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ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT: LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

Prevention, according to the Oxford Languages Dictionary, is "the action of stopping something from happening or arising." One does not need to be formally or informally educated, and it does not matter at what levels or degrees of knowledge acquisition. To prevent only requires common sense. What we see these days, even from those who should know better, is disappointment resulting from failures to act on time to stop what needed to be stopped, for a stitch in time saves nine.

We have seen clearly from the example of the COVID-19 pandemic what the difference between prevention and curing means. Failure to prevent more often than not has led to avoidable expenses and costs of trying to cure what should have been prevented in the first place.

In some instances, prevention is made to take the rear instead of the front seat and this could either be due to ignorance, lack of wherewithal or negligence. Whatever it is that needs to be prevented and if not possible at a time will have to be cured if that is an option. Most of the problems that the individuals, societies, and nations at large are plagued with today are such that could have been prevented if the will and the requisite preparation was available. Most times, prevention needs foresight and preparation as essential ingredients without which the stage gets missed and with a cost, sometimes small or big.

Diplomacy, as we know, is a systematic and violence-free approach of solving a problem. This approach could be applied before the problems arise and can also be undertaken when the problem has arrived. What is important is to realize that whatever it is that needs to be prevented is not for our good and can be very dangerous.

One of the commonest reasons why people fail to prevent is the carefree attitude and with others, difficulty identifying the problems before or when they arise. Prevention, because of its importance, also finds an important place to occupy in the field of medicine; hence, preventive medicine, which is the practice of promoting preventive health care to improve patient well-being. A good example of prevention in medicine is the non-pharmaceutical use of the face mask, hand washing, sanitizers, and lastly, the COVID vaccine shots, which require that we roll up our sleeves and get the shots as a precautionary and preventive measure against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Human beings are uniquely different from all other creatures, but the pertinent question to ask is why have we as individuals and organizations failed in the application of preventive diplomacy to conflict resolutions. This brings to the fore the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has been on now

for several decades and with no possible solution to ending the conflict in sight.

There have been a series of efforts made in the direction of peace but none has yielded the desired results. Some of the diplomatic efforts include the Madrid Conference of 1991, the Oslo Declaration of 1993 and the Clinton Parameters of 2000. The Madrid Conference of 1991 was a peace conference, held from 30 October to 1 November 1991 in Madrid, hosted by Spain and co-sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union. It was an attempt by the international community to revive the Israeli-Palestinian peace process through negotiations involving Israel and the Palestinians as well as Arab countries, including Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The Oslo I Accord or Oslo, officially called the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements or in short Declaration of Principles (DOP), was an attempt in 1993 to set up a framework that would lead to the resolution of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It was the first face-to-face agreement between the government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The Clinton Parameters were guidelines for a permanent status agreement to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, proposed during the final weeks of the Presidential transition from Bill Clinton to George W. Bush. All these are diplomatic efforts made at resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but none of them has actually brought about the desired peace as well as an end to the long-standing conflict between the Jews and the Arab world.

All the above diplomatic arrangements do not represent what a preventive diplomatic is, for they were carried out with the hope of deescalating the conflict and charting a course that leads to peace and stability in the Middle East. How did we get here is the question that always comes to mind when people fail to prevent the preventable, and finding an answer to such a question takes one back to the root cause of the problem at hand.

The history of the genesis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is traceable to World War I and the roles played by the allies, which include Britain, France, Russia, and Italy on one hand. It all started by Britain's ambition to promote imperialism in the Middle East and with the burning desire to control the oil deposit in Iraq, as well as to control and take charge of the Suez Canal. The Prime Minister of Britain at the time, David George Lloyd, was very instrumental to the key decisions made towards the expansion of the British imperial ambition in the Middle East.



President Joe Biden

Realizing that to get this ambition achieved, the central power in the Middle East then, which was the Othman Empire, had to fall for their goals to be realized. They sought the help of the Arab states, which then also were under the control of the Othman Empire. The Othman Empire had pocketed the Arab states with a policy similar to that of “assimilation” which the French used in governing their colonies in Africa, and for that reason, there were also agitations going on among the Arabs in the Middle East to gain independence from the Othman Empire. The British knowing the desire of the Arab world to gain independence for itself played on that and invited the Arabs to join the European allies with a promise that Britain would help them in return to gain their independence and achieve their long-aged dream of the formation of the Arab nations.

