



# IRAN ON THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD

Does the world have a Plan B  
to stop it?

**ANTISEMITISM – THE  
FIGHTBACK**  
The IHRA definition and the global  
battle plan against the world’s oldest  
hatred .....PAGE 20

**BLURRED LYONS**  
An ABC execu-  
tive pens a polemic  
against the “Israel  
Lobby” .....PAGE 27

**HI-TECH WAR**  
How the IDF is  
preparing for the sci-  
fi battlefield of the  
future .....PAGE 30

**ODDLY  
SUCCESSFUL**  
Israel’s strange rul-  
ing coalition scoring  
achievements in the  
Arab world .....PAGE 23



WITH COMPLIMENTS

JAGEN

L1 26 BEATTY AVENUE  
ARMADALE VIC 3143

TEL: (03) 9661 8250  
FAX: (03) 9661 8257



**WITH COMPLIMENTS AND BEST WISHES  
FROM GANDEL GROUP**

CHADSTONE SHOPPING CENTRE  
1341 DANDENONG ROAD  
CHADSTONE VIC 3148

TEL: (03) 8564 1222  
FAX: (03) 8564 1333

## EDITOR'S NOTE

This *AIR*'s cover story looks at the crucial decision point rapidly approaching as it becomes increasingly clear that Iran is not going to go along with the Biden Administration's hopes to negotiate a return to the 2015 JCPOA nuclear deal.

Former senior government officials Richard Goldberg and Jacob Nagel offer some concrete ideas about what the Biden Administration should do now. Meanwhile, Israel Kasnett canvasses some experts for their views on whether the Biden Administration can develop a "Plan B" and Simon Henderson explains the technical background of Iran's ever-expanding uranium enrichment efforts. Plus, Iranian dissident Hossein Ronaghi pleads for the world to understand what is really happening to the Iranian people.

Also featured this month are Judy Maynard and Naomi Levin on the coordinated global efforts to address the escalating antisemitism scourge and where the Australian Government's decision to embrace the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism fits into it. Also, Hanan Greenwood gets a fascinating peek inside the IDF's efforts to prepare for the hi-tech battlefield of the future.

Finally, don't miss Allon Lee and Tzvi Fleischer's review of a conspiratorial new booklet by ABC News executive John Lyons, and Amotz Asa-El on how Israel's diverse new Government is faring with the Arab world.

We would welcome your feedback on this edition at [editorial@aijac.org.au](mailto:editorial@aijac.org.au).

Tzvi Fleischer

## CONTENTS

### FEATURE STORIES

#### DECISION TIME ON IRAN

RICHARD GOLDBERG & JACOB NAGEL

Over the next few weeks, US President Joe Biden will face the biggest decision of his presidency regarding Iran. He can build a coalition to hold Teheran accountable for its nuclear misconduct. Or, he can fall into the mullahs' trap and close the door on achieving a stronger agreement in the future. **PAGE 12**

#### THE "PLAN B" PROBLEM

ISRAEL KASNETT ..... **PAGE 14**

#### IRAN'S SPINNING CENTRIFUGES

SIMON HENDERSON ..... **PAGE 15**

#### THE MEDIA AND THE TRUTH ABOUT IRAN

HOSSEIN RONAGHI ..... **PAGE 17**

#### ANTISEMITISM – THE FIGHTBACK

Australia and the IHRA definition as part of a global battle  
JUDY MAYNARD & NAOMI LEVIN ..... **PAGE 20**

#### ISRAEL'S ODD COALITION & THE ARAB WORLD

AMOTZ ASA-EL ..... **PAGE 23**

#### MORE PRO-IRAN CONSPIRACY THEORIES

RAN PORAT ..... **PAGE 26**

#### BIBLIO FILE: POLEMIC ROOTED IN CONSPIRACY

ALLON LEE & TZVI FLEISCHER ..... **PAGE 27**

#### ESSAY: FUTURE WARS

Inside the IDF's sci-fi weapons plans  
HANAN GREENWOOD ..... **PAGE 30**



### ON THE COVER

A handout photo made available by the presidential office shows Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation Mohammad Eslami (right) speaking to media during a visit to the Bushehr nuclear power plant, Bushehr, Iran, 8 Oct. 2021. (Credit: EPA/ AAP)



### REGULAR COLUMNS

#### FROM THE EDITORIAL CHAIRMAN

COLIN RUBENSTEIN ..... **PAGE 4**

WORD FOR WORD ..... **PAGE 5**

#### SCRIBBLINGS

TZVI FLEISCHER ..... **PAGE 6**

#### DECONSTRUCTION ZONE

GERALD STEINBERG ..... **PAGE 7**

#### ASIA WATCH

MICHAEL SHANNON ..... **PAGE 8**

#### AIR NEW ZEALAND

MIRIAM BELL ..... **PAGE 9**

BEHIND THE NEWS ..... **PAGE 10**

STRANGER THAN FICTION ..... **PAGE 11**

NOTED AND QUOTED ..... **PAGE 35**

IN PARLIAMENT ..... **PAGE 36**


#### MEDIA MICROSCOPE

ALLON LEE ..... **PAGE 39**

#### THE LAST WORD

JEREMY JONES ..... **PAGE 40**

### HOW TO USE OUR INTERACTIVE EDITION

- Tap/click  to return to the Contents page
- All listed articles link to their page.
- Best viewed in your desktop browser or the Books (iOS) or equivalent e-book reader app in portrait mode.

**Australia/Israel Review**

Published by the Australia/Israel &amp; Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC)

**Editorial Chairman****Dr COLIN RUBENSTEIN AM****Editor-in-Chief****Dr TZVI FLEISCHER****Senior Contributing Editor****JEREMY JONES AM****Staff Writers****ALLON LEE, JAMIE HYAMS, AHRON SHAPIRO, NAOMI LEVIN, OVED LOBEL, JUDY MAYNARD****Publishing Manager****MICHAEL SHANNON****Correspondents****ISRAEL: AMOTZ ASA-EL****EUROPE: DOUGLAS DAVIS****NEW ZEALAND: MIRIAM BELL****National Editorial Board****KEITH BEVILLE, RABBI RALPH GENENDE OAM, GARY HERZ, MIRIAM LASKY, STEVE LIEBLICH, RABBI JOHN LEVI AC, Hon. HOWARD NATHAN AM, IAN WALLER SC****AIJAC****National Chairman****MARK LEIBLER AC****NSW Chairman****PAUL RUBENSTEIN****Executive Director****Dr COLIN RUBENSTEIN AM****Director of International & Community Affairs****JEREMY JONES AM****Policy and Research Coordinator****Dr TZVI FLEISCHER****Executive Manager****JOEL BURNIE****Senior Policy Analysts****AHRON SHAPIRO, JAMIE HYAMS, ALLON LEE, NAOMI LEVIN, SHARYN MITTELMAN****Policy Analysts****OVED LOBEL, JUDY MAYNARD****Research Associate****RAN PORAT****Multimedia Designer****AREK DYBEL****Events Coordinator****HELEN BRUSTMAN OAM****Administration****MELBOURNE: ROSEMARY SANDLER,****RENA LANGBERG****SYDNEY: LOUISE DE MESQUITA****Israel Liaison****PETER ADLER****Founding Chairmen****ISADOR MAGID AM (OBM)****ROBERT ZABLUD (OBM)****HEAD OFFICE**

Level 1, 22 Albert Road,

South Melbourne, VIC 3205, Australia

Telephone: (03) 9681 6660

Fax: (03) 9681 6650

Email: [aijac@aijac.org.au](mailto:aijac@aijac.org.au)**SYDNEY OFFICE**

140 William Street

East Sydney, NSW 2011, Australia

Telephone: (02) 9360 5415

Email: [ldemesquita@aijac.org.au](mailto:ldemesquita@aijac.org.au)**SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Please send all remittances, changes of

address and subscription inquiries to:

Australia/Israel Review

Level 1, 22 Albert Road

South Melbourne, VIC 3205, Australia

ISSN No. 1442-3693

Print Post Approved – 100007869

**[www.aijac.org.au](http://www.aijac.org.au)****FROM THE  
EDITORIAL CHAIRMAN****COLIN RUBENSTEIN****AUSTRALIAN LEADERSHIP  
MOMENTUM**

**T**hese are surely auspicious times for policymaking in Australia. After many challenging months of relative isolation due to the global pandemic, highly-vaccinated Australia is gradually reopening and reconnecting to the world – socially, economically and diplomatically.

Revitalised global engagement brings with it new opportunities to refine Australia's policies and international stances in a changing world, maximising our voice on the global scene – as a force for democracy, human rights, and a stable, peaceful international order, all of which are profoundly in our national interests.

Recent debates over confronting China's growing regional aggression and Australia's greenhouse gas emission targets highlight some of the complexities in making decisions that balance domestic priorities with Australia's international reputation and hopes to play a strong role on the global stage.

Yet, in certain respects, this reorientation process has already been unfolding throughout the course of the past year, thanks to a number of principled and wise decisions from Government and Opposition leaders in Canberra.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's decision in May 2021 for Australia to be one of the first countries to announce a boycott of September's "Durban IV" Conference event marking the 20th anniversary of an "anti-racism forum" poisoned by antisemitism, showed true global leadership. It paved the way for other like-minded countries to follow Australia's lead. In the end, 34 countries boycotted the event – more than twice the number that did so on Durban's 10th anniversary.

Also extremely important was PM Morrison's recent announcement to the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism that the Australian "Government", "people" and "nation" will "embrace" the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism.

Moreover, our leaders have made it clear that fighting antisemitism is an unequivocal bipartisan national interest, as Labor Party and Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese committed to Jewish leaders in July that a future Labor government would also endorse the IHRA definition. This bipartisanship was underlined by the welcome adoption of the IHRA definition and anti-BDS resolutions at the NSW ALP State Conference on Oct. 9.

The IHRA announcement, while important and welcome, must be viewed as only the first step on a journey. As AIJAC's Judy Maynard & Naomi Levin report (p.20), the crucial first step in combating antisemitism is defining it in a way that is accepted by a broad consensus, as almost all Western democracies have recognised by adopting this definition, and then disseminating and operationalising it in areas of society such as education, law enforcement and cultural policy.

The Malmö Forum set out a template and a program for countries to move forward, jointly yet autonomously, tapping into innovative global initiatives against antisemitism, including those promoted by Europe and Canada. Australia should be part of the global effort to maintain the momentum of Malmö.

More welcome news related to Australia's role in an interconnected global system came from the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS). In June and October respectively, this Committee recommended, on a bipartisan basis, im-



provements to Government policy by embracing the overwhelming evidence about the reality of both Hezbollah and Hamas, and calling for expansion of Australia's terrorism listings to include both groups in their entirety.

Hezbollah is already wholly proscribed by the US, Canada, the UK, Germany and many other countries, while all of Hamas is listed as a terror group by the US, Canada and the European Union.

In the session on Hezbollah, counterterrorism expert Dr. Matthew Levitt of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy implicitly urged the PJCIS to recognise that banning all of Hezbollah is a matter of good international citizenship, as well as in Australia's national interests.

"Banning only part of Hezbollah has not worked. Hezbollah called the bluff of those countries which continued to ban only part of the group by continuing to engage in terrorist and criminal activities notwithstanding the partial ban," he said. A full ban, he said, would help "contribute to stability in Lebanon" and impose costs on Hezbollah's ongoing "terrorist, militant and illicit financial activities" internationally.

Regrettably, Australia currently has the weakest stance on Hezbollah of any member of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance – which also includes the US, Canada, UK and New Zealand.

Meanwhile, addressing the PJCIS as an expert on Hamas, Dr. Jonathan Schanzer of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies called distinctions between the mili-

tary and political branches of the group a "fiction" some countries employ to allow engagement with it.

Like Levitt, Schanzer implicitly urged Australia to be part of international efforts to sanction and marginalise Hamas given its destructive and murderous activities, saying, "In expanding its listing to include the entirety of Hamas, Australia will more closely align with key like-minded countries around the world that have taken this

important and necessary step."

AIJAC is proud to be counted among those who contributed valuable evidence to both Committee hearings and we are grateful

that all members of the Committee, from both sides of politics, have recommended proscribing the entirety of both Hezbollah and Hamas.

The final decision now rests with Home Affairs Minister Karen Andrews, who we are sure will thoroughly review and then hopefully adopt the Committee's sound recommendations as soon as practicable.

Australia is again demonstrating it can play a strong leadership role on the world stage, and be a force for good, serving our key interests in the process. A small but essential element of being ready to do so is to follow through on recent policy achievements and recommendations with respect to the global battle against antisemitism and the fight against terrorism and extremism as epitomised by Hezbollah and Hamas. Maintaining the momentum and following through on both these fronts is the important challenge ahead.

AIR

## WORD FOR WORD

"The runway that we have left to [return to the nuclear deal with Iran] is getting shorter and shorter... We are prepared to turn to other options if Iran doesn't change course."

**US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (*The National*, Oct. 14).**

"Judges must be free from threats and intimidation, including Hezbollah's. We've long been clear that Hezbollah's terrorists and illicit activities threaten Lebanon's security, stability, and sovereignty."

**US State Department spokesperson Ned Price on Hezbollah trying to remove the judge investigating the Beirut Port explosion (*US State Department*, Oct. 12).**

"The biggest threat to Christian presence in Lebanon is the Lebanese Forces party... [Hezbollah has] 100,000 trained and armed fighters... Do not make wrong calculations. Sit still, be

polite and draw lessons from your wars and our wars."

**Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah makes threatening comments following clashes in Beirut, allegedly with the Christian Lebanese Forces party, that resulted in Hezbollah casualties at a demonstration (*Naharnet*, Oct. 18).**

"We need to not only celebrate this relationship, but look at new venues of co-operation."

**Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, UAE Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, on relations with Israel (*The National*, Oct. 14).**

"There was agreement that Hamas operates as a singular entity with overlapping personnel, finances and structure. In addition, leaders of Hamas have repeatedly made statements which meet the advocacy test for terrorist listing, including direct incitement of acts of violence against Jewish people."

**Senator James Paterson, Chairman of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, on the bipartisan recommendation for Australia to list all of Hamas as a terrorist organisation (*Herald Sun*, Oct. 14).**





# SCRIBBLINGS

Tzvi Fleischer

## LESSONS FROM A NON-JEWISH VICTIM OF ANTISEMITISM

Eddie Marsan is not a Jew, but he does play one on TV. And his lack of any actual Jewish background has not protected him from becoming a victim of antisemitism.

Marsan plays Soly Malinovsky, the Jewish leader of an anti-fascist underground movement known as the 62 Group, in the new BBC series “Ridley Road”, which began airing on Oct. 3. It is a fictionalised version of real events which occurred in Britain in 1962, when the 62 Group successfully disrupted the efforts of the far-right and anti-semitic National Socialist Movement.



Eddie Marsan in the new BBC series “Ridley Road” (Source: BBC)

Marsan recently published images of a series of anti-semitic tweets attacking him which he received after the series began airing. He stated on twitter; “F\*\*k me, this is relentless, all I did was play a Jew, I dread to think what would’ve happened if I was actually Jewish.”

Many of the tweets attacked him over supposed Israeli misdeeds. One said, “you are a crap actor and I’ll never watch shite with your Apartheid loving bake in it.” Another said, “Why does the BBC do so many programmes favouring the Zionists ‘return’ and so few favouring Palestinian’s Right of Return?”

Marsan made an important point in response, writing: “did a series about British Jews facing antisemitism, nothing to do with Israel or Palestine. But if you think they’re linked you probably think one justifies the other & the irony is, that’s exactly why Ridley Rd got commissioned.”

He’s dead right. Social media is full of trolls who think it is okay to target random Jewish individuals over Israel’s supposed misdeeds against Palestinians – or even non-Jews they think might be Jewish. This is clearly antisemitic – yet some deny this, insisting if it is about Israel, it cannot be antisemitic. But let’s just change the ethnicity – imagine

you heard about someone targeting any person with a Chinese name for abuse on social media for the crimes of the Chinese Communist Party? Or random Muslim individuals for the actions of Islamic State? How could anyone possibly deny this is racist?

Yet many, particularly on the far left, defend such behaviour. As Marsan noted, “Antisemitism gives the myth that it’s punching up to some mythical all-powerful Jewish elite... so quite often, young people are taken in by antisemitic tropes on social media... They don’t see it as racism, they see it as anti-capitalist.”

Social media has facilitated and encouraged an explosion of antisemitism – and as Marsan noted, a growing tendency to justify or excuse it. Much more clearly needs to be done about it. It’s just a pity that it takes a non-Jewish victim of antisemitism to point out how bad things have become.

## HAMAS’ ETHNIC CLEANSING CONFERENCE

As this column has illustrated in the past through both polls and public statements by Palestinian leaders, many Palestinians consider the only acceptable end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be the “ethnic cleansing solution”. This involves not two states for two peoples, or even one state for both peoples, but Palestinians controlling all the land from the river to the sea, and all or most of the Jews there being killed, expelled or leaving.

Representatives of both the Islamist Hamas in Gaza and the “moderate” Fatah party which controls the West Bank have expressed expectations that the land will be cleansed of Jews. However, Hamas has just made its support for such ethnic cleansing more or less official by sponsoring a conference in Gaza which sets out plans for such ethnic cleansing once all of Palestine is “liberated”.

The Sept. 30 conference was titled “Promise of the Hereafter – Post-Liberation Palestine” and sponsored by Hamas’ leader in Gaza Yahya Sinwar and attended by senior Hamas officials.

