"...if way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst."
—Thomas Hardy

Contents #4, #5, #6 at end

**Contents #7**
Sign J-Street Petition Against Closing Palestinian Mission
Live from Palestine
Breaking the Silence: Israeli Soldiers’ Confessions
U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation
Free Palestine Movement

**Contents #8  March 29, 2013**
2012 Russell Tribunal on Palestine
UN Welcomes Palestinian State: 3 Views
Film: *5 Broken Cameras*, Resistance
Carey, Four Films: *Cameras, The Gatekeepers, The Law in These Parts, Towards a Common Archive*
Hajjar, Israeli Court System Palestinians, *Courting Conflict*
Kaufman-Lacusta: P&I Nonviolent Resistance
Jamiel Rev. of Lerner, *Embracing Israel/Palestine* (see Newsletter #2, 2-16-12)

**Contents #9**
Qumsiyeh: Occupation
Lazare: Palestinians in Hebron
Abulhawa: Novel about Palestinian Refugees
David Swanson on Ruebner’s *Shattered Hopes*
Bar-Tal, Two New Books: Effects of Occupation on Israel and Long-Lasting Conflicts
Jebreal, *Miral*, Book and Film
Just Vision Palestinian-Israeli Documentary Films (Budrus, My Neighbourhood, etc.)
Khalidi, US Deceit in ME
Blumenthal, From David to *Goliath*
Israel’s Nuclear Bombs

**Meanwhile... [Injustices of the Occupation’s Orwellian World.]**

**Mazin**

Qumsiyeh mazin@qumsiyeh.org via uark.edu

[Note: More people are reading and some are putting comments directly on the blog instead via email. For this week’s blog and previous blogs and to write or read comment, go to http://popular-resistance.blogspot.com/]

I am back to Bethlehem which is **physically under Israeli occupation**. But then again that is less significant than **mental occupation** from which so many people in Palestine and elsewhere seem to suffer. Perhaps if more of us free their minds of this mental occupation we can more easily rid ourselves of the physical occupation and colonization whether here or in America or the rest of the world. The following are just samples of the symptoms of this Orwellian world.

- Israeli occupation forces demolish yet another Palestimoam village and the Western governments remain silent
http://www.imemc.org/article/66122
Meanwhile, the Palestinian authority continues to “negotiate” for the 21st year in a row and without legality (going back to the Palestinian people).

-31 years passed and those responsible for the massacre at Sabra and Shatila have not been brought to justice
http://qumsiyeh.org/sabraandshatila/
http://www.imemc.org/article/66121

Meanwhile, the Palestinian authority succumbed to US pressure and decided never to take Israel to International courts..

-NSA shares raw intelligence including Americans' data with Apartheid Israel

Meanwhile, the US administration continues to claim that it respects human rights.

-Israel has 80 nuclear warheads, can make 115 to 190 more, report says (and the US says nothing)
http://www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-israel-nuclear-weapons-20130915,0,4117406.story

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority sides with the US against Iran

-Israel refuses to ratify chemical weapons treaty (and the US says nothing)

Meanwhile, the Palestinian authority refused to join any UN bodies (beyond UNESCO) in deference to a request by the US (Israeli occupied) administration.

-Egyptian authorities stepped-up their punishment of Gaza in collusion with Israel. Closing the lifelines and choking Gaza are ongoing crimes against humanity.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian authority signs onto all dictats of COGAT (Israeli occupation arm in the West Bank) to round-up all Palestinians who do or might resist occupation.

-An excellent article was published by Ian Lustick in the NY Times explaining the “Two-state illusion”

Meanwhile, the Palestinian authority refuses to consider that there was never a viable two-state solution and continues to play the
make-belief game that peace is possible with Zionist apartheid.

For the rest of us, we must strive to stay sane and to stay human in this Orwellian world,

Mazin Qumsiyeh
http://qumsiyeh.org

Palestinians in Hebron: “To Be Here Is a Form of Resistance”

Sarah Lazare, Truthout: Palestinian and Israeli anti-occupation organizers take Lazare on a chilling tour of the Israeli military occupation, Israeli settler harassment and apartheid-style separation driving Palestinians from this city.

