

Palestinian Nationhood: Truth...The Key to Peace

Written by Gadi Adelman

Sunday, 25 September 2011 20:36



After Abbas' UN theatrics, Israeli premier Netanyahu said, "The truth is that Israel wants peace with a Palestinian state, but the Palestinians want a state without peace." So what is the truth?

September is here in the midst of the "Arab Spring", the month that I have been writing about and speaking about on my radio show for months. The Palestinian Authority (PA) has entered its application for Statehood with General Ban Ki-moon and the UN.

The announcement came from PA President Mahmoud Abbas as he addressed the UN this past Friday. Why the "President" of a non-existent country should even be allowed to address

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the UN can be answered with two words: Yasser Arafat.

On October 14, 1974, the United Nations invited Yasser Arafat, then Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to address the General Assembly, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3210. Arafat was the first representative of a non-governmental organization to address a session of the UN General Assembly. He was also the first leader to address the UN while wearing a holster, although contrary to stories, it did not contain a gun.

Not long after, the PLO was given observer status and the UN recognized the rights of the Palestinians to self-determination in Resolutions 3236 and 3237.

Yes, the PLO, the same organization that spawned such groups as Fatah, Black September, Tanzim and Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. The same organization that was responsible for hundreds of bombings, hijackings, assassinations as well as other known terror acts. These included the killing of the 11 individuals that made up the entire Israeli Olympic team and their coaches in Munich in 1972, the murder of Cleo Noel, American ambassador to Sudan, in 1973, as well as the 1985 hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship which resulted in the murder of wheelchair-bound Leon Klinghoffer.

What I consider to be an important side note, the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade also claimed responsibility for the November 1975 bombing in Jerusalem, an attack that I survived and which claimed the lives of 7 children.

After October 1974 and Resolution 3210, we saw the “leaders” of the PLO and later the Palestinian Authority (PA) address the UN General Assembly time and again. Friday’s address was far removed from those in the past. This time PA leader Mahmoud Abbas, [told](#) the UN and the world,

“We aspire for and seek a greater and more effective role for the United Nations in working to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in our region that ensures the inalienable, legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people as defined by the resolutions of international legitimacy of the United Nations.”

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“International legitimacy”, in other words, an independent state or country. Abbas laid out five points during his speech. The first point was, in part,

“The goal of the Palestinian people is the realization of their inalienable national rights in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on all the land of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, which Israel occupied in the June 1967 war...”

During the Six Day War in 1967 Israel captured land through battles and bloodshed. That land later became known as the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. But whose land was this? Was this a state or country known as Palestine? No. The West Bank was part of Jordan and the Gaza Strip was part of Egypt.

That was not the only land that Israel captured. In addition they captured the Golan Heights which was a part of Syria. So why are the so-called Palestinians not also asking for the Golan Heights? Because the Golan was never a refugee camp of displaced people.

On December 9, 1917, as the First World War was winding down, Jerusalem surrendered to the British forces. Two days later General Allenby entered Jerusalem. This marked the end of four centuries of Ottoman-Turk rule (the Ottoman Empire) and the beginning of thirty years of British rule, otherwise known as the British Mandate.

The mandate system was established in the League of Nations (the forerunner to the UN) by [Article 22](#) which was formulated at the Paris Peace Conference between January and June 1919. Article 22 stated in part,

To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.

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To put it in to simple terms, the territories would be entrusted to advanced nations until such time as the local population could handle their own affairs. This was all incorporated into the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919.

At the end of the British Mandate, on November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly, by a two-thirds vote (33 to 13 with Britain and nine others abstaining) passed Resolution 181 partitioning Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. Yes, that is fact. One Jewish, which would later become Israel, and one Arab.

The Jews of Palestine accepted this partition despite the small size and strategic vulnerability of the proposed state. Additionally this proposed territory was one tenth of the original size that had been promised as a Jewish homeland.

As soon as the vote was announced, the Arab delegations of Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen stormed out, threatening war and the annihilation of all Palestinian Jews. The Arab national movement in Palestine, as well as all of the other Arab states, rejected any partition. They demanded the entire country and threatened to resist the partition by force.

So we need to explain how Trans-Jordan (known today as Jordan) figures in to all this. According to the [website](#) History of Nations,

At the end of World War I, the League of Nations as the mandate for Palestine and Transjordan awarded the territory now comprising Israel, Jordan, the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem to the United Kingdom. In 1922, the British divided the mandate by establishing the semiautonomous Emirate of Transjordan.

