

The Arabs have abandoned the Palestinians. They should accept any deal they can get

The demonstrations this week along the Gaza border and the attempt by protesters to swarm into Israel under an acrid smokescreen is a gesture of pathetic desperation.

by Conrad Black



The move of the U.S. embassy in Israel to Jerusalem and the American withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear deal have been the subjects of an immense volume of nonsensical comment and hand-wringing. The idea that it is anyone's business apart from Israel and the U.S. where the embassy is located within uncontested Israeli territory is based on the theory that there is some question over whether Israel is going to retain even the section of Jerusalem that it held prior to the 1967 Six Day War, launched and lost by the Arab powers, and the end of which has been formalized between Israel and both Egypt and

Jordan.

The new embassy is in the section of Jerusalem that Israel has held since the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 and objections to this move imply that the right of Israel to exist as a sovereign Jewish state is a matter of some debate. Canada and 34 other countries abstained from voting at the United Nations on a resolution claiming the United States had no right to make this move while a majority of countries voted in favour of the motion. The abstainers cannot have believed the U.S. had no right to move its embassy, only that this was a destabilizing measure for the peace process and the effort to finalize Israel's border and carve a Palestinian state out of largely Israeli-occupied territory. The problem originated in the First World War-era British promise to create a Jewish homeland out of Palestine without compromising the rights of the Arabs who lived there. The territory was occupied by Turkey as it had been for centuries, a country with which Britain was at war.

In fact, the American move should expedite progress in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The principal Arab powers and the post-Shah Iranians have used the existence of Israel, created by the United Nations as a Jewish state, to distract their oppressed masses from the misgovernment they have generally inflicted on them. At any time from the return to government in Israel of Yitzhak Rabin in 1992 until recently, the Palestinians could have had a state consisting of a narrowed West Bank and a thickened Gaza Strip with a secure access road between them, if they had recognized Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state and renounced their spurious demand of the right to inundate Israel with millions of alleged descendants of Palestinian Arabs driven from their homes in the War of Israeli independence in 1948. The right of return, when it comes, will be to Palestine and not Israel, which has not persevered these 70 years to put the fate of the Jews in the splendid country they have built again in the

hands of a genocidally hostile majority.



Supporters of Pakistani religious groups rally to protest the move of the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and on going violence in Gaza, in Karachi, Pakistan, Friday, May 18, 2018. Banner reads "Protection of Al-Quds is our faith." Fareed Khan / ASSOCIATED PRESS

The entire correlation of forces has changed. Turkey, rejected by Europe, has resumed its interest in the Middle East and is impinging on the Arab countries. The Iranian theocracy has set out to be the hegemon between the Persian Gulf, the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, and is stoking up aggressive violence in Syria, Lebanon and Gaza. Iraq and Syria, two of Israel's most virulent enemies, have disintegrated. Egypt's 800-pound gorilla for 80 years, the Muslim Brotherhood, won a free election, violated the constitution, squandered much of its popularity, and was deposed by the army, which has ruled Egypt for all but a year since 1952. The 32-year old Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia is swiftly inducting that formerly feudal and post-nomadic petro-state into the modern world, and in the repulse of Turkish and Iranian intrusions into Arab affairs, the most natural and powerful ally of Egypt and Saudi Arabia is Israel. The cards are shuffled and the Palestinians have fallen out of the deck. Saudi Arabia's reported peace proposal is less generous to the Palestinians than what Israel is already offering.

The demonstrations this week along the Israeli border in Gaza and the attempt by thousands of protesters to swarm into Israel under an acrid smokescreen from burning tires is a gesture of pathetic desperation. The Palestinians never understood that they were just pawns and that their time has passed. They had the world's attention when they were the vanguard of an Arab effort to destroy Israel, and their placation was necessary to keep the peace. Now that the Israelis are assisting the Arabs in expelling Iran and cold-shouldering Turkey, the Palestinians have no sponsor. They

should take what they can get.

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The Iranian nuclear agreement, with the United States, Russia, China, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, was the nadir in misguided Obaman appeasement. It purported to stop Iran's development of fissile material for nuclear military use for a decade, though the verification system was inadequate to accord any security on the point. It did nothing to retard missile and warhead development, and the approximately \$150 billion of sanctions-frozen cash that the agreement deluged upon the ayatollahs in Tehran has been largely squandered in the violence on the Israeli borders, in Syria, and in Yemen. Iran has a restive and irritated population and no reliable allies. Saudi Arabia has hobbled it before by increasing oil production to reduce the price, virtually Iran's only source of hard currency. And this condition is aggravated by Trump-

America's headlong rush to increase oil production (up five million barrels a day under this administration), and cease to be an oil importer (something every U.S. president since Eisenhower threatened to do, but none until now has done anything about it).



In this March 27, 2018 photo, a man watches a TV screen showing file footages of U.S. President Donald Trump, right, South Korean President Moon Jae-in, center, and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, left, during a news program at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea. The most under-appreciated current fact of global affairs is that Donald Trump is the last hope of nuclear non-proliferation. Lee Jin-man / AP

The most under-appreciated current fact of global affairs is that Donald Trump is the last hope of nuclear non-proliferation. The North Korean crisis has seemed until the last few days to be ending because he promised North Korea the choice of a face-saving end of sanctions and rhetorical agitation for a unified Korea, in exchange for a permanent and verifiable renunciation of nuclear weapons in both Koreas (they aren't deployed in the South); or the direct and overpowering intervention of conventional American air power to destroy North Korea's nuclear military program and the artillery that is focused across the frontier on the immense South Korean capital, Seoul. (If the agreement crumbles now, the Americans should go to the military option at once.) The Chinese convincingly delivered the message and the North Korean leader, with American rocketry pointed at his head, seemed to have made the sensible decision.

The British, French and Germans will deliver the same message to Iran, though probably not as convincingly as Chinese president Xi Jinping did to North Korea. Iran is not as far advanced as North Korea in nuclear terms, though it is a stronger but also more divided country. The Americans could carry out the threat, as Israel and Egypt and Saudi Arabia have been urging it to do for a decade, even more easily on

Iran than on North Korea. If North Korea and Iran become nuclear military powers, so will Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and ultimately many other countries. Even regional, hair-trigger cease-fires would be based on massive nuclear retaliation, apart from American talents at anti-missile defence, which are considerable but not leak-proof. No one could have any confidence in such arrangements.

The non-proliferation regime is pledged to the self-disarmament of the nuclear powers, which of course is nonsense and won't happen (or we would all be at the mercy of lunatics like Kim and the ayatollahs). President Trump is the first believable head of a nuclear power to say that he will not tolerate such belligerent regimes arming themselves with nuclear weapons. Canada's government should not have fallen for the Obaman fairy tale that American withdrawal from the Iran agreement was a blow to arms control. It should recognize that no pressure on Iran to forego nuclear weapons can be excessive, and that no pressure that is insufficient to achieve that aim, such as the Obama-designed treaty, is useful.

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