

# NPK-info

*Nederlands Palestina Komitee [www.palestina-komitee.nl](http://www.palestina-komitee.nl)*

## Inhoud

### **Wat korte berichten**

#### **Kok ontvangt Peres**

DEN HAAG (ANP) - Premier Kok ontvangt donderdag 24 januari de Israëliische minister Peres van Buitenlandse Zaken. Dat heeft een woordvoerder van de premier vrijdag bekend gemaakt. Kok en Peres zullen onder meer een bespreking houden tijdens een lunch in het Catshuis in Den Haag.

#### **Belangstelling voor de Stichting Groningen-Jabalya?**

Mail naar [jabalya@hotmail.com](mailto:jabalya@hotmail.com)

Op 23 jan van 20 tot 22 uur houdt de Stichting "Vrede Voor Palestina" te Deventer een avondbijeenkomst. Met Ibrahim en Ghada Issa over de situatie in AlKhader op de bezette Westoever. Gaat over de werkwijze op de Hope Flowerschool. De Stichting Vrede Voor Palestina steunt deze school. Adres: Noorden Bergsingel 2 te Deventer. Info: E-mail: [vrepale@zonnet.nl](mailto:vrepale@zonnet.nl) of tel 0570-619229 . Graag te voren opgeven, toegang gratis

Op 29 jan spreekt Anja Meulenbelt te Deventer in de bibliotheek op de Brink. De Stichting "Vrede Voor Palestina" heeft een samenwerkingsproject met deze bibliotheek. Reserveren gewenst. Entree € 6,80, donateurs € 5,70

#### **CNN-poll on UN-observers**

<http://home.netscape.com/ex/shak/international/packages/mideast/>

Te Den Haag is zaterdag 26 januari tussen 11-12 uur op het Plein bij de Tweede Kamer een éénpersoons-demonstratie pleitend voor een Israel-tribunaal nu en voor onmiddellijke beëindiging van Israels bezetting van Gazastrook en de Westbank. Wie wil aansluiten, graag. Informatie bij Yaël Singer, 070-388.42.04 of [yaelsinger@hetnet.nl](mailto:yaelsinger@hetnet.nl)

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# Delusional Politics

By Dr. Hanan Ashrawi\*

The worst type of mental delusion is described as the inability to grasp, cope with, or comprehend concrete reality-hence the construction of a non-existent, mythical, or totally fictitious reality that exists only in the delusional mind.

An objective observer of the drastic deterioration in conditions and the lethal breakdown governing Palestinian-Israeli realities may safely draw the conclusion that the definition of this type of "insanity" applies.

Among its discernable symptoms and manifestations are the very concrete and willful insistence on dealing with a fictitious "reality" that seems to bear no relationship to the world or to the components of the escalating crisis.

First-there seems to be an insistence in the minds of Israeli decision makers that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands does not actually exist, but is a figment of the twisted imagination of some Palestinians who insist that their collective victimization is a direct result of their enslavement by the Israeli occupation.

These same Israeli officials also are at odds with the "misguided" or "biased" positions of the international community, international law, and UN resolutions that somehow "perversely" keep insisting on the usage of such terminology as "belligerent occupant" in describing Israel's role in the Palestinian territories.

Hence the Israeli coinage of alternative "unreal" terms such as "disputed" rather than "occupied" territories. "Homeland for the Jews" or "greater Israel" has also been employed as verbal substitutes for historical Palestine, despite the fact that Palestinians have accepted the term "Israel" as applicable to the state that now exists on 78% of historical Palestine.

Second-the whole concept of "defense" has been turned on its head to apply only to the Israeli occupation whereby Israel is engaged in "self defense" when it shells Palestinian homes and turns them into piles of rubble. The "reason," of course is that Palestinians were firing from these homes (often despite the absence of any evidence), thereby transforming them into impersonal and banal "structures" that had to be "removed" for the proper "defense" of the Israeli "Defense" Forces.

Similarly, civilians who are torn to bits by shells fired from Apache gun ships or Israeli tanks are not "assassi-

nated" according to the Israeli lexicon. They are "eliminated" as part of Israel's "active self-defense" policy. Any reference to "extra-judicial killings" or "cold-blooded murder" must be expurgated from the pc (politically corrupt) dictionary of "Israelese."

