

**CRITICAL ISSUES IN ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT AND THE  
PROSPECTS FOR RESOLUTION**

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**ABSTRACT**

Since end of the Second World War in 1945, no other conflict has commanded attention on a global scale persistently than the Israel-Palestine conflict and, certainly, none has been as intractable for resolution. This paper explores the prospects for the resolution of the conflict which began effectively in 1948 when the state of Israel was established and is now in its 76th year. The paper follows the historical approach and a neo-realist perspective, tracing the roots of the conflict to its classical, biblical era, and terminating in its current phase of escalation marked by the Israel-Hamas war that has taken over 30,000 toll on human lives and over 70,000 injured as at the first week of March 2024. Thus, major flashpoints in the history of the conflict are highlighted, as well as notable efforts aimed at resolution by the United Nations, as well as initiatives by individual state interveners. The paper observes that the zero-sum game by Israel with the backing of the United States is responsible for the protractedness of the conflict. Finally, it asserts that it is in the mutual interest of the two parties to the conflict to reach a just resolution that will guarantee a permanent end of hostilities because, in an international system where the only constant thing has been the rising and falling of powers, the advantages of a zero-sum game can only be temporary.

**Keywords:** Israel-Palestine conflict, neo-realism, conflict resolution, third parties, and rules-based international order.

**INTRODUCTION: WHO OWNS THE LAND?**

In conflict analysis, there is the fundamental issue of clarifying the type of conflict in focus. In the present instance, we are focusing a resource-based conflict. The resource is land. In this conflict, two parties – the Israeli state and Palestinians - are laying claim to the land hitherto known as Palestine from pristine times, but renamed Israel in contemporary era. The conflict can be classified into three phases. The first phase was the Balfour Declaration and its fallouts, the second is the Israel's Declaration of Independence and the Arab alliance wars' phase, while

the third is the Palestinian intifada phase. The problematic of this introduction is captured in the question: who owns the land? We proceed by putting the Balfour Declaration in context.

Palestine shifted from being a colonial territory of the Ottoman Empire to a British colony following the defeat of Ottoman forces in the First World War. British control of the territory was given a veneer of legitimacy with the so-called British Mandate (1914 – 1948), granted by the League of Nations (and sustained by the United Nations) to Britain as part of her share of the territories dispossessed from the defeated powers of the First World War, prominently including the Ottoman Empire and Germany. The arrival of the British in the Middle East was undoubtedly pivotal to the outbreak of Israel-Palestine conflict. While the conflict became noticeable to the world when a group of heavily-armed Israeli militias announced the establishment of the state of Israel on 14th May 1948, it actually began with the Balfour Declaration 31 years earlier, contained in a letter dated 2nd November 1917. The letter was signed by the British Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, and addressed to Lord Rothschild, a British Jew, for delivery to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, whose lobbyists, comprising Jews in government and influential Jews in diverse walks of life, had put the British Government under tremendous pressure. In the letter, the British Government expressed its intention to create a Jewish state out of Palestine and made some rather ambiguous remarks about ensuring that non-Jewish communities in the territory did not experience any disruption to enjoyment of their rights. A point stands clear here. The British Government further acknowledged the fact that the territory in question belonged to the Palestinians. That fact was not in contention at all, as it did not talk about restoration of a Jewish territory to the Jews, but about allotting part of what was recognized as Palestinian territory to the Jews, calling it a “national home”. The full text of the letter reads thus:

Dear Lord Rothschild, I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet. His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country. I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation (Balfour, 1917).

It should be noted that this decision to cede part of Palestine to the Jews to afford them a homeland was taken because the British were the colonizing power in Palestine. The decision was not taken in consultation with the owners of the territory, the Palestinians. This was the root of the protracted Israel-Palestine conflict that remains unresolved till this day, as over the years, Jews across the world took advantage of the support and protection of the British authority in Palestine to migrate in large numbers for domicile thither. Before the British Mandate of Palestine, the population of Jews in the territory was only six percent (McCarthy, 1990). But between 1920 and 1947, an estimated 376,415 Jews migrated to Palestine, amounting to a 33 percent of total population in the territory (McCarthy, 1990). This, of course, did not go down well with the Palestinians and their Arab kinsmen; hence their incipient resistance to Jewish settlements, which, nonetheless, continued to rise. By 1936 an organized rebellion against influx of Jews and accompanying encroachment on Palestinian land ensued and continued till 1939. Commenting in *The Wall Street Journal*, Green (2023) described the development as “the storm before the storm” – a comparison of the rebellion to the escalation that followed and has persisted at varying degree of intensity post-Declaration of Israel’s Independence.

