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Today, by any reasonable standard, Israel remains a beacon of liberalism in an illiberal region. Moreover, on any genuine political compass, Jews and Israel *are* the true north of liberalism, not simply because of the way they are constituted as a people, but also because of the anti-liberal forces ranged against them.

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We Arabs have been exposed to many good things inside Israel. I'm not ashamed to say that we learned from Israel. We learned about democracy. We learned about the freedom of debate. We learned about the freedom of the media.

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'Kauft nicht bei Juden' will worsen the conflict

By Denis MacShane, JPost, 29 November 2010

The call to boycott Jewish commerce is Europe's oldest political appeal.

Kauft nicht bei Juden – “Don't buy from Jews” – is back. The call to boycott Jewish commerce is Europe's oldest political appeal. Once again, as the tsunami of hate against Israel rolls out from the Right and the Left, from Islamist ideologues to Europe's cultural elites, the demand is to punish the Jews. That the actions of the Israeli government are open to criticism is a fact. But what are the real arguments?

Firstly, that Israel is wrong to defy international law as an occupying force on the West Bank. But what about Turkey? It has 35,000 soldiers occupying the territory of a sovereign republic – Cyprus. Ankara has sent hundreds of thousands of settlers to colonize the ancient Greek-owned lands of northern Cyprus. Turkey has been told again and again by the UN to withdraw its troops. Instead, it now also stands accused of destroying the ancient Christian churches of northern Cyprus.

Does anyone call for a boycott of Turkey, or urge companies to divest from it? No. Only the Jews are targeted. Or take India; 500,000 Indian soldiers occupy Kashmir. According to Amnesty International, 70,000 Muslims have been killed over the past 20 years by these soldiers and security forces – a number that far exceeds the Palestinians killed by Israeli forces in the same period. But the Islamic ideologues focus on Jews, not Indians.

May we talk of the western Sahara and Morocco, or Algeria's closure of the border there, making life far worse than that of Palestinians in Ramallah or Hebron? No, better not.

Voltaire – anti-Semite that he was – should be alive today to mock the hypocrisy of the new high priests calling anathema on the heads of Jews in Israel.

Second, the desire for peace in the Middle East is a global priority. But peace requires recognition of the Jewish state of Israel. There are 40 member states of the UN which have the words “Muslim” or “Islamic” in their names. No one challenges their right to exist or defend themselves.

Israel unilaterally withdrew from Gaza. Its reward was to have the territory turned into a new launch pad for rockets intended to kill Jews.

More rockets have been fired at Israel from Gaza than V1 or V2 rockets at London in 1944. No one blamed Winston Churchill for responding with all the force he could, as cities like Hamburg or Dresden faced the wrath of the RAF. But if Israel takes the slightest action against the Jew-killers of Hamas, all the hate of the world falls on its head.

Third, it is hard to see how peace can be made with an Israel that so many seek to brand an “apartheid state.”

I worked in the 1980s with the black trade union movement inside South Africa. We lay in ditches as the apartheid police patrolled townships hunting for political activists. I

could not swim at the same beach as my wife, a French-Vietnamese, because of the racist laws. Muslims and Jews swim off the same Tel Aviv beaches. They can stay in the same hotels, be elected to the same parliament, and appeal to an independent judiciary for justice.

By definition, an apartheid state has no right to exist. It cannot be a member of the UN. The campaign to call Israel an apartheid state is a campaign to make it a non-state. How can peace be made with a state whose opponents say should not exist?

In Britain, there are calls by journalists and professors to boycott the Israeli media or universities. But Israeli writers, journalists and professors are the main opponents of the counterproductive policies of their government. To boycott them is to hand even more power to the haredi and Russian nationalists who now control Right-wing politics in Israel.

By any standard, the attacks on media freedom, on women, on gays or on lawyers is 1,000 times worse in Iran or Saudi Arabia. There is no democracy in Syria or Libya, limited democracy in Jordan, and open anti-Semitism displayed by the Muslim Brotherhood movements in the Arab world. Is there any call to boycott these states, their journalists or professors? No. The call – rightly – is for engagement, contacts, debate and discussion. Many even argue for talks with Hamas, although its charter, with its strident anti- Semitic language, could have been written by a Nazi.

