



August 2018

Dear Friend of Israel,

Just a few days ago, **there was an item in one of the Israeli news services about President Trump's "Deal of the Century."** For months now, there have been rumors about a deal that Trump is trying to put together in the Middle East. Just a few weeks ago, **I received a panicky email from someone in the US who had heard that Trump was going to push concessions from Israel for a two-state solution.** I calmed her down and explained that with Abbas boycotting all American contact, it didn't look like any deal was going to happen any time soon, certainly not in Judea and Samaria.

This most recent news item claims that because of the Abbas boycott, Trump had decided to leave him out of the process, working directly with the so-called moderate Arab nations to support a plan to improve the situation in Gaza. **The idea is to create conditions to lift the Israeli blockade against Gaza by creating a port in Cyprus for Gazans to use that will be supervised by the international community.** The Israeli Government has been investigating this possibility for quite some time. The plan would also involve international investment in Gaza, again by working directly with the Palestinians, not through the Palestinian Authority, which is incredibly corrupt. According to the story, Egypt and Saudi Arabia are supportive.

While I think it is a very good idea to exclude the Palestinian Authority from any positive processes in the Middle East, I can't see a "deal" going through on Gaza without involving Hamas. And I can't imagine any deal with Hamas being a good thing. **Hamas will never agree to anything that includes their direct involvement with or recognition of Israel.** In any case, they will never be anything other than what they are today – a bloody, vicious, Islamist terrorist organization.

**But this news item does contain something positive. I do believe that if we are to achieve anything remotely close to peace, it will be through direct relationships with the Palestinian Arabs, bypassing their leadership which has always been corrupt and self-serving.** I just hope that Trump and the Arab nations realize that a two-state solution is the worst possible alternative.

**I do believe that there are Arabs living around us with whom we can live in peace.** And I also believe that they will be better off under Israeli sovereignty, perhaps with a degree of civil autonomy. I believe this because of the facts as we see them played out before us. But I also believe this because it is the plan that G-d has laid out for us: *"Every spot on which your foot treads shall be yours... No man shall stand up to you."* **Deuteronomy 11:24-25.** May G-d's plan come to fulfillment quickly. May we all live to see the complete redemption of Israel and a universal recognition of the G-d of Israel, and only then will we experience peace in our time.

Sincerely,

Sondra Oster Baras  
Director, Israel Office

***P.S. You can help keep peace in Israel, by making a donation today to purchase emergency communication equipment to protect the people of Migdal Oz. When you help protect the people of Israel, you are partnering with G-d. Thank you for being there for us.***