

Politics – January 2008

This was another sad month for the people of Sderot and for Israeli education. Hello, is there prime minister in Jerusalem?

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Rocket threat from Gaza



The situation in the south of Israel is very tense, and escalation is probable. Israel attacks in Gaza to stop the Qassams. In return, the Palestinians fire more Qassams. During this month, parts of southern Israel were subjected to a barrage of dozens of Qassam rockets and dozens of mortars. On January 15, Israel Defense Forces said they killed 19 Palestinians. Of the dead, 15 were confirmed as armed militants. One of the fatalities was the [son of Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar](#), the last surviving founder of the Islamist group.

My heart goes out to the residents of Sderot. I don't understand how they can live under such fear. And now the residents of Ashkelon, a much bigger town, have reason to fear as well. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the rocket fire on Ashkelon, a city of 120,000 people about 16 kilometers (10 miles) from Gaza.

Please find below links to a report (102 pages) on the rocket threat from the Gaza Strip from 2000-2007 that was prepared by the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Israel Intelligence Heritage & Commemoration Center (IICC).

http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/eng/eng_n/rocket_threat_e.htm

I thank Reuvan Erlich for this.

Bush Visit to Israel



People asked me what I think of the Bush visit to Israel. Think of a man who is courting after a lady, speaks good words in her ear, sends presents, brings flowers. However, she could not care less. She turns a deaf ear and ignores him.

Bush, Abu Mazen, Olmert may all orchestrate an agreement, but without the bride, this would be futile. No matter how you call Hamas: a terrorist organization, freedom fighters, militant militia or the elected representative of the Palestinian people. At present, Hamas is what the Palestinian want, and Hamas is not willing even to recognize Israel, let alone compromise in the pursuit of peace. As long this is the case, the awful status quo will be maintained.

Bush knows this. He should know this. Why did he bother to visit the region at this point? Possibly for his legacy. For empty historical reasons. Nothing concrete and of substance emerges from the visit.

We in the west have a very different conception of compromise than do the Arabs. We tend to believe that compromise is almost always achievable. This is not the case in the Arab world. Some actually despise the idea of compromise, as it is conceived as weakness. The strong need not compromise.

In the west, one wishes to sell one's house and wants a million dollars. Another offers \$ 850,000. For both sides, the idea of compromise is paramount. If the first really wants to sell, and the other really wants to buy, there will be a deal. In the Arab world, sometimes nothing less than 100% will do. No compromise could be reached. We need to recognize this.

In the west, suppose you don't wish to sell your house. However, a person fancies the house and offers double of the price. You say no. He increases the offer. Until you say yes. Again, in the Arab world, it does not work this way. The entire process of negotiation is different. No means no. Even talking to you might be conceived as a weakness. Deal is not necessarily achievable simply by increasing the price.

So when Hamas says no to Israel, no to recognition, no to two-state solution, no to peace, yes to violence and resistance, the idea that we can make Hamas to say yes by simply increasing the offer is alien to all that has taken place in recent years. It does not work this way. We need to understand this.

For further discussion on compromise, see R. Cohen-Almagor, "On Compromise and Coercion", *Ratio Juris*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (December 2006), pp. 434-455.

Ran Cohen

Yossi Beilin is a thoughtful, visionary person. He is not a leader. Meretz, the Israel Civil Rights Party, had acknowledged this quite a while ago, recognizing it was a mistake to vote him for leadership. Beilin has now announced that he will not compete for the leadership in the coming elections. He understood his chances to win are not great, to put it mildly.



The three contenders are Haim Oron, Ran Cohen and Zehava Galon. All are worthy people. None will advance Meretz to the place it deserves, as a contender party to form a coalition, a party to offer a candidate for the prime minister office. Among the three I warmly endorse Ran Cohen.

I have known Ran for many years. He is a conscientious, genuine, responsible, fair and able politician, with a clear agenda as to how to advance human rights in Israel, how to improve the condition of the poor, how to promote peace and security. Ran is a rare mensch in Israeli politics, a person who gained my trust and appreciation. I endorse Ran Cohen wholeheartedly, and wish him every success in this campaign.

New Arab Reform Brief on Jordan: “The Possibility of Transition from Electoral Rut to a Constitutional Democratic Monarchy”

28th December, 2007, By Khaled Hroub



Article 1 of the Jordanian constitution states that the country’s governance system is a “Parliamentary Hereditary Monarchy”, meaning that Jordan is supposed to be a state with a constitutional democratic monarchy, similar to contemporary European monarchies like Great Britain, Sweden, Spain and Belgium. The Jordanian constitution was modelled on the latter’s democratic constitutions, according to which authority rests in the hands of an elected government, while the monarchy serves as the symbolic framework of the country’s political and social system; in other words, the monarchy reigns but does not rule. Had Jordan succeeded in configuring itself according to the provisions

of its own constitution it would have become a pioneering model of democracy in the Arab world.

