

SELECTIONS FROM THE PRESS

This section includes articles and news items, mainly from Israeli but also from international press sources, that provide insightful or illuminating perspectives on events, developments, or trends in Israel and the occupied territories not readily available in the mainstream U.S. media.

INTERVIEW WITH NORMAN FINKELSTEIN
BY FRANK BARAT, 14 FEBRUARY 2012
(EXCERPTS)

Below is an excerpted transcript of an interview conducted by Frank Barat and posted on YouTube. The full video can be viewed at <http://youtu.be/ASIBGSSw4II>.

Barat: I understand you've been working on a book about solving the Israel-Palestine conflict. So how do you do it?

Finkelstein: Well, basically, to put it in a nutshell, if you are serious about politics and serious about trying to build a mass movement, you can't go beyond what the public is ready to accept. The public is ready to accept, in my opinion, what international law says. So if you were to put forth a very simple slogan when you are asked, "how do you want to solve it?" I would say easy, all I want to do is enforce the law. The law is clear, it's unambiguous, it's uncomplicated. . . . [T]he law is clear: the settlements are illegal—that is correct. East Jerusalem is occupied Palestinian territory—that is correct. The West Bank and Gaza are occupied Palestinian territory—that is correct. But it is also correct that Israel is a state; that is also the law. If you want to use the law as a weapon or as leverage in order to reach public opinion, you cannot be selective with the law. You can't say I have the *right* to walk at the green, but I'm kind of agnostic on the red. No, if you have the *right* to walk at the green, it's because you have an obligation to stop at the red. The law is a package deal, so if you want to use the law, the law also says that Israel is a state.

The problem with the solidarity movement is that it's a kind of mirror image of the so-called Palestinian Authority. In my opinion, the goals of the

Palestinian Authority are correct. It always talks about international law and international legitimacy—namely what the law says, what the UN says—that's what they say they want. Their goals are correct, but the problem is their means will never work because the Palestinians' main asset is the Palestinian people, the four million people of Palestine. And if you mobilize them, galvanize them, I don't think Israel has a prayer—they can't win. But the Palestinian Authority will never mobilize them because they are afraid that if you mobilize them the Authority will meet the same fate as Mubarak and all the others because they are a gang of corrupt, wretched, collaborators. So their goal is correct, but their means will never achieve their goal because all they want to do is bargain behind closed doors with the Israelis, and the Israelis will never give them anything. . . . Unless you have the force to extract it from Israel, they will never give you anything. And the main force, the main weapon, is the people and they will never organize it.

For the solidarity movement, I think its means are correct. I have no problem with the boycotts, the divestments, sanctions, all of that nonviolence, civil disobedience like the flotillas, the legal weapon like the attempt at universal jurisdiction. So the means are right, but the goal will never fly. You want to say you are agnostic on Israel, you want to say you want one state; there is nothing in international law for one state. You are not going to win a public to that. Once you step out of your little cult, your little ghetto, and you enter the real world and try to reach a broad public and say, "we are a rights-based organization" (which is what BDS [the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement] likes to say) and we want to enforce our rights—okay, the law—once you step

out of your ghetto you're no longer just talking to yourself. There is the other side, they also make themselves heard. So they say, "No, that's not true, they're lying. They say they want to enforce the law, but they really want to destroy Israel, they want to eliminate Israel." So now the public hears both sides and they come back to the solidarity movement and they say, "Is that true? Do you want to destroy Israel?" And the solidarity movement says, "We do not have a position on Israel, we do not take a position." Oh, really? You do not take a position on Israel? Well, then we are not going to take a position on BDS.

The law is clear; you want to use the International Court of Justice on your side? Okay, the International Court of Justice has said the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem—they are occupied Palestinian territories—that's correct. But the ICJ also said that the pre-June 1967 border is Israel's legal border. That's their country, that's the law. You want to promote one state? Fine, that's your right, but then don't pretend that you are trying to enforce the law. That's not true. You want to *selectively* enforce the law.

Barat: But what the BDS movement and, I think, more and more Palestinians want to portray is that there aren't four million Palestinians—there are the refugees and there are the Palestinian citizens of Israel. So it comes to a much bigger number, and the fact that they're not taking a position on whether or not they want the State of Israel to exist or what, I think it's not saying that we want to destroy Israel, it's saying that the 20 percent of the citizens of Israel who are Palestinian citizens have the right to have the same rights as the Israelis.

Finkelstein: . . . I am getting a little bit exasperated with what I think is . . . a lot of leftist posturing. There is a settlement that has been proposed by the international community for resolving the conflict. It does include a statement, "a just resolution of the refugee question based on UN resolution 194," the right of return and compensation. There is nothing anywhere in the international consensus for resolving the conflict that

says anything about the minority inside Israel, the Palestinian Arab minority. It's not there. You want to drag in that minority and start talking about them, well, in my opinion you will get nowhere because the whole world is filled with countries that persecute their minorities. . . . You want to go through every country in the Middle East and how they treat their minorities? . . . If you look at, for example, when Yasser Arafat declared a state in November 1988 and you read the platform, the political document, and so forth, there is no mention of the Palestinian Arabs. There is a mention of the refugee question—that is correct; there is no mention of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel. . . . I mean, we have to be honest and I loathe disingenuousness. [People] don't want Israel; they think they are being very clever. They call it their three tier: "we want the end of the occupation, we want the right of return, and we want equal rights for Arabs in Israel," and they think they are very clever because they know the *result* of implementing all three is what? What is the result? You know and I know. There is no Israel.

Barat: I think the result is that there is no Israel the way that Israel is now, but—

*Finkelstein: No, there is no Israel. Full stop. And the law is Israel is a state, it has its defined borders, and if you want to eliminate Israel, that is your right but I do not think you will reach anybody. I think it's a non-starter. If you say you want to enforce the law, and in fact, impose it on Israel because they will not accept it—then the law is clear and you have to say, and you will never hear the solidarity movement say—*two states*. Go look at the UN General Assembly resolution, it always begins, "a peaceful settlement to the Palestine question," and in the last part where they lay out the terms for resolving the conflict, they say, "a two state settlement," and then they say, "East Jerusalem, West Bank, Gaza are occupied Palestinian territories, settlements are illegal under international law, and a just resolution to the refugee question based on the right of return," but it's all within that framework. And if you do not want*

the framework, then stop talking about the law. And stop trying to be so clever, because you are only clever in your cult. The moment you step out, you have to deal with Israeli propaganda and here they have a case, they say no, they are not really talking about rights; they are talking about wanting to destroy Israel. And in fact, I think they are right. I think that's true.

If you tell a public Israel's population is seven and a half million, of those seven and a half million, five and a half million are Jewish and the other two million are Palestinian Arab and the other are neither of the above, and you say, as a lot of the solidarity movements says, all six million Palestinian refugees have to go back. Okay, now, will a public think it is reasonable for six million Palestinians to descend on a country which right now has 1.8 million Palestinians and five and a half million Jews, which means that you are going to completely, overnight, radically, completely, change the demographic balance in the country. Will a person in the public find that reasonable? My answer is that you can give them every fact behind the creation of the refugees, and they will still see the Israeli position that that is not tenable. I don't think you can sell it.

Barat: Well, I think the BDS movement has turned to the international community, not to the—

Finkelstein: Well, that to me is a problem, I will tell you the truth because if you were an indigenous organization in Palestine, you should be organizing your people, and it's our job to organize from our side. I went through many solidarity movements; the Vietnamese never gave us marching orders. The Nicaraguans, the El Salvadorians, they did not tell you what to do. They organized their people and as the solidarity movement abroad, we were supposed to make the judgment about how best to organize ourselves. And it's a very strange thing, when the people there who claim to be the leaders of civil society, they cannot organize a demonstration of 500 people amongst themselves, but they are telling everyone else abroad what

to do—that's a weird inversion. When I was first involved in the Gaza freedom march, I don't know if you were involved in it—they said they were going to bring out 50,000 people in Gaza. Fifty thousand people and you know how many they brought out? They brought out 300.

ALI ABUNIMAH, "FINKELSTEIN, BDS, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL," *AL JAZEERA ENGLISH*, 28 FEBRUARY 2012 (EXCERPTS)

In a recent and highly controversial interview, Norman Finkelstein, long a scourge of Israel, turned his guns on Palestinians and their supporters. He accused the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement of being a "cult" and claimed that its achievements were mostly exaggerated.

But what exercised Finkelstein most was his conclusion that, if implemented, the demands of the 2005 Palestinian civil society call for BDS, would amount to "the destruction of Israel."

...

Finkelstein demanded that Palestinians drop this program, "Because, if we end the occupation and bring back six million Palestinians and we have equal rights for Arabs and Jews, there's no Israel." He also insisted that a "two-state solution" was the only outcome supported by international law.

Putting the BDS call to the test

For the sake of argument, let's put Finkelstein's thesis to the test. But before I do that, let me make clear where I stand. As is well known, I support, and believe, that the eventual outcome in historic Palestine will be a single state.

