

Middle East Notes
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
July 18, 2013



Please note: Opinions expressed in the following articles do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.

[Read previous Middle East Notes here.](#)

This week's Middle East Notes contains articles from Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), Ha'aretz, the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, and other sources focusing on the Israeli Palestinian relations, the continuing occupation, two-state solutions and other issues. **In a separate email, you will receive the first alert from a newly organized campaign of faith-based groups, including the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, designed to raise awareness about Israel-Palestine.**

- CMEP's July 12 Bulletin shares information about the project to help a Salesian convent near Bethlehem, and its October 2014 delegation to Israel-Palestine. Also included are links to many articles on Secretary of State John Kerry's work and the crisis in Egypt.
- Jews for Justice for Palestinians (JFJFP) and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah have released the Joint Israeli Palestinian Poll, June 2013.
- Oudeh Basharat writes in Ha'aretz of Netanyahu's absurd demand for recognition of a Jewish state -- there has never in history been the demand that an outside party sign on to the definition of the character of the other party.
- Jay Ruderman and Gur Alroey claim in Ha'aretz that Israel is taking U.S. American Jews for granted and that the reality is that the flow of support to Israel is not a given. U.S. American Jewry is changing, and the consequences could be catastrophic and affect Israel economically, militarily and socially.
- Gideon Levy suggests in Ha'aretz that with Israel entering into another round of diplomatic inaction, the call for an economic boycott has become a patriotic requirement.
- Ilan Baruch writes in Ha'aretz that Netanyahu should learn from the fall of apartheid and the South African example of a negotiated settlement of equals.
- The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs has three special reports in its latest issue: a) Although Arab nations have revived and revised the 2002 peace initiative, Israel still isn't accepting it; b) It is impossible not to compare "separate-and-unequal" Jim Crow-era United States with the lives of present-day Palestinians and non-Jewish Israelis; c) the extensive use of detention of Palestinians and the inadequate medical attention they receive.
- Israel Policy Forum provides the "State of Two States" for the week of July 7.
- Jonathan Cook writes that the international community has long criticized Israel for the "discrimination" its Palestinian citizens face and for the "oppression" of Palestinians under occupation. This terminology needs overhauling too, say the human rights lawyers. They say that a system that treats one ethnic group as less human than another already has a legal name: it is called apartheid.
- Yuval Diskin writes in the Jerusalem Post that Israel is approaching a point of no return regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He writes: "This subject has a place in our essence, in our identity, in our souls, in our security, and in our perception of morality – as a society or nation that has come to rule another nation."

1) Churches for Middle East (CMEP) Bulletin, July 12, 2013

CMEP remains active over summer months: The peace process is dragging but the CMEP staff isn't! We are continuing to work to try and help the nuns of the Salesian Catholic Convent in the Cremisan Valley near Bethlehem. A recent Israeli government decision routes the separation barrier through their land, separating the convent from the nearby monastery and from their agricultural lands and surrounding a primary school on three sides. CMEP is raising the issue in Congress and you can [click here](#) to encourage Secretary Kerry to take action.

CMEP is also working hard on our Peace Journey travel program. Visiting with Israelis and Palestinians is essential to understanding how the ongoing conflict undermines the lives and livelihoods of both people and to being an advocate for an end to the violence. If you have a call to be a peacemaker, and a passion and love for the people of the Holy Land, [CMEP invites you to join a Peace Journey this October](#).

CMEP provides links to many articles both on the Egyptian crisis and its effect on Palestinians and on Secretary of State John Kerry's ongoing efforts on the Middle East peace process. Find these links in the Bulletin posted on the CMEP website.

[Recap for July 8](#)

[Recap for July 1](#)

2) Peace would be M.A.D.: Results of new poll of Israelis and Palestinians Jews for Justice for Palestinians (JFJFP), July 2, 2013

Despite the launching of the efforts of U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry to renew the peace process and the modification introduced to the Arab Peace Initiative (API) accepting minor territorial swaps, both sides display pessimism regarding the peace process and Israeli support for the API drops.

These are the results of the most recent poll conducted jointly by the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah. This joint survey was conducted with the support of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Ramallah and Jerusalem.

