

November 2007

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Road Map II—A ‘Virtual’ Peace

For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 1 Thessalonians 5:3

Some 49 nations were invited to send delegates to Annapolis, Maryland this week to discuss the creation of a first-ever Palestinian state and to pressure Israel to yield a significant portion of its land to the cause. According to a senior Palestinian negotiator, President Bush told Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas during a private meeting that the Palestinians will have a state on the ground before he leaves office.

The inducement for Israel to cooperate is the prospect of a cessation of missile attacks and suicide bombings that have long been carried out against the Israeli populace. But Senior News Analyst Bill Wilson warns, “The Middle East Peace Summit in Annapolis has two sides to it—a physical side where leaders from around the world gather to make the public believe they are interested in peace; and a spiritual side that most involved have no idea the pending destruction that has been created by meetings such as these.”¹

In light of the resurgence of a U.S.-brokered peace plan, it seems both timely and pertinent to reissue with this mailing, our June 2003 commentary, Road Map to Peace or Peril. It also seems appropriate to share some thoughts from a personal friend who is an orthodox Jew living in Israel. Regarding the Annapolis meetings, here is what she writes:

Last night, I watched the news with great interest. The day we had feared would arrive had come. The Summit at Annapolis had convened and, beginning in the evening hours in Israel, the television and radio reports were ongoing. I listened to the speeches live on the radio as I drove home and then stayed glued to the television for the evening news and the follow-up talk shows. And as I watched and listened, a terrible sinking feeling pervaded me. I wanted to cry but could not. I wanted to shout, but the people I was watching...wouldn't hear me. I felt helpless.

I read the full texts of Bush's, Olmert's and Abbas' speeches this morning and had the opportunity to peruse a great deal of commentary as well. There is no doubt in my mind that this summit will fail. The Palestinians and the Israelis are still too far apart to be able to reach an agreement any time soon. There is no question that we have seen similar summits and photo ops before, from Madrid to the White House Lawn, to Camp David. And each time, we witnessed the smiles, the speeches and the handshakes. And each time, the summit failed while Israeli concessions were met with terrorism and bloodshed...

And then came the Disengagement, the destruction of close to 2,000 homes, the cruel expulsion of close to 10,000 people from their homes...When Ariel Sharon first put forward the idea of disengagement, none of us believed it would actually happen. But it did. And we protested and prayed, but it went forward anyway.

President Bush made it very clear that the "settlements" were a major obstacle to regional peace. In his own words: "Israel must demonstrate its support for the creation

of a prosperous and successful Palestinian State by ending settlement expansion."

Abbas went further: "ending all settlement activities, including natural growth." Last night, Israeli television reported that Olmert's vision would require the removal of between 100,000 and 120,000 Jews from their homes. Abbas' vision requires the removal of all 280,000.

[We] moved to Israel 23 years ago and within a month of arriving, had already signed a contract to build our home in Karnei Shomron. We took out a mortgage which we are still paying and committed nearly all our savings to the home...Our children are mostly out of the house now, at least during the week, but they come home for Shabbat, to the home and community that they have always known. On Shabbat, we go to synagogue and visit with friends, catching up with what is happening to everyone in the community.

[I ask]: What is it about my house, my family, my community that is an obstacle to peace? What is it about our lives that prevents the Arabs in the neighboring villages from enjoying peace and security, from living their own lives. If my son gets married and wants to live nearby, should he be asking Abbas and Bush for permission to build a new house?

...We live in Judea and Samaria and we love it here. We have taken rocky, barren land and turned it into a paradise. We have planted trees and gardens, built schools and shops and raised our children to love the land as we do. The world has gathered at Annapolis, in part to solve the Palestinian refugee problem. But, in so doing, they have put forward a plan that will create an enormous Jewish refugee problem.

I am not willing to be a refugee. I tremble at the thought of going through what my friends from Gush Katif went through. I came to Israel to set down roots in my own homeland, roots that cannot be set down by a Jew anywhere else in the world. I set down my roots in Samaria. I built my home on land that did not belong to any Arab—that had not been cultivated by anyone for centuries, on the same spot where Jews lived thousands of years ago. How dare anyone try and take that away from me? ²

Mr. Wilson says that President Bush is insistent on Israel giving up its traditional Biblical lands for a peace agreement with so-call Palestinians, despite the fact that they elected terrorists (Hamas) to represent them in the takeover of Gaza which Israel gave up in good faith. "This," notes Wilson "has resulted in Gaza becoming a lawless base of terror against Israel rather than a model of a Palestinian state co-existing side by side in peace with Israel..." Knesset member Eli Yishai agrees. He says, "I support peace with a real partner, but now we are dealing with a 'virtual' one."

"Now the spiritual battle may well rage over one of the world's foremost military academies," says Wilson. "All the hostile nations of the world gathered in one place against Israel in Annapolis...are armed with the spirit of division—dividing Israel and the holy city of Jerusalem..."

We too, are concerned that President Bush and his administration are at cross-purposes with prophetic passages in the Bible that pertain to Israel—perhaps even moving a spiritual stronghold from the Middle East to America.

We know Israel has a powerful FRIEND. We hope the President keeps that in mind.

Rick Forcier

Executive Director

¹ Bill Wilson, Koenig's International News, [The Two Real Sides of Annapolis-Physical and Spiritual](#), 11/26/2007

² Sondra Oster Baras, Director, Israel Office of *Christian Friends of Israeli Communities*