

JPPI's 2017 Brainstorming Conference -- Integrative Summary

Introduction

JPPI's 2017 Conference on the Future of the Jewish People (Feb. 28 – March 1, 2017) assessed the social, political, economic, and ideological shifts taking place in the Western world that could influence the future of the Jewish people. In addition to identifying key trends and gauging their possible ramifications, the Conference framed policy dilemmas and formulated potential policy recommendations to help mitigate negative trends and leverage new opportunities. The following paper is a summary outlining the Conference's main insights. (Since the shifts taking place in the West are surrounded by uncertainty, it must be noted that the possible avenues of influence are at times contradictory). As developments taking place within Israel itself affect the Western world's approach to Israel and the Jewish people, this issue was discussed as well and its relevant trends are included in Part 2 of this report. Part 3 lays out a set of policy challenges and dilemmas generated in Conference discussions and offers decision makers some key policy recommendations. The complete set of JPPI's policy options will be presented in its 2017 Annual Assessment of the Situation and Dynamics of the Jewish People.

Shifts in the West – Challenges and Dilemmas that Call for Policy Measures in Israel and the Diaspora

Shifting trends in the West may have significant implications for Israel and the Jewish people. These developments require shaping policy measures to both mitigate potential negative effects and leverage new opportunities. Six main areas posing policy dilemmas and challenges to decision makers in Israel and Diaspora Jewish communities were identified in conference discussions:

- 1. Formulating Israel's policy vis-a-vis the Trump administration on diplomatic and ideological matters.**
- 2. Formulating policy with respect to far-right parties in Europe.**
- 3. Shaping a strategy in response to the changing world order and the rise of non-Western powers.**
- 4. Improving Israel-Diaspora relations in light of trends of polarization and alienation in the West.**
- 5. Taking steps to strengthen Diaspora Jewry given current trends challenging the centrality of communities and institutions.**
- 6. Monitoring illiberal internal Israeli trends and curbing initiatives negatively affecting the values and image of the Jewish state.**

Part 1

A. Upsetting the Existing International Order

It is clear that in recent years there has been a weakening of the cornerstones at the base of the world order as we have known it since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. This order was based on American dominance (even while the international system tilted toward multi-polarity), institutions of “global governance” (such as the UN, World Bank, IMF, IAEA and others), trans-Atlantic cooperation between the United States and Europe, expanding globalization and international trade and free markets based on liberal values.

In the framework of this world order, the United States was the dominant external actor in the Middle East, and Israel benefited from its close relationship with America. A number of elements led to the destabilizing of these cornerstones: American “exhaustion” from being the global policeman (including investing in expensive wars in the Middle East); the Obama Doctrine which limited the intervention of American forces while prioritizing dialogue and acting within multi-lateral frameworks; “the Putin Doctrine” which took advantage of the diminished U.S. role (seen as a show of American weakness) and strengthened Russia’s global position; China’s rising power; Europe’s weakening and the growing doubts over its collective identity and future; and the upsetting of the domestic-political order (see below).

The Middle East provided an important contribution to this trend as the old order collapsed, turning Syria into a blood soaked catastrophe, sending waves of terror and refugees to Europe, testing both the Obama and Putin Doctrines. This upset of the world order has created dangers for Israel and troubling fissures in its relationship with the United States on the one hand, while on the other hand Israel has managed to maintain working relations with Russia and China and to develop regional alliances.

In the emerging international reality, we are witnessing: rising nationalism and populism and a growing critique of globalization; the aggressive moves of Moscow in Eastern Europe and the Middle East; strategic Chinese assertiveness (South China Sea, penetrating deep into Africa, and its economic infrastructure initiative framed as its “One Belt One Road” policy” (a modern Silk Road)); cracks in the EU (Brexit) which is also under the heavy strain of terror and refugees; the strengthening of right-wing nationalist parties in Europe; the rise of alternative regional institutions (the Chinese Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Shanghai Europe Asia Alliance); and the rise of Turkey and Iran’s weight as regional powers.

The ascendance of the Trump administration is the most conspicuous expression of how the domestic-political order is being upset and how it can dramatically influence the current world order. It’s not yet clear how the United States will navigate between an isolationist trend and possible impulses for international aggression. It’s possible that Trump will try to reach a grand bargain with Putin to implement a new world order. This will not be a simple task given the many areas of contention between the two powers. The range of possibilities as to the future of Washington-Moscow relations is wide: tight cooperation at one end and a new Cold War on the other. As for the United States and China, there is the possibility of an escalation into a trade war. The Trump administration could also weaken the UN, NATO, and other American alliances. (That is, in the framework of a general American trend of moving away from a sense of American exceptionalism and responsibility for world peace and to maintaining it, which has characterized American foreign policy in the past.)

