

From: Office of Terje Rod-Larsen
Sent: Tue 4/29/2014 1:32:23 PM
Subject: April 29 update

29 April, 2014

<u>Article 1.</u>	The Daily Beast 1. <u>Kerry Warns Israel Could Become ‘An Apartheid State’</u> <u>Josh Rogin</u> 2. <u>Kerry Apologizes for Apartheid Comments</u> <u>Ben Jacobs</u>
<u>Article 2.</u>	The American Prospect <u>For the U.S., Israel and Palestine: What's Plan B?</u> <u>Matthew Duss</u>
<u>Article 3.</u>	The New Republic <u>A New (and Plausible) Plan for Peace</u> <u>Ari Shavit</u>
<u>Article 4.</u>	The National Interest <u>Palestinian-Israeli Talks: Time for a “Time Out”</u> <u>Shai Feldman</u>
<u>Article 5.</u>	Al Monitor <u>Palestinian reconciliation deal a Hamas surrender</u> Daoud Kuttab
<u>Article 6.</u>	The Washington Post

	<p><u> Hamas must repudiate the anti-Semitism in its charter </u></p> <p><u>Richard Cohen</u></p>
Article 7.	<p>NYT</p> <p><u>Political Executions in Egypt</u></p> <p>Editorial</p>
<u>Article 8.</u>	<p>The Council on Foreign Relations</p> <p><u>Historic Iraq Election Brings New Uncertainties</u></p> <p>An interview with Ned Parker</p>

Article 1.

The Daily Beast

Exclusive: Kerry Warns Israel Could Become ‘An Apartheid State’

Josh Rogin

27 April, 2014 -- The secretary of state said that if Israel doesn't make peace soon, it could become 'an apartheid state,' like the old South Africa. Jewish leaders are fuming over the comparison.

If there's no two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

soon, Israel risks becoming “an apartheid state,” Secretary of State John Kerry told a room of influential world leaders in a closed-door meeting Friday.

Senior American officials have rarely, if ever, used the term “apartheid” in reference to Israel, and President Obama has previously rejected the idea that the word should apply to the Jewish state. Kerry's use of the loaded term is already rankling Jewish leaders in America—and it could attract unwanted attention in Israel, as well.

It wasn't the only controversial comment on the Middle East that Kerry made during his remarks to the Trilateral Commission, a recording of which was obtained by The Daily Beast. Kerry also repeated his warning that a failure of Middle East peace talks could lead to a resumption of Palestinian violence against Israeli citizens. He suggested that a change in either the Israeli or Palestinian leadership could make achieving a peace deal more feasible. He lashed out against Israeli settlement-building. And Kerry said that both Israeli and Palestinian leaders share the blame for the current impasse in the talks.

Kerry also said that at some point, he might unveil his own peace deal and tell both sides to “take it or leave it.”

“A two-state solution will be clearly underscored as the only real alternative. Because a unitary state winds up either being an apartheid state with second-class citizens—or it ends up being a state that destroys the capacity of Israel to be a Jewish state,” Kerry told the group of senior officials and experts from the U.S., Western Europe, Russia, and Japan. “Once you put that frame in your mind, that reality, which is the bottom line, you

understand how imperative it is to get to the two-state solution, which both leaders, even yesterday, said they remain deeply committed to.”

According to the 1998 Rome Statute, the “crime of apartheid” is defined as “inhumane acts... committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime.” The term is most often used in reference to the system of racial segregation and oppression that governed South Africa from 1948 until 1994.

Former president Jimmy Carter came under fire in 2007 for titling his book on Middle East peace *Palestine: Peace or Apartheid*. Carter has said publicly that his views on Israeli treatment of the Palestinians are a main cause of his poor relationship with President Obama and his lack of current communication with the White House. But Carter explained after publishing the book that he was referring to apartheid-type policies in the West Bank, not Israel proper, and he was not accusing Israel of institutionalized racism.

“Apartheid is a word that is an accurate description of what has been going on in the West Bank, and it’s based on the desire or avarice of a minority of Israelis for Palestinian land,” Carter said.

“Injecting a term like apartheid into the discussion doesn’t advance that goal [of peace],” Obama said. “It’s emotionally loaded, historically inaccurate, and it’s not what I believe.”

Leading experts, including Richard Goldstone, a former justice

of the South African Constitutional Court who led the United Nations fact-finding mission on the Gaza conflict of 2008 and 2009, have argued that comparisons between the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians and “apartheid” are offensive and wrong.

“One particularly pernicious and enduring canard that is surfacing again is that Israel pursues ‘apartheid’ policies,” Goldstone wrote in The New York Times in 2011. “It is an unfair and inaccurate slander against Israel, calculated to retard rather than advance peace negotiations.”

In a 2008 interview with Jeffrey Goldberg, then-Sen. Barack Obama shot down the notion that the word “apartheid” was acceptable in a discussion about Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians:

“There’s no doubt that Israel and the Palestinians have tough issues to work out to get to the goal of two states living side by side in peace and security, but injecting a term like apartheid into the discussion doesn’t advance that goal,” Obama said. “It’s emotionally loaded, historically inaccurate, and it’s not what I believe.”

State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki told The Daily Beast that Kerry was simply repeating his view, shared by others, that a two-state solution is the only way for Israel to remain a Jewish state in peace with the Palestinians.

“Secretary Kerry, like Justice Minister Livni, and previous Israeli Prime Ministers Olmert and Barak, was reiterating why there's no such thing as a one-state solution if you believe, as he does, in the principle of a Jewish State. He was talking about the

kind of future Israel wants and the kind of future both Israelis and Palestinians would want to envision,” she said. “The only way to have two nations and two peoples living side by side in peace and security is through a two-state solution. And without a two-state solution, the level of prosperity and security the Israeli and Palestinian people deserve isn't possible.”

But leaders of pro-Israel organizations told The Daily Beast that Kerry's reference to “apartheid” was appalling and inappropriately alarmist because of its racial connotations and historical context.

“One particularly pernicious and enduring canard that is surfacing again is that Israel pursues ‘apartheid’ policies,” Goldstone wrote in The New York Times in 2011. “It is an unfair and inaccurate slander against Israel, calculated to retard rather than advance peace negotiations.”

Yet Israel's leaders have employed the term, as well. In 2010, for example, former Prime Minister and Defense Minister Ehud Barak used language very similar to Kerry's. “As long as in this territory west of the Jordan River there is only one political entity called Israel it is going to be either non-Jewish, or non-democratic,” Barak said. “If this bloc of millions of -Palestinians cannot vote, that will be an apartheid state.”

“While we've heard Secretary Kerry express his understandable fears about alternative prospects for Israel to a two-state deal and we understand the stakes involved in reaching that deal, the use of the word ‘apartheid’ is not helpful at all. It takes the discussion to an entirely different dimension,” said David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee, an

organization that has been supportive of Kerry's peace process initiative. "In trying to make his point, Kerry reaches into diplomatic vocabulary to raise the stakes, but in doing so he invokes notions that have no place in the discussion."

