

A New Dimension for Statecraft

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FAREED ZAKARIA WROTE IN A *Washington Post* column in July 2014 that the world is experiencing a new kind of nationalism based on fear, insecurity, and anxiety, no doubt in part linked to terrorist threats. He went on to say that we are now seeing the “the pull of older, deeper forces. From Catalonia to Scotland to the Middle East, subnational identities have taken on new meaning and urgency.”¹

Identity is defined persuasively in political psychology as the accumulation of individual and large-group historical memory. In other words, identity—who we are and what we feel—is composed of the memory of what has happened to us as individuals and as identity groups or nations. Social psychology explains that political and economic stresses intensify people’s sense of loss of control when governments weaken or in extreme cases appear to be collapsing. Human beings under such stress turn to those social units that make them feel most secure, from nuclear family, to clan, tribe, ethnic, or religious identity group. The late psychoanalyst and Harvard professor Erik H. Erikson introduced the

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idea of identity shaped in social context in *Childhood and Society* and *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*.² Vamik Volkan expanded Erikson's concepts to include the impact of social and political conflict on identity. He introduced the terms chosen glories and chosen traumas. Chosen traumas are those losses in history that most dominate the consciousness of peoples who suffer from a resultant psychology of victimhood, elaborated below.³

This essay advocates for the increased application of the science of political psychology, which embraces our definition of identity within policy and aca-

demetic communities, as well as in conversations with the concerned lay public, so that we may be better equipped to make sense of the dis-

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order and violence that surrounds us. Political psychology helps us predict and explain the instincts toward violence by individuals, large groups, and nations with memories of traumatic loss. More importantly, political psychology explains how to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The piece will begin with case studies of victimhood and political psychology in Russia and China, followed by an explanation of an ongoing project, based on political psychological theory, to promote reconciliation in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN NEEDS

There is a general consensus on the hierarchy of human needs, which Abraham Maslow introduced in *Motivation and Personality*.⁴ Basic physical survival needs include food, shelter, clothing, health, and safety from attack. Next are relational or social needs for affection and connectedness to a nuclear family and a wider identity group. These are followed by the more psychologically complex needs for self-esteem and the esteem of others—for dignity—that are critical for a basic sense of safety and security. Finally, there is what could be called a luxury-level category known as self-actualization, which entails the fulfillment of one's developmental potential. Only a small percentage of the world's population—about 10 to 20 percent of people living in the most developed, prosperous, and nonviolent countries—reaches such a level.⁵ Social and economic justice needs are central to a sense of well-being for the vast majority of humankind, and the deprivation of these needs leads to a sense of powerlessness. The lack of fulfillment of identity and esteem needs for some individuals and nations makes them

particularly vulnerable to political violence and aggression from external forces.

Traumatic loss dominates the historical memories of many nations and peoples. This enduring sense of injustice makes peacebuilding difficult for traditional diplomats and political leaders. For example, it took strenuous efforts and extraordinary patience by U.S. Senator George Mitchell to overcome the hostility between Northern Irish Catholics and Protestants when negotiating the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.⁶ U.S. President Jimmy Carter won praise for his persistence and spiritual strength in negotiating the Egypt–Israel Peace Treaty at Camp David for over 13 days in 1978.⁷ Indeed, in neither case did these mediation efforts truly enhance genuine trust among the parties, as trust requires profound social psychological transformation in the relationships. Exhaustion, combined in some cases with reluctance to disappoint distinguished mediators, appeared to be a factor in the case of George Mitchell and President Carter. But the world is grateful that the agreements have endured. One explanation for the endurance is that once the parties sign an agreement that ends the violence or probability of war, the sense of structural security sustains the agreement. To violate or renounce the agreement could produce very destructive renewed violence or even war. I believe this accounts for the longevity of the Good Friday Agreement and the Egypt–Israel Peace Treaty.

40 The psychology of victimhood is an automatic product of the aggression and the traumatic loss it inflicts on individuals and peoples. It is defined by an overwhelming sense of injustice resulting from the refusal of aggressors to acknowledge the pain of the harm inflicted on their victims or to express remorse. Furthermore, victims feel an overwhelming sense of injustice from a world they had assumed would shield them from harm. The victims' collective sense of security in their identity, their basic dignity, and a future for their children has been dealt a devastating blow.⁸ This perspective makes people highly suspicious and places them on permanent alert for future acts of aggression and violence. It also makes them resistant to peace unless aggressors acknowledge and, ideally, express regret for the victims' losses.

