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Mahmoud Abbas försöker manövrera bort president Trump från kommande fredsförhandlingar i samtal med Putin.



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Med Israel för fred och utveckling!

Innehåll bl.a.: Insidan, Israel and the Road to Peace, Mail News Israel, Program-nöjesguide, EDEN Party, The EDEN Jewish-Scandinavian Culture Games Competition 5778, Magnetic Peace Badge Israel, m.m.

INSIDAN

Mars - Maj 2018

5778

Hej!

Välkommen till vårsäsongen med EDEN eller med adam V´chava! Vi försöker att skapa ett smörgåsbord med judiska/israeliska program, skandinaviskt och vi vill gärna se det som ett Knytkalas där Du eller Din familj också har möjlighet att vara aktiva! Anmäl familjen till EDEN Jewish-Scandinavian Culture Games Competition 5778!

Du kan vara med om EDEN Party eller EDEN Träff o Debatt, Filmklubb EDEN, Fototävling Israel 5778. Vår debatt-idé "debatt-O-bingo" erbjuds till alla judiska föreningar, i samarbete med EDEN. Vi har skapat vår Program och Nöjesguide för att Du och familjen skall kunna uppleva intressanta judiska program i Sverige och Danmark! Vi judar måste bli bättre på att komma till program o aktiviteter för Israel! Israel behöver vårt stöd!

Om det fattas något program så får Du höra av Dig! Du vet väl att vi är den enda judiska klubb-verksamheten som är aktiv skandinaviskt hela året! Vi försöker skapa verksamhet skandinaviskt och ökar hela tiden vårt kontaktnät! I EDEN kan alla vara med! Målet är att ge dig fler aktiva judiska, spännande kultur-upplevelser. Genom att familjen blir medlem i EDEN eller Du som judisk singel blir medlem i adam V´chava, hjälper Du både Dig själv och oss att nå Dina eller familjens drömmar och våra mål! Kom med som medlem i EDEN - Judisk Skandinavisk Kultur & Sällskapsklubb, för alla!

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Jag hoppas att många skall få nya judiska vänner genom EDEN och att du som är judisk singel, skall träffa en vän att leva med, kanske genom adam V´chava! Varför vara ensam när man kan ha trevligt tillsammans!

Under våra ca 20 år har vi speciellt noterat alla försök till fred för Israel under rubriken: Israel and the Road to Peace. Kärnvapen-avtalet med Iran, är Israel och hela världen förlorare?!

Hatet mot judar/israeler som lärs ut i palestinska skolor och genom palestinska massmedia kommer att försvåra för israeler och palestinier att snabbt nå en hållbar fred. Hur få stopp på palestinska ungdomars knivterror?! Kan freden bli en verklighet inom 5 år? Kan Hamas sluta med sin terrorverksamhet och bli en förhandlingspart?! Kan hotet från Iran stoppas? Abbas och hans regering pratar om fred, på deras villkor, med icke judiskt Israel! Med Hamas i båten verkar möjligheterna till fred svaga. Kan östra Jerusalem och Västbanken bli ett nytt terror-näste om Israel avstår dessa till Palestinierna?!

Är Netanyahu rätt politiker att föra Israel mot trygghet och fred? Blir östra Jerusalem en fredsgåva?!

Utan Israel´s hjälp kan inte palestinerna få en egen stat! Trump och medarbetare ställer tydliga krav på palestinerna: Inga bidrag utan fredsförhandlingar, piska och morot! Vem blir ny ledare istället för Mahmood Abbas, är han redo för förhandling nu eller hetsar han till mer död i en ny palestinsk intifada mot Israel?! Samarbete med Egypten, Saudiarabien, FN och PA för en varaktig fred i Gaza, med försvagat Hamas? Blir Västbanken ett nytt Gaza, Startar Hezbollah terror i norra Israel?! Palestinska Myndigheten utnyttjar sin höjda status i FN att skapa nya problem för Israel?

Vill Du arbeta med mig för att göra det lättare för familjer och singlar att träffas i Skandinavien? Är Du intresserad av att marknadsföra EDEN?! Vill Du vara med om att genomföra program som erbjuder:

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För EDEN och adam V´chava

Sigvard "Sigge" Aronsohn

Ordförande, judisk-skandinavisk kulturarbetare

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Abbas in Moscow pushes to oust US as Mideast peace broker

February 13, 2018



(Pool Photo via AP)

Abbas in Moscow pushes to oust US as Mideast peace broker

Abbas met with Putin in an attempt to find a new Mideast peace broker and to promote Palestinian statehood. By: World Israel News and JNS.org

Palestinian Authority (PA) head Mahmoud Abbas traveled to Russia and met with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday in an attempt to boost the standing of the PA and garner support for a Palestinian state, in the wake of deteriorating relations between the Palestinians and Washington. Abbas has refused to have any contact with President Donald Trump's administration since the American president officially recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Abbas and the PA even boycotted a visit by Vice President Mike Pence in January.

Abbas is now seeking to circumvent the US and achieve recognition of a Palestinian state through the United Nations (UN), while trying to create a multinational body that would serve as an intermediary in the Mideast diplomatic process, instead of the US.

"In this current atmosphere created by the actions of the United States, we declare that starting from now, we refuse to cooperate in any way with the Americans as mediators, as we oppose their actions," Abbas said at talks with Putin, Russia's *Sputnik* news reported.

Abbas sees Russia as an emerging power in the Middle East and hopes that Russia, together with other international powers, can serve as brokers of an arrangement that will deliver a Palestinian state. Prior to Abbas' visit, Palestinian ambassador to Russia Abdel Hafiz Nofal, said on Sunday that Abbas' visit to Russia "aims to find an impartial broker to lead negotiations with Israel."

Nofal said that "Abbas announced that for Palestinians, the US is not welcome to play the role of broker because of its bias towards Israel. At the same time, we remain committed to the peace

process and wish to resume it and achieve a two-state solution."

