

The Fence

Will the Fence calm the region or exacerbate the conflict?

After more than three years of the intifada, Israel has decided to build a protective fence that would separate "Israel proper" from the "West Bank" and protect its citizens from murderous assaults which so far have caused over 1,000 Jewish deaths.

What are the facts?

A nation at war. Israel is at war—a war imposed on it by its mortal enemies. The Arabs are prepared to do anything at all, including their individual or collective self-immolation to attain their murderous ends. During the last three years, during their so-called Al Aksa intifada, scores of young Palestinians have blown themselves up in order to take as many of the hated Jews as possible with them. They have been most "successful" in that grisly endeavor.

Israel has refrained from inflicting serious punishment on its tormentors. Clearly, Israel's military might would enable it to destroy its enemies quickly, but decency and respect for human life keep it from that. Instead, Israel decided to build a protective Fence, the course of which essentially follows the "green line," the armistice line from the 1948 War of Liberation. The only purpose of the Fence is to keep suicide bombers out of "Israel proper" and to seal it off from Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"). The Fence causes inconvenience and hardship for the Arabs. Before the intifada, up to 200,000 of them went daily to their jobs in Israel. Now, that source of income is cut off. More than 50 per cent of its employable men are out of work and unable to feed their families.

The one person guilty of having brought this suffering, this misery on his people is Yasser Arafat, the president of the so-called "Palestinian Authority." World opinion and even our own government prevent Israel from touching this archvillain and from bringing him to justice.

Some misconceptions. It is not clear why so many are opposed to Israel's protective Fence. The radical left is protesting it in noisy rallies all over the world. Some call it a "wall," bringing up odious images of the wall erected by the Soviet Union to prevent mass flights to the West. But

the Israeli Fence is not that. Only less than four miles out of the eighty-three miles that have been built so far actually constitute a wall, rather than a fence. The walled portions were built in areas where sniper incidents have occurred.

Another misconception about the Fence is that it intrudes on "Palestinian land." It is true that the Fence—the portions that are now built and the portions that are still to be built—extends in some localities across the "green line." That is only in order to include that small part of the "West Bank" in which about 75 per cent of Israelis beyond the "green line" now live.

"The corollary of the wise saying that good fences make good neighbors is that bad neighbors require good fences."

Some people are in uproar because they argue that Israel has de facto annexed "Palestinian land." But that is nonsense, of course. There is no "Palestinian land." It is only the constant repetition that makes people believe that the "West Bank"

belongs to the "Palestinians." Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is part of the Jewish homeland. Any land that Israel might eventually yield to the Arabs to establish some kind of autonomy would be an act of generosity and accommodation unprecedented in world history.

Israel has tremendous expenses for its educational and social needs. No Israeli decision maker would waste money on a fence if the constant atrocity attacks had not made it imperative. If attacks were to stop, the Fence project could be immediately halted. Those who oppose the Fence and refer to it as an "apartheid wall" either do not understand the horror that suicide terrorists inflict on Israel's civilian population or they do not wish Israel well. But if the Arabs would abandon their obsession to obliterate the Jewish state, and once they demonstrated that they truly wished to live in peace with Israel and participate in its prosperity and booming economy, the Fence could be torn down in no time at all. But that happy day seems far away.

What is wrong with a fence? We have a 70-mile-long fence—ultimately to be lengthened to 330 miles—snaking along the Mexican border. Its purpose is not to keep murderous intruders at bay, but to prevent people looking for work from entering our country. How can we then ask the Israelis not to build a fence to protect the lives of their citizens? The Gaza Strip is and has been for years surrounded by such a fence. Not a single suicide attacker has ever been able to cross into Israel from Gaza, while, with devastating "success," hundreds have been able to cross the open border of the "West Bank." And then there was the "good fence" between Lebanon and Israel, which for many years Lebanese workers could daily cross into Israel and earn their livelihood. The corollary of the wise saying that good fences make good neighbors is that bad neighbors require good fences. And surely, the Arab terrorists are the very worst neighbors that could happen to Israel.

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