

Middle East Notes
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
November 28, 2015

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

THANKSGIVING PEACE AND BLESSINGS TO ALL



[Read previous weeks' Middle East Notes](#)

This week's featured articles and links to other articles focus on the Daesh (ISIS) attacks on Paris, responses to these attacks, the present Israeli government's opposition to any two-state solution, President Obama's de-facto acceptance of this status quo, the reality that the Israelis and Palestinians are already living in a single state with freedom and equality only extended to Israelis, and the present need for either a real peace move by Israel or the full occupation of the West Bank.

Commentary: *There are no longer any realistic prospects for a viable two-state solution. The on-going and permanent occupation of the West Bank, the "imprisonment" of the Gaza people, and the increasing restrictions of Jerusalem Palestinians, give evidence that Israel is moving toward complete annexation of all the "occupied territories." The focus held now by Israeli, Palestinian and world-wide advocates for justice and peace, is toward pressuring the Israel government to guarantee and promote basic human rights of all the people under its control...Israelis and Palestinians. Without such equality Israel will find itself ostracized by most nations of the world as a de-facto apartheid state.*

- Yariv Oppenheimer writes in Ynet News that ISIS and the Palestinians are not the same thing. The Paris attacks cannot justify for a minute Israeli ongoing control of the Palestinians and do not make the vision of a bi-national state any better for Israel.
- An Haaretz Editorial states that response to Paris attacks must not be dictated by grief and anger. The Paris events were an attack on civilization itself, but harm caused by emotional reactions outweighs the benefits. This applies not only to states being attacked by ISIS, but also to Israelis and their government.
- Bradley Burston writes in Haaretz that the enemy of my enemy is love and that after all the horror of Paris, after murder after murder after murder, he is learning to love more than hate. Blind love is the common enemy of our common enemy, terrorism. It is a vision not of this world of short tempers and long grudges but of the world to come.
- Mitchell Plitnick in the FMEP blog states that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisted that the Israelis need to control all of the territory (of the West Bank) for the foreseeable future, and that despite his stated support for a two-state solution, he saw no alternative to a permanent Israeli military presence in the Jordan Valley.
- Amjad Iraqi writes in the 972 Magazine that the debate over whether Israelis and Palestinians are living in a single state is irrelevant – the answer is a resounding yes. The real problem is that freedom and equality are only extended to some of its subjects, Israelis.
- Alex Fishman analysis in Ynet News states that the Israeli defense establishment has already realized that Israel has no more gestures to offer the Palestinians. There are two options left: A real peace move or instructing the army to prepare to take over the West Bank completely.

1) [ISIS and the Palestinians are not the same thing](#)
Yariv Oppenheimer, Ynet News, November 20, 2015

“If the Islamic State members could, they wouldn't hesitate to hurt Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas too and behead him. As far as the radical Islam created by ISIS is concerned, the Palestinians and their leadership are heretics too.

“The terror offensive in Paris has nothing to do with the Palestinian struggle, it does not represent the entire Arab world, and the attempt to link it to the terror striking us Israelis may sound good, but it is not in line with reality. Radical Islamic terror is also directed at those sitting in Jordan, Egypt and Ramallah who see Israel and the Western world as allies.

“From the moment it learned about the terror attacks, the Right's propaganda machine has been working ceaselessly. The message is simple and clear: The terror is the same terror, the Arabs are the same Arabs and the sea is the same sea. The attempt to gain a political profit at the expense of the dead and wounded in Paris hasn't stopped. One can rejoice and mock the European desire to find a solution for the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

“Beyond how ugly this looks and is interpreted, we are essentially talking about nothing less than cheap demagoguery. The attack on Paris does not justify for a minute our ongoing control of the Palestinians and does not make the bi-national state vision any better for the State of Israel.” ...

“The reality in which the lives of thousands of Israelis are in danger on a daily basis could change. The Palestinian leadership and the majority of the Palestinian public are in favor of dividing the land and accept the two-state solution. Their struggle is not driven by a desire to destroy the West or Israel, but by a desire to live in dignity with rights and national independence, as any other people is entitled to.” ...

