

Rock-solid Israeli consensus on security

written by David M. Weinberg | 19.07.2026

Entering a 100-day election campaign this weekend, it is instructive to note what the coming Israeli vote is about and what it is not.

The election is mainly about government responsibility for the October 7, 2023 disastrous attack by Hamas and the government's outrageous indulgences during wartime to the Ultra-Orthodox Israeli public.

The election is not about classic foreign and defense policy issues, because on these matters there is today a broad Israeli consensus. It is important to recognize this and understand the reasons why this is so.

The past three years of devastating enemy attacks on Israel taught Israelis an important lesson - which is the need to maintain a proactive defense posture including strategic ascendancy against enemies near and far.

Consequently, Israel will not return to the containment policies of recent decades that prioritized restraint and diplomacy over enemy degradation and military triumph. This approach allowed enemies to develop attack capabilities under the cover of diplomatic breathing time; what some Western officials mistakenly called periods of "stability."

That approach blew-up in Israel's face, with terror and invasion from the West Bank and Gaza and from Syria and Lebanon, and with the march of Iran's nuclear bomb program to near completion and Iran's ballistic missile array to near-annihilation-of-Israel potential.

Instead, Israel understands today that it must continue to make fierce and overwhelming moves against enemy strongholds from Sidon to Khan Yunis, and from Nablus to Isfahan. Israel will attack, not defend. It will initiate, not respond. It will hunt down its enemies, not be hounded by them.

Israel also has adopted a buffer-zone military strategy, with areas of long-term IDF control over borders where territory is dominated by Islamist-jihadist organizations. Behind the buffer zones now established in Lebanon, Gaza, and

Syria is a set of ideas that identify a grim reality and provide a concrete and practical response.

Israelis also realize that this country's neighbours will seek true reconciliation only when Jerusalem is strong. Additional Abraham Accord-style peace treaties are possible and desirable, but these will be based on muscular defense partnerships, not mushy notions of goodwill.

NOTICE THAT opposition figures now challenging Prime Minister Netanyahu for leadership of the country are not talking much about any of this, because they have nothing to say differently than him in this regard.

Neither Gadi Eisencott, Naftali Bennett, Benny Gantz, nor Yair Lapid would or could act otherwise if they sat in the prime minister's chair. They would have to clobber Iran and Iran's proxies (which includes most actors in the irredentist Palestinian national movement) no less than Netanyahu has. And they will have to resist international pressures on these matters no less than Netanyahu has.

They also know that Israeli public opinion won't brook any weakness in these matters. Consider several recent Knesset decisions and declarations that were passed by overwhelming majorities; approved by crushing majorities that are so rare in the raucous and often-poisonous Israeli political playground.

In February 2024, 99 out of 120 members of Knesset - essentially representing the entire country aside from Israeli Arabs - voted to reject unilateral recognition by European and other countries of Palestinian statehood.

In July 2024, the Knesset issued a declaration by a 68-9 vote opposing Palestinian statehood all-together. The nine votes opposing the resolution came from the Knesset's two Arab parties.

"The Israeli Knesset firmly opposes the establishment of a Palestinian state west of the Jordan [River]. The establishment of a Palestinian state in the heart of the Land of Israel will pose an existential danger to the State of Israel and its citizens, perpetuate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and destabilize the region. It will only be a short matter of time before Hamas takes over the Palestinian state and turns it into a radical Islamic terrorist base, working in coordination with the Iranian-led axis, to eliminate the State of Israel," the declaration stated.

Indeed, recent polls indicate that 80% of Israelis, again basically the entire Jewish public, oppose the establishment of another Palestinian state beyond the ruinous one already extant in Gaza.

As a result, settlements in Judea and Samaria have manifestly become a consensus issue too. Israelis now understand that broad and deep settlement in Judea and Samaria is needed to torpedo the nightmare scenario of runaway Palestinian statehood.

This issue, which tore the Israeli public apart for four generations, has been resolved. Settlements are a security and Zionist asset, not a burden or a bar to peace.

Sure enough, and understandably so, settlements are not an issue in the coming election campaign. No mainstream Israeli politician is stupid enough to dredge-up stale paradigms about territorial withdrawals; to talk about tearing down the pioneering and more-important-than-ever settlement enterprise. (The muckraking “Democratic Party” leader Yair Golan, heir to the tiny extreme left Meretz Party voting public, is the exception to this rule.)

In fact, in July 2025 a majority of 71 out of 120 Knesset members from the coalition and opposition passed a non-binding resolution in favor of applying Israeli sovereignty to Judea, Samaria, and the Jordan Valley. And I expect a next Israeli government – any government – to advance a declaration of Israeli sovereignty in at least Area C of these territories.

Congruous with this updated, necessarily tough, Israeli mindset on defense and national matters, the Knesset approved a law in March this year by a walloping vote of 93-0 (no objections or abstentions!) enabling the prosecution of Hamas’ Nukhba terrorists.

Indictments are expected in special military courts against more than 400 Hamas barbarians for crimes against the Jewish People, crimes against humanity, war crimes, murder, rape, abduction, and looting. The death penalty for convicted terrorists is explicitly an option, and this applies also to terrorists who killed Israeli hostages in captivity long after October 7.

The Israeli public demands no less. Protestations from the world against these trials and possible executions will fall on defiant and appropriately deaf Israeli

ears.

ALAS, I sense that much of the international community and even the world Jewish community still does not comprehend the deep changes in national security thinking and practice that are now the rock-solid Israeli mainstream path, and which will not change much under the next Israeli government – whoever heads it.

Some highhanded politicians around the world refuse to consider the views of Israelis. They know better than Israelis how to secure this country. They flock to Israel to posture like peacocks and take this country's leadership to task.

A classic example: The arrogant Rahm Emanuel, a US Democratic Party presidential candidate wannabe, who alighted in Tel Aviv last week to deride Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu as a “drunk driver” and to dispense warmed-over, hackneyed advice from the dreadful playbook of his former boss. Like President Barack Obama, Emanuel only pretended to be upset about drawing away from Israel.

Emanuel is stuck in a world of double illusions – the illusion that his election will advance by bashing Israel, and the fantasy that Israel's election can be swayed by pressure from abroad in favor of infirm foreign and defense policies. It would be smarter for world leaders to get used to a revamped Mideast strategic situation anchored by a hard-hitting, confident, and undivided Israel.

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