He expressed hope that Russia would play a bigger role in a broader international mechanism, in which the US plays a part but does not lead, in order to put an end to the escalating crisis, which threatens the entire region.

Abbas' visit comes just a week after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Abbas in Ramallah as part of the diplomatic campaign to find multinational backers for a Palestinian state. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Modi in India last month amid blossoming Israeli-Indian relations.

Egypt Wants US

In the meantime, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi told US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson during their meeting in Cairo on Monday that the US should revive negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis.

In an official statement, Egyptian spokesman Bassam Rady said Sisi affirmed Egypt's "clear and unwavering stance on reaching a fair and comprehensive solution that guarantees the right of Palestinian people and the establishment of an independent state with its capital in East Jerusalem in line with the June 1967 borders in accordance with international resolutions."

Earlier in the day, Tillerson told reporters after his meeting in Cairo with his Egyptian counterpart that the US remains committed to achieving lasting peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians.



What are the Palestinians' Responsibilities for Peace?

by **David Gerstman** | 01.26.2018

Israel and the Road to Peace by EDEN

Following President Donald Trump's decision to **withhold** America's contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), *The New York Times* **reported** that a number of aid organizations wrote a letter pleading for the administration to restore the funding.

The letter called the decision to withhold the funds a "dangerous and striking departure" from past United States actions.

However, Jonathan Schanzer and Richard Goldberg, in an **analysis** of the Trump administration's decision described it as being a demand for accountability. They pointed out that a decade ago, when Congress demanded an audit of UNRWA's cash assistance program involving "hundreds of millions of dollars in cold cash handed out to people without regard for terrorist affiliations," UNRWA refused to allow the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to do its job. The GAO was thus unable to ensure if American funds were or weren't going to terrorists.

The U.S. is the largest funder of UNRWA, to the tune of \$6 billion since the agency was founded in 1949, meaning that "it would seem like a no-brainer that Washington should ask for some accountability." When the U.S. withholding of funds to UNRWA is framed as a matter of accountability, it may be a departure from past practice, but it seems like a sensible, not a dangerous, one.

Questions about accountability shouldn't just apply to the UN agency that effectively **prolongs** Israeli-Palestinian crisis, but also to the Palestinian government itself. In his joint meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the World Economic Forum in Davos this week, Trump demanded

accountability from the Palestinian Authority and its president, Mahmoud Abbas.

"We give them hundreds of millions of dollars in aid and support, tremendous numbers, numbers that nobody understands," Trump **said**, expressing anger that the Palestinians snubbed Vice President Mike Pence on his trip to the Middle East last week, "that money is on the table and that money is not going to them unless they sit down and negotiate peace."

In addition to his **refusal** to negotiate meaningfully with Israel over the past decade, Abbas has rebuffed personal appeals from Trump to stop supporting terror.

During a stop in Bethlehem as he visited the the Middle East last May, Trump made a point of **rebuking** Abbas for the PA's practice of praising and rewarding terrorists. "Peace can never take root in an environment where violence is tolerated, funded and even rewarded," Trump said as he stood next to Abbas. "We must be resolute in condemning such acts in a single unified voice."

Instead of changing a policy that encourages violence after being asked to by the president of the U.S., Abbas persisted. It was subsequently **reported** that the administration was "quite

unhappy” with Abbas because, instead of calming things during the unrest over the Temple Mount last summer, he encouraged violence.

Abbas’s failure to make peace with Israel goes back even further. In his often-quoted speech demanding new leadership for Palestinians in 2002, President George W. Bush **stated** that his vision of the future would be “two states, living side by side in peace and security.”

That vision was a goal but he laid out intermediate steps too:

I call on the Palestinian people to elect new leaders, leaders not compromised by terror. I call upon them to build a practicing democracy, based on tolerance and liberty. If the Palestinian people actively pursue these goals, America and the world will actively support their efforts. If the Palestinian people meet these goals, they will be able to reach agreement with Israel and Egypt and Jordan on security and other arrangements for independence.

And when the Palestinian people have new leaders, new institutions and new security

arrangements with their neighbors, the United States of America will support the creation of a Palestinian state whose borders and certain aspects of its sovereignty will be provisional until resolved as part of a final settlement in the Middle East.

Bush called on the Palestinians to adopt a democratic and accountable government.

But Abbas, now **beginning** the fourteenth year of the four-year term he was elected to in 2005, has hardly been the model of accountability, using his position to secure **fortunes** for his family. He tolerates no dissent, **marginalizing** and **arresting** critics.

If a democratic and accountable state is necessary for peace with Israel, Abbas has failed to deliver either.

As with UNRWA, Abbas seems to think he is entitled to funds and authority, regardless of what he does. That might be the biggest obstacle to peace with Israel.

[Photo: AFP news agency / YouTube]

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Beyond the Money: A Modest Proposal to Remake UNRWA

by Johanna Markind | 01.24.18 9:43 am

Rather than helping to resolve the Palestinian refugee issue peacefully, the UN Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) actually works to prolong it and promote violence. On January 16, President Trump announced that the US would **donate** only \$60 million out of an expected \$125 million to UNRWA, and has been threatening to **end** support for it. While reducing funding to UNRWA, these cutbacks do not go far enough in reforming the organization that has done so much to prolong the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

UNRWA History and Problems

First a little background. Approximately **700,000** Arabs fled from their homes in what became the state of Israel during its war of independence. In **1949**, the UN established UNRWA to provide assistance to Palestinian refugees. It currently has over **30,000** employees, most of whom are Palestinian. Subsequently, in **1950** the UN established the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (**UNHCR**). This organization is **responsible** for – well, all refugees in the world *except* Palestinian refugees. According to its own figures, UNHCR has a staff of 10,966 working in 130 countries assisting **17.2 million** people.

Strangely, over time the number of Palestinian refugees has increased rather than decreased. As of 2017, UNRWA recognized over **5.3 million** Palestinian refugees, a sevenfold increase since 1949.

