

Mideast political quiz for 5786

written by David M. Weinberg | 28.09.2025

Which of the following Mideast-related events can be expected in 5786 (2025-2026)? Take this quiz and calculate the year for which you need to be prepared. (My answers are at the end.)

1. Which of the following security-diplomatic developments will dominate in the coming year?

- a. A series of Iranian-inspired terrorist attacks on Israeli and Jewish targets around the world in retaliation for Operation Rising Lion.
- b. Another Israeli/American strike on Iran's nuclear program and ballistic missile array.
- c. A security accord between Israel and Syria.
- d. Release by Hamas of all live and deceased Israeli hostages held in Gaza, accompanied by a long lull in Israeli military operations.
- e. A deepening IDF drive into Gaza that lasts all year and amounts to a full-scale occupation.
- f. One million Gazans will flee into Sinai and from there to refuge around the world, despite Egypt's protestations and threats.

2. How will Israel's relationships with Sunni powers develop?

- a. Turkey's hegemonic ambitions in the Mediterranean and Syria will lead to near-war with Israel. Israel will strenuously object to further US weapons sales to Ankara.
- b. Israel will threaten military action unless Egypt scales back its aggressive and treaty-violating military buildup in Sinai. Israel will strenuously object to further US weapons sales to Cairo.
- c. Abraham Accord partnerships with Morocco, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates will remain intact but frozen.
- d. When a ceasefire in Gaza is reached, Abraham Accord partnerships will expand to Oman, Indonesia, Djibouti, Comoros, Mauritania, and eventually even Saudi Arabia.

3. What will be in French President Emmanuel Macron's phony "State of Palestine"?

- a. The so-called "State of Palestine" (a.k.a. the "Palestinian Authority") will sign a treaty of protection with Turkey and Iran.
- b. Mahmoud Abbas will die or be overthrown by one or more of the following Fatah leaders (who will battle succession out among themselves): Hussein al-Sheikh, Jibril Rajoub, Mahmoud al-Aloul, Majid Faraj, Marwan Barghouti, and Mohammed Dahlan.
- c. Iran/Hamas will spark a wild wave of terrorism in Jerusalem and across Judea and Samaria. The IDF will have to retake Judea and Samaria to stem this assault and prevent a Hamas takeover of Macron's "State of Palestine."
- d. To shore up the "State of Palestine," Macron and other European leaders will fund a Palestinian space program and triple their funding of UNRWA, while tightening an arms embargo on Israel.
- e. The "democratic and peaceful" State of Palestine will cease to "pay-for-slay" (support terrorists and their families), dismiss soldiers and policemen who have aided or participated in terror attacks on Israelis, criminalize and prosecute religious leaders and broadcasters who rail about Jews as subhuman forces of evil, introduce peace education in PA schools, and embrace water, sewage, industrial, and other cooperative projects with Israel.

4. Israel will extend its sovereignty to the following ("annexation"):

- a. The Jordan Valley
- b. The Jordan Valley and the greater Jerusalem envelope, including Ma'aleh Adumim and Gush Etzion
- c. Area C (which includes all Israeli cities and towns in Judea and Samaria)
- d. All of Judea and Samaria
- e. None of the above, at least not until the next government is formed after the elections.

5. The 2026 Israeli election will be held in:

- a. February-March (because the current Netanyahu government will fall swiftly when the Knesset winter session convenes in late October, mainly because of the haredi draft impasse).

- b. June-July (because the government will fail to pass a state budget by the end of March 2026, mainly because of the haredi draft impasse).
- c. September-October (because that is the outside limit of the current government, by law).

