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2018 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION AND DYNAMICS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

THE JEWISH STATE AT 70: MAJOR CHALLENGES FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Foreword

Israel at 70 is a remarkable success story. If David Ben-Gurion were alive today, he would find it hard to imagine the country he sees. It is a dynamo economically, quite literally the start-up nation and with a per capita income of \$37,000 a year. It is the strongest country in the region militarily, with not only the most sophisticated and capable of all the forces in the region but a capacity to fuse intelligence with operational plans in a way that few, if any, countries possess. Whether in science or medicine or agriculture or new wave industries or cyber, Israel is a cutting-edge country. And, it has accomplished all this in an environment that was hostile and rejectionist for much of its existence.

Ben-Gurion would be wowed by what Israel has accomplished but he would have concerns as well. Ben-Gurion, a genuine socialist, would be concerned by the income inequality that characterizes Israel today, with 20 percent living under the poverty level. He would want to tackle the social gaps and he would worry about whether Israel can still be a light unto the nations when it has not figured out a way to end its control over territories in which the Palestinians reside.

This year's annual assessment offers a balanced overview of how Israel is doing geopolitically, demographically, in its relations with the Diaspora, and in fostering a Jewish identity in Israel while also preserving a home for all streams of Judaism. One would expect a mixed picture, some good, some not so good developments, and that is what this year's annual assessment provides. Geopolitically, there are positives: the support of the U.S. administration

politically is strong and symbolically very important; the tacit cooperation with leading Arab states reflects a strategic convergence of threats; the relationship with big powers like China, India and Russia is good—though with the exception of India, it does not express itself politically and diplomatically.

JPPI has been very helpful to the Israeli government in promoting stronger ties between Israel and the two great Asian powers, China and Israel. JPPI's recommendations were presented to the Israeli government as well as to the heads of major Jewish organizations active in promoting the relationship with the two Asian giants. The strategic study on relations with China was translated into Chinese in Beijing and serves as a textbook in universities across China. Likewise, JPPI prepared a major study on the history and future path of Israel-India relations, and hosted an event shortly before India Prime Minister Modi's historic visit to Israel—the first by a sitting Indian prime minister—with India's Ambassador to Israel and Stu Eizenstat.

The shadows that are cast on Israel by other developments and threats are real and require Israel to be especially vigilant. Iran has developed a land-bridge from the Islamic Republic through Iraq, Syria and Lebanon to the Mediterranean. It is now trying to create the equivalent in Syria of what it created in Lebanon with Hezbollah and its 120,000 rockets. Israel faces the real prospect of confronting a northern front now and cannot rule out the possibility that a war with rockets from the north could be matched with rockets from Hamas out of Gaza at the same time. Practically, Israel is largely facing all this on its own.

It is not an accident that Prime Minister Netanyahu has met with Russian President Putin eight times in the last two years. He has sought de-confliction with Russian forces in Syria but also to persuade Putin to contain the Iranians and prevent the spread of its proxy militias. He has succeeded on the former but not on the latter. For some time, Russia has said all foreign forces should leave Syria, but for the first time it is also saying that admonition applies to Iranian and Hezbollah forces as well. The new Russian public posture is hopeful but should not be taken at face-value. Given the Russian record of duplicity in Syria, it is far too soon to know whether Russia's leaders will actually take steps to make this happen or continue to acquiesce in the expansion of Iran and its Shia proxy presence. Russia's record in Syria leaves much room for skepticism, especially since the Russian use of air power has consistently abetted the spread of the Qods Forces and Hezbollah there.

What is beyond question is that until now, Russia has generally given Israel a free hand to deal with the Iranian presence in Syria, even as it also has given the Iranians a free hand to expand as well. Unless the Russians have a change of heart, their willingness to permit each to operate freely increases the prospect of a war between Israel and Iran; it is easy to predict how such a war starts, but not so easy to foretell how it ends.

Historically, the U.S. might have made its influence felt, making clear the eruption of a wider regional war between Israel and Iran was not in our interests and we would intervene to make it less likely. We would very likely have gone to the Russians and made it clear that if they did not stop Iran, we would. That is not happening. President Trump has made it clear, he

wants to get out of Syria—and his focus there is ISIS and not Iran. It is ironic, perhaps, that the Trump administration is prepared to adopt a very tough rhetorical posture toward Iran, walking away from the JCPOA, but its policy toward Iranian expansion in the region is tough talk, but until now, not tough action.

Much like the Obama administration, the current administration seems to want out of Middle East conflicts and it has left Israel to deal with the Iranian threat. Words of support for Israel and its right to defend itself are strong, but that is it. Apart from not acting against Iranian threats in the region, the Trump administration at this point has done nothing to offer additional material help at a time when the Iranian nuclear threat could become more imminent. While the JCPOA had real flaws, it basically limited the threat of Iranian nuclear weapons development until after 2030—and Israeli force planning and the \$38 billion ten-year assistance package provided to Israel by the Obama administration was also based on this premise. What happens now if the Iranians decide to walk away from the nuclear deal and no longer live up to it? Is there any prospect that the Trump administration will decide to take that into account and increase what it provides Israel in terms of military assistance? That is unknowable at this point, but President Trump is not an enthusiast for military and other forms of assistance.

Similarly, it is worth asking whether the administration is going to present its peace plan and whether it will restore the possibility of peace-making. The administration devoted considerable time to develop a plan with the hope that it would provide a new serious foundation for negotiations that lead to what President Trump calls "the ultimate deal". The

administration is aware that it must create the right context in order to allow the plan to have the best chance to succeed. The president's announcement on Jerusalem and the decision regarding the embassy move contributed to changing the regional context and delaying the plan's unveiling. Although the administration continues to emphasize that it will present the plan, its chances of success will depend heavily on producing Arab leader acknowledgement that the plan credibly addresses the national aspirations of the Palestinians. Any hope of building pressure on the Palestinians to respond with something other than a "no" will depend on that.

JPPI has been at the forefront of providing important analysis of the pernicious Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction (BDS) effort to delegitimize Israel as a Jewish state. JPPI's comprehensive report includes the most complete analysis ever published on the BDS movement, in all its dimensions, with recommendations on how to combat it, for the Ministry of Strategic Affairs. This follows on a recommendation JPPI made several years ago to Prime Minister Netanyahu and his Cabinet to establish one ministry to combat BDS, with a budget allocated for this critical activity, leading directly to the selection of the Ministry of Strategic Affairs as the lead agency. This recommendation was accepted in the Cabinet meeting of 23 June 2013.

Absent any movement from the Palestinians, or some kind of Israeli initiative, we are likely to continue to see the growth of the BDS movement on U.S. campuses and an increasing part of the Jewish community in America distancing itself from Israel.

Despite Israel being such an economic, military and cultural success story, with visits by American Jews to

Israel at an all-time high, through Birthright/Taglit and personal visits, and with Israel now the home of a plurality of world Jewry, and by 2030 a majority, there are, nonetheless, troubling clouds on the horizon in Diaspora-Israel relations, one of the main focuses of JPPI's attention. JPPI has conducted a series of Dialogues over the last several years in over 40 locations with Jewish leaders throughout the Diaspora, on issues like Israel as a Jewish and Democratic state, Jewish values and armed conflict, the Jewish spectrum in a time of fluid identity, Jerusalem and the Jewish people, and 70 years of Israel-Diaspora relations.

Israel for the first time in its history is becoming a partisan political issue. This is not yet evident in the U.S. Congress, where Israel continues to enjoy bipartisan support, but it is clearly evident among the general American public. The Democrats in general have more concerns than Republicans about what they see as the occupation of the West Bank, expanded settlements there, and the treatment of the Palestinians and to a lesser degree of Israeli Arabs. A 2018 survey by the respected Pew Research Center found a growing gap between Democrats and Republicans in supporting Israel or the Palestinians: 79 percent of Republicans said they support Israel more than the Palestinians, compared to only 27 percent of Democrats.

Given the political polarization today in America—and the deep alienation of Democrats from the Trump administration—it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain bipartisan support for Israel. The close personal, political, and ideological affinity of the Israel prime minister and the American president, and with

the Evangelical movement, add to the difficulty, especially in the American Jewish community.

