

Appraisal of the Politics of Israeli and Palestine Conflict using Intractable Conflict Theory

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Abstract: *One of the conflicts that had defied all attempts to resolve it is the Israeli and Palestine conflict, and recently the United States of America introduced a policy on the status of Jerusalem that seems to further escalate the conflict. This paper examined the politics of Israeli and Palestine conflict using intractable conflict theory, with specific objectives of identifying the factors escalating the conflict, ascertaining the role of the superpowers in escalating the conflict as well as looking at all the past efforts to de-escalate Israeli and Palestine conflict and why they failed. The study used Enemy System Theory as a framework of analysis. Data was sourced from documentary sources that contain information on the conflict while content analysis was used to analyze data. The study found that factors triggering the conflict are: a contention by the two groups of people (that is Israel and Palestine) over ownership of the same piece of land and the United States of America's interest in maintaining hegemony in the Middle East. All the past efforts failed because of lack of commitment and mistrust among the parties (Israel and Palestine) and their allies especially the one of the United States of America who vetoes resolutions capable of ending Israeli-Palestine conflict. The study recommends that the United Nations Security should implement/enforce the 1947 Two State solution for both Israel and Palestine as contained its resolution 181 of 1947. That the United States of America should rescind its hegemonic influence in the Middle East and work towards a final settlement of the conflict based on UNSC resolution 181 of 1947. That both Israel and Palestine should stop using any form of violence such as terrorist acts against each other but should resort to pacific means to de-escalate the conflict.*

1. Introduction

Conflict according to Adenyi (2015) is a phenomenon that exists in human society and it emerges from interaction among human beings who in their day to day activities interact with one another either at the interpersonal level or inter-group level. Such interaction may lead to incompatibility or opposition as a result of the pursuit of interest and goals. Ifesinachi (2009:73) noted that Conflict is the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups. The use of forces and armed violence in pursuit of interest and goals produce armed conflict. One of the conflicts that have defied all attempts to resolve it is the Israeli and Palestine conflict, This Conflict has remained intractable and destructive leading to loss of several lives and properties. Bercovitch (2003) described a destructive conflict as one that has sunk into self-perpetuating violent interaction in which each party develops a vested interest in the continuation of the conflict which is always characterized by a deep feeling of fear, hostility, and intractability. This type of conflict as noted by Kreisberg (1998:166) appears endless; erupting into an emotional display and other displays and even violence from time to time. Threats to identity tend to arouse feelings of anger and fear which can, in turn, fuel conflict escalation and thus lead to destruction.

Intractable conflicts such as Israeli and Palestine as noted by Coleman, Vallacher, Nowak & Bui-Wrzosinska (2018) essentially conflict persist because they seem impossible to resolve. Kriesberg (2005) identified three dimensions that differentiate intractable from tractable conflicts which are their persistence, destructiveness, and resistance to resolution. The long history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the inability to resolve it peacefully, in spite of the numerous bilateral attempts and third-party interventions as

noted by Bar-Tal & Halperin, (2011) imply that this conflict is vicious, stubborn, and resistant to such efforts. The lack of peaceful resolution can be attributed, to a large extent, to the functioning of very powerful socio-psychological barriers that inhibit and impede progress. These barriers are socio-psychological forces that underlie the disagreements and prevent their resolution by posing major obstacles to beginning the negotiations, conducting the negotiations, or achieving an agreement, and later, to engaging in the process of reconciliation.

The conflict according to Halperin, Oren, and Bar-Tal (2010) has lasted over a hundred years and is still one of the most salient and central conflicts in the world. It has gone through various stages and developments during these hundred years, and still, it remains unresolved and resistant to a peaceful resolution. The fundamental premise is that the disagreements in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are not easily resolved in part because socio-psychological barriers prevent the peaceful resolution of conflicts. These barriers pertain to an integrated operation of cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes, combined with a pre-existing repertoire of rigid supporting beliefs, world views, and emotions, that result in selective, biased, and distorted information processing. This processing obstructs and inhibits the penetration of new information that can help facilitate the development of the peace process.

