

The War on Hate: June 9, 2024

Conversation 1

President Swanson of the United States walked into congressman Nora's office. "Nora, you were born and raised in the West Bank right?"

"Yes."

"Please meet me live on CNN on Wednesday for a public conversation that the whole world will witness. I am not going to tell you what is going on until you get there. I want every part of our conversation and what is likely to be many future conversations, recorded for all the world and posterity. Make sure you are completely up to date on the state and goings on of Israel and Palestine."

Nora was quizzical for a second and then said, "I will be there."

As the days passed Nora wondered what he was walking into and as he sat down across from President Swanson, he was excited to find out what was coming next.

President Swanson started speaking as soon as the camera light turned red. "Tonight is just a beginning conversation toward what I hope will end with a peace treaty between the United States and the people of Gaza and the West Bank. The reason I brought into this conversation blindly is because I want the conversation documented and provided to the world unedited from start to end. You are here to represent the people of Gaza and the West Bank while I will be representing the United States in this and all future conversations."

"First, we have to agree on our goal and then we can work on the vision. I will not ask you to agree with my idea for these people's present and future until you have had time to consider what I am suggesting. Tonight, I am going to do most of the talking. Our next meeting in a couple of days will be you talking and I will be listening. Are these terms acceptable?"

Nora pondered for a minute and responded with a simple, "Yes".

President Swanson took a drink of water and smiled. "I needed to take a drink because I have no idea how long this will take to communicate. While I want to minimize the death and destruction that I see, Israel has turned rabid. The only leverage that I have with them is diplomatic unless I am willing to wipe them off the map. Let me make this clear. If you push the agenda of wiping them off the map then this conversation will end immediately."

"My goal is to turn the West Bank and Gaza into an Islamic version of Germany or Japan. Those countries are both doing quite well now and started in a similar place as were the Gaza and West Bank People currently are. It was a hard road for them but through hard work and the United States' help we were able to get them from where they started to where they are now. This is my goal for the people that I have asked you to represent and I hope the peace treaty between the United States and the Islamic people of Israel that we will eventually hammer out will lead the people that you represent there. So, think about that as the goal and when we talk next you can tell me if that goal is acceptable for you or if you want a different goal."

President Swanson cleared his throat.

“You need an industry if your people are to go anywhere. As best I can tell, the land Israel has given you guys isn’t worth crap but it is what you have. The only industry I can think that you guys can be given is entertainment. My vision of how to achieve this is quite simple and I learned it as a boy. Walt Disney provided the world with an example of how to take worthless swamp land and turn it into a thriving metropolis filled with high quality of life. When we come back to meet again, I want you to examine the idea of a vision that incorporates using theme parks as their industry. These theme parks will be distinctly Islamic and will work as a representative of Islam to the world. Many people see Islam as violent but I know there is far more to them than just violence. Currently when I look at you guys, I think showing the world what Islam is that doesn’t include violence can be exceptionally profitable using your crap land. I am floating this vision for how to reach the goal that I have set and hope that you will accept this vision and goal in our next meeting.”

“Thank you for your time and unless you have any immediate questions, we will adjourn until our next meeting.”

Nora pondered for a minute and responded, “I will see you in a couple days. There is no sense in trying to respond immediately when you have been given the opportunity to consider your response.”

Conversation 2

Nora sat down at the CNN news desk at. As usual president Swanson was early and already seated.

“Alright, Mr. President. I want to start with some thoughts about our earlier conversation. I think I am willing to accept your goal of turning Gaza and the West Bank into an Islamic version of Japan and Germany. As for your vision, I am still researching. We definitely need to provide the people I represent with industry but I am unsure if the industry that you propose is the right one. In other words, the goal is acceptable but I need to do more research before I endorse the vision.”

“What I ultimately concluded was that we are not going to survive long enough for your vision to matter in the slightest right now. We are being slaughtered wholesale. You have to start by addressing how you are going to end the slaughter without military intervention because industry doesn’t matter when we are all dead.”

The president grimaced back. “When I watched our first conversation afterwards, I realized that very problem but getting the goal accepted is a huge leap forward. As for the problem that you suggest, I decided that I would make an offer to your people that will give me the ability to offer the same deal that Japan and Germany have. It can only be provided with a huge condition that you might be unwilling to pay.”

“In exchange for us providing protection, it comes with two requirements.”

“First, you have to agree never to have a military but if you look at the two countries that agreed to this then you will realize that there are work arounds eventually but not for a while.”