The final communique of the conference said that “In dealing with the Jewish settlers on Palestinian land, there must be a distinction in attitude towards [the following]: a fighter who must be killed; a [Jew] who is fleeing and can be left alone or be prosecuted...; and a peaceful individual who gives himself up and can be [either] integrated or given time to leave... Educated Jews and experts in the areas of medicine, engineering, technology, and civilian and military industry should be retained for some time and should not be allowed to leave.”

The document also said the new government in Palestine, “must put their hands on the data regarding the agents of the occupation in Palestine in the region and [throughout] the world... using this information we can



purge Palestine and the Arab and Islamic homeland of the hypocrite scum that spread corruption in the land.”

In other words, anyone considered a fighter will be killed, other Jews will be allowed or encouraged to flee or possibly allowed to stay if they surrender and promise to be “integrated.” However, educated Jewish experts will not be allowed to leave and instead be forced to serve the new regime.

Moreover, anyone deemed an “agent of occupation”, whatever that means (anyone who served the Israeli government or army in any role, perhaps??) must be “purged”. This is a bit unclear, but certainly suggests bad things will happen to them.

It’s clearly a formula for a form of ethnic cleansing – and Hamas is being completely open about it. And yet there are still people going around insisting Hamas is becoming moderate.

## THE ABC GETS SMART

The ABC Board, led by Chair Ita Buttrose, deserves kudos for its decision to establish an inquiry into the network’s very problematic complaints procedure. It’s a welcome move, but also a smart one. In addition to concerns expressed by AIJAC and other Jewish groups, the ABC has been under fire for blatant journalistic malpractice in the “Ghost Train” documentary, pushing hard on unprovable claims against conservative politicians, and other serious problems.

Hopefully, the inquiry will recognise that the only way to restore a measure of faith in our national broadcaster is to establish a complaints procedure which is genuinely independent and external – which is not the case with the current system.

AIR



Gerald Steinberg

## DURBAN’S LEGACY OF HATE

Twenty years ago, the world’s human rights community came to Durban, South Africa for a conference called to eliminate racism and discrimination. This event took place just a few days after a Palestinian terror attack in Jerusalem killed and maimed Israelis in a pizzeria filled with teenagers and young families. But the thousands of self-proclaimed human rights activists at Durban did not mention the attack or the victims; for them, Israelis do not have human rights. Instead, the diplomats, UN officials and leaders of powerful non-governmental organisations (NGOs) focused on demonising Israel and Zionism.

Durban was the blueprint for the 21st century antisemitism. The Arab Lawyers Union distributed caricatures

of Jews with fangs dripping blood, and delegates picked up copies of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* forgery. Well-organised mass marches through the streets, with placards declaring “Zionism is racism”, were accompanied by speeches denouncing Israeli “apartheid”. Arafat and his chief propagandist Hanan Ashrawi were flown in to denounce Israeli “apartheid”.

The plan to hijack Durban was formed months before, at a UN preparatory conference in Teheran. There, the strategy of equating Israel to apartheid South Africa was developed into a full-scale war plan. The NGO Final Declaration and Program of Action, composed in Teheran, was a strategy for political war. Israel was labelled as a “racist apartheid state”, guilty of “genocide”, and “racist crimes against Palestinians.” They demanded that all countries implement policies for “the complete isolation of Israel as an apartheid state.”

Immediately after Durban, the same NGOs and UN allies moved to implement the strategy. Human Rights Watch led the other groups with allegations of war crimes following every Israeli response to terror, whether from Hamas in Gaza or Hezbollah from Lebanon.

The NGO Durban war has continued for 20 years, including the flood of “reports” recently on the apartheid lie. The European-funded organisations campaign for boycotts targeting Israeli universities and businesses, athletes and cultural events, often joined by church groups with classical theological antisemitic agendas under the banner of BDS (boycotts, divestment and sanctions).

The constant drumbeat from Durban has contributed significantly to violent antisemitic attacks worldwide. Recent statistics from the US, Britain, and European countries highlight the hate directed against Jews and Jewish or Israeli targets.

Nevertheless, the Durban framework remains on the UN’s permanent agenda. The one-day event in the UN General Assembly known as Durban IV was called on Sept. 22 so that officials and affiliated NGOs could celebrate their successes in this war of hate. To their credit, US President Biden and the leaders of Britain, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand, Italy and 26 other countries refused to participate.

But the antisemitism and obsession with Israel will continue, under the façade of human rights. Now, as in 2001, many of those who claim to speak in the name of morality and law continue to support the perpetrators of inhuman brutality, and erase the victims of terror and injustice. This is the legacy of Durban after 20 years.

AIR

*Gerald Steinberg is professor emeritus of political science at Bar-Ilan University. He is the founder and President of NGO Monitor, a policy analysis think tank focusing on nongovernmental organisations. © Israel Hayom (www.israelhayom.com), reprinted by permission, all rights reserved.*



# ASIA WATCH

Michael Shannon

## GAINING GROUND

Indonesia's effort to counter and extinguish violent Islamic extremism is arguably a never-ending task, but the weekly grind of intelligence gathering and pursuing targets continues to yield results – results that rarely generate prominent headlines.

Recent weeks have seen gains against two Islamic State-linked organisations – the Jemaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) and the Eastern Indonesia Mujahideen (MIT) – which show the multifaceted approach of Indonesia's counter-terror forces.

In early October, information obtained from a convicted JAD militant led to the seizure of home-made explosives at the foot of a mountain in West Java. Prisoner Imam Mulyana, arrested in 2017 for a failed attempt to attack the entourage of President Joko Widodo, confessed that he and his group had stored 35 kilograms of TATP (triacetone triperoxide), a powerful home-made explosive used in several terrorist attacks in recent years, including the 2005 London Underground bombing, and attacks in Paris in 2015 and on the Brussels Metro and airport in 2016. Mulyana guided police to the site at Mount Ciremai, before a police bomb squad disposed of the material in a controlled explosion.

Credit for the event is due to the deradicalisation program run by Densus 88 (Detachment 88), Indonesia's elite counterterror unit, formed in June 2003 in the wake of the Bali bombings with significant, ongoing Australian and US backing.

Using sophisticated psychological techniques and backed by experts with deep religious knowledge, Densus 88 officers have proven effective at building rapport and trust with many of the militants they have captured. This approach, along with other intelligence gathering methods, has enabled the unit to disrupt terror plots and cells with impressive frequency.

Densus 88's hard side also enabled the elimination of a militant leader in late September. Ali Kalora, the top commander of the MIT, and one of his followers were tracked down in the dense, mountainous jungles of Parigi Moutong regency in Central Sulawesi and killed in a shootout with police. The deaths reduce MIT's known members to four, with police vowing to capture the remnants "dead or alive".

The MIT insurgency in Sulawesi is rooted in a vicious Muslim-Christian conflict which left more than 1,000 people dead between 1998 and 2001. MIT founder Santoso, killed by police in July 2016, was the first Indonesian



The late Ali Kalora, former MIT commander (Screenshot)

militant to publicly pledge allegiance to the Islamic State group. MIT fighters have been responsible for at least 20 killings of civilians and police since 2012, including beheadings of suspected informants and villagers unlucky enough to cross their path.

Meanwhile, convicted accessories to the 2002 Bali bombings have testified in the trial of Aris Sumarsono, better known as Zulkarnaen, the former military leader of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). After having been on the run for about 18 years when he was arrested last year, 58-year old Zulkarnaen is charged with a criminal conspiracy for allegedly harbouring Upik Lawanga, a top JI bombmaker.

In a virtual hearing, the witnesses told the court that Zulkarnaen formed and recruited for a JI special team to prepare attacks. But they said they never met nor took orders from Zulkarnaen before the Bali attack. "[Zulkarnaen] has nothing to do with it, but long before the Bali bombing, he had been our leader," said Sarjio, who is serving a life sentence for helping assemble the bombs used in the attack.

Another witness, Suranto, said Zulkarnaen had never provided any directions regarding the Bali bombings. "I have known him since we joined military training in Pakistan. Other members have known the defendant since he was in Pakistan and Afghanistan," he testified.

According to the indictment, Zulkarnaen helped write JI's guidebook. While he was a fugitive, other JI members helped Zulkarnaen and provided him with cash because he was considered a valuable asset and had military expertise, it said.

Close to 900 JI members have been arrested since the 2002 Bali bombings, and it has not staged a major attack in Indonesia since 2011. In 2020, Para Wijayanto, who led JI from 2009 until his arrest in May 2019, was sentenced to seven years in prison.

However, Densus 88 officials remain vigilant against the threat – the number of JI members and sympathisers is estimated to still be several thousand, with 67 JI-affiliated pesantren (religious schools) suspected to be breeding grounds for recruitment.



Miriam Bell

## ANTI-VAXXERS GET UGLY

Frustration and dissent are building around New Zealand as lockdown restrictions to varying degrees drag on indefinitely – and, alongside that, a wave of hysterical anti-vaccination rhetoric has developed.

With the introduction of mandatory vaccination rates for certain professions, and growing numbers of employers and companies introducing “no jab, no job” or “no service” policies, complaints of oppression and denial of freedom have increased.

And, as seen in other countries, that has been quickly followed by objectionable comparisons to the Holocaust by elements of the anti-vaccination movement.

Holocaust Centre of NZ chair Deborah Hart said they have been dealing with this issue and, unfortunately, there are lots of examples. These include posters that were put up around Wellington, which featured a Star of David with “unvaccinated” in the middle.

Another example involved a person who was organising an anti-vaccination protest group who contacted the Jewish community for advice. He said that to him “there is little or no difference between forced vaccinations and lining Jewish people up at ‘the showers’ in the death camps.”

Hart said the person did not like the response they received and replied to it by insisting: “The language describing un-vaxed people is along almost identical lines as what was used against Jews in the 1930’s when they isolated them for destruction.

“Combine this with the suppression of information on vax side effects and the vulnerabilities of vaxed people to mutations of covid [sic] and there is a danger to humanity as a whole that is going to make the Holocaust [sic] look like a garden picnic.”

This type of Holocaust misuse and relativism has not just been the province of the anonymous. At least one public figure, Billy Te Kahika, a prominent musician who recently founded his own political party, the New Zealand Public Party, has also been guilty of using such ugly analogies.

Te Kahika had publicly espoused antisemitic theories in the past. And on his Facebook page, he recently posted a link to a documentary on “Surviving the Holocaust” and encouraged his followers to watch it.

The message said: “Look at how the Nazis used the yellow Star of David to slowly but surely identify and segregate ‘Jews’ or ‘enemies of society’. My issue is with the developments in New Zealand that will see people divided and marked – and if you are marked you are not

able to have access to freedom and certain community facilities. Watch this sad tale, please share it and ask fellow Kiwis is this something we will stand for in our beloved country?”

Hart said anti-vaccination protests using the yellow Star of David and the Holocaust are making a false equivalence that diminishes the enormity of what the Nazis did in the Holocaust. “In essence, no one is trying to systematically exterminate people who choose not to be vaccinated.”

To compare the Holocaust and a government requiring vaccination if you want to do certain things, but leaving individuals the choice to decide, is grotesque, wrong and deeply hurtful to Holocaust survivors and their families, she said.

“Not every wrong in the world can be sheeted back to the Holocaust. Anti-vaccination protesters are free to protest, but their protests should not be based on the lie that what is being done in New Zealand is anything remotely resembling the Holocaust in which six million Jews were murdered.”

Jewish community leaders agreed with Hart, and were uniformly scathing about the inappropriate Holocaust analogies made by some anti-vaccination campaigners.

NZ Jewish Council spokeswoman Juliet Moses said if people want to criticise the Government or claim they are being persecuted or denied basic freedoms, they should do so without invoking the industrialised genocide of six million Jewish people, survivors of which were among us today.

“Such ‘comparisons’ are historically illiterate and trivialise the Holocaust, which constitutes soft core Holocaust denial, as labelled by renowned Holocaust scholar Professor Deborah Lipstadt. Those who engage in this are not showing any sympathy for or respect to the victims of the Holocaust – quite the contrary,” she said.

“It is extremely disappointing that we have people in Aotearoa indulging this kind of behaviour, but it reflects what we have seen overseas,” she added.

Zionist Federation president Rob Berg said it is wrong and offensive in every way to use imagery of the Holocaust, where six million people were systematically murdered by the Nazis for the crime of having at least one Jewish grandparent, to bolster any political or social cause.

If people resort to this imagery, including wearing adaptations of the yellow Star of David which the Nazis forced Jews to wear as part of their policy to dehumanise them, they either know little of what happened in the Holocaust or have weak arguments that need to be supplemented by this grotesque analogy, he said.

“Trying to equate the intentional murder and annihilation of an ethnic group with the government’s response to try to save lives, is morally corrupt,” Berg added.

# BEHIND THE NEWS

## ROCKET AND TERROR REPORT

No rockets were fired from Gaza between Sept. 12 and Oct. 20.

A stabbing attack took place at Jerusalem's Central Bus Station on Sept. 13, wounding two, with the assailant shot and arrested. There were additional attempted stabbings on Sept. 13 and Sept. 30.

On Sept. 19, the IDF rearrested the final two escapees of six that escaped from Gilboa prison on Sept. 6 in the West Bank city of Jenin. A raid to arrest Hamas operatives in the West Bank on Sept. 26 resulted in at least five terrorists killed and several wounded or arrested. Two soldiers were also injured.

Clashes and riots occurred throughout the West Bank on a near daily basis.

In Cyprus, Israeli billionaire Teddy Sagi escaped a September assassination attempt that Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's office said was a terrorist attack orchestrated by Iran, and part of a broader operation to assassinate Israeli businesspeople in Cyprus.

## HAMAS' LEBANESE ARM

In an Oct. 11 report, the Israeli research centre Alma exposed Hamas' rapidly developing organisational infrastructure in Lebanon. Hamas' Lebanese efforts are reportedly aimed at extending the reach of the terror group beyond Gaza by creating an additional front against Israel.

Under guidance from Hamas bureaus in Lebanon and Turkey, and assisted by Iran's Quds Force, Hamas' Lebanese branch is reportedly collaborating with Hezbollah to recruit operatives, and arm and train them. It is also allegedly producing weapons such as rockets and drones, while pre-

paring small cells to attack Israel.

Hamas in Lebanon is most likely responsible for at least five incidents since May where Grad rockets were fired from Lebanon towards Israel.

Meanwhile, with Lebanon facing a severe energy shortage, it may soon be inadvertently receiving Israeli gas, mixed with Egyptian gas, under a US-brokered project to deliver gas to Lebanon from Egypt via Jordan and Syria. Under existing arrangements, all Egyptian gas exported to Jordan is mixed with gas from Israel's offshore fields.

## FUNDING CONDITIONED ON TEXTBOOK CHANGES

On Sept. 28, the European Union Parliament's Budget Panel resolved to withhold €20 million (A\$31.1 million) in aid from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees (UNRWA) unless it changes its school curriculum to align with the goals of a two-state peace – including removing anti-Israel, anti-normalisation and antisemitic incitement from Palestinian school textbooks. Otherwise, the money will go to other groups.

The EU Commission directorate overseeing aid to Palestinian education condemned the incitement and antisemitism found in the textbooks in September, after the delayed release of an EU report into their content which analysed 156 textbooks and 16 teachers' guides.

## IRAN BLOCKS NUCLEAR INSPECTORS

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) announced on Sept. 26 that Iran had violated an access agreement that had been reached between Iran and the IAEA on Sept.

12 by blocking access for IAEA inspectors to the TESA Karaj uranium enrichment centrifuge parts factory. As a result, memory cards in the agency's surveillance cameras at Karaj were not replaced.

The Sept. 12 agreement, reached immediately prior to an IAEA Board of Governors meeting, had been a key reason Western countries had decided not to pursue a resolution criticising Iranian violations at that meeting.

Meanwhile, the head of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran, Mohammad Eslami, boasted on Oct. 10 that Teheran has produced more than 120 kg of uranium enriched to 20%, much more than the 84.3 kg estimated by the IAEA in September.

## IRAN JOINS SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION

Iran became a fully-fledged member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a Chinese and Russian-led intergovernmental body, on Sept. 17, although it may take at least two more years to clear all legal hurdles to Teheran's accession. In practice, the SCO has proven ineffective as anything but a regional diplomatic forum, not least because it contains avowed adversaries such as Pakistan, India and China. However, Iran's accession symbolises the deepening relationship between Teheran, Russia and China, and may be another vehicle for Iran to increase regional ties and influence despite sanctions and international isolation.

## ISRAEL TO SUPPLY MORE WATER TO JORDAN

Israel and Jordan signed an agreement in early October under which Israel pledged to sell Jordan an ad-



ditional 50 million cubic metres of water annually. This amount, sourced from the Sea of Galilee, will be on top of the 35 million cubic metres of water Israel already supplies Jordan each year under the 1994 peace agreement between the two countries.

Meanwhile, Jordan's King Abdullah is facing internal discontent after documents uncovered among the millions of "Pandora Papers" recently leaked to the press reveal that he secretly bought 14 estates in the US and UK between 2003 and 2017, with an estimated combined worth of more than US\$100 million (A\$130 million).

## BAHRAIN VISIT

Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid flew to Bahrain on Sept. 30 in the first Israeli ministerial visit to the Gulf state since relations were formally established last year. Lapid held talks there with his Bahraini counterpart, Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, signed agreements relating to water, the environment and sport, and opened Israel's new embassy in Manama.

## IRAQI ELECTION FOLLOWING CALLS FOR ISRAEL NORMALISATION

Following elections on Oct. 10, populist Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr now heads the largest bloc in the Iraqi Parliament, winning 73 of its 329 seats. The Al-Fatah alliance, backed by Iran, performed poorly winning only 17 seats. Voter turnout was low – an estimated 43%.