But it was not just the British colonisers of Palestine that acknowledged the territory as a possession of Palestinians. More importantly, the founding fathers of the present State of Israel acknowledged same in the Declaration of Independence on 14 May 1948 in the following remarks: “Exiled from Palestine, the Jewish people remained faithful to it, never stopping to pray and hope for their return” (Declaration, 1948). In other words, the land at issue is Palestine, not Israel. Also, the Jews had exited the territory by going into exile. However, in their diverse diaspora, they maintain a religious attachment to it by prayer. Further in the Declaration, the establishment of Israel was stated as follows: “We, the members of the National Council, representing the Jewish people in Palestine and the Zionist movement of the world, proclaim the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine, to be called Israel” (Declaration, 1948). Again, it is made crystal clear in this statement that it is in the land of Palestine that Israel was being established.

Nonetheless, what are Israel’s justification for its occupation of Palestine? Among other shades of claims, two are prominent. The first is rooted in religious belief of divine promise. Troen (2013) described Israel’s Declaration of Independence as “a document that derives from a belief articulated more than three millennia ago in a promise recorded to Abraham in Genesis”. The particular passage in reference reads:

I will maintain My everlasting covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be God to you and your offspring to come. I assign the land you sojourn in to you and your offspring to come, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting holding” (Genesis 17: 7-8).

We indeed have biblical accounts of how Moses, and Joshua his successor, conquered Canaan – the Promised Land - and its multiplicity of kingdoms, and divided it among the 12 tribes of Israel. By the same token, the Bible in the Old Testament recorded that Israel had embarked on a trajectory of loss of sovereignty over its conquered territory through counter-conquests and colonizations by various great powers of the time as a punishment for sinning against God, who had given them the land, *ab initio*. For example, in Second Chronicles Chapter 36, we read of the defeat of the King of Judah and the conquest of Jerusalem in succession by the King of Egypt and the King of Babylon. In the Book of Ezra, Israel and its capital, Jerusalem, fell under the rule of Cyrus, the King of Persia. In the Book of Daniel is the famous account that, among those captured and taken to the court of the King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego.

Biblical accounts also confirmed that about two thousand years ago when Jesus Christ was on earth as a Jew, Israel was a colonial fiefdom of the Roman Empire. The money in use then among the Jews bore the image of Caesar, the Roman emperor. That was why Jesus said, “Render unto Caesar, the things that are Caesar’s”, when asked whether it was right for Jews to pay taxes unto Caesar. After Jesus’ resurrection, Jews who saw a superman in Him thought he should be able to restore sovereignty to Israel, hence they posed this question to Him: “Lord, will you at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel”? (Acts of the Apostle 1: 6). Their question, plainly, was whether there would be an end of colonization and restoration of sovereignty to Israel. Jesus tactfully dodged the political question, telling them it was God’s prerogative to keep the information they sought confidential: “It is not for you to know the times and season, which the Father hath set within His own authority’ (Act: 1-7), He had replied them.

In essence, even in Jesus’ time, Israel had long lost its independence and sovereignty. Importantly, it was during Roman’s colonization of Israel, part of which was witnessed by Jesus in His 33 years of earthly life, that it was renamed Palestine. An account puts the precise time this happened at 132 CE after the conquest of ancient Israeli territories of Jerusalem and Judea by the Romans (“Origins of the Name”, n.d.). That was 108 years short of 2000 years ago.

How then did Palestinians become the occupants of the ancient Israel? We should recall that the Palestinians (recorded in the Bible as Philistines) were neighbours to Israel. In an account, their army had pitched on the borderline with Israel with Goliath as their commander, while King Saul commanded the Israeli forces, until David emerged and killed Goliath. It stands to reason that the Palestinians gradually fulfilled their yearnings to conquer and takeover the Israeli territory as most of its Jewish population were forcefully migrated to other parts of the world by their conquerors. In any case, it should also be recalled that the land in question, hitherto called Canaan, was not Israel's originally. It was forcefully taken after the exodus from Egypt with Moses and Joshua as commanders, respectively.

