

Where, Then, Shall We Go?

BY ISAAC KOHN

(The year is 2020. The ultra-liberal Ein-Kavod Party has governed Israel since the last elections.)

The General Assembly of the United Nations had never seen such a capacity crowd. Every one of the 191 member states was represented. Thousands of reporters, photographers and cameramen jammed the media gallery. Anticipation rose to a boiling point. The babble of languages created the sound of rushing waves. "Please be seated," the president of the General Assembly, Sir Emyr Jones Parry of England, urged the assembled. Silence engulfed the room.

"Distinguished delegates," Sir Emyr began, "this special meeting of the General Assembly was called in order to hear what I can only describe as the most incredible proposal ever put forth in these hallowed chambers. Please welcome the esteemed prime minister of Israel, Oren Avidan. Without further ado I give the floor to the distinguished Mr. Avidan."

The applause was scattered and light, though this time none of the Arab or Muslim delegates walked out. They sat stone-faced as Avidan walked to the podium. The prime minister took a sip of water and began to speak.

"Distinguished delegates, I am here with a unique plan unanimously accepted by the Knesset, and approved by leaders of the U.S., the EU, and other nations that were consulted.

A soft murmur rose from the news gallery. Avidan continued.

"The implementation of this plan will finally bring about that long-elusive peace we've all been looking for. We tried wars, terror, agreements and disengagements. Plans were devised, suggested, created and discarded. Israel disengaged from Gaza and uprooted twenty-five flourishing, vibrant communities. That, of course, proved too small a gesture.

Isaac Kohn, senior vice president at HealthPoint Acquisitions Inc., writes frequently on Israel-related issues.

"So, as you all know, as a result of U.S. prodding and the relentless wave of terror unleashed on our major cities, Israel implemented three additional phases of disengagement. We uprooted the entire Samaria and Judea territories. The Jordan Valley, the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Ma'aleh Adumim were evacuated. The third phase saw Israel relinquishing control of the entire area captured in the 1948 War of Independence.

"Accepting UN resolution 33217, Israel dismantled and destroyed its Dimona nuclear reactor, surrendered control of the Jordan River, the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. Because of those unilateral moves, Israel is now an area smaller than that allotted her by the UN in its Partition Plan. Yet peace is not here."

Some delegates shifted in their seats; most looked on with anticipation.

Smiling, the prime minister went on:

"For the last nine months, Israel has done a thorough analysis of its detrimental impact on the world. We debated, argued and have come to a solution. Israel has decided that its 72-year experiment in statehood has failed. All it managed to do was antagonize the entire world.

"Therefore, Mr. Secretary General, distinguished delegates and leaders, in Israel's name I thank the UN for giving the survivors of the Holocaust the opportunity to establish a state and govern their own affairs. Looking back, Israel should have been satisfied with the world's generosity and the hospitality of the local Arabs.

"Instead, it pains me to admit, we became belligerent and greedy. In May 1948, almost immediately after we declared a Jewish state in Palestine, the Israeli army added to the territory allotted it under the partition plan by easily besting the rag-tag armies of our neighbors. Adding insult to injury, Ben-Gurion actively encouraged — psychologically as well as militarily — the Arab population to flee, which eventually resulted in the miserable refugee camps.

The time here is too short for me to detail our sins and shortcomings — the unprovoked wars, the demolitions of homes, the violation of other nations' sovereign territory and airspace, as in the 1976 Entebbe incident and the 1983 preemptive aggression against Iraq's nuclear reactor."

At this point a perceptible buzz went through the crowd. Delegates turned to each other in disbelief. Egypt's prime minister turned to the Palestinian president, a broad smile splashed across his face. A loud "Allah akhbar" was heard from the Syrian delegation. "Order please!" a voice boomed from the loudspeaker.

Prime Minister Avidan resumed his address:

"For the last seventy-two years my country has been a thorn in the side of every country in the UN. Even our friends in Washington have grown sick and tired of our intransigence. We ignored or violated every UN resolution designed to put an end to the state of belligerence. Israel's army and security agencies crossed every red line in our pursuit to destroy those we labeled our enemies.

"Distinguished delegates, Israel's experiment as a state has failed. There is no other conclusion. As such, we have notified high level officials in Washington, Europe and right here at the UN of our final and irrevocable decision. To implement it, we need your individual cooperation, and I thank you in advance."

Avidan paused and looked around the hall. "Ladies and Gentlemen, Israel has decided to dismantle itself."

His words were met with stunned silence, followed by a series of muffled gasps and whispers.

"My esteemed colleagues, do not look perplexed. Let me repeat. Israel has decided to dismantle itself. The Knesset will be dissolved, and I will resign my position, as will every cabinet member and government minister. Within the next eighteen months, with the help of our friends in the family of nations, Israel

(Continued on Page 70)

Kohn (continued from Page 7)

will completely cease to exist as a sovereign nation. Every Jew will be allowed to take whatever he or she can carry in a suitcase and leave the country. Within this allotted time period, every Jew will return to his or her country of origin, where he or she can once again set solid roots and...."

A babble of voices ripped the silence. Delegates stood up shouting. "Never! *Niez!* No! *Nein!*" The babble was deafening. The French ambassador to the UN ran to the podium and grabbed the mike from the startled Israeli. Yelling into the mike, his heavily accented voice thundered above the noise.

"No! No! No! We have enough Jews in France! We don't want more Jews to return to our shores. We can't afford to further antagonize our Muslim population. No! Never!"

A state bordering on pandemonium ensued. Delegates stood up, many gesturing wildly. An eardrum-shattering chorus of voices shouting "No!" in every language and dialect shook the room. Hundreds of security personnel, buttressed by dozens of New York City police officers, rushed in to restore order. Twenty minutes later, quiet reigned again. The German chancellor requested permission to speak.

"Dear Mr. Avidan," he began. "We regard you with the utmost respect. What you've done to bring this moment to fruition can never be put into words. The world owes you a tremendous debt. In the name of the German people we thank you and the people of Israel for such a brave move. I'm sure

I speak in the name of every nation represented here when I say that the steps you've outlined today represent a giant step forward in the quest for world peace. We graciously accept your unprecedented gesture and I bow my head at the sacrifice you are making. Israel will never be forgotten for what it was and will forever be remembered for what it has done here, today. We all salute you."

The Arab delegates squirmed uncomfortably in their cushioned bucket seats, as did the French and Russian representatives. They were always wary of the Germans.

"Having said that," the chancellor continued, "we wish to correct, or should I say delete, your last provision — that of every Jew returning to his land of origin. No, Mr. Avidan, speaking for the German people only, we're very sorry but we cannot accommodate that part of your plan.

Hundreds of delegates from all corners of the world nodded their heads in vigorous assent. It was clear the sentiment was virtually unanimous. The Israeli prime minister, ashen-faced, turned to the German chancellor.

"I don't understand. We are the most liberal, dovish party that ever ruled Israel. And we are doing the utmost for world peace. Before the establishment of Israel the world yelled at us to 'Go to Palestine.' Then, when the State of Israel became a reality, you shouted 'Get Out of Palestine.' And now that we are willing to get out of Palestine, where exactly do you suggest the Jews of Israel ought to go? Where, then, shall we go?"

The chancellor said nothing, but a smile, barely perceptible, formed on his lips as he left the podium. ■