Read the Article

Mornings in Jenin, by Susan Abulhawa – review

By Nicola Bar

1. Mornings in Jenin
2. by Susan Abulhawa

In the 1948 nakba, the "catastrophe" that was the invasion of Palestine leading to the founding of Israel, a baby boy is snatched from his Palestinian mother by an Israeli soldier
and delivered to his wife, to be brought up hating Palestinians. Then he meets his twin brother. It's a simple and artful conceit to humanise the cruelty of the Palestinian plight. And interestingly, Abulhawa chooses not to make it the centre of her novel. Rather, *Mornings in Jenin* is the story of Amal, the twin boys' sister. Orphaned and injured in the 1967 war, she leaves the Jenin refugee camp in which she has grown up for a Jerusalem orphanage, and then faces her early adult years alone in Pennsylvania. She becomes Amy ("Amal without the hope"), and on her return to Lebanon falls in love, only to meet with further tragedy and heartbreak. This is a brave, sad book that tells the story of a nation and a people through tales of ordinary lives lived in extraordinary circumstances. Unsensational, at times even artless, it has a documentary feel that allows events to speak for themselves, and is all the more moving for it.

**An Endless "Peace Process" for Palestine**

Mon May 27, 2013 7:56 am (PDT) . Posted by: "Shelly Rockett", Veterans for Peace

-------- Forwarded message --------
From: David Swanson <davidcnswanson@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, May 27, 2013 at 4:07 AM
Subject: An Endless "Peace Process" for Palestine
To: shelly@veteransforpeace.org
Cc: media@lists.mayfirst.org

An Endless "Peace Process" for Palestine By David Swanson
[http://warisacrime.org/content/endless-peace-process-palestine](http://warisacrime.org/content/endless-peace-process-palestine)

The United States balances its endless war of terrorism with the institution of an endless "peace process" for Palestine, a process valuable for its peaceyness and interminability.


* could just as easily have been called "Fulfilled Expectations: The Success of Obama's Middle East Peace Process," depending on one's perspective. Its story could be summarized: Obama's performance in this area has been of a piece with his performance in every other. Some people became very hopeful about his rhetoric and then very dejected about his actions.

In this case, among those getting hopeful were Palestinian negotiators. But they didn't just grow depressed and despondent. They felt no obligation to behave like Democratic voters. They swore off the Hopium and
went to work on an international approach through the United Nations that has begun to pay off.

Obama began his "peace process" efforts "naively unprepared for the intensity of the pushback from Israel and its supporters in the United States to its demand that Israel freeze settlements," Ruebner writes. But evidence of Obama's mental state is hard to pin down, and I'm not sure of the relevance. Whether Obama began with naive good intentions or the same cynicism that he was, by all accounts, fully immersed in by his second or third year in office, the important point remains the same. As Ruebner explains, Obama employs an all-carrots / no-sticks approach with Israel that is doomed to failure.

In fact, suggesting that the White House cease providing Israel with ever more weaponry and/or cease providing Israel with ever more protection from justice following its crimes is liable to get Ruebner himself denounced as naive, along with the rest of us who think he's right. Obama's fundamental problem is not one of naiveté, but of "seriousness," of upholding the solemn seriousness of willful belief in a respectable but doomed approach. If Obama was surprised that Palestinian negotiators didn't play along with this the way U.S. "journalists" do, that would suggest he had internalized the official point of view. Whether that is naiveté or deep cynicism may be in the eye of the beholder.

Ruebner provides the chronological play-by-play from Obama's first happy shiny moves in office to his familiar flailing about in search of propaganda that would continue to hold up year after year. And Ruebner includes analysis of what activists were up to along the way.

In fact, Ruebner begins with Obama's campaign promises, which -- upon close inspection -- prove, as with every other issue, to have been much closer to the President's abysmal performance than to the glowing image people recall of his early hope-and-changey self. Obama campaigned placing all blame on Palestinians, supporting Jerusalem as Israel's undivided capital, backing resolutions and legislation in the Senate imposing sanctions on Palestinians as punishment for having held an open election, and supporting Israel during its wars on Lebanon and Gaza. Obama's speeches and his website made his position clear to those inclined to see it. Boycott campaigns against the Israeli government were, according to him, "bigoted."

As with every other area, on peace in Palestine, Obama's disastrous approach could also have been read clearly from his selection of individuals to run his foreign policy team. During the transition period prior to his inauguration, Obama took positions on many foreign policy matters, but when it came to the ongoing Israeli assault on Gaza, he declared himself unable to speak prior to becoming president.

