Public diplomacy and the question of Palestine

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Abstract

Traditional diplomacy in the context of current political realities and the structural weaknesses of the Palestinian diplomatic apparatus having demonstrated its failure to resolve the Palestinian issue on equitable terms, a new approach is called for. This paper proposes public diplomacy as that alternative. We present an overview of the evolution and definition of the concept of public diplomacy, analyze the elements and tools around which a Palestinian strategy may be structured, and discuss political steps and alternatives.

Key words: Traditional diplomacy, public diplomacy, branding, Palestine question.

Traditional Diplomacy: Concepts and Applications

From the Congress of Vienna (1815), through to the Vienna Convention (1961) and beyond, diplomatic and political representation has been correlated with state sovereignty and governed by delegations of high officials from the represented state. Traditional diplomacy is the tool for inter-state relations through permanent ambassadors or special diplomatic assignees who reside in the assigned state during their mandate. Reciprocal diplomatic exchange is among the most significant and characteristic of institutions responsible for stable international relations. However, these agreements are short of a clear, candid definition of diplomacy. Definitions and terms utilized for the nature of diplomatic work varies according to researchers and specialists.

Kissinger (1967), notes that states are always in a posture of contact and communication, through missions and diplomatic deputations, or through armed conflicts, or through offensive, defensive and deterrent power. Ernest Satow, the British diplomat defined diplomacy at the beginning of the twentieth century as "the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between governments of independent states" and "the conduct of business between states by peaceful means" (Gore-Booth & Pakenham, 1979: 3). It is possible to argue that the widespread use of diplomacy between states constitutes the main intellectual factor driving international "détente" (Keohane, 1948: 49), notwithstanding

that other important factors also contributed to stability and peace, such as power and hegemony (Keohane, 1948: 110).

Traditional Diplomacy between Constants and Variables

It is known that people and states will be in a situation of continuous conflict by peaceful or forceful means. The question is, what is the place of diplomacy in the equation of international relations constants and variables, and what is its future in the international system? For an answer to this question certain significant overviews of professionals in the diplomatic field and interested academies will be presented. There are two approaches. The first emphasizes the significance and prominence of diplomacy in the context of relations between states and people. The second is skeptical about the role of diplomacy and minimizes the ability of diplomats to play a clear and substantive role that is capable of stabilizing international relations.

The First Approach: Emphasizing the Importance and Role of Traditional Diplomacy

There is consensus about the existence of old and relatively new agreements and treaties that include items and principles which govern diplomatic work, including motives, objectives, and functions. One of these agreements is the Vienna Convention of 1961[1]. However, it is worth noting that the Vienna Convention neither clearly defined nor prescribed mandatory diplomatic functions, but left the task to be determined by states and circumstances. The definitions that delineate the profession of diplomacy derive from customary praxis and the activities undertaken by those who practice the field of diplomacy. Raymond Cohen (1998: 1) described diplomacy as the" engine room of international relations", which may also include communication with local individuals and groups who are not necessarily in agreement with the authorities of the hosting state (Freeman, 1979: 94). Johnson (1967) asserts that diplomacy is a sensitive, complicated apparatus that measures the shifting powers at the centers of diplomatic activity. This diplomatic apparatus can be used to defuse and conciliate misunderstandings, disagreements and discord that can engender crises in international relations, by means of an undramatic negotiating style. According to Sharp (1999: 38), the scholar-diplomat Smith Simpson argued that "Diplomats … make international life possible in much the same way as 'free-floating infinitesimal aquatic plants known as phytoplankton'

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[1]For a history of the various international conventions and treaties (Treaty of Westphalia, 1648; Congress of Vienna, 1815; Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1818; Charter of the League of Nations, 1920; Havana Convention, 1928; United Nations Charter, 1945; Vienna Convention, 1961) see (Black, 2010). Also see (Nicolson, 1970).

a re-responsible for a quarter of the oxygen we breath."– not with standing that many issues in international politics remain not well understood and require further research.

The Second Approach: Skepticism over the Importance of Traditional Diplomacy

The Second Approach casts doubt on the nature and importance of diplomacy, and stresses its diminishing prestige at the academic level and in public perception. Paul Sharp (1999: 41) assures us that "Diplomacy is generally regarded as 'nice work if you can get it' by most people." Hans Morgenthau (1946) has no confidence in diplomacy and its practitioners, and finds that they are both unnecessary although they will always be present. He believes that we do not learn from the lessons and verdict of history which is replete with the failures of diplomacy, both old (Congress of Vienna and the League of Nations) and new (the United Nations and International Law). He puts his trust in power, especially military presence at international frontiers.

