

# Two states, too little, too late: What Next?

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In the immediate aftermath of the Gaza carnage, in which some 1500 Palestinians have been killed by Israel, at the same time that Israel has suffered 13 deaths, ten of those soldiers, and of them three killed by the Israeli forces themselves, one is forced to wonder about not just the proportionality of this barbaric attack, but also about the acceptance of those war crimes by the International community. Neither has this carnage started on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008, but much earlier.

How far shall we go back in time? The simplest would be going back to the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, after which, Hamas became more influential in Gaza than the discredited PNA, which was seen by most Palestinians as servile to Israel and the USA. Since that time, the Palestinians have fired some hundreds of rockets into Israel. In the whole period, until this week, 22 Israelis have died as a result of Palestinian actions of resistance; in the same period of four years, over 4250 Palestinians were killed by Israel. The ratio has always been so – over 100 hundred Palestinians to every Israeli killed, and now it has climbed to 200 to one, or more. Inside Israel, this is not seen as enough of a punishment for voting the Hamas into Government in 2006, three years ago. Some academics in Israel are even clearer than most Israelis would like them to be; the demographer, Prof. Arnon Sofer was, speaking on Gaza and the problem it faces Israel with. In a interview with the *Jerusalem Post* in 2004, he says: "When 2.5 million people live in a closed-off Gaza, it's going to be a human catastrophe. Those people will become even **bigger animals** than they are today, with the aid of an insane fundamentalist Islam. The pressure on the border is going to be awful. It's going to be a terrible war. So, if we want to remain alive, we will have to kill and kill and

kill. All day, every day." Sofer admitted to only one worry in relation to all this killing, which will, he says, be the necessary outcome of a policy that he himself helped to invent. "The only thing that concerns me," he says, "is how to ensure that the boys and men who are going to have to do the killing will be able to return home to their families and be normal human beings." This reminds historians of the famous secret speech Heinrich Himmler gave to SS officers in 1944, where he discusses the psychological toll of the destruction of the European Jewry on the very SS personnel who exterminate them!

Few years ago, Arnon Sofer was seen clearly as a dangerous fascist, someone who may bring about a new Nakba and untold suffering. Arnon Sofer and his friends are fanning the flame of ethnic 'imbalance', and arguing for the old solution to the 'Palestinian problem' or even to the Demographic problem, as he like calling it. Sofer is not alone in suggesting that a transfer of Palestinians en-mass is the only viable solution to keeping Israel Jewish, when he is not talking about plain murder as a solution. Party leaders such as Lieberman are now speaking the same language of hate, openly and clearly from his Knesset seat.

Now this is hardly new; Already Theodor Herzl, the father of political Zionism, in his Diaries was speaking of the total removal of the Palestinian peasantry and 'the paupers', to what he calls the 'Transfer countries'.

Views such as Sofer's have had the upper hand in Israel, in the last few years. After the election of Hamas to government, it seems that all the stops have been removed – open talk about 'punishing', 'dieting' and 'teaching Gaza a lesson have become normalized and are now used across the political spectrum with impunity. Open talk of 'transfer' of over one million Palestinian citizens of Israel, as well as the millions of those in the rest of Palestine, has also become *de*

*rigueur*. In the last few years even people who have been responsible for researching and publishing important materials about the 1948 war, which have proven that the ethnic cleansing during that years was indeed a carefully planned process, rather than the chaos of war, such as Benny Morris, have become supporters of further ethnic cleansing. In an astonishing 2004 Ha'aretz interview, Morris argues for the necessity of ethnic cleansing in 1948. He faults David Ben-Gurion for failing to expel all Arab Israelis, hinting that it may be necessary to finish the job in the near future. Though he still considers himself a left-wing Zionist, he invokes and praises the fascist Vladimir Jabotinsky, in calling for an "iron wall" solution to the current crisis. Referring to Sharon's Security Wall, he says, "Something like a cage has to be built for them. I know that sounds terrible. It is really cruel. But there is no choice. There is a **wild animal** there that has to be locked up in one way or another." He calls the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians a struggle between civilization and barbarism, in cheap throwback to Samuel Huntington's corrosive thesis *Clash of Civilizations*, and suggests an analogy frequently drawn by Palestinians, though from the other side of the Winchester: "Even the great American democracy could not have been created without the annihilation of the Indians." Furthermore, Morris says bluntly, "There are circumstances in history that justify ethnic cleansing." There's no point in saying, "You're denying Palestinian suffering!" for after chronicling that suffering in scrupulous detail, he observes brightly, "You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs. You have to dirty your hands." There's no point in saying, "This is racist!" for Morris has abandoned humanist ethical universalism, invoking the pied-noir Camus to do so: "He was considered a left-winger and a person of high morals, but when he referred to the Algerian problem he placed his mother ahead of morality. Preserving my people is more important than universal moral concepts." Here we have some of Israel's leading academics, using both the

