

Positive International Intervention in Palestine

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Recently, proposals have intensified calling for international intervention in Palestine, especially after the unfortunate renewed wave of clashes between Fateh and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, which ended with decisive military control by Hamas on Gaza, as this threatens to separate the two wings of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, thereby endangering the entire national project.

A few of the factors that have contributed to reaching the current situation are: the obstruction of any political horizon for the peace process, the American position towards the Palestinian cause, and the existence of several decision-making centers threatening to confiscate the independence of the Palestinian decision, where the Palestinian cause became an issue of humanitarian relief rather than a political cause. The political content of the cause was also overlooked in favor of contents of combating terrorism and searching for stability in the region. Moreover, there is a crisis in leadership at a time when people are living a situation of wandering amid the political vacuum.

All that placed the Palestinian cause before several options which can be summarized as follows:

- 1. Dissolving the Authority-**This option assumes that as soon as the Authority is dissolved, the Israeli occupation will re-assume its responsibilities according to international norms and conventions. But this proposal ignores the fact that Israel refuses to bear the expenses of occupation. This option would require the United Nations to shoulder the responsibility of enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination. It also requires a Security Council resolution on the formation of a transitional administration of the United Nations for a limited period ranging between two to three years to establish a Palestinian state.
- 2. Calling for a democratic state-** meaning a binational state, but the fact that the occupation gives demography the utmost importance, the occupation will evolve -in the best cases- to an Apartheid State as was the case in South Africa.

3. **Returning to the Jordanian option**-This option involves a lot of illusions, as it considers the problem to be centered on representation in the negotiations with Israel, forgetting that the Israeli occupation aims at blocking the Palestinian partner .
4. **Separating Gaza from the West Bank**-This approach calls for fragmenting what is left of the national project unity and calls for international sponsorship within a security context primarily aimed at the destruction of the entire Palestinian national project, which could delay the establishment of a unified Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
5. **Foreign intervention**-This is an option for discussion in order to resolve the current crisis.
6. **Maintaining the status quo**-This is a more dangerous option on the national cause since it allows the erosion of its national standards in favor of demands. This situation will lead to the confiscation of the Palestinian independent national decision and makes others decide the fate of the people, land and homeland.

Declaring a state of emergency

By declaring a state of emergency on June 14, 2007, President Abbas asserted his legitimacy and the intention to take back the initiative, noting that the state of emergency allows him to put all security services under the command of a centralized authority under his control. The state of emergency allows the President to request assistance from Egypt to provide him with all means to control the security situation in the Strip. It also permits him to centralize various services. Under the state of emergency, it is forbidden for any citizen, other than members of security apparatuses, to carry arms.

The questions that arise now revolve around the form of international intervention that the Palestinian people want. Do the current proposals conform to the Palestinian demands, especially with regard to providing protection in light of the current balances of power? Will the dispatch of international troops halt the deterioration and pave the way for launching a genuine peace process, especially that Israel has succeeded in eliminating it and established facts on the ground? Before answering these questions, one must review the historical experiences of successful international intervention and then address the proposals of international intervention in Palestine:

- **Namibia Model**

In the year 1988, UN Security Council Resolution No. 435 (1978) was implemented. The resolution called for the replacement of occupying South African troops with international troops, allowing the return of refugees and exiles and organizing a referendum on self-determination, after which there were presidential elections and the declaration of independence after 75 years

of occupation of this country rich in uranium, gold, and copper, within 30 months.

- **East Timor Model**

After independence from Portuguese colonialism in 1975, East Timor was subject to the occupation of Indonesian troops with American support, but after the collapse of Soeharto regime in the 1990s following the economic crisis in South-East Asia, the floodgates of self-determination for the people of East Timor were opened. The United Nations organized a popular referendum in 1999, which resulted in the independence of the country that then organized general elections in 2001 and declared independence on May 20, 2003. The models of East Timor and Namibia are alike in the way that the occupying power had agreed to end its occupation of those areas.

International intervention in Palestine

The deployment of international forces on the border between Egypt and Gaza Strip.

