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Contexts

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Welcome

A variety of material this month, from the Unity Government of the PNA, announced this week, to the Barbary Wars of 200 years ago, and the territory conquered, occupied and controlled by David and Solomon 3,000.

But first, before you read on, a question:
From Jerusalem, if you wanted to travel to the Euphrates River, in which direction would you go, and how far do you think it is?

Write me at pkclark@pmbx.net & let me know what you think.

Palestinian 'Unity' Government

On Thursday, March 15th, the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, accepted the line-up of the new government proposed by Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh. Abbas is head of Fatah, Yasser Arafat's party, for many years the strongest party within the PLO. Haniyeh is leader of Hamas, which a year ago overwhelmingly won the Palestinian election, but which then brought on a Western embargo on aid and a refusal on Israel's part to transfer to the PNA taxes it had collected on behalf of the authority. Internal tensions between supporters of secular Fatah and Islamist Hamas led to rising violence, especially in poverty-ridden and despairing Gaza, where Hamas is strongest. Various truces failed to settle this violence, which continued even after the two parties made statements of reconciliation at a conference promoted by Saudi Arabia.

One of the results of that conference was the progress towards the formation of a Unity Government in the Palestinian territories – one in which the *Cabinet* was made up of a balanced number of Hamas and Fatah members, as well as non-aligned 'technocrats' with skills in the fields (finance, etc.) in which they hold ministry positions.

The last position to be decided, that of **Interior Minister**, was one that has been problematic ever since the last years of Yasser Arafat, when he refused to yield control of the security forces even to a member of his own organization, Fateh, his then Prime Minister, Mahmoud Abbas.

Interior Minister: **Hani al-Qawasmi** (Aged 49, with 5 children Qawasmi is a professor and lawyer, with little experience in security matters.)

Finance Minister: **Salam Fayyad** (Fayyad was finance minister in the previous Fateh-controlled government. He worked for the World Bank and was the IMF representative to the PNA from 1995-2001. He founded an alternative party, Third Way, but this did poorly in the 2006 elections.)

Foreign Minister: **Ziad Abu Amr** (Abu Amr from Gaza is an independent lawmaker and political science professor. Though he represented Hamas in the 2006 election, he is Fatah's choice for this post.)

Deputy Prime Minister: **Azzam al-Ahmed** (From Jenin, he is the leader of Fatah's representatives in parliament. He has long been close to Abbas, an ally since their days in Tunisia, and is a known opponent of Hamas.)

As his first appointment after the government was approved, Abbas appointed **Mohammed Dahlan** as his National Security Advisor. Dahlan is perhaps Hamas' strongest opponent, and the appointment was met with complaints from Hamas.

Though the platform for the new government fails to explicitly accept Israel, it does refer to it in terms that accept it as a negotiating partner with boundaries up to the 1967 ceasefire line.

Some excerpts:

"resistance is a legitimate right for the Palestinian people that is guaranteed by all international conventions. Our people have the right to defend themselves before any Israeli aggression"

The unity government will "respect" past agreements signed with Israel and "respect" international resolutions

"stability and peace in the region are dependent on ending all forms of occupation in the Palestinian territories, including removing the racist wall, settlements and stopping the Judaisation of Jerusalem".

The government will seek to "maintain and broaden" the current ceasefire with Israel in the Gaza Strip "in return for Israel's cessation of its occupation measures ... such as assassinations, arrests, incursions, house demolition, clearing of lands, excavation in Jerusalem," and for the "lifting of checkpoints and reopening of crossing points, the ending of travel restrictions and the release of prisoners".

The government authorises Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah to handle negotiations with Israel, "based on the commitment to achieve Palestinian national goals", and to present any "fateful" agreement to a national vote.

The Barbary Wars

During the 16th century, privateers – semi-independent mercenary ships that fought for the booty obtained from their conquests – assisted the emerging Ottoman Empire to assert its control over the Mediterranean. After the expulsion of the Moors from Spain with the conclusion of the long 400-year *reconquista*, the *Corsairs* based on the North African coast were instrumental in maintaining Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya under the control of the Ottomans.