The second justification for Israeli appropriation of Palestine is based on the contentious claim that vast areas of the territory were uninhabited and undeveloped. Those who held this notion were associated with the slogan, "A land without a people, for a people without Land" (Troen, 2013). The argument here is that it is a universal experience for uninhabited territory to be taken over by a people desirous of putting it to use and have the capacity to surmount any obstacle in the way of achieving this object. Troen (2013) describes the undeveloped Palestine in the contemplation of Zionist ideologues as a place where "extensive areas were barren and uncultivated, devoid of trees, containing regions with numerous swamps, and yielded but a modest produce that barely sustained a relatively small population".

On the other hand, Palestinian claim to right of ownership of Palestine is anchored, largely, on diverse international law documents that recognize "the principle...that a group of people with a common past, with a common language, that inhabit a certain territory constitutes a nation that has the right to self-determination and a state... Israeli existence is represented as violating the principles of international law since it was based on conquest and dispossession." (Maissy-Noy, 2006). Presently, Israel does not permit Palestinians to enjoy the right of self-determination, while it continues to build more settlements in Palestinian territory in flagrant disobedience to several resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council.

In light of the foregoing, it is correct to depose that, indeed, Palestine belongs to Palestinians. This is the belief of Arab sympathisers of Palestinians who decided to redress what they deemed an injustice by engaging Israel in series of wars since it was founded in 1948.

## **MAJOR THIRD PARTIES IN THE CONFLICT**

The Israel-Palestine conflict has morphed, over the years, into a multi-stakeholder conundrum. In addition to the primary parties in the conflict comprising Israel and Palestinian groups, there are third parties involved, representing various interests. While it is difficult to exhaust the whole range of interested third parties, a couple of them loom large for their active involvement. Three will be reviewed here because their respective positions are crucial to resolving the conflict. They are the United Nations, the United States, and Arab nations.

### **The United Nations**

On the heels of the holocaust suffered by the Jews in World War II, the United Nations Organisation, the successor organization to the League of Nations, established in 1945, was quite sympathetic to the desire of Jews for an independent homeland where they could feel secure. On 29 November 1947, the UN passed Resolution 181, partitioning Palestine into two, one Jewish, the other for Palestinian Arabs. The Resolution was passed by a vote of 33 to 12, with 10 abstentions. Israel has shown no gratitude for the magnanimity of the UN for using its multilateral platform and diplomatic clout to offer it a portion of a territory to which it held no valid claim. Rather, it has deployed force over the years to acquire far more land than apportioned to it by Resolution 181, sometimes using attacks by hostile Arab neighbours as an alibi in time past. Decades after wars with its Arab neighbours had ceased, however, it continues to confiscate Palestinian land in the West Bank, for instance. On top of this, it has made a two-state solution embodied in Resolution 181, and of which Israel is a beneficiary, impossible as it maintains occupation forces in what is left of Palestinians' habitation of the old Palestine – the West Bank being a prominent case. Without a coercive apparatus to enforce its resolutions against Israeli illegal construction of settlements in prohibited space and occupation of same, all the UN could do over the years has been to issue a rash of resolutions in their hundreds, while the organisation's Secretary General supports the resolutions with occasional releases condemning Israeli actions in strong terms. One of the more recent of the several ineffectual resolutions is UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2334 adopted on 23 December 2016 by a vote of 14 to 0. Further underscoring its popularity, China, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom - four of the five UNSC permanent members with veto power - the United States being the only abstention, voted for the Resolution. The 10 non-Permanent members who voted in favour of the Resolution are Angola, Egypt, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Senegal, Venezuela, Spain, Ukraine, and Uruguay. Specifically, Resolution 2334

condemns Israeli settlements in Palestine as a “flagrant violation” of international law, as well as lacking “legal validity”.

