

**Middle East Notes**  
**Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns**  
**December 5, 2013**

*Please note: Opinions expressed in the following articles do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.*

[Read previous weeks' Middle East Notes.](#)

This week's Middle East Notes presents articles concerning settlements and the Netanyahu government, the relationship between Obama and Netanyahu, injustices towards the Palestinians, and reflections on the newly agreed upon Iran nuclear agreement, and other issues.

- The many issues included in the CMEP Bulletins for November 16 and November 22 highlight continuing settlement plans, the peace negotiations, the deterioration of quality of life Gaza, and other matters of pressing concern.
- Richard Falk comments on his final report to the General Assembly of the United Nations as Special Rapporteur for Occupied Palestine. He ends his report writing that the settler colonial enterprise being pursued by Israel is on the wrong side of history, and so contrary to appearances, there is reason to be hopeful about the Palestinian future.
- Lara Friedman writes that Peace Now and APN have released a new report looking at the first eight months of the current Netanyahu government during which there has been a non-stop settlements construction and approval boom.
- James Wall writes of John Kerry's November 6 television interview with two reporters, an Israeli and a Palestinian. He did so in order to send a public message to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with a series of negative comments.
- The Israel Policy Forum has released The State of Two States for the Week of November 10 and November 17 which document continuing tension in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations particularly regarding the approval, and then the freezing, of the Israeli Housing and Construction Ministry plans for 23,000 housing units beyond the Green Line. Also noted are references about the possibility of a viable Palestinian State.
- The Associated Press notes the crisis brewing in Israeli-U.S. relations revealed in John Kerry's TV interview questioning Israel's seriousness about peace with the Palestinians and a return to the uncomfortable relationship that has often characterized dealings between Obama and Netanyahu.
- Amir Oren of Ha'aretz writes that the spat between Netanyahu and Obama over Iran shows how out-of-touch Israel's leader is with world opinion, and with the fact that the U.S. seems to have war and Middle East fatigue.
- Amira Hass writes in Ha'aretz that there is no Palestinian without a personal and familial history of injustice that was caused by, and is still caused by Israel.
- Four more contributions from Ha'aretz comment on the Israeli response to the Iran nuclear agreement.
- Ian Black writes in the Guardian that the historic partners of U.S., Saudi Arabia and Israel are circumspect and angry over deal hailed by Syria and tolerated by Russia.

## 1) CMEP Bulletins for November 16 and November 22, 2013

**November 16 summary:** A lot happened after Secretary of State John Kerry left the region last week. Here's a quick summary of the major story lines currently playing out.

On Tuesday, Israeli Housing Minister Uri Ariel announced more settlement plans, this time for the highly controversial E-1 area. This announcement allegedly took Prime Minister Netanyahu by surprise. After a rebuke of Minister Ariel, Netanyahu announced that Israel will reconsider the announced plans and stop issuing tenders and emphasized that "the tenders have no legal or practical significance that creates unnecessary friction with the international community."

In the Daily Beast, Michael Omer-Man explained this is hardly a helpful gesture. He wrote, "The Israeli Right doesn't actually lose anything because Netanyahu didn't order that the settlement building be canceled. The only thing he objected to, actually, was the timing of the announcement. The prime minister, who was called out by Kerry last week, in turn gets to reprimand his housing minister for announcing the settlement plans while the world's attention is on Israel. The 'reconsideration' that he demanded relates only to the timing and size of the announcement."

Also making headlines were the resignations of some members of the Palestinian negotiating team after accusing Israel of a "lack of integrity" following the recent settlement announcements. Saeb Erekat has repeatedly tried to resign in his lengthy career but his resignations have never been accepted by President Abbas. This time, President Abbas says those who wish to quit will be replaced and negotiations will continue. A senior Palestinian official told Haaretz that Abbas would not leave the negotiating table without coordinating with the United States first and said, "We must remember that stopping the negotiations and the peace process is exactly what the settlers are after...If we play into their hands, they'll be getting what they want." ...

### **November 22 CMEP Bulletin: Gaza deteriorating despite lull in violence**

One year ago, Israel ended its last offensive in Gaza. 175 Palestinians and six Israelis died after several days of military strikes in response to over a thousand rockets launched by Gaza militants that year. Today, the offensive is being heralded as a success. Since the strikes ended last November, 35 rockets have launched from Gaza. In a speech to the Israeli Defense Force's Gaza Division, Israeli Prime Minister [Netanyahu] said the offensive reduced the rockets by 98 percent and "There is no doubt that significant deterrence has been achieved."