Memory sustains fear, which activates stress-related hormones that mobilize individuals and groups into defensive psychology. In this state of persistent anger, perception of injustice, basic distrust, and continual fear, it is of little wonder that ethnic and sectarian conflict has always been and continues to be so resistant to traditional diplomacy—which relies on a rational-actor model of give-and-take that hopefully results in an agreement that both sides can live with, but does not deal with the impact of traumatized memory. As with individual victims of trauma, peoples and nations require complex healing processes to move beyond

their psychological and physiological symptoms to become full partners in reconciliation.⁹ To clarify, diplomacy is deal making. Reconciliation is healing.

For example, Lawrence Wright's book, *Thirteen Days in September: Carter, Begin and Sadat at Camp David*, illustrates that the Egypt–Israel Peace Treaty was nothing short of a miracle, seeing that President Anwar Sadat and Prime Minister Begin could not bear to be in the same room together at Camp David. Nazis had murdered Begin's mother in her hospital bed and drowned his father in the local river during the Holocaust. Sadat, who had fought against the British in Egypt during World War II and had been imprisoned, had a self-important sense of himself as a leader. Each brought memories to the Maryland countryside that hindered their ability to listen to the other. The summit had been resigned to failure until Jimmy Carter brought photos addressed to each of

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Begin's grandchildren by name and expressed how sad it was that the leaders could not succeed for the sake of their grandchildren. This exchange in Begin's cabin apparently pushed

the Israeli prime minister to extricate himself psychologically from his traumatized past to think about his duty toward the future, and he agreed to sign the peace agreement with Egypt. Sadat had told his shocked staff that he would sign any document Jimmy Carter put before him without reading it.¹⁰

A political psychologist might imagine how the negotiations would have turned out had Sadat sat down quietly with Begin at the outset to acknowledge and mourn the murder of his parents, and if Begin had acknowledged how tragic it was for the Arabs of Palestine to be expelled from their homes in 1948. In over 45 years of involvement in problem-solving workshops with Israelis, Palestinians, and Egyptians; Kurds, Turks, and Greeks; Armenians and Turks; Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, and Russians; and Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, I have witnessed and often initiated exchanges in which one side acknowledged and showed remorse for the losses endured by the other. Such initiatives almost always evoke an immediate and profound change in the recipient. Psychologically, it is as though the hope for a sense of justice has entered the space in which only resentment had dwelled.

RUSSIA AND THE WEST

The current conflict between Russia and Ukraine is an excellent example of the role of wounded memory. It also reflects Russia's memory of its perceived humiliation by the West in the last three centuries. At the end of World War II

and the beginning of the subsequent Cold War, the United States and Western Europe were fearful of the potential of Soviet power. The nuclear arms race intensified Western anxiety. When President Ronald Reagan later called Russia “the Evil Empire,” he helped crystallize the Soviet threat in American minds.¹¹ This concept was central to the thinking of “Cold Warriors” and more aggressive policymakers, as well as their supporters in the media and certain think tanks. In retrospect, it is clear that the United States and the West were not blameless in the Soviet conflict but were instead active in the competition for power and influence, both directly and indirectly through Third World surrogates. The U.S. inclination toward building a new American empire intensified with the collapse of the Soviet Union. In winning the Cold War, the United States became the world’s sole superpower.

Russia specialist and retired CIA operations officer Graham Fuller wrote that it was American post-Soviet triumphalism, in particular, that spawned the seeds of the virtually non-stop era of foreign wars in which the United States has engaged since the Soviet collapse. For example, less fearful of effective Russian opposition, the United States became embroiled in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, and almost intervened in Syria as well. All because Washington believed that Russia was too weak to oppose its projection of power.

42 Ironically, despite the sense of unopposed power, many Americans began to lose the sense of control over world events they expected to have as presumed winners of the Cold War. Outside of the families of the troops wounded or lost, one American who was strongly affected by the human cost of the country’s adventures was President Barack Obama. Early in his administration, without notifying the media, he went to Delaware’s Dover Air Force Base, America’s military funeral parlor, to salute and witness the return of the coffins of young men and women who sacrificed their lives on behalf of the world’s sole remaining superpower. In this quite personal moment, the president also reflected a growing anxiety in the country about the cost of the American “boots on the ground” approach to Muslim countries wracked by civil wars.

