

Forms of International Crisis Policies That Perpetuate Crises Rather Than Resolve Them -Evidence from the Cuban, Korean, and Palestinian Crises-

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Abstract:

Many scholars of international crisis dynamics have demonstrated that “international crises are often deferred rather than resolved.” This is due to several influencing factors such as the size of states, political blocs, the veto power, globalization, and many others, which in reality act as obstacles to the resolution of international crises. One example of this is what is known as the Middle East crisis, the Palestine crisis, or the two-state crisis. It is therefore necessary to examine the problem of combining crisis existence with the will to manage it.

Are international crises truly in need of management or of political will for resolution? This study aims to: provide a theoretical understanding and description of crises; present some of the most prominent crises of our time (the Cuban, Korean, and Palestinian crises); and show the interests of major powers in maintaining crises in order to serve their various interests and support just causes in the world. This article has been divided into alphabetically ordered sections from (A) to (I), starting with the Cuban crisis model, then the Korean crisis, and finally the Palestinian crisis. As for the findings, they reveal the reality of major powers rebelling against international law and benefiting from the crises of weaker states. This is sufficient to uncover the confirmed truth that rights are taken, not granted...

Keywords: international crises, Cuban crisis, Korean crisis, Palestinian crisis.

Introduction:

The international arena has witnessed and continues to witness severe crises that have shaken or nearly undermined global security and stability. Despite the extensive arsenal of international law, these crises have not been fundamentally altered in their reality or consequences, largely due to the dominance of veto-wielding powers and influential international actors, as well as the pursuit of their multiple interests in maintaining such crises. Indeed, the management of these crises by dominant states has, in effect, turned peoples, states, and regimes into a frozen prison akin to the barrier of Gog and Magog keeping victims preoccupied with their successive tragedies so that major powers remain secure from their schemes or awakening. The objective may also be to create balances, appeasements, power struggles, and evasions among adversaries or competing actors on the international stage.

It is therefore necessary to address the problematic question of combining crisis situations with the will to manage them. Accordingly, we raise the following question: Do international crises truly require management, or do they require political will? Among the pressing hypotheses is that major powers possess the will to prolong certain crises and maintain them, despite the existence of

mechanisms and tools capable of resolving many international crises. However, the will to activate such tools and mechanisms is often absent. There are thus crises that are invested in and deliberately extended by major powers.

The methodology adopted in this article is descriptive-analytical. It begins with definitions and conceptual clarifications, then proceeds by presenting examples drawn from international political crises particularly long-standing and highly consequential ones such as the Cuban, Korean, and Palestinian crises, arranged alphabetically in sections from (A) to (I).

The key point here is to demonstrate the existence of this serious phenomenon, which requires further in-depth studies to explore its forms, dimensions, complexities, causes, objectives, and outcomes, given its continuous and evolving nature.

On the Concept of The Policy of International Crisis Management

According to (Fathi, 2001, p. 111), “crisis management” refers to “dealing with the elements of a crisis situation using a combination of bargaining tools both coercive and conciliatory in a way that achieves the state’s objectives and preserves its national interests.”

It is also defined by (Ismail, 2016, p. 88) as “an attempt to apply a set of innovative procedures, rules, and principles that go beyond familiar organizational forms and conventional administrative methods.”

Some researchers view crisis management in international politics as (Jabr, 1998, p. 68) “an attempt to balance confrontations or disputes in order to preserve common interests without resorting to war.”

If a crisis is a situation that can be described as approaching loss of control, then confronting it must be done swiftly, intelligently, and through rational procedures to prevent its escalation into direct armed conflict.

The emergence of a crisis places the responding party before two main objectives: first, to protect existing interests and conditions at the lowest possible material and human cost; and second, to avoid as much as possible entering into a costly military confrontation.

Although some thinkers are pessimistic about the possibility of theoretical development that enhances crisis management techniques due to bureaucratic and organizational obstacles that arise during crises thus negatively affecting rational decision-making this process can nevertheless derive its effectiveness from the strength of the crisis-managing actor and the coherence of its strategy through several steps:

- setting objectives and attempting to control the actions of the opposing party or aggressor, as well as the reactions of the other side(s);

- flexibility in political decision-making and its alignment with alternative goals;

- providing alternatives and options while avoiding emerging obstacles;

- leaving room for political maneuvering that ensures the opponent can “save face” (Othman, 1995, p. 24).

On the other hand, the success of this process requires studying the crisis in light of its objective elements and real causes, rather than merely assigning responsibility to the opposing party in an attempt to absolve oneself of blame. This is because such an approach may increase the other party’s intransigence and ultimately lead to a dead end (Al-Amari, 1993, p. 22).

