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Palestinian Center for
POLICY and
SURVEY RESEARCH

The Day After: paper # 9



Repercussions of the PNA's Collapse on Civil and Political Affairs

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*Strategic Analysis Unit
October 2013*



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With the establishment of the PNA in 1994, I served as Director General in the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, and was responsible for Israeli affairs. During this period, I was a member of the Steering Committee of the “People- to People” program and director of the Palestinian committee. (The People –to People program, part of the Oslo Accords, was funded by the Government of Norway.) My responsibilities included the development of relations between the two peoples in order to support the peace process. In addition, during the same period, I served as a member of the Palestinian delegation responsible for negotiations regarding the release of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails. Director of MA programs of Al-Quds University in Gaza 2006-2007.

From 2008 head of the culture of peace committee, as part of the Palestinian negotiation team.

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The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)

PSR is an independent nonprofit institution and think tank of policy analysis and academic research. PSR was founded with the goal of advancing scholarship and knowledge on immediate issues of concern to Palestinians in three areas: domestic politics and government, strategic analysis and foreign policy, and public opinion polls and survey research. PSR research units conduct and organize four types of activities: research and policy analysis, empirical surveys and public opinion polls, task forces and study groups, and meetings and conferences. The units focus on current public policy issues with a special reliance on empirical research as a tool to advance scholarship and understanding.

PSR is dedicated to promoting objective and nonpartisan research and analysis and to encouraging a better understanding of Palestinian domestic and international environment in an atmosphere of free debate and exchange of ideas. PSR is registered as a nonprofit institution in the Palestinian Ministry of Justice.

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Repercussions of the PNA's Collapse on Civil and Political Affairs

This paper is one amongst ten such papers prepared within the Palestinian center for policy and survey research's initiative titled, "The day after". The initiative aims to study the circumstances that would face Palestinian politics and society in a situation in which the PA becomes unable to carry out its role. These papers examine the consequences of the dissolution or collapse of the PA on a number of central issues that concern the Palestinians, which include: security, economy, education, health, judiciary, telecommunications, basic services such as water and power, local government, political and civil conditions, as well as the future of the two-state solution.

These papers examine the significance and implications of PA's absence as well as possible options that could be adopted to mitigate the negative effects of such an absence and develop specific recommendations for the sector in question. Two experts have commented on each of these prepared papers. Each paper was presented and discussed in a workshop attended by policy makers, parliamentarians, experts, and academics.

This initiative has been organized in cooperation with the U.S./Middle East Project and the Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre.

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Summary:

The Palestinian Authority was established as a result of the Declaration of Principles in Oslo in 1994 as a temporary authority in the West Bank and Gaza, on the basis that the negotiations for a permanent solution would end in a period no longer than five years, culminating in the creation of a Palestinian state on the fourth of June 1967 borders.

Even though the negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides were troubled, especially after the collapse of the Camp David negotiations, and even with the devastating consequences of the second Intifada which almost caused the PA to completely collapse and shatter the hopes of reaching a two state solution resulting in the transition of the PA to a state, and despite Israeli policies that led to the weakening of the PA, especially those concerning settlement expansion, the PA, until this moment has not collapsed.

The main reason that is preventing the collapse of the PA is the Palestinian and Israeli need and mutual interest in the PA continuing its role. Both sides, each for their own interest are careful that the PA does not reach a level where it is unable to continue. To Israel, the status quo is the best option and the PA is aware of this. Even with the weakness the PA suffers from, sometimes to the level of incompetency, when looking at the ramifications of its dissolution, the conclusion is clear that this step should not be taken.

Even with the mutual need for the PA to continue, the PA might reach a stage where it would not be able to continue performing its duties, whether this happens gradually or as a result of dramatic developments that the PA won't be able to escape, such as having a severe financial blockade because of the Palestinian reconciliation, or the refusal to go to negotiations under Israeli and American conditions. The collapse of the PA might result from the collapse of the security situation because of dangerous hostile attacks by the settlers, or due to a decision by president Abbas to retire from the political scene.

If the PA does collapse, Israel would have many options. Option one would be to try to reoccupy the West Bank once again as it has done before the establishment of the PA, and work on managing municipalities, civil organizations and international organizations from afar, while controlling security. The second option would be Israel's withdrawal to areas behind the wall and move scattered settlements into settlement blocks, announcing their inclusion to Israel, as it announces to the international community its lack of responsibility for the rest of the areas or the people. The third and last option would be in having the pre PA situation back; the return of military rule to the West Bank.

If the PA collapses either gradually or suddenly by a decision from the Palestinian leaders, or as a result of certain developments, and regardless of the policy Israel takes, it is likely that the security situation would return to the way it was before the establishment of the PA two decades ago; the control of the ground situation would return back to the hands of the Palestinian factions which would be in constant struggle with the Israeli forces.

The collapse of the PA would have ramifications on the Palestinian-Palestinian relations, especially between Gaza and the West Bank, as Hamas would benefit the most from such a step. Hamas would tighten its control on Gaza on the basis that it is the only Palestinian entity in existence, and would treat its own government as the Palestinian government, while it strengthens its role in the West Bank replacing that of Fatah. In the case of the collapse of the PA, Israel would keep control on borders and the movement of Palestinians which would mean a continuing coordination when it comes to people's documentation and authentication papers.

The Possibility of the Collapse of the PA:

Given everything the PA is currently going through, such as the obstacles threatening its continuity, especially on the political and economic sides, and given Israeli settlement expansion and security steps that weaken the PA, and despite Israel's precaution to avoid a PA collapse-- while keeping it weak and busy providing daily sustenance for its citizens-- developments on the ground might occur that would lead to PA collapse or dissolve regardless of the desires of the concerned parties, especially the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

There are many scenarios or developments that might lead to the collapse or dissolution of the PA. The most prominent are:

First: The failure to return to negotiations on the basis of a two state solution. The failure especially of the American efforts to bring the two sides to the negotiation table, or forcing the Palestinian side to undergo negotiations predestined to have no solution, or the PA holding negotiations only for the sake of filling a vacuum as has happened several times before, could trigger this scenario. This might make the PA lose its reason to exist, no longer having a political purpose. The PA was created as a temporary entity with limited privileges and possibilities until a sovereign Palestinian state can be established on the borders of the fourth of June.

The failure to return to negotiations, and most importantly reaching a political agreement, might lead the Palestinian leadership to take steps that would change the status quo in terms of the relations with Israelis. Such steps could include decreasing security cooperation with Israel and at the same time increasing popular resistance that might become more violent, as has happened in the first Intifada.

Second: Ending the Palestinian division and creating one Palestinian government, contrary to American and Israeli desires. This might lead to the imposition of an economic and political blockade, as has previously happened in 2006 when Hamas won the legislative elections. A Palestinian reconciliation such as this, coupled with a failed peace process and an increase in popular resistance could lead to an increase in tensions and a clash with the Israelis which might lead to the gradual collapse of the PA. The presence of a right wing Israeli government with extremist members who do not believe in the two-state solution, and who do not consider the collapse of the PA as dangerous to Israeli interests, would help foster this scenario. What would also help is the public opinion's preoccupation with regional and international developments that are happening in nearby countries, and the continuous push regarding a military strike against Iran's nuclear project. This would make the collapse of the PA or its dissolution an unimportant event.

Third: An unexpected event triggered by one side that would lead the other side to take steps or react in a manner that might lead to the collapse of the PA. For example, an act of violence by settlers against Palestinians that leads to many deaths. This would make the PA unable to control the Palestinians' angry reactions, which might lead to the collapse of the security establishment, which is probably the one and only essential establishment the PA relies on. There might be an opposite situation where a Palestinian organization could perform a substantial military action against Israelis that would illicit an angry Israeli reaction, this reaction could render the security situation uncontrollable, leading gradually, if it continues, to the collapse of the PA, or its loss of its political and security purpose.

Fourth: The sudden retirement of the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas for a variety of reasons, most importantly reaching a state of hopelessness in his role as a president of the PA and the PLO. The absence of president Abbas from the political scene before conducting presidential and legislative elections, and before giving a chance for the Palestinian leaders and Palestinian factions to reorganize, might have negative effects on the function of the PA, leading to its collapse. President Abbas is the father of Oslo, meaning that from a political point of view he is not only an elected president-- even though his presidency has ended and there is a need for elections to renew the legitimacy-- but most importantly he is the person who is the architect of the political project that the PA was founded on, and he believes in peaceful negotiations and in the need for security stabilization as a means of reclaiming Palestinian rights and establishing a state. His absence, especially a sudden one, would hit the PA hard; if not leading to its collapse, it would decrease its viability.

