

## THE REAL TRAGEDY IS THE DEATH OF PEACE

**History doesn't exactly repeat itself, but it does rhyme. You can usually guess how the next line is going to end by looking at the last verse.**

Once in a while there's a surprise. Then we either rejoice because with luck and hard work, peace was created, or we recoil and shudder in despair because it all got horribly worse.

Most of the time, though, things stay pretty much the same, with alternating hope and disappointment. After awhile it can be hard to remember how it all started, and why it is like it is. That's why we need history. If we don't understand the past, we'll never fix the future.

### **The True Gaza Back-story That The Israelis Aren't Telling**

**Robert Fisk takes a look at current events in Israel with the background of its history, which puts the rhetoric and propaganda in perspective.**

**So now Netanyahu is holding up ISIS as the new fear factor. That's convenient, since Israel helped create ISIS. Maybe it got a little out of hand, but that's what happens when you create an enemy to oppose your enemy, but neither one is really your friend.**

**That's what the US did in Afghanistan when the Russians were there, and ended up with Al Qaida afterward. To mess with Shiite-led Syria, ally to Shiite Iran, stir up the Sunnis against them, with US and Saudi covert help and funding. What could go wrong?**

***The Israeli expansionists need a fear factor. They made peace with Egypt and Jordan, so they used Iran, and Syria, but that is losing credibility. They need something to keep the people afraid, to support the right-wing hardliners, the settlements, and avoid having to give the Palestinians back a portion of the land they stole from them.***

***Since 1967 there have been about 11 attempts at peace negotiations. The basis for all of them to some degree has been the 1967 UN Resolution 242.***

**Resolution 242 was passed on 22 November 1967 and embodies the principle that has guided most of the subsequent peace plans - the exchange of land for peace.**

***The resolution called for the "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict", and "respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries free from threats or acts of force".***

**Camp David Accords, 1978: The first Arab-Israeli peace treaty. US President Jimmy Carter invited President Sadat and the Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, for talks at the Presidential retreat at Camp David. The talks lasted for 12 days and resulted in two agreements.**

**(1) A Framework for Peace in the Middle East.** It laid down principles for peace, expanding on resolution 242, set out what it hoped was a way of resolving what it called the "Palestinian problem", agreed that there should be a treaty between Egypt and Israel and called for other treaties between Israel and its neighbours. The weakness of the first agreement was the section on the Palestinians. The plan aimed to set up a "self-governing authority" in the West Bank and Gaza, leading to eventual "final status" talks, but the Palestinians were not party to the agreement.

**(2) The Camp David framework for the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.**

### **The Madrid Conference, 1991**

This conference, co-sponsored by the US and the Soviet Union, was designed to follow up the Egypt-Israel treaty by encouraging other Arab countries to sign their own agreements with Israel. Jordan, Lebanon and Syria were invited as well as Israel and Egypt.

The Palestinians were also represented, but as part of a joint delegation with Jordan and not by Yasser Arafat or other leading figures in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), to whom the Israelis objected. The conference eventually led to a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan in 1994,

### **Oslo Agreement, 1993**

The Oslo negotiations tried to tackle the missing element of all previous talks - a direct agreement between Israelis and Palestinians, represented by the PLO. Its

importance was that there was finally mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO.

*"The agreement signed between Arafat and Rabin was controversial for many Israelis and Palestinians. Israelis on the right opposed dealing with the PLO, a group it considered a terrorist organization. Israeli settlers feared that Rabin's land-for-peace formula would result in their eviction from land they regarded as theirs by Biblical right, even if the United Nations had ruled their settlements were a violation of international law.*

**Sadly, the Jewish fanatic who assassinated Rabin in 1995 achieved his broader aim of derailing the peace train. In 1996 the right-wing Likud returned to power under the leadership of Binyamin Netanyahu.**

*He made no effort to conceal his deep antagonism to Oslo, denouncing it as incompatible with Israel's right to "security" and with the historic right of the Jewish people to the whole land of Israel. And he spent his first three years as PM in a largely successful attempt to arrest, undermine, and subvert the accords concluded by his Labour predecessors.*

Particularly destructive of the peace project was the policy of expanding Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian territory. These settlements are **illegal** under international law and constitute a huge obstacle to peace.

*Building civilian settlements beyond the Green Line does not violate the letter of the Oslo accords but it most decidedly violates its spirit. As a result of settlement expansion the area available for a Palestinian state has been steadily shrinking to the point where a two-state solution is barely conceivable.*

The so-called security barrier that Israel has been building on the West Bank since 2002 further encroaches on Palestinian land. Land-grabbing and peace-making do not go together: it is one or the other. Oslo is essentially a land-for-peace deal. By expanding settlements all Israeli governments, Labour as well as Likud, contributed massively to its breakdown.

*The rate of settlement growth in the West Bank and Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem is staggering. At the end of 1993 there were 115,700 Israeli settlers in the occupied territories. Their number doubled during the following decade.*

Today (2014) the number of Israeli settlers on the West Bank exceeds 350,000. There are an additional 300,000 Jews living in settlements across the pre-1967 border in East Jerusalem. Thousands more settlement homes are planned or under construction. Despite his best efforts, John Kerry, the US secretary of state, failed to get the Netanyahu government to accept a settlement freeze as a precondition for renewing the peace talks suspended in 2010.

