



International Consultation of  
Jewish Parliamentarians

**PARLIAMENTARY ROLE IN  
ADDRESSING THE ASSAULT  
AGAINST ISRAEL AND THE JEWISH  
PEOPLE: REPAIRING THE JEWISH  
AND HUMAN CONDITION**

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# ***My Fellow Jewish Parliamentarians***

***Gary Ackerman***

***President, International Council of Jewish Parliamentarians***

*There is a saying in Washington often  
attributed to former Secretary of State  
George Schultz: “You can’t kill a bad idea”*

With Israel’s legitimacy under tremendous assault, this year’s conference couldn’t be more important. Our task, it could be said, is dedicated to proving Secretary Schultz’s theory wrong.

In most things, the work we do as Jewish parliamentarians varies by region, nation and political circumstances. What is essential in one place is of little or no concern elsewhere. And elections here have no effect on stability there. Moreover, each of us brings to the job our own history, beliefs and aspirations. Some of us are on the left, some are in the middle, some are on the right, and each of us knows the others are almost certainly mistaken.

But some things are true for each of us, and some challenges are the same across international boundaries, and all around the world.

With the special exception of our Israeli colleagues, each of us bears a unique burden as a Jewish parliamentarian representing the rest of our countrymen. Our patriotism, no matter how deeply founded, no matter how authentic and sincere, will always be

targeted by anti-Semites and demagogues. No matter that our non-Jewish colleagues are also people of many parts, the “dual-loyalty” smear will always wait patiently for the bigot’s call to action.

And while each of us bears responsibility for our own nation, and the communities we represent, we also, uniquely, share in the responsibility for Israel, and for Jews everywhere.

As such, the assault on the legitimacy of the State of Israel, its right to self-defense and secure, recognized borders, as well as the challenges facing Jewish communities around the world, are the concern of us all. No matter that some of these issues have been with us for decades and others for centuries; the differentness, the distinctness of the Jewish People not only defines a piece of our identity and our politics, but it demands our collective effort.

Although we are a diverse group by nationality and political background, we do, overwhelmingly share certain ideas: that we Jews are not just a religious group, but a distinct people whose ancient origins lie in one particular place, that we share a common history, a special religious heritage and a remarkable culture of learning and compassion. We are all uniquely marked by the experience of the Shoah, which took from us more than can be described by words or counted by numbers. And though we are scattered around the world, though we are citizens of many nations, we always have been, we are today, and we will remain one people.

The attacks on Israel’s right to exist and the efforts to derogate its acts of self-defense to that of “war-crimes” or even “crimes against humanity” stem from a deep-seated and stubborn refusal to see Israel as a normal state, and as such, as entitled to the fundamental right of self-defense. Many countries have unsettled borders. Many states could make improvements in their human rights records. Many nations contain minorities in need of greater legal protection and advocacy for their interests. Many states have been compelled to use force to protect their people and their vital national interests.

Only Israel, the one and only Jewish State, is subjected to the humiliation of having its right to exist routinely questioned and the right of its people to be free from the threat or use of force against them, openly rejected. And here lies a paradox: while the anti-Semitism and discrimination Jews have historically faced and, in some places rightfully continue to fear, is based on the view of Jews as a people apart, the ongoing assault on Israel’s legitimacy is built upon the idea that the Jews are not a separate people, and are thus not entitled to self-determination in their own homeland.

It is this idea, this strange contradictory confabulation of ignorance and malice that we have to struggle against, and ultimately overcome. As legislators, as parliamentarians, we are all accustomed to sometimes losing. We lose votes, we lose elections, we lose majorities, we lose power for years at a time. But we also never give up. That's the job.

And in the struggles we face today, as Jews who bear responsibility not only for our nations, but for our people as well, we cannot afford to do any less. I am proud to be in your company, and to fight these fights at your side.



## ***Dear parliamentarians and members of Knesset***

***Ambassador Ronald S. Lauder  
President, World Jewish Congress***

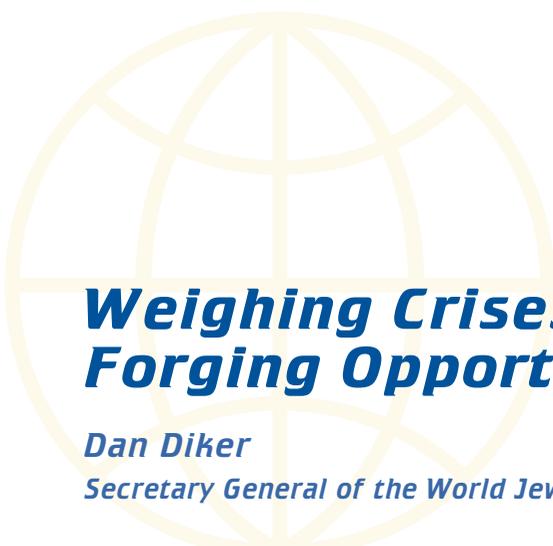
I extend my warmest greetings to you at the ICJP-WJC parliamentary consultation that is taking place in Jerusalem – the eternal capital of the Jewish people.

I firmly believe that this consultation, the only venue that brings together Jewish lawmakers the world over to address some of the most pressing challenges to the Jewish people and the Jewish nation-state, is vital to maintaining the vibrant debate on the issues that will determine the future of our people.

This consultation is unique. This is the only forum in which Jewish parliamentarians from Israel and around the world can compare and contrast their views and their legislative activities and exchange strategies for addressing some of the difficult issues that confront Israel and the Jewish world.

As former United States ambassador to Austria, I have come to appreciate the great importance that Jews can play in international public life, particularly in their ability to influence their governments, media and international institutions in areas that are critical to the well-being and continuity of Jewish communities around the world.

**חזק חזק ונתחזק**



# ***Weighing Crises and Forging Opportunities***

***Dan Diker***

***Secretary General of the World Jewish Congress***

The International Council of Jewish Parliamentarians is convening this year in Jerusalem at a time of great urgency. Arab revolutions have engulfed the Middle East and pose a formidable challenge to the Jewish world, the state of Israel, and vital western interests in the region. The Palestinian leadership has embarked on a unilateral path to statehood which intensifies the threat to regional security and stability, and threatens the credibility of national and global institutions in international diplomacy.

This year's meeting of Jewish parliamentarians representing 22 countries differs from past ICJP conferences in Jerusalem. This year's gathering is a consultation, not a conference, of parliamentarians. It is truly an opportunity to exchange views on issues of vital interest to parliamentarians who are both Jewish and part of the complex reality of serving in western legislatures. This year's ICJP/WJC consultation also affords a window of opportunity to forge a shared worldview on a range of issues via discussion and debate between visiting parliamentarians and members of Knesset.

We have over 20 different countries represented at the ICJP/WJC consultation – an unprecedented number. It is little coincidence that so many members of parliament are convening in Jerusalem today, when the historical connection and right of the Jewish people to self determination in its own capital city has been undermined by Israel's neighbors and their supporters as part

of an overall campaign to challenge the very legitimacy of the nation state of the Jewish people in secure and recognized boundaries and defensible borders.

This year also captures a moment in time of overwhelming exigency in view of the unprecedented political, economic, and social assault on the state of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people. The time is ripe for Jewish parliamentarians of all origins to discuss what role if any they and parliaments in general, might assume in combating this assault. And what of the overall role of ICJP at this time? What is the importance of the relationship between Jewish parliamentarians and members of Knesset in addressing the critical challenges the Jewish people faces today?

The other sense of urgency these days is the aforementioned Palestinian leadership's unilateral gambit to gain United Nations endorsement of a unilaterally declared Palestinian state and the multiple challenges that this may create for the Middle East, and the State of Israel, and the free world. We will consider the Palestinian gambit in terms of international law, regional and international security, and the overall well being of the Middle East. Here again the ICJP is convening to consider what role Jewish parliamentarians and their parliaments might play in responding to this type of challenge to diplomatic and legal precedent.

This year's consultation also affords time to Jewish parliamentarians to consider their professional participation in the Jewish tradition of *tikkun olam* – making the world a better, safer, and healthier place to live. This consultation provides a platform to consider cooperation toward a common goal between Jewish parliamentarians from around the world, but also between them and with fellow lawmakers in the Knesset.

Finally, The World Jewish Congress sees this consultation as part of a larger framework in strengthening the relationship between Jewish members of parliament. That means convening in Jerusalem, but also in the capitals of Europe, North and South America, and Asia. This year is a kick-off event to what we hope to be a much closer, intimate, and stronger on-going relationship between Jewish parliamentarians on issues that are critical to the vitality, strength and well-being of the Jewish people, and to the free world at large.



# ***The ICJP – A Global Jewish Challenge***

***Shai Hermesh***

***Shai Hermesh is a Member of Knesset (Kadima) and  
Chairman of the World Jewish Congress in Israel***

## ***Zionism and the Diaspora – Ambivalent Relations***

The Zionist Movement and Diaspora Jewry have come a long way in terms of their complex and intricate relationship.

The Zionist movement originated as a minority group within the Jewish people at the close of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century that was predicated on negating the diaspora as a core value. This provided the justification prompting pioneering youth in Eastern Europe to arise. Some were inspired by the contemporary European national awakening; others were influenced by social-revolutionary ideological movements and first and foremost the Russian Revolution. They abandoned their parents' homes in protest against the traditional society into which they had been born and departed to establish a new society in the old-new land.

More numerous were those who, due to the pogroms, economic penury and opposition to the regime in their homelands, chose to migrate to distant countries including the United States, South America and South Africa. It was a common situation where Jewish families in the Diaspora were divided between those who elected to remain in their countries of origin in Eastern and Central Europe

and others – those called emigrants, who were part of a global emigration movement from Eastern Europe to America, and those who viewed the move as an historic ideological odyssey and defined themselves as *olim* – new immigrant pioneers building a homeland.