Most countries in this part of the world have adopted hereditary systems, either in the form of well-established old monarchies or they developed novel forms of the system (like republics gradually shifting towards hereditary government). However, 18 years after the first Jordanian legislative elections were held in 1989, following the lifting of the emergency rule imposed in the aftermath of the 1967 War, and the occupation of the West Bank by Israel, “Jordanian democracy” is still illusive, let alone making the country a model of good governance. Successive legislative elections have become an uninteresting routine, the political process is non-cumulative and its protagonists lack a shared long-term, and forward-looking, national vision. The Jordanian-Palestinian mix, both demographically and politically, and the regional dimensions of Jordan’s situation, have eroded this vision even further.

As for parliament, its role and status are being eroded by conservative, Islamist and partisan tribal and traditionalist elements, while the palace and royal court are pushing it in a liberal and modern direction. For its part, the government, positioned right in the middle between the two, tries to reconcile their positions and close the gap between parliament’s conservatism and the palace’s modernity, tearing its performance apart in the process, and provoking a rapid succession of government reshuffles and changes. Jordan needs a “Project of State and Society”, far greater than the palace, parliament and the government, and able to steer these three institutions’ performances in a single direction. However, before there could be any talk about this “project”, we should take stock of the November 2007 election results, ponder upon them and draw one more lesson that would only confirm the fact that Jordan’s current path towards democracy needs a thorough dust-off, and real shake-up.

To read the full English version of the Arab Reform Brief click here :

<http://www.arab-reform.net/spip.php?article1145>

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http://www.arab-reform.net/spip.php?page=article_ar&lang=ar&id_article=1146

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US Elections

Written on January 4, 2007:



The White House race was officially opened on January 3, 2007 with the Iowa caucuses. Obama's aggressive campaign paid. He received 38% of the votes. John Edwards came second with 30% and Hillary Clinton third with 29%.

As for the Republicans, former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee enjoyed the support of the evangelical camp to victory over Mitt Romney. He received 34% of the votes, Romney 25%, Fred Thompson and John McCain came third, each with 13% of the votes.

My favourite candidate is Hillary Clinton, a woman of experience, a champion of human rights, minority rights, women's rights, health rights, an astute leader who stands for the right thing. In this world of men for men, I enjoy and appreciate strong women who are committed to human rights. I'd like to see more of them in politics. The world will be a better place voting such women into office.

Here is Clinton's record on human rights:

1962: met MLK Jr. preaching a sermon in Chicago. (Jul 2007)

1965: brought black classmates to all-white church. (Jul 2007)

Supports DOMA, which Bill Clinton signed. (Jul 2007)

We've come a long way on race, but we have a long way to go. (Jun 2007)

1995: Politely criticized China's human rights. (Jun 2007)

1988: Instituted gender diversity Report Card within ABA. (Jun 2007)
Developmental thread: tragedy of race must be made right. (Jun 2007)
Pushing for privacy bill of rights. (Jun 2006)
Argued with Bill Clinton about diluting affirmative action. (Oct 2005)
1972: Worked with Edelman on school desegregation in South. (Nov 2003)
Apologize for slavery, but concentrate on civil rights now. (Oct 2000)
Crack down on sex trafficking of women and girls. (Jan 2000)
Human rights are women's rights. (Jan 2000)
Women's rights are human rights. (Dec 1999)
Support National Endowment for the Arts. (Feb 1997)
Affirmative living: involve entire village against racism. (Sep 1996)
Sex selection, prostitution & war rape: human rights issues. (Sep 1995)

Gay Rights

Telling kids about gay couples is parental discretion. (Sep 2007)
Positive about civil unions, with full equality of benefits. (Aug 2007)
Let states decide gay marriage; they're ahead of feds. (Aug 2007)
GLBT progress since 2000, when I marched in gay pride parade. (Aug 2007)
Don't ask don't tell was an important transition step. (Jun 2007)
2004: defended traditional marriage; 2006: voted for same-sex. (May 2007)
Federal Marriage Amendment would be terrible step backwards. (Oct 2006)
Gay soldiers need to shoot straight, not be straight. (Nov 2003)
End hate crimes and other intolerance. (Sep 2000)
Gays deserve domestic partnership benefits. (Feb 2000)
Military service based on conduct, not sexual orientation. (Dec 1999)

Voting Record

Op-ed: Voted no on flag-burning to build centrist credential. (May 2006)
Voted NO on recommending Constitutional ban on flag desecration. (Jun 2006)
Voted NO on constitutional ban of same-sex marriage. (Jun 2006)
Voted YES on adding sexual orientation to definition of hate crimes. (Jun 2002)
Voted YES on loosening restrictions on cell phone wiretapping. (Oct 2001)
Rated 60% by the ACLU, indicating a mixed civil rights voting record. (Dec 2002)
Rated 89% by the HRC, indicating a pro-gay-rights stance. (Dec 2006)
Rated 96% by the NAACP, indicating a pro-affirmative-action stance. (Dec 2006)

Source: http://www.issues2000.org/Hillary_Clinton.htm



In the Republican camp I like John McCain, a man of experience, integrity, common sense and clear agenda. I'd be happy to see him doing well in New Hampshire, get the funding he desperately needs, and fly from there.

