

MR. GORDON: I'm Dick Gordon, this is "The Connection." Israeli and Palestinian leaders are forever trying to work out security details in talks about guarding borders and check points. Despite a flare-up of violence last week, the region has been relatively calm as both sides prepare for Israel's move to pull settlers out of Gaza. For example, Israel's Defense Minister is to meet today with top Palestinian security officials. Beyond the day-to-day news, there are those trying to imagine the future. A recent, privately commissioned study by the Rand Corporation takes a radical new look at what a country called "Palestine" might look like. It is a futuristic image of high-speed rails and highways linking community that are today separated by check points and soldiers. This hour, we'll talk with the man behind the project and we'd like to hear from you as well, is it reasonable to start designing Palestine. You might think it's too early given plans for the settlers evacuation of Gaza. You might think that it's too late given the way that Palestinian towns and cities are already so difficult to knit together, or perhaps it's the perfect time to consider what a two-state solution would look like. Our number is 1-800-423-8255; that 1-800-423-TALK. The man behind this design is Doug Suisman. He normally works from his studio in Santa Monica, California. Today he's joining us from the studios of the Jerusalem Post in Jerusalem; Doug, thank you for being with us.

MR. SUISMAN: It's great to be with you.

MR. GORDON: I want to just see if I can plant an image in the minds of people listening on the radio so when we talk about the design you've come up with, they have something they can work with. If you were to try to give us a description of this aerial view of the State of Palestine as you've conceived it, how would you describe it?

MR. SUISMAN: The first thing to note is that the Palestinian State as currently envisioned in the political arena will have two parts. That in itself is unusual, although not unprecedented. The Gaza Strip, which is the smaller of the two in the south, significantly smaller, and then the much larger piece of the West Bank, which has a kind of kidney bean shape. The indentation in the middle is where Jerusalem sits. The Gaza Strip lies somewhat to the south of the southern part of the West Bank.

MR. GORDON: How do you knit them together? Is this where the word "the arc" comes in?

MR. SUISMAN: We were asked to think about the problem conceived in this way: what happens the day after peace. I want to emphasize that the work that I did and my firm did with the Rand Corporation was the second of two studies. The first one was really the foundation on which we built. The first one asked the broader question: how can a Palestinian state succeed. Everyone is now agreed, the U.S. Government and even the Israeli Government now supports officially a two-state solution. The creation of a Palestinian State seems to

be on the agenda in the direction we're headed. The question is can such a state succeed. The first report, which was comprehensive and covered domains of various sectors such as education, health, internal security, water, and so forth, concludes that it is possible, that such a state is feasible and can succeed but the threshold is high and there are many challenges. That may not sound like news to people, but Rand does very thorough analysis. I think many people feel that that's significant that Rand concludes one that a Palestinian State can succeed and then lays out a full series of very detailed recommendations about things that need to be done in these areas to make it succeed. After that study was well under way for a year, a second private donor came to Rand. The first study had also been funded by an individual. A second donor and was very concerned about what the physical shape of that state would be in the future given the very high birth rate in the Palestinian territories and the prospect of many Palestinians returning from the Palestinian diaspora to a new state. This donor was concerned about how a new state, a fragile new country could handle the influx and the very rapidly growing population. That's where we came in to look at the physical conditions that existed and what could be envisioned in the future.

We found a series of very disconnected towns and cities in the West Bank and of course a very serious disconnection between Gaza and the West Bank. I went to Gaza last week and it is disconnected in every respect physically, psychologically, militarily. I think for those here, it's understandably difficult to imagine a country where the Gaza Strip and the West Bank will really be connected in a way that works. It's even difficult within the West Bank to imagine a country whose larger portion has functioning successful towns and cities with a thriving economy and a population that enjoys a quality of life that any people are entitled to aspire to.