But talks with Jewish politicians, lawyers or intellectuals must be boycotted. This policy of making the Jewish citizens of Israel into objects of global hatred will only make the Middle East crisis worse. If it was directed evenly at all states which occupy and oppress territories, it might have some basis in morality. If the boycott, disinvestment and sanctions movement also called for sanctions against the new anti-Semitism of the extreme Right in Europe, it might make sense. The openly anti- Semitic Jobbik Party in Hungary parades in its fascist uniforms. Anti-Semitic politicians are elected to the European Parliament. The German politician Thilo Sarrazin can describe Jews as having “different genes” from other people. And now Europeans, of all people, once again cry *Kauft nicht bei Juden*.

Those who dislike Israeli rightwing policies must find other language than that of classical anti- Semitism. I am not Jewish. As a British MP, I work with thousands of Muslims in my constituency. I am more often in mosques than in churches. I am proud of my Muslim friends who are MPs, peers, municipal councillors or prominent as journalists, lawyers, doctors and intellectuals. The 20 million European Muslims face new hates which must be combated. But there is no profit for them in joining the hate campaigns against Jews in Israel.

As Europeans we must reject the old language of boycott and economic campaigns against Jews. Israel, Palestine and Europe must all have a 21st century future, and not return to the hates of the past.

The anti-Semites pointed finger

Ruth Wisse, Commentary Magazine, 3 November 2010

<http://www.ruthfullyyours.com/2010/11/03/ruth-wisse-the-anti-semites-pointed-finger/>

Why can't we set ourselves the goal of eradicating anti-Semitism? All across the civilized world, people track anti-Semitism, expose it, oppose it, decry it. And yet no one seriously considers the possibility of bringing about its end. Is this because of some lack of capacity or courage? Or do we face in anti-Semitism something, to use the phrase of the Yiddish writer L. Shapiro, as eternal as the eternal God?

Two other scourges of modern times have seen their power greatly diminished if not eliminated. Fascism was crushed in World War II, and Communism lost its political base in 1991. These movements still have their adherents, but their sustaining polities went down to defeat. Yet anti-Semitism, which figured prominently in both, has metastasized and, according to one of its foremost historians, Robert Wistrich, "will probably get worse."

Many reasons - historical, religious, sociological, ideological, even epidemiological - have been adduced for the persistence of what Anthony Julius has termed the "sewer" of anti-Semitism. All have merit. But the one reason that remains but dimly understood, and even stubbornly resisted, is the political - and yet it is the one, I believe, that accounts for the phenomenon's continuing success. Politically, anti-Semitism succeeds by working through misdirection, and its opponents no less than its adherents tend to be taken in by some of its deceptive strategies.

A good place to begin probing the resiliency of anti-Semitic deception is with the origin of Zionism. Zionism arose, in part, as a response to modern political anti-Semitism, but the movement's history reveals an early and profound misdiagnosis of the problem.

It was first and foremost a movement of national self-determination, a familiar force in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. But unlike other national movements, whose efforts to liberate subjugated peoples was opposed by existing polities - nations and empires - Jews confronted a trans-national political force that would come to be known as "anti-Semitism." Zionists believed that the way to address the problem was by normalizing the political condition of the Jews themselves. Jews had been for too long a dependent minority in other people's lands. Since anti-Semitism attacked Jews as usurping aliens, the provocation would presumably be removed once the Jews packed up and went home. It seemed to make independent sense, at a time of proliferating nation-states, for Jews to re-establish *their* homeland: once they did so, logic suggested, they would at last become a politically unexceptional people.

Zionism achieved its primary goal. I will not dwell here on the marvels of Israel, except to emphasize that Zionism succeeded in accomplishing whatever depended on Jewish effort, energy, and will alone. But what about the expectations of political normalization its founders and builders possessed so fervently? Those who settled the land and attained sovereignty were entitled to expect that they, like the populaces of other new nations, would be accorded "normal" treatment commensurate with international custom.

In this, Zionism proved mistaken.