Here is McCain's record on **human rights:**

Don't ask, don't tell is working; don't tamper with it. (Jun 2007) Confederate flag on top of capitol was wrong; in

front is ok. (May 2007) Leave gay marriage to the states. (Jan 2007) John Lewis was as courageous as anyone could ever hope to be. (Apr 2004) Fear did not restrain Dr. King to resist repression. (Apr 2004) Support evangelism but don't pander to evangelical leaders. (Feb 2000) Inter-racial dating ban is idiotic and cruel. (Feb 2000)

Career-long history of supporting Indian causes. (Jan 2000)

Ten Commandments would bring virtue to our schools. (Jan 2000)

Confederate flag is a "symbol of heritage". (Jan 2000)

Allow, but not mandate, school prayer. (Jan 2000)

Would be "comfortable" with a gay president. (Dec 1999)

Flying Confederate flag should be left to states. (Sep 1999)

1st Amend. not a shield for hate groups. (Aug 1999)

Indian gambling OK; lottery is not. (Aug 1999)

Hollywood should voluntarily self-censor sex and violence. (Jul 1999)

Supports Amendment against flag-burning. (Apr 1999)

We don't need laws against Spanish language & culture. (Mar 1999)

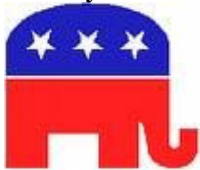
Affirmative action OK for specific programs, but no quotas. (Jul 1998)

Source: http://www.issues2000.org/John_McCain.htm



The Democrats' colour is blue, while the Republican colour is red. That started quite recently, only in the 2000 elections, when the TV networks coloured the US map with these colours to show which party was winning in each state.

The Democrats' mascot is a donkey. This dates back to President Andrew Jackson, who opponents in the 1828 elections called "jackass". Cartoonists picked up the image, and by 1880 the donkey became the party's mascot.



Republicans once had an eagle as a mascot. Again, some cartoonists came up with the elephant as a symbol. It was Thomas Nast who cemented that image for the party in 1874.

Source: *The Washington Post* (January 2, 2007).

Written on January 9, 2007:

You can imagine my joy when my favourite candidates won in New Hampshire on January 8, 2007. While McCain was the front runner in NH, Clinton was not, but she rode a wave of female support to a surprise victory over Senator [Barack Obama](#).

Echoing Bill Clinton's "Comeback Kid" speech after his surprise second-place finish in the NH primary in 1992, Hillary said: "Now together, let's give America the kind of comeback that New Hampshire has just given me."

Clinton received 39 percent of the vote, Obama 37 percent, and [John Edwards](#) 17 percent. On the Republican side, McCain received 37 percent, Mitt Romney 32 percent and [Mike Huckabee](#) 11 percent of the vote. Exit polls suggested that there was a record turnout, with half a million voters — 280,000 Democrats and 230,000 Republicans.

All six contenders are very much in the race, all with high hopes to win. I hope this win will garner both Clinton and McCain the momentum and money they

need in order to win. The presidential bid is exhausting and very costly. While Clinton apparently is able to raise the necessary funds, McCain is struggling on this front. Without money, he does not stand a chance against the deep pockets of Romney and Huckabee. [Rudolph W. Giuliani](#) is also in the picture. He made a strategic decision not to invest in Iowa and NH, hoping to win in the larger states, Florida, New York, New Jersey and California. The picture will become clearer after the February 5 primaries.

Tom Lantos



People who are interested in Israel-USA relations are familiar with the name Tom Lantos, as he has been a passionate and reliable friend of Israel on the Capitol Hill for many years. During my time in Washington, I attended two meetings in which Lantos spoke. He is an elegant and articulate speaker, who speaks with warmth, candor and intelligence that are well appreciated by his audiences. I was saddened to hear about his recent medical problems, and wish him strength to overcome the present

challenge in his life. Lantos had known many challenges, and did well. The following is from the Washington Post of January 3, 2007.

[Rep. Tom Lantos](#) (D-Calif.), a Holocaust survivor who became the chairman of the [House Foreign Affairs Committee](#), announced yesterday that he has cancer and will not run for reelection in November.

Lantos, who will turn 80 on Feb. 1, said a routine medical test last month revealed that he has cancer of the esophagus. The nature of the illness and the treatment it will require persuaded him to retire at year's end.

"It is only in the United States that a penniless survivor of the Holocaust and a fighter in the anti-Nazi underground could have received an education, raised a family, and had the privilege of serving the last three decades of his life as a member of Congress," Lantos said in a statement. "I will never be able to express fully my profoundly felt gratitude to this great country."

Elected in 1980, the Hungarian-born Californian has used his remarkable biography as much as his political stature to advance the cause of human rights and to become one of Congress's leading voices on foreign policy. Lantos was 16 when Nazi forces occupied his native [Budapest](#) and began rounding up Jews. He escaped a forced labor camp, only to be captured and beaten before escaping again to a safe house protected by famed Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg.

During much of World War II, Lantos moved about Budapest in a military cadet's uniform, procuring food for other Jews in hiding. A 1947 scholarship brought him to the United States and eventually [California](#), where he earned a doctorate from the [University of California at Berkeley](#) before settling in as an economics professor at San Francisco State University.

