

Martin Indyk's Appalling and Failed Peace-Processing

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Martin Indyk has always believed that the way to peace between Palestinians and Israelis is to put maximum pressure on Israel. Caroline Glick describes his appalling peace-processing thus: “At a diplomatic crossroad, it’s time for Israel to act,” by Caroline B. Glick, [Israel Hayom](#), November 20, 2020:

In 2013-14, Martin Indyk served as the head of then-Secretary of State John Kerry’s negotiations team. Indyk pulled out all the stops to coerce Israel into transferring the vast majority of Judea and Samaria to PLO control and to partitioning Jerusalem. He bitterly blamed Israel when his aggressive efforts came to naught.

When Martin Indyk was the American Ambassador to Israel, he was reported to stride about the corridors of power like a

bantam rooster, a puffed-up gap-toothed little viceroy inspecting his colony and browbeating the natives. He is the reported author of remarks that infuriated the Israelis: **"The Jewish people are supposed to be smart; it is true that they're also considered a stubborn nation. You're supposed to know how to read the map: In the 21st century, the world will not keep tolerating the Israeli occupation. The occupation threatens Israel's status in the world and threatens Israel as a Jewish state. The Palestinians are tired of the status quo. They will get their state in the end – whether through violence or by turning to international organizations."**

Indyk claims the "occupation threatens Israel's status in the world." Meanwhile, Israel's status in several key Arab countries has never been higher. Not only in the UAE, Bahrain, and Sudan, but also among leaders in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Chad, Morocco, Mauritania, some of whom are in line to normalize relations with Israel themselves. There is nothing inevitable about the Palestinians getting a state; violence has not worked for them in the past 72 years; Israel has only gotten stronger militarily, and has met every new military challenge, including finding novel ways to locate and destroy the deepest terror tunnels of both Hamas and Hezbollah. Israel is the strongest military power in the region, the most effective opponent of Iran, and it has long cooperated on intelligence matters with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

As for "international organizations" – that is, the obsessively anti-Israel U.N. – despite all the votes taken against Israel in the General Assembly and the UNHRC (UN Human Rights Council), where Israel and its human rights record remain permanently on the docket – it's always Item #7 – at every session, the effect on Israel has been negligible. It will not be pushed into surrendering its legal claim to Judea and Samaria (a/k/a the West Bank) based on the Mandate for Palestine, U.N. Resolution 242, and the accepted Law of Nations principle that territory won in a war of self-defense

need not be returned to the aggressor. Israel continues to build and expand settlements, on land assigned to the Jewish state by the Palestine Mandate; it remains unintimidated by these endless, and endlessly unjust, U.N. votes. How does the gap-toothed grobian Martin Indyk think that “they (the Palestinians) will get their state by turning to international organizations”? They’ve been turning to those international organizations for more than half a century but are no closer to forcing Israel to retreat from what they describe as “Palestinian lands” where Israel, following the Palestine Mandate, has been building settlements in the years since the Six-Day War in 1967. Israel left Gaza not because “international organizations” forced it to but because it deemed ruling the Strip and discharging the responsibilities of rule there resulted in too much cost, and too little benefit, to the Jewish state.

Now back in business, Indyk published an article last week [in early November] on NBC’s website setting out how Biden should go about reinstating Obama’s Middle East policies.

Indyk argued that to advance the cause of peace, Biden should pick on Israel. Biden, Indyk advised, needs to force Israel to accept the Kerry (Indyk) plan as a basis for negotiations, ban all Israeli Jewish construction in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, and force Israel to give land in Judea and Samaria to the PLO. Indyk called on the Arab states that have peaceful relations with Israel to reinstate the Palestinian veto – conditioning ties with them on Israeli concessions to the Palestinians.

And just how does Martin Indyk, who is only channeling Mahmoud Abbas, plan to halt Israeli construction in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria? Both Biden and Harris have said they will not pressure Israel on settlements by denying it needed weaponry. How can Israel be made to give land to the PLO (which constitutes the largest part of the PA)? Indyk even

wants to undo the great diplomatic achievement of the Trump Administration – the normalization of ties between Israel and three Arab states. Is it likely that the leaders of the UAE, Bahrain, and Sudan will reverse course, undo all the agreements between their governments and Israel, declare null and void those private agreements made between their businessmen, who have been so excited by new opportunities, with Israeli counterparts – all because Martin Indyk, after decades of peace-processing failure, tells them to?

Martin Indyk is the former Ambassador to Israel who is back in the news as a likely member of the Biden team, focussed on the Palestinian-Israeli dispute. He believes that Israel will Inevitably have to yield to Palestinian demands: "They [the Palestinians] will get their state in the end – whether through violence or by turning to international organizations."

Indyk's advice is noteworthy in the context of the two other events that happened this week. First, Wednesday saw Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif al-Zayani arrive in Israel for a first official visit by a Bahraini leader. During his meetings in Jerusalem, al-Zayani formally requested to open a Bahraini embassy in Israel and committed to further strengthening bilateral ties between Manama and Jerusalem.

Along the same lines, last week, Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed accepted President Reuven Rivlin's invitation to pay an official visit to Israel. Al-Zayani's visit, like bin Zayed's announcement, indicates that Israel's partners in the Abraham Accords have no intention of following Indyk's advice and subordinating their national interests to the whims of the PLO's decrepit leadership.

Both the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and the Bahraini Foreign Minister are eager to solidify their new ties with Israel: the Bahrainis want to quickly open an embassy in Israel and

further strengthen ties between themselves and Israelis. The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Mohamed bin Zayed, has accepted an invitation from Israeli President Rivlin to visit the Jewish state. In his NBC article, published online before the announcement of the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's future visit to Israel and the Bahraini Foreign Minister's actual visit to Israel, Indyk called on the Arab states that have peaceful relations with Israel "to reinstate the Palestinian veto – conditioning ties with them on Israeli concessions to the Palestinians." In other words, Indyk advises a return to the status quo ante, where the national interests of Arab states in opening or upgrading ties to Israel will again be put on hold, held hostage to what the PA leaders demand. Why should the Palestinians be allowed to call the tune for the UAE, Bahrain, and Sudan, and undo the only real peace process now going, which is that between Israel and those Arab states?

Indeed, they [the Gulf Arabs] have positively had it with the Palestinians and their grievance-mongering. Last month, a UAE official referred to the PA and Hamas as "corrupt murderers," and last Friday, Saudi writer Osama Yamani published an article in the regime-backed Ukaz newspaper rejecting the Palestinians' Islamic significance.

Titled, Where is Al-Aqsa Mosque? Yamani's article insists that the Palestinian and Muslim Brotherhood claims regarding al-Aqsa, the place Islam's Prophet Muhammed alighted to in his nighttime flight to heaven, are false. The Palestinians and the Muslim Brotherhood say that al-Aqsa is the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. But in keeping with Saudi Wahabi belief, Yamani insisted that al-Aqsa is in Ju'rana, a village located 30 kilometers (18 miles) northeast of Mecca.

Needless to say, if the Sunni Arab world outside the Brotherhood's orbit embraces the Wahabist view, Arab support for the Palestinian war against Israel will dry up regardless of who sits in the White House.

If Yamani's article were to gain wide support among Muslims – and the backing, and the billions, of the Saudi rulers who would no doubt be pleased to have the Al-Aqsa mosque located in Saudi territory, giving the country all three of the faith's holiest sites – that could obviously lead to a downgrading of Jerusalem's significance in Islam, and hence, as well, of the Palestinian cause that, for many reasons, has already been downgraded in Muslim eyes.

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