The Clinton and George W. Bush administrations expanded NATO’s territory to Russia’s borders—the Baltic countries and Poland—repudiating a 1990–91 agreement between George H.W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev stating that NATO would not expand there. The United States and its allies were also keen to add Ukraine, long understood to be a sensitive sphere of security interest for Moscow. As Tom Switzer explained in *The American Conservative*, “For the West to further isolate Moscow and at the same time escalate military support to Ukraine is fraught with danger. Russia is a declining power, but it

maintains a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons. If made desperate and humiliated further, it could be dangerous, like a cornered, wounded animal.”¹² Nations, like individuals, need self-respect, and they crave the respect of others, including other nations.

Michael Gorbachev negotiated in the early 1990s that in exchange for Russia’s acquiescence to the reunification of Germany, NATO would not move further east. In 2004, NATO embraced Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, and—most painfully for Putin and Russian nationalism—Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The attempted seduction of Ukraine was the last straw for Putin; he would no longer put up with what he saw as Western betrayal and contempt for Russian dignity.¹³ His “repossession” of Crimea could be seen as a direct result. Even Russia’s history with the United States is only one part of a larger and consequential historical context—that of Russia’s struggle for the respect of the West, dating back to the seventeenth century. It is in this context that the healing of historical memory enters the picture.

RUSSIA AND MEMORY

Peter the Great (1672–1725), perceiving Europe—primarily France—as both superior and arrogant, built his capital on a European sea and set out to win respect for Russia. Catherine the Great, Peter’s successor, succeeded in making Russia largely acceptable to France, then considered the center of cultural excellence. Among Russian intellectuals, the increasing interaction with Europe generated not only intense admiration for the West but also a determination to assert a Russian greatness, with the Russian language becoming a major instrument of this effort. A Russian grammar book written in 1775 spoke of the majesty of the language, claiming that it combined the best qualities of Spanish, French, German, Italian, Latin, and Greek. Nikolay Karamazin, previously a “Westernizer,” wrote *History of the Russian State* in the early 1800s to emphasize the glories of Russia’s Slavic roots and traditions.¹⁴

Perhaps unsurprisingly, courting the approval of Europe generated an angry reaction from some members of the intelligentsia. Russian nationalists criticized those Russians who were enamored with everything Western, and the latter became targets of jealous wrath. Leah Greenfeld, a Harvard sociologist and student of Russian nationalism, wrote of the prevalence of Russian anti-Western rage in the nineteenth century.¹⁵ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, writing as a journalist during the 1870s, attacked Western disdain for things Russian. In a quite psychological personal speculation, he asked, “But why this hatred

against us? The main reason is that they are altogether unable to recognize us as theirs... They consider us alien to their civilization. They regard us as strangers and imposters, as Asiatics and barbarians.”¹⁶ Tibor Szamuely wrote in *The Russian Tradition*, “The famous ‘Russian soul’ was to no small extent the product of this agonizing uncertainty regarding Russia’s proper geographical, social, and spiritual position in the world, the awareness of a national personality that was split between East and West.”¹⁷

The Bolsheviks sought to end the ambiguity once and for all with a revolution that would be the ultimate rejection of Russia’s Western critics. The sense of “otherness” was powerful in the East–West relationship during the leadership eras of Lenin, Stalin, and Khrushchev. But when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power, the West was stunned by the shift in dynamic between the United States and the Soviet Union. Preceded by a good Western press and an endorsement by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who famously said she could do business with Mr. Gorbachev, the Russian president attracted large, excited crowds when he walked down the streets of Washington.¹⁸ He lectured on the psychology of enmity and declared that the Soviet Union would resign its role as the enemy of the West. On 7 December 1988, in a dramatic speech to the UN General Assembly, he announced unconditional reductions in the Soviet armed forces.¹⁹ These included a cut of 500,000 men within two years and the withdrawal and disbandment of six tank divisions and all assault units from East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, resulting in a net reduction of 50,000 troops and 5,000 tanks in those countries. It appeared at the time that Gorbachev had set Russia on a course of transition to international peacemaking, intellectual liberalism, freedom of expression, democratization, and market economics that could not be reversed.

