

Shame on the UN: A Bold Reaction to Palestinian Statehood

On Nov. 29, 1947, the United Nations' General Assembly voted to partition Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state. The Jewish leadership accepted the plan; the Arab leadership rejected it. Sixty-five years later, on Nov. 29, 2012 (Thursday), Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority, excoriated Israel, praised Islamic terrorists and received the overwhelming approbation of the General Assembly, which voted 138 to 9 (with 41 abstentions) to recognize Palestine as a "non-member observer state."

Abbas was perfectly clear: "The moment has arrived for the world to say clearly: 'Enough of aggression, settlements and occupation.'" The world, then, through the U.N., would be rebuking Israel with its vote.

To be sure, President Abbas made some conciliatory remarks, such as, "We did not come here seeking to delegitimize a state established years ago, and that is Israel." But these remarks were completely overridden by his unstinting condemnation of Israel, whose policies, he claimed, "have thrown [negotiations] into the intensive care unit."

How could he claim that he came to the U.N. to "launch a final serious attempt to achieve peace"?

Speaking of the recent conflict in Gaza, Abbas said, "Palestine comes today to the United Nations General Assembly at a time when it is still tending to its wounds and still burying its beloved martyrs of children, women and men who have fallen victim to the latest Israeli aggression, still searching for remnants of life amid the ruins of homes destroyed by Israeli bombs on the Gaza Strip, wiping out

entire families, their men, women and children murdered along with their dreams, their hopes, their future and their longing to live an ordinary life and to live in freedom and peace.”

Yes, this is how Abbas attempts “to breathe new life into the negotiations” with Israel: by failing to mention the thousands of rockets launched first by Hamas terrorists at Israel; by failing to acknowledge that some of these Palestinian “martyrs” were men like Ahmed Jabari, the mastermind of numerous mass-murder plots against unarmed Israeli citizens; by forgetting entirely that it was Hamas that brutally drove the Palestinian Authority out of Gaza.

Yet in the mind of Abbas (and apparently of the U.N. General Assembly as well), it is the Israelis who are the murderers, guilty of “brute force and war.” And how many times did Abbas speak of “Israeli aggression” in this speech, which was allegedly aimed at achieving peace?

Abbas also recounted the revisionist version of recent Palestinian history, noting that, “hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were torn from their homes and displaced within and outside of their homeland, thrown from their beautiful, embracing, prosperous country to refugee camps in one of the most dreadful campaigns of ethnic cleansing and dispossession in modern history.” (What extraordinary charges!)

The tragic irony of all this is that, had the Arab leadership accepted the U.N. partition plan offered in 1947, “Palestine would be celebrating its [65th] anniversary this May. And there would have been no *Nakba* [catastrophe]” (quoting Professor Ephraim Karsh in his important book *Palestine Betrayed*).

As far back as 1937, David Ben-Gurion stated, “We do not wish and do not need to expel Arabs and take their place. All our aspiration is built on the assumption—proven throughout all our activity in the Land of Israel—that there is enough room

in the country for ourselves and the Arabs.”

And on Nov. 29, 1947, when the Jewish leadership accepted the two-state partition plan, Golda Meir said, “We are happy and ready for what lies ahead. Our hands are extended in peace to our neighbors. Both States can live in peace with one another and cooperate for the welfare of their inhabitants.”

This was followed by Ben-Gurion’s statement in December, 1947: “If the Arab citizen will feel at home in our state ... if the state will help him in a truthful and dedicated way to reach the economic, social and cultural level of the Jewish community, then Arab distrust will accordingly subside and a bridge will be built to a Semitic, Jewish-Arab alliance.”

In contrast, Arab leaders like Azzam Pasha, secretary-general of the Arab League, had their sights set on driving the Jews into the sea: “It will be a war of annihilation. It will be a momentous massacre in history that will be talked about like the massacres of the Mongols or the Crusades.” (As quoted in an interview in the *Akhbar Al-Yom* newspaper on Oct. 11, 1947.)

Speaking to the U.N. Security Council on April 16, 1948, Jamal Husseini stated, “The representative of the Jewish Agency told us yesterday that they were not the attackers, that the Arabs had begun the fighting. We did not deny this. We told the whole world that we were going to fight.”

The Arab nations did fight—and lost. And while the fledgling state of Israel absorbed 800,000 Jewish refugees who were expelled from surrounding Muslim lands, these same countries made no effort to absorb the 600,000 Arab refugees who fled Israel. Sadly, to this day, there are Palestinian refugee camps in Arab countries like Lebanon, while the inhabitants of Gaza lived in oppressive conditions when it was under Egyptian control after 1948.

But truth and justice matter little to the U.N. General Assembly when it comes to Israel, and so, Nov. 29, which was

once an important day in the history of the United Nations, has become a day of infamy.

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