Many supporters of the BDS movement, including some of its founders are on record calling for the same. But the BDS call itself is agnostic, focusing on the rights of Palestinians, not on state arrangements, something Finkelstein insisted was mere deception.

Here, I am going to do what I normally never do. Argue the case for a two-state solution that meets all the demands of the BDS call. Moreover, it should meet fully with Finkelstein's approval as well, because it will be based on a solution that he himself endorsed.

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A quick history: Settler colonialism and partition

Conflicts in Ireland and Palestine are the legacies of settler-colonialism facilitated by Britain. In each case, the settler-colonial intervention created two mutually exclusive claims to sovereignty, legitimacy and self-determination underpinned by two diametrically opposed narratives, and a material reality of one community long monopolizing state power, resources, and symbols to dominate and denigrate the other. In both cases, the British imposed or facilitated partitions, which rather than resolve the underlying problem, simply converted the conflict into new forms of antagonism.

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A Protestant state for a Protestant people

[After the signing of the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty partitioning Ireland,] Northern Ireland became a unionist-run, one-party state. Nationalist resistance to partition was violently suppressed by British forces and unionist militia. Within a year of partition, hundreds of Catholics were killed in Belfast, 11,000 were forced from their jobs, and 22,000—a quarter of the city's Catholic population—were driven from their homes.

In the widely quoted formula attributed to Northern Ireland's first prime minister, Lord Craigavon, the state's seat of government at Stormont Castle was a "Protestant parliament for a Protestant people."

Catholics experienced severe discrimination in employment, housing, and all aspects of political and cultural life. They viewed Northern Ireland as an illegitimate imposition, and its security forces as Protestant sectarian militia guaranteeing unionist dominance.

Unionism viewed any effort to create a united Ireland as a mortal threat. In 1990, for example, James Molyneaux, leader of the then dominant Ulster Unionist Party, described the Republic of Ireland's constitutional claim to the north as "a demand for the destruction of Northern Ireland" that was "equivalent to Hitler's claim over Czechoslovakia."

This language resembles that used by Zionists and Norman Finkelstein to

describe any fundamental reform of the Israeli state to end its systematic discrimination against non-Jews, let alone a one-state solution, as tantamount to Israel's "destruction."

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Equality for all or the "destruction of Israel"?

...

[That] Israel also characterizes these demands as an existential threat [is] a tacit acknowledgment that inequality and discrimination are foundational elements of the Israeli state. As Finkelstein succinctly put it, "equal rights means the end of Israel."

This is why Palestinian citizens of Israel and their representatives in the Knesset such as Hanin Zoabi face ever more hostile rhetoric and discriminatory bills and laws—from loyalty oaths, to bans on commemorating the Nakba, to provisions reserving jobs and land for army veterans (effectively favoring Jews), to the Citizenship Law that makes it impossible for Israeli citizens to bring Palestinian or other Arab spouses to live in the country. . . .

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A two-state solution in Ireland

In 1998, unionists and nationalists signed the Belfast Agreement. It established, in effect, a binational state in Northern Ireland where Irish nationalists share power with pro-British unionists.

It did not abolish Northern Ireland, but it did banish, once and for all, the "Protestant state" and enshrined equality as a fundamental principle.

The agreement notably does not resolve whether the six counties that form Northern Ireland should remain part of the United Kingdom or rejoin a united Ireland, but it establishes principles and mechanisms for determining where sovereignty should lie and what would happen if it changes.

Crucially, the agreement states whether Northern Ireland remains part of the UK or becomes part of a united Ireland:

[T]he power of the sovereign government with jurisdiction there shall be exercised with rigorous impartiality on behalf of all the people in the diversity of their identities and traditions and

shall be founded on the principles of full respect for, and equality of, civil, political, social and cultural rights, of freedom from discrimination for all citizens, and of parity of esteem and of just and equal treatment for the identity, ethos, and aspirations of both communities.

Northern Ireland has no “right to exist”

This was made possible because the British effectively abandoned any claim that Northern Ireland as an entity had a “right” to exist. A breakthrough moment came in 1992 when the UK Secretary of State for Northern Ireland conceded that “provided it is advocated constitutionally, there can be no proper reason for excluding any political objective from discussion. Certainly not the objective of a united Ireland . . .”

As part of the agreement, nationalists conceded that the reunification of Ireland could only come about by the consent of a majority in Northern Ireland.

Consequently, the Belfast Agreement did not recognize any separate right to self-determination for unionists as unionists or Protestants as Protestants that would be analogous to a specifically Jewish right to self-determination within historic Palestine.

Unionists enjoy the right to participate in self-determination, along with nationalists, as legitimate residents of the territory. No more, no less.

Freedom of movement and citizenship

There is complete freedom of movement, residency, and cross-border employment (something guaranteed in any case under European Union rules) between the two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland and the right to full citizenship in either or both states. Moreover, such citizenship cannot be revoked from any person even if the status of Northern Ireland changes. There is nothing to stop Catholics moving north or Protestants moving south.

In order to reverse the long history of discrimination, public bodies and officials in Northern Ireland are under a statutory obligation to promote equality among individuals and communities, and safeguards enacted in British and Irish law are designed to ensure

that practices conform to European and international human rights standards. Employment anti-discrimination measures in Northern Ireland are strictly enforced, and although Catholics are still, on average, poorer than Protestants, the gap has narrowed.

A form of 1980s solidarity activism in the United States—somewhat analogous to BDS—demanded that U.S. firms doing business in Northern Ireland adhere to the MacBride Principles, which forbid any form of sectarian discrimination.

A model for historic Palestine?

The Belfast Agreement preserves an existing “two-state solution” in Ireland unless and until people in both jurisdictions choose any other arrangement. But in the meantime, it required one of the states—Northern Ireland—to transform into an inclusive democracy from an oppressive ethnocracy. The agreement also required the Republic of Ireland to strengthen its own human rights and equality guarantees.

So if Northern Ireland is the model, how would it transpose to Palestine? Clearly, Israel would have to become, like Northern Ireland, a binational state with strict equality and full representation for all citizens. All laws privileging Jews would have to be abolished and strong measures taken to redress historic and present injustices and prevent future discrimination. A Palestinian state would have to be no less committed to equality.

There would be complete freedom of movement and residency between Israel and the Palestinian state, and because ethnic and racial privileges would have to be abolished, Palestinian refugees could exercise their right to return to the state of their choice and gain citizenship in either.

The Republic of Ireland grants citizenship to any person from abroad with one grandparent born in Ireland, regardless of religion or ethnic background. A similar law could replace Israel’s racist “Law of Return” that grants citizenship only to Jews while discriminating against Palestinians.

Jews would have no separate right of self-determination, but like Protestants in Northern Ireland, would enjoy

full democratic rights to participate in self-determination as residents of the territory.

All these principles underpin the Belfast Agreement and yet they did not mean the “destruction of Northern Ireland.” What they rightly did away with is ethno-religious privileges for Protestants at the expense of Catholics.

So the question then for Norman Finkelstein and Zionists who are horrified by the idea of a one-state solution, is: could they accept two states on such terms? If the answer is yes, then it is clear that the BDS call is completely compatible with a two-state solution, and Finkelstein should withdraw his claim that this is mere deception.

If Finkelstein and Zionists cannot accept a two-state solution on these terms, then we know it is not the number of states that concerns them. Rather, their priority is to preserve racial and colonial privileges for Jews at the expense of fundamental Palestinian rights.

That is something Palestinians and their allies, as with nationalists in Northern Ireland, can never—and must never—accept, no matter how many states exist in their respective homelands.

BARAK RAVID, “SECRET EU PAPER AIMS TO TACKLE ISRAEL’S TREATMENT OF ARAB MINORITY” *HA’ARETZ*, 16 DECEMBER 2011

The European Union should consider Israel’s treatment of its Arab population a “core issue, not second tier to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,” according to a classified working paper produced by European embassies in Israel, parts of which were obtained by *Ha’Aretz*.

This is an unprecedented document in that it deals with internal Israeli issues. According to European diplomats and senior Foreign Ministry officials, it was written and sent to EU headquarters in Brussels behind the back of the Israeli government.

Other issues the document deals with include the lack of progress in the peace process, the continued occupation of the territories, Israel’s definition of itself as Jewish and democratic, and the influence of the Israeli Arab population.

The original document also included suggestions for action the EU should take, but these were removed from the final version at the insistence of several countries. Among these were the suggestion that the EU file an official protest every time a bill discriminating against Arabs passes a second reading in the Knesset, and that the EU ensure that all Arab towns have completed urban plans, “with each member state potentially ‘adopting’ a municipality to this end.”

The contents of the 27-page report were kept under wraps, and a number of European diplomats contacted by *Ha’Aretz* over the past two weeks refused to disclose any details. Foreign Ministry officials said they had heard about it unofficially from some European diplomats a few weeks ago, but to date no Israeli official has been able to obtain a copy.

