

**Israel Today –May 6-8, 2016**  
**Rabbi Howard L. Apothaker, Ph.D.**

**Gaza Sewage Poisons Coastline** (AP)

Each day, millions of gallons of raw sewage pour into Gaza's beachfront, turning miles of once-scenic coastline into a stagnant dead zone. The sewage has damaged Gaza's limited fresh water supplies, decimated fishing zones, and is floating northward and affecting Israel. Most of the waste is consumed by algae, but a buildup of algae can block filters at the desalination plant. A recent check of the water quality off Ashkelon found the beaches suitable for bathing.

**Pal. Mortar Fire From Gaza** (JPost)

The IAF struck targets in Gaza in response to a continued mortar assault on IDF forces Friday. Pal. media reported that IDF artillery had begun shelling Hamas installations following some 20 mortar attacks from Gaza that began Tuesday and targeted IDF troops at the border fence between Gaza and Israel.

**Will Hamas Risk an Escalation?** (Ynet)

The IDF has developed a way to locate attack tunnels dug beneath the border from Gaza into Israel. A captured tunneler described a sophisticated network including rest areas, showers and dining areas. Mortar fire is Hamas' way of sending a message: If you keep looking for tunnels, a war will break out. Hamas still isn't ready for another round of fighting w/ Israel on the scale of the summer 2014 war. Jonathan Tobin: The majority of Israelis see the Gaza experiment as proof that, in the absence of evidence that Pals want a peace that will end the conflict for all time, a similar withdrawal in the more strategic W. Bank would be insane. Hamas sees Tel Aviv as being every bit as much of a Jewish "settlement" that needs to be dismantled as communities that were left behind in Gaza in 2005. *IMRA*: Israel has been briefing US gov't agencies on technology and methods to detect tunnels from Mexico. US Homeland Security is sponsoring tests of "Iron Dome Underground." US Rep. Doug Lamborn: "Tunnels are a threat to American bases and embassies around the world.... It makes sense to partner w/ Israel ... to learn about how to defend against tunnels."

**Protecting Status of Temple Mount** - Nadav Shragai

The Temple Mount, where the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Jewish Temples once stood, is the holiest place for the Jewish people. Today, 2 famous houses of prayer, the al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock, the 3<sup>rd</sup> holiest site for Muslims - reside on the Temple Mount. 49 years after the establishment of the status quo, realities on the Mount have changed dramatically, greatly enhancing the status of Muslims and deeply eroding the status of Jews.

**Egyptian Salafist Meets w/ Israelis** (Ynet)

Omar Salem, an Egyptian-American religious scholar, invited 3 Jewish scholars to Egypt as part of efforts to hold an interfaith dialogue. They met w/ a high-ranking official in the a-Noor party: "I agreed to meet w/ them once I understood that they live in the US and that they have no connection to Israel. The goal of the meeting was to show the tolerance of the Islamic religion."

**"Arab Nationalism Is Dead"** (Economist-UK)

"We're now in the 21st century. The idea of Arab nationalism is dead," says a veteran Arab opinion-writer from Lebanon. Anti-Israelism longer offers much glue. BDS has more traction in Europe than in much of the ME. Morocco is reintroducing French as the language of instruction for science and math. A survey last year confirmed that young Arabs in the Gulf use English more frequently than Arabic.

**Israel Won't Abandon the Golan** - Moshe Arens

The borders of Iraq and Syria delineated in 1916 by Britain and France are artificial constructs. In the Golan, the border between British-mandated Palestine and French-mandated Syria in 1923 altered the lines defined by the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Who'd agree to move control over to ISIS, al-Qaeda or the Nusra Front, or whoever survives the Syrian bloodbath? Steve Postal: Israel has a stronger claim to the Golan than Syria does. Before 1945, the Golan was part of the French Empire (1923-45); before that for ~400 years, part of the (Turkish) Ottoman Empire. So, Syria had control of the Israeli-administered part of the Golan for 22 years (1945-67); Israel has had it for 49 years. Giving up the Golan would most likely result in it being controlled by forces hostile to Israel and the West.

**I Am an Israeli-Arab** (JPost)

Abdullah Abed al-Rahman of Abu Ghosh: "We never hear the sane and rational voice of the Arab sector, the one that opposes terrorism.... I hope that a new generation will grow up here - Jews and Arabs who want to live together and work together out of pride in our country." "There are rational and irrational people.... We just want to wake up every morning like normal people do, go to work, sit at a coffee house and live a normal life." *Times of Is.*: Plans to establish a cultural center in honor of Arafat in the Arab-Israeli town of Abu Ghosh were cancelled due to popular opposition. Abu Ghosh stayed neutral during Israel's 1948 war for independence, is known for maintaining friendly relations with Jews.

