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The Day After: paper # 10



Future of the Political Settlement after the Dissolution or Collapse of the PA

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Comments by **Basem Tammimi & Nabil Amr**

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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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Future of the Political Settlement after the Dissolution or Collapse of the PA

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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4	Dr. Fathi Abu Moghli	The Effects of the PNA's Dissolution or Collapse on the Provision of Health Services	Dr. Munther Alsharif & Dr. Jihad Mashal
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9	Dr. Sufian Abu Zaeda	Repercussions of the PNA's Collapse on Civil and Political Affairs	Dr. Ayman Daraghmeh & Dr. Azmi Shuaibi
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Summary (by author):

PA collapse or dissolution as well as the collapse of the two-state solution have been worrisome questions within the Palestinian psyche for a long time, indeed since the signing of the Oslo agreements. When the Palestinian leadership decided to return to the homeland in accordance with the Oslo Accords, many painful questions were asked regarding the soundness of this step. There was a division in opinion concerning the potential dangers, which pushed the PLO to take a decision to maintain part of the leadership abroad, until we made sure that this was the correct choice.

Therefore, I understand very well the current doubt and paranoia, and accept with an open mind all opinions and discussions and disagreements regarding the most successful alternatives, the best paths and the most worthy remaining options. This is to break free of this vicious cycle, and shake off these worrying obsessions, and put an end to the receding importance in the status of the Palestinian case. Then we could move from this phase of intractability towards new and more promising capabilities to continue our political assault with renewed vigor.

Within the framework of this brainstorming in this symposium, and in response to the question of the day after the collapse of the PNA and the end of the two state solution, which are hung above us as two razor blades, we need first of all to make a strong distinction between such an event coming around due to independent developments that could not be prevented, and between such an event happening due to a self-taken decision coming from strong considerations. This in particular so, if the losses of the continued functioning of the PNA seem to outweigh the gains, necessitating its abandonment and the washing of our hands of it.

And I also see that it is our duty, before we enter this hypothetical world, to remind you that we are not alone in this geographic space, where the wills of stronger countries compete to enact great changes, least of which could be regarding us. This could include even a regional war, which does not seem so unlikely, which pushes us to contemplate the possible options, free from the mentality of a prisoner or an isolated hermit.

The present and future of PNA in the foreseeable future is not –and will never be– a pure Palestinian concern. Our options are not completely free from all side effects, perhaps today we are even more exposed to regional and international interference than ever before, not to mention the increasing exposure to direct and indirect Israeli influences, even if it has to do with the results of the Israeli parliament elections, formation of a new cabinet and many other Israeli variables that have severe consequences on our conditions.

Therefore, it is our responsibility, both towards ourselves and to our great cause, to choose the correct timing to discuss fateful matters, and to choose the most appropriate circumstances to refer these matters to the public opinion. This brings up the question of if this time period is the correct one to bring up an extensive inner discourse regarding the scenarios to be discussed in this symposium. Especially considering that we do not see in the short term any serious changes, which would force us to make these unrealistic calculations, and push us into a new context.

I have no doubts whatsoever, that if the path of negotiations to solving the Palestinian case on which we started in Madrid and Oslo more than two decades ago fails, even though it only succeeded in fulfilling a part of its promises, and failed in fulfilling others, especially those related to ending the occupation, then we should not abandon this road unless we have a ready alternative. An alternative

road on which we can walk more effectively, to finish what we began, and succeed where we failed before.

And in this context away from all improvisation, we can examine the feasibility of transitioning from the two-state solution -which is the only internationally acceptable solution- to the labyrinth of the one-state solution, or other options. It should be remembered that other options, including the one-state solution, have no supporters, neither on the Israeli side, which would trigger an existential paranoia if such an option were to be discussed, nor on the international political stage.

The Palestinian reality is a one riddled with difficulties, influenced by strong forces, and lacking in any easy options or alternatives. Therefore, we need to remain steadfast and utilize the few solid cards remaining in our hands, to face the oncoming challenges. We must remain steadfast until we are able to engage our reality, not try to avoid it and curse it, and ask God to change it.

