Netanyahu's Strategy: A Question of Occupation and a Dilemma of Recognition

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Abstract

This article discusses the Israeli strategy of addressing the issue of negotiation with the Palestinians during Netanyahu government 2009-2011. Netanyahu-Liebermann coalition government came after the defeat of the previous Israeli government led by Kadima political party under the chairmanship of Yahud Olmert in 2009 general election. That paved the way for the rise of the political forces that were leaning towards the Right within the Israeli political spectrum. The current Netanyahu government believes in stage-wise solution that divides the settlement with the Palestinians into two stages: the interim arrangement and the permanent solution. In order to hinder the Palestinian political endeavours under Abbas-Fayyad umbrella of internationalization of the conflict, Netanyahu began insisting that the root of the conflict is not 1967 border but 1948 confrontation. This implicitly means that the Palestinians and the Arabs must recognize the state of Israel as homeland for the Jewish people if they want Israel to recognize Palestine as a land for the Palestinians.

Keywords: Israel, Palestine, negations Netanyahu, Kadima

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk meneliti strategi Israel berkaitan isu perundingan dengan Palestin semasa pemerintahan kerajaan Netahayu 2009-2011. Kerajaan pakatan Netanyahu-Lieberman ditubuhkan selepas kekalahan kerajaan Kadiman sebelumnya yang diketuai oleh Yahud Olmert dalam pilihanraya tahun 2009. Kerajaan Netanyahu menggunakan pendekatan berperingkat yang memecahkan penyelesaian dengan Palestin kepada dua peringkat, iaitu penyelesaian interim dan penyelesaian kekal. Netanyahu menegaskan bahawa permulaan konflik bukan dalam tahun 1967 tetapi konfrontasi tahun 1948. Tujuannya ialah untuk menghalang usaha Abbas-Fayyad untuk mengantarabangsakan konflik Israel-Palestin. Ini secara halus mesti menerima kewujudan Negara Israel sebagai tanah air orang Yahudi jika Palestin ingin Israel kewujudan Palestinc sebagai tanah air untuk orang Palestin.

Kata kunci: Israel, Palestin, perundingan, Netanyahu, Kadima

Introduction:

Conflict resolution also overlaps with conflict management,where some experts believe that conflict management is the umbrella name for conflict resolution and conflict transformation. The conventional meaning of conflict management could be replaced with broader processes such as containment, settlement, resolution, transformation and prevention of conflicts. Conflict management is strongly rising as umbrella discipline dealing with conflict, its causes, symptoms, dynamics and solutions. Its and important field including description, understanding, prediction and participation in part or comprehensive, interim or permanent solutions (Azem Hamad : 2005).

In conflict resolution paradigm, it's possible to transcend conflicts if parties can be helped to explore, analyze, question and reframe their positions and interests. Conflict resolution therefore emphasizes intervention by skilled and powerless third parties working unofficially to foster new thinking and new relationships. In this respect, one can argue that conflict resolution is about how parties to conflict can move from zero sum pattern of conflict to positive sum constructive outcomes. On the other hand conflict transformation theorists argue that it's important to engage the conflicting parties by transforming their interests, relationships and discourses. People within the conflict parties, within conflicting societies or communities, along with people at regional and international levels, all have designed roles to play in peace building (Miall, 2011).

Te resolve conflicts substantially, it's necessary to address two fundamental problems concurrently: first, the effective control of violence between the two conflicting parties, and, second, the building of cooperative relationships within the communities or within the societies to promote sustainable peace building in the long run (Hansen, 2004).

The present Israeli government led by Benjamin Netanyahu envisions the peace process with the Palestinians on the basis of actual balance of power between both conflicting parties and the real facts on the ground. It was inaugurated in the aftermath of some events including the war on Gaza launched by the previous Olmert government and after a serious of negotiation rounds between the Palestinians and the Israelis run by Olmert-Abbas themselves. The peace process was deadlocked since 2009, although one or two meetings were held between Abbas and Netanyahu under the US auspices but without fruitful or tangible results in actual terms.

