

Why is this year different from all years and this vote from all other votes?

Written by Adam Keller
Friday, 24 June 2011 09:51 -

Saturday, June 18, 2011

<http://adam-keller2.blogspot.com/2011/06/why-is-this-year-different-from-all.html>

For decades, the UN General Assembly is meeting every year in the month of September. And every year it adopts by a large majority a series of resolutions initiated by the Palestinians. These resolutions gets reported (if at all) as a minor news item deep down on page 10 and go straight to the UN archives. No one seriously expects them to be actually implemented in reality. This year, it is quite different.

Never did a UN vote get such attention as the vote which is expected in September this year. This year, Israel's Defense Minister expressed apprehension that the expected UN vote might cause a political Tsunami. And the Foreign Ministry embarked on an emergency mobilization of all its diplomats in all countries throughout the world and instructed them, many months in advance, to focus their energies on the expected vote in the General Assembly. And the IDF and the police hold extensive exercises, half a year in advance, anticipating the United Nations vote and its predicted impact on the ground. And the Prime Minister of Israel and his senior ministers are all the time running around the world, from one capital to another, in a non-stop campaign of conversations and speeches and persuasions and pressures, so as to gather and collect a General Assembly vote here and there. And the President of the United States of America in person undertook a trip to Europe and met with the prime ministers of Britain and Germany, in a desperate attempt to formulate and present the Palestinians with a substitute of equal value which may yet convince them to take back their appeal to the UN and save the United States and its President the difficult dilemma of what to do and how to vote in September.

What has changed? It is not the UN itself which had changed since last year. Its prestige was not greatly enhanced, nor did it gain additional concrete powers. UN Member States still determine their vote because of various interests, and the great powers still cast their veto due to similar considerations. Still, the situation did change. It is the situation on the ground which has changed.

44 years have passed since Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza - more than two thirds of the total period of Israel's existence. 44 years, during which the State of Israel has established dozens of settlements and created hundreds of accomplished facts and carefully refrained from annexing these territories and explained to anyone who asked that this was a temporary situation and that the permanent status negotiations shall be held in the future, once upon a time. And after 44 years Israel's PM still asserts that the final status would be determined in negotiations which would start once upon a time, when the Palestinians fulfill all the conditions

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presented to them, and that such negotiations might even be concluded at an even more distant future date, but that actually there is not much to hope for "since the conflict is in fact unsolvable."

Already for seventeen years the Palestinians have the Palestinian Authority with its President and Parliament, Prime Minister and Ministers duly placed in charge of ministries – everything which a sovereign state has, except for one thing: real power on the ground. Also seventeen years after the creation of the Palestinian Authority, a 19 year old Israeli corporal standing at the checkpoint on the road between Ramallah and Nablus has much more power and influence on the daily lives of Palestinians than the Palestinian Authority's President and its Prime Minister and all ministers together.

No wonder that Palestinians are less and less enthusiastic about the Palestinian Authority which is supposed to represent them. No wonder that fewer and fewer Palestinians believe that diplomatic activity can make the occupation army and settlers go or that it might lead to the creation of a free and sovereign Palestine, whose borders would be based on the 1967 lines and which would have East Jerusalem as its capital.

Palestinian confidence in this option eroded further after the President of the United States called for negotiations based on the 1967 borders and Israel's prime minister rejected this call out of hand at the podium of the U.S. Congress while receiving the prolonged applause of American lawmakers from both parties alike.

The expected UN vote in three months from now, in September 2011, is the final test and the last chance - now or never. The Palestinian Authority's last chance to prove to its people that their hope to be a free people in their land is not lost, that the international community is behind them and that through its support a miserable and hollow Palestinian Authority could be upgraded and turned into a real sovereign state.

In the UN Security Council, the United States has veto power, as is officially enshrined in the UN Charter. In the United States Congress, the Government of Israel has veto power which does not appear in any written document but is enshrined deep within American politics, and which in effect controls the U.S. veto at the UN. And the United States remains the strongest power in the world, and its exercise of the UN veto is a highly significant gesture. Still, in recent years doubts are heard and fissures appear in the US global might, competitors and opponents show up to increasingly challenge the might of the American empire. If its veto is bypassed through the General Assembly, leaving the Americans in a less than splendid isolation in their opposition to Palestinian aspirations, these fissures would become somewhat wider.