Roughly 70 percent of American Jews voted for Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election. At the same time, as Israel, through demographic changes, is becoming increasingly Orthodox by religious affiliation and conservative and nationalist in their politics, there is a potential collision of values with Diaspora Jews who are largely Conservative, Reform or secular in their religious orientation and liberal in their politics. In 2017, the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) population in Israel is 12 percent of Israel's Jewish population; by virtue of their high birthrates, by 2030 they will constitute more than 20 percent, and by 2065, more than 40 percent all Jews in Israel, and over a third of Israel's total population.

This demographic trend is mirrored in the U.S. with the Orthodox, now roughly 12 percent of American Jewry, and generally politically conservative, growing at a much faster rate than the non-Orthodox population, both because of lower birthrates and high levels of intermarriage (around 30 percent of Jewish children under the age of 18 in the US are being raised in Orthodox households. In the greater New York area, this rate is as high as 70 percent).

The concerns of the non-Orthodox members of the American Jewish community were exacerbated by the government of Israel's decision to cancel the Kotel agreement and make the conversion process more stringent.

Added to these issues, is a series of legislative actions that many liberal American Jews see as a challenge to Israel's democracy.

What compounds these trends is the tendency of the current Israeli government to ignore the concerns of the Reform and Conservative streams of Judaism.

Listening to the Diaspora has never been more important, and with these developments in mind, the annual assessment makes a number of recommendations:

- Promote mechanisms for consulting with Diaspora leaders before decisions are taken;
- Mobilize resources that reinforce projects that foster Israeli-Diaspora connections (Birthright and Masa);
- Encourage cultural exchanges between the Diaspora and Israel involving art, music, science, and literature;
- Engage more with the liberal, progressive parts of the Jewish community. Israel and the Jewish Diaspora's efforts should focus on "expanding the tent" on the one hand, and reaching a consensus "red lines" beyond which entails harming mutual respect and responsibility between the communities.
- Encourage the growing Orthodox community in the U.S. to become more integrated into Jewish community-wide activities and public affairs more generally
- Make clear that decisions made in the Diaspora on Jewish issues within Diaspora communities will be respected in Israel.

If Israel does not want to find itself losing support in the Jewish community—support that has historically driven close U.S.-Israeli relations—and among significant segments of the American public, non-Orthodox Jews and progressive Americans should not be written off, but rather should be engaged. Moreover, It is critical that the Israeli government avoid Israel becoming a polarizing political issue.

Dennis Ross and Stuart Eizenstat

Policy Recommendations¹

Relations with Diaspora Communities

- Encourage the Ultra-Orthodox and Orthodox communities, especially in the United States, to take an active role in the general Jewish community life, the general American society and participate in politics on the National level and Public Service in general.
- Engage the liberal segments of the Jewish People and maintain a broad pluralistic approach, enlarging the Jewish tent of unity and commitment to Israel.
- Mobilize resources to reinforce projects that foster Israel-Diaspora connections (Such as Birthright Israel and Masa). Encourage cultural exchanges between Israel and the Diaspora involving art, musical, science, and literature.
- Consult with Jewish leaders in the Diaspora on decisions having an impact upon Diaspora Jews. Honor the decisions of Diaspora Jewish communities, allowing the communities to manage their own lives.

- Take advantage of immigrant groups that maintain significant ties with their countries of origin.

Haredi Integration in Israel

- Continue the balanced and pragmatic policy towards Haredi integration into general Israeli society, facilitating integration for those Haredim who desire it while preserving their unique identity.

Conversion

- Ensure that the conversion authority, if and when it arises, not only includes representatives of the Orthodox community from the Diaspora, but also from the non-Orthodox streams such as the Conservative and Reform. (Their exclusion is liable to alienate Diaspora Jews from Israel.)

Asia

- Engage Diaspora Jewry in cultural, artistic, academic and intellectual Israeli-Jewish outreach to Asia in order to generate “soft power” in this rising continent.

¹ This year we have decided to focus on a small set of action-oriented policy recommendations. The reasoning behind them can be found in the relevant chapters of the text.

Strategic Threats to Israel and their Implications for the Jewish People

Seventy years after its founding, Israel faces no existential threats of a security nature in the foreseeable future, its overall strategic balance is positive, and over the past year it has even achieved some improvements in its strategic position. Simultaneously, looming shadows on the horizon threaten to tilt this balance over time, deleteriously and perhaps relatively quickly.

These shadows, and the political and ideological divisions some of them cast over Israeli society, have caused a polarizing debate in Israel and the Diaspora over the assessment of Israel's long-term resilience. It is clear that Israel can influence these trends to a certain extent. Its decision-making, including refraining from making certain decisions, has limited influence on the overall picture, but could still prove fateful to Israel and the Jewish people

Israel was founded as the nation-state of the Jewish people. Since its establishment on the ashes of the Holocaust, an unwritten pact of mutual responsibility has existed between Israel and most of Diaspora Jewry. And from the outside, the non-Jewish world has by and large tended to view Israel and world Jewry as somewhat overlapping. Therefore, every development critical to Israel's fate and every fateful decision taken in Jerusalem carries potential implications for the Jewish world. For its part, world Jewry serves as one of Israel's potential force multipliers.

The Strategic Balance – Assets

- Israel is the leading military power in the Middle East with effective deterrence and clear military superiority over any regional adversary.
- Conventional state military threats to Israel have significantly weakened in the wake of regional upheavals and the internal collapse of states such as Iraq and Syria.
- The non-conventional threat to Israel is also diminished at this time – Syria relinquished most (though not all) of its chemical weapons capabilities; Iran's nuclear program was set back a number of years by the nuclear agreement (JCPOA), and with the Trump administration withdrawing from the agreement – is confronted by a toughening U.S. policy.
- Israel has established itself as an economic and technological powerhouse relative to its size, with a GDP per capita that surpassed USD 37,000, advanced hi-tech and cyber industries, natural gas resources in the Mediterranean, and its formidable engines of innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Israel's strategic alliance with the United States, with its numerous benefits, is strong and stable, and Israel registers high levels of basic sympathy and support among the American public.
- The peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan remain stable anchors despite regional upheavals.
- Furthermore, the threats posed by Iran's ambitions, radical Islamist terror, and regional instability, as well as the uncertainty regarding the U.S. role in, and future commitment to, the region – have created a confluence of interests between Israel and the key Sunni states (Egypt, Jordan, the Gulf states, and especially Saudi Arabia). In this context, unprecedented cooperation on security matters has developed with some of them, and energy and economic cooperation, even diplomatic coordination, has followed in certain cases.

- Israel is developing a broad network of diplomatic and economic relations around the globe, including close working relations with Russia based on understandings on regional matters (possibly even expanding as relates to Iran's role in Syria), increasing Chinese economic interests in Israel, ever-closer relations with India as well as the African and the former Soviet Union countries, and an evolving energy cooperation axis with Greece and Cyprus.
- With these assets taken together, the international campaign to de-legitimize Israel has not succeeded in gaining strategic traction and has yet to impact Israel on a macro-economic level.

areas). Israel could also face, for the first time, a simultaneous challenge from Gaza.

- The nuclear Iran agreement left its nuclear infrastructure and ambitions intact. If the United States does not succeed in blocking Iran's nuclear ambitions, especially after exiting the JCPOA, they will return to Israel's doorstep sooner rather than later.
- Russia has become a permanent fixture with a military presence on Israel's border. Under certain circumstances, Russia's converging interests with Israel's enemies could negatively affect Israel's interests.
- The United States aims to decrease its military footprint in the region, especially in Syria.
- The continuing lack of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict fuels and creates a breeding ground for threats against Israel that could, under certain circumstances, gain momentum and erupt. These include:

1. Significant terror threats from individual actors and groups in the West Bank and Gaza.
2. The risk of a major conflagration in Gaza, which is a "powder keg," especially in light of the harsh economic conditions and grave humanitarian situation there.
3. Damage to Israel's relations with some of the Arab states. Despite the warming relations between these states and Israel mentioned above, the Palestinian issue remains sensitive for the Arab states, especially as expressed by public opinion within them (which is still largely hostile to Israel).
4. The de-legitimization threat and damage to Israel's standing, especially in the free world. The de-legitimization campaign's lack of strategic success thus far cannot be taken for granted and this campaign should be seen as a long-term strategic threat.
5. Expressions of unrest among Israeli Arabs.