“As long as we fight for universal values of equality, freedom and fraternity, the entire world will stand with us and we will find partners in the Arab world as well. But for values of controlling another people, losing democracy and an occupation, we will find ourselves - as usual - alone, in a bleeding rearguard battle which has no chance of succeeding.” ...

2) [Response to Paris Attacks Mustn't Be Dictated by Grief and Anger](#)
Haaretz Editorial November 15, 2015

... “Unfortunately, it seems these attacks will not be the last in the decades-long battle against terror organizations such as the Islamic State. As if proof were needed, they prove that the wars in the Middle East know no political borders, instead operating like a system of connecting vessels that is spread across the face of the earth. In such wars, immediate responses and strategic measures must not be dictated by grief and anger.

“Emotional reactions that called for immediate revenge created the war in Afghanistan in 2001 and the second Gulf war of in 2003. In hindsight, the harm they caused outweighed the benefits. Now, strict observance of the values of civilization, adherence to civil rights — especially that of Muslim minorities — and aid to refugees fleeing from terror organizations can at least thwart such organizations' ambitions to recruit supporters from these minorities. Physical and cultural withdrawal, the persecution of Muslims solely because they are Muslim and draconic legislation in the name of fighting terror will only aid terror organizations toward their goal of creating persecuted communities in the West.” ...

3) [In Paris, Beirut, and Hebron: The Enemy of My Enemy Is Love](#)

Bradley Burston, Haaretz, November 16, 2015

... "Just one thing before we kill this peace and love stuff for good. I saw it, this month. Peace. And that other thing. At least 129 dead in multiple Paris terror attacks; Hollande says ISIS responsible. After all this time, after all this horror, after murder after murder after murder, I am learning to love more than I hate." ...

"The enemy of my enemy is love.

"The enemy of my enemy is people going about their lives, doing God's work in ways as simple and as crucial as falling in love, and going to a wedding, and loving their children, and just being children. The enemy of my enemy is love that is blind. In the best sense. Love that heightens sensitivity to the idea that God's children going about their lives are God's children, whether in Paris, or in Beirut, or flying over the Sinai, or in Jerusalem or the West Bank.

"The enemy of my enemy loves blindly. Loves the victims of terrorism, whoever they are, wherever the murderer may have slaughtered them." ...

"My enemy, in all his many forms, yaks on ceaselessly about God. Then he goes out and butchers more of God's children. For being at a rock concert. Or being gay. Or being female. Or being Jewish. Or being Palestinian. Or Kenyan, or American, or Australian, or Kurdish, or a Shiite, or a Sunni, or a settler.

"My enemy renders it impossible these days to use the word "peace" straight out, without apology or scorn. My enemy, in his methods, renders irrelevant the word "justice." My enemy, in his hatred of the majority of humanity, makes a mockery of the concept of God." ...

"Closer to home, a former Israeli defense minister writes in an opinion piece "There are no good terrorists." I agree. Except when Moshe Arens fails to mention, for example, the terrorists who brutally incinerated the Palestinian Dawabsheh family in July, and whom Israel has been all but unable to apprehend, find evidence against, or charge. Perhaps, where it comes to our side, there are no Jewish terrorists.

"I'm sick to death of the justifications: Our terrorist as freedom fighter (Choose one: Yasser Arafat or Yitzhak Shamir). Our terrorist as a natural and legitimate response to oppression, injustice, hopelessness, evil, history.

"I'm sick to death of the distortions, the crap about martyrdom and the world to come, of the armchair extremists who mistake hating for helping.

"I'm sick to death of how terrorism, whether it's that of Hamas or Baruch Goldstein or ISIS or Yigal Amir, has set its lethal sights on peace. And succeeded." ...

4) [The Endless Occupation](#)

Mitchell Plitnick, FMEP, November 12, 2015

"In late October, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a joint meeting of the Knesset foreign Affairs and Defense Committees that "at this time we need to control all of the territory (of the West Bank) for the foreseeable future." He echoed this during his talk at the Center for American Progress on November 10, when he insisted that, despite his stated support for a two-state solution, he saw no alternative to a permanent Israeli military presence in the Jordan Valley." ...

“This view is not only that of the Israeli right, but of the majority of politicians in both Jerusalem and Washington. Netanyahu is merely following those parameters to their logical conclusion: that the occupation lives until such time as Israel feels it should end. The fact that millions of Palestinians live under military rule may disturb many Israelis, but it does not create a political imperative to change that state of affairs.” ...