It is no coincidence that the Institute of USA and Canada of the Russian Academy of Sciences (ISKRAN) had at least two members in the International Society of Political Psychology whom I knew well. One, who I later learned was a senior KGB officer undercover, told me that he advised the Kremlin on psycho-political aspects of the U.S.–Soviet relationship.

Gorbachev’s successor Boris Yeltsin, however, was perceived as an extremist by Russian nationalists for dissolving the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Ironically, Yeltsin recruited Vladimir Putin—a KGB veteran, who was deputy to the mayor of St. Petersburg and had a reputation as a disciplined manager—to be chief of staff of the presidency, and it was Putin who eventually revived and personally relived the memory of Western contempt for Russia as NATO edged toward its borders. As this is written, polls taken by the BBC in Russia show about

80 percent popular support for Putin. A one-night-only art exhibit in Moscow organized by a Putin supporter on the eve of his 62nd birthday depicts him as Hercules carrying out his labors: reclaiming Crimea and standing firmly against Europe, Japan, and the United States, all of whom imposed painful economic sanctions on Russia over its involvement in the Ukraine.²⁰

Despite the tense relations between Russia and the United States, the situation is not entirely bleak. In private communications, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Harold H. Saunders reported that non-official specialists from the United States and Russia met in Moscow from 15 to 17 September 2014 for the eleventh semiannual meeting of the Dartmouth Conference Task Force, an organization inspired by President Eisenhower in 1960.²¹ This year, attendees to the conference discussed the importance of defeating extremist movements in the Middle East, peaceful withdrawal of NATO from Afghanistan, and broader regional dynamics in Central and South Asia, Russia, China, and the Middle East. Eisenhower had strong psychological intuition, and recognized the tradition of public posturing by political leaders, which needed to be supplemented by sustained problem-solving dialogue between adversaries at the unofficial level.

CHINA'S MEMORY

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The case of China's humiliation with regard to its dignity and security is very pronounced in the country's modern history. The following brief analysis is of Sino-American relations and the role of a deeply negative historical memory.

Peter Loewenberg, an emeritus professor of history at the University of California, Los Angeles and a psychoanalyst, played a major role in modeling a healing process for the Sino-American relationship, organizing the first conference of the International Psychoanalytic Association in Beijing in October 2010. In his paper entitled "Face in Chinese Culture and in Sino-American Diplomacy," he highlights the history of Chinese humiliation at the hands of Western powers and Japan.²²

In the 1839 Opium War, Britain punished China for its refusal to buy opium by forcing it to cede Hong Kong in 1841. In the Second Opium War of 1860, British and French forces combined to invade China and occupy Beijing. Lord Elgin ordered the Old Summer Palace, the royal estate that was a depository of some 3,500 years of cultural treasures, to be sacked and burned. In 1900, an eight-power Allied coalition plundered and burned the remaining buildings of the Summer Palace. Japan, Russia, and Germany, competitors in the age of imperialism, all joined the attack against the defenseless Chinese state. Perhaps

the greatest traumatic wound and most profound insult came from Japan's occupation of all of eastern and much of northern, central, and southern China until 1945. During the Second Sino-Japanese War, on 13 December 1937, the Japanese Imperial Army invaded Nanking, then capital of the Republic of China. The army killed and raped citizens of the capital, with the death toll estimated from a low of 30,000 to 300,000.

In the evolving theory of psychologically sensitive conflict-resolution and peacebuilding practice, acknowledgement by aggressors to peoples and nations who feel victimized

followed by expressions of remorse and contrition—though the latter is not always politically feasible—can transform intergroup and interna-

tional relationships. In Beijing, Peter Loewenberg spoke of the May 1999 bombing by the U.S. Air Force of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, for which President Clinton apologized profusely, calling it a “tragic mistake.”²³ The Chinese ruefully accepted the apology, but many never believed the bombing was a mistake. The case demonstrates the enduring power of wounded memory and rage as affronts to the collective sense of self. In the context of the Chinese memory of Western aggression and occupation, President Clinton's sincere apology was not enough to erase suspicion. Building trust in a country-to-country relationship that has been deeply wounded is a long, steady process.

