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Wednesday May 20, 2009

Rosner's Domain: Leon Hadar on why Israel will have to get used to a nuclearized Iran

Posted by SHMUEL ROSNER

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[Leon Hadar](#) is a research fellow in foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute (formerly with JPost). He just published an article on the [Foreign Affairs](#) website, titled [Misreading the Map](#). It's core argument: the [road to Jerusalem](#) doesn't lead through Tehran. Hadar agreed to answer my questions, and I warned him that nasty readers' comments might follow. Please try to stay civilized.

Here's the dialogue:

1. Israel's Defense Minister Ehud Barak had said today that working on a two state solution will not do much to stop Iran: "These... words will not cause Iran to stop its centrifuges. Israel has already said in the past 'two states for two peoples' and this didn't cause the Palestinians to fall into our arms and reach all the tough decisions that are required." You write that "successful U.S. efforts to achieve a peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians would make it more difficult for Iranian radicals to win support across the region". Why are you right and he is wrong?

I agree that a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not going to end Iran's development of nuclear military capability. I think that a nuclear Iran is a reality that Israel will have to deal with sooner or later through an effective nuclear deterrence strategy vis-a-vis Iran. An Israel-Iran nuclear balance of power like the kind that exists in South Asia between India and Pakistan could help maintain stability in the region. Now... an effort to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian issue would weaken Iran's ability to win support in the [Arab world](#) and could eventually put pressure on Tehran to accept the reality of an Israel-Palestine peace.

That will help advance both the interests of both Israel and the US, while a unilateral Israeli attack against Iran will harm the interests of both nations. As far as what Israel could or could not do to make peace with the Palestinians is another issue. The current government has refused to embrace the two-state solution and continue with the settlement policy.

2. Do you think Israel is using Iran as an excuse because it doesn't want to move forward with the peace process - or maybe it's leaders just don't understand the strategic situation the way you do?

I don't think that the Israeli leaders are using Iran as an "excuse" not to move forward on the peace process. But I do believe that this government doesn't have the interest and the will to make the many concessions that are necessary and prefer to focus on the Iran issue as a way of forcing Washington and the Arabs to "change the subject." I do think that some Israelis don't recognize the enormous changes that have taken place in Washington and the U.S. and the world as a result of the combination of the consequences of the Iraq War and the financial crisis. America is no longer the global hegemon and it faces major constraints on the use of its military power. Hence there is no support in this country for going to war against Iran. And certainly not in order to protect Israeli interests.

3. You write that "Obama must recognize that the main threat to Israel's existence as a Jewish and democratic state is not Iran but its conflict with the Palestinians". What will you say to an Israeli asking you (and President Obama) to stick to your own interests instead of trying (or pretending) to act on your perception of Israel's best interest?

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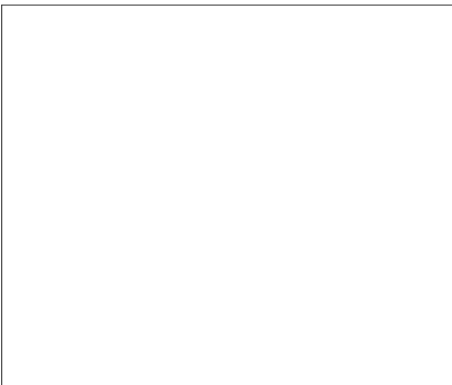
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[Tom-Occupied Native American Indian Territory:](#) I have

Response: Well...if that means that Israel will do what it considers to be in its interests -- no matter the American position, it would have to live with the consequences of a similar attitude on the part of Washington: Sticking to what they considered to be American interests even is that means taking steps that are going to hurt Israel in terms of its diplomatic and military positions. And there is a difference between a client state (Israel) and its patron (US). The costs of hurting the relationship will be more costly for the client state than for the patron. In any case, I do think that an Israel that will over the Palestinians forever will not be a Jewish and/or a democratic state. That is the view of many Israelis.

4. You seem to think that dealing with Palestine is no less important than dealing with Iran - but what about Iran? How far will you advise the President to go in order to try and stop it from acquiring nuclear weapon?

As far as he can do under these difficult circumstances. See my earlier response re current U.S. global power and the military and economic constraints operating on its ability to go to war against Iran. The best-case-scenario: Putting Iran's nuclear military program on hold.

5. Why should Israel take the risk of "developing an effective nuclear deterrence strategy" which might not work?

There was a time when some experts argued that an American nuclear deterrence would not be effective in dealing with the Soviet Union and/or the crazy Chinese communist. Nuclear deterrence is working now in South Asia. There is no reason it won't work in the Middle East. Recall that Saddam didn't use chemical weapons against Israel since was worried over Israeli retaliation. Israel has to prepare for the "day after." There is no other choice.

