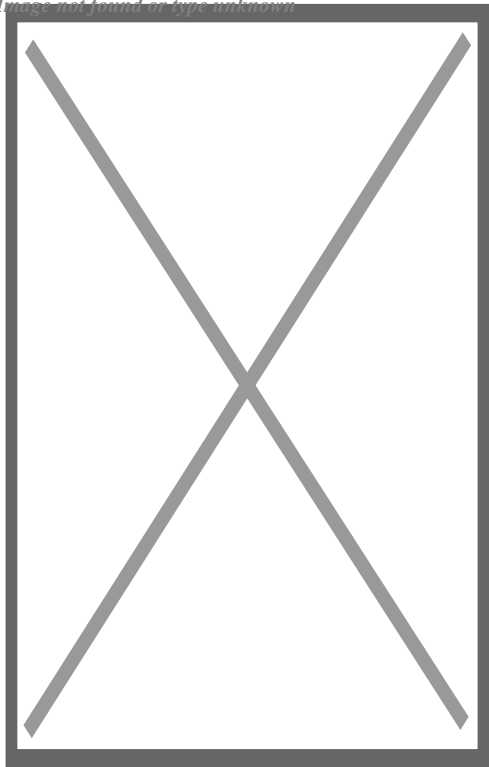


Scholar says Israeli regime faces hopeless situation in Gaza

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Washington, October 15 (RHC)-- The Israeli regime faces a “hopeless” situation in its war of aggression against the Palestinians in Gaza, an American scholar and commentator has said.

Dr. Kevin Barrett, an Islamic scholar and former American academic made the remarks in an exclusive interview with the Press TV website over the weekend.

Gaza has been a target of Israel's continuous bombardment since Saturday when it was caught flat-footed by a multi-pronged operation by resistance groups that involved massive missile strikes and ground incursions into settlements near the blockaded territory.

The Health Ministry in Gaza announced on Friday that at least 1,799 Palestinians, including 583 children and 351 women have been martyred in six days of incessant Israeli bombardment of the blockaded territory. More than 7,000 Palestinians have also been wounded in the bombardment.

“Like the Americans in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, Israel faces an impossible, hopeless situation. The more violence it uses, the more it is hated. Kill an enemy, and ten new ones spring up in his place,” said Dr. Barrett, who is now based in Morocco. He previously lived in the US.

On the possibility of an Israeli ground offensive against the strip, Barrett said that “a limited ground invasion” is likely but if Israel decides to go further than that, a wider conflict may break out leading to Israel’s destruction.

“A limited ground invasion of Gaza is likely unavoidable. But if the Zionists continue to take heavy losses, which seems probable given the Palestinians’ stellar military performance (not to mention courage), a genocidal escalation cannot be discounted,” he said.

Barrett said Palestinians would resist the Israeli regime’s ground invasion, as they have nothing to lose and are ready to die for their cause, unlike Israelis who can move to other countries and live a comfortable life.

“The Palestinians have long since reached the point where they really have nothing to lose. Like Putin, who says ‘What’s the point of a world without Russia;’ they see no point in living in a world without Palestine. And of course, Muslims will never accept a world without al-Aqsa. So the Palestinians and their supporters are fully prepared to die for their cause,” he stated.

“Not so the Zionists. Most have dual citizenship and can live quite comfortably in Western or Eastern Europe, Russia, North America, or even South America,” he explained. Dr. Barrett said the Israeli regime is willing to expel or even kill all the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, but he hopes fears of a “mutually assured destruction (MAD)” would deter the regime from taking that option.

And Barrett added: “Netanyahu has openly proclaimed his genocidal intentions: ‘We will turn Gaza into a deserted island. To the citizens of Gaza, I say: You must leave now. We will target each and every corner of the strip.’”

“In other words, Netanyahu is threatening to murder the 2.3 million people penned up in the open-air concentration camp known as the Gaza Strip if they refuse to leave. And they will refuse,” he said.

“But will Netanyahu really exterminate 2.3 million concentration camp inmates? Is he planning to load them into boxcars and ship them to gas chambers? Even if he thought world public opinion would allow it, does he really believe that Hezbollah and Iran, and quite possibly other regional nations and organizations, would stand by and allow the Gazans to be completely exterminated?” he asked.

“While it is true that the Zionist entity commands enough firepower to obliterate Gaza, supporters of the Palestinians likewise command enough firepower to obliterate the Zionist entity. I hope and pray that this mutually assured destruction deters the Zionists from implementing Netanyahu’s final solution to the Palestinian problem,” Barrett stated.

