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ISRAELI – PALESTINIAN WAR: THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE KEEPING MISSION

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Abstract

This paper investigates the role of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Israeli - Palestinian war. The UN has played a significant but limited role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. UN peacekeeping missions have helped to maintain cease-fires, provide humanitarian assistance and fostering diplomatic dialogue between the parties, but have been unable to resolve the underlying political issues. In the current war, the UN's role has been further limited, but it remains committed to supporting peace in the Middle East. The purpose of this study is to offer empirical insight on the influence of the UN peace keeping missions on the Israeli - Palestinian war. The study used a descriptive research approach and qualitative analysis to evaluate the peace keeping operations and missions of the UN on the war and their impact in de-escalating and resolving the conflict between the two States. An extensive investigation of UN peacekeeping strategies in Israel and Palestine, including those for protection, de-escalation, emergency services, food assistance, healthcare, and humanitarian corridors, were part of the study's qualitative analysis. The study examined how well these initiatives work to meet urgent humanitarian needs while also promoting diplomatic peaceful resolution of the war. The paper utilized secondary sources of data from the literature, empirical field research, and information from national and international organizations, including journal articles, reports on the Global Security Goals of the United Nations, online publications and papers. The Liberal Institutionalism theory and the Peacekeeping Theory were adopted to analyze how international institutions, like the United Nations, can promote peace and cooperation and also analyze the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions in maintaining ceasefires, providing humanitarian assistance, and fostering diplomatic dialogue between the parties, and examined the principles, strategies, and challenges associated with UN peacekeeping operations in conflict zones, and also evaluate the specific UN mandates and tactics employed in the Israeli-Palestinian context. The study found that UN peacekeeping missions has played a significant role to de-escalate the conflict between the two States, such as cease-fires and humanitarian aid. However, its long-term goal of conflict resolution remains farfetched. Thus, recommends that the UN should ensure that peacekeeping operations and missions are aligned with long-term or complete desolution of the war. This will significantly help to resolve the issue of conflict between the parties and foster peaceful coexistence.

Keywords: United Nations, Peace Keeping, Conflict Resolution, De-escalation, Peace Initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations has been involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since its inception in 1948. The UN also has a number of peacekeeping missions in the region, including the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). In 1947, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to partition Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. This resolution was rejected by the Arab states and the Palestinians, and led to the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

In response to the war, the UN Security Council established the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in 1949. The first UN peacekeeping mission in the region was the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), which was established to monitor the cease-fire and Armistice Agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbors. UNTSO remains active today, and it is the longest-running UN peacekeeping mission in history. UNTSO is the oldest peacekeeping mission in the world, and its mandate is to observe and report on cease-fire violations and other border incidents in the Middle East. UNTSO also provides assistance to other UN peacekeeping operations in the region.

The UN Security Council has passed numerous resolutions on the conflict, calling for a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders. The role of the UN peacekeeping mission in the Israeli-Palestinian war is complex and challenging. The UN missions are not authorized to use force to enforce peace agreements, and they often operate in hostile and dangerous environments. However, the UN missions play an important role in monitoring ceasefires, investigating violations of international law, and providing humanitarian assistance.

In addition to UNTSO, the UN has also deployed a number of other peacekeeping missions to the region over the years. These missions have been tasked with a variety of tasks, including monitoring cease-fires, protecting civilians, and supporting the implementation of peace agreements. Some specific examples of the role of UN peacekeeping missions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are;

UNTSO- The UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) was established in 1948 to monitor the cease-fire and to supervise the implementation of the armistice agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The mission has over 150 military observers from over 20 countries. It also investigates ceasefire violations and reports its findings to the UN Security Council. UNTSO operates in Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt.

In addition to UNTSO, the UN has established a number of other peacekeeping missions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict zone. These include:

UNIFIL- The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was established in 1978 to help restore peace and security in southern Lebanon after the Israeli invasion of that year, and to help restore Lebanese government control over southern Lebanon. It helps to maintain peace and security along the Israel-Lebanon border. It also monitors the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon and helps to prevent the infiltration of armed groups into Lebanon. The mission has over 10,000 troops from over 30 countries. UNIFIL operates in a buffer zone between Lebanon and Israel. UNIFIL remains in place today, and its mandate has been expanded to

include monitoring the Blue Line, which is the border between Lebanon and Israel.

UNSCO- The UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, works to promote peace and dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. UNSCO also coordinates the activities of UN agencies, funds, and programmes in the region.

UNEF- The UN Emergency Force (UNEF) was established in 1956 to oversee the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip following the Suez Crisis. UNEF was withdrawn in 1967, but was re-established in 1973 to monitor the cease-fire between Israel and Egypt after the Yom Kippur War. UNEF was finally withdrawn in 1979.

UNDOF- The UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) was established in 1974 to monitor the cease-fire between Israel and Syria on the Golan Heights. UNDOF remains in place today.

The UN peacekeeping missions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict zone have played an important role in maintaining cease-fires, preventing further conflict, and providing humanitarian assistance to civilians. However, these missions have also been criticized for their inability to resolve the underlying political issues that drive the conflict.

In recent years, the UN peacekeeping missions in the region have faced increasing challenges. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become more complex and intractable, and the region has become more unstable. The conflict has become more fragmented, with a growing number of actors involved. This has made it difficult for UN peacekeeping missions to operate effectively. The UN missions have also been criticized for their inability to prevent violence and for their perceived bias towards Israel.

Despite these challenges, the UN peacekeeping missions continue to play an important role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The missions provide a neutral presence in the region and help to maintain a fragile peace, the UN has also been involved in efforts to promote peace and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. In 2007, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1754, which endorsed the two-state solution to the conflict and called for the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. The UN missions also provide humanitarian assistance to civilians caught up in the conflict and development support to the Palestinian people. UN agencies, funds, and programmes work to provide food, water, shelter, healthcare, and education to Palestinians in need. They also work to promote economic development and build capacity in the Palestinian territories.

In the context of the current Israeli-Palestinian war, the UN peacekeeping missions have been working to de-escalate the conflict and provide humanitarian assistance to civilians. UNSCO has been engaging with the parties to the conflict and key stakeholders to encourage a ceasefire and a return to dialogue. UNTSO has been monitoring the ceasefire and investigating violations of International law. UNIFIL has been working to maintain stability along the Israel-Lebanon border in southern Lebanon and to prevent the conflict from spreading. However, neither of these missions has been able to prevent the ongoing violence between Israelis and Palestinians.

The UN has also been involved in diplomatic efforts to end the war. The UN Security Council has issued a number of resolutions calling for a cease-fire, but these resolutions have been ignored by both sides. The UN Secretary-General has also been engaged in

shuttle diplomacy between Israel and Palestine, but these efforts have so far been unsuccessful.

The UN's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is likely to continue to be limited as long as the two sides are unwilling to negotiate a peaceful resolution. However, the UN remains committed to supporting peace in the Middle East, and will continue to work with both Israelis and Palestinians to achieve a just and lasting peace.

CONCEPTUAL ELUCIDATION

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is widely considered as one of the most intractable conflicts of our time. Intractable conflict is distinguished by its longevity, high violence and deep societal impact, particularly upon societal beliefs, those fundamental ideas held in common by society that shape society's view of the world and conduct. Whereas all conflict inevitably entails war-supporting or belligerent societal beliefs, intractable conflict pushes these to excess. As a result, the peaceful resolution of intractable conflict is so much more challenging. A society steeped in belligerent beliefs has difficulty to accept or even conceive of peaceful conflict settlement. The formal resolution of intractable conflict, therefore, often requires an accompanying process of mutual reconciliation between the communities involved, whereby popular beliefs in each society transform from belligerent perceptions to peace-supporting ones.

UN's Peace Keeping Mission

The Israeli-Palestinian dispute reaches back to over one century ago; it has been characterized by frequent violence and large-scale war. By all accounts, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has shown itself to be highly intractable. Decades of fighting and talking alike, have hardly managed to sway it off course. The mental and physical anguish visited upon the Israeli and Palestinian people by this dreadful state of affairs is evident to all, and in particular to the protagonists themselves. The benefit of peaceful relations between Israelis and Palestinians hardly needs explaining.

This study is concerned with the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by the United Nations. Its starting point is the notion that ordinary Israelis and Palestinians have a crucial role to play in the settlement of their struggle. However it is achieved and irrespective of its final outcome, the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must involve the mutual reconciliation of the two people. Without it, the continuation of violence is a certainty. Any peace agreement that lacks the genuine support of the public on each side is bound to run foul of continued resistance and thus, sooner or later, to come undone. Moreover, the direct involvement of the Israeli and Palestinian people in efforts to reach a peace settlement might also contribute to its attainment. If the mutual reconciliation of Israelis and Palestinians is indispensable to a peaceful settlement of their conflict, then the reconciliation must somehow be achieved. At a minimum, mutual reconciliation suggests the reciprocal embracing of Israelis and Palestinians of the principle of peaceful coexistence based on the joint recognition of their national rights. This implies a profound shift in national mentalities on both sides. Societal beliefs of enmity and belligerence dominant in each community would have to be discarded in favour of more liberal views of one another and broad support for peace. For such a transformation to occur, the deliberate, concerted efforts of groups and individuals acting to reshape social ideation through confronting established mentalities with alternative views are necessary. Peaceful societal beliefs hardly flourish of their own account in times of war, and even less

so when war is so protracted and complete that it engages society as a whole on a daily basis for decades on end.

