

5-MINUTE VIDEO SCRIPTS

ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST 101





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THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM

Presented by Dennis Prager



When I did my graduate studies at the Middle East Institute at Columbia University's School of International Affairs, I took many courses on the question of the Middle East conflict.

Semester after semester, we studied the Middle East conflict as if it was the most complex conflict in the world—when, in fact, it is probably the easiest conflict in the world to explain. It may be the hardest to *solve*, but it is the easiest to *explain*.

In a nutshell, it's this: one side wants the other side dead.

Israel wants to exist as a Jewish state and to live in peace. Israel also recognizes the right of Palestinians, to have their own state and to live in peace. The problem, however, is that most Palestinians and many other Muslims and Arabs, do not recognize the right of the Jewish state of Israel to exist.

This has been true since 1947, when the United Nations voted to divide the land called Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state.

The Jews accepted the United Nations partition, but no Arab or any other Muslim country accepted it.

When British rule ended on May 15, 1948, the armies of all the neighboring Arab states—Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Transjordan, and Egypt—attacked the one-day old state of Israel in order to destroy it.

But, to the world's surprise, the little Jewish state survived.

Then it happened again. In 1967, the dictator

of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, announced his plan, in his words, "to destroy Israel." He placed Egyptian troops on Israel's border, and armies of surrounding Arab countries were also mobilized to attack. However, Israel preemptively attacked Egypt and Syria. Israel did not attack Jordan, and begged Jordan's king not to join the war. But he did. And only because of that did Israel take control of Jordanian land, specifically the "West Bank" of the Jordan River.

Shortly after the war, the Arab states went to Khartoum, Sudan, and announced their famous "Three No's": No recognition, no peace, and no negotiations.

What was Israel supposed to do?

Well, one thing Israel did, a little more than a decade later in 1978, was to give the entire Sinai Peninsula—an area of land bigger than Israel itself, and with oil—back to Egypt, because Egypt, under new leadership, signed a peace agreement with Israel.

So, Israel gave land for the promise of peace with Egypt, and it has always been willing to do the same thing with the Palestinians. All the Palestinians have ever had to do is recognize Israel as a Jewish state and promise to live in peace with it.

But when Israel has proposed trading land for peace—as it did in 2000 when it agreed to give the Palestinians a sovereign state in more than 95% of the West Bank and all of Gaza—the Palestinian leadership rejected the offer, and instead responded by sending waves of suicide terrorists into Israel.

Meanwhile, Palestinian radio, television,

and school curricula remain filled with glorification of terrorists, demonization of Jews, and the daily repeated message that Israel should cease to exist.

So it's not hard to explain the Middle East dispute. One side wants the other dead. The motto of Hamas, the Palestinian rulers of Gaza, is: "We love death as much as the Jews love life."

There are twenty-two Arab states in the world—stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean. There is one Jewish state in the world. And it is about the size of New Jersey. In fact, tiny El Salvador is larger than Israel.

Finally, think about these two questions: If, tomorrow, Israel laid down its arms and announced, "We will fight no more," what would happen? And if the Arab countries around Israel laid down their arms and announced, "We will fight no more," what would happen?

In the first case, there would be an immediate destruction of the State of Israel, and the mass murder of its Jewish population. In the second case, there would be peace the next day.

As I said at the outset, it is a simple problem to describe: one side wants the other dead—and if it didn't, there would be peace.

Please remember this: There has never been a state in the geographic area known as Palestine that was not Jewish. Israel is the third Jewish state to exist in that area. There was never an Arab state, never a Palestinian state, never a Muslim or any other state.

That's the issue: why can't the one Jewish state the size of El Salvador be allowed to exist?

That is the Middle East problem.

I'm Dennis Prager.

ISRAEL'S LEGAL FOUNDING

Presented by Alan Dershowitz



Of all the countries that have come into existence in the last century, no country's birth certificate is more legitimate than that of Israel.

One reason is that many of the men who founded the country—Theodor Herzl, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, David Ben Gurion, Menachem Begin, and Yitzhak Shamir—were either lawyers, or had legal training. They were obsessed with “making it legal.”

Unlike almost every other country, lawyers, not generals, were the midwives of Israel's birth—or more accurately *re*-birth, since it had existed as an independent country twice before in history.

Step by legal step, Israel moved legally toward nationhood—from the Balfour Declaration in 1917, to the San Remo Agreement in 1920, to the League of Nations Resolution in 1922, to the Anglo-American Convention on Palestine in 1924, to the partition of land ordained by the United Nations in 1947 into a nation-state for the Jewish people and an Arab state.

Yet, immediately upon its lawful establishment in 1948 as the nation-state of the Jewish people, Israel was illegally attacked by all the surrounding Arab states, as well as by elements of the local Arab population. In defending its right to exist during that war, Israel lost 1% of its population, including many civilians and Holocaust survivors. It also lost some of the land assigned to it by the United Nations. It captured other land from the aggressors that was originally assigned to the Arab state. The end result of that war against Israel was

an armistice line that prevailed until 1967, when Israel was once again attacked by Jordan during Israel's war with Egypt and Syria.

Between 1948 and 1967, despite the armistice, Arab terrorists continued to infiltrate Israeli borders, and to injure and kill Israeli citizens. This was part of an official policy by the surrounding governments, and by leaders of local Palestinian groups. All of it was in violation—obvious violation of international law.

Following the establishment of Israel, a transfer of populations occurred. Several hundred thousand Arabs who fled from Israel during the War of Independence were not allowed to return. Some had chosen to leave, assured by their Arab leaders that the fledging country would not last a week. Others were forced to leave. At that time, approximately the same number of Jews were forced to leave Arab countries—another violation of International law—where they had lived for thousands of years. The difference was that Arab countries kept the Arabs who left Israel in refugee camps, where many of them still live more than half a century after leaving Israel. And Israel, on the other hand, fully integrated all the Jewish refugees from Arab countries into Israeli society, where many of their descendants now serve in the highest positions of Israeli life.

Israel's establishment as the nation-state of the Jewish people by entirely lawful means is quite remarkable for several reasons. First, there is no country in the world that is as surrounded by hostile enemies as is Israel.

It's been that way since 1948. Yet Israel sought the way of the pen rather than of the sword. It has needed the sword to survive. But its preference has always been for the pen—that is, for peaceful negotiations. Its peace treaty with Egypt in 1978, its peaceful abandonment of Gaza in 2005, and its many attempts to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians are examples.

Yet despite its entirely lawful origins, Israel is the only country in the world today whose origins—and therefore its very legitimacy—have been questioned by the General Assembly of the United Nations, by numerous member nations and by many organizations that claim the mantle of human rights and the rule of law.

Ironically, current attacks on Israel's legitimacy have taken the form of "lawfare"—the use of international law as a weapon. Any fair tribunal that judged Israel by universal standards would reject such attacks out of hand. But, alas, international courts, like the UN itself, have been packed by those bitterly antagonistic to the nation-state of the Jewish people. For example, the misnamed International Court of Justice refuses to acknowledge that Israel, a country that deals with terror attacks and the threats of terror attacks on a regular basis, has any special security needs.

As I've demonstrated, this phenomenon—questioning the very right of Israel to exist as the nation-state of the Jewish people—cannot be explained on legal grounds or on any other rational basis, for that matter.

So, then, how can this worldwide attack on Israel alone be explained? In only one way: It is pure bigotry. And there's a word for this bigotry: antisemitism.

If you have a better explanation for why the one country in the world whose right to exist is denied is also the one country that is the nation-state of the Jewish people, I ask you: what is it?

I'm Alan Dershowitz, professor of law at Harvard University, for Prager University.

A PALESTINIAN EXPLAINS HAMAS



Presented by Bassem Eid

To my Palestinian brothers and sisters, and to anyone who supports the Palestinian people, I implore you:

Please do not let Hamas brainwash you into thinking it has “achieved” anything on our behalf.

It hasn’t.

Not in the Gaza wars of 2021, 2014, 2012, or 2008.

Each one of these pointless conflicts has been a catastrophe, costing us dearly in lives and treasure.

Hamas is not a social justice movement, and it certainly does not care about the Palestinian people. It is a criminal gang that only cares about increasing its own power.

Israel is not the main cause of your suffering. *Hamas* is the main cause. Israel is not your jailer. *Hamas* is.

It was Hamas that led you into this most recent disaster.

They told you that the Israelis were evicting innocent Palestinians from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah area of East Jerusalem.

It is a lie.

The people living in those homes weren’t tenants—they were squatters. They hadn’t paid rent for decades. They told you that the Israelis planned to destroy the al-Aqsa

Mosque.

This, too, is a lie.

The mosque is still there. It will be there tomorrow. Say what you want about the Israelis, they are not stupid. They know that if they actually attempt to destroy al-Aqsa, it would lead to war with every Muslim country.

Yes, Hamas takes actions and thus looks strong next to its rival, the corrupt Fatah party. But the only action it takes is to lead us into chaos.

Hamas has no ability—and, in fact, no desire—to govern.

The water isn’t safe to drink; the power goes out for hours at a time; raw sewage washes up on your beaches. The Israelis are not responsible for these dismal failures—*Hamas* is. And everybody in Gaza knows it.

It is Hamas that steals the imported cement meant to build houses for you and uses it instead to build a massive network of tunnels from which it hopes to terrorize Israelis. It is Hamas that makes sure humanitarian aid meant for you is diverted to its favored elites who then sell it for a profit on the black market.

And it is Hamas that uses you as human shields, stationing rocket launchers and missile arsenals in your apartments, office buildings, schools, and even hospitals.

Israel uses rockets to defend its *people*. Hamas uses people to defend its *rockets*.

As for its war strategy, Hamas doesn't have one. It fires missiles at the most highly populated regions of Israel, with no specific target. Yet, I know from my sources in Gaza that as much as 25% of all rockets launched by Hamas in May 2021 crashed within Gaza. Fifty Gaza civilians were killed by these rockets, their deaths falsely blamed on Israel.

But you can stop believing its lies.

I'm Bassem Eid, for Prager University.

Are you aware of the fact that some of the Hamas missiles that Israeli Defense Forces failed to intercept ended up exploding in places like Jaffa, Abu Ghosh, and Lod—where Arab Israelis live? Palestinians living in Israel are as likely to be killed as Israelis themselves.

Hamas couldn't care less.

And what was gained?

Palestinians living in those four buildings in Sheikh Jarrah will still eventually be evicted, a fact that has been known to those families since they sold away the title to those buildings.

Think about the even greater number of Palestinians who are now homeless in Gaza because Hamas chose to hide weapons in residential buildings.

And when naïve American and European NGOs offer millions to "rebuild Gaza," who do you think will get that money? It won't be you—the people who really deserve it and need it—it will be the leaders of the Hamas gang and their friends who will add new rooms to their fancy villas, rather than rebuild homes, purchase coronavirus vaccines, or provide social services for their people.

And the peace you so deserve, the peace which could have been possible when Israel withdrew entirely from the Gaza Strip in 2005, will be even further out of reach. Hamas robbed you of that chance when it set up its military gang then. It's robbing you of the same chance now.

No matter how many Jews it manages to kill, Hamas will never be satisfied.

It will never stop lying.

WHY ISN'T THERE A PALESTINIAN STATE?



Presented by David Brog

If Israel just allowed the Palestinians to have a state of their own, there would be peace in the Middle East, right? That's what you hear from UN ambassadors, European diplomats, and most college professors.

But what if I told you that Israel has already offered the Palestinians a state of their own—and not just once, but on five separate occasions?

Don't believe me?

Let's review the record.

After the breakup of the Ottoman Empire following World War I, Britain took control of most of the Middle East, including the area that constitutes modern Israel.

Seventeen years later, in 1936, the Arabs rebelled against the British, and against their Jewish neighbors.

The British formed a task force—the Peel Commission—to study the cause of the rebellion. The commission concluded that the reason for the violence was that two peoples—Jews and Arabs—wanted to govern the same land.

The answer, the Peel Commission concluded, would be to create two independent states—one for the Jews, and one for the Arabs. A two-state solution. The suggested split was heavily in favor of the Arabs. The British offered them 80% of the disputed territory; the Jews, the remaining 20%. Yet, despite the tiny size of their proposed state, the Jews voted to accept this offer. But the Arabs rejected it, and resumed their violent rebellion. Rejection number one.

Ten years later, in 1947, the British asked the United Nations to find a new solution to the continuing tensions. Like the Peel Commission, the UN decided that the best way to resolve the conflict was to divide the land.

In November, 1947, the UN voted to create two states. Again, the Jews accepted the offer. And again, the Arabs rejected it, only this time, they did so by launching an all-out war. Rejection number two.

Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria joined the conflict. But they failed. Israel won the war, and got on with the business of building a new nation. Most of the land set aside by the UN for an Arab state—the West Bank and East Jerusalem—became occupied territory; occupied not by Israel, but by Jordan.

Twenty years later, in 1967, the Arabs, led this time by Egypt, and joined by Syria and Jordan, once again sought to destroy the Jewish state.

The 1967 conflict, known as the Six Day War, ended in a stunning victory for Israel. Jerusalem and the West Bank, as well as the area known as the Gaza Strip, fell into Israel's hands. The government split over what to do with this new territory. Half wanted to return the West Bank to Jordan and Gaza to Egypt, in exchange for peace. The other half wanted to give it to the region's Arabs, who had begun referring to themselves as the Palestinians, in the hope that they would ultimately build their own state there.

Neither initiative got very far. A few months later, the Arab League met in Sudan and issued its infamous "Three No's": No peace

with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel. Again, a two-state solution was dismissed by the Arabs, making this rejection number three.

In 2000, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak met at Camp David with Palestinian Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat to conclude a new two-state plan. Barak offered Arafat a Palestinian state in all of Gaza, and 94% of the West Bank, with East Jerusalem as its capital. But the Palestinian leader rejected the offer. In the words of US President Bill Clinton, Arafat was "here 14 days and said 'no' to everything."

Instead, the Palestinians launched a bloody wave of suicide bombings that killed over 1,000 Israelis and maimed thousands more —on buses, in wedding halls, and in pizza parlors. Rejection number four.

In 2008, Israel tried yet again. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert went even further than Ehud Barak had, expanding the peace offer to include additional land to sweeten the deal. Like his predecessor, the new Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas, turned the deal down. Rejection number five.

In between these last two Israeli offers, Israel unilaterally left Gaza, giving the Palestinians complete control there. Instead of developing this territory for the good of its citizens, the Palestinians turned Gaza into a terrorist base, from which they have fired thousands of rockets into Israel.

Each time Israel has agreed to a Palestinian state, the Palestinians have rejected the offer, often violently.

So, if you're interested in peace in the Middle East, maybe the answer is not to pressure Israel to make yet another offer of a state to the Palestinians. Maybe the answer is to pressure the Palestinians to finally accept the existence of a Jewish state.

I'm David Brog, Executive Director of the Maccabee Task Force, for Prager University.

ISRAEL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Presented by Stephen Harper



When I was Prime Minister of Canada, I was often asked this question: “Why do you support Israel?”

My response, in effect, was always the same: Why *wouldn't* I support Israel?

Why wouldn't I support a fellow democratic nation where open elections, free speech, and religious tolerance are the everyday norm? Why wouldn't I support a country with a vibrant free press and an independent judiciary? Why wouldn't I support a valuable trading partner and a wellspring of amazing technological innovation? Why wouldn't I support our most critical ally in the Middle East, and in the international struggle against terrorism?

In a rational world, in a world where simple common sense prevailed, the question “Why do you support Israel?” would be like asking “Why do you support Australia?,” or “-Canada?”

But we don't live in that rational, common-sense world. So the case for Israel has to be made over and over. I, for one, am happy to make it.

Let me start with this:

Every military action Israel has ever taken has been to protect itself. Israel is not an aggressor state; it's a defensive state. This has been true from its founding to this day.

As a fledgling nation in 1948, Israel was immediately attacked by its Arab neighbors. Their goal was not to contain the tiny new

country; it was to annihilate it. No nation came to Israel's aid—not the United States, not my country, Canada, not the United Kingdom—no one. They all thought Israel would lose. But it didn't lose. It won.

In 1967, Israel's neighbors again sought to utterly destroy the Jewish state, a nation that had then existed for two decades. Again, Israel prevailed. And it survived another all-out attack in 1973.

Those are the big wars, but I'm not sure there has been a single day in Israel's entire history when some act of terror has not been waged against it—inside or outside its borders.

There have been two bloody waves of terror, so-called “intifadas,” in the late 1980s and the early 2000s, when Israelis were blown up on buses, at pizza parlors, and celebrating weddings. There have been incursions from terror groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon. There have been thousands of rocket attacks from Hamas in the Gaza Strip—even after Israel completely withdrew from that territory in 2005.

In between the wars, in between the terror, Israel has sought peace with its neighbors. And it has achieved peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan. For others, however, every Israeli gesture for peace is met with incitement and violence.