According to a European diplomat involved in drafting the report, work on it began more than a year ago at Britain’s initiative. The idea was to write a report that could be debated by a forum of EU foreign ministers. At some point, however, several countries, among them the Czech Republic, Poland, and the Netherlands, expressed objections to its contents.

After lengthy debates on the issue in an effort to obtain the consensus necessary to send the report to Brussels, it was decided to water it down somewhat and drop the operative conclusions. It was also designated a “food for thought” document, rather than a “report.”

The embassies declared in the document that the breakdown in the peace process was having a negative impact on the integration of Israeli Arabs into society.

“The stalemate in the peace process, and the continuing occupation, inevitably has an impact on the identification of Israeli Arabs with Israel,” the document states. “It will be more difficult for Israeli Arabs to be wholly at ease with their identity while the conflict with the Palestinians continues.”

At the same time, the embassies said this should not be used as an excuse for “hostile behavior by Israeli Arabs which alienates the Jewish majority, or for failure

by Israeli government to achieve genuinely equal treatment of Israeli Arabs.”

The document suggests that the EU discuss Jewish-Arab relations with the Israeli government, while stressing the government’s obligation to bridge the gaps between the Jewish majority and Arab minority.

“We should emphasize that addressing inequality within Israel is integral to Israel’s long-term stability,” the document says.

The document also relates to the demand made by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

“We do not believe that recognition of Israel as a Jewish State should detract in any way from the vision of equality for all its citizens enshrined in its founding documents,” the report says.

“It is in the interests of all Israelis to demonstrate that Israel is not only Jewish and democratic, but tolerant and inclusive, and that these are patriotic values. We believe in common with most Israelis that Israeli nationality is an inclusive concept which can accommodate equally those of other faiths and ethnic origins.”

Other operative suggestions that were dropped from the final document included supporting projects promoting coexistence in schools, and encouraging European companies setting up high-tech operations in Israel to invest in Arab areas.

In response to *Ha’Aretz’s* report, the EU said on Friday that “a core task of any diplomatic mission is to report back to its headquarters on developments in the host country. In this regard, as part of the EU foreign policy process, the embassies of the EU Member States and the EU Delegation cooperate closely.”

“This report was prepared to stimulate thinking at the EU level on how the EU might engage constructively with governmental and non-governmental interlocutors in Israel with respect to an issue that has been identified in the EU–Israel Action Plan as a shared value, namely to ‘promote and protect rights of minorities, including enhancing political, economic, social and cultural opportunities for all citizens and lawful residents,’” the EU press office added.

**BARAK RAVID, “ENVOYS WORLDWIDE FEEL BRUNT OF ISRAEL’S WORSENING IMAGE,”
HA’ARETZ, 29 DECEMBER 2011**

On Tuesday morning, 100 Israeli ambassadors gathered on Mount Scopus, and together with their host, Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat, looked out onto Silwan and the Temple Mount. Later they continued toward Abu-Dis, there they peered at the border area and the separation fence. Last year, Barkat and the city he manages caused many of these Israeli diplomats to work overtime, preparing explanations to foreign ministries or media outlets in the countries where they serve. It can be assumed that in 2012, their work will only get harder.

The annual ambassadors’ meeting is met with ambivalence by many Israeli diplomats. On the one hand, it provides an opportunity to visit the country for a week, and to be briefed on political matters, as well as internal ministry gossip. On the other hand, instead of a Christmas vacation, these sequestered ambassadors spend long days, from morning to night, inside the Foreign Ministry’s auditorium.

Ambassadors who arrived from European states and North America talked about how they are becoming increasingly hated and unwanted, while ambassadors from Asia and Africa spoke optimistically about new markets and opportunities for cooperation in areas such as agriculture and medicine. “Exports to China are at \$2.5 billion a year; why isn’t this figure \$10 billion?” asked one ambassador.

Yet, in contrast to past annual gatherings, one topic kept coming up during all the discussions, this being an understanding that developments in Israel’s domestic arena have a negative impact upon the country’s reputation overseas. Within hours, ultra-Orthodox men who spit at children in Beit Shemesh, or who threaten women bus passengers in Ashdod cause huge diplomatic damage to Israel around the world. To garner the extent of such damage, it sufficed to read one of this week’s *New York Times* editions, which carried three lengthy reports about discrimination of women in Israel, Egypt, and Somalia.

Many ambassadors raised this issue during meetings with Prime Minister

Netanyahu, President Shimon Peres, and in additional discussions. "Once, Israel's democracy was our calling card around the world," reflected one ambassador. "Today, there's a feeling that this is no longer the case."

The ambassadors noted that their workdays are filled up with efforts to explain legislative initiatives against left-wing organizations and mosques, and acts of religious and right-wing extremism. Overseas, these are not marginal subjects. Quite often, the ambassadors say, we don't have answers to questions referred to us.

Bleak Forecasts

Eran Etzion, head of the Foreign Ministry's policy planning division, is known for his elaborately prepared Power Point presentations. Months of analyses, arguments, and discussions are packed densely into dozens of slides which present the ministry's annual diplomatic assessment.

As was the case last year, Etzion's presentation at this year's gathering did not leave much room for optimism. One of the slides was particularly upsetting. A big "X" was drawn over the words "peace process;" and the explanation accompanying the slide declared that the process is dead. At least it will not come to life during the coming year. A virtual consensus has congealed among the ambassadors and also Netanyahu aides Yaakov Amidror and Yitzhak Molcho, holding that the continued diplomatic impasse hurts Israel.

One slide pointed to an equally worrisome trend of "erosion in the special relationship with the U.S." In a separate panel, Washington Ambassador Michael Oren spoke about how relations with the American government are strong and close, and even proudly divulged public opinion poll results which show that support for Israel is stable in the U.S. public.

Ido Aharoni, Israel's Consul-General in New York, a wizard when it comes to polls, interrupted Oren and proposed that he look at the opinion surveys more closely. "Our image in America is worse than it was in the past, particularly among the young educated sectors," stated Aharoni, and explained that once the data are broken down, it

appears that entire sectors in the U.S. might not have transferred their allegiance to the Palestinians, yet have simply lost enthusiasm for Israel.

Another worrisome trend in Etzion's presentation involved the European Union's economic crisis. A third of Israel's exports goes to EU countries and thus, Etzion stressed, Israel's economy is bound to take a hit, even if it is somewhat delayed. If anyone needed proof of the extent to which the economic crisis worries Israel's political-security establishment, it was furnished in a briefing provided by Mossad chief Tamir Pardo to the ambassadors. For no less than 20 minutes, the Mossad director spoke about the threat to the economy. He devoted less than five minutes to the Iranian threat.

MARK PERRY, "FALSE FLAG," *FOREIGN POLICY*, 13 JANUARY 2012

Buried deep in the archives of America's intelligence services are a series of memos, written during the last years of President George W. Bush's administration, that describe how Israeli Mossad officers recruited operatives belonging to the terrorist group Jundallah by passing themselves off as American agents. According to two U.S. intelligence officials, the Israelis, flush with American dollars and toting U.S. passports, posed as CIA officers in recruiting Jundallah operatives—what is commonly referred to as a "false flag" operation.

The memos, as described by the sources, one of whom has read them and another who is intimately familiar with the case, investigated and debunked reports from 2007 and 2008 accusing the CIA, at the direction of the White House, of covertly supporting Jundallah—a Pakistan-based Sunni extremist organization. Jundallah, according to the U.S. government and published reports, is responsible for assassinating Iranian government officials and killing Iranian women and children.

But while the memos show that the United States had barred even the most incidental contact with Jundallah, according to both intelligence officers, the same was not true for Israel's Mossad. The memos also detail CIA field reports

saying that Israel's recruiting activities occurred under the nose of U.S. intelligence officers, most notably in London, the capital of one of Israel's ostensible allies, where Mossad officers posing as CIA operatives met with Jundallah officials.

The officials did not know whether the Israeli program to recruit and use Jundallah is ongoing. Nevertheless, they were stunned by the brazenness of the Mossad's efforts.

"It's amazing what the Israelis thought they could get away with," the intelligence officer said. "Their recruitment activities were nearly in the open. They apparently didn't give a damn what we thought."

Interviews with six currently serving or recently retired intelligence officers over the last 18 months have helped to fill in the blanks of the Israeli false-flag operation. In addition to the two currently serving U.S. intelligence officers, the existence of the Israeli false-flag operation was confirmed to me by four retired intelligence officers who have served in the CIA or have monitored Israel intelligence operations from senior positions inside the U.S. government.

The CIA and the White House were both asked for comment on this story. By the time this story went to press, they had not responded. The Israeli intelligence services—the Mossad—was also contacted, in writing and by telephone, but failed to respond. As a policy, Israel does not confirm or deny its involvement in intelligence operations.

