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The Fixation of Israel's Elites on “Land for Peace”: Five Interpretations

Paul Eidelberg

Paul Eidelberg (Ph.D. University of Chicago), a professor of political science, is president and co-founder of the Foundation for Constitutional Democracy in the Middle East as well as president of the Yamin Israel Party. He is the author of many books including *The Philosophy of the American Constitution*, *A Discourse on Statesmanship*, *Beyond the Secular Mind*, and *Judaic Man*. **Professor Eidelberg**, who lives in Jerusalem, is a member of the Advisory Council of the Ariel Center for Policy Research and of the Editorial Board of *Nativ*, to which he is a frequent contributor. He also has a weekly radio program on Israel National Radio.

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Introduction

September 13, 1993 was a momentous day in Washington, DC. It was on that day that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shook hands with PLO Chief Yasser Arafat and sanctified the Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles on the White House lawn. More than 14 years have elapsed since that ceremony, during which time literally tens of thousands of Jewish women, men, and children have been murdered, maimed, or traumatized by Arab terrorists and suicide bombers. Nevertheless, Mr. Rabin's successors, Shimon Peres, Benjamin Netanyahu, Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon, and Ehud Olmert have adhered to Israel's agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organization – an aggregation of terrorist groups which have not concealed their intention to annihilate the Jewish state in stages. This they have been doing by means of Israel's own policy of "land for peace".

The continuity of this policy perplexes pundits. They puzzle over the fact that regardless of which party or coalition of parties controls the Government, the policy of land for peace continues despite its obvious futility and fatal consequences. They wonder what animates Israel's ruling elites? Why do they continue to negotiate with terrorists, that is to say, with Arabs or Muslims steeped in a fourteen-century religion driven by hatred of "infidels", a religion whose armies, according to the Center for the Study of Political Islam, have slaughtered approximately 270 million people since Muhammad?¹

The pundits also wonder why the people of Israel, who exercise the franchise, tolerate their ruling elites? Given periodic, multiparty elections, why don't the voters elect statesmen possessing enough courage, wisdom, and integrity to face to truth about the implacable nature of the enemy – statesmen who can pursue a strategy whose goal is to defeat the enemy? Why do the voters repeatedly elect governments that appease the enemy via the futile and fatal policy of land for peace?

This paper will examine five interpretations of that policy and the mentality of its advocates. In addition to economic, psychological, cultural, theological interpretations, we shall set forth a Machiavellian interpretation of Israel's ruling elites going back to the founding of the state, an interpretation that departs from conventional analyses. These interpretations sometimes intersect, but each provides a distinctive way of understanding the persistency of Israel's bewildering policy of land for peace. Moreover, with the help of Machiavelli (and his disciple Thomas Hobbes) we shall see that the policy of land for peace renders the differences among Israel's ruling elites insignificant.

Part I – The Economic Interpretation

Many pundits contend that Israel, or rather its Government's undeviating policy of land for peace is simply the consequence of undeviating US pressure dating back to the Six-Day War of June 1967, when Israel gained or regained possession of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza (as well as the Sinai and the Golan Heights). As may be seen in the Rogers Plan (1967), the Reagan Plan (1982), and the current Saudi-sponsored Road Map, Washington wants Israel to return to her pre-1967 borders. Why?

Here let us examine only Washington's *primary* motive, which is independent of whether Democrats or Republicans control the White House.

As is well known, the American economy depends very much on oil. Saudi Arabia not only sits on 25% of the world's proven reserves, but Saudi oil, barrel per barrel, is the cheapest oil in the world to extract. Less than 24 hours after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the Saudis put on the market an extra nine million barrels of oil, going mostly to the United States.

It is also known that Saudi Arabia, a Sunni Muslim kingdom, has supported the Sunni dominated PLO for several years and advocates a Palestinian state. With this fact connected to the US purchase of Saudi oil and to the Saudi purchase of American arms, Riyadh should not find it difficult to persuade Washington that the Israel-Palestinian conflict is "the core of the Middle East problem", and that the solution of this problem requires the US to induce Israel to return to her pre-1967 borders. Washington can the more readily do so because the US is Israel's major arms supplier. Saudi oil, it seems, silently lubricates Israel's undeviating policy of land for peace.

This economic interpretation probably has the most proponents. It's charmingly simple and superficial, which is probably why it's so popular. Virtually everyone assumes that Washington exerts irresistible diplomatic pressure on Israeli governments, more precisely, on Israeli prime ministers. But surely the efficacy of US pressure on Israeli governments depends, at least in part, on the personal character of Israeli prime ministers: their courage and wisdom, their sense of honor or of Jewish national pride. What is even more remarkable is that hardly anyone relates the cowing of these prime ministers to their covert *political ambitions* (discussed in Part V).

American military assistance alone does not adequately explain why Israeli prime ministers have shaken the bloodstained hands of Yasser Arafat. Nor does it adequately explain why Israel, a reputed democracy, negotiates with, and expects to obtain genuine and abiding peace from, Arab despots and tyrannies whose 1,400-year culture exalts war (*jihad*). Besides, how can peace be achieved by yielding land from which Arab terrorists and armies can all the more successfully wage war against the Jewish state? Are Israel's ruling elites mere fools?

Before explaining the allegedly craven and idiotic character of Israeli prime ministers, one little known fact should be stressed. Dr. Joseph Sisco, a former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs, once told Israeli author Shmuel Katz, "I want to assure you, Mr. Katz, that if we were not getting full value for our money, you would not get a cent from us." American foreign policy-makers are pragmatists, not moralists. US aid to Israel is animated by national self-interest – pious platitudes to the contrary notwithstanding.

As we shall now see, Israel is, and has been, America's biggest strategic bargain – *and Israel's ruling elites know this.*

- For FY 2006, US military grants to Israel was \$2.28 billion (= \$2.28B). US economic aid was \$240 million. (Note: economic aid does not go into building up Israel's economy; most of it is used to repay pre-1974 loans for military hardware, loans that were given to Israel at a high rate of interest.)
- Since Israel's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2006 was \$170.3B, total US aid to Israel was less than 1.5% of its GDP!
- Viewed over a longer time period – say between 1991 and 2006 – total US military grants and economic assistance to Israel was approximately \$47.5B.

What has the US received from Israel in return?

- Israel must spend about 74% of US military aid in the United States, where it provides jobs for an estimated 50,000 American workingmen.
- Total exports from the 50 states of the American Union to Israel between 1991 and 2006 was \$102.4B – more than twice the \$47.5B Israel received in US aid during this period. The annual average of US exports to Israel was \$6.4B per year, more than twice the average American aid package. In fact, total exports to Israel from the 50 states in 2006 was almost \$11B – more than four times the US military-economic aid package!
- Unknown to many observers, US military aid to Israel creates a demand for, and the purchase of, tens of billions of dollars worth of US weaponry by Saudi Arabia and other Arab states. US grants to Israel – far from imposing a burden on the American taxpayer – actually enriches the American economy. (American arms manufacturers know this. So do Senators and Representatives who represent states in which corporations such as Boeing, Lockheed, and General Dynamics are located. These elected officials, along with these corporations, have vested interests in opposing any sanctions against Israel if its government were to take a more independent and vigorous stand against the Palestinian Authority.)
- According to Gen. George Keegan, a former chief of US Air Force Intelligence, between 1974 and 1990, Israeli aid to America was worth between \$50-80B in intelligence, research and development savings, Soviet weapons systems captured and transferred to the Pentagon, and testing Soviet military doctrines up to 1990 when the USSR collapsed. Senator Daniel Inouye put it this way: “The contribution made by Israeli intelligence to America is greater than that provided by all NATO countries combined.”
- Recall that in 1970, at Washington's request, Israel prevented a Syrian invasion of Jordan. By protecting Jordan from that client of the Soviet Union, Israel thwarted Moscow's ambitions in the Middle East. It would be naive to think that Russia has abandoned its historic objectives in this region.)

Now let us paraphrase a report of Yoram Ettinger, former Israeli liaison to the US Congress²:

- Israel constantly relays to the US lessons of battle and counter-terrorism, which reduce American losses in Iraq and Afghanistan, prevent attacks on US soil, upgrade American weapons, and contribute to the US economy. Innovative Israeli technologies boost US industries.

