

**WHILE CANADIANS CHOOSE TRUDEAU AS LEADER, U.S.
REVERSES AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL**
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NB: EXCITING UPDATE TO OUR CONFERENCE: KEYNOTE ADDRESS WILL BE FROM RABBI IRVING GREENBERG, & A SPECIAL VIDEO PRESENTATION FROM ELIE WIESEL!

***Beth Tikvah Synagogue & CIJR Present: The Annual Sabina Citron International Conference: THE JEWISH THOUGHT OF EMIL L. FACKENHEIM: JUDAISM, ZIONISM, HOLOCAUST, ISRAEL* — Toronto, Sunday, October 25, 2015, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.** The day-long Beth Tikvah Conference, co-chaired by Prof. Frederick Krantz (CIJR) and Rabbi Jarrod R. Grover (Beth Tikvah), open to the public and especially to students, features original papers by outstanding Canadian and international scholars, some his former students, on the many dimensions of Emil L. Fackenheim's exceptionally powerful, and prophetic thought, and on his rich life and experience. Tickets: Regular - \$36; Seniors - \$18; students free. For registration, information, conference program, and other queries call 1-855-303-5544 or email yunna@isranet.org. Visit our site: www.isranet.org/events.

[Back to the Future, With the Kid: Margaret Wente, *Globe & Mail*, Oct. 20, 2015](#)— A moment came during the red tidal wave Monday night when a friend turned to me in awe.

[Obama's Afghan Reversal: *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 15, 2015](#) — If there is a single element of consistency in President Obama's foreign policy it is his desire to end and avoid U.S. military engagements.

[Plan B for Libya: Gal Luft, *American Interest*, Oct. 1, 2015](#)— The September 20 deadline for establishing a unity government in war-torn Libya ahead of the UN General Assembly meeting came and went ...

[Assassination Attempt in Tunisia Highlights Mounting Challenges: Farah Samti & Kareem Fahim, *New York Times*, Oct. 9, 2015](#) — Hours before the Norwegian Nobel Committee gave its highest-profile honor to a coalition of Tunisian groups ...

**WHILE CANADIANS CHOOSE TRUDEAU AS LEADER, U.S.
REVERSES AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL**
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, October 20, 2015
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/while-canadians-choose-trudeau-leader-us-reverses-afghan-withdrawal/>

On Topic Links

[America's Failed Foreign Policy: Margaret Wentz, *National Post*, Oct. 20, 2015](#)

[Obama Deploys Troops to Cameroon to Fight Boko Haram: Frances Martel, *Breitbart*, Oct. 15, 2015](#)

[Mideast Turmoil Strengthens Sudan's Regime: Yaroslav Trofimov, *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 15, 2015](#)

[Toward a Post-Obama Middle East: Conrad Black, *National Review*, Oct. 7, 2015](#)

BACK TO THE FUTURE, WITH THE KID

Margaret Wentz

[Globe & Mail](#), Oct. 20, 2015

A moment came during the red tidal wave Monday night when a friend turned to me in awe. The CBC's seat counter had just clicked past 180 for the Liberals. "Oh my God," she said. "What have we done?" No one, even diehard Conservatives, doubted that Stephen Harper deserved to lose. But even diehard Liberals wonder if Justin Trudeau deserved to win a majority government on his very first try, without the customary test of having to prove himself in Opposition, or, for that matter, any other responsible post in government. It's like giving your kid the keys to the Ferrari before he's finished driving lessons.

"I never thought this was in the realm of possibility," one voter told the CBC. "I wanted the young son to squeak in and be supported by maybe more experienced

**WHILE CANADIANS CHOOSE TRUDEAU AS LEADER, U.S.
REVERSES AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL**
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, October 20, 2015
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/while-canadians-choose-trudeau-leader-us-reverses-afghan-withdrawal/>

people.” “Oh well,” said one of my Liberal friends cheerily. “At least he’ll have adult supervision.”