Possible Implications for Israel and Diaspora Jewry

Israel

The disruption of the established world order and the possibility that a new order will coalesce presents challenges but also opportunities for Israel:

- In a world in which nationalist and isolationist tendencies seem to be on the rise, the inclination to intervene in Israel's affairs could diminish. On the other hand, this development may also erode the inclination to come to Israel's aid in times of need.
- The growing influence of nationalism over cosmopolitanism could lead to greater acceptance in the West of Israel's position: a state seeking to maintain and assert its Jewish national identity.
- It is reasonable to assume that the relationship with the American administration will strengthen and maybe even become a force multiplier for improving relations between Israel and key countries in the Middle East.
- If the United States begins to favor a realpolitik foreign policy of "American interests" over the current American commitment to a clear moral vision of the world, it could decide not to support Israel on issues that it deems to be in contradiction with its material interests.
- The U.S. focus on domestic issues while neglecting its role as global leader, especially in the Middle East (continuing the Obama Doctrine), would harm Israel and even erode its deterrent force.
- American-Russian understandings could limit Israel's maneuvering room. At the same time, an American-Russian or American-Chinese conflict could generate new risks and dilemmas for Israel.
- Presently, it is difficult to assess how the emerging international reality will influence the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. At this stage, the U.S. continues to take a leading role in achieving a settlement; however, only time will tell if Washington will maintain its leadership role or relinquish it to other actors.
- In a world that increasingly relies on scientific and technological innovation, Israel has the potential for significant achievements. In addition to the economic benefits, meeting this potential will strengthen Israel's "soft power" in the West (and in the world generally) and strengthen Israel's image as the "Start-up Nation."
- Cutting-edge technologies could help close the qualitative gap between Israel and its enemies, who could equip themselves with advanced arms that do not require a special infrastructure of quality education and training (which is required today to operate an advanced military force).

Diaspora Jewry

- Innovative technologies engender social atomization and could thus further imperil Jewish solidarity ("the end of the community campfire"). Alongside the erosion of the role of veteran organizations, closed virtual dialogue groups are developing that isolate them from society at large.
- New technologies – those that make intercontinental travel more efficient and affordable as well as social networks – allow a strengthening of connections between Diaspora and Israeli Jews. Virtual Jewish dialogue communities are expanding. At the same time, individuals have greater exposure to

alternative identities. The deepening of “leisure culture” reinforces the potential for such developments.

- A dynamic world characterized by scientific and technological innovation tends to reward excellence. This opens new horizons for the Jewish people, which has a long record of achievement and excellence in these areas.

B. Upsetting the Existing Domestic Political Order in the West

Alongside the upheaval in the existing world order, in recent years we have also witnessed an erosion of the stability of the political order in the West as the doubts surrounding the validity of its foundational values grow: the liberal-capitalist economic system based on free markets and globalization.

The continued effects of the 2008 economic crisis, combined with free-market capitalist forces and globalization trends, new technologies and robotics, have diverted many blue-collar jobs overseas, hurting mostly the working class and leading to growing economic polarization. Migration, from Latin America to the United States, and from Africa and the Middle East to Europe, including illegals, has exacerbated frustrations as many fear these immigrants will compete for scarce jobs. Beyond this, the immigration and resulting demographic trends have fed into a sense of cultural displacement among white Christians, who feel increasingly like a minority “in their own country.” As Muslim minorities expand demographically and become more assertive and integrate into local politics, so does the fear and concern in Europe. The wave of refugees, the largest since the end of World War II, is seen in Europe as a demographic, cultural, and security threat. At the same time, the wave of terror rooted in radical Islam is striking at the heart of Europe and adding to a sense of fear and disorientation. The formation of ISIS, and the thousands of young Muslims from Europe who have gone off to join its ranks, signaled to many Europeans the failure of the open border, multi-cultural system, and the failure of current political structures to deal with the threat.

These issues have strengthened “fear based politics,” turning people against the other, those who are different (nationally, socially, economically or religiously).

