ON: Israel (Palestine) Before Zionism

The Unbroken Jewish Presence

The Jewish people have maintained an unbroken presence in the land of Israel for nearly 4,000 years. Even after the Romans destroyed Judea and renamed it “Palestina” in 135 CE (the year of the Bar Kochba Revolt), the Jews have sustained ties to their historic homeland.

Over the millennia, the number of Jewish inhabitants in the land of Israel continually varied. The Jews were always subject to the whims of their rulers; the Jewish population in the land of Israel was as large as political conditions permitted. At the close of the fifteenth century, Safed’s Jewish community flourished, numbering 20,000-30,000. Other Jewish communities in the Galilee did so as well. Unless under Jewish rule, the land of Israel was never an independent country.

By the 19th Century, A Desolate Land

The Turkish Ottoman Empire ruled much of the Middle East and southeastern Europe from 1516 to 1917. The Ottomans divided it into two administrative zones. In the 1880s, when the Zionist movement began, Palestine’s sparse population was less than 300,000. Today, over nine million inhabitants live on that same land.

As a result of the devastation wrought by succeeding conquerors, centuries of Ottoman neglect, clan feuds, malarial mosquitoes and other maladies, in 1867 Mark Twain characterized Palestine as a “desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds – a silent mournful expence…”

Other travelers to Palestine throughout the 19th century reported similar conditions.

J. S. Buckingham described his visit of 1816 to Jaffa, which “has all the appearances of a poor village, and every part of it that we saw was of corresponding meanness.”

In 1865, H. B. Tristram noted in his journal:

“The north and south [of the Sharon plain] land is going out of cultivation and whole villages are rapidly disappearing from the face of the earth. Since the year 1838, no less than 20 villages have been thus erased from the map [by the Bedouin] and the stationary population exterminated.”

Palestine’s Heterogeneous Population

Palestine’s population was by no means solely Arab or Muslim. By the early twentieth century, the Encyclopedia Britannica of 1911 reported that ‘Palestina’s population was composed of so ‘widely differing’ a group of inhabitants whose ‘ethnological affinities’ create ‘early in the 20th century’ a list of no less than fifty languages’ that it is ‘therefore no easy task to write concisely… on the ethnology of Palestine.”

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire

In 1918, after the Ottoman Empire fell during World War I, the Arab leader Sherif Hussein of Mecca wrote the following:

“The resources of the country are still virgin soil and will be developed by the Jewish immigrants. One of the most amazing things until recent times was that the Palestinian used to leave his country, wandering over the high seas in every direction. His native soil could not retain him.”

In this environment grew two national movements claiming the same land: the Jews and the Arabs. While Israel has come to accept the pragmatic reality of sharing the land in some form, Palestinians have yet to agree on how to live with the reality of Israel.

This mosaic reflects the continued Jewish presence in the historic land of Israel.

Photo: “Peace unto Israel” mosaic from the floor of the synagogue in Jericho (c. 5th century CE).
Jewish links to the Land of Israel

The Zionist idea — the return of the Jewish people to its homeland in Israel — is deeply embedded in Jewish religion and culture. The Jewish people base their claim to the Land of Israel on four general premises:

1. Jewish religion, civilization and history developed there throughout the millennia
2. Jews have continuously lived on this land for nearly 4,000 years
3. Jews developed the land in the 19th and 20th centuries
4. Jews received political sovereignty to govern this land in the mid-20th century

Meanwhile, in Palestine...

At the beginning of the 19th century, nearly 100 years before the advent of modern Zionism, thousands of Jews from Eastern Europe and the Middle East began to arrive in Palestine. By 1858, Jews were reported to be a majority in Safed and Tiberias. Thousands of Jews from Yemen also immigrated to Palestine at this time, establishing communities in Jerusalem and elsewhere.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Jews, who were then a majority in Jerusalem, started a movement to make their own community in Palestine self-sufficient. These Jews began moving to the countryside, establishing farming communities in Rishon Le’Zion, Gedera, Petah Tiqva, Zichron Ya’akov and Rosh Pina.

Escaping violent pogroms in Russia, young, idealistic, secular Jews began immigrating to Palestine in the early 20th century. Many of them established collective settlements called kibbutzim.

Jewish Empowerment

Political Zionism began in the early 1880’s when Jews fleeing massacres in Czarist Russia immigrated to the land of Israel (Palestine). In 1897 Theodore Herzl formally established the Zionist movement, the Jewish movement of national liberation and self-determination. Its founding was nothing less than a major revolution in Jewish life.

Political Zionism aspired to deal with Jewish powerlessness by urging Jews to return to their historic homeland. The movement developed organizational, political and economic tools to implement its vision.

The impetus behind the Zionist movement was to empower Jews, who for centuries were everywhere a powerless minority. While for millennia individual Jews contributed greatly to both Christian and Muslim societies, Jews were always vulnerable to persecution and exploitation, suffering massacres, mass expulsions, forced conversions, ghettoization and humiliation. The Holocaust, Nazi Germany’s systematic murder of two-thirds of European Jewry, was the definitive, horrific symbol of this powerlessness.

From the early 1930s until 1948, modern Jewish history experienced two events of seminal importance: the extermination of 6 million Jews and, three years after the end of WWII, the birth of the State of Israel. When on May 14, 1948 Israel was established, the Zionist dream was realized.

David Ben Gurion, Israel’s first Prime Minister, declares Israel’s independence.
The Partition Plan

On November 29, 1947, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 called for the partition of the British-ruled Palestine Mandate into a Jewish state and an Arab state. The Jewish state was to have three segments; Jerusalem was to be an international zone.

The UN blamed the Arab side for the violence. The UN Palestine Commission was never permitted by the Arabs or British to go to Palestine to implement the partition resolution.

Arab leaders were blunt in taking responsibility for starting the war. Jamal Husseini, the Arab Higher Committee's spokesman, told the Security Council on April 16, 1948:

The representative of the Jewish Agency told us yesterday that they were not the attackers, that the Arabs had begun the fighting. We did not deny this. We told the whole world that we were going to fight.