Since that operation, the humanitarian situation in Gaza has become untenable. James Rawley, the UN humanitarian coordinator for the Palestinian territories said this week, "In fact I am sorry to report that situations for Gaza's 1.7 million people is worse than it was before the hostilities a year ago." Gazans have relied on smuggled goods and fuel from Egypt, a practice that peaked under the Muslim Brotherhood government. After the ousting of the Brotherhood and several attacks in the Sinai emanating from Gaza, the tunnels were destroyed by the new Egyptian government. With no smuggled fuel coming in, the power plant in Gaza has stopped operating, shutting down power for up to 18 hours a day.

The shortage of electricity shut down a sewage pump station November 14, causing raw sewage to flood the streets. According to The New York Times, "Three more sewage stations in Gaza City and 10 others elsewhere in the Gaza Strip are close to overflowing, sanitation officials here said, and 3.5 million cubic feet of raw sewage is seeping into the Mediterranean Sea daily." Residents say the children are vomiting and suffering from diarrhea. ...

[Read the entire November 22 Bulletin here.](#)

## **2) Invisible Horizons of a Just Palestine/Israel Future**

**Richard Falk, Global Justice in the 21st Century blog, November 4, 2013**

I spent last week at the United Nations, meeting with ambassadors of countries in the Middle East and presenting my final report to the Third Committee of the General Assembly as my term as Special Rapporteur for Occupied Palestine comes to an end. My report emphasized issues relating to corporate responsibility of those companies and banks that are engaged in business relationships with the settlements. Such an emphasis seemed to strike a responsive note with many delegations as a tangible way of expressing displeasure with Israel's continuing defiance of its international law obligations, especially in relation to the unlawful settlements being provocatively expanded in the West Bank and East Jerusalem at the very moment that the resumption of direct negotiations between the Palestine Authority and the Government of Israel is being heralded as a promising development.

There are two reasons why the corporate responsibility issue seems to be an important tactic of consciousness raising and norm implementation at this stage: (1) it is a start down the slippery slope of enforcement after decades of UN initiatives confined to seemingly futile rhetorical affirmations of Israeli obligations under international law, accompanied by the hope that an enforcement momentum with UN backing is underway; (2) it is an expression of tacit support for the growing global movement of solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people for a just and sustainable peace agreement, and specifically, it reinforces the claims of the robust BDS Campaign that has itself scored several notable victories in recent months.

My intention in this post is to put aside these issues and report upon my sense of the diplomatic mood at the UN in relation to the future of Israel/Palestine relations. There is a sharp disconnect between the public profession of support for the resumed peace negotiations as a positive development with a privately acknowledged skepticism as to what to expect. In this regard, there is a widespread realization that conditions are not ripe for productive diplomacy for the following reasons: the apparent refusal of Israel's political leadership to endorse a political outcome that is capable of satisfying even minimal Palestinian aspirations; the settlement phenomenon as dooming any viable form of a "two-state" solution; the lack of Palestinian unity as between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas undermining its representational and legitimacy status.

The most serious concern on the Palestinian side is whether protecting the interests and rights of the totality of the Palestinian people in a peace process can be achieved within the present diplomatic framework. We need to be constantly reminded that "the Palestinian people" cannot be confined to those Palestinian living under Israeli occupation: refugees in neighboring countries; refugees confined within occupied Palestine, but demanding a right of return to their residence at the time of dispossession; the Palestinian minority living in Israel; and 4-5 million Palestinians who constitute the Palestinian diaspora and its underlying reality of enforced exile.

It was also clear that the Palestinian Authority is confronted by a severe dilemma: either to accept the inadequate proposals put forward by Israel and the United States or reject these proposals and be blamed once again by Tel Aviv and Washington for rejecting a peace offer. ...

**[Read the entire piece here.](#)**

### **3) New Peace Now/APN Report: Bibi's Settlements Boom – March-November 2013** **Lara Friedman, November 8, 2013**

Peace Now (Israel) and Americans for Peace Now have released a new report looking at the first 8 months of the Netanyahu government and its record regarding settlements. The key findings are summarized below, followed by a detailed examination of the data. The full report, including all the data in table form, can be viewed/downloaded [here](#).