language and argumentation of racist and fascist in the 1930's, ironically directed at Jews, and the 'final solution' to the Jewish Problem' of Europe. That both Sofer and Morris have used the word 'animals' to describe the Palestinians, reminds us of the 'two-legged animals' by Israeli Premier Begin, but also of the language racists and Nazis used in order to describe the Jews! That sons and daughters of the victims of the Nazism ended up using the vile and repulsive language of their exterminator, is a measure of the moral and political decline of Israel.

On such a background, it is hardly surprising that the last barbaric war against Gaza and its 1.5 million people, has received such a high level of popular support in Israel. The propaganda tells Israelis (and others) that this was an operation to finish off Hamas and its rockets, but that is an obvious lie; In four years, the rockets have killed less people than Israel loses every day in traffic accidents! The rockets and the lightly-armed Hamas are no military threat to Israel, and have never been. The real threat they pose is that of continued resistance to the long-term Zionist project of clearing Palestine of its Arabic population. And to achieve this, every means is justified. Like the Nazis during the Holocaust, Israel is using a range of measures to fight the Palestinians, such as continued starvation, which was called by Israeli Prime Minister Olmert 'putting them on a strict diet'!

Since its failed operation in Summer 2006, when Israel bombed Lebanon and invaded the south of the country, Olmert is increasingly searching for a successful war, as all analysts were unanimous that his Lebanon incursion was a terrible failure. Since that war, Israel has started to plan its next war against Gaza. This has meant the building of a huge dummy city in the south of Israel, at a huge cost, to train the Israeli army in densely built-up urban area fighting, such as would be necessary in Gaza. Over a number of years the IDF has trained in this location, using the latest US technology, in order to be prepared for the coming attack. This

facility, which in size and character is modeled on Gaza, is also serving as a model for the USA in its planned fighting in the Arab world and the East. After all the preparations, the time was judged right for the attack – a day after the Christmas and during the longest holiday in the West, with a lame duck president who is fully supportive of Israel. Israel also got the nod from its European partners, so there was no reason for them to worry.

Having starved the Gaza residents of food and water, denied them medicines and fuel, gas and electricity, Israel has planned the media operation for six months, since the summer, in parallel with planning the military operation. Immediately on starting the Gaza bombardment, Israel has flooded the air with simple slogans, all of them false, but catchy enough to have the great minds of the international media fall for them. I of course cannot read Japanese, and so I do not know how Israel's action was treated in Japan. I can, however, refer to the British media, which have not given Israelis a hard time, as opposed to other countries' media:

'Israeli diplomats and spokespeople working with the British media have said that so far "most of the hostility has been in the print media, especially in The Guardian and The Independent. The electronic media, including also the BBC, have made more of an effort to seem even-handed. "The coverage is definitely less hostile to Israel than what we saw during the Second Lebanon War two-and-a-half years ago." (Avi Pazner, Israeli spokesperson)

It also seems that the long planning of both the military atrocities as well as the media control has paid dividends:

"The months of preparation and the increased intensity of the media efforts have also shown results in Britain. Senior diplomats in the London Embassy, headed by Ambassador Ron Prossor gave an unprecedented 25 interviews to national

television and radio channels, in the first three days of the operation.” In the same time-frame, two interviews were held with the Palestinian Ambassador. Hardly a picture of balance and proper media management, when the aggressor gets all the time to explain themselves, but the victims do not...

“Whenever Israel is bombing, it is hard to explain our position to the world,” said Avi Pazner, Israel’s former ambassador to Italy and France, and one of the officials drafted in to present Israel’s case to the world media. “But at least this time everything was ready and in place.” One of the decisions taken following Israel’s failure to explain its case during the Lebanon War was the formation of a National Information Directorate within the Prime Minister’s Office, tasked with coordinating the efforts of the press bureaus in the various government departments. The Directorate, which has been up and running for eight months, began planning six months ago for a Gaza operation. A forum with representatives of the press offices of the Foreign and Defence ministries, the IDF Spokesman Unit and other agencies held numerous meetings to decide on the message. The forum held two system-wide exercises in the past two months, one aimed at foreign media and, last week, one dedicated to the Israeli press.”