The social media discourse encourages short, blunt and violent messages that attract attention. In many cases, information reaching the public is biased or twisted to serve a specific agenda. Even worse, the lines between “real” and “fake” news have been blurred and “alternative facts” are widely disseminated and often left unchallenged. Social media based information sources and partisan news outlets do not allow adequate filtering, fact checking, or balanced reporting. Dialogue has become over simplified. Nuanced discourse has been replaced by simple messages powered by emotional rather than intellectual forces. Political rhetoric has evolved into a repetition of black and white slogans aimed at the lowest common denominator.

There is a feeling in the West that traditional elements of governance – the political system, parties, parliaments – do not represent the interests of a significant segment of the population that feels alienated from political elites and traditional political structures, and powerless to effect change, even through elections. The fact that political leaders can speak to tens of millions instantaneously and gauge their responses immediately, contributes to a weakening of the institutions of representative democracy.

This, combined with a general frustration and disappointment with the traditional ruling classes, seen as corrupt or out of touch, has fueled the rise of populist parties and politicians seeking to take on the ruling elites. One trend we are watching is the rise of nationalistic right-wing political figures and parties espousing – with an Islamophobic soundtrack – populist economic, immigration, and security policies.

Potential Impacts on Israel and Diaspora Jewry

Israel

- Israel's strategic standing improves due to the rise of the new U.S. administration, which publicly proclaims its support of Israel and expresses hostility toward Israel's enemies.
- At this stage, the U.S. has blocked the political impulse of some of Israel's right wing elements to take advantage of what they consider a "window of opportunity" opened by Trump's election: to annex West Bank territory – in part or in its entirety – and foreclose the possibility of a two-state solution. However, only time will tell if Washington keeps this "window" shut.
- Rise in support for Israel given the strength of right-wing populist parties in Europe that mostly support Israel (not Le Pen's party, which supports banning, for example, external Jewish symbols such as the kippa from the public sphere).
- Increased support for Israel based on the growing fear of Islamic terror and immigration. Increasing openness to Israel's claims that there is no difference between terror aimed at Israel and terror aimed at the West.
- Increased legitimization of nationalistic trends in Israel.
- Radicalization among the most liberal elements of the Democratic Party in the U.S. (minorities, millennials) accompanied by a negative approach to Israel. It must be noted that this group increasingly includes many young American Jews likely to choose their allegiance to liberal democratic principles over a commitment to Israel.
- Continued erosion of Israel's bi-partisan support in the United States (based on domestic polarization in the U.S. on one hand, and the strengthening Israeli right on the other).

Diaspora Jewry

- Societies that shy away from liberal and cosmopolitan values, tilting instead toward nationalism and the development of their internal identity, could evince hostility toward minorities including the Jewish community.
- Economic pressures on the middle class (in the U.S. and Europe) could strengthen anti-Semitic outbursts and turn the Jews, who are relatively successful economically, into scapegoats.
- The preferential treatment Jews have received in Europe since the Holocaust (additional rights, direct access to political leaders, increased economic support) could be threatened.
- The continued undermining of Israel's bi-partisan support, and the growing gap between Democrats and Republicans with respect to Israel, could further erode the influence of American pro-Israel organizations (despite this, support for Israel continues to remain one of the few bi-partisan issues).
- The deepening the divide between parts of the liberal U.S. Jewish community and Israel, which is becoming more right-wing, nationalistic, and religious.
- A decline in the political power of American Jews, given their lack of unity and the internal Jewish polarization with respect to Israel.

- A potential decrease in the power of U.S. Jewish organizations – on both the local and national levels – given the general disappointment with the current leadership and systems. Alternatives posed by social media help propel this trend and create space for virtual dialogue communities, which tend to self-isolate.
- Given the general increased political and social polarization, the potential exists for a similar polarization within the U.S. Jewish community.
- A widening divide between parts of the American Jewish community and the Jewish organizational leadership that must cooperate with the Trump administration.
- Most of American Jewry (about 70 percent) has historically been affiliated with the liberal Democratic base and the values of human rights, equality, and opposition to racism and discrimination. This means that most American Jews are firmly on the losing side of the last election cycle. This creates a double dilemma for some Jewish leaders: first, how to oppose Trump and his ideas but maintain the identity of a loyal minority; and second, how to oppose Trump and his ideas without harming the interests of the State of Israel, which sees him as a close friend.
- The 20-30 percent of U.S. Jews – mostly Orthodox – that supports Trump are offering a new strategy for Jewish American integration into the larger society. For the last 200 years, the model was based on the internalization and affirmation of civic values – pluralism, tolerance, and egalitarianism – while erasing outward cultural markers that had signified the Jewish community (today identified with Orthodox Judaism). The changing characteristics of the new American Christian right and the growing population proportion of the Orthodox change the rules of the game: rather than the civic creed these add a new moral, religious component, which is thicker. Conservative Judeo-Christian morality, which to Orthodox Jews includes such principles as fairness (reward and punishment), loyalty, sanctity, and authority, which are generally less emphasized by liberal America and liberal Jews. (Interestingly, this development has led to potential alliances on specific issues between Jews and Muslims in the U.S.).

