

# Lamed-E

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## Proof of the Mystical 'Gold of Ophir' Discovered

*A Hebrew ostracon provides proof of  
the enigmatic region of Ophir*

By Marianna Bala'a

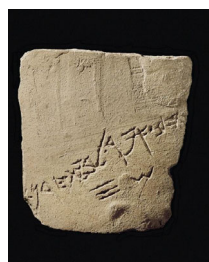


*Gold mining in Ophir*  
akg-images

The ancient region of Ophir—a place of wealth and gold—has captivated the imagination of men for centuries. You might recall the book by Henry Rider Haggard titled *King Solomon's Mines*—or maybe the 1950 movie of a similar name, or perhaps the TV miniseries. The location has been a common quest for ancient explorers: A Portuguese explorer of the 15th century claimed it was in the Shona lands of Zimbabwe. Christopher Columbus thought he had found Ophir in Haiti; Sir Walter Raleigh thought it was in the jungles of Surinam. A Spanish captain in 1568 discovered an archipelago and, believing it to be Ophir, named them the Solomon Islands.

All this search with no concrete discovery can lead one to question: Is this place real? An article published in 2017 by the *Independent* stated, “King Solomon’s gold mines, which the Bible says helped him store wealth amounting to more than £2.3 trillion, are a complete myth, historians believe.” The article quoted British historian and author Ralph Ellis, who said finding the lost mines was “about as likely as taking a dip in the Fountain of Youth,” concluding, “There comes a point when we either have to accept that the biblical account is entirely fictional, or that we may be looking in the wrong location and for the wrong things.” The author of that 2017 article wrote, “[E]xperts now say the pot of wealth is unlikely to have ever existed.” Not so fast.

An ostracon (a pottery shard containing an inscription) found during the 1946 archaeological excavations of Tell Qasile (a site in Tel Aviv) validates the existence of that “pot of wealth”—Ophir. This ostracon, along with another discovered with it, served as an invoice and testifies to the importance of this settlement in the eighth century B.C.E. as a center for imports and exports. One of these ostraca, likely from an Israelite official in charge of the royal exports from Tell Qasile, describes 1,100 measures of oil for the king. The other reads as follows:  
*Ophir gold to Bet Horon – 30 shekels.*



*Ostracon with inscription: “Gold  
from Ophir to bet Horon – 30 shekels”*  
akg-images / Erich Lessing

Renowned Israeli archaeologist Prof. Benjamin Mazar (who at the time went by his original surname “Maisler”) wrote in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* that “Bet Horon” is “apparently the twin-city, Upper and Lower Beth Horon, known as the city of the Levites (administrative center) in the district of Ephraim, a store-city in the period of Solomon, an important fortress on the road leading from the plain up to the mountains and situated on the border of Israel and Judea.” He postulated that the name referred to a temple of the Canaanite god Hauron.

Either way, this ostrakon confirms the veracity of the Bible in its reference to Ophir in the ancient world. Professor Mazar wrote, “The Ophir gold ... so called after the country of its origin, is apparently of an especially fine quality.” The Bible repeatedly describes the gold of Ophir as precious: Job 28:16 says that wisdom does not have a price, and “It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, With the precious onyx, or the sapphire.” Isaiah 13:12 says that in the Day of the Lord, a man will be “more rare than fine gold, Even man than the *pure gold* of Ophir.”

Solomon, with the help of the Phoenician king Hiram, built ships and sent servants who had knowledge of the sea to Ophir to bring back the greatly desired gold (1 Kings 9:26-28). Solomon had two navies: one based on the Mediterranean and one in Eilat. Sending servants who had “knowledge of the sea” shows that these ships were not taking short expeditions. They traveled extensively.

But where exactly did they travel? Theories abound. Some believe Ophir is in Sri Lanka or India; others think it is in Pakistan at the mouth of the Indus River or in Saudi Arabia; others believe it is in South America.

2 Chronicles 9:21 tells us that the king’s ships were gone for *three years* at a time, and when they came back, they brought gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks. The port from which the king’s ships left to gather gold of Ophir is described in 1 Kings 9, referring to the one in the south—near Eilat, located in the Gulf of Aqaba, which connects to the Red Sea. Considering this port opened out to the Indian Ocean, it wouldn’t make sense for *this* fleet to go to South America for the gold, and Saudi Arabia would be too close for such a long trip. In addition, Saudi Arabia does not have many of these exotic items. It’s

possible the fleet went to east Africa, but it appears the gold of Ophir most likely came from the area of India, or perhaps Sri Lanka.

The Hebrew words translated as “ivory,” “apes” and “peacocks” in 2 Chronicles 9:21 are all of a foreign origin, relating commonly to India. *Gensenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon* says the word used for *ape* is “a word of Indian origin.” It’s likely that travelers from the land of Israel would have learned the foreign names for these exotic items, calling them by their foreign names when they returned to Israel. Considering India’s plenteous supply of all these commodities, it seems highly likely Ophir might be in or around India.

With all of this trade, Solomon’s accumulated wealth rose to almost unfathomable heights. His drinking cups were made of gold. He had 300 shields beaten from gold. His throne was made of ivory and overlaid with the best of gold. The steps leading up to the throne had 12 golden lions facing 12 golden eagles. Additionally, the temple in Jerusalem was adorned with 3,000 talents of gold (with a low-end valuation of \$4.2 billion). Other than the name, the Bible doesn’t give much detail about Ophir. And with so many unfruitful expeditions, it appears elusive. But the ostrakon found near Tel Aviv does confirm its existence and the veracity of the Bible.

*Watch Jerusalem, December 14, 2020*

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## Archaeologists Find Remains of ‘Royal’ Garments From King David’s Time – in a Mine

By Ariel David

3,000-year-old textiles unearthed in the copper mines of Timna were dyed with purple extracted from seashells, said to have been used by biblical kings and priests.

Back in the time of King David you couldn’t wear Prada, but there already was a must-have high fashion item: anybody who was somebody had to wear purple.

*Haaretz*

28.01.2021

# Iran and Al Qaeda: Friends or Foes?

*A recent assassination raises questions about Iranian links to al Qaeda.*

**By Callum Wood**

On the evening of August 7, Lebanese Prof. Habib Dawoud was driving his Renault L90 through the bustling streets of Tehran. In the car with him that night was his 27-year-old daughter, Maryam. As Dawoud approached a set of traffic lights, two men on a motorbike pulled alongside his car. The rider pulled out a silenced pistol and fired five shots through the window at Dawoud and his daughter. Both Habib and Maryam died immediately. The assailants fled into the night, leaving the bullet-riddled car idling in the road. The killing came in tandem with a series of explosions at Iranian nuclear facilities. The murder of the Lebanese academic and his daughter soon faded from the headlines. But not before journalists had a chance to dig into the background of the victims. They found one glaring problem: Habib Dawoud didn't exist. In Lebanon, nobody had heard of the professor or his daughter. He had no associates. No friends. The journalists dug further, and new names emerged for the victims. The man was none other than Abu Mohammed al-Masri, al Qaeda's second in command.

For years, Masri sat near the top of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's most-wanted list. There was a \$10 million reward for information leading to his capture. Masri was responsible for the 1998 United States Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania that left 224 dead. His own death came on the anniversary of those attacks. His slain daughter was the widow of Osama bin Laden's son Hamza bin Laden. It seems that she also died for her role in the plots.

## *Friends or Foes?*

Iran is no stranger to assassination and spycraft. But what makes this case unusual is the cover-up. Al Qaeda sat on the news for months—only coming forward to confirm the news in December. At the time of the assassination, Iran

also buried the news and continues to deny the allegations.

Aged 58, Masri was part of the old guard—the core founders of al Qaeda. He was a top-tier terrorist living and operating within Iran with impunity. Iran is the number one state sponsor of terror in the world. And the presence of a handful of al Qaeda operatives in Iran is well-known. But how deep does Iran's relationship with al Qaeda go?

There is no doubt Iran has kept al Qaeda alive by providing a safe haven. Iran is in ideal territory to shelter and transport terrorists. It shares large borders with Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. This creates a nation-size bridge across the Middle East.

And so the question becomes one of complicity. Does Iran merely provide a safe haven or more direct financial and military support? Does al Qaeda act independently or at Iran's behest? According to sources that spoke with the *New York Times*, Masri has been in Iranian custody "since 2003, but ... living freely in the Pasdaran district of Tehran, an upscale suburb, since at least 2015." He wasn't exactly living as a prisoner, but he wasn't free from Iranian control either.

"Iran's connections to al-Qaeda [are] very real," declared Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in April 2019. "They have hosted al Qaeda; they permitted al Qaeda to transit their country. There is no doubt there is a connection between the Islamic Republic of Iran and al Qaeda. Period. Full stop." In May that year, Pompeo gave a classified briefing to Congress on the same subject.

Many in the mainstream media claim that linking al Qaeda and Iran is baseless. To them, the jihadists and Iranians cannot and will not cooperate. Many view the association between Iran and al Qaeda to be like oil and water. Iran is Shiite; al Qaeda is a Sunni jihadist group. Each considers the other religious heretics. The only tenuous thread binding the two is a shared hatred of the West.

But that preconception is being challenged. The cover-up of Masri's murder suggests the relationship is stronger than most are willing to admit.

## *Useful Allies*

Iran didn't want the world to know about Masri.

It is in Iran's best interest to have the world believe that there is no way it could work with Sunni partners. Such a preconception protects Iran from repercussions when its sponsored terror cells carry out attacks—9/11 being the most obvious. Ever since the New York attacks, Iran has failed to bring al Qaeda terrorists to justice. That makes Tehran a supporter of the terrorists at the very least. If a strong link between Iran and al Qaeda is discovered, post-9/11 Authorization for Military Force laws might justify war with Iran. The age-old adage says, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." Iran's target is first and foremost the nation of Israel and its Western supporters like America. Perpetuating al Qaeda's existence—even if it is not controlled by the mullahs—helps Iran.

