Mordechai Kedar

The Eight State Solution

Palestinian territorial contiguity is dangerous for Israeli national security. For security and demographic reason, Israel must retain as much land as possible in the West Bank. Evacuation of these areas will create a dangerous situation for Israeli security and eventually will necessitate re-conquering extensive parts of the West Bank. There is no reason to dismantle and destroy the existing settlements, rather we propose the creation of seven independent and separate city-states within the West Bank, in addition to Gaza.

Premise:
There is no reason to assume that a Palestinian state will not become another failing Arab state, due to the fragmented society in the West Bank and Gaza, tribalism and the lack of awareness of nationhood as demonstrated by the failing performance of the Palestinian Authority since its establishment in 1994.

Since nobody in the world can assure that a Palestinian state will never turn – like Gaza – into an Islamic terror state, any solution for the Palestinians must minimize its potential threats on Israel, on the region and on the world.

Social stability is the key for political stability. Many existing Arab states are models only of ineffectual governance; the only successful model for an Arab state is the one which is based on a single consolidated traditional group such as each of the individual Arab Gulf Emirates. The standard Arab states - Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, which are conglomerates of tribes, religions, sects and ethnic groups – present the opposite picture. It is our belief that the successful Emirate model can be implemented in the Palestinian case more easily and successfully than the failing Arab model.

Problems with Territorial Contiguity:
Over the years, many Israelis and others have adopted the Arab-Palestinian narrative that views territorial contiguity as a condition for the establishment of a viable Palestinian state. As a result of this narrative and

its pervasiveness worldwide, efforts are made to insure that the West Bank Palestinians will have an integral territory from Mount Gilboa in the north to the outskirts of Beersheba in the south. Thus, the large Israeli settlement blocs in the West Bank become thin "fingers," with no ability to expand, and their inhabitants, easy targets.

Meanwhile, the central strategic goal of the state of Israel should be to permanently remain in Judea and Samaria and to prevent Palestinian territorial contiguity. There are dangers of maintaining territorial contiguity in the West Bank. While it will facilitate the Palestinians' movement and allow them a better life, the repercussions are impractical for Israel. Territorial contiguity will compromise Israel's security for the following reasons: **Rockets**. Territorial contiguity will enable weapons smuggled from Gaza to easily reach all parts of the West Bank and to be used against the surrounding major Israeli landmarks and cities. For example, Israel's only international airport, nuclear reactor, and towns such as Petah Tikva, Kfar Saba, and Afula in addition to Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel Aviv will fall within rocket range.

Non-viability of Palestinian governments.
Experience has shown that Palestinian governments do not resolutely and consistently act against terrorists. Political and media messages since 1994 have proven that neither the PLO nor Hamas have prevented terrorism and the proliferation of weapons. There also is no evidence that any Palestinian government will prevent terrorism, even if Israel withdraws all the way to the Green Line. A further danger is the possibility of a Hamas takeover in Judea and Samaria and the creation of a terror state like the one in the Gaza Strip.

Tunnels.
After the completion of the security fence in the West Bank, the Palestinians are likely to dig tunnels along the perimeter, as they have done along the Gaza-Egyptian border. These tunnels can be used to smuggle explosives and terrorists in and out of Israel. Palestinian territorial contiguity will make it easier for terrorists to bring explosives into Israel via the tunnels.

Territory.
Transferring land to the Palestinians will remove the IDF presence from Palestinian towns. Two problems arise with this scenario. First, every

strategic location Israel evacuates is at risk of becoming an arms depot and a haven for launching missiles into Israel. Second, any IDF operation against terror in these towns will require movement through hostile territory. This eliminates the element of surprise, essential for an operation's success and forces the IDF to cope with explosives, mines and ambushes on the way to the target. By remaining in the rural areas of the West Bank, the IDF will more easily have the capacity to collect intelligence and to perform military operations against terrorists, if needed.

Water.
Most of Israel's water comes from an aquifer located under the Judea and Samaria. Palestinian sovereignty over the aquifer will create a grave water problem, compounded by the presence of tens of thousands of Israelis who will need to be evacuated from the settlements of Judea and Samaria.

Arab neighbors to the East.
Palestinian territorial contiguity will cut off the strategically vital Jordan Valley from Israel, exposing it to dangers from the east - Jordan, Iraq and Iran. The threat posed by Iraq and Iran is thus greatly magnified by the loss of this territory.

Settlements.
Retaining the rural areas in Judea and Samaria will significantly reduce the number of settlements to be dismantled, increase the chances that evacuation of settlements will be accomplished by agreement, decrease the expenditures for compensation and rebuilding, and limit the destructive repercussions on Israeli society. At present, there are serious social disruptions resulting from the events of Gush Katif, northern Samaria, and Amona. There is also a growing distrust and the resultant alienation from the political establishment and the democratic system by religious Zionists and settlers. Efforts should be made so that further withdrawals will be conducted in cooperation with the settlers and not in opposition to them.