For scores of years the Diaspora was the stronger party whereas the developing Jewish community in Palestine-Israel was the one in need of sustained material support. The Holocaust followed by the declaration establishing an independent Jewish state in the land of Israel (in 1948 there were approximately 600,000 Jews in the land of Israel) intensified the sense of ambivalence.

On the one hand, there was a young state, that was small and impoverished and which paid the price for independence with the blood of 6000 of her sons (1% of the current total Jewish population in Israel!) This gave a sense of tremendous pride and expectation that the vision of the return to Zion would be realized. The events unfolded in the most dramatic and significant dimensions. Let it be emphasized that a large portion of the immigrants came from distressed countries. In other words, this was to a large extent an *aliyah* that signified salvation.

On the other hand, the material needs grew given the mission of absorbing new immigrants, preserving security and developing a physical and economic infrastructure for the young state. This required a huge amount of money which was not available and thus was generously supplied by Western Jewry, some of whom had already developed by then the most impressive economic capabilities.

The denial of the Diaspora and the simultaneous need to rely on the material support of Diaspora Jewry created a most problematic dissonance. The expectation that Diaspora Jewry in its entirety would immigrate to Israel was unrealistic, but it was part of the Israeli ethos that was predicated at that time on the state's renewal. The most extreme expression was uttered by a person who subsequently would serve as Israel's ambassador to Washington and as Prime Minister of Israel – Itzhak Rabin, the ultimate Sabra who termed those Israelis who chose to leave Israel (the expatriates) “dwarf droppings.”

A book is set to appear these very days, authored by Yacob (Yasha) Kedmi (Kazakov), a former prisoner of Zion and later on head of the Liaison Office (a classified institution responsible to the Prime Minister), responsible for Jewish activism behind the Iron Curtain. In his book, Kedmi discloses for the first time that he operated in diverse ways to block the Soviet Jews' option to immigrate to the United States and the West and all this with a view to channeling them to the single track of arrival in Israel. The result was definitely welcome because Israel was blessed by 1 million Jews who disposed of vast



human capital that was purchased or acquired in their country of origin. “Was this ethical?” deliberates Kedmi. “I don’t know the response, but there can be no doubt that this measure saved the State of Israel.”

The economic dependence on the Diaspora no longer exists to the same extent, but the apprehension that the Jewish majority in Israel will diminish poses a long-range strategic threat, and hence there is still the expectation that Jews will continue returning to their land.

## ***The Clash of Civilizations***

The 21<sup>st</sup> century created a new reality: no more local wars (although these have not ceased) but a genuine struggle between civilizations—the terror incidents in the Western countries that reached their apogee on September 11, 2001, in the United States and clarified that there is no longer a front and a rear, but that the entire free world is a front. The struggle in Iraq and Pakistan directly impacts the Lebanese border and Hezbollah, as well as the border with Gaza and Hamas. In the new reality anti-Semitism has joined forces with anti-Israelism and anti-Zionism and both with anti-Americanism.

The Iranian nuclear threat is not directed purely against the Zionists, because in order to drop a bomb on Israel there is no need for missiles with a huge range of 3000 km and over. Israel has become a forward outpost in the new global battle arena. However, at issue is not a conflict over territories and simply a geographic boundary (although, as aforesaid, this has not yet disappeared) but a struggle that captures an ideological element. Radical Islam contends against the West. The role of the pragmatic political leader has been supplanted by the spiritual leader, and where two faiths clash it is difficult to believe that one can obtain compromises and agreements.

We are being towed together by this reality of radicalization. World Jewry, like their brethren in the State of Israel, is exposed to the joint peril. The terror that devastates the Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires and strikes a synagogue in Istanbul is verily the same terror that Qassam missiles impose on the town of Sderot and dispatches a suicide bomber to murder the guests of a Haifa restaurant or bus passengers in Jerusalem. A common fate rejoins those who built their homes in Israel together with their brethren in the Diaspora; past ideological disputes are forgotten.

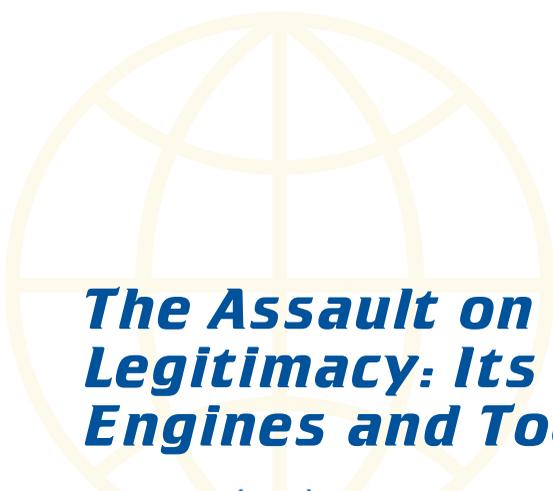
## ***The New Alliance-The Alliance of Free Peoples; What is our duty as members of the ICJP?***

We have to tap the maximal implicit advantages in a reality where the Jewish people of about 13 million sons and daughters is scattered across the globe. The presence of our brethren in all countries of the free world, in the senior positions that they enjoy in their countries in parliaments and senates, academia, the media, education, culture and sport – all these are junctions and meeting points that provide an opportunity to convey **Israel's voice** in every single place in the world.

This is by no means an easy mission – Israel is no longer David fighting Goliath as, not infrequently, we are considered a Goliath who is opposing a David. We have our internal disputes – sometimes things that are seen here are not perceived at a distance. Sometimes we in Israel make mistakes, and it's proper that the opinion of Diaspora Jewry be heard, because they too are partners in this alliance between Israel and the Diaspora. We can also find allies currently among the Christian communities – they like us are frequently threatened by a world of fanatical religious fundamentalists – they too need allies. Thus, after 2000 years of an arduous and sometimes bloody history, we have the opportunity of establishing a pact between us, two sides of the same coin that share common values like monotheism and the values of justice, egalitarianism and human dignity, equality between the sexes, the sanctity of life, the right to freedom of expression and commerce, tolerance towards those who are different and the other, the joint commitment to a free democratic society.

The mission of building such a coalition is a real challenge and here the ICJP's contribution to its establishment can prove most significant.

This Jerusalem encounter between Jewish parliamentarians is an opportunity to build a concept for the new coalition in a world that is currently undergoing a severe shakeup and is beset by uncertainty and outbursts of violence and bloodshed. In this manner we will help realize the prophetic vision and together we will build a world where “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation nor shall they teach war anymore.”



# ***The Assault on Israel's Legitimacy: Its Roots, Engines and Tools***

***Lt.-Gen. (ret.) Moshe Yaalon***

***Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Strategic Affairs***

The legitimacy of the State of Israel, as recognized by the international community, constitutes the core concept underpinning Israel's security rationale and the basis for all other components of its national security. As such, the attempt of recent years to delegitimize Israel represents a major threat to its national security and to the security of the entire Jewish people. This assault on Israel's legitimacy is moving from the margins of the political discourse to its center, thanks to an unholy alliance between radical Islam, radical Arab nationalists and radical, naïve liberals in the West.

This unholy alliance has managed to plant its demonizing libels and misconceptions – branding Israel an apartheid state and a war criminal – among the nomenclature used by a considerable and influential segment of the Free World when discussing the Middle East in general and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in particular.

There are several reasons why this phenomenon is taking root in the West.

**Firstly**, Israel has long focused on thwarting the attempts of its enemies to eliminate the Jewish state by military means or terrorism, and not given the same attention to countering the simultaneous political assault waged against it; Israel has always been criticized for not doing a good enough job at “*hasbara*”

(advocacy) and not being able to translate its military achievements into political capital.

**Secondly**, because of its success on the battlefield and in fighting terror, Israel has often been perceived more like Goliath and less like David. The Palestinians, on the other hand, have been very successful in presenting themselves as the kind of victims with which liberals in the Free World can easily identify.

**Thirdly**, radical post-modernist and post-nationalist, epistemological authorities have come to dominate the agenda in the battle to conceptualize the problem in the Middle East. Pro-Israeli sources of authority have been much less effective and heeded.

**Fourthly**, the discourse about Israel's legitimacy has gone from being dominated by security to being dominated by human rights; this came about immediately after the Cold War, when Europe began to feel more secure and the mandate for defining human rights devolved to NGOs governed by radical anti-Israel liberals or nations notorious for their "respect" of human rights (like Sudan and Libya), while those who truly care about human rights – such as Robert Bernstein, the celebrated founder of Human Rights Watch – were cast aside.

**Fifthly**, the Free World has developed a growing fear of radical Islam, and thus adopted a *dhimmi* approach to try and appease it. These attitudes were subsequently adopted by a considerable part of the mainstream media in the West.

And finally, the intentional or unintentional involvement of many Jews, including Israelis, in this campaign, has substantially weakened the ability of pro-Israeli forces to confront this de-legitimization campaign.

The main engine enabling the de-legitimizers to gain influence is their ability to form a loose, yet determined and motivated network of like-minded organizations. Anti-Israelism, more often described for political convenience as Palestinianism, is becoming a kind of new religion and faith whose adherents have, of course, no interest in the facts. This new faith allows its believers to overcome their feelings of guilt toward Jews and to retain their anti-Semitic feelings at a time when anti-Semitism is no longer fashionable.

But this engine alone would have been insufficient had it not been hitched to the engine of Western ideas like guilt, accountability and the belief that every problem has a solution – ideas prevalent among liberal democracies and Jewish communities.

