

Palestine-Israel Conflict and Israeli Strategies

Prof. Dr. Oya Akgönerç Muğisuddin*

Abstract

Since its establishment in 1948, Israel has expanded its territory by waging aggressive wars beyond the UN approved limits. The West Bank has been the main area of Israeli expansion, in addition to complete occupation of Syria's Golan Heights and Sinai now evacuated by Israel under a peace accord. Israel has been performing guard duty for Western interests in the Middle East. The U.K. France, the United States, and other European States ignore Israel's territorial expansions and violation of human rights in lieu of protection of Western interests by Israel. Often Israel has exposed Arab military weaknesses by waging war on its neighbours. Dynastic, ideological, and economic diversities among Arab States have been sources of disunity of Arabs States. The Gaza Strip has been a singular target of Israel's military campaign because it is governed by a strong popular national group and sits on valuable natural gas stocks. Europe wants to control the energy sources, energy routes and international trade networks in the Middle East. This is the gate to Eurasia. This is the main target of all Middle East policies in the 21st century as being practiced by Western powers and their local henchmen. Within this context, the newly discovered natural gas fields in and around Gaza provides a main reason for Israel's insistence not to relinquish control of the Strip and if possible clear the inhabitants of the region to have full control of the drilling operation.

Keywords:

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* Prof. Dr. Oya Akgönerç Muğisuddin is Head of Political Science & International Relations Department, Ufuk University, Ankara, Turkey

From its inception to its aggressively illegal growth, Israel has used military force to expel local inhabitants from the Palestinian and other Arab territories. This process has been roundly condemned by the United Nations and several other legitimate international agencies. Several major battles and international wars have been fought between Jewish immigrants from Europe and local Arab inhabitants who from immemorial time lived and worked on this land. After the demise of the Ottoman Empire, this region has not seen a prolonged or even a brief period of peace and tranquillity. Lack of unity among Arabs fostered military defeats. Dynastic, ideological and tribal disunities further aggravated conditions that required collective action against aggressive new arrivals. Rival forces were equipped with left over World War II (WWII) and even World War I (WWI) vintage weapons. Monarchical Arab regimes were completely unprepared to face a Western-backed aggressive regime. In the forthcoming period in the Arab States numerous and drastic political changes took place that shifted political power to radical groups destroying legitimacy of traditional elite groups.

While Arab disunity continued along with attempts to seek unity by certain groups, Israel increased its military strength by its lobbying effort in the United States and in Europe. USA remained more or less objective until the end of Eisenhower presidency while formulating Middle East policy. The Kennedy era ushered in a significant change in US Middle East policy. Since the Kennedy period, US Middle East policy has been overwhelmingly pro-Israel. Since then every US President has stated that US would keep Israeli forces stronger than all Middle East forces. As a result of this declared policy, no wonder that Israel's aggressive territorial expansion has remained non-stop.

Until 1973, Arabs have been losing territory to Israel. In the 1967 war, Syria lost to Israel the Golan Height, a water rich and productive piece of real estate. As a result of the same war, Egypt lost the Sinai Peninsula from where oil and natural gas were extracted for the duration of occupation.

In the meantime, Jordan abandoned its sovereign control over the West Bank, including Jerusalem which was quickly occupied by Israel military forces.

Although Arabs and Israelis steadfastly increased their respective military strength, the gap between the two forces did not narrow sufficiently. USA was determined to keep Israeli strength superior to the combined strength of all Middle East states. This policy did not undermine Arab determination to try to recapture lost territories and its honour and pride.

Determination and willingness to make supreme sacrifices, Palestinians and other Arab volunteers increased their knowledge and acquisition of new weapons to fight the Israeli aggressive designs. This degree of determination bore fruit in the form of technical success developing more effective weapons. From initial stage, when Palestinians did not have any better weapon than the War-I vintage 303 bore rifle, to the point where a homemade missile could be put together and successfully launched in the direction of Jewish settlements would be considered great technical achievement.

