

The Arab-Israel Conflict: An Uncertain Future

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Abstract:

This paper examines a major turning points have characterized the Middle East since the end of the Second World War is Arab-Israeli conflict. In 1948, Zionist Jews living in the British mandate of Palestine declared the independent State of Israel. This ushered in strong sentiments of military-centered nationalism and engulfed the entire region in war. Following the four Arab-Israel War, it became clear that the military nationalists had failed to provide answers to the most pressing issues of the region. However, the establishment of the State of Israel created more than one million Palestinian refugees. Their conditions of life are now precarious. In terms of the human cost, it is estimated that the conflict has taken millions of lives. The settlement of millions of Arabs in Israel would immediately eliminate Israel as a Jewish state. This is the real aim of the Arab countries, to achieve by supposedly "peaceful" means what they could not achieve by unceasing violence in whole scale wars and daily terrorism.

Keywords: *Jewish State, Palestine, immigration, Zionists.*

By the end of World War I a few seeds of the future Arab-Israeli conflict had already been sown more serious ones were to take root during the mandate period itself. During the years immediately after World War I, when the split between the Arabs and the Jews over Palestine was still in its embryonic stage the possibility remained that determined, farsighted efforts could still build a bridge between the two communities. ¹ But neither the British nor the Arabs and Zionists were willing to make the required efforts and concessions. As the years went by Arab and Zionist attitude and actions became increasingly antagonistic and irreconcilable while British policies frequently did more to aggravate the deteriorating situation than to ameliorate it.

Origin of Jewish and Arab ties to Palestine:

The Jews had their first contact with their "promised land" about 1800 B.C., when Abraham led his Bedouin followers to the outskirts of the Palestine area, much of which was controlled by the Canaanites. Later, Abraham's descendants migrated to Egypt, where they multiplied and lived for several centuries before Moses led them out again. The Jews returned to Palestine around the twelfth century B.C., but they remained weak and divided until Saul united them into one Kingdom. Saul's successor, David, extended the country's borders and his son Solomon built the first Temple in the city of Jerusalem during the tenth century. This first United Kingdom, which lasted less than two hundred years before dissolving into the Kingdom of Judah and Israel, provided the religious and emotional basis for Jewish interest in Palestine so Zionist claims to the area. ²

As the world's third monotheistic religion, Islam shared many historical and religious traditions with Judaism and Christianity to the area, near the spot in Jerusalem, where Muhammad was believed to have ascended briefly to heaven; Jerusalem became the third city sacred to the Muslims after Mecca and Medina. Arab rule in the Palestine area ended in 1071. Although from that date parts or all of Palestine fell under the control of the Seljuk Turks (1071-1099), the Crusaders (twelfth and thirteen centuries), the Tartars and Mongols (1244-1260), the Mamluks of Egypt (1260-1517), and the Ottoman Turks (1517 to World War I), the majority of the inhabitants remained Arab and Muslim.³

Zionists movement and Balfour Declaration:

Zionist movement that has had as its goal the creation and support of a Jewish national state in Palestine, the ancient homeland of the Jews. Though the Zionist movement originated in eastern and central Europe in the latter part of the 19th century, it is in many ways a continuation of the ancient nationalist attachment of the Jews and of the Jewish religion in the historical region of Palestine, where one of the hills of ancient Jerusalem was called Zion.⁴

A political turn was given to Zionism by Theodor Herzl, an Austrian journalist who regarded assimilation as most desirable, but in view of anti-Semitism, impossible to realize. Thus, he argued, if Jews were forced by external pressure to form a nation, they could lead a normal existence only through concentration in one territory. In 1897 Herzl convened the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, which drew up the Basel program of the movement, stating that "Zionism strives to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law".⁵

Although Herzl thought in terms of mass migration of Jews to Palestine, he apparently did not consider the matter of future Arab-Jewish relations important. He seemed to feel that since the Arabs allegedly would benefit economically from the Jewish settlements, they would not object to the Jews' taking control. In fact, it was not until after 1908 that a few leading Zionists began to be aware of an Arab problem.⁶

