

Annapolis Conference: Another Palestinian Carrot

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As expected by a majority the hailed Annapolis Conference did not produce any positive results. On the contrary it took the Palestinian cause back to 1993 Oslo period when the PLO and the Israeli government initially agreed to negotiate.

The Abbas-led Palestinian negotiating team is the same team, who negotiated the miserably failed Oslo agreement and the many barren negotiating meetings that followed. These negotiators had not learned from their experience that Israel had always sabotaged peace talks with their unreasonable demands and reservations, and had never followed any agreement. The team had lost the trust of their people long time ago and was booted out of the Palestinian Authority after the Palestinians elected Hamas to represent them through a free democratic election. This team went to Annapolis without getting the approval or the authority of Palestinian Legislative Council to negotiate and to make final decisions on behalf of the Palestinians. Abbas had ignored the demands of all Palestinian factions, including many in Fatah, not to go to Annapolis. He does not represent the Palestinians majority but Fatah's ruling elite; a small group who had hijacked Fatah movement, ignored the rest of Palestinian factions, and turned their backs on their own people to serve the Israeli/American interests in order to keep their power position and to keep receiving more bribes into their own pockets. Many Palestinians, including those in Diaspora in European countries, and their Arab brothers had demonstrated against Annapolis into the streets of their cities in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and occupied Palestine, even in Abbas' base city Ramallah, where his security forces had met the demonstrators with live bullets and brutal force. Although insisting that Fatah, and nobody else, is the sole representative of the Palestinian people, Abbas is so detached from his people to the point of ignoring, in his speech at Annapolis, to mention their suffering under the Israeli occupation to the point of starvation, while Israeli Olmert talked about the suffering of the Israelis under what he called "Palestinian terror" (Palestinian legitimate right to resist Israeli occupation), as if the Palestinian tanks and helicopters are bombarding the Israeli cities.

The Arab states went to Annapolis because the American administration had, once again, dangled the carrot of the Palestinian State in front of their eyes. The Arab governments had never whole-heartedly supported the Palestinian cause. With all the money many of them have, some of the Arab leaders are considered among the wealthiest in the world, they have dropped only negligible morsels to

the Palestinians. All what they care about is to save their own skin from the Israeli expansionist scheme. They are willing to sacrifice the Palestinians in the hope that the American administration might “contain” Israel within parts of Palestine or even within the whole Palestine. Their 2002 Peace Initiative “land for peace” to Israel gives up the Palestinian refugees’ right of return to their homes, and legalizes Israeli occupation of 78% of Palestine. By attending Annapolis side by side with Abbas & Company (the so-called Arab moderates) they are sending a rejection message to Hamas and its likes (the so-called Arab Muslim extremists). Finally the Arab leaders understand that the American administration is cooking an extreme Sikes-Picot like partition plans for the Middle East, and want to appease this administration for fear of having a similar fate like Iraq.

Israel is the only party to profit from Annapolis. The corrupt and weak Israeli Prime Minister Olmert needed Annapolis to improve his political status. To attend Annapolis the Israelis demanded Palestinians to recognize and to acknowledge the “Jewishness” of the Israeli State, and demanded all Arab countries not to interfere with the Israeli/Palestinian negotiations or giving Palestinian team any council. Recognizing the Jewishness of Israeli state, an ultimate racist ideology, would be a precursor for the Israelis to transfer the Israeli Arabs out of Israel. Israelis want to Isolate Palestinians away from the rest of the Arab world so that they, the strong occupiers, can impose their conditions on the weak occupied Palestinians.

Citing Egyptian and Jordanian leaders as examples Israeli Prime minister Olmert took the opportunity to “invite” the rest of the Arab leaders to similarly quit boycotting Israel and to establish normal economic and political relationships with Israel, of course on Israel’s conditions otherwise it would have accepted the Arab Peace Initiative that would establish these relationships.

The major Israeli gain in Annapolis is its success of transforming the Israeli/Palestinian problem from Israeli occupation and Palestinian refugees’ problem to the issue of establishing a Palestinian state. Thus marginalizing the Palestinian refugees and legalizing the Israeli occupation.

Israeli government does not want peace and security to its people otherwise it would have accepted the Arab Peace Initiative that would have guaranteed peace and security to the Israelis. Peace would put an end to the Israeli expansion and ends its role as a Sparta-like mercenary state.

All successive American administrations had pledged unconditional financial, military, and political support to the state of Israel despite its criminal record and violations of international laws and human rights. All the president candidates rush to AIPAC’s podium to vehemently declare her or his commitment to Israel. American administrations had ignored and marginalized the Palestinians. The administrations had never been a fair and neutral broker to Israeli/Palestinian peace negotiations as they claimed themselves to be. President George Bush

does not even know the correct name of the Palestinian President; he called him Muhammad rather than Mahmoud Abbas.

As a typical biased broker Bush urged the Palestinians to adopt the Road Map, with the many Israeli nullifying reservations, by disarming Palestinian militias (freedom fighters) but did not urge the Israelis to dismantle the hundreds of military check points within the occupied West Bank, freeze the illegal colonies, and stop the imprisoning apartheid wall. He stressed the American commitment to the security of Israel as a national homeland for the Jews, but did not utter one word about the security of Palestinians, who are subjected to starvation and are murdered daily by Israeli army and by Israeli settlers. He claimed he supports a two-state solution when he knows very well that a Palestinian state could not be viable if it is riddled with illegal Israeli colonies and Israeli-only roads.

No, Bush, like the rest of the presidents, does not care about the Palestinians. They remember Palestine only to wave its resolution as a carrot to the Arab leaders to lead them towards meeting the American foreign policy in the region. This carrot was waved by then President Bush, the father, to the Arab leaders during the first Gulf War against Iraq late 1990 so they open their countries to be used as American military bases to attack Iraq. The result was the ill fated Oslo Accord that officially ended Palestinian military resistance and installed a weak Palestinian Authority under the watchful eyes and the mercy of the Israeli army and donor countries.

In 2003 when Bush, the son, wanted to invade Iraq he was advised to use the Palestinian carrot again to neutralize and pacify any Arab objection as well as using their countries as a launching pad for the invasion. So Bush, for the first time and after two years in his presidency, remembered the Palestinians and declared his support to the two-state solution. Yet later on he supported Israeli Prime Minister Sharon's terror campaign against all major Palestinian cities and his usurpation of more Palestinian land to build more illegal Israeli colonies, and called him a man of peace. Meanwhile the Palestinians lost more of their land and their leader, Yasser Arafat, was poisoned.

Four years later Bush, again, remembered the Palestinian carrot and has used it in Annapolis to convince the Arab leaders to accept the American plans for the "New Middle East" including accepting Israel and supporting the plans of his administration to secure Iraq and to attack Iran, reminding them that refusal will lead their countries into long wars with Iraqi devastation as an example.