Framework of Analysis

Considering the above events, it may be stated that there are both conflicting and converging factors in Israel/Palestinian land today, each aiming for superiority or success. To further analyse the conflict of interest, one can discuss the conflicting factors as follows:

One main factor is the founding logic and reason for the State of Israel. Israel has been established as the homeland for the Jews from all over the World, particularly Europe, United States of America, Asia and Africa. It continues to be so by the support and unyielding insistence of the World Zionist organization.

The second and equally strong factor is the political and economic interests of the Western countries and their desire to have a permanent toehold in the Arab lands to continue their influence and involvement in the region.

The third factor is disunity and disharmony among the Arab states and the power struggle among them. Monarchical Arab regimes were completely unprepared to face a Western-backed aggressive regime. In the forthcoming period in the Arab States numerous and drastic political

changes took place that shifted political power to radical groups destroying legitimacy of traditional elite groups.

In recent years, to complicate the matter further, an important factor was added to the list of reasons for the unending struggle. This was the discovery of vast natural gas fields in Israel especially in Gaza that was inhabited by the Palestinian Arabs. It is the section that was assigned to the Arabs in the two states plan for this land in 1948 decision of the United Nations giving birth to Israel.

All these factors definitely complicate the peace efforts, peace process, stability of the area and the viable existence of the Palestinians in Palestine. Israel's approach and political strategy can be understood within the paradigm of "might makes it right."

The following analysis of the strategies used in the region, coupled with the answers of the most frequent inquiries would provide the necessary parameters to draw realistic conclusions to the reel politics of the issue.

Recent Strategies Used in the Region: Terror and Destruction as a Tool of Domination in Gaza

Beginning in 1948, Israel at various times and post-war periods occupied nearly 78% of the Palestinian lands, leaving only 22% to the original inhabitants and owners of the land. Now, even the land which is still in possession of the Palestinians is open to dispute by the Israeli government under the mounting pressure of the new Jewish settlers from all over the World. As for the members of the Israeli Knesset, many believe that Israel should own and control the entire Palestine and make it a wholly "Jewish land". All their neighbours and the World should accept this land as a "Jewish land". Whereas, the Palestinians believe their lands had been taken away from them unlawfully and opened for the settlement of the Jews with the help of the ex-colonial powers such as England and France during the first half of the 20th century. Later, after WWII, main support and protection for the new Jewish State began to come from the United States of America (USA) and Europe.

In the last clash, Israel started bombing the Gaza-strip on July 7, 2014. The clashes between Gaza forces and the Israeli military came to

an end on the August 4 for a cease-fire that lasted hardly for 72-hours. The clashes re-started few hours before the end of the cease- fire period was over. Israel and Palestinian groups agreed, in last week of August, 2014, for an open-ended ceasefire in Gaza (Palestinian joy, n.d.). But Gaza is still in Israeli blockade that was started in 2006 (Presse, 2015).

During 2014 operation, Israel used Iron –Dome Shield to avert the missiles fired from Gaza strip. Most of these were home-based missiles and ineffective according to accounts provided by military observers. Although, it was reported in start that more than 500 such missiles were launched from Gaza, their actual effect and damage stayed at minimal level causing 76 casualties and several wounded Israelis during the entire confrontation between the two sides. Again, according to military analysis in Israel, the target ranges of the missiles fired from Gaza became longer, reaching 40 Km and in some cases to 90 Km, instead of 25 Km of the earlier range.

Israeli government retaliated to these missile strikes by conducting a full scale military operation known as “Operation, Protective Edge” on the Gaza strip, which lasted about seven weeks. The Israeli military offensive both by air and land forces caused 2,142 deaths in Gaza and over 10 thousand civilians wounded and maimed for life. About 40% of the dead were Palestinian children under 12 years of age. Each side had certain targets and acceptable conditions for a cease-fire of any kind.

