

The Narrative in the Arab-Israeli Conflict

- Every national community is founded on a narrative that tells the history of a people, elaborating collective memory and social ethos by creating a national culture and political myths in which a people identifies itself.
- Political and social narratives become particularly important when a national community has to legitimise its existence and its political choices.
- In national conflicts, political myths and national narratives acquire exceptional importance insofar as they are pivotal in legitimising the existence and the demands of a particular community.

Israeli and Palestinian narratives

- In the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, narratives assume a pivotal role in defining national communities, in claiming sovereignty over the territory and in legitimising the right to a national state.
- Israeli and Palestinian narratives appear to be analogous and incompatible to the extent that they build upon the same events, but with radically different political construal.
- In this respect, the Palestinian narrative owes much to the Israeli, having developed as a “counter-narrative” intended to invalidate and substitute itself to the Israeli political and historical narrative.

Examples of drift in the narrative

- Attachment to the land. During the years of exile, Judaism has maintained a strong connection to the Land of Israel, both in national and religious terms, whereby Israel as the Jewish state finds its primary significance in the land where the Jewish people was born. Palestinians have briefly experienced a form of collective independence during the British Mandate, when their national identity was not yet distinguished from the Arab people. Despite that, the Palestinian narrative has developed the idea of Palestinians as the “indigenous people”, while the Jewish attachment to the Land of Israel would be a fake historical construal.
- Nakba/Independence Day/ Shoah. While the Israeli political narrative has elaborated collective memory of the Holocaust, the several wars and the foundation of the State of Israel into national celebrations, the Palestinians have built upon the same elements by elaborating the Nakba, which serves as the opposing collective memory of the “catastrophe”, i.e. the foundation of Israel.
- Jerusalem/AI-Quds. Jerusalem assumes an extraordinary significance in Jewish history as the capital of the Jewish nation, to which Jews turn their prayers and which hosts the only sacred place of Judaism, the Western Wall of the temple. Palestinians have developed a parallel narrative suggesting the alleged importance of Jerusalem for Islam.
- Collective suffering. The idea on which Israel is built is liberation of the Jewish people from persecution and oppression through the establishment of a state that not only serves as haven for the Jews but also reflects Jewish values and culture. The same way, Palestinians have increasingly expanded on the notion of collective suffering, elaborating the concept of Palestine as the liberation of the Palestinian people from alien occupation and oppression.

Interview with Isi Leibler



Veteran international Jewish leader and leading commentator for the Jerusalem Post and Yisrael Hayom. Isi Leibler's blog <http://wordfromjerusalem.com/>

Talking about the Arab-Israeli conflict, one usually refers to a territorial, national or even religious conflict. But what is the importance of the narrative in the Arab-Israeli disputes?

I think narrative plays a critical role insofar as the outlook of both parties is influenced by it and also pressured to move in a particular direction. In this particular context, it has created the seeds of a conflict that cannot be resolved until such time as the Palestinians recognise that there is a need to come to terms with reality of Jewish sovereignty in this region. I also believe that the core of the entire conflict comes down to this: the Palestinian concept that there is no room for an alien, non-Islamic body in this area; it considers the creation of Israel as a catastrophe and it has pledged itself both from the national and religious viewpoint, with the religious viewpoint becoming increasingly more important, never to come to terms with this situation even if this means fighting on for decades.

Every conflict, even settled, ends up in multiple versions of history (Austria and Italy for instance), but what is it so special about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Basically, the reason is that the Palestinians see Israel as a cancerous intrusion on their territory and are never prepared to come to terms with it – and this is becoming increasingly more important from a religious point of view as well, which makes it much more difficult. From a pure nationalist point of view, there could be a foreseeable solution in terms of exchange of territories and other ideas brought forward in the times of Oslo, but in the context of what is happening now, it is quite clear that this is totally irrelevant.

Jerusalem, the territories, the Jewish State, the Palestinian State: every time the parties sit to negotiate, these seem to be problems with no solution. Why?

Negotiations require acquiescence by two parties that are willing, despite differences, to make some sort of sacrifice in order to achieve some form of peaceful coexistence. There may have been mistakes made by Israel over a period of time, but the overwhelming thrust both from the people and the political framework in Israel has been to look for ways and means for achieving peace, which has been the ultimate objective of the people of Israel from its inception. And the concept of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren fighting for wars is something that every Israeli would be willing to make major sacrifices to

overcome the endless cycle of war, semi-peace, and again war. Stability is something Israelis desperately yearn and seek.