No one called this one. What happened was a snowball that picked up momentum as it went. During the last few days of the campaign it became a monster. The opinion polls were accurate about the fate of the Conservatives. What they didn’t catch was the dramatic collapse of the New Democratic Party. People decided Justin was the best anti-Harper and stampeded over to his side. And that is how Tom Mulcair’s dreams of glory melted in an instant.

All of a sudden Canada’s political alignment looks a lot like it did 30 years ago - before the Harper decade, before the fragmentation of the right, before Happy Jack Layton created the hope that the NDP could be something more than an also-ran. The Liberals and Conservatives have most of the seats, and the PM is a handsome guy named Trudeau with three photogenic kids and a gorgeous wife. Break out those bell-bottoms and love beads. The ’70s are back! This is not a bad outcome. A strong, stable majority government with a healthy opposition will give us four blissfully election-free years. There will be none of the nail-biting uncertainty that afflicts a minority government. The Governor-General can return to his ceremonial duties. The Conservatives will regroup, rethink and rebuild. One day they’ll be contenders again.

So what will Prime Minister Trudeau do with all that horsepower? His policy proposals (which many voters are only dimly aware of) are also a blast from the past. Expand the government. Tax breaks for the usual suspects, especially the sacred middle class (on top of the tax breaks they’ve been showered with for the past 10 years). Soak the rich some more and pretend it makes a difference. Deficit spending, whether or not we need it, on infrastructure projects that may or may not help the economy. But no idea of how to get our landlocked oil to markets, or any comprehensive plan to spur innovation and economic growth.

**WHILE CANADIANS CHOOSE TRUDEAU AS LEADER, U.S.
REVERSES AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL**
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, October 20, 2015
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/while-canadians-choose-trudeau-leader-us-reverses-afghan-withdrawal/>

Mr. Trudeau's foreign policy ideas are naive and nostalgic. They harken back to the golden age of peacekeeping and multilateralism, as if blue berets and good intentions could defeat Islamic State. Those ideas resonate with voters, because they like to think of Canada as a force for good in the world. Unfortunately, the world is a nastier, messier place than it used to be, and niceness does not go very far.

One of the few people to see the landslide coming was Brian Mulroney, a political junkie who knows every one of Canada's 338 ridings inside-out. He has warned that Mr. Trudeau is a man of consequence, and last week he was telling friends to expect something big. Mr. Mulroney should know - it was a landslide that swept him into office in 1984, giving him the biggest majority in history. The joke was that if the election had lasted two weeks longer, he would have taken every single seat. (The tide went out in 1993, when his Progressive Conservatives were reduced to a pathetic two seats.)

"I ran and was successful because I wasn't Pierre Trudeau," Mr. Mulroney said Monday night. "Jean Chrétien ran and was successful because he wasn't Brian Mulroney, and Justin Trudeau tonight was successful because he wasn't Stephen Harper." It's high tide for Mr. Trudeau now. Does he have the smarts and instincts to make the most of it? We'll have four years to find out. And I, for one, wish him well.

[Contents](#)



OBAMA'S AFGHAN REVERSAL

[Wall Street Journal](#), Oct. 15, 2015

**WHILE CANADIANS CHOOSE TRUDEAU AS LEADER, U.S.
REVERSES AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, October 20, 2015

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/while-canadians-choose-trudeau-leader-us-reverses-afghan-withdrawal/>

If there is a single element of consistency in President Obama's foreign policy it is his desire to end and avoid U.S. military engagements. In 2011 he withdrew the final U.S. troops from Iraq. He had planned to do the same in Afghanistan, but on Thursday the President hit the pause button. For now, 9,800 American boots will remain on Afghan soil.