**Key findings:** During these first eight months of the new Netanyahu government, there has been a non-stop settlements construction and approval boom.

The most recent evidence of this came with the latest round of Palestinian prisoners released by Israel, which was accompanied by the publication of tenders for 2,258 new units in settlements, and the promotion of plans for 2,487 new units in settlements.

These tenders and approvals were just the latest symptoms of the longstanding trend. Overall, since the establishment of the current government on March 18, 2013, tenders have been published for 3,472 new units in settlements, and plans have been promoted for no fewer than 8,943 new settlement units.

These facts once again raise the very serious question about the motivations and intentions of Prime Minister Netanyahu with respect to peace, negotiations, and the two-state solution.

**Negotiations or settlements: What is the true policy of the Netanyahu government?** In recent days, ... Netanyahu has worked to sell the narrative that he is serious about peace and that the only obstruction on the road to successful negotiations for a two-state solution is Palestinian intransigence. ... However, as Netanyahu constantly reminds the world with respect to his adversaries - particularly Iran and the Palestinians - political leaders should be judged on their actions, not their words. By this standard, Netanyahu's actions over the past eight months - the period since his new government took office - demonstrate the opposite of a commitment to peace and a two-state solution.

The data show unambiguously that Netanyahu, in his new term in office, and both before and after the launch of the latest peace effort, has forged ahead with settlements at a truly alarming pace. Prior to the start of the new peace effort, planning for settlement expansion continued unabated, as did construction on the ground. Since the start of talks, settlement-related approvals of every category have surged, with the evidence today pointing to the conclusion that Netanyahu elected to go with the Palestinian prisoner release option as cover for "bulk approvals" of settlement growth.

To be clear: there is nothing anomalous about these findings. The data for Netanyahu's current term in office is entirely consistent with his actions and policies during the previous four years in office, as documented exhaustively in our January 2013 analysis, "Settlements & the Netanyahu Government: A Deliberate Policy of Undermining the Two-State Solution." At that time, we noted that during the first four year Netanyahu's government was in office, "its policies and actions in the West Bank and East Jerusalem disclose a clear intention to use settlements to systematically undermine and render impossible a realistic, viable two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

Looking ahead, the question is: can or will anyone convince Netanyahu to change course? The answer will be critical, given the damage that has already been done to the credibility of the current peace effort. It is all the more critical given that, assuming talks survive in the coming months, there is every likelihood that Netanyahu will once again seek to exploit the remaining two prisoner releases for further settlement-related provocations - provocations that represent a real threat not only to the sustainability of talks, but to the viability of the two-state solution. ...

[Read the entire piece here.](#)

#### 4) John Kerry: Unfiltered In his own words James Wall, Wallwritings (blog), November 11, 2013

John Kerry took the unusual step of agreeing to a November 6, Jerusalem television interview with two reporters, an Israeli and a Palestinian. He did so in order to send a public message to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. An Israeli writer for the right-wing Jerusalem web site, Times of Israel, got the message. He did not, however, like what he heard. He relayed his negative reaction in his story:

“For the first time since he managed to restart the [Israel-Palestine peace] talks in July, Kerry dropped his statesman-like public impartiality, and clearly spoke from the heart — and what emerged were a series of accusations that amounted to a **forceful slap in the face for Netanyahu**. It was a rhetorical onslaught that the prime minister cannot have expected and one he will not quickly forget.”(*emphasis added by blogger*)

The writer with that perspective is Raphael Ahren, diplomatic correspondent for the Times of Israel, a Web-only, English-language Israeli newspaper, launched in February earlier this year by Seth Klarman, a wealthy American Jewish investor. Klarman, according to Wikipedia, has also been the longtime chairman and a financial supporter of The David Project, a Boston-based group which sponsors pro-Israel advocacy programs on American college campuses.

Using words from Kerry’s TV interview, and then filtering them through the Times’ right-wing perspective, Ahren continues:

“A very frustrated Kerry basically blamed the Israeli government for stealing the Palestinians’ land and the Israeli public for living in [a] bubble that prevents them from caring much about it. If that wasn’t enough, he railed against the untenability of the Israel Defense Forces staying ‘perpetually’ in the West Bank.

