

Could Jerusalem Become an Internationalized City?

Could the implementation of a “two-state solution” create greater conflicts in the region of Palestine? Would such conflicts bring about an intervention from the international community to make Jerusalem an internationalized city?

Nation building is tricky political business and it is not without its cultural and humanitarian pitfalls, and the evidence for this is clearly seen in the European and American geopolitical interventions of the 20th century.

Perhaps nowhere is this more apparent than in the Middle East where in 1947 the United Nations—with strong backing from the United States and Soviet Union—attempted to form two independent states in Palestine.

One for the Palestinian Arabs and one for the Israelis.

However, this particular UN mandate regarding Palestine, commonly referred to as the “two-state solution,” came to an early end as the First Arab-Israeli War broke out in the Middle East, which began soon after Israel declared its independence in May of 1948.

The result, as history shows, was a defeat for the Arab states by early 1949. This led to the armistice that was completed in July of that same year. But not before the Israelis had acquired and occupied more territory than what was initially proposed by the United Nations. (Many Lebanese consider

themselves ethnically Phoenician and not Arab.)

Consequently, the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948 marked the beginning of a refugee crisis for the Arabs of Palestine who eventually found themselves living in lands predominantly controlled by Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt.

Since that time the conflicts have continued between some Arab states and the state of Israel (Medinat Israel). Causing the issue of statehood to remain unresolved for the Palestinian Arabs, which has led to a greater sense of national repression among the displaced Palestinians.

Thus, there is a reasonable lack of confidence that a two-state solution will be implemented for the sake of the Palestinian Arabs.

And the reasons are many.

First, because the two-state solution would certainly require significant financial resources and a prolonged military involvement in the area, particularly in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Second, there are communal issues within the social structure of the Palestinian Arabs, and this casts a shadow over the Palestinian’s ability to self-rule and establish themselves as economically and politically independent in a globally connected world. Third, the long history of political maneuvering and extremist violence in the region is not easily forgiven or forgotten, and fourth, it is not expected that the Israelis or the Palestinian Arabs would

ever abandon their ethnoreligious view of themselves and each other in the context of the promises given to the patriarch Abraham.

So, what then should we expect to see happen in the Middle East if the international community should attempt to actually implement a two-state solution in Palestine?

Proverbially speaking, we should expect to see the international community attempting to take the political dog by the ears, and becoming unable to let go lest there should be greater problems in stepping back from their involvement in the overall Arab-Israeli conflict. Also, we should expect to see further opposition—especially from extremist organizations—to Israel’s supposed “right” to claim a landed inheritance in the region of Palestine based on the promises afforded to the patriarch Abraham. (Opposition to Israel’s statehood can be traced back to the Zionist movement that was founded in 1897 with the publication of Theodore Herzl’s book, *The Jewish State*.)

But more specifically we could well expect to see an abandonment of the two-state solution in favor of making the Palestinian Arabs trustees of the international community, which in some small sense they already are because the Palestinian Arabs as of yet do not have an officially defined and recognized Palestinian state.

Bringing us then to consider the obvious.

That a two-state solution has little hope of solving the problems for the Palestinian Arabs in the foreseeable future, which exposes the insecure political situation that now exists in the Middle East, particularly in the state of Israel.

Also, the status quo cannot long be maintained in the Middle East.

Nor should it.

Otherwise, the conflicts will continue between the Arab states and Israel.

Meaning that the conflicts will eventually reach a breaking point.

Consequently, we should not be surprised to see that in the future there will be a call for greater international participation in the Middle East, and with this participation we could reasonably expect a reinvestigation of the plan to internationalize the city of Jerusalem, which raises the critical and politically explosive issue of who will oversee the areas of Jerusalem deemed sacred to Judaism, Islam and Christianity. 