

Palestine and the Arab Regional Order: What Changed after Operation Al-Aqsa Flood?

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ABSTRACT *This commentary examines the changes and transitions in the Arab regional order in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict since the foundation of the Israeli state. The discussion centers on four main transformations in the Arab regional order that occurred after major wars or confrontations with the Zionist regime. It also suggests that due to Operation al-Aqsa Flood, the conflict may enter a fifth phase. In addition, the analysis addresses the failure of the strategic decision made by the Arab states to only back a political settlement with Israel. It also argues that the American strategy to integrate Israel into the region and pursue a policy of normalization with its Arab allies was the main causality of the October 7 attacks. Finally, the discussion explores Israel's strategic losses that diminish its strategic value in the region.*

Keywords: Arab Regional Order, Arab Peace Initiatives, Israeli Strategic Losses, Al-Aqsa Flood

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Introduction

Ever since the emergence of the Medinan State in the 7th century, the territory that extends from the Maghrib in the West to the Gulf of Oman in the East and from the Levant in the North to the Gulf of Eden in the South has mostly been bonded by language and culture, embodying the collective societies, history, and politics of the Arab world. For centuries, much of the history of the Islamic world, including the rise and fall of many empires, the last of which was the Ottoman that essentially disintegrated in the aftermath of the First World War, was shaped and influenced by this region, as it represented the heart of the Islamic civilization and culture.

Even though Islamic doctrines and principles largely guided it, this civilization has manifested itself in significant human domains and endeavors, including philosophy and law, theology and mysticism, governance and social order, architecture and urban development, trade and international relations, science, and technology, as well as literature and the arts. Across this vital region of the world, peoples, nations, and tribes from different ethnicities, cultures, faith traditions, and languages have not only peacefully coexisted but also cooperated to build one of the most enduring and influential civilizations in history.

During bygone eras, the region had suffered from existential threats that could have altered its history in

vastly significant ways. The successive invasions by the Crusaders and the Mongol conquests between the 11th and 13th centuries epitomized such major challenges. In each instance, the collective will of the people of the region and their ability to mobilize their societies and martial vital resources allowed them to repel the invaders and recover and renew their civilizational quest.

However, in the wake of the post-Westphalian world of the 17th century, many European powers embarked on imperialist conquests and colonial campaigns, not only in the Western Hemisphere but also across Asia and Africa, including much of the Islamic world.

A Painful Legacy: Western Imperialism in the Arab World¹

By the early 20th century, many countries in the Arab world were under direct European colonial rule, including Algeria (1830) and Tunisia (1881) by France, Egypt (1882) and Sudan (1896) by Britain, and Libya (1911) by Italy. In the aftermath of the First World War, the rest of the Arab world came under direct colonial control and foreign influence as the Sykes-Picot Accords of 1916 divided the sphere of influence and direct occupation between Britain and France, with Iraq, Palestine, Transjordan, and the small sheikhdoms along the Gulf falling to the British. The Levant (Syria and Lebanon) going to the French. The Hijaz and Najd regions had already been un-

der heavy British influence in the leadup to the break-up of the Ottoman Empire and subsequently coveted by great American interests because of oil.

The significance of the occupation's religious and cultural aspects did not escape the attention of the colonialist powers. Upon entering Jerusalem in December 1917, British General Edmund Allenby remarked, "The wars of the crusaders are now complete," while French military General Henri Gouraud, who conquered Damascus in July 1920, stood at Saladin's grave, kicked it and declared: "The Crusades have ended now. Awake Saladin, we have returned. My presence here consecrates the victory of the Cross over the Crescent."² By November 1917, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issued a declaration that pledged Britain's full support to the international Zionist movement in establishing a national home in Palestine for the Jewish people as soon as British control over the country was consolidated.

For the next half-century, most Arab societies were engaged in national liberation struggles and resistance movements against colonial powers, leading to national independence for many Arab countries, including Syria and Lebanon in the 1940s, Egypt, Sudan, Iraq, Morocco, and Tunisia in the 1950s, Kuwait, Algeria and Libya in the 1960s, and the Emirates, along with the Persian/Arabian Gulf, as well as South Yemen in the 1970s.