This goes a long way towards explaining how it is possible for Israel, small country with a population smaller than that of London, to disregard international law, conventions such as the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention, UN and Security Council resolutions, and many other. Controlling media reporting is one of the more crucial aims of any politician, especially one undertaking a clearly illegal military occupation and destruction of civilians on a massive scale, as we have seen in Gaza.

So, did it start in 2005? Of course, this is a rhetorical question. It started even

before the setting up of the state in 1948, after months of violence by the nascent Israel against the unprotected citizens of mandate Palestine, between November 1947 and May 1948. In this period, the violence by Hagana and Irgun forces towards Palestinians has brought about the creation of 400,000 refugees, even before the proclamation of Israeli Independence. In this period, Palestinians were also not defended by the Arab states, which only entered the fray in May 1948. The fighting which ensued, has led to another 370,000 Palestinians being made refugees, three quarters of a million in all, and more than the whole population of Israel, at that point a mere 470,000 people! How many of you, I wonder, knew those details, and knew that even before the war in 1948 started, the Israelis have already created the refugee problem?

In discussions with Israeli and other Zionists, one often hears a repetition of the claim that “the UN has decided on the setting up of a Jewish state in 1947” and hence all which followed seems to emerge from this foundational myth as if from the head of Zeus. And be justified by it. The Jews are said to have accepted the resolution, while the Palestinian Arabs are said to have rejected it. Behind this simplified and distorted version of the negotiations, and the misconceptions related to UN resolution 181, hides much of Israeli propaganda and its marked success in converting world media opinion to an unquestioning support of the Israeli position. Hence I would like to do my best to dismantle this popular myth about the past, before speaking of the future.

The UN had before it two versions of the political resolution for Palestine: the first was the partition resolution, which became the one which has been later adopted, and the other one was the setting up of a single democratic state for all the citizens of Mandatory Palestine, Jews as well as Arabs. While the first (Partition) resolution was supported by the West, the Single-State resolution was

supported by all the Arab countries, and some of the new democracies in the Third World. While the Single State resolution would offer all Jews living in Palestine equal rights, it offered them no supremacy, or a nationalist state, obviously. They would not get any special additional areas to settle in, and Palestine as an entity would be finalized as an independent state. For the Arab states and for Palestinian Arabs, this represented a huge concession, as it meant that they had to accept the *colon* as an equal partner in the new state, a *colon* which was, unlike them, well-connected to the European and western interests, and therefore, by definition 'more equal'.

The use of the terms "Jewish State" in the text of the resolution, did not mean that the state set up by the Jewish majority was to be a Jewish state in the sense that Israel is, and neither was the Arab state to become Islamic. The use of the term Jewish and Arab was inaccurate and crude, but those were the terms available at the time. The resolution does all it can to point out that all citizens of *both states* should be equal before the law, and religion was not to be a state religion, neither the state a religious state. The term Jewish is certainly not understood as a racial or religious definition, but as an ethnic one. The ethnicity which the resolution was that of European Jewry, a group devastated during WWII by the Nazi murder of millions of Jews, mainly European. There is also no way in which this could be a Jewish State – only 55% of its citizens would have been Jewish, with the rest Palestinian Arabs of all denominations. The UN recognized this clearly by devising an enormous and detailed machinery to protect the large Palestinian minority within the proposed state. Of course, none of such articles were ever implemented by the Israeli regime.

Another feature of the resolution that is little known and much misunderstood, is the UN contention that enclaves of one community will continue to exist in the



state of the other community. Jaffa was one such example – a large Palestinian city in the midst of the territory allocated for the Jewish state, but there were numerous others. In both cases of such communities being isolated, it was the duty of the state to protect them and their safety.

