

CHAPTER

19

CONCLUSION



It took fifteen hundred years from the collapse of the Roman Empire to the end of World War II to crystallize, more or less, the map of Europe. It may take the Middle East many generations to sort it all out as well.

Until the 2006 Hamas and Hezbollah kidnappings and rocket attacks, surveys showed that, in principle, over 70 percent of the Israeli public felt that Israel should leave the bulk of the territories, even if it was done unilaterally, without an agreement with Palestinian Arabs, the Arab community of states, or Muslims worldwide.¹ The Jews in Israel and around the world were tired. A defeatist attitude was born from the logical expectation that the international community would not allow any other outcome, ever.

But in the wake of the 2006 war, the major powers are re-examining all issues surrounding the conflicts in the Middle-East, in search of a solution that will bring lasting peace, not merely a cease fire before the next round of war.

And though many people do not yet face reality, having a viable Palestinian and Israeli state within the geographic confines currently imposed by the international community on both communities cannot happen.

The path to a larger Israel may, indeed, wind through the establishment of a non-viable Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. The deep seeded disrespect for Israel by most Arabs and radical Islamists will not likely vanish in such a compromise, and it will neither bring peace nor allow for a viable, prosperous Israel. It will bring misery to Palestinians.

But things change. Attitudes change. Maps change. When oil is no longer the world's dominant energy source, powerful states may view matters differently. When inevitably, Arabs cease to be willing to divide themselves by the state boundaries imposed by last centuries' imperial European powers, establishing appropriate new borders may take the center stage of international discourse. When it becomes clearer to more people that Israel's existence, and world stability, is threatened in part by Israel's diminutive size, then a fresh view may take hold in Israel, and around the world.

Peace is more than an absence of war. Peace must be based on shared interest, not the tactical reality of the moment.² The fanatical desire for pan-Arab nationalism, the rise of radical Islamic fundamentalism to replace the power vacuum left by the receding Soviet empire, and the general resentment of Western power and values are the root causes that prevent an entire region from accepting Israel's existence. Israel is seen as a small foreign object that interferes with an undisturbed Arab map. It is seen through the eyes of xenophobic hate for anything non-Muslim. It is seen by most Arabs as a Western outpost in *their* land.

A tiny Israel is too inviting a target. Even if the current