

NEWS REVIEW



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If Tehran gets the Bomb ...

How Iranian nukes would reshape the Middle East.

Lee Smith | Slate | 9 October

In the past, the ambition to create "a new Middle East" was underwritten by American power. The George W. Bush administration decided that the Arab political culture that had engendered Osama Bin Laden was nonetheless ripe for democracy, and so it is not surprising that amid the carnage of Israel's 2006 war with Hezbollah, then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice discerned the "birth pangs of the new Middle East." In fact, that war was just the old Middle East explaining itself, as the region usually does, through patterns of violence.

Over the years, other players have jumped sides—for instance, Egypt became pro-United States after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Iran turned against Washington after the 1979 revolution, the PLO moved more or less into the American camp in the 1990s, and Iraq shifted into the U.S. column after Operation Iraqi Freedom. Since Israel became a significant part of Washington's Middle East strategy in 1973, it should hardly come as a surprise that the U.S.-friendly Arab regimes (albeit not all the Arab masses) were pulling for the Israelis in their wars with those who want to destroy the American order.

If Iran gets the bomb, other regional powers will pursue nuclear programs—if they are not already doing so. Remember, the main reason these states support non-state terror groups is to deter one another and thus avoid all-out war. However, the prospect of states transferring nukes to so called non-state actors is a nightmare for the United States, which does not fare well against such tactics. We will not be deterring Iran but inviting the rest of the region to shoot at us.

The one ally that shares our interests and is capable of defending them against Iran and its assets is Israel. If we leave Iran to Israel, we are enhancing Jerusalem's prestige at the expense of our own.

At least all the talk of deterrence and containment should remind us why we fought the Cold War: to protect our way of life, a life sustained by oil. Without cheap oil, the life we came to associate with peace would not have been the same. The Persian Gulf was the Cold War's strategic grand prize, and that we have held onto it for 65 years is a credit to the design of Washington's policy of preventing any adversary from breaking out with just the sort of game-changing threat that the Iranian nuclear program represents. In other words, the American order of the Middle East *is* containment; its unravelling will not allow for a different form of containment but spells the end of our hegemony in the region. [READ MORE](#)

Shlomo Sand: Much ado about...what?

Haviv Retig Gur Blog | 12 October

I've never been able to get too worked up over the latest fashion of left-wing Jewish anti-Zionism.

Always had a much deeper respect for the agonized theological contemplation that produced haredi anti-Zionism, which at least grows from the Jewish bookshelf rather than from a simpleton's misreading of it.

At the end of the day, the many movements and ideals, sometimes contradictory, that together made up the Zionist movement in the last century constituted a profound shift in Jewish identity and communal organization. Obviously such a vast project would inspire opposition. In 1948, just after the murder of six million in Europe, only 600,000 Jews lived in Israel. Even factoring for the refugees stuck in British transit camps, Zionism had failed to convince the masses.

Yet so little remains of Yiddish civilization, or Iraqi Jewish civilization, after the massacres and expulsions of the 20th century that to be anti-Zionist is to nitpick about an ideological leaf in a vast forest of brutal historical experience.

Zionism's "triumph" was caused by a horrific human tragedy, and stands as a devastating moral rebuke to 20th-century Europe and Islam. The Jews deserve their state whether or not they are being massacred. But it sure makes it tougher to argue against Israel's legitimacy when this country harbours the last major civilization of Jews left alive in the Eastern Hemisphere.

(The exception to this Zionist experience, of course, is the English-speaking world. But that's a whole 'nother story beyond the purposes of this post.)

So it is with that caveat that I want, *bechol zot*, to note a well-written intellectual curiosity on the radical anti-Zionist Jewish Left – published Saturday on the Mondoweiss website. (*Scroll down to "And one last obvious point" for the essence. Continue below for the fun argumentation.*)

The framework of this critique of Zionism is, predictably, a glowing review of Shlomo Sand's **The Invention of the Jewish People** by Jack Ross. [READ MORE](#)

Dear President Lula, again

David Harris | The Huffington Post | 13 October

Dear President Lula,

I wrote to you in the spring, deeply concerned about President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's scheduled visit to Brasilia on May 6. Thankfully, that visit did not take place. Sadly, it is now slated to occur next month. Mr. President, please reconsider.

You are a widely admired political leader. Brazil, under your guidance, has rapidly emerged on the world stage, to quote you, as a "first-rate citizen" of the international community. Why would you wish to confer your considerable prestige on Ahmadinejad, who craves it but surely does not deserve it? And why would Brazil, today a towering bastion of democratic values, seek closer ties with Iran, your polar opposite?

Mr. President, you spoke passionately at the UN a few weeks ago about the kind of world you seek to build.

You called for the preservation and expansion of human rights. Under the current regime, however, Iran has trampled on human rights -jo- flagrantly, brutally, repeatedly. You expressed support for disarmament and non-proliferation. Under the current regime, however, Iran is rapidly arming and is violating binding UN Security Council resolutions and International Atomic Energy Agency guidelines on nuclear proliferation.

You appealed for a confrontation with terrorism "without stigmatizing ethnic groups and religions." Under the current regime, however, Iran actively promotes and funds terrorism and has targeted specific ethnic groups and religions, including the Jewish community in your own backyard, South America. And you articulated a vision of a two-state solution, a Palestinian state living alongside Israel. Under the current regime, however, Iran seeks a world without Israel, pure and simple.