Israelis and Palestinians continue to display pessimism regarding the peace process despite [Kerry's] efforts ... and despite modification introduced to the Arab Peace Initiative: Only 27 percent of Palestinians and 10 percent of Israelis think that the two sides will return to negotiations and violence will stop while 34 percent of Israelis and 31 percent of Palestinians believe that negotiations will resume but some armed attacks will continue as well. On the other hand, 44 percent of Israelis and 15 percent of Palestinians think that the two sides will not return to negotiations and armed attacks will not stop and 21 percent of the Palestinians believe that the two sides will not return to negotiations but that violence will not resume.

Furthermore, findings indicate that each side perceives the other side as constituting a threat to its very existence: 57 percent of Palestinians think that Israel's goals in the long run are to extend its borders to cover all the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea and expel its Arab citizens, and 25 percent think the goals are to annex the West Bank while denying political rights to the Palestinians. 37 percent of the Israelis think that the Palestinian aspirations in the long run are to conquer the State of Israel and destroy much of the Jewish population in Israel; 17 percent think the goals of the Palestinians are to conquer the State of Israel. ...

To read more, including the survey's main findings, [visit the JFJFP website](#).

3) Netanyahu's absurd demand for recognition of a Jewish state Oudeh Basharat, Ha'aretz, July 8, 2013

Prepare the stalls! The Middle Eastern bazaar, as Henry Kissinger dubbed the Arab-Israeli negotiations, is coming. And there's nothing better than conducting them in a tent, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is suggesting – so that the sand will remind us that the desert is the same desert.

And while the stalls of the others will include all the latest innovations in the marketplace, such as recognition and normalization, Netanyahu's merchandise won't change: from the demand for recognition of a Jewish state, to continued construction in the settlements, and up to stories from his happy childhood – 2,500 years ago – in Judea and Samaria, the places where Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and Solomon, Isaiah and Jeremiah walked.

And when asked for a gesture – for example, releasing Palestinian prisoners, a kind of special offer to attract buyers – he refuses. The defenders say that there's no contradiction between the state's Jewish nature and its democratic nature. To that there is no more suitable reaction than the duck speech made by Netanyahu himself: "If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then what is it?"

Well, the quacking is with us in all walks of life, from institutionalized discrimination to the plan to uproot the last of the Bedouin tents in the Negev. At the moment our duck is quacking in the guise of a monstrous highway in Beit Safafa in southeast Jerusalem.

That's why the issue is not the title "Jewish state," it's the implementation. And before anything else, it's the bad intentions. One hadith (proverb) of the prophet Mohammed says: "Deeds are examined by the intentions behind them." And when good intentions are absent, and when decency wanders to distant lands, every word is superfluous. In 1948 the United Nations decided to establish two states. The decision was based on the right to self-determination of both peoples, but they were not talking about establishing states whose essence is contrary to the principles of the civil state.

We can assume that in their worst nightmares the authors of the UN resolution didn't dream that future generations would use the term "Jewish state" as a tool to cause the failure of any progress towards peace. The proof of that is that the leaders of the country over the years, while they regretted the fact that the Arabs did not recognize the state, did not demand the addition of any word to define it.

Moreover, the peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan were not conditional on the acceptance of the definition "Jewish state." Today, when the entire Arab world declares its recognition of Israel and even its willingness to normalize relations with it, Netanyahu is demanding, as an ultimatum, an upgrading of that recognition.

In addition, there has never in history been the absurd demand that an outside party sign on to the definition of the character of the other party ... Israel is placing Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas – who needs permission from the occupation officer each time he crosses the threshold of his home to leave it – in charge of the wording of Israel's definition. ...

[Read the entire piece on the Ha'aretz website.](#)

4) Israel is taking American Jews for granted **Jay Ruderman and Gur Alroey, Ha'aretz, July 8, 2013**

The long-standing relationship between American Jewry and Jews in Israel is one of the most important and central relationships between the state and the Jewish Diaspora. A comprehensive study has yet to be undertaken examining how much money has been donated by American Jewry to Israel, directly and indirectly, from the First World War until today.

However, whether directly (American Jewish philanthropy intended to improve Israeli society) or indirectly (federal funds secured via the pro-Israel lobby and pro-Israel members of Congress) there is no doubt that altogether this amounts to hundreds of billions of dollars. These contributions were sorely needed for hospitals, universities, the military, Iron Dome defense systems, and education and welfare institutions of the State of Israel. It is clear that without this support we would not be where we are today as a society.

These contributions have benefited Israeli society and have had a profound effect on its well-being and way of life. However, it seems that as the years pass by, Israelis seem to take their relationship with the American Jewish community for granted. The reality is that the flow of support to Israel is not a given.