In addition, Britain hoped to use Zionists support to help block the internationalization of Palestine, as required, at that time Britain was consolidating its plans for the Judaization of Palestine under its protection, it was simultaneously practicing a policy of hypocrisy and deception toward the Arabs. Thus, in a series of correspondence between Sir Henry Mc. Mohan --- the High Commissioner in Egypt --- and Sharif Hussain of Mecca (which came to be known as the Hussain-Mc. Mohan Correspondence) exchanged during 1915 and 1916, Britain promised to safeguard the independence of the Arab East, including that of Palestine, in Exchange for Arab participation in the war on the side of the Allies.⁷

However, the Hussain --- Mc. Mohan agreement and the entry of the Arabs into the war on the side of the Allies did not prevent the British from going ahead with executing its own plans. Thus, in 1916 Britain concluded a secret treaty with France known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement. This divided the Arab East between the two countries. Britain acknowledged the 'rights' of France in Syria and Lebanon and in return France acknowledged British 'right' to Iraq while Palestine was allotted to an international administration. In February 1917, this was to an international administration. On February 1917, this British government entered into negotiations with the Zionist organization over the scheme for establishing a national home for the Jews in Palestine. These negotiations, which were conducted without the knowledge of the Arabs

and the French (partners of the Britain in the Sykes-Picot Agreement), ended with the Balfour Declaration.⁸

In November 2, 1917 and after long negotiations, the British Government issued the Balfour Declaration according to which it promised to work toward the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people...."⁹ This was done by six British individuals (Members of the British War Cabinet) who issued in London, and thousands of miles away from Palestine to a foreign people who had never set root in it. The country was thus torn away from its own long history and from its indigenous population.

The Declaration ignored completely and deliberately the political rights of the majority of the population, referring to them as "civil and religious rights." This was at a time when, the Allies led by Britain were claiming that they were fighting in defense of the principle of the right of self-determination in the face of German-Turkish oppression.

Arab Nationalism and British Wartime Promises:

The British government seriously underestimated both the extent and the implications of the rise of Arab nationalism in and over Palestine and the determination of the Zionists to realize their goal of a Jewish state. In addition, it ignored the warnings made as early as 1918 by a number of official observers and experts that Britain's conflicting promises and policies would ultimately lead to strife between Arabs and Jews and to endless troubles in Britain in Palestine. Some suggested that one way of resolving Britain's conflicting promises to Arabs and Jews would be to establish one large Arab federation with a Jewish national home, being set up in the Palestine part of this federation.¹⁰ Since the Jews then in Palestine represented only about 10 per cent of the total population, and since there was little assurance that the Jews could ever become an actual majority in Palestine, this proposed solution, if effectively pressed by Britain, might very well have been acceptable to many Zionists, as well as too many Arabs. This early period --- before major problems and vested interests had had a chance to take root and when the Zionists were still calling for only a national home, not a sovereign state, and Arab opposition to Jewish immigration, was just beginning to develop --- was the most opportune time for Britain to have sought some fair and practical way of reconciling her conflicting commitments. By failing to take advantage of this singular moment in history to devise a consistent farsighted program for Palestine, the British helped to create future dilemmas. This led to Arab resentment and the Palestinian resentment which resulted in many intermittent clashes which grew over the years.

Paris Peace Conference and its aftermath:

The Zionist organization submitted their draft resolutions for consideration by the Peace Conference on 3 February 1919.¹¹ This shortly followed the Conference's decision that the former Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire should be separated from it and the newly convinced mandate-system applied to them.

The statement included five main points:

☆Recognition of the Jewish people's historic title to Palestine and their right to reconstitute their National Home there.

☆The boundaries of Palestine were to be declared as set out in the attached schedule.

☆The sovereign possession of Palestine would be vested in the League of Nations and the Government entrusted to Great Britain as Mandatory of the League.

☆Other provisions to be inserted by the High Contracting Parties relating to the application of any general conditions attached to mandates, which are suitable to the cases in Palestine.

☆The mandate shall be subject also to several noted special conditions, including a provision to be inserted relating to the control of the Holy Places.