Interim Solution

The starting point for the interim solutions to the Israeli Palestinian conflict is the common claim that there is no such solution! This paradoxical situation originates in equal but competing biblical as well as historical claims.

To complicate matters further, there are issues regarding the fate of Palestinians refugees (following the establishment of the Israeli state in 1984 and the subsequent Six Day Arab-Israeli

war in 1967). The ever- growing number of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Areas, the Separation Wall, the fixing of road blocks preventing free Palestinian movements between own towns and villages as wells as contradictory visions regarding the final status of Jerusalem, are all further difficulties to a peaceful settlement.

In such an intricate situation, where common visions are absent, and ideologies are conflictive; an approach by strategic ideas drawn from the theory of conflict resolution is proposed (Ayland: 2010, 7-8). Proponents of the interim solution from the Israeli side as well as their Western supporters claim that where enabling condition to resolve the conflict are absent, negotiation should not be stopped. Israel should push for interim solutions with the Palestinians to save its own political and security interests.

Interim solutions from the Israeli view-point involve either a partial withdrawal from Palestinian areas occupied after the six-day war and/or the establishment of a provisional Palestinian state on temporary borders as a negotiating option displayed in the road map for peace. According to the strategic expert and Chairman of the former National Security Council, General Giora Eiland; states that the interim solution serves four main benefits for Israel, these are:

Firstly the interim solution reduces the political damage, which was caused to Israel by retaining the current situation. Secondly the establishment of a Palestinian state in temporary borders should reduce the area of the Israeli occupation making the majority of population (95%) Palestinians under own rule, thus reducing contact with the Israeli road blocks and barriers and settlements.

Thirdly, this solution can solve all the practical issues (such as the border) but beyond resolving the core issues such as refugees, Jerusalem and settlements.

Fourthly, the interim solution will also reduce tension between the two sides paving the way to a complete interim solution and turning it into a final one (Ayland:2010, 8-9).

Eiland recognises also that the Palestinian side –especially the Palestinian president (Abu Mazen) objects to the idea of an interim solution due to their fear of turning such a solution into a lasting and permanent one. Meanwhile, the Israelis realise that interim solution have its own drawbacks and advantages as far as the Israeli security is concerned. The advantages of the interim solution to the Israelis is that it is easy to reach once an agreement between the two parties is forged, thus leaving the main conflicting issues (such as the question of Jerusalem) to be dealt with at the final negotiating table- a matter which Israel is extremely critical of. As far as the disadvantages; the Israelis see that an interim solution will shrink the file of political manoeuvring with the Palestinian side; Israeli withdrawal from certain Palestinian areas will reduce the Israeli advantages of holding the bargaining chips. Another disadvantage is that if the interim solution fails its implementation phase, trust will be damaged between the two sides and

expectations are reduced leading to an aggravated security situations especially for Israel (Even: 2008).

Netanyahu's position is consistent with his Minister of State Lieberman; they believe that interim solutions are options for the best negotiating strategy with the Palestinians. Netanyahu wants to manage the conflict with the Palestinians during the negotiations for the sake of negotiations and not to reach a final solution. Netanyahu spoke on condition that the Palestinian recognition of the Jewishness of the state of Israel and the Jewish people ultimate rights over the entire land are preconditions for negotiations. These are in essence aimed at the inclusion of new topics for negotiations just to complicate any suggested final solution to the conflict in the future.

Unilateral Direction without Agreement

The Israeli withdrawal from Gaza was one of the most important unilateral Israeli experiences, which, although led to undesirable results, it did serve some valuable lessons for the Israeli strategic mission. In spite of the smuggling of arms through the Philadelphi route and lack of coordination arrangements for boarder crossing, Israel managed to relieve itself of the burden of Gaza and the costly military rule of some one million and three hundred thousand rebellious Gazans. And so after the inter-Palestinian conflict and the forceful military takeover of Gaza by Hamas, the security situation for Israel improved and the Gaza-Israeli boarder became the quietest in its entire history.