I recount this history for one reason: Any nation that has endured what Israel has endured could easily have become a police state. But through it all, Israel has never abandoned its commitment to the rule of

law, to democracy, to tolerance. One-fifth of its citizens are Muslim. They enjoy the same rights as Jewish citizens. They occupy key positions in the nation's courts, press, and government. And they have their own parties representing them in the Knesset, Israel's parliament. To say that Muslims in Israel are the freest Muslims in the region is an understatement.

How about this as a human rights test: Prisoners in Israel, be they Jewish or Arab, are well-treated, well-fed, and have access to the best possible medical care. Parents and spouses of these prisoners know where they are and that they are safe. Who else in the region but Israel can make that claim?

Through all the wars and all the terror, Israel has survived and, especially in the last twenty years, it has thrived. It's known as "start-up nation," and with good reason. Key components of your cell phone and your laptop were designed in Israel. A drug or a medical device that has saved your life or the life of a loved one may have been developed in Israel. Yet there are leftist politicians, activists, artists, academics, and college students who devote their lives to denouncing Israel, calling for boycotts, demanding it be cut off from academic and professional societies.

Do they denounce the Palestinian leadership that hasn't held an election in well over a decade? Do they denounce the leadership of Hamas, who use women and children as human shields to protect their fighters?

No. They denounce free, vibrant, democratic, innovative Israel.

With all the brutal and violent regimes, not only in the Middle East, but around the world, how is one to explain singling out Israel for condemnation? Sadly, only one explanation fits: antisemitism.

Do these haters of Israel question the legitimacy of any other democratic nation? Of any nation, for that matter? Of course, the answer is "no." Somehow, they only manage to oppose the Jewish one.

The State of Israel has now existed for seventy years. It is one of the freest, most prosperous, most successful nations on earth.

Why do I support Israel? Why *wouldn't* I? Why *wouldn't anyone*?

I'm Stephen Harper, twenty-second Prime Minister of Canada, for Prager University.

ISRAEL: WHO ARE THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE?



Presented by Noa Tishby

When we think about indigenous people, we think about their deep roots and longstanding connections to the land they inhabit, often spanning centuries, or even millennia.

For example, the Chinese are from China, the Egyptians are from Egypt, and the Indians are from India. But what about the Jews? Well, the Jews are from Judea, the modern-day land of Israel, where Jewish heritage stretches back over 3,000 years.

And like other indigenous people, the connection to the Jewish homeland is an integral part of the Jewish identity. Judaism is not just a religion, but the Jews are also a people with strong ties to the place from which they originated, the ancient land of Israel.

The practice of Judaism is directly connected to that land. It celebrates holidays like the harvest time and has prayers that are tied to the seasons in the Land of Israel.

Seven crop species, including olives, grapes, wheat, and barley, are cherished in Jewish symbolism because they represent Israel, the "Land Flowing with Milk and Honey."

For centuries, Jews have been saying *L'Shana Haba'ah B'Yerushalayim*, or "Next Year in Jerusalem," never forgetting their connection to the Land of Israel.

But don't just take my word for it. Historians and archeologists also point to artifacts and historical writings that prove the connection between the land of Israel and the Jewish

people.

Hebrew inscriptions have been found on thousands of artifacts dating as far back as the 6th century BC. Hebrew is my mother's tongue. I can read these thousands-of-years-old artifacts. In addition to Jewish sources, an Egyptian document dating to approximately 1200 BC mentions a campaign in which an Egyptian ruler says that he has defeated Israel.

"Israel is no more," the document reads, probably the worst prophecy ever made about the Jews, since you know, I'm still here.

The Hebrew Bible is, of course, much more than a book of history, but there's a lot of verified history in it. The fact that Jerusalem is mentioned 669 times in its pages confirms that the city is central to the Jewish identity.

Politically, the Land of Israel swapped hands for thousands of years, but it was never anything other than a sovereign Jewish state.

Let me say that again: the only sovereign state that ever existed in the Land of Israel—forever—is a Jewish state.

The Jewish people have formed three nation-states in the Land of Israel throughout history. The first was the First Commonwealth, ruled by the House of David, and it lasted for more than four centuries. Israel was united by King David, and Jerusalem was the capital of that Jewish state. The First Temple, built by King

Solomon, was a huge source of Jewish pride.

Then the Babylonians conquered the land, exiling most of the Jewish residents to Babylon. In 539 BC, Persia's King Cyrus conquered Babylon and issued the Cyrus Decree, allowing the Jews to return to Israel, and many did. They rebuilt the country, including the Second Temple in Jerusalem on the site of the destroyed First Temple. Its Western Wall is still standing and today it is one of the holiest sites of the Jewish people.

The second Jewish state is often referred to as the Second Commonwealth, later called the Kingdom of Judea, born from the Maccabean revolt against the Greeks.—hello Hanukkah!

It was a time of independence, but it didn't last. In 70 AD the Romans conquered Jerusalem and burned down the Temple, exiling most of the Jewish population, and giving the land a new name—Palestina—in order to disconnect the relationship between the Jewish people and their homeland.

After the destruction of the Second Temple, the land of Israel changed hands many times. From the Romans, the Byzantines, the Caliphate, the Crusaders, the Mamluks, the Ottomans, and the British Empire.

But it wasn't until the nineteenth century that the Jewish people's longing to return to their homeland became an existential need because of the rise of murderous antisemitism. A movement was born: Zionism—the Jewish people's right to have a state again. Zion, by the way, is just another name for Jerusalem, mentioned in the Bible over a hundred times. Zionism is a movement for Jewish self-determination in their ancestral land, in a Jewish—not an exclusively Jewish—, state.

Initially, locals welcomed the new Jewish immigrants, like my great-grandparents, who brought prosperity to the land with new cities and agricultural villages, called *kibbutzim*. The people they encountered there included the community of Jews who had never left Israel, known as the Old Yishuv.

The Israeli Declaration of Independence ensures equality of social and political rights to all its citizens regardless of religion, race, or sex; guaranteeing freedom of religion, conscience, language, education, and culture; and pledging to safeguard the holy places of all religions. Which is what Israel does.

Israel doesn't deny anyone else's identity. Of course, there have always been people of non-Jewish identity in the land, including modern Arab Palestinians, who also have ties to the place that Jews celebrate as the Land of Israel and that Christians call the Holy Land.

But if you support indigenous peoples' rights, you should also be a Zionist, and understand that the Jews are the indigenous people of the Land of Israel, who never really left.

I'm Noa Tishby, author of *Israel: A Simple Guide to the Most Misunderstood Country on Earth*, for Prager University.

WHO WANTS PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST?



Presented by Sarah Idan

There's an old saying: Man plans and God laughs. That couldn't be more true.

My plan was simple enough. Go to the Miss Universe contest as Miss Iraq and represent Iraqi women on the world stage.

My country hadn't sent anyone to the competition for forty-five years, so my being there was a big deal.

The Miss Universe contest brings women together from all over the world—it's a true celebration of diversity. The world is made up of all kinds of people, and I like that.

So, when I met Miss Israel, I said, "Let's take a picture so our people can see we don't have a problem, and we're actually ambassadors for peace."

We took a photo together and I shared it on Instagram. I captioned it "Peace and Love from Miss Iraq and Miss Israel."

And that was the end of life as I knew it.

Overnight, everything changed. The Miss Iraq organization—under pressure from the Iraqi government—threatened to strip me of my title if I didn't immediately take down the photo.

But that was nothing compared to the barrage of death threats I received. And not only was I getting them, so was my family.

You see, Iraq doesn't recognize Israel as a legitimate nation-state. It never has.

There are no diplomatic relations between the countries.

My selfie with Miss Israel was meant to be a gesture of goodwill—the start of something positive.

But many Iraqis and other Arabs took it as a slap in the face. They thought I was betraying the Palestinians, and by extension, all Arabs and Muslims.

As bad as it was for me, it was worse for my family, who were living in Iraq and, suddenly, in very real danger. To protect them, I did what the Miss Iraq mission told me to do. I issued a statement saying I do not support the Israeli government or its policies.

Then, with as much grace as I could muster, I put a smile on my face and competed. I didn't talk to the media. I didn't talk to anyone.

But the hatred didn't stop. There was no way I could safely go back to Iraq and no way my family could stay there. Thank God, they managed to get safely out of the country. To this day, no one in my family could return to Iraq. All because I smiled next to an Israeli.

I went to the Miss Universe pageant as a musician and a model.

I left conflicted and confused. What had I done that was so terrible? Why so much hate?

During the pageant, my intentions were never

political. I just wanted to meet people and make friends. But my experience showed me that I had to become political. But I would do it in my own way.

I would bring my photo with Miss Israel to life.

So I went to Israel, even though my Arab friends advised me not to go. They told me it would be dangerous and that it would ruin my future, because they believed Israelis don't like Arabs, and the Arabs would hate me even more for going.

Well, the second part certainly turned out to be true.

As for the Israelis, they could not have been more welcoming. But here's what surprised me: the Israelis were not just Jews. They were Muslims, Christians, and others, too.

I'm not the first person to say this, but if you want to make an informed judgment about Israel, go there. I've never been in a more diverse country—culturally, ethnically, and intellectually.

It will quickly become clear to you—as it did to me—that Israelis just want to live in peace. They don't care about your ethnicity or religion, as long as you don't seek to hurt them.

Sadly, there is no chance for coexistence while extremists, like Hamas and even other nations, including the country where I was born, don't believe in Israel's right to exist.

They don't want a Jewish state. And if that means eradicating every Jew in Israel, so be it. They don't want peace *with* Israel. They want peace *without* Israel.

But the reality is Israel is here to stay.

The idea that any anti-Israel group or nation can destroy it is a sick, twisted fantasy.

When certain groups push this evil idea, it achieves nothing. Well, that's not quite true. It continues the cycle of antisemitism.

Tragically, that's just what these extremists want.

Too many people don't put in the time and effort to research the hateful propaganda they're being fed. These people are much easier to control than the people who think for themselves.

That's the truth.

Telling the truth and trying to bring people together regardless of their ethnicity, religion, or beliefs is my new plan. That's the best way to bring humanity forward.

I'm Sarah Idan, for Prager University.

ARAB, ISRAELI, AND PROUD

Presented by Yoseph Haddad



The mission was straightforward: Rescue comrades coming under heavy anti-tank fire.

But now the sun was up. And our cover was blown. We were totally exposed.

I felt a heavy whoosh of air.

Then I felt nothing. Just a ringing in my ears.

I was on the ground. I could see through my thigh. Even worse, I couldn't see my foot.

It was gone.

When I awoke in the hospital, it took every ounce of courage I had to look down my leg.

Somehow. Some way. My foot was there. The doctors had managed to re-attach it. We have the best surgeons.

Unfortunately, they get a lot of practice at this sort of thing.

That's life in Israel. That's life as an Israeli soldier. And that's what I am.

I'm also an Arab. Sometimes people say to me, "Yoseph, how could you fight for the IDF?" I say, "It's simple. It's not the *Jewish* Defense Forces. It's the *Israeli* Defense Forces. And I'm an Israeli.

Are you surprised? If so, I don't blame you. You probably get your news about Israel from...well, the media. They amplify extremists and sell conflict, because conflict sells; conciliation doesn't.

Stereotypes make for simple stories. Too simple. So, let's examine some.

Let's take the simplest: That there are Israelis. And there are Palestinians. And that each side defines itself against the other.

Turns out that fundamental division is false. According to a poll in 2020, only 7% of Arabs living in Israel self-identify as "Palestinian." By contrast, 74% consider themselves either Israeli-Arab—or just plain Israeli.

This is typical. So, here are a few.

In America, given their numbers, Jews are disproportionately represented in the medical professions. No surprise.

But did you know this?

In Israel, *Arabs* are disproportionately represented in the medical professions. Arabs comprise 20% of Israel's population—but 30% of its physicians and 35% of its pharmacists.

You've probably heard the stereotype that Jews are bankers. This suggests that they control things behind the scenes. So, you may be surprised to learn that the head of the biggest bank in Israel is an Arab.

Worse than the stereotypes are the lies. The worst lie is this: Israel is an "apartheid state."

In an apartheid state, some can vote, and some cannot. But in Israel, Arabs don't just vote—they sometimes call the shots. In 2021, as an article in *Al-Monitor* put it, "for

the first time in Israel's 73-year history, Arab [Parliament] members will likely have the final say on whether a government is formed and even who will head such a government."

In an apartheid state, some get an education, and some don't. But in Israel, Arab enrollment in higher education is exploding—more than doubling between 2008 and 2018. And Israeli Arab-Christians actually outpace Israeli Jews in higher education degrees relative to population.

You probably don't know these facts because the media prefer to demonize Israel rather than report about it fairly.

That may never change, but whether or not they report it, Israel is experiencing an important generational shift.

Our parents' and grandparents' generations witnessed major wars—in 1948, 1967, and 1973. My generation and the generation after me haven't seen such conflicts. But we have all grown up under the shadow of terrorist violence—from suicide bombers to Hamas rocket attacks.

And terrorists don't discriminate between Jews and Arabs.

When you come face to face with this reality—when you have face-to-face conversations— you realize that everyone within the borders of Israel confronts the same threats. And then you can begin to understand that the real story isn't two groups—Jews and Arabs—locked in an eternal conflict, but two parts of a nation coming together in a process I call "Israelization."

A silent, but ever-growing majority of citizens simply want to live in peace with their neighbors—the ones across the street, and the ones on the other side of national borders.

Like I said, extremist voices get amplified. The media likes it that way. It generates clicks, sells papers, and boosts TV ratings. Unfortunately, stories of good people living and working side-by-side without strife don't

do any of those things.

But that doesn't make those stories less true, or those people any less real.

The real peace process happens one person at a time. With each passing year, I see that process expanding.

It won't be smooth, because nothing in this part of the world goes smoothly.

But no one is going to stop it.

Just like no one is going to stop me from defending my country, Israel.

I'm Yoseph Haddad, founder of Together: Vouch for Each Other, for Prager University.

BORN TO HATE JEWS

Presented by Kasim Hafeez



I was born to hate Jews. It was part of my life. I never questioned it. I was not born in Iran or Syria. I was born in England. My parents moved there from Pakistan. Theirs was the typical immigrant story: Move to the West in the hope of making a better life for themselves and their children.

We were a devout Muslim family, but not extremist or radical in any way. We only wished the best for everyone—everyone except the Jews. The Jews, we believed, were aliens living in stolen Muslim land, occupiers who were engaged in a genocide against the Palestinian people. Our hatred, therefore, was justified and righteous. And it made me and my friends vulnerable to the arguments of radical extremists. If the Jews were as evil as we had always believed, mustn't those who support them—Christians, Americans, and others in the West—be just as evil?

Beginning in the 1990s, speakers and teachers at mosques and in schools began to endlessly repeat this theme: We were not Western. We were not British. We were Muslims, first and only. Our loyalty was to our religion and to our fellow Muslims. We owed nothing to the Western nations that welcomed us. As Westerners, they were our enemies.

All of this had its desired effect. At least, it did on me. It changed the way that I saw the world. I began to see the suffering of Muslims, including in Britain, as the fault of Western imperialism. The West was at war with us, and the Jews controlled the West. My experience at university in Britain only

enhanced my increasingly radical beliefs. Hating Israel was a badge of honor. Stage an anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian rally, and you were sure to draw a large, approving crowd.

While at university, I decided the protests and propaganda against Israel were not enough. True jihad demanded violence. So, I made plans to join the real fight. I would leave college and join a terrorist training camp in Pakistan. But, fortunately for me, fate intervened—in a bookstore.

I came across a book called *The Case for Israel*, by Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz. The case for Israel? What case could there be? The title itself made me furious, and I began to read the pages almost as an act of defiance. How ill-informed, how stupid, could this guy be to defend the indefensible? Well, he was a Jew. That had to be the answer. Still, I read. And what I read challenged all of my dogmas about Israel and the Jews: I read that it wasn't Israel that created the Palestinian refugee crisis—it was the Arab countries, the United Nations, and the corrupt Palestinian leadership. I read that Jews didn't exploit the Holocaust to create the state of Israel—the movement to create a modern Jewish state dated back to the nineteenth century, and ultimately to the beginnings of the Jewish people almost 4,000 years ago. And I read that Israel is not engaged in genocide against the Palestinians. On the contrary—the Palestinian population has actually doubled in just twenty years.

All this did was make me angrier. I needed to prove Dershowitz wrong, to see with my own

was. So I bought a plane ticket. I would travel to Israel, the home of my enemy. And that's when everything changed. Everything.

What I saw with my own eyes was even more challenging than what Dershowitz had written. Instead of apartheid, I saw Muslims, Christians, and Jews coexisting. Instead of hate, I saw acceptance, and even compassion. I saw a raucous, modern, liberal democracy—full of flaws, certainly—but fundamentally decent. I saw a country that wanted nothing more than to live in peace with its neighbors. I saw my hatred melting before my eyes. I knew right then what I had to do.