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Palestine: The Center of Arab Politics

In addition to the national liberation struggle that spread across the Arab world throughout this period, another parallel conflict in Palestine between an aggressive Zionist movement and the Palestinian and Arab people was taking place, eventually leading to a multitude of wars that spanned decades (1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982, the First Intifada 1987-1991, the Second Intifada 2000-2002, 2006 in Lebanon, and the Gaza wars in 2008-2009, 2012, 2014, 2021, and 2023-ongoing).

The impact of each major war with the Israeli state, founded in 1948, was fateful. Not surprisingly, several regimes would be replaced with new ones after each confrontation as the regional order was transformed and upended. The unsettling defeats would cause old regimes to lose their legitimacy and fall. New ones would be erected and slowly start to domi-

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nate the political scene with new political actors.

Before the 1948 War, the Arab polity was dominated by a *façade* of elite parties that adopted the liberal-democratic traditions of the colonial powers and dominated by the bourgeois class, especially in the countries surrounding Palestine, namely Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. The major consequence of the 1948 Nakba (catastrophe) was the loss of 78 percent of historical Palestine and the displacement and exile of about 800,000 Palestinians who had lived in the territories claimed by the nascent Zionist state. For decades thereafter, the overwhelming majority of these dispossessed Palestinians and their descendants would be living in many refugee camps across the region, mainly in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. However, the direct political impact

of the Nakba on the region was the loss of legitimacy of the main Arab states that had badly lost the devastating war. However, it is important to note that the majority of these governments such as in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq, were either under the direct or indirect control of foreign colonial powers. Within a few years, many of these states were replaced, mainly through military coups, with authoritarian regimes (as in the cases of Syria, Egypt, and Iraq, later followed by Sudan and Libya).

As noted, after the 1948 catastrophe, many of the Arab governments (with the exception of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf sheikhdoms, Jordan, and Morocco) replaced monarchies or tribal systems with republics and revolutionary councils dominated by military officers and left-leaning or socialist political parties. Socialism replaced capitalism in many Arab societies as a new class of elites dominated by the military class was established. However, many of these socialist republics would soon lose their legitimacy in the eyes of their populace as a result of the 1967 defeat, which was even more devastating in its outcome than 1948. Not only had the rest of Palestine been lost (Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem), but the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights were also captured by the Israelis from Egypt and Syria, respectively.

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estinian resistance factions under the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) umbrella took center stage. In 1964, the Arab League, an ineffective institution established in 1945 to formulate a political consensus within the Arab states, established the PLO in an attempt to offload the burden of the struggle on these regimes under the disguise of empowering the Palestinians while still controlling their movements and political positions. Therefore, a major consequence of the 1967 War was the take-over of the PLO by the Palestinian factions dominated by Fatah in 1969. But perhaps the most significant political outcome of the 1967 War was to reframe what the final resolution of the struggle would be. Before 1967, there had been a regional consensus to reject the legitimacy of the Zionist regime and define the goal of the struggle as being the liberation of Palestine and the return of the 1948 displaced Palestinian refugees. However, after 1967, the end goal was redefined and changed to become the restoration of the pre-1967 status quo ante. Simply put, the Arab regional order had accepted after 1967, albeit begrudgingly, the Zionist state in its midst, provided that it was willing to withdraw from the territories it had occupied in 1967.

When Israel ignored this significant concession, Egypt and Syria launched a limited war in 1973 to force international powers, particularly the U.S., to be serious about reaching a political settlement. As the U.S. became involved, the direct result was not just concluding a separate peace

agreement between the Zionist regime and Egypt in exchange for returning the Sinai to Egypt with limited sovereignty, effectively removing the latter as a major threat to Israel or a main player in the conflict. More importantly, the main outcome was consolidating the Israeli occupation and providing it with a free hand over the occupied lands, particularly in the Palestinian territories and the Syrian Golan Heights.

