

A Personal Reflection on the Current War in Israel

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(This brief article is based on personal convictions, faith, observations, a reasonable sense of history, and with a realistic approach to the problems discussed herein. Many of my friends may have a different perspective on this issue. It is difficult to have a consensus on such a staggering geopolitical issue. This was written at the request of many friends. Hope you will patiently and carefully read my reflection. Thank you.)

A Miracle nation

Israel, indeed, a miracle nation! Israel's preservation is an incredible thing to ponder. The story of their existence as a nation is too fantastic to believe. The mysterious 'Israel phenomenon' seems to defy both logic and history. The amazing survival of Israel over thousands of years - against all odds – has led me to believe the comment of C.S. Lewis (once a professor at Oxford): "History is a story written by the finger of God."

Israel is God's banner for the nations. "I will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah 11:12). *Israel is God's prophetic time piece to know where we are in history.* The Bible makes it abundantly clear that Israel has a special place in God's sovereign plan for the ages. According to Bible prophecies, Jerusalem is the God's stage for the final drama. Ever since the amazing rebirth of Israel as a nation (1948) the stage is being set for the fulfillment of many end-time prophecies.

Hostilities Against the Jewish nation

The current crisis and conflict in Israel are not an isolated incident. It is a continuation of the efforts of many radical, militant, terrorist groups, supported by some rogue nations to "wipe Israel off the map." This has been going on for the last 75 years, ever since the rebirth of the Jewish nation. Most of the neighboring countries of Israel are always in a declared or undeclared war against Israel. They continue to call for its destruction. These nations fund terrorist groups to destroy Israel. Remember that these extreme groups and organizations have training camps for children where they learn the value of being anti-Israel terrorists and aspire to become martyrs for the cause. From their childhood they are indoctrinated with hatred of Israel and the Jews. That's why whole families sing dance and celebrate in the streets when terrorists slaughter innocent Israelis. Oh, they think there are no innocent Israelis! Such celebrations were staged on the tragic day of 9/11. Rejoicing and celebrating violent atrocities!

Think for a moment: how would you like to live next door to a family who believe you don't have the right to live in your house, and for no reason to exist on earth? What if they have stated time and again that "we will finish you off." If the whole neighborhood joins with them in

eliminating you, what will you do? *In such a context, what is the relevance of peace talk? That is the reason the US, UN, and Arab nations-initiated peace talk is only on paper, and just as thin.*

The problem of a Radical, Hate-spitting Religious Ideology

The perennial, unsolvable problem in the Middle East is not political. The world has made it a political issue of land, settlement, aggression etc. The real problem is a radical, extremist ideology that considers Jewish state is an illegal entity, it must disappear from Palestine. "No more Jews in the land! No more Israel." Armed resistance is a divine mandate for them. I am only using milder terms in describing this radical ideology of hatred, destruction, and death. The real language is uncouth, uncivilized, and barbaric. Through antisemitism, racial and political hatred against the Jewish state, many world nations make this only a land issue and completely ignore the real issues involved. If they acknowledge the real issues involved, then they must radically revise their foreign policies. Because of the irresponsible support of the nations to the terrorist groups, the terrorists are emboldened to claim international support.

Gaza and Palestinians

After Israel declared independence, Egypt attacked Israel, through the Gaza strip. Though Israel won, Gaza remained under the control of Egypt and the region saw an influx of Palestinian refugees from Israel. Eventually they were unable to migrate to Egypt and not allowed to return to their former homes in Israel. In the 1967 war Israel seized Gaza and held it for nearly 40 years until 2005, when it withdrew its troops and settlers. In 2006 the Palestinians (before the six-day war of 1967, there was not a Palestinian identity, they were known simply as Arabs) in Gaza elected Hamas as their leadership. Hamas was originally formed in 1987 with the purpose of obliterating Israel.

Israel is a nation, and Palestine is a geographical location. Palestine has not been, nor is it currently a nation. The nation of Israel is in the land region of Palestine. *Palestine is a label often used by propagandists who are anti-Israel and who refuse to acknowledge Israel's right to exist. Palestine* also has taken various political connotations implying the legitimacy of Israel as a modern nation. Maps published with the nation of Israel labeled as *Palestine* are blatant attacks on the legitimacy of Israel as a nation to exist. The proposed solution of a two-state region is just a political hide and seek game. *The state of Israel should never exist - that is the real solution in the minds of the terrorist groups and their supporters in the region.*

The Myth of Land for Peace

The popular notion around the world is that if Israel would give back the territories it seized in the 1967 war, peace would come to the Middle East. Really? Israel gave back the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in 1982 (this strategic location includes the southern border of Gaza). Israel also made concessions for West Bank (Judea and Samaria in biblical times) as Palestinians (most of them Muslim Arabs). Though Israel occupies the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority, administers semi-autonomous areas of the regions. Israel gave Gaza back to the Palestinians. Israel did open

its borders to Gazan workers on a limited basis, and many of them do various jobs in Israel. As the Covid pandemic ebbed, the Israeli government decided to resume Gazan employment in Israel. What happened then? Israel's 9/11 on Oct.7, 2023!!

