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Analysis of Egypt's Political-Security Activism in the 12-Day Gaza War and Resistance in 2021

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Abstract

Extended Abstract:

The fourth war of the Zionist regime against Gaza in May 2021, known among the Palestinians as the “Sword of Jerusalem” and in Zionist circles as the “Guardian of the Walls,” marked a turning point in the political, military, and security developments in the West Asian region. (Yassin, 2021:218) Following the Zionist regime’s attempt to evacuate the homes of Palestinian residents in the “Sheikh Jarrah” neighborhood in favor of Israeli settler populations in 2021, all Palestinian cities and movements, including armed and peaceful Palestinian resistance groups, launched a new intifada. The main excuse of the Zionist authorities for taking over this neighborhood is that they claim that Jewish families have been living in this area since before the 1948 war.

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This is despite the fact that Palestinians have documents for their residential homes dating back to the Ottoman period and were evicted from them in the 1948 war, so this claim by the Zionists has always been challenged. (Diab, 2021: 110)

On the other hand, although the issue of the Sheikh Jarrah attack is the main reason for the tension in the city; apparently the actions and plans of the Zionists against the Al-Aqsa Mosque are the main driving factor in creating the current tension in the entire Palestinian territories. At the beginning of Ramadan 1432 AH, settler groups announced their intention to attack the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the occasion of Quds Day on May 10, 2021, which is the same day that Israel occupied East Jerusalem in 1967. (Arabic Post, 2021) As a result, clashes broke out between Palestinians and the Israeli police in the courtyard of Al-Aqsa Mosque, and attempts by the police and settlers to storm the mosque failed.

Resistance movements in Gaza also entered the mainstream on May 10, 2021; in response to the crimes and aggressions of the Israeli regime against the city of Jerusalem and the pressure on Palestinians living in Sheikh Jarrah, the spokesman for the "Al-Qassam Brigades", the military wing of the "Hamas" movement, announced that the movement had launched a missile strike on the occupied city of Jerusalem during an operation called "Sword of Jerusalem". (Anadolu, 2021) The Israeli regime also announced on the same day in response to this attack; it had launched its military operation against Gaza under the title "Guardian of the Walls" and then began its airstrikes against various targets in the Gaza Strip. (Al-Jazeera Net, 2021)

As in previous wars, Egypt, as a geographical neighbor of the warring parties, acted as a mediator to end it and reach a ceasefire agreement. In this way, it once again emphasized its position in this case and showed its concern for the Palestinian case, and continued these efforts to achieve a ceasefire through negotiations between the parties until an agreement was reached. In this regard, it presented the initiative to reconstruct Gaza through investment and participation of Egyptian companies as an opportunity to guarantee a ceasefire, and continued indirect negotiations on the cases of the siege, reconstruction, and prisoner exchange as the main axes of achieving a long-term ceasefire in the

Gaza Strip and creating opportunities for Palestinian reconciliation and a political settlement of issues between Palestinian groups. (Yasin, 2021:115)

In light of the above, the main issue of the research is to examine the developments and events of the 12-day war of 2021, from which perspective we will analyze Egypt's political-security actor in the 12-day war in Gaza based on the theory of pragmatism.

This article aims to examine Egypt's political agency and the role of President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in mediating an end to the 12-day conflict between the Israeli regime and Palestinian Islamic resistance groups. Over the past decade, West Asia has witnessed five missile confrontations between Palestinian resistance factions—primarily led by the Hamas movement—and the Israeli regime in the Gaza Strip and occupied territories. Despite the geographically limited scope of these conflicts, they have yielded considerable strategic consequences for both sides and for the broader region. The research adopts a qualitative, content analysis methodology, and is fundamental in nature. The study integrates scholarly perspectives with empirical data gathered from 24 Arab and international media outlets, including television networks, newspapers, and news agencies. In total, over 170 news items and reports related to the conflict period were analyzed. Shared narratives were identified, their frequency compared, and key components were extracted using the theoretical framework of pragmatism. The findings suggest that Egypt's political and security engagement during the recent Gaza war—regardless of the final outcomes for both the Palestinian and Israeli parties—has resulted in an enhanced regional status for Egypt and a strengthened international profile for President Sisi. Through a pragmatic and flexible diplomatic approach, Sisi has succeeded in aligning more closely with U.S. President Joe Biden and positioning Egypt as a pivotal actor in advancing the United States' strategic interests in West Asia, thereby presenting both himself and Egypt as key allies of the West and the United States.

Considering the purpose of the research and the question raised in the article, the following can be presented as the most important findings and results of the present study:

By examining the Egyptian approach to the Palestine case, it can be claimed that the policy of the country's statesmen in the aforementioned case focuses

on at least four strategies, which are: "Managing this case, not resolving it"; in other words, from the perspective of Egypt's former and current statesmen, the Palestine issue acts as an internal tool to convince its people of their rulers' belief in the Palestinian cause and, to a large extent, prevents domestic political groups and parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood from rebelling against it. In the regional arena, Egypt also seeks to "monopolise the management" of this case against its other rival actors and exploit it as a lever of pressure at the disposal of the Egyptian foreign policy apparatus to impose Cairo's will and regional tendencies in other cases such as the Libyan crisis, the Renaissance Dam (the disputed case with Ethiopia), and ... To this end, Egypt has been able to "securitize" this case, while gaining control of its intelligence apparatus over the PA on the one hand and the Palestinian resistance groups on the other, to the extent that it can limit the circle of entry of other regional actors into this scene. However, in the international arena, the Palestine case is a trump card in the hands of the pragmatic and opportunistic ruler of Egypt, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, to convince international powers, especially the United States, that in light of the failure of the Arab coalition led by the Saudi regime in the Yemen crisis and the existence of conflicting opinions and conflicts of interest between regional and international powers in the Libya case, Egypt remains the best option for protecting America's vital interests in the region and the best partner of the Zionist regime in its military confrontation against the Palestinian resistance groups.

Key words: Islamic Resistance, -12Day War, Gaza Strip, Palestine, Egypt.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in conducting this research study.