Javier Solana, the former High Representative for the European Common, Foreign and Security Policy, has called for the European Union to vote ' Yes ' to whatever resolution the Palestinian Authority brings before the United Nations General Assembly next week. You may remember it was Javier Solana who originally proposed that if Israel and the Palestinians were unable to conclude a peace agreement within a set time frame, that the matter should be referred to the United Nations. The time-frame was subsequently set for a two year period, by which it was hoped a negotiated settlement could be reached, and a Palestinian state could be established. The two year time-frame was adopted by the EuroMed Parliamentary Assembly, the US Administration and the Palestinian Authority. But the talks broke down following the breaking of the Hamas ceasefire and Operation Cast Lead. US President Obama's labelling of Israeli settlements as a major obstacle to peace and demand that Israel halt all settlement growth lead to a hardening of the Palestinian position and a refusal to take part in any negotiations. They would withdraw from the process so long as Israel was the one taking the flak for obstructing the peace and its relationship with its closest ally was under pressure. They also felt that they could achieve independence by obtaining international recognition at the United Nations without having to make peace with the Jewish state. Thus a state could be established 'within the 1967 borders' by international decree, but without necessarily recognizing Israel's right to exist. Thus the conflict for the liberation of 'Palestine' (including Israel proper) can be carried on, even after a state is established. So next week, God willing, the UN will be asked to vote on the establishment of a Palestinian state. Let's look at the ten reasons Solana gives for voting yes to the establishment of a Palestinian state...

The first reason why the E.U. 27 should vote “yes” is that the U.N. resolution is an attempt to keep the two-state solution alive. This solution is under attack from the steady expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, and from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s belief that the conflict should now be accepted as “insoluble.” As a result this vote is not a meaningless distraction, but a reaffirmation that the peace process is meaningful.

In reality, voting for the establishment of a Palestinian state would not necessarily keep the two-state solution alive, for as we discussed, establishing a state within the 1967 borders does not imply that Palestinians are actually recognizing Israel's right to exist. They are simply acknowledging the fact of its existence and will continue to call for Israel's complete destruction.

Hamas and Fatah do not recognize Israel's right to exist, and still seek the liberation of all 'Palestine'. The Hamas charter states, *"Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it" (The Martyr, Imam Hassan al-Banna, of blessed memory)* .

The second reason for a European "yes" is that the Europeans have already invested hugely in the two-state solution that is under scrutiny, including the annual €1 billion aid to help build a functioning Palestinian state. Again, a "yes" is a reaffirmation that the project is worthwhile and can succeed.

In reality, a 'Yes' vote will do immense damage to the peace process and the 'two-state solution'. Recognizing a Palestinian state on Israeli land, and specifically in east Jerusalem, is a recipe for war, not peace. And even if there is no war, a 'Yes' vote will not encourage either side to establish diplomatic relations. Rather it will remove the need in the eyes of the Palestinians for a peace treaty with the Jewish state.

The third reason for a "yes" is simply to respond positively to Mahmoud Abbas' state-building achievements. Failing to vote "yes" would be to respond to demands for state-building by refusing to formally acknowledge where they have got to.

Here, Javier Solana assumes that the Palestinian Authority is like a spoiled child and needs to be 'placated' for their efforts to build a state, and that voting 'No' will either offend them or undo years of hard work. They may have gotten somewhere in building the infrastructure of a state, but the Palestinian Authority have gotten nowhere in making peace with Israel. Why should the United Nations vote 'Yes' to establish a state that openly calls for another member state to be destroyed?

The fourth reason is about the Arab Spring. Anything other than a "yes" would expose Europeans to charges of double standards from both post-revolutionary governments and conservative Arab regimes (for different reasons) for failing to support rights for Palestinians while advocating them elsewhere.

In reality, the European Union has done very little to support 'revolutions' in Iran or Syria, so we already have a poor track record on this. The Arab Spring is perhaps a good reason not to

support the creation of yet another Islamic state that is at war with Israel. Recent events in Egypt have shown that rather than bringing more stability and peace to the Middle East, the revolutions have been hijacked by Islamic radicals who are openly opposed to the Jewish state. One of first acts of the new 'democratic' Tunisian government was to prohibit relations with Israel. Political analysts are warning that the Arab Spring may soon become the Islamic Winter. So why create another Islamic state that will just be hijacked by Hamas, Syria or Iran? That would be a complete disaster for security in Israel, Jordan and the wider Middle East.

Usefully, a "yes" also aligns European interests with European values (the fifth reason), as it resets regional relationships. Interests — including preventing jihadist terrorism, containing Iran, security energy supplies and retaining markets for our exports — would all be damaged by perceived hypocrisy on the Israel/Palestinian conflict.