There are both biblical and scholarly versions of the origin of the conflict, however, Dowty (2005) argued that it is tempting to claim biblical roots for such tension, nonetheless Olson (2012) contends that the holy land had changed hands many times through history—from the Canaanites to the Israelites, Babylonians, Romans, Crusaders, Arabs, Ottoman Turks, British and so on. But the modern phase of the conflict began in late 1800 when a Viennese journalist

named Theodore Herzl witnessed the rise of Anti-Semitism in Europe and concluded that the best solution would be the mass exodus of Jews to a state they could call theirs. In a similar manner, Dowty (2005) notes that this conflict finds its true roots in such tension the migration of Jewish people from Europe, beginning in the 1880s, many of whom would ultimately come to settle in *Eretz Yisrael*. At this time the area was ruled by the Ottoman Empire - the more distinct Arab-Israeli conflict would become apparent much later in the mid-twentieth century. Falk (2004) traced the origin of the conflict back to Jewish immigration, and sectarian conflict in Mandatory Palestine between Jews and Arabs. It has been referred to as the world's "most intractable conflict", with the ongoing Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip reaching 51 years. Karády (2004) added that it began with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. This conflict came from the intercommunal violence in Mandatory Palestine between Israelis and Arabs from 1920 and erupted into full-scale hostilities in the 1947-48 civil war.

The New York Times (2009) summarized the origin of the conflict by reporting that Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank were once known as Palestine. Ownership of the land is disputed primarily between two different groups: Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs (who are chiefly Muslim but also include Christians and Druze). After the Arab-Israeli War of 1947, Palestine was divided into Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank. The Jewish Israelis whose ancestors began migrating to the area in the 1880s say their claim to the land is based on a promise from God, and also for the need for a safe haven from widespread hostility toward the Jewish people (known as anti-Semitism). On the side of the Palestinians, the New York Times (2009) reported that the Palestinian Arabs say they are the rightful inhabitants of the land because their ancestors have lived there for hundreds of years.

Scholars are divided in their perspective on who owns the land in question. Arguing in favour of Israeli's claim of ownership of the land, Anup (2006:30) states that Israelis traced their roots to this land back to the ancient biblical times as the land in which Moses, Jesus, and the likes lived. It was then known as Israel as most who know a bit about Bible is familiar with. Being a fundamental aspect of the Bible, most Christians according to the scholar (Anup) share this belief that Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people. Supporting Anup's (2006:30) position, Krauthammer (2005:50) asserted that Israel became a nation about 1300 BC, that is Two Thousand years before the rise of Islam. The people of the modern day Israel share the same language and culture shaped by the Jewish heritage and religious past through generations starting with the founding father Abraham and that since the Jewish conquest in 1271 BC, the Jews have had dominion over the land for one thousand years with a continuous presence in the land for the past 3,300 years.

On the other hand, arguing in favour of Palestine, Rouhana (2006) asserted that Palestinians have right on the land. The scholar based his argument on the fact that Palestinians are an ancient people with historical roots in Palestine that date back to before the emergence of the Zionists movement and

that Palestine is the exclusive homeland of the Palestinian Arabs nation within the borders of the British mandate. The scholar further argued that had it not been for the Zionist enterprise, Palestine could have developed into a Palestine State under the British mandate as did their other Arab countries. The scholar further added that if the Jews have a right to an independent state on the basis of their long time of suffering, including the Holocaust, then this right should be realized outside of Palestine because the latter is the homeland of the Palestinian people. In the same manner, Elystain (2009:43) added that Palestinians regard Israel as their homeland and see Jewish as presently in Israel as European settlers that sojourned there during and after the second world war. The scholar further states that the Palestinians view Israel as the land of their ancestors (the Canaanites) as they have some of their religious most holy place like the al-Aqsa Mosque, the second holiest place in Islam.

