Incidents of violence flood the news-cycle every day in every part of the world. After watching and digesting these conflicts, the possibility of cooperation between enemies appears to be increasingly improbable. However, the prevalence of conflict can trigger the initiative to find an alternative or a solution. This raises the question: are all conflicts truly irreconcilable or is there a possibility of a peaceful resolution between the most adversarial of nations?

Throughout history, there are various examples of antagonistic relationships that have been able to become more friendly or even friendly. A prominent example of a former adversarial relationship that has become more friendly is that of France and Germany. Both nations trace their histories back to the tense imperial clashes between the Holy Roman Empire and the French kingdom after the death of Charlemagne’s son.1 Many wars and conflicts have led to the history of a two-country relationship, including the War of Spanish Succession, The Thirty Years War, The War of the Grand Alliance, and the Franco-Russian War in 1870. The centuries of conflict reached a climax in the bloodiest period of the Wars of the 20th century, however, after an innovative approach to diplomacy on behalf of the French government, the two nations signed the Franco-German Treaty of 1959. The Franco-German alliance produced a significant and successful result; the economic agreement of the European Coal and Steel Community, which itself no longer exists, but has triggered the powerful modern alliance between France and Germany.

The contemporary equivalent of the Franco-German relationship is that of the Israelis and the Palestinians. Today Israel and Palestinian conflict, as France and Germany was the epitome of hostility. The many iterations of this conflict remain prominent accounts in global news. Due to the heightened tensions that once existed between France and Germany, and the resulting exchange between France and Palestine today, is it possible to apply a similar framework from the former conflict to the latter?

There are many failed past attempts within the Israel-Palestinian conflict. They include treaties, the Oslo agreements, sanctions and cultural exchanges. It seems that both countries, as they are Palestinian, or international, have tried every sort of solution. In order to make cooperation or growth possible, the Euro-Bothoax must be tried. The choices are limited, like those available at the end of World War II, between France and Germany. The seemingly impossibility of combining the interests and capabilities of two enemies is a tough functional reality that theoretical possibility in the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict. A ludicrous plan of functionalism worked in the 1950s due to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The unprecedented solutions of functionalism bound two countries too tightly for either to instigate a war. Can lightning strike twice? Can an environment be set up that leads to peace in the Middle East?

1 Julius Wies Friend, The Linchpin: French-German Relations, 1918-1958 (City: Publisher, Year).
2 Ibid.

Biography

Elizabeth Jimenez is a ProInspire Fellow at FHI 360, a global not-for-profit organization utilizing a holistic and integrated approach in addressing complex human development needs. Elizabeth graduated from Williams College with degrees in Arabic Studies and Political Science. Upon graduation, Elizabeth worked at Booz Allen Hamilton as a management consultant in Washington, D.C. She has also cultivated a pro bono partnership with an educational non-profit organization in New York City working to increase college-access for groups that are traditionally under-represented. She has international experience in the Middle East and Latin America, especially in research topics regarding the human effects of political changes.