The Strategic Balance – Looming Shadows

- Iran, hostile as it is to Israel, is establishing itself in an ever more dominant regional position than before - on the ruins of the "Arab Spring" and ISIS. It is in the process of establishing a zone of direct influence stretching from Tehran to the Mediterranean.
- As part of this regional array that rests inter alia on Iran's dominance in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon and on numerous Shia militias, Iran is working energetically to transform Syria and Lebanon into a threatening military front in the face of Israel. It is also working to expand the "resistance axis" to Israel in the Palestinian arena, especially Gaza.
- Through years of experience fighting in Syria, Hezbollah, the strongest non-state actor subservient to Iran, has essentially transformed from a militia into an army. It maintains a significant arsenal of rockets (over 120,000) aimed at Israel. Iran and Hezbollah now seek to improve the accuracy of this arsenal and thus intensify the strategic threat to Israel.
- Iran's entrenchment in Syria and Lebanon amplifies the friction between Jerusalem and Teheran. This, in turn, could lead to a direct confrontation, in which Iran may also conscript Hezbollah. In such a northern border military conflict scenario, Israel could pay a heavy price given the relative vulnerability of its home front (while Israel's enemies operate out of populated

In addition to these "shadows" other potential threats, although not politico-military in nature, could still

have significant ramifications for Israel's strategic balance. These include the dangerous erosion of bipartisan support for Israel in America, and among certain sectors (such as millennials and Hispanics), and assimilation and distancing from Israel among Diaspora Jews. Additionally, there are pressures inside Israel itself which carry the potential to further deepen societal cleavages among Israel's different "tribes," disturb the delicate balance of the internal democratic fabric and damage Israel's "liberal" image.

A closer examination of the components of the strategic balance, positive and negative, requires clearly distinguishing between existing trends (which tilt the balance in a positive direction) and potential developments over time (which could tilt the balance in a negative direction). It further requires distinguishing between developments and trends in or adjacent to Israel that it can influence, and those where Israel's influence is limited or non-existent. Special attention should be given to the evolving Iranian threat in both its nuclear and regional dimensions, after the United States (in the nuclear field) and Israel (in the regional arena) have raised the stakes of brinkmanship vis-a-vis Iran, and to the gathering shadows in the Israeli-Palestinian picture over time.

Conclusion

The bottom line is that Israel is strong yet vulnerable and cannot, therefore, let down its guard. Israel must pay attention to the gathering shadows that could upend its positive strategic balance and address them

as fully as possible. Alongside investing in the "hard power" of its critical military might and deterrence capacities -- especially given the significant strategic threats of the Iranian axis' military capabilities, nuclear ambitions, and hegemonic aspirations -- it is imperative that Israel further develop its "soft/smart power" assets. These include: fostering the strategic alliance with the United States, which has no substitute (no relationship, including with Russia, China, or India, can replace the U.S.-Israel relationship, as it is based on a platform of shared core values and on the significance of the American Jewish community); developing regional relations and cooperation; and Israel's legitimacy in the international arena (influenced mostly by the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israel's image as a liberal democracy).

Moreover, Israel must factor into its strategic balance safeguarding its relationship with Diaspora Jewry as a force multiplier, by heeding and striving to strengthen the notion of mutual responsibility and commitment. Israel should take into account that some of the looming shadows mentioned pose potential threats not to just to Israel but also to Diaspora communities. These include security threats and increased expressions of anti-Semitism in response to violent confrontations in the region (especially on the Iranian, Syrian-Lebanese and Palestinian or fronts). Ultimately, if Israel is to be a "light unto the Jews" it must position itself not only as a potential safe haven but also as a source of pride and moral identification for every Jew, wherever s/he may be.

The Triangular Relationship – Washington – Jerusalem – U.S. Jewry

The special relationship between Israel and the United States rests on a foundation of shared interests, principles and values: freedom, rule of law, democracy, human rights, the just treatment of minorities, rejection of racism, pioneering, innovation and a long history of diplomatic, military, economic and scientific cooperation. The special and significant connection with the American Jewish community reinforces all of these.

The American Jewish community – nearly half of the Jewish people – has long held prestige, standing, and influence in nearly all aspects of American life: politics, government, the economy, media, science, academia, culture, society and more. America's long-standing and bipartisan support for Israel is partly based on this prestige. The extensive network of connections Israel has developed in the United States also rests, largely, on the strength of the Jewish community, as well as the extraordinary military, economic and diplomatic support Israel receives from the United States.

These special relations comprise the **Jerusalem-Washington-U.S. Jewry “triangular relationship.”** The triangle, a strategic asset and crucial force multiplier for Israel and the Jewish people's strength, comprises a complex set of dynamics. Maintaining the triangle's resilience is a critical ongoing challenge for the Israeli government. This challenge has a number of elements, all of which demand careful attention and judgement. It is essential to maintaining American sympathy for, and the attachment of American Jewry to, Israel.

Ignoring the trends taking place in American society generally, and in the American Jewish community in particular -- alongside ignoring the inherent risks in actively seeking to influence events in the United States -- could erode the resilience of the triangular relationship and the necessary balance that exists between its sides.

The American Component

American attitudes toward Israel have become a partisan matter in recent years. A 2018 Pew survey found that the gap between Republicans and Democrats in supporting Israel or the Palestinians is growing. 79 percent of Republicans said they support Israel more than the Palestinians while only 27 percent of Democrats answered similarly. While support for Israel among Republicans continues to grow, it is decreasing among Democrats. This presents a significant challenge to the Israeli government: maintaining bi-partisan sympathy and support from the Jewish community – especially millennials – most of whom (about two-thirds) are Democrats. The challenge is further complicated by an increasing polarization over core values in the United States. Attitudes toward Israeli policy measures are a bone of contention between the parties. In American liberal-intellectual circles, some cannot accept the idea of a religion-based nation-state. At times Israel is represented as a moral failure; others cast doubt on Israel's adherence to the foundational values of the special relationship with the United States. They cite Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, discrimination

against Israeli Arabs, gender inequality, matters of religion and state, and a seeming preference for Jewish values over democratic ones. Conversely, support for Israel grows among Republicans. They vigorously reject claims that the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict harms America's interests and erodes shared values. (Relatedly, the support for Israel among American Evangelical Christians, who support the settlement of "Greater Israel" including the territories, is significant.) As America becomes more polarized, it is increasingly difficult to maintain bi-partisan support for Israel. At the same time, the temptation to curry short-term Republican favor grows, while the price Israel may pay for this in the long term (especially among Democrats) is ignored.

Israeli attempts to influence American decision-making processes could spark criticism, especially if viewed as contradicting American interests. Israel should take this into account in its cost-benefit analysis vis-à-vis any planned efforts in the American arena. In this regard, it is appropriate to draw lessons from historical decision-making junctures: beginning with the (failed) attempt to stop the United States from selling AWACS to Saudi Arabia (1981), through thwarting U.S. moves relating to the situation with the Palestinians during the Obama administration, and including the ongoing efforts against the nuclear agreement with Iran. Israel should also prepare for a reality in which the erosion of U.S. interest in and willingness to continue playing the role of strategic cop in the Middle East continues. Such a development is inconsistent with Israel's interests and would force Israel to adjust its expectations accordingly.

The Jewish Component

The growing trend among American Jews, especially liberal ones, is the strengthening of the American component of their identity relative to the Jewish one. High rates of intermarriage contribute to this trend. Over half of American Jews identify as liberal and only 20 percent as "conservative." Most American Jews (70 percent) supported the losing side in the 2016 presidential elections. Israeli policies on various issues (especially the continued occupation) is seen by most liberal American Jews as at odds with their aspiration to serve as a "light unto the nations" and their desire for *Tikkun Olam*, or social justice. Therefore, tensions arise for these Jews between their loyalty to liberal values and their love for Israel. They see Israel moving in a "conservative" direction and distancing itself from liberal and pluralistic values. One expression of this involves the ongoing debate in Israel on matters of religion and state: recognition of the non-Orthodox Jewish movements, conversion, and pluralistic prayer at the Western Wall.

