

**Prof. Abolfazl Beheshti,
member of EU think tank:**

Two-state solution not feasible

**Iran, US engaged in
full-blown hostility**



By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

**INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE**

Almost five months have passed since the war in the Gaza Strip broke out and Israel started committing genocide in the enclave, and there's still no clear outlook on the future of Palestine and the war-torn strip.

Despite numerous international efforts and negotiations, even achieving a cease-fire has proven elusive. Amidst this, the United States has thrown its support behind the so-called two-state solution, which envisions the formation of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. But is this plan achievable? Would there be enough pressure on Israel to stomach an independent Palestinian state? What impact has the Gaza war had on the tumultuous relationship between Iran and the US? What is the reasonable option for reducing tensions between Washington and Tehran? These are some of the questions that were discussed with Abolfazl Beheshti, who is a professor of International Relations and Energy Economy and a member of a European Union think tank in Brussels, Belgium. Years of study, tutorship, and residence in Europe have made Professor Beheshti's analyses of the assessments of Europeans and Americans from the Middle East crisis more concrete and accurate.



Abolfazl Beheshti, a professor of International Relations and Energy Economy and a member of a European Union think tank in Brussels, Belgium
IRAN DAILY



The Jewish West Bank settlement of Psagot (foreground houses with red roofs) adjacent to the West Bank city of Ramallah, in 2000
EYAL WARSHAVSKY/AP

The recent months-long war in Gaza seems to have put West Asia on the brink of new developments. Where do you think these developments will take us?

The reality is that previously, events used to occur once every ten years, but in recent years, we have witnessed a major upheaval almost every year. In 2022, we saw the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and in 2023, we witnessed the Israel-Gaza war. I am

confident that after the end of this war, the situation in Gaza will not return to what it was before, and Palestinian forces will undoubtedly establish a new form of governance in Gaza. The more significant transformation is that if the war ends up weakening Israel's position and replacing Netanyahu and his cabinet, the formation of a Palestinian state will naturally be pursued with more momentum.

It should be noted that the weakening

of Israel's position effectively destabilizes the normalization process with Saudi Arabia unless a Palestinian state is established, which has its own specific challenges. If the war concludes in favor of Hamas, the position of resistance forces will also be strengthened. If, on the other hand, the Israelis get their wish and Hamas gets destroyed — which is highly unlikely — the position of resistance forces in the Middle East would be weakened.

Do you think a path toward resolving the decades-long issue between Israel and Palestine will emerge out of these recent developments?

The path to achieving this goal is highly remote and fraught with challenges. This is primarily because in reality, 500,000–700,000 individuals are settled in approximately 30,000 settlements in the West Bank and East Al-Quds (Jerusalem), making it unclear where

exactly these two states would be established.

The Zionists adamantly oppose the formation of a Palestinian state with its capital in East Al-Quds. They will not even entertain the idea of Ramallah as the capital of a Palestinian state. This is because practically, the entire West Bank has been fragmented into settlements, resembling pieces of a Swiss cheese block, and all connections have been severed by these settlements. As such, the

two-state solution is practically unattainable. Moreover, the question arises of how a state can be formed and administered without possessing any land.

Another crucial point is that Israeli extremists, who comprise at least half of Israeli public opinion, will oppose the formation of a Palestinian state or even its recognition by Israel, even if Netanyahu is not in power. This fact will further exacerbate the existing conflicts.

The United States and the United Kingdom have said that they would recognize an independent Palestinian state if it is ever established. Does this imply their willingness to settle the Israel-Palestine issue? What would a Palestinian state that is desirable to the US and the UK looklike?

All signs suggest that the United States and the United Kingdom are genuinely pursuing the recognition of an independent Palestinian state. The fact that they see the solution in a two-state

framework shows that this is not mere words. However, the issue is twofold: first, the two-state solution is not feasible, and second, due to the entanglements I mentioned in response to your previous question, nobody can evacuate Jews currently residing in settlements such as the ones in Ramallah. The state that the US and the UK want to recognize is merely on paper. Only Gaza can serve as a suitable land for such a state, but, according to United Nations Security Council resolutions, Gaza, alongside the West Bank and East Al-

Quds, is part of occupied Palestinian territories. As you know, during the Trump era, the Americans declared the entire Al-Quds (Jerusalem) as Israel's "eternal and undivided" capital, and Biden has not altered this decision either. But even assuming a Palestinian government is formed and then recognized by the United States and the United Kingdom, it would only be on paper, and its coordinates would be limited to Ramallah and Gaza because practically, Al-Quds is completely under Israeli occupation and control.

How do you evaluate the position of the European Union in this regard? Do Europe's interests also necessitate easing or ending the Middle East crisis?

Indeed, it is generally perceived that the European Union is not genuinely seeking tension in Gaza or Palestine. However, the Zionist lobby is strong and influential in France and its senate, newspapers, and elsewhere,

easily shaping public opinion. Nevertheless, the European Union's interest lies in easing themselves from the burden of Jews and keeping them in Israel. Therefore, they support the two-state solution.

Furthermore, it seems that as long as Israel does not accept a cease-fire, the Houthis will continue their attacks and cause tension in the Red Sea. This is more detrimental to

Chinese, Indian, and European companies than to Americans, although they have also suffered losses. Regardless, it can be said that they have found more excuses for further intervention in the region.

In any case, all signs indicate that not only the European Union does not benefit from the conflict between Israel and Hamas, but also the tension in the Middle East is detrimental to the EU.

Where do you think the Islamic Republic of Iran stands in terms of mediation efforts for a cease-fire in Gaza and resolving the Palestinian issue? Will the US involve Iran in mediation or benefit from Tehran's influence to resolve the issue? See, Americans are currently focused on Qatar and Turkey as mediators because both are aligned with the

Muslim Brotherhood and have close ties to Hamas. While they are aware of Iran's influential role as a leader in the resistance movement, I haven't seen any indications that Americans are considering Iran in this context. Nevertheless, since they take the resistance seriously and view Iran as its leader, in issues related to Palestine, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Leba-

non, they see Iran as the other side of the coin. Even in their scenarios, they are squaring off against Iran. However, they strive to ensure that this engagement is not direct but rather proxy-based. They have employed various methods to achieve this, including terrorist acts, attacks on ships, seizure of Iranian oil, and many other actions.