The War of Independence

The UN never suspended or rescinded Resolution 181, and on May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was established. Less than 24 hours after the declaration was made, five Arab armies (Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon and Iraq) invaded the new Jewish state. In what became known as Israel's War of independence, the poorly equipped Israel Defense Forces (IDF) repelled the invaders in fierce fighting, which lasted some 15 months and claimed over 6,000 Jewish lives — nearly one percent of the country's Jewish population at the time.

During the first few months of 1949, with the war coming to a close, the UN oversaw direct negotiations between Israel and each of the invading countries (except Iraq, which has refused to negotiate with Israel to date). These negotiations resulted in armistice agreements that reflected the war's outcome. Accordingly, Israel controlled the coastal plain, the Galilee, and the Negev; Jordan controlled Judea and Samaria (the "west bank" of the Jordan River); Egypt controlled Gaza; and the city of Jerusalem was divided, with Jordan controlling the eastern part (including the Old City) and Israel controlling the western half.
The Looming Threat

In the mid-1960s, the goal of the Arab states was to destroy Israel. Syria used the 3000-foot high Golan Heights, which overlooks northern Israel, to shell Israeli farms and towns. Throughout 1965 and 1966, Syria's attacks on Israel increased. Egyptian President Nasser’s rhetoric also became more bellicose: “We shall not enter Palestine with its soil covered in sand. We shall enter it with its soil saturated in blood.”

On May 30, Jordan’s King Hussein signed a defense pact with Egypt. And on June 4, Iraq joined the military alliance with Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Nearly 250,000 Arab troops, more than 2,000 tanks and 700 aircraft were arrayed in battle formation along Israel’s borders. Arab leaders openly declared their intentions of militarily destroying Israel.

The combined Arab armies were in a position to strike Israel from the West Bank, the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip. An Arab first strike risked severing Israel at its narrowest point, which was only 9 miles wide. The Egyptian army, striking from Gaza, could cut off Tel Aviv from Jerusalem, while the Jordanian army surrounded western Jerusalem on three sides. The situation for Israel was dire, as Israel’s reserves — the backbone of the Israeli army — had been mobilized for three weeks, thus bringing Israel’s economy to a standstill.

Israel’s Pre-emptive Strike

After fruitless political efforts at the United Nations, and despite the best efforts of the United States to find a diplomatic solution, as a matter of self-defense and survival, Israel preemptively attacked Egypt on June 5, 1967.

The United States imposed an arms embargo on the entire region. France, Israel's other main arms supplier, also embargoed arms to Israel. Meanwhile, the Soviets continued to supply massive amounts of arms to the Arab states. Israel's strategy was to win the war as quickly as possible.

In only six days of combat, Israeli troops demolished enemy forces in the Sinai, the Golan Heights and the West Bank. The international community called for a cease-fire on June 10 just as Israel was in position to bring the battle to the Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian capitals. Israel gained control of the entire West Bank, Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights.
After the 1967 Six-Day War

In the aftermath of the Six-Day War, Israel offered to exchange the newly acquired territories (with its 750,000 Palestinian inhabitants) for peace with the Arab states. Moshe Dayan famously said, Jerusalem was waiting only for a telephone call from Arab leaders to start negotiations.

The Arab states, however, were not remotely interested in peace. In the fall of 1967, eight Arab heads of state attended a meeting in Khartoum. At this summit, Arab leaders reached a consensus on their relationship with Israel: No peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiations with Israel.

A few months after the 1967 meeting in Khartoum, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 242. (See other side for full text.) This resolution established the principles that have continued to guide Arab-Israeli negotiations. The ultimate goal of 242 was the achievement of a “peaceful and accepted settlement.” This means a negotiated agreement based on the resolution’s principles rather than one imposed upon the parties.

The Heart of Resolution 242

At its core, Resolution 242 calls for a “just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security.” The phrase “every State in the area” includes Israel.

Resolution 242 affirms that fulfilling Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East that includes the following principles:

(i) Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;

(ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.”

Significantly, the language used in the first principle lacks the direct article “the” before the word “territories.” Resolution 242 does not require Israel to withdraw from “the territories” only from “territories” occupied in the 1967 war. This indicates the desire of the resolution’s drafters to see negotiations leading to a “just and lasting” peace based on the second principle, which calls upon the Arab states to terminate their state of war against Israel.

Thus the “land for peace” formula governing all Israeli-Arab peace efforts was born. Israel accepts Resolution 242 as the basis for a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians and Arab states.
The three “Nos” of Khartoum

Immediately after the 1967 Six Day War, Israel offered Syria, Jordan and Egypt the return of captured territories in exchange for full peace. The offer was refused.

In August and September of 1967, the Arab states held a summit in Khartoum, Sudan where they adopted a position vis-à-vis Israel that became known as the “Three No’s of Khartoum”:

- **No** peace with Israel.
- **No** recognition of Israel.
- **No** negotiations with Israel.

Not surprisingly, against the background of Khartoum, Israel’s diplomatic feelers to Egypt failed to spur negotiations. Instead, between 1967 and 1973, the Israeli and Egyptian militaries engaged in many small skirmishes.

At the same time, Palestinian terrorists, led by Yassir Arafat, began to play a major role in the Middle East conflict. The greatest concentration ever of Palestinian terrorist actions outside of Israel occurred between 1970 and 1973; they were directed against both Israeli and Jordanian targets abroad.

Preparing for War

Both Syria and Egypt spent the early 1970s preparing for war. In 1972 and early 1973, Egypt’s military chief of staff visited fourteen Arab capitals to ask for money, weapons, and personnel for use in a war against Israel. All of the Arab states responded generously.

Egyptian President Sadat threatened war publicly in 1971 and 1972, declaring his willingness to lose one million men in the pursuit of Israel’s destruction. When Sadat failed to act immediately on his threats, Israel was lulled into complacency.