- The vice-president of the company that produces the F16 fighter jets told Ettinger that Israel is responsible for 600 improvements in the plane's systems, modifications estimated to be worth billions of dollars, which spared dozens of research and development years.
- Without Israel, the US would have to deploy tens of thousands of American troops in the eastern Mediterranean Basin, at a cost of billions of dollars a year.
- In 1981, Israel bombed the Iraqi nuclear reactor, thus providing the US with the option of engaging in conventional wars with Iraq in 1991 and 2003, thereby preventing a possible nuclear war and its horrendous consequences.
- In 2005, Israel provided America with the world's most extensive experience in homeland defense and warfare against suicide bombers and car bombs. American soldiers train in IDF facilities and Israeli-made drones fly above the Sunni Triangle in Iraq, as well as in Afghanistan, providing US Marines with vital intelligence that saved many American lives.

Now let us consider only US military aid, given an Israeli decision to phase out economic aid.

Israel's GDP in 1985 was \$24.5B. That year Israel received \$1.8B US military aid or 7.3% of Israel's GDP – considerable. But as we saw, Israel's GDP for FY2006 was \$170.3B, and US military aid that year was \$2.28B – a mere 1.3% of Israel's GDP!

Compare Egypt whose GDP in 2006 was almost \$90B. Egypt received about \$2B in US military aid or 2.2% of its GDP; yet, unlike Israel, the Egyptian government is not subservient to Washington. Hence, the economic interpretation of Israel's policy of land for peace is far from being adequate. True, Israel, unlike Egypt, faces the threat of genocide. But the policy of land for peace, having already truncated Israel, *logically* requires the Jewish state to surrender land whenever Arabs threaten war, and this points to politicide.

The feared loss of \$2.28B in US military aid is a bogeyman – probably less than Israel's government loses in tax evasion (notorious in this country).³ Besides, far more than \$2.28B was lost as a direct consequence of the policy of land for peace. Suffice to mention the multi-billion dollar price tag on the so-called security fence; the multi-billion dollar cost of withdrawing from Gaza, which required the redeployment of the Israel Defense Forces and financial compensation of the 8,000 Jews whose homes, farms, and factories were destroyed by the Sharon Government. (Nor should we ignore the incalculable cost of devastating the lives of these productive Jews, whose farms and factories contributed \$100,000,000 annually to Israel's economy and who certainly did not obtain peace from the misnamed "peace process".)

The economic interpretation of the government's futile and fatal policy of land for peace conceals more than it reveals. Let us grant that Israel's ruling elites do not resist US pressure. Why don't they? Are they simply moral cretins? Do they lack confidence in the justice of Israel's cause? Or is their apparent subservience to Washington motivated by their own calculated self-interest? Perhaps they use the ogre of the American superpower to help them cow the Jews of Israel and thus render them more subservient to their secular elites? On the other hand, perhaps these elites are simply bowing to Jewish public opinion? After all, isn't Israel a democracy? Perhaps the people lack the stamina to take a firm and independent stand not only toward their enemies but toward Israel's benefactors?

This leads to our second interpretation of the fixation of Israel's ruling elites on the policy of land for peace.

Part II – A Psychological Interpretation: The Death Wish Hypothesis

Since 14 years of “Palestinian” terrorism do not seem to have convinced Israeli governments of the futility of this policy, some pundits regard the persistence of this policy as symptomatic of a Jewish or national “death wish”. Notice, first, that these pundits identify the Jews of Israel with their ruling elites. Second, their psychological interpretation of the land-for-peace policy, conceived in terms of a Jewish or national death wish, is at best a hypothesis. No one to my knowledge has verified this hypothesis on scientific grounds. Indeed, I shall refute this hypothesis by evidence drawn from three sources: demonstrations, opinion polls, and election results.

On September 7, 1993, one week *before* the September 13 signing of the Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles (hereafter referred to as “Oslo” or the “Oslo Agreement”), some 450,000 Jews assembled in Jerusalem and demonstrated against that agreement. Yona Presburg documents more compelling evidence in his monumental work, *Ruach Acheret*, which graphically displays how Jews in virtually every city and town in Israel held vigorous demonstrations against Oslo, year after year after year.⁴

Before continuing, and to avoid misunderstanding, I must point out that the policy of land for peace actually surfaced ten days after the Six-Day War of June 1967 when the government transmitted a proposal to Cairo and Damascus offering to return to the prewar borders for a peace agreement. However, it was only after Egyptian President Anwar Sadat’s historic visit to Jerusalem in November 1977 that land for peace became the centerpiece of Israeli governments.

Now let us consider the results of two elections. In the February 2001 election, Ariel Sharon received 62.4% of the votes cast. This was a landslide victory over Ehud Barak who had offered Yasser Arafat 95% of Judea and Samaria including the Old City and the Temple Mount. True, the “West Bank” was not the only important issue in that election, since Arafat had launched his terror war the previous September. Nevertheless, in view of Sharon’s stunning victory, it would be absurd to say Israel was suffering from a national death wish.

A national death wish was hardly evident in the January 2003 election, when the parties opposed to Labor’s policy of “unilateral disengagement” from Gaza won 84 Knesset seats. Since disengagement was the paramount issue of that election, the election was tantamount to a national referendum.

Turning to public opinion polls, consider how Jews answered the following questions⁵:

- “If Israel had to choose between peace and annexation of the territories held since the 1967 war which would you choose?” **54% chose annexation (July 1984).**
- “In peace negotiations with the Arabs, Israel should suggest territorial compromise against suitable security guarantees.” **54% disagreed (September 1986).**

A survey conducted during the 1992 Knesset election campaign reported that no less than 55% of Israel’s Jewish population – excluding the Jewish residents of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza – agreed that these areas ought to “remain under Israeli rule, **even if this meant hindering the peace process**” (emphasis added). Only 33% favored “land for peace”. No wonder the Labor Party campaigned against negotiations with the PLO. Once entrenched in

office, however, Labor betrayed its pledge to the nation by pursuing the policy of land for peace.

Now consider a poll commissioned by the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) and the Independent Media Review and Analysis (IMRA). The poll, reported in *The Jerusalem Post* on June 7, 2002, asked four questions:

1. “Do you support the proposal that Israel withdraw to the pre-Six Day War lines and agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state in return for peace...?” **Jews: 56% against.**
2. “If it were possible to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, would you support, or oppose the establishment of a Palestinian state?” **Jews 66% against.**
3. “Do you support the proposal that Israel withdraw to the pre-Six Day War lines – including the Golan, the Jordan Rift Valley, the Old City of Jerusalem – and agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state in return for peace...?” **Jews: 80% against.**
4. “Do you support the proposal that Israel withdraw to the pre-Six Day War lines – including the Golan, the Jordan Valley, the Old City of Jerusalem, and agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state – and allow Palestinian refugees the right of return to Israel instead of receiving compensation – in return for peace with the Palestinians?” **Jews: 93% against.**

The results of this poll indicate that a large percentage of Jews, whether motivated by religious or cultural convictions, are wedded to the Land of Israel and oppose sacrificing part of it for peace. The poll also revealed that the more Jews are made aware of the strategic assets Israel must surrender for “peace” – and I have not mentioned the loss of crucial water resources and increased vulnerability to missile attacks – the more they oppose a Palestinian state. Clearly, most Jews in Israel do not really believe they will obtain peace by yielding Jewish land to the Palestinian Arabs.

Despite the incessant propaganda of Israel’s leftwing dominated media, a poll published by Independent Media Review Analysis on May 18, 2007 reported that clear majorities of Israeli Jews believe Palestinian Arabs want to destroy Israel and reject land-for-peace deals as well as unilateral concessions to Palestinian Arabs.

Incidentally, Jewish skepticism about Palestinian Arabs extends to Israel’s own Arab citizens. A University of Haifa poll released on June 21, 2004 revealed that 64% of the Jewish public in Israel believes that the government should encourage Israeli Arabs to emigrate. 55% said Israeli Arabs endanger national security, while 45% said they support revoking Israeli Arabs’ right to vote and hold political office. The Jewish national death wish hypothesis cannot stand the test of empirical reality. This does not mean, however that alternative psychological interpretations of Israel’s policy of land for peace are invalid.⁶

Part III – A Cultural Interpretation: Moral Relativism

Related to the Jewish death wish hypothesis is the “Jewish self-hatred” hypothesis which many commentators attribute primarily to Israel’s leftwing elites – whether politicians or judges, academics or journalists.

What does it mean to hate one’s “self”? What is the “self” that one hates? In modern psychology, the self takes the place of the soul. The word “soul” (*anima*) will not be found in Machiavelli’s primary works *The Prince* and *The Discourses*. As I have elsewhere elaborated at length,⁷ Machiavelli’s political science is rooted in unadulterated *egoism* – unadulterated because he regards all the emotions, love included, as self-regarding. Indeed, for Machiavelli, the father of modernity and democracy, the only “natural” good is the private good. What has this to do with the policy of land for peace?