It follows, therefore, that the polarizing trends in the United States on one hand, and the strengthening of the Israeli right on the other, strain the sense of solidarity these groups feel with Israel. This lack of Jewish unity over Israel will affect the Jewish community's ability to enact political pressure on Israel's behalf. Additionally, there is a possible decline in the power of Jewish organizations at the community and national level, given the trend of abandoning large organizations -- the "post-organizational" and "post-denominational" era -- in America generally and the Jewish community in particular. In the immediate political context, the American Jewish leadership faces a dilemma vis-a-vis the current president: how to

express the majority of American Jewry's discomfort with President Trump and his conduct without losing the status and influence gained through hard-earned efforts over the years. Moreover, how can this be done without harming Israel's interests, which sees in President Trump an important friend and ally (especially after the United States left the Iran nuclear agreement and moved its embassy to Jerusalem).

The polarization within the Jewish community points to another salient phenomenon: the same segment of American Jewry (20-30 percent) – mostly from the Orthodox community – who voted for President Trump, embodies a new integration strategy into American society. In the past century, the integration strategy for American Jewry was based on espousing liberal social values – pluralism, tolerance, and equality – while erasing external cultural and religious markers (associated with Orthodox Judaism). The changes in the right wing of Christian America and the growth of the Orthodox population in relative terms highlight a new path for social integration in America based on an alternative value set: such as fairness (reward and punishment), loyalty, sanctity and respect for authority, and not necessarily those values highlighted by liberal America.

Demographics reinforce this phenomenon. While parts of the liberal Jewish population are assimilating into the general population, the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities are growing due to high birth rates and low rates of assimilation and intermarriage. However, these communities, which tend to be insular, are also less involved in the political and public discourse. Therefore, the ramifications of these internal-Jewish trends are yet unclear as to the future strength and influence of the American Jewish

community. (Similarly, it is not yet clear if the presence of Orthodox Jews in influential positions in the Trump administration is a harbinger of things to come.)

The ideological polarization developing in the United States has, to some degree, an Israeli parallel. The political leadership of both countries is controlled by those who do not ascribe to the supremacy of liberal values and are increasingly emphasizing values such as conservatism, nationalism, religion, and tradition, and tend to adopt a foreign policy based on competition and real-politic devoid of ambitions and illusions of global peace and harmony. These ideological trends in both countries, together with the rise of the Orthodox in the U.S. Jewish community, point to new developments, but it is still unclear if they will become the new reality: the appearance of an alternative triangular relationship whose shared values are not the liberal values we have known until now.

The Government of Israel should be attentive to these trends, particularly the American and the Jewish component of the strategic triangular relationship. The passage of time erodes collective formative memories of historic events: the Holocaust, the heroic founding of the State of Israel (David vs. Goliath), the miraculous Six-Day war victory, Entebbe, and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Israel needs to nurture bipartisan American sympathy and increase awareness of its achievements, and its value as a U.S. asset. Israel should invest resources in creating a base of support among the younger generation of Americans, especially in growing minority communities (Hispanics, blacks, and Asians).

The Israeli government should also seek to develop relations with the Orthodox Jewish community, whose stock is rising in the United States, and encourage it to

become more involved and take greater leadership roles in the Jewish future in Israel and the Diaspora. At the same time, it should shape and enact policy related to the connection difficulties between liberal American Jews and Israel, especially among the younger generation. This type of policy is imperative given the challenges threatening Jewish unity and the resilience of the triangular relationship. The Israeli government should seek to deal with challenging dilemmas in this regard: Is it desirable or possible to

maintain close relations with the Trump administration without it appearing to most Jews as endorsing the administration's value system? Is it possible to open effective communication channels and mechanisms that take into account the positions of most of Diaspora Jewry in Israeli decision making on matters relating the Jewish people, and to what extent should Israel show sensitivity in decision making when there are implications for the Jewish people?

Israel's Long Road to Asia: 100 Years and More

Zionism's and Israel's long efforts of seeking contact and friendship with China and India are a major chapter in diplomatic history. These efforts started in 1918 and were patiently continued by a few committed Zionist Jews, pushed by a visionary David Ben-Gurion in the 1930s and since 1948 driven by a small number of dedicated Israeli diplomats and businessmen. The Jewish and Israeli public were indifferent. They had more urgent priorities, and Asia was far from their sight.

These efforts coincided in 1990 with the emergence of the United States as the sole super-power. Together this turned the erstwhile hostility of the two giants into normal diplomatic relations (1992), and finally into cooperation, respect and friendship. Israel's influence in the U.S. has been perceived by Asian governments as very significant and many believed that the road to Washington passes through Jerusalem. This influence was based mainly on the strong Jewish community which became a strategic asset for Israel and for the Jewish People.

The global balance of power is changing. In 2011, the Paris-based OECD predicted that in 2060 China and India together will produce 46 percent of the global GDP, as against 16 percent for the USA and 9 percent for the Euro-Zone. Implausible? By 2018, the growth rates of both countries have already borne out the OECD forecast for the first seven years of the reference period. Reaching out to Asia is a necessity for every trading nation, and particularly for Israel which has to strengthen its links with all accessible non-Western countries. Even more compelling is that the footprints of China and India in the Middle East are spreading

fast. Their energy, trade, investment and personal links with the Muslim Middle East are growing exponentially, accompanied by political and military links. Today, the Arab countries and Iran listen to Xi Jinping's China and Modi's India and seek their support. The two giants are their nearest great powers and do not carry the West's colonial baggage or the anti-Semitic and biblical traditions. China's "One-Belt-One-Road" initiative plans to spend billions in infrastructure investments in the entire Muslim world. India has eight million workers in the Middle East and has recently shown its political clout when it persuaded Saudi Arabia to open its airspace for direct Air India flights to Israel. In 2009 U.S. President Obama asked for the same concession, but the Saudis rejected his plea.

Engaging with Asia while holding the position of "America's best friend", to quote its President, means that Israel could be increasingly forced to cope with conflicting objectives. Israel got a foretaste of things to come in 2000 when strong American pressure forced it to break a contract to supply reconnaissance planes to China. This put Sino-Israeli relations back by many years. A smaller repeat episode of this clash in 2004, this time about Israeli drones sold to China, did not help. The United States are not the only source of problems in this regard. In summer 2017 China and India disagreed about their common border in the Himalayas, which triggered military tensions between the two. A wave of anti-Israeli comments appeared on China's social media, including television because the Chinese public suddenly discovered Israel's strong defense relations with India.

The tensions between the United States and rising China will continue for a long time, fueled by broader issues than defense. So, will tensions involving other major Asian powers, including Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Israel will need a better understanding of Asia at government, academic and think-tank levels, in order to formulate a vision of its future place in Asia and better coordinate its policies.

Like all Western countries, Israel has spent years developing its economic and technological relations with Asia, particularly China and India. In four more decades Asia is expected to represent more than half of the world economy. By then, Israel will likely have at least half of its trade and economic relations with Asia. A shift of global economic power of such magnitude will have geopolitical, military and cultural consequences. Israel would be well advised to prepare for these by forging deeper, civilizational links to Asia, as David Ben-Gurion demanded decades ago. Today Israel is increasingly assertive about its specific historic, religious and cultural identity. It demands to be recognized as a "Jewish State" and shuns European notions of multiculturalism. Asserting their identity is also distinguishing China, India and other Asian countries. China's President Xi Jinping called the "defense and assertion of Chinese values" a key national goal. Could this help Israel find common ground with Asian countries? The national languages of Asia (except in Muslim countries) had until recently not even a word for "Jew", but these countries are now

discovering Israel, Jews and Judaism. Most Asian reactions to Israel and Jews are very welcoming, free of historic and religious baggage and not affected by negative voting records in the United Nations. But the Bible and Judaism are foundations of Western civilization. Israel will not abandon its links with the West and its cultural and democratic values, certainly not with the United States and American Judaism. Could Israel then become a bridge between East and West? Being a part of two worlds means that Israel's political dilemmas might grow. As indicated, it will have to cope increasingly with competing objectives. It will have to convince the United States and its Jews that it would serve neither long-term American nor Jewish objectives if Israel is seen only as the West's permanent outpost in the Middle East. However, a bridge has to stand on two pillars, and Israel's Asia pillar is still weak.