Mr. Obama is to be commended for changing his mind. He has been building a reputation for being impervious to counterargument, and here he listened to his generals. Senior officers earlier recommended that the U.S. keep up to 20,000 troops in Afghanistan, warning that a lesser number would put the fledgling Afghan army at risk from the Taliban. Those warnings became reality last month when the Taliban overran Kunduz, a major city in northern Afghanistan. With U.S. air support, the Afghans recaptured Kunduz, but Islamist fighters still threaten elsewhere. Fighting has broken out in a third of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, with the terrorists, who now include Islamic State fighters, threatening Ghazni, another major city not far from Kabul. Last week U.S. forces led a sweep in southern Kandahar province against two large al Qaeda training camps.

It is possible that what drove Mr. Obama's decision was concern that an Afghanistan overrun by terrorists, as ISIS had done in western Iraq, would leave his foreign-policy reputation in tatters. In a remarkably weary announcement Thursday, Mr. Obama said, "As you are all well aware, I do not support the idea of endless war." The irony is that Mr. Obama is likely to bequeath "endless war" in the Middle East and Afghanistan to his successor. The central issue now is whether the Administration will do enough militarily in Afghanistan to ensure that the war inherited by the next President isn't worse than it is today.

Mr. Obama said the U.S. military mission will remain primarily "supporting counterterrorism operations against the remnants of al-Qaeda." Surely this understates the nature and scale of the current threat to Afghanistan. It is also troubling to note that Mr. Obama restated his goal of reducing U.S. troop levels there to 5,500 by January 2017. Press reports are calling this a "reversal," given his prior goal of only 1,000 residual forces by then. But will even 5,500 troops

**WHILE CANADIANS CHOOSE TRUDEAU AS LEADER, U.S.
REVERSES AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL**
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, October 20, 2015
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/while-canadians-choose-trudeau-leader-us-reverses-afghan-withdrawal/>

prevent the Taliban, al Qaeda and ISIS fighters from taking large swaths of Afghanistan?

The U.S. continues to have some 29,000 troops in South Korea, 62 years after its war with the North ended. Their presence has kept the peace and allowed East Asia to flourish. If instead Mr. Obama gives the Afghans inadequate support, “endless war” will run deep into the next American Presidency.

[Contents](#)



PLAN B FOR LIBYA

Gal Luft

[American Interest](#), Oct. 1, 2015

The September 20 deadline for establishing a unity government in war-torn Libya ahead of the UN General Assembly meeting came and went, and reconciliation between Libya's internationally recognized parliament based in Tobruk and the rival leadership, the new General National Congress (GNC), in Tripoli, was nowhere on the horizon. Anyone who is surprised by this just hasn't been paying attention.

Reuniting the Libyan militias has been the West's only endgame for Libya since the oil-rich country slid into a civil war following the 2011 removal of Muammar Qaddafi by a select coalition of NATO countries led by Britain, France, and the United States. But this outcome does not seem to be getting any closer. Indeed, things have gotten much worse.

**WHILE CANADIANS CHOOSE TRUDEAU AS LEADER, U.S.
REVERSES AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL**
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, October 20, 2015
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/while-canadians-choose-trudeau-leader-us-reverses-afghan-withdrawal/>

During the 12 months in which the UN Special Envoy for Libya, Spanish Diplomat Bernardino Leon, labored to hammer out a deal, the country became a destination for ISIS fighters taking advantage of the chaos on the ground. The fact that a UN arms embargo prevents weapons transfers to either the Tobruk or Tripoli governments means that ISIS fighters have a distinct advantage: Where two fight, a third may win out. In June, ISIS temporarily took over the city of Sirte on the coast of the Mediterranean, and several days ago a group of their suicide terrorists attacked Libya's international airport in Tripoli, killing three people.

To make matters worse, the lack of functioning government and border controls had enabled many thousands of migrants from North and Sub-Saharan Africa to cross the Mediterranean into Europe, exacerbating Europe's migrant crisis.

Neither the continuation of ISIS's expansion in Libya nor the persistence of the flow of African migrants are options the U.S. government and those of the European Union can tolerate. It is time to thank Leon for his noble efforts and recognize the reality that the only realistic solution one can aspire to at the moment is the division of Libya into two independent national entities.