It is this engine that enables the delegitimizers to create the impression that Israel alone bears full responsibility for the difficulties in the peace process and is guilty of crimes against humanity. The truth, in fact, is quite the opposite.

The de-legitimizers use a variety of tools in performing their mission. On the political level, they focus on educating political leaders and brainwashing them with their ideas, as well as on public diplomacy campaigns like those surrounding the Goldstone Report and the Flotilla. In so doing, they make impressive use of the media – both traditional and new – as tools for indoctrinating the public and the political leadership. They also work intensively on education, mainly on the campus and within trade unions.

More specifically, their tools include what have been termed the five D's, namely: de-legitimization, dehumanization, demonization, disinformation and double standards. Employing these tools, they try to:

- » Isolate Israel outside the international state system as a pariah state that maintains an apartheid regime;
- » Distort international law to prevent Israel from defending its citizens against physical attack;
- » Deny the historical link of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel and to its capital, Jerusalem, and;
- » Advance the Palestinian agenda of unilaterally imposed statehood, as a step in the staged dismantling of Israel.

This “political warfare” against Israel and the West is characterized by:

- » The perversion and “weaponization” of international law, humanitarian values and human rights, and;
- » ‘War by Analogy’ – fabricating false analogies that compare Israel to the crusaders, colonialists and the former South African apartheid regime.

In order to confront this campaign, we must unite our people behind the common denominator of preserving Israel's right to exist as the free and democratic nation-state of the Jewish people. We must develop new epistemological authorities that will immunize public opinion against the impact of the false messages spread by radical de-legitimizers, treat and “cure” the discourse of those false concepts already planted there, and fight against the de-legitimizers in a way that will make it much more difficult for them to operate.

Of course, this does not mean that we should close our ears to criticism of Israeli policy. Israel is a free and democratic society that entertains open debate and investigates itself if necessary. But we must not cooperate with those who would deny our independent understanding of the situation and who deliberately ignore the context of our activities.

If we mobilize our capabilities to meet this critical challenge, we will certainly prevail and thereby make peace all the more achievable.



# ***The Political Assault on Israel: Implications for Europe***

***Fiamma Nirenstein***

***Journalist and author, Italian MP, and Vice-president of  
the Committee on Foreign Affairs***

The assault on Israel, a long time core of EU politics, represents both a moral and a political pain. On the one side, the daily sight of the unjust parameters under which Israel is judged creates a continuous feeling of lack of morality, of poor judgement, of misery of thought. It's exactly the feeling that an opposition member of the Italian Parliament, a good guy, confessed to me one day: "On the shore of the Mediterranean lives a democratic country that applies rules of justice no matter what, that hold sacred the equality of citizens, punishes corruption and aggressive sexual behaviour, defends women, children, disabled, homosexuals, has a marvellous judiciary, a flowering economy, outstanding science... and nearby, in the area, there are plenty of violent corrupted undemocratic, ignorant countries where injustice has finally raised a wave of huge protest, were women and homosexuals are persecuted. How come, tell me please, people stand on the side of these corrupted authoritarian violent civilizations, instead of holding strong on the side of Israel, our own defense and shield?"

Yes, how indeed? And here comes the second reason for my pain. It comes from observing that the Western world would face dire consequences if Europe remains unable to recognize the truth, to sincerely analyse the present. Any decision that is



nowadays based on the narrative we construct for ourselves, is conceived in an atmosphere of distortion, misrepresentation, and selective reporting that we choose to comfort ourselves with, using concepts that mostly fit our ego and our hopes. This delusional attitude is the source of great damage to Europe and its future.

Depicting Israel as the only one responsible for the continuous instability in the Middle East and, by doing so, attributing it enormous and unfair charges, results in our joining the Arab point of view that Israel must find the solution for the violence shaking the Middle East, for its religious and political conflicts. If Europe does not change its way of thinking about Middle Eastern dynamics, it will only try to impose misguided policies on the region, the Arab states and on the several Muslim groups that operate in the area.

The confusion about the role of terrorists and fundamentalist organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah, with periodical attempts to rehabilitate them, even if their attitude never changes, and the unbelievable conceptual overlapping between “resistance” and terrorism are the result of our guilty confusion and of our wishful thinking: in 2005, in Italy, a well known judge, decided to acquit a group of terrorists accused of recruiting kamikazes headed for Iraq, claiming that it was a matter of freedom of choice and that what appears like terrorism to us can be interpreted as resistance by someone else.

Blaming Israel has simply been a weapon, for Arab and radical Islamic regimes, to keep their people united and subdued in the name of the destruction of Israel and with it the Western world and culture. We, the Westerners, have never denounced these attitudes. On the contrary, we have tried to create a justification for the cry of hate of the Arab world. Today, following of the revolutions in the Islamic world, we hope that the wish for dignity and freedom will inspire the new regimes, and still we see very clearly how the fundamentalist poison can be inoculated in the people of the Middle East, when the new Egypt calls for severing ties with Israel, when masses of people break the Syrian and Lebanese borders chanting death to Israel. Not to mention the danger of Iranian extremism, which is becoming more and more threatening for Israel and the Western world.

Now, the cost of the stability that has been for a long time placed on the shoulders of the Arab people, while Europe was maintaining good relations with dictators, could fall on ours. To be able to defend our interests as well as those of the people longing for democracy, we must avoid adopting any interpretation of a Middle East whose problems depend solely on Israel's actions, if not on its very presence in the area. We must have the courage to stop depicting the Palestinians only as victims, especially given that they are patently victimizing Israelis demanding the Jewish State gives up its right to self-defense.

If Europe keeps pressuring Israel to make concessions and does not face the Arab refusal to recognize Israel, it will help neither the Arabs nor the Palestinians: this will simply put them in a situation where they will await history to serve them whatever they want on a silver platter, without accepting the existence of the State of Israel and actually trying to destroy the Jewish homeland. Denying the existence of the State of Israel, as Fatah has done with its alliance with Hamas and by its promise to declare a Palestinian State unilaterally in September, is glaring evidence attesting to the fact that Fatah denies democracy, and with it the Western democratic way of life. It's a cry of hate toward our own world, and not only against Israel.

While Europe has trouble speaking the truth, it also suffers from another problem: saving itself. Ideological and religious denial, terrorism, and demography are also our problems, not only Israel's. The second Intifada that killed thousands of civilians, women and children didn't raise sympathy or solidarity toward Israel, and very soon, after the explosions in Madrid and London, explained to us that terrorism was also a great problem of ours. The massive Islamic immigration to Europe raises the demographic question also on our territory, and we can therefore draw a parallel between the Islamic presence in Europe and the problem of Palestinian refugees for Israel: not only a demographic question, but a matter of cultural and physical survival.

Saving Israel, understanding Israel, rescuing it from the enormous de-legitimization campaign of is simply vital to us, first and foremost, in terms of our moral, religious and ideological identity. Our life and that of Israel are intertwined; even a child would realize that the surrender of Israel is our surrender, the surrender of human rights, the burial of equality between sexes, classes, and an attack on democracy itself.

The fight against the de-legitimization of Israel is a furious struggle against the lies corrupting our conscience. The Goldstone report, that Italy voted against, Durban II, that Italy did not attend, are only two episodes in which, in an apocalyptic fight, we tried to save the mind of the European elite from total moral corruption. How will we be able to fight the battle for human rights and against racism if Israel is called an "apartheid state"? How will we be able to defend ourselves, if Israel is denied its right to self-defence in an asymmetric war, which is the main challenge of our times?

Europe must stand strong against the political assault on the State of Israel, and we, as Jewish parliamentarians, must steer our governments and peers in the right direction.



# ***Jewish Refugees From Arab Lands***

***Dr. Laurence Weinbaum***

***Executive Director of the World Jewish Congress Research Institute and the Israel Council on Foreign Relations and the editor-in-chief of the Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs***

The Arab-Israeli conflict embraces many seemingly intractable issues – none more contentious than the question of the so-called “Palestinian right of return.” In recent years, advocates of the Arab cause have succeeded in propelling this issue to the forefront of public discourse. Forgotten in the discussion are the claims of the nearly one million Jewish refugees from Arab lands, the majority of whom were absorbed by Israel.

Jews have lived in what are now Arab lands since the destruction of the first Jewish Temple, in 586 BCE. Between the 1940s and the 1970s, most of these Jewish communities, the oldest in the Diaspora, came to an unhappy end. In 1945 there were approximately 900,000 Jews living in communities throughout the Arab world. Today, there are less than 7,000. Some Arab states, such as Libya, are completely *judenrein*; in others, there are only a handful of Jews who remain (nearly all in Morocco and Tunisia). Some 600,000 (2/3) were absorbed by Israel; the remainder went to France, Canada, Italy, the United States, Australia and South America.

The history of the Jews under Arab and Muslim rule is a long and varied one. Jews (and Christians) were considered *dhimmi*, a “protected” group of second-class citizens. The Jews’ long sojourn in Arab lands was marked by some golden periods of

prosperity, when Jews served as advisors to Arab rulers and contributed to the development of medicine, business and culture. Jewish philosophy and religious study also flourished. Often, however, Jews were subjected to punishing taxes, forced to live in cramped ghetto-like quarters and relegated to the lower-levels of the economic and social strata. In the 1940s Jews in the Arab lands began to fear for their lives.

