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Palestine and the Arab World in the Aftermath of 1967 Events: New Facts and Repercussions in the Context of War on Gaza

وتداعيات فلسطين والعالم العربي في أعقاب أحداث عام 1967: حقائق
جديدة في سياق الحرب على غزة

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Abstract:

Many Palestinians living in the diaspora, particularly in neighboring countries learned about what happened in 1967 from a traumatized and horrified perspective. This event was described as a huge explosion that had tremendous effects on the psychological and intellectual thinking process of large sections of Arab intellectuals. The fact of the matter is that Arab identity particularly Palestinian one has received massive alterations as an indirect consequence of 1967 events which ultimately was in need to be sheltered and built up again. The new war on Gaza has reshaped that process by offering a new hope for the Palestinian cause regaining its international importance. Nevertheless, Political and psychological shake Palestinian Arab refugees in particular experienced in these extreme circumstances had a tremendous impact. They both made them rethinking from the start what do Palestine and Arab countries, they take refuge in, mean for them; in terms of identity and history.

Keywords: Arab; Palestine; Gaza; History; Identity; War; Change.

الملخص:

واكب العديد من الفلسطينيين المقيمين في الشتات، وخاصةً في الدول المجاورة، أحداث عام 1967 من منظور مروع ومؤلم. وقد وُصفت هذه الأحداث بأنها شرح هائل خلف آثاراً بالغة على التفكير النفسي والفكري لشرائح واسعة من المثقفين العرب. والحقيقة أن الهوية العربية، وخاصةً الفلسطينية، شهدت تغييرات جذرية كنتيجة غير مباشرة لأحداث عام 1967، مما استدعى إعطاؤها أهمية قصوى بغية ترميمها أو بنائها من جديد. وقد أعادت الحرب الأخيرة على غزة تشكيل مسار هذا التفكير من خلال بثّ أملٍ جديد في القضية الفلسطينية من أجل استعادة أهميتها الدولية. ومع ذلك، كان للاضطرابات السياسية والنفسية التي عانى منها اللاجئين الفلسطينيون على وجه الخصوص في ظل هذه الظروف القاسية أثرٌ بالغ. فقد دفعتهم هذه الظروف إلى إعادة التفكير من جديد في معنى فلسطين والدول العربية التي لا زالوا يعيشون فيها، من حيث الهوية والتاريخ.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العرب؛ فلسطين؛ غزة؛ التاريخ؛ الهوية؛ الحرب؛ التغيير.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The dramatic change that the whole world read about in the mid-seventies was the war of 1967. As a result of this event, the entire map of the Arab world changed. The Zionist entity which was for about twenty years largely confined to the boundaries of the declaration of 1948 abruptly extended its borders taking from several Arab territories. This extension included the Golan Heights, Sinai, Jordan, Gaza, and the West bank (Aly, Said, & Khalil, 2013). There was a glimpse of consolation for Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular

that fortunately the Zionist entity could not achieve all of its already fixed war goals.

This fact could have been a starting point in the process of identity restoration for this latter to be made the focal issue, but it seemed to be unrealistic for some people in power mainly because of a number of political miscalculated reasons. Nevertheless, the Arab scene was not fully empty of any attempts in this regard (Said, 1992). It did witness several initiatives by intellectuals and academics throughout the Arab world and even in the diaspora exemplified in many cultural and political events. The prevailing theme is often about reviving the lost sense of belonging and a symbol of unity in making people keep hope for the future (Rheingold, 2002).

That hope is firmly embedded in the idea that the Zionist entity could not in any way convert its successive military victories into international political successes. This last war on Gaza has unequivocally proved this equation. Palestinian cause gained momentum worldwide during this war with large sections of people throughout the five continents spreading political awareness particularly via social media on what the Palestinian struggle is all about. The map this time is differently shaped by powerful leading elite where political agendas of opportunities for creative diplomacy are not of first priorities. A deep reading into a number of books and articles published in this regard including some of Edward Said's outstanding works particularly "the Question of Palestine" is meant to reveal to what extent this war was a turning point into rethinking both concepts of identity and history.

2.Lost territories, vanishing dreams and dogma of priorities

Said argues that this war stood in the way not only of Palestinian dreams but also of Arab dreams (Said, 1992). The logic of the Arab states that fought the 1948 war was that they believed Palestine belonged to them. Ever since that war along with that of 1956 both Arab nations and the Zionist entity realized that the conflict was far from over so they continued preparing for the next episode of armed confrontation. This latter was almost inevitable particularly when all sides were unable to agree on a settlement, added to that what seemed to be a major failure of successive international diplomacies (Bowen, 2004).