The reason is that Palestinian refugees are defined **differently** from all other refugees on the planet. Adopting the definition of the 1951 **Convention** and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, UNHCR **defines** refugees as “people fleeing conflict or persecution.” But UNRWA’s also **serves** “descendants of Palestine refugee males, including adopted children.” So over time, even as the number of Palestinians who actually fled from the Palestine Mandate has decreased, the number of people labeled as Palestinian refugees has ballooned.

Another difference between the two organizations: UNHCR’s **mandate** is to **resolve** refugee crises, as by assisting to integrate refugees into their host country or to resettle them in another country. That is not one of

UNRWA’s **objectives**; on the contrary, it has **resisted** resettlement efforts.

Notably, the Palestinian Authority has likewise worked to **prolong** the refugee “crisis.” Since Oslo, it has obstructed efforts to eliminate refugee camps in Gaza and the West Bank.

At present, UNRWA educates **515,260** schoolchildren, who are the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of people who actually left their homes. **311,071** of these are in Gaza and the West Bank. UNRWA spent **\$760 million**, or roughly two-thirds of its budget, on education in 2017. It also **provides** social services to 294,152 people and health care to 3.1 million.

In providing these services, UNRWA has become a partisan **against** Israel, promoting and aiding terrorism. Its **educational** texts demonize Jews, ignore or belittle Israel’s side of the conflict, and endorse violence. It has **employed** terrorists to fill high-level positions. And, its educational and medical facilities have been used to store Hamas **arms caches** and a **booby-trapped** tunnel entrance.

Proposal

Given UNRWA’s background and the dysfunctional role it currently plays, reducing or even eliminating it would be a salutary objective. What follows is a proposal to leverage the UNRWA budget cuts into a constructive framework.

President Trump should announce that the U.S. will not make any further donations or offer support of any kind to UNRWA, but will *consider* giving the balance of the money to UNHCR, *under the following conditions*:

1) That UNRWA hand over all of its responsibilities to UNHCR and close up shop, completely and permanently.

2) That UNHCR bring in its own personnel at least at the managerial level, and commit to ending all cooperation with terrorists. (e.g. by employing Hamas personnel and allowing Hamas to store weapons and tunnel entrances in its facilities.)

3) That UNHCR identify who/how many of the people registered as eligible for UNRWA services actually meet UNHCR's definition of refugees. Only the latter would be eligible for services/aid from UNHCR.

4) That UNHCR review all educational materials and revise/remove anti-Israel and anti-Semitic propaganda from them.

5) That UNHCR prepare a written plan to integrate Palestinian refugees into their host countries and/or resettle them in another country outside of the conflict zone.

UNHCR must assume responsibility from UNRWA and take serious steps showing it has at least begun to fulfill each of the other conditions before any funding is restored (or, rather, given to UNHCR in the first instance.)

This proposal would eliminate a player obstructing resolution of the refugee issue. It would promote fairness among refugees by applying the same definitional rules and apportioning the same financial resources to Palestinian refugees that apply to every other refugee on the planet, including those from Syria, Iraq, and Rohingya refugees from Myanmar.

By taking the initiative and demanding positive action from UNHCR to define and treat Palestinian refugees exactly like all other refugees, no more and no less, the U.S. will seize the moral high ground. Objections by the United Nations and **European nations**, which predictably opposed Trump's UNRWA cuts, will ring ever more hollow. It will also provide a face-saving means for other Arab countries to offer little more than token opposition. Not only do they want Israel's support against Iranian expansionism, and not only are they tired of Palestinian rejectionism, but they also have many other Arab refugees to deal with and a region in desperate need of the stabilization that only a permanent resolution can provide.

It would also focus attention on the reality that there are very few Palestinian refugees today, and push the narrative toward a resolution within the same

framework governing other refugee problems – generally, integration and resettlement. There are **5.5 million** Syrian refugees; the UN, European Union, Arab League, and media who lobby so persistently to “return” Palestinian “refugees” to Israel are not clamoring to return Syrian refugees to Syria. After World War II, **Germany** resettled **12 million** ethnic Germans expelled from Eastern Europe. **Israel** resettled most of the **850,000** Jews expelled from Arab lands and Iran after Israel was established. There is no reason why actual Palestinian refugees and their descendants could not be resettled in the Palestinian territories, or integrated into Lebanon, Jordan, and other places in which they reside.

Perhaps most importantly, these changes would pressure the Palestinian Authority to act like a true government, instead of a perennial troublemaker. Under the above proposal, the UN would (properly) stop providing services like education, social services, and health care to non-refugees, who will look to the PA to fill this role. The PA has focused on prolonging its conflict with Israel rather than building effective governing institutions. It can do this, because others (including UNRWA) provided services the PA should have but did not. The PA will likely try to continue dodging responsibility and point the finger of blame at Israel, the U.S., and the UN, but that does not mean it will succeed in doing so. As recent Iranian protests demonstrate, even oppressed and ideologically propagandized populations eventually tire of being exploited to finance their governments' self-serving ambitions.

The PA has refused to negotiate in good faith, while maintaining maximalist positions demanding a “right of return” for “refugees,” and refusing to agree to a permanent border that accepts Israel in Jerusalem or anywhere else. Meanwhile, it has kept 5 million plus refugees and their descendants in limbo.

Trump recently pushed back against the Palestinian refusal to compromise by recognizing the reality that Jerusalem is Israel's capital – a recognition that did not actually prejudice Palestinian claims to part of the city, only Palestinian claims to all of it. By pressuring the UN to work toward ending the refugee issue under the same standards it applies to other refugee conflicts, Trump would apply a counterweight against Palestinian rejectionism and promote resolution of the conflict.

TT

Lebanon should be wary of becoming Iran's pawn, IDF official says

Iran's efforts to use its regional proxy, Hezbollah, to cement its grip on Beirut will only turn Lebanon into a powder keg, IDF spokesman warns • "If our enemies knew how much we know about them they would remain deterred for years," he says.

Lilach Shoval

An Iranian dictator is in control of the Lebanese people's future, IDF Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Ronen Manelis warned Sunday in an article published on opposition-affiliated media in Lebanon in what has been described as a highly unusual move.