The Ottomans paid the *corsairs* to raid and attack European towns and ships on the North African Barbary coast. Khair Ed Din *Barbarossa* was the most famous of these. His family was Turkish, but based on the island of Djerba, in southern Tunisia. The Ottoman Turks paid Barbarossa to defend Algiers. He was able to capture the city in 1529, avenging his brother who had earlier been killed there by the Spanish.

In 1534 Barbossa took Tunis for a short time, an event that contributed to the defeat in 1574 of the Hafsids, the Tunisian dynasty that had resisted the Ottoman conquest.

By the late 18th century the United States had won its independence, but was unable to protect the Mediterranean trade that it was involved in. There are records of the numbers of ships operated by the Barbary States: Algeria, 19; Morocco, 20; Tunis, 94; Tripoli, 11. These were based in various ports of the territory – Tunis, for example, had ships based in Bizerte, Tunis, Mahdia, and elsewhere.

In 1785 the United States had no navy to defend its shipping, when two of its ships were captured by the Barbary pirates. These ships were the schooner, Maria, out of Boston, taken on July 25, 1785, and the Dauphin, taken five days later. Between them 21 Americans had been taken captive by the Algerian corsairs, and the USA paid a $60,000 ransom for them. Then, for the next 15 years the USA paid about $1m per year, 20% of its annual budget in 1800.

The Burning of the Philadelphia

When Jefferson became president in 1801 and refused to pay such bounties to the *privateers* the Barbary states declared war. Jefferson sent the navy to patrol the region but in 1803 the Frigate Philadelphia ran aground in Tripoli harbor and was captured. Its captain and crew were taken hostage.

Lt. Stephen Decatur

In a daring raid in 1804, Lt. Stephen Decatur led a group of sailors into the harbor, to burn the ship, preventing the pirates from using it (see picture).

Tripoli was difficult to assault, but in 1805 a group of US marines (aided by Greek, Arab & Berber mercenaries) made an overland raid on Derna, from Cairo. An attack on Tunis was also necessary before the Bey submitted to US demands. This temporarily concluded the hostilities, and the first period (1801-1805) of the Barbary Wars.

