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Trends. The Psychology of the Only Realistic Alternative: A Problem in the Mideast

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Received wisdom on the conflict between the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the State of Israel is that the two sides just don't get it. What they must get is that they must coexist, that neither side can achieve political objectives through military might, that peace must be given a chance, and that compromise is the only way out. All the past, ongoing, and future death, destruction, and atrocity are merely unfortunate and needless sequelae of not getting it.

As with much received wisdom, however, it may be the transmitters of what is received that may not get it. The history of political and ideological conflict is characterized by resolution through the creation of winners and losers--with sequential and concurrent interludes of hot and cold peace and hot and cold war. In fact, conflict is resolved in the context of yet other conflicts sequentially and concurrently waxing and waning.

In the PNA-Israeli conflict, elements of the PNA and its direct and indirect supporters--including those who support a "Palestinian cause" independent of the PNA--have been more likely to voice this version of the truth. And, in fact, these elements and supporters are usually castigated for this voicing among peace lovers throughout the world. Yet, whether this truth is voiced or not, we all may be living in truth--not in Vaclav Havel's sense of taking power for the powerless but in the Frantz Fanon's sense of always risking becoming the wretched of the earth. (See de Mendelsohn, F. (2000). The aesthetics of the political in group analytic process--the wider scope of group analysis. *Group Analysis*, 33, 438-458; Fanon, F. (1963). *The wretched of the earth*. Grove Weidenfeld; Flinn, F. K. (April 19, 2001). The hard language of the Mideast. *The New York Times*, <http://www.com>; Gomes de Matos, F. (2000). Harmonizing and humanizing political discourse: The contribution of peace linguists. *Peace & Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 6, 339-344; Havel, V. (1986). *Living in truth*. Faber and Faber; Lewis, B. (1995). *The Middle East*. Touchstone; Krysan, M. (2000). Prejudice, politics, and public opinion: Understanding the sources of racial policy attitudes. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 135-168.) (Keywords: Conflict Resolution, Ideology, Israel, Palestine.)