Cutting a long story short, a lot happened behind the scenes. The major problem that brought the Palestinians and the Israelis into the conflict they are confronted with today was the fact that Britain was alleged to have betrayed and deceived the Arabs who with the help of Sharif Hussein, who happened to be a descendant of the prophet Mohammed and who also was in control of the holy places of Mecca and Medina. Hussein, through the help of his two sons Abdullah and Faisal, gave military support to the allies.

Secret letters were said to be exchanged between Britain and the European allies with regard to the plan of sharing the spoils from the Othman Empire as well as dividing the Arab states of Iraq, Syria, and Palestine to mention a few among themselves. This was done without the knowledge of the Arabs who believed strongly on the promises of Britain to help them gain their independence.



Queen Elizabeth II

While the war was going on and the Arabs had been dragged into it through the support of Sharif Hussein, Britain also had a reason to have dealings with the Jews who were scattered all over Europe after the first temple in Jerusalem was captured. Because of the popularity of the Jews in Berlin, Russia, London and other places, especially with the establishment of the Zionist movement of the Jews, Britain fell in love with them and saw them as a people with a monolithic identity.

The Balfour Declaration was a statement of British support for

“the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”

The Balfour Declaration was a pronouncement made by Britain to give all the necessary support to the Jews in helping them to establish for themselves their long-age dream of becoming a sovereign state of Israel in Palestine. In other words, Britain inspired in both the Arabs and the Jews at the same time, the spirit of nationalism and with promises to the Arabs on one hand of helping to gain their independence and to the Jews on the other hand to help them in establishing a nation in Palestine.

The first Hebrew university was established in Palestine in 1918 with the support of Britain, which provided all the logistics in terms of security and protection. This action incensed the

Arabs who found it unbelievable seeing a minority group of people taking over their lands with impunity. This sparked off serious resistance and in different shapes and forms, prominent among which is suicide bombing as a way of expressing their displeasure over the occupation of their land. This continued until, when in 1948, the European Jews immigrated to Palestine, with the British providing military and protection, and established the independent state of Israel. This marks the beginning of the Israeli and Palestinian conflict, which up to today has yet to be resolved.

This political impasse had its aftermath as the above-mentioned diplomatic efforts, which include the Madrid Conference, the Oslo Pronouncement, and the Clinton Parameters. Unfortunately, October 2021 made it 30 years after the Madrid Conference was held in 1991, followed by the Oslo Pronouncement in 1993, and the Clinton Parameters in 2000. However, as saddening as it is, suffice it to say that the dream of the peace mediators on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which notably comprised of the late American President, George H. W. Bush and his Soviet Union counterpart is yet to be realized thirty years after it was initiated. This historical perspective given helps to gain understanding about the root cause of the conflict in the Middle East, and to say a permanent solution to this conflict is far-fetched is to discountenance the strength of the United Nations and the Security Council as well as to water down the importance of living up to the expectations of the reasons behind the formation of the United Nations.

Britain is seen clearly from the historical perspective given above as the master minder and the planter of the seed of discord and conflict between the Jews and the Arabs of the Middle East.

This is neither an attempt to paint any country black nor to fix blames. The purpose and the task at hand right now is to do the needful by taking positive steps that will assuage the Palestinians and deescalate the violence that is going on in the Middle East.

Here are a few ideas of what could be done. Just as the late Colin Powell said during the tenth year anniversary of the Madrid Conference:

“As we look forward, we should also look backward.”

Notable former American Presidents did make significant contributions towards resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and these include late former President George H.W. Bush, President Bill Clinton, President Barak Obama, and President Donald Trump. Their approaches toward achieving peace differ in some respects. As we know, the Madrid Conference had the blessings of President Bush. President Clinton came up with the Clinton Parameters. President Obama made concerted efforts through his foreign affairs secretary John Kerry, and President Trump moved the American consulate from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and shut down the Palestinian consulate in D.C., backing it up with measures that would make it very difficult if not impossible to open. In the case of President Joe Biden, record has it that he made promises about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict when he was running for office and these promises are yet to be kept.