When Israel besieges the Palestinian territories and turns each village, camp, or town into an isolation prison, the territories are "closed" in defense of the Israelis who are "besieged" by the Palestinians (and, at times, Arabs) in their "beleaguered" state. The fact that the Israeli army is the strongest in the region, and that it has total control over the lives and lands of the Palestinians, seems to have vanished from official Israeli consciousness and discourse.

Third-a new concept of "humanity" seems to have evolved in the imagination of Israeli political and religious ideologues. The term, of course, does not seem to apply to Palestinians at all-having been described variously as "vipers, cockroaches, crocodiles, an evil curse, etc." The most appropriate Israeli term for any Palestinian human being is, of course, "terrorist." Such a convenient label, in one fell sweep, serves to deprive the Palestinian of his/her humanity as some form of a genetically-violent species, thereby unfit for human treatment or rights, hence fully deserving of any form of brutality exercised against him/her in the course of Israel's struggle for "self-defense." "Terrorism," of course is never applicable to any Israeli individual or policy regardless of the massive targeting of a captive civilian Palestinian population that has been deprived of all forms of security or rights.

While the delusional mind has proven to be very fertile ground for a whole variety of "dehumanization" exercises in relation to the Palestinian human species, the most striking and warped depiction has been firmly rooted in the biological area. It seems that Palestinian mothers and fathers are born missing the parenting gene, hence they deliberately and cold-bloodedly send out their children to "intercept" the free passage of Israeli bullets and shells. Not only do they find a convenient way of getting rid of their children by such devious means, even more insidiously Palestinian parents also succeed in giving the Israeli army a bad name such as "child killers" thereby scoring free media points.

In the same vein, Palestinians cynically transform their children into "human shields" in some weird form of metamorphosis whereby infants killed in their mothers' arms or children shot on their way to/from school, or playing in their back yards, or indulging in such abnormal/delinquent behavior as playing soccer or shopping, or daring to take naps in their own beds-are all part of an

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adult conspiracy to utilize (through procreation) a unique form of protective gear for their own survival.

Thus, the 165 Palestinian children who were murdered by Israeli troops and settlers since October 2000 were actually non-human forms of "shields" and "media ploys" invented by the Palestinians for the sole purpose of giving the Israeli delusional mind a bad name.

Fourth-conceptual distortions also generate self-defeating strategies, particularly when applied to the Israeli concept of "Security." The term, somehow, has become the exclusive domain of Israel with no reference or applicability to the Palestinians or to the Arab world. The Palestinians, therefore, have no right to feel "insecure" when their homes are being shelled or their children killed or their crops and trees uprooted or their lands "confiscated" or their livelihoods destroyed or their freedoms negated or their very lives "targeted."

Somehow, such a distorted view of reality gives itself license to conceive of a "safe," or "secure," or "normal," or even a "pleasant" occupation. The most elementary conclusion that the occupation itself is the most pervasive form of cruelty and provocation seems to escape the grasp of such a world-view. Thus, Israeli discourse is always characterized by perpetual "surprise" at the lack of docility of the Palestinians who have failed historically to appreciate the virtues of a "benevolent" or "benign" occupation. By a strange twist of logic, it demands guarantees for the "security" of the occupier from any retaliation or resistance by the occupied, while enjoying full immunity and impunity.

The fact that the occupation itself lies at the root of all "insecurity" has not crossed the minds of Israeli policy makers who persist in their futile search for causes among their victims instead of looking within.

Fifth-in addition, the Israeli fictional world of politics has spun numerous myths and imaginary versions to deal with the "reality" of negotiations. The most prevalent version is that of the "generous offer" that the previous Israeli prime minister Barak had offered the Palestinians out of the generosity of his soul-probably having been inspired by the pastoral American Camp David setting and the irresistible charm of the then American president Bill Clinton. Unfortunately, the Palestinians proceeded to behave like "ungrateful natives," biting the hand that feeds them, with no appreciation of the white man's burden of Barak (and even Peres) who had been trying to teach them the rudimentary elements of statehood.

By refusing to fragment the West Bank and accommodate settlement clusters, by insisting on "territorial contiguity" (the DOP, or Oslo Agreement) instead of fragmented native reservations, by maintaining their commitment to international law and UN resolutions, by refusing

to relinquish the Palestinian refugees' right of return, and by not handing occupied Jerusalem over to the Israelis on a silver platter, the Palestinians proved to be "unrealistic and inflexible."