However, despite these attempts to influence the conference, the Zionists were instead constrained by Article 7 of the resulting Palestine Mandate to merely having the right of obtaining Palestine citizenship: "The Administration of Palestine shall be responsible for enacting a nationality law. There shall be included in this law provisions framed so as to facilitate the acquisition of Palestinian citizenship by Jews who take up their permanent residence in Palestine."¹²

With the approval of the Supreme Council at Paris Peace Conference. President Wilson sent Dr. Henry C. King, president of Oberlin College, and Charles Crane, a businessman, to the Middle East for a report on the situation there. The King Crane Commission found that an overwhelming number of Palestine Arabs wanted Palestine to remain part of Syria with Feisal as the head of state. If a mandate were established, the Arabs insisted that it include Palestine as well as Syria and that it be temporary, with either the United States or Britain as the mandatory power. The commission also warned against "the extreme Zionist program me for Palestine of unlimited immigration of Jews, looking finally to making Palestine a Jewish state." Although the commission felt that some of the aspirations and plans of the Zionists were praiseworthy, it concluded that the Zionist proposals as a whole would be unfair to the Arab majority and would require the use of military force to be implemented. The commission recommended that Palestine be kept as part of Syria and that only a limited part of the Zionist program be carried out.¹³ The King-Crane report was not only to be ignored by the Peace Conference, but it was not even made public until 1922. Since this document gave more support to the Arab case than to the Zionist one, the conference's failure to consider the report or to publish it before the Palestine Mandate was set up by the League of Nations had the practical effect of aiding the Zionist cause and depriving the Arabs of favorable documentary evidence despite the Arabs had a more valid claim to Palestine than did the Jews.

Although, the British government seriously underestimated both the extent and the implications of the rise of Arab nationalism in and over Palestine and the determination of the Zionists to realize their goal of a Jewish state. In addition, it ignored the warnings made as early as 1918 by a number of official observers and experts that British's conflicting promises and policies would ultimately lead to strife between Arabs and Jews and to endless troubles in Britain in Palestine. Some suggested that one way of resolving Britain's conflicting promises to the Arabs and Jews would be to establish one large Arab federation.¹⁴ Since the Jews then in Palestine represented only about 10 per cent of the total population, and since there was little assurance that the Jews could ever become an actual majority in Palestine, this proposed solution, if effectively pressed by Britain, might very well have been acceptable to many Zionists as well as to many Arabs. This early period - before major problems and vested interests had had a chance to take root and when the Zionists were still calling for only a national home, not a sovereign state and Arab opposition to Jewish immigration, was just beginning to develop --- was the most opportune time for Britain to have sought some fair and practical way of reconciling her conflicting commitments. By failing

to take advantage of this singular moment in history to devise a consistent, farsighted program for Palestine, the British helped to create future dilemmas.

U N and the Arab-Israel Conflict:

After the World War II, the British foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, sought the solution of a "binational state" in the hope that concerted action by the United States might solve the problem and Britain would remain on good terms with both the parties. However, in 1947, Britain finally abandoned hopes of reconciling the interests with its own. One account of numerous pressures, Britain decided to hand over the whole problem to the United Nations.¹⁵

The British Government requested the United Nations Secretary General on 2 April 1947 to place the Question of Palestine on the General Assembly Agenda at its next regular session in September 1947.¹⁶ It asked the General Assembly to make recommendations, under article 10 of the Charter concerning the future government of Palestine, and to summon a special session for the purposes of constituting and instructing a special committee to prepare a preliminary study for the consideration of this question of the next regular session of the assembly.

Accepting the British proposal to future Palestine government, the UN General Assembly sent a special commission (UNSCOP) to Palestine to report on the situation, and its report issued on August 31, 1947, proposed two plans; a majority plan for the partition of Palestine into two states, one Jewish and the other Arab State with economic union, and a majority plan for a federal state. It provided that Jerusalem would be an international zone administered by the UN as the holy city for the Jews, the Muslims and the Christians. The Arabs refused to accept the majority plan which became a reality on 29th November 1947 when UN adopted its partition resolution.¹⁷

The mandate was relinquished by Britain in 1948 and the State of Israel was officially declared by the Jewish authorities in Palestine on 14th May 1948. This again was vehemently opposed by the Arabs and many Afro-Asian Nations. However, the two big powers USA and USSR subsequently recognized the newly created States of Israel. The creation of the State of Israel led to the perpetuation tension in the area when the Palestinians started pouring in neighboring Arab countries where they became refugees.