The Israeli-Palestinian agreement of September 1993 represents a fundamental breakthrough in the long-standing Arab-Israeli conflict. The crucial element of this breakthrough is the mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO, expressed in the exchange of letters between the late Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat and in the opening of formal negotiations between the two sides. Israel's recognition of the PLO constitutes acceptance of Palestinian nationhood and signals—to Palestinians, to Israelis, and to the rest of the world—that the most likely eventual outcome of the negotiations, after a peaceful transition period, will be a Palestinian state... PLO recognition of Israel constitutes a formal acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the State of Israel within its pre-1967 borders, and opens the door to the recognition of Israel by Arab states and acceptance of its rightful place in the region.

In addition to censorship, the representation of daily events by Israeli and Palestinian news organizations generally suffers from a pronounced national bias. In reporting the news, both the Israeli and Palestinian media take a highly nationalistic and hence partial view of matters, with each eagerly endorsing its national stance, bitterly denouncing that of the other, and diligently disregarding all that might suggest otherwise. Thus, while the Israeli press typically exonerates the Israelis and vilifies the Palestinians, the Palestinian media glorifies the Palestinians and demonizes the Israelis, and both overlook evidence to the contrary.

The reporting of Israeli actions with regard to the Palestinians in the Israeli press is generally couched in innocuous language, which obscures and deforms their actual nature, and transforms them into normal justifiable measures under the circumstances when in fact they are nothing of the sort. As such, Israeli military operations in the West Bank and Gaza are typically presented as defensive reactions to Palestinian violence, the confiscation of Palestinian lands and destruction of Palestinian homes becomes security engineering work or widening of the margins of settlements, and the assassination of Palestinian militants and bystanders, against all international legal norms, are transformed into selective strikes. Moreover, all Israeli newspapers generally unquestionably accept the version of accounts put to them by the Israeli army and transmit these to the public without further verifying their accuracy or at least indicating that they are in fact official accounts. Lastly, notably absent from the Israeli press are questioning regarding the reasons for the current situation, considerations of the desperate plight of Palestinians and its constant deterioration under the weight of Israeli retaliatory measures to the intifada, and inquiries into the excesses of the Israeli army.

In contrast, the Israeli press stigmatizes the Palestinians by depicting them as aggressive, inhuman and untrustworthy. Any form of Palestinian civil disobedience is automatically treated as violence and aggression, violence, even of the stone throwing kind, is hastily assimilated to terrorism, and any attack against Israeli soldiers or civilians is taken as evidence that the Palestinians have no desire for peace. The Israeli press report stories telling that the Palestinians use their children as human shields and send them out to be shot for the sake of publicity or that Palestinian medical staff refuse to evacuate the injured again in order to attract international attention and sympathy. Palestinian victims of violence are treated as faceless numbers or merely as Palestinians or Arabs, but not as individuals with common lives worthy of empathy. Whereas Israelis live in cities and communities, Palestinians live in areas

and places, and even Palestinian citizens of Israel are not Israelis but Arab residents. Lastly, Palestinian views with regard to incidents, when presented at all, are prefaced by expressions of reservation which implicitly raise doubts about their authenticity and hence of the reliability of their authors. In the Palestinian media the situation is almost exactly the opposite. The Palestinian press bestows its acclamations on Palestinians, who are portrayed as a victimized people heroically struggling on. Thus, Palestinian attacks on Israeli soldiers or civilians are approvingly termed legal resistance and the perpetrators of these attacks are celebrated as martyrs.

The Israelis, in contrast, are cast as the ruthless aggressors and occupiers. Any Israeli action against Palestinians is trumpeted as an undisputable display of aggression, and the Israeli army is commonly referred to as soldiers of the occupation, killers or child killers, while Israelis in general are labelled Zionists. To underscore the ruthlessness of the Israelis and the victimization of the Palestinians, the unsubstantiated use of prohibited weapons and marshalling of extravagant plots are routinely attributed to the Israeli army, and any unfortunate spectacular incident is reason enough for levelling another accusation. Moreover, even when these charges are clearly shown to be false, they are never retracted or corrected. The partial reporting of events is another mark of national bias in the Palestinian news media. For example, Israeli retaliations against Palestinian attacks are widely reported but the sequence of events that triggered the retaliation is not. As well, any international condemnation of Israeli actions is reported in full, but similar condemnations of Palestinian conduct, even when emanating from the very same source, fail to be mentioned. Most flagrantly, though, all Palestinian ills are blamed on the Israeli occupation, but the transgressions of Palestinian authorities such as the blatant abuse of power and the miscarriage of justice are wilfully overlooked.

Besides censorship and national bias, the third prominent defect that characterizes the reporting of news by the Israeli and Palestinian media is widespread sensationalism. In this context, sensationalism refers to the deliberate presentation of current events in an exaggerated, emotional manner designed to attract and exacerbate public emotions. Like censorship and national bias, sensationalism interferes with and distorts the coverage of news. Because it seeks to play on and ultimately inflame emotions, sensationalism favours the coverage of extreme, dramatic events at the expense of other more modest though more relevant ones, and presents these in the most melodramatic and shocking manner, rather than in a pondered way that might be more conducive to reflection. In many ways closely linked with national bias, sensationalism is rife in the Palestinian press. Coverage of frictions, especially of violent incidents such as clashes between Palestinian youths and the Israeli army and the death of children, is attributed overwhelming attention in the Palestinian news media. Since the beginning of the war, Palestinian newspapers and TV have devoted numerous pages and much footage to the depiction of the goriest scenes of the war. The main Palestinian newspapers often carry photos of clashes and martyrs on the front page while gruesome photos of dead and injured Palestinians accompanied by emphatic headlines and commentaries praising the intifada and its martyrs and urging them on, fill several pages. Palestinian TV routinely shows dramatic scenes of violence, which it transmits repeatedly throughout the day, often in a décor of nationalistic poems or nationalistic music for greater effect.

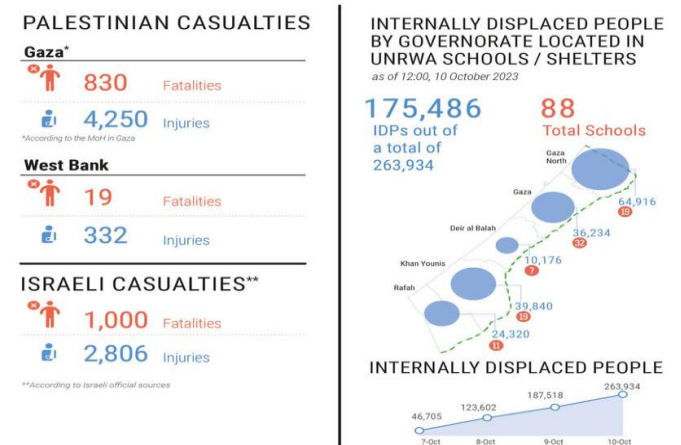
As in the Palestinian press, sensationalism is also very much a part of the coverage of events by the Israeli news media. The reporting of attacks against Israeli soldiers and civilians by the Israeli press is largely comparable to the coverage of clashes and violence by the Palestinian media. Photos and footage of victims, blood and mourning frenzies are spread over multiple newspaper pages and routinely shown on TV for hours on end, all accompanied by agitated eyewitness accounts and editorials dramatizing the situation and calling for vengeful retaliation against Palestinians militants with all available means.

As highlighted, the role of the news media is to inform the public about current events and related matters. In times of conflict, and particularly protracted conflict where national survival is often thought to be at stake, current events take on a special importance. As the main social conduits of relating the news to the public, the news media has considerable influence in shaping the latter's view of the conflict. Depending on the stories it tells, the news media may reinforce established war-supporting societal beliefs, inevitably dominant during conflict, or it may challenge them. In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Israeli and Palestinian news media clearly reinforce belligerent societal beliefs. Censorship, national bias and sensationalism, three of the main salient features of the Israeli and Palestinian press, all work to bend the news in favour of established warsupporting beliefs. A P2P programme in the realm of the news media would seek to reverse this situation, or at least attenuate it to the greatest extent possible.

Reasons For Peace Keeping Missions

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Peace Keeping Missions of The United Nations in The Israeli - Palestinian War



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Liberal Institutionalism: This framework emphasizes international institutions, like the United Nations, and how they can promote peace and cooperation. Liberal Institutionalism also analyze the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions in maintaining ceasefires, providing humanitarian assistance, and fostering diplomatic dialogue between the parties.