The Attack

Egypt and Syria attacked Israel on October 6, 1973, on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar. The Arab states chose the date because they knew that most Israeli soldiers would be on leave and that Israel’s radio and TV stations would be off the air, making mass mobilization difficult.

At the start of the war, Israel’s enemies amassed the equivalent of the total forces of NATO on Israel’s borders. On the Golan Heights, approximately 180 Israeli tanks faced an onslaught of 1400 Syrian tanks. Along the Suez Canal, 80,000 Egyptians attacked less than 500 Israeli defenders.

During the first two days of war, Israel was on the defensive. Israel then succeeded in fully mobilizing its reserves and eventually repelled the invading armies.

Aftermath

The October 23, 1973 cease-fire essentially left the 1967 armistice lines and boundaries intact. The Arab armies had failed to achieve any significant territorial gains. Despite its military victory, the Israeli government appointed a high level commission to investigate the functioning of the intelligence services before the war and the army’s preparedness.

The commission’s report reproached the intelligence branch for overconfidence, false assumptions and missed signals, and the anger of the Israeli public forced the resignation of the government of Golda Meir.

In the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, Anwar Sadat came to the realization that defeating Israel militarily was impossible. Sadat’s foresight ultimately led to the negotiations that produced the Camp David Peace Treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1979.

Battle-worn Israeli soldiers at Suez
Jerusalem Post
(Avraham Vered)
ON: The Forgotten Refugees: Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa

There has been an uninterrupted Jewish presence throughout the Middle East since the destruction of the first Temple in the sixth century BCE. Except for intermittent periods when Jews in Arab lands were able to contribute to their countries of residence, Jews have been persecuted in Arab lands since the birth of Islam in the seventh century. Jews, along with Christians, were known as dhimmis: second-class citizens who received some temporary measure of protection in exchange for subordination to their Muslim rulers. Among other discriminatory practices, Jews were forced to live in segregated quarters, wear distinctive clothing, and either embrace Islam or pay the jizya — a humiliating protection tax.

During the 20th century, in the wake of the formation of new Arab states and of Israel, Arab persecution of the Jews intensified. In most cases Jews were expelled en masse or compelled to flee.

Today, 99% of the ancient Jewish communities in the Middle East and North Africa no longer exist. Out of some 900,000 Jews who lived in Arab countries until 1948, only a few thousand remain. In some cases, such as Libya, Jews have completely vanished as a result of a campaign of expulsion spearheaded by Arab nationalists.

Did you know that...

During the Palestine Partition debate at the United Nations in November 1947, the Egyptian, Iraqi and Palestinian delegations issued violent threats against the indigenous Jewish communities of the Middle East and North Africa.

These threats were carried out in the weeks and months after the 1947 Partition vote. Hundreds of Jews in Arab lands were massacred in government-organized rioting, leaving thousands injured and millions of dollars in Jewish property destroyed. During these expulsions, the Arab governments — most notably Iraq, Egypt, Libya, and Syria — confiscated property from the fleeing Jews worth tens of billions of dollars (in today's dollars).

While fending off six advancing armies during the War of Independence, the nascent state of Israel absorbed an estimated 600,000 Jews from Arab countries, nearly doubling its initial population, without any financial support whatsoever from the international community.

Did you know that...

Just as Arabs suffered from displacement during the Arab-Israeli conflict, so too have the Jews of the Middle East and North Africa. The number of Jews from Arab countries who fled their homes is roughly equivalent to the number of Palestinian Arabs who fled Israel. Other conflicts have also resulted in a similar proportion of refugees on both sides. Approximately twelve million Muslims and Hindus became refugees upon the creation of India and Pakistan in 1948, and were quickly resettled.

Did you know that...

UN Security Council Resolution 242 states clearly “the necessity for a just settlement of the refugee problem.” This formulation should be applied to all refugees, including the Jewish refugees from Arab states. Recognizing the Jewish refugees has long been overlooked but will be absolutely essential to any just resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.
ON: Israel’s Security Fence

“A month ago I went to protest the fence. Now I believe it can only strengthen us. These terrorists don’t differentiate between Jews and Arabs. They just want to kill.”

- Sammi Masraw, a 29-year-old Israeli Arab, to Army Radio, after he was wounded in an attack in TelAviv on July 11th.

WHY A FENCE?

Since September 2000, hundreds of terrorist attacks have killed over one thousand Israelis, with thousands of others physically and emotionally scarred. Palestinians crossing into Israel from the West Bank - and deliberately trying to kill as many people as possible - carried out the majority of these terror attacks.

The security fence around the Gaza Strip, completed several years ago, has successfully kept suicide bombers out of Israel. This success, coupled with the ongoing terror war against Israel emanating from the West Bank has prompted Israel to take this last, passive defensive measure to protect its innocent civilians. Despite regular miscalculations, the fence or barrier is not “a wall”. 97% is fencing like that pictured above. The 3% that are walls was constructed precisely in those areas where snipers routinely fired at passing automobile traffic - where wire fencing would be useless. Every nation has the right - indeed, obligation - to defend its citizens. The only purpose of the fence is to keep terrorists out.

Did you know that...

- The fence works. Terror attacks in Israel have dropped 90% since it was built.

- The fence is a temporary, non-violent way to keep terrorists out. What would you do if terrorists were attacking your friends and family on buses, in pizzerias, coffee shops, malls and dance clubs?

- When Palestinian leaders disarm terrorists, a fence won’t be needed. Until then, like America, Israel has the right to protect its citizens.

- Whenever possible, the fence is built on public land. Israel regrets the inconvenience the fence imposes on Palestinians, limits those inconveniences and compensates those affected.

THE LEGALITY OF THE FENCE

On July 9th, 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion that Israel’s security fence is a violation of international law, and that Israel is not only required to dismantle it, but to also make reparations for any damage done to Palestinian land in constructing the fence. As Israel was not asked or required to participate in the case, the ICJ did not present evidence in support of the fence - only against it. Israel’s Supreme Court ruled that the fence is a legal means to defend the lives of its citizens, but that the route must take into account Palestinian humanitarian concerns. The Israeli government has accepted the Supreme Court’s ruling and implemented its decision. Rulings of the ICJ are not binding; in fact, France, Iceland and the U.S. - all democracies like Israel - have defied the ICJ on similar grounds of national security and have not incurred sanctions.