### **Reality TV Chooses Pal. Prez** (*Makor Rishon*)

For the Pal. reality show "The President," 1,200 candidates aged 20-40 applied. The public chooses the winner from the final 4 candidates, via text messages. Hussein al-Deik, 31, from Ramallah, won w/ 67K votes. In an interview, al-Deik: "I come from a place where there are daily cooperative activities w/ Israelis. We shop by them and they shop by us. We work w/ them in factories and in their towns.... I'd change the curriculum in the schools, and I'd have the students learn Hebrew so they'll be able to speak with the Israeli side. I would end the incitement heard every Friday in the mosques, and prevent the hatred toward Jews in the local media."

### **An Ambulance for Israel** (*Journal News-NY*)

On May 1, Allan Rubin's family dedicated an ambulance to the memory of his wife, a longtime ambulance volunteer who died 4 years ago. Family: "When you give an ambulance to the people of Israel you get a double mitzvah ... because it supplies jobs for the American worker, these are GM vehicles assembled in Indiana, and then it gets shipped to Israel."

### **Happy in Israel** - Dov Lipman

Per the World Happiness Index, Israel is the 11th-happiest country in the world (US – 13; UK – 23; France – 32; Italy – 50). It was the 4<sup>th</sup>-best place in the world to raise children per the 2015 Family Life Index poll. Israel's suicide rate ranks 2<sup>nd</sup>-lowest among 28 European countries, and even lower among Israeli Arabs. Every Israeli plays a role in building and strengthening the state, in the continued survival of the Jewish people and in the contribution internationally.

### **Arab Implosion Continues** - Walter R. Mead

Last week, protesters loyal to a Muslim cleric stormed Baghdad's gov't seat and occupied the Iraqi parliament. At the other end of the Arab world, 80+ migrants are feared to have drowned off the Libyan coast. The US has tried its hand at nation-building and met w/ no success. Among the consequences: Less attention paid to the Pal. issue. The Pals do not have a functioning state structure capable of either making peace or of keeping radicals from attacking Israel after peace is signed will likely gain force within and beyond Israel.

### **ISIS's Pyramid Scheme** - Mokhtar Awad

ISIS is taking steps to destabilize mainland Egypt by steadily making inroads in the vast Western Desert, Upper Egypt, and Greater Cairo. Given recent trends, there is a real possibility in the coming years that ISIS could consolidate its militants' efforts and escalate insurgency in mainland Egypt. *Ha'aretz*: The US has plans to reduce from 700 its number of its soldiers in Sinai by

33+%. Egypt fears it will be seen as an American expression of no confidence in Prez el-Sissi's ability to effectively fight terrorists in Sinai. Many of the Bedouin in Sinai make a living from these camps.

### **Pals Refuse Direct Negotiations** - Dana Somberg

The Pals believe they will receive a better deal if Israel is not involved, if outsiders dictate to Israel the outcome. The Pals say that they have no interest in sitting down w/ the Israelis, and so we have not been able to discuss any matters w/ them....The Pals want to know in advance...what the outcome of the game will be.

### **Pal. Civic Activist Gunned Down** (*JPost*)

Baha Nabata, a well-regarded Pal. civic leader from E. J-em, was shot dead for working w/ Israeli officials to improve living conditions in his community. Nabata worked to pave the community's roads, set up emergency medical services, and train firefighters w/ help from the Fire Dep't. His murder warns Pals working w/ Israelis to "stop, or you will end up like Nabata."

### **Optimistic about Zionism** - Col. Richard Kemp

Israel leads the way as a beacon of moral clarity and success for the West. Despite major wars, waves of suicide attacks, and other traumatic events, Israel's birth rate is steadily climbing, its economy is punching far above its weight, and its diplomatic ties w/ Sunni Arab states are growing stronger. Zionists were not paralyzed by the extraordinary persecution of the Jewish people that marked the 20<sup>th</sup> C. Instead, they courageously met every challenge, and then proceeded to build a flourishing, democratic state.

### **NATO Approved after Turkey Lifted Veto**

NATO upgraded its ties w/ Israel amid mounting instability in the ME. Israel will be able to open offices at NATO HQ in Brussels and complete a credentialing process for its reps. While Israel is not a member, it signed a security agreement w/ the alliance in 2001, is an associate member of the NATO parliamentary assembly, and has taken part in joint military exercises. The decision was enabled after Turkey rescinded the veto on any Israeli activity w/ NATO. (*Ha'aretz*)

### **Poll: 2/3 of Gaza Pals Do Not Trust Hamas**

### **Boost Israeli Aid for Missile Defense** -

The Administration sees the Iran agreement as a strategic achievement that'll decrease the nuclear threat to Israel. That the US military aid budget for Israel is also expected to cover costs related to protection vs. missile threats makes the proposed budget increase relatively minute. The US House Armed Services Committee would boost funding for Israeli missile defense programs by ~\$200 million above the level requested by

