

Do the Palestinians Deserve a State?

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has just had his first meeting with President Barack Obama. The two Obama issues, however, are non-issues for the Netanyahu government: talking to Iran and a fast track toward a Palestinian state.

The Obama government is trying to make things move in the Middle East and there are fears this will come at Israel's expense – even if it means bringing down Netanyahu's government.

Obama has embarked on a peace crusade. He has invited Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to Washington. Next month Obama will speak from a podium in Cairo in an effort to restore America's image in the Muslim world. He apparently believes this cannot happen nor will peace be achieved until Israel accepts a Palestinian state.

Last week the United States voted for a United Nations Security Council resolution reaffirming support for a two-state solution. Ambassador Susan Rice said the U.S. wants to integrate the Saudi-sponsored peace initiative into the process.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told Netanyahu over dinner that the Palestinians “deserve a viable state.” President Obama said that Netanyahu “needed to stop expanding settlements and grasp the historic opportunity to make peace with the Palestinians.”

This is the theater of the absurd and a festival of hypocrisy. Would the U.S. government permit the Ku Klux Klan to fire more than 10,000 missiles into Harlem and then demand that blacks in America make peace with the Ku Klux Klan by giving them New

York City and not support any blacks living there?

How dumb can you be and still breathe? What have the Palestinians done to deserve a state? Palestinian Christians are shot to death for simply believing that the Jewish people have been given a promised land.

If an Israeli child goes hiking and ends up in a cave and Palestinian terrorists kill the teenager, smearing profanity with his blood on the walls of the cave, the world is silent. If a couple of Israeli reservists make a wrong turn on a road and end up having their bodies thrown from a police station window and ripped to pieces, the world is silent. But let Israel dig an archeological tunnel or start construction in a new neighborhood in Jerusalem. The U.S. would scream its head off.

Do Palestinians deserve a state for supporting Saddam Hussein during the Persian Gulf War or for sending a plague of suicide bombers into Israel? There have been close to 20,000 attempted suicide attacks in Israel. No city has been bombed more by Palestinian suicide terrorists than Jerusalem.

The truth is, the U.S. government is following a double standard. It's OK to vilify Israel for any act that might appear to be an exercise of sovereignty, but when Palestinians violate peace agreements, they receive nothing more than a wink.

It would be front-page news around the world if blacks in Harlem were shot and killed for selling land to whites. Yet when the Palestinian Authority does this on a regular basis, the world is silent.

The Arab world wants a Palestinian state for one simple reason: to destroy the State of Israel. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was first organized in Cairo in 1964 (three years before the 1967 war) under Arab League auspices to defeat the Jewish state through a war of

attrition. Palestinians living in Israel were forced to accept the PLO or else.

It would be absurd for Obama to think that Netanyahu – who went into politics inspired by the heroic death of his brother, Yonatan, while freeing terrorist hostages in the 1976 Entebbe Rescue Mission – would ever reward an Iranian-funded terrorist regime by redividing Jerusalem. He would never shrink Israel as a goodwill gesture to help restart the so-called peace process—not in the absence of a genuine goodwill gesture by the Palestinians and Muslim world of recognizing Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

I was so moved by the Netanyahu family and Benjamin Netanyahu's moral clarity at the anniversary of the death of his brother in 1981, that I asked then-Prime Minister Menachem Begin to give him a government job (Below is a photo of me and Prime Minister Netanyahu taken that night). I said, "I believe this man will be prime minister some day." Begin hired him the following evening.

What precisely is Obama doing? He has pressured Prime Minister Netanyahu to commit to Israel not attacking Iran, at least until the end of the year, so as not to disrupt Washington's plans to dialogue with Iran over its nuclear program.

Additionally, he has played into Iran's hands by tying the Palestinian situation into the Iranian nuclear crisis. In essence, he is telling the State of Israel: If you want my support in dealing with Iran, you are going to have to give the Palestinians a state.

Why does Netanyahu demand the Arab world recognize a Jewish state? Because they are bigots and they hate Jews.

