

**Then Satan said:
This beleaguered soul—[Israel]
How can I subdue him?
He has courage and skill
And weapons and ingenuity and judgment.
And he said: I will not take his strength.
Nor fetter nor restrain him
I will not weaken his will
Nor dampen his spirit.
This will I do: Dull his brain
Until he forgets that justice is his.**

—Nathan Alterman, [d. 1970.]

The Palestinians were among the first to realize that, in a media age, you can win on other battlefields. Stone-throwing youths have won more victories for Palestine—at least in the European press and on North American campuses—than the Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian armies ever did.

—Mark Steyn (2011).

**OBAMA, THE DELEGITIMATION OF ISRAEL, AND THE
PALESTINIANS' UN "UDI" CAMPAIGN**

isranet-publications
Blog, August 29, 2011

<https://www.isranet.org/blog/obama-delegitimation-israel-and-palestinians-un-udi-campaign/>

As looming fall's first reds stain summer's fading greens, the Egyptian Army is clearing the now bothersome "freedom" protesters out of Tahrir Square, the Syrian bloodbath passes 2,200, and the media have so far largely ignored the Palestinians' proclaimed September 20 "Unilateral Declaration of Independence". But that will soon change, and this critically important event soon will take stage center. Hence, why it is being undertaken, and how it plays out, needs careful attention, and relating to the ongoing pro-Palestinian delegitimation campaign against Israel.

This campaign, increasingly strident since the openly antisemitic denunciations of Israel at the first, 2001, UN Durban Human Rights conference, has since been playing out on a global scale. It is being elaborated on campuses in Europe and North America, among NGOs and European government agencies, in the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council and subsequent (and again upcoming) "Durban" gatherings, and in much of the American, and especially European, media.

The delegitimation campaign seeks to analogize democratic, Jewish Israel to pre-independence apartheid South Africa. If the obscene analogy works—if the anti-Israel ideological drumbeat on campuses, in "progressive" magazines and journals and in much of the media is successful, and enough major states then agree that "the occupation", Israel's self-defense in the Gaza "Cast Lead" incursion, and its actions against the Gaza blockade flotillas transgress international law and the Geneva Convention—then Israel and its government, like that of pre-Mandela South Africa, can be deemed illegitimate and hence subject to international sanctions and embargoes.

If Israel were then to resist such international pressures, refusing to negotiate with the Palestinians on the disadvantageous "international community" terms threatening its security and sovereignty, then further, concrete steps could be taken, which would severely weaken the Jewish state, and even threaten its very existence. For instance, Security Council and General Assembly majorities—with either passive or active US support (an eventuality we shall return to)—could enact measures choking off its key trade with Europe or blocking foreign and military aid from the U.S.

**OBAMA, THE DELEGITIMATION OF ISRAEL, AND THE
PALESTINIANS' UN "UDI" CAMPAIGN**

isranet-publications

Blog, August 29, 2011

<https://www.isranet.org/blog/obama-delegitimation-israel-and-palestinians-un-udi-campaign/>

Persistent Israeli resistance could even see direct "international community" intervention (stationing UN forces along the West Bank pre-1967 [*i.e.*, 1949] "borders", withdrawing the American troops still policing the Sinai border with Egypt, and so on).

The goal of the "anti-Zionist" delegitimation movement, which long predates the current Palestinian "UDI" gambit, is severely to weaken Israel, by first turning it into an international (indeed, the only) pariah state and then, ultimately, to cause its collapse. Such a collapse could be effected through a combined external energizing of a series of crises, eventuating in a renewed Arab onslaught, and internal reinforcing of a severe, debilitating, and ultimately paralyzing political-ideological division.

Hence the delegitimation campaign, which is absorbing much pro-Palestinian energy and to which significant funds are clearly being devoted, must be understood not as some kind of frivolous extreme-left political psychotherapy or irrelevant campus fringe play-acting, but as a serious and coordinated part of the larger strategy of continued Arab opposition to the very existence of a Jewish state in the Middle East.

Which is where the Palestinian "Unilateral Declaration of Independence", now scheduled for September 20, 2011 at the UN, comes in. Piggy-backing on US President Obama's grandstanding "peace process" demands, that Israel cease expanding "settlements" and that the pre-Six Days War 1967 "borders" serve as the basis for negotiation, the PA's Mahmoud Abbas broke off direct negotiations with Israel. Declaring that there could be no negotiations until "settlement" construction was entirely stopped (never heretofore an impediment to Israeli-Palestinian talks), Abbas came up with a new strategy: avoiding the Oslo Accord-mandated direct negotiations entirely, and moving instead directly to a "UDI".