The situation would be bleaker if more than one of the scenarios mentioned above were to happen at the same time, making the collapse of the PA more likely.

Israel's Action in the Case of the Collapse of the PA:

Israeli policy has treated the PA since its establishment as a weak authority, but not one that should be brought to collapse. The biggest test for this policy came after the collapse of the Camp David peace process in 2000 and the repercussions that followed on the ground which led to the weakening of the PA through Israeli invasions, arrests, and building of the wall as well as the erection of hundreds of military checkpoints spread throughout the Palestinian territories. Even with the collapse of the peace process and the bloody confrontation between the two sides, Israeli policy did not reach a point of seeking the end of the PA. It preferred to besiege the late president Yasser Arafat in his headquarters until he passed away.

This has been Israel's policy which was supported by the security and military establishments who sought to insure that the Israeli pressures would not lead to the collapse of the PA or cause the PA to make the decision to dissolve itself by returning the "keys" to the Israeli occupation. The main reason that makes the Israelis in general and the security and military establishments in particular to follow such policy is the interest in avoiding a situation in which they would have the responsibility for delivering services and alleviating the economic burden of the Palestinian people.

As described by many, it is a "deluxe" occupation where Israel practices all sorts of violence as an occupying force, but at the same time does not take any legal or economic responsibility as a price for its actions against Palestinians, their land, and needs. The most important part is their complete satisfaction with the security coordination with the PA which allows them unprecedented control on the security situation. This control is stronger than it was when the Israelis were occupying the area before the establishment of the PA.

But what would the Israeli policies towards these areas be like if the PA were to collapse or dissolve itself?

The first scenario, which is preferred by the Israeli side, is preventing the situation from going back to what it was before the establishment of the PA, with Israel taking responsibility for the areas. Israel does not want to find itself responsible for providing services for more than two and a half million Palestinians living in the West Bank (As for Gaza, Israel considers itself withdrawn from it and has no responsibility for its citizens). Israel does not want to take control of education, health, social affairs and municipality services...etc. Instead, Israel wants to keep security intact while controlling more and more lands while not caring for the occupied people.

The best option for Israel, in case of PA collapse, would be in controlling the situation from afar without the need to enter the areas. It would rely on strengthening the role of municipalities so that they would be able to provide the maximum possible services and fill the vacuum that would result from the dissolution of the PA.

It would depend on international organizations such as the UN and the World Bank and other service organizations that would help in easing the burden. Israel would not stop Palestinian civil organizations specialized in economic and social affairs from strengthening their capacity. In this case, Israel would focus on security matters and would keep controlling areas "C" and would not allow Palestinians to use it without permission.

This would guarantee Israel the continuation of control over Palestinian movement across the borders, especially the Karama (King Hussein) Bridge and everything related to the documentation of citizens, in order to continue its control on Palestinian movement. And because the collapse of the PA would have economic ramifications, particularly for the PA work force, whether military or civilian, Israeli interests would dictate a change in its policy in dealing with the Palestinian labor market. It is expected that Israel would grant tens of thousands of work permits based on specific security measures such as age and social status in order to compensate for the loss in of income the PA used to provide.

The success of such an option depends primarily not on the Israeli desire alone, but also on other factors, for example, the nature of the prevalent security situation after the PA's collapse, as well as the degree of responsiveness of local authorities and international organizations to Israeli requests.

The second scenario that Israel might pursue, is taking unilateral steps as it has done before in the Gaza Strip. This means that the Israeli government might announce formally the inclusion of settlement blocs into Israel, including the settlement blocs around Jerusalem, as well as the "Ariel" settlement. At the same time Israel would continue building the wall with adjustments that suit it, as well as dismantling dispersed settlements and including them to the settlement blocs that would become part of Israel and would come under Israeli law.

Once this step is taken, Israel would announce that it has no responsibility for what is left of the Palestinian areas, and that it is better to coordinate the future of those areas with Jordan. Israel would actually encourage an association between Palestine and Jordan and for Jordan to take control of the Palestinian areas, especially considering that Israel still considers the Jordan Valley as a strategic place that it does not plan on withdrawing from.

In linking the Palestinian areas with Jordan, Israel would get rid of its responsibility towards Palestinian citizens and shatter their dreams about a state on the 1967 borders. Gaza would be completely separate from the West Bank, and most importantly, Israel would have control over Jerusalem without having to compromise in the future.

The problem that might prevent this from happening is the Israeli government's inability to make a decision to dismantle settlements and evacuate settlers. Although there are many who oppose this step, perhaps their opposition would weaken if the Jordanian side is seen as part of the solution. They would consider this the end of the Palestinian dream of having their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The third scenario, one that Israel does not want and would strive to not find itself in, is to hold complete responsibility for the areas, especially judiciary, economic and security responsibilities over the Palestinians. Israel would find itself facing a situation similar to that which prevailed before the establishment of the PA. This would mean the official return of Israeli military rule, and the Israeli responsibility for the Palestinian life in the eyes of the international community.

This is Israel's least favorable scenario. It might lead to constant Palestinian-Israeli confrontations and would probably lead to a state of continuous bloodshed which would keep the Palestinian cause as the top priority regionally and internationally. Furthermore, the return of direct Israeli military rule to the Palestinian areas would make Israel's ability to continue with its settlement expansion and exploit Palestinian resources easier to criticize than the case today. This, Israel would most likely seek to avoid.

The Repercussions of the PA's Collapse on the Palestinian Situation:

The collapse of the PA could lead to a dramatic change in the relationships between Israel and the Palestinians, whether on the ground or on the political negotiations front. It could also lead to changes in domestic relationships between various Palestinian factions.

First: Relations with Israel after the Collapse:

Regardless of the nature of the policies that Israel would adopt in the case of the collapse of the PA, there are two main areas that Israel would not allow change in. The first is the population registration file or what is known as "civil affairs;" Israel would continue to control borders and Palestinian citizens' movement. The other area is the security issue where Israel would not end its security operations inside Palestinian territories.

Civil Affairs:

Before the establishment of the PA and under the military rule of the occupied Palestinian areas in 1967, Israel managed the population registration file and land registry file since it was the controlling power on the ground. Managing those files was done by Israeli army officers and local Palestinian employees. After the establishment of the PA, and as a part of the Oslo accords, the civil affairs

authority was established by the Palestinian side. Its job was restricted to administrating and coordinating everything relating to civil affairs between the two sides. On the opposite side was the office of the coordinator, the one responsible for organizing the relationship with the Palestinians through coordination offices (civil administration) available in each Palestinian governorate.

On the ground, nothing but names has changed. The roles and responsibilities and power relationships have remained the same. The various terms used, such as military rule or military ruler, and the term civil administration or head of civil administration, as well as the higher coordination committee and head of higher coordination committee, practically meant the same thing. What is common between all of these terms is that they directly refer to the Israeli army; all employees are officers working in the army.

In the case of the collapse of the PA, and regardless of the name given to the body that would administer the relations with Palestinians, there would remain a coordinator and staff that would either directly or indirectly, officially or unofficially oversee the relationship. In any scenario, Israel would keep its control over the population registration file and land registration file in the West Bank, especially for the area known as areas “C”, as Israel has kept to itself all files and jurisdiction related to this area, and has not transferred this information to the Palestinian side.

Israel would only give up its control on things related to Palestinian civil affairs or decrease its control if it no longer controlled international borders that link the West Bank with the outside world, or more specifically handing the responsibility and control to the Jordanian side. In case of bringing in the Jordanians, that would mean that there is an Israeli decision to transfer to Jordan complete responsibility for the areas that Israel decides not to include in its borders. This would apply in the case Israel decided to dismantle dispersed settlements or move them to other settlements located inside the wall.

Security Conditions after the Collapse of the PA:

Israel’s satisfaction with the current security situation in the Palestinian areas, especially in the last five years, is the main reason that makes it opposed to bringing the PA to collapse. Each time the PA reaches a severe financial crisis, mainly because of an Israeli decision not to transfer Palestinian tax returns, the Israeli security establishment pressures the Israeli government to undo that action, thus helping the PA overcome its economic problems and ensuring that it won’t collapse. This mainly is the result of Israel’s awareness that the collapse of the PA could lead to dramatic changes in the security situation that wouldn’t serve Israel’s interests. The security challenges are likely to be the main concern of Israel in the case of PA collapse. Of the most important challenges is how Israel would deal with the weapons now in the possession of the Palestinian security forces. How would Israel deal with thousands of military personnel trained by American, European, and Jordanian experts? Some of these forces would most probably become hostile to Israel.

