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OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Palestinian State...

What A Palestinian State Will Look Like

By Yonatan Hambourger

As the war between Israel and Hamas continues into its sixth month and many around the world are looking to find a way to put it to an end, the chatter around recognizing a Palestinian state as an exit ramp is getting louder and louder. News outlets in the United States and the United Kingdom, traditionally seen as Israel's staunchest allies, have discussed supposed plans in their respective State Departments to push forward with timelines and announcements for establishing a state for the Palestinian people, much to Israel's chagrin and consternation.

The case of those that call for a Palestinian state is obvious: Give the people a state to call their own, along with the dignity to control their own security and civil administration, and peace will be upon the land. It is Israel's reasons for opposing this that are completely unrepresented (or when addressed, misrepresented) by government and media types.

For starters, the founding story of a country significantly shapes its culture and identity for generations. In the United States, the timeless story of the courageous Founding Fathers rebelling against a distant imperial monarchy to establish a democracy for the people by the people resonates deeply and is often celebrated. Similarly, Israel's origin story is the story of a decimated Jewish people rising from the devastating genocide of six million of their people and returning to their ancient homeland after 2,000 years of continuous colonial rule. In both cases, there are heroic and admirable arcs and protagonists that are worthy of being celebrated as the patriarchs of our nations.

For a Palestinian state, rewarding its history of fanaticism and terrorism would be shameful, and the lessons and incentives it teaches are perverse. If the world were to recognize a state now, it would be as a direct result and reward of the brutal assault Hamas unleashed on Israel on October 7th, where they raped, kidnapped, looted, and murdered their way into a war they couldn't win, and then rewarding their terrorism with an outcome beyond their expectations. October 7th, the worst single day in Jewish history since the Holocaust, would be celebrated as Independence Day, and its terrorist perpetrators would be forever honored as the nascent state's Founding Fathers. Civilized societies can't allow a state to be born through terrorism and expect to be rewarded with a friendly and peaceful country in return, with a healthy culture and admirable heroes.

Then there are Israel's security concerns to consider. There is no evidence to suggest a recognized Palestinian state wouldn't turn into what Gaza became after Israel withdrew its entire civilian population and armed forces in 2005: a vassal state for enemy regimes and launching pad for thousands of rocket and terrorist attacks that have killed thousands of Israeli civilians over the decades. The only reason more civilians haven't been harmed, that would have forced Israel into this war much earlier, is because of the miracle of Israel's Iron Dome system.

The balance of world security would also be affected by recognizing a Palestinian state. There seems to be an assumption that a new Palestinian state would be allied with the United States and our interests, united in the common causes of freedom and democracy, but there's no reason to believe that is true. Sure, a Palestinian state would be allied with the United States, the most powerful country in the world and gives Palestinians plenty of money for their indulgence, but their culture is much more in line with that of Russia, China and Iran. What's not to say that as soon as they're handed a state, they won't sign security agreements with these belligerent and aggressive countries, who will threaten World War III when Israel is inevitably forced to respond to terrorism?

And finally, there is the question of who will run this state. The United States accepts Israel's demands that Hamas must be dismantled, but our government's favored party to lead the new country is the Palestinian Authority, who is already making noises about simply folding Hamas into their organization and claiming it has been eradicated. PA President Mahmoud Abbas, now a frail 90-year-old authoritarian in the 21st year of what was supposed to be a 4-year term, is already just a dictatorial figurehead, and it's reasonable to expect a Palestinian state would adopt the model of its patron states, where the real power is in the hands of a mysterious council who rule by fiat. There are no Arab democracies in the world; there is no reason to think Palestine would be the first, just because we want it to be so. Despite utopian hopes and pronouncements, a Palestinian state would not be a thriving liberal democracy with a religious bent in a vein similar to Israel. It would continue to be Judenrein while subjugating and intimidating its Christian minority, and a repressive authoritarian theocracy that aggressively punishes those that don't follow their twisted version of Islam.

In reality, it's much more likely that the situation on the ground would remain exactly the same: the "government" will continue to be led by extremists and fanatics who remain in power despite overt corruption and stealing foreign aid money, while Israel is expected to continue providing essential services for the population or risk international condemnation. The United Nations would continue operating in the area with a massive budget donated by kind countries, as the leaders continue getting fat from their people's pain.

Knowing all this, we can confidently say now is not the time for a Palestinian state. There are many things that need to happen prior, and it shouldn't be considered until Israel's mission of dismantling Hamas, deradicalizing the population, and removing corrupt and extreme figures of influence from operating in the region (including UNRWA and our supposed allies in the apparently-moderate-yet-still-Holocaust-denying Palestinian Authority) is complete.

