

ABANDONING THE IRON WALL: ISRAEL AND “THE MIDDLE EASTERN MUCK”

Ian S. Lustick

Dr. Lustick is the Bess W. Heyman Chair of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania and the author of Trapped in the War on Terror.

Zionists arrived in Palestine in the 1880s, and within several decades the movement’s leadership realized it faced a terrible predicament. To create a permanent Jewish political presence in the Middle East, Zionism needed peace. But day-to-day experience and their own nationalist ideology gave Zionist leaders no reason to expect Muslim Middle Easterners, and especially the inhabitants of Palestine, to greet the building of the Jewish National Home with anything but intransigent and violent opposition. The solution to this predicament was the Iron Wall — the systematic but calibrated use of force to teach Arabs that Israel, the Jewish “state-on-the-way,” was ineradicable, regardless of whether it was perceived by them to be just. Once force had established Israel’s permanence in Arab and Muslim eyes, negotiations could proceed to achieve a compromise peace based on acceptance of realities rather than rights. This strategy of the Iron Wall served Zionism and Israel relatively well from the 1920s to the end of the twentieth century. Converging streams of evidence now suggest, however, that Israel is abandoning that strategy, posing

the question of whether Israel and Israelis can remain in the Middle East without becoming part of it.

At first, Zionist settlers, land buyers, propagandists and emissaries negotiating with the Great Powers sought to avoid the intractable and demoralizing subject of Arab opposition to Zionism. Publicly, movement representatives promulgated false images of Arab acceptance of Zionism or of Palestinian Arab opportunities to secure a better life thanks to the creation of the Jewish National Home. Privately, they recognized the unbridgeable gulf between their image of the country’s future and the images and interests of the overwhelming majority of its inhabitants.¹ With no solution of their own to the “Arab problem,” they demanded that Britain and the League of Nations recognize a legal responsibility to overcome Arab opposition by imposing Jewish settlement and a Jewish polity in Palestine.

By the 1920s, however, it was obvious that Arab opposition to Zionism was broad and deep, especially within Palestine. Arab demonstrations and riots erupted regularly. In addition to “Muslim-Christian Associations,” a number of clan-based

nationalist organizations and parties emerged, all opposed to the British Mandate and the growth of the Jewish National Home. Across the board, Palestinians rejected the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate that incorporated it and demanded a plebiscite to implement Wilsonian principles of national self-determination for the majority of Palestine's inhabitants. A series of British investigating commissions identified the taproot of Arab discontent as Zionism itself and the immigration of Jews and land transfers to Jews that were associated with it. It was against this background that Zionism found a way to cope with the unavoidable fact of intransigent Arab opposition to its objectives.

The policy adopted was that of the "Iron Wall," famously advanced in an article published in a Russian Zionist journal by Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky in 1925 ("O Zheleznoi Stene"). The central lines of its analysis came rapidly to be accepted across the broad spectrum of mainstream Zionist organizations and parties, from Jabotinsky to David Ben-Gurion, Berl Katznelson to Menachem Begin and Chaim Arlosoroff to Chaim Weizmann.² The only way, Jabotinsky argued, that the necessary peace agreement with the Arabs could ever be achieved was if an "Iron Wall" were to be constructed. This wall would be so strong that Arab enemies trying to break through it would experience a long series of devastating defeats. Eventually this strategy would remove even the "gleam of hope" from the eyes of most Arabs that the Jewish National Home, and then the State of Israel, could ever be destroyed. Jabotinsky acknowledged that some Arab extremists would always maintain a violent attitude of resistance toward the injustice

they naturally understood Zionism to have inflicted. Nonetheless, he predicted that the overwhelming majority of Palestinian Arabs and Arabs in the surrounding countries would eventually come to the conclusion that a practical settlement with Zionism was preferable to unending and humiliating defeats. Only then would negotiations be productive, and only then would Zionism achieve its ultimate objective: a secure and permanent peace, albeit a peace based on resignation of the enemy to an unchangeable reality rather than acceptance of the justice of the Zionist cause.

The Iron Wall strategy did produce a long series of military encounters with Palestinians and other Arabs that resulted in lopsided defeats and painful losses. As I and others have shown, it also produced a fundamental split between those Arabs who were willing to negotiate based on accepting the permanence of Israel and Arab "extremists" who Jabotinsky had said would never be brought to settle for half-a-loaf, but who could be isolated by the productivity of negotiations with the "moderates."³ Where the strategy ran into trouble was the expectation that, inside the Iron Wall, the objectives of the Jewish protagonist would remain stable. Instead, especially following the 1967 war, the center of gravity of Israeli politics moved toward maximalist positions. Israel did not welcome moderate Arab offers to negotiate (such as those of West Bank Palestinian notables in 1967 and 1968, King Hussein in 1972, Egyptian President Sadat in 1971-72, or King Hussein again in the mid-1980s). Rather, successive Israeli governments in the late 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s adopted the view that the Arabs in general, and the Palestinians in particular,

were only advancing moderate-sounding positions in order to deceive Israel and regain territories that would be used to destroy the Jewish state “in stages.”⁴

This expansion of distrust and demands by the consistently victorious side of the conflict should be understood as just as natural (“normal” is the word Jabotinsky used) as the contraction of the demands and greater realism associated with repeated and costly defeats. However, this was, in fact, not anticipated by Jabotinsky or the generally applied theory and policy of the Iron Wall. The result, from the War of Attrition in 1969-70 through the first Intifada, 1987-93, was a bloody and complex process by which both Arabs/Palestinians and Israelis used force to incentivize negotiations toward some sort of mutually tolerable settlement.⁵ The logic of “ripening” dominated thinking about how the conflict might eventually be resolved. This was a well-established idea, related to the Iron Wall theory but anchored in a fundamentally symmetrical view of the antagonists⁶ that only when both sides to a protracted conflict feel themselves caught in a “hurting stalemate” will realistic prospects for a negotiated settlement based on painful and mutual compromises be possible.

This progression of Zionist -Arab relations — from increasing but uncalculated hostility (1882-1925) to the unilateral pedagogy of force (1925-68), to the reciprocal impact of Israeli and Arab “Iron Walls” (1969-93) — appears now to have entered a new stage. Foreshadowed by the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, accelerated by the collapse of the Oslo peace process, and inaugurated by the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada, this stage is marked by Israeli abandonment of

efforts to “teach” Arabs anything and by Arab/Muslim rejection of the principle of a Jewish state’s existence in the Middle East. While I will make some references to the radicalizing transformations that have occurred on the Arab/Muslim side, my main concern in this paper will be to consider the logical implications of Israel’s effective abandonment of the Iron Wall strategy along with evidence that these logical implications are indeed manifesting themselves in Israeli thinking and behavior.

A CHANGE IN STRATEGY?

Jabotinsky and others based the Iron Wall strategy on their recognition that it was not reasonable to expect that Arabs would consider what Zionism was doing to them and to Palestine as just or right. Jabotinsky admitted that, for the Arabs of Palestine, Zionist Jews were correctly seen as “alien settlers” making unjust and unacceptable demands. Thus a corollary of the Iron Wall strategy was that Zionism would not demand Arab recognition of the justice of the Zionist project. It would demand only that eventually Arabs would accept the reality and permanence of a Middle East that included Jewish immigration and a Jewish polity. With characteristic eloquence, Foreign Minister Abba Eban put this point very clearly in a speech in 1970, identifying the root cause of the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict as

the refusal or the inability of Arab intellectual and political leadership so far, to grasp the depth, the passion, the authenticity of Israel’s roots in the region....The crux of the problem is whether, however reluctantly, Arab leadership, intellectual and political, comes to understand the existential character of the Middle East as an area

which cannot be exhausted by Arab nationalism alone.⁶

The direct implication of this position — of requiring existential acceptance of reality, not moral approval — is the rejection of demands that Arabs or anyone else “recognize” Israel’s “right to exist.” Indeed, Eban was explicit on this point:

There are some governments which in a benevolent spirit, offer to secure the consent of the Arab states to the recognition of our right to exist. It is sometimes my duty to say that we do not ask any recognition of our right to exist, because our right to exist is independent of any recognition of it.⁷

This is the classic Zionist Iron Wall position. Until recently, it had also been the standard Israeli government position. Jews needed, and could eventually expect to receive, not recognition of rights but acceptance of fact. To be sure, Security Council Resolution 242 does refer to “acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.” For Arabs there is, however, a crucial difference between acknowledging rights of an existing entity and recognizing that it was right for that entity to come into existence. This distinction is also present in Yasser Arafat’s 1993 letter to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, which did not recognize Israel’s “right to exist,” but rather its “right to live in peace and security” (given that it does exist and no matter whether it originally had a right to exist or not).⁸

In keeping with Israel’s abandonment of the Iron Wall strategy, Israeli leaders

have shifted their discourse. Since the mid-1990s, Israeli leaders have increasingly demanded, not Arab reconciliation to the fact of Israel’s existence, but explicit Arab approval of Zionism itself via demands to recognize the right of Israel to exist in the Middle East as a Jewish state. For example, while Prime Minister Barak never included Arab or Palestinian recognition of Israel’s right to exist in any of his lists of Israel’s “essential requirements” for peace, by late 2002 this demand had become a prominent feature of Israeli foreign policy. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s December 2002 speech to the Herzliya Conference on Israel’s national-security posture included the following assertion: “Israel’s desire is to live in security and in true and genuine coexistence, based, first and foremost, on the recognition of our natural and historic right to exist as a Jewish state in the Land of Israel.”⁹ In a joint 2006 news conference with President Bush, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert listed a number of things that would be required of Palestinians who desired to negotiate with Israel. One of them was that “(t)he Palestinian partner will have to...recognize the state of Israel and its right to exist as a Jewish state.”⁹ Olmert’s foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, has used even more emphatic formulations: “The West,” she told a *New York Times* reporter, “must not only recognize Israel’s right to exist but also ‘the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state.’”¹¹

This new official insistence on explicit recognition of Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state is striking because Arabs and Muslims are now, if anything, much less ready to accept Israel’s “right” to exist as a Jewish state than ever before. Accordingly, the timing of the use of this formula in connection with negotiations with the

Palestinians or the Arab world can be seen as directly linked to the abandonment of the Iron Wall strategy and the political pedagogy it represented. Indeed this new demand is evidence of a fundamental withdrawal of many Israeli leaders, and of much of Israel as a whole, from the realities of the Middle East and from a commitment to engage and change those realities, whether through force or diplomacy.