The outcomes of any crisis ultimately lead either to war or to peaceful settlement. These outcomes are not based on chance as much as they depend positively or negatively on the personal capacities

of the crisis manager, as well as their will and the efficiency or deficiency of the strategy adopted in managing the crisis.

It is useful here to distinguish between “crisis management” and “management by crisis.” The first refers to attempting to control the course of crises and regulate them according to scientific and legal principles alongside personal judgment. The second, however, is based on deliberately creating real or artificial crises, which some states and organizations typically use as a form of orchestration to achieve intended goals and interests.

The Policy of International Crisis Management

The success of crisis management depends on time. Decision-makers operate as a cohesive team that knows each other well and works at maximum speed and with greater effectiveness than in normal routine situations. This requires rapid engagement, commonly referred to as “crisis intervention,” and the adoption of swift decisions.

The crisis manager has already defined everything and assigned probabilities to each element according to specific orientations, based on comprehensive knowledge and full awareness of “alternative scenarios,” the approved scenario for intervention in the crisis, task assignment, and the distribution of roles within the task team. The American crisis management team during the Cuban crisis consisted of 17 individuals.

The Approach of The Policy of International Crisis Management That Prevents Final Solutions

The principles of “crisis management” are based on six foundations (Shuddud, 2002, p. 222):

Defining objectives (Maher, 2006, p. 99).

Gradual implementation and restricting the use of military force to a limited geographic area (Hoover, 1998, p. 119).

Ensuring the continued existence of both sides i.e., preventing mutual collapse (Hilal, 1996, p. 117).

Maintaining communication with the adversary (Othman F., 2004, p. 101).

Seeking broad political support through an extensive political plan (Mehna, 2004, p. 98).

Learning lessons from previous crises and precedents (Al-Hawari, 1998, p. 89).

3.1 Policy of Misperception Without Final Solutions in the Cuban Crisis

In the 1962 Cuban crisis, misperception was exhibited by both the United States and the Soviet Union.

The United States underestimated the likelihood of Soviet military action, or even the possibility of a Soviet military response, after it had used force against Cuba in April 1961 in the “Bay of Pigs” operation aimed at overthrowing Castro’s regime. This occurred even as the United States had deployed nuclear missiles in Turkey. On the other hand, the Soviets believed they could secretly deploy nuclear missiles in Cuba and that the United States would accept this as a fait accompli once discovered (Huweidi, 1993, pp. 67–68).

3.2 Objective-Oriented Policy Without Final Solutions in the Cuban Crisis

Studying previous crises is a useful tool for managing future crises.

Although there is a link between crises, war, and the decisions made during crises that affect the likelihood of war, not every crisis leads to war. Crises often precede wars, as occurred before World War I. However, in the case of the Cuban missile crisis, the crisis ended without war.

During the 1962 Cuban crisis between the United States and the Soviet Union, an objective-oriented policy was adopted. The United States did not insist on the complete withdrawal of Soviet presence from Cuba, nor on the removal of Castro's regime. Instead, its demands were limited to dismantling and removing Soviet missile installations from the island.

In return, the Soviet Union agreed to relinquish the advantages of having missiles positioned in Cuba very close to American shores to compensate for its deficiency in long-range ballistic nuclear capabilities, in exchange for the lifting of the American blockade (defensive quarantine) around Cuba's shores, along with an American pledge not to invade Cuba in the future (Al-Qawi, 2015, p. 302).

Thus, crisis management became one of the most vital topics in the world following the 1962 Cuban crisis. Its importance is reflected in the statement of U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara: "We will no longer speak of strategic management; we must now speak of crisis management."

3.3 Policy of Seeking Broad Support Without Final Solutions in the Cuban Crisis

If a party involved in a crisis resorts to military force, it must seek broad support and authorization for its plans from other states whenever possible. There is also a need to obtain moral and political support, not only military alliances. It is often impossible to consult even close allies when urgency and immediate reaction are required to face an unexpected challenge, especially when prediction is difficult and planning is limited. This was reflected in the American handling of the Cuban crisis, where the United Nations and its institutions were bypassed.

3.4 Policy of Maintaining Communication with the Adversary Without Final Solutions in the Cuban Crisis

Before the nuclear era, diplomats fell silent during conflicts, leaving only weapons to "speak." Communication was thus suspended and resumed only after military confrontation, for negotiating ceasefires, surrender agreements, or peace treaties.

However, signals exchanged during crises are not limited to verbal communication. Misinterpretation may create problems, and various assumptions may be incorrectly understood as threats or offers. Nevertheless, official communications between crisis parties continue.

