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The New World Order and the Prospect of Peace in the Middle East

Anthony Danladi Ali

Department of International Studies and Diplomacy
Benson Idahosa University, Ugbor, GRA, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria

Abstract:

The study focuses on the New World Order (NOW) and the prospects of peace in the Middle East. The objective of the study is to explore the position of the Middle East in the NOW, the process that led to conflict and the means by which peace could be achieved. By peace we do not mean only the absence of violent conflict, but a contractual agreement between the parties agreeing to end the war. Conditions promoting or impeding the prospects of peace do not stand still but evolve dynamically as generated by the cold war era and now New World Order. The paper concludes that the issue of peace making concerns not only the state at war, but other actors in the international arena as well especially the big powers. Hence, the question raised in this study is, whether Israel in the emergence of a NOW and the prospect of peace in the Middle East? This question is imperative because the emergence of a NOW which followed the collapse of the Soviet bloc in the last decade of the 20thc, has given rise to significant development in the way nations relate with each other in the international system on the one hand, a “Unipolar” situation on the other, and the way various social groups perceive the change process itself. The study recommends among others that western nations should be careful in imposing on the rest of the world those values which may have worked within the cultural milieu of America and Europe. While the United Nations should effectively checkmate a messianic ‘sword in the hand’ the study adopts historical methodology through the application of primary and secondary data

1. Introduction

The paper makes a critique of the Arab-Israel conflict and examines the impact of the New World Order (NOW) on the Middle East conflict. It is also critical about the United Nation’s stand on the Middle East conflict. The continuing occupation, the demographic ‘time-bomb’ and the development of economic independence for the territories so far, which has created firm basis for political sovereignty.

The Middle East conflict which started as a political and nationalist conflict over competing territorial ambitions following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire has shifted over the years from the large scale regional Arab-Israel conflict to a more local Israel-Palestine conflict though the Arab world and Israel generally remain at odds with each other over specific territory. (www.google.com/saturday3/7/10). The paper makes recommendations and draws conclusion on this topic.

2. The New World Order (NOW) and the Middle East Conflict

Following the collapse of the Soviet bloc during the last decades of the 20th century, the world has been experiencing tremendous changes which cut across all aspects of human life. These changes have also given rise to significant development in the way nations relate with each other in the international system on the one hand and the way various social groups perceive the change process itself. It is these changes and their consequences on the world that has informed the view that indeed, a NOW does exist. An important feature of this order is what is referred to as “unipolarity” (Okpoh, O.O. Jr... 2006: 93)

A feature of the NOW is the consequence of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the United States of America (USA) as the defender of capitalism, both as an ideology and an economic system. The preponderance of the USA was eloquently demonstrated in its role in ousting Slobodon Milosevic of Yugoslavia. The global war against Islamic fundamentalism especially in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq in defiance of the United Nations’ resolutions and preferences; and its relentless campaign for the globalization of western civilization and values like liberal democracy and free market-related concepts of development.

Another feature and mature trend in the NWO is the stupendous consequences of globalization, a phenomenon associated with the process in which the world’s countries and their economies are increasingly being integrated as a function of cross-border economic activities as well as the expansion of human activities in the area of transport and communication, financial exchange, nuclear targeting around the world and of course global mercantile networking.

The NOW is similarly characterized by the deepening gulf between countries in the Northern Hemisphere and their counterparts in the South, between the rich and the poor countries of the world. The marginalization of the countries of the south arising from the above polarization remains one of the greatest threats to the supposed enhancement of global peace following the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. This situation has produced inequality with grave consequences for the development of humanity. For instance 75% of the world's population in the South accounts for less than 25% of the world's productive output and less than 15% of the global trade. (Okpeh, O.O. Jr... 2006: 94).

The rise of economic regionalism has contributed to the contradictions in the NOW. The European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) and recently, the African Union (AU), etc exist on the shared foundation of European culture and Western Christianity. What the West sees as universalism, the non-western countries perceive as imperialism. Thus, even as the world is globalizing against the background of the racial consciousness and its negative consequences have acquired pronounced importance in global politics.