By my reckoning, the best remaining options for us in case the political impasse persists, and the chances for advancing peace through negotiations are weakened, are through systematically studied and discussed methods. These would enable the Palestinian people to remain steadfast in its endurance and planted in the soil of its forefathers. Of course while working diligently to provide the necessities for such endurance, and to better the educational, health and economical capabilities, which would in turn enhance the effectiveness of the struggle.

Introduction:

The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research requested that I write the main paper for the symposium regarding the future of the political settlement in case of the dissolution or collapse of the PNA. If such a case were to arise, would the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) continue to struggle for the two-state solution? Or would it build a new strategy for reaching a settlement such as: the one state solution. Are there any alternatives or other choices?

The groundwork that such a question is based upon, is filled with warranted and justified concern, especially taking into account the worsening political deadlock, cloudiness of the regional political climate and the receding importance of the Palestinian case on the regional and national agendas, not to mention the increase in extremism in Israel, embodied in feelings of superiority and contentment with its made choices. Israel sees that the current results of what is now called the “Arab Spring” ultimately serve its political interests.

Perhaps a quick glance backwards at the first chapters of the peace process, which began in Madrid and Oslo in 1991, confirms that the choice to establish a Palestinian state on the occupied territories of 1967 was not merely a self-made one, but an independent patriotic decision adopted by the Palestinian National Council in 1988. This decision was one of the fruits culminating from the first Intifada in 1987, and was a qualitative transformation in the direction of the national armed struggle.

With a little objective analysis, it can be considered that our humble political gain in the Madrid conference was the equivalent to protecting the Palestinian revolution, and a step on the road towards a declaration of principles, which laid the groundwork for building the first Palestinian presence on the ground. The Madrid conference also achieved many other political gains, gains which importance we could argue about, but it remains uncontested that facts on the ground were created. These facts gave us the possibility to control our own destiny, and create new methods of resistance and guarantee their continuance.

As such, we are faced with an extremely justified question: What if the PNA was dissolved, or ended due to one reason or the other? What if it was disbanded by its own free will, or due to any other reality or factor? What would happen to us the day after such an event? Is it not our national responsibility to prepare in advance, and take precautions to anticipate what the Palestinian situation would look like the day after such a political earthquake?

And within the framework of this brainstorming, and as a response to this hypothetical question, we need first of all to make a strong distinction between such an event coming around due to independent developments that could not be prevented, and between such an event happening due to a self-taken decision coming from strong considerations, especially if the losses of the continued functioning of the PNA seem to outweigh the gains, necessitating its abandonment and the washing of our hands of it.

And although we will discuss the possible scenarios in detail, I see it as our duty, as responsible people, to rule out the possibility of the PNA disbanding itself by its own free will. Indeed, before we begin the discussion of these scenarios, I must first clearly warn that the end of the PNA, for any reason whatsoever will be a tragic end to this generation of politicians, thinkers and Palestinian freedom fighters, all of whom need to admit defeat, and retreat with haste to make room for a new generation, tougher than the previous one, and more capable of reigniting the Palestinian struggle, and fortifying it against the difficult trials on the road ahead.

It should also be mentioned, that the PNA was not a free gift to us, nor was it a diabolical plant we happened to stumble upon. The PNA was the fruit of our people's struggle, a people who through

valiant resistance, heroic steadfastness and heavy sacrifices managed to impose itself on the political landscape. This people built the very first bridge on the first available Palestinian land, built its political entity, in which the PNA was the first link, or at the very least, the foundation for building a free and sovereign state.

Therefore, I would like to restrict the discussion in this symposium to the hypothetical failure of the two-state solution, whereas this plan has almost reached a dead end, and not to include a discussion on dismantling the PNA, which is a national accomplishment, won at great cost.

Based upon this all, I ask regarding the hypothetical failure of the two-state solution: What comes afterwards? What happens the day after the declaration of failure is made, this failure that was not wrought by our own hands? As an objective necessity the idea of a one state solution must be brought up as an alternative to a solution which was destroyed by Israel.

Going back to the general theme of this symposium, in an effort to answer the question on what would happen after the dissolution of the PNA and the death of the two-state solution, I would like at the end of this introduction to clarify my point of view, in a conservative careful manner.

Therefore, allow me begin with a retraction for the following thoughts and points of view that have to do with the core of what we are about to discuss.