Recalling a Lebanon-Israel border tour that Iran's regional proxy, Hezbollah, gave journalists in April, Manelis wrote, "Those unique images unmask the reality of Iran's growing control in Lebanon. It is clear that this unique phenomenon of 'terror tourism' is a concrete expression of the threat to the future of the Cedar State [Lebanon] and the entire region, which is in danger of being overrun by Tehran's henchmen.

"The past year, like the 11 years that followed the conclusion of the Second Lebanon War, has been characterized by relative stability on the Lebanese front. This calm benefits residents on both sides [of the border]. The fact that sixth-graders in northern Israel and southern Lebanon have never heard an air raid siren is the best proof of the stability of Israeli deterrence and the fact that the Lebanese people remember the magnitude of [Hezbollah leader Hassan] Nasrallah's previous mistake."

The Israeli military, he said, "used the past year to significantly improve its war readiness on the northern front. The IDF has held several drills, most notably the Northern Corps exercise, held for the first time in 20 years, which included practicing the IDF's operational contingencies on the ground in the northern sector.

"Our intelligence gathering efforts are also ongoing and, as the chief of staff and head of the Military Intelligence have said, if our enemies knew how much we know about them they would remain deterred for years to come. We do not seek war," he stressed, noting, "We ended [2017] better equipped and better prepared for any scenario in the northern sector."



The previous year, Manelis' piece continued, had seen Hezbollah "pursue involvement in wars that do not concern it, which has only increased its list of casualties and the economic crisis plaguing it.

"The past year further proved that Hezbollah serves as an Iran's operational arm of Iran. Wherever there was instability [in the Middle East] Iran's fingerprints and Hezbollah's involvement were evident. Hezbollah sent thousands of fighters to Syria; its advisers intensified the fighting in Yemen; and Nasrallah even boasted sending special anti-tank missiles to the Gaza Strip, saying he had met with officials from terrorist groups there. Billions flow from Tehran through Beirut to anywhere in the Middle East where there is evil and terrorism," he said.



IDF Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Ronen Manelis

Hezbollah has made no secret of its effort to overrun Lebanon, where it is also part of the government, Manelis said.

Lebanese President Michel Aoun "lends legitimacy to this terrorist group, its prime minister struggles to function given Hezbollah's bullying, and Hezbollah has been able to insert itself into the population and set up terrorist infrastructure and weapon production facilities right under the Lebanese government's nose.

"Along the Israel-Lebanon border, in clear violation of U.N. Resolution 1701, Hezbollah continues to undermine Lebanon's interests. Plainclothes Hezbollah operatives patrol the border and operate from within the civilian population and Hezbollah is actively trying to recruit Lebanese soldiers to do its bidding. The border tour was a brazen way of showing reporters how comfortable Hezbollah feels violating Security Council resolutions.

"Such violations do not threaten Israel," he stressed. "On the contrary – the difference between a violation that culminates in a report to the U.N. and one that results in a security escalation is entirely up to Israel's discretion."

Manelis urged the Lebanese people to "open their eyes" and acknowledge the fact that their country has become the subject of nothing short of a takeover by Iran.

"Perhaps most egregious is what lies beneath the surface," he wrote. "Lebanese authorities' acquiescence and the willingness of many in the international community to turn a blind eye have allowed Iran to turn Lebanon into one big missile factory. This goes beyond weapon shipments, funding or counseling. Iran has set up a new de facto branch, the 'Lebanese branch' right here.

"Ordinary [Lebanese] citizens should not mistake this process as one that can turn Lebanon into a fortress – it is little more than a powder keg on which they are sitting. One in every three or four houses in southern Lebanon is used as a headquarters, a post, a weapons depot or a Hezbollah hideout. We know where these assets are and will know how to surgically strike them if need be.

"The Lebanese people have become a pawn in the hands of the dictator from Tehran, and the heads of villages, towns and government institutions who see this and choose to remain silent are to blame."

Manelis further wrote that as 2018 begins, Israel "saw fit to warn the Lebanese people against allowing Iran to compromise their security and future. This year will see a struggle in terms of how Lebanon shapes its future. This conflict stems from the need to foster stability and economic prosperity, and to promote Lebanese political issues, which clash with Iran and Hezbollah's efforts to impose their hegemony.

"On the one hand, you have the desire to develop the gas sector, which will benefit the economy for the next two decades, boost employment and foreign investments, and

increase the country's gross domestic product; while on the other hand, you have the arrival of additional Shiite militias in Lebanon, the lack of economic development, damage to the tourism and banking sectors and the country's international image and, above all, the possibility of serious security escalation.

"This struggle depends on two factors: Will Lebanon and the international community allow Iran and Hezbollah to exploit the innocence of Lebanese leaders and set up a facilities producing precision missiles, as they are currently trying to do; and whether Hezbollah, under the new electoral system, will succeed in pushing the Sunni camp out of the government in the coming elections (set for May 2018), thus officially turning Lebanon into an Iranian protectorate," he warned.

Manelis stressed that the IDF remains "ready for any scenario and plans to further enhance its abilities in the coming year. As we have proven in recent year – and those who need to be the wiser know this – our red lines have been clearly illustrated. We are not impressed by the dismissive attitude Hezbollah's leader shows and the Lebanese people should not be impressed by it, either. The choice is yours," he concluded.

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It's Time for Mahmoud Abbas to Go!



[Roger Cohen](#) Jan. 27, 2018



Credit Majdi Mohammed/Associated Press
RAMALLAH, West Bank —

Elie Shamaa is the kind of young man Palestine needs. A tech specialist working for an international organization in the West Bank, he's fluent in English and is completing an M.B.A. through an American program in Ramallah. But he's had it. He sees his future elsewhere. "People reached a point where they know they are losing their life," he told me.

