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Future Scenarios for the Arab Israeli Conflict

Introduction:

It is astonishing that Israel is seeking to export a conflict that has lasted for more than a century to the neighboring countries in order to resolve the Palestinian issue, which has been a source of wars, confrontations, and disturbances worldwide. The result is that the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and his right-wing coalition government are currently seeking to exploit the recent events in Gaza to impose a new fait accompli at the expense of the neighboring countries, primarily Egypt and Jordan, as if they want to completely swallow the Palestinian territories for themselves. They are trying to shift the blame for the conflict to the other side, so that they appear to have washed their hands of the blood, carnage, and historical sorrows.

In my opinion, the problem lies not only in Israel's well-known policies of creating problems, manufacturing challenges, and relentlessly pursuing unjust policies at the expense of the Palestinian people and the Arab lands. What has happened since the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) struck a sudden blow against Israel has led to a highly complex scenario in which both the Palestinian and Israeli sides harbor deep historical enmity and a huge accumulation of mutual hatred discourse between the occupying forces on one side and the owners of the usurped land on the other.

In this historical context, it is important to strive for a fair and comprehensive solution that allows for the relative acceptance of each party to achieve a lasting peace in a region that has long suffered from clashes, conflicts, uprisings, and wars as a result of the continued policies of annexation and containment, which are now turning into policies of collective punishment and forced displacement to change the map of confrontation at the expense of the Arab neighboring countries. It may be useful to currently observe some of the facts resulting from the latest round of the deadly conflict, in which thousands on both sides have fallen victim.

Major Observations

Firstly: The study of history and the examination of the causes of wars have shown that wars are often retaliatory, resulting from a party's sense of injustice or a lost opportunity, in an effort to avenge what has happened and prepare for what is to come. Germany's defeat in World War I gave rise to an extreme nationalist ideology that sought justification for German superiority in the Aryan race. In this volatile environment, Nazism was born, which dragged Germany and Europe into a second world war, the scale of destruction in which exceeded all expectations, and millions perished. One of the consequences was the crystallization of the Jewish question and the resurgence of the call for the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine. Therefore, the lack of balance and the absence of a sense of justice in various conflicts inevitably leads to military confrontation. International peace and security require a complete conviction that each party has achieved more than the minimum of its aspirations and realized a large part of its planned objectives according to its governing ideology.

Secondly, the Arab Israeli conflict is a complex one, where politics intermingles with religion, and history intersects with geography. It is also an international conflict that has witnessed full-scale wars and sudden confrontations and has constantly haunted millions of Arabs and Jews alike. I still remember that after the late President Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and his balanced speech before the Israeli Knesset, **Abba Eban, -the former Israeli Foreign Minister-** came to Cairo and delivered a lecture at the Diplomatic Club in downtown Cairo. This was perhaps the first time a senior Israeli official had addressed an audience in an Arab capital. At the time, I was a young diplomat in the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, and I attended that meeting, driven by intense curiosity and a strong desire to directly engage with the other side after the long and bitter conflict between Egypt and Israel. The Israeli diplomat began his speech by saying that ***the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict is a history of lost opportunities***. My mind immediately drifted to the Partition Resolution and the events that followed, any one of which could have led to a breakthrough in that bloody conflict, which witnessed fierce battles in the years 1948, 1956, and 1967, followed by smaller wars in which the Palestinian resistance participated with remarkable bravery.

Thirdly: The Arab-Israeli conflict has gone through several turning points, some of which have tended towards calm and temporary peace, but the effects of the ongoing occupation have always sparked the fire of estrangement and hostility, and made the region a center of continuous unrest and constant conflict, to the extent that the concept of legitimate resistance against the occupation became intertwined with the problem of terrorism on the other side, and here the good got mixed with the bad, and the just cause found itself in a real dilemma as a result of Israel's continued policy of settlement, aggression, and intolerance, and its neglect of the other. The reasonable people have called for the need to reach a point agreed upon by the two parties, based on balanced justice. The Arabs as a whole have recognized the existence of Israel and some of them have accepted dealing with it and normalizing relations after a long boycott. We believe that this will lead to calm, defuse the hostility, and exclude the discourse of hatred, racism, and incitement against the Palestinian side, considering them as outsiders according to the governing Jewish doctrine that exists in the current right-wing government and beyond.

