

Middle East Notes
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
October 30, 2014



Please note: Opinions expressed in the following articles do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.

[Read previous weeks' Middle East Notes.](#)

These Middle East Notes focus on the debate concerning the UN recognition of the State of Palestine, continued Israeli settlement building and erosion of international support for Israel, an informative lecture in the UN by Noam Chomsky, self-censoring of U.S. media re: criticism of Israeli policies, the duty of Palestinians to resist the occupation, and other issues.

- The CMEP Bulletins for October 17 and October 24 focused on the international debate over recognition of the State of Palestine, reconstruction of Gaza, clashes in Jerusalem, the date of the Palestinian request to the UN Security Council for State recognition, and other issues.
- Barak Ravid writes in Ha'aretz that the U.S. fears that once the Palestinian initiative gets rolling in the UN, it will snowball and end any hope of resuming peace talks in the coming years.
- Lara Friedman in Americans for Peace Now believes that Israel's friendship and future are being sacrificed by Elad sponsored settlement expansion in East Jerusalem.
- Omar Barghouti, a Palestinian activist and one of the founders of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, writes in the New York Times that recognition of a Palestinian State without full rights is meaningless.
- Edith M. Lederer notes in Ha'aretz that Palestinian UN ambassador Riyad Mansour said his government wants the UN Security Council to vote on a resolution that would set November 2016 as the deadline for Israeli troops to withdraw from all Palestinian territories. He also said that if draft resolution is defeated by U.S. veto, the Palestinians will join the International Criminal Court (ICC) and sign on to other international treaties.
- Uri Avnery writes in his column that the British Parliament's resolution to recognize the State of Palestine may be non-binding, but it expresses public opinion, which will sooner or later decide government action on arms sales, Security Council resolutions, European Union decisions and what not.
- Gershon Baskin writes in the Jerusalem Post that the Palestinians are on the path to victory, and as long as they are able to contain violence, even in the face of settler violence against them, they will get their state and the Israeli occupation will finally come to an end.
- Gideon Levy in Ha'aretz suggests that the U.S. American involvement in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has only served to deepen and perpetuate it.
- Noam Chomsky addressed the 365th Meeting of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; his lecture was followed by a Q&A with Amy Goodman.
- Peter Beinart writes in Ha'aretz that at a conference, Reuven Rivlin, Israel's president, said, "It's time to admit honestly that Israeli society is sick." He went on to suggest that his country's Jewish citizens have "forgotten how to be decent human beings." Beinart suggests that if he were a politician in the U.S., he'd be labeled an anti-Semite and likely forced out of office.
- The State of Two States - Week of October 19.
- Gideon Levy writes in Ha'aretz that faced with a reality in which Israel is strong and the United States is in its pocket, it is the duty of Palestinians to resist the occupation. The only question relates to the means.

Additional video resource: [Stop the settlement building](#)

1a) Churches for Middle East Peace Bulletin, October 17, 2014

British lawmakers vote to recognize Palestinian State: On October 13 members of the British Parliament voted 270 to 12 to support a non-binding motion calling on the British government to “recognize the state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel.” Prime Minister David Cameron and other conservatives of the 650 member House of Commons abstained from the vote. While the vote is largely symbolic, it reflects a significant shift in public opinion since the breakdown of US sponsored peace negotiations and the Gaza war last summer. Conservative House of Commons foreign affairs committee chairman Richard Ottaway said, “[I] stood by Israel through thick and thin [and] under normal circumstances [would] oppose the motion; but such is my anger over Israel’s behavior in recent months that I will not oppose the motion. I have to say to the government of Israel that if they are losing people like me, they will be losing a lot of people.”

Left wing Israeli MKs responded to the UK vote by blaming the Israeli government for failing to advance the peace process, Israel’s embassy in London issued a statement saying, “The route to Palestinian statehood runs through the negotiation room,” adding: “Premature international recognition sends a troubling message to the Palestinian leadership that they can evade the tough choices that both sides have to make, and actually undermines the chances to reach a real peace.” British Ambassador to Israel Matthew Gould said that Monday’s UK parliamentary vote reflected broader public opinion and said that the outcome of “Palestinian sovereignty could only be achieved through direct negotiations with Israel.” The Palestinian Ambassador to the United Kingdom Manuel Hassassian said that the UK vote is symbolic but has placed Palestinians “one step closer to statehood.”

The Israeli Foreign Ministry said, “The stated policy of the Israeli government is already in support of a Palestinian state. So there’s no big deal here on substance, the question is process.” Other Israelis including former Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry Dr. Alon Liel disagree. Liel organized a public letter signed by 363 prominent Israelis encouraging the British Parliament to pass the motion.

France weighs in on recognizing a Palestinian State: France’s foreign minister Laurent Fabius said Paris should only recognize a Palestinian state if doing so would help achieve peace and that “until now the prevailing idea was that recognition should be linked to negotiations. But if negotiations were to prove impossible or have no conclusion, then France will naturally have to assume its responsibilities.”