MR. GORDON: I should let our listeners know that we have links to some of the design work on our website, theconnection.org. If people want to look as you're describing what's there, they can see that on our website. Am I wrong, Doug, to focus on this sort of swoop of high-speed rails and highway corridors, and communication lines as a sort of backbone, the vertebrae of this thing?

MR. SUISMAN: Not at all. That emerged after our analysis of the conditions that existed. That is the title of the second book, [The Arc: A Formal Structure for a Palestinian State](#). So, it's not at all wrong to focus on it. I just wanted to emphasize that it is built on a very solid base of analysis for the whole range of conditions and I think when you introduced it, you called it "futuristic." That sometimes makes it sound like *Buck Rogers* or something very sort of impractical. We approached this looking for a very pragmatic approach to conceiving the future for a Palestinian State. I would call it modern rather than futuristic. We're simply looking around at the best practices in coun-

tries and cities around the world and selecting those which we think are perhaps most appropriate for a future Palestinian State.

The key, as we were doing our analysis, what we saw was the topography in the West Bank in particular is quite dramatic. I'm actually looking out a window in Jerusalem right now and can see the Judean Hills. It's a very beautiful and dramatic landscape, quite rocky and quite steep. We saw a pattern in the West Bank and really up into Haifa Bay that we called a natural arc in the landscape. It's an arc of ridgelines if you will. We found that those ridge lines cause rain to fall off the Mediterranean. That's where the agriculture is, and to the west are the towns and cities to a large extent. We thought that was a useful thing to pull out of the landscape because we were searching for an organizing principle, if you will, that wasn't imposed from the outside that will never take root but rather something that is coaxed out of existing conditions, a kind of clear principle for organizing future growth. It would feel like it belonged here and would also set a direction for the future.

Finally, we came up with was along that line, a corridor of infrastructure which we call the arc. Infrastructure is kind of a catchall term that doesn't really evoke images for most people. We suggest that first and foremost, if it is an inter-urban rail line. When people say "high-speed train," they may think of the bullet trains in Japan or the TGV in France. The distances are quite short here and things are actually really rather close. We can remove roadblocks and have free movement. We simply suggest a swift train, a very modern train; it doesn't have to be super high-speed and not futuristic; just a very good train system running from Gaza in the south across Israel, as a third safe passage corridor; two are already envisioned in the various diplomatic efforts to date further to the north, and then running up that ridge line through the West Bank all the way to the north in Jenin with eventual extension back into Israel along the arc line into Haifa when relations between the two countries permit sometime in the future.

MR. GORDON:

Doug, you'll note that for decades now, diplomats and planners have been scratching their heads over this. I got something of a chuckle from a piece that I read in which one of your colleagues said of you that this wasn't something that you worked on all of your life so you bought a kind of enthusiasm and almost naivety to what could be done there. Is that a fairly accurate description of how you approached the project?

MR. SUISMAN:

When your colleague is a dear friend named Steven Simon, who is a former National Security advisor in the Clinton Administration, almost anyone will look like a political naïve compared to his experience. I guess I plead guilty on that. Naivety I think maybe only in terms of the details of the political

and diplomatic side of the issue, although, I have followed it as a general reader and interested person for many years.

MR. GORDON: Right.

MR. SUISMAN: I think what he was saying was that we had a real luxury. We had two very generous donors whose names are published in the book; it's not secret. They for parallel reasons decided to ask Rand and to give money to Rand to undertake this study because they had very deep concerns. That generosity bought the luxury of lifting your eyes above the next day, or the next week, or even the next few years, and to look to the horizon. That's not to say we looked up into the sky. The criticism then is that it's a blue-sky proposal. This is not a blue-sky proposal. It's very much rooted in conditions that exist both historically and what exists today.

MR. GORDON: I'm going to stop you there. We have to take a short break, and just to let our listeners know, we'll be hearing some reaction on the ground when we come back. We'd also like to hear from you. Is it premature to start designing what a Palestine might look like? Is it possible to think past the every day uncertainty of the region to imagine a two state solution and what the two states would look like? 1-800-423-TALK; 1-800-423-8255. I'm Dick Gordon; this is "The Connection."

