

**Middle East Notes**  
**Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns**  
**July 20, 2017**



*Please note: Opinions expressed in the following articles do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.*

Read previous weeks' Middle East Notes at

<http://maryknollogc.org/tag/middle-east-notes>

The four featured articles and the related links in this issue of the Middle East Notes focus on the recent Temple Mount (Haram al Sharif) attack on Israeli Security forces by "Arab Israelis"; the necessity for both the Israelis and Palestinians to end the occupation; the "self delusory bubble" in which most Israelis live that blinds them to the fact that they are "occupiers; the humanitarian tragedy and moral outrage that is the continuing Israeli blockage/siege of Gaza; links to other articles of interest; and two more recommended web sites for contemporary and reliable information on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

**Commentary:** Isaiah, the Jewish prophet wrote millennia ago: "bring forth the people who are blind but have eyes, also the deaf who have ears...". Modern day Israeli, Palestinian, Jewish and Christian "prophets" continue to make this call to the people and Government of Israel. The "people" of Israel and their non-critical Christian "supporters" of the occupation have not yet seen or heard what is very obvious to the Palestinians and informed observers of an on-going humanitarian tragedy and moral outrage that is the occupation, especially in the blockade and siege of Gaza.

- Amos Harel writes in Haaretz that the Temple Mount Attack is a nightmare for Israeli security forces, but the real test is yet to come. What comes next depends on how Israeli police handle the situation in Jerusalem and the Temple Mount.
- Israeli writer Gershon Baskin states in the Jerusalem Post that Palestinian freedom from Israeli occupation is his freedom as an Israeli from occupying. He needs to be free from this occupation just as they need to be free from it.
- Don Futterman in Haaretz speaks to Israeli Jews: "Let's enjoy our self-delusory bubble. Let's not talk about the regime of control we Jews have created to keep Palestinians off-balance and in fear."
- Tareq Baconi writes in The Nation that the crisis in Gaza is not simply a humanitarian tragedy. It's a moral outrage.

**1) [Analysis Temple Mount Attack Is a Nightmare for Israeli Security Forces, but the Real Test Is Yet to Come](#) ,  
Amos Harel, Haaretz, July 15, 2017**

"Friday morning's (July 14) attack on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is a nightmare come true for the police and the Shin Bet security service. Three young Arab Israelis broke into the well-secured compound, shooting two policemen to death before being shot themselves. This happened at Israel's most sensitive location, a place sacred to Jews and Muslims, with some of the incident captured on cell phone cameras and almost instantly disseminated on social media."...

"It was only natural for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to ignore those calls and adopt the recommendations of the security chiefs. In a phone conversation with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Netanyahu said that he would maintain the current arrangements on Temple Mount. The prime minister understands how dangerous it is to stoke these flames, which could again spread to the West Bank and Arab communities in Israel. It appears that similar messages will be conveyed to Jordan as well." ...

“According to a preliminary Shin Bet report, the three assailants were unknown and had no records. Now, a thorough examination must be conducted to establish whether they showed any early signs of their plot, other than general hints on Facebook. Nevertheless, the establishment of such a terrorist cell, its arming and possibly an early casing of the area before the attack should have sounded the alarm somewhere in the defense establishment. “

2) [Encountering Peace: If I Were The Palestinian Leader... Gershon Baskin, Jerusalem Post, July 12, 2017](#)

“This column is usually directed at the pro-Israel, Jewish audience. I have been spending a lot of time lately with young, smart, ambitious and thoughtful Palestinians from all over the West Bank. We have had a lot of deep and challenging discussions. I would like to direct this column toward them.

“Recently I was asked: ‘If you were Abu Mazen [Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas], what would you do?’ This is what I told them: The first thing I would do is call for new national elections. Abbas is serving the 12th year of a four-year term and he lacks public and political legitimacy.”