Zionists believed that anti-Semitism could be calmed through actions taken *by Jews* to give their enemies what their enemies wanted: a place, a place elsewhere, to which Jews could and would go. It was as if Jews were acknowledging that their existence as a minority people was a problem, and therefore *remediable*.

What this hope of normalization ignored was the fact that the doctrine of anti-Semitism arose in the 19th century not to address the realities of the Jewish situation but to meet the political needs of *others* and to satisfy the political ends of others. The error lay not in the confidence placed by Jews in their capacity to establish a homeland but in the expectation that doing so would mitigate or put an end to the hostility directed against them.

As it turned out, anti-Semitism was launched against a people without a homeland, but it would work just as well against Jews with a state of their own.

How so? In 1945, the Arab League was founded with the common goal of preventing the creation of Israel. So far, nothing out of the ordinary: many emerging nations initially meet with opposition. But what followed was altogether exceptional. Israel won its War of Independence, and the war was concluded with an armistice between Israel and the neighbouring countries it had been forced to fight. But unlike Britain's response to the victory of the 13 American colonies, the leaders of Israel's neighbours, plus 17 other Arab nations, actually refused to acknowledge its existence. And the United Nations collaborated in this refusal. Instead of expelling the countries of the Arab League for failing to abide by the founding principle of the international body, the UN gave the action a pass. This monumental failure of world leadership rendered Israel, the only member state to be so treated, exceptional. The establishment of the State of Israel, undergirded by the 1947 UN vote to partition Palestine into two states, meant nothing when it came to the political normalization of the Jews.

More than the offense itself, the UN's condoning of that offense allowed anti-Semitism to become a viable international tool. At almost every step, the UN functioned to facilitate rather than to thwart the Arab war against a member state. The UN did not generate the politics of postwar anti-Semitism, but it legitimated its practice—the practice, that is, of organizing an entire politics as a means of defaming, delegitimizing, and if possible destroying another national polity.

There was nothing inevitable about this process. The Arab world might have developed differently in the wake of 1948. Had Arab leaders accepted the presence of a Jewish state alongside so many of their own states - most of them not much older than Israel, and many of them much more artificial - the Middle East could have seen peoples living side by side in relative amity. The United Nations might also have acted differently, just as it had been free to go in another direction when it voted in 1947 for the partition plan. In such an alternative scenario, the United States might have exerted pressure on even the obdurate King Saud of Saudi Arabia to accept Israel.

But it was not to be. The Zionist misdiagnosis, however innocent, raised expectations that were not satisfied. And, in the next phase, Zionism itself would be held responsible for raising these false expectations in the first place. Having expended so much creative energy in the recovery of the Jewish homeland - on the assumption that it would reduce anti-Jewish assaults - Jews found themselves facing greater enmity than before. For

some Jews, therefore, it was hard to feel grateful for the acquired capacity for self-defense when the goal, as they thought, had been to *need* no self-defence. Instead of reconsidering the original mistake, some compounded the error by attributing the perpetuation of anti-Semitism to the Jews of Israel or to the Jewish state itself. In short, the enemies of Israel had discovered in anti-Semitism an amazingly effective political tool - and one that, into the bargain, rewarded them with wonderfully useful side effects.

Anti-Semitism works through the strategy of the pointing finger. Through political prestidigitation, the accuser draws attention away from his own sins - in the case of Arab leaders, the systematic oppression and immiseration of their own people - by pointing to the Jews, whose demonically inflated image and luridly portrayed wickedness make them a plausible explanation for whatever ails his regime. The pointing finger keeps negative attention focused on the Jews - or Israelis - and the latter, as often as not, obligingly fall into the trap by accepting responsibility for a situation they cannot control. In politics as before the law, whoever points the finger is the plaintiff, and whoever stands in the dock is the defendant. Unless they were to file a countersuit, simply answering to the charge of which they stood accused placed the Jews under the constant obligation of defending their innocence.