The helplessness of the UN at ensuring compliance to principles of equality of mankind, the right of a people to self-determination, and respect for the territorial integrity of all nations - all embedded in its Charter endorsed by all its member nations – underscores the triumph of might over right in the prevailing international order. We live in a world where structures of international law and conventions are consequential only with the weak and powerless nations. Powerful nations like Israel, heavily backed by the United States, can act in flagrant disregard of international law with little or no consequences. In the circumstance, the UN can only act as a moral force, pointing out what is legal and moral to do and no more.

### **The United States**

While the United Kingdom literally gifted a part of Palestine to Israel via the Balfour Declaration, the United States had taken up the role of a protector of the Jewish nation in a manner that vitiates some of the provisions of the UN Charter to which it is a prime-mover and signatory. The US has used its veto power on the Security Council indiscriminately to block any resolution aimed at calling Israel to order, whether in the matter of halting new illegal settlements on Palestinian land or to put an end to the genocide being perpetrated by Israel on women and children in Gaza from October 2023 till date, that is, March 2024. For example, UN News reported that the United States vetoed a Security Council resolution requesting that “Israel, as the occupying power, immediately and completely ceases all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and that it fully respects its legal obligations in this regard” (“United States Vetoes”, 2011). In late January 2024, Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary General, described the scale of killings in Gaza as “heartbreaking and unacceptable” with figure of casualties then at 25,000 (Burke, 2024). Two months later, it is much more. Yet, the US vetoed a UN Security Council draft resolution in the third week of February 2024 calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Thirteen countries on the Council had voted in support of the resolution with the United Kingdom as the only abstention. In other words, the US was the sole opponent of the humanitarian resolution meant to create a corridor for the supply of critically needed aid in the form of food and medicines. The US establishment went to this extent despite the fact that the ceasefire being requested did not entail a permanent end of hostilities. For the American establishment, it is simply a matter of acquiescence to Israeli

position on any issue – a trend a former American President, Jimmy Carter, had had cause to shed light on in a viral interview available on diverse online media, including the YouTube. According to Carter, any elected American official, for instance, who opposed what he called Israeli “apartheid” policy among the Palestinians, was certain not to get reelected (Goodman, 2007). In essence, the powerful Jewish community and lobby groups in the US have made expediency the operative word for American politicians when dealing with Israel. This has made it impossible for any initiative aimed at making the country amenable to a peaceful resolution of its protracted conflict with Palestinians to work. Relying on its own strength and assured backing of the superpower US militarily, politically, and diplomatically, Israel has been reckless in defying the position of the entire international community under the auspices of the UN. It feels satisfied having only the US on its side on many issues before the UN. And, getting the US to maintain an objective position is absolutely imperative for any resolution effort to be successful. For now, the rule of might and power reigns supreme!

### **The Arab Nations**

Arab nations sympathetic to the Palestinian cause have been important interested parties in the conflict in focus, particularly, since some of them launched a retaliatory war on Israel in 1948. While the quartet of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Transjordan were the arrowheads of the Arab-Israeli war of 1948 – 1949, the entire Arab world were with them, if not militarily, morally. They all expressed the belief that Palestine belonged to Palestinian Arabs and it was a travesty of justice for Israel to declare its independence by force of arms on what they considered land stolen from their kinsmen. Upon the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from Palestine at the expiration of its Mandate on 15 May, 1948, it was the independence of Palestine that was expected as had been the case in other colonies held by the UK, but, shockingly there was a preemption with unconcealed UK connivance on 14 May! For example, Egypt, which alongside Palestine and Iraq, had come under the League of Nations Mandate granted the UK in 1918, had secured its independence about four years later on 28 February 1922. Ten years after Egypt's, Iraq too got its independence in 1932. The question then was, Why should Palestine suffer a different fate? Why should it come under another colonizer of its territory, rather than breathe the air of freedom when the British departed? These were questions to which no satisfactory answers were given. Consequently, the Arabs denied recognition to the Israeli state. Their goal, *ab initio*, was to crush Israel and transfer sovereignty over its illegally occupied land to Palestine. Then ensued a series of Arab-Israeli wars. Israel had victory in the