The Palestinians wanted Israel to lift the embargo on Gaza strip and pull out of Gaza as occupiers. Leaving them to administer their own affairs and try to improve their living conditions. To be able to do these affairs, Gazans want to have a port open for their use in Gaza to be able to trade and bring in food, health and construction material. There was a port and a small airport earlier which were both closed once Israelis occupied the land.

On the other hand, Israel wanted all tunnels in Gaza to be destroyed, all weapons to be cleared or captured so that the Israeli citizens would feel “safe” for a prolonged period of time. In prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s words on August 4, 2014: “...this operation will only end when quiet and security is established for the citizens of Israel for a prolonged period. Israel’s aim is to wipe out Hamas...” (Noorani, 2014).

Right now, Israel tries to control the remaining area of the Palestinian land whereas the Palestinians living on Gaza strip and the West Bank try to maintain some sort of independence on these last pieces of land left to them. They try to form some sort of governance of their own on their lands.

The total size of Gaza strip is 141 square miles with 1.8 million Palestinians living on it (Gaza Strip, n.d.; Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, n.d.). Out of this population, over 250,000 of them are living in tent shelters under very difficult conditions.

Israel has a land mass of 8,019 square miles (20,770 square Kilometre) (Geography of Israel, n.d.), and its population has reached 8,180,000 in 2014 according to their own census records. Israel continuously receives Jewish immigration from all over the World. It has received 16,600 new immigrants during the year 2013. Between January and March 2015, it received 6,499 Jews arriving mostly from Europe (Zonszein, 2015). This places considerable pressure on the Israeli government to provide new settlements for them. The only available land seems to be the part where the Palestinians live and that area had been shrinking ever since 1947.

The Gaza and West Bank strips make up only 22% of the land mass of Palestine. Yet with each wave of new Jewish immigrants from different parts of the World, their portions seem to be reduced to provide more space for the incoming Jews¹.

Additionally, years of Israeli occupation, humiliation and suffering inflicted on the Palestinians and constant fear of losing more land to the occupier prepare the grounds of unrest and anxiety among the Arabs who are yearning for more freedom and better conditions of life.

The Strategy used by Israel in Gaza conflict was implementation of brutal and inhuman conflict resolution methods. The aim seemed to eliminate one side completely rather than to reach to an agreeable solution between the two.

¹ Wikipedia: Israeli geography and population.

The devastation created in Gaza by the Operation Protective Edge in 2014 was worse than the Israeli operation five years earlier, “Operation Cast Lead”. That operation had lasted 22 days from December 27, 2008 to Jan 18, 2009. The strategy used by Israel should be clearly understood. First of all, it’s apparent that Israel has quickly learned from the debacle of 2006 invasion of Lebanon, where it faced not only military but political and diplomatic disaster as well.

Israel launched the subsequent operations “Operation Cast Lead”- on December 2008, and “Operation Pillar of Defense” on November 2012. Before starting the “Operation Protective Edge” on 7th of July 2014, Israel made all its soft power preparations. Israel, seemingly took all the possible precautions for political, economic and psychological war damages and fall outs. That is why it seems so on caring about any criticism and suggestions from outside. They do not seem to hesitate in doing all the possible damage in Gaza because they have unleashed their propaganda and PR machines as soon as the military operation started.

Israeli Diplomatic Strategies and the World Public Opinion

After 2006 war with Lebanon, Israel established a “National Information Directorate” tasked to coordinate and cooperate among different government agencies (Shabi, 2009). The main objective of this directorate was to synchronize the domestic and international information flow. When the operation was started, diplomats, lobbyists, bloggers and other groups were unleashed to hammer home a handful of carefully crafted core messages in order to ensure that Israel is portrayed as the victim. The directorate was successful to a much extent as it can be seen from the coverage of mainstream Western media like CNN, BBC, CNBC etc. (Zia, 2014)

On the diplomatic front; it’s a known fact that Israel and America are working very closely to ensure continuous flow of financial and military aid to Israel. They meticulously prepared and positioned the UN to serve their interest. The American veto in the UN Security Council is like an “iron dome” for Israel under any criticism or demand to correct its policy. Protection of Israel’s interests is at the heart of the Middle East policies of Washington².