Watching the sequence of events play out post-inauguration is painful. Obama urges an end to Israel's expansion of settlements. Netanyahu
suggests that Obama, with all due respect, stick his proposals where the sun don't shine. But Netanyahu backs "statehood"; (someday, with no rights or power or independence or actual -- you know -- "statehood") for Palestinians, but proceeds to rapidly expand settlements, effectively eliminating territory on which to create any state. Obama announces that victory has come and help is on the way!

Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton gave up on freezing settlements and announced that slowing the pace of the expansion would be an "unprecedented" accomplishment -- a claim that was less credible to people who had lived and suffered through many such claims before. As reward for the same lawless abuses as always, Israel received from the Obama administration more weaponry than ever, and a veto of a resolution at the United Nations opposing more Israeli settlements.

Ruebner rightly concludes:

"Obama's failure to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace resulted not only from his unwillingness to go to the mat with the Israel lobby over the issue of fully freezing Israeli settlements, not only from the scattershot, frenetic lurching of his policy initiatives thereafter. Obama also founndered because his approach relied solely on providing Israel with carrots. With the trivial exceptions of denying Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu photo-ops at the White House on a few occasions and reportedly forcing him to wait for several hours before a meeting, Obama never brandished the proverbial stick. But these personal insults did nothing to create incentives for Israel to cease openly and brazenly defying U.S. policy objectives."

Hope is so much more popular than reality. But Ruebner is full of hope. He holds it out there in front of us. All that's required is a little actually useful action:

"[I]f the United States were to pull its backing for Israel's oppression of the Palestinians, then Israeli intransigence would melt away in the historical blink of an eye, as it did when President Dwight Eisenhower terminated all U.S. aid programs to Israel after it invaded and occupied the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula in 1956."

How do we get there? Part of the answer, Ruebner persuasively suggests<http://www.amazon.com/Shattered-Hopes-Obamas-Failure-Israeli-Palestinian/dp/1781681201>is **Boycott-Divestment-and-Sanctions (BDS)**, a movement that is making great strides, including in changing the public discourse, altering the sorts of things that even U.S. politicians can get away with claiming with a straight face.
NEW BOOKS BY DANIEL BAR-TAL.

*The Impacts of Lasting Occupation.*

*Intractable Conflicts: Socio-Psychological Foundations and Dynamics.*

Briefing call invitation: The Impact on Israel of 46 years of occupation Thursday, June 6th, 2pm

Ori Nir, APN [onir@peacenow.org]

To:

James R. Bennett

Friday, May 31, 2013 9:01 AM

Dear Dick,

Please join us for a briefing call with Israeli political psychologist Daniel Bar-Tal on Thursday, June 6th, at 2:00pm Eastern Time.

One of Israel's leading psychologists and sociologists and an expert on the socio-psychological foundations of intractable conflicts and peacemaking, **Bar-Tal is the co-editor of the recently-published "The Impacts of Lasting Occupation,"** a book that examines the impact that 46 years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has on Israel's society.

Bar-Tal's most recent book, fresh off the press, is **"Intractable Conflicts: Socio-Psychological Foundations and Dynamics."** Professor Bar-Tal will talk about the corrosive impact of the occupation on Israeli society, and will discuss ways in which Americans who care about Israel could help end the occupation.

The details of the call are as follows:

Date: Thursday, June 6th
Time: 2:00 PM (Eastern Time)
Dial-in Number: 951-797-1058
Participant Access Code: 147414

To receive a link of the recording, please email Ori Nir at onir@peacenow.org. APN will send you a link to the recording of the call as soon as i
Miral's Rula Jebreal: The Palestinian Woman who wrote the Book that Started this Big Screening War

Rula Jebreal, whose autobiographical novel inspired Julian Schnabel's film Miral, condemns violence by Israelis and Palestinians, quotes Yitzhak Rabin, and is dedicated to peace. So why did the Israeli Government, the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League try to stop the film's premiere at the United Nations?