Kerry has used dire warnings twice in the past to paint a picture of doom for Israel if the current peace process fails. Last November, Kerry warned of a third intifada of Palestinian violence and increased isolation of Israel if the peace process failed. In March, Democrats and Republican alike criticized Kerry for suggesting that if peace talks fail, it would bolster the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel.

"It's in the Palestinian playbook to tie Israel to these extreme notions of time being on the Palestinian side, that demographics are on the Palestinian side, and that Israel has to confront notions of the Jewishness of the state," Harris said.

Kerry on Friday repeated his warning that a dissolution of the peace process might lead to more Palestinian violence. "People grow so frustrated with their lot in life that they begin to take other choices and go to dark places they've been before, which forces confrontation," he said.

The secretary of state also implied, but did not say outright, that if the governments of Israeli Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu or Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas left power, there could be a change in the prospects for peace. If "there is a change of government or a change of heart," Kerry said, "something will happen."

Kerry criticized Israeli settlement construction as being

unhelpful to the peace process and he also criticized Palestinian leaders for making statements that declined to recognize the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state.

“There is a fundamental confrontation and it is over settlements. Fourteen thousand new settlement units announced since we began negotiations. It’s very difficult for any leader to deal under that cloud,” Kerry said.

He acknowledged that the formal negotiating process that he initiated and led since last summer may soon stop. But he maintained that his efforts to push for a final settlement will continue in one form or another.

“The reports of the demise of the peace process have consistently been misunderstood and misreported. And even we are now getting to the moment of obvious confrontation and hiatus, but I would far from declare it dead,” Kerry said. “You would say this thing is going to hell in a handbasket, and who knows, it might at some point, but I don’t think it is right now, yet.”

Kerry gave both Israeli and Palestinian leaders credit for sticking with the peace process for this long. But he added that both sides were to blame for the current impasse in the talks; neither leader was ready to make the tough decisions necessary for achieving peace.

“There’s a period here where there needs to be some regrouping. I don’t think it’s unhealthy for both of them to have to stare over the abyss and understand where the real tensions are and what the real critical decisions are that have to be made,” he said. “Neither party is quite ready to make it at this point in time. That

doesn't mean they don't have to make these decisions.”

Kerry said that he was considering, at some point, publicly laying out a comprehensive U.S. plan for a final agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians, in a last-ditch effort to forge a deal before the Obama administration leaves office in 2017.

“We have enough time to do any number of things, including the potential at some point in time that we will just put something out there. ‘Here it is, folks. This is what it looks like. Take it or leave it,’” Kerry said.

The Daily Beast

Kerry Apologizes for Apartheid **Comments**

Ben Jacobs

28 April, 2014 -- In a statement Monday evening, the secretary of state said if he ‘could rewind the tape,’ he wouldn’t have used the word ‘apartheid’ in his warning about Israel.

John Kerry apologized Monday for warning last week that the lack of a two-state solution in the Middle East could lead to Israel becoming an “apartheid state.” Kerry’s remarks, made in a closed door meeting of the Trilateral Commission and first

reported by The Daily Beast Sunday night, provoked strong reactions from across the political spectrum.

In a statement issued Monday evening, Kerry defended his record as a supporter of Israel but also said, "if I could rewind the tape, I would have chosen a different word to describe my firm belief that the only way in the long term to have a Jewish state and two nations and two peoples living side by side in peace and security is through a two state solution."

Jewish organizations in the United States like AIPAC and the Anti Defamation League quickly expressed their dismay at Kerry's private Apartheid remarks. In a statement, Abe Foxman, the president of the Anti Defamation League said "it is startling and deeply disappointing that a diplomat so knowledgeable and experienced about democratic Israel chose to use such an inaccurate and incendiary term." These remarks were echoed in a statement from AIPAC, the bipartisan pro-Israel lobby, which said "Any suggestion that Israel is, or is at risk of becoming, an apartheid state is offensive and inappropriate."

Politicians also got involved in the brouhaha. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) urged Kerry to apologize, saying that the Secretary of State's remarks "are extremely disappointing. The use of the word apartheid has routinely been dismissed as both offensive and inaccurate, and Secretary Kerry's use of it makes peace even harder to achieve." Florida Senator Marco Rubio, a possible 2016 presidential candidate, shared Cantor's outrage, saying "these comments are outrageous and disappointing."

But not everyone viewed Kerry's remarks as a gaffe. J Street, the

dovish, left-wing Middle East lobbying organization, issued a statement saying “Instead of putting energy into attacking Secretary Kerry, those who are upset with the Secretary's use of the term should put their energy into opposing and changing the policies that are leading Israel down this road.”

At Monday's State Department press briefing, spokeswoman Jen Psaki made clear that Kerry believes Israel is currently "a vibrant democracy with equal rights for its citizens" and noted the Secretary of State was merely warning of the possible long term consequences if a two-state solution couldn't be reached.

[Article 2.](#)

The American Prospect

For the U.S., Israel and Palestine:

What's Plan B?

Matthew Duss

April 28, 2014 -- As a concept, the two-state solution is more broadly accepted than ever, even as achieving it seems more remote.

If the Obama administration's view of the Israeli--Palestinian conflict could be summed up in a sentence, it is this: The status quo is unsustainable. “The status quo is unsustainable for all

sides. It promises only more violence and unrealized aspirations,” Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told the American Israel Public Affairs Committee’s annual Washington policy conference in March 2010.

“The status quo is unsustainable, and Israel must too act boldly to advance a lasting peace,” President Barack Obama said in his May 2011 speech at the State Department, laying out his vision of the U.S. role in the Middle East after the Arab Awakening. “Today’s status quo absolutely, to a certainty, I promise you 100 percent, cannot be maintained. It’s not sustainable,” Secretary of State John Kerry told the Munich Security Conference in February. “It’s illusory. There’s a momentary prosperity, there’s a momentary peace.”

Although the Obama administration may have coined the phrase, the sentiment is not new. Every president since Jimmy Carter has, in some fashion, recognized that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict creates costs for the United States in the region and that the U.S. has an interest in resolving it. In the words of General David Petraeus, the conflict “fosters anti-American sentiment ... limits the strength and depth of U.S. partnerships with governments and peoples in the [region], and weakens the legitimacy of moderate regimes in the Arab world.” Since the 1993 signing of the Oslo Accords, the historic set of agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization aimed at securing a peace treaty between the two sides, a strong international consensus has formed behind a two-state solution to the Israeli--Palestinian conflict. Yet even in the face of this consensus, the status quo persists, year after year, defying the efforts of the world’s most powerful country to change it. The Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations all put considerable

effort into reaching a deal that would end the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and create a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Obama made achieving this goal a priority of his presidency, appointing a special envoy in his first week as president in 2009, and yet now, five years later, Secretary Kerry is working overtime just to keep the parties at the table (a task made even more complicated by the recently announced Fatah-Hamas reconciliation), never mind hammering out a final agreement. One of the ironies is that, as a concept, the two-state solution is more broadly accepted than ever, even as achieving it seems more remote. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's adoption of the two-state solution in his 2009 Bar-Ilan University speech may have been so heavily qualified as to make it almost meaningless, but the fact remains that he recognized the need for making the speech.

