PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR LONG-TERM STABILITY

Palestinian Perspectives on the Reconstruction of Gaza

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The lack of a unified Palestinian strategy is a major obstacle to peace. A coordinated effort involving regional and international actors is crucial to foster internal Palestinian reconciliation and ensure longterm regional stability.

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The prolonged maintenance of the old (dis)equilibrium between Israel and the Palestinians, characterised by tactical management and periodic outbreaks of hostilities, culminated in the 7 October attacks. This highlights the inadequacy of these strategies. This approach, driven largely by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, has proven ineffective, necessitating a shift towards earnestly pursuing a two-state solution to avoid worse outcomes for both Israelis and Palestinians.

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Significant political changes are expected following the 7 October attacks, impacting both the Israeli government and the Palestinian system. For long-term stability and the realisation of a two-state solution, profound changes are essential in the Palestinian political system. This includes creating a technocratic, non-factional government, holding general elections, and building a system based on checks and balances, with robust oversight and accountability.

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The lack of a unified Palestinian strategy is a major obstacle to peace. A coordinated effort involving regional and international actors, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Turkey and Qatar, is crucial. Support from the international community, including Israel and the United States, is necessary to foster internal Palestinian reconciliation and formulate a unified strategy. This unified approach is key to ensuring long-term stability and cooperation in the region, moving away from past policies that have failed to advance Palestinian interests and Israeli security.

Further information on the topic can be found here:
https://palestine.fes.de/topics/palestinian-perspectives-on-the-reconstruction-of-gaza

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SWP

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Content

1

INTRODUCTION

The October 7 attacks and Israel's subsequent war, aimed ostensibly at destroying Hamas in the Gaza Strip, represent by far the most horrific episodes in the Israel-Palestinian conflict. When the guns go silent, the two peoples will surely need time to grieve, mourn and draw lessons. Both societies are still processing frustration, wrath and revenge. Unfortunately, the worst may be yet to come. If Israelis and Palestinians reach the wrong conclusions, the implications could be devastating and reverberate for years. Both societies are mobilised for war and continue to dehumanise the other. Following the eruption of the war in October 2023 and in anticipation of the war ending, many observers, think tanks, governments and international organisations have been debating best-case scenarios with a focus on what could bring about long-term security and stability, including reconstruction of the Gaza strip. This paper explores "Security governance of rehabilitation and reconstruction" for the Day After the war on the Gaza Strip.

While some of these issues may appear to be technical in nature, the reality is that what underlies this process is deeply rooted in domestic Palestinian politics, bilateral Israeli–Palestinian relations and regional and international implications.

Among other issues, this paper addresses these dynamics and makes a number of realistic proposals with a view to restoring governance, law and order, as well as longer term stability.

CURRENT SETTING

The war has now been going on for eight months, with some 37,500 Palestinian fatalities – mostly women and children – and more than 80,000 wounded (according to Gazan health ministry data), as well as 1,200 Israeli fatalities. At least 70 per cent of the civilian and government infrastructure has been destroyed, as assessed by numerous international organisations (ReliefWeb 2024). Nonetheless there appears "no end in sight for the hostilities". The on-off indirect ceasefire talks – including the recent President Biden plan (The White House 2024) for a sustained ceasefire – are currently facing deadlock, with Hamas insisting on a permanent ceasefire, while the Israeli government under Mr Netanyahu refuses to make such a commitment (CNN 2024).

Arguably, for any actionable plan to work in a post-war scenario, either current Israeli government policy needs to change or a new government is needed in Israel that would define different achievable war goals. The current Israeli government plan, as reported in recent weeks by the Israeli press, is aimed at maintaining military control and imposing a civilian regime in Gaza (BBC 2024). It will not bring about short- or medium-term stability but will undoubtedly create further friction and so is liable to sustain the current confrontation for much longer.

