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# A "Palestinian Homeland"

## Is it a valid aspiration or an unwarranted demand?

Once again, strife and trouble have erupted in Israel and in the territories administered by Israel. And many thoughtful people believe that these problems could be laid to rest, that tranquility could be restored if the "Palestinians" had their own country. That homeland would be Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza strip. Its capital would be Jerusalem or, at the very least, its "Arab sector."

### What are the facts?

■ First of all, some definitions are in order. The Arabs living in "Palestine" — which is Jordan, Israel and the areas administered by Israel — like to refer to themselves as "Palestinians", and to the Jews living there as "Jews". But all inhabitants of Palestine obviously are Palestinians — either Arab or Jewish Palestinians. By only referring to themselves, but not to the Jews, as "Palestinians", the Arabs attempt to convey legitimacy on themselves and illegitimacy on the Jews, despite the uninterrupted presence of Jews in all parts of Palestine since Biblical times.

■ In 1948, the Palestinian state of Jordan, in an act of naked aggression, invaded the just-born state of Israel. It managed to occupy Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem. For the next 19 years, and until 1967 when the territory came under Israeli administration after the Six-Day War, Judea/Samaria was part of the Kingdom of Jordan. During that entire time, nothing was ever heard of "Palestinian" peoplehood. The thought of creating a second "Palestinian" state in the "West Bank", in addition to the Palestinian state of Jordan, did not occur to anyone — certainly not to the "Palestinians", not to any of the 22 Arab countries, and not to the rest of the world.

■ By the relentless drumbeat of Arab propaganda, the impression has taken hold that the "Palestinians" in Judea/Samaria are a distinct and unique people. But that just isn't so. The concept of separate "Palestinian" peoplehood is a new one. It did not exist before 1967. The reality is that the so-called "Palestinians" in this area are exactly the same people — undifferentiated in dialect, dress, social customs or anything else — from the Palestinian Arabs in Jordan. A second Palestinian peoplehood is a myth. It was created for the purpose of laying claim to Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") in the first instance, and for its use as a launching pad for the destruction of Israel proper thereafter.

The "Palestinians" are not a distinct people. They are simply Arabs. They chafe under Israeli administration, however benevolent it may be. Scores of ethnic groups live under such conditions, many of them — in contrast to the Arabs under Israeli administration — under political duress, discrimination against them, and with their religion, language and identity suppressed. But the Palestinian Arabs do have a homeland. It's Jordan. Jordan is by far the largest part of Palestine. The Arabs living there are overwhelmingly Palestinians. The ultimate resolution of the problems of the Palestinian Arabs of the "West Bank" — a resolution that satisfies the irreducible security requirements of Israel and the national aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs — can only come about by direct negotiations. Under pressure of the PLO and of Arab rejectionists, the Palestinian Arabs have so far refused to participate in any such negotiations. Israel has been ready for them for over twenty years.

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■ With the help of President Carter, Menachem Begin of Israel and Anwar Sadat of Egypt signed the Camp David Accords. In line with these Accords, Israel returned the entire Sinai Peninsula — including the valuable oil fields it had developed, two of the world's most advanced military bases, and several cities — to Egypt, in exchange for peace. And in the Camp David Accords it was agreed that the inhabitants of Judea/Samaria and the Gaza Strip would get autonomy and that during a five-year period, the final status of the territories would be negotiated. But that process never got started. Why not? To the Arabs, the Camp David Agreement is unacceptable, because it implies recognition of Israel. The Egyptians were drummed out of the Arab League, and most Arab countries broke relations with them, for having committed the unpardonable sin of making peace with Israel. For good measure, Anwar Sadat was assassinated by his own countrymen — a destiny shared with any other Arab who has dared to advocate recognition of or peace with Israel.

■ The real and never changing purpose of the Arabs is not the attainment of "the rights of the Palestinian people", autonomy in the administered territories, or even a state of their own in what is now called the "West Bank". The real purpose has never changed. It is the dismantling and the destruction of the state of Israel. To the Arabs, having a state of "infidels" on what they consider "sacred Arab soil" is a religious crime. Because of that, the Kurds, the Druze, the Copts, the Armenians, the Maronites and other minorities have all been brutally repressed and periodically massacred by the Moslem Arabs. But the Arabs' greatest hatred is directed toward the Jews. The wished-for establishment of a "Palestinian" state on the "West Bank" would be the first step toward the "final solution" desired by the Arabs. The PLO has never deviated, never wavered from that. The destruction of Israel, its "secularization" or its Lebanonization, are the unswerving core dogma of the PLO.

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