Following Leon's maneuvering in Libya over the past year, one always got the false impression that a deal to stabilize the country was just around the corner. A draft proposal on forming a national unity government would be put forth; the two sides would stall in approving it; they would then suggest amendments which, in turn, would get rejected; and public protests would then lead the rival factions to back down. And so it went, and so it goes. The appearance of progress when in fact there is none has served as eyewash as Libya has fallen ever deeper into chaos—and as the flow of migrants through Libya to Europe intensifies.

The failure of the Leon doctrine is not a testament to his less-than-stellar mediation skills but rather a reflection of a far deeper reality: the inability of the

**WHILE CANADIANS CHOOSE TRUDEAU AS LEADER, U.S.
REVERSES AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL**
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, October 20, 2015
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/while-canadians-choose-trudeau-leader-us-reverses-afghan-withdrawal/>

rival factions to accept the concept of shared governance over the country. Indeed, they don't even genuinely recognize the notion that Libya is a country.

What has complicated the West's efforts to reunite Libya is the senseless characterization of the Tripoli government as "Islamist." In our day and age there is no better way to delegitimize a group than to label it as Islamist. This is exactly what happened to the GNC. While the Tobruk government enjoyed broad international recognition and free access to international forums, only Turkey and Qatar recognize the Tripoli government, and its leaders cannot even travel abroad freely. But the notion that Tripoli is more Islamist than the other groups vying for control over Libya—not the least other groups and regimes throughout the Middle East that the West is happy to embrace—is bogus. When it comes to Islamist tendencies, all tribes are more or less cut from the same cloth. By not recognizing those who are in command of most of the country's institutions and strategic assets—paradoxically, the salaries of Libya's diplomatic staff representing the Tobruk government all over the world are drawn from the coffers in Tripoli—and who also contributed their fair share to Qaddafi's removal, the West is undermining any chance for stabilization. Equally delusional is the idea toyed with by some American and European operatives of installing a Western backed Libyan expat who would miraculously rally the tribes behind him. Wasn't the Ahmed Chalabi mirage in Iraq enough?

Now, when the deadline for reunification is passed, it is time to consider a Plan B for Libya. This plan should draw from the country's history. Back in the early 20th century the territory of today's Libya was split into three self-governing regions: Cyrenaica, which was located in eastern Libya, more or less in the region controlled today by the Tobruk government, and Tripolitania, situated today in some of the area controlled by the GNC. The third was Fezzan, which was and still is an inhospitable desert region in the southwest sparsely populated by Arab and Berber tribes. Some version of this arrangement, which lasted until 1963 during the reign of King Idris I, should be considered today.

Washington and Brussels should first recognize the Tripoli government and treat it

**WHILE CANADIANS CHOOSE TRUDEAU AS LEADER, U.S.
REVERSES AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL**
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, October 20, 2015
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/while-canadians-choose-trudeau-leader-us-reverses-afghan-withdrawal/>

as a legitimate party. They should then work to hammer out an agreement with the factions to form an orderly division of Libya into two separate entities, under the condition that these two will work—separately and jointly—to combat the spread of ISIS in North Africa. They also need to cooperate in active measures to create a virtual wall along Libya's coastline to thwart additional migration into Europe. To this end the Libyan navy and coast guard should be reconstituted, and the arms embargo should be gradually lifted to allow security forces to effectively take on ISIS.

In his UN speech this past week, President Obama boasted of America's achievement in Libya. But he admitted, "Our coalition could have, and should have, done more to fill a vacuum left behind." And then he somewhat incongruously promised, "In such efforts, the United States will always do our part." Thinking again on how to fill the vacuum, Obama should take note of a 2006 proposal by the senior Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—namely, his Vice President, Joe Biden. Then-Senator Biden proposed that Iraq be divided into three separate regions—Kurdish, Shi'a, and Sunni. At the time the U.S. government and its allies were still consumed by dreams of forming a democratic heaven on the Tigris, and the idea was dismissed. A decade later it no longer sounds so bizarre. Let us hope that, when it comes to Libya, it will take the West less time to recognize that sometimes a divided country is better than a broken and hopeless one.