For instance, earlier this year the U.S. signed an agreement with the Afghan Taliban. In the deal, the U.S. would commit to withdrawing all American forces from the country by next summer. In return, the Taliban would stop al Qaeda from using Afghanistan to stage attacks. This was a major victory for Iran. By perpetuating the war and keeping al Qaeda alive, Iran has worn out America. Al Qaeda is heavily involved within the Taliban ranks. They will not leave Afghanistan. And even if they did, they need only move a few hours away to neighboring Iran.

By supporting America's enemies, Iran has been able to wage a proxy war without risking a more direct confrontation with the West. But the evidence is piling up.

Even the Benghazi, Libya, attacks have ties to al Qaeda and Iran. In 2013, Egypt arrested three militants armed with explosives and bomb-making equipment. Egyptian Interior Minister Mohammed Ibrahim told journalists that the men received orders from an al Qaeda leader called Dawoud al Asadi. According to Rewards for Justice, a website set up by the U.S. State Department, Dawoud al-Asadi is an alias for Muhsin al-Fadhli—who was the leader of al Qaeda in Iran. One of the three terrorists even received military training in Iran.

The terrorists had been attempting to contact an al Qaeda affiliate in Egypt: the Nasr City Cell. This cell has been linked to the attacks on Benghazi. You can read more about this in our article, "*Was Iran Behind the Benghazi Attacks?*"

Other al Qaeda affiliates, such as al Shabaab, also have strong links to Iran. Many of its fighters have received advanced training from Hezbollah, an arm of Iran.

The evidence is there for all to see, yet so few do. As *Watch Jerusalem* editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote in a 2006 article, "America lacks the will to confront Iran, the head of the terrorist-sponsoring snake." Instead, the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and elsewhere chop at the snake's tail. But there is no denying that Iran is at the head.

Accepting these facts is hard. Doing so means accepting that Iran's influence is far broader than most are willing to accept. If Iran and al Qaeda are working together, how far does that extend? How much responsibility must be laid at their feet for Benghazi, for 9/11? If al Qaeda can work with Iran in these arenas, where else do they cooperate? Only time may tell.

Iran's efforts to spread terror across the Middle East and North Africa are being exposed. Iran once hid comfortably behind proxies. Today, we are starting to see Iran for what it is. It is not a Shiite-exclusive "enabler." Iran is an active instigator of terrorism through any means possible—Sunni or Shiite.

Much of the world is only now waking up to Iran's involvement in the region. But *Watch Jerusalem* has long forecast the rise—and ruin—of the Iranian regime. We peg Iran to become a major power in northern Africa. It will get control of Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia. Its links with al Qaeda and its affiliates are a major step in that direction. These terrorist groups may be Sunni, but they are still influenced by Iran and supported by Iran. And as Masri's life in Tehran suggests, that support may go deeper than previously thought.

God's inspired words found in the book of Daniel and elsewhere back up the facts about Iran. You can read in Daniel 11 about a "*king of the south.*" We identify that power as Iran—the leader of radical Islam. Keep watching as that role becomes more and more prominent. Iran will remain the chief patron of radical Islam until it is outmatched in what God describes as a "whirlwind" retaliation.

*Watch Jerusalem, December 8 2020*

# Obama's Secret Iran Strategy

By Michael Doran



“The president has long been criticized for his lack of strategic vision. But what if a strategy, centered on Iran, has been in place from the start and consistently followed to this day?” So asks Michael Doran in his blockbuster essay, “Obama’s Secret Iran Strategy.” Originally published to wide acclaim in *Mosaic* in February 2015, “Obama’s Secret Iran Strategy” is now available as an ebook from Mosaic Books. The ebook, available in all major outlets, features the original essay, three thoughtful responses from foreign policy luminaries Elliott Abrams, Eric Edelman, and Reuel Marc Gerecht, and Doran’s own “last word” in which he addresses the controversy his essay stirred up.

## *About the Author*

Michael Doran, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and the author of *Ike’s Gamble: America’s Rise to Dominance in the Middle East* (2016), is a former deputy assistant secretary of defense and a former senior director of the National Security Council. He tweets [@doranimated](https://twitter.com/doranimated).

# Obama's Promised Land

By Jerold Auerbach

*A Promised Land*, Barack Obama’s newly-published 768-page memoir that tops *The New York Times* Best Seller List, borrows its title from the Biblical recounting of God’s promise to Abraham and his descendants. Millennia later that promised land was understood by Zionists to be the Land of Israel, where their ancient homeland would be restored. Curiously, the American president least friendly to the State of Israel since its birth in 1948 recasts the promised land of Jews to highlight the narrative of his own presidency.



Former US President Barack Obama. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Obama’s recounting of his relationship with Israel (in fewer than five pages) begins with the Balfour Declaration, noting that the promise of “a national home for the Jewish people” ignored the reality of “a region overwhelmingly populated by Arabs.” Following World War II, when the United Nations approved a plan to partition Palestine between Arabs and Jews, “Zionist leaders embraced the plan but Arab Palestinians ... strenuously objected” and “the two sides fell into war.” They hardly “fell” into war. Arabs — as yet there were no self-defined “Palestinians” — waged war to exterminate the fledgling Jewish state. In Obama’s cursory narrative, “Israel would engage in a succession of conflicts with its Arab neighbors” — which, he fails to note, those “neighbors” provoked.

As president, Obama writes, “the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ... weighed on me personally.” He claims to have believed that

“there was an essential bond between the Black and the Jewish experiences” that made him “fiercely protective of the right of the Jewish people to have a state of their own” — an absurdly inflated claim. Obama “thought it was reasonable to ask the stronger party to take a bigger first step” toward peace. But “the noise orchestrated by Netanyahu” — his favorite villain — “had the intended effect of gobbling up our time, putting us on the defensive, and reminding me that normal policy differences with an Israeli prime minister ... exacted a domestic political cost that simply did not exist” when he dealt with “any of our other closest allies.” In translation, he was no match for Netanyahu.

Obama’s narrative conceals far more than it reveals about his impatience with, and eventual hostility toward, Israel. In his 2013 Jerusalem speech to “the people of Israel” he made clear his belief that “the only way for Israel to endure and thrive as a Jewish and democratic state is through the realization of an independent and viable Palestine” — “two states for two peoples.” In translation, all that was required was for Israel to relinquish its Biblical homeland in Judea and Samaria.

The final blow to the relationship, and to Obama’s fantasy of presiding over peace, came when Israel announced permits for the construction of new housing units in East Jerusalem while Vice President Joe Biden was visiting. As “the window for any peace deal had closed,” he realized that “the children of despair” (Palestinians) would inevitably revolt against the “old order in the Middle East” and “those [Israelis] who maintained it.” In other words, Palestinian terrorism was predictable and forgivable.

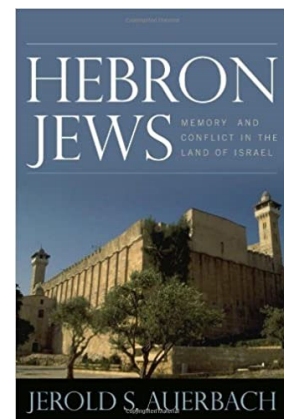
Even before he arrived in the White House, Obama had pledged that he would create “daylight” between the United States and Israel. It may have been his singular foreign policy achievement, topped only by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (2015), his nuclear deal that provided Iran with a clear path toward atomic weapons — that is, until Israeli attacks (as recently as last week) killed Iran’s top nuclear scientists.

It is hardly surprising that *A Promised Land* would receive a fawning front-page review in the *Sunday Times* Book Review (November

29). Five pages long, comprising one-third of the Review, it was written by novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who deserves a prize for hero worship. In her ludicrous opening she writes that Obama’s pedestrian prose is “gorgeous in places, the detail granular and vivid.” More revealing is a Jewish Journal poll, taken just after Obama’s presidency ended, asking, “Which US President was the worst for Israel over the last 30 years?” Not surprisingly, in a landslide, Obama ranked highest at 63%. (His nearest challenger was Jimmy Carter at 16%.) *A Promised Land* reveals why.

In the final days of his presidency, Obama abstained from UN Resolution 2334 maligning Israeli settlements as a “flagrant violation of international law.” But for eight years he had made quite clear his discomfort with Jews living in their Biblical homeland. Yet, the title of his book — *A Promised Land* — is a biblical reference to God’s promise of the land to the Jewish people. Does he know that?

Ironically, the president most hostile to Israel was followed by the president who has done more for the Jewish state than any of his predecessors since Harry S. Truman recognized it moments after its declaration of independence.



*Jerold S. Auerbach is the author of Print to Fit: The New York Times, Zionism and Israel 1896-2016, chosen for Mosaic by Ruth Wisse and Martin Kramer as a Best Book for 2019.*

*Algemeiner*  
November 30, 2020

# As Trump exits, the full Mossad story on normalization into focus

*Key moments with Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates in 2017 and 2019 led to last year's deals*

**By Yonah Jeremy Bob**

As the administration of president Donald Trump exits stage left, it's time to take stock of the four normalization deals that Israel has already signed.

But there is a crucial piece of the story that has not been emphasized.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, although the July-to-December 2020 wave of deals provided the historic photos, the turning point moments were back in 2017 and 2019, The Jerusalem Post has learned. Also, though, it has not yet signed an agreement itself, the key party was always Saudi Arabia.

Much of the de-emphasis of these points has to do with Mossad chief Yossi Cohen – whose acts were mostly shrouded in mystery until a major speech in July 2019 – who was leading the Israeli push by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. There have been multiple narratives about who really got the ball rolling between Israel, the US and the UAE, and about when was the critical turning point.

Of course, part of the complex answer is that each country in the Israel, UAE, US triad played its part.

