

June 2007

The relationship between Israeli leadership and Israel's enemies resembles the relationship between a bleeding fish and a shark. As the shark senses the vulnerability of the fish and rushes to its attack, so Israel's enemies sense the weakness of the dwindling Israeli leadership. As you would not trust the ability of the lifeless fish to make careful decisions so you should not trust the ability of the Israeli leadership to master the present crisis. Israel needs elections, the sooner the better.

Raphael Cohen-Almagor

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Israel's Ninth President – Shimon Peres



Hearty congratulations to Shimon Peres. I recall the last election for president, when Peres lost to Moshe Katzav. I was in Jerusalem that day, and was taken by surprise. I could feel his humiliation. Possibly I was touched by this loss more than Shimon did, as my skin is not as thick as his. On the spot I wrote a poem, "The mouse that roars". The poem is included in my poetry book, *Voyages*, scheduled to be

published later in 2007.

On June 13, 2007, the Knesset behaved sensibly, understanding the need to renew and restore respect in the presidency, an institution that suffered a severe blow during the past two years or so, as President Katzav was the focus of police interrogations for serial rape and spent more time with lawyers and police officers than with ambassadors and public officials.

Vice Premier Shimon Peres was elected Israel's ninth president by a Knesset majority, with 86 MKs voting in favor of him, 23 against, eight abstaining, one MK missing and two spoiled ballots. This was the second round of voting. In the first round of voting, Peres received 58 votes, three short of the 61 majority needed. Rival candidates Reuven Rivlin (Likud) and Colette Avital (Labour) only garnered 37 votes and 21 votes, respectively. In the second round, Rivlin and Avital both stepped down and the Knesset was left to vote

for or against Peres.

Peres will enter office in mid-July, replacing Acting President Dalia Itzik and the temporarily suspended current president, Moshe Katsav.

"This may be my last contribution to the State," Peres said during his campaign, and the race was indeed one of paramount significance to Peres, a staple figure of Israel's leadership since the country was founded, who received far more appreciation outside the borders of Israel than in Israel itself.

I convey my warmest good wishes to Shimon, one of the most important statespersons in the history of Israel, second only to his mentor David Ben-Gurion. For a time, Shimon was my mentor. We have known one another for over twenty five years, and have a complex relationship. I will find an opportunity to elaborate. Nevertheless, I always enjoy and appreciate his successes. I wish him good health and success in this important unifying role, restoring confidence and tranquility to an institution that received far too much attention recently, for the wrong reasons. Shimon has the wisdom, ability and experience to rejuvenate the presidency. I hope his wife Sonia will join him in good health in these efforts, and continue to stand by him as she did in the past for many years to come.

At the same time I reiterate the need to change the system by which the president is elected. If the Knesset will continue to elect the president, we can expect more politicians to assume this important office. Until now, only one president, Efraim Katzir, was not a politician. There are capable people for the job outside politics. It will be good for this institution to have presidents from all walks of life: literature, academia, public activists, the arts (inconclusive list).

Labour Primaries and New-Old Leader

On May 28, 2007 the Labour Party held its much awaited primaries. The five contenders were two people who served as party leaders: Ehud Barak and Amir Peretz, and three experienced men: Ophir Paz-Pines, who spent most of his life in politics, and two retired army officers: former general Dani Yatom, and former admiral Ami Ayalon.

Ehud Barak won this first round of the battle with 35.6% of the votes. Ami Ayalon came in second with 30.6%. Amir Peretz, the current chairman, was behind with 22.4% of the votes. Ophir Pines-Paz and Danny Yatom, had slightly more than 10% of the votes combined.



On June 12, a run-off between the two top contenders was held as the winner needs to top the 40 percent bar necessary to win Labour party primaries.

It was a battle between the familiar and experienced and the new and inexperienced, between someone who could give a fight to Bibi Netanyahu in the next elections, to another whose chances to wage such fight are dubious. Ayalon made many mistakes in his recent appearances in public whereas Barak did his best to refrain from speaking. His silence worked well for him. Silence is golden. In the end, Barak projected

more experience and ability. Thus, most Labour members opted for Ehud Barak, with all his faults, as they believed Israel needs someone with experience and leadership qualities during these difficult days, when there are hostilities in the south, and prospects of war in the north.

Barak, who came from behind after trailing a distant fourth in early opinion polls for Labour's top spot, received 51.3 percent of the Labour Party members' votes; Ayalon received 32,117 of the votes (47.7 percent), while 683 of the party's registered voters abstained from voting.

There was a relatively high voter turnout in the election, with 64.5 percent of Labour Party members casting their ballots.

The results suggested that Ayalon's alliance with the failing Minister of Defence and present party chairman Amir Peretz hurt Ayalon in the kibbutzim, where Ayalon had enjoyed a lead of some 300 votes in the first round. Barak beat Ayalon in the counts for Jerusalem, the kibbutzim, moshavim and Druze and Arab sectors. Associates of Ayalon, who was victorious in Lod, Sdot Yam and Shoham, claimed that there had been fraudulent voting in the Arab and Druze communities, where Barak scored a comfortable win.

Accompanied by Ministers Eitan Cable, Binyamin Ben Eliezer, and Isaac Herzog, former Prime Minister Ehud Barak pledged in a victory address to focus his efforts on bolstering the military and Israel's deterrent capability: "I will invest all my energy and knowledge in strengthening the defence establishment and the Israel Defence Forces, and returning to Israel the power of deterrence".