Peace keeping Theory: This theory helps in Analyzing the role of United Nations peacekeeping missions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the lens of Peacekeeping Theory, by examining the principles, strategies, and challenges associated with UN peacekeeping operations in conflict zones.

Application

Liberal Institutionalism asserts that international organizations provide a framework for peaceful conflict resolution. By applying Liberal Institutionalism theory, you can gain insights into how the United Nations, as an international institution, contributes to efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and maintain peace in the region; by analyzing the role of United Nations peacekeeping missions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the lens of Liberal Institutionalism theory focuses on how international institutions, like the UN, can promote cooperation, peace, and the resolution of conflicts and also analyze the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions in maintaining ceasefires, providing humanitarian assistance, and fostering diplomatic dialogue between the parties. and examine the principles, strategies, and challenges associated with UN peacekeeping operations in conflict zones, and also evaluate the specific UN mandates and tactics employed in the Israeli-Palestinian context.

Peacekeeping Theory on the other hand, examines the principles, strategies, and challenges associated with UN peacekeeping operations in conflict zones. And evaluates the specific UN mandates and tactics employed in the Israeli-Palestinian context. It also involves examining the principles, strategies, and challenges associated with UN peacekeeping operations in conflict zones. This includes;

1. Peacekeeping Theory emphasizes the core principles of UN peacekeeping, such as consent of the parties, impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defense.
2. Conflict-Specific mandates of UN peacekeeping missions in the region, includes; monitoring ceasefires, facilitating negotiations, and protecting civilians.
3. Strategies and Tactics like promoting dialogue, building trust between the conflicting parties, and implementing confidence-building measures.
4. Operational Challenges such as security threats, limited resources, and political complexities. This can impact the ability of the missions to fulfill their mandates.
5. UN peacekeepers play a vital role in protecting civilians, including refugees and vulnerable populations, in the conflict. With a record number of success.
6. UN peacekeepers engage in conflict resolution and diplomatic efforts. By facilitating negotiations, promoting dialogue, and supporting diplomatic initiatives aimed at resolving the conflict.

By applying Peacekeeping Theory, you can gain insights into the specific strategies, challenges, and outcomes of UN peacekeeping missions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and assess their contributions to peace and stability in the region.

The UN and The Israeli - Palestine Conflict

Of all the notable problems in the world, none has engaged the attention of the United Nations more, for a longer time, and with less success than the Israel-Palestine conflict. The Israel-Palestine conflict is practically as old as the United Nations. A major part of the history of the United Nations is thus a history of the Israel-Palestine conflict. And yet no conflict threatens as sure to spark a global nuclear war with all its catastrophic consequences for mankind today as the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The United Nations have since 1947 been dealing with the Israeli - Palestine problem, under the cover of the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, despite its efforts to resolve the conflict, there have been

five major wars in the region, including the recent 2023 war; and the situation looks as grim and explosive today as ever. Indeed new factors --- political, economic, psychological and human, have entered the picture, that we have one of the most complicated of contemporary conflicts in recent times.

Origin of the Israeli - Palestine problem:

Following the First World War, Great Britain appointed the occupying power under the League of Nation's Palestine mandate, proceeded to implement policies that contributed to escalating hostilities between the native Arab and immigrant Jewish communities. After World War II, the League of Nations was replaced by the UN, which assumed authority over the League's Mandates. Britain unable to reconcile its conflicting promises to both the Arab and Jewish community, sought to extricate itself from the situation, it had helped to create by requesting that the UN take up the question of Palestine. Thus, in May 1947, the UN General Assembly considered and adopted a resolution establishing the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to investigate and make recommendations.

At that time, the UN consisted of 55 members, (no representatives from any Arab nations were included in UNSCOP), however, whose membership comprised Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Uruguay and Yugoslavia. Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia requested that Britain's mandate be terminated and Palestine's independence recognized, but this motion was rejected.

The population of Palestine at the end of 1946 was about 1,846,000 more than two-thirds of whom were Arab and one-third Jewish. While the growth in the Arab population was due to natural increase, the growth of the Jewish population was mainly the result of immigration, which was supported by British policy. Arabs constituted a majority and owned more land than Jews in every district in Palestine, including Jaffa, which included Tel Aviv. According to the UNSCOP report, the Arabs were in possession of about 85 percent of the land, compared to only about 5.8 percent owned by Jews. Despite these facts, the majority of UNSCOP recommendation was that Palestine should be partitioned into two states, with the majority Arabs surrender land to the Jews for their state. Under the proposal, 45 percent of the land would be in the Arab state, compared to 55 percent for the Jewish state.

UNSCOP explicitly rejected the right of the Palestine Arabs to self-determination, stating that this principle "was not applied to Palestine, obviously because of the intention to make possible the creation of the Jewish National home there". Arab representatives had proposed a unitary Palestine with a democratic constitution guaranteeing full civil and religious rights for all citizens and an elected legislative assembly that would include Jewish representatives, UNSCOP dismissed this as "an extreme position."

India, Iran and Yugoslavia dissented from UNSCOP's majority recommendation for partition, supporting instead the alternative proposal, which was, they observed, "in every respect the most democratic solution" and most in harmony with the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations". Arab representatives naturally also rejected the proposed partition plan. After receiving UNSCOP's report, the General Assembly established another committee that similarly rejected the majority recommendation as being "contrary to the principles of the [UN] Charter, "pointing out that the UN had no authority to "deprive the majority of the people of Palestine of their country and transfer it to the exclusive use of a majority in the country." The new committee likewise proposed

that the Independence of Palestine instead be recognized. Nevertheless, on November 29, 1947, by a vote of 33 in favor, 15 against, and 10 abstentions, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 181, which recommended that the majority UNSCOP plan be implemented. The non-binding resolution was referred to the Security Council --- where it died. It is important to emphasize that, contrary to popular myth; the UN, neither created Israel, nor conferred upon the Zionist leadership any legal authority for its unilateral declaration on May 14, 1948 of the existence of the state of Israel.

Indeed, the US ambassador to the UN, Warren Austin, observed that the only way the UNSCOP plan could be implemented would be through the use of force, and that the Security Council had no such authority to enforce the partition of Palestine. He further noted that the expectations of the termination of the Mandate and withdrawal of the British from Palestine "would result, in the light of information now available, in chaos, heavy fighting and much loss of life in Palestine". On the other hand, Austin agreed, the UN did have authority to take action, including the use of force, to prevent such a violent outcome. The Council "can take action to prevent a threat to international peace and security from inside Palestine", he stated, as well as "to prevent aggression against Palestine from outside". He urged the Council: "The United Nations cannot permit such a result. The loss of life in the Holy Land must be brought to an immediate end. The maintenance of International peace is at stake".

The UN, however, did nothing as the Zionist leadership under David Ben-Gurion implemented a campaign of ethnic cleansing, the expulsion of the Arab population being a prerequisite for the creation of a demographically "Jewish State". As Iian Pappé wrote in his groundbreaking book, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, "UN agents and British officials stood by and watched indifferently" as Zionist forces systematically attacked major urban centers of Palestine. Similarly, by the end of April, "US representatives on the ground were by now fully aware of the expulsions that were going on".

By the time, the British Occupation came to an official end on May 14, 1948; a quarter of a million Palestinians had already been expelled from their homes by Jewish military forces. The same day, the Zionist leadership issued its unilateral declaration of the existence of Israel, which falsely cited UN General Assembly Resolution 181 as having granted legal authority for the establishment of their "Jewish State".

The role United Nations played after the partition:

From the start, once Israel was created and on its way to stability, the UN was largely excluded from the politics of the issue. UN peacekeepers were stationed on the Israeli-Egyptian border and the UN Refugee Works Agency (UNRWA) was established to provide for the refugees until such time as they would return home, but there was little involvement of the UN as an institution in political decision-making. That process was largely dominated by the Security Council's powerful permanent members --- and by the time of the Palestine war 1948-49 and 1967 wars, the US, France, Britain and the Soviet Union were in charge.

The UN and the Palestine War of 1948-49:

The Zionists proclaimed the State of Israel on their way on 14 May 1948. The United States extended its de facto recognition to the new state on the same day. The Soviet Union extended its de jure recognition three days later. The forces of five Arab States - Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Iraq-moved half-heartedly

across the borders of Palestine on 15 May. Widespread fighting occurred between Arab and Israeli forces, the most intense fighting being in the Jerusalem area. As the Arab armies were on the point of entering Tel-Aviv, on 22 May, the Security Council adopted a resolution (S/749) calling upon "all governments and authorities without prejudice to the rights, claims or positions of the parties concerned, to abstain from any hostile military action in Palestine, and to that end to issue a cease-fire order to their military and paramilitary forces."

Earlier, Israel has turned to the Security Council for help. The Soviet Union, the United States and UN Secretary-General had upheld Israel's charge that the Arabs had started an "aggression." Trygve Lie had urged the Security Council and the Member states of the United Nations to take whatever action was necessary, including sanctions against the Arabs.