Solution: Palestinian City-States
For all the reasons mentioned above, Israel must strive to block the territorial contiguity of the West Bank while maintaining the Israeli presence in the area between Ramallah and Nablus, including the settlements of Ofra, Shilo, Eli, Yizhar, Itamar, and the region of Ma'ale Efraim.
Therefore, the proposed plan is the creation of eight independent and separate city-states within the West Bank, having a limited rural periphery,

that will enable future expansion and the establishment of industrial zones. The towns that will receive independence are under this plan are Hebron (the Arab part), Jericho, Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, Tul-karem and Qalqilya. Bethlehem will require further consideration. At the same time, Israel must create a situation of de facto annexation of the majority of the rural areas, while granting Israeli citizenship to those Arab residents of the villages who want it.

Such a *de facto* division, sustained over time, will foster the development of local rule and facilitate the establishment of political entities based on each separate city-state.

In its public relations outreach, Israel will put forth and explicate the concept that size alone does not determine the success or failure of a state. For example, Monaco, Lichtenstein, San Marino and Luxembourg are small states with a high quality of life, while Algeria, Libya, and Sudan are large states with poor quality of life. Thus, it is demonstrable that size is less important than effective government. So far, the Palestinians have shown their inability to manage an orderly, peaceful political system that has renounced terror. Until this happens, Israel must retain as much territory as possible to defend its citizens.

Hurdles
There are three major hurdles for Israel regarding the question of territorial contiguity. The first deals with the differences in social characteristics between Gaza and the West Bank. In Gaza, there is a high percentage of refugees and Bedouins, while by contrast, their concentrations in the West Bank are smaller. The levels of education and income are also unequal, and even the spoken language differs. As a result, it appears that the political separation between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip will continue. Considering that the prevailing historical competition and tensions between Nablus and Hebron have created friction within the Palestinian Authority, it can be reasonably assumed that their separation into two states will be tacitly accepted.

A second hurdle that Israel must overcome is the Supreme Court. Currently, the Supreme Court has taken on the role of demarcating the country's borders. To undo this role, the Knesset must pass a basic law, by which the government declares that the setting of borders is a political rather than a judicial act. Indeed, defining a state's borders has political

(not legal) significance, and it is inappropriate for the Supreme Court to continue managing Israel's relations with its enemies.

The third and highest hurdle is Israeli public opinion, which has adopted the terms "Palestinian territories" and "occupied territories." This terminology is taken from the Arab-Palestinian narrative that Europe has so enthusiastically adopted and espoused. These terms are problematic because there still is no Palestinian state and, therefore, no "Palestinian territory." The region of Judea and Samaria is a territory without sovereignty, and the ability to claim sovereignty over it exists for any state that borders it, including Israel. The existence of Israeli settlements over dozens of years is sufficient for claiming sovereignty. Moreover, the residents of the territory are Israeli citizens. The settlements do not infringe on the sovereignty of any existing state. Since these territories are vital to Israel's security, the government needs to construct and propagate a new and different narrative. They should use these arguments to inform and so, combat, negative public opinion.

From the standpoint of demography, the rural areas in the West Bank constitute a small burden relative to the size of the territory that will be added to the state through annexation. Hence, there is almost no need to relinquish these areas out of demographic considerations. Israel will provide these residents a choice between citizenship and residency, the same choice possessed by the Arab residents of East Jerusalem.
Taking into consideration Israel's security requirements, it is imperative to block the territorial contiguity of any future Palestinian entity. Israel should encourage and assist the establishment of eight "city-states" in the towns of Judea and Samaria, which will be independent and separate. Technical problems arising from the separation between them can be solved if their residents maintain good neighborly relations with Israel.
Israel must retain as much rural land in the West Bank as possible, particularly the area between Ramallah and Nablus, for security and demographic reasons. Evacuation of these areas will create a dangerous situation for Israeli security and will necessitate re-conquering extensive parts of the West Bank. According to this scenario, there is no reason to dismantle and destroy most of the existing settlements.

It would be a dangerous folly to relinquish these areas of the West Bank and would result in undermining Israel's security and economy. Such ideas stem from the adoption of Arab-Palestinian, anti-Zionist and anti-Israeli

rhetoric would must be strongly refuted. It is imperative that Israel do everything possible to thwart such an outcome.

Mordechai Kedar, PhD, the director of the Center for the Study of the Middle East and Islam (under formation); a researcher at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies; a lecturer at the Department of Arabic, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel. Mordechai.kedar@biu.ac.il