Things to stress:

We are still on land, planted firmly in its soil like olive trees. We are not on a ship, or even a harbor. We are a people filled with life and awareness, a people who paid the full price to achieve its independence and freedom, after having established a strong invincible identity and a political bridge on its historical homeland, despite all the Israeli efforts to evade its responsibilities.

Firstly, I must emphasize that the PNA is the national project that will lead us gradually towards self-determination. This solid achievement is one of the most important gains resulting from painful sacrifices and struggles across many decades, and this national authority, is a fact on the ground, and is fully capable of enduring and transforming into the awaited state.

Based upon this all, it is not asked of us, nor should we be allowed to, to shoot ourselves in the foot, or to compromise our position by our own will while we are still in the racing track. In politics there is always a wide gray area, which necessitates caution from taking hurried decisions which could lead to breaking the classical rules of the game and towards unknown ends.

On the other hand, we are standing in front of an objective possibility, which is the failure of the two-state solution, which has been presented more than a decade ago, and has yet to translate itself as anything solid in reality. I would not say it is impossible, but Israeli policies are pushing rapidly towards a situation where the objective groundwork for this solution is not possible anymore. This is through taking over the disputed territories, either through settlement activities, annexations, confiscations and creating facts on the ground which prevent the application of this solution.

We should however realize, as we approach this problem, that there is more than one reality attached to the failure of the two-state solution, especially if such a declaration were to come officially from the Palestinian side. The failure of the two state solution is a strike to the very heart of the Palestinian national independence project, and would be considered a very negative turn of events, not to mention that making this declaration and then thinking of dissolving the PNA would be a free gift to Israel, who

will utilize this politically to evade its obligations.

Taking the risk and declaring the failure of the two-state solution voluntarily and unilaterally would automatically put the PNA in an existential crisis, and would expose it to a myriad of dangers. It would reflect poorly on its officials and would give the impression of recklessness and irresponsibility. Not to mention that the Palestinian side reneging on the only solution that has international consensus would have swift and direct repercussions on the PNA, which is the employer of hundreds of thousands of individuals, and the only source of finance for the administrative and security bureaucracies.

Washing our hands of the two-state solution will have political repercussions and effects the PNA cannot possibly withstand in the medium and short terms, of such repercussions there are:

First: It would be necessary for the Palestinian leadership to admit failure, and issue an apology to the Palestinian people for mismanaging their public affairs, leaving the people in a state of desperation and disappointment, before stepping aside and leaving the political arena.

Second: Adoption of a plan “B” beforehand. This plan should be ready and supported by a wide popular consensus. This however is unlikely to be reached in light of the political division, where two sides struggle for legitimacy, and where two authorities clash: the national and the religious.

Third: The anticipation of a probable state of political, social and security confusion, and to take early precautions so the situation does not break out of control. Such precautions are possible in the presence of an authority able to provide a large part of its responsibilities. However this seems impossible with its absence after announcing it has reached a dead end and its dissolution.

Fourth: Take into account the ramifications of the failure of the two-state solution, not only on the PNA which would receive the blame for this, but also on its role as the Palestinian representative, and its international standing.

Fifth: Uncalculated risks, such as exposing the PNA to dissolution would be improvisation and sailing in uncharted waters.

The responsibility of a political leader is just as important as his equivalent on the front lines, if not more important. This means that the leadership on this level needs to be brave and far sighted. So if victory is not possible, then at the very least the minimization of losses and prevention of collapse can be achieved.

With this background in mind, we can now examine two thoughts concerning the failure of the two-state solution and the dissolution of the PNA, as both are possible outcomes which would have many long ranging negative impacts. These negative impacts would not only affect the PNA, but the whole course of the Palestinian struggle that has been in play for more than half a century. This indicates how deep these two issues affect the public, and shows the seriousness of discussing them in the arena of public opinion.

Therefore, it is logical to discuss and exchange opinions about such thoughts behind closed doors with other officials, researchers and thinkers. It is then possible to examine these scenarios, and come up with alternatives, and study all options, without such a discussion taking the form of official discourse open to interpretations and paranoid utilization.

The Need for PNA's survival:

The survival of the PNA is contingent on two interlinked conditions:

First: Its ability to manage Palestinian public affairs, through providing services and ensuring security and public order and access to justice, as well as achieving economic growth and as long as its existence does not contradict the goal of achieving the national goals of the Palestinian people.

