**Israel-Palestine and the Geopolitical Chessboard**

[Noorul Ain Ali](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/noorul-ain-ali/)

October 27, 2023

In the heart of the Middle East, where history and geopolitics collide, the Israel-Palestine conflict has been a hotbed of controversy for decades. While religion has often taken centre stage in discussions, the roots of this conflict are far more complex and multifaceted than a simple religious struggle. The core of the issue lies in the quest for control over one of the world’s most vital trade routes and, by extension, the global balance of power.

Israel’s strategic location at the intersection of Africa, Asia, and Europe grants it control over the Eastern Mediterranean – a crucial trade route for oil and goods. This location is pivotal, given its proximity to the Suez Canal, a lifeline for global trade. The geopolitical significance of this region cannot be overstated. Major world powers have their eyes firmly fixed on the Middle East, not only for its energy resources but also as a geopolitical chessboard.

The United States’ unwavering support for Israel is not merely an alliance based on shared values or regional stability. It is a calculated move to sustain American hegemony in the region and secure dominance over these vital trade routes. This geopolitical support, founded on realist principles, places Israel as the key player in ensuring American influence in the Middle East. This support not only solidifies the bond between the two nations but also helps America counterbalance potential threats and maintain its global power position.

The involvement of the US is grounded in a realist perspective – it seeks to maintain control, secure vital trade routes, and ensure its interests in an ever-volatile region.

International relations theory, particularly Realism, sheds light on the dynamics at play. Realism posits that states are primarily driven by self-interest, power, and security. The Israel-Palestine conflict fits this paradigm perfectly. The involvement of the United States in the region is grounded in a realist perspective – it seeks to maintain control, secure vital trade routes, and ensure its interests in an ever-volatile region.

Beyond its strategic location, the Middle East is also home to vast oil reserves. Control over these resources is vital for global energy security, making the region even more critical. Israel, with its location and military might, plays a crucial role in safeguarding these resources, even if this aspect is often overlooked in discussions of the conflict.

The conflict’s roots trace back to the early 20th century when both Jewish and Arab communities claimed the same land. The territorial dimension is fundamental, and the Israeli-Palestinian dispute is also about competing national identities and the right to self-determination.

While the conflict is not fundamentally religious, the importance of religious sites and identities adds another layer to the complexity. Jerusalem, in particular, holds great significance for Jews, Christians, and Muslims, with competing religious claims contributing to tensions and political disputes.

In conclusion, reducing the Israel-Palestine conflict to a religious battle fails to capture its complexity. This is a conflict rooted in a complex web of historical, political, and territorial factors. Geopolitical interests, resource control, superpower involvement, and historical disputes all contribute to the ongoing tensions. International relations theories, particularly Realism, provide insights into the strategic considerations driving the conflict and the involvement of various actors. The Israel-Palestine conflict is not a mere religious feud; it’s a geopolitical chess game with global consequences. It’s time to recognize the conflict’s true nature and work toward a solution that addresses all its dimensions.

*The writer is a freelance columnist.*