

## A Response to Mitch Wolfe

Huffington-Post, April 21, 2013

[A blog](#) by Mitch Wolfe in The Huffington Post on April 9 cites me as an apparent influence on Justin Trudeau on the Middle East. I would be honoured if it were true but in fact I am not sure what Justin Trudeau's position on the Israel-Palestine conflict is -- I have never discussed it with him and not a lot has been written about it. Nor have I talked with Mr. Wolfe, either, that I am aware of. But I doubt that Mr. Trudeau would think that a two-state solution would be tantamount to throwing the Israelis under the bus, as Mr. Wolfe's article mentions. Certainly I don't think so. Nor do the six last leaders of Shin Bet think so, either. In the remarkable Oscar-nominated documentary *The Gatekeepers*, they are frank in their impatience with the occupation, persuasive in their concern that Israel cannot remain Jewish and democratic absent a two-state solution, and direct in their criticisms of successive Israeli governments for not negotiating a solution with the Palestinians.

As for Mr. Wolfe's direct reference to me, I am not, his contention notwithstanding, "adamant that all the Israeli settlements in the West Bank must be dismantled." My presumption is that in the context of a larger, final agreement the border would be negotiated between the parties based essentially on the 1967 lines, but as a practical matter allowing for some land swaps if agreed to by both sides. Mr. Wolfe is, however, right that I believe that the Israeli settlements in the West Bank violate the fourth Geneva Convention and are contrary to numerous UN resolutions. That was and remains the position of consecutive Canadian governments, including the Harper government, though the latter voices the position decidedly *soto voce*, and of nearly all other governments. Beyond illegality, I also believe that the continued building of settlements and the transfer of Israelis into the West Bank is progressively defeating the purpose of the negotiations and rendering them pointless. Absent a viable, fair, negotiated, agreed two-state solution, neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians will likely ever live in peace and security.