In 1941, during the festival of Shavuot, 180 Jews were murdered in a *farhoud* (pogrom) in Baghdad. Unofficial reports say that 700 persons suffered bodily harm and that damages to Jewish property amounted to \$3 million. The *farhoud* sent shockwaves through the Jewish community. In 1948 conditions became truly unbearable. Jews experienced severe economic persecution, leading to punishing poverty among all sectors of the Jewish community. In 1950, the Iraqi government revoked the Jews' citizenship and permitted them to leave. Aliyah emissaries present in Iraq at the time explained that that "there is no doubt that the desire to control Jewish property remains behind all this." Thus, the Iraqi government froze all Jewish assets, prevented Jews from accessing their bank accounts, and closed Jewish warehouses and factories. There were reports of "Jews on the streets (being) attacked by the police, the detectives and ordinary citizens," and everything being taken from them. According to two Iraqi olim interviewed on March 15, 1951, "The specter of starvation was fast approaching." Most Iraqi Jews were rescued by Israel in the early 1950s during "Operation Ezra and Nechemia." Those who remained experienced economic deprivation, arrests, and harassment. Many tried to escape in the 1960s and 1970s, and today, of this ancient Jewish community, which in 1948 numbered 90,000, only a handful remain.

Iraq is just one case of many. But its story is similar to many other Jewish communities in Arab lands. The Egyptian Jewish community lived in relative calm until the 1950s, when the Free Officers group, led by General Naguib and Colonel Gamal Abd al-Nasir, took control and Egypt began to move closer to the Soviet Union. Over the years, many Egyptian Jews had become successful businessmen, and their since-nationalized stores are still in operation today. On November 3, 1956, Nasir ordered the expropriation of all Jewish property. All Jewish workers were dismissed from their positions at expropriated companies where Jewish merchants, professionals and government clerks could no longer work. The message was clear: It would be better for Jews to give up their property and to leave Egypt as soon as possible. Between November 1956 and June 1957, more than 22,200 Jews departed. Brutal attacks on Jews continued, compelling them to leave. More than 13,500 Egyptian Jews arrived in Israel by October 1957. Persecution of the Jews continued in Egypt, so that from a community of 75,000 a few



dozen remain. It is estimated that the Jews of Egypt left behind property and assets worth up to \$2.5 billion.

Throughout the Arab world Jewish property was confiscated, assets seized, livelihoods destroyed. Physical attacks on Jews went unpunished, and at times were carried out by the police forces themselves. During their concerted effort to force the Jews to flee, the Arab states uprooted and destroyed 2000 years of Jewish life in the region.

It is time to remove the veil of silence that surrounds the story of the Jewish refugees (though, unlike their Arab counterparts, they are no longer refugees). Jews from Arab lands left behind communal and private property worth billions of dollars, and memories of a life that is gone forever. They do not seek the “right of return,” but justice requires that their material claims be juxtaposed against those of Arabs displaced in the War of Independence.

In 1978, John McCarthy, an expert on refugees for the United Catholic Conference, noted that but for the uncooperativeness of the Arab states, the Palestinian Arab refugee problem would have been solved. McCarthy pointed out that over the course of 30 years the Catholic Conference had helped resettle approximately a million people all over the world. “We can (resettle) people if we have the help, just the permission of the governments. But you must remember one thing: the Arab countries don’t want to take the Arabs... (These refugees) are simply pawns.” And in 1975, Sabri Jiryis, Director of the Institute of Palestine Studies in Beirut, wrote in the Beirut daily *Al-Nahar*:

Clearly Israel will raise the question (of the expulsion of the Jews from Arab countries) in all serious negotiations... over the rights of the Palestinians... Israel’s arguments will take approximately the following form: It is true that we the Israelis brought about the exodus of Arabs from their land in the war of 1948...and that we took control of their property. In return however, you Arabs caused the expulsion of a like number of Jews from Arab countries since 1948 until today. Most of them went to Israel after you seized control of their property in one way or another. What happened, therefore, is merely a kind of ‘population and property transfer,’ the consequences of which both sides have to bear. Thus, Israel gathers Jews from Arab countries and the Arab countries are obliged in turn to settle the Palestinians within their own borders and work towards a solution of the problem.”

On July 28, 2000, then US President Bill Clinton suggested one way in which the refugee problems—on both sides—may be finally resolved: “There will have to be some sort of international fund set up for the refugees. There is, I think, some interest on both sides in also having a fund which compensates the Israelis who were made refugees by the war, which occurred after the birth of the State of Israel. Israel is full of people, Jewish people, who lived in predominantly Arab countries who came to Israel because they were made refugees in their own land.” The history of those Jews cannot be ignored or whitewashed. The tragedy of the Jews compelled to leave Arab lands should be placed on the international agenda and its importance recognized in any final resolution of the Middle East conflict. The vast sums spent by Israel in absorbing and rehabilitating Jewish refugees from Arab lands should likewise be acknowledged. It must finally be acknowledged that in the aftermath of the birth of the state of Israel, there was not one refugee problem created, but two.



# ***An Israel Intellectual Defense Force***

***MK Dr. Einat Wilf***

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Israel is a state that – with all its economic and cultural achievements – continues to struggle for survival in a region that is hostile towards its very existence. The very notion that the Jewish people, as a people, have the right to self determination and a state of their own in the only region in which they were ever sovereign, was opposed from the outset. Israel's ability to survive and even thrive amidst the surrounding hostility has been the result of its ability to identify the threats to its survival and to respond to them decisively.

Immediately upon its establishment – within hours of its declaration of Independence – Israel was threatened militarily. The mobilized armies of seven Arab armies were to be the means of its physical destruction. Fighter planes, tanks, guns and soldiers were mobilized again and again in an effort to rid the region of a Jewish state in its midst. And Israel, through the sacrifice of many of its best young men and women – repelled them again and again. Israel responded to what to the military existential threat with the building of one of the world's mightiest military machines. War after war, attack after attack Israel managed to demonstrate to the hostile armies around it that it would not be defeated by force. Twenty-five years after Arab armies first mobilized against Israel, the bloody and terrible 1973 Yom Kippur War was to be Israel's last conventional war. Within the course of a generation Israel won the military battle for survival.

For its enemies – armies would not be the means of Israel's destruction.

But Israel's enemies did not give up on their goal – they merely changed the arena where their wars were fought. Beginning in the 1970's, international and domestic terrorism, as well as a petro-dollar driven Arab boycott, were the new tools of attack. The people of Israel were to be terrorized the economically strangled to submission. In response, Israel developed substantial skills in combatting terrorism – both international and domestic, and developed one of the world's most innovative export-based economies. Contrary to most countries in the world, Israel's economy does not depend on the region and survives as a virtual island. Victory was not immediate, but by the end of 1990's the Arab boycott failed and was dissolved, and Israel's economy surpassed even those of the oil-rich states of the region. In the past decade international and domestic terrorism were also put at bay, and even though attempts at attacks continue, terrorism no longer represents a strategic threat to Israel and its citizens are not terrorized.

But as in the previous rounds, Israel's decisive victories in one arena merely forced its enemies to search new arenas where Israel is vulnerable. The new arena is one of ideas and images. In a bizarre return to 'square one' Israel is currently being attacked for its foundational idea. It is an attack on the idea that the Jewish people, as a people, have the right to self-determination and their own state in the only land in which they were ever sovereign – an idea without which there would be no Israel. Each one of the elements of this idea is under attack: the existence of the Jewish people as a people, rather than 'just a religion' is being questioned and dismissed. The idea that the Jewish people should therefore have the right to self-determination and a state of their own is rejected. The historic relationship between the Jewish people and the land of Israel is also being denied. This attack on the ideas that underpin Israel – the attack on its very legitimacy as a state – is taking place in a variety of forums, from international forums such as the UN and its various bodies, to courts, to academia, to the media, the NGO world and social networks. And so, with the failure of physical attacks, an intellectual attack is being mounted. While this attack does not appear at first to be dangerous and lethal as the others, it is no less threatening as it is targeting the very thing that makes Israel strong – its unique foundational idea.

Israel's ability to survive and thrive depends again on providing a strong, smart and definitive response to this attack. First, the importance, severity and nature of the threat must be acknowledged. While several years ago, calls to head this issue seriously were dismissed by some as "fluff," compared with 'serious' physical threats, the leadership of Israel and the Jewish world is now firmly behind this issue. Second, the same kind of resources and structures that were mobilized in previous wars and battles should be put to work in



this case. Just as we have the IDF – the Israeli Defense Forces, we should now have the IIDF – the Israeli Intellectual Defense Forces, committed to the intellectual defense of Israel. These structures should also reflect the nature of the threat and the arena – diverse and dispersed. Rather than hierarchical closed structures we should have global, open and dispersed ones that allow for anyone who want to serve in Israel's defense – whether they are members of parliament who believe in Israel's foundational idea, international legal luminaries, or 15 year old kids with a creative minds and a laptop – to contribute to the effort.

Third, a battle doctrine should be developed that includes several key principles such as: don't just engage in defense – go on the offense. For too long Israel has merely responded to the attacks, but there is no reason why Israel should not mount its own campaigns. The absurdity of Israel being repeatedly attacked on human rights issues by some of the world's greatest offenders should not go unchallenged. Another principle should be not to leave any arena unattended and to not allow any lie to fester. Even the most ridiculous charges and the most obscure place need to be countered. Fourth, we should remember that the world does not consist only of European courts and west coast university campuses. Most of the world lives in the east. China and India are rising to world prominence. They do not have a complicated history with the Jewish people. On the contrary, there is tremendous sympathy for the Jewish people and the story of Israel. These are the places where we need to invest the most in building relationships and support for the future.