Part 2

Shifts in Israel that Could Influence the West's Approach to Israel and the Jewish People

A. The Rise of the Religious Nationalist Right in Israel

In recent years, we have seen the rise of right-wing religious nationalism in Israel. This trend is growing due to several factors: demographic trends in Israel; the crisis of the Israeli left; growing doubts over the legitimacy of ruling elites; the collapse of the Oslo peace process; the increasing solidification of the notion among Israelis that “there is no Palestinian partner for peace”; an erosion of the self-confidence of Israeli secularism; and the general violence raging throughout the Middle East, which is seen by many as reaffirming the right's worldview.

In this sense, developments in the National-Religious sector are especially interesting. This sector's leadership has in recent years focused on openly and aggressively seeking to provide moral and political leadership for the state and for Israeli society. The National-Religious sector adheres to a nationalistic version of Zionism with some prominent characteristics: it sees the return to Zion and the establishment of a

Jewish state not necessarily in Herzlian terms (as an answer to the Jewish problem) as its goal, rather as the necessary fulfilment of National-Religious ideals. It believes that the State of Israel should reflect Jewish interests. The National-Religious sector seeks to reshape the normative intellectual and moral basis of authority on which the Israeli legal system rests. In this framework, they imbue a greater authority to values that draw from the religious world and Jewish legacy, rather than from the secular-liberal-cosmopolitan world.

The National-Religious sector seeks to implement this goal – its push for the moral and political leadership of the country – through the Jewish Home Party, prominent religious figures in the Likud Party, and through its attempt to garner influence in the ranks of the civil service, the press, and the military leadership where National-Religious officers are increasingly prominent.

The National-Religious worldview is expressed, first and foremost, in trying to settle and annex West Bank territories. With its current control of the justice and education ministries (Ministers Ayelet Shaked and Naftali Bennett respectively), it is advancing policies and legislation that emphasize Jewish identity and the interests of the state as the nation-state of the Jewish people. There are those who see these initiatives as anti-liberal and a threat to the principles of equality and civil rights. In the educational sphere, they are advancing curricula that emphasize Jewish identity and nationalism, and weaken the commitment to liberal and universal values. Although only a fifth of the entire population considers itself as “belonging” to the National-Religious camp, broad segments of the population identify wholly or in part with National-Religious policies on issues of politics, security, and education. What distinguishes religious Zionism is that it provides a complete ideological vision and intellectual anchor that posits a coherent alternative to the ideology of secular Zionism that has ruled the country since its founding.

Possible Implications for how the West Relates to Israel

- As the West itself is highly polarized, dynamics in Israel could lead to contradictory results. For liberal segments in the West, Israel could be seen to be moving away from the shared values it was once thought to have. However, this is not necessarily the case with conservative elements in the West, who stress nationalism over cosmopolitanism and are averse to the existing order.
- We can expect increasing criticism from liberal voices in the West over Israel’s perceived lack of commitment to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of a two-state solution; its attempts to push legislation seen as illiberal, and ever increasing demands to include religious content in the education system (there is a greater sympathy for such efforts among Republicans in the United States and right-wing elements in Europe).
- Among liberal groups in the United States, there may be growing perception that the principles that traditionally formed the foundation of the special relationship between Israel and America are eroding in Israel (equality under the law, personal freedoms, social justice, ethics, democracy, religious pluralism, human rights, and the fair treatment of minorities).

B. Strengthening Israel’s Jewish Characteristics

Demographic, social, and cultural trends in recent years have led to a deepening of a range of phenomena and world-views that stand under a unified umbrella: the strengthening of Israel’s Jewish character. These are long-term structural trends; signs of them can be found in public opinion polls and in data relating to behavior and life style. These trends take on different forms in different populations – usually according to religiosity level – and are not distinct to any single group. The easiest to explain are those coming from the

demographic increase of the “religious” and “Haredi” sectors in Israel. In recent decades, the number of Israeli Jews we can identify as having a strong connection to Jewish culture/religion, in the cognitive and the practical sense, has grown. The percentage of Haredim within Israel’s Jewish population has increased from three percent in 1990 to ten percent today.