Our leaders must not chase short-term political gamesmanship in an election year to ram through ill-advised policies that will affect a region thousands of miles away for generations to come. Summarily recognizing a State of Palestine - before ensuring it would be a viable and valuable addition to the international community - is not a quick or peaceful solution to a deeper and more ancient conflict of religion that existed for millennia before Israel's founding in 1948.

Because for them, having a State of Palestine is not enough. It will never be enough. Until the world recognizes the problem was never that there wasn't a state for Palestinians, but that there exists a state for the Jewish people at all, this is how it will always be, until this seed of hatred and extremism is forever eliminated. G-d should bless our leaders with the gift of foresight, the courage to support our ally's fighting terrorism and hatred, and the wisdom to navigate decisions that may affect the world for centuries to come.

Yonatan Hambourger is a rabbi with Chabad of Rural Georgia.

Echos from Sinai
"Torah for Everyone"
Rabbi Yonatan Hambourger



TIKTOK IS SINISTER AND NEEDS TO BE SOLD OR WE WILL BAN IT. - U.S. CONGRESS



Spring Ephemerals

Spring ephemerals are (in my opinion) some of the prettiest native plants that we have in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. Some of these plants can be quite rare or difficult to find. They usually have some unique site requirements, which makes them difficult to transplant. The difficulty in cultivating some of them makes them all the more beautiful when you find them in the wild. These plants are called spring ephemerals because they come up quickly in the spring, bloom, and then quickly die back. The suddenness that they appear and disappear with makes them difficult to find sometimes. Let's talk about some of these spring ephemerals, all of these are shade loving plants.

UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Trillium is a fairly common spring ephemeral. There are many different species of trillium, which have different colors of flowers, although white, red, and pink seem to be the most common. Sweet Betsy is one species that has a deep red flower. The leaves on it have a variegated look to it. Trillium always comes up on a single stalk that turns into 3 leaves. The flower is usually on the top of the plant, but with nodding trilliums the flower is on a stem that drops below the leaves, hiding the bloom.

Trout lily has a beautiful yellow flower. The leaves are a very attractive mottling of green and purple. This is a very low growing plant with thin stalks that support the intricate flowers. Trout lily grows in the shade. It tends to grow on drier sites. There are also white trout lilies, but they don't seem to be as common in our area.

Mayapple is an interesting looking plant that sends up a single stalk with leaves drooping over that make it look like an umbrella. Mayapples tend to grow well in wet areas. A plant will have a single white flower, that is hidden beneath the leaves. It does produce a fruit in May that kind of looks like an apple. Hence the name, mayapple. It is not recommended to eat these fruits as they are toxic.

Dutchman breeches have a unique flower. They are white and yellow. If you use a little imagination they look like upside-down britches (breeches) that would belong to a dutchman. This plant is an important pollinator for bumblebees. The leaves look a bit like fern leaves, but less glossy.

Bloodroot has unique shaped leaves that change as the plant ages. It tends to like places that stay fairly dry. It blooms early in the spring with white flowers, that look similar to daisies. The juice from the root is an orange-red color. Native Americans had many uses for this plant including dye and insect repellent. The flowers will open during the day and close at night. The leaves are deeply lobed. I think the leaves look a little bit like the bat signal.

Ramps don't have a very showy flower. They are in the allium genus, which is the genus that contains garlic and onions. They are edible and have a very strong flavor to them. Historically, ramps are an important part of Appalachian cuisine. Today they have become more difficult to find on public land so there are regulations regarding wild harvesting them.

There are many more spring ephemerals for you to discover. When these plants are found in the wild, it is best to leave them there and enjoy them as wild plants. There are nurseries where you can buy seed for these plants if you want to have them in your yard. If you have questions about native plants or spring ephemerals contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Our Neighbor's Chimneys

The Smoke From Our Neighbors' Chimneys

Thunder echoes from the mountain this morning as welcome rain washes the air clean again. That mountain air that we advertise for the envy of our friends in the city has of late been nothing to brag about.

Daniel Boone is credited with saying that you could see the smoke from your neighbor's chimney it was time to move someplace less crowded. I know that some of us, myself included, understand how he felt. Sadly, there is hardly anyplace left that is less crowded. Or less smoky.

Personally, I don't mind an occasional whiff of oak from my neighbor's chimney. It is an aroma that reminds me of homes and hearths from simpler times, of bonfires and campfires from the days when we knew enough people unburdened by wage slavery or pinned down by gravity and inertia to get up off the couch and go sit around the fire. Alas, we barely know enough now for a friend or two to just sit across.