The partition resolution became a dead letter when the General Assembly dissolved the Palestine Commissions that it had set up earlier to implement the resolution. Britain's surrender of the mandate, therefore, had restored Palestine Commissions to its inhabitants, who had the right to take whatever decision they might think fit for their own future. The Arab League a "regional arrangement under Article 52 of the Charter", had first tried to settle the Palestine problem peacefully. when it failed in its efforts, it accepted the invitation of the people of Palestine to help them in defending themselves against Zionists "aggression" and to restore order in the country. As a regional organization, it was supremely interested in the maintenance of peace in the region. Moreover the Zionists had "aggressive" and imperialistic intentions in the Arab East and threatened all Arab states. Arab armed intervention in Palestine was, therefore, both necessary and "lawful."

After the strong diplomatic and political lobbying and in the face of pressures from the US and other countries and increasing agitation in the Security Council for a stronger cease-fire resolution, the Arabs finally accepted the resolution.

In sum, if one looks at the performance of the UN during this crucial period (1947 to July 1949), one is convinced that the world organization failed to accomplish the role it ought to have played. First, the Arabs remained unconvinced of its competence to pass any resolution. Later, after getting what they had wanted the Zionists developed almost a total hostility. All those affected the prestige of the world body. The responsibility might perhaps have been shared by the Big Powers, but because of inter-bloc rivalry and lack of vision, they exploited the platform for their own petty selfish ends. The consequences were that Arab-Israeli hostility increased. Their differences remained unresolved. The world, which had just managed to survive a bloody war unparalleled in the history of mankind, did not feel encouraged to see how the UN was serving the cause of peace. If the UN gave refuge to a million Jews on the one hand, it deprived two million Palestinians of their rights to self-government and made them refugees almost permanently.

From the Armistice to the Suez War:

The unwillingness on the part of the Arabs as well as the Israelis accept the partition plan, the establishment of Israel, and the Arab-Israeli War created certain basic problems which the UN was not able to solve. The problem of boundaries was the most important of these problems. The frontier between Israel and the Arab states were determined solely on the basis of the positions

taken by the forward troops of the opposing armies at the time of the cease-fire. Israel's frontiers with Jordan (329 miles) and with Egypt (164 miles) were particularly vague and confusing. Indeed, they soon proved to be the most turbulent of borders during the post-war era.

On 11 September 1956 after the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company, President Gamal Abdel Nasser released the non-Egyptian employees of the Company from the obligation to remain any longer at their posts. This resulted in the withdrawal of about a hundred pilots. Next day Britain and France moved a resolution in the Security Council calling attention to "the situation which, if allowed to continue, would institute a manifest danger to peace and security."

On 29 October 1956 Israel attacked Egypt, its aim, being the elimination of Fedayeen bases in Egyptian territory. Within a week, Israeli forces had occupied the Gaza Strip and the entire Sinai Peninsula, including Sharm el-Sheikh on the Gulf of Aqaba.

On 30 October the Security Council considered a US draft resolution, which charged Israel with "violating the armistice agreement between Egypt and Israel" and called on Israel immediately to withdraw its armed forces behind the established (1949) armistice line.

Britain and France, however, vetoed the resolution. The Soviet representative thereupon declared: "This has been a black day for the Security Council confronted with an act of aggression, perpetrated against a State Member of the United Nations; the Security Council has shown itself to be incapable of action."

In the light of these developments Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the UN, forcefully asked for the support of all members of the UN. He made it clear that unless all members respected all articles of the Charter the Secretary-General could not undertake his responsibility as a servant of the world body. Deadlocked in the Council, the issue went to an emergency session of the General Assembly. For the first time the Assembly met to consider an emergency situation resulting from a deadlocking of the Security Council through use of the veto. The General Assembly deliberated from 1 to 10 November 1956. The Indian representative,

Arthur Lall, took the lead in condemning the aggression of Egypt by the armed forces of Britain, France and Israel. He said:

"We demand of the nations concerned that they immediately seek to pursue their interests only through the measures allowed to them by the Charter and sanctioned by all codes of civilized and humane behavior. It is with these feelings and with a deep sense of urgency that we ask this assembly to act immediately and to adopt the draft resolution before it."

On 2 November 1956 the Assembly adopted a resolution --- General Assembly Resolution 997 (ES-1) --- by a majority unprecedented in the history of the UN --- 64 to 5. The resolution, which was sponsored by the US. In pursuance of the resolution to the Secretary-General reported that the Governments of France and Britain wanted urgent police action to stop the hostilities which were now threatening the Suez Canal and to prevent the resumption of hostilities as also to pave the way for a definitive settlement of the Arab-Israeli war, which threatened the legitimate interests of so many countries.

On 22 December the Anglo-French forces completed their withdrawal, and United Nations Emergency Forces (UNEF)

contingents moved in and took up positions. Since the forces of Israel did not withdraw, the General Assembly passed another resolution, General Assembly Resolution 1123 (XI) of 19 January 1957, requesting the Secretary-General to continue his efforts for securing such withdrawal.¹⁷ By another resolution, General Assembly Resolution 1124 (XI) of 2 February 1957, it deplored Israel's failure to complete withdrawal of its forces and called upon it to do so without any further delay.¹⁸ It adopted yet another resolution General Assembly Resolution 1125 (XI) of the same date, calling upon the Governments of Egypt and Israel scrupulously to observe the provisions of the General Armistice Agreement between them of 24 February 1949 and recognizing that, after full withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza areas, the maintenance of the armistice agreement required the placing of the UNEF on Egyptian-Israeli armistice demarcation line. On 7 March 1957 the Israeli forces withdrawal from that area.

The Decade of UNEF:

For about a decade (from 1956 to 1967) after Suez War the Arab-Israeli armistice lines remained relatively quiet and the reputation of UN stood very high after the crisis. It had brought an end to the military intervention of two Colonial Powers within a few days and had forced Israel to withdraw all its troops from Egyptian territory. It had created the UNEF, which not only managed the post-crisis situation, particularly in November 1956, but also stayed on for a decade to ensure stability in the frontier between Egypt and Israel. Whereas the duty of the UNEF was to observe the implementation of the agreements of 1949, task of UNEF was heavier; it had to maintain peace and supervise the boundaries. Its task was rendered especially difficult when Israel refused it permission to station its forces to be stationed on the Israel side of the demarcation lines. However, the situation was certainly better than it was prior to 1956, and the presence of UNEF units on the Gulf of Aqaba and at Sharm el-Sheikh on the Straits of Tiran ensured that the Straits would remain open for all ships, including Israeli ships. Although the maintenance of the UNEF cost of tremendous lot of money, the General Assembly voted its continuance year after year. The countries of the Soviet bloc said that the UNEF was illegal and made no contribution to the cost of maintaining it.

The Arab states made no comment on the legality or otherwise of the UNEF. They withheld payment all the same, saying that the "aggressors" should bear the cost. No grave incidents took place for the ten years following the Council debate. However, the Arab-Israeli conflict continued to receive attention from the UN through all of 1956-67. Nature of the cease-fire between Israel on the one hand and Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria on the other, was the focal point of the deliberation in the UN.

The United Nations and June War:

In 1966 the US had begun providing Israel with new advanced planes and missiles. Describing the new US's strategy in the Middle East. James Feron wrote in the New York Times (11 June 1966), that the "US has come to the conclusion that it must rely on a local power --- the deterrent of a friendly power --- as a first line to stave off America's direct involvement. Israel feels she fits this definition." The Cold War had come to the Middle East, and the UN was out of the loop.

Over the next month tensions increased between Israel and each of the surrounding Arab states. In April 1967 there were artillery exchanges between Israel and Syria. The US Six Fleet remained on maneuvers off the Syrian coast. Egyptian President Gamal Abdel

Nasser symbolically asked the UN to move its observers, then inside Egyptian territory to the Israeli border. The UN told him he could not ask for UN troop movement his choice was only to demand complete removal of the UN troops, or to leave them where they were. Under pressure from other Arab governments, and unwilling to back down. Nasser demanded the withdrawal of all UN troops from Egypt. On May 23 Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping. The rhetoric escalated, and in early June, Israel attacked Egypt, destroying virtually all of Cairo's air force on the ground.

This Six Day War occupied the remaining part of Palestine, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, plus the Syrian Golan Heights and the Egyptian Sinai. Two hundred fifty thousand more Palestinians were forced into exile, and a million more were under Israeli Military occupation. After 1967 US willingness to rely on Israel vastly expanded and relations with the Arabs would be secondary to the emerging US-Israeli alliance.

But a different international consensus took shape in the UN following the June War and Israel's subsequent occupations. Resolution S/242 began with a statement emphasizing "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every state in the area can live in security."²¹ While referring to the Palestinians only in the context of refugees rather than reaffirming their national rights, the resolution unequivocally called for "the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict." The resolution was drafted largely by the four powers of the Security Council - the limited reference to Palestinian rights was a reflection of US influence on the process. And for another two years or so, the same powers operated within the UN to shape the direction --- and the limits --- of Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy.