Confusion, Escape and Violence

Most Israelis consider the 2006 conflict with Hezbollah, now officially named the Second Lebanon War, to have been a failure. As such, the conflict corresponds to Israeli memories of the disastrous aftermath of the (first) Lebanon War (Operation Peace for the Galilee), involving a bloody 18-year occupation of various portions of the country, hundreds of Israeli soldiers killed amidst internecine fighting among Lebanese sectarian groups, the birth of a ferocious Shia “resistance” movement whose leadership shifted eventually, from Amal to Hezbollah, and finally the abrupt and ignominious withdrawal of Israeli forces in May 2000.

The general image Israelis developed of their northern neighbor was of *habotz haLevanoni* (the Lebanese muck). It is my overall thesis that Israelis are coming to see the Middle East as a whole the way they came to see Lebanon in the 1980s. Instead of *haBotz haLevanoni*, Israelis implicitly but powerfully experience the region where their country is located as *habotz haMizrah-Tichoni* (the Middle Eastern muck). The more they struggle, it seems, whether violently or diplomatically, to make sense of or headway in the Middle East, the more they sink into an unforgiving and debilitating quagmire.

A natural feature of this overall outlook is an image of the Arab/Muslim world, and the Palestinians in particular, as irrational, brutal and violent, imbued with intractably anti-Semitic hatreds fortified by deeply anti-Western, Muslim-fundamentalist fanaticism. Against such an enemy deterrence is only barely possible, and only by suppressing the natural human instincts of Israelis. Consider, for example, the work of Efraim Inbar, director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University. Inbar is a much-published scholar and commentator on military, political and security affairs who identifies with and has long reflected the thinking of right-of-center politicians, including the once and perhaps future prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Referring to the Palestinians’ “psychotic hatred of Jews,” Inbar has urged an end to Israeli apologies for accidentally killing Palestinian civilians.

We are confronted by a society that is mesmerized by bloody attacks, relishes the sickening sights of Palestinian militias playing with the severed limbs of dead Israeli soldiers, and savors gory images of maimed Israeli bodies, victims of a bus explosion.

Tragically, Palestinian society seems to enjoy even the sight of its own dead. Rather than break away from the psychological mold the Palestinian national movement has propagated so successfully for years it seems to prefer the role of victim. Israel’s apologies only reinforce such a dysfunctional preference....

The Palestinians do not deserve any apologies — just condemnation for their outrageous behavior. These

repeated apologies are also counter-productive in a strategic sense. Expressing sorrow and extending sympathy projects softness, when what is required is an image of determination to kill our enemies. Only such an image can help Israel acquire a modicum of deterrence against the bestiality on the other side.¹²

Yossi Klein Halevi, a commentator who prides himself on having voted with the winner in every Israeli election since the early 1980s, was a supporter of Sharon's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza. But his justification of that move was not as a step toward peace but as preparation for all-out war against the "genocidal" threat posed by Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran and Syria. This war, he predicted, having begun with Hezbollah in August 2006, would last for months or even years. If it did not result in the utter destruction of these organizations and regimes, it would "mean the end of hopes for Arab-Israeli reconciliation, not only in this generation but in the next one too."¹³ Professor Yehezkel Dror of the Hebrew University, whose views as a futurologist and president of the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute will be discussed more thoroughly below, has urged Israelis to recognize the essential impossibility that Islam could ever come to terms with a Jewish state in the Middle East.¹⁴ In that context, he advises Israelis to refrain from criticizing Turkish genocidal policies against the Armenians since somewhat similar techniques, using "weapons of mass destruction," may well have to be used by Israel despite the inevitable deaths of a "large number of innocent civilians."¹⁵

Benny Morris is the dean of Israel's "new historians." He laid the groundwork for widespread recognition of Israeli

policies of Arab expulsion in 1948. During the first Intifada, he went to prison for refusing to serve in the army in the occupied territories. More recently, Morris has joined in the despair and fury that marks so much of Israeli public commentary across much of the political spectrum. In a lengthy interview with Ari Shavit, Morris portrayed the Palestinian people as a whole as a "serial killer" and called for them to be treated accordingly:

The barbarians who want to take our lives. The people the Palestinian society sends to carry out the terrorist attacks, and in some way the Palestinian society itself as well. At the moment, that society is in the state of being a serial killer. It is a very sick society. It should be treated the way we treat individuals who are serial killers.... Something like a cage has to be built for them. I know that sounds terrible. It is really cruel. But there is no choice. There is a wild animal there that has to be locked up in one way or another.¹⁶

Dark and Cloudy Visions of the Future

Foreboding, though not necessarily apocalyptic, images of Israel's future featured prominently in a dozen extended interviews conducted between 2004 and 2007 with Israelis from across the political spectrum. Each interviewee was asked to describe a long-term future for the country that he/she regarded as both possible and positive or at least acceptable. Israelis who identified themselves as left of center were able, albeit with some difficulty, to describe a two-state solution that they believed was both possible to achieve and acceptable for them. On the right, however, interviewees were glumly willing to admit that they no longer could hold out

such a vision, while still ready to insist they knew what they did not want or would not accept.

In the wake of Hamas's rise to power and the disintegration of Palestinian governance in Gaza and the West Bank, it would appear that this incapacity to imagine a future for Israel in the Middle East that is both positive and possible has been spreading across the center into the dovish side of the Israeli political spectrum. In David Grossman's passionate and widely circulated speech at the annual rally commemorating Rabin's assassination, he pleaded with Prime Minister Olmert and the government to at least try something, anything, to renew hope for peace. His words reflected fear for, not faith in, Israel's future. "Look over the edge of the abyss," Grossman said in his conclusion, "and consider how close we are to losing what we have created here."¹⁷

As noted by Grossman, Olmert's appointment of Avigdor Lieberman as "minister for strategic affairs" was emblematic of the striking absence from Israeli thinking of any vision of Israel's future in the region as stabilized and protected by peace agreements with its neighbors. Lieberman himself claims a "new vision" for the future, but that vision excludes both negotiations and peace. "I suggest that we redefine our goals and focus on bringing security and stability to the Middle East, instead of setting our sights on unrealistic, unattainable fantasy."¹⁸ A former head of Mossad, Efraim Halevy, rejected both roadmap-type negotiations and the convergence plan. His vision of the next 25 years is an extension of the present, with Israel, fighting in the front lines in a "Third World War against radical Islam. As he sees it,

the war began with the 1998 bombings in Africa of two U.S. embassies, continued through 9/11, and there is no end in sight."¹⁹

Nor do traditionally inspiring Zionist narratives and images seem any longer to work for organizing Israeli thinking about a positive future. In January 2007, the Gush Emunim-affiliated journal *Nekuda* devoted many pages to the question of whether Zionism was any longer relevant. Most contributors argued that Zionism had fulfilled its historical mission and was no longer relevant to present realities or future challenges.²¹ According to Israel's best known "futurologist," Professor Yehezkel Dror, an effort to publish a book series on "Zionism in the 21st Century" foundered because, "despite much effort, only two authors willing to write on that subject were found."²² Dror himself, as noted, is the founding president of the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute. Under the imprimatur of that organization, he published two "realistic" scenarios for Israel in the year 2050, one a positive vision and the other a "nightmare." In the nightmare scenario, Israel is described as fading away or collapsing amidst endemic conflict, emigration, Europeanization and abandonment of Jewish-Zionist values.

What is instructive is that even in the positive future, which does feature peace based on a Palestinian state, Dror imagines a successful Israel as one that depends only on itself and the United States. No details whatsoever are offered as to the terms of agreements with its neighbors that would, in his view, enable that success or Arab/Muslim accommodation to Israel's permanent presence. Instead, Dror simply asserts the existence of peace accords and permanent borders that will protect the

demographic preponderance of Jews inside the country. He offers not one word on refugees, the shape of the Palestinian state, the future of Jerusalem, the route of the boundary between Israel and Palestine, the disposition of settlements, or the nature of the peace agreements with other Arab and Muslim countries. Instead, he simply stipulates, as part of the positive scenario, that in 2050 “(t)here are diplomatic, economic and cultural relations between Israel and most Arab and Islamic countries. There are no terror activities.” While acknowledging that the “stability of the peace” will be uncertain, he portrays Israel as secure and happy, not because of its relations with its neighbors, but because of its return to its true Jewish-Zionist vocation, its special relationship with the United States, and because of large increases in Jewish immigration that produce a Jewish population of 9 to 9.5 million (two thirds of the world Jewish population).²³

In general, systematic Israeli thinking about the country’s long-term future is scarce, pessimistic and cloudy. As reflected in Dror’s exercise, it is also unsystematic, with a tendency to omit serious analysis of the Arab question in any of its “political” forms. Consider Arnon Sofer’s most recent study (with Evgenia Bystrov), *The Tel Aviv State: A Threat to Israel*. The authors contend that a national disaster entailing the end of the Zionist project is the probable, if not inevitable, outcome of current trends that are concentrating increasing proportions of the Jewish population in a narrow area surrounding greater Tel-Aviv. Contending that Israel must maintain its first-world standard of living to prevent the “strong” Israelis from leaving, they nonetheless see “Israel (as) hurtling toward a place among

the states of the third world.”²⁴ Sofer and Bystrov attribute some of the impetus for the Jews’ flight from the periphery to the center of the country as an effort to avoid contact with Arabs, and brief mention is made at the very end of the book to the importance of treating Arab Israelis more equally if they are to develop a stake in the country’s future. However, neither the thrust of the analysis leading to the dire prediction, nor the policies suggested as possible remedies, have any relationship to an image of the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict or Israel’s relationship to the Palestinians as a political community. Nor do the authors indicate how their categorical imperatives to “Judaize” the Galilee and the Negev could square with their advice to improve the treatment of the deprived and discontented Arab populations who live in those regions.²⁵