The collapse of the PA would lead the security situation to return to what it was before the establishment of the PA in 1994, including armed violence on the one hand, and a popular Intifada on the other. The competition between Palestinian groups in general, and Fatah and Hamas in particular would fuel the violence. The biggest beneficiary in the beginning of the collapse of the PA is likely to be Hamas who would no longer be under a PA crackdown. Even though Israel depends on its own army when it comes to security, it has benefited throughout the last years from the cooperation and security coordination with the PA, as it has made sure that the scenario of Gaza where Hamas took control does not repeat itself.

Second: The Ramifications of the PA’s Collapse on the Domestic Palestinian Situation:

The relations between the Palestinian factions have gone through many stages throughout the last two decades. This relationship has reached its maximum degree of division and separation after the infighting in Gaza in June 2007, which ended with Hamas militarily controlling Gaza and creating a separate government to the one in. In practice there has been two governments, two prime ministers, and two judiciary systems that do not acknowledge the legitimacy of the other, even though the international community and the regional powers only deal with the PA in Ramallah, with the exceptions of certain countries which have dealt with Hamas, if not officially, such as Qatar, Iran, and the Syrian regime where there was a headquarters for Hamas leaders abroad.

In the Gaza Strip, Hamas dominates disallowing any activity for Fatah except in rare cases. This

applies to the West Bank as well, where the PA and its security controlled by Fatah does not allow Hamas to have any activities or social gatherings or any other event fearing that the situation of Gaza would happen elsewhere in the West Bank.

The Palestinian division has been reflected in political activities on the international and regional spheres. Unified Palestinian representation fell victim to the infighting and struggle between the two political groups. This has been particularly relevant in the aftermath of the revolutionary changes in the Arab World such as in Egypt and Tunisia where the Muslim Brotherhood, who consider themselves closer to Hamas than Fatah and the PLO, won the elections. The collapse of the PA or its dissolution would change the relationship structure that was present throughout the past years, especially since 2007.

The Ramification of the PA's Collapse on Hamas:

It is expected that Hamas would benefit the most from this situation and would probably take advantage of it in many aspects, such as:

First, if the PA collapses, its security forces, that were blocking and obstructing the work of Hamas, would collapse as well, leaving that organization free of restrictions and able to continue its advocacy and organization, and perhaps military activities.

Second, the collapse of the PA would open the way for Hamas to rebuild its military arms to use against Israel, knowing that a confrontation with Israel would allow the Islamist group to gain respect and popularity in the West Bank and at the same time provide it a security valve in the case of any internal developments. This would be identical to the way things evolved in the Gaza strip, which Hamas considers a successful one: during the second Intifada, Hamas rebuilt its military forces that were fighting the occupation, but at a certain point it used this power against the PLO and Fatah.

Third, politically Hamas would seek to legitimize its government in the Gaza Strip on the basis that it is the only government available that represents the Palestinians, even if it cannot provide services to citizens in the West Bank. The prime minister would react as if he is the president of the Palestinian people on the basis that Gaza is free, and the West Bank is struggling against the occupation.

Fourth, Hamas would invest in the collapse of the PA believing that it is the end of the political project that Fatah has implemented. On a more practical manner it would be the end not only of the Oslo Accords, but the end of Fatah's political scheme that calls for building a Palestinian state on the fourth of June borders through negotiations. Hamas would claim that its "resistance" is the right method which has liberated Gaza and is capable of liberating the West Bank.

Fifth, Hamas believes that the collapse of the PA would raise questions regarding who represents the Palestinians. A battle over control of the PLO would ensue as Hamas considers such control as one of its strategic goals. In the case of the collapse of the PA, coupled with a struggle between Hamas and Fatah, there would be an equally important struggle between the two sides on leading the PLO, especially that the majority of the historic leaders of the PLO would either leave the West Bank or vow not to return to politics. This would produce new leaders capable of leading the new phase.

The Ramification of the PA's Collapse on Fatah:

The collapse of the PA would greatly affect Fatah since the faction is the mainstream faction in Palestinian politics. It has led the Palestinian political project and led the creation of the PA. All these efforts were based on the belief that its political projects will succeed. The collapse of the PA means the collapse of that political project that Fatah has led throughout the last two decades. There would be dramatic changes in Fatah's future behavior as well as a major change in the makeup of its leaders once collapse takes effect. Some leaders, senior and junior alike, would be replaced with a younger generation of more able leaders. Here are the most important changes that would be reflected on Fatah in the case of the collapse of the PA:

First, the collapse would be considered a declaration of the failure of Fatah's political approach throughout the last two decades. This approach consisted of direct negotiations with Israel, and the dependence on political resistance, away from violence, to reach goals, while hoping to convince the international community to empathize with the Palestinians, and especially establishing an independent state on the fourth of June borders, with east Jerusalem as its capital, as well as a guarantee of a fair resolution for the Palestinian refugees problem based on the Arab Peace Initiatives. During the last two decades the majority of members and cadres of Fatah have been employed in PA institution, especially

its security services as they make up the vast majority of the security establishment. There has been almost complete Fatah dependence on PA institutions, especially in financial and security aspects. The collapse of the PA means that Fatah's political project would collapse too, not only in the eyes of the group's opposition, but also as seen by Fatah's leaders themselves. They are likely to look for ways to regain the organization's role in being the leader of the Palestinian national movement. Their pragmatic nature would help them overcome the challenge since Fatah is devoid of any governing ideology to tie it down.

Second, the collapse of the PA would bring with it a return to grass roots activism, as the security and economic powers fail, younger local leaders would soon realize that the circumstances are ripe for them to emerge in Palestinian cities and refugee camps. This is exactly what has happened in the first and second Intifadas. There are three factors that would help those leaders in their return to grassroots after the collapse of the PA. The first is the competition between leaders and various groups in Fatah. The second is the competition between different Palestinian factions in order to gain public support, especially between Fatah and Hamas. The third factor is the nature of the struggle with the Israeli forces that would try to control the events as has happened in the last two years of the first Intifada or what happened in West Bank cities and refugee camps during the second Intifada.

Third, collapse of the PA would be considered by Fatah as an end of an era and a beginning of a new one. The new era would be much like the pre Oslo period in terms of Fatah's political behavior as well as its operational activities on the ground. Regardless of the shape of the changes that would happen to its leaders, Fatah wouldn't have any other option than to partake in popular resistance, free of Oslo's restrictions and commitments.

The most favored option and the option least expensive is focusing on nonviolent resistance in fighting the occupation, which would tighten its grip and increase its military and security presence in order to fill the vacuum that would follow the collapse of the PA. Past experiences have proved that such nonviolent forms of resistance do not have a chance of lasting for long; community tradition believes in the right to resist in any shape or form, including the use of violence. Experience has shown throughout different stages of Palestinian Israeli confrontation that wishes alone are not enough to force a specific method of resistance on the ground, and that Israeli actions motivate and galvanize new forms of opposition.

Fourth: divisions within Fatah would be along the lines of support and opposition to Oslo: one side would represent those who strived for the adaptation of the political program that has paved the way for the Oslo accords and the establishment of the PA and the other side would represent those who did not believe in this approach knowing that Israel won't grant Palestinians a fair deal, particularly given the fact that the major architect of the negotiations is the American side who has never been fair to the Palestinians and who would always stand with Israel. Assuming that there is likely to be a competition between generations and that there are two different experiences for Fatah, one in the outside experience, with all that it carries from political and military experience, and one in the inside, in Palestine, which was led by leaders who have spent time in Israeli prisoners and gained experience there. The collapse of the PA means a dramatic change in the structure of the movement's leaders, many of whom would find themselves unable to continue and cope with the new situation.

The collapse of the PA and the likely gradual escalation in confrontation with Israel, in which Fatah would take the lead, might push some leaders to move outside of the country.

The absence of Mahmoud Abbas as a president of the PA and head of Fatah and the PLO, as well as the commander in chief, would have effects on the Palestinian political system and its future. Politically, President Abbas is considered one of the leaders who have affected the political approach in Fatah and in Palestine generally. The collapse of the PA, and given the age of the president, wouldn't allow him to continue his political career, especially considering that he has announced his intentions to retire, even without the collapse of the PA.