Arab-Israel War (1948):

Right after the establishment of the State of Israel, the first Arab-Israeli war took place which resulted in the defeat of the Arabs and loss of the portioned Palestinian State. This also resulted in a massive influx of Palestinian refugees in the neighboring states. Israel, after the war joined with area, double of its size.

In the early 1950s, it was the Palestinian refugees who made intermittent frontier incursions into the occupied territories, mainly from Syria and Jordan and to some extent from the Gaza Strip which since the 1948 war, had been administered by Egypt. Ben Gurion is looking Nasser as the principle threat, ordered a raid which on 28 February 1955 wiped out the small Egyptian garrison at Gaza. Now Nasser determined to secure adequate military strength and entered into the "Czech" arms agreement in August 1955 and result, substantial quantities of arms and planes began to arrive quickly. The threat to Israel now increased.¹⁸

The Suez Crisis of 1956:

Israel felt frustrated by the failure of its reprisal raids to deter border incursions and sabotages by the exiled Palestinian groups which in 1954 were not only sponsored by Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser but were also increased in their numbers. In an apparent, move, Israel decided to end these incursions in early 1956. Jamal Abdel Nasser in his bid for the leadership of the Arab World sought to head the confrontation with Israel stepping up the pressure by sealing Israeli Red Sea outlet by closing the Iran Straits and declaring a military alliance with Syria. The Israeli decision to take military action to halt the attacks by the Palestinians was determined by its --- determination to prevent the Egyptian forces from integrating new and sophisticated equipments of Czech and Soviet make into effective field units. Moreover, the nationalization of the Suez Canal in July 1956 by Egypt in retaliation to the withdrawal of Western capital from Egypt's Aswan High Dam projects resulted in the planning of joint Israeli, French and British attacks on Egypt.¹⁹

The Anglo-French forces invaded the Port Said area and advanced some miles along the Suez Canal. But in the face of the forthright condemnation of the UN and financial sanctions threatened by the USA. Both countries withdraw their troops. This also forced the Israelis to withdraw from Sinai. The Strait of Tiran was opened in Israel. The Palestinian attacks on Israel from Egyptians bases were also reduced due to the presence of UN forces in the Sinai region. Although war caused heavy military losses in Egypt it left Nasser in a much stronger political position.²⁰

There was a notable increase in Arab guerilla activity across the frontiers of Egypt, Jordan and Syria in the mid 1960s. The Palestinians formed a guerilla organization called Al-Fatah. Mutual accusation of frontier violations followed and President Nasser warned that he would have to activate the Egypt --- Syria joint Defense Agreement if Israel's aggression did not cease.²¹ For several years after the war the Arab-Israeli armistice lines remained relatively quiet. UNEF troops prevented any significant complications from arising along the Egyptian-Israeli lines. While more serious and more frequent incidents took place along the borders between Jordan and Israel and especially between Syria and Israel even these were usually minor. In later years, however border conflicts increased in number and intensity.

June 1967 War:

During the first three months of 1967 though some incidents occurred along the Jordanian-Israeli lines and al-Fatah used Jordanian and Lebanese territories as bases of operations for several raids the Syrian-Israeli frontier remained the most serious trouble spot. On the one hand Israeli persisted in sending tractors to plow disputed lands in the demilitarized zone, even though it was obvious that the Syrian would fire on them. Syria on the other hand continued to support Palestine refugee commando activities in order to undermine, Israeli's sense of security to discourage foreign investments and the Jewish immigrants and to encourage emigration from Israel even though it was clear that Israel would sooner or later react forcibly.

So, Nasser reacting to a supposed threat of an imminent Israeli attack on Syria imposed the blockade against shipping from Eilat, and demanded the evacuation of UN buffer force from the border areas of Sinai and signed a pact with Jordan, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia for placing the alliance forces under

Egyptian command. Israel adopted a low key posture, while secretly mobilizing reserves updating was planned and apparently demonstrating a concentration toward Jordan.

