

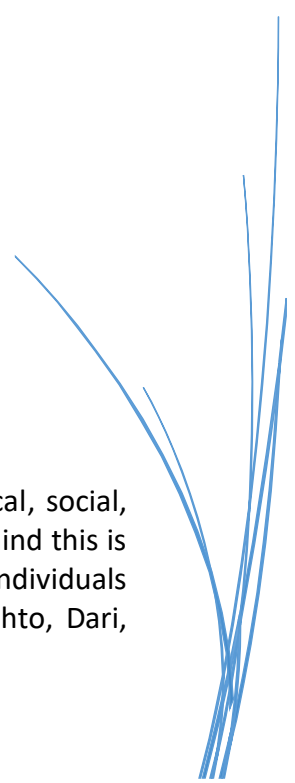
WEEKLY ANALYSIS

Issue Number – 449
(October 08-15, 2024)

THE REFLECTION OF THE GAZA CRISIS (PALESTINE) IN THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE



Weekly Analysis is one of the CSRS publications analyzing significant weekly political, social, economic, and security events in Afghanistan and the region. The prime motive behind this is to provide strategic insights and policy solutions to decision-making institutions and individuals in order to help them design better policies. Weekly Analysis is published in Pashto, Dari, English and Arabic languages.



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Center for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS)



THE REFLECTION OF THE GAZA CRISIS (PALESTINE) IN THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE

Introduction

The annual sessions or general debates of the United Nations General Assembly held once a year since the UN's establishment, convened this year for its 79th session from September 24 to 28 in the General Assembly Hall in New York City. According to the UN spokesperson, this year's session was attended by 76 presidents, 4 crown princes, 2 prime ministers, 42 deputy prime ministers, 9 ministers, 54 deputy ministers, and a delegation from the European Union. This year's general debate theme was: *"No one left behind; joint action to advance peace, sustainable development, and human dignity for present and future generations."*

However, this year's United Nations General Assembly debate took place against the backdrop of a world immersed in severe and bloody crises, the most prominent of which is the war in Gaza and its regional and global repercussions. Although the UN had set the agenda for this year's session, the deepening crisis in Palestine, which has pushed the entire Middle East to the brink of war, became the central topic of discussion. Global leaders made the Palestine issue and Israel's ongoing war against Palestine their primary focus. This article examines the positions and approaches of the leaders of the world's most important countries at this year's United Nations General Assembly regarding the Palestine issue.

POSITIONS AND APPROACHES OF COUNTRIES REGARDING THE CURRENT PALESTINIAN CRISIS

1. Iran

Iran's stance and approach, as the sole country currently in active opposition to the Israeli regime, is of critical importance. This year, Masoud Pezeshkian, the President of Iran, addressed the United Nations General Assembly on behalf of his nation. While his speech conveyed a relatively moderate and conciliatory tone regarding Iran's broader interests, his remarks on the current Palestinian crisis were predominantly characterized by sharp criticism and condemnation of Israel's assault on Gaza.

Pezeshkian presented statistics and outlined the atrocities committed by the Zionist regime in Gaza, emphasizing his defense of Hamas. He asserted that, after enduring over seven decades of aggression and mass killings, the Palestinians have risen to reclaim their rights from the occupying Zionist regime. Praising the Palestinian people's resistance, he framed their actions as a legitimate struggle for freedom and reiterated Iran's unequivocal support for their cause.



He further proposed that the primary solution to resolving the Palestinian crisis lies in conducting a referendum among Muslims, Christians, and Jews across all of Palestine, aimed at establishing a unified state. This proposal implicitly calls for the dissolution of Israel. Considering the overall conciliatory tone adopted by the Iranian president on other matters, it appears that Iran's position on the Palestinian issue has transitioned from an aggressive posture to one that is more defensive and focused on reconciliation. This shift is also reflected in Pezeshkian's statement indicating Iran's readiness to enter a new era of constructive engagement with the international community.

2. Turkey

In his speech, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan expressed his delight at the presence of the Palestinian representative, describing Palestine as a friendly and brotherly nation. He voiced hope that one day the representative of Palestine would attain the rightful and deserved position in the United Nations. Erdoğan's stance on Israel's actions in Gaza was strong and unequivocal. He condemned the atrocities committed by the Israeli regime in Gaza, highlighting the depth of the brutalities, and criticized the United Nations for its inability to control Israel, calling the organization ineffective. He questioned the global community, asking, "What are you waiting for to take action to stop Israel's crimes?"

