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Palestinian Center for  
POLICY and  
SURVEY RESEARCH

**The Day After: paper # 2**



## **The Effects of the PA's Absence on Security and Public Order**

**Said Zaid**

*Comments by Nasser Yousef & Roland Friedrich*

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*Strategic Analysis Unit  
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## **Said Zaid**

Mr. Zaid is a researcher with a special focus on politics and governance. Holding a Masters degree in Contemporary Arabic Studies from the University of Birzeit, he has been working as a Rapporteur for the Interior and Security Committee in the Palestinian Legislative Council since 1996. He has many published studies, including: “Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Establishment: 1996-2006,” and “The Effectiveness of the Integrity System in the Work of the Palestinian Security Apparatus,” published in 2013 by the Coalition for Accountability and Integrity, AMAN.

## **The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)**

PSR is an independent nonprofit institution and think tank of policy analysis and academic research. PSR was founded with the goal of advancing scholarship and knowledge on immediate issues of concern to Palestinians in three areas: domestic politics and government, strategic analysis and foreign policy, and public opinion polls and survey research. PSR research units conduct and organize four types of activities: research and policy analysis, empirical surveys and public opinion polls, task forces and study groups, and meetings and conferences. The units focus on current public policy issues with a special reliance on empirical research as a tool to advance scholarship and understanding.

PSR is dedicated to promoting objective and nonpartisan research and analysis and to encouraging a better understanding of Palestinian domestic and international environment in an atmosphere of free debate and exchange of ideas. PSR is registered as a nonprofit institution in the Palestinian Ministry of Justice.

P. O. Box 76, Ramallah, Palestine

Tel: +970-2-2964933

Fax: +970-2-2964934

[pcpsr@pcpsr.org](mailto:pcpsr@pcpsr.org)

[www.pcpsr.org](http://www.pcpsr.org)

## **The Effects of the PNA's Absence on Security and Public Order**

This paper is one amongst ten such papers prepared within the Palestinian center for policy and survey research's initiative titled, "The day after". The initiative aims to study the circumstances that would face Palestinian politics and society in a situation in which the PA becomes unable to carry out its role. These papers examine the consequences of the dissolution or collapse of the PA on a number of central issues that concern the Palestinians, which include: security, economy, education, health, judiciary, telecommunications, basic services such as water and power, local government, political and civil conditions, as well as the future of the two-state solution.

These papers examine the significance and implications of PA's absence as well as possible options that could be adopted to mitigate the negative effects of such an absence and develop specific recommendations for the sector in question. Two experts have commented on each of these prepared papers. Each paper was presented and discussed in a workshop attended by policy makers, parliamentarians, experts, and academics.

*This initiative has been organized in cooperation with the U.S./Middle East Project and the Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre.*

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## Summary:

The future of the PA is influenced by many factors, most important of which are: Israeli occupation policies, the PA's security role, Palestinian division, donor states and the performance of the PA itself. Based on the role of each of these factors, multiple possible scenarios emerge regarding the future of the PA, whereas the security situation is affected by each of them in a specific way.

### **First Scenario: Dissolution of the PA through a Palestinian decision**

This decision would give Palestinians the initiative, especially if before making it there was reorganization in the PLO, allowing it to regain its importance, because an organized dismantlement of the PA would enable some degree of control over armed chaos. However, many problems could result, such as the lack of any central control, and the possibility that weapons could be used in personal and familial disputes. Weapons could even reach Palestinian groups that believe in armed resistance, which would give Israel the needed pretext to respond harshly to popular resistance.

### **Second Scenario: Collapse due to external factors**

Israeli and perhaps American policies is what is meant by this, such as the imposition of economic sanctions, the cessation of tax return transfers, and ending foreign aid. This scenario is seen as the most likely one, due to the fact that the PA would not dissolve itself by its own will, owing to the large segment of the population whose interests would be harmed by such an action. In addition to this, the PLO would not abandon its responsibilities towards the Palestinian people

The freezing of international aid would lead to inconsistencies in the payment of wages for public servants. This would mean the inability of the security apparatus to provide its security obligations. Israel might -with the security apparatus on the brink of collapse- perform a wide ranging preemptive military operation, to seize the largest amount possible of weaponry belonging to the Palestinian security apparatus, and preventing them from falling into the hands of resistance groups.

### **Third Scenario: Collapse due to internal factors.**

This could happen according to different possibilities, such as: Worsening of the political and financial crises, failure of the Palestinian leadership in ending the political division, failure of the Palestinian leadership in finding practical solutions for youth and social issues, such as unemployment. This could result in demonstrations that could snowball into wide and popular protests, during which, security and state centers could be attacked, which would paralyze the PA's work, as well as result in many deaths, leading to the loss of legitimacy for PA leadership.

This could occur if there was a worsening of the inner Fateh crisis, and its escalation to an armed conflict, causing a split in the security apparatus.

This would be the worst case scenario, as it could result in widespread chaos, and a lack of any central leadership. Manifestations of such a scenario could include: Emergence of neighborhood gangs and a wide dissemination of weaponry among the populace. Naturally Israel would also have a hand in this, through supporting one faction over the other, directly or indirectly either through military or financial aid. Some Palestinian factions or groups might utilize this chaos and obtain weaponry and escalate the confrontation with Israel.

## **Results of the PA's absence.**

The absence of the PA would directly affect the inner security of the Palestinian territories. There would be a security vacuum and a general feeling of instability. The absence of the PA could reinforce the idea of total resistance, because it would mean the failure of negotiations and the political settlement. This could lead to the emergence of groups or factions attempting to fill the vacuum of the PA's absence, such as families and clans, whereas the absence of the PA could lead citizens to seek refuge in traditional affiliations.

Another faction would be the private security companies, whereas it is expected that the use of such companies would increase. These companies could turn into militias providing services to the highest bidder, they could even become parties in different conflicts.

The outbreak of a third Intifada is a possibility, because the absence of the PA does not mean the absence of political factions, which could adapt their resistance methods to the new reality.

The PA's absence would create new security threats for Israel, because such an absence would mean the collapse of the Palestine-Israel peace agreement, and the end of security coordination. Israel might take steps to impose security, such as the reinforcement of occupation activities, or bringing in a third party to impose security, or even a neighboring country.

The neighboring countries would not be safe from the negative repercussions of the PA's absence, it could limit their ability to maintain their peace treaties with Israel. It could affect the ability of the PLO to pay wages and fulfill its obligations towards Palestinian forces abroad, especially in Lebanon. This would weaken the PLO's control over the Palestinian forces abroad, which would destabilize Lebanese security.

The absence of the PA and the dismantling of the security apparatus in the West Bank would enable Hamas to reorganize itself and its activities, and perhaps build its military capabilities. It might then work on escalating its resistance against Israel in the West Bank, to win more legitimacy and popularity. Hamas would maintain its authority in the Gaza Strip, but it could face serious challenges when it comes to maintaining security control in the Gaza Strip.

## **Recommendations:**

- Reformation of the PLO, and building its organizations on a democratic basis, incorporating all segments of Palestinian society.
- Announcement of a Palestinian government in the Diaspora, this government would be the authority on daily issues facing Palestinians.
- Factions and groups must rebuild themselves and crystallize new programs to face the new emerging challenges of a situation where the PA is absent.
- Empowering cooperative Associations and bodies in various fields, to contribute to the strengthening of security.
- Reinforcement of popular resistance enables the Palestinian people to remain steadfast for the longest possible period.
- Conversion of the Gaza Strip into a Palestinian focal point, this should be done with limits and guarantees preventing it from turning into a state in the Gaza Strip alone.
- Re-transferring the powers of civil defense organizations back to the municipalities.

- Reconsidering Palestinian military and security formations, searching for new formations and formulas to use in times of need. Such as creating small and flexible military formations able to prolong the confrontation with Israel.

## **Introduction:**

Since Mahmoud Abbas became president, he has been committed to all the necessities of the peace process, and to negotiations as the only mechanism to ending the occupation. However, Israel was not responsive, and continued in its expansionist policies in a manner threatening the survival of the PA. The PA's legitimacy is tied to its progress in the peace process and the ending of Israeli occupation, and if the PA remains without a political horizon, it could lose this legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the Palestinian people. If the Palestinians were to adopt other alternative options next to the PA, such as resistance, the Israelis would as a response destroy PA institutions and organizations.

In the light of such events, the dissolution or collapse of the PA is within the realm of possibility. It could even become a realistic possibility, because the future of the PA is still unknown. This is despite the recognition of Palestine as an observer state by the United Nations in November 2012, and its ability to make the transition to an independent state within the legal international framework. The PA might be unable to fulfill its obligations in the future, which could lead to its absence. What we mean with the dissolution or collapse of the PA is: The absence of the power responsible for providing security and services, and managing daily life.