[Contents](#)



ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT IN TUNISIA

HIGHLIGHTS MOUNTING CHALLENGES

Farah Samti & Kareem Fahim

[New York Times](#), Oct. 9, 2015

**WHILE CANADIANS CHOOSE TRUDEAU AS LEADER, U.S.
REVERSES AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL**
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, October 20, 2015
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/while-canadians-choose-trudeau-leader-us-reverses-afghan-withdrawal/>

Hours before the Norwegian Nobel Committee gave its highest-profile honor to a coalition of Tunisian groups that had helped ease the country's path to democracy, unknown gunmen attacked a member of Tunisia's Parliament, firing seven or eight shots at his car as he drove to work in a seaside town. The assailants missed their target. But the attack...was an urgent reminder of the violence that still menaces Tunisia's transition, one of many challenges to the country's significant and celebrated political gains.

The threat against prominent political figures, by shadowy militant groups, is among the government's deepest worries: Twice in the last two years, high-profile assassinations have thrown Tunisia into political crisis. This year, the country has also grappled with an unprecedented wave of jihadist violence, including two large-scale attacks on tourists that killed at least 60 people and helped plunge the economy into recession.

In a country still wrestling with its authoritarian past, the attacks have provoked anguished arguments about how much power the government and the police should wield to confront the threats. Other debates — about the economic direction of the country, and its ability to come to terms with a legacy of past abuses — have exposed divisions between old elites and newer political forces empowered by the uprising in late 2010 against the 23-year dictatorship of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali.

The challenges are testing not only the young government but also the compromise between secular and Islamist parties that is at the heart of Tunisia's inchoate political system and is frequently held up as a model for the Arab world. Talk of Tunisia's success is frequently attributed to its relatively peaceful transition, especially set against the violent struggles of other countries in the region, including Syria, Yemen and neighboring Libya. That contrast often overlooks an arduous road that began in December 2010, when a Tunisian fruit vendor named Mohammed Bouazizi lit himself on fire, in an act of despair that

**WHILE CANADIANS CHOOSE TRUDEAU AS LEADER, U.S.
REVERSES AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL**
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, October 20, 2015
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/while-canadians-choose-trudeau-leader-us-reverses-afghan-withdrawal/>

resonated throughout the Arab world.

Days after Mr. Bouazizi died in January 2011, mass protests forced Mr. Ben Ali into exile. The Islamist Ennahda Party won the most votes in parliamentary elections that October but fell short of a majority. The group promised that its own Islamist program would not overwhelm the country's deeply ingrained secular politics, and it also promised to build, as one Ennahda official put it, a "charismatic, democratic system."

But a backlash against Ennahda paralleled events in Egypt, where huge demonstrations led to a military coup in 2013 against the year-old government of President Mohamed Morsi, a leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, now banned.

The four groups honored with the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday helped Tunisia avert the civil strife that led to hundreds of deaths in Egypt. They helped Tunisia negotiate its way through the most serious threat to its nascent transition: the crisis that followed the assassinations of two opposition politicians, Chokri Belaid and Mohamed Brahmi, in 2013. Giant protests that summer threatened to topple the Ennahda-led government. But the Islamists refused to cede power until they completed their mandate to pass a new Constitution. The impasse began to destabilize the country as the government grappled with jihadist militancy, popular unrest and strikes, and a worsening economy.

