$500,000. You offer \$400,000. They say, "No." You offer \$450,000, saying that if both sides give some that a mutually beneficial deal can be reached. Again they say, "No." Finally you offer \$500,000, smug in the belief that you've made a purchase. And then they say once again: "No! How dare you! What a cheat! How about changing the financing to my benefit, putting the full amount down in cash, and buying me another house?" You are incredulous. How could your reasonable, apologetic, empathetic, confidence-building, flexible strategy have failed?

Answer: They never intended to sell. For them, Palestine is Arab or Muslim or both forever. It's not for sale at any price. Anyone who indicates a real interest in selling will be disgraced, or fired, or even killed. To sell your land is to be a sell-out.

And the fact that their title is questionable and they never actually had national ownership, that someone else who has a previous claim has long ago returned and built it up with all sorts of additions and improvements is irrelevant to this thinking.

So instead they prefer to wait. What does the suffering matter? What do the years matter? The deepest principle of blood, and honor, and religion, and right is at stake. So they wait. They wait for the other side, Israel, to collapse. Or for the West to throw Israel to the wolves, persuading themselves that this is happening. Or they wait for all Arabs - more recently the favored formulation is all Muslims - to unite and wipe out the evil usurper. Or perhaps when Iran gets the bomb or the mahdi, the Islamic messiah, comes, or something will happen and then total victory will be theirs. And if passersby shout out: "Yes, you are in the right! Your suffering is intolerable and we want to help you!" that doesn't erode but only reinforces their determination to remain steadfast.

Obama's speeches, UN votes, Goldstone report, leftist chants, growing Muslim migration to the West, Iran defiant and going nuclear and Western concessions do not inspire eagerness to compromise but an enthusiasm for fighting on.

Sound strange to you? Well it sounds normal for millions in the Middle East. And even if part of their brains say something different - Israel is strong, Israel won't go away, Arabs and Muslims always bicker among themselves, why continue following a strategy that always fails, wouldn't it be nicer to have higher living standards - the siren song of militancy overrides it. At least that's true in public, no matter how much in private

many deride these notions as pure foolishness, and no matter how much a few brave souls reject the whole mess publicly and point out how it has in the past and will in future lead the Arabs to disaster.

But now Palestinians and Arabs need someone to blame. Of course, that someone is Israel. Yet also, as always, that someone will be the US.

In this view, Obama has sold them out. He's like all the others. He didn't give them everything they wanted; everything they said they wanted and more; everything at no price whatsoever to themselves. He is, they say and will say more in the days to come, is just like all the other presidents who came before. For they - the Arab dictatorships that need the conflict to stay in power, the Palestinian leadership that still believes in total victory, the Islamist opposition that wants to use the conflict to prove its enemies to be Western puppets and to use the Palestinian issue to seize state power - can never blame themselves.

To blame yourself a bit is the first step to fixing one's worldview and policy. Unfortunately, this possibility is rejected and there is no glimmer of hope that it will change over the next few years, dare I say decade or decades? Indeed, \$2 billion in annual US aid to Egypt buys no leverage.

Knowing that they tremble in fear of a nuclear Iran buys no leverage either. Liberating Kuwait from the hands of Iraq and Iraq from the fists of Saddam Hussein doesn't solve the problem either. Remember the sanctions on Saddam Hussein's Iraq? The elite didn't reduce its truffle consumption and just told the masses that they were suffering due to America. Ditto for Hamas in the Gaza Strip. And the Western left will agree with them.

Equally, no matter how many apologies, how many statements made about the glories of Islam and the sufferings of the Palestinians that Barack Hussein Obama makes, it will not matter. Now he is the enemy.

Does that sound bleak? Well, sorry, reality is bleak, bleakest of all for the Arabs themselves - and pity for the victims of this system - who follow that path. Why do you think there is so much hatred, violence, miscomprehension, tyranny and pure stagnation in this region?

Meanwhile, Israel goes on developing its society, pioneering in technology and science, maintaining democracy, showing flexibility and surviving the hatred and slander that's all-too-common in today's world.

Mr. President, welcome to the real Middle East. (Jer. Post Nov 8)

Israel Stands Alone By Lloyd Greif

Eight months into President Barack Obama's administration, his Middle East peace "road map" is crystal clear. First, he dialed down the pressure on Iran, whose nuclear weapons program presents an existential threat to Israel. Second, he shifted the blame for Islamic extremism to Israel and solely blamed it for the Palestinian's plight. Then he unilaterally ratcheted up the pressure on Israel to cease building settlements and to ease its self-defense blockade of Gaza. Now, Obama has upped the ante even further, framing lasting peace in the Middle East as requiring Israel to retreat to its 1967 borders. Although he blandly claims that there are "no preconditions" to relaunching negotiations, in truth he has doomed the peace talks before they even start. Obama has set up Israel as the fall guy for negotiations that will ultimately fail and is the architect of that failure.