And so the lessons learned from the Israeli unilateral withdrawal from Gaza and by exercising extra caution, such lessons can be repeated elsewhere. Thus any unilateral move on behalf of Israel will have to take into account not evacuating the areas but also making sure that they are left secure. One final lesson learnt is that any unilateral withdrawal should not necessary lead to a total evacuation from any region though the withdrawal from the West Bank could not possibly be from the entire area but parts of it.

Israeli talks of repeating the same experience in the West Bank and by retaining certain parts under own control such as the Israeli settlement blocks and all areas behind the Separation Wall as well as Valley of the Great (the Jordan Valley) should lead the Palestinians to manage own affairs. However, the situation that prevailed afterwards although boosted reasonable opportunities to reach an agreement on acceptable grounds, this did not happen due to loss of hope and disperse on reaching a final settlement.

With the increased crisis for negotiations and the strenuous search for exit solution for the Israeli dilemmatic situation due to demands for Israel to freeze its settlement activities and thus submit to the Palestinian precondition for the resumption of the negotiation process. In view of the demands posed by the international community for the submission to the Palestinian conditions, it appears there is an Israeli need to search for unilateral exit, which may succeed in offering new options on the ground. Such an option which may satisfy the Palestinian minimum demands and provides Israel with its maximum security interests.

The Israeli publicity media spoke of the unilateral and voluntary withdrawal security plan, which began to appear in the Likud lobby halls and which may turn into a policy vision and a political offer. This offering is in fact a repeat of reproduction of previously offered plans by Olmert and Sharon. The current Israeli serious discussions which centre around reviving the older plans by Sharon in 2005, which is specific in its voluntary withdrawal and unilateral approach, and which Sharon has implemented its initial phase by withdrawing from the Gaza Strip and some isolated areas in the north of the West Bank.

Olmert intentions to implement voluntary withdrawal and the often referred to by himself as the re-allocation of Israeli settlements in the West Bank to new seven settlement concentrations in the West Bank. These seven settlement concentrations which are planned to be annexed to Israel and by the removal of Palestinian populated areas outside of it where frozen. This was due to the Israeli war on Lebanon in 2006, when he declared that such a move was not a priority. Olmert plan included also the completion of the Separation Wall and the withdrawal from the Palestinian towns and villages and the removal of the isolated Israeli settlement posts from the heart of the Palestinian populated areas.

Olmert security plan included also the transfer of nearly 40-70 thousand Israeli settlers to the new allocated settlements concentration and the prevention of the Palestinians from taking over the vacated areas whilst retaining it under the control of the Israeli army. By implementing this plan Olmert aimed at the total removal of Israeli settlers living outside the separation Wall into geographically connected areas with the "motherland of Israel" and becomes part of it. However, in 2008, Olmert appeared on Israeli National TV to state that the choice for unilateral solution remains an option should the bilateral negotiations fails to find a durable solution for the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

According to the new developed plan in 2010, Israel re-allocates the settlement behind the Separation Wall and their transfer to within the concentrated settlements inside the West Bank. At the same time, while Israel withdraws from the Palestinian populated areas without abandoning its security obligations and maintaining safe passages which enable Israel to work freely according to its security needs. Israel learned from their experience of unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip and parts of the North of the West Bank. In other words, Israeli civil presence in the West Bank can be dismantled from the main Palestinian areas. Thus, the Israeli army and its intelligent service maintain, a constant presence and acceptable monitoring on the ground to satisfy the Israeli needs and security guarantees. In the words of Ma'areev newspaper; the exit from the Palestinian veins in all that is relevant to civil administration and control, should make Israeli a favourable state in the eyes of the International community, at least for some time (Maarev, 2010).

Amongst the Likud party lobby halls, a current discussion of developing the voluntary withdrawal plans while taking into account the main ideas from the older Olmert plan include the following main issues:

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Firstly, the plan of course does not mean full withdrawal of the entire West Bank Area; the Israel withdrawal plan under the Likud party, begins with initiatives and steps on the ground, which include the withdrawal from the main populated Palestinian areas. Secondly, while keeping control over the major settlement blocks in the Occupied Palestinian Areas, the plan includes also the retaining of strong security presence on strategic heights westwards as well as eastwards.