Even though polls of both Israelis and Palestinians over the past decade have consistently shown majority support for a two-state solution, rejectionist factions—hard-line Israeli settlers, Palestinian extremists—have managed to wrest control of the process at key moments and play a spoiler role. Still, the two-state solution remains the most favorable one: Plan A. Its broad outlines have long been understood, and even many of its most difficult details have been hashed out in exercises like the Geneva Accord, in which a group of Israeli and Palestinian negotiators signed a model final agreement, and in negotiations between President Mahmoud Abbas and then-Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, as journalist Bernard Avishai reported in 2011. Still, it's only responsible to consider a Plan B in the event that Plan A remains elusive. In a recent interview, Obama nodded toward some of the costs that would accrue to Israel in the

absence of a two-state deal. The Palestinians have made clear that if talks break down, they will escalate their campaign to gain membership in various international organizations, a move strongly supported by the Palestinian public. President Abbas took a step in this direction in early April, responding to Israel's renegeing on its commitment to release prisoners by signing documents joining 15 international conventions. These efforts could create an enormous headache for Israel, forcing it to play a game of diplomatic whack-a-mole as it tries to head off challenges in various international venues, and it could become increasingly costly for the U.S. to provide diplomatic cover. "If Palestinians come to believe that the possibility of a contiguous, sovereign Palestinian state is no longer within reach," the president said, "then our ability to manage the international fallout is going to be limited." But beyond these warnings of consequences, which have also been echoed by Secretary Kerry, there has been little discussion of what the U.S. policy response might be to the loss of faith in a two-state solution. How would the U.S. contend with the heightened international criticism and isolation that would likely be directed at Israel when its control of the West Bank became formalized? With growing calls for divestment and boycott of settlement products in Europe, how would the U.S. respond to its European partners' developing a more independent approach, as they have been hinting at doing for years?

For understandable reasons, it's difficult to get currently serving officials to respond to questions like these. "Talking about Plan B kills Plan A," is how one Israeli official put it. That may be true for those closest to the negotiations. But for others, it's worth thinking about. Any attempt to understand Israel's

reticence to draw down its presence in the West Bank must reckon with the second intifada, the Palestinian uprising that erupted after the failure of the 2000 Camp David summit, which saw numerous terrorist attacks inside Israel. Confronted with a violent campaign, and with President Bill Clinton's blaming Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat for the summit's failure, many Israelis decided that the Palestinians were not interested in peace. Although a solid majority of Israelis continue to support the two-state solution, they remain cautious about steps, such as withdrawing troops from the West Bank, that, even if necessary to achieve such a solution, could result in a return of attacks.

Addressing those security requirements has been a primary focus of U.S. efforts. One of the most successful American initiatives in Palestine has been the work to stand up a Palestinian security force capable of acting against terrorist groups in the West Bank. Established by the Bush administration in 2005, the Office of the U.S. Security Coordinator (USSC) has two goals: First, to build a key institution of an eventual Palestinian state, a competent security force. Second, to prove to the Israelis that they could withdraw from the territories with an expectation that calm would be maintained.

Lieutenant General Keith Dayton served as U.S. security coordinator from 2005 to 2010 and was hailed by Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans as doing a tremendous job. But he warned that a lack of meaningful diplomatic progress would eventually cause the cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis to collapse. "There is perhaps a two-year shelf life on being told that you're creating a state when you're not," he said in 2009. In Ramallah in 2011, I spoke with Jerry Burke, a retired Massachusetts state police major who had trained officers

in Iraq and Afghanistan and was working with the USSC in the West Bank. “The longer [the occupation] goes on, the less chance there is of a Palestinian state,” he said. “Most Palestinians will tell you the two-state solution will never happen.”

Advertisement

Burke doesn't see an outbreak of organized violence as likely: “The second intifada wasn't that long ago. They don't want to go back.” Palestinian security forces are dedicated and work hard, he said, but “most of them don't think they'll ever see a Palestinian state.” Asked to guess at likely outcomes, he says, “I'd say we're headed toward an American Indian model, with Palestinians on reservations” amid a sea of settlements and Israeli security zones. “There is no irreversible moment for a two-state solution, except such developments like Israel annexing the occupied territories, which I don't see coming,” says Noam Sheizaf, an Israeli journalist and editor of +972 Magazine, a left-leaning Israeli Web magazine. “[But] at a certain point a viable Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital won't be a very plausible option anymore, because you will have to either evacuate so many people or build such a complicated system of bypassing roads, tunnels, and bridges, that the solution itself becomes a problem.” But what are the solutions? A number have been offered, but they're all problematic in different ways.

Some people, most prominently the Palestinian American activist Ali Abunimah, have called for a single democratic state of all its citizens, a vision that is slowly but steadily gaining allies. In 2011, former Knesset speaker and Peace Now activist

Avraham Burg declared the two-state paradigm finished—“So enough of the illusions,” he wrote in Haaretz, “there are no longer two states between the Jordan River and the sea”—and called on the Israeli left to cease giving cover to the right by pretending that outcome was any longer in the offing.

For a number of conservatives in Israel, an acceptable alternative would be to withdraw unilaterally from parts of the West Bank and annex the parts it intends to keep. While this option has been discussed for years, it recently acquired urgency when Michael Oren, former Israeli ambassador to the United States, raised the idea in a February interview with *The Times of Israel*: “If we declare our borders, that creates a de-facto situation of two nation states recognized by the UN. ... We would be one of dozens of pairs of countries in the world that have a border dispute.”

Right-wing Israeli journalist Caroline Glick has an even more extreme plan. Glick recently published *The Israeli Solution*, in which she calls for the country to annex all of the West Bank and offer the Palestinians living there a “path to citizenship” (a path, one imagines, that would be quite arduous). In response to concerns that Israeli Palestinians would eventually outnumber Israeli Jews in such an arrangement, Glick insists that, without Gaza, this new Israel would still safely retain a two-thirds Jewish majority.

Some alternatives are baroque. In a 2008 piece for *Tikkun*, scholar Russell Nieli proposed an arrangement that he called “Two-State Condominialism”: a two-state confederation in which Palestinian Israelis “would be required to transfer their citizenship, national identity, and national voting rights—but

not their residence—to the new Palestinian state.” These Palestinians “would retain their permanent right to live in Israel and they would also retain their current benefits under the Jewish welfare state, but it would be required that they become citizens of—and permanent voting members of—the Palestinian state, not Israel.”

A much more pessimistic proposal was offered by Palestinian intellectual Sari Nusseibeh in his 2011 book-length essay, *What Is a Palestinian State Worth?* Reflecting on the failure to create a state, Nusseibeh asked the reader to consider what a state is for in the first place—securing the rights of those within it. To this end, Nusseibeh proposed “that Israel officially annex the occupied territories, and that Palestinians in the enlarged Israel agree that the state remain Jewish in return for being granted all the civil, though not the political, rights of citizenship.” In other words, Palestinians accept second-class status, rather than continuing to fight an apparently unwinnable battle against the Israeli occupation.