It is believed that President Joe Biden, with his vast experience in the Senate for decades as well as being the Vice-President to President Obama, is in a better position than all his predecessors to achieve a landmark success by deescalating violence and bringing to an end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. What people ordinarily are expecting from President Joe Biden as the first step towards deescalating tensions in the Middle East would be for him to reverse the decisions by his immediate predecessor Donald Trump of moving the American consulate from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and shutting the Palestinian consulate in D.C.

It is widely believed that the action taken by the former President Donald Trump was not diplomatic enough as expected from a country like America who should be an equitable moderator. One thing that is not negotiable with the United States of America is her stand as the arbiter of justice, freedom, dignity of human beings, and the proponent for self-determination. This stance was also taken by the former President Woodrow Wilson after the first World War. When the allies were considering sharing the spoils of the defeated Othman Empire, President Wilson held onto the idea of a new world order that would guarantee freedom and independence for the people and territories that got freed from their overlords. The idea of President Wilson's new world order met with a stiff resistance from those countries that make up the allied forces, which include France and Britain. However, the British all along during the war appeared to the Arabs as champions of democracy and self-determination, whereas what they were doing behind the scenes was different and contrary to what they pretended to represent.

Going by the antecedents of both the British and the Americans, it becomes evidently clear that America is indeed the beacon of light and the custodian of democracy, and to this end, no other country can be trusted with the huge burden of finding a lasting peace in the Middle East other than America. So far, what is urgently needed now in the Middle East is peace, and that will require some important diplomatic efforts, and America is more than qualified to provide the leadership needed at this time.

It is very, very important to note that the function or the most important reasons behind the formation of the United Nations was to uphold or guarantee peace in the world by doing just two important things in one, which are to prevent and to end conflict. Why the case of the Israeli and Palestinian conflict has seemed to defy all solutions is now a mystery to be unraveled.

As we try to make positive impact on all potential mediators, it is important also for us to set the record straight and to make abundantly clear about what platform we are making contribution from and what forms the basis of our authority. I would like to first and foremost open up and touch on one or two factors that could be what constitutes the reasons for the lackadaisical attitude of the super powers and the United Nations in getting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict resolved before now.

It is true and undeniable that the establishment of the United Nations after the second World War had as its core mandate the protection of the rights of all the member nations and with a view to creating an atmosphere of peace. Suffice it to say also that peace can only be achieved where there is justice, equity, and fair play. If all these guiding principles, as contained in the United Nations charter, were strictly adhered to, there shouldn't have been conflicts in different places in the world today.



According to the scriptures:

*“There is one glory of the sun,
and another glory of the
moon, and another glory of
the stars: for one star differeth
from another star in glory.”*

—1 Corinthians 15:41

This is how it is and there is nothing anyone can do about it. The whole world and its occupants come under this scrutiny of our makeup and how it differentiates one from the other.

The country called Israel, from my understanding, had its name from an encounter that a man called Jacob had with, God and that explains the connection that exists between humanity and divinity. Israel, from the historical perspective contained in the Bible, is a man turned into a nation.

"He sent a word into Jacob and it hath lighted upon the whole of Israel."
—Isaiah 9:8.

Understand that Israel is not just a country like all the countries that we know in the world. It has a unique place that it occupies and this cannot be controverted. It is a monolithic nation that enjoys special grace, not as others have it. The reasons for the hesitancy by the super powers and the United Nations can be understood from the unique position of Israel, which has a significant role to play in the history of the world. Take it or leave it, Israel does not have just the weapons of warfare, it has a covenant covering that makes it difficult for it to be defeated.

This understanding should serve to open our eyes to how best we can deescalate tension and move in the direction of peace with Israel. Peace in the Middle East officially with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved through peaceful negotiations. We have tried every other thing to get the problem resolved without any positive result. Now is the time to follow the path of wisdom and get this problem resolved once and for all.

This will require concessions and compensations, and the world should be ready to get into business. Let me say this with the authority of God, that the world will not experience peace until Israel is at peace. The word of the Lord says:

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee."
—Psalm 122:6.