Thirdly, the plan maintains control over strategic locations in the Palestinian areas of the West Bank while keeping control over the main natural water resources.

Fourthly, Israel keeps total security control over the Jordan valley and the Dead Sea.

The intention of the discussion of the unilateral solution comes in the context of Israeli efforts to impose conditions for solutions on the Palestinian leadership from the perspective of forceful acceptance with no other choices or the exertion of pressure on the Palestinian leadership to prevent them from any future unilateral steps. This provides the Israeli leadership with a window of opportunity to prevent the Palestinians from approaching the United Nations for full recognition of the Palestinian State as an independent state within the 1967 borders in Sep. 2011.

Meanwhile, internal Israeli discussions began around their own response on any Palestinian unilateral declaration of an independent Palestinian state or any attempts by the international community to recognise a Palestinian state as an independent political entity within the 1967 boarders. As far as Israel is concerned, its response to the unilateral Palestinian declaration would be met with an Israeli unilateral reaction through the imposition of a consensus agreement, which meets the Israeli security needs and their strategic interests.

The Israeli strategic plans included also the unilateral withdrawal from wide areas in the West Banks while maintaining security control over owns settlement blocks and all routes as well as by-pass routes leading to them. This vision enables Israel in the case of any military confrontation with the Palestinians to re-occupy main cities of the West Bank and tearing a part all geographical locations in the Palestinian Territories. Should such a situation arise, it will eventually force the Palestinian newly established state to surrender to the Israeli negotiation demands to administer the security arrangements on the ground. This means, that the Palestinian state would be one with temporary boarders with a geographically disconnected nature. This short-term solutions may turn into a long-term obligations.

Long-Term Solution-Permanent Agreement

Proponents of the final solution amongst the Israeli side claim that such a solution is the right formula, which both Israeli and Palestinian sides can eventually agree upon it. Therefore, there is not other choice except pressing with it in totality and at once. The pro-permanent solution add that time is against Israel and the continuing of the status-quo or any incremental or stage-wise solutions would shrink the political manoeuvring ground for the Israeli side in the future. This

will also weaken the Israeli pre-conditions for negotiations; therefore Israel should exploit its military and political advantages to determine the shape and nature of the final solution and puts an end to the conflict at once (Ayland: 2010, 10).

The Israelis are not the only side in the negotiation process because the Palestinian side in general and the Palestinian president- Mahmood Abbas in particular are persistent in their calls for negotiations for a final solution and not any incremental or stage-wise solutions. This issue forms one of the main points for differences between both Netanyahu and Mahmood Abbas (Laibi: 2010, 70).

The Israeli strategic expert and ex-army General Efraim Laibi points out that the Palestinian President Abu-Mazin prefers going for negotiations for a final solution tackling all obstinate issues. Abu Mazin is insistent of a final solution settlement comes in view of the presence of the right wing Israeli government led by Netanyahu- Lieberman.

Abu-mazin pushes for final settlement solution originates from within his believe that the current Israeli government objects to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the whole territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile. Laibi believes that the Palestinian Authority demanded from Israel the freezing of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian areas, not only in harmony with the American position but also because the Palestinian Authority wants to push for negotiations without changing the current status quo on the ground and because the Palestinian Authority fulfilled its road map obligations whiles Israel maintained its settlement activities in the West Bank.

Laibi believes also that the Palestinians will implement their plans to achieve a world-wide recognition of a Palestinian State should Netanyahu insists on his pre-conditions for negotiations. This should also provide the Palestinians with the opportunity to implement Salam Fayyad vision for establishing a Palestinian State outside of the negotiation theatre with the Israelis (Laibi: 2010, 71). For this reason, the international community rejected the economic peace as offered by Netanyahu as an alternative to the political peace so to speak. This is because economic peace implies transitory or temporary peace and not long-term or permanent peace. In the meanwhile, Netanyahu welcomed the Palestinian domestic policies which have been implemented by the PA to establish the Palestinian State and re-building of the State institutions (Feldman: 2009).

