

Ramblings

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An Equitable Resolution of the Status of Jerusalem Is Essential for Genuine Middle East Peace

A consensus is growing that only an equitable resolution of the status of Jerusalem can lead to a lasting peace in the Middle East. A hopeful sign is that many prominent American Jews, and many Israelis as well, seem to be coming to this conclusion.

In January, a group of American rabbis, concerned that the Israel-Palestinian peace talks might collapse over the tangled issue of Jerusalem, called for the two sides to share the city.

A statement signed by more than three hundred rabbis organized by the Jewish Peace Lobby declared:

The question is whether Jerusalem should be under the exclusive sovereignty of one nation. The question is whether the pursuit of both justice and peace requires that, in some form, Jerusalem be shared with the Palestinian people. We believe that it does.

Professor James Segal, a research scholar at the Center of International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland, who founded the Peace Lobby a decade ago, said:

We know there has been no serious discussion inside Israel about any general compromise on Jerusalem. Jerusalem is still viewed as the third rail of Israeli politics, with the right claiming that the left will redivide Jerusalem and the left saying that is a lie.

According to Segal, the subject is so emotional that no one has ever analyzed the actual geography involved in detaching western Jerusalem from the eastern portion, where all 180,000 Palestinians live.

A survey devised by Segal with researchers from both sides found that neither Israelis nor Palestinians viewed the borders of the city as sacrosanct when it was broken down neighborhood by neighborhood. "When you ask people what parts of the city are important," he said, "only the Mount of Olives and the Old City are really important to both peoples."

The Old City constitutes only one percent of the area of modern Jerusalem, the rabbis pointed out in their statement. Sovereignty in this area, which contains places of religious significance to Jews, Christians and Moslems, could come

through creative negotiations that would not have to apply to other lands. They also suggested that the borders of Jerusalem—which have been expanded a number of times since Israel captured the city of 1967 and reunited its eastern and western parts—might be reduced to create a more Jewish city. By giving up control over the mostly undeveloped Arab areas, the rabbis say, Israel would remove from Israeli Jerusalem most Palestinians, who would most likely become citizens in a future Palestinian state anyway.

Rabbis who signed the statement said they felt it was a moral question and that peace was the most important goal for Jews. “The notion that Jerusalem belongs to the Jews and only the Jews, if that precludes peace, is wrong,” said Rabbi Burton Visotzky, a professor of rabbinic literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

The fact is that Jerusalem’s present border is only thirty-two years old. The current boundaries were drawn after the 1967 Six Day War and took in not only the five square kilometers of Arab East Jerusalem—but also sixty-five square kilometers of surrounding open country and villages, most of which never had any municipal link to Jerusalem. Suddenly, they became part of what some Israelis now call their “eternal and indivisible capital.”

There are other indications of changing views. A new study calling for the creation of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital has been issued by a joint working group of four Arabs and four Israelis who met under the auspices of Harvard University’s Program on International Conflict Analysis and Resolution working with a grant from the U.S. Information Agency as well as the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies and the Jewish Life program of the Nathan Cummings Foundation.

The Harvard study declares:

The two state solution here refers to two states, each of which is sovereign, viable and secure. The solution of the Jerusalem problem should respect the national, cultural, religious, political, legal and historical rights of both peoples. Jerusalem should be an open and undivided city, with free access to the holy sites, serving as the capital of both states.

The Harvard psychology professor who helped organize the working group, Herbert Kelman, said there is more flexibility on the Jerusalem question among the Israeli public than there appears to be. Kelman said,

There have been a lot of slogans, but when you go into it in more detail, you find that really the issue is not as insoluble as it has at times been presented.

In February, Americans for Peace Now, a Jewish group, and the American Committee on Jerusalem, an Arab-American group, co-sponsored a Capitol Hill conference to explore the future of Jerusalem. Among the speakers was Ellen Laipson, Middle East specialist currently on the staff of the National Intelligence Council. She said that in “the new Middle East” which is emerging, neither side is

“going to achieve total vindication of their historic grievances, nobody is going to get one hundred percent of what they think they are entitled to . . .”