It's not often that a movie's theatrical release is an historic moment. But Miral, which opens today in LA and NYC, is the first Hollywood film to look at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the eyes of Palestinians, Palestinian women, at that. The film is based on the autobiographical novel of Rula Jebreal, the Palestinian journalist, who was born in Haifa, raised in East Jerusalem, has lived in the Middle East, Europe and, most recently, New York. Directed by the New York-based Jewish-American artist and filmmaker Julian Schnabel, Miral offers glimpses of history, as experienced by Palestinian women, starting with the formation of Israel and ending with the Oslo Accords. It premiered at the UN's General Assembly, on March 14th, drawing stars from Robert de Niro to Sean Penn, along with a storm of protest. Schnabel's Jewish credentials are true blue--and white. His mother was the President of the Brooklyn Chapter of Haddassah, the Women's Zionist Organization, in 1948, during the establishment of Israel as a state. Schnabel recalls seeing Exodus at Manhattan's Rivoli Theater with his parents: "Everybody stood up when they sang 'Hatikvah,' and put their hands on their chests. My mother and father were very proud." But Schnabel's history and his film's vision mattered little to the film's critics. Seeing the movie, in fact, mattered little to the Israeli Government, the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League, who, on principle, (unsuccessfully) called on the UN to cancel its March 14th screening.

This week, days before Miral's release, I talked to Rula Jebreal about her life, her story, the film, violence, and her optimism for a peaceful future for Israelis and Palestinians alike.
Katie Halper: Were you surprised by the response of the Israeli government and by American Jewish organizations like the AJC and the ADL?

Rula Jebreal: No, not at all. No, no, no, no. Absolutely not. No, no, no, no. After every screening, I see the fear in people's eyes. This is their censorship response, their way of avoiding the truth. The movie is really about one thing: peace. And I'm not sure this is on their agenda. I'm more dangerous than Hamas. Hamas responds in such a stupid way—with violence. But people like me—artists, writers, intellectuals, journalists—raise awareness and consciousness. You can't label them as the enemy. These are the people that build bridges.

KH: When I saw the film I kept waiting for something that people could construe as anti-Israeli or anti-Semitic, which is the charge made by the film's most vocal critics, sadly without even seeing the film. But what I saw was a film filled with thoughtfulness and sensitivity. It certainly challenges the idea that we hear all the time—that all Palestinians hate all Jews.

RJ: I have to thank you very much for this interview. Many people shy away from interviewing a Palestinian. They avoid talking to me. In this country where there is supposed to be so much freedom of expression, there is still a fear of considering a certain perspective. I know what is important and that is telling stories. What I'm interested in is telling the story of civil society in war time. What are the implications of war on women in terms of security, in terms of freedom, in terms of sexual harassment? I think all of that is breaking the wall of silence. I know that's not easy. The fact that in America, the land of freedom of expression, I see this concern, this fear of considering that point of view, makes me think there's an issue here that needs to be addressed. There are always two sides to every story, and if we don't listen to each other, how can we find a solution? This culture of demonization has been creating more violence.

KH: You collaborated with a director who is Jewish. So much for your being an Anti-Semite. But I guess there are those who can't believe a Jew and a Palestinian can or should work together. Or more specifically, what kind of Jew would work with a Palestinian?

RJ: Julian and I have the same values and both of us are very critical of what's going on around us, including in our own communities. We believe in respect and human rights. I reject violence. I think that killing Israelis is a tragedy. It's like killing our own people. Some of my own people say to me, "but they kill our people" and I say, "but it isn't right." Julian is on the same page. He always says he doesn't belong to any groups. He is only accountable to his conscience. It's the same with me. When I go to bed I want to feel like whatever action I did was right. Not because I'm on this side or the other side. At the end of the day we are all human. And working with him was really inspiring because I saw my own country through his mother's eyes, because he told me about how she saw it. I understood how much American Jews love Israel and care about it. I knew Israelis love their country but I didn't know how American Jews related to it.
KH: Are you ever accused of "selling out" because you condemn violence on both sides? Because, as you just said, you're critical of elements in your own community?
RJ: Yes. There are people like this on both sides of the issue. Ultimately, they are the same people. They don't realize that they are only helping each other by doing things that the other side can point to as a justification for whatever it does. And it is a cycle. So their accusations don't touch me. These people don't touch me.
KH: How do you feel about the future for Israelis and Palestinians?
RJ: I'm very optimistic. I lived in Europe for a long time. Look at Europe, where there's freedom of expression, democracy, stability. Think about it 50 years ago. There was dictatorship, destruction, genocide, no economy, no human or civil rights. If that can happen in Europe, then that can happen everywhere. That can happen in our country and more than ever today because the Arab revolution is showing that people are ready to be protagonists in their own future. They are engaging in non-violent, democratic protests, asking for reform and change. They didn't call for a war; they didn't have anti-American or anti-Israeli slogans. What you hear from millions of young people in the streets is, "we want freedom, We want to live with dignity." That's a great sign and that's what we need to listen to.
KH: So your detractors in certain quarters of American Judaism are telling Jews not to see Miral. You obviously disagree. What would you tell Jews about why they should see Miral?
RJ: This film is a cry for peace. This film is against violence, wherever violence comes from. Whether it's from an Israeli soldier, a Palestinian militant, a Palestinian woman--it's wrong. It's immoral. It's killing our own country. The film is a story about love and education. It's a true story. I'm a real believer that we both deserve peace and stability. And that's only possible if we listen to each and talk to each other. It will come not through demonizing and criminalizing each other but through understanding. The example of Nelson Mandela is incredible because he left jail and didn't say, "kill all the white people." He called for forgiveness. He said are we ready to forgive each other and move forward? Are we ready to look at each face to face and not from behind guns? Are we ready to consider the others' pain as our pain and the others' blood as our own blood, to work together and try to build a bridge? Or are we going to condemn our children to live what we lived?