Finally, some of the traditional key messages need to be changed. Israel should not try to compete on victimhood. Any effort by Israel to show the world that we are greater victims than the others and that we suffer more is bound to fail. As a proud Zionist, I don't want to win in the competition of who is the greater victim. We did not build an independent state in order to arouse pity and wallow in misery. Our message should be one of responsibility – this is our strength and this is where we can challenge the other side – on their actions, decisions and responsibility for the historical outcomes.

While victory in this battle, as in others, is not likely to swift, with the proper resources, organization, and determination it is within reach. After all, if there is any battle that the Jewish people should be able to win, it is the battle of the mind.



# ***Democracy, Responsible Sovereignty and the Prospect of Palestinian Statehood***

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*“The quality of international society depends on the quality of the governments that are its foundation. The best protection for our society is a world of well-governed democratic states”  
(European Security Strategy, 2003)*

In the contemporary international system powerful states, whether democratic or not, rarely go to war against one another. Of the total number of armed conflicts that have taken place in the world between 1989 and 2008 (namely 124 armed conflicts), only 7 involved conflict between two or more States. No instances of war were recorded between consolidated liberal democracies. In contrast, 117 armed conflicts took place over this period either within a single State (civil war) or between at least one State and one armed Non-State Actor (NSA). This reality has two profound consequences for Israel and the free world more broadly.

## ***The Loneliness of the Fighting Democracy***

The dramatic reduction in the number of inter-state wars over the past several decades has meant that in certain regions of the world today – notably in North and Latin America, Europe and parts of Asia – Democratic (or Kantian) Peace is not a theory, but a reality.

Substantial parts of the world now exist within a self-reinforcing, virtuous cycle of liberal democracy, economic and technological interdependence, and rule-based international organizations. Nuclear deterrence has made all out war between Great Powers prohibitive. The global spread of democracy – from 40, or only 27% of the total number of states in 1974, to 123 today, or 63% – and the continued expansion of the Liberal International Order under *Pax Americana*, means that for substantial portions of humanity in the contemporary world not only is war absent, but the very memory of war – indeed the memory of death by deliberate organized violence – is fast receding into oblivion.

In Europe and Latin America in particular – two large regions with considerable clout at the UN and in other international venues – experience of large-scale enmity has all but disappeared. And since where you sit is where you stand, many in the comfortable West, have come to believe that diplomacy and multilateralism are always the solution to conflict, and that the use of force therefore, even in self-defense, is essentially never justified.

Among the new emerging global powers – the so-called BRICS: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa – three are solidly democratic. And while Russia and China give strategic planners cause for concern, they are not perceived by most people in the West as real and immediate dangers. China in particular is likely to grow old before it grows rich, and countries with an aging population have mounting social costs and are unlikely to become actively and dangerously aggressive.

Viewed from another perspective, the number of liberal democracies that are still required to fight in self-defense – or even prepare seriously for war – has dropped precipitously, perhaps to single digit numbers. How many fighting liberal democracies exist in the entire world today? Israel and the United States? Perhaps Britain, Canada, India, South Korea and Taiwan?

Fighting democracies are few, and therefore fighting democracies are lonely. This is partly why liberal democracies are today forced to defend their very right to self-defense, the most fundamental right to self-preservation; a right which until comparatively recently was all but taken for granted in the West.

Israel's loneliness is compounded by its geopolitical location. It not only finds itself in the unenviable position of not belonging fully to any of the five regional groupings of the UN, but is located in what is perhaps the last remaining Hobbesian region of the world. Devoid of the international institutions that Europeans in particular have come to take for granted as mechanisms for diplomacy and peaceful conflict resolution, the Middle East has no NATO and no EU, no Council of Europe and no OSCE.

## ***Proxy War Waged from Ungoverned Spaces***

But of course war and the threat of war have not vanished. They have mainly shifted form. The few democracies that still experience serious enmity in the international arena today are compelled to defend themselves, overwhelmingly, not against powerful States, but against relatively backward Islamic States, their proxies, and transnational terrorist networks. These adversaries depend, without exception, on exploiting weak states, failed states, and other “ungoverned spaces” to advance their local, regional, and global goals.

Even the most powerful Islamic states – Iran and Pakistan – have, so far at least, chosen to fight through Non-State Actor proxies housed in ungoverned, or under-governed, spaces: Hizbullah in Lebanon, HAMAS in Gaza, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the Taliban and Hizbul Mujahadin in the case of Pakistan's proxy war with India. Similarly, Al-Qaeda and its affiliates can effectively plan and organize attacks today only from within states that either actively harbor them (Pakistan) or are too weak and illegitimate to govern effectively (Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and now possibly Sinai, Libya and Syria).

In the contemporary international system, it is this combination of Islamic states' and their proxies' hijacking of ungoverned spaces that poses arguably the most serious and immediate threat. The proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD's), porous borders that facilitate weapon, drug and human trafficking, and developments in viral communication technology – all combine to create an historically unprecedented situation in which actors and polities with very limited material resources endanger the security of much more powerful states.

The nature of this struggle is fundamentally a political one. It is in essence a struggle over the very nature of the international system itself. Whether we are dealing with Iran's revolutionary regime, violent off-shoots of the Muslim Brotherhood, or Al-Qaeda – what is common to all elements of the Globalized Islamist Insurgency is that its leaders do not accept the existing



State-based international order. The declared strategy of these Islamists is the overthrow of the liberal international order, and its replacement with local, regional, and eventually global caliphates.

The taking-over of ungoverned and under-governed spaces represents a critical dimension in the realization of this vision. Like nature, the international system abhors a vacuum, and wherever effective statehood recedes or collapses we can expect *Jihadi* Non-State Actors backed by anti-Western Islamic states to attempt subversion and control.

Israel's situation in this context is especially serious, and appears to be deteriorating rapidly. Whereas in the past, the Jewish State was threatened primarily by the conventional armies of capable, nationalist Arab regimes, Israel's strategic environment is now increasingly characterized by territories hijacked by *Jihadi* Non-State-Actors (in Lebanon, Gaza, and increasingly Sinai), failed or failing states (Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, and now possibly Syria and Libya), and weak Arab regimes (Jordan and, to a lesser degree, Egypt).

## ***A Crisis of Sovereignty***

The rise of a Globalized Islamist Insurgency and armed Non-State Actors – some of whom, like Hizbullah, command more fire power than most national governments possess – represents a real challenge to the existing Laws of Armed Conflict (LOAC), in the application of the right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, and the principles of military necessity, distinction and proportionality. Moreover, the use of proxies who fight from within the territory of weak or failed states is pernicious in that it defies conventional categorization of armed conflict, blurs state responsibility for armed attacks, and undermines deterrence.

Yet this is only a symptom of a deeper crisis; a crisis of sovereignty. State sovereignty has been the organizing principle of the international system for more than 350 years, since the Peace of Westphalia of 1648. Our existing notion of sovereignty – what we might call “Conventional Sovereignty” – emerged in the very different context of 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe, and was designed to address very different needs: namely to prevent warring princes from interfering in one another's internal affairs, especially religious affairs.

The fundamental rule of Conventional Sovereignty is therefore that each state has the right to determine its own domestic authority structure; that outsiders must not interfere in those domestic affairs (the principle of nonintervention); and that in the international system, states are like individuals in society – they are equal and they have rights and responsibilities.



Conventional Sovereignty, which has since become the global standard, assumes a world of autonomous, internationally recognized and, most importantly, effectively governed states.

This is the conventional world of international politics and international law in which state-to-state relations is what counts, and states are accountable for threats that emanate from their territory. But this world no longer exists, and Conventional Sovereignty no longer works.

In the world today there are between 30 and 45 failed states, and their number is growing. In the past, these entities would have been swallowed up by their neighbors or by powerful empires. Nowadays, however, the Darwinian mechanism has ceased to operate. States today are a little like diamonds – once formed they last forever. Unfortunately though, unlike diamonds, not all states shine.

Indeed, one of the most striking aspects of the contemporary world, is the extent to which domestic sovereignty has ceased to function in states that still enjoy international legal sovereignty, with all its benefits. And the benefits are considerable. They include:

- » The right to territorial integrity and to self-defense (individual or collective);
- » Juridical equality (right to legislate and enforce rules within its territory);
- » International legal personality, bestows power to purchase and transfer state assets;
- » Power to enter into contractual agreements with other states, UN membership and membership in other international organizations;
- » Sovereign immunity for the head of state and diplomats;
- » Financial and technical assistance from the IMF, World Bank and bilateral donors;
- » The ability to litigate before international courts;
- » Participation in making international law and shaping the international system.

According to the existing rules of Conventional Sovereignty, in other words, states like Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen – entities that have ceased to function internally and have become breeding grounds for international threats – continue to enjoy these far reaching privileges and protections. Similarly, states like Iran, Syria and Pakistan retain their international legal sovereignty, instead of having it curtailed. This is untenable.

Much more can and should be done to condition the benefits of sovereignty on responsible domestic and international behavior.

## ***No Sovereignty Without Responsibility***

Both the United States and European Union have acknowledged this, and have adopted the central liberal insight whereby the foundations of true peace, security and prosperity depend on the nature of a state's government. The 2002 US National Security Strategy (NSS), for example, overturned decades of American security thinking by stating that the US today is threatened more by failing states than it is by conquering ones. Similarly, the 2006 NSS recognized that "In the world today the fundamental character of regimes matters as much as the distribution of power among them."

Since the end of the Cold War especially, Europe, the United States and Latin America have made commitment to liberal democratic rule the sole basis for legitimate states and governments, as well as for membership in various regional governance structures. We see insistence on democracy and respect for human rights, as the sole reliable basis for peace and security, imbued in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act from which emerged the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the 1990 Charter of Paris. Under the Charter of Paris, CSCE countries (which became the OSCE in 1995) committed themselves to "build, consolidate and strengthen democracy as the only system of government of our nations." Similarly, under the Copenhagen Criteria, the European Union (EU) would not admit a state to its club unless the candidate "achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy."

