

Annapolis summit looms amid threats of violence

Contributed by Jim Greene
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Middle East conflict continues

Despite everything Annapolis summit to go forward.

President Bush is a lame duck president, Ehud Olmert is the least popular prime minister in Israeli history and Abu Mazen is as weak as a new born child. All these factors and many others seem to tell everyone where the summit is headed. A dead end.

There has been yeoman efforts to forge a document that would be the basis for present and future negotiations. These efforts have proven inconclusive so far. The fact that even an opening document is so difficult to agree upon speaks leaps and bounds about the chance of success at such a conference.

Why is the conference going forward and what are the ramifications of the expected failure? Opinions differ as to what will really happen. The prevailing opinion is that all hell is to break loose when the Arab demands to all or almost all territories captured by Israel in 1967 are denied. That demand is logistically inconceivable as massive Jewish neighborhoods have sprung up in former east Jerusalem. The demand of the right of return to Israel of Arabs who fled in Israel's independence War will flood the country with refugees and defacto end Jewish rule over the country. That's a condition that no Israeli politician who is Jewish agrees with even the most extreme liberal ones.

What then will be discussed? No one knows or understands how the sides will overcome extreme differences that have been talked about for years without results. Sisyphus is best known for being punished in the Underworld by being forced to roll a large stone with his hands and head in an effort to heave it over the top of a steep hill; but regardless of how much he pushes, as Sisyphus approaches the top of the hill, the stone rebounds backwards again and again. The Arab Israeli territorial and military conflict is the modern Sisyphus.

Some experts are trying to downplay the ramifications of the expected failure of the talks. They say there is not going to be immediate violence. They may not even believe these predictions themselves.

The Middle East is headed for conflict once again for a simple reason that permeates all the discussions on the subject. There still is no real acceptance of Israel as a Jewish State living in the Middle East.

That's the real problem.