There is a belief that a number of factors call for a whole sale review of the system of diplomacy, especially with respect to those tasks that, both, continue to be undertaken by diplomats, and others that have since fallen outside of their purview. Amongst the objective factors that places the tasks of diplomats (ambassadors and consuls) at stake are globalization and the revolution global communications.

Despite such skepticism over the role of traditional diplomacy in light of the explosion of mass and social media and of global communications, it is unrealistic to posit that traditional diplomacy no longer has a role to play. The presence of diplomats cannot be totally dispensed with, especially in developing countries that have insufficiently developed means of communication. Furthermore, diplomatic institutions with their traditional functions add a humanitarian factor to international relations. This is an important aspect for which trends in international relations continue to assign to diplomacy a role of great importance that cannot otherwise be fulfilled entirely through the new communication technologies.

The Status of Official Palestinian Diplomacy

Palestine was granted observer state membership at the United Nations on the 29th of November, 2012. Several member states subsequently raised the Palestinian representation in their countries to embassy level. However, Palestine continues to be shackled by the weak

and limited capabilities of its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its embassies abroad with respect to the influence it is able to wield at the formal political level. Its ability to be effective is hostage to what can and cannot be achieved at the diplomatic and formal protocol levels. If we consider the state of Palestinian-Israeli relations and what is happening in the Arab and world arenas, we may conclude that the challenges facing Palestine are becoming ever more formidable, and are beyond what the capabilities of Palestinian diplomacy can overcome.

At this point we will focus on some positions and events by means of which the profound deficit in the balance of power between the Palestinian and Arab side on the one hand, and the Israeli on the other, can be brought to light. We then discuss how this reflects on the positions of the two parties in the conflict before and after the peace talks over the past twenty years.

The Arabs have lost many opportunities and positions in the preceding decades and find themselves at outset of the twenty-first century developmentally virtually at a standstill, while their vital interests remain unaddressed and neglected (Abdallah, 2003: 7). These harsh statements described the painful position of the Arabs, and provide a meaningful cognitive background that permits our present discussion to proceed, setting aside analytical consideration of the causes that brought about this situation. For example, the Arabs entered peace negotiations and opened diplomatic channels with Israel, while they were internally fragmented and externally exposed, especially at the end of the Cold War. In light of this fractured reality, the United States saw as an opportunity for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on terms strongly biased towards Israeli interests and preferred outcomes, and called for an International Peace Conference under the auspices of international parties and not under the supervision of the United Nations. The conference was held at the end of November 1991. The participants included Israel and, on the Arab side, state representatives from Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. The PLO was not allowed to participate officially and represent its people. Instead, a Palestinian delegation, consisting only of notables from the West Bank and Gaza, had to accept participation under the umbrella of the Jordanian delegation (Khalifa, 1991).

To elucidate the obvious asymmetry in the balance of power between the parties, we shall examine the conditions stipulated by Israel for participation in the conference (Khalifa, 1991). The conference should have no complete and full authority; it should be convened in

the presence of the United Nations but not under its auspices, with no UN authority to impose solutions or undertake resolutions; it may not be subsequently reconvened at any time; Palestinians should agree to conduct future negotiations bilaterally with the Israelis, without the supportive participation of an Arab presence; and the PLO may not participate officially in the negotiations.

The United States which sponsored and supported the conference also committed itself to a set of "guarantees" that gave a wide range of negotiation maneuverability freeing Israel from any possible American pressure (Khalifa, 1991). The United States "does not support the establishment of a Palestinian State"; the United States "does not aim at including the PLO in the negotiations for reaching a comprehensive settlement". This unprecedented, major event between Israel and the Arabs, may, in traditional terms, be called a diplomatic conference. In this sort of traditional diplomacy the implied premise is that the conference should address and resolve issues and problems in a conciliatory manner acceptable to all participants (Feltham, 1998: 138). However, the restrictive stipulations governing the structure, purview and conduct of the conference did not meet the substantive and legitimizing criteria for conference diplomacy.