American Jewry is changing. Jews who immigrated to the United States early last century, and who showed great affection for the early settlers of the Zionist movement, are no longer alive. Neither are their children. The affinity of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren to the State of Israel is weaker than their forefathers'. The feeling of admiration of the first and second generations is gone and has been replaced by a reevaluation of the relationship with Israel, at best, and indifference, at worst.

There is a clear and present danger lying at Israel's doorstep: There is a widening gap between American Jewry and Israel, and in some cases, Diaspora Jewry is losing its strong connection to Israel. If this trend continues, the consequences could be catastrophic and affect Israel economically, militarily and socially.

In order to create the desired change and bring American Jewry closer to Israeli society, we must act quickly. We believe that we must work on two levels which complement each other. The first level is developing and deepening the knowledge between American society and Israeli politicians and opinion makers. The second level is building a comprehensive academic curriculum for Israeli students where they can learn about American society in general and American Jewry in particular.

This plan is the key to training, educating and building future leaders who understand the importance of the bond between the two central Jewish communities in the world. As recent elections have shown, today's students are members of the Knesset and the leaders of tomorrow. This program will be the student's journey into the depths of the soul of American Jewry. They will learn about the emergence of American Jewry, its social make-up and contribution to the State of Israel, past and present. ...

[Read the entire piece on the Ha'aretz website.](#)

5) The Israeli patriot's final refuge: boycott **Gideon Levy, Ha'aretz, July 14, 2013**

Anyone who really fears for the future of the country needs to be in favor at this point of boycotting it economically.

A contradiction in terms? We have considered the alternatives. A boycott is the least of all evils, and it could produce historic benefits. It is the least violent of the options and the one least likely to result in bloodshed. It would be painful like the others, but the others would be worse.

On the assumption that the current status quo cannot continue forever, it is the most reasonable option to convince Israel to change. Its effectiveness has already been proven. More and more Israelis have become concerned recently about the threat of the boycott. When Justice Minister Tzipi Livni warns about it spreading and calls as a result for the diplomatic deadlock to be broken, she provides proof of the need for a boycott. She and others are therefore joining the boycott, divestment and sanction movement. Welcome to the club.

The change won't come from within. That has been clear for a long time. As long as Israelis don't pay a price for the occupation, or at least don't make the connection between cause and effect, they have no incentive to bring it to an end. And why should the average resident of Tel Aviv be bothered by what is happening in the West Bank city of Jenin or Rafah in the Gaza Strip? Those places are far away and not particularly interesting. As long as the arrogance and self-victimization continue among the Chosen People, the most chosen in the world, always the only victim, the world's explicit stance won't change a thing.

It's anti-Semitism, we say. The whole world's against us and we are not the ones responsible for its attitude toward us. And besides that, despite everything, the English singer Cliff Richard came to perform here. Most Israeli public opinion is divorced from reality – the reality in the territories and abroad. And there are those who are seeing to it that this dangerous disconnect is maintained. Along with the dehumanization and demonization of the Palestinians and the Arabs, people here are too brainwashed with nationalism to come to their senses.

Change will only come from the outside. No one – this writer included, of course – wants another cycle of bloodshed. A non-violent popular Palestinian uprising is one option, but it is doubtful that will happen anytime soon. And then there's American diplomatic pressure and the European economic boycott. But the United States won't apply pressure. If the Obama administration hasn't done it, no American administration will. And then there's Europe. Justice Minister Livni said that the discourse in Europe has become ideological. She knows what she's talking about. She also said that a European boycott would not stop at products made in West Bank settlements.

There's no reason it should. The distinction between products from the occupation and Israeli products is an artificial creation. It's not the settlers who are the primary culprits but rather those who cultivate their existence. All of Israel is immersed in the settlement enterprise, so all of Israel must take responsibility for it and pay the price for it. There is no one unaffected by the occupation, including those who fancy looking the other way and steering clear of it. We are all settlers. ...

[Read the entire piece on the Ha'aretz website.](#)

6) What Netanyahu should learn from the fall of apartheid

Ilan Baruch, Ha'aretz, July 10, 2013

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has declared his – at least rhetorical - willingness to meet with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas without preconditions, even if he must do so in a tent on the way from Jerusalem to Ramallah. Netanyahu even committed to confining himself in the tent until peace is concluded. United States Secretary of State John Kerry has focused his efforts in recent weeks to bringing the two to a negotiating 'tent' in Jordan but, so far, without success.