However, what happened was disappointing. The recent Israeli governments have focused on the relationship with a number of Arab countries in an attempt to build bridges of communication with them on the path to normalization, and there is nothing wrong with that, as that is the movement of international relations and regional policies, which is inevitable sooner or later. But the Israeli sin was that its extremist governments, particularly the current Prime Minister Netanyahu, have all neglected the Palestinian demands and the daily tension stored in the generations in the occupied land against Israel's racist policies. Israel did not care about the development of this matter with the latent outbursts of anger in the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank. The extremist parties in Israel believed that they could eliminate resistance in all its forms in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as long as there were communication bridges between Israel and an increasing number of Arab countries, according to the peace agreements signed between Israel and some Arab countries. This was a mistaken estimate and a limited understanding of the nature of the conflict and its future, until it shifted from the concept of political support.

Fourthly : The recent events carried out by the Hamas movement, and the deadly reactions that followed them, reflect the overall plight of the region and the impact on civilians on both sides. As a result, the world is standing on its toes, witnessing the fierce bombardment and the deadly conflict that threatens to explode the relations between Israel and the neighboring Arab countries, especially Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and possibly Syria as well. There is a deep sense that a plan has been carefully crafted, which in some aspects approaches the "Deal of the Century" promoted by **the former US President Donald Trump**, and in other aspects, it approaches historical plans to settle the Palestinians outside their original lands, in an attempt to resolve the conflict at the expense of Arab land, repeating the Nakba of 1948 and the setback of 1967. Egypt has succeeded in foiling the transfer plan with all its plans and projects, which have multiplied between projects launched by Israeli think tanks and the recycling of some old projects produced by the far-right mind, some of which have been marketed by some senior Israeli military figures such as General Giora Eiland, General Uzi Arad, and academic Arnon Sofer, among others

Fifthly: The Arab wisdom says: ***"It narrowed down, but when its rings became firmly established,***



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it opened up, and I thought it would not open up.”

This escalation that we are currently witnessing can be a pressing factor in reaching an acceptable settlement - even at a minimum - for all parties. How many fierce wars have given birth to acceptable peace and stability agreements! Therefore, the whole world is watching the expected peaceful efforts to resolve a conflict that has lasted for a long time and which everyone has suffered a lot from.

It is hoped that, after the international and regional pressures, and the surge in Israeli public opinion, Israel will abide by the decisions of international legitimacy and that the shed blood will dry up. Here we have a legitimate question that insistently comes to the minds of all those who have followed the recent events in Gaza and its bloody war, a question posed by both the Arab and Western sides, and also attracting the attention of American circles and perhaps the Israelis as well: What next? So far, a comprehensive regional war has been avoided - even though its chances are still present and possible given the ongoing events. On the other hand,

Iran has precisely calculated its choices and interests, and has certainly preferred its national interests over its Islamic slogans, and realized that if the battle occurs, it will have no limits and no specific ceiling for its results, for conflicts know how to start but do not know how to end. Hezbollah, in the recent Gaza war, was aware of the existing risks and did not enter the battle to open a new front, but it also did not stop the skirmishes that we call in traditional military sciences the operations of advance and retreat, as a proof of its presence.

The United States has been very keen to avoid the expansion of the war and has tried to put pressure on Israel and Netanyahu in particular to stop at certain stages of military escalation and has been enthusiastic about the temporary ceasefire, but has not yet been able to stabilize it for long periods, and the situation is still not far from the brink of the abyss due to the Israeli stubbornness represented by the religious right and personified by Netanyahu himself, where it appears to everyone, including Washington, London, Paris, Berlin and other capitals supporting Israel's vision, that they are not only satisfied with seeking revenge against the leaders of the Hamas movement, but are seeking to completely eliminate it, which may take many years, because movements with popular and religious roots cannot be eliminated overnight; this requires tremendous effort and the ability to change concepts and ideas before being able to change the