Too many people on this planet are consumed with the same hatred that consumed me. They have been taught to despise the Jewish state—many Muslims by their religion; many others by their college professors or student groups.

So here is my challenge to anyone who feels this way: do what I did—seek out the truth for yourself. If the truth can change me, it can change anyone.

I'm Kasim Hafeez, for Prager University.

WHY ARE THERE STILL PALESTINIAN REFUGEES?



Presented by Dumisani Washington

Visit Israel, and you'll be startled by how many colors you'll see. I don't mean the colors of the buildings or landscape; I mean the colors of the people—black, white, olive, brown, and everything in between. Israel is a true United Nations. That's because Israel is a nation of refugees—from everywhere.

And more than half of them are from—are you ready?—Arab countries.

Over 850,000 Jews were expelled or fled from the Middle East and North Africa following the Arab countries' attack on Israel when it gained its independence in 1948.

For over 2,000 years, these Jews had lived in the Arab countries of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq—and in the Muslim, but non-Arab, countries, such as Turkey and Iran. Today, they form over half of Israel's Jewish population.

Many of these Jews from Middle Eastern lands look, well, just like other people from Middle Eastern lands—of darker complexion with dark hair. Other Jews migrated from North Africa. So, why is their story so unfamiliar to most people?

The most important reason is that they didn't remain refugees for long. But refugees they most certainly were: the vast majority forced to leave their homes, possessions, and businesses behind. In other words, they came to Israel with nothing.

Some 650,000 of the Jews forced to flee North Africa and the Middle East became

citizens of Israel. The other 200,000 fled to the United States and other Western countries.

To give you an idea of how few Jews remain in Arab countries, consider these numbers: There were 150,000 Jews in Iraq in 1948; today there are less than ten. There were 140,000 Jews in Algeria; today there are less than fifty. There were 75,000 Jews in Egypt; today less than twenty. The pattern is the same across North Africa and the Middle East.

Now contrast these forgotten Jewish refugees with the most celebrated refugees in the world—the Palestinians. How is it that the Jewish refugees are not even an afterthought, but the Palestinians are the longest lasting, most lavishly supported refugee population in the history of the world?

The answer is purely political.

After Israel gained its independence in May of 1948, the surrounding Arab nations attacked the new Jewish state. As a result, about 700,000 Arabs living in Israel fled. Many left because of the war, and many did because they were told by Arab leaders to leave the Jewish areas. The idea was that they would return once the Jews and their state had been destroyed.

Khalid al Azm, the Syrian prime minister in 1948-49, admitted this Arab role in persuading Palestinians to leave. In his memoirs, he wrote: "Since 1948, we have been demanding the return of the refugees

to their homes. But we ourselves are the ones who encouraged them to leave.” That’s how the Arab-, later re-named Palestinian-, refugee crisis was created.

In 1949 the United Nations formed UNRWA –the United Nations Relief & Works Agency for the Palestinian refugees–the largest and only long-term UN agency that was ever formed to deal with just one group of refugees. Seventy years later, it still exists, and still calls the Palestinians, and their children, and their grandchildren, “refugees.” It has an annual budget of over a billion dollars, funded mostly by the US and the European Union.

How much did the Jewish refugees who were expelled from the Middle East and North Africa receive from the UN? How much did Israel receive to help toward their resettlement? How much does it receive today?

The answer to all three questions is the same: Zero.

So, the next time you hear someone talk about the Palestinian refugees, ask them why they never talk about the Jewish refugees. And the next time you hear people talk about Israel being settled by Europeans, ask them if they have ever seen an actual picture of Israelis. In color.

I’m Dumisani Washington, of Christians United for Israel, for Prager University.

ISRAEL: THE WORLD'S MOST MORAL ARMY



Presented by Col. Richard Kemp

There are two views of the Israeli military—what you hear in most of the media, and the truth. I'm going to tell you the truth.

I was the commander of British forces in Afghanistan. I have fought in combat zones around the world, including Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Macedonia, and Iraq. I was also present throughout the conflict in Gaza in 2014.

Based on my experience and on my observations: the Israel Defense Forces, the IDF, does more to safeguard the rights of civilians in a combat zone than any other army in the history of warfare.

Why is this so?

Firstly, Israel is a decent country, with Western values, run on democratic principles. Israel has no more interest in war than Belgium does. In fact, Israel has never started a war. The only reason it ever goes to war is to defend itself. And it has to defend itself because, unlike Belgium, it is surrounded by countries and armed groups that want to destroy it.

Secondly, Judaism, with its unsurpassed moral standards, remains a major influence on the citizens of Israel. I say this as a non-Jew.

Thirdly, the army is composed overwhelmingly of citizen-soldiers.

Israel is a small country, with a small professional army. To fight a war, it depends on its conscripts and its reservists. These

are ordinary citizens, from professors to plumbers, called upon to defend their homes. They don't want to be fighting, and they don't want to harm others.

Nowhere was the essential morality and decency of the IDF more evident than in the Gaza war of 2014. If ever there was a purely defensive war, this was it.

The war was started by Hamas, the terror organization, designated as such by the US State Department, that runs the Gaza Strip. In the first six months of 2014, Hamas launched hundreds of rockets at Israeli civilians.

After repeated warnings from Israel to stop, the Israeli Air Force finally conducted precision strikes to halt the rocket-fire. And the IDF advanced into Gaza to destroy a network of terror tunnels that Hamas had constructed to attack Israeli communities near the Gaza border.

The IDF took extraordinary measures to give Gaza civilians notice of targeted areas, dropping millions of leaflets, broadcasting radio messages, sending texts and making tens of thousands of phone calls. Let me repeat that: The Israelis called Gazans on their cell phones and told them to leave their residences and move to safety. Never in the history of warfare has an army phoned its enemy and told them where they are going to drop their bombs.

Many IDF missions that could have taken out Hamas military capabilities were aborted to prevent civilian casualties, increasing the risk

to Israeli citizens and soldiers.

Despite all of this, of course innocent civilians were killed. Every war is chaotic and confusing, and mistakes are frequent. But mistakes are not war crimes.

Hamas, on the other hand, committed war crimes as official government policy.

Hamas deliberately positioned its military assets among the civilian population, hiding weapons in schools and hospitals, and placing rocket launchers alongside apartment buildings, then forced those civilians to stay in areas they knew would be attacked. They also instructed their people to report the lie that every Gazan killed was a civilian, even if they were actually fighters.

And if there were no civilian deaths, Hamas made them up! Numerous internet sites show Palestinians elaborately staging sniper victims and smashed ambulances, among other phony horrors. It's so common there's even a term for it—Pallywood—as in Palestinian Hollywood.

Ironically, it's the leaders of Hamas themselves who best understand the extraordinary measures the IDF will take to protect innocent civilians. They take full advantage of Israel's decency and adherence to the laws of war.

No army takes such risks in order to protect civilians as the Israeli army does. I say this as a professional soldier. I say it because it's true. And people who care about truth should know it.

I'm Col. Richard Kemp, for Prager University.

SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT ISRAEL?



Presented by Robert C. O'Brien

From 2019 to 2021, I was the National Security Advisor to the President of the United States. During those two years, I was preoccupied with one thing: assisting the president with keeping our nation safe.

Anyone who wants to do that spends a lot of time thinking about Israel—for the simple reason that the Jewish state is vital to America's security.

Israel is not much bigger than New Jersey. But because of where it's located, its history, and the leadership it plays in technology, Israel plays an outsized role in international politics.

Israel is located in one of the toughest neighborhoods in the world—the Middle East. If World War III ever happens, it is as likely to start there as anywhere.

Iran, for example, is relentlessly seeking to develop nuclear weapons. It hasn't been subtle about what it intends to do with them: destroy Israel. Former Iranian President Rafsanjani even called Israel "a one-bomb country," referring to the damage one nuclear device would do to the geographically small nation.

Jerusalem isn't going to sit back and allow Tehran to achieve its nuclear ambitions, and neither should the United States. You don't have to be a national security expert to understand why. First, Israel is a close ally. Second, Iranian nukes would cause chaos in the world. I'm often asked: why do we give Israel \$4 billion a year in security assistance when it already has such a strong military?

There are two answers to that question: First, Israel has such a strong military, in part, because we are Israel's partner. Second, our investment in Israel's defense is an investment in our own security.

If we don't want the Middle East's problems like Iranian aggression to come here, we need to stop Iran there. Israel is helping us hold that line.

Israel's modern history has been one of constant conflict with its neighbors. And every one of those conflicts started with an attack on Israel. The country has been in three major wars for its survival: the Arab-Israeli War in 1948, the Six Day War in 1967, and the Yom Kippur War in 1973.

Israel has prevailed in every instance, in no small part because the US has stood by the Jewish state. During both Republican and Democratic administrations, America has backed up Israel with financial aid and military equipment. But it's Israel that has paid the heaviest price—the loss of her sons and daughters defending their freedom.

Even today, Israel is under the threat of constant rocket barrage from terrorists in places like Gaza and Lebanon.

Then, there's Israel's heritage. It is the birthplace of both Judaism and Christianity and, therefore, the birthplace of Western Civilization. We're talking the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and the Apostles. That's one reason why hundreds of thousands of Americans visit Israel every year—to connect with their

deepest roots.

Even if America had no security interest in Israel, Israel's history would be reason alone to want to keep it safe. To be cut off from the treasures of our cultural past is unthinkable. Israel protects those treasures, and we protect Israel.

There are also treasures of the modern kind. Israel is known as the "start-up nation," because of its innovations in computers, medicine, and other sciences. If there is a rival to Silicon Valley, it's Tel Aviv. The technology that you rely on every day—from your desktop computer to your mobile phone—was developed or enhanced in Israel.

In our strategic competition with China, the advantage of having Israel in our corner cannot be overstated.

I've made a rational case for why it's in our national interest to back the Jewish state, so let me now make a personal one. Israel holds a special place in my heart.

I love the country's raucous democracy and free press. I admire its mix of modern and traditional life—from the vibrancy of Tel Aviv to the quiet of Jerusalem on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. I am awed by walking on the stones where Jesus once tread. I enjoy the falafel shops and the humus and the honeycombed streets of the Old City. Most of all, I am impressed by the grit, energy, and *joie de vivre* of the Israeli people. They live

under a constant threat of terrorism, but they keep moving forward.

I've traveled to over seventy-five countries, and have enjoyed my time in most of them. But they all feel foreign. Israel feels like home. That might sound strange—but only to people who haven't been there.

Let me make one final argument on Israel's behalf.

Israel *is*.

We don't question the legitimacy of Belgium or Mozambique or Thailand or any other country in the world. So, why is Israel's legitimacy questioned? From the UN to college campuses, activists deny Israel's right to exist.

Israel was an ancient country. It now thrives as a modern democracy. It was established by the United Nations in 1947. Nine million people live there—Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Israel is, and always will be.

I'm Robert O'Brien, for Prager University.

ZIONISM: WHY ALL THE CONTROVERSY?



Presented by CJ Pearson

What is Zionism?

It's certainly a word that provokes deep emotions—both from its supporters and its opponents.

Is it a political movement?

Is it a philosophy?

Is it something new?

Or is it something old?

Actually, it's all of these things.

But to summarize it in one sentence, Zionism is the belief that the Jewish people have a right to a homeland, and that homeland is the Land of Israel, where the Jewish people came into being.

This goes back to the most influential book ever written, the Bible.

The book that brought the Ten Commandments to the world is the same book that brought Zionism to the world.

The word "Zion," by the way, appears in the Bible as a synonym or nickname for both Jerusalem and Israel. It's not more complicated than that.

In the book of Genesis, God makes an extraordinary promise to the first Jew, Abraham: "I assign the land in which you sojourn to you and your offspring to come... as an everlasting possession."

And for 3,000 years, Jews have held fast to that possession.

In fact, over those three millennia, there have only been three independent states on that land, and they have all been Jewish states.

But, to put it mildly, it has not been an easy road.

The Romans thought they had finally kicked the Jews out in 70 AD when they destroyed the Great Temple, and leveled Jerusalem to the ground. To finish the job, they even changed the name of the area to "Palestine."

But it didn't work.

The Jews' connection to their land could not be broken.

Even as the Jews were scattered throughout the world, their prayers were always directed toward Israel. So central to Jewish identity is Israel that the Bible invokes a curse against a Jew who doesn't acknowledge it: "If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand become paralyzed, and may my tongue lose its ability to speak."

Despite their long exile, there was always a Jewish presence in the Holy Land. Often desperately poor, this community was sustained by the charitable contributions of Jews living outside of Israel.

This kind of medieval Zionism lasted for hundreds of years.

Zionism as a modern political movement

emerged in the late nineteenth century under the leadership of a remarkable Hungarian Jew, Theodor Herzl. A journalist and playwright, Herzl was shocked to his core when he witnessed the infamous Dreyfus Trial in Paris in 1894. Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish French army officer, was framed for the crime of treason, a crime he obviously didn't commit. The trial, which was an international sensation, was the tip of an iceberg of Jew-hatred that had gripped much of Europe. If cultured Europe couldn't provide safety for its Jews, Herzl concluded, the situation was hopeless.

Chaim Weizmann, a protégé of Herzl's, and later the first president of Israel, summed up the situation this way: "[For the Jews] the world is divided into places where they cannot live, and places where they cannot enter."

Herzl came to believe that there was only one answer for the Jews: to set up their own state where they could control their own destiny. They needed to return to Israel.

Slowly, but steadily, Jews throughout Europe migrated there. They started farms and carved cities like Tel Aviv out of the desert landscape. Herzl himself died before he could see these efforts bear fruit. But the momentum was there. Others continued what he had started.

It was the rise of Nazism, the outbreak of World War II, and the Holocaust, that made Zionism an existential issue. On November 29, 1947, the prayers of generations of Jews were finally answered. The United Nations voted to make Israel a state again, making the Jews the only people in history to have regained their homeland after having been exiled from it.

Israel has had to fight three major wars, numerous minor ones, and endure endless terror attacks to hang on to it.

But hang on to it they have. Israel is now a nation of nearly ten million people, one-fifth of whom are not even Jewish. Yet many still refuse to accept it.

Consider this: At the same time Israel became a state, so did Pakistan. But unlike Israel, Pakistan was a brand-new state, carved out of India. There was no ancient connection to the land of Pakistan. There was no "Pakistanism" that was the equivalent of Zionism. Pakistan was simply wrenched out of India because the Muslims in that area demanded it. Millions of Hindus who lived there were forcibly expelled. Outside of India, few objected even at the time. And today no one questions Pakistan's right to exist as a nation-state.

So why all the controversy? Why all the hatred directed toward Israel and the idea that the Jews have claim to their ancient land—the Zionist idea?

The answer to that question is as old as the Jewish people.

It's called antisemitism. It takes many forms. Anti-Zionism is just one of them.

At its core, it's a hatred of all things Western.

How else do you explain this coincidence? Those who most hate Zionism are the same people who most hate the United States.

I'm CJ Pearson, for Prager University.

ISRAEL: WHAT WOULD YOU DO?



Presented by David Brog

“What would you do?” That can be a very useful question. It can be both clarifying and humbling when evaluating complex situations.

To illustrate this, let’s apply it to a real-world example.

In May 2021, Israel and Hamas fought a brief war in Gaza.

Nearly everyone knows that Hamas started the conflict. Firing rockets into a neighboring country is the very definition of “aggression.”

And Israel responded as any country under attack would. Yet many blamed Israel, not Hamas, for the violence.

People are certainly entitled to criticize the Jewish state—even when it defends itself. But before you do so, ask yourself a question, the one I posed at the opening.

What would you do?

So, congratulations! You have just been made Prime Minister of Israel. And Mr. (or Madam) Prime Minister, we’ve got a problem.

Hamas is firing hundreds of rockets at our cities. Yes, our missile defense system is stopping most of these from hitting their targets. But many are getting through.

In recent days, Hamas missiles killed an Arab-Israeli citizen and his daughter, as well as a five-year-old Jewish boy.

Millions of your people have been forced into

bomb shelters.

The economy is shut down. Your citizens—Jews and Muslims alike—are terrified and demanding action.

What are you going to do?

You have two options:

Option 1:

Do nothing.

Israel is stronger than Hamas. And, therefore, people who dislike Israel will portray you as a bully if you respond. This leads to a lot of bad press. So, to avoid a PR disaster, tell your citizens to stay in their bomb shelters and hope that Hamas will run out of missiles soon; or...

Option 2:

Defend yourself.

Use your powerful military to stop the missile fire so that your people can go back to their lives. If you choose to defend yourself, then you’re doing what Israel does. The first responsibility of every government is to keep its citizens safe from invasion, violence, and terror.

So, you’ve given the order to stop the missile fire. But wait. There’s a big problem. Hamas operates in the heart of Gaza’s densely populated cities. It stores its missiles in apartment buildings, hospitals, and schools. And it fires its missiles from residential

neighborhoods.

They don't care that using civilians as human shields like this is a war crime.

