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GEOPOL REPORTS

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NOTES ON THE WAR IN GAZA

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1. SELECTED STATEMENTS OF WORLD POLITICAL FIGURES ON THE WAR IN GAZA

Selection by the editor

HARRIS SAYS U.S. STRONGLY OPPOSES 'FORCED RELOCATION OF PALESTINIANS FROM GAZA' (2/12/2023)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/02/world/middleeast/kamala-harris-israel-gaza.html>

Vice President Kamala Harris said on Saturday that the United States fiercely opposes forcibly relocating Gaza residents outside the enclave as Israel resumes its bombardment of Hamas terrorists, or in the days and weeks after the war eventually ends.

In a statement after meeting with President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt in Dubai, officials said Ms. Harris rejected the idea of moving Palestinians into Egypt or refugee camps elsewhere and offered her strongest statement to date urging Israel to reduce harm to civilians in its war campaign.

"The vice president reiterated that under no circumstances will the United States permit the forced relocation of Palestinians from Gaza or the West Bank," the statement from the White House said.

She also rejected an idea suggested recently by some Israeli officials that the borders of Gaza could shrink after the war is over to accommodate a security "buffer zone" between the interior of Gaza and Israel. The statement said the United States would not permit "the redrawing of the borders of Gaza."

NETANYAHU: ISRAEL WILL NOT HALT GAZA WAR UNTIL ALL GOALS ACHIEVED (2/12/2023)

https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/netanyahu-israel-will-not-halt-gaza-war-until-all-goals-achieved/

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says that the only way to achieve Israel's goal of destroying Hamas is through the continuation of the IDF's ground invasion of Gaza

Netanyahu, speaking at a press conference, says the war will continue until this goal is achieved, adding that he will also continue to work toward freeing the hostages still held by Hamas in Gaza

"We will do everything to bring them home, to complete that mission but also to destroy Hamas, and to ensure that Hamas will never be a threat to us anymore and that there will be no group threatening Israel from Gaza," says the prime minister during a press conference.

"I am saying clearly and plainly: We will continue with war until we achieve all our goals... There is no way to achieve these goals apart from winning, and no way to win apart from through the ground invasion."

US officials have reportedly warned Netanyahu that Israel will not necessarily have maneuverability and support should the fighting continue for months.

TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER WARNS OF ESCALATING NUCLEAR ARMS RACE WITH ISRAEL'S CONTINUED POSSESSION (18/11/2023)

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20231118-turkish-foreign-minister-warns-of-escalating-nuclear-arms-race-with-israels-continued-possession/>

"The ongoing possession of nuclear weapons by Israel, coupled with the failure to denuclearize the region, will escalate the nuclear arms race, leading to increased nuclearization in the area. This is not a favorable situation for both the region and the world," Fidan said in an interview with Al Jazeera.

"Israel's possession of nuclear weapons has been a known yet unacknowledged secret for many years — a fact that everyone is aware of but no one has admitted. We see that Israel has developed its nuclear capability by not becoming a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and we also know that it has received significant support from both the US and Europe in this regard. So, this is not a secret," he said.

ISRAEL MUST STOP KILLING BABIES AND WOMEN IN GAZA, FRENCH PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON HAS TOLD THE BBC (10/11/2023)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-67356581>

In an exclusive interview at the Élysée Palace, he said there was "no justification" for the bombing, saying a ceasefire would benefit Israel.

While recognising Israel's right to protect itself, "we do urge them to stop this bombing" in Gaza, he said.

But he also stressed that France "clearly condemns" the "terrorist" actions of Hamas.

Speaking the day after a humanitarian aid conference in Paris about the war in Gaza, Mr Macron said the "clear conclusion" of all governments and agencies present at that summit was "that there is no other solution than first a humanitarian pause, going to a ceasefire, which will allow [us] to protect... all civilians having nothing to do with terrorists".