To understand the scale of devastation and injustice in Gaza and against the people of Gaza, one has to only listen to Raji Sourani's description of the developments. He is the director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights based in Gaza. His analysis and list of facts are solid parameters to conclude how the outcome was to affect the future in Israel and Gaza. Mr Sourani (2014) describes the situation as follows:

The horrors of the offensive remain indelibly in the minds of all Gazans...at the end of the offensive 1,400 Palestinians were dead; 82 percent of them - the overwhelming majority - were innocent civilians. In January 2009, Gaza looked like the scene of a natural disaster. ... Who can forget the sight of White phosphorous raining down over Gaza City, and the suffering and death it caused to our families? Who can forget the indiscriminate artillery bombardment, the drone attacks that killed only civilians and innocent children, or the bulldozers and explosive charges that left the homes in the Gaza Strip in ruins? We believed that justice would be done for the innocent civilians, and those responsible would be held to account.

Human Rights Watch in its report (*White Flag Deaths*, 2009) stated about killings of civilians during Israel's major military operations in Gaza in December 2008 and January 2009:

All available evidence indicates that Israeli forces had control of the areas in question, no fighting was taking place there at the time, and Palestinian fighters were not hiding among the civilians who were shot. Whether waving a white flag or not, these people were civilians not taking an active part in hostilities, and therefore should not have been attacked, according to international humanitarian law (the laws of war).... In each of these incidents, the evidence strongly indicates that, at the least, Israeli soldiers failed to take feasible precautions to distinguish between civilians and combatants before carrying out the attack. At worst, the soldiers deliberately fired on persons known to be civilians.

² Amb (R) Khalid Mehmood, Chairman ISSI, Pakistan

Horowitz, Ratner & Weiss argue in “The Goldstone Report: The Legacy of the Landmark Investigation of the Gaza Conflict” (2011), “The use of white phosphorus was thus one example of “a deliberate policy of dis-proportionate aimed not at the enemy but at the ‘supporting infrastructure’” – which, in practice, the report concludes meant the civilian population.”. In 2009 the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) submitted 490 criminal complaints on behalf of 1,046 victims, to the Israeli Military Advocate General (MAG) and received only 21 responses out of which 19 were interlocutory, indicating that a complaint had been received and that PCHR would be informed of the result. After that, no more information has been received (Factsheet, 2011). Mr Sourani (2014) argues about injustice and response from world as:

Not even civil compensation claims have had any chance of success. The hindrances imposed on victims from Gaza seeking compensation before Israeli courts include prohibitive court guarantees, a requirement that power of attorney forms be signed by an Israeli diplomat (impossible given the Israeli-imposed closure of the Gaza Strip), and Amendment No 8 which exempts Israel from any liability arising during a "combat action" This injustice is no longer acceptable and demands international intervention. If international law is to be effective, it must be enforced through the appropriate bodies, at the UN level and through the International Criminal Court. The world, however, has turned its back on the civilians of Gaza and on ‘justice’.

Reflection of Prejudices and Hidden Fears of the Outsiders

Presentation of most frequently asked questions on the most recent conflict between the Palestinians and Israel would help to show the complexity of the issue and the perceptions of the various groups:

Most frequently asked questions

1-What is the attitude of the Western World and the Arab World towards the Palestinian tragedy and especially the situation in Gaza?

The attitude of many Western and Arab countries on the most recent events was not too different than their previous attitudes earlier on. The

indifference shown by these Western and Arab countries to the violation of human rights and breaching the international law in Palestine, especially in the Gaza strip was totally appalling, and most unbelievable.

