

Israel's "Right to Exist" (II)

How could anyone question such a right?

Perhaps the most bizarre aspect of the never-ending Moslem-Israel dispute is the perennial question about Israel's "right to exist." What a strange formulation! How weird that anybody should question anybody else's right to exist, that one country should question another's existence. It is definitely a first in the history of the world.

What are the facts?

Denial of the obvious. The questioning by the Moslems of Israel's right to exist is particularly strange in view of Israel apparently being the major preoccupation of all Arab countries and of most non-Arab Moslem nations, Iran prominently among them. And how can the Arabs possibly question Israel's existence since they have been involved with Israel in at least five major wars, in all of which they were decisively defeated. Nobody questions that if results had been reversed in any of these encounters, Israel would indeed have ceased to exist and most of its inhabitants killed.

How is it possible, one wonders, that despite the decisive military defeats that the Arabs have suffered, they still wish to deny Israel's existence. It is an almost unbelievable act of mental acrobatics to deny the existence of a country that has inflicted such severe and repeated punishment on them. When it becomes inevitable for the Arabs to mention Israel at all, they always refer to it as "the Zionist entity."

This non-acknowledgement of Israel's existence is not simply a matter of semantics. Arab maps do not show Israel, but a vast area, including Jordan, called "Palestine." Major cities such as Tel Aviv and Haifa simply don't exist on Arab maps. Arab school children, imbued from early age with hatred for the Jews, have no "official" knowledge of Israel's existence. They learn about it, one supposes, just as they learn about sex, by whispered remarks in the schoolyard.

Sacrifices for nothing. As an inducement to Israel for yielding part of its minuscule national territory, the Arab nations dangle from time to time the carrot of "recognition," "the right to exist," before Israel. Almost inexplicably, the Jews, who are supposed to be so "smart," have yielded to these insincere offers and in the spirit of the "land for peace" mantra have surrendered valuable territory to their implacable enemies. They have turned the vast Sinai back to Egypt, including the oil fields that they had developed and which would have made them independent of petroleum imports for the foreseeable future. They have

The bizarre concept of Israel's not having the right to exist has been around for almost 60 years. It is often said that Israel needs to be "recognized" by the Arabs in order to bring about peace and to "normalize" its position. But need not the Arabs, too, "normalize" their position? Most Arabs live in abject poverty and in third-world conditions. They need peace in order to obtain a standard of living approaching that of Israel. But peace will come to this troubled region only when the Arabs accept the reality of Israel's existence and negotiate with it openly and in good faith.

abandoned Gaza, where Jewish families had lived for generations. They have evacuated the buffer zone in southern Lebanon that protected Israel's northern cities and settlements. All of these sacrifices were in vain. The peace with Egypt is the coldest imaginable. The Gazans daily lob Qassam rockets into Israel and kill and wound its people. In southern Lebanon, where the Israelis have incredibly allowed vast fortifications to be established and tens of thousands of rockets to be installed, Hizbollah (the "Army of God") has launched a bloody war against Israel, which has caused thousands of casualties on both sides and mutual destruction, mostly in Lebanon.

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Take threats seriously. In order to gain "recognition" and, one

hopes, the "right to exist," Israel now seems poised to yield Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and even the Golan Heights to its mortal enemies. Both would be unbelievable acts of folly and would immediately subject Israel to utter destruction. It would no longer be a matter of the right to exist, but an assured road to non-existence.

The denial of Israel's "right to exist" goes hand in hand with the threat to exterminate this non-existent entity as soon as feasible. It has already been tried many times. Abdal Nasser, the former dictator of Egypt, promised his people to drive the hated Jews into the Sea. He did not succeed. Iran's ruler Ahmadinejad has vowed to "excise the Zionist cancer" and to "wipe Israel off the map." He is feverishly trying to develop nuclear weapons. There can be no doubt that he will drop such weapons on Israel the very day he comes into their possession. The world made a terrible mistake when it doubted the fulminations of Adolf Hitler. The world would make a fatal error in not taking Ahmadinejad seriously. He means every word he says.

In view of that, and if persuasion continues to be unsuccessful, isn't it clear what the world must do in order to prevent a nuclear catastrophe that would engulf not only the Middle East but the entire world? But there are only two possible actors that could take such initiative: the United States and Israel.

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