This paper aims to study the repercussions and effects of the absence of the PA on security and public order, in order to develop recommendations which could help in taking fateful future decisions, as well as serve national goals and maximize the gains and minimize the losses.

## **1- Factors affecting the future of the PA:**

Policies of the Israeli occupation: After signing the Oslo agreement, Palestinians assumed that the path of the PA would lead to establishing a sovereign state. Therefore, the continuation of the occupation and the lack of progress in the peace process means the failure of this path, which damages the PA's legitimacy in the eyes of Palestinians. This is especially true taking into account the Israeli policy on the ground, from the expansion of settlement activity to the annexation of lands and the judaization of Jerusalem, in addition to the continuation of arrests and break ins, construction of the racist separation wall and strangling the Palestinian economy. This does not reflect an Israeli readiness for a settlement that would rise to Palestinians expectations.

On the other hand, Israel still occasionally withholds Palestinian tax funds, which it is obligated to collect, and imposes restrictions on Palestinians, limiting the capability of the PA to run its organizations and provide for its citizens. Israeli policies also have a negative effect on the PA, through causing internal pressure due to Palestinian citizens losing faith in the PA and its protection. Based on the above, the PA might then lose its reason for continuing or even existing.

**The PA's role in security:** The PA has a double role when it comes to security, it protects Palestinian society on one hand, and provides security to Israel on the other. This role is something Israel has always insisted on in every agreement in the passing years, it was even at one point considered a main condition for progress in the peace process. Therefore, any change to this, from an Israeli point of view, would render the reasons for PA existence as moot. This is because the PA is a result of Israeli, Palestinian and regional interests, and not only as a result of the justice of the Palestinian case. On the other side of the argument, we could consider this Israeli need as a positive pressuring card, which could be utilized for Palestinian interests. At the same time, Palestinian-Israeli security coordination faces strong and continuous criticism from Palestinians.

**The Palestinian division:** The PA is divided in two parts, each of which is represented by its own government and prime minister due to Hamas forcefully seizing control of the Gaza strip. This means an absence of unity in political authority and choice. Therefore, the division is a major Palestinian weak point, which affects Palestinian life in its political, economic and social aspects. It also damages the unity of Palestinian representation, and the legitimacy of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its future decisions. The PLO would not be able to take any fateful decision without a Palestinian reconciliation, such as: The dissolution of the PA, even for tactical reasons.

On the other hand, the end of Palestinian division could have effects on the PA as well. If Fateh and Hamas agreed to form a government without an internationally accepted political program, the PA could face international isolation such as that of 2006 in the wake of the Hamas victory in the legislative elections.

**Donor states:** The PA depends on international aid as a primary source for financing its budget and developmental projects, which increases the likelihood of interference in internal Palestinian affairs, making the PA susceptible to political blackmail and collapse. For instance, the severance of international aid between 2006-2007 led to damages in the PA's ability to provide for its citizens' needs. It also led to the undermining of PA reforms, especially those related to security. It contributed to shaking the faith of the populace in the abilities of the PA.

**Palestinian performance:** The performance of PA organizations is considered weak, and suffering from a lack of competence due to widespread corruption and nepotism. This limits the ability of the PA to provide efficient services to citizens, and threatens its legitimacy and existence.

## 2- Scenarios where the PA cannot function:

The impasse in the political process, and the failure of the two state solution puts the future of the PA in danger. The Palestinian people and their leadership cannot wait for much longer, and they would never accept a national authority whose authority does not exceed that of a large municipality. Israel would not accept change to the PA in the direction of it transitioning into a state on the ground. This will be decisive in determining the possibility of future PA collapse, according to the following scenarios:



**First scenario: Dissolution of the PA through a Palestinian decision.**

The idea of dissolving the PA through a Palestinian decision was brought up in the beginning of the Aqsa Intifada (uprising) in the year 2000, in the light of the Israeli incursions into Palestinian controlled “A” territories, and the destruction of PA structures and centers. Since that time, this option is mentioned occasionally, due to reasons relating mainly to Israeli practices and crises in the political process. In addition to the PA's inability to end the occupation and establish an independent state, whereas with time the PA has become a cover for Israeli practices ranging from settlement activity to the annexation of lands. It functions as a watchdog for Israeli security, which provides relief for Israelis, and reduces the military and economic costs of the occupation. On November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the newspaper Ha'aretz reported from Israeli military sources that the number of occupation soldiers in the West Bank is the lowest since the first Intifada of 1987. Therefore, there are those who see the necessity in the dissolution of the PA to reveal the reality of Israeli occupation, and force Israel to take on the full cost of its occupation.

The PLO might be the party taking the decision to dissolve the PA, as it was the faction legally and practically responsible for the creation of the PA. For the PLO was the signatory of the Oslo accords with Israel, which gave them the ability to perform responsibilities in the occupied territories. This dissolution should follow an official notice to the UN and other Arab states, that Palestine is occupied by Israel, therefore Israel should take on the responsibility of running it, following which there would be a laying off of all public servants and the cessation of services from civil and security organizations.

**Factors for the realization of this scenario:**

Some of the most important factors for this scenario are: The large number of public servants who make a living by working for the PA, Israel and the international community's stance on the PA, the weakness and marginalization of PLO organizations in the wake of PA establishment, the necessity of the Palestinian leadership understanding the pointlessness of the negotiation process, failure of the PA in achieving its primary goals, which are the ending of Israeli occupation and the establishment of an independent state.

**Possibility of this scenario:**

Israeli intransigence and limited PA options would lead to the dissolution of the PA, because it would lose its *raison d'être* from a Palestinian perspective. This is a possible outcome, even the President of the PA hinted at it. But we must also take into consideration that there are those who object to the dissolution of the PA, because it is seen as a national achievement and a Palestinian right. Its dissolution could also free Israel from local and international pressures to proceed in the peace process, it could even help some right wing factions within Israel in realizing their plans for constructing settlements in the West Bank.

**Features of this scenario:**

Dissolving the PA due to a Palestinian decision would give Palestinians the initiative, which they have lacked up until this point. Especially if before this decision, there was a reorganization in the PLO and it regaining its importance. This would reduce the negative effects on inner Palestinian affairs, especially when it comes to security relative to any other scenario. Because dissolving the PA according to an organized program helps in controlling chaos and weapons.

In order to secure the weapons of the security apparatus, in a way which is consistent with the new methods of resistance adopted by the Palestinian leadership, there might be orders to keep and store

these weapons in the houses of security personnel, and the prevention of their use. This is due to the lack of a proper place of storage and the chances of Israel seizing them. This is in the case where the Palestinian leadership adopts popular and peaceful resistance. However, storing of weapons in such a manner might have some dangerous problems attached to it, such as the lack of central control, and the possibility of the use of these weapons in family or personal feuds or even criminal activities. They could even be smuggled to Palestinian groups that refuse peaceful resistance, which would give Israel the needed pretext to respond harshly to any and all resistance. However, if the Palestinian leadership decides on adopting armed resistance, then it would make it much more difficult for Israel to gather and confiscate these weapons.

### **Second scenario: collapse due to external factors.**

The PLO played a historical role in leading the Palestinian people under different circumstances before the establishment of the PA in 1994. This was through municipalities, the national steering committee, the unified Intifada leadership (1987), associations and different civil society organizations. Therefore, many officials do not see the PLO giving up on its responsibilities towards the Palestinian people by dissolving the PA. In the absence of any progress in the negotiations, the Palestinian leadership might reevaluate the functions and strategy of the PA, and its commitments towards Israel, such as security coordination and the ending of the occupation and materializing a state.

The USA and Israel might see in this a violation of the Palestinian-Israeli agreements and impose sanctions on the PA. These sanctions would be reflected in the cessation of economic aid from the USA and other donor states, and the termination of tax fund transfers from the Israeli side, to force the PA back into security coordination and stop any form of action leading to ending the occupation.

The freezing of international aid usually leads to inconsistencies in the payment of wages for public servants. This would mean the inability of the security apparatus to provide its service, which is maintaining public order and other routine operations. This would damage discipline, as a security officer would be unable to join his unit, as well as damage working motivations, it is expected that some officers would search for other means to support themselves. Such manifestations were seen in the Gaza strip and even the West Bank during the second Intifada and the financial siege on the PA during the reign of the Hamas government (2006-2007).

Israel might -with the security apparatus on the brink of collapse- perform a wide ranging preemptive military operation, to seize the largest amount possible of light weaponry belonging to the Palestinian security apparatus. This would be achieved through breaking into Palestinian camps and security centers, to prevent the acquisition of these weapons by resistance groups, and to prevent any form of armed resistance, which would lead to an increase in occupation costs for Israel. The Palestinian security apparatus will be unable to resist the Israeli break ins, in light of Israeli military superiority and advantages over this security apparatus. If Israel is successful in gathering these weapons, then there would be no need for it to directly control Palestinian cities and population centers. It could observe the situation from afar, the same way in which it acted after Operation Defensive Shield (Second Intifada and the incursion into "A" territories), whereas Israeli presence was primarily at city entrances. During this period, Israeli forces carried out concentrated military operations without imposing itself on daily life. It is worth mentioning, that the collapse of the PA in such a situation would include all sectors, which could push Israel into involvement in one way or the other to facilitate health and educational services among others.