Fearing the Arab air threat both in terms of equipment and numbers, Israel attacked air fields in Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Iraq is destroying large number of planes on the ground and runways. The 1967 War was a turning point in Israel's success in capturing the West Bank, the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip.²² There were some fierce armored battles in the Sinai but Israeli forces were in position along the Suez Canal on 8 June. On the eastern front they took Sharm al-Shaikh without a fight, they reached the Jordan River on 7 June and entered consequent old Arab, Jerusalem on the same day. The 'June War' as it became known, war over; Israel had achieved a victory more sweeping than even that of 1956 and proved disastrous for Arabs in the true sense of the defeat.

The Yom Kippur War of 1973:

The Egyptians launched their attack on 6 October, 1973 at the occasion of Yom Kippur the most important festival in Israel.²³ The impregnable sand banks of the Bar-Lev line was broken down with powerful water jets throwing pontoon bridges across the Suez Canal and breaking into Sinai. By midnight that day, the Egyptian had 500 tanks and missiles across the canal and destroyed 100 Israeli tanks. The Syrians had also broken through the Israeli lines on the Golan Heights. The advances on both the Egyptian and Syrian fronts were initially successful, but when a ceasefire was enforced on 24 October --- Israel had not only repulsed the Egyptians and the Syrians but also annexed further territories.

Efforts towards Arab-Israel peace:

Arab-Israeli wars failed to bring a solution to the Palestine problem. The major incident which took place after the 1973 was the signing of the Camp David Accord in 1978 and the return of most of the Egyptian territory under the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, which was signed in March 1979.²⁴ Then, the entire Arab world, including the PLO, had opposed it tooth and nail and termed it as a conspiracy. The disappearance of one superpower (USSR), making the other all powerful, is said to be one of the major factors leading to the dramatic change in the attitude of the Arab world towards illegal and illegitimate Israel.

The parties had come to the negotiation table for the first time in Madrid in October 1991 at the joint initiative of the USA and USSR.²⁵ The purpose of Christopher's visit to Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel would be to convey to all the parties, the American commitment to advance the peace negotiations and to tell their views on how best to promote progress. It made clear that the US had no intention to impose a solution, but the leaders of the region can make peace successful.

Another step for Arab-Israel peace was a Palestinian Accord of 1993. On September 13 1993, the Gaza-Jericho autonomy accord was signed in Washington in the presence of the PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the US President Bill Clinton.²⁶

Meanwhile, in the other major peace treaty was signed between King Hussein and Yitzhak Rabin in Wadi Arabia near the Jordan-Israel border in the presence of American President Bill Clinton. The movement toward a Jordan-Israel reapeachment had started soon after the signing of the Israel-PLO accord in September 1993. In July 1994 Rabin and Hussein had signed a joint declaration,²⁷ declaring an end to 46

years of hostility and state of belligerency between the two countries. Ever since the 1967 War Jordan as a state had never fought a war along with Egyptian and Syrian forces. But technically and officially Jordan was at war with Israel since 1948. In that sense the two countries were the most amiable enemies in the Arab-Israeli hostility. In terms of leader to leader contacts also Jordan and Israel had met many times in the past, but under the veil of secrecy. From Jordanian viewpoint, an open contact with Israel was a taboo because of domestic and regional compulsions.

After pulling Jordan out of the Arab hostility camp, Israel will now have one major challenge ahead: seeking peace with Syria. Israeli officials have suggested that the treaty with Jordan could be a model for a similar arrangement with Syria. But Assad has said Syria would never agree and said that there can be no peace with Syria as long as the land is not returned fully.

However, there are many hurdles in completing the process that has begun after the Israel-Arab peace pact. Arab-Israeli animosities will not disappear over night. The agreement is binding to trigger certain changes of far reaching implications in this crucial region of the world, dominated by the centrality of the Israeli-Arab confrontation, in the post World War II era. Each state in the region and outside powers will need to realign and modify policies to bring about comprehensive peace in the entire Middle East rather than one brother segment of the area.

