



Ελληνική Εταιρεία Γεωγραφικών Μελετών
«Ο Στράβων»

WAR OF ISRAEL AGAINST HAMAS – A PYRRHIC VICTORY

On Friday, October 27, the long-awaited ground operation in the Gaza Strip by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) against the militias of Hamas began.

Unity of purpose and civic peace-Burgfriede (to paraphrase conditions in Germany at the outset of WWI) within Israel itself is tenuous, as the anti-Netanyahu sentiment is continuously lurking. Nevertheless, the resolve of IDF remains steely, no matter the huge number and asymmetrical victims among the Palestinian civilians of Gaza.

As the days go by, no prospect for the desired silence of the arms is palpable soon. Outrage of the Arab street and the Muslim world at large, so far, serves only the social necessity for those sitting in power to defuse the justified ire of the masses, while in the West, humanitarian sensitivities do not translate into decisiveness to urge for a cessation of hostilities.

This page deems that the Israeli campaign to suppress Hamas will be a Pyrrhic victory at best. This victory will not remove the existential threat the Jewish state has been confronted with since the May 1948 Declaration of Independence (from the same Britain which 31 years before had committed itself to a national home for the Jewish people). Even if IDF carries the day in several weeks or months, Israel will politically get out of war traumatized and isolated: the horrible incursion of Hamas terrorists beyond its direct results has managed to revive head-on the worsening conditions of Palestinians in the West Bank. The Hamas members are regarded as heroes, and Abbas's authority is sustained rather by the friendly Arab and Western countries than by the Palestinians themselves.

As the war drags on, repression in the West Bank and expansion of the settlements become more and more apparent, Hezbollah actions on the border of Lebanon will be gradually more intense, Al Sissi's Egypt and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will face a stability challenge, Iran will be walking a tightrope between entering the battlefield by proxy and losing face if they stand idly by. For Egypt and Jordan, it is unbearable to accept refugees from an ethnically cleansed Gaza, be their expulsion programmed or unintended but accepted by the Israeli government. Israel is leaving at a rapid pace the moral high ground and, for the first time, is clearly losing the

battle of public opinion with societies in the global South and even in the West.

The more the fight goes on, the more the public standing of Israel is suffering, while Netanyahu and his domestic allies have not come up with a viable exit strategy.

Things hang on the balance. The security of Israel is most important for the West. In the present imbroglio, security is first undermined by the Israeli PM. Israel's security is a more precious commodity than the political fate of Netanyahu; Western security and prosperity are, in turn, more considerable than Israel's self-appreciation, and humankind's safety and existence more significant than the hegemony of the West. Israel must not draw the world into Sampson's dilemma. Instead, they should come to terms with the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem for all difficulties in revisiting the Oslo Accords. Nor that the Palestinians have not played their part in the failure of these agreements.

This crisis is not a simple Intifada; it is something much bigger, profoundly altering the terms of the functioning of Israel and the entire Middle East.

***Stravon of Amaseia,
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