In principle, this direction of thinking has much to recommend it. Democracy is a universal human aspiration. No famine or genocide has ever taken place in a liberal democracy. Democracies are also more stable regimes and make reliable allies.

And, in fact, there is now substantial state practice to support the idea that effective, democratic government should be adopted as the only legitimate form of government. Countless UN reports and Security Council resolutions cite treaty-based rights to political participation and urge free and fair elections. International Elections Monitoring (IEM), which was virtually unknown when the Berlin Wall fell down two decades ago, is now universal and ubiquitous. Membership in the European Union, Council of Europe, and OSCE, is open only to liberal democracies, and since 1997 members of the Organization



of American States (OAS) are legally required to suspend a member-state whose government takes power through undemocratic means. And at the global level too there now exists a Caucus of Democracies at the UN – albeit a nascent and under-developed one. Leading legal scholars have postulated the emergence in international law of a legal right to democratic governance, and have called for a “Treaty of Democratic Peace” to be signed, and for a “Community of Democracies” to eventually replace the UN.

And yet, as long as international giants like China and Russia do not make the transition to liberal democracy, setting democracy as the foundational principle for a secure international order is regrettably unrealistic. The free world cannot, at this point in human history, insist on democracy being the foundational principle of international politics and law. But it can, I believe, insist on the somewhat diminished standard of “Responsible Sovereignty.”

Responsible Sovereignty – a term originally articulated by African scholar Francis Deng and developed by Bruce Jones, Carlos Pascual and Steve Stedman – is the injunction that sovereignty entails security obligations and duties both to one’s own citizens and to other sovereign states. Responsible Sovereignty means that, domestically, national governments are legally obliged to ensure basic standards of security, freedom and welfare for their citizens, and internationally they are legally obliged to actively prevent the export of security threats from within their territory. Responsible Sovereignty also implies effective accountability for these obligations.

The notion of Responsible Sovereignty, therefore, differs from Conventional Sovereignty in three key respects:

**First,** Conventional Sovereignty emphasizes non-interference and international juridical equality among states regardless of their regime type; whereas Responsible Sovereignty emphasizes positive duties and basic standards of state behavior.

**Second,** Responsible Sovereignty is not entirely agnostic about regime type. It does not insist that the domestic government be a consolidated liberal democracy, but it does not tolerate state failure either. It demands at least basic state effectiveness and legitimacy as conditions for recognition of a state as sovereign and for the enjoyment of the privileges of sovereignty.

And finally, Responsible Sovereignty emphasizes states’ accountability for actions that have consequences beyond their borders. In a world of diffuse threats and interdependent security, it insists that states cannot permit their territory to be used to launch cross-border attacks, let alone aid and abet the export of such attacks themselves.

How would the principle of Responsible Sovereignty be operationalized? And who will decide? These are important questions that I cannot do adequate justice to here. Certainly, Responsible Sovereignty would in practice mean different activities and obligations in different contexts.

Towards weak states that are willing to reform, it would mean positive measures such as greater governance aid to improve state capacity, enhanced donor coordination, and close monitoring of compliance. Towards aggressive, threat-exporting states – like Iran, Pakistan and Syria – it would mean increased pressure, sanctions, and the withdrawal of various international benefits. Towards failed or collapsed states, it would mean containment, greater intervention, greater targeting of aggressive Non-State-Actors, and – where practical – the creation of new arrangements including “shared sovereignty.”

Responsible Sovereignty is particularly important regarding the creation of new states. It is one thing to have to deal with the consequences of state failure in an already existing state. It is quite another thing to permit the establishment of a new state where there is no guarantee of effective, stable and peaceful statehood. At a time when the international community is struggling with the dire effects of state failure in the Middle East and Africa, it would be unconscionable – perhaps illegal – to aid and abet the establishment of a new failed state in the West Bank and Gaza.

The dramatic collapse and fragmentation of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia resulted in the emergence of several new states. In December 1991, the European Community (EC) issued a unanimous ‘Declaration on the Recognition of New States in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union’, in which the Member States affirmed their readiness to recognize: “subject to the normal standards of international practice and the political realities in each case, those new States which, following the historic change in the region, have constituted themselves on a democratic basis, have accepted the appropriate international obligations and have committed themselves in good faith to a peaceful process and to negotiations.” The Declaration then prescribed conditions for recognition, requiring the new States: (1) to respect the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, “especially with regard to the rule of law, democracy and human rights”; (2) to guarantee rights for ethnic and national groups and minorities; (3) to respect existing borders; (4) to accept arms control commitments; and (5) to commit to settle by agreement all questions regarding State succession and regional disputes. The same principles were later applied to new states emerging from the disintegration of Yugoslavia and both the EU and US agreed to recognize the new states based on these criteria.



The logic of applying similar criteria to a prospective Palestinian state is compelling. To be viable internally and peaceful externally, a Palestinian State must satisfy the basic requirement of effective and legitimate statehood.

The European Union will not negotiate a trade agreement with Bosnia-Herzegovina or admit Turkey into the club unless and until they fulfill the hugely demanding Copenhagen Criteria. Yet many in Europe, Latin America and US demand that Israel make life-and-death concessions to a weak Palestinian Authority, mired in a history of ineptitude and corruption, and now composed of Hamas – the Palestinian arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, and a terrorist organization religiously committed to the Islamization of Palestinian society and the annihilation of Israel. This is fundamentally at odds not only with the values of the free world, but with the principles we now understand to be the foundation of true peace and security. At the very least, a prospective Palestinian State must achieve Responsible Sovereignty before it is accorded international recognition.



# ***The Role of Parliamentarians in Combating the Assault on Israel and the Jewish People***

***Prof. Irwin Cotler***

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former Minister of Justice and Attorney General***

Three years ago, in an op-ed in the Jerusalem Post – “The Gathering Storm” – I discussed a series of political earthquakes that were then affecting not only Israel and world Jewry but the human condition as a whole, including: first, the state-sanctioned incitement to genocide in a prospectively nuclear Iran ; second, Israel being caught in a pincer movement between Hezbollah in the north and Hamas in the south; third, the globalization of a totalitarian radical Islam that threatened not only Jews in Israel but international peace and security; fourth, the singling out of Israel for differential and discriminatory treatment in the international arena as exemplified in UN resolutions; fifth, the emergence of a new, escalating, global, virulent and even lethal anti-Semitism; the developing de-legitimization of Israel – and sixth – the whole impacting upon an Israel beset by its own serious divides.

Now, three years later, these dynamics have not only congealed, but intensified. The Iranian threat is now a toxic convergence of four distinguishable but interrelated threats – nuclear, incitement, terrorist and massive domestic repression. Hezbollah, on Israel’s

north, now has 50,000 missiles capable of hitting the heartland of Israel, while it “only” had 10,000 three years ago; more importantly, Hezbollah is now in effective control of Lebanon. Hamas has not only been rearmed with longer-range missiles, but, as the “freedom” flotillas seek to demonstrate – and the reconciliation with Fatah seeks to achieve – has been gaining even a measure of international legitimation. The de-legitimization of Israel – exemplified by the BDS – has not only intensified but globalized, while a whole new series of de-legitimizing dynamics have developed.

Furthermore, there is increasing support for a UN resolution to recognize an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, operating as a bypass to negotiations with Israel. There has been a diversion and deflection of the “Arab Spring” with “Arab Winter,” with populist marches on Israel’s borders from all sides, both in the commemoration initially of the Nakba (the catastrophe of 1948) – now the Naqsa (the occupation of 1967) – and prospective populist marches on the road to the UN resolution. There has been a Palestinization of both politics and culture, particularly and increasingly so in Europe, on university campuses, in the UN, and the like. There have been repeated attempts at, and suggestions of, the isolation of Israel as a pariah state – dramatized by the movement of Turkey from a Middle East geo-political ally to a Middle East Islamist oriented adversary – including allegations of a *contretemps* between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Obama during the recent visits of the former to the United States.

And so the question becomes – what can and should be done with regard to all this, and what role can parliamentarians play in that regard? One of the first things that needs to be done is to disabuse people and politics of this alleged isolation of Israel in the international community while referencing Israel’s developing relations with India and China; its bilateral and multilateral relations with the countries of the former Soviet Union – where it was not all that long ago that it had no relations at all – and indeed, it was the Soviet Union that initiated the “Zionism is Racism” resolution and related condemnations at the time. Israel has been admitted to the OECD, it is reengaging with Africa, maintains important ties with major countries in Latin America and Asia, and enjoys strong support from such major democracies like Canada, Australia, and Germany.

Most importantly, we need to disabuse people and politics of this alleged *contretemps* between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Obama, or more importantly, between Israel and the US. If one looks at Obama’s speeches on May 19<sup>th</sup> 2011 and at AIPAC on May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2011, one will find a series of not only statements, but foundational principles that bespeak an Israeli-American partnership or shared understanding on a number of these foundational principles, which then became incorporated by reference in the G8 communiqué. In particular, the Deauville, France G8 communiqué

concluded with a statement that “Negotiations are the only way toward a comprehensive and lasting resolution to the conflict. The framework for these negotiations is well known. We urge both parties to return to substantive talks with a view to concluding a framework agreement on all final status issues.” It then added, “To that effect, we express our strong support for the vision of Israeli-Palestinian peace outlined by President Obama on May 19, 2011.”