Palestine Problem and the PLO:

The Palestine problem has two interrelated facets. On the one hand it embodies a tragedy on the other it is the manifestation of the negation of the concept of self-determination. It is a problem of a whole person uprooted by armed forces from its homeland and condemned to permanent exile.

The tragedy of the usurpation of Palestine and the creation of Israel was not the sudden outcome of the partition plan of 1947 or the war of 1948.²⁸ It was the outcome of an old colonialist plan which found in Zionism the means for its realization. The history of the Palestine problem can be seen as the activities and counter activities to that old conspirational pact which in turn, has reflected a wide plot, including in its fold all the Arab and Afro-Asian countries.

In January 1964, an Arab Summit Conference, which was held in Cairo to discuss the question of the diversion of Jordan River Water, also accepted the principle of projection of the "Palestine entity."²⁹ Accordingly the Palestinian National Congress met in Jerusalem on 28 May, 1964 and the Palestine Liberation Organization was officially created. The Supreme organ of the PLO is the Palestine National Council (PNC), while the Palestine Executive Committee consisting of 14 members, deals with the day to day business. Fatah, the Palestine National Liberation Movement joined the PNC in 1968, and all the guerilla organizations joined the Council in 1969.³⁰

The PLO has offices and representatives in every Arab country, and in many non-Arab states such as the USSR, China, Cuba, Yugoslavia, Switzerland and Britain. In 1985 Spain became the first Western European country to grant full diplomatic status to a PLO representative.³¹ The "Rabat Arab Summit" in October 1974, affirmed the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent national authority, under the leadership of the PLO in its capacity is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, over all liberated territory. In November 1974 Yasser Arafat addressed the UN General Assembly,

and on 22 November 1974, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution acknowledging and reaffirming the PLO position.³²

Though the formation of the PLO was a step towards the liberation of Palestine it was not of much significance to achieve its goals, the creation of a Palestinian state, because the Arab regimes were more concerned about their own interests rather than those of the Palestinians. It was obligatory on the part of Egypt and Jordan to leave Gaza and West Bank in the greatest interest of Palestinian Liberation. These two areas could have been made bases of the Palestinians in order to launch the liberation struggle.

The frequency of anti-Israeli demonstrations and violent incidents in the occupied territories increased during 1987, in particular following the reunification of the PLO in Algiers in April. However, the authorities were not prepared for the wave of violent demonstration and strikes against Israeli raids, the worst since Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, that began on 8 December 1987 and we're continuing if at a lower level of intensity, in July 1990 by which time more than 1000 Palestinians had died. The PLO were not slow to exploit the unrest, or Intifada (uprising) as it came to be known, that the disturbances began more as a spontaneous expression of accumulated frustration at the constraints imposed by Israeli rule than as a politically motivated and coordinated demonstration.³³

At the outbreak of the second Intifada in September 2000, the political situation both internally in the OPT (the Occupied Palestinian Territories) and between the Palestinians and the Israelis had changed dramatically compared to that of 1987. The Oslo Accords had been signed in 1993 and a Palestinian quasi-state was in place in the West Bank and Gaza, run mainly by Fatah, the dominant faction in the PLO. The majority of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories were now in many respects governed by their own authorities.³⁴

Given its identification with the Oslo Peace Process, the dire situation puts the PA under severe pressure, facing dwindling legitimacy among Palestinians as a result of its inability to deliver liberation from occupation, and yet bound to the parameters of the Oslo Accords. Consequently, tensions increased sharply between the PLO and Israeli leaderships.

