

The Path to Climate Security passes through Gaza: a Prologue to Rethinking Strategy

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Abstract

The stakes are very high for a just and peaceful resolution of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict by full recognition of the individual and collective rights of the Palestinian people. Achieving this goal is not merely for the realization of the human rights of Palestinians and Israelis, as important as that is. The Imperial Agenda and militarization of global political economy threatens us all. Only global equity and cooperation made possible by the termination of the Imperial Agenda will create the possibility of preventing catastrophic climate change. Thus, convergence of the climate security, peace and anti-imperialist movements is imperative while we still have time to act.

Introduction

Preposterous, some readers may object, what possible connection could the Israeli Palestinian conflict have with confronting the challenge of mounting carbon emissions to the atmosphere which will lead us to climate catastrophe unless these emissions are radically curbed in the near future? I argue here that the connection is profound, with the challenge of achieving a just resolution of this conflict being the potential lever that will make global prevention of C3 (catastrophic climate change) possible. And only convergence of the climate security, peace and anti-imperialist movements has any hope of success for the prevention of C3.

The climate security and peace movements remain divided, the former gaining global momentum while the latter, at least in the global North, is just beginning to wake up from the illusions generated by Obama's election just two years ago. No surprise here, since while the right wing is the bastion of global warming denial, even the anti-imperialist left has its ill-informed advocates (e.g., Alexander Cockburn), as well as those who acknowledge the reality of anthropogenic climate change while still refusing to prioritize this issue of critical significance to the survival of human civilization. Nevertheless, the realities of the Afghan War combined with global economic distress and alarming new signs of climatic instability now are forcing a rethinking of strategy.

Let's start with the historical context. The US/Israel client state relationship has been a critical component of Imperial Project of US Imperialism. Its central objective has been the control of the petroleum resources in the Middle East, with extension to the Near East, including Iran. Even conservatives commonly admit to this agenda, as central to the preservation of the American Way of Life.

As Haddad (2004) put it in his discussion of the Iraq war and occupation:

"Of course it is no secret that oil is at the heart of the occupation's objectives. American and world dependence on Gulf oil will increase precipitously over the next twenty years. Veteran Middle East analyst Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)—well connected to the U.S. intelligence community—describes this dependency in a document written before the occupation of Iraq:

"We need to remember what our key strategic priorities are. The U.S. is steadily more dependent on a global economy and the global economy is steadily more dependent on Middle Eastern energy exports, particularly from the Gulf. We tend to take this so much for granted that we sometimes fail to consider just

how serious this dependence is and how much it is estimated to grow in the future. There also is still a tendency to view the issue in terms of American import dependence, our normal peacetime dependence on given countries for imports, and dependence on direct imports. These are all false approaches to the problem. We are steadily more dependent on global imports; what affects the global economy affects us and our direct level of oil imports is no measure of strategic dependence. Similarly, we compete for oil on a world market. Any shortage or price rise in a crisis forces us to compete for imports on the same basis as every other nation. Finally, focusing on direct imports of oil ignores the fact that the U.S. has steadily shifted the pattern of its manufactured imports to include energy dependent goods, particularly from Asia. These, in turn, are produced by economies that are critically dependent on oil imported from the Middle East. Estimates of import dependence that only include direct imports of crude understate our true net dependence on oil imports to the point where they are analytically absurd.¹⁴ Footnote 14: "The U.S. Military and the Evolving Challenges in the Middle East," Anthony Cordesman, Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 9, 2002, 5."

This client-state relationship was founded in 1967, with Israel becoming a willing instrument of U.S. imperial power first of all in the Middle and Near East, attacking Arab nationalist regimes and movements, as well as elsewhere such as in Central America, Iran and even manifested in continued support of the U.S. blockade of Cuba with the U.S. becoming completely isolated in the world community, aside from Israel's obsequious loyalty (e.g., latest General Assembly vote, October 27, 2010, **187** against the blockade: 2 in favor (U.S. and Israel).

My Summary Thesis

A just resolution of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict will terminate the US/Israeli imperial axis, thereby undermining US imperialism's role as the dominant military arm of transnational capital.

This Imperial Agenda is the actual policy of the MIC, which I define here as the Military Industrial Fossil Fuel Nuclear Terror Complex, with the Pentagon/ IDF as its "Petroleum Protection Service". The MIC is the biggest obstacle to achieving climate security in face of the looming threat of catastrophic climate change. I will not make the case here for the reality of climate change and the real potential for climate catastrophe in this century, if not in a few decades (see documentation in Schwartzman, 2009).