It must be stressed here that the White Paper (also known as the Churchill White Paper) stated that the Balfour Declaration could not be amended and that the Jews were in Palestine by right. It partitioned the area of the Mandate by excluding the area east of the Jordan River from Jewish settlement. The land was 76% of the original Palestine Mandate land. It was renamed Transjordan and was given to the Emir Abdullah by the British.

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A British memorandum that was presented to the League of Nations on September 16, 1922, stated that the provisions of the Mandate document calling for the establishment of a Jewish national home were not applicable to the territory known as Trans-Jordan, thereby severing almost 80% of the Mandate land from any possible Jewish Homeland.

It amazes me that the world forgets the fact that the Arab demands for a state or a "Palestine" were already satisfied once, it's called Jordan.

The British divided the mandate establishing Trans-Jordan, but that is also how the West Bank and its "refugees" enter the picture.

Once the Arabs rejected the partition of Palestine, the surrounding Arab nations told the Arabs of Palestine to flee due to the impending war. Many went to Trans-Jordan. Again, according to the History of Nations website,

Transjordan was one of the Arab states which moved to assist Palestinian nationalists opposed to the creation of Israel in May 1948, and took part in the warfare between the Arab states and the newly founded State of Israel. The armistice agreements of April 3, 1949 left Jordan in control of the West Bank and provided that the armistice demarcation lines were without prejudice to future territorial settlements or boundary lines.

In 1950, the country was renamed the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to include those portions of Palestine annexed by King Abdullah. While recognizing Jordanian administration over the West Bank, the United States maintained the position that ultimate sovereignty was subject to future agreement.

"The armistice agreements of April 3, 1949 left Jordan in control of the West Bank", so, the West Bank was part of Jordan from 1949 until 1967. It was during this time period that Jordan set up "refugee camps" for the Palestinians because they were not "Jordanians".

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There are many reasons as to why Jordan created these refugees in camps, but simply explained, according to [Wikipedia](#) ,

At the time, the population east of the Jordan River contained over 400,000 Palestinian refugees who made up one-third of the population of the Kingdom; another third of the population was Palestinians on the West Bank. Only one third of the population consisted of the original inhabitants of Trans-Jordan, which meant that the Jordanians had become a ruling minority over a Palestinian majority. This proved to be a mercurial element in internal Jordanian politics and played a critical role in the political opposition. Since the 1950s, the West Bank had become the center of the national and territorial aspects of the Palestinian problem that was the key issue of Jordan's domestic and foreign policy. According to King Hussein, the Palestinian problem spelled "life or death" for Jordan and would remain the country's overriding national security issue.

In reality, the West Bank was Jordan, yet Jordan is not asking Israel for that area back. That is because in 1988, Jordan renounced all claims to the West Bank. It did not want to deal with the "Palestinian" issue yet again.

The same holds true for the Gaza Strip, once an area belonging to Egypt. Once again, we must look at the UN 1947 partition plan. The United Nations 1947 partition plan allotted the coastal strip from Yavneh to Rafiah on the Egyptian border to be an Arab state. But remember the Arabs rejected that offer.

In 1948 before the Arabs attacked the newly formed Israel, most Arab inhabitants in Gaza fled or were expelled, settling around Gaza City. The Israeli Defense Forces captured Gaza in 1948, but Israel gave control of the Gaza Strip to Egypt in negotiations, keeping the towns of Ashdod and Ashkelon. In 1956, Israel again went to war with Egypt and captured Gaza yet again, only to return it again.

When Israel returned the entire Sinai Peninsula to Egypt as part of their peace agreement in 1979, Egypt refused to take the Gaza Strip back. Again, these "people" were not really Egyptians and therefore were not wanted.

These are the facts and they had to be explained. Too many people have no clue how we have

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gotten to this point. As clear as Netanyahu's speech was, it did not explain the facts leading up to today.

So now Gaza is somehow Israel's problem even though Israel left Gaza in 2005. As Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu explained in his UN [speech](#) shortly after Abbas spoke,

"We withdrew from Lebanon in 2000 and from every square inch of Gaza in 2005. That didn't calm the Islamic storm, the militant Islamic storm that threatens us. It only brought the storm closer and made it stronger."