This gambit, if successful, would enable a Palestinian state to come existence without recognizing the political-juridical legitimacy of Israel. Not incidentally, it also provides the Palestinians with an "out" insofar as one of Israel's fundamental

**OBAMA, THE DELEGITIMATION OF ISRAEL, AND THE
PALESTINIANS' UN "UDI" CAMPAIGN**

isranet-publications

Blog, August 29, 2011

<https://www.isranet.org/blog/obama-delegitimation-israel-and-palestinians-un-udi-campaign/>

demands for any peace treaty is concerned, recognition as a Jewish state. This seemingly self-evident reality (clearly expressed in the language of the 1947 UN Palestine partition vote, which Israel accepted and the Arabs rejected) has consistently been repudiated by the Palestinians. And this rejection is key, for it clearly implies a lack of a commitment to a “two-state”—one Palestinian Arab, one Jewish—political solution: recognizing Israel as a Jewish state would rule out, for instance, the supposed “right of return” of millions of Palestinian “refugees.” Still part of the PLO Charter, and consistently defended by Mahmoud Abbas (let alone Hamas), such a “return” would, if allowed, swamp Jewish Israel.

The working assumption about a UDI until very recently has been that it would, surely, be vetoed in the Security Council by the United States, Israel’s main ally, certainly by Germany, currently a non-permanent member, and probably by Great Britain and France as well (that Russia and China, the remaining permanent members of the Security Council, would abstain, or perhaps even support the UDI, was a given).

Such a veto would not, of course, block a potential General Assembly vote, where the Palestinians have a built-in Arab bloc/Latin American/Third World majority, but such an affirmation, while not without propaganda value, has no constitutive value—only a unanimous Security Council vote can approve a new state. (Indeed, a General Assembly majority had already approved a Palestinian state, in 1988, to no practical effect.)

Here a number of recent possibilities must be faced. While Germany’s Angela Merkel has stated that Germany would not vote for a Palestinian state, Bundestag election- and foreign-policy related pressures might yet lead to an abstention; and the closer to the vote we get, the more possible pro-votes by the French and British, ever vigilant to curry Arab favor, become.

Further, and much more importantly, America under Obama, who has been

**OBAMA, THE DELEGITIMATION OF ISRAEL, AND THE
PALESTINIANS' UN "UDI" CAMPAIGN**

isranet-publications

Blog, August 29, 2011

<https://www.isranet.org/blog/obama-delegitimation-israel-and-palestinians-un-udi-campaign/>

currying Arab and Muslim opinion ever since his Cairo Address, and whose pressure on Israel in the first place led to the Palestinian withdrawal from talks and Abbas' UDI policy, is far from rock-solid in its anti-UDI Security Council stance.

(Indeed, some Israeli insiders believe that the sudden announcement this month by Israel's Netanyahu, that he was ready to negotiate on the basis of the 1967 borders [Obama's recent "peace process" suggestion, which Bibi had earlier and eloquently shot down], if the PA's Abbas returned to negotiations, was prompted by American threats of Security Council abstention, or worse, unless Israel relented.)

Obama's coolness to Israel—the one major US ally he has yet to grace with a personal visit—and to Netanyahu has been evident since the beginning of his Presidency. Quick to abandon US—and Israel—ally Hosni Mubarak just as the Egyptian Arab Spring rebellion began, but slow to move against both Iranian and Syrian dictators (Israeli enemies), despite popular rebellions against them, the depth of Obama's commitment to Israel, despite much campaign-oriented lip-service, is at best shallow.

Most observers assume he would not risk Jewish, and general U.S. support (opinion polls rank pro-Israel sentiment at almost 70%) in the fast-approaching U.S. Presidential election. On the other hand, Obama—facing severe negative economic and political (Afghanistan, Iraq) pressures—has been steadily falling in the public opinion polls, and no President facing an 8%+ unemployment rate in November has ever won re-election.

Obama, a highly ideological left-wing Democratic liberal, has himself said he would rather be right than be re-elected: facing sure defeat in November, 2012, might he perhaps see voting for a Palestinian State in the Security Council as part of his political "legacy", his campaign to "remake" America?

**OBAMA, THE DELEGITIMATION OF ISRAEL, AND THE
PALESTINIANS' UN "UDI" CAMPAIGN**

**isranet-publications
Blog, August 29, 2011**

<https://www.isranet.org/blog/obama-delegitimation-israel-and-palestinians-un-udi-campaign/>

Is it far-fetched, then, to see American Middle East policy under the Obama Administration meshing with the anti-Israel delegitimation campaign and its related Palestinian UDI move?

An American President disposed to favor Israel's Arab enemies at the UN, regardless of domestic electoral consequences, would indeed be a *novum*, a radical new political fact. One of course hopes that such a conjecture is a mistaken conflation of unrelated inferences, rather than a terribly dangerous new reality for Israel and the Jewish people.

(Prof. Krantz is Director of the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research and Editor of its Daily Isranet Briefing and Israfax publications.)