With the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the siege of Beirut in 1982, the direct military confrontation between the PLO factions and Israel came to an end as thousands of Palestinian fighters were removed from Lebanon, disarmed, and scattered in faraway places. The immediate consequence of this was to transform the center of gravity of the struggle from outside Palestine to inside the occupied territories. As the first Palestinian intifada erupted in late 1987 and intensified for a few years, Israeli leaders realized that they needed to pacify the Palestinian national liberation struggle inside the occupied territories through a fake political process that would not offer real concessions to the Palestinians while slowly incorporating major parts of the West Bank into greater Israel to make it impossible to have a sovereign Palestinian state.

Even though the 1993 Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO, and later the Palestinian National Authority (PA), were devised as a political negotiation process to realize a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, it was merely a convenient Israeli tool

Following the UN General Assembly's vote for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire during the Emergency Special Session on December 12, 2023, representatives from the Arab Group and the Islamic Group on Palestine addressed the media at the UN.

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in its quest to absorb the occupied territories. The end goal remained elusive since the Zionist regime refused to commit to any meaningful withdrawal or to allow the emergence of a sovereign Palestinian state. In fact, the number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank increased more than sixfold over the next three decades, from 125,000 in 1993 to over 750,000 in 2023. Meanwhile, Israel consolidated its hold over Jerusalem and the holy sanctuaries and made it virtually impossible to have any hope for a two-state solution.

As the PLO and its affiliated PA failed to achieve any meaningful political resolution to the conflict, a parallel path of mainly Islamically-oriented resistance initiated the fourth phase of the struggle. This phase was born in the 1980s out of an Islamic revival phenomenon that slowly swept the

region in the aftermath of the 1967 defeat and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 and the subsequent Afghani Jihad had indeed inspired countless youth and reinvigorated many social movements across the region. But by the end of the 1980s, several movements within the Palestinian-occupied territories had launched and were leading the daily struggle against the occupation. Notably among them were Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the Palestinian-occupied territories and Hezbollah in South Lebanon.

In short, with the colossal failure of the Oslo process, the struggle of the Palestinian national resistance movement, dominated for over two decades by secularist and leftist groups, came to a halt. Within a few years, the composition of the resistance

movement as noted above was slowly transformed during the First Intifada (1987-1991) to be dominated by the Islamic movements, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah. By the end of the Second Intifada (2000-2002), which effectively ended the flawed Oslo Peace Process, this transformation was complete. After 18 years of fierce resistance, Hezbollah defeated Israel, which had to withdraw from Southern Lebanon in 2000. In addition, Hamas was the biggest beneficiary of the 2005 Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, since no political cost was associated with the withdrawal. Soon Hezbollah and Hamas dominated Lebanese and Palestinian politics with the former dominating the Lebanese political scene, and the latter winning the Palestinian elections in 2006 and subsequently taking over Gaza in 2007.

In short, since the end of the Second World War, Arab societies conferred political legitimacy on the regimes and movements that confronted the Zionist enterprise in the heart of the Arab world or faced Israeli aggression and expansion. The political legitimacy of the Islamist groups was further consolidated in the Arab world when Israel failed to defeat the Islamic resistance groups in the 2006 war against Hezbollah or in the successive wars over a decade and a half against Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza. Although Israel caused massive deaths and destruction in these wars, it could not exact a political price on its nemeses. In all these conflicts it was demonstrated to people across the region that Israel, which imposed

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its policies by force on most of the impotent Arab regimes, could not dictate its ultimatums against these resistance movements.

Israel and the Arab Peace Initiatives

Ever since the 1967 defeat, the collective Arab response was simply to offer the Zionist state recognition, legitimacy, and normalization in return for withdrawal roughly along the 1967 borders and an establishment of a Palestinian state, even if truncated. The Arab “peace” initiatives came in abundance after each phase, with more concessions and compromises. After Egypt signed its peace treaty with Israel in 1979, several Arab peace proposals were offered including the Prince Fahd plan (of Saudi Arabia) in 1982, as well as King Abdullah’s peace plan, later dubbed as “the Arab Peace Initiative.” The latter was supported by all Arab states in an Arab League Summit in Beirut in 2002, and sub-

The U.S.' new plan for the Middle East called for a new regional order that brought its Arab allies in the region, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, Bahrain, Morocco, and possibly others, in a close alliance with Israel against Iran and its allies, including the Palestinian resistance movements

sequently endorsed after each major confrontation including in 2007 and 2017 Arab League Summits.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Arab Peace Initiative was the removal of any notion of a military confrontation or a threat against the Israeli occupation while promising recognition, peace relations, and normalization. Such a toothless position was repeatedly reiterated by the Arab regimes as their only strategic option.

