**Everlasting war or peace in the Middle East**

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There seems not to be any solution to the long Israel-Palestine conflict, currently it is a full war with hundreds of victims daily. Many thousands have died or have been injured since the recent crisis begun on the seventh of October this year. Most victims are civilians and about a third is children. The crisis had built up over years but the terrible terrorist attack by Gaza’s organisation Hamas came as a surprise, setting off a full war. There is no involvement of the Palestinian Authority (PA) ruling the West Bank, although that area is also occupied by Israel. More than 1400 people were killed in the seventh of October terrorist attack, many injured, and over two hundred hostages abducted. Now Israel carries out daily bombings in Gaza and it has warned of further revenge, including ground invasion of the Gaza City and elsewhere in the overcrowded Gaza territory in order to finish off Hamas. It can kill many Hamas leaders but the organisation or similar organisations will exist.
It is likely that Israel will succeed in removing Hamas from power in Gaza, but it will not be able to finish it off entirely. Hamas also has assistance from other organisations and countries in the region, such as Lebanon, Iran and Qatar, and Hezbollah in Lebanon is an ally. The Islamic State (IS) is the original, ideologically related organisation. When we define Hamas as a radical, extremist organisation, which is true, we should also remember that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was named a terrorist organisation for long, and still it has that designation by some countries and groups. In this article, there is no space to discuss these and many other historical and other issues in detail, including, inter alia, the role of the United Nations in the past and today.
Last week, when I also wrote about the current Israel-Palestine War, I drew special attention to the Oslo Peace Accords of 1993, where a two-state solution was proposed. Along with most observers, I believe that a two-state solution is the only solution for peace between the two peoples. Alas, two states should have been created in 1948 when Israel became a Jewish state, although initially without borders. The Palestinians living in the area was not given its Arab state when the British Mandate over Palestine expired. That was a major mistake and deep injustice was done towards the Palestinians – and it was also wrong for the Jews in Israel having suffered from constant unrest and conflict. Let us still remember, though, that about two million Palestinians live in Israel, many as citizens; and other Arabs also live there.
I do not know how the territorial issues of a two-state solution would be, and it seems nobody knows. The current Palestinian enclaves of Gaza and the West Bank, occupied by Israel since the 6-day War in 1967, seem to be unrealistic and unsustainable entities for the Palestinians, and Israel is not likely ever to give up the land. The West Bank is in a somewhat better position than the tiny, overcrowded and embargoed Gaza Strip. Unless additional land is added, notably from neighbouring Egypt, sea access is allowed, and also normal border crossing with Israel, there is little or no prospect for a sustainable future for people on the Gaza Strip.
The West Bank probably has a future, but again additional land would be needed, thus having some prospect of becoming a real state, but neighbouring Jordan would hardly be willing to cede more land, or even discuss the issue. The Golan Heights were taken from Syria. However, in our time, strict borders and absolute sovereignty over territory may be seen less important than before, or at least, there can be very close cooperation across borders, remembering, too, that Israel was to begin with an area without borders.
In the Middle East, there is closeness between all people, with the Arabic language and Islam unifying people. There are possibilities for closer cooperation and also for sharing of resources, albeit not land, as it stands today. The Middle-East oil-era is coming to an end and that will lead to major changes in the region, and new approaches for livelihood, living and societal organisation will emerge.
The ongoing Israel-Palestine War has just begun, and nobody knows how it will go and how it will end. But we know it will be terrible and devastating. It could also lead other countries in the region to become directly involved, and countries further away. Thus far, USA, UK and other Western states seem to have accepted that Israel will be allowed to implement massive military revenge operations against Hamas. The Palestinians have not been given similar support, but will receive humanitarian aid, and some countries internationally support Palestine, such as Russia, but its war in Ukraine is still not over. There is a risk for escalation of the Israel-Palestine war, even towards the traditional East-West blocks being manifested.
Normally, I am optimistic, but this time it is more difficult to see peace and prosperity ahead for the Palestinians and also the Jews. However, what I think is not important, but unfortunately, I don’t see anyone else having clear solutions. Maybe we have to wait for those who are young today, in both Israel and Palestine, to do something entirely different and new. Obviously, as for all human activities, there are solutions. We should pray to the only and universal God that we can see what that is. I believe in a two-state solution, but even that will be difficult to implement and sustain, hence, we must also consider alternatives – using our mind, heart, emotion, religious belief, historical knowledge, and more.