1948-1949 war. On 26 July 1956, Egypt embarked on a hostile act by nationalizing the Suez Canal Company with the intent to block Israeli shipping. With the support of French and British military, on 29 October 1956, Israel retaliated by launching an invasion of the Sinai Peninsula, which was on Egypt's territory. The intervention of the UN and the US led to a ceasefire and Israel's withdrawal from Sinai Peninsula. To sustain the ceasefire, the UN further deployed a peacekeeping force named United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), which Israel refused operations on its territory, thus limiting them to the Egyptian side. There were other tensions between Egypt and Israel over the years, as well as with other Arab nations who, in August 1967 met in Khartoum, Sudan, and declared the "three nos" against Israel: no recognition, no peace, and no negotiation. Another notable war – perhaps the last joint Arab military operation against Israel – was launched by Egypt and Syria on 6 October 1973 during the Yom Kippur festival in Israel. It was a surprise attack and it took Israel three days to mobilise to repel the attackers. To reinforce the Egyptian and Syrian positions, Sister Arab nations supplied those troops. To impel Western nations to put pressure on Israel, they further imposed embargo on oil sales to the West, causing an astronomical rise in global oil price. When Israel gained the upper hand in this war, the defunct USSR threatened to intervene on the side of the Arabs. At this juncture, the United States, wary of a nuclear war, pressurized Israel to a ceasefire with the other belligerents.

Gradually, Arab positions vis a vis Israel began to shift. Beginning with the Camp David Peace Accord brokered by the United States, leading to the return of Sinai Peninsula by Israel to Egypt in March 1979, a series of other peace deals have been made with Israel by a succession of Arab nations. For example, under what is tagged the Abrahamic Accords, the United Arab Emirates normalized relations with Israel (Frederico-O'Murchu, 2020).

## **TOWARDS A RESOLUTION: NEO-REALISM Vs. RULES-BASED INTERNATIONAL ORDER**

There are, broadly, two methods of resolving a conflict. One is the use of force, the other is by peaceful means. The neo-realists are advocates of force, while those who believe in a rules-based international order superintended by the agency of the UN and international law are advocates of peaceful resolution of conflicts. The neo-realist thesis is anchored on the premise that the international system is anarchic. And this impels fear in states over their security. One of the three features of the international system that make nations fear one another, according

to Mearsheimer (2001), is the lack of an all-powerful central authority that can compel great powers to act within the bounds of international law and protect weak nations. The UN, which is the nearest to that authority is a toothless bulldog that cannot bite when its rules are violated by great powers. In this circumstance, the more capabilities a state acquires both to guarantee its own security and to establish hegemony over others, the better. Nuclear-armed Israel is a great power with one of the best-armed military and secret service in the world. These, coupled with the backing of the US, have made Israel the undisputed regional power in the Middle East. It is against the background of this humongous power resources that any discourse exploring the prospect of resolving Israel-Palestine conflict must be situated, as it is never an easy task to reach a just or mutually satisfactory resolution of a conflict in which one party enjoys the upper hand.

While concerned interveners are seeking an end to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Israel continues to build new settlements on Palestinian land that is far more in size than the initial UN allotment via Resolution 181 (II) ("Resolution", 1947). Hence, the UN had expressed its strong objection to the construction of new Jewish settlements in land reserved for Palestinians via Resolution 2334, which "reaffirms that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace" ("Resolution", 2016). In any negotiation, Israel, albeit on a shaky moral pedestal, will be at the table from a position of strength, while Palestinians will be there from a position of weakness. The first critical issue in reaching a resolution, therefore, is about getting Israel to be fair and just, bearing in mind that the UN's Resolution 181 that accorded legitimacy to its quest for a homeland by partitioning Palestine into two states, of which it is one, was a product of humanitarian consideration on the heels of the Jewish holocaust orchestrated by Nazi Germany during World War II.