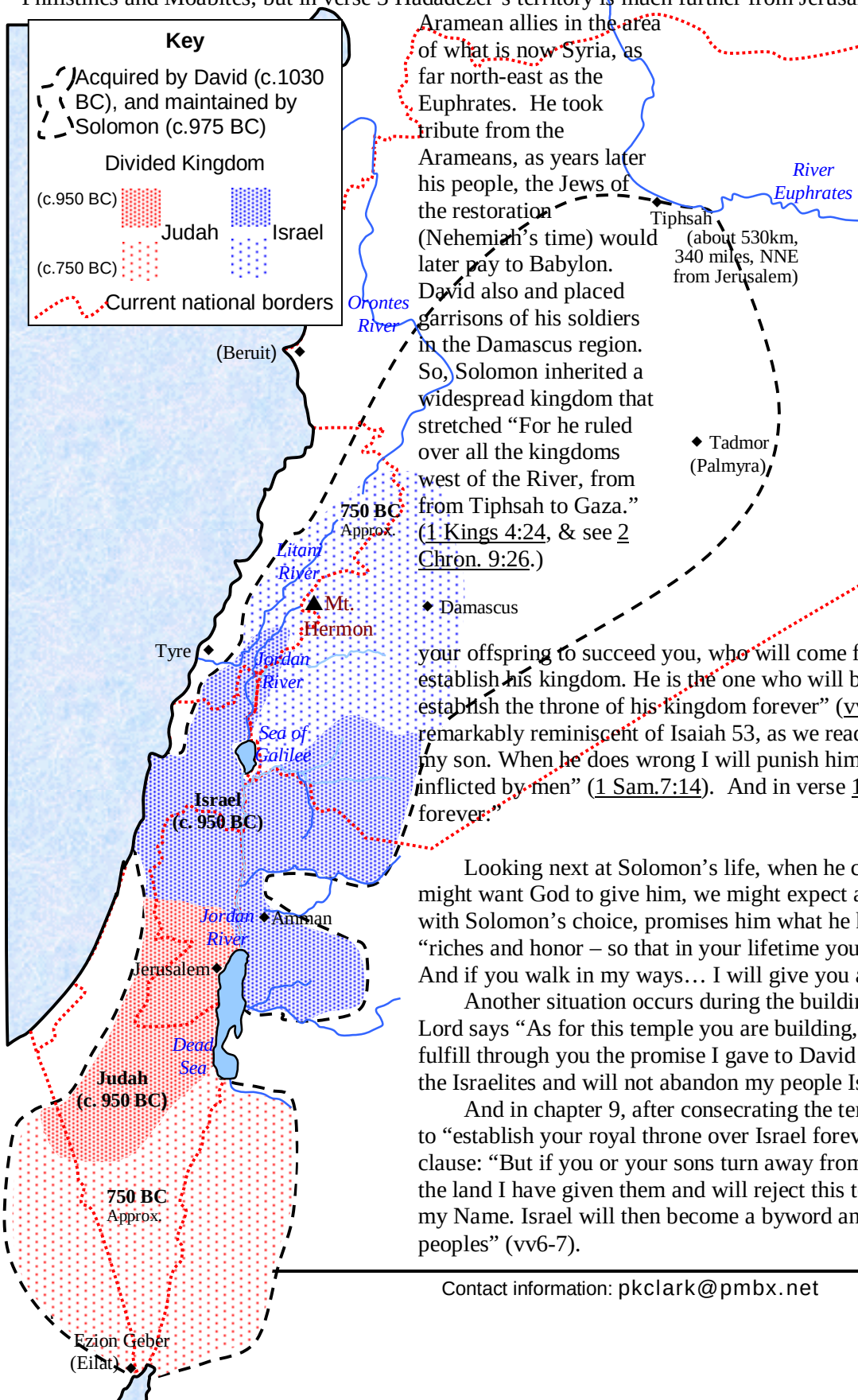
Hoever, as soon as 1807 Algiers began again taking American ships and sailors hostages. Due to the worsening situation that led up to the War of 1812, the US was unable to respond as it wished. After the war, in 1815 a force of 10 ships was sent to deal with the problem. Led by Decatur they attacked Algiers, taking hundreds of prisoners, negotiated a treaty releasing the USA from tribute obligations, and freed 1,642 prisoners and slaves currently held. Decatur then pushed through a similar treaty in Tunis.

The Dey of Algiers repudiated the treaty almost as soon as the ink was dry (and Decatur's ships were on their way to Tunis). The following year, however, a European fleet bombarded Algiers, effectively enforcing the treaty Decatur had implemented, and ensuring that Christians would no longer be captured and enslaved by the corsairs.

Christian Zionism – Geography: David and Solomon

In this article I want to look at God's **promises** directly to David and Solomon. In preparation for future discussion I also want us to see what **territory** David, Solomon and their successors did actually control.

During the reign of King David, Israel's **territory** under his control was extended beyond the Jordan, beyond Mount Hermon, and beyond Damascus itself. In the summary of his conquests in 2 Samuel 8, we read of David defeating the Philistines and Moabites, but in verse 3 Hadadezer's territory is much further from Jerusalem; David defeats both him and his Aramean allies in the area of what is now Syria, as far north-east as the Euphrates. He took tribute from the Arameans, as years later his people, the Jews of the restoration (Nehemiah's time) would later pay to Babylon. David also and placed garrisons of his soldiers in the Damascus region. So, Solomon inherited a widespread kingdom that stretched "For he ruled over all the kingdoms west of the River, from from Tiphsah to Gaza." (1 Kings 4:24, & see 2 Chron. 9:26.)



When we come to **promises** made by God to David and Solomon, their character changes from those made to the Patriarchs. In their case the promise is the continuance of their dynasty – the precise loss that Saul suffered when he failed Samuel (1 Sam.13:13).

David was 23 when he became king over Judah, and 30 when Israel came over to him. God's promise to him comes in 2 Sam. 7, after David wants to build a temple to house the Ark. "I will make your name like the greatest of men" (v7), and "I will provide a place for my people Israel and will place them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed" (v10).

