



Occupation of Gaza - Insurgency, Challenges, and Lessons Learned

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The conflict between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), General Eyal Zamir, has highlighted not only political and military differences but also the complex issues related to the occupation of hostile territories, especially in a context of insurgencies and resistance wars. The recent discussions between the two power figures have focused on the total occupation of the Gaza Strip, a move that **Zamir described as a "trap"**, endangering both the lives of Israeli soldiers and the security of hostages held by terrorist groups.

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The Trap of Occupation: Challenges and Risks

Zamir raised fundamental concerns about the sustainability of a prolonged occupation of Gaza, emphasizing that total control of the territory could lead not only

to the exhaustion of Israeli armed forces but also to the aggravation of local resistance and the fueling of a spiral of violence. This type of conflict is characterized by asymmetric warfare, where occupying forces face a population with strong ideological motivations and a well-rooted insurgency network, as demonstrated by experiences in Afghanistan and other similar war theaters.

The occupation of a territory populated by a hostile population that organizes into insurgent groups is one of the most complex challenges for any armed force. **The difficulty of maintaining security, the resilience of the civilian population, and the management of insurgent groups are issues that Israel should not underestimate.** The lesson learned in Afghanistan, for example, shows that the prolonged occupation of territories by foreign forces not only increases resistance from the population but can also deteriorate international legitimacy and compromise political stability.

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The "Lessons Learned" from the Afghan Experience

The lessons drawn from the intervention in Afghanistan are extremely relevant for assessing the occupation of Gaza. The presence of various instability factors, such as insurgent groups, competing local powers, crime, and corruption, can seriously undermine efforts to stabilize a country and promote democracy. In Afghanistan, for example, stabilization operations failed to create a solid and sustainable government structure, partly due to the lack of coordination among international actors and the difficulties in addressing the resistance of local insurgent groups.

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Another problem that emerged in Afghanistan was the inability to adapt Western governance models to such a complex local context. Occupying forces often imposed institutional models that did not take into account local traditions and political dynamics, making state and governmental reconstruction processes difficult. **The lesson learned is that a military intervention, although necessary for security, cannot be the final solution for**

promoting democracy and human rights. In Gaza, similar issues could arise, where occupation might not resolve the underlying causes of the conflict and could even worsen the situation.

The Integrated Approach and Civil-Military Cooperation

In the context of the war in Gaza, one of the main challenges is the coordination between military and civilian actors. The Afghan experience highlighted how the separation between military interventions and civilian development efforts can compromise efforts to stabilize a country. The integrated approach, which combines security actions, development, and political support, is essential to prevent violence from becoming the only tool to resolve conflicts.

Israel might consider a similar approach, although the intensification of the conflict and the continued expansion of the occupation may reduce the space for such cooperation. In Gaza, as in Afghanistan, military occupation risks further damaging reconstruction and economic development capabilities, creating a dependency on international funding and worsening the social and economic conditions of the local population.

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The Critique of the "Adoption Strategy" and the Importance of Strategic Patience

Another central aspect in the discussion on the occupation of Gaza is **the "adoption strategy" proposed by some analysts, suggesting that military intervention should be accompanied by a long-term commitment to building democracy and promoting economic development.** However, this vision might be incompatible with short-term political cycles, such as those often characterizing international politics, especially in Western democracies. The Afghan lesson teaches that adopting an intervention strategy that does not take into account local political and social realities risks failing.

In the case of Gaza, total occupation, **without a clear plan and long-term vision, could lead to a stalemate similar to that of Afghanistan, where the goal of a "total victory" proved unattainable and only prolonged the conflict.** Strategic patience and a long-term

vision are essential, as is the awareness that the end of a conflict does not simply come with the occupation of a territory, but requires a complex process of stabilization and reconstruction that must involve all parties, including dissenting voices and minorities.

Conclusion: The Challenges of an Unsustainable Occupation

In conclusion, the proposal to occupy Gaza raises enormous questions about Israel's ability to manage a long-term conflict in a territory already marked by years of tensions. International experiences, such as the Afghan one, suggest that the occupation of hostile territories is an undertaking that carries enormous risks, not only on the military front but also on the political and social front. The most important lesson that emerges from these cases is that, to effectively manage a conflict in an insurgency context, it is essential to adopt a strategy that goes beyond military occupation and includes development, the promotion of human rights, and the strengthening of local institutions in an inclusive and long-term process.