There is no denying that there is a covert, bloody, and ongoing campaign aimed at stopping Iran's nuclear program, though no evidence has emerged connecting recent acts of sabotage and killings inside Iran to Jundallah. Many reports have cited Israel as the architect of this covert campaign, which claimed its latest victim on Jan. 11 when a motorcyclist in Tehran slipped a magnetic explosive device under the car of Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan, a young Iranian nuclear scientist. The explosion killed Roshan, making him the fourth scientist assassinated in the past two years. The United States adamantly denies it is behind these killings.

According to one retired CIA officer, information about the false-flag

operation was reported up the U.S. intelligence chain of command. It reached CIA Director of Operations Stephen Kappes, his deputy Michael Sulick, and the head of the Counterintelligence Center. All three of these officials are now retired. The Counterintelligence Center, according to its website, is tasked with investigating "threats posed by foreign intelligence services."

The report then made its way to the White House, according to the currently serving U.S. intelligence officer. The officer said that Bush "went absolutely ballistic" when briefed on its contents.

"The report sparked White House concerns that Israel's program was putting Americans at risk," the intelligence officer told me. "There's no question that the U.S. has cooperated with Israel in intelligence-gathering operations against the Iranians, but this was different. No matter what anyone thinks, we're not in the business of assassinating Iranian officials or killing Iranian civilians."

Israel's relationship with Jundallah continued to roil the Bush administration until the day it left office, this same intelligence officer noted. Israel's activities jeopardized the administration's fragile relationship with Pakistan, which was coming under intense pressure from Iran to crack down on Jundallah. It also undermined U.S. claims that it would never fight terror with terror, and invited attacks in kind on U.S. personnel.

"It's easy to understand why Bush was so angry," a former intelligence officer said. "After all, it's hard to engage with a foreign government if they're convinced you're killing their people. Once you start doing that, they feel they can do the same."

A senior administration official vowed to "take the gloves off" with Israel, according to a U.S. intelligence officer. But the United States did nothing—a result that the officer attributed to "political and bureaucratic inertia."

"In the end," the officer noted, "it was just easier to do nothing than to, you know, rock the boat." Even so, at least for a short time, this same officer noted, the Mossad operation sparked a divisive debate among Bush's national security team, pitting those who

wondered “just whose side these guys [in Israel] are on” against those who argued that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

The debate over Jundallah was resolved only after Bush left office when, within his first weeks as president, Barack Obama drastically scaled back joint U.S.-Israel intelligence programs targeting Iran, according to multiple serving and retired officers.

The decision was controversial inside the CIA, where officials were forced to shut down “some key intelligence gathering operations,” a recently retired CIA officer confirmed. This action was followed in November 2010 by the State Department’s addition of Jundallah to its list of foreign terrorist organizations—a decision that one former CIA officer called “an absolute no-brainer.”

Since Obama’s initial order, U.S. intelligence services have received clearance to cooperate with Israel in a number of classified intelligence-gathering operations focused on Iran’s nuclear program, according to a currently serving officer. These operations are highly technical in nature, and do not involve covert actions targeting Iran’s infrastructure or political or military leadership.

“We don’t do bang and boom,” a recently retired intelligence officer said. “And we don’t do political assassinations.”

Israel regularly proposes conducting covert operations targeting Iranians, but are just as regularly shut down, according to retired and current intelligence officers. “They come into the room and spread out their plans and we just shake our heads,” one highly placed intelligence source said, “and we say to them—‘Don’t even go there. The answer is no.’”

Unlike the Mujahedin-e Khalq, the controversial exiled Iranian terrorist group that seeks the overthrow of the Tehran regime and is supported by former leading U.S. policymakers, Jundallah is relatively unknown—but just as violent. In May 2009, a Jundallah suicide bomber blew himself up inside a mosque in Zahedan, the capital of Iran’s southeastern Sistan-Balochistan province bordering Pakistan, during a Shiite religious festival. The bombing killed 25 Iranians and wounded scores of others.

The attack enraged Tehran, which traced the perpetrators to a cell operating in Pakistan. The Iranian government notified the Pakistanis of the Jundallah threat and urged them to break up the movement’s bases along the Iranian-Pakistani border. The Pakistanis reacted sluggishly in the border areas, feeding Tehran’s suspicions that Jundallah was protected by Pakistan’s intelligence services.

The 2009 attack was just one in a long line of terrorist attacks attributed to the organization. In August 2007, Jundallah kidnapped 21 Iranian truck drivers. In December 2008, it captured and executed 16 Iranian border guards—the gruesome killings were filmed, in a stark echo of the decapitation of American businessman Nick Berg in Iraq at the hands of al-Qa’ida’s Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. In July 2010, Jundallah conducted a twin suicide bombing in Zahedan outside a mosque, killing dozens of people, including members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

The State Department aggressively denies that the U.S. government had or has any ties to Jundallah. “We have repeatedly stated, and reiterate again that the United States has *not* provided support to Jundallah,” a spokesman wrote in an e-mail to the *Wall Street Journal*, following its designation as a terrorist organization. “The United States does not sponsor any form of terrorism. We will continue to work with the international community to curtail support for terrorist organizations and prevent violence against innocent civilians. We have also encouraged other governments to take comparable actions against Jundallah.”

A spate of stories in 2007 and 2008, including a report by ABC News and a *New Yorker* article, suggested that the United States was offering covert support to Jundallah. The issue has now returned to the spotlight with the string of assassinations of Iranian nuclear scientists, and has outraged serving and retired intelligence officers who fear that Israeli operations are endangering American lives.

“This certainly isn’t the first time this has happened, though it’s the worst case I’ve heard of,” former CENTCOM

chief and retired Gen. Joe Hoar said of the Israeli operation upon being informed of it. "But while false-flag operations are hardly new, they're extremely dangerous. You're basically using your friendship with an ally for your own purposes. Israel is playing with fire. It gets us involved in their covert war, whether we want to be involved or not."

The Israeli operation left a number of recently retired CIA officers sputtering in frustration. "It's going to be pretty hard for the U.S. to distance itself from an Israeli attack on Iran with this kind of thing going on," one of them told me.

Jundallah head Abdolmalek Rigi was captured by Iran in February 2010. Although initial reports claimed that he was captured by the Iranians after taking a flight from Dubai to Kyrgyzstan, a retired intelligence officer with knowledge of the incident told me that Rigi was detained by Pakistani intelligence officers in Pakistan. The officer said that he was turned over to the Iranians after the Pakistani government informed the United States that it planned to do so. The United States, this officer said, did not raise objections to the Pakistani decision.

Iran, meanwhile, has consistently claimed that Rigi was snatched from under the eyes of the CIA, which it alleges supported him. "It doesn't matter," the former intelligence officer said of Iran's charges. "It doesn't matter what they say. They know the truth."

Rigi was interrogated, tried, and convicted by the Iranians and hanged on 20 June 2010. Prior to his execution, Rigi claimed in an interview with Iranian media—which has to be assumed was under duress—that he had doubts about U.S. sponsorship of Jundallah. He recounted an alleged meeting with "NATO officials" in Morocco in 2007 that raised his suspicions. "When we thought about it we came to the conclusion that they are either Americans acting under NATO cover or Israelis," he said.

While many of the details of Israel's involvement with Jundallah are now known, many others still remain a mystery—and are likely to remain so. The CIA memos of the incident have been "blue bordered," meaning that they were circulated to senior levels of the broader U.S. intelligence community

as well as senior State Department officials.

What has become crystal clear, however, is the level of anger among senior intelligence officials about Israel's actions. "This was stupid and dangerous," the intelligence official who first told me about the operation said. "Israel is supposed to be working with us, not against us. If they want to shed blood, it would help a lot if it was their blood and not ours. You know, they're supposed to be a strategic asset. Well guess what? There are a lot of people now, important people, who just don't think that's true."

AMOS HAREL, "APPOINTMENT OF IDF'S NEW 'IRAN COMMAND' CHIEF RAISES EYEBROWS," *HA'ARETZ*, 28 DECEMBER 2011

The decision by Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Israel Defense Forces [IDF] Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Benny Gantz to create a new army formation, to be known as the Depth Corps, followed recent recommendations issued by a team headed by Maj. Gen. Gadi Eizenkot. Eizenkot was tapped for the task last summer, after he completed his assignment as GOC [General Officer Commanding] Northern Command and began an educational leave of absence.

Maj. Gen. Shai Avital was named head of the new corps, which has already earned the somewhat overstated sobriquet "the Iran Command." Israel already has a command for Iran affairs—the Mossad, which since the last decade has been doing the heavy lifting in the campaign against the Iranian nuclear threat. If there is any unit within the IDF that deals with Iran specifically it is the Israel Air Force [IAF], the main branch that will be called upon in the event of an Israeli attack on the country's nuclear facilities.

The new corps could, in the future, assist in mobilizing special forces in the Iranian context. More important, it will have the job of planning and leading operations in areas far beyond the borders, operations that are connected to the covert war against terror organizations (and, indirectly, against Iran). One could imagine, for example, operations that have been ascribed to Israel, such

as alleged IAF air strikes and special forces operations in Sudan, or the assassination of a Syrian general at his home in northern Syria.

