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The Tragedy of the West Bank, 1988.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE WEST BANK DANIEL JEREMY SILVER MAY 1, 1988

ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1987 AN ISRAELI TRUCK DRIVER LOST CONTROL OF HIS VEHICLE AND KILLED FOUR CITIZENS OF GAZA. RUMORS SPREAD QUICKLY THAT THIS WAS AN ACT OF PREMEDITATED REVENGE FOR THE KILLING OF AN ISRAELI SETTLER IN GAZA THE DAY BEFORE. YOUTHS TOOK TO THE STREETS. STONES WERE HURLED. BARRICADES WERE QUICKLY ERECTED TO STOP TRAFFIC. TIRES WERE BURNED. IT SEEMED FOR AWHILE JUST ANOTHER OF THE PERIODIC INCIDENTS WHICH HAVE DISRUPTED AND DISTURBED ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION OF GAZA AND THE WEST BANK SINCE 1967, BUT THE HOSTILITIES SPREAD QUICKLY AND FOR FIVE MONTHS HAVE SHOWN FEW SIGNS OF ABATING. OVER THESE MONTHS YOUNGSTERS HAVE FILLED THE STREETS OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA, HURLING STONES, BUILDING BARRICADES, TAKING PART IN WHAT THEY NOW CALL THEIR INTIFADE, OR THE AWAKENING.

ISRAEL WAS NOT PREPARED FOR THIS KIND OF CONTINUING

DEMONSTRATION. THEY LACKED ENOUGH TROOPS TRAINED IN CROWD

CONTROL. THEY SEEMED TO HAVE HAD NO DEVELOPED PLAN TO DEAL

WITH THIS KIND OF ACTIVITY. DEFENSE SECRETARY YITZHAK RABIN

WAS OUT OF THE COUNTRY WHEN THE DEMONSTRATIONS BEGAN. IT

TOOK HIM A FULL WEEK TO UNDERSTAND THE SEVERITY, TO RECOGNIZE

THAT HE FACED A MASSIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE SOCIAL ORDER WHICH

REQUIRED HIS GOING HOME. WHEN HE GOT BACK TO ISRAEL RABIN

ORDERED BEATINGS, TEAR GAS, RUBBER BULLETS, MASSIVE INCARCERATIONS,

A FEW DEPORTATIONS COMBINED WITH SEVERE ECONOMIC AND

ADMINISTRATIVE RESTRICTIONS.

THE ISRAELIS HAVE RESUMED THEIR PRACTICE OF PUNISHING TROUBLEMAKERS BY SEALING UP OR DEMOLISHING THEIR HOMES, A TECHNIQUE WHICH THE BRITISH USED WITH EFFECTIVENESS IN SUPPRESSING THE PALESTINE REVOLT AT ITS PEAK HALF A CENTURY AGO, BUT NONE OF THESE REPRESSIVE MEASURES SEEMED TO WORK. THE DEMOSNTRATIONS CONTINUED.

BY THIS WEEK 170 ARABS HAVE BEEN KILLED AND SEVERAL ISRAELIS, INCLUDING A 14-YEAR OLD GIRL WHO WAS OUT ON A TIYYUL WITH A GROUP OF SCHOOL CHUMS. THE GROUP WAS GUARDED BY 2 ISRAELIS, AT FIRST SHE WAS PRESUMED TO HAVE BEEN KILLED BY THE ARABS, BUT IT TURNED OUT THAT SHE HAD BEEN WOUNDED BY A STRAY BULLET FROM ONE OF THE GUNS OF THE ISRAELI GUARDS, A MAN WHO BY THE WAY HAD NO RIGHT UNDER ISRAELI LAW TO BE ON THE WEST BANK. HE HAD BEEN BARRED FROM THE TERRITORY BECAUSE OF SERIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES.

FORTUNATELY, THE ISRAELI ARMY QUICKLY REVEALED THE RESULTS
OF AN AUTOPSY, AND A POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE SITUATION WAS DIFFUSED,
BUT ISRAEL, IN ANY CASE, SET OUT TO PUNISH THE VILLAGE BEITA
FROM WHICH THESE YOUNGSTERS HAD COME. THE ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES
DYNAMITED SEVERAL HOMES OF RING LEADERS AND DEPORTED 6 OF THEM.

THE RESULT OF FIVE MONTHS OF BEATING AND DEMONSTRATIONS HAS BEEN A MASSIVE BLOT ON THE IMAGE OF ISRAEL. DURING THESE MONTHS THERE'S HARDLY BEEN A NEWSPAPER EDITION WHICH HAS NOT FEATURED A LARGE PHOTOGRAPH OF SOME ISRAELI SOLDIERS MANHANDLING ARAB YOUTH OR OF AN ARAB WOMAN BEWAILING THE DEAD.

THERE HAS BEEN SATURATION COVERAGE FROM THE 700 REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS WHO WERE LOOKING FOR A FEATURE STORY EVERY DAY.