Israel needs coordinated, long-term Asia, China and India policies with a clear view of Israel's long-term interests. It should greatly strengthen defense links with all Asian countries that do not have adversarial relations with the United States with a careful eye towards Israel's relations with China. It must also greatly increase its cultural, artistic, and intellectual outreach to Asia in order to accumulate "soft power" in this rising continent.

Jewish Identity in Israel Today

Zionism was a movement to found a Jewish state. However, especially in its early formative decades it was much more than that – it was a movement to reorder Jewish life and, in particular its pattern of collective identity. Many of the historical streams within Zionism presented their own unique conceptions of Jewish collective identity and identification. With the establishment and the consolidation of the State and Israeli society, some of these visions, to one extent or another, were translated into social reality. Such translations, of course, entailed changes. Nevertheless, in some cardinal cases one can detect the ideological origins of some of the contemporary patterns of Jewish identity in Israel.

With that in mind we are going to examine salient patterns of Jewish identity in Israel, based upon recent surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center and the Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI). Based upon these surveys it appears that the major patterns of Jewish identity in Israel are, first, the pattern that characterizes those who self-identify as Hilonim (secular) and secondly, the pattern that characterizes those groups whose self-identity is delineated in one fashion or another by religion – Haredim (Ultra-Orthodox), Datiim (National Religious), and Masoratiim (Traditional or Traditionist) In regard to one area, the Masoratiim constitute their own subgroup.

The conclusion that one derives from these surveys is that the difference between Hilonim and those who self-identify as traditional or religious is not only, or even primarily, one of the degree of religious observance. **A central difference between the groups is deeply held**

ideological and conceptual differences concerning the fundamentals of Jewish existence – what does it mean to be Jewish? What is the task of the State of Israel? What is the relationship between Israeli and Jewish identity?

Hilonim are approximately half of the Israeli Jewish population. Everyone else, those who include a component of religion or tradition in their self-identity, Haredim, Datiim or Masoratiim, constitute the other half. Despite its appellation, the Hiloni group is not devoid of religion. A third of Hilonim keep kosher and over 90 percent attend a Passover Seder. Sixty seven percent do not eat pork and over 50 percent always or occasionally light Sabbath candles. Sixty percent, to one degree or another, believe in God. In other words, differences among the groups in regard to religious observance are a matter of degree, they are not binary or polar ("yes/no").

Binary differences emerge, though, when it comes to the construction of Jewish and Israeli identity. Here the differences between Hilonim on the one side and Datiim, Haredim and Masoratiim on the other are binary. There are also stark differences Between Datiim and Haredim on the one side and Hilonim on the other mainly in regard to the relationship of religion and public life. In regard to these latter issues, the Masoratiim often occupy a midway position. Their responses are often split down the middle. Thus, their responses are very far from those of Hilonim, but equally unlike those of Datiim and Haredim. The different patterns are summarized in the following chart.

	Hilonim	Haredim, Datiim	Masoratiim
Major component of Jewish identity	National and culture 83%	Religion. Haredim 97%, Datiim 85%	Religion 58%
Religion Important?	Not very important (98%, 79% not too important or not important at all)	Very important 100%	Very Important 83%
Jewish or Israeli?	Israeli (59%)	Jewish (Haredi 91%, Dati 80%)	Jewish 59%
Relationship to Diaspora	43% believe that Israel has special responsibility to communities in need	60% Datiim and 70% of Haredim believe Israel has special responsibility	60% Believe Israel to have special responsibility
To be a good Jew one must support settlement in the Greater Land of Israel.	Do not agree. 63%	Agree to very great or great extent. At least 70%, including Liberal Datiim	Agree to very great or great extent. 66%
Political Alignment – Identify as Left	14%	2%	2%
Religion and state	religion should be kept separate from government policies (88%)	government policies should promote religious values and beliefs. (Haredi 82%, Dati 80%)	Split 51% Govt. should promote religious values and beliefs.
Judaism or Democracy?	Democracy (89%)	Judaism (Haredim 89% Datiim 65%)	Split 56% favor democratic principles
Shut down public transportation on Shabbat?	94% opposed	Datiim and Haredim over 85% for	Split (44% for, 56% against)
Rationale for States’ existence	"enable modern Jewish existence in a civic state with a Jewish culture" (Hilonim 47%, Masoratim 39%)	"to realize fully the religious and national nature of the Jewish people. (Haredim -84%, Datiim 73-84%, Liberal	Split 39% for each of the rationales.

		Datiim 47%, Masoratiim 39%	
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To understand these profiles, we must go back to the essentials of the Zionist project. As we have indicated, Zionism was a movement to reorder Jewish life and, in particular its pattern of collective identity. The population group that calls itself Hiloni [secular] is the group that carried out and underwent the Zionist revolution in the structure of Jewish identity. This revolution attempted to replace religion as the overarching authoritative framework of Jewish life and collective identity with a political national framework. It entailed an attempt to base Jewishness upon the "immanent frameworks" of language, political collective, and (to a certain extent) calendar, not upon religious ideals, aspirations, obligations or messianic hope. If one lives in the State of Israel and identifies with it as expressing one's identity, is a Hebrew speaking citizen of it, especially if one fulfills one's citizenship duties in terms of military service and political participation, then one's life is Jewish. Hence, religion is not a major component of Jewish identity but rather national belonging and culture; and Hilonim are Israelis first and Jews second; religion should be kept apart from politics; and the sense of responsibility of Hilonim to the Diaspora (as it currently exists) is not so great. The primary rationale among Hilonim for the State of Israel is "enable modern Jewish existence in a civic state with a Jewish culture."

The Zionist revolution in Jewish identity, though, remained incomplete. Other, Haredi or ultra-Orthodox groups in the Jewish population of Palestine-Eretz Yisrael objected vociferously to this program, including the very attempt to found a Jewish national-political

framework. Yet other groups, who became known as Datiim and Masoratiim attempted to reinterpret Jewish nationalism and to assimilate it (in one fashion or another) into the traditional religious framework. For all of these groups, as we have seen, religion is a much more important component of Jewish identity than it is for Hilonim. Secondly, for them, **Israeliness is a realization of Jewishness, not a replacement or a translation of it.** As a result, all these groups are **Jewish first** and then Israeli. Accordingly, they also have a much closer connection with the Diaspora – at least 60 percent of Masoratiim, Datiim and Haredim feel a special responsibility to take care of Jews in need.

As far as the connection between religion and government policy is concerned, the picture is somewhat more complicated. Datiim, Haredim, and Masoratiim believe that insofar as the state **expresses** traditional Jewishness, it ought not be kept separate from religion **especially in regard to national and political issues** such as the Land of Israel, borders, and, apparently, peace agreements. Thus, among the Haredim, Datiim, and Masoratiim, large majorities responded that, to a great or very great extent, to be a good Jew one has to support settlement in the Greater Land of Israel (numbers forthcoming). Among the Hilonim, in contrast, very few responded that supporting settlements was necessary in order to be a good Jew. This of course accords with the political alignment of the religious and traditional populations. Thus, according to both the Pew and JPPI surveys, among those who self-identify as traditional or

religious, only about 2 percent identify as Left. The vast majority of these sectors is more or less divided equally between those who identify as Center or Right. People who identify in significant numbers as Left are to be found only among the Hilonim (14 percent), even though among that population too, the majority identify as Center (62 percent).

Furthermore, the Haredim and Datiim believe that insofar as the state **expresses** traditional Jewishness, it ought not be kept separate from religion: individual religious conduct and traditional issues of religion and state such as Shabbat and women praying out loud at the Kotel. Thus, 80 percent or more of Datiim and Haredim believe that "Government policies should promote religious values and beliefs." Accordingly, the vast majority of Haredim and Datiim (96 and 85 percent respectively) believe that the government should prohibit public transportation on Shabbat. They also believe that in a conflict between Judaism and democracy, Judaism should be favored and, furthermore, that the primary rationale for the State of Israel is "to realize fully the religious and national nature of the Jewish people" (Haredim -84 percent, Datiim 73-84 percent, Liberal Datiim 47 percent). Among Hilonim (of all sorts), support for this rationale is much lower: among "absolute Hilonim" only 6 percent supported this rationale and among the "slightly traditional Hilonim" 16 percent supported it.

