

A New Road Map for Peace

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We've been reading about the "road map" to peace in the Middle East for many years. Anyone can see it hasn't taken us very far. It's been like trying to get to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco using a map of Lower Manhattan. You can try harder, pray harder, and double your speed. But your efforts only succeed in getting you to the wrong place faster. The fundamental problem has nothing to do with traffic jams, diversions or delays; it has everything to do with using the wrong map.

For over a decade, Israel has navigated tirelessly to achieve peace using the Oslo map, which was built on this premise: Assuage the other side's grievances—end the occupation; give the Palestinians land, armed forces, their own state—and peace will follow. Hence in 1993, Israel brought the PLO out of exile and gave it recognition, international legitimacy, governmental autonomy and authority over 98% of the Palestinian population.

Where has this map brought us? In the past decade, terrorism has increased dramatically. Eleven years ago, Yitzhak Rabin, in his historic speech on the White House lawn, spoke of a future in which mothers no longer wept for sons lost in battle. But the weeping has not ended; it reached a deafening crescendo. Terrorists have killed more Israelis in the eleven years since Oslo began in 1993 than in the 45 years of Israel's existence before that.

Obviously we've been using the wrong map to move us toward peace. Is there an alternative?

Ludwig Wittgenstein once said that his aim as a philosopher was, "To show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle." The fly keeps banging its head against the glass in a vain attempt to get out. The more it tries, the more it fails, until it drops from exhaustion. The one thing it forgets to do is look to the sky. Like the frustrated fly, the one thing Israel has forgotten to do is look to the sky.

If Israelis were to look up, they would see an alternative map to peace, provided by El Al, Israel's renowned airline.

El Al is the gold standard in aviation security. There is a sense of safety and comfort on El Al planes felt by all of its passengers—Jews, Christians and Moslems alike—that one does not feel on any other aircraft. This is an astounding achievement, since El Al is the world's most coveted terrorist target in the sky.

Now, imagine if El Al decided that because it has been despised for decades, it is time to change its policy and methods of security. First, El Al would invite people who in the past wished to hijack and blow up its planes and passengers and give them "autonomy" on one section aboard El Al aircraft. In these sections, former hijackers could move about freely without scrutiny or supervision. Next, El Al would make these "reformed militants" responsible for the security of passengers seated in their area of the aircraft. This overture of peace would certainly demonstrate to the international community that El Al is truly committed to coexistence and liberal values. It would help put an end to the animosity felt by many toward El Al.

Some would propose that El Al show more "flexibility" and relinquish control of the cockpit to the former terrorists. Some would advocate that El Al construct a wall to enclose the

autonomous aisles or to unilaterally withdraw from several seats that are in close proximity to those aisles.

All of these strategies, of course, would be suicidal for El Al. All of them miss the fundamental point. Compromising on security or granting autonomy on a single seat would spell cataclysmic disaster for the entire airline. The life of every passenger, Muslim, Jew and Christian, would be placed in mortal danger. Travelers would before long bid farewell to El Al. That would spell the end of the airline.

The only way for El Al to eradicate terror from its airplanes is not through concessions or autonomy, but rather by destroying any hope the terrorists have of achieving their objectives. El Al has adopted an uncompromising stance against terrorism, and they make no apologies. The world stands in admiration of what El Al has accomplished. The El Al road map goes by the name "peace through strength."

This is the right road map to peace in Israel.

If the last decade of the Oslo process has taught anything, it is that no responsible government can give in to terror. Such behavior does not end terror, but invites it yet more.

The Arab terror war against Israel is no more a territorial conflict than was al Qaeda's strike against America, and it can no more be resolved by the current "road map" than anti-Americanism could be appeased by yielding New Jersey to Osama bin Laden.

Hence, Israel's intent to withdraw from Gaza is profoundly misdirected. The Palestinian goal over the last decade has been to demoralize the Israeli people through terrorism and force a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the territories. If they succeed, the relentless war against Israel will be launched far more advantageously from their newly acquired territory.

At the end of World War II, Winston Churchill quipped, “You can always rely on America to do the right thing, once it has exhausted the alternatives.” Israel, which has far fewer alternatives than the U.S., has long ago exhausted them all. How much more innocent blood needs to be spilled before we abandon the failed maps of the past? How many more children have to be blown up by suicide bombers before we pursue the course El Al has bravely charted?

By Dov Greenberg

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