The points of view of the participants in the conference clearly reflected the reality of contradictory intentions and goals that ran along incompatible, non-intersecting, parallel lines. Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazin), 1991), at that time a member of the Executive Committee of the PLO and currently president of Palestinian National Authority, described the Madrid conference as "the most important event in the Middle East concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict". In contrast, the then Israeli Prime Minister, Shamir, considered the conference as the ceremonial celebration that did not call for any change in the Israeli position towards the peace process (Khalifa, 1991). When Haydar Abdul-Shafi from Gaza, head of the participating Palestinian delegation was asked about the imbalance of power with Israel, he admitted that Israel was stronger by all measures ("The Oslo agreement", 1993). He added that the Palestinians had recognized rights enshrined in United Nations resolutions and the principles of International Law. In the aftermath of the conference, the Israelis and the Palestinians entered bilateral peace talks that ended in September 1993 with the Oslo Agreements. Despite this, Israel remained unwilling to fully fulfill what it had committed itself to under these Agreements. The Palestinians, on the other hand, were unable to achieve the aims for which they entered the negotiations –freedom for their people and independence

for their state, nor even to secure full Israeli compliance to the truncated and limited outcomes of the Agreements themselves.

The unanswered question remains: How should the Palestinians, the weaker party despite internationally-recognized and legitimate rights, handle a prejudicial and dehumanizing political reality? Should they succumb and surrender to the de facto situation and forgo their rights? Or, instead, indefinitely await –with their children and their grandchildren–in the hope that outsiders might one day provide empowering support and deliverance? Or should they try their hand at diplomacy again? The answer to these questions should be guided by their tenacity to inalienable rights guaranteed by the principles of international and humanitarian law, and that cannot diminish and atrophy with time. Therefore, the egress from the dilemma of the imbalance of power depends upon the capability for creativity and utilizing another type of diplomacy which is not traditional. It is imperative to secure alternative techniques to strengthen the Palestinian traditional diplomatic approach since the latter lacks adequate power to resolve the Israel-Palestinian conflict. The alternative approach being proposed in this study is soft power, referred to as public diplomacy.

Public Diplomacy: Leveraging the Palestinian Cause

Public Diplomacy is a neologism, reflecting a relatively new paradigm with a still-evolving theoretical framework. Its concepts and applications are being increasingly disseminated around the world and relates to several aspects, such as states, society, and people. Cull (2006), of the American Center of Public Diplomacy believes that the first utilization of the term occurred in the British newspaper, the "Times" in 1856, criticizing President Franklin in one of its headlines and accusing him of dealing with his people undemocratically. The objective of utilizing the term was to create propaganda. Historically, the term was not used until the First World War in the European and American press between the years 1916-1919. In 1919, the "open covenants" of the US President Woodrow Wilson was described as "diplomatiepublique" (Cull, 2006). Thereafter, the term "Public Diplomacy" was used in 1965 by Edmund Gullion, Dean of the Institute of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, in justification of the requirements for the implementation of American Foreign Diplomatic requirements. "Public Diplomacy" was chosen as an alternative term for "propaganda" because of the negative connotations associated with the latter (Cull, 2006), the users of the term being mindful of the recipients of the message contained in public diplomacy.

In spite of the term being utilized in a multitude of contexts, it is difficult to identify an internationally accepted definition agreed upon by researchers and practitioners in the diplomatic field. There are different dimensions to public diplomacy such as power, information, influence, and engagement. Furthermore, it is difficult to establish a definition which includes the aforementioned dimensions of public diplomacy. It is also noted that the definition includes all or parts of the dimensions with contrasts in the emphasis of its importance because it would depend on who presents the definition in the context of the speech. For example, Joseph Nye (2004) defines public diplomacy as "the soft power" that is reflected from the power of states. However, the author endeavored to express himself through different means. He uses examples of how France was able to make French the prestigious language of diplomatic discourse in order to compensate for their defeat in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. Another example is how the United Kingdom was able to express its culture through the BBC since 1922.

Definition of Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy is defined as several levels of communication of a society or a state with another society through institutions, political officials and individuals who transfer the special position of their state or people with reliability and objectivity, depending on publicizing and enforcement of cultural, vocational and social connections between the different countries and conveying the message or the special narration of this community or state and disseminate and generalize it (Snow & Taylor, 2008).

Public diplomacy in our society stipulates the dissemination of a specific vision on all related issues, not only by utilizing publicity (propaganda), advertisement and public relations, but multi venues between the different institutions of throughout the world (states) (Gilboa, 2008).