Indeed, whether it comes to speculation about paying millions of Arabs to leave the country, or enlisting Jordan or Egypt to solve the Palestinian problem by absorbing all refugees in the West Bank and Gaza, there is a striking element of dissociation, unreality and even fantasy in right-wing depictions of how to resolve the “Arab problem” in the long run. A particularly vivid example appeared in the September 2006 issue of *Nekuda*. Yoav Sorek published an article in that issue contending that, with the collapse of Oslo and the failure of the disengagement policies of the left, “the ball is now in the right’s court to make clear its solution. If no to the Palestinians and no to withdrawal, then what?”²⁶ In other words, an inhabitant of the veteran Gush Emunim settlement of Ofra, who also serves as an editor with the right-wing nationalist paper *Makor Rishon*, sees himself called upon to offer

the right's plan for the future, a plan that will be both attainable and satisfying. Consistent with my argument, the plan Sorek offers is entirely based on unilateral actions by Jews, especially Jewish settlers, to build a powerful Knesset lobby, to "Israelize" and otherwise normalize expanded settlements and thereby to fully naturalize the integration of the West Bank inside Israel. Sorek includes not a word about the future of Israel's relationship with the Palestinians as a political community, about Israel's relationship with individual Arab countries, or about Israel's future relations with the Middle East as a whole. In his analysis Israel's future is fundamentally disconnected from the region. Indeed, Sorek's only mention of Arabs is an exhortation to deport those in the West Bank who support terrorism and to subsidize the agricultural activities of those who remain. Why? In order to transform Arabs there into a kind of diorama of life in Biblical times for the entertainment of visiting tourists! "Christians from everywhere in the world would pay high prices to come and see 'original biblical agriculture'.... UNESCO would declare the area an international heritage site, etc."²⁷

This kind of solipsistic thinking that radically separates images and analysis of Israel's future from images and analysis of the rest of the region is mirrored by strong Israel supporters in America. In October 2001, *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz published a vehement and detailed denunciation of anyone who, after the failure of the Camp David summit and the outbreak of the al-Aqsa intifada, still believed that a negotiated peace was possible or that any "peace process" should continue. Toward the end of the article, Podhoretz asked himself what then might lie ahead. "Is there then no glimmer of light at

the end of this dark and gloomy tunnel? I would be less than honest if I suggested that I could see any." Without entirely ruling out the possibility of peace, sometime in the future and under completely unspecified conditions, he still sounded a distinctly pessimistic note, suggesting Israel would have to live by the sword until "the Arab world will make its own peace with the existence of a Jewish state."²⁸ His article prompted a flood of responses. Most celebrated his demonstration of Arafat's villainy and the blindness of Shimon Peres, Yossi Beilin and other "peacemongers." But in answer to two letters that drew attention to the dismal future he was predicting for Israel and the possibility of Israel's disappearing via emigration "as another Crusader Kingdom," Podhoretz could offer little reassurance. It would be silly to write off that possibility, he said and, without any explanation, claimed he was "still convinced that if the Israelis can hold on tight, ... the day may yet come when the Arab world will call off the war it has been waging against the Jewish state since 1948."²⁹

The columnist David Brooks, another strong Israel booster, went even further. He found it impossible or unnecessary to locate Israel's place in his long-term vision of the Middle East. In Brooks's prediction for how a new 30-year war would reshape the Middle East in the twenty-first century, following the departure of American forces from Iraq, he entirely omitted mention of Israel. He seemed to imply that the country will not even exist after a few more decades, or will exist in some way that is fundamentally disconnected from the region.³⁰

Escape: Leaving the Middle East

The general obliviousness to, or refusal to confront, Israel's future relations with the

Arabs and Muslims of the Middle East is part of a larger pattern in Israeli thinking and behavior marked by determined efforts to substitute escape from *habotz HaMizrach-Tichoni* for attempts to engage with it. Israel's government has been conspicuous for being the only government in the Middle East to identify itself wholeheartedly with America's War on Terror and with American and British policies in Iraq. Both prime ministers Sharon and Olmert were enthusiastic in their personal identification with President George W. Bush.³¹ In 2006, Efraim Inbar declared that American unipolarity and Washington's policy of *Pax Americana* suited Israel perfectly and was the basis for an "enduring union" between the two countries.³² In a May 2007 poll, 59 percent of Israelis agreed with the proposition that "in retrospect, the United States was correct in going to war in Iraq."³³ In this sense, it is not just a policy stance that isolates Israel from the Middle East, but also a contemporary version of the old idea of Israel as an "outpost of Western imperialism." Now, however, the functional equivalent of that view is articulated by Israelis and many of Israel's most avid supporters abroad: Israel is the front line of the Western world in its civilizational battle with Muslim and Arab fundamentalist, obscurantist forces. The following passage from a conservative columnist is typical:

Israel's culture is ours. She is part of the West. If she goes down, we have suffered a defeat, and the howling, jeering forces of barbarism have won a victory. You don't have to be Zionist, nor even Jewish, to support Israel. ... You just have to understand that the war between civilization and barbarism is being fought today just as it was fought at Chalons and Tours, at the

gates of Kiev and Vienna, by the hoplites at Marathon and the legions on the Rhine.³⁴

In 2001, Inbar praised Ehud Barak for his judgment that "Israel cannot be an integral part of the Middle East":

The Arabs still refuse to accept, in the full sense of the word, the emergence of a culturally separate and politically independent Jewish entity in their midst, because they believe we are foreign colonizers and an extension of the West....

Moreover, deep down, Israelis do not want to integrate into this region, which is poor, authoritarian, brutal and despicably corrupt. Do we really want to belong to an Arab world whose hero is Saddam Hussein? ... Truthfully, all we want is to be left alone.

Barak was right in depicting Israel as a villa surrounded by a wild jungle. It is beyond our means to change the jungle. We can only defend our national home and make it clear to our neighbors that there is a price for aggression.³⁵

In the interview with Ari Shavit quoted earlier, Benny Morris also describes the civilizational war separating Israel and the West, on one side, and the Arab-Muslim Middle East, on the other:

Morris: "I think there is a clash between civilizations here [as Huntington argues]. I think the West today resembles the Roman Empire of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries: The barbarians are attacking it, and they may also destroy it.

Shavit: The Muslims are barbarians, then?

Morris: I think the values I mentioned earlier are values of barbarians — the attitude toward democracy, freedom, openness; the attitude toward human life. In that sense they are barbarians. The Arab world as it is today is barbarian....

Shavit: Is it really all that dramatic? Is the West truly in danger?

Morris: Yes. I think that the war between the civilizations is the main characteristic of the twenty-first century. I think President Bush is wrong when he denies the very existence of that war. It's not only a matter of Bin Laden. This is a struggle against a whole world that espouses different values. And we are on the front line. Exactly like the Crusaders, we are the vulnerable branch of Europe in this place.

Among Israelis, a natural and very prominent result of this deep-seated alienation from the region, its peoples and its cultures is an urge to escape. It takes many forms. Consider the construction of the "security barrier," a network of fencing, concrete walls, barbed wire, trenches and embankments intended to surround the Jewish state. One can usefully imagine the barrier as transforming Israel into a kind of "gated community" sealed off from the Middle East as hermetically as possible. Since 1994, a 30-mile barrier has existed as a seal between the Palestinian-inhabited Gaza Strip and Israel. Now that settlers have been removed from Gaza, Israel is almost entirely closed off from that area. The West Bank barrier now runs for 436 miles and is nearly 60 percent completed. It runs along the Green Line, though mostly not on it. The barrier separates the vast

majority of Palestinian portions of the West Bank from Israel proper and from selected settlements included on the "Israeli" side of its tortuous route. About 10 percent of its current length features an 8-meter concrete wall that makes it impossible to even see people or landscape on the other side.

The proposal for the barrier gained support as a result of the rash of horrific terrorist bombings by Palestinians in Israeli cities. By all accounts it has contributed substantially to the great reduction in penetration of Israel by Palestinian bombers. However, it must also be noted that the effect of the barrier, and perhaps more of its purpose than is commonly acknowledged, is not to keep Middle Easterners out of Israel, but to physically and psychologically remove Israel from the Middle East. The iconic formula, offered originally by Yitzhak Rabin, picked up by Ehud Barak as his campaign slogan, but used now by virtually all supporters of the barrier to describe its purpose most succinctly, is "Anachnu po, hem sham" ("Us here, them there").

Of course, it is clear who is meant by "them" (the Palestinian Arabs) and by "us" (the Israelis, especially Israeli Jews). What is not so clear is where "there" and "here" are. It is undeniable that a continuous barrier separating Israel from the Palestinian territories, along with new laws making it illegal for Israelis to visit those areas unless they are settlers or on-duty soldiers, greatly reduces the amount of contact Israelis have with the only part of the Muslim/Arab Middle East to which they have had direct access. In these ways, the barrier contributes directly to an Israeli separation or escape from the Middle East. But escape to where?

Certainly the barrier does not join Israel to "the Mediterranean" community, to Europe or to North America. Yet, psychologically, it does act in almost precisely that way. In an interview about his controversial book, *The Defeat of Hitler*, Avraham Burg described it as such. Burg is the son of Yosef Burg, long-time leader of the National Religious Party and minister of interior under Menachem Begin. Avraham Burg himself was a contender for leadership of the Labor party, speaker of the Knesset, and chairman of the Jewish Agency (the highest post in the Zionist Movement). "The fence," said Burg, "physically demarcates the end of Europe. It says that this is where Europe ends. It says that you [Israelis] are the forward post of Europe, and the fence separates you from the barbarians."³⁶ It certainly makes it easier for Israelis to imagine a "Tel Aviv-style" rhythm of life in Israel that is much more Mediterranean, European or American, than it is in the "muck" of the Middle East.³⁷

Adjusting the "us here, them there" slogan, one might say that what the barrier expresses is a deep Israeli yearning for "them" (the Arabs) to be "here" (in the Middle East) and "us" (Israeli Jews) to be "there" (in the United States and Europe). Other signs of Israeli alienation from the Middle East are readily apparent. For example, traditionally the government and/or the Histadrut (the Israeli federation of trade unions) maintained Arabic language newspapers. Radio Israel has always had an Arabic service as well, beaming Israeli news and views to the Middle East in a Middle Eastern language understood outside Israel itself. Now, according to veteran Israeli journalist Ehud Yaari,

Israel Television's Arabic programming is a bad joke. The government-backed grand adventure of satellite broadcasting in Arabic around the clock, seven days a week, collapsed over two years ago after a miserable run of two years.... What remains is a three-hour-long daily 1970s-style broadcast on marginal Channel 33 that cannot be received in most parts of the Middle East. Channel 2...goes through the motions of having an Arabic program on early Friday afternoons, with almost zero ratings.³⁸

Yaari not only blames government incompetence for the absence of Israel-friendly Arabic media; he portrays this negligence as reflective of a larger public lack of interest in anything having to do with Arabs. Unless there is a war being actively fought, "All television ratings surveys show a decline when it comes to interest in Arab affairs,...(and) print media also provides only sparse reporting." Consistent with the overall purpose and effect of the security barrier, "Israel has stopped listening to its neighbors, stopped keeping track of them and at the same time it has stopped speaking to them." Overall, Yaari observes, the Israeli media "educates its consumers to believe that what happens in Gaza or Ramallah might as well be happening light years away." The message, probably an accurate one, that Israel now sends to the Arab world is

a cruel one: We simply do not care! We have no interest in trying to influence how you picture us. We have no interest in what you are experiencing. The West Bank security barrier may not yet be complete, but this wall, the wall of alienation, already separates us.