In spite of the corrosion for Israeli support of permanent solution, and the rise of other strategic ideas in favour of temporary and short-term solutions, the idea of long-term and permanent solution remains a favourable option attracting some support from the main Israeli political parties including the Labour, Kadema and some other members within the Likud main stream. This is the case although the postponing of the more important and complicated issues such as the question of Jerusalem, the removal of settlements and return of the Palestinian refugees as well as an agreed final shape of the boarders, are all persistent excuses to by-pass the Palestinian demands in favour of the least damage to the Israeli interests.

The permanent solution from the Israeli perspective means reaching an agreement with the Palestinian side, which involves settling all the intractable issues. The Israeli offer intends to place the Palestinians in a position where they lower their demands while agreeing to the ultimate and historical solutions putting a final end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Advantages of reaching a final solution from the view point of its proponents in the Israeli side include the following main points:

1. There is a genuine desire on behalf of major world powers and especially Israeli allies and friends to end the chronic conflict in the Middle East. The search for permanent solution was the main feature of most peace efforts and proposals, which were proposed by various world-powers to stop the conflict and reduce tension in the region.

2. The Israeli future is linked with its ability to be a normal part of its surroundings. This of course will not be achieved unless a historical settlement is reached to settle all differences and disputes with its neighbours. The permanent solution should also enable Israel to normalise relations with its neighbours and allows for a full political and economic integrations.

3. The final solutions provides the Palestinians with an independent state and fulfil their desire to exercise their own sovereignty on own land, while enabling them to share parts of Jerusalem and find an acceptable solution to the Palestinian refugees. All of this should heal the past bloody memories in the area and end their demand which causes most of the crisis in the region.

4. Any postponement of the permanent solution and the search for non- permanent alternatives will contribute to the complexity of the situation and will develop new ones which do not help in solving the crisis and may turn these efforts into time-bombs and death traps, which Israel should deal with in the future. And because the future is not guaranteed and always uncertain, due to international relations may differ as much as the possibilities of changing regional balance of power, therefore, it is for the Israeli best interest to search for a final and permanent solution, no matter how costly.

5. The continuation of hostilities and conflict will be too costly for Israel, and may cause excessive deterioration of its international relations with the outside world including its main allies and friends. Opinion polls in Western Europe and the US indicate a deteriorating public image for Israel. There also appears to be indicators which points to increased campaigns for the de-legitimising of Israel as a Jewish state in international organization and human rights groups.

Therefore, ending of the conflict means that Israel will be enabled to rid itself of all burdens associated with its own creation following the 1948 Arab-Israel war. This should also provide Israel with a legitimacy to be part of a greater and peacefully settled region. Should not this vision be achieved, Israel will be met with greater strategic challenges and dangerous threats to its existence. From the strategic perspective, only a permanent and agreed upon solution may bring to Israel international guarantees to its security and any a possible undermine of its legitimacy.

Rhetoric of Recognition: from the Periphery to the Centre

During his new term as a prime minister, Netanyahu demanded that the Palestinians recognise the Jewishness of the Israeli state as a basic and preliminary condition to reach a final solution with them. And before discussing the issue of recognition in greater details, it should be stated that the subject of recognition as an obstacle to peaceful settlement between the two sides is not new in the Israeli discussion arena. There was an academic Israeli debates which focused on the psychological barriers and the conflicting, and contradicting historical claims on both sides. Added to the intellectual and ethical differences along with the concept of justice which differs on both sides. All of these differing views were exploited as barriers by the Israelis to prevent settlement and compromise. Except Netanyahu managed to transfer this debate strongly into the political arena; instead of adopting a settlement approach, he used terms of reconciliation, not because he intended to apply it, rather, he knew the difficulties reconciliation will be faced with on both sides as well as his confidence that such a tactic will remove any possibilities of a solution and will ultimately fail the negotiations (Bar Seman Tov: 2010).