Earlier, speakers at a conference held on Sept. 24 in the Iraqi Kurdish city of Erbil had openly called for Iraq to normalise relations with Israel. However, the Iraqi Government condemned the conference and issued arrest warrants for some participants. It is illegal in Iraq to promote "Zionist principles".

## DURBAN IV

Australia, the US, the UK, France, Germany, New Zealand, and Canada were among 34 countries which boycotted a UN General Assembly session on Sept. 22 commemorating the 20th anniversary of the infamous UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa which turned into an antisemitic hate fest featuring discriminatory texts, antisemitic caricatures and even pro-Hitler flyers.

On Oct. 11, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) approved a pro-Durban resolution 32-10, but only after the UK secured a roll-call vote to prevent the resolution passing by consensus. Five countries abstained.

Australia is not a member of the UNHRC, but signed onto the UK statement opposing the resolution.



## STRANGER THAN FICTION

### NO PIZZA FOR YOU!

The Iranian regime has long been known for appalling discrimination against women, among many other evils, but under the new ultra-hardline Raisi Government, this has become even more bizarre.

On Sept. 27, Amir Hossein Shamshadi, the head of PR at the national broadcaster, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), revealed on his Instagram page that an audit of the organisation had resulted in a ban on certain sorts of scenes being shown.

This was not about banning depictions of violence, such as Iran's public hangings, where the victims are suspended from cranes and slowly suffocate. That's fine.

This ban involved scenes depicting some things even more horrific, including (sensitive readers may prefer to stop here): Women eating pizza or sandwiches, or drinking anything red, or wearing leather gloves or being served tea by men

## ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN COVID UPDATES

Israel is now emerging from its Delta wave of COVID-19. While there were 89,557 new cases from Sept. 19 to Oct. 19, that is down from 256,366 new cases in the previous month. Serious cases also declined, with 380 COVID cases listed as serious on Oct. 16, down from 679 a month previously. There were 482 deaths in the month to Oct. 19, with 84.42% of eligible Israelis having received at least one vaccine and 77.56% being fully vaccinated at that time.

In the PA-controlled areas of the West Bank, there were 34,959 new cases and 412 deaths between Sept. 19 and Oct. 19, with 30.95% of the population fully vaccinated. Gaza had 26,751 new cases between Sept. 18 and Oct. 18.

at their workplaces.

Furthermore, just to be safe, any depiction of men and women together in a domestic setting must be vetted by IRIB directors prior to broadcast.

In another strange result of the apparently increased vigilance by Iran's moral guardians, on Sept. 27 a streaming service controlled by IRIB broadcast an interview with Iranian actress Elnaz Habibi showing only the male host's face, but not Habibi. Viewers complained that if they missed the introduction, they didn't know who was being interviewed.

The regime also generally forbids women from public sporting events. While women are banned from all Iranian domestic league soccer games, some have very occasionally been admitted to international games under pressure from FIFA, the international soccer roof body. One such occasion was to be the Oct. 12 World Cup qualifying game against South Korea. However, at the last minute, crowds were banned altogether, leading to speculation this was to keep women out.

Maybe authorities were worried one might be caught on camera eating pizza.

## COVER STORY

# DECISION TIME ON IRAN

## THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION NOW HAS ONLY ONE GOOD OPTION

by Richard Goldberg & Jacob Nagel

Over the next few weeks, US President Joe Biden will face the biggest decision of his presidency regarding Iran. He can finally take “no” for an answer and build a coalition to hold Teheran accountable for its nuclear deceit and misconduct. Or, he can fall into the mullahs’ trap and close the door on achieving his goal of a longer and stronger nuclear agreement in the future.

For months now, the Biden Administration has been operating under a mistaken assumption. The Administration believed that if the United States eased the political and economic pressure on Iran while abjuring any credible threat of military force, Teheran would potentially negotiate a replacement to the flawed 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), from which then President Trump withdrew in 2018. In fact, the opposite has proven true.

Iran entered this year with just US\$4 billion in accessible foreign exchange reserves, a US president who demonstrated a willingness to use force against it, and the possibility that the International Atomic Energy Agency’s (IAEA) Board of Governors might refer the regime to the UN Security Council for breach of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Tellingly, Iran began producing highly enriched uranium in early January only because the regime was confident the Trump Administration – days from leaving office – no longer had the political ability to



US President Joe Biden needs to accept “no” for an answer from Teheran and formulate a new policy (Credit: GPO/Flickr)

respond militarily. Had the economic and political pressure of 2020 intensified in 2021, the United States would likely already be in negotiations with Iran over a new nuclear agreement.

But on Jan. 20, 2021, the mullahs got a new lease on life as the Trump campaign of maximum pressure shifted to a Biden campaign of maximum deference. Rather than continue to starve the regime of cash, Biden allowed Iran to use its frozen reserves to repay foreign debts while pulling back European allies from censuring Iran over its continued refusal to cooperate with an IAEA investigation into undeclared nuclear sites and materials. At the same time, Iran tested Biden through its regional proxies



with sustained attacks on American troops in Iraq, rocket and missile attacks on Israel and Saudi Arabia, and attacks on maritime shipping. Yet Biden did not retaliate as his predecessor did by targeting the personnel of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which directed these attacks – even after the death of a US contractor.

The results? The most aggressive expansion of Iran's uranium enrichment program to date, the most audacious limitation of UN inspections in Iran's history, and the instalment of an Iranian hardline government determined to hold on to a new nuclear baseline for future negotiations. Biden allowed Iran to flip the script in a matter of months – from an increasingly contained regime on the verge of financial collapse to an increasingly confident regime inches away from a nuclear breakout capability. The regime could even pursue something even more dangerous: a nuclear “sneakout” wherein Iran uses clandestine facilities and advanced centrifuges to prepare a detonation.

Iran is operating advanced centrifuges, enriching uranium to 60% purity – just a short distance from weapons-grade fissile material – and working on uranium metal technologies. It is advancing both the enrichment and weaponisation tracks needed to build a bomb.

Iran refuses to answer the IAEA's questions as to why the agency has found nuclear material in at least three locations previously unknown to be linked to its nuclear program and why Iran never declared those sites to the agency. It has refused to give the IAEA the video recordings of its declared sites, limiting the analysis of the agency and its inspectors. The regime is not just in significant non-performance of its commitments under the JCPOA – it is in material breach of its more fundamental obligations under the NPT.

Since Biden became President, the IAEA board has met three times. Before each meeting, the Administration has opposed diplomatic attempts to censure Iran for its non-cooperation with the IAEA and its non-compliance with the NPT, despite harsh reports from the agency's Director General. After each meeting, Iran has accelerated its nuclear misconduct and further obstructed access for the IAEA and cooperation with its investigation. Just days after the IAEA's September board meeting, Iran denied the agency access to yet another site – a centrifuge assembly facility in Karaj – even though the regime agreed to such access just days before the board meeting.

If the international community needed one more reminder that pressure, not appeasement, is the only proven formula to win Iranian cooperation, the story of Karaj was it. As the world looks to the final IAEA board meeting of the year in November, the credibility of the NPT and the IAEA, along with Director General Rafael Grossi, is now

in serious doubt.

If Biden makes the same mistake for a fourth time, he alone will bear responsibility for what comes next – a green light for further nuclear escalation into 2022. Now is the time for the President to turn the tables. In coordination with US allies in Europe, the Biden Administration should request an immediate special meeting of the IAEA board – before its November meeting – to hold Iran accountable for its wide range of illicit conduct. This should be followed quickly with a formal resolution, at the November quarterly board meeting, that censures Iran not just for its enrichment ramp-up and limited access to inspectors, but also for its non-compliance with a now three-year-old safeguards investigation.

There will undoubtedly be voices within the Biden Administration, including Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley, and maybe even Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who will look for any excuse to keep the current policy in place.

Malley, perhaps coordinating with Russia, China, and some European Union diplomats also desperate to preserve the old JCPOA framework at any cost, could schedule the next round of indirect US-Iran negotiations just before the November quarterly meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors. If the Iranian delegates so much as smile at their interlocutors – let alone introduce a proposal that falls short of Biden's demands – Malley will still argue to hold off any further political pressure.

Another potential pitfall: Iran could grant access to Karaj just before the November board meeting – giving Malley and others an opening to argue that Washington has achieved progress even though Karaj access is merely the latest ploy that Teheran has advanced to distract from its underlying nuclear misconduct.

Biden and his senior advisers need to recognise that after more than eight months of squandering US economic leverage and allowing Iran to vastly increase its nuclear leverage, Malley's advice leads back neither to the JCPOA nor to a longer and stronger deal. Instead, it leads to something even worse: the so-called concept of “less for less”, where the US provides “partial” sanctions relief for “partial” Iranian nuclear concessions.

“Partial sanctions relief” for “partial nuclear steps” may sound appealing on its face but the US is dealing with a regime whose expertise is hobbling along with limited financial resources; partial sanctions relief is the very outcome the mullahs now seek. It will allow them to continue their terror support activities all over the world and bag their nuclear advances as a new baseline for future negotiations. As we saw in 2013, an interim agreement that grants partial sanctions relief and removes all US leverage ends up becoming a flawed final deal.

**“The status quo is untenable. But a return to a deeply flawed and expiring JCPOA or an even worse ‘less for less’ deal is equally unacceptable”**

The status quo is untenable. But a return to a deeply flawed and expiring JCPOA or an even worse “less for less” deal is equally unacceptable. President Biden has only one good option: reconstitute a coalition of democracies willing to exert economic and political pressure alongside sustained military deterrence to force Iran to comply with its NPT obligations and negotiate the longer, stronger deal he has always wanted.

China and Russia will complain along the way. Let them. They are powerless to stop a diplomatic coalition of the United States, its transatlantic and transpacific allies, and key allies in the Middle East. Neither Beijing nor Moscow can stop an IAEA board referral to the Security Council – nor can they stop a snapback of UN sanctions.

The Biden Administration is fond of saying that US leadership at multilateral institutions like the IAEA “is back”. The world will be watching Vienna in the weeks ahead to see if that’s really true.

AIR

*Richard Goldberg is a senior adviser at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD). He previously served on the US National Security Council. Brig. (res.) Prof. Jacob Nagel is a senior fellow at FDD and a visiting professor at the Technion Aerospace faculty. He previously served as head of Israel’s National Security Council. This article first appeared in The Dispatch (thedispatch.com). © FDD (www.fdd.org), reprinted by permission, all rights reserved.*

With Compliments

R L Webb  
Nominees  
Pty. Ltd

Property, investment,  
development & finance

## THE “PLAN B” PROBLEM

by Israel Kasnett

Israel could be forced to attack Iran due to US “appeasement”, former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said during a visit to Jerusalem on Oct. 12.

The next day at the US State Department, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, sitting next to Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid and Emirati Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, said his team will examine “other options if Iran doesn’t change course.”

“We believe that diplomacy is the best way to do that,” added Blinken.

But by employing the vague use of the word “other” without being specific about military options, by saying “if” and by insisting on diplomacy without a military threat to back it, Blinken and his team appear to be ignoring Iran’s blatant belligerence and disinterest in reaching another deal.

This became apparent on Oct. 15, when a senior official from the European Union acknowledged that Iran isn’t ready to return to talks in Vienna, where efforts are being made to convince Iran to return to the negotiations surrounding the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The Biden Administration, including negotiators Robert Malley and Wendy Sherman, makes it difficult for anyone to believe its promises to contain Iran when it continues to be played by Iran.

Michael Doran, a senior fellow at Hudson Institute, told the *Jewish News Syndicate (JNS)* the Biden Administration “tells allies that it intends to achieve a ‘longer and stronger’ agreement with Iran on its nuclear program. It does not explain, however, how it plans to turn this pious intention into a reality. Thus far, Iran has refused to return even to the JCPOA. If it does return, the JCPOA ends all sanctions on Iran’s nuclear program in perpetuity, thus eliminating any possibility of a longer and stronger deal.”

Lapid defined Israel’s intentions when he said, “other options are going to be on the table if diplomacy fails. By saying other options, I think everyone understands, here, in Israel, in the Emirates and in Teheran, what it is that we mean... There are moments when nations must use force to protect the world from evil.”

He then added in Hebrew that he was in Washington with the intention to focus on “the other options”.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken says the US will consider “other options” against Iran, but what does that mean? (Credit: GPO/ Flickr)



Behnam Ben Taleblu, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told *JNS* that the Biden Administration “has been talking, officially and unofficially, about the need to explore other options on Iran and using other metaphors for this need ever since indirect diplomacy collapsed after six rounds in Vienna. But talk can only achieve so much – or so little rather – in the face of a resolute adversary like the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

The Biden team so desperately wanted to restore the JCPOA that they convinced US President Joe Biden to lift some sanctions on Iran even before it had agreed to direct talks. Nevertheless, the Islamic Republic only wound up increasing its uranium-enrichment levels to more than 60%, built more advanced centrifuges and began efforts to produce uranium metal. Now Iran is dragging its feet and refusing to meet for more talks.

Ben Taleblu warned that “one great fear of the current impasse is that rather than revert to pressure, the Biden Administration will define ‘other options’ as settling for even less than the JCPOA in a bid to try to cap the nuclear program, which has expanded far beyond the JCPOA’s limits.”

## “THERE HAS NOT BEEN A PUBLIC PLAN B”

Blaise Misztal, Vice President for Policy at the Washington-based Jewish Institute for National Security of America (JINSA), was even blunter and told *JNS* that the Biden Administration’s Iran policy “has failed – and everyone seems to know it except the Biden Administration.”

“Regardless of whether Iran agrees to return to negotiations,” he said, “it is now clear that it will not accept a return to the original terms of the JCPOA; it will demand greater concessions from the United States than were made in the original deal.”

He lambasted Blinken’s vague remarks, saying “while it represents progress from previous statements, it is minuscule and insufficient. Whatever additional strength might come from Secretary Blinken invoking ‘every option,’ that is immediately undercut by the fact he said the United States was ‘looking at,’ rather than actually using, those options. Moreover, while it would be a positive development to have the United States and Israel discussing a potential military option, so long as they remain behind closed doors and they remain discussions, not decisions, they do little or nothing to pressure Iran into changing its behaviour.”

Misztal agreed with Doran that “Iran has made it clear that there is no chance that it will agree to the centerpiece of the Biden Administration’s plan: a ‘longer and stronger’ follow-on deal that fixes the JCPOA’s glaring weaknesses.”

He also noted the Biden Administration’s obsession with diplomacy, saying that while the Administration “is warning that time is running out and that it might have to

switch to Plan B, it seems that it hopes that making these statements might still breathe some life into its Plan A.”

He said the lesson that the Administration should take away from the last six months of diplomacy is “that it failed precisely because there has not been a public Plan B and timeline for when it would go into effect.”

“Blinken provided no details of what a Plan B would look like to prevent a nuclear Iran,” he continued. “Indeed, the Biden Administration, while promising to prevent a nuclear Iran, has not said – as all of its predecessors, including [former] President [Barack] Obama, did – that it will use all elements of American power, or any means necessary, to prevent a nuclear Iran. What few off-the-record remarks have been made by Biden Administration officials about what Plan B might look like, all refer to economic sanctions and make no mention of military preparations or pressure.”

“This is a glaring and unmistakable omission,” he said, adding that it is also “a major strategic mistake.”

According to Misztal, “combined with the continued reduction of US forces in the Middle East – something that meets with bipartisan support in Washington – and the Biden Administration’s weakening stance on confronting Iranian regional aggression in Syria and Yemen, it is unlikely that anyone in Teheran or in any other Middle Eastern capital believes President Biden will use force to stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear-weapons capability.”

Doran came to a similar conclusion, saying “the Biden team is not naive; it is disingenuous. It is seeking strategic accommodation with Teheran while pretending that it is still in the business of opposing the Islamic Republic. The truly naive ones are those who take the stated intentions of the Administration as truthful.”

AIR

© Jewish News Syndicate (*JNS.org*), reprinted by permission, all rights reserved.

## IRAN’S SPINNING CENTRIFUGES

By Simon Henderson

While Washington policy circles debate apparently endlessly about Iran’s nuclear intentions and its level of expertise, Teheran presses on remorselessly.

On Oct. 10, Mohammad Eslami, the newly-appointed head of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran, announced that his country had produced more than 120 kg. of 20% enriched uranium. If true, this is a dramatic increase from the 84 kg reported a month earlier by the





Advanced Iranian centrifuges, which enrich uranium at a much faster rate, are now being deployed in defiance of JCPOA restrictions (Credit: AAP)

nuclear watchdog, the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA), and the IAEA's figure of around 63 kg three months earlier.

Eslami justified the figure by saying it was the production level demanded by the Iranian Parliament in a law passed last year, noting: "We are ahead of schedule."

Lost in the reporting was the simple, although esoteric, detail that such a level of production is getting tantalisingly close to the magic figure of 200 kg. This is the amount of 20% enriched uranium that, in the archaic code of nuclear weapons, when further enriched to 90% is one "significant quantity". (An SQ is the amount needed to make one atomic bomb.)

Confusingly to non-scientists, the amounts are actually of uranium hexafluoride, which, when heated, becomes a gas and is the feedstock for high-speed centrifuges that separate out the fissile isotope Uranium-235, increasing its proportion from the 0.7% level found in natural uranium. So, if you Google "significant quantity 20 percent uranium," you will find the figure 155 kg – which is after the fluorine atoms have been removed from the 200 kg.

