

HISTORIC VICTORY FOR PALESTINE

With overwhelming rejection against the occupation, will Israel consider a just peaceful resolution of the conflict?

By Franklin Lamb

The United Nations General Assembly vote of 29 November 2012, which some in Lebanon's 12 Palestinian refugee camps are calling a "birth certificate for our country" is the latest of more than 400 UN resolutions on the Question of Palestine and a rare major victory for Palestinians after 65 years of resisting occupation.

The UN action, which was backed by an overwhelm majority of UN members with a lopsided vote of 138 to 9, may well force the Zionist regime to seriously consider a just peaceful resolution of the conflict.

With due respect to the nearly 50 percent of the UN members who voted against the historic Palestine Resolution on 11/29/12 at the General Assembly, which is to say the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru (the world's smallest republic covering just 8.1 square miles with a population of 9, 378)), and Palau, with its approximately 20,000 inhabitants, all former U.S. Trust Territories and currently "freely associated states" of the United States, with U.S. zip/postal and telephone codes much more closely resembling American states (51st, 52nd, 53rd and 54th) than sovereign countries, the World spoke clearly in favor of Palestinian self-determination. Indeed, the only reason these dissenting four "countries" are UN Members at all is due to cold war era efforts of Washington to stack the General Assembly in its favor by running up the numbers of its safe votes.

Over the past fortnight, as the US and Israel piled layers of threats onto their mantra of derision regarding this historic UN vote on Palestine, both countries desperately tried to dissuade the Palestinians from scrapping their application for non-member observer state membership status with the United Nations.

Way too much did Israeli officials and their US lobby protest, thus drawing more international attention and curiosity as they kept dissing the "purely symbolic empty gesture and meaningless act."

Naftali Bennett, leader of the extremist right-wing national religious Zionist party in Israel, Habayit Hayehudi ("The Jewish Home") warned the day before the vote that "the PA bid for non-member status at the UN has very real implications on Israel, and that we must take harsh measures in response. I don't accept the claim that this is a symbolic move," Bennet told Israel Radio. "This is not symbolic at all. This has very practical implications. "He added: "We must tell the Arabs, if you pursue a unilateral strategy at the UN, We will pursue a unilateral strategy in annexing settlements in the West Bank."

There is some important symbolism in the UN admitting Palestine as a non-member observer on the 65th anniversary of the November 29, 1947, adoption by the UN General Assembly of the resolution on the partition of Palestine (resolution 181 (II)). On December 2, 1977, it was recorded that the assembly called for the annual observance of November 29 as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (A/RES/32/40 B).

Last minute appeals by Secretary of State Hilary Clinton plus a late night pre-vote visit by US Deputy Secretary of State William Burns and Middle East envoy David Hale to the hotel room of the Palestinian Authority hold-over President Mahmoud Abbas failed to convince him to withdraw the resolution and to include the demanded eviscerating codicils.

Secretary of State Clinton could not have been more mistaken as she insisted at her news conference on 28 November 2012 that "the only path towards a Palestinian state was through direct negotiations. As I have said many times the only path to a two-state solution that fulfills the aspirations of the Palestinian people is through Jerusalem and Ramallah, not New York." Few in the state department, according to congressional staff members who liaise with Clinton's staff, believe that direct negotiations would ever lead to Israel voluntarily rejecting its current apartheid system or that the interminable "peace process" has ever been taken seriously by the Zionist regime and in fact constitute a hoax. In contradistinction, the growing reality in the Middle East and all five continents is the belief that only Resistance, with its scores of forms, will liberate Palestine from Zionist occupation.

Low balling the UN vote.....

Following the 138 to 9 vote, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, intimated, as did the usual Amen chorus of anti-Arab & anti-Islam zealots, from the US Israeli lobby, including the likes of ADL's Abe Foxman, that "just as predicted, anti-Semitism was lurking behind the lopsided vote" and that it all amounted, in the words of Netanyahu spokesman Mark Regev, "to nothing but cheap political theater that should not come as a surprise to anyone."

The American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), as it does on any issue involving Palestine and Israel issued Talking Points for members of Congress and other Zionist organizations to be used when communicating with constituents and giving media interviews. AIPAC keeps close track of how many interviews each member gives and how closely they tow the Zionist line so as to help determine how much cash the particular member will receive for re-election as well as other perks.

