Gaza Under Attack

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Gaza Strip is one of three pieces left of Palestine after the establishment of Israel in 1948. Al-Hemma strip in the Northern part of Palestine which is of few squared kilometers in area and was adjoined to Syria, the West Bank which is around 5,880 sq km, and Gaza strip which is about 365 sq km. the population of Gaza is around 1,400,000, and is described as the most dense area in the world. Most of its population are refugees who where expelled from their homes and land by the Israelis in 1948. By the way, there are around 5 million Palestinian refugees who have been living in refugee camps under dire conditions since 1948.

The three pieces fell under occupation in the war of 1967 in which Israel achieved a quick and stunning victory over the Arabs. Since then, the Palestinians have been resisting the occupation and demanding the restoration of their rights including the return of the refugees to their homes and property. That is why they have been labeled as terrorists by Israel, the United States and their allies such as the government of South Korea.

In the last few years, the Palestinians have developed several methods in attacking the Israelis who are armed to the teeth among of which is the martyrdom attacks (which are described as suicidal attacks by the enemies of the Palestinians), and the development of primitive rockets which are of around 10 km in range and hardly accurate. These developments are extremely annoying for the Israelis, and consider them a threat to their own security.

Regarding the Israeli security doctrine, one needs to remember that security is a prime and profound reason for the establishment of Israel. Due to the persecution the Jews experienced over the centuries in Europe, they started thinking of a homeland of their own where they can live in peace and security. They chose Palestine to be the sought homeland because so many of them considered it the historical land of the Jews. Although the Western countries such as Britain proposed alternatives such as Uganda, but finally, the Europeans went along with the choice of the Zionist movement which led the endeavor to establish Israel.

The Jews decided to immigrate to Palestine with the hope that there will be security and peace. If it wasn't for these two reasons, Israel would have never been established. That is why Israel is so sensitive or any threat to its own security no matter how minor or trivial it is. If security isn't enforced, so many Israelis will leave the country and so many Jews from around the world will not immigrate to Israel. In other words, the Israeli security doctrine says that the insecurity is equivalent to the collapse of the state.

In its military and security doctrines, Israel adopts the preemptive action; that is, destroy your enemies before they gain the capability to attack. And always tries to make sure that its wars must take place in the land of the enemy away from its own population centers. That is why the Israelis got out of their mind due to the martyrdom attacks the Palestinians started carrying out against the Israeli population centers. So many Israelis left Israel, so many of them started to be careful when in public places, and the tourists decided to stay away. Israel suffered a lot, and finally decided to build the wall that separates the West Bank from Israel.

Although the Israelis hit hard on the Palestinians using their advanced military machine, the Palestinian are insisting on resistance. The Palestinians insist that they have rights, and the international community should be fair in dealing with the problem. They hardly care about the unbalanced positions of the US and other Western countries, and believe that, one day, Israel will be brought to the recognition of their own rights including the establishment of a free and sovereign Palestinian state. And as a response to the siege imposed on the Palestinians by the US run Arab regimes, they thought of developing their own arms.

Israel found a threat in the rocketing of its population centers around Gaza although it suffered very minor casualties and damage. For Israel, it is the idea, and those who could develop missiles can also develop their range and accuracy. That is why it announced several times that it is going to carry out a huge military expedition so as to silence the shooting; and, meanwhile, it continued its air, sea an land attacks against selective posts and individuals.

Where is the Palestinian Authority from all of this? This Authority is absent. On one hand, it is required by the accords with Israel to defend the Israeli security, and to arrest who are called the Palestinian terrorists. It cannot do that simply because Hamas and Jihad Islami (the two major resisting movements) are much stronger, and because it will be labeled as traitor by the people. Besides, the Authority isn't totally Fatah anymore. Hamas won the late legislative elections and formed the government, and it isn't ready to abide with the accords.

While the Israelis were thinking of carrying their threats of invading Gaza, the Palestinians (mainly Hamas people) carried out a well planned attack against an Israeli military post killing three soldiers and capturing one. For the Palestinians, this captured soldier is a treasure; but, for Israel he is a nightmare. The Palestinians hope to hammer a deal of exchanging prisoners. (There are around 8,000 Palestinians prisoners in Israel). for Israel, it is disastrous to negotiate even indirectly with whom it labels as terrorists, and respond positively to their demands.

In its security doctrine, Israel takes all precautions to prevent the fall of Israeli prisoners, dead or alive, in the hands of the enemy.

This military event heated the Israeli anger, and ignited an immediate mobilization of troops. It is true that the Israelis can inflict heavy damage and kill so many Palestinians, but will they free their captured soldier? From a military tactic, it is almost impossible because they threaten the life of their soldier. But they might be able to do so through intelligence activity. I am sure that, behind the scene, the Israelis are working very hard on collecting information, drawing maps, and evaluating choices. Nevertheless, any action the Israelis decide to take is extremely hazardous unless they decide to take their soldier dead rather than alive. Even if they do so, the Israeli government will become under sever internal criticism from the public and the mass media.

Will the Palestinians back up under the Israeli military pressure? The Israelis are biting on that because the Palestinians backed up several times on different issues over the years. For instance, the Palestinian leadership recognized Israel although it used to describe those who recognize Israel as traitors. The Palestinians actually have major weaknesses: they don't insist on their own demands, and they are infiltrated by the Israeli security service. The Palestinians usually suffer a lot in facing the Israelis, and under different illogical justifications they don't persist. On the other hand, the Israelis have the

capability to collect accurate information about the Palestinians due to the agents they have been recruiting and to their technological advancement in the realm of intelligence.
However, Hamas is different to some extent from Fateh. Hamas is a well-integrated organization on ideological basis, and ready to accept the necessary sacrifices. They suffer less infiltrations, and aren't ready to back up.
What end are we awaiting? Concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict in general, we shouldn't be awaiting any solution in the force able future; but concerning the present situation I believe that the Israelis, if they reach a conclusion that will not be able to free their soldier, will negotiate a prisoners-exchange. The Palestinians will continue to hold the Israeli soldier no matter the severity of the Israeli attacks. But the whole soldier ordeal will end if the Israelis decide to attack the post where he is confined. The possibility that the Israelis will take measures that might lead to the killing of their soldier is very high. Their dignity, as they say, is more important than the life of a soldier.
No matter what, Israel will continue to attack the Palestinians under all conditions of steadfastness. As long as there are Palestinians who are unwilling to concede the Palestinian rights, Israel will continue its barrage. It has arrested cabinet and parliament members, but it is highly possible that it is going to gun down Hamas political leaders such as the Palestinian prime minister. The circle of violence will continue, and it might intensify.