What is likely to bring the two leaders - from Ramallah and from Jerusalem - to this tent of meeting? Can we in the Middle East learn how to negotiate a settlement to a conflict that spans generations from South Africa's experience during the twilight of apartheid? Can the examples of leadership embodied by Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk at that time and place offer us a way to break the ice separating the Palestinian and Israeli leaderships right now?

Former South African president Nelson Mandela is now in the twilight of his life. In May 1994, he was sworn in as president of South Africa, after an election campaign that brought the entire country's citizenry to the polls. The African National Congress, which Mandela led, won a large majority – a majority that already would have been his decades before, had elections been based on universal suffrage and not the discriminatory policies of the apartheid government. The journey to this election victory was a long one.

The most critical juncture in the dismantling of apartheid came when South Africa's white government internalized that apartheid had no future. Pretoria itself initiated secret contacts with the ANC leadership. Their messengers, meeting with the leadership of the struggle against apartheid, did not try to save apartheid. They came with a vision to bring apartheid to an end in a manner that would ensure the safety and well-being of the white population in South Africa, the people on whose behalf the regime had existed for 46 years.

This, then, is the first imperative which paves the way to the negotiations tent: The recognition that the occupation, like apartheid, is a political, diplomatic and national security experience without a future.

The settlement enterprise that is intended to perpetuate the occupation is both immoral and impractical. There is no chance that Israel will perpetuate its control over the Palestinian people in its current format without also risking its own security. Israel does not and will not have the physical, human and defense resources to rule 2.5 million people in the West Bank and East Jerusalem against their will, and to hold under siege another one and a half million people in the Gaza Strip. There is no future to national self-determination built upon the negation of another people's national self-determination, upon the regular humiliation of that people and the plundering of their land, water and resources. Under South Africa's apartheid government, the rights and dignity of blacks were also negated by law, the law of the whites alone, and backed by the force of the whites' security and law enforcement forces acting solely on their behalf. ...

[Read the entire piece on the Ha'aretz website.](#)

7) Washington Report on Middle East Affairs (WPMEA)

Three special reports in the June-July 2013 issue

Editor's note: We highly recommend the [Washington Report on Middle East Affairs](#). It is well written and scrupulously accurate.

A] Arabs revive their 2002 peace initiative but rejectionist Israel still isn't buying

Rachelle Marshall

It was tempting to sympathize with newly appointed Secretary of State John Kerry as he made his first attempts to deal with a problem that has frustrated his predecessors: how to bring about peace between Israel and the Palestinians. It is to Kerry's credit that he understands the importance to U.S. national security of a just solution to the conflict, but neither he nor President Barack Obama has explained how an agreement can be forged between an Israel determined to maintain an illegal occupation, and a Palestinian people equally determined to achieve independence. Compounding the problem is a U.S. Congress that is virtually unanimous in its support of Israel—regardless of its actions. ...

[*Read the entire report on the WRMEA website.*](#)

B] On 65th anniversary of Nakba Palestinians and Israelis are more separate – and unequal

Delinda C. Hanley

Gazing at photographs by Gordon Parks on view from March to May at the Adamson Gallery in Washington, D.C., it's impossible not to compare the "separate-and-unequal" lives his photos captured in 1956 Alabama with the lives of present-day Palestinians and non-Jewish Israelis. As we commemorate the 65th anniversary of the Nakba, or catastrophe, Parks' photos challenge viewers to end segregation, wherever it occurs, including in Israel and occupied Palestine.

Indeed, in this country African Americans make up 12 percent of the population, while 20 percent of Israeli citizens are Arabs. America still has a long way to go in treating all its citizens equally, but that at least is the ideal toward which we strive. ...

[*Read the entire report on the WRMEA website.*](#)

C] The Nakba continues: Palestinian prisoners: Broken heroes, broken generations

William Parry

"I don't differentiate between medicine and politics. They're connected. More than connected—they're inseparable," said Prof. Ruchama Marton, founder and president of Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHR-I).