It is necessary that this role be confined to the Foreign Ministry, its embassies and consulates. The state is responsible for planning and determining the strategy with an aim and specific objectives. Consequently, the development of a detailed strategy is a political decision that is phrased in the official political circles such as the Foreign Ministry to safeguard the public objectives of the society and the state, which eventually enables the government to confront the challenges effectively and efficiently.

Public diplomacy is a relatively new methodology in International Relations and could be used by both superpowers and the weak to serve certain issues that states or its people want to communicate to the world. The Unite States of America utilizes public diplomacy to brand its culture and values through its official and unofficial institutions through highly technical information means (Tuch, 1990: 3).The people of South Africa utilized public diplomacy to challenge the apartheid authorities before 1994, and celebrated its liberation by staging festivals and declaring the anniversaries of certain significant dates as public holidays.

Hence, public diplomacy rotates within the framework of the state's position and interests as outlined by official diplomacy such as to serve the political position of the state through its institutions and official agencies. Furthermore, it benefits from the thoughts expressed through public relations by using a new methodology to construct their efforts on sound scientific and practical foundations (Lama, 2011: 14). Public diplomacy explains, clarifies and justifies the political decision and presents answers to related questions. Consequently, it is a means of contact and communication between the state and the community in another country. It is directed at public opinion with all its categories and classes aiming to influence their attitudes and aspirations, including servicing the interest of the state and its policies. A given state's foreign policy cannot be separated from its public diplomacy. Consequently, public diplomacy cannot contradict the distinctive policy and interest of the state. It is impossible to isolate the state's foreign policy from its public diplomacy. Public diplomacy cannot be diverted from the special policy or interests of the state. In the case of Palestine, there is profound support and consolidation for the Palestinian requisite for liberation and independence almost throughout the world as well as at the level of political parties, especially the greens, the leftists and socialists in general (Barsamian & Said, 2010). Of critical significance is the lack of the necessary resources to effect official diplomatic effort in Palestine. Public diplomacy was utilized as a new methodology by the diplomatic world agencies in order to adopt a comprehensive social and economic human agenda that affects the communication between the state and the outside world as well as exceed the official or traditional diplomatic relations (Al-Hashimi, 2003: 125).

Public diplomacy has always been utilized by government, individuals or groups to directly or indirectly influence attitudes and public opinions. To attain these objectives, it is possible to develop a comprehensive plan that includes the constituents of public relations, propaganda and multi communication levels with the rest of the world while defining the

targeted public with its different sectors and categories. This plan should be honorable and respect the culture and perceptions of the people of the targeted states. It is also imperative to have a mechanism to monitor the application, evaluation, and periodic development of the plan taking into consideration the developmental process (Abu Abah, 2009: 60; Al-Hashimi, 2003: 132).

Palestinian Public Diplomatic Issues

The justice of the Palestinian people's rights, requirements and requisites enjoy global support. However, this is not congenial with the policies, interests and alliances that govern international positions. The big question is what is the relative weight of these peoples position in contrast to international interests and policies? What is the weight and magnitude of the effects of public diplomacy and the people's position on the states standpoint with the outside world, notwithstanding that public diplomacy concentrates on the different forms of communication and meetings, i.e., the meeting between any nation, group or individual from any specified state with that of a group from another state.

Public Diplomacy and its Efficacy in Affecting the World Community

The Palestinian struggle and their kufieyah is becoming a symbol for protest and struggle against injustice all over the world. Simultaneously, prominent Palestinian persons and symbols emerged and became known throughout the world and reiterated their positions, such as Yasir Arafat, Edward Said, Mahmoud Darwish, Ghassan Kanafani, and Fadwa Tugan. Palestinian diplomacy is no longer a monopoly for the politicians, but rather comprises the social, cultural and athletic aspects.

Mahmoud Darwish, who was deported, represented the Palestinian refugee who was devoted to his country. This helped to enrich his unique experience in Palestine and the world at large. His poetry helped him to transfer his message to the world. His poem transferred the Palestinian suffering and inspired the world as well as contributed to the global humanistic experience. The Palestinians, despite their intellectual convictions were unable to offer a humanistic look at their cause aside from the existence of a poet who touched the human emotions and feelings and addressed their human conscience like Mahmoud Darwish. He cast the "Palestinian Declaration of Independence" such that it be considered a cultural and humanitarian document rather than a political script. It is no surprise to the Palestinians to

have a noteworthy institution named after Mahmoud Darwish anywhere in the world or in one of the capitals such as the Place Mahmoud-Darwish which was opened by Bertrand Delanoë, Mayor of Paris, in the presence of president Mahmoud Abbas. The following was inscribed on the plaque: "we love life if we can find the way to it". It is neither strange to see political demonstrations nor syndicate protests raising the Palestinian flag or the Palestinian kufieh.