A champion of [Israel](#) as well as international human rights, Lantos has traveled from [North Korea](#) to [Iraq](#) to [Syria](#). His sharp tongue has at times drawn rebukes from Republicans, but he worked closely for much of this

decade with the late [Henry Hyde](#) (R-Ill.), who chaired the House Committee on International Relations before the Democratic electoral sweep of 2006. Lantos helped craft the 2002 resolution that authorized war with Iraq, proclaiming: "Had the United States and its allies confronted [Hitler](#) earlier, had we acted sooner to stymie his evil designs, the 51 million lives needlessly lost during that war could have been saved."

Since then, he has turned strongly against the Iraq war and the Bush administration's prosecution of it, helping [House Speaker Nancy Pelosi](#) (D-Calif.) devise her so-far fruitless strategy to force a change of course.

"It is with great personal sadness and deep appreciation for his outstanding leadership that I learned of Chairman Lantos' illness," Pelosi said in a statement. "His experience, intelligence and compassion will be deeply missed."

[Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen](#) (Fla.), the Foreign Affairs Committee's ranking Republican, said, "Tom's decision to leave Congress will be deeply felt by his colleagues who value his wisdom, expertise and good judgment."

Lantos expects to remain a vigorous committee chairman throughout his final year, said spokeswoman Lynne A. Weil. He plans to chair hearings on [Pakistan](#) later this month and hopes to summon Secretary of State [Condoleezza Rice](#) before his committee within weeks to defend her budget request for 2009.

The two members in line to succeed Lantos, [Rep. Howard L. Berman](#) (D-Calif.) and [Rep. Gary L. Ackerman](#) (D-N.Y.), have served similar terms on the committee, raising the possibility of a contest for the chairmanship.

In Internet's Way

I was recently interviewed by the Washington Profile, the only Russian-language information agency based in Washington, about my research. The interview can be found in <http://www.washprofile.org/> and in <http://www.washprofile.org/ru/node/7243>.

Here is the English translation:

Raphael Cohen-Almagor (D. Phil., Oxon), Chair in Politics, University of Hull, published extensively in the fields of political science, philosophy, law, media ethics, medical ethics, sociology, history and education. He taught at Oxford, Jerusalem, Haifa, UCLA and Johns Hopkins. Raphael founded the Center for Democratic Studies at the University of Haifa. Presently he is a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center. His books include *The Right to Die with Dignity* (2001), *Euthanasia in the Netherlands* (2004), *Speech, Media and Ethics* (2005), and *The Scope of Tolerance* (2006).

The United States has some of the most liberal policies regarding the regulation of speech and expression in the world. You argue that there should be more limits on free speech. In what circumstances should the freedom of expression be curtailed?

The United States holds the most liberal view on free speech; there is no comparison between the United States and any other country. The First Amendment is ingrained in the psyche of this nation. People from all over,

students, my colleagues and especially law professors, are very committed to free speech. Having said that, I think that they should invest far more thought regarding the Internet and the role that it is playing in our lives. The Internet came into the public arena around 1992-1994 without any design, without any planning. All of a sudden it was there, available to us. In many respects, it not only evolutionized, but revolutionized our lives. Today many people can't work without the Internet; it became part of our existence and is probably going to stay forever. But the lack of design and ideology that underpins the Internet brought about some serious challenges. The Internet is a free highway in which everyone can just upload, download, put whatever he/she wants on the Net. This has become a forum for the best products of humanity, but fortunately also for the worst products. What people did not take into consideration when the Internet evolved was that this wonderful, innovative tool can be exploited by people who want to do harm. Some people wish to inflict harm on other people, on certain segments of society, or on nations. My research concentrates mainly on four clusters that I deem to be problematic, and about which I am calling for some more thinking. One is how the Internet has been exploited by terrorist organizations to pursue their aims. We know that September 11 could not have been conducted, in the way it was conducted, without the assistance and help of the Internet. It might have been conducted in a different way, but in that plot the internet played a very significant role in the planning, in the transmission of communications and orders. The plot was a grand design that encompassed at least three continents, in which the Internet was tremendously instrumental. The Internet is used by terrorist organizations for design, for fundraising, for transmitting information, for propaganda, for gaining legitimacy, for recruiting supporters and potential terrorists. Now, I find this troublesome, and I think we should do some further thinking with regard to the Internet and the role it has played in the hands of those evil people.

The second cluster that troubles me is hate speech and racism. The Internet is providing an easy-to-use accessible arena for hate-mongers. Once upon a time, before the age of the Internet, hate mongers had a difficult life. They had to print leaflets, go to the public square, distribute these leaflets and often they would get harassed by the police, and by people that did not liked their racist ideas. It would take them quite an effort just to, say, distribute 2000 leaflets, whereas today, all they have to do it is put it on the Net. One of them, Don Black, claims that he has 100,000 hits a day. So for him, that's a wonderful achievement. Knowing the connection that exists between hate speech and hate crimes (which is documented) we have to think hard about the role of the Internet in our lives, whether we see this as something that a democratic society should allow to happen. Germany, for instance, does not allow certain types of hate speech to take place in Germany, hence Germans who are engaged in hate propaganda, in neo-Nazism, have to disguise themselves, create mirror sites, log into the Internet as if they are in California. Germany has a very different view regarding free expression on the Net than the United States.