We know what happened. The Arab states and the Palestine Arabs did not accept resolution 181, and lost the ensuing battle for control, to the superior forces and equipment of the emerging state of Israel. Why did they not accept the resolution? Because no one else would have done, being in their place. They were to get 43% of Palestine, to house 75% of the population, while the Jews would get 55% of their country... the resolution was clearly unfair – favouring the *colon* over the indigenous population. The Palestinians could not sign away their own country, after the generosity they have shown was disregarded, and they were in fact punished for allowing Jewish immigration in. The Arab states and the Palestinians also saw this procedure as aggressive and unbalanced – after all, they were prepared to have one state of all the citizens, in order not to partition Palestine, especially after what was already known of that other great success of the British empire – the partition of India, which has devastated Hindi, Sikh and Moslem communities alike. Indeed Nehru was very clear about this in 1947, as was the India delegation to the UN. Partition was to be avoided at all costs, especially the kind of partition proposed in Palestine, where the small colon would be the winner of most of the country, and most of the arable land. Why should they have accepted this unjust solution?

Gandhi has made that point a long time before the terrifying events in the East in 1947 took place; it was well known his sympathies were with the Jews, due to their suffering in the Holocaust, but this did not sway him, and he could well tell the difference between Jews and Zionism, to which he was strongly opposed:

“My sympathy does not blind me to the requirements of justice. The cry for the national home for the Jews does not make much appeal to me... Why should they not, like other peoples of the earth, make that country their home where they are born and where they earn their livelihood?”

“Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs... Surely it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that Palestine can be restored to the Jews partly or wholly as their national home,”

Those lines, written in 1938, around the time of the Evian conference, still resound today, after the events that changed the Middle East. Gandhi understood that the only way Jews can have their own state in Palestine, is by the dispossession of the indigenous population, to which he was opposed. Of course everyone at the UN understood that also, but many states and their diplomats were of course not opposed to the dispossession of the Palestinians, and did nothing to stop it, or to hold Israel to the resolution, when it had occupied 78% of the territory of Palestine, in 1948, or to force it to return the refugees to their homes, according to Resolution 194 in 1949.

All this is well known, and I mention it here because those are important milestones in the debate about the ‘Jewishness’ of Israel. Though Israel was never a democratic country, it has not defined itself as a Jewish state by its own legislative machinery until 1980, when to be non-Jewish was also legally inferior a position to be, while before it was mainly factual state of affairs. But 1980 is of course a long time after the 1967 war, the UN resolutions which have demanded that Israel withdraws from the Occupied Territories, and also after the many illegal settlements which were sanctioned, supported and financed by the government. By that time, I argue, it was clear that Israel cannot be a Jewish State, as long as it holds on to the last 22% of Palestine with its four million

Palestinians. The only way it could have remotely argued that it is a Jewish State is by returning to the 1967 line. This was of course not what it wanted, or meant to do at any point in time since 1967. Israel was then against the two states solution, and has done all it could to make sure it will never be a viable solution, or even possible. The grid of settlements was placed exactly to make a Palestinian state virtually impossible, and in doing that, Zionism was more successful than it may have intended – it made a solution of any kind near impossible, apart from that old chestnut of the PLO – secular democratic state in all of Palestine!

Olmert has recently used this understanding to point out how urgent it is to find a solution which at least some Palestinians can sign to: if such a solution cannot be found, he said, then the one-state will gain the upper hand, as nothing else can now be done...

While it is not surprising to hear Olmert speak of the two-state solution, it is more unusual to hear progressive intellectuals speaking of this as a viable or just solution, leave alone possible. It was quite amazing, then, to read famous peace activist and renowned linguist Noam Chomsky, one of the great moral figures of North America, about the Israeli Wall and its invidious agenda ("The Wall as a Weapon," *New York Times*, 23 February 2004). In his meticulously written deconstruction of Israel's false and disingenuous arguments, he calls for the almost forgotten "two states for two people" solution to be revived, and for the wall, if one was felt to be necessary, to be built on Israeli land. While it is difficult to disagree with Chomsky that this vile construction of the largest ghetto wall in creation is one that should never have been built on Palestinian land, the totality of his argument is problematic and troubling.

The two-state solution, in the form of Israeli withdrawal to the Green Line of the

pre-1967 war, would, if implemented, leave the Palestinians with 22 per cent of their own country. For the Palestinian population, which is roughly the size of the Israeli Jewish population, after a century of suffering, to accept the loss of *four fifths* of their country to foreign settlers, "returning" after two millennia, is not an easy solution to accept, neither a logical or just one. It is also questionable for someone like Chomsky, when he and us know very well that this line of argument has been used by the Israeli government for decades to cover up and justify their continued military brutalities and settlement of the Occupied Territories.

