

PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

A Desperate Case Cries Out For a New Paradigm

by Hussein Askary

This is an edited transcript of remarks delivered by Hussein Askary to The LaRouche Organization's Manhattan Town Hall webcast on May 22, 2021. Mr. Askary is Southwest Asia Coordinator for the Schiller Institute. A video of the full meeting is available [here](#).

Lyndon LaRouche often said that you don't have any problems in Southwest Asia that have not been created by the British Empire. We are now seeing in the current clash between Israel and Palestine a classic case of geopolitical manipulation of religion and politics and geography to pit nations against each other, peoples against each other. Before the British Empire got its nose into this region in 1917, we didn't have any problems between Jews and Muslims and Christians and so on. It's a tragic situation. In Gaza, for example, there is a horrendous situation. The living conditions are similar to an open prison.

The lying Western media have been talking about Xinjiang in China being an open-air prison and a concentration camp, which is a complete lie, but they are completely blind to the fact that what the Palestinian people—especially in Gaza—have been subjected to is prison camp or concentration camp conditions.

The thing with tragedies is that the people who are inside the tragedy are not able to solve the problem *per se*, because they are locked into a dead end. Both Hamas and the current Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu are into a game which they believe has nothing to do with anything else than their own goals. The reality is that there is a much bigger picture in which we, who are outside the tragedy so to speak, can situate this problem and find a solution to it. So, the problem does not come from the Palestinians or Jews or anybody, although they are now, in the

news media, the major players. The Israelis are shooting rockets, so the Palestinians are shooting rockets, and so on and so forth. But that's not really the real story.

Some History

Last week on the Manhattan Town Hall [meeting](#), Harley Schlanger did a fantastic job of explaining the historical background for this.

I'm just going to touch on a few crucial matters of



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that history. As I just said, there is this British game which continues up to today. The people who planned this knew it was going to continue. But the thing which is important for us today is to situate these events in Gaza of today and in Southwest Asia in the larger context, when and where these things are happening. This is something we have learned from Lyndon LaRouche: We cannot understand any event by itself without looking at the larger context; otherwise we won't be able to find a solution for that.

I wrote on Facebook, a few weeks before the recent

outbreak, that there are very interesting moves in the region, that can point to a different direction than what we have seen in the past six—we count the years by how many American administrations there have been—so we had two Obama administrations and one Trump administration. That’s the diary, and during these three administrations we had a terrible situation in the region, but recently we had very important developments taking place concerning countries in this region. But also, it involves Russia and China.

The first foreign policy declaration by President Biden was that “the United States is back.” Now, that was a terrifying message as I recollect when I heard it. The thing is that what Biden means is that what the Trump administration did in this region by disengaging from many issues there—for example, regime-change wars and launching new wars—that made the United States to lose its leadership in the region and in the world. And therefore, the United States should take the leadership in this region back, but from whom? From China and Russia, because according to the Biden administration, the vacuum created by the lack of U.S. leadership was filled by Russia and China, but it was filled by Russia and China for a good reason with a good policy.

Positive Developments

Recently we had the possibility of the 5+1—the 5 permanent members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany—reopening the negotiations with Iran for the nuclear deal, the JCPOA, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Lifting the sanctions against Iran and having Iran cooperate with the international community so to speak, on its own nuclear program to limit Iran’s possibility to produce a nuclear weapon, although Iran never had that intention. In any case, these negotiations were going well, it was also still going on in Vienna.

Iran and China had signed a very strategic and economic joint agreement for 25 years, mostly on economic development along what the Chinese now call the Belt and Road Initiative, the New Silk Road. Iran and China will work intensively to build infrastructure, develop industry, transfer technology, and other strategic and military cooperation.

At the same time Saudi Arabia and Iran, who are rivals in this region, the big Sunni-Shi’a rivals, had started negotiations in Baghdad, the Iraqi capital, to

ease the tension and find ways of ending their so-called proxy wars in other parts of the region. We had the prospect of Syria re-entering the Arab League and ending the war there in which Russia has played a key role. We also had the prospects of having a new Yemen envoy to the UN instead of the British diplomat who has been actually playing a dirty game in Yemen in the last few years—a new envoy who will start negotiations.

