

Obama's Middle East Peace Talks: A Circus to Distract

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What a joke. President Obama surely knows there is zero chance that his Middle East peace talks will succeed, even with the deck stacked in his favor. All of the main actors are on the U.S. payroll: Israel, Egypt, and Jordan get billions in foreign aid, while the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has proven a pliable puppet for the U.S. as he is disdained by his own people.

But even puppets have their limits. If the above governments were to support the type of peace treaty that Israel would agree to, their already oppressed people would revolt.

This is because Israel has been quite clear about what it will and will not “concede.” The basis for all Middle East Peace talks has always been the land that Israel stole during the 1967 six day war: the Golan Heights in Syria must be returned; the West Bank must be unoccupied; East Jerusalem must be returned to the Palestinian people. UN Resolution 242 demands that Israel return these territories. It will not.

Nor will Israel stop Israeli settlers from building communities in the West Bank or allow all Palestinian refugees to return to their land and homes that were confiscated beginning in 1948. Israel does not grant equal civil and political rights to any Arabs living in this theocratic state. The U.S. and Israel will not even allow the only political party in the occupied territories with any legitimacy, Hamas, to participate in the “peace process.”

In fact, the only reason that Israel has agreed to participate in this sham is for some good public relations. Years of oppressing the Palestinians has earned Israel international condemnation, especially after the recent flotilla massacre. Israel hopes that in making a “sincere effort” in the peace process, it will shift attention away from the ongoing atrocities it commits as a matter of state policy.

Obama has similar motives as he pursues a path leading to nowhere. At home, Obama becomes more unpopular with each passing day, as he confronts a jobs depression by ignoring it or by pretending that the economy is improving for working people.

The wars that Obama is conducting are failures; hundreds of billions of dollars continue to flow into the doomed effort, money that could instead be used to create jobs.

As Obama chooses to pursue policies only acceptable to corporations, he must lean heavier on right-wing elements. The same approach that Israel uses to oppress the Palestinians — racism, scapegoating, and fear — are being transferred to the U.S., especially towards those with ancestry from the Middle East or immigrants from Latin America.

As former Labor Secretary Robert Reich recently explained:

“The practical choice we face is this: Either major action to reverse the jobs emergency or years of intolerably high unemployment coupled with demagoguery and scapegoating.” (September 3, 2010, robertreich.org)

If there were good intentions behind the peace talks that included serious proposals, Obama would deserve credit for his effort. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Obama refuses to cut U.S. aid to Israel, which it uses to wage war against its neighbors and to crush the Palestinians. This is because Obama continues to use Israel as a giant extension of U.S. corporate interests: Israel uses its U.S. financed military to ensure that profitable resources like oil do not fall into the “wrong hands.”

Obama and the Democrats will travel down their corporate inspired path until there are obstacles thrown in their way. On October 2nd attention will be given to the enormous need for jobs as labor unions, the NAACP, and other organizations descend on Washington, D.C. for a mass demonstration. Demonstrations in other states are being planned too.

The bigger the demonstrations, and the louder that the demand of “Jobs For All!,” the less able are politicians to focus on foreign affairs and phony negotiations. The bigger the focus on creating jobs and making Wall Street pay for them, the less able are right-wing elements to steer workers frustration into racism, scapegoating, and other fake solutions.

All Out For October 2nd !

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