So stopping the missile fire will require you to strike Hamas in the heart of Gaza's population centers. If you want to protect your citizens, you risk harming Palestinian civilians.

What are you going to do? You have two options: Option 1: Do nothing.

The terrorists have outsmarted you by using your own morality against you; you're trapped by your own decency.

Tell your citizens to stay in their bomb shelters and hope that Hamas will run out of missiles soon; or...

Option 2: Do everything possible to stop the Hamas missiles while protecting Palestinian civilians. How?

Before you conduct an operation, drop thousands of leaflets warning that you're coming. Create safe corridors for civilians to flee. And before you strike a particular building, warn every person in that building that you're coming. Call and text their cell phones. And then make sure they've actually left. If you choose option 2, you're doing what Israel does.

Yes, you're giving up the element of surprise. Yes, the terrorists will most likely take their missiles and flee along with the civilians. And yes, by letting the terrorists escape to fight another day you're endangering your own people. But this is what Israel insists upon doing in order to protect Palestinians. Unfortunately, not every country is as moral as Israel. When countries are stronger than their adversaries, they actually have a third option. Indiscriminate bombing.

So you could simply bomb Gaza without trying to limit civilian casualties. That would provide maximum protection to your soldiers and civilians and crush Hamas for the foreseeable future.

That's what Russia basically did to Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, when that Muslim province sought independence in the 1990s. That's what Hamas tries to do when it fires thousands of missiles at Israeli cities.

But that choice is immoral. Israel has never, and will never, do something like this. Nor should you, Mr. or Madam Prime Minister. Those who make light of Hamas rockets have clearly never experienced the terror of running to bomb shelters, hearing bombs bursting around you, and then frantically calling loved ones to see if they're OK.

All nations have not only a right, but an obligation, to defend their citizens from such attacks. And the best of these nations do so while taking difficult and dangerous steps to protect innocent civilians on the other side. This is what Israel does. I hope you'd do the same. Because the other options—such as behaving like Hamas—are simply not acceptable.

I'm David Brog, Executive Director of the Maccabee Task Force, for Prager University.

DOES ISRAEL OCCUPY THE WEST BANK?



Presented by Eugene Kontorovich

How many times have you heard that Israel “occupies” the West Bank?

Probably more times than you can count.

But have you ever asked yourself whether it’s true? Or even what it means?

Let’s do so now in the most objective way possible; that is, in the way that all territorial questions everywhere else in the world are resolved.

To do this, we must look at the law.

But first, we need a little history.

Up until 100 years ago, the areas now called Israel, the West Bank, Gaza, and all the countries around them—were part of the Ottoman Empire, which ruled over a vast area and many peoples. Neither the Jews nor those Arabs we now call Palestinians had a state, though the Jews had a nationalist movement calling for one.

Everything changed after World War I. The Ottomans fought on the losing side with Germany. By the end of the war in 1918, their empire had disintegrated, leaving the British and French in control of much of its territory.

In earlier times, the victors would likely have kept this land as colonies for themselves. But there was a new spirit of democracy in the air. The allies—including the British, French, and Americans—agreed that the former Ottoman lands should be allowed to become independent nation-states.

After the war, the nations of the world created the League of Nations, a precursor to the United Nations. Meeting in San Remo, Italy, in 1920, they set up what was known as the “Mandate system.” The colonies of the defeated powers—Germany and the Ottoman Empire—were converted into distinct geopolitical entities, which became the countries now known as Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.

None of this is controversial.

There was one other mandate issued—the mandate for Palestine. “Palestine” was merely a geographic label—the name the Romans gave the Jewish kingdom of Judea after they conquered it. There was nothing exclusively Arab about it.

The mandate provided that Palestine would become a “national home” for the Jewish people. There was a simple reason for this: the League recognized that Jews were the indigenous people of the area.

All the mandatory territories in the Middle East transitioned to statehood in the 1930s and 40s, with Israel the last to do so, declaring independence in May 1948.

Now we get to the legal stuff.

What were the borders of the State of Israel when it declared independence?

International law has a simple and universally applicable rule for determining borders of new countries. It’s called the *uti possidetis juris* principle (lawyers love Latin

phrases). The rule provides that when a new country is created, its borders match the borders of the previous geopolitical entity in that territory.

For example, the borders of Ukraine, Latvia, and Azerbaijan, are exactly what they were when they were parts of the Soviet Union.

Other considerations, such as demographics, are not taken into account—because without a simple, easily-applied rule, a new country's borders would never be settled—a recipe for permanent conflict.

Applying this rule to Israel means that it had sovereign claims to all of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and Gaza, because those were its borders according to the Mandate of Palestine.

To be sure, the United Nations proposed a resolution in 1947 with different borders and a much smaller area for a Jewish state. But that resolution was a non-binding recommendation, nothing more. It did not have the force of law.

We know what happened next.

Upon declaring independence, Israel was immediately invaded by five Arab armies, seeking to destroy it.

Israel survived, but Jordan managed to seize parts of Jerusalem, as well as Judea and Samaria, which it dubbed “the West Bank.” All the Jews living in these areas were expelled—or, to use the contemporary term, ethnically cleansed.

Here we need to introduce another key principle of international law: a war of aggression cannot be used to change another country's borders.

Israel and Jordan signed an armistice agreement in 1949—an agreement to temporarily stop fighting. This truce had no legal effect on borders.

When Israel liberated these territories in 1967 during the Six Day War, it was retaking its own land. You can't “occupy” land that

belongs to you.

So where are we now?

In 1994, the Palestinian Authority was established as part of the Oslo Accords. Israel didn't have to agree to this, but it did. While not being a sovereign state, the PA operates independently of Israel. The PA, not Israel, governs the lives of Palestinians living in the West Bank.

Israel has offered the Palestinians a fully independent state on several occasions. Each time the Palestinians have rejected the offer, something no other national independence movement in modern times has done.

Whether or not it makes sense for Israel to renew such offers is an open question. But it is under no legal obligation to do so.

I'm Eugene Kontorovich, professor of law at George Mason University, for Prager University.

AN ARAB MUSLIM IN THE ISRAELI ARMY



Presented by Mohammad Kabiya

I am an Arab. I am a Muslim. And I love my country. In fact, I'm prepared to die for it. Which is why I serve in its army.

I don't have to do this. I *want* to do this. Because my country is a special place, unlike any other.

Free. Diverse. Vibrant.

Yet, other countries—countries not so free, not so diverse—call for my country's complete destruction. The moment my country lets its guard down, it will be destroyed.

My country is Israel.

I grew up, and still live, in a small village named after my family's Bedouin Arab tribe. Our roots in this land run deep.

In 1948, when Arab armies invaded the new state of Israel, my family thought of leaving our village. Some of them did. But when the Jews' leaders heard that, they implored us to remain. "This is our country, for both Arabs and Jews," they said. "Stay, and we will work together to build it."

My family stayed. My parents were born here, made their lives here, started their own family here—in Israel.

In 2002, I was a teenager. It was a violent time. Palestinian suicide bombers were blowing up Israeli civilians—a danger to Arabs and Jews alike. Israeli troops entered the West Bank to stop them at their source. As a result, many Palestinians were killed.

I was torn. Whose side was I on, I thought: Israel's, or the Palestinians'? Is it possible to be an Arab and an Israeli? The question became even more difficult when I saw men from my own village wearing the uniform of the Israeli army. Only Jews are required to serve in the military. No one forced these Arab men to join; they chose to. "Why?" I asked them.

"Our home is here, in Israel," they said. "Our home is under attack. Our neighbors in this home are Jews. They are being attacked. We fight together."

Still, I struggled.

I went to high school in Nazareth. There, unlike the village where I grew up, most of the Arab students identified as Palestinians, even though they are citizens of Israel.

Some of the students—my friends—hated Israel. They couldn't understand me. "You're a Palestinian," they said, "so you must hate Israel." When I said that I didn't, that we had far more freedom and opportunity than Arabs anywhere in the Middle East, they called me a traitor.

After high school, I went to study electrical engineering at Technion, a leading Israeli university. During my first semester, heavy rocket fire from Gaza forced Israel to launch a counterattack.

Not long after the war began, I witnessed a group of Arab-Israeli students expressing their solidarity with Hamas, the Palestinian terror organization that controls Gaza and is

committed to Israel's violent destruction.

Did these students not understand that those rockets could just as easily be aimed at them? Hamas didn't care who they killed as long as they landed inside the borders of Israel. Had my fellow Arab students forgotten that Israel had left Gaza a few years before? That there wasn't a single Israeli living there?

That day, I dropped out of school to join the Israeli army, the IDF. A few months later, I was a soldier in the Israeli Air Force. After months of training, I was assigned to the Search & Rescue Helicopter Unit.

Our job was to save lives. We never concerned ourselves with the identity of the people who needed our help. We rescued Syrian civilians wounded in their country's civil war, Palestinian children from Gaza requiring urgent medical care, and countless Israelis of every religious and ethnic background. A life—whether it is Muslim or Jewish, Palestinian or Israeli—is a life.

On a base of 6,000 soldiers, I was the only Bedouin. But it didn't matter. The only thing that mattered was keeping Israel—our home—safe. We came from all parts of the country and from many parts of the world. We were every shade of skin color. Our shared goal created a deep bond.

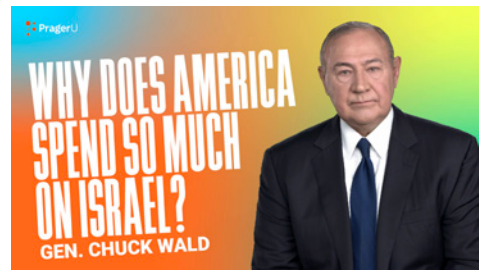
Today, I am a student at Haifa University. Half of the students are Arab. More than once, I have seen the Palestinian flag being waved at a rally or a protest on campus. In Israel, you can do this because, whether you are a Jew or an Arab, you are free.

What more do you need to know?

I am Mohammad Kabiya, for Prager University.

WHY DOES AMERICA SPEND SO MUCH ON ISRAEL?

Presented by Gen. Chuck Wald



Why do we spend so much money on Israel?

Over my decades of military service, as the Deputy Commander of United States European Command, and now as a security advisor, I've often heard people make this complaint.

The truth is we don't spend enough. We should spend more. And for purely selfish reasons.

Every dollar we spend on Israel is a dollar spent, in effect, in our own defense. As a value proposition, it's all in America's favor.

Let me explain, but before I do, let me say this:

I can easily defend why America supports Israel on moral grounds alone.

I've been there on numerous occasions. It's a good and decent country. Given the neighborhood it lives in, I find that both remarkable and admirable.

But I will make this argument solely on the basis of America's security.

Our partnership with Israel is unique.

Unlike most of our current treaty alliances—say with South Korea—our ties with Jerusalem are not premised on American troops serving as tripwires on Israel's frontlines.

This is because Israel takes care of itself.

America, for good reason, remains wary of any further military engagement in the Middle East. And this only strengthens the case for giving Israel the tools it needs to defend its borders.

Here are three things we can do—again, all in our own self-interest.

First, the United States should “frontload” its financial commitment to Israel.

We have agreed to provide Israel \$38 billion in defense assistance over ten years. That's a big number, but it's also a great deal—for America.

In addition to giving Israel the financial wherewithal to purchase the weapons it needs, it also benefits the American economy. Under the agreement, Israel must spend these funds on US products. And it's happy to do so. Without adding a cent to the total, the United States should “frontload” this assistance to reflect the changing strategic situation in the Middle East, specifically the rising danger presented by Iran and its proxies, Hezbollah and Hamas.

An accelerated timetable would allow Israel to acquire critical capabilities like more F-35 attack squadrons, more refueling tankers, and more precision munitions. It will need this hardware to defend itself and American interests against persistent, and growing, threats.

Second, the United States should enhance our alliance with Israel.

It may surprise you to know that the United States does not have a defense treaty with this essential ally—lots of agreements, but no treaty.

We should.

Why is this so important? Because it will send a loud strategic signal to Israel's enemies that if you mess with Israel, you mess with us.

Israel is not going to ask us for troops. But we should be giving them anything else they need— intelligence, weapons technology and other vital information. And we know this is a two-way street. Israel gives a lot in return.

Which leads me to the third point.

The United States and Israel should build on their already close collaboration in research and development. Israel is one of the most high-tech economies in the world. American investors understand this. More venture capital is spent per capita in Israel than in any other country. Nine out of the ten largest companies have R&D facilities there. This is in a country of just 8 million people.

When we sell them military gear, they adapt it to their own special needs. The American military, in turn, benefits from these innovations, especially in the area of desert warfare. Indeed, President Obama's Defense Secretary Ashton Carter made this point: "There's no question that American lives have been saved by Israeli technology."

There are many cutting-edge projects we can work on together, such as directed-energy weapons. This new form of cannon emits highly-focused energy to neutralize targets. Such weapons will be needed to counter the spread of cheap, deadly, and plentiful mortars and drones from Iran and other bad actors.

All this explains why I find it so infuriating to see Americans, especially young Americans, support anti-Israel groups like BDS—Boycott, Divest, Sanction—that want to weaken and destroy Israel. Putting aside the perverse logic of these groups—that we should

punish a free and open democracy—it's self-destructive.

Israel is on the front line of terror.

They, not us, are within missile range of Iran, Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas. To the extent these enemies of freedom are held in check, they are held in check by Israel. And, they ask from us not one US soldier—only for military aid, which they spend on American defense products to help defend American interests.

We should give them that aid without reservation. Sure, it costs us treasure. But it saves us blood. Our blood.

It's also the right thing to do.

I'm General Chuck Wald, United States Air Force, for Prager University.

DOES ISRAEL DISCRIMINATE AGAINST ARABS?

Presented by Olga Meshoe



Maybe you've heard someone say that Israel is an apartheid state. That Israel has a policy of segregating and oppressing the minority population within its borders—like South Africa once did.

Maybe you've been so outraged by this information that you have considered joining the BDS movement—the effort to boycott, divest, and sanction Israel, until it ends its alleged “racist” policies.

I don't blame you.

Apartheid is a great evil, and deserves to be fought wherever we find it.

But here's the thing: You won't find apartheid in the State of Israel.

So, I'll put it bluntly: The BDS movement is a slick propaganda effort built on lies.

I think I have the credibility to make this claim.

Having grown up in South Africa, and having spent a fair amount of time in Israel, I know what apartheid is, and what it is not. My parents were raised under real apartheid, where blacks were, by law, separated from whites at every level, from education to drinking fountains.

Blacks couldn't vote, couldn't own land, couldn't live next to, or use the same transportation system as whites. I remember my father telling me about how my grandfather was kicked and humiliated in public by a young white boy. All he was

permitted to say was, “Please stop, little boss.” That was the world my family lived in.

That was the world of apartheid South Africa.

But in Israel, the law is color-blind. Israeli Arabs have the same rights as Israeli Jews. They ride the same buses, study in the same schools, and are treated in the same hospitals. Arabs are elected to Israel's parliament, serve as judges, and fight in the Israeli military.

On my first trip to Israel, the group I was with had a Jewish tour guide and an Arab bus driver. Imagine our surprise, having heard that Israel is an apartheid state. This would have been inconceivable in apartheid South Africa.

All these things would be self-evident to anyone who did any kind of actual research, or, even better, visited Israel—something I encourage everyone to do.

BDS doesn't want you to research or visit Israel. It depends on the ignorance of its audience. Sadly, on American college campuses, BDS has a significant presence. It succeeds by playing on the good intentions of good people through deliberate deception.

In short, they lie.

And lies really make me angry, because lies empower evil.

Lies about blacks empowered apartheid in South Africa.

Lies about Jews made the Holocaust possible.

And lies about Israel are misleading a lot of good-hearted young people into opposing the only country in the entire Middle East that doesn't segregate and oppress its minority population. Just ask the next Egyptian Copt or Iraqi Christian you meet on campus.

So, the question people should really be asking is: What does the BDS movement want?

The answer is simple: They want to destroy Israel. They can't do it militarily, so they try to do it through lies.

They say that Jews have no historic claim to Israel – Lie.

They say that Israel treats its Arabs as second-class citizens—Lie.

They say that Israel doesn't want peace with its Arab neighbors—Lie.

If you tell lies, and you tell them often enough, people who don't know the truth start to believe them.

The BDS movement's leaders barely try to hide this charade. They will lie and say that they only want a Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel, and then they say this:

"We oppose a Jewish state in any part of Palestin...Ending the occupation doesn't mean anything if it doesn't mean upending the Jewish state itself." That's from Omar Barghouti, a founder of BDS.

Barghouti lives in Israel, so you might expect that he said this from inside an Israeli prison, like Nelson Mandela during South African apartheid.

You would be wrong.

Barghouti is a PhD student at Israel's Tel Aviv University, where he enjoys the same rights as every Israeli.

My parents could only dream of that kind of freedom.