“The second requirement may be difficult to do and may be the reason that you will table this deal for later treaties. If Hamas is telling the truth that they are willing to die for their people now and in the future, then they have to release all their hostages and turn all their members involved in their terrorist attack over to Israel. I know the people you represent think of them as heroes but I will never support anyone who thinks it is OK to randomly torture, murder and so on just because they are in dire

circumstances. No circumstances justify what they did. We don't have to agree on my assessment of Hamas or yours but I need them to sacrifice themselves if I am going to justify to Israel why I am suddenly offering them military protection."

"Remember, if your people don't want to accept this deal then they can choose to go it alone as they have been. This deal can wind up in future treaties. The choice is yours. That is what it costs to provide your people with the security necessary to survive long enough to see my vision."

The president leaned back. "Now I have something I want and I want to know next time we speak, what you want in exchange for it. Ask for what you want and if it is actually something in my power, I will tell whether I am willing to pay what you want. If I don't want to pay the price then we can table it for future treaties."

President Samson smiled, "What I want is the Palestinian people to agree to no longer view violence as a way to be heard and a promise that they will no longer pursue violence and instead dedicate all their efforts to peacefully increasing their quality of life for themselves and future generations. Think on it and I will see you back here in a couple of days."

Conversation 3

Congressman Nora was excited for the next conversation but also depressed for fear his response to earlier conversations might result in the United States walking away from the table.

"I have some things to say before the next conversation can be addressed. When I agreed to do this with you, I didn't agree to represent Hamas. I agreed to represent the Palestinian people living in Gaza and the West Bank who desire to increase their quality of life and the quality of life of future generations through pacifistic hard work. What you asked in exchange for military support was unfair. I can no more control Hamas then you can control Israel. If you are going to make me control Hamas with every request then there is no point in continuing. Do you want to continue?"

For the first time the President paused and shook his head. Finally, he responded, "I never looked at it like that. I definitely want to continue but I am not sure if there is another way to give you military support without that condition. I don't have an answer for that. Give me some time to ruminate on that and then we can try to address it. The problem I see is that if I give you military support without sating Israel's desire for vengeance then I think there is a high likelihood that I will have to go war with Israel or take responsibility for hunting Hamas. Any option that has those two results, I can't accept. I will think about the problem and notify you if I can find an alternative solution and I ask you to do the same."

The president then said, "I had a very different problem that I need to address. This was your unwillingness to accept my vision. I want you to know how I tend to use the vision and what qualities the vision needs so that you can help find a vision that your people can agree with us on. It can't just be a vision but it has to be one that your people believe in and intend to do. If we can find a vision like the one that I proposed then I can use it against Israel in our diplomatic attempts to stop their genocide. I need something that I can bring to Israel and say, "There is nothing wrong with what the Palestinians are trying to do so why are you preventing this." If I have that then I might be better enabled to talk Israel out of being rabid."

Nora decided that he didn't need to wait to supply his response. "The major problem that I have with your vision is that it leaves our people dependent on discretionary income. One global depression and we will be the first ones dying. I do have concerns whether it will work but the fact that there are two historical examples of it working does alleviate some of my concerns."

The President looked back at Nora and responded. "What you are saying is true in the beginning but look at Orlando. They have computer programming, banking, healthcare and factories. Other industry would come and then your people won't be a one trick pony any more. It will take some time but it is

better than being slaughtered. I think I have learned a lot from this conversation and I have lots to think about. Probably more to think about than I have time to think. Is there anything else that you would like to discuss?"

Nora grinned, "You are not getting off that easy. You asked me what I need from you in exchange for agreeing to never resort to violence ever again to be heard. I want a detailed and comprehensive plan to make sure that not only my people are heard but how you are going to alter the system and the world so that all people are heard. If you want us not to resort to violence to be heard then you have to show us that you will throw everything you have including the kitchen sink into making sure that not only us but everyone doesn't have to resort to violence to be heard. Those are the terms of the deal that we are willing to offer in exchange for our declaration."

Conversation 4

When the President sat down, Nora could tell that he was troubled. Without waiting for pleasantries, the President immediately started to speak.

"I made some progress with the plan to make sure everyone gets heard but I realized that for the current situation, it is too late to implement it. The current situation on the ground does not allow for us to hear the people that you represent. They have no internet and no power which is needed to communicate with them and hear them. Before we continue with our negotiations, I am going to explain how I can prevent this inability to be heard in the future and ask you for ideas on how to fix the current situation so that we can get around the problem."

