

Arabs Slash Aid to Palestinians

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Gaza City

As is well known, the Arabs no longer put the Palestinians at the center of their politics. The vivid demonstration of this was the decision of four Arab states to normalize ties with Israel, without waiting for the Palestinian demands for an independent state to be met. And there are other Arab or Muslim states – Oman, Mauritania – believed ready to follow suit. Finally, there are Arab countries that, without normalizing ties themselves, look favorably on other states doing so, and maintain their own close cooperation on security matters with the Jewish state, including Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The four Arab states – the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco – that recently agreed to normalize ties with Israel, were demonstrating that they were putting their

own national interests first, and would no longer allow the Palestinians to dictate their policy toward the Jewish state. But it was not only those four states that caused fury among the Palestinians, with Abbas raging in spittle-flecked fury in Ramallah, denouncing those states as having “betrayed” the Palestinians and “stabbed us in the back.” The Palestinians were further horrified when, having asked the Arab League to condemn those states normalizing ties with Israel, they were turned down flat. It has begun to dawn on the Palestinians that they are much less important to the other Arabs than they had allowed themselves to believe. Chastened, they have toned down their vituperative rhetoric, hoping to win back Arab support. But it won’t work. Too many benefits have accrued to the four Arab states that have normalized ties. Other states – Oman, Mauritania – are waiting in the wings, hoping to follow suit.

For each state that normalized ties with Israel, there were different benefits awaiting them. For the UAE, it was the go-ahead to buy \$23 billion dollars in American weapons, including 50 F-35 Stealth fighter jets that the UAE had wanted to buy for six years, and at long last was being granted its wish. For Bahrain, it was American assurances of protection against Iran, which has fomented trouble among the Bahraini Shi’a, who constitute 60% of the population. For the Sudan, it was the American government’s removal of Sudan from a list of state sponsors of terrorism, and a consequent lifting of its sanctions. For Morocco, it was American recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara. These are all benefits that the American government was willing to offer as inducements to join the Abraham Accords. These four states will now also benefit directly from their ties with Israel. Trade, technology transfer, and tourism between Israel and the normalizing states will grow. Already Emirati and Israeli businessmen, investors, bankers, entrepreneurs, tour operators, media companies, sports teams, have been making deals at breakneck speed. Israel can offer Sudan and Morocco

farmers its expertise in drip irrigation, desalination, waste water management, and producing water from air, areas in which Israel is the world's leader. It can offer all four normalizing states its advances in solar energy – another field in which Israel is a world leader. Finally, as the original Start-Up Nation, Israel can help train Arabs in several of those countries for jobs in high tech.

What can the Palestinians offer the Arab states? Nothing. They are a dead weight on the Arabs. They demand diplomatic and financial support, and continuously complain when they think they are not being given what they deserve. Their hands are perennially held out in Eleemosynary Position #1. And this continues even as the Palestinian leaders, maddeningly, make off like gangbusters, with Khaled Meshaal and Mousa Abu Marzouk of Hamas each amassing a fortune of at least \$2.5 billion, while Mahmoud Abbas of the PA, a somewhat less successful kleptocrat, has acquired \$400 million dollars.

The Arabs have had quite enough of financing the Palestinians, including their crooked and grasping leaders. Not only are they unwilling to dance to the diplomatic tune of the Palestinians (as shown by the normalizing of ties with Israel), but they have drastically cut to the bone their own financial support of the Palestinians. That story is [Jihad Watch](#).