There are many indications to suggest that man is living in an era of transition, a period of systematic change, which will lead to new and radical shifts in international relationships. The concept of national sovereignty is becoming anachronistic in today's rapidly changing world. A new kind of international system is likely to emerge in the present era of cross-currents and countervailing pressures and trends. The world is therefore in state of constant transition as new ideas and institutions continue to prove inadequate to modern needs. (Palmer, N.D. and Perkins, H.C. 2005: 763).

Technological progress which opened up new vistas of human progress has added to the world-wide insecurity which is the fate of modern man. Technical progress has caused the balance of power to shift. The balance of power was one of the nation-state system but the whole concept of the balance of power is outmoded in the nuclear age and under existing world conditions.. The balance of power worked more effectively when international relations were confined largely to European powers that played the game of diplomacy and war according to recognized and generally observed rules. (Palmer, N.D. and Perkins, H.C. 2005: 764-6)

The United States Government recently unfolded measures to deal with its vulnerability to terrorist plots hatched abroad. It published a list of countries it has isolated for special observation and stipulated that citizens of such states undergo tight screening procedures introduced at its airports in the wake of the December 25, 2009, suicide bomb attack on a transatlantic jetliner. (Punch, Wed. Jan. 13, 2010, 14.) The terror watch-list released by its department of state on January 4, 2010, consists of 14 sovereign nations. They are divided into two categories, namely, "state sponsors of terrorism" and "countries of interest." Nigeria falls into the latter category, which means, much as the country might not be officially associated with terrorist acts and would enjoy normal diplomatic ties with Washington, its citizens have to face painful, humiliating body scans whenever they seek entry into the United States. (Punch, Wed. Jan. 13, 2010, 14.).

However, America and its allies in the industrialized world, who view economic and political backwardness as the staple source of terrorist tendencies, also need to realize that isolation of certain Third World countries for purpose of harsh and discriminatory treatment is, at best, only one of several necessary steps towards guaranteeing security of the "homeland."

Against the backdrop of the political and economic turbulence at the time President Barack Obama was elected President, he was faced from the outset with the prospect of a challenging tenure. He inherited two wars abroad – in Iraq and Afghanistan. He also inherited a national and global economic recession which was unprecedented in its magnitude. The protracted wars in Iraq and Afghanistan alone caused American taxpayers a whopping \$2 billion monthly. The wave of anti-American sentiment in part of the world was at a feverish pitch. In the face of all these, President Obama has so far provided quality leadership and has helped to build bridge of hope in the world. He stabilized his country's economy in record time, reversed the hitherto belligerent posture of the US in international politics and brought hope of real peace to the world. (The Guardian Newspaper, Wednesday January 27, 2010, 14). Clearly,

Obama's relevance to America and the world remains strong. His broad mindedness, charisma and passion for world peace denote an appreciable leadership quality, and an essential ingredient for global progress. His admonition to Africans to be on top of their problems is encouraging, although many Africans think he should devote more attention to the continent and show better understanding of its peculiar circumstances. He had responded energetically to virtually all major events in the last one year. President Obama however, cannot afford to be overwhelmed at this stage by problems confronting his administration. A lot more still needs to be done particularly in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, in addition to the continuing challenge of America's domestic policy. (Punch Newspapers, Thursday, December 31, 2009, 13).

3. The Prospect of Peace in the Middle East Conflict

The issue of peace making concerns not only the state at war, but other actors in the international arena as well, especially the big powers. Global interest may bring a big power to exert pressure on the nations at war to initiate peace. 'Pressure donates selective use both of the carrot and the stick. It entails bargaining not only between the more or less willing partners to the peace settlement but also between the external 'treasuring' state and its candidates for peace. A piece of this kind does not necessarily mean that the would-be peace-making state surrenders to the pressure of the external power, the reward offered by that power (benefit) and the possible inflations of sanctions (cost) in the event intransigence. (Sella, A. and Yishal . Y., 1986: 2). The more dependent the nation at war on the external power, the greater will be its vulnerability to the external inducement for peace.