2

THE MYTH OF FOUR SCENARIOS

As things stand today there are four theoretical scenarios for post-war reality. These four scenarios in certain ways reflect unrealistic attempts to deal with the post-war challenges. Some reflect the wishful thinking of parties seeking to preserve their own interests, while others are the product of intellectual exercises but ignore certain key prerequisites required to ensure a minimal level of success. The four scenarios are as follows:

I. **Hamas retains governance:** one wishful thinking scenario entertained by some elements, including within Hamas itself, suggests that when the war comes to an end, Hamas' bureaucracy, which governed Gaza up to 7 October, would regain control of the Gaza Strip and resume governance functions. Needless to say, this scenario is doomed to fail for local, regional and international reasons. Chief among these is the inability of any local government in Gaza to respond to the huge needs of the Gaza Strip, including relief and reconstruction. A key requirement for any government to succeed, wholly or in part, in addressing the increasing demands, including nearly 30-40 billion US dollars for reconstruction (as estimated by prominent international organisations[1]), is to foster strong cooperative relations with the international community. Under the current and future political realities, a Hamas-only government in the Gaza strip will not have the necessary resources or cooperative agreements with the international community to meet such needs. It is almost certain that regional partners, in other words Egypt and Qatar, will not be in a position to work with a Hamas-only government. Following the October 7 attacks, it is inconceivable that any Israeli government would allow a Hamas government to resume control of the Gaza Strip.

II. **Fatah/PA only government:** a Fatah-led bureaucracy in the Gaza Strip without coordination, consent and endorsement by the remnants of the other factions, including Hamas, Islamic Jihad, smaller PLO factions, societal forces, and others will most likely lead – if imposed – to a state of extended insurgency and civil strife. The

former PA government, which was ousted in 2007, has a pool of some 38,000 personnel in both the civilian and security sectors.[2] At any rate, the lack of constitutional legitimacy, coupled with forcing a political entity onto the Gaza Strip in the aftermath of the war, will undoubtedly be met with a fierce insurgency by the remnants of Hamas military wing, Islamic Jihad and possibly other factions. A hypothetical scenario whereby the PA returns to Gaza backed by the Israeli army is likely to trigger internal strife that in some ways will be a continuation of the conflict with Israel and not an end to it.

III. **Multinational force and transitional political authority:** Some Western think tanks have been debating and recommending the creation and deployment of multinational transitional authority/forces to administer the Gaza Strip (McLaughlin 2023). This is perceived to include both law enforcement and a civilian/political bureaucracy. This idea is based on the good intention of supporting the creation of an all-inclusive, legitimate and efficient Palestinian entity after a transitional period. However, a reality check indicates that a number of strategic and tactical challenges must be resolved before such an approach is entertained seriously. One of the key challenges is that the consensus among the Palestinian political leadership, as well as opposition factions, including Hamas, is that an international/multinational force/ system can be mobilised only if it covers the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza under one united mandate. This mandate is perceived to have been designed by the UN Security Council, based on pertinent UN resolutions concerning statehood. There is no expectation that the Palestinian leadership would change its position under the current realities. Moreover, it is inconceivable that the current or any other government in Israel in the foreseeable future would agree to such an arrangement. In addition, peacekeeping and protection forces, a longstanding demand by the Palestinian leadership, would be feasible from an Israeli and international community perspective, should there be a peace agreement. Without reaching a political solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict as a whole, the deploy-

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[1] "The United Nations Development Programme's initial estimates for the reconstruction of […] the Gaza Strip surpass $30 billion and could reach up to $40 billion," UN assistant secretary-general Abdullah Al Dardari said.