What is happening is tragic. What happened in Itamar [the settlement where earlier this month a family was killed while they slept. though the latest suspect is an Asian worker] is tragic, what happened [with the most recent air strikes, which have killed civilians, including children] in Gaza is tragic; what happened this morning [the bombing of an Israeli bus station] is tragic. Violence is tragic, and it's destroying our country. Violence is immoral. And it has to be stopped. Violence is the only language that has been used for 63 years. It's time to change course and to evolve and use other languages and other methods. You cannot stop killing by killing other people. We cannot continue this dysfunctional cycle. Everyone needs to see that. Rabin used to say: "I go on with the negotiations like there's no terrorist attacks." You need to show...
that there's diplomacy. If you don't show that there's diplomacy, if you only speak through a military language, you empower extremists. How can you hear words when there are bombs? How can you hear stories? How can you understand people and culture? It is impossible because the sound of violence drowns out everything else. Come and see this other point of view. See the other side that you don't ever see, because the news only covers violence.

May 7 2013

WE'RE HIRING! Please help us find some fantastic candidates to join our team as our new Media and Public Engagement Manager.
May 6 2013

Christiane Amanpour shared My Neighbourhood on her Facebook page today.

May 5 2013

Rula Salameh, Just Vision's Education and Outreach Coordinator in Palestine, is interviewed on Palestine TV after a live broadcast of the Budrus Graphic Novel launch event last Thursday.

May 3 2013

New Release: A graphic novel in Arabic based on our documentary, Budrus.
Apr 15 2013

Chris Schroeder joined the Just Vision Board of Directors.

Apr 12 2013

The Elders stream our documentary My Neighbourhood (directed by Julia Bacha and Rebekah Wingert-Jabi).

Apr 11 2013

Julia Bacha, Just Vision's Creative Director, lays out the strategy behind our impact campaign around BUDRUS in Forbes magazine.
April 9, 2013

Budrus screened for the women and girls of the Palestinian village Kufr Qaddoum

April 6, 2013

Ronit Avni, Just Vision Founder and Executive Director, in a meeting with President Obama and his senior staff before his trip to Jerusalem.

April 3, 2013
Zvi Benninga, Israeli activist, medical student and protagonist of our film My Neighbourhood - on the Israeli government's role in supporting settlement expansion in East Jerusalem.

Apr 2 2013

Julia Bacha, Just Vision's Creative Director, was on a panel at the Skoll World Forum about storytelling's potential for impact.

Mar 29 2013

Ronit Avni, Just Vision Founder & Executive Director, was honored as a Trailblazer at the National Council for Research on Women's annual awards dinner.
Mar 27 2013

Just Vision is honored to have just won the Peabody Award for our film, My Neighbourhood

Sunday, June 23, 2013

• BOOK TV SERIES/TOPICS
• C-SPAN WEBSITES

"Brokers of Deceit: How the U.S. Has Undermined Peace in the Middle East"

Rashid Khalidi

About the Program

Rashid Khalidi argues that the U.S. is far from being an impartial broker in negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. He says that since 1982 the U.S. has had several opportunities to move the peace process forward, the latest as recently as last year, but decided to thwart them all. Prof. Khalidi speaks at an event celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Institute for Palestine Studies.
Rashid Khalidi

Rashid Khalidi is the Edward Said Professor of Modern Arab Studies at Columbia University and editor of the Journal of Palestine Studies. His books include "Resurrecting Empire," "The Iron Cage," and "Sowing Crisis."

