

27-Dec-16 World View — Furious Israel retaliates against UN for condemning West Bank settlements

Description

This morning's key headlines from GenerationalDynamics.com

- Palestinians declare a defeat for the forces of darkness
- Statements by diplomats show they live in fantasyland
- Israel's Netanyahu orders retaliation against the United Nations

Palestinians declare a defeat for the forces of darkness

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The United States Security Council on Friday passed Resolution 2334, which says that Israel's West Bank settlements constitute "flagrant violation of international law." Similar resolutions in the past have failed because of a United States veto, but in a major reversal of policy by the Barack Obama administration, the United States abstained on Friday's vote, allowing the resolution to pass.

The Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat, interviewed on the BBC, was ebullient, and said that the resolution was a major victory for Palestinians and the "two-state solution, and a defeat for the forces of darkness (my transcription):

"This is a day for peace. This is a day for hope. This is a day when the international community stood tall. To tell the Palestinians and Israelis that peace is possible. Through the establishment of a two-state where the state of Palestine can live side by side with the state of Israel in peace and security on the 1967 line.

This is a day where the international community unanimously have told the Israeli government stop the settlements. Stop the dictation. Stop the occupation. This is a day when the international community have told the Israeli people if you want to live in peace and security, it's not going to be through dictation and occupation and settlements. It's going to be through fairness, through neighborly relations, through the freedom of the Palestinian people, through international law. I hope this clearcut message to the Israeli government will be understood. I think that this is a major defeat for the forces of darkness and extremism and dictation. [Inaudible] for Palestinians and Israelis in peace. So today, it's really a day of hope not only for Palestinians and Israelis, but for the whole region as a whole, for the people of this region as a whole."

Resolution 2334 contains the following text:

“Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and reaffirming, inter alia, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,

Reaffirming the obligation of Israel, the occupying Power, to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention ...,

Condemning all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, including, inter alia, the construction and expansion of settlements, transfer of Israeli settlers, confiscation of land, demolition of homes and displacement of Palestinian civilians, in violation of international humanitarian law and relevant resolutions,

Expressing grave concern that continuing Israeli settlement activities are dangerously imperiling the viability of the two-State solution based on the 1967 lines ...

1. Reaffirms that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace;
2. Reiterates its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard. ...”

In another interview, Saeb Erekat said that the Palestinians will pull membership in the United States for the State of Palestine. [United Nations](#) and [WAFA \(Palestine News & Information Agency\)](#)

Statements by diplomats show they live in fantasyland

One can't help but laugh at the statement by Saeb Erekat quoted above, and his victory over the forces of darkness, but statements by other diplomats were equally idiotic.

The problem is this “two-state solution” fantasy. The [very first Generational Dynamics prediction](#) that I wrote was in May 2003, when President George Bush announced his “Mideast Roadmap to Peace.” President Bush called for a Palestinian State by 2005, to live in peace and security side by side with Israel. It provided a series of steps for both sides to follow, mostly having to do with eliminating violence against both Palestinian and Israeli civilians.

As I wrote at that time, the Jews and Arabs were headed not for a two-state solution, but for a full-scale war, as the generations of survivors of the 1949 war that followed the partitioning of Palestine and the creation of the state of Israel died off. Since I wrote that analysis, there are certainly no signs of a two-state solution, as there have been numerous Mideast wars in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, Gaza and Libya, with skirmishes in other countries. The Mideast is still headed for full-scale war, pitting Jews against Arabs, Sunnis against Shias, and various ethnic groups against each other.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to see all that. Talking about a two-state solution today is

nothing more than political posturing in order to gain power and votes. Any politician who actually believes what he's saying is living in fantasyland.

Here's what Samantha Power, US Ambassador to the UN, said after the Security Council vote:

"One cannot simultaneously champion Israeli settlements and champion a viable two-state solution that would end the conflict. One has to make a choice between settlements and separation. In 2011, the United States vetoed a resolution that focused exclusively on settlements, as if settlements were the only factor harming the prospects of a two-state solution. The circumstances have changed dramatically. Since 2011, settlement growth has only accelerated. Since 2011, multiple efforts to pursue peace through negotiations have failed. And since 2011, president Obama and secretary Kerry have repeatedly warned publicly and privately that the absences of progress toward peace and continued settlement expansion was going to put the two-state solution at risk and threaten Israel's stated objective to remain both a Jewish state and a democracy."