His absence from the political scene would open the door for competition, whether for leading Fatah or the PLO. It is hard to imagine a repetition of the same experience that Abbas has undergone when Arafat died; one person who holds responsibility for various positions: the president of the biggest political faction is considered the leader of the faction and at the same person the president of the country as well as the leader of the PLO. The absence of president Abbas would be considered an end

of a historical, organizational and structural era in the history of the Palestinian people, as it is likely that the Palestinian leaders would succeed in what they have failed to do after the death of Arafat, in not allowing one person to hold all leading positions as is Abbas's case right now.

The Ramification of the Collapse on the Palestinian Reconciliation:

The term Palestinian reconciliation, the ending of the Palestinian division, means the return to the situation prevailing before Hamas took over the Gaza Strip by force in June 2007. Hamas' step led to the establishment of a new government in the West Bank while Hamas kept its own government in the Gaza Strip. The term reconciliation also means the holding of presidential and legislative elections to renew legitimacy of the two establishments whose legal terms expired. Moreover, reconciliation means undergoing dramatic changes in the construction of the PLO and its leaders based on agreements between different Palestinian groups. This is supposed to take place through elections for the Palestinian National Council leading to the inclusion of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad.

The collapse of the PA would give a new definition to Palestinian reconciliation. Two issues would be removed from the Palestinian agenda: the creation of a reconciliation government and holding legislative and presidential elections. Instead, reconciliation and ending the division would be reflected in the following tasks:

First: the rebuilding and reconstruction of the PLO by including in its make up all Palestinian factions working in Palestine, especially Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. What is certain is that a lot of effort would be put into accomplishing this task since the PLO is the moral home for Palestinians and is the only legitimate representation acknowledged by the Arabs, internationally, and globally. The success of this step does not only depend on the Palestinian factions' desire and their concern about unity, but it would also be affected by political, global, and regional factors. Failure to accomplish this task would cause the conflict over Palestinian representation to heat up again leading to a real danger of further disunity.

Second: After the collapse of the PA and the dismantling of its institutions a question is likely to be raised: would the dismissed government in Gaza remain or would it be dismantled as well--considering that it is part of the PA? Would PA collapse bring about an end to disunity or would it make Gaza's government more important as it becomes the only government on the ground, which would then increase the disunity between Gaza and the West Bank?

There isn't any reason that would make Hamas abandon its government in Gaza, regardless of any other developments. In the best case scenario, Hamas might allow other factions to participate in its government, including Fatah if it desires. There is a slight possibility this might happen. As long as Hamas controls the Gaza Strip, and as long as it values its own security, at least in the near future, it would maintain its government in Gaza in order to administer and manage the Strip. It might state that Gaza is liberated and that there is a Palestinian Authority. Even if it gets attacked by the Israelis from time to time it would continue to exist. The struggle over the West Bank, now under complete Israeli occupation would continue.

But this Hamas policy might be faced with a more complicated reality. Maintaining the government in Gaza under Hamas depends mainly on the relative calm of the conflict with the Israeli side. Based on past experiences, whenever there has been a violent clash in the West Bank, Gaza could not remain calm for long. Therefore, Hamas' desire to keep its government and its control over the Gaza Strip is likely to be dependent on its ability to control events in the West Bank.

Third: developments in the West Bank are likely to determine the nature of the relationship between the various Palestinian factions. PA collapse is likely to be followed with an intensification of Israeli military presence in the West Bank leading to greater conflict, confrontation, arrests and casualties which in turn would lead to the creation of a special kind of relationship between Palestinian factions, especially Fatah and Hamas. On the one hand, they are likely to be united by the struggle and common destiny and by the harsh circumstances of arrests-- as the number of prisoners would exceed the numbers from the first and second Intifada. But at the same time, there would be a state of rivalry between the various factions and groups, especially between Fatah and Hamas, regarding control over the Palestinian street in their attempt to affect and use the masses in what they perceive to be beneficial for them. This would build a lot of friction, which the occupation would likely help in deepening and spreading, so that they remain preoccupied with infighting, making the occupation more effective in

controlling the situation from afar.

Recommendations

First, the collapse of the PA would bring about an end to the peace process that has been based on the two-state solution through direct negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. This is likely to be the case since the Israeli government, controlled by the extreme right wing, would invest in the situation to promote and enhance settlement expansion and create new realities on the ground that would make a two state solution impossible. The implication of this is that the PA needs to shift to a new solution: demanding full citizenship in a bi-national state.

Second, even with the PA's weakness, and even though it was established temporarily and for a specific period of time until the Palestinians could transition to an independent sovereign state, and although the occupation benefits from the PA's current position, the continuation of the PA is a benefit to the Palestinian people and serves their interest. As long as it is in their hands, Palestinians shouldn't dissolve the PA.

Third, in the case of the collapse of the PA, and in order not to recreate some negative aspects that were a source of discomfort and confusion, and drawing from lessons from the previous Palestinian experience, especially during the first and second Intifadas, there needs to be coordination between different Palestinian forces on the methods and ways of Palestinian resistance.

Fourth, assuming that the collapse of the PA would lead to bloody Palestinian-Israeli confrontations, and based on past Palestinian experiences, there needs to be extreme caution not to be drawn to acts of violence that would cause damage to the Palestinian people and their fair resistance, so that they do not become the aggressor, rather than the victim. The Palestinian resistance should avoid targeting civilians, especially women, the elderly and children.

Fifth, if Israel decides not to accept responsibility for Palestinian's conditions as an occupying force, the Palestinians shouldn't cooperate in any way with any kind of Israeli policy that aims to get rid of its responsibility towards the Palestinians. The Palestinians need to be ready for Israeli attempts that aim to create new Village Leagues or perhaps City Leagues.

Finally, the future of the Palestinians and their cause would depend on their unity and cohesion, both in the political and social realms. The Palestinian people shouldn't lose their compass in order to insure that their cause remain alive until a fair political solution that guarantees a dignified life is reached. The PA is only one tool available for the Palestinians in their search for statehood in accordance with international legitimacy.

To start with, I would just like to point out that researchers and research centers looking into the idea of the PNA collapsing, or being dissolved, is nothing new. It usually results in feeling the helplessness of the PNA and its failure to achieve its goals, first of which, being the goal it was created to carry out according to the Oslo accord, and that is the establishment of an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders.

The stances on the dissolution of the PNA differ. There are those in favor, based on the deadlock in the political horizon, and the impasse in the path of negotiations. As well as the ineffectiveness and corruption of the PNA, which gives citizens heavy financial burdens in the light of price increases, limited salaries and an economic depression. There are also those who see that the PNA has become a security agent for the Israeli occupation, and played a role in the marginalization of the PLO, and at the same time, it failed to represent Palestinians abroad and provide for their needs. However, those who oppose the dissolution of the PNA base their argument on the fact that the PNA is a national achievement, an organization made possible through Palestinian popular struggle, and that its collapse would have catastrophic effects on the future of the Palestinian people.

The repercussions of the PNA's dissolution for any reason, would differ from those of the PNA's collapse. In the first scenario, the rationale would be to hold the occupation accountable for its responsibilities, and the preparation to manage a new struggle. whereas the collapse of the PNA would be unplanned, and would have difficult repercussions on the Palestinian situation.

The possibility of PNA collapse:

Dr. Abu Zayda mentioned some reasons that could lead to the collapse of the PNA, and I agree with him that a failure to reach a political settlement which is acceptable to the Palestinian people, is the most important factor in the mobilization of the Palestinian masses to take the initiative and put an end to the negotiations. However, such a scenario does not necessarily lead to the collapse of the PNA. But it would surely weaken it, and cripple its policies in the political and security arenas. The demolition of the PNA is not a popular Palestinian goal, but its reformation could be a uniting objective.

As to the effects of the reconciliation and the ending of the division, despite its refusal by the occupation and the USA, it can be seen that the intensity of this refusal is not as strong as it used to be, especially if we take into account the current European stance on the reconciliation. This weakens the Israeli refusal.

