

recognize Israel's "right to exist" if it is recognized to be eliminating Palestinian sovereignty altogether?

The more embarrassing problem, however, is that the EU itself has not explicitly recognized Israel's "right to exist" in this sense. Nor has Canada, or Norway. The United Nations has not done so either. They haven't, because they can't.

This may take some people by surprise, but the U.N. has not used the term "Jewish state" since 1947. Resolution 181 then called for a "Jewish state" and an "Arab state," with gerrymandered borders designed to craft Jewish and Arab majorities in each state. But the attempt was rendered obsolete when Zionist forces established "Israel" on a much greater swath of territory that had, in total, held a substantial Arab majority, and expelled most of the Arab residents. As refugees, according to the Geneva Conventions, those Arab residents have the right to return to their homes, villages, towns and cities. But their return would eliminate the Jewish majority in what became "Israel," so Israel hasn't allowed this.

Hence the U.N. cannot confirm Israel as a Jewish state (i.e., a state that can legitimately sustain a Jewish majority) without contradicting international law regarding the right of refugees. When the U.N. refers to "Israel" today, it does not understand Israel as the "Jewish state" in the old ethnic-majority terms of 1947, because Israel can be granted no "right" to an ethnic demography that would prevent the return of refugees.

Also, times have simply changed. In 1947, ethnic nationalism still made some belated sense, although it was already discredited by the dreadful abuses wreaked by Germany and Japan. Today, recognizing the "right" of any state to compose itself legally as an ethnic-majority state would clearly flout U.N. conventions on human rights and non-discrimination. The U.N. and EU, therefore, cannot openly endorse Israel's right to compose itself as one.

So the U.S.A. has lured the EU, Canada, and Norway into a trap. If they hold that Hamas must recognize Israel as a Jewish state (with a right to preserve an ethnic-Jewish majority), then they must state clearly that it endorses ethnic-majority governance. But they themselves cannot explicitly endorse Israel's right to ethnocracy, because it would contradict international law as well as its own diplomacy in a host of other conflict zones, so

on what grounds does they require Hamas to do so?

Worse for them, they are adhering to international norms in insisting that the State of Palestine must comprise a stable democracy that secures equal rights for all its citizens irrespective of religion or race. But if they hold Palestine to this standard, then why are they not holding Israel to the same standard?

But if they did hold Israel to that standard, then the entire rationale for a two-state solution would evaporate. The Road Map is based on the supposition that the only peaceful solution in Palestine is to establish one state for Jews and another for everyone else. If Israel's "right to exist" does not entail sustaining a Jewish majority (which necessitates discriminatory legislation, ethnic cleansing, land grabs, and social engineering), then the ethnic logic supporting two states disappears. Why agree to compose two secular-democratic states sitting next to each other in this small land? No one can articulate an answer, because ethnic demography is their only rationale.

So what are the EU, Norway and Canada requiring Hamas to do? Recognize Israel as an ethnic state with a "right to exist" wherever it decides to set its borders—even though doing so would not only mean Palestinian national suicide but would violate principles that govern their own diplomacy as well as their own internal laws and values about nondiscrimination? Or is Hamas supposed to evade the issue by recognizing Israel's "right to exist" simply as a normal state, even though "normal" (non-ethnic) status would then obligate Israel to permit Palestinian refugees to return—) thus implying that the EU, Norway and Canada do not support Israel in sustaining a Jewish majority?

This conundrum should have diplomats, parliamentarians, and foreign ministries huddled trying to sort out their own positions, rather than attempting to starve the Palestinians. For it is not only the funding freeze that has become rampant nonsense. The entire Road Map logic has become nonsense, too.

May its dutiful proponents in foreign capitals lie sleepless contemplating their own confusion and the terrible bloody consequences it is likely to wreak. CP

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The Israel Lobby

By NORMAN FINKELSTEIN

In the current fractious debate over the role of the Israel Lobby in the formulation and execution of US policies in the Middle East, the "either-or" framework—giving primacy to either the Israel Lobby or to U.S. strategic interests—isn't, in my opinion, very useful.

Apart from the Israel-Palestine conflict, fundamental U.S. policy in the Middle East hasn't been affected by the Lobby. For different reasons, both U.S. and Israeli elites have always believed that the Arabs need to be kept subordinate. However, once the U.S. solidified its alliance with Israel after June 1967, it began to look at Israelis—and Israelis projected themselves—as experts on the "Arab mind." Accordingly, the alliance with Israel has abetted the most truculent U.S. policies, Israelis believing that "Arabs only understand the language of force" and every few years this or that Arab country needs to be smashed up. The spectrum of U.S. policy differences might be narrow, but in terms of impact on the real lives of real people in the Arab world these differences are probably meaningful, the Israeli influence making things worse.

The claim that Israel has become a liability for U.S. "national" interests in the Middle East misses the bigger picture. Sometimes what's most obvious escapes the eye. Israel is the only *stable and secure* base for projecting U.S. power in this region. Every other country the U.S. relies on might, for all anyone knows, fall out of U.S. control tomorrow. The U.S.A. discovered this to its horror in 1979, after immense investment in the Shah. On the other hand, Israel was a creation of the West; it's in every respect—culturally, politically, economically—in thrall to the West, notably the U.S. This is true not just at the level of a corrupt leadership, as elsewhere in the Middle East but—what's most important—at the popular level. Israel's pro-American orientation exists not just among Israeli elites but also among the whole population. Come what may in Israel, it's inconceivable that this fundamental orientation will change. Combined with its overwhelming military power, this makes Israel a unique and irreplaceable American asset in the Middle East.