*As long as Netanyahu remains in power, it is a safe bet that no breakthrough will be achieved in the new round of talks. He is the procrastinator par excellence, the double-faced prime minister who pretends to negotiate the partition of the pizza while continuing to gobble it up."*

**There have been more attempts, and there will be more in the future. But the people of Israel need to reject the expansionist right-wing Netanyahu kind of leaders and elect some sincere and honest seekers of peace if any agreement is to be reached, and for it to work.**

### EXPLOITING THREE TRAGIC DEATHS

The death of three teenagers, by any cause, anywhere in the world, is a tragedy. Whenever young people are deprived of the long lives that should be ahead of them, we are saddened. But whenever such deaths are not simply mourned, but exploited for motives of power and politics, it is a travesty.

It is one thing to seek ways to prevent such deaths in the future, but to stir up general hatred and misdirected acts of revenge in order to avoid making peace instead of expansionist aggression reveals a cold ruthlessness that should be condemned by the entire world.

*"In the past two weeks, Israel has launched a massive security operation in the West Bank that has led to the rounding up of over 400 Palestinians suspected of being Hamas operatives. The house-to-house searches and mass arrests brought Palestinian youth out into the streets. At least five Palestinians have died after being fatally shot by Israeli soldiers in the resulting crackdown, including 15-year-old teenager Mohammed Dudeen."*

Since then, another young Palestinian has been murdered, in an act of senseless retribution. The perpetrators of the original crime have not yet been caught. It is they alone who deserve punishment, not the many thousands of innocents who share only an ethnic identity and/or a religion.

But the public is unofficially encouraged to hate and blame them all by those who blame Hamas as an organization. It is unlikely that Hamas officials ordered three Israelis killed. But Netanyahu wanted to be sure Hamas was blamed as an excuse not to deal with Palestinians, who include Hamas as a political party.

### REJECTING THE TRUTH

**"He has a deep understanding of the peace process and its importance to the future of Israel," Livni said, according to Israeli news source Ynet. "Indyk worked intensively during the last round of talks and is committed to the process."**

Livni was the lead negotiator for the Israeli side in the most recent round of negotiations with the Palestinians before efforts broke down in late April.

*Netanyahu feels Indyk placed disproportionate blame on Israel for the failure of the US-led nine-month peace effort, overly highlighting Netanyahu's settlement-building activity, and neglected to emphasize the Palestinian role in the collapse of the negotiations."*

**If Indyk blamed Netanyahu, he was right. His only fault was not saying it loudly and publicly enough. As the following article points out, the US is not doing and saying nearly enough to make it clear who is sabotaging the peace "process", and to demand that Israel stop the settlements and quit the word games.**

*"The Palestinian government agreed to [the] terms. Israel rejected them. Rather than make public this framework and thereby hope the Israeli public would pressure its right-wing government to compromise, the Obama administration instead insisted that "both sides" had shown a lack of will to compromise."*

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/stephen-zunes/us-culpability-in-the-fai\\_b\\_5455371.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/stephen-zunes/us-culpability-in-the-fai_b_5455371.html)

**The stupidest word game ever played in any serious peace negotiation is the demand for recognition of Israel as a "Jewish State". It is a game designed as one more block against talking about issues that actually matter.**

**The Palestinians recognize Israel. Everyone knows 80% of Israelis are Jewish. Does that mean the other 20% don't exist? No. Yet that is what Israel is insisting on implying.**

*"Abbas has said that Israel can identify itself however it wants, but -- given that 20 percent of the Israeli population is ethnically Palestinian Arab -- it would be politically impossible to agree to something that would acknowledge second-class status for other Palestinians."*

**The word game only obscures the real problem: the SETTLEMENTS. What kind of Palestinian state can exist with colonies scattered within it? It's a condition sure to cause conflict.**

### **ANOTHER APPROACH**

**If Israel will not negotiate reasonably in good faith, then perhaps international law should be invoked.**

*"JERUSALEM — More than a year after Palestine was upgraded to become a nonmember observer state of the United Nations, the attributes of statehood exist mainly on official Palestinian letterhead. Now, with the collapse of the American-brokered Middle East negotiations, the Palestinian leadership is focusing on its diplomatic and legal struggle for international recognition of Palestine as a state under occupation and for Israel to be held accountable as the occupier. "*

[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/05/world/middleeast/after-failed-peace-talks-pushing-to-label-israel-as-occupier-of-palestine.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/05/world/middleeast/after-failed-peace-talks-pushing-to-label-israel-as-occupier-of-palestine.html?_r=0)

**The real tragedy is not the deaths of three young people, sad as that is. It is the death of peace, and the death of hope for it in the near future. This conflict is not just a local one. It is a major factor in the tensions throughout the middle east, and it needs to be solved.**

**--cosmicrat June 11-July3 2014**