Also, each of the countries that came afterward made its own contributions which helped form the order of who would be “in” during the Trump era and who would play “wait and see.”

But to properly understand what happened in 2020, Israeli intelligence sources would say that it is imperative to understand the behind-the-scenes role of Cohen and the Saudis and what happened in September-November 2017, and in July 2019. Traditionally, clandestine developments with countries with which Israel has no diplomatic relations fall under the realm of the Mossad.

In that respect, the Post has learned that Cohen especially distinguished himself from his start in January 2016 by not only marking goals, but establishing a unit to focus on the normalization goal.

Reports of Cohen's travels to Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, Morocco and other countries without diplomatic relations with Israel started coming in the middle of his term, but he was on the travel circuit even earlier.

There were precursors like former National Security Council chief Yaakov Amidror and former Foreign Ministry director-general Dore Gold. There were also other Israeli intelligence figures, who are conventionally less involved with foreign countries, who got involved in the game in important ways in recent years.

One interesting departure from Mossad dominance of the normalization trend related to Sudan and Morocco.

Cohen was virtually the sole key figure paving the early path which led to normalization with the UAE, and which brought the Saudis to actively support the trend, even as they themselves have not formally crossed the line.

He was also the early middleman for Sudan and Morocco.

But at an undefined point leading up to normalization with those countries, National Security Council chief Meir Ben Shabbat, represented by “R.” or “Maoz,” a Shin Bet agent on “loan” to the NSC, took a critical role in finishing those deals.

Ben Shabbat, Maoz and, according to reporter Barak Ravid, a British-Israeli lawyer named Nick Kaufman, who had connections with the Sudanese because of his expertise in dealing with some of their International Criminal Court issues, helped smooth over a range of rough patches along the way.

Cohen would not deny that Ben Shabbat and Maoz made contributions to those normalization pushes and helped save them at various points when the US and Sudan hit temporary walls. However, the Post has learned that even once Ben Shabbat and R. were working the Sudan and Morocco angles, Cohen's view would be that he was still the “project manager” for the normalizations, and that he merely “subcontracted” out aspects of implementation.

In Cohen's narrative, his direct involvement in planning the meeting between Netanyahu and chairman of the Sovereignty Council of Sudan Lt.-Gen. Abdel Fattah Abdelrahman al-Burhan in Uganda in February 2020, as well as being physically present there, shows that he had gotten most of the key work done before subcontracting out later implementation measures.

Further, even as Ben Shabbat, Maoz and their team helped put out fires down the stretch, Cohen still had his hands at least partially on the wheel with additional meetings, one of which with the deputy chairman of the Sudanese Sovereign Council, Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, was widely reported in August 2020.

Reports throughout the second half of 2020 noted Cohen hopping around the Gulf and elsewhere. IN SOME ways, sources would say, this would lead to a new perspective on the July-December 2020 normalization wave.

Conventional wisdom is that no wave was coming until July 2020, and that there might have been no wave if UAE Ambassador to the US Yousef Al Otaiba, Israeli Ambassador to the US Ron Dermer, senior adviser to the US president Jared Kushner, his aide Avi Berkowitz, Ambassador to Israel David Friedman and a variety of other players had not suddenly scrambled to a magic formula, which then paved the way for the other three normalization deals. While recognizing each contribution to the Abraham Accords, Cohen's narrative would be entirely different.

His version of events would look back to his major July 2019 speech at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya conference.

In that speech, he said, "The Mossad has identified at this time a rare opportunity, perhaps the first in the history of the Middle East, to reach a regional understanding that would lead to an inclusive regional peace agreement," he said. He added: "This creates a window of opportunity that is perhaps one-time only."

While his speech made headlines, nothing immediately came of it. In fact, nothing came of it for another 13 months, and most viewed it as just giving out talking points which Netanyahu and a variety of other ministers were periodically issuing.

A point Cohen made in the speech saying the Mossad had set the stage for "a renewal of ties

with Oman and the establishment of Foreign Ministry representation" was even met with a public rejection by Oman.

Yet, sources would indicate that in Cohen's view, this speech was actually the key point.

He was not pontificating with generic hopeful aspirations or guessing, the way some other ministers might have been who were hearing things secondhand.

Cohen was delivering a hard-nosed assessment of the future which he knew firsthand to be on the way.

He could not predict the exact timing, but he knew that he had helped convince the Saudis as well as the UAE that normalization was the way forward, and that they would find the right moment.

The reason he could make that speech in July 2019, the Post has learned, is that ironically, even as they have not yet officially crossed the normalization line themselves, the Saudis were the key, and were committed.

In that sense, Israeli intelligence sources have indicated that a real turning point was the reported visit of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to Tel Aviv in September 2017. By November 2017, this had led to a historic interview by then-IDF chief Gadi Eisenkot with a Saudi media outlet in which he proclaimed that Israel was now sharing classified intelligence on Iran with Riyadh.

In this light, insiders like Cohen could see the building of momentum for the events of 2020, even if they were far from inevitable, long before the general public caught on.

Then why didn't Cohen make the July 2019 speech back in 2017?

Sources indicated that the plan was to get the other countries on board so it would build like a wave.

Saudi support in late 2017 laid the groundwork for the Mossad to have greater success in building that wave over the next 18 months, including visits by Netanyahu and other Israeli ministers to various countries.

The current Mossad chief might even say that the months when normalization happened were when it had to happen. This was because it was all part of a general vision of achieving certain common goals within the Trump administration's framework for the Middle East.



No one knew who would win the US election in November 2020, but everyone knew that US President Joe Biden (then the Democratic challenger) had a strong shot.

From this perspective, the normalization wave had to start no later than around September, and July was about the latest it could start if time would be left for a series of countries to each make a splash by joining.

But the Palestinians needed to be given a chance first to accept the Trump administration's peace plan, which kept getting delayed by Israeli elections, until it was finally unveiled in January 2020.

From then until July 2020, with a boost of cooperative activity between Israel and the UAE in March relating to the coronavirus, the question was timing.

Also, from that perspective, as crucial as the Kushner-Friedman-Berkowitz group, Otaiba and Ben Shabbat, "Maaz" and his team were, the big leaps forward were already made by the Mossad with the Saudis by 2017 and were getting revved up by the time of Cohen's July 2019 speech.

Undeniably, the US, UAE and Ben Shabbat's team helped put out major fires and used out-of-the-box thinking to create new opportunities.

The Mossad would be happy to share credit with the full cast. Certainly, the Trump administration's approach of making deals between Israel and its neighbors at all costs created opportunities that would not have otherwise existed.

In addition, not every prediction Cohen made has come true.

After naming Oman in 2019, he was on record again in fall 2020 that Oman would sign a normalization agreement with Israel, and that still has not yet panned out.

Still, some of the key US actors saving, salvaging and signing the Abraham Accords in 2020 were not even in office in 2016, and in 2017 were still learning the lay of the land – this while the Mossad was already paving the road.

But, by and large, if many of Cohen's seemingly audacious 2019 predictions about normalization have come true, it could be because, as a director and producer, he was already holding much of the script.

*The Jerusalem Post, January 20, 2021*

## Fabricator and fraudster

*The fact that fabrications can so easily be found in Robert Fisk's work destroys his legacy of award-winning reporting*

SACRED COWS

By Oz Katerji

The late Robert Fisk was as close to a celebrity as it is possible to get for a foreign correspondent. I vividly remember the moment I met him after a lecture in Beirut in 2010: for a young journalist in the first few months of my career, it was almost like meeting David Beckham. I also remember the words he said during that lecture: "The Middle East is not a football match. It's a bloody tragedy, and the journalists have a responsibility to be on the side of those who suffer."

It's an analogy I have used many times in my own life. Robert Fisk, who worked as a foreign correspondent first for *The Times* and since 1989 for the *Independent*, had the most influence of any journalist on my career. But it wasn't because of his charismatic speech in 2010, or because of the many articles I had read that had influenced my understanding of the Middle East as a student.

*Fisk did not speak fluent Arabic, not even after living in the Middle East for more than 40 years*

It was because learning for myself that Fisk was a fraud, a fabricator and a fantasist was fundamental to my understanding of the very concept of journalism, and the responsibility that this profession is supposed to carry. He was guilty of the same "propaganda campaigns" he accused the Western media of conducting.

The veneration of Fisk, in his obituaries and throughout his career, serve as an indictment of a British foreign press that continued to indulge a man who they knew was violating not just ethical boundaries, but also moral ones. In a way, the glowing obituaries, free from the constraints of

the normal journalistic practice of fact-checking and evidence, were a fitting tribute to Fisk. Like him, they preferred to tell a story that was not true, because stories are often far more comforting than the reality.

So let's separate the myths from the facts. Fisk did not speak fluent Arabic, not even after living in the Middle East for more than 40 years. Leaving aside the testimony of Arabic speakers who worked alongside him, his lack of basic knowledge of the language is contained multiple times within his own work, such as his inability to tell the difference between the words "mother" and "nation" in a well-known Ba'athist slogan.

Fisk's reputation among scholars and journalists in the Middle East was destroyed by years of distortions of the truth in his work on Syria. But even before he started embracing pro-Assad conspiracy theories, Fisk's relationship with the truth was widely scrutinised. It is a monumental absurdity that we have a word, "Fisking", in the *Cambridge English Dictionary* derived from his surname, without any mention of him.

*The frequency with which falsehoods can be found in Fisk's work wasn't so much an open secret as a widely shared joke*

The dictionary defines it as "the act of making an argument seem wrong or stupid by showing the mistakes in each of its points, or an instance of doing this." The frequency with which falsehoods can be found in Fisk's work wasn't so much an open secret as a widely shared joke understood by all who worked in the industry.

Fisk got away with it because he always got away with it. The falsehoods he published were often tolerated, excused or dismissed because people agreed with the stories he was telling. But our job as journalists, especially in the Middle East, isn't to tell stories — it's to tell the truth.