2- What is the attitude of the Israelis toward the immense destruction and human suffrage in Gaza, time and over again?

Not much has changed in the attitude of the Israelis towards the sufferings of the people of Gaza and their helplessness in the face of sure death coming to them from the attacks of the Israeli military forces. Israeli supporters all over the World displayed a crude contempt for the dead and the dying for them to be caught in such a situation. Two examples of the Israeli attitude during the 2014 operation are:

- Israeli member of the Knesset, Ayelet Shaked, said it is not enough to kill the children alone, the women and unborn babies should also be targeted. Her comments drew very strong reactions (August 12, 2014).
- Israeli Moshe Feiglin, deputy speaker of the Knesset, expressed his anger by posting some angry suggestions on his face book for a few days, “concentrate, exterminate...we need to concentrate them in the camps and exterminate”-(submitted by Ali Abunimak, August 3, 2014).

3- What is the attitude of the Israeli supporters in the Gaza conflict: A small region and its people fighting for their land and their independence and state of Israel who has been implementing a total embargo on the region turning it to a huge, open prison?

Supporters for the Israeli military operations and Israeli political implementations were equally unmoved on the face of all the human suffering and use of uneven force. On the contrary they pledged further and continuing support for Israel in the coming days. Regardless, all the rhetoric and explanations to justify “Operation Protective Edge”, and the actions of the Israeli military, the reality is concealed in the words of the Israeli prime minister.

4- What really is the motive behind these continuous conflicts and clashes between the people of Gaza and the government of Israel?

The answer is in one word, Control. Control over everything.

Three days after the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu launched the war in Gaza on July 7, 2014, he held a press conference in Tel Aviv during which he said, in Hebrew, according to the Times of Israel newspaper, “I think the Israeli people understand now what I always say: that there cannot be a situation, under any agreement, in which we relinquish security control of the territory West of the River Jordan.”

So, what is going on in Palestine today is not really about Hamas or any other event. It is not about the rockets or about “human shields” or terrorism or tunnels. It is about Israel’s permanent control over ‘Palestinian land and Palestinian lives’. What Netanyahu really says is this control and how it will be achieved. It is about an unswerving, decades-long Israeli policy of denying Palestine self-determination, freedom, and sovereignty (Khalidi, 2014). As Khalidi mentions:

As Netanyahu’s own words show, however, Israel will accept nothing short of the acquiescence of Palestinians to their own subordination. It will accept only a Palestinian “state” that is stripped of all the attributes of a real state: control over security, borders, airspace, maritime limits, continuity, and, therefore, sovereignty.

Netanyahu in his own words said that all Israel did was to find and destroy the tunnels and stop the terrorism. As for all the destruction in Gaza and loss of human life, it was Hamas and the people of Gaza who were responsible for the misery fell upon them. As can be seen from these comments, not much has changed in the attitude and the position of the Israelis from the “Operation Cast Lead” to “Operation Protective Edge”. Actually, nothing much changed since 1947.

5- Why so much hatred toward Gaza and its people?

Rashid Khalidi in his article, titled, “Collective Punishment in Gaza” (2014) emphasizes the following ideas:

What Israel is doing in Gaza now is collective punishment. It is punishment for Gaza’s refusal to be a docile ghetto. It is punishment for the gall of Palestinians in unifying, and of Hamas and other

factions in responding to Israel's siege and its provocations with resistance, armed or otherwise, after Israel repeatedly reacted to unarmed protest with crushing force. Despite years of ceasefires and truces, the siege of Gaza has never been lifted.

Punishing Palestinians for their existence continues since long. Since its creation, it has been policy of Israel and at that moment there was no Hamas or its rockets at that time. At start, in 1948, hundreds of thousands of innocent people were forcefully displaced by Israel. It is interesting to note that at that time, the so called Jewish-majority state was being created on the area that was 65% inhabited by Arabs. In 1967, it displaced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians again, occupying territory that it still largely controls, forty-seven years later (Khalidi, 2014).

Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 in order to expel the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). During the invasion, around seventeen thousand people were killed, mostly civilians bore the burden. Since the late 1980s, when Palestinians under occupation were resisting only by throwing stones and staging strikes, Israel arrested tens of thousands of Palestinians to crush the freedom struggle. It is also important to note that around eight hundred thousand people have spent time in Israeli prisons since 1967. Israeli atrocities have been reported by human rights organizations (Khalidi, 2014; Palestinian Prisoners, n.d.). As Khalidi argues:

During the second intifada, which began in 2000, Israel reinvaded the West Bank (it had never fully left)... And yet, in America, the discussion ignores this crucial, constantly oppressive context, and is instead too often limited to Israeli "self-defense" and the Palestinians' supposed responsibility for their own suffering.

In the past seven or more years, Israel has besieged, tormented, and regularly attacked the Gaza Strip. The pretexts change: they elected Hamas; they refused to be docile; they refused to recognize Israel; they fired rockets; they built tunnels to circumvent the siege; and on and on. But each pretext is a red herring, because the truth of ghettos—what happens when you imprison 1.8 million people in a hundred and forty square miles, about a third of the area of New

York City, with no control of borders, almost no access to the sea for fishermen (three out of the twenty Kilometres allowed by the Oslo accords), no real way in or out, and with drones buzzing overhead night and day—is that, eventually, the ghetto will fight back.” (Khalidi, 2014)

The Attitude of the Arab States and the Outside World

When there is so much destruction and loss of life in an Arab land, the most common thought is how and when the neighbouring Arab countries are going to help and stop the carnage. Yet, with so much tragedy going on in Gaza, on 146 square miles land and 1.8 million population, about half of them are children and old people- no Arab country really took a strong stand and asked to help stop the conflict in any way. The Arab organizations were planning to convene and do something about the situation, but it never materialized properly. Egypt, closest and politically most important country did nothing. Still worst, did something to hurt the besieged Gaza by destroying their life-line tunnels to Refah area during the Israeli operation. These tunnels were where the Gazan people received food, medicine, water and other crucial items to survive from Egypt and other counties. The El-Sisi government of Egypt had flooded these tunnels under the pressure of Israel.

Other rich Arab countries were quite, inactive and withdrawn at the face of the human drama unfolding in Gaza strip and just watched the destruction of Gaza into a pile of rubble.

It looks like sectarian preferences were at work in the formation of the attitude rather than justice and humanitarian thoughts. Gaza resistance was led by Hamas a Sunni organization which was opposed by some forces. This is a most unfortunate development which is dragging the entire Middle East into sectarian wars and conflicts. The devastating effects of such religious wars had been witnessed in Europe during Middle Ages.

The European attitude is even more interesting. From all the political manoeuvring in the West, it is becoming more and more apparent that many states have not forgotten their colonial pasts. Right now the international political trends are not conducive to direct military

assaults or invasions as it was the case in the 19th century. Yet, there are new methods and ways utilized in the 21st century. This is achieved basically through two methods:

- Through a local state who can act as an agent of the imperialist powers. By doing so, it can benefit immensely politically and economically. –Israel fits these conditions perfectly.
- Through local groups within the country which can be aided through propaganda, financial help and military help. These groups can create enough instability to shake up the country and make it weak enough to fall under foreign influence, easily. Since the beginning of the so called “Arab Spring,” situations look more and more like the results of the second implementation.
- Western countries in Europe mostly hide behind the concept of “self-defence” and “security” while supporting and aiding Israel in every way. Only a handful of intellectuals, activists and people with conscious raised their voices to protest the disproportionate use of force by Israel in Gaza.