The Israeli foreign ministry expressed concern that the combination of the British vote, the French foreign ministers remarks a day later, Russia’s announcement October 14 that they would support a UN resolution to set a time table for the establishment of Palestinian state, and Sweden’s announcement a couple weeks ago of its intention to recognize a Palestinian state all indicate a trend of decreased international support for Israel.

Palestinian “Unity” government in Gaza and Cairo: Following a meeting in Gaza October 10th, ministers from the Palestinian government of national unity left for Cairo to attend an international donor conference on rebuilding Gaza that raised \$5.4 billion in pledges to Gaza reconstruction. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said in Cairo that reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas will not happen before national elections are held. He also said that international donor states have “high confidence in the Palestinian Authority” and the Palestinian government would take full control of Gaza reconstruction money. Hamas spokesman Salah Bardawil responded that Abbas is not serious about reconciliation and the Fatah could not come in and take control of everything in Gaza without considering Hamas’ security dominance. Preparations are reportedly underway for Abbas to visit Gaza for the first time since 2006. ...

[Read the entire Bulletin here.](#)

1b) Churches for Middle East Peace Bulletin, October 24, 2014

UN Security Council consideration postponed to January: There are reports that Palestinian authorities have decided to postpone submission of a resolution to the UN Security Council from November to January. This would give more time for negotiations and the composition of the fifteen member Security Council changes January 1. The U.S. has said it opposes action in the Security Council on Palestine and would vote against a resolution that imposes a deadline (such as November 2016) on negotiations. However, if a resolution gains ten votes in the Security Council and but is vetoed by a permanent member of Council, the possibility exists under the so-called "Uniting for Peace" resolution to have the measure considered by the UN General Assembly.

Clashes and war of words in Jerusalem: There have been a series of clashes, some verbal, some deadly, in East Jerusalem. On Wednesday a baby was killed and many injured when a Palestinian deliberately drove his car at high speed into a group getting off the light rail train that runs through both Israeli and Palestinian neighborhoods of Jerusalem. The State Department said Wednesday, "The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms today's terrorist attack in Jerusalem..." Israeli and Palestinian officials blamed each other for incitement that led to the incident.

Clashes also have emerged amidst calls by right-wing Israeli politicians to change the status quo on the Temple Mount, also referred to as Al Aqsa, to allow Jews to pray not only at the Western wall but also in part of Al Aqsa. President Mahmoud Abbas told Palestinians October 17 to use "any means" to bar settlers from the Temple Mount following weeks of clashes between Palestinians and Jewish Israelis.

Hamas and Israel in Egypt negotiate over Gaza: Two months after a ceasefire last summer, indirect negotiations have resumed between Israel and Hamas in Egypt over Gaza. Hamas will call for a seaport on the Mediterranean and the reopening of the airport that has been closed for over ten years. There are reports that Israel has already eased restrictions on goods entering Gaza and on the offshore fishing zone.

Knesset Peace Bloc: Political parties led by Tzipi Livni and Yair Lapid that support the idea of a peace agreement with Palestinians have agreed to coordinate their strategies at the beginning of a new session of the Knesset.

Together they have 25 out of 120 seats. There have been rumors, quickly denied, that the Prime Minister is considering early elections next year.

Irish Senate votes to recognize Palestinian State: The Irish Senate has followed the British example and voted for recognition of the Palestinian state.

As with the UK, the vote is not binding. ...

[Read the entire Bulletin here.](#)

2) Kerry urges PM to hold talks on '67 lines to block Palestinian UN bid **Barak Ravid, Ha'aretz, October 14, 2014**

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is seeking to advance a new Israeli-Palestinian peace initiative that would forestall the Palestinians' application to the UN Security Council to mandate an end to the occupation. To this end, senior Israeli officials say, Kerry has asked Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu whether he would be willing to resume negotiations on the basis of the 1967 lines with territorial swaps.

In his speech to the UN General Assembly in late September, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said he would ask the Security Council to set a deadline for ending Israel's occupation of the West Bank. A week later, the Palestinians circulated a draft resolution calling for Israel to withdraw by November 2016 and for an international force to replace the Israeli army.

The U.S. administration is very disturbed by the Palestinian initiative, which is liable to create a serious Israeli-Palestinian crisis. Though it has already told the Palestinians it will veto the resolution, it would rather not have to do so, especially at a time when it is recruiting Arab countries to join its military coalition against Islamic State jihadists in Iraq and Syria.

The senior Israeli officials, who asked to remain anonymous, said that despite the breakdown in Israeli-Palestinian talks in March, Kerry has resumed dealing with this issue intensively over the last month. The Security Council hasn't yet set a timetable for considering the Palestinian resolution, but the Palestinians have agreed to wait until after the U.S. congressional elections on November 4. Thus Kerry believes he has about a month to find a solution.

Two weeks ago, he met with Netanyahu in New York and said he thought it was still possible to forestall the Palestinian bid. But he said his impression from his talks with Abbas a few days earlier was that the only way to do so was to offer a substantive alternative.