Recognizing his own proposal as “so objectionable that it might well generate its own annulment, either by making all parties see the need to find a tenable alternative or, if indeed adopted, by serving as a natural step toward a single democratic state,” Nusseibeh nevertheless insisted that such a plan would provide Palestinians with “a far better life than they have had in more than forty years under occupation or would have under another projected scenario: Israeli hegemony over scattered, ‘autonomous’ Palestinian enclaves.” Even though offered as a “thought experiment,” such a proposal coming from a longtime supporter of two states like Nusseibeh is a sign of the Palestinian intelligentsia’s exhaustion with endless rounds of negotiations.

That exhaustion is shared broadly among the younger generation. Two Palestinians at opposite ends of the establishment spectrum—the first an activist leader in the West Bank, the second a young Palestinian official close to the negotiations over the past several years—illustrate a fundamental shift in views. The activist is done with two states, with Oslo, and with the Palestinian government created under its auspices. “I don’t want a Palestinian Authority representing me that hasn’t had elections since 2006,” she told me. “It’s time to get people out of thinking about land and into thinking about rights. I’m tired of arguing about land. I want my rights.” The Palestinian official confessed to me that, after years of being at negotiations, “I never thought I’d say this, but I care less about a state than I do about being treated with dignity. Give me an Israeli passport, but don’t humiliate me at checkpoints.”

These sentiments were echoed in a recent New York Times article on growing frustration with the two-state solution among younger Palestinians, including the son of President Abbas. “If you don’t want to give me independence, at least give me civil rights,” Tareq Abbas told the Times. “That’s an easier way, peaceful way. I don’t want to throw anything, I don’t want to hate anybody, I don’t want to shoot anybody. I want to be under the law.”

Still, no one has articulated a plausible process for how that could happen. “There’s no exact model, but there’s no exact situation like Israel-Palestine anywhere else in the world,” says Yousef Munayyer, the executive director of the Jerusalem Fund, a Washington-based nonprofit that does educational and humanitarian work on behalf of the Palestinians. “I think there are lessons that can be borrowed from the outcomes in different

places that can help us move in a different direction in Israel-Palestine, but we have to always remember that it is a unique situation, and so unique solutions have to be thought about.”

Given the massive investment in diplomatic efforts over the past decades, it’s difficult to imagine that U.S. policy can be redirected toward a solution beyond two states. But American policy is going to have to confront openness to other answers on the part of Israelis and Palestinians. The logic of the Oslo process that created the Palestinian Authority was that it was a transitional period leading to the creation of a Palestinian state, in which the Palestinian people would enjoy sovereignty and self-determination. Because the occupation was nearing its end, the thinking went, it was better to focus on the ultimate goal and not get distracted arguing about the daily challenges that Palestinians face. After almost 47 years of occupation, that thinking may need to change.

“We may be entering a ‘nonsolution’ era,” says Palestinian official Husam Zomlot. “It doesn’t mean renewed conflict, but it means we need to ditch the idea that our peoples’ daily needs must wait for a solution.” Finding a solution remains paramount, Zomlot stresses, “but in a scenario of a nonsolution, then what? The people of Gaza should remain under siege? The people of the West Bank should continue to see their land being robbed by the day? We cannot afford any longer to continue behaving as if everything has to wait until a solution is struck.”

Noam Sheizaf believes it is time to change the terms from a struggle for statehood to a struggle for human rights. “When one addresses the occupation as a human-rights issue, and I believe this to be its true essence, attitudes change, even dramatically,”

he says. The existing reality in the West Bank, Sheizaf says, is “two different legal systems in the same territory, access to resources based on ethnicity, the lack of due process which is an inherent part of the occupation. All of these are so foreign to the American ethos.” Heightening the focus on that reality, he argues, rather than on a diplomatic process that has proved incapable of changing it, could be more constructive.

If the current negotiations effort by the U.S. fails, it’s unlikely that any measure of trust between the sides will be preserved for the next president to have another go at the issue. In such a scenario, the U.S. will find itself in a situation in which it remains deeply implicated but seems to have even less ability to influence the course of events. The time is now to start talking about Plan B, if only to give greater urgency to Plan A.

Matthew Duss is a foreign policy analyst and a contributing writer for the Prospect.

[Article 3.](#)

The New Republic

A New (and Plausible) Plan for Peace

[Ari Shavit](#)

April 28, 2014 -- John Kerry is a hero. Although all odds were

against him, he took it upon himself to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He was determined to make the impossible possible and to succeed where so many others have failed (among them, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Madeleine Albright, Condoleezza Rice, and Hillary Clinton). In the last 15 months, the secretary of state marshaled his significant stamina, invested his precious time, and risked his political capital to carry out the noble mission of bringing peace to the Promised Land.

Yet peace is not nigh. Despite the personal determination, intellectual commitment, and diplomatic dedication of the extraordinary American peace team, Israelis and Palestinians are as divided as they were a year ago and a decade ago. Both pretend to sing the song of peace that the benevolent American expects them to sing. But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas don't really mean it. Jews and Arabs are deeply suspicious of one another and do not agree on the fundamentals that could make peace a reality. Hence, the formidable work done by Kerry's team—a creative solution to the settlement issue, Jerusalem, borders, security arrangements, refugees—made no headway. Like some tragic twenty-first-century Sisyphus, Kerry rolled up the rock of Middle East Peace just to see it slip from his hands and roll down the slope into the abyss. Even if a last moment Jonathan Pollard / Palestinian prisoners swap can be agreed upon and several more months of pseudo-negotiations secured—it is now apparent that there is no deal there. Kerry's peace is a benign American peace that the harsh realities of the Middle East reject.

So should the quest for peace in our time be abandoned? Should

the fourth grand failure to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict convince us all that the two-state solution is doomed? Should the lesson of the (failed) Oslo Accords, the (failed) Camp David Summit, the (failed) Annapolis Process, and the (hopeless) Kerry initiative be that violence, occupation, and settlement are allowed to go on and on and on? Some pundits suggest that the United States should turn away from the conflict. Others think that the secretary should lay his peace plan on the table and wait until the parties grow up and endorse it. Both schools of thought promote, unintentionally, dangerous ideas. The Middle East cannot sustain a vacuum in its midst. When one occurs, it is immediately filled with extremism and bloodshed. Left to their own devices—without active American leadership—regional tensions would escalate violently. So what should be done in the wake of Kerry's failure is quite different.

We must pause now, take a long breath, and think about what went wrong and why. Why were the peaceniks mistaken? Why did the 1993, 2000, 2007–2008, and 2013–2014 peace initiatives—which we full-heartedly supported—not bring about peace?

Because the assumptions of Old Peace were wrong. Because the wishful thinking of peace seekers in the United States, Europe, and Israel blinded us to the depth of the 100-year-long Holy Land conflict. As solution-oriented liberal Westerners, we did not wrestle seriously with the fact that the conflict did not begin in 1967 and that it would not necessarily end with the resolution of the problem that 1967 created. We overlooked the notion that the Palestinians' formative trauma is that of 1948, and therefore it is highly unlikely that they would give up their demand to return to the cities, villages, and homes lost that year. We

dismissed the possibility that the Palestinians are victims of an anachronistic political culture whose negative ethos makes it especially difficult to offer the concessions required to reach a historic reconciliation in this day and age.