What about Palestinians? They also claim they want peace and look forward to an end to the conflict.

It is wrong to compare the two parties: Israel is a democracy, made of multiple concepts and a wide range of views extending from the extreme left to the extreme right, whereas the Palestinian entity is essentially an authoritarian structure. Going much further, even if it is not politically correct to do so, I would describe the current Palestinian entity as a criminal society, in real terms of the word.

The international community has endorsed the idea of a Palestinian state, what do you mean when you say it is a criminal society?

One determines a criminal society by the moral ethos that it promotes, and I think it is a criminal society that promotes the concept of destroying a neighbouring state, bringing up children from the age of kindergarten into believing that the ultimate gratification they can achieve is to sacrifice their lives in order to bring down the State of Israel either by killing individuals and becoming shahids, martyrs, which bears a significantly religious connotation: they are told they will go to paradise and enjoy rewards for their sacrifices. This is what I define as a criminal society. This is exemplified by the fact that mass murders are not only extolled and sanctified, but even become nationalist symbols.

Do these people and their deeds also become part of the Palestinian narrative?

You see, in the Palestinian territories, squares are named after them, and cultural centres, even football clubs. The shahid is sanctified. Even when they are released from prison, as we have seen in recent months, to describe on TV with pride, the details of how they managed to kill Israeli civilians and they are applauded and regarded as national heroes. On top of that, when these people are captured, the Palestinian Authority provides them with income and salary. The longer they are in jail, the higher the level of income they get. To my mind, this is not part of a normal society. This is a society that promotes hatred and death, which is inherently criminal.

In the Palestinian Authority you have two regimes, Fatah and Hamas, though.

I know it is not politically correct to say this, but in reality the distinctions between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas are largely theoretical. Hamas tells the truth and openly says it wants to kill every Jew and the PA speaks the language of hatred to its own people in Arabic, while to the rest of the world it speaks in pleasant syrupy terms promoting an image of the PA that is completely out of context with reality.

But over the last few years, Palestinians are increasingly active in the political battle than in the actual terror war.

They have correctly come to the conclusion that direct terrorism is not as effective as diplomacy: the Western world, which is desperate to find a solution, is willing to exert maximum pressure on Israel to make unilateral concessions. That becomes more awkward for them when the Palestinians engage in terrorism and suicide terrorist attacks. There is an atmosphere now prevailing in the world that Israel is the enemy and the Palestinians are the underdogs and that Israel has to make the concessions. Israel has made concessions: they have been implemented and they are significant. In contrast, the Palestinians have made zero concessions, and have in fact escalated their demands, like

the right return of Arab refugees, which has become a priority and would imply the destruction of Israel.

The current negotiations have failed, because the Palestinians are not prepared to accept any agreement as demonstrated clearly by Arafat and Abbas when Barak and Olmert offered them over 90% of the territories over the Green Line and they didn't even come back with a counteroffer.

I believe that Abbas has absolutely no intention of jeopardising his position by making any concession. Besides, even if he wished to do so (and he does not) he cannot make any concession. The Palestinians impose pre-conditions to negotiations, and act as though Israel is the supplicant rather than vice versa; it creates an environment that is impossible for us.

The pressure of the world on us has been extraordinarily negative in terms of peace process, because it has strengthened the influence of the radicals who do not want compromise and aim at taking Israel down piece by piece. The offers that were made by Olmert and refused have become now the benchmark and the beginning for further negotiations. This is not a real negotiation, but rather a process of trying to bring Israel down in stages. And this is the struggle we are facing at the moment.

The Israeli narrative is considered backward and ridiculous, whereas the Palestinian, based on same tenets, is rewarded, why?

You are asking me a question that is very sensitive and difficult to answer, because this is the core of the problem of Israel among the nations of the world. I may be accused of being a chauvinist but I insist that double standards are being applied toward Israel. The same way as the Jew in the Middle Ages was the outcast, the source of all the problems, blamed even for all natural disasters, Israel has now assumed a similar position on an international level. Israel has in a sense become the scapegoat for all the problems of the world. In Europe today, close to half the people believe that Israel is committed to a genocidal programme toward the Arabs; half believe that Israelis behave like the Nazis behaved toward the Jews. How does one explain this? Part of it is due to an extremely effective Muslim anti-Semitic propaganda, but there are also substantial anti-Semitic cultural memories that remain effective in Europe.