[2] Figures confirmed by the PA Ministry of Finance and General Bureau of Personnel, June 2024.

ment of multinational and/or international forces risks entering a conflict zone without the prospect of an imminent solution. It is unlikely that countries would want to deploy troops in a conflict zone unless a peace agreement is at hand, or likely to be signed in the short or medium term. In addition to all those complexities, several factions, including Hamas, have declared repeatedly that "any force deployed in the Gaza Strip without coordination with the Palestinian factions will be treated as a force of occupation". Such a reality and positions deter potential stakeholders from considering supporting such an approach to the post-war situation in the Gaza Strip. The conflicting positions will be a major stumbling block that will inhibit this whole approach. On one hand, Israel demands that such a mission be for "peace enforcement and combatant" in nature to ensure the disarmament of Hamas and other formations, while the Palestinian side would like it to be a protection force deployed in both Gaza and the West Bank that would transition Palestinians to statehood within a specific timeframe.

IV. **Israeli military rule and civil administration:** in recent weeks, the Israeli press has reported that the current Israeli government has a plan of its own to maintain military control and impose a civilian regime in Gaza with a view to achieving the declared war aims of destroying Hamas. This Israeli government plan is reportedly based on perceived security threats from the Gaza Strip in the event the Israeli army pulls out prematurely from the enclave. The plan, which is perceived as part of Israel's extended war goals, relies on a security/military assessment of the need to maintain security control, allowing Israeli forces to operate in the Gaza Strip. To that end, the Israeli army has built ad hoc military installations, military roads near Rafah and south of the Gaza Strip that divide the area into two major blocks. This is in addition to fully occupying the Philadelphi corridor border between Gaza and Egypt, as well as creating the Netzarim military outpost south of Gaza city. From a Palestinian perspective, this plan and all forms of maintaining Israeli military occupation in the Gaza Strip will lead to a prolonged confrontation. Objectively, this plan, if implemented, would not bring about short- or medium-term stability but undoubtedly generate further friction that is liable to sustain the current confrontation and extend it long term.

3

THE MOST PLAUSIBLE ACTIONABLE SCENARIO

Having laid out the vulnerabilities of the four scenarios listed above, this section will present what could work in terms of restoring governance, enforcement of order and moving forward. Following the end of the war and the complete withdrawal of the Israeli forces, a gradual process of restoring stability should start and would be extended in three phases.

Phase I would involve the provision of badly needed immediate relief, ad hoc shelters, removing the rubble, clearing unexploded ordinance, and provision of immediate humanitarian supplies of all forms, including food, water, fuel, medicine and all other necessities. This should be carried out mainly by all relevant local elements, including local councils, community emergency committees and other local and international players, to commence within 1–3 months at the latest.

In Phase II, which should be implemented in parallel or immediately thereafter, the Palestinian Authority would form a new technocratic (non-factional) government uniting the West Bank and Gaza under its administration. This phase, which would be extended to the medium term of 1–2 years, would have to address many issues related to governance, stability and security in the Gaza Strip. During this medium-term phase, the Palestinian government would deploy law enforcement in full coordination with and with the consent of all players on the ground, including remnants of armed factions to ensure that no insurgency ensues. Thus, Phase II ought to focus on the creation of an interim administration for Gaza but one that brings administrative unity with the West Bank in order to end the political division that has existed for nearly two decades. This requires special attention to key principles of inclusivity, legitimacy and efficiency. These principles are key to ensuring maximum stability and security moving forward. Inclusivity and legitimacy are intertwined, as the consent and endorsement of all or nearly all of political groups and societal forces is necessary to provide the interim local administration with the required legitimacy. Taking these principles into account would ensure that the interim Gaza administration would not face public discontent and encounter minimum or no violent insurgency. Therefore, it is important to emphasise that unless such an administration enjoyed local legitimacy among the Gaza community it would be targeted, including violently by the remnants of Hamas' military wing and other armed formations in the Gaza Strip.

In Phase III, which is a longer-term effort, an international peace conference should be held to address the longstanding intractable Israeli–Palestinian conflict, with prior confirmation that the aim of this international effort would the creation of a Palestinian state along 1967 lines. In parallel with Phase III general elections must be held on the basis of constitutional legitimacy in order to allow for the creation of a representative Palestinian government. This phase should not exceed 3–4 years in order to maintain momentum and bring about a new reality that guarantees long-term stability and prosperity for all.