The Zionist misconception - namely, that actions on the part of the Jews would end anti-Semitism - found its apotheosis in the Oslo Accords of 1993. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's decision to invite Yasir Arafat to head the Palestinian Authority was an absurd political decision - no threatened country has ever before armed its sworn enemy with the expectation of *gaining* security. But there it was, and Israel acted as it acted. The deed was exacerbated, however, by being linked to the expectation that it would lead to peace. Once again, Jews pretended that anti-Semitism could be stopped by some remedial action of their own, ignoring that the option lay not with them but with their accusers.

Rabin might have said:

The State of Israel under my leadership has decided to make such and such concessions because we feel it is in our national interest to do so for the following reasons (a) (b) (c) and (d). But we are obliged to point out that the preposterous imbalance between the Arab belligerents and their target makes it impossible for us to end the conflict. Only Arab leaders can stop what they started. However much we may wish it, Israeli concessions can do nothing on their own to bring peace. We have no incentive for aggression, and the lopsidedness of the war against us means that only its initiators can halt their incitement against us. We call on them to help their Palestinian brethren govern and improve their society. We call on the international community to help us in enforcing penalties against any violation of the agreement we now sign.

But he did not. And since Israel walked open-eyed into the peace trap, it was increasingly blamed for the ensuing aggressions of its "partner." The Israeli actions were supposed to bring peace. So why didn't they? Why not try again with more concessions? The same trap continues to ensnare not only Jews and Israelis but all people of goodwill who genuinely wish for peace in the Middle East and who, with greater or lesser naiveté, look to Israel to bring it about. And who can blame them, if Israel itself has been at least partially responsible for raising false expectations?

In the short run, one can, of course, understand the well-intentioned advice of the pollster Frank Luntz: “The only way for Israel to create sympathy is to be the side working hardest for peace. The best case for Israel is to demonstrate that she is willing to go twice as far as her neighbours to establish peace.” In proposing to end the wars against them, Jews appeal to a worldview that champions conflict resolution, believes in human progress, trusts mankind’s rational self-interest, and seeks international harmony and peace. The catchword for this view is liberalism, which is thought to represent optimism, hope, and a generous view of human nature, and attributes the same disposition to all peoples everywhere. Indeed, Jews were a popular liberal cause in the decades between the end of the Second World War and the Yom Kippur War - when it seemed, momentarily, as if Israel would be able to win the peace.

Today, by any reasonable standard, Israel remains a beacon of liberalism in an illiberal region. Moreover, on any genuine political compass, Jews and Israel *are* the true north of liberalism, not simply on account of the way they are constituted as a people, but also because of the anti-liberal forces ranged against them. Arab opponents of Israel themselves oppose liberal democracy and fear its freedoms. Anti-Semitism in all its forms - Christian and Muslim, secular and religious, totalitarian and authoritarian- is an anti-liberal movement, one that explicitly defines liberalism as a Jewish conspiracy. One would therefore expect the alignment of Israel with liberalism and anti-Zionism with anti-liberalism to win Israel the defence of all liberals. The standard-bearers of muscular liberalism, from the 19th-century novelist George Eliot to the late senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson, have done just that, using defence of Jewish rights as a touchstone of liberal principles.

Yet here is the paradox: the fiercer anti-Semitism grows, the more it forces a choice on liberals. The choice is between protecting the Jews and protecting the orthodox liberal belief in rational compromise, world peace, “getting to yes,” and all the rest. Protecting the Jews requires confronting hostility that is *not* subject to rational persuasion, does *not* obey the liberal version of the rule of law, does *not* abide by liberal ideas of fairness, and does *not* extend peace and goodwill to others. To side with Israel, therefore, leaves one exposed to the same hostility that assails the Jews - an uncomfortable position for individuals and governments alike. The dictates of self-interest persuade some to ignore aggression that presumably doesn’t concern them, and then to justify their callousness by holding Jews responsible for the aggression against them. Some Jews try to demonstrate their own innocence by dissociating themselves from those of their fellow Jews who are under attack.

The politics of anti-Semitism strikes again: blaming the Jews succeeds by persuading liberals that it is aimed only at the “culpable” Jews. By casting these Jews as aggressors, it invites liberals to join the attack on them, on behalf of the Jews’ alleged victims. It congratulates liberals for joining the anti-liberal side by persuading them that they stand with the weak against the strong.