"The solution I came up with is that we start a surrogate program in the United Nations. Any group over five thousand or that is represented in the UN can apply to a country in the UN to be their surrogate to speak for them if they ever lose the ability to speak for themselves. It is entirely voluntary who they pick and the surrogate that they pick has to voluntarily accept the role."

"An example of how this works is that I think there will be a problem between the Kurds and Turkey. The Kurds could apply to the United States for their surrogate if things get as bad as they have for your people. If accepted and things get this bad, the United States will speak for the Kurds."

"However, it is too late to let your people voluntarily pick their representative because the situation on the ground makes it impossible for them to communicate. Any ideas on what we should do because after we hammer out the deal that we are working on, someone will have to ratify it. There currently isn't a large group that can do that."

Nora thought about it for several minutes and the silence was deafening. Finally, Nora said, "There is only one option that I can see. We have to assign them a surrogate involuntarily. It is not fair but as far as I can tell that is the only choice. My suggestion is that Jordan is already playing that role without even being designated. After we hammer out our deal, we go to Jordan to ratify it. Also, we need to get Jordan involved in the process."

The President responded immediately. "Our conversations have to remain public which should be enough to include them and there are huge advantages to the conversation being between two people instead of many. I am not ready to sacrifice these advantages. Unfortunately, I now have too much to do for the conversation to continue."

“At our next meeting, I want to give you a status report on the follow tasks. I need to define the role very clearly of a surrogate. I need to explain what I want to implement to my UN representatives and get the ball rolling on initiating the surrogate program. I need to contact Jordan through the state department and find out if they are willing accept the responsibility that we just so cavalierly gave them without asking.”

“This is several days’ work. Unless something new comes up, I want you to do most of the talking at our next meeting. Our treaty is about peace but I still have the role of feeding the Palestinians which I am trying to do while taking flack from Israel for it. Is it OK with you if we adjourn for the day.”

Nora smiled, “Absolutely, I think we made great progress today.”

Conversation 5

It was congressman Nora's turn to be excited for the conversation. He was excited and a little trepidatious about it. It was going to be hard to get through the President's status report before Noraa spoke. The President started his status report to Nora.

"Here is where we are at with the progress of our previous conversation. I have the UN delegates up to speed on what they are trying to make in the UN. I also have reached out to Jordan to ask them if they are willing to be Gaza and the West Banks surrogates. They want a precise definition of what a surrogate's role is before accepting the responsibility. I am still working on that role and have run into a sticky wicket. Defining how we determine if a group has lost its ability to communicate is a little more difficult than I thought. We don't want people trying to take away a group's ability to speak for themselves if that group already can speak for itself. That is where I am at with my progress on the tasks provided me in our last conversation. Did you have any thoughts or ideas since our last meeting?"

Nora was almost too excited to wait for the end of the question to speak.

"Yes, I want your permission and aid in doing a task that doesn't really involve you much at all. I want to find a Jewish congressman who is willing to not represent Israel but instead only wants to represent the Israelis who want to increase their quality of life and their future generations quality of life through pacifistic hard work. I want to initiate the exact same thing that we are doing but between him or her and myself. What I need help with is securing time on CNN like you are able to do for us? I don't think I have the clout with CNN that you do. Do you see any problems with this?"

The president smiled.

"I love that idea but I see two potential problems that are both easily surmounted. The big one is that you need to understand the risk. If your conversation devolves into a fight then people watching might lose heart that a solution of coexistence is possible to achieve. You have to make sure that you are confident that the conversation will never devolve into a fight. Make sure the person you pick is an excellent diplomat. If you accept this risk then I will do everything in my power to pave the way for the entire world to hear what both of you have to say."

"The second problem is that you might be looking for a unicorn. Picking you as my partner was easy because you were the only one that met the criteria that I was looking for. You may have multiple

choices because you might not be looking for a unicorn. Just be wise about who you pick and understand the risk that you are taking. Is that fair to you?"

Nora couldn't be happier with the answer but hadn't thought about the consequences of failure. After some thought he responded. "I am going to try to do it if I can find the right partner. I guess it is now my turn to end the conversation the way you did last time. I have lots to do and I will provide you with a status report at our next meeting. Thank you for supporting me in this effort."

Conversation 6

When the two people sat down at the table, Nora realized that they were becoming friends just by going through the peace process. President Swanson spoke up first.