Will Israel agree to relinquish Palestinian land? It is most unlikely. It has built infrastructure and settled people on the land for decades and kept it under the protection of its armed forces. All these it did while ignoring series of UN resolutions. The second critical issue and the next question is, Will Palestinians agree to a settlement with the bulk of their land confiscated by Israel? It is most unlikely too. Hamas, which sees Israel as an illegally-constituted state on stolen Palestinian land and has refused to accord it recognition, will certainly not agree. However, in a situation where more and more Arab countries are beginning to soften their

stance on non-recognition of Israel by signing peace agreement with it under the auspices of the US, the Palestinians are, indeed, in an increasingly weak position for a fair negotiation. There are speculations the 7 October 2023 Hamas' invasion of Israel was to halt the tide of Arab nations negotiating peace with Israel. As noted earlier, Egypt had made peace and begun diplomatic relations with Israel in 1979 at the Camp David Accord mediated by the US. Jordan followed suit 15 years later in 1994. Note that both countries share border with Israel and, of course, there are mutual economic benefits in pursuing peaceful relations. Also, the quartet of Sudan, United Arab Emirates, and Morocco all normalized relations with Israel in 2020 ("Arab-Israeli", n.d.).

The foregoing projections lead us to the inexorable fact that only a third party intervention stands any chance of resolving the Israel-Palestinian conflict. In this connection, the mediatory role of the UN over the years has yielded little or no result in a situation where a powerful Israel prefers playing a zero-sum, winner-takes-all game. It then appears that only the United States can exert enough pressure on Israel to make some concessions as to give the Palestinians some consolation that their struggle and suffering over the years have not been in vain. For now, they are in a highly humiliating position to recognize Israel as a state and accept an armistice, while Israel is still building new settlements on the remnant of their land in the West Bank occupied by Israeli forces.

Are there prospects of the US undertaking a mediatory role in a manner that would afford the Palestinians some respite? If the UK that was pivotal to Jewish foothold in Palestine through the Balfour Declaration could condemn Israeli settlements in unauthorized areas and has, lately, been condemning its high-handed responses to 7 October 2023 invasion by Hamas, causing the death of over 30,000 persons, comprising mostly women and children, and injury to over 70,000, it is possible for the US to change its position on the conflict at issue. *The Jerusalem Post* reported attacks in high places against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's mishandling of the Israeli response to the 7 October Hamas' invasion. The report quoted the Senate Majority Leader, Senator Chuck Schumer as saying, "Netanyahu has lost his way by allowing his political survival to take precedence over the best interests of Israel" (Lazaroff & Sarisohn, 2024). His colleague, Senator Jack Reed, in the same medium supported him with a statement on his X social media handle: "No one else could have done it other than Chuck. No one has the spiritual and emotional connections to Israel. No one has done more to expand the hope of a peaceful, progressive Jewish democratic state than Chuck. Now it's our turn to stand with

him. To speak out for justice and humanity,” (Lazaroff & Sarisohn, 2024). To drive the message home pointedly and poignantly for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the object of these attacks from his erstwhile supporters in the American Government, President Joe Biden disclosed his staff had been briefed before Senator Schumer made his release and that he spoke the mind of many Americans (Lazaroff & Sarisohn, 2024).

What the open call for regime change in Israel by its strongest and most dependable ally signals is the fact that there is a limit the US would not cross, especially in the matter of gross violations of human rights and perpetration of war crimes in Palestine. The US has found itself in a rather awkward and embarrassing position, being at the lead of supply of relief materials to Palestinians under Israeli brutal attacks, while Israel refuses to accede to its modest request for a ceasefire on humanitarian grounds. Rather, Prime Minister Netanyahu insisted on launching a ground offensive on Rafah, the only place in the ambience of Gaza it has not fully destroyed.

In the final analysis, it should be pointed out that a zero-sum game in a conflict has never been beneficial to any country in the long-run. If there is anything that has stayed constant in the history of international relations, it is the rising and falling of great powers. Roman and Babylonian Empires of classical era, rose and fell. Ditto contemporary ones like the British and the superpower USSR, all rose and fell. There is nothing to guarantee that Israel will maintain its dominance in the Middle East forever, especially if it falls out with the US.

Not permitting a just settlement with Palestine is thus tantamount to laying a potent mine in its own path when the balance of power is to its disadvantage. Afterall, its history as encapsulated in the Bible shows that it had been conquered and subjugated by other nations several times in classical times and was not able to regain its statehood for over 2,000 years until 14 May 1948 when it declared itself independent with great support from the UK and the UN. Only adherence to a rules-based international order, which Israel presently violates with impunity will guarantee its survival in a changing world.

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