This new type of diplomacy requires as a pre-requisite administrative awareness in the Department of Foreign Affairs which is the administration and planning reference for traditional diplomatic work. Therefore, to serve this purpose it is possible to assign a department of skilled and trained experts on public diplomacy within the ministry of exterior for coordination between the traditional and innovated functions. This leads us to look at the subject of "soft power" that concentrates on the ethics of the political position and not on the "hard power", or only the international interests (Nye, 2004: 5-11; see also Pratkanis, 2008: 111-112). The rights for self-determination and liberation from occupation are two ethical and humanitarian principles that could be built upon by the Palestinians. Therefore, it is imperative to look with great respect at the people of the world who support the Palestinian struggle for the establishment of their independent state on moral grounds, based on commitment to rights and justice (Said, 2000). Hence the significance of international, regional, functional organizations and agencies is aimed at implementing public diplomacy, togetherness and cultures of the people. Participation in the achievement of world security and peace can help in all aspects aimed at creating a developed community that is open to world culture (Al-Hashami, 2003: 130).

The success of public diplomacy depends on the efficacy of cultural and informative programs that enables the coordination of declared positions according to national political priorities (Cull, 2008: 31) and the confrontation of contrary propaganda. Any successful public relations and branding program should comprise three elements: defining the targeted public, the tools for reaching it and finally, the existence of a mechanism for management to follow-up and evaluate (Pratkanis, 2008: 125).

Public diplomacy addresses the public outside the regional boundaries of the state through new methods, starting with the media, conferences, international and vocational organizations, scholars, academics, and clerics, with the purpose of forming an international public opinion. Public diplomacy concentrates on convincing the opinion of leaders from the

political and communal citizens and government bureaucrats throughout the world to influence the behavior and political decisions of the departments where they work (Scott-Smith, 2008: 175).

The realities of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict reveal that the two-state solution became an illusion (Pappe, 2006; see also Said, 1997: 46). In this context, the well-known American adage "When you find yourself in a hole, quit digging"[2] applies. Palestinian public diplomacy was once managed as if it were a 'sink', while on another, as if it were a lever for the Palestinian position. These steps are essential in the preparation of a successful operation on all fronts (arenas) based on the available resources of soft power owned by the Palestinians (Nye, 2004).

Two States for Two People Solution: Still Possible?

International and local observers have convinced themselves for a long time that the negotiated peace solution, based on the concept of two states for two people is a unique and ideal solution for the Palestinian Issue. Due to the weakness, incompetence of Palestinian pressure and power on Israel, international observers have convinced themselves that the establishment of an independent Palestinian state is basically a strategic Israeli benefit. After twenty years of Palestinian negotiations, it became obvious that Israel does not share this conviction with anyone. The alignment of the Israeli government parties is unanimous in their rejection to the withdrawal and ending the occupation. So, what is the expected gain from the Israeli point of view if a sovereign Pal state has been established, while Palestinian citizens (Palestinian of 1948) remained within the boundaries of Israel? (Pappe, 2006) We must also remind ourselves that the Palestinian request for freezing the Israeli settlement in the occupied Palestinian territories since 1967 is inadequate under the present circumstances. It is not enough for the Palestinian leadership to suspend or prohibit negotiations until the cessation of settlement activities. Whether negotiations cease or not the Israeli occupation of the settlements continues. The issue is dismantling and not freezing the settlements. There is a need for radical solutions of the Israeli settlement and intransigence against abiding to international law (Barsamian & Said, 2003).

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[2]Attributed to the actor William Penn Adair ("Will") Rogers (November4, 1879-August15, 1935).

Branding on the International Arena: Branding for Countries, Issues and Persons

Edward Said spoke of the solidarity of the Arab world with the Palestinian cause. He was aware that the Arab people all stood in support of the Palestinian cause and loved Palestine, but the Palestinian people not quite as much.[3] This reflects duality of the position towards the Palestinians and his issue. This phenomenon is still chasing the Palestinian wherever it exists. What is required is the improvement and development of the Palestinian perception around the world, especially the neighboring Arab countries. It is essential to brand the Palestinian issue, its people and history (Barsamian & Said, 2003).

