

The Failed Peace-Plan

How U.S. policy toward Palestine became a de facto policy toward Israel

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11/16/2007

The special relationship between the United States and Israel prevents an honest brokerage of peace between Israel and Palestine. For over fifty years, the U.S. has been unable to remain neutral and unbiased when negotiating “peace” between the Palestinians and the occupying forces of Israel. Because of this special strategic relationship between the U.S. and Israel, the Palestinians are viewed and treated as terrorists rather than what they really are, a people fighting for their right to exist. We cannot possibly expect peace in the Middle East to be brokered by a nation inclined to further its own hegemonic ideals regardless of the people already inhabiting that region.

My primary source, “Dishonest Broker” by Naseer H. Aruri, talks about a failed “peace process” that has been taking place since 1967. This paper will identify the numerous variables as to why the U.S. attempts at being the regional superpower in Southwest Asia, through Israel, has been detrimental to the “peace process.”

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The special relationship between the United States and Israel prevent an honest brokerage of peace between Israel and Palestine. For over thirty years, the U.S. has been unable to remain neutral and unbiased when negotiating “peace” between the Palestinians and the occupying forces of Israel. Because of this special strategic relationship between the U.S. and Israel, the Palestinians are viewed and treated as terrorists rather than what they really are, a people fighting for their right to exist.

From occupation to occupation

At the height of its power, the Ottoman Empire spanned three continents: Southeastern Europe, the Middle East (Southwest Asia) and Northern Africa. The Ottomans were tolerant of other religions and cultures and, contrary to popular misinformation, did not force feed Islam onto the conquered. Rather, “the Turks allowed each religious and ethnic group to rule themselves” (Coyle & Roskin, 2008, 2004, p. 45). The lands ruled under the Empire were not carved into countries nor frivolously set aside for a group of people in order to gain approval for a political or military campaign. Hence, at the time of the Ottoman Empire the Palestinian Arabs--Muslims co-existed with the Palestinian Jews and Christians. It was not until after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the removal of the Caliphate that hell began to break loose in the Middle East and has yet to be contained.

As the Ottomans allied themselves with the German empire to protect and preserve the territories of the Ottoman Empire, Britain, France, Russia and Italy began their brainstorming of how to carve up the territories of the Empire, finally drawing up the Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916. And, knowing that Russia was home to many Jews, the British began seducing the Jews

with promises of their own home in the land of Palestine, a home the Jews believe was ordained to them by God himself. Although the Balfour Declaration of 1917 did not specify the creation of an Israeli state, it was implied and the Jewish community the world over, especially those being persecuted in Russia and Germany worked to make it a reality. Already the Jews were being used as pawns to further exert the West's influence in Southwest Asia by preying on their hope of returning to their biblical homeland.

While the Balfour Declaration did not advocate an ignorance of Arab rights, it opened a can of worms that led to the current state of the oppression of the Palestinian people—an oppression that has spanned over fifty years.

US-Israeli special relationship

With America's huge presence in Southwest Asia, influencing a plethora of policies, why can the self-proclaimed "world police" not find a solution to the problem plaguing the region: the Jewish colonization of Palestine? America cannot find the solution because of the special relationship it shares with the State of Israel.

U.S. policy toward Palestine during and after the Second World War became a de facto policy toward Israel long before its declaration of statehood" (Moore, Winter 2001, p. 115). As the state of Israel evolved, so too did U.S. interest in the region evolve. When the Eisenhower Doctrine became law on March 9, 1957, specifying the Middle East as a "vital national interest" (Aruri, 2003, p. 18), it solidified the U.S. intent to exert their military prowess in order to thwart the spread of communism in the region.

“President Truman related to the Zionist refugees for a variety of reasons, many of which incorporated elements of Judeo-Christian mysticism. Congress envisioned the Jewish state as serving as a periscope for U.S. interests in a hostile part of the world” (Moore, Winter 2001, p. 116). “In August of 1945, Truman declared his support for increasing Jewish immigration to the limit of Palestine’s absorptive capacity...” (Moore, Winter 2001, p. 119) As Truman said on Army Day in 1946 “The Near and Middle East...contains vast natural resources...lies across the most convenient route of land, air and water communication...[and]might become an arena of intense rivalry among outside powers” (Aruri, 2003, p. 15). This meant the Middle East was soon to become vital to the national interest of the U.S. and needed protection from the rising threat of communism. The Arab nations were proving to be an unreliable conduit for American influence in the region, as evidenced by the “ill-fated” Baghdad Pact.¹ That left Israel.

“King Saud, the Arab world’s unofficial spokesman, held Washington responsible for betraying both the Arabs and the British to Jewish immigrants who held distinct advantages in military training and supplies” (Moore, Winter 2001, p. 124). The surrounding Arab nations had just cause to be weary of the mass immigration of Jews to Palestine. Israel, backed by U.S. military and monetary support, became the dominant force in the Middle East with the establishment of the state of Israel. “*The New York Times* reported that Nixon remained “firmly committed to Israel’s security and to her military superiority in the Middle East, for only Israel’s strength can deter attack and prevent a call for direct American intervention” (Aruri, 2003, p. 20).

¹ Royalist Iraq broke ranks with the Arab League and allied with Turkey.

This special relationship between the U.S. and Israel seems to have given Israel an infinite “get out of jail free pass” and shields Israel from any international scrutiny as they continue to violate international law and trample on the rights of the Palestinian people.

