

Point of View No.71

Failure of the Political Process:

The Danger of Dissolution of the Palestinian Authority

A prominent commander of the Palestinian Resistance Committee (PRC), called last week for the de-facto Palestinian government to dissolve the Palestinian Authority (PA) and to replace it with a "Resistance Authority" in the West Bank and Gaza (Ma'an, 10/24/07).

This statement reflects the ideology of some resistance factions, which view the dissolution of the PA as a pivotal stage in promoting the idea of 'one-state.' These factions 'await' the failure of the Annapolis Summit, in order to prove the impotence of the PA and its inability to serve the interest of the Palestinian people.

What is the Issue?

- During the Oslo Peace Process, Israel, the Palestinians and leading members of the international community, implicitly accepted the principle of the "Two State Solution". The PA was supposed to be the cornerstone of the future Palestinian state and gradually assume Israel's authorities and powers concerning the residents of the West Bank and Gaza.
- The Palestinian resistance factions including Hamas, opposed Oslo and the formation of the PA. However, Hamas gradually changed its attitudes and decided to integrate into the PA – first in the municipal elections and later in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and the government.
- However, most of the resistance factions continued to negate the legitimacy of the PA. Moreover, there remain differences on this issue within Hamas itself.
- In recent years, there have been increasing calls among the Palestinians to restore the Israeli occupation and to dissolve the PA. In the months prior to Hamas' take over of Gaza, senior members of both Fatah and Hamas did not rule out this option and the PLC discussed the issue (see: ['Dismantling the PA- an emerging trend'](#))

Why is this Important? Why Now?

- The calls for dissolving the PA expressed the despair from the political and security chaos within the PA and the internal power-struggles as well as the rise of the resistance factions which promoted the idea of dissolving the PA for ideological reasons.
According to their logic (hereinafter 'the Logic of Implosion'), dissolving the PA will force Israel to carry the full economic and political burden of occupation, and may lead to Israel's internal collapse, similar to the case of white South Africa.
- Hamas' take over of Gaza and the renewed Israeli-Palestinian political process, have for the time being halted the trend of the PA's dissolution .
- **However, a possible failure of the political process might reawaken this trend.** This is because Abu-Mazen and Fayyad are considered to be the most moderate leaders of the Palestinians. Their failure to reach an agreement with Israel, is likely to increase the doubts over the viability of the Two State Solution.
- The Resistance factions' logic of implosion 'awaits' the failure of the political process in order to prove that the PA provides Israel with a 'license for occupation', and it does not serve the interests of the Palestinian people.
- Moreover, the failure of the political process may cause a strategic inversion in the goals of the entire Palestinian national movement: from a struggle to end occupation and establish a Palestinian state, to a struggle to hinder attempts to end occupation and demand a "One State Solution".

Policy Options

- The danger of the PA's dissolution turns the Israeli presence in the West Bank into a trap. On the one hand, IDF presence prevents Hamas from taking over the West Bank and averts terrorism. On the other, if the PA dissolves while the IDF is in the West Bank, Israel risks renewing its full responsibility over the West Bank.
- Israel should prepare for the possibility of failure of the political process. The key to this should be strengthening and building the PA's institutions, so that the PA could 'survive' a possible failure of negotiations. In this context, Israel should consider transferring its authorities and powers to the PA, in parallel to the negotiation process and independent of its outcome.

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