Barak maintained: "Today our journey together begins... In this journey we will seek the uniting, the common, the constructive and the linking factors... We will do this out of a sense of mission, and basic commitment to the existence of the Israeli society, and the security of the State of Israel, the home of the Jewish people, its historic fortress, the homeland of our people."

"There is no leadership without the public's faith. In days of anxiety, a lack of security, despair and loss of leadership, the Labour Party must take control as the head of the democratic alternative in the State of Israel".

Barak called on Labour supporters that had abandoned the party with the election of Amir Peretz as is chairman a little over a year ago to "return home." Shortly after he secured the support of MK Ophir Pines-Paz Barak declared that Olmert should resign after publication of the Winograd Committee's final report on the government's performance during the Second Lebanon War. He added that Labour will attempt to form an alternative government, but should it fail to do so, this would mean early elections.

Words are important. No less are actions. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert immediately tempted Barak by offering him the defence ministry, replacing

the ridiculous Amir Peretz who has set a precedent as the most unqualified person ever to serve in the most sensitive ministry in Israel. Barak did not blink accepting the position. Less than a week after Labour primaries, on June 18, 2007 Barak assumed office.

Man of the Month – Ehud Olmert



And the man of the month: Ehud Olmert. These two recent elections helped him greatly. Olmert is the prime facilitator of Peres' success. He worked for months behind the scenes to see Peres in the president's house. He had good reasons to do so. Anyway you look at this, Peres is a threat for him. This is especially so after the irresponsible war Olmert waged in Lebanon. Many called for his resignation, hoping that a more responsible and experienced person will take over. They meant Peres.

Secondly, Peres is popular abroad and could help in the public relation campaign to bolster Israel's stance in the world.

Thirdly, Peres will not forget and could help Olmert in time of need. Olmert could use a friend in the president's house.

Lastly, Rubi Rivlin (Likud) was working hard for more than three years to be elected for president. Olmert and Rivlin know one another for more than twenty years, when they developed within the Likud ranks in Jerusalem. They share a passion for football, went to quite a few games together to watch their favourite team, Beitar Jerusalem; worked together for the success of their team; cooperated in many campaigns to advance the interests of Jerusalem. They know one another very well. However, in recent years, more so after Olmert went with Sharon to establish Kadima, a few black cats have passed between them, and bad blood lingered. Olmert did not want Rivlin in office. Peres' success was sweeter knowing that this came at the expense of Rivlin.

Barak's success meant very good things for Olmert: bolstering his government; getting rid of Peretz; having a reliable minister of defence in office.

So now two of the major architects of the Hezbollah War paid the price for their glorious failure: Halutz and Peretz. But the person who carries most responsibility as first among equals, Ehud Olmert, is still in office. Not for long, I hope. The Winograd Committee is said to publish its final report in a few months time. One section should include personal responsibility, and Olmert will be the star of this section. He would need to pull many rabbits from his sleeve to survive this one.

Palestine



Some months ago I wrote that Abu-Mazen is facing his Altalena test: that he cannot allow fragmented militia holding weapons without a central government; that he needs to unify all fragments into a unified army, or else he would lose control and things might go out of hand. Abu-Mazen, in his quiet way, believed that through mediation and compromise he will be able to work out the

differences with Hamas, and avoid civil war. He did not understand that when you are dealing with religious zealots who see the reality through the eye of the rifle, coins of mutual concessions, tolerance, brotherhood, solidarity and compromise are absolutely meaningless.

Hamas was willing to make tactical compromises but not give away one inch to achieve a Muslim Palestinian state. Abu-Mazen, who wished to avoid civil war on his own terms is now having a civil war on his rivals' terms. The prospects are horrifying for the Palestinians, Israel, the Middle East and the world. Because now we might end up with two Palestinian states: a religious one in Gaza, and a secular one in the West Bank. More fragmentation is not a recipe for peace. Quite the opposite. It multiplies the challenges and schisms. Watching the brutality between Hamas and Fatah brings you to fully realize with whom Israel has to deal, and even more so what the Palestinian are capable of doing in terms of fighting for their independence. If this is the way they treat their brethren, how violent and brutal can they be against their unifying prime enemy, Israel?

In attempt to restore some sanity, security and stability, on June 17, 2007 Abu Mazen appointed Salam Fayad to Prime Minister, replacing the Hamas leader Ismail Haniya. Fayed is a person I have appreciated for a long time: sane, calculated, prudent, reasonable, and not bloodthirsty. He is the right person in the right place. Fayad heads the emergency cabinet, which replaces the Hamas-Fatah coalition dissolved by Abu Mazen after Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip by force a week before. Hamas reacted by saying that it does not recognize the new illegal government. This is, it should be said, "democracy from above", something we dread in full-fledge democracies. Abu Mazen also outlawed the Hamas militias and vowed to push to restore foreign aid to the Palestinians after a punishing 15-month boycott. "The first goal we are working to achieve is to end the siege and have a unique relationship with all the nations," Abu Mazen said after swearing in the new cabinet.

The hurried swearing-in ceremony of the new cabinet left the Palestinians effectively with two governments - the Hamas leadership headed by deposed Prime Minister Haniyeh in Gaza and the new cabinet led by the Western-backed economist Fayad in the West Bank.