6. In the 2026 Israeli election:

- a. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will triumphantly bow out of Israeli politics, after crushing Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran, pulling off additional Abraham Accord-type treaties, and feeling vindicated by a feeble end to his criminal trials.
- b. Prime Minister Netanyahu will run and win reelection, after crushing Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran, pulling off additional Abraham Accord-type treaties, and feeling vindicated by a feeble end to his criminal trials. He will then stand for election to the post of president of Israel when President Isaac Herzog's term ends in 2028.
- c. Prime Minister Netanyahu will be run out of office by an Israeli public that holds him responsible for the security collapse on October 7, 2023, and the escalating regional conflicts that have ensued with no end in sight.
- d. The attorney-general and the Supreme Court will rule, based on some concocted legal convention, that Netanyahu is barred from running for reelection.
- e. Netanyahu will seek to postpone the election to 2027 or 2028 on the basis of an emergency security situation.
- f. A fresh crop of brave, battle-tested, and ideologically motivated leaders will enter Israeli public life, breathing hope and inspiration into Israeli politics; the heroic mid-level commanders of the current war, and the equally heroic civil society leaders of today. They will tip the balance of Israeli politics.
- g. Even after opposition parties unite into one large bloc for the purpose of winning against Netanyahu, and even after the entry into politics of new leaders and parties, the election result will be inconclusive - a hung jury. No centrist or stable government will be possible without including Likud or involving either haredi or Arab representatives.

7. If Benny Gantz, Gadi Eisenkot, Naftali Bennett, Yair Lapid, and/or Avigdor Liberman were to form the next Israeli government, they

would manage diplomacy and security much better than Benjamin Netanyahu has, by doing which of the following?

- a. Cutting a swift hostage release deal with Hamas, then convincing Egypt to take control of Gaza.
- b. Unilaterally withdrawing Israeli troops and settlers from significant sections of Judea and Samaria, and recognizing the "State of Palestine."
- c. Quickly reaching a peace accord with Palestinian Authority head Mahmoud Abbas, who would assume responsibility for Gaza and bring stability, good governance, and goodwill to the entire area.
- d. Dropping Israel's demand for total dismantlement of Iran's nuclear and missile arrays, and instead partnering with the E-3 and IAEA to reach an accommodation with Iran.
- e. All the above answers are ridiculous. None of this is wise nor feasible, and none of Israel's leaders would go there, despite the fantasies of many global observers.

8. If, on one day, 5,000 rockets were to be fired into populated areas of Paris, London, Ottawa, and Canberra (never mind if this were to continue for two years amounting to over 30,000 rockets and missiles), and 1,200 citizens of these countries were slaughtered (not to mention raped, tortured and/or kidnapped) - what would be the "proportionate response" of Emmanuel Macron, Keir Starmer, Mark Carney, and Anthony Albanese?

- a. They would seek to invest billions in the attacker's economy to improve quality of life and squelch the urge of the attackers to further hit France, Britain, Canada, and Australia. They also would cheerfully and generously pay out billions of dollars in "humanitarian aid" to feed the population that elected the terrorist attackers, without serious supervision of how the funds are used (meaning, diverted for military rearming).

- b. They would vote for a UN Security Council resolution calling on “all sides” to exercise “restraint,” then convene an international conference to accord “state” status to the attacking terrorist enemy.
- c. They would erase the leadership of the attacking party from the face of the earth. And then carpet-bomb the attacking zone to kingdom come, as the Allies did in World War II.

9. The most important prayer that Israelis can offer this Yom Kippur is:

- a. A prayer for national calm and mutual consideration, even amid a controversial war and a hotly contested election campaign.
- b. A prayer for enhanced Zionist spirit and backbone, including renewed commitment to national service and winning against Israel’s enemies.
- c. A prayer for the hostages, wounded soldiers, and war widows/orphans.
- d. “Oh Lord God, to whom vengeance belongs: Oh God to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth! Lift up yourself, you judge of the earth. Render to the proud their recompense. Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?... The Lord is my defense, and my God the rock of my refuge. He brings (upon the enemy) their own iniquity, and He cuts them off in their own wickedness...” (Psalm 94)
- e. All the above.

MY ANSWERS:

1. Alas, not d or f.
2. a and d.
3. b and c.
4. e.
5. b.
6. g.
7. e.
8. c.
9. e.

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Israel's strike on Hamas failed tactically but sends strategic regional messages

written by Dr. Raphael BenLevi | 28.09.2025

The Israeli strike's main achievements lie in the messages it conveyed.

Independence and partnership

written by David M. Weinberg | 28.09.2025

Time for reset in Israel's diplomatic world.

