

Solving complex geopolitical environment in Middle East requires courage and creativity

written by Ruth Wasserman Lande | 03.05.2024

The current geostrategic situation in the Middle East appears at times impossible and even hopeless. Contrary to popular opinion, however, I am not taken with this fatalistic line of thought. Cleaning up the current regional “mess” requires courage and vision, yet it is, indeed, possible.

Beyond the significant threat to our citizens in the form of Hamas and other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, in recent years, the Judea and Samaria region has also become the Wild West, given the Iranian-backed growth of radical movements such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).

Currently, only a significant IDF presence prevents disaster for the residents of nearby Jewish towns and villages in the northern Sharon area, well within undisputed Israel, as Israel’s enemies make no secret of their wish to eradicate all of Israel’s citizens and destroy the entire state.

The Palestinian Authority (PA), officially ruling the Palestinians in that area, has proven over the years that it is, indeed, more moderate than Hamas, yet it is still very far from being a terror-free bed of roses.

Recently, along with the gradual and obvious weakening of PA President Mahmoud Abbas (a phenomenon clearly encouraged by the Israeli government over the last decade), the military arm of his political faction, Fatah, has begun competing with Hamas to see who kills more Israeli civilians. Clearly, the situation certainly does not look very promising. So, where is the light at the end of this dark tunnel?

Owing to the fact that in the current state of affairs, the State of Israel depends on the United States to a significant degree in terms of its security and its assistance in the international arena, Israel must creatively recruit Washington and other countries to help when it comes to dealing with the aforementioned threat in question.

A sustainable quiet

THE BIDEN administration is interested in creating “a sustainable quiet” between Israel and Hamas. Washington has a clear interest in calming the current strife between Israelis and Palestinians, especially in the months prior to the November elections in the US. In other words, Israel has inherent leverage with the US due to the Israeli military presence in the Gaza Strip and the fact that it can produce a temporary “calm” if it so wishes.

Furthermore, dealing a decisive blow to all hostile terrorist activity in Gaza will be difficult to achieve in a short period of time, as the IDF has already publicly announced in recent days. This will entail a long-standing confrontation against a bitter and stubborn enemy. On the other hand, Jerusalem cannot and should not allow the continued existence of an enemy that declares its readiness to kill, rape, burn, and eliminate its people – and hence, has little choice but to continue to strike. There is little point in doing so, however, without three basic conditions being fulfilled at the same time.

The hostages must be returned, either via a deal or by force, given that Israel cannot violate the unwritten contract between itself and its citizens, who were brutally kidnapped from their homes and held in terrible conditions by a bitter enemy. However, I am not optimistic about Hamas’s intention to release all of them. In fact, to do so would be an antithesis to their worldview and the martial theory they adopted in the first place. There is much room for massive pressure from the US on Qatar with regard to the presence of the Hamas leadership in its territory and until now, such American leverage has not been fully applied.

A clear plan for the temporary civilian management of the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria must be adopted, along with the continued military presence of the IDF. As long as such an Israeli plan is not proposed, any and all in the international arena will view themselves as authorized to come up with a “road map” of one kind or another, without it being viewed and/or sanctified by Israel and regardless of whether it would suit the preservation of Israel’s security interests.

The international arena, with the US and the United Kingdom at its helm, must take responsibility for the temporary civil management of the Palestinians, while the IDF maintains a temporary military presence to prevent terror against its own

civilians, Palestinians living in the Strip, and US and UK nationals who would be present. I do not accept the voices according to which certain political parties would not agree to this. What is true is that neither they nor any others would wish to be dragged into the Gazan and Palestinian mud. But this must be the temporary price for taking care of the Palestinian civilian population - until the establishment of a demilitarized political entity of one kind or another, after a decade or another time frame to be determined by the parties.

Throughout that interim period, constructive" regional parties (such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, etc.) would lend a hand to civilian aid, but above all, there would be one specific party - the United Arab Emirates - that would take care of the re-education of the population in Gaza and in Judea and Samaria, but also- and not less important (and in full coordination with the Hashemite Kingdom) in Jordan. Without this significant, long-term reeducation plan, consistent with Western values and devoid of incitement and hateful and murderous messaging - with which Palestinian and Jordanian youth are currently being brainwashed - the mentality will not change and the brainwashing will continue to create more and more terrorists.

The United Arab Emirates has already proved that it is willing and able to change the entire education system in its own territory, to the point of replacing teachers who did not adapt themselves to the renewed content. Also, the UAE has great interest in taking extremely harsh steps against the Muslim Brotherhood and its subsidiary organization, Hamas. It has been doing this tirelessly for years within its own borders, where it is strictly forbidden to act, identify with, or support the Muslim Brotherhood or anyone on their behalf, and anyone who does so feels the iron arm of the local law.

As someone who has lived for several years in an Arab country and learned Arabic, as well as to understand the mentality and even the core and vital elements of Islam, I do not recognize attempts to weaken the aforementioned proposals by epithets such as "naive."

Living for several years, as a Jew and an Israeli, in an Arab country, does not leave much room for naivete. Albert Einstein once said that stupidity is defined by repeating the same action over and over while expecting a different result.

Given the complexity of the current situation, its solution calls for great faith in

our Creator, along with extraordinary creativity, courage, and original thought.

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