When Obama was elected -- with 78 percent of the Jewish vote -- there was concern about what his administration would mean for the 60 years of unwavering support America had provided Israel. Unlike his Republican opponent, John McCain, or his predecessor, George W. Bush, both longstanding supporters of Israel, Obama had no such track record and was championing a different course, one of détente with such hard-line regimes as Iran and Syria. Jews took heart when then-President-elect Obama selected a Jew, Rahm Emanuel, as his chief of staff, and Hillary Clinton, previously a staunch supporter of Israel from her days as senator from New York, as his secretary of state.

An examination of the first 250 days of President Obama's administration convincingly demonstrates that the earlier concerns were well founded and the mitigating cabinet appointments mere window dressing. From his first telephone call as president to a head of state -- Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian National Authority -- and his first one-on-one television interview with any news organization -- Al Arabiya TV -- to his bowing to Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, then embracing the Muslim world at Cairo University and, most recently, rebuking Israel in an address to the United Nations General Assembly, Obama has shown far more concern for strengthening ties with authoritarian regimes on the Arabian Peninsula than to maintaining the historically close alliance with the region's only true democracy.

His Cairo speech scaled back his support of Israel in favor of establishing new diplomatic channels in the Arab world. He also equated the suffering of the Palestinians with the loss of 6 million Jewish lives in the Holocaust. Worse yet, Obama's affirmation of the Arab propagandist idea that Israel was created as a response to the Holocaust greatly undermined its legitimacy as a state and ignored Jews' forced diaspora and Judaism's historical ties to the Middle East that predate all other religions.

Instead of seeing Israel as the oasis and model for democracy that it is in the Middle East, Obama views the country and its conflict with its neighbors as "this constant wound ... this constant sore, [that] does infect all of our foreign policy." It is as if the president has blinders on: in effect repeating the red herring that blames the atrocities of 9/11 on America's support of Israel, in July 2008, Obama stated:

"The lack of a resolution to this problem [the Israeli-Palestinian conflict] provides an excuse for anti-American militant jihadists to engage in inexcusable actions, so we have a national security interest in solving this."

Sound familiar? Former President Jimmy Carter, author of the canard, "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid," asserts, "lack of progress in the Middle East is one of the main causes for animosity, hatred and even violent acts against America." Both presidents conveniently neglect the fact that Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda, perpetrators of multiple attacks on America, never cared or linked any of their actions to the Palestinian cause until after 9/11. Islamic extremists are at war with the spread of Western culture, and the United States is the chief exporter of Western beliefs, so it is a pipe dream to assume that America can achieve détente with "anti-American militant jihadists" by, in effect, offering up Israel as a sacrificial lamb.

In his United Nations address, Obama called for Israel to establish "a viable, independent Palestinian state with contiguous territory that ends the occupation that began in 1967." Like Bush before him, Obama referred to the territories Israel won in the Six-Day War -- a preemptive defensive strike against armies from nine Arab countries massing on its borders -- as "occupied territory" but, unlike Bush, Obama's proposal has Israel retreating from its own land, returning to indefensible 1967 borders and trusting in the peaceful intentions of its neighbors. Bush didn't go nearly that far, citing in his 2004 "road map" that "in light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949."

Obama went even further, linking America's continuing support for the Jewish state's very security with his demand that it surrender the territory, stating, "The United States does Israel no favors when we fail to couple an unwavering commitment to its security with an insistence that Israel respect the legitimate claims and rights of the Palestinians." Of all the countries in history that have won wars, only Israel is being denied the fruits of its victory in 1967.

Obama appears to have adopted as policy the controversial agreement Carter reached with Hamas last year to establish a Palestinian state in the territories won by Israel 42 years ago. Additionally, and again in sharp contrast to the Bush Administration, which opposed a Palestinian national unity government, Obama has communicated his support, through Special Envoy to the Middle East George Mitchell, for the formation of a Hamas-Fatah coalition government. Obama has even gone so far as to request Congress amend the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 to enable the United States to continue to provide financial aid to any Palestinian government if the President determines that it is in the interests of national security.

