

MYTHS OF THE MIDDLE EAST-A DIFFERENT ARAB PERSPECTIVE by Joseph Farar, an Arab-American 2000 WorldNetDaily.com

Well, as an Arab-American journalist who has spent some time in the Middle East dodging more than my share of rocks and mortar shells, I've got to tell you that these are just phony excuses for the rioting, trouble-making and land grabbing.

Isn't it interesting that prior to the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, there was no serious movement for a Palestinian homeland? "Well, Farah," you might say "that was before the Israelis seized the West Ban and Old Jerusalem." That's true. In the Six-Day War, Israel captured Judea, Samaria and East Jerusalem. But they didn't capture these territories from Yasser Arafat. They captured them from Jordan's King Hussein. I can't help but wonder why all these Palestinians suddenly discovered their national identity after Israel won the war.

The truth is that Palestine is no more real than Never-Never land. The first time the name was used was in 70ad when the Romans committed genocide against the Jews, smashed the Temple and declared the land of Israel would be no more. From then on, the Romans promised, it would be known as Palestine. The name was derived from the Philistines, a Goliathian people conquered by the Jews centuries earlier. It was a way for the Romans to add insult to injury. They also tried to change the name Jerusalem to Aelia Capitolina, but that had even less staying power.

Palestine has never existed-before or since-as an autonomous entity. It was ruled alternately by Rome, by Islamic and Christian crusaders, by the Ottoman Empire and briefly, by the British after World War I. The British agreed to restore at least part of the land to the Jewish people as their homeland.

There is no language known as Palestinian. There is no distinct Palestinian culture. There has never been a land known as Palestine governed by Palestinians. Palestinians are Arabs, indistinguishable from Jordanians (another recent invention), Syrians Lebanese, Iraqis, etc. Keep in mind that the Arabs control 99.9% of the Middle East lands. Israel represents one tenth of 1% of the landmass.

But that's too much for the Arabs. They want it all. And that is ultimately what the fighting in Israel is about today. Greed. Pride. Envy. Covetousness. No matter how many land concessions the Israelis make, it will never be enough. What about Islam's holy sites? There are none in Jerusalem. Shocked? You should be. I don't expect you will ever hear this brutal truth from anyone else in the international media. It's just not politically correct.

I know what you're going to say: "Farah, the Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem represent Islam's third most holy sites." Not true. In fact the Koran says nothing about Jerusalem. It mentions Mecca hundreds of times. It mentions Medina countless times. It never mentions Jerusalem. With good reason. There is no historical evidence to suggest Mohammed ever visited Jerusalem.

So how did Jerusalem become the third holiest site of Islam? Muslims today cite a vague passage in the Koran, the seventeenth Sura, entitled "The Night Journey." It relates that in a dream or a vision Mohammed was carried by night "from the sacred temple to the temple that is most remote, whose

precinct we have blessed, that we might show him our signs." In the seventh century, some Muslims identified the two temples mentioned in this verse as being in Mecca and Jerusalem. And that's as close as Islam's connection with Jerusalem gets-myth, fantasy, wishful thinking. Meanwhile, Jews can trace their roots in Jerusalem back to the days of Abraham.

The latest round of violence in Israel erupted when Likud Party leader Ariel Sharon tried to visit the Temple Mount, the foundation of the Temple built by Solomon. It is the holiest site for Jews. Sharon and his entourage were met with stones and threats. I know what it's like. I've been there. Can you imagine what it is like for Jews to be threatened, stoned and physically kept out of the holiest site in Judaism?

So what's the solution to the Middle East mayhem? Well, frankly, I don't think there is a man-made solution to the violence. But, if there is one, it needs to begin with truth. Pretending will only lead to more chaos. Treating a 5,000 year-old birthright backed by overwhelming historical and archaeological evidence equally with illegitimate claims, wishes and wants gives diplomacy and peacekeeping a bad name.

This article is one of the best narratives of history with respect to the Middle East I think I have ever read!

God Bless,

Bro Stephan