Such a solution, were Israel to accept it, is made even more difficult by the facts on the ground. Israel would have territorial contiguity, while Palestine would be divided into two parts, with connecting roads under Israeli control, or more accurately, stranglehold. All the valuable assets of the small country -- water resources, coastline, and arable land -- would be in Israeli hands. Israel has the fourth most powerful army in the world, a First World technological economy and the unwavering support of the most powerful empire on earth, in whatever it decides to do; this after almost four decades of brutal, illegal occupation in which it did all it could to break the spirit and destroy the daily life of most Palestinians.

It may be just that imbalance of power, which drove the Palestinian leadership to accept this most unequal of peace formulas in Oslo, moving towards a resolution of the conflict by negotiated solution. For a while, this looked almost feasible -- Rabin indicated that settlements in the occupied territories would have to be removed as part of an overall peace settlement that included Syria and Lebanon. He was just talking, of course, but has not moved to enforce any evacuation of settlers; in hindsight, it seems that he was whistling in the dark.

The settlers were not about to accept that. Sharon, the founding father of the

settlement enterprise -- a giant project of diverting funds, priorities and effort so as to make any political solution impossible -- was there right behind them while Rabin was assassinated for trying to say the obvious; that Israel must vacate all territories taken by force to allow the Palestinians a fifth of their own country, as a bottom-line option. That was the price of peace, he argued. Most of us would argue that it was the Palestinian people who were asked to pay the bill for the peace process: giving up most of their country in order to be allowed to govern themselves in a two small corners of it.

But even this was not to be. Premier Rabin never got to the point of getting any settlers off their militarised, illegal outposts. He was shot in the midst of one of Israel's peace rallies. Following that vile murder, all Israeli leaders who followed him were reluctant to go even as far as he did, which was not very far. What died with Rabin was the spirit of hope which was present since Oslo, even if it was not justified by the results of Oslo.

None accept what was the rationale of the Oslo accord: that Israel must vacate *all* its settlements -- every single one of them -- including those areas of Jerusalem which were unilaterally and illegally annexed. This was the very even-handed bottom-line for most Palestinians. Most people elsewhere could easily see the reasoning and justice behind such a solution. To a man, Peres, Netanyahu, Barak and Sharon, and now Olmert and Livni, have refused to come to terms with reality. Whole years of waiting have passed in which Palestinians hoped that promises would be honoured -- these puny, humiliating and minimalist promises. All that has happened is that the settlements grew bigger, and Palestine lost more and more.

But Israeli society was not ready, and still is not ready, to face the simple realities

that it had itself created by its military occupation, refusing to make even those minimal adjustments which would create the necessary conditions for peace. It may be argued that Oslo could never have worked, offering Palestinians so little in return for their giving up on the struggle to liberate Palestine. That may well be true, but for a while Israel was offered a genuine possibility for peaceful coexistence. It failed to live up to this historical opportunity. It refused consistently to make the adjustments. Instead, it chose to hang on to military spoils; to a continuing, de-humanising occupation and its regime of terror and intimidation.

Now this continued state of denial on the part of Israel could not go on indefinitely. The acts of resistance that followed the outburst of the Al Aqsa Intifada, have not only exacted a painful price for Israel's continue intransigence, but also reminded Israelis that their wish for a Jewish state is not compatible with the continuation of the occupation and settlement. A number of democratically elected parties represent in the Knesset this excellent solution to all the problems in Palestine, and their power is only growing. Even some intellectuals who like to call themselves left-wing now support this neat solution...

But transfer is still not a solution Israel feels is viable now, though it is now openly discussed as a policy in the Knesset. To protect the 'Jewishness' of the state, we are told, the Apartheid wall is now being completed. It has been proven elsewhere and repeatedly, that the only function of the wall is separating Palestinians from their land in the Western approaches of the whole west bank, and assisting the continued robbery of all arable land in Palestine; an important fact is also that the wall has given Israel control of 98% of all water resources within Palestine; this was recently admitted in a book about the wall, by Sfarad and Arielly, both not exactly anti-government radicals... The wall, under the guise

of security reasons, continues the long advance of Zionism – separating Palestinians from their land, and forcing them to leave it.

If Israel was ever ready to accept Oslo, and what it entailed, the need to build this enormous wall would have never arisen. Many lives on both sides would have been saved, as well as lives of others elsewhere, probably.

