

Round Table – TK Foreign relations Committee – 8 February 2024

Intro RS: UN Special Envoy (2008-15) – Three Gaza Wars (Ban ki-moon after third: “Are we going to rebuild Gaza knowing it will be destroyed again?”)

Renewed terrible destruction and unacceptable losses of civilian lives require more than even ever a comprehensive and sustainable ceasefire. But how?

My own experience telling me that no sustainable ceasefire without addressing underlying conditions:

- (new main obstacle) release of all remaining Israeli hostages for Palestinian prisoners (we can't forget or forgive that Hamas committed on 7 October 2023 the worst atrocity against Jews since the Holocaust).
- The full and phased withdrawal of the IDF from the Gaza Strip (avoiding a security vacuum: Euro-Arab transitory security presence?)
- Hamas to stand down from governing/controlling Gaza: Transitional governing structure under the umbrella of PA (likely requiring Hamas acquiescence/Palestinian reunification)
- End of blockade/reopening Gaza for massive humanitarian and reconstruction works (minimum: review Gaza reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) which I helped to set up after third Gaza war).
- A firm, time bound link of Gaza stabilization measures (see above) to a renewed political path towards a Two State solution, embedded in regional security arrangements (Saudi recognition of Israel key).

All this requiring a transformative deal to take shape and intense diplomacy to this unfolding right now under US leadership (Biden/Blinken diplomacy. Odds at present not looking good, with both Netanyahu and Hamas (Sinwar) obstacles. But too easy to despair!

Finally, a warning: this may be the last chance for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by way of a TSS. Urgent need for some international parameters (for example, based on so called Kerry parameters, 2015). Also need to go back to drawing board and find fresh solutions to key obstacles, such as Israeli settlers (+ 750.000) and the future status of Jerusalem.

Glimmer of hope: the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue group, reinforced with Jordanian, Egyptian and European experts, still active. (some members meeting the TK Committee on 22 September).