

## What you need to know about Israel: 10 Points

*This year, through the Messenger, the Israel Action Committee will expound upon its theme Know/Show/Dough/Go in articles written by Beth Sholom members and former members describing their special connections to the Land of Israel and its people. This first article falls under the theme of "Know".*

In a world of slanted reporting and moral relativism, those who support the Jewish State might find cause to question the justification of her policies and of her position in the peace process. Fortunately, the vast majority of Jews—and Americans at large—are very strong supporters of Israel, and all the signs indicate that their support for Israel and her efforts at eradicating terrorism are on the rise. Nevertheless, it is easy to lose sight of the facts, which are so crucial to understanding the pro-Israel perspective.

The purpose of this piece is not to present a means by which peace will be achieved between Israel and the Palestinians, but to provide a theoretical framework that will serve as a starting point from which conjectures could be made about the current situation and about various peace proposals. Therefore, while we agree with all of the following points in theory and in principle, we do not necessarily advocate those which might, by inference, mandate a specific course of action. Indeed, one could agree with the following points and still be either for or against settlements, or for or against Palestinian statehood. Finally, though the following points reflect our views only, it is our hope that they will hopefully prove valuable in informing the decision making of a broad range of individuals.

- **Point 1: Moral authority for the beliefs and actions of the Jewish people and the Jewish State need not be relegated to the international community.** Indeed, it was the recognition of this by the former that ultimately led to the actualization of the latter. The United Nations, for example, has demonstrated itself to be no more worthy of dictating morality than the totalitarian and genocidal regimes that often chair the human rights and security councils of that body. Put simply, this means that we do not need to make excuses for defending ourselves and for what we determine to be our rights.
- **Point 2: Terrorism is caused by political and/or religious ideology *only*—not poverty and not hopelessness.** Prior to the outbreak of the Intifada, the Palestinians had a higher standard of living, had a greater per capita GDP, and enjoyed more civil rights and civil liberties than their brothers and sisters in just about every other Arab country. Further, studies show that suicide bombers are, on average, more educated and wealthier than your average Palestinian Arab. Terrorists, even those who take their own life, act not out of frustration, but out of religious or ideological conviction. If you think otherwise, then explain why our inner-city youth are not blowing themselves up inside of pizza shops.
- **Point 3: There is no cycle of violence.** As one Israeli politician put it, if the Palestinians put down their weapons, there would be no more violence. If the Israelis put down their weapons, there would be no more Israel.
- **Point 4: Judea and Samaria (a.k.a. the “West Bank,” a neologism meant to “de-Judaize” the area) and Gaza are not “occupied”,** because in order have such status they would have to have been legally possessed by another sovereign entity immediately prior to their capture. Neither Egypt, which possessed Gaza from 1948 to 1967, nor Jordan qualify. If the Ottoman Empire were to resurface, it might have a legitimate claim; until then, it will remain ownerless and in dispute.
- **Point 5: The location of the Green Line is arbitrary and has neither historical, nor political nor religious significance.** It represents the armistice line with Jordan, which annexed the territory in 1949, in a move not internationally recognized, and subsequently relinquished its claim in 1967, after it was captured by Israel. There is no legitimate reason for any future Palestinian Arab state to have the Green Line as its border. Based on this premise, Israel has the right to extend its security fence across the Green Line to protect Jews living on legal settlements from terrorism.

- **Point 6: The Right of Return, the claim that all refugees and their descendents have a right to return to their original homes, is code for the destruction of Israel** because it would create an Arab majority. It is inconsistent with a two-state solution, because such a solution mandates that one of those states be Jewish. Further, it denies legitimacy to the equivalent number of Jewish refugees that were expelled from Arab lands in 1948 and subsequently resettled in Israel. Even a symbolic gesture of recognition of this right is untenable because of the financial and other responsibilities that Israel would incur. The Arab world should learn from the Jewish example and take care of its own.
- **Point 7: To say that there are certain places where Jews have no right to exist is anti-Semitic.** What if we said that, if there is to be a two-state solution, one Jewish and one Arab, then all Israeli Arabs, which constitute 20 percent of the Israeli population, should be forcefully removed from the Jewish state to the Arab state? We would probably be dubbed racist extremists. Why then is it okay to say that in order for there to be a two state solution, all Jews in the territories, which constitute about five percent of the population there, must be evacuated to Israel proper? To the extent that doing so is necessary by some perverted definition of justice, it is anti-Semitic and bigoted, and to the extent that doing so is necessary in order to prevent Jews from being murdered, it speaks to the humanity of Arabs.
- **Point 8: Settlements authorized by the Israeli government are legal.** They are built on vacant land that was legally purchased from Arabs, often at prices significantly higher than market value.
- **Point 9: Don't be naïve about the intentions of the Palestinian Arab leadership.** The PLO and Fatah, PLO's largest faction, were founded in order to effectuate "the total liberation of Palestine". Oddly, these groups were founded several years *before* Israel captured Judea, Samaria, and Gaza in the Six Day War, and so the occupation they seek to end is not that which began in 1967, but rather that which began in 1948, with the establishment of the State of Israel. The PLO/PA has a two stage plan to acquire as much land as possible from Israel through negotiations, and then to use such land as a staging ground for the final assault aimed to destroy Israel. Such a plan was established in 1974, upon recognizing that armed conflict, by itself, would not yield the results they desired. See it for yourself on their official website at [www.palestine-un.org/plo/doc\\_one.html](http://www.palestine-un.org/plo/doc_one.html). Finally, we must remember the unambiguous intentions of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which combined rival the influence of the PLO.
- **Point 10: Palestinian statehood, should there be any, will be a means of achieving peace, not of fulfilling any right or obligation.** Palestinian nationalism was invented in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in reaction to Zionism. Previously, Arabs living in what was then called Palestine did not consider themselves to be any different from their brethren spread across the Ottoman empire. Even so, the Palestinians already have a state, Jordan, where they constitute over two thirds of the population. The clincher, however, is that *the world community has no moral or legal obligation to confer statehood upon any people*, especially if doing so would set a dangerous precedent by rewarding terror. Obligations to others exist only when those others lay claim to a right, and sovereignty for any given group that desires it is *not* a right.

Once again, these points are suggested principles, meant to guide decision-making on the various issues surrounding the Arab war against Israel. They are not meant to dictate the proper course of action necessary for peace. One could in fact be supportive of settlements in principle, and still believe that their evacuation is necessary for peace. One could also believe that Palestinians have no right to statehood, but still be willing to confer it in the name of peace.

In order to keep updated on the latest events and developments in Israel and relating to Israel, we recommend going daily to [www.jcpa.org/daily](http://www.jcpa.org/daily), an excellent summary of many sources, which you can also have delivered to your inbox each morning. Another website, [www.israelinsider.com](http://www.israelinsider.com), cuts through the peripheral issues to provide in-depth looks at important topics. To learn more about the history of Israel and the current conflict, visit [www.us-israel.org](http://www.us-israel.org).