### **Factors for the realization of this scenario:**

Some of the most important factors for the realization of this scenario include: Reformation of the PA and preparation of a program aimed at ending the occupation and establishing a state, insistence on the application of this program, the conviction of the Palestinian leadership regarding changes in the PA's mission, cessation of protection of Israeli security interests and ending security coordination.

**Possibility of this scenario:**

This scenario is seen as the most likely one, due to the fact that the PA would not dissolve itself by its own will, owing to the large segment of the population whose interests would be harmed by such an action. In addition to this, the PLO would not abandon its responsibilities towards the Palestinian people, and would work on changing Palestinian strategies. On the other hand, some view this as a distant possibility, and that Israeli and international interests necessitate in the very least, maintaining the status quo.

**Third scenario: collapse due to internal factors.**

Many a state have collapsed due to internal political and economical factors, in the case of the PA, this could happen according to different possibilities, such as: Worsening of the political and financial crises, failure of the Palestinian leadership in ending the political division, failure of the Palestinian leadership in finding practical solutions for youth and social issues, such as unemployment. Other possibilities include, the inability of the PA to end corruption, especially taking into account that its performance is a major factor in determining its legitimacy. This could result in demonstrations that could snowball into wide and popular protests, during which, security and state centers could be attacked, which would paralyze the PA's work, as well as result in many deaths, leading to the loss of legitimacy for PA leadership.

From another perspective, internal collapse could be the result of the worsening of an inner Fateh crisis, which spirals out of control into an armed conflict. This would cause the security apparatus to be split between the different factions, especially considering that a large number of security officers and leaders are Fateh members.

**Factors for the realization of this scenario:**

Failure of the PA to find solutions for its internal crises, and the freezing of international aid are two primary factors for this scenario. This would be reinforced in the case of an armed conflict within Fateh, and its escalation to include the security apparatus.

**Possibility of this scenario:**

This scenario seems unlikely in the case where the PA maintains its agreements with Israel, especially those relating to security. It is within Israelis interests to ensure the continuation of these agreements, and would not allow a crisis to threaten them. This is evident taking into consideration that whenever the PA finds itself in a difficult financial position due to Israeli pressures, the Israeli security apparatus advises the Israeli government to resume the transfer of tax payments, and reduce pressure.

Regarding the possibility of the PA's collapse through an intra-Fateh conflict, it seems unlikely with the presence of president Mahmoud Abbas, who has the loyalty of the majority of the security leadership, however, if the president were to be absent for one reason or the other, this is more possible.

**Features of this scenario:**

This would be the worst case scenario, as it could result in widespread chaos, and a lack of any central leadership. Even if new leaderships arise, they might not be up to the task. Manifestations of such a

scenario could include: Emergence of neighborhood gangs and a wide dissemination of weaponry among the populace. Naturally Israel would also have a hand in this, through supporting one faction over the other, directly or indirectly either through military or financial aid, with the end goal of weakening every faction. This would guarantee their disunity, within a divide and rule policy. It would also work on instating collaborator forces friendly to her.

Some Palestinian factions or groups might utilize this chaos and obtain weaponry to use against Israel. Such a situation might reduce the negative impact on the Palestinian side, because Israel's response to this would unite the different factions against it.

### 3- Results and effects of PA absence:

Absence of the PA would be one of the most dangerous events ever witnessed by the Palestinian people, because it would result in immensely important effects affecting the whole region in the long term. Such effects include:

#### **First: Effects of the PA's absence on security.**

The PA's absence would affect the security in the Palestinian territories as follows:

A) The absence of Palestinian institutions and dissolution of the security apparatus would lead to a halt in judicial and court functions. Even if the judicial system continued working, it would lack an executive to carry out any order. This would result in a security vacuum, creating an atmosphere of political, economic and social instability. There would be tens of thousands of unemployed and frustrated trained security professionals. Not to mention the prevalence of weapons, crime and attacks on public and private property. All this would contribute to the likelihood of a violent Palestinian unrest. Some Islamic organizations or groups might attempt to establish connections with Al-Qaeda or Hezbollah or Iran, or vice versa. This would be to utilize these groups in an armed fight against Israel, launched from the West Bank, for their own interests, especially considering that Iran is always looking to influence the Palestinian scene, being the closest and most direct area of conflict with Israel. It would be within Iran's interests to disrupt the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, and to escalate the conflict to divert Israel's attention away from its nuclear file.

B) Reinforcement of resistance: The absence of the PA for any reason, would mean the end of negotiations and political settlement. This would reinforce the option of armed resistance, which has support within some factions. These factions see that the struggle with Israel is a struggle for survival, and that negotiations with the Israeli occupation is a waste of time, useless for the realization of Palestinian hopes and ambitions. If such a case were to happen, total resistance methods could be utilized, such as military and suicide operations within Israel. This would harm the Palestinian standing in the arena of international public opinion, therefore weakening the Palestinian ability to remain steadfast.

C) Emergence of groups or factions attempting to fill the vacuum of the PA's absence, and with it the absence of any faction with a monopoly on legitimate violence, such as:

#### **Families and clans.**

Before the advent of any PA organization, families and clans played a crucial role in organizing Palestinian society. They reinforced Palestinian cohesion and prevented any serious harmful deterioration. This was especially true during the first Intifada of 1987, where families and clans provided care and protection. Even after the establishment of the PA, this role did not disappear. The PA used this role to complement its own policies and legitimacy, in the light of the absence of the rule of law.

With the outbreak of the second Intifada, PA security institutions faced demolition by the Israeli occupation. This resulted in them losing their capability to carry out their responsibilities, which in turn increased the importance of the role of families and clans, who attempted to fill the security and judicial vacuum. It is possible that families and clans could still carry out this function in the case of the PA's absence, it could even reinforce this role, because the absence of political authority would lead citizens back to traditional authorities. There is a potential for these families and clans to create their own armed militias in case PA weaponry is disseminated. This could lead to further chaos and worry.

### **Private Palestinian security companies.**

After the advent of the PA, some private security companies were established according to Company Law. They provided their services such as providing security for banks, companies, organizations and persons. In the light of PA absence, and any framework restricting their armament and operational procedure, they could act as a substitute for security forces. It is expected that the use of such companies would increase. This is natural, and can be observed in areas ridden with conflict, where businessmen feel the need for better security.

However, the relationship these companies would have with the countries taking over security responsibilities in light of the PA's absence, remains unclear. These companies cannot carry out their operations without official security coordination. They might be hired to carry out some responsibilities at the request of the new powers or citizens. These companies could turn into militias providing services to the highest bidder, they could even become parties in different conflicts.

There are those who find this unlikely, for these companies are a part of the current economic system, which would collapse along with the PA, therefore weakening them, or even pushing them towards dissolution.

### **Political parties and factions.**

Political parties and factions have played the role of official organizations before the establishment of the PA, such as: judiciary and security functions. They could play a role in providing security and public order in a situation of PA absence, as they previously provided in the Intifada of 1987, such as creating reconciliation and popular committees to protect neighborhoods and population centers. The role of political parties and factions would be amplified with the PA's absence by a Palestinian decision, because there would be a stage of preparation preceding the declaration.

From another perspective, political parties and factions taking over security functions has its dangers, due to the large amount of weapons among the populace, and a rivalry and competition between the factions to establish areas of influence which could evolve into an inner struggle.

### **Outbreak of a new Intifada, and a return to a pre-Oslo situation.**

The Israeli occupation, through its oppressive policies such as killings and torture, annexations and arrests, judaization of Jerusalem, demolition of homes and settler terror all add fuel to the fire of a

possible escalation. The option of an Intifada will always remain present, as long as Palestinian territories are under Israeli occupation.

The outbreak of a third Intifada and a return to a pre-PA situation, in the case of the collapse or dissolution of the PA is possible, but not inevitable. This is because returning to such a situation would necessitate working on increasing the readiness of the collective Palestinian mindset. Especially since the PA dedicated itself to negotiations and a peaceful resolution. The PA transformed public sentiments from those of defiance and resistance to the occupation, to those more interested in establishing a different lifestyle, far removed from the previous. In the case of PA absence, Palestinians would -at least at first- be more interested in securing their family's basic needs, because a large segment of them would become unemployed.

There are those who believe otherwise, and see the possibility of a new Intifada as very likely, seeing how the political parties and factions would not collapse with the collapse of the PA. It is possible that they would adapt themselves and their methods of struggle, despite their unpreparedness. This is in addition to the Arab revolts, which have increased the Palestinian youth's confidence in their abilities to accomplish their political and national goals.