The third troublesome form of speech is crime-facilitating speech, i.e. speech that is designed to promote criminal activities. Here I refer to bomb making; to manuals as to how to become successful assassins, how to become

successful rapists, how to prepare the rape drug. Only hours after the Oklahoma City bombing that killed 168 people, someone posted on the Internet directions -- including a diagram -- explaining how to construct a bomb of the type that was used in that tragic act of terrorism. Another Internet posting offered not only information concerning how to build bombs, but also instructions as to how the device used in the Oklahoma City bombing could have been improved.

The fourth cluster of my research is pedophilia. The Internet is a magnificent party zone for pedophiles, who are taking advantage of the Net to lure kids, to pursue kids, to tempt kids, and they are somewhat successful. Prior the Internet and its advanced technology, pedophiles needed to rely on mail services, which are relatively slow, not always reliable, and could have potentially compromised their identity. In the market there were only hundreds of child porno videos that were circulated in the rings. They were very limited in supply and were very costly. With the help of the Internet and Internet technology, gold has been made into metal. Today they can upload and download many thousands of films, and many of these are made without any kids, with photo-shop technology and the like.

These are the four areas of concern, and I think we should pay more attention and invest more thinking in addressing those challenges.

There are already restrictions with regard to these kinds of activities on the Internet. How does the United States currently approach these issues from a legal standpoint?

There is no unified policy on the four issues. The United States after September 11 has invested a lot of resources, and I mean money, time, congressional action, laws -- first and foremost the Patriot Act, which is a very comprehensive law to combat terrorism. Some websites were shut down by the United States. However, not enough has been done, because some terrorist organizations are disguising themselves as charity foundations and are difficult to track down. You have to look very carefully in the Net and check where the money goes. What are the real aims of those sites? If the sites are designed merely for propaganda purposes, just to convey information, I myself wouldn't close them down. But if you see that those websites are designed to mobilize recruitment of terrorists and for raising funds, then of course that's a very different matter. We need to invest far more in tracking down terrorist websites and be very vigilant in how to pursue terrorists. Because the Internet is an international tool, we need to take international action. The United States is first among equals. It has a major role to play because 60% of Internet sites originate in the United States. Still, 40% originate elsewhere. Thus we need international cooperation.

Now I am calling for discussion, for pondering these issues. I do not necessarily call for abrupt censorship. Because the internet came into our lives without any planning, it is now time, after 14 years of its existence, to stop, to reflect, to generate discussions about its role in our lives and just to examine boundaries and costs: What is legitimate speech, and what can be described as incitement, which should not be tolerated. Because harmful speech can result

in harmful action, the issue under examination is time. If the period of time between speech and action is very lengthy, then we may conceive that speech as legitimate. But if we deduce that there is close proximity between the two, and the time factor is very short, then we are more firm grounds to justify restrictions on the Internet.

Between Internet free highway on the one hand, and censorship on the other there is a spectrum of actions we can take to address major concerns, ranging from education to oversight, holding Internet providers liable, filtering to shutting down websites.

Certain countries, such as China are on the other side of the censorship spectrum. Meanwhile, American companies such as Yahoo doing business in the sphere are being implicated in the issue as facilitators of censorship. Have you touched on this issue in your research?

My research is confined only to liberal democracies. The hypotheses advanced in my research are limited to modern democracies emerging during the last century or so. I believe that there are some basic universal needs that all people wish to secure such as food, raiment, and shelter. I believe that sexual drives are universal and that people need to have some sleep to be able continue functioning. I also believe that we should strive to universalise moral principles. But sociologically speaking we cannot ignore the fact that universal values do not underlie all societies. Some societies reject the moral notions of liberty, tolerance, equity, and justice that liberal democracies promote. Thus my concern is with liberal democracies which perceive human beings as ends and which respect autonomy and variety. The arguments are relevant to other countries, but because non-democratic countries do not accept the basic liberal principles, because their principles do not encourage autonomy, individualism, pluralism, and openness, and their behaviour is alien to the concepts of human dignity and caring, one can assume that the discussion will fall on deaf ears. Non-liberal societies, based on authoritative conceptions and principles, deserve a separate analysis. I don't wish to bang my head against the wall. Thus I am not speaking about Iran, China, or even Singapore.

As for Yahoo, Google and other major companies, at the end of the day, economy will dictate much of the discussion. Major companies provide the infrastructure and forum for people to speak. Those companies are driven only by economic considerations. If it works, if it sells, then it's fine. If it doesn't, then it is not. Economic considerations are vital in framing the scope of tolerance because if the companies see that they are going to be hurt by the public, by governments, or by the international community, then they will be far more cautious in their financial considerations and decision-making, with consequences on the forum and scope of free expression.