High birth rates among the Haredi and other religious sectors continue to increase their proportion in the overall population. This necessarily leads to a strengthening of the political power of these groups and their ability to influence and shape the Israeli agenda and its societal characteristics.

A more complicated trend relates to a growing realization, especially among traditional elites and secular Israelis, of the need to “take ownership” over Israel’s Jewish character – after years in which this was neglected and left to Orthodox religious groups. A clear majority of Israeli Jews (90 percent according to the latest Pew survey) say that being Jewish is “very important” (54 percent) or “somewhat important” (36 percent). Thus, it is not surprising that in recent years there has been a noticeable expansion and deepening of the “Jewish renewal” discourse. This discourse connects various sub-groups: secular and Reform, liberal Orthodox, the formerly religious, participants in various pre-military courses, and those exposed to programs such as Taglit Birthright during their military service. All these are active to some degree in an expanding effort to shape Judaism in a manner that is not specifically religious and is more suitable for Israel in the 21st century. These groups take a sympathetic approach to aspects of religion and tradition in the public sphere, yet are wary of religious coercion and claim the freedom to decide personally on religious matters. Accordingly, the number of Israelis seeking new approaches to the Jewish holidays and the number of pre-military seminaries merging Jewish studies with a pluralistic approach is growing.

Despite trends of Jewish renewal, and expansion of Jewish learning among secular Jews, Orthodox Judaism still defines many aspects of the Jewish state up to a point that some say that Israel is the only democracy in the world in which Jews do not have freedom of religion. Israeli Jews grew up in a Jewish state, and do not know any other way of life. They do not understand what it means to live as a Jewish minority, which deepens the gap between Israeli and Diaspora Jews.

Possible Implications for how the West Relates to Israel

The inclination of many Israelis to create a fusion of Jewish and Israeli culture could have contradictory outcomes:

- The formation of a unique Jewish-Israeli culture could further widen the gap with Diaspora Jewish culture. As this trend unfolds, it will weaken the connection between Israeli and Diaspora Jewish identity in the eyes of the West (and thus also the power attributed to the Jewish people generally).
- It may distance non-Orthodox Jews from Israel if they are excluded from the formation of a unique Jewish-Israeli culture.
- It may reinforce Israel’s image as pluralistic, i.e. able to include under an updated Jewish cultural umbrella various Jewish streams in a non-coercive manner. This process could strengthen the connection between the mostly liberal Diaspora and Israel.

C. Shifts in Israel’s Strategic Position and Power

From an historical perspective, Israel is something of a strategic miracle. At its founding, 650,000 Jews lived in Israel; today there are ten times that number. Israel is ranked 11th on the World Happiness Index, its birth rate is the highest among developed countries, and life expectancy is the fifth highest in the world for men and ninth highest for women. Israel’s per capita GDP (\$37,000 a year) is higher than those of Italy and

Spain. Israeli hi-tech is world class and several multinational corporations maintain R&D centers in Israel. The natural gas fields discovered off Israel's shores promise energy security for years to come and have turned Israel into an energy exporter. Exports to Asia have grown significantly. Moreover, the peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt are stable despite the regional turmoil. As a result of Iran's regional subversion, jihadi terror, and the rise of ISIS, the mutual interests between Israel and the moderate Sunni countries in the region have grown and security cooperation with Egypt is better than ever. Given the collapse of Syria and Iraq, there is no longer a conventional military threat to Israel. Iran's attempts to produce a nuclear weapon have been pushed back, at least for the near future.

Despite such encouraging statistics, it is possible to draw contradictory assessments when examining Israel's strategic power. This is due to the strategic uncertainty that characterizes much of the world, and certainly the region. The Middle East remains turbulent. The cornerstones of the old regional order are crumbling, and a new reality has yet to emerge that can promise stability of any sort. The international arena relevant to the Middle East and to Israel's strategic resilience is undergoing significant shifts as well and is far from radiating stability.