Specious protestations and declarations of sovereignty

written by David M. Weinberg | 28.09.2025

On the hypocrisy of Western countries that condemn Israel's hit on Hamas in Qatar.

Trump will no longer let international law get in his way

written by Prof. Zaki Shalom | 28.09.2025

The Trump administration is making it clear to the international system that the principles of international law will no longer constitute an obstacle on the path to achieving its objectives.

Thou doth protest too much

written by David M. Weinberg | 28.09.2025

This country is on the verge of complete chaos. Every single interest group thinks it can block roads and airports and besiege the homes of public figures. Every sect and splinter faction feels that it holds absolute truths that justify shutting down the country whenever they feel like it, until they get their way - no matter how inconvenient this is for others in the country or how close this takes us to civil war.

This has to stop. There must be limits to dissent and demonstration.

Alas, threats to “burn down the country” and instigate “civil war” are becoming standard language in various protest movements, say, among the hostage freedom “fighters” and the haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) anti-draft “shock troops.” And the protests themselves are becoming more violent every day.

Hostage freedom campaigners burn tires on the main roadways in wildcat style, and residences of the prime minister in two locations have been assaulted. The beat of bullhorns with ugly accusations of “war crimes” and concrete threats to personal security have become de rigueur outside the homes of government ministers - at 6 am, at 11 pm, and any other ungodly hour of the day or night. Even protests outside and inside of synagogues are not out of bounds.

“Kaplanist” protesters have even taken to pursuing government leaders and their

families, hunting them down, literally chasing them down the street and marching outside the schools of their kids. The latest anti-government extremist slogan speaks about lighting a “ring of fire” around every minister and every army general who is implicated in government “crimes” related to continuation of the Gaza war and “abandonment” of Israeli hostages.

HAREDI FURY at the failure of the government to pass a military draft exemption law for their masses of yeshiva students (alongside anger at the arrest of a few draft deserters and the denial of budgets to such shirkers of military service) has led to mass demonstrations that choke off entrances to major cities like Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Ashdod.

Haredi chutzpah extends to blocking Ben-Gurion Airport too. “No one will fly, if we can’t fly,” they threaten – referring to the possibility that draft-dodging acolytes of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov could be arrested at the airport en route to the rebbe’s gravesite in Uman (Ukraine) before Rosh Hashanah. They even demand the Israeli government pay for part of this pilgrimage!

Last weekend, I saw gigantic haredi street posters (known as *pashkevilim*) with a one-word screaming headline: “War!” For a moment, I thought to myself, oh good, the haredi community finally has woken up to the fact this country is fighting a long and difficult war against its external enemies and that haredi people need to pitch in too.

But no, “War!” meant war against the haredi community’s perceived internal enemies, meaning most Israelis, who seek to draw Ultra-Orthodox young men into some form of national or military service.

The posters went on to describe the “evils” of mainstream Israeli society (– perhaps that is the source of term *pashkevil*?) and to threaten to “burn” (*lisrof*) and “destroy” (*lehachariv*) the “Zionist state” if yeshiva boys are forced out of their study halls or kollel men are denied discounts in municipal taxes and HMO fees.

The demonstration free-for-all runs amok across the gamut of the upset: Distraught Ethiopian, Eritrean, handicapped, and LGBTQ communities. Angry settlers, disgruntled port workers, dissatisfied farmers, disadvantaged residents of the peripheries, displeased teachers and doctors. Even upset butterfly enthusiasts and bottlecap makers (just kidding, but only by a bit). They all think

that they can demonstrate on major highways at rush hour with the declared intention of gridlock, until and unless they get their way.

Everybody else affected by such narrow-self-interest protests – which of course are self-defined by the protesters as emergency rallies of the highest and broadest national priority – be damned.

Unfortunately, the notion that a police permit is necessary before launching a protest or a march in the streets – is wholly out the door. Nor are the police “allowed” to arrest any illegal protesters; that becomes a cause for accusations of “dictatorship” and for additional protests.

