



Israel – Palestine: A new chance for peace?

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The conflict between Palestine and Israel, now partially relegated to the media because of the devastating wars currently being fought in the region, is still a key element in the complex and chaotic puzzle of the Middle East. Although its deadly intensity has lessened somewhat lately, this everlasting conflict is now moving towards a new stage subsequent to the election of Donald Trump as the new president of the United States.

Since 2017 is a year full of commemorations such as the centenary of the Balfour declaration, the 70 years of the division of Palestine proposed by United Nations, 50 years since the Six Day War broke out in 1967 and 30 years after the first Intifada exploded, the Sabino Arana Foundation intends to address, with the assistance of several outstanding analysts, future possibilities in terms of coexistence and good neighbourly relations between Israelis and Palestinians based on past events and present developments.

Since the first declaration of support was issued by the British Government 100 years ago until a national home was established in Palestine for the Jewish people, the region has undergone numerous upheavals, particularly after the Shoah and the Jewish exodus to Palestine at the end of World War II: war confrontations, illegal occupations and invasions, forceful displacements of people, terrorism, Intifadas... that killed thousands of innocent civilians. Against the backdrop of open wars unleashed against different Arab alliances, Israel has achieved military victories that have allowed it to extend its jurisdiction in Palestinian lands to reach beyond internationally recognised borders.

This military superiority of a nuclear power that is afraid and obsessed about threats for its national security, together with the solid support provided from USA, internal Arab and Palestinian divisions, the failure to comply with UN resolutions and failed peace plans have placed the Palestinian people in a situation of inferiority that threatens their future survival in the form of a viable State.

Although hostilities between contenders have lessened, the settlement policy in the West Bank and Jerusalem still continues unchecked. It could, in fact, eventually give rise to further unrest amongst citizens and bring back a war fuelled by feelings of humiliation and

powerlessness on the part of the Palestinian people and would not only represent a significant danger for the state of Israel but also trigger many alarms.

Although the programme that can be carried out by the Trump presidency in relation to the Palestine-Israel conflict is weighed down by scepticism, there is a slight glimmer of hope, a new opportunity that was already reaffirmed by 70 countries last January in Paris that is based on reformulating potential solutions for the conflict. Along these lines, therefore, it is fundamental to readdress direct negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis supported by an international community that must guarantee an agreement that complies with international law.

Based on the experience of past failed attempts aimed at dealing with an unstable and unfair situation as regards achieving a lasting peace underpinned by parameters recognised by all parties which should lead to the creation of two secure and viable states, the seminar will try to deliver balanced responses for this never-ending problem whose resolution would represent a significant contribution as regards achieving peace not only in the Middle East but also in the rest of the world.