4

POST-WAR SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS

Among the thorniest issues in any post-war scenario are security arrangements, law enforcement across the Gaza Strip, as well as maintaining order at the Rafah crossing and other crossings between Gaza and Israel. While the war is still raging, a number of regional and international parties have put considerable effort into planning for security arrangements that would achieve two goals in the short and long terms. The immediate short-term goal is to allow for humanitarian relief. The second is intended to provide for longer term stability, preventing a recurrence of attacks while securing a stable governance system that would allow for reconstruction and beyond. It is important to note that ad hoc solutions based on the commissioning of private contractors would not serve long-term purposes. While such services may arguably boost international organisations' relief and rehabilitation efforts, it is highly unlikely that they could replace the kind of solid governance and security institutions that must be established to provide for the more strategic goals of long-term stability. It is important to note that previous mechanisms applied following the war in 2014 – including the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) – failed to deliver the anticipated outcome. The mechanism did not provide for the entry of enough construction materials to allow for a broad reconstruction of the destroyed civilian infrastructure and arguably did not prevent the use of certain materials in the reconstruction of paramilitary structures or halt the smuggling of weapons and ammunition. Future planning for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip will have to address this and other related issues within a more strategic framework.

In these circumstances, according to numerous PA security officials, PA security officers have crafted a plan entitled "Saving Gaza", which is premised on the redeployment of some 17,000 security officers who have remained off duty since Hamas took over governing the Gaza Strip in 2007. In addition, the officials affirm that the PA has some 500 security officers who are ready to take control of the Gaza side of the Erez and Rafah border crossings. The plan also suggests the recruitment of new security officers from Gaza in order to expand its pool and cover the entire Gaza Strip along with reinforcements from the West Bank. Senior PA security officials believe that a minimal level of coordination is required for the plan to succeed. Coordination is required with Hamas and other factions through Egypt and Qatar as cosponsors. According to senior PA officials, the United

States Security Coordinator (USSC) has also crafted a logistical plan to support the deployment of PA security forces in the Gaza Strip after the war. This plan reportedly covers training, vehicles, rifles and any other gear that may be required. The PA security officials believe that one-third of their old security pool in Gaza are fit for service, while another third needs retraining, and the remainder would need to be replaced, mainly due to age. The officials explain that the last batch of security officer recruitment took place in the Gaza Strip in 2002.

Another approach that the PA is also reportedly preparing for is the possibility of deploying a multinational Arab force for a transitional period of 1–3 years. This force would operate under a mandate designed and endorsed by the UN Security Council. It would be mandated to assist the PA security forces, providing advisory guidance, but would not act as a combatant or for the purpose of law enforcement. Such a force will also help the PA security forces to reconstruct destroyed security infrastructure, including garrisons, police stations, and other relevant installations.

These two plans are interdependent in several ways. It would be vital to prepare a logistical and administrative plan in preparation for the deployment of PA security forces in Gaza. This would guarantee that such arrangements could be implemented effectively. In addition, the deployment of a multinational Arab force in the Gaza Strip is equally important for planning and implementation. However, as acknowledged by senior PA officials, the PA security plan must include a political component with two aspects. One is external, related to the international community and other regional stakeholders, including the government of Israel, which continues privately and publicly to oppose the deployment of PA security forces in the Gaza Strip. The other is the prior approval and consent of the widest segments of the Gaza Strip community, as well as of various political factions, including remnants of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. One of the biggest risks facing a PA security plan without considering these political components would be escalation from a state of war between Israel and the armed factions in the Gaza Strip into an internal civil war or armed insurgency against the PA security forces. Such a development would threaten stability, prevent smooth provision and distribution of humanitarian supplies, and probably lead to renewed conflict with Israel.

