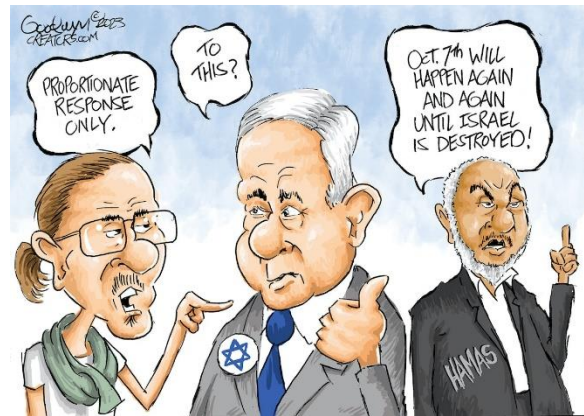


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Gaza war isn't about land

Steve Bakke  July 3, 2024



The Israeli/Palestinian conflict exists as unresolved as it has ever been. My review of the narrative history sends this strong and often repeated message: "It's not the land stupid!" But the world hasn't been listening. I'll provide examples.

Alan Dershowitz recently reminded us that following WW2, Hitler ally Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Muslim leader in what is now Israel, "turned the Jewish/Arab dispute from a resolvable conflict over land, to an irresolvable conflict over religion" i.e. there must be no Jewish sovereignty.

PLO official Zahir Muhsein announced the following in 1977: "The creation of a Palestinian state is only a means for continuing our struggle against the state of Israel.....Only for political and tactical reasons do we speak today....."

Yasser Arafat admitted this in 1993: "The question of borders doesn't interest us. Palestine is nothing but a drop in an enormous ocean."

In 2009, Muhammad Al-Muraikhi, a Qatan Sheikh, stated: "We do not treat the Jews as our enemies just because they occupied Palestine.....We will treat the Jews as our enemies even if they return Palestine to us, because they are infidels. They rejected Allah....."

Muhammad Hussein Ya'qoub, an Egyptian Imam, declared quite simply: "The Jews are infidels, not because I say so, and not because they are killing Muslims, but because Allah said [they are disbelievers]."

Radical Arab and Palestinian leadership have emphatically told us the same thing, time after time, through their rejection of at least five land partition offers for a separate state alongside Israel. They wouldn't accept a separate Jewish nation.

Jewish Prime Minister Netanyahu's comments about mutual disarmament are simple and practical truths. He's repeatedly stated that, "If the Arabs put down their weapons today, there would be no more violence. If the Jews put down their weapons today, there would be no more Israel."

It seems obvious that "it's not about land." It's all about religion. That means any solution to this problem won't be advanced by partitioning the disputed territory. Therefore, any hope for a permanent solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict seems more difficult to achieve. The logical question is, how can future conflicts be minimized so that the larger goal of peace in the Mideast can develop?

While reading from Benjamin Netanyahu's book, "Bibi: My Story," I came across this enlightening observation: ".....the key to achieving that peace was.....the historic peace accords.....In its first seventy-two years, Israel made peace with two Arab countries, Egypt and Jordan. In the span of four months, Israel made peace with four more Muslim countries."

Netanyahu is referring to the Abraham Accords led by President Trump. Trump decided to bring an end to the current international obsession with achieving peace between Israel and the Palestinians. He turned his attention to promoting peace talks between Israel and other Muslim nations. And he found several nations had immediate interest.

Soon, Israel signed four separate "normalization" agreements with: United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco. Sadly, hoped-for agreements with other Muslim countries now seem to have stalled.

The name itself, "Abraham Accords," recalled the prominence of Abraham in both Judaism and Islam. Abraham was a Jewish patriarch and a major prophet in Islam. In fact, the religions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are all included in what some describe as Abrahamic religions. This represents important common ground.

Stephen B. Young saw a pathway to peace as he related in an article in the June 20, 2024 StarTribune Opinion Exchange, "To bring peace to the Holy Land." In spite of their serious conflicts, the ancient relationship between these two groups demonstrated a willingness to enter into "covenants," sometimes with each other. A covenant is a promise, an agreement, a deal an "accord."

According to Netanyahu, President Trump, the "dealmaker," eventually came to understand that Israeli/Palestinian peace wasn't a prerequisite for accomplishing the broad goal of Israeli/Mideast peace. The modern-day Jewish/Islam "covenant" was born...the Abraham Accords. We must continue to pursue expanding this approach with other countries!

Israel and the U.S. should move on as soon as possible to regain the momentum Trump achieved with the Abraham Accords. There's no need to wait until after the presidential election.

While this won't bring the war in Gaza to a standstill, a different strategic attitude may develop, and that could affect how the warring parties decide to conclude the current conflict.