MAX BLUMENTHAL, GOLIATH, GOOGLE SEARCH, OCT. 21, 2013, Page One

1. **Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel: Max Blumenthal ...**

   www.amazon.com › Books › History › Middle East › Israel

   Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel [Max Blumenthal] on Amazon.com. *FREE* super saver shipping on qualifying offers. [Library Edition Audiobook CD ...

2. **The 'I Hate Israel' Handbook | The Nation**

   www.thenation.com/article/176691/i-hate-israel-handbook

   5 days ago - Max Blumenthal's Goliath, published by Nation Books, consists of seventy-three short chapters, each one devoted to some shortcoming of ...

3. **Max Blumenthal - Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel ...**

   www.politics-prose.com/.../max-blumenthal-goliath-life-and-loathing-gr...

   Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel (Hardcover). By Max Blumenthal. $27.99. ISBN-13: 9781568586342. Availability: On Our Shelves Now Published: ...

4. **News for Blumenthal, Goliath**

   Exchanging hand wringing for truth telling: A review of
Max Blumenthal's 'Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel'
Mondoweiss - 4 days ago

Erudite, hard-hitting, and with the potential to influence American public opinion on Israel, Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel, by Max ...

2. Eric Alterman on Palestine and Israel, part 2: Alterman vs. 'Goliath'
Mondoweiss - 2 hours ago

3. For Eric Alterman defending Israel trumps longtime friend and employer
Mondoweiss - 2 days ago

5. There Are No Facts: Excerpt from Max Blumenthal's 'Goliath: Life ...
mondoweiss.net/2013/10/excerpt-blumenthals-loathing.html

Oct 10, 2013 - We’re excited to share an exclusive excerpt from Max Blumenthal's new book 'Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel.' In this chapter titled ...

6. Max Blumenthal on "Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel ...

www.democracynow.org/.../max_blumenthal_on_goli...
Oct 4, 2013
As Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is continuing a public campaign to cast doubt on U.S. diplomatic ...

7. Part 2: Max Blumenthal on "Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater ...

www.democracynow.org/.../part_2_max_blumenthal_...
Oct 7, 2013
Part two of our conversation with journalist Max Blumenthal on his new book, "Goliath: Life and Loathing in ...

8. No Longer David: The State of Israel As Goliath -
Al-Monitor: the ...

www.al-monitor.com/.../aipac-israel-narrative-max-blumenthal-book-gol...
Sep 25, 2013 - In a new book, journalist Max Blumenthal leaves the "comfort zone" of the Jewish American community, opening the issue of Israel and the...

9. Max Blumenthal: "Goliath Life and Loathing in Greater Israel"

www.youtube.com/playlist?list...

"Max Blumenthal: "Goliath Life and Loathing in Greater Israel"", a playlist created by Tulsidas Dwivedi.

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**It's Time to Put an End to Israel's "Don't Ask-Don't Tell" Nuclear Policy**

Saturday, 19 October 2013 11:46 By Pam Bailey and Medea Benjamin, PinkTank | News Analysis [from David D]

The negotiations this week in Geneva between Iran and the “P5+1” (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — plus Germany) offer a promising vehicle for avoiding another destructive war. The talks came on the heels of a virtual uprising by the American people that stopped President Barack Obama’s plan to attack Syria, clearly demonstrating their desire to solve conflicts at the negotiation table rather than at the point of a gun.

However, Israel and its allies in the U.S. Congress continue to lobby against a deal that would meet Iran in the middle, insisting on a “zero-enrichment” policy that is a deal-breaker for Iran.

The Israeli cabinet said in a statement Tuesday that “Israel does not oppose Iran having a peaceful nuclear energy program. But as has been demonstrated in many countries, from Canada to Indonesia, peaceful programs do not require uranium enrichment or plutonium production. Iran’s nuclear weapons program does.”

**The ‘elephant in the room’: Israel and the bomb**

The Israeli cabinet’s statement is more than ironic, in light of Israel’s own nuclear-weapons program — often called the world’s “worst-kept secret” because of the taboo surrounding any public discussion of its existence.