I opt for ethical considerations and for considerations stemming from social responsibility. Presently in most people's houses, also in libraries, in work places, in schools there is only one browser, the Explorer. I would like to suggest that alongside the Explorer we will be able to have another browser which I call "CleaNet". This browser will be clean, a public forum that will be

created by someone of the magnitude of Bill Gates – a rich individual with a sense of social responsibility who is thinking beyond immediate profits, although this new browser I hasten to think can be very, very profitable as well. This browser will not offer a complete free highway. The creation of this browser should not be left to any government. On CleaNet you wouldn't find terrorist organizations, you wouldn't find racism, you wouldn't find hate speech or pedophilia. There would be a close scrutiny of everything that is entering the Internet. Then you as a parent, you as an educator, you in the workplace, you in high school, you as a librarian, you can voluntarily decide whether you want to use Explorer or CleaNet, or opt for both of them. Both will be available and you can have an alternative. That's the aim I want to promote, but I would like to promote discussions about these issues first. We should debate the need for that, how to devise this new tool, who will sit in the citizens' committee that will decide what will enter the Net and what would be left outside its confines.

Defenders of free speech may say that technologically this idea is impossible; you wouldn't be able to apply this because we live in a vast international world, and technologically people can create mirror sites. If you shut down websites today, tomorrow you are going to have websites with different addresses and situated in other places. This argument doesn't convince me. The beauty of technology is that to every technology there is a counter-technology, so everything that you want to make, you can make on the Internet. You can block websites, you can shut down websites. There were precedents, in which websites were shut down, also in the United States. The issue is not capacity; it is a question of will. On CleaNet, there will be no need for filters because the citizens' committee will decide on content prior entering the Net, so it will make the issue of filters redundant.

This is a very interesting idea, but you can see how there would be a lot of criticism to this sort of project, with different people having different ideas on what is acceptable and not acceptable speech. How would it be possible to sustain this type of common browser in the midst of all the controversy?

The internet is an infant in historical terms. We are just in the starting stages of understanding this fantastic phenomenon, and this discussion is going to continue for a long period of time. At this stage we need to open a debate and agree on the minimum. I am sure that you and I can agree on certain sites that both of us will find so abhorrent, that we could agree that they should not have a place in the free marketplace of ideas. Let's start with those. For instance, a site that provides a manual for how to become a successful assassin, with details instructions from how to get the contract, methods of killing, how to get rid of the body if necessary, to the coconut trees in the Bahamas. Think of all those petty criminals who might wish to elevate themselves to the level of full fledged criminals, and those sites will equip them with the knowledge, and legitimacy, to kill for money and get away with murder-for-profit. Do you think such speech is legitimate? I think not.

So let's start from the sites that are socially irresponsible, those that undermine democracy and our very existence. Normally the courts decide on

such matters, but they are not necessarily the best forum to make such decisions. They are not necessarily more equipped to discuss these questions more than the citizens themselves.

In light of the United States having the stance that it does on freedom of speech, how likely is it that the U.S. will take measures to further restrict speech on the internet in the near future?

.. I don't think the United States is going to join in this motion at first. But on the other hand there were instances in which the United States had shut down websites. For instance, in the wake of September 11, Internet providers shut down several sites associated with Dr. Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, mentor of bin Laden. A website of Alpha HQ, a racist hate speech organization that threatened to kill a fair-housing officer who helped the African-American community, was shut down. A website known as the "Nuremberg Files" which targeted physicians who are abortionists ("baby-butchers") was shut down by the FBI. There were a few more such incidents. That means that the U.S. does understand that you can pay a very high price for freedom of expression, and not all prices are affordable. Sometimes, the price-tag is simply too high.

If you wish to create safe environment for freedom of expression, it is up to you to define "safe". Safe for whom? Safe for free speech or safe for those who exploit free speech? Recently there was the case of Jack McClellan, who has had Web sites detailing how and where he likes to troll for children. He had been posting nonsexual pictures of children on a Web site intended to promote the acceptance of pedophiles, and to direct other pedophiles to events and places where children tended to gather. But apparently he is not doing anything illegal. Is this legitimate speech or not? Is it OK to post information that might help pedophiles find children to molest? You may argue that if you want to follow free speech and be on the safe side for freedom of expression, by all means, allow this to happen. But if you care more about children and their safety and you suspect that such websites may be legitimizing actions that may potentially harm your own children, especially if you happen to live in the same vicinity of McClellan, then you may think differently. So there is going to be debate, of course, but let's start a debate.

I don't think you can have democracy without freedom of expression. The issue is where to draw the lines. This line-drawing is a real tough nut, but it needs to be addressed, otherwise freedom might turn into anarchy, and free expression might become the pretext for hate mongering, pedophilia and criminals. My concern lies with the four clusters mentioned earlier. Our society, and each and every society, should decide for itself the bounds of free expression and tolerance, what can be discussed and promoted freely on the

Internet, and what lies beyond affordable costs. The boundaries are not necessarily universalistic in nature. What United States is willing to afford, Israel may not be able to afford. But lines should be drawn, otherwise we might be left with no freedoms at all.

Adi Card



As you may know, Israel suffers from a shortage of human organs. Each year, dozens of lives that could be saved are lost because no organs are promptly found for transplantation.