ACCORDING TO A WELL-KNOWN MEDIA ANALYSIS FIRM, ADT RESEARCH IN NEW YORK, ABC'S WORLD NEWS TONIGHT DURING FEBRUARY GAVE 67 MINUTES OF ITS PRIME TIME TO THE UPRISING IN GAZA AND THE WEST BANK. A DISTANT SECOND WAS THE 21 MINUTES OF COVERAGE FOR THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE PLAN AND SANDANISTA AND CONTRA ACTIVITIES. NBC NIGHTLY NEWS ALLOWED FIFTY MINUTES FOR THE UPRISING AND TWENTY-THREE MINUTES TO THE COVERAGE OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE PLAN WHICH PLACED SECOND IN THE AMOUNT OF TIME GIVEN OVER TO A PARTICULAR ITEM.

CBS EVENING NEWS GAVE THE CLASH BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS AND THE PALESTINIANS 48 MINUTES AND THE BUSH-DAN RATHER AFFAIR AND THE QUESTION OF THE VICE PRESIDENT'S ROLE IN THE IRAN CONTRA AFFAIR 33 MINUTES. IN OTHER WORDS, 165 MINUTES, 23 PERCENT OF THE PRIME TIME ALLOCATED TO MAJOR NEWS STORIES WENT TO THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

I AM CONVINCED THAT ALL THIS PUBLICITY CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONTINUATION OF THE UPRISING. THE OLDER LEADERS WHO TOOK OVER FROM THE YOUTH DIRECTION OF THE RIOTS AFTER THE FIRST FEW DAYS RECOGNIZED THE ADVANTAGE TO THE ARAB POSITION WHICH ACCRUES FROM SUCH MEDIA COVERAGE. I DO NOT FAULT THE MEDIA FROM COVERING THESE EVENTS. IT IS A NEWS STORY. THESE EVENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE. THERE HAS BEEN VIOLENCE. THE AWAKENING,

THE INTIFADE, IS A STORY THAT SHOULD BE COVERED. NO OCCUPATION IS A PRETTY SIGHT. I REMEMBER MY FEELINGS IN THE SUMMER OF 1967 WHEN A WEEK AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE '67 WAR I DROVE WITH A FRIEND THROUGH THE WEST BANK AND SAW HUNDREDS OF WHITE SHEETS DRAPED AT THE TOP OF ARAB HOUSES. NO ONE IN THIS WORLD SHOULD HAVE TO ADMIT IMPOTENCE, BUT YOU WOULD AT LEAST EXPECT THE BETTER PAPERS TO KEEP SOME BALANCE TO THE COVERAGE AND THAT THEY WOULD AT LEAST PROVIDE VIEWERS WITH SOME BACKGROUND, REMIND THEIR READERS AND LISTENERS THAT IT IS THE ARABS, NOT ISRAEL, WHO ARE RIOTING, THAT IT IS ANY GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENFORCE LAW AND ORDER IN ITS TERRITORY, AND REMIND THE WORLD THAT THE ARABS COULD HAVE HAD A PALESTINIAN STATE IN 1947 HAD THEY ACCEPTED PARTITION. AGAIN IN 1967 THEY MIGHT HAVE RETAINED THE STATE THAT JORDAN OCCUPIED IN 1947-48 HAD NOT KING HUSSEIN TURNED A DEAF EAR TO ISRAEL'S SUGGESTIONS NOT TO ENGAGE HIMSELF IN THE SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN STRUGGLE AGAINST ISRAEL.

THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA IS NOT THE RESULT OF ANY TERRITORIAL DESIGN BUT A RESPONSE TO A DIRECT ATTACK ON ISRAEL. JORDAN WAS ONE OF THE STATES THAT ATTACKED ISRAEL IN 1967. ISRAEL NECESSARILY RESPONDED, AND JORDAN WAS NOT ABLE TO SUSTAIN MILITARY CONTROL OVER THE FERRITORIES SHE HAD OCCUPIED IN THE 1947-48 WARS. PEOPLE FORGOT THAT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE 1967 CONFLICT PRIME MINISTER LEVY LASHKOL OFFERED TO NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH JORDAN AND THE WEST BANK ARABS ON ANY AND ALL OUTSTANDING DIFFERENCES. THE ARABS TURNED A DEAF EAR AS THEY HAVE TURNED TO EVERY OFFER OF A SIMILAR NATURE BY THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT OVER THE LAST TWENTY YEARS.

ONE OF THE REASONS THAT ISRAELIS WERE SURPRISED BY THE DURATION AND EXTENT OF THE UPRISING IS THAT AS AN OCCUPATION ISRAEL'S OCCUPATION OF THE WEST BANK HAS BEEN A RELATIVELY ENLIGHTENED ONE. THE ARAB STANDARD OF LIVING HAS RISEN. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS HAVE BEEN INCREASED. MONEY HAS BEEN SPENT BY ISRAEL TO INCREASE THE AMENITIES OF LIFE: ELEMENTARY EDUCATION FACILITIES, SEWAGE SYSTEMS, UNIVERSITY EDUCATION, HIGHWAYS AND THE LIKE. THE ARABS IN THE WEST BANK ARE BETTER OFF TODAY THAN AT ANY TIME IN THE PAST.