The Masoratiim, though, seem to be divided as to whether and to what extent the Jewish-traditional character of the state requires restrictions on individual freedom and choice and democracy. Thus, in regard to questions traditionally regarded as matters of religion and state, such as Shabbat, Masoratiim tend to be divided. This divided opinion is not limited to practical

questions (such as shutting down public transportation on Shabbat or allowing women to pray out loud at the Kotel) but also extends to fundamental issues regarding Judaism and the public sphere. Thus, they are also divided in regard to such questions as the relative prioritization of Judaism and democracy, and the primary rationale behind the Jewish state - "to realize fully the religious and national nature of the Jewish people" (39 percent) **or** "to enable modern Jewish existence in a civic state with a Jewish culture" (39 percent).

Despite the fact that Datiim and Haredim have similar views regarding Jewish identity and the relationship between religion and state, there are, of course, serious differences between them. The nature of these differences can be glimpsed in their differential responses to the question "does the term Zionist describe you accurately." Only 9 percent of Haredim answered that the term describes them very accurately and 24 percent said that it describes them somewhat accurately (33 percent in all). Among Datiim, in contrast 95 percent said that the terms describe them very or somewhat accurately. This difference reflects that fact that religious Zionists, in their own way, support the Zionism as a transformative and redemptive project, while the Haredim tend to reject it (while retaining nationalist, right wing orientations).

Thus, the differences between the various identity groups, and especially between Hilonim and the other, religion or tradition-oriented groups, go way beyond degrees of religious observance. They centrally involve deeply held ideological and conceptual differences concerning the fundamentals of Jewish and Israeli collective identity and the nature of the Jewish state and public life.

In the initial decades of the state, the Hiloni construction of identity was hegemonic. Today, it is being ever increasingly contested by the other more religious and traditional constructions. This development presents a dilemma. It is certainly a positive development that Jewish identity expressions in Israel are more pluralistic and variegated. At the same time, such contestation concerning fundamental questions can threaten social solidarity and "cohesion." Under such circumstances, JPPI **recommends** that the Israeli public sphere engage in education and debate concerning these issues. This would entail official bodies providing resources and venues for such discussion. WJPPI is **not recommending** "Jewish education, renewal or Jewish consciousness undertaken by one of the sides (in a condescending manner). Rather we are recommending, for example, that the both the Garinim Toraniim and anti-religionization

committees in the schools be allowed to reflect on their beliefs and to understand more deeply and thoroughly what is at issue between them alongside what joins them.

While this paper emphasizes what divides the various sectors of Jewish Israeli society, it must be remembered that much joins them. Thus, majorities of every Jewish population in Israel believe that Israel can be a Jewish state and a democracy at the same time. Such agreement reflects wide ranging agreement, of whatever sort, with the constitutional designation of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state and with the joint components of Israeli collective identity – Jewishness and democracy. Thus, what we are seeking is in the educational programs that we are recommending is not superficial conciliation or agreement but rather a more intelligent and informed debate about both what divides and joins us.

The Reform and Conservative Movements in Israel

Surveys of Israeli Jewish identity consistently show as many as 12-13 percent of Israeli Jews self-identify as Reform or Conservative. While conservative voices claim that the liberal religious movements have no place in Israel, that secular Israelis are "secular-Orthodox," it is becoming difficult to ignore this emerging reality. The movements combined maintain 125 communities throughout Israel, 280 affiliated rabbis, 85 of them working in such capacities. Both have active rabbinic seminaries, youth movements, pre-army *mechinot* and three kibbutzim, with many more hosting "Reform-style" synagogues.

Yet the movements report only 12,000 registered adult members combined. Instead, the majority of these "Reform" and "Conservative" Jews are secular or traditional Israelis who engage with Jewish practice such as weddings (~1000/year), bar/bat mitzvahs (~3000/year), circumcisions and more (~1000/year) through the liberal alternatives, rather than traditional Orthodox Judaism.

To understand the emerging religious identity of secular and traditional Israelis, we suggest considering the following elements:

- Synagogue membership plays a nominal role, as Israelis rarely "belong" to synagogues, and much of what the organized Jewish community provides abroad is provided instead by the state, school, or in the public space.
- Most secular Israelis are not detached from Judaism and engage with Jewish practice, holidays and life cycle events.
- Those Secular Israelis who are turned off by the Orthodox establishment, are increasingly exposed to non-Orthodox alternatives through travel abroad and interaction with local Jewish communities, interactions with Diaspora Jews in

Israel, and attendance of Reform or Conservative life-cycle events.

We propose that this amounts to a significant shift from the accepted paradigm for religious identity for secular and traditional Israelis. Historically, most Israeli Jews "didn't attend Orthodox synagogues;" **today, a growing number of secular and traditional Israelis now also "don't attend Reform and Conservative synagogues," and engage with the movements primarily for lifecycle events.**

While this has not yet translated into Reform and Conservative movements with hundreds of thousands of committed followers, it could, realistically mean that in the near future as many as 20-30 percent of secular and traditional Israelis will prefer to "not attend" Reform and Conservative synagogues. This is already the case in Tel Aviv and other places around Israel.

Public attitudes toward the Reform and Conservative movements is generally positive: highest among secular Israelis; mixed or neutral among traditional Israelis; and negative among the Orthodox and Haredi. A majority of Israeli Jews favor granting equal rights and recognition to the movements. That said, hostility from Orthodox and Haredi groups is significantly more intense than is the sympathy and support proffered by the secular and traditional public.

The Reform and Conservative movements, despite the common criticism, have significant room to operate in most respects, although much of this has been achieved through legal activism. Thus, today the only major issue with which the movements have no official rights is in the realm of marriage and divorce. They do have full or partial freedom in the area of conversion,

access to the Kotel, access to the public education system, government funding for rabbis and synagogues, and burial. However, public funding is entirely disproportionately low with respect to what is granted the movements (a few millions) vs. Orthodox and Haredi groups (a few billions).

Policy Implications

- The unequal status of the movements in Israel is a point of contention between the Israeli government and many Diaspora Jews. There are significant parts of the government and the constituencies that they represent who are strongly opposed to the liberal movements and expressions of religious pluralism in general. At the

same time, while there is wide support for these in the general public, this support is not afforded high importance and priority by the supporters themselves. Thus, policies favorable to the movements may find favor with the Diaspora but will cause domestic political harm, not gain.

- Continued efforts by the Haredi parties to push legislation that would grant greater control to the Rabbinate and block the non-Orthodox movements (as well as modern-Orthodox), is driving many to bypass the Rabbinate altogether. Some of these efforts are led by Modern Orthodox elements in society as well as the Reform and Conservative movements. This could make the Rabbinate irrelevant to a significant segment of Jewish Israelis if this trend continues (marriage, kashrut supervision, conversion, etc.).

The State of Israel and American Jewry: Relations in Flux

The American Jewish community is developing in two distinct directions. One direction is the demographic growth of the Orthodox and especially the Ultra-Orthodox community, which gives them increasing weight and presence. The second direction is that the liberal non-Orthodox community is becoming increasingly enmeshed in a welcoming American society and is developing a new model of Jewish identity based upon personal choice. The challenge facing the liberal American Jewish religious and communal leadership is to craft forms of Jewishness and Jewish belonging that are attractive to Jewish individuals.

The policy challenge facing the Government of Israel is that the liberal American Jewish community and their leadership believes that the Government of Israel has written off their support and their attachment to Israel. They attribute this in part to their view that Israeli decision-makers have erroneously come to believe that the liberal camp is in a state of inevitable terminal decline.

We recommend that the organized Jewish community, the major Jewish organizations and the Government of Israel facilitate and encourage the increased entrance of Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jews into the public sphere and politics on the national (and not only the state) level. Such

entrance will enable their influence on issues that are of concern to the entire Jewish People and not only to the Ultra-Orthodox community.

At the same time, we recommend that the Israeli government continue to view the liberal American Jewish community as an important source of support for Israel and as a strategic asset. While we recognize that the liberal non-Orthodox Jewish community is becoming more deeply enmeshed in American life, we do not believe that this necessarily makes for indifference to, and distancing from, both Jewish life and Israel. Evidence from the past shows that educational interventions (post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Jewish Learning and projects like Taglit and Masa) can keep liberal and even assimilated Jews connected to Jewish life and supportive of Israel. We recommend that such programs be not just maintained but expanded. (A detailed set of recommendations will come at the end of the chapter.)