Death is permanent. The inconvenience of the fence is temporary. The fence is a symptom, terrorism the disease and peace the cure.
ON: Disengagement from Gaza

In 2005, Israel disengaged from the entire Gaza strip, removing all civilian settlements and military installations, and disengaged from four settlements in the northern West Bank. This move was undertaken after the Palestinian Authority pledged not to use the area as a staging-ground for war with Israel, and that it would remain faithful to the “roadmap for peace.”

The reason for pursuing this unilateral action was given by Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, who claimed that the existing political stalemate was harmful to both Israelis and Palestinians. To change the dynamic, Israel needed to initiate moves that were not dependent on Palestinian cooperation in order to achieve a better security, political, economic, and demographic situation.

The Israeli decision to disengage from Gaza is a major achievement in the path towards a two-state solution, and is a step forward in the Roadmap peace plan. Shortly before the disengagement, Ariel Sharon stated, “We are willing to proceed towards its [Roadmap] implementation: two states – Israel and a Palestinian state – living side by side in tranquility, security, and peace.” He noted that an essential condition of the Roadmap is its requirement that terrorism must stop and the terrorist organizations dismantled.

It is a testament to Israeli society that the operation was carried out with mutual respect between the soldiers and settlers, and was completed with little violence. The plan to disengage also carried significant risks for Israelis, but was undertaken with the goal of progressing towards a peaceful two-state solution in mind. Disengagement was a unilateral act of compromise with the Palestinians.

Escalation of Attacks on Israel Post-Disengagement

Immediately following the disengagement from Gaza, the Palestinians erupted in violence against Israel. In the first three months following the disengagement, Palestinians launched over 500 Qassam rockets from Gaza onto Israeli towns and cities.

The election of Hamas, a terrorist organization principally dedicated to the destruction of the Israeli state, ushered in a new era of violence. While Israel, by disengaging from Gaza, moved towards peace, the Palestinian people chose moved away from it by electing Hamas. Indeed, Hamas, as the leading power of the Palestinian Authority, has both directly and indirectly attacked Israel since the disengagement. The Hamas-led Palestinian authority publicly defended the suicide bombing in Tel Aviv that took place on April 17, 2006. In June 2006, only several months after the election, Hamas operatives invaded Israel through Gaza and attacked an army post, killing two Israeli soldiers and kidnapping one, Corporal Gilad Shalit. To this today, his Palestinian captors are still holding Cpl. Shalit.

Israel now lacks a serious partner in the roadmap for peace. Hamas refuses to acknowledge the state of Israel, renounce terrorist attacks, or abide by peace agreements signed by previous Palestinian governments. Only if these conditions are met will Israel consider Hamas an earnest participant in the peace process.
In 2006, Palestinians elected Hamas to govern the Palestinian Authority. Officially designated as a terrorist organization by the governments of the United States and Israel, this occurrence came as a major setback to the peace process. The fact that the election of a terrorist organization, principally opposed to any negations with the Israeli government, occurred shortly after the unilateral withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza was a disappointing development. Hamas’s political victory is disheartening because Israel expected their peaceful overture to receive a response-in-kind. Instead, the Palestinians chose to elect a terrorist organization dedicated to violence against Israelis. Israeli disengagement from Gaza was one step forward in the peace process, while the election of Hamas was two steps back.

**History**

Hamas has been responsible for hundreds of attacks against Israeli civilians, soldiers, and Palestinians accused of “collaboration” with Israel. Since 2000, Hamas has murdered over 300 Israelis, and wounded over 2,000. Through persistent religious and political indoctrination, Hamas leaders recruit young Palestinian youth for suicide and other attacks against Israelis. A recent development in Hamas’s recruitment strategy has been including attackers from beyond the West Bank and Gaza, reaching as far as Great Britain.

While Hamas, as a designated terrorist organization, is prohibited from receiving funding from the EU and US, it continues to receive significant financial support from various sources. Iran, which is a major supporter of Hamas, recently pledged $250 million, while the remainder of Hamas’s funding comes from various Gulf States, Palestinian expatriates, and Islamic “charities” across the globe.

**Election of Hamas and its Repercussions**

The Palestinians’ choice to elect Hamas, which refuses to negotiate with Israel on any grounds, directly after Israel’s disengagement from Gaza was a disheartening site for those interested in seeing a peaceful resolution to the conflict. While the Israeli disengagement from Gaza was one step forward towards peace, Hamas’s rise to power should be seen as two steps back. Israel’s disengagement was a major setback to the peace process, while the election of Hamas was a disappointing development.

Following the disengagement of Gaza, the Palestinian people made a conscious decision not to capitalize on the opportunity to form a sovereign state. Instead, Palestinians chose to freely elect a terrorist government that refuses to (1) recognize Israel, (2) cease violence against Israelis, and (3) abide by previous agreements with Israel. The Palestinians refused to recognize the gravity of the Israeli’s gesture towards a peaceful solution, and used the recently evacuated territories as staging-grounds to launch attacks against Israel.

In June 2006, only several months after the election, Hamas operatives invaded Israel through Gaza and attacked an army post, killing two Israeli soldiers and kidnapping one, Corporal Gilad Shalit. To this today, Cpl. Shalit is still being held by his Palestinian captors, who demand as ransom the release of all female and minor (under the age of 18) Palestinian prisoners, as well as 1,000 additional prisoners who were convicted of terrorist actions against Israel.