STILL, NO OCCUPATION IS A PRETTY SIGHT. THERE ARE CURFEWS AND RESTRICTIONS OF ALL KINDS AND MANY CAUSES FOR DISGRUNTLEMENT. IN RECENT WEEKS THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF UGLY INCIDENTS SUCH AS THE ATTEMPT BY SOME ISRAELI SOLDIERS TO BURY ALIVE A FEW PALESTINIAN YOUTHS, SUCH INCIDENTS MAKE FOR UNHAPPY READING, AND ON THE WEST BANK ISSUE THERE IS EVIDENCE OF A STRONG SENSE OF DISAPPROVAL - A GROWING SENSE OF EMOTIONAL DISTANCE FROM ISRAEL. THIS DISTANCE HAS BEEN GROWING OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS EVER SINCE THE INVASION OF LEBANON, THE ATTACKS BY THE LEBANESE ARMY ON THE REFUGEE CAMPS OF SABRA AND SHATILLA, THE POLLARD AFFAIR AND THE MACHINATIONS OF THE BLACK HATS TO HAVE If ALL IN ISRAEL THEIR OWN WAY. THERE IS A GROWING SENSE THAT MODERN-DAY ISRAEL IS NOT THE ZION OF JEWISH DREAMS. ALL THIS FRUSTRATION HAS BEEN DIRECTED AT PRIME MINISTER SHAMIR AND THE LIKKUD FOR THEIR ADAMANT REFUSAL TO TAKE PART IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

NOW, WHAT WE JEWS OF THE DIASPORA SAY AND THINK MATTERS LITTLE IN DETERMINING ISRAEL'S POLICY MAKING. THEY, NOT WE, MUST BEAR THE BRUNT OF THEIR DECISIONS. THEY DO NOT HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF RETREATING TO THEIR HOMES AS WE DO. BUT WHAT WE SAY MATTERS A GREAT DEAL IN TERMS OF AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION. THE UNITED STATES, AFTER ALL, MATTERS A GREAT DEAL TO ISRAEL. WE SEND OVER 3-1/2 BILLION DOLLARS A YEAR IN VARIOUS KINDS OF AID. IF AMERICAN JEWISH SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL IS SHATTERED THAT AID CAN BE RADICALLY AND QUICKLY DIMINISHED.

DIASPORA JEWRY HAS BENEFITED IMMENSELY FROM THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL. IT HAS PROVIDED A NEW SENSE OF DIGNITY TO OUR LIVES. IF HAS GIVEN A NEW SENSE OF MEANING TO BEING JEWISH. IT ALLOWED THE JEW TO WALK TALL IN THE CORRIDORS OF THE WORLD. BUT NOW, WHEN THINGS ARE NOT GOING QUITE RIGHT, THE SUMMER SOLDIERS AND THE SUNSHINE PATRIOTS AMONG US WITHDRAW THEIR ACTIVE SUPPORT FROM ISRAEL AND EVIDENCED IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS AND SOMETIMES IN PUBLIC REFLECT A GOOD DEAL OF DISCONFENT WITH THAT COUNTRY.

IS THIS DISCONTENT MERITED?

ISRAEL HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO PUT DOWN THIS REVOLT BY FORCE. ISRAEL REMAINS UNDER THE GUN. IT REMAINS A HEAVILY ARMED SOCIETY NOT BECAUSE SHE HAS ANY PRETENSIONS AGAINST HER NEIGHBORS BUT BECAUSE THEY HAVE AMBITIONS WHICH CAN BE SATISFIED ONLY AT ISRAEL'S EXPENSE.

THERE IS A RISING DEMAND IN BOTH ISRAEL AND OUT THAT PRIME MINISTER SHAMIR AND THE LIKKUD WHO ARE THE SENIOR PARTNERS AT THIS TIME IN THE COALITION GOVERNMENT CHANGE THEIR ADAMANT OPPOSITION TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. MANY OUTSIDE OF ISRAEL HAVE A SIMPLE ANSWER, LAND FOR PEACE.

WHAT THE WORLD SEEMS TO EXPECT IS A CONFERENCE WHICH WILL ACHIEVE PEACE, BUT HOW THIS COULD HAPPEN IS NOT CLEAR. THERE IS THE MUCH BANDIED-ABOUT PHRASE, LAND FOR PEACE, THE ARABS PRESUMABLY ACKNOWLEDGING AND GUARANTEEING ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST, ISRAEL RETURNING THE WEST BANK AND GAZA TO ARAB SOVEREIGNTY. THIS SO-CALLED SOLUTION HAS SUPERFICIAL APPEAL. IT SEEMS DO-ABLE, BUT IS IT? WHAT TERRITORIES ARE INDICATED WHEN ARABS SPEAK OF REGAINING PALESTINE? THE WEST BANK AND GAZA? EAST JERUSALEM? ALL OF JERUSALEM? ALL OF ISRAEL? THE RIOTERS HAVE ISSUED NO-POLICY STATEMENTS. WHEN INTERVIEWED THEY HAVE SPOKEN SIMPLY OF RIDDING THE AREA OF JEWS. THE MODEL IS THE CRUSADES. AFTER A NUMBER OF YEARS THE CRUSADERS ADMITTED DEFEAT, PACKED UP THEIR SWORDS, AND WENT HOME.