After all, Barak knew not only what was best for Israel, but also what was good for the Palestinians.

The "unprecedented Israeli concessions" that sought to maintain Israeli control while annexing Palestinian land and resources and devaluing Palestinian rights were somehow "inexplicably" rejected by Arafat (the archetypal villain) who all along had harbored evil designs for the "destruction of the state of Israel" and had never mended his "terrorist" ways. With one imaginative sweep, the Israeli mind transformed Arafat from a "peace partner" to "the terrorist enemy" without so much as a by your leave.

Such a miraculous transformation, by necessity, had to be accompanied by a deliberate "demonization" if the illogic is to be maintained. Thus Arafat became the convenient "scapegoat" to be burdened with all the failures of Israeli policy and with the sins and extreme provocation of a brutal occupation for the sake of a convenient Israeli catharsis. The "disappointment" of the fair-weather Israeli "peace camp" could then be justified with an easy conscience. The "betrayal" then would not be theirs-as having betrayed the principles and integrity of a just peace-but would be the "failure" of the Palestinians to abide by the rules and roles designed for them by the all-knowing, superior Israeli mind.

The debate then shifted as to whether Arafat was a "suitable" Palestinian leader or not-i.e. whether he met the Israeli definitions of proper Palestinian leadership or whether he failed the "test of legitimacy" Israeli-style.

Hence the sixth delusional symptom that finds its expression in Israel's god-given right to shape not only Palestinian territoriality, but also the requirements of leadership legitimacy and suitability.

The "seal of approval" syndrome is a typical expression of power intoxication, particularly applicable to situations of colonization.

By extension, it applies to a whole people as well. Its most frequent manifestation is in such formulations as the "push button" people and the "control" controversy.

The schizophrenic aspect of the delusional mind can accommodate several contradictory and equally false versions of reality, including:

1. Arafat is "in control," hence he "issued orders" to his "push button" people who immediately "complied" by resorting to "violence and terrorism" that were the Arafat "hidden agenda" all along. He must be removed.

2. Arafat is not "in control," hence he cannot "order" his people to "stop the violence" thereby making it imperative for Israel to create "alternative leadership" that is more "flexible and reasonable," capable of being compliant and of carrying out Israel's bidding as a test of "pragmatism." He must be removed.
3. Arafat is in "partial control," hence he must be "strengthened" against his more "radical" opponents who reject any peace with Israel. He must be brought to sign.
4. Arafat is in "partial control," hence he must be "weakened" enough to feel sufficiently threatened in his "authority" to accept the Israeli version of reality as his lifeline. He must be made to sign.

### **The variations and permutations are endless.**

Seventh-national liberation movements can be "crushed" and "subdued" if sufficient force is used. Concomitant with this delusion is the myth that the escalation of Israeli violence and brutality will not only "teach the Palestinians a lesson," but will also bring them to their knees in search of respite and Israeli approval. The perception of the Palestinians as "inhabitants of the territories" rather than a nation with inalienable rights, particularly in the exercise of their nationhood, lies behind Israeli military efforts at subduing the "restless natives."

Thus the lessons of history are never part of the delusional mindset. The fact that no colonized people had ever been brought to their knees or forced to abandon their quest for freedom, dignity, and independence as a result of increased violence and oppression skips notice altogether. More specifically, throughout decades of occupation, Israel had persistently attempted-and failed-to subdue the Palestinian people by brute force, succeeding only in generating more volatility and aggravating existing conditions of instability and conflict. The will to resist subjugation and the yearning for freedom and dignity have never been broken or defeated. Such a willful "blindness to history and experience" is also indicative of a serious rift between reality and awareness producing dysfunctional and dangerous policies.

Eighth-many of these policies can be traced back to another disconnection from reality. According to the Sharon lexicon, the situation is one of "war" rather than occupation, hence all Palestinians are potential "combatants"-i.e. legitimate targets for his policy of "targeted killings"-hence the objective is to achieve a state of "non-belligerency" rather than achieving peace by withdrawing from the occupied territories and recognizing Palestinian rights. In plain language, the Palestinians must not express any hostility towards their occupiers and must reconcile themselves to a perpetual state of enslavement by coercion.