At the very same time, the Old Peace seekers did not address the fact that Israel's chaotic politics make it almost impossible for its leadership to take the bold steps needed to end occupation in a timely manner. We also failed to recognize the traumas Israelis went through in the last 20 years as each attempt to reach peace ended with turmoil, terror, and bloodshed. While we who believed in Old Peace were totally right about the futility of occupation and the scourge of settlement, we were misled to believe that ending occupation quickly is possible and that resolving the settlement issue would smooth the way to a comprehensive peace. Ignoring the traumatic past, we could not present a realistic vision for the future. Failing to distinguish between the occupation issue (which we rightly identified as corrosive) and the peace issue (on which we were somewhat naïve) was the fundamental flaw. This failure sabotaged our efforts over the last two and a half decades to end occupation. It led to a vicious circle whereby every year we all hoped for peace by the coming spring, and every year we ended up with thousands of new settlers by the following winter. This vicious circle might very well repeat itself in 2014. In order to free ourselves, a New Peace mindset is needed.

What is New Peace? It is an attempt to reconcile liberal-democratic values with the merciless Middle East. It is an enterprise designed to reach peace gradually rather than instantly. It is an endeavor that replaces the castle in the sky of formal peace with the tent on the ground of a de facto peace.

New Peace will not alter the ultimate goal of Old Peace: a two-state solution. But it will not be obsessed with mutual recognition and the drafting of end-of-conflict documents. Rather, it will focus on fostering the conditions that will allow the two states to evolve and flourish side by side. New Peace will not forsake the hope that eventually a democratic Middle East will emerge. But it would acknowledge the political culture of the Arab world and the Palestinian people as they are now and it would try to make the most out of it.

How can all this come about? Very simply. First, Israel will freeze all settlement activity beyond the separation barrier. Then Israel will initiate limited pullouts from designated areas in the West Bank. The Palestinians will commit to turning every piece of liberated land into a development zone in which massive building projects (resembling those in the new Palestinian city of Rawabi) will take center stage. The Saudis and the Gulf states will finance those development enterprises. The Egyptians and Jordanians will give the process political backing and military guidance. The United States will oversee it all, and Europe will do what Europe does best: NGO activity and civil-society building. While the Israelis and Palestinians advance the process with unsigned understandings and undeclared cooperation, the Israelis, Palestinians, Arabs, and Turks will institute major regional economic projects. Gas pipes, water distillation plants, high-tech companies, free commerce zones, and programs to eliminate illiteracy will weave the fabric of a New Peace reality. Interdependence and mutual economic interests will be New Peace's substitutes for hollow signed agreements, meaningless legal documents, ongoing ideological debates, and futile diplomatic rituals. The long-term end-of-occupation initiative

will be interwoven into a larger scheme of a realpolitik peace. Unlike Old Peace, which had at its core White House lawn signing ceremonies, New Peace will be based on quiet, clever, and realistic White House leadership. American behind-the-scenes thinking, planning, and prompting will lead, coordinate, and monitor the unilateral processes and the regional one while impelling the Israelis, the Palestinians, and the Middle East to move forward and create a relatively stable environment that would eventually—after a decade or two—lead to an overall comprehensive and formal peace.

The advantages of New Peace for the Palestinians are self-evident. Abbas's failure to recognize Israel as a Jewish state proves that the Palestinian national movement has an inherent difficulty in making significant ideological concessions vis-à-vis the Jewish national movement: Zionism. Israel has recognized the Palestinian people and their right to have a Palestinian state; the Palestinians have not reciprocated by recognizing the Jewish people's right to self-determination in their ancient homeland. To this day, they find the very concepts of Jewish peoplehood and Jewish sovereignty unacceptable. This ideological reticence—which makes Israelis suspicious, anxious, and nervous—is one of the major obstacles preventing Old Peace from materializing. And yet, there are strong and constructive new forces in Palestine wishing to move forward, to pursue freedom, happiness, and prosperity, and to build a democratic state. These forces—personified by the former prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, Salam Fayyad, and manifested in the building project of the modern city of Rawabi—cannot yet grapple with such charged issues as Jerusalem, refugees, and final-status peace. Fayyadism and Rawabism are not yet strong

enough and mature enough to do that. But the new Palestinian moderates can grow and prosper within the protective greenhouse of a New Peace structure that will expand the Palestinian geographic, political, and economic space—year by year, quarter by quarter. If at any given point in time the Palestinians are better off than in the previous point in time, there is hope. A new generation of modernized and globalized West Bankers may find reconciliation with their Israeli neighbors essential—and feasible. Over time, a benign Palestine may be established and a two-state steady-state may come to be.

New Peace would be beneficial for Israel just as it would be for its Palestinian neighbors. Most Israelis realize that the only way is the two-state way. But most Israelis are paralyzed because of the failure of previous peace initiatives and the apparent brutality of their neighborhood. At the very same time, Israel's bizarre political system and dysfunctional republic do not enable it to deal with the enormity of the settlement project in one quick blow. For strategic, political, and psychological reasons, Israelis need time. They need a gradual, cautious, trial-and-error approach. They need to realize that dovish mistakes can be mended and security risks can be controlled. Reasonable, middle-of-the-road Israelis must be convinced that the essential yet dangerous retreat from the West Bank will be handled with care, caution, and wisdom. Polls indicate that most Israelis have abandoned the greater-Israel ideology, are willing to divide the land and establish a Palestinian state. Yet since Ariel Sharon's untimely departure—some eight years ago—they have not been offered a reasonable way to do all of the above. Rather, they were constantly asked by the international community and the Israeli left to put their faith in Abbas, whom they do not trust.

These intimidated citizens of the only democracy in the Middle East gave up on Old Peace because they came to the conclusion that it ignores history and reality. But these very same sensible middle-class individuals would endorse New Peace if they were persuaded that it does not ignore history and reality. Once the all-or-nothing approach is replaced by a step-by-step approach, they may very well go for it. The time bought will also enable them to fix their political system and reform their republic in a way that will allow Israel to tackle the massive mission ahead. As long as they are not faced with uncalculated existential risks, Israelis will probably be willing to try to curtail occupation and eventually end occupation—within the sensible and realistic framework of New Peace.

The advantages of New Peace for the moderate Arab nations are just as clear. The most striking outcome of the Arab Spring is the loss of legitimacy of all (non-democratic) Arab regimes. Whether they are reactionary monarchs or secular dictators—all Sunni leaders walk on thin ice these days as their moral authority has been undermined. This inherent weakness makes it nearly impossible for the monarchs and dictators to strike a formal peace agreement with the hated Zionists and to make the painful rhetorical concessions needed if an end--of-conflict accord is to be publicly signed. And yet, most of these Arab leaders are now closer to Israel than they ever were. Fear of Iran, fear of the Muslim Brotherhood, and fear of American decline make them see Israel as the lesser evil and bring about strategic cooperation between Sunnis and Jews. But only some good news from the West Bank—tangible, positive developments—will provide them the political justification for fully embracing such an alliance. That's why a gradual approach

to ending occupation would suit the Sunnis just fine.