MR. GORDON: I'm Dick Gordon. You're listening to "The Connection." This hour, a conversation about Doug Suisman's design for a formal structure for a Palestinian State. He calls it the Arc. He is with us this hour. We welcome you into the conversation. We're at 1-800-423-8255. I want also to bring in Ari Shavit. He is a columnist for the Israel newspaper *Ha'aretz* joining us on the line from Tel Aviv. Ari, it's nice to have you back with us.

MR. SHAVIT: It's nice to be back.

MR. GORDON: Jihad al-Wazir is also joining us. He's on the line from Ramala. He is Deputy Minister of Finance for the Palestinian Authority. Jihad, thank you for being with us as well.

MR. AL-WAZIR: It's nice to be here.

MR. GORDON: Can I ask you first, Jihad, your reaction to this plan when you saw the design for the very first time.

MR. AL-WAZIR: I was in the room watching the PowerPoint presentation and had tears in my eyes. You know, when you're dealing with the daily grind of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and fighting fires and crisis management and here comes this new vision really with a kind of innocence to it. I don't want to use the word naivety, as you used before. There is that pure innocence to it in the sense that it provides an alternative to the realities and takes us out from the daily crisis that we go through, to use the cliché, really

thinking outside the box. This is way outside the box, but it provides a comprehensive vision for a Palestinian State. What struck me most about it was that it had a real social element to it in the sense that because of the closures and the lack of movement in the occupied territories, the society has been fragmented. Here comes this nice vision where it provides a vehicle for social cohesion and a comprehensive look at things uniting the society again.

MR. GORDON: Jihad, stay with me for a minute. I want to turn to Ari Shavit. Ari, is it possible for something like this to be inspirational, or is it too far outside the box for that?

MR. SHAVIT: I congratulate anyone coming and thinking about the deep problems here and definitely bringing innocence or naivety or hope. I welcome this and I appreciate the effort very much. Yet, I would like to warn us from going into the kind of hopes and dreams that are right now totally disconnected from the reality on the ground. I do believe it's important to have vision. It's important to give people hope and a sense of direction. It's very important for the specialists to go into different planning options and so on. We are going to face a real challenge. I fear a possible crisis within the coming year or two. In order to deal with that challenge, we need a vision that is the one before what the Rand Corporation is offering here. We need a vision that is connected to the real problems that is not bogged down to the details and sometimes even the horrors of daily life here. It gives a concept that is the conceptual structure for a better and a new peace process, which we don't yet have. I have no argument with Rand, but I would like the kind of money and effort and intellectual honesty to be put into a project that deals with reality and deals with the conceptual problem that we will face pretty soon.

MR. GORDON: Why does one have to come before the other? Why do you need to do the concept before you do a physical manifestation of it? Why couldn't the physical manifestation provide some kind of anchor for ideas of peace? I understand what you're saying; I just don't really understand why the cart necessarily has to follow the horse on this one.

MR. SHAVIT: I repeat; I have no argument with this project whatsoever. On the contrary, I would just say that in our thinking about the two state solution, we need to work out a vision and a conceptual framework that both has vision in it but is also connected to the ground before or at the same time. Again, I have no argument whatsoever with, I'd like the trains to run as quick as possible and I think they are needed. Perhaps they can even be built even before we have the perfect peace deal. I think that can run in parallel in a sense to the political process. I think that in this very sensitive time, we shouldn't let this vision take us away from the challenge, which we must deal with in the coming months.

MR. GORDON: Doug Suisman, would you agree with that?