A senior Israeli official briefed on the Kerry-Netanyahu meeting said Kerry sought to see what Netanyahu would be willing to do to advance such an alternative. Specifically, he asked whether and under what conditions the Israeli leader would be willing to agree to negotiations based on the 1967 lines with territorial swaps.

The senior Israeli official said Netanyahu didn't reject Kerry's ideas out of hand, but answered only in general terms, leaving the impression that he wasn't enthusiastic about them.

Between January and March 2014, while Kerry was trying to get Israel and the Palestinians to agree to a framework document detailing the principles under which peace talks would continue, Netanyahu agreed to negotiate on the basis of the 1967 lines with territorial swaps. However, his agreement was conditioned on Israel being allowed to say it had unspecified reservations to the document, and on the Palestinians both accepting Israel's security demands and agreeing in principle to recognizing Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people.

Kerry hinted at his efforts to restart peace talks at a press conference with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry in Cairo on Sunday. "We are not stopping," he said. "We are committed to continuing to put ideas on the table, to continue to talk."

In meetings with both Kerry and U.S. President Barack Obama, Netanyahu raised the possibility of involving the Arab states in reviving Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. The White House was skeptical, but Kerry didn't rule the idea out, and at his Cairo press conference, he raised the possibility of integrating the Arab Peace Initiative, in an updated form, into the peace process.

[Read the entire piece here.](#)

3) Sacrificing Israel's friendships – and future— at the altar of Elad

Lara Friedman, Americans for Peace Now, October 15, 2014

Last week, the Israeli online magazine +972 reported that Maj. Gen. (ret.) Amos Yadlin, the former head of military intelligence and the current director of the Institute for National Security Studies, and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel, signed onto an ad congratulating settlers for taking over some seven buildings (with more than 20 apartments) in East Jerusalem, in the Palestinian neighborhood of Silwan, which the settlers call the City of David/Ir David. The ad read:

On the eve of Sukkot, we are happy to congratulate the dozens of new families that are joining the Jewish settlement of Ir David these days. We salute the Zionist work of those who take part in this mission. Strengthening Jewish presence in Jerusalem is the challenge for all of us, and by your act of settlement you make us all stand taller. Together, we will welcome the pilgrims who are visiting on the holiday. We appreciate and endear you.

Yadlin and his co-signers are, in effect, endorsing the sacrifice of Israel's future at the altar of Elad. This is the right-wing organization that for decades has been the engine behind settlement in Silwan—an enterprise that has historically been and continues to be especially problematic politically, morally, and legally. While recently Elad has endeavored to transform itself into a “mainstream” organization associated with cultural and touristic activities, its raison d’etre has not changed: to create facts on the ground that prevent a two-state solution and to establish an exclusionary, Jewish/Israeli hegemony in the heart of Palestinian East Jerusalem.

By celebrating, supporting and defending Elad's efforts, Yadlin, Wiesel, and their fellow travelers – in Israel and abroad – are, in effect, telling the world that they prioritize land over peace, settlements over security, and Greater Israel over Israeli democracy and Israel's standing in the international community.

The world is getting the message, and is responding by making increasingly clear that it has run out of patience with Israeli policies that are anathema to a two-state solution. Frustration with such policies is finally being translated into action: Israel's largest trading partner, the EU, now includes anti-settlement provisions in new cooperative agreements with Israel; governments are warning citizens not to do business in settlements; earlier this month, Sweden became the first European country to announce that it would recognize Palestine. And on Monday, the British parliament voted 274-12 to recognize the state of Palestine, despite entreaties from Israeli leaders not to do so. While mainly symbolic, the UK vote to recognize Palestine nonetheless underscores the depth of Europe's frustration and the degree to which the political winds have shifted.

The latest Jerusalem settlement scandals, Silwan and Givat Hamatos, and Israel's recent annexation of almost 1000 acres of West Bank land, clearly contributed to the outcome of Monday's vote. Make no mistake: more than Westminster's vote was pro-Palestine, it was anti-settlements. As the Times of Israel's David Horovitz points out, MPs spoke out against settlements more than forty times during the debate. UK Conservative party member and chair of the House of Commons foreign affairs committee Richard Ottaway, a longtime supporter of Israel, summed up the current situation succinctly:

Under normal circumstances I would oppose the motion tonight; but such is my anger over Israel's behavior in recent months that I will not oppose the motion. I have to say to the government of Israel that if they are losing people like me, they will be losing a lot of people.

Israel is indeed losing friends in the international community. This is not because of rising global anti-Semitism, or successful Palestinian public relations campaigns. Rather, it is because pro-settlement forces – Prime Minister Netanyahu Netanyahu and members of his Cabinet; Yadlin, Wiesel and their fellow travelers – are recklessly sacrificing Israel's relationships and its future at the altar of Elad and its ilk, in the service of the messianic dream of Greater Israel.

4) Recognition of a Palestinian State without full rights is meaningless

New York Times, October 16, 2014

The following opinion piece was written by Omar Barghouti, a Palestinian activist and one of the founders of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. He is the author of "Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights."

