

Thoughts on Annapolis

Every thirty years in November, since at least November 1917, there has been a significant event that has related to Israel. Prior to the Annapolis Conference last November there was an article from Israel about this phenomenon.¹ The article listed these events:

- 1 November 1917.** The Balfour Declaration was published, giving a guarantee about establishing a national home for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel.
- 2 November 1947.** The United Nations approved a plan to partition Palestine, thus allowing the establishment of the State of Israel.
- 3 November 1977.** The president of Egypt, the largest and most important Arab country, visited Israel for the first time, beginning the process of establishing peace between Israel and Egypt.

November 2007 saw the Annapolis Conference, and so it is natural to wonder whether anything significant will come from it.

Another article noted the following:

“‘Israel needs to internalise that even its supportive friends on the international stage conceive of the country’s future on the basis of the 1967 borders and with Jerusalem divided’, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has declared to the *Jerusalem Post*. ‘President Bush was not pressurising Israel in any way’, Olmert said. ‘He’s not doing a single thing that I don’t agree to [and] he doesn’t support anything that I oppose’. Rather, Olmert said, both he and the president hoped that the Annapolis timetable, for an accord between Israel and the Palestinians in the course of 2008, could be met.

“Indeed, said the prime minister, *there was currently an almost divinely ordained constellation of key personalities on the international stage favourably disposed to Israel, creating comfortable conditions for negotiations that might never be replicated. ‘It’s a coincidence that is almost “the hand of God”’, Olmert said, ‘that Bush is president of the United States, that Nicolas Sarkozy is the president of France, that Angela Merkel is the chancellor of Germany, that Gordon Brown is the prime minister of England and that the special envoy to the Middle East is Tony Blair’.*

“The imperative, he said, was to make every effort for progress while this array of supportive characters remained in place”.

Two features stand out from the Annapolis Conference. One is that there is a difference from

all preceding Middle East peace initiatives. More than forty nations were there, including not only the nations of the Arabian Peninsula, the Sheba and Dedan of Ezekiel 38:13, but the Vatican and Russia, key future antagonists of Israel. This is the direction that we would expect from Zechariah 14:2, “I will gather all nations . . .”.

Another is that there is a pattern since the formation of the State of Israel that points strongly in the direction of Annapolis being the start of something that will be of significance in 2008. Returning to the thirty-year pattern outlined above, consider the following. The right for the Jewish people to have their own state, as declared by the representatives of the nations of the world at the UN in November 1947, came to fruition in May 1948 when the State of Israel came into being. The dramatic declaration by Sadat before the Knesset in November 1977 that Egypt was ready to seek real peace was translated into concrete agreements with the Camp David Accords in the middle of 1978.

So there is a pattern; what was commenced in November of the ‘7’ year came to fruition about the middle of the ‘8’ year. With Annapolis fitting into this remarkable thirty-year sequence, we would therefore expect that it will bear fruit in 2008, and likely about the middle of the year. This is interesting, as there is general scepticism that Annapolis will eventuate in anything of significance, meaning more than ever that it has to be of God. Where anything significant has occurred in latter-day Israel, it has been against the odds.

And what could this event be? It is all pointing to some form of peace agreement. Gog says, “I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates” (Ezek. 38:11, NKJV). Israel now dwells securely behind its defence forces, but this would be the final stage.

We also note that this peace process is spearheaded by America, of the Tarshish/Sheba/Dedan alignment of nations (v. 13). Such must get up the nose of Russia, which has come to the fore in seeking to assert itself come what may, and we can imagine that such will act as a spur for Russia to fix the problem its own way.

The words of Olmert quoted above, though, would seem to pose a problem. The times of Gentile domination over Jerusalem ceased in 1967,

1. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3439816,00.html>.

so we cannot see it being voluntarily surrendered into Gentile hands in any peace deal, which is what Mr Olmert is advocating. Hence we await developments.

John Milverton
Kallangur, Brisbane, Australia