For a few years, 20% enrichment has been the crucial figure toward which Iran has been pressing. (Actually, its official figure for enrichment was 19.75% because 20% is the level at which enriched uranium becomes labelled as "high-enriched uranium".) Although one really needs uranium enriched to 90% of Uranium-235 for a bomb,

20% is theoretically the level with which you could create a nuclear explosion. (The US tried it once; it worked.) But this year, even before the latest news, Iran has enriched up to a 60% level. At this point, comparatively little "work" (meaning "effort"), by the spinning centrifuges separating the gaseous uranium isotopes, is needed to reach 90%. And the time it takes to reach this level is measured in just weeks.

Under the 2015 Iran nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran is not supposed to research or produce uranium metal, except under very limited and agreed-upon conditions, and is prohibited from enriching uranium to 20% until 2030.

Other, still unannounced, news is also worrying. Enrich-

ment using centrifuges essentially needs great patience. Hundreds of machines spin continuously for months on end, incrementally increasing the richness of Uranium-235 in the mix. Most of the work is done getting from the 0.7% level of Uranium-235 found in natural uranium to just 5%. The machines that Iran uses for this first stage of enrichment are known as IR-1s, an Iranian copy of Pakistan's P-1 centrifuges, which it obtained via the nuclear scientist Dr. A.Q. Khan, who died on Oct. 10 of COVID-19. The P-1 has a rating of around 1.1 or 1.2 "separative work units" (SWU).

Iran recently managed to improve the IR-1 machines it uses to around 1.5 SWU. The increase seems small but is 25% – and so ap-

preciably enhances Iran's capacity to enrich. Iran has more IR-1s than any other type of centrifuge. The IAEA is still trying to find out what exactly is the modification Iran made.

September's IAEA report included obscure paragraphs about Iran converting some uranium into uranium silicide fuel plates for possible use in a research reactor.

The debate it prompted about whether the fuel plates could work missed an important point: To get to the silicide form, the uranium has to be converted into a metal form.

This is a "red line" for countries concerned about Iran's nuclear ambitions, because converting uranium into metal

**"Iran's bomb design is thought to be an adaptation of the design Pakistan was given by China"**



gives it experience in the tricky art of making it into the grapefruit-size hemispheres needed for an actual weapon. Iran has the knowledge to do this — years ago it was given a 15-page document of details from Pakistan — but it denies putting it into practice.

Another concern about the metal form is the evidence the IAEA has of work done on a circular uranium disk with a hole in it, which Iran is reluctant to even acknowledge. The suspicion is that the disk, said to be a few inches across, relates to experiments on the “initiator” for a nuclear weapon.

The one-line explanation of an initiator is that an atomic bomb is an out-of-control chain reaction achieved by a neutron hitting a Uranium-235 atom, causing it to split, with the release of energy and more neutrons. In reality, the chain reaction is prompted by very fast compression of the uranium, achieved by conventional explosives, with a burst of neutrons from the initiator being injected at a crucial time.

Iran’s bomb design is thought to be an adaptation of the design Pakistan was given by China, in which the neutron-generating initiator sits in a small hollow less than an inch across between the two hemispheres of high-enriched uranium.



The late Pakistani nuclear scientist Dr. A.Q. Khan (Credit: Wikimedia Commons)

When Dr. Khan in Pakistan tested his initiator in 1984 — in a “cold test” using tungsten rather than uranium — he and his team could not interpret the data they collected and so asked the Chinese for help. A month later in Beijing, Chinese experts told

Khan that if high-enriched uranium had been used, there would have been a nuclear explosion.

Despite Khan’s death, his role remains important. In the more than 40 years of his diaries, which he gave me in electronic copies, he claimed that his cooperation with Teheran had been permitted and encouraged by Pakistan’s political leadership at the time and senior military officers.

An Iranian opposition group has reported that the new nuclear chief Eslami, a civil engineer by training, was a key link with Khan in the 1990s. In Khan’s diaries are several references to “the Engineer.” I once asked Khan this person’s identity, but he never gave me a proper answer. Perhaps it was Eslami.

AIR

*Simon Henderson is the Baker Fellow and director of the Bernstein Program on Gulf and Energy Policy at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Reprinted from the Hill (thehill.com) © The Hill, reprinted by permission, all rights reserved.*

## THE MEDIA AND THE TRUTH ABOUT IRAN

by Hossein Ronaghi

I am a blogger and internet freedom activist in Iran, and I have a message that millions of Iranians are desperate for you to hear: The Western media is failing the Iranian people.

There have been five nationwide uprisings against the regime in our country in the past four years. Our government has slaughtered protesters and tortured political prisoners to suppress them. Yet most people in the West — even those who consider themselves informed on Iran — don’t know our reality because foreign media coverage consistently overlooks or denies our reality.

For us, it is as if there are two Irans — the one where we live and another that you read about. Your Iran is defined by a pesky nuclear negotiation. Ours is much worse. It is a religious police state where we live in fear, with countless red lines that most dare not cross. It is a country of repression, censorship and violence. I would know — I have spent six years in its jails.

After the 2009 Green Movement protests, countless Iranians were detained and imprisoned. I was thrown into Evin prison in Teheran. I had helped Iranians bypass internet censorship, and for that “crime,” the Revolutionary Guards’ intelligence unit charged me with “acting against national security.” Writing this article could bring the same charge again.

In Iran, thinking can be a crime. The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance enforces this by closing down magazines and tearing pages out of books. The textbooks taught in our schools are full of hate, such as bigotry toward the Baha’i faith and the promotion of terrorism. Our newspapers print lies about the regime’s popularity, our nation’s history and anti-government protests. Only newspapers approved by the intelligence services are allowed to publish.

With Compliments

gleneagle  
securities

Level 27, 25 Bligh Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

[www.gleneagle.com.au](http://www.gleneagle.com.au)





Iran's morality police – harassing women over their mandatory hijabs, and bursting into parties to stop co-ed mingling (Credit: Wikimedia Commons)

Roaming morality police brutalise women for not wearing the mandatory hijab. They burst into parties where there is alcohol and co-ed mingling to beat and arrest young people. Repeat “offenders” are imprisoned, publicly flogged or executed.

This isn't 1984 or *The Handmaid's Tale*. This is our Iran.

The virtual world doesn't escape control. Facebook, Twitter and other platforms have been banned. Social-media monitors scour the web to identify and arrest those who post content deemed to violate religious dignity or insult the regime's leaders. This was another of my “crimes”.

Political activities are forbidden, aside from state-approved ones like rallies against the US or Israel. Dissidents are jailed for simple acts of civil disobedience like removing their headscarves or holding up photos of their murdered children.

Even in death, Iranians aren't free from harassment and other indignities perpetrated by the state. Many relatives of those killed by the regime aren't allowed to hold funerals.

They often are charged a fee to have their loved one's body released or are required to pay for the bullet or rope used to kill them.

For those kept alive, torture comes in many forms. Some are subjected to severe beatings, rape or whippings. Others face physical deprivation, threats and psychological torture. When I was in prison, the guards tortured me and brought me close to death. I lost a kidney and was denied proper treatment. To this day, I struggle with the effects of that torture.

This is our reality. Yet when we look abroad, we see the media portray another Iran. As protests raged across Iran in November 2019 and the Islamic Republic shut off the internet and dispatched military units to slaughter more than 1,500 protesters, a Bloomberg Iran correspondent tweeted about an unexpected snow-fall in Teheran.

When the regime shot down Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 in January 2020, murdering 176, many Western media reports said our president had no knowledge of the attack – but gave no evidence for the claim.

**“For those kept alive, torture comes in many forms. Some are subjected to severe beatings, rape or whippings. Others face physical deprivation, threats and psychological torture.”**

In Iran, we protest as loudly as we can and post videos online, but the reality doesn't find its way into most Western media reports. Meanwhile, journal-

ists tweet about trivia like new shopping malls and ignore the real story of what's happening in our country. They are showing you an imaginary Iran.

In the real Iran, we are familiar with the long shadow of state suppression. We aren't victims of global ignorance but of a deliberate and systematic attempt by the Islamic Republic to manipulate world opinion through apologists in the foreign media. Thus, you've read that there is no internal opposition to the Islamic Republic. That's wrong. We the people are the opposition.

What we ask of you is simple: to learn about Iran, listen to us, share our stories. You have been told that your solidarity would hurt us, that talking about our struggle would put us at risk. That is a lie. It is your silence and indifference that threaten us.

We have lost friends who fought for freedom from this regime. We have been in its jails and seen its torture chambers. Writing this could land me back in prison. But if that's the price for giving a voice to the voiceless, it will be worth it.

AIR

*Hossein Ronaghi is an Iranian blogger and freedom-of-speech activist. Reprinted from the Wall Street Journal. © Dow Jones and Co., reprinted by permission, all rights reserved.*

with compliments

**Alceon**  
Investment, corporate finance and capital

---

Phil Green
Trevor Loewensohn
Morris Symonds

Sydney • Melbourne • Brisbane • Perth

Tel: 02 8023 4000  
www.alceon.com.au



# MYRIAD

DIAMONDS

AIJAC  
supporters  
Special  
Offer



- 9ct gold diamond necklet with diamonds totalling 0.14 carats
  - Available in 9 carat yellow, white or rose gold
  - Chain length is adjustable to 40 or 45cm
- Normal retail price is \$699, AIJAC supporters price is \$499

[www.myriaddiamonds.com.au](http://www.myriaddiamonds.com.au)

To order, contact: [admin@gjconcepts.com.au](mailto:admin@gjconcepts.com.au)



## With Compliments SPOTLIGHT RETAIL GROUP

Level 6, 111 Cecil Street, South Melbourne VIC 3205 Australia

[spotlight.com.au](http://spotlight.com.au)

[anaconda.com.au](http://anaconda.com.au)

### SPOTLIGHT

Bargains  
Galore!



### ANACONDA

PLAY MORE  
PAY LESS 10%  
OFF





# Antisemitism – the fightback

## Australia and the IHRA definition as part of a global battle

by Judy Maynard & Naomi Levin

On October 13, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced that the Australian “Government”, “people” and “nation” would join 32 other countries and “embrace” the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism.

Appearing by video link at the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism before a distinguished international audience, Prime Minister Morrison said, “In the history of humanity the Holocaust serves as a perpetual and brutal reminder of exclusion, of racism, of systematic political hatred and evil itself.”

He emphasised that “Antisemitism has no place in Australia. It has no place anywhere in the world. And we must work together, resolutely and as a global community, to reject any word or any act that supports antisemitism towards individuals, towards communities or religious facilities.”

That stance has received strong bipartisan support in Australia. In July, Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese had committed a future Labor government to endorsing the definition, while Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong told a Zionist Federation of Australia conference in November 2020 that “Labor fully supports the IHRA definition of antisemitism – a position reaffirmed in 2016, 2019, and [which] I again reaffirm today.”

The announcement came following repeated calls from the leaders of Australia’s Jewish community for the Working Definition’s adoption following a global uptick in

antisemitic incidents in the past year due to the proliferation of online conspiracy theories falsely linking Jews to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, Israel’s response to indiscriminate rocket attacks against its civilians by terrorists in Gaza in May also led to a dramatic rise in antisemitic incidents around the world.

But for the pandemic, the forum in Malmö, Sweden’s third-largest city, would have taken place in 2020, 75 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, and the 20th anniversary of the first Stockholm Forum on the Holocaust. The fact that it was held at this time, despite the ongoing global healthcare emergency, demonstrates widespread recognition among both governments and experts that the problem has not receded and a strong collaborative effort is required.

That the forum was held in Malmö is itself significant, indicating the willingness of Swedish authorities to confront some difficult truths. Jews had fled there from the Nazis in 1943, and after the war the city received survivors from concentration camps, many of whom stayed on and made new lives there.

But in recent times, due to both verbal and physical antisemitic attacks, the city has developed a reputation as a place unsafe for Jews. The Jewish population has dwindled.

### THE ORIGINS OF IHRA

It was in 2000 at the first of four Stockholm International Forums on the Holocaust, in which AIJAC’s Jeremy Jones participated on behalf of the Australian Government, that the IHRA’s founding document was agreed on. The Stockholm Declaration gave expression to the sense of horror perpetuated by the Holocaust, and the international community’s shared responsibility to never again allow such evil, by promoting remembrance, education and research. Bringing governments together in this work is the IHRA’s mission.

The IHRA’s Working Definition of Antisemitism is the fruit of a collaborative international effort that spanned almost two decades. A valuable tool in helping to educate about, and to eradicate, antisemitism, it is not intended to be legally implemented in and of itself. Its usefulness lies in providing a means of identifying examples of antisemitism, and thus enabling the design and employment of strategies designed to counter such behaviour.

The Malmö Forum was conceived to achieve practical outcomes, as well as verbal ones. Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven insisted that participants to the forum – named “Remember-ReAct” – move from words to action: “The basis for remembrance efforts and combating antisemitism is already established, in part in the Stockholm Declaration from 2000”, he said. “What we need now is not fine words and lofty phrases, we must ensure that more concrete action is taken... to jointly make real progress in this important work.”



THE CUSTOM MADE  
RUG & CARPET  
SPECIALISTS

**DESIGNER  
RUGS**

*Established 1986*

SYDNEY | MELBOURNE  
BRISBANE | AUCKLAND

1300 802 561  
designerrugs.com.au



Scenes from the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism, which took place on Oct. 13. (Credit: Government Office of Sweden)

## THE NEW EU STRATEGY ON COMBATING ANTISEMITISM

Attended by the King and Queen of Sweden, heads of state and other dignitaries, the Forum heard presentations from various governments regarding their respective strategies.

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, presented a summary of the comprehensive “EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life” that had been launched the previous week.

The policy is intended to be implemented over the period 2021 to 2030, and seems to demonstrate a serious commitment to protecting Jews and Jewish life in Europe.

It has generally been warmly welcomed by Jewish groups. The European Jewish Congress (EJC), for example, called it “an unprecedented and vital document.”

Its goals are to strengthen the fight against antisemitism, to foster European Jewish life and to preserve the memory of the Holocaust. It acknowledges that previous efforts to prevent a rise in antisemitism have failed.

The strategy recommits the EU to the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, and notes that the most common form of antisemitism found online today is Israel-related antisemitism.

Financial commitments include a €1.55 billion (A\$2.41 billion) fund to promote fundamental rights. The strategy also pledges to halt funding to any program being run in a European member-state that discriminates against Jewish people or breaches any EU anti-discrimination rules.

The strategy commits to strengthening legal mechanisms pertaining to hate crimes and hate speech, and urges member states to provide more support to victims of anti-

semitic crimes. It notes the need for better training for police in handling these victims and improved reporting of antisemitic incidents.

Pointing to the level of antisemitism online, the strategy outlines a range of measures being undertaken currently, or in the planning stages, to reduce antisemitism in cyberspace, such as working with organisations to develop counter-narratives against rapidly spreading online conspiracy theories, and supporting a “hackathon” to find innovative ways to address antisemitism online.

With respect to physical safety and security, the European Commission committed to

organising a high-level conference to discuss the protection of Jewish communities across Europe. Funding of €24 million (A\$37 million) will also be provided to protect synagogues and other Jewish communal institutions.

The strategy also contains a pledge to support training for journalists to recognise all forms of antisemitism, including any unconscious antisemitic bias in reporting; and it plans to address antisemitism in sport, including via social media campaigns.

It even proposes to connect the Jewish festival of Tu b'Shvat, the “new year for trees,” to the EU’s pledge to plant three billion trees by 2030.

Finally, the strategy recognises the importance of educating young people about antisemitism, including the Holocaust, and “reflects Europe’s commitment to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive, even after the last Holocaust survivors have passed away.”

It finds “currently one European in 20 has never heard of the Holocaust, and less than half of Europeans think it is sufficiently taught in schools.” To correct these deficiencies, the European Commission wants to create a network of sites it calls “where the Holocaust happened”, as well as continuing to support public Holocaust memorials and commemorations.

This ambitious strategy appears to set the benchmark for other countries in terms of seriousness in combatting contemporary antisemitism.

## NATIONAL EFFORTS

Pledges by the host Swedish Government at Malmö included promoting what it calls “education for active citizenship” to prevent antisemitism and other forms of racism, and the strengthening of Holocaust research.

Stockholm pledged it would present an action program in 2022, whose elements include enhancing efforts by police to counter antisemitism, racism and hate crime, and the continuous monitoring of these activities in digital environments. The Swedish Government also plans to criminalise organised racism, and will establish a parliamentary committee to, as it puts it, “unbiasedly consider whether Holocaust denial should be more clearly criminalised.”

Sweden has also flagged the establishment in 2022 of a museum to preserve and pass on the memory of the Holocaust, and a Yiddish language centre to promote Jewish life. The funding of security measures will be significantly enhanced.

All in all, the Government expects the implementation of the proposed measures to cost some €9.3 million (A\$14.4 million) per annum.

French President Emmanuel Macron was another national leader who appeared virtually at Malmö to voice support and to outline his country’s commitments to fighting antisemitism. These include the release by year’s end of a new national strategy combating racism and antisemitism by the country’s Inter-Ministerial Delegation for Combating Racism, Antisemitism and anti-LGBT Hate (DIL-CRAH – Délégation Interministérielle à la Lutte Contre le Racisme, l’Antisémitisme et la Haine anti-LGBT). Additionally, substantially increased budgets are promised for memorial institutions and associations working to combat hatred.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also addressed the Forum, pledging that the previously unfunded office of Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Fighting Antisemitism, held by international human rights lawyer and former Justice Minister Irwin Cotler, would be upgraded to a permanent post supported by dedicated funding and staff.

Trudeau also highlighted previous actions taken by his Government, such as convening a national summit on antisemitism in July, and his Government’s adoption of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism.

Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin told the forum that his country’s proposed Hate Crime Bill would introduce new legislation outlawing both online and offline incitement to hatred against another person or group due to characteristics such as race, religion, or ethnic or national origin. It would also create a new offence of denying, or grossly trivialising, crimes of genocide, including Holocaust denial. A new National Action Plan on Racism will be published, including measures to combat antisemitism, antigypsyism/anti-Roma discrimination and other forms of racism.

Commitments outlined to the forum by Romanian President Klaus Iohannis include the establishment of an award for those who contribute to Holocaust education, research and commemoration, as well as to the

prevention of antisemitism. In May, Romania adopted its first national strategy for preventing and combating antisemitism, xenophobia, radicalisation and hate speech. In addition, it developed an action plan containing 36 concrete projects designed to protect vulnerable groups, and encourage cultural and educational programs, including the promotion of Jewish life. Efforts are being made to inaugurate a National Museum of Jewish History and the Holocaust.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told the Forum that the US was allocating \$1 million (A\$1.33 million) to counter online antisemitic hate speech in the Mideast and North Africa, and has commenced a series of international visitor leadership programs designed to confront Holocaust distortion and antisemitism in North Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Latin America.

## THE SOCIAL MEDIA FRONT

With heavy criticism directed at social media and other online sites for enabling antisemitism, officials from Facebook and YouTube pledged to take their responsibilities seriously.

Pedro Pina, YouTube chief for Europe, Middle East and Africa, committed to tackling hate speech online through policies, tools and programs, and pledged €5 million (A\$7.75 million) from Google to be directed towards governments and non-profits engaged in the fight.

Facebook’s Sheryl Sandberg described the way her company had worked with the World Jewish Congress to provide accurate information about the Holocaust to those searching for information on its platform. She said the company was removing 15 times more hate speech now than it was five years ago, and this work would not stop.

## THE WAY FORWARD

Sweden assumes the presidency of the IHRA from March 2022 until February 2023. Having required the participants in the Malmö Forum to deliver concrete pledges and not mere words, Sweden has set itself the further task of following up on these pledges during its forthcoming term.

Australia, for its part, a member of IHRA since 2019, did more than simply pledge to adopt the widely used definition of antisemitism at Malmö, welcome and important as this is. On a bipartisan basis, it demonstrated it was a core member of a global community committed to both Holocaust remembrance and fighting a battle against the growing global scourge of antisemitism, in all its manifestations. Malmö, and the examples of positive action put forward by the various other democracies there, would have provided ample ideas and potential initiatives to consider as Canberra now contemplates what more it can do to participate in those global efforts.



# ISRAEL'S ODD COALITION AND THE ARAB WORLD

by Amotz Asa-El

**F**our months after journeying from the opposite ends of Israel's political rainbow to set up camp in a shared ruling coalition, the leaders of the parties making up Israel's diverse Government have not changed their ideological spots.

A reminder of their disparate backgrounds and ideologies emerged when Defence Minister Benny Gantz met Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in Abbas' office in Ramallah on Aug. 30.

Considering that Abbas had not met an Israeli cabinet member since 2014, the meeting marked the end of an era in which Jerusalem largely sidelined Abbas. However, the attitude of the centrist Gantz was one thing, and that of right-wing Prime Minister Naftali Bennett was another.

"I don't see the logic in meeting Abu Mazen," he told *Ynet*, referring to Abbas by his unofficial *nom de guerre*. "He is suing our soldiers in The Hague and he accuses the IDF's commanders of committing war crimes," said Bennett. "My position is different," he explained, "I oppose [establishing] a Palestinian state."

Bennett's stance is shared by three of the coalition's eight partners, and opposed by the other five, who espouse a two-state solution. That is why a delegation from

the liberal Meretz faction, including Bennett's Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz and Regional Cooperation Minister Isawi Freij, also met with Abbas in Ramallah on Oct. 3.

Still, while the coalition remains deeply divided on the Palestinian issue, its partners' agreements on other issues, including other Arab affairs, seem for now stronger than their disagreements. So also does the spirit of compromise that their improbable cohabitation demands.

Compromise is a prerequisite for any governing coalition, but in Bennett's Government, which ranges from West Bank settlers to Islamist activists, compromise is a daily necessity, particularly on Arab affairs. The results have been rather surprising.

One test loomed days after the Government's establishment, when the deadline arrived for the annual renewal

of a legal stipulation that prevents the automatic naturalisation of Palestinians who marry Israelis, for fear of facilitating terrorist infiltration.

While the issue pitted one of Bennett's coalition partners, the United Arab List (UAL), against his closest ally, hawkish Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked, a deal was negotiated by Shaked and Arab

minister Isawi Freij. It was based on a formula whereby 1,600 Palestinian residents of Israel would have their status upgraded from tourists to temporary residents in exchange for the law's renewal.

The opposition managed to derail the compromise in the Knesset plenary, and it is now being renegotiated. However, the deal showed that the new coalition can produce understandings even between the starkest antagonists, and even on particularly prickly issues.

On a less explosive, but even more interesting issue, the UAL voted for a bill that legitimises medicinal cannabis



Israel's Ideologically diverse government cannot reach agreement on relations with the PA – but can do a lot in Israeli Arab communities and with regional Arab nations (Credit: Israel GPO/Flicker)

With compliments from



**Sandra & Barry  
Smorgon  
Family**



**SANDBAR**  
I N V E S T M E N T S

use. The UAL initially opposed the idea, citing Islam's opposition to addictive drugs, but received permission from its spiritual leaders to back the bill's first reading, provided its final version leaves no openings for non-medicinal use.

Even more improbably, Knesset Interior Committee Chairman Walid Taha of the UAL said that an Israeli military operation in Gaza would not necessarily bring down the Government. "An alternative government would only be worse" from a Palestinian viewpoint, he told *Channel 12's* "Meet the Press".

Lurking beyond all this pragmatism is the central Arab-related issue for the Bennett Government: crime in Israel's Arab-majority communities.

In recent years, Israeli Arab cities and neighbourhoods have become hotbeds of crime in almost all its forms: gang wars, protection rackets, drug trafficking, homicide, fraud, prostitution and gambling. The number of Israeli Arabs murdered by other Israeli Arabs rose from a record 95 in 2019 to 106 last year, and this year it is set to be even higher – there were 100 such murders by early October.

The Bennett Government is united in its determination to address this scourge, which is caused by a mixture of inadequate policing, low social investment and a culture of family feuds and so-called honour killings.

An ambitious NIS 2.4 billion (A\$1.01 billion) plan devised by a team headed by Bennett and Internal Security Minister Omer Bar-Lev (Labor), in cooperation with the UAL leader Mansour Abbas, includes deploying 1,100 additional police officers in Arab towns; opening new police stations in several such towns; establishing a special police unit for the prevention of crime in the Arab sector; and creating departments for combating street violence, protection rackets and financial fraud in the Arab sector.

Just how much of all this will happen and how successful these efforts will be remains to be seen, but there is no doubt that the Bennett Government is truly motivated on this front, and also united, for several reasons.

Firstly, the crime situation has indeed become a national crisis about which practically all citizens care. Secondly, for the coalition's Arab component it is electorally crucial – it was their key justification for breaking old taboos to enter

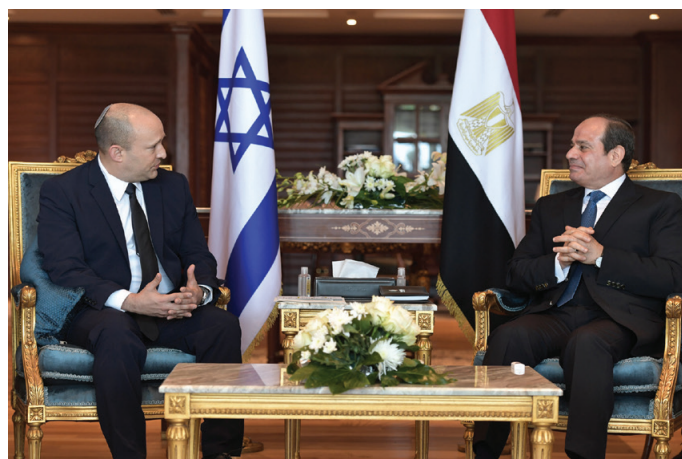
the governing coalition. Thirdly, the rest of the Government would like to see civic issues, as opposed to nationalist ones, dominate Israeli Arab politics. And lastly, crime in the Arab sector is one big and urgent issue on which this eclectic Government can demonstrate its ability to work together without ideological disagreements.

Meanwhile, this urgency and common cause on the domestic front, and impossibility to harmonise on the Palestinian front, do not mean that nothing is happening on the third front of Israeli-Arab relations, the regional.

Bennett inherited a rapidly developing thaw in Israel's relations with the broader Arab world: In the east, normalisation agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain; in the west, a similar deal with Morocco, and in the middle, close cooperation with Egypt.

The new prime minister has picked up from where his predecessor, Binyamin Netanyahu, left off.

In June, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid arrived in the United Arab Emirates, and formally opened the Israeli embassy in Abu Dhabi.



Israeli PM Naftali Bennett with Egyptian President Abdel Fatah el-Sisi at Sharm el-Sheik (Credit: Israel GPO/Flickr)

In July, Jordan's King Hussein, whose relations with Netanyahu were rocky, hosted Bennett in his palace. The meeting was unofficial and only became known after it had been held, but diplomats say relations between the two countries have been improving since the change of government. Israel later signed a deal to greatly increase the amount of water it supplies to Jordan.

In August, Lapid visited Morocco, and formally opened the Israeli mission in Rabat, which, according to the Abraham Accords, will later become an embassy. Lapid was accompanied by the Moroccan-born Welfare Minister Meir Cohen, whose family moved to Israel in 1961 when he was six.

In September, Bennett visited Egypt and met President Abdel Fatah el-Sisi in the Red Sea resort town of Sharm el-Sheik. It was the first time in a decade that the two

**A.Wiener and Company**  
DIAMONDS AND FINE JEWELLERY



Level 10, 227 Collins Street  
Melbourne Vic 3000

Ph: (03) 9654 1766 [www.wiener.com.au](http://www.wiener.com.au)

countries' leaders have publicly met in Egypt. Bennett was greeted warmly, a reflection of the close cooperation between Egypt and Israel in fighting terror in general, and in the Sinai Desert in particular.

Later that month, Lapid landed in Bahrain, where he met with King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and also inaugurated the Israeli embassy in Manama. Lastly, in October, Lapid conferred in Washington with his American and Emirati counterparts, Antony Blinken and Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed.

Added up, these events suggest that the process of normalisation between Israel and the broader Arab world has not been affected by the change of government in Israel and, if anything, has accelerated. The common denominator among all these Arab countries is that, like Israel, they feel threatened by Islamist terror, and by Iran.

While engaging in all this diplomatic hyperactivity, Lapid is cultivating the worldly profile that his current job requires and that he also hopes will help benefit his future career.

His turn to succeed Bennett as prime minister is now less than two years away, according to the coalition agreement, and the outgoing and telegenic Lapid has aroused curiosity in world capitals. In some places, there are reportedly also hopes that he will make moves on the Palestinian front that Bennett would not.

This is likely wishful thinking. The alliance between Bennett and Lapid is the most solid element in Israeli politics right now, and attempts to drive a Palestinian wedge between them will probably fail.

Opponents of Bennett's hard line on the Palestinian front will therefore have to make do with what he has been up to on Israel's domestic and regional fronts in dealing with the Arab world – where the strangest coalition Israel has ever had is, so far, delivering no less than previous governments, and possibly more.

AIR

## MORE PRO-IRANIAN CONSPIRACY THEORIES OUT OF SYDNEY

by Ran Porat

In the previous *AIR*, I reviewed the pro-Iranian propaganda promoted in Australia by the Sydney-based 5 News website (5news.com.au) and especially its executive producer, Hanif Bismi.

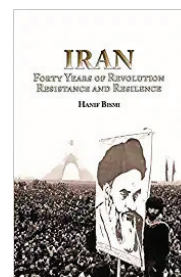
This time the focus will be on Bismi's sycophantic book about Iran, and on how he spreads anti-Israel fabrications and anti-US conspiracy theories.

## IRAN: FORTY YEARS OF REVOLUTION, RESISTANCE AND RESILIENCE

Bismi regularly has his articles published in the *Australian Muslim Times* (*AMUST*) and in July 2019 was the winner of the *AMUST* writers' award.

For Bismi, *AMUST* is just another platform for spreading Teheran's narrative to Australian audiences. For example, reporting on the visit of then Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to India in 2018, Bismi described Iran as "the beacon of Muslim unity... Iran continues to live up with this popular narrative of Islamic unity". Not a word about the wars, killings and deep animosity between Teheran with its Shi'ite proxies and Sunni nations across the Middle East.

Bismi's book, *Iran: Forty years of Revolution, Resistance and Resilience*, appears to be his latest means for promoting Teheran's interests and worldview to readers of English. Published earlier this year in India, Bismi's country of birth, it is currently unavailable in Australia (and so has not yet been viewed by this author.)



The book was reviewed by *AMUST* editor Zia Ahmad, who admitted that he is an Iran enthusiast himself: "For me Iran is a special place, having visited it in 1985 following the Islamic Revolution in order to attend a conference where I met many great people including Imam Khomeini."

Ahmad says that Bismi's book summarises Persian history and culture, as well as "the unique Islamic revolution, its causes and achievements and the resistance and resilience of the Islamic Republic of Iran for more than four decades against all kinds of global opposition and hegemony... The book [includes] photographs showcasing... its revolutionary leadership and the popular base for Islamic Iran that continues to thrive as a result of its pragmatic policies." The appalling human rights record of the oppressive regime in Teheran, the dire economic situation in Iran and the "pragmatic policies" of trying to build an atomic bomb and exporting terror do not seem to have been featured in the book.

## FAMILIAR ANTI-WEST CONSPIRACIES

To his followers on 5 News and on social media, Bismi spreads anti-Western conspiracy theories of the sort generally promoted by Iran and its proxies, and other Islamist radicals.

In June 2021, Bismi entertained on a Facebook post the conspiracy theory that the US "created 911 [terror attacks] to create islamophobia to loot the natural resources of Muslim nations in the name of their democracy."

Similarly, commenting in April 2021 on the killing of the head of Iran's secret nuclear weapons program Mohsen Fakhrizadeh the previous November, Bismi again insisted that the US and its campaign against terrorism are merely a pretext to murder Muslims and force Mus-





lim countries to obey Washington: “Millions of Muslims have been systematically slaughtered since 9/11 by the US and its allies under the pretext of ‘war on terror’. America used 9/11 as an excuse to invade and to destroy Muslim countries [sic]. ‘War on terror’ was institutionalised to wage war, impose sanctions, and propagate to topple those governments in the Muslim world who would not take orders from Washington. US and its allies which are currently involved in numerous illegal wars against defenseless [sic] nations.”

In July 2021, at the beginning of an interview with Turkish journalist in exile Levent Kenez on his 5 News show about the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, Bismi suggested that Israel and the US colluded with Turkey to remove Syrian tyrant Bashar al-Assad: “[Turkish] Prime Minister [sic] Mr. Erdogan visited Israel in 2005. Turkey is involved in Syria, along with US and allies, since 2011, supporting those who want to overthrow the legitimate government of President Dr. [Bashar] al-Assad.”

Bismi expanded this concoction on 5 News later that month to insist Islamic State was also part of the plot. He claimed that “The Syrian conflict began in 2011 when local protests were hijacked and camouflaged as a ‘civil war’ which is how anti-Assad powers wanted to paint it. Next emerged the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) created with the sole aim of destroying Iraq and Syria. Western powers had incubated these outfits so that they could be released into the population to cause terror and the necessary chaos under which sitting governments could be overthrown and puppet regimes installed in the region.”

## THE US-ISRAEL MASTER PLAN

Bismi “analysed” the 2020 Abraham Accords peace agreements between Israel and four Arab and Muslim countries in an article on 5 News in April 2021. His main thesis: They are part of the US-Israel scheme to take over the region. “Expansion and acceptance of the newly created Israel was one of the political objectives of the US which since then has tried to create a favourable political climate in the Middle East”, says Bismi. “To advance this

goal US empowered its proxies in countries at the heart of Muslim world which had no independent foreign policy.” Meanwhile, internal Palestinian divisions, explained Bismi, are not genuine, but “a proxy for Israel and US towards the Greater Israel master-plan.”

Only Iran, argues Bismi, stands in the way of this mega plot – which apparently also included both the Iran-Iraq war and Saddam Hussein’s 1990 invasion of Kuwait: “Experts say that ‘the master plan’ began when Saddam with help of America attacked the newly established Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. US viewed the new Islamic Republic as a threat to this ‘master plan’. Later Saddam invaded Kuwait enabling US to establish military bases in the region. ‘The master plan’ continued through the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 under the pretense [sic] of Weapons of Mass Destruction. In 2006, first time in Israel’s history it tasted a defeat as a result of Israel-Hezbollah direct war. Hezbollah was well supported by Iran and Syria. Hence attacking Syria became necessary for ‘the master plan’. A war against Syria loomed under the smoke screen of the ‘Arab Spring’.”

Discussing the latest illegal import of Iranian fuel to Lebanon by Hezbollah on 5 News, Bismi painted the Lebanese terrorist organisation as a peaceful NGO, failing to mention that it is an armed militia and an international crime syndicate, responsible for the deaths of thousands around the world and actively fighting alongside the Syrian regime. According to Bismi, Hezbollah is “a socio-political organization ingrained with the Lebanese society which must tried [sic] hard to be inclusive and to stay above religious differentiation in a religiously divided nation. Syed Hasan Nasrallah, the chief of Hezbollah stepped in to help the people of Lebanon by asking for aid from Iran. Over the past decades, Iran has helped Lebanon in its needy times.” The same Nasrallah dragged Lebanon into a war with Israel in 2006 bringing destruction and death to Lebanon’s citizens – oh wait, Bismi has said that war was a glorious victory against the US-Israel master plan, so obviously it must have been worth it!