Both Israel and the Palestinian political leadership prepared military in the 1990s, creating an escalation in an already fragile situation. This preparation was promised on the logic of deterring the other side, but both the Israeli and the Palestinian leadership miscalculated. On the Palestinian side, several factors caused military preparation: Internal struggle among the factions (old versus young, local versus recently arrived leadership, Fatah versus Hamas) and the belief that building up military force might improve the bargaining situation.³⁵

But the continued expansion of Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank raised tensions among the Palestinians. In November 2012, in retaliation against the UN vote to upgrade the Palestinian's status, Israeli officials announced plans to develop settlements that would severely hinder the movement of people and goods between East Jerusalem and the West Bank. This move complicated efforts to map a future contiguous Palestinian state and raised tensions between Israel and the United States, which condemned settlement expansion. In January 2013, Palestinians set up a tent city in the area in protest; however, several days later, Israeli security forces evicted the protesters in a pre-dawn operation. A UN panel of experts found that Israeli settlement violated international law and called for an immediate halt to

all settlement activity. However, Israel continued settlement expansion and retroactively legalized three settlement outposts in the West Bank.³⁶

Fatah and Hamas Conflict:

Palestinian politics remained frustrated between Fatah and Hamas. The conflict also referred to as the Palestinian civil war and conflict of Brothers fratricidal war. The conflict is called Wakseh among Palestinians, meaning humiliation ruin and collapse as a result of self-inflicted damage began in 2006 after Hamas's legislative victories and has continued politically and sometimes military up to this day. The conflict which erupted between the two main Palestinian parties, Fatah and Hamas result in the split of Palestinian authority into two politics, both seeing themselves the true representatives of the Palestinian people --- the Fatah ruled Palestinian National Authority and Hamas Government in Gaza.³⁷

2011 Cairo Agreement:

Hamas and Fatah among other Palestinian groups held talks aimed at reconciling rival factions for the first time in two years in February 2010. In March 2010 on the Doha Debates television show representatives of Fatah and Hamas discussed the future of the Palestinian leadership.³⁸

On April 27, 2011 representatives of the two factions announced, an agreement mediated by Egypt to form a joint caretaker government with Presidential and legislative elections to be held in 2012.³⁹ On May 4, 2011 at a ceremony in Cairo the agreement was formally signed by the Palestinian Authority President Mahmod Abbas and Hamas leader Khalid Marshal. The accord provides for forming a transitional government of technocrats to prepare for legislative and presidential elections to the Palestinian Authority in one year. It also permits the entry of Hamas into the Palestinian Liberation Organization or holding of elections to its Palestine National Council decision-making body. The Palestinian Authority continues to handle security in the West Bank as does Hamas in Gaza. They will form a joint security arrangements. Israeli Prime-Minister Binyamin Netanyahu objected because Hamas still calls for the destruction of Israel. The US said the new Palestinian government must recognize Israel continue previous agreements with it and renounce violence.

In June 2011 following the unity accord negotiations proceeded regarding the formation of a unity government. Among the issues discussed were recognition of Israel, security, governance, relations with the West and economic policy. Hamas had initially indicated that it wishes to remain out of governance to focus on the more social work it conducted prior to its 2006 ascendancy but it later retracted this statement. Negotiations were derailed over the issue of who would assume the position of prime-minister after Hamas rejected the appointment of current Palestinian Authority PM Salam Fayyad.⁴⁰

However, the Cairo reconciliation agreement was not executed up until the withdrawal of the Hamas external office from Damascus due to the 2011-2012 Syria uprising. As a result the Doha deal was signed by the two parties.

2012 Doha Agreement:

The Doha deal was described as a step forward in the stalled implementation of the Palestinian reconciliation agreement signed in Cairo in April 2011. On April 1, the reconciliation implementation

however was described as stalling with no progress on the joint election scheme.⁴¹ In addition, the Fatah blamed Hamas that its security forces have set up roadblocks and arrested dozens of Fatah members and individuals in Gaza they whom accused of spreading rumors. In a letter to Binyamin Netanyahu on April 2012, Abbas expressed his regret that Israeli continued to oppose reconciliation, due to the growing activity by militant groups, repeated bombings of a pipeline that transports gas to Israel and Jordan.

Even then, distrust between the two sides delayed any real progress and there remained considerable skepticism about whether the Doha agreement could be implemented.