“That policy means holding the West Bank and East Jerusalem in perpetuity while denying citizenship, along with basic rights, to the Palestinian people living there. If that is the policy that Israel pursues, then it must explain to the world how it justifies a system that is unmistakably reminiscent of apartheid.” ...

“This is what needs to change before any serious progress can be made. Israeli security is of course important, but it cannot continue to serve to justify the violation of Palestinians’ basic rights. The current paradigm frames the issue as one where Israel’s security concerns are the first order of business, and in pursuing those concerns, Palestinian rights should be addressed. But the most basic ethical view demands the reverse: a framework that demands the same rights for Palestinians as for Israelis, and within pursuing that overarching goal, security for both peoples must be maximized.” ...

“But the more crucial moral argument is that millions of Palestinians live under occupation, and have done so for more than 48 years now. As those years have progressed, the occupation has not normalized or relaxed, but has grown even more restrictive and oppressive. This is a horrible reality, and obscuring it behind attacks on Israelis is a massive injustice to the overwhelming majority of Palestinians who want nothing more than to live normal lives without fear but with hope and opportunity. That is an argument that has been sadly neglected.

“As long as the moral and political questions of ending the occupation revolve so strongly about Israel’s concerns, legitimate though those may be, Netanyahu can find his justification for advocating occupation without end. And he will find an audience that will not berate him for it. Once the question is properly framed around both Israeli security and Palestinian rights and freedom, such options cannot be considered, and progress can reasonably be expected.” ...

5) [Can we call it one state and be done with it?](#)
Amjad Iraqi, 972 Magazine, November 8, 2015

... “I always raise this fact with visitors not to emphasize the importance of the Green Line, but rather to show them how insignificant it really is. Decades ago, this “armistice” line separated the hostile armies of Israel and the neighboring Arab countries. Today it is supposed to demarcate the border of a Palestinian state. But the Green Line is nowhere to be found in East Jerusalem, nor in any other part of the occupied territories. Settlements, highways, national parks, and the separation wall have completely erased it from the land’s geography.

“The only places one can find the Green Line are on some foreign maps (not Israeli- or Palestinian-made maps), and in the minds of policymakers and observers who believe that the two-state solution is still possible. But even that seems to be changing. Barak Ravid recently reported in *Haaretz* that senior officials at the White House are beginning to publicly speak about the situation in the West Bank as a one-state reality, with almost “no chance of reaching an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement.” This news comes a few weeks after U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry remarked that the violence of the past month “offers a glimpse” into the reality of two peoples being forced to live with each other.” ...

“This longstanding view, however, has ignored the passing of time and insulated itself from the facts on the ground. The reality is that the Israeli and Palestinian generations of the past 50 years have only ever lived in one state. With Israeli citizenship or Jewish identity, a person can travel from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean

Sea, live on most parts of the land, and receive the support and security of the state. But with Palestinian residency, a person's movement is heavily restricted, their place of living is designated in specific areas, and the state's security apparatus is constantly directed against them. The supreme powers presiding over this vast system lie with the Jewish-Israeli political and military authorities sitting in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv — not in Ramallah or Gaza.

“The debate over whether we are in a single state is therefore irrelevant – the answer is a resounding yes. The real problem is that all its subjects have very different and separate experiences living under this state. Palestinians in the territories live in a cage that is forcibly imposed upon them. Israelis live in a bubble that they have deliberately imposed on themselves. Only one group on the land – the 1.4 million Palestinian citizens of Israel – is immersed in both societies, caught between their relative privilege vis-à-vis Palestinians under occupation on one side, and systemic discrimination from Israelis on the other.” ...

6) [The fourth stage of terror is on its way](#)
Alex Fishman, Ynet News, November 22, 2015

“The understanding among senior officials at the US State Department ahead of Secretary of State John Kerry's visit to Israel this week is that Israel will hand additional chunks of Area C over to the Palestinians. Such a move, if done, means expanding the Palestinian control, and mainly patting Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on the back, as if telling him that his diplomatic efforts in the past year were not in vain.” ...