Laipson explained that,

. . . in the early ‘80s there was a lot of discussion, and some academics did some very useful work on what shared sovereignty of Jerusalem would look like.

Today, she said, many people are thinking of “side-by-side sovereignty” in which

. . . there will be as little shared sovereignty as possible, possibly only shared sovereignty over those core holy sites, but essentially people who have ID cards for the Palestinian Authority would be let into Jerusalem, would pay their taxes, and get their municipal services, would largely be under Palestinian Sovereignty, for the municipal part of Jerusalem, that would be recognized as the Palestinian capital. And those on the Israeli side would see themselves exclusively under Israeli sovereignty. . . . What I think was a utopian ideal of shared sovereignty has evolved into something that is more parallel.

Ron Pundik, an Israeli architect of the Oslo agreement, stated:

To all Israelis and Jews . . . who say Jerusalem is not negotiable, Jerusalem is not on the table, Jerusalem is ours, I say: Without an understanding on Jerusalem, there is no peace.

For a Middle East peace settlement to succeed, it is essential that more light than heat be brought to a discussion of the future of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was founded and named neither by Jews, Christians nor Muslims. In his book *Jerusalem*, Thomas A. Idinopulos, professor of religious studies at Miami University of Ohio, notes that

The Canaanites knew there was something strange about Jerusalem. . . . In their eyes here was the axis of the world, the meeting point of heaven and earth. . . . Nowhere else but here was the home of the solar deities, Shaha, the god of the rising sun, and the Shalem, the god of the setting sun. Shalem gave his name to Jerusalem. Jeru-shalem, meaning “place of the god Shalem.” . . . When the Israelites made their appearance in the ancient land of Canaan, they proceeded to confuse the name of Shalem with their own Hebrew word for peace, shalom. Thereafter, Jerusalem was mistakenly called “city of peace.” What a mockery history has made of their mistake.

In *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, Karen Armstrong declares that

Crucial to the cult of Jerusalem . . . was the importance of practical charity and social justice. The city cannot be holy unless it is also just and compassionate to the weak and vulnerable. But sadly, this moral imperative has often been overlooked. Some of the worst atrocities have

occurred when people have put the purity of Jerusalem and the desire to gain access to its great sanctity before the quest for justice and charity.

Jerusalem has been destroyed and occupied by many different nations and faiths. Karen Armstrong points out that

The societies that have lasted longest in the holy city have, generally, been the ones that were prepared for some kind of tolerance and coexistence in the Holy City. That, rather than a sterile and deadly struggle for sovereignty, must be the way to celebrate Jerusalem's sanctity today.

The Emerging Media Culture: How Well Will It Serve Us?

Increasingly, Americans have lost faith in the media. This is not a healthy thing in a democratic society for if citizens are to make judgments about the nation's future, those judgments can hardly be any better than the information upon which they are based.

The historian Paul Johnson notes that in the past, the media were widely viewed as

. . . beacons of enlightenment and progress . . . generally identified with knowledge and improvement, helping to . . . produce a responsible citizenry.

At the present time, he says,

. . . the general view of the media is almost entirely negative. It is associated with ignorance, lies, malicious invention and scurrility.

A *Los Angeles Times* poll found that 67 percent of respondents agreed with the statement: "The news media gives more coverage to stories that support their own point of view than to those that don't."

A recent survey by the Roper Center shows the depth of public distrust of the media: 82 percent think reporters are insensitive to people's pain when covering disasters and accidents; 64 percent think the news is too sensationalized; 64 percent think reporters spend too much time offering their own opinions; 63 percent think the news is too manipulated by special interests; 60 percent think reporters too often quote sources whose names are not given in news stories; 52 percent think the news is too biased; 46 percent think the news is too negative.

The advent of the internet, twenty-four-hour cable news programs, and corporate ownership of news organizations has created a new media culture. A study released by the Committee of Concerned Journalists suggests a decline in journalistic standards, particularly a strong emphasis on disseminating the latest developments in a competitive story rather than determining their accuracy.