The most blatant sign of the seemingly most important strategic alliance in U.S. history is the “enormous amount of economic and military aid that the U.S. government has been supplying to Israel since its establishment over half a century ago. U.S. aid to Israel since 1949 has totaled \$81.38 billion, not including the \$10 billion in loan guarantees or an unknown amount of ‘side benefits.’ The *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* reported an estimated total aid through fiscal year 2000 at \$91.82 billion” (Aruri, 2003, p. 36). Veteran economist, Thomas Stauffer, commissioned by the U.S. Army War College said that the “total bill in real terms, including the cost of the Palestine-Israel conflict since 1973, is \$1.6 trillion—twice as much as the cost of the Vietnam War” (Aruri, 2003, p. 37). Can we honestly expect the United States to negotiate peace without its favoritism towards Israel?

Delusions of grandeur

One of the primary contributions to the misunderstanding and miseducation about the on-going Israel-Palestine question is the media portrayal of events in the region. “The U.S. media focuses on the suicide bombings that kill Israeli soldiers and civilians; little or no attention is paid to Israel’s state of terrorism, which involves constant bureaucratic harassment, assassinations by death squads, destruction of infrastructure, confinement of civilians to towns, villages, or districts, long curfews, administrative detention, torture and systematic confiscation of land for building settlements and roads for the exclusive settlers” (Aruri, 2003, p. xvi). But,

because the U.S. media refuses to portray the U.S. government's best friend and ally in a negative light, "the Palestinian victims in the Diaspora do not qualify as victims worthy of our sympathy" (Aruri, 2003, p. xvii) and are portrayed as terrorists and Islamic fundamentalists instead of a people fighting an occupation. It has gotten to the point where supporting anyone who questions Israel's occupation or gives funding to the displaced Palestinians are supporters of terrorism. The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs labeled the late President Saddam Hussein of Iraq supporter of "Palestinian terrorism" because he empathized with the families of Palestinian suicide bombers and gave them the equivalent of \$25,000.² Of course, the Bush-Cheney Administration made the decision to invade Iraq the following month. President Ahmedinejad of Iran seeks to research how the Holocaust and migration of Jews the world over equates Palestinian/Arab forfeiture of the area known as Palestine. Naturally, the man is labeled, by Israel and the West as "crazy" and a threat to Israel's sovereignty and a threat to the stability in the Middle East.

How is solving the Israel/Palestine catastrophe possible without asking such questions as to "what gave Jews the right to stake claim in a land already inhabited by a people, just because of the religious and historic connection they shared?" Is it really anti-Semitic to ask that question? According to Israel and the U.S. it is. Think about this scenario: If I went to Jacksonville, Florida, to the house my great-great grandmother lived as a child and claimed that house as my own because my great-great grandmother used to live there, I would be out of line. This is what the Jewish community did to the people inhabiting Palestine.

² Israel Ministry of Defense, September 2002

Of course the inhabitants consisted of non-Arabs as well. However, the majority of the population was Arab: Arab Muslims, Arab Jews and Arab Christians. However, as the international Jewish movement to settle in Palestine took off, the Arab Jews began to see themselves as Israelis rather than Arab.

Conclusion/Peace in the Middle East

Making it even harder for a non-bias brokerage of peace between Israel and the Palestinians is the demonization of Islam. Since the September 11 attacks, the word terrorist has become synonymous with Muslim, thanks to the U.S. media and right-wing political analysts. After the attacks had occurred, Fox News presented former UN Ambassador and Reagan administration apologist Jeane Kirkpatrick to explain the horrific events, and she said “we are at war with Islam...” (Kellner, 2007, p. 623). Newt Gingrich followed with “we urge Congress to move immediately toward declaring war against militant Islam” (Kellner, 2007, p. 624). Meanwhile, on CNN that same day, William Bennett came out and urged that the United States declare war on ‘militant Islam,’ asserting: We have a moment of clarity right now in America...Congress should declare war against militant Islam...” (Kellner, 2007, p. 625). These people continued to hurl the word “militant” at the American people and the rest of the world as if they truly understood the word. Militant, from my understanding, means rebellious. Therefore, during the entire anti-Islam campaign what I deciphered from the messages on television was this: we need to declare war against those who refuse to be susceptible to America’s influence.

How can any Muslim nation expect to be treated fairly with this type of campaign of hatred aimed at them? The United States, supposed sole arbiter of peace between Israel and

Palestine, cannot be expected to make a decision based on what is best for the Palestinians or what is best for the Southwest Asian region.

Tuesday, November 27th, 2007, the U.S. hosted peace talks in Annapolis, MD. Amongst the countries invited to these peace talks were Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia as well as Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Israel and the Palestinian Authority have agreed to resume “peace talks” and to “return to the negotiating table to revive the *road map* peace plan ...which calls for both sides to take steps on the ground to build confidence in each others’ intentions—chiefly, a freeze on settlement–building in the West Bank by Israel and an action against militants by the PA” (Economist, 2007). “Construction on Palestinian territory was supposed to cease immediately after the Annapolis talks. Once again, not respecting agreements, Israel has decided to expand an already existing settlement in East Jerusalem, which President Mahmoud Abbas of the PA declared he wanted as capitol of the Palestinian state he wishes to be established” (Jazeera.net, 2007). If the U.S. cannot or will not influence Israel to honor promises made at Annapolis, the Palestinian people should seek help elsewhere.

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