The British Parliament's overwhelming vote to recognize a "State of Palestine" may indeed be a sign of "where the wind is blowing," as the British ambassador to Tel Aviv has commented – a reflection of the significant erosion of public support for Israel's regime of occupation and denial of Palestinian rights. But it should not be seen in black and white.

If it is the first step toward recognizing the irrefutable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, then it would be a positive contribution to establishing a just and sustainable peace in accordance with international law.

But, if it is, as implied, solely meant to resuscitate the comatose version of the "two state solution" which, as dictated by Israel, omits basic Palestinian rights, then it would be yet another act of British complicity in bestowing legitimacy on Israel's unjust order. Israel's denial of Palestinian rights and ongoing colonization of the occupied Palestinian territory, including in East Jerusalem, after all, will turn the putative two-state solution into a Palestinian Bantustan in an "apartheid state" of Israel, as Secretary of State John Kerry has warned.

The Palestinian right to self-determination, according to the United Nations, includes, aside from national sovereignty, "the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted." The overwhelming majority of Palestinian civil society has stated in the historic 2005 call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel that exercising Palestinian self-determination requires ending Israel's 1967 occupation and colonization, "recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality," and the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and lands from which they were forcibly displaced in 1948.

Israel has fiercely rejected full equality, in law and policies, for its Palestinian citizens because that would undermine, de facto and de jure, its continuation as an exclusionary Jewish state. But even the U.S. Department of State has criticized Israel for maintaining a system of "institutional, legal and societal discrimination" against its Palestinian citizens.

Palestinians expect world governments, especially the British, with its direct responsibility in creating the question of Palestine, to recognize, first and foremost, our right to have equal rights to all other nations and all other human beings.

We want what Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes as "the full menu of rights."

5) Palestinians want UN Security Council to vote on Israel pullout this year

Edith M. Lederer, Ha'aretz, October 18, 2014

AP - The Palestinian UN ambassador said Friday his government wants the UN Security Council to vote on a resolution before the end of the year that would set November 2016 as the deadline for Israeli troops to withdraw from all Palestinian territories.

Riyad Mansour said Friday that if the resolution is defeated — which is almost certain because of opposition from Israel's closest ally the United States and others — the Palestinians have other options. "This is not going to be an open-ended exercise," he said. "The main option is to go with a vote."

Palestinian officials said Thursday they have seven "yes" votes in the 15-member Security Council and are seeking additional support. A minimum of nine votes is needed for approval, and then the measure can be vetoed by one of the five permanent members, including the United States.

The draft resolution is an expression of Palestinian frustration with the repeated failure of U.S.-led negotiations with Israel on the terms of an independent Palestinian state. The last round broke down in April, after nine months of fruitless talks in which the two sides couldn't agree on the ground rules. Mansour said the Palestinians will not go back "to the same kind of negotiations that have led us nowhere for more than 20 years."

U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power, asked earlier this month about a deadline for an Israeli pullout, said that the United States strongly believes the only solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is through negotiations between the two parties. Israel's UN Ambassador Ron Prosor said when the draft was first circulated that by pursuing the resolution the Palestinians were "bypassing negotiations by taking unilateral action" and "avoiding a real dialogue."

Mansour said the Palestinians are committed to voting on the resolution and "the centerpiece of our resolution is the time frame." He said one option if the draft resolution is defeated is for the Palestinians to join more treaties and conventions and the International Criminal Court.

When the UN General Assembly recognized a state of Palestine in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem in October 2012, the Palestinians gained the right to seek membership in UN institutions and treaty bodies and possibly take their complaints over Israeli settlement-building on occupied land to the ICC, which is independent. Earlier this year, it joined 15 international treaties and conventions. "We want to create legal facts on the ground that we exist as a state," Mansour said, adding that joining additional treaties, conventions and the ICC will further "acknowledge that a Palestinian state does exist."

Palestine joined Paris-based UNESCO in 2011 before becoming a UN observer state, leading to a U.S. cutoff of funding to the educational, scientific and cultural agency under a US law that bans support for any UN agency with Palestine as a member.

Mansour said the Palestinians may also go to the UN General Assembly where resolutions are not legally binding but there are no vetoes.

6) Decent respect

Uri Avnery, Gush-Shalom.org, October 18, 2014

If the British parliament had adopted a resolution in favor of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, the reaction of our media would have been like this: "In an atmosphere of great enthusiasm, the British parliament adopted with a huge majority (274 for, a mere 12 against) a pro-Israeli motion...Over half the seats were occupied, more than usual...the opponents of Israel were in hiding and did not dare to vote against..."

Unfortunately, the British parliament voted this week on a pro-Palestinian resolution, and our media reacted almost unanimously like this: "The hall was half empty...there was no enthusiasm...a meaningless exercise...Only 274 Members voted for the resolution, which is not binding...Many Members stayed away altogether..."

Yet all our media reported on the proceedings at length, many related articles appeared in the newspapers. Quite a feat for such a negligible, unimportant, insignificant, inconsequential, trivial, petty act.

