

Destroying peace in Palestine

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The purpose of the recent visit to the Middle East by US President George W. Bush was declared as being to strengthen the basis for a future peace agreement between Israel and Palestine before the end of his mandate in 2009, continuing along the lines initiated at the Annapolis conference last November. However, the reality on the ground bears no relation to the supposed efforts for peacebuilding by Bush and his Israeli allies.

What has happened in Gaza and the West Bank for years, but now more than ever, is the result of an express desire to destroy any possibility of fair and lasting peace in the zone.

The Annapolis conference, and more recently Bush's visit, have taken place in parallel to the building of settlements in occupied territory, large scale military incursions in West Bank towns, air and land sieges in the Gaza Strip, and a humanitarian catastrophe of the largest proportions caused by the Israeli and international (including the EU) blockade of the territory. And this is not to mention the building of a wall that is approaching its planned length of over 700km, the expansion policy of East Jerusalem and the numerous military checkpoints that are stifling the lives of the Palestinian people and are but one of the visible faces of the occupation.

All of these actions have produced hundreds of dead, injured and detained Palestinians throughout 2007, and meanwhile the Israeli government has justified its action by arguing that the Palestinians had launched 2,000 rockets against Israeli territory from Gaza.

Purporting the search for peace while allowing events to continue in the opposite direction is just one example of the political double standards that are so commonplace in the international community, whether the USA or Europe. At the same time, isolating the elected Hamas government (negotiating with, financing and arming its Fatah rivals) has deepened internal division in Palestine, invalidating any possible construction of a future Palestinian State as advocated in the recovered Roadmap.

The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, was right about in one thing when he affirmed that 2008 could be the year of peace, but also that it may not be. Unfortunately, the strategy in Palestine does not correspond to the talks for peace that are so loudly proclaimed, but rather to a detailed and continued will to destroy it.

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