The military Arab coalition formed mainly by the three major powers of Egypt, Syria and Jordan were too keen to take de facto control of the region. The purpose was to challenge the circumstances and to create new situations on the ground. The victory these nations along with some others were looking forward to achieve is based on an Arab dream of unified perspectives towards forming one entity of Arab nations. A story of a shattered identity that could be reconstituted by defeating what Arabs believe was the core cause of the bitter dilemma they have ever experienced.

All political events which have subsequently occurred in the aftermath of that war and which profoundly reshaped Arab international relations can be seen as a reaction to and direct or indirect consequences of that conflict. Arab nationalism, as championed by a number of Arab leaders at that time of history was not so much an embodiment of a Palestinian nation, for Palestine was not advocated as a separate nation as much as being the heart of a bigger Arab nation.

The seizure of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, meant that all of historic Palestine had come under Zionist control. The occupation of these territories still haunts Palestinians and defies a smooth reconstitution of remaining historical identity (Brenchley, 2005). To add to Palestinian predicament, Said emphasizes that this war has brought a new strategic transformation in Arab priorities: Principally, Arab states became focused not only on

the occupation of Palestinian lands but also of lands belonging to the two most powerful neighbors, Egypt, which lost the Sinai, and Syria, which lost the Golan Heights (Said, 1992). As far as the Arab region is concerned, the whole first twenty years that comes in the aftermath of this war were framed with reference to the issue of Palestine.

3.Long-term outcomes on the relationship between Palestine and the Arab world

Even though most Arab nations were amid their own anti-colonial struggles when Zionist militias launched a secret campaign attack of ethnic cleansing of Palestine with an ultimate purpose to establish claimed state, Arab nations reacted firmly and decisively to the plight of the Palestinian people. They even elevated the cause of the liberation of whole Palestine to the status of a pan-Arab cause. However, as soon as these Arab regimes, both monarchical and “republican” - according to Arab political leaders’ own interpretation-, became more grounded, priorities changed. Slogans of a united cause and shared destiny slowly began to fade amid strong belief of the utility of the Palestinian struggle at least amongst the ruling systems (Efrat, 2006).

This shift of interest could be widely related to the successive military defeats, but the reality is that the renunciation of the Palestinians cause is also attributed to the autocratic nature of Arab regimes and their desperate political dependence on the main supporter of the Zionist entity and its settler-colonial project namely the West, and the United States in particular. By the end of this six-day war, Said says it became clear that the shocking defeat of Arab forces had led to three outcomes that had particularly strong impacts on the Palestinian issue. The first is a creeping Arab sense that Zionist state wasn’t about to disappear. The second is that, in occupying Syrian and Egyptian sovereign territories, this Zionist entity acquired direct levers with those states, possessing therefore assets that they wanted back even more than helping their fellow Arab Palestinians. The third is that Palestinians, disillusioned by Arab

governments after the Zionists occupied the West Bank and Gaza, decided to take things into their own hands (Said, 1992).

4.The effect on Palestinian political representation

At the end of the same year, and months after this war, a new UN Resolution 242 of the United Nations was finally passed. This decision called for the occupying forces to completely withdraw from all the Arab territories it had already seized during the conflict in exchange for making a long-lasting peace agreement with involved Arab countries. Later on this passed resolution has become the corner-stone for diplomatic claimed political settlement between the Zionist entity and engaged Arab nations from one hand as well as with the Palestinians from the other hand.

As it was originally formed under Egyptian auspices in 1964, immediately after the war, the PLO Palestine Liberation Organization broke free from control of the Arab states. Within seven years, in 1974, the Arab summit conference declared the PLO the “sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people” embracing the notion of Palestinian nationhood, and this is again a new shift. It was a moral and political victory for some Palestinians, but came at a cost: If Palestinians were now on their own, Arab states also had license to go it alone (Oren, 2003).

Ever since 1967, every time Palestinians felt sidetracked by events, they took matters into their own hands. The fact of the matter is that afterwards Palestinian representation in the form of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) approached the United Nations (UN) to request the admission of Palestine as being both a member of the UN recognized as a state. Moreover, and as an indirect consequence of sentiments of marginalization developed new nationalist sentiments to be shaped in the form of a bid for self-determination which is known under international law as people’s right to freely determine without external interference the political status and to pursue the economic, social and cultural development freely. With the failure of this attempt to meet Palestinian aspiration for

freedom, liberty and the establishment of an independent state along with the failure also of what was known as peace process the inevitable happened.