Following Fisk's passing, away from the newspaper obituaries, an entirely different narrative was expressed by those who saw him up close. Syrian journalist Asser Khatab wrote an excoriating article for the online platform Raseef22, sharing his experiences of working alongside him in Homs, including his lack of Arabic and his reliance on a translator connected with the Syrian mukhabarat (secret police).

"Fisk talked about places we did not visit and incidents that we did not witness," Khatab said. "His interviews with officials, including the governor, were full of long, eloquent and expressive phrases. I do not know where they came from."

Lebanese journalist Joey Ayoub also condemned the praise Fisk received for his reporting. "Robert Fisk chose to embed himself with the murderers of the 2012 Daraya massacre [when more than 300 people were killed by Assad's forces], chose to traumatise survivors, and chose to invent a story to sell to his Western papers, a story denied by the Local Coordination Committee and witnesses," he said on Twitter. "None of Robert Fisk's editors and certainly none of his admirers ever bothered to ask the Local Coordination Committee or the survivors about the massacre he whitewashed. "I have met survivors, and I will never forgive him," he said. "His previously good work on Lebanon does not excuse him." Fisk was not just adding false colour and quotes to his articles, he was engaged in perpetuating outright falsehoods, spreading regime propaganda and absolving mass murderers of some of the worst atrocities of the twenty-first century.

*The fact that fabrications can so easily be found in Fisk's work destroys the legacy of decades-worth of award-winning reporting*

His perpetuation of the lie that opposition groups were responsible for the Daraya massacre is just one of many shameful examples of his false reporting on Syria. His approach of embedding with the regime, relying on regime minders and uncritically repeating whatever falsehoods he was spoon-fed by the mukhabarat became his modus operandi.

Fisk repeated the same routine in Douma, where he dutifully regurgitated more pro-regime lies, this time about a regime chlorine bomb attack that killed more than 40 people.

Fisk's claims that he couldn't find anyone that could corroborate the attack collapsed immediately. A CBS crew who were on the same regime-escorted press junket as Fisk did find eyewitnesses, even under the immense duress they must have been under. In this instance, it's not that Fisk failed in his attempt at objective journalism: it's that he went to Douma, fresh after

the massacre of dozens of civilians, with his mind seemingly already made up.

The work that he was widely praised for in the past needs also to be re-examined. If Fisk was willing to spread falsehoods in Syria, how can any of his previous work be trusted? Speak to enough foreign correspondents, and most have at least one story about him.

“When I was in Zagreb, the foreign desk sent me his piece from rural Croatia,” said former *Telegraph* journalist Francis Harris. “I said that’s impossible. No one could do that journey in a day, and I’d seen him at breakfast and dinner.

“A decade later, when I was on the foreign desk, an angry young correspondent said the same — that Fisk’s trip from Kabul to Kandahar was impossible. Journalists had died trying to drive down that road. And I told him what my deputy foreign editor had told me in ’91: ‘Sorry old son, you’ve been Fisked’.”

The fact that fabrications can so easily be found in Fisk’s work destroys the legacy of decades-worth of award-winning reporting. This was no accident. Fisk’s latter-day atrocity revisionism was the logical end of a career unburdened by the responsibility of telling the truth at all costs. But as with Walter Duranty before him, Fisk’s plaudits and awards won’t be rescinded.

That the true state of his reputation is admitted only by foreign correspondents, but not the newspapers that employ them — that is the indictment against us: a British foreign press more interested in convenient and colourfully worded stories than in truth.



*This article is taken from the December 2020 issue of The Critic.*

## Growing Peace in the Middle East

*American Jews can help Israel and the entire region by strengthening the Abraham Accord. And please, come visit us.*

**By Hend al Otaiba**

The Abraham Accord signed on Aug. 13, 2020, between the United Arab Emirates and Israel is a huge step forward, not only for the two countries, but the entire region. Israel and the UAE had been moving toward greater, low-profile cooperation in various fields over the past few years, but the dramatic nature and timing of the accord has introduced much-needed optimism into a region in turmoil. The Abraham Accord owes much to the changing attitudes of younger people, and its legacy will flow from its success in advancing the needs and aspirations of the region’s youth.

Last year, Zogby Research Services, a respected polling firm in Washington, D.C., known for its work tracking regional public opinion on a variety of political and social issues, started to see some marked shifts in Arab and Israeli attitudes—things that had not appeared in any of their previous polls. This was particularly notable in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which for decades has dominated Arab political landscape. Arabs—and many Palestinians—seemed, for the first time, to be signaling that they were favorable to Arab normalization with Israel, if it resulted in tangible improvements to the lives of Palestinians. Wanting to understand what was motivating this shift, pollsters followed up with open-ended questions, asking respondents to articulate why they felt this way. Those responses were also very interesting. Reflecting the demographic changes in the region, respondents said they were less concerned about political orthodoxies, and wanted to see real, practical change in the lives of Palestinians and a change in the stagnant regional status quo. The other notable finding was on the Israeli side: The conventional wisdom in the Arab world is that Israelis are not concerned with Arab opinion,

and thus what Arabs think about the annexation of the Jordan Valley is more or less irrelevant. But when our ambassador to the United States, Yousef Al Otaiba, addressed the Israeli public directly for the first time in an op-ed last June, warning that annexation would have dire consequences for Israel's relations with its neighbors, Israeli public opinion shifted 12 points against annexation. This strongly suggested that Israelis do indeed care about their relations with the Arab world and are unwilling to risk damaging the prospects of future relations by proceeding with annexation.

All these developments were in play as the Abraham Accord was coming together. We were certain that Israeli annexation would kill the two-state solution once and for all. So we acted fast, offering normalization of ties, in exchange for a stop to annexation.

People under the age of 35 make up more than 65% of the population of the Middle East. They are the ones whose futures are directly impacted by the actions and choices the region's leaders take now. And they realize this. In the past we worried that youth would take on the intransigent attitudes of older generations, which is always a danger. But now it is the youth who are signaling to older generations that their views and attitudes need to change; that they need to adapt to new realities if younger generations are to have a chance at prosperous, fulfilling lives.

For the UAE and Israel, the benefits of the accord are straightforward. The two countries have never been in a state of active hostility, so there is none of the baggage that attends other Arab-Israeli interactions. We expect to see substantial mutual gains quickly, in a number of areas, from health care to agritech and tourism.

Once the accord was signed, we started working with our Israeli counterparts to meet the enthusiastic demand by young people to see what life is like "on the other side." There has been a lot of interest on the part of Israeli and Emirati students and academics in studying and teaching in the other country. One initiative that is coming together now is a UAE-Israel Youth Circle, bringing young professionals together in the arts, literature, diplomacy, science, to share ideas and make connections.

Israel and the UAE have so many complementary interests and strengths, that the possibilities for

action and innovation really are endless, and exciting. We expect these connections to grow and evolve quickly, in step with the number of people traveling to the other country for business and tourism. This will be made infinitely easier by 28 weekly direct flights between Tel Aviv and Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

We are looking into other ideas, including the construction of platforms for collaborative action, where Arabs and Jews (and others) can meet and share ideas, and start new initiatives and businesses. We want the youth of the entire region to imagine how this widening diplomatic space can open doors for them.

It is essential that the Palestinians see the concrete benefits from the accord. While the task of peacemaking is up to the Israelis and Palestinians, we in the United Arab Emirates will continue to do what we can to support the process. We have seen proposals already from various groups and individuals with ideas about how to bring Israelis and Palestinians closer together through creative logistics solutions, virtual education, and collaborative opportunities for Palestinian and Israeli women in tech, and more.

Last but certainly not least, we believe there is a place for the Jewish and Arab diasporas in this process. These are dynamic populations with world-class skills who care about the future of the region, and have influence in their own countries. We extend a very warm welcome in particular to the American Jewish community and hope more will come to visit us in the United Arab Emirates, which is home to a growing and dynamic Jewish community.

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*Tablet, November 16, 2020*

# What Saudi Arabia Is Thinking

*There's talk of the new American administration moving closer to Iran. Could a Saudi step toward peace with Israel protect Riyadh from the troubles that might ensue?*



*Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud at the State Department in Washington, D.C. on October 14, 2020. MANUEL BALCE CENETA/POOL/AFP via Getty Images.*

**By Richard Goldberg**

The last few months have brought a series of historic firsts to the Middle East, a region that for all its regular news-making has been stuck in a decades-long strategic stasis. Another first reportedly arrived two days ago: a clandestine meeting in Saudi Arabia between the Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Saudi crown prince Mohammad bin Salman. For now it is only an unconfirmed meeting, far from the momentous normalization treaties known as the Abraham Accords that Israel recently ratified with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, or its follow-on peace agreement with Sudan. There is, nevertheless, an undeniable strategic opportunity at hand for Israel and Saudi Arabia. For the former: diplomatic relations with the custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and normal trade relations with the largest economy in the Arab world. For the latter: formalization of a strategic relationship that benefits the Saudi

kingdom's security and its potential for economic innovation.

Will we see a Saudi-Israeli peace treaty in the coming months? With the election of a new U.S. president bent on returning to the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran and the appointment of a secretary of state who has pledged to re-evaluate the U.S.-Saudi relationship, the clock is ticking on what could become the most pivotal decision taken by the House of Saud in more than a generation.