The Current Conflict: Democracy & Governance:

Israeli-Palestinian negotiations stalled throughout the year in mid-2012 amid upheaval in the Arab world, regional disinterest and American fatigue. Israeli reluctance to take risks in the face of changing regional dynamics and shifting Palestinian strategies contributed to this lack of progress. If unity agreements on both sides strengthened ruling coalition, they also contributed to the negotiation status.⁴²

Changing regional dynamics affected Israel's perception of its security situation. The daring push by the Palestinian Authority (PA) for recognition of Palestine as a sovereign state at the United Nations General Assembly during its September 2011 meeting inflamed tensions and passions. The move, driven by Palestinian frustration at perceived Israeli obstruction of a two-state solution, met strong opposition from the United States and Israel, who argued that such a unilateral move would undercut the spirit of peace making. However, it garnered sympathy, if not support, from European, Arab and other States, heightening Israeli concerns about growing diplomatic isolation.

The request for full recognition and Palestinian membership of the UN proved popular among Palestinians and other Arabs. PA President Mahmod Abbas, whose approval ratings had fallen in recent years, hoped to rekindle international support and regain diplomatic traction. Several factions, including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine backed the proposal. Hamas, accusing Abbas of relinquishing rights to pre-1967 territory, opposed the bid, but stated that it would not get in the way of the establishment of a Palestinian state.⁴³

The statehood campaign met total and relentless Israeli opposition. Since the Palestinian bid had enough votes at the UN General Assembly. Israel focused its efforts on the Security Council, hoping that the vote-yielding Western States would end the process. The United States put pressure on the Palestinian leadership to return to negotiations with Israel and commit to negotiations to achieve Palestinian statehood. The US Congress passed resolutions denouncing the initiative, demanded that the administration use its veto at the UN to block the Palestinian motion and threatened to withdraw US aid. As a result, the United States stated that it would oppose the bid. Some European states tried to broker a compromise that would have the PA accept status as an observer rather than a full-member state.⁴⁴

Supported by the leaders international governments and private funders scores of peace building organizations have worked for two decades to foster cooperation and trust between Israeli and Palestinians. However, the issue of Israeli settlement expansion remained a non-starter for the Palestinians, increased Israeli-Palestinians tensions. Serious violations of International law continued since 2012 in Israel and in the West Bank and Gaza. Renewed armed conflict between Israel and Hamas and armed groups in Gaza from 2012 to present day involved unlawful attacks on civilian by both sides.

Past experience also revealed that although some progress was made through US mediation, the negotiations failed to produce an agreement and nothing indicates that the resumption of the negotiations under US auspices would lead to different results. As such, it has become increasingly clear that only international intervention would provide the practical channel for peace negotiations and motivate or incentivize both sides to come to terms with the inevitability of coexistence. Indeed, the two state solutions remains the only viable option that allows for peaceful coexistence, on which any new initiative must be based.

Conclusion:

As a matter of fact, according to my point of views long-term solution for the Arab-Israeli dilemma would be the establishment of a federal union of the Arab states and Israel, because peace treaties between sovereign states frequently leave many actual and potential problems and dangers. For example, since a peace settlement would not eliminate the unreliable balance of power system, it would leave each side constantly worried about its security. The Arabs would always be fearful of the effects of any large-scale immigration into Israel on her military power and of continued economic and political support for Israel from world Jewry and the West. The Israelis, in turn, would remain forever concerned about the superior manpower and resources of the Arab world and about every move which might bring about closer Arab unity and increase Arab military capabilities. Competition for arms and allies would never cease. Major obstacles to the uninhabited movement of persons and goods across national boundaries, to the full exploitation of the region's water and other resources, and in the general economic development of the area as a whole would continue to exist. The position of the Arabs in Israel and the Jews in the Arab countries would remain precarious. The threat of incidents and even of war would persist. All parties would constantly be tempted to disregard those particular peace terms which hampered the attainment of their national ambitions. Only a federation would eliminate most, if not all of the complications and hazards which would certainly follow in the wake of just another peace settlement; only a federation could ensure lasting peace and security for both the Arabs and the Israelis.

In any event, so long as ignorance and misunderstanding persist, so long as passions are inflamed and two extreme nationalisms continue to be relentlessly pitted against each other, and so long as no determined and constructive efforts are made --- especially through the UN and quiet diplomacy --- to reduce gradually the scope and intensity of Arab-Israeli animosity, then not only a federation but peace itself in the Middle East will remain only a forlorn hope and dream.

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