MR. SUISMAN:

Well, actually, I do. Our feeling about this is that there are many many smart people and experts in many fields working on precisely the kind of planning that Ari Shavit talks about. Of course, we support that. What we thought we could do is rather than simply duplicate that effort from a distance, what we could do from a distance is think beyond so that those who are working now and looking at the next year or two can have a kind of guiding star if you will as to where the next year or two might eventually lead. Let me give you an example. Last week when I went to Gaza, because of the work we had done on the train idea, we learned from Majada Buramadan, who is the acting mayor of Gaza City that there is an existing railway that runs north to south in the Gaza Strip. It's the old Turkish and British rail line. We asked to go and see it. Right now, it's an abandoned corridor with trash and even dead mules on it. It is as abandoned and neglected a quarter as you can imagine. I know, for example, and from my experience in Los Angeles that such corridors, when lost are repurchased at an enormous cost as we did in Los Angeles to put in a mass transportation system. Here is the Gaza Strip about to be turned over to the Palestinians that has from north to south a publicly owned corridor that runs right through the middle of Gaza City, a very dense city. Nothing needs to be purchased. I think what the project yields for example in this case is a very practical revelation that this corridor exists and could be used in the short-term to help movement within Gaza. Let me finish by saying that one needs the vision of how that train will hook up in the long-term to the West Bank in order to know how to do it right now. You need both the long-term vision in order to inform what you do in the short-term.

MR. GORDON:

Let me hear from Jihad al-Wazir just on the questions being raised here.

MR. AL-WAZIR:

You know, one of the reasons I like this vision is that it really takes Palestinian statehood from the political statements into the realm of reality in the sense that President Bush has talked about the two state solution and a vision of a two state solution, but sometimes a conduit or a rail project that really provides that tactical solution on the ground. You're talking about the majority of this line is really on Palestinian territory. There is a small part that goes through Israel and the Negev Desert, which is a mostly unpopulated area within Israel. The rest of the rail line or the conduit is on Palestinian territories and is needed in daily life to attract investment, create possibilities for the future.

MR. GORDON:

Let me ask you, is anyone in Gaza, in the Strip, or in the West Bank, are Palestinians talking about this?

MR. AL-WAZIR:

Yes, yes they are. The people have seen the reports published in the paper. Some people scratch their head. Some people say it's a great idea. The real project as far as Gaza is concerned, there are already, it's not a new idea.

There are plans to do the rail in the Gaza. There were also suggestions prior to the Intifada for certain segments within the West Bank to be developed. This links all of these little projects together and adds a comprehensive economic as well as trade related as well as investment related and tourism related perception to the whole idea.

MR. GORDON: Let me put that same question to Ari Shavit. Are people in Israel talking about this plan?

MR. SHAVIT: There were reports about it in the paper, in my paper and some others. The professionals talk about it. I don't think it took over the attention of the majority of Israelis. Many people found it interesting. I'm afraid that local cynicism sometimes brought some sarcasm towards it. I think people were interested.

MR. GORDON: I think you both for taking a moment to be with us on the program. Ari Shavit, always nice to have you, thanks again.

MR. SHAVIT: Thank you.

MR. GORDON: Ari Shavit, columnist for the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz. Jihad al-Wazir, I think you for making time for us as well.

MR. AL-WAZIR: My pleasure. I listen to you in Gaza via satellite.

MR. GORDON: That's great to know. Jihad al-Wazir, Deputy Minister of Finance in the Palestine Authority. Our telephone number is 1-800-423-8255. We'll take our first call from Raleigh, North Carolina. Mohammed is joining us. Mohammed, thanks for calling.

MOHAMMED: Yes, thanks a lot for taking my call.

MR. GORDON: Yes.

MOHAMMED: I'm from the Middle East. I happen to be a Muslim. I think it's a wonderful idea. One has to start thinking in terms of what the future holds for the betterment of the people. I think vision is reality and conception is reality. In my view, it's a great beginning that one is beginning to think of what a Palestinian state will look like and basic infrastructure that it is supposed to have. I may be naive of all of the other nuances with respect to what the dispute is all about but you can never go wrong with thinking positively about the future of the country. That's all I have to say.