The Israeli and Palestine conflict has led to the loss of lives and properties as a result of several confrontations between Israeli security forces and Hamas a military wing of the Palestinian leadership. Because of the non-resolution and intractability of the conflict Palestine recognition as a sovereign state in the comity of nations had been in jeopardy and had reduced them to warm the bench as an observer at the United Nations instead of a sovereign state. Several efforts had been made to end the hostility yet the conflict had defiled all solutions. Recently the President Trump administration introduced a policy that seems to further escalate the conflict. This was followed by enactment of a law called the basic law Israel on the 19th of July, 2018 in which alluded to the fact that the land of Israel is the historical homeland of the Jewish people, in which the State of Israel was established including Jerusalem which is the Centre of the contention between it and Palestine.

This paper with its focus on the analysis of the politics of Israeli and Palestine conflict using intractable conflict theory is set to address three issues which formed the objective of the study. The issues are identifying the factors that triggered the conflict, ascertaining the role of the superpowers in escalating the conflict as well as looking at all the past efforts to resolve or de-escalate Israeli and Palestine conflict and why they failed. Consequently, the study is anchored on three research questions: what are the factors that triggered the Israeli and Palestine conflict? Are the actions and inactions of the superpowers escalating the conflict and why all the past efforts to resolve or de-escalate Israeli and Palestine conflict failed to achieve peace. Drawn from the above research questions, this study hypothesizes that the contention over the ownership of Jerusalem by the two sides has continued to trigger the conflict and that the superpowers especially the United State of America uses the conflict to preserve both balance of power and economic interest in the Middle East.

2. Literature

Intractable Conflict

According to Licklider (2005) between 1816 and 1992, there were 1,100 conflicts globally and many ended within 3 years, only 5% lasted 20 years or longer. These are the conflicts

that could be considered to be intractable. According to Bar-Tal (1998) intractable conflicts are characterized as protracted, irreconcilable, with vested interests in their continuation, violent, of zero-sum nature, total, and central, it is exhausting, demanding, stressful, painful and costly -- in human as well as material terms. Because intractable conflicts have serious implications for the world community, understanding their dynamics is a special challenge for social scientists. It is perceived as being of zero-sum nature, Ordeshook (1986) argued that parties who engage in an intractable conflict perceive any loss suffered by the other side as their own gain, and conversely, any gain of the other side as their own loss. Each side tries to inflict as many losses as possible on the opponent and to prevent any gains. Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Freund (1994) added that members of a society involved in an intractable conflict are preoccupied constantly and continuously with it. This preoccupation reflects its centrality in the cognitive repertoire of society members. This centrality is further reflected in the saliency of the conflict on the public agenda. Societies in intractable conflict according to Rieber (1991) form beliefs which delegitimize the opponent. Delegitimization is the categorization of groups into extremely negative social categories with the purpose of excluding them from recognized human groups which act within the framework of accepted values and norms. Delegitimizing beliefs as noted by Holsti (1967), help explain the violence, viciousness, and atrocities of the opponents involved in intractable conflict.

Tubman (2012) noted that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as an intractable conflict, has resisted resolution due to the fact its socio-economic drivers have gone unaddressed. Past and current international efforts have been poorly focused, directing efforts at state-level solutions (i.e. borders and security), and failing to address the key socio-economic factors fueling the conflict. These efforts have attempted, rather, to simply manage the conflict rather than create fertile ground for a solution. Tubman (2012) further argues that intractable conflict is rooted in human suffering and therefore efforts should be targeted at alleviating the many aspects of human suffering, as generated by intergroup competition as well as the ongoing conflict itself; areas important to address include; economic opportunities, physical safety, and opportunity for positive political expression. There is potential for such efforts to disempower the cyclical nature of this intractable conflict itself and to move forward to an eventual resolution. Burgess & Burgess (2003) added that intractable conflicts possess characteristics that predispose them to intractability, as they are often "high-stakes, win-lose hat have no zone of possible management. They further argue that the idea of intractable conflict is part and parcel with the notion of "seemingly irreconcilable moral differences and struggles" that is, these are conflicts that center on binary notions such as 'right and wrong' and "mine and yours".