COORDINATION WITH the police, not defiance of the police, is the logical approach in a democracy, where balance in civil order is paramount. It is the job of internal security leaders to uphold the important right to protest against, or advocate for, a specific policy, and balance this with the rights of other citizens (who are not party to the vogueish cause-of-the-moment) to conduct their lives without undue interference.

And yes, balanced policy requires fair and uniform application of the law across societal sectors and the political spectrum.

By way of example, we all know what would have happened if so-called settler “hilltop youth” or haredi hooligans had climbed onto the roof of the National Library in Jerusalem or firebombed a car outside the Prime Minister’s home. These things actually happened this week.

But since the ruffians are left-of-center protesters against the Netanyahu government, well, don’t expect many arrests and certainly no arrests that lead to actual criminal prosecutions. The politicized Attorney General would never allow that.

I won’t rehash here the horrible disengagement from Gaza in 2005 but recall this: Sixteen-year-old Religious Zionist girls who merely were on their way to protest the destruction of Gush Katif settlements were incarcerated by very aggressive policemen, held incommunicado in jail for weeks, and then hit with severe criminal indictments.

For the sake of both civil sanity and minimal national unity, I therefore support

the plan of National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir to limit the ability of protesters to block major roads, aggressively besiege personal homes, assault synagogues, etc. This includes highways, access roads to Ben-Gurion International Airport, hospitals, emergency routes, and roads whose closure would isolate communities.

The plan would not interfere with the large anti-government protests taking place on Kaplan and Begin streets in central Tel Aviv every Saturday, if they are coordinated with police (and generally they are, although extremists frequently have broken through barriers to block the Ayalon Freeway).

“The right to demonstrate is not an inherent right, but rather a relative right... and cannot come at the cost of human life and public safety,” reads the new policy document.

I also support the bill placed before the Knesset by coalition chairman MK Ofir Katz that would impose mandatory heavy fines on protest lawbreakers – be they “Kaplanists” or “Breslovers,” settlers or asylum seekers, Ultra-Orthodox, ultra-Right or ultra-Left. The legislation sets fines of NIS 14,400 (\$4,300) for blocking critical roadways, and more than twice as much (NIS 29,200 or \$8,700) for burning tires or placing dangerous obstacles on such roadways. A repeat violation would cost the lawbreaker another NIS 22,000 (\$6,500).

Indeed, I wonder whether these fines are set high enough.

The broader point here is not (just) “public safety” or “public order” – and I am not seeking to give tools to a controversial government (whether this one or the next) to stifle dissent and punish all protesters. Nor am I indifferent to the desperation felt by hostage families, or *lehavdil* (big distinction!), haredi families.

Rather, the point is to place fetters on our passions that will allow for more civil debate and discourse; that will re-teach us to respect the concerns, viewpoints, and needs of others (yes, travel on unobstructed roads is a basic need); and that will set guardrails so that we collectively don’t drive off the roadways into the ravine. Civil sanity and minimal national unity demand no less.

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Snapback now

written by David M. Weinberg | 28.09.2025

The so-called “snapback” mechanism for sanctions against Iran was triggered several days ago. But the three European countries who made the call – Britain, France, and Germany (the E-3) – may yet fudge the issue and fritter away Western leverage on Iran. They are talking about giving Iran an extension, up to six months’ grace to reach understandings about curbs on its nuclear bomb and missile programs.

That would be a whopping mistake. With Iran charred by the emphatic Israeli and American military strikes of July and weakened by economic and domestic upheavals, the Europeans should be toughly negotiating Iran down and away from its aggressive capabilities and postures, not giving the Islamic Republic a sugarcoated lifeline.

A BIT OF BACKGROUND is necessary. Between 2006 and 2010, the UN Security Council passed six tranches of sanction resolutions against Iran because of its nuclear weapon and ballistic missile programs.

Then in 2015, the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council: Britain, France, Russia, China, and America, plus Germany) reached an agreement with Iran called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to limit Iran’s nuclear program in exchange for massive sanctions relief and the release of billions of dollars of escrowed Iranian funds. This was US President Obama’s signature foreign policy “achievement.”