America would definitely do better if it promotes New Peace. In the last two decades, the United States made every possible mistake in the Middle East. It tried to impose peace and it tried to impose democracy—and failed at both. It tried war and it tried appeasement—and ran into the wall. So now Americans are sick and tired of the region they tried to reform. They are fed up with its violent ways and oppressive regimes. Imminent energy independence allows some Americans to believe they can actually disengage from the one part of the world they failed to transform. They are wrong. As 9/11 proves, the Middle East tends to chase those running away from it. So the United States needs a new strategy that will enable it to address the Arab world and the Jewish state as they really are. Fantasy time is over. A total disengagement is not possible. The only way forward for America is to promote a grand Sunni-Jewish alliance based on concrete mutual interests and on the co-production of a reasonable, long-term end-of-occupation strategy. If the United States sponsors and coordinates Israeli-Palestinian unilateralism, and puts it in a larger regional context, it will lay the foundation of a New Peace.

Forty odd years ago, the United States did just that. Henry Kissinger brokered an Israeli-Jordanian de facto peace, which held for 24 years, until a formal agreement could finally be signed. The close yet unofficial bond between the Hashemite Kingdom and Israel that spanned from 1970 to 1994 could very well be the model for New Peace. Israel actually saved Jordan in 1970, when Syria was about to invade it, and Jordan tried to save Israel in 1973, when Egypt and Syria were about to attack it. The two nations stood by each other for a quarter of a

century, without formal diplomatic relations. If America once again musters Kissinger-like realism, it could bolster Israeli centrists, Arab pragmatists, and Palestinian moderates.

Paradigms are difficult to change. Sacred paradigms are especially difficult to challenge. We are emotionally attached to them as they are familiar and (paradoxically) reassuring. Yet the theory of Old Peace has misled us for a generation while playing into the hands of the enemies of peace. So now, when there is overwhelming evidence that Old Peace is dead, we must shift directions. We must think differently about peace and act differently regarding peace. If we fail to do so, we may soon see a political avalanche in Israel-Palestine. The century-long conflict might spiral out of control just because we were not courageous enough to face up to an inconvenient truth and see reality as it is.

Ari Shavit is the author of My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel.

[Article 4.](#)

The National Interest

Palestinian-Israeli Talks: Time for a “Time Out”

Shai Feldman

April 29, 2014 -- In basketball, when a team scores a number of baskets in a row, the opposing team's coach usually calls for a "time out." Its purpose is not only to give new instructions to the team, but more importantly, to stop the psychological slide that may be causing the collapse of the team's defense and the impotence of its offense.

Therefore, it was hardly surprising that, as an avid basketball player, U.S. President Barack Obama reacted last Friday to the news about the reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas by suggesting a "time out" in the currently morbid Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. [3] Implicitly, when suggesting the pause, Obama also acknowledged that the talks had reached a dead end even before the latest crisis, noting that the two sides' leaders failed to make the difficult decisions that a breakthrough required.

Secretary of State John Kerry should heed the president's advice. Moreover, he should use the suggested pause to take his negotiations team, headed by Special Envoy Martin Indyk, to a weekend retreat. There, they should review the process as it has unfolded since this phase of the talks began in July 2013. They should ascertain the strategic—not operational or tactical—mistakes made during the period. They should also determine what a "recalibrated" process should look like and assess whether they can do what it takes to achieve better results.

What are the key mistakes that should be discussed at the retreat? First, Kerry should not have permitted Palestinian

President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to engage him in endless discussions regarding the conditions for negotiations. Kerry should have told the two leaders:

Gentlemen, if you want peace, the United States is prepared to facilitate. If you reach an agreement, issues like a settlement-construction freeze and release of prisoners will be taken care of. Prisoners will be released and construction will cease in whatever settlements will find themselves located on the Palestinian side of the negotiated boundary. But the world presents the United States with too many important challenges for us to be engaged in negotiating precursors to negotiations. So make up your mind: If you want peace, we need to focus on border demarcation, security, Jerusalem, refugees, and water resources. Not on your conditions for negotiating these issues.

Second, Secretary Kerry should not have retreated from the original goal of negotiating a comprehensive deal to gaining acceptance of a Framework Agreement. The reason this was a mistake is that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict violates the golden rule that “the devil is in the details.” In this conflict, the devil is in the principles that form the essence of any Framework Agreement.

The problem is less about the demarcation of a boundary that makes sense demographically—it is about accepting the principle that it would be based on the 1967 lines. The problem is less about dividing control and responsibilities in Jerusalem—it is about defining who will be sovereign in the Holy Basin. It is less about finding a practical solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees—it is about accepting the

refugees' Right of Return. It is less about gaining Palestinian acceptance of a legal stipulation that the agreement would "end all claims" and that following its signing there would be "no further recourse"—it is about gaining their formal recognition of Israel "as the national homeland of the Jewish people."

While professionals on both sides can reconcile competing interests on the practical dimensions of the conflict, a Framework Agreement involves principles and competing national narratives that only the leaders can negotiate. Not surprisingly, Kerry has spent many visits and countless hours discussing these principles with Abbas and Netanyahu. This violated Henry Kissinger's stipulation that leaders should not assume the role of negotiators. It also ignored the experience of South Africa, where the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to reconcile competing narratives took place only after the political resolution of the dispute.

Third, Kerry should have begun by focusing on the most important set of negotiations—that between himself and President Obama. This is because Palestinian-Israeli negotiations were never going to succeed without the United States exercising some leverage over the negotiating parties. But given the political capital that needs to be spent exercising such leverage, it is only the President of the United States who could decide that such leverage be employed. As these negotiations between the secretary and the president were never settled in a way that gained clarity in the minds of Palestinian and Israeli leaders, it is hardly surprising that both kept wondering what the president's oft stated backing of his Secretary of State actually meant.

Finally, Kerry allowed a devaluation of America's standing by violating Jim Baker's number one rule for successful negotiations: The willingness to walk away from the table. By refraining from using leverage and by agreeing to engage the parties in endless discussions over conditions for negotiations—and even more bizarrely, by allowing Jonathan Pollard's possible release to be brought into the equation—the secretary gave the parties the impression that he is more interested in an agreement than they are. Thus, instead of the parties pleading for U.S. facilitation, it appeared as if Kerry was chasing Netanyahu and Abbas.

Recalibrating U.S. conduct in the peace process mid-way through the Obama administration's second term will not be easy, because most of the recommendations suggested here will require Israeli and Palestinian leaders to unlearn what they have become accustomed to expect from Secretary Kerry and his team. Indeed, given the importance that the exercise of leverage will assume in any successful recalibration of America's approach, none of this will succeed without President Obama deciding that this is really a top priority. Yet without such recalibration, Israeli-Palestinian negotiations will remain in the Intensive Care Unit where the talks are currently hospitalized. That everyone concerned has been reluctant to “pull the plug” over these talks is of little consolation for those who truly care about Arab-Israeli peace.