### **Internationalization of security responsibilities in the West Bank.**

Due to the impasse in the political process, the Palestinian leadership turned to the United Nations to request the recognition of a Palestinian state. If the PA is dissolved or collapses, the Palestinian case might become part of the international agenda in the light of the security deterioration in the West Bank, and Israel refusing to fulfill its obligations. As a response to a PLO request, the international community might agree to establish an international peacekeeping force in the West Bank. This force would take the place of the Israeli occupation (in case Israel unilaterally withdraws its forces as a result of PA dissolution) and the Palestinian security apparatus. In any case, an international force would require the consent of all affected parties, or else it would face immense difficulties. Although there might be a large number of Palestinians welcoming this force, there would also be groups opposing its presence. As for the Israelis, they would never entrust their security to any foreign force, even if friendly. Therefore it is expected that Israel would continue carrying out limited operations, even with international presence, which might lead to a conflict between these two factions. Based upon this, it is unlikely that Israel would agree to an international peacekeeping force that could restrict its security activities.

On the other hand, this option necessitates the continuation of the PLO as a representative for the Palestinian people in wake of the PA's absence. It would also necessitate a change in the American position, and the preparedness of the international community to take up this responsibility. Until such necessities are present, this remains a losing bet, especially taking into consideration that the international community's role is restricted to offering conditional financial aid, whereas Israel enjoys continuous American support.

### **Second: Effects of the PA's absence on Israel.**

The PA's absence would create new security threats for Israel, because such an absence would mean the collapse of the Palestine-Israel peace agreement, and the end of security coordination, which has spared Israel much resources. Israel might take steps to impose security and alleviate some negative effects resulting from the PA's absence. Such steps might include:

### **A- Reinforcement of occupation activities in controlled Palestinian territories.**

The Palestinian territories remain under Israeli occupation, therefore, in the absence of the PA, Israel

would expand its military control over the territories, to fill the resulting security vacuum, and reinforce its presence. This would be followed by an expansion in Israeli civil and military administration jurisdiction, with the goal of maintaining security and public order. Israeli authorities might divide the Palestinian territories into enclaves, to ensure its grip, and carry out a wide campaign of arrests, in order to damage Palestinian organizations and prevent them from mounting any effective resistance. This would not be difficult for Israel, as a large scale operation such as Operation Defensive Shield in 2002 would not be required. This is due to the fact that Israel has not stopped its continuous arrests and break ins which began with the Aqsa Intifada.

However, another possibility is that Israel might refuse to manage the Palestinian territories, and transfers this authority in its entirety to the Palestinians. This would be a unilateral withdrawal similar to that seen with the Gaza strip. The former minister of defense, Ehud Barak, proposed such a plan to withdraw from the West Bank, whereas Israel evacuates its isolated settlements outside of the major settlement blocs. This is possible, because Israel would still be in control of the Jordan valley, which would prevent any risks to Israel, similar to those risks from Gaza, due to the differences between the two areas.

Another possible outcome, would be for Israel to insist on maintaining all agreements signed with the PLO, which obligates the PA to run the daily affairs of the Palestinian people, according to the Oslo accords. This could carry on, even in the case of PA dissolution. Israel would continue transferring the tax funds as if nothing happened. In such a scenario, PA employees might carry on with their jobs.

The dissolution or collapse of the PA, with an Israeli refusal to manage and administer the Palestinian territories would create a security and administrative vacuum. This would result in absolute chaos, and could have a damaging effect on the Palestinian national project. It would not have the hoped effect of holding Israel to its responsibilities and obligations.

#### **B- Use of a third party to maintain security.**

With the establishment of the PA, Israel was able to break free from its security, economical and political burdens resulting from the occupation of Palestinian territory. This was without an actual end to the occupation, therefore, in the absence of the PA, Israel would not return to carry these burdens. It might request that a third party take over the PA's institutions, according to the following options:

**Alternative Palestinian leadership to the PLO:** Israel has tried many times to find a sympathetic Palestinian leadership that could replace the PLO. Such attempts include the now defunct village associations, formed in the 1980s. However, all of these attempts ended in failure. In the event of PA collapse or dissolution, Israel might attempt to create an alternative different from those of the village associations, but according to the Israeli vision of the region, as alluded to by Israeli foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman, where he said that Israel does not see the PA as a partner for negotiations, and that Israel has other options.

Perhaps Israel would resort to a policy of organized chaos, through instigating inner strife and infighting, to create a state of insecurity. This would make the local leadership's demands an acceptable popular Palestinian demand, falling into line with Israeli policy, dependent on creating chaos in its dealings with the Palestinians.

Israel might seek new faces, or perhaps ones that have already held positions in the PA, with the condition that they remain obedient to Israel's will. The weakness and marginalization of the PLO

might contribute to the success of Israel's plans.

Israel might impose restrictions and sanctions on the Palestinians, in a bid to force them to seek an alleviation to these punishments, and accept the alternative leadership imposed by Israel. Some Palestinians might accept this, with the pretext of protecting and serving citizens. The framework for such was already implanted by the PA, such as coordination for “humanitarian reasons”.

Despite the mentioned above, there are those who do not view Israel creating an alternative authority as a likely scenario. Mainly because the legitimacy of the PA stems from it being a national project, and any authority created in a context other than that would be seen as a pro-occupation authority. It would never be able to impose itself, other than by force, on the Palestinian people.

**Use of the neighboring countries:** Jordan and Egypt have both played a pivotal role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Both of them have carried out administrative, political and security roles in the areas of Palestine remaining after the Nakba of 1948. Egypt managed the Gaza strip until 1967, and Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1950 and considered all its residents Jordanian. Jordan was still in competition with the PLO in matters concerning the representation of Palestinians, up until the disengagement of 1988. After the establishment of the PA, the Egyptian and Jordanian roles were always present. Especially in light of Palestinian inner disagreement, and to provide support during negotiations with Israel. In fact, they were even necessities at some points, and requested by the US and Israel to mediate between both sides. After the Arab Spring, Egypt continued playing this role, similar to the former regime. It even went beyond that of a mediator, and became a warrantor for the agreements between Hamas and Israel, whether regarding the latest prisoner exchange deal or in reaching a truce after the latest escalation and war on the Gaza strip in 2012.

The end of the PA could reopen the door to resurrecting old solutions and suggestions to ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Such as what is named the Jordanian option, which appeared in the 1980s. This option stipulates the transfer of authority over Palestinians to Jordan, forcing Jordan to play a security and administrative role and undermine Israeli right wing tendencies, which see in Jordan an alternative homeland for the Palestinians. In multiple occasions, Jordan has shown worries from this option, and considers playing a role in the West Bank a far better alternative. It is also a better alternative for Israel, because it would prefer to give concessions to a country on which it can depend.

On the other hand, in the situation where the PA is absent, Jordan and Egypt could become an important part of creating temporary Palestinian leadership, ready to partake in security, political, administrative, or peacekeeping efforts, with Arab or international actors. They would also help ease the life of citizens in the West Bank.

### **Third: Implications for the neighboring countries.**

Results and repercussions of the PA's absence: It would not be restricted to the Palestinian and Israeli sides, but would spread to the neighboring Arab countries, and would affect them as follows:

**A-** The absence of the PA would limit the ability of the neighboring Arab countries of Jordan and Egypt to maintain their peace treaties with Israel. The potential for any future progression in Arab/Islamic relations with Israel would be impossible. Especially taking into account the results of the Arab spring and the larger influence that Arab populations now play in governing themselves. This could play a role in any popular movements pressuring the governments to cut ties with Israel, as well as become a source of legitimacy for weak regimes.



**B-** The absence of the PA would affect the ability of the PLO to provide services, pay wages and fulfill its obligations towards Palestinian factions abroad, especially in Lebanon. This is because the PLO's budget is a part of the PA's budget. Even though on a theoretical level, the PLO is superior to the PA. This would weaken the PLO's control on Palestinian forces abroad, and could open the door to other powers influencing these forces and utilizing them in favor of specific agendas, contrary to Palestinian benefits, which would destabilize Lebanon.

**C-** A deterioration in security in light of the PA's absence could push many Palestinians, especially those with Jordanian or other foreign citizenship to relocate to Jordan, and live there either temporarily or permanently, which would increase pressure on inner Jordanian services.

From the above, we can see that it is within Arab interests for the PA to remain the representative of the Palestinian people, because it would save these regimes many difficulties and help maintain stability in the region.

#### **Fourth: Implications for the Palestinian factions**

##### **1- Implications for the PLO and Fateh.**

###### **1- Effects on the PLO:**

The PLO is considered the political and moral authority, as well as the leading organization in the struggle and resistance of the Palestinian people. It is also the party which participated in negotiations with Israel, and established the PA. Currently, the PLO's organizations suffer from weakness and marginalization, after transferring most of their authority to the PA.