But an emergency brake was built into the JCPOA that allows for swift reimposition of United Nations sanctions against Iran on the tenth anniversary of the agreement – which will be soon, on October 18, 2025 – if Iran is found in violation of its nuclear commitments by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This is the snapback mechanism.

Well, the IAEA formally determined this past June that Iran is indeed in flagrant “non-compliance” with its nuclear obligations. And then shortly thereafter Iran

showed off its illegal ballistic missile capabilities by firing more than 600 of them at Israel.

Invoking snapback requires a majority of P5+1 members, but not a UN Security Council resolution. (The snapback was specifically designed this way to *avoid* the UN Security Council, where Russia and China could be expected to veto any decision against Iran.)

Now here is the math: Since Russia and China are in cahoots with Iran, and since President Trump withdrew the US from the P5+1 and the rotten JCPOA in 2018, that leaves the decision to trigger snapback to the E-3.

So the E-3 had to do something, because snapback requires 30 days' advance notice, which brings the deadline forward to September 18, and the E-3 said it would pronounce on snapback by the end of August, which is this weekend.

At the same time, even after starting the snapback process, the wishy-washy Europeans are offering Iran a way out; suggesting that they won't actually *apply* snapback if Iran returns within 30 days to the negotiating table – in direct talks with the US too, and if Iran accounts for the country's large stock of enriched uranium and fully re-opens its nuclear facilities to IAEA inspections.

OF COURSE, Iran is up to its old tricks: Promise, postpone, stall, threaten, smile and negotiate, and then threaten and negotiate some more. All the while, in some as-yet-undetected Iranian bunker, the uranium centrifuges may be spinning.

Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi is demanding an extension to the snapback deadline, "to give diplomacy the time and space it needs," and threatening the E-3 with a "harsh" Iranian response (– terrorism?) if the Europeans play tough.

(Araghchi also this week threatened Israel with a repeat war, and Gulf countries with blockage of their oil shipping through the Straits of Hormuz – if they don't line-up with Iran against Israel.)

Russia also is trying to buy more time for Iran. It has circulated a draft Security Council resolution that would tack a six-month extension onto the Iran nuclear accord, during which time no snapback action could be taken.

And note this: Iran's "Supreme Leader" Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Sunday

that the nuclear issue is “unsolvable.” He defiantly declared that “Tehran would never bow” to US, European, and Zionist pressures. “They want Iran to be obedient to America. The Iranian nation will stand with all its power against those who have such erroneous expectations,” he declared.

Given such Iranian intransigence and arrogance, the E-3 must not revert to the failed diplomacy of the past. It must not fall prey to Iran’s bait-and-delay scam. It is high time for the E-3 to crack the whip and trigger snapback now – without waffling and equivocating, without offering Iran yet another opportunity to wiggle off the hook.

This would mean automatic reinstatement of the pre-JCPOA sanctions: a renewed global embargo on arms sales to Iran, limits on Iranian missile production and distribution, trade restrictions, banking and financial sanctions on Iran, a freeze on Iranian assets around the world, and travel bans on Iranian leaders.

Iran is genuinely concerned about this. Given the rickety state of the Iranian economy, such sanctions could accelerate deep rifts inside Iran and destabilize the Islamic Republic; and perhaps even bring an end to the radical theocratic regime that has ruled Iran since 1979.

IN FACT, even full compliance with past UN resolutions may no longer be sufficient. Those demands were the floor. Today’s reality demands much more.

After all, Iran didn’t just aggressively enrich uranium to bomb-grade levels over the past ten years, but it launched hundreds of ballistic missiles at Israeli civilian and military targets. As Jacob Nagel and Mark Dubowitz of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies have written in this newspaper, this alone justifies new redlines.

Among the necessary new redlines are *elimination* of the three pillars of Iran’s nuclear weapons program: Complete destruction of all enriched uranium, centrifuges, and enrichment facilities. Full disclosure and termination of all nuclear warhead design, related research and development, and any remaining weaponization infrastructure. Termination of Iran’s ballistic missile, cruise missile, and drone arsenals, including ICBMs that can strike Europe and the US.