WH – bumping up funding for Tamir interceptors for the Iron Dome air defense system; for procurement/co-production of the David's Sling medium- and long-range air defense system and for the Arrow 3 Upper Tier Missile Defense System. Over the past 10 years, Congress has appropriated \$1.9 billion more than was originally requested by any administration. In 2016, the president requested ~\$150 million and Congress enacted \$488 million for Israeli missile defense funding. Lawmakers said that Israeli and US national security are strongly linked and that Israel's missile defense innovations are significant to the. The Israeli-US partnership on Iron Dome includes an agreement for co-production of the system that, in fiscal 2015, brought 55% of the work to the US, and a similar agreement to produce David's Sling is being negotiated. (*Defense News*)

**PA Security Expands Counterterrorism** (*Ha'aretz*)  
PA security services made 40% of all arrests of terror suspects in the W. Bank in recent months. The IDF has reduced its activity in Area A in response.

#### *Anti-Semitism*

**Insidious Virus of Anti-Semitism** - Ephraim Mirvis  
Britain's Labour Party has suspended 50 of its members over anti-Semitic and racist comments on Twitter and FB. British political figures claim that Zionism is separate from Judaism as a faith; that it is colonialist and imperialist. Zionism is a belief in the right to Jewish self-determination in a land that has been at the center of the Jewish world for 3,000+ years. One can no more separate it from Judaism than separate the City of London from Great Britain. Open a Jewish prayer book from any part of the world. Zionism will leap out at you. Throughout our history we've yearned for a chance to determine our future, to revive Hebrew and return to rejoice in our love for this tiny sliver of land. (*Telegraph*) A. Shay: Recent comments by members of Labour have prompted a public debate regarding anti-Semitism among British politicians. The British gov't has been pro-Arab since the early days of the Empire. The majority of Gulf and Arab royalty and military elite have been educated in Oxbridge and Sandhurst. British technicians, managers and investors live in every oil-producing country from Iraq to Oman. Islam is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest religion in the UK, practiced by 3+ million people. Mehdi Hasan: Countless Muslims I have come across hold weird and wacky anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. It is hypocrisy for Muslims to complain of Islamophobia while ignoring the rampant anti-Semitism in our own backyard. (*New Statesman*)

**World Is Forgetting the Holocaust** (*Boston Globe*)  
In 2013, a survey of 53K+ respondents in 101 countries found that 54% of the world's adults had heard of the

Holocaust. Of those, 1/3 believe it is either a myth or has been greatly exaggerated.

**Egyptian: Hatred of Jews Poisons Us** (*MEMRI*)  
In a lecture on 3/21, Egyptian-German scholar Hamed Abdel-Samad: "We have had a fixation about the Jews ... and this fixation refuses to end. The Jews ... small in number ... cause us some mental reaction and we cannot get them out of our mind." "When I was studying in Cairo, 2 of the most popular books... in libraries and on the streets were *Mein Kampf* and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a forgery." "This hatred poisons us. We have wasted vast efforts on this hatred.... This hatred prevents us from dealing w/ our problems in a serious way. You always need an enemy on which to pin all your catastrophes. Anything that happens to you is a conspiracy. Whenever something does not work your way, the Jews are the cause." "We should get rid of this hatred, not for the benefit of the Jews and Israelis, but for our own sake.... We should overcome the barrier of hatred and of fear of the other. We should view all human beings as human beings."

**Kuwait Air Halts Flights** (*JNS.org*)  
Kuwait Airways has halted its inter-European routes to avoid "civil and criminal charges" in Europe for refusing to allow Israeli citizens on its airline. Earlier this year it dropped its NYC-London route rather than transport Israeli citizens, after the US Dep't of Transportation found the airline to be practicing "unreasonable discrimination."

**1940s Cartoons Warned of Holocaust** (*Times of Is.*)  
Long before becoming a children's author, Dr. Seuss sounded the alarm about Hitler and the Nazis. The work featured in R. Medoff's new book, *Cartoonists Against the Holocaust*, upends the narrative that Americans were unaware of the mounting barbarism.

**Kerry: Stand Against Resurgent Anti-Semitism**  
Kerry Thurs.: "I join all Americans in observing Yom HaShoah.... when we reflect on the irredeemable loss of 6 million Jews and countless Poles, Roma, LGBT people, Jehovah's Witnesses, and persons w/ disabilities murdered by the Nazis because of who they were or what religion they practiced.... Many Jews fleeing violence and extremism were denied entry to our ports. All of us must stand firmly and resolutely against resurgent anti-Semitism, sectarian hatred, and bigotry in our time." Israel marked the day w/ ceremonies and events across the country, beginning at 10 am w/ 2 minutes of silence, marked by a siren that was heard throughout the country. Drivers got out of their cars, soldiers climbed on top of their tanks, and pedestrians stopped in their tracks

### **Plotter to Blow Up Florida Shul** (*Miami Herald*)

The man accused in Miami federal court Mon. of trying to blow up the Aventura Turnberry Jewish Center appeared in court: "It's my calling," adding he was "comfortable" with killing innocent women and children.