Second: Its competence in attaining progress in the political process, i.e. continuing the national project for independence.

Based on the above, the option of dissolving the PNA seems absurd, and should not be spoken about as a real option. This is especially so because the consequences of such an option would harm those Palestinian leaders who have led the Palestinian struggle since its beginning. It would also waste this achievement which was only won through the blood of thousands of martyrs and the sacrifices of the wounded and imprisoned.

The Palestinian National Authority is not the end goal; rather it is the vehicle in which our struggle towards independence may take place. It is the legitimate political expression of the people in this phase of our struggle for national independence. Therefore the scenarios regarding the failure of the two-state solution would be a double failure for the PNA, which would have failed in reaching the level of independent statehood.

Possible scenarios for the dissolution of the PNA:

There are three scenarios; one or more of them could lead to creating a situation where the PNA might be unable to continue carrying out its role, and as a consequence, a failure in its responsibilities towards the Palestinian people as a whole:

First: Israel and the USA, and as an extension the donor states, could impose political and financial sanctions on the PNA. Such a development, in addition to strict policies by the Israeli occupation forces, could expose the PNA to some very difficult challenges, where there exists no alternative or Arab support to help prevent its collapse.

Second: The Palestinian leadership, represented primarily in the PLO could reach the conclusion that the two-state solution is no longer feasible. Therefore, the political reality would dictate the need for finding new and alternative methods of struggle. This would put the PNA in a situation whereby its very reason for existence is no longer credible.

Third: In the case of a popular uprising aimed at the PNA. This would rob the PNA of a large portion of its representative legitimacy, and unleash a large amount of inner conflict, some of which might even be violent. This would be the case particularly if the PNA was unable to function properly and fulfill its basic obligations.

We must take into consideration that there are two levels of direct challenges facing the possibility of the dissolution of the PNA. We must also take into consideration the possible consequences resulting

from such a failure, regardless whether it was a self-made decision, which would be near impossible, or imposed upon us by other parties who wish to bury the most agreed upon solution in the political arena for the last 10 years.

There are two levels to the domestic environment:

The first level: This level entails a domestic reality of the PNA with its large number of employees and families and persons who see in the PNA the means to survive. At this level there will be rejection of any decision to dissolve the PNA.

The second level: This level has to do with objective political reality of division which the PNA has no control over. It is likely that one of the two Palestinian sides will reject the dissolution, and will work hard to utilize this opportunity to take control and to rob the legitimacy from PA hands, which will then be called unworthy of leading the Palestinian struggle.

In such a framework we must examine closely each of the three scenarios that could lead to the dissolution of the PNA. This must be done in order to understand them, and the likelihood of them ever happening. This should take place before we look at the repercussions and the long term effects in the event they happen.

1) *Israel and the USA imposing heavy political and financial sanctions.*

When discussing how realistic this scenario is, we must take into account some factors:

- 1- The existence of the PNA and its management of public affairs of millions of Palestinians is not only a Palestinian need, but also an international, regional and Israeli need.
- 2- The PNA is an international project, which the USA, China, Russia, the EU and other Arab and Islamic countries have supported to reduce the tensions resulting from the historical conflict in the area. This is evidenced by all the support and financial backing, which represents a major international investment in maintaining the PNA and keeping it able to at least take care of its basic obligations as a recognized representative entity.
- 3- The PNA in its capacity for maintaining public order and upholding its responsibilities represents the best option in preventing violence and chaos.
- 4- Based on the above, it is realistic to exclude such a taxing scenario. Not only is it taxing for Palestinians, but also for Israelis and Americans. Therefore, those who discuss this shocking scenario should exclude it from their political calculations, and focus their research on the remaining two scenarios.

2) *A Palestinian leadership reaching the conclusion that there is no hope for the two state solution, and that it would be pointless to remain an authority without actual authority.*

This would necessitate a search for alternative methods of confronting Israeli occupation:

By my reckoning this scenario would not be attractive, neither on the official nor popular levels. The Palestinian leadership might reach such conclusions in two cases, and they are:

If the PNA finds itself unable to fund public expenses. Or if the PNA finds itself surrounded from all directions, without any support, and lacking any real purpose. However, these situations seem far-fetched, both in the long and medium terms. If the PNA ever finds itself confronting a dead end, and all chances for achieving peace dissipate, and the international community washes its hands of the PNA, only then can we speak about isolating the PNA and removing its representative function.