Is Israel a perfect country? No. There are as many perfect countries as there are perfect people. But to call it an apartheid state is not only an insult to the only democracy in the Middle East and the only country with equal rights for all its minorities, it's also an insult to the actual victims of apartheid—like my parents, and all those who suffered under it.

I'm Olga Meshoe, for Prager University.

HOW THE LEFT SEES THE WORLD: POWER, RACE, AND CLASS

Presented by Dennis Prager



Why does the left hate Israel? On the surface, it doesn't make sense. Israel is a liberal democracy. It extends full rights to women, to gays, and to its many Arab citizens. Like all countries, which are made up of flawed human beings, Israel is flawed. But compared to most countries, not to mention its neighbors, it is a civil rights paradise.

So, why does the left hate Israel? The reason is that the left — and as I always emphasize, I am talking about the left, not about liberals — is not guided by a moral compass. It is guided by three other compasses:

A power compass, a race compass, and a class compass.

Let's begin with the power compass.

Instead of evaluating people and nations on the basis of right and wrong or good and evil, the left evaluates them on the basis of weak and strong. If you're weak, you're good. If you're strong, you're bad. Israel is strong. Therefore, it is bad. America is strong. Therefore, it is bad. The Palestinians are regarded as weak. Therefore, they are good.

When you are guided by a moral compass, you don't ask, "who's strong and who's weak?" You ask, "who's morally right and who's morally wrong?"

Fifty years ago, Israel was not a big issue for the left. Why? Because it was perceived as weak. But after the 1967 Six Day War in which Israel achieved a stunning military victory, it all changed. Israel became strong, so Israel became bad. And the Palestinians

were weak, so they became good.

So, no matter how much terror Palestinians engaged in — hijacking airplanes, murdering eleven Israeli athletes and coaches at the 1972 Munich Olympics, blowing up Israelis in pizza parlors and at weddings — the left's position never changed: Palestinians good. Israel bad.

Because the Palestinians were weak, and Israel was strong.

That's one of the three ways the left judges the world. You can test this theory in other ways. Why is the United States bad? Because it's strong. And Third World countries that oppose the United States are good.

Cuba, for example, has been adored by the left for decades. Never mind that Cuba's communist party has ruined Cuba, that Cubans have no civil rights, and Cuba is one of the poorest countries in the world. Since Cuba is weak, to the left, Cuba is good.

The same was true with North Vietnam in the 1960s. It was considered weak, so it was good. The US was strong, so it was bad. It didn't matter that America was trying to preserve the freedom of the South Vietnamese, exactly as it had preserved the freedom of the South Koreans. The US was strong. So it was bad.

Which brings us back to Israel. The stronger Israel gets — as it effectively defends itself, as its economy grows, and as its diplomatic position improves — the more the left hates it.

The second of the left's compasses—the race compass—is another reason the left hates Israel.

Just as it substitutes “weak and strong” for good and evil, the left substitutes “non-white and white” for good and evil. The left doesn't judge people by their actions, but by their race. That's why, for example, the left asserts that a black person cannot be a racist, only a *white* person can be a racist.

And that provides the second reason Israel is labeled evil: Israelis are considered white and Palestinians are not white. Never mind that more than half of Israel's population is not white.

The result: the left essentially ignores Palestinian terror, and loudly condemns Israel's responses to terror.

Now to the left's third compass, the class compass.

This is the third way in which the left replaces traditional Western and Judeo-Christian categories of good and evil. Instead of judging people's actions by the same moral yardstick—that of good and evil—the left judges people's actions based on their economic class. Rich people and rich nations are bad; poor people and poor nations are good.

This began with Karl Marx, who divided the world by economic class, not moral behavior. To Marx and to Marxism, good and evil is entirely class-based. Good is defined as workers; evil as owners. And that is the third reason for the left's hatred of Israel and of America—they are both wealthy.

As fewer and fewer people perceive the world in terms of good and evil—substituting a power-, race-, or class compass for a moral compass—you will inevitably get more evil, and more hatred of the good—beginning with Israel and America, and ending with Western Civilization.

I'm Dennis Prager.

IF YOU HATE ISRAEL, YOU'RE NO FRIEND OF THE JEWS

Presented by Dennis Prager



Imagine a group of people who work to destroy Italy because, they claim, Italy's origins are illegitimate. Imagine further that these people maintain that of all the countries in the world, only Italy doesn't deserve to exist. And then imagine that these people vigorously deny that they are anti-Italian. Would you believe them?

Now substitute "Israel" for "Italy," and you'll understand the dishonesty and absurdity of the argument that one can be anti-Zionist—that is, against the existence of a Jewish state—but not antisemitic.

But that is precisely what anti-Zionists say. They argue that Israel's existence is illegitimate. They don't believe this of any other country in the world, no matter how bloody its origins. And then they get offended when they're accused of being antisemitic.

How can they make this argument?

First, they change the topic. They say it's unfair to charge those who merely "criticize" Israel with being antisemitic. But criticism of Israel is fine. Denying Israel's right to exist isn't. Anti-Zionism isn't criticism of Israel. Anti-Zionism is opposition to Israel's existence.

Zionism is the name of the movement that advocates for the return of Jews to their historic homeland. Over the past 3,000 years, there were only two independent states located in what is called Israel. Both were Jewish states, and invaders destroyed both. No Arab or Muslim or any other country ever

existed in that land, which was only named "Palestine" by the Romans to remove all memory of the Jewish state they destroyed in the year 70.

Second, anti-Zionists claim they can't be anti-Jewish because Zionism has nothing to do with Judaism. That's equally false. It is the same as saying Italy has nothing to do with being Italian.

Judaism has always—always—consisted of three components: God, Torah and Israel. If Israel isn't part of Judaism, neither is the Bible or God.

Third, anti-Zionists claim that Judaism is only a religion; therefore, Jews are only members of a religion, not a nation. But the Jews are called a "nation" more than a hundred times in the Bible. That is why there can be irreligious, secular, and even atheist Jews—because Jews are not only a religion. They are also a people, or a nation. There are no atheist Christians, because Christianity is only a religion.

Fourth, the anti-Zionists claim that Israel is illegitimate because it is racist. This is the fraudulent charge Israel-haters and America-haters make against two of the least racist societies in the world. Half of Israel's Jews are not even white, and anyone, of any race or ethnicity, can become a Jew.

Plus, one of five Israelis isn't a Jew. And these Israeli citizens, mostly Arab Muslims, have the same rights as Jewish Israelis.

As for Israel's control of the West Bank, that has nothing to do with race. Israel doesn't control the West Bank because Palestinians are of another race—but because Palestinians and their Arab allies tried to destroy Israel in 1967, and they lost the war. Palestinians have rejected offers to found their own state on five separate occasions since 1947. That's the only reason they don't have a state. And why have they always rejected building a Palestinian state? Because they have always been more interested in destroying the Jewish state.

Finally, the anti-Zionists claim that Israel's origins are illegitimate. Of all the world's 200-plus countries, the only country anti-Zionists declare illegitimate is also the only Jewish one. That's pretty much all you need to know about their motives. Why, for example, don't they make this claim about Pakistan? In 1947, nine months before the establishment of Israel, India was partitioned into a Muslim state—Pakistan, and a Hindu state—India.

Unlike Israel, Pakistan had never existed before. Unlike Israel's founding, which created about 700,000 Jewish refugees from Arab lands and about 700,000 Arab refugees from what became Israel, the founding of Pakistan created about 7 million Muslim refugees from India and about 7 million Hindu refugees from Pakistan. And while the highest estimate of Arab deaths in the fighting that took place when Israel was established is 10,000, the number of deaths as a result of Pakistan's creation is around 1 million.

So why is Israel's legitimacy challenged while Pakistan's isn't? There is only one answer: Israel is the one Jewish state.

Of course, not all anti-Zionists hate all Jews. But if you seek to destroy Italy, you don't have to hate every Italian to be anti-Italian. If you seek to destroy the one Jewish state, you don't have to hate every Jew to be an antisemite.

I'm Dennis Prager.

A BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ON ISRAEL AND APARTHEID

Presented by Kenneth Meshoe



There is widespread allegation—really a slander—that Israel is an apartheid state.

That notion is simply wrong.

It is inaccurate and it is malicious.

And it will not help to promote peace and harmony in the Middle East. Its only purpose is to demonize Israel, and to isolate her in an attempt to de-legitimize Israel's existence.

And because it is so inaccurate, it betrays the memory of those who suffered through a real apartheid.

As a black South African, who was born under apartheid, in the administrative capital of South Africa, Pretoria, I know what apartheid is. I've experienced it. My parents experienced it.

But having been to Israel on a number of occasions, I know that nothing is happening in that country—that I have either seen or read—that can be compared to apartheid in South Africa.

Let's remember the major reason Nelson Mandela went to prison – why he was involved with the armed struggle. He was fighting for the right to vote, for the right to choose the leaders who one believes in, for the right to move and travel freely, to live wherever one wants, to be educated, and to be admitted to the hospital or medical facility of your choice.

All these things Mandela fought for because black people never enjoyed any of them in

their very own country. For example, when I had to see a white doctor—a white doctor who was prepared to have black patients—I would have to go to a back room, a specially segregated room where black patients of white doctors went who could never enter through the same door that was used by white people.

Now compare that to Israel. Three years ago, a black pastor friend of mine went to Israel where he had an accident and had to be hospitalized. When he came back to South Africa, he said to as many people as he could, that the people who are talking about apartheid in Israel are talking nonsense.

“When I was in that hospital in Israel,” he tells people, “on my right was sleeping a Jew and on my left was a Palestinian Muslim and in between that Palestinian Muslim and that Jew was this black South African.”

In private, the Palestinians he was with in the hospital said to him, “This ‘Israel-is-an-apartheid-state’ thing is what politicians are saying. It is not what we are experiencing on the ground.”

We all need to recognize that those who say that what is happening in Israel is like apartheid South Africa are minimizing the suffering that black South Africans endured. They are taking the sting out of the pain that we suffered in South Africa. If South African apartheid was what people are seeing in Israel, there would never have been any need for an armed struggle. There would never have been any need for a Nelson Mandela to go to prison because he would have all the rights Arabs in Israel have.

There are judges in the Israel courts who are not Jewish. In apartheid South Africa, you could never have had something like that. You have teachers who are not Jewish who are teaching Jewish children. These non-Jews in Israel have everything that we non-whites in apartheid South Africa never shared with white South Africans.

Most South Africans know this. They know that to call Israel an apartheid state is false; that what we suffered in South Africa is not being suffered by anybody in Israel.

But to those South Africans who believe these falsehoods about Israel we say, "Go to Israel, go and see for yourself. Tell us where you see Palestinians having to endure what we endured during apartheid."

As a member of the South African parliament, and in the name of millions of my fellow black citizens of that country—we know what apartheid really was—and I therefore ask those in the United States, Europe, and anywhere else in the world who charge Israel with practicing apartheid to please stop doing so. You are damaging the truth, you are damaging any chance for peace in the Middle East, and most of all, you are destroying the memory of the real apartheid.

The charge that Israel is an apartheid state is a lie about the real Israel, and it is a lie about the real apartheid.

I am Kenneth Meshoe, member of the South African parliament, for Prager University.

AJ+ IS AL JAZEERA

Presented by Raheem Kassam



They are turning social media against us. Using it to influence our elections. Spreading propaganda. Disguising it as news. Pretty scary stuff.

I'm not talking about Russia. That's amateur hour. The media organization I'm talking about operates right here, in the USA. Out in the open. Legally.

It has a large staff of on-air personalities, reporters, cameramen, and editors. It operates out of state-of-the-art studios in Washington, DC; London; Rio; and half a dozen other major cities. It produces videos, news reports, and documentaries. It has tens of millions of social media followers. Their content is viewed and shared by countless young people across the western world. In short, they're targeting us.

CNN, right? Wrong.

Fox News? Wrong again.

The answer is...AJ+.

If you've spent time on social media, you've seen their stuff, I promise you. This isn't the work of a scrappy start-up in Silicon Valley. AJ+ is bankrolled by the government of Qatar.

Never heard of Qatar? Most people haven't.

It's a tiny Persian Gulf state with lots of oil money; billions of dollars they're not afraid to spend on causes they believe in—causes like the terror group Hamas, which runs the Gaza Strip.

Without billions from Qatar and its ally, Iran, Hamas would blow away in the next desert sandstorm. But Hamas is only part of Qatar's terror portfolio. The Qatar government bankrolls the Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Qaeda in Yemen and Syria, radical extremists in Libya, and Hezbollah in Lebanon—in other words, a rogues gallery of murderous Islamist terror groups.

Qatar's propaganda arm is the Arab news service Al Jazeera—which it owns lock, stock, and America-hating, Israel-hating, barrels. Al Jazeera made a splashy attempt to break into the US media market in 2013. They bought a cable franchise for \$400 million from former vice president Al Gore. They signed up some major American TV journalists, and opened up shop in New York and Washington. But the effort failed. Americans just couldn't cozy up to the idea that a news network that they had rightly associated with Osama bin Laden could be trusted.

But Al Jazeera didn't disappear. They just re-branded into the much nicer sounding "AJ+" and they concentrated their efforts on the internet and a market that didn't have a bin Laden fixation—or much connection to 9/11 at all: young people. And they've been amazingly successful.

Their productions are well-produced, slick, and left. In fact, they are so left, that they make videos railing against leftist white women for being insufficiently sympathetic to leftist women of color, especially women of color who are gay or transgendered.

It's hard to ignore the irony that a media operation fully funded by a country that oppresses women and gays makes this kind of content for an American audience.

But the irony goes deeper.

The young and hip presenters at AJ+ depict America as racist through and through—past and present. Black Lives Matter has no greater media ally than AJ+. Nor do avowed socialists like Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. AJ+ jumped on her bandwagon early on, making a video in the summer of 2018 about then-candidate Ocasio-Cortez entitled “Socialist Rising.”

Why, you might ask, would the government of a Middle Eastern country care about influencing young Americans?

The answer is this: anything that weakens the US is a victory for them and their radical form of Islam. If they can convince young Americans that the US is a bad place, young Americans are less likely to defend it, and less likely to support its efforts to fight Islamic terror. And if America is bad, then anyone it supports must also be bad. America supports Israel. Qatar, like its allies in the Iranian theocracy, wants Israel destroyed.

So AJ+ turns out video after video, news report after news report, portraying the democratic, free, liberal Israel as a repressive apartheid state, despite the fact that Muslims living in Israel have more rights—such as freedom of expression and the equality of women and gays—than Muslims living in Qatar.

In AJ+'s world, Israel attacks their peaceful neighbors in Gaza for no good reason. No need to mention the rocket attacks randomly directed at Israeli civilians.

Weaken America. Weaken Israel. To Qatar, a few billion dollars for a few decades is a cheap price to pay if it can achieve those goals. But you don't have to play into their game.

The next time you see an AJ+ video or so-called “news report,” consider the source.

Or better still, swipe left.

I'm Raheem Kassam for Prager University.

THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

Presented by Dennis Prager



We say that evil is dark. But this metaphor is imprecise. Evil is actually intensely bright. So painfully bright that people look away from it. Many even deny its existence.

Why? Because once people acknowledge evil's existence, they know they have to confront it. And most people prefer not to confront evil.

That is what led to World War II and the death of 55 million people. Many in the West denied the darkness of Nazism. They looked the other way when that evil could have been stopped, and then appeased it as it became stronger.

We are reliving 1938, the year that democratic Western nations assured a police state, the Nazi regime, that they would do nothing to prevent its expansion. That year, the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, went to Munich to negotiate with Adolf Hitler. He left believing Hitler's promises of peace in exchange for Germany being allowed to annex large parts of Czechoslovakia. Upon returning to England, Chamberlain announced "Peace for our time."

The 2015 agreement between America, Europe, Russia, China and Iran mirrors 1938.

The Nazi regime was a police state. The Islamic Republic of Iran is a police state. The Nazis' greatest aim was to exterminate the Jews of Europe. Iran's greatest aim is to exterminate the Jewish state. The West dismissed Hitler as the Jews' problem. The West dismisses Iran as Israel's problem. Nazi

Germany hated the West and its freedoms. The Islamic Republic of Iran hates the West and its freedoms. Germany sought to dominate Europe. Iran seeks to dominate the Middle East and the Muslim world.

And just as Britain and France appeased Nazi Germany, the same two countries along with the United States have chosen to appease Iran.

In fact, there is considerably less defense for the Iran agreement—which awards Iran \$150 billion dollars in currently frozen assets and the right to keep its nuclear program—than there was for the Munich agreement. Prior to 1938, Hitler had not publicly proclaimed his aim to annihilate Europe's Jews. Yet, Iran has been proclaiming its intention to annihilate the Jewish state for decades. There were no massive "Death to America" demonstrations in Germany as there regularly are in Iran. In 1938, Germany had not been responsible for terror around the world as Iran is now. Nor was Germany responsible for the death of more than a thousand Americans as Iran has been—in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Lebanon.