The Lord goes on to say "When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (vv11-13). The following verses are remarkably reminiscent of Isaiah 53, as we read "I will be his father and he will be my son. When he does wrong I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men" (1 Sam.7:14). And in verse 16: "your throne will be established forever."

Looking next at Solomon's life, when he chooses 'wisdom' from whatever he might want God to give him, we might expect a stronger promise. God is pleased with Solomon's choice, promises him what he has requested, and additionally "riches and honor – so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in my ways… I will give you a long life" (1 Kings 3:13-14).

Another situation occurs during the building of the temple. The word of the Lord says "As for this temple you are building, if you follow my decrees… I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David your father. And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel" (1 Kings 6:12-13).

And in chapter 9, after consecrating the temple, that same promise is repeated, to "establish your royal throne over Israel forever" (v5). But there is an additional clause: "But if you or your sons turn away from me…then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple which I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples" (vv6-7).

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This Month

Feb	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	Mar	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W		F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T
Far East																			Philippine troops kill 17 Muslim separatists		Mortars hit mil. post near Tues. battle							
Sudan				70+ killed in Darfur tribal fighting						Algeria Al Qaeda arms ring caught						AU official attacked in home			2 AU peacekeepers killed in Darfur								US coniders sanctions on Sudan	
UN troops accused of assaults							Darfur peace talks in Libya				Govt. rejects UN troop deployment												Sudan rejects UN plan for Darfur					
Somalia				Govt. sets up new combat unit						UN freight ship hijacked by pirates									Rockets hit Mogadishu airport								Mortar attack on Pres. palace kills 8	
Residents oppose troops					16 killed by mortars	Gunmen attack military base								Uganda peace troops arrive							Attack on AU troops kills 9 Somalis							Somali HR activist killed	
Pakistan				Train bomb kills 66				Religious leaders oppose polio campaign							Quetta:Taliban leader held				Quetta:30+ Islamists held				Spate of Sunni/Shia killings				14 separatists held, inc. leader	
		Bomb in court kills 17			Woman govt. min. killed					3 bombers killed when bike hits road bump							Shia assassin held			Wazir Tribesmen fight Al Qaeda								
Afghan.						Spanish soldier killed					Cheney visits				Bombs hit NATO convoy				Air strike kills 9 civilians					Taliban attack Pak. border post, 13 dead				
Infiltration fr. Pakistan sur			US chopper shot down, 5 killed														Taliban ambush, 16 Afghans killed								Bomb kills 10 police			
Arabia				Saudi reformers call for free elections							3 French shot dead in Saudi						Yemen accuses Iran of fomenting clashes							11 killed, 11 held, in bombing attempts in Sanaa				
						Yemen rebels kill 15 soldiers					Saudi to host Arab summit on 3/28-29								160 killed in recent clashes in Yemen						Dubai airport closed for 7 hrs after accident			
Iraq		Sadr:militia leaders to leave				Sadr City car💣 kills 3				Baghdad 11 insurgents killed				Action against insurgents, 100+ killed, many arrests					250+gunmen storm Mosul jail, 140 freed							Gunmen kill 4 at Sunni mosque		
US Deaths: 3/30: 2,317 9/30: 2,700 12/31: 3,000 1/31: 3,073 2/15: 3,118		2 car 💣s kill 10 in Kirkuk				US chopper shot down					Draft oil law approved															Judge shot dead in Baghdad		
		Borders with Iran/Syria reopen					6-hr battle in Ramadi				Ambulance S-💣,15 die			Car 💣 kills 5 at wedding					S-💣s kill 149 Shiite pilgrims								4 US troops killed in action	
		Kut battle:50 insurgents held						3 US killed in Anbar			💣 injures Iraq VP, al Mahdi				3 US killed by RS💣					Balad Ruz s-💣 kills 26							S-💣 kills 10 in Tuz, nr Kirkuk	