The Israeli government is aware of that, as are the 4,900 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons—including 168 administrative detainees (those detained without trial, potentially indefinitely, under secret, undisclosed charges) and 236 children. Over the past year, and particularly the last few months, several Palestinian prisoners have successfully used hunger strikes in their struggle for justice. In April, Samer al Issawi, 33, negotiated a deal that should see his release by the end of the year in return for ending his 250-day hunger strike. A week before that deal, the Israeli government released another prisoner, Mohammed al Taj, 41, on "humanitarian" grounds due to his serious medical condition. ...

[*Read the entire report on the WRMEA website.*](#)

8) The State of Two States, Israel Policy Forum - Week of July 7

- Members of the Likud and Shas parties met senior Palestinian officials in Ramallah for discussions organized by the Geneva Initiative.
 - Secretary General of the Palestinian Liberation Organization's Executive Committee Yasser Abed Rabbo claimed that Prime Minister Netanyahu held secret talks with him in the Prime Minister's home. This report has been denied by the Prime Minister's office.
 - The constantly evolving situation in Egypt, including violence by global jihad in Sinai, continues to consume American and Israeli officials.
 - Prime Minister Netanyahu announced that Ron Dermer will succeed Michael Oren as Israel's ambassador in Washington.
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" Hamas pinned its hopes on the Islamist regime in Egypt... That is why I think Hamas is going to get a very cold shoulder, which will mean that this will hurt its tunnels, it will hurt its freedom of action and maybe somewhat undermine its political and economic standing in the Gaza Strip." – **Maj. Gen. (res.) Amos Yadlin, former IDF Intelligence Director and director of the Institute for National Security Studies in an interview with 'Yoman' (Friday, 7/5)**

"Leading voices inside the State Department are calling for US Secretary of State John Kerry to lay down a set of principles that Israel and the Palestinians would either have to accept or reject as a way of restarting the negotiations." – **Herb Keinson [reporting in the Jerusalem Post \(Monday, 7/8\)](#)**

"I have been travelling around the world for years...there is no one in the world who is sitting in South Carolina or Wales, asking himself in the morning, what's happening with the Israel-Arab conflict." – **Jewish Home Chairman Naftali Bennett in Army Radio News, alluding to Minister Tzipi Livni's statements on the isolation Israel will encounter if negotiations do not resume (Monday, 7/8)**

"The last time I visited Ramallah two years ago, I was the only Likudnik present. Today, there are almost fifty. We must not bequeath the conflict to our children and grandchildren. We will not stop aspiring to peace, because no ideology can be stronger than reality." – **Shlomo Madmon, member of the Likud Secretariat, in Israel Hayom (Monday, 7/8)**

"Not a week passes without holding negotiations with Israel. I have been to more than 10 secret meetings with Netanyahu's adviser and I've also met with Netanyahu himself at his home." – **PLO Executive Committee Secretary General Yasser Abed Rabbo [speaking to Israel Hayom \(Tuesday, 7/9\)](#)**

"I remain skeptical that Netanyahu will be the leader to make peace with the Palestinians, but less so than I was then, if only because his political survival may now depend on it... If Netanyahu wants a fourth term—and he does—he needs to shake things up. The Palestinian leadership should put him in a position where he can." – **Ben Birnbaum [writing for the New Republic \(Tuesday, 7/9\)](#)**

"In regard to peace, the prime minister is serious. He really does want to enter talks, and he really does want quick and brief talks, and he really does want to arrive at a solution. Netanyahu is aware of the danger posed by an absence of peace, both in terms of Israel's perceived legitimacy and in terms of the risk to Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. Few have noticed, but aside from the Bar-Ilan [University] speech and the construction freeze, he also said that when peace is achieved, some settlements will remain outside the border – in the territory of the Palestinian state. He meant it...He is truly committed to peace." – **Outgoing Ambassador to U.S. Michael Oren [speaking to Ari Shavit in Ha'aretz \(Thursday, 7/11\)](#)**

9) “Treatment of Palestinians is apartheid by any other name”

Jonathan Cook, *The National*, July 10, 2013

Were it not for the razor wire, giant concrete blocks, steel gates, watchtower and standard-issue surly teenage soldier, it would be impossible to tell at what point the barren uplands of Israel’s eastern Negev give way to the South Hebron Hills of the West Bank.

The military checkpoint of Shani vaguely marks the formal demarcation between Israel and occupied Palestinian territory, but in practical terms the distinction is meaningless. On either side of the Green Line, Israel is in charge. In recent weeks it has been intensifying a campaign to evict Palestinian farming communities summarily from their ancestral lands to replace them with Jewish newcomers.