Gantz instructed Eizenkot to assess recent developments and strategic shifts in the region to determine whether the IDF needed to make changes to its planning in response. In reviewing past assessments, Eizenkot's team, which comprised high-ranking officers and one senior Mossad official, discovered that the problem had been identified back in 1982, when a decision was made to create a depth corps at the General Staff level.

Implementation was delayed until 1986 as a result of the first Lebanon war. Maj. Gen. (res.) Doron Rubín was appointed head of the unit, but fallout from the raid it orchestrated against Ahmed Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command in December 1988, codenamed Operation Blue and Brown, shut down the command. Rubín stepped down and the remaining special operations unit was absorbed into the Northern Command.

Special operations

Eizenkot determined a need for a combined corps that could carry out operations far from the country's borders. It had to be capable not only of linear battle, for example sending tanks from the Golan Heights in the direction of Damascus, but also simultaneous attacks, such as strikes against scattered rocket launch sites, each of which must be neutralized.

Eizenkot envisioned a relatively small unit of about 100 troops, some of whom were already serving in special operations, answering directly to the chief of staff but freeing both the chief and deputy chief of staff of the need to deal directly with the areas under the corps' jurisdiction, which are technically their area of responsibility but in practice receive inadequate attention.

The jurisdiction of the district commands—north, central, and south—generally extends only a few dozen kilometers beyond the border. In the second Lebanon war commanders were reluctant to carry out depth operations in the Bekaa Valley. Col. Nitzan Alon,

who last week was promoted to GOC Central Command, was eventually "borrowed" from his assignment in the West Bank to do the job.

The Depth Corps will have the authority to deploy special operations units when necessary, but under normal circumstances each unit's chain of command will remain unchanged.

In wartime the new corps might be assigned a sector, movement into which would be controlled by the relevant district command. An entity whose entire scope of interest lies well beyond the border is already close to being established.

"What is happening today is that actions in the strategic depth area are largely the result of some momentary flash," a senior officer who helped draft the recommendations told *Ha'Aretz*. "An officer goes to Military Intelligence with an idea, and they start working on an operation. A corps headed by a major general will consider the threats methodically and continuously, and we hope it will lead to solutions and results," he said.

While the idea of the corps itself has broad support within the army, the same cannot be said about the choice of the man who is to lead it.

Avital, 59, who will return to active duty for the assignment, has a long and impressive record in special operations as an officer in Sayeret Matkal, the general staff's elite special-operations force, and later as its commander. But he left the army ten years ago, of his own choosing, after just one rather undistinguished assignment as commander of a large unit. Since leaving the IDF he has tried his hand at farming, politics (he placed low on Kadima's candidate list in the 2006 election and did not make it into the Knesset), and public service (as a controversial director general of the Environmental Protection Ministry).

Avital has a wealth of experience, but it is difficult to see how his resume in the past decade connects him to the technological advances of that period, to the nature of the activity he will oversee or the current crop of commanders. Perhaps the answer lies in the defense minister and chief of staff, his patrons.

MAX BLUMENTHAL, "FROM OCCUPATION TO 'OCCUPY': THE ISRAELIFICATION OF AMERICAN DOMESTIC SECURITY," *ALTERNET*, 3 DECEMBER 2011

In October, the Alameda County Sheriff's Department turned parts of the campus of the University of California in Berkeley into an urban battlefield. The occasion was Urban Shield 2011, an annual SWAT team exposition organized to promote "mutual response," collaboration, and competition between heavily militarized police strike forces representing law enforcement departments across the United States and foreign nations.

At the time, the Alameda County Sheriff's Department was preparing for an imminent confrontation with the nascent "Occupy" movement that had set up camp in downtown Oakland, and would demonstrate the brunt of its repressive capacity against the demonstrators a month later when it attacked the encampment with tear-gas and rubber-bullet rounds, leaving an Iraq war veteran in critical condition and dozens injured. According to *Police Magazine*, a law enforcement trade publication, "Law enforcement agencies responding to . . . Occupy protesters in northern California credit Urban Shield for their effective teamwork."

Training alongside the American police departments at Urban Shield was the Yamam, an Israeli Border Police unit that claims to specialize in "counterterror" operations but is better known for its extrajudicial assassinations of Palestinian militant leaders and long record of repression and abuses in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Urban Shield also featured a unit from the military of Bahrain, which had just crushed a largely nonviolent democratic uprising by opening fire on protest camps and arresting wounded demonstrators when they attempted to enter hospitals. While the involvement of Bahraini soldiers in the drills was a novel phenomenon, the presence of quasi-military Israeli police—whose participation in Urban Shield was not reported anywhere in U.S. media—reflected a disturbing but all-too-common feature of the post-9/11 American security landscape.

The Israelification of America's security apparatus, recently unleashed in

full force against the Occupy Wall Street Movement, has taken place at every level of law enforcement, and in areas that have yet to be exposed. The phenomenon has been documented in bits and pieces, through occasional news reports that typically highlight Israel's national security prowess without examining the problematic nature of working with a country accused of grave human rights abuses. But it has never been the subject of a national discussion. And collaboration between American and Israeli cops is just the tip of the iceberg.

Having been schooled in Israeli tactics perfected during a 63-year experience of controlling, dispossessing, and occupying an indigenous population, local police forces have adapted them to monitor Muslim and immigrant neighborhoods in U.S. cities. Meanwhile, former Israeli military officers have been hired to spearhead security operations at American airports and suburban shopping malls, leading to a wave of disturbing incidents of racial profiling, intimidation, and FBI interrogations of innocent, unsuspecting people. The New York Police Department's disclosure that it deployed "counterterror" measures against Occupy protesters encamped in downtown Manhattan's Zuccotti Park is just the latest example of the so-called war on terror creeping into everyday life. Revelations like these have raised serious questions about the extent to which Israeli-inspired tactics are being used to suppress the Occupy movement.

The process of Israelification began in the immediate wake of 9/11, when national panic led federal and municipal law enforcement officials to beseech Israeli security honchos for advice and training. America's Israel lobby exploited the climate of hysteria, providing thousands of top cops with all-expenses paid trips to Israel and stateside training sessions with Israeli military and intelligence officials. By now, police chiefs of major American cities who have not been on junkets to Israel are the exception.

"Israel is the Harvard of antiterrorism," said former U.S. Capitol Police Chief Terrance W. Gainer, who now serves as the U.S. Senate Sergeant-at-Arms. Cathy Lanier, the chief of the

Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police, remarked, "No experience in my life has had more of an impact on doing my job than going to Israel." "One would say it is the front line," Barnett Jones, the police chief of Ann Arbor, Michigan, said of Israel. "We're in a global war."

Karen Greenberg, the director of Fordham School of Law's Center on National Security and a leading expert on terror and civil liberties, said the Israeli influence on American law enforcement is so extensive it has bled into street-level police conduct. "After 9/11 we reached out to the Israelis on many fronts and one of those fronts was torture," Greenberg told me. "The training in Iraq and Afghanistan on torture was Israeli training. There's been a huge downside to taking our cue from the Israelis and now we're going to spread that into the fabric of everyday American life? It's counterterrorism creep. And it's exactly what you could have predicted would have happened."

Changing the way we do business

The Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) is at the heart of American-Israeli law enforcement collaboration. JINSA is a Jerusalem and Washington, D.C.-based think tank known for stridently neoconservative policy positions on Israel's policy toward the Palestinians and its brinkmanship with Iran. The group's board of directors boasts a Who's Who of neocon ideologues. Two former JINSA advisors who have also consulted for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Douglas Feith and Richard Perle, went on to serve in the Department of Defense under President George W. Bush, playing influential roles in the push to invade and occupy Iraq.

Through its Law Enforcement Education Program (LEEP), JINSA claims to have arranged Israeli-led training sessions for over 9,000 American law enforcement officials at the federal, state, and municipal level. "The Israelis changed the way we do business regarding homeland security in New Jersey," Richard Fuentes, the N.J. State Police Superintendent, said after attending a 2004 JINSA-sponsored Israel trip and a subsequent JINSA conference alongside 435 other law enforcement officers.

During a 2004 LEEP trip, JINSA brought 14 senior American law enforcement officials to Israel to receive instruction from their counterparts. The Americans were trained in "how to secure large venues, such as shopping malls, sporting events and concerts," JINSA's website reported. Escorted by Brigadier General Simon Perry, an Israeli police attaché and former Mossad official, the group toured the Israeli separation wall, now a mandatory stop for American cops on junkets to Israel. "American officials learned about the mindset of a suicide bomber and how to spot trouble signs," according to JINSA. And they were schooled in Israeli killing methods. "Although the police are typically told to aim for the chest when shooting because it is the largest target, the Israelis are teaching [American] officers to aim for a suspect's head so as not to detonate any explosives that might be strapped to his torso," the *New York Times* reported.