“In warning that a violent Palestinian leadership might supplant Mahmoud Abbas if there was not sufficient progress at the peace table, he appeared to come perilously close to empathizing with potential Palestinian aggression against Israel.”

As to tone and intent, Ahren got it about right. The problem is, what he heard as a “slap in the face” were words intended not as an insult, but as a wake-up call. Kerry spoke as a friend of the state of Israel, but more importantly, he warned Netanyahu that his adamancy was damaging the chance for peace in the region.

In his Times story, Ahren focused on Kerry’s responses that clearly disturbed Ahren.

“‘If we do not resolve the question of settlements,’ [Kerry] continued more dramatically, ‘and the question of who lives where and how and what rights they have; if we don’t end the presence of Israeli soldiers perpetually within the West Bank, then there will be an increasing feeling that if we cannot get peace with a leadership that is committed to non-violence, you may wind up with leadership that is committed to violence.’” ...

[Read the entire piece here.](#)

## 5) The State of Two States - Weeks of November 10 and 17 Israel Policy Forum – November 16, 2013

Week of November 10 ([read entire entry here](#))

Ongoing discord between the U.S. and Israel concerning the Iranian threat dominated both the Israeli and American press these past weeks. Tension has been apparent between the parties within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations as well, particularly regarding the approval, and then the freezing, of Housing and Construction Ministry plans for 23,000 housing units beyond the Green Line. Escalating tensions even further, this week a string of violent attacks took place in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, including the fatal stabbing of an IDF soldier by a 16-year-old Palestinian boy on Wednesday. Finally, there have been some notable changes within domestic Israeli and Palestinian politics: despite vocal objections, the Israeli cabinet approved the appointment of Avigdor Lieberman as foreign minister on Monday, and on Wednesday President Abbas confirmed that his delegation of peace negotiators, including Saeb Erekat, has resigned.

“The policy, the path, the style and the foolish quarrels with the Obama administration are no less than irresponsibility that harms the interests at stake. Netanyahu furiously attacks an agreement that does not yet exist, accuses the United States of appeasement, of an historic error and of sacrificing vital Israeli interests—all before knowing the details of the negotiations on the inchoate agreement, which for the time being—only for the time being—has not been achieved.” – IPF Israel Fellow Alon Pinkas commenting on the state of U.S.-Israeli relations in Yedioth Ahronoth (Monday, 11/11)

Week of November 17 ([read entire entry here](#))

While the media focal point this week may have been a potential interim deal with Iran and the P5+1, there were significant developments concerning the Israeli-Palestinian talks as well. Today it was announced that Isaac “Bougie” Herzog won the Labor party primary and will be leading the opposition in the Knesset. Also this morning, President Abbas accepted the resignation of negotiator Mohammad Shtayyeh and confirmed that talks will resume, with Saeb Erekat remaining part of the Palestinian delegation. Earlier in the week, David Makovsky was named to the U.S. State Department’s Israeli-Palestinian peace-brokering team, where he will be serving as senior adviser to Martin Indyk. Finally, as tensions continue to simmer between the US and Israel on the Iranian issue, Prime Minister Netanyahu made a visit to Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday.

“I regret that we have arrived at this point. I regret that it is no longer possible to trust the commitments the state gives through its lawyers to the court.” – Deputy Supreme Court President Naor, echoing the decision of the High Court of Justice to give the state six months to evacuate houses built on private Palestinian land in three illegal West Bank outposts, since the state has so far not done so (Tuesday, 11/19)

“There needs to be countries—France is one of them—that can tell Israelis what gestures should be made and what should be equally done by the Palestinians. So that we can have not only another accord but a definitive accord.” – French President Hollande speaking in a joint television interview with Israeli President Shimon Peres (Monday, 11/18)

## 6) Crisis brewing in Israeli-U.S. relations

Josef Federman, Associated Press, November 9, 2013

A pair of testy public exchanges this week appear to have undone whatever good will was created between the Israeli and U.S. governments during a high-profile visit by President Barack Obama early this year. Tensions burst into the open during a swing through the region by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry. In an interview broadcast on both Israeli and Palestinian TV, Kerry questioned Israel's seriousness about peace with the Palestinians. Hours later Netanyahu fired back, vowing not to cave into concessions to the Palestinians ... and also saying he "utterly rejects" an emerging nuclear deal between world powers and Iran.

