

The Final Settlement

by John Hartung (Palestine Times, October 1997)

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Netanyahu's objectives for a Final Settlement with the Palestinians were recently described by Uzi Benziman: "to annex at least 50 percent of the West Bank (the Jordan Valley, the old Green Line, Gush Etzion and greater Jerusalem); to allow the Palestinian Authority no more than the status of a quasi-state (like Puerto Rico or Andora) without arms or an army; to continue controlling its borders and airspace; to be able to limit its immigration and its access to Israeli [sic] water resources; to leave most of the Israeli settlements under Israeli sovereignty; and to continue Israeli control over both parts of Jerusalem, while possibly granting some status to an Arab entity over the Temple Mount mosques" (HA'ARETZ, September 21).

Benziman assured readers that because such a proposal "has no chance of winning American support," it cannot be openly discussed. So when the Israeli cabinet met to discuss a Final Settlement plan, "Instead, ministers listened to reports about army preparations for an armed confrontation with the Palestinians."

Unfortunately, Mr. Benziman may be naive. An armed confrontation with the Palestinians may be Netanyahu's strategy for gaining American support. How would that work? First, with the help of people like Irving Moskowitz, Yigal Amir's fan club and followers of the late Meir Kahane, Netanyahu will infuriate enough Palestinians to cause enough "terrorist" incidents to push United States public opinion over the threshold of accepting an Israeli invasion of territory that is currently under Palestinian control. This invasion will be claimed to have the sole purpose of "combating terrorism," but it will ignite sufficient resistance to provide an excuse for disarming the Palestinian Authority, killing 10 to 20,000 Palestinians, expelling a larger number, and when the shooting is over, threatening to expel the rest.

Then, in response to threats from the non-US-aligned Arab world, demands from the US-aligned Arab world, pressure from the non-US-non-Arab world, and pleas from the United States, in a magnanimous gesture of concession Netanyahu will reluctantly agree to give Palestinians almost 50 percent of the West Bank in a set of disarmed Bantustan-like refuge areas that will be at the mercy of Israel for every drop of water that does not fall from the sky. In reality, this will not be a concession at all, because Netanyahu actually wants clusters of non-voting Arabs sprinkled throughout Israel. Why? Somebody has to pick the Zionist fruit, carry Zionist bricks, sweep Zionist streets and clean Zionist toilet bowls -- and East Europeans, Africans and Southeast Asians are too expensive, are causing too much trouble, and unlike Palestinians, cannot be beaten into submission as part of a Final Settlement.

How can Palestinians prevent Netanyahu's Final Settlement from happening? By not committing the terrorist acts that will supply Israel with an excuse for initiating a

military solution? No, because Israel would simply keep pushing until they created Palestinian Bantustans without a major military intervention. By aligning sufficient support from the Arab world to pose a serious military threat to Israel? Yes, that would work if it could be done, but it cannot be done because the United States has made Egypt dependent upon US financial aid and the Arabian Peninsula dependant upon US military aid.

So what might work? Please consider a suggestion: resist retaliating in reaction to Israeli provocations while you advocate a Final Settlement plan of your own -- a daring plan that would appeal to most people's sense of justice. Here it is.

Propose a new nation for the Middle East. Israel, without the Golan Heights, should join the West Bank and Gaza. This new country should not be called Israel and it should not be called Palestine. Any other name would be acceptable, but I suggest New Canaan.

All current inhabitants of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza would be citizens of New Canaan, and no citizen would be discriminated against, or receive privileges, on the basis of religion. People residing outside of New Canaan who were born in Israel, the West Bank or Gaza could immigrate to New Canaan with their children and receive automatic citizenship. Otherwise, immigration policy should be determined by a democratically elected government in any manner that would not discriminate by religious affiliation.

Because the United States has been critically responsible for creating the circumstances which require such a major solution, it should guarantee the security of New Canaan for fifteen years subsequent to its creation. In addition, the United States should facilitate justice by granting expedited U.S. citizenship to any former Israeli citizen of New Canaan who wishes to immigrate to the United States.

Sound fantastic? Compared to what? Armed resistance? Arab unity? The Oslo accords? Divine intervention? A Final Settlement Plan that could be openly advocated would be a powerful force.

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