The effects of these programs can be seen in that Seven in ten Jewish Americans say they feel either very attached (30 percent) or somewhat attached (39 percent) to Israel, according to the 2013 Pew study. Recent studies of Birthright participants show their “connection to Israel persists and is significant.”² The number of American Jews visiting Israel has increased in recent years, both in absolute numbers,³ and as a

² “Beyond 10 Days: Parents, Gender, Marriage, and the Long-term Impact of Birthright Israel”, Leonard Saxe, Michelle Shain, Graham Wright, Shahar Hecht, and Theodore Sasson, December 2017 - <https://goo.gl/okh91w>

³Ministry of Tourism Travel Survey, 1998-2015

percent of American Jews who have been to Israel.⁴ And the internet and social media enable Jews wherever they live to communicate both easily and constantly. Furthermore, other studies have shown that the children of intermarriage and other "borderland" Jews are responsive to educational programming and in their wake form genuine attachment to the Jewish community and Israel.⁵

However, there are also troubling signs: The multi-decade bi-partisan support that framed decades of U.S.-Israel relations is beginning to fray. As noted in a recent Gallup poll, there is now a historically unprecedented 38-point gap between Republican and Democrat sympathy for Israel versus the Palestinians. This has implications for the relationship of American Jews to Israel. 70 percent of American Jews continue to vote for Democratic candidates and have strong antipathy for the values and policies advanced by President Trump.

Furthermore, multiple studies have documented that identified American Jewry can be demographically described as a 90/10 percent split -- 20 percent comprised by Orthodox communities (from Modern Orthodox to Haredi) and 80 percent reflecting those who identify as Reform, Conservative, or Just Jewish. While both groups or camps identify and embrace Zionism have strong positive views about Israel and ties to Israel, most in the "Orthodox camp" -- with some exceptions-- tends to vote Republican in

substantially greater numbers and to be more supportive of policies being advanced by the present Israeli government; and most in the "Liberal Camp,"—with some exceptions—tend to vote Democratic in substantially greater numbers and have far greater differences with policies being pursued by the present Israeli government.⁶

During Israel's first decades, broad segments of American Jewry were united in their commitment to mobilize to support for the young state. The widely cited slogan "We Are One" obscured the reality that American and Israeli Jewry lived in two substantially different contexts: in Israel, in a sovereign state with a government elected by its citizens providing one center of integrated authority; and in America where Jews lived in diffuse voluntary communities. These structural differences were less visible as Israel in its first decades relied heavily on both World Jewry and global governments for vital support and legitimacy.

The overall picture of relations between the two largest Jewish communities is one of strong and solid relations. And yet such a picture has an increasing backdrop of concern as changes take place. Israel today is no longer a weak country in urgent need of American Jewish philanthropic largess. The strength and size of Israel's economy has re-contextualized global Jewish philanthropy which continues to support important work in Israel but is no longer indispensable for Israel's survival. Larger and larger

⁴ The 2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey found that 35% of American Jews had visited Israel, while the 2013 Pew Study "A Portrait of Jewish Americans" found that 43% of American Jews had visited Israel.

⁵ "Millennial Children of Intermarriage: Religious Upbringing, Identification and Behavior Among Children of Jewish and Non-Jewish Parents", Theodore Sasson, Janet Krasnic Aronson, Fern Chertok, Charles Kadushin, Leonard Saxe, , Contemporary Jewry, April 2017, 37:1, 99-123.

⁶"The Rise of Orthodoxy and Political-Cultural Polarization within the Jewish Community in the U.S.", Shlomo Fischer, JPPI, <https://goo.gl/pRfXHX>

segments of Diaspora Jews no longer live under the emotional power of 20th century Jewish history—the Holocaust, the establishment of Israel, and the Six-Day War. Moreover, whereas Jewish identity in Israel is ascriptive and national, large segments of American Jews are increasingly described by observers as “Jews by choice.”

Said differently, the largest segments of identified American Jews view the religious diversity of the Jewish People as an asset for strengthening the Jewish Future and are deeply troubled by what they perceive as the Israeli Orthodox rabbinate monopoly over religious issues including issues related to conversion. They were deeply troubled by the present government’s abrogation of the Kotel agreement in June 2017 and their leaders and those most involved advocate for the Israeli government to recognize the major religious streams and provide equitable funding to them. Large numbers of those in the “Liberal Camp” are also troubled by what they observe to be challenges to Israel’s democracy: threats to an independent judiciary and efforts perceived as seeking to stifle dissent. Finally, large numbers in the liberal camp are troubled by the 50-year occupation of the West Bank and would like to see the Israeli Government be more supportive of credible efforts to break the Palestinian-Israeli impasse, although most recognize that a range of issues in the Palestinian camp are equally if not more responsible for the stalemate.⁷

From “we are one,” two “camps” are emerging. And this is further compounded by the conflation of Israeli advocacy and Israeli education. This has resulted in the perception, particularly among large numbers of the young in the Liberal camp, that there is little support or context within American Jewish institutions—for significant opportunities to learn about the range of Zionist views and visions past and present, to debate difficult policy issues or to deal with the challenging “grey” issues. And beyond this, some individuals or groups which raise difficult issues have been branded anti-Israel, anti-Semitic or both.

The Liberal Camp is stunned by emerging trends in Israel and many of the recent policies being pursued by the GOI. Yet their “representatives,” the leadership of the Reform, Conservative movements and Federations – arguably 70 percent of American Jewry – believe they have less access and less impact on decision makers in Israel. They attribute this in part to their view that Israeli decision-makers erroneously come to believe that the Liberal Camp is in a state of inevitable terminal decline hence Israeli decision makers need not be concerned with the Liberal Camp’s grievances even if presently is broadly reflective of American Jewry. Conversely, the Orthodoxy Camp is more supportive of emerging trends in Israel and most policies being pursued by the GOI and is seen as becoming more dominant in American Jewry as the decades unfold.⁸

⁷ For example, “Why Many American Jews Are Becoming Indifferent or Even Hostile to Israel”, Daniel Gordis, Mosaic Magazine, May 2017 - <https://goo.gl/w7QZxj>

⁸See “The Rise of Orthodoxy and Political-Cultural Polarization within the Jewish Community in the U.S.” mentioned above and 2013 Pew study “A Portrait of Jewish Americans”, pages 81 to 95. This study shows that American Orthodox Jews’ opinions are more congruent with those held by the current Government of Israel, compared to those of non-Orthodox Jewish Americans.

Despite the liberal/Orthodox divide, deep concerns are increasingly shared throughout the community. In a widely noted op-ed in the NY Times (March 18, 2018), Ronald Lauder, President of the World Jewish Congress, a conservative, Republican, Likud supporter for decades, shared his deep concerns about the future of Israel. They included what he described as “Israel’s capitulation to religious extremists and the growing disaffection of the Jewish Diaspora.” He continued “By submitting to the pressures exerted by a minority in Israel, the Jewish state is alienating a large segment of the Jewish People.”