The rancor signals a tough road ahead for the twin American goals of finding a diplomatic solution for Iran's nuclear program and forging peace between Israel and the Palestinians. And it raises the specter of a return to the uncomfortable relationship that has often characterized dealings between Obama and Netanyahu.

Israeli news reports describe Netanyahu as being in "shock" over the possible Iranian compromise. Netanyahu, who sees Iran as an arch-enemy, has vowed to do anything, including a military strike, to prevent Iran from reaching weapons capability.

"If there were a synoptic map for diplomatic storms, the National Weather Service would be putting out a hurricane warning right now," diplomatic correspondent Chemi Shalev wrote on the website of the newspaper Ha'aretz. "And given that the turbulence is being caused by an issue long deemed to be critical to Israel's very existence, we may actually be facing a rare Category 5 flare up, a 'superstorm' of U.S.-Israeli relations."

Obama and Netanyahu took office just months apart in 2009, but seemed to share little in common. At joint appearances they appeared uncomfortable and even occasionally sparred. In one famous instance, Netanyahu lectured Obama on the pitfalls of Mideast peacemaking in front of the TV cameras at a White House meeting.

The lack of chemistry seems rooted in vastly different world views. Obama is a proponent of diplomacy and consensus, while Netanyahu believes Israel can trust no one and must protect itself. ...

And there has been constant friction over Netanyahu's insistence on continuing to settle Jews on occupied land even as he negotiates with the Palestinians. Last March, Obama traveled to Israel for a visit widely seen as an attempt to reboot relations. The two leaders appeared together at a series of events, smiling and sharing jokes. But even then there were signs of trouble. Obama urged an audience of university students to pressure Israeli leaders to change their ways and take bold new steps to reach peace with the Palestinians.

Since then, officials on both sides have stressed the countries are close allies regardless of politics. But the atmosphere gradually soured again as Obama pressed forward with his two major diplomatic initiatives. Over the summer, Kerry persuaded Israel and the Palestinians to return to the negotiating table for the first time in nearly five years. The sides agreed to talk for nine months, with an April target date for reaching a peace deal. ...

[Read the entire piece here.](#)



## **7) U.S. has war and Middle East fatigue** **Amir Oren, Ha'aretz, November 17, 2013**

The spat between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Barack Obama over Iran shows how out-of-touch Israel's leader is with world opinion.

Here's a statistic from an official Pentagon presentation, recently revealed at a security industry conference in Augusta, Georgia. The subject was American military interventions since the end of World War II. The figures: 44 interventions – one a year – between 1945 and 1989; and another 100 – three to four a year – since the end of the Cold War.

The world has become wilder, with more American raids and invasions, since the disintegration of the bipolar American-Soviet structure. The trend is toward longer interventions, which require maintenance of ground forces – that is, a long, costly investment from a cavernous-bottomed barrel.

That is the backdrop for an important and frank statement made by a senior American official, in the current context of the dispute between U.S. President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about the emerging agreement between the six world powers and Iran. Last Thursday, speaking at another security conference, this time in Washington, U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel summed up the American public's position as it is reflected in opinion polls: "No more wars, no more Middle East." They don't want to spill any more blood or money into the quicksand of countries in the same region as Afghanistan and Iraq.

The public, said former senator Hagel, is at the foundation of democracy. The public decides because Congress – a partner as strong as the president – must constantly heed the desires of the voters. Especially the House of Representatives, which stands for election every two years. None of its members is so invulnerable as to buck the spirit of the times.

Without willingness to put boots on the ground – not a commando force to kill Osama bin Laden that performs its task and takes quickly to the air, but divisions that get bogged down and bloodied – no regime can be toppled. Prudent planners don't talk about air operations before they have the general outlines of the boots on the ground operation.

That is why the threats against the Iranian regime heard in the Kirya defense headquarters in Tel Aviv are so ridiculous. Israel has never managed to bring down a foreign regime, not even when it reached Beirut and Ramallah, and certainly not when it got within threatening distance of Damascus and Cairo.