Meanwhile, Iran, along with the resistance groups that it has been supporting militarily, economically, and politically, was offering an alternative path, based on the use of hard power and relentless resistance, which was yielding tangible results in terms of meaningful concessions from Israel, including land recovered, establishing relative deterrence, and forcing exchanges of prisoners.

The Impact of the Arab Spring and the Search for a New Enemy

As a result of the Arab Uprisings that swept the region in 2011 and 2012 during the so-called Arab Spring phenomenon, a new regional realignment was taking shape. Old and new social and popular movements supported by restless populations in many Arab societies were demanding sweeping political and social reforms. Consequently, a new counter-revolutionary force, led by reactionary regimes such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, entrenched powers, including the strong Egyptian military, a corrupt business, and a Western-oriented class, as well as other social and ethnic groups that feared the rise of political Islam across the region. It mobilized its vast resources to frustrate the reform movements and kill any genuine attempt toward the creation of a new order based on national independence, democratic representation, civil freedoms, or the redistribution of resources. It's also been aptly documented that foreign powers, particularly Western powers such as the U.S. and France, as well as Israel, had greatly feared the consequences of the Arab Spring on their strategic interests in the region, which they consider to be more secure under authoritarian regimes and repressive systems.³

During the administrations of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, all political actors, including America's major Arab allies in the region such as Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, played their roles by pretending that there was a genuine

peace process, while everyone knew that the so-called two-state solution, which is at the heart of the Arab Peace Initiative, was dead. Before leaving office in January 2017, Obama even allowed UN Security Council Resolution 2334 to pass, which “reiterated its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.” Shortly thereafter, Secretary of State John Kerry declared that the two-state solution was dead.⁴ He did not hide the fact that Israel was principally to blame.

But once Donald Trump came to power in 2017, he veered sharply toward the Israeli position and rewarded its intransigence by acceding to its demands. He recognized Jerusalem, including East Jerusalem, as Israel’s capital, and moved the U.S. embassy there. In addition, he recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Syrian Golan Heights. Strategically, he made Israel the 23rd member of the Central Command, or CentCom, which is the military structure responsible for all military operations between Egypt and Afghanistan. In short, the military alliance of this new NATO in the Middle East consisted of the U.S., Israel, and America’s Arab client states with dozens of military bases across the region.⁵ It’s then quite reasonable to assume that Iran and its regional allies were marked to be the principal targets of this new military structure.⁶

In addition, Trump virtually ended any meaningful relations with the

PA, as he closed the PLO mission in Washington and the American consulate in Jerusalem, which was the primary American diplomatic mission to the Palestinian Authority. In addition, he punished the Palestinians in a variety of ways, including freezing many assistance programs as well as ignoring their pleas for meaningful consultations. The final nail in the coffin came with his so-called “Peace Plan,”⁷ which was short of the minimum requirements of a viable Palestinian state, awarding Israel with large swaths of land including the entire Jordan Valley, and even stripping the citizenship of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians that have been living in the Israeli state since its founding. Angering all Palestinians, including the PA, the plan was summarily rejected by all Palestinian factions, including the PA, and had temporarily united them against it.

However, the architect of the plan, Jared Kushner, who is also Trump’s son-in-law and served as his chief advisor for the Middle East, was working on other tracks that would lead to the recognition, normalization, and exchange of ambassadors with several Arab states, including the UAE, Bahrain, and Morocco, under what was coined as the “Abraham Accords.” Furthermore, tremendous pressure was applied on other Arab regimes such as Sudan and Mauritania to join the normalization train, with other advanced normalization plans to include Saudi Arabia and other major Islamic countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indo-

nesia. However, Trump's defeat to Joe Biden in the 2020 elections froze such plans as the new Biden team was re-examining its grand strategy around the world, as well as its foreign policy priorities in the region in light of its overall strategy.