"De facto - today, civilians are bombed - de facto. These babies, these ladies, these old people are bombed and killed. So there is no reason for that and no legitimacy. So we do urge Israel to stop."

TURKEY'S ERDOGAN SAYS POST-WAR GAZA MUST BE PART OF SOVEREIGN PALESTINIAN STATE (4/11/2023)

<https://www.newarab.com/news/erdogan-gaza-must-be-part-sovereign-palestinian-state>

"Once all of this that is happening is finished, we want to see Gaza as a peaceful region that is a part of an independent Palestinian state, in line with 1967 borders, with territorial integrity, and with East Jerusalem as its capital," Erdogan was on Saturday cited as saying by broadcaster Haberturk and others.

2. ON THE GAZA CRISIS

Dr. Georgios Poukamisas, Ambassador ad honorem, Greece - Chairman of Stravonas Society

We have been following closely the disquieting developments since the horrific terror attack of Hamas last Saturday, 10/07.

We stand with Israel. We express our compassion for the civilians killed.

We have exchanged at a very early-stage in-house assessments about the geopolitical implications of the Hamas onslaught, while our attention was turning to the fate of Israeli hostages at the hands of the terrorist formation.

We pointed that,

- The question of strengthening and extending the Abraham accords suffered a blow.
- The normalization of Israeli-Saudi relations is put to the deep freeze.
- The Indian-Mediterranean transport corridor being a long-term project, was not seriously affected. - The thaw in the ties of Israel with Turkey is likewise relegated to a more propitious future.
- Egypt, bordering to Gaza via Raffa, faces a renewed humanitarian, security, refugee and ultimately a political challenge of magnitude. The same applies to the Hasemite Kingdom of Jordan. - Iran, directly involved or not, is at first look, a beneficiary of this grave crisis, as, beyond the influence it already exerts via proxies, it has a plain field to get closer to Saudi Arabia. At the same time, they might be tempted to think that the prospect of facing an attack by Israel goes in the dustbin.
- The longer the crisis lasts, the more the probability of spikes in the oil prices rises. - Western Europe, and Greece, hosting ver
- Western Europe, and Greece, hosting very large numbers of Moslem immigrants, citizens as well as legal or illegal migrants, will have to deal with an explosion of religiously motivated sympathy to

Gazans and the Palestinians at large. This will stand at odds with the policy of support of Israel by the European governments and a large part of the European public.

- If PM Netanyahu's policies of razing to the ground Gaza in order to eradicate Hamas prevail, then a new wave of Palestinian refugees will knock the doors of Egypt and the other Arab League states, Turkey and Europe across the sea.
- Hostilities in Ukraine must cease.

Stravonas (<https://www.stravonas.gr/>), integral part of the Hellenic citizens society, in view of the gathering storm, thinks as follows:

- Israel risks losing the moral high ground by pushing aside any sense of analogy in its war against Hamas, bombing and destroying indiscriminately the Gaza exclave.
- US got to safeguard "equilibrium of suffering" between Israelis and Palestinians, if the remaining western influence is to be preserved in the Middle East and across the Moslem world.
- Paradoxically, the Hamas terror operation and the Israeli counterattack, bring back to the table the issue of definitive settlement of the question of Palestine; on the basis of the UN two states formula, in principle along the lines of pre1967 borders.
- The longer this crisis festers the more state actors like Iran and Turkey, will benefit and the world public opinion will be galvanized not just against Israel but against the West and Christianity.
- Europe will have an acute domestic problem, with legions of Moslem inhabitants demonstrating against Israel and harbouring hatred against their respective host countries.

That's why this war between Israel and Hamas must come to an end, before the Armageddon is unleashed.