“The Palestinian street is already on a different court. It doesn't believe the PA, it despises Israel, and the unrest is changing gears to the third stage: The firearm stage.

“If the first stage included young people throwing stones and rioting, and the second stage was stabbings and vehicular attacks, the move to terror attacks with firearms reflects a higher level of willingness to launch an armed conflict. This paves the road to institutionalized terror, which will also include suicide bombers exploding on buses.

“In the meantime, alongside the shooting attacks of lone-wolf terrorists who go out with weapons to kill Israelis and die, there are those who only want to die. We are witnessing the development of a new model of a shahid (martyr) who faces soldiers in order to be shot.” ...

“The defense establishment internalized a long time ago that the case of beads Israel hands out to natives has already been emptied out. The third stage of terror is already here, and the fourth stage is on its way. We are left with two situations: A real peace move or instructing the army to prepare for an occupation of the West Bank.”

Other Articles of Interest:

A) [Occupation's violence admitted by Israeli military officials – what about Congress?, Kate Gould and Wardah Khalid, The Hill, November 12, 2015](#)

How this current wave of Israeli-Palestinian violence ends depends in large part on whether it is heard for the wakeup call it is: that Israel's military occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza is at the root of today's violence.

- B) [Netanyahu Shows D.C. Liberals Why He's the 'Armor-plated Bullshitter', Peter Beinart, Haaretz, November 11, 2015](#)
 Instead of admitting his opposition to a Palestinian state, Netanyahu twisted the concept beyond recognition.
- C) [Fact Checking Netanyahu's November 10 Statements on West Bank Settlements, Americans for Peace Now \(APN\), November 11, 2015](#)
 Speaking at Washington's Center for American Progress, Prime Minister Netanyahu was asked about his government's West Bank settlement construction policies. His replies were littered with falsehoods and misrepresentations.
- D) [Netanyahu won. Here's how to beat him, Michael Schaeffer Omer-Man, 972 Magazine, November 9, 2015](#)
 Benjamin Netanyahu's strategy for defeating the prospect of Palestinian statehood has always been to stall.
- E) [Open Letter to Hillary Clinton from a Young Palestinian Feminist, Layali Awwad, Huffington Post, November 19, 2015](#)
 You famously declared, "Women's rights are human rights." That's something I strongly believe, too. That's why I was surprised to read your article in *The Forward*. I was surprised because when you chose to speak about my homeland, not once did you mention Israel's human rights violations against Palestinian women and children. Even worse, you described us as lurking terrorists motivated only by "incitement," as if the Israeli military occupation does not exist.
- F) [CMEP Bulletin – November 13, 2015 - The New Status Quo](#)
 Very fine LINKS in all CMEP Bulletins
- G) [CMEP Bulletin – November 20, 2015 - Netanyahu Suggests Unilateral Moves](#)
- H) [That Is Not a Jewish State, Ariana Melamed, Haaretz, November 18, 2015](#)
 The 'Jewish state' envisioned by the leaders of the Israeli right is a theocratic-fascist-racist regime, served up warm in sanitized language.
- I) [Words matter in 'ISIS' war, so use 'Daesh', By Zeba Khan, Boston Globe, October 9, 2014](#)
 The term "Daesh" is strategically a better choice because it is still accurate in that it spells out the acronym of the group's full Arabic name, al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham. Yet, at the same time, "Daesh" can also be understood as a play on words — and an insult. . Depending on how it is conjugated in Arabic, it can mean anything from "to trample down and crush" to "a bigot who imposes his view on others."
- J) [European Commission Adopts Guidelines for Labeling Products From Israeli Settlements, Barak Ravid, Haaretz, November 11, 2015](#)
 The European Commission adopted Wednesday morning the Notice on indication of origin of goods from the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967, a senior EU official said. According to the official, the notice will contain guidelines for labeling of products from West bank settlements.
- K) [Like the Germans, Israeli Jews don't want to know about persecuted people, Ilana Hammerman, Haaretz, November 20, 2015](#)
 We live in a society that cultivates the feeling, from kindergarten to old age, that every stranger is an enemy. No conflict has ever justified one nation's permanent military and civilian control over millions of people of another nation, and the denial of their human and civil rights.