Hamas, with its responsibility for ensuring the safety of Palestinian citizens, must cease all attacks against Israeli citizens and soldiers immediately. Israel cannot live peacefully with a terrorist regime that refuses to acknowledge Israel’s existence, rejects any offer of negotiation, and both directly and indirectly supports terrorist attacks against Israel.
Receiving a majority of support from Iran, and a substantial amount of support from Syria, Hezbollah acts essentially as an Iranian and Syrian proxy. Dedicated on principle to the complete destruction of Israel, and to killing Jews across the globe, this organization poses a serious and existential threat to Israel, the United States, and the Western world at large.

On July 12th, 2006, Hezbollah crossed the internationally recognized border between Lebanon and Israel. Invading sovereign Israeli territory, the Iranian and Syrian-funded terrorist group killed eight Israeli soldiers and kidnapped two others. This aggression took place more than six years after Israeli forces had fully withdrawn from Lebanese soil. A strong response by the Israeli military was necessary to protect Israeli citizens and deter a future attack by Israel’s foes.

Iranian and Syrian Connections
The vast majority of support (whether military, financial, or intelligence) for Hezbollah comes from Iran. Accordingly, Hezbollah essentially acts as an informal Iranian proxy, receiving directives from the Iranian government in its fight against Israel and the west. Hezbollah explicitly acknowledges this fealty to Iran, stating in its official platform. Syria, unlike Iran, may not be an Islamist state. But its regime, led by Bashar Assad, maintains a weak hold on power because of its anti-Western sentiment. Its alliance with Iran, and subsequent support for Hezbollah, gives the Syrian public reason to keep Assad in power.

Recent Conflict
This past summer, the world witnessed Hezbollah launch an unprovoked and brutal attack across an internationally recognized border. Launching more than 4,000 rockets during a 34-day period, Hezbollah killed nearly 200 Israelis and wounded nearly 2,000.

For several primary reasons Israel was justified in its military response. First, Israel had withdrawn from Lebanon for several years prior to Hezbollah’s invasion. Hezbollah could not use “self-defense” as an excuse for invading sovereign Israeli territory: occupation had ceased to exist long before Hezbollah’s decision to attack. Israel’s purpose in responding was defensive. Second, Hezbollah’s attack was no mere tactical decision. It is part of a strategy whose objective is the total destruction of Israel as a sovereign nation. Israel’s response, therefore, must be strong enough to deter future aggression; a weak response would have only encouraged Hezbollah to attack again in the future.

Hezbollah’s Use of Civilian Shields
Hezbollah systematically engaged in the use of “civilian shields” during the conflict. The terrorist organization’s strategy in the war can be described as such: hide missiles and other weaponry in civilian homes, fire them at civilian targets from densely populated areas, then use civilians as human shield to deter an Israeli counter-attack. In the unfortunate event that the Israeli response results in collateral damage, Hezbollah gladly exploited these casualties as proof of Israel’s “disregard for human life.” Yet, nothing could be farther from the truth. It was Hezbollah’s conscious decision to place the civilians of Lebanon directly in harms way by hiding among civilians.

Israeli Concern for Civilian Life
Israel, however, has gone to such lengths as to provide advanced warning to Lebanese civilians of a likely attack on specific Hezbollah targets. Israel has done this with full knowledge that the extreme care it takes to protect the Lebanese civilian population often
ON: The Conflict Between Israel and Hezbollah, continued

comes at the cost of military advantages. Yet, Israel abides by its military procedure that calls for the minimization of civilian casualties. It deeply regrets the loss of innocent lives, but the true guilt of these deaths lies with Hezbollah, who intentionally places the civilian population in harms way. The moral responsibility lies with Hezbollah for knowingly firing missiles from the Lebanese population’s midst, fully aware that Israel will respond.

UN Security Council Resolution 1701
In August, the U.N.S.C. passed a resolution reaffirming previous resolutions that called for Hezbollah’s disarmament and dismantlement, and the return of kidnapped Israeli soldiers. The implementation of this resolution is essential to both Lebanon’s internal stability and Israel’s security. Hezbollah, however, refuses to disarm and continues to hold two Israeli soldiers captive, in blatant defiance of the United Nations. In refusing to actively pursue the disarmament of Hezbollah, the Lebanese government has failed to meet its obligations under Resolution 1701. Israel, however, has fully met its obligations under the resolution, fully withdrawing from Lebanon and lifting its blockade.

Despite the resolution being officially accepted by Lebanon, Hezbollah has continued to receive massive amounts of funding and weaponry from both Iran and Syria. UNIFIL, the United Nations force present in Lebanon, has proven too weak to prevent the infiltration of arms crossing over the Iranian and Syrian borders into Lebanon. The Lebanese army has proven itself unable and unwilling to stop this flow of arms, as well. Without a strong international force, Hezbollah will continue to destabilize Lebanon and the larger Middle East, and pose a dire threat to Israel’s security.
Increased radicalization and a more aggressive posture has turned Iran into a serious threat to Israel, the US, and global stability. Iran’s most unsettling behavior is its intention to acquire nuclear weapons, coupled with the statements of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad calling for the total destruction of Israel. The Iranian government, which is a major supporter of international terrorism, which actively pursues the acquisition of military nuclear capability, and which has repeatedly threatened Israel, the United States, and Europe, must not be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons.

**Nuclear Aspirations**
For nearly twenty years, Iran pursued a covert nuclear weapons program, which was, and still is, in direct violation of its obligations to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The covert nature of its nuclear program, and the abundance of evidence found which proves Iran’s nuclear program is not peaceful in nature, demonstrates a clear and present danger to the world.

While certainly a threat to Israel, a country who President Ahmadinejad threatened to “wipe off the map,” Iran’s danger to the U.S. and Europe is often understated in the media. The escalating threats Ahmadinejad, who considers himself a divine leader charged with hastening the arrival of the messiah, also target Europe and the United States: “We inform you [Europe and the United States] that the nations are like an ocean that is welling up, and if a storm beings, the dimensions will not stay limited to Palestine, and you may get hurt…This is an ultimatum.”