Barack Obama should read Martin Luther King's words: "You declare my friends, that you do not hate the Jews, you are merely anti-Zionists. I say, let the truth ring forth from the highest mountaintops. Let it echo through the valleys of God's

green earth. When people criticize Zionism, they mean Jews. Zionism is nothing less than the dream and the ideals of the Jewish people returning to live in their own land.”

For Obama to think that Israel’s support of a Palestinian state will help Iran is completely naïve. It will do just the opposite. Iran – the center of gravity for world terrorism – has made the lives of Jews a living hell on Israel’s northern and southern borders through its Hezbollah and Hamas proxies. To allow these terrorists to be a stone’s throw from Israel’s population center in a Palestinian state would just embolden Iran.

Netanyahu wants the U.S. to reaffirm its support for Israel’s right to self defense against the looming threat from Iran. During the last three years Israel fought two bitter campaigns to halt the bombardment of its civilian population by thousands of terrorist missiles – fired by the Iranian terrorist proxies Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza.

Meanwhile, Iran denies the Holocaust while threatening to wipe the Jewish state off the map, as it develops nuclear weapons and tests long-range ballistic missiles.

Israel’s prime minister takes Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at his apocalyptic word, as must the leader of a country that has suffered unrelenting Islamist terrorism for 61 years.

In terms of Jewish history, Netanyahu considers Iran to be a threat similar to that posed by the Israelites’ Biblical scourge, the Amalekites, and more ominously by Hitler’s Germany. President Obama, on the other hand, thinks Iran can be won over with patience and reason and is no real threat to America or world peace.

Obama’s advisers reportedly consider the sole obstacle to peace in the Middle East to be the lack of a Palestinian state. The problem with this Pollyannaish vision is that it

lacks hindsight.

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations voted to partition British Mandatory Palestine into two states, Jewish and Arab. The Jews accepted the resolution and the Arab states did not and invaded Israel in the first of many unsuccessful attempts to destroy it. The Palestinians could have had their state 62 years ago, but preferred to deny the Jews their own state. The only state the Palestinians have been capable of living in since then is the state of denial.

If a Palestinian state came into being tomorrow, this would not solve the conflict in the Middle East or the problem of Islamist terrorism, for the Hamas charter still calls for the destruction of the State of Israel and for a jihad against Jews wherever they live.

President Obama has said he does not support regime change. Will this apply to Netanyahu's government, if Washington spins it as an "obstacle to peace"? A possible indication is that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's spouse, former President Bill Clinton, is advising the leader of Israel's opposition, Kadima Party head MK Tzipi Livni.

Obama made his feelings about Netanyahu's Likud Party clear during the recent election when he said, "I think there is a strain within the pro-Israel community that says unless you adopt an unwavering pro-Likud approach to Israel that you're anti-Israel and that can't be the measure of our friendship with Israel."

The president wants speedy action and hinted so at a recent press conference with Jordan's King Abdullah. "I agree that we can't talk forever," Obama said, "that at some point steps have to be taken so that people can see progress on the ground." He said he expects such progress to take place in the coming months. If that is going to happen, Obama must first change the Palestinian regime to recognize Israel.

By the way, what is a sovereign Palestinian state? It is a state that has an army, air space, and can form treaties with Israel's enemies. Israel's tiny state could never survive with Palestinians having control of air space, an army, and signing treaties with Arab states that deny the existence of the State of Israel. Netanyahu is right to reject a Palestinian state, and the U.S. is wrong to demand it. It would also mean an additional danger for America – by emboldening the terrorists to strike again by sending a signal that crime pays.

On September 23, 1980, the founder of Israeli Intelligence, Isser Harel, told me over dinner at his home that America was developing a tolerance for terrorism. He said if that continued, terrorists would strike America's largest symbol, New York, and its tallest building first. You can be sure that if America continues on this tolerance-for-terrorism policy, terrorist's will be coming to a theater near you.

Dr. Michael David Evans is a New York Times bestselling author. His latest book is Jimmy Carter, the Liberal Left, and World Chaos.