Please read, consider signing, and forward to others who might sign. This

is a true issue of life and death, of concern to all Israelis. See:

<http://www.amosmos.com/adi>

THE VICTOR J. GOLDBERG IIE PRIZE FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Institute of International Education is pleased to announce the call for nominations for the Victor J. Goldberg IIE Prize for Peace in the Middle East. The Prize, awarded annually, recognizes outstanding work being conducted jointly by two individuals, one Arab and one Israeli, working together to advance the cause of peace in the Middle East. The two individuals whose work is judged to be most successful in bringing people together and breaking down the barriers of hatred will share a \$10,000 prize. For details go to www.iie.org/goldbergprize

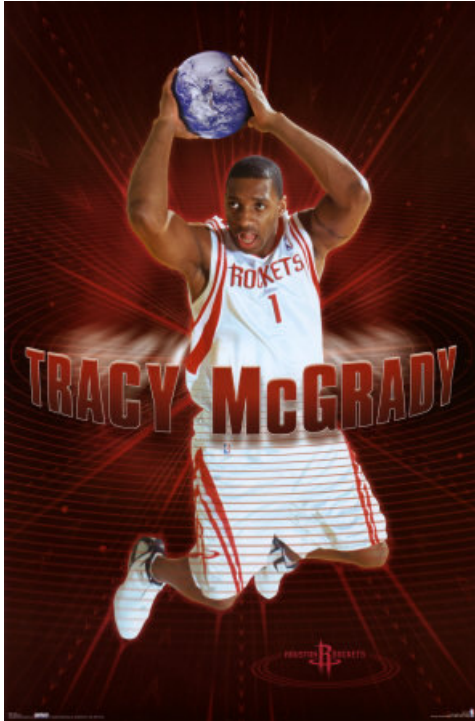
Eligibility: To be eligible for the Prize, at least one of the nominated individuals must be an alumna/us of a program administered by the Institute of International Education (IIE), or on an exchange program funded by the U.S. Department of State, including but not limited to the Fulbright Programs, the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowships, and the International Visitor Leadership Program (formerly International Visitor Program, or IVP) sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, the Ford Foundation International Fellowship Program, IIE's Scholar Rescue Fund, or any of the development training programs administered by IIE for the U.S. Agency for International Development.

For individuals who came to the United States on programs funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, eligibility is not restricted to those programs administered by IIE. For example, Fulbright alumni need not have been grantees of IIE, but may have received a Fulbright grant administered by AMIDEAST. International Visitor

Leadership Program alumni need not have been grantees of IIE, but may have participated in a program coordinated by another organization.

Nominations are due by February 29, 2008. Nominations may be submitted by the individuals themselves or by a third party. A copy of the nomination form can be downloaded at www.iie.org/goldbergprize. The winners will be announced in the spring.

McGrady and Darfur



Professional sportsmen in the US earn enormous amount of money. Most of them use it for their own purposes. I am heartened to hear of the few that decide to better the world. Caron Butler, whom I watch regularly playing for the Wizards, has established fund to help children. On January 15, the Washington Post published Tracy McGrady's new welcomed initiative.

McGrady, an NBA superstar (two-time scoring champion), listened to stories from parents who had seen their babies thrown into fiery huts and burned alive, from orphaned children who had seen their parents shot and killed, from women who had been held captive and raped repeatedly.

He watched 4-year-olds walking around, unattended, with infants on their backs. Children sat on his lap to show him drawings, mostly covered in red crayon

to symbolize the blood spilled in their villages. And then, there were the boys, ages 14 or 15, carrying AK-47s for protection.

By the time [Houston Rockets](#) all-star [Tracy McGrady](#)'s five-day visit to three refugee camps for [Darfur](#)'s displaced residents in eastern [Chad](#) ended last summer, he had lost about 10 pounds from a lack of food and some restless nights. On his last night in this war-torn region of central [Africa](#), McGrady cried and couldn't stop staring at the ceiling of his tent.

"It was sad, man. It really was," McGrady said in a recent interview. "I don't [care] how tough you are, you go over there, it will have an impact on you." McGrady felt compelled to visit the refugees after hearing about the atrocities from [Chicago Bulls](#) forward and Sudan native Luol Deng and Rockets teammate and former [Georgetown](#) star Dikembe Mutombo, who has championed humanitarian causes in Africa and opened a \$29 million hospital in his native [Democratic Republic of Congo](#) last July.

[Cleveland Cavaliers](#) reserve Ira Newble brought attention to concerns in Darfur during the playoffs last season when he issued a letter -- signed by most of his teammates and other NBA players such as [Washington Wizard Etan Thomas](#) -- directed at [China](#), a major importer of Sudan's oil and the host

country for this summer's Olympics. Newble also visited Darfur camps last summer as part of a group called Dream for Darfur, which includes actress [Mia Farrow](#). He was excited that McGrady has taken up the cause for Darfur. "Any NBA person can have a voice, but obviously if it's somebody like Tracy McGrady or an all-star caliber player, it definitely can reach more people," Newble said in a phone interview. "I'm glad that he's stepping up to do what he can."

McGrady has already committed \$75,000 to build a school in the Djabal camp he visited in eastern Chad. He mailed invitation packages last week to 11 other NBA players, asking them to get involved and become "principals" for the other schools.

His stance is unusual: High-profile professional athletes often shun political causes for fear it will hurt their business interests. "I didn't think about it at all. Wasn't a concern," McGrady said. "It's something that crept up on me. It happened, I'm in it. I believe I was put here to do things like that."