Machiavelli would say that egoism, not altruism, motivates those who advocate this policy. Of course, the same applies to the opponents of this policy, leaving us no rational or moral grounds to prefer one to the other. Let’s see where this leads us.

According to Machiavelli, man’s essence is *desire*: the desire for peace has no more intrinsic value than the desire for war. As he puts it in Chapter 3 of *The Prince*: “It is a thing truly very natural and ordinary to desire to acquire; and when men are able to do so do it, they are always praised or not blamed...” Machiavelli thus denies the distinction between noble and base desires. By doing so, he planted the seed of moral relativism, a doctrine that has influenced Israel’s ruling elites, as we shall clearly see in a moment.

Hobbes clarifies Machiavelli’s teaching in *The Leviathan*. Man is simply a democracy of desires and no desire (including covetousness) is intrinsically evil, which is to say all desires are morally equal. In Hobbes we find the most lucid and succinct definition of moral relativism:

Whatever is the object of any man’s appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part calleth good; and the object of his hate or aversion, evil...For these words of good [and] evil...are ever used with relation to the person that useth them: there being nothing simply and absolutely so, where there is no commonwealth.

It follows that what a democratic regime calls “good” and “evil” is no more valid than what a totalitarian regime deems “good” and “evil”. (A recent document of the American Council of Learned Societies entitled “Speaking for the Humanities” maintains that democracy cannot be justified as a system of government inherently superior to totalitarianism; it is simply an “ideological commitment” the West has chosen to make.) This means that all moral values or lifestyles are equal in principle (since none is objectively true). Still, what has this moral equivalence or relativism to do with Israel’s policy of land for peace?

Let us first note that the policy of land for peace policy obscures or renders irrelevant the basic ideological antagonism between Israel and its Arab adversaries. Second, the policy of land for peace conforms to the idea of “conflict resolution”, an idea purveyed by political science departments throughout the United States and Israel. Third, underlying the idea of conflict resolution is moral relativism, which denies the enormity of evil that motivates Israel’s foes. Conflict resolution insinuates the disarming belief that all ideological conflicts can be resolved, that peaceful coexistence between Jews and Muslims is theoretically possible. Here theory trumps reality: Peace requires democratic Israel not only to negotiate

with her autocratic and warlike enemies, but also to yield land to her enemies. Indeed, conflict resolution requires Israel to withdraw to her (indefensible) 1949 armistice lines. This is the irrational and suicidal basis of Israel's land for peace policy! Judging from the polls cited above, most Israelis seem to know this. Are we to conclude that Israel's ruling elites are idiots?

Is it not idiotic to expect peaceful coexistence between infidels and believers when 1,400 years of history demonstrate that the followers of Muhammad have been addicted to war? Let's put it this way: How much land must Israel yield to achieve peace? Former Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered the Palestinian Arabs Gaza and 95% of the "West Bank" including eastern Jerusalem, and the Temple Mount. The Arabs not only rejected the offer, they responded with a terror war. Moreover, a Jerusalem Media and Communications Center poll reported that 69% of the Palestinians want all 4.4 million refugees and their descendants relocated to Israel. This alone would doom Israel. Clearly, what the Palestinian Arabs desire is not a state but the annihilation of the Jewish state.

What prevents Israel's ruling elites from taking those genocidal intentions seriously? Have they sacrificed their intellects to the desire for peace? This would confirm Hobbes' contention that reason is merely an instrument of desire. But what about the desire for self-preservation? Are these elites suffering from a death wish? Not according to Hobbes.

For Hobbes – and here we approach the basic presupposition of his political science – man's most powerful emotion is the *fear of violent death*. Throwing logical consistency and moral relativism to the winds, Hobbes maintains that violent death is *the greatest evil*. The fear of violent death (to which one may add the desire for commodious living) impels men to seek peace. Hobbes (unlike Muslims) denied perdition, providence, and paradise. In fact, he was the first systematic political philosopher to substitute bourgeois or utilitarian morality for aristocratic pride or honor. This is why the aim of the state, for Hobbes, is *peace at any price*. ("Better Red than dead!")

If violent death is the greatest evil, engaging in negotiations with one's enemy to avoid war appears, at first glance, to be rational. Moreover, since bourgeois pragmatism has supplanted aristocratic honor, there is no reason why Israel's elites should feel ashamed to shake the hands of Muslim terrorists. The trouble is that Muslims are not bourgeois: far from regarding violent death as the greatest evil, they regard their own death – while killing Jews – as the greatest good! The Qur'an exalts the Muslim who "slays and is slain" for Allah (Sura 9:111).

We see in Hobbes the moral equivalence or relativism that underlies the negotiations that have taken place, year after year, between Israel and Arab despots. (The same moral equivalence is manifested in the "even-handed" diplomacy of the United States toward Israel and the Palestinian Authority). Hobbes is very much alive. His political philosophy permeates the mentality of Israel's ruling elites, which goes a long way toward explaining the persistency of their policy of land for peace. We hasten to add, however, that motivating their quest for peace, according to Hobbes, is their egoistic lust for power – precisely the teaching of his mentor, Machiavelli. Moral relativism, as will be seen more clearly later, spawns or fosters egoism.

Of course, Israel's ruling elites do not have to be conscious purveyors of relativism to have been influenced by that doctrine. Relativism is a university-bred doctrine especially prevalent in the social sciences and humanities. Hebrew University Professor Yehoshafat Harkabi, once the head of Israel's "War College", was a self-professed moral relativist; he was also the mentor of Shimon Peres.⁸ Relativism tainted Ariel Sharon. While homicide bombers were

reducing Jews to body parts, he baldly admitted that his son Omri had taught him “not to see things in black and white” (*Ha’aretz Magazine*, April 13, 2001).

Caroline Glick, Deputy Managing Editor of *The Jerusalem Post*, addressed some 150 political science students at Tel Aviv University, where she spoke of her experience as an embedded reporter with the US Army’s Third Infantry Division during the Iraq war. Any person not corrupted by moral relativism would favor, as she did, the US over the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Yet a student, who expressed the general attitude of her audience, asked, “Who are you to make moral judgments?” Glick spoke at five liberal Israeli universities. She learned that moral relativists dominate their faculties. Relativism now wears the garb of “multiculturalism”.⁹

Multiculturalism is the mantra of Israel’s ruling elites. Note the exalted status they have or have held: President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, and Education Minister Yuli Tamir. Add the illustrious former Supreme Court President Aharon Barak, than whom no prime minister was more powerful. Barak very much prescribed the moral values of this country. He was a relativist who systematically pursued the agenda of transforming Israel into “a state of its citizens”, i.e., a multicultural society comparable to Sweden, which recently enacted multiculturalism into law in recognition of the large influx of Muslims. In other words, just as Sweden’s government renounced the country’s Swedish nationality, so Israel’s multicultural elites, led by the Supreme Court, are eviscerating Israel’s Jewish nationality. But I am intruding on Part V of this essay.

Multiculturalists are at war with Jews who want to preserve and enrich Israel’s Jewish character. To call these multiculturalists “self-hating Jews” obscures a contradictory and more serious personality flaw. Since relativism has influenced the mentality of these Jews, it would be more revealing to call them arrant egoists. This would be the diagnosis of Dr. Max Nordau, a psychiatrist of remarkable breadth of learning – a Zionist who understood the servile mentality of many assimilated Jews as opposed to the pride of religious Jews in Europe’s ghettos.

In 1895, Nordau published a heavy tome entitled *Degeneration*. Republished by the University of Chicago Press in 1968, *Degeneration* has been the subject of several doctoral dissertations. Of profound significance, Nordau regarded the nexus of moral relativism and egoism the basic cause of psychological degeneration. His book provides insights relevant to Israel’s ruling elites and their fixation on the policy of land for peace.

Nordau, who practiced psychiatry in Paris, finds that nearly all degenerates “lack the sense of morality and of right and wrong” (p. 18). An inevitable concomitant of their moral relativism is “egomania”, which Nordau discusses at great length (pp. 241-372). Nordau also finds that in many degenerates, egomania coexists with “self-abhorrence” (p. 20). Interestingly, Nordau sees that the egoism and self-loathing of degenerates render them quite suggestible. The combination of egomania, self-loathing, and suggestibility conduces to impulsiveness, lack of balance, weakness of will (pp. 19, 22, 23, 257-261).