Bercovitch corroborated this position (by Burgess & Burgess) by positing that intractable conflict often involves states or groups with historic and long-standing grievances, coupled with a desire for redress, identity conflicts, contested sovereignty, or irreconcilable beliefs. Furthermore Burgess and Burgess (2003) posit that that a key feature of

intractable conflict is its "destructive" nature and that "intractable conflicts are conflicts that are doing substantial harm, yet the parties seem unable to extricate themselves – either alone or with outside help because the perceived costs of "getting out" are still seen as higher than the costs of staying in" Kriesberg (1995) suggested that four features characterize the extreme cases of intractable conflicts:

- 1) **They are protracted:** Intractable conflicts persist for a long time, at least a generation; attempts to resolve such conflicts have failed and the parties have accumulated animosity, hatred, and prejudice.
- 2) **They are perceived as irreconcilable:** Parties involved in intractable conflicts view their goals as radically opposite and irreconcilable. Each side sticks to its own goals, perceiving them as essential for own survival; neither side sees a possibility of making concessions or anticipates a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Both sides expect that the conflict will last indefinitely.
- 3) **Parties have an interest in the conflict's continuation:** The parties engaged in the intractable conflict make vast military, economic and psychological investments which later impede its resolution. These investments include military training, development of military industries, and formation of ideology to buttress the conflict. Having vested interests in the conflict, individuals and groups have great difficulties changing the perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors which perpetuate the conflict.
- 4) **Intractable conflicts are violent.** Wars are fought, limited military engagements take place, and terrorist attacks occur with fluctuating frequency and intensity. Over the years not only soldiers are wounded and killed, but often civilians are also hurt and civil properties destroyed. Intractable conflicts also frequently create refugee problems and atrocities may be perpetrated by either or both sides.

Factors that escalated the Israeli and Palestine conflict,

The factor that triggered the Israeli and Palestine conflict could be traceable to the events of World War I. According to Dowty (2005) during World War I, the Allied Powers entered into covert discussions to divide areas of the Ottoman Empire once the Allies were victorious. They originally decided on an internationally controlled area of Palestine. However, Great Britain entered into a number of other agreements in order to court support in the Middle East and ultimately destabilize the Ottoman Empire itself. These agreements included promising the Hashemite Sharif of Mecca support for a state under the Hashemite rule. At the same time, the British attempted to garner the support of the Zionist movement by issuing the Balfour Declaration in 1917, which supported "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people". Dowty further posited that at the end of WWI, the area of Palestine fell under British authority, and did not become an international mandate. In 1922, the British issued a White Paper indicating

that Great Britain's commitment was to the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people, which did not entail the creation of an actual state in Palestine. The White Paper also limited migration to Palestine to a level that the British felt the area could absorb. However, at the same time, the persecution of the Jewish people continued in Europe, ultimately peaking in the 1930s and 1940s as a result of the

rise of Nazism. It is this hypocrisy on the part of Britain and the allied forces after the WWI that set the stage for Israeli Palestine conflict.

The return of Jewish people to Palestinian land is another contributing factor to the conflict, Vital (1982) asserted that the return of the Jews to Israel and to the territory known over the last centuries as Palestine, to establish their own state after 2,000 years of exile, was inspired by the nationalist ideology of Zionism. This ideology provided Jews with the goals and their justifications. The goals as posited by Vital (1982) refer first of all to the rights of establishing a Jewish state in the old homeland of Israel, and historical, theological, national, existential, political, societal, and cultural arguments were used to justify them. Within the theme of the justness of Jewish Israeli goals, Vital (1982) noted that special efforts were made through the years to refute the Palestinian claims. In another development, Tessler (1994) described the Israeli-Palestinian as an existential conflict between two peoples-two identity groups-each of which claims the same territory for its national homeland and political state. In such a conflict, according to Kelman, (2001), the identity and the very existence of the other represent a threat to each group's own identity and existence. 'The other's identity and its associated narrative challenge the group's claims to ownership---at least to exclusive ownership---of the land and its resources

Motala (2016) added that the literature on the origins and progression of Israeli and Palestine conflict places an increased focus on the construction of antagonistic and uncompromising identities as a key motivating factor driving the conflict and preventing any meaningful progress towards peace. Other factors, which are seen both as a perpetual hindrance to peace and driving motivators of the conflict include the uncompromising status of Jerusalem, the Right of Return for Palestinian refugees, the sovereignty and security of each state, the continual redefinition of borders and Israeli settlement expansion, among others. Each of these motivating factors form part of the larger picture of the conflict in the region. Each will be analyzed independently before being discussed in relation to the conflict as a whole. While all these factors play a part in sustaining the conflict, it is evident throughout the literature that at its core the dispute centers on the competing narratives of the conflicting sides.