Academic Strike



University lecturers continue their strike until Sunday, January 20, 2008, leaving hundred of thousands of students at home. After 89 days of strike, the longest in Israel's history, university faculty Friday officially signed an agreement with treasury officials. The agreement was drafted by Histadrut labor federation chair Ofer Eini, who said he

was pleased that the professors and treasury were "responsible enough to reach an agreement that would salvage the academic year."

Eini added "I don't want to even think about the potential damage that could have been caused had the academic year been canceled." The compromise is substantially lower than the lecturers' original demands, and stands on a 16.8 percent compensation for salary erosion over the past ten years.

The university presidents laid down an ultimatum, threatening to close down universities if an agreement was not reached by today, Friday January 18 at noon. Earlier the presidents of Israeli university who (with the exception of Galil, the new president of Tel Aviv University) decided to take the senior staff to the Labour Court. I cannot recall the last time when presidents turned their back on their own people, in effect ceasing to represent them. This is a gross mistake on their part, for which I sincerely hope they will pay. Time will tell whether they could continue cooperating with faculty as nothing had happened.

Index Site

My Israeli friends may find interest in the following link which will take them to a comprehensive index site of many important resources in Israel. See <http://www.meshulamart.com/find/webIndex.asp#a5>

I thank Sharon Amir for this.

New Article

I am happy to announce my new article:

"Hate in the Classroom: Free Expression, Holocaust Denial, and Liberal Education", *American Journal of Education*, Vol. 114, No. 2 (2008), pp. 215-242.

This article is concerned with a specific type of hate speech: Holocaust denial. It is concerned with the expression of this idea by educators. Should we allow Holocaust deniers to teach in schools? This article attempts to answer this question through a close look at the Canadian experience. First, I will establish that Holocaust denial is a form of hate speech. Next, I will lay down the main premises of the argument and make some constructive distinctions that will guide our treatment of teachers who are Holocaust deniers. Finally, I will probe three cases—James Keegstra, Malcolm Ross, and Paul Fromm—and argue that hatemongers cannot assume the role of educators.

See <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/524316>

As ever, I'd be happy to send a copy to interested parties.

Light Notes – Intelligent Insults

These glorious insults are from an era when cleverness with words was still valued, before a great portion of the English language got boiled down to 4-letter words, not to mention waving middle fingers. I thank Orit Ichilov for forwarding them to me.



The exchange between Churchill & Lady Astor: She said, "If you were my Husband I'd give you poison," and he said, "If you were my wife, I'd drink it." "He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire." - Winston Churchill

"A modest little person, with much to be modest about." - Winston Churchill

"I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; bring a Friend.... If you have one." - George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill "Cannot possibly attend first night, will attend second... If there is One." - Winston Churchill, in response.

"I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure."

Clarence Darrow

"He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the Dictionary." - William Faulkner (about Ernest Hemingway).

"Poor Faulkner. Does he really think big emotions come from big words?" - Ernest Hemingway (about William Faulkner)

"Thank you for sending me a copy of your book; I'll waste no time Reading it."
Moses Hadas

"He can compress the most words into the smallest idea of any man I know."
Abraham Lincoln



"He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends." - Oscar Wilde

"Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go." - Oscar Wilde

"His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork." - Mae West

"I feel so miserable without you; it's almost like having you here." - Stephen Bishop

A member of Parliament to Disraeli: "Sir, you will either die on the Gallows or of some unspeakable disease." "That depends, Sir," said Disraeli, "on whether I embrace your policies or your mistress."

"He had delusions of adequacy." - Walter Kerr

"He is a self-made man and worships his creator." - John Bright

"I've just learned about his illness. Let's hope it's nothing trivial." - Irvin S. Cobb

"He is not only dull himself, he is the cause of dullness in others." - Samuel Johnson

"He is simply a shiver looking for a spine to run up." - Paul Keating

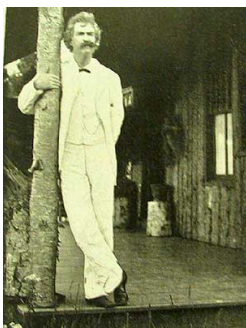
"There's nothing wrong with you that reincarnation won't cure." - Jack E. Leonard

"He has the attention span of a lightning bolt." - Robert Redford

"They never open their mouths without subtracting from the sum of human Knowledge." - Thomas Brackett Reed

"In order to avoid being called a flirt, she always yielded easily." Charles, Count Talleyrand

"He loves nature in spite of what it did to him." - Forrest Tucker



"Why do you sit there looking like an envelope without any address on it?" – Mark Twain

"I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it." - Mark Twain

"He uses statistics as a drunken man uses lamp-posts... For support Rather than illumination." - Andrew Lang (1844-1912)

"He has Van Gogh's ear for music." - Billy Wilder

"I've had a perfectly wonderful evening but this wasn't it." - Groucho Marx

Keep smiling, 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/>>

People wishing to subscribe to this Monthly Newsletter are welcome to e-mail me at rafi.almagor@wilsoncenter.org