Competition generated by the new cable news stations and the proliferation of talk shows has led to more tabloid-style sensationalism and less fact-based reporting. "The media culture today is oriented around talking about the news rather than reporting it," said Tom Rosenstiel, a media critic and vice chairman of

the committee.

The examination conducted for the committee by Princeton Survey Research Associates found that 41 percent of the reporting was either analysis, opinion, or speculation. Forty percent of the reporting based on anonymous sources relied on a single source, while only 1 statement in 100 was based on two or more named sources.

Larry Sabato, professor of government at the University of Virginia and author of the book *Feeding Frenzy*, declares that tabloid influence has gone up

. . . simply because today, not only do tabloids have the power to inject almost any rumor into the national conversation, they receive very little criticism for doing so.

“Truth is no longer as interesting as gossip,” said Bill Kovach, curator of Harvard’s Nieman Foundation, a mid-career program for journalists.

Kovach and Rosenstiel have written *Warp Speed: America in the Age of Mixed Media*, in which they claim that argument is overwhelming reporting, that the old professional culture that rewards the gathering and verification of information is being overwhelmed by cheaply produced commentary, chat and speculation. With so many channels and so much air time to fill, there’s little time or money left for the truth.

The traditional press faced many difficulties: the flight to the suburbs that doomed many big-city papers; the birth of cable and satellite television that ended the broadcast networks’ monopoly over the news. The principal press response, writes Michael Janeway, onetime editor of the *Boston Globe*, in the book *Republic of Denial*, was a panicked submission to the demands of the marketplace: newspapers and magazines ordered up flashy graphics, shorter stories, more “news” about show business and fashion. Television abandoned documentaries for tabloid-style magazine shows. The traditional stewardship model of running newspapers, shunning short-term gain for long-term investment and commitment, largely crumbled under the weight of corporate imperatives: bigger profits every year no matter what the cost.

Newsweek columnist Jonathan Alter argues that news, public affairs and history are morphing into entertainment:

Year by year the anchors of news give way to the ringmasters of talk. It’s a new information order. Nowadays you often hear the opinionated “take” first, perhaps you log on or go to the newsstand for the facts. “News” now comes from a thousand mouths—stories can move from internet to Leno monologue without stopping at a traditional news organization in between. . . . The old media food chain, whereby a story moved from newsletter to newspaper to news magazine to newscast to syndicated show to movie of the week, has been shattered. The food chain is now more of a food processor, with everything Cuisinarted in our brains. Protein, fat—what’s the source? We don’t ask too many questions as long as it goes down easy and maybe gives us a laugh.

Political talk shows tend not to be discussions but brawls. Writing in the *American Journalism Review*, Alicia Shepard notes that

With few exceptions, brawling pundits used to be hard to find on network television. . . . But now the food fights are spilling onto the networks. . . . Rare are reasoned discussions that enlighten or persuade. The weapon of choice is the bludgeon, not the scalpel. In the stylized format that has taken shape during the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal, the unwritten rules specify that one combatant must staunchly support Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr and the other must stand up for the president. Debate on other issues is similarly choreographed. . . . The ugly, insult-driven battles are apt to turn off viewers, rather than engage them in the political process, trivializing the news by making every conversation a shouting match, every difference of opinion the equivalent of a barroom brawl.

Deborah Tannen, author of the book *The Argument Culture*, states:

The biggest damage being done is not just losing viewers but to our democracy, because people aren't being informed. If you reduce everything to two sides fighting, you aren't exploring anything. People aren't getting the information they need. It also produces real cynicism about the political process.

Traditionally, journalists were not supposed to have financial relationships with the subjects they cover. In a much-publicized case, the *Los Angeles Times* made a business arrangement with the Staples Center sports complex. In this arrangement, advertising revenue from a special October 10, 1999 issue of *Times'* Sunday magazine—devoted entirely to the center—would be split with the center's owners. Former *Times* publisher Otis Chandler, whose family ran the paper for over a century, charged that the new leadership of the paper were “breaking down the traditional editorial/business wall.”

