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THE LOOMING DANGER OF ANNAPOLIS

The Jewish state is in greater danger than anytime since the 1948 War of Independence. The danger stems not from current Arab violence, nor the threat of future violence. It lies in the convocation of the Annapolis conference conceived and promoted with almost frenetic enthusiasm by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Today, Arab League foreign ministers are scheduled to meet in Cairo to decide which countries will send representatives to Annapolis besides Mahmoud Abbas's Palestinian Authority/Palestine Liberation Organization. An unknown number of delegates from various Arab states together with representatives of the Quartet - US, Russia, the UN and the European Union - will presumably turn up for the conference opening at Annapolis, Maryland, on November 27.

WHOEVER THEY are, an analysis of their respective outlooks shows that all the delegates are committed to the diminution of Israel and some, frankly, to her consequent extinction.

They will be faced by a single delegation from Israel, headed by Ehud Olmert. He has already announced (on November 4) that there will be no 'negotiations' at the conference, only a 'jumping-off ground for continued serious and in-depth negotiations, which will not avoid any issue or ignore any division which has clouded our relations with the Palestinian people for many years.'

And among them he mentioned 'refugees.' Coming even from the notably unprincipled Ehud Olmert, his inclusion of the 'refugees' is most disturbing. This is a subject which, as all Israeli governments have repeatedly made clear, they are not prepared to discuss, for very good reason. It is simply not arguable. To discuss it is to flout the will of the people. Now it touches the outer edge of Olmert's irresponsibility.

The 'refugee problem' was created by the Arabs, who led the 1948 invasion of Israel, and it was created deliberately to bring about what president Gamal Nasser of Egypt called the 'end of Israel.' Olmert's loose-tongued talk raises acutely the serious question of the very legitimacy of all his representations on behalf of Israel.

No less significant are his and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni's frequent references to the Road Map as the basis for Israel's policy at the projected conference. This is outright deception.

The Road Map is dead. It died stillborn - when Abbas refused to implement its first clause: the surrender of arms. 'I do not intend,' he said, 'to have a civil war on my hands.'

That first clause was manifestly the only potential safeguard of Israel's security.

MORE THAN that, when and how did the Israeli government accept the Road Map? Do Olmert and Livni forget the Road Map's reverberating slaps in Israel's face? The Road Map was concocted by the Quartet as a means of foisting on Israel a plan for creating a Palestinian state. It was drawn up in consultation with, and perhaps by the inspiration of, one of Israel's most virulent and most active enemies - Saudi Arabia. Then it was submitted for approval by the Arab League. Israel was kept in the dark.

Israel was handed the Road Map in the same way, weirdly enough, as the Munich Pact was handed to the betrayed Czechs in 1938, by its authors Britain, France, Germany

and Italy. When a shocked prime minister Ariel Sharon ventured to say that there were 14 amendments (which he presumably felt could make the repugnant diktat acceptable to Israel), he was told tersely and without qualification by US secretary of state Colin Powell that no amendments would be considered (exactly what the Czechs were told in 1938).

Sharon kept on trying.

It is important to read at least the first, and most important, of these proposed amendments:

'The Palestinians will dismantle the existing security organizations and implement security reforms during the course of which new organizations will be formed and act to combat terror, violence and incitement (incitement must cease immediately and the Palestinian Authority must educate for peace). These organizations will engage in genuine prevention of terror and violence through arrests, interrogations, prevention and the enforcement of the legal groundwork for investigations, prosecution and punishment.

'In the first phase of the plan and as a condition for progress to the second phase, the Palestinians will complete the dismantling of terrorist organizations (Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front, the Democratic Front, al-Aksa Brigades and other apparatuses) and their infrastructure, collection of all illegal weapons and their transfer to a third party for the sake of being removed from the area and destroyed; cessation of weapons smuggling and weapons production inside the Palestinian Authority, activation of the full prevention apparatus and cessation of incitement. There will be no progress to the second phase without the fulfillment of all the above mentioned conditions relating to the war against terror.'

MANIFESTLY NONE of this was implemented, and the Road Map was quietly buried. But Washington, feeling the need for some achievement in the Middle East as a counterweight to the widespread criticism of its performance in Iraq, then gave birth to an alternative means of producing a quick-fix Palestinian state. That, it seems, is how the idea of an international conference was born.

Meantime, however, the political map of the Israel-Arab dispute changed radically.

Not that the demonization of Israel throughout the Arab world - and the world at large - has decreased. The imams continue to blare forth their incendiary messages from the mosques every Friday, the children in the schools continue to be indoctrinated daily with hate and contempt for Israel and the Jewish people. A revolution, however, has taken place in the Palestinian arena. By a democratic election in January 2006 the Hamas terrorist organization became the governing power in the Palestinian Authority. And by June 2007 Hamas had ousted Fatah from the Gaza Strip.

Abbas still heads the Palestinian Authority on the 'West Bank,' so in fact there now exist two conflicting governing bodies; and it is Hamas that provides most of the terror - though bizarrely, Abbas's own Fatah Aksa Martyrs Brigades took responsibility for the murder of Ido Zoldan, a 29-year-old father of two from Shavei Shomron, on Monday night. It carried out the attack as 'a protest against the Annapolis conference and a response to Israel's crimes against the Palestinians.'

So it turns out that Abbas doesn't (or won't) control all armed factions of his own Fatah movement.

STILL HE'S considered a 'moderate,' and is now widely courted. Abbas has been received at the White House, and he is the Chosen Partner of Olmert and Livni. They, under the tutelage of Condoleezza Rice - and, as they claim, the inspiration of the Road Map - will help to bring about peace and the Palestinian state.

To smooth the path toward negotiations and boost Abbas' popularity, Israel is told to make concessions. Any difficulties that arise are met by cries from Washington: 'The conference must not fail.'

And so comes the pressure for concession after concession by Israel to 'help Abu Mazen': almost 500 security prisoners are to be released on top of the hundreds already freed; Abbas's forces in Nablus are to receive 25 Russian-made armored vehicles; blockades in Judea and Samaria have been lifted (making drive-by shootings easier), and future cessions of territory are dangled before the Arabs. All this on top of Jerusalem's promise that every claim and demand ever made on Israel by the 'Palestinians' will be on the table.

PERHAPS Ms. Rice simply does not understand that in the situation thus created, Abbas, his hold threatened by a more belligerent Hamas, dares not claim and demand from Israel any less than Hamas, and so Olmert, willy-nilly, will find himself, in effect, negotiating in Annapolis on terms laid down by Hamas.

Thus Israel has reached an unprecedented nadir in the dispute with the Palestinian Arabs. An examination of each step down into the depths proves how every Israeli government has failed to assert itself in confronting the deadly Arab purpose. There is only one way to stop the descent. Israel must effect a complete reversal of policy.

Interestingly enough, Tzipi Livni, in the course of a recent lecture published in the Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs, unwittingly laid down two vital truths on which Israel must base its policy. In the title of her lecture she describes Israel's present situation as being at a 'crossroads,' and in the body of the lecture she says 'Absolutely the last thing that Israel can afford and the last thing the world needs is the establishment of another terror state in the Middle East.'

Absolutely, indeed; and as neither she nor Olmert - nor, if you were to press them, Rice and President George W. Bush himself - can provide a smidgen of evidence to suggest that a Palestinian state will not be a terror state, 'the last thing that Israel can afford and the last thing the world needs is a conference to establish a Palestinian state.'