This also means an end to Tehran’s longtime arming of Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and other proxy forces; and cancellation of Iran’s nuclear, missile, and

arms agreements with Russia, China, and North Korea.

All this would require super-invasive American or IAEA monitoring of Iran's bank accounts, uranium mines, mills, ore processing facilities, military and missile bases, ports and airfields, along with total destruction of Iran's underground bunkers for nuclear activities and weapons storage.

In short, another naïve diplomatic deal based on delayed snapback and flimsy-phony inspections, without real-time dismantlement of Iran's core nuclear and terrorist infrastructure, would repeat Obama's fatal errors.

Hello E-3, wake up! A dawdling deal is worse than no deal. Half-measures benefit Iran, providing camouflage for nuclear rebuilding. Weakness will whet Iran's jihadist appetite for rage and revenge.

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Six reasons to build in E-1

written by David M. Weinberg | 28.09.2025

Building 10,000 homes in E-1 is critical for the future of Jerusalem and for Israel's security. It also is appropriate pushback against the arrogant Western attempt to ram runaway, perilous Palestinian statehood down Israel's throat.

Grieving for Gaza

written by David M. Weinberg | 28.09.2025

As we grieve for Israeli victims of Hamas's October 7 raid into Israel, and for Israeli soldiers killed in fighting Hamas, and for Palestinians caught in the crossfire and starved by Hamas, and for the devastation in Israel and Gaza – let's

not forget a key cause of the ongoing disaster: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's 2005 "disengagement" from Gaza and the attendant expulsion of "Gush Katif" settlers from Gaza. What a whopping strategic mistake!

The wrong and wrenching Israeli disengagement – twenty years ago this week – inspired the October 7 massacre. It not only gave Hamas the opportunity to seize control of Gaza and dig attack tunnels and arm itself to the hilt, but it gave Hamas the motivation and confidence that it could crush Israel.

The fact that the supposed Israeli strongman, General Sharon, fled lock-stock-and-barrel from Gaza in the face of Palestinian terrorism and brutally crushed the Israeli "settler" sector, strengthened extremists in Palestinian society and led to collapse of Israeli deterrence.

Sharon's argument – that after leaving Gaza Israel would enjoy overwhelming backing from the world to decisively crush "residual" Palestinian terrorism from Gaza – turned out to be utter nonsense. Until recently, the world never truly supported Israeli military action against the jihadist Palestinian state that emerged in Gaza. And even today many world leaders refuse to recognize the obvious existential threats that any Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza would pose to Israel for the foreseeable future

The bottom line is that those who understood in real time that the Israeli disengagement was bound to be a disaster for Israelis and Palestinians alike – were right. The resilient Right knew that the ravaging of Gush Katif was a deathblow to Zionism and to Israeli security. The levelheaded Left knew that unilateral withdrawal would boost the worst elements in Palestinian society.

If all this was so painfully obvious, why did Sharon obtain real-time support from so many Israelis? The answer I think is that the disengagement initiative was a trenchant exhibition of bleak and vengeful impulses in Israeli politics. It was not really or mainly about peace with the Palestinians (which Sharon certainly did not believe in), but, alas, about the crushing of Religious Zionism.

Reflect upon this story from miserable August 2005. This happened several days after the violent ejection of Israelis from the magnificent towns of Gush Katif and the ransacking by Palestinians of the spectacular farms and greenhouses that Israel purposefully left behind for Palestinian benefit. I hosted in Israel a group of 14 Canadian newspaper editors. The group met its peers at all Israeli

newspapers, including the then-editor-in-chief of *Haaretz*, David Landau.

Mr. Landau was an English gentleman, and to me, always a good colleague. While we were poles apart ideologically, I appreciated his advice and even his support. I knew that my Canadian guests would find him fascinating. But this time, Landau's radical creed got the better of him, and he proceeded to give a lesson in raw Israeli politics to the unsuspecting Canadians.

"You undoubtedly want to know what I think about the disengagement from Gaza," he told the Canucks. "I'll tell you: I think that it was the most important and uplifting thing that has happened in this country in decades! It gives me great hope for the future. I am delighted by the disengagement. But *not* for the reasons you imagine," Landau asserted with a smirk on his face.

