

Our World: Welcome to Palestine

Caroline Glick , THE JERUSALEM POST

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In the world of international diplomacy few issues receive more wall-to-wall support than the notion that it is essential to establish a Palestinian state. Leaders worldwide are so busy speaking of how essential it is for a State of Palestine to be founded that none of them seems to have noticed that it already exists.

This state was officially founded in the summer of 2005, when Israel removed its military forces and civilian population from the Gaza Strip and so established the first wholly independent Palestinian state in history. Israel's destruction of four Israeli communities in Northern Samaria and curtailment of its military operations in the area set the conditions for statehood in that area as well.

And so it is that as statesmen and activists worldwide loudly proclaim their commitment to establishing the sovereign State of Palestine, they miss the fact that Palestine exists. And it is a nightmare.

In the State of Palestine 88 percent of the public feels insecure. Perhaps the other 12 percent are members of the multitude of regular and irregular militias. For in the State of Palestine the ratio of police/militiamen/men-under-arms to civilians is higher than in any other country on earth.

In the State of Palestine, two-year-olds are killed and no one cares. Children are woken up in the middle of the night and murdered in front of their parents. Worshipers in mosques are gunned down by terrorists who attend competing mosques. And no one cares. No international human rights groups publish reports calling for an end to the slaughter. No UN body condemns anyone or sends a fact-finding mission to investigate the murders.

In the State of Palestine, women are stripped naked and forced to march in the streets to humiliate their husbands. Ambulances are stopped on the way to hospitals and wounded are shot in cold blood. Terrorists enter operating rooms in hospitals and unplug patients from life-support machines.

In the State of Palestine, people are kidnapped from their homes in broad daylight and in front of the television cameras. This is the case because the kidnappers themselves are cameramen. Indeed, their commanders often run television stations. And because terror commanders run television stations in the State of Palestine, it should not be surprising that they bomb the competition's television stations.

SO IT WAS that last week, terrorists from this group or that group bombed Al Arabiya television station in Gaza. And so it is that Hamas attacks Fatah radio announcers and closes down their radio station claiming that they use their microphones to incite murder. Because indeed, they are inciting murder. What would one expect for terrorists to do when placed in charge of a radio station?

And so it is that in the State of Palestine, journalists - whether members of terror groups or not - are part of the 88 percent of their public who are afraid. Sunday they protested outside the offices of one terror faction or another that controls the Palestinian Authority.

Speaking to *The Jerusalem Post*, reporter Ala Masharawi explained, "No one goes outside, no one moves without thinking twice. Gaza's streets have become terrible streets, especially at night. Gaza is a ghost town."

As the *Post's* Khaled Abu Toameh reported last week, in the State of Palestine, Christians are persecuted, robbed and beaten in what can only be viewed as a systematic campaign to end the Christian presence in places like Bethlehem. As Samir Qumsiyeh, owner of the Beit Sahur-based private Al-Mahd (Nativity) TV station lamented, "I believe that 15 years from now there will be no Christians left in Bethlehem. Then you will need a torch to find a Christian here."

MANY GOVERNMENT ministers and commentators seek strategic meaning in the strife in the State of Palestine. Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, for instance, goes on and on about the need to strengthen the "moderates" - that is, the Fatah terror group - over the "extremists" - that is, the Hamas terror group.

Helping her to propound this nonsense is PA Chairman and Fatah chief Mahmoud Abbas. Abbas and his men tell Westerners how pro-Western they are at the same time as they name streets and schools financed by US aid after Saddam Hussein and build sports facilities on the American taxpayers' tab in memory of terrorists who killed American soldiers in Iraq.

For the umpteenth time, on Sunday Fatah spokesmen in PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas's office blamed Iran and Syria for the escalating violence in Gaza and Judea and Samaria that has killed 29 people, including two children, in four days. "Iran and Syria are encouraging Hamas to continue fighting against Fatah," they alleged.

And yet, just last Thursday the Shin Bet arrested Omar Damra, a Fatah terrorist in Nablus. Damra is accused of manufacturing suicide bomb belts and attempting to smuggle them into Israel. He also stands accused of plotting to place explosive devices along roads in Judea and Samaria with the intention of blowing up IDF patrols.

Damra and his partner and fellow Fatah terrorist Mahamad Ramaha, who was arrested a month ago, were working under the instruction of Hizbullah - that is, under the direction of Iran. According to the Shin Bet, Hizbullah - that is, Iran - has taken over Fatah operations in Nablus. Since Israel's withdrawal from northern Samaria in August 2005, the Shin Bet has noted that, like Gaza, the Nablus area has become a mini-Afghanistan.

So not only are Hamas terrorists operating under Iranian and Syrian direction today, Fatah terrorists are as well. Yet this doesn't stop the US and Israel from pouring guns and money into the hands of Fatah terror chiefs. They fail to recognize that what you see is what you get.

These guns are not used to encourage moderation. These guns are used against Israelis and Palestinians alike in a turf battle between terror groups over money, guns and power that will never end. And it will never end because fighting and killing for money, guns and power is what terrorists do.

FOR THE past 13 years, since the Palestinian Authority was established in 1994, the contours of the State of Palestine have taken form in front of our eyes. Starting with Yasser Arafat's abrogation of the rule of law and murderous campaign against land dealers and journalists, with each passing year and with each move to further empower the PA, the situation has only grown worse. And yet, international pressure on Israel from Arabs, Europeans and the US to surrender more territory, curtail its authority, abrogate its claims to the areas set for Palestine, and finance the Fatah terror group have only grown in intensity.

And with each passing year, as the reality of Palestine has become clearer, the Israeli leadership's will to resist

this pressure is increasingly eroded.

So it is that last week Defense Minister Amir Peretz announced that he supports negotiating with Hamas. Peretz laid out his "vision" for the reinstatement of the so-called peace process with the Palestinians, and stated that, to "empower" the Palestinians, he supports extending the ban on IDF operations from Gaza to Judea and Samaria. It should go without saying that such IDF operations are aimed at preventing massacres of Israeli civilians like the one that happened in Eilat Monday morning.

LIVNI, FOR her part, has become the international champion of Fatah. Gushing to an audience of international peace processors in Davos, Switzerland, last week, Livni said, "In order to achieve peace and in order to promote a process, we must stick to this vision of a two-state solution and examine what the best steps to take are."

Of course, neither Livni nor Peretz, who insist that Israel's most urgent priority is to establish Palestine, is willing to recognize that Palestine exists already. They refuse to acknowledge what we already know: Palestine is a terror state and an economic basket case fully funded by the international community. Indeed, over the past year since Hamas won the Palestinian elections, international assistance to the Palestinians has increased dramatically.

As Ibrahim Gambari, the UN under-secretary-general for political affairs, noted last Thursday, official Western aid to the Palestinians, not including Arab and Iranian support for Hamas and Fatah, increased by 10 percent in 2006 over 2005, and stood at \$1.2 billion.

The Palestinians, who receive more aid per capita than any people on earth, are needy not because they lack funds. They are poor because they prefer poverty, violence and war to prosperity, peace and moderation. So it is that 57 percent of Palestinians support terror attacks against Israel.

The multitude of protesters worldwide who demand an end to the so-called "occupation" and the establishment of Palestine should be made aware of the fact that Palestine already exists. The hordes of political leaders mindlessly squawking about "visions" and "two-state solutions" should know: This is Palestine. Enter at your own risk.

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