The Arab Regional Order on the Eve of al-Aqsa Flood

After the hasty U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, and in light of its designation of China to be its major global competitor and fierce rival in its National Security Strategy in October 2022,⁸ the U.S. started to reposition itself in the Middle East to greatly focus on China.⁹ Part of its plan to pivot toward Asia was to establish a new regional order to secure its vital interests in the MENA region. The anchor of this regional strategy was to forge a strong normalization deal between Saudi Arabia and Israel that would have produced close security coordination between them. It would have been akin to the twin pillar policy of the Nixon doctrine of the early 1970s.¹⁰

Two weeks before the October 7 attacks, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stood pompously at the UN podium with a map drawing a line from India to Europe that went through the Persian Gulf, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, reaching the Israeli port of Haifa, and from there to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea, dubbing it the "India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor" (IMEC). Unsurprisingly,

the name Palestine was missing from Netanyahu's map. The IMEC is a Western-backed initiative devised to supplant China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as the future of the Middle East with Israel playing a pivotal role in the region, not just in the security realm, but also economically and strategically.

In short, the U.S.' new plan for the Middle East called for a new regional order that brought its Arab allies in the region, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, Bahrain, Morocco, and possibly others, in a close alliance with Israel against Iran and its allies, including the Palestinian resistance movements Hamas and Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen and other militant groups in Syria and Iraq. The U.S. had hoped that, by early 2024, it could have offered Saudi Arabia the three conditions it was seeking in exchange for its normalization deal with Israel. These three conditions were strong security protection and guarantees, the sale of advanced weaponry, and the construction of a civilian nuclear reactor. The Saudi regime was willing to sign this deal without the establishment of a Palestinian state or an Israeli withdrawal from the 1967 lands as stipulated in the Arab Peace Initiative.¹¹

Al-Aqsa Flood and Regional Arab Disorder

Unquestionably, the tremors unleashed by Hamas on October 7 will have far-reaching effects, not only

across the region but worldwide, for years to come. In its decades of existence, Israel has never faced such a challenge to its military doctrine. This doctrine is based on six imperatives, with all being undermined since October 7, namely: the use of pre-emptive strikes, effective deterrence, early warning systems, strong defense, quick resolution of the conflict, and escalation dominance.

Upon close examination, it's clear that all these imperatives have either been ineffective, inoperable, or significantly weakened since October 7. It was Hamas that had preemptively attacked Israeli military targets this time. Its early warning systems and intelligence services failed miserably. After more than eight months of incessant fighting none of Israel's adversaries are considered deterred. Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and even Iran have strongly responded blow for blow, consistently and persistently.

In addition, Israel can no longer claim to be able to defend its citizens in the North or South as tens of thousands have been relocated and unable to return to their towns and communities. Moreover, Israel has failed to end the conflict after months without achieving any of its declared objectives.¹² While Israel killed and injured over 120,000 Palestinians, destroyed much of Gaza, and made it unlivable, it has not been able to bring its adversaries back down despite its constant escalation. In fact, its response to the Iranian response in April was so underwhelming that the result was

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effectively the nullification of its doctrine of escalation dominance.

In short, based on its conduct and failure to achieve its declared goals, Israel has received a strategic military defeat despite months of devastatingly destroying Gaza. Such a colossal failure has exposed the Zionist state not only before its restive people but also across the region. Hence, the strategic value of Israel regionally has been clearly undercut. In essence, the notion of maintaining a stable regional order for America's Arab allies by depending on Israel's military strength for security and protection was exposed as a sham. Moreover, for the first time in its history, Israel is no longer able to dictate the narrative, nor control many media outlets, especially alternative media platforms and social media activities. Israel also had to stand before the International Court of Justice, accused of committing war crimes and genocide and ordered to comply with provisional orders to stop its mass murder and starvation policy. The request by the General Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to seek the indictments of

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the Israeli prime minister and defense minister demonstrates the degree to which Israel has become a pariah state and its leaders toxic.