MR. GORDON: I think Doug Suisman that we heard much the same thing from Jihad al-Wazir, that there is something about seeing something physical that kind of changes one's imagination or thinking, right?

MR. SUISMAN: The response has been very moving, I have to say. The overwhelming most common response is that people will say this is the first thing I've seen in a long time that has given me hope because it's not just a promise in words

from a political leader. It's actually an image, a picture, a series of pictures that anyone can see and I believe understand because we strove to make it very comprehensible to anyone who might see it. When people can envision something, I agree with the caller and I thank him, a kind of reality does set in. I do want to say that on this trip to the region, we've met with a number of Israelis privately, some of them very influential Israelis. They are using words like "powerful" and "important" not in public and not representing the Israeli Government's position but personal responses. I can tell you an incident that occurred at the World Economic Forum in Jordan just over the weekend which my colleague Michael Shumbaum from Rand and myself attended. It's a great opportunity to meet leaders from all over the region from the King of Jordan to leaders of Egypt and Saudi Arabia and Israeli leaders as well, and of course, a strong representation from the Palestinian Authority. Shimon Perez was walking through the lobby and we had copies of our report and I took the opportunity to walk over to him and shake his hand. I said, "I'd like to offer you these reports from Rand." He looked at me and said, "Is this The Arc?" and I said it was. He asked, "Do you have the full report?" and I said, "Yes, it's here," and he said, "Thank you very much." As he walked away, his aide leaned over to me and said, "He loves it." What is that worth in the world of very tough political environment of Israel and of the region, I don't know. But on an anecdotal basis and on a one-on-one basis, I think we've struck a chord, that's all I can say. Whether that chord can resonate and have a positive effect, I don't know, but that would be a fondest hope and wish. We shall see.

MR. GORDON: Let's go back to our telephone lines. We're taking a call from Cairo in Egypt. Ray is joining us on the line from there. Ray, thanks for calling.

RAY: You're welcome. I just have a question. I wanted to know to what degree does this plan assume that settlements will stay and to what degree does it assume settlements will be removed?

MR. GORDON: Do you mean both in Gaza and in the West Bank, Ray?

RAY: Gaza will happen, perhaps. Moving Gaza will happen, but the West Bank is the key to this.

MR. SUISMAN: Thank you for asking. Of course, that's a critical question. Let me tell you what the first report says on which we predicate our design on the first report, which simply says, when you look at all of the various sectors of health, education, security, and so forth, there is a pretty simple formula that emerges: greater territorial contiguity, which is a diplomatic term, increases proportionally the chances of success of the Palestinian state. In other words, the more contiguous the West Bank is, the more likely it is to succeed. That is not a moral or political position, although it's very difficult to remain neutral in those areas or to have people assume that you're neutral.

That emerges from technical assessments such as if you don't have territorial contiguity, when a child is sick, the ambulance may have to go 15 miles to the hospital rather than 2 miles. The costs of all transactions go up when you have less contiguity. Someone trying to maintain public order and security may have to have two police vehicles rather than one because the area is divided up into two parts. The report is very clear. It says not on moral or political grounds but on technical or operational grounds of what it takes to run a country, greater contiguity is more likely to lead to greater success. Having said that, within the Arc plan, it's interesting; I have been quoted as saying, "Suisman admits that the settlements were ignored." This was no admission. We're very clear. We neither admitted it nor ignored them. What we said was that in developing the plan, we rolled the clock back to look at persistent patterns in the West Bank. Maybe we can come back to that after the break.

MR. GORDON: Doug Suisman is my guest this hour. He is Founder and Principal of Suisman Urban Design and his idea of a Palestinian State which goes by the name, "The Arc" is what we're talking about this hour. Is it premature to start thinking about those two states and what they would look like. We're interested in your thoughts. We're at 1-800-423-8255; that's 1-800-423-TALK. I'm Dick Gordon; this is "The Connection."