The PA's absence, whether due to internal or external factors, would have an effect on the PLO. If the PA collapsed due to Israeli and American pressures, its popularity would increase, and the people would rally around it. Foreign pressure usually has effects opposite to the intended. If this were to happen, in the eyes of the people there would not be an alternative to the PA and PLO. Any organization claiming otherwise would be seen as collaborating with Israel, and would not be able to maintain public order or represent the Palestinian people. The collapse of the PA due to external pressures would have a positive effect on the unity of the different Palestinian factions regarding a national program, under the banner of the PLO. This program would have to be one of resistance and struggle, because the dissolution of the PA would have been a fatal blow to the peace process and the two state solution. However, the weakness of the PLO would prevent it from carrying out its role at the desired level.

In case of the PA's dissolution by a Palestinian decision, then the PLO's status would not be significantly impacted, due to the fact that such a step would follow a calculated and studied vision, and whoever takes initiative is also taking a role of leadership. In such a situation, the PLO would remain the authority on all cases, as it was before the PA.

However, in the case of the PA collapsing due to popular Palestinian demonstrations and protests, the PLO would lose its role as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. Other alternatives would evolve, based on liberation and resistance to occupation. The PLO might not disappear fully, but it would be in a very weak state, it could even come to be dominated by Hamas.

### **Effects on Fateh:**

Fateh currently dominates the PLO, and is considered the political leader which established the PA. Collapse of the PA would mean a collapse for Fateh's political project, therefore, Fateh's popularity and ability to lead would be heavily affected. This would push it towards adopting armed resistance, in order to maintain some legitimacy. The current leadership would fade into the background, and a new younger leadership would emerge from the field, similar to what happened in the first and second Intifadas. Fateh and Hamas might compete for the public's approval by escalating their resistance against the occupation.

On the other hand, the situation could differ, in the case of PA self dissolution. Fateh might remain in control of the initiative with slight alterations to its leadership and an adoption of popular resistance.

## **2- Implications for Hamas and its Gaza government.**

### **– Effects on Hamas:**

The PA has taken a group of measures in the West Bank to solidify its position, and designate itself as the sole wielder of legitimate violence. Some of these measures included banning some of Hamas' activities, especially armed ones. In case of the PA's absence, and the dissolution of the security apparatus, Hamas would be able to reorganize itself and its activities, and perhaps build its military capabilities. It might then work on escalating its resistance against Israel in the West Bank, to win more legitimacy and popularity. Hamas' military forces could be used in the future for party purposes, similar to what happened in the Gaza Strip, whereas its forces were established to fight Israel, but were used to seize control of the Gaza Strip.

### **– Effects on the deposed Government in the Gaza Strip:**

From a practical standpoint, there is no one authority in the Palestinian territories, there are in fact two: The first in Ramallah, and the other in the Gaza strip. The collapse or dissolution of the PA would not necessarily spread to the Hamas ruled Gaza Strip.

If the PA is absent from Ramallah -and in case the division continues- Hamas would maintain its authority in the Gaza Strip. It could however, face real issues when it comes to maintaining public order, seeing as how the new direction of resistance would be towards armed struggle. Hamas would be unable to keep Gaza separated from the events of the West Bank, which would lead to the collapse of the truce with Israel, and any other agreement, especially those regarding the ceasefire. If Hamas chose to maintain these agreements, the Palestinian public would erupt against it. The PA's absence would affect the security in Gaza, whereas a large number of salaries for civil and military public servants, mainly in health and education, are contingent on the caretaker government in Ramallah. There could be an increase in criminality due to the increase in poverty and other social problems. Hamas and its government would be forced to provide salaries to these public servants, which would push Hamas towards reorganizing its priorities. It might transfer a large portion of the funds dedicated to armaments, as well as to supporters, to the government's treasury, so that it could afford to pay its public servants. Otherwise, services would stop, and Hamas' popularity would suffer. On the other hand, if the PA collapses due to internal economical or political factors, Hamas' popularity would increase, it could even seize control of the West Bank, as it has a strong organizational base there.

From another perspective, Hamas and its Gaza government might step up and play the role of the political representative of the Palestinian people, and try to take over the PLO, and engage in direct or indirect negotiations with Israel, to reach similar agreements as those currently in effect in the Gaza

Strip, such as a ceasefire. These agreements could include concessions from the international community giving Hamas recognition, in return for them changing their position on Israel and the peace process. Hamas has won credibility through its ability to keep other factions in Gaza in line, and maintain a truce with Israel. Hamas has hinted, more than once, that it is prepared to deal with temporary solutions, strongly opposed by the PLO, such a state with temporary borders, which is consistent with the idea of a long term truce.

In the light of the PA's absence, Hamas could play an effective and primary role in maintaining security and public order in the West Bank. With or without Israel's blessing. This is because Hamas is the most disciplined and organized group, and has organizational formations in all West Bank areas.

## Recommendations:

Based on the previous, the repercussions of the PA's absence on security and public order must be confronted by taking the following procedures:

- Reformation of the PLO, and building its organizations on a democratic basis, incorporating all segments of Palestinian society, so it is better equipped to be the one authority on the Palestinian people, which would reinforce societal security and order.
- Announcement by the PLO of a Palestinian government in the diaspora, coinciding with the dissolution or collapse of the PA, with Palestinian consensus. This government would be the authority on all issues facing Palestinians, and maintaining some security establishments: Such as intelligence services, after reconsidering their purpose, which could play a role in maintaining internal security, and perhaps serve in the new reality.
- Factions and groups must rebuild themselves and crystallize new programs to face the new emerging challenges of a situation where the PA would not be able to perform its responsibilities. They must also find a balance between confronting the occupation, and organizing daily life affairs, to guarantee success and achieve victory.
- Crystallization of a plan to maintain the internal situation, based on granting the PLO (or the government in diaspora) a moral role, whereas civil forces (civil, union and clan society leaders) play a practical role in maintaining internal and societal security, under the umbrella of the PLO, as was the case in the 1987 Intifada.
- Providing basic needs for citizens helps reinforce security and public order, therefore it is necessary to work on establishing and improving organizations and cooperatives in different fields. This is with the goal of helping the Palestinian people and reinforcing their steadfastness in case of the absence of the PA, so that Palestinian civil society can play the same role it did prior to 1994.
- Reinforcement of popular resistance enables the Palestinian people to remain steadfast for the longest possible period. Especially considering that popular resistance would mean Israel facing an unarmed people, and would restrict Israel's military power, which is based on prevention and destruction. However, such resistance needs to be prepared for via popular and regular training regiments, and creating special teams to develop new methods of popular resistance.
- Conversion of the Gaza Strip into a Palestinian focal point, with the condition of reforming the PA based on new representation parameters ensuring the participation of all Palestinian factions and forces. This should be done with limits and guarantees preventing it from turning into a state in the Gaza Strip alone.

- Re-transferring the powers of civil defense organizations (fire fighting, rescue services) back to the municipalities, i.e. to how it was before the establishment of the PA.
- Reconsidering Palestinian military and security formations, embodied by the Army and regular security forces, through searching for new formations and formulas to use in times of need. Such as creating small and flexible military formations able to prolong the confrontation with Israel, and cost it a high price if the PA decides on armed resistance. Naturally this would happen with coordination between the different elements of national work, such as organizations and civil society organizations, so that they could contribute to maintaining inner and societal security. The first Intifada, with all its lessons could be an experience that could be developed and built upon, especially concerning peace and security in society.

## Comments and Discussion:

### **Roland Friedrich:**

1- In its second and third chapters this paper presents a detailed and persuasive analysis of the potential outcome of each of three scenarios in relation to four variables (which should be independent of each other): a) the internal security situation; b) Israel; c) neighboring countries; d) Palestinian factions. There is some systemic ambiguity between the analysis of the scenarios and the more general policy analysis, but this can be overcome by implementing a number of steps.

First, the purpose of the scenario presented in the paper may be defined in a clearer manner: the purpose determines the method of application and implementation of the tool. It also determines the purpose behind the structural analysis of the paper and clarifies it from the outset, including the setting of a time framework, (for example, what will be the situation of the PNA in 2020?). In fact, the purpose of the analysis of the scenarios presented in this paper is not clear: does it entail defining the consequences of each of the three scenarios? Or does it mean preparing policy recommendations to test the available options in light of Palestinian political action in these scenarios? Or is it nothing more than a future political notion or vision different from the Palestinian reality in the absence of the PNA?

Second, it is better to link the driving forces and the resultant scenarios with a clear review of the assumptions behind each of the driving forces. The paper does not explain the reasons for envisioning a future without the PNA: maintenance of the status quo could also be a possible option. The first paragraph of the second chapter adopts this basic assumption and the reasons behind it, although additional elaboration and explanation are required. (The Palestinian people and leadership will not wait forever; they will not accept an authority with the jurisdictions of a large municipality; Israel will not accept to change the mission and task of the PNA into a Palestinian state on the ground...)