Possible inducement for peace have three sources: the external environment, the domestic arena and the reality anticipated under peace conditions. More specifically, the leadership of a state is motivated to end a state a state of belligerency and sign a peace treaty as a result of one (or more) of the following circumstances: (a) pressure by an external power; (b) effective domestic demand or else

support from an undemanding public; (c) expectation of direct benefit as a corollary of peace; 9d) hope of anticipated indirect benefit from the peace. (Sella, A. and Yishal . Y., 1986: 4).

The domestic inputs for embarking on the peace-making process consist of demand or else objections, which may stem from elites (other than the decision-making in foreign affairs), political organizations (parties and groups and the unorganized public. An outstanding example is the effect of public opinion on the US administration during the last stage of the war in Vietnam. If no external power intervenes in the on-going state of war and the domestic arena is indifference or inactive regarding the lack of peace, the government is not affected by either of the two first possible sources of influence listed above. It results to its 'own list of cost and benefits, which are not necessarily linked to the peace itself but are expected to flow from it indirectly. (Sella, A. and Yishal . Y., 1986: 5).

The task of administering Palestine in accordance with the terms of the mandate given to Britain during the First World War became increasingly onerous. Therefore, in 1947, Britain handed over the problem to the United Nations. A special session of the UN General Assembly was held from 28 April to 25 May, and the Assembly set up a special committee on Palestine

In 1969, Egypt initiated the war of attrition, with the goal of exhausting Israel into surrendering the Sinai Peninsula. The war ended following Nasser's death in 1970. On October 6, 1973, Syria and Egypt staged a surprise attack on Israel on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar. The Israel military were caught off guard and unprepared, and took about three days to fully mobilize. The Yom Kippur war accommodated indirect confrontation between the US and the Soviet States, wary of nuclear war, secured a ceasefire on October 25. Following the Camp David Accords of the late 1970s, Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty in March, 1979. Under its terms, the Sinai Peninsula returned to Egyptian hands and the Gaza Strip remained under Israel control, to be included in a future Palestinian state. The agreement also provided for the free passage of Israel ships through the Suez Canal and recognition of the Strait of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba as international waterways. (www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page1 of 6)

In 1970, following an extended civil war, King Hussein expelled the Palestine Liberation Organization from Jordan. September 1970 is known as the black September in Arab history and sometimes is referred to as the "era of regrettable events". It was a month when Hashemite King Hussein of Jordan moved to quash the economy of Palestinian organization and restore his monarchy's rule over the country. The violence resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of people, the vast majority Palestine. (www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page1 of 6) Conflict lasted until July 1971 with the expulsion of the PLO and thousands of Palestinian fighters to Lebanon.

The PLO resettled in Lebanon, from which it staged raids into Israel. In 1981, Syria, allied with the PLO, positioned missiles in Lebanon, in June 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon. Within two months the PLO agreed to withdraw thence. In March 1983, Israel and Lebanon signed a ceasefire agreement. However, Syria presented President Amin Gemayel into nullifying the truce in March 1984. By 1985, Israel forces withdrew to a 15 km wide southern strip of Lebanon, until its complete withdrawal in May 2000, seen by Arab Muslims as the result of painful blows suffered at the hands of Hezbollah. They claim that they had won the war and had forced Israel out. ((www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page1 of 6-7)

In June 1981, Israel attacked and destroyed newly built Iraqi nuclear facilities in Operation Opera. During the Gulf War, Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles into Israel, in the hopes of uniting the Arab world against the coalition which sought to liberate Kuwait, at the behest of the United States, Israel did not respond to this attack in order to prevent a greater outbreak of war.