The other factor in Europe is the Holocaust inversion: unconsciously, there is a feeling that if the Jews behave badly toward the Arabs, somehow it mitigates the guilt that Europe shares for its involvement in the Shoah.

On top of that, Europe has become so anti-nationalist, that anything that does not fit into its template is an extension of colonialism, including Israel. All of these things put together, create a consciousness that Israel is evil. To top this, the human rights movement has been hijacked by those for whom the existence of Israel and its alleged crimes blurs everything that is going on in the world. Building an apartment in the Jewish suburbs of Jerusalem therefore generates greater condemnation than 150,000 people being killed in Syria or other abominations prevailing in this region.

Israel, like the Jew in the past, has become the outcast, the core of irrational hatred.. I often ask myself whether the world is insane.

What is so appealing of the Palestinian narrative?

I would turn the question upside down and ask what is it that makes anti-Semitism an element that has remained as the oldest and longest hatred in history, totally irrational, under all circumstances from right to left? In my view, this is the real issue. Rather than

loving the Palestinians, there is a prejudice against Jews and against the Jewish state. That sounds somewhat self-centred, but when you look at the actual behaviour of the Arab world and the record of human rights atrocities, the way they behave toward minorities, the way Christians and all minorities are being persecuted in their countries, the lack of tolerance and opposition to everything the Western civilisation stands for, this is not so far fetched.

You are asking me why the Palestinian case is taken up against a democratic state, which is the only state in the region that practices human rights. Why? I think it is a prejudice against us, which is irrational and philosophically difficult to explain. There is of course also the realpolitik factor that should not be minimised either. The Islamic nations are an extraordinarily powerful group, although oil is less important, but with allies that depend on them, with the third world and rogue states going along with them; these countries represent the majority of votes in international organisations. If they decide that the world is flat, they would pass a UN resolution accordingly. And that is why Israel is always at the centre of all resolutions, which is totally inconsistent with rationality and sanity. But such is the reality of the world order we are living in.

Arab Israelis have progressively adopted the Palestinian narrative and plight. Arab Israelis define themselves as Palestinians, celebrate the nakba, the catastrophe of Israel's foundation, and antagonise the attempts of other Arab-speaking minorities to integrate within Israel, such as the Christians, Bedouins and Druse. Is it a problem for Israel?

It is a very difficult problem; because somehow the radical Arabs have taken the front role in the Arab Israeli community and these people have more in common with the Palestinians across the border than with Arabs in Israel. I believe that we have a lot to do to improve the status of Arabs in the country: they have equal rights, but socially and economically they still have a long way to climb. You can draw a comparison with the African-American minority in the US: it has taken a while but they are moving upwards. As they get more established, I believe the silent majority are good citizens and one day, maybe, we can use them as intermediaries to try to bring about a better relationship with our neighbours. This is an optimistic view. Still, there are very serious problems. I certainly do not go along with our Foreign Minister suggesting to throw them over the border. You cannot cut them off; we have to find a solution. What I do not want is to absorb more of them, which would make the situation dangerous. Those who promote annexation insisting that Jews would remain the majority are crazy! It is not a question of being the majority; it is a question of not turning this country into another Lebanon, which is precisely what would happen if we had another few million Arabs.

What role are Arab Israelis playing in promoting the Palestinian narrative?

They do not play a real role; they are rather reflective: the militant and extremist nakba concepts are exported and they find ready soil here among radical Arabs. We have very difficult problems in dealing with the issue of subversion, but there must be redlines that a democracy such as ours must devise. A country under siege cannot permit continuous incitement against the society itself within its borders. This is unacceptable in any country.. A democracy must find a balance, without suppressing the right to freedom of expression.

Do you consider anti-Israeli hatred a fundamental part of the Palestinian narrative?