Perhaps one of the most important branding campaigns for the Palestinians was the comprehensive artful look of the contestant Mohamad Assaf in the programme "Arab Idol". He could not have succeeded without the vote of millions of Arab admirers in addition to his people. This is considered propaganda and for the Palestinian people, this branding is a breakthrough to locations which were previously closed to its people. Just like the branding of products, the branding of persons, historic places of interest, tourist and sacred places is very important for a country. Sixty-five million tourists visited Paris during 2014 which is an indication of France consistently branding tourism. There is a new concept of branding that includes the foreign affairs for any state. Branding a country would include tourist attractions popular and natural resources. Palestine holds many holy sites pertaining to the three monotheistic religions, as well other archeological and historical sites from the dawn of history to the recent past, all of which could be branded globally.

Contemporary branding is the ability to create a mental image based on correlating the mention of a place with the presence of a reputable product, identity or a related value with the place. For example, the United States has branded itself through – expression, sciences and technology; the name of Germany is branded with engineering and the quality of products; Japan is branded with electronics and miniatures; Italy and France with fashion and style (clothes and appearances) (Gowan & Cull, 2008). Britain is branded with history and historical pomp and circumstance. Branding is based on practice and expertise more than on theories. It is an idea of the conceptions of a state and its people through a group of national resources namely: tourism, exports, cultural and heritage, investment, governance, people and immigration.

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[3]Edward Said talk at Columbia University, New York, in 2002, during a pro-Palestinian demonstration in support of the second Intifada at which the author of this article was a participant.

Social Media Sites

It is possible to utilize media nets, social and cultural locations such that it enables the Palestinian self-expression and dissemination of his/her narrative of the historic events. This enables the Palestinians to become acquainted with the experiments of other people in their struggle against colonization in order to achieve their political and human rights. The struggle arenas are not confined to terminology but include any location that represents the Palestinian interests and vision. The importance of these locations was evident when the people gathered in support of the prisoners in their protest, embarking on a hunger strike and confrontation against land confiscation in initiatives such as the Bab el-Shams, Kan'an, etc.[4]

This is a clear assurance that locations of social communication play a significant role in exerting the image and creating an echo of the event that responds to the feelings and interests of people instead of daily sacrifices through the traditional media. The locations of communication offer the possibility of presenting the same event frequently at prolonged intervals.

Social media penetration in the Arab world, been growing rapidly since the beginning of the current decade. Statistics posted in July 2013 (http://www.go-gulf.ae/blog/social-media-middle-east/) show that 40.2% of the total Middle East population accesses the web; 88% of this online population uses social networking daily; 65% of users are men, 35% are women; 36% of them are aged between 18 and 24 years, and a further 32% between 25 and 34. There are 6.5 million Twitter users, of which 3.7 million are active. Facebook had 58 million users, up from 21 million at the end of 2010 (Dubai School of Government, 2011: 4). Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia are the highest utilizes of Facebook (Cole, 2012).

Several discussions arise on the importance and extent of the role played by the social communication media in the Arab Revolutions, "Arab Spring". While some opinions gave the media revolution and the exposure of using social communication locations among the youth the role and responsibility for the success of these revolutions against the governing regimes, other opinions regard these sites as mere catalysts for gathering and branding the

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[4]In his novel *Jaffa prepares the morning coffee*, Anwar Hamed (2012) addresses a call to Palestinian youth to form social media networks constituting an open space in which Palestinians may diffuse their narrative to the world, and mobilize support and solidarity for their cause. The author of the novel characterizes such social media activists as "kings of the era".

revolution or the revolution would not have proceeded where the youth remained 'glued' to their computers (Ka'ssis-Khalassi, n.d.).

In Palestine, it is possible to notice the high ratio of the youth ranging between ages 16-34 who perform varied activities such as the sites of the assumed and third Intifada etc. Furthermore, is there is also the expansion of national officials sites, such as the sites of President Abu Mazen and ex-Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. This official concern is an awareness and recognition of the importance of social communication and initiation of the Palestinian youth who bear the burden of change. It is impossible to fight future battles with old tools.