In December 1987, the First Intifada began. The First Intifada was a mass Palestinian uprising against Israel rule in the Palestinian territories. The rebellion began in the Jabalia Refugee camp and quickly spread throughout Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Palestinian actions ranged from civil disobedience to violence. In addition to general strikes, boycotts on Israel products, graffiti and barricades, Palestinian demonstrations that include stone-throwing by youths against the Israel Defense Forces brought the Intifada international attention. The PLO was excluded from peace negotiations until it recognized Israel and renounced terrorism the following year.

In mid 1993, Israel and Palestinian representatives engaged in a peace talks in Oslo, Norway, as a result, in September 1993, Israel and the PLO signed the Oslo Accords, known as the Declaration of principles or Oslo 1; in side letters, Israel recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people while the PLO recognized the right of the state of Israel to exist and renounced terrorism, violence and its desire for the destruction of Israel. The Oslo II agreement was signed in 1995 and detailed the division of the West Bank into Areas A, B, C. Area A was land under full Palestinian civilian control. In Area A, Palestinians were also responsible for internal security. (www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page1 of 6-7)

In October 1994, Israel and Jordan signed a peace agreement, which stipulated mutual cooperation, an end of hostilities, and a resolution of other issues. The conflict between them had cost roughly 18.3 billion dollars. Its signing is also closely linked with the efforts to create peace between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) representing the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). It was signed at the southern border crossing of Arabah on October 26, 1994 and made Jordan only the second Arab country (after Egypt) to normalize relations with Israel. (www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page1 of 6)

The Oslo agreement remains important documents in Israel-Palestinian relations. As an attempt to halt the al-Aqsa Intifada, Israel raided facilities in major urban centre in the West Bank in 2002. This included re-taking many parts of land in Area A. Violence again swept through the region. Israel Prime Minister Ariel Sharon began a policy of unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2003. This policy was fully implemented in August 2005. Sharon's announcement to disengage from Gaza came as a tremendous shock to his critics both on the left and on the right. A year previously, he had commented that the fate of the most far-flung settlements in Gaza, Netzararem and Kfar Darom, was regarded in the same light as that of Tel Aviv. ((www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page1 of 6-7)

The formal announcement to evacuate seventeen Gaza settlements and another four in the West Bank in February 2004 represented the first reversal for the settler movement since 1968. It divided his party. It was strongly supported by trade and industry Minister Ehud Olmert and Tzim Livru, the Minister for immigration and Absorption, but Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom and Finance Minister Bibi Netanyahu equally strongly condemned it. It was also uncertain whether this was simply of further evacuation. (www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page 7-8)

In June, 2006, a cross-border raid by Palestinian militants from the Gaza Strip resulted in the capture of Israel soldier Gilad Shalit, to date, he's been held hostage by Hamas, who barred the international Red Cross from seeing him, and demands the release of 450 Palestinian prisoners. Hamas took over control of the strip in 2007. Due to Hamas holding Shalit, firing rockets at Israeli towns, and refusing to recognize past agreements between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel, the latter has tightened its control over Gaza's borders and restricted the flow of goods and people into and out of the area. The BBC reports that as a result "there are high levels of poverty, deprivation and unemployment in Gaza City – Only basic humanitarian items have been allowed in (the Gaza Strip), and virtually no exports permitted, paralyzing the economy". (www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page 1 of 8)

In July 2006, Hezbollah fighters crossed the border from Lebanon into Israel, attacked and killed eight Israel soldiers, and abducted two others as hostages, setting off the 2006 Lebanon war which caused much destruction in Lebanon. A UN sponsored ceasefire went into effect on August 14, 2006, officially ending the conflict. The conflict killed over a thousand people, mostly Lebanese civilians, severely damaged Lebanese civil infrastructure, and displaced approximately one million Lebanese and 300,000-500,000 Israelis, although most were able to return to their homes. After the ceasefire, some parts of Southern Lebanon remained uninhabitable. ((www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page 1 of 8)