One such person was a U.K. minister who resigned her post in protest of the attitude of her government in favour of Israel who was killing hundreds of people indiscriminately. The First Muslim to sit in the British cabinet resigned on the 5th of August, 2014 over the Cameron government’s “morally indefensible” policy in Gaza. Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, a British Cabinet Minister for faith and communities resigned accusing that British government of not responding strongly enough over a conflict that has killed at least 2,100 Palestinians, thousands of injured and 73 people on the Israeli side, most of them soldiers (Fidler, 2015). In addition to the 500,000 people who have been displaced in Gaza due to Israeli operation in 2014, more than 20,000 Palestinian homes, 148 schools and 15 hospitals and 45 primary health-care centres have been destroyed or severely damaged (Occupied Palestinian Territory, n.d.). Sayeeda Warsi condemned Israel for the bombing of UN schools and hospitals in Gaza where the people did not even have time to evacuate their homes. Even more, she did not approve the British government’s docile approach to such a blatant violation of human rights (UK minister Warsi quits, 2014).

Western attitude of quiet and tacit approval of Israel is more of an indication of their own satisfaction:

- They rather have the Jews of their own country, go and settle in Israel rather than stay in Europe. This is a very old and historical attitude of certain groups of European that found its worst application by Nazi Germany during WWII.
- European countries still entertain colonial desires in the Middle East and wish to be the “controlling power” on the energy sources. What we see is the underhanded methods of achieving the same results through indirect methods.

Economic reality and profit motives behind disputed areas

- Europe wants to control the energy sources, energy routes and international trade networks in the Middle East. This is the gate to Eurasia. This is the main target of all Middle East policies in the 21st century as being practiced by Western powers and their local henchmen.
- Within this context, the newly discovered natural gas fields in and around Gaza provides a main reason for Israel’s insistence not to relinquish control of the Strip and if possible clear the inhabitants of the region to have full control of the drilling operation. To provide further information on the issue, the following information should be analysed carefully:

According to Dr. Gary Luft (2009) – an advisor to the US Energy Security Council who commented in the *Journal of Energy Security*:

with the depletion of Israel’s domestic gas supplies accelerating, and without an imminent rise in Egyptian gas imports, Israel could face a power crisis in the next few years. If Israel is to continue to pursue its natural gas plans it must diversify its supply sources.

In 2000, there was discovered around 1.4 trillion cubic feet of natural gas off Gaza coast; named as Gaza Marine Gas which is estimated to have value of \$4 billion. Additional \$2.4 billion would be generated in royalties and taxes, and also \$560 million annually will be saved due to elimination of electricity import from Israel. Also the oil import will be replaced by newly discovered natural gas. The Gaza

Marine Gas project, therefore, would be benefiting the Palestine economically and financially (Zia, 2014).

Realizing that the current sources of energy are depleting fast, Israel has made successful efforts to find new gas fields in recent years – such as the Leviathan field estimated at 18 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. However, much of the 122 trillion cubic feet of gas and 1.6 billion barrels of oil in the Levant Basin lie in the territorial waters that are contested between Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus and Gaza. Because of this legal hurdle, extraction of gas and oil in this location may become less attractive (Chossudovsky, 2009).

Conclusion

Despite US and UK involvements to supplement talks between Israel and Palestinian Authority (PA), it has mainly been fruitless. Hamas strongly contested deals brokered by international powers between Israel and PA because it believed them be unfair to the Palestinians. This led the PA to look elsewhere for the development of the projects. In January, the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, met with Russian President Vladimir Putin, and an official investment agreement was concluded to develop Gaza's offshore gas field in the Mediterranean Sea (Russia preparing to develop Gaza gas field, 2014).