Among the patterns of international intervention subordinate to an American/Israeli veto is what Israel has been recently studying which is the deployment of international forces on the border between Egypt and Gaza Strip. The troops' mission would be confined to stopping the smuggling of arms into the Strip, since Israel fears the smuggle of surface-air missiles and explosives, and infiltration of activists trained by Iran, according to a spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry Mark Regev¹. Note that since the signing of the Oslo Convention until now, Israel has refused any international intervention in the peace process. Javier Solana, European Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, did not rule out dispatching an international peacekeeping force to the Gaza Strip.

Assignment of responsibility for the Gaza Strip to the Arab League

Meretz Members of Knesset Avshalom Vilan and Zahava Gal-On presented a proposal that calls the Arab League to take responsibility for the Gaza Strip as part of a "package-deal" which would begin with negotiations between Arab and Israeli representatives on the Arab Peace Initiative with the introduction of multinational forces, in cooperation with the European Union. The next stage will include the exchange of the kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit for Palestinian prisoners. Then a mutual ceasefire will be declared and the Quartet will propose a multi-national force deployment in front of the UN Security Council. The multi-national force will be deployed for two to five years, with the agreement of both the Palestinians and Israel. The force would have security and economic roles.

¹ A Statement to France Press published in Al-Ayyam newspaper on 21/5/2007

According to the proposal, the multi-national force would be deployed along the Gaza-Egyptian border to prevent smuggling from Sinai, and along the border with Israel to prevent Qassam rocket attacks. Its economic role would be in rebuilding the infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, assisting the population, rehabilitating Palestinian Authority institutions, and preventing the collapse of social services.

American trusteeship on the occupied Palestinian territories

Martin Indyk proposed placing the Palestinian territories under the trusteeship of the United States by mandate from the United Nations until a final status agreement is reached. This came in an article published in the Journal of Foreign Affairs in June, only two months after the announcement of the Road Map in 2003. Indyk wanted to develop implementation mechanisms not available in the Road Map, which encountered Sharon's 14 reservations.

Indyk designates a period of three years to end the final status negotiations. He also calls for the formation of a custodianship commission to assess the commitment of the Palestinians towards a settlement, and that the Legislative Council should play an advisory role to that body. Indyk believes that his plan needs international forces of ten thousand troops led by the United States and includes British, Australian, and Canadian military units.

International custody on the occupied Palestinian territories

In October 2003, the European Parliament called on the international community to explore the possibility of developing the Palestinian territories under international guardianship in the event that the implementation of the Road Map failed. The European parliament adopted-in its session on October 23, 2003 in Strasbourg- a decision that also provides for sending "a separation and monitoring force" that would be under the authority of the Quartet.

Recommendations

In light of the differences between the models mentioned above and the Palestinian situation in which Israel refuses to end its occupation, since it does not recognize that the Palestinian territories are occupied territories, but rather as a disputed territory, the revival of a political initiative and emphasis on the roof of international legitimacy as a reference to ending occupation should be stressed. However, this requires a national consensus, particularly regarding the limits of the State and form of resistance consistent with international law, in addition to issues of internal security. There is also a need to restore respect for the legislative, executive and judicial authorities.

Those developments encounter the risks of having the international community impose a Security Council resolution –for security purposes- on the Palestinian people and may not be compatible with the Egyptian national security. This might result in imposing unwelcome international intervention by force, which will entail a national

tragedy. It is preferred not to ask for international trusteeship, because this demand requires dissolving the Palestinian Authority first and ending Israeli control over the Palestinian occupied territories.

It can be said that the Palestinians are currently living in a state of weakness that does not qualify them to impose their conditions on the foreign states. For this, they will have to be prepared for the various possibilities of international intervention, especially after the failure of all the Palestinian internal efforts to get out of the current crisis, which can not be separated from what is happening regionally and internationally. Any form of intervention that would detract from the Palestinian national project must be rejected, despite acknowledging that the national project will not be accomplished sometime soon. After what happened in Gaza, Hamas had lost legitimacy and sent the invitation for negative international intervention, thus attacking the national project. Any intervention limited only to Gaza Strip without the West Bank that does not include providing protection for the Palestinian people and securing their rights must also be rejected. There is a need for action to restore the concept of international intervention to the Palestinian understanding which guarantees protection and legitimacy of the Palestinian Arab people.