In another development, scholars such as Onuoha (2008:311) Djerejian (2010) and Miller (2003:31) cited in Nwoboshi&Itumo (2017) argued that Israeli-Palestine conflict is over ownership of the same land by two peoples who are of external forces. The scholars maintain that the basic issue is that two separate groups of people want to build a State on the same piece of land and that the complexity of the issues lies in the fact that the problem in question is one that cannot be resolved in a win-win way. This is because if one controls, the other will not, while sharing is possible in theory, contending sides usually regard compromise a loss. This is usually true in societies where natural fear and hatred is ingrained that opposing groups cannot imagine living with or working with the other side

but willing to take whatever means necessary to ensure group survival and protect their way of life.

The role of the Super Powers in escalating the conflict

From available literature, conspiracy by the superpowers in world politics who operate behind the curtain is one of the reasons why the Israeli and Palestine conflict remained intractable and that was what resulted to the 1967 Arab and Israeli war. As noted by Dowty (2005), who posited that as a result of numerous compounding factors, the 1967 war was one that represented a central turning point within the Arab-Israeli conflict. False information provided to Egypt by the Soviet Union indicating that Israel was about to attack Syria, following a period of high tensions between the two countries, resulted in Egypt amassing forces in the Sinai and demanding the removal of international forces positioned there. Egypt then closed passage to the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli ships. Subsequently, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan entered into a mutual defence pact. When diplomacy failed, Israel attacked capturing the Sinai, the West Bank (which is one of the lands in contention between Israel and Palestine today), and the Golan Heights. It was during this time according to Tubman (2012) that Israel captured Eastern Jerusalem.

According to the United States based Public Broadcasting Service(2006), Washington has viewed Israel as a crucial political and economic ally in the oil-rich Middle East and has provided Israel with the highest amount of financial and military assistance of any other foreign country. These days, however, the United States has used its leverage to urge Israel to resolve the Palestinian issue and move forward on plans for an autonomous Palestinian state. U.S. financial and military assistance quadrupled after Syria and Egypt, supported by the Soviet Union, invaded Israel on Oct. 6, 1973. In a similar manner, Nwoboshi&Itumo (2017) found that the hegemony of US, interest group, religious and cultural differences of both parties and the strategic interest of the US in the Middle East has made the realization of the two-State solution difficult, and the implications of the failure of US peace settlement process at achieving the goal of resolving the conflict has led to the hatred of the United States and her allies by the Islamic fundamentalists and proliferation of terrorist groups in the Middle East/

On December 6, 2017, according to Landler (2017), US President Donald Trump announced the United States recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and ordered the relocation of the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and thus further escalated the conflict and prospect of peace. However, *Fassih*, (2007) noted that Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital was rejected by a majority of world leaders. The United Nations Security Council held an emergency meeting on 7 December where 14 out of 15 members condemned Trump's decision, but the motion was vetoed by the United States.

The past efforts to resolve or de-escalate the Israeli and Palestine Conflict.

Tubman (2012) posited that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as an intractable conflict, has resisted resolution due to the fact that its socio-economic drivers have gone unaddressed. According to the author (Tubman), past and current international efforts have been poorly focused, directing

efforts at state-level solutions (borders and security), and failing to address the key socio-economic factors fueling the conflict. These efforts as noted by Tubman (2012) have attempted, rather, to simply manage the conflict rather than create fertile ground for a solution. Intractable conflict is rooted in human suffering and therefore Tubman (2012) contended that efforts should be targeted at alleviating the

many aspects of human suffering, as generated by intergroup competition as well as the ongoing conflict itself; areas important to address are economic opportunities, physical safety, and opportunities for positive political expression. There is potential for such efforts to disempower the cyclical nature of this intractable conflict itself and to move forward to an eventual resolution (Tubman 2012).