In other words, Mr. President, not only does Iran not share your core views, it actively opposes them. [READ MORE](#)

The thawing relations between Riyadh and Damascus

BICOM Analysis | 13 October

Key Points

- Saudi King Abdullah bin Aziz's visit to Damascus is a significant element in a larger strategy that seeks to tempt Syria away from its alliance with Iran. It reflects both Saudi Arabia's close alliance with the US, and its particular interest in resolving the situation of near 'Cold War' that has pertained among Arab states in recent years.
- Saudi Arabia and Syria find themselves in direct opposition over a number of key issues in Middle East diplomacy: notably, the attempt to form a governing coalition in Lebanon, the Palestinian political impasse and most importantly - Iran.
- It should not be expected that the visit will lead to the rapid solution of the stalemates in Lebanon and among the Palestinians. These have their own dynamic and are not solely the result of the rift between Riyadh and Damascus.
- While the Syrians will be happy to see a warming in relations with the Saudis, an early alignment by Damascus away from its longstanding alliance with Iran is unlikely. Syria will prefer to develop warmer relations with Saudi Arabia alongside, rather than instead of its links to Teheran.

For more background information [READ HERE](#)

Ankara must decide

Editorial | The Jerusalem Post | 12 October

Who would have thought - Turkey and Armenia agreeing to normalise political relations. Armenia's president planning to attend a football match in Turkey. And George Papandreou, the new Greek prime minister, making Turkey the destination of his first trip abroad.

These are encouraging examples of how age-old animosities are being relegated to the dustbin of history.

Too bad, then, that Ankara appears to be simultaneously doing everything it can to junk its relationship with the Jewish state. On Sunday, in an unprecedented slap in the face, Turkey cancelled joint military exercises that were to have included pilots from Israel and NATO. Analysts in Jerusalem suspect the government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is using the unfortunate civilian deaths during Operation Cast Lead as a pretext for distancing Turkey from Israel - diplomatically, strategically and economically.

Turkey is an irreplaceable ally and. Israelis want our two countries to enjoy cordial relations despite everything that's happened. The onus is now on Ankara to make plain that it, too, wants the relationship to continue. It would thereby also be signaling that Turkey wants to be a bridge between Islam and the West - instead of yet another barrier. [READ MORE](#)

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Ensure that the voice of your community is heard by supporting the work of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies.

Join us in the work of strengthening Jewish life.

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Education, not settlements, is the key to peace

Asaf Shariv | The Jewish Week NY | 14 October

All children deserve to be taught peace. In Gaza, more than 200,000 students attend schools supported and run by the UN. Unfortunately, these students are deprived of the education that will "build peace in the minds of men."

Gaza shares a border with Israel. People cross the border to work in Israel. Yet these children in Gaza and the West Bank use textbooks that do not show their neighbour across the border, the State of Israel. The critical importance of education in reaching peace in the Middle East was understood by Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, U.S. President George W. Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon when they signed the "road map" for peace in 2003. As part of the journey, Phase I required that the Palestinian government end incitement against Israel by all official Palestinian institutions.

The first word that every Israeli child is taught in school is shalom, peace. I know that when peace is a word that is taught to every child in Gaza and the West Bank, then peace will be around the corner. [READ MORE](#)

Italian Jews launch new Jewish newspaper—for non Jews

Ruth Gruber | JTA | 12 October

When Italy's first national Jewish newspaper launches this month, Italy will get what few Jewish communities around the world offer: a Jewish newspaper geared toward non-Jews.

Sponsored by the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, or UCEI, the umbrella organisation that links Italy's 21 established Jewish communities, the newspaper and an online Jewish information portal launched last year are part of a multi-dimensional media offensive aimed at bolstering the Jewish voice in Italy and creating a constructive dialogue between Jews and non-Jewish Italians.

The impetus behind them is the UCEI's desire to confront a seeming paradox: Italians are fascinated by things Jewish even though the country's 30,000 Jews comprise a tiny fraction of the population of 60 million. "There is a huge interest in Jews and Jewish culture here," said Emanuele Ascarelli, who directs "Sorgente di Vita" ("Source of Life"), a biweekly Jewish television program co-produced by UCEI and state-run RAI television that draws 200,000 to 400,000 viewers. Ascarelli estimates that 90 to 95 percent of them are not Jewish. He says the new media initiatives reaching out to the non-Jewish world reflects a new self-confidence among Italian Jews. [READ MORE](#)

GENERAL FRANCHISE DEPUTIES NOMINATIONS

This is a reminder to all Board's Members that General Franchise (GF) Deputy Nominations for the period of 2010-2011 must be lodged by no later than 5pm on Tuesday 20 October or handed in by no later than 8.30pm at the Plenum on 20 October.

If you are an existing Deputy, your term expires at the end of this year and you have to stand for re-election in October.

Nominations must be made on the official form, accompanied by a fee of \$15.00. Candidates should attach up to 108 words of biographical detail to the nomination form.

[Nomination Forms](#) are available from the Board's website or by contacting the Board's office.

To have a say in the policy and the future direction of your community, please nominate and vote this October.