We spoke as we drove north from Ramallah to Nablus. Hilltop Israeli settlements, controlling the line of sight, loomed into view at every turn, the ubiquitous red-roofed stamp of a half-century of occupation. As we passed through an Israeli checkpoint, Shamaa murmured, "In one minute they can close anything; in one minute they can open anything." Planning is impossible for the three million Palestinians in the West Bank. Their lives must bend to Israeli whim.

Never, through decades of national struggle, have the Palestinians been weaker. Benjamin Netanyahu's Israel has been implacable in undermining possible Palestinian statehood. Arab states, Iran-obsessed, have lost interest in the

Palestinian cause. President Trump has [threatened to cut off](#) "hundreds of millions of dollars in aid and support" in response to perceived Palestinian *lèse-majesté* after his decision to take Jerusalem "off the table" by recognizing it as Israel's capital.

But even in this environment, Mahmoud Abbas, the 82-year-old Palestinian president, cannot escape responsibility for failure. His government is now widely seen as a corrupt gerontocracy. It is inept, remote, self-serving and ever more authoritarian. Elected to a four-year term in January 2005, he's entering the 14th year of a largely unaccountable presidency.

Crippling divisions between his Fatah movement and Hamas in Gaza persist beneath a veneer of "reconciliation." To a population whose median age is about 20, Abbas and his cronies look like the past. Of the 18 elected members of the Fatah Central Committee, only one is under 50. Most of them live very well even as many Palestinians dismiss them as Israel's lap dogs because of their close security and intelligence cooperation with Israel.

“There’s a growing climate of fear,” said Darin Hussein, the country manager for a nongovernmental organization encouraging sports for Palestinian children. “You can be arrested for posting anything critical on social media.” In her mid-30s, she, too, has hit bottom. “Nothing is going to change,” she told me.

Abbas has stamped on a free press at a time when strong investigative journalism in Israel has contributed to Netanyahu’s woes over corruption allegations. He issued a grotesque cybercrime law last summer that punishes with a year of imprisonment anyone who creates a website that “aims to publish news that would endanger the integrity of the Palestinian state” or “the public order.” The legislation, which also imposes a two-year sentence on anyone publishing information “with the intent to attack any family principles or values,” amounts to a violation of the Palestinian Basic Law of 2003. This guarantees the right of everyone to “express his opinion and to circulate it orally, in writing, or in any form of expression.” Putative Palestine is in a repressive slide.

The president has also undermined an independent judiciary. Over multiple objections, Abbas has appointed a Constitutional Court, pliant to his will. This was a means to circumvent the High Court and lift the immunity of several members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, or Parliament, which has not convened for more than a decade. The maneuver was aimed against his arch political rival, Muhammad Dahlan, who lives in exile in the United Arab Emirates. Dahlan has been sentenced to prison on corruption charges.

Khalil Shikaki is a respected Palestinian pollster. He runs the independent Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, which receives funding from the European Union. Now, he told me, the Abbas government has blocked access to the money in an illegal attempt to force the think tank to close down.

“Power has corrupted Abbas,” Shikaki said. “He’s destroyed the judiciary, and he’s destroying the plurality of civil society. The cybercrime law is worthy of Saddam Hussein.”



A Palestinian from the Jalazoun refugee camp at a crossroads in Ramallah, in front of the Israeli settlement of Beit El. Credit Abbas Momani/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Of course, Abbas’s cover is the Israeli occupation, with its unrelenting settlement growth and use of military force. Electricity comes and goes. Access to water is intermittent. The same journey can take one hour or 12. Families may be dragged from their homes. To get a permit to go to Ben-Gurion airport, or visit a relative in Gaza, can be an endless headache. Little humiliations multiply.

In these circumstances, with Netanyahu veering right and his ministers talking openly of annexation of parts of the West Bank, European governments are reluctant to criticize Abbas. His two sons, Tareq and Yasser, are known to have large business interests. Their privileged position has attracted international scrutiny.

If Palestine has slipped backward toward opacity and one-man rule since former Prime Minister Salam Fayyad’s transformative push for transparency ended in 2013, the argument goes, that’s just the collateral damage of the occupation. With Israel at his throat, what could Abbas do?

“We are not out of touch,” Muhammad Shtayyeh, a member of the Fatah Central Committee, told me. “But we are unable to fulfill the aspirations of the Palestinian people due to the Israeli occupation. Our failures are not due to any mistakes.”

Such arguments fall short. By dismantling Palestinian freedoms, by disempowering his people, Abbas has been undoing the foundations of statehood and sapping the energy that comes with personal agency. It is time to organize elections that might usher in younger leadership — and reveal the balance of forces in the West Bank and Gaza. The alternative is a drift to

despotism under a bunch of old men long on outrage but short on everything else.

“If you don’t take agency in your liberation, you are not going to be free,” Fayyad told me. “What Palestinians see of their state right now is not very attractive.”

Abbas remains committed to a two-state outcome. But belief in a two-state peace is dwindling. Shikaki, the pollster, told me that Palestinian support for two states is now about 46 percent, down from about 80 percent in the mid-1990s. Still, he said, a two-state solution remains viable. Surveys show that various incentives — like the release of prisoners for Palestinians, or a wider peace with the Arab world for Israelis — can quickly shift opinion.

Sooner or later, whether in the next several months through an indictment or later through the ballot box, Netanyahu will be gone. It’s idle to think any successor will easily cede territory for peace. Yet it’s possible; it’s happened before. Trump, too, will be gone one day. Abbas could live on for several years, but the damage he is doing the Palestinian cause is such that he should quit now if he is not prepared to organize an election in 2018.

In the current vacuum, a dream of one state with equal rights for all peoples — a kind of United States of the Holy Land — has gained some traction. It is pure, if seductive, illusion — flimsy code for the destruction of Israel as the national homeland of the Jews. It will not happen.

Trump’s instinct to blow up the status quo is dangerous. So is Abbas’ comfort with that status quo. It corrodes. The threat from Trump to cut off aid could leave millions of Palestinian refugees without access to schools or hospitals. That’s unacceptable. But it’s equally unacceptable that Arab states only contribute about 3.5 percent of the budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinians refugees, compared with the American contribution of about 25 percent. The “peace process,” unable to resolve the refugee issue, has become an infernal,

corrupted mechanism incubating victimhood and masking myriad abuses. The Palestinian Authority is its poster child.