### Support for International Terrorism
Iran, which is has been listed by the US as the leading state sponsor of terrorism for more than twenty years, manipulates international terrorist organizations to serve its own national interests. Iran and its terrorist proxies, which include Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, al-Aksa Martyrs Brigades, pose a serious threat not only to the possibility of peace in Israel, but to regional and global stability. A nuclear-armed Iran would pose an even greater threat to Israel, the United States, and its allies. A state that provides direct support for terrorist organizations that have repeatedly attacked the United States and Israel, and which shelters known al-Qaeda operatives must not be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons.

### Radicalization
The Iranian-hosted Holocaust denial forum is an illustration of President Ahmadinejad’s intense hatred of Israel and the Jewish people. This blatant display of anti-Semitism, coupled with the Ahmadinejad’s repeated statements to wipe Israel off the map, serves as a reminder of the danger in allowing this regime to continue to develop nuclear weapons. History has repeatedly shown us that to dismiss the hate-filled threats of rulers like President Ahmadinejad as “mere rhetoric” is to guarantee disastrous consequences.
ON: Palestinian Rejections of Peace

Camp David
In 2000, U.S. President Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and Palestinian Chairman Yasir Arafat met at Camp David for peace negotiations. By the end of the meeting, the parties had hammered out the draft of a peace accord, which Yasir Arafat rejected. The proposal, which Arafat refused to agree to, included the following concessions:

• The creation of a sovereign Palestinian state;
• Israeli withdrawal from approximately 95% of the West Bank, and Israeli annexation of the remaining 5%, in exchange for an equivalent amount of territory in pre-1967 Israel;
• A road to the Temple Mount under Palestinian authority and sovereignty;
• A secure highway between the West Bank and Gaza, which would run through Israel proper;
• The creation of a Palestinian army;
• Israeli acknowledgment of “the suffering of the refugees,” and the absorption of tens of thousands of Palestinians into Israel, as well as the right of return for refugees to the new Palestinian state; An international fund to provide for the compensation and restitution of Palestinians.

Taba, Egypt
In 2000, Two months after the second intifada began, President Clinton and Ehud Barak presented Yasir Arafat with another peace proposal. Using the concessions proposed to Arafat at Camp David as a starting point, this new proposal expanded on them significantly.

The Palestinian negotiating team was prepared to accept the peace proposal offered at Taba, but Yasir Arafat single-handedly rejected it. Furthermore, Arafat’s rejection lacked any alternative proposal.

In the Jordanian newspaper al-Ria, commentator Dr. Fahed Al-Fanek wrote, “It is entirely clear that the Palestinian side has made a mistake by missing a rare opportunity that may never return…he [Arafat] has now started to demand, in vain, to return to the negotiating table on the basis of the point where the negotiations were stopped in Camp David and Taba…the same proposals that Arafat rejected, he now demands.”

Election of Hamas after Israeli Withdrawal From Gaza
Displacing Fatah in the 2006 parliamentary elections, Hamas received a large majority of the Palestinians’ votes cast in the 2006 parliamentary elections. Following its rise to power, Hamas continues its stated policy of (1) refusing to acknowledge Israel, (2) actively engaging in terrorist attacks, and (3) refusing to abide by peace agreements signed by previous Palestinian governments. Until Hamas reverses its policies in those three crucial areas, the United States, Israel, and the rest of the international community must continue to isolate Hamas, and refuse any form of aid to the terrorist-led Palestinian authority.

Members of Hamas parading a child in Gaza
ON: Israel’s Diversity

"THE STATE OF ISRAEL...will be based on the precepts of liberty, justice and peace taught by the Hebrew Prophets; will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of race, creed or sex; will guarantee full freedom of conscience, worship, education and culture; will safeguard the sanctity and inviolability of the shrines and Holy Places of all religions..."

Israel’s Declaration of Independence

Israel, the national homeland of the Jewish people, is also home to people of many different religions, ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds. Arabs, Christians, Muslims, women, gays, Africans, Russians, and Ethiopians all play prominent roles in Israeli society. All are allowed full and equal civil rights. Unfortunately, Israel is the only Middle-Eastern country affording these rights to minorities.

Did you know that...

ARABS IN ISRAEL

- Approximately 20% (around one million people) of Israel’s population is comprised of Arabs. Almost 80% of Israeli Arabs are Muslim and over 15% are Christian.

- Active voters, politicians, activists and organizers of political parties, Israeli Arabs serve in the Knesset (Israel’s parliament), on the Supreme Court, in the Foreign Ministry and some, though not required, serve in the military.

AFRICANS/ETHIOPIANS IN ISRAEL

- As a result of several rescue missions to Ethiopia, there are nearly 100,000 Ethiopian Jews in Israel today. Fleeing religious persecution, civil wars and famines, they have found refuge, citizenship and freedom in their Jewish homeland.

- Millions of other Israelis (or their parents) were born in the Arab countries of North Africa - Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya. Many others hail from the Arab countries of Asia - Iraq, Syria, Yemen, etc. Indeed, a majority of Israel’s Jewish citizens trace their 20th century ancestors to non-European countries.

WOMEN IN ISRAEL

- Women are afforded full equality to men, representing almost half of the workforce and over half the recipients of all Israeli academic degrees.

- Israeli women have served as prime ministers, ambassadors, military generals, business and philanthropic leaders. No sector of Israeli life is closed to them.

LESMON, GAY, BI-SEXUAL & TRANSGENDERED RIGHTS IN ISRAEL

- Israel is one of the world’s most progressive countries in terms of equality for sexual minorities. Sodomy laws were repealed in the 1980’s, and in 1992 workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation was outlawed. The Israeli military does not discriminate against gays and lesbians in conscription or promotion. Tel-Aviv, Eilat and Jerusalem hold annual pride parades, and Jerusalem’s Open House is the only LGBT center providing services to Arab gays and lesbians in the Middle East. In fact, members of the LGBT community from the West Bank and Gaza flee to Israel to avoid persecution.
ON: Israeli Technology and Innovation

The Israeli company Given Imaging's ingestible "Pillcam" diagnoses intestinal diseases.

MICROSOFT'S ISRAEL OFFICE

"Israel can win the battle for survival only by developing expert knowledge in technology."