Netanyahu backed-off from proceeding on the same basis of negotiations such that which was used by the predecessor Israeli governments. Such basis which began from the view point of reaching an agreement regarding boundaries first and which also the Palestinian side agreed to. Netanyahu, however, wanted to place a new foundation for fresh negotiation, which begins with talks on security arrangements and the recognition of the state of Israel as a Jewish state and not on the demarcation of boundaries; a clear implication of the Jewishness of the state of Israel!

This new approach by the Netanyahu government constitutes a fresh arrangements for the Israeli negotiations priorities in addition to the recognition of the Jewishness of the Hebrew state; a radical new tactic (Tal- Landman: 2010, 121-35). Netanyahu understood that the symbolic recognition of the Jewishness of the state of Israel implies historical evidence which ties the proclaimed Jewish historical rights with Palestine. This of course would also be a compensation token for the right wing political parties in exchange for their support and agreement to divide the "the Land of Israel". The demand for the recognition of Israel as Jewish state was repeated by Netanyahu at his Bar-Illan university rhetoric speech in June 2009 and was re-affirmed in front of Council of Foreign Affairs in New York in July 2010.

Netanyahu fresh approach is considered not only a new one but also a deep pre-condition demand as it ties between the success of the negotiations with the issue of the recognition of

Israel as a Jewish state.. Netanyahu also believed that through the Palestinian's recognition of the Jewishness of Israel would resolve all major differences between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

In his own words, and before his meeting with President Abbas in Sharm-El-Shaik in Egypt, Netanyahu stated that "the main obstacle to peace in the Middle East is the issue of recognition. He also added that "when we manage to overcome our mutual recognition, I hope we can –after one year- to congratulate each other with blessing and peace". In many other occasions, Netanyahu described the Palestinian refusal to the issue of recognition as the roots to the conflict.

After the launching of negotiations with the Palestinians in Washington, Netanyahu went straight to the negotiations after the celebration of the Jewish New Year saying; " we insist that the final settlement with the Palestinian must be based on two main principles; security and recognition. Security; because peace will not stand unless new security arrangement are placed on the ground. As for recognition of Israel as a nation state for the Jewish people because the Palestinians are asking us for the recognition of a Palestinian national state!" (PMO Communication Spokesman: 2010).

The Netanyahu recognition speech takes back the debate to the core of the conflict; the 1948 year when the state of Israel was founded and not the 1967 six day war. This move is brought into light because Netanyahu believes that the de-legitimisation of Israel, which has become an intense issue in recent years, is rooted in the Palestinian refusal to recognise Israel as a Jewish state. In a further statement in December 2010- after the failure to resume Israel-Palestinian talks, Netanyahu stated "even if we manage to reach peace agreement, our legitimacy will remain exposed; this is because it is not rooted in the events of 1967 war, rather in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war because there was an Arab efforts to prevent the Jews from having a national state and national home (Haartez: 2010, 12).

Netanyahu repeated his demands for recognition rhetoric in every possible occasion while attempting to follow on with this strategy re-affirming his position in three occasions in May 2011. He further affirmed his position during the AIPAC (American Israeli Public Affairs Committee) meetings and his well-known speech in front of the US Congress also in June 2011.

In alls his speeches, Netanyahu made it clear that the problem does not lie in the establishment of a Palestinian state but in the Palestinian refusal to the recognition of Israel as Hewish state.. The purpose of re-asserting this position is an effort on behalf of the Netanyahu government to remove the public position Israel is being held into as an occupier state. This became clear when Netanyahu himself stated during his speech at the American Congress that the Israelis presence in the West Bank is NOT an occupation, rather, a return to the Land of the Ancestors. By tying the Jewish people with the West Bank through historical and religious right, Netanyahu is prepared to drop-off painfully such rights in exchange for the Palestinians' recognition for state of Israel as Jewish sate..

Netanyahu's Vision of Interim Solutions

As far as his own preference is concerned, Netanyahu sees that the interim solutions are best to service his negotiations strategy with the Palestinians. In adopting this position; Netanyahu finds himself in alliance with his Foreign Minister Lieberman on the subject. The former wants to manage the Palestinian- Israeli conflict through prolonged negotiations for the sake of continuing negotiations and not to reach a final solution! Should the Palestinians recognise Israel as Jewish state and submit to the rights of the Jewish people over the land, is in essence a precondition for further negotiating issues and new subjects which will complicate matters further and prevent the reaching of a final settlement. Consider for instance a precondition such as the removal of both the Jerusalem and refugees issues from the negotiation agenda; a situation will not be and cannot be accepted by the Palestinian side.

