

Peace in the Middle East Begins with Israel, Palestine, Says Award-Winning Author

Written by Ginny Grimsley

Wednesday, 25 September 2013 13:13

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A Look at the 'One State' Vs. 'Two State' Solutions

US Secretary of State John Kerry has repeatedly requested the support of Israelis, Palestinians and Americans – especially Jewish Americans – in reviving the moribund Israel/Palestine peace process. Negotiations began again July 29 after being shelved for nearly three years.

With the Middle East in the throes of upheaval from Syria to Egypt, this step toward stabilization has become even more urgent.

“Kerry views an Israeli/Palestinian peace agreement as a vital American national interest, and many Israelis view a stable two-state solution as a vital Israeli national interest,” says Michael J. Cooper, (michaeljcooper.net), author of the award-winning history-adventure novel “Foxes in the Vineyard,” set in 1940s Israel. Cooper, an Israel-educated physician, regularly returns to that country for volunteer medical missions in Palestine.

The two-state solution – establishing an independent Palestine -- has been the focus of negotiations since Israel and the Palestine Authority agreed on it in principle in 2007. Now, there is growing support for what is called the “one state solution.”

Those who support ongoing settlement by Israelis in Palestine and oppose the current peace process prefer a single bi-national state between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River, Cooper says.

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Cooper offers a brief analysis of the problems associated with this solution.

- With the “single-state,” solution Israel has a stark choice: to grant or not to grant citizenship to the Arabs of the West Bank at the same level enjoyed by Israeli Arabs.

“If Israel were to incorporate the West Bank, it would become approximately 56 percent Jewish and 44 percent Arab,” Cooper says. “With the higher birth rate among Palestinians and the rate of Jewish emigration from Israel, there would be a demographic shift in the future that would find Israel without a Jewish majority.

“Simply put, Israel would cease to be ‘Jewish.’ ”

- If Israel were to incorporate the West Bank without granting the basic rights of citizenship to Palestinians?

“Israel would cease to be a democracy,” he says.

The only viable option is the two states, Cooper says: an independent Palestine and an independent Israel.

“There is no middle ground – one is either for the process or against it,” Cooper says. “One is either for the ever-expanding settlement enterprise throughout the West Bank or against it.”

About Michael Cooper

Michael J. Cooper emigrated to Israel after graduating high school in Oakland, Calif. Living in Israel for more than a decade, he studied at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and graduated

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from Tel Aviv University Medical School. Now a clinical professor at the University of California San Francisco Medical Center and a practicing pediatric cardiologist in Northern California, he returns to Israel several times a year, volunteering on medical missions under the auspices of the Palestine Children's Relief Fund. Cooper's novel, "Foxes in the Vineyard," historical fiction set in 1948 Israel, was the 2011 grand prize winner of the Indie Publishing Contest. A second novel, "The Rabbi's Knight," is due out soon.