Fayad, an independent, will retain his post as finance minister and also serve as foreign minister in the emergency government. The small cabinet of 12 ministers, all independents who are not affiliated with Fatah, includes technocrats, human rights activists and business people. A leading technocrat is Transport Minister Dr. Mashhur Abu Dakka. The Interior Minister is Abdel Razek al-Yihyeh, a PLO veteran and interior minister in Yasser Arafat's government, who will also be responsible for security. The remainder of the cabinet are Justice and Information Minister Riyad al Maliki; Municipal Affairs Minister Ziyad al-Bandak; Prisoners, Youth and Sports Minister Ashraf al-Ajarmi; Communications, Economy and Public Works Minister Kamel al-Hasuna; Tourism and Women's Affairs Minister Hulud Deibas; Education Minister Namis el-Alami; Planning Minister Samir Abdullah; Health Minister Fat'hi Abu Marli; and Minister of Religious Affairs Jamal Bawatna, who is also the mufti of the Ramallah district.

In his speech, Fayad stressed that the government represented Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Addressing the Palestinians in Gaza, he said: "You are in our hearts, and the top of our agenda. The dark images, the shameful things that are alien to our traditions ... are not going to stop us. It is time to work together for Palestine."

I am afraid this reasoning will not convince Hamas to change its policies. Fayad is working on the western false assumption that the Hamas will be swayed to change because of economic incentives or because of the wish to keep Palestinian unity. Hamas is convinced it is right. Hamas has all the light whereas the others are mistaken. Hamas is patient. Whereas we think of terms of changes in our life time, possibly in terms of securing a good future for our children, Hamas employs a longer, historic viewpoint. Its leaders think in terms of hundreds of years. They are willing to pay a high price to see their goals achieved. If the destruction of Israel and the accomplishment of a Muslim Palestinian state will take 150-200 years, so be it. Their reasoning is: We have time. We are willing to pay a high price. Eventually we will win. The glory will be with us. Israel and all infidels will be destroyed.

War Prospects



First thing we learned, even before Barak assumed office, was that the new minister of defence is planning a wide military campaign in Gaza, aimed to destroy the Hamas infrastructure. The man has not set foot in office and already declares violent attempts. Patience is a virtue yet to be recognized by Israeli leaders.

Having said that, Israel cannot afford sitting idly by, watching its enemy grow in power and preparing for the destruction of "The vicious Zionist entity". Peretz could not do anything after the Hezbollah War, and Olmert will not allow another military campaign without a trustful person in the ministry of defence. Now that the most decorated soldier in the history of Israel assumed office, the government is heading for more

bloodshed. Since the last war people spoke of war during the summer. Only prudence will stop this from happening. By prudence I mean something to be desired both on the Palestinian and Israeli sides. The bloodshed can be avoided. I call upon external powers, first and foremost the US and Europe, to show more involvement to halt the vicious snowball. It is in their best interest to push the Israelis and Palestinians to speak to one another.

Hate Crimes in Europe



Anti-Semitism and hate crimes rose last year in several places throughout Europe, according to a report released on June 6,

2007 by the American advocacy group Human Rights First.

The report says more than 50 people were killed in Russia because of their ethnic origin, and Britain has seen a sharp rise in anti-Semitism and hate crimes since the terror attacks in London on July 7, 2005. Hate crimes in London motivated by religion climbed by as much as 600 percent following the July 7, 2005 bombings on the London mass transport system.

The report states that those who attack Jews in Europe use criticism of Israel and its policies to justify their actions. It says Muslims are attacked in the street as a response to Islamic terror by people who see every Muslim as a legitimate target.

British Boycott of Israeli Academia



British academics voted in favour of deliberating on an academic boycott of Israel on May 30, 2007 to protest what they termed "Israeli academics' cooperation with Israeli government's policies that

harm Palestinians".

Delegates at the University and College Union conference in Bournemouth voted 158 in favour of the decision to debate the possibility of imposing an academic boycott on institutions of higher education in Israel, unless these condemn the occupation of the Palestinian territories, with 99 opposing and eight abstentions.

The boycott's shameful motion "notes that Israel's 40-year occupation has seriously damaged the fabric of Palestinian society through annexation, illegal settlement, collective punishment and restriction of movement, deplores the denial of educational rights for Palestinians by invasions, closures, checkpoints, curfews, and shootings and arrests of teachers, lecturers and students." It condemned "the complicity of Israeli academia in the occupation, which has provoked a call from Palestinian trade unions for a comprehensive and consistent international boycott of all Israeli academic institutions," adding that "in these circumstances passivity or neutrality is unacceptable and criticism of Israel cannot be construed as anti-Semitic."

The resolution instructs British academics to "circulate the full text of the

Palestinian boycott call to all branches," and to "encourage members to consider the moral implications of existing and proposed links with Israeli academic institutions." It also called on its members to "organize a UK-wide campus tour for Palestinian academic/educational trade unionists."

Zvi Hefetz, Israel's ambassador to London, commented that "A stench of ignorance arises from the one-sided formula and unbalanced language of the decision". I tend to agree. Hefetz also pointed out the fact that during the discussion, a proposal was made, and rejected, that the resolution also condemns anti-Semitism. The ambassador said this fact strengthened his feeling that the ignorance shown by those proposing the boycott was also tinged with anti-Semitism.

Education Minister Yuli Tamir (who did her D.Phil. at Oxford) said that the decision was outrageous, adding Israel would work to defuse it through cooperation with England's prominent universities, "which have never approved of academic boycotts".