Third, it is possible to define the driving forces in a more precise manner. Instead of using terms such as “Israeli occupation” and the “Palestinian internal split”, more precise expressions such as “Israeli occupation policies” and the “degree of Palestinian unity” may be used.

Fourth, the driving forces may be described in more accurate terms by focusing on political and economic factors and interests and other relevant factors instead of dealing with their current or historical ramifications.

2- The third chapter presents a detailed analysis of the ramifications of each scenario in light of the four variables described above. According to the aim of the analysis of the scenario, the ramifications can be included within the scenario itself. (In the first scenario, for example, the following will happen to the Palestinian security services and political factions, etc.) A specific policy issue (such as the role to be assumed by the Palestinian security services, the state of law and order, etc.) can be discussed in detail in light of each of the proposed scenarios.

3- The recommendations at the end of the paper are separate from the analysis that precedes it. Although the recommendations are linked to a cohesive practical course (the strategic option), it is not clear why the author proposes this course of action. Does the author propose this action simply to avoid the collapse of the PNA? Or does the proposed course present a general strategic option that springs from analysis of the scenarios? If so, how?

4- On a more general level, the paper could be enriched by expanding the scope of analysis beyond the two-state solution model (the strategic policy goal). In fact, many Palestinians and international observers believe that the two-state solution is no longer a policy goal achievable in reality and many elements of the scenario presented in this paper appear to adopt this assumption without stating it explicitly. Therefore, it is important to deduce the existence of this assumption without stating it and to consider the method adopted by this strategic policy goal (i.e., the one state solution, the bi-national state, or the two states) when defining detailed policy tools and methods.

5- The paper could make use of thorough field research, especially interviews with various political factions and figures who call for the adoption of different policy goals.

### **Other Comments:**

The PNA was established in the context of Palestinian, regional and international balances of forces that do not serve Palestinian interests.

1- The loss by the PLO of its arena of military and political power in Lebanon and dispersion in the Diaspora.

2- The weak Arab position.

3- The collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the United States of America as a unipolar power leading the world.

Therefore, the signing of the Oslo Accords represented the political status prevailing at that time; this Accord represented an authority with limited jurisdictions under an interim agreement implemented on an interim basis, “i.e., a balance of forces that did not serve the Palestinians”.

Today, we discuss the options for the future of the PNA in light of new Palestinian, Israeli, regional and international conditions.

At Palestinian-Israeli level:

- Decline of Israeli peace forces and influence following the assassination of Rabin; increase in the influence

of the Israeli right wing.

- The failure of the peace process, which reached a dead end with lack of trust and confidence between Palestinians and Israelis.
- The division of the Palestinian people and entity into the West Bank and Gaza Strip with diminishing hope of their reunification.
- Israel retaining control over the majority of West Bank land, the right to track down any person in these territories, and the ground and maritime siege imposed by Israel on Gaza.

Under all these conditions, we discuss the dissolution of the PNA in the context of three scenarios.

**First scenario:**

The presence of the PNA still presents a factor of political pressure with regional and international dimensions; it puts pressure on Israel to halt settlements and delegitimizes it. The absence of the PNA would free Israel from international pressure to halt settlements.

It is important to explain that Israeli security is still the responsibility of the Israeli army and Palestinian security services currently contribute no more than 15% of basic needs.

The PNA is a Palestinian political entity and not a local authority, especially following UN recognition of the State of Palestine under occupation. This entity is complete from a legal perspective: 1- executive authority; 2- legislative authority; 3- judicial authority.

Personnel employed in the PNA would not pose a problem since Israel would not leave this army of workers unemployed and prey to temptation by armed factions; Israel would open its gates to employ Palestinian workers within Israel.

Dissolution of the PNA without the Palestinian leadership presenting alternatives to achieve Palestinian goals would be destructive to the Palestinian people and their cause, whether the alternatives are peaceful or armed struggle.

It is not simple to restructure the PLO and grant it status because once the Palestinian armed factions had joined it, it became a gathering of armed movements: restructuring would require Arab and international recognition.

I believe that dissolution of the PNA by Palestinians would lead to greater chaos and competition among Palestinians with regard to control and leadership, allowing external regional and international forces to fill the vacuum. This would not be at the expense of Israel, but at the expense of the Palestinian people.

Palestinian weapons do not represent a problem for the Israelis as Palestinian weapons are registered with the Israeli army and most of them could be brought in within a short period of time.

Such a scenario is not acceptable to the Palestinian mentality. There are countries which remained under occupation for a long period of time and are members in international organizations.

A Palestinian state will be established eventually no matter how long the occupation remains; the alternatives do not serve the Israelis as long as the Palestinian entity remains in situ and its legitimacy is derived from the Palestinian people.

The current Palestinian leadership is incapable of creating a strategic and feasible vision for the next phase. I

think that the initiative will revert once again to Palestinians abroad to establish new Palestinian movements or renew the agendas of the existing factions. This will entail more divisions in the Palestinian movement in light of the failure of the peace process and the dissolution of the PNA and may push several Palestinian leaders to live outside Palestine. The current changes in the region will also exert an impact.

**Second scenario:**

I believe that the PNA cannot end the security coordination, but it may reduce the extent of coordination to a minimum without announcing a halt, which would give legitimacy to any Israeli counter action.

I believe that the situation will remain unchanged: the US, donor countries and Israel will continue to provide funds to enable the PNA to maintain the burden of administering the Palestinian people and security bodies. Politically, Israel cannot break into the security headquarters and remove their weapons as long as the headquarters are controlled by Palestinian security and as long as the weapons are not used to kill Israelis. Even if armed resistance operations against Israelis increased, the Israelis cannot act if the security services do not participate in these operations, even if the effectiveness of the security services against such operations is minimal.

The security services have two functions: 1- Palestinian internal security; 2- Israeli security. In the absence of Palestinian security, the two functions would be the responsibility of Israel (at the least). Maintaining Palestinian security is considered an accomplishment by the Israelis. I also believe that the possibility of a confrontation between the Israeli army and Palestinian security may be excluded, but lack of harmony remains a possibility.

**Third scenario:**

I believe that there are several determinants of this scenario. I do not think that if Israel refrains from paying tax money to the Palestinians and donors refrain from offering support to the PNA it will lead to the internal collapse of the PNA. It would increase protests, but the Palestinian street realizes the constraints. However, there are other determinants of this scenario that may lead to internal chaos and Palestinian in-fighting. These determinants are:

- 1- The internal conditions inside Fatah: the current leadership of Fatah is incapable of reuniting the movement to form a united national, organizational and political framework; the return of some armed groups to carrying arms.
- 2- Lack of national reconciliation to achieve a reconciliatory program between Fatah and Hamas. Hamas and the factions working with it remain in the sphere of terrorism and targets. Hamas is intent on transferring armed action to the West Bank, but this will lead to clashes with the PNA because Hamas cannot protect itself from attack unless it enters into the legitimate context of the PNA. The siege imposed on Gaza, the continuous armed friction with Israel and the permanent threats to occupy Gaza and eliminate Hamas and the factions there encourage Hamas to transfer action to the West Bank.
- 3- The economic conditions in the West Bank and the failure of the government to develop an acceptable economy in the West Bank, whether this is a failure in evaluation, administration, planning, or even circumstances beyond the control and will of the government.
- 4- The need of Israel to intervene directly in the Palestinian situation in Gaza and intervene indirectly in the West Bank on Palestinian pretexts so that it does not bear the responsibility for the collapse or weakening of the PNA. The official status of the PNA is not accepted by the Israelis, whether relating to the condition that settlements be halted in order to resume negotiations, or Palestinian efforts to take the Palestinian cause to the international arena and bypass the US broker, or the creation of a Palestinian political status as a result of an international decision outside any agreement with the Israelis. Israel will use Hamas to intervene in the West Bank and will make it a pretext to intervene in Gaza.

This scenario would be the worst, especially in terms of internal Palestinian anarchy resulting from the use of arms to decide matters inside Fatah or national turmoil in a confrontation with Hamas that could lead to a civil war. Israel would try to exploit these conditions by encouraging disagreements that could be kept under control and would use these to intervene in the West Bank and claim the right to intervene in Gaza. Such turmoil might lead to Palestinian displacement to Jordan and this would force Jordan to intervene to maintain the PNA. Engagement in this disorder might start in Gaza through an initial escalation between Hamas and Israel that would quickly move to the West Bank.

Hamas believes that the most important factors in its survival in the next phase are: 1- reconciliation and its protection through the Palestinian legitimacy of the PNA; or 2- the collapse of the PNA in Ramallah and its survival in Gaza. Hamas believes that it will be recognized as a result of regional and international need to talk to an influential Palestinian party in order to maintain stability.