PA officials recently announced that the resolution of the issue of border crossing security and administration should be based on the 2005 Access and Movement agreement (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2005). According to the preamble of this agreement, it was signed "to promote peaceful economic development and improve the humanitarian situation on the ground. It represents the commitments of the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA)." Nevertheless, the current Israeli government refuses to apply this agreement as the basis for the deployment of PA security forces in the Gaza Strip or at the border crossings.

According to Palestinian Authority officials, security arrangements for the crossings, including Rafah, cannot be separated from the general situation in the Gaza Strip. These officials confirm that the PA recently refused to cooperate with certain proposals to administer Rafah crossing while the Israeli army is still present in the area. The Palestinian leadership has decided that the PA will deploy in those crossings only when the Israeli army has pulled out entirely from the Gaza Strip.

A close reading of the Palestinian Authority's position, and those of the armed factions in the Gaza Strip indicate that the problem of the pathway to proper and stable governance in the Gaza Strip will have to be resolved by internal Palestinian agreement. Such an agreement should also be cosponsored by regional stakeholders, namely Egypt and Qatar, and at least tacitly accepted by international actors such as the United States and the EU. An internal Palestinian understanding on governance will inevitably require solid agreement on the deployment of PA security forces, and demobilisation of armed formations under a unified national agenda. Although this point was addressed in past intra-Palestinian national dialogue, albeit without reaching agreement, current realities in the wake of the war necessitate a more fruitful approach to this thorny issue. Previous attempts failed to identify as a possible solution the placement of all weapons and armed formations under a unified leadership that would not be based on the decision of a single faction. While a comprehensive solution to this issue might require more time than is currently available and deeper agreement between the relevant factions, it appears to be one of the most pressing imperatives, in order to provide for longer term stability. Alternative scenarios or plans that risk compromising this fundamental principle would only exacerbate the situation, leading to internal Palestinian strife that would definitely slide into a renewed conflict with Israel. The lack of an agreed vision or a plan for the Day After in the Gaza Strip among the Palestinian factions will only reduce the prospects of internal confrontation, on one hand, and contribute to Israeli plans to impose extended military and security control over the Gaza Strip for years to come.

5

CONCLUSION

The prolonged maintenance of the old (dis)equilibrium between Israel and the Palestinians ended on 7 October in the most horrific way. The previous conflict management strategy failed again. It turned out that the tactical management approach had only bought time between numerous rounds of bloody fighting. The crisis and conflict management strategies of the past were plagued by periodic outbreaks of hostilities amidst efforts to reach peace agreements, but the main aim and premise was simply to manage the conflict. A lot of political capital was invested in crisis and conflict management over the past two decades, driven mainly by Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and his rotating coalition partners. As the stronger side in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, Netanyahu's government has demonstrated more interest in tactical solutions to strategic problems. As terrible as 7 October and the subsequent war have been, failing to adapt in the wake of these events while doggedly pursuing a two-state outcome could produce even worse results for Israelis and Palestinians in years to come. It is hard to imagine that the current Israeli government would want to embrace any form of real partnership with the Palestinian Authority. An Israeli government that will be a viable partner in this process would be required to forge a new policy toward the Palestinian people, both on the immediate issue of the Gaza Strip, and on finding a solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict as a whole. A future Israeli government will be expected to work in close coordination with the new PA government to empower it to assume security control over all the territories. The Israeli government will also be expected to allow the PA full access to its financial resources, and to minimise military activities in the West Bank while forging new security understandings with the new PA government. Significant political steps, including engagement in a regional pathway with Saudi Arabia aimed at the creation of a Palestinian state, would dramatically reduce the appeal of radical organisations and empower a newly formed technocratic PA government and moderate forces.