Elaborating on the root of Hamas’s surprise operation, Barrett said it was the natural outcome of what he calls “the ongoing slow-motion genocide of Palestine.” He said that as a people living under occupation, the Palestinians have the right, under international law, to use military force to try to remove the occupation. Considering the horrific treatment they continue to receive, it is not surprising that they are willing to avail themselves of that right.

“The Palestinians have been massacred, blockaded and starved, penned up in de facto concentration camps like the Gaza Strip, and subjected to endless indignities. Their children are shot for sport by Israeli soldiers. Their neighborhoods are broken up with Orwellian checkpoints and illegal settlers steal more and more of their land,” he stated.

“Their homes are invaded and demolished. Their women are assaulted, their holy places defiled, their olive trees uprooted, their water, sewage and electricity systems destroyed,” he said.

“Their schools and ambulances are bombed, their teenagers are mowed down from aircraft while they play soccer on the beach, and their bodies are burned away with white phosphorus. Experimental weaponry is tested on them. Their bravest leaders are targeted and killed. And anyone caught resisting who isn’t killed is imprisoned and tortured.”

Barrett said the Zionist regime’s escalating series of desecrations of the Al-Aqsa mosque, which are meant to prepare the ground for the eventual destruction of the Islamic world’s oldest and greatest architectural monument, is what pushed Palestinians over the brink.

“Operation Al-Aqsa Storm was primarily launched in defense of the holy mosque. Al-Aqsa is the pre-eminent symbol of Islamic spirituality and monotheistic ecumenism. It is as important to Muslims as the Vatican is to Catholics. For Muslims, allowing al-Aqsa to be invaded, desecrated, and destroyed is not an option, any more than Catholics would allow the Vatican to be invaded, desecrated, and destroyed,” he said.

Dr. Barrett explained that during recent months, and even more so in recent weeks, the Zionists have been invading the mosque and attacking worshippers including women and the elderly while being protected by the Israeli police. “The Zionist settlers who invade the mosque under police protection are not just trespassers and bullies. They intend to destroy Al-Aqsa, and their invasions are meant to gradually erode Muslim control of the mosque and assert Zionist control,” he said.

“Once Muslims have been fully dispossessed of their greatest spiritual and architectural treasure, the Zionists intend to destroy it so they can ‘rebuild’ a blood sacrifice temple,” he observed. Dr. Barrett said Hamas is now not only representing Palestinians but the whole Muslim world, as it is defending the Al-Aqsa mosque.

“Hamas, in its heroic defense of al-Aqsa, does not just represent Palestinians. It represents the entire Islamic world. Every Muslim leader on earth needs to let the world know, clearly and unmistakably, that we all have the Palestinians’ back.”

Barrett said Hamas was probably also worried that Saudi leaders may soon start befriending the Israeli regime and this would embolden the regime to accelerate its drive to basically uproot Palestinians.

“They were concerned that the Saudis, those self-appointed custodians of the Islamic world’s other two great shrines, were getting ready to stand back and allow the al-Aqsa Mosque to be destroyed while the Palestinian people suffered gradual extermination. That seems to be the Saudi leadership’s policy,” he said.

“So Hamas was faced with a difficult situation: The extremist-led Zionists had bought off much of the regional leadership and were clearing the way for an even bigger attack on Palestine,” he said.

“As Sam Hussein says: ...the chessboard was basically set for Israel to pummel the Palestinians. This was especially driven by the US government’s drive for ‘normalization’ between Arab states with Israel.”

“This and other things—Turkish president Erdogan meeting Netanyahu for the first time recently—made it apparent that Israel was positioned to inflict massive violence against the Palestinians. I don’t know but suspect that Hamas came to the same conclusion and decided to strike first,” he said.

By striking first and scoring a big victory, Palestinians have rallied and roused the people of the region, including Saudi Arabia, making it impossible for the Saudi leadership to pursue its deeply unpopular “normalization” project, Barrett said.

Commenting on the long-term future course of the conflict, Barrett said Zionists are their own biggest enemy, as their project of occupying the Palestinian land was always doomed to failure.

“The Zionist project recalls Walt Kelly’s famous Vietnam-era ‘Pogo’ comic strip: ‘We have met the enemy, and he is us.’ The Israelis are their own worst enemies. Their invasion, occupation, and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians, in a region where hundreds of millions of people share the language, culture, and/or religion of their victims, was always bound to fail,” he stated.

“Ten million Jewish tribalists, no matter how rich and powerful and connected, cannot permanently defeat four hundred million Arabs and two billion Muslims,” he explained.

He said the only realistic course that was ever open to the Zionists was peaceful integration into the region on the basis of friendship and equality, but their “insufferable arrogance” precluded that from the very beginning.

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