Addressing countries that support Israel, Erdoğan challenged them by asking how they could bear such disgrace with a clear conscience. He called the Palestinian resistance legitimate and a source of pride, asserting that Israel was the one unwilling to reach an agreement. According to Erdoğan, Israel derails negotiations by making excuses and changing positions, only to then accuse the negotiating party of drawing closer to an agreement. He proposed that, since UN Security Council Resolution 2731 is not being implemented, coercive measures should be taken against Israel. He also called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, urging that aid be sent to Gaza before winter sets in.

Regarding Turkey's actions, Erdoğan stated that Turkey had severed its trade ties with Israel and would continue its struggle until the Palestinian people secured their rightful claims. He emphasized that Turkey would not allow Israel to infringe upon the sanctity of Al-Aqsa Mosque. Furthermore, Erdoğan expressed support for the case brought by South Africa against Israel in the International Court of Justice. In Erdoğan's view, the root cause of the crisis is the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. Therefore, the two-state solution, based on the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, is the only way to resolve the crisis.

3. Pakistan



Pakistan's Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif, while focusing much of his speech on highlighting Pakistan's economic challenges and appealing for global support to combat the country's economic hardships, also devoted a significant portion of his address to the issue of Palestine and the crimes committed by the Israeli regime. Sharif described Israel's actions in Gaza as genocide and called for international intervention to put an end to Israeli aggression. He advocated for the formation of an independent Palestinian state based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as the final solution to the ongoing crisis in the region.

Arab Countries

The Arab countries, which should ostensibly be the strongest advocates for the Palestinians, displayed weak and superficial responses to the current crisis in Gaza and the atrocities committed by the Israeli regime. For example, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, while offering a formulaic and clichéd condemnation of the crimes of the Zionist regime, boasted about his country's aid to the people of Gaza. A similar stance was taken by the foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates. He characterized the situation in Gaza as a crisis and called for the immediate establishment of a ceasefire. Additionally, the UAE foreign minister reiterated that the fundamental solution to the Palestinian crisis lies in the creation of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on the two-state solution. Other Arab countries echoed similar positions to those of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, offering no new or substantial proposals to address the ongoing catastrophe in Palestine.

The Zionist Regime of Israel

The speech delivered by Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of the Zionist and occupying regime of Israel, was the most aggressive of all. In his address to the United Nations General Assembly, Netanyahu made false defenses of his attacks on the defenseless people of Gaza and Lebanon. He justified his actions by claiming that Hamas is holding the people of Israel hostage, that Hezbollah in Lebanon attacks Israel in support of Hamas, and that Yemen's Houthis are targeting Israeli interests. Based on these arguments, he deemed his attacks on Gaza, Lebanon, and Yemen as legitimate.

Furthermore, Netanyahu issued a direct threat to Iran, stating, "Iran is attacking us directly. I have a message for the rulers of Iran: if you attack us, we will strike back. No part of Iran is out of our reach, and the entire Middle East is witnessing this."

Netanyahu also touched on other subjects, all related to the Palestinian issue. He displayed two different maps, attempting to portray his occupying regime as peace-loving and eager for the economic development of the entire region. The fictitious future he depicted included a



union of Arab nations, centered on Saudi Arabia, in alliance with Israel—a vision he linked to the so-called "Abraham Accords."

It is worth noting that Netanyahu's speech took place as many representatives, including the Saudi foreign minister, walked out of the hall in protest. Overall, the most prominent aspect of Netanyahu's speech was his malevolent determination, alongside that of his occupying regime, to continue the war against Hamas to completely eradicate it from Gaza.

United States of America

President Joe Biden, in his address, expressed support for the genocidal actions of the Zionist regime in Gaza, justifying the killing of Palestinians by Israel with the flawed logic that "every country has the right to ensure that an attack like that of October 7 will never happen again." However, Biden also emphasized that Israel's war with Hamas and Hezbollah should not escalate into a full-scale regional war, urging the need for diplomatic efforts to address the ongoing crisis. Despite his overall support for Israel, Biden could not completely ignore the dire situation in Gaza, shamefully admitting that the humanitarian conditions for civilians there are extremely critical and require immediate attention. Although Biden proposed the two-state solution as a resolution to the conflict, he made no mention of halting Israel's attacks on Gaza, reflecting continued U.S. backing for Israel's military operations in the region.

European Countries

Among the European countries, the positions of the three main powers—Britain, Germany, and France—were the most significant. The stance of the United Kingdom, expressed by its Prime Minister, was entirely hollow and devoid of any substantial solutions to end Israel's brutal war against the defenseless people of Gaza. The Prime Minister merely warned that the Israel-Hezbollah conflict might engulf the entire region in chaos and urged both sides to consider an immediate ceasefire. Regarding the Palestinian issue, he reiterated the usual empty rhetoric supporting the establishment of a Palestinian state, without addressing the immediate actions Israel is currently taking.