This is not something I find easy to say, as an Israeli and son of Holocaust survivors. I would like to be able to argue for an Israeli-Hebrew entity -- not a Zionist militarist enterprise, of course, but a democratic, autonomous political and cultural entity twinned with a similar Palestinian entity. But after four decades of military rule and all the desecration of political, human, civil, property and other forms of rights by the occupation regime, most reasonable people will agree that no support can be given to this outdated, violent, immoral and inefficient mode of domination of one people over another. I feel certain that after Gaza, we are all quite sanguine about allowing Zionism a further couple of decades of destruction and expropriation, leading to possible genocide, at worst, and at best unbalancing further the international political scene.

If it at least worked for the oppressors, some people may well have justified the means *vis-à-vis* the end. Alas, it does not, cannot and will not work for the benefit of either side. The West was quick to see this in the case of South Africa, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Kuwait and a number of other zones of conflict. Military occupation cannot be condoned. Domination through power and might will never get the vanquished to accept the occupiers. Political solutions enforced by the powerful on the powerless are wrong -- not just morally but because they undermine the rule of law elsewhere, and do not work.

This reality, simple enough in itself, was not just avoided by Israel but the

powerful forces in the new world order. This denial has finally come home to roost. The removal of hope for a solution by reason and negotiation leaves the ground open for those who feel, having lost all other avenues and not being in control of any real power to change reality, that suicide is their only means of affecting the course history. This in itself is a most serious indictment of the international political order. To drive a nation into this existential corner could be described as nothing short of criminal shortsightedness. That is exactly what has happened as the Palestinian claim for natural justice has been totally ignored for over half a century.

So, after all that has taken place since October 2000 when Sharon, architect and author of the most hideous examples of Israeli aggression -- from the Kibya massacre, through Sabra and Shatila to the horrors of the Al-Aqsa Intifada -- has made it impossible, by careful and detailed work over many decades, to affect the two-state solution. The wall, a structure that will create 16 larger ghettos and many smaller ones, of a kind the world has never seen, even during the atrocities of WWII, making life for Palestinians just about impossible, is the last straw. It will achieve exactly what it was designed to do: no possibility of going back to the 1967 borders.

So, what should Palestinians do? What should the international community do? Are we to suffer the menace, illegality and atrocities of the Israeli regime as if they were natural disasters? Should the international community, the UN, the EU (even the US) just accept whatever Israel does, as it did in 2006, when Israel invaded Lebanon again, when they would never have done so if those atrocities were to be committed by Milosevic, Saddam or Idi Amin? If it was possible, and necessary, for the international community to intervene in Cyprus or Kosovo, why not in Palestine?



The mistake the West (and apparently Chomsky) makes is to assume that there is still a two-state solution, sitting on some shelf waiting to be used. Apparently this is also the advice received by the new President, Obama. There is none possible. Israel has made sure that cannot happen. Many Palestinians (and some Israelis...) are now returning to an earlier, more principled stage of their political struggle and argument -- the PLO solution of a secular, democratic single state in the whole of Palestine; one state that allows equal rights to Jews and Arabs alike. It is ironic that through failing to grasp the nettle which would have enabled them to keep a separate Israeli state in the pre-1967 borders, Israeli leaders have forced a change in Palestinian thinking: "if we are not allowed to live as a free people in 22 per cent of our country, or come to that, even 10 per cent of it, maybe we should go back to fighting to liberate the whole country, for both peoples to live in peace, as equals."

What the West is suggesting is too little, too late. Not because Palestine rejected this solution, but because Israel did. The Palestinians are not turkeys, and will not vote for Christmas, and the idea that they can be forced into the 16 ghettos is ludicrous. But so also is the idea that Israel will go back to the 1967 borders willingly. The international community bears full responsibility for failing to act when it could, for the last 42 years.

While it is not clear when such an advanced solution of Jews and Arabs living together may materialise, it seems that it is the only one left, as Israel has made damned sure no other solution is allowed even half a chance. Political solutions of difficult and resilient conflicts are normally possible, only when all other solutions have become impossible. This is what has now happened in Palestine. The question seems to be: Must we have a bloody showdown, many more massacres and ethnic cleansing before it emerges?

That is a question international society can ill-afford to ignore. Ignoring it may well bring about much worse attacks than we have hitherto seen, both in the Middle East, and in other parts of the world. The instability injected into the international political system by Israel's illegal, immoral and irresponsible behaviour is likely to push many in the Arab and Islamic world towards extremism, in the absence of a strong international law enforcement.