Netanyahu did address the problem with territorial compromises,

"Now, some argue that the spread of militant Islam, especially in these turbulent times -- if you want to slow it down, they argue, Israel must hurry to make concessions, to make territorial compromises. And this theory sounds simple. Basically it goes like this: Leave the territory, and peace will be advanced. The moderates will be strengthened; the radicals will be kept at bay. And don't worry about the pesky details of how Israel will actually defend itself; international troops will do the job."

"These people say to me constantly: Just make a sweeping offer, and everything will work out. You know, there's only one problem with that theory. We've tried it and it hasn't worked. In 2000 Israel made a sweeping peace offer that met virtually all of the Palestinian demands. Arafat rejected it. The Palestinians then launched a terror attack that claimed a thousand Israeli lives."

"Prime Minister Olmert afterwards made an even more sweeping offer, in 2008. President Abbas didn't even respond to it."

He went on to state facts about what happens each time Israel gives land for peace,

"Hezbollah and Hamas fired thousands of rockets against our cities from the very territories we

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vacated. See, when Israel left Lebanon and Gaza, the moderates didn't defeat the radicals; the moderates were devoured by the radicals. And I regret to say that international troops like UNIFIL in Lebanon and UBAM in Gaza didn't stop the radicals from attacking Israel."

"We left Gaza hoping for peace. We didn't freeze the settlements in Gaza, we uprooted them. We did exactly what the theory says: Get out, go back to the 1967 borders, dismantle the settlements."

He explained the fact of what happened to the PA in Gaza when Israel withdrew,

"But ladies and gentlemen, we didn't get peace. We got war. We got Iran, which through its proxy Hamas promptly kicked out the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinian Authority collapsed in a day -- in one day."

He spoke about the fact of weapons,

"President Abbas just said on this podium that the Palestinians are armed only with their hopes and dreams. Yeah, hopes, dreams and 10,000 missiles and Grad rockets supplied by Iran, not to mention the river of lethal weapons now flowing into Gaza from the Sinai, from Libya, and from elsewhere."

When it came to the rights of Arabs in Israel, he again spoke in facts,

"The Jewish state of Israel will always protect the rights of all its minorities, including the more than 1 million Arab citizens of Israel. I wish I could say the same thing about a future Palestinian state, for as Palestinian officials made clear the other day -- in fact, I think they made it right here in New York -- they said the Palestinian state won't allow any Jews in it. They'll be Jew-free -- Judenrein. That's ethnic cleansing. There are laws today in Ramallah that make the selling of land to Jews punishable by death. That's racism. And you know which laws this evokes."

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The Palestinian Authority refuses to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, how can Israel be expected to make peace with a neighbor that refuses to recognize them? Netanyahu spoke of this as well,

“Ladies and gentlemen, last year in Israel in Bar-Ilan University, this year in the Knesset and in the U.S. Congress, I laid out my vision for peace in which a demilitarized Palestinian state recognizes the Jewish state. Yes, the Jewish state. After all, this is the body that recognized the Jewish state 64 years ago. Now, don't you think it's about time that Palestinians did the same?”

He explained the fact that the problem is not settlements while pointing out with Abbas's very own words that the issue is Israel and not the “territories”.

“President Abbas just stood here, and he said that the core of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the settlements. Well, that's odd. Our conflict has been raging for -- was raging for nearly half a century before there was a single Israeli settlement in the West Bank. So if what President Abbas is saying was true, then the -- I guess that the settlements he's talking about are Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jaffa, Be'er Sheva. Maybe that's what he meant the other day when he said that Israel has been occupying Palestinian land for 63 years. He didn't say from 1967; he said from 1948. I hope somebody will bother to ask him this question because it illustrates a simple truth: The core of the conflict is not the settlements. The settlements are a result of the conflict.”

Lastly he offered Abbas and the PA to sit down once again,

“In two and a half years, we met in Jerusalem only once, even though my door has always been open to you. If you wish, I'll come to Ramallah. Actually, I have a better suggestion. We've both just flown thousands of miles to New York. Now we're in the same city. We're in the same building. So let's meet here today in the United Nations. Who's there to stop us? What is there to stop us? If we genuinely want peace, what is there to stop us from meeting today and beginning peace negotiations?”

I am sad to report the fact that, once again, Abbas has failed to respond.