Prof. Albert Einstein, President of the first Technion Society, established, 1924

Though smaller than New Jersey, with under 7 million inhabitants, and less than 60 years old, the modern State of Israel is among the world's top 5 countries achieving innovative technological advancements. Many of the computers, software applications and medical devices being used around the world today were designed and created by Israelis. Part of this amazing accomplishment is due to the extraordinary percentage of engineers in Israeli society - there are 1.35 engineers per every 10,000 people in Israel, more than double that of other western, industrialized nations. Only the US approaches Israel's density of computers per capita, where 50% of every household enjoys a personal computer.

Did you know that...

- **INSTANT MESSAGING**, which allows global, instant Internet chatting capabilities between friends, families and coworkers was created in 1996 by three young Israelis who sold the technology two years later to AOL.
- **CELL PHONES** were created by Motorola's R&D center in Israel.
- **VOICE MAIL** was first created in Israel.

- **MAINSTREAM SOFTWARE**, also known as computer applications and software (think of products like Windows NT operating system) were created by Microsoft's Israeli branch - one of the company's first non-U.S. facilities. Similarly, the world's first anti-virus software was developed in Israel in 1979.

ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY

- An Israeli company was the first to develop and install a large-scale, solar powered electricity generating plant (in southern California's Mojave Desert).
- At 30% of its water usage capacity, Israel is the world's leader in wastewater recycling. Pioneering developments in drip irrigation, desalination, and effective rainfall collection have not only become necessary for Israel's own water resources, but these techniques have been shared as part of the country's inspiring foreign aid program, helping to alleviate water-based causes of starvation in other Middle Eastern countries and Africa.
- Patented breakthroughs by biological and agricultural engineers have allowed Israel to gradually eliminate the use of all agricultural pesticides.

ON THE HORIZON:

- Israel's Given Imaging has recently developed the first ingestible video camera, which is so small that it fits inside a pill. Used to view the small intestine from the inside, the camera helps doctors diagnose cancer and digestive disorders.

Jerusalem-based Camera Inc. is currently developing a unique radar system that can literally see through walls using ultra wireless wideband technology. The system will be invaluable for rescue efforts in fires, collapsed buildings and hostage rescue operations.
**Recommended Reading**

**Israel Before Zionism**

1. *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)*: "Brief History of Israel"
   http://www.science.co.il/Israel-history.asp
2. *Israel MFA*: Highlighted Events in Israel’s History
   http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/History/Facts+About+Israel+History.htm
3. *Zionism-Israel*: "History of Zionism"
   http://www.zionism-israel.com/zionism_history.htm
4. *Anti-Defamation League* – “Israel Before Zionism”
   http://www.adl.org/ISRAEL/Record/conflicts.asp
5. *Jewish Virtual Library*: General Overview of Israel Before Zionism
   http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/myths/mf1.html

**Zionism**

1. *Anti-Defamation League* – Basic Definition of Zionism
   http://www.adl.org/durban/zionism.asp
2. *Jewish Virtual Library*: “Zionism is Not Racism”
3. *Jewish United Fund*: Interview view Israel Deputy Foreign Minister on Zionism
   http://www.wzo.org.il/doingzionism/resources/view.asp?id=1419
5. *Jewish Agency for Israel*: Theodore Herzl Biographical Information
   http://www.jafi.org.il/education/herzl/biography.html

**Partition and War of Independence**

1. *Jewish Virtual Library*: Myths and Facts About Partition
   http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/myths/mf3.html
2. *Anti-Defamation League*: “War of Independence”
   http://www.adl.org/ISRAEL/Record/48war.asp
3. Text of UN Partition Plan of 1947
   http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/partmap.html
4. Operational History of War of Independence
   http://www.israeli-weapons.com/history/war_of_independence/WarofIndependance.html
5. *Israel MFA* – Overview of Arab-Israeli Wars
   http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/History/Modern+History/Centenary+of+Zionism/The+Arab-Israeli+Wars.htm

**1967 Six Day War and UNSC Resolution 242**

1. *United Jewish Communities*: “Six Day War”
   http://www.ujc.org/content_display.html?ArticleID=40606
2. *Jewish Virtual Library*: Additional Information
   http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/myths/mf6.html
   daccessdds.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/240/94/IMG/NR024094.pdf?OpenElement
4. *Anti-Defamation League* – Six Day War
   http://www.adl.org/ISRAEL/Record/67War.asp
5. PalestineFacts.org: Israel Acted in Self Defense
   http://peace.heebz.com/sixdaywar.html


1973 Yom Kippur War

1. Israel MFA: Overview of War

2. Jewish Virtual Library: History of 1973 War
   http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/source/History/73_War.html

3. PalestineFacts.org

4. Jerusalem Post: Yehezkel Dror: Political Repercussions of War
   http://info.jpost.com/C003/Supplements/30YK/new_01 qa.html

5. Jerusalem Post: Yossi Klein Halevi: Spiritual Impact of War
   http://info.jpost.com/C003/Supplements/30YK/new_07.html

The Forgotten Refugees

1. JIMENA Homepage (Organization of Jews Expelled from Arab Lands)
   http://www.jimena.org/index.htm


   http://www.bnaibrith.org/pubs/bnaibrith/summer2006_inv_exiles1.cfm

4. Middle East Forum: “Why Jews Fled the Arab Countries”
   http://www.meforum.org/article/263

5. Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs: “The Other Refugees: Jews of the Arab World”
   http://www.jcpa.org/jl/jl102.htm

   http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/isljew.htm

Israel's Security Fence

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   http://www.adl.org/israel/advocacy/glossary/fence.asp

2. United Jewish Communities: “Myths and Facts”
   http://www.ujc.org/content_display.html?ArticleID=148038

   www.aipac.org/Publications/AIPACAnalysesMemos/Israel_Right_to_Self_Defense

   http://www.jaff.org.il/education/iaiz/actual/conflict/fence/5.html

5. Israel Ministry of Defense Website on the Security Fence
   http://www.securityfence.mod.gov.il/Pages/ENG/default.htm

6. Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs: Security Fence and UCJ Ruling
   http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp513.htm