“The Palestinian Authority is a subcontractor to the occupation,” Issa Amro, a human-rights activist in Hebron told me. “Abbas should stop corruption and start organizing an election.”

The road from Ramallah to Nablus winds from “Area A,” which is under Palestinian control, through “Area C,” the 60 percent of the West Bank under direct Israeli rule: the lexicon of the moribund Oslo Accords endures. A settler, Rabbi Raziel Shevach, had been shot dead near Nablus a few days before my visit, a killing applauded by Hamas. Young settlers with the hilltop look — large kippas and side locks — milled around the roadside as a squad of Israeli soldiers tried to keep them away from Palestinians: just another day in the West Bank.

In Nablus, with its beautiful covered market, I met Saed Abu-Hijleh, a 52-year-old university professor and poet. In 2002, Israeli forces killed his mother. He raised his shirt to reveal scars from bullet wounds.

Wandering through the market, he saluted friends, all of whom seem to have been in prison with him at one time or another. He describes Israel as a “colonial apartheid state” built on the “perpetuation of violence and dehumanization.”

That’s Abu-Hijleh’s lived Palestinian truth. The family of the murdered Shevach has its lived Jewish truth. Everybody has a lived truth between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River. Perhaps those truths are irreconcilable. Without creative leadership, they certainly are. Abu-Hijleh continued: “After the slap they got from Trump, the Palestinian Authority should resign and organize elections. They put their eggs in the American basket for 25 years, and all they got is humiliation.”

It is time for Abbas to go, before the bright young Palestinians like Elie Shamaa, the young tech specialist, all go from their occupied land.

BY DENNIS ROSS

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Monday, February 12, 2018.



After the weekend's Iran-Israel attacks, a burden on Trump to confront Russia and engage Europe

The remains of a missile that landed Saturday in the southern Lebanese village of Kaoukaba, near the border with Syria, after Israel's military attacked 12 Syrian and Iranian targets inside Syria on in what it described as "large-scale" raids following an exchange of fire earlier in the day.

BY DENNIS ROSS

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Monday, February 12, 2018

Early Saturday morning, Iran crossed a threshold in trying to carry out a direct attack against Israel from Syria. Using its T-4 airbase in Homs province — a base used by the Qods Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and its head Qassem Soleimani — the Iranians launched a stealth, armed drone into Israel.

Perhaps hoping to surprise the Israelis, the Qods Force was itself surprised when the Israelis not only intercepted the drone but also attacked the base and destroyed its command center and mobile launch vehicle. Advanced surface-to-air missile batteries supplied by the Russians to the Syrians then opened fire against the Israeli aircraft, and an Israeli F-16 was shot down in Israeli airspace. In response, Israel destroyed SA-5 and SA-17 missile batteries in Syria, with Israeli planes hitting 15 targets in all.

While all is quiet now, the episode should set off a loud, flashing siren about the escalatory potential that the expanding Iranian military and Shia militia presence creates in Syria. As someone who has long watched the Iranians sponsor proxy terror attacks against the Israelis at the height of our peace efforts in the mid-1990s and against American forces in Iraq, the surprise is not that the Iranians would try to hit Israel but that they would do it directly.

That is potentially a game-changer and helps to explain the Israeli response which was designed to leave no doubt with the Iranians that they are playing with fire.

Precisely because this may be a game-changer, it should also be a wake-up call for the international community and the Trump administration. Acquiescing in the continuing expansion of the Iranian military presence and infrastructure in Syria will sooner or later produce a much wider conflict involving the Israelis and Iranians and the Shia militias — several of whose leaders have provocatively visited the Israeli border recently.

In the first instance, the Russians have to change their posture. They called for restraint in the wake of the skirmish, and yet it is the Russians who have abetted the spread of the Iranian military presence in Syria. President Vladimir Putin could immediately signal the Iranians that they crossed a line with him, potentially putting Russian forces in danger with their attempted attack against Israel.

Now is the time for him to say that there will be no more Russian air cover for any Shia militia expansion from existing positions; without the Russian air support, the Qods Force advisors with the Shia militias, including Hezbollah, would be very vulnerable.

Will Putin do it? Of course, the U.S. can make it more likely that Putin will decide it is in Russia's interest to step up by conveying a long overdue message: If Russia will not act to contain the Iranian presence, the U.S. will no longer sit on the sidelines as the Iranians continue their expansion.



Israeli soldiers block a road in the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights on Saturday. Israel struck a dozen Syrian and Iranian targets inside Syria in "large-scale" raids after an Israeli fighter jet crashed under fire from Syrian air defences in a severe increase in tensions.

Until now, that is exactly what we have done. As the Qods Forces built positions and forward outposts, including one less than four miles from the Israeli border in the Golan Heights, the Trump administration has left the Israelis largely on their own. And, on their own, they have little choice but to use force to send blunt messages like they did Saturday.

It may not be President Trump’s inclination to be blunt with Putin, but unless Putin sees that his current posture is likely to trigger American — and not only Israeli — responses to the Iranians and their proxies, he may not act. To be sure, Trump could tell him that the last thing either of us wants is an escalation in Syria that could draw the two of us into an unwanted conflict.

But if the Iranians are left unchecked, that is a risk we are both running. (That this past week, U.S. forces in eastern Syria decimated a Syrian regime militia — after failing to get the Russians to stop them from assaulting the Kurdish-led SDF—could lend credence to our being willing to act to contain the Iranian presence in Syria.)

To underline the message, the Trump administration should be reaching out diplomatically to the Europeans as well. They can go directly to the Iranians and say if their expansion continues in Syria, the EU will have little choice but to impose new sanctions on the Iranians for their de-stabilizing actions there.