In this regard, it's useful to recall the

rationale behind British support for Zionism. Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann once asked a British official why the British continued to support Zionism despite Arab opposition. Didn't it make more sense for them to keep Palestine but drop support for Zionism? "Although such an attitude may afford a temporary relief and may quiet Arabs for a short time," the official replied, "it will certainly not settle the question as the Arabs don't want the British in Palestine, and after having their way with the Jews, they would attack the British position, as the Moslems are doing in Mesopotamia, Egypt and India." Another British official judged retrospectively that, however much Arab resentment it provoked, British support for Zionism was prudent policy, for it established in the midst of an "uncertain Arab world... a well-to-do educated, modern community, ultimately bound to be dependent on the British Empire." Were it even possible, the British had little interest in promoting real Jewish-Arab cooperation because it would inevitably lessen this dependence. Similarly, the U.S. doesn't want an Israel truly at peace with the Arabs, for such an Israel could loosen its bonds of dependence on the U.S., making it a less reliable proxy. This is one reason why the claim that Jewish elites are "pro"-Israel makes little sense. They are "pro" an Israel that is useful to the U.S. and, therefore, useful to them. What use would a Paul Wolfowitz have of an Israel living peacefully with its Arab neighbors and less willing to do the U.S.'s bidding?

The historical record strongly suggests that neither Jewish neo-conservatives in particular nor mainstream Jewish intellectuals generally have a primary allegiance to Israel – in fact, *any* allegiance to Israel. Mainstream Jewish intellectuals became "pro"-Israel after the June 1967 war when Israel became the U.S.A.'s strategic asset in the Middle East, i.e., when it was safe and reaped benefits. To credit them with ideological conviction is, in my opinion, very naive. They're no more committed to Zionism than the neo-conservatives among them were once committed to Trotskyism; their only ism is opportunism. As psychological types, these newly minted Lovers of Zion most resemble the Jewish police in the Warsaw ghetto. "Each day, to save his own skin, every Jewish policeman brought seven sacrificial lives to the extermination altar," a leader of the Resistance ruefully recalled.

"There were policemen who offered their own aged parents, with the excuse that they would die soon anyhow." Jewish neo-conservatives watch over the U.S. "national" interest, which is the source of their power and privilege, and in the Middle East it happens that this "national" interest largely coincides with Israel's "national" interest. If ever these interests clashed, who can doubt that, to save their own skins, they'll do exactly what they're ordered to do, with gusto?

Unlike elsewhere in the Middle East, U.S. elite policy in the Israel-Palestine conflict would almost certainly *not* be the same without the Lobby. What does the U.S.A. gain from the Israeli settlements and occupation? In terms of alienating the Arab world, it's had something to lose. The Lobby probably can't muster sufficient power to jeopardize a fundamental American interest, but it can significantly raise the threshold before U.S. elites are prepared to act – i.e., order Israel out of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, as the U.S. finally pressured the Indonesians out of Occupied East Timor. Whereas Israel doesn't have many options if the U.S. does finally give the order to pack up, the U.S. won't do so until and unless the Israeli occupation becomes a major liability for it: on account of the Lobby the point at which "until and unless" is reached significantly differs. Without the Lobby and in the face of widespread Arab resentment, the U.S. would perhaps have ordered Israel to end the occupation by now, sparing Palestinians much suffering.

In the current "either-or" debate on whether the Lobby affects U.S. Middle East policy at the elite level, it's been lost on many of the interlocutors that a crucial dimension of this debate should be the extent to which the Lobby stifles free and open public discussion on the subject. For in terms of trying to broaden public discussion here on the Israel-Palestine conflict the Lobby makes a huge and baneful difference.

Especially since U.S. elites have no entrenched interest in the Israeli occupation, the mobilization of public opinion can have a real impact on policy-making – which is why the Lobby invests so much energy in suppressing discussion. CP

Norman G. Finkelstein's most recent book is *Beyond Chutzpah: On the misuse of anti-Semitism and the abuse of history*.

Michigan's Youth Used as Political Scapegoats by Dems

By RAYMOND GARCIA

Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm signed into law "what's called one of the nation's strictest public school curriculums" on April 20, 2006, claiming it would "help Michigan's economic revival". While it should obviously be patently absurd to link high school curriculum to the economic recovery of a thoroughly depressed state like Michigan, this action serves Governor Granholm quite well as she seeks re-election this year. It creates the illusion that poor high-school education is a key part of Michigan's economic problems, as well as the illusion that her action will correct the problem. The reality is that she is running for re-election on the backs of a demonized minority, youth, just as her political role model Bill Clinton did in 1996, with his welfare reforms that screwed the country's poor.

The educational bias in the new education guidelines for Michigan should be obvious by the new high-school graduation requirements that have "no opt outs": four years of English, three years of math, three years of science, and two years of foreign language. The Social Studies, Phys Ed and Arts requirements all have "opt out" clauses.

The bias against educating youth in history, civic government, humanities, creative arts, and physical activities isn't anything new, as the emphasis on standardized testing in K-12 education has clearly illustrated. What the new Michigan high school graduation requirements do is force all students onto the college prep track, whether they like it or not.

We can't provide decent jobs for most of our college/university graduates as it is (much less those with higher degrees), and yet we are mandating that this is the only possible track for high-school education for youth. As it stands, way less than half of U.S. high-school graduates go on to higher education, for any number of reasons, but future youth in Michigan are being forced into preparing for it, and our schools are going to be held responsible for making this fantasy a reality.