Table 1: Showing different Peace Process on Israel-Palestine conflict and why they failed

Date	Conference	Outcome	Why it failed
1948	UN General Assembly Partition Plan	Called for the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state at the end of the British Mandate.	Lack of commitment on the part of the United Nation.
1949	Armistice Agreement	Agreement between Israel and neighbouring Arab states outlining the borders of the newly formed state of Israel.	Lack of commitment on the part of the United Nation
1967	UN Resolution 242	Drew up principles for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East Called for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from all territories occupied in the 1967 war.	Lack of commitment on the part of the United Nation
1973	UN Resolution 338	Reaffirmed the principles of Resolution 242 and called for negotiations.	Lack of commitment on the part of the United Nation
1978	Camp David Accords	Agreement between Egypt and Israel. Also set out the Framework for Peace in the Middle East.	The conference did not nominate a Palestinian representative coupled with the annexation of East Jerusalem by Israel
1991-1993	Madrid Peace Conference	Negotiations aimed at attempting to revive the peace process between Israel and Palestine.	The conference ended in deadlock as a result of a disagreement between parties couples with heightened acrimony between Syrian and Israel during the period.
1993	Oslo I Accords	Declaration of Principles geared towards a two-state solution aimed specifically at resolving the Israeli Palestinian dispute.	The peace process suffered a setback following the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin
1997	Hebron Agreement	Negotiated by Israel and Palestine	Both sides reneged on the agreement
1998	Wye `River Memorandum	Brokered by the United State of American	The Outbreak Of The September 2000 Al-Alqasa Intifada and the counter attacks from Israeli Forces.
2000	Camp David Summit	Continuation of the negotiations of the Middle East peace process where the Final Status negotiations were to be resolved. No agreement was reached.	1. The rejection of the resolution. 2. The negotiation process did not include religious leaders from both sides.
2001	Oslo II – Taba Talks	Plan to resolve the Israeli Palestinian conflict specifically outlining steps to reach a peace agreement.	The meeting deadlocked
2007	Annapolis conference	Conference between Israel and Arab neighbours, formally restarting the negotiations and reaffirming the two-state solution	The outcome was rejected by Israel.
2010-2014	General peace talks	Direct talks between Israel and Palestine	The meeting ended in a deadlock

Sources: Motala (2016) The intractability of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict with a focus on the construction of identity and Nwoboshi&Itumo (2017) Israeli-Palestine conflict and the United States’ comprehensive Peace Settlement Process (2001-2014)

3. Theoretical Framework

Enemy system theory

The paper adopts Enemy System Theory as the theoretical foundation. The theory is one of the conflict theories that is used to explain intractable and destructive conflict. The theory was developed in the late 1980s by a group of psychologists and international relations practitioners among whom include Volkan, Demetrios, Montville, and Montville. The theory was developed to explain intractable conflict and was used to explain the cold war in the early 1990s before the collapse of the Soviet Union. The major assumption of the theory according to Volkan et al, (1990) is that humans tend to discriminate which leads to the establishment of enemies and allies. This desire to have enemies and allies affects conflict and makes it become intractable. This phenomenon is often the case in ethno-related conflict as

well as in international conflict of which the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is a typical example. The theory further states that human beings identify themselves as individuals or members of a group treat another non-member or group as an out-group and thus create conflict through such dichotomy and this is the case of the Arab nations including Palestine against the State of Israel.

This phenomenon happens at both individual and group level. The theory is centered on identity which leads to a sense of us and them, friends and enemies, in-group and out-group. The theory also centers around the feeling of victimization by the groups towards the in-group or allies and demonization towards the out-group or enemies.

The theory presents some important conceptualization which helps to create a sophisticated model of conflict. The following ideas make up the Enemy System Theory.