The Iran-Saudi negotiations will have a positive effect on solving the horrible situation in Yemen, which has been discussed many times in your shows, and Mrs. Helga Zepp-LaRouche has made an issue of lifting the blockade and sanctions on Yemen, which are genocidal.

Also, at the same time, we had the Libya situation becoming calm due to interventions by many nations, but especially Russia, Egypt, and Turkey working together to stabilize the situation. Egypt and Turkey, which have been rivals for the past 10-12 years, are now re-approaching each other diplomatically.

So, you had a situation in the region where things were going in the right direction, and suddenly, we had the increase of tension in Palestine and Israel, with East Jerusalem first in the Sheik Jarrah neighborhood, which was about to be taken over by Israeli Jewish settlers from its Arab inhabitants. But the core decision was delayed, but then you had all the rioting and the brutal treatment by the Israeli police of the Palestinians. And Hamas, from Gaza, intervening with its rockets. So, we had this development which everybody saw on the news.

The problem is, there are people who, if we don’t look at the general context, if we don’t look at the history of this conflict, there are certain fallacies which people push out.

Palestinians and Israelis Not Treated as Equals

For example, the idea that Israel and Palestine are treated as equal, but Israel is one of the strongest military powers in the world. It’s backed by the most advanced military power in the world—the United States. They have the most advanced weapons and intelligence and everything. The Palestinians don’t have that.

The other thing is that the Palestinians don’t really have a state. So, you cannot demand from the Palestinians to take certain actions when they are living in a state-less condition and being oppressed both in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

People say, “Why can’t the Palestinians live in

peace with the Jews and the Israelis?” The problem is, the Palestinians are not treated as equals, they are not treated as humans, even. Also, what they are seeing—and this is something which Harley Schlanger discussed last week—that we have an ideology in Israel, especially in the right wing like Netanyahu’s party, the Likud and other extreme so-called Zionist political par-

ties and religious groups, who really don’t consider the Palestinians or the Arabs as people whom they should live with and who should exist there. We remember Ariel Sharon’s old slogan that “Jordan is Palestine.” His idea was that the Palestinians should be moved, transferred to Jordan where they can have their Palestinian state, but not on the so-called Holy Land.

Therefore, we have many issues that are not resolved; but solving them could become easier if we look back at the history of the situation. There are UN Resolutions that can give the Palestinian people and the Arab countries a fair solution to this problem, and make sure that the moderate forces in the Arab world and in Palestine are the ones who have the upper hand, not the extremists.

Just to recall, one thing we have discussed and developed, in the LaRouche movement and *Executive Intelligence Review*, is that Hamas, for example, has its own agenda. It’s part of the international Muslim Brotherhood movement, and it does not do things just for national interest. The problem with the Muslim Brotherhood is it has been the creation of the British Empire, and has been manipulated, including by the CIA, to oppose the nationalist anti-imperialist forces in the whole South-west Asia region and the Arab world. So, Hamas itself—and I’m making myself unpopular now in the Arab countries—has its own agenda, exactly as Benjamin Netanyahu and his people have their own agenda.

I just want to share with you a few things on the historical background to understand how the British manipulated the situation.

The Post-World War I British Trap

While World War I was going on, you had young people dying on the Western Front, Germans, French, and even Americans were involved later, by the tens of thousands. The British were planning, together with the French, other things somewhere else in the world. We have described it as the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The British and the French would divide the territories of the old Ottoman Empire, which also included what is today Palestine, Israel. It was still under control of the Ottomans, the Turks, until that point.

So, they were planning that, and then at the same time—November 1917—the British presented what is historically called the Balfour Declaration. The Balfour Declaration was a letter sent by Lord Arthur Balfour, the Foreign Secretary of Britain, to Lord Rothschild,

From the Discussion

Moderator: The first [question] is from an Israeli activist who says: “To my friends abroad, who are interested to know what’s going on in Israel right now, let me try to sum up: After 12 years in office, our corrupt Prime Minister was about to lose his position in the next few days; so, in order to sabotage the gradually forming alternative government, and avoid trial, he went and authorized the provocative ideas of his most extremist officials. The plan was simple and brutal. Since the alternative government was about to include an Arab party for the first time ever in Israel, provoking the Muslims during their most sacred holiday, Ramadan, would result in another mini-war, and divide the already-fragile coalition. Unfortunately, it has worked.