As expected, following the May 2021 conflict in Gaza, Bismi joined the choir of disinformation about Israel. His “International outrage to Israel’s assaults” June article on 5 News blamed Israel for the violence, gave a false explanation about how it had started, and suggested that Israel’s very existence is at the heart of the violence: “The current situation has begun with a new illegal settlement just as illegal settlements are as old as Israel itself.”

AIR

*Dr. Ran Porat is an AIJAC Research Associate. He is also a Research Associate at the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation at Monash University, a Research Fellow at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the Interdisciplinary Centre in Herzliya and a Research Associate at the Future Directions International Research Institute, Western Australia.*



**AIR CONDITIONING & VENTILATION SOLUTIONS**

**Orion Mechanical Services Pty Limited**

ABN 20 101 402 411

Factory Unit 40/34-36 Ralph Street  
Alexandria NSW 2015

Phone: +61 2 9669 1404

Fax: +61 2 9669 2404

Mobile: +61 414 877 516

Email: [info@orionmechanical.com.au](mailto:info@orionmechanical.com.au)

[www.orionmechanical.com.au](http://www.orionmechanical.com.au)

DESIGN - INSTALLATION - SERVICE - MAINTENANCE  
RESIDENTIAL - INDUSTRIAL - COMMERCIAL - PROJECTS



## A polemic rooted in conspiracy theory

### Dateline Jerusalem: Journalism's Toughest Assignment

by John Lyons

Monash University Publishing, 2021, 91 pp., \$19.95

by Allon Lee & Tzvi Fleischer

The new 84-page booklet *Dateline Jerusalem: Journalism's Toughest Assignment* by John Lyons, the former Middle East correspondent for the *Australian* and current ABC Executive Editor of News and Head of Investigative Journalism, is a polemic rooted in a conspiracy theory.



ABC Executive Editor of News and Head of Investigative Journalism John Lyons (Source: Twitter)

In it, Lyons insists that Australians are being denied the opportunity to learn about Israel's deliberately cruel policies towards Palestinians, and its determination to stymie the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza, so the dream of "Greater Israel" (see pg.18) can be achieved.

The booklet's argument centres on the supposed responsibility of the

"pro-Israeli lobby", particularly the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC), for creating this purported information black hole. Lyons claims AIJAC and others use the "deliberate tactic[s]" of bullying, intimidating, accusations of antisemitism and exerting illegitimate pressure on the media, to convince news rooms to think "it is simply not worth running" critical stories about Israel "as it will cause more trouble than it's worth" (pg. 5).

#### The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is "blindingly simple"

On pg.15, Lyons claims that the Israel lobby says, "Israel's dispute with the Palestinians is complicated", but "It's not. It's blindingly simple." He then explains that the whole story is that in 1967 Israel occupied land set aside by the UN for a Palestinian state – and by implication, should simply get out.

Having established to his own satisfaction that Israel is the side wholly responsible for the lack of peace – an assumption never questioned throughout the whole booklet – Lyons tries to portray Australian pro-Israel advocacy organisations as working to deliberately hide this truth.

On pg. 25, he explains he knows about this because he went to Israel

when he was editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* (in the booklet, Lyons says it was 1997 but he is incorrect, contemporary media reports show it was 1996. That visit was organised by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, and was not, as Lyons falsely claimed in a webinar interview with Stan Grant on Oct. 6, a "Board and AIJAC" trip). He writes of that trip, "the general line of the trip was that Israel tries so hard to make peace with the Palestinians, and if only the Palestinians were reasonable then there could be a solution."

Lyons proceeds to attack that "general line", claiming in hindsight it was "wall-to-wall propaganda, choreographed to portray the occupation of the West Bank as normal."

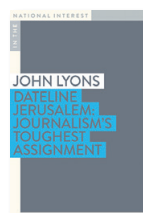
1996 was only two years after the Palestinian Authority was established by the Rabin Government as part of the Oslo Accords in an effort to pave the way to peace, so it would not have been hard to portray Israel as seeking peace.

Yet Lyons never concedes anywhere in the booklet that Israel has ever done anything to genuinely try to make peace. Oslo and Rabin are not mentioned – nor is the Palestinian Authority, which has controlled the daily lives of most West Bank Palestinians since then.

Of course, the only way the booklet can justify the claim the conflict is not complicated – a claim no serious scholar of the conflict would make – is by omitting vital information about the conflict's history and the reality on the ground.

It is precisely because the conflict is anything but simple that pro-Israel advocacy groups, including AIJAC, organise short study visits to Israel and the West Bank for Australian politicians, opinion makers and media professionals to gain a more nuanced understanding of those complexities of the conflict that Lyons insists do not exist.

Participants on AIJAC study visits always meet with representatives from the Palestinian Authority, visit



refugee camps on the West Bank and are free to go wherever they like and speak to whomever they want.

And most study visit participants quickly realise that the Lyons view that the conflict is “blindingly simple” is obviously wrong.

#### Omitting what does not fit the narrative

Lyons’ claim about the conflict being about Israel’s seizure of Palestinian land in 1967 and refusing to vacate it leads him to ignore and omit anything that contradicts this simplistic narrative.

These include the facts that there was no Palestinian state prior to 1967; that the West Bank and Gaza, which Israel captured in a defensive war, had been occupied since 1948 by Jordan and Egypt respectively; and that in 1967, virtually no one was calling for the establishment of a Palestinian state in these areas, including even the PLO.

In addition to never mentioning the Oslo Accords, Lyons also never acknowledges that in the years following his 1996 trip, Israel made three credible offers of statehood to the Palestinians that were rejected – in 2000, 2001 and 2008.

Also not mentioned is how the rejection of the highest profile Israeli offer in 2000 by then Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, was followed by the deliberate launching of a mass terror campaign, the Second Intifada, that lasted five years and resulted in the murders of more than 1,000 Israelis, with thousands more injured, as well as many casualties on the Palestinian side.

In fact, there is virtually no reference to any Palestinian terrorism anywhere in the booklet.

Lyons does not even mention the US-mediated talks held in 2013-14 – when Lyons was actually based in Jerusalem – where a similar deal was reportedly discussed.

Nor does the booklet discuss Israel’s unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, or how it was followed by the Islamist terror group Hamas,

committed to Israel’s destruction, launching a successful coup there against the Palestinian Authority in 2007, and since then using Gaza to launch thousands of missiles and rockets at Israel’s civilian population.

All of these indisputable facts which complicate Lyons’ claim that the whole conflict is a “blindingly simple” story of Israel conquering Palestinian land and brutally ruling Palestinians are airbrushed out of the picture in this booklet.

#### Pro-Israel advocates are ipso facto far right extremists

On pg. 23, Lyons nonchalantly accuses AIJAC of “hold[ing] hardline positions”, of being “aligned to the far right of Israeli politics” and being in support of a “greater Israel”.

He offers no justification or evidence for any of this name-calling, other than an ambiguous quote from former *Australian* newspaper editor Chris Mitchell, in which he doesn’t call AIJAC “far right” or anything resembling it.

In reality, of course, AIJAC is an Australian advocacy group whose views align with the mainstream Australian Jewish community. It is not aligned with any Israeli political grouping and regularly hosts Israeli guests and speakers from across the political spectrum and works with Israelis of all political stripes.

For instance, over recent years, AIJAC has hosted numerous Israeli Labor Party lawmakers including current party leader Merav Michaeli, then party Secretary-General Hilik Bar, former Labor PM Ehud Barak and former Labor leader, and current President of Israel, Isaac Herzog.

Furthermore, AIJAC has criticised decisions and policies of Israel’s governments and unacceptable comments made by Israeli politicians on numerous occasions.

In fact, ever since the Oslo peace process began in 1993, AIJAC has been a vocal and consistent supporter of the principle of Israelis and Palestinians making peace through a negotiated settlement of outstanding issues, in the form of two separate nation states – one for Jews and one for the Palestinians.

Virtually all of AIJAC’s significant public statements on the Israeli-Palestinian issue make this clear.

Yet, despite AIJAC’s repeated commitments to a two-state outcome, Lyons says of AIJAC, “they may occasionally talk about a two-state solution, but

in my view this is purely lip-service. If they genuinely wanted a two-state solution they would push not just for an end to new settlements but for the winding back of existing settlements.”

No Israeli Zionist party, even those on the left, advocates the immediate dismantling of settlements, as Lyons demands AIJAC must do here.

So in Lyons’ worldview, in order to not be “far right,” a Jewish group must be more radically left-wing than any Israeli Zionist political party.

#### Claims about pro-Israel lobby pressure

Lyons claims that Middle East correspondents and their outlets face extraordinary pressure from pro-Israel organisations to censor what they see in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

Yet there is not one single example in the booklet of AIJAC or any other Jewish group directly causing a media organisation to withdraw or refuse to run a story critical of Israel.

Perhaps this is why Lyons argues that media outlets self-censor.

Even then, his examples are ridiculous.

Pg. 74 of the booklet claims that “many media outlets – including my own organisation, the ABC – largely ignored” the April 2021 Human

**“Lyons demands readers accept his word that pro-Israel lobby groups are shutting down critical coverage of Israel by making accusations of antisemitism without offering a single example”**



Rights Watch report – which Lyons wholeheartedly endorses – that scurrilously and untruthfully accused Israel of having crossed the threshold into Apartheid.

In the webinar with veteran Australian journalist Stan Grant (Oct. 6), Lyons was even more emphatic about the alleged failure to cover the report, saying, “not a peep. You know front page *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, BBC. All around the world. Huge play. It’s a big story...barely a peep in Australia. I could not find a single story on it anywhere.”

Lyons did not look very hard. The SBS website and its TV news bulletin, the *Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald* print editions and multiple websites, including the *Guardian Australia*, as well as news.com.au and its many subsidiaries – the *Australian*, *Herald Sun*, *Daily Telegraph* etc. – all covered the HRW report.

Lyons’ claims about *New York Times* and *Washington Post* “front page” coverage are also false. The *New York Times* covered the report on pg. 12, the *Washington Post* ran an analysis in the world section and an opinion piece.

### The antisemitism furphy

According to Lyons, groups like AIJAC shut down critical media reports on Israel with accusations of antisemitism.

On pg. 27, he writes, “I find it disturbing that the claim of anti-Semitism is frequently made against critical reporting of Israel” and on pg. 81 he says, “the accusation of anti-Semitism cannot be used to shut down debate.”

Yet the booklet fails to cite even one bona fide example of AIJAC or any other Jewish group ever making such a claim about a report.

In essence, Lyons demands readers accept his word that pro-Israel lobby groups are shutting down critical coverage of Israel by making accusations of antisemitism without offering a single example.

### Two blatant misrepresentations regarding AIJAC’s Colin Rubenstein

On pg. 18, Lyons makes the extraordinary claim that AIJAC has “unadulterated power” and “there are only three people who can tell the editors of *The Australian* what they can or can’t use: Rupert Murdoch, Lachlan Murdoch and [AIJAC Executive Director Dr.] Colin Rubenstein. Only one of them doesn’t have Murdoch as his surname. That’s power.”

Lyons selectively quotes, and then completely misrepresents, an email from Colin Rubenstein to substantiate his claim that Rubenstein is so powerful that he could tell the editors of the *Australian* newspaper what they could and could not print, and they would cravenly comply.

In fact, the Rubenstein email merely mentioned in passing the agreed ground rules of an off the record media conference organised by the Israeli Embassy, not AIJAC, that had already taken place. He didn’t, as Lyons claims, tell the editors what they couldn’t publish. Lyons omits the part of the email noting that the briefing had been off the record.

A detailed rebuttal exposing the blatant misuse of the email – including its full text – can be read in a blog post on AIJAC’s website.

A further example of Lyons egregiously misusing primary sources to smear AIJAC is found on pg. 46 where he selectively quotes from a speech Colin Rubenstein delivered on the steps of the Victorian Parliament at a pro-Israel rally during the 2014 Israel-Hamas war.

Lyons accurately quotes Rubenstein saying “Israel does more than any other country to avoid killing civilians.”

But Lyons omits mentioning Rubenstein’s words immediately afterwards, listing the measures the Israeli military used to avoid civilian casualties, including “phone calls, texts, leaflets and the knock on the roof to warn civilians, even if that means it loses some military advantage.”

Instead, Lyons implies Rubenstein was disrespecting the Australian military, writing, “Rubenstein had said that a foreign army conducted itself with higher moral standards than the army of the country of which he was a citizen,” adding numerous “leaders of Australia’s Jewish community have echoed the same view.”


But Rubenstein never said anything of the sort. It is insidiously implied that Rubenstein and other Jewish leaders perhaps have greater emotional loyalty to Israel than their own country.

### Conclusion

All the above raises serious questions about the propriety of a senior ABC News and Current Affairs executive essentially seeking to delegitimise the activities of one segment of Australian society – especially on the basis of factual errors, misrepresentations and blatant misuse of sources (of which there are too many in the booklet for this article to address).

Lyons’ name-calling, browbeating and factual distortions appear designed to delegitimise efforts like AIJAC’s to expose one-sided, distorted or historically illiterate media coverage wherever it may come from – without ever addressing the substance of any of it, something he never does in the booklet or anywhere else.

AIJAC has a democratic right to offer constructive criticism to the media, and a right to expect media reporters, editors and decision-makers will consider any such criticisms on their merits, as they would with any other community group.

There should be no place in a democratic multicultural Australia for Lyons’ contention that one sort of community group – Jewish pro-Israel ones – are too dangerous to have their voices heard and considered. 

(An extended version of this article, addressing a number of additional serious errors and problems in Lyons’ booklet, has been posted on the AIJAC website.)



# ESSAY

## Future Wars

### Inside the IDF's sci-fi weapons plans

by Hanan Greenwood

Think about any science fiction war movie you have seen lately — augmented reality binoculars providing information to soldiers in the field; drones eliminating threats from a great distance and providing precise intelligence to a force behind cover; autonomous vehicles operating in an urban setting without any human presence. A lot of the things you will have seen are no longer science fiction, and are possessed by militaries around the world, with the IDF leading the field.

“Our vision is that entire theatres will fight autonomously, without a single human being directly involved in the fighting,” say engineers from Israeli defence electronics company Elbit Systems’ C4i (command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence) division, explaining how they see the battlefield of the future.

Elbit is where a lot of the most classified technologies in the IDF are being developed; some of them are already changing the battlefield. “In the future, which is no longer in the realm of science fiction, entire areas of the battlefield will be fought with autonomous means, without a single human. The robots will report back that they have completed their mission and we will return to routine.”

My visit is the first-ever by a journalist to Elbit’s classified labs in the heart of Netanya. Around 50% of what we saw is prohibited for publi-

cation due to considerations of state security. What can be said is that some of the technologies being developed here will significantly change the battlefield and will save soldiers’ lives in the next war or in future operations. If you were to see them, you would think they were coming straight out of a movie.

One needn’t look to the distant future, though, to see the IDF quickly absorbing advanced technologies. The IDF has already brought into service autonomous and robotic vehicles, drone fleets and sophisticated battlefield communication networks. The jewel in the crown of all these advanced systems, however, is the MK 77 and 624 radio transceivers, with

which anyone who has served in a combat role in the IDF will be familiar. But more on these later.

### A TRAINING REVOLUTION

The most significant change can already be seen shortly after soldiers are conscripted into the IDF. Colonel (res.) Arik Avivi, the outgoing head of the weapons department at the ground forces command, reveals that the IDF will soon bring into service simulators for light weapons training. This, he says, will save the army a fortune and better prepare soldiers for combat, as from the outset they will be able to train in challenging terrain instead of shooting at cardboard cut-out figures on the firing range.

“We have already started constructing a combat training facility at the Nahal Brigade training base that will be entirely based on the use of simulators. It’s a revolution. We will save 100% ammunition; we will shorten training time and we will improve the professional level of the soldiers.” Reservists are already using a simulator at the Sorek Base that within hours prepares them for combat in complex urban environments. In the near future, all combatants will train like that.

Personal equipment has also been significantly upgraded. In the past



The IDF is moving to quickly outfit all its combat troops with hi-tech gear that previously only went to special forces (Credit: IDF/Flickr)



only special forces units received night vision goggles for each soldier, while in the infantry battalions only commanders, snipers, and a few individual soldiers would be allocated such equipment. Today all combat battalions are fully equipped as the IDF has understood that optimal fighting capabilities need to be assured into darkness. Other projects in the works are enabling combatants to identify enemy fighters using digital means, and “smart glasses” that operate without needing to be touched. The US Army is currently conducting a large pilot program to introduce smart glasses for its soldiers, and we can expect to see such technologies reach the IDF as well.

About two years ago, a special tech combatant unit was set up within the elite IDF Paratrooper Brigade Reconnaissance Battalion (*Sayeret Tzanchanim*). The soldiers specialise in using specialist equipment on the battlefield. But this is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the introduction of special capabilities to infantry brigades – and that means that in the very near future, soldiers from the Golani, Paratrooper Nahal, Givati and Kfir brigades will have capabilities that soldiers from these cohorts could only have dreamed of a couple of years ago.

“The trend in the coming years will be to provide tactical forces with more specialist equipment” says Colonel Avivi. “All new weapons are given first to the reconnaissance units because the personnel are of higher quality. We learn from them and if everything works out, we send it down to the combat battalions.”