A day before, 363 Jewish Israeli citizens called upon the British Parliament to adopt the resolution, which calls for the British government to recognize the State of Palestine. The signatories included a Nobel Prize laureate, several winners of the highest Israeli civilian award, two former cabinet ministers and four former members of the Knesset (including myself), diplomats and a general.

The official propaganda machine did not go into action. Knowing that the resolution would be adopted anyhow, it tried to downplay the event as far as possible. The Israeli ambassador in London could not be reached.

WAS IT a negligible event? In a strictly procedural sense it was. In a broader sense, far from it. For the Israeli leadership, it is the harbinger of very bad news.

A few days before, a similar news item came from Sweden. The newly elected leftist prime minister announced that his government was considering the recognition of the State of Palestine in the near future. Sweden, like Britain, was always considered a "pro-Israeli" country, loyally voting against "anti-Israel" resolutions in the UN. If such important Western nations are reconsidering their attitudes towards the policy of Israel, what does it mean?

Another unexpected blow came from the South. The Egyptian dictator, Muhammad Abd-al-Fatah al-Sisi, disabused the Israeli leadership of the notion that the "moderate" Arab states would fill the ranks of our allies against the Palestinians. In a sharp speech, he warned his new-found soul-mate, Binyamin Netanyahu, that the Arab states would not cooperate with Israel before we make peace with a Palestinian state.

Thus he punctured the newly inflated balloon floated by Netanyahu – that pro-American Arab states, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Emirates, Kuwait and Qatar, would become open allies of Israel. IN South America, public opinion has already shifted markedly against Israel. The recognition of Palestine is gaining ground in official circles, too. Even in the US, unconditional support for the Israeli government seems to be wavering.

What the hell is going on? WHAT IS going on is a profound, perhaps tectonic change in the public attitude towards Israel. ...

[Read the entire piece here.](#)

7) Encountering peace: Saving the two-state solution

Gershon Baskin, Jerusalem Post, October 22, 2014

A few days ago I visited Beit Hadassah in the heart of the Jewish community in Hebron and heard from their English spokesperson that “the two-state solution is dead – there will never be a Palestinian state.” As someone who believes very strongly that there is no other solution to the Israeli- Palestinian conflict, I can honestly say that it is very much alive – and will come to pass much sooner than most people think.

As long as the Palestinians refrain from renewed violence in the form of a new violent intifada, their international diplomatic strategy will be successful. The Palestinians are on the path to victory, and as long as they are able to contain violence, even in the face of settler violence against them, they will get their state and the Israeli occupation will finally come to an end.

Ironically, the more Israel opposes the Palestinians, places diplomatic barriers in their way and most importantly continues to build settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem, the more support the Palestinians will gain and the more the international disgust with Israel will increase. The formula is quite simple; the world is sick and tired of the occupation, and of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The trigger for this disgust is most definitely the aggressive settlement policies of the Netanyahu government. The war in Gaza this summer, and the pictures of death and destruction that emerged from it, have created a renewed determination in the world to see the Palestinians free of Israel.

It is true that there will be no peace without a negotiated agreement. But the spokesperson of the Hebron Jewish community is completely blind to the realities that exist five minutes from his home in the center of Hebron, and across the entire globe.

The state of Palestine is coming into existence and whether he likes it or not, the Israeli occupation over the Palestinian people will come to an end. The Palestinian political program is clear, coherent and strategic. First, they are seeking recognition of the state of Palestine, recognized by the UN in September 2013. 134 countries have already recognized Palestine.

Now the Palestinians are seeking recognition from the countries of the European Union.

The positive outcome of the issue in the British Parliament is the first step in the direction of gaining formal recognition from the UK government. Spain is next on the list and then France. Once France agrees to recognize Palestine, they believe that another 10 countries will follow. In parallel the Palestinians have worked hard to have five new countries appointed to the UN Security Council which will support the Palestinian draft resolution – Spain, New Zealand, Venezuela, Angola and Malaysia – replacing Australia, Argentina, Luxembourg, South Korea and Rwanda, which have traditionally not supported the Palestinians. The Palestinian strategy is to get the votes of at least nine of the 15 members of the Security Council and to have no vetoes against the resolution, including by the United States.

The Palestinians have intelligently named their strategy the “plan to save the two-state solution.” Their draft resolution to the Security Council is composed of wording taken directly from speeches of U.S. President Barack Obama, Secretary of State John Kerry and other world leaders. The first operative paragraph states: *Reaffirming the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,*

1. Affirms its determination to contribute to the attainment, without delay, of a peaceful solution that ends the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, and fulfills the vision of two States: an independent, sovereign, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders. ...