“Right now, Gaza is burning. There are riots on the streets of the mixed-population cities in Israel, and rockets are falling on Tel Aviv and the south during the night.

“Good luck to us all, and may all the cynical, power-hungry leaders get what they deserve.” That’s one person from inside of Israel....

Askary: For the first comment, or questioner who said that Netanyahu had his own agenda, I actually didn’t say that, I didn’t present it, but it’s something I presented in an interview on Iranian television. And I mentioned that Netanyahu had his own reasons to provoke this escalation, as the friend from Israel says, that he was facing jail, and also that a new Israeli government of more moderate elements would form a new government which would include an Arab party for the first time in recent years. So that’s completely correct.

who was the head of the UK-based Zionist Federation. In that letter, the British, as you see in the text, are willing to have a Jewish Zionist state in Palestine. This is an admission that there was such a place called Palestine, but the British wanted to offer that as a homeland for the Jews in Europe.

The thing is, what the British set up is actually a trap, both for the Jews and for the nations of the region. Because prior to that—it's a bit humorous how some of these Jewish organizations in the 19th Century and even the early 20th Century were thinking where their future Jewish state should be. And you can find it on the internet if you look for proposals for a Jewish state. There are about 10 or 11 proposals; *none* of them include Palestine. These are places in the U.S., there is a place in Uganda, there was one in Russia, Japan, Madagascar, in Guyana, Ethiopia, and so on.

But the British chose Palestine because they had their own plans for how to divide and conquer this region. It is also situated at the crossroads of the continents and the oceans, which the British planned to either control forever or manipulate through others like the United States. And the U.S. is being manipulated now into supporting Israel in whatever Israel does, so that the conflict continues. There is no way out of such a conflict. This is one of the sinister things the British created, like they did in Kashmir and so on, which is a big problem.

The Way Out

The problem now is how to get out of that situation. We cannot get out of that problem by rolling back history. You cannot negate the existence of the Israeli state; you cannot either ask the Palestinians to leave for Jordan, as Sharon wanted to do, to have their own state.

We should, rather, follow certain steps, make certain compromises to allow the Palestinian people to

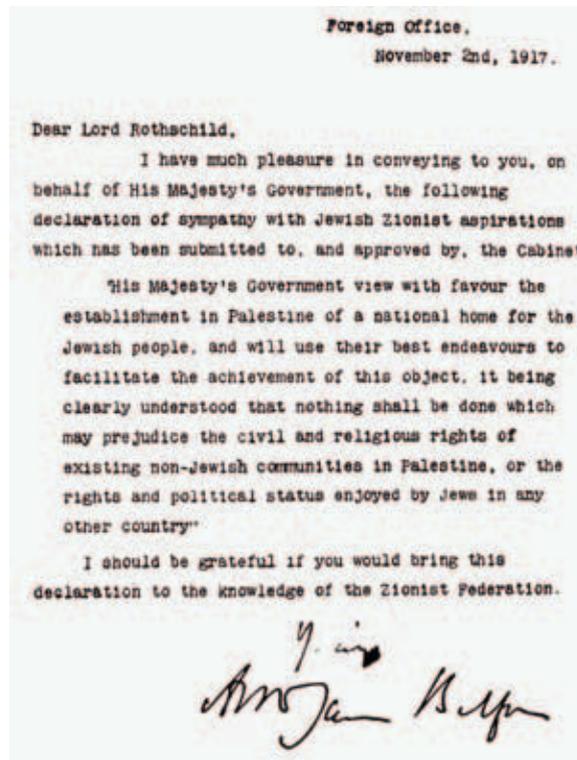
have their own state. Because without a Palestinian state, you would have this continuous problem where the Palestinians continue to lose territory and power, and they will have to resort to either rioting, or as we have seen recently, rocket attacks on Israel. Hamas knows it cannot defeat Israel with military means, but what they want to show Israel is that Israelis cannot be safe being there while exerting that kind of force and policy against the Palestinians.

Which is correct. It's not only the Palestinians. Israelis cannot exist in a region of 100 million Egyptians, 40 million Iraqis, millions of Jordanians, 30 million Syrians, and 5 million Lebanese. They may think they can live like an island of peace and tranquility in the midst of a hell they are contributing to create—just as Israel played a key role in the war on Syria in recent years, also in Lebanon.