And what would happen on the day after? In his famous speech Obama warned the Palestinians that the UN vote by itself would not create a Palestinian state - which is undoubtedly true. A UN vote in itself does not establish states which fail to materialize on the ground. Also the UN vote on November 29, 1947, did not in itself establish the State of Israel, it only provided a framework and legitimacy to the acts of David Ben Gurion and his colleagues. So, what will happen on the ground?

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The influential columnist Tom Friedman urged the Palestinians to implement the creation of their state in practice through a non-violent struggle - large processions setting out every Friday to Jerusalem, with olive branches in their hands. For this scenario, Israel's army and police already begun to prepare and practice, and they have a wide spectrum of measures to counter what Army Chief of Staff Benny Gantz termed "The Demonstrations Threat" – from tear gas and stinking water to snipers who are instructed to shoot to kill.

But a state recognized by the International Community has various new possibilities open to it, even when its territory is still under occupation by a foreign army, and even if its full membership in the UN was stopped by an American veto. For example, to lodge a complaint to International Court in the Hague for the violation of its sovereignty by the occupying army and by the settlers illegally introduced into its sovereign territory by that army. Also, start individual international proceedings against particular officers in the occupation army, for personal acts in violation of International Law committed on its sovereign territory.

Once the state of Palestine is recognized, it will be much harder to send Israeli forces late at night into the heart of Ramallah, in order to detain Palestinians wanted by the Israeli security services for the purpose of "interrogation under moderate physical pressure". From the purely military aspect, there would be no problem to bring to bear a tremendous firepower which would overcome all opposition by the Palestinian police forces, but the Israeli officers involved may need immediately afterwards to get legal assistance. Adv. Michael Sfard already pointed out that the diplomatic tsunami of which the Defense Minister is so apprehensive might be dwarfed by the judicial tsunami which the State of Israel might face if insisting upon retaining the Palestinian Territories after September.

<http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/the-legal-tsunami-is-on-its-way-1.358758>
<http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/a-legal-tsunami-on-the-horizon-1.362001>

And inter alia, a sovereign state is definitely entitled to issue its own currency. If the Government of Israel insists upon keeping the Palestinian territories within a single economic framework with the State of Israel, there could suddenly flow into this shared economy an enormous amount of Palestinian Pound notes and coins, with vast economic effects unforeseen and uncontrolled by the eminent economist Stanley Fisher, who apparently failed in his bid to head the IMF and will have to remain at the head of the Bank of Israel.

And yet, what if all this does not help the Palestinians? What if their state remains a piece of paper at the UN General Assembly, with no sign of it visible on the ground, with occupation keeping its usual routine and Israeli soldiers standing at the checkpoints through all the highways and the settlers in place, driving bulldozers and building and expanding and bursting out in all directions? A great victory for the Israeli right wing and the vision of Greater Israel. A very great pyrrhic victory,

If the Palestinian leadership is revealed as having given false promises and false hopes and having nothing further to offer to its people, the revolutions in the Arab World would swiftly arrive in the Palestinian streets. The Palestinian Authority which failed to transform itself into a state will collapse like a house of cards, its government and parliament swept away without a

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trace, and with them all remaining support for a solution based on a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

Palestinians would abandon en masse the demand for an independent state, and would instead adopt a call – already gaining support among them – for a single state from the sea to the Jordan, a democracy with voting rights for all. All settlements would remain in place - only that their Palestinian neighbors in Nablus and Hebron, Jenin and Ramallah as in Gaza and Rafah would also send their democratically elected representatives to the Knesset.

And just then, when support for a democratic state from the Mediterranean to the Jordan would spread throughout the world, an Israeli government – terribly fearful of the loss of the Jewish state and the Jewish majority – would very urgently offer all that it refused and rejected before...

Posted by Adam Keller קלר אדם at [11:58 AM](#)