Cathy Lanier, now the chief of Washington, D.C.'s Metropolitan Police Department, was among the law enforcement officials junketed to Israel by JINSA. "I was with the bomb units and the SWAT team and all of those high profile specialized [Israeli] units and I learned a tremendous amount," Lanier reflected. "I took 82 pages of notes while I was there which I later brought back and used to formulate a lot of what I later used to create and formulate the Homeland Security terrorism bureau in the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department."

Some of the police chiefs who have taken part in JINSA's LEEP program have done so under the auspices of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), a private nongovernmental group with close ties to the Department of Homeland Security. Chuck Wexler, the executive director of PERF, was so enthusiastic about the program that by 2005 he had begun organizing trips to Israel sponsored by PERF, bringing numerous high-level American police officials to receive instruction from their Israeli counterparts.

PERF gained notoriety when Wexler confirmed that his group coordinated police raids in 16 cities across America against Occupy protest encampments.

As many as 40 cities have sought PERF advice on suppressing the Occupy movement and other mass protest activities. Wexler did not respond to my requests for an interview.

Lessons from Israel to Auschwitz

Besides JINSA, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has positioned itself as an important liaison between American police forces and the Israeli security-intelligence apparatus. Though the ADL promotes itself as a Jewish civil rights group, it has provoked controversy by publishing a blacklist of organizations supporting Palestinian rights, and for condemning a proposal to construct an Islamic community center in downtown New York, several blocks from Ground Zero, on the basis that some opponents of the project were entitled to “positions that others would characterize as irrational or bigoted.”

Through the ADL’s advanced training school course on extremist and terrorist threats, over 700 law enforcement personnel from 220 federal and local agencies including the FBI and CIA have been trained by Israeli police and intelligence commanders. This year, the ADL brought 15 high-level American police officials to Israel for instruction from the country’s security apparatus. According to the ADL, over 115 federal, state, and local law enforcement executives have undergone ADL-organized training sessions in Israel since the program began in 2003. “I can honestly say that the training offered by ADL is by far the most useful and current training course I have ever attended,” Deputy Commissioner Thomas Wright of the Philadelphia Police Department commented after completing an ADL program this year. The ADL’s relationship with the Washington, D.C. Police Department is so cozy its members are invited to accompany D.C. cops on “ride along” patrols.

The ADL claims to have trained over 45,000 American law enforcement officials through its Law Enforcement and Society program, which “draws on the history of the Holocaust to provide law enforcement professionals with an increased understanding of . . . their role as protectors of the Constitution,” the group’s website stated. All new FBI

agents and intelligence analysts are required to attend the ADL program, which is incorporated into three FBI training programs. According to official FBI recruitment material, “all new special agents must visit the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to see firsthand what can happen when law enforcement fails to protect individuals.”

Fighting “crimterror”

Among the most prominent Israeli government figures to have influenced the practices of American law enforcement officials is Avi Dichter, a former head of Israel’s Shin Bet internal security service and current member of Knesset who recently introduced legislation widely criticized as antidemocratic. During the second intifada, Dichter ordered several bombings on densely populated Palestinian civilian areas, including one on the al-Daraj neighborhood of Gaza that resulted in the death of 15 innocent people, including 8 children, and 150 injuries. “After each success, the only thought is, ‘Okay, who’s next?’” Dichter said of the “targeted” assassinations he has ordered.

Despite his dubious human rights record and apparently dim view of democratic values, or perhaps because of them, Dichter has been a key figure in fostering cooperation between Israeli security forces and American law enforcement. In 2006, while Dichter was serving at the time as Israel’s minister of public security, he spoke in Boston, Massachusetts, before the annual convention of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Seated beside FBI Director Robert Mueller and then-Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez, Dichter told the 10,000 police officers in the crowd that there was an “intimate connection between fighting criminals and fighting terrorists.” Dichter declared that American cops were actually “fighting crimterrorists.” The *Jerusalem Post* reported that Dichter was “greeted by a hail of applause, as he was hugged by Mueller, who described Dichter as his mentor in anti-terror tactics.”

A year after Dichter’s speech, he and then-Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff signed a joint memorandum pledging security collaboration between America

and Israel on issues ranging from airport security to emergency planning. In 2010, Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano authorized a new joint memorandum with Israeli Transport and Road Safety Minister Israel Katz shoring up cooperation between the U.S. Transportation Security Agency—the agency in charge of day-to-day airport security—and Israel's Security Department. The recent joint memorandum also consolidated the presence of U.S. Homeland Security law enforcement personnel on Israeli soil. "The bond between the United States and Israel has never been stronger," Napolitano remarked at a recent summit of AIPAC, the leading outfit of America's Israel lobby, in Scottsdale, Arizona.

The Demographic Unit

For the New York Police Department, collaboration with Israel's security and intelligence apparatus became a top priority after 9/11. Just months after the attacks on New York City, the NYPD assigned a permanent, taxpayer-funded liaison officer to Tel Aviv. Under the leadership of Police Commissioner Ray Kelly, ties between the NYPD and Israel have deepened by the day. Kelly embarked on his first trip to Israel in early 2009 to demonstrate his support for Israel's ongoing assault on the Gaza Strip, a one-sided attack that left over 1,400 Gaza residents dead in three weeks and led a United Nations fact-finding mission to conclude that Israeli military and government officials had committed war crimes.

Kelly returned to Israel the following year to speak at the Herzliya Conference, an annual gathering of neoconservative security and government officials who obsess over supposed "demographic threats." After Kelly appeared on stage, the Herzliya crowd was addressed by the pro-Israel academic Martin Kramer, who claimed that Israel's blockade of Gaza was helping to reduce the numbers of "superfluous young men of fighting age." Kramer added, "If a state can't control these young men, then someone else will."

Back in New York, the NYPD set up a secret "Demographics Unit" designed to spy on and monitor Muslim communities around the city. The unit was

developed with input and intensive involvement by the CIA, which still refuses to name the former Middle East station chief it has posted in the senior ranks of the NYPD's intelligence division. Since 2002, the NYPD has dispatched undercover agents known as "rakers" and "mosque crawlers" into Pakistani-American bookstores and restaurants to gauge community anger over U.S. drone strikes inside Pakistan, and into Palestinian hookah bars and mosques to search out signs of terror recruitment and clandestine funding. "If a raker noticed a customer looking at radical literature, he might chat up the store owner and see what he could learn," the Associated Press reported. "The bookstore, or even the customer, might get further scrutiny."

The Israeli imprimatur on the NYPD's Demographics Unit is unmistakable. As a former police official told the Associated Press, the Demographics Unit has attempted to "map the city's human terrain" through a program "modeled in part on how Israeli authorities operate in the West Bank."

Shop 'til you're stopped

At Israel's Ben Gurion International Airport, security personnel target non-Jewish and nonwhite passengers, especially Arabs, as a matter of policy. The most routinely harassed passengers are Palestinian citizens of Israel, who must brace themselves for five-hour interrogation sessions and strip searches before flying. Those singled out for extra screening by Shin Bet officers are sent to what many Palestinians from Israel call the "Arab room," where they are subjected to humiliating questioning sessions (former White House Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala encountered such mistreatment during a visit to Israel last year). Some Palestinians are forbidden from speaking to anyone until takeoff, and may be menaced by Israeli flight attendants during the flight. In one documented case, a six-month-old was awoken for a strip search by Israeli Shin Bet personnel. Instances of discrimination against Arabs at Ben Gurion International are too numerous to detail—several incidents occur each day—but a few of the more egregious instances were outlined in a

2007 petition the Association for Civil Rights in Israel filed with the country's Supreme Court.

Though the Israeli system of airline security contains dubious benefits and clearly deleterious implications for civil liberties, it is quietly and rapidly migrating into major American airports. Security personnel at Boston's Logan International Airport have undergone extensive training from Israeli intelligence personnel, learning to apply profiling and behavioral assessment techniques against American citizens that were initially tested on Palestinians. The new procedures began in August, when so-called Behavior Detection Officers were placed in security queues at Logan's heavily trafficked Terminal A. Though the procedures have added to traveler stress while netting exactly zero terrorists, they are likely to spread to other cities. "I would like to see a lot more profiling" in American airports, said Yossi Sheffi, an Israeli-born risk analyst at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for Transportation and Logistics.

Israeli techniques now dictate security procedures at the Mall of America, a gargantuan shopping mall in Bloomington, Minnesota, that has become a major tourist attraction. The new methods took hold in 2005 when the mall hired a former Israeli army sergeant named Mike Rozin to lead a special new security unit. Rozin, who once worked with a canine unit at Ben Gurion Airport in Israel, instructed his employees at the Mall of America to visually profile every shopper, examining their expressions for suspicious signs. His security team accosts and interrogates an average of 1,200 shoppers a year, according to the Center for Investigative Reporting.