According to Anais Antreasyan in the University of California's Journal of Palestine Studies, Israel's long term goal, apart from not only making Palestinian access to Gaza Marine field impossible, is also averting the Palestinians from exploiting their own resources, is to integrate the gas fields off Gaza into adjacent Israeli offshore installations; which is part of a wider strategy of,

.... Separating Palestinians from their land and natural resources in order to exploit them and as a consequence, block Palestinian economic development. Despite all formal agreements to the contrary, Israel continues to manage all the natural resources nominally under the jurisdiction of the PA, from land and water to maritime and hydrocarbon resources." This explains that during "Operation Cast Lead", Palestinian gas fields were de facto

confiscated by Israel in derogation of international law. (Chossudovsky, 2014)

Israel created its own “David” by refusing all venues of dialogue initially, all possibility of any kind of agreement with the people of Gaza and by denying their basic human rights and the right to exist on their homeland during the operation in 2014 until it agreed for a ceasefire after six weeks of operation. A report released by United Nations has warned that the Gaza Strip could become “uninhabitable” within five years as a result of Israeli military operations and a nearly decade-long blockade that have crippled its economy and infrastructure (Occupied Palestinian Territory, n.d.).

Israel uses the tool of “anti-Semitism” to quite thinking people and people who follow the events closely. Yet, one of the people who was involved closely with the solution of the problem published a report. It was former US president Jimmy Carter and the president of Ireland Mary Robinson together with the Elders –a group of elder statesmen prepared a report of opinion on the Gaza conflict of 2014. At the end of the report it is summarized in the following words (Carter & Robinson, 2014):

...The international community’s initial goal should be the full restoration of the free movement of people and goods to and from Gaza through Israel, Egypt, and the sea. Concurrently, the United States and EU should recognize that Hamas is not just a military but also a political force. Hamas cannot be wished away, nor will it cooperate in its own demise. Only by recognizing its legitimacy as a political actor — one that represents a substantial portion of the Palestinian people — can the West begin to provide the right incentives for Hamas to lay down its weapons. Ever since the internationally monitored 2006 elections that brought Hamas to power in Palestine, the West’s approach has manifestly contributed to the opposite result. Ultimately, however, lasting peace depends on the creation of a Palestinian state next to Israel... Leaders in Israel, Palestine and the world’s major powers should believe that these policy changes are within their reach and would move Israelis and Palestinians closer to a day when the skies over the Holy Land can forever fall silent.

As the Jewish drive for a homeland in Israel continues with the support and unyielding insistence of the World Zionist organization, the tension and clash within Israel should be expected to continue. This will be so because with the arrival of each new Jewish settler, the Israeli authorities will need new land to settle them. The only available land would be in the Palestinian Arab sections, namely Gaza and West Bank. The Arabs would continue to fight back what they consider as unlawful encroachment on their possessions.

The second and equally strong factor is the political and economic interests of the Western countries and their desire to have a permanent foothold in the Arab lands to continue their influence and involvement in the region. The strong involvement of the European and Western nation could easily be observed in the recent developments of Syria and Iraq and North African Arab states. Israel, a nation created by the help of the European states and USA in 1948 at the United Nations is still a safe station and dependable ally for them in the mayhem of the Middle East.

Thirdly, disunity, disharmony and the power struggle among the Arab states prevent them from coming together for a concerted political action. They hardly convene to discuss a crisis situation in the Middle East. This is basically due to their individual national interests and their economic and political ties with various European and Western countries. So, in reality despite their numerical superiority and wealth, the Arab states in the region do not pose a threat to Israel's wellbeing and security under the present conditions.

To top it all, the newly discovered rich natural gas resources in Israel occupied territory added to the difficulties in finding a settlement or a solution to the existing conflicts. Most of these resources seem to be in Gaza or on the continental shelf off the Gaza shores.

Sufficient help cannot come from outside. Gaza and its people will eventually learn to succeed in surviving and protecting their homeland and their rights. Hopefully, by that time the World public opinion would come to realize that justice and fairness should be applied evenly to all groups. Only then there is a possibility to cope with and amicably settle the conflicts around the World, especially in Palestine and Israel.

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