### **Poll: Americans Sympathize More w/ Israel** (*Pew*)

Among Millennials (born after 1980), 43% report sympathizing more w/ Israel; 27% more w/ the Pals. Older Americans sympathize more w/ Israel by about four-to-one. Generation Xers (born 1965-1980) sympathize more w/ Israel than the Pals by roughly three-to-one.

### **Vassar Students Reject BDS** (*Algemeiner*)

In March, the Vassar Student Assoc. council passed a resolution endorsing BDS. An amendment prohibiting the use of student funding for pro-Israel companies, including Ben & Jerry's, failed to pass. A campus-wide vote rejected both the resolution and the amendment.

*Etc*

### **Palestinian Violence**

A Jewish man in his 60s was stabbed in the chest Mon. in J-lem's Old City. An 18-year-old Pal. was arrested. A Pal. from Hebron was arrested by Border Police near the Cave of the Patriarchs after he was found to be carrying a knife. 2 female Pals, armed w/ knives, attempted to attack Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint in the W. Bank. One was found to be carrying a syringe full of an undetermined liquid. A car-ramming attack wounded 3 Israeli soldiers at a roadblock in the W. Bank Tuesday. The driver was shot and killed at the scene.

### **Gaza-Bound Chemicals for Rockets** (*JPost*)

Israeli security forces foiled an attempt to smuggle into Gaza 4 tons of chemicals that can be used to manufacture long-range rockets. Ammonium chloride was concealed within a 40-ton shipment of salt. The importer is a Gaza resident associated with Hamas.

### **Iran Touts Israel Invasion to Recruit** (*WashTimes*)

Iran has begun to ask its teenagers to volunteer to fight in Syria, to defend sacred Shiite shrines in Syria and to position themselves to invade Israel. In a video, boys sing, "On my leader's orders I am ready to give my life. The goal is not just to free Iraq and Syria; my path is through the sacred shrine [near Damascus], but my goal is to reach Jerusalem."

### **Attack on Embassy in Rome Thwarted** (*Is. Hayom*)

An ISIS plot to attack the Vatican and several foreign embassies, including the Israeli Embassy in Rome, was recently uncovered by Italian authorities. Four Islamic extremists were arrested.

### **After ISIS Is Defeated** - Noam Tibon (*Times of Is.*)

Syria and Iraq should form 4 new countries, on an ethnic and religious basis, to provide each group w/ a sense of security, independence, and prosperity. (1) A Sunni state in W. Iraq and E. Syria. (2) A Shi'ite state in SE Iraq. (3) A Kurdish state in the territory of N. Syria and N. Iraq. This country already exists. (4) An Alawite state in the Damascus region and along the Syrian coastline - a safe haven for the Alawite minority that it is fighting for its life.

### **Journalist Infiltrates Jihadist Cells** (*AFP*)

A French journalist infiltrated a cell of would-be jihadists, filming them w/ a hidden camera as they plotted an attack in the name of ISIS; they were arrested. The journalist: "One of the main lessons was that I never saw any Islam in this affair. No will to improve the world. Only lost, frustrated, suicidal, easily manipulated youths."

*To Raise Your Spirits*

### **China Tech Group Invests** (*Bloomberg*)

Israel's EyeSight Tech has raised \$20 million from China's group Kuang-Chi. Its software allows a point of the fingertip to control the TV.

### **Biocancell Raises \$6M** (*Globes*)

Biocancell has two drugs that combine a diphtheria toxin w/ a component that becomes attached to cancer cells significantly more frequently than to healthy cells. Once the component attaches itself to a cancer cell, it releases the toxin, thereby killing the cell. The company is focusing on bladder cancer.

### **Israel's Negev Desert** (*WSJ*)

Israel's largest nat'l park, the Ramon Nature Reserve, is a playground for thrill-seekers w/ mountain biking, trekking, camping and off-roading into beautiful, remote areas. Perched on the lip of the Ramon crater is Beresheet, an ultramodern resort hotel.

### **Oil Found near Dead Sea** (*Globes*)

The Hatrurim oil and gas field in the Dead Sea area contains an oil reservoir worth NIS 1.2 billion.

### **Ohio to Purchase \$50 M in Bonds** (*Cleve. Jsh News*)

Every Ohio treasurer since 1993 has invested in Bonds, as have 80+ state and municipal public employee pension and treasury funds. Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced that Ohio is purchasing \$50 million worth of Israel Bonds. Since taking office in 2011, he has made purchases of Israel Bonds totaling \$167+ million. For 64 years, Israel has paid all interest and principle.