Several years ago, Saudi Arabia's future looked bleak. Thanks to the Iran nuclear deal, the kingdom's archenemy was newly flush with cash. The Obama administration sought a balance of power in the Gulf, rather than siding with America's traditional Sunni Arab allies. The price of oil had just dropped 60 percent in three years, creating economic pressures at home. A war in Yemen was dragging on longer than expected; images of emaciated children had become a staple of foreign media coverage, and, with news that the Saudi-led coalition mistakenly struck a school bus with a missile, killing 40 children, a bipartisan coalition in Congress pressed to cut off arms sales to the Gulf and to force the Saudis and Emiratis to withdraw from the conflict. Meanwhile, the Obama administration was normalizing the Muslim Brotherhood, the Saudi government's most feared internal enemy. And Congress, still viewing Saudi Arabia as a haven for terror finance and the export of jihad, voted to override a presidential veto that would have blocked the families of September 11th victims from suing the Saudi government. In Riyadh, it was obvious something had to change. The Saudis correctly assessed that, despite high-level relationships with the American private sector and defense establishment, many in the West still saw them as terrorists. With a new generation coming to power, their country's position was weakening. An economy built on oil would no longer immunize them from scrutiny, nor would it indefinitely sustain their economy or the rule of the royal family. They needed to try something new, something that would strengthen their own security as well as warm relations with Washington and the West.

Facing a growing threat from Iran, quiet cooperation with Israel's security and intelligence apparatus accelerated. The unexpected election of President Donald Trump also gave the Saudis an opportunity to rebrand. Saudi Arabia would launch a campaign to present itself as a reforming, progressive kingdom working to liberalize its economy. It was time for Riyadh to move its secret relationship with Israel out of the shadows.

But before it could, it had to deal with a problem that was simultaneously domestic and one of perceptions abroad. For decades, the Muslim World League (MWL) financed radical Islamist schools, scholars, and research while providing hate-filled textbooks to Muslim communities around the globe. This network promoted intolerance of many kinds, including hatred of Jews and the Jewish state. If Saudi Arabia wanted to fight an ideological war against radical Islam and get ahead of any Wahhabi opposition to relations with Israel, the MWL was the place to start.

In August 2016, bin Salman installed the former Saudi justice minister Muhammad al-Issa as the secretary general of the MWL. Al-Issa, an expert in Islamic jurisprudence, entered office with a mandate to counter extremist ideology within the organization. By mid-2017, he was prepared for a global charm offensive to complement the marketing of bin Salman as a reform leader. But even the greatest skeptics had to concede that what al-Issa was doing and saying went far deeper than public-relations spin. He publicly [condemned](#) Holocaust denial and visited Auschwitz. He told Muslim communities abroad to “embrace the nations they live in”—integrating into society rather than radicalizing on the margins. In public and private, he opposed sending Muslim students to Islamic private schools rather than giving them an opportunity to learn science, math, and literature. When accusations of extremism in MWL-connected mosques propped up, al-Issa cut ties. When my Foundation for the Defense of Democracies colleague Mark Dubowitz and I first met al-Issa in Riyadh, before he had hosted more high-profile delegations or visited synagogues abroad, we probed his views at great length on a myriad of longstanding concerns about the

kingdom's support for extremists. At the end of our meeting, I informed him that I was a Modern Orthodox Jew—a member of a movement founded on similar principles to those al-Issa espoused for Islam in which adherence to traditional Judaism and an embrace of the progressive, secular world were complementary, not incompatible. “You are creating Islamic Modern Orthodoxy,” I quipped. Around the same time as our visit, Prince Turki bin Faisal al-Saud, a former chief of Saudi intelligence, and Efraim Halevy, a former director of the Mossad, were sharing a stage at a New York synagogue to discuss the Trump administration's strategy on Iran. Putting the pieces together, it looked to us like the Saudis weren't just focused on reforms internally; they were laying tracks for normalization with Israel. By summer, bin Salman lifted the ban on female drivers—once again bolstering his image as a moderating influence moving Saudi Arabia toward a more liberal future. For a moment, Washington looked at Saudi Arabia as part of a better future for the Middle East, not as the natural home of fifteen of the 9/11 hijackers. Americans overlooked the palace intrigue underway in the kingdom where bin Salman, still fending off competition for the throne, jailed rival royals and elites in the Ritz Carlton hotel. When the Lebanese prime minister dropped out of sight then suddenly appeared in Saudi Arabia announcing his resignation, the incident was simply chalked up as bizarre. Human-rights concerns in an autocratic police state took a back seat. The reform-minded rhetoric and activity, especially improvements in the status of women, had turned around Saudi Arabia's image in just over a year. Everything was coming together for the kingdom's future under bin Salman. Everything was still on track for a slow, incremental path to normalization with Israel.

Then came the killing of Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi dissident who wrote a column for the *Washington Post*. He was brutally dismembered in a Saudi consulate in Turkey in October 2018, and his murder could not have done more damage to the country's position. Khashoggi wasn't an anonymous Saudi locked away in a hotel. He had friends in Washington—in the media, in think tanks, and on Capitol Hill.

That the killing was recorded by Turkish intelligence and its details slowly leaked to the media increased the political cost exponentially. Overnight, for many Washington insiders, the image of bin Salman turned from celebrity reformer to brutal dictator.

In the aftermath, Jerusalem was notably silent. Israel had already cast its lot with Saudi Arabia over Turkey and Qatar. With the fall of the Egyptian strongman Hosni Mubarak in 2011 and the election of a Muslim Brotherhood president to replace him, America's traditional allies in the Middle East—Israel and the Sunni Arabs—were stunned. The Brotherhood had long challenged Arab monarchies in the region while its Palestinian offshoot, Hamas, terrorized the state of Israel. The Obama administration's acceptance of the Muslim Brotherhood and deepening ties to the Brotherhood's state sponsors—Turkey and Qatar—provoked the beginnings of the unexpected alliance between Riyadh and Jerusalem.

And Israel wasn't alone. Political pressure to condemn bin Salman was steadily growing on Capitol Hill and in the media, but the Trump administration was willing to ignore it. President Trump's instincts militated against criticism of pro-American regimes. In addition, the United States was a month away from re-imposing oil sanctions on Iran as part of the president's decision to leave the nuclear deal. While the U.S. was not dependent on Saudi oil in the way it once was, the kingdom's swing production capacity would still be critical in keeping oil markets stable amidst an imminent loss of at least one million barrels per day of Iranian crude. Trump also valued his chief adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner's relationship with bin Salman—a relationship he assessed would be jeopardized by public criticism. Even so, the administration ultimately imposed sanctions on seventeen Saudi officials despite absolving bin Salman personally of Khashoggi's murder.

While the executive branch was determined to maintain a strategic partnership with bin Salman despite the Khashoggi affair—a show of loyalty in a region built on trust and relationships—the temperature on Capitol Hill never cooled. Congress sent the president a series of bills aimed at cutting off American arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Trump vetoed them all—

building up more chits with Gulf leaders that would come in handy the following year when he put that fantastic goal of every American president, peace in the Middle East, again on the table. Trump's actions did not lead to a “deal of the century” with the Palestinians, but they did, by happenstance, lead to the Abraham Accords.

It was not surprising that when Trump announced in 2017 that he would be moving the U.S. embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, the pundit class in Washington predicted the Arab world would be set ablaze. The same predictions were made when the president announced he would cut U.S. funding to the UN's Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA). Outrage and condemnation followed Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's declaration in 2019 that the U.S. would no longer consider Israeli settlements inherently illegal. For decades, both diplomats and scholars had insisted the core problem in the Middle East was the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Solve that and anything else is possible; otherwise, there will never be peace. What was surprising, at least to anyone who hadn't had a private conversation with a Sunni Arab leader in a few years, was the muted response from the “Arab Street” to each of the Trump administration's moves. Foreign ministries churned out pro-forma statements and the Palestinians worked to get UN votes of condemnation, but no riots erupted and the news cycle moved on from the issues quickly. Trump's moves—widely panned by foreign-policy mandarins as counterproductive to peace—were not originally intended to spur Arab-Israeli peace agreements like the Abraham Accords. These were actions aimed at the Palestinians, part of a strategy leading up to the rollout of the highly anticipated “Peace to Prosperity” plan. But Palestinian rejectionism and Israeli political turmoil made negotiations all but impossible. In attempting to lay the groundwork for Palestinian-Israeli peace from the inside-out, however, the Trump administration made a new discovery: peace was possible from the outside-in. The long-standing hypothesis that Arab leaders would pay a price for normalizing relations with Israel was false. The Palestinian issue need not be fully resolved for Arab states to make peace with Israel. And by cementing Arab-Israeli peace treaties, the Palestinians would soon

need to make a choice: cut the best deal they can get or get left behind by a changing Middle East.

A few days before the UAE announced it was normalizing relations with Israel, I published an article in *Newsweek* that argued that Saudi Arabia and the UAE could hedge against the potential fallout of a Democratic victory in November by normalizing relations with Israel. It was clear to me then—as it is now—that the anti-Saudi, pro-Iran echo chamber in Washington would organize a full-throated campaign to cut off arms sales to both Riyadh and Abu Dhabi and impose further sanctions on Saudi Arabia for Khashoggi's killing. With Donald Trump out of the way and pro-Iran-deal Democrats in control, the U.S.-Gulf relationship would turn 180-degrees—unless the Gulf states gave the Biden administration a compelling reason to stay on good terms.

The Abraham Accords have already proven my thesis correct. Last summer, President Trump was vetoing legislation to cut off U.S. arms sales to the UAE. Today, Congress is debating whether and how the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter would be made available to the same country. The UAE and Bahrain punched their proverbial tickets to long-term U.S. security guarantees as a cornerstone of their peace treaties with Israel—just as Egypt and Jordan had done previously. Saudi Arabia could have a similar future if it follows its neighbors. Alternatively, it could become the sole target of congressional wrath—facing a long-term cut-off of U.S. arms sales and increased human-rights sanctions on top regime officials, potentially including bin Salman himself. The kingdom could also lose support from Iran hawks who are more inclined to give bin Salman the benefit of the doubt in the context of a maximum-pressure campaign against Tehran. Saudi Arabia's decision to flood the oil market earlier this year devastated U.S. industry in states represented by Republicans, while China hawks are increasingly alarmed by Beijing's support for the Saudi ballistic-missile and nuclear programs. There's more at stake, too. A normalization agreement with Israel opens the door for bin Salman to relaunch Vision 2030, his ambitious development initiative—this time backed by eager U.S. and Israeli investors. The initiative's website hasn't been updated since 2018 when the

Khashoggi killing led to an international boycott of what was scheduled to be another star-studded Riyadh investment conference.