Degenerates, says Nordau, lack a sense of honor as well as a heightened sense of outrage at the suffering of others (p. 260). (Notice how Israeli prime ministers consort with Arab terrorists, shaking their hands as if those hands were not responsible for Jewish bloodshed. Notice, too, how Israeli prime ministers have so often failed to retaliate against terrorist attacks, such as the suicide bombing in the Sbarro pizzeria in Jerusalem and the incessant missile attacks on Sderot). Here let us pause.

Nordau claims that the degenerate is “incapable of correctly grasping, ordering, or elaborating into ideas and judgments the impressions of the external world...” He “surrenders himself to the perpetual obfuscation of...fugitive ideas” (p. 21). He is given to “fixed” ideas, however visionary or unrealistic [such as land for peace] (p. 242). Moreover, “facts which do not please him he does not notice, or so interprets that they seem to support his delirium” (p. 31).

Nordau anticipates Harry Stack Sullivan’s concept of “selective inattention” (such as 14 centuries of Arab-Islamic plunder and butchery). This selective inattention raises the question of whether degenerates compulsively misrepresent or consciously lie about reality. Nordau contends that they believe in the truth of their fabrications (p. 25). It seems to me, however, that conscious but habitual liars will eventually believe in the truth of many of their lies. In any event, bearing in mind that fear governs many degenerates (p. 19), such is their inability to face reality that even their instinct of self-preservation, according to Nordau, is crippled (p. 31).

A Case Study: Ehud Olmert

On June 9, 2005, Ehud Olmert addressed the Israel Policy Forum in New York. The Sharon Government, of which he was the Vice Premier, was then in the process of preparing some 50,000 soldiers and police to implement Sharon’s plan to withdraw from Gaza and forcefully expel its 8,000 Jewish residents. Olmert told his New York audience that the withdrawal represents “a remarkable process...that will have an enormous impact on everything that will happen thereafter, in the State of Israel and in the Middle East.”

Dwelling in wonderland, Olmert spoke glowingly of the unilateral aspect of the Gaza withdrawal: “We don’t have to wait anymore,” he said. He even boasted to his American audience: “We really don’t need the United States to lead the [peace] process in the Middle East; we will lead this process...”

Israel will lead the process, he said, because it’s good for us and for the Palestinians. It will be good for everyone because “It will bring more security, greater safety, much more prosperity, and a lot of joy for all the people that live in the Middle East.” Self-intoxicated, Olmert confided:

We are tired of fighting, we are tired of being courageous, we are tired of winning, we are tired of defeating our enemies, we want ... to live in an entirely different environment of relations with our enemies. We want them to be our friends, our partners, our good neighbors.

Clearly a case of egomania and monomania, confirming Nordau’s understanding of degeneration. Summing up this case study:

- Olmert can hardly be oblivious of, even if he has not been outraged by, the bloody consequences of Oslo: the murder and maiming and traumatizing of tens of thousands of Jewish men, women, and children. Yet the Government persists in this illusionary and suicidal policy.
- Despite the fatal consequences of Oslo, and contrary to the warnings of Lt. Gen. Moshe Ya’alon, IDF Chief of Staff, Maj. Gen. Aharon Ze’evi-Farkash, head of IDF Intelligence, and Avi Dichter, Director of the *Shin Bet* (General Security Service), Olmert boasted that “unilateral disengagement” from Gaza would be a major step toward peace. His “selective inattention” is extraordinary.
- Finally, despite the fact that the Gaza withdrawal brought Hamas to power and made Gaza a center for international terrorism, Olmert persisted in his fixed idea to withdraw

from Judea and Samaria. This he did even while arms were being smuggled into these most strategically important areas. As Nordau said of degenerates: “Facts which do not please him, he does not notice, or so interprets that they seem to support his delirium.”

* * *

It may be argued that fear alone is sufficient to bewilder and paralyze Israel’s ruling elites and to fixate them on the simplistic and make-believe policy of territory for peace. Fear of what?

Perhaps they fear losing their reputation as the leaders of “the only democracy in the Middle East”. Israel’s reputation as a democracy is precisely what endows its government with legitimacy and its ruling elites with respectability, especially in democratic America. Fear of losing that legitimacy and respectability impels them to negotiate with Israel’s Arab adversaries. Indeed, since democracy is based on the primacy of persuasion, Israel’s ruling elites are expected by the capitals of the democratic world to resolve territorial disputes by means of diplomacy, not coercion. It would be difficult indeed for these elites to enjoy their democratic reputation if they were unwilling to consort with Arab dictators for the sake of peace. Let us probe a little deeper.

For Hobbes (but not for Machiavelli) peace, meaning comfortable self-preservation is the highest good. Little wonder that the idea of “conflict resolution” is prominent in the democratic world (but utterly absent in the Islamic world).

So concerned is Israel’s government about its democratic reputation that its ruling elites would have Israel take “risks for peace”, such as relinquishing land, releasing terrorists, and exercising self-restraint when Jewish civilians become the deliberate targets of Arab terrorists. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was so fearful that he would lose his democratic peace credentials that he insisted on attending the Annapolis Conference with Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas even though several Fatah security force officers, assigned to protect Olmert as he went to meet with Abbas, planned to assassinate him instead. Remarkably, the would-be assassins were quickly released by PA authorities before outside pressure forced their re-arrest.

It seems that fear-driven egoism lurks in politicians who regard the policy of land for peace policy as their political life raft.

IV – A Theological Interpretation

A. Islam

Israel's policy of territory for peace utterly contradicts the *ethos* of Islam, an ethos articulated in the Qur'an, reinforced by the Hadith (the Tradition), and manifested throughout Islam's history of war and destruction. Although individual Muslims such as Nonie Darwish, Wafa Sultan, and Tawfik Hamid have liberated themselves from that culture of murderous hatred, more than a billion Muslims derive their identity, their pride, the meaning and purpose of their lives and of their worldwide community from Islam. That purpose is to wage jihad against "infidels" until the entire world becomes of Dar al-Islam.

Israel's godless elites cannot comprehend or take seriously the enormous hatred of Jews daily instilled in Muslim prayers and education. Maimonides writes in his "Epistle to Yemen":

Never did a nation molest, degrade, and hate us so much as they. Therefore when [King] David, of blessed memory, inspired by the Holy Spirit, envisaged the future tribulations of Israel, he bewailed and lamented their lot only in the Kingdom of Ishmael.

Today, the obscene vilification of Jews appearing in Egypt's state-controlled media surpasses that of *Der Sturmer* – and Egypt has a peace treaty with Israel! This lurid hatred of Jews does not prevent Israel's bourgeois prime ministers from making diplomatic pilgrimages to Cairo. Such pilgrimages bolster their egos and reputations as democrats.

To all but fools and moral cretins, Islamic hatred of Jews as well as Islamic imperialism makes nonsense of Israel's policy of land for peace. All this is patently obvious from the bloody record of Islam's devastation of Christian, Jewish, Zoroastrian, Hindu, and Buddhist communities throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Asia. Before our eyes, we see Islam's invasion of England and Europe and its penetration of the United States. Surely this is obvious to Israel's ruling elites.

The policy of territory for peace cannot be dismissed as self-deception – a concept denied by Jean-Paul Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*. Although it may be more revealing to attribute that policy to degeneracy, in general, and moral cowardice, in particular, something more profound is operating in Israel's godless elites.

Let us try to explain Israel's relentless policy of territory for peace together with Islam's relentless imperialism in biblical and theological terms. Let us begin with Genesis 16:12 with the birth of Ishmael, the archetype of the Arab nation.

Ishmael is there referred to as a "*pere adam*" – an unusual construct since, contrary to Hebrew grammar, the adjective "*pere*" precedes the noun "*adam*". Many commentators have puzzled and commented on this bizarre construction. Some have translated *pere adam* as "a beast in the form of a man". Genesis 16:12 says of Ishmael: "*His hand shall be against everyone, and everyone's hand shall be against him.*" Midrash Rabbah (Genesis 45:9) refers to *pere adam* as "a savage among men in its literal sense, for whereas all others plunder wealth, he plunders lives".

Other commentators refer to *pere adam* as a prolific man who will have abundant progeny spread throughout the world. That great convert to Judaism Onkelos (c.35-120 CE) says of *pere adam*: "He will be dependent on every one and similarly everyone will be dependent

upon him” (a prophecy that has come to fulfillment in our times: witness Arab dependency on Western technology and the West’s dependence on Arab oil).

Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra (1092 or 1093-1167) also construes the reference to *pere adam* in Genesis 16:12 as a prophecy.