In the mid-1980s, Education Minister Yitzhak Navon, himself an Arabic speaker, made the study of Arabic mandatory in all junior high schools. The requirement is, however, widely ignored. In 2003, only 20 percent of Israeli tenth-graders were enrolled in Arabic courses.⁴⁰ Policies announced in the 1990s to sharply increase the teaching of Arabic to Jewish Israelis have, since 2000, been largely honored in the breach.⁴¹ In 2007, a major Israeli newspaper described the chances that Prime Minister Olmert would resign in response to a student protest strike as “like those of the editors learning Turkish.”⁴² In other words, the metaphor that came naturally to mind to evoke a sense of impossibility or absurdity was the idea of prominent Israelis learning a Middle Eastern language! It is also worth noting that Yehezkel Dror’s list of “strategic intervention recommendations” for Israel to save itself from the nightmare future he describes includes a requirement, for all university graduates, of “proficiency in English and one more language, in addition to Hebrew.”⁴³ There is no suggestion whatsoever that this language should be a Middle Eastern language, whether Arabic, Farsi or Turkish.⁴⁴ Nor does Dror, anywhere in his study, offer any consideration of the 20-25 percent of the Israeli population that is not Jewish. Only a determined act of will or an irresistible habituation could explain how a professional futurologist and policy analyst could offer serious predictions about the future of the country and ignore what would be the rough equivalent, in terms of population proportions, of an American planner ignoring the presence of both African Americans and Hispanics.

Israelis with the training, skills and wealth to do so are also literally “escaping” from the Middle East and from those parts of Israel that are more Middle Eastern. The Sofer/Bystrov study is based on an image of Israel as a “Western society” that is losing its ability to remain “Western” and in danger of becoming a part of the Middle East.⁴⁵ As noted above, they say Israeli Jews have been streaming out of the country’s “borderlands” where Arabs are concentrated and into “Greater Tel Aviv.” Sofer and Bystrov report that between 1990 and 2005, 55,000 Jerusalemites left that city for the Tel Aviv core and its surroundings and that “all in all, in the last 15 years the core region has absorbed about 100,000 Jews from the peripheral regions!”⁴⁶ These migrations contributed to an increase in the density of Jewish habitation in the central region to 92 percent in 2004. “Jews,” they conclude, “are running away from all the peripheral areas and converging steadily into the Dan bloc.”⁴⁷ Their data also show that these population movements are disproportionately composed of young, productive adult Jews moving to the center from the periphery, thereby making steeper the gradient in living standards between greater Tel Aviv and the rest of the country. In a parallel study, B.A. Kipnis has argued that greater Tel Aviv is a “world city,” but with the unusual feature that it had “earned world-city standing in spite of its frontier location in its region, the Middle East, and its situation at a dead-end site relative to the global economy.”⁴⁸ Kipnis’s image is of Israel as a wealthy city-state with strong trading ties to Europe but only negligible economic contact with the Middle East. “Regardless of the future geopolitical state of affairs in the Mideast,”

he writes, "Tel Aviv, as a global city, will not be part of its own region."⁴⁹

The Israelis' urge to escape from the Middle East is expressed in their tendency to look to the West for a sense of belonging and reassurance. In late 2006, the Foreign Ministry's director of public affairs, Amir Reshef-Gissin, noted that Israelis were "thirsty for hope." His advice was to create an attractive image of Israel; to "brand" the country. Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, he said, was "keenly aware that in order for branding to work, we'll first have to 'sell' our brand here at home." What is most instructive is how Reshef-Gissin seeks to convince Israelis of the country's attractiveness by emphasizing how similar it is to the United States and Canada:

It's time to remind Israelis that, apart from the U.S. and Canada, we have more companies on the NASDAQ stock exchange than any other country in the world; that the cellphone was invented in Motorola's laboratories in Haifa; that the number of patents, per capita, we've registered in the U.S. is higher than that of the Americans.⁵⁰

The logically extreme expression of escape is, of course, emigration. It is instructive, that when Benny Morris was pressed by his interviewer about whether he had in fact lost all hope for the future, his thoughts turned immediately to the departure of his children from the country.

There is not going to be peace in the present generation. There will not be a solution. We are doomed to live by the sword. I'm already fairly old, but for my children that is especially bleak. I don't know if they will want to go on

living in a place where there is no hope. Even if Israel is not destroyed, we won't see a good, normal life here in the decades ahead.⁵¹

There is significant evidence that, since the collapse of the Oslo peace process and the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada, the emigration of Israeli Jews has increased, as have activities that would make future emigration easier. In February 2007, Israel's minister of immigrant absorption, Zeev Boim, acknowledged that there were between 700,000 and 1 million Israeli expatriates worldwide, with some 600,000 in North America alone, and that in 2005 between 8,000 and 9,000 Israelis emigrated.⁵² This estimate for recent annual emigration is almost certainly low. Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) estimates emigrants by subtracting Israelis arriving from those departing from the country, with a one-year lag in the arrivals count. From 1998 to 2000, CBS figures show an average of approximately 13,000 annual emigrants. The average for the next four years, after the outbreak of the al-Aqsa intifada, showed an increase of nearly 40 percent, to 18,400 emigrants per year.⁵³ A similar 40 percent increase in the number of Israeli immigrants gaining permanent residency or citizenship in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom was registered between the five years prior to the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada and the five subsequent years, a jump from 25,276 in the years 1996-2000 to 35,372 in the years 2001-2005.⁵⁴

Writing in late 2005 and citing a special report on emigration by the CBS to the Knesset, Meir Elran reported in a study of "national resilience" that approximately 19,000 "yordim" per year from 2002 to 2004. He attributed this "negative migration" to the

deteriorating economic and security situation in Israel.⁵⁵ In 2006, Hillel Halkin reported that 30,000 Israelis were emigrating annually and that in 2004 there were 10,000 more emigrants than immigrants.⁵⁶ Late in 2007, the director-general of Israel's Ministry of Absorption, Erez Halfon, announced generous economic incentives, including ten years of zero tax on foreign income, to bring "former Israelis" home. He cited as justification for the program the fact that "between 18,000 and 21,000 Israelis emigrate each year."⁵⁷ In recent years, passionate discussions have been underway regarding the "brain drain," emigration of talented Israelis, especially university professors. In 2006, a study published by the Shalem Center, a conservative think tank in Israel, reported that 2.6 percent of all married, college-educated Jews who were in Israel in 1995 were classified as emigrants in 2002.⁵⁸ In 2007, the first official estimate was released since the mid-1980s that emigration would exceed immigration. In April 2007, *Yediot Acharonot* reported that only 14,400 immigrants (including non-Jews) were expected in 2007, while it was predicted that 20,000 Israelis would leave the country.⁵⁹ In a widely cited study, a prominent Israeli economist published data showing that nearly 25 percent of all Israeli academics were teaching in the United States in the academic year 2003/04. This was the highest proportion of any other country's scholars and twice as high as the next closest country, Canada.⁶⁰

Just as significant is the cultural and psychological shift that has occurred in Israel toward the idea of emigration. "Yeridah" (literally "going down," or "emigrating") has traditionally been a word of derision and blame, even disgust. As

many have observed, this norm has been changing since 1976, when then Prime Minister Rabin called *yordim* "leftovers of weaklings."⁶¹ In the 1980s, the Israeli government began relating to Israelis abroad, not as deserters but as a resource to be organized and as a recruitment pool for immigration. In late 2004, a Mina Tzemach poll reported that 67 percent of Israeli respondents "understood the choice to relocate abroad."⁶² According to *Maariv*, polls in early 2007 showed that one quarter of Israelis were considering leaving the country, including almost half of all young people.⁶³

Noting that 40,000 Israelis now live and work in Silicon Valley in California, one prominent Israeli economic analyst suggested that the large-scale emigration of highly skilled Israelis be reconceptualized. Leaving Israel, wrote Shlomo Maital, should not be seen as a "betrayal of Zionism" since, in a globalizing age, "where on this planet you live matters less than how you think and act toward Israel."⁶⁴ Maital suggests that economic and professional concerns are still the main impetus for emigration, but that Israelis capable of leaving the country are increasingly motivated by the security situation and the desire for an "insurance policy" in case life in the Jewish state becomes too dangerous, unstable or uncomfortable. The idea of an "insurance policy" is a dominant theme in interviews conducted with Israelis applying for European passports for which they are eligible because of the citizenship of their parents or grandparents. In 2004, the German government issued 3,000 passports to Israelis. The explanation one recipient offered is typical:

I don't want to lie and say that it's not a kind of insurance policy in case something happens here. I'm not going to get up and leave the country tomorrow...but it's good to know that I have a second passport. I believe that Germany will still exist long after Israel, and that was something I thought about.