Yes, absolutely. It is a very radical statement I am going to make. I want first to make something clear in advance: Palestinians are the most able and talented Arabs in the

region. If we could achieve peace with them, we could do dramatic things in this region. I have not the slightest hatred or dislike of them per se; but when I referred to the PA as a criminal society I would make an analogy: I would say that the Germans before the Nazi came to power were among the most enlightened people in Europe. After the Nazis had a few years brainwashing of youth, the country turned into monsters. Today, since democratisation and de-Nazification, Germany would be among the most enlightened of the Europeans. In this respect, I would make an analogy with Palestinians. Arafat has radicalised the Palestinians and brought up generations of youngsters hating far more bitterly than their predecessors. Until this poisonous incitement to hatred promoted in schools, mosques, and media will change you cannot expect public opinion to be anything but against us. Perhaps over the course of time there will be a change of leadership committed to coexistence should that happen Israel would come to a swift accommodation and both people would reap enormous benefits.

What is the future?

I do not see any solution in the short term. Under certain conditions, the status quo is the best of acceptable alternatives: Under extraordinary, difficult, tough external conditions Israel has emerged as the miracle achievement of the last 100 years. I am optimistic. This is a country that is established, an island of tranquillity in a terrible volcanic eruption going on in the area. That may not be the case forever. But overall, despite facing tough challenges, I am very optimistic about our future.

Interview with Barry Shaw



Special Consultant on Delegitimisation Issues to the Strategic Dialogue Centre at Netanya Academic College, Israel; author of "Israel Reclaiming the Narrative – Exposing the Big Lie and Its Perpetrators"



What role does the Palestinian narrative play in the conflict?

The goal of the narrative from a Palestinian perspective is to deconstruct the whole notion of Israel as the national homeland of the Jewish people. On the other hand, a concrete Israel narrative is the justification and the legitimisation of Israel as the national homeland of the Jews.

What does it have to do with the Palestinian plight for a Palestinian state?

The strategy of Abbas is to create a Palestinian state under occupation. He is pushing for it using diplomatic means. The reason he is doing this is that, once a Palestinian state is established and legitimate, the question arises: what about the rest of Palestine (i.e. Israel)? What this implies is that the rest of Palestine is where you and I are now, sitting in Tel Aviv. If Israel is not legitimate over there, in Judea and Samaria, it is not legitimate here either. This is where the Palestinian plan leads.

How is it connected to the current negotiations?

The Palestinians refuse to recognise Israel as a Jewish state. They make excuses. The Palestinians cannot accept that Israel is the Jewish state and cannot agree to an end to the conflict, because they are not interested in leaving space for Israel. So when people

say we should relinquish the territories, it is people that have not fully grasped where relinquishing territory is going to lead, which is to create a greater Palestine that includes Israel. It is this problem that is the constant friction between two opposing sides that does not allow mutual trust, which creates a malevolent Palestinian partner who aims to destroy Israel. Kerry says it is a mistake for Israel to demand from the Palestinians recognition of the right to a Jewish state. This is the basis on which Israel was founded. This simple recognition would lead to the end of conflict, because it would create the confidence that Palestinians accept Israel and its legitimate existence.

The international community has endorsed the Israeli predicament of a Jewish state and the Palestinian predicament of a Palestinian state – the two-state solution. Why is then the narrative impeding a real agreement between the parties?

From my perspective, this is where Israel is now trapped. Netanyahu recognised the right of a Palestinian people to a state of their own, and the need for a two-state solution, but now it becomes transparent that it is not what Palestinians want. At one time, not so long ago, they spoke of “two states for two peoples.” You don’t hear that any more. They only talk about a “two-state” solution. Whatever happened to the “two peoples”? It seems to be legitimate to talk openly about the Palestinian state, but not about the Jewish state. We are trapped in a situation in which Israel has to make concessions, but without any partner for peace. The assumption is that Abbas is our peace partner, but he is proving that he won’t be ever a peace partner, and this is peace without a partner that Israel finds herself in.

Can you make an example of the divide in the narrative?

There is a drift of the narrative. Take Judea and Samaria, which became known as the Disputed Territories, then the West Bank, and now it is called Occupied Palestinian Land. We should question why and how this language drift occurred. The same land captured by Israel in 1967 was always “Judea and Samaria.” It suddenly became “Illegal Occupied Palestinian Land”. It is not illegal, not occupied, and not Palestinian land., according to international law going back to the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine. I strongly recommend people to read the words of this defining document which remains valid in international law. The Mandate for Palestine was to create a national homeland for the Jewish people. Included in the wording of the Mandate is the expression “close Jewish settlement.” Jewish settlement has now become a dirty word, yet it is legally valid. This Mandate, as with the other mandates that gave birth to Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan retains its legal validity and is enshrined in the UN Charter Article 80 that all treaties and resolutions of the League of Nations pass as international binding law into the United Nations, but this is now overlooked and today people tell you that Jewish settlements are illegal. If the British Mandate is not relevant to the legitimacy of Israel, similarly the Mandates that gave birth to Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq are also no longer relevant either and, ultimately, the birth of Austria and Hungary are irrelevant! They all came out of the same resolution! The misuse of language is appalling and has a dangerous role in reconfiguring, incorrectly, the current political dialogue. That is why you hear people talking of two states with no recognition of a Jewish state. Why? Because they want to retain the right to claim Palestinian rights on what would become the rump state of Israel should Israel foolishly agree to surrender territory and security and allow the Palestinians to seek the liberation what they consider all Palestine, which is Israeli territory!