The Saudis are undoubtedly watching with jealousy the instant flow of capital to the UAE since the Abraham Accords were signed. Venture capitalists and hedge funds are lining up to establish trilateral U.S.-Israel-UAE investment funds and joint ventures. The three governments recently announced a joint \$3 billion fund based in Jerusalem to promote regional integration. Saudi Arabia's GDP is nearly twice the size of the UAE. The opportunity to establish trilateral U.S.-Israel-Saudi initiatives—or even fully integrated U.S.-Israel-Gulf investment plays—will be even more attractive over time. Vision 2030 already provides the investor roadmap with programs planned across multiple sectors of the Saudi economy. Bin Salman's digital city on the Red Sea, Neom, might actually get built.

In fact, that this week's reported clandestine meeting between Netanyahu and bin Salman took place in Neom is significant. The leader of the "Start-up Nation" met with the founder of a smart-city incubator—a reminder that Israeli-Saudi normalization is about a lot more than just Iran.

If securing American arms sales and rebuilding excitement for his country's economic modernization aren't enough of an incentive to normalize relations with Israel, bin Salman has one more: Qatar would become more isolated in Washington. No longer could Doha claim to be the moderate Gulf nation when Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain have normalized ties with Israel while Qatar continues to support Hamas and pump out anti-Semitism in English and Arabic through Al Jazeera.

How long will Saudi Arabia spend on the edge of friendship with Israel? The Saudi Royal Court is old-fashioned when it comes to the Jewish state. In its official response to the Abraham Accords, the Saudi foreign ministry declared that the kingdom would not normalize relations with Israel until peace is achieved between Israel and the Palestinians on the basis of the Arab (i.e., Saudi) Peace Initiative of 2002.

While bin Salman may assess that radical extremism, Iran, and an oil-based economy are the primary long-term challenges facing Saudi



Arabia, his advisers may fear that radical clerics in coordination with rivals within the royal family and foreign intelligence services (e.g., those of Qatar, Iran, or Turkey) would use normalization with Israel as the pretext for a coup or assassination. Indeed, the U.S. philanthropist Haim Saban recently claimed that bin Salman told him exactly that. Incrementalism is thus the preferred approach—opening Saudi airspace to Israeli commercial flights; inserting Israeli characters into Saudi television dramas; and signaling Riyadh’s approval of other Arab countries normalizing with Israel.

But will this incremental approach provide enough reason for a Biden administration to shield bin Salman from what the pro-Iran deal, anti-Saudi wing of the Democratic party will push forward in Congress? Media coverage of the Abraham Accords gives little to no credit to Saudi Arabia for its behind-the-scenes enablement of the other peace treaties. Bin Salman needs a formal agreement with Israel—or at least an institutionalized process for reaching an agreement—to complicate anti-Saudi initiatives in Washington.

This week’s reported meeting between bin Salman and Netanyahu may be a step in that direction. But more is needed—and soon. Within hours of learning about the bin Salman-Netanyahu meeting, President-elect Joe Biden announced that Antony Blinken would serve as his secretary of state. Last month, Blinken told *Jewish Insider* that a Biden administration would “undertake a strategic review of our bilateral relationship with Saudi Arabia to make sure that it is truly advancing our interests and is consistent with our values.”

Ambassador Dennis Ross, a former Middle East peace envoy, has suggested a step-by-step approach that might appeal to bin Salman—that is, staged normalization in exchange for staged Israeli concessions to the Palestinians. Israel, however, may see the status-quo relationship with Saudi Arabia more favorably. Why give in to pressure to make concessions when other Gulf states have normalized in full and more Arab governments may follow?

The UAE wisely leveraged Arab fears of an Israeli sovereignty declaration in the West Bank to spin its normalization agreement as a win for

the Palestinians, since the declaration never went forward. Is there something similar Netanyahu could offer to allow Saudi Arabia to claim an achievement toward Israeli-Palestinian peace? Maybe a normalization agreement commits Israel to a peace process with the Palestinians based on both the Trump peace plan and Arab Peace Initiative. Maybe it recognizes the mutual importance of Jerusalem and guarantees Muslim access to holy sites. Framed correctly, it could offer Saudi Arabia something to tout not just in the Middle East but throughout the Muslim world—without forcing Netanyahu to make concessions his government would not allow. Can creative and willing minds find something that works? Israel stands at the crossroads of the U.S.-Saudi relationship, and the ball is in the Royal Court.

*About the author*



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# Will Hamas and Fatah Form a Unity Government?

*Rival Palestinian factions have drafted an agreement that paves the way for a coalition government.*

**By Watch Jerusalem Staff**



*Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas (right) walks hand-in-hand with Hamas leader Ismail Haniya after their meeting in Gaza City in April 2007.*  
MAHMUD HAMS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

For the first time in over four years, Hamas and Fatah leaders are working to set up a unified list to form a Palestinian coalition government. On January 22, Arab News reported that the leaders of both rival factions discussed terms of a new draft agreement in recent meetings at Istanbul and Cairo. This accord, which was a major factor in the decision to hold elections later this year, has become the basis of several letters between Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and Fatah leader Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Hamas and Fatah leaders are meeting in Cairo on February 8 to further discuss how to successfully carry out elections. They also hope to draft a “code of conduct” to help make the upcoming elections as free and transparent as possible.

There is still a lot of distrust between the rival parties, but this new draft accord seems to be overcoming some hurdles. “We have worked in past months to resolve all obstacles so that we can

reach this day,” Hamas said in a statement, “and we have shown a lot of flexibility.”

Hamas agreed to be part of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The PLO is a political organization that claims to be the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The PLO formed shortly after the Six-Day War. It engaged in guerrilla warfare against Israel for over 30 years before it entered into peace negotiations with them in the 1990s. They officially recognized Israel’s right to exist in 1993. By agreeing to comply with the PLO, Hamas would essentially recognize Israel too, a stance which they have long proved is not one they support; Hamas is an Islamist and jihadist terrorist organization and a sworn enemy of Israel.

On the other side, Fatah, which more or less controls the PLO, agreed that the political organization needs to change in order to better represent all Palestinian groups.

This agreement also has several benefits—especially for Hamas. The new coalition government will attempt to revive Gaza’s battered economy by seeking a long-term ceasefire with Israel. This ceasefire will pave the way for major rebuilding in Gaza, including the Gaza airport, which has remained closed and in ruins since 2001. Additionally, this agreement calls for all crossings to be permanently restored and a security corridor between Gaza and the West Bank to be established.

This new government will also run affairs in both Gaza and the West Bank, uniting these long-divided Palestinian areas. According to the agreement, the government “will work on unifying laws and institutions, and have security control over all areas.”

Ultimately, this new accord is calling for a complete overhaul of the political structure in the Palestinian Authority; it seeks to adjust the roles of the president, government and legislative council. “It is either a presidential structure or a parliamentary one,” the accord said. “The hybrid is a source of conflict.”

This revamping of the system is slowly becoming a necessity if Abbas wants to remain in power. Ever since the Palestinian Authority announced its intentions to resume civil and security cooperation with Israel in November of last year, Abbas's favor has declined. The December Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research polls showed that 66 percent of Palestinians are in favor of Abbas resigning. The same poll also projected that Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh would receive 50 percent of the vote in the presidential race—putting him ahead of Abbas's 43 percent. And with several Fatah members in support of Mohammed Dahlan, Abbas's chief rival who has been banned from running in the elections, things are not looking good for Abbas.

But Abbas seems to have accounted for this. Four days before his decree announcing the elections, he amended several laws pertaining to the elections. These mostly affected timing for elections and who can run, but he also made major changes concerning the court system. Essentially these changes allow Abbas to choose the president of the Supreme Judicial Council, who appoints the court judges. This is important for Abbas, because if the election doesn't turn out in his favor, the appeals court will essentially be under his control. These amendments are a major point of contention that Hamas and Fatah plan to discuss in their meeting in Cairo.

Despite the contention, the Arab states' normalization with Israel is placing tremendous pressure on both parties to put aside differences and unify behind their movement against Israel. Especially now that Qatar—a country that funds Hamas and has pledged \$360 million in aid to Gaza this year—might normalize relations with Israel, Hamas is looking to get into the Palestinian interior.

*Watch Jerusalem* has been watching for the rise of Hamas in the Palestinian Authority for years, and these new elections look like a step in that direction. Perhaps a Hamas-Fatah coalition government could give Hamas the power it needs to finally gain control of the Palestinian Authority—and the West Bank.

If Hamas ruled over the West Bank, its ideologies and rockets would have access to the most populous areas in Israel, as well as the Holy City—a dream it's had for years, and the exact thing Israelis fear, with good reason.

The Palestinians have long desired to control East Jerusalem. A powerful prophecy recorded in Zechariah 14 says that they will get it (Zechariah 14:1-2). This prophecy indicates East Jerusalem will not be taken through negotiations with the Israelis or through international pressure; rather East Jerusalem will fall in a violent takeover. Fatah has tried using diplomacy and pressure from the international community to force a two-state solution with Israel. But Hamas has shown it is willing to fight for Jerusalem. That is why *Watch Jerusalem* expects Hamas to gain political control of the West Bank.

This new coalition government could be the cloak Hamas needs to get a foot in the door. However things play out, the Bible shows that the violent fall of East Jerusalem is sure to happen. Continue to watch Hamas and Fatah in the lead-up to the Palestinian elections this summer. And as you do, realize that a Hamas takeover of the West Bank, and later East Jerusalem, is only the beginning of the three-step prophecy recorded by Zechariah that is soon to impact the entire world.