The British Minister of State for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning, Bill Rammell, arrived in Israel to discuss the boycott plan. Prior to his arrival Rammell advised that he takes a stand supportive of Israel and against a boycott. The British government holds that any kind of boycott will not contribute to the peace process and a two-state solution, and therefore dialogue is preferable. On June 5, 2007 Prime Minister Ehud Olmert spoke with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who condemned calls for an academic boycott of Israel, and said they are not representative of British public opinion nor of British universities. During his visit to Israel, On June 10 Rammell stressed that his government honoured academic freedom and was disturbed by several matters. He said that, as a friend of Israel and the Palestinians, he believed that both sides should be encouraged to promote peace. Rammell emphasized that the British academia supported Israeli and Palestinian academic activity in Britain. According to Rammell, Britain wanted to attract Israeli students to its campuses; it wanted to collabourate (pun intended). He said that the academia should promote such cooperation around the world.

Rammell and Israel's Minister of Education Tamir discussed a series of joint academic activities, to prove de facto cooperation. "The British government's statements regarding academic cooperation with Israel de-legitimize the boycott, and the academic institutes will most probably continue to work with Israel," Tamir said.

A few weeks ago I had a discussion with a lecturer from Brighton University, who appeared to endorse the motion. He thought that Israeli academia is much involved in the life of the nation, and could exert influence on the government to change its policies. I said that Israeli academia has influence on the Israeli government to the same extent that the British academia has influence on the British government. I said that most of Israeli academia objects to the occupation, and many people do it publicly, without a shadow of doubt. Readers of my blog <http://almagor.blogspot.com/> can testify that I have been objecting to the occupation for many years. Indeed, I spoke against the occupation since 1985, with little success or impact on Israeli governments

through the years to cease the occupation. I endorse the motion language on the evils of occupation. I don't see how boycotting the Israeli academia is going to make the Israeli government change its policies.

The Brighton lecturer, Bob, suggested that all presidents and rectors of Israeli universities sign a petition denouncing the occupation. I said this will not and cannot be done. First, political views are private. All citizens are entitled to keep their political opinions to themselves, if they so desire. This is why people vote behind a curtain. Even presidents and rectors are entitled to some privacy. Second, I would assume that as people, presidents and rectors included, disagree on almost anything, they would also disagree on this issue. You cannot expect unanimity of opinions. Third, it seems that Bob is putting too much weight on what presidents and rectors think, as if people actually care. I really do not think that the Israeli government will be convinced to change its policies on the occupation because of such petition. Lastly, for prudential reasons presidents and rectors cannot do this, as university budgets are very much dependent on the government. They would not like to shoot themselves in the leg, or higher. The last few governments, from 2001 onwards, had cut universities' budgets by 20 percent, and I don't think the Olmert government will go out of its way to guarantee a no-further-cut policy.

Israeli academia, together with Israeli artists, is the most vocal voice against the occupation. Boycotting the academia will not stop the occupation. If at all, it would help to silence voices against the occupation. Those who push forward this motion simply do not know the Israeli scene. The occupation should be stopped, the sooner the better, but there are other ways to sway the Israeli government to change its policies. This one undercuts the purpose.

Moreover, I have already mentioned on <http://almagor.blogspot.com/> that Olmert came to power with an explicit agenda of ending the occupation and bring an end to the conflict by establishing a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Amir Peretz was the perfect partner for such a plan. However, when the Palestinian opt for violence and answer with suicide murderers and Kassam rockets, no sane prime minister will simply give away territories, knowing that this step might subject the entire country to the Kassams. If the British academia really wants to enter into these muddy waters of Middle Eastern politics, it should prepare its homework first, study the situation, and then seek ways to end the prolonged Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I am sorry to say there are no easy short-cuts. This bloody conflict is complex and complicated. It deserves careful attention, and not a quick wide-brush decision to ban those who work hard to install peace and tranquility in the region. It is counter-productive and smells bad. British academia has a leading role in the world, and some of its scholars are simply the best. They are capable of devising far better ways to promote a peaceful agenda for the Middle East.

On June 13 an ad was published in The Times carrying signatures of academics in Britain who oppose the boycott. My signature was there. I would hope that many more of my colleagues oppose this anti-academia, anti-free speech, discriminatory and ill-thought out campaign.

British Academy Restates Opposition to Academic Boycotts

<http://www.britac.ac.uk/news/release.asp?NewsID=256>

For more than twenty years the British Academy has made clear its opposition to academic boycotts. It supports free academic interchange, global collaboration and participation in scholarly activity, without regard to race, religion, political philosophy, ethnic origin, citizenship, language and sex. The Academy, as a member of the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (IHRNASS), indicates its full support of the Network's statement published in the scientific journal *Nature* on 13 June 2002.

The text of the statement includes the following:



"The International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies was created to address grave issues of science and human rights

throughout the world. It aims to put into practice the professional duty of scientists and scholars to assist those colleagues whose human rights have been - or are threatened to be - infringed and to promote and protect the independence of academies and scholarly societies worldwide. The basis of the network's activities is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The network seeks to promote the free exchange of ideas and opinions among scientists and scholars in all countries and, thereby, to stimulate the development of collaborative educational, research and human-rights endeavours within academies and the institutions with which they are affiliated.

Moratoria on scientific exchanges based on nationality, race, sex, language, religion, opinion and similar factors thwart the network's goals. They would deny our colleagues their rights to freedom of opinion and expression; interfere with their ability to exercise their bona fide academic freedoms; inhibit the free circulation of scientists and scientific ideas; and impose unjust punishment. They would also be an impediment to the instrumental role played by scientists and scholars in the promotion of peace and human rights."