There are certain ways of getting to diplomatic ways of resolving the Palestinian issue. We have United Nations resolutions, which clearly mark where the Palestinians could have their own state, and the Israelis could have their state. There is [UN Resolution 242](#), which came after the 1967 War in which Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza and Golan Heights and other parts and the Sinai Peninsula. This Resolution was voted unanimously by the United Nations Security Council, including

the United States. But people have been dragging their feet on that.

Figure 1 is an old map of the Partition Plan of 1947, before the first Arab-Israeli war and before Israel was officially established, where the blue indicates the extent of Israel. The UN Partition Plan was supposed to solve the problem at the time. Remember, President Roosevelt had been very active in the last year of his life, when he met with leaders of the region. In his discussions with the Saudi king, Abdul Aziz ibn-Saud, he



The Balfour Declaration, a letter from British Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour to Baron Walter Rothschild, to be communicated to the Zionist Federation, dated November 2, 1917.

FIGURE 1

UN Partition Plan of 1947



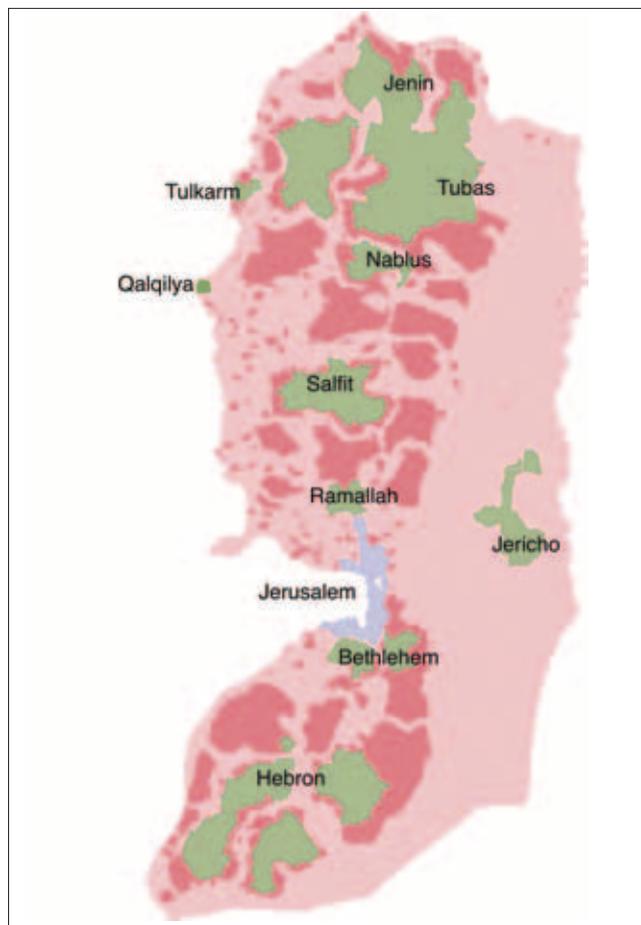
suggested the king intervene with the other Arab leaders to resolve the problems created by the British in the region in this Palestinian area.

‘Inside the Tragedy’

That was because Roosevelt sensed that he had to stop this British game in the region, but also because there were moves inside the United States to entangle the United States in this conflict. Through what later emerged, especially under Harry Truman, so-called “election considerations” forced the United States to side completely with the Israeli side. Roosevelt was trying to get the Arabs to accept a compromise to establish this so-called Two-State Solution and stop the British geopolitical manipulation. But that did not happen. Roosevelt died; the British continued to control there.

FIGURE 2

Illegal Settlement in the West Bank



The map shows, in dark red, the areas in which illegal Jewish settlements have been built since the Oslo Accords of 1993. The named locations shown in grey-green, such as Jenin and Tubas, are Palestinian enclaves cut off from each other (and walled off in certain cases).

But then the British pulled out and allowed the Israelis to take even more of the Palestinian land, as you can see marked on the Figure 1 map in pink and green. The pink areas were taken in 1949; the green areas—the West Bank and Gaza—were taken in 1967, as was East Jerusalem.