For more information about this prophecy and where all these events are leading, please request our free booklet *Jerusalem in Prophecy*.

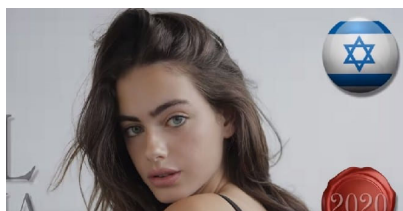
*Watch Jerusalem, February 8*



*Is Abbas Rival Mohammed Dahlan Plotting a Comeback, With the UAE's Help?*

# Yael Shelbia

By JNS



Israel model Yael Shelbia has been awarded the top spot on the magazine *TC Candler*'s list of the most beautiful women in the world for 2020.

The list ranked actress and "Wonder Woman" star Gal Gadot, who also served in the IDF, as No. 22.

Overnight Sunday, *TC Candler* released a video compilation showing its readers' picks for the most beautiful women in the world. The 15-minute clip ends with a picture of Shelbia's face and her title.

The clip garnered some 200,000 views in the first two hours it was posted online. Later Monday, the magazine was expected to formally announced Shelbia as "loveliest of them all" on its official *Instagram* page, which has roughly 1 million followers.

Shelbia has recently climbed in the list's rankings over the past few years. In 2017, the model placed 14th; and in 2018 she was up to third place. In 2019, she came in second, and now she has made it into the top spot.

In April 2020, Shelbia joined the Israeli Defense Force, the military forces of the State of Israel. She is currently serving in the Air Force. Yael Shelbia Cohen was born in Nahariya, Israel, to a religious Orthodox Jewish family. She attended a religious Ulpana high school for girls. Her modeling soon led to controversy and opposition in her Ulpana, which threatened to send a letter to the Israeli Education Ministry to expel her. Her family, however, had been supportive of her career, so long as it would not interfere with her religious studies. And after consultation with Israel's Religious Education Ministry, she was allowed to continue her studies on the condition of following certain guidelines.

However, combining a modeling career with a religious lifestyle has led to difficulties, including in terms of modesty of clothing. During a modeling campaign in Milan, she had to live on crackers for four days, as she could not find kosher food. She says she had lost many modeling contracts, due to her keeping of the Sabbath and choices in clothing. In 2019, she began dating American businessman Brandon Korff, son of Rabbi Yitzhak Aharon Korff, and grandson of billionaire Sumner Redstone.

*Biblical News, December 29, 2020*

# Shabtai Shavit

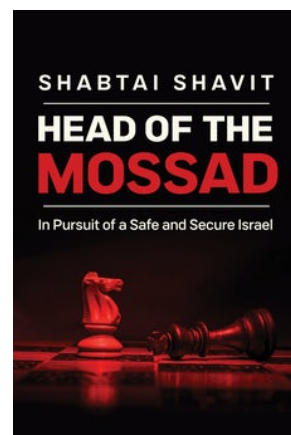
## *Head of the Mossad*

Shabtai Shavit, director of the Mossad from 1989 to 1996, is one of the most influential leaders to shape the recent history of the State of Israel. In this exciting and engaging book, Shavit combines memoir with sober reflection to reveal what happened during the seven years he led what is widely recognized today as one of the most powerful and proficient intelligence agencies in the world. Shavit provides an inside account of his intelligence and geostrategic philosophy, the operations he directed, and anecdotes about his family, colleagues, and time spent in, among other places, the United States as a graduate student and at the CIA.

Shavit's tenure occurred during many crucial junctures in the history of the Middle East, including the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War era; the first Gulf War and Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's navigation of the state and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)

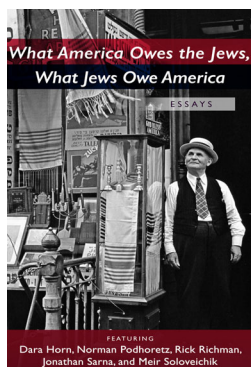
during the conflict; the peace agreement with Jordan, in which the Mossad played a central role; and the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Shavit offers a broad sweep of the integral importance of intelligence in these historical settings and reflects on the role that intelligence can and should play in Israel's future against Islamist terrorism and Iran's eschatological vision.

*Head of the Mossad* is a compelling guide to the reach of and limits facing intelligence practitioners, government officials, and activists throughout Israel and the Middle East. This is an essential book for everyone who cares for Israel's security and future, and everyone who is interested in intelligence gathering and covert action.



## What America Owes the Jews, What Jews Owe America

*Dara Horn, Norman Podhoretz, Rick Richman, Jonathan Sarna and Meir Soloveichik*



To what extent was the American Revolution an achievement of Judaism? How did Zionism win over American Jews? Is there an American Jewish equivalent to Yiddish? Why did Abraham Lincoln feel such a close connection to the Jews?

Why are many American Jews so often reluctant to admit what they owe to America? These are but some of the questions asked—and answered—in this new collection of never-before-published essays from five of Jewish America's leading thinkers. Out in time for the Fourth of July, *What America Owes the Jews, What Jews Owe America* is an essential text for lovers and observers of American and Jewish life.

### *About the Authors*

*Dara Horn* is the author of five novels, most recently *Eternal Life*.

*Norman Podhoretz* served as editor-in-chief of *Commentary* from 1960 until his retirement in 1995. He is the author of twelve books, including *My Love Affair with America* (2000) and *Why Jews are Liberals* (2009). In 2004 he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

*Rick Richman* is an attorney and frequent contributor to *Mosaic*. He is the author of *What Would Brandeis Do?* (August 4, 2016) and *Racing Against History: The 1940 Campaign for a Jewish Army to Fight Hitler* (Encounter Books, 2018).

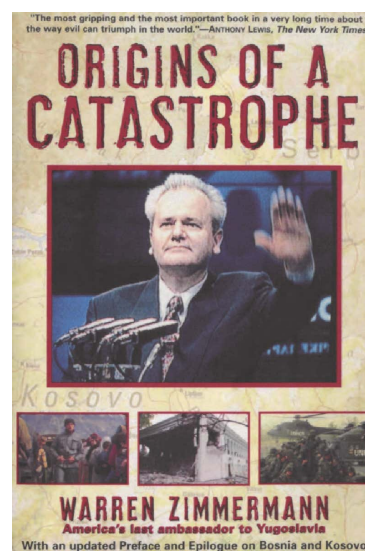
*Jonathan Sarna* is the Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun professor of American Jewish history at Brandeis University and chief historian of the National Museum of American Jewish History. He has written, edited, or co-edited more than 30 books. The most recent, co-authored with Benjamin Shapell, is *Lincoln and the Jews: a History*.

*Meir Soloveichik* is the rabbi of Congregation Shearith Israel in New York and director of the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought at Yeshiva University.

## Origins of a Catastrophe Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers (1999)

By Warren Zimmerman

### PREFACE



This is a story with villains—villains guilty of destroying the multiethnic state of Yugoslavia, of provoking four wars, and of throwing some twenty million people into a distress unknown since the Second World War. How could this tragedy have happened to a country that by most standards was more prosperous and more open than any other in Eastern Europe? My thesis is that the Yugoslav catastrophe was not mainly the result of ancient ethnic or religious hostilities, nor of the collapse of communism at the end of the cold war, nor even of the failures of the Western countries. Those factors undeniably made things worse. But Yugoslavia's death and the violence that followed resulted from the conscious actions of nationalist leaders who coopted, intimidated, circumvented, or eliminated all opposition to their demagogic designs. Yugoslavia was destroyed from the top down. This book is primarily about those destroyers. As American ambassador between 1989 and 1992, I saw them frequently and came to know them well. Speaking with me before their faces had become familiar to Western television viewers, they hadn't yet learned the full panoply of defenses against questions from foreigners. They described their plans, sometimes honestly, sometimes deceitfully, but always passionately and with a cynical disregard for playing by any set of rules. This record of their

words and actions provides evidence for a coroner's report on the death of Yugoslavia. The book also recounts the changes in American policy toward Yugoslavia in its death agony. None of these policy decisions were either easy or self-evident. Choices rarely present themselves as clearly when they need to be made as they do later, after their consequences are known. Both the Bush and Clinton administrations made damaging mistakes in the Yugoslav crisis, as I did also. While mistakes never seem like mistakes when we make them, I have tried to be candid about what was right and what was wrong in American policy. Yugoslavia was the first European country to perish since World War II. The Soviet Union followed soon after. The two cases were different. The Soviet Union was a dictatorship from the center, an ideological tyranny, a despotism exercised by a single ethnic group, and a colonial empire. Yugoslavia was none of those. Thus, while the Soviet Union deserved to die, the fate Yugoslavia merited was less morally ordained. The Yugoslav experiment in liberal communism from 1945 to 1991 was based on the twin assumptions that diverse peoples who had fought in the past could learn to live together and that communism based on local factors rather than the Soviet model could help them do so. In both conception and implementation, the experiment was flawed. But it offered far more to the twenty-four million Yugoslavs than the sea of misery into which most of them have now been cast adrift. The destruction of Yugoslavia led directly to wars in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo—each war more savage than the one before. The prime agent of Yugoslavia's destruction was Slobodan Milosevic, president of Serbia. Milosevic claimed to defend Yugoslavia even as he spun plans to turn it into a Serb-dominated dictatorship. His initial objective was to establish Serbian rule over the whole country. When Slovenia and Croatia blocked this aim by deciding to secede, the Serbian leader fell back on an alternative strategy. He would bring all of Yugoslavia's Serbs, who lived in five of its six republics, under the authority of Serbia, that is, of himself. Milosevic initiated this strategy in Croatia, using the Yugoslav army to seal off Serbian areas from the reach of Croatian authority. His plan in Bosnia was even bolder—to establish by force a Serbian state on two-thirds of the territory of a republic in which Serbs weren't even a plurality, much less a majority. In league with Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader with whom he later broke, Milosevic was responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of Bosnians and for the creation of the largest refugee population in Europe since the Second World War. Then, in 1999, he turned on

