

Palestine: “The Day After” Fading to Oblivion?

Wednesday 1 May 2024, by [FINKEL David](#) (Date first published: 1 May 2024).

“THE DAY AFTER” has been a mantra of U.S. government and media from the beginning of the carnage in Gaza in the six months since October 7. The assumption is that the zombie “peace process” and “normalization” of Israeli-Arab states’ relations would proceed under U.S. auspices, once Israel achieved the defeat and “destruction” of Hamas rule in Gaza.



New York City demonstration opposing Washington’s complicity in Israel’s war on Palestine. Labor is usually present at these actions. Photo: Dan La Botz

Instead, the question now is whether there is a “day after” at all. Half a year of civilian slaughter has brought not the defeat of Hamas or freedom for Israeli hostages — those who are still alive — but the utter annihilation of Gaza, perhaps beyond reconstruction and quite clearly by the Israeli government’s design.

Prime Minister Netanyahu’s desire to prolong the Gaza catastrophe, not end it, was evident well before Israel’s attack on Iran’s diplomatic mission in Syria and the highly telegraphed April 14 Iranian drone and missile attacks that predictably did minimal damage.

Against the Current is going to press immediately after this event, before we know whether and how soon Netanyahu will choose to escalate a confrontation with Iran, keeping his despised government afloat and hoping to drag the wretched “Genocide Joe” U.S. administration into a really big war.

Even before the weekend events, as prominent Israeli journalist Amos Harel observed:

“More than half a year after the October 7 massacre, Israel is finding it difficult to achieve a military victory that would strategically counterbalance part of the damage inflicted by the disaster, and is still not close to alleviating the dire distress of the families of the 133 hostages (many of whom are dead).” (Haaretz, April 12, 2024)

What Next?

Following the Iranian attack, Biden is begging Netanyahu to “take the win” without responding further, pointing out how the multinational defense that shot down the drones and missiles expose Iran’s relative weakness.

That of course is true. It's also true that Iran took care to inform regional governments, to say nothing of intelligence services, 72 hours in advance so there would be no surprise and plenty of preparation time. The Iranian regime's priority — like Netanyahu's — is its own internal standing. It is at war with its own population, and more suffering is the last thing it needs.

On the other hand, if Iran actually intended to inflict strategic damage, it would have to take drastic steps including massive missile strikes from Lebanon and shutting the Strait of Hormuz, posing the real threat of all-out conflagration. Clearly both Iran and the United States want to avoid that. But does Netanyahu?

Gilbert Achcar, commenting on the Iranian action, comments that “by launching hundreds of devices directly on Israeli territory, they walked into the trap, thus legitimizing a direct Israeli attack on their own territory ...thus strengthening the Israeli argument for a pre-emptive destruction of their own potential.”

Achcar concludes: “In my opinion, [this is an error](#) which could prove to be as monumental as that which Hamas committed by launching the operation of October 7, 2023.”

At the same time, acts of sadistic savagery by Israeli forces in Gaza, although underreported, are impossible to hide entirely, with consequences of course for Gaza's population but for Israel too. Amos Harel touches on this:

“The General Staff's control over the events on the ground and in the command posts is constantly weakening, and the result is a departure from the procedures and the orders...Added to this is growing Israeli indifference to human life on the Palestinian side. Its origin lies mainly in the feelings of revenge provoked by the massacre, and it has by now become routine in some of the army's units.”

Over time, it's almost inevitable that the genocide in Gaza and violent ethnic cleansing in the West Bank will feed straight back into Israeli society, as we saw in the United States during and after the Vietnam war, and into Israel's potentially violent re-emerging political crisis. As for Netanyahu himself, Harel concludes:

“According to all the signs, he intends to hold onto power with all his might. There is no evidence that five brave coalition members who are needed to unseat him will raise their hands to do that anytime soon.

“The man will stay in office and continue to disrupt every possibility for the state and society to emerge from the calamitous situation we find ourselves in, for which he is largely to blame.”

The cynical imperial expectation that U.S. influence can re-shape Palestine and the Middle East “the day after” the slaughter begs the question of when “after” will come, if it ever does.

David Finkel

P.S.

• Against the Current No. 230, May/June 2024:

<https://againstthecurrent.org/atc230/the-day-after-fading-to-oblivion/>