In 1987, almost 40 years after Nakba; the catastrophe, they unleashed the first Intifada after they felt their issue was marginalized. Soon after that, it turned out to be a very long well-organized armed struggle that after another 40 years, ultimately led to 2023 Taufan Al Aqsa revolution and the current, ongoing war on Gaza (Allen, 2006). Many followers attribute this last turning-point event to the fact that the Zionist entity has had numerous opportunities to end the conflict particularly when referring to 1993 Oslo agreement. They continued to assert that things have not changed on the ground for the reason that Palestinians have not yet given their own state as requested by the political representation and the other military groups. The Zionist entity rather used this peace process to further humiliate the Palestinians, to confiscate more of their lands and to use more military forces in order to desperately subjugate venerable people. All notorious genres of torture and nonhuman conducts have widely been reported from the occupied territories. This includes extrajudicial killing of innocent civilians, long-term incarceration without any trial of large number of people including women and young children.

5.Identity at stake

The fact of the matter is that Arab Palestinian identity has received massive alterations as an indirect consequence of 1967 events which ultimately was in need to be sheltered and built up again. Said focuses on the political and psychological shake Palestinian Arab refugees in particular experienced in those extreme circumstances which had a tremendous impact on their daily life (Said, 1992). They both made them rethinking from the start what does Palestine in the first place and what do Arab countries, they take refuge in, mean for them; in terms of identity and history. For internally displaced Palestinian refugees, the trauma was particularly about destitution (Breytspraak, 1984).

As a result of 1967 war, Palestinian people either forcibly immigrated or were expelled from their land, livelihood, and source of income. Fragmentation or “Shatat” is seen by many Palestinian second and third generation refugees living outside for decades now as quintessential Palestinian experience. They all almost around the world have developed this mixed feeling of being from one hand attached to their homeland but at the same time not being able to grasp the fact that they were not born in that place or even if so they have never been their again. Nevertheless, this does not in any way make them less Palestinians.

“Shatat” does really remind this people of what to be a Palestinian is all about; a set of values that strongly teach them to believe in the right of return, a hope that once becomes reality will surely suspend the current condition of exile and dispossession (Corbin & Strauss, 1988). Oslo that had later followed has completely decimated Palestinian grassroots, institutions, and so it deed with Palestinian identity. The task the new generation undertakes is mostly how to revitalize and reinstall the revolutionary optimism. As for those who resisted perpetuated ethnic cleansing of the 1948 refusing to quit their land, many of them are still living the trauma and in best cases as second or third class citizens within the borders of 1948, or what has been since then known as the green line.

6.Desperate search for reshaped identity

The trauma of 1967 was no more than a starting point of a very long and continuing journey for this search of an effected identity. Of all the dramatic consequences of this war, Said argues that the dual impact on the Palestinians stands out most in the Arab defeat that ultimately bolstered the rise of Palestinian nationalism and inevitably, the gradual decline of Arab support. As has been recorded in much Arab literature produced ever since, Palestinian Arab identity took a broader hit; the path the war set for the Palestinians was unfortunately hardest for them to overcome (Said, 1992).

The impact of war consequences on self and identity among people has been tremendous and obvious in almost every aspect of life when taking into account sociological conceptions of identity reconstruction. The reconstruction of self and identity post war trauma is conceptualized as a long lasting process that needs both time and huge collective effort. Identity reshaping is a continuing path that swings back and forth between the requirements of the community and various influencing aspects of self. The transformative pedagogy widely adopted particularly in formal aspects through educational systems in first place will surely have profound impact on identity reconstruction or reconstitution. This pedagogy has to include both process and outcome components of that system in order to increase the opportunity chances of reconstructing one's self.

The question that is often asked in this regarded is mostly related to what does it mean to pass a Palestine national identity on to next generations. In this context, existence would widely be perceived as form of resistance, it is also about preserving identity features mainly archive of stories, language, customs, music, and also that of human nature. The message of nationalism includes lecturing Palestinian people in the diaspora that they are in part indigenous to that land. This message will be much more crucial when facing Zionist media obfuscation, fancy language, or history tweaking when all of these elements keep always trying to alter realities.

7. The impact of the trauma on the military equation

The 1967 six days war is often referred to by Arabs as the "Neksa" the setback. It was considered as a very humiliating defeat for participating Arab armies.

