

# YOU ARE WAY OFF, MR. GOFF

*Michael Kuttner*

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Phil Goff, recently set out his position concerning the intention of the Palestinian Arab leadership requesting the UN to recognise a Palestinian State with defined borders and his advice to the NZ Government to vote in favour of such a unilateral move. The reported statement is riddled with inaccuracies and omissions.

In the interests of a balanced and informed understanding of the real situation, it is necessary to unravel the myths and expose them to reality.

First and foremost what is glaringly absent is any acknowledgment that since 1948 Israel has on countless occasions offered the Arabs a variety of peace proposals all of which could have resulted in meaningful negotiations and a resolution of the conflict. Instead, every offer made by Israel was rejected and followed by terror, murder and mayhem carried out by those who today purport to loudly declare their desire for peace. It is totally incorrect to assert that negotiations have floundered because of Israeli hard line policies or settlements. If Mr. Goff and indeed the Editors of newspapers knew anything about historical facts, they would realise that between 1948 and 1967 when no settlements existed, the Arab States surrounding Israel, supported, financed and encouraged terrorist groups to carry out daily murderous attacks against Israeli babies & schoolchildren, worshippers and commuters. Their excuse? The occupation, only in this case it was the "occupation" of such settlements as Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jaffa, Safed and of course the half of Jerusalem not illegally occupied by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Today, maps used by the Palestinian Authority and displayed in their schools, on letterheads and banners, shows the proposed Palestinian State as encompassing all of Israel. The settlements have nothing to do with the lack of peace. It is purely a red herring, disguising the real aim – the elimination of Israel as the Jewish State.

Mr. Goff also makes great play about the "humiliations" suffered by the Palestinian Arabs. He does not exactly detail what these "humiliations" are, but one can guess that he is talking about road blocks and the security wall. Of course if he had bothered to delve into the subject a bit deeper, he would have asked himself a simple question. Could there perhaps be a good reason for security checks and a security barrier? Does New Zealand protect its borders and carry out checks on all those wanting to enter? Of course they do and there is a very good reason for it. Bearing in mind that Israel's so called peace partners have and still do have an urge to become martyrs by carrying out terror, it is only sensible that security precautions are taken to prevent this from taking place. Palestinian Arabs are not citizens of Israel. They belong to a foreign entity, aspiring to Statehood, and that is why they do not have free access to Israel. If Mr. Goff is advocating that they do, we must assume he will throw open the borders of New Zealand to all, if he becomes Prime Minister. If there was no terror and the Palestinian Authority and Hamas in Gaza were educating the next generation towards peace and co-existence, there would be no need for a barrier or roadblocks. Israelis by the way also have to go through road block checks and also security checks at the entrance to malls, shops, restaurants and even hospitals. Do we feel humiliated? No, we feel frustrated that those who spout peace at the UN and actually preach hatred and delegitimisation to their population make this necessary.

Mr. Goff has also arrived at the brilliant conclusion that as Israel is no longer the "underdog" and therefore by implication is the oppressor and the guilty party, any sympathy and support which perhaps was warranted in the past, is no longer desirable. In his opinion therefore, New Zealand should now be supporting the so called "victims". Well, here are a few facts which seem to have escaped him. Israel with a population of over 7 million (including 1.5 million Arabs with full citizenship) is surrounded by a hostile Arab world of many millions more, spread over a vast territory. The majority of these Arab/Moslem States do not recognize the right of the Jewish State to exist. Not only that, but many of them (Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia & Iran) are in a declared state of war with Israel. Israel, a member of the UN is vilified and not recognized by a large number of fellow UN members. Even worse, at least one of them (Iran) not only

threatens to wipe the Jewish State off the face of the map via nuclear weapons, but also denies the historical truth of the Holocaust. When these countries, supported by other morally bankrupt regimes, stand and applaud Mr. Abbas and the tyrant of Tehran at the General Assembly, who do you think is the underdog? What other country faces daily rocket attacks on its civilians and lives under the threat of genocide?

Another thing to blame Israel with, according to Mr. Goff, is the economic misery he witnessed. Obviously he was not shown the luxurious villas built in the "West Bank", the modern malls and other manifestations of progress evident in cities under the control of the Palestinian Authority. One has to wonder why he has not asked a simple question: where has all the millions of international aid gone? Why has it not been used to improve the living conditions of the deprived, resettle the refugees, build hospitals and instead why has all this money been diverted to the smuggling of weapons and the campaign to eliminate Israel? Does he not realise that there are also economically deprived Israelis who struggle to make ends meet and put a roof over their heads?

There are many other misinformed myths which have been trotted out, not only by politicians but also by Editors and those in the media. Their breathtaking ignorance of past international agreements starting with San Remo in 1922, the legal and historical rights of the Jewish People to a country with borders which have nothing to do with 1949 armistice lines, mythical green lines and settlements, the daily stream of hate and deligitimisation which takes place in order to erase the Jewish connection to the Land of Israel, the lack of tolerance of other Faiths, is a symptom of current political and media bias. Whether this is intentional or merely a product of deficient knowledge, the fact remains that it continues to contribute to the perpetuation of the problem. No amount of resolutions, political hot air or editorials will help. Only when the Palestinian Arabs are persuaded to invest in genuine peace, dialogue and recognition of Jewish rights, will swords be turned into ploughshares.

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