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## **New envoy to U.S.: Soon Jews won't want to live in Israel**

By [Natasha Mozgovaya](#), Haaretz Correspondent

Suppose a Jewish couple considering immigration to Israel were to ask a bored Jewish Agency emissary for background material on the situation here. "It just so happens I received something today that might interest you," the emissary might reply, pulling out the most recent article written by Dr. Michael Oren, Israel's ambassador-designate to the United States.

This article might well deter the potential immigrants from ever bothering the agency's emissary again. Under the title "Seven Existential Threats," published in the latest issue of the conservative Jewish publication "Commentary," Oren wrote that Israel has no competition in the modern era when it comes to the number and variety of threats that endanger the Jewish state's existence.

Oren, a historian from the Shalem Center whom Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has tapped for Israel's top diplomatic post, described a country rotten to the core, riddled by everything from drug dealing to white slavery, from money laundering to illegal arms trading.

He reported that not even the army has escaped the clutches of corruption, thus weakening Israelis' will to fight for their country, or even to live in it. Moreover, Oren complained, Israel's best and brightest are being persecuted around the world for what the country's detractors term "war crimes."

Upon reading this article (which was written before he was appointed to his ambassadorial post), American Jews will also learn that the Jewish people will soon lose Jerusalem as its eternal capital, as this city, too, is under existential threat: A majority of Jerusalem's inhabitants (272,000 Arabs and 200,000 ultra-Orthodox, out of a total of 800,000 residents) are not Zionists; secular Jews are fleeing the city; and fully half of Israel's youth have never even visited the holy city.

According to Oren, "if this trend continues, [Israeli founding father David] Ben Gurion's nightmare will materialize and Israel will be rendered soulless, a country in which a great many Jews may not want to live or for which they may not be willing to give their lives."

Next on the list are the existential demographic threat, the existential

terrorist threat and the existential threat of Iran's nuclear capability. Interspersed throughout the article are a few rather existential historical inaccuracies, such as the claim that no Arab leader has ever recognized Israel as a Jewish state (the 1988 Palestinian declaration of independence recognized the Jewish state), or that between 1957 and 1967, hundreds of Jews were killed in acts of terror (the number is less than two dozen).

Particularly interesting is the solution to the existential demographic problem that ambassador-to-be Oren proposes → unilateral withdrawal from the West Bank to borders that would be determined in accordance with the following principles: maximum Jewish population, strategic assets, holy sites and natural resources. In other words, the historian-ambassador believes it is possible, and even appropriate, to (continue to) rob the Palestinians not only of their land, but also of their water and quarries.

This delusional article should come as no surprise to Haaretz readers with long memories. In December 1993, several weeks after the Oslo agreements were signed, this paper reported that Oren had written a document proposing the establishment of "a centrist bloc headed by [then] chief of staff Ehud Barak and MK Benny Begin as a counterweight to Yitzhak Rabin, who is being led by the left and Yossi Beilin, and to Benjamin Netanyahu, who is being dragged after the extreme right."

At that time, the American Jewish Committee, a smallish Jewish organization, had named Oren its representative in Israel. Now, Netanyahu the one who was in the clutches of the extreme right (presumably no longer?) → is appointing him to be Israel's number-one representative to the most important superpower in the world.

### **Crisis in a phone booth**

The crisis that has beset the Israeli delegation to the International Women's Commission undermines the theory that if women were in charge of the peace process, the many men who make their livings from the conflict would have to find new jobs. The internal struggle in the phone booth that houses what remains of the peace camp is paralyzing activity in the Israeli-Palestinian channel of the United Nations organization, which includes leaders from around the world.

The controversy broke out over Operation Cast Lead in Gaza earlier this year. Members of the Israeli steering committee → Prof. Galia Golan, Prof. Naomi Chazan, Anat Sargusti and Aida Touma-Sliman → signed a statement harshly condemning Israel. They agreed with their Palestinian comrades and other international delegates that Israel perpetrated a "massacre" in Gaza and urged the international community to "put an end to the madness."

Former Knesset member Colette Avital → an IWC veteran who also heads the Labor Party's external relations department → protested the

declaration, charging that it failed to mention Hamas' attacks against Israeli civilians. She herself traveled to Europe during the war with a delegation of Knesset members to explain Israel's position. Eti Livni, a former Knesset member from the Shinui party, sent her colleagues an e-mail asking: "Are we talking about a struggle between the forces of light, Hamas, and the forces of darkness, murderers?"

The Palestinian delegates said they would not sit with women who justified the war. The Israeli steering committee hinted to the two that their resignations would be welcomed. Former Meretz MK Chazan wrote in a letter to her colleagues that delegates from the rest of the world were discomfited by the Israeli group's inability to support the commission's basic stance, which opposes all violence. Chazan cautioned that prolonging this situation would lead the commission to a sad end.

After lengthy soul-searching, Avital decided to resign angrily from the organization, but Livni continues to resist. She said yesterday that she has no intention of "abandoning the arena to colleagues who surrender to the Palestinians' dictates." Those who want her expelled from the organization will have to do it themselves.

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