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Canada, Israel, International Law and ‘Negotiations’

Canada’s House of Commons, confronted with a motion put forth by the New Democratic Party (NDP) to recognize Palestine, passed a weaker motion calling for “...the establishment of the State of Palestine as part of a negotiated two-state solution.” The Conservative foreign affairs critic, one Michael Chong, said that an independent Palestine could only be established through negotiations “...that will take months, if not years, of negotiations between the two parties at hand.”

This motion completely ignored reality, in two very important facts:

+ International law established Israel’s borders in 1947 – 1948. Every settlement Israel has built on Palestinian territory since that time is illegal. No negotiations are required. What is required is adherence to international law.

+ Negotiations can only be successful between two parties, each of which has something the other has that it wants, that can only be obtained by surrendering something it has. Israel takes what it wants from Palestine with complete impunity. The United States has vetoed resolutions critical of Israel in the United Nations Security Council at least 34 times, thus enabling Israel to escape any responsibility or accountability for its war crimes.

There are now over 800,000 Israeli settlers living illegally in Palestine, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has stated that not a single one will ever be required to leave.

Why does the Canadian Government believe that negotiations can be successful, if one of the parties has stated that a key component of the dispute is not open for discussion? And how will negotiations be successful, when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has stated that he will never allow the establishment of a Palestinian state?

What Canada can do to bring about peace in the Middle East is stop selling armaments to Israel, something that is now 'on hold'. Canadian officials can also stop making nonsensical statements about negotiations.

It would be helpful, too, if Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had some concept of history and current events. At a news conference on February 15, Trudeau, asked about divisions within his Liberal party over the Israel's onslaught in Palestine's Gaza Strip, said this: "We have a large number of Muslim MPs. We have a large number of Jewish MPs." No one questions the religious and ethnic diversity of the Canadian Parliament, but one must ask what this has to do with international law, human rights and genocide. The current Israeli invasion of Palestine is not a religious issue; the seven-decade long tensions are not a Jewish-vs-Muslim issue. For decades, minority Jews lived in majority Muslim Palestine with minimal, if any, tensions. Tensions began with the United Nations Partition Plan, which gave 56 % of Palestine for a Jewish state. It must be remembered that the people of Palestine had no voice in this decision; 750,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes and over 500 of their villages – their homes, houses of worship, businesses, cemeteries, roads, etc. – were bulldozed to the ground. Over 10,000 Palestinians were killed.

The Canadian and many other government officials, also need to stop parroting the nonsense of Israel 'having the right to defend itself' in the current crisis. It is illogical to proclaim that a perpetrator has the right to defend itself from its victim. It is akin to saying that if a man is raping a woman, he has a right to defend himself against her struggles. Israel has brutally oppressed the people of Palestine for decades, and an occupied people have the right to resist the occupation in any way, including armed struggle. So the October 7 event was not aggression against an innocent entity; it was an act of resistance.

As of this writing, the brutal genocide of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip continues. Israelis are calling for the ethnic cleansing of those that survive, and the re-occupation of the Strip by Israel. Jared Kushner, son-in-law and former senior advisor to former (and possibly future) president Donald Trump, has stated that Israel should 'finish the job', so the 'very valuable' potential of Gaza's waterfront property can be realized.

Kushner's callous remarks may be worse than the nonsense spewed by government officials of the 'need for negotiations', or Israel's 'right to defend itself', but all of them show a complete disregard for the human rights, and even, perhaps, the humanity of the Palestinian people. When Ukraine was invaded by Russia, the humanity of the Ukrainians was front and center. Writing for the Telegraph, Daniel Hannan explained: "They seem so like us. That is what makes it so shocking. Ukraine is a European country. Its people watch Netflix and have

Instagram accounts, vote in free elections and read uncensored newspapers. War is no longer something visited upon impoverished and remote populations.” Apparently, Palestinians don’t ‘seem so like’ Mr. Hannan.

He was not alone in his racist horror. On France’s BFM TV, journalist Phillipe Corbé stated this about Ukraine: “We’re not talking here about Syrians fleeing the bombing of the Syrian regime backed by Putin. We’re talking about Europeans leaving in cars that look like ours to save their lives.” How unfortunate that Gazans don’t have ‘cars that look like ours’ or they may have received more sympathy.

And lastly, a former deputy prosecutor general of Ukraine, stated the following: “It’s very emotional for me because I see European people with blue eyes and blond hair ... being killed every day.’ Rather than question or challenge the comment, the BBC host flatly replied, ‘I understand and respect the emotion.’” So unlucky for the people of Gaza that, as Arabs, they don’t generally have blue eyes and blond hair which would make watching them be killed ‘very emotional’.

So what are we to make of all this? Has the world really gone mad, or do political and economic concerns trump human rights and international law? If government leaders insist on making the kinds of statements mentioned herein, one must wonder how they continue to be re-elected. In the United States, there is no mystery. Pro-Israel lobbies donate tens of millions of dollars to candidates who will do their bidding, and once those candidates have been elected, the lobbyists write legislation for them to introduce at the state and national levels. So human rights and international law take a back seat to job-preservation on the part of elected officials.

The current genocide, however, may change this situation. Around the world, pro-Palestine sentiment is growing, witnessed by the massive demonstrations calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire. Even the United States finally abstained from a United Nations Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire.

Despite Kushner’s lust for ‘valuable beachfront property’ in Gaza, the world is demanding that the human rights of the Palestinian people be respected. Government officials are slowly getting this message, and it cannot come soon enough for the suffering people of Palestine.

Robert Fantina’s latest book is Propaganda, Lies and False Flags: How the U.S. Justifies its Wars.

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