

Giving up the 'Occupied Territories' Is Not the Solution

There is a widespread belief that if Israel would only give back the territories it seized during the Six Day War in 1967, then peace would come to the Middle East. This is demonstrably false, especially in light of a popular chant heard around the world in recent days.

To start, Israel gave back the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in 1982 as a result of Egypt recognizing Israel as a legitimate sovereign state. This is the land that borders Israel on the south, including the southern border of Gaza, and is certainly of strategic importance. Still, Israel returned that to Egypt.

The other territories that Israel occupied after 1967 were the Gaza Strip and the West Bank of the Jordan, the latter known as Judea and Samaria in biblical days. What has happened since then?

As is well-known now, in 2005, Israel gave Gaza back to the Palestinians. (On a side note, before the Six Day War, the Palestinians were known simply as Arabs, since there was not a Palestinian national identity, even though some of the local Arab inhabitants had lived there for centuries.)

And, as is also well-known today, in 2006, the Palestinians in Gaza elected Hamas as their leadership. Yet Hamas was explicitly formed in 1987 with the purpose of obliterating Israel.

So much for the concept of "land for peace." Not quite!

How would you like to live next door to a family who believed you did not have a right to be in your house and who expressly

stated, "We will drive you out or murder you"?

That's what Israel has faced since 2006.

As far as Gaza is concerned, Israel *has* returned to its pre-1967 borders.

You say, "But it still exercises control over Gaza, not allowing the Palestinians to travel at will in and out of Israel and restricting their access to the outside world."

That is correct, but for one reason only: Hamas has vowed to slaughter as many as Israelis as possible, and Hamas rules Gaza. Do you really think Israel will say, "Yes, by all means, we will take down all defensive measures and open our borders fully to barbaric terrorists who want to wipe us out"?

Remember that Hamas has training camps for children where they learn the value of being anti-Israel terrorists and aspire to become martyrs for the cause. Remember that from their earliest days they are indoctrinated with hatred of Israel and the Jews. That's why whole families sing and dance in the streets when Hamas slaughters innocent Israelis—because in their eyes, there are no innocent Israelis.

To put this in perspective (and this view is not just held by the Gazan Palestinians; it is widely held in other Palestinian circles), consider these words from a Jordanian-Palestinian businessman and politician named Talal Abu Ghazaleh. He was being interviewed on Lebanese television on Oct. 12 about the war in Gaza.

He said, "Israel would not sacrifice a single person. There isn't a goal for which it would sacrifice a single person. They are afraid of death. Death for them is strange and loathsome. We, on the other hand, welcome death. A Palestinian carries his son on his shoulders, with a headband on the kid's forehead, which his father inscribed: 'Martyrdom Seeker.' This is a man who says: 'I want my son to die.' A [Palestinian]

mother says: 'I have given birth to six children, so that three could die in the revolution. I gave birth to children so that they would be martyred.' This does not exist in the Zionist mentality."

Moms and dads, you might want to read those words again. This is what Israel is facing.

When the interviewer referenced "the multitudes of innocent civilian victims [in Gaza]," he replied, "How many? Two thousand? The casualties always accumulate, unfortunately... Fine. How many people did Russia sacrifice in its war against the Nazis? Twenty-seven million. Not just a thousand... We haven't gotten to thousands yet. Russia knowingly sacrificed those people. It was no coincidence. It is not that Russia did not know that these people were going to die. It wanted 27 million people to die so that Russia survives. We, Palestinians, are the same. There are two million people [in Gaza]. If one hope I will be one of them. It would be an honor to die as a martyr. But there are two million people in Gaza. Will [Israel] kill two million people? How? Half of them are hidden underground, in tunnels."

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And this was just a casual TV interview, two people talking about Israel's war with Hamas.

Abu Ghazaleh also explained, "You cannot defeat someone who wants to die. People who flee death cannot defeat people who seek death. What happened in Germany in the World War? Entire cities were destroyed. But didn't Germany become later one of the five most wealthy countries in the world? Let them destroy [Gaza]. What is destroyed can be rebuilt. I think that the goal of [Hamas'] lions of humanity was to cause the demolition of those buildings so that they could be rebuilt properly,

according to more aesthetic and newer engineering standards.”

As to why Hitler only slaughtered 6 million out of 9 million European Jews, it was because he wanted to leave some alive so everyone could realize why he did what he did.

And you actually think that Israel going back to pre-1967 borders would eliminate these kinds of sentiments? Spend a few hours on the Memri TV website and watch the clips for yourself. Or read the quotes on the Palestinian Media Watch site to see for yourself what the Palestinian people are hearing and reading and seeing (not just in Gaza but under the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank as well).

The peace loving voices and the voices of conciliation are in the small minority.

Remember also that Israel did open its borders to Gazan workers on a limited basis, allowing those who were thought to be non-lethal to do various jobs in Israel.

As noted by the Institute for National Security Studies, “In Oct. 2021, as the COVID-19 pandemic ebbed, the Israeli government decided to resume Gazan employment in Israel. Currently, about 11,000 Gazan workers have entry permits and are employed informally. In March 2022 the government decided to regulate Gazan employment in Israel and allocate 20,000 work permits to Gazans, 12,000 for the construction industry and 8,000 for agriculture. The permits are given to married Gazans aged 25 and up who have passed a security check.”

A lot of good this ended up doing.

You say, “Well, maybe the situation in Gaza is more complex, but surely, if Israel returned the West Bank to the Palestinians, there would be peace.”

Not quite.

First, more than 500,000 Israelis currently live in the West

Bank. A Palestinian state would demand that every last Jew uproot and leave. It must be *Judenfrei* (meaning “free of Jews”). In stark contrast, there are roughly two million Arabs (Palestinians) living in Israel.

So, Palestinian Arabs can live in a Jewish state, but Jews cannot live in a Palestinian Arab state (if, in fact, they wanted to).

Second, and more importantly, remember that the rebirth of the State of Israel in 1948 is, in the Palestinian (and wider Muslim-Arab) world, “Al-Nakba,” the Catastrophe.

This is confirmed in the chant that is being heard around the world these days (as I referenced in my recent article on Hamas): “From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free.”

This means no more Israel, even with pre-1967 borders.

This means rejection of the UN’s 1947 Partition Plan that resulted in the birth of the modern State of Israel.

This means no homeland for the Jews.

This is what the protesters are chanting. This is what Muslim crowds are calling for. This is what Palestinian sympathizers desire. “Jews go home!”

Sorry, but we are home—back in the Land, our one and only ancient homeland. And we are not about to leave.

In saying this, I do not demean the struggles of the Palestinian people.

I do not claim that Israel has always been ethical and righteous in all its dealings with the Palestinians.

And I do not present a peace plan for the Middle East.

I’m simply debunking a popular myth. {eo}

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