If it is logical to deal with these two cases in an abstract theoretical fashion, but it is illogical to rush to

irresponsible conclusions. This necessitates speaking of such a possibility only in closed and narrow circles, and not to include the PNA in any of its theoretical arguments which could be negatively interpreted and not help in advancing the current Palestinian situation in the slightest.

3) A popular uprising which begins against the occupation, but evolves into a rebellion against the PNA:

This scenario might be the most realistic one, and the closest to reality from all the possibilities. Therefore it is the most important to deal with, being that it is the biggest threat to the Palestinian national project. In this context, we must examine all facts that could start a small spark which then evolves into a wild fire. Therefore, there are a few worrying hypothetical questions that should be asked:

1- Is there underneath the current political situation in the West Bank, a hidden power in hibernation, which has the ability and intention of causing an uprising against the PNA, and using the ensuing chaos for its own agenda?

2- Do some political groups or factions within the PLO have the objective ability -not to mention interest- in creating an inner struggle to undermine the national independence movement, led by Fateh? Would this then be utilized for other small agendas?

3- Has the Fateh movement, the movement which has led the national struggle for more than half a century, become unfit to remain in control of the political situation?

Although many more questions within the scope of this imaginative scenario could be asked, a closer inspection of its details leads us to the conclusion that, the requirements needed to create such chaos and for it to be utilized by enemies of the national project, are not yet fulfilled, or in a place of threat in the short term.

The different Palestinian factions and groups, in all of their different forms and varying strengths, are unable -even if there was a will- to take control of or replace the PNA. The opportunities for political Islam seem limited and distant. All of this of course is in a reality living under a heavy handed occupation with all of its implications.

Therefore, returning to the specific details regarding the previous 3 scenarios, it can be seen that these are mere hypotheticals with no basis in reality or hope in the short and medium terms, perhaps even in the long term as well. Consequently, we should not build on quicksand and speak of baseless scenarios in a world of fantasy.

Is there an alternative to the two-state solution?

The difficulties facing the implementation of the two-state solution demand a consideration of the alternative one-state solution, or any solution, and how realistic it is. This calls for studying the dangers underlying the dissolution of the PNA, and whether it could be a stronger launching point for the Palestinian struggle, which would create a new reality closer to the fulfillment of the Palestinian national project.

I have no doubts whatsoever, that if the path of negotiations to solving the Palestinian case on which we started in Madrid and Oslo more than two decades ago fails, even though it only succeeded in fulfilling a part of its promises, and failed in fulfilling others, especially those related to ending the occupation, then we should not abandon this road unless we have a ready alternative. An alternative road on which we can walk more effectively, to finish what we began, and succeed where we failed before.

And in this context away, from all improvisation, we can examine the feasibility of transitioning from the two-state solution -which is the only internationally acceptable solution- to the labyrinth of the one-state solution, or other options. Other options have no supporters, neither on the Israeli side, which would trigger an existential paranoia if such an option were to be discussed, nor on the international political stage.

The Palestinian reality is riddled with difficulties, influenced by strong forces, and lacks easy options or alternatives. Therefore, we need to remain steadfast and utilize the few solid cards remaining in our hands, to face the oncoming challenges. We must remain steadfast until we are able to engage our reality, not try to avoid it and curse it, and ask God to change it.

Preferred Option:

By my reckoning, the best remaining options for us in case the political impasse persists, and the chances for advancing peace through negotiations are weakened, are through systematically studied and discussed methods. These will enable the Palestinian people to remain steadfast in its endurance and planted in the soil of its forefathers. Of course while working diligently to provide the necessities for such endurance, and to better the educational, health and economical capabilities, which would in turn enhance the effectiveness of the struggle.