Meanwhile, Israel faces significant strategic challenges: the nuclear agreement achieved between Iran and the international community, described by Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu as a "mistake of historic proportions"; the danger of a security escalation in the north (Hezbollah, ISIS, and other radical Islamist actors in Syria) and in the south (Hamas or terror cells in Sinai); the danger the "Lone Wolf Intifada" continues to pose; the uncertainty regarding continued U.S. willingness to maintain a presence and leadership role in the Middle East; the impulse to transform the model for solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (from direct negotiations under American leadership to a coercive solution pushed on Israel by the UN and led by a multi-national coalition); the attempt to harm Israel through boycotts and de-legitimization efforts.

Alongside these various challenges, which hold considerable risk, there are also considerable opportunities for Israel: opening a "new page" in relations with the United States following the election of President Trump; deepening relationships with the Sunni moderates who are showing increased openness to Israel given the Iranian threat and radical terrorist groups; implementing a strategic plan that would stymie the threat of losing Israel's Jewish character as Israel may head toward a bi-national reality.

Implications for how the West Relates to Israel and the Jewish People

- If Israel's strategic stature is seen in the West as strong and it remains a close ally of the U.S., it diminishes the West's appetite for forcing diplomatic solutions on Israel that it opposes (an agreement with the Palestinians and other strategic issues).
- Moving away from a two-state solution could drag Israel into a diplomatic and violent escalation with the Palestinians and negatively influences Israel's international standing as well as its relationships with Arab states.

D. Demographic Shifts

The population of Israel has grown steadily. Recently, it has overtaken the United States as the largest Jewish population in the world. By the middle of the 21st century, most of the world's Jews, more than half, will live in Israel. At the same time, the composition of Israeli Jewish society is also changing. Most Jews in Israel today are native-born. The significance of this is that they are raised in a common environment, learn in the Israeli education system, have compulsory military service (for the most part), and are exposed throughout their lives to the cultural, social, and political advantages of the state.

At the same time, the composition of Israeli society is also shifting according to religiosity. The Haredi and National-Religious sectors are growing while the traditional center and, to a lesser extent, the secular are weakening. To compare: The Diaspora is largely characterized by demographic stability with a slightly negative trajectory due to low birth rates and an aging population. In the United States, as in Israel, the proportion of Haredim in the Jewish population is also growing. High intermarriage rates in the Diaspora distances some Jews from Jewish institutions and from Jewish expressions in the personal and familial spheres. On the other hand, mixed marriages expand the circle of non-Jews who have some familiarity with someone Jewish, and through them familiarity with Judaism and Israel.

Implications for how the West Relates to Israel and the Jewish People

- The West takes a particular interest in issues related to the demographics of Jews and non-Jews in the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. That is, regarding the significance of continued Israeli control over the West Bank, and potential future Israeli decisions to annex territories or parts of such, and their impact on Israel's Jewish and democratic nature.
- There is some interest in the shifts of the relative weight of various groups in Israeli society as well. Especially, there is much attention given to the growth of the religious and Haredi sectors of society given the tendency of these groups to hold right-wing political positions. Moreover, given the lack of separation between religion and state in Israel, these sectors' desire to strengthen the religious nature of the Israeli public sphere, could be perceived negatively by considerable segments of the liberal West.
- Another demographic focal point that draws the West's attention is the influence of immigrants from the former Soviet Union on Israeli politics and society. On one hand, this large wave of immigration has had a moderating effect on processes that threatened to erode Israel's Jewish majority; on the other hand, these immigrants are largely right-wing in their political positions. Moreover, as a Russian diaspora, they influence and can help improve Israel's diplomatic relationship with Russia.

Part 3

Challenges and Dilemmas that Call for Policy Measures

Shifting trends underway in the Western world may hold significant implications for Israel and world Jewry. These developments demand shaping policies to both mitigate negative consequences and leverage new opportunities. We present here insights and recommendations expressed during JPPI's 2017 Conference on the Future of the Jewish People irrespective of the views and positions of the Institute. (JPPI's recommendations regarding these issues will appear in its 2017 Annual Assessment of the Situation and Dynamics of the Jewish People.)

The conference discussion groups highlighted six areas that pose policy dilemmas and challenges for decision makers in Israel and the Diaspora:

1. Formulating Israel's policy vis-à-vis the Trump administration on diplomatic and ideological matters

The election of President Trump carried the promise of a friendlier, more sympathetic administration than its predecessor. Alongside the possibility of turning a "new page" in U.S.-Israel relations, there are also some dilemmas as to how much Israel should publicly identify with the new administration's ideology and the

sentiments and ethos that helped Donald Trump take the White House. The majority of American Jews disagree with the president's views, which brings the sensitivity of this diplomatic dilemma into sharp focus.