Watching the efforts of European nations to evacuate their nationals from Lebanon during the 2006 war, many Israelis with dual citizenship wondered if they would be eligible for this kind of aid in the event of an emergency. In answer to such questions, Tom Segev reported that, according to German officials, the 70,000 Israelis who currently hold German passports are indeed eligible to be evacuated by the German armed forces from Israel should an emergency arise that threatens their safety.⁶⁶

Many Israelis were shocked when Avraham Burg urged every Israeli who could to imitate him (Burg has secured French citizenship.) and get a European passport. Altogether it is estimated that the expansion of the EU to include Eastern European countries has prompted more than 100,000 Israelis to acquire European passports in recent years.⁶⁸ Thus, although Israelis tend to criticize European governments severely for their policies toward the Israeli-Palestinian problem, Israelis are powerfully drawn to the countries of the EU. The EU is Israel's largest trading partner. Early in 2007, surveys conducted by a German foundation revealed that 75 percent of Israelis wanted Israel to be in the EU; that 11 percent of Israelis would leave Israel if granted EU citizenship; and that in the previous three years, fully half of Israelis had visited Europe.⁶⁹ We may

consider the psychological readiness to depart the country, the acquisition of dual citizenship in attractive countries for emigration, and the consolidation of job opportunities and purchase of property abroad as a kind of “escape-route-on-the-way” for many Israelis. The trend of transcontinental commuting, featuring semi-annual or even bi-weekly commutes by Israeli professionals and businessmen to jobs in the United States and Europe, is associated with this larger pattern — a shift, to use Israeli legal parlance, of many Israelis' “center of life” from Israel toward locations abroad.⁷⁰

In his positive future scenario for Israel, Dror recognizes this trend as an unavoidable feature of Israeli life. “Special efforts,” he says, “should be made to ...reduce emigration of high-quality human resources, including...opportunities and incentives for part-time living in Israel....”⁷¹ Others have concluded that, in light of the negative emigration balances of Jews and the prominence of non-Jews, the Law of Return should be substantially amended. They question whether “*aliyah*” and immigrant absorption should be reconsidered as central tasks of the state.⁷² One of the most striking signs of demographically or politically meaningful rates of Jewish emigration from Israel is contained in the Elran study of Israeli national resilience, cited above. The purpose of that study was to prove that the violence following the collapse of Oslo had not driven the country into a tailspin and that Israel was demonstrating the “resilience” needed to survive the dismal prognostications he characterized as prominent in the media (p. 68). Elran provides a great deal of data to show high levels of Israeli patriotism and willingness

to sacrifice on behalf of the collective. But he acknowledges that “the most important indicator of patriotism is negative migration, that which is called ‘yeridah’ in Israel.” After telling his readers that, in fact, rates of emigration had sharply increased since the al-Aqsa Intifada, he then provides Dahaf polling data, not on how many Israelis said they want to leave the country (a rather standard question in many surveys), but on how many said they wanted to remain. In other words, he cites the fact that 69 percent of Israelis say they want to stay in the country as evidence of Israel’s “resilience.”⁷³

NON-RATIONAL USE OF VIOLENCE

From the late 1920s to the late 1960s, Zionist military thinking focused on how to build, train and equip an army capable of not only protecting the Yishuv and then the state of Israel, but of delivering painful preemptive or retaliatory blows against Arab enemies. The core idea was not to avoid war, but to insure victories of such vividness and consequence that Arabs would come to regard Israel’s existence an immutable, if unpleasant, fact of Middle Eastern life. Once that attitude was instilled, the objective was to combine the stick of coercion with the carrot of compromise to achieve negotiated peace agreements. However, in the next historical stage of the Arab-Israeli relationship (1969-93), Arab Iron Walls exacted increasingly high costs from Israeli society and the Israeli governments in power during wars, thereby greatly complicating Israel’s own Iron Wall strategy.

Until the 1970s, the core idea undergirding Israeli military doctrine and deployments stressed the importance, first

and foremost, of projecting an image of Israeli invincibility and retaliatory might that would deter Arab attacks. During this period, although demonstrations of Israeli military prowess were still seen as useful, war became something that was to be avoided if possible — not only to preserve Israeli control of territories captured in 1967, but also to convince Arab enemies that substantial moderation of their ambitions would be required as part of peace negotiations. As portrayed by the governments of Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and even Menachem Begin in this period, these negotiations could result in compromise agreements that would satisfy some, but certainly not all, Arab aspirations.⁷⁴

Indeed, apart from a brief period between the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the 1975 Sinai disengagement agreement with Egypt, Israeli strategic thinking was largely based on the presumed credibility and effectiveness of its military deterrent. To cement this belief, Begin signed a very “Jabotinskian” peace treaty with Egypt, largely separating it from the Palestinian core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The subsequent confidence Israeli leaders had in their ability to deter an all-out Arab attack was reflected in the invasion of Lebanon in 1982. This operation was designed to establish peace with Lebanon, inflict a punishing defeat on Syria, remove the Palestinian problem from the regional agenda, and enable Israeli absorption of the West Bank and Gaza. However, the results of the Lebanon War, including the collapse of ambitions to establish a friendly government in Beirut, deep divisions inside the army and inside Israel, and 18 years of costly and unsuccessful occupation of Lebanese territory exposed the limits of Israeli power and weakened Israel’s

deterrent. What Arabs learned from the Lebanon War was not the inevitability of accommodating themselves to Israeli diktats, but the vulnerability of the Israeli army and Israeli society to determined Arab and Muslim political and military action. With the PLO relocated in Tunis and the “Resistance” in Lebanon gaining credibility, Palestinians in the occupied territories began to build new forms of distributed, clever and defiant organization that led, five years later, to the Intifada, by any measure a revolutionary act of Palestinian confrontation with Israel.

The Intifada that erupted at the end of 1987, coupled with the missile attacks against Israel by Saddam Hussein during the 1991 Gulf War, helped shift the discussion of national-security affairs in Israel toward the problematic status of Israel’s deterrent. By the end of the Intifada in 1993, the dominant Israeli strategic perspective still accepted that at the highest level of force, where Israel’s nuclear option could be brought into play, deterrence remained intact. At lower levels, however, Israel’s deterrent against Arab attacks was judged to have been weakened considerably. This was Efraim Inbar’s analysis in 1994.⁷⁵ Inbar’s changing assessments of the strategic challenges and opportunities facing Israel are an excellent way to trace dominant national-security perspectives in Israel. For the balance of the 1990s, Inbar’s writings emphasized the end of Israeli commitments to “self-reliance” in national security affairs and treated the peace process as a likely, if not certain, path for Israel’s integration into Middle Eastern regional-security arrangements or for the achievement of a Middle Eastern version of “détente.”⁷⁶ The al-Aqsa Intifada that

erupted following the collapse of the Camp David negotiations in 2000 and Ariel Sharon’s visit to the Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount) highlighted the disappearance of Israel’s deterrent capacity, at least against the Palestinians, while destroying the faith of many Israelis that peace could be achieved through negotiations. It also triggered a sharp change in Inbar’s analysis, entailing portrayal of the Palestinian problem as essentially “unsolvable” and impossible to ameliorate, endorsement of unilateral disengagement from Gaza, and insistent exhortations to attack Syria in order to re-establish strategic superiority.⁷⁷

As I have stressed, Zionism’s use of violence against Arabs was traditionally conceived as a pedagogical device to convince Arabs of the Jewish National Home’s indestructibility, and then to persuade some among them to negotiate mutually acceptable deals based on the alternative of suffering painful defeats. It is natural, then, that, as images of a future in which Arabs and Muslims can come to accept the Jewish state fade from Israeli consciousness, the rationale for violence also changes. Instead of being conceived as a persuasive instrument in service of political or diplomatic aims, force against Arabs and Muslims is increasingly treated as a kind of *rattonade*. This was the term used to characterize the French practice in Algeria of entering casbahs and other Muslim quarters, killing inhabitants, and then quickly returning to European areas or bases. Its literal meaning is “rat hunt.” More generally, it refers to a violent strike against the enemy “on the other side of the wall” for purposes of punishment, destruction and psychological release. While Sharon and other Israeli military leaders in the 1970s and 1980s made the slogan

sbang ve'gomarnu (“smash and we’re done”) popular, and while the activities of Unit 101 in the 1950s and many Israeli military operations can be understood as at least in part motivated by the desire to satisfy psychological or domestic political requirements, Israel’s long-term strategy for moving Arab-Israeli relations closer to peace by the use of force has never been more conspicuous by its absence than in the years since 2000.

This was dramatically apparent in the findings of the Winograd Commission, appointed to investigate the debacle of Israel’s participation in the Second Lebanon War. Its first and primary finding was an absence of any plan, military or political, that integrated Israeli military strikes against Hezbollah into a coherent framework of political or strategic objectives. Absent such a framework, military action can be emotionally satisfying but cannot be rational (in the sense of systematically relating actions to objectives). The commission published its interim report in April 2007, labeling the first of the “main failures” they listed as “the decision to respond with an immediate, intensive military strike [that] was not based on a detailed, comprehensive and authorized military plan....” According to the report, “The goals of the campaign were not set out clearly and carefully, and...there was no serious discussion of the relationships between these goals and the authorized modes of military action.”⁷⁸ Indeed, the most notable declaration by an Israeli leader of Israel’s overall objective in the war was Chief of Staff Dan Halutz’s celebrated statement that, if the two soldiers abducted by Hezbollah were not returned, Israel would “turn Lebanon’s clock back 20 years.” A purer expression

of the *ratonnade* mentality would be difficult to find.

Of course, the most regular expressions of this (strategically) nonrational use of Israel’s coercive capacity are Israeli policies: targeted assassinations of Palestinian leaders, entry into Palestinian zones by Israeli intelligence agents and reconnaissance units to capture or kill particular individuals, missile attacks, bombing raids and temporary, but devastating search-and-destroy ground incursions. Even during the Oslo period, the irrationality of conducting strikes that destroyed the credibility and efficacy of Palestinian leaders while demanding more effective governance by the Palestinian Authority never became important, let alone decisive, in Israeli political discourse. Today, moral or strictly “professional” military criticism of particularly cruel or “disproportionate” raids in Gaza, the West Bank, or Lebanon can still be heard. However, specific evaluation of these measures based on their political rationality — i.e., the likelihood that they might enhance or undermine chances for progress toward a peace settlement — is almost entirely absent.

