

Events

AIPAC Policy Conference

Former Spanish Prime Minister and Foll Chairman José María Aznar will be one of the speakers at the pro-Israel community's pre-eminent annual gathering, the [AIPAC Policy Conference](#), on 24th May in Washington.

Greg Rosshandler International Conference

On 17th May Rafael Bardaji, Foll's Executive Director, spoke on 'Why an attack on Israel is an attack on the West' at the [Greg Rosshandler International Conference](#) on Democracies and the Right of Self-Defence, organised by the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, at Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel.

Going on Record

Crying lamb but thinking wolf

The unity agreement signed between Hamas and Fatah on 4th May, amid much commentary on reconciliation in Gaza and the hope for a new future as a result of the grass-roots demands for democracy and freedom in the Arab world, has nevertheless been accompanied by considerably less publicised and more violent and dogmatic statements from the Hamas leadership. This is not the first time a terrorist movement has accepted what it considers empty rhetoric in order to gain a tactical advantage while giving up [nothing](#).

Rooting Around

'Four legs good, two legs better'

The establishment of a permanent Holocaust gallery at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg is being opposed by the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress on the grounds that the 1932-33 Ukrainian famine or Holodomor deserves parity of treatment. In support of the gallery, around 80 distinguished academics and scholars have signed an open letter in which, while in no way denying the horrors of the famine, they denounce the manipulation of history and the failure to confront and condemn the role of Ukrainian nationalists in the mass assassination of Jews and Poles in WWII. In a deplorable throwback to sadder times, the campaign to discredit the gallery has resorted to tasteless imagery from Orwell's *Animal Farm*, unintentionally proving how necessary it is to have permanent exhibitions of this kind.

INTIFADA 3.0

A country that fails to defend its borders very quickly ceases to be an independent state. For that reason, the government of Israel had no other choice but to stop the aggression against its territory organised by Palestinians from Syrian and Lebanese territory and from Gaza. The Moroccan 'Green March' ended Spanish rule in the Western Sahara in 1975, and this new 'Green March' could put an end to the State of Israel—if allowed to proceed—.

It may well be that the assault on the fences separating Syria from Israel along the Golan Heights border was a diversionary tactic orchestrated by Bashir al-Assad, who has bloodily repressed the opponents to his brutal dictatorship, since it is common knowledge that no one can approach the area from within Syria without a special permit from the authorities and a military escort. But this does not mean that such an attack on the existence of the Jewish State is solely attributable to internal politics in Damascus.

The Palestinians are aggressively manoeuvring for the recognition of a Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders at the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly to be held in September. But while they attempt to seduce the diplomats wherever they can, they are intent on cornering Israel into ever greater political isolation. For that reason they aim to portray Israel as a brutal, illegitimate actor, undeserving of any support.

And that is Israel's basic problem: While its enemies are no fewer, its circle of friends is shrinking—or, at least, what is shrinking is their will to show public understanding for what is happening in that part of the world—. Israel's leaders are accustomed to hearing words of sympathy in private but threats and criticism in public. It is not Israel's fault: it is the sign of a Western world in retreat, particularly in Europe's case, fearful as it is of retaliation from Arab countries and now terrified by a growing Muslim immigrant population within its borders that is increasingly radicalised and disinclined to integrate into a welcoming society. Yet whatever the cause, this is still a serious problem for Israel. The campaigns to delegitimize Israel are not just a whim, they are specifically directed at reducing Israel's freedom of action.

The dilemma for Israeli leaders is not a simple one to solve: if they act decisively and resolutely, as they did in their last intervention in Gaza, the world reacts by condemning Israel, accusing the country of using 'disproportionate force'; but if Israel despatches commandos with non-lethal weaponry, as in the Mavi Marmara incident, the result is the same: Israel is still accused of using uncalled-for violence.

The IDF's soldiers had to learn as quickly as possible how to fight the second Intifada with both effectiveness and legitimacy. It now looks like Israel's security establishment will very rapidly have to learn how to confront this new type of aggression, in which civilians, with anything but a peaceful attitude, are again playing an active, offensive and decisive role. Intifada 3.0 is now on the boil.

SPOTLIGHT

The elephant in the room...

The revolts in Tunisia and Egypt, ongoing military support for the anti-Gaddafi rebels in Libya, unrest in Syria and the Persian Gulf, a bomb in Morocco, the good news that at last Bin Laden has been found and killed and the worrying consideration that after six years the government of Pakistan had failed to detect his presence seem to have drowned out almost all other news except something of the magnitude of the Japanese earthquake. Nevertheless, there is something in the Middle East that is still there however much it passes unnoticed or is overlooked.

As a country that casts a looming shadow over its immediate neighbourhood and beyond, with significant military strength, warships in the Mediterranean, a seriously skewed sense of [justice](#) and a President who considers Israel a 'germ' that must be 'annihilated', the West cannot afford to ignore Iran.

Recent events have shown that ineffective UN pressure and sanctions have done nothing to deter Iran from its quest for nuclear power, as understood in all its possible [meanings](#), while the future is being made more uncertain as the unrest in other countries of the Islamic world has generated what appears to be a power struggle among Iran's leadership.

It would be a good idea to start paying attention once again to what is so blindingly obvious.

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'My commitment to the security and future of Israel is based upon basic morality as well as enlightened self-interest. Our role in supporting Israel honors our own heritage'

(Gerald R. Ford, US President, 1974-77)



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