For this crucial UN vote, the US Zionist lobby used U.S. Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Susan Collins (R-ME) drafted a letter from these AIPAC stalwarts to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas opposing any unilateral attempts by the Palestinian Government to pursue non-member state status at the United Nations General Assembly.

In their letter, the Senators asserted that "Palestinian statehood can only be realized as a result of a broader peace agreement negotiated with the Israelis, not through unilateral measures at the United Nations.

Should you decide, however, to bypass direct negotiations and unilaterally seek upgraded status at the UN, we want to again remind you of the potential for significant consequences. As S. Res. 185 notes, any such efforts may cause consequences in regards to U.S. policy and foreign aid."

AIPAC instructed Congress to make the following points which was included in an "urgent advisory" to every member and many staffers.

1. This UN action won't lead to peace.

Peace will only occur through direct talks. By refusing to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and seeking recognition of a state at the United Nations, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is damaging U.S. peace efforts. (nothing in this point is accurate)

2. Recognizing a Palestinian state gives legitimacy to Hamas.

The Iranian-backed terrorist group has fired thousands of rockets at Israeli civilians and is sworn to the destruction of the Jewish state. By granting recognition of a state, the international community will reward Hamas for its terrorist actions, rather than condemn them

3. The United States has rejected the Palestinian approach.

President Obama has said that "no vote at the United Nations will ever create an independent Palestinian state" and called the Palestinian efforts at the U.N. a "mistake."

Other talking points AIPAC told Congress to use include: while Israel Takes Steps for Peace, Palestinians run to UN , Israel Wants Talks; Palestinians Still Refuse, Palestinians Glorify Terrorists by praising the Hamas victory.

What the Zionist leaders of Israel, as they frantically try to intimidate the region by stockpiling American weapons, while grabbing more Palestinian land, fear is that the 11/19/12 UN resolution may be a game changer.

In this they are correct.

The UN action allows the Palestinians to participate in General Assembly debates and de facto grants recognition of Palestinian statehood on the

pre-1967 ceasefire lines while re-enforcing the wide international consensus that the pre-1967 lines should form the basis of a permanent peace settlement.

It also opens up the 17 Specialized Agencies of the UN including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labor Organization (ILO), International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Universal Postal Union (UPU), the World Bank Group, World Health Organization, World Trade Organization (WTO), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) as well as related and comparable organizations.

As noted this week by Al-Haq, the Palestinian human rights organization " Under such a strengthened position within the international legal system, the State of Palestine will be allowed to formally accede to international human rights instruments and other technical United Nations bodies, thus improving protection of Palestinian rights at the domestic and international level".

It is also to be expected that Palestinian citizens under brutal Zionist occupation will demand to use their new status to join the International Criminal Court and might press for investigations of Zionist international crimes, crimes against humanity, attempted genocide, and a host of other practices in the occupied territories. Investigating such international crimes and bringing punishment to those convicted is why the ICC was established.

Professor Francis Boyle reminds us that Palestine can also now sue Israel at the International Court of Justice and end the illegal siege of Gaza, and join the Law of the Sea Convention and secure its fair share of the gas fields lying off the Gaza coast with enormous economic benefits.

Palestine can also now join the International Civil Aviation Organization and gain sovereignty over its own airspace; join the International Telecommunications Union and gain sovereign legal control over its own airwaves, phone lines and band-widths.

These are just some of the many reason the Obama administration, slavishly joined the Zionist leadership of occupied Palestine to defeat the UN application.

The actions of the Obama Administration and its vehement opposition to the UN vote continues to diminish the relevance of the US in the Middle East as it slides further down the wrong side of history with its client state in tow. Attempting to justify its shameful opposition to the Palestinian diplomatic undertaking in the UN, the Obama administration could only offer a weak brief from the State Department legal department accusing the PLO of acting unilaterally, in breach of signed agreements are simply parroting AIPAC talking points noted above.

Deepening Palestine's international legal personality within the United Nations system is a legitimate presence on the world stage from which to assert rights guaranteed by fundamental principles of International Law.

With more access to the United Nations system, Palestinians have gained a major political and legal framework from which to work and to encourage the international community to comply with its obligation to end Israeli crimes against them and bring Israel's serious breaches of international law to an end. – Third World Network Features.

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