And yet, the world stands with the Palestinians. What is it so appealing about the Palestinian narrative?

The Palestinian narrative has been shrewdly crafted in seductive terms for liberal, progressive, secular ears. They pump out what I call the “scented industry of lies” It’s almost like a drug. In universities they seduce students with the secular religion of human rights, and it is almost a crime not to support the poor oppressed Palestinian people. But, in truth, liberal values and minority rights are trampled on in Palestinian society and under Palestinian law. This should appal their new-found supporters, but it doesn’t. This raises the question why liberal thinkers stand with a corrupt and undemocratic Palestinian leadership and against the one liberal democracy in the region? Palestinians do not seriously pursue a two-state solution that would create a state of their own alongside Israel. The destruction of Israel is their real goal.

Do you refer to Jewish organisations adopting the Palestinian narrative?

A lot of people say that they have to take a number of anti-Israel actions for the good of Israel. Israel is being punished by people who should know better! In America, one of the Jewish organisations, Hillel, invites radical anti-Israel speakers. It’s crazy! A Jewish student organization invites anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic speakers, while they do not allow Israeli views to be heard. Israelis are not invited to Arab students’ bodies on campuses. This pluralism is one-sided. Another thing that we are fighting is the Israel Day Parade in New York where Jewish organisers are now inviting Jewish NGOs that damage Israel and anti-Zionist Israeli NGOs to march openly on Israel Day. It’s hypocritical! So this is another aspect of the seduction of the Palestinian narrative, which can be deconstructed so easily, because it is built on lies, half-truths and hypocrisy. The whole idea of a Palestinian nation is based on a fraud.

In your book “Israel Reclaiming the Narrative”, you directly turn to human rights activists. It seems that the whole Palestinian version of history is based on a question of injustice.

Basically, it is because the activists for the Palestinians began a narrative based on human rights and justice for the “occupied people”. They positioned Israel as “colonial invaders.” Anyone who knows history, as far back as the Bible knows this is a false narrative. The message was repeated and no one on the Israeli side ever talked about justice and rights for Israel and the Jewish state. Even Shimon Peres does not support hasbara. He once said, “if Israel is doing something right you don’t need hasbara.” He was wrong. Many have had a dismissive attitude toward anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. Suddenly, Israelis found an international community using expressions like illegal occupation, apartheid, and human rights abuses. How do you fight the abuse of language? This is the blind alley that Israel finds itself in, being beaten up by anti-Israeli thugs. Israel is today trying to explain itself in a world conquered by the Palestinian narrative. In my book, I quote Arafat’s words in an interview given to the Italian journalist Arianna Palazzi in 1970: “The question of borders does not interest us. The PLO is fighting Israel in the name of pan-Arabism. What you call Jordan is nothing more than Palestine.” This, and many more quotes, statements, and facts are used to express the historic truth behind the Palestinian fraudulent language.

You also refer to de-legitimisation activists. What role does BDS play in the Palestinian narrative?

De-legitimisation is pivotal to the Palestinian narrative and BDS is the primary weapon. BDS activists are not really interested in human rights. They don’t really care about

Palestinians. They cloak themselves in moral superiority to hit on Israel. Do they care about human rights in territories administered by the Palestinian Authority? Do they ask themselves what sort of monster they are creating there? What about the Palestinian persecution of Christians, the Sharia abuse of women, and gay rights? Progressive, liberal, and secular people will be shocked to know what they are getting into bed with!

But the main focus is Israeli occupation.

There wouldn't be an "occupation" had the Palestinian leadership accepted Israel's generous concessions. They like to say that full democracy cannot come under occupation. It's a false argument, a complete nonsense. If they committed to structuring their own administration, their own government and society under the same values of those who support them in the West, they would have peace tomorrow as far as Israel is concerned!