			Baghdad minibus 💣kills 4						Gunmen attack base nr airport, 8 police killed		157 cult members caught in Diwaniya				Ramadi car S-💣 kills 12					Baghdad car-💣 kills 22							Bombs damage Sunni mosque in Iskandariya	
			Baghdad car 💣 kills 60 Shia												Sadr City car 💣 kills 10					Attacks on Shia pilgrims kill 25+									
			Basra:UK/Iraq forces raid slum district							Hakim's son arrested on Iran border					14 police abducted, killed						Police stn. stormed, weapons taken							Pres. Talabani returns from Jordan hospital	
US/Iraqi Operation Imposing Law sweeps Baghdad, attacks decrease, # of bodies found drops from 40+ to 3 or 4 at first, then increases. 1000 families return home in first 10 days. Bombers begin to use chlorine gas to increase injuries. Some bombs & equipment originate from Iran. UN estimates 2m Iraqis have left the country, with 1.7m internally displaced.				2 suicide 💣s kill 11 in Ramadi						US/Iraq troops attack/ destroy insurgent base			Large arms cache found: 194 mortars, 160 rockets			US/Iraq troops sweep Sadr City for arms, etc.				42 prisoners recaptured							Baghdad car-💣 kills 8	
				Fuel tanker suicide attack on US/Iraq base kills 2 US						Kirkuk newspaper owner killed				Brothers of MP killed			50 insurgents held nr Tikrit				Insurgent A-A gun destroyed							3 US troops killed	
					3 💣s kill 17 in Baghdad					Habaniya Sunni mosque 💣 kills 52							UK/Iraq troops raid Basra jail, suspect officers of torture						REGIONAL CONFERENCE on stabilizing Iraq; inc Iran/US						Car-💣 kills 6 in Iskandariya	
					2 car 💣s kill 10 in Baghdad				S-💣 nr Talabani home				Baghdad car 💣 at veg. market kills 10										31 insurgents held in Rasheed						
					Suicide attack on funeral kills 10					Talabani medical tests in Jordan								Baghdad s-💣 kills 30					S-💣 kills 6 nr Sadr City						
					Taji Chlorine 💣, 2 die, 138 hurt								UK soldier killed in Basra					Qaeda leader held in Dhuluiya											
										S-💣 kills 40 at Baghdad college								12 Pilgrims killed in S Baghdad					S-💣 on minibus kills 10						
						Najaf S-💣 kills 13													9 US killed in 2 incidents				S-💣 kills 19 Shia pilgrims						
										Baath party leader killed in Mosul																		
Iran											Copter crashes nr Turkey, 13 dead									Sm. quake in West		Women protesters arrested						
																						4 Rev. Guards abducted						
Turkey						5.7 quake in SE					20 convicted after 13-year trial											3 killed in clashes w/ PKK on border						
Lebanon					Bomb defused near airport rd.																PFLP arms dealer caught with A-A missiles							
Demonstrators still outside parliament						Israeli planes fly low over Lebanon															Berri/Hariri begin discussions					6 militants admit Feb bombings		
Jordan									King urges Hamas accept Quartet conditions							King promises elections in 2007												
Morocco																						Bombs suspect held			Suicide bomb, 3 injured			
Israel		Abbas, Olmert & C. Rice to meet Feb. 19th			Suicide bomber arrested in Tel Aviv					5-day raid/curfew on Nablus |1 killed | 11 arrested										IDF arrest 18 at PNA security HQ,					IDF kill 1 after attack in Jenin			
Israel refuses to deal with new Pal. unity Govt.				Police Chief resigns over govt. inquiry		Jihad leader killed in Jenin raid (sent Tel Aviv suicide bomber)					Settler killed nr Hebron, attackers arrested 2/26	3 Islamic Jihad leaders killed in Jenin										Man killed by IDF nr Gaza border fence			Office suspended after threatening a mosque			
																										UNESCO asks for excavations halt		
WB & Gaza					3 US women kidnapped – released after 1 hour				4 killed in Gaza clan violence												PNA security fire at each other				BBC's Alan Johnston abducted			
											Hamas leader Meshal visits Moscow												Fateh gunmen fire at Hamas convoy in Jenin					
Unity Govt. talks completed. Hamas statements not explicit about recognizing Israel						Egypt police catch suicide bomber entering Egypt via Gaza tunnel																	Hamas man killed by Fateh fire, fighting erupts in Beit Hanoun, Gaza City				Houses destroyed by rockets in Gaza		
																												Platform of Unity Govt. released
Feb	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	Mar	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15