A careful examination of President Obama’s vision for an Israeli-Palestinian peace reveals the following principles, which parliamentarians should appreciate and propagate in the pursuit of peace:

**First**, “that the ultimate goal is two states for two peoples,” with Israel as a Jewish state and the homeland for the Jewish people, and the state of Palestine as the homeland for the Palestinian people. This foundational principle makes express reference to the importance of the recognition of Israel as a Jewish state and as the homeland of the Jewish people.

**Second**, it is clear, as President Obama put it, “that the recent agreement between Fatah and Hamas poses an enormous obstacle to peace. No country can be expected to negotiate with a terrorist organization sworn to destroy it.”

**Third**, President Obama reaffirmed the “unbreakable” bond between the US and Israel, the “ironclad” commitment to Israel’s security. In particular, as he put it, President Obama recognized that “every state has the right to self-defense, and Israel must be able to defend itself – by itself – against any threat,” requiring therefore that the proposed Palestinian state be demilitarized, and conditioning Israeli withdrawal from any post-1967 territory on the demonstrated effectiveness of security arrangements.

**Fourth**, President Obama made it clear that the reference to the 1967 borders – in both his State Department and AIPAC speeches – did not indicate that Israel should return to the 1967 lines. On the contrary, after saying, as Obama did, that the “1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps should be the basis of negotiation,” Obama then added, “It means that the parties themselves, Israelis and Palestinians, will negotiate a border that is different than the one that existed on June 4, 1967.” This was the reason that Canada’s Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, felt it was important to reject the inclusion in the G8 communiqué of the singling-out of an alleged reference by Obama to the 1967 borders, because, in fact, Obama had not made such a requirement; and, more importantly, it was only one of a number of important principles and policies – as set forth above and as follows below – shared by both the US, Israel, Canada and other members of the international community.

**Fifth**, and yet another foundational principle, President Obama reaffirmed that “peace cannot be imposed on the parties to the conflict”; that “no vote

at the United Nations will ever create an independent Palestinian state”; and that the US was opposed to the Palestinians bypassing negotiations with Israel and seeking a unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood in the pre-1967 borders at the UN. It should be noted that only the UN Security Council can confer such recognition – a UN General Assembly Resolution is only a recommendation – and the US has undertaken not to support such a resolution, neither at the UN General Assembly nor at the Security Council.

**Sixth,** President Obama reaffirmed his steadfast opposition to any attempt to delegitimize the State of Israel. As he put it, “Israel’s existence must not be a subject for debate” and “efforts to chip away at Israel’s legitimacy will only be met by the unshakeable opposition of the United States.”

**Seventh,** President Obama stressed the dangers posed by a nuclear, genocidal-inciting, terrorist-supporting, and rights-violating Iran. As he put it, “when I walked among the Hall of Names at Yad Vashem, I was reminded of the existential fear of Israelis when a modern dictator seeks nuclear weapons and threatens to wipe Israel off the map – the face of the earth;” and the importance of combating the terrorism of its proxies, like Hezbollah, “who exercise political assassination and seek to impose their will through rockets and car bombs.”

Finally, even on matters that Obama has been criticized for relegating to the final status talks and not pronouncing upon them – Jerusalem and the Palestinian right of return – Obama did in fact express himself regarding the Jewish connection to Jerusalem and inferentially regarding the right of return.

While stating that Jerusalem was a matter to be negotiated between the parties and to be left to final-status talks, Obama recognized the special historical relationship between the Jewish people and the old city of Jerusalem, and said “When I touched my hand against the Western Wall and placed my prayer between its ancient stones, I thought of all the centuries that the children of Israel had longed to return to their ancient homeland,” a clear reaffirmation of the historic relationship between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel and Jerusalem; as well, Obama’s reference to the recognition of Israel as a Jewish state – and the homeland of the Jewish people – effectively precluded any Palestinian return to the Jewish State, though an express reference to that effect would have been desirable. But the clear inference – though again it should have been clearly stated – is that the Palestinian refugee question must be solved in Palestine just as the question of the Jewish refugees from Arab countries was resolved in Israel.

With these foundational principles in mind, parliamentarians could call for a return to direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians based upon

these principles. Indeed, Prime Minister Netanyahu might himself exercise such an initiative, saying that Israel seeks direct negotiations now with the Palestinians based on the Obama principles as incorporated by reference in the G8 communiqué (Prime Minister Harper was correct that the G8 communiqué should not have sought to “cherry-pick” amongst the Obama principles, and should not have sought to selectively – and even misleadingly – reference a return to the '67 borders as if that were the only principle, and as if Obama had called for a return to the '67 lines).

Such an initiative by Netanyahu will challenge the Palestinians to return to negotiations and effectively say to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, “We agree and have agreed to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state for the Palestinian people. Are you prepared to recognize a Jewish state for the Jewish people?” As Netanyahu put it in his speech to the US Congress, Abbas should stand before his people and utter the six words that could change history, “I will accept a Jewish state,” and reaffirm this to President Obama. As Netanyahu pointed out, he has already affirmed his acceptance of Palestinian statehood before the Israeli people, and that is what Abbas should now do in recognizing a Jewish State before the Palestinian people. Prime Minister Netanyahu should reaffirm that Israel wants negotiations now, and the question is whether the Palestinians are prepared to forego going to the United Nations.

Parliamentarians should call on Israel and the Palestinians to demonstrate their good faith by entering into direct negotiations now, and that these negotiations might also be anchored in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which have been accepted by Israel and the Palestinians, and the international community, as the cornerstone for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

In addition, parliamentarians should not only support the “Arab Spring” in terms of the importance of democratic development, human rights and the rule of law, as indicated initially in the Tunisian and Egyptian Tahir Square revolutions, but also point out some of the dangers of the “Arab Winter,” particularly that which is finding expression in the massive domestic repression, torture, repression and brutality in Syria, the suppressions in Bahrain and Yemen, and the diversion and deflection away from that internal repression, as exemplified by Syria, in directing populist movements towards the Israeli borders.

Parliamentarians should seek to enhance Israel's participation in the international community and counter its isolation by supporting Israeli membership in organizations like the Francophonie. Indeed, Israel's percentage of French-speaking people exceeds that of many of the member states in the Francophonie itself. Parliamentarians should also support Israeli

membership in the G20, an important annual gathering of states, as Israel clearly qualifies for that association.

As well, parliamentarians should seek to counter the disenfranchisement of Israel at the UN, as expressed in its exclusion from any of the regional bodies that would qualify it for representation and participation in the activities of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Parliamentarians should also help showcase Israel's democracy, constitutionalism and legal system in all its configurations, including the rule of law, the promotion and protection of human rights, the constitutionalization of fundamental freedoms, the availability of all fundamental freedoms (freedom of speech, freedom of the press, assembly and association), and in particular, the democratization of access to justice. In a word, Israel has the broadest approach to the principles of standing and justiciability of any democracy in the international community, such that any citizen can petition directly to the Israeli Supreme Court for redress of grievance; without having to go through several layers of judicial review, and with the Supreme Court disposed to find such petitions justiciable (capable of being judicially reviewed). Indeed, I myself have benefited from such open-ended principles of standing and justiciability and have appeared before the Israeli Supreme Court on a number of occasions, including seeking relief for prospective Ethiopian Jews wishing to immigrate to Israel, and Palestinians in detention.

In other words, Israel should not be showcasing only, as it does now, its economic success as a startup nation – which is indeed most impressive – or even its important scientific, medical and educational achievements – but also its democratic, human-rights and rule-of-law expression.

Equally, as Israel more than any other state has been the target of international terrorism, parliamentarians should invoke the Israeli experience as a case study with respect to the development of principles of international humanitarian law in an age of asymmetrical warfare – and where any reading of Israeli jurisprudence would reveal that there is no other country that has so explored – and so developed – the foundational principles of international human rights and humanitarians law in the matter of terrorism, security and human rights.

Parliamentarians should also initiate reforms at the UN, to combat the singling out of any member state for differential and discriminatory treatment at the UN. That in itself is a breach of United Nations principles of equality for all nations large and small. For example, Israel should seek the elimination of permanent Agenda Item 8 at the meetings of the UN Human Rights Council which institutionalizes findings of fact and conclusions of law respecting “Israeli violations of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,” an Alice in Wonderland situation (which I have personally witnessed) where

the conviction is secured even before the hearing begins; and where there is a general agenda item for “human rights violations in the rest of the world” which ends up giving the major human rights violators exculpatory immunity. Indeed, it is this same UN Human Rights Council whose mandate for the Goldstone Mission presupposed Israeli guilt.

Parliamentarians should also seek to sanction Iran not only for its nuclear threat, as the UN Security Council and many democracies have done in the matter of the Iranian nuclear threat, but it should seek to sanction Iranian leaders for each of the aforementioned three threats: the state-sanctioned incitement to genocide, the terrorist threat, and the massive domestic repression.

Accordingly, any state party to the Genocide Convention can initiate an interstate complaint before the International Court of Justice against Iran, which is also a state party to the Genocide Convention, for its state-sanctioned incitement to genocide. Parliamentarians of such state parties can assist in the initiation of such complaints.

In the matter of the Iranian terrorist threat, parliamentarians should work to sanction the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps in all its emanations and configurations, particularly as it at the epicenter of the fourfold Iranian threat in general, and the terrorist threat in particular.

Moreover, we have been witnessing a massive domestic repression in Iran, for which Iranian leaders must be sanctioned and held accountable, as has begun to be done in the U.S. Congress and the European Parliament.