Figure 2 shows the illegal settlements that have been built in the West Bank, which started after the Oslo Accords. The Israelis have been building illegal settlements in these occupied areas, shown in the dark red areas. So, the Palestinians are living in these enclaves in the West Bank which are cut off by a series of settlements by the Jewish settlers, and also walled off. Israel had walls built between the different parts of the West Bank.

The Palestinians see their land shrinking more and more, and their rights disappearing. The Palestinians are told they should stop complaining and accept whatever they are offered. The problem is that the Palestinians have looked at this history, and seen their country shrinking, their water being stolen from them, and every other right. They know that Netanyahu and his supporters have no intention of establishing a Palestinian state.

Actually, even the Arab Israelis—Arabs inside Israel who are Israeli citizens—are also being targeted right now. Last year the Israeli Knesset removed Arabic language from existence inside Israel; they decided there shouldn't be any Arabic language. So, the Arabs in Israel also see themselves threatened. They are the ones who have been making lots of demonstrations in recent weeks. They are Israeli citizens, but they have an Arab ethnic background.

Asking the Palestinians to stop complaining is like asking the woman who is beaten by her husband all the time, that she should stop complaining so her husband will stop beating her. The problem is, the husband continues beating her because he's a sociopath; he's an insane person. Somebody comes with a statistical study like we see all the time—Jared Kushner is typical. The theory is that the more the woman complains, the more there is abuse. Therefore, complaining is counterproductive. So, the Palestinians should stop complaining because that creates the problem. This enormous injustice continues, and the Palestinians can see all of this and that their future and their children's future is enormously threatened. There is no future in view, there are major powers who are against them, and they have no allies. That's what creates the enormous frustration among the Palestinians who see no other way than fighting back. That's really terrible.

Economic Development Required for Southwest Asia

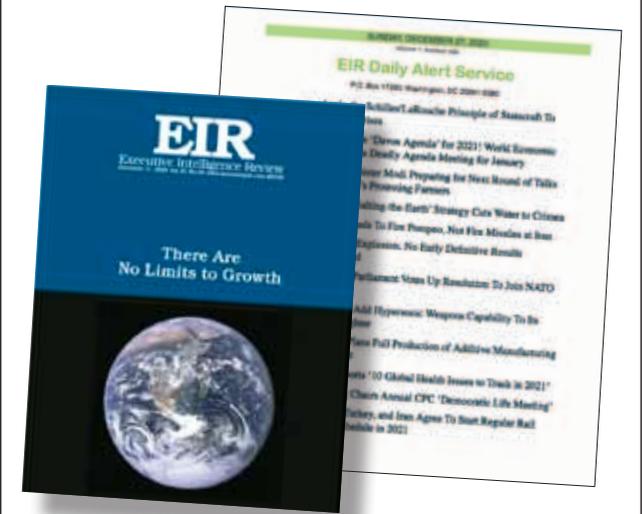
Besides the diplomatic solutions I mentioned—either a two-state solution going back to the Oslo Agreement, or going back to the United Nations' solutions—we need to have a solution for the whole region, which was vigorously advocated by Lyndon LaRouche from the 1970s.

The only way out of these wars is economic cooperation, economic development, especially in terms of water resources, transportation, electricity, education, and health care. I think this is the important issue to discuss now: Take the whole so-called Palestinian issue back to the big powers, as Helga Zepp-LaRouche

has mentioned. We should have a summit of the major powers. LaRouche called it the Four Powers—the United States, Russia, China, and India. We can also discuss the United Nations Security Council powers and others, to have a discussion about establishing peace in this whole region with economic development.

I think the best solution which we have had—which has worked and is achieving things on the ground—is what China is doing with the Belt and Road Initiative, the New Silk Road. Building infrastructure, health care, and so on. Russia is also playing a key role in providing specific technologies like nuclear power to nations in the region, to Iran, and now Egypt, and with other African nations.

So scientific and technological cooperation, economic cooperation is the solution. It has been since LaRouche announced it in the early 1970s, and it will continue to be so in the future. I think this is one of the big issues that has to be put on the table for people, so we don't get entangled in these ethnic and religious matters. There were no real ethnic or religious problems between Jews and Arabs before the British Empire stuck its nose into this region.



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