- The first idea is that of identity with its associated concept of the negative identity and distinguishes an enemy from an ally.
- The next concept is that of ethno-nationalism under which Montville (in Volkan 1990, p.169) defines the concept of "ethnic victimization as the state of ethnic insecurity caused by violence and aggression". Depending on the circumstances, feuding parties often have a feeling of insecurity in their survival hence the tendency to protect it.
- Another part of this concept is the known premise among ethno-national groups that passivity ensures the continuation of victimization (Montville in Volkan et al., 1990).
- The next concept deals with the psychological mechanism that enables humans to aggress and kill one another. These are the processes of demonization and dehumanization (Volkan et al., 1990).

The Israeli/Palestine conflict possesses all the characteristic of the above ideas highlighted by Volkan et al., (1990), the conflict is rooted on identity; the Israelis want to be identified as the owners of the land they are currently occupying and thus the land should be identified as Jewish land. On the other hand, Palestine wants the land "West Jerusalem" to be identified as Palestinian land and by extension Arab land, this concept of the negative identity made the two groups see themselves as enemies and their supporters as allies. Furthermore, the intractability of the conflict has led to ethnic victimization demonization and dehumanization with its attendant consequences of insecurity caused by violence and aggression as posited thereof by Volkan et al., (1990).

Coleman, (2000) Kelman, (2005) Kriesberg (2010) and Motala (2016) agreed that when an intractable conflict is difficult to resolve because of oppositional ideologies or competing for territorial claims, each side is not willing to compromise its beliefs, which in turn sustains the conflict and further extends its duration. In certain intractable conflicts, particularly when each side holds that the construction and recognition of another group's identity would necessarily mean bringing into question the legitimacy and authenticity of their own identity, a cessation of the conflict is for the most part unattainable. This is because each side seeks to attain its desired ends; however, since different outcomes are sought by the respective parties, success for one side necessarily means a loss for the other. Thus, these authors concluded that each side is determined not to renounce its position which means coming to any constructive resolution (i.e. not a stalemate) would require compromising on entrenched beliefs, which are recognized as drivers of the conflict.

4. Methodology

Data for the study was sourced from secondary sources such as institutional and official documents, journals, articles, textbooks, newspapers, magazines and other written materials that contain information on the conflict while

analysis of the data generated was done using content analysis.

5. Findings

This paper has been able to examine Israel and Palestinian conflict using intractable conflict theory and found that what triggered the conflict was the hypocrisy on the part of Britain who after World War 1 surreptitiously entered into agreement with Hashemite Sharif of Mecca with a promise of a state under Hashemite rule (that is Palestine) and at the same time, supported the Zionist movement for the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.

The study further found that the contention by the two groups of people (that is Israel and Palestine) over ownership of the same piece of land is the factor that made the conflict to remain intractable. It was also established that the United States of America's interest in maintaining hegemony in the Middle East using Israel as its allies further made possible resolution impossible. All the past efforts failed because of lack of commitment and mistrust among the parties (Israel and Palestine) and their allies. We argue here that the failure of the United Nations Security Council to implement and enforce its "Two States solution" for Israel and Palestine with clearly defined borders as contained in resolution 181 of 1947 is the main reason why Israel and Palestinian conflict has remained intractable and unresolved.

6. Conclusion

This paper having analyzed and identify factors that triggered the conflict, the role of the superpowers in escalating it as well as the reason behind the failure of all the past efforts to de-escalate it concludes that based on the findings thereof, the resolution of Israeli and Palestine conflict and the end to its intractability and destructiveness requires concerted efforts on the side of the two parties and their allies as well as full commitments of the United Nations through the Security Council to implement resolutions on ending conflict.

7. Recommendations

This study after our evaluation and analysis, we hereby make the following recommendations:

- 1) That the United Nations Security should implement and enforce the 1947 Two State solution for both Israel and Palestine as contained its resolution 181 of 1947.
- 2) That the United States of America should rescind its hegemonic influence in the Middle East and work towards a final settlement of the conflict based on UNSC resolution 181 of 1947
- 3) That both Israel and Palestine should stop using any form of violence such as terrorist acts against each other but should resort to pacific means to de-escalate the conflict.

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