### **Ramifications of the absence of the PNA on security:**

The absence and disintegration of Palestinian security would lead to the lack of a minimum level of relative stability in Palestinian society, paralyzing most of the daily and social activities of the Palestinian people. Anarchy would start to take hold and crime rates would increase; some factions and individuals would seek contact with Israel, Iran, Hezbollah and Al Qaeda. These groups would also try to contact and employ Palestinians. If Iran were hit, these groups would see the absence of the PNA as an opportunity to return to the region via the Palestinian context and the termination of the peace process.

The absence of the PNA means the end and failure of the current peace process, thereby strengthening the options of the Palestinian people inside Palestine and in the Diaspora. Palestinians in the Diaspora would adhere more closely to the PLO; action from both the elite and the Palestinian masses would originate from within the PLO or from bodies outside the PLO in attempts to seek feasible alternatives that serve the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Armed struggle might be the sole option for Palestinian forces outside Palestine.

Inside Palestine, the first phase would be a state of shock and confusion in defining a feasible vision for the future between adoption of armed resistance and its effectiveness, the feasibility of peaceful resistance, or a return to the one-state option and struggle to achieve equality. New factions may appear and the entire Palestinian movement might reconsider its previous political strategies, whether to amend, develop or change them into new programs with the appearance of new leaders for the future and the disappearance of the leaders of the peace era.

In the absence of the PNA, tribes would assume a new role as the body to which all would resort to provide protection for individuals and alleviate the negative impact of the absence of security on stability. Tribal reconciliation committees would once again assume a leading role in the absence of the judicial system.

### **Security companies and the problem of obtaining licenses to work:**

Security companies used to work in the presence of a relatively effective security environment. In the absence of the PNA and security, the burden would be far beyond the human, professional and financial capacities of these companies, which cannot work with the Israelis to form an alternative to official Palestinian security. Moreover, the Israelis will not allow any organized armed groups to work, whether as security companies or militias, without their approval and without a commitment to work with them.

### **Palestinian parties and factions:**



The conditions of Palestinian parties and factions would be difficult for several reasons, including Palestinian in-fighting and the inability, collectively or individually, to provide a security alternative because they lack the capacities at operational and professional levels. Even if they have some special capabilities in the field of arms, these are limited, with the exception of Hamas. This situation requires coordination with the Israelis and this would lead to many problems inside factions: whether to go underground and work secretly, or keep working in public and coordinate with Israel. In the realistic expectation that factions would cease to exist politically, some tribes would be stronger than factions and factions may turn to the tribes to gain power.

**Eruption of a new Intifada:**

In the first phase this option is excluded, but after some time, the masses would remobilize and confront the occupation. Popular organized relations between the inside and outside would return, but with enhanced experience.

**Internationalizing the responsibility of security:**

Internationalization of the responsibility of security in the Palestinian territories is not an option for the Israelis as this would mean a reduction in Israeli responsibility for security.

Israel would not allow the total collapse of the PNA, but would agree to internal actions with a specified time limit and scope. Israel would use these actions to reorder the Palestinian situation politically and with respect to security in order to end the current deadlock in Palestinian-Israeli relations. The Israelis would be forced to intervene directly in events to a limited extent, without declaring its intervention. Therefore, I believe that internal Palestinian problems would not be long term; they would be short-lived. Instability in the West Bank may lead to Palestinian migration to the Jordanian territories as Israel would close its borders and would not allow entry into its territories.

This chaos would be accompanied by military operations against settlers that would give Israel a pretext to intervene. I do not think that unilateral Israeli withdrawal due to Palestinian armed turmoil would be possible for Israel politically or feasibly at a security level. Israel is still responsible for the West Bank and this entails certain duties regionally and internationally, especially as the current government did not agree to unilateral withdrawal from Gaza, which has been a failure in its security results for Israel.

**Seeking the assistance of a third party:**

New Palestinian leadership of the PLO in the current phase is ruled out as Arab stability is required to discuss and agree to this. Current conditions in the Arab world have sidelined the Palestinian issue for the moment and this suits Israel. The option of Israel establishing a local leadership outside the PLO context is doomed to failure and previous experience prior to Oslo was unsuccessful because Palestinians were opposed to it. Israel will seek to organize anarchy to keep the Palestinian system within its national PLO context, but new figures and leadership, whether playing a former or a new role, is ruled out because Palestinians would not accept a new legitimacy for the Palestinian people outside the PLO context. Israel would attempt to find a leadership for this phase and Palestinian official and partisan groups would be at their weakest.

**Seeking assistance from neighboring countries:**

In the event of anarchy, neighboring countries, especially Egypt and Israel, would find themselves forced to play a limited role that includes preventing Palestinians from leaving their homeland, preventing the collapse of the PNA and ensuring that it maintains social stability. Egypt and Jordan would not accept to cooperate in

the absence of the PNA as this would transfer responsibility to them. Egypt and Jordan might intervene to calm the internal Palestinian situation and impose a formula for understanding between the conflicting parties that restores conditions to their previous status and allows the PNA to uphold its responsibilities. Egypt may send officers to assist the PLO to secure security in Gaza following its occupation by Israel and return to the PNA. Jordan, too, might send liberation forces stationed in the Jordanian territories to assist Palestinian security in controlling the situation.

**Effect on Fatah:**

There is no doubt that Fatah would be the biggest loser if the PNA were to collapse because Fatah is the owner of the project. Fatah might also lose the PLO leadership and internal divisions may occur in the movement.

**Effect on Hamas:**

Hamas would try to exploit the dissolution and collapse of the PNA. Hamas awaits this day anxiously as, in its own words, this would leave it as the sole party with whom discussions could take place. Hamas also anticipates the weakening of Fatah to a point that would enable Hamas to lead the PLO. In response to a statement by Abu Mazen, Abu Marzouq stated: “Hand it over to us instead of dissolving it”. In the event that the PNA is dissolved, Hamas may assume control of the situation as it has done in Gaza, but may take steps to gain greater legitimacy and popularity such as control inside Palestine. Hamas would attempt to engage in direct and indirect understandings with Israel.

I do not know to what extent Jordan would accept the presence of Hamas in the West Bank because this would have a direct impact on internal conditions in Jordan and on Palestinian Islamic groups inside the Green Line, along with the future of Hamas with Iran, Hezbollah and Palestinian and Islamic movements affiliated with Iran. The collapse of the PNA in this scenario and the participation of Hamas would return Hamas to the sphere of terrorism and would legitimize an Israeli invasion internationally. It is true that Israel wants to exploit Hamas to intervene in the West Bank, but it would be unable to intervene legitimately in Gaza and end the existing situation there without obtaining international and regional approval to strike at terrorism that threatened Palestinian peace forces. Israel would face embarrassment in the West Bank, but would win regional and international legitimacy to enter Gaza because Hamas, in its current form in Gaza, is not acceptable (politically and militarily) by Israel and the international community. Also, Gaza harbors several armed factions and this is one of the prime reasons for the occupation of Gaza and elimination of Hamas, thereby regulating conditions in the West Bank and Gaza.

## Day After - Workshops' Participants

#	Name	Organization
1	<b>Mr. Abd Alnaser Masoud</b>	National Sec. Forces - NSF
2	<b>Dr. Abd Alrahman Altamimi</b>	Head of Palestinian Hydrology Group
3	<b>Dr. Abdelnaser Makky</b>	JICA/Birzeit University
4	<b>Ms. Abeer Albatma</b>	PENGON
5	<b>Mr. Abulmajeed Melhem</b>	PALTEL
6	<b>Mr. Ahmad Hindi</b>	PWA
7	<b>Mr. Ahmad Qurei "Abu Alaa"</b>	Adisory Board/Fatah
8	<b>Mr. Ahmad Surghally</b>	PALTEL
9	<b>Mr. Alaa Lahlouh</b>	PSR
10	<b>Mr. Alaa Yaghi</b>	PLC
11	<b>Mr. Ali Hamoudeh</b>	JDECO
12	<b>Dr. Ali Jarbawi</b>	Minister of Higher Education
13	<b>Mr. Ali Nazzal</b>	President office
14	<b>Mr. Ali Omar</b>	National Sec. Forces - NSF
15	<b>Mr. Amin Maqboul</b>	Sec. General, Fateh Revol. Council
16	<b>Mr. Ammar Dwaik</b>	Birzeit University
17	<b>Mr. Anwar Abu Ammash</b>	Welfare Association
18	<b>Dr. Ayman Daraghme</b>	PLC
19	<b>Mr. Aziz Kayed</b>	PSR
20	<b>Dr. Azmi Shuaibi</b>	AMAN
21	<b>Mr. Basem Tamimi</b>	Popular Committes
22	<b>Mr. Basri Saleh</b>	Ministry of Education
23	<b>Mr. Bassam Alaqtash</b>	National Sec. Forces - NSF
24	<b>Ms. Buthaina Hamdan</b>	Ministry of TLC
25	<b>Ms. Covadonga Bertrand</b>	UNDP
26	<b>Mr. Daoud Darawi</b>	Adala law
27	<b>Mr. Eyad Zeitawi</b>	PMA
28	<b>Mr. Fadel Hamdan</b>	PLC Member
29	<b>Mr. Fadi Qura'an</b>	Alhaq
30	<b>Ms. Fadwa Barghouthi</b>	Revolutaionary Council/Fatah
31	<b>Dr. Faisal Awartani</b>	Researcher
32	<b>Mr. Fajr Harb</b>	Carter Center
33	<b>Mr. Faris Sabaneh</b>	Supreme Judicial Council
34	<b>Dr. Fathi Abumoghli</b>	former minister of Health
35	<b>Ms. Florence Mandelik</b>	NOREF
36	<b>Mr. Florid Zurba</b>	Ministry of TLC
37	<b>Dr. Ghassan Khatib</b>	Birzeit University
38	<b>Dr. Hanan Ashrawi</b>	PLO
39	<b>Dr. Hanna Abdalnour</b>	Alquds University
40	<b>Mr. Hasan Abushalbak</b>	Ramallah Municipality
41	<b>Mr. Hazem Gheith</b>	Egyptian Embassy