In sum, this proves that the UN had no solution to offer. It was incapable of being used as an instrument of justice. Indeed the incapacity of the UN increased during this period (June 1967-September 1973). This incapacity threatened to freeze the Arab-Israeli conflict on account of the "State of no war no peace." In the circumstances, the Arabs were left with no alternative but to attack Israel.

The October War of 1973 and after:

The fourth Arab-Israeli war started on 6 October 1973, the Egyptian and Syrian armies simultaneously attacked Israel to get back the territories that they had lost in June 1967. The Security Council met ten times between 8 and 27 October to consider the West Asian situation. On 7 October the US representative, John Scali, requested (S/11010) a meeting in accordance with Article 24 of the UN Charter, which confers primary responsibility for the maintenance of International peace and security on the Security Council. Sir Donald Maitland, the UK representative, said that the Council had two immediate responsibilities, via to issue an urgent call for a cessation of the fighting and to treat the tragic events as a catalyst for accelerating the pace of the diplomatic process and achieve a lasting peace.

The debates in the Council remained inconclusive till 20 October. Nothing tangible in the form of a cease-fire resolution was achieved, chiefly because of lack of consensus among members. At the same time, no initiative was taken to persuade either side to cease hostilities. Indeed there prevailed a feeling of frustration in the UN over the world body's inability to influence events. At last on 21 October, the US and the Soviet Union presented a joint resolution containing the basis of a cease-fire. This resolution was

adopted as Resolution 338 (1973) by a vote of 14 to nil. (China did not participate in the vote). The resolution called upon the parties concerned to stop the fighting, to cease-fire and terminate all military activity within twelve hours and in the positions these parties occupied at the time of the adoption of the resolution. The Council also called upon them to start implementing Resolution 242 (1967) in all of its parts immediately. It called for negotiations between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices with a view to establishing a just and durable West Asian peace.

Thus, the procedures of a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict following the October War did not originate in the UN. Nor did they result from any initiative that the UN took as an international organization independently, of the will of its members or the effective major powers in it. They were formulated by the two Super Power outside the international organization. The UN was only the organizational framework in which those Powers exercised their role.

The UN during the Oslo Peace Process:

Throughout the late 1980s and into the 90s, Israel-Palestine diplomacy lay squarely at Washington's door. The UN remained excluded, with the exception of a series of condemnations of various specific violations of International law and UN resolutions in herent in Israeli's actions as an occupying power in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. By 1994, after the Oslo Declaration of Principles has been signed, then-Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright wrote in a letter to the General Assembly that the US goal for that year was to make existing UN resolutions on the Israel-Palestine conflict irrelevant, since bilateral negotiations were underway.

In 1996 Israel's "Operation Grapes of Wrath" in Lebanon included the bombing of a United Nations refugee center in Lebanon, killing 106 civilians sheltering there and wounding several UN peacekeepers. The release of a UN report, which the US had worked hard to keep secret, proving Israeli knowledge of the center, caused enormous international anger towards Israel in UN circles.

But as the Oslo "peace process" wound on in inconclusive fits and starts, the UN remained sidelined. Other international actors --- notably the European Union and Japan, were encouraged by the US to pay billions of dollars towards the costs of Oslo's infrastructure, but were similarly excluded from political decision-making.

The Camp David Summit & the UN:

By the summer of 2000, Oslo's five-year "interim period" had stretched to seven. No progress was insight on the major issues (a Palestinian state and its borders, Jerusalem, settlers, refugees) and little progress had been made on the "easy" issues that were supposed to be resolved already (release of prisoners, connecting roads, the Gaza air and seaports, water security arrangements etc).

It was in that context the President Clinton convened the two sides, again at Camp David, for intensive talks focused directly on the "final status" issues, at that the UN didn't convene talks. Shortly after Camp David's collapse, Ariel Sharon's provocative walk on the Temple Mount and the killing of several Palestinian demonstrators there the next day, the second intifada began.

But this time, some of the diplomacy began to look just a bit different. There was the hint, though only a hint, that Washington's iron grip on the diplomatic motion in the region had begun to slip. There was a growing sense, in the region and internationally, that

the US could no longer maintain its historically absolute control over Middle East negotiations. Other forces --- regional and international --- are suddenly thrust into center-stage. And suddenly UN Secretary General Kofi Anan was not only on the scene, but serving as at least titular centre of negotiations during the weeks leading up to the Sharm el-Sheikh "ceasefire summit."

The Americans were still in charge, of course. Ambassador Indyk was given a reprieve from his no-access-to-classified-documents-until-you-learn-to-behave scolding. Albright and Clinton both weighed in on a daily, sometimes hourly basis. And more significantly, the participation of other parties, Anan in particular, was harshly constrained by unmistakable US fiat. The UN Chief had already had to "earn" Israel's at least grudging acceptance. It was largely attributed to Annan's role at certifying Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon (despite an unresolved conflict over where to draw the border in the Shaba Farms area), and his behind the scenes efforts to convince the European countries to accept Israel, long an outcast from the UN's regional groups, as a member of the Western European and Others (WEOG) in the General Assembly. Membership in such a group is a prerequisite for Security Council consideration and other UN perks. When it came to Annan's participation as a new mediator, Israel's UN Ambassador Yehuda Lancry acknowledged, "It's a new dynamic. I can't say he has a formal track alongside the US sponsorship. But he is much appreciated."

It remains uncertain whether the UN Secretary-general's personal role will be broadened to create a new, UN-centered peace effort to replace the long-failed Oslo process. Certainly key limits on Annan's role are already visible; his early efforts focused on persuading the Palestinians to accept the US-Israeli terms for a "cease-fire," including giving up their demand for an UN-based international commission of inquiry. On one occasion Annan even referred to hoping for an end to the escalating violence so that "normalcy will be restored," implying, presumably unintentionally, that Palestinian life under military occupation was somehow "normal" if no shooting was going on.²⁸

UN and the Palestinian state:

The PLO's campaign for full member status for the state of Palestine at the UN and have recognition on the 1967 borders received widespread support though it was criticized by some countries for purportedly avoiding bilateral negotiation. Netanyahu expressed criticism of the Palestinians as he felt that they were allegedly trying to bypass direct talks, whereas Abbas argued that the continued construction of Israeli-Jewish settlements was "undermining the realistic potential "for the two-state solution. Although denied full member status by the UN Security Council, in the late 2012 the UN General Assembly over whelming approved the de facto recognition of sovereign Palestine by granting non-member state status.

UN and the Current Situation of the Conflict:

Israel, the Palestinian territories, and the Palestine-Israel Conflict:

Following several years of unsuccessful negotiations, the conflict re-erupted as the second Intifada on September 2000. The violence, escalating into an open conflict between the Palestinian National Security Forces and the Israel Defense Forces, lasted until 2004/2005 and led to approximately 130 fatalities. Israeli Prime Minister Sharon decided to disengage from Gaza. In 2005, Israel removed every soldier and every Jewish settler from Gaza. Israel

and its Supreme Court formally declared an end to occupation, saying it "had no effective control over what occurred" in Gaza. In 2006, Hamas took power by winning a plurality of 44% in a Palestinian parliamentary election. Israel responded it would begin economic sanctions unless Hamas agreed to accept prior Israeli-Palestinian agreements, forswear violence, and recognize Israel's right to exist. Hamas responded with rocket attacks and an incursion into Israeli territory using underground tunnels to kidnap Gilad Shalit. After internal Palestinian political struggle between Fatah and Hamas erupted into of Gaza (2007), Hamas took full control of the area in 2007, Israel imposed a naval blockade on the Gaza Strip, and co-operation with Egypt allowed a ground blockade of the Egyptian border.

The tensions between Israel and Hamas, who won increasing financial and political support of Iran, escalated until late 2008, when Israel launched operation Cast Lead (the Gaza War). By February 2009, a cease-fire was signed with international mediation between the parties, though small and sporadic eruptions of violence continued.

The question of whether Gaza remains occupied following Israel's withdrawal remains contentious. Israel insists that its full withdrawal from Gaza means it does not occupy Gaza. The UN has taken no position over whether Gaza remains occupied.

Palestinian leaders insist that the Israeli decision, following attacks from Hamas, to impose a weapons blockade of Gaza, Israel's control of Gaza crossing points into Israel, and Israel's control of air above and sea around Gaza constitutes continued Israeli occupation.

In 2011, a Palestinian Authority attempt to gain the UN membership as a fully sovereign state failed. In Hamas-controlled Gaza, sporadic rocket attacks on Israel and Israeli air raids still take place. In November 2012, the representation of Palestine in the UN was upgraded to a non-member observer state, and mission title was changed from "Palestine (represented by PLO" to state of Palestine).

However, after nearly seven decades of conflict, peace between Israel and the Palestinians remains elusive. The longer the conflict persists, the more intractable it will become. Those Israeli and Palestinians who wish to have it all are dangerously misguided and will ultimately condemn any prospect for peaceful coexistence.