In contrast to the British Prime Minister's casual dismissal of the Palestinian crisis, the German Foreign Minister took a more aggressive stance. Shamelessly ignoring the Zionist regime's 70 years of occupation and atrocities, he placed the primary blame on the Palestinians, framing Israel's brutal actions as legitimate and justified. Furthermore, he declared Germany's unwavering support for Israel's continued onslaught.

The French President, in his speech, presented a typical double standard regarding the Palestinian issue. While condemning Hamas' operations in Israeli territory, he simultaneously



endorsed Israel's actions in Gaza. Yet, he shed crocodile tears over the plight of Gaza's civilian population, calling the current situation in the region "unacceptable."

Russia and China

This year, the participation of Russia and China in the United Nations General Assembly was represented at the foreign ministerial level, which may be seen as a sign that the presidents of these two countries did not consider the session of critical importance. The speeches by the foreign ministers of both countries largely centered on the core priorities of their respective foreign policies, with only limited attention given to the Palestinian crisis. Neither country presented any new or substantive insights on the issue. The foreign ministers of Russia and China both criticized Israel's actions in Gaza, reiterating that the two-state solution remains the most viable path to achieving a permanent resolution to the Palestinian crisis. Both also called for an immediate cessation of Israel's operations in Gaza and Lebanon.

CONCLUSION

The Palestinian issue and Israel's multi-front war against Hamas, Iran, and what is referred to as the "Axis of Resistance" have escalated into a full-blown crisis in the Middle East. Should the situation worsen, its potential to spill over into a global conflict cannot be ruled out. Consequently, this year's General Debate at the United Nations General Assembly saw world leaders addressing the issue and expressing their respective positions.

Broadly, the responses of different nations to the current Palestinian crisis can be categorized into four distinct stances. The first position is that of Iran, which has long held a unique perspective on the Palestinian issue. This time, as well, Iran's president reiterated that the only solution to the Palestinian question is to hold a referendum among all Palestinians—Muslims, Jews, and Christians alike—to establish a unified Palestinian state.

In contrast, the second position is that of Israel, which remains categorically opposed to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The third stance came from Arab and Islamic nations. Without exception, the leaders of these countries supported the two-state solution, with the critical condition that East Jerusalem must serve as the capital of the Palestinian state.

The fourth position, championed by the U.S. president, European leaders, Russia, China, and others, also advocated for a two-state solution but without specifying any particular conditions.

While these proposals were presented in theory, there was a glaring absence of practical measures or pressure on Israel to halt its military operations against Gaza and Hamas. Among



all nations, only Iran has provided tangible support to Hamas, Hezbollah, and other groups aligned with the Axis of Resistance. In contrast, Western countries stand firmly behind Israel, offering it extensive financial and military backing. The West's approach reflects a double standard: on the one hand, they express concern for the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, shedding "crocodile tears" over the suffering of civilians; on the other hand, they continue to arm Israel, fueling the ongoing conflict.

This duality is even more evident in their rhetoric: while they decry the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, they align themselves militarily with Israel in its campaign of destruction. What deepens the pain further is the passive and dismissive stance of Arab nations in the face of the Palestinian crisis. These countries, as mere spectators, watch the massacre of their fellow Arabs and Muslims. Their only claim to action is the humanitarian aid they provide to the slaughtered and displaced people of Gaza—an effort that does little to absolve them of responsibility.

There are even reports suggesting that some Arab nations may have privately struck deals with Israel regarding the suppression of Hamas, a possibility that can be inferred from Netanyahu's speech. Indeed, Netanyahu's boldness in his address—boasting about continuing the war against Hamas until its destruction—is a direct reflection of the impotence of dozens of Arab countries. Without such a level of acquiescence, how else could Netanyahu speak so brazenly of his intentions to wage war without constraint?

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the analysis presented, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. The Muslim Ummah must recognize its historic responsibility and take decisive action in this critical moment to prevent Israel from committing further atrocities.
2. The Muslim people—both Arab and non-Arab—should mobilize through protests, strikes, and other effective measures to compel their governments to take serious actions against Israel and the West.
3. The Islamic world today possesses significant latent potential, which, if properly utilized, can pressure the international community to restrain Israel from its criminal actions against the Palestinian people.
4. Islamic countries, along with other nations that support Palestine, should exert the necessary diplomatic pressure to secure full membership for the Palestinian state within the United Nations.



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