Palestinian Peace Talks - How to Fail without Really Trying

“The American peace initiative has ground to a halt. The full truth about it can and must now be told. It was doomed to failure before it even started. There was not the slightest chance of its bearing fruit.” - Uri Avnery, Israeli peace activist, ex-Irgun and Knesett member

The Palestinian peace talks concluded with their expected end... a dead one. The reasons are many, but mainly fall into the historical negotiation record where failure really was the goal, and then the planned smokescreen reasons particular to this round of talks.

First up is why should the Israelis want peace when the never-ending “no peace” situation has been such a gold mine for them? The list of benefits is too long to cover here so I will just mention a few highlights. One of the constant glues holding the Israeli multiparty fractious political system together is the age-old outside enemy, which keeps them all on the plantation so to speak.

The Knesset is legendary for its infighting and nasty debates, which international media has bent over backwards not to publicize all the nasty names used by Jews against Jews. It got so bad that years ago they had to literally compile an official list of nasty names that could not be used during debates. It is buried on an old hard drive somewhere, but I distinctly remember it reading like an encyclopedia of nasty name calling, quite humorous really.

With peace would come the lessening of security tensions in the Mideast, where Israel is by far the biggest threat. The Israeli would have to start saying goodbye to all the US money that has kept the failed socialist state afloat with its various underclasses.

In the US we have some in jail, those administering the funds, for taking bribes for accepting false applications, and I mean a lot of them... something in the 5000 range. Their attitude was “the more the merrier.”

US money comes to Israel in multiple ways, starting with the public amount that is published every year, which Israel never has to account for how it was spent. And then there is the lesser known back door funding right out of the Pentagon budget.

This includes goodies like the Army Corps of Engineers having chipped in to build the big confinement cage for the Gazans, and the huge, nuclear-hardened underground command centers on the scale of what we have here. Americans would riot if they knew the true amount over the years... tens of billions. Do the militant Israelis want to say goodbye to that? No way.

And last, there is that little problem of the Israelis being the biggest WMD depot in the Mideast. They know that with peace would come much stronger pressure to turn over all of those stockpiles to international supervision. Iran is out in front of this issue by calling for the entire region to do so, with no free pass for Israel.

I have also been astounded how there has not been a peep from anyone about the Israelis’ joint ICBM program with India to build five warhead MIRV’d rockets that can hit anywhere from China and Russia to the US. I wonder who is
helping to pay the tab for that?

The Kerry leadership of the talks was a disaster from the start, beginning with the choice of Martin Indyk as the negotiations coordinator. He was an old AIPAC employee, and like they used to say with the Italian Mafia... you are in it for life. So the US Israel Lobby, doing all they could to defeat Obama’s Mideast peace efforts, had a seat at the table with one of their most obvious agents. This was an open display of their power, despite Obama giving them the stiff arm on their wanting to wreck the Iran talks.

Kerry was angry with the Israelis, but that was the expected cover story. Any intelligent person knows that the Israelis will not make peace until forced to do so. The Likud party running the government knew that Washington would never use the sanctions card on Israel. Congress and AIPAC would have any president blocked on that. I won’t say the Jewish Lobby has America totally compromised, but I will say “very compromised”. And that includes their massive espionage operations here with our Congress at the top of the target list.

The final talks-killer was Netanyahu's refusing to release the last batch of prisoners previously agreed upon. This was a dual lightening rod. The first part being how large the ex-prisoner constituency is among the Palestinians, its biggest fraternity. The numbers are close to 40% of the men having been imprisoned, about 800,000. They have their own multiparty government inside the prison system and join a tight community when released, despite the harsh restrictions on their not engaging in any political activism. The purpose is to neuter them politically. Recently near Ramallah, 38 people were arrested for collecting money to help build a house for a PFLP member's widow.

Two of the tightest bonds I know of among men is those who have been in a lot of combat together, and those who have survived harsh imprisonment, especially where torture was routine as it was in Israel. Netanyahu knew he could hold back the prisoner release card and cause the Palestinians to walk out of proposed talks.

Kerry knew it, too. So what did he do about it? He used the “A” word on the Israelis... apartheid, and we know how the Israelis like to control the vocabulary, as a display of power. And Kerry had been mentioning all along that the boycott pressure would increase with no peace agreement, and it will. The Israelis obviously considered the boycott to be the lesser of two evils, as they still have the US on the hook for the ten-year advance funding agreement that was George Bush’s going away present to them.

But when it came to punishing Abbas for not accepting political suicide, the sanctions card was played immediately with the threat of US funding cut offs for the PA. And no, the hypocrisy of that did not embarrass the US State Department in the slightest. It is top heavy with dual Israeli-American citizens.

The Palestinian Authority had anticipated the Israeli move. They went ahead with their UN membership requests, which will include access to the international legal forums to pursue the numerous Israelis participating in war crimes and crimes against humanity. I hope to see those trials in my lifetime.

The second motivation for the Israelis to kill the talks by reneging on the prisoner release was having the PA make up with Hamas to form a coalition government. Much fanfare was made of this in the media when it was announced, but it is a task easier discussed than done, as power sharing in any Mideast country is like tightrope walking on a windy day.

Left out of the coverage about the talks breakdown was something so obvious that I found hard to believe it could have been purposefully overlooked. And that is, how can anyone continue investing in a peace negotiation, which requires confidence that the other party will live up to its terms, when that party is already in breech of their agreements made before going into the talks? How stupid would that investment be?

It is mind boggling this was not front-page news. Could the reason be that the Israel-friendly corporate media does not want to publicize the track record of Israel not living up to agreements any time it wants, simply by “reinterpreting” them? This is the elephant sitting in the living room, which everyone pretends not to smell.

In closing, there is another “don’t even go there” aspect that everyone seems afraid to discuss publicly. And that is the large oil and gas reserves off the coast of Gaza, which could be a Mother Earth's monetary reparations fund for the inestimable economic devastation inflicted on the Palestinians for 66 years.

If such a thing had been inflicted on Jews anywhere on the planet, they would have had worldwide support for reparations. So what remains to be answered is who is going to pay the Palestinian reparations? I don't mean just
the Israeli Jews. Those who aided and abetted them, like the American Christian ones -- who give more money to Israel every year than American Jews do -- have directly funded the crimes against the Palestinians.

For the CZ's, this includes the persecution of the Christian Palestinians, the “living stones” of Christianity whose numbers have dwindled from 20% of the population down to 2%. This has been an ethnic cleansing so shameful that hardly anyone dares mention it.

But I mention it because I hold these actions in utter contempt. One of the great benefits of independent journalism is that we get to tell folks exactly how we feel. It is a wonderful freedom that is worth all the struggles that accompany this work. And I will keep doing it until my last breath.

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