His hand shall be against everyone, means that Ishmael will be victorious at first over all nations, and afterwards, *everyone’s hand shall be against him*, meaning that he will be vanquished in the end.

Now let us consider what Efraim Karsh records at the very outset of *Islamic Imperialism* (2005):

- “I was ordered to fight all men until they say ‘There is no god but Allah.’”
Prophet Muhammad’s farewell address, March 632
- “I shall cross this sea to their islands to pursue them until there remains no one on the face of the earth who does not acknowledge Allah.”
Saladin, January 1189
- “We shall export our revolution throughout the world...until the calls ‘there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah’ are echoed all over the world.”
Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, 1979
- “I was ordered to fight people until they say there is no god but Allah, and his prophet Muhammad.”
Osama bin Laden. November 2001

Notice that “Allah” and “Muhammad” constitute the operative terms in this bellicose litany of Islam. Unlike the God of the Bible, Allah is absolutely transcendent: he is pure will without personality. Allah’s absolute transcendence precludes the possibility of human free will or choice. Islam postulates absolute predestination of all that we think, say and do. The totality of all events is irrevocably fixed, preordained, and recorded from eternity. Muslims are programmed, and to be an authentic Muslim one must accept Allah’s program, which requires unending war against infidels. *Theologically* speaking, there is no such creature as a “Muslim moderate”. No authentic Muslim can long abide by any agreement resulting from Israel’s policy of territory for peace.

As for Muhammad, he is the role model of Arab leaders, be they religious or not. Yasser Arafat adhered to the model of negotiations exemplified by Muhammad in the Hudibayya Treaty of 628. In explaining his acceptance of the Oslo Agreement of 1993, Arafat told his Fatah supporters: “When we chose the peace of the brave [Oslo], we chose it with trust in the Prophet who agreed to the Treaty of Hudibayya...” Arafat’s supporters knew that Muhammad had torn up his 10-year Hudibayya treaty with the Koreishites after only two years. By then Muhammad’s military position had changed and enabled him slaughter the Koreishites.

The theological relevance of this all-too-brief discussion of Allah and Muhammad to Israel may be stated as follows: *God has given the Jews the best enemies – Muslim Arabs who cannot be bought by the potage of territory!* Only such stubborn, murderous foes can drive stubborn, peace-loving Jews to a level of danger where they will at last realize that their survival ultimately depends on God – the Master of peace as well as of war, (See Exodus 15:3; *Mishna Sotah*, 9:2.)

B. Secular Zionism

As an ideology, secular Zionism is not entirely Jewish. David Ben-Gurion maintained that, “An Arab should also have the right to be elected President of Israel.” Vladimir Jabotinsky anticipated Ben-Gurion, saying, “In every Cabinet where the Prime Minister is a Jew the Vice-Premiership shall be offered to an Arab, and vice-versa.” What else can one say given Israel’s Declaration of Independence, which calls Israel a Jewish state but one in which all of its inhabitants, regardless of religion, are entitled to political equality?

The dogma of democracy trumps whatever Jewish content is found in secular Zionism. In fact, and we shall see, that dogma will transform Zionism into anti-Zionism by means of the policy of territory for peace.

The mindless, secular fixation of Israel’s ruling elites on the policy of territory for peace corresponds to Arab’s mindless, religious fixation on war. But the futility of that policy is not simply the consequence of Islam’s theologically inspired bellicosity. Notice that territory for peace inverts the territorial nationalism of the founders of the State of Israel. These Zionists borrowed the territorial nationalism of nineteenth-century Europe and jettisoned the nationalism of Sinai in the process. How ironic: their political heirs have become fixated on the anti-Zionist policy of territory for peace! Ironic or providential?

Perhaps Islamic bellicosity should be construed as divine punishment for having substituted *territorial* nationalism for *Torah* nationalism as the foundation of the State of Israel? The very first sentence of the State’s Declaration of Independence – a document signed by four rabbis – denies the Sinai Covenant and therefore that which alone can endow the State with authentic Jewish character. The document declares, “The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people.” This implies that the Jews did not become a “people” until the conquest of Canaan by Joshua, hence only *after* the Law-giving at Mount Sinai. Yet the Torah repeatedly refers to the Children of Israel a people *before* their exodus from Egypt, as well as during their wanderings in the Wilderness. The Torah also calls them a “nation”. Thus: “What great *nation* has laws and social rules so righteous as this Torah?” (Deut. 4:8; Exod. 1:9; Num. 23:9.)

That nation no longer exists, or if it does, it has lost its grandeur. Its laws, far from being righteous in any superlative way, assimilate those of the Gentiles. No wonder: the State of Israel has more or less relegated the Torah to the home and the synagogue. In other words, Israel’s ruling elites have severed the Torah from public law, which is to say the Torah is not the supreme law of the land. It is in this light that we are to understand the most fundamental cause of the policy of “land for peace” – the icon of Israel’s ruling elites.

The subordination of the Torah to the State gave color of legitimacy to the Gaza Evacuation Law as well as to the Government that implemented this law. How could any sane and humane government forcefully expel Jews from their homes, destroy their schools and synagogues, their farms and factories – yes, and give this flourishing Jewish land to Israel’s barbaric enemies? That Gaza has become (predictable) a haven for terrorist organizations, that Gaza-based terrorists have struck Israel with thousands of missiles, that despite these explosive facts. The Government continues to pursue the land-for-peace policy bewilders pundits.

To attribute undeviating adherence to this visionary policy to stupidity or madness is hardly enlightening. It seems to me more meaningful and more plausible to believe that operating in the Holy Land is not mere stupidity, but extraterrestrial stupidity, not simple madness but theologically induced madness. Irving Kristol put it this way: “

Whom the gods would destroy they first tempt to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.” But we have already learned from the Prophet Isaiah (44:24, 25): “I am the Lord that makes visionaries mad ... that turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolish.

V – A Machiavellian Interpretation

Preliminary Statement

Despite the “revelations” of modern psychology on human behavior, pundits have failed to comprehend the motives of Israel’s ruling elites, their addiction to the futile and fatal policy of territory for peace.¹⁰ What really motivates these politicians?

When the present writer, a political scientist, made Israel his home in 1976, he was amused to hear people say that the paramount concern of Israeli politicians is their “seats”. This piece of conventional wisdom actually confirms Machiavelli’s conception of politics. As we saw in Part III, the father of modern political science maintained that *egoism* is the foundation of politics. We also saw that, according to Machiavelli, the essence of human nature is *desire*, and that the strongest desire is the will to power. Hobbes put it this way: “the desire of power, of riches, of knowledge, and of honour...may be reduced to the first, that is, desire of power.”

Plato and Aristotle were no less aware that politicians are motivated by egoism, but they asked the more challenging and elevating question of how can regimes be structured to serve the common good and, above all, human excellence or virtue.

Egoism is as old as the hills, else why the Ten Commandments? Where Machiavelli departs radically from the Bible as well as from classical political science is that his new science of politics takes its bearings on the behavior of *ordinary* men, on the *many*, not the *few*. The standard and ruling principle of his politics is not virtue but the all-to-human vice of egoism. Among mankind as a whole, egoism is more predictable than virtue and therefore provides a more solid foundation for creating a new science of politics.

We have in Machiavelli a democratic as opposed to an aristocratic politics. This democratic politics thrives in Israel, which does not mean Israel is a genuine democracy.

As previously indicated, if one studies Israel’s periodic, multiparty elections, is it not strange that regardless of which party or party coalition has won control of the government during the past 30 years, all have pursued the obviously dangerous and counterintuitive policy of yielding land to Arabs addicted to war?

Most curious is the behavior of the religious parties. What motivated Shas, an ultra-orthodox party, to join the Labor-Meretz Government in 1992 despite the ultra-secularism of those two parties and their commitment to yielding Judea, Samaria, and Gaza for peace?

What motivated the National Religious Party – a Zionist party – to join the Sharon Government of 2003 and sign its coalition agreement, which bound the signatories to Oslo?

What motivated Torah United Judaism, another ultra-orthodox party, to join the Sharon Government of 2004 and thereby enable that government to expel Gaza’s 8,000 Jewish residents and render them homeless?

They initially justified their collaboration by saying something like this: “We can do more good inside the Government than outside, by restraining its land-for-peace policy and by securing larger appropriations for Jewish education.” Flapdoodle, Machiavelli would say in Italian. The principal objective of all parties is power or self-aggrandizement.