"You Canadians probably think that the withdrawal is a fine thing because it ends the Israeli occupation of Gaza," Landau said, toying with the visitors. "But that's not it," he proclaimed, gesticulating with his hand in a dismissive motion. "That's not what makes the disengagement important."

"And you Canadians probably think that the withdrawal is a good thing because the Palestinians now will be able to build a thriving state in Gaza, and show Israel and the world that they can live in peace alongside Israel. But that's not it," Landau again proclaimed, again waving his hand dismissively. "That's not what makes the disengagement important."

"And you probably think that I think the withdrawal is a very good thing because my sons will no longer have to do army duty patrolling the alleyways of Khan Yunis and Jabalya," said Landau. But that's not it," he proclaimed, his hands flicking furiously and derisively. "That's not what makes the disengagement important. In fact, that's really not important at all."

Here Landau turned red in the face. He began banging on the table and bellowing at full volume. "I'll let you in on a secret: a dirty little secret known only to true Israeli insiders!" he said.

Now screaming: "The reason why the disengagement is so important; the reason why it is so historic a move; the reason why it makes Ariel Sharon into such a great hero; the reason why it fills me with hope for the future - is because we *crushed* Religious Zionism!" Landau barked.

Shocked silence in the room. And then boom, crash, whack – Landau pounded on the table some more. “We *crushed* the Religious Zionist rabbis and settlers! We *destroyed* their Gush Katif towns, and we *smashed* their political power! We *decimated* the Religious Zionist lock-hold on Israeli politics. And now, now, now... Now there may be, finally, true hope for peace!”

Landau then wiped away the saliva that was literally oozing from his mouth. He had completed this bloody baring of his soul.

The Canadian visitors sat dumbfounded. They had come seeking understanding of Israel’s strategic environment and of Israel’s diplomatic horizons. Instead, they were treated to an acerbic exhibition of the vindictive compulsions that course through Israeli politics.

EVER SINCE THEN, it has been clear to me that a very deep and central motivation of the Left’s enthusiasm for the Gaza disengagement indeed was evisceration of the settlement movement and the disembowelment of the Religious Zionist community that largely stands behind it.

This ugly truism was borne out at conferences in 2015 marking the tenth anniversary of the disengagement, held at the Israel Democracy Institute and the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

None of Sharon’s aides who spoke at these conferences – Dov Weissglass, Yisrael Maimon, Amos Yaron and others – could cobble together a convincing diplomatic rationale for the expulsion; any logic that stood the test of time. Nor did they express any remorse, despite the obviously catastrophic security consequences of the unilateral withdrawal.

Intellectual figures like A.B. Yehoshua and Fania Oz-Sulzberger were no better. No regrets, no political repentance, no recalibration of their ragged strategic worldview.

“The settlers are just a bunch of fanatic right-wing crybabies,” the foul-mouth Israeli media personality Yaron London roared. “So they had to move a few kilometers away, so what? I moved 16 times in my lifetime and never demanded compensation from anyone!”

Then London let the cruel cat out of the bag. “We had to get out from under your

strangling grip,” he told former National Religious Party MK and Gush Katif resident Zvi Hendel, with whom he shared a stage. “The domination of Israeli politics and policy by messianic settler forces was much too overwhelming. So we clobbered you, and I am not sorry.”

David Landau could not have said it better. His successor at *Haaretz*, current editor-in-chief Aluf Benn, this week wrote similarly with disdain about the “massive compensation and valuable real estate” that Gush Katif “evacuees” supposedly received. (Not true.) He would like to see a repeat of the disengagement in the West Bank. Ugh.

The morals of the story are clear: Be very skeptical of fallacies about free Palestinians living in peace alongside Israel (unless Israel maintains full control of the entire security envelope) and beware the ruthless resentments in Israel politics. Israel must rebuff international pressures to rush into risky diplomatic gambits, and Israelis must refrain from ruinous internal reprisals.

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Hypocrisy ‘uber alles’

written by David M. Weinberg | 28.09.2025

Callousness and double standards are the reasons why Israelis increasingly dismiss Western pressures.