Fighting the Boycott – Please Sign the Petition

<http://www.ajcongress.org/site/PageServer?pagename=boycott&JServSessionIdro10=iaam7eqk26.app2a>



Dear Friends, The American Jewish Congress is actively fighting the British University

and College Union's (UCU) proposed academic boycott of Israel on a number of fronts:

AJCongress President Richard S. Gordon commended the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) for their opposition to the boycott, praising their commitment “to preserving and advancing the free exchange of ideas among academics.” ([Click here to read the full press release](#)) We initiated a massive email campaign (over 13,000 emails were issued) to enlist members of the academic community to sign the Scholars for Peace in the Middle East (SPME) petition, which declares that the singling out of Israelis for an academic boycott is wrong and asks academics outside Israel to declare themselves to be Israeli academics for purposes of any academic boycott and to decline from participating in any activity from which Israeli academics are excluded. ([Click here to sign the petition](#)) In a repeat of our highly-successful appeal in 2005, credited by many to have been extremely influential in ending a similar proposed boycott by the British Association of University Teachers (AUT), AJCongress called upon Rhodes Scholars to join in a statement objecting to this outrageous action against Israeli universities and those who teach in them. ([Click here for more information](#))

The Annual Israeli Democracy Index



On June 10, 2007 the Israel Democracy Institute published its Annual Democracy Index, showing that the level of trust in most institutions is in significant decline. Indeed,

sixty-six percent of Israelis are not satisfied with the functioning of Israeli democracy.

The poll, conducted among a representative sample of 1,203 respondents showed that 70 percent of Israelis feel that politicians do not consider the citizen's opinions.

The survey, which is conducted annually, was carried out by the Guttman Center in three different languages, and with a maximum sampling error of 2.8 percent. This is hardly surprising given that the prime minister and minister of defence remain in office despite the very little support they have, and the repeated calls for their resignation following their fiasco handling of the July 2006 crisis that developed into a full-fledge, most unnecessary war. Eighty-six percent of the public feels that the government is not handling the state's problems in the right manner, while only 29 percent say they trust the political echelon's statements on security matters.

The public's faith in the prime minister is in sharp decline that is most worrisome: 21% have faith in the office, compared with 43% last year. This is a 22 percent drop in one year, and the “credit” goes to Ehud Olmert.

The public's faith in Prime Minister Olmert's ability to preserve democracy only reached 14 percent. Yet again, the public said again that it does not trust its prime minister.

The relentless efforts of Olmert to remain in office no matter what, are detrimental to Israeli democracy. Most disturbingly, the yearning for a strong hand that will put things in order is unsurprisingly on the rise. 69% (compared with 60% last year) feel that "a few strong leaders could do the country more good than all the meetings and laws". This shows the urgent need for developing democratic curricula in all education levels in Israel. The majority of Israelis simply do not understand what democracy is all about. Lack of trust in the prime minister brings many to prefer strong leaders over law and democratic institutions.

The annual democracy index showed that 79 percent of the respondents are concerned with the state's current situation, yet a similar number of citizens (76 percent) are proud to be Israeli. Most of the public feels it is inseparable from the State of Israel and its problems, and is willing to fight for the state when the need arises.

The Second Lebanon War left most of the respondents agreeing that the state's defense budget should be increased, while only 13 percent said it should be reduced, and 61 percent said they do not trust the military echelon's statements on security matters.

When the state president is accused of serial raping and is not willing to resign you can expect that many will cease to appreciate this institution. Unfortunately, the common tendency is to associate the institution with the present person who is serving in office. Faith in the president has also dropped, from 67 percent last year to 22 percent in 2007.

The politicians' unremitting efforts to undermine the position of the Supreme Court is bearing fruit: faith in the Supreme Court declined from 68 percent to 61 percent. Only 39% perceive the Supreme Court as the institution which best preserves democracy.

The Israeli Police also suffered a three percent drop in the public's faith, from 44 percent to 41 percent, while the IDF lost five percent of the public's trust, from 79 percent to 74 percent.

While the Knesset also suffered a five percent drop from 79 percent to 74 percent of the public's faith, and faith in the government went down from 39 percent to 31 percent. More than 50% do not trust the media.

The poll showed that 79 percent of the respondents did not think relations between the rich and poor in Israel were good, and 66 percent said that strengthening ties between religious and seculars was necessary for real improvement.

In Arab-Jew ties, 87 percent of the respondents said the relations were either not good or not good at all. Some 55 percent of the Jewish respondents agreed that "Arabs will never reach the cultural level of the Jews", while 51 percent of the Arabs agreed that "the Jews are racist". The majority of both Arabs and Jews (73 percent) said that they had a hard time trusting the other and believed that the other side was prone to violent behavior.

The Failed States Index 2007



The world's weakest states aren't just a danger to themselves. They can threaten the progress and stability of countries half a world away. In the third annual Failed States Index, FOREIGN POLICY and The Fund for Peace rank the countries where the risk of failure is running high.

To provide a clearer picture of the world's weakest states, The Fund for Peace, an independent research organization, and FOREIGN POLICY present the third annual Failed States Index. Using 12 social, economic, political, and military indicators, we ranked 177 states in order of their vulnerability to violent internal conflict and societal deterioration. The index scores are based on data from more than 12,000 publicly available sources collected from May to December 2006. The 60 most vulnerable states are listed in the rankings, and full results are available at <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/> and <http://www.fundforpeace.org/fsi>.