One of the thousands who fell into Rozin's dragnet was Najam Qureshi, a Pakistani-American mall vendor whose father accidentally left his cell phone on a table in the mall food court. A day after the incident, FBI agents appeared at Qureshi's doorstep to ask if he knew anyone seeking to harm the United States. An army veteran interrogated for two hours by Rozin's men for taking video inside the mall sobbed openly about his experience to reporters. Meanwhile, another man, Emile Khalil, was

visited by FBI agents after mall security stopped him for taking photographs of the dazzling consumer haven.

"I think that the threat of terrorism in the United States is going to become an unfortunate part of American life," Rozin remarked to *American Jewish World*. And as long as the threat persists in the public's mind, Israeli securitocrats like Rozin will never have to worry about the next paycheck.

"Occupy" meets the Occupation

When a riot squad from the New York Police Department destroyed and evicted the Occupy Wall Street protest encampment at Zuccotti Park in downtown Manhattan, department leadership drew on the antiterror tactics they had refined since the 9/11 attacks. According to the *New York Times*, the NYPD deployed "counterterrorism measures" to mobilize large numbers of cops for the lightning raid on Zuccotti. The use of antiterror techniques to suppress a civilian protest complemented harsh police measures demonstrated across the country against the nationwide Occupy movement, from firing tear-gas canisters and rubber bullets into unarmed crowds to blasting demonstrators with the LRAD sound cannon.

Given the amount of training the NYPD and so many other police forces have received from Israel's military-intelligence apparatus, and the profuse levels of gratitude American police chiefs have expressed to their Israeli mentors, it is worth asking how much Israeli instruction has influenced the way the police have attempted to suppress the Occupy movement, and how much it will inform police repression of future upsurges of street protest. But already, the Israelification of American law enforcement appears to have intensified police hostility toward the civilian population, blurring the lines between protesters, common criminals, and terrorists. As Dichter said, they are all just "criminterrorists."

"After 9/11 we had to react very quickly," Greenberg remarked, "but now we're in 2011 and we're not talking about people who want to fly planes into buildings. We're talking about young American citizens who feel that their birthright has been sold. If we're

using Israeli style tactics on them and this stuff bleeds into the way we do business at large, we're in big trouble."

MAX BLUMENTHAL, "THE BIBI CONNECTION," *AL AKHBAR ENGLISH*, 12 JANUARY 2012

The U.S. presidential election campaign that kicked off January 3 with the Iowa caucuses was the subject of a curious article attacking President Barack Obama in the mass circulation Israeli daily newspaper, *Israel Hayom*.

"U.S. President Barack Obama is 'naïve' and needs to face up to the threat presented by the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood across the Middle East, Israel's National Security Council concluded during a strategic discussion several days ago," *Israel Hayom* reported.

The Israeli National Security Council consists of Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu's closest advisers. And *Israel Hayom* is not just another right-leaning Israeli tabloid. Referred to by Israelis as the "Bibiton," or Bibi's mouthpiece, the paper is an instrument that gives him extraordinary political leverage. The obviously planted article in *Israel Hayom* rang like a bell sounding the start of Netanyahu's own campaign in helping the Republican Party oust Obama from the White House.

Israel Hayom's genesis demonstrates the depth of Netanyahu's connections in Republican circles. It was created by one of Netanyahu's top financial supporters, a Las Vegas-based casino tycoon named Sheldon Adelson, who is also a major donor to the conservative wing of the Republican Party. Adelson's closest relationship is with former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, a longtime ally of Netanyahu who has been running a rancorous campaign for the Republican presidential nomination.

Netanyahu's less than subtle intervention has become an open issue in Israeli politics. Opposition leader Tzipi Livni of the Kadima Party has criticized Netanyahu for damaging the U.S.-Israeli relationship.

But Livni's warning has been ignored. Rather than hesitating, the prime minister and his inner circle are moving full steam ahead in their political shadow campaign whose ultimate goal

is to remove Obama. Bibi's war against Obama is unprecedented. While Israeli prime ministers have tried to help incumbent presidents, none have ever waged a full-scale campaign to overthrow them.

Netanyahu has engaged enthusiastic allies in the Republican Congress, led by House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, and within the right-wing media. His neoconservative allies in Washington are launching a "Super PAC" to generate emotional attack ads against Obama and any candidate that might be an obstacle to his policies. And his campaign has even broadened into an attempt to discredit the *New York Times*, whose editorial page and foreign policy columnists, Thomas Friedman and Roger Cohen, have been critical of him.

As political strategy, by tainting Obama as less than full-throated in support of Israel, Netanyahu bolsters the Republican themes that the president "apologizes" for U.S. power, is weak on national security, and is an agent of "decline." By depicting Obama as "weak" on Israel, Netanyahu's campaign excites right-wing Jews and evangelical Christians, who overwhelmingly accept the biblical claims of the Jewish state's historical right to Greater Israel, Judea, and Samaria. Bibi's deepest attack line against Obama merges theology with ideology.

Already, Netanyahu has succeeded in polarizing the political debate, as his agenda is singularly aligned with the Republican Party. Yet Bibi's short-term objectives are rapidly turning the U.S.-Israel relationship, at least under his aegis, into a partisan issue, another litmus test of conservative ideology rather than national interest.

The personal connection

Netanyahu's American orientation is partly rooted in his personal history. Raised in suburban Philadelphia, his father, Benzion Netanyahu, was the former press secretary for the godfather of right-wing revisionist Zionism, Zeev Jabotinsky. Benzion Netanyahu spent his most consequential years in New York raising money for Jabotinsky and the rightist Irgun militia in Palestine. When he returned to Israel to launch a political career, the elder Netanyahu

was rejected by Menachem Begin, the Likud Party leader, who, as right wing as he was, considered him dangerously extreme (Arabs are “an enemy by essence,” the elder Netanyahu said recently). But the son triumphed where his father failed, rising at first on his fluency in American political culture, a frequent guest on ABC News’ *Nightline* and other U.S. broadcast news programs, eventually winning the chairmanship of the Likud Party in 1992.

Suddenly in the wilderness [after his defeat by Labor’s Ehud Barak in 2000], Netanyahu plotted his path back by cultivating the right-wing in the United States—the pundits, the Republican politicians, the big donors, Fox News. In 2007, he held a meeting with a small group of conservative activists emerging as key players in the conservative blogosphere. Among those present was Andrew Breitbart, who became a notorious hatchet man staging wild stunts and whose myriad websites routinely carry conspiratorial, racially charged attacks on Obama. Other figures at the meeting included conservative bloggers Scott Johnson, Jim Hoft, and Jeff Emmanuel. “At our meeting we talked mostly about the dangers of the Iranian regime acquiring a nuclear bomb,” Johnson recalled, revealing his newly acquired foreign policy expertise. “It was a subject to which Netanyahu had obviously devoted great thought.”

Two years later, Netanyahu returned to the prime minister’s office at the head of an even more decidedly right-wing coalition than before government and was determined not to repeat his previous mistakes of “capitulating” to the peace process at the behest of an American president. Now he turned to the movement he had courted to help him undermine and humiliate Obama.

Humiliating Obama

In March 2010, when Obama dispatched Vice President Joseph Biden to Israel in a futile attempt to restart negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Netanyahu appeared in Jerusalem at a massive rally of 1,000 evangelicals organized by Texas megachurch Pastor John Hagee, a leading Christian Zionist and sometime Holocaust revisionist whose End Times

theology committed him to the vision of Greater Israel.

Before the rapture-ready audience, Netanyahu proclaimed that Jerusalem would remain “the undivided, eternal capital of the Jewish people.”

At once, he authorized the construction of 1,600 new settlement units in occupied East Jerusalem over the stringent objections from the Obama administration. Though the move angered the White House, Ron Dermer, a top Netanyahu aide with close ties to leading Republicans in Washington, reassured the prime minister that Republicans would retake Congress. Netanyahu simply rejected Obama’s plea to freeze settlements and then rejected overtures to restart the peace process. In the 2010 midterm elections, Republicans gained control of the House of Representatives.

While on a trip to New York days after the Republican victory, Netanyahu authorized another 1,000 more settlement units in East Jerusalem, a direct rebuke of Obama. That same day, Netanyahu held a meeting with the incoming House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, the only Jewish Republican in Congress, and a leader of the right-wing in the House Republican Conference. Cantor’s office produced a summary of the meeting for the media that contained the remarkably crude statement: Cantor promised Netanyahu that “the new Republican majority will serve as a check on the [Obama] administration and what has been, up until this point, one party rule in Washington.”

In April 2011, Republican Speaker of the House John Boehner personally invited Netanyahu to speak before a joint session of Congress. He was interrupted 36 times by standing ovations—more than Obama during his State of the Union address—despite making such mind-boggling false claims as that the “vast majority” of Israeli settlers live in “neighborhoods in Jerusalem and greater Tel Aviv.”