As to the possibility of the PNA's collapse due to a wave of violence, I cannot discount such a possibility and its effects, especially considering that we witnessed the Israeli incursion in the wake of the Aqsa Intifada, and what followed it from harm to the PNA and the destruction of its headquarters, ending in the siege and assassination of Yasser Arafat by poison. But we are in agreement, that the Israelis, and even in the most severe circumstances, have not gambled with the destruction of the PNA or its consequences.

I disagree with Dr. Abu Zayda with regards to the resignation of President Abbas and his absence from the political field, and its effects on the collapse of the PNA. I do not believe that the resignation alone would lead to collapse, unless Fateh made a decision to move on to other scenarios. Of course I do not wish to belittle the effects of a surprise resignation, and the state of confusion it would lead to, however I do not believe that the President himself is in favor of ending the PNA.

I find it unlikely that any of the above reasons alone would lead to the collapse of the PNA, but it is possible that many factors could occur simultaneously, forming heavy pressure that could lead to such a collapse.

Israeli behavior in the case of PNA collapse:

I agree with Dr. Abu Zayda, that the occupation's policy towards the PNA is based on utilizing and using the PNA, without letting it develop beyond the realm of carrying out administrative, financial and

security functions. In the best case scenario, it could evolve into self rule.

Regarding the scenarios that Israel could resort to in the case of PNA collapse, all of these scenarios are possible on a theoretical level. However, I believe that they are not ready to repeat the Gaza disengagement scenario, as leaving a security vacuum is the focal point of any Israeli consideration, especially since they have come to believe that their unilateral disengagement from Gaza entailed a high security cost, the situation in the West Bank could be even more dangerous. Therefore, a unilateral disengagement behind the wall is possible in the case of the PNA or another party taking responsibility for security. Because of this, they would be eager to fill the security vacuum with alternatives to the PNA, either through returning the administrative and service responsibilities to Jordan, who under pressure somehow agreed to this, or through international forces, which is a weak possibility due to its difficulty, as the Palestinians would treat them as an occupation army, or through Palestinian collaborator forces. I expect that the third scenario, in which Dr. Abu Zayda suggested that Israel would try to avoid a direct involvement and reoccupation and administration of the whole West Bank, would be the most likely. Although it is not the best option for the Israelis, but perhaps it could be the easiest and least dangerous option for them from a security standpoint, especially if it is accompanied by international service organizations, and giving municipal councils more powers. As well as a propaganda campaign declaring such an occupation as temporary, and is only for humanitarian reasons and for maintaining international law to better the life of the populace...during this all, there would be a continuous search for alternatives and solutions.

Repercussions of PNA collapse on the Palestinian condition:

First: The relationship with the occupation:

In the case of PNA collapse, Israel would resort to filling the vacuum and finding an alternative administration to manage the occupied territories. It would strike against national factions and icons, through a wide campaign of arrests. It would also seek to create chaos and lawlessness, and encourage theft and violence among other things to weaken the morale of the populace, so that they are more susceptible to alternative solutions. However, it would of course maintain the provision of basic services such as education and health and the police and civil affairs offices.

Concerning the security situation, it would be prickly and complicated. A state of instability and insecurity would develop. There might be a return to lawlessness, and Palestinian factions, including Fateh, would find themselves in front of an important question regarding their program for the upcoming phase. Therefore, clashes with the occupation and the settlers might escalate to a wave of violence and counter violence in both directions, this could lead to a reverse migration from settlements into Israel proper, and the spread of occupation troops and security presence in villages, cities and refugee camps. The quest to find an alternative leadership would continue by the occupation, and we would witness an international effort to find an exit to the situation and return the calm.

Second: Reflections of PNA collapse on the inner Palestinian condition:

Theoretically, the collapse of the PNA would provide a new environment for Palestinian factions to re-examine the Palestinian political system and their vision for the new situation. The factions would be under popular pressure to reorganize themselves, and build the Palestinian house on a basis that could fulfill the public's aspirations, especially considering the continuation of the Arab Spring and its everlasting effects on the public mood.

I agree with Dr. Abu Zayda that Hamas could utilize these circumstances to rebuild its institutions and military apparatus in the West Bank. As for the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian government there would consider itself the government of the entire Palestinian people. Hamas would call for the adoption of resistance, and for haste in rebuilding the PLO.

The dispute between Fateh and Hamas could persist. Closing this file depends primarily on Fateh's position, and in its admittance of the failure of the path of negotiations, and its readiness to join Hamas and the rest of the factions in rebuilding the PLO. I believe it would take a long time for Fateh to comprehend the effects of this stage.

As for the internal Fateh condition, there are a few possible changes to its program, organization and relationships. The burden of decision could move abroad, or to the Gaza Strip. Fateh would work on

reshaping its organizational structure, and the issue of its political program would no doubt come up. It could be that field commanders in the West Bank would seek to rebuild the Aqsa Martyr brigades to play its role in resisting the occupation.

I expect the role of Fateh in leading Palestinian representation and PLO organizations, would recede. However, it would require a long time to respond to calls for unity and rebuilding of the PLO, due to confusion, and unpreparedness to hand the leadership of the Palestinian national project to Hamas. This is accompanied by the appearance of organizations within Fateh, and the striving of marginalized leaderships abroad to retake their leadership positions. This could be an opportunity for the return of the dismissed Mohammed Dahlan.

As for the Gaza Strip, and the behavior of Hamas, there is more than one possibility. One of such, is Hamas forming a unity government with all factions, including Fateh. It is not unlikely that Hamas would declare the Gaza Strip an independent political entity. As for Dr. Abu Zayda's suggestion that Hamas might dissolve its own government in Gaza, it is unlikely, as it would create a vacuum in an isolated and besieged area, which would have catastrophic consequences.

The position of the Palestinians in the diaspora would be limited to waiting and observing, we could witness some efforts from some leaderships to form initiatives to reunite the Palestinian house and find solutions or alternatives.

It could be that the collapse of the PNA would accompany a breakthrough in Arab and international relations with the Gaza Strip, and the easing of the siege, and the provision of aid to help alleviate the crisis and support the Palestinians.

As per usual, the position of the Arab states would be mixed. They might, however, be united in their avoidance of taking responsibility for the Palestinian case, and focus on the necessity of Palestinian unity, and reinstating the role of the PLO.

Recommendations:

I agree with Dr. Abu Zayda that the collapse of the PNA would mean the failure of the political settlement option. Therefore, the leadership must not await that day to declare the failure of negotiations, and I do not see the one state solution as an alternative, as it is refused by Israel, and does not fulfill the Palestinian aspirations.

As for discussing the dissolution of the PNA, what is required of it is a reformation, and combating corruption, and most importantly, rethinking its political system as a whole and how the PNA relates to it. This is done by redefining the PLO, and setting its role and structure, and rebuilding its organizations with the help of all to be a united representative for the Palestinian people.

Please allow me to share some initial remarks:

First: Beginning from the supposition that the goal of the Oslo accord was to establish a Palestinian state is inaccurate.

The fate of the transitional phase and the end of negotiations point towards many possibilities and options, including the creation of a state, but not the establishment of a state according to the written texts as advertised by the official Israeli side. As for the Palestinian side, it considered the goal of the accords to be the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, and on the basis of the 1967 borders, as well as an agreement on the question of refugees and the application of resolution 194. President Abbas, who was the patron of the accord, pointed out the uncertainty of the establishment of a state if we did not follow through with the application of the agreement. This was in a meeting of the central committee, in which the Oslo accords were approved.

Second: Is it true that the security relationship (coordination) between the PNA and Israel today is deeper and more extensive than before?

I believe that between 1995-2000 there was more. And after the incursions under Ariel Sharon, there was a return to direct Israeli control, whereas Israel played a direct security role, especially in regards to intelligence, and gathered information in PNA areas, including areas A. I do not agree that security is the only focal point for the PNA's existence.

Third: I do not believe that President Abbas can resign from a life of politics, and leave the PNA to collapse due to his direct and personal absence. President Abbas is the benefactor of a political program, and is straightforward in his belief in negotiations as the mechanism to achieve this program. I believe that recently, he has come to want to remain in power, unlike how it was previously.

Fourth: I do not believe that the dissolution of the PNA could result from a decision by the PLO or the president due to a failure in negotiations. I do not believe that the reasons mentioned in the paper can lead to the collapse of the PNA. The collapse of the security system remains as one of the most important reasons that could lead to the weakening of the PNA.