MR. GORDON: I'm Dick Gordon. You're listening to "The Connection." This hour, our guest is Dough Suisman. He is lead author of the project, "The Arc, a Formal Structure for a Palestinian State." If you'd like to see some images of what he has in mind, you can go to our website. We're at theconnection.org and there are links there to the report that Doug has done as part of the Rand look at a Palestinian State. It's kind of like, well, I'll use Doug's word. It is a modern infrastructure corridor that's kind of shaped like an arc, which is where the name comes from, from the north end of the West Bank coming down past Jerusalem and turning towards the Mediterranean into the Gaza area. There are people looking at it in Israel and in the Palestinian territories. People are talking about it here. We'd like to have you as a part of that. We're at 1-800-423-8255; to Mansfield, Massachusetts and John is on the line. Hi, John.

JOHN: Hi. I want to say first of all I think it's a great idea. I think we need a plan for the day after. We saw in Iraq how problems can come out without a plan. What's to keep us from implementing this now? I believe that if it's implemented even in small steps it would lead towards the day of a Palestinian State. I think having this in place would increase the chances of the state becoming a reality sooner and in a more viable position.

MR. SUISMAN: but that would mean, John, that there would be people in that part of the world who would campaign against putting it in place now because of the

number of people who are just principally opposed to the idea of two states there.

JOHN: I think just in small steps; a few of the towns in the West Bank are already there. They're not going anywhere. You'd think just having those would lead to that.

MR. GORDON: I don't know. Doug's over there talking to the people. Doug, what do you think?

MR. SUISMAN: I think the caller is just right. We have suggested that pieces of this could be built sooner rather than later if not immediately and that that is fine. Phasing is often a part of infrastructure plans as long as you know where you want to end up in the long-term. I agree. We have discussed this here and others have felt that this was a good approach to look at those pieces that might be done now while holding off on others that need to wait.

MR. GORDON: 1-800-423-8255, to Lexington, Massachusetts and Bob is with us. Hi, Bob.

BOB: Hi. Well, I'm calling because I think there is something unreasonable here in that people are forgetting about the fact that land in the West Bank was actually land that belonged to the Jewish people that was taken from them in the days when Arabs from the Arab peninsula moved eastward, went across the North African peninsula and made it over to Spain. The land in the West Bank actually belonged to the Jewish people and was never given back to the Jewish people. I don't see why anyone but the Jewish people ought to be deciding how to work out any arrangement.

MR. GORDON: You have such a range of views of people who feel as you do very strongly that that's Judaen and should not include any part of a Palestinian State up to many people who are saying no, that they have a historical right to it.

BOB: Is it the chicken or the egg. Actually, the Jewish people were there before the people from the outside –

MR. GORDON: Do you make the decisions based on the history or do you make the decisions in part based on the modern current day reality?

BOB: Well, I asked the people in Spain how they felt about it. You have a different standard for the people in Spain than the Jewish people in the West Bank.

MR. GORDON: You're not answering my question, Bob.

BOB: Well, neither are you. It should be the same standard. The people in Spain had a right to have their country back and the Jewish people have a right to have their country back.

MR. GORDON: It's often, Doug, that when we talk about different ideas for what a two state solution would look like or what Israel will look like 50 years from now that the conversation does wind up with really strongly held views about the

history of that land. Do you think that a plan, any plan, can navigate that kind of debate?

MR. SUISMAN: That's a tall order for any plan. I will say this: my experience here, which is limited and recent, but I've learned one thing in my travels here. When people start talking about history, I know that in a way our conversation is over. We're looking at the future. Our starting point is the roadmap, which is what the Russians, the Americans, and the Europeans have agreed is the future, which is an independent Palestinian State. It's the policy of the U.S. Government and is actually the stated policy of the Israeli Government at this point. Of course, people will disagree with that as is their perfect right. There are strong arguments all around. This is where we are. This is the policy of the international community. It's where we're headed so we're looking towards the future. Discussions about historical justification don't really help us in what we're trying to do.