As far as Netanyahu is concerned this is a suitable exit even for the Palestinians: the Palestinians will get their recognised state at the end and at the same time, any unforeseen dangers and security concerns as far as the Israelis are concerned will be minimised. This is due to the main objective of the plan, which focuses on the security side of the negotiations, will allow Israel to exercise control over the eastern boundaries of the Palestinian State (the Jordan Valley) as well as the Western boundaries (the Security or Separation Wall), in addition to their control over the water resources and sovereignty over Jerusalem. In more accurate words, the Israeli vision will render the Palestinian State well-surrounded by Israel from all directions as well as being geographically discontinued (the Gaza Strip and the West Bank) unless the Israelis permit so.

According to a reliable Palestinian source; in previous meeting at Sharm El-Sheik, Washington, and in Jerusalem, Netanyahu offered an interim and gradual solution, which may take up-to more than ten years whereby Israel maintains 40% of the West Bank. This would keep the Israeli concentrated settlements in place and keeping control over Jerusalem as well as holding a full lease over the Jordan Valley for further 40 years and the maintaining of military posts at the main entrances of all Palestinian major cities. This proves that Netanyahu is held firmly in the belief that interim and stage-wise solutions are the best offer he can give in replacement of a final solution.

What matter most to Netanyahu is that the Eastern border of the proposed Palestinian state remains in the Israeli hands and any other borders should temporarily remain! This of course would enable Israel from examining the extent to which this arrangement suits Israeli security needs and if any further modifications are needed. The Security Wall would remain the Western boundaries for the Palestinian state and whatever lays westwards remains as Israeli while the Eastern boundary of the Wall is Palestine (Al-Ayyam Newspaper: 2010). According to this proposition; there is a major difference between the security boundaries and the political boundaries. Thus the Palestinian state can claim its political boundaries to stretch up to the Jordan Valley where as its security boarders would not! This proposition resembles the Oslo Accord in its essence as far as the administrative and the military sovereignty; the autonomy of the state is

of a political and administrative nature, which covers the inhabitants of the Jordan Valley whereas Israel retains absolute political and administrative autonomy.

The Israeli experience gained from leaving Gaza proved that Israel should hold onto something; Israel cannot possibly leave totally military-free zones from the areas which were once under its military control or of no further military interest. Thus the complete exit from the Philadelphia crossing for instance proved to be a mistake which should not be repeated; arm smuggling bloomed in the absence of an Israeli presence and this has threatened the Israeli security interest, and so how is it possible to withdraw from a boundary that is some 80 km in length?

Current discussion is taking place around a framework of permanent settlement (or a framework agreement) which includes guarantees obligating both side to commit to the spirit of a final solution premised on the principle of two-states for two peoples, however with changes and arrangements which guarantee taking the Israeli demands into consideration. This guarantee although is committed to the general framework for the settlement as the title suggests however does not consider taking into account too much considerations the finer details. This proposed agreement may stretch up to thirty years (Netanyahu expressed definitely for more than twenty years), whereby Palestinians undergo the "Monitored Test". Whilst announcing the agreement; the Palestinians officially announce their independent state while the Israelis presence does not diminish with the signing of this agreement. The Israelis withdraw their military presence gradually and n incremental basis, meanwhile, the Israeli presence in the Jordan valley remains according to private arrangements as mentioned previously.

The Israeli offers of incremental solution hide dangers; gradual solutions may turn into final solutions and therefore dealing with it should take this matter into serious considerations. Migrating the Israeli crisis this way may eventually placing it onto the shelves and thus ignoring it; whatever is not on the discussion table today does not necessarily mean it will be debated another day; this is because there are real developments on the ground which may engage all party and becomes more important issue to be dealt with.