The same pattern of discussing policy options with no regard to their impact on eventual opportunities to advance prospects for peace is apparent in Israel’s reaction to the possibility that Iran could join the club of Middle Eastern nuclear powers. It also reveals the country’s abandonment of the Iron Wall pedagogy of coercion. The Israeli definition of the threat posed by the Islamic Republic of Iran is existential and desperate. This is precisely the image of Iran that Ahmedinejad and his allies are seeking to create. It is also worth noting that, once defined in this manner, there is no limit on

the measures Israelis can imagine are justified in taking against it. After all, when survival is perceived to be at stake, there is neither need nor rationale for thinking about consequences or how to calibrate the use of force to foster positive outcomes or reduce the political fallout of military action. More generally, military options to eliminate the threat can be discussed with no attention to their long-term consequences for peace in the region.⁷⁹

When it comes to Israel's response to Iran, it is not just the abandonment of the Iron Wall that is striking, but its replacement by the primitive, but overwhelming, psychological and mythic power of the Holocaust. Israelis seem haunted by the specter of catastrophic destruction that Ahmedinejad has so skillfully associated with Iran's ambiguous but apparently vigorous attempt to become a nuclear power. Foreign policy speeches by Israeli leaders from across the political spectrum have a similar refrain: "Teheran delenda est!" (preferably by the United States).⁸⁰ By leaking reports that Israeli planes were practicing nuclear strikes against Gibraltar to prepare for hitting Iran, Israel's government was clearly, if clumsily, trying to remind the West that what had been done to Osirak in Iraq could be done, with much more dangerous consequences, in Iran if the problem were not taken care of by others.⁸¹ In January 2007, Yossi Klein Halevi and Michael B. Oren said they spoke for most Israelis when they portrayed Iran armed with nuclear weapons as equivalent to another Holocaust. "Senior army commanders, who likely once regarded Holocaust analogies with the Middle East conflict as an affront to Zionist empowerment, now routinely speak of a 'second Holocaust.'"⁸² Op-eds, written by

left-wing as well as right-wing commentators, compare these times to the 1930s...., "(when) the international community reacted with indifference as a massively armed nation declared war against the Jewish people...." Making the very possession of nuclear weapons by Iran the issue, Halevi and Oren suggested that, even without using them, Iran could cripple the country. An Iranian nuclear threat would embolden Hezbollah and Hamas, limit Israeli military options, prevent any Arab country from making concessions in negotiations, deter investors away from the Jewish state, and drive Israeli elites with opportunities abroad to leave the country. If the West cannot be convinced to prevent Iran from going nuclear by the middle of 2008, say Halevi and Oren, Israel will have to strike Iran militarily, anticipating an all-out conventional war with Iran and other Middle Eastern states if this occurs.⁸³

It is not only the Iranian nuclear threat and Ahmadinejad's jeremiads, however, that incline Israelis to see war, not as a pedagogical device or a tool to move the country toward a brighter and more peaceful future, but as an existential necessity. In January 2007, Adi Mintz, a former head of the Yesha Council, described an American withdrawal from Iraq as inevitable and predicted it would be followed by a "tsunami" of radical change that would replace governments in Egypt and elsewhere with fundamentalized Islamic and ferociously anti-Israel regimes. The result would be a threat to Israel's existence "no less dangerous than a nuclear Iran." It will, he wrote, force Israelis to abandon the image of their country as a "shelter" for Jews (because it would not be) and to embrace the transcendental spiritual mission of the Jewish

state as the only way to build the strength necessary for the struggle.⁸⁴

THE CHALLENGE OF A CATEGORY

A great fact of modern human history, whether to be treated as celebration, puzzle or tragedy, is that Europeans explosively outdistanced peoples anywhere else on the planet in their ability to build things, whether states, weapons, ships or factories. This meant, among other things, that European colonists, settlers and fragments spun out across the globe and were implanted on other continents. Where these fragments annihilated or otherwise rendered aboriginal populations politically irrelevant, as in North America, parts of South America, Australia and New Zealand, new European-style societies appear today as unproblematic, permanent parts of our political world. Where these fragments survived but did not annihilate or otherwise render irrelevant the indigenous populations, European-style societies have had rather less good fortune. Considering the category broadly (but omitting tiny enclaves such as Hong Kong, Macao, and Goa), we may include the Crusader kingdoms, South Africa, Rhodesia, French Algeria and Israel.

Israel, of course, is the only survivor in this list. Counting from the state's establishment, it is almost 60 years old. Counting from the first arrival of Zionist settlers in Palestine, it is 125 years old — compared to almost two hundred years for the Crusaders; about 80 years for the white version of the Union, then Republic, of South Africa; 120 years for French Algeria; and 34 years for independent (white) Rhodesia. Israel's biggest challenge, indeed the biggest challenge facing Zionism

and its descendants, is to escape the fate of all other polities falling within this category. Can Israel do what no other country in this category has done — establish itself as a commonsensical, naturalized, and presumptively permanent feature of a non-European landscape?

Zionism's architects were of two minds when it came to the question of integrating Israel into the Middle East. On the one hand, Zionist poets and writers celebrated the "return to the East," where the Jewish people's history had begun. More powerful, though, was the sense that the Jewish polity would integrate itself into the Middle East, not by becoming Middle Eastern, but by serving as the vanguard of general processes that would modernize, industrialize, secularize and Westernize the region. The argument set forth here has been that Israel and Jewish Israelis are deep into the process of abandoning any image of the state or of themselves as part of the Middle East. Instead of hoping to transform Arab/Muslim attitudes toward the Jewish state by a pedagogy of force followed by diplomacy (the Iron Wall strategy), or of transforming the cultural content of the region via modernization cum Westernization, Israelis are seeking isolation or escape.

For seven decades (from the late 1920s to the late 1990s), the Iron Wall strategy for engineering Middle Eastern tolerance of a Jewish polity was seen to be working relatively well. Now, in the face of the difficulties discussed, Israel has effectively abandoned the Iron Wall and lives, without an alternative plan, within the category of European fragments that did not annihilate aboriginal populations. Membership in this category implies a horizon for the very existence of the

Jewish state. In this context, it may be noted that in each of the modern cases of failed European fragments, international pariah status preceded the polity’s demise. There is ample evidence that Israel is assuming this image. An EU-sponsored poll in 2003 showed that respondents considered Israel to be a more dangerous threat to world peace than any other country.⁸⁵ In 2006, this finding was dramatically confirmed in a “national brand” study commissioned by the Government of Israel. The survey included 25,903 online consumers across 35 countries and found that Israel, by substantial margins, had the worst public image in every category.⁸⁶

It is impossible, of course, to be certain that Israel is doomed by the category within which history, the exertions of the Zionist movement, and the moral scruples of Jews, have placed it. For those committed to the preservation of a large, prosperous, and secure Jewish community in the Middle East, this is a basis for urgent and generous political action. However, the change in Israel’s posture and in Israelis’ view of the Middle East and of non-Jewish Middle Easterners has been so dramatic that it is more reasonable to treat the argument advanced here as probably valid rather than just plausibly so. Close evaluation of the argument will require extensive analysis of trends in the Muslim and Arab worlds as to images of Israel as either an indestructible, if unwelcome fixture of Middle Eastern life or as an utterly indigestible and fundamentally temporary phenomenon. To what extent have the views of the great majority of the region’s inhabitants moved rapidly from the first perspective toward the second, and in that way are they aligning themselves with

the way politically dominant groups in the other European fragments were regarded by indigenous majorities? Certainly it is true that some Arab regimes continue to express their willingness to sign peace treaties with Israel. But in a region whose deepest and strongest political sentiments are those of religion, it would seem that, if democracy does take hold in the Middle East, it may simply accelerate the rise to power of forces unwilling to accept Israel as a long-term partner in the future of the region. To what extent, therefore, will Israel feel it can rely on peace commitments of authoritarian regimes so unpopular and so likely to be replaced as those in Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia?

In the long run, the question for Israel is not whether it can escape from the Middle East; it is whether it can escape from the category of its creation. As Vladimir Jabotinsky understood, if that escape is to be possible, if the “alien settlers” in the Land of Israel/Palestine are to eventually become accepted as an irremovable aspect of Middle Eastern life, then the key to that escape can only be the Palestinians. The peace process in all its guises has been based on the single and simple wager that if Palestinians could be given enough political, economic and legal satisfaction, and if that satisfaction could be tied to the continued existence of Israel as a Jewish state, then the rest of the Arab and Muslim worlds would avail itself of the Palestinian “heksher”⁸⁷ to end its wider conflict with Israel. It is the centrality of this wager to the integrity of the Zionist project that has made the question of de facto annexation, and whether Israeli settlements have obliterated chances for a real Palestinian state solution, so crucial and so painful within Israel.

If the negotiated two-state solution is still possible, the bad news is that it may no longer be the decisive question. For, if Israelis are so disconnected from Middle Eastern realities as to have lost the empathy with Palestinians necessary to convince them that negotiations will lead to a satisfying outcome, and if Arabs and Muslims in the Middle East are as intransigently hostile to Israel as most Israelis believe them to be, then, in effect, a two-state solution has been rendered impossible. This is not because of the oft-discussed supposed impossibility of actually establishing a Palestinian state next to Israel (Hamas, for its part, is perfectly ready to accept one as a prelude to a 20-year lull in the battle.). The impossibility of a the two-state solution hangs, instead, on the question of whether the belief in the rationale behind it — achieving some semblance of a comprehensively stable and peaceful end to the Arab-Israeli dispute — will have vanished from inside Israeli political life. Why should Israelis tear themselves to pieces to produce a state that will satisfy the Pales

tinians if they come to believe that the rest of the Middle East hates Israel more than they care for the Palestinians?

Having abandoned the Iron Wall, Israelis are increasingly confused and even distraught about the future. Yet they face a stark choice: engagement with the real Middle East and the demands it makes upon Israel for justice, democracy and territory, or escape from it. The danger for the Jewish state is that, given the choice between convincing Middle Easterners that Israel can be a good neighbor and leaving the neighborhood, more and more Israelis are attracted to the latter. Most unsettling of all is the interaction between two logical but mutually reinforcing trends. Israelis are embracing coercive and unilateralist policies that destroy whatever is left of its image as a potential good neighbor. Arabs and Muslims can be expected to treat signs of Jewish abandonment of the region as encouragement to forget any inclination they may still have to make peace with the Jews rather than wait them out.