We have already called for rebuilding a more aggressive Palestinian position. Incorporating the possible changes in a fluid political reality, to repel lurking dangers, and adapt to the situation. This should be according to prudent principles, and practical and appropriate rules to raise the level of national performance. These principles include:

- 1- Holding onto the first constant of Palestinian demands, and it is the end of the Israeli occupation and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capitol, and the guarantee of the right of return for all refugees.
- 2- Activation and enhancement of PLO institutions, and setting up PLO meetings as the authority and source of Palestinian national decision making, working further on incorporating the entirety of the Palestinian cause within the PLO framework.
- 3- Working on pushing the Arab peace initiative back into a place of attention for the international community and Israel, and holding onto it as a united Arab effort without amendment.
- 4- Diligently seeking an end to the internal Palestinian political division. This division which has no reason to exist, and is directly benefitting Israel. This is particularly so because there has been a convergence in the political stances of both Fateh and Hamas when it comes to the Palestinian state.
- 5- Improving the general national situation, and reinforcing the spirit of popular resistance in all its forms, through centrally organized initiatives, including national popular conventions, which would involve a large segment of the people in the decision making process.

6- Refusal of wasting opportunities and resorting to desperate measures and being dragged into Israel's preferred playing field. Refraining from experimental alternatives, we should not allow Israel to reduce the ceiling of our expectations. We should build upon the legendary steadfastness of our people and the patriotic spirit which has never cracked under the heaviest blows.

7- Holding onto the principles of national legitimacy and international law and the Arab peace initiative, as well as all other treaties and agreements with Israel, as a basis to achieving an acceptable fair and comprehensive peace settlement.

8- Avoiding wading into partial or interim settlements and unbalanced initiatives, including plans for a state with temporary borders, through aggressive diplomatic efforts, to avoid falling into the traps of rejection and acceptance and being held responsible for lost opportunities and "generous" Israeli offers.

Recommendations:

In light of the previous analysis, and the arguments against the idea of a unilateral declaration of the failure of the two-state solution, or dissolving the PNA by our own will, I recommend the following:

First: Working on the Palestinian collective mindset to move it from a place of doubt in the future and fear from possible regional changes, to a horizon of steadfastness and insistence on survival. We can begin this with a plan to strengthen the foundations of the PNA, make greater efforts to end the political division, and increase popular resistance. Furthermore, we must revitalize our legitimate institutions, and do all we can to increase our capacity to entrench ourselves in our homeland.

Second: Improving our self-reliance and the performance of the PNA and PLO. Our decision making process must become more inclusive through greater participation of civil society organizations and the enhancing of the democratic process. We need to make greater efforts to improve our economic performance and increase growth, and provide qualitative services in health and education with the goal of enhancing Palestinian efficiency.

Third: Increasing the pace of political engagements with Israel, and increasing the capacity to communicate with Israeli people, parties and media, in an effort to combat extremist tendencies in Israel, as well as encourage the moderates who are for peace against racist Israeli policy. This should be done through intelligent and skillful initiatives and diplomatic efforts, and support from the Palestinian community within the Green Line.

Furthermore, and no matter how few choices we may have, or how hopeless the situation may seem, we have some effective cards that cannot be ignored, in this long conflict that despite all difficulties still offers a chance to move from a transitional Palestinian entity to an independent state. Some of these cards include:

First: There exists an ever increasing demographic advantage, whereas there are 4.5 million Palestinians currently living in the West Bank and Gaza, and more than 1.6 million within Israel proper. Together these form approximately half of Palestinian society, which still endure, and despite all the efforts to rip them from their roots, they increase their steadfastness.

Second: We are the only faction, which has the exclusive right to represent the Palestinian people, and speak on their behalf. We even have the unique final say on any plan or settlement, reaching the levels of a veto, similar to the veto used in the Security Council. This ensures that no unjust solution can be implemented behind the back of the people or its leadership.

Third: We have justice on our side, on the side of a people who has not received its rights in freedom and independence, unlike all other peoples following the Second World War. Such an injustice has had a toll on the international conscience, which pressures Western public opinion in our favor, as well as some segments of Israeli public opinion. This is reflected in the wealth of initiatives and plans and international efforts to solve this historical conflict, considered to be the root of all Middle Eastern problems.

Fourth: We have in our possession, a myriad of international recognitions reinforcing our legal representative legitimacy, including those recognitions from the UN, the latest of which has propelled our status to an observer state, with the support of two thirds of the general assembly, which lays the foundation for building upon these decisions and recognitions and a political settlement.

Fifth: I would be remiss not to mention the official as well as popular Arabic and Islamic stance towards the Palestinian cause, who still considers it as their own despite priorities temporarily shifting. Long term stability of the region is dependent on ensuring the national rights of the Palestinian people.