The relationship of American and Israeli Jewry is multi faced: both strong and challenged by trends in both societies and policies being pursued by the present Government of Israel at the cultural level, the differences between living in a Jewish community increasingly “of choice” as distinct from a national sovereign state are becoming more manifest. As Rabbi Elliot Cosgrove of the Park Avenue Synagogue said “Israeli Jewry and American Jewry are on two very different trajectories. Israel is headed toward centralization, exclusion and insularity. American Jewry toward decentralization, inclusion and pluralism.” (Park Avenue Synagogue, Dvar Torah “The Two Worlds of Judaism,”; May 9, 2015)

To conclude, the State of Israel and the organized Jewish community should continue to invest in both major segments of the American Jewish community: the liberal majority and the Orthodox minority

One major segment is the Orthodox and especially the Ultra-Orthodox. This community is growing owing

largely to much higher birthrates than among non-Orthodox liberal Jews. (Currently, 30 percent of Jewish children nationally, are being raised in Orthodox households.) Because of this demographic growth, it is important that Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jews enter the public sphere and politics and achieve positions of influence. In the second half of the Twentieth century, liberal Jews achieved great professional and public prominence and hence positions of public influence. With their growing demographic rise, it is important that Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jews do the same. The Ultra-Orthodox do have considerable political representation on the State level. This representation is mainly concerned with attaining benefits for the Ultra-Orthodox community. We are recommending that the Ultra-Orthodox community expand its representation to the national level and deal with Jewish People concerns and not only with issues that only affect the Ultra-Orthodox community. Placing Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox members in national public service and public life will continue Jewish People influence under changing demographic circumstances. **The organized Jewish community and the major Jewish organizations should encourage this trend, by offering training especially adapted to the Haredi community, to public service and communal professionals. The Government of Israel should encourage and support these initiatives.**

The other segment is the liberal non-Orthodox community. **JJPI recommends that a worthy policy**

for the Government of Israel is not to disregard segments of the Jewish People but on the contrary to maintain a broad, pluralistic Jewish People with many segments and points of view. This is for two reasons: It is the very *raison d'être* of the Jewish state to preserve and maintain the Jewish People in all of its variety. Secondly, the support of the broad Jewish community is a strategic asset to the State of Israel.

In order to maintain and expand the connection with the liberal Jewish community JPPI makes the following recommendations:

- Programs such as Birthright and Masa have had considerable efficacy in strengthening the bonds between the broad, liberal segments of American Jews and Israel. Such programs, with the

significant support of the Israeli government, should be continued and expanded into new areas.

- The government of Israel should make an effort to understand and appreciate the new model of being Jewish by choice. It should enter into dialogue with Diaspora communities so to better understand the model's advantages and disadvantages.
- The Government of Israel should explain its security and political needs to the liberal Diaspora community. It should discuss its constraints and its opportunities so as to give the Diaspora communities a more empathetic understanding of its policies.
- The Government of Israel should expand its cultural ties with the liberal Diaspora communities, including the showcasing of art, literature, music, and thought.

Latin American Jews. Changing Horizons and New Challenges

There has been a significant revitalization of Jewish life among the Jewish communities of Latin America although communities are shrinking, mostly due to emigration processes.

Over the course of two generations, Latin American Jewry has transformed from mostly immigrants and immigrant communities to rooted communities of locally-born citizens and, simultaneously, of emigrants and expatriates.

Under the impact of globalization process and the move towards social and institutional pluralism, Jewish individuals have increasingly entered the political sphere and assumed high-ranking public roles, while organized Jewish communities have attained prominent roles as a result of increased top-to-bottom citizenship participation. Thus, the twofold complex process of the erosion of a national ethnic narrative and the greater recognition of minorities based on religious and ethnic grounds confer increasing visibility and legitimacy to Jewish communities. At the same time there are also exclusionary initiatives directed against minorities.

Jewish presence in Latin America's public sphere is defined by a new agenda in which citizenship-building and collective identity seek to converge. Thus, in Mexico and Argentina, Jewish communities take an active role in regard to general civic issues such as fighting poverty and advancing democracy.

In Latin American Jewish life differing and even contradictory trends coexist. Decline in historical criteria of belonging coexists with a diversified Jewish

life displayed along religious, sub-ethnic and political differences. Communities are facing the challenge to offer the appropriate and differentiate spaces to reduce the dis-affiliation as an elective option. Thus, policies should be developed and refined regarding inclusion measures for entering Jewish peoplehood, while greater attention should be given to defining whether a threshold exists for exiting Jewish peoplehood, and what it is.

Historically, the multi-functionality of Israel for Latin American communities as identity referent, organizational axis, and energy catalyzer for building communal life has been determinant. However, both these functions and the traditional pillars of Israel-Diaspora relations – its institutional channels and the types of connection – have changed.

For Latin American Jews, besides its condition of national sovereign and creative cultural center, Israel has historically been a vital space for those in need. While regional and national trends point to dependency of Aliyah (and Jewish migration in general) on the unfolding of specific local circumstances, varying recurring economic crises and political unrest; ideological attachment has also played an important role.

Data on Mexico shows that while 97 percent of the Jewish community's older members (individuals 70 years old, for instance) express the belief that Israel is of uttermost importance, only 77 percent of the young population (18-19-year-olds) report the same belief. These percentages are far higher if we compare them

with opinions expressed by members of other Latin American communities. In Argentina, the percentage of those who expressed the belief that Israel is of utmost importance diminished to 57 percent.

Data on Jews living in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela show that both age (generation) and country of origin influence the place of Israel in people's lives and their attachment to it. Mexico has exceptionally high rates of visits to Israel while lower rates characterize Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela.

Latin American Jewish migration to the United States implies an altered posture vis-à-vis the connection to Israel. A geographically diverse transnationalism replaces older binary connections between Latin American Jews and Israel. That does not necessarily imply the weakening of attachments but rather their re-signification. There is some departure from the previous dominant pattern of almost exclusive interaction with Israel or Israel-Zionist based organizations, as North American Jewish institutions become an important source of direct political support and a model for collective organization for Latin American communities.

Looking at the educational ecology, the highest rate of population growth takes place at the religious schools. While acknowledging the fact that this trend is related to the incidence of community social policies on communal cultural profiles – as expressed in the massive support offered through scholarships by religious schools – it also must be noted that this process reflects an increase in religiosity and observance.

Religion shows a noteworthy strengthening not only in the educational field, but also in the overall

community life. In the last few years, paired with changing trends in world Jewish life, Orthodox groups have formed new religious congregations. Today, the spread of Chabad and the establishment of Chabad centers, both in the large, well-established communities as well as in the smaller ones, are striking. The expanding presence of Shas and Aish Hatora in communities where the Sephardic and Mizrahi presence is dominant complements the picture (Mexico, Panama). There is a very important trend toward religious observance and Haredization. In Mexico, these trends were specifically analyzed among the population below 40 years of age and the figures for very observant went up from 7 to 12 percent; observants from 17 to 20 percent and traditionalist fell from 62 to 59 percent.

Anti-Zionism and de-legitimization of Israel has become an expanded “transnational ideological package” that symbolizes and codifies the struggle against globalization and U.S. hegemony, so dominant in Latin America. Lately, it has incorporated the narrative and concepts of colonialism (occupation=conquest=domination) relating its meaning to the history of the continent. Post-modern and post-colonial motives co-exist with renewed struggles for modernization.

Following the US decision to move its Embassy to Jerusalem, Guatemala and Paraguay were the first Latin American countries to also move their embassies to Jerusalem. The importance of this step should be evaluated on the light of the historical role the region has played in the UN process that led to the Resolution 181 that approved the Partition of Palestine. Out of the then 57 member-countries, 20 were Latin Americans, which constituted the major

block. Of them, 13 voted positively, 6 abstained and only one Cuba voted No.

The role played then by the Jewish communities in order to mobilize the government and societies and the attention channeled to government and communities by the Jewish National bodies (WZO and JAFI) were determinate.

Recommendations

Today, Israel and the Jewish communities globally need to affirm the importance of a Jewish public conversation based on shared and specific dialogues, comprised by leadership and constituencies – affiliated and non-affiliated – to strengthen the bases of a pluralistic coexistence as a way of being faithful to the Jewish past and its current challenges. It implies differentiated inclusive policies based on agreed thresholds instead of exclusions that find their source in unilateral decisions.

We emphasize the need to develop pluralism as a normative code that leads to building mechanisms that regulate differences and conflict and make it possible to deal with dissent. Israel and the Jewish communities should invest more creativity aimed at developing institutional rules, sites, and arrangements to induce contingent consent and provide spaces for the unfolding and interplay of a diverse but peaceful common life of identity and difference. The Government of Israel should commit itself to a joint effort with the local communities to strengthen the ties to Israel, Judaism and the Jewish communities, of those whose Jewish connections have eroded.

In light of the current political Latin American map, Israel should take advantage of the prevailing centrist character of the governments and the existence of

regional organizations that may collectively act as allies (the LIMA Group or the OAS).

Israeli authorities involved with immigration would highly benefit from an accurate assessment of the required support and immigration needs of different sectors of olim, as well as the needs of potential new immigrants who are able or may be willing to maintain a significant link to their countries of origin and to other (third) countries where parts of their families live.