"I have good news Nora. I have received word from Jordan. They have agreed to ratify what we create under two conditions. One if the Palestinians don't follow the terms of the deal, then they will in no way be held accountable for the Israeli Palestinian's failure. Two they have to agree that it is a good deal. Before I can put a surrogate program in place permanently, I still have to define the surrogate role but still, we have a surrogate."

Nora smiled. "That is good news but we still have a long way to go before we can provide something that is worth providing and isn't just flowery words. This brings me to what I want to talk about today. I want to discuss your vision of positioning the people I represent as representatives of Islam through the avenue of theme parks."

The president said to her, "What do you want to discuss? Have you found a differing vision for the Palestinians that you want to present?"

"Actually, no. I want to discuss making it a part of our treaty. To do this we need a massive influx of money that we do not possess. The question becomes not whether we agree with your vision for us but whether the United States believes in your vision for us. I am not just talking about money for theme parks here. The people going to be entertained will need to be safe and comfortable. For that we need hotels, hospitals, fire departments, EMS, disaster recovery, Airports, and water ports, and so much more. Are you guys willing to pay for all that? Do you really believe in your vision?"

The president thought about it and said, "I believe in my vision. I don't think we can pay for any of that but we can promise you low interest loans. As collateral, anything you build would have to become American soil if you default on these loans. I believe in this vision with all my heart but as for the American people, I don't know. That kind of money is not mine to pledge but the House of Representatives role. As a member of the House of Representatives, you would have to lead the charge on making that happen but you would have my full support in that battle."

Nora smiled, "So it is a shared risk, I have to support your vision which means we both have to believe in the vision with all our hearts. I guess that means that in the treaty, we will have to secure a promise of the loans before we can add it to the treaty."

The president responded, "Keep in mind Nora, that we can secure loans for this from other countries as well as the United States. This is a burden that the whole world can bear as a team. Hypothetically, if we can secure the loans from 30 countries then we will have thirty countries invested in seeing the idea come to fruition. That is not a bad thing and it might help to approach not just the United States for money but also countries like Saudi Arabia, Britain, and so on. The more I think about it, its chance of success increases significantly if we can sell it to the world as a business opportunity to make money with low interest loans."

"I believe in the plan but you have to believe in it too. I think that if you do what Walt did and include everyone in the world in the planning stage as well as yourself then you would create something that you know you believe in as well as generating money from countries around the world. This means gathering four or five Palestinians and a theme park planner and designing it on TV. If you do that before we approach Congress then I think we will have much more success. Do you have any interest in that approach?"

Nora thought about it and decided, "It is a minimal initial investment of 6 people but you will have to secure us time on CNN so that people can observe it. Are you willing to do that?"

The president grimaced. "I think I have pushed my clout with CNN as far as I can by securing time for this conversation and the conversation that you want to hold with a Jewish person. Instead, I suggest a new C-Span channel called C-Span: Nora builds a theme park. You set the five people and the theme park planner in the room for eight hours a day and let them have at it while you observe from a distance and interject your thoughts when you feel you need to. You would be the boss though and if something they do rubs you wrong, you can eliminate it. Are you cool with that?"

Nora responded, "Sounds fair to me as long as I don't have to agree to your vision until I see what they come up with."

The president smiled, "I will sign the executive order for the channel and budget to pay the people necessary. I will see you in a few days unless you have something else."

Nora said, "I do. I need a CNN contact because I found my Jewish partner and we need to schedule our CNN time for our discussions."

"I will give you that off air. See you in a few days."

Conversation 7

When Nora and the President sat down, Nora felt obligated to speak first.

“Mr President, I want...”

“Nora, please call me Jon. What’s on your mind?”

“We have now reached the point where the rubber meets the road. I have to generate investment for our plan but how can I do that. The Israeli’s will either just cease my businesses or tax them into oblivion. If I don’t have an answer for this then no one will invest. What the world seems to fail to understand is that the Palestinians are the slave class in Israel. It is very similar to the situation in America with the undocumented workers. Americans say that they hate the undocumented workers but when they go to the grocery store and buy a watermelon, they are all secretly delighted that their slave class, the undocumented worker, exists to pick their fruit. Israel will not sit idly by as we try to take away their slaves. How can we stop them when we don’t even have representation in the government. This has been the crux of the problem the whole time.”

