US's Recognition of Israel's West Bank Settlements - II

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What is the issue?

- The U.S. administration recently declared that the Israeli settlements on the West Bank are not illegal. Click here to know more on West Bank settlements.
- It is essential now that any future solution must be one that rectifies past evils and offers democracy to all Palestinians.

What is the new challenge?

- The "Green Line" was the 1949 armistice line that separates Israel from the West Bank.
- It is an illusion of the imagination of those who support the two-state solution.
- [The two-state solution envisages Israel for the Jewish people and Palestine for the Palestinian people.]
- That was replaced by a greater Israel, ruled by the Israeli nationality law passed in 2018.
- It states that only the Jews have the right of self-determination all over historical Palestine.
- It thus sanctions the continued colonisation of the country and upholds its apartheid system.
- This new reality requires a different approach by anyone caring for the future of the Palestinians and respecting their basic rights.
- This is now a struggle for a regime change.
- It allows half of the population living between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean to have all the privileges.
- They would thus continue to rob the other half of its living space, lands, rights, dignity and life.
- In this regard, popular or armed resistance on the way to liberation would have not been needed if the international community had responded rightly.

What is the international community's approach?

- The international diplomacy should have bravely examined the origins of the conflict in Palestine and on its basis, support a just and lasting solution.
- But, the international community, and mainly western political elites, fully support Israel.
- It also remains silent in the face of continued dispossession of Palestinians.
- It adopted the two-state solution as its mantra for what should be done.
- This was supported by the Palestinian leadership which hoped to salvage at least part of Palestine (22%).
- This approach too has failed miserably.
- The recognition of the U.S. of the illegal Jewish settlements in the West Bank is yet another indication that the two-state solution is dead.

What is Israel's stance?

- Israel has established that any sovereign Palestinian state is impossible.
- Moreover, now is the American administration's endorsement of Israel's wish to de-politicise the Palestinian question.
- It thus allows Israel to fully extend its sovereignty all over historical Palestine.
- It thereby rejects categorically the right of any Palestinian refugee to return.
- Notably, this was a right recognised by the UN in its Resolution 194 from December 11, 1948.
- Israel feels that it wasted 50 years in trying to push towards the two state solution.
- The end result of this effort was more Jewish settlements in the West Bank and a total separation between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

What does the Palestine's civil society feel?

- The civil society in Palestine and around the globe believes in a different way forward.
- Unlike its political elites, it frames the situation in Palestine not as a conflict but a struggle against settler colonialism.
- So, the first step forward suggested by Palestinian civil society was to call upon the international community to boycott and sanction Israel.
- This BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) campaign will continue until -
    i. the people of the West Bank would be liberated from a military rule
    ii. the people of Gaza would be liberated from the siege
    iii. the refugees return from their exile
    iv. the Palestinians in Israel would be recognised as equal citizens

What is the next Palestinian step?

- A clear alternative Palestinian call for the establishment of a one democratic state all over historical Palestine.
- It is now a vision that will soon become a clear Palestinian political programme.
- This could play a significant role in -
    i. rectifying past evils by compensating and restituting lost land and property
    ii. enabling the repatriation of the refugees
    iii. offering democracy for all who live in historical Palestine, without any discrimination
- This vision has now a growing support in the international community, among young Palestinians and progressive Jews inside and outside Israel.
- However, privileged people like the Jews of Israel would not willingly give up their position.
- Nevertheless, pressure from the outside, a continued popular struggle from the inside and a clear Palestinian vision for the future can turn this vision into reality.

Source: The Hindu