This however, was a typical case. Newspapers increasingly offer advertising-driven sections on everything from computers to dining out to automobiles. Many papers have entered into promotional deals with the teams they cover. The Tribune Company owns the Chicago Cubs as well as the *Chicago Tribune*. The *Dallas Morning News* recently invested in the Dallas Maverick's basketball team and in the city's planned new arena.

The picture is even murkier on television, where the major networks are part of huge entertainment conglomerates that see their news divisions as profit-centers and as promotional platforms for their many products. At ABC, the ownership by Disney has revealed a blurring of brand. Recently, Michael Eisner told National Public Radio: “I would prefer ABC not to cover Disney, I think it's inappropriate for Disney to be covered by Disney.”

In January, America On-Line announced the purchase of Time-Warner. How can we really tell when a reporter for *Time* or *Fortune*, owned by Time-Warner,

appears on CNN praising the deal, whether he is feeling any constraint on what he can say? Already, we have seen ABC kill a story on Disney theme parks.

In his book *Breaking the News*, James Fallows argues that journalists falsely pride themselves for being detached, indeed condescending, about the political process. Instead of trying to help people find common ground on complex issues—welfare reform, Medicaid, social security, abortion—the media play up conflicts and cross fires in a quest for entertaining, diverting drama.

By choosing to present public life as a contest among scheming political leaders, all of whom the public should view with suspicion, the press helps bring about that very result.

Nothing is more important for the future of our free society than a free and vibrant press. The emerging new media culture may not be up that job.

It Is Time to Face Up to the Potential Dangers of Ecoterrorism

In recent days, there have been increasing acts of violence across the U.S. by ecological and environmental groups such as the Earth Liberation Front and the Animal Liberation Front. Neither the American public nor our law enforcement agencies, it seems, have been paying proper attention to this growing problem. Consider several violent attacks for which they have claimed credit:

- * In October, 1996, arson caused an estimated \$9 million in damages at the U.S. Forest Service's Oakridge Ranger Station south of Eugene, Oregon.
- * In November, 1997, arson occurred at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) wild horse corrals near Burns, Oregon.
- * In June, 1998, arson occurred at the U.S. Department of Agriculture animal damage control building near Olympia, Washington.
- * In October, 1998, arson at a Vail, Colorado resorts damaged seven structures causing \$12 million in damages.
- * In December, 1998, arson caused more than \$500,000 in damages at U.S. Forest Industries' corporate headquarters in Medford, Oregon.
- * In December, 1999, arson at Michigan State University caused \$400,000 in damages, destroying research on genetically engineered plants.
- * In January, 2000, a house was set on fire in Bloomington, Indiana because it was part of a development that reputedly was jeopardizing a watershed. Damage is estimated at \$20,000.

On the web site of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), one of the world's most militant ecological groups, eight animated bombs appear on the introductory page. The ALF likens itself to those "who freed the slaves in the South" and those "who broke down the gates of Hitler's death camps." The ALF invites members to study

an on-line, do-it-yourself manual called the "Final Nail," which helpfully "details several basic incendiary mixes from easily acquired materials," popular with ALF activists worldwide. There is also a guide called "Arson Around. . . Getting the Job Done," which instructs on illegal methods of "putting the heat on animal abusers everywhere."

In March, a string of six attacks on meat and fur vendors in the San Francisco Bay area caused at least \$500,000 in damages, an ALF press release boasted. ALF spokesperson David Barbarash declared:

Whoever these ALF activists are, they're doing a damn fine job of inflicting economic damages to these companies, and they should be regarded for their courage and bravery.

In October, 1999, a militant animal rights group calling itself the "Justice Department" sent out more than eighty booby-trapped letters to scientists who performed experiments on animals. The letters contained razor blades. In this instance, a list of the targets, including professors at schools such as Harvard, Tulane and the University of California at Davis, was posted on the web and the researchers were able to avoid injury.

In April, 1999, ALF activists caused approximately \$1 million worth of damage to six laboratories at the University of Minnesota and set back important cancer research. Over 100 animals were stolen from the labs, and several froze to death in a nearby field. The Student Organization for Animal Rights (SOAR), a club that gets office space from the university, openly supported the raid. SOAR member Kevin Kjonass acted as a spokesman for the ALF and said that he was "extremely elated that this happened."