## SEND IN THE DRONES

But all of that is just a promo for what soldiers in standing army battalions will receive in the near future. During Operation Guardian of the Walls, the battle with Hamas earlier this year, the Sayeret Tzanchanim tech unit used a new drone called the *Maoz* (Firefly) produced by Rafael Advanced



Elbit drones in action (Credit: Elbit Systems)

Defence Systems. The Firefly is a loitering munitions system that can locate and attack targets at a range of 1,000 metres, or 500 metres in urban environments. It carries a 350-gram warhead and dives at a speed of 70 kph before exploding on its target.

Avivi reveals that 15 IDF operational battalions are about to receive the Firefly, which will constitute a significant force multiplier in any future conflict. Company commanders already have observation and intelligence drones, and now they will receive a weapon that will enable them to operate without exposing themselves. “Maoz is a lethal drone that when a terrorist is identified will close the circuit and blow itself up on them. A lot of these tools will be available to the IDF very soon.”

During Guardian of the Walls, Sayeret Tzanchanim employed drone swarms, a tactic that will be increasingly used in the near future. However, in the future fewer drones will

be employed as they will be able to travel further and carry larger warheads, requiring fewer of them to achieve the same effect.

With all due respect to face-to-face physical skirmishes, combat is becoming more and more about intelligence, and commanders who don’t make use of intelligence capabilities will find themselves at a disadvantage, endangering themselves and their soldiers. Every battalion and company commander today has intelligence drones and because they have become so ubiquitous and cheap, they are no longer fixed if they break – it is more cost-effective just to replace them. These drones provide short-term intelligence to tactical forces and provide commanders with up-to-date situational intelligence.

One of the most advanced tools in IDF use today, and one that is being revealed here for the first time, is what the IDF has dubbed “seismic pearls”, small circular sensors just a few centimetres wide that carry an antenna.

During the next war, thousands of these devices will be dropped from planes and drones, and will be able to detect movement on the ground.

“The seismic sensors were envisioned by the late Shimon Peres, who set up an NGO called Pearls of Wisdom,” said Avivi. “He said fol-



[www.noahsjuice.com.au](http://www.noahsjuice.com.au)  
[www.facebook.com/NoahsCreativeJuices](https://www.facebook.com/NoahsCreativeJuices)





lowing the Second Lebanon War that there is no need for planes to fly back and forth and that we would create advanced appliances that are capable of tracking terrorists. The vision is that in the future the pearls will be the size of a droplet.”

In practice, the pearls can’t be located once they have been dropped because they are so small. They will be able to provide intelligence in the field and give an up-to-date situational picture to digital ground army systems.

“As an officer in the Second Lebanon War, I remember situations of friendly fire that occurred because I couldn’t understand who was on the other side of the hill just a kilometre-and-a-half away,” recalls a senior official who accompanied us on the tour of the Elbit campus. This has changed at unprecedented speed, and it looks like in the future the changes will even be a lot more dramatic.

Elbit is currently developing a 15 centimetre drone with the aim of sending it into hostile territory equipped with sensors so that Israeli forces will be able to identify the enemy without endangering themselves. “Our vision is that these miniature drones will enter buildings and fly between trees, and at the same time the sensors that we have dropped ... will provide intelligence. The seismic pearls work for a few days and can do the work deep in enemy territory without us being there.”

## THE NETWORKED BATTLEFIELD

The jewel in the crown of Elbit’s technological developments, one that pulls together all the digital

capabilities of the ground army, is Digital Army Program – a kind of digital navigation system on steroids. An encrypted system is installed on every armoured vehicle, tank, and armoured personnel carrier and even on special IDF smartphones; the system provides real-time information about the location of friendly forces, terrorists and targets. This system received a major update a few months ago.



Elbit's SmartEye ballistic eyewear, which provides users with instant situational awareness (top); Elbit's Smart WristView (bottom) (Credit: Elbit Systems)

The impact of this system on the battlefield is difficult to overstate. It provides a real-time overview of the entire battlefield, integrating input from Unit 8200 and the intelligence branch in Tel Aviv through to planes and unmanned aerial vehicles, the Armoured Corps, the Navy, and all the way down to individual infantry soldiers crouching behind a wall, metres away from the enemy.

“The system has input from the

chiefs of staff at ‘the pit’ [the operations centre of IDF headquarters in Tel Aviv] down to infantrymen in the field. We can analyse what the soldiers in the field can see and from that construct an ambush on a target and destroy it,” said the engineers from Elbit’s C4i division.

“The system allows threat location and enables us to prioritise. If in the Second Lebanon War, intelligence from Unit 8200 took half an hour to reach a battalion commander and only then made its way down to troops on the ground, now all of that will happen in seconds,” they explained.

“We will be able to transmit to a soldier’s smartphone where the enemy is, to a great degree of certainty, and enable them to view the battlefield through the cameras of a ship or plane and other means. Every platoon commander will know how to create targets, to open a live chat with all the relevant elements, and to request an immediate strike if needed. Our vision is that already during the next campaign we will see a lot of video-based combat – they [soldiers] will be able to see from a plane or UAV in real time. These processes will help us keep our soldiers safe and on the other hand conduct strikes that are far more accurate,” they added.

None of this is science fiction; it is all already in use in the IDF.

“The Digital Army Program gives us intelligence that we have never had before. There is nothing like it anywhere in the world. It’s in another league. We let Elbit know everything we need and they supply us with the capabilities,” explains Colonel Avivi.

“We have the ability to close circles of fire, to connect to the air force, whatever we want. If we had these capabilities in previous operations such as Defensive Shield, we would have lost far fewer soldiers. It’s true that soldiers knew how to orient themselves before the digital ground army, but it’s like the Waze navigation app – it’s a backup. Training will still teach soldiers to be able to cope

# REBEL

PROPERTY GROUP

PROUDLY SUPPORTING AIJAC

without technology, but why should I want to prevent a soldier from getting stuck in a traffic jam? We save lives with these [tools].”

In the future, the IDF will be able to monitor each and every soldier on the battlefield and thus to know how the force is deployed and even whether soldiers have been kidnapped – and where they have been taken. A few weeks ago, soldiers from the *Refaim* (Ghost) Multidimensional Unit conducted an experiment at the Smart-Tech facility with an appliance the size of a packet of cigarettes. The idea is that from next year, if everything works out, thousands of soldiers will be equipped with the devices.

## STAYING CONNECTED

There is one thing that is essential in order to provide the full intelligence picture, operate the Digital Army Program, the drones and the rest of the classified equipment that soldiers will use in the next war – an internet connection, even in areas without reception. And this is where radio transceivers – those burdensome boxes that soldiers carry on their backs – come in. The soldiers may see them as a tool for commanders to speak with each other, but for the IDF they are the most significant factor in the next war.

“We are in the midst of creating a revolution that will enable a quantum leap in the battlefield,” say the folks at Elbit. “We are bringing the radio of the future to the IDF. Currently, you can only be a champion gamer if you have a powerful computer, and here the goal is to make our soldiers the most lethal and efficient in the world. Today we have a cellular device that is connected to radio and can generate operational internet in the battlefield.”

Over the past few years, the IDF has been working to dramatically improve coordination between its various branches so as to enable real-time data transfer and create efficient mutual strike capabilities,



In the future, an IDF soldier is likely to need his smartphone and laptop at least as much as his rifle and ammunition (Credit: IDF/Flickr)

among other things through the use of advanced digital equipment. About two months ago, an advanced pilot exercise was held in the Golan Heights with the aim of integrating Air Force and Military Intelligence personnel into ground force units. Pilots and intelligence officers joined in the exercise held by a battalion battle team – tanks, infantry, artillery UAVs and more. They experienced what war looks like in practice, not via the screens at the IDF headquarters in the Tel Aviv.

“These officers are doing holy work but they do it from offices in the Kirya [IDF HQ in Tel Aviv]. Now, however, they have been inside a tank and fired shells, and they understand how the intelligence they generate from the rear serves the last mile of the manoeuvring force,” explains Artillery Corps commander Brigadier Neri Horowitz. “The officers slept in the field, ate battle rations and gained a better understanding of operational processes. We are conducting a lot of digitisation processes, but there is no replacement for knowing how to work together. After we drop those officers off in the field, the guys from military intelligence understand better how things work on the ground and how to better operate the Digital Army Program.”

That exercise came alongside another project that is currently taking shape in the IDF, the *Sufa* (assistance and assault) teams. For the first time, alongside artillery support officers, whose role is to coordinate between artillery batteries and fighting forces on the ground, battalions will also have aerial support officers and soldiers who have been trained as assault NCOs, and whose role will be to locate and map targets and coordinate artillery fire, missile fire and aerial assault vehicles – operated via technological means and command and control systems, including the Digital Army Program.

“Robotic technology is being developed around the world at a dizzying pace. Technologically, we are there. There is no alternative to ground manoeuvres in winning a war, it cannot be done without it – but we can provide the ground forces with tools that will prevent unnecessary loss of life and change the battlefield,” says Colonel Avivi, summing up the revolution that is currently taking place in the IDF.

AIR

*Hanan Greenwood reports on military and ultra-Orthodox affairs for Israel Hayom. © Israel Hayom (www.israel-hayom.com), reprinted by permission, all rights reserved.*



# AsheMorgan

INTUITIVE CAPITAL

## A Specialised Real Estate Investment Group

At AsheMorgan, we have been involved in real estate for over 30 years and have a demonstrated capability in earning superior returns for our investors. We invest in quality assets that meet strict risk guidelines and asset investment profiles.

We actively seek commercial and retail opportunities across the east coast of Australia where we are able to achieve value add returns through our specialist management skills and an active participation in asset delivery.

Investments all have a high degree of transparency, including documentation, reporting and fee structures.

Contact us to find out more about how to invest with AsheMorgan.

Property Investment  
Funds Management

## Intuitive Solutions

Level 12  
139 Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

p (02) 9240 1000  
w [www.ashemorgan.com.au](http://www.ashemorgan.com.au)

With Compliments

# ABAKUS AIRCRAFT & AVIATION SPECIALISTS

Suite 2, Level 1, 5 Knox Street  
Double Bay, NSW 2028  
Tel: 02 9356 2333





# NOTED AND QUOTED

## THE MONTH IN MEDIA

### WELCOME NEWS

PM Scott Morrison's announcement to the Malmö International Forum in Sweden that Australia would adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism should have been a timely opportunity for the media to accurately report what it is.

The print edition of the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Oct. 15), quoted Anti-Defamation Commission Chairman Dvir Abramovich saying it was a "historic day" in the fight against "the world's oldest hatred" – but also noted "human rights barrister Geoffrey Robertson and the definition's lead drafter Kenneth Stern, have raised concerns that the definition was being used to police speech." Australia Palestine Advocacy Network President Bishop George Browning was quoted claiming the IHRA definition "has been used to shut down legitimate advocacy for Palestine in other places in the world, and we must not allow this to happen in Australia." No actual examples were cited where this is alleged to have happened – nor is it clear why the views of a Palestinian advocacy group are relevant to a definition of antisemitism.

The report did not appear in the *Age* print edition.

### VIEW FROM THE IVORY TOWER

Writing in the *Age* (Oct. 18), university student Josh Feldman called on universities to adopt the IHRA definition because Jewish students on campus are "horribly vilified" for their support of Israel and are questioning whether they should "wear Jewish insignia".

Feldman stressed that the defini-

tion "does not seek to create a Kafkaesque environment in which free speech is stifled." The definition, he wrote, specifically states "criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic" and there is no intention to have the definition "enshrined into law," he noted.

Ahead of the announcement, Federal Education Minister Alan Tudge told *Sky News* "Credlin" (Sept. 16) that "this international definition is important. It provides that guidance for institutions and particularly our universities, to be able to call out poor behaviour when they see it. It's never going to stop antisemitism altogether. Antisemitism's been going on for thousands of years. But it can make a difference, particularly in some of the antisemitism from the Left where we've seen very significant increases in recent times."

### SAME OLD BLAME GAME

Marking the 20th anniversary of the September 11 terror attacks, Executive Council of Australian Jewry's Alex Rychin lamented in the *Australian* (Sep. 14) that it "triggered a dangerous defect in our thinking" that included blaming support for Israel as a key reason it happened.

According to Rychin, the attacks "produced a narrative that Israel's conflict with the Palestinians and US support for Israel were the root cause of radical Islam's desire to overthrow the West."

In Britain, he wrote, "high school textbooks... also suggested Israel's creation was the root cause of Islamist terrorism and the motivation for 9/11."

Rychin noted the obvious point that "the wicked sectarianism on

display in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon finally made mockery of the view that if only Israel withdrew from the West Bank, al-Qa'ida, Islamic State, Jemaah Islamiyah and the rest would promptly beat their swords into ploughshares."

### WHITE WASHING

In October's edition of the *Monthly*, commentator Hugh White criticised the Bush Administration's decisions after Sept. 11 – particularly the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which he said had disastrous regional consequences.

White's list included Russia's re-entry to the Middle East; "alienating... Turkey"; "the rise of the Islamic State"; the Syrian civil war; as well as the failure to "transform Iraq" and foster democracy in the Middle East or "curb Iran's nuclear ambitions or to blunt Tehran's drive for regional influence."

Bizarrely, White also added the US "fail[ure] to broker peace between Israel and Palestine" to his list.

The failure to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had nothing to do with Sept. 11 and little to do with US foreign policy.

The die was cast in July 2000 and January 2001 – well before the attacks – when Palestinian President Yasser Arafat refused to accept Israeli offers, under US President Bill Clinton's mediation, to create a Palestinian state.

Instead, Arafat launched a five-year campaign of terror in which more than 1,000 Israeli citizens were murdered. Despite this, Israel offered an even better deal in 2008, which was rejected by current Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who also upended peace talks in 2014 during President Obama's watch.

## THE ACCORD'S REWARDS

In the *Sydney Morning Herald* online (Sept. 19), AIJAC's Dr Colin Rubenstein celebrated the first anniversary of the historic Abraham Accords that resulted in peace deals between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco, which he said had been "a shining light in what is so often seen as a troubled region."

Noting a variety of benefits of the Accords, he said that perhaps the "most important are the 'people-to-people' links. A significant aspect of the Abraham Accords is the recognition of the need to promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue between the adherents of the three Abrahamic

religions: Judaism, Islam and Christianity. This development has even spread to Australia, where dialogue between Jewish organisations, AIJAC included, and Emirati and Moroccan diplomats has been frequent and warm."

Writing in the *Canberra Times* (Sept. 22) Zionist Federation of Australia Public Affairs Director Bren Carlill also commented on the Accords, noting, "in just one year, Emirati-Israeli trade went from zero to north of \$750 million" as a "new generation of Arab leadership" realised that adherence to the "stale ideology" of solidarity with the Palestinians, whose leaders "rejected four offers of statehood this century," was not only "holding back Palestin-

ian livelihoods, it was also holding back their own."

## HEADLINE ACTS

A *Daily Telegraph* report (Oct. 9) of an Israeli magistrate authorising silent Jewish prayer (a decision that was later overturned) on Jerusalem's Temple Mount correctly noted the site is administered by the Waqf Islamic Trust and that Israeli police had appealed the decision.

However, the report was given an inflammatory headline "Mosque Prayer Outrage", which implied the judge had allowed Jews to pray in the Al-Aqsa mosque.

On Oct. 2, a report of gun battles between Hamas and Israeli soldiers



## IN PARLIAMENT

The following are responses by Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator **Marise Payne** (Lib., NSW) to two petitions presented to the Parliament – Oct. 18 – "Australia condemns the indiscriminate use of rockets, incendiary balloons, and other methods of attack by Hamas. As Australia said in its address to the United Nations General Assembly... attacks on civilians are utterly reprehensible and the reckless disregard that Hamas has shown towards the people of Gaza and Israel must end. Australia imposes strict financial and criminal sanctions on Hamas."

"The Australian Government notes the petitioners' concerns regarding Israeli policies towards Palestinians. As Australia said at the United Nations General Assembly... the cycle of violence and bloodshed must end. The Australian Government has been clear in calling for all parties to return to direct and genuine peace negotiations as soon as possible, with a view to defining a durable and permanent peace arrangement. Australia continues to urge all sides to refrain from violent or provocative acts, or actions that increase tensions. This includes terrorism, land appropriations, annexation, forced evictions, demolitions and settlement activity. Holy sites are for peaceful worship. They must never be places of chaos and violence.

"While Australia affirms Israel's right to self-defence in accordance with international law, we also unquestionably affirm the right of Palestinians to live in peace and with dignity. The Government regularly makes representations to Israel with respect to human rights issues, both in Tel Aviv and Canberra. The Government does not support calls to boycott or embargo Israel. This harms Israelis and Palestinians economically and is unhelpful to the peace process."

Shadow Attorney-General **Mark Dreyfus** (ALP, Isaacs) – Oct. 18 – "On behalf of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, I present the following reports:... The evidence to the committee overwhelmingly confirmed that the Hamas Brigades do not operate as some kind of independent entity, separate and distinct from the rest of Hamas... Certainly I have no doubt that Hamas as a whole meets the requirements of being listed as a terrorist organisation under the Criminal Code. That is also the position that the committee has reached... unanimously and it is a position that the government ought to give serious and urgent consideration to."

Senator **David Van** (Lib., Vic.) – Oct. 18 – "I rise to pay tribute to Sir David Amess, the Conservative MP who was tragically murdered last week. Sir David was the lead parliamentarian for the Conservative Friends of Israel. I and some of my colleagues in this place are patrons of the Liberal Friends of Israel. I share his deep passion for Israel and for the Jewish community... [Amess] said: 'I would certainly have been proud to have been born a Jew, and I stand shoulder to shoulder with our local Jewish community' – a sentiment I share."