Thus, I submit: *"The path to climate security must pass through Gaza"*, i.e., climate security for humankind will only be achieved with the end of the Israeli blockade of Gaza, termination of Israeli apartheid regime, and the full realization of the individual and collective rights of the Palestinian people.

The Imperial Agenda and militarization of global political economy threatens us all. Only global equity and cooperation made possible by the termination of the Imperial Agenda will create the possibility of preventing catastrophic climate change.

As Evo Morales put it:

"The budget of the United States is \$687 billion for defense. and for climate change, to save life, to save humanity, they only put up \$10 billion. This is shameful. The budget for the Iraq war, according to the figures we have, is \$2.6 trillion for the Iraq war, to go kill in Iraq. Trillions of dollars. But directed towards paying the climate debt, \$10 billion. This is completely unfair. These are our deep observations of what's going on. That's why—for the war, while trillions are going to the wars, on the other hand, to save humanity and the planet, they only want to direct \$10 billion." President Evo Morales, Interviewed by Amy Goodman, Dec. 16, 2009

(http://www.democracynow.org/2009/12/16/bolivian_president_evo_morales_shameful_for)

Thus, I argue that the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is a transcendent challenge for the global human rights, peace and the emerging climate security movements. On one hand, it is the nexus of potential escalating conflict, even nuclear war. On the other hand, its just resolution is likewise an immense opportunity to create the "other world that is possible".

New developments that may enhance our struggle

We now witness growing isolation of Israel in the world community translating into growing weakness and contradictions in the US/Israeli alliance. The ruling elites of U.S. Arab/Near East Client states, such as Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan, increasingly risk losing their legitimization with the potential for regime change unfavorable to U.S. imperialism. The current popular uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Bahrain have brought this possibility closer to reality. This poses an increasing threat to US Imperial hegemony in the Middle and Near East. The now frozen Israeli-Palestinian negotiations forced by Obama are simply a delaying action, postponing the inevitable rupture in U.S. foreign policy that will come to recognize the necessity of a just resolution of the conflict. The alternative is unthinkable, escalating conflict in this region, with the real potential of war, even nuclear war. The US/Israeli Imperial Axis has no sustainable future.

The decision in May, 2010 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference called for a nuclear-free Middle East. This development exposes the pure hypocrisy of the US/Israeli campaign against Iran's nuclear program for peaceful use. Israel rejected the NPT conference for nuclear-free Middle East, even while its sponsor the United States was forced to sign the conference document.

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TORONTO--Israel on Saturday denounced as "hypocritical" a UN resolution by members of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty calling for a conference on a nuclear-free Middle East and said it would not participate. "This resolution is deeply flawed and hypocritical. It ignores the realities of the Middle East and the real threats facing the region and the entire world," said a statement issued by the Israeli government in Toronto, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited [Canada](#). "It singles out Israel, the [Middle East's](#) only true democracy and the only country threatened with annihilation," the statement added. "Given the distorted nature of this resolution, Israel will not be able to take part in its implementation." The Jewish state has reacted furiously to the agreement reached Friday at the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference, which called for a regional conference in 2012 to advance the goal of a nuclear-free Middle East. The accord specifically mentions "the importance of Israel's accession to the treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) safeguards." But it failed to make similar reference to other nations including India and [Pakistan](#) that, like Israel, are non-members of the treaty and are either known or believed to possess nuclear weapons. The text also made no mention of Iran, which faces a new round of United Nations sanctions over its refusal to halt uranium enrichment as part of a nuclear program that many in the international community fear masks a nuclear weapons drive. Tehran says the program is for civilian nuclear energy only. Israel is widely believed to have nuclear weapons, but it maintains a policy of refusing to deny or acknowledge its nuclear arsenal. The deal agreed by the treaty's 189 signatories, their first in a decade, also includes commitments to advance non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful nuclear energy. President Barack Obama said Friday he supported those goals, but he criticized the agreement for its focus on Israel. "We strongly oppose efforts to single out Israel, and will oppose actions that jeopardize Israel's national security," he said.

Conclusion

Already a component of the global human rights and peace movements, the mushrooming Global BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement should now seek convergence with the newly emerging climate security movement growing out of the historic World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, Cochabamba, Bolivia. Likewise we should encourage leaders and activists in the climate security movement to support the global BDS movement. We have a common challenge which requires broad unity.

Relevant Sources

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