Conclusion

Ever since the creation of the Zionist state, the Arab regional order has gone through several metamorphoses as new regimes replaced old ones that lost their legitimacy in the aftermath of a major confrontation or defeat with Israel. While Western-oriented regimes were toppled after the 1948 Nakba, left-leaning military dictatorships and authoritarian regimes lost their status in the Arab streets after the 1967 defeat. The third stage of the struggle witnessed the rise and fall of the secular Palestinian national movement, the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, and the subsequent failure of the Oslo process, respectively. The fourth stage of the struggle was characterized by shifting the center of gravity from outside to inside the

occupied territories. This phase was marked by the rise of the Islamic resistance movements culminating in Operation al-Aqsa Flood attacks on October 7.

After the 1967 defeat, and under extreme American pressure, the collective Arab order, led by America's Arab allies, embarked on a strategy that abandoned the use of hard power to extract any Israeli concessions. Starting with the 1974 10-point plan, the 1988 Palestinian Declaration of Independence in Algiers, and the subsequent Oslo Accords, the PLO and PA embraced the so-called Arab Peace Initiative that promised recognition and normalization through a negotiations-only approach.

As Israel rejected all peace proposals and rebuffed all Arab overtures in favor of the greater Israel project, it has relied on U.S. pressure and a lack of Arab resolve to push through its agenda. But when the Arab Spring phenomenon exposed the weakness of the Arab regional order in front of the uprisings that swept the region, a realignment took place between the Arab counter-revolutionary and reactionary regimes on one hand, and foreign powers, particularly the U.S. and Israel on the other.

With the rise of a more powerful China and an increasingly assertive Russia, a geopolitical transition has steadily taken place from a unipolar to a multipolar international system. In such a system, the U.S. wanted to have less presence in this vital region to focus on its competition with

China in an attempt to contain it in the East Asia region before it becomes too powerful or a regional hegemon. Such a strategy called for the return of a twin-pillar doctrine by relegating the task of protecting American vital interests in the region to its allies, particularly Israel and Saudi Arabia. Such an undertaking requires that both countries become allies with normal and close security coordination to build strategic relations.

The surprising October 7 attacks came amid the U.S. attempt to normalize relations between the Zionist regime and Saudi Arabia, the cradle of Islam. Thus, one of the most important strategic goals of the U.S. in the region has recently been to shut down the disastrous Gaza war and conclude a normalization deal before the U.S. November elections.

As the U.S., Israel, and their regional Arab allies fail to defeat Hamas or dislodge it from Gaza, crush the resistance axis, particularly in Lebanon and Yemen, or curb Iran's geopolitical influence in the region, which has so far been the primary beneficiary of the Israeli debacle,¹³ it would be very difficult, though not impossible, for Saudi Arabia to conclude a normalization deal with Israel in the near or medium term. As Israel has been considerably weakened as a result of its genocidal war in Gaza, such a deal would not only be doubtful but also very risky.

Meanwhile, the long-term impact of the titanic events on the restive populations across the region, which have

been taking place in Gaza and other fronts for many months, could be monumental. As experienced during the Arab Spring, Arabs across the region have shown that when they are angry, frustrated, and inspired, they could turn a sleeping giant into another flood that might topple political regimes and social orders. Such a wild card could be the trigger that shakes up the regional order and forces drastic changes that are so radical and unpredictable as to defy common wisdom.

Finally, in light of the strategic changes taking place on the world stage as a result of Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the subsequent Israeli war on Gaza, the conflict is entering its fifth phase, which is characterized not as a regional conflict, but by a new global movement sweeping the world. In essence, Palestine has become the key, symbol, and compass for a global struggle that will propel many social forces toward promoting positive change in a world characterized not by devastating wars, genocide, ethnic cleansing, apartheid, and occupation, but by truth, freedom, justice, equal rights, people power and humanity. ■

Endnotes

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