Thus the ! term "ceasefire" was forcibly imposed on the

discourse of Israel, the US, and the international community as a whole. The victim must not be allowed to fight back, however feebly, while the conqueror will not stop shelling and shooting until the "target" surrenders or is destroyed.

The oft-repeated dictum that "Israel will not negotiate under fire" applies only to Palestinian "fire" or attempts at self-defense. While Israel must be left unhampered in its fire-shell-assassinate at will policy, the Palestinians must maintain "zero violence" leading to a "cooling off period" that would prepare the way for "confidence-building measures" and ultimately award the Palestinians the coveted "prize" of resuming negotiations with their occupiers.

Rarely, if ever, has the world witnessed such an aberration whereby the victim is placed "on probation" and asked to demonstrate "good behavior" in order to be granted the "privilege" of negotiating with the oppressor. The racist, patronizing attitude of the Sharon government constitutes yet another set of blinders that distort its perceptions of reality.

Ninth-once delusional concepts take over, both discourse and policy enter the realm of the absurd. The issue of Jerusalem is one of the most glaring examples of such an incongruous condition. On the one hand, Israel claims to have "liberated" (rather than occupied) Jerusalem in 1967 and to have guaranteed full "access" to the city while assuring members of all three monotheistic faiths their "freedom and right to worship."

In reality, Jerusalem under occupation is a city under siege, totally closed off to all Palestinians-both Christian and Muslim-who do not carry the blue ID's issued by Israel to Palestinian Jerusalemites. At times, even those are classified by gender and age where men (only) who are forty or older are allowed into the Aqsa Mosque. West Bank and Gaza Palestinians can no more attend services in the churches and mosques of Jerusalem than they can fly to the moon.

They are banned from their capital, and are forbidden to conduct any kind of personal, social, economic, cultural, educational or any other type of human activity there. "Religious tolerance" and all manifestations of "freedom" have gained a surrealistic significance in their application by Israel.

Tenth-while such a warped mentality may find endless expressions, the most "creative" forms are those that are used to distinguish between Palestinians and Israelis. Among those is the depiction of every Palestinian victim of Israel's state terrorism as a "ticking bomb," thereby rendering his/her assassination as a dispassionate and impersonal exercise tantamount to the "dismantling" of an explosive device. The 48 "dismantled" Palestinians so far (along with the "unfortunate bystanders") are part of

Israel's policy of "interception" and "self-defense" that has gained approval even from such high western officials as the American vice-president himself (who found it "justifiable" or "reasonable").

Israel's publication of seven names on its hit list of Palestinians slated for "elimination," has compounded the confusion. The "targets" all have first, father's, grandfather's, family, and even clan names indicating a genealogy and a distinctly biological/human continuity.

On the other hand, all Israelis are "civilians," including vigilante settlers who are armed to the teeth and who regularly terrorize whole Palestinian communities, often with Israeli army cover and protection. Settlements are, of course, harmless and defenseless "Jewish neighborhoods" that deserve "protection" and require more Palestinian land for "natural growth." Ancient Palestinian villages and towns not only do not require room for "natural growth" on their own land, the strangling siege does not give them room to breathe since they are inhabited by potential "terrorists" and non-human "objects" that occupy "structures" that can be "surgically" removed by an equally impersonal missile fired from an American Apache gun ship. Their crops and trees are, by that logic, entirely superfluous and Israel is entirely within its rights to destroy them.

Ultimately, one could argue that by losing touch with reality on such a grand scale, and like all criminals found mentally unfit to bear the consequences of their own actions, the Israeli government should not be held accountable.

The more sinister aspect of such "mental incompetence" is the conscious inducement of this state, deliberately invoked as an instrument for the manipulation of the perceptions of others. Such a unique form of "insanity" will ultimately be exposed and dealt with in a manner appropriate to the malady.

Such is the message that Sharon must hear from the Belgian courts for his persistent war crimes, that Carmi Gillon must hear from the Danish courts for his systematic policy of torture, and that General Mofaz and all his cohorts who have devised a demonically hysterical solution to the Palestinian intifada and to Palestinian human reality as a whole must hear from the rest of the world. Otherwise known as "military mania," when delusions of unbridled power and control are transformed into actual policy, the need for protection becomes paramount.

If this is Israel's policy of "restraint," as Sharon boasts publicly and often, then many policy makers in Israel need to be "restrained." In this context, "International protection" gains a new meaning and an added urgency. ■