Palestinian peace refusal

Why do the Palestinians refuse a negotiated peace?

A negotiated peace means the end of the conflict, or at least promising to end the conflict and accept the very existence of Israel. But the Palestinian leadership wants a state so that they can continue the conflict from a stronger position. In particular, they want a state and they want to keep pressing in every way for the “right of return” to Israel. But Israel would not agree to that in negotiations, which is why Palestinians want a state without negotiations, and without having to make any compromises.

In accord with this, at least three times the Palestinians have refused statehood when it was offered to them, most recently just a few years ago.

Here are the details:

1. In 2008, after extensive talks, then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and presented a comprehensive peace plan. Olmert’s plan would have annexed the major Israeli settlements to Israel and in return given equivalent Israeli territory to the Palestinians, and would have divided Jerusalem. Numerous settlements including Ofra, Elon Moreh, Beit El and Kiryat Arba would have been evacuated, and Hebron would have been abandoned. Tens of thousands of settlers would have been uprooted. Olmert even says preliminary agreement had been reached with Abbas on refugees and the Palestinian claim to a “right of return.”

2. In the summer of 2000 US President Bill Clinton hosted intense peace talks at Camp David between Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli leader Ehud Barak, culminating in a comprehensive peace plan known as the Clinton Parameters, which was similar to the later Olmert Plan, though not quite as extensive.

Despite the vast concessions the plan required of Israel, Prime Minister Barak accepted President Clinton’s proposal, while Arafat refused, returned home, and launched a new terror campaign against Israeli civilians (the Second Intifada).

Despite the violence, Prime Minister Barak continued to negotiate to the end of his term, culminating in an Israeli proposal at Taba which extended the Clinton proposal. Barak offered the Palestinians all of Gaza and most of the West Bank, no Israeli control over the border with Jordan or the adjacent Jordan Valley, a small Israeli annexation around three settlement blocs balanced by an equivalent area of Israeli territory that would have been ceded to the Palestinians.

3. UN Resolution 181, the Partition Resolution, passed in November 1947, called for the creation of a Jewish state and an Arab state in the land which at that point was controlled by the British-run Palestine Mandate. All the Arab countries opposed the resolution, voted against it, and promised to go to war to prevent its implementation. Representing the Palestinians, the Arab Higher Committee also opposed the plan and threatened war, while the Jewish Agency, representing the Jewish
inhabitants of the Palestine Mandate, approved the plan.

The Arabs and the Palestinians were true to their word and did launch a war against the Jews of Palestine, violating both Resolution 181 and the UN Charter. Much to the surprise of the Arab side, the Jews were able to survive the initial onslaughts and eventually win the war.

The fundamental fact remains that had the Arabs and the Palestinians accepted the Partition Resolution and not violated the UN Charter by attacking Israel, there would be a 63-year-old Palestinian state today next to Israel, and there would not have been a single Palestinian refugee.

Just as today, it seems that even in 1948 the Arab side was more concerned with opposing and attacking the Jewish state than with creating a Palestinian state.

Besides the above statehood opportunities, there were other notable opportunities that were missed too:

-The 1978 Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt, which provided for Palestinian autonomy in the territories of the West Bank and Gaza. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat begged the PLO and Yasser Arafat to accept what he had negotiated with Israel, and to engage in talks with Israel.

-US President Jimmy Carter also called on moderate Palestinians to come forward and join the Cairo conference. Unfortunately Arafat refused and did everything he could to undermine Egyptian President Sadat and the Camp David Accords, with PLO gunmen even murdering West Bank Palestinians who supported Sadat’s approach.

While the Palestinian people have much to be frustrated about, the object of their frustration should be not Israel, but their own leaders, who have thrown away opportunity after opportunity to establish the Palestinian state they claim to desire above all else.

>> For Additional Reading:

Foreign Affairs
www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136588/yosef-kuperwasser-and-shalom-lipner/the-problem-is-palestinian-rejectionism

FLAME
www.factsandlogic.org/hotline_archive/FLAME_hotline_111312.html

Discover the networks
www.discoverthenetworks.org/viewSubCategory.asp?id=38

The Washington Institute