2 million Arabs/Palestinians live in Israel. 500,000 Israelis currently live in the West Bank. *A Palestinian state would demand that every Jew uproot and leave. Palestinian Arabs can live in a Jewish state, but Jews cannot live in a Palestinian Arab state! Yes, this is the real issue. The nations and world leaders have been covering up this real issue.*

"Land for peace." Not quite! It will not work that way in Gaza or in the region because of ideology, not because of politics or land. The terrorists and radical groups controlling the region with the support of some countries DO NOT WANT PEACE WITH ISRAEL. They just want to wipe off Israel from the face of the earth. That is their agenda, dream and goal.

In recent months a drumbeat has built around the US effort to negotiate a peace and normalization agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Both countries were steadily moving towards a deal that could have reshaped the Middle East. What happened? The Iran backed Hamas torpedoed the noble effort for peace by launching a devastating attack on Israel on Oct.7. "Peace." Who wants it anyway? No Israel, No Jewish state, no homeland for the Jews, even with the pre-1967 borders. This is the political and religious agenda behind what we have seen in the past and what we are seeing right now.

Did Hamas and their supporters ever want peace with Israel? The answer is an emphatic NO. This is the lingering and lurking problem in this geo-political issue. Most of the world nations ignore this question.

The Struggles of The Palestinian People

All Palestinians are not haters of Israel and not supporters of Hamas. No one can ignore and demean the struggles of the Palestinian people who are caught up in this crisis, without any real freedom, and controlled by the radicals, terrorists, and extremists. They are suffering in this humanitarian crisis. The money and the support given for humanitarian aid is used to make weapons to attack Israel. Peace and prosperity of the region is not in the terrorist agenda. As a result, the Palestinians suffer the consequences of terrorism and war.

It is a fact that Israel has not always been considerate, ethical, and righteous in their dealings with the Palestinians. War creates humanitarian crisis and sometimes violation of human rights. It is not new. It has happened in all wars. It just shows the sinful depravity of man dead in sins and trespasses. We should sympathize with all the innocent people who are suffering and pray for them. World nations which can alleviate the suffering of the innocent people (not only in the Israel-Gaza region, but all over the world, who are victims of terrorism, war, and brutal dictatorship regimes) should do their best in this noble cause. Unfortunately, many are reluctant to stand up and stand against these evil men. United Nations support for what is right and moral have waned. A brutally antisemitic spirit drives the decisions of many world leaders.

I don't think anyone can realistically present a peace plan for the Middle East when a group of radical terrorists assassinate any chance for peace as we have seen in the present crisis. Just think for a moment about the Oct.7 attack on Israel. It was not an attack on military units or bases, but an attack aimed to simply slaughter and annihilate entire communities of civilians. The terrorists took over villages and towns and systematically slaughtered innocent people without any provocation. This is just demonic evil and has paved the way for indescribable suffering on both sides. Minimizing such atrocities in the past and present, the propogandists nations are there in the front to lecture on Peace to Israel and hurrying for a peace treaty. This has been the pattern ever since the establishment of the Jewish nation in 1948. *Just think about all the atrocious wars waged against Israel from the day the Jewish nation was reborn. It is amazing how this tiny nation survived all these vicious attacks all alone against dozens of enemy countries surrounding them.*

We cannot support violent revenge of any party, nation, or group. But remember, violence by its very nature tends to spread. Once loose it overruns moral boundaries. It creates a cycle of revenge, escalation, and chaos, not justice, mercy or any other good. It has always been like that, and we will see that in Israel's response to Hamas. It is unavoidable and inescapable. It is human nature to respond to evil with evil. Who is to blame for the current situation? Everyone knows the answer. But to be "politically correct" many people try to pretend that they do not know the correct answer, or they give the wrong answer. No nation or leader on earth will be able resolve this issue.

Israel & The 'Times of the Gentiles'

In Jesus' famous prophetic discourse on the end of the age, He specifically referred to a period as the "times of the Gentiles." "Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). This is the period when Israel would no longer fully possess or live in peace in their homeland; will be constantly attacked by enemies. The "Times of the Gentiles" as Jesus called this time is the period of the dominance of the Gentile nations in the world (under the sway of the Wicked One, manifesting evil, corruption, and moral depravity). The period of Gentile domination of Jerusalem began with Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem (586 B.C.) and throughout history they were under the control of Gentile rulers, persecuted and afflicted.

The Times of the Gentiles continues today and into the future Tribulation days. Despite the military superiority of Israel, in the era known as the Times of the Gentiles, Gentiles will continue to attack, persecute, and oppress the Jewish nation. That is exactly what Jesus said. Hence these conflicts should not surprise us. Jesus used the word "until" to assure them that after this period has run its determined course, God will step in and says in effect, "That's enough." Attack and oppression of the Jews will continue until God decided to end it. The world is getting ready for end-time cataclysms. *Jesus' words throw much light on what is happening now in Israel – "Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."*

Amid unsolvable geopolitical problems, confusion, turmoil, and violence, let us pray for peace, and the protection of innocent lives. Being salt of the earth and light of the world let us practice Kingdom righteousness and justice and be peacemakers wherever possible.

“Let Thy Kingdom come” – “a Kingdom which cannot be shaken” (Hebrews 12:28); Kingdom of peace, truth righteousness and justice, under the victorious reign of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. “He who is coming will come, and will not delay, but My righteous one shall live by faith” (Hebrews 10:38) – faith in His Power, Protection, Providence, Promises, Plan, and Purpose. Yes, the best is yet to come!