- Given the polarization trend inside the United States, Israel should tread cautiously and strive to maintain bi-partisan support. Israel should differentiate between developing a good working relationship with the Trump administration and projecting an ideological affinity to it. It should not neglect relations with the Democratic Party, especially its more liberal elements (minorities, millennials) who currently tend to have a negative view of Israel.
- Given the ability to improve the relationship with the American administration and given its interest in advancing an Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Israel should utilize this strategic advantage to counteract the threat of its sliding into a bi-national reality, and as a force multiplier to the improving relations with the moderate Arab states in the region.
- Israel should exercise caution in its geopolitical affairs in accordance with the reality that the U.S. may no longer emphasize its commitment to a moral vision of global leadership. At a time when the litmus test is what is in the "American interest," the U.S. could decide to isolate itself and decrease support for Israel on issues that do not line up with its own material interests.

2. Formulating policy toward Europe's far-right nationalist parties

Shifting trends in Europe include rising populism, sharp polarization, and the strengthening of right-wing political elements, who sometimes express their support of Israel. This phenomenon is reinforced by the growing fear of Islamic terror and new (mostly Muslim) immigration waves. There seems to be a greater acceptance of the Israeli claim that there is no difference between terrorism that targets Israel and terrorism aimed at the West. At the same time, there is a growing legitimacy granted to the political rise of the Israeli right.

- Israel should be wary of granting legitimacy to the radical far-right parties gaining currency in Europe. Even though they may seek the support of Israel and Jews, and at times express pro-Israel positions, Israel should be careful not to "take the bait" and must not express its support of these parties.
- Israel should stand against Islamophobia in the international arena, and in so doing express its values and loyalty to its own Muslim citizens.

3. Shaping a strategy that considers disruptions of the current world order and the rise of new non-Western powers

The disruption of the existing international order and the possibility that a new order will emerge presents Israel with both challenges and opportunities. For example, certain American-Russian understandings could limit Israel's maneuverability with respect to some issues and, at the same time, favor Israeli interests with respect to others. In a world where nationalistic and isolationist trends seem to be on the rise, the impulse to intervene in Israel's affairs could diminish. On the other hand, this might also weaken the inclination to come to Israel's aid in times of need. The growing influence of nationalism over cosmopolitanism could lead to greater acceptance in the West of Israel's predicament: a state seeking to maintain and assert its Jewish national identity.

- Israel should encourage those voices within the administration that call for the United States to reaffirm and fulfill its role as leader of the free world. America's focusing on domestic affairs while

neglecting its global leadership role, in general and in the Middle East in particular, could harm Israel and erode the might and deterrent power attributed to it.

- Israel should encourage Washington to continue taking a leading role in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. A lack of American leadership would create a vacuum for other international actors, who are not as sympathetic to Israel, to fill.
- Developing relations with the rising non-Western powers (China, Russia, India) should proceed with care and transparency vis-a-vis the United States. Israel's diplomatic moves should be undertaken with the fundamental understanding that there is no alternative to its strategic alliance with Washington.
- Israel should increase its investment in cutting edge science and developing new technologies. In a world in which these fields are highly regarded and rewarded, Israel has the potential for significant achievements. Alongside the economic benefits, realizing this potential will strengthen Israel's "soft power" in the West (and in the world writ large) and reinforce Israel's image as the "startup nation."

4. Improving Israel-Diaspora relations in light of trends of polarization and alienation in the West

Polarizing trends in the West have not bypassed Israel or Diaspora Jewry. Much of American Jewry (about 70 percent) historically identifies with the liberal-Democratic base recently trounced in the U.S. elections. Right wing, nationalistic and religious tendencies in Israel are also growing. As these trends continue, liberal Diaspora Jews may become more alienated from Israel. If these gaps widen within the Jewish people, its political power will diminish accordingly.