Still, they zealously commit to justice, peace and even non-violence!

The Palestinian cause is the poster-child that satisfies narrow-minded activism. As Steve Apfel wrote in his "Enemies of Zion," "'Occupied Palestinian Territory' is the article of faith on which anti-Zionists peg their zeal. Their god demands little except hatred of Zionism, and reverence for Palestinian Arabs." They are encouraged to build their fantasies against Israel, and for Palestinians, around this dogma. Truth can be discarded in favour of an attractive fiction that will seduce a naïve public opinion with its emotional appeal.

Going back to the captivating Palestinian narrative, it is not just a question of the liberal secular world, but also of the religious Christian world, which increasingly supports the Palestinian with theological arguments.

We have a lot of Christians supporting Israel, and I meet with them, but at the end of the day I ask them to what extent is the anti-Israeli approach of certain church groups built on anti-Semitism. Take the Kairos Document, an inter-denominational Christian charter denouncing occupation. It is based on replacement of Israel by Palestine. Kairos means "eternity" but it doesn't mean eternity. It only means as far back as post-Jesus times, creating a form of Christianity that denies the Jews, a replacement theology that has persecuted Jews for centuries. Now these dangerously misguided dogmatists are trying to convert the Evangelicals, but they will find their work hard as there are so many strong and loving Christian Zionists that support Israel.

What about the Israeli narrative? How come history has been forgotten?

Good question! The crux of the matter is that history has been forgotten by our side. We have allowed the Palestinians the platform to deny our heritage, rights, and history. The most effective advocacy people in Israeli today originate from English-speaking countries, creating groups and NGOs, without any support from Israeli government. Honest Reporting, NGO Monitor, UN Watch, Palestinian Media Watch, Stand With Us, even Christian Friends of Israel, all doing effective work in their various fields and they are all created not by Israeli government ministries or politicians, but by ordinary citizens!

What role does Europe has in the fabrication of Palestinian narrative?

I would ask European diplomats to look at the Palestinian leadership, Fatah in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza. Look at what you have created with your huge gifts of aid and money, which is mainly given unconditionally. What they should be doing is putting Palestinians under pressure by telling them, "you're not getting money until you accept the presence of Israel, and develop a liberal, secular, democratic society that is ready to live in

peace with Israel.” Instead we have a corrupt and rejectionist regime. Why are you supporting it?

Last year, in 2013, honour killings in Palestinian society went up 100%. Is this the new Palestine that liberal, progressive human rights supporters want to create? Doesn't that entity have to prove itself in advance before human rights promoters in the international community fund it? Don't you think that this entity should be given conditions for getting support and funding?

I find this hypocrisy absolutely appalling! You come from Italy, which you admit, like Israel, is not a perfect democracy, but if Palestine echoed even a few of the values on which Italy is based, Israel could have a partner for peace, with common values and a reliable partner to build a better future. Only in this way Israel would know that a potential neighbour is not out to destroy it.

What is your opinion on the current talks?

What lessons can Israel learn from the breakdown of talks with Mahmoud Abbas?

One obvious and vital lesson is that Palestinian signatures on binding documents cannot be trusted. When Abbas signed the 15 applications to treaties and UN bodies, this was a basic breach of their legal obligations of the Oslo Accords signed on the White House lawn in 1993 and witnessed by the United States, the European Union, and Russia. To Israel this said they will sign anything but their signature is worthless. It's only a subterfuge to get Israel to cede land and security until the time when a Palestinian enemy will choose to dishonour their commitment. How can Israel be expected to take such life-threatening risks for peace with an obviously deviant adversary? To make matters worse they then entered into a coalition with Hamas, the Palestinian terror regime that haunts Gaza and incites to kill Jews and destroy Israel. This confirms my worst fears that I expressed in an article written a year and a half ago called "Palestinian flags flying over Jerusalem." In this piece I predicted the danger of Israel entering into an agreement with a Palestinian Authority that will be taken over by this Islamic terror organization. Can you imagine Israel surrendering land and security and then waking up to find Hamas on the streets of Jerusalem and overlooking Israel's most sensitive infrastructure, including our only international airport, along our narrow, low-lying, coastal strip? Surely a reasonable world can now see how untenable this is?