The Neville Chamberlains of 2015 defend the agreement with Iran on two grounds—that the only alternative is war and that this agreement has the capacity to bring Iran into the "community of nations."

The war argument is a falsehood. For three reasons.

First, the alternative to this agreement was continuing and tightening the sanctions that were weakening the Iranian regime and

greatly diminishing its ability to fund terror groups around the world. Second, because the agreement so strengthens Iran, it makes war far more likely. When evil, expansionist regimes get richer, they don't spend their wealth on building new hospitals. They expand. Third, Iran has been at war with America for decades.

And whoever believes that the agreement will bring Iran into the "community of nations" betrays a breath-taking ignorance of the Iranian regime.

The Iranian regime is composed of religious fanatics who are morally indistinguishable from ISIS, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and all the other mass murdering Islamist movements.

The Iranian regime has executed more people than any country except China and killed more than 6,000 Iranians just for being homosexual. A woman in Iran is not allowed to leave the country without the permission of her husband.

The Iranian regime repeatedly calls for the extermination of Israel. No other country in the world is committed to annihilating another country.

Iran is already the world's greatest funder of terror organizations. Imagine what it will do with another \$150 billion. Imagine what it will do with the removal of the current weapons and missile embargo. Imagine what it will do with its intact nuclear infrastructure. This deal allows all three.

Very few people have a chance to do something about the greatest evil of their time. When it votes on this agreement, the American Congress has that chance.

I'm Dennis Prager.

IRAN AND THE BOMB

Presented by Bret Stephens



Why are so many people with so many different perspectives—from the Prime Minister of Israel, to the King of Saudi Arabia—so worried that Iran might build a deliverable nuclear weapon? Or to put it even more simply: why do we have to stop Iran from getting the bomb?

The reason is painfully obvious: They might actually use it.

France has nuclear weapons. So does the United Kingdom. But nobody worries that they will use them. It's not nuclear weapons that are the problem. It's who has them and what they might do with them.

"We do not worship Iran, we worship Allah," said Iranian Leader Ayatollah Khomeini in 1980. "I say let this land burn. I say let this land go up in smoke, provided Islam remains triumphant in the rest of the world."

A militant nation that does not fear its own destruction is a sure threat to its enemies. And that threat is taken to a whole new level if the militant nation arms itself with nuclear weapons.

Who are the enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran?

There are three:

The first enemy of Iran is the United States of America.

A common slogan chanted by Iranians at public rallies is "Death to America." But it's not just a slogan. Iran has been committing

actual acts of war against what it calls "the Great Satan" for over three decades.

There was Iran's seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979, the 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut that killed 241 American servicemen, and the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia that killed another 19 Americans—not to mention the War in Iraq, during which Iran did little to disguise the fact that it supplied anti-American militias with sophisticated, armor-piercing munitions responsible for the maiming and death of hundreds of U.S. soldiers.

A nuclear Iran could greatly expand its efforts to harm American interests, secure in the knowledge that its possession of nuclear weapons would make any military retaliation extremely unlikely.

And over time, and not much time, a nuclear Iran could develop the sort of intercontinental ballistic missiles that would bring American and European cities within range of its weapons.

A second enemy of Iran, which is a Shiite Muslim nation, are the Sunni Muslim nations of the Middle East. An Iranian bomb would instantly spark a nuclear arms race in the region as Arab states—nearly all of which have majority Sunni populations—move to defend themselves against aggression from Iran.

As these regimes and dictatorships race to become nuclear powers, the chances that nuclear weapons might be used, either

directly or through terrorist proxies, grow exponentially.

And the third and ultimate enemy of Iran is Israel.

Only around a thousand miles separate the Islamic Republic from the Jewish state. Iranian leaders have called Israel “a rabid dog,” “a cancerous tumor that needs to be cut away,” and have called publicly and repeatedly for Israel’s “annihilation.”

They wage a continuous terrorist war against Israel through their proxies, Hezbollah and Hamas.

Former Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani—a man often described as a moderate and a pragmatist in the Western press—articulated the Iranian position this way:

“If one day, the Islamic world is also equipped with weapons like those that Israel possesses now, then the imperialists’ strategy will reach a standstill because the use of even one nuclear bomb inside Israel will destroy everything. However, one bomb will only harm the Islamic world.”

He’s right.

That’s why the civilized and sensible leaders of the world cannot allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons.

Because once the Iranians do, they will pose a severe threat to the security of America and Europe, spark a regional arms race that could see the world’s worst players acquire the world’s worst weapons, and threaten the Jews with extermination for the second time in a century.

Or to put it more simply: Iran cannot be allowed to get the bomb because they might actually use it.

I’m Bret Stephens.

DO YOU PASS THE ISRAEL TEST?

Presented by George Gilder



How do you respond to people who excel you in invention, creativity, and wealth? Do you envy them? Do you feel their success somehow diminishes you? Or do you admire what they've achieved, and try to emulate it?

These questions sum up what I call "the Israel Test."

In the 1880s, European Jews settled in Mandate Palestine, and wrought an agricultural miracle in that desolate territory, then sparsely populated by a few score thousand Jews and a couple hundred thousand Arabs.

The Jewish settlers drained malarial swamps, leached salt from the soils, terraced the barren hills, and planted millions of trees. They massively expanded the capacity of the land and enabled it to support a substantial Arab population.

In the two decades between 1921 and 1943, Jews quadrupled the number of enterprises, multiplied the number of jobs by a factor of ten, and increased the level of capital investment a hundredfold. Far from displacing Arabs, they provided the capital for a major expansion of Arab farms and enabled a sevenfold rise in Arab population by 1948, to a level of 1.35 million, the largest in the long history of Palestine. In other words, the Arabs came to what would be soon be the State of Israel because of the Jews.

By comparison, TransJordan, now known as Jordan, with the same geological endowment and four times the land, but

no Jews, was able to sustain a population density only one-tenth of the population density of Palestine.

Crucial to Israel's accomplishments were world-leading technological advances in the recovery of water through desalinization, drip irrigation, and sewage recycling.

Over the past fifty years, Israel has increased its population tenfold, its agricultural production sixteen-fold and its industrial production fifty-fold while actually reducing net water consumption by 10% since 1948. This huge expansion of effective water resources enabled the land to support not only more Jews, but also millions more Arabs.

Today, the State of Israel, with its astonishing achievements in computer science and other high tech fields, distills both the genius of the Jews and the misdirected anger of the failed states that surround her.

The great divide in the Middle East is not between Arab and Jew, but between admiration of achievement, along with a desire to replicate it, and envy accompanied by violent resentment.

People who admire success, who pass the Israel Test, tend to be wealthy and peaceful. People who resent achievement, who fail the Israel Test, tend to become poor and violent.

So, again...

How do you respond to people who excel you in invention, creativity, and wealth?

Do you envy them? Do you feel their success somehow diminishes you?

Or do you admire what they've achieved and try to emulate it?

The Israel Test is the central divide in the world today.

How you answer it as an individual and ultimately how we answer it as a nation is a test of our own will to triumph over enemies who hate us, as they hate Israel, for what is best within us.

I'm George Gilder—a non-Jew who has passed the Israel Test—for Prager University.

WHAT'S HOLDING THE ARAB WORLD BACK?



Presented by Bret Stephens

In the judo competition of the 2016 Olympics in Brazil, an Israeli heavyweight judo fighter named Or Sasson defeated his Egyptian opponent, Islam El Shehaby, in a first-round match. The Egyptian then refused to shake the Israeli's extended hand, earning boos from the crowd.

If you want the short answer for why the Arab world is sliding into the abyss, look no further than this little incident. It illustrates how hatred of Israel and Jews corrupts every element of Arab society.

You won't find this explanation for the Arab world's decline among journalists and academics. They reflexively blame the usual suspects: the legacy of colonialism, unemployed youth, the Sunni-Shia sectarian divide, and every other politically correct excuse they can think of. For them, hatred of Israel is treated like sand in Arabia—just part of the landscape.

Yet the fact remains that over the past 70 years the Arab world expelled virtually all of its Jews, some 900,000 people, while holding on to its hatred of them. Over time the result proved fatal: a combination of lost human capital, expensive wars against Israel, and an intellectual life perverted by conspiracy theories and a perpetual search for scapegoats. The Arab world's problems are a problem of the Arab mindset, and the name of that problem is antisemitism.

As a historical phenomenon, this is not unique. Historian Paul Johnson has noted that wherever antisemitism took hold, social and political decline almost inevitably followed. Just a few examples:

Spain expelled its Jews in 1492. The effect, Johnson noted, "was to deprive Spain and its colonies of a class already notable for the astute handling of finance."

In czarist Russia, the adoption of numerous antisemitic laws ultimately weakened and corrupted the entire Russian government. These laws also led to mass Jewish emigration, resulting in a breathtaking loss of intellectual and human capital.

Germany might well have won the race for an atomic bomb if Hitler hadn't sent Jewish scientists like Albert Einstein and Edward Teller into exile in the U.S.

These patterns were replicated in the Arab world. Contrary to myth, the cause was not the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. There were bloody anti-Jewish pogroms in Palestine in 1929, Iraq in 1941, and Libya in 1945.

Nor is it accurate to blame Israel for fueling antisemitism by refusing to trade land for peace. Among Egyptians, hatred of Israel barely abated after Prime Minister Menachem Begin returned the entire Sinai Peninsula to Egypt. And among Palestinians, antisemitism became markedly worse during the years of the Oslo peace process.

Johnson calls antisemitism a "highly infectious" disease capable of overwhelming intellectuals and simpletons alike. Its potency, he noted, lies in transforming a personal and instinctive irrationalism into a political and systematic one. For the Jew-hater, every crime has the same culprit

and every problem has the same solution. Antisemitism makes the world seem simple. In doing so, it condemns the antisemite to a permanent darkness.

Today there is no great university in the Arab world, no serious scientific research, a stunted literary culture. In 2015, the U.S. Patent Office reported 3,804 patents from Israel, as compared with 30 from Egypt, the largest Arab country. Hatred of Israel and Jews has also deprived the Arab world of both the resources and the example of its neighbor. Israel quietly supplies water to Jordan, helping to ease the burden of Syrian refugees, and quietly provides surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities to Egypt to fight ISIS in the Sinai. But this is largely unknown among Arabs, for whom the only permissible image of Israel is an Israeli soldier in riot gear, abusing a Palestinian. Successful nations make a point of trying to learn from their neighbors. The Arab world has been taught over generations only to hate theirs.

This may be starting to change. Recently, the Arab world has been forced to face up to its own failings in ways it cannot easily blame on Israel. The change can be seen in the budding rapprochement between Jerusalem and Cairo, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi.

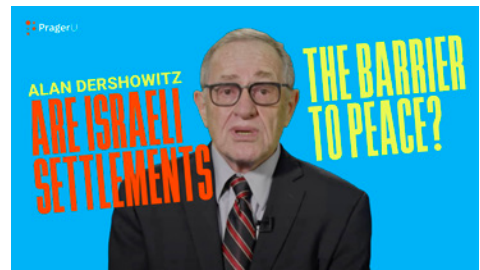
But that's not enough. So long as an Arab athlete can't pay his Israeli opposite the courtesy of a handshake, the disease of the Arab mind and the misfortunes of its world will continue.

For Israel, this is a pity.

For the Arabs, it's a calamity.

I'm Bret Stephens.

ARE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS THE BARRIER TO PEACE?



Presented by Alan Dershowitz

Is Israel's policy of building civilian communities in the area known as the West Bank the reason there is no permanent peace between Israel and the Palestinians?

The answer to that question, despite all the sound and fury regarding the so-called settlement issue, is "no."

The Israeli settlements in the West Bank are not the major barrier to a peace agreement.

A little historical context will make this clear.

For two decades before June of 1967, the West Bank, including much of Jerusalem, was controlled by Jordan. During that time—a time when Israel did not have a single settlement—there were numerous Palestinian terror attacks against the nation state of the Jewish people. In other words, Palestinians committed terror attacks against Israel when there were no settlements and they committed terror attacks against Israel when there were settlements.

If Israel were to pull out of every single settlement in the West Bank tomorrow, it's unlikely that anything much would change. In fact, if history is any indicator, Israel could be worse off.

In 2005, Israel abandoned every single community, every house, every farm, every structure it had built in the Gaza Strip. How did the Palestinians of Gaza react? They launched thousands of rockets and numerous other terror attacks against the nation state of the Jewish people. The

attacks continue to this very day. And every year the range of these rockets get longer and their payloads more lethal. Only a very sophisticated Israeli anti-missile defense keeps the country secure. Can you blame Israel for not wanting to risk a two-front rocket war?

But Israel has no right to be in the West Bank at all, many say. So, permit me, a law professor at Harvard, to say that on the basis of international law, this position is incorrect.

Military occupations are clearly permitted under international law following an aggressive attack by a neighboring state. Jordan, Israel's neighbor to the east, attacked Israel in 1967, despite Israel's repeated efforts to keep Jordan out of the Six Day War.

In defending itself against Jordan, Israel captured the West Bank and the eastern part of Jerusalem. Under international law, until a meaningful peace is achieved, and all terrorism against it ceases, Israel has every right to retain military control over this area. Since no peace treaty has been reached and the terrorism continues with new attacks threatened almost daily, Israel is under no legal obligation to leave. Given the danger that Israel would be putting itself in if it did leave the West Bank—exposing its major cities and international airport to rocket attacks—it would be irresponsible to do so, which is why Israel is still there.

Nevertheless, I fully acknowledge that a military occupation is significantly different, both as a matter of law and politics, from building civilian settlements even in a

territory that is legitimately subject to a military occupation. That's why I have long opposed the building of settlements in the West Bank. I believe it has caused resentment, and has given enemies of Israel an excuse to attack the legitimacy of the occupation in general.

It is also why I have always supported Israel's efforts to exchange land for peace, as it has done on multiple occasions over the last few decades. So, while the settlements may have contributed to the difficulty of making peace, it has not been the major barrier that Israel's enemies claim it to be. It is not the reason there has been no peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

The reason has always been and remains the unwillingness of Palestinian leaders—and, according to Palestinian polls, much of the Palestinian population—to recognize Israel's right to exist as the nation-state of the Jewish people. Until and unless the Palestinian leadership and the Palestinian people acknowledge that the State of Israel has the right to be free from military assault, from terrorism, from rocket attacks, and from diplomatic warfare, there will be no resolution to the Middle East dispute.

If these conditions, which must be the basis of any two-state solution, meaning a nation-state for the Jewish people, and a Palestinian state, are met, the occupation will end, the settlement issue will be resolved, and the blessings of a mutual peace will finally be achieved.

I'm Alan Dershowitz, professor of law at Harvard University, for Prager University.

LIES ABOUT ISRAEL LEAD TO LIES ABOUT EVERYTHING

Presented by Sebastian Cevallos



Why would someone who lives in Ecuador—that’s me—be preoccupied with...Israel? The countries are separated by two continents and an ocean. Nothing that happens in Tel Aviv has much, if any, effect on what happens to me in Cuenca.

Except for this: I always want to know the truth about things. And I hate lies. And there are more lies told about Israel than about any place in the world. I have come to realize that if you believe lies about Israel, you will believe lies about almost anything. And if you know the truth about Israel, you’re likely to think straight about most things.

In other words, Israel is a kind of truth test. Fail this test, and you’ve fallen into a fantasy world of untruth, a funhouse mirror of the real world.

That’s a pretty bold statement, I know. But I stand by it—and I’m not even Jewish. In fact, only about 1,000 Jews live in the entire country of Ecuador. So how did Israel even get on my radar? you might ask. That’s easy.

Israel is very hard to ignore, no matter where you live. Did you ever meet someone who didn’t have an opinion about the Jewish state? So, sometime during my high school years, Israel got my attention. And I started to do some research.

At first, I thought, “Wow, this is a complex issue.” Was Israel the victim or the aggressor in the Middle East? Did it oppress its minority population or was it a bastion of civil rights? Was it a colonizer of Palestinian land? Or did it have legitimate claim to that land?

Why did the United Nations pass resolution after resolution condemning Israel, but say nothing about Syria or North Korea? Why did Israel’s neighbors pledge themselves to its utter destruction?

All this attention, focused on a country you have to squint to see on a globe, a country one-tenth the size of my own, and with one-half the population. It was all very confusing. So I pushed on. And the more research I did, the clearer the picture became.

Israel has free speech, a free press, and independent courts. It has open and fair elections. Its neighbors don’t. Women have full rights, and are active in every profession, including the military. That’s not true of any of its neighbors.

Neither is this: Tel Aviv hosts one of the largest gay pride parades in the world, and the only one in the Middle East. A fifth of Israel’s citizens are Arab Muslims. In fact, they have their own political party. The holy sites of all religions are fully protected within its borders. Can’t say that about its neighbors.

More research led to even more revelations. Israel has repeatedly offered the Palestinians their own state, and every time, those efforts were rejected. Why? For one simple reason: the Palestinians have never accepted Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state. And the wall Israel built to separate themselves from the Palestinians? The wall most of the world condemns? The only reason the Israelis built it was to stop waves of suicide bombings. It worked. The bombings stopped.