It is fairly evident that the 7 October attacks and the subsequent war will bring about significant political changes that will have a major impact on the future of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. While it is highly likely that these changes will impact the current Israeli government, it is critical that the Palestinian system, too, undergo major changes to emerge as inclusive, legitimate, representative and efficient. Such a transformation is imperative in order to ensure long-term stability, security and prosperity and achieve the anticipated goal of a two-state solution. This will require profound and genuine change in the Palestinian political system, not merely partial and selective administrative and technical reforms. This process should start by forging a minimal level of national consensus on creating a technocratic, non-factional government for the short-medium term. Longer term, however, there is no alternative to rebuilding Palestinian politics by holding general elections and rebuilding a robust system based on checks and balances, as well as proper oversight and accountability, with a vibrant legislative authority.

III. One of the main obstacles facing the Day After plan and the reform process is the lack of a unified strategy among the competing Palestinian circles. A unified Palestinian strategy is therefore needed that would also be embraced by all regional actors, including Israel and international stakeholders. Forging a unified strategy among the regional and international parties will make it easier to induce Palestinian decision-makers to take the right decisions to ensure long-term stability, not only in Gaza but also in the West Bank. This in practice means that the world community and regional partners must support internal Palestinian political efforts to achieve a unified Palestinian strategy that will provide the basis for future cooperation and stability in the region. Coordinating this effort between Palestinian factions and aligning it with regional and international acceptability is a crucial element in building a more stable future. One of the key factors exacerbating internal Palestinian divisions is regional and international pressure on relevant important players, including Fatah and Hamas. As already noted, drawing up a regional/international unified strategy to support internal Palestinian reconciliation, which would include as many influential countries as possible, namely Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Turkey and Qatar, would prevent spoiler countries from obstructing this strategically vital outcome. This effort will not succeed without Israeli and US policy support and urging of the relevant parties, mainly the Fatah leadership. While this has not happened in the past, and it is not easy to accomplish, the current reality is that previous policies that have maintained Palestinian division between Fatah and Hamas have all failed miserably to advance Palestinian interests at any level. Arguably, US and Israeli policies that punished any possible reconciliation between the two factions in the past have also failed to secure

long-term Israeli security interests. Such a change in policies will undoubtedly require a profound review of older policies by all relevant parties in the aftermath of the war in Gaza. In the absence of any other realistic approach to resolving the major challenges lying ahead in the Gaza Strip and the region as a whole, this emerges as a pragmatic and necessary approach that needs to be re-examined if longer term stability is ever to be achieved.

6

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

I. **End the war, get relief under way and prepare for reconstruction:** It is crucially important to reaffirm that ending the war and reaching a ceasefire agreement is only the gateway for Day After planning. In the absence of such an agreement the only plausible outcome is continued conflict at different levels of escalation for years to come. The immediate priorities as outlined are therefore reaching a ceasefire agreement, providing badly needed aid to the civilian population in Gaza, and relieving economic and security hardships in the West Bank. Under the circumstances, it is imperative for all international actors, including the United States and the EU, to reexamine their crisis management strategies concerning the conflict and to steer the two towards a ceasefire agreement.

II. **Form an inclusive, efficient and legitimate technocratic government:** In the absence of immediate elections, the best mechanism for ensuring the most legitimate, efficient and all-inclusive West Bank and Gaza administration is one formed under the aegis of the PLO, with the consent of local Gaza politics and society, uniting the West Bank and Gaza under its administration. This government would be similar in structure to the 2014 / PA Consensus Government (Al Jazeera 2014), but with a different mandate and composition. In terms of technical and human resources, it is imperative that this process take into consideration the bureaucracy appointed by Hamas since 2007, which totals 40,000 employees in the civilian and security sectors. Previous attempts to ignore or bypass this labour force have resulted in miserable failure and created tensions that eventually stymied all endeavours to reunite the Palestinian system. Under a possible scenario of reaching an internal Palestinian understanding on governance in Gaza, old or former employees appointed by PA or Hamas since 2007 could be eased out if proven to have party affiliation. Such employees could be retired with an incentive package and gradually replaced with a new set of employees based on merit rather than on party ties. It is noteworthy that thousands of former PA security personnel were retired in the West Bank in 2005 using a similar approach.

