

A Palestinian State and Cease-Fire will reduce Tensions

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The passage discusses the recent conflict between HAMAS and Israel, highlighting the complexities and tensions in the Middle East.

The attack by Hamas

The terror-attack by HAMAS from the Gaza strip on Israel, leaving 1200 civilians and military personnel dead, has made many conflict lines in the Middle East visible that have been covered up or papered over. The 75-year occupation or blockade of Palestinian territories has left grievances and unhealed wounds. Many promises of a Palestinian State remained empty. Even more, some Arab and African states (United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan) entered the process of “normalization” with Israel in 2020, while ignoring Palestinian rights and wishes. Saudi Arabia was about to join, if some conditions are met, like strong security guarantees by the US, a peaceful nuclear program, and a missile defense system. This endeavor has been stopped by HAMAS’ attack.

Israel’s war

Israel reacted to the attack according to its own way and with its own goals. In its military campaign it started not only to destroy the infrastructure of HAMAS but also the civilian infrastructure leaving the 30.000 casualties and two million people displaced. The Gaza-strip became more and more uninhabitable. South Africa brought the case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) because it suspected Israel to commit Genocide. After stressing Israel’s “right of self-defense” against HAMAS the US requested Israel not to pursue the following goals: depopulation, forceful displacement of Gazans, re-occupation, blockade or redrawing borders. Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not accept one of them and also rejects a Two-State-Solution. He wants Israel’s control over all of its territory, including the West-Bank and Gaza. This means the continuation of the war and no cease-fire. The US does not use its leverage (e.g. aid and military assistance) to implement this solution and the European Union (EU) does not have the leverage to “impose a Two-State-Solution” as High Representative Josep Borrell suggested. The US used leverage in the past, when it put pressure on Israel, France and Great Britain 1956 during the Suez-Crisis to withdraw from Egypt.

Lebanon and Yemen

Other members of the so called “Axis of Resistance”, the Hezbollah in Lebanon reacted with military strikes on Northern Israel and the Houthis in Yemen with strikes on Israel bound ships in the Red Sea. The US and UK retaliated with strikes from aircraft-carriers in the red sea and bombers starting from international basis (e.g. Cyprus). Iran is in a delicate position. It feels obliged to support the Houthis and Hezbollah with aid and weapons, but tries not to get involved directly in the conflicts itself, although Israel hit Iranian backed militias in Syria and Iraq. This tit-for-tat could at some point get out of hand. The US has to call on Israel not to provoke a broader war, and Iran should hold back its allies not to incite a conflagration in the region. At the end of the day, Israel is sure that the US will not abandon it. As Israel’s Defense Minister Moshe

Dayan coerced the US during the Yom Kippur 1973 to get its support; otherwise it would threaten the attacking Arab States with its nuclear weapons.

The Arab-Peace-Plan

As long as a viable Palestinian State is not being established, the tensions will remain. The Arab States should reset the “normalization”-process and make the recognition of Israel in the borders of 1967 as a pre-condition. This would mean to revive the Arab-Peace-Plan of 2002. It calls “land-for-peace”. Moreover, Iran has to make up its mind and join this initiative. A good basis would be the Saudi-Iran Agreement that was brokered by China. After all, Iran has already recognized a Two-State-Solution, when it voted for the Resolution of the UN General Assembly (UNGS) on the “cessation of hostilities” in Gaza in December 2023, where this request was enshrined. Also, Iran supported the Statement of the Organization of Islamic States (OIS) that included a Two-State-Solution, as well. In the wake of these peace processes steps to revive some elements of the nuclear agreement (JCPOA) could be established: freeze Iran’s uranium-enrichment, un-freeze Iranian assets abroad, closer cooperation of Iran with the IAEA to solve the outstanding issues of contaminated particles, exchange of prisoners.

In summary, the passage outlines the complexities surrounding the conflicts in the Middle East, potential solutions, and the involvement of various regional and global actors.