On September 6, 2007, in Operation Orchard, Israel bombed an eastern Syrian complex which was allegedly a nuclear reactor being built with assistance from North Korea. Israel had also bombed Syria in 2003. In April 2008, Syrian President Bashar Al Assad told a Qatari newspaper that Syria and Israel had been discussing a peace treaty for a year, with Turkey as a go-between. This was confirmed in May 2008 by a spokesman for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. As well as a peace treaty, the future of the Golan Heights is being discussed. President Assad was quoted as saying:

There would be no direct negotiations with Israel until a new US President takes office. The US was the only party qualified to sponsor any direct talks, The Bush administration does not have the vision or will for the peace process.
(www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page 1 of 8)

Speaking in Jerusalem on August 26, 2008, then United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice criticized Israel's increased settlement construction in the West Bank as detrimental to the peace process. Rice's comments came amid reports that Israel construction in the disputed territory had increased by a factor of 1.8 over 2007 levels.

A fragile six-month truce between Hamas and Israel expired on December 19, 2008. Attempts at attending the truce failed amid accusation of breaches from both sides. Following the expiration, Israel launched a raid on a tunnel suspected of being used to kidnap Israel soldiers which killed several Hamas fighters. Following this, Hamas resumed rocket and mortar attacks on Israel cities, most notably firing over 60 rockets on December 24. On December 27, 2008, Israel launched Operation Cast Lead – a massive aerial assault and subsequent land invasion – against Hamas, beginning a major battle in Gaza. The Israel operation began with an intense bombardment of the Gaza strip, targeting Hamas bases, Police training camps, Police headquarters and offices. (www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page 1 of 8-9)

Civilian infrastructure, including mosques, houses and schools were also attacked with allegations made by Israel that Hamas fighters were operating out of them. Throughout the conflict, Hamas and other organizations fired hundreds of rockets and mortar shells on Israel cities. Human Rights groups and organizations have accused Israel and Hamas of war crimes and called for independent investigations and review of arms sales to Israel. The conflict came to an end on January 18, 2009 after first Israel and the Hamas announced unilateral ceasefires. In the days following the ceasefire, the BBC reported that, "more than 40,000 Gazans were left without running water and 4,000 homes ruined, leaving tens of thousands of people homeless. (www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page 1 of 8-9)

In December 2009, Israel signed that it was intending to build a further 700 apartments in East Jerusalem, a move criticized by the international community which views such settlements as illegal. The move was criticized by the United States as a "blow" to peaceful negotiations with the Palestinians. The Palestinian Authority has postponed future negotiations with Israel until Israel halts the construction of additional settlements on what the PA considers Palestinian territory. ((www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page 1 of 9)

The newly rebuilt Hurva Synagogue in Jerusalem was dedicated on March 15, 2010. Several Palestinian leaders claimed that the rededication signaled Israel's intent to destroy the Muslim holy places on the Temple Mount and replace it with the Third Temple. Fatah official, Khatem Abd el-Khader, called the Palestinians to "converge on Al-Aksa to save it". Fearing riots by Arab protestors, over 3,000 Policemen were deployed ahead of the dedication ceremony. The Organization of the Islamic Conference said that the re-opening risked "dragging the region into a religious war" and claimed the building was historically on a waqf (Islamic trust) land. The Jordanian government also condemned the move stating that it;

Categorically rejects the dedication of Hurva synagogue and all other unilateral Israel measures in occupied East Jerusalem because they ran counter to international legitimacy. (www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page 1 of 9)

Iran urged the international community to respond to the re-opening and a Foreign Ministry Spokesman called the move a “catastrophe that has distressed the Islamic world.” Israel officials countered that Arab fears of a takeover of the Temple Mount were based on rumors and Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu extended a message of coexistence. The day after, Arabs clashed with Israeli police in East Jerusalem after Palestinian groups called for a “day of rage” over the reopening. (www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page1of 9)

A raid was carried out by Israeli naval forces on six ships of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla in May 2010. The Flotilla, organized by the Free Gaza Movement and the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief Relief (IHH), a Turkish NGO, attempted to break the blockade of Gaza and deliver aid to the Gaza strip. The six ships rendezvoused near Cyprus and departed on 30 May 2010 carrying 663 people from 37 countries. Israel forces boarded and captured in the ships in international waters of the Mediterranean Sea after the flotilla refused calls to change its course towards Gaza.

