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More About Minister Sharansky's Letter Is he (are we) justified in being seriously concerned?

In a recent issue of *The Jewish Bulletin*, a number of Jewish leaders endorsed a letter that Natan Sharansky, Minister of the Interior of Israel, had written to Prime Minister Barak. In that letter, Mr. Sharansky expressed his concern about the ever-increasing concessions that Mr. Barak, almost single-handedly, is making to Mr. Arafat and his Palestinians. The area of greatest concern is the almost heedless giving away of large chunks of the Jewish homeland, in order to appease the insatiable appetite of the Arabs.

What are the facts?

The futility of appeasement. Even though Israel (including the "West Bank" and the Golan) is barely half the size of San Bernardino County in California and would sink without trace in Lake Michigan, Israel's leaders toss chunks of it away as though the country were the size of the United States, Canada, or Russia. They do that in the futile attempt to induce the Palestinians and the other Arabs (and non-Arab Moslems) to make peace with the beleaguered Jewish state. But there will be no peace, and yielding more and more territory to those who daily in their newspapers call for the elimination of Israel is reckless and stupid.

It is almost unbelievable that a generation of Jews (or at least a significant sector of Jewish "liberal intellectuals") would not have learned anything from our horrible recent history. We must look the hard facts squarely in the eye. And those hard facts are that the Arabs (and the non-Arab Moslems) are almost single-mindedly obsessed with the destruction of Israel. Their determination to accomplish that is fully comparable to that of the Hitlerite Nazis. Those who refuse to see that or to acknowledge it are fools or at least live in a haze of wishful thinking.

Territories that have been designated as indispensable strategic assets for the defense of Israel – the Golan Heights, the Judean-Samaritan Mountains, the Jordan Valley – are carelessly offered as appeasement presents. In fact, Israel is goaded to make such concessions by its "friends", including (it is painful to acknowledge) the Clinton Administration, for which a "Mid-East Peace" would be a foreign policy triumph.

Is Israeli territory not sacred? The Arabs consider every inch of their territory as "sacred Arab soil". Mr. Sadat, Egypt's president at the time, was handed the vast Sinai Peninsula – with its oil fields developed by the Israelis, its sophisticated military installations, and its burgeoning cities – on a silver platter. He then went to the

Peace can only come about by a fundamental mind change by the Arabs, a sincere desire to live in peace and hoped-for prosperity with Israel. But that is not in the cards. Arab publications feature the most outrageous stories and caricatures about Israel and about Jews. Schoolchildren in Arab countries, including those under the Palestinian Authority, are taught that the Jews are devils, must be destroyed, and that "all of Palestine" (and we know what that means) must be recovered. Israel would be foolish to make any territorial concessions at all until it can be convinced that all Arab and Moslem countries have forsworn their enmity of Israel and their desire to wipe it off the map. That may take a little while. It certainly cannot be hastened by giving away big chunks of the country.

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Facts and Logic About the Middle East
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World Court to sue Israel for Taba – one disputed square mile that he could not bear to abandon to the hated Jews. The sainted King Hussein of Jordan insisted on a "border modification" involving a few acres of land before he would deign to sign a peace treaty with Israel. The late unlamented Hafez Assad of Syria was literally begged to accept a present of the entire Golan Heights, in return for granting "peace" to Israel. But he walked away from the

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deal because it did not include a strip of shoreline on the Sea of Galilee – again, "sacred Arab soil". It is only the Israeli Jews, to whom no part of their country appears to be sacred, who carelessly and indiffer-

ently toss away chunks of their very small patrimony. You may be sure that a good portion of Jerusalem, once thought of as the "eternal indivisible capital of Israel", will be the next peace offering.

What Israel is expected to do – to reward those who have invaded it (for the purpose of destroying it) with territorial gifts – is unprecedented in the history of the world. Nobody has ever suggested that the French return Alsace-Lorraine to Germany, the Czechs the Sudetenland, or the Poles the vast swatches of Eastern Germany that they received after World War II. The Russians laugh at the suggestion that they should return to Japan the islands they snatched from them in the last weeks of World War II. It is only Israel that is expected to bring such "sacrifices for peace", a bizarre term that has been coined specifically for application to this proposed outrage.

Only fools and wishful thinkers will believe that making such "sacrifices" will bring peace even one step closer. On the contrary, the more Israel allows itself to be weakened by yielding strategic assets, the more likely are the Arabs to be encouraged to launch the war for which they are so feverishly preparing and to attempt to finish off the Jewish State (an intolerable thorn in their side) once and for all.

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