As the United States, the European Union and other countries have classified Hamas as a terrorist organization, America under Obama would appear to have strange new bedfellows. Perhaps the president has forgotten that Hamas' charter (Article 7) advocates the killing of all Jews by Muslims, its leaders are Holocaust deniers, that his own FBI director, Robert Mueller, in testimony before the U.S. Senate, cited "the FBI's assessment that there is a ...threat of a coordinated terrorist attack in the U.S. from Palestinian terrorist organizations, such as Hamas," that Hamas has never accepted Israel's right to exist and is committed to "obliterating" it (preamble to Hamas charter), and that, according to Defense Secretary Robert Gates last January, Hamas and another terrorist organization, Hezbollah, have joined with Iran in fomenting "subversive activity" in Latin America. Or perhaps he believes America's stated policy of not negotiating with terrorists -- established by President Ronald Reagan in 1981 and reaffirmed by Obama as a presidential candidate in April 2008 -- should be scrapped.

The United States is proving to be a fair-weather ally, abandoning Israel in the face of an impending existential threat from a nuclear Iran. Obama's self-declared "evenhanded" approach to solving the Middle East "problem" would appear to consist of continually pressuring Israel to give up its secure borders while simultaneously enabling grave threats to Israel's very existence, refusing to engage the United States in taking action to halt Iran's nuclear weapons program. Last May, the president connected the dots thusly:

"To the extent that we can make peace... between the Palestinians and the Israelis, then I think it actually strengthens our hand in the international community in dealing with a potential Iranian threat."

This idealistic view misses the point -- Iran isn't interested in a two-state solution. In the words of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, "Israel must be wiped off the map," is a "stinking corpse," "is on its way to annihilation" and "has reached the end like a dead rat." Not a lot of room to negotiate there.

Nor is there room to negotiate Iran's nuclear weapons program. As Obama belatedly acknowledged on Sept. 26 regarding the country's newly disclosed nuclear power facility, "the size and configuration of this facility is inconsistent with a peaceful program." Iran desires global power and to spread the religious and political ideology of the Islamic Revolution, so what's left to negotiate? Access to nuclear energy for peaceful uses isn't on Iran's shopping list.

Iran and Syria rank as the leading state sponsors of terrorism, yet the president has removed a longstanding export ban on American technology to Syria, allowing the transfer of spare aircraft parts, information technology and telecommunications equipment, all material that could also benefit the air force of Syria's close ally, Iran. At the same time, Obama actually suspended the sale of military equipment to Israel -- holding up the shipment of Apache helicopters after Israel moved to defend its citizenry against daily Hamas-enabled rocket barrages earlier this year -- equipment necessary to safeguard Israel's security against overwhelming odds. Syria, an unrepentant state supporter of terrorism, was exempted by Obama from the longtime ban on the sale of sensitive, dual-use technologies. Yet, it is only Israel that stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States as America's most important and dependable ally in combating terrorism. Can the president see the difference?

Obama spoke eloquently to the United Nations about having compassion for "the Palestinian boy in Gaza who has ... no country to call his own." Where's his concern for the 3,000-year-old Jewish communities in Arab lands that were ethnically cleansed between 1948 and the early 1970s? Commencing with Arab League retaliation for the declaration of the State of Israel, 1 million Jews were forcibly removed from their homes and personal property, forfeiting 62,000 square miles of land (nearly five times Israel's 12,600 square miles) and assets worth approximately \$300 billion. What of their "right of return?"

By tying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to improving Muslim-U.S. relations, Obama has forced Israel into the position of answering for U.S. failures in the Muslim world and making the sacrifices necessary to mend that relationship. Obama has placed immense pressure on Israel to halt settlement building. Where is the equal pressure on the Palestinian Authority to ensure Israel's security? Obama's far greater pressure on the Israelis has emboldened Arab intransigence and moved the Middle East farther away from the prospect of peace.

Case in point: Last weekend, Mohamed ElBaradei, the Egyptian chairman of the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency, asserted that Israel's nuclear weapons program, not Iran's, is "the number one threat" to Middle East peace. In the words of Jeffrey Goldberg of *The Atlantic*, "Israel seeks Iran's recognition; Iran seeks Israel's destruction. So of course it is Israel that poses a threat." Obama's strong-arm policies toward Israel have created the opening Arab countries have long sought to solve "the Jewish problem" once and for all.

President Obama's new, "evenhanded" policy in the Middle East is anything but fair and balanced. His policies increasingly endanger and isolate Israel. At the United Nations, Obama forcefully stated that "the United States of America will never waiver in our efforts to stand up for the right of people everywhere to determine their own destiny," that is, of course, unless the people are Israelis. Without the Jewish state of Israel as a standard bearer for Western ideals of democracy in the Middle East, the world will be a far more dangerous place. Then it will be America's turn to stand alone as "Public Enemy No. 1" for Islamic fundamentalists. (Huffington Post Nov 10)