This statement, which attempts to explain the Obama administration's complete reversal of policy, makes no sense at all. There are no prospects for a two-state solution, or Power would have been more specific. Instead, Power uses her statement to blame, by implication, Israel for the failure of the two-state solution.

Even under the most benign interpretation of Obama's policy reversal, I cannot see how it improves chances for any peaceful solution, or for how it benefits the Israelis, the Palestinians, the UN, or anyone else. Under any reasonable interpretations, all of those groups are hurt by the policy reversal.

It was clear from the start that this policy reversal would have consequences that would have to be dealt with. If Obama had made the policy reversal a year or two ago, then he would have had to deal with the consequences, and Power's statement might be more credible. Instead, Obama waited until three weeks before leaving office, so that other people will have to deal with the consequences, while he sits on the sidelines and probably provides commentary.

Barack Obama and Israel's president Benjamin Netanyahu have always had a visceral dislike for each other. President Obama comes from an activist community of black leaders many of whom are openly anti-Semitic (google the words "anti-semitic black leaders" for plenty of examples). This doesn't mean that Obama himself is anti-Semitic, but the company he keeps certainly inflames the situation. Netanyahu has returned the favor by being openly hostile to Obama, including open support for Mitt Romney in the 2012 presidential election. So it's possible that Obama may simply have been looking for a way to get revenge against Netanyahu before leaving office.

Anti-Semitism has always been prevalent in America, as [I wrote in 2006](#). In the Catholic Church, it was official policy for centuries that Jews were responsible for the murder of Jesus Christ, and that all Jews must be punished for it. A Papal bull issued by Pope Paul IV on July 14, 1555, began:

"As it is completely absurd and improper in the utmost that the Jews, who through their own fault were condemned by God to eternal servitude, can under the pretext that pious Christians must accept them and sustain their habitation, are so ungrateful to Christians,

as, instead of thanks for gracious treatment, they return contumely, and among themselves, instead of the slavery, which they deserve, they manage to claim superiority.”

This teaching, which goes on to justify forcing Jews to live in ghettos, was never withdrawn and was certainly known to Hitler. It was only reversed on April 13, 1986, when [Pope John Paul II gave a major speech at the Great Synagogue of Rome](#).

In this generational Crisis period, it appears that anti-Semitism is reviving, just as all forms of racism, xenophobia and nationalism are increasing in countries around the world. This is undoubtedly part of the scenario that will lead the Mideast to full-scale war as described above.

Dennis Ross, a Mideast diplomat who served under both Presidents Clinton and Bush, said in a BBC interview that the UN Security Council resolution was the wrong way to go (my transcription):

The language in the resolution equates all settlement activity beyond the June 4 1967 lines, and yet the position of the US as stated by the president in the two speeches he gave in 2011 was that the final border should be determined by settlement blocks and swaps. ...

What I'm suggesting – if you turn this into a legal question, then you're not going to find a simple way, or any way, of actually resolving this through negotiations. When you turn this conflict into a legal conflict, when in fact it is a historic conflict between two national movements, then you move away from being able to come up with compromises that would be able to resolve the issues. I think what we want to do is find a way to have negotiations, not find a way try to try to impose things from an international perspective, meaning from a UN perspective, or even from a legal perspective, because that isn't going to produce an outcome.”

Of all the statements from politicians that I heard, this is probably the closest to making sense. None of the politicians that I heard who praised the UNSC resolution explained how the resolution in any way promoted peace. Ross's statement that it's a “historic conflict between two national movement” comes closest to the Generational Dynamics analysis.

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Israel's Netanyahu orders retaliation against the United Nations

After the UNSC vote, a furious Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered that steps be taken to respond:

“I share ministers' feelings, anger and frustration vis-à-vis the unbalanced resolution that is very hostile to the State of Israel, and which the [UN] Security Council passed in an unworthy manner. From the information that we have, we have no doubt that the Obama

administration initiated it, stood behind it, coordinated on the wording and demanded that it be passed.”

Reports indicate that Israel has suspended working ties with 12 of the Security Council countries that supported the resolution: Britain, France, Russia, China, Japan, Ukraine, Angola, Egypt, Uruguay, Spain, Senegal and New Zealand.

Even if these suspensions are only temporary, what this shows is that this reversal of US policy has not only harmed the Palestinians and Israelis, it's harmed the United Nations itself. [Israeli Prime Minister](#) and [The Hill](#) and [Jerusalem Post](#)

KEYS: Generational Dynamics, UN Security Council, Resolution 2334, Saeb Erekat, Palestinians, Mideast Roadmap to Peace, Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, Samantha Power

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