The President thought for a while. “There will be some protection when they are messing with 40 countries money but you are right, there is not enough. Unfortunately, because we don’t speak for Israel or Hamas, we have to plan as if they will both exist after our conversation. This means that Hamas will still be dedicated to killing all Israelis. Even though it is unfair and I don’t expect you to speak for them, our plan will have to account for that as well. This is an obstacle that we will have to face and it is good to be aware of the obstacle as early as possible but I think we need to have something to sell in this case before we worry about selling it. Do you disagree?”

Nora responded, “I guess there is value in after Israel killing everybody having the ability to prove to the world that it was completely unnecessary. With Hamas continued existence, it means that Israel will prevent us from getting the materials needed to enact our plan. I would prefer to know that I am not working on something that is dead on arrival but you don’t always get what you want I suppose.”

The President responded, “Are you still negotiating with your Jewish friend because bringing up the slave class problem with them might yield some interesting results? I would suggest that as we progress your tools in your toolbox are growing. I think the longer you and I communicate the more likely that we might make a tool that can help. Also, I have been desperately trying to restore communications between both of the people in power in Israel. If I achieve that then I can interject the slave class problem with them. Maybe there will be a solution there.”

Jon drank some water and said, "On a different topic, I have been working on the issue of making sure that no one has to commit violence to be heard. The way I see it is that people listen when entertained and they love the ability to judge. If I can add those two qualities to important debates over divisive issues then I have something that can bring divisive issues to the forefront of all people. Currently I have a plan for doing that at the United Nations and I am trying to put in a beta feature on the white house website for national rather than international issues. Soon I am hoping to have met your criteria that no one ever feels that they have to resort to violence to be heard. So, we have that going for us."

Nora smiled. "I think we have gotten the long-term plan started but I really feel that we need to start focusing on keeping people alive. People are dying everyday we converse and I feel compelled to at least talk about it at our next meeting. I think we should keep working the long term at the same time as with the immediate situation. My primary concern at this point is getting as many out alive as I can."

The President said. "I would love to hear any ideas that you have on that front but that fight has been being fought the whole time by just about everybody but Israel and Hamas. Of course, the fact that no solutions have arrived is depressing but I agree that the long-term pieces have started to roll so let's spend some of our time on getting people out alive. I am not sure what else I can do at this point except try to provide as much food and aid as I can. I think you will be doing most of the talking. Israel's fear that if they open the borders that Hamas will sneak out or bring in weapons with the openings is the obstacle there. We all need to figure out how to take that fear away from them if we are to gain the access that we need to keep people alive. This is about solving that because if you can solve that, I can get them all the aid that they could possibly need with the help of the global community. See you in a few days."

Conversation 8

Nora now understood that failure at this conversation had consequences but at the same time, he realized that he needed an answer to his controversial question. He was going to have to roll the dice.

“What I need to know Jon is why you won’t deploy the military to forcibly open the border of Gaza so that aid can get through.”

“You will probably not be happy with the answer Nora. When most people view violent situations, they think of an active shooter scenario where a single gun can save lives. A situation like this requires a different response from a President. I have to get as many people out alive as I can and this includes Israelis. Adding a 100,000 guns to the situation is guaranteed to end with more death rather than less. This leaves me having to try and find a different solution. Your position requires you to defend just the people you represent. I have to defend everyone.”

Nora could kind of see his point but was completely unhappy with the strongest man in the world not protecting the people that Nora was defending.

“So, you are just going to do nothing. What value is it being the strongest man in the world if you don’t use it?”

The president smiled. “What’s the saying, with great power comes great responsibility. I actually have an idea that could really help me out that might help the situation but it requires a lot of people to agree with it. It also helps me pay a debt which is nice. I haven’t suggested it to anyone so let me run it by you to see if you can punch a hole in it so that I can throw it out if it lacks value.”

“Jon, I am willing to listen to anything if it might get the border open and aid flowing into my people. My people are starving to death and their children are bathed in blood.”

The President grimaced. “Those things bother me too and saying it that way doesn’t even come close to expressing how much I agree with you on that. Here is the idea. I stole a 50 billion dollar contract from France for submarines going to Australia. I have a technology that I am not ready to share with the world that I also needed to put on those submarines. What I want to do is contract the French with the task of making sure that nothing goes into Gaza or the West Bank that is used to harm an Israeli.”

“The flaws I see are that Israel might not be willing to contract out that responsibility and that France might not be willing to take the contract. Also, I can’t really afford it on my own so we would have to pass around the collection plate at the United Nations.”