With a rancorous, multibillion dollar U.S. presidential campaign certainly looming on the horizon, Netanyahu continued his pattern of making friends in the radical right’s media machine. Among them was Glenn Beck, a Mormon convert and former Fox News host,

who had compared a major liberal Jewish religious denomination to radical Islamists and claimed that Obama has “a deep-seated hatred for white people.” Beck was admonished by the Anti-Defamation League and other mainstream Jewish groups for his anti-Semitic rants against George Soros, a major funder of liberal and Democratic Party–related organizations. In July 2011, Beck traveled to Israel to deliver a diatribe against liberal Israelis demonstrating against Netanyahu’s economic policies, labeling them patsies in a secret Islamist-Communist plot.

When the right-wing Zionist Organization of America honored Beck this November with a prize named after Sheldon Adelson and his wife, Miriam, Netanyahu displayed his gratitude in a videotaped tribute. “Glenn, you can be sure that if Sheldon and Miri Adelson put their name to something, it must stand for a lot. You stand for a lot. . . . And I want to tell you how deeply we appreciate this stand of courage and integrity.”

In December [2012], Thomas Friedman, the Pulitzer Prize–winning *New York Times*’ former Jerusalem bureau chief and one of the few American columnists whose opinions seriously register in the Israeli media, published an uncharacteristically pointed critique of Netanyahu’s leadership. In Friedman’s column were two lines that incited the wrath and fury of the prime minister’s office. “I sure hope that Israel’s prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, understands that the standing ovation he got in Congress this year was not for his politics. That ovation was bought and paid for by the Israel lobby.”

Neoconservative opinion makers exploded with orchestrated rage accusing Friedman of being a self-hating Jewish anti-Semite. In response, the *New York Times* gave Netanyahu an opportunity to respond on its opinion page.

But rather than accept the *Times*’ offer, Netanyahu dispatched Ron Dermer, his key emissary to the American political scene, especially to the conservative movement, now serving as a senior advisor on his staff, to issue what amounted to a declaration of war against the American newspaper of record. Dermer’s letter was extraordinary

in its vitriolic, hostile, and contemptuous tone. Nothing like it had ever existed before—a vicious official attack from the prime minister of Israel on the credibility of the *New York Times*. Perhaps only a little less surprising was that this major event received nearly no coverage in the American press.

In his scathing letter, Dermer accused the *Times* of “cavalierly defam[ing] our country,” claiming that 19 out of 20 op-eds published in the *Times* were “negative” (Dermer did not challenge their factual basis). He concluded, “it would seem as if the surest way to get an op-ed published in the *New York Times* these days, no matter how obscure the writer or the viewpoint, is to attack Israel.”

Netanyahu’s attack on the *Times* represented a significant new stage in his shadow war. He was drawing sharp new lines. By rebuking the paper, Netanyahu attempted to define its liberal Zionist, pro-peace process editorial line as hostile to Israeli security needs. And by default, he positioned Rupert Murdoch’s *Wall Street Journal*, with its relentlessly anti-Obama, pro-Bibi op-ed page, as the only respectable forum for true friends of Israel.

Bibi’s man in Washington

More than any other candidate in the Republican presidential contest, Newt Gingrich has hewed to Netanyahu’s line on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In an interview with the cable TV Jewish Channel, Gingrich declared, “We’ve had an invented Palestinian people who are in fact Arabs and are historically part of the Arab community and they had a chance to go many places.” He added, “I see myself as, in many ways, to be pretty close to Bibi Netanyahu in thinking about the dangers of the world.”

In May 2010, when Gingrich’s presidential campaign was no more than the subject of guarded speculation, Israel Hayom, Bibi’s house organ, provided Gingrich with a Hebrew-language forum to assail Obama’s policies.

Israel Hayom’s owner, Las Vegas Sands casino corporation chairman Sheldon Adelson, is America’s eighth wealthiest man. At the same time he was bankrolling Netanyahu’s career,

Adelson also became Gingrich's leading financial angel. The casino kingpin was introduced to Gingrich in 1996 through George Harris, a right-wing anti-tax activist and Clark County, Nevada Republican chairman who helped Adelson block a unionization bid at one of his casinos. When Gingrich embarked on the presidential trail, George Harris became his campaign finance co-chair, representing Adelson by proxy.

Despite Gingrich's dismal finish in the Iowa caucuses, the opening contest in the Republican contest, Adelson has staunchly remained on his side, donating US \$5 million to a Super PAC created to support Gingrich's campaign in the key primary state of South Carolina, his Armageddon.

Bibi's Super PAC

When Gingrich quits the race, Netanyahu will not be without a candidate. He can count on former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney to carry the neoconservative banner all the way to election day. Of Romney's 22 campaign foreign policy advisers, 15 worked in the administration of George W Bush, and six were original members of the Project for the New American Century, the neoconservative group that called for regime change in Iraq.

Romney's own Super PAC, Restore Our Future, credited with destroying Gingrich's hopes in Iowa through a relentless barrage of negative ads, is financed in part by Mel Sembler, a Florida-based multimillionaire shopping mall developer and veteran Republican fundraiser, appointed the U.S. ambassador to Italy by President George W. Bush. Sembler was mired in scandal when the federal government revoked the license of a chain of adolescent treatment centers he founded after former teenage patients complained they were sexually abused, psychologically tortured, and humiliated during sadistic behavior modification programs. Less well known is the financial largesse Sembler has bestowed on neoconservative outfits supporting Netanyahu's policies. He is also a close friend of Adelson.

In November 2011, President Obama and French President Nicolas Sarkozy

commiserated about Netanyahu, unaware that their voices were picked up by a live microphone. "You're fed up with him, but I have to deal with him even more often than you," Obama complained to Sarkozy. Romney seized on the episode as proof of Obama's disqualifying leadership and proof of his own fitness for office. "We have here yet another reason why we need new leadership in the White House," Romney declared. (Joining the chorus of pro-Bibi attacks on Obama were the Netanyahu-approved bloggers Breitbart, Hoft, and Johnson).

In ramping up the effort to turn Israel into an anti-Obama wedge issue, a group of neoconservative Netanyahu allies have started a independent political committee called the Emergency Committee for Israel (ECI). The group's name was inspired by the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe, an organization that Netanyahu's father, Benzion, helped lead during World War II in part to raise money for the right-wing Irgun militia in Palestine. The group's board comprises a Who's Who of Washington neoconservatives. It is directed by Noah Pollak, a former assistant editor of *Azure*, the in-house journal of the Adelson-funded Shalem Center, several of whose fellows are now in Netanyahu's inner circle of advisers. Pollak was credited with helping the Israeli army launch a YouTube channel to rebut accusations that it committed war crimes in the Gaza Strip and elsewhere.

This month, the ECI established a Super PAC in order to use unlimited corporate contributions for political attack ads. The group's first major presidential campaign ad buy targeted Representative Ron Paul (R-Texas), a fervently antiwar libertarian candidate who has called for an end to the special relationship between Israel and the United States. The ad features Gary Bauer, an ECI board member, Christian right leader and failed presidential candidate. (Bauer endorsed former Senator Rick Santorum, a right-wing Catholic, who has declared, "All the people that live in the West Bank are Israelis. They are not Palestinians. There is no Palestinian. This is Israeli land.")

Jewish concerns

While Obama and the Democratic Party elite have kept silent in the face of Netanyahu's American shadow war, its polarizing effects have prompted resistance from an unexpected place: the Jewish-American establishment.

In October [2011], two of the U.S.'s oldest and most prominent Jewish organizations, the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee, released a "National Pledge for Unity" urging politicians, religious leaders, and other Jewish groups aimed at preserving bipartisan support for Israel. "We want the discourse on U.S. support for Israel to avoid the sometimes polarizing debates and political attacks that have emerged in recent weeks, as candidates have challenged their opponents' pro-Israel bone fides or questioned the current administration's foreign policy approach vis-à-vis Israel," declared Anti-Defamation League national director Abraham Foxman. "The last thing America and Israel need right now is the distractions of having Israel bandied about as a tool for waging political attacks."

The Emergency Committee for Israel and the Republican Jewish Coalition, an Adelson-funded, pro-Netanyahu group that claims to raise "tens of millions" of dollars for Republican candidates each

election cycle, not only rejected the unity pledge, but accused its authors of attempting to suppress pro-Israel activism. In a defiant statement by its chairman, neoconservative activist William Kristol, the ECI proclaimed, "This attempt to silence those of us who have 'questioned the current administration's foreign policy approach vis-à-vis Israel' will re-energize us." Thus the show went on. The effort to lower the temperature only became another occasion for the pro-Netanyahu operation to raise the heat. As their anti-Obama campaign intensifies, Israel is being merged seamlessly with traditional right-wing wedge issues such as abortion, gay marriage, and the menace of immigration.

In the past, America's Israel lobby sold the U.S.-Israel alliance as a marriage of two vibrant democracies united by shared liberal values. In the current environment of heightened polarization, the special relationship is increasingly marketed to Americans as a united front of besieged bastions of Western civilization against an incipient Islamic onslaught. Rapture-ready evangelicals, right-wing ultranationalists, and Republican Jews are far more likely to be attracted to this sort of alliance than cosmopolitan liberals. And this may be exactly the way Netanyahu wants it.