The *Washington Post’s* Walter Pincus is one of the few journalists openly questioning this obvious hypocrisy. He writes, “When the Israeli prime minister asked (at the UN), ‘Why would a country that claims to only want peaceful nuclear energy, why would such a country build hidden underground enrichment facilities?’ I thought Dimona.”
Israel’s nuclear facility at Dimona, a city in the Negev desert, reportedly has six underground floors dedicated to activities such as plutonium extraction, production of tritium and lithium-6, for use in nuclear weapons.

**Whereas Iran signed the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), giving the international community the right to demand inspections and controls, Israel has not** — and is therefore not subject to external oversight.

According to **Avner Cohen, author of “Israel’s Bargain with the Bomb,”** David Ben-Gurion began planning how to arm Israel with a nuclear shield even before the creation of the Jewish state, soon after the United States dropped its own atomic payload on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The first president of Israel took action to initiate a nuclear-development project by the end of the new state’s first decade, with its successful "birth" on the eve of its 1967 occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The U.S. government got wind of the project and objected strenuously. But when the Israelis brought it to fruition regardless and refused to give up their new arsenal, a covert agreement was struck between Prime Minister Golda Meir and President Richard Nixon – rather like the old U.S. policy of “don’t ask, don’t tell” for gays in the military. The Israelis agreed to keep their newfound strength under wraps, and the Americans pledged to pretend it didn’t exist.

Cohen uses the Hebrew term amimut (opacity) to describe the taboo that developed within Israel around any sort of public acknowledgement of its nuclear arsenal – which estimates peg at up to 200 warheads. **To this day, there is total censorship within Israel of any mention that the weapons exist, and the United States actively plays along.**

**Edward Snowden’s predecessor**

In fact, there is an eerie similarity between the stories of Israeli whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu, a nuclear technician who revealed details of Israel’s nuclear weapons program to the British press in 1986, and Edward Snowden. Both held junior positions in organizations serving the defense industry, in which they had access to sensitive national secrets. Both became convinced their employers were responsible for immoral acts and decided to violate their oaths of secrecy to tell the world about them. They both shared what they learned with a British newspaper and set off an international storm. And both have been persecuted since then by their governments, in retaliation for their leaks.

While Snowden has so far evaded capture by his government, Vanunu spent 18 years in prison, including more than 11 in solitary confinement. Although released in 2004, he has been subjected to a broad array of restrictions on his speech and movement, including several re-arrests for giving interviews to foreign journalists and attempting to leave Israel. Yet, just as activists, foreign governments and others would never have known the U.S. government is tapping their emails and phone calls without Snowden, the world would have known very little – if anything –
about Israel’s weapons of mass destruction without Vanunu.

‘Blowback’ from Israel’s nuclear lead

Although Israel, the United States and its European allies continue to dance around the subject, Israel’s nuclear capacity is widely known and has changed the dynamics in the region in dangerous ways. On Sept. 19, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said that “Syria came into possession of chemical weapons as an alternative to Israel’s nuclear weapons.” (It’s also worth noting that while Israel was one of the first countries to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993, it remains one of only six countries that has not ratified it.)

Some analysts believe that Israel’s insistence on zero enrichment for Iran is designed to ensure that no deal is struck at all – allowing Israel to maintain its military superiority in the region. “Netanyahu ultimately fears the success of diplomacy, not its failure,” explains Trita Parsi, founder and president of the National Iranian American Council, in Foreign Affairs. “Israel…understands that a resolution to the nuclear standoff would significantly reduce U.S.-Iranian tensions and open up opportunities for collaboration between the two former allies. This is what Israelis refer to as the fear of abandonment — that, once the nuclear issue is resolved or contained, Washington will shift its focus to other matters while Israel will be stuck in the region facing a hostile Iran, without the United States by its side.”

Neither the world, nor Israel, is served legally or morally by continuing to condone a practice of don’t ask-don’t tell for an issue that is so central to global security and safety. As long as Israel refuses to acknowledge its possession of nuclear weapons or even that it has produced weapons-grade materials, it is difficult, if not impossible, to engage it in any meaningful arms control or other nuclear-related diplomacy. It certainly makes it impossible to move towards a nuclear-free Middle East—a goal to which the entire international community should aspire, and that has been endorsed by the new Iranian president.

Isn’t it time for the world to start asking, and for Israel to tell?

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