

## Clouds Over Annapolis

By David Bedein

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No message to the Palestinian people is more genuine than the one delivered in Arabic language by the official Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation (PBC). Based in the Ramallah headquarters of Palestinian Authority leader Machmud Abbas, and operating under Abbas's direct control and supervision, the PBC might fairly be described as the voice of the Palestinian government.

This past Friday, this reporter recorded the pre-Annapolis sermon that was broadcast on the PBC radio network from the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, and asked an Arabic language expert to translate that sermon. Here is that sermon, in translation. It speaks for itself as a candid public statement of Palestinian Authority policy and intentions:

*"The Annapolis conference will take place next week. The deluded believe that this conference will end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and put an end to the occupation. The astute, who watched the preparations for this conference, knows better... Israel invades Palestinian territory and arrests the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.*

*"Israel has already laid many obstacles in the negotiations prior to the Conference so it can shake off any kind of commitment in the future.*

*"Israel wants to be recognized as a Jewish state. Unfortunately, this request did not receive the appropriate attention from the Arab League and the Islamic Conference Organization. If this request is granted and Israel is recognized as a Jewish state, there will be no withdrawal to 1967 borders, no partition of Jerusalem and no deportation of the Israeli settlers. This is a serious danger to the Palestinian people and it confirms the Balfour Declaration from 1917.*

*"This consolidates with the Zionist ideology and with the Bible that poses Palestine to be the 'promised land,' and the Jews as the chosen nation by God. Israel's request to be recognized as a Jewish state confirms that they are a racist regime and speeds the immigration of Jews from around the world to Israel.*

*"The effects on the Palestinians will be vast, if this request is granted. The 1948 refugees will not be allowed to return to their homes and there will be a revival of the calls to deport the Palestinians from the 1948 Occupied Territories. Jerusalem will become more Jewish, demographically, politically and religiously, with the support of the U.S, which views Jerusalem as the capital of the Israeli state. In addition, the lives of the Palestinians in Jerusalem will become even harder than they already are.*

*"The Conference coincides with American interests. The U.S. military has mobilized its forces in the gulf to threaten Iran and Syria and to continue to create tension as it has already done in Iraq.*

*"The enemies of the Arab nation are mistaken. We do not react to the attempt to turn our holy city Jerusalem to Jewish. There must be an Islamic awakening that will end the nation's dependency and subordination. We call for a unified nation that follows one leadership and*

*obeys the Koran. The conflict is a conflict between religions, but Allah has declared Palestine to be the land of Islam at the beginning of the Al Israe' verse in the Koran. The same verse heralds victory to the Muslims."*

This statement confirms that the Palestinian Authority rejects the very idea of Israel as a Jewish state. Journalist Aaron Klein, the Israel bureau chief of *WorldNetDaily.com*, says that his agency has obtained the document that will provide the basis for the Annapolis conference. Klein reports that, according to the document in his possession, in exchange for Saudi Arabia attending this week's U.S.-sponsored Israeli-Palestinian conference in Annapolis, the Israeli government agreed to recognize the importance of a Saudi-sponsored "peace initiative" in which the Jewish state is called upon to evacuate the strategic Golan Heights, the entire West Bank and eastern sections of Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount.

According to Klein, this document will be presented at the Annapolis Conference, where it will serve as an official outline of a final settlement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The wording is still being negotiated by both sides. However, according to Israeli diplomatic sources, Israel agreed to a Saudi request that the declaration document include references to a Saudi-backed Arab Peace Initiative, first presented in 2002 and reissued earlier this year at a meeting of the Arab League.

While Israel doesn't commit itself to the Arab Initiative's requirements, a clause in the current draft of the Israeli-Palestinian declaration slated for the Annapolis conference and obtained by Klein reads: "We recognize the critical supporting role of Arab and Muslim states and the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative."

In Annapolis, it was disclosed by Israeli government sources that Israel General Security Services Director Yuval Diskin and Director of Military Intelligence Maj. Gen. Amos Yadlin warned the political echelon that the timetable the Americans wish to dictate to the Israelis and the Palestinians -- to reach a final status arrangement within a year -- is dangerous to Israel.

At the Israeli security cabinet meeting that was held prior to the departure of Olmert, Livni and Barak to Annapolis, the two warned, along with Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, that Abu Mazen is weak and not yet ready to implement a peace agreement with Israel, and that his ability to act is close to zero. They recommended to the Israeli political establishment to negotiate over the final status arrangement, but to see this as no more than a "shelf agreement," the implementation of which would be postponed by several years until the Palestinian Authority proves that it is a partner.

Diskin and Yadlin recommended that Israeli leaders "buy as much time as possible" in the implementation of the first stage of the road map, thereby enabling Abbas and his supporters to establish themselves and gain strength. In addition, it was recommended that the government refrain from transferring security responsibility to the Palestinians.