6. You say that Israel wants the Israeli-Arab conflict to be "on the back burner". Let's say your advice is taken, and negotiations are serious and intensive - the way it was at the end of Bill Clinton's term - do you think an agreement is possible?

Nothing is certain in life. One certainly needs to try to reach an agreement without risking Israeli security. If Israel decides to give-up on pursuing peace with the Palestinian -- which would mean never-ending-war -- at least that should be done after all the diplomatic avenues have been closed. In any case, it seems to me that a creative diplomatic approach -- perhaps an enhanced Jordanian role in the peace process -- is needed and is a realistic option.

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1 | Ploni Almoni, Wednesday May 20, 2009

Mr. Hadar didn't answer the first question. Mr. Rosner asked about a "peace agreement," but Mr. Hadar started talking about a "successful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." Those are two different things. It's not at all clear that the first will lead towards the second. If it does not, then a peace agreement (and the resulting escalation) might strengthen regional support for Iranian radicalism.

2 | Yuri Sakhar - Israel, Wednesday May 20, 2009

As he says, "Nothing is certain in life", but some things have a higher probability than others. High probabilities are best regarded as "virtual certainties". That a nuclear Iran would, after all its threats to obliterate Israel, refrain from using its weapons either to do that or to attempt regional or global hegemony, has a very low probability. In the absence of certainty, both Israel and the US would be stupid not to stop the development at the earliest feasible stage. Mr Hadar makes many statement without basis, predicting (as though it were a certainty) the future behavior of Iran. .

3 | Chris USA, Wednesday May 20, 2009

Mr. Hadar seems to dismiss Tehran's religious-political agenda. They are using Hezbollah to infiltrate Arab and American states. Their ultimate objective appears to be subverting the US and Arab states as parallel paths to Islamic supremacy. In support of this agenda they have used Hamas to incite the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order to siphon financial support and create diversionary cover for these initiatives. One only has to measure the financial burden Hamas and Hezbollah have assumed to see a discrepancy. Where is the money going if not to support the US-Arab initiative?

4 | Chris USA, Wednesday May 20, 2009

The only alternative path to peace between Israel and the Palestinians is if the Arab community recognizes the threat of Iranian supremacy and intervenes against Hamas with Israel, effectively cutting off Iranian and Syrian support. This

to confess: I am an indeed a Nazi and anti-semite. I decided to come out of the closet. Also my IQ is not 75 as reported, it is at least 80

Indian: Andy-London, during WWII, Europeans exterminated other Europeans. Muslims had nothing to do with it. millions of Europeans were killed by other Europeans. It is none of Islam's business. Hitler probably had a Jewish ancestry.

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would only be temporary as long as Hezbollah was still functioning so the US, Arabs, and Israel would need to garner support from Russia and China to neutralize Hezbollah's global reach (Improbable as that may be). The nuclear option is fundamentally linked to Iran's Islamic ambitions - the two can not be separated without mischaracterizing the situation.

5 | Lura Schweitzer, Wednesday May 20, 2009

That is true, and the reason for that is to gain time to build more Jewish-only colonies on occupied territories. This is why Israel is constantly prevaricating and stalling and creating distractions and red herrings. Because Israel doesn't want peace, since peace involves giving up the stolen goods. A country that wants peace doesn't build hundreds of settlements on occupied land, it doesn't transfer hundreds of thousands of its citizens to live on land that doesn't belong to them. Sadly, our AIPAC-controlled government is too cowardly to call the spade a spade when it comes to Israel.

6 | Micaela Stern, Chicago, Wednesday May 20, 2009

Let us not deceive ourselves and others. There is no such a thing as "Jewish" and "democratic" state. This is an eternal oxymoron. Israel can't be Talmudic and Democratic at the same time. Even a mentally-challenged kid knows that when "Jewish" collides with "democratic", the former comes first. Just Look how Israel is treating its non-Jewish citizens... Now they want to force them to take loyalty oaths... In fact, if only one tenth' of what is said in Israel against non-Jews were to be said in America against Jews, Jews would take to the street and shout... Nazi! holocaust! Bergen Belsen!

7 | Tanya Yarkoni, Wednesday May 20, 2009

Israel doesn't want peace. Israel wants to create a greater Israel. Iran is only a red herring. Even if Iran didn't exist, Israel still wouldn't make peace with the Palestinians. Israel simply doesn't want non-Jews to live in Israel-Palestine. But of course Jews are not going to say so openly for PR expediency.

