

**Borders do not exist**  
GS Don Morris, Ph.D.

Interesting how the old adage, “what goes around, comes around” has made its appearance again here in the Middle East. Story after story is reporting the rather old and worn out mantra of “return to the 1967 borders.” Headlines on both sides of the argument abound:

**No return to pre-1967 borders: Israel**

**Abbas wants return to pre-1967 borders**

**Israeli FM rules out return to 1967 borders**

**Hamas: Ceasefire for return to 1967 border**

**And today:** “Everyone around the world talks about the ’67 borders, but with some amendments, some swaps here and there,” he told a Brookings Institution forum the day after he met with US President Barack Obama and other top American officials\*\*

Again, it is mid 2010 and this statement has been made for years as my 2007 article described. Abbas is in trouble with his own organization. They just announced cancellation of Fatah local elections: “The decision to call off the elections was announced on the last day set for candidates and lists to present their candidacies. Palestinian sources told The Jerusalem Post that the decision had been made due to deep divisions in Fatah and because many of the faction’s candidates had been planning to run as independents, which was one of the reasons why Fatah lost the January 2006 parliamentary election .”\*\*\*

In order to regain some control Abbas brings out the same old nonstarter argument-the non-existent 1967 borders. A reminder of the facts does follow-please hold those who suggest otherwise accountable-enough lies!

There you have it-everyone referring to the “borders”. The fact is this has been used as a term for decades by initially the media, then the local populations, then the academics followed by the governments involved. Surely I must be mistaken when I say there are no legally fixed borders. Explanation will follow in a moment. It has been a most convenient strategy, inadvertently reinforced by Israel years ago, to have been used by our enemies’ to their advantage. Implicit within the term borders is the notion that one country stops and another entity begins. If we have towns on the “other side of the border” then we are “occupying” their land and we must now “leave and give back the land to its rightful owners. A very good strategy and it has worked to a limited degree thus far. Time to set the record correct-again.

Let's re-set the stage: "At the conclusion of the War of Independence, in 1949, all of the Arab countries who invaded Israel signed cease fire agreements with Israel, starting with Egypt on February 24 and concluding with Syria on July 20. These agreements specified the interim borders between Israel and the Arab states, as decided by the outcome of the battles." These became known as the "Armistice Line" and later it was called also the "Green Line... The Armistice Agreements brought the fighting of the War of Independence to an end, but did not actually end the war between Israel and its Arab neighbors."<sup>1</sup>

In a legal sense, what is today called a border is indeed nothing more than an arbitrary line between Israel proper and its surrounding Arab neighbors. The lines were originally called armistice lines and morphed into the "green line" as time went on. The end result "on the ground" was as follows:

- Egypt territory was restored to its previous line; however, in the Gaza Strip where Egypt continued in control.
- The border with Lebanon was the same previous line.
- The border with Syria was the same previous line.
- Now it gets interesting, Jordan retained control of the hill country historically known as Judea and Samaria. This territory was renamed the "West Bank" and Jordan also controlled the Old City of Jerusalem.

It is important to understand one critical fact that your media and pundits either withhold from you or are ignorant and have not completed their homework. In the Armistice Agreements, the ceasefire lines are defined as follows:

- 5(2). In no sense are the cease-fire lines to be interpreted as political or territorial borders and their delineation in no way affects the rights, demands or positions of any of the parties to the cease-fire agreements regarding the final disposition of the Palestine question.
- 5(3). The fundamental objective of the cease-fire lines is to serve as a line beyond which the armed forces of each of the parties will deploy.<sup>1</sup>

From 1949 to 1967, the areas of Gaza and Judea and Samaria were illegally placed under the control of Egypt and Jordan respectively. Arabs and Jews continued to live within these same areas during this time. From a political and military point of view, the 1947 U.N. partition plan served as reason for the legal declaration of a Jewish State.

Fast forward to June 1967. Israel was forced to defend herself against Arab aggression. It took six days and all of their armies were defeated. Mind you, during this entire time, 1949-1967 the "Armistice Lines remained-again a demarcation for placement of armies

but never represented an official border. Once again the issue of borders reared its “head”. After the 1947- 48 war, the Arabs refused to recognize Israel, and insisted the boundaries were only ceasefire lines, and this remained their legal status. The Arab nations were given another opportunity to recognize Israel and settle upon borders. Instead, the Arab League declared: "no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it....