Disengagement from Gaza
1. **Address on Disengagement**, Silvan Shalom, Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs  

2. **Yedioth Ahranoth**: Abraham Foxman: "Pullout With or Without the Palestinians"  
   [http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3088771,00.html](http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3088771,00.html)

3. **Anti-Defamation League**: Disengagement, a Basic Fact Sheet  

4. **AIPAC**: "Palestinians Creating ‘South Lebanon’ in Gaza"  

5. **Israel MFA**: "Israel’s Disengagement Plan: Renewing the Peace Process"  

6. **Israel MFA**: "Paying the Price for Peace: The Human cost of Disengagement"  

7. **Jewish Tribune** "Myth: Israel’s Disengagement was a Victory for Terror"  
   [http://www.jewishtribune.ca/tribune/jt-060105-09.html](http://www.jewishtribune.ca/tribune/jt-060105-09.html)

**Hamas**

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   [http://www.aipac.org/NER/040306/hamasTakesCharge.cfm](http://www.aipac.org/NER/040306/hamasTakesCharge.cfm)

2. **Washington Post**: Hamas’s Refusal to Pursue Peace Process  

3. **AIPAC**: International Response to Election of Hamas:  

4. **List of Hamas’s Violations of Previous Peace Agreements with Israel**: AIPAC  
   [http://www.aipac.org/hamas/commitmentViolations.htm](http://www.aipac.org/hamas/commitmentViolations.htm)

5. **Egyptian Foreign Minister’s Praise for Israel’s Restraint in Ceasefire, Despite Repeated Palestinian Attacks**; Haaretz  

6. **Human Rights Watch**: Hamas Must Order End to Civilian Attacks  
   [http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/01/30/isrlpa12549.htm](http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/01/30/isrlpa12549.htm)

7. **Report on Escalation of Palestinian Terrorism Post-Disengagement**, Israeli Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies  
   [http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng_n/pa_esc_te.htm](http://www.intelligence.org.il/eng/eng_n/pa_esc_te.htm)

8. **Haaretz**: "Painting a Rosier Future"  

**Hezbollah and Recent Conflict With Israel**

1. **Photographic and video evidence of Hezbollah’s use of civilian shields** (Israel MFA):  

2. **Comprehensive FAQ list provided by Israeli MFA**:  
   [http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/About+the+Ministry/Behind+the+Headlines/Islayels+counter+terrorist+campaign+-+FAQ+18-Jul-2006.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/About+the+Ministry/Behind+the+Headlines/Islayels+counter+terrorist+campaign+-+FAQ+18-Jul-2006.htm)

3. **Council on Foreign Relations – Basic Fact Sheet on Hezbollah**  
   [http://www.cfr.org/publication/9155/#6](http://www.cfr.org/publication/9155/#6)

4. **American Israel Public Affairs Committee - Memo on Threats Posed to US and Israel by Hezbollah**  

5. **Thomas Friedman editorial in New York Times**  

6. **Anti-Defamation League – “Hezbollah and the Recent Conflict”**
Iran

   http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/63947.htm

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   http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/About+the+Ministry/MFA+SPOKESMAN/2006/Israel+decrees+Iran+international+Holocaust+denial+conference+11-Dec-2006.htm

3. **American Israel Public Affairs Committee** Webpage on Iranian Nuclear Threat
   http://www.aipac.org/iran/

4. **American Israel Public Affairs Committee** Webpage on Iranian Support for Terrorism
   http://www.aipac.org/iran/terrorist_support.html

5. **Council on Foreign Relations** FAQ About Iranian Nuclear Threat
   http://www.cfr.org/publication/8830/#8

6. **Washington Times** Editorial Denouncing Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as Radical
   http://www.washtimes.com/op-ed/20050630-085631-3915r.htm

7. **New Republic** Editorial on Iran’s Radicalization and Aggressive Posture
   http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC06.php?CID=951

8. **Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs**: Dr. Ephraim Kam: “What If Iran Gets the Bomb?”
   http://www.jcpa.org/brief/brief005-5.htm

Palestinian Rejections of Peace

1. **Middle East Media Research Institute**: “A Jordanian Analyst Calls for Flexibility and Compromise”
   http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP20301

2. **ADL**: “Arafat’s Legacy Is Terrorism and Failed Leadership”
   http://www.adl.org/PresRele/IsiME_62/4585_62.htm

3. **Jewish Virtual Library**: “Camp David 2000”
   http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/cd2000art.html

4. **Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs**: “Whose Fault Was the Failure of Camp David?”
   http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp474.htm

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   http://www.aipac.org/NER/040306/hamasTakesCharge.cfm

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   http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC06.php?CID=897

7. **AIPAC** -International Response to Election of Hamas

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   http://www.aipac.org/hamas/commitmentviolations.htm

9. **Haaretz**: Egyptian Foreign Minister’s Praise for Israel’s Restraint in Ceasefire, Despite Repeated Palestinian Attacks

Israel’s Diversity

1. **Brookings Institution** “Diversity in Israel: Lessons for the United States”

2. **Jewish Agency for Israel**: The Diversity of Israeli Society
3. **Israel MFA: “Gender Equality in a Jewish State”**

4. **BICOM: LGBT Rights in Israel**
   [http://www.bicom.org.uk/about_israel/gay_rights/](http://www.bicom.org.uk/about_israel/gay_rights/)

5. **Israel MFA: Arab Rights in Israel**

### Israeli Technology and Innovation

1. **Israel21c – Comprehensive Website on “Israel Beyond the Conflict”**
   [www.Israel21c.com](http://www.Israel21c.com)

2. **Isracast – Focus on Israeli Technological Innovations**

3. **America-Israel Friendship League; Highlighted List of Israeli Technologies**

4. **Israel MFA: Science and Technology**

5. **Israel MFA: Environmental Protection**