



Report Information from ProQuest

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After Annapolis ... then what?

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Abstract (Abstract): Forty years ago was the Six-Day war, when Israel captured the West Bank and Jerusalem from the Jordanians and Gaza from the Epytians. Twenty years ago was the beginning of the first intifada. More than half of all Palestinians and Israelis weren't born or didn't live in Israel in 1967; all they know is a Cold War-like stalemate for the last two decades.

Saeb Erakat agreed, incorrectly announcing even before the conference began that "no state in the world connects its national identity to a religious identity." (Just what does he think the Vatican is? Or the UK, where Queen Elizabeth is head of the Anglican Church? Or Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Yemen, United Arab Emirates, to name a few which describe themselves as "Muslim" countries where Islam is the state religion?)

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Full text: The day 55 leaders from the United States, Israel and Arab nations met in Annapolis, MD, rioting broke out in Gaza and Hebron. One man was killed by Palestinian police in Hebron and a journalist was wounded. That day, the Saudi foreign minister was asked why he chose not to shake hands with any Israelis. He replied that Saudi Arabia "does not recognize Israel as a Jewish state."

Saeb Erakat agreed, incorrectly announcing even before the conference began that "no state in the world connects its national identity to a religious identity." (Just what does he think the Vatican is? Or the UK, where Queen Elizabeth is head of the Anglican Church? Or Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Yemen, United Arab Emirates, to name a few which describe themselves as "Muslim" countries where Islam is the state religion?)

The day after the conference at Annapolis, a new posting on Palestinian television showed a map of the region; there was no Israel - only "Palestine" which covered the entire territory where Israel currently exists as a legitimate nation.

Sigh. Is there no end to the posturing?

Rather than make outrageous statements or insist that Annapolis was not "a time for theatrics," as Adel al-Jubeir, the Saudi Amabssador said Nov. 28, this is the perfect time for the little gestures that will show the world (as well as Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran), that the region is serious about creating a lasting and secure peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Instead of designing a map without Israel, why didn't the PA announce that it would review all its educational materials to remove such distortions? Or why didn't Mahmoud Abbas criticize the map as a leader should?

Oh, right, he might put his life in danger. Well, sometimes that's what it takes to do the right thing. Abbas and the Palestinian people (minus Hamas, of course) want a state? Then let him show courage and determination; let him lead - even if it means his very existence might be threatened. Look at Anwar Sadat as an exmample of an Arab leader with vision!

On the Israeli side, magically all fraud charges against Ehud Olmert are disappearing. He's dropped all pretense of his ultimatums - not negotiating with any entity that doesn't recognize Israel as the Jewish state, not having a timetable, and not implementing the next stage of the Road Map until the Palestinians ceased all terror.

Having stated the obvious, now let's look at some other things that might just make a difference.

According to Ori Nir, a spokesman for Peace Now, "51.3 percent of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are 20 years or younger. That means that more than half of the Palestinians in these territories were born into a

milieu of on-again-off-again warfare with Israel. The overwhelming majority of the Palestinian population, 80.3 percent, is younger than 40, which means that four out of every five Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have lived their entire lives under Israeli occupation.

Nir added, "Israel's population is older, but taking into account the 1,010,900 immigrants from the former Soviet Union who arrived in the past 17 years, official Israeli data shows that 52 percent of Israelis were not alive 24 years ago (there is no available data for 1967) and 84 percent were not alive 44 years ago."

What's so important about these figures?

Forty years ago was the Six-Day war, when Israel captured the West Bank and Jerusalem from the Jordanians and Gaza from the Egyptians. Twenty years ago was the beginning of the first intifada. More than half of all Palestinians and Israelis weren't born or didn't live in Israel in 1967; all they know is a Cold War-like stalemate for the last two decades.

If, and it's a big "if," Annapolis leads to concrete solutions that can be realistically accepted and implemented, then even the skeptics can look back on last week as more than yet another photo-op of a meaningless handshake.

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