For the second year in a row, Sudan tops the rankings as the state most at risk of failure. The primary cause of its instability, violence in the country's western region of Darfur, is as well known as it is tragic. At least 200,000 people—and perhaps as many as 400,000—have been killed in the past four years by janjaweed militias armed by the government, and 2 to 3 million people have fled their torched villages for squalid camps as the violence has spilled into the Central African Republic and Chad. These countries were hardly pictures of stability prior to the influx of refugees and rebels across their borders; the Central African Republic plays host to a modern-day slave trade, and rebels attacked Chad's capital in April 2006 in a failed coup attempt. But the spillover effects from Sudan have a great deal to do with the countries' tumble in the rankings, demonstrating that the dangers of failing states often bleed across borders. That is especially worrying for a few select regions. This year, eight of the world's 10 most vulnerable states are in sub-Saharan Africa, up from six last year and seven in 2005.

Two vulnerable giants, China and Russia, improved their scores sufficiently to move out of the 60 worst states. That is in part due to the fact that 31 additional countries were assessed this year. But some credit must be paid to the countries themselves. China's economic engine continues to propel the country forward at a breakneck pace, but the growing divide between urban and rural, as well as continued protests in the countryside, reveals pockets of frailty that the central government is only just beginning to address. Russia's growing economy and a lull in the violence in Chechnya have had stabilizing effects, despite fresh concerns about the country's democratic future.

It is sad to see the decline of Lebanon. The Switzerland of the Middle East dropped nearly 12 points in the index, giving it a total score just a hair shy of Liberia's. The Hezbollah War helped undo nearly two decades of economic and political progress and reversed much of the progress made since the end

of its own civil war in 1990. The war did an estimated \$2.8 billion in damage to the country's infrastructure. Lebanon was vulnerable because its political and security structures lacked integrity and remained tensely divided by factionalized elites. Those vulnerabilities not only helped turn the clock back on the country's development, but they reverberated across the region—into Israel, Jordan, and Syria. It shows again that a country's problems are never simply its own.

See

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3865&page=0&fp_src=ealert071505ak2khg

Freedom of the Press 2007 Survey



In advance of World Press Freedom Day, on May 3rd, Freedom House has released several critical tools to highlight data from its annual survey of global press freedom, and to help explain the newest findings in their historical context. The current edition of the survey, Freedom of the Press 2007, points to improvements in several countries such as Italy, Nepal, Colombia, and Haiti; however, it shows mixed trends in Africa, as well as a continuation of a longer-term pattern of decline in press freedom in Asia, Latin America, and the former Soviet Union.

See <http://freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=362>

International Day of Peace -

<http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org/>



On Friday, September 21, 2007 - the UN International Day of Peace, a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, the Royal Albert Hall will hold a special music event. Performing live include:

Annie Lennox
Corinne Bailey Rae
James Morrison
Beth Orton

Marc Almond

There will also be other elements, including key speakers, video messages from international celebrities and specially created POD films.

Tickets go on sale from June 17. Tickets are available from:
Royal Albert Hall 020 7589 8212 (9.00am to 9.00pm daily)
or <http://www.royalalberthall.com/>

The Woodrow Wilson Center Announces 2007-2008 Fellows

News Release - 14 May
2007



WASHINGTON—Lee H.

Hamilton, president and director of the Woodrow Wilson Center, announces the selection of the 2007-2008 fellowship class. The 21 fellows, most of whom will arrive in September 2007 to spend an academic year in residence at the Center, will include scholars and practitioners from the United States, Azerbaijan, Chile, India, Israel, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

“We’re pleased to have such a distinguished group of men and women joining us this fall,” said Hamilton. “They represent a variety of disciplines, topics, nationalities, and viewpoints, which will undoubtedly add to the richness of thought and dialogue here at the Wilson Center.”

The fellows are listed below with the projects they will pursue during their Wilson Center residency.

Caroline Bledsoe. Melville J. Herskovits Professor of African Studies and Professor of Anthropology, Northwestern University. “The Demography of Family Reunification in Afro-Iberia: Emerging Dilemmas for Spain and its African Immigrants”

William Callahan. Chair Professor of International Politics, University of Manchester, United Kingdom. “Security, Identity, and the Rise of China”

Gokhan Cetinsaya. Professor of History, Istanbul Technical University, Turkey. “Turkey and the New Iraq: Past, Present and Future”

Rita Chin. Assistant Professor of History, University of Michigan. “The European Left and Postwar Immigration”

Raphael Cohen-Almagor. Director, Center for Democratic Studies, University of Haifa, Israel (recently moved to Hull University, United Kingdom). “In Internet’s Way: New Challenges for Liberal Democracies”

Marie-Therese Connolly. Coordinator, Elder Justice Initiative and Senior Trial Counsel, United States Department of Justice. “No Place for Sissies: The Silent Scandal of Elder Abuse in an Aging America”

Mary Ellen Curtin. Lecturer, Department of History, University of Essex, United Kingdom. “From Virtue to Power: Barbara Jordan and the Origins of the Black Female Politician in America”

Matthew Dallek. Author and Adjunct Professor, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, School of Public and International Affairs. “Sense of Siege: The Titanic Struggle to Defend America, 1941-1962”