3. THE IMPERATIVE OF MUTUAL RECOGNITION AND THE DANGERS OF EXTREMISM IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Dr. Brince Ghattas, Professor Emeritus, Assiut University, Egypt - President, Institute of Middle East Studies (IMSAM)

The ongoing conflict in Gaza, with its devastating toll on innocent lives on both sides, continues to escalate tensions and concern internationally. A thorough examination of the core issues and potential avenues for peace is urgently needed. This commentary aims to emphasize the critical importance of adhering to international law, especially regarding the protection of civilians, and highlights the complex role of social media in fueling extremism in this protracted conflict. A

universally acknowledged principle in international law is the prohibition of targeting civilians in conflicts. The loss of life and destruction in Gaza and Israel not only represent humanitarian tragedies but also violate international legal standards. A commitment to these principles is vital, mandating that military actions avoid civilian areas and comply strictly with the laws of armed conflict. This is crucial for reducing human suffering and laying the groundwork for any sustainable peace. The impact of targeting civilians goes beyond immediate casualties, perpetuating a cycle of revenge and escalating violence. This exacerbates the humanitarian crisis and hampers the prospects for lasting peace. Thus, the international community must ensure compliance with these laws, not only through words but through practical measures to protect civilians and hold accountable those who violate these standards. In the era of digital communication, the role of social media in this conflict is significant. Platforms once praised for promoting democracy and free speech are now often exploited to disseminate propaganda and incite violence. Extremist elements on both sides use these platforms to radicalize individuals, deepening hatred and misunderstanding. The challenge is to counteract this by promoting narratives of peace and reconciliation, utilizing social media's potential to connect and heal rather than divide. Central to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the principle of mutual recognition, as embodied in all previous peace agreements. Recognizing each other's right to exist and to self-determination is essential for meaningful dialogue. Israelis and Palestinians must acknowledge each other's deep historical and cultural ties to the land. This mutual recognition, although challenging, remains the only viable path to a two-state solution and peaceful coexistence. The reality that neither Israelis nor Palestinians are going to disappear is fundamental to understanding this conflict. Solutions must be based on mutual respect and recognition, leading to coexistence within mutually agreed borders. As the conflict evolves, these fundamental principles must guide efforts towards a peaceful future. In summary, resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict requires a renewed commitment to international law, a strategic approach to managing social media's influence, and a strong dedication to mutual recognition. These elements are crucial for achieving a resolution that ensures lasting peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

4. HAMAS ATTACK AS A STRATEGIC CHOICE

Prof. Kleanthis Kyriakides, American University of the Emirates

My humble opinion is that the Hamas tremendously cruel attacks were executed with the purpose to cause an extreme Israeli reaction with massive illegal retaliation against civilian population, war

crimes according to International Humanitarian Law, bordering genocide. Already blocking Gaza from any food, fuel, electricity and water is a crime against humanity. But why would Hamas do something that would hurt its own people?

Firstly, it brings Saudi Arabia who wants to normalize relations with Israel in a very tough position. So does with the signatories of the Abraham Accords, not to mention Egypt and Jordan, the latter's Hashemite King being the custodian of Al-Aqsa Mosque. No Arab government can turn a blind eye into the wiping out of Gaza. The Palestinian cause rallies all Arabs (even non Muslims) and all Muslims (even non Arabs) As simple as that.

How about the Palestinian Authority? The attack was a fait accompli to the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank who has to take sides! Can PA denounce the Hamas attack? That would have been a political or even literal suicide. Unity by force and unity against Israel against the will of PA.

How about Iran? Can it remain idle as the "big supporter" of the Palestinian cause if Gaza is "reduced to rubble"? Hamas' war crimes are calculated moves and Iran will be in a difficult position, too! They are obliged to be more proactive in their support, or they will lose face. Add to the aforementioned the message to Netanyahu: In the last year, the Israeli conservative government has considerably increased the illegal settlements in Occupied Territories and of course Gaza remains the largest open-air jail in the world due to the Israeli blockade for the last 17 years. So, what is there to lose with an all-out war? All these years we had been hearing about the Israeli "Samson option". Finally it was a Palestinian one...