

NEWS REVIEW



15 JULY 2009

23 TAMMUZ 5769

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18th Maccabiah - 'Time to move on'

Dan Goldberg | Ha'aretz' | 14 July

34 survivors of the '97 Maccabiah disaster - when a bridge over the Yarkon River collapsed, killing four and injuring dozens of Australian athletes - will be attending the 18th Games. Among them are children of the victims, and a record-breaking golfer. [READ MORE](#)

Deaf, Dumb and Blind: Muslim reactions to the Uighur tragedy

Eamonn McDonagh | Z World Blog | 12 July

Writing in *El País* today, Moisés Naím condemns the silence of the Muslim world in the face of Chinese repression of the Uighurs and contrasts it with the indignation produced the publication of a few cartoons in Denmark.

In various countries Muslim clergy have found the time and energy to speak out against Pokémon cartoons, having sex while fully unclothed, vaccination against polio and Salman Rushdie. Have they had anything to say about the Uighurs? No. What about the Arab League, the governments of Muslim countries and European and Asian Muslim organizations? Nothing from them either.

Neither have the Uighurs, who have deep ethnic links with Turkey and who speak a Turkic language, been able to count on the same solidarity from Turkish prime minister Recep Tayep Erdoğan that he expressed towards Palestinians during the most recent Gaza crisis. While promoting the international recognition of Hamas, Erdoğan denied an entry visa to Rebiya Kadeer, the Uighurs leader in exile. However, he recently changed his mind and said that Kadeer would be allowed to visit and Turkey has increasing the force of its previously modest expressions of concern about the situation in Xinjiang. About time too. [READ MORE](#)

Netanyahu's speech for peace: Is anyone listening?

Lanny Davis | The Washington Times | 13 July

I really don't get it. On June 14, less than a month after his meeting with President Obama, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave one of the most comprehensive, thoughtful and highly personal speeches supporting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process of any Israeli prime minister in recent years, perhaps ever.

One would have thought his speech would have been big news in the U.S., Europe and elsewhere. Mr. Netanyahu for the first time clearly stated he would support a two-state solution, albeit with understandable requirements to guarantee Israel's security, despite leaving a different impression during last month's U.S. visit.

Yet, the reaction of governments and media in the U.S. and Europe was the functional equivalent of a tree falling in the forest with no one listening. Where it was covered, the writing emphasized the cynical and focused on the half-empty, rather than the half-full, glass.

... Palestinians have been taught that Israel was founded largely by alien foreigners, foisted on the

native Palestinians by Europeans feeling guilty over the Holocaust. That misstatement has been the central rationale for Arab and Palestinian unwillingness to publicly recognize Israel as a Jewish state. [READ MORE](#)

Lanny J. Davis, a Washington lawyer and former special counsel to President Clinton, served as a member of President George W. Bush's Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board. He is the author of "Scandal: How 'Gotcha' Politics Is Destroying America."

Narrative Dissonance

Martin Peretz | The New Republic | 1 July

What the Cairo speech got wrong.

"I mean, in a way, Obama's standing above the country, above--above the world, he's sort of God." These drug-addicted words come from Evan Thomas, a longtime editor at *Newsweek*. He uttered them on Chris Matthews's MSNBC show. Such words would wreak havoc on any person's ego, even Barack Obama's. It also would enrage his enemies.



Robert Capa/Cornell Capa/Magnum Photos.

The end of the British Mandate in Palestine: "What is most bizarre in Obama's historical narrative is the omission of the entire Zionist enterprise."

After all, the president has told us that he is a mere student of history, and *that* he is.

But history these days is no longer a discipline inclined to defend the truthfulness of its claims or the reasonableness of its arguments or the plausibility of its conclusions. More and more, history has become a competition between and among narratives, self-consciously disdainful of what we used to think of as fact. In this intellectual competition, the losers almost always win or, at least, they win the "moral argument." Not in real history, mind you, but in many a Western professor's classroom. And, sometimes, in an American president's mind.

The truth is that Barack Obama has a penchant for these narratives and yet an inclination to rise above them. Two grand but antithetical stories about the same problem, awaiting him and his Olympian skill for the discovery of "common ground": That is Obama's favourite script. He regards himself as a kind of unprecedented referee between histories and philosophies. He likes to think that he can see what others cannot see and that, therefore, they must come to him if they wish to live in peace and with meaning. A man of not especially discriminate empathy, he sees himself in the Whitmanesque sense of containing multitudes.

I suppose that President Obama thinks that in Cairo he bridged many narratives. He certainly appeared to try: on the one hand, on the other, us and them, more or less equal in our stories. But real history is the telling and interpretation of actual happenings. It is specific, concrete, particular; it eats analogies and commonalities for breakfast; and it requires what used to be called knowledge--correct facts and warranted interpretations of them. From the standpoint of knowledge, not every assertion has equal weight, even if it is deeply felt.

There was one startling passage in Obama's speech that very few commentators have noticed, perhaps because they also don't know their history. "Islam has always been a part of America's story. The first nation to recognize my country was Morocco. In signing the Treaty of Tripoli in 1796, our second president, John Adams, wrote, 'The United States has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquillity of Muslims.'" Now, as Michael Oren recounts in his magisterial history of America's enmeshment in the region, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy*, the fact is that this treaty, which imposed a ransom of money and ships on the Americans, was a fraud. Moreover, within four years, Tripoli captured another U.S. ship and went on to take into captivity other American vessels and their crews. Suffice it to say that wars, declared by the Pasha of Tripoli and undeclared, continued with more death and more ransom, until 1815. Let it be hoped that the Treaty of Tripoli in which President Obama delights so much will not be a precedent for the

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agreement he wants to forge between Israel and the Palestinians or between the United States and Iran. It is also a scandal that no one on his intimate staff told him the facts--if, indeed, they knew them--about the settlements with the Barbary Pirates. They are a precedent for nothing, except cheap getting-to-yes ecumenicism. [READ MORE](#)

The United Nations Kangaroo "Investigation" of Israeli "War Crimes"

Alan Dershowitz | The Huffington Post | 2 July

Just as Spain's National Court decided to shelve a phoney war crime investigation of a 2002 Israeli air strike in Gaza, a group of lawyers and military experts assigned by the United Nations Human Rights Council continued its phoney investigation of "the grave violations of human rights in the occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly due to the recent Israeli military attacks against the occupied Gaza Strip."

The UN Human Rights Council is a scandal. It's a successor to the defunct UN Human Rights Commission. Both organizations have a long history of singling out Israel for condemnation and of ignoring real human rights abusers by the world's worst offenders, several of which dominate the Human Rights Council and its predecessor.

The very mandate that authorized the Gaza investigation reveals its bias against Israel. The council has already concluded, without any pretence to an investigation, that Israel is guilty of "grave violations of human rights... due to its... military attacks."

The very idea of the UN Council conducting an "independent" or objective investigation of Israel is preposterous. It would be as if an all white Mississippi court were investigating a black man's self-defense in response to years of lynchings by whites and limiting its investigation to the event following the lynchings. There is simply no way of an investigation conducted under the auspices of the UN Human Rights Council and be fair. Its history of bias and bigotry should not be legitimated by men and women of decency who care about real human rights. That is why it was so surprising and disturbing to see a good man like Richard Goldstone agree to head the investigation team appointed by the UN Human Rights Council. [READ MORE](#)