On one of the ships, the MV Mavi Marmara, activist clashed with the Israeli boarding party. According to videos filmed both by the IDF and the activists, activist fought the soldiers with metal bars, knives, and other weapons as the latter rappelled one by one onto the deck of the ship. Nine activists were killed by Israel soldiers, some shot repeatedly and at close range, according to Turkish sources. Several dozen other passengers and seven Israel soldiers were injured, with some of the commandos suffering from gunshot wounds. (www.google.com/saturday3/7/10, page1of 9)

The raid prompted international reactions, including widespread outrage, from national authorities, supranational bodies and NGOs, as well as civilian demonstrations around the world. The United Nations Security Council condemned “those acts resulting in civilian deaths”, demanded an impartial investigation of the raid,” and called for the immediate release of civilians held by Israel. Israel responded that it would release 620 of the 682 arrested people and deport them back to their countries. The UN Human Rights Council condemned Israel and decided to dispatch an independent international fact finding mission to investigate violations of international law. www.google.com/saturday3/7/10,page1of 9) on 7 June 2010, an Israel naval patrol killed four Palestinian commando divers off the Gaza coast. In a message sent to reporters in Gaza Al-aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades said the four men killed were members of its marine unit who were training in Gaza’s water.

4. Conclusion

So far, the paper has made a critique of the Middle East conflict and examines the impact of the New World Order (NOW) on the Middle East conflict. It is also critical about the United Nation’s stand on the Middle East conflict. The continuing occupation, the demographic ‘time-bomb’ and the development of economic independence for the territories so far, has created firm basis for political sovereignty. Solving the first problem that is, changing the demographic structure, involves the allocation of huge national resources. Substantial funds were diverted to the ‘settlements’, whose political future remains obscure. Economic integration on the other hand benefitted Israel and supplemented the dwindling resources.

The paper sees the establishment of an exclusive Jewish state, in the heart of a territory already populated by Arabs, as an confrontation to the Arab people, and this crisis can only be resolved if the Arabs go in league with their oppressors. Indeed, from the very outset the Zionist based their hope of success on the support of one or another imperialist power, offering in return a Jewish state which would serve imperialist interest in the Middle East. (Lumer, H. 1973: 32) It was no wonder that the Arabs met the Balfour declaration with extreme hostility and that they view it as creating a bastion of imperialism in their midst. Nor did the Zionist do anything to dispel this hostility.

5. Recommendations

This paper recommends that:

First, the establishment of an exclusive Jewish state, in the heart of a territory already populated by Arabs, is confrontational to the Arab people and should be reconsidered amicably.

Second, the Middle East crisis can only be resolved if the Arabs go in league with their oppressors. Indeed, from the very outset the Zionist based their hope of success on the support of one or another imperialist power, offering in return a Jewish state which would serve imperialist interest in the Middle East. (Lumer, H. 1973: 32) It was no wonder that the Arabs met the Balfour declaration with extreme hostility and that they view it as creating a bastion of imperialism in their midst. Nor did the Zionist do anything to dispel this hostility.

Third, it is true that all nations of the world are eager to enjoy the fruit of science, technology and globalization. But not all culture, races and religions are prepared to work the road of liberal democracy and free enterprise to attend to those desirable goals. Therefore, western nations should be careful in imposing on the rest of the world those values which may have worked within the cultural milieu of America and Europe. While the United Nations should effectively checkmate a messianic ‘sword in the hand’

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