8 | Tom, US, Wednesday May 20, 2009

When I first started posting in here I was considered a Nazi and an antisemite. Now I am feeling well with the other people who post in here. Having worked as a spy for decades I know that Iran is NOT a problem. It is no big secret who I am. I have even given my home address in here because I am NOT afraid of the kooks who threatened my life. As a former Ranger I know how to fight. I have even studied your form of martial arts (magda gravda). But I do not choose to pick a fight. Iran can be dealt with diplomatically.

9 | jonah Viet-Nam, Wednesday May 20, 2009

The Islamist global outreach doesn't come by Islam's own strength, but by a worldwide anti-Israel conspiracy nothing short of total extermination of Jews will satisfy. Now Mr. Hadar's conclusion that Israel must "get used to a nuclearized Iran" appears to have a rather short-lived future, seeing that "a nuclearized Iran" will have nothing more pressing to do than to cut short the time of Israel getting "used to a nuclearized Iran". Reciprocally with "a nuclearized Iran", Israel will have nothing more pressing to do than "get used" to the indispensability of cutting short its time of existence.

10 | Mike Feldman, Canada, Wednesday May 20, 2009

Re #5. Obama seems to be two people. He's controlled by AIPAC and he's controlled by the Muslim agenda. I don't think the expansion of settlements is useful for peace, and I know allowing Iran to nuclearize is not useful for peace. I know arming terrorists to attack U.S. soldiers and Israeli citizens is not helpful. At the end of the day, I believe that the U.S. will be on the sidelines and not instrumental in solving the crisis. Israel and Iran will follow their own paths to what is likely the certainty of armed conflict.

11 | Mike Feldman, Canada, Wednesday May 20, 2009

I didn't see Tom's comments when I first bigged. My guess is that the average female Israeli soldier could step over Tom on the way to a fight.

12 | Tryker, Nebraska, Wednesday May 20, 2009

Eliminating Iran's refinery and nuclear program would take a few hours for the US to accomplish.

13 | U.M., Wednesday May 20, 2009

Does Israel have to "get used" to a nuclear holocaust? Iran would use the bomb at some stage against Israel. Iran could use the bomb against other countries too. Iran is a threat to European cities, to Russia, to Arab states and finally to the US. Pakistan is a good example where US appeasement leads to; the US helped Pakistan get the bomb (the CIA) and there has been a nuclear war scenario ever since. Now those weapons might be caught by the Taleban and other extremists. The Pakistan bomb has brought insecurity to the region and soon to the whole world. Iran is a serious threat.

14 | Proud Zionist, Wednesday May 20, 2009

What is with Rosner's new tactic of telling readers not to be nasty or advising them only to write certain things about Obama if they have "proof," etc. It seems that someone subscribes to the "masses are asses" theory...

15 | Terry - Eilat, Israel, Wednesday May 20, 2009

I can't write anything because I'm following Mr Rosner's advice not to write anything nasty, which is all this man's opinion merits.

16 | Tzvi/amerikkka, Wednesday May 20, 2009

another "expert" that talks about Israel as if its the size of australia or amerikkka. Israel is the size of rhode island. israel cannot give away any land to arabs. Israel was founded as a home for indiginious Jews and for WWII refugees. Israel was not founded as a ghetto refugee camp for every Jew in the world not allowed to live in the land of her/his birth. Israel was not founded as a refugee camp for 1 million Sefardic Jews thrown out of arab countries, nor for 2 million

from the ussr, or for Jews forced to leave north africa central africa and south africa,...

17 | Tzvi/amerikkka, Wednesday May 20, 2009

Israel was not founded for Jews fleeing fascists in argentina, chile paraguay or uruguay(I get them confused) nor for Jews leaving venezuela bolivia nicaragua cuba etc. Israel was not founded as a refuge for Jews fleeing nazi france. etc. I suggest this 'expert' read history. Learn that jordan is arab palestine, learn about americas support of the Balfour declaration etc. once the 'expert' learns facts he can grant you an interview. why when a Jew is forced out of the country of birth and moves to Israel the media calls them an immigrant but a grandchild of an arab that left in 48 is a refug

18 | Hofikoman, Wednesday May 20, 2009

When Iranian Mullahs and political leaders crowed that Israel would be destroyed with nuclear weapons but part of IRan would survive a counterstrike was this just blustre, reaction to Israeli verbal provocations as alleged by Leon Panetta on his recent trip to Israel insisting on restraint? Seeing how long this line has been parroted, that if Iran just took its first atomic bombs and exploded them on the Tel Aviv Metro without their obvious fingerprints on the act, would Israel be immediately retaliating or exercising all efforts on saving lives? If Obama fails to restrain Iran, Israel attacks