¹Regarding suppressed portions of Zionist Congress debates about policy toward the Arabs of Palestine, see Benny Morris, “Thus Were the Zionist Documents Overhauled,” *Haaretz*, February 4, 1994.

²For revealing insights into how even an extremely “dovish” Zionist such as Arthur Ruppin gravitated toward insistence that negotiations with Arabs be avoided until they had been brought to accept Zionist realities, see Arthur Ruppin, *Memoirs, Diaries, Letters* (Herzl Press, 1971), pp. 189, 196, 216, and 277, and Moshe Dayan’s public endorsement of Ruppin’s embrace of the Iron Wall policy, reprinted as an afterword in this volume, pp. 315-23. See also the analysis provided confidentially by Chaim Arlosoroff to Chaim Weizman in 1932, published as “Reflections on Zionist Policy,” by Jewish Frontier (October 1948), pp. 1-7. On convergence of the views of Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky on the Arab question, see Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force 1881-1948* (Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 156-58 and 210-11.

³For a close analysis of Jabotinsky’s argument and direct quotations from translations of his writings in the original Russian, see Ian Lustick, “To Build and To Be Built By: Israel and the Hidden Logic of the Iron Wall,” *Israel Studies*, Vol. I, No. 1 (Summer 1996), pp. 196-223. For an extended application of portions of this argument, see Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (W. W. Norton, 2001).

⁴Lustick, “To Build and To Be Built By,” pp. 209-12.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 216-19.

⁶Abba Eban, Speech to Commonwealth Club of California, November 14, 1970, <http://www.commonwealthclub.org/archive/20thcentury/70-11eban-speech.html>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The beginning of this shift can be detected in 1993, when Yitzhak Rabin, in his Sept. 21 Knesset speech defending the launch of the Oslo Process, slightly, mischaracterized Arafat’s letter to him that preceded signing of the DOP. The letter read, “The PLO recognizes the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security” http://www.unitedjerusalem.com/DECLARATION_OF_PRINCIPLES_1993/Arafat_letter_to_Rabin/arafat_letter_to_rabin.asp. Rabin reported that Arafat had written a letter that “recognize(d) Israel’s right to exist and to live in peace and security.” <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Archive/Speeches/EXCERPTS+OF+PM+RABIN+KNESSET+SPEECH+-DOP-+-+21-Sep.htm>.

⁹ <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2002/Speech%20by%20PM%20Sharon%20at%20the%20Herzliya%20Conference%20-%204>.

¹⁰ May 23, 2006. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060523-9.html>. Olmert reaffirmed this position just prior to the Annapolis summit, describing Palestinian recognition of Israel “as a Jewish state” as a “precondition” for negotiations. Aluf Benn, “Israel to Release Up to 400 Palestinian Prisoners Ahead of Summit,” *Haaretz*, November 12, 2007.

¹¹ Roger Cohen, “Her Jewish State,” *The New York Times Magazine*, July 8, 2007, p. 36.

¹² Efraim Inbar, “Stop Saying Sorry,” *Jerusalem Post*, May 30, 2004.

¹³ Yossi Klein Halevi, “Israel’s Next War Has Begun: Battle Plans,” *The New Republic*, July 12, 2006. <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?i=w060710&s=halevi071206>. For a similar view of the future as having no chance for successful peace negotiations—a view shaped directly by the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada, see Benny Morris, “Peace? No Chance,” *The Guardian*, February 21, 2002.

¹⁴ Yehezkel Dror, “The Consequences of 1948 Are Still Unclear,” *Jewish Chronicle*, April 18, 2008, p. 45.

¹⁵ Yehezkel Dror, “When Survival of the Jewish People Is at Stake, There’s No Place for Morals,” *Forward*, May 15, 2008.

¹⁶ Ari Shavit, “Survival of the Fittest? An Interview with Benny Morris,” *Haaretz*, January 16, 2004 (in translation at: <http://www.logosjournal.com/morris.htm>). For an analysis of the pervasiveness with which brutality and even genocide have come to characterize Israeli public discourse on Arabs and Muslims, see Avraham Burg, *The Defeat of Hitler* (in Hebrew, Yediot Acharonot, 2007), pp. 88-89.

¹⁷ David Grossman, “Looking at Ourselves,” reprinted in *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 54, No. 1, January 11, 2007; <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/19770>. For a detailed account of Grossman’s view of Israel’s despairing mood, see, “Writing in the Dark,” *The New York Times Magazine*, May 13, 2007, pp. 28-31.

¹⁸ *New York Times*, November 1, 2006. For a more detailed portrayal of the Middle East as intractably hostile to Israel, see Mordechai Kedar, “The Illusion of Peace in Exchange for Territories,” Perspectives Papers on Current Affairs, BESA Center, February 15, 2007; <http://www.biu.ac.il/Besa/perspectives25.html>.

¹⁹ “World War III Has Already Begun, Says Israeli Spy Chief,” *Y-Net*, January 27, 2007, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3357552,00.html>; Excerpts from Halevy address to BESA conference at Bar-Ilan University, *Bulletin*, No. 21 (January 2007), p. 9.

²⁰ *Nekuda* is the official journal of the “Yesha Council,” the umbrella organization for the local councils of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Golan Heights.

²¹ See for example Motti Karpel, “It Is Impossible to Continue Zionism without Recognizing That It Is Finished,” *Nekuda*, No. 297 (January 2007), pp. 37-39. Some but not all contributors acknowledged their views were aligned with those of the “post-Zionists.”

²² Yehezkel Dror, “The Future of Israel between Thriving and Decline,” May 2006, p. 20n.

²³ Ibid, pp. 7-12. <http://www.jpppi.org.il/JPPPI/Templates>ShowPage.asp?DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=341&PID=611&IID=514>. Dror worries that, despite his exhortation to Israelis to think seriously about their future, there is the “danger of a self-fulfilling prophecy, with thinking about a possible catastrophic end to Israel, demoralizing Israel, encouraging its enemies and wakening efforts to make such a contingency impossible.”

²⁴ Arnon Soffer and Evengia Bystrov, *Tel Aviv State: A Threat to Israel* (Ayalon, 2006), p. 53.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 65-66.

²⁶ Yoav Sorek, “Normalization of Judea and Samaria,” *Nekuda*, No. 294 (September 2006), p. 31.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 33.

²⁸ Norman Podhoretz, “Oslo: The Peacemongers Return,” *Commentary Magazine*, Vol. 112, No. 3 (October

2001), p. 32.

²⁹ *Commentary Magazine*, Vol. 113, No. 1 (January 2002), p. 5. For commentators who consider Podhoretz an optimist, see John Derbyshire, "Israel: The Odds," *National Review Online*, January 31, 2002.

³⁰ David Brooks, "After the Fall," *The New York Times*, December 10, 2006.

³¹ To a group of visiting Americans in November 2006, Olmert said: "I know all of his (Bush's) policies are controversial in America...I stand with the president because I know that Iraq without Saddam Hussein is so much better for the security and safety of Israel, and all of the neighbors of Israel without any significance to us...Thank God for the power and the determination and leadership manifested by President Bush." Dan Williams, "Iraq War Was Good for Israel: Olmert," Reuters, November 22, 2006; http://www.zionism-israel.com/israel_news/2006/11/iraq-war-was-good-for-israel-olmert.html. On the dramatically isolating consequences of Israeli association with the Bush administration's policies in Iraq, see Yossi Sarid, "Israel, Victim of the Iraqi Adventure," *Haaretz*, May 22, 2007.

³² Efraim Inbar, "Israel: An Enduring Union," *Journal of International Security Affairs*, No. 11, Fall 2006, pp. 7-13.

³³ Poll conducted by Ma'agan Mochot, May 1-4, 2007. Reported in the BESA Bulletin, No. 22, October 2007.

³⁴ John Derbyshire, "Hesperophobia," *National Review Online*, September 14, 2001; <http://www.olimu.com/webjournalism/Texts/Commentary/Hesperophobia.htm>. See also Yaacov Katz, "The War of Civilizations," *Nekuda*, No. 294 (September 2006), pp. 26-28; and Moshe Sharon, "Agenda of Islam: A War between Civilizations," December 24, 2003; http://www.freeman.org/m_online/feb04/sharon.htm.

³⁵ Efraim Inbar, "What Lies Ahead for Israel," *The Jerusalem Post*, December 11, 2000, emphasis added. For a more recent expression, see Doron Rosenblum, "It's a Jungle Out There," *Haaretz*, June 8, 2007.

³⁶ Quoted by Ari Shavit, in "Leaving the Zionist Ghetto," *Haaretz*, June 8, 2007; <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/868385.html>.

³⁷ In June 2007, Hebrew billboards in Tel Aviv advertising concerts by Bob Dylan in Milan and Genesis in Budapest illustrated the sense Israelis have, or seek to have, of living in the European cultural space. For a treatment of the self-consciously strained psychology of normalcy maintained by Tel-Avivians, see Orly Goldkling, "Unceasingly Trendy," *Nekuda*, No. 304 (September 2007), pp. 36-41.

³⁸ Ehud Ya'ari, "Choosing to be Dumb — the Arabic TV Fiasco," *The Jerusalem Report*, March 5, 2007, p. 20.

³⁹ Ibid. See also Avi Issachar, "We Don't Want to Know," *Haaretz*, June 15, 2007.

⁴⁰ "The State of Arabic Education in Israel," *Haaretz*, November 21, 2004.

⁴¹ Smadar Donitsa-Schmidt, Ofra Inbar, and Elana Shohamy, "The Effects of Teaching Spoken Arabic on Students' Attitudes and Motivation in Israel," *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 88 (2004), pp. 218-19.

⁴² Editorial, *Yediot Acharonot*, May 6, 2007.

⁴³ Dror, p. 21.

⁴⁴ In its editorial on May 6, 2007, *Yediot Acharonot* described the chances that Prime Minister Olmert would resign in response to a student protest strike as "like those of the editors learning Turkish," a metaphor that evokes a sense of the impossible.