Its one dubious success came from withdrawal and not conquest: in Gaza, with the fall of Fatah and rise of Hamas following Ariel Sharon's disengagement from the region in 2005. In most cases, the government that fell in the next election was the Israeli one. Even when there were successes on the ground, they were translated into the failure of the government's declared policy – whether good or bad. May 2002's Operation Defensive Shield in the territories began as an effort to stop Palestinian terror, but led to its biggest diplomatic achievement – because the Israeli army's entry into the cities of the West Bank extracted from President George W. Bush the first support by an American president for a Palestinian state. ...

[\*\*Read the entire piece here.\*\*](#)



## **8) In the real tally of violence, Palestinians have it much worse**

**Amira Hass, Ha'aretz, November 21, 2013**

Anyone who has worn a uniform past or in present, whether speaking on the record or off, immediately “knows” that the latest terror attack and what looks to soldiers as the latest attempted terror attack does not signify the beginning of a third Intifada. Or, they “know” it does signify such a beginning, and it’s all because of the peace negotiations or because of Palestinian incitement, or both. Relying on the knowledgeable military brass is a fixed Israeli reflex; it is part of the balance of power and part of how the Israelis exert control over their subjects.

Whoever said 100,000 Palestinians have unfinished business with the Israel Defense Forces took it a step further creating the impression that he really knows and thinks, and does more than calculate tallies. But the starting point for calculation is somewhere else completely: There is no Palestinian whose score with the State of Israel is settled - whether he lives in forced exile or whether he lives within the borders of Israel, or in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. There is no Palestinian without a personal and familial history of injustice that was caused by, and is still caused by Israel. Just because the Israeli media does not report on all the injustices Israel causes day in and day out - even if only because they so numerous - does not mean they go away and neither does the anger they cause. Therefore, according to the correct calculation, the number of attacks by Palestinian individuals is relatively microscopic. This small number shows that for the vast majority of Palestinians - passing, murderous and hopeless revenge is not an option.

But nonetheless, the fatal attacks in recent months are worrying. They point at the political and social bankruptcy of the Palestinian leadership and organizations, who have stopped serving as the national rallying point, and are unable to hold back the waves of despair. The Palestinian feels isolated against his attackers. New initiatives and other forms of leadership are still in their diapers. And in the meantime, the Israel’s methods of injustice are becoming more sophisticated. To speak about the anger without linking it to the occupation and systematic discrimination is like discussing environmental pollution without reference to the polluter.

Any Jew in the world who has never so much as set foot here, automatically enjoys the right to enter Israel, to find shelter here from economic distress (Argentina) or political distress (Russia), to tour the land, to settle down, to live and to work on both sides of the Green Line. These are rights that are partially or fully denied to Palestinians - whether they are citizens of the state or not, whether they live in Israel, whether their family comes from here and whether they lost land and property to the other.

What kind of feelings does the structural discrimination against Palestinians engender? It riles up and infuriates. The Israeli experts, those who keep stats on Palestinian violence, either ignore their own violence or else they are smart enough to cover it up. We must therefore cry out again and again: Every Palestinian, man or woman, poor and less poor, and also the very wealthy, refugees or not, and those who live in the Land of Israel (within the borders of the British Mandate) daily risk that the Israeli authorities and their representatives (soldiers, policemen, settlers, right-wingers) will harm them in some fashion. The situation jeopardizes their lives, livelihood, property, land, health, education, or the continuity of their family and social relations.

In every area, there are additional varieties of harm and harassment particular to it. For citizens of Israel, it is the creeping racist legislation. In East Jerusalem, it is the negation of residency status and expulsion from Israel. In the West Bank, it is the wholesale arrests, the settlements, the settlers, land expropriations under a pseudo-legal guise, and lack of running water in many communities during the summer. And in the Gaza Strip? Unseen jailers, whose identity is known [sic]. They sequester its residents in the world’s largest prison camp, and there is no one who will say as God said to Moses during the crossing of the Red Sea: Wake up, compose thyself, my beloved ones are drowning in the sewage and in the sea of oblivion.