This stuff isn't hard to find out. Nor was it hard to find out—despite the lack of Western media coverage—how many Syrians fled to Israel during the Syrian civil war, to have their injuries treated, and lives saved, in Israeli hospitals.

And then I realized that Israel is like a north star of truth, a way to set your moral compass. If you can't locate this star, you're guaranteed to get lost in a sea of lies. How many rockets does Hamas have to launch, how many times does Iran have to threaten to blow Israel off the face of the earth, before this becomes clear to you?

Yes, life is complicated. As young as I am, I know that. There are shades of gray. But some things are pretty close to black and white. They just are.

Why anyone who values freedom and democracy wouldn't wish Israel well, wouldn't be willing to take its side when it's threatened, I find hard to understand. I guess not everyone is interested in truth.

Well, I am—which is why Israel means so much to me. Even in Ecuador.

I'm Sebastian Cevallos, for Prager University.

CAN A DESERT NATION SOLVE THE WORLD'S WATER SHORTAGE?

Presented by Seth Siegel



Is the world going into a water crisis? It certainly seems that way.

The US government predicts that by 2025, 60% of the world's landmass, and 40% of our fifty U.S. states will experience water shortages—some of them extreme.

The U.S. intelligence community sees worldwide water shortages as a major national security risk. Water scarcity helped trigger the Syrian civil war, and has been a key reason why Africans have migrated in large numbers to Europe. More of this can be expected.

But there is cause for optimism. And it comes from a very unlikely place—a country in the middle of a desert.

That country is Israel.

Compelled by necessity, and powered by remarkable technological innovations, Israel has become the world's water superpower. By reusing waste water, by making desalination affordable, by rethinking irrigation, and by developing an array of sophisticated water conservation techniques, Israel not only has a sufficiency of water, but an abundance of it.

What Israel has done, other nations can do, too, including its Mideast neighbors. And while it's a lot to hope for, cooperation on water issues could become the basis for cooperation on other issues, as well.

For Israel, an obsession with water is not new. The word "water" appears 600 times

in the Hebrew Bible. For over 2,000 years daily prayers for rain in the Land of Israel have been a part of traditional Jewish ritual. For the founders of the modern State of Israel, water was not only a daily concern, but a paramount question of future survival. Vast quantities of water would be needed for the millions of immigrants who would make their way to the new country. Without plenty of water, economic growth would be impossible.

But where was the water going to come from? It was a daunting challenge, but one which Israel overcame.

Today, while other nations, even ones with far more natural water resources, struggle with water management, Israel has a surplus of useable water. The desert, as Israel's founders dreamed, is blooming.

Not only does the country supply its own population with an array of fruits and vegetables, but it exports billions of dollars worth of produce to nations around the world.

So, how does a small country with little annual rainfall, with only one freshwater lake, and with no major rivers, do this?

It begins with a nothing-wasted attitude that extends from the government, to private industry, to farming, to consumers. Israel charges its citizens the market price for water—no subsidies. You can have as much water as you want, but you have to pay for it. And when you pay for something, you tend to be more careful with how you use it.

This also extends to the nation's infrastructure. In virtually every country, massive amounts of water are wasted every year in leaky pipes. Israel has developed technology that tells it when and where a pipe is leaking, so that it can be fixed immediately. This not only saves water, but it saves homeowners and industry money on their water bills.

The biggest user of water—in Israel—and everywhere is agriculture. To get maximum use of its water, Israel developed the revolutionary farming technique known as “drip irrigation”—the process of applying micro amounts of water to individual plants at their roots. This is much more water efficient than the traditional method, still widely used around the world, of “flood irrigation”—flooding fields with water. Israeli scientists have also developed drought-resistant crops that need less water to grow.

Sewage is usually thought of as a nuisance, but in Israel it is now a highly valuable resource. Israel takes nearly all of its sewage, treats it to an ultra-pure level, and then reuses it in agriculture. No other country utilizes sewage as comprehensively as does Israel.

Israel has also pioneered the use of desalination, turning seawater into drinking water. Once it was thought to be prohibitively expensive—no longer. Israel built five giant desalination plants along its Mediterranean coast that together provide the equivalent of 80% of the water piped into Israeli homes.

Putting all of these practices and techniques together, Israel has grown into a water superpower, as well as a global center of water innovation.

As the world grows drier and thirstier, those who want solutions will look to a little country in the middle of a desert for answers.

Israel is ready with them.

I'm Seth Siegel, for Prager University.

IS THE UN FAIR TO ISRAEL?

Presented by Anne Bayefsky



There are 193 countries in the United Nations today. Of these, one has been singled out as an especially egregious offender of the organization's mandate to preserve and enhance human freedom and tolerance.

Can you guess which it is? It has about seven million citizens, of whom a fifth are Arab. The government is vibrantly democratic, its press wide open, and religious freedom fully respected. Women have equal rights, and gays live openly. The answer is Israel.

Here are some facts: 38% of all the resolutions of the United Nations Human Rights Council—the UN's top human rights body—that are critical of specific countries have been directed at Israel alone.

The Council has a permanent agenda that governs every regular session. This agenda is composed of ten items, one of which is always reserved for criticizing Israel.

Between 2006—when the council was created—and 2012, it published forty-eight reports condemning Israel. During that same period, there were nine reports on Syria's mass killings and torture of its own citizens, three on Iran's genocide-threatening regime, and not one on, for example, China—which denies more than a billion people elementary freedoms.

I could go on, but I think you get the idea. So we are faced with a choice. Either there's something very wrong with Israel that I'm not telling you about, or there's something very wrong with the United Nations that you should know about.

Let's look into the history of both.

First, Israel. Ever since its establishment (voted for by the United Nations, by the way) in 1948, Israel has had to fight its neighbors solely in order to survive. It has endured innumerable acts of terrorism, the most intense from 2000-2005, the so-called Second Intifada, in which children and other innocents were blown up in places like pizza parlors and buses, and at weddings.

It still suffers from rocket attacks against civilians from the Gaza Strip, which is controlled by a terror group, Hamas, whose stated reason for existence is to destroy Israel. Israel has developed a strong military and a web of security fences and walls to protect itself.

Do these security measures cause hardships to people who must deal with this network? Yes, they do. Israel would like nothing better than to tear all these fences and walls down. But bitter experience informs them what would happen if it did.

Is Israel a perfect country? Of course not. But it is one of the freest and most open societies in the world. That's Israel's history.

Here's the UN's. In 1949, when the UN admitted Israel as a member state, the UN had fifty-eight member countries, and a clear democratic and pro-Western orientation.

Today, the UN has 193 member countries, most of which are not even free. Among its many negative changes, the UN changed the principle of "self-determination" from a post-

World War II, post-Holocaust human rights principle, to a tool to wield against the West, especially against Israel.

This reached its fullest expression at the notorious Durban Conference, held in South Africa in 2001. The Durban Conference was billed as a UN world conference against racism and intolerance, but it turned into an orgy of anti-Israel- and anti-Jew propaganda.

Of all the bad actors in the world, the final Durban Declaration found one state guilty of racial discrimination—you guessed it, Israel. The Durban Declaration, however, remains to this day the centerpiece of the UN's allegedly anti-racism agenda.

There's only one country in the world whose very legitimacy is questioned, only one country that is openly threatened with annihilation. That country is Israel.

And what has the United Nations done about it? Worse than nothing. It has itself become a global platform for antisemitism and the destruction of the Jewish state.

I'm Anne Bayefsky, director of the Touro Human Rights Institute, for Prager University.

ISRAEL AT WAR: 1948

Presented by Michael Oren



On November 29, 1947, after a hotly contested debate, the United Nations decided to partition British-ruled Palestine into two separate states, one for the Jews and one for the Arabs.

After 2,000 years of exile, and a mere three years after the Holocaust, the Jews would once again be a free nation in their ancient homeland. But having a claim to land was one thing—being able to keep it was another. The Jews were euphoric, but the Arabs were enraged. They swore to destroy the Jewish state before it could even be born. Arab armies, supplied with tanks, guns, and planes by Britain and France, were poised to attack the Jewish forces, who were only lightly armed. “It will be a war of annihilation,” declared Azzam Pasha, Secretary-General of the Arab League. And the threat was not idle. The war can be broken down into four phases.

The first phase began immediately after the UN partition resolution in November 1947. Palestinian Arabs and irregulars from Syria, Lebanon, and Gaza, attacked Jewish settlements. Arab forces also laid siege to Jerusalem, depriving 100,000 Jews of food and water. Repeated Jewish attempts to break the siege were repulsed. The situation was desperate. While frantically trying to procure weapons from abroad, Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion, fearful that the world would retreat from the partition resolution, refrained from ordering a counter-offensive. But the Arab attacks proved too devastating, forcing the Jews to strike back. In brutal battles, the Jews scored victories in Haifa, Safed, Jaffa, and Tiberias. Assuming these defeats were only temporary, tens

of thousands of Arabs fled to neighboring states. The violence reached a pitch in April 1948, when Zionist forces attacked the Arab town of Deir Yassin, resulting in what the Arabs claim was a massacre. Arab gunmen then ambushed a medical convoy to Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem, killing seventy-eight doctors and nurses.

A month later, Arab forces overwhelmed the Jewish defenders of the Etzion Bloc of settlements south of Jerusalem. 127 men and women were slaughtered. By mid-May, when the state was set to come into being, its survival was far from certain. Laboring under an American arms embargo, the Jewish forces only had enough bullets to fight for one week. Jerusalem was cut off, and settlements throughout the country were isolated. Fearing a second Holocaust, Zionist leaders were divided about whether or not to even declare the state. Nevertheless, on Friday, May 14, Ben-Gurion entered the Tel Aviv Art Museum, chosen because its thick walls could withstand an anticipated Arab air attack and proclaimed the independence of the reborn Jewish state—to be known as the State of Israel. Eleven minutes later, President Harry Truman made the United States the first nation to recognize the Jewish state.

The second phase of the war was about to begin. And Israel’s situation was only going to get worse. The Arabs had promised to invade the moment Israel declared independence. And they did, their five armies conquering large parts of the Galilee in the north and the Negev in the south. Egyptian forces advanced within twenty miles of Tel Aviv. In the Old City of Jerusalem, Israeli

fighters tried and failed to defend the ancient Jewish Quarter, which was conquered and looted by the Arabs. Yet as bad as it was for the Jews, it was almost as bad for the Arabs. They had also suffered severe losses and had seriously underestimated the strength of Israel's resistance. So when a UN truce was proposed on June 11, both sides agreed. Israel used the truce to procure more advanced weaponry and absorb tens of thousands of immigrants, many of them Holocaust survivors. These new arrivals were given guns and immediately sent into battle. The Egyptians broke the truce by attacking an Israeli village in the Negev. Israel responded by advancing on all fronts. The third phase of the war had begun.

Among the cities taken by Israel were Lod and Ramle, whose Arab inhabitants either fled or were expelled. All told, nearly 700,000 Palestinians became refugees in what they still call today the Nakhba, the Disaster. Roughly an equal number of Jews were later expelled from Arab countries. Another truce was declared on July 18 and lasted until mid-October, when the fourth and final phase of the war began.

By now, the balance of power had shifted. Adequately armed, the Israel Defense Forces, the IDF, drove the invaders beyond the original partition lines. The last operation of the war took place in March 1949, when IDF troops raised a hand-painted Israeli flag over the Red Sea village of Umm Al-Rashrash, soon to be renamed Eilat. Israel's War of Independence ended with armistice agreements negotiated by American diplomat Ralph Bunche. He was the first black American to be awarded a Nobel Prize.

The war was costly, resulting in the deaths of 6,000 Israelis—one percent of the population. Jerusalem was divided between Jewish west and Arab east, with the Old City remaining in Jordanian hands. Nearly two decades would pass before Jews could once again pray at the Western Wall. The Palestinian refugee problem became a perennial source of Middle East instability and conflict.

But the most momentous outcome of the war was the rebirth, after two thousand years of

exile, of a strong and sovereign Jewish state, the State of Israel.

I'm Michael Oren, author of *Six Days of War*, for Prager University

ISRAEL AT WAR: 1956

Presented by Michael Oren



Just before dawn on October 29, 1956, paratroopers of the Israel Defense Forces, led by the legendary commander, Ariel Sharon, descended into Egypt's Sinai Desert. The paratroopers' goal was to conquer the strategically important Mitla Pass. But the broader objective was to eliminate the threat posed by the Soviet-armed Egyptian military, and Egypt's strongman, Gamal Abdel Nasser. Israel was not alone in seeking Nasser's defeat. Great Britain and France also wanted to intervene against Nasser, who had just nationalized the economically-vital Suez Canal. They only needed a pretext. And Israel provided them with one by attacking Egyptian forces in the Mitla Pass, twenty miles away from the canal. Thus began what is known as the Suez Crisis, the second Arab-Israeli war.

Where did it all begin? The war's origins can be traced to the end of Israel's War of Independence in 1949, when Israel signed armistice agreements with Jordan, Egypt, and Syria. Israel viewed these agreements as precursors to peace, but the Arabs saw them as temporary truces leading up to what they called the "second round," to attack and destroy Israel.

Throughout the early 1950s, the Arabs acquired modern weapons—above all, fighter jets—which Israel, still laboring under a US arms embargo, could not obtain. The Arab states also backed bands of Palestinian terrorists known as *fidayeen*—self-sacrificers—who launched raids against Israeli communities from the West Bank, which was then ruled by Jordan, as well as from the Gaza Strip, ruled by Egypt. In response, Israel formed paratrooper units

under Ariel Sharon to retaliate against the *fidayeen* raids. Border tensions reached a fever pitch. Still, war seemed unlikely unless a leader emerged who could rally the Arab world and unite it against Israel. That leader was the charismatic Gamal Abdel Nasser, who electrified Arabic-speaking audiences with his fiery rhetoric against the West.

After seizing power in July 1952, he portrayed himself as the hero of Pan-Arabism, the notion that all Arab states should unite and form one powerful nation. Nasser also railed against "the Zionist Entity"—he refused to call Israel by its name—and pledged to fight it. He rejected repeated American and British attempts to broker a treaty with Israel, even though they offered him large pieces of Israel's Negev desert in return. Instead, he intensified *fidayeen* attacks, and sought advanced weaponry from the West's paramount enemy, the Soviet Union.

In September 1955, he succeeded, signing a massive arms deal with the Soviets that included not only hundreds of tanks and armored vehicles, but also modern fighter jets and bombers. Suddenly outgunned by Egypt, surrounded by threats on all sides, Israel's very existence hung in the balance—so believed Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan. Israel sorely needed an ally, but no country was willing to aid the isolated Jewish state. That is until 1955, when Nasser started backing Algeria's struggle for independence from France, giving France and Israel a common enemy. Secretly at first, France started providing Israel with arms. A great many arrived, but for Ben-Gurion and Dayan, not

fast enough. In another year, at most, they estimated, Egypt would be ready to strike.

The opportunity to preempt that attack came in July 1956, when Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. Britain and France, which largely owned the canal, were willing to take it back by force, but they needed a pretext. In a secret agreement, Israel committed to land its paratroopers in the Mitla Pass near the canal. This would set off a pre-planned chain of events. Britain and France would issue an ultimatum to both Egypt and Israel to cease threatening the waterway.

Both, presumably, would reject the demand and so give an excuse for a joint Anglo-French expedition to invade Egypt and “protect” the canal. It was a wild scheme, one that was certain to anger US President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who publicly opposed the use of force against Nasser. Which is why the French, the British, and the Israelis kept their plan a secret.

Until October 29, when the paratroopers landed in Mitla. At the same time, Israeli ground forces smashed through Egyptian lines in Sinai, and Israel’s French-made jets shot Egypt’s Soviet-made MiGs out of the sky. Within 100 hours, all of Sinai down to the Suez Canal and all of Gaza lay in Israeli hands.

The British and French had their pretext, and offered their ultimatum. Then they failed to act. Eisenhower, feeling betrayed, was furious, and warned of serious repercussions if Britain and France went ahead with their scheme.

Despite US objections, they did, but only after dallying for five full days before invading Egypt. And even then their progress was painfully slow. That gave the US and the UN enough time to condemn the invasion and force the expedition to evacuate Egypt at once. The invading troops retreated in disgrace, and both the British and French governments fell. Israel, too, was pressured by the US to withdraw its troops, and a first-of-its-kind United Nations peacekeeping force was deployed in Sinai and Gaza. But Israel had eliminated the immediate Egyptian threat, and earned itself a decade of relative quiet. Ben-Gurion and Dayan were national

heroes, and Israel could focus on absorbing more immigrants, building its economy, and fortifying the Israel Defense Forces to meet the far greater challenge that would come in 1967.

I’m Michael Oren, author of *Six Days of War*, for Prager University.