After months of sometimes heated negotiations, a deal, concluded in December 2013, forged a new contract between the political parties, including a timetable for a democratic transition. The Islamist government agreed to step down and hand power to a caretaker government that would oversee the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections in October and November 2014. The adoption of the Constitution, in January 2014, was seen as a high point in the transition, producing a charter forged from robust debates between Tunisia's disparate political currents, and that enshrined democratic principles and a

**WHILE CANADIANS CHOOSE TRUDEAU AS LEADER, U.S.
REVERSES AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL**
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, October 20, 2015
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/while-canadians-choose-trudeau-leader-us-reverses-afghan-withdrawal/>

separation of powers.

Compromises by two men — Rached Ghannouchi, the leader of the Islamist Ennahda party, and Beji Caid Essebsi, one of the founders of the secularist Nidaa Tounes party, and Tunisia’s current president — ended the impasse, analysts say. Despite that achievement, the basis of their compromise remains fragile: “It is very much a consensus from the top — often against elements of their base,” said Issandr El Amrani, who oversees the North Africa Project for the International Crisis Group. As both leaders manage the pressures from within their own ranks, the government has been criticized for lacking a sense of direction and dynamism as well as for failing to tackle urgent issues, Mr. Amrani said. “This worries people.”...

The Parliament member who survived the assassination attempt on Thursday, Ridha Charfeddine, 63, is a member of Nidaa Tounes and also a prominent businessman who owns a soccer team. The gunmen, riding in the back seat of a white car, attacked him in an industrial section of Sousse, on Tunisia’s eastern coast, according to the Interior Ministry. Sousse is the same beachside town where a 23-year-old Tunisian gunman slaughtered 38 people, mostly British tourists, in June. It was Tunisia’s worst terrorist attack in living memory. “This is not an isolated incident,” Mohsen Marzouk, the general secretary of Nidaa Tounes, said in an interview with a local radio station after the gunfire. He said the gunmen belonged to an organized movement, but he did not identify it.

As the political violence and jihadist attacks have unnerved the public, they have also given rise to fears about the state’s reaction. The police have reasserted themselves in response to the attacks, despite growing reports of human rights abuses and a lack of coherent strategy to reform the security services, Mr. Amrani said. In the aftermath of the attack on the tourists in Sousse, the government also started closing dozens of mosques — prompting concern that Mr. Essebsi’s secular government, with its strong connections to the old dictatorship, was reviving the crackdowns on Islamists that occurred during Mr. Ben Ali’s rule. The government closed at least 80 mosques, though none of them had any connection to the

WHILE CANADIANS CHOOSE TRUDEAU AS LEADER, U.S.
REVERSES AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, October 20, 2015
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/while-canadians-choose-trudeau-leader-us-reverses-afghan-withdrawal/>

gunman in Sousse, officials said.

[Contents](#)

On Topic

[America's Failed Foreign Policy: Margaret Wente, *National Post*, Oct. 20, 2015](#)—U.S. President Barack Obama's decision to maintain American troops in Afghanistan was the correct move made under difficult circumstances.

[Obama Deploys Troops to Cameroon to Fight Boko Haram: Frances Martel, *Breitbart*, Oct. 15, 2015](#) —President Obama announced Wednesday that 300 U.S. troops will be deployed to Cameroon to fight the ISIS-affiliated Boko Haram terrorist group.

[Mideast Turmoil Strengthens Sudan's Regime: Yaroslav Trofimov, *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 15, 2015](#)—When it briefly looked as if Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir would be detained in June on an International Criminal Court warrant in South Africa...

[Toward a Post-Obama Middle East: Conrad Black, *National Review*, Oct. 7, 2015](#) —In the week in which the Russians escalated their attacks on the Syrian factions being assisted by the United States and what is left of the Western Alliance, and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas renounced the long-dead letter of the Oslo Agreement...

**WHILE CANADIANS CHOOSE TRUDEAU AS LEADER, U.S.
REVERSES AFGHAN WITHDRAWAL**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, October 20, 2015

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/while-canadians-choose-trudeau-leader-us-reverses-afghan-withdrawal/>