Prof. Shai Feldman is the Judith and Sidney Swartz Director of the Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis University and is a Senior Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy

School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

Article 5.

Al Monitor

Palestinian reconciliation deal a Hamas surrender

Daoud Kuttab

April 28, 2014 -- Ever since the 2007 split that divided Palestinian rule between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Ramallah-based leadership has had three options to consider: using force, compromising or waiting for Hamas to capitulate. Israel, which was established and continues to exist through use of brutal force, has always recommended that Ramallah crush the Gaza-based Islamic insurgency. Israelis used their own history as an example. In the early days of the State of Israel, David Ben-Gurion's army sank the Altalena, a ship loaded with arms belonging to the rival Irgun, headed by Menachem Begin, killing 20 Irgunists.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas could have also yielded politically to the many demands of Hamas, the most important of which was to abandon the Western-sponsored negotiations with Israel and join Hamas in its "resistance" program. Instead,

Abbas choose a third option: supporting Gazans while waiting for Hamas to give in. The Ramallah-based government has been paying salaries and covering the electricity costs for the Gaza Strip since the split erupted in 2007, even at the cost of its own fiscal health.

Abbas' strategy finally paid off, in an agreement that at least on paper suggests a total Hamas capitulation and a clear political victory for Abbas and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The Islamic movement suddenly began speaking of Abbas as president and even applauded one of his speeches that reiterated his commitment to the peace talks. Hamas has agreed to yield its government to a unity cabinet made up of technocrats, none of whom will be known Hamas members. The Islamic movement has also crucially agreed to presidential and parliamentary elections to be conducted no later than six months after the formation of the unity government. The most important political concession, however, is that Hamas agreed to join the PLO and all its institutions.

Throughout the talks with Israel, there had been arguments concerning whether Hamas would be obliged to separately accept the three conditions set out by the now nearly defunct Quartet: recognizing Israel, renouncing terror and accepting all previous agreements signed by the PLO. The position presented by the PLO was that all of these conditions have already been met by the PLO, and therefore Hamas, by joining the organization — as long as the PLO does not retract its earlier positions — would be in adherence with the three conditions.

For the PLO, Hamas' capitulation was made abundantly clear

when the PLO's Central Council met in Ramallah on April 26. Addressing the second highest PLO committee, Abbas reiterated that the unity government, as stipulated in the signed April 23 reconciliation, will continue to recognize Israel, renounce terror and adhere to all previously signed agreements. Most important, Abbas said publicly that he wanted to continue the negotiations with Israel irrespective of the reconciliation, a sure sign that Hamas had capitulated politically to the PLO.

The European Union, which had previously been trapped by refusing to deal with a duly elected Palestinian government, was quick to welcome the reconciliation as were two other members of the Quartet, Russia and the United Nations. The United States was mild in its reaction to the reconciliation, stressing that the key is for the new government to adhere to the Quartet's conditions.

The only party opposed to Hamas' capitulation has been Israel, which has declared a public relations war against Abbas and the PLO. The disingenuous position of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has been exposed by a number of Israelis arguing that it was the Israelis, especially Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman, who have regularly complained that Abbas was not a peace partner, because he was unable to speak on behalf of the Gaza Strip or implement any agreement including it. By suspending the peace talks, already on their last breath due to Israel's reneging on the prisoner release agreement, the Israelis have clearly shown that they are not interested in a genuine peace that includes all Palestinians.

The tough and strange Israeli reaction to Hamas' capitulation to

the PLO is indicative of a party that is not genuinely interested in peace. It seems to reinforce the Palestinian claim that Netanyahu prefers the situation in which Gaza is not ruled from Ramallah and Hamas remains outside the PLO, pursuing its "resistance" agenda against Israel.

Daoud Kuttab is a columnist for Al-Monitor's Palestine Pulse. A Palestinian journalist and media activist, he is a former Ferris Professor of journalism at Princeton University and is currently the director-general of Community Media Network, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing independent media in the Arab region.

Article 6.

The Washington Post

Hamas must repudiate the anti-Semitism in its charter

Richard Cohen

Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day has passed. But then, as far as I'm concerned, it is always Holocaust Remembrance Day — a perpetual and frustratingly futile attempt to come to terms with murder so vast and incomprehensible it is like pondering what came before the big bang. And yet in a corner of the world, the Holocaust is considered no mystery at all. The Jews did it to themselves to foster the creation of Israel. This is what Hamas believes.

Mahmoud Abbas, the moderate Palestinian leader, has made peace with Hamas — and it with him. Abbas had earlier acknowledged the Holocaust but recently called it “the most heinous crime to have occurred against humanity in the modern era.” This sounds like a prosaic statement of fact, but coming from a man who once held the Jews complicit in their own near-destruction, it is significant. For Abbas to have elevated the Holocaust over the Palestinian Nakba — the forced and non-forced evacuation of Arabs from Israel — is an important concession.

Not surprisingly, Abbas’s rendezvous with history was dismissed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. This is Netanyahu’s default position when it comes to Palestinian concessions. Yet this time, he has a point. Hamas is indeed the terrorist organization Israel and the United States say it is. Its opposition to the mere existence of Israel is stated not just in the usual terms of Palestinian grievance or nationalism but also by a remarkable and stupendously stupid anti-Semitism.

In fact, according to the Hamas charter, it’s nothing less than a miracle that Hamas exists at all. Its enemy, the Jews, are so rich and powerful that “they took control of the world media, news agencies, the press, publishing houses, broadcasting stations, and others. . . . They were behind the French Revolution, the Communist revolution and most of the revolutions we heard and hear about.” The Jews had help, of course — and the Hamas charter names their allies: “Freemasons, Rotary Clubs, the Lions and others.” How the Elks and the Civil Air Patrol got left out is beyond me.

The charter does not stop there. The Jews, it says, “were behind

World War II, through which they made huge financial gains by trading in armaments, and paved the way for the establishment of their state.” In other words, the Holocaust — not that it happened, mind you — was a clever Jewish ruse to win the world’s sympathy and thereby establish the state of Israel. Mazel tov! It worked.

To our ears, this is all loony stuff. But history demands that attention be paid. In its tone, in its detail, in its sheer monumental idiocy, the Hamas charter is nothing but warmed-over Hitlerism. It is no crazier than what Hitler laid out in “Mein Kampf.” Yet this was a doctrine that helped make him Germany’s paramount leader and enabled the murder of 6 million Jews. Hamas proclaims its anti-colonialist bona fides yet it has swallowed whole European anti-Semitism.

The Hamas charter was adopted in 1988 and possibly no longer accurately reflects the thinking of the current Hamas leadership. If so, it should be repudiated — and not without fanfare. Anti-Semitism has come to reside in the Middle East. If Israel was always a diversion for the region’s rulers, then anti-Semitism is a useful explanation. It is the granddaddy of all conspiracy theories. It seems to account for the region’s poverty, its haplessness, its relative weakness vis-a-vis Israel and so much more. If the Jews were behind the French Revolution, then why not, too, the collapse of the Arab Spring?