19 | Hofikoman, Wednesday May 20, 2009

As for Israel's destiny as a "client state" of the USA in the wake of a military action on Iran, whatever the result of that action, global politics should change dramatically. As Hadar is correct that the current America administration is in retreat from asserting global leadership, remaining America's client is no longer as compelling, although good relations are of course desirable. Until 2010 Israel will work with the PA and the Obama administration, but if the American olive branch continues to be spurned by the Mullahs, Obama might even be supportive of an Israeli military action.

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21 | T, Wednesday May 20, 2009

Well he is a regular contributor to "The American Conservative" - a magazine was one of it's founder was Pat Buchanan.

22 | Ed, Arizona - USA, Wednesday May 20, 2009

I think the big mistake that liberals make is thinking that you can reason with iran. I suggest they try reasoning with a wolverine and see how it goes. After the wounds heal, go back and try to reason with the same wolverine again. After a certain point maybe they will figure out that you can't reason with a wolverine. In my estimation Iran is far more unpredicable than a wild animal. The animal acts on instinct, Iran is cunning and deceptive. They lie and deceive and have a deep seated hatred of Jews. I hope that Israel survives.

23 | mick uk, Wednesday May 20, 2009

the iranian question will not go away,as it will be involved in a islamic alliance,in a major war against my beloved israel,which will usher in the messiah,then israel will have peace.all you nations and beaucrats,that talk about a palestinian state,and dividing up that land TREMBLE

24 | Derick Schilling, New York, USA, Wednesday May 20, 2009

Mr. Hadar says "Nuclear deterrence is working now in South Asia." I'd put heavy emphasis on the "now"; we have no idea if the Indian-Pakistan conflict will end in catastrophe or not. Published reports suggest that Indian and Pakistan have already had approached "the brink" more than once, and needed American diplomatic intervention in order to defuse the immediate confrontation. I doubt that in an Israeli-Iranian nuclear crisis Russia would be able to step in and play an equivalent role.

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26 | Randall Florida, Wednesday May 20, 2009

Do you want to see what a palestinian state would look like? Look at Gaza. Terrorist move, set up weapons and start trying to destroy Israel . Pretty clear. Everybody wants over there wants to destroy Israel. If they lose once, they're gone. Look at history, see Gods hand at work. There is a book that so far has been 100% accurate on this matter so far, so probably will be in the future. Hello, Israel. Good-bye Damascus.

27 | Mike Feldman, Canada, Wednesday May 20, 2009

Hey Mick, Change the order of a few words, and you'd sound like a fanatical Islamist.

28 | Sage, Wednesday May 20, 2009

Iran has a sacred duty to protect its people from Jewish nuclear bombs. Israel introduced Nukes to the Region, it must live with the consequences. In some religious books, it is predicted that most Jews would be annihilated in Palestine. Maybe Israel's arrogance would lead to that end.

29 | Randy US, Wednesday May 20, 2009

Unfortunately, taking a stance against Iran developing nukes while ignoring Israeli nuclear arsenal is a little hypocritical. Technically, Iran has as much right to it's own military industrial development. Especially if Israeli gets \$\$ billions in US military aid. With all the rhetoric from Iran about eliminating the Jewish State is no different than the Israeli rhetoric in not allowing a Palestinian State to evolve. If Israeli Jews want a single state solution, then Iran is right. The Zionist state should be dismantle and replaced with a democratic state that will service all.

30 | Pakistani expatriate, UAE, Wednesday May 20, 2009

Ronald, the Pakistan-Israel analogy is corrupt. Pakistan didn't take over anyone's country or homeland. They were part of India. They didn't displace anyone, they didn't replace anyone, they didn't dispossess anyone, they didn't ethnically cleanse anyone. Israel, on the other hand, imported million of Jews from Eastern Europe and other parts of the world, superimposed them on the native Paelstinians, took their land away from them, destroyed their towns and homes, and then expelled them to the four corners of the world. Pakistan was a legitimate marriage, Isael was an act of rape.

31 | Tom-Occupied Native American Indian Territory, Wednesday May 20, 2009

I have to confess: I am an indeed a Nazi and anti-semite. I decided to come out of the closet. Also my IQ is not 75 as reported, it is at least 80

32 | bannister , USA, Wednesday May 20, 2009

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