These remarks do not mean that I do not agree with the expectations and analysis mentioned in the paper, I especially agree with:

- 1- It is within both Israeli and Palestinian interests to prevent the collapse of the PNA, regardless of each sides motivation for such.
- 2- Security stability and coordination requires a form of public authority with a measure of legitimacy, even if it is weak or merely formal, but certainly not municipalities.
- 3- The expectation that in the case of the PNA's weakness, Fateh would also be weakened. On the other hand, Hamas would be strengthened in the West Bank. Israel's priority would be the control over the movement of the population as well as security. They would increase their construction in areas "C" and Jerusalem. The collapse could have different reasons, I agree with some, and disagree with others.

As for Israel's strategic options and scenarios with regards to its official response to the collapse or dissolution of the PNA, I do not agree with any of the three options mentioned in the paper. I believe the most likely option is another, which depends on the formal existence of the PNA, and a focus on amplifying Israel's settlement, Jerusalem and Jordan Valley activities, as well as spreading and entrenching Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem and parts of the West Bank.

**I will go over the options as mentioned in the paper:
Three options..and why not a fourth?**

First option: Could municipalities and organizations fill the vacuum left by the PNA?

I do not believe so. As municipal councils are not local governments with their own capabilities. In 1976 municipalities played a national role, not a service provision role, and that is completely different.

They cannot provide basic services such as education, health, telecommunications, water and power. Therefore, the main condition for the viability of this option lies in the maintenance of the PNA, even in a weakened form, as the experience of the failed Village Leagues remains as a lesson for Israel.

This would mean the establishment of a semi-state in the Gaza Strip, and limited self rule in the West Bank, which would reinforce the position of Hamas and the opposition in the PLO, leading to a failure for any form of future self rule.

Second option: Reaching a solution with Jordan:

This option would be refused by Jordan, due to reasons concerning the stability of the regime as a whole. There is no strong Israeli politician, such as Ariel Sharon, capable of performing a unilateral disengagement, especially considering that the security in the Jordan Valley would require a high degree of exposed security cooperation between Israel and Jordan. Without a doubt, such an approach would reapply pressure in the direction of considering the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people and would strengthen it. This contradicts the goal of reaching a solution to end the national case. The Netanyahu government is incapable of carrying out Sharon's plan of a unilateral withdrawal to behind the wall, and the establishment of a state of cantons, because this government on its fundamental level does not agree with the idea of a two state solution. This would lead to resignations in the Israeli government and the end of the Netanyahu era, and the sabotage of any solution for a period of time.

Third option: Return of the occupation:

This is an option Israel would not take, unless it was forced to be officially involved, this is due to effective armed resistance, based on support locations and backing from PNA leadership. This does not seem likely, due to individual, leadership level and factional interests.

Fourth option: Existence of a weak and tired authority, restricted to acquiring its budgets through international aid and Israeli cooperation with regards to tax returns:

Israel would strive to maintain the form and symbols of the PNA as much as possible, including President Abbas.

It would continue in its Carrot and Stick policy with regards to areas "A".

It would utilize the state of chaos to reinforce the reality of settlements in the settlement blocs, through a horizontal expansion of settlement along the 1967 border line, and connecting them legally to Israel.

Take special steps to reinforce the judaization of east Jerusalem, especially under the Aqsa mosque, or even within it.

Deepening of its security presence in the Jordan Valley and River areas, and exerting control over border crossings.

Formal flexibility, giving the impression of readiness for negotiations, and holding the Palestinian people responsible for the weakness of Palestinian leadership, due to the division and the impasse in the negotiations.

Deductions and analysis in need of scrutiny:

The reason for the collapse in negotiations (the application of Oslo) is in my opinion, due to two factors in the period following the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin:

1- The Likud not agreeing on the principle of establishing a Palestinian state, which still continues until this day. This led Sharon to split off from the Likud and create Kadima, which in turn meant that the

negotiations during the reign of the Likud were a time gain for Israel, as the Likud slips further towards the right. If Netanyahu agrees to the two state solution, he would be dismissed from the party.

2- During the reign of Ehud Barak (labor) he changed the mechanism upon which Oslo was based, that being the gradual withdrawal of the occupation, and gradually increasing the powers of the PNA, leading up to a direct solution and an end to the conflict (Camp David). This spelled failure for the negotiations, and led to the break out of the second Intifada, which damaged both the Labor party and President Yasser Arafat. Following this, was the rise of Ariel Sharon and his policies based on determining the shape and security of the Zionist project, regardless of what the Palestinians want to do with the remaining areas, even if they wanted to call it a state.

I do not believe that the current Israeli government, which is lacking a leader such as Ariel Sharon, could possibly adopt the second solution, which would necessitate a unilateral disengagement, similar to what Ariel Sharon did with the Gaza Strip.

It is difficult to imagine armed anarchy coexisting with popular resistance. Armed anarchy would lead to a bloody, bitter struggle. Under such a condition, it is not possible to develop popular resistance which would necessitate a wide participation from citizens, and include them in the struggle against the Zionist project through sound and creative means.

Effects on inner Palestinian relations:

The collapse and weakness of the PNA would lead to:

Reinforcement of the Hamas controlled political entity in the Gaza Strip, and an increase in the belief in the necessity of a federal system between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This could divide Hamas between those in Gaza, and those in the West Bank who want to reestablish connections with the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan.

An increase in the PFLP and some independents' direction towards the abandonment of the two state solution, and calling for one state and struggling against the system of Apartheid.

Strengthening of the demands for comprehensive resistance, by Hamas and the popular resistance from Fateh and the remaining forces on the left. (DFLP, Fida, people's party, national initiative)

A fruitless continuation in the calls to reform the PLO, and the national program, due to the current fragmentation of Palestinians. This would negatively impact representation, especially considering that Hamas could see this as an opportunity to improve its representative role, which would necessitate it turning towards moderation and preparedness to take part in the political process, and abandon violent resistance, especially if it is accepted on the Arab level.

Effects of PNA collapse on Fateh:

The Fateh leadership who hold positions in the central committee and the revolutionary council are not in favor of ending the PNA, due to their network of interests which benefit from the presence of the PNA. Not to mention those benefiting from money transfers to the national fund from the PNA, as well as the interests of the heads and retired members of the security apparatus. If an unplanned collapse were to occur, there would be disputes between the different Fateh centers of influence, especially after President Abbas decides to leave the equation for any reason. The effects would escalate, and take the form of local blocs, deriving their power and influence from some financial Arab sources, or older Fateh leaderships in Israeli jails. There would be a phenomenon of hiring local armed men for the benefit of the local warlord, which could lead to the appearance of mercenaries.

Fateh's rebellion in Gaza against its West Bank leadership could reach the point of total separation, if financial aid is somehow provided for them from abroad.

The relationship with Hamas:

Hamas would not progress towards a comprehensive reconciliation and an end to the division without reaching a deal where Hamas would receive an influential position in the PLO. Hamas considers its authority (resulting from the 2006 elections) a huge win at the expense of Fateh, and therefore has no interest in dissolving the PNA. If the PNA in the West Bank were to collapse or dissolve, Hamas would consider its authority in Gaza as the one legitimate authority. It would work on finding local militias and charity organizations to lead the resistance in the West Bank, and would push towards a national front under its leadership.

Workshop Discussion

Dr. Sufyan Abu Zaydah.

This research paper tackles the possible consequences of the collapse of the Palestinian National Authority and effects on the relationship with Israel and the interior Palestinian relationships including the partition and the relations between different political powers.

There are scenarios that may lead to this assumption (the PNA's collapse) which is connected with the political and economic situation and also connected with deterioration. I have given great priority to the position of President Abbas since he the President of everything, the PLO and Fattah chairman, the head of the PNA and the state of Palestine. So, if he steps down or retired suddenly, this will be a satisfying reason for the collapse of the PNA.

In fact, we should search for an answer to the question: is it Israeli interest that the PNA collapses and so it is pushing towards this direction?

Or is it doing its best to keep the PNA weak, without any real sovereignty on the ground and struggling for its daily survival? For Israelis, they haven't dreamt of the authority and its role: Israelis conquered the land, whereas the PNA holds other responsibilities on its shoulders.

In the past, Israel didn't work for the collapse of the PNA, but it weakened the PNA as it didn't want to hold the responsibility of Palestinian population. Therefore, the last thing for Israel to think of is going back to the years before 1994 and return to the military rule.