But if politics, including democratic politics, is rooted in egoism, then *altruism* is a myth. This has profound consequences. Egoism renders politicians indifferent to the lessons of

history. (Recall Shimon Peres' egotistical statement: "I have become totally tired of history, because I feel history is a long misunderstanding.") Radically understood, egoism makes politicians unconcerned about posterity.

Egoists live in the present; they care nothing about the welfare of others, except when it serves their own self-interest. Egoism dulls their sense of outrage at the suffering of others. Notice that the Sharon and Olmert governments refrained from retaliating, in a sustained and decisive way, against terrorist attacks that have killed or wounded or traumatized tens of thousands Jewish women, men, and children. The IDF's targeted assassinations and limited incursions into terrorist havens primarily serve to mollify the public. Indeed, to destroy the Palestinian Authority and its terrorist network would contradict the policy of territory for peace, which requires, in the words of Israel's ruling elites, a "negotiating partner".

Although cynicism is rampant, politicians still have to pay lip-service to such shibboleths as the "common good" or the "national interest". But who does not know that these clichés are merely a façade to obscure and dignify the politician's own self-interest? This applies to politicians who intone the mantra of "peace". Our problem is to understand how the fatal policy of land for peace serves the self-interest of Israel's ruling elites.

The Supreme Objective of the Founders

To understand the policy of land for place from a larger Machiavellian perspective, we have to examine more deeply the motives of the Zionists who founded the State of Israel.

According to Machiavelli, the greatest manifestation of the will to power is the founding of an entirely new "state". To establish a new state a founder must create "new modes and orders". To do this he must radically alter a people's inherited beliefs and values. This cannot be accomplished without coercion and force.

To establish "new modes and orders", the founders of the State of Israel would have to transform the "Chosen People" into a "normal people". (Almost 60 years after Israel's rebirth, Interior Minister Meir Sheerit proposed to rescind the foundational law of the State, the Law of Return, which grants automatic citizenship to Jews. "Israel," he said, "should become like every other country" (*Jerusalem Post*, October 31, 2007, p. 1.) This is tantamount to saying Israel should cease being a Jewish state.)

To transform the Jewish people, the founders had to imbue them with a new personal and national identity. This required the founders to remove the Torah from domain of statecraft or public life. The State, divorced from Jewish law, would then become Jewish in name only.

It would be *naïve* to regard the founders or their motives as disinterested. Only by radically curtailing the role of the Torah as the paradigm of how Jews should live could the founders long maintain *their own* political power, which was rooted in secularism.

The founders were not only secularists; they were democratic socialists, and this complicated their secular agenda. Their democratic egalitarianism required them to confer citizenship on the Arabs living within the armistice lines established after the 1948-1949 War of Independence. This could not but render precarious the elite's electoral base and voting strength in the Knesset. The founders needed a large Jewish majority in the Land of Israel. They needed a large influx of Jews not only from war-torn Europe, but also from Asia and Africa. This posed a dilemma.

The vast majority of Sephardic and oriental Jews from Africa and Asia were religious. Given the democratic principle of one adult/one vote, the high birthrate of these religious Jews was

an obvious threat to the elite's political power. The addition of hundreds of thousands of religious voters would eventuate in the elite's political decline. If the elite were not to commit political suicide and renounce the goal of creating a thoroughly egalitarian society in the Land of Israel, the Sephardic and oriental Jews would have to be secularized.

Accordingly, immigrant parents who sent their children to religious schools were denied employment until they transferred their children to secular schools. Thousands of Yemenite children, brought to Israel by *Youth Aliyah*, were herded into secular kibbutzim and other anti-religious institutions. Meanwhile, immigrant transit camps became the scenes of anti-religious propaganda designed to turn youth away from their parents. Thus, by means of coercion, segregation, and indoctrination, the secular elite undermined the structure and intense religious loyalties of countless impoverished Sephardic and oriental Jewish families on the one hand, and their dedication to Torah values on the other.

What has this to do with the policy of territory for peace? That policy surfaced only after the Six-Day War of June 1967, when Israel regained much of the land to which it was entitled under the Balfour Declaration of 1917.¹¹

As is well known, the Six-Day War was a pre-emptive war. The Government had no plans to establish Jewish sovereignty over the land conquered in that war. To the contrary, as previously indicated, the Government was anxious to return most of the land for a peace agreement! The ruling secular Zionists found themselves in very much the same position of their predecessors after the War of Independence: they were saddled with a large Arab population in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza (Yesha). To preserve Israel's democratic reputation, the ruling elites could not readily declare Jewish sovereignty over Yesha without giving the Arab inhabitants citizenship. This would obviously diminish the ruling Labor Party's electoral base; and given Israel's parliamentary system of Proportional Representation, the addition of hundreds of thousands of Arabs to the electorate would diminish Labor's power in the Knesset.

Moreover, thanks to the welter of parties spawned by the Knesset's low electoral threshold, no party in Israel has ever come close to winning a majority of the Knesset's membership. Labor (Mapai), the leading party, was always dependent on religious parties to form a government; and of course, the religious parties were also reluctant to see their Knesset representation decline by the addition of countless Arab voters. Yesha was a hot potato for religious as well as secular parties. What was Israel to do?

Fast forward to 1978 and the Camp David Agreement. That agreement is the first international document that refers to Judea and Samaria as the "West Bank" and its Arab inhabitants as the "Palestinian people". Camp David thus provided the Arabs with irresistible democratic rhetoric: "the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination", hence to a sovereign state.

Now, what is astonishing, three decades ago, no less than Shimon Peres saw in a Palestinian state a dire threat to Israel's existence. In *Tomorrow is Now*, a book published in 1978, Peres warned:

The establishment of such a state means the inflow of combat-ready Palestinian forces (more than 25,800 men under arms) into Judea and Samaria; this force, together with the local youth, will double itself in a short time. It will not be short of weapons or other [military] equipment, and in a short space of time, an infrastructure for waging war will be set up in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. Israel will have problems in preserving day-to-day security, which may drive the country into war, or undermine the morale of its citizens. In time of war, the frontiers

of the Palestinian state will constitute an excellent staging point for mobile forces to mount attacks on infrastructure installations vital for Israel's existence, to impede the freedom of action of the Israeli air force in the skies over Israel, and to cause bloodshed among the population in areas adjacent to the frontier-line.¹²

By "combat ready Palestinian forces", Peres must mean Palestinians from Jordan. ("Palestinians" comprise about two-thirds of Jordan's population.) Leaving aside Peres' implied skepticism of Jordan's former monarch, King Hussein, a more relevant issue is this: How are we to reconcile the Peres of 1978 and the Peres who, since then, has been the foremost exponent of Israel's withdrawal from Judea, Samaria, and Gaza – Peres, the father of Oslo and the champion of territory for peace?

In the May 1977 Knesset elections, Labor lost control of the government for the first time in 29 years. Various factors contributed to Labor's defeat, but I shall mention only one: Labor's *shrinking electoral base*. Lack of economic opportunities combined with lack of serious Jewish education or Jewish national identity prompted hundreds of thousands of secularists to emigrate. Meanwhile, projecting the high birth rate of religious Jews could also have inspired a book entitled *Tomorrow is Now*. Sooner or later, religious Jews would control the government.

The problem for Peres and secular elites was how to delay their own demise? Two ways occurred to them: import Gentiles and undermine Jewish national identity. Tens and even hundreds of thousands of Gentiles from the Soviet Union could be attracted to Israel by amending the Law of Return by adding of a "grandfather's clause" The clause allowed anyone whose grandfather was Jewish to become, automatically, a citizen of Israel. Perhaps as many as 400,000 citizens of Israel, mostly from Russia, are not Jewish.

More significant are the various ways in which the ruling elites sought to undermine Jewish national identity: one is the policy of territory for peace. Before discussing the relationship between that policy and Jewish national identity, let us consider more obvious ways by which Israel's political and judicial elites have worked to deJudaize this country.

The most obvious way is to eliminate the Jewish content of the public school curriculum (which had always been superficial). Thus, when Yitzhak Rabin was elected Prime Minister in 1992, he appointed Shulamit Aloni Education Minister – Aloni, a person whose anti-Zionist and anti-religious views are notorious.¹³ Nor is this all. Mr. Rabin was also Israel's Defense Minister, and his Chief of General Staff was Ehud Barak. Under their leadership, the words "Judaism", "Zionism" and "*Eretz Israel*" were erased from the Soldiers' Code of Ethics!

In 2003, in a meeting of the education committee of the 16th Knesset, the subject of the swearing in ceremony for new recruits of the Israel Defense Forces came on the agenda. MK Yuli Tamir – as of this writing Israel's Education Minister – proposed to replace the Bible with Israel's Declaration of Independence in the swearing in ceremony. A majority of the members of the committee then present agreed (but failed to make a binding decision).