University of Minnesota officials said the damage seriously impeded research on Alzheimer's research by two years. One of the pieces of equipment damaged was an incubator containing brain cells from a patient participating in a research project. Dr. Low said:

You begin to have an impact on a patient who's donated their cells for us to develop a vaccine, and we no longer have that vaccine to offer to that patient. . . . That patient has no other hope.

"This was a very crafted, well-thought-out plan," says Tim Ebner, head of the University of Minnesota's Department of Neuroscience. "There was no warning. It's an escalation of this battle to a new level that we haven't seen before." Scientists believe that there can be no medical progress without animal research. "We need to use animals to probe disease," says Ebner.

Society wants us to solve the problem of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's and stroke. We need animals to do this.

Another group, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has launched a campaign against the use of animals in biomedical research, the raising of farm

animals for food and clothing and for by-products such as insulin, hunting, trapping and fishing and the use of animals in education and entertainment, including zoos, aquariums, circuses and rodeos.

Ingrid Newkirk, founder of PETA, has said that,

Six million Jews died in concentration camps, but 6 billion broiler chickens will die this year in slaughter houses.

Alex Pacheco, a PETA leader, says that

We feel that animals have the same rights as a retarded human child because they are equal mentally in terms of dependence on others. Arson, property destruction, burglary and theft are “acceptable crimes” when used for the animal cause.

Political scientist Kevin Beedy, writing in *Animals’ Agenda*, said:

Terrorism carries no moral or ethical connotations. It is simply the definition of a particular type of coercion. It is up to the animal rights spokespersons either to dismiss the terrorist label as propaganda or make it a badge to be proud of wearing.

PETA is closely allied with the Animal Liberation Front, which is classified by the FBI as a terrorist organization and which is active in a number of countries, including Australia, Canada, France, Great Britain, Holland, Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, South Africa and the U.S.

In 1989, terrorists broke into a University of Arizona Laboratory, destroying research on cryptosporidium, a bacteria that can be deadly to malnourished people, AIDS patients and other immuno-suppressed people. An outbreak of cryptosporidium subsequently killed 100 people in Milwaukee—and there remains no cure.

The long-run goals of many in the extreme ecological-environmental movement is nothing less than the deindustrialization of society. ALF’s founder, Ronnie Lee, declares

The human species is a tyrant species. It acts like the Nazi regime toward other species. It’s fascist. Other species have a right to their place of Earth. It’s truly wrong for us to spread and breed and take over the whole Earth.

ALF believes that human beings have polluted the earth, waged war against each other, and massively abused millions of animals either by experimenting on them for false scientific reasons or killing them for food. Lee states:

True animal liberation would mean massive changes in society. You would have to have deindustrialization. The problem is the extent of the human population together with industrialization. . . . The human population needs to be drastically reduced.

In Lee’s view, the “proper boundaries” for the human race are 100 million. He

does not, however, have a practical program in mind about how such a reduced human population could be achieved, or how modern society can “deindustrialized.” The current human population is nearing 6 billion. Only by eliminating billions of human beings could ALF’s goals be achieved.

The FBI is now investigating a number of ecoterrorist attacks. Critics, however, charge that the U.S. Government has not done a good job of solving these crimes. Frankie Trull of the Washington, D.C.-based Foundation for Biomedical Research, which monitors international ecoterrorism, says that

. . . while some members of Congress take the issue very seriously, I also think that the federal government has historically been very slow to move.

She says that investigators have allowed the trail to run cold and there is no national repository of information on the radical animal rights movement’s activities.

With regard to the press, Miss Trull notes that,

In general, the media have been fairly sympathetic to the ALF’s activities. They tend to cover animal-rights terrorism as an underdog effort.

That, she said, is a seriously misguided view of a movement that is largely “a bunch of thugs looking to smash things up.”

As such terrorist acts increase, and as the goals of the movements involved become more clear, a toughening of our attitude and response is essential. Ω

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