Presumably, Solana believes that by establishing a Palestinian state, Iranian President Ahmadinejad will be compelled to withdraw his statement calling for Israel to be ' wiped off the map ', and that Syria will suddenly seek to establish peaceful relations with Israel rather than with Hizbullah. In reality, the establishment of a Palestinian state on Israeli territory will constitute a sure sign to Israel's enemies that the Jewish state on its way out. As Ahmadinejad remarked during his last address to the United Nations, "
Today, the Zionist regime is on a definite slope to collapse, and there is no way for it to get out of the cesspool created by itself and its supporters"
. Establishing a Palestinian state will not 'reset' regional relationships.

Despite concerns from Atlanticists that a "yes" will damage relations with the United States, arguably it could also be in Washington's interests (the sixth reason). The U.S. is unable to vote "yes" for evident domestic reasons, but the E.U. 27 doing so would strengthen America's hand when dealing with Israel. In the words of William Hague, a healthy trans-Atlantic relationship would be solid rather than slavish.

I take it 'domestic reasons' here means 'Christian support of Israel'? If that is so, then Solana assumes that the only reason the US could possibly veto the establishment of a Palestinian state is because the government would lose popular support from its mainstream voters. It seems that Solana cannot conceive that there might actually be a legitimate reason for voting against it. As for strengthening America's hand when dealing with Israel, that has not brought peace before. And if the EU votes 'Yes' and the US votes 'No', the US will be weakened in the Middle East, because they will be perceived as the ones who prevented the establishment of a Palestinian state.

The seventh and eighth reasons concern Israel. The Israelis' objections to the vote — that it is unilateral and violates previous agreements — do not hold water, and are no reason for Europe not to vote "yes." Although the vote would open up negotiating options for Palestine that are currently closed, overall it might even help Israel. Moves toward recognition of Palestinian statehood within 1967 borders would reinforce the legitimacy of Israel's own existence.

That is a very big assumption. When Hamas signed a unity government agreement with Fatah in 2006 and agreed to the establishment of a Palestinian state within the '1967 borders', the world media boldly proclaimed that Hamas had implicitly recognized Israel's right to exist. It was left to Ismail Haniyeh, then PA 'Prime Minister', to set the record straight by stating that Hamas had not and would not recognize Israel's right to exist. The establishment of a state in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem does not imply automatic recognition of Israel's right to exist, nor does it strengthen Israel's legitimacy. Hamas and Fatah leaders have long stated that the establishment of a Palestinian state is simply a
stepping stone
towards the ultimate destruction of the nation of Israel.

Despite Israeli fears, it would not necessarily open an easier path for Palestinian recourse to the International Criminal Court, and might give Europe a position from which it could pursue a quiet understanding with the Palestinians that they would not pursue I.C.C. jurisdiction for a significant period, drawing the sting from this troubling issue.

The ninth reason for a European "yes" is that it would not make Palestinian violence more likely. Indeed, a combination of perceived failure and the influence of the Arab Spring could touch off a "third intifada." Squeezed between Israel and the invigorating sight of televised uprisings, the Palestinian authorities need a sign of progress if they are to prevent frustrations turning to violence. European endorsement of their statehood would be a powerful public signal that progress is possible.