No institution, however, has toiled so diligently and systematically to transform Israel into a multicultural society or "a state of its citizens" as has Israel's Supreme Court, especially under its former president Aharon Barak. Judge Barak baldly stated that his duty is to be "faithful to the views of the enlightened population", meaning Israel's intellectual and cultural elites – a small minority of ultra-secularists estranged from the Jewish heritage.¹⁴

The Knesset facilitated Judge Barak's agenda in March 1992 when it enacted Basic Law: Human Dignity and Freedom as well as Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation. The first passed

by a vote of 32-21, that is, with less than half the Knesset voting! The second passed by the underwhelming vote of 23-0! Judge Barak was not exaggerating when he said that these basic laws initiated a “constitutional revolution”. Suffice to say the vagueness of the term “human dignity” reinforced his unprecedented and truly undemocratic dictum that “everything is justiciable”. This dictum opened the floodgates of judicial imperialism. The Court could now readily substitute its own views for those of the legislative and executive branches of government. This it could do more readily and systematically because the Court’s membership is controlled, de facto, by its president and two other sitting judges. This self-perpetuating oligarchy could now teach the Jewish people about the meaning of “human dignity”.

The ruling elites derive their understanding of “human dignity” from democracy’s two basic principles, equality and freedom. However, since secularism and relativism modulate their mentality, they are “normalizing” the Jewish people by means of the indiscriminate equality and unfettered freedom prevalent in *normless* democracy (as opposed to *normative* democracy). For Judge Barak both equality and freedom lack ethical and even rational constraints. Not reason but volition – the will of unelected judges – reigns supreme.

In other words, given the Court’s elitism, the will of a minority has supplanted the will of the majority. Thus, if 80% of the Jewish citizens of Israel (see the ZOA poll above) oppose the policy of “territory for peace”, it will avail them nothing to challenge the legality of any government agreement based on that policy. Inspired by Barak’s jurisprudence, the Court could readily dismiss the suit on the ground that maintaining Israeli rule over Arabs violates Basic Law: Human Dignity and Freedom.¹⁵

A vulgar form of relativism underlies Barak’s jurisprudence. Barak’s relativism surfaced when he nullified a law permitting the Film Censorship Board to ban pornographic movies by ruling that nothing can actually be declared pornography, *as one man’s pornography is another man’s art*. But to see his anti-Jewish direction, and to appreciate the little known fact that he has been the supreme law-giver of modern-day Israel – the legislator of Israel’s moral and social values – let it be noted that the Barak Court:

1. Ruled that the Chief Rabbinate does not have final jurisdiction over conversions;
2. Ruled that rabbinical Courts must adopt the same criteria as civil Courts when deciding property settlements in divorce cases;
3. Decided that kibbutz shopping centers may remain open to the public on the Sabbath;
4. Declared “illegal” the Defense Ministry’s policy of exempting yeshiva students from military service (even though it has remained “legal” for Arab citizens to receive blanket exemptions from any form of national service);
5. Ruled that forbidding the import of non-kosher meat infringed Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation;
6. Ordered the return of a girl to a secular school after her father withdrew her;
7. Overruled the education minister’s decision to delay the screening of a program on homosexual youth;

The following decisions more clearly reveal the Supreme Court’s anti-nationalist hence multicultural agenda. The Court:

8. Quashed the Attorney-General's decision to disqualify the Balad Party for violating Basic Law: The Knesset, which prohibits any party that negates the Jewish character of the State.
9. Ruled that land purchased by the Jewish National Fund for the purpose of Jewish settlement must be sold to Arabs on an equal footing;
10. Ruled that Judea, Samaria, and Gaza constitute "belligerent occupied territory" – a decision that legalized the government's expulsion of the Jews from Gush Katif, causing unrelieved physical and psychological damage to these victims of secular coercion.

The Court's ruling that Judea, Samaria, and Gaza constitute "belligerent occupied territory"¹⁶ obviously goes hand in hand with the ruling elite's policy of land for peace. The question remains: How does this policy advance the secular elite's supreme objective, namely, to change or "normalize" the personal and national identity of the Jewish people and thereby transform Israel into a multicultural society?

The emigration of hundreds of thousands of non-religious Israelis on the one hand, and the prolific birthrate of religious Jews on the other, foretold the political demise of the secular elite, in particular the Labor Party (now hardly distinguishable from Kadima). To compensate for its shrinking electoral base, Labor had to attract Arab voters, especially in view of the fact that after Labor's defeat in the 1977 elections, the religious parties shifted toward the more traditionally oriented Likud.

Labor did not regain dominant control of the government until after the June 1992 elections. During the preceding three years, Labor spokesmen had been engaging in clandestine and illegal negotiations with the PLO. It was only in January 1993 that a Labor-led government legalized such negotiations, which culminated in the Oslo Agreement in September of that year.

Labor's territorial retreat policy has a two-fold objective: to win Arab votes and to emasculate religious Jews. Oslo, which portended the establishment of a Palestinian state, was Labor's payment for Arab support in the 1992 Knesset election. In that election, Labor and its Meretz ally won 56 seats. The Likud and the religious parties won 59. The two Arab parties won the five remaining seats, which gave Labor-Meretz a "blocking majority" – enough to form a government. But to make the government kosher and viable, Labor induced the religious Shas Party – which had been on Labor's payroll – to join this leftwing coalition.¹⁷

To make the betrayal of Yesha and its 200,000 Jewish residents palatable to the public, Labor justified withdrawal from Judea, Samaria, and Gaza by intoning the mantras of "peace" and "democracy". Peace and democracy required the end of Israeli rule over the Arabs in the "West Bank" – which means peace and democracy required the end of Zionism and the *invalidation* of Jewish prophecy.

The teachings of the Prophets of Israel, which sanctified Judea and Samaria, especially Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, were engraved in the Jewish people's collective memory. So long as Jews remained in Judea and Samaria, most Jews in Israel would remain bonded to Judaism. This bond had to be severed, Judaism had to be eviscerated, and the Jewish soul deconstructed. This was the hidden purpose of Oslo's architects.¹⁸

And so the original and supreme objective of the secular Zionists that founded the State is being implemented by their political heirs – anti-Zionists, if not anti-Semites. That supreme objective, to repeat, was to change the personal and national identity of the Jewish people. We have seen, however, that a large majority of Israel's Jewish population have not been utterly

brainwashed by the Israel's ruling elites – politicians and judges, academics and journalists. Year after year objective polls indicate a significant majority of Jews remain attached to the Land of Israel. Moreover, as much as 90% of the public regards the Knesset as corrupt – a haven for job seekers. This being so, how is it that so many of these jobbers are entrenched in office?

As already indicated, members of Knesset are not personally accountable to the people in constituency elections. An incumbent MK does not have to compete with a rival candidate who would surely expose the incumbent's failings. Since the government consists of a coalition of party leaders in the Knesset, this means that the government can ignore public opinion with impunity. Thus, despite periodic, multiparty elections, the citizens of Israel have been rendered powerless – equivalent to saying they have been *disenfranchised!*

At stake is Israel's survival. Endangering Israel are not only flawed politicians, but also the flawed institutions that entrench them in power. The electoral rules governing these institutions enable Israel's ruling elites to transfer Jewish land to Israel's enemies contrary not only to public opinion but also to the Penal Law on treason.¹⁹ The truth, ugly and fearful, is that Israel's SYSTEM of governance facilitates treason and even makes it respectable as indicated by the names of those who have headed the State since Oslo!

Let's face the truth about Israeli politicians. Every member of the Knesset knows that Israel's political system makes the country a single electoral district where parties, with closed lists, compete for Knesset seats on the basis of Proportional Representation (PR). Every MK knows that PR with a low electoral threshold *facilitates his own re-election*. He knows that membership in the Knesset is the road to his becoming a cabinet minister, a post that will endow him with political power and political longevity. He is surely cognizant of Basic Law: The Government, which stipulates: "The Government can do in the name of the State, subject to any law, any act whose doing is not enjoined by law upon another authority." The Government can declare war, make treaties or agreements with foreign powers or entities (including terrorist organizations) and even change the exchange rate without consulting the Knesset! All MKs know this.