“The Palestinians must review and rewrite their textbooks and remove all of those elements which deny the existence of Israel, contain anti-Semitic content, teach and foster a culture of hate and encourage martyrdom and death instead of encouraging young people to live a productive and constructive life for themselves, their family and their nation. They do not have to rewrite history. Israel has been their enemy and history is history. The Nakba did take place and Palestinians have suffered and continue to suffer greatly.” ...

“Yes, there are reforms and revisions which are necessary to make in Israeli textbooks as well, but this is not a legitimate excuse to continue to use textbooks in Palestine which not only teach hate but send a very clear message to Israelis that Palestinians are not honest and genuine when they say that they are a partner for peace.

“Likewise, I think that the Palestinian leadership must remove from the table the whole issue of recognition of the Jewish identity of the State of Israel. Palestinians lose nothing by stating that when negotiations are complete and Israel and Palestine reach agreements on all of the issues including borders, settlements, Jerusalem, refugees and mutual security, and when there are guarantees for the equal rights of the Palestinian citizens of Israel, there will be no reason not to recognize Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish People. Palestine should be equally recognized as the nation-state of the Palestinian People.” ...

“Lastly, I believe that the Palestinian leadership must seek real engagement with Israeli society, including with businesses that are interested in investing in Palestine, with people interested in working together to build peaceful relations, in cultural exchanges, in encouraging Palestinians to learn Hebrew and Israelis to learn Arabic.” ...

“I know that these ideas are not popular among Palestinians. But since you asked me what I truly believe, this is what I have to tell you. Your freedom from Israeli occupation is my freedom as an Israeli from occupying you. I need to be free from this occupation just as you need to be free from it. Your security is my security and your prosperity and good life is my prosperity and good life. No walls or fences will ever enable our two people to live without regard for the other. Those walls must come down, but that will only happen through engagement and real peace between Israel and Palestine and not from Palestine in place of Israel.”

See also:

[The “Leahy Law” Prohibiting US Assistance to Human Rights Abusers: Pulling Back the Curtain](#)  
[No One Actually Knows Where Israel Ends and the Palestinian Territories Begin](#)  
[UNESCO Hebron motion important to all faiths](#)  
[Don't say 'Palestine' – it's an antisemitic word](#)

**3) [Opinion Let's Talk About \(Anything But\) the Occupation](#); Don Futterman, Haaretz, July 5, 2017**

“Let’s open our eyes and look again at the daily brutality of the Occupation, and what it does to human beings living only a few miles from our homes, and what it does to ourselves.” ...

“Let’s talk about how we arrest Palestinian children in the middle of the night for throwing stones, terrorizing their families, to avoid exposing our soldiers to the hostile crowds of adults who might attack them if we arrested children in daylight hours. And about the kangaroo courts of our military justice system, in which these children are sentenced to prison terms without any idea of what is going on. And how Israeli settlers, by contrast, enjoy the full protection and due process of Israel’s civil court system.” ...

“Let’s talk about what the contributors to the new book Kingdom of Olives and Ashes: Writers Confront the Occupation – 24 of the most thoughtful, articulate, sensitive, insightful and renowned writers in the world today – have to report about the 50-year-old Occupation, edited by Michael Chabon and Ayelet Waldman, and sponsored by Breaking the Silence (and supported by the Moriah Fund, which I represent).”

“Let’s talk about the moral and psychological damage inflicted on our own soldiers by being forced to police another population, and how the daily abuse of power over men, women, children, the elderly, boomerangs when it is brought back to our own society.” ...

“Let’s talk about how Israel turns Gaza into an open-air prison, how Gazans suffice with three or four hours a day of erratic electricity even in the blistering heat of summer and drenching rains of winter, how Gaza has never recovered from the massive damage and casualties of the last war, how Gazans struggle to live normal lives and celebrate weddings and go to the beach despite living under a repressive theocratic regime which executes its own "citizens" and is accountable to no one.” ...