The losses of Arab countries as a result of this days-lasting conflict on several aspects; human lives, economy, reputation and in the first place on the military level were disastrous. Human casualties for each of the participating Arab nations were numbered more than thousands; with Egypt at the top losing more than 11,000, followed by 6,000 for Jordan and more

than 1,000 for Syria. Meanwhile, the Zionist entity declared no more than 700 casualties, but there were almost no official figures on lost concerning military equipment. For Arab armies, the lost was also crippling on terms of weaponry and equipment (Aly, Said, & Khalil , 2013). Arab powers also suffered demoralization losing confidence in their leaderships as a consequence of that. Both the Arab public and the political elite experienced frustration and lopsidedness realizing the heaviness of the tenderness defeat. The leader of Egyptian forces Djamal Abel Nasser announced his resignation afterwards, declaring that he is ready for assuming the whole responsibility of what happened. This decision was followed by what seemed to be mass demonstrations on Egyptian streets calling for him to retreat his resignation, to which ultimately Nacer quickly yielded.

This war has marked the beginning of a long-term occupation of more lands by the Zionist entity. This new occupation has radically reshaped the destiny of the whole region. Consequently, the Zionist entity tripled in term of size showing its superiority creating what was described as a mythical aura (Halliday, 2005). It brought again more than one million Palestinian people under its administration, starting building settlements across the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem.

Putting claimed religious justifications for its continuous occupation of Muslim lands, the Zionist entity was not ready at any price to give up these gains while taking advantages of Arab forces weaknesses. This arrogance pushed by new-found power made it even noncomplying with neither International Community nor the United Nations' successive resolutions. Arab nationalism was crippled so did its army particularly with some Arab leaders trying to hide their failure. Palestinians finally realized Arab powers could not protect them so they moved forward in the creation of their own national liberation movements which also largely failed to fulfill their short and long-term aspirations (Halliday, 2005). As the war scarred the Arab psyche it did ultimately pave the way for an over-zealous

Zionist upper hand while the issue of borders remained unresolved.

The war of 1973 had failed to recover the Sinai for Egypt or the Golan Heights for Syria within an atmosphere of lack of self-criticism by the overwhelming majority of Arab leaders. Egypt then was taken out of the military equation. Consequently, Arab states' ability to fight effective conventional wars against the Zionist entity was dramatically reduced since 1967 (Efrat, 2006). Said emphasizes that though the leverage of support was significantly decreased, Palestinians continued to get Arab funding and rhetorical backing.

8. The impact of trauma on the Palestinian diaspora

Many Palestinians living in the diaspora, particularly in neighboring countries learned about the 1967 war from a traumatized and horrified perspective. As it was sadly said, the consequences of this war were an open profound wound from which the entire Arab world has never recovered (Said, 1992). This event was described as a huge explosion that had tremendous effects on the psychological and intellectual thinking process of large sections of Arabs including academics as mentioned in Said's book "The Question of Palestine". They had, as indirect victims, mostly learnt about this from entirely a horrified and shamed viewpoint.

For Arab intellectuals living in the West at that particular era, with their Arab identity that couldn't by anyway be hidden, it was never a question of going on with that strange, peculiar and very confounding Western perception about Arabs and Palestinians. They had a colossal fact-proving mission to accomplish especially in American and to some extent European academic area. The intellectual elite has undertaken the daunting task of explaining, commenting on what happened, and more importantly defending their just cause in front of an obfuscating mass-media campaign to deliberately defame facts and serve some international agendas. They have found the field of academia a suitable environment for this task as it continuously

offers opportunity for political dialogue and debated forums of discussions.

Palestinians in the diaspora started developing a sense of being forsaken; new peace settlements do not directly deal with the Palestinians, since they are not yet a state, as they do with several Arab countries. Consequently, Palestinians in the diaspora strongly felt international marginalization. Their cause is not being seriously taken into account; there is no reference to Palestinian self-determination (Said, 1992). This was the reason why the leadership consistently rejected several propositions and United Nations' resolutions as they were all not in the interest of the people, only serving the other side agendas. Moreover, the issue of the right for return that profoundly matters to Palestinians living for decades outside their homeland was always at stake.

9. Arab general public opinion

After centuries of harmonious coexistence between Arabs mainly Muslims from one part and Jews along with other Arabs of Christian faith from another part it came the British mandate of Palestine in the late nineteenth century that deliberately seeded the causes of conflicts that resulted in decades of furious confrontations between them. Arabs and Jews both communities have received conflicting promises by the United Kingdom to form an independent national state on the land of Palestine. Arab countries were widely deceived by Briton when asked to join its campaign to end the Ottoman ruling. Ironically, the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1924 came shortly after the Belfour declaration in 1917 which promised the Jews a state on the Palestinian land. This declaration was afterwards followed in 1922 by both Arabs and Jews seeking self-determination.

