



No End of Conflict: Rethinking Israel-Palestine

By Yossi Alpher

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Yossi Alpher, a veteran of peace process research and dialogue, explains how Israel got into its current situation of growing international isolation, political stalemate, and gathering messianic political influence. He investigates the inability of Israelis and Palestinians to make peace and end their conflict before suggesting not “solutions” (as there is no current prospect for a realistic comprehensive solution), but ways to moderate and soften the worst aspects of the situation and “muddle through” as Israel looks to a somber bi-national future.

Alpher argues that a sober reassessment is long overdue in the way the West looks at the Israeli-Palestinian relationship. He submits that we have to stop talking about “the peace process” as if it still seriously exists, that 20 years of the Oslo process have failed for very substantial reasons that the professional peacemakers ignore at their risk, and that Israel is more likely to sink into a single-state reality than to remain truly “Jewish and democratic.” Yet, his is a non-ideological, no nonsense book. Israel will not disappear, will not become impoverished, and will still find strategic partners.

The book opens with a true story of two sisters whose lives were separated in 1947, as a parable for what is still happening in Israel’s relations with the Arab world in general and the Palestinians in particular. It then offers brief analyses of how Israel looks today in the world, from a rejection of deceptive nostalgia for imaginary “good old days” to a discussion of Israel’s increasingly problematic internal cohesion and the paralysis this generates in decision making regarding territories-for-peace issues. A discussion of Diaspora Jewish influence focuses on the Diaspora’s anachronistic approach to the peace process. It is followed by a look at the highly negative effect regional developments are having on Israeli attitudes toward Arabs in general and peace in particular, using the summer 2014 war with Gaza-based Hamas as a case in point. Next comes a discussion of the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and peace process, looking at the principal processes and dynamics that have thwarted peace and coexistence since the 1930s. Alpher argues that peace process practitioners on all sides—Israel, Palestinians, other Arabs, the US, the UN—have consistently ignored these dynamics or refused to take them seriously, producing today’s stalemate. The book concludes with a look at the scaled-down alternatives available today for

avoiding, or at least delaying, total paralysis and a one-state reality. These include a UN approach and another unilateral withdrawal. It concludes with an examination of the increasingly influential Israeli proponents of a one-state solution and the spectacular damage their policies are bringing about.

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Editorial Review

Review

Alpher's compelling new book, *No End of Conflict*, focuses on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in an attempt to restore the centrality of an issue he feels is being neglected, and in it he looks at Israel's growing relations with the Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, that are born in part of a shared fear of Iran. (*The Guardian*)

[*No End of Conflict: Rethinking Israel-Palestine* is a] well-informed, thoughtful analysis. (*The Arab Weekly*)

No End of Conflict – Rethinking Israel-Palestine by Yossi Alpher is an important read for anyone seeking clarity about the past and future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.... This book will challenge readers to think differently about this seemingly intractable conflict and what might be necessary to address the many concrete pragmatic issues (post-1967) between Israel and the Palestinians before it is too late and a one-state bi-national entity destroys Jewish and Zionist dreams. (*The Jewish Journal*)

There is an old joke about a Jewish telegram that reads, 'Start worrying, details to follow.' For anyone who still harbors the belief that a conflict-ending agreement can be reached soon between Israel and the Palestinians, start worrying. Yossi Alpher's latest book provides a plethora of details explaining why, tragically, it just isn't going to happen.... Will the Israeli public, looking into the abyss, elect a more progressive government? Will the Arab states, fearing Iran and radical Islam, find common ground with Israel in the absence of improvement in the Palestinian situation? Will some unforeseen cataclysmic event reshuffle the cards altogether? All of these scenarios are possible, though unlikely. This is not a feel-good read, but an essential one for those who care about Israel's future as the democratic nation-state of the Jewish people. (*Hadassah Magazine*)

[This book is a] highly personalized account.... *No End of Conflict* adds to the decades-old literature of introspection and stock-taking by Israelis and Jews regarding the direction of the Zionist project. (*Middle East Journal*)

[A] book that is well worth reading. (*Executive*)

A thoughtful and compelling analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conundrum by one of Israel's most astute and veteran political and security analysts. Alpher doesn't leave us with much hope but his trenchant shattering of illusions is worth the ride. A must-read for anyone interested in the problem of the much too promised land. (Aaron David Miller, vice-president at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington and a former Middle East analyst and negotiator in Republican and Democratic Administrations)

A sober account by one of Israel's premier security analysts and peace activists. Going beyond the conventional distinction between "doves" and "hawks," Alpher recognizes that there are at the moment no realistic chances for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations to put an end to the conflict. Nonetheless, he suggests a number of possible options for partial steps, unilateral or negotiated, to avoid the continuing stalemate which he realistically views as endangering Israel's long term perspectives. Both Israelis and foreigners should listen carefully to Alpher's measured and wise suggestions. (Shlomo Avineri, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, former Director-General of Israel's Foreign Ministry)

This well written and carefully presented book should be read both by the non-proliferation wonks and those interested in a careful analysis of the key elements of the future of the Middle East. It takes a deep historical

look at Arab-Israeli differences and conflicts and seeks to discover and elucidate clearly and openly the reasons for failure and as well the central questions that must be tackled by both sides to achieve success. Alpher opens new ground in presenting 5 options for the future along with the challenges in making them work. His bottom line: efforts to maintain a status quo or to set the issue aside will only lead to more damaging consequences. (Thomas R. Pickering, former US Under Secretary of State and Ambassador to Israel, Jordan, Russia and the United Nations)

About the Author

Yossi Alpher was an officer in Israeli military intelligence, followed by twelve years of service in the Mossad. Until 1995, he was director of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University. In July 2000, he served as Special Adviser to the Prime Minister of Israel during the Camp David talks. From 2001 to 2012 he was coeditor of the *bitterlemons.net* family of internet publications. He is the author of *Periphery: Israel's Search for Middle East Allies* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

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