- In this time of polarization, Israel should focus on its potential as a unifying force. It should increase its investment in strengthening the connection with the Diaspora and make a special effort to assist in healing divisions among polarized Diaspora communities.
- The Israeli government should be aware of and sensitive to the double bind facing the Jewish American leadership: on the one hand – how to contend with ideologies of the Trump administration while maintaining the status of a loyal minority. On the other – how to maintain the liberal values objectionable to the more radical elements of the administration without harming the interests of the State of Israel, which considers the new administration a dear friend.
- Israel should differentiate between "love" of Israel and "blind support" of its government's policies. Many young Jews in the Diaspora feel deeply connected to Israel, but reject some of its policies. Israel needs to be able to accept them as they are, as the real threat is that younger Diaspora Jews may become apathetic and disconnected from Israel.
- Israel should strive to be more pluralistic on personal and family matters, and work to be more open to the non-Orthodox streams. Jewish communities in Israel and abroad need to adapt to a new reality of greater diversity, multiplicity of views, complex identities, conflicting narratives and acknowledge a broader array of organizations that reject the hegemony of any single organization.
- Israel should initiate direct and constant connections with Jewish groups and organizations, even if they are not usually considered part of the current establishment.
- Israel should support joint projects with the Diaspora based on Jewish values (such as a Jewish Peace Corps).

- Israelis should be encouraged to get better acquainted with the Jewish communities of the Diaspora.
- The trend of forging a new Jewish-Israeli culture could widen the gap between Israel and Diaspora Jewry (and thus erode the power of the Jewish people). Therefore, Diaspora involvement in such “renewal” efforts should be encouraged as much as possible.
- As many Jews consider leaving Europe, Israel must work to improve its absorption infrastructure (including employment opportunities). At the same time, Israel must avoid loud and conspicuous Aliyah persuasion campaigns so as not to draw negative pushback from certain governments.

5. Steps to strengthen Diaspora Jewry given the trends challenging the centrality of communities and institutions

Polarization in the West is among the shifting trends that may erode the power of Diaspora Jewish communities and institutions. Social media contributes to this trend by stimulating personal atomization and weakening social cohesion, which endangers Jewish solidarity. Closed virtual dialogue groups that self-isolate from the larger society are also on the rise. All this is happening while voices opposed to liberal values and advocating greater nationalism and hostility to minorities grow louder – at times, hostility toward Jews seems to be increasing.

- Diaspora Jewish institutions should focus on renewal and reinvention initiatives, with a primary focus on educational programs, in order to halt the erosion of their centrality and reinvigorate their currency in the communities they serve.
- The Jewish community should be aware of and discuss the implications of a relatively new trend in the United States – an ideological connection between Orthodox Jewish communities and (mostly Christian) social conservatives (characterized by the trends and sentiments that helped bring Trump to power). The building blocks of this bridge are not the classical liberal values once thought to be the common base between the Jewish community and the American ethos.
- Jewish organizations need to enlist state authorities to actively counter anti-Semitism. They should demand that their various governments deal effectively with anti-Semitic incidents.
- Jewish communities should promote Jewish-Muslim dialogue initiatives based on their common status as minority groups.
- Given the significant demographic growth of the North American Haredi and Orthodox communities (and the growing involvement of some of their members in public and economic positions of influence), there is a growing need to appeal to the spiritual and rabbinic leaders of these communities to convince their members to take a more active role in ensuring the future of the Jewish people. At the same time, leaders of the major Jewish organizations should encourage Haredi participation and leadership in the broader Jewish community.
- There should be a special effort focused on bringing Russian-speaking Jews and Israeli expats living in the West into the fold of the established Jewish community.
- New technologies should be harnessed – including those that allow more efficient and affordable intercontinental travel as well as social networks – in order to strengthen connections between Israeli and Diaspora Jews.

- An effort should be made to strengthen the political influence of European Jewish communities in light of a possible erosion of the special status granted them in the decades following the Holocaust (direct access to political leaders, increased financial support, etc.).

6. Monitoring illiberal internal Israeli trends and curbing initiatives negatively affect the image and values of the Jewish state

As the West itself is highly polarized, dynamics in Israel, where right wing, nationalistic and religious tendencies are on the rise, could lead to conflicting influences. Western liberals tend to perceive Israel as abandoning some of the core values it has traditionally shared with the West. But this is not the case for conservative elements in the West, who prefer nationalism over cosmopolitanism and are dissatisfied with the prevailing order.

- Growing doubts among left-wing groups about Israel's commitment to liberal values (rule of law, liberty, justice, ethics, democracy, religious pluralism, human rights, minority rights, and fighting racism), should worry Israeli decision makers on two levels: one relates to the ideological essence of the Jewish state and the other relates to the values at the foundation of Israel's special relationship with the United States and liberal American Jewry.
- Israel, which has faced the challenge of striking a balance between its "Jewish" and "Democratic" characteristics since its founding, can offer the West a model for a successful coexistence between nationalism and liberalism.