MR. GORDON: I wonder if you find that recurrent criticism or cynicism is the word that I think Ari used in any way disheartening. The former mayor of Jerusalem said this is a fable that will just end up in the scrap pile of ideas under the title "wouldn't it have been nice but."

MR. SUISMAN: There is a multi-thousand year history of pessimists in the Middle East and many of them have good reason. I think it would be truly naive to be unabashedly optimistic because there are all kinds of challenges and impediments ahead. Nonetheless, if there isn't an optimistic perspective that sets out a vision, then there is no direction to steer it towards and the pessimists and cynics may be proven right in the long run. They will certainly be proven right if those who are capable of mustering an optimistic view do nothing and don't set forth an alternative roadmap, not a political roadmap but a physical roadmap that isn't just about policies and diplomatic language but really lays out a vision of what peoples' daily lives will be like. We keep hearing this again and again here. What will it do for the daily life of the Palestinian people? That's what we try to address, not diplomacy, not history, not politics.

MR. GORDON: Doug Suisman is my guest. He is the man behind the Rand Corporation's report, "The Arc: A Formal Structure for a Palestinian State." You can see pictures of it on our website, theconnection.org. Our number is 1-800-423-8255. let's rejoin our discussion about the plan and its place in politics today. To West Roxbury, Massachusetts next and Arif is with us. Hi, Arif.

ARIF: Good morning, how are you?

MR. GORDON: What do you think?

ARIF: I think I was born with this tragedy which we learned from school. I'm a Lebanese American. I live in West Roxbury but I do travel to the Middle

East quite often. As an Arab with honest mind and honest heart, I need to tell you something. For it to work, it will have to be like in the South African idea of a country where everyone is equal under the laws and religion doesn't come first; it comes third or fourth in terms of its importance. For a country in the Middle East to survive among the Arab world, it has to be more or less one of them. No boundaries, and no matter what happens, no boundaries no matter how we sketch it and how we program it and what engineer will draw it.

MR. GORDON: Arif, I'm wondering whether it is realistic when there are so many people looking at how those borders and boundaries would be drawn to imagine a state that has none at all and Palestinians and Israelis living together. Is that realistic?

MR. SUISMAN: No.

ARIF: The only realistic and only long-term solution; sometimes I shake my head and wonder where are the intelligent people who really know better.

MR. GORDON: Let me ask you a direct question. You've been listening to Doug Suisman's description of his idea. I'm wondering what you think about it.

ARIF: I think no idea will work unless it is an idea that is part of the whole. For a country to survive in the Middle East in the long-term, it has to be part of the Middle East in every sense of the word and not a religious entity. No religious entity will last in the Middle East as is. Take out Saudi Arabia. The Koran made it to be what it is.

MR. GORDON: Let me if I can go back to Doug on the question of who else has seen this. You mentioned that the Russians, the Americans, the European Union, and the UN, who are all a party the roadmap, have they looked at it? Has there been any conversation among that cortex?

MR. SUISMAN: Yes, with the exception of the Russians, who we hope to brief. We have been to Brussels where we briefed Javier Salan in a private meeting and staff members of the European Commission. We've been to Germany and briefed high level people in the foreign ministry. We've been to London and briefed Tony Blair's Government, the White House, the State Department. The briefing have been going on for several months before the release of the report at the end of April. That is a normal part of the process when Rand releases a report, particularly one of this sensitivity is to privately brief all of the interested parties beforehand.

MR. GORDON: 1-800-423-8255 is the number to join my conversation this hour with Doug Suisman as we talk about his plan for a Palestinian State. You can see the concept on our website at theconnection.org. Doug, there is one thing that I wanted to ask you about. I know that a lot of the original thinking and map making and tracing happened in your studio in Santa Monica and that as a

part of the process, when you had that design in mind, you returned to the region for I think the first time in some 30 years. Is that right?