The British announced the end of their mandate, withdrawing their forces from Palestine which marked the announcement of the creation of a Jewish state in 1948. The Arab public opinion has never ever accepted the born of this strange and peculiar entity in a region that it was not in need of

more disputes and conflicts. This entity that tried to make new facts on the ground engendered since its creation unresolved disputes over land ownership, borders, security, and other matters. Public opinion was not far from evolving events; it closely followed the coverage of clashes as well as the consequences of the development on those conflicts with significant interest.

Arab public opinion also experienced the consequences of the war of 1967 as did the Arab political system. Despite Arab governments' shifting priorities, Arab publics have not abandoned Palestine after 1967 events; despite the shock and disappointment they ever experienced (Bowen, 2004). This public remains tied to the sense of being Arab and Muslim. The whole world has witnessed, for instance, how in some of the states that initiated so called peace process, public opinion has been among the harshest on the Zionist entity, resulting in what has been termed a "cold peace."

Despite what has happened in the past 15 years in particular conflicts within Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, and many other countries, despite all that, Said believes that Arab publics have never been completely distracted by their own immediate tragedies and struggles (Said, 1992). This is again an interpretation of the deep split between official political stands and that of general Arab view. Priorities are not often alike as most of these countries did not yet shift from autocratic ruling system to a democratic one. These Arab political ruling systems continuously make use of the ongoing circumstances only to consolidate the grip of political power under the control of handful ruling junta or corrupt political groups in best cases.

10. CONCLUSION

It has been said that the world is still living the seventh day of the Six Day War. The War marked the start of a lasting phase in the conflict between the Zionist entity and the Palestinians in terms of existence, land or territory ownership, as well as the right of both armed and political resistance. This last war on Gaza that started on October 2023 is according to many political analysts the final page in this long sorrowful story. Since the

conflict from its early days has brought more than one million Palestinians in the occupied territories under Zionist control there was a new emerging status quo in the West bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza concerning their new political and civil administrative status. Questions of identity and belonging have risen quickly and strongly making this large spectrum of Arab Palestinians in perpetual crisscross of choices. Another dimension of the consequences of this war was hundreds of thousands of refugees mainly in a number of surrounding Arab countries. Their political status as well as that of belonging and identity reshaping or reconstruction remains till the present day a daunting issue to be solved.

Nevertheless, the strength of the Palestinian sense of nationhood, resistance, resilience, and arm struggle that have grown in the past half-century, despite the Trauma of 1967, cannot be ignored; Palestinians are not going away. And with all its growing relative power, the Zionist state that had and still is the main cause of all war traumas has no ability to impose a sustainable unilateral solution without the Palestinian say. Successive political and military events just consolidated the idea that armed struggle must always be part and partial of the liberation equation, and for many, it is a resort from a hunting trauma. Most Palestinians in the occupied territories have been born—and many born and died—under conditions of occupation. Rather than being temporary, the occupation has lasted for so long with more wounds to be healed.

The consequences of the trauma of 1967 War have brought many things into focus: For Palestinians, the term “occupation” has been a double-edged trauma. On the one hand, it signals a state of affairs that must come to an end; that the occupied territories are Arab Palestinian stolen land. It was about a firm conviction that the thief never becomes an owner. As long as there are millions of people in the status of refugees living for decades in neighboring countries the conflict is not yet settled. They live forever with the hope and right that one day they will come back to enjoy their lives within the territories they have forcibly been expelled from following the Nekba of

1948. It is a Palestinian dilemma which after each of successive conflicts with this peculiar entity Palestinian people ended up in new life-shattering displacement.

For Palestinians, the term “occupation” on the other hand leads to international complacency with a state of affairs that’s morally intolerable. It is the responsibility of the International Community to counter this unjustified perpetual act of aggression against Palestinian people. Global peace and security could receive huge blow and could easily be undermined once these agreed-upon global norms and rules around the world are neglected. The current status quo in Gaza and whole Palestine and what is happening right now of unjustified actions in Lebanon and Syria particularly the new seizure of Arab land in front of the International Community are actually blatant breaches of universal human values. All sides must uphold these rules and norms as they claim to be democratic liberal states. The policy of double standards can only blow off the whole case moving it from bad to worse. Finally, one fact that social media have so far revealed particularly after committed genocides, war crimes, and ethnic cleansing by the Zionist entity in this last war on Gaza has become the title of this struggle worldwide. This blatant fact is that these latest actions have ultimately blown the Zionist fig leaf away and forever.

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