Loewenberg quotes a *People's Daily* editorial, saying, “This is not 1899 China. This is 1999...This is not...the age when people can barge about the world just by sending a few gunboats...It is not the age when Western powers plundered the Imperial Palace at will, destroyed the Old Summer Palace, and seized Hong Kong and Macao...China is a China that has stood up.”²⁴ In other words, the Belgrade bombing immediately evoked the memory of nineteenth century attacks by Britain, other European states, and Japan. Nations do not forget.

Today, China is expanding its naval perimeter to lay and enforce claims to clusters of rocks and islands in the South China Sea. Potentially significant oil and gas deposits are a factor. Anxiety is increasing over possible competing claims with Japan, which is amending its post-World War II constitution to provide for more robust defense infrastructure. In a recent interview with the *Washington Post*, Herbert Carlisle, head of U.S. Pacific Air Forces, said that

It will take a long period of sustained dialogue between China and other nations, Japan in particular, to make relationships healthy in the Pacific.

China is becoming more active in the air and sea. He commented, “They still talk about the century of humiliation in the last century. They still talk about the rise of China.”²⁵ From the perspective of political psychology, it will take a long period of sustained dialogue between China and other nations, Japan in particular, to make relationships healthy in the Pacific. The United States would be well advised to also do a Dartmouth process with China as a major Pacific power, along the lines described above with Russia.

ISRAEL, PALESTINE, AND THE MULTIPLE BURDENS OF HISTORY

The last and most complex case consists of the terrible memory of European Jewry in Christian Europe, the arrival of modern Zionism in Arab Palestine in the late-nineteenth century, and the assumption among many Zionists and Palestinian leaders of an inevitable clash of civilizations between European Jews and native Muslim and Christian Arabs. Presented here is a multi-level psychological approach for at least the beginning of a reconciliation that integrates formal Track I peacemaking diplomacy with expansive Track II psychologically grounded cognitive approaches to prepare Israeli, Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and even Diasporic Jewish public opinion for what might seem an impossible goal: peace. The theory behind this section is equally applicable to Russia and China, and most other ethnic and sectarian conflicts, but this complex dispute has been my focus since 1959.

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THE CHALLENGE

In the 48 years since the 1967 war that pitted Egypt, Syria, and Jordan against Israel, resulting in Israel’s capture of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza, continual diplomatic attempts to achieve a comprehensive peace agreement between the Palestinians and Israel have failed. Despite the hopes generated by the interim Oslo agreements of 1993 and 1995, the Camp David II negotiations in 2000, and other U.S.–Israeli–Palestinian summits, none of these diplomatic efforts has been successful in solving the core issues necessary for peace: the drawing of borders, the status of Jerusalem as a shared capital, and refugees’ return and compensation.

There has been a serious deficiency of political-psychological insight in the traditional protocols and methods of official diplomacy. Because of this missing element, foreign ministers, secretaries of state, special envoys, and lawyers have been constrained by one of the greatest obstacles to rational deal-making:

the inability to trust in nations and peoples who have been deeply traumatized by aggression, violence, and historical losses. For Israeli and older Diasporic Jews, whose dominant collective memory is largely an experience of repression, violence, and ultimately genocide in Christian Europe, trusting non-Jews does not come easily. The Second Intifada from 2000 to 2005—in which Palestinian suicide bombers killed over 1,000 Israelis, many of them

children and high school students—revived the deep fear of genocide in Jews.²⁶ For Palestinians, the loss of homes, lands, and dignity in the 1948 *Nakba*—the catastrophe in which some 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes—was enormously traumatic. Further loss of land in the 1967 war and continued settlement building in lands occupied by Israel intensified the Palestinian sense of injustice. It is unseemly to imply a bidding war over the extent of losses and tragedies between the Jews and the Arabs of Palestine. But the impact of tragedy for both peoples has been powerful and paralyzing in the resolution of their conflict. Healing for both parties has its own essential requirements, which will be further described below.

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TOWARD THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM: A STRATEGY

Toward the Peace of Jerusalem is a project in unofficial, or Track II, diplomacy that aims to highlight the main psychological obstacles to Israeli–Palestinian and Jewish–Christian–Muslim reconciliation in Jerusalem and the Middle East. This process can help heal traumatic memories that negatively influence the collective consciousness of Israelis and Palestinians. In consultation with Israeli and Palestinian partners, I developed the project alongside several other retired American diplomats. It is independent of any official negotiations between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority, but it could help influence public opinion in both nations in a way that makes it safer for their leaders to take the political risks for peace.