MR. SUISMAN: That's right.

MR. GORDON: What was it like to take the idea the concept that was on paper and in your mind to both Israel and to the Palestinian territories and try to imagine it practically being applied. Was that encouraging, discouraging? What was it like?

MR. SUISMAN: It was a bit overwhelming as has been written, it's a bit hubristic to even imagine designing a country. It's certainly not something that I set out to do. We generally work on urban projects on a municipal scale.

MR. GORDON: We seem to have lost our connection with the *Jerusalem Post*. We'll get our engineer working on that. While we make that reconnection, let's go to Boston and Mihaus is joining us from there. Mihaus, I'm not sure that Doug is actually connected to us. I'll let you know as soon as he's back on the line. Thank you for calling. Tell me what your thoughts are.

MIHAUS: Well, I wanted to first of all thank you for having Doug on the program. My family is also from the Middle East. I think that it is a wonderful, wonderful endeavor and what it means to me is that here is a group of intelligent, educated people who have had the foresight to plan for a future generation. I think that many of the people who live there, and I have to mention that one of the earlier callers, a couple of them actually, were sort of separating the people and I think that's not necessary. They're just human beings and human beings that are in the middle of a mass psychological warfare, which is basically all that's been going on there for all of these years. They need to know that there is a future and that people in the global community think about them and have plans and can imagine them in a modern society with modern amenities that allows them to fulfill their obligations and to find their dreams and ambitions reachable. The people that are sitting there in these terrible houses that have been bombed and what have you that they actually can see that that the global community thinks that they have what it takes to be civilized even though the things surrounding them may say otherwise.

MR. GORDON: Have you seen an image of Doug's plan, Mihaus?

MIHAUS: I have not actually seen the plan itself. But I am a big fan of Edward Said and I remember several years ago there was an interesting article in *The New Yorker* where he was describing what it was like driving from Palestinian regions and how many hours it took along what perilous highways and things. So I was really while listening to Doug and you describe his plan. I have had a couple of E-mails from Egypt from different friends and rela-

tives about it. I was sort of seeing what Edward Said was describing and thinking that this is much more useful for everyone involved.

MR. GORDON: Doug is back with us. And in fact, I want to hear from Doug on the last point that you raised. When you are there and on the ground and looking at the corridors that might be and trying to imagine it, is there a sense from the people there that yes, that would be useful and that would make their lives better or do you get just as much don't talk to me about this?

MR. SUISMAN: Certainly not from the Palestinians, the Palestinians are immediately deeply engaged whenever we talk with them about this project. They understand immediately the ramifications of it. It helps them envision, as the caller just said very well, I'm sorry I didn't hear his full comments because we were cut off briefly, but what I heard I thought was perfectly well said, and that is very much what we were trying to do. The response, I can tell you last night that we met with the owners of *Al-Quds* Newspaper, which is the leading newspaper in the Palestinian territories, who were deeply moved I believe and enthusiastic about what they saw and planned to undertake some strategy to get this word out to the broad Palestinian public. It was quite a wonderful response.

MR. GORDON: As Israel turns to this wrenching moment of moving settlers out of the Gaza Strip, I'm wondering if there is not some concern in your mind; we're tight for time; I ask you to brief with your answer, but some concern that the Arc gets set aside and never does get brought back after those months of whatever is ahead.

MR. SUISMAN: After doing this for many years, I know that that risk is always there for large planning concepts. I have a feeling that though the Israelis are understandably focused on the Gaza disengagement now, I don't believe that the Palestinians will let go of this so readily.

MR. GORDON: Doug, thanks so much for being with us on the program.

MR. SUISMAN: It's been my pleasure.

MR. GORDON: Doug Suisman is founder of Suisman Urban Design. Earlier in the program we talked also with Jihad al-Wazir Palestinian Deputy Finance Minister and Ari Shavit, columnist with *Ha'aretz*