WILL IN FACT THE RETURN OF GAZA AND PARTS OF THE WEST BANK MOLIFY THE ARABS? ISRAEL IS NOT GOING TO PERMIT JERUSALEM TO BE REDIVIDED AND WILL INSIST THAT IT REMAIN ITS CAPITAL AND THAT STRATEGIC MILITARY SETTLEMENTS REMAIN IN THE WEST BANK AS A FORWARD WARNING SYSTEM AGAINST POSSIBLE ATTACK. TO ACHIEVE THIS DESIRED RESULT ANY PALESTINIAN STATE WHICH RESULTS FROM ANY NEGOTIATION MUST BE PERMANENTLY DEMILITARIZED.

WILL THIS SATISFY PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP? IT MAY IF THE BARGAINERS REPRESENT THE LAND AND MERCHANT CLASSES OF THE WEST BANK WHO WILL THINK MORE OF TRADE THAN OF WAR, BUT THERE'S NO GUARANTEE THAT THESE PEOPLE WILL HAVE ANY MAJOR SAY IN ANY NEGOTIATIONS.

THEN, TOO, WHAT GOVERNMENT CAN OR WILL GUARANTEE THE RESULIS OF NEGOTIATIONS? THE PALESTINIANS ARE AT PRESENT A PEOPLE WITHOUT A GOVERNMENT. THE PLO HAS PRETENSIONS IN THIS DIRECTION BUT IS CLEARLY MORE INTERESTED IN THE LARGER ARAB REVOLUTIONS THAN IN THE PROBLEMS OF PALESTINE. IN THE LAST MONTH YASSAR ARAFAT HAS BEEN IN TUNIS AND NORTH YEMEN, TRYING TO NEGOTIATE THE RELEASE OF THE KUWAITI AIRCRAFT AND ITS PASSENGERS. THE PLO LEADERSHIP IS MORE INTERESTED IN AN ARAB AGENDA HAVING TO DO WITH OIL, HEREDITARY RULERS, AND THE LIKE RATHER THAN WITH PALESTINIAN RIGHTS.

THE INTIFADE FORCED ARABS AND ISRAELIS TO DEAL WITH SOME HARD AND UNWELCOME FACTS. THERE ARE PALESTINIANS. THEY DO HAVE DEMANDS. FOR TOO LONG TOO MANY ISRAELIS AND TOO MANY AMERICAN JEWS HAVE DENIED THE BRUTE FACT THAT THE PALESTINIANS ARE A DANGER TO A JEWISH STATE, NOT TO ITS LEGITIMACY BUT TO ITS SURVIVAL AS A LIBERAL JEWISH STATE.

THE REASONS FOR THIS ARE DEMOGRAPHIC. THE ARABS ARE NOT SO MUCH A MILITARY PROBLEM AS THEY ARE A POPULATION PROBLEM. TWENTY YEARS FROM NOW THERE WILL BE APPROXIMATELY 2 MILLION

PALESTINIANS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY, NEARLY 4-1/2 MILLION IN THE WEST BANK, GAZA AND ISRAEL ITSELF. GIVEN THE WIDE VARIANCE OF BIRTH RATES OF JEW AND ARAB, BY THE YEAR 2020 THE JEWISH AND ARAB POPULATION IN ISRAEL WILL HAVE ATTAINED PARITY, THAT IS IN A LITTLE MORE THAN A SINGLE GENERATION THE NUMBER OF ARABS WILL EQUAL THE NUMBER OF JEWS AND ISRAEL WILL BE FORCED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN AN OPEN AND FREE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM AND ITS JEWISHNESS.

THE FIRST RESPONSE ISRAEL MADE TO THESE DEMONSTRATIONS IS THE ONE THAT SHE HAD TO MAKE, THAT IS TO DO ALL THAT SHE COULD TO RESTORE LAW AND ORDER. HOW ISRAEL GOES ABOUT THIS FASK IS A RESPONSIBILITY ONLY ISRAEL CAN DETERMINE. ISRAEL CANNOF NEGOTIATE WITH A GROUP OF WANDERING AND STORMY YOUTH, 15- OR 16-YEAR OLDS. THE SUPPRESSION OF STREET ATTACKS SEEMS SLOWLY TO BE FAKING HOLD, BUT IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING. THERE IS, AFTER ALL, THE ISSUE OF LAND. TO WHOM DOES IT BELONG?

BY RIGHT OF CONQUEST IT BELONGS TO ISRAEL. BY THE DECISION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN 1947 THE WEST BANK BELONGS TO THE PALESTINIANS WHO PROCEEDED TO FRITTER AWAY THESE RIGHTS BY MAKING WAR AGAINST ISRAEL. IN 1948 IT FELL UNDER JORDANIAN RULE. IN 1967 ISRAEL BECAME THE OCCUPYING POWER. 1948 MAY HAVE DRAINED THE WEST BANK OF ALL JEWS. THEY WERE THERE BEFORE IN HEBRON, BETHLEHEM, NABLUS, AND THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM AND THEY FEEL VERY MUCH THAT THEY CAN BE THERE AGAIN BY RIGHT.