Kosovo, a province under Serbian sovereignty and with important Serbian memories and monuments, but with a large Albanian majority. In a scheme so ruthless that even NATO military planners were caught by surprise, he set out to denude the province of all of its two million Albanian inhabitants—a people whose roots in the Balkans were planted over two thousand years ago. Franjo Tudjman, elected president of Croatia in 1990, also played a leading role in the destruction of Yugoslavia. A fanatic Croatian nationalist, Tudjman hated Yugoslavia and its multiethnic values. He wanted a Croatian state for Croats, and he was unwilling to guarantee equal rights to the 12 percent of Croatia's citizens who were Serbs. Tudjman's arrogance in declaring independence without adequate provisions for minority rights gave Milosevic and the Yugoslav army a pretext for their war of aggression in Croatia in 1991. And Tudjman's greed in seeking to annex Croatian areas of Bosnia prolonged the war and increased the casualties in that ill-starred republic. Slovenian nationalism was different from the Serbian or Croatian sort. With a nearly homogeneous population and a location in the westernmost part of Yugoslavia, Slovenia was more democratically inclined and more economically developed than any other republic in Yugoslavia. The Slovenes wanted to be free of the poverty and intrigue of the rest of Yugoslavia. They particularly detested Milosevic, charging him with making Yugoslavia uninhabitable for non-Serbs. Under the presidency of Milan Kucan—a conflicted figure buffeted toward secession by the winds of Slovenian politics—Slovenia unilaterally declared its independence on June 25, 1991. The predictable result, irresponsibly disregarded by Kucan and the other Slovene leaders, was to bring war closer to Croatia and Bosnia. An ironic feature of Yugoslavia's destruction was the descent into barbarism of the Yugoslav People's Army. The army, heir to the partisan force that Josip Broz Tito had led to victory in World War II, was a genuine Yugoslav institution. Though with a predominantly Serbian officer corps, it drew soldiers from all parts of the country. Its mission was to protect Yugoslavia's integrity and borders. As the country became increasingly divided by competing nationalisms, the army became the tool of Milosevic's imperial designs. It tried unsuccessfully to destroy the Slovenian and Croatian leaderships; it helped the Serbs in Croatia seize more than a quarter of that republic; it colluded with the schemes of Milosevic and Karadzic to tear away two-thirds of Bosnia; and it committed massive atrocities in Kosovo. The army's shame was symbolized by the rise of General Ratko Mladic, commander of the

Bosnian Serb army—a career officer in the Yugoslav army and a war criminal of Nazi proportions. Because of the intensity of the nationalisms in Yugoslavia, it proved impossible to preserve the country in a way that would have moved it toward democracy. There were many Yugoslavs who tried, and this book also tells their story. The leading figure was Ante Markovic, a businessman and economic reformer from Croatia who was prime minister from early 1989 until the Yugoslav flame finally guttered out toward the end of 1991. Had Markovic come to office a decade earlier, at the time of Tito's death and before the rise of nationalism, he might have led the country to economic and democratic reform. Instead he was the coda of a tragic symphony. History takes little account of lost causes. This book is in part an attempt to vindicate the valiant efforts of an able man overwhelmed by forces beyond his control. My most difficult task has been to convey the conviction that all Yugoslavs weren't the bloodthirsty extremists so ubiquitously visible in Western news accounts. Most of the people my wife and I met in six years of living in Yugoslavia were peaceful and decent, without a trace of the hostility on which nationalism feeds. It's true that nationalist leaders have been able to turn many normal people toward extremism by playing on their historic fears through the baleful medium of television, a matchless technological tool in the hands of dictators. What amazed me was how many Yugoslavs resisted, and continue to resist, the incessant racist propaganda. I have tried to describe some of them, because they or their political heirs will one day help to build societies not driven by rabid nationalism. The death of Yugoslavia and its bloody aftermath proved a debacle for the United States and Europe. The Bush administration believed that it was important to hold the country together as long as that could be done democratically. I shared that belief and the view—which proved tragically accurate—that Yugoslavia's death could come only with extreme violence. This book explores alternatives to President George Bush's "unity and democracy" policy and identifies mistakes in our approach. Still, I believe that no imaginable political or even military intervention from outside could have arrested the nationalist-inspired drive to Yugoslavia's destruction. When war broke out in Bosnia, however, the United States was not so impotent. The Bosnian war confronted two successive American administrations with the first test of their leadership in Europe since the end of the cold war—a test that, until much too late, they failed to pass. The aggression in Bosnia by Milosevic, Karadzic, and the Yugoslav army went far

beyond the bounds of any Serbian grievances, real or imagined, against the Muslim president, Alija Izetbegovic. Had the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) met that aggression with air strikes in the summer of 1992, I believe that an egotiated result would soon have followed. From July 1992 I urged that course, without success. The war dragged on into the Clinton administration, whose vacillations deferred decisive Western action to the summer of 1995. Then Tudjman's recapture of the Serbian-held areas of Croatia, the pressure on Milosevic of international economic sanctions, a decisive two-week NATO air campaign, and an ingenious and determined American negotiating effort achieved an agreement in Dayton, Ohio, at the end of the year. It came three years and more than a hundred thousand deaths after America's first real opportunity to help end the war. The Dayton result mirrored all the complexities and contradictions that I have sought to describe in this book. It was an uneasy compromise between the multiethnic values of the old Yugoslavia and the nationalistic assertiveness of Milosevic and Tudjman and their compatriots in Bosnia. The Dayton formula will succeed only if radical nationalism and its champions are discredited in Bosnia, if Serbia and Croatia stop meddling there, and if the Bosnian people themselves decide that they've had enough of war. The Bosnian war had frozen the even older and less tractable crisis in Kosovo. After Dayton, Kosovo returned predictably to a dangerous state. In 1998, an Albanian guerrilla group—the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)—emerged as the product of Milosevic's habitual intransigence and the failure of the moderate Albanian leadership to win any concessions from him. The KLA demanded an independent Kosovo and began to kill Serbian officials. Milosevic's reaction was to use paramilitary troops to kill KLA members and supporters and to prepare the expulsion of Kosovo's entire Albanian population. The NATO countries, led by the United States, demanded that Serbia concede autonomy to Kosovo and accept a NATO peacekeeping force to ensure it. When Milosevic refused, NATO launched, on March 24, 1999, a campaign of airstrikes against Serbia. This NATO intervention, though not as shamefully dilatory as in Bosnia, may still have come too late. Milosevic took advantage of the months of negotiation to organize his cleansing operation. When the bombing began, he was able to accelerate the expulsions, driving nearly half the population of Kosovo outside its borders in the first days of the war. The aggressive nationalism that destroyed Yugoslavia and turned Bosnia and Kosovo into killing grounds can be overcome only by arecommitment to the proposition that different

ethnic groups must learn to live together. As of this writing—May 1999—this is still possible in Bosnia. The cynical ruthlessness of the Serb attack against the Kosovo Albanians makes Kosovo a more doubtful case. Even Yugoslavia, imperfect and doomed, had something to teach us about tolerance. The lesson isn't confined to the Balkans. All but a small percentage of the world's peoples live in states containing more than one ethnic group. From India to Israel, Sudan to South Africa, Quebec to Chiapas, the principles of the single nation-state and the multiethnic state are in conflict. The issues fought out with such savagery in Yugoslavia—how to curb a tyrannical majority, how to preserve minority rights, when to recognize claims to self-determination, how to apply international preventive strategies, when and how to use force, how to reshape international institutions to meet ethnic challenges—are being contested around the globe. This book is also an attempt to deal with these larger questions. I have written it in the form of a memoir, because I was fated by diplomatic assignment to be on the scene for the final three years of Yugoslavia's turbulent history. The role that the United States and other Western countries played in the country's terminal disease and my own role are a part of this memoir. But the story is mainly about the individual people who strode the stage of the last tragic act of this Balkan drama, the people who tried to save Yugoslavia and the people who destroyed it.

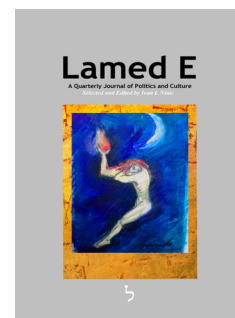


*Warren Zimmermann* (November 16, 1934 – February 3, 2004) was an American career diplomat best known as the last US ambassador to SFR Yugoslavia before its disintegration in a series of civil wars.

Zimmermann was a member of the Yale Class of 1956, and a member of Scroll and Key Society. He died of pancreatic cancer at his home in Great Falls, Virginia on February 3, 2004.

## Content

- Marianna Bala'a:** *Proof of the Mystical 'Gold of Ophir' Discovered*  
**Ariel David:** *Archaeologists Find Remains of 'Royal' Garments From King David's Time – in a Mine*  
**Callum Wood:** *Iran and Al Qaeda: Friends or Foes?*  
**Michael Doran:** *Obama's Secret Iran Strategy*  
**Jerold Auerbach:** *Obama's Promised Land*  
**Yonah Jeremy Bob:** *As Trump exits, the full Mossad story on normalization into focus*  
**Oz Katerji:** *Fabricator and fraudster*  
**Hend al Otaiba:** *Growing Peace in the Middle East*  
**Richard Goldberg:** *What Saudi Arabia Is Thinking*  
**Watch Jerusalem Staff:** *Will Hamas and Fatah Form a Unity Government?*  
**JNS:** *Yael Shelbia*  
 \*\*\* *Shabtai Shavit's Head of the Mossad*  
 \*\*\* *What America Owes the Jews, What Jews Owe America*  
**Warren Zimmerman:** *Origins of a Catastrophe Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers (1999).*



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