Palestinians have legitimate grievances. They lost their land and the hurt is great. But they are not children and they should not be patronized. Europeans and others who find such unalloyed virtue and victimhood in Hamas and the Gaza it rules ought to demand a repudiation of the charter. How some of these

sympathizers can go from the lands of the Holocaust itself to a place where anti-Semitism is official doctrine ought to trouble them. It doesn't, I know — and that ought to trouble the rest of us.

If there is ever to be a lasting peace in the Middle East, Arab anti-Semitism must be repudiated. Instead, the Jew-hatred that was introduced to the region by Nazi agents has become semi-official or official doctrine — so much so that it was both brave and newsworthy for Abbas merely to acknowledge the primacy of the Holocaust. Now, though, he must take the next step and demand that his new buddies in Hamas purge their charter of its vile anti-Semitism. Palestinians would benefit more than Jews.

[Article 7.](#)

NYT

Political Executions in Egypt

Editorial

April 28, 2014 -- An out-of-control government in Egypt has now sentenced more than 680 people to death in a mass trial that lasted a few minutes and is part of an organized effort not just to crush its political opponents but to eliminate them. Last month, a court delivered a similar sentence on 529 others. The sentences further demonstrate that the military-led government's ruthless disregard for the law and its contrary political views go far

beyond anything that former President Mohamed Morsi was accused of doing when he was deposed by the army in July.

And what did the Obama administration have to say about this travesty, which will further fuel hostility and division in one of the Arab world's most important countries? "The United States is deeply troubled," the office of the press secretary said in a shockingly weak statement. There was no indication that the administration would reconsider last week's decision to provide the Egyptians with 10 Apache helicopters and more than \$650 million in aid.

The death sentences are subject to appeal, but that is little solace to the defendants who have been accused and sentenced with nothing resembling justice or even minimal due process. In Monday's ruling, the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Mohamed Badie, was among those convicted even though he repeatedly emphasized nonviolence in his public remarks in the period leading up to the anti-Islamist crackdown that began with Mr. Morsi's overthrow and the backlash against it.

The sentences were imposed for inciting violence and disturbances in which one police officer was allegedly killed. But none of those sentenced were charged with participating in his murder. Mr. Badie and many others were given the death sentence for lesser crimes.

In a separate outrageous ruling, a court banned the activities of the April 6 group, a liberal organization that spearheaded the revolt against then-President Hosni Mubarak in 2011. Its leaders are already serving three-year sentences for organizing an unauthorized street protest.

The courts in Egypt were once regarded as relatively liberal within the country's authoritarian system, but it is clear that the judges have become a government tool. There has been no serious attempt to deliver justice for the thousands of Islamists and other antigovernment critics who are now languishing in jails or the estimated 1,000 who were killed by security forces during last year's protests by supporters of Mr. Morsi and the Brotherhood.

Like the United States, Israel has an interest in a stable Egypt that can honor the 1979 Israel-Egypt peace treaty and defeat militants in Sinai. But an Egyptian government that persecutes its political opponents and denies them justice and any political role in society will produce only instability and violence.

[Article 8.](#)

The Council on Foreign Relations

Historic Iraq Election Brings New Uncertainties

An interview with Ned Parker

April 28, 2014 -- As Iraq prepares for its first nationwide elections since the U.S. withdrawal, it's still up in the air whether Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki will win enough seats to stay in power, says longtime Iraq watcher Ned Parker. In addition, he says a deteriorating security situation could delay

the formation of a new coalition government for months. "There are real reasons to worry about the future because of Iraq's internal problems: the religious tensions, the ethnic tensions, the legacy of corruption, the abuses of security forces, and the presence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant," he says.

Iraq goes to the polls on Wednesday for another round of parliamentary elections. What's at stake, and is Maliki expected to win again?

There are 328 seats in the Council of Representatives up for grabs. Some nine thousand people are running for office among various and sundry parties. Will Maliki end up getting enough support to remain in power? That's the question. Maliki's Shiite rivals want to unseat him because they feel he's monopolized power, and the Sunnis by and large want Maliki gone. The main Kurdish political branch, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, also wants him out. But Maliki is very popular still among many Shiites, who see him as a strong man—someone who's defending Iraq against regional Sunni Arab countries.

So how many seats do you think his State of Law Coalition will get?

It's hard to say. Nobody knows exactly. His people hope he'll get ninety. They feel with ninety seats or more, and independent slates loyal to him, he could climb to 100–110 seats and make the argument that he has the mandate for forming the next government.

His rivals from the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq expect Maliki will get just over seventy seats, and that their own coalition, including the Sadrists (led by influential cleric

Muqtada al-Sadr) and independents, will fall just behind. With such a tight margin, ISCI and the Sadrists hope they can come together to present a substitute for Maliki. There are rumors that even some in Maliki's own political party are quietly preparing to present their own alternative to Maliki if it becomes clear he is no longer viable.

So what will happen this time?

Some people are saying that a government will be formed in six weeks, but a lot of people say it will take a year. There is a worsening security situation here, and there are real reasons to worry about the future because of Iraq's internal problems: the religious tensions, the ethnic tensions, the legacy of corruption, the abuses of security forces, and the presence of the [Sunni jihadist group] Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Things that could get better don't. Politicians speak in a much more radical and sectarian tone. The government's security forces have been used in Anbar province as a policy solution, which has only aggravated the situation. Hundreds of thousands have been displaced; there is fighting on the perimeter of Baghdad and in neighboring provinces on the capital's doorstep. Shiite militias have been mobilized to fight side by side with the Iraqi security forces against ISIL. Political figures say the militias are formally serving the state through a new organization loyal to the prime minister's military office, but the government has vociferously denied the charge. When the Americans were still in Iraq, despite all their mistakes, they were able to exert a restraining influence on Iraqi politicians. Now, without the Americans, you have all these sides escalating their language and pushing the envelope. They haven't exhibited an ability to compromise.

So what's life like in Baghdad?

In Baghdad, there is a prosperous neighborhood, Karrada, that gets bombed about three or four times a week, during busy hours. There's a haunting picture in newspapers this past week of a blown up coffee shop with chairs on the ground. People feel uncertain and confused.

The situation is worsening, and it's hard to see who is capable of being bold enough to take practical steps to solve the country's multiple problems. There are cities like Fallujah, where you have multiple armed groups—some of them from the ISIL, others are tribal, others are from old insurgent groups that have been dormant—but suddenly now you have this very balkanized situation from neighborhood to neighborhood. Even before the Anbar campaign last year, Baghdad was getting hit all the time by car bombs in different Shiite neighborhoods. It was as if you were seeing a ripple effect from every bombing where five people die or ten people die, but it's another twenty or thirty people who are affected. Maliki felt he had to act against the bombings in his capital, but he ended up in a battle in Anbar province without a clear exit strategy.

Could the United States have done more?

As the United States withdrew its troops in 2011, its influence weakened. In particular, it could not get the Iraqi government to fulfill its promises to bring the Sunnis, who had helped the Americans in the "Awakening" in Anbar Province, into the security forces. For a while Vice President [Joe] Biden had influence and came several times to Iraq, but he stopped coming in 2011, and America's role as a broker fell apart.

Interviewee: Ned Parker, Bureau Chief, Reuters News Service