BY RIGHTS OF NECESSITY ISRAEL MUST CLAIM CERTAIN LANDS
IN THE WEST BANK FOR SECURITY PURPOSES. AFTER ALL, THERE ARE
TODAY 70,000 JEWISH SETTLERS IN THE WEST BANK WHO MUST BE
PROTECTED.

THE DEMILITARIZATION OF THE WEST BANK IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY. WEAPONS EXIST WHICH ARE MUCH MORE POWERFUL AND SOPHISTICATED THAN THEY WERE 20 YEARS AGO WHEN ARAB GUNS STOOD WITHIN SHELLING DISTANCE OF TEL AVIV AND NAHARIAH. NOBODY IN ISRAEL WOULD AGREE TO THE DISMEMBERMENT OF JERUSALEM, AND NOBODY IN THE ARAB WORLD WOULD BE SATISFIED WITH A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION WHICH INVOLVES ADVANCED ISRAELI SECURITY POSITIONS IN THE WEST BANK AND A UNITED JERUSALEM UNDER ISRAELI SOVEREIGNTY. A FINAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE WEST BANK IS WAY OFF IN THE FUTURE.

THE MEDIA HAS MADE IT SEEM THAT IT IS ISRAEL WHO STANDS IN THE WAY OF NEGOTIATIONS, BUT THERE IS NO GUARANTEE OF AN ARAB PRESENCE. ARAB GOVERNMENTS HAVE CONSISTENTLY REFUSED. THE INTIFADE GANGS HAVE NOT DEMANDED SUCH A CONFERENCE. THEY ARE SIMPLY GANGS OF ADOLESCENTS FIGHTING AGAINST AN UNWELCOME COLONIAL POWER. WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN INTERVIEWED THEY HAVE TALKED ABOUT DRIVING ISRAEL INTO THE SEA.

EVEN WERE MR. PERES TO BECOME THE PRIME MINISTER IN NOVEMBER—AT THE NEXT ELECTION, HE WOULD BE HARD PUT TO FIND A NEGOTIATING PARTNER. THE GANGS IN THE STREETS ARE THERE. THEY HAVE NOT PROPOSED ANY SET OF DEMANDS. THEY'RE SIMPLY GANGS FIGHTING A COLONIAL POWER. INDEED, THERE IS NO GROUP THAT CAN COME TO THE BARGAINING TABLE. JORDAN HAS CONSISTENTLY REFUSED TO COME. THE PLO'S ARE A DISPARAGED SET OF IDEALOGUES AND PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS TO WHOM EVENTS IN LEBANON, TUNISIA AND SYRIA ARE RATHER MORE IMPORTANT THAN ISRAEL. INDEED, THE PLO IS NO LONGER A MAJOR ACTOR ON THE SCENE AND HASN'T BEEN SINCE ITS BASES WERE CRUSHED IN LEBANON FOUR YEARS AGO. THE PLO, HOWEVER, CAN PLAY A SPOILER'S ROLE. IN THE PAST FEW YEARS WHENEVER A GROUP OF WEST BANK PALESTINIANS SEEM WILLING TO ACCEPT AN ISRAELI CONFERENCE PROPOSAL, THEIR LEADERS WERE ELIMINATED BY PLO GUN MEN.

THE RIOTS GO ON BECAUSE ARABS WILL NOT NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH ISRAEL. THAT IS WHY THERE'S NO VEHICLE AVAILABLE TO GET A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT SAVE AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.

ARABS MAY BE MORE PREDISPOSED TO SUCH A CONFERENCE BECAUSE IT WOULD GIVE THEM A PREPONDERANCE OF SYMPATHETIC NATIONS TO BACK UP THEIR DEMANDS. IT IS ASSUMED THAT PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD BE THE CONVENERS. OF THE FIVE NEITHER CHINA NOR RUSSIA RECOGNIZE ISRAEL, AND EACH HAS A LONG

HISTORY OF ARMING THE ENEMIES OF ISRAEL. INDEED, RUSSIA HAS SENT SOLDIERS AND TECHNICIANS TO HELP THE ENEMIES OF ISRAEL FIGHT IN EACH OF THE 5 WARS THAT SHE HAS FOUGHT. ENGLAND AND FRANCE ARE POLITICALLY AMBIVALENT BECAUSE OF THEIR CONCERN FOR THEIR INVESTMENTS IN THE ARAB WORLD. THIS LEAVES ONLY THE UNITED STATES AS A POSSIBLE DEPENDABLE FRIEND. AMERICA IS A FRIEND, BUT AMERICA, TOO, HAS A SET OF NATIONAL INTERESTS WHICH MAY NOT IN ALL MATTERS CORRESPOND WITH ISRAEL'S. WE HAVE ONLY TO LOOK AT THE PRESSURES THE UNITED STATES IS EXERTING TODAY IN ISRAEL IN THE MATTER OF FORCING SHAMIR TO COME TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.