Comments by Basem Tammimi (activist in the popular resistance movement):

Discussion of “the Day After” is a feature undertaken by leadership and the elite groups selected to support them as a means to decide on appropriate actions and adopt realistic options based on considered information and logic; it attempts to explore the future without embarking on adventures and hasty, unplanned improvisation. This approach marks a new rational trend that is not apparent in the history of Palestinian decision making. As Palestinians, we must reformulate our quest for liberation and construct it according to the goal and means. In the context of the changes imposed by the occupation on the geopolitical map, and following detailed academic analysis of our past experiences and avoiding repetition of previous actions, the question that poses itself is whether negotiations will lead to the achievement of the aspired political (two-state) solution in the existing reality, particularly when this reality reveals that the solution has deliberately been obliterated on the ground?

The “Day After” discussion assumes opening up to and considering all possibilities, studying the options and creating open-minded alternatives. Flexibility is required to consolidate the stance and build a strategy based on the experience accumulated and the exploitation of successes. We attempt to answer the questions put by brother Abu Ala, but with fears of catastrophe when imagining these scenarios: what if the PNA were to be dissolved, or what if it ends for compelling reasons? What about us on the day after this happens? The proposed scenarios that may lead to the dissolution or destruction of the PNA are considered in this paper in part of a context that raises fears of its loss, even if it has lost its legitimacy; this is practically ideological controversy.

The rejection of options is contrary to the rationale of evolution and history. It is clear that Abu Ala refutes the case under discussion because he believes that the other options are out of the question. This may be an excuse for a researcher who has no relation to the case at hand, but in our case, the theory was employed to justify a position and reinforce a vision, even if it contradicts the course of history, progression and national responsibility, taking into consideration that Abu Ala is a crucial figure in Palestinian decision making. Sustaining the political process and the PNA for the longest possible period of time depends on the pattern of development prevailing in the West Bank: this pattern is adopted by the PNA and the donors, who treat the occupation for the most part as an external factor or an ongoing factor under the assumption that it is impossible to control it. This leads to the conclusion that it must be accepted and development must take place only within its framework and within the space permitted to the Palestinians under the political ceiling of the Oslo Accords. The development policies and concepts applied on the ground presuppose the post-PNA phase (the Palestinian state), but adhere to the current model of development.

The question that must be asked is as follows: Will ruling out dissolution of the PNA be an Israeli-American decision if negotiations end with the failure of Palestinians to compromise on national principles that contradict the American-Israeli vision of a solution? How will the PNA justify itself to any Palestinian movement if an unfair solution is reached? The PNA relates not only to Palestinians and it is good to acknowledge this, but it is unrealistic to measure the relative scope of relevance. If the PNA is considered as simply a body to run Palestinian affairs, and if it is considered an administrative reality with a specific benefit in the authoritarian definition of values and interests without achieving its goal as announced at the start: liberation of the homeland, then the relative relevance, i.e., that it relates not only to Palestinians, raises the possibility of its dissolution if other matters take precedence or if it fails to achieve its main goal vis-à-vis its secondary function as one of the tools of the PLO. In the Palestinian reality of political and geographic fragmentation and a vulnerable economy, the task of maintaining achievements is difficult, particularly with the political crisis and internal divisions. The different positions of other parties with direct relationships to the Palestinian cause also have an impact, in particular the occupation, Arab, regional and international interests and the extent to which the PNA is capable (politically, socially and economically) of maintaining its commitments since it is dependant

on external funding.

Why is there a link between the dissolution, collapse or destruction of the PNA and the two-state solution? It is well known that the peace process, from the start, set the perimeters of the conflict in terms of phases and did not aim to end the occupation once and for all. The vision did not take into consideration the concept of the Day After. We can talk about two states; even if the PNA were dissolved the solution still exists, but discussion should focus on the feasibility of maintaining this goal if Israel sabotages it on the ground. Existing Israeli goals aim to end the two state solution and retain the PNA without any substance or meaning and with the sole task of relieving the occupation of its responsibilities. This is what the occupation authorities want to consolidate: coexistence with the occupation. Faced with this reality, the Palestinian leadership must seriously consider the challenges posed by the next phase; it must work on a course to confront and deter the expansionist policies of the occupation, condemn its violations, build international support and sanctions against its policies, halt negotiations if settlements continue, demand a time limit for the negotiations process and define the terms of reference for the negotiations. In this way, we can refute Israeli claims that a peace process exists without any sense of peace on the ground and without seeing any real intentions to achieve such peace.