I have tried to show (a) that anti-Semitism cannot be arrested by any remedial action of the Jews; (b) that there are harmful consequences for pretending that concessions from Jews can stop the aggression against them; and (c) that anti-Semitism forces a choice between protection of the Jews and, under the guise of liberalism, complicity with their enemies. And though anti-Semitism is often compared to cancer, there is no comparable effort to finding a cure. The reason seems plain: where the carriers of an illness are also

its casualties, they and their well-wishers have incentives to tackle the problem. But the carriers of anti-Semitism do not experience themselves as its apparent victims. At-risk Jews cannot halt the malignancy, because they are not its carriers. And its carriers, the anti-Semites, will not seek a cure, because they don't recognize its harm to them. Not until enlightened Arabs recognize that they, not the Jews, are its ultimate casualties will this political threat be contained.

What then? Some might argue that, even granting my thesis of a Zionist misdiagnosis, the scourge of anti-Semitism is so protean and so venerable that it can never be entirely expunged. They may have a point about the "entirely," but I beg to differ about the realities of the present situation. A longstanding political attack has repeatedly called forth a defensive reaction of negotiation, accommodation, and no small amount of self-blame. This response has been shown to fail, and will go on failing with ever mounting consequences.

To say that anti-Semitism persists and succeeds does not mean that anti-Semitism is politically invulnerable. Tactics in fighting anti-Semitism may and should vary. But what is required strategically, from Jews as from all decent human beings, is no more than what justice and truth and genuine liberalism demand: namely, to reject vigorously the role of defendant at the bar of world opinion and to instigate political, diplomatic, moral, and intellectual countersuits on every front.

Tolerance and intolerance in the Islamic World

(Seminar held at the Palais des Nations during the Durban Review Conference. All panel members were practising Muslims.)

Khaled Abu Toameh, 18 May 2009

Today I would like to focus more on current political affairs, rather than on the threats of radical Islam - specifically the Israeli-Arab conflict and the status of Israel's Arab citizens.

Before that I would like to tell you a bit about my background. I have been working as a journalist for the past 27 years in the Palestinian areas. My career as a journalist started by working for a PLO newspaper in Jerusalem. For the past 20 years or so I have been serving as a consultant, advisor and facilitator for most of the foreign journalists who come over there and want to go to Ramallah and Gaza and talk to Fatah and Hamas.

And for the past eight years I have been also writing for the Israeli media and specifically *The Jerusalem Post*, reporting on Palestinian issues.

I am an Arab Muslim living in Jerusalem. I am also an Israeli citizen, not because I am a collaborator with Israel, but because my father belongs to the Israeli-Arab community inside Israel. We are talking about nearly 1.4 million people living inside Israel. And I also happen to be a Palestinian because my mother is a Palestinian from the West Bank. So if you're confused you can call me an Israeli-Arab-Muslim-Palestinian. We have a crisis of identity over there.

Now as I said, for the past eight years I have been working for *The Jerusalem Post* and one of the questions that people often ask me is, "Why are you working for a Jewish paper? Aren't you seen as a traitor because you work for a Jewish paper?" I tell people "absolutely not."

There has never been a decision by the Palestinians to boycott the Israeli media. The only talk about boycott comes from American and British university campuses.

For a period of 15 years I was also writing for a Hebrew paper and among the people that I used to interview were most of the Hamas and Fatah leaders, including Yasser Arafat and Ahmed Yassin.

Even most of the wanted Palestinian gunmen on Israel's list gave interviews to the Israeli media.

The Arabs living over there are not stupid. Although they have lived under occupation and despite the tensions, they have also learned some good things from Israel.

We Arabs have been exposed to many good things inside Israel. I'm not ashamed to say that we learned from Israel. We learned about democracy. We learned about the freedom of debate. We learned about the freedom of the media.

That is why the Arabs had high hopes on the eve of the Oslo Accords. They were hoping that when they finally have their own Arab government over there, it would be a democracy like the one in Israel; that we would have our own Knesset where someone can criticize the Prime Minister and government. And we would have a free media where someone could write about corruption.