“However, this does have an advantage for the people that you represent, Nora. Let us use your watermelon to explain. The Israeli’s may say that they are unwilling to let your people have the watermelon because you might drop it on an Israeli’s head. France would probably ask if you were going to drop it on an Israeli’s head which would result in the response being no. Then you guys get the watermelon.”

“My question for you is whether or not you think this solution has merit and more importantly, do you think that we can sell Israel on the idea?”

Nora shook his head. “You like to call the Israeli’s as rabid and that is in my opinion a fair assessment. I am not sure they will agree to anything other than genocide. An approach that is fairer about what the people I am representing can possess to better their quality of life is something that we desperately need. The idea is worth considering. I will think about it for a few days and we can talk about it then.”

Conversation 9

When the President arrived at the table, Nora had already arrived. He hated arriving second but he wanted to know what was so important so he let Nora start.

“Jon, I don’t understand the advantage that I have in your contract to France. I am really exchanging one bootheel for another. Won’t the French just come after us instead of the Israelis.”

The President realized that he hadn’t really explained his idea very well and decided to give it another shot. “I am not envisioning a situation where France will be doing anything militarily. They are just responsible for tracking all of your people’s inventory. You will be able to build and have whatever you want as long as it isn’t used to hurt Israelis.”

“Let’s use a purchase of 10 tons of cement for an example and cement is on the no use list provided by Israel. Your people go to France and give them the plans for the building as well as the buildings purpose. France verifies that you are on level and authorizes the ten tons of cement which they accompany to the site to make sure that it is all used as expected. They also make sure that any unused cement returns to the cement warehouse where the builder is reimbursed.”

“The French will constantly be monitoring the warehouses to make sure that no inventory ever goes missing. If all of a sudden, a bunch of cement goes missing then they notify Israel. Israel puts a halt on all cement while they figure out if the cement is being stolen for profit or something more nefarious. Also, if France notices that suddenly a specific warehouse is losing 30% of its inventory then Israel is notified and the warehouse loses its warehouse license.”

“Ultimately, Israel will know what is being stolen which gives them a better idea of what their enemy is up to. This provides Israel with huge intel on their enemy’s actions. Personally, I often wonder why Israel didn’t just tell you guys to build whatever you want and just take control of all your material storage facilities.”

“Nora, your people get to build whatever you want and you have a neutral third party determining if your people are doing nefarious things or not rather than having to rely on your oppressors to do it. What do you think?”

Nora pondered and then said, "I like the idea of the freedom to build whatever we want and it may prevent Israel from denying my people what they need to become self-reliant. What guarantee does Israel have that their enemy won't buy the French inventory people off?"

The President responded. "The Israelis can do warehouse inventory once in a while to confirm the French's honesty. If they go and the numbers don't add up then we will require that the staff be replaced or the Israeli's can fire the French on a whole. It is easier to do inventory when you know what the numbers should add up to."

"Jon, if it gives us the freedom to build what we want and prevents a repeat of what we are currently seeing then I am all for it. Selling it to Israel is your responsibility and not mine. Anything else. I don't want to hurry you but I have an iron in both the fires of my conversation with my Jewish woman and my plans for our theme parks."

The President pretended to look hurt then laughed. "Not a problem. I will see you in a couple days."

Conversation 10

The President decided that it was important that he talk first.

“Nora, if I am to sell the opening of the trade then I will have to ask for help with ideas on the following. I have to convince Israel that their war with Hamas can only be won if they win the battle of hearts and minds of the people that you represent. The advantage that we have in this is that it also happens to be true. Exchanging the sanctions against your people for a flawless inventory system, would be a massive step toward Israel winning that battle. To sell them on this, I would have to convince them that it is still possible to win the hearts and minds of the people that you represent. Is there a possibility that your people’s hearts and minds can be won by Israel and if so, what can we do to convince Israel that it is possible and important.”

“Well, Jon, I think that my answer to that won’t help you but it is the best answer that I can give. You need to ask Jordan that question. The answer that I give may be different then the answer that they would give. My answer is that it would take generations to happen but my people are also aware that every journey starts with a single step. Jordan may have decided to represent all of Palestine which includes Hamas. Depending on who Jordan is representing will probably have a huge impact on what answer they provide. That is the best answer that I can give.”

The President grimaced and thought about it. He decided to ask a potentially inflammatory question which was something that he hated doing but he needed to know.