[Read the entire piece here.](#)

8) Yankees, go home, for the sake of peace **Gideon Levy, Ha'aretz, October 19, 2014**

This may be the greatest mystery of all: the relations between Israel and the U.S.A. They are everything but logical. We have a protégé that humiliates its patron power and a power that grovels in front of its protégé; a power that acts against its own interests and a president who acts contrary to his worldview. We have a protégé whose dependence on the power grows with its effrontery and a power's unbelievable weakness in the face of its protégé's brazenness. It's a wild sado-masochistic game, in which it is not clear who is the slave and who is the master, which is the power and which is its protégé.

"America don't worry, Israel is behind you" more than just a slogan on a T-shirt sold to American Jews in Jerusalem.

Nothing can fully explain this phenomenon, certainly not in its current dimensions. No Israeli government has permitted itself to disregard the American administration with such impudence as the current one. No American administration has received the spitting in its face as submissively as this one. No other ally in the world, including the European powers, has dared to act so explicitly against the United States' positions. All this is happening with Israel isolated in the world and dependent on the United States' mercy, while its policy endangers American and global interests. This state of affairs cannot be explained in full by the Jewish lobby, the Christian lobby or the weapons industry. Go figure.

But you don't have to penetrate the roots in order to understand the full extent of its damages. This is the time to tell the "leader of the free world:" Hands off the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Leave the sides alone. You've never contributed anything to advance its solution anyway. On the contrary, your policy has only deepened and perpetuated it. Yankees, go home, for the sake of peace.

The United States has never been – and could not have been – an honest broker. The absolute patron of one side cannot serve in this position for even a moment. Indeed, the only peace flashes in the region — the treaty with Egypt and the Oslo agreements — were achieved behind America's back. But the Palestinian Authority, weak and isolated, is forced to accept the broker Uncle Sam, despite the knowledge that nothing will come of this. The PA hardly has a choice.

Meanwhile this uncle finances the occupation, as it has always done, backs it and deepens its expansion. The White House and State Department's frequent denunciations of the construction in the occupied territories, being sterile of content and devoid of any practical significance, only further legitimize the settlements. America restrains itself and accepts everything. Its weakness in the face of Israel's policy is no less than astonishing.

The history of the relations between the two states in the last few years is a series of apologies, almost all American, and moralizing lectures, almost all Israeli. For example, over the weekend John Kerry said some things that made sense and were true, mainly that not solving the Palestinian problem feeds Islamic State.

The Israeli attack was not late in coming — this time it was launched by ministers Naftali Bennett and Gilad Erdan. These were followed, of course, by the State Department's inevitable pseudo-apology. Perhaps the honorable ministers didn't understand the secretary and anyway he didn't mean it. That's the pattern of relations.

When Sweden takes a tiny step to recognize Palestinian statehood, America reproaches it as "premature." After 47 years it's premature (to implement declared American policy). ...

[Read the entire piece here.](#)

9) Lecture by Professor Noam Chomsky, Q&A moderated by Amy Goodman, October 14, 2014

Held at the 365th Meeting of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. ([Event video](#))

AMY GOODMAN: United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Tuesday he is setting up an investigation into the attacks on UN facilities during Israel's recent assault on Gaza. Some 2,100 Palestinians, most of them civilian, were killed in the conflict, along with 67 Israeli soldiers and six civilians in Israel.

Well, today we spend the hour with Professor Noam Chomsky, world-renowned political dissident, linguist and author. He's Institute Professor Emeritus at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he's taught for more than half a century. In a rare event that took place last Tuesday, 800 people packed the hall of the UN General Assembly to see Noam Chomsky—ambassadors and the public from around the world. The event was hosted by the [Committee on the] Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Noam Chomsky gave a major address, and I followed with a public interview. First, the speech.

NOAM CHOMSKY: It's a pleasure to be here to be able to talk with you (UN General Assembly) and discuss with you afterwards.

Many of the world's problems are so intractable that it's hard to think of ways even to take steps towards mitigating them. The Israel-Palestine conflict is not one of these. On the contrary, the general outlines of a diplomatic solution have been clear for at least 40 years. Not the end of the road—nothing ever is—but a significant step forward. And the obstacles to a resolution are also quite clear.

The basic outlines were presented here in a resolution brought to the UN Security Council in January 1976. It called for a two-state settlement on the internationally recognized border—and now I'm quoting—"with guarantees for the rights of both states to exist in peace and security within secure and recognized borders." The resolution was brought by the three major Arab states: Egypt, Jordan, Syria—sometimes called the "confrontation states." Israel refused to attend the session. The resolution was vetoed by the United States. A U.S. veto typically is a double veto: The veto, the resolution is not implemented, and the event is vetoed from history, so you have to look hard to find the record, but it is there. That has set the pattern that has continued since. +The most recent U.S. veto was in February 2011—that's President Obama—when his administration vetoed a resolution calling for implementation of official U.S. policy opposition to expansion of settlements. And it's worth bearing in mind that expansion of settlements is not really the issue; it's the settlements, unquestionably illegal, along with the infrastructure projects supporting them.

For a long time, there has been an overwhelming international consensus in support of a settlement along these general lines. The pattern that was set in January 1976 continues to the present. Israel rejects a settlement of these terms and for many years has been devoting extensive resources to ensuring that it will not be implemented, with the unremitting and decisive support of the United States—military, economic, diplomatic and indeed ideological—by establishing how the conflict is viewed and interpreted in the United States and within its broad sphere of influence.