Lucia Dammert. Director, Citizen’s Security Program, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLASCO), Chile. “Diffusion and

Confusion: The Importation of U.S. Public Security Policies to Latin America”

Neil Foley. Associate Professor of History and American Studies, The University of Texas at Austin. “Jim Crow Good Neighbors: Black and Latino Civil Rights in World War II-Era Texas and the Southwest, 1940-1964”

Dipankar Gupta. Professor of Sociology, Center for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. “The Vanishing Village: Policy Implications for India in the Era of Globalization”

Frances Hagopian. Michael P. Grace II Associate Professor of Latin American Studies, Department of Political Science, University of Notre Dame. “Reorganizing Political Representation in Latin America: Parties, Program, and Patronage in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico”

Alexander Knysh. Professor of Islamic Studies, Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of Michigan. “Islam and Empire in the Northern Caucasus”

Chingiz Mammadov. Professor of Political Science, Khazar University; Manager, Counterpart-International, Azerbaijan. “The Experience of Interfaith and Interethnic Tolerance in Azerbaijan to Moderate Current Religious and Interethnic Confrontation in Iraq”

Deirdre Moloney. Coordinator of Postgraduate Fellowships, George Mason University. “National Insecurities: Immigration and U.S. Deportation Policy”

Daniel Monk. Cooley Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies, Colgate University. “Traces of Aggression: Mutual Recrimination and the Elaboration of History in the Aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War”

Robyn Muncy. Associate Professor of History, University of Maryland, College Park. “Progressivism and the Great Society: Josephine Roche and the Reform Tradition in Twentieth Century America”

Shobita Parthasarathy. Assistant Professor, Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan. “Crisis at the Patent Office: Rethinking Governance of Biotechnology in Comparative Perspective”

Jill Shankleman. Director, JSL Consulting, United Kingdom. “New Kids on the Block: Chinese State Oil Companies and Governance of Oil Wealth”

Aili Tripp. Professor of Political Science and Women’s Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison. “Women and Peacemaking in Africa: When, Why and How Gender Matters”

Salim Yaqub. Associate Professor of History, University of California, Santa Barbara. “Imperfect Strangers: Americans and Arabs in the 1970s”

The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, established by Congress in 1968 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., is the living,

national memorial to President Wilson. The Center establishes and maintains a neutral forum for free, open, and informed dialogue. It is a nonpartisan institution, supported by public and private funds and engaged in the study of national and world affairs.

Request for Funding - The Social Responsibility Project



As you know, following the events of last year, most notably the Hezbollah War, I decided to do some concrete things rather than rambling complaints. I joined the public movement which calls for Elections Now, lend my

signature to a public petition that expressed grievances regarding the war conduct, calling for the resignation of Olmert-Peretz and Halutz. We got rid of two. One more to go. These people are unfit to lead.

Moreover, together with a colleague from Bar-Ilan University, Dr. Ori Arbel-Ganz, I embarked on a new venture: a comprehensive volume on social responsibility. We believe social responsibility is greatly desired and of much need in Israel. However, not many people are leading by example and serve a light to the nation. I checked what is available in Hebrew on the subject and discovered a desert. Almost nothing. A few articles, and one booklet which is more or less useless. I believe the role of academia is not to remain aloof in the ivory tower, teaching students and conduct research that has little meaning or effect on real life. I believe our role as academics is to ignite debates, provoke discussion and awareness to important subjects, and suggest remedies to pressing problems. We need to oil the wheels of change.

Hence, Ori and I have gathered a very distinguished list of people, THE leading experts in their respective fields, to write about social responsibility in Israel. This is a path-breaking venture.

Given the prestigious authors who understand the importance of this project we wish to secure a publisher first and only then give the contributors green-light to start writing their respective essays. We do not wish to face a situation by which we will have articles but no publisher. Alas, publishers in Israel are reluctant to commit themselves to such bulky projects as they are guided by considerations of profit, not social responsibility. First and foremost, they do not wish to lose money. They assume that this considerable project, which is likely to comprise two volumes of hundred of pages (36 articles, each 25 double-spaced pages long), will not become a best seller. They acknowledge that it will become the guiding source on responsibility, but this does not provide enough incentive for them. One publisher already voiced interest, but it requires funding.

Thus, we are looking for a sponsor. A sum of \$25,000 will enable us to secure a publisher and grant authors with the go-ahead signal to work on their respective pieces.

All ideas/advice/help and especially kind sponsorship are most welcome and very much appreciated.

Here is the tentative table of contents:

Public Accountability

Edited by: Raphael Cohen-Almagor and Ori Arbel-Ganz

Introduction: On Public Responsibility by Raphael Cohen-Almagor

First Part: Theory

Public Responsibility as Moral Expression by Dani Attas

Public Responsibility and Ethics by Asa Kasher

Halakha and Public Responsibility by Yuval Shrlo

Law and Public Responsibility by Ron Shapira and Hanan Mandel

Public Responsibility as Rational Choice by Gideon Doron and Assaf Meydani

Public Responsibility's Typology and its Behavioral Expression by Ori Arbel-Ganz

Public Responsibility as Corruption by Doron Navot

Second Part: Institutions

The Legislatures' Public Responsibility by Naomi Chazan

The Cabinet's Public Responsibility Gad Yaakobi

Public Responsibility of the Prime Minister by Arye Naor

Public Responsibility of Judges by Eliahu Mazza

Public Responsibility of the State Attorney by Talia Sasoon

Public Responsibility of the State Comptroller by David Deri

Public Responsibility of the Local Government and Municipalities by Nahum Ben-Elya