They know, as David Ben-Gurion wrote in his *Memoirs*, that a single nationwide electoral district, in contrast multi-district elections, severs the representational bond between the legislators and the voters. They know that Ben-Gurion deplored the excessive multiplicity of parties spawned by Proportional Representation. They know that, thanks to PR, a dozen and more parties periodically enter the Knesset, a number that makes it difficult to form not only a government, but also a clearly defined and effective opposition – a precondition of democracy. They know, as Ben-Gurion wrote, that Proportional Representation produces a government or cabinet consisting of rival parties whose business is not to pursue a national program "but merely to divide positions of influence and the national budget".²⁰

What does all this mean? It means that Israel's ruling elites have imbued the people with the false belief that Israel is a democracy. It means they have *deliberately* opposed any institutional reform that would shift power from parties to the people. Were they to make legislators individually accountable to the voters in constituency elections – the practice of more than 80 democracies, 26 of which are smaller in size and population than Israel – this reform would be contrary to their personal and partisan interests.

Another ugly truth: Every member of Knesset knows that multiparty cabinet government, hence a *plural* executive, is inherently unstable. (The average duration of Israel governments is less two than two years!) Why, then, has the Knesset refrained from establishing a *unitary* Executive – a popularly elected president whose cabinet would *exclude* members elected to

the Knesset? Surely, every member of the Knesset knows that a unitary Executive would be more capable of pursuing coherent, resolute, and long-term national policies? Moreover, every Knesset member surely knows that separation of the executive and legislative powers would strengthen the Knesset and enable it to check and balance the Executive – especially if treaties had to be ratified by an extraordinary legislative majority.

Surely, the members of the Knesset know that the Supreme Court's usurpation of legislative powers diminishes their own prerogatives? Can it be that Israel's ruling elites tolerate their dysfunctional system of government, above all, the Court's judicial imperialism, *because they deem this system the most effective way of rendering the people powerless on the one hand, and of postponing the ascendancy of the religious population on the other?*

May we not conclude, therefore, that the persistency of the policy of land for peace should be attributed to the Machiavellian character of Israel's ruling elites, who understand quite well that the (flawed) character of Israel's political and judicial institutions perpetuates their power?

Conclusions

Israel's ruling elites are not stupid, and it's a strategic error to pursue plans as if they were. It would be far more realistic to see them through the lens of Machiavelli's understanding of human nature and politics. These elites are well aware of the deadly intentions of the Palestinian Authority. Those intentions are proclaimed by PA leaders, broadcast in PA media, and manifested in ceaseless terrorist attacks.

Israel's ruling elites do not need defense experts to know that surrendering Judea and Samaria with its strategically important highlands and water resources cannot but endanger Israel's survival. As for appeals to moral and religious values, the religious parties have themselves facilitated the fatal policy of land for peace.

Therefore, if Israel's ruling elites are not inane or insane, then that policy – as they see it – serves their own interests or serves to maintain their political power. The logic and dynamic of their egoism render them indifferent to posterity. *“Après moi le Deluge!”*

If this Machiavellian interpretation is correct, then it is futile and even misleading for opponents of territory for peace to (1) expose the genocidal intentions of Israel's enemies; (2) reveal the dangerous strategic consequences of that policy; and (3) appeal to moral and religious values. More than 14 years of incessant criticism of Oslo illustrate this futility.

The only way to put an end to the land-for-peace policy is for its opponents to obtain more power than its scheming advocates. Demonstrations will not do this unless designed to topple the Government and inaugurate *a new kind of government*, one whose leaders have a personal interest in establishing Jewish sovereignty over all the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean, thus reversing the policy of territory for peace.

Only superior countervailing power can terminate the rule of Israel's current elites and reverse their destructive territorial policy.

Endnotes

¹ See *FrontPageMagazine*, February 21, 2007.

² See <<http://www.israelunitycoalition.org/home/link.php?file=../html/article.html?id=5693>>.

- ³ A November 2007 Globes report indicates that tax evasion in Israel is 40-50% higher than the average in the West.
- ⁴ See Yona Presburg, *Ruach Acheret*, Jerusalem, 2004.
- ⁵ See <<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/penncip/lustick/app2.html>>.
- ⁶ See Paul Eidelberg, *Demophrenia: Israel and the Malaise of Democracy*, Prescott Press, 1994, ch. 5.
- ⁷ See Paul Eidelberg, *A Jewish Philosophy of History: Israel's Degradation and Redemption*, Springdale, AR: Lightcatcher Books, 2007, ch. 13.
- ⁸ See Eidelberg, *Demophrenia*, ch. 6.
- ⁹ Cited in Eidelberg, *A Jewish of History*, pp. 80-81.
- ¹⁰ By "ruling elites", I mean, primarily, the leaders of Israel's major political parties – Kadima, Labor, and Likud.
- ¹¹ After World War I had ended, the Allied Supreme Council that assembled at San Remo, Italy, decided, in accordance with the Balfour Declaration, to assign the Mandate for the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine to Great Britain. This decision turned the right of the Jewish people over *Eretz Israel* into a right recognized by international law, recognized by the 52 members of the League of Nations. That right remains intact to this day. See Howard Grief, "Legal Rights and Title of Sovereignty of the Jewish People to the Land of Israel and Palestine under International Law", Shaarei Tikva: Ariel Center for Policy Research, Policy Paper No. 47; See also Eidelberg, *A Jewish Philosophy of Israel*, pp. 7-9.
- ¹² See <www.jerusalemsummit.org/eng/peres/peres_eng.htm>; Shimon Peres, *Tomorrow is Now*, Jerusalem: Keter, 1978, p. 232 (Hebrew).
- ¹³ See Yoram Hazoni et al., "The Quiet Revolution in the Teaching of Zionist History: A Comparative Study of Education Ministry Textbooks on the 20th Century", Jerusalem: The Shalem Center, 2000.
- ¹⁴ See Yonason Rosenblum, "He Who Judges Too Much Judges Not At All: The Controversial Course Pursued by Israel's Supreme Court", *The Jewish Observer*, Nov. 1996, p. 8.
- ¹⁵ See HC 3414/96. This 90-page scholarly petition to the High Court of Justice, drafted on behalf of eight eminent Israeli citizens, is contained in "A Petition to the Supreme Court of Israel Challenging the Legality of the Oslo Accords", *The International Journal of Statesmanship*, Vol. I, No. 2, 1996.
- ¹⁶ This ruling has been refuted by Howard Grief in "The Howard Grief Eretz-Israel Letters to [former Supreme Court President] Meir Shamgar, 2005-2007", Office for Israeli Constitutional Law, May 2007; See notes 9 and 12 above.
- ¹⁷ See Howard Grief, "Why Israel Needs an Independent Counsel", *Foundation for Constitutional Democracy*, November 12, 1998. According to Grief, an improper relationship existed between the Labor and Shas parties between 1988 and 1996 during which time Shimon Peres was the key player. To paraphrase: On January 11, 1993, a special Report of the State Comptroller was published which detailed a cozy relationship between Shas and Labor based on illegal payments made in violation of the Party Financing Law. The Report stated that, on October 6, 1989, Shas agreed to back Labor in the Histadrut elections of that year in return for monthly consecutive payments of 110,000 NIS (about \$55,000 in US funds at the time). The payments were spread out over a three-year period lasting significantly until the end of 1992, six months *after* the June 23 national elections. It was therefore not surprising that Shas agreed to join the Labor-Meretz Coalition Government in 1992, which helped to initiate the Oslo peace process.
- ¹⁸ See Yoram Hazony, *The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel's Soul*, Basic Books, 2000, p. 72. Hazony writes:

In some crucial way, the Oslo agreement had signaled the end of *the* [anti-Zionist] mission, a turn of events that the celebrated author David Grossman described – mimicking the language of the accords, which called for an Israel military redeployment – as a “redeployment from [and shrinkage of] entire regions of our soul”.

¹⁹ See petition to the High Court of Justice, pp. 48-62, cited in note 12 above, which explains Sections 97, 99 and 100 of the Penal Law *in re* four kinds of acts as treason:

- (1) the category of acts which “**impair the sovereignty**” of the State of Israel – section 97(a);
- (2) the category of acts which “**impair the integrity**” of the State of Israel – section 97(b);
- (3) the category of acts under section 99 which give assistance to an “**enemy**” in war against Israel, which the Law specifically states includes a terrorist organization;
- (4) the category of acts in section 100 which evince an intention or resolve to commit one of the acts prohibited by sections 97 and 99.

²⁰ One reason why Ben-Gurion deplored PR is that it enabled small parties to obtain cabinet posts and threaten to resign and topple precariously balanced coalition governments if their demands were not satisfied. Ben-Gurion went so far as to propose (in vain) a 10% electoral threshold to eliminate small parties.

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