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## Budding Scholars Conference

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### "Excerpt from: *A Comparative Analysis of Water Politics and Functionalism in the European Coal and Steel Community and Israel-Palestine*"

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 impossible. 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 warring countries that subsequently became allies. Some of them are now friendly trading partners and hold thriving diplomatic relationships. A prominent example of a formerly antagonistic relationship that has become positive is that of France and Germany. Both nations trace their histories back to the tense imperial clashes between the Habsburg Empire and the French Kingdom after the death of Charlemagne's son.<sup>1</sup> Many wars and conflicts have littered the history of the two countries' relationship, including the War of Spanish Succession, The Thirty Years War, The War of the Grand Alliance, and the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. The centuries of conflict reached a climax in the bloodshed of the World Wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, after an innovative approach to diplomacy on behalf of the French diplomatic corps throughout the 1920s to the 1950s, the two nations laid down their swords and signed the Franco-German Friendship.<sup>2</sup> The seemingly impossible 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 to the animosity that defined the Franco-German relationship is that of the Israelis and the Palestinians. Today Israel and Palestine have replaced France and Germany as the epitome of hostility. The many iterations of this conflict remain prominent in regional and global news. Due to the heightened tensions that once existed between France and Germany, and the similar degree of rancor between Israel and Palestine today, is it possible to apply a similar framework from the former to the latter situation?

There are many failed past attempts within the Arab-Israeli conflict. They include treaties, the Oslo agreements, sanctions, and cultural exchanges. It seems that political actors, be they Israeli, Palestinian, or international, have tried every sort of solution. In order to move forward on the path to peace, the unorthodox 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 through functionalism, is a 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 features of functionalism bound the countries too tightly for either to instigate a war. Can lightning strike twice? Can an environmental resource bring peace in the Middle East?

<sup>1</sup> Julius Weis Friend, *The Linchpin: French-German Relations 1950-1990* (City: Publisher, Year).

<sup>2</sup> 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.