Third Part: Public Administration and Executive Agencies

Public Responsibility of the Public Administration by Eran Vigoda-Gadot

Public Responsibility of the Bank of Israel by Ohad Bar-Efrat

Public Responsibility of Regulators and Regulatory Agencies by Tehilla Altshuler-Shvartz

Public Responsibility of Citizens' Representatives in Public Committees by Ruida Abu-Ras

Public Responsibility of IDF's Officers – Psychological Aspects by Uzi Ben-Shalom

Public Responsibility of the IDF's General Staff by Yagil Levi

Fourth Part: Non-Governmental Organizations and Players

The Community's Public Responsibility by Gad Barzilai

The Citizens' Public Responsibility by Avia Pasternak

Public Responsibility of the Mass Media by Dan Caspi

Public Responsibility of the Israel Press Council by Moshe Ronen

Public Responsibility of the Private Sector and Firms by Aviva Geva

Public Responsibility of the Third Sector (NGO's) by Benjamin Gidron and Nissan Limor

Public Responsibility of Think-Tanks by Uri Dromi

Fifth Part: Policy Issues

Public Responsibility for the Israeli Arabs by Sami Smooaha

Public Responsibility for Gender Equality by Orna Sasoon-Levi and Orli Benjamin

Public Responsibility for Immigrants and Foreign Workers by Moshe Semyonov and Rebecca Reijman

Public Responsibility for Public Health by Mordehai Halperin

Public Responsibility for Education by Orit Ichilov

Public Responsibility for Environmental Protection by Uri Marinov

Public Responsibility for the Arts by Ori Lev

Epilogue: Public Responsibility in Israel by Raphael Cohen-Almagor and Ori Arbel-Ganz

New Article

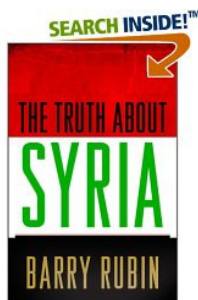


Raphael Cohen-Almagor, "Political Extremism and Incitement in Israel 1993-1995, 2003-2005: A Study of Dangerous Expressions", *Democracy and Security*, Vol. 3, Issue 1 (2007), pp. 21-43.

This essay discusses the issue of inciteful speech, focusing on cases that took place in Israel prior to the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin, and during the years 2003-2005 against Prime Minister Sharon. It is argued that these incitement cases required the involvement of the legal authorities, but not enough action was taken in order to prevent them or to punish the inciters. The legal authorities were mistaken in adopting a liberal, tolerant attitude towards incitement. To date, this attitude will not deter future inciters from violent speech-acts against Israeli leaders who support evacuation of settlements and dividing the land between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

As ever, I'd be happy to e-mail the article to interested parties.

New Book



Barry Rubin, *The Truth about Syria* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2007). 304 pages. \$24.95. ISBN: 1-4039-8273-2.

In all the world's and especially the Middle East's biggest issues, Syria plays a central role. This book provides a comprehensive explanation of Syria's regime, interests, policies, and society. In turn, Syria provides a model for understanding the Arab and Muslim worlds today. While the Syrian regime poses as being desirous of peace and engagement with the West, in fact, its institutions, ideology, propaganda, and activities go in the exact opposite direction. To survive, the minority-dominated, dictatorial, and economically incompetent government needs radicalism, instability, anti-Americanism, Lebanon as a strategic and economic asset, and Israel as a scapegoat. This book explains the countries' policies and problems in a systematic way. To

order, click here. For a review copy, contact: Ellis.Trevor@stmartins.com. For publicity information, contact: william.smith@stmartins.com.

The Freud House, London



This recommendation is for the “advanced tourists” in London, those who visited the grand museums, beautiful parks, interesting neighborhoods, and have some spare time in London. This small museum requires 1-2 hours. Entrance fee: 5 GBP.

The Freud Museum, at 20 Maresfield Gardens in Hampstead (nearest tube: Finchley Road), was the home of Sigmund Freud and his family when they escaped Nazi annexation of Austria in 1938. Freud spent the last year of his life in this house. It remained the family home until Anna Freud, the youngest daughter, died in 1982. Indeed, the house is as much about Anna as it is about her father. The centre piece of the museum is Freud's library and study, preserved just as it was during his lifetime. You can watch two movies: one about Sigmund Freud, which I recommend. The other is composed of family movies. This one I did not watch for long. Further details: <http://www.freud.org.uk/>

FREUD MUSEUM , 20 Maresfield Gardens, London NW3 5SX
tel: +44 (0)20 7435 2002; fax: +44 (0)20 7431 5452
email: info@freud.org.uk



Life with a Wink

Sam is shouting at his wife, Becky: "Oh no, not another new dress and accessories. Just where do you think I am going to get the money to pay for it all?"

Becky replies: "I may be a lot of different things to many people, but I'm certainly not inquisitive!"

It was mealtime during a flight on El Al.

"Would you like dinner?" the flight attendant asked Michael, seated in front. "What are my choices?" Michael asked.

"Yes or no," she replied.

With my very best wishes,

Yours as ever,

Rafi

My last communications are available on <http://almagor.blogspot.com/>

Earlier posts at my home page: <http://hcc.haifa.ac.il/~rca/>

<<http://hcc.haifa.ac.il/~rca/>>