Another threat to Israel and the Jewish people is the continuing de-legitimization of the Jewish state. It is important to note that de-legitimization is not a new phenomenon; it has been around since Israel’s establishment when it was spoken of as an “original sin.” Israel was also referred to as a “congenital act of aggression” on the eve of the Six-Day War, and which helped to precipitated that war; while the first international juridical manifestation of this de-legitimization found expression in the “Zionism is Racism” UN resolution in 1975, which the late Senator Daniel Moynihan said “gave the abomination of anti-Semitism the appearance of international legal sanction.”

All these were straightforward, overt and direct manifestations of de-legitimization. The real problem that we are facing today is what might be called the laundering of the de-legitimization of Israel under, inter alia, the rule of law; or in other words, the presentation of Israel as the enemy of all that is good and the repository of all that is evil. This phenomenon manifests itself in five different ways.

**First**, the de-legitimization of Israel proceeding under the protective cover of the United Nations – where the United Nations becomes an instrument

of that de-legitimization – in a body that is held out to represent “the decent opinion of mankind.”

**Second**, there is the de-legitimization of Israel under the rubric of international law – international humanitarian law, international criminal law, and international human-rights law, which is particularly prejudicial to Israel’s perceived legitimacy and its right to self-defense, if not its right to exist. Indeed, in a legal culture – in due process societies – de-legitimization under the rubric of international law can have serious prejudicial fallout, as exemplified in the use of the principle of universal jurisdiction to single out Israeli nationals for selective prosecution. Simply put, it is not the principle of universal jurisdiction that is a problem. Indeed, Israel was the first country to invoke the principle of universal jurisdiction in the prosecution of the Nazi desktop murderer Adolf Eichmann 50 years ago. But now, the singling out of Israelis for selective prosecution launders this de-legitimization under this rule of law principle.

**Third**, there is the laundering of de-legitimization under the rubric of human rights. Simply put, in a world in which human rights has emerged as the new secular religion of our time, the positing of Israel as the “enemy of human rights” is such that Israel is seen as the new “anti-Christ” of our time.

And so it is then, that Israel is condemned by UN specialized agencies engaged in human rights work as the oppressor of trade unionism, in the resolution of the ILO condemning alleged Israeli repression of trade unions; the oppressor of Palestinian health in the resolution of the WHO condemning alleged Israeli poisoning of Palestinians on the West Bank; the oppressor of culture in the UNESCO resolution condemning alleged Israeli desecration of historic sites; the oppressor of women in the resolution of the UN Commission on the Status of Women condemning alleged Israeli violations of women’s rights; and everywhere, and always, Israel as the enemy of peace in a world in which, rightly so, peace is the highest value.

The **fourth** is the laundering of de-legitimization under the rubric of the struggle against racism, and which ascribes to Israel the twin evils of the twentieth century: apartheid and Nazism. Simply put, if Israel is an apartheid state, and apartheid is defined in international law as a crime against humanity, then Israel, as a perpetrator of a crime against humanity, must be dismantled. Moreover, if Israel is a Nazi state, there is an obligation to dismantle it; for the international community cannot abide an apartheid Nazi state. As well, all those who support Israel are held out to be supporters of an apartheid Nazi state, such that their “free speech” is thereby silenced.

**Finally**, one of the most disturbing indictments of all is that in which Israel is held out as a genocidal state. This is the worst of Orwellian ironies. For Israel is the only state in the world today, and the Jewish people the only people in

the world today, who are singled out as standing targets of state-sanctioned incitement to genocide at the same time that it is the only country that is systematically accused of committing genocide.

And so the question becomes, how does one address this growing phenomenon of de-legitimization? Parliamentarians should make it clear that this globalizing dynamic of the de-legitimization of Israel and the Jewish people is not only prejudicial to Israel and Jews, though it is certainly that – but it is prejudicial to all the things that we care about – prejudicial to the public good of which Israel is said to be the enemy.

In other words, de-legitimization is prejudicial to the integrity of the United Nations under whose protective cover this de-legitimization proceeds and is abused. It is prejudicial to the entire framework of international law, in the use and abuse of international law through lawfare. It is prejudicial to the human-rights movement – and indeed to the whole human-rights culture – when a member state is singled out for differential and discriminatory treatment while the major human-rights violators enjoy exculpatory immunity. A case in point is the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), the agency mandated for the promotion and protection of human rights, where some 70 percent of decisions single out one member state (it happens to be Israel) for differential discrimination and indictment.

Moreover, the laundering of de-legitimization under the struggle against racism in effect shames the struggle against racism; while the comparison of Israel to apartheid demeans the initial struggle against apartheid itself, in which I and many others participated. Indeed, if one postulates that Israel is an apartheid state – apart from it being “a crime against humanity that needs to be dismantled” – then one can be understood to say that South African apartheid was like Israel. But that would mean that apartheid South Africa was, as Israel is, a constitutional democracy with a universal franchise, independent judiciary, independent free press, equality before the law, etc., which was clearly not the case.

Simply put, Israel’s de-legitimization under the banner of the struggle against racism demeans the original struggle against apartheid and shames the struggle against racism, just as the indictment of Israel as a genocidal state, demeans and shames the struggle against the real perpetrators of genocide.

Accordingly, in order to combat the de-legitimization of Israel, one has to make it clear that it is causing harm to all the things that we care about – not just to Israel – but to the UN, to international law, to human rights, to the struggle against racism, to the struggle against genocide and more.

It is also important for parliamentarians, in making this point, to invert a misleading paradigm which has taken hold in the international arena, and which again, is not only prejudicial to Israel but to peace and to the



understanding of what the Israeli-Arab-Palestinian conflict is all about. The paradigm goes as follows: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the source of all conflict in the Middle East and beyond; the occupation is the source of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and the apartheid state Israel is the source of the occupation.

One needs to turn this paradigm around and make it clear that it is radical Islam – and the related Arab tyrannies, as we have seen over the last few months – that have been the source of evil in the Middle East, and that have suppressed the Arab and Palestinian people; that radical Islam and Arab tyrannies like Syria that have denied the legitimacy of a State of Israel within any borders; that this is the real apartheid – the refusal to accept the legitimacy of a Jewish state within any borders; while calling publicly, as does Iran, and its proxies Hamas and Hezbollah, for the destruction of Israel and the killing of Jews.

It is important to expose this real apartheid – indeed this criminal, destructive apartheid – and invert the paradigm that often passes for conventional wisdom in the Middle East. For this paradigm not only distorts the nature of the Israeli-Arab-Palestinian relationship, but also undermines the cause for peace itself.

None of this is intended to suggest that Israel is above the law, or is not accountable for any violations of human rights and humanitarian law. On the contrary. As I have written elsewhere, Israel like any other state, must be held accountable for any violations of human rights. But that is precisely the point – like any other state – and not singled out for discriminatory treatment, let alone having its very legitimacy, if not its very existence, denied.

Finally, we, as parliamentarians, can and must play an important role not only in combating the assault on Israel; not only in countering the laundering of the de-legitimization of Israel under the rubric of all that is good while positing Israel as the repository of all evil; not only in seeking to invert the false and misleading Mideast paradigm that endangers peace, but we must engage in an ongoing way in initiatives that promote *tikkun olam* – the repair of the human condition.

Jewish parliamentarians and Israeli parliamentarians need to make the question of *tikkun olam* a priority on the Jewish and, I would say, the justice agenda. We need to revert back and invoke the understanding of *Tzedek, tzedek tirdof* (Justice, justice shall you pursue) as being equal to all the other commandments combined – that this is in effect the *veshinantam levanecha* – that which is to be taught unto one's children. This pursuit of justice would include, for example in our respective domestic arenas: a social justice agenda with respect to the importance of child care, health care, anti-poverty initiatives, equality before the law, and access to justice.

(I might add that Israel could showcase some of its initiatives in the matters of health care and child care as part of the social justice agenda in which parliamentarians worldwide can engage) The importance of environmental initiatives as are now being taken, as we meet, in Ketura in Israel, and the overriding importance of environmental protection and the combating of global warming, and finally the importance of humanitarian relief. Israel is also a case study of absorption and integration in a multicultural society, as in the matter of Ethiopian Jews or the earlier *aliyah* of Russian Jewry; the importance of humanitarian relief, where Israel has been at the forefront of humanitarian relief or disaster relief, be it in Haiti or elsewhere, and where we in our respective parliaments have to be engaged as well.

Most importantly, we have to place the question of *tikkun olam* at the forefront of the domestic and international agenda – at the forefront of the work that is done within Israel – and that is not always well known – and at the forefront of our work in our respective parliaments. Indeed, we as parliamentarians, while pursuing *tikkun olam* within our respective parliaments, can invoke some of the Israeli initiatives as case studies whenever we engage in debates on the matters of social justice, humanitarian relief and the like.

We can draw on Jewish values, as parliamentarians, to make the case for *tikkun olam* on both the micro and the macro level – such as the importance of *zachor* – remembrance; such as “do not stand idly by while thy brothers and sisters blood is being shed” as an antidote to indifference and inaction; the danger of *l'shon harah*, or assaultive speech, as an assault on human dignity that can fracture a polity as well as a people; and, in so doing, we will not only enhance the case and cause of *tikkun olam* in each of our own respective parliaments but, where it is joined with and by Israel, it will enhance the case and cause of Israel in the international community as a whole.

May I close with the words with which I ended the peace on the gathering storm three years ago and which remain no less true today. That whatever 2011 may be, it is not 1941. There is a Jewish State as an antidote to Jewish powerlessness. There is a Jewish people with untold intellectual, moral, and material resources. There are non-Jews – indeed many non-Jews – prepared to join in the support of Israel not because it is a Jewish cause but because it is a just cause – and therefore with all its imperfection, one deserving support of Jew and non-Jew alike.