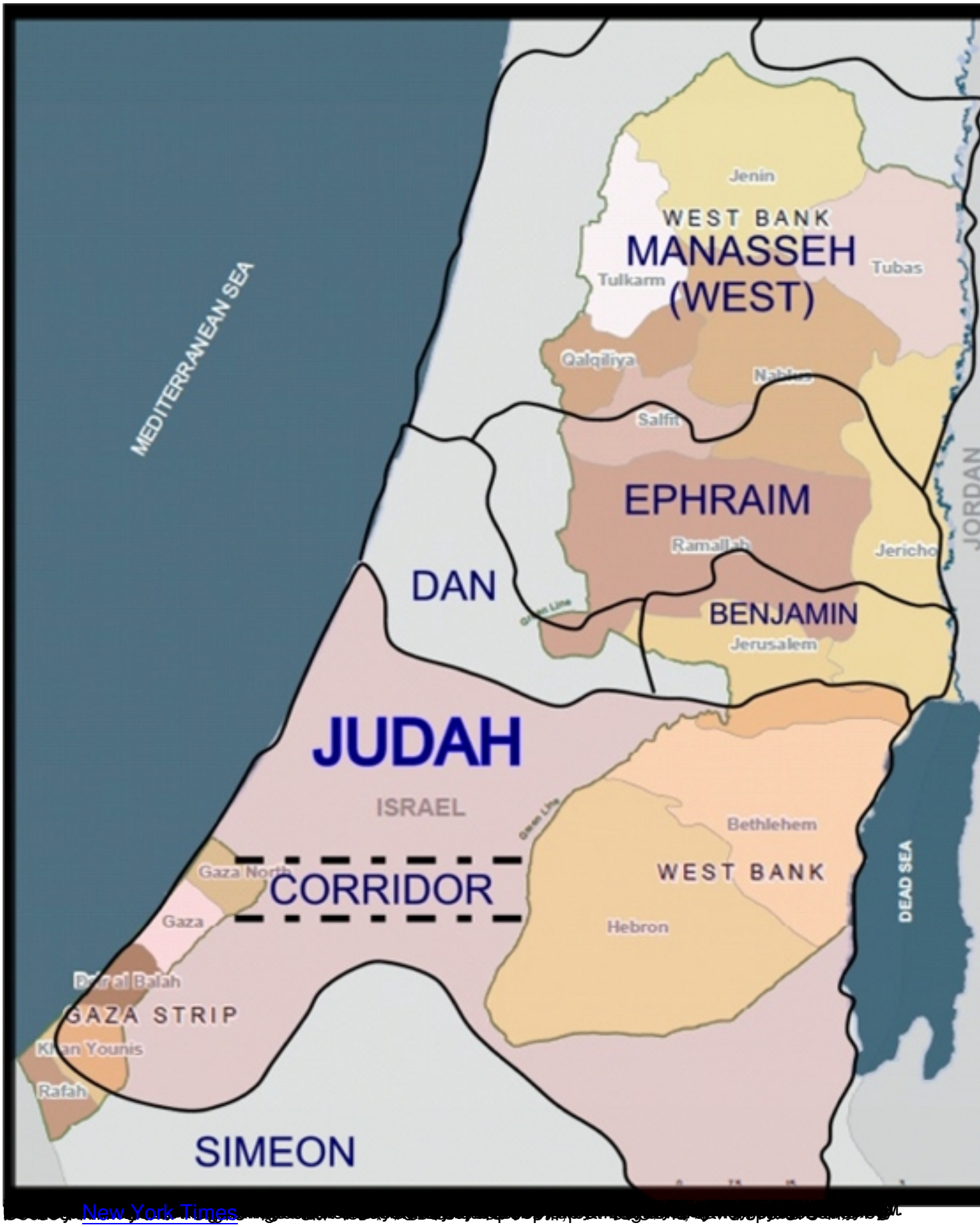
And once again, Solana portrays the Palestinian Authority as a spoiled child that must be 'placated', and that voting 'Yes' for the establishment of a Palestinian state is the only way this can be done. The same kind of logic was used to justify allowing Hitler to invade Czechoslovakia. Voting 'Yes' will only make Palestinian violence less likely if the newly established Palestinian state does not become a base for Hamas, Syria or Iran to launch terrorist attacks against Israel. History has shown that from every place that Israel has withdrawn, Islamic terrorists have used it as a base from which to attack it. And what happens if

Israel responds to a attack launched from 'Palestine'? Will this now be seen as a declaration of war against a sovereign state? Will Russia or other nations take sides? Or will nations like Iran seek to draw out a response from Israel in order to purposely foment a new war in the Middle East?

Finally, a “yes” at the U.N. does not entail bilateral recognition of Palestine. The vote is for upgrading representation at the U.N., and only individual states can bestow recognition on Palestine.

No, but the Palestinians will see it that way. And a 'Yes' vote at the UN will be perceived as a victory for Islamic terrorism, just as it was after Israel's disengagement from Gaza. And it will signal to them the impending demise of the Jewish state and Islam's victory over the West.

Many people do not understand the significance of what is happening in the Middle East today. They see this conflict as dispute over land, a religious conflict, or possibly a 'clash of civilizations'. In reality it is the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy. The Old Testament prophets foresaw a time when Israel's enemies would be “in siege both against Judah and Jerusalem”, Zechariah 12:2. A few years ago I decided to take a modern-day map of the state of Israel and traced on it the outline of the various tribes of Israel from Old Testament times. You will see that the area occupied by Judah contains most of the territories now known as the 'Gaza Strip' and 'West Bank'. The Old and New Testaments also prophesy of a day when the city of Jerusalem would be divided (Zechariah 12:2, Zechariah 14:2, Revelation 11:2). Today the Palestinian Authority is pressing for the establishment of a Palestinian state 'within 1967 borders', which can only result in the division of Jerusalem.



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