There's no time here to review the record, but its general character is revealed by a look at what has happened in Gaza in the past decade, carrying forward a long history of earlier crimes. Last August, August 26th, a ceasefire was reached between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. And the question on all our minds is: What are the prospects for the future? Well, one reasonable way to try to answer that question is to look at the record. And here, too, there is a definite pattern: A ceasefire is reached; Israel disregards it and continues its steady assault on Gaza, including continued siege ...

[Read the entire speech and interview here.](#)

10) Is Israel's president an anti-Semite? **Peter Beinart, Ha'aretz, October 22, 2014**

At a conference earlier this week, Reuven Rivlin, Israel's president, said "It's time to admit honestly that Israeli society is sick." He went on to suggest that his country's Jewish citizens have "forgotten how to be decent human beings."

To imagine what would happen if an American politician uttered those words, think back to early last year. When Obama nominated Chuck Hagel to be his secretary of defense, critics seized on the fact that, years earlier, the then-Nebraska senator had said, "The Jewish lobby intimidates a lot of people up here." He'd also declared, "I'm a United States Senator. I'm not an Israeli Senator. I support Israel. But my first interest is I take an oath of office to the Constitution of the United States."

In response, former Bush administration official Elliott Abrams told National Public Radio that Hagel "appears to be ... frankly an anti-Semite." Wall Street Journal columnist Bret Stephens wrote that "prejudice—like cooking, wine-tasting and other consummations—has an olfactory element" and that when it comes to Hagel's statements about Jews "the odor is especially ripe." Anti-Defamation League head Abraham Foxman said, "The sentiments he's expressed about the Jewish lobby border on anti-Semitism."

Because President Obama refused to back down, and because Hagel tearfully apologized for his comments, the senate still confirmed him. But it was the closest vote for a defense secretary in American history. All that because Hagel made comments far tamer than Rivlin's. The Nebraskan merely argued that the "Jewish lobby" (a term many American Jews use) throws its weight around on Capitol Hill (something many American Jews believe). Nonetheless, Foxman suggested that merely by noting the negative influence of Jewish political power, Hagel was playing into anti-Semitic stereotypes about Jewish cabals.

By that standard, Rivlin's comments are positively bursting with Jew-hatred. First he called Jewish society "sick"—dredging up anti-Semitic tropes about Jews as carriers of cultural and ideological disease. Then he asked whether Jews are "decent human beings": Questioning their humanity itself. Yet Rivlin isn't in danger of losing his job. And as of Tuesday, the ADL hadn't even mentioned his comments on their website.

This double standard is nothing new. Ehud Olmert and Ehud Barak have both warned that Israel risks becoming an apartheid state. Yet they provoked none of the rage that greeted Jimmy Carter when he offered a similar warning. In 1998, Barak declared that, "If I was [a Palestinian] at the right age, at some stage I would have entered one of the terror organizations" - and was elected Israel's prime minister the following year. An American senator who said that probably wouldn't even get the chance to win another election. His party would force him to resign.

This discrepancy stems in large measure from the assumptions America's "Pro-Israel" organizations and pundits make about intent. No matter how harshly Rivlin, Olmert and Barak condemn Israel, American Jewish leaders can't imagine calling them anti-Israel or anti-Semitic since Rivlin, Olmert and Barak are prominent Israeli Jews themselves. Hagel and Jimmy Carter enjoy no such presumption of goodwill. Figures like Thomas Friedman or Jon Stewart, being Jews but not Israelis, fall somewhere in between.

The real test of what gets deemed anti-Israel or anti-Semitic, in other words, often turns less on what is said than on who said it. Which makes a statement's truth largely irrelevant. By making various, largely unspoken, assumptions about who has earned the right to criticize Israel without being accused of bigotry, American Jewish leaders and hawkish "Pro-Israel" journalists create a tiered debate. ...

[Read the entire piece here.](#)

11) The State of Two States - Week of October 19

This week began with discussions over the recent tensions between Israel with both the U.S. and the E.U. On Wednesday, a Palestinian terrorist drove his car into a Jerusalem light rail station, killing a three-month-old baby and injuring eight others. Tensions remain high in Jerusalem.