“Let’s talk about the highly effective regime of control we Jews, despite our moral superiority, have created to keep an entire population off balance and in fear, since that minimizes the potential for another Intifada. About roadblocks that turn ten-minute drives into hours of aggravation and humiliation, about arresting Palestinian soccer stars, and imposing bureaucratic hurdles on Palestinian businesses simply because we feel like it, about the epidemic of drug addiction we do nothing to stop.” ...

“Let’s talk about Palestinian non-violent resistance, from demonstrations to boycotts, and whether that isn’t preferable to lone wolf terrorist attacks, full scale Intifadas or border wars with Gaza?” ...

“Let’s talk about the Occupation.” ...

“No, let’s talk about anything but the Occupation.”

**4) [How Israel’s 10-Year Blockade Brought Gaza to the Brink of Collapse](#) Tareq Baconi, The Nation, July 7, 2017**

“The stories read like dispatches from a nightmare, describing a reality that is almost too extreme to fathom: nearly 2 million people locked inside a land mass the size of Philadelphia, the borders carefully controlled, the movement of goods and humans severely restricted; as much as 72 percent of the population facing food insecurity and 41 percent struggling with unemployment; hospitals forced to rely on generators for life-saving equipment, while supplies of life-saving medicines dwindle to dangerous levels; and looming in the not-far-off distance, as water treatment and desalination plants stop working, the risk that drinking water will run out.” ...

“Mostly, people offered feelings of desperation and claustrophobia, of absolute incomprehension as to how the world still does not know of the misery in Gaza. Or worse, if the world knows, of why it has forgotten them. In the face of so much misery, the larger context can quickly evaporate, the solutions reduced to emergency food and fuel shipments. Yet viewing Gaza solely as a heart-wrenching humanitarian catastrophe elides the fact that this reality has been carefully engineered. Indeed, three years after the blockade was imposed, it was revealed that the Israeli administration in charge of overseeing the siege considered using caloric measures to weigh how many truckloads of food should be allowed in. The goal was to regulate the import of food down to the exact number of calories needed to avoid starvation, no more.”

“The blockade is premised on the notion that the collective punishment of 2 million Palestinians is permissible, even justified, to reach the political goal, dictated by Israel, of subduing Hamas. Such thinking dehumanizes Palestinians in Gaza: It becomes an unfortunate reality that civilians are terrorized and killed in an effort to break Hamas. It also elides key shifts that have taken place within Hamas itself: Earlier this year, Hamas officially accepted the goal of a Palestinian state alongside Israel and has issued a political document that offers a starting point for engagement.”...

“Viewed in its proper historical context, then, the blockade, the punishment of all of Gaza for Hamas, becomes a piece in a much larger puzzle, part of a long-standing effort to subdue Palestinians in Gaza and isolate them from the West Bank. This allows Israel to continue managing rather than resolving the conflict—to maintain control over the Palestinian territories without having to assume responsibility for 2 million additional Palestinians, something that would threaten its Jewish majority.”...

See also: [Report: ‘Life under siege: Electricity cuts put dialysis patients at risk’](#)

**Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) July 14, 2017 [\[Bulletin\] US Debates Palestinian Aid](#)**

**Foundation for Middle East Peace (FMEP) July 17, 2017 [No ‘Status Quo’ in Jerusalem, Yet; Gaza’s Electricity Crisis Continues](#)**

**Excellent sources for information and links to articles concerning the State of Israel and the Palestinian people are:**

CMEP Bulletins (Churches for Middle East Peace) [www.cmep.org](http://www.cmep.org)

FMEP (Foundation for Middle East Peace) <http://info@fmep.org/>

Americans for Peace Now - News Nosh: <http://peacenow.org/>

Jewish Voice for Peace: <https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/>

+ 972 Magazine: <https://972mag.com/>

Ma’an News Agency: <http://www.maannews.com/>

Haaretz: <http://www.haaretz.com/>

(new additions)

Jews for Justice for Palestinians (JFJFP) <http://jfjfp.com/>

Electric intifada <https://electronicintifada.net/>