

“Land for Peace” (II)

Should the “West Bank,” should the Golan be yielded?

In an earlier one of our *hasbarah* (educating and clarifying) messages, following Israel’s ill-advised transfer of the vast Sinai to Egypt, we explained the folly of the belief that “Land for Peace” could bring about peace in the Middle East. Since then, Israel has given up further pieces of its small land, hoping that it would bring about peace. All these gifts of the Israeli patrimony to its sworn enemies have been in vain.

What are the facts?

Land for Peace: a dismal failure. In 1977, in exchange for peace and normalization of relationship with its neighbor, Israel returned the vast Sinai Peninsula to Egypt. In retrospect, it is clear that this decision was one of the worst mistakes that Israel ever committed. The peace with Egypt is the coldest imaginable and it is likely to be rescinded if, as seems possible and even likely, a new government, similar to that of Iran, would take over in Egypt.

Always hoping against hope, Israel abandoned the buffer zone it had established in southern Lebanon, where it was able to protect its northern cities and settlements from the maraudings of Hizbollah (the “Army of God”). In order to bring about peace, and yielding to insistent pressure of “world opinion,” Israel vacated this buffer zone. Hizbollah and its 20,000 missiles moved right in, invaded Israel and killed and kidnapped its soldiers. The “second Lebanese war” erupted as a consequence. It left thousands of dead and wounded on both sides and destroyed much of Lebanese infrastructure. Once again, “Land for Peace” proved to be a disaster.

Ariel Sharon, until recently prime minister of Israel, but now comatose and moribund, famously said that “responsible statesmen do not give away pieces of their country.” That dictum should be even more true for Israel than for any other country, because Israel is so small that it would sink without a trace in Lake Michigan. Still, probably in his dotage, Sharon decided to abandon Gaza and to evict the thousands of Israelis who had been living there for generations.

Instead of acknowledgement and gratitude, the Gazans erupted in spasms of aggression against Israel, showered it with missiles, invaded it through tunnels, and killed and abducted Israeli soldiers. Once again, the trusted formulation of “Land for Peace” had proven to be a dismal failure.

Most of the Arabs and Iran are Israel’s implacable enemies and don’t hesitate to proclaim their goal, namely “wiping Israel off the map,” “driving the Jews into the sea,” or “excising the cancer of the Zionist entity.” These formulations, which have been repeated and confirmed for decades and which the Arabs, so far unsuccessfully, have repeatedly attempted to implement, make it clear that no further land that Israel might foolishly yield to the Arabs would bring peace one step closer. The only way to peace in this turbulent area is for the Arabs to undergo a complete change of heart and mind. And that, if it is to happen at all, will take a very long time.

What else is left to give away? There remain Judea/Samaria (the “West Bank”) and the Golan Heights. Having urged Israel to yield Gaza, most of the world, even the enlightened leaders of our own country, pressure Israel to yield the “West Bank” to the Palestinians. But that would be an existential disaster for Israel. Within weeks, the Judean ridges, which totally dominate Israel’s heartland,

would be occupied by Palestinian troops and, more than likely, also by troops of Syria, Iran, and quite possibly also from Jordan and Egypt. A merciless bombardment of Israeli cities, military and industrial installations, utility infrastructure and airports would immediately ensue. Tanks and

armored personnel carriers, fighter planes and bombers, even chemical weapons would promptly materialize. “Land for Peace” would become “Land for National Suicide.”

Syria is Israel’s most implacable enemy, sworn to its destruction. It is an insistent supporter of terrorism; it hosts the most vicious Palestinian rejectionists; it is the missile supplier to Hizbollah; and it is allied with Iran’s murderous Ahmadinejad. Still, there are those who press for “dialog” with Syria and urge Israel to return the Golan to this murderous regime. But that would be even more disastrous than handing over the “West Bank” to the Arabs. When Syria was in possession of the Golan it bombarded Israel’s northern cities and settlements almost daily, making life intolerable. It used the Golan three times to invade Israel. It was only the skill and courage of the Israeli Defense Forces that in each of these cases prevented disaster.

If Israel were to commit the folly of returning the Golan to Syria, it would put itself in mortal danger. Together with having handed over the “West Bank,” Gaza being armed with heavy weapons and, in all likelihood, Jordan and Egypt having cancelled their peace treaties, Israel would be totally surrounded by mortal enemies whose only foreign policy objective seems to be the destruction of Israel.

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