“[S]omething has changed and the dam has burst. We treat America like our submissive maid and kick it in the head at every opportunity. The person who allowed American blood to be spilled was Binyamin Netanyahu.” Columnist Ben Capsit, in an op-ed for Ma’ariv about Israeli criticism of American officials. (Sunday 10/19)

“Look, the European Union—I saw its behavior in Libya, in Iraq, in Syria—and I say to all the Europeans: go make peace between India and Pakistan, [which is] a conflict that is even older than ours.” Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, in an interview on Channel Two’s “Meet the Press,” as reported by Mako.co.il. (Sunday 10/19)

“The relationship between the U.S. and Israel is based on common interests and values, and no disagreement should mar it. The U.S. aids Israel in a variety of ways, and we must remember this and be grateful to it and its leaders.” Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon, in a comment about American-Israeli relations, as reported by Yedioth Ahronoth (Sunday 10/19)

“[P]olicies that bear no relationship to reality -- such as hoping that Israel will remain a Jewish state when half or more of the people living within its borders are not Jews - will result in disaster. But it’s not too late. The next election holds the key.” S. Daniel Abraham, in an op-ed published in Ha’aretz. (Sunday 10/19)

“This government is going nowhere...The lack of a peace process and the anti-social budget reached with underhanded deals are one thing, but even the leaders of the coalition parties no longer believe in this government and are competing with each other in threatening who will quit first. I invite everyone to join.” Member of the Knesset and the Labor Party Itzik Shmuli, in a comment to introduce a bill to dissolve the Knesset. (Wednesday 10/22)

In the Knesset session that starts next week, we will create one front in the government and in the Knesset on the peace process issue, one bloc, 25 seats. Together in favor of a peace arrangement, together against Danny Danonism and against nationalism. We will also join forces on affairs of religion and state.” Justice Minister Tzipi Livni, in an Interview Yedioth Ahronoth (Wednesday 10/22)

“There’s no crisis. The coalition is strong and the government is not about to fall.” Finance Minister Yair Lapid, in a comment about the stability of the current government, as reported by Walla.co.il. (Wednesday 10.22)

“Terrorism and violence, from the Arab side or the Jewish side, not only require condemnation, but also firm action, both by the security forces and by the local leadership. Along with this, we have to remember that we returned to our homeland not from hatred for others but from love for the land of our forefathers. Violence has not been and will not be our path. Terrorism does not justify terrorism, or attacking holy places. We will conduct our national struggle as a proud and strong people, not as lawbreakers.” President of Israel Reuven Rivlin, as reported by Ma’ariv. (Wednesday 10/22)

"That's how Abu Mazen's [Abbas'] partners in government act, the same Abu Mazen who just a few days ago incited to an attack on Jews in Jerusalem." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a statement concerning the terrorist attack in Jerusalem. (Wednesday 10/22)

[Read the entire collection here.](#)

12) The Palestinians' right and duty to resist

Gideon Levy, Ha'aretz, October 26, 2014

Imagine you're the Palestinians. Perhaps residents of East Jerusalem. Forty-seven difficult years are behind you; a big, depressing darkness lies ahead. The Israeli tyranny that dooms your fate declares arrogantly that everything will stay like this forever. Your city will remain under occupation "for ever and ever." The defense minister, second in importance in the government that subjugates you, says a Palestinian state will never be established.

Imagine you're Palestinian and your children are in danger. Two days ago, the occupation forces killed another child because "he lit a firebomb." The words "Death to Arabs" were sprayed near your home. Everywhere you turn, a soldier or Border Police officer may shout at you. Every night, your home may be invaded brutally. You will never be treated like human beings. They'll destroy, humiliate, intimidate, perhaps even arrest you, possibly without trial.

There are close to 500 administrative detainees, a record number in recent years. If one of your dear ones is arrested, you will have difficulty visiting him. If you succeed, you'll get half an hour's conversation through a glass window. If your dear one is an administrative detainee, you will never know when he'll be released. But these are trivia you grew accustomed to long ago.

Maybe you've also grown accustomed to the land theft. At every moment a settler can invade your land, burn your plantation or torch your fields. He will not be brought to trial for this; the soldiers who are supposed to protect you will stand idly by. At any moment, a demolition order or random eviction order may appear. There's nothing you can do.

Imagine you're the Palestinians. You can't leave Gaza and it's not easy to leave the West Bank, either. The beach, less than an hour's drive from your West Bank home, is beyond the mountains of darkness. An Israeli can go to Tierra del Fuego, between Argentina and Chile, much more easily than you can go to the beach at Ajami.

There are no dreams, no wishes. Your children have a slim chance of accomplishing anything in life, even if they go to university. All they can look forward to is a life of humiliation and unemployment.

There's no chance that this situation is about to change anytime soon. Israel is strong, the United States is in its pocket, your leadership is weak (the Palestinian Authority) and isolated (Hamas), and the world is losing interest in your fate. What do you do?

There are two possibilities. The first is to accept, give in, give up. The second is to resist. Whom have we respected more in history? Those who passed their days under the occupation and collaborated with it, or those who struggled for their freedom?

Imagine you're a Palestinian. You have every right to resist. In fact, it's your civil duty. No argument there. The occupied people's right to resist occupation is secured in natural justice, in the morals of history and in international law.

The only restrictions are on the means of resistance. The Palestinians have tried almost all of them, for better and worse – negotiations and terror; with a carrot and with a stick; with a stone and with bombs; in demonstrations and in suicide. All in vain. Are they to despair and give up? This has almost never happened in history, so they'll continue. Sometimes they'll use legitimate means, sometimes vile ones. It's their right to resist. ...

[Read the entire piece here.](#)