RECOGNIZING THE ADAMANT REFUSAL OF THE ARAB COUNTRIES TO MEET AND NEGOTIATE, GEORGE SCHULTZ HAS TRIED TO CRAFT DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE WHICH WILL MAKE IT SEEM AS IF THE CONVENING POWERS OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WOULD HAVE NO AGENDA EXCEPT THAT OF DEVISING A WAY OF BRINGING THE PALESTINIANS AND THE JEWS TO A TABLE. BUT IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE A CONFERENCE WITH THE GREAT POWERS INVOLVED WHICH LIMITS ITSELF TO THAT NARROW AN AGENDA.

THE UNITED STATES, AFTER ALL, CAN IMPOSE ON ISRAEL AND HAS DONE SO BEFORE. REMEMBER WHEN JOHN FOSTER DULLES ORDERED ISRAELI TROOPS OUT OF EGYPT ACROSS THE SINAI IN THE 1954 WAR? PRESIDENT NIXON AND HENRY KISSINGER WITHHELD ARMS DELIVERY TO ISRAEL FOR SEVERAL DAYS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE '72 WAR, A FACT WHICH ALMOST LED TO ISRAEL'S DEFEAT IN THAT WAR.

THE DEMAND FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE REPRESENTS AS MUCH A DEMAND BY THESE MAJOR POWERS TO PROTECT THEIR INVESTMENTS AND ENHANCE THEIR NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS TO REPRESENT A SINCERE WILLINGNESS TO HELP IN THE NEGOTIATIONS OF AN ARAB-ISRAEL PEACE.

IT'S A SAD SITUATION. THE RIOTS SIGNAL THAT MANY PALESTINIANS REFUSE TO WAIT ANY LONGER, AND IT'S ALMOST AN AXIOM OF MODERN POLITICS THAT AROUSED NATIONALISM CAN NEITHER BE REPRESSED NOR HELD BACK. FOR THE PALESTINIAN THERE IS A DRIVE FOR RIGHTS, FOR THE ISRAELI A DRIVE FOR SECURITY. FOR AMERICANS FORCED TO WATCH THE NIGHTLY SPECTACLE ON TELEVISION THERE SEEMS TO BE A SIMPLE SOLUTION, LAND FOR PEACE, AND AS ISRAEL IS THE STRONGER, AMERICANS BELIEVE SHE MUST ACT FIRST AND DO SOMETHING TO BREAK THE IMPASSE. ISRAELIS ARE WAITING FOR A NEGOTIATING PARTNER WHO WILL RECOGNIZE THEIR EXISTENCE.

ISRAEL WOULD SEEM TO HAVE 3 BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ANY NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. 1) THERE MUST BE A STRONG ARAB NEBOTIATING PARTNER, 2) THAT PARTNER MUST OFFER RECOGNITION AND PEACE AND BE WILLING TO SAY THAT WHATEVER SETTLEMENT IS REACHED MARKS THE END OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI WAR, 3) THAT THE ARAB PARTNERS IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS MUST BE WILLING TO TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONTROL OF THEIR TERRITORIES - AND THE PALESTINIAN STATE IS NOT TO ACT AS A COVER FOR ANY PARTY THAT REJECTS ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE AND SEEKS TO CONTROL THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AS A FIRST STEP IN THE DISMEMBERMENT OF ISRAEL.

IF ISRAEL IS TO GIVE UP TERRITORY IT MUST GET SOMETHING IN RETURN. WHAT IT MUST GET IS PEACE, A SOLID PEACE, AND THAT PEACE MUST BE SECURE.

WE HEAR HORROR STORIES ABOUT THE JEWISH REACTION TO
THE INTIFADA DEMONSTRATIONS. SOME OF THEM ARE TRUE. MEIR
KAHANE HAS CALLED UPON ISRAEL TO EXPEL ALL ARABS FROM THE
COUNTRY AS A SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM. HE IS NOT ALONE. A
FEW MONTHS AGO THE MINISTER OF HEALTH, JOSEPH SHAPIRO, PROPOSED
THAT PALESTINIANS BE ENCOURAGED BY BRIBE TO EMIGRATE.
MICHAEL DEKAL, DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE, SPOKE OF THE FORCED
TRANSFER OF POPULATION FROM THE WEST BANK TO THE EAST BANK
MUCH AS TOOK PLACE AT THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR.
POPULATION TRANSFER IS OBVIOUSLY ONE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM,
BUT IT IS NOT ONE THAT THE PALESTINIANS OR ANY RIGHT-MINDED PERSON
WOULD ACCEPT. AN ISRAELI SOCIETY GENERALLY WILL NOT ACCEPT SUCH
A PROGRAM OF POLITICAL DEPRAVITY.

YET, THERE HAS BEEN A RISE IN SUPPORT FOR TAHIYA, THE PARTY OF THE JEWISH RIGHTISTS, AND FOR KACH, MEIR KAHANE'S SMALL RACIST PARTY OF THE EXTREME RIGHT.