It is possible that the aborted attack and the expanding military presence is not President Hassan Rouhani’s doing but that of Soleimani and the IRGC. All the more reason to highlight the price of such adventurist behavior, particularly at a time when the demonstrations in Iran showed the Iranian public resents what Syria and Lebanon are costing them.

Policy makers don’t often get crystallizing moments that tell them action is required to avert bigger dangers. But Iran’s attempted attack and Israel’s response is such a moment and the administration would be wise to mobilize a wide diplomatic response before the next shoe falls.

Ross is William Davidson Distinguished Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.



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Big Changes Are Reshaping Jerusalem

Alienated young Arabs are increasingly finding work in Jewish parts of the city, which helps to curb violence
By Gwen Ackerman

@GwenSahar More stories by Gwen Ackerman and

Fadwa Hodali den 30 januari 2018 04:00

Jerusalem's Malcha mall was bustling with activity as workers mixed with shoppers, setting up stands decked out with balloons and preparing cotton candy booths for an afternoon gala celebrating the shopping center's 25th anniversary.

At one of the clothing stores, a 22-year-old sales clerk in jeans and a sweater named Ro'aa was unpacking new merchandise from a cardboard box. As she answered customer questions in fluent Hebrew, she slipped jeans, skirts, and blouses out of plastic bags, refolded them so the creases matched and organized them for shelving.

Then she explained to two visitors, in her native Arabic, why she works in a Jewish area of west Jerusalem, rather than in east Jerusalem, where she lives, as do most of the more than 300,000 Arabs of Jerusalem.

"I tried to work several times on the Arab side, but it didn't work out," said Ro'aa, who declined to allow her family name to be used because of the sensitivity of the subject. "There were no benefits, my salary was always two months late. On the Israeli side you get paid more and receive all your benefits, and if they see you are working hard you get promoted."

Rising Incomes

Arabs slightly narrow the salary gap with Jews in Jerusalem

Source: National Insurance Institute via Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research

Monthly pay, in shekels

Ro'aa is a symbol of how economics is reweaving the tapestry of the fractious city. She and an increasing number of young Arabs like her are finding more professional opportunities in the Jewish quarters of Jerusalem. That helps explain in part Jerusalem's relative calm in the wake of U.S. President Trump's Dec. 6 decision to recognize the city as the capital of Israel, especially in contrast with violent demonstrations the West Bank, Gaza Strip and other parts of the Arab world and even Europe. Even though the young Arabs of east Jerusalem strongly oppose the embassy transfer, they don't want to undermine opportunity with violence.

"We want to create a better life for our residents," said Hussam Watad, manager of the community center in the Beit Hanina neighborhood of east Jerusalem, which offers Hebrew classes and is supporting lawsuits against the city demanding better infrastructure. "We want to show a rosier future to those now so overcome with despair that they see the only way out is stabbing an Israeli soldier."

The number of employed east Jerusalem Arabs is rising, salary gaps with the city's Jewish population are narrowing, more are learning Hebrew—6,000 currently study the language in classes—and registration at higher education institutions in the western sector is up. City Hall has established an employment center in east Jerusalem and plans a second one. There are even growing applications for citizenship, said Ben Avrahami, the mayor's adviser for east Jerusalem affairs. This from a population of permanent residents that can file for social security benefits but doesn't have the right to vote in national elections.



The mostly Arab east Jerusalem neighborhood of Beit Hanina.

"It is dripping into the consciousness that Israel is a reality and that if east Jerusalemites want to improve their lives, they might be willing to pay the price of integration," Avrahami said, adding

that the city is doing what it can to improve infrastructure and lives in the Arab areas.

East Jerusalem Arabs have lived on a tightrope since Israel captured the sector from Jordan in the 1967 Middle East war and annexed it in a move never internationally recognized. They have Israeli residency that gives them freedom of movement within Israel that West Bank Palestinians are denied, but they hold no passport. They say they recognize the Palestinian Authority before Israel, but their government of choice has no power over the place where they live.

Their neighborhoods have seen neglect for decades. Teddy Kollek, the city's mayor from 1965 to 1993, acknowledged it as one of his major oversights.

Beit Hanina, which is divided into two by Israel's security barrier through the West Bank, has two city-built playgrounds for its children; the adjacent Jewish east Jerusalem neighborhood of Pisgat Zeev, with a comparable population, has more than 50, Watad said. There aren't enough classrooms: The Arab sector needs another 2,000.

Marik Shtern, a researcher at the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies who has delved into the economic gap, says that the city's Arabs remain underrepresented in knowledge industries where the salary is higher, although there are signs this is changing. They are principally salespeople, security guards and call-center employees. Even so, both sides gain from the economic interchange.

Away From Home

More than one-quarter of Jerusalem's Arabs work in Jewish areas

Source: Jerusalem transportation master plan via Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research

"The thing that holds the city together from fragmentation is the economy and the shared interest both sides have in this dual economy," Shtern said. "The Palestinians are dependent on the Israelis for a source of income and the Israelis are dependent on them as workers. In some way this stabilizes the situation and keeps it from deteriorating into war in the streets."

Jerusalem has often been a focal point for violence and some assailants have come from its eastern Arab neighborhoods. Nowhere is the tension more visible than in the Old City, whose 500-year-old cream stone wall encloses enclaves that house sites holy to Jews, Christians and Muslims. At the Damascus Gate, shoppers must pick their way cautiously past three border police posts put up in recent weeks to prevent violence.

Shop owners say revenue has fallen since Trump's announcement, possibly because tourists and other potential shoppers are avoiding an area known as a flashpoint for violence.



Israeli border police man a security post outside the Damascus Gate, one of the main entrances into Jerusalem's Old City.

Photographer: Geraldine Hope Ghelli/Bloomberg

"I had to let go of four of my employees," said clothes merchant Sobhi al-Halhouli, 28, from the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Shuafat. "People don't come here anymore. They are afraid and the situation isn't going to get any better." He won't participate in any demonstrations for fear it will hurt his business.

Candy- and toy-merchant Hashim Salaymeh, 55, said that violence would be more effective in insuring the eastern sector becomes the capital of a would-be Palestinian state.