“Nora, here is what I can’t wrap my head around about the people that you represent. I know you see Hamas fighting gunmen with rocks and that provides with a comfort with Hamas even though you do not represent Hamas. Here is what I see in them. I don’t see them as stupid and Israel’s response to their actions were obvious. The scale of the response may or may not have been but the response itself was obvious. The question is why aren’t your people comfortable with giving Hamas up to the Israelis? Before you answer, here is what I see when I look at Hamas. They are leaders that offered up the people that you represent to be non-consensually martyred in an effort to create global hatred for their enemy. Someone claiming to be a leader that would do that to their followers is filth in my mind.”

Nora responded, “What were they supposed to do? They feel and I somewhat agree that they had pursued all other options and failed. I feel that they probably thought the game was over and it was time for a hail mary. You also have to calculate into Hamas that their hatred might be justified and that our older and wiser generation has pretty much been wiped out. With age comes wisdom. Are you suggesting that we should work with our oppressors to kill the people who are fighting our oppressors

with violence only after all other avenues have failed. While I think what Hamas did is wrong, I also think it is better than just accepting being oppressed in all of perpetuity.”

The President grinned. “I guess I may never understand until I have walked a mile in your people’s shoes. Thank you for helping me better understand. I don’t think my increased understanding will help much but you never know. I think communication and understanding are the corner stones of figuring out how to fix conflict. Currently, I was trying to decide whether or not to ask the people that you represent to join in the hunt for Hamas but now I think that request would be offensive. For me though, I would turn my leaders over to the people martyring me non-consensually.”

Nora responded, “Your right. You would have to walk a mile in our shoes which is something I hope that you will never have to do. I don’t really have anything else for today’s conversation and if you don’t, I will see you in a couple of days.”

The President just said, “See you in a couple of days.”

Conversation 11

When Nora sat down the President looked crest fallen.

“Jon, what happened?”

“Well, I took your advice and asked Jordan my question.”

Nora was fascinated that he actually did it. “What did they say?”

The President responded, “They told me that Hamas would offer an official apology and a promise never to do another violent act again immediately after Israel offered an apology for their generations of oppression and a promise of never oppressing the Palestinians again.”

Nora said, “Dammit.”

The President looked hopeful. “You don’t like that response.”

Nora grinned, “I am just mad that I didn’t give that answer. What did you do?”

The President replied, “What choice did I have? I went to Israel and asked them for the apology.”

When Nora had finally stopped laughing, he asked, “What did they say?”

The President further grimaced, “I am too much of a gentleman to repeat the response.”

Nora finally looked at the President and said, “You are running around like a bull in a China shop. I know you are trying to help but I am starting to lose sight of your approach. What exactly are you really trying to do with your line of questioning?”

“Well, Nora, what has to happen is that we need to figure out a way to close this chapter of the book that Israel and Palestine are writing which is a horror story and start a new chapter that is a story of redemption. I think that is common knowledge but I currently don’t know what options are available to do that. These questions I am asking are mostly motivated by me trying to identify the lay of the land and what is and isn’t possible. If I can do that then I might be able to find a way to close this chapter. Unfortunately, to truly understand what is possible I have to ask what may seem like stupid questions. If both sides had agreed to apologize then I would have known that the current chapter that I want to end had finally run its course. You never truly know an answer until you ask the question. Imagine if the unexpected had happened and Israel had agreed to the two apologies. Even being aware that the question was destined for a less than polite response, the opposite response would have transitioned the whole thing into a new chapter which is ultimately what I need to do.”

Nora replied. “I wish it were that easy but Israel kills our little children without an ounce of regret or remorse. Do you really think they feel any remorse over oppressing us. They are rabid and even though I know you are determined not to resort to violence, it is the only way to save us in my opinion. Although, I think it is unrealistic to not resort to violence in this. In our conversation, I dedicate my time to nonviolent approaches because having other approaches that were offered means in the end that I can at least say I tried but in all honesty, I think violence is the only approach that Israel will respect and respond to. I will continue trying to help along the process of closing this horror chapter and writing your redemption chapter by dedicating some serious thought to an approach that is a little less than your bull in a China shop approach. If I come up with something then I will propose it in the next conversation. Is that fair to you?”

The President wanted to argue but, in many ways, he agreed with the assessment. “I will see you in a few days.”

Conversation 12

Jon was quite chipper when he sat down for the conversation and Nora was pleased to see it.

“Hey Jon, you seem chipper today. You were so deflated last time that I wasn’t sure that you weren’t going to give up.”