The new international efforts led by the US and the EU to resume the peace negotiations must not lose sight of the popular demand of the majority on both sides to live in peace, because on their own, they will come to terms with one another. The regional turmoil must not forestall the Israeli-Palestinian peace process; on the contrary, it should serve as the catalyst that could end one of the longest conflicts in modern history.

UN Resolutions and it's acceptance or rejection by the two States

Since Israel's 1967 occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, those understandings included the nearly unanimous international consensus on how to resolve the crisis: an international conference based on international law and UN resolutions. But since 1967 Israel disagreed,

In the run-up to the 1991 Madrid talks, the US-Israeli Memorandum of understanding stated explicitly that the UN would be allowed no role. In Oslo's 1993 Declaration of Principles, the UN was ignored. By 1994, when the first post-Oslo General Assembly convened, then US Ambassador to the UN Madeleine

Albright announced in her annual letter to Assembly members that dissolving the Palestine-related consensus was on top of her agenda. According to her letter, "contentious resolutions that accentuate political differences without promoting solutions should be consolidated (the various UNRWA resolutions), improved (the Golan resolution) or eliminated (the Israeli nuclear armament resolution and the self-determination resolution)." The piece de resistance was the demand that "resolution language referring to 'final status' issues should be dropped, since these issues are now under negotiations by the parties themselves. These include refugees, settlements, territorial sovereignty and the status of Jerusalem." This was, of course, precisely the moment at which those same final status issues were taken off the negotiating table for five, eventually a full seven years. In 1999 when over 100 signatories of the Geneva Conventions met to assess Israeli compliance with the Conventions, the meeting lasted only ten minutes in order according to the Oslo-infatuated PLO delegation, to "avert friction" with Israel's new Labor-led government.⁴⁰ The failed Camp David summit, of course, had ignored the UN altogether.

However, the dawn of the new millennium saw continued conflict fighting Israel and the Palestinians, as well as interference from outside forces, which complicated the conflict to an unprecedented degree. From September 11 2001, World Trade Center attack, to the rise of Hezbollah, to the Arab Spring uprisings in the Middle East, incidents and circumstances in other countries have directly impacted the situation with Israel and Palestinians.

But after months of clashes, rising numbers of Palestinian dead, a military occupation and siege tighter than ever, the best hope for a comprehensive and just peace remains a return to UN resolutions, international law, international protection and a new peace process under UN supervision. The Obama administration, particularly its oil industry-linked foreign policy team of Richard Holbrook, and Gen. Jim Jones has made clear that its Middle East priority have oil and rebuilding ties with the despotic governments of the Arab Gulf. That bodes badly for Iraq, with a likely effort to escalate the on-going unilateral bombing raids and tighten the already crippling economic sanctions.

But despite such dangerously provocative movements, there could be a moment of hope on the Israel-Palestine front for a new kind of diplomacy. With attention turned towards Iraq, perhaps the Obama administration was less hostile to the possibility of a European, or UN initiative to restarted floundering Israel-Palestine negotiations. Having Secretary General Ban ki Moon, or even the EU's security coordinator Sebastian Decuyper, Middle East envoy George J. Mitchell, special adviser for Persian Gulf Dennis Ross (who chaired the last-effort before the Israeli elections negotiations) in charge of negotiations instead of unilateralist US Diplomats would certainly raise at least a glimmer of such hope. Only in such a venue is there any possibility that not only the disparity of power, but also the disparity of legitimacy between the two sides, might finally be addressed.

THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE KEEPING MISSIONS IN CONFLICTING STATES

United Nations peacekeeping missions in conflicting states play a crucial role in maintaining peace and security in regions affected by armed conflicts. These missions are typically authorized by the UN Security Council and involve the deployment of military, police, and civilian personnel to support conflict resolution and

peacebuilding efforts. Here are some key points to consider regarding UN peacekeeping missions in conflicting states:

1. **Mandate:** Each peacekeeping mission has a specific mandate, which outlines its objectives and tasks. This mandate is authorized by the UN Security Council and can include tasks such as monitoring ceasefires, facilitating negotiations, conflict resolution, protecting civilians, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), and support for political processes and governance, and helping to rebuild state institutions.
2. **Neutrality and Impartiality:** UN peacekeepers are expected to maintain neutrality and impartiality in the conflict. This means they should not take sides but work to create conditions for a peaceful resolution.
3. **Types of Personnel:** Peacekeeping missions can involve military, police, and civilian personnel. Military personnel may be responsible for security and monitoring, while police personnel help maintain law and order. Civilian personnel can include experts in governance, human rights, and development.
4. **Conflict Zones:** UN peacekeeping missions are deployed in areas affected by armed conflict. They operate in challenging and often dangerous environments, where they may face threats to their safety.
5. **Humanitarian and Development Assistance:** In addition to security-related tasks, peacekeepers often provide humanitarian assistance, support refugees, and engage in development projects to help stabilize the conflict-affected region.
6. **Exit Strategies:** Peacekeeping missions are not meant to be permanent. They have specific timelines and exit strategies. The goal is to transition from peacekeeping to sustainable peace and development, often through political negotiations.
7. **Successes and Challenges:** Assessing the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping missions can be complex. Some missions have been successful in reducing violence and supporting peace processes, while others have faced challenges and criticism.
8. **Political and Diplomatic Role:** Peacekeepers often play a diplomatic role by engaging with conflicting parties and helping to mediate disputes. Their presence can create opportunities for dialogue and negotiations.
9. **International Support:** UN peacekeeping missions require international support, both politically and financially. Member states contribute troops and resources to these missions.
10. **Human Rights and Accountability:** UN peacekeeping missions are expected to uphold human rights standards. There have been instances of misconduct by peacekeepers, and accountability for such actions is essential.

Analyzing the role and impact of UN peacekeeping missions in conflicting states involves assessing the specific context, challenges, and outcomes of each mission. It requires a multidisciplinary approach that considers political, military, humanitarian, and diplomatic aspects of peacekeeping efforts.

The United Nations Peace Keeping Missions in the Israeli - Palestinian War

United Nations Peacekeeping Missions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have played a significant role in efforts to promote peace and stability in the region. Here's an overview of UN peacekeeping involvement in this context:

1. **UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO):** Established in 1948, UNTSO is the oldest UN peacekeeping mission and was created to monitor the ceasefire agreements between Israel and its neighboring Arab states, including Palestine. It continues to operate in the region, providing military observers and staff officers.
2. **United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF):** UNDOF was established in 1974 following the Yom Kippur War to oversee the ceasefire between Israel and Syria on the Golan Heights. Its role is to monitor the disengagement of forces and maintain the ceasefire.
3. **United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL):** UNIFIL, created in 1978, primarily operates in South Lebanon. It monitors the Blue Line, an armistice line between Israel and Lebanon, and supports the Lebanese government in ensuring stability in the area.
4. **United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA):** While not a traditional peacekeeping mission, UNRWA plays a vital role in providing humanitarian assistance, education, and healthcare to Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. It supports the well-being and rights of Palestinian refugees.

These missions have different mandates and functions but share the common goal of promoting peace and stability in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They engage in ceasefire monitoring, humanitarian assistance, and support for political and diplomatic efforts. Analyzing their roles involves assessing their effectiveness in fulfilling their respective mandates and their contributions to peace in the region. UN peacekeeping missions operate in this challenging context and face numerous obstacles, including security threats, political tensions, and sometimes limited progress toward a comprehensive resolution of the conflict. Evaluating their impact requires a thorough examination of their activities, challenges, and outcomes within the broader context of the conflict.

LIMITATIONS OF UN'S PEACE KEEPING MISSIONS IN THE WAR

United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions face various limitations and challenges in conflict zones, including wars. These limitations can significantly impact their effectiveness. Some common limitations include:

1. **Consent and Neutrality:** The success of UN peacekeeping often relies on the consent of the conflicting parties. When one or both parties do not fully cooperate, it can hinder the mission's ability to operate effectively and impartially.
2. **Security Threats:** UN peacekeepers often work in high-risk environments with the potential for violence, attacks, and threats to their safety. Inadequate security measures can compromise their effectiveness.
3. **Resource Constraints:** Funding, equipment, and personnel shortages can limit the capacity of

peacekeeping missions. Inadequate resources can hinder the mission's ability to fulfill its mandate.

4. **Complex Political Context:** Many conflicts have deeply rooted political issues and are often characterized by power struggles and complex political dynamics. Peacekeepers may struggle to navigate these complexities effectively.
5. **Mandate Ambiguity:** Unclear or overly broad mandates can lead to difficulties in mission implementation. Peacekeepers may be unsure about their role and authority in certain situations.
6. **Lack of Enforcement Power:** UN peacekeepers are not a military force, and they can only use force in self-defense. This lack of enforcement power limits their ability to compel parties to comply with agreements.
7. **Hostile Environment:** In some conflicts, parties may view peacekeepers as a threat or obstacle to their goals, leading to hostility and resistance towards the mission.
8. **Coordination Challenges:** Coordination among UN agencies, local actors, and international partners can be complex and may lead to inefficiencies and gaps in the delivery of humanitarian aid or other mission activities.
9. **Political Interference:** Peacekeeping missions can be subject to political pressures and interference from powerful states that may have interests in the conflict.
10. **Impartiality vs. Neutrality:** Striking the right balance between impartiality and neutrality can be challenging. Being too neutral may lead to perceptions of inaction, while taking sides can undermine impartiality.
11. **Local Ownership and Capacity Building:** Achieving a successful transition from peacekeeping to sustainable peace often depends on the ability of the host country to take over and manage its own affairs. Building local capacity can be a long and challenging process.
12. **Duration and Exit Strategy:** Prolonged peacekeeping missions may face challenges related to mission fatigue and sustainability. Developing and implementing exit strategies is crucial, but they can be complex to execute effectively.