We have seen in our days things that are relatively new and which threaten our survival as humans. The problems we have seen in the climate change crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic are just a tip of the iceberg. We can make our world work in our favor if only we are ready and committed to do the needful, and the greatest need of mankind today which

also connects with the heartbeat of God is finding a lasting solution that will guarantee peace for Israel.

The United States of America is called upon once again, this time not by the authority of man but by God the almighty, to step into this great opportunity of being an equitable mediator, and with faith and trust in God, the world shall experience peace again. What we disregard or ignore is the fact that when Israel is not at peace, it rubs on the whole world making the world be in crisis.

The civil society organizations in both Palestine and Israel have an important role to play in jumpstarting the process by coming together to discuss. This does not exempt the United Nations from doing its own part, for that is the main function for which it was created to carry out, which is preventing or ending conflicts, and don't forget also, for the sake of emphasis, finding a lasting solution is expensive but not impossible. It involves, like I said earlier, two important things which are the readiness to concede and the heart and will to compensate accordingly.

The world is eagerly waiting for the United Nations with the help of the United States of America to champion this great cause, and hopefully, the tables shall be turned upside down for peace to reign in the Middle East.

I may sound a little bit emotional and spiritual. Without both of these attributes, the conflict easily gets overlooked or trivialized, and the more reason why the conflict has lingered for such a long time and sending negative signals to the world about the sincerity of the super powers, especially America, on it's commitment to freedom, equity, justice, fair play, and human dignity.

The Palestinians should adopt the posture that engenders peace as we all know that violence is easy to escalate and difficult to deescalate. The 1967 border arrangements can be revisited but with a mindset that welcomes adjustments. What has been missing, which is an essential ingredient in brokering peace, is love. Love does not see color, religion, and other divisive orientations. It only sees divinity in humanity.

"We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies."
—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



This message will not be complete without reference being made to the Christian communities worldwide who double up also as the spiritual Jews. It is not enough to pray for the peace of Jerusalem; we should also be seen working for the peace of Jerusalem. Provocative statements born out of religious sentiments rather than being productive are counterproductive. You should get to know the truth in order for you to do the right thing. Understand, and very well, that the conflicting promises given by the British to both the Arabs and the Jews created a legacy of bloodshed. The British promised the Arabs independence on one hand and promised the Jews a homeland on the other hand. This dubious use of diplomacy through diversion, bribery, and subjugation created the atmosphere of distrust, suspicion, and violence. This revelation needs to be taken to heart and should guide the judgment that we make towards achieving a lasting peace in the Middle East.

Former President Donald Trump seemed to have played on the gullibility of the Christians by winning their applause and support after he unilaterally moved the American consulate from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The Arabs are not to be seen as enemies especially of the Christians, and where there is justice and fair play, the British should tender an all-reserved apology, not only to the Arabs but to the United Nations and the world at large for committing this great injustice to the Arabs.

Since leadership is a continuum, the energy that President Joe Biden invested into evacuating the American troops from Afghanistan, the same is also required to provide an equitable mediating service in this regard that pertains to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Not making a decision is a decision.

According to the jewishvirtuallibrary.org's chart on Vital Statistics: Total Casualties, Arab-Israeli Conflict, the total number of casualties since 1920 is 116,342 and those who were injured total 114,640.

Going forward from our gloomy past and present situations, I suggest the use of the concession and composition diplomacy with purpose-driven meetings, first with the American representative, the United Nations Security Council, and the Prime Minister and other officials of the Israeli government on one hand, and on the other hand, another meeting which is comprised of representation from America, the U.N. Security Council officials, and representatives of the Palestinians. The objective of the meeting should revolve around talks about how to concede, who to concede to and who gets compensated. When a memorandum of understanding is signed by representatives at these two meetings, then the two parties of the Israelis and the Palestinians can now meet with the representatives of the United States and the U.N. Security Council to finalize the agreements and spring into action that will guarantee a lasting peace in the Middle East and in the world in general.

On a final note, as long as we choose to live in a loveless society, we automatically have chosen to live in a crisis-ridden society, and until we change our attitude and mindset towards our fellow human beings, struggle continues. May God bless America, the United Nations, and humanity at large.

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