When I used to work in the PLO newspaper, we used to say that we hope one day we will have a free media like the one these Jews have, where a writer can bring down a minister through an investigative report.

But things have been going in the wrong direction ever since the peace process began. Why? Not because of the peace process itself or the principles of the Oslo Accord. The concept of the Oslo Accord and the two-state solution is wonderful, although it is not practical and will never work. The idea of Oslo is good, but the way it was implemented brought disaster to both Jews and Arabs. And the way Oslo was implemented is responsible for the fact that Hamas is now in power.

Why? Because the assumption back then in Israel, in America and in Europe was that if we bring Yasser Arafat into the West Bank and Gaza, give him billions of dollars and guns, he will do the job for us and there would be nothing to worry about. Arafat will even fight Hamas, prevent terrorism and foil suicide bombings.

So they brought Yasser Arafat over there. He established this thing called the Palestinian National Authority and the show began. It was actually a one-man show run by Arafat and his corrupt cronies. The international community poured \$6.5 billion on this PA between 1993 and 2001. Most of this money literally went down the drain or to support the shopping sprees of a lady sitting in Paris.

Instead of building a hospital, Arafat built a casino, as if the Palestinian revolution has been aspiring for 40 years to build a casino.

Now by depriving his people of the international aid, Arafat drove many Palestinians into the open arms of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The people lost faith in him and the peace process. By establishing a corrupt regime, by cracking down on human rights activists, newspaper editors and political opponents, Arafat actually boosted Hamas's popularity among the Palestinians.

Palestinian academics who signed a petition calling for an end to financial corruption in the PA in 1997 were targeted and silenced by Arafat. Some were shot, beaten and arrested. Others had to flee the country. They were targeted by the same Palestinian security forces that were being trained and financed by the USA and Europe.

So all these things boosted Hamas's popularity to the point where when Hamas finally challenged Arafat's Fatah Party in a free democratic election in January 2006, Hamas won. Why? Hamas was very clever - it ran under the banner of Change and Reform. Hamas came to the Palestinians with a message that said, "Listen folks, the PLO and Arafat have stolen your money, why don't you try us now?"

I know Christians who voted for Hamas in the January 2006 elections. I know secular Palestinians who voted for Hamas. I even know PLO people who voted for Hamas because the name of the game was, "Let's punish the corrupt PLO guys."

One of the reasons why Hamas became so popular was the incitement. The international community gave Yasser Arafat money to open a TV and radio station and in this media Arafat said jihad, jihad, jihad. Arafat used the media to tell his people how bad and evil the Jews are. So the Palestinians said to themselves, "Well, that means Hamas is right about the Jews. If these Jews are so evil and so bad, why are we making peace with them?" So that's one of the reasons why the Oslo process brought Hamas to power.

Hamas owes its victory to the corruption of Fatah. Now the mistake that the international community made was that they poured money on Fatah unconditionally, without holding them accountable. Fatah was squandering the money while Hamas was building schools and hospitals. One of the reasons why Hamas won the hearts and minds of the Palestinians was that ever since the movement was established, it managed to establish a vast network of social, economic, health and education services. Hamas was establishing orphanages and charities while Arafat was giving his wife \$100,000 a month so that she could do her shopping in Paris.

Now if you ask many Palestinians over there, they will tell you "look, the international community corrupted the Palestinians and created this elitist group that actually distanced itself from the Palestinians." Hamas came into this vacuum that was created. So the international community is responsible for the fact that Hamas eventually came to power.

The international community, sadly, has not learned from its mistakes and is continuing to support the same Fatah guys who lost the election and they are even encouraging them to go and bring down the democratically elected government of Hamas.

And this is playing into Hamas's hands because it is boosting its popularity even more. When a Palestinian sees the US Administration and the Europeans trying to bring down their Hamas government, their sympathies go to the Hamas government.

