

Israeli - Palestinian conflict - Why is it so hard to understand?

Some thirty years ago a friend of mine knowing that I was Israeli living in Toronto asked me the proverbial question: "Do you think there will ever be a resolution to the Israeli - Palestinian problem?" I quickly responded by saying: "Do you really want to know the answer? or are you trying to strike a conversation on a topic with which I am very familiar?". "No!" he said, "I have all the time in the world to try and understand the issues and I'm sure you'll need all the time in the world to explain it all to me, it's so complex!" To which I responded, "Wrong. now that I know that you really want to understand the problem I only need 10 seconds to explain it". Here we go: "Do you or do you not agree that Israel has the right to exist in the Middle East as a Jewish State?" "I do" he said, but..." "Well" I said, "the Palestinians do not! all the rest of it are details that can readily be worked out!".

Fast forward 30 years and listen to Abbas' speech at the United Nations: (not an exact quote - but close): "Palestine is the historic land of Muslims and Christians..." Hello!? No mention of Jews!. "Israeli colonial power resulted in the Naqba" (the disaster of 1948). Hello?! The U.N Partition Plan of 1947 sanctioned by the Security Council created two states for two people. Israel, as the (written in the resolution) home land of the Jewish people and an Arab state (there was no Palestinian entity at that time). Israel agreed and accepted the Partition Plan and declared itself with majority U.N support as an independent state. The Arabs did not!. They declared war and attacked Israel the next day. That is what caused the Naqba!

Now, not a day later Abbas already declared that he will decline the terms of reference of the Quartet calling on Israel and the PA to begin direct peace negotiations immediately. Terms that were agreed to by the Palestinians before and that are consistent with the concepts of Peace for Security, 1967 borders with land swaps and a resolution to the Palestinian refugee problem.

Now it is clear! The Palestinians want (and frankly deserve) their own state, but they will not accept Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State in the Middle East.

Why is it so hard to understand? The Palestinians say that even if there were a Palestinian State, Palestinian refugees must have the right of return to Israel proper, rather than the right to live in peace and prosperity in their own homeland?

Can anybody, no matter on what side explain this logic? ...and we didn't even mention the Hamas who at least openly declare no interest in peace but rather the annihilation of the "Zionist entity" .

I ask you again: "Do you or do you not agree that Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish State in the Middle East" If you do, you must understand why peace has been so elusive and if you don't, I got some bad news for you : "Israel is here to stay!"