It's important to recognize that peacekeeping missions are often deployed in complex, high-stakes environments, and while they have made significant contributions to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, their limitations and challenges are intrinsic to their operations. Evaluating and addressing these limitations is an ongoing process for the UN and the international community.

United Nations Impact So Far

The United Nations (UN) has had a significant impact on the world since its establishment in 1945. While the UN has faced various challenges and limitations, it has made substantial contributions in several key areas as peace and security, Conflict Prevention: The UN has played a role in preventing conflicts and reducing tensions through diplomatic efforts and early warning mechanisms. Peacekeeping: UN peacekeeping missions have helped maintain ceasefires, protect civilians, and support peace processes in numerous conflict zones. And Conflict Resolution: The UN has facilitated negotiations and peace agreements in various conflicts, helping parties reach peaceful resolutions.

The United Nations (UN) has faced several shortcomings in its peacekeeping mission, as well as its broader efforts to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

1. **Limited Progress in Conflict Resolution:** Despite decades of UN involvement, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has not seen a comprehensive resolution. Peacekeeping missions have not been able to facilitate a lasting peace agreement between the parties.
2. **Consent and Cooperation:** Gaining the full consent and cooperation of both Israel and the Palestinian authorities has been a challenge. This has limited the effectiveness of UN missions and led to restrictions on their movements.
3. **Security Threats:** UN peacekeepers and personnel have been subject to security threats, including attacks and violence, which have affected their ability to fulfill their mandates and protect civilians.
4. **Mandate Constraints:** The mandates of UN peacekeeping missions in the region are often limited and may not include enforcement powers or mechanisms to address critical issues, such as the status of Jerusalem or the right of return for Palestinian refugees.
5. **Political Complexities:** The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is deeply entwined with political complexities, including territorial disputes, sovereignty issues, and the status of Jerusalem. These complexities make finding a resolution challenging.
6. **Polarization and Regional Dynamics:** The conflict is deeply polarized, and regional actors have their own interests and involvement in the region, which can hinder UN peacekeeping efforts.
7. **Humanitarian Concerns:** The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank remains dire. UN peacekeeping missions, while providing some assistance, have not been able to fully address the broader humanitarian crisis.
8. **Implementation and Compliance:** Parties to the conflict have not consistently complied with UN Security Council resolutions and international law, further complicating the peacekeeping efforts.
9. **Public Perception and Legitimacy:** The UN's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has faced criticism from various quarters, affecting its perception and legitimacy in the region.
10. **Ongoing Violence:** Despite the presence of UN peacekeeping missions, sporadic outbreaks of violence continue to disrupt stability and prevent the achievement of a lasting peace.

It's important to note that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is exceptionally complex, and no single entity, including the UN, can resolve it unilaterally. UN peacekeeping missions face significant challenges, and their impact is limited by the broader political and regional dynamics of the conflict.

Milestones

The United Nations (UN) has played a significant role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since its inception. While the conflict remains unresolved, there have been notable milestones and key moments in the UN's peacekeeping efforts and diplomacy in this conflict:

1. **1947 - UN Partition Plan:** The UN General Assembly passed Resolution 181, recommending the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem as an international city. The plan was accepted

- by Jewish leaders but rejected by Arab states and Palestinian Arab leaders, leading to conflict.
2. **1948 - Establishment of Israel:** Israel declared its independence, leading to the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The conflict resulted in an armistice, and the UN established the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) to monitor the ceasefires.
3. **1967 - Six-Day War:** The 1967 Six-Day War led to Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. UN Security Council Resolution 242 called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from territories occupied in the war, laying the foundation for future negotiations.
4. **1973 - Yom Kippur War:** The 1973 Yom Kippur War led to renewed efforts to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. UN Security Council Resolutions 338 and 339 called for a ceasefire and negotiations, leading to the Geneva Peace Conference in 1973.
5. **1993 - Oslo Accords:** The Oslo Accords were signed in Washington, D.C., under the auspices of the United States. The Accords marked a significant milestone, leading to limited self-rule for the Palestinians and mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).
6. **2000 - Camp David Summit:** The Camp David Summit, hosted by the U.S., aimed to address the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the summit did not result in an agreement, it raised the profile of the conflict on the international stage.
7. **2002 - Quartet Roadmap:** The "Quartet" (UN, U.S., EU, and Russia) proposed the Roadmap for Peace, outlining a process for achieving a two-state solution. The roadmap has since served as a framework for negotiations.
8. **2012 - Non-Member Observer State Status:** The UN General Assembly granted the State of Palestine non-member observer state status, recognizing it as a state. This was seen as a symbolic step toward Palestinian statehood.
9. **Ongoing Peacekeeping Efforts:** The UN has maintained various peacekeeping missions and agencies, including UNRWA, UNDOF, and UNIFIL, to monitor ceasefires, provide humanitarian assistance, and support stability in the region.
10. **Ongoing Diplomatic Initiatives:** The UN has been involved in various diplomatic initiatives and negotiations to bring about a two-state solution, including the Quartet and direct talks between the parties.

While there have been milestones and diplomatic efforts, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains unresolved, with continued challenges and complex political dynamics. The UN's role in the conflict has evolved over the years, and peace efforts continue to be a priority on the international agenda.

WHY HAVE PAST NEGOTIATIONS FAILED?

Although the regional environment is conducive for the resumption of peace talks, no new format for peace negotiations can succeed unless it carefully considers the reasons behind the failure of past negotiations to ensure that the same mistakes are not repeated. The major reason behind the collapse of past negotiations is that no effort was made to mitigate the psychological impediments that relate to every conflicting issue through conciliatory people-to-

people measures in advance of the negotiations, blocking any significant compromise without serious domestic repercussions.

The following highlights some of the more prominent reasons behind the collapse of prior Israeli-Palestinian negotiations:

Lack of trust: One of the most daunting problems is the lack of trust between the two sides, as neither has made any effort to foster it. On the contrary, they have both made demonstrable actions on the ground, such as building and expanding settlements, erupting into wanton violence, failing to interact on a people-to-people level, and engaging in public acrimony in ways that only deepen mistrust. Moreover, personal chemistry and communication between Israeli and Palestinian leaders, which could stimulate trust, was and still is absent.

Disagreement on rules of engagement: Given their stark disagreement on various issues, each side insisted on rules of engagement that supported their perceived reality and were consistent with their outward strategic interests. For example, Netanyahu insisted that the negotiations must first consider Israel's vital national security concerns because of its continued sense of vulnerability. The Palestinians, on the other hand, wanted to negotiate borders first to establish the parameters of their state and define from the onset the space on which the independent state will be established.

Refusing to delink conflicting issues: Both sides have failed to delink the conflicting issues out of fear that making significant concessions without ensuring the success of the end-game would prejudice future negotiations, and therefore they agreed that nothing is agreed upon unless everything is agreed on at the same time. As a result, they have refused to set aside, or "bank," any issue over which they have reached an agreement, as they could not envision a comprehensive peace agreement given their past experiences with one another. This made it difficult to make significant lasting progress as every time they entered into new negotiations, they had to start from scratch.

Failing to engage the public: Both sides have failed to involve their respective publics in the progress (or lack thereof) in the peace process, invite support, and prepare their citizens to accept the inevitable concessions that will be required to reach an agreement. Moreover, the press was left in the dark and was not allowed to witness or gauge any aspect of the negotiations that would engender public discussion, thus leaving the public with little or no expectation or hope that the peace negotiations could in fact lead to an agreement.

Political factionalism: Whereas a majority of Israelis and Palestinians (based on many polls conducted over the years) have steadily supported a solution to the conflict based on two states, political factionalism within both communities and the fear of future uncertainty makes it extremely difficult to concede on this or any other issue. Major opposition from political opponents with differing agendas, though representing a small part of the overall population, has consistently scuttled the peace talks. The settlement movement in Israel and extremist jihadist groups among the Palestinians wield far greater political influence than their numbers warrant, and thus far have succeeded in dashing any prospect for peace.

Power disparity in the negotiations: Whereas Israel enjoys a preponderance of military and economic power that allows it to

negotiate from a position of strength, the Palestinians are under occupation with a limited ability to challenge Israel. As a result, they have sought to balance their power relations at the negotiating table or prior to the commencement of the negotiations with Israel by demanding, for example, a freeze of settlement activity or the release of Palestinian prisoners, to which Israel objected.