III. **Carry out political, not only technical reforms of the Palestinian Authority:** The Palestinian Authority suffers from serious domestic challenges, which have undermined its legitimacy, relevance and performance. Longer term – not exceeding four years – general elections must be the cornerstone of ensuring legitimate, efficient and inclusive governance in order to rebuild the Palestinian political system. Technical and administrative reform plans are no substitute for profound revitalisation of political governance. This can be achieved only by holding general elections and rebuilding the legislative, executive and judicial authorities so that they are based on checks and balances, as well as oversight through parliamentary and legislative authority.

IV. **Create a reliable pathway for a two-state solution:** In order for this approach to work, it is important to note that Israel and other international decision-makers seem to have fallen into the trap of believing that the conflict was being managed successfully. Given the experience of the previous eight months, it is becoming more evident that this conflict cannot be resolved merely by "management". Rather its root causes must be addressed. Over the past two decades, instead of reaching a peace agreement, the Israeli occupation has become more entrenched through military control, settlement expansion, and imposition of new and deeper restrictions. Recent normalisation agreements between Arab countries and Israel only aggravated this hopeless situation, leaving Palestinians with a sense of abandonment. Other recommendations include cessation of settlement construction, expanding PA control over areas B and C in the West Bank, and engagement along a regional pathway together with Saudi Arabia aimed at the creation of a Palestinian state. This would dramatically reduce the appeal of radical organisations, empower the newly formed PA technocratic government and moderates, and weaken extremists.

V. **Recommendations for a practical approach:** Having underlined the need to review the previous strategies of all parties concerned and to develop a new, well-coordinated one, the process of restoring governance and creating a security and service system that works efficiently in Gaza also requires a robust practical approach. This should be all inclusive, legitimate and efficient in the eyes of the local community. That entails the inclusion of all relevant segments of the community.

Specific recommendations include:

– Prioritise law and order, as well as delivery of humanitarian supplies. As Phase I requires intensive law and order efforts to protect swift delivery of humanitarian supplies and other basic services, they should be given top priority at the outset.

– Combine former PA employees in Gaza and the pool of staff recruited following 2007 in all relevant missions to prevent insurgency.

– Subject the whole pool of civil and security employees to a process of vetting, retirement and reemployment based on merit and professional qualifications.

– Prioritise working with civil police as the main law and order force. A new recruitment and training process must start in parallel to ensure continuity.

– Ensure transparency and help mitigate any internal rifts that might arise. A stability force made up of personnel from Arab countries who enjoy Israel's trust could be deployed in Gaza at the request of the Palestinian government to provide guidance and ensure stability. The same force could also help in meeting relevant security concerns when deployed at border crossings, specifically between Gaza and Egypt. These are some of many other ideas that could help meet such challenges during a transitional period that eventually will have to lead to a political resolution of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The old policy of applying tactical solutions to strategic problems will not provide long-term security and stability. Turning the current calamity into a promising opportunity necessitates a move beyond the strategies of conflict management that led to it.

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

»Palestinian Perspectives on the Reconstruction of Gaza« is a joint project carried out by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), the German Institute for International and Security Affairs. The papers published within the framework of this project focus on Palestinian needs and priorities with regard to a range of topics linked to early recovery and reconstruction of Gaza after the 2023/2024 war.

In this context, they do not regard the Gaza Strip as a separate entity, but as part of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967. They also hold that all approaches, be they short or long term, should be compatible with the principle of Palestinian self-determination. The objective is to highlight key insights from Palestinian experiences and expertise and introduce them into the international debate. Papers cover aspects such as security arrangements, governance, the role of women and urban planning for recovery and reconstruction. They reflect the author's views only.

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