⁴⁵ Arnon Sofer and Evengia Bystrov, *Tel Aviv State: A Threat to Israel* (Ayalon, 2006), p. 53. In 2007, it was reported that an average of 7,000 Jews per year had left Jerusalem for other parts of Israel each year for the previous ten years. Foundation for Middle East Peace, Report on Israeli Settlements, July-August 2007, p. 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 25.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 26.

⁴⁸ B.A. Kipnis, "Tel Aviv, Israel — A World City in Evolution: Urban Development at a Deadend of the Global Economy," in M Pak, eds., *Cities in Transition*. (Department of Geography, University of Ljubljana, 2004), pp. 183-194. Accessed as Research Bulletin #57, at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/rb/rb57.html>.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Interview with Amir Reshef-Gissin, *The Jerusalem Report*, November 27, 2006, p. 48.

⁵¹ "Survival of the Fittest?"

⁵² Tom Tugend, "No Place Like Home? Expats Wooed to Return to Israel," *Jewish Exponent*, February 22, 2007. These figures are strikingly higher than in 1990 of between 250,000 to 400,000 Israeli expatriates worldwide. See Oren Meyers, "A Home Away from Home? Israel Shelanu and the Self-Perceptions of Israeli

Migrants,” *Israel Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Fall 2001), pp. 71-90, quoting Yinon Cohen and Yitchak Haberfeld, “The Number of Israeli Immigrants in the United States in 1990,” *Demography*, Vol. 34, No. 2, 1997, pp. 199-213.

⁵³ Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2006, Table 4.9, and information from Martha Kruger, “Israel: Balancing Demographics in the Jewish State,” Migration Information Source, <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=321>.

⁵⁴ Figures taken from official U.S., British and Canadian census and immigration publications.

⁵⁵ Meir Elran, *National Resilience in Israel: The Influence of the Second Intifada on Israeli Society* (in Hebrew), Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Memorandum 81 (Tel Aviv: January 2006).

⁵⁶ Hillel Halkin, “The Demographic Race,” *The Jerusalem Post*, November 30, 2006. Immigration into Israel has been running approximately 20,000 per year; in 2006, there were 19,264 immigrants (*Jerusalem Report*, March 19, 2007, p. 6). According to the Jewish Agency, about 35 percent of them are from the former Soviet Union. <http://www.jewishagency.org/JewishAgency/English/Home/About/Press+Room/Press+Releases/2006/dec27.htm>. Since the mid-1990s, half or more of the immigrants from the Former Soviet Union have not been classified as Jewish. See Ian S. Lustick “Israel as a Non-Arab State: The Political Implications of Mass Immigration of Non-Jews,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Summer 1999), pp. 101-17. Clearly, since the al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000, there have been far more Jewish emigrants from Israel than immigrants.

⁵⁷ *Haaretz*, December 10, 2007, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/932667.html>. Read the posted comments for the radically changed discourse about leaving the country. Most justify emigration and ridicule attempts to bribe Israelis to return.

⁵⁸ Eric Gould and Omer Moav, *The Israeli Brain Drain* (Jerusalem: The Shalem Center, July 2006). See also Dan Ben-David, “Soaring Minds: The Flight of Israel’s Economists,” CEPR Discussion Paper No. 6338 (Center for Economic Policy Research, 2007) <http://spirit.tau.ac.il/public/bendavid/econ-rankings/SoaringMinds.pdf>. For a somewhat contrary analysis, see Yinon Cohen, “Who Needs and Who Wants Differential Salaries in Universities?” (in Hebrew) forthcoming in *Welfare and Economy*. Accessed at <http://spirit.tau.ac.il/socAnt/cohen/>.

⁵⁹ <http://stlouis.ujcfedweb.org/page.html?ArticleID=144274>.

⁶⁰ Dan Ben-David, Brain-Drained Discussion Paper 6717 (March 2008), Tel Aviv University and Centre for Economic Policy Research (London), www.tau.ac.il/~danib/econ-rankings/BrainDrained.pdf.

⁶¹ Oren, “A Home Away from Home?”

⁶² Sharon Ashley, “Shades of Grey,” *The Jerusalem Report*, December 13, 2004, p. 4.

⁶³ <http://stlouis.ujcfedweb.org/page.html?ArticleID=144274>.

⁶⁴ Shlomo Maital, “Expatriates or Ex-Patriots,” *The Jerusalem Report*, July 24, 2006, p. 37. Maital is academic director of the Technion Institute of Management, Israel’s leading science and technology institute.

⁶⁵ “EU Passport Gets Popular in Israel,” *Deutsche Welle*, July 21, 2004, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,1273065,00.html>. See also Rafal Kiepuszewski, “Growing Number of Israelis Hoping to Make Poland a Second Homeland,” *Insight: Central Europe*, Dec. 17, 2004, <http://incentraleurope.radio.cz/ice/article/61469>; and Justin Huggler, “Israelis Revive Their Old Family Ties to Gain EU Passports,” *The Independent*, Feb. 15, 2003. Regarding the al-Aqsa Intifada as a trigger for emigration, see Alex Weingrod & André Levy, “Paradoxes of Homecoming: The Jews and Their Diasporas,” *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (2006).

⁶⁶ Tom Segev, “The September 11 Enigma,” *Haaretz*, May 8, 2007.

⁶⁷ Quoted by Ari Shavit, “The Zionist Ghetto.”

⁶⁸ Yoram Ettinger, whose views are prominent in the debate over Israel’s demographic future, has referred to this trend as “the passport disease,” personal communication, April 13, 2007.

⁶⁹ Report published at Ynetnews.com, February 22, 2007. The study was commissioned by the Israeli offices of the German political foundation Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, <http://www.ynetnews.com/EXT/Comp/ArticLayout/CdaArticlePrintPreview/1,2506,L-3368220,00.html>; Aluf Benn, “European Dreaming,” *Haaretz*, November 13, 2003, quoted by Weingrod and Levy.

⁷⁰ Regarding transcontinental commuting, see Abigail Klein Leichman, “Aliyah Commuters,” *New Jersey Jewish Standard*, February 15, 2007. <http://www.jst.andard.com/articles2264/Aliyah-commuters>; Dodi Tobin and Chaim I. Waxman, “Living in Israel, Working in the States,” *Jewish Action* (Winter 5766/2005), pp. 44-48. Regarding the legal meaning of “center of life” in Israeli law and administrative procedure, see <http://>

www.mof.gov.il/ITC/taxReform2003.pdf. Although it has most notably been used as a criterion to exclude Palestinian Arabs from protecting rights under Israeli law to enter Israel, it had its origin in Israeli tax law and is now relevant for considering when commuting Jews can no longer be deemed “residents of Israel.”

⁷¹ Dror, p. 21.

⁷² See Shahar Ilan, “Entering the Age of Post-Aliyah?” *Haaretz*, March 2, 2007, for debates between Jewish Agency Chairman Zeev Bielski and Ruth Gavison and Shlomo Avineri. One reason for the decline in Jewish immigration and an embarrassing statistic that helps explain the difficulty the Israeli government has had finding someone willing to be named minister of immigration absorption is that, in recent years, 200,000 of the Jews remaining in Russia emigrated to Germany. Amiram Barkat, “Nativ Wins Bid for Outreach to Russian-Speaking Jews in Germany,” *Haaretz*, May 30, 2007, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/864945.html>; Gil Hoffman, “Analysis: Absorption the New Bastard Portfolio,” *The Jerusalem Post*, July 5, 2007.

⁷³ Between 2001 and 2004, approximately 69 percent on average of Jewish-Israeli respondents said they wanted to remain in the country. It is the asking of the question in a way that renders staying in Israel as problematic that is most illuminating. Elran, *National Resilience in Israel*, p. 42.

⁷⁴ In this period I do not include governments headed by Yitzhak Shamir in the category of those who sought anything more than deterrence of Arab attacks.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Efraim Inbar and Shmuel Sandler, “Israel’s Deterrence Strategy Revisited,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 3, Winter 1993/94.

⁷⁶ Efraim Inbar, “Israel’s Continuing National Security Challenges,” *Strategic Review*, Winter 1995, pp. 48-54; “Israel: The Emergence of New Strategic Thinking,” *International Defense Review* (1995) pp. 90-97; “Israeli National Security, 1973-96,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 555, January 1998, pp. 62-81.

⁷⁷ Efraim Inbar, “What Lies Ahead for Israel,” *The Jerusalem Post*, November 13, 2000. More recently Inbar’s exhortations have focused on the advisability of an Israeli attack on Iran. “An Israeli View of the Iranian Nuclear Challenge,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes* (April 2008), <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/200804.inbar.israeliviewiraniannuclearchallenge.html>.

⁷⁸ Winograd Committee, Press Release, April 30, 2007. <http://www.imra.org.il/story.php3?id=34083>.

⁷⁹ For a typical example of an extended discussion of Israel’s options for responding to the Iran’s nuclear weapons potential that omits completely any consideration of the political fallout from various options, see Leslie Susser, “Testing Times for Tehran,” *The Jerusalem Report*, November 26, 2007, pp. 8-12.

⁸⁰ This was the focus of a ten-minute peroration by former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the end of a presentation at the Wharton School of Business on September 6, 2006, devoted to his implementation of successful neoliberal economic policies as finance minister in the Sharon government.

⁸¹ “Israel Rejects Report It May Attack Iran’s Nuclear Program,” *International Herald Tribune*, January 7, 2007. A larger and more public exercise was conducted in the Eastern Mediterranean earlier this summer.

⁸² Yossi Klein Halevi and Michael B. Oren, “Israel’s Worst Nightmare,” *The New Republic*, January 30, 2007.

⁸³ Klein-Halevi and Oren. For another instance of this genre, see Gerald M. Steinberg, “From Pyongyang to Tehran,” *The Jerusalem Report*, March 19, 2007, p. 46.

⁸⁴ Adi Mintz, “Surrounded by a Belt of Islamic Bombs,” *Nekuda*, No. 297 (January 2007), pp. 14-17.

⁸⁵ http://www.adl.org/PresRele/IslME_62/4390_13.htm.

⁸⁶ “Survey: Israel Worst Brand Name in the World,” *Israel Today*, November 22, 2006; <http://www.israeltoday.co.il/default.aspx?tabid=178&nid=10395>.

⁸⁷ “Heksher” is a legal term referring to a rabbinic authorization of food to be served or sold as edible by Jews.