situation on the ground and transform reality into a different perspective, and this cannot be achieved without activating the peace process between the Palestinians and Israel, and entering advanced stages of political settlement, until hope returns to the people whose land Israel has usurped, stripped of its sovereignty, and is currently trying to subdue its will, but the steadfastness of the Palestinian people, which by the way is different from the strength and solidity of the Hamas movement, as the Hamas movement is not truly the entire struggling people, but it invests, from a nationalist and religious standpoint, the feelings of that people and bets on their suffering. The matter here is subject to many predictions of future scenarios without a definitive opinion, as things change periodically according to pivotal developments, making it difficult to predict the decisions of the Israeli military establishment and the ruling extreme right, as the tendencies of revenge and unilateral and hostile military action emanate from the institutions of political and military decision-making in Israeli policy, and confirm that the motives of revenge are rooted in the formation of the Israeli political scene, whose parties and actors try to embody Israeli fears and consider aggression and excessive use of force as a pattern of protecting Israeli

security, even if it comes at the expense of the whole world and expands to the point of threatening international peace and security.

We see that the current situation does not appear to be temporary; its repercussions have left a major impact on the Palestinian people, the Israeli extremism, and even hundreds of millions around the world, whether in acceptance or rejection of Israel's aggressive policies that continue to apply theories of collective punishment and forced displacement, and even attempt to tamper with the political map of neighboring countries under flawed interpretations and distorted ideas that leave no positive legacy for the future to build upon or even to start from.

We may recall some of the ideas related to the future of that bloody conflict, which has left negative marks on the peoples of the region, torn by other conflicts that can evoke one another. The events in northern Iraq, along with the uncontrolled Houthi advance, were all side phenomena of what the unplanned escalation of the perpetual battles in the Arab-Israeli conflict, ***which (Abba Eban), the former Israeli Foreign Minister, called “the conflict of lost opportunities”.***

Suggestions for Dealing with the Situation

Firstly, Hamas is required to recalculate its plans and think realistically about its future. Its political office should be able to transform the movement from a purely military aspect to a more politically oriented movement closer to a political party than an armed force. Many may see this view as unfair to the Palestinian people given the difficult circumstances they are facing under the occupation on their land. One may rightly argue that such an idealistic vision can only be achieved in the advanced stages of a political settlement that gives the Palestinians the minimum of their legitimate demands, and this is unlikely to happen in the near future. However, we hope that emerging from the current crisis will prompt all parties to seriously consider a future with a minimum of mutual understanding and a sense of shared responsibilities in this part of the world, after a long period of suffering and severe turmoil in which the Palestinians have paid one of the costliest prices in contemporary history.

Secondly, the rational Israelis and the moderates among them - who are few at the political and military levels - must lead a new current that recognizes the legitimate Palestinian rights and establishes a different political movement with a new vision that allows for acceptable security arrangements between the two sides. This should ultimately lead to the birth of a Palestinian state that may be demilitarized but enjoys all the attributes of international, regional and national sovereignty, and receives full global recognition and substantial material support in the beginning. Relieving the suffering of the Palestinian people and pumping aid into their veins that have hardened over the years has become an urgent matter, as peoples do

not drink drop by drop or eat day by day, but rather need solid foundations and stable bases that allow the newborn state to live in favorable conditions of parity with the neighboring countries, foremost among them the Hebrew state, and allow it to be an active member of the Arab group, so that the concept of coexistence becomes a voluntary philosophy accepted by all.

Thirdly: The Arab climate as a whole bears part of the national responsibility towards the Palestinian issue, which is the primary Arab issue. This is something that compels all parties to unify their position in order to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people. There must be an international conference attended by the five major countries on the UN Security Council, in which a minimum level of consensus is reached between the Palestinian and Israeli parties, taking into account the latest developments in this context. It should not escape everyone's awareness that a unified and internationally influential Palestinian leadership that has an impact on the Palestinian street is needed. Arafat - with all his positives and negatives - was a symbol of the Palestinian people, which is no longer the case to the same degree. The Palestinians must forget their differences, stand united behind their leadership, and stay away from aligning themselves with uninterested forces. The Palestinian issue is a clear international issue recognized by most countries in the world, and the Palestinians will not achieve what they want except through cohesion, solidarity, and the adoption of new methods other than armed resistance and resorting to policies and initiatives that the world listens to in a new language, different thinking, and a realistic vision that accommodates international and regional changes.