IN POLITICS FOR EVERY ACTION THERE IS AN EQUAL AND OPPOSITE REACTION. THERE IS SHALOM ACHAV, PEACE NOW. THIS GROUP BECAME IN RECENT YEARS A MAJOR FORCE FOR SUPPORTING SUCH ACTIONS AS ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWAL FROM SINAI, OPPOSITION TO THE INVASION OF THE LEBANON, AND THEY NOW DEMAND THAT ISRAEL TAKE THE BULL BY THE HORN AND BARGAIN IN GOOD FAITH. SINCE THE

INTIFADE BEGAN SHALOM ACHAV HAS MOUNTED SIX NATIONAL DEMONSTRATIONS, EACH OF WHICH DREW THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE. FORTUNAFELY, THIS IS NOT A DATI VERSUS LO DATI ISSUE, RELIGIOUS VERSUS NON-RELIGIOUS. THERE IS ON THE LEFT OZ V'SHALOM, COURAGE AND STRENGTH, A GROUP OF ORTHODOX RELIGIOUS DOVES WHO EMPHASIZE PEACE AND WHO STUDY TRADITIONAL PEACE, ENCOURAGING FEXTS IN OPPOSITION TO THE MORE MILITANT AND NATIONALIST TEXTS CHOSEN BY OTHER ORTHODOX GROUPS. STILL, I WOULD EXPECT THAT PRESIDENT SHAMIR HAS MORE SUPPORT IN ISRAEL TODAY THAN DOES FOREIGN MINISTER SHIMON PERES.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT ITS CITIZENRY IS ABOUT FVENLY DIVIDED ON MATTERS WHICH AFFECT ISRAEL'S SURVIVAL. THERE IS IN ISRAEL TODAY A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY PRECISELY BECAUSE THERE IS, AT THIS MOMENT, NO NATIONAL UNITY. THE POPULATION TRANSFER IS OBVIOUSLY ONE POSSIBLE SOLUTION, BUT IT IS OBVIOUSLY ONE THAT PALESTINIANS WOULD NOT ACCEPT OR, FOR THAT MATTER, MOST ISRAELIS.

IS THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE THEN THE ANSWER? THERE ARE INNUMERABLE PROBLEMS IN CONVENINE SUCH A CONFERENCE AND THE QUESTION REMAINS, IS IT WORTH IT. WOULD AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PROMOTE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST? I BELIEVE THAT IN MANY WAYS IT IS AN INVITATION TO FAILURE. GEORGE SCHULTZ HAS INSISTED THAT IT IS INTENDED TO BE ONLY A CONVENING CONFERENCE. THE ACTUAL BARGAINING WILL TAKE PLACE FACE TO FACE BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND ARABS. IT IS CLEAR THAT SUCH A CONFERENCE

WILL HAVE A MORE IMPORTANT FOCUS. IT WILL BE A WAY FOR THE WORLD TO TELL ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM. YOU CAN BE SURE THAT ISRAEL WILL GET THE SHORT END OF THE STICK. ISRAEL IS, AFTER ALL, MORE SUBJECT TO INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T HAVE OIL, SHE DOESN'T HAVE A LARGE LAND MASS OR A GREAT NUMBER OF PEOPLE. AS THE UNITED NATIONS DEBATE OVER THE LAST 40 YEARS HAS SHOWN, IN THE WORLD OF POLITICS IT'S OIL AND WEALTH THAT COUNTS. IN THE WORLD OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS ISRAEL HAS FEW DEPENDABLE FRIENDS.

THERE IS NO SIMPLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM ISRAELIS HAVE NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES TO FACE. THE ARABS HAVE DEMANDS BASED ON NATIONALISM. AS LONG AS THE PALESTINIANS BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE TERRITORIES INSIST THAT THE CHOICE IS BETWEEN TWO NATIONALISMS, THEN ISRAEL MUST INSIST THAT HISTORY MUST CHOOSE JEWISH NATIONALISM. IF SUCH A CHOICE MUST BE MADE, ALL NEGOTIATIONS WILL FAIL.

IF A LAND FOR PEACE NEGOTIATION IS CONVENED THERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF DANGERS IN IT FOR ISRAEL. THERE IS THE DANGER THAT PALESTINE WILL HAVE AN UNSTABLE GOVERNMENT AND THAT A NEW, MORE RADICAL GOVERNMENT WILL COME INTO POWER AND RENOUNCE ITS PREDECESSOR'S AGREEMENTS. AFTER THE AGREEMENT IS SIGNED AND ISRAELI TROOPS HAVE WITHDRAWN, THE WEST BANK GOVERNMENT COULD BE QUICKLY DISPOSED OF BY THE PLO OR SOME OTHER RADICAL GROUP AND REPLACED BY ONE WHICH RENOUNCES ALL ACCORDS WHICH HAVE BEEN REACHED.

THERE IS THE DANGER THAT ISRAEL WILL THEN HAVE TO FIGHT AGAINST A MUCH CLOSER AND WELL-ARMED ENEMY. IF ISRAEL IS FORCED TO CHOOSE PREMATURELY BETWEEN THE TWO APPROACHES THEN SHE WILL BE FACED WITH A SITUATION WHICH UNLIKE THAT OF CAMP DAVID FORCES HER TO NEGOTIATE WITH SOMETHING LESS THAN A SOVEREIGN STATE.