NSW Shadow Minister for Counter Terrorism, Police, the Arts and Heritage and the North Coast **Walt Secord** MLC (ALP) – Oct. 13 – Second Reading Speech, Crimes Amendment (Display of Nazi Symbols) Bill: "Put simply, the Nazi hooked cross is an emblem of genocide and racism. The decision to fly or carry a Nazi flag in a public act or at a rally in NSW is a simple expression of hate... the display of Nazi symbols goes well beyond the realm of political debate or ordinary free speech. These are not symbols of ideas but acts of intimidation... The Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council's director of international and community affairs, Jeremy Jones, AM, wrote: 'We are in full agreement with the intent and appreciate the thoughtful framing of legislation on a complex issue.'"

was given the terse headline of “Four Killed in the West Bank” in the *Age* and *SMH*.

But the report did say Hamas had “blamed the rival Palestinian Authority for the killings,” giving a tantalising hint at the complexity of Palestinian politics – a point that was not made in an *SBS TV* “World News” report of the incident later that night.

## ANTI-SOCIAL

On Sept. 17, Nine Newspapers’ Karl Quinn reported journalists, including Lisa Millar, Waleed Aly, Stan Grant and Hamish Macdonald, are increasingly abandoning social media because it has become a toxic space.

The report included *ABC TV* “7.30” host Leigh Sales’ recent comments that she is regularly bullied and harassed on social media and quoted her saying “it is overwhelmingly left leaning Twitter users who are targeting ABC journalists for abuse.”

Quinn also made reference to commentator Mike Carlton as “another who copped abuse from the right-wing on social media – he resigned from the *Herald* in 2014 after his response to reader comments on a column critical of Israel’s actions in Gaza.” Carlton was quoted saying “a lot of people on Twitter and elsewhere see the whole thing through the prism of their own prejudices.”

In fact, Carlton was suspended by the *SMH* for his extreme language in responding to critics on Twitter and in emails, which included describing one as “a typical Jewish bigot” and telling another “looking forward to hearing from you after you have joined the IDF and gone off to kill some kids.” He was asked to apologise, but instead chose to resign.

The Carlton column that sparked such angry reactions had included provocative claims that Israel’s military operations in the 2014 war were “genocide... ethnic cleansing” and “aim[ed]... to kill Arabs.”

Meanwhile, in the *Age/SMH* (Oct. 11), Rachel Lord, the wife of former Australian Ambassador to Israel and current Member for Wentworth Dave Sharma, noted that, “during the 2014 war with Gaza... I understood social media to be a place where you play the man as well as the ball and often in as base a way as possible.”

## ON THE BANNED WAGON

A bipartisan federal parliamentary inquiry that recommended Australia should list all of Hamas as a terrorist group after earlier hearing expert testimony on the subject, was widely reported on.

The *Canberra Times* (Oct. 2) noted that Hamas is listed as a “terrorist organisation by the European Union and the United States” and ASIO’s Mike Burgess was quoted explaining that “There’s no doubt the group as a whole does advocate for acts of violence... The brigades are a highly capable terrorist organisation who are committed to the use of terrorist tactics targeting Israel. As a consequence they remain a security concern to ASIO and we support the listing.” The article noted AIJAC and the Zionist Federation of Australia made oral submissions.

The *West Australian* (Oct. 2) quoted US-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies and former AIJAC guest Jonathan Schanzer saying “the idea of wings within Hamas was fiction.”

In the print edition of the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Oct. 15), national security correspondent Anthony Galloway noted that “The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which has about 10 consular staff in Gaza, raised concerns it would need to make changes if all of Hamas were declared a terror group. But the review found its concerns ‘cannot take precedence over national security.’”

The *Australian* (Oct. 16/17) editorialised that the Morrison Government “should waste no time in implementing the recommenda-

tion” of the committee. The paper said the listing should enable authorities to “clamp down on funding allegedly intended for... ‘social welfare’ work that find their way to one of the Middle East’s most ruthless jihadist killing machines.”

An *SBS TV* “World News” report on Oct. 14 noted that “the Australian Palestine Advocacy Network... accused the committee of only seeking pro-Israeli perspectives and urged the Cabinet to disregard the recommendation.”

## SPINELESS SOLIDARITY

On Oct. 13, the *Age/SMH* websites reported Irish novelist Sally Rooney’s decision to block an Israeli-based publishing house issuing a Hebrew language edition of her new book in solidarity with the demands of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel.

The report noted Rooney’s statement that the publisher has links with the Israeli military. Yes, but it also publishes books with pro-Palestinian themes.

Tel Aviv bookstore owner Yosef Halper, who opposes Rooney’s decision, was quoted saying, “Hebrew is a language, not a political ideology. The Arabs in Israel speak and read Hebrew. Anti-Zionist Jews (yes, there are such people) read, speak and write Hebrew. It is like saying I won’t translate into German because Hitler was German, or into Chinese because of the Uighurs, or English because Trump speaks English.”

Anti-Zionist activist and writer Antony Loewenstein was quoted saying “people are so outraged by Rooney’s decision – more outraged by that than they are by what Israel is doing day to day under Israeli occupation.”

The piece quoted publisher Louise Adler saying “Sally Rooney is a young author with a young audience and she’s asking people to think about this issue.”

Quinn said Adler “is not a fan of cultural boycotts.” Of course, that



didn't stop Adler signing the "#dobetteronpalestine" petition in May calling on the media to stop reporting both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian issue, which is effectively a kind of boycott.

A shorter version appeared in the *Age* print edition on Oct. 14, but not in the *SMH*.

## ROONEY TUNES

In the *Spectator Australia* (Oct. 16), columnist Rod Liddle said when he heard of Rooney's decision, his reaction was "oh, you lucky, lucky Israelis."

Liddle said the news was a reminder of "the modern left's visceral anti-Semitism."

"The left," he wrote, "hates Israel with a venom that is, to most normal human beings, out of all proportion... [BDS] considers Israel – uniquely – a terrorist and apartheid state. That BDS is itself deeply anti-Semitic is something scarcely worthy of debate. Its spokesman says it wants to 'upend the Jewish state' therefore denying the right to self-determination to Jews. In doing so, then, it is clearly and explicitly racist."

"Rooney's last awful book was translated into 46 languages. Did that include Arabic, the language spoken by the Saudis, Kuwaitis and Emirates — a collection of slave states which deny their citizens the vote, along with all the normal access to human rights? Is it okay for her book to be translated into Urdu or Burmese or even Russian? If so, why? What is the great difference with Israel?" he asked.

On Oct. 20, *Age* columnist Julie Szego wrote, "Rooney's decision is nasty but... it's also impressively on brand. How better to cement her persona as chronicler of millennial Marxists obsessed with gestural politics than indulge in gestural politics on behalf of Palestinians, whose legitimate struggle has acquired totemic status? Especially when she's being attacked as 'too white'; standing against 'Zionists' helps deflect the charge."

## INDEFENSIBLE

On Sept. 25 the *Australian* slammed three anti-Israel US Congresswomen, members of what is known as the Squad, who forced US\$1 billion in funding for Israel's Iron Dome anti-missile system to be removed from an appropriations bill intended to stave off a government shutdown in Washington.

The editorial noted that Squad member Ilhan Omar's tweet "don't sell arms to anyone who violates human rights" misrepresents the "reality of Iron Dome" which "has no offensive capacity. It causes no casualties."

In contrast, it said, "Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad rockets, many supplied by Iran, are aimed at Israel's population centres, to kill and maim" and noted that Iron Dome only activates when "the point of contact is a civilian population centre, which is invariably the case."

In the May 2021 war between Hamas and Israel, 4369 rockets were launched against Israeli cities and towns, it said, with more than 90 per cent of those that crossed into Israel "intercepted and destroyed by Iron Dome before they could cause casualties."

"Fewer Israeli casualties meant there was less political pressure for a full-scale land invasion of Gaza or for indiscriminate airstrikes that would have killed many more than the 240 Palestinians who died during the conflict. Yet that paradox appeared lost on the Squad," the paper noted.

## INCOMING

On *SBS TV* "World News" (Oct. 13), Rena Sarumpaet said, "some Democrats had opposed giving Israel one billion dollars to maintain the Iron Dome missile defence system used against militants in Gaza." Iron Dome is not used against militants but against the rockets and missiles they launch at Israel's civilian population — which is a war crime.

On *Sky News* "Sharri" (Sept. 26), UN Watch Executive Director Hillel Neuer said, "the notion that AOC and her colleagues Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, who claim to be progressive and humanitarian, would be doing something that eliminates defence for civilians and effectively empowers terrorists... is truly unbelievable and a betrayal of their principles... showing an irrational hatred of Israel... of Jews."

On *Sky News* "Paul Murray Live" (Sept. 26), US documentarian Ami Horowitz called Squad member Rashida Tlaib the "Democrat representative for the District of Hamas." Horowitz said people who call Israel an apartheid state but fail to "reference Iran, North Korea, China in the same way" are probably antisemitic.

## FACILE MATERIAL

An *SBS TV* "World News" report (Sept. 23) on Iran's Foreign Minister meeting with his EU and British counterparts on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly said he was "signalling" the country's "intention to resume nuclear talks, halted since June, to restore the scrapped 2015 nuclear pact."

SBS reporter Naveen Razik said these "moves [were] welcomed by cautious neighbours who also have one eye on Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal."

The report cut to footage of Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud reading a statement to the UN that "the Kingdom stresses the importance of making the Middle East a region free of all weapons of mass destruction. We therefore support international efforts aimed at preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon."

Razik's reference to Israel was entirely gratuitous. King Salman's speech made no reference to Israel's alleged nuclear weapons, and virtually all analysts agree that the Saudis have come to increasingly see Israel as a potential ally against Iran, rather than any sort of threat.

# MEDIA MICROSCOPE

Allon Lee

## NO SMOKE, NO FIRE

No smoke, no fire, but plenty of hot air – this sums up the verdict of most of the comments in the media about John Lyons and the wild and often factually-challenged claims about Australian media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian issue in his new booklet *Dateline Jerusalem: Journalism's Toughest Assignment*.

Publicity for the booklet by the former *Australian* Middle East correspondent and current ABC Executive Editor of News and Head of Investigative Journalism started with an extract in the *Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald* (Oct. 2), insisting “the Israeli-Palestinian issue is the single issue which the media will not cover with the rigour... it covers every other issue.”

The explanation for this, according to Lyons, is reporters critical of Israel are “trolled and abused” or accused of antisemitism by the pro-Israel lobby, which leads to “self-censoring.” No concrete examples were included.

Meanwhile, asked to confirm a claim in the extract that “a prominent US-based pro-Israel lobby group had branded her a ‘Nazi bitch’,” former *New York Times* Middle East correspondent Jodi Rudoren told AIJAC she doesn’t remember any such incident and said she would ask Lyons the source for his claim.

On Oct. 6, both the *Age* and *SMH* ran former *Age* editor Michael Gawenda’s withering takedown of Lyons which noted the booklet lacks “examples of compromised reporting” and that it’s “incontestable... that the conflict... gets more newspaper and television coverage than virtually any other overseas conflict.”

In an interview on *Radio ZZZ* (Oct. 13), Gawenda was even more scathing, saying, “What was deeply troubling to me” was that Lyons’ claims about the pro-Israel lobby distorting Australian media coverage of the Israel/Palestinian issue were made “without providing significant evidence... I think on its face... it’s an absurd proposition and... based on a view of Jewish power that I think is nonsensical, to say the least.”

A letter by former Middle East correspondent Tony Walker challenging Gawenda appeared in the *Age* (Oct. 8), insisting “reasonable discussion of the... issue is media-constrained” and that “anti-Semitism has been weaponised to stifle such discussion,” but again offering absolutely no examples.

Interviewed on *ABC Radio National* “Breakfast” (Oct. 5),

Lyons claimed his former *Australian* newspaper colleague Jennine Khalik had “left journalism” after allegedly experiencing pressure at the *Australian* because of her Palestinian background. In fact, Khalik subsequently worked at both the ABC and *Crikey*.

On *ABC Radio 774 Melbourne* (Oct. 5), Lyons repeated the Rudoren claim and said in Hebron there is a road “you can only drive if you’re Jewish,” forcing Palestinian women to carry their shopping. In fact, except for a tiny enclave where Israelis live, the Palestinian Authority controls 80% of Hebron and for security reasons one connecting road is off limits to non-resident Palestinians and

can be used by anyone else, Jewish or non-Jewish.

On *Crikey* (Oct. 8), veteran newspaper editor Peter Fray contested most of Lyons’ claims about media coverage, writing, “Are editors aware they will upset the pro-Israel lobby from time to time? Yes. Does the threat of being called an antisemite or worse lead to widescale mis- or non-reporting, to self-censorship?... not in my experience... What about the reporting?... Lyons largely ignores the scores of hard-nosed reporting done from and about Israel by the likes of Paul McGeough (*SMH/Age*), Sophie McNeill (*ABC*) and, of course, himself... The fact that the reaction to pieces... is so fierce doesn’t mean such pieces are not being published. They are.”

On *Sky News* “Bolt Report” (Oct. 7), host Andrew Bolt ridiculed Lyons’ conspiratorial view of the Israel lobby, saying “[AIJAC’s] Colin Rubenstein... sent two editors a memo saying, ‘listen, you’ve been to a private briefing with... Netanyahu. That was off the record... But by the way, here’s some information that you might be able to use’. And... Lyons produces this as an example of how... Rubenstein is censoring journalists. It’s just insane.”

On Oct. 9, the *Guardian Australia* ran a self-serving op-ed by the booklet’s publisher, Louise Adler, who stressed that “700 journalists and writers signed a petition calling for fuller media coverage of the plight of the Palestinians.”

Actually, the petition (which Adler signed) did not call for “fuller” coverage, but demanded the media “prioritise” Palestinian views and cease covering both sides of the issue.

A lengthy critique on the *Australian* website (Oct. 15) by commentator Gerard Henderson in his Media Watch Dog column concluded that Lyons “like so many journalists... likes to criticise others but seemingly does not like to be criticised.”

**“Gerard Henderson in his Media Watch Dog column concluded that Lyons ‘like so many journalists... likes to criticise others but seemingly does not like to be criticised.’”**



# THE LAST WORD

Jeremy Jones

## A DEFINITION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Earlier this year, an “open letter” appeared in print and online, which opened, “We the undersigned regret any attempt to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s IHRA definition of antisemitism [sic].”

The signatories stressed their “deepest concern” at Labor Shadow Foreign Minister Senator Penny Wong having publicly “asserted federal Labor’s adoption” of the Working Definition.

The full letter rehashed familiar fantasies concerning the way issues relating to Israel are debated in Australia and contained both a revisionist history of the adoption of the definition and a comical summary of its content.

Most of the signatories had no track records indicating a concern with the problem of antisemitism, while a number had rather dubious relations with Jewish Australians.

A few days after the letter was published, I was at an event in Sydney where I encountered a signatory of the letter. He told me that the definition had to be opposed as he was informed it was a product of nefarious Israeli propaganda and intelligence efforts as part of an attempt to stop any exposure of Israeli interference in Australian politics.

When I told him I was involved in a minor way in drafting the definition and had firsthand knowledge of what had inspired it and who had been the most important individuals in its genesis and development, I received a blank stare.

When I asked for a single example of the Working Definition having been the key factor in stopping any criticism of Israel which he himself would not have regarded as antisemitic, I was told that this was beside the point – what mattered is that any action against antisemitism helped Israel, so he would remain steadfast in his opposition to it.

A publisher of the letter told me he hadn’t bothered reading the IHRA Working Definition but happily promoted the letter as he felt that condemning antisemitism could help Israel, and he wanted to do what he could to promote an

environment where any form of attacks on Israel could flourish.

The Working Definition is concerned with antisemitism, in

the process recognising that some antisemitism is disguised as political debate.

Some of the campaigners against the adoption of the Working Definition in Australia make it clear that “anything goes” in the war on Israel, declaring that “anti-Zionism is not antisemitism” – a rather inane statement given that the IHRA definition does no more than recognise that anti-Zionism may or may not be antisemitic in its motivation or effects.

A website which has published more attacks on the definition than any other is “Pearls and Irritations” – which is also a favourite of anti-Israel maximalists.

Contributors to this site rarely deal with the reality of contemporary antisemitism, but the site has found space for a series of bizarre theses in defence of calls for the Government and Opposition to abandon support for the IHRA definition.

Readers have been treated to the idea that opposition to antisemitism is per se anti-Palestinian, and that a definition allegedly subject to misuse should be replaced by a less practical suggestion which is also able to be misused.

Some individuals within the Jewish community have found a comfortable place to snipe at mainstream Jewish organisations knowing their critiques will be uncontested on this site.

The latest article in the series argues that the fact that not a single delegate at the NSW ALP Conference opposed its adoption of the Working Definition, despite a campaign directed at parliamentarians and other delegates demanding they oppose it, was evidence that its supporters had something to hide.

As Professor Irwin Cotler, former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, told a recent AIJAC webinar audience, the Working Definition came about after a decades long process of consultation and debate involving community representatives, scholars, politicians, law enforcement officials and others, in a transparent democratic manner.

Any genuine opponent of antisemitism will welcome Australia joining so many other democratic nations in embracing a sensible and practical Working Definition of antisemitism.



The IHRA Working Definition is being targeted by people who effectively oppose any action against antisemitism



9 771442 369017 >

Australia \$7.95 (inc GST)

AIR