

Obstacle to peace

The most serious obstacle to peace appears to be Israel's ongoing settlement drive into occupied territory, which it wants to annex into Israel. However, under International Law the Fourth Geneva Convention forbids occupying powers from colonizing lands seized by military force with their own civilian population and engaging in any policy which makes such a military occupation permanent. Additionally, UN Security Council resolution 446, calls for Israel to withdraw from these illegal settlements. Israel refuses to comply.

This in no way justifies the targeting of Israeli civilians for death strikes. Any calculated action which deliberately violates the Law of Love is unacceptable. Both sides are guilty, and both will equally incur karmic retribution. But what drives young Arab men and women to turn themselves into living bombs? Their actions cannot be totally dismissed as religious fanaticism. Forced from land sanctioned by the UN, this group has been living under Israeli occupation since the 60's, and their cries for self-determination and a Palestinian State have largely come to nought. The actions of these suicide bombers could be interpreted as the desperate actions of people who feel they have no other recourse. Whether all this is correct or not, the fact remains that the world is witnessing a "vicious circle of error and wrong doing, of retribution and revenge" which must be stopped.

Atrocities are being committed on both sides, and although Israel would like to paint itself the victim, the fact is that Palestinian casualties triple those of Israel's. With the weight of military might truly on Israel's side, opposed by stone-throwing Palestinians who now turn their bodies into living weapons, we can see a reverse of the David - Goliath story.

A cynic would say that Israel continues the inflammatory action of razing Palestinian areas, pushing the rightful owners out and replacing them with Jewish settlements, to further incite Palestinian attacks. That Israel wishes to keep the war going, and is prepared to sacrifice its own people thereby skilfully painting itself as the victim, because this provides an opportunity for further "retaliatory" action, and the opportunity to further expand its borders. That a peace agreement with clearly defined borders will not meet this goal.

There is really only one acceptable solution. A State of Palestine, beside the State of Israel, both secure within defined borders, living cooperatively as respectful neighbours, and supported by the nations of the world. The USA and Great Britain governments, have publicly stated that this is their current aim (April 2002). This goal is in direct conflict with the current Israel government's expansionist aims, and with the desire of extremist Arabs to destroy Israel. But it is exactly in line with the goals of moderate Jews and Palestinians who just want a peaceful and secure environment in which to raise their children.

The USA and other nations of the world, need to exert firm pressure on both these sides to force them to comply with international law! Israel's stalling tactics regarding the return of Palestinian territory needs to be seen for the political ploy it is, and pressure exerted to force this process to begin again, and not be side-tracked again! Simultaneously, the UN needs to monitor the situation, take firm steps to protect Israel's citizens, and prevent further illegal incursions by Israel into Palestine territories!