What to do-almost 20 years and still no legal borders. Almost during this same timeline, when the territories were under Egyptian and Jordanian control and power, no request was ever made for a “Palestinian State”. Equally true is that the people living in these territories were Arab tribes and social clans who dealt with the daily issues of life.

The International community stepped forward. After the 1967 War, President Lyndon Johnson also rejected the idea that Israel should withdraw to the pre-war frontier: "There are some who have urged, as a single, simple solution, an immediate return to the situation as it was on June 4.... this is not a prescription for peace but for renewed hostilities."

The Joint Chiefs of Staff concluded in 1967: "From a strictly military point of view, Israel would require the retention of some captured territory in order to provide militarily defensible borders." More than three decades later, Lieutenant General (Ret.) Thomas Kelly, director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Gulf War, reiterated Israel's strategic concern: "It is impossible to defend Jerusalem unless you hold the high ground....An aircraft that takes off from an airport in Amman is going to be over Jerusalem in two-and-a-half minutes, so it's utterly impossible for me to defend the whole country unless I hold that land."<sup>2</sup>

Curiously, on the last day of the war, orders were given to the Israelis at the front to stop their movement-it took some time to get the information to them and where they physically stopped the new “Green Line” was created. The eastern borders of Israel are yet to be decided. Moreover, UN Resolution 242, the foundation stone of Arab-Israeli negotiations, explicitly avoided requiring an Israeli retreat to the 1967 lines, its drafters believing those were indefensible.

Resolution 242 calls for the recognition of Israel’s right to exist, an end to the state of war maintained by the Arab world against Israel and secure and recognized boundaries for Israel. 242 does NOT require Israel to return to the non-secure borders of pre-1967.<sup>3</sup> The Arab nations and the leaders of the Arabs living in Gaza and Judea and Samaria have, to this day, used UN 242 as the guiding legal principle for legally determining internationally recognized borders.

Remember, Jordan actually annexed the territories called Judea and Samaria-this was done illegally and was only recognized by Great Britain and Pakistan. Nonetheless, Jordan operated as though this territory belonged to them. After the six-day war, Israel began its administration of these areas west of the Jordan River to this day. The best descriptor for these areas is clearly they are “disputed territories” and have been for decades.

After the battles and the Yom Kippur War in October of 1973, another Arab attack upon Israel, a period of instability followed. It should be noted that most of Jordan's population east of the Jordan River are people known as Palestinians—fact is some 70% of Jordan is comprised of this group. The country is run by another group of people known as the Hashemites. Much has been written on this time in history and it is not the intent of this piece to review the unintended consequences of Jordan ultimately renouncing all claims (1988) to the disputed territories of Judea and Samaria. At this point, still no border between Israel proper and the disputed territories.

It is now 2009, we have had any number of “peace processes”, and you all should know them by name. They have all failed to produce borders and certainly peace is as elusive as is the “Man in the moon”. Of course, the facts do not matter to the Arab nations and peoples who profess to be our enemies. They do possess a great deal of “chutzpah” that resonates within their own populations and now we have President Obama who has bought into the misrepresentation “hook, line and sinker.” For a supposed intelligent man, his knowledge of the history and understanding of the facts is only surpassed by his ignorance of this area. I am attempting to be gentle with this characterization and to jolt his supporters with the truth. They have embarked upon a ME strategy that will fail for all, have incredible security ramifications for the USA and/or they mean to destroy Israel. There are no other outcomes should the Obama team continue down the path of arrogance.

### Notes

1. Palestine Facts, “What determined Israel's borders after the 1948 War of Independence?”, [http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf\\_1948to1967\\_land\\_1948.php](http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1948to1967_land_1948.php)

2. “Israel Education Initiative: The 1967 Border”, World Jewry, <http://www.ujc.org/page.aspx?id=88968>

3.” What happened in 1967 that caused Israel's borders to change?”, Smooth Stone Blog, Jan. 3, 2007, <http://smoothstoneblog.com/2007/01/what-happened-in-1967-that-caused-israels-borders-to-change.htm>

\*\* <http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=178137>

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\*\*\* <http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=178148>