Discussion and Summary

Three main principles underpin the Israeli negotiations strategy adopted by the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, these are:

The Policy of Recognition:

These policies form the initial indicators for the Israeli negotiation strategy. This is represented by the Israeli demand that the Palestinians recognize Israel as a state for the Jewish people, in other words Israel as Jewish state. Netanyahu raised the sealing for these policies by placing this demand as one of the main priorities at the top of the requirements for negotiations and placed it also as of value as those conditions attached to the final solution conditions. The policies of

recognitions aim at placing the claim that the main problem with the Palestinian side is not due to the Six Day War, rather, in the recognition of 1948 Arab-Israeli war. This implies simply the removal of the Israeli position being seen as an occupier to a question of recognition for the rights of the Israeli people. Referring back to the 1948 war is an Israeli effort to place the Jewish people as victims and thus the Jewishness of the state is being victimized. Whilst concentrating upon the 1967 war places the problem in a question of occupation; a situation which Netanyahu does not want, because he knows the negotiations with the Palestinians cannot proceed any further to reach a final solution which may satisfies the position of the quartet, thus he wants to make the case a matter of recognition rather than a case of occupation.

Dispersing the boundaries between incremental solutions and a final solution:

In his speech at Bar-Élan University in 2009, Netanyahu spoke of his vision regarding the final solution with the Palestinians and expressing his approval to the two-state solution, although we believe that this celebration were artificial in Israel; Sharon did recognize the Palestinian state previous to Netanyahu though the former represented the right wing government more than the later did not to mention that Sharon held Kadima party as an expression of a shift in attitude towards the conflict with the Palestinians. This was evidently represented in the unilateral steps adopted by Sharon and by his vision of the Palestinian state as a demilitarized one. As Netanyahu expressed; this situation is acceptable by the American administration (Shalom: 2009); a state of partial sovereignty in its fly zone. By signing military and security agreement, it would leave the boarders of the Palestinian state in the hands of the Israelis especially the Jordan Valley, in addition to maintaining sovereignty over the concentrated settlements blocks as well as keeping Jerusalem unified. What Netanyahu referred to in this political framework as a state cannot be in any recognized political sense. Though offered previously as a preamble for a final solution, Netanyahu offered this political framework as a final solution, within which the Palestinians are required to declare an end to hostilities.

        Conflict Management: Netanyahu realizes the political and ideological obstacles facing a final solution. The right wing, which Netanyahu represent sees a final solution as a concession over the "Land of Israel" thus evacuating the settlements means a collapse of the Netanyahu government as well as a collapse of himself as a prime minister. Therefore Netanyahu looms the policies of recognition as new instruments to manage the conflict rather than resolve it; Netanyahu sees the negotiations as objectives by own right since he always declared that Israel was ready for negotiations and so when the American requested that Israel freezes settlements for three more months, he (Netanyahu) asked the Palestinians for recognition in exchange….a temporarily freeze (not mounting to a dismantle of settlements) in exchange of a permanent and historical recognition! Thus Netanyahu attempts to manage the conflict, not only with the Palestinians, but also in front of his own coalition camp (for instant, through government support for the referendum law). Netanyahu realizes only too well that the Palestinians will not accept the freezing of settlements in exchange of a Palestinian recognition for the Jewishness of Israeli and he knows if they do accept for argument sake, this would be a historical achievement at least in front of his own camp.. In reality, Netanyahu cannot go too far with the negotiations; consider the

security bargain offered to Israel by the USA in exchange of freezing the settlement for three months was rejected because Netanyahu prefers managing the conflict through one crisis into another and so on. Netanyahu however, is managing the conflict without any political horizon and without knowing where he wants to reach through such management. Netanyahu believes that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be resolved and this is what he confessed to Haarts Newspaper lately when he stated; "The conflict cannot resolved because it is not held on the ground" (Haartez: 2011). This statement sparked uproar in Israel as it reveals that Netanyahu is held in the belief that such conflict is unsolvable, so he is prolonging in the demand for the recognition of the Jewishness of the state of Israel, which runs in favour of managing the conflict and not solving it.

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