Elements of Structuring the Palestinian Strategy

Among the sources of power that should not be neglected in planning the next phase is the settlement of the Palestinian people on their land despite attempts by the Israeli Occupation to uproot them through implementing the policy of evacuation and settlement colonization (Masalha, 1997). The Palestinians who remained on their land in Israel even after 1948 form one fifth of the population. The number of Palestinian residents on historic Palestinian land almost equals the number of Jewish settlers (Barsamian & Said, 2003). The second factor which was non-existent during the first Intifada was the presence of the Palestinian National Authority over Palestine. This factor cannot be underestimated even to those who are politically in opposition to its presence. The Palestine Authority (PA) is a government that exists with sustainable economic, educational, health, welfare, and rule of law. The PA is an essential factor of presence of the Palestinians on their land as a harbinger of their independence.

Palestinian Civil Society supports the struggle for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state through the wide range of relations with, and support from, the world arena. This position is evident from the boycott of Israeli goods as well as economic and academic sanctions of which the last was Senator Alima Bomeddein's indictment of anti-Semitism and hatred speech for appealing for the economic boycott of Israel. Civil Society institutions in Palestine applied pressure to establish democratic institutions of justice, transparency accountability and governance.

The third factor is the steadfastness of the Palestinians on their land despite efforts to displace them. Media plays a major role in communicating the Palestinian message to the world. The PA should take full responsibility for defining and implementing this message through its media centers and institutions by posting a consistent and non-contradictory narrative to the world (Abu Abah, 2009: 60-61).

A significant realistic study needs to be undertaken that includes all the Palestinian political factions in order to safeguard the accomplishments and presence of the PA on Palestinian land. The presence and mechanisms to ensure the internationally guaranteed rights of Palestinians include: sovereignty over the occupied Palestinian land and a just solution for the refugee problem without being forced to repeal any right. At that point, the Palestinians would make real progress instead of "destroying all (i.e. dissolving the PA) and waiting to see what happens." This would be a form of political suicide that would lead to massive losses for the people of Palestine and the generations that follow.

Available Political Steps and Alternatives

The choices are restricted to two groups. The first is adhering to the status quo of economic peace without peace and prosperity as imposed by Netanyahu and his right-wing government, interminable settlements, no independent state at the end of negotiations, no sovereignty, and no return of refugees.

The second alternative is a clear declaration from the Palestinians of the failure of the negotiations route as currently structured, and a call for fundamental change in present policies. This requires public, Arab and international support of the Palestinian position, the undertaking of a comprehensive evaluation of the present situation, negotiations, and the start of preparation for alternative plans for the next stage (Gresh, 2011).

Palestinians cannot accept the status quo or "economic peace". Possible approaches to implementing the second alternative outlined above include:

First, preparation of clear plans for the intervention of the world community and international institutions such as the Security Council, the General Assembly of the United Nations (under the "Uniting for Peace" procedure), the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable

Rights of the Palestinian People, the International Court of Justice at The Hague, and other international organizations.

Second, a well-planned public struggle against the Israeli occupation and its racist policies, which requires developing widespread public resistance coupled with international solidarity, while maintaining the focus on core and critical issues. Here the Palestinians could benefit from historical precedents and such success as they have been able to achieve in their confrontation with the Israeli occupation, especially during the first Intifada of 1987-1993. The struggle requires the adoption of a non-violent approach as propagated by Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Mandela. Any militarization of public protest would constitute a regression towards a form of resistance that corresponds to Israeli preferences because it would be easier for them to mobilize against and confront.

Third, revitalization of national democratic institutions constitutes a foundation of basic support for the Palestinian position in gaining the respect of the world community.

Fourth, the Palestinian state currently exists as a nation, present in its homeland, with a history and broad –though still not universal–international recognition. Israeli historian Benny Morris has acknowledged that the Palestinian nation has stood steadfast in the struggle for its land. Hence, it is possible to "revive" the Declaration of Independence with or without Israeli consent. The Israelis can refute this declaration, but at the prospect of future confrontation with the Palestinians, especially once the latter form the majority in historic Palestine, and in particular within the boundaries of the UN partition plan of 1947. What then would prevent the Palestinians from reclaiming the partition boundaries of 1947?

The Palestinian people undoubtedly possess a manifold and multifarious capacity to launch and sustain a long-term campaign of public diplomacy, as well as a not inconsiderable number of skills and capabilities, and the capacity to achieve such a goal. This potential needs to be fundamentally evaluated and realized so that the just cause of the Palestinian people may be disseminated to the international community.

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