42	<b>Mr. Henry Siegman</b>	US/ MIDDLE EAST PROJECT
43	<b>Mr. Ibrahim Barghouthi</b>	head of MUSAWA
44	<b>Mr. Ihab Shihadeh</b>	Ministry of Justice
45	<b>Mr. Jacob Hoigilt</b>	NOREF
46	<b>Mr. Jamal Zakout</b>	FIDA
47	<b>Mr. Jamil Rabah</b>	Negotiations Support Unit - NSU
48	<b>Dr. Jehad Albadawi</b>	MOH
49	<b>Mr. Jehad Alwazer</b>	PMA Governor
50	<b>Mr. Jehad Harb</b>	PSR
51	<b>Dr. Jehad Mashal</b>	Expert
52	<b>Mr. Jihad Shomali</b>	UNDP
53	<b>Mr. Khaled Alosaily</b>	Business man
54	<b>Mr. Khaled Shtayeh</b>	UNDP
55	<b>Mr. Khalil Rifai</b>	Deputy Ministry of Justice
56	<b>Dr. Khalil Shikaki</b>	PSR
57	<b>Mr. Mahmoud Haroun</b>	Military Intelligence
58	<b>Mr. Mariano Aguirre</b>	NOREF
59	<b>Dr. Mashhour Abu Daka</b>	Former Minister of Communication
60	<b>Mr. Mazen Sinokrot</b>	Private Sector
61	<b>Mr. Mohammad Alfaqih</b>	PNC
62	<b>Mr. Mohammad Aref</b>	PMA
63	<b>Mr. Mohammad Attoun</b>	Wassel co.
64	<b>Mr. Mohammad Daraghmeh</b>	Journalist
65	<b>Mr. Mohammad Hadieh</b>	Ministry of Justice
66	<b>Dr. Mohammad Odeh</b>	MOH
67	<b>Dr. Muatasem Alhmod</b>	MOH
68	<b>Mr. Munib Masri</b>	Private Sector
69	<b>Mr. Munir Barghouthi</b>	Ministry of Education
70	<b>Dr. Munther Alsharif</b>	NAS
71	<b>Mr. Musa Haj Hasan</b>	QIF
72	<b>Mr. Mutaz Abadi</b>	PWA
73	<b>Mr. Nabil Amr</b>	Fatah
74	<b>Mr. Nabil Masri</b>	Private Sector
75	<b>Dr. Naim Sabra</b>	MOH
76	<b>Dr. Naim Abuhommos</b>	Birzeit University
77	<b>Dr. Naser Abdelkarim</b>	UNDP/Birzeit University
78	<b>Mr. Naser Yosef</b>	Adisory Board/Fatah
79	<b>Mr. Natasha Carmi</b>	Negotiation Aff. Dep.
80	<b>Mr. Nayef Swetat</b>	Revolutaionary Council/Fatah
81	<b>Mr. Omar Assaf</b>	Return right committee
82	<b>Mr. Peter Krause</b>	Boston University
83	<b>Mr. Qaddora Fares</b>	Prisoner's Affairs
84	<b>Mr. Qais Abdelkarim</b>	PLC

85	<b>Mr. Radi Jarai</b>	Alquds University
86	<b>Mr. Reda Awadallah</b>	PPP
87	<b>Mr. Roland Friedrich</b>	DCAF
88	<b>Dr. Sabri Saidam</b>	President consultant
89	<b>Mr. Sadam Omar</b>	National Security Forces
90	<b>Dr. Safa Nseraldin</b>	Minister of TLC
91	<b>Mr. Said Alhmouz</b>	PMC
92	<b>Mr. Said Zaid</b>	PLC
93	<b>Mr. Salam Zagha</b>	NEDCO
94	<b>Mr. Saleh Ra'afat</b>	Former Head of FIDA
95	<b>Mr. Samer Farah</b>	Welfare Association
96	<b>Mr. Sami Alsaedi</b>	AI Bank
97	<b>Mr. Samir Abdallah</b>	MAS
98	<b>Mr. Sergio Garcia</b>	NOREF
99	<b>Dr. Shaddad Attili</b>	PWA president
100	<b>Mr. Shaker Sarsour</b>	PMA
101	<b>Ms. Shereen Zedan</b>	PWTI-PHG
102	<b>Mr. Shihadeh Hussein</b>	PMA
103	<b>Ms. Stephanie Heitmann</b>	KAS
104	<b>Dr. Sufian Abuzayedeh</b>	Birzeit University
105	<b>Mr. Tareq Tayel</b>	Egypt Embassy
106	<b>Dr. Tarif Ashour</b>	MOH
107	<b>Mr. Tayseer Zabre</b>	HURRAT Center
108	<b>Dr. Ummaya Khammash</b>	UNRWA
109	<b>Dr. Wael Qa'adan</b>	PRCS
110	<b>Mr. Waleedd Ladadweh</b>	PSR
111	<b>Dr. Walid Aburas</b>	HWC
112	<b>Mr. Walid Hodali</b>	JWU
113	<b>Mr. Wisam Atwan</b>	National Security Forces
114	<b>Mr. Yousef Adwan</b>	UNDP
115	<b>Mr. Zafer Milhem</b>	PERC

## **The Day After: How Palestinians Can Cope if the PA Ceases to Function**

January-October 2013

PSR, in cooperation with the USMEP and NOREF, has initiated in January 2013 a policy research project that aims at exploring Palestinian conditions and options in the day after the PA ceases to function. The initiative seeks to produce a series of expert papers focusing on 10 main challenging areas of “the day after” in Palestinian political, social, financial, economic, and security life.

The initiative’s point of departure is that the PA may collapse or may decide to dissolve itself in the near future under the heavy weight of various financial and political pressures. Three scenarios are conceivable: (1) Israel and the US may impose on the PA severe or crippling financial and political sanctions; (2) the PLO leadership may conclude that the two-state solution is no longer practical and may begin to search for other means to gain Palestinian rights leading it to dissolve the PA; and (3) a series of economic, financial and political crises may lead to popular demands for change expressed in mass demonstrations against the PA and a widespread demand for regime change leading to chaos and eventual collapse.

The initiative goals are three: (1) explore the implications of such a development on various critical dimensions of Palestinian life and government, elaborating on the magnitude of the problems and challenges that might arise as a result of PA demise; (2) debate various policy options to respond to such a development, to contain the damage, and to capitalize on potential benefits, if any; and, (3) recommend a course of action for Palestinians to pursue in response to the expected complications.

PSR has gathered a team of 30 experts in the areas of finance and economics, internal security and law enforcement, health, education, communication, justice system, local government, water and electricity, civil and domestic political affairs, and the future of the two-state solution. Experts have been asked to write 10 papers in their various areas of expertise examining the implications, policy options, and recommendations. Each paper has been reviewed and critiqued by two experts. Drafts of the expert papers have been discussed in small specialized workshops attended by policy makers, parliamentarians, experts, and academics.

A final report will be prepared based on the expert papers, workshops/focus groups, interviews, and background research. The report will summarize the main findings, examine the overall policy implications for the PA and the international community, and provide policy recommendations for the various relevant parties.

### **The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR)**

P. O. Box 76, Ramallah, Palestine

Tel: +970-2-2964933

Fax: +970-2-2964934

[pcpsr@pcpsr.org](mailto:pcpsr@pcpsr.org)

[www.pcpsr.org](http://www.pcpsr.org)