However, this has started to change in recent years , the political right in Israel doesn't care whether the PNA collapses or not. This current has consolidated the idea of autonomy (self-rule) instead of a Palestinian state. So, if the PNA collapses by a Palestinian decision, Israel has options: the most important of these directing the situation (the Palestinian territories) by a remote control without bearing responsibilities .It may also resort to find an alternative to the PNA accepts the role that Israel sets or it may resort to the United Nations. All these options mentioned above while Israel control both land and borders as well.

The second scenario- despite the opposition of the "right" in Israel – Israel takes unilateral step. Israel wants about 50% of the West Bank, and so it may to dismantle some isolated settlements, then declares that it is not responsible for the West Bank and calls for Jordan or the United Nations to take over responsibility. But this scenario requires a strong leader as Ariel Sharon.

The third scenario, turning the Palestinian situation back to the year before 1994 which Israel doesn't want to. The research paper tackles the possible consequences:

1. The collapse of the PNA definitely means a failure to Fattah political project during the last 25 years.
2. This collapse will change the nature of the leaders that lead Fattah in particular and the Palestinian people in general.
3. The collapse of the security network and that means adopting new policies.
4. One of the consequences is the increasing competition between the political leaders and field's leaders up to contradiction and fighting.
5. Hamas movement will be the most beneficial side of this collapse and it will do its best to consolidate the idea that its government in Gaza is the only government of the Palestinian people.

Comment by Dr. Azmi Al- Shu'aibi

I don't think that the personality of president Abu Mazen could step down and leave the PNA collapses because of his direct personal disappearance, since Abu Mazen has a declared political program and the way of achieving it is clear, that is, through negotiations only. Moreover, I think that now he tends to power in contrast with the previous periods which he showed less interest in it. I don't also think that the option of dissolving the PNA could be decided by the PLO or by the president of the PNA because negotiations fail. On the contrary, I believe that the reasons mentioned above in the research paper don't justify the collapse of the PNA, whereas the collapse of the security forces remains one of the most reasons that may cause the PNA's weakening. These notes don't mean that I don't agree on what the research paper mentioned in terms of analyses and expectations: the following notes in particular:

1. The common interest of the Palestinians and Israelis isn't represented in the collapse of the PNA regardless the justifications of each side.
2. The demand for co-ordination and stability of security forces requires an existence of any form of general authority that has some sort of legitimacy even if it is weak, but it is not certainly a municipal authority.
3. If the PNA is weakened, expectations says that Fatah movement will be weak, whereas Hamas movement become strong in West Bank. Therefore, Israeli's priority is controlling the population movement and their registers. It will also guarantee the security control and building in Jerusalem and C areas as well. In fact, there are several reasons for the collapse, I agree with some, but I don't agree others.

With regard to Israel's strategic scenarios and its official position if the authority collapses or dissolved, I don't see any of the three options could happen as they were mentioned in the research paper. In fact, I think the nearest option is the one that depends on a symbolic authority existence, while focusing on Israeli policy concerning settlements, the Jordan Valley, expanding its sovereignty and building settlements in Jerusalem and parts of West Bank. The first option: Could municipalities and institutions of the state fill the space that the PNA leaves?

I don't think so, because councils of municipalities are not local governments with capabilities. In 1976, municipalities played a national (political) role, not a service one and this is different. Municipalities can't afford basic services like education, health, water, communication and electricity. Thus, the main condition for the possibility of this option requires a kind of official existence of the PNA even if it is weak. Of course, the failure of the Israeli experience with the so called "Rawabit Alqura" (or Village Leagues) is a lesson to Israel.

This means quasi-state in Gaza and an imperfect autonomy which will strengthen the role" Hamas " and the opposition inside the PLO. This leads to a failure of any form of autonomy in the future.

The second option: the option of achieving a solution with Jordan:

It is rejected from the Jordanian point of view for reasons connected with the stability of the regime itself. In addition, there is no strong Israeli leader as Sharon repeats a withdrawal process especially security in the Jordan Valley requires a high declared degree of Israeli-Jordanian co-ordination. This trend will certainly put more pressure to regain the essential role of Palestine National Organization as the only legitimate and representative of the Palestinian people and strengthen is in contrast with a planned solution aiming to put an end to the Palestinian cause. Furthermore, Netanyahu's government cannot carry out Sharon's idea, that is withdrawing beyond the separation wall and

establishing a state of "cantons" because the components of his government don't accept the idea of a two-state solution. In fact, it may cause a resignation of the Israeli government, an end to Netanyahu's era and freeze any solution for a while.

The third option: a return of the occupation:

Israel will not resort to this option unless it is forced to involve publically as a result of an active military resistance supported by some leaders in the PNA. This seems unlikely to happen because of the individual interests of the leaders of the PNA, PLO and factions.

The fourth option: the existence of an exhausted weak authority prepares for budgets due to an international financial support and Israeli co-operation in transferring the Palestinian revenues that Israel collect on behalf of the PNA. Therefore, Israel will:

- Struggle to keep the authority symbols as much as it can including Abu Mazen, the president.
- Continue using the "carrot and stick policy" in A areas.
- Exploit chaos to reinforce building in settlements through a horizontal expansion along the 1967 borders and connect them "legally" with Israel.
- Take particular steps to reinforce the Judaization process in East Jerusalem especially under Al Aqsa Mosque or even inside it.
- Increase the security existence on the River Jordan and the Jordan Valley in addition to increase the tight control of borders.
- Show a flexible position and readiness for negotiations without any actual progress claiming that responsibility falls on the Palestinians because their leadership is weak as a result of partition.

A conclusion and analysis need to be checked:

- I don't think that the current Israeli government which lacks a leader as Sharon may resort to adopt the second option that refers to a unilateral withdrawal just as Sharon did in Gaza strip.
- It is difficult to predict that phenomenon of the armed chaos to cope up with popular resistance, since the armed chaos leads to a bitter bloody conflict. In this sort of conflict, it is impossible to improve a popular resistance that needs the crowds to participate in through the right and creative means in our struggle to face the Zionist project.

The consequences on the Palestinian interior relationships:

The collapse or weak of the PNA will lead to the following:

-reinforcing the entity of Hamas power in Gaza and increasing the convenience of establishing a federal relationship between Gaza and those who would like to regain the relationship with Hamas leaders of Jordan's Muslem Brothers in West Bank and diaspora.

-an increasing trend inside the Palestinian Popular Front and independents to give up the two-state solution and call for a unified state, then struggle against the apartheid regime at the same time.

-reinforcing the request of a comprehensive resistance by Hamas and the popular resistance by Fattah movement and "remains" of the left factions (the Democratic Front, Fida, the People's Party and the Initiative).

- The continuing call for reforming the PLO but without hope because of the Palestinian partition and disperse. It is also because of the national project which may negatively affect the Palestinian representation; Hamas could find it an opportunity to strengthen its representative role. This may require a moderate position and readiness from Hamas for political participation, not resorting to extremity or violent resistance especially if it is recognized by the Arab countries.

The effect of the PNA's collapse on Fattah movement:

The essential leaders of Fattah including members of the central committee and revolutionary council are against putting an end to the PNA, as a result of the interest network that has been working and stabled since the establishment of the PNA, in addition to poets' network and beneficiaries of the budget transferred from the PNA's budget to the National Fund. Moreover, interests of the leaders of security forces and those who retired. If an unplanned collapse happens, the dispute between centres of influence inside Fattah movement after Abu Mazen gets out of the Palestinian equation for any reason, will deepen and take forms of local blocs. The dispute may be strengthened by the financial support of some Arabs or Fattah leaders in Israeli jails. Local militants will be used for the benefit of "territory" leaders which reinforce the phenomenon of local beneficiaries. Collapse may also reinforce mutiny of Fattah movement in Gaza against its leadership in West Bank that may develop to separation if a foreign financial support has been secured.

The relationship with " Hamas" movement :

Hamas will not seek a comprehensive reconciliation or ending the partition without reaching a political bargain through which it obtains an effective role in Palestine Liberation Organization. In fact, Hamas considers the power resulted from the 2006 elections is a great gain on the account of Fattah, and so it has no interest to dissolve the PNA. As a result, if the PNA collapses or dissolved, it will consider its authority in Gaza is the legitimate one. It will also contribute in forming local militants and local charitable associations to lead resistance in West Bank and push forward a national front under Hamas leadership.

