

Is the Palestinian Authority Controlled by Israel?

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The Palestinian Authority (PA) must stop demeaning its people. One can understand being fooled once or even twice, but being fooled over and again every three to four years for the last 20 years is just going overboard.

It becomes a bit annoying to continue hearing cries from the same “deceived” Palestinian leaders repeating empty threats in response to Israeli intransigence and lies. I heard it directly from several high level PLO officials that should the current negotiations fail to reach an agreement by April 29, the PA was prepared to join UN organisations. They spoke specifically of the International Criminal Court of Justice (ICCJ).

Early in April, Israel broke a nine-month-old agreement by refusing to release the final batch of Palestinian “hostages” as it agreed to with the US Secretary of State last July. Half-heartedly, the PA submitted applications to join 15 UN organisations. Half-heartedly, because the token measure ratified accords obligating the PA to fulfil UN conventions, none of which could have empowered the PA to put an end to Israel’s wanton disregard of international law.

The decision to endorse UN treaties such as the 4th Geneva Convention, protocol one, Conventions against Corruption, Rights of the Child, Civil and Political Rights, Consular Affairs ... etc., was most likely to mollify rising internal frustrations with the sham negotiations. It was not directed at Israel and this might explain the US’ muted displeasure with the toothless measures.

Now the PA is disingenuously leaking out information about dismantling the Authority and turning over its role of managing the occupation to Israel. Israel and its America Israel Public Affair Committee (AIPAC) ex-staffer who is mediating the talks on America’s behalf, understand very well that the PA threats are for local political consumption just like the inconsequential move to join irrelevant UN organisations.

It is mind-boggling that the PA expects others to take its threats seriously. Shouldn’t they

first take other steps such as ending security co-ordination to protect Israel's illegal settlers? How about joining relevant UN organisations like ICCJ or endorsing article 49 of the 4th Geneva Convention- which Israel is categorically violating- instead of signing the worthless protocol one.

Just like the self-proclaimed "chief" Palestinian negotiator who publicly resigned more than a month ago protesting, ostensibly, the lack of progress at the peace talk. In reality however, he was incensed by informal parallel secret negotiations conducted with Israel behind his back. He backed off once assured of his role as the main collaborator. Interestingly though, he did not seem bothered enough to resign after Israel failed to carry out a feeble agreement he himself negotiated last July.

It is not just Israel's disregard to the international law, but this type of Palestinian leadership – lacking self-respect- who represent the biggest threat to the future of Palestine. It is the grovelling Oslo-created Palestinian VIP class. VIP passes are renewable benefits bestowed by the Israeli army to supposedly facilitate the movement of Palestinian officials. Obviously, VIP Palestinian club members do not experience the reality of occupation and have for the most part enjoyed this status since the establishment of the PA in 1994 as long as Israel was content with their performance.

To be taken seriously, the PA must first end this joke and limit the "intravenous" VIP status for its officials to no more than two years. Not to suggest a far-fetched "radical proposal" like ending security co-ordination with Israel, PA should at a minimum return all VIP passes and insist on its security co-ordinators and negotiating team to navigate Israeli military barriers like normal citizens.

Besides making Israel and AIPAC American's mediator sit and wait, reminding these officials of the evil of occupation might be an incentive to change the way VIP holders negotiate with Israel.

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