The presentation of the Palestinian Authority’s argument is really pitiful

The Region

By BARRY RUBIN

Take, for example, the December 25, 2013, New York Times op-ed by Ali Jarbawi, “The Coming Intifada.”

“These days, life appears to be going along as normal for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Appearance is deceptive, however. Prior to the 1987 intifada, too many things appeared to be normal until they exploded, much to everyone’s surprise. But no one should be surprised if a new intifada erupts in the next few months. Many experts, even those within the Israeli security apparatus, like the former Mossad chief, Meir Dagan, are predicting it.”

Note that this is supposed to be the victimization argument. Thus, even if Palestinians refused the UN Partition Plan (1947) as well as Camp David (2000) and don’t even pay their electric bills, they are nonetheless eternal victims; their problem does not have anything to do with their actions.

Actually, ex-Mossad chief Meir Dagan did not predict an intifada. He said it was possible that an intifada could occur. In fact, the Mossad report said that it was quite possible that an intifada would not occur. Dagan was thus misquoted, and an intifada is not definite.

“We Palestinians are living through the worst situation in years. And, despite surface appearances of normal, mundane, routine everyday life under occupation, four significant factors have begun to interact that may disrupt the seemingly stable status quo,” wrote Jarbawi.

Indeed, it is certain that the conditions of the Palestinians have not improved over time - despite having received billions of dollars in aid, much of which was stolen or wasted. And if they truly are in the worst situation in 50 years, who is to blame? The situation of the Palestinians is due to decisions made by Palestinian rulers, negotiators and terrorists. The first, and most potent factor, is the collapse of any hope that the occupation will ever end and Palestinians will attain their freedom and independence. This hope had allowed Palestinians to endure the daily injustices of occupation in the expectation of a better future. It is this same hope that led them to support negotiations with Israel and the idea of a two-state solution.

Again, this is an extremely selective view of the situation over the past half-century. For example, “The Palestinians’ strategic mistake was to think that conceding 78 percent of the land of historical Palestine in 1993 would be enough.” Note the subtitle here, as the author is in fact hinting that the Palestinians should have demanded a one-state solution.

The peace negotiations (1993-2000) were based on the premise that there would be a two-state solution. “It didn’t occur to them that Israel wanted to split this remaining land with them, leaving them with - in the best of cases - a state of leftovers. And the price that is being demanded for this state is so exorbitant that the Palestinian Authority cannot sell it, nor can the Palestinians accept it.”

In fact, the “exorbitant” price for the Palestinians consisted of the recognition of a Jewish state in exchange for the recognition of an Arab state, the cessation of terrorist attacks on Israel, and other similar conditions. Yet in the previous month alone there were at least five murder attacks on Israelis, a bomb on a bus within Israel, a border attack against Israel from Gaza, and the - especially creative - effort of a member of the PA security forces who had requested to be treated for an eye injury in Israel, intending to use that humanitarian gesture as an opportunity to commit a terrorist attack on an Israeli hospital.

Every day, there are verbal attacks on Israel as well. In other words, Israel is only offered peace as a propaganda measure.

“The promised Palestinian state will be nothing but a shadow entity completely ruled by Israel,” Jarbawi continues. Remember that if the Gaza Strip is being included in the 22% allegedly offered to Palestinians, Gaza is not controlled by the PA. Therefore the PA has no authority to be negotiating about Gaza and Hamas is not ready to accept Israel under any conditions.

Meanwhile, another op-ed, “Israel’s Jim Crow Treatment of Palestinians Continues” by Ahmed Tibi in The Hill - a publication that is widely read by Congressional staff - claims that in the negotiations on a two-state solution Israel is subjecting Palestinians to “Jim Crow’ treatment.” In other words, Tibi’s claim is that the problem is not a conflict between two national groups, but rather a systematic racist one, in which Palestinians are always the victim.

Note that since 1994, Palestinians have had self-government and have voted to determine who would rule in the West Bank and Gaza. After two decades of Palestinian self-rule, including its own armed forces and economy, and after having received billions of dollars in aid, Tibi is arguing that the Palestinians should never be held responsible for ruling themselves.

In a recent poll, two-thirds of Jewish Israelis agreed that they would hear the Palestinian narrative in school. Can you imagine the opposite? Of course not. Some years ago, I actually lectured at a Palestinian university and apparently my affiliation was omitted from the syllabus.

Despite 50 years of cross-border terrorist attacks against Israel, missiles fired against Israel, attempts of boycotts against Israel, and failure to pay Israel for providing electricity to the Palestinian territories, The New York Times article claims, “The Authority’s financial insolvency is creating more problems for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, especially the young.” If a PA government that has existed for two decades wants a situation in which stability is impossible, how can the virtual state of war be blamed on Israelis?

Note that when Israel withdrew from the Gaza settlements in 2005, the equipment that was left behind was either stolen or broken by Palestinians. And who started the rocket wars? For 50 years, Palestinian attacks and victims have been bragged about.

The basic construction of the argument is this: We fought and attacked Israelis and yet throughout the years, only the Israelis were responsible for our suffering. How can the PA make peace with Israel? How credible can it be?

After two decades of self-rule, Palestinian public figures can say that Israel’s don’t want peace and that Jews subject Palestinian to Jim Crow treatment, yet Israelis and Jews say nothing of the kind and yet are condemned as horrible oppressors and racists.

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