Jon smiled, “I think people who give up after being knocked down fail at doing anything hard in their lives. Instead, my failure gave me a second wind. While I haven’t come up with anything to add to our peace treaty, I do have a suggestion for you that I think will help you as a leader of the Palestinian community in the United States.”

“What have you got Jon?”

“Well, Hitler’s battle cry was “kill all the Jews”. This battle cry led to great loss for all of humanity from artists, doctors, farmers, architects and lawyers although I am not sure anyone is that mad about the last one. America is always acutely aware of this loss and anything that seems at all similar to this cry generates resistance amongst most of the United States. I think a different battle cry in the United States from the Palestinians would generate a great deal more favor. My suggestion to you as a Palestinian leader is that you use the battle cry no taxation without representation.”

Nora grinned at the sheer ridiculousness. “There is no way that Israel will give us representation. I am unsure as to what that battle cry will really give us as an advantage.”

“Nora, my thought process is as follows. For people not to support you in this endeavor then they have to admit that they are unpatriotic. This kind of forces people to support you and your protests. More importantly, it may result in Israel making a formal declaration that you will never have representation. When approaching the global community, I can think of no better argument for a two state solution then that. Finally, when they refuse representation then you can suggest that you don’t really want representation as you guys already have a government that you participate in but instead you really want a promise of no taxation which has all sorts of advantages.”

Nora actually liked where this was going. “What are the advantages of no taxation as you see it?”

“Nora, this makes our theme parks far more profitable and easier to garner investment in. You will be able to pay off your loans faster and then start redirecting the money into schools and infrastructure projects which benefits your people greatly and has the end result of achieving our goal of an Islamic version of Germany and Japan much faster. It will be great for you and it is just a slight change in approach. Granted securing a promise of no taxation is terribly unlikely, what the approach exposes is just how unfair your opponent really is to all of the United States. I know I don’t have to explain the advantage that that will have, considering that you guys are struggling to get the United States on your side. I don’t really have anything else for today, do you?”

Nora responded, “Not really. My theme parks and my other conversation are really taking up most of my time but whether I take your suggestion or not, ideas like this are valuable to consider. I hope to continue the conversation. Currently, I am trying to figure out what I can do that is entertaining in the desert. Any help with that in your next conversation would help the theme park plan. See in a few days.”

Conversation 13

Nora sat down and immediately started talking.

“Jon, we have a really simple way that Israel can thwart this. What if they just refuse to let tourists into their country. Nothing we can do can prevent that.”

Jon smiled, “Ah, you want to hear my sales pitch to the Israeli government. My sales pitch is part of the vision and I will customize it for you and I. Are you ready?”

Nora smiled, “I can’t wait to hear this if for nothing else then entertainment.”

Jon started, “Sit back because this will take a few minutes. Using you and I as an example, here is why I can go on a suicide run and you can’t. You have a huge family that you need to provide for and protect while I have nothing to protect.”

“The current Israeli actions just proved that they can take everything away from the Palestinians in a heartbeat. The next step in pacifying Israel’s unhappy population is to provide the Palestinians something to protect. The more valuable the item then the more likely that the Palestinians will bend over backwards to protect it.”

“When a rogue suicide bomber puts at risk the Palestinian’s hard work, ability to be representatives to the world of their culture and religious beliefs, and the quality of life of their family and future generations then they will be angry instead of happy as they are now when events like this occur. This will be especially true with all of us putting forth every effort to give nonviolent access to being heard to as many as we can.”

“This approach that we are engaging in will promote pacification, increase tax revenue and provide Israel with a recourse if absolutely necessary to harm the Palestinian people through nonviolent acts like ceasing their money or closing down tourism access. Instead of having to resort to violence to prove their points, they will be able to prove their points through less permanent and painful measures.”

“What do you think Nora?”

Nora immediately replied, "I need time to unpack all of that. It might be good or it may be a flawed. The bootheel remains but things get significantly better for my people. I am conflicted."

Jon said, "I can understand that but I would like to float an idea for your Jewish counterpart and yourself. I suggest you offer them the following deal. You will do everything in your power to thwart all violence against any Jewish Israeli citizen and decry the violence if a rogue gets through in exchange for their agreement to prevent anyone in the world from preventing the Palestinians from their attempts to increase their quality of life for themselves and future generations through pacifistic hard work. What do you think of that deal?"

Nora felt blindsided. "This is far too much to unpack. Let's break and we can discuss next time."