The project uses political psychology analytically and prescriptively, guiding the collaborative engagement of scholars, such as historians and media specialists, as they recover the past history of creative coexistence among Muslims, Jews, and Christians in the wider Mediterranean region. Creative coexistence indicates that different ethnic or religious identity groups have the ability to cooperate economically, politically, and culturally without having to give up their iden-

tity. The project also examines unacknowledged moral debts of Christendom to European Jews. The approach integrates shared pro-peace ethical values in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam into politically effective communications that can support the official Israeli–Palestinian peace process.

The overall goal of the Toward the Peace of Jerusalem project is to create a new vision for Israeli–Palestinian peace and creative coexistence to be inspired by:

1) Recovery of positive Jewish–Muslim history—from the rise of Prophet Muhammad in Arabia in the early-seventh century, through the Middle Ages from Spain through Persia, and in Ottoman and Mandate Palestine—for wide dissemination in Israeli, Palestinian, and broader Arab, Muslim, and Diaspora Jewish public discourse.

2) Extensive attention to the unhealed memory of the Jewish experience in Europe, which has a powerful grip on contemporary Israeli and older Jewish Diasporic psychology. The focus will not be on commemoration but rather on what needs to be healed in collective trauma and consequent memory, given its debilitating spiritual and political effects. The project has secured the support of internationally recognized Christian experts who accept the reality that Christians must acknowledge and ask forgiveness for the crimes Christendom has committed against Ashkenazi Jews.

3) A frank acknowledgement by Israel of the expulsion of some 750,000 Palestinians from their homes; the Nakba of 1948; the occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza; and their enduring impact on Palestinian consciousness, politics, and spiritual and economic health.

4) Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the project will focus on Jewish and Muslim religious nationalism. It will examine both Jewish and Muslim scriptures and values in action that make the search for peace a central commandment of God in Judaism and Islam. And as a spiritual and theological consensus evolves among secular Jews, religious Zionists, Palestinian Muslims, and Christians, then, and only then, the project partners believe, could an enduring covenant of peace have a chance to be established between the two nations to anchor whatever peace agreements are arrived at through official, governmental negotiations. A significantly enlightened public opinion would provide the space for political leaders to take risks for peace.

THEORY BEHIND THE PROJECT

The goal of the Toward the Peace of Jerusalem project is to identify the greatest psychological obstacles to reconciliation and then to plan and begin a healing

process that draws on experiences from political-psychological strategies for healing of traumatized historical memory.

The challenge is complicated by the fact that the project must deal with the memory of trauma in Israeli–Jewish consciousness and Palestinian consciousness, Israeli security anxiety generated by Hamas rocket attacks as well as with the recurrent trauma on the Palestinians from the occupation of the West Bank and effective siege of Gaza. Possibly the greatest challenge is to overcome the belief—deeply rooted in Jewish memory—in enemies who rise up to destroy the Jews in each generation. The Passover ceremony states the “every generation” belief, and the loss of the six million in the Holocaust reinforces it powerfully. While there are other strands and voices in Jewish texts and historical precedent that counter this pessimism, the longer the occupation goes on and hardline politicians in Iran and Islamist extremists threaten Jews, the more psychologically burdensome the belief in these enemies will become.

The symbol of the threat is Amalek in Exodus and Deuteronomy, the people who hate and attack Israel without any reason. These include the Romans, the European Christians, the Nazis, the Soviet Communists and, in the words of a settler rabbi, “those Arabs who will not rest until we disappear from the land.”²⁷ This belief is anchored in European Jewish historical experience. It cannot be dismissed. Yet, this tragic belief could become a self-fulfilling prophecy that blocks Jewish imagination in the Israeli political culture from conceiving of peaceful and creative coexistence with Muslims and Christians as founding members of the Abrahamic family of religions. The project will work energetically to walk through and expose the experience of being Jewish under Christian rule in Europe. The hope, stemming from past experience with other traumatized conflicts, is that Jewish despair will begin to dissipate and that Israel can begin to trust European and American Christians.

A basic assumption of the project is that Muslim Arabs and Muslim non-Arabs should participate as witnesses to this Christian acknowledgement of moral debts to European Jewry. This will not expunge modern Zionism’s debt to the Palestinian people in 1948 and beyond, but it will help them understand in much greater depth and detail the circumstances that led to their own catastrophe, the Nakba. For their part, the Palestinians will have to acknowledge the tragedy of Israeli losses of innocent civilian lives in acts of terrorism and especially the mass killings in the Second Intifada. A healing process also requires that the Israelis acknowledge their debt to the Palestinians.