Israeli human rights lawyers, tired of the international community’s formulaic criticisms, say it is time to be more forthright. They call these “ethnic cleansing” zones – intended to drive off Palestinians irrespective of the provisions of international law and whether or not the Palestinians in question hold Israeli citizenship.

In the occupied South Hebron Hills, a dozen traditional communities – long ago denied by Israel the right to enjoy modern amenities such as electricity and running water – are struggling to remain in the cave-homes that sheltered them for centuries. Israel has reclassified much of their land as a military firing range and demands that they leave for their own safety. An appeal to the Israeli courts, the latest instalment in a 14-year saga to avoid eviction, is due in the next few days.

Israel’s concern for the villagers’ welfare might sound more convincing were it not encouraging Jews to live close by in illegal settlements. Palestinians in other parts of the occupied territories coveted by Israel – such as villages next to Jerusalem and those in the fertile Jordan Valley, the territorial backbone of any future Palestinian state – are being squeezed too. Firing ranges, closed military zones and national parks are the pretexts for Israel to appropriate the farmland these rural communities need to survive.

As a result, Palestinian life is withering in the nearly two-thirds of the West Bank Israel was temporarily entrusted with – the so-called Area C – under the Oslo Accords. Endlessly harassed Palestinians have sought sanctuary in West Bank cities under Palestinian Authority control. Today the remnants in Area C, a population of about 100,000, are outnumbered three to one by Jewish settlers.

A discomfited European Union, normally mealy-mouthed on Israel’s occupation, has started to describe this as “forced transfer”. The term may sound ominous and reproving, but human rights groups say that, from a legal perspective, the terminology obscures rather than illuminates what is taking place.

“Forced transfer”, observes Suhad Bishara, a lawyer with Adalah, a legal centre for Israel’s minority of 1.5 million Palestinian citizens, usually describes uncoordinated and unofficial incidents of population displacement, often as an outcome of war. ...

[Read the entire piece on Jonathan Cook's website.](#)

10) Israel nears point of no return on two-state solution

Yuval Diskin, Jerusalem Post, July 13, 2013

We are approaching a point of no return regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In fact, it may be that we have already crossed it.

The issue may not seem as urgent to the Israeli public as the Iranian nuclear program, which has become, with the help of our leaders, a central focus of discussion at the expense of other pressing issues.

To my regret, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has yet to reach a prominent place at the top of our list of priorities, nor has it become the second-, even third-most important issue.

However, this subject has a place in our essence, in our identity, in our souls, in our security, and in our perception of morality – as a society or nation that has come to rule another nation. The relative security calm that we have recently enjoyed creates a dangerous illusion that our problems have been solved, and maybe worse – that we have “frozen the situation”: a kind of de facto strategy in the face of the “Arab Spring” that is raging all around us. But it is clear that it is impossible to truly freeze the situation as social, economic, political and other processes are never frozen in time. Unfortunately, we have yet to find a strategy or the technology that can freeze frustration.

Look no further than at what’s been happening in the Arab world in recent years, at what’s been happening in Egypt in the past several days, what is happening simultaneously in Brazil, at what happened in Russia after Vladimir Putin was elected, and at what happened in Iran in the latest election – and even at what happened in the social protests which took place in Israel during the summer of 2011 – and you will understand that in the latest era, which is represented by the “Arab Spring,” there is no way to freeze the frustration of a nation or of any public entity.

Among the Palestinians, there is a growing sense of anger and frustration.

The fading hopes for a real change in the situation haven’t just lowered the Palestinian street’s faith in a solution to the conflict through negotiation, but it is also the reason, at the end of the day, the Palestinians will take to the streets, leading to another round of bloody violence. And the construction of settlements (whether or not this is taken as a symbolic gesture toward Mahmoud Abbas) is not stopping; the number of settlers or “residents” in the West Bank, outside the main settlement blocs, is growing (if it has not already arrived) to dimensions that no Israeli government will be able to dismantle in an orderly fashion, unless it is with the consent of the residents – and it doesn’t appear that the current government possess the will or the desire to buck the trend.

No less worse – many of our friends in the world, whose support of the peace process with the Palestinians is critical, understand the powerless leaderships of Binyamin Netanyahu and Abbas. They see the continued expansion of the settlements and are choosing to call it quits regarding the possibility of ever implementing the solution of “two states for two nations.” ...

[Read the entire piece at the Jerusalem Post website.](#)