

Myths About the Israeli-Arab Conflict (I)

Is “occupation” the cause of this conflict?

In the decades in which the Israeli-Arab conflict has raged, certain myths have been repeated so often and so insistently by Arab propaganda that most of the world has come to believe them. Today, we briefly examine one of those myths.

What are the facts?

The myth of “occupation” being the cause of conflict.

The very concept of “occupation,” as applied to Gaza and Judea/Samaria (the “West Bank”), is a myth. When the Egyptians were in possession of Gaza for almost twenty years nobody accused them of being occupiers. The Jordanians, who were in possession of Judea/Samaria (the “West Bank”) and much of Jerusalem for the same length of time, were not considered occupiers by the nations of the world and by the inhabitants of the area. The Israelis were considered “occupiers” when, after a war of extermination against them, they prevailed and came into possession of these territories. The oldest rule of warfare is that to the victor belong the spoils. Do people expect France to return Alsace-Lorraine to Germany? Do they expect the Czech Republic or Poland to return the German territories awarded to them after Germany’s defeat in World War II? Of course not! Those countries evicted most of the original inhabitants or caused them to flee. Israel, in contrast, has never evicted a single Arab from these territories. On the contrary, lured by the prosperity the Israelis have created, tens of thousands of Arabs from adjacent Syria and Jordan have come to live there.

Israel’s “occupation” of those territories is a myth. But even so, the hope that Israel’s abandonment of any territory – the same old “land-for-peace” formula – would bring about peace is an illusion and a fallacy. In order to establish peaceful relations with its northern neighbor Lebanon, Israel abandoned the security zone of southern Lebanon. But instead of acknowledgment and gratitude, the result has been never-ending attacks with Katyusha rockets, led by Hizbullah, the “army of God,” which is supported and egged on by Iran and by Syria. It makes life on Israel’s northern frontier almost unbearable. Israel, unilaterally and in order to appease the Palestinians, the United States and world opinion, vacated Gaza and evicted thousands of Israeli families and abandoned their homes, institutions, extensive agricultural installations, and valuable infrastructure. Not a single Israeli citizen, not a

single Israeli soldier, remains in Gaza. But, in the few months since it has abandoned that territory, Israel has been provoked to bloody warfare and has been subjected to daily attacks by Qassam rockets. It is only a matter of time until one of those devices will crash into a school or into a hospital causing untold casualties and destroying vital infrastructure.

Destruction and almost civil war.

Instead of using their newly won “liberty from occupation,” the Gazans have engaged in what is practically a bloody civil war and have destroyed most of their meager infrastructure. They have demolished and vandalized the valuable and extensive greenhouse installations that the Israelis had created, which could have been the basis for a prosperous agricultural economy and of substantial export income. But they focus their efforts and their energy on digging tunnels under the wall that separates them from Israel, in order to attack Israeli military, killing and kidnapping their soldiers, and thus bringing added misery upon themselves. Having the disastrous examples of the withdrawal from the southern Lebanon security zone and now from Gaza, it is easy to imagine what would happen if Israel would not have learned from experience and – under pressure from the U.S. and world opinion – would commit the folly of abandoning Judea/Samaria (the “West Bank”). While Gaza is isolated, surrounded by Israel and the sea, the “West Bank” is connected to Syria and Jordan. Within days of Israel’s abandonment of that territory, Syrian tanks, Syrian aircraft, Syrian artillery, and Syrian and perhaps even Iranian troops would be stationed on the ridges of the Judean hills that dominate Israel’s heartland. That heartland is only nine miles wide at its narrow waist. Israel’s population centers, Israel’s military installations, Israel’s industrial capacity, Israel’s utilities, and Israel’s international airport would be in the gun sights of the Arabs, sworn to the destruction of Israel. The attack against Israel, the hoped-for final assault against the hated Jews, would begin within days or weeks and might well be successful.

“Those who advocate the ending of the ‘occupation’ do so either out of ignorance or because they have a death wish for Israel.”

The Palestinians, along with most other Arabs and Moslems, are single-mindedly focused on the destruction of Israel, to “wipe it off the map.” If Israel were pressured into ending the “occupation” of the territories, it would not bring peace. On the contrary, it would bring about bloody warfare, just as in Gaza and Lebanon, and could well be the end of Israel. Those who advocate the ending of the “occupation” do so either out of ignorance or because they have a death wish for Israel.

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