Comments by Dr. Ayman Daraghma:

First of all, the PNA's collapse will create a vacuum, so Israel and the international community will intervene. As for Israel, this may require a direct intervention and a bigger invasion than 2002. Israel will never repeat the experience of withdrawal from Gaza. For Israel, security is the most determining factor in its decisions. The situation of the West Bank and openness of the Palestinian coast will make the Palestinian resistance harm Israel.

Secondly, if the collapse happens, Israel will give more permissions to local councils, look for a substitute leadership, solutions with Jordan or ask for an international aid. Anyhow, Israel will reinforce its security fist.

Thirdly, concerning the Palestinian interior affairs:

There will be a change in the political map; the position of the PLO may be reinforced outside Palestine, but Hamas will ask for re-arranging the Palestinian "political house".

Fourthly, regarding Fattah, its leadership will become weak and may get out Palestine. However, it will not directly accept the failure of its project; it will try to stay as much as possible.

Fifthly, the militant groups might return and competition among these groups returns, too. Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades in particular.

Sixthly, the force of Hamas will be reinforced and the government of Gaza will try to kidnap the lights that it represents the Palestinian people.

Finally, the positions of the Arab countries will vary, but without holding responsibility and there might be a pressure on Jordan to hold some responsibilities.

Day After - Workshops' Participants

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1	Mr. Abd Alnaser Masoud	National Sec. Forces - NSF
2	Dr. Abd Alrahman Altamimi	Head of Palestinian Hydrology Group
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4	Ms. Abeer Albatma	PENGON
5	Mr. Abulmajeed Melhem	PALTEL
6	Mr. Ahmad Hindi	PWA
7	Mr. Ahmad Qurei "Abu Alaa"	Adisory Board/Fatah
8	Mr. Ahmad Surghally	PALTEL
9	Mr. Alaa Lahlouh	PSR
10	Mr. Alaa Yaghi	PLC
11	Mr. Ali Hamoudeh	JDECO
12	Dr. Ali Jarbawi	Minister of Higher Education
13	Mr. Ali Nazzal	President office
14	Mr. Ali Omar	National Sec. Forces - NSF
15	Mr. Amin Maqboul	Sec. General, Fateh Revol. Council
16	Mr. Ammar Dwaik	Birzeit University
17	Mr. Anwar Abu Ammash	Welfare Association
18	Dr. Ayman Daraghme	PLC
19	Mr. Aziz Kayed	PSR
20	Dr. Azmi Shuaibi	AMAN
21	Mr. Basem Tamimi	Popular Committes
22	Mr. Basri Saleh	Ministry of Education
23	Mr. Bassam Alaqtash	National Sec. Forces - NSF
24	Ms. Buthaina Hamdan	Ministry of TLC
25	Ms. Covadonga Bertrand	UNDP
26	Mr. Daoud Darawi	Adala law
27	Mr. Eyad Zeitawi	PMA
28	Mr. Fadel Hamdan	PLC Member
29	Mr. Fadi Qura'an	Alhaq
30	Ms. Fadwa Barghouthi	Revolutaionary Council/Fatah
31	Dr. Faisal Awartani	Researcher
32	Mr. Fajr Harb	Carter Center
33	Mr. Faris Sabaneh	Supreme Judicial Council
34	Dr. Fathi Abumoghli	former minister of Health
35	Ms. Florence Mandelik	NOREF
36	Mr. Florid Zurba	Ministry of TLC
37	Dr. Ghassan Khatib	Birzeit University
38	Dr. Hanan Ashrawi	PLO
39	Dr. Hanna Abdalnour	Alquds University
40	Mr. Hasan Abushalbak	Ramallah Municipality
41	Mr. Hazem Gheith	Egyptian Embassy

42	Mr. Henry Siegman	US/ MIDDLE EAST PROJECT
43	Mr. Ibrahim Barghouthi	head of MUSAWA
44	Mr. Ihab Shihadeh	Ministry of Justice
45	Mr. Jacob Hoigilt	NOREF
46	Mr. Jamal Zakout	FIDA
47	Mr. Jamil Rabah	Negotiations Support Unit - NSU
48	Dr. Jehad Albadawi	MOH
49	Mr. Jehad Alwazer	PMA Governor
50	Mr. Jehad Harb	PSR
51	Dr. Jehad Mashal	Expert
52	Mr. Jihad Shomali	UNDP
53	Mr. Khaled Alosaily	Business man
54	Mr. Khaled Shtayeh	UNDP
55	Mr. Khalil Rifai	Deputy Ministry of Justice
56	Dr. Khalil Shikaki	PSR
57	Mr. Mahmoud Haroun	Military Intelligence
58	Mr. Mariano Aguirre	NOREF
59	Dr. Mashhour Abu Daka	Former Minister of Communication
60	Mr. Mazen Sinokrot	Private Sector
61	Mr. Mohammad Alfaqih	PNC
62	Mr. Mohammad Aref	PMA
63	Mr. Mohammad Attoun	Wassel co.
64	Mr. Mohammad Daraghmeh	Journalist
65	Mr. Mohammad Hadieh	Ministry of Justice
66	Dr. Mohammad Odeh	MOH
67	Dr. Muatasem Alhmod	MOH
68	Mr. Munib Masri	Private Sector
69	Mr. Munir Barghouthi	Ministry of Education
70	Dr. Munther Alsharif	NAS
71	Mr. Musa Haj Hasan	QIF
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74	Mr. Nabil Masri	Private Sector
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80	Mr. Nayef Swetat	Revolutaionary Council/Fatah
81	Mr. Omar Assaf	Return right committee
82	Mr. Peter Krause	Boston University
83	Mr. Qaddora Fares	Prisoner's Affairs
84	Mr. Qais Abdelkarim	PLC

85	Mr. Radi Jarai	Alquds University
86	Mr. Reda Awadallah	PPP
87	Mr. Roland Friedrich	DCAF
88	Dr. Sabri Saidam	President consultant
89	Mr. Sadam Omar	National Security Forces
90	Dr. Safa Nseraldin	Minister of TLC
91	Mr. Said Alhmouz	PMC
92	Mr. Said Zaid	PLC
93	Mr. Salam Zagha	NEDCO
94	Mr. Saleh Ra'afat	Former Head of FIDA
95	Mr. Samer Farah	Welfare Association
96	Mr. Sami Alsaedi	AI Bank
97	Mr. Samir Abdallah	MAS
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108	Dr. Ummaya Khammash	UNRWA
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111	Dr. Walid Aburas	HWC
112	Mr. Walid Hodali	JWU
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114	Mr. Yousef Adwan	UNDP
115	Mr. Zafer Milhem	PERC

The Day After: How Palestinians Can Cope if the PA Ceases to Function

January-October 2013

PSR, in cooperation with the USMEP and NOREF, has initiated in January 2013 a policy research project that aims at exploring Palestinian conditions and options in the day after the PA ceases to function. The initiative seeks to produce a series of expert papers focusing on 10 main challenging areas of “the day after” in Palestinian political, social, financial, economic, and security life.

The initiative’s point of departure is that the PA may collapse or may decide to dissolve itself in the near future under the heavy weight of various financial and political pressures. Three scenarios are conceivable: (1) Israel and the US may impose on the PA severe or crippling financial and political sanctions; (2) the PLO leadership may conclude that the two-state solution is no longer practical and may begin to search for other means to gain Palestinian rights leading it to dissolve the PA; and (3) a series of economic, financial and political crises may lead to popular demands for change expressed in mass demonstrations against the PA and a widespread demand for regime change leading to chaos and eventual collapse.

The initiative goals are three: (1) explore the implications of such a development on various critical dimensions of Palestinian life and government, elaborating on the magnitude of the problems and challenges that might arise as a result of PA demise; (2) debate various policy options to respond to such a development, to contain the damage, and to capitalize on potential benefits, if any; and, (3) recommend a course of action for Palestinians to pursue in response to the expected complications.

PSR has gathered a team of 30 experts in the areas of finance and economics, internal security and law enforcement, health, education, communication, justice system, local government, water and electricity, civil and domestic political affairs, and the future of the two-state solution. Experts have been asked to write 10 papers in their various areas of expertise examining the implications, policy options, and recommendations. Each paper has been reviewed and critiqued by two experts. Drafts of the expert papers have been discussed in small specialized workshops attended by policy makers, parliamentarians, experts, and academics.

A final report will be prepared based on the expert papers, workshops/focus groups, interviews, and background research. The report will summarize the main findings, examine the overall policy implications for the PA and the international community, and provide policy recommendations for the various relevant parties.

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