And on the other hand, when the Palestinians see that Fatah has not drawn the conclusions from its defeat in the January 2006 elections and is continuing to block reforms, the Palestinians do not see any reason why they should support Fatah. I am convinced that if there were a free election tomorrow morning in the West Bank and Gaza, Hamas would win. They would win for two reasons. One, the US-led campaign against Hamas has turned the movement into a victim in the eyes of the majority of the Palestinians. Many Palestinians do not hold Hamas responsible for failure because they say, "Oh these poor Hamas people, they won a free election but no one is giving them a chance."

So that is reason number one why most people would vote for Hamas.

Reason number two: Why should any Palestinian vote again for the same Fatah people he/she voted out three years ago if they have not changed? It is the same faces. You go to Ramallah and it is the same "Abus": Abu Mazen, Abu Ala, etc. It is the same guys who failed their people under Arafat. They are continuing to run the show with the help of the Americans and the Europeans as if nothing happened. So the international community has to wake up and go to these "Abus" in Ramallah and say, "Hamas is in power because of your corruption and incompetence. Why don't you guys reform yourselves?"

When the US demanded that the Palestinians go and have a free and democratic election, the Fatah people went to Condoleezza Rice and said, "Listen. We can't have free and democratic elections in Palestine" and she asked them why. So they said, "Well, we are corrupt, we are thieves, we are thugs, we stole the money. And Hamas is running under the banner of change and reform and it is very risky." She said "Don't worry. Go and have a free and democratic election and I assure you that Hamas will not win." And when they asked her "How do you know?" She said because I just warned the Palestinians if they vote for Hamas, we the USA will punish them. That warning on the eve of the election, by the way, was one of the main reasons why Hamas won the election.

The only way to undermine Hamas is by offering the Palestinians a better alternative to Hamas and not by giving Fatah guns so that they can bring down Hamas. We tried it and it did not work.

But what has been happening since Hamas came to power is also very interesting. The same international community that pushed the Palestinians to go have a free democratic election, after Hamas came to power, went to the guys who lost the elections, the PLO people, and said, "Folks, Here are guns and here is money. Go bring down this democratically elected government of Hamas."

And Hamas is sitting there saying, "Hey, what do you guys want from us? We were voted in, in a free, democratic election. If you don't believe us, ask Jimmy Carter. He supervised the election."

Fatah's refusal to accept their defeat and Hamas' insistence on clinging to power has created a power struggle that has been raging for the past three years and has claimed the lives of over 1,500 Palestinians, some of them killed in the most brutal, ruthless ways. Thousands of people have been injured in the power struggle between Fatah and Hamas. Contrary to the USA administration and the United Nations, I do not think that this is a power struggle between good guys and bad guys; this is a power struggle between bad guys and bad guys.

I wish they were fighting over reforms and democracy and a better economy. All they are fighting over is money and power.

So this is the situation in the Palestinian areas today. I said before that I support a two-state solution. If you think of it, in the end we did get a two-state solution over there. The Palestinians got two states: one in Gaza and one in the West Bank. And it is not good news, by the way, because it means we do not have a clear address on the Palestinian side today.

The funny part is that the Obama Administration is now putting pressure on Netanyahu to accept the two-state solution. Let's assume that tomorrow morning Netanyahu declares that he is going to give the Palestinians a state. Where are the Palestinians going to set up their state? Fatah cannot go to Gaza and Hamas cannot go to the West Bank. We are talking about two separate entities. So it is a stalemate.

Now with regards to the Israeli-Arabs. On my way to Geneva I read in one of the newspapers that an Arab Knesset member who came here said: "I'm a Palestinian living in Israel and suffering from apartheid and racism."

Now some Israeli-Arab leaders, like this Knesset member, they run in the elections on a platform that promises their constituents equality and better services. They come to us, the Israeli-Arabs and say, "Vote for us. We'll bring you equality. We will make sure that the government starts investing more in the Arab sector."

As I said, there are very serious problems facing the Arab sector inside Israel. Ehud Olmert, former Israeli Prime Minister, recently said that the Israeli-Arabs are suffering from a policy of systematic discrimination, especially when it comes to the allocation of public funds.

But when these Israeli-Arabs Knesset members come to the Knesset, instead of dealing with the real problems of the Israeli-Arab community, what do they do? They meet with Hamas and Hizbullah leaders. And they will use any available platform to attack Israel and provoke the Jewish public. Why?