THE PROCESS

The project's first goal, however, is the recovery of the positive history in the Jewish-Muslim relationship, which will establish a documented precedent for creative coexistence. The history in question began with the rise of Islam in the seventh century and reached its height in the Jewish Golden Age in Muslim Spain and the wider medieval Mediterranean region. Attention to this history will have the added benefit of exposing the children and grandchildren of Jewish immigrants to Israel from medieval Spain and Arab and Muslim countries to a heritage in which they can take justifiable—and psychologically essential—pride.

As an example of this approach, in November 2013, Princeton University Press published *A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations: From the Origins to the Recent Day*. Coedited by two French citizens, Abdelwahhab Meddeb, a Muslim born in Tunisia, and Benjamin Stora, a Jew born in Algeria, the 1,147-page collection has 116 articles. The book was primarily supported by the French Ministry of Culture, a politically significant move on the part of the French government. France has a large Muslim population, and it recognizes the importance of careful, scholarly documentation of the positive times, as well as the difficult times. The psychological goal is to lay the basis for recovery of a dignified sense of self and self-worth among Muslims in France and worldwide.

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The book is divided into three periods: the Middle Ages, the modern world, and the present. The editors write:

This history of the relationship between Jews and Muslims has until now been underestimated, as a result of the various Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. It has occupied only a discreet place in the field of studies devoted to these large communities, because it was considered almost non-existent after the recent division between them. We have endeavored to make possible a disinterested balance.²⁸

Vanderbilt University historian David Wasserstein, formerly of Tel Aviv University, adds to the literature in his *How Islam Saved the Jews*, writing:

Islam saved Jewry. This is an unpopular, discomfiting claim in the modern world. But it is a historical truth. The argument for it is double. First, in 570 CE, when the Prophet Mohammad was born, the Jews and Judaism were on the way to oblivion. And second, the coming of Islam saved them, providing a new context in which they not only survived, but flourished, laying foundations for subsequent Jewish cultural prosperity—also in Christendom—through the medieval period into the modern world.²⁹

Contributing to this redefining of Jewish–Muslim relationship, Menachem Klein, similarly shares from his book, *Lives in Common: Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron*.³⁰ Narrated by the Jews and Muslims who lived in that era, *Lives in Common* is an important tool in a peacebuilding strategy for Israel and Palestine in the twenty-first century. It is irrefutable proof of the possibility of social, political, and indeed, interreligious communal coexistence if a systematic process of healing historical memory is given room to work its way into the contemporary and desperate consciousness in Israel–Palestine and Jewish–Muslim relationships.

CONCLUSION

One should have no illusions that official diplomats and negotiators from the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia, China, or Japan might begin meetings by stating that they have studied the aggressions and crimes committed by their countries against the others, and that they would like to ask forgiveness for these acts. Psychologically, such confessions do not come easily to representatives of the winning side in a political power struggle. Nor are they seen as likely to advance the careers of these officials.

52 The proposition here is that the wisest and most psychologically sensitive negotiators will find a chance, perhaps during a stroll with a colleague after a meal, to acknowledge the pain their countries inflicted on their counterpart colleagues' countries in the past. I have personally witnessed and participated in such conversations in Track II dialogues, and the impact of acknowledgement is immediate and powerful.

The process should be relatively easier with Russia and China, other factors being equal. With Israel and Palestine, Jews and Christians, and Jews and Muslims, the process is much more complex and subtle. However, I have seen it begin to take root with representatives of many of the identity groups and nations—with Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, with Russians and Baltic peoples after the end of the Soviet Union, and with many other conflict-ridden countries.

My ideal for a more mature statecraft for the twenty-first century conceives of a diplomacy based on the best psychologically informed research into the historical roots of protracted ethnic and religious identity conflicts and the training of diplomats in the arts and science of healing the wounds of history. The insights from such research conducted by scholars, foreign affairs professionals, and citizen diplomats, communicated by journalists and artists in all forms of

media, can prepare public opinion in societies that yearn for peace with justice for creative solutions through visionary negotiations by courageous leaders. 

NOTES

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