A pre-Annapolis briefing was conducted by the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education,

dedicated to the research of school curricula and textbooks throughout the Middle East. Since its creation in 1998, it has researched school textbooks, teachers' guides and syllabi used by the Palestinian Authority, Israel, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran. The briefing was conducted by the Institute's director, Dr. Yohanan Manor and by the Arabic language expert who translates the schoolbooks, Dr. Arnon Groiss. The context of the briefing was that the PA has now completed its seven-year project of replacing textbooks that had been in use from Jordan and Egypt, in the West Bank and Gaza respectively, with ones they have produced using funding received from 14 nations, including the US.

This briefing constituted an overview of the material, with special emphasis on the new 11th and 12th grade books. All of the PA texts have now been studied and translated by the Institute under the supervision of Dr. Groiss. In all cases, assessment of material is based on 10 criteria established by UNESCO as well as two other factors:

- 1) How is the 'other' perceived?
- 2) Does the education foster peace?

The conclusions, which are posted in great detail on the Institute's [website](#) are that:

\*Jews are represented as foreigners without rights in the land. There are no Jewish holy places. For example, Rachel's Tomb is alluded to as "Bilal bin Rabbah Mosque."

\*Palestinian Arabs are seen as the only legitimate inhabitants of the land, descended from the Canaanites and Jebusites, who are said to be Arabs.

\*When information is taught to Palestinian Arab children about the inhabitants of the land, Jews are excluded.

\*Israel is not taught of as a legitimate state. Israel is presented to a new generation of Palestinian Arab school children as a Zionist, imperialist, western, racist usurper.

\* "Israel" is omitted from all Palestinian political maps. One book did reproduce two Israeli maps. When Israel must be alluded to in the Palestinian Arab classroom, alternative terms are used, such as "pre-1948 lands."

For example:

From Modern History of Palestine, Grade 11, 2006:

"The green line is an imaginary line separating land occupied before 1967 and land occupied after."

\*Palestine is presented as an existing sovereign state, established in 1988.

\*Jews are demonized, seen as a hostile enemy, and as the source of all evils in the Palestinian society, e.g., cause of drug addiction. Twenty-five crimes against the Palestinians are enumerated in the Palestinian class room.

\*Individual Jews are never mentioned, and the humanity of the Jews is lost.

\*The fabricated, anti-Semitic “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” was represented in a text as factual. When representatives of Belgium, which underwrote production of this book, were informed, they protested and a new version of the book, omitting the “Protocols” was published. However, the old version is the only version available in Palestinian Authority bookstores and there is no evidence that the new version is actually in use in the schools.

\*Praise of jihad and martyrdom remains another aspect of the Palestinian curriculum.

\*As an integral part of the Palestinian curriculum, armed groups are celebrated.

Dr. Yohanan Manor provided the following “open letter” to Annapolis conference participants:

#### Open Letter to the Delegations Taking Part in the Annapolis Summit

“The Annapolis Conference brings together Israel and the Palestinians, along with international support, to restart the peace process and place it on the right track toward ending the conflict. As the parties lay the foundations for a final agreement, they must pay special attention to the enormous impact education has on the process, and commit to amending their respective curricula to reflect the spirit of their declarations.

Education reform is not just a key factor for Israel and the Palestinians, but also for the Arab countries that are participating in the Conference as well. As of now, the horrific incitement and xenophobia present in Middle East school textbooks only serves as a stumbling block to the process that prevents the sides from reaching a peaceful end to the conflict.

‘A study of Palestinian textbooks by the Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace (CMIP) reveals the Palestinian Authority is still educating its younger generation with values that dash any prospects of peace with Israel.

‘The Palestinian education system still teaches children the following incendiary lessons in schools: Jews are foreigners and have no rights whatsoever in the land; that Jews have a dubious and even murderous character. Israel is an illegitimate usurper who occupied Palestine in 1948 and is the source of all kinds of evil against Palestinians. No peace with Israel based on reconciliation is ever sought.

‘A violent struggle for liberation is encouraged instead. The exact area to be liberated is never restricted to the West Bank and Gaza alone. Jihad is glorified, militants are held up as role models for kids to emulate and terrorism against Israel is implicitly encouraged. ... There is still no Palestinian program that teaches kids to seek peace, and hatred toward Israel is still part of the official curriculum.

‘Arab countries, some of which are set to participate in the Annapolis conference, teach children from a similar and often even more hostile education syllabus. Even Egypt and

Jordan,  
that signed peace treaties with Israel, display negative attitudes toward Israel in their school textbooks and, despite the treaties, do not advocate peace with Israel.

‘The Israeli curriculum maintains a clear peace advocacy program. Since the middle of the 90's the Israeli textbooks stopped using derogatory language to describe the Arab world or Palestinians. Lessons supporting peace and the compromises involved in its achievement increased consistently over the years until the outbreak of the Second Intifadah, when they reached a plateau and seemingly even some kind of set back, reflecting a deep disenchantment from the peace process.

‘With all this in mind, we urge the delegations taking part in the Annapolis Summit, especially those involved in the Arab-Palestinian-Israeli conflict, to commit to adopting the following peace oriented steps:

- To advocate peace and tolerance in their respective school curricula toward all the parties involved in the conflict.
- To explicitly voice opposition to resorting to war and violence as a means to solving the conflict in their respective school curricula.
- To agree to set up a joint mechanism to monitor their school curricula that will follow the actual implementation of the above.”

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