

ISRAEL- PALESTINE: “Peace-making” without “Mediators”

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A surplus of mediators have been around all the time, including the heavy weight Quartet of the UN, U.S., EU and Russia, as well as heaps of terms of reference of UNSC resolutions, bilateral signed accords and “roadmaps,” in addition to marathon bilateral talks that have left no stone unearched, international as well as regional conferences were never on demand to facilitate the “peace process,” which has been lavishly financed to keep moving.

However the Palestinian – Israeli peace-making is still elusive as ever as Samuel Beckett’s “Waiting for Godot” has been, without a glimpse of light at the end of the endless tunnel of Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territory and people.

Palestinian – Israeli peace-making has been for all practical reasons on hold since 2000, and bilateral peace contacts have been dormant since Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu came to power in 2009 except for a failed five-round “exploratory” talks hosted by Jordan last January.

The latest indirect exchange of letters between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and PM Netanyahu and the joint statement issued by their carriers pledging mutual commitment to peace are no less misleading: “No peace No War” is still the name of the only game in town, which is in fact the ideal prescription for the implosion or explosion of an unsustainable status quo in the Israeli – occupied Palestinian territories.

And the almost twenty-year old U.S.-led and EU-financed “peace process” is still a non-starter for any feasible, credible or sustainable peace-making in any foreseeable future.

Failure of the “peace process” to deliver is proof enough that it is inherently infertile, but most importantly it is proof enough that there has never been any serious mediation, or the mediators themselves were only either managing a process instead of trying to solve a conflict, were unqualified, or the parameters of their approach were the wrong ones.

The end result however is that all mediators have failed and it is the time to acknowledge their failure and to make room for other options, like sending back the file of the Palestinian – Israeli conflict to the United Nations, which was responsible for creating the conflict in the first place when the UN General Assembly adopted the non-binding resolution No. 181 for partitioning Palestine in 1947, which triggered a series of Arab – Israeli wars, thus undermining its own main mission as the organization created for the sole purpose of maintaining world peace.

Since 1947, the “two-state solution” has been on the agenda. Sixty five years on, none is

closer to that end. The U.S. and EU conduct over those years has been in effect to reinforce the “one state solution”, i.e. Israel .

Olivia Ward speculated in the Canadian “The Star” on May 1 that the “one-state solution to Mideast peace may arrive by default,” but she might not have anticipated it to be a bi-national, bilingual and bi-religious one state for Israelis and Arab Palestinians, Arabic and Hebrew and Jews and Muslims, which is a recipe for apartheid in view of the prevailing balance of power in favor of Israeli Jews in historic Palestine.

I wonder whether U.S. Rep. Joe Pitts (R-Pa.) was completely out of touch with a major foreign-policy reality or was he satirically sarcastic when he responded to a constituent last April by a letter calling for peace negotiations between deceased Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who has been in a coma since 2006?!

The UN option is obviously what President Abbas is left to try now as the only option available for a man of peace like him, and this is exactly the door which the U.S. administration is determined to close; for this purpose, according to Esther Brimmer, the Assistant Secretary for International Organizations Affairs, in Miami on April 24 this year:

“Over the past several months, we have engaged in a global diplomatic marathon to oppose the Palestinian” option, “because, ... the United States strongly opposes efforts to address final status issues at the United Nations rather than in direct negotiations,” which Brimmer’s country failed to mediate, revive and resume through the terms of the last three presidents who collectively failed to deliver on their promises to the Palestinians to conclude negotiations on final status issues in 1999 (Bill Clinton), in 2005 (George W. Bush), in 2008 (G.W. Bush again) and within two years of his assuming office (Barak Obama).

Not to honor U.S. promises and pledges to Palestinians could only be interpreted as out of bad faith, bad management of the “peace process” or failure to deliver, which all dictate, as another option, a change of course and that the US monopoly of the sponsorship of peace-making should be discarded and replaced by more efficient peace makers, or that the current U.S.-led peace mediators should be replaced by peace enforcers.

Aaron David Miller of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars noted on May 11 that, “The only three breakthroughs in the history of Arab-Israeli peacemaking – involving Israeli deals with the Egyptians, Jordanians, and Palestinians – came about through secret diplomacy in which Washington wasn’t even involved.” Miller stopped short of saying that the U.S. and Quartet mediation is no more needed.

The International Crisis Group, in an executive summary on May 7, 2012, concluded that the U.S.-led mediation efforts have *“become a collective addiction, ... And so the illusion continues,”* adding: *“All actors are now engaged in a game of make-believe: that a resumption of talks in the current context can lead to success; that an agreement can be reached within a short timeframe; that the Quartet is an effective mediator, ...”* On April 26, the American Jewish newspaper “Algemeiner” described the “Middle East Quartet” as *“An Institutionalized Failure.”*

Israel, U.S. and the Quartet mediators are all winners in this “make-believe” non-delivering mediation; the Palestinian people are the only losers.

Palestinians have had enough and now saying enough is enough: Peace is a mirage, peace-making is a failure, peace process is a sham, peace mediators are a fake, and if all the parties involved can enjoy the luxury of “addiction” to the status quo, Palestinians cannot; their survival is at stake.

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