

Global Perspectives

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World Issues Paper- The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

When thinking of terrorist actions, what exactly do you think of? Just imagine yourself in a place where bombs can turn up inside the strangest of places like inside a watermelon on the seat of a bus or inside a drink bottle being hurled at a pub. Malls getting bombed everyday and having to keep your child inside at all times because it seems to be the safest places, but it can still be bombed as well. This may not be an everyday thing in the United States but lately they happen to the people of Israel and Palestine almost every day. Let us travel back not to long ago, with what started out as a disagreement regarding land became violent. The countries' leaders had made attempts at armistice, but both sides were unable to agree on anything. My paper is going to cover three major points: one, where the United States stands in this war that is being waged. Two, how this whole thing started and why, and finally how I believe this dispute is going to end.

First and foremost, I am going to speak about where the United States stands amidst all this. Both the United States and the European Union believe that they share a common vision of the two states, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace and security. President Bush spoke at a White House news conference with European Union (EU) Council President Jose Aznar and EU Commission President Romano Prodi, after

three and a half hours of talks with them. The talks were part of the annual summit between the United States and the European Union. President Bush also said that the United States wants to work with the Palestinian people "to build a Palestinian state that both lives at peace with Israel and lives up to the best hopes of its people." He said it was important for Arafat to show the world "that he's capable of leading" his people toward peace and away from violence.

Secondly, how did this all start? Well, on one side (Israel) of the issue we have those who believe that God has given Palestine to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, a gift made in perpetuity. For Christians, Israel's original occupation of Palestine was commanded by God, as was the destruction of the original population. Because of this, Christians around the world often hold a special place in their hearts for Israel and usually helped the Zionists settle Palestine, leading to the creation of the modern Jewish state and strong support from Western nations. For some Jews, the religious dimension no longer matters, yet Palestine remains their historical homeland. For some Christians, God's promises to the Jews were made null and void through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Again, whether their theology gives the Holy Land a special position in God's eyes or not, most Christians agree that Palestine is the ancestral land of the Jews. On the other side (Palestine), the Jews were not the original residents of Palestine. Abraham and his descendants lived there for a time, spent 400 years in Egypt, and returned as conquerors, driving out the natives, when not committing all out genocide. The history of Israel records times when the Jews were taken into exile and their land abandoned or given into the hands of others. Even before the time of Jesus a

great issue among Jews was how to deal with Samaritans, those who came to live in Palestine while the Jews were in exile. Following the fall of the Jewish state in the first century, Jews dispersed through the known world, retaining their identity wherever they settled. Palestine was taken in turn by the Moslems, liberated by Crusaders, and reverted to local rule during intervening centuries. Then came the Zionist movement, a humanitarian response to the pogroms Jews had experienced for centuries, followed by the creation of the modern state of Israel. So, in a nutshell, the problem is two groups with different but legitimate claims to the same land. And neither side is behaving particularly well.

Both sides have arguments to back their claims. The Israelis argue that they were in that land since ancient times and that it is their ancestral home. Also, they site the Torah and Bible which claims that Israel is the eternal home of the Jewish people. From the start of the Zionist movement, their goal was to migrate into Palestine as much as possible. Once Israel was formed, the Israelis were fighting for survival. They wanted to be recognized and live in peace after 1948.

The Palestinian argument is just as sound as the Israeli one. They too had a presence in the land in ancient times, just not as “numerous” as the Jewish had. They made the land their sovereign home with the Arab conquest 638 A.D.. Israel’s argument for the occupied lands it has today is that it won them “fair and square.” Well, Palestinians argue that they won the land which is now Israel “fair and square” in 638 A.D. and that it was stolen from them. They have no “country” per se. They want a place to call their own.

The conflict is a brain-braking puzzle that seems impossible to resolve, especially when it comes to the question of land and when the question grows to include participation of the entire world. At this point every move becomes dangerous and comes close to the domino effect, when taking away one peace of domino may trigger the entire flow of the consequences.

Finally what I believe is going to be the solution to this dilemma, which seems to have no end. There was a story about a knot the Gordian knot that I found was very interesting and could be applied in this situation. The father of gods had intended that when it came time for the people to select a king, they must choose the first person to ride up to the temple of Zeus in a wagon. Gordius innocently fulfilled the oracle and was made king. In any event, Gordius seems to have done very well. One of his first acts was to dedicate his wagon to Zeus and to place it near the temple, the yoke tied to the pole by an intricate knot of cornel bark. Another oracle declared that anyone who succeeded in untying the knot would be the conqueror of all Asia. After hearing this kings and princes around the world came to tried and untie this knot. Many tried and none succeeded because both end point were deep inside the knot and if you didn't know where to start then how could you finish, until Alexander the Great arrived. He stared at the knot for a while and cheated the oracle by cutting the knot with his sword instead of untying it. Zeus honored his initiative by making the prophecy come true. Alexander did indeed conquer all of Asia. What does this have to do with the Israel and Palestine conflict? Well both countries have tried to reach an agreement and have not be successful in doing so and there is no one who can help them reach an agreement. They are the princes and the

land is the knot. In my opinion, another country is going to come in and say “you know what the land is mine” and he is going to take it and start the third world war.

In conclusion, I have spoken about where the United States government stands in this predicament, how it started, and how I believe it will end. There are several theories but I stand by mine the most because it to me it seems rational and very likely of occurring, the only thing is the consequences that may come after that happens because both countries as we know have no problem committing terrorist acts.

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