ISRAEL AT WAR: 1967

Presented by Michael Oren



Few events in modern history were as dramatic as the Six-Day War of June 1967, the war between Israel and four Arab nations: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq. Among other things, it changed the nature of the Middle East and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, transferred control of the West Bank from Jordan to Israel, and unleashed Islamic extremism.

The origins of the war were complex. They began with the rise of Pan-Arabism, which sought to unite the countries—Syria, Iraq, and Jordan—created by the Europeans after World War I—into a single Arab state. The question was, who would lead that state? In their efforts to claim that role, Arab rulers tried to outdo one another in attacking Israel. Foremost among them was Gamal Abdel Nasser, the charismatic leader of the most powerful Arab country, Egypt.

To establish his leadership, on May 16, 1967, Nasser evicted the UN peacekeepers who served as a buffer between Israel and Egypt in the Sinai desert and the Gaza Strip, which was then under Egyptian control. Nasser marched his army into the Sinai and threatened to “drive the Jews into the sea.” He blockaded the Straits of Tiran, at the entrance to the Red Sea, choking off Israel’s vital southern port of Eilat. He made a military alliance with Syria and Iraq. He placed the Jordanian army under Egyptian command.

By the first week of June 1967, Israel was surrounded. On its southern border, the army of Egypt. On its eastern border, the armies of Jordan and Iraq. On its northern border, the army of Syria. And on its western

border, the Mediterranean Sea. And to make matters worse, Israel faced these threats virtually alone. It had a tenuous relationship with Europe and friendly ties with the United States, but not a strategic alliance.

The Israeli Defense Forces, the IDF, fought with French arms, not American arms. And, of course, the Soviets were antagonistic, having fully backed Nasser. The situation was life-and-death. The normally fractious political parties of the Jewish state formed a national unity government with the dour Levi Eshkol as prime minister, and the famed one-eyed general, Moshe Dayan, as defense minister. The existential question of the moment for Israel’s politicians and generals was this: Should Israel wait for the inevitable attack and react? Or should it strike preemptively? And if it did, what if the attack should fail?

After much arguing and agonizing, Israel’s leadership chose to attack. At 7:45 a.m. on the morning of June 5, Israel launched one of the largest air strikes in military history. The Egyptians were caught completely by surprise. In a matter of hours, Israeli planes wiped out three-quarters of Egypt’s air force, most of it on the ground. This gave Israel command of the skies, a major tactical advantage. Then, Israeli ground forces rushed into the Sinai.

Their goal was to neutralize the Egyptian threat and, by doing so, hopefully dissuade other Arab states from joining the fray. Israel repeatedly urged Jordan’s King Hussein to stay out of it. It didn’t work. In a matter of hours, Israel was fighting a three-front war. Jordanian forces fired thousands of artillery

shells into West Jerusalem and the Tel Aviv area, and attacked Israeli positions along the eastern border. Syria, too, rained thousands of shells down onto Israeli towns and villages in the Galilee. Israel responded as if the nation's life depended on it. It did. In the open spaces of the Sinai desert, Israeli jets pulverized Egyptian forces from above while Israeli ground troops and tanks sent the Egyptians reeling back toward the Suez Canal.

Meanwhile, in the tight quarters of Jerusalem, Israeli paratroopers advanced into the eastern half of the city. By the third day of the war, the Jordanian and Egyptian armies were in full retreat. Israeli soldiers conquered all of Sinai up to the Suez Canal. Responding to Palestinian attacks from Gaza, the IDF captured the Strip as well.

Most dramatically, on the morning of June 7, Israeli paratroopers realized a two-thousand-year-old Jewish dream of reuniting East and West Jerusalem and liberating the Old City. "The Temple Mount is in our hands," commander Motta Gur reported, as his troops danced in front of the Western Wall. Only the Syrian front remained, with Syrian artillery still pounding Israel's north.

Though fearful the Soviets would enter the war in defense of their ally, Moshe Dayan determined that the opportunity of securing the high ground of Israel's northern border, the Golan Heights, could not be missed. Advancing under furious Syrian fire, Israeli forces achieved their objective. In six earth-shaking days, it was all over. Israel had defeated multiple Arab armies, convincing American leaders to ally with the Jewish state and provide it with arms.

The world was stunned: a country of merely two and a half million people had defeated an Arab world of over one hundred million. A country eight miles wide at its narrowest point before the war had quadrupled the territory under its control. But many challenges loomed, not the least of which was what to do with over a million Palestinians now under Israeli authority.

That question would preoccupy Israeli political, diplomatic and military thinking for

many decades to come, and still does to this day.

I'm Michael Oren, author of *Six Days of War*, for Prager University.

ISRAEL AT WAR: 1973

Presented by Michael Oren



The date was October 6, 1973, Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year. Synagogues in Israel were filled with Jews fasting and praying. Then, at precisely 2:00 p.m., air raid sirens started to blare. The prayers stopped. In their place came whispers—rumors of war. But they weren't rumors. I

n the south, an Egyptian force of 100,000 soldiers, backed by 1,300 Soviet-made tanks, was crossing the Suez Canal. They quickly overran a series of fortifications Israel had constructed along the canal following the 1967 Six-Day War.

Israeli fighter jets scrambled to meet the invading force, but the Egyptians were ready with the latest generation of Soviet-designed anti-aircraft batteries. Israeli tanks ran into a deadly barrage of anti-tank missiles.

These were weapons Egypt didn't possess in 1967, and Israel wasn't prepared to deal with them. The Egyptians inflicted hundreds of casualties, but the Sinai desert is deep and far from Israel's southern border.

There was no such buffer in the north. Hundreds of Syrian tanks, outnumbering Israeli tanks five to one, broke through Israeli defenses on the Golan Heights. That night, Israel's legendary Defense Minister, Moshe Dayan, appeared on Israeli television and broke down in front of the cameras, telling viewers that the Jewish state was in danger of total destruction.

How did this disaster happen? There's one simple answer: complacency. After winning

a lightning victory in the Six-Day War six years earlier, Israeli leaders assumed that the Arabs wouldn't dare to launch another war so soon. It was worse than that.

Israeli leaders had credible intelligence that Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Syrian dictator Hafez al-Assad were planning an attack. But they simply dismissed those reports as overwrought. Anyway, who would ever think that the Arabs would attack on the holiest day of the Jewish calendar?

Only the day before, October 5, with Egyptian and Syrian forces now massed on Israel's borders, did Prime Minister Golda Meir, Dayan, and other Israeli officials finally conclude that war was about to happen. Israel frantically called up its reserves. Golda Meir, meanwhile, phoned US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, asking for support to mount a preemptive strike.

But Kissinger said no. If Israel attacked first, he explained, it would be seen as the aggressor. This hesitation cost Israel dearly. As enemy armies broke through Israel's defenses, tens of thousands of reservists rushed out of their synagogues.

They didn't go home. They went straight to the front. The fighting in the north was brutal, often hand-to-hand. But within forty-eight hours, Israeli forces had halted the Syrian advance on the Golan Heights. In the south, it was a different story. The Egyptian Third Army repulsed Israel's counterattack.

The pressure on Golda Meir was overwhelming. Normally a five-pack-a-day

smoker, she was up to nine.

Just as the situation looked hopeless, Israeli General Ariel Sharon came up with an audacious plan. He would lead a combined division of tanks and paratroopers across the Suez Canal, cutting off the Egyptian Third Army from behind and surrounding it.

The problem was how to get the pontoon bridges to the Suez Canal through heavily defended Egyptian lines. Some of the fiercest fighting of the war followed, but in the end, Israeli forces broke through and crossed the canal. Israel was back in control.

The Egyptian Third Army—20,000 men—now surrounded, faced obliteration. Enter the superpowers: the Soviet Union on the side of Egypt and Syria; the United States on the side of Israel.

As fast as Egyptian and Syrian forces were losing planes, tanks, and missiles, the Soviet Union was resupplying them. And as fast as Israel was losing its armaments, the US was resupplying Israel—22,000 tons of military aid authorized by US President Richard Nixon. But then, to save the Third Army, the Soviets moved their nuclear-armed fleet to the Eastern Mediterranean where it went “eyeball to eyeball” with the US Sixth Fleet.

For the first time since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, both superpowers went on nuclear alert. A regional conflict was threatening to become a world war. Kissinger pressured Meir to stand down.

Israel had successfully repelled the invasion, he argued; it was no longer in danger. The Soviets, in turn, convinced Sadat and Assad that a cease-fire would be better than having their armies annihilated. Negotiations between the warring parties soon followed. After three bloody weeks, the Yom Kippur War was over.

Caught off guard on the first day, Israel rebounded and ended the war with its artillery within range of both Cairo and Damascus—a military feat still studied at West Point. Nevertheless, the Israelis, who lost over 2,600 men, consider the Yom Kippur War a disaster.

The Egyptians, conversely, consider the October War, as they call it, a glorious victory. Even though they were defeated at the war's end and lost 15,000 men, they had given Israel a terrible shock. That belief made Sadat a hero in the eyes of his own people.

He was the warrior who restored their national honor. Six years later, with this new credibility, Sadat joined with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and US President Jimmy Carter in signing the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel that endures to this day.

I'm Michael Oren, author of *Six Days of War*, for Prager University.

ISRAEL AT WAR: 1982

Presented by Michael Oren



At dawn, on June 6, 1982, 60,000 Israeli troops, accompanied by 800 tanks, stormed across Israel's northern border into Lebanon. So began the fourth Arab-Israeli war—a war that the Israeli government officially dubbed Operation Peace for Galilee, but the rest of the world called the Lebanon War.

An old adage holds that everyone knows how wars begin but nobody knows how they end. That was certainly true in Lebanon. The war's roots could be traced back to Israel's struggle for independence in 1948, when more than 100,000 Palestinians fled to Lebanon.

They were kept in refugee camps, which became hotbeds of radicalism. Then, with the Palestinians' defeat in the Jordanian civil war of 1970, another 200,000 Palestinians fled to Lebanon along with numerous terrorist groups. Chief among these was the Palestine Liberation Organization—the PLO—under Yasser Arafat.

The massive influx of armed Palestinians tipped Lebanon's delicate balance between Christians, Druze, and Muslims. It led, five years later, to the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon, and hundreds of thousands of casualties. Syria exploited the conflict to occupy large parts of the country.

The terrorists, meanwhile, turned their sights on Israel—firing rockets into the Galilee, and attacking northern border communities. In March 1978, terrorists landed on a beach between Tel Aviv and Haifa and attacked the nearby highway, killing thirty-eight civilians, many of them children. Israel responded by invading southern Lebanon—the Litani

Operation—which succeeded in pushing the terrorists back from the border, but only temporarily. The PLO attacks continued, not only from Lebanon, the West Bank, and Gaza, but also against Jews and Israelis abroad. Israel struck back, hitting PLO bases.

In addition, it formed an alliance with Bashir Gemayel, the leader of the Lebanese Christian militia. Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon believed that, together with the Christians, Israel could drive the PLO and the Syrians out of Lebanon, and replace them with a pro-Western government that would make peace with Israel.

The entire Middle East would be altered, Sharon asserted, and convinced Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin of the plan. Israeli forces were ready to strike.

On June 3, 1982, Shlomo Argov, Israel's ambassador to Great Britain, was shot in the head by a Palestinian terrorist, and left permanently disabled.

The next day, the Israeli government approved Operation Big Pines, designed to push the PLO twenty-five miles away from the border. But a secret part of the plan also provided for the possibility that the IDF would push further north to drive Syrian forces out of Lebanon.

Two Israeli divisions crossed the border, one heading north along the coastal road, and the other heading east to outflank the Syrians. Between the two columns towered

Beaufort Castle, a medieval stronghold that served as the PLO's fort. It was taken after a bloody battle by Golani Brigade commandos. On both fronts, the fighting proved fierce.

Yet everywhere, Israeli arms prevailed—the air force shot down 100 Syrian jets and helicopters without suffering a single loss. Bashir Gemayel signed an historic peace agreement with Israel. By the end of June, Israel was besieging Beirut.

Through American mediation, Syrian troops evacuated the area, and some 6,500 PLO terrorists—most notably among them Yasser Arafat—boarded boats for Tunisia. Operation Big Pines appeared to be on the verge of an historic success. But it was not to be.

On September 14, Gemayel was assassinated by a massive car bomb. Avenging his death, Christian militiamen entered the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps, and slaughtered hundreds of civilians.

The IDF, which failed to prevent the massacre, was accused of perpetrating it by much of the international community. Menachem Begin's response was, "Christians kill Muslims, and the world blames the Jews." Israel subsequently pulled back to what it called the "security zone" along its northern border.

US soldiers, led by the Marines, took the place of the Israelis in Beirut, fighting against Muslim and Druze militias. On October 23, 1983, a Shi'ite suicide bomber struck their headquarters, killing 241.

The United States later withdrew from Lebanon, as well. Though Operation Big Pines succeeded in driving both the PLO and Syria from Lebanon, it failed to realize its vision of peace. Bashir Gemayel's brother, Amin, cut off ties with Israel. Begin resigned, and Ariel Sharon was forced from office. But the long-term effects of the Lebanon War would be felt for decades.

The vacuum created by the withdrawal of the PLO and Syria from Lebanon was filled by an Iranian-backed Shi'ite militia, Hezbollah. Its repeated attacks on Israeli troops convinced the Israelis that the cost of remaining in

Lebanon was too high. The IDF withdrew from Lebanon entirely in May 2000. But Hezbollah continues to threaten Israel to this day.

Had Israel been able to make a peace agreement with Lebanon in the 1980s, it would have changed the Middle East for the better.

But rather than bringing peace, the Lebanon War once again revealed the core cause of the Middle East conflict: the refusal to accept the Jewish state. As long as that refusal persists, there will be no peace.

I'm Michael Oren, author of *Six Days of War*, for Prager University.

ARABS AND ISRAELIS: FINDING COMMON GROUND



Presented by Fatema Al-Harbi

People tell me I'm courageous.

Maybe I am. I'll let you decide.

But I never think about myself that way. I think about what the right thing to do is and what makes sense. And I leave it at that.

I was taught that Jews hated me because I'm Muslim, and, in turn, I was taught to hate them because they're Jews. That's pretty much what every child grows up thinking in the Arab world.

I grew up in Bahrain. After graduating from university, I went to work in the education sector. I didn't think much about Israel at the time. Out of sight, out of mind.

Then, when the Abraham Accords—a new partnership between Israel and the Gulf States—took shape, I began to take notice. This was interesting, I thought. We live in the same neighborhood. Israel is a thriving tech hub. It stands to reason that they might have products and technology that would benefit the Gulf economy.

Then, in 2020, out of the blue, I was contacted by a nonprofit NGO called Sharaka, whose goal is to introduce and educate Arabs and Israelis about one another and promote peace. They asked if I wanted to visit Israel as part of a Bahraini delegation connected to the Abraham Accords. I accepted.

By this point, I was very curious. Who were these Israelis? I went all over Israel. I visited with Jews, of course, but also Arabs. I met

with Christians, Druze, and Bedouins. I toured Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and many holy sites—Jewish, Christian, and Muslim. What I discovered shocked me. These weren't horrible people. This wasn't a horrible country. It was a dynamic democracy. It was also incredibly diverse—different races, different ethnic backgrounds, different religions.

From what I could tell, everybody seemed to get along. And the Israelis, I discovered, were very anxious to establish good relations with Bahrain—and, for that matter, the rest of the Arab world. Furthermore, they treated me with generosity and respect, both as a committed Muslim and as a woman.

They were genuinely curious about me—my personal story, my country, and what I thought about a whole host of issues. In short, they listened. And I listened to them. I decided that the future—my future—shouldn't be based on hatred; the future should be based on respect.

I felt sure that if more Arabs knew what I now knew about Israel, this might be possible. I was so taken by this idea that I quit my job and went to work for the organization that brought me to Israel.

As it turned out, my sudden career move came at a steep cost. In this, I was naïve. I didn't anticipate the anger my new thinking would provoke—that I would be called a traitor, that people would be so mad at me. It threw me into a real depression.

But I came out of it more convinced than

ever that a better future was possible. I believe the Palestinians deserve a homeland of their own. But the idea that Israel doesn't deserve to exist and should be wiped off the map doesn't get anyone anywhere.

Just how counterproductive this idea is was all too clearly demonstrated on October 7, 2023. I've seen the raw footage: the beheadings, the children watching their parents being murdered in front of their eyes. I can't unsee it. And I can't let it stand.

I won't let it confuse me or deter me from pursuing peace. I grieve for every innocent person killed in Gaza. I grieve for any innocent person killed anywhere. I hate war. I can only see one way forward: mutual understanding and shared interest.

The Abraham Accords represent that. The purveyors of hate are only too aware of this fact. That's why they will do anything to stop them. But they will fail. There are too many people like me who know who the real enemy is. And it's not Israel.

I'm Fatema Al-Harbi, CEO of Sharaka Bahrain, and the Gulf Affairs director of Sharaka Global, for Prager University.