All options must be available to the Palestinian leadership; all options must be on the table for external and internal discussion, such as the dissolution of the PNA, the adoption of the one-state solution and other solutions. All these options are the result of a growing reality in our world as Palestinians.

Workshop Discussion:

Ahmad Qurei': When discussing the question of the day after the collapse of the PNA and the end of the two-state solution, we must first differentiate clearly between this scenario or other scenarios that result from objective developments that are beyond our control, or the result of an internal decision necessitated by powerful factors that cannot be countered or contained. The most important strategy to confront all possible scenarios is for the PLO to debate how to consolidate and strengthen the steadfastness of the people on the ground.

Nabil Amr: The internal division and destructive competition transform positive energy into negative energy; the situation of Palestinians internally drives the Palestinian leadership. The negotiations process faces several problems and faults. It is not possible to comment on Israeli policies or goals, but the focus should be on what Palestinians want. Palestinian institutions are weak and their legitimacy is declining. The PNA is no longer a transitional stage towards a state, but has become a burden; the current structure of Palestinian leadership cannot accomplish the process of national liberation.

Basem Tammimi: Dissolution or maintenance of the PNA must take place in the context of assessment, preparation and reconciliation with the liberation project; a national alternative must be sought that can preserve all the political and national gains accomplished internally or externally and build on them. The one state option needs to be considered as a strategy and goal to enable us to create a blueprint of struggle that opposes Israel as an apartheid state in all international venues, exploits the potential of all our people wherever they are, and embarrasses US policies that endorse Israeli racism.

Workshop audience stated that the end of the PNA does not necessarily end the two state solution because the Oslo Accords represent a transitional phase towards achieving national liberation and may be reevaluated in the context of the Palestinian national project. The discussion focused on the status of the national movement, which faces a crisis in its structures and personalities. There was also discussion of the difficult situation inside the Fatah movement and the need for it to reorganize its ranks to lead the national movement once again. The discussion also focused on the inability of official Palestinian institutions to take political steps and the fact that the PNA is in a state of total collapse and the current leadership feels defeated without any alternatives. Some participants pointed to the need to think about a new strategy that would achieve long term consensus between Palestinians once again: a strategy of struggle to expose the apartheid practices of the state of Israel under the title "Equality, freedom, democracy and human rights".

Day After - Workshops' Participants

#	Name	Organization
1	Mr. Abd Alnaser Masoud	National Sec. Forces - NSF
2	Dr. Abd Alrahman Altamimi	Head of Palestinian Hydrology Group
3	Dr. Abdelnaser Makky	JICA/Birzeit University
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. Jihad Albadawi	MOH
49	Mr. Jihad Alwazer	PMA Governor
50	Mr. Jihad Harb	PSR
51	Dr. Jihad 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
72	Mr. Mutaz Abadi	PWA
73	Mr. Nabil Amr	Fatah
74	Mr. Nabil Masri	Private Sector
75	Dr. Naim Sabra	MOH
76	Dr. Naim Abuhommos	Birzeit University
77	Dr. Naser Abdelkarim	UNDP/Birzeit University
78	Mr. Naser Yosef	Adisory Board/Fatah
79	Mr. Natasha Carmi	Negotiation Aff. Dep.
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
98	Mr. Sergio Garcia	NOREF
99	Dr. Shaddad Attili	PWA president
100	Mr. Shaker Sarsour	PMA
101	Ms. Shereen Zedan	PWTI-PHG
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103	Ms. Stephanie Heitmann	KAS
104	Dr. Sufian Abuzayedeh	Birzeit University
105	Mr. Tareq Tayel	Egypt Embassy
106	Dr. Tarif Ashour	MOH
107	Mr. Tayseer Zabre	HURRAT Center
108	Dr. Ummaya Khammash	UNRWA
109	Dr. Wael Qa'adan	PRCS
110	Mr. Waleedd Ladadweh	PSR
111	Dr. Walid Aburas	HWC
112	Mr. Walid Hodali	JWU
113	Mr. Wisam Atwan	National Security Forces
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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