I think they do it in order to grab headlines in the newspaper. Because if they are dealing with sewage and classrooms and paving roads, no one in Israel is going to write about them. But if an Israeli-Arab Knesset member comes out in favor of suicide bombing, for example, he will get a lot of coverage in the Israeli media. As far as he is concerned, "I don't care what you write about me as long as you spell my name right."

In the course of doing this, these radical Knesset members are causing the Israeli-Arabs huge damage. These are not the issues that they should be dealing with. We should not be in favor of Hamas or Hezbollah. We want to see these leaders deal with equality

inside Israel. I want to see the leaders of the Israeli-Arab community inside Israel fighting for our rights from the Knesset in Jerusalem and not from Damascus or Beirut or Gaza. And why do they forget that when they were elected they made an oath to the State of Israel. And then they come here to tell us that Israel is a state of apartheid?

Excuse me. What kind of hypocrisy is this? What then are you doing in the Knesset? If you are living in an apartheid system, why were you allowed, as an Arab, to run in the election? What are you talking about?

We do have problems as Arabs with the establishment here. But to come and say that Israel is an apartheid state is a big exaggeration. I am not here to defend Israel, but I think that Knesset members like this gentleman are doing huge damage to the cause of Israeli Arabs. I want to see the Knesset member sitting in the Knesset, in Jerusalem, and fighting for the rights of Arabs over there.

These Knesset members are responsible for the fact that many Jews today see us the Israeli Arabs as a fifth column, an enemy from within.

I am very worried about the deterioration of relations between Jews and Arabs inside Israel, more than I'm worried about the deterioration of relations between Jews and Palestinians.

It is easy to solve the problem with the Palestinians because, at the end of the day, there is going to be separation between Jews and Palestinians in one form or another. But what do we do with the 1.4 million Arabs living inside Israel? That is something that we should focus on.

I really believe that we, the Israeli-Arabs, can serve as a bridge between the Jews and our Palestinian brothers. And it is a huge mistake for us to side with one side against the other. We are playing into the hands of those radical Israeli right-wingers who are trying to depict us as a fifth column and a cancer and we are actually giving them the ammunition to attack us.

So we should be very careful about how we present our case as Israeli Arabs.

Our dilemma is that our state, Israel, is at war with our people in the West Bank and Gaza. And by the way, we have no problem being Israeli citizens. I mean many of us are even proud to be Israeli citizens. If you go to Ramallah and Gaza once, and you come back into Jerusalem or Tel Aviv, you will see what I mean. Sometimes I say "thank God we have Israel."

Israel is a wonderful place to live and we are happy to be there. Israel is a free and open country. If I were given the choice, I would rather live in Israel as a second class citizen than as a first class citizen in Cairo, Gaza, Amman or Ramallah.

Imra.org, 6 January 2011: Saudi Arabia and the USA are holding negotiations on the "final details" of a massive arms deal, a daily said on Jan. 5, citing the kingdom's assistant defense minister. The United States said in November that the \$60 billion deal would take effect despite initial worries from U.S. lawmakers over its impact on Israeli security.

Imra.org, 6 January 2011: The IDF's new shield, the Trophy, also known as ASPRO-A or Meil Ruach in Hebrew (meaning Windbreaker) is an active protection system designed to shield light and heavy military armored vehicles against various types of anti-tank rockets and missiles (used by Hezbollah operatives in the Second Lebanon War, for example). The system is comprised of three elements: threat detection and tracking, launching and, finally, interception. Sensors located on the vehicle's various surfaces enable threat detection and warning subsystems to provide full coverage of the vehicle's surroundings. Neutralizing only takes place if an incoming projectile is detected and identified as a real threat. The launching and interception functions are then activated and neutralizing agents are fired at the incoming threat. The Trophy was successfully tested on December, 2010, when an anti-tank missile was fired at a Merkava Mark 4 tank equipped with the system, the tank being operated by soldiers and the Commander of the Armored Corps' 401st Brigade himself sitting in the tank at the time.