SECONDLY, ISRAEL WOULD MORTGAGE ITS MILITARY SECURITY FOR THE GOOD WILL AND INDULGENCE OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY. IF THERE IS AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE IN THE WEST BANK THEN ISRAEL HAS LESS DEFENSIBLE BORDERS. ITS SURVIVAL WOULD DEPEND LESS ON ITS OWN STRENGTH AND MORE ON ITS CAPACITY TO PROPITIATE THE MAJOR POWERS OF THE WORLD WHO MIGHT COME TO ITS AID.

THEN, TOO, THERE IS THE DANGER OF CIVIL WAR IN ISRAEL.
THE ISRAELIS ARE ALMOST EQUALLY DIVIDED ON HOW TO DEAL WITH THE
TERRITORIES. SOME JEWS ARE FANATICS. JEWS SHOOTING AT JEWS
HAS NOT HAPPENED FOR 40 YEARS, BUT IT DID HAPPEN DURING THE
WARS OF INDEPENDENCE. EACH SIDE BELIEVES THE OTHER IS
THREATENING ISRAEL'S VERY EXISTENCE WITH ITS POLITICS.

FROM ANY POINT OF VIEW A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE AND EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN. ISRAEL OFFERED IN NOVEMBER TO NEGOTIATE ALL OUTSTANDING ISSUES WITH THE JOINT PALESTINIAN-JORDAN BOARD. THE OFFER WAS TURNED DOWN UNCEREMONIOUSLY.

YET, CLEARLY, SOMETHING MUST BE DONE. THE MAJORITY OF US BELIEVE THAT WORKING OUT AN AGREEMENT WITH THE PALESTINIANS IS TO ISRAEL'S BENEFIT BECAUSE ONLY BY RIDDING ITSELF OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM CAN ISRAEL SAVE ITSELF. YET, IT IS MERE ESCAPISM TO BELIEVE THAT UNILATERAL AUTONOMY, UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL, OR A PLO STATE, ALL OF WHICH HAVE BEEN PROPOSED, WILL RID ISRAEL OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM.

AT PRESENT THE BEST SOLUTION FOR EVERYONE WOULD BE THE JORDANIAN OPTION, BUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THAT HAPPENING, OF HUSSEIN HAVING THE COURAGE TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED, IS SMALL AND DIMINISHING. HE HAS A LONG RECORD OF COPPING OUT. ANOTHER SOLUTION IS FOR TIME TO PASS WHICH WILL ALLOW A NEW GENERATION OF ARAB LEADERS TO RISE WHO HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT ACCOMMODATION FOR ISRAEL IS DESIRABLE AND POSSIBLE. BUT IT MUST BE ADMITTED THAT TODAY THAT KIND OF LEADERSHIP IS UTTERLY LACKING. THE TRAINING WHICH THE PALESTINIANS RECEIVE IN THEIR SCHOOLS AND THEIR HOME AND ON THE STREET MAKES IT UNLIKELY THAT A NEW LEADERSHIP WILL BE MORE ACCOMMODATING.

A WORD TO THOSE WHO SAY, DO SOMETHING, DO ANYTHING,
AND WHO FEEL THAT A SOLUTION MUST BE FORCED UPON ISRAEL.
THESE WOULD RISK ISRAEL'S HISTORY AND FUTURE TO SATISFY THEIR
IMPATIENCE TO RELIEVE THE ANGUISH OF THE MOMENT. TRUE, ISRAEL
MUST DO WHAT IT CAN TO ENCOURAGE THE EMERGENCE OF RESPONSIBLE
PALESTINIAN GROUPS, BUT ALONE ISRAEL DOES NOT HAVE THE POWER
TO CREATE THE KIND OF LEADERS WHO COULD FORM THESE GROUPS. THIS
IS A TASK FOR THE PALESTINIANS THEMSELVES AND WILL TAKE SOME DOING.

WHAT THEN IS THE SOLUTION?

A PHASED PROCESS SUCH AS THE ONE ENVISAGED IN THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS IN WHICH INITIAL AGREEMENTS ON SOME MINOR ISSUES WOULD LEAD TO PROGRESS ON MORE COMPLEX AND DIVISIVE ISSUES. IF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IS CONVENED IT SHOULD HAVE VERY LIMITED AUTHORITY AND VERY LIMITED EXPECTATIONS. IT WILL ALL TAKE TIME, A GREAT DEAL OF TIME. IN THE MEANTIME, LET'S NOT FAULT ISRAEL FOR THE REPRESSIVE MEASURES SHE HAS TO TAKE AGAINST THOSE WANDERING YOUTH GANGS. SHE DOES WHAT SHE DOES BECAUSE SHE HAS A LAW AND ORDER RESPONSIBILITY.

THE ISSUE REMAINS TO GET THE ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS TO SIT DOWN AT A SINGLE TABLE AND THAT WILL TAKE TIME, MUCH TIME.