Lack of a comprehensive US strategy: As the mediator, the US did not follow a carefully constructed framework for the negotiations that could guide both sides to make the necessary concessions to reach an agreement. Indeed, being that both Israel and the Palestinians often vacillated and changed course by design or circumstances, the US (out of frustration) changed its strategic approach in response, thereby losing consistency and control over the negotiating process, which led to repeated failures.

No consequences for failure: Although the US offered economic and security incentives for both to reach an agreement, it lacked a strategic approach and attached no repercussions for failing to reach an agreement. That is, the lack of a mechanism to punish either or both sides for failing to make serious progress made it possible to resist any pressure, knowing that they could do so with impunity. Netanyahu's defiance of the US' wishes to halt the expansion of settlements to create a positive atmosphere for the negotiations offers a case in point.

Absence of bold leadership: There has been a serious absence of courageous and visionary leadership that could move against the political current for the sake of a larger purpose by making important concessions which could advance the peace negotiations. Since the 1993 Oslo Accords, signed by Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat, neither side has produced a committed leader with the strength and conviction to take a risk for the sake of peaceful coexistence.

Findings

The Palestinian militant group Hamas launched an unprecedented assault on Israel on 7th October, 2023, with hundreds of gunmen infiltrating communities near the Gaza Strip. The Hamas-led Palestinian militant groups launched a surprise offensive against Israel named "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood." The attack began with a barrage of rockets targeting Israel, while around 3,000 militants breached the Gaza-Israel barrier and attacked neighboring Israeli communities and military bases. During this attack, 1,139 Israelis and foreign nationals were killed, of whom 766 were civilians. Hamas said its attack was in response to the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, the blockade of the Gaza Strip, the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements, and the plight of Palestinian refugees and prisoners, whom it sought to free by taking an estimated 253 Israeli and foreign captives into Gaza as leverage. In response, Israel declared a state of war and launched a counteroffensive named "Operation Swords of Iron." During the course of this operation, Israel tightened its blockade, ordered the evacuation of the northern Gaza Strip, and fired over 29,000 munitions at targets in Gaza before and during its ground offensive, which began on October 27, 2023. Israel's stated goals included destroying Hamas, freeing the hostages and controlling the Gaza Strip.

Since then at least 24,100 people have been killed and more than 60,800 wounded in Israeli attacks on Gaza; also 189 Israeli soldiers have also been killed. However, the Israeli army's overall death toll since the launch of the Israeli offensive against Gaza on Oct. 7 has

risen to 523. In the West Bank, Israeli forces in 2023 killed 492 Palestinians, including 120 children, according to the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), more than twice as many as in any other year since 2005, when the UN began systematically recording fatalities. A severe humanitarian crisis has resulted, with healthcare in a state of collapse, shortages of food, clean water, medicine and fuel, electricity and communications blackouts, and the UN warning of potential famine. The widespread civilian deaths have led to accusations of war crimes against both Israel and Hamas. Nearly all of Gaza's 2.3 million population and around 500,000 Israelis have been internally displaced, while thousands of Palestinians have been detained by Israel, and Israel has lost over 150 further soldiers in its counteroffensive.

The UN play a sensitive role on both the political and humanitarian fronts. The humanitarian role is what gets a lot of public attention as agreements are secured to arrange for aid to get through to civilians and to protect them, including trying to ensure that international humanitarian law (often called the laws governing war and broadly covered by the Geneva Conventions) are upheld. While what we hear less about is the political role, as it is often played out away from the public eye. The UN Charter has several provisions that create a framework for mediation and conflict resolution and gives the Secretary-General the option to use his good offices to broker agreements in order to hopefully diminish tensions and lead to the steps that could help avoid war.

According to the UN World Health Organization (WHO), 15 out of Gaza's 36 hospitals remain "partially functional": nine in the south and six in the north. Since the start of hostilities, the UN and health partners have provided healthcare and medical services to an estimated 500,000 people.

The UN currently maintains 12 peacekeeping operations of 24 active missions. The UN maintains more than 10,000 peacekeepers along Israel's border regions who had intensified their work when rocket and artillery fire was reported in the vicinity on the 17th of October, 2023. The missions are tasked with monitoring the respective ceasefire agreements among Israel and its two neighbours, from patrolling along the so-called Blue Line to monitoring such areas as Mount Hermon in the disputed Golan Heights.

The UN peacekeeping missions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict zone have played an important role in maintaining cease-fires, preventing further conflict, and providing humanitarian assistance to civilians. However, these missions have also been criticized for their inability to resolve the underlying political issues that drive the conflict. Despite the challenges, the UN continues to play an important role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. UN peacekeeping missions provide a vital presence on the ground and help to deter violence. They also play an important role in supporting humanitarian assistance and development efforts.

Conclusions

After nearly seven decades of conflict, peace between Israelis and Palestinians remain elusive. The longer the conflict persists, the more intractable it becomes. The Israelis and Palestinians who wish to have it all are dangerously misguided and will ultimately condemn any prospect for peaceful coexistence.

Past experiences also revealed that, although some progress was made through US mediation, the negotiations failed to produce an agreement and as such, it has become increasingly clear that only

joint international intervention through the United Nations, would provide the practical channel for the peace negotiations and motivate or incentivize both sides to come to terms with the inevitability of coexistence. The UN's role is central to the success of these efforts.

The new effort led by the UN to resume peace negotiations must not lose sight of the popular demand of the majority on both sides to live in peace, because left to their own devices, they will not come to terms with each other or broach the subject of conflict resolution or pushing for peaceful coexistence. The regional turmoil must not forestall the UN's Israeli-Palestinian peace keeping mission; on the contrary, it should serve as the catalyst that could end one of the longest conflicts in modern history. Indeed, the two-state solution remains the only viable option that allows for peaceful coexistence, on which any new initiative must be based.

Recommendations

This study recommends that the United Nations in embarking on its peace keeping mission of fostering diplomatic dialogue between Israel and Palestine and promoting the peaceful resolution of the conflict, should take measures to ensure that the peace processes are protected and prevented from being derailed by deliberate or unexpected factions that may arise during negotiations.

Due to the severity of the impact of the war on innocent lives and the destruction of structures, properties and investments, there is urgent need for International intervention to definitely resolve the decades long conflict between Israel and Palestine; by insisting on providing a level field for a round table discussion by both parties, by convincing both parties to consider a permanent cease-fire to enable negotiations and peaceful dialogue and concessions; with peaceful coexistence between both parties as the ultimate goal.

Unlike previous peace efforts, hegemonies like the USA, China, France, Britain, and the leading Arab states (particularly Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Qatar), in collaboration with the United Nations, should take the initiative to convene an international peace conference, with the sole purpose of highlighting game plans in resolving the Israeli - Palestine Conflict and enacting a framework for peace. Making a United Nations Security Council resolution to persuade/compel/incentivize any current or future Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority to abide by it, provided that the resolution is equitable, offers peace and security to both sides, and has a credible enforcement mechanism.

The full implementation of the framework for peace must demonstrate the enormous benefits that both can derive from reaching an agreement consistent with their national aspirations in the context of a two-state solution. To that end, both the Israeli and Palestinian citizens ought to be enlisted in support of the initiative, understand its benefits, and become more disposed to exert pressure on their respective governments.

The framework for peace must include provisions that would increase the odds in favor of a solution. The negotiations should commence, at a minimum, after one year of taking reconciliatory measures, to create both the atmosphere and the trust necessary to start the negotiations in earnest, this is because, unless both sides are willing to engage each other on these levels, there is no point in entering into any new peace negotiations.

During negotiations by both parties, neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians should be allowed to use their internal political factionalism as an excuse as to why they cannot make certain

concessions, which has been the practice by both sides in the past. Israeli and Palestinian factionalism is not likely to end now or at any time in the future. The main reason behind the need for international involvement is to awaken both parties to the reality that mutual sacrifices must be made to reach an agreement, because allowing the conflict to fester will continue to have disastrous consequences.

Also, both sides must undertake any and all measures to prevent acts of violence that some extremists on either side might attempt to commit against the opposite side or even their own leaders, to torpedo the whole peace process. Both parties must embrace the late Yitzhak Rabin's mantra: "*fight terrorism as if there is no peace process; pursue peace as if there is no terrorism.*" Unfortunately, both sides have historically resorted to violence as the first choice rather than as a last resort. This approach has proven futile over the years, as nearly 70 years later, little change has been made in the way they perceive and treat each other. Case in point, the recent September 2023 war. There will always be certain elements on both sides who are determined to destroy any prospect for peace, either because of their deep uncompromising ideology, or because they have and continue to benefit from the continuing conflict.

Fortunately, these groups are marginal and will not succeed in undermining the peace process if both sides at the negotiating table remain committed to negotiate an agreement, because their survival as states with secure futures depends on their ability to bring the lingering conflict to an end. Only a united front from within both camps will dash the efforts by violent extremists to sabotage the negotiations.

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