

## Israel needs to do some soul searching

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*Written in response to [Fighting the same battle from Europe to the Mideast](#) by Natan Sharansky.*

Can anyone be truly surprised by the rise of anti-Semitism around the world? Only someone who has been living in a time warp, or who was lost in the jungles of Borneo for years, can fail to know the reasons why.

From the strong-arm tactics of those who have sought reparations from the Swiss and Germans (among others), to the occupation of Palestinian territories - and yes, the settlement policies and the oppression of Palestinians - to the attempted silencing of critics of Israel by labeling them as anti-Semites, such actions and similar policies have backfired.

Instead of Israel being viewed as the righteous underdog, it is seen by many around the world as an immoral aggressor. Instead of standing for the rights of Jews and non-Jews alike - a shining beacon to the world, from those who survived one of history's worst nightmares - Israel's conduct has morphed into that of its Nazi oppressors in the eyes of many.

Simon Wiesenthal once spoke about survivors of the Nazi Holocaust owing a duty to Jews and non-Jews to insure that other holocausts did not occur. Monuments have been erected to those who died at the hands of Hitler and his thugs, but the 30 million who died under Stalin during the 1930s are forgotten. So too are those who died in

Cambodia under the Khymer Rouge, and the millions who have died in Africa and elsewhere.

Instead of more monuments, the world needs even-handed examples of humanity by the survivors and their offspring to lead the way toward a better world for Palestinians and Jews alike, and for all who suffer injustice and oppression at the hands of others anywhere in the world. Until that happens, with due respect, Mr. Sharansky and others will be like boys crying in the night, wondering why there is lightening - and nightmares.

America is Israel's only true ally in this world, and it provides extensive military, economic and diplomatic support, without which there would be no Israel; it would collapse both militarily and economically. Yet, the U.S. and Israel are not tied at the hip, and America will pursue its own best interests, which at times may diverge from those of Israel and Israelis - and vice versa.

For years, America and others in Europe have carried water for Israel, and have earned enmity in the Arab world for doing so. Arabs and followers of Islam represent the dominant and ever-expanding population base of the Middle East, with increasingly influential American constituents, who cannot and will not be ignored.

The Bushes - both George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush - have taken courageous but politically-risky steps to remove those who pose threats to Israel, and have presented Israel with opportunities that are unprecedented in this often-troubled world. Yet, they continue to be maligned in Israel; and it is time for Israel to seize those opportunities and to live up to the hopes of many non-Jews with its founding.

Instead of convening forums to fight against anti-Semitism, as Mr. Sharansky suggests, Israel and Jews around the world should recognize that Israel's actions produce

reactions; and instead of once again blaming others, Israelis need to do some soul-searching and address the root causes of the rise of anti-Semitism in recent years. It is clear that some Israelis know this all too well, but others seem to have their heads firmly planted in the ground.

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