## 9) Four Ha'aretz articles on the Israel's response to the Iran nuclear agreement

*Click on headline to read entire article*

[Give Iran deal a chance, Ha'aretz editorial](#), **November 25, 2013**: The signing of the agreement between Iran and the P5+1 group of world powers is worthy of the title "historic event." However, it is an event that does not end with the signing itself, since the agreement is the start of a long, complex process whose purpose is to uproot the Iranian nuclear program and stop the Islamic Republic's dash to nuclear weapons. Like every agreement, this one does not fulfill all the wishes of the sides. The six world powers will be forced to maintain their suspicions of Iran, to unceasingly supervise its actions and not let the whip of threatened punishment fall from their hands, in the event that Iran violates the agreement. Iran, for its part, will be forced to wait patiently until the powers decide it's time to ease the sanctions further and allow the country to rehabilitate its economy. ...

[A good deal: Geneva pact distances Iran from nuclear bomb, Barak Ravid](#), **November 24, 2013**: Despite the irate responses from the Prime Minister's Office to the agreement signed in Geneva early Sunday between Iran and six world powers, the deal is not really a bad one. Even from an Israeli perspective, it is actually a reasonable deal. Maybe even a good one. For the first time in a decade, Iran will be freezing its progress on its nuclear program, and is even rolling back certain parts of the program that particularly concerned Israel.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu argues that the Iranians are holding onto all their centrifuges, are not dismantling the heavy water reactor in Arak and can continue to enrich uranium. In exchange, he says, the sanctions on Iran will be considerably lessened. Netanyahu says a "good deal" could have been reached with Iran if only the world powers had continued pressuring it a bit more. ...

[Battle for new sanctions could harm Israel more than Iran, now that the deal is done, Chemi Shalev](#), **November 24, 2013**: It's hard to decide what should worry Israelis more: The fact that an agreement that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has depicted as "very bad and exceedingly dangerous" was signed in Geneva, or that Israel has somehow maneuvered itself into international isolation, with only Saudi sheikhs and American senators standing by its side.

And it's not completely clear which is the more imminent danger to Israel's national security: The possibility that Iran will exploit the new accord in order to advance its nuclear weapons program, as Jerusalem suspects, or the probability that Jerusalem will once again wage a harsh but nonetheless futile campaign against the U.S. Administration, thus exposing, for all the world to see, its growing discord with what was, is and will apparently continue to be its one and only strategic ally. ...

[With Iran deal sealed, don't expect Israel to send out the air force, Amos Harel](#), **November 25, 2013**: The agreement signed early Sunday between Iran and the P5+1 powers in Geneva is an important, if limited, step in restraining the Iranian nuclear weapons program. Tehran agreed to a limited freeze in the program in exchange for a partial lifting of the international sanctions. While the agreement stops Iran in place, it doesn't push the timetable back significantly if Tehran decides later to push forward toward a nuclear bomb. It seems the question of Iran's right to keep enriching uranium was deliberately left in a gray zone where both sides agreed not to agree. ...

## **10) Iran nuclear deal shows U.S. is now prepared to act independently of allies**

**Ian Black, The Guardian, November 24, 2013**

Israel, looking uncomfortably isolated, has made its position clear, with Binyamin Netanyahu lambasting the agreement as an “historic mistake” – and perhaps, ironically, thus helping President Hassan Rouhani sell the deal at home.

But Israel’s ability to attack Iranian nuclear facilities – without overt or covert U.S. help – now looks like a hollow threat, for political reasons as well as the limited capabilities of even its formidable air force. It will also fear renewed pressure to come clean about its own nuclear arsenal – still a regional monopoly.

Elsewhere the discomfort is most obvious in Saudi Arabia and the smaller Gulf states, which have long seen Iran as a greater threat and strategic rival than Israel. Pejorative talk of a “Zionist-Wahhabi” alliance reflects that. King Abdullah, as revealed by WikiLeaks, famously urged Barack Obama to “cut off the head of the (Iranian) snake.” Instead the U.S. president has done a deal with it.

The silence in Riyadh on Sunday was thunderously eloquent. It would be smart of the Iranians to extend their current charm offensive to the Gulf neighbours but it will be difficult to allay suspicions. The UAE, interestingly, gave the agreement a terse welcome.

Viewed from the heartlands of the Middle East, the most striking conclusion of the Geneva drama is that the U.S. is now prepared to act more independently of its traditional allies – the Israelis and Saudis – than ever before. That appears to confirm the dawning realisation that Obama is simultaneously pivoting away from the region – while helping craft its new realities.