Conclusion:

These attempts are closer to speculations and thinking out loud about the future of the region after the unprecedented events witnessed in the recent weeks. Let us hope that wisdom prevails among all parties, away from opportunistic attempts to settle the Palestinian issue, which has persisted for more than three-quarters of a century and will never end except with a comprehensive and just solution in a Palestinian homeland within an independent state with a capital in East Jerusalem. We look forward to a new Middle East where the sounds of cannons, the buzz of aircraft, and the sounds of rocket launchers cease, if the intentions are sincere and the souls are purified from the long accumulated deep-seated hatred and animosity. It is time for them all to depart with the logic of the age, the movement of history, and the spirit of the region where the heavenly religions appeared and coexisted with each other over dozens of centuries.



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Abstract:

Israel seeks to export a conflict that has extended for more than a full century to neighboring countries to settle an issue that has filled the world and caused wars and numerous confrontations. It is currently seeking to exploit the recent events in Gaza to impose a new fait accompli at the expense of neighboring countries, especially Egypt and Jordan, as if it wants to swallow The entire Palestinian land is for its own account and the parties to the conflict are exporting to the other side, and since the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) launched a surprise strike on Israel, we are facing a very complex scenario in which the two sides - the Palestinian and the Israeli - are lurking for the other side in a hidden historical hostility with a huge accumulation of mutual hate speech between the occupying forces on one side and the owners of the usurped land on the other side. In this historical context, it is important to aspire to a just and comprehensive solution that allows the relative acceptance of each party to accept a balanced formula for making lasting peace in a region that has long suffered from conflicts.

Keywords: Arab-Israeli conflict, Palestine, Israel

سيناريوهات مستقبل الصراع العربي الإسرائيلي

■ د/مصطفى الفكي

الكاتب والمفكر السياسي، مساعد أول وزير الخارجية الأسبق

المستخلص :

تسعى إسرائيل إلى تصدير صراع امتد لأكثر من قرن كامل إلى دول الجوار لتصفية قضية ملأت الدنيا وقامت بسببها الحروب وتعددت المواجهات، وتسعى في الوقت الراهن إلى استغلال أحداث غزة الأخيرة لفرض أمر واقع جديد على حساب الدول المجاورة وفي مقدمتها مصر والأردن، وكأنما هي تريد أن تبذل الأرض الفلسطينية بالكامل لحسابها وتصدر أطراف الصراع إلى الجانب الآخر، ومنذ قيام حركة المقاومة الإسلامية (حماس) بتوجيه ضربة مباغطة لإسرائيل، ونحن أمام سيناريو معقد للغاية يترصد فيه الجانبان - الفلسطينى والإسرائيلى - للطرف الآخر عداءً تاريخياً دفيناً مع تراكم ضخّم لخطاب الكراهية المتبادل بين قوى الاحتلال من جانب وأصحاب الأرض المغتصبة من جانب آخر.

في هذا السياق التاريخي من المهم التطلع إلى حل عادل وشامل يسمح بالقبول النسبي لكل طرف بأن يقبل بصيغة متوازنة لصنع السلام الدائم في منطقة عانت طويلاً الصدمات والصراعات والانتفاضات والحروب نتيجة تواصل سياسات الضم والاحتواء التي تتحول حالياً إلى سياسات العقاب الجماعي والتهجير القسري لتغيير خريطة المواجهة على حساب دول الجوار العربي، وقد يكون من المفيد أن نرصد حالياً بعض الحقائق الناجمة عن الجولة الأخيرة من الصراع الدامي الذي راح ضحيته الآلاف من الجانبين.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الصراع العربي الإسرائيلي، فلسطين، إسرائيل