"What is needed now is an armed struggle," he said.

At the mall 7 miles away, Ro'aa says she's not going to stop at selling women's clothing. She's waiting to hear if she got an entry-level job at Bank Hapoalim, one of Israel's top banks. Her sister works for mobile provider Cellcom and everyone in her family, she said, works on what she calls "the Israeli side."



Israel’s hosting of Arab journalists is an “inexcusable and unjustified disgrace,” the Palestinians charged.

Feb 11, 2018

By: *United with Israel Staff*

Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs last week hosted “special guests” from the Arab world in Jerusalem – a delegation of nine Moroccan, Lebanese, Syrian, Kurdish and Yemeni journalists who came in order to “get to know Israel, its history and its society from up close,” the ministry said.

In response, the Palestinian Authority (PA) on Thursday denounced the journalists’ visit and called for their blacklisting.

The PA Ministry of Information called on the Arab Journalists Union to take “punitive and deterring measures” against the visitors and their media outlets, *Times of Israel* reported.

“Siding with Israel and its terrorism marks a departure from the Arab rank and the decisions of the Council of Arab Ministers of Information,” the PA ministry said, calling the visit an “inexcusable and unjustified disgrace.”

The visit, the statement added, “constitutes a departure from the official and popular Arab position that considers Israel a state of occupation, racism, ethnic cleansing, and extremism.”

Israeli MFA spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon tweeted in response: “**Freedom of press Palestinian Authority style.**”

“We will keep hosting journalists from all over the world and let them form their own impressions of Israel,” Nahshon pledged.

“We are proud to organize this visit of journalists from Arab countries to Israel, to help open a window on

Israel and its people for readers across the Arab world,” MFA Director-General Yuval Rotem stated.

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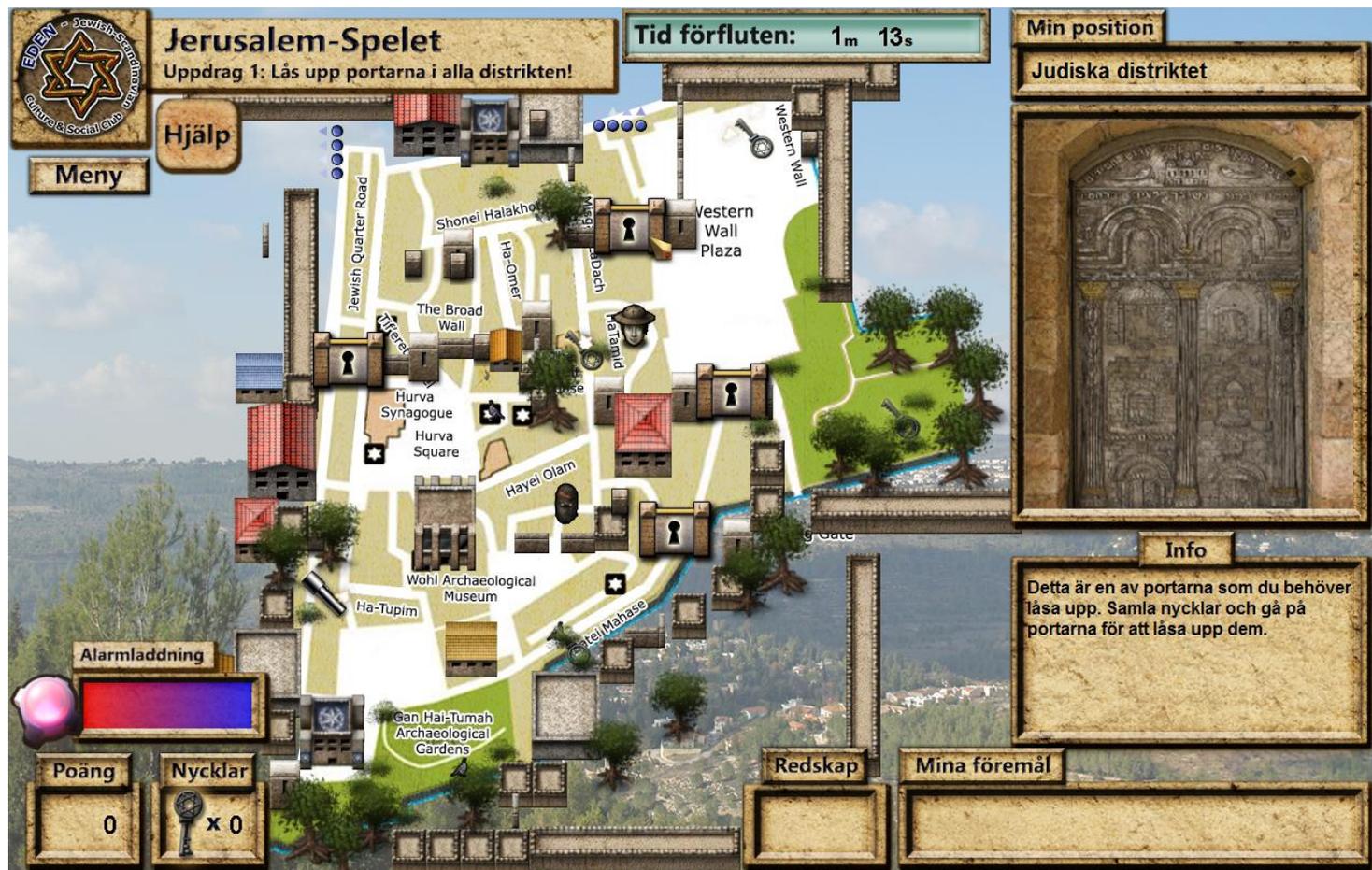
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Magen David Adom ansvarar för akut prehospital sjukvård, ambulanssjukvård och blodbanker, samt utbildning i första hjälpen och medicinetiska frågor i Israel. MDA bistår och räddar liv vid akut sjukdom, olycksfall och terroråd, dygnet runt, året runt.

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