But the smoke we have endured so often in the last several years has not been the incense of good fellowship. Much of it has come from well-planned and increasingly urgent efforts to manage the forests and make them less dangerous for all the people perched on the mountaintops and crowding the hillsides. It's an unfriendly smoke of extremely fine particles that draws deep into the lungs and shortens life expectancy. It is misery for people with respiratory problems. They say it even causes cognitive impairment. That would explain a lot, wouldn't it?

More frequently than any time in living memory, the smoke visits us now. Sometimes it comes from hundreds of miles away; sometimes from the fool next door burning leaves during a red flag warning, or the developer who still doesn't understand, or care, that a pile of roots and dirt produces as much smoke as fire.

It's difficult to explain the change to someone who hasn't lived here. Nantahala is a Cherokee word that means roughly, "land of the noonday sun," but those storied mountains rarely live up to their name now. The Blue Ridge and the Smoky Mountains, which were so named for the lingering moisture in the air which appeared as clouds of smoke or a blue haze when seen from a distance, have all but lost those distinctive features.

Thank God the rains still come. Two years ago we recorded over 100 inches at our weather station at home. But now the fronts that bring the rain are often followed by days of unrelenting wind that robs the moisture from the surface and elevates fire danger. Just last week we had two days of rain and a mere two days after, another red flag warning.

I asked well-known meteorologist, Glenn Burns, about this phenomenon last year, and he attributed much of it to the El Nino event that was occurring. A deeper dive into the meteorology reveals a complexity that scientists labor to understand, but events are currently following a predicted pattern of increased wildfire activity in the Southern Appalachians.

In 2016, the year Towns County was squeezed between two large wildfires to our east and northwest, a record 231 square miles of our southern forests burned. If the prediction holds true, we'll see an average 310 square miles burn every year until 2100.

The US Forest Service and state forestry officials are well aware of the predicted trend, and they are doing everything they can to get ahead of the problem. Expect to see more smoke in the future. I know it can be miserable, but when it does happen, be grateful that it's coming from far away and not from the hillside you see through your front window. The smoke you see from a controlled burn is part of an effort to keep your home from going up in smoke as well.

At this point, I would like to issue a challenge to county and state officials as well as emergency services. We have a lot of senior citizens among us who are particularly vulnerable to the smoke that settles so often in our valleys now. Most of us are not in the habit of searching the internet for air quality and wildfire maps for warnings ahead of controlled burns, so many of us go out unprepared when the air quality is bad. This problem is not going to go away soon, and it can get worse. We have a good workable system in place for emergency services to warn us with phone calls when storms are imminent. Perhaps an air quality warning can be added as well, or a push notification to cell phones, in addition to coordinating with local newspapers and radio stations.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

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PO Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546.

Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net.

Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste. Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc. Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers. Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.*

Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

Outside The Box
By: Don Perry
worldoutsidethebox.com

Letters To The Editor

Climate Reparations

Dear Editor,

In 2021, President Biden appointed John Kerry as the United States Special Climate Envoy, a position that did not previously exist and did not require Senate approval. The Biden regime just made the job up. The job doesn't exist in any federal statute.

Recently, Kerry has indicated that he's willing to spend more of our tax dollars to try and fix the weather. Last November, Kerry spoke at the sixth annual Bloomberg New Economy Forum in Singapore. After flying there in his private jet, Kerry announced that there was no price too high for you and me to pay to stop global warming. Kerry made a promise to pay millions of American taxpayer dollars into a global climate reparations fund. It's called the Climate Change Loss and Damages Fund.

This is an international wealth transfer fund by which rich countries, except for China of course, will pay reparations to poor countries because of "disproportionate impacts" on the weather. It's like systemic racism but for the weather. It's not clear how any of this works because we're not "climate experts" like Climate Envoy Kerry. What we do realize is that no matter how bad the alleged fake global warming scheme gets, more money always seems to be the answer. And of course, after Kerry gave his speech, he got back on his private jet and flew back to Europe, which is where he prefers to live instead of the United States.

Tim Groza

Towns County Community Calendar

First Monday of each month:	School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
Every Tuesday:	Storytime for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
First Tuesday of each month:	Hiaw. City Council... City Hall	6 pm
	YH City Council... YH City Hall	6:30 pm
Second Wednesday of each month:	Board of Elections... Elections Office	4 pm
Third Monday of each month:	Planning Commission... Temporary Courthouse	6 pm
Third Tuesday of each month:	Commissioner's Mtg... Courthouse	5:30 pm
	City of Young Harris Planning Commission...	
	Meeting Room in City Hall	5 pm
	TC Water Authority Board Meeting	6 pm

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