In contemporary crises, negotiation behavior differs significantly from the past. Decision-makers remain in contact during the crisis, and if communication is interrupted, it is often used to improve military positions or achieve gradual advances for bargaining leverage.

One of the characteristics of international crises is the inability of parties to control their trajectory, along with the ambiguity of objectives. There is also an atmosphere of tension, mutual threats, and a tendency toward the use of armed force. When an international crisis becomes complex, decision-makers are forced to take decisive decisions within a limited time frame, and any mistake may disrupt the negotiation process. Under such conditions, maintaining communication becomes essential to prevent the crisis from slipping out of the control of the involved parties.

Strategy alone is nothing more than a set of principles and good intentions; without effective and serious human effort, it is meaningless. Thus, the human element in planning has become a fundamental component of negotiation. The ability of negotiators to understand the capabilities and motivations of their counterparts is essential for successful negotiation processes.

The psychological composition of negotiating parties has attracted the attention of behavioral scientists due to its significant impact on negotiation processes in all forms and methods. A true

understanding of the negotiator's psychological makeup allows for better goal-setting, planning, and balancing between strategy and tactics. Psychological studies have shown that the successful competent negotiator's qualities fall into two groups:

Skills, experience, and knowledge: including technical competencies and expertise related to negotiation processes.

Personal traits and abilities: such as the ability to perceive problems holistically without losing focus in details, analyze situations and identify key aspects, and extract necessary information for negotiation (Al-Hassan, 1993, pp. 127–128). This also includes sound judgment when information is incomplete or unreliable, decision-making under crisis conditions, time management, emotional stability, psychological balance, openness to others' opinions, and adaptability to changing conditions.

Behavioral scientists generally classify the qualities of a successful negotiator into three capacities:

Intellectual capacity: sound thinking, planning, and balanced analysis.

Human capacity: effective interpersonal relations and constructive communication with other negotiators.

Technical capacity: understanding negotiation goals, strategies, and tactics.

Mediation refers to the intervention of a third party between conflicting parties with their consent to propose a solution to the dispute. Such solutions are non-binding. Reconciliation committees, as stipulated in the 1925 Locarno Treaty, were composed of 3–5 members unrelated to the dispute, and their jurisdiction was limited to conflicts of interest (political disputes), not legal ones.

An example of this is the agreement reached during the 1962 Cuban crisis, mentioned earlier in detail. This agreement was initially reported and transmitted by American journalist John Scali, who worked for ABC television, and later appointed as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. He communicated with Soviet consul Alexander Fomin at the Soviet embassy during lunch at the Occidental Restaurant on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington.

For his part, President Khrushchev maintained contact with American businessman William Knox of Westinghouse, who was visiting Moscow, as well as with American singer Jerome Hines after his performance in the Soviet capital.

Although the Cuban crisis ended peacefully, the superpowers learned from it valuable lessons that improved direct communication during crises and emergencies, which later became known as the "hotline between the two capitals."

3.5 Limiting the Use of Military Force to a Restricted Geographic Area, Without Final Solutions in the Cuban Crisis

Based on the principle of "defending state interests," a party involved in a crisis has the inherent right to resort to the use of force, even progressively and in an escalating manner. However, contrary to this, a policy of not completely closing the door requires stakeholders to seize every possible opportunity in order to buy time. It also necessitates delaying the possibility of resorting to the nuclear option, even in its tactical form, while ensuring that the military conflict remains geographically contained.

During the Cuban crisis, a task force of 17 members was formed in the United States to assist President John Kennedy in making decisions and responding appropriately to the Soviet challenge. The majority of this task force voted in favor of imposing a naval blockade on the Cuban coast, while

sending clear signals and warnings to the Soviets that the United States was attempting to buy time. This initial measure avoided aerial bombardment of Cuban experts, which would have caused casualties and further complicated the crisis. If the blockade failed to achieve its objectives, air strikes would remain an urgent and possible option.

The United States succeeded in gaining time by accepting the advice of the British ambassador in Washington, Sir David Ormsby-Gore, who proposed drawing the blockade line very close to the Cuban coast and also near Soviet cargo ships, in order to send an urgent message to Moscow to change course. It was in the U.S. interest to confine the Cuban crisis to the Caribbean region.

On the other hand, the Soviets were inclined to expand the confrontation further, particularly toward strategically and politically vulnerable areas in Europe, especially Berlin. However, Moscow ultimately abandoned this approach and agreed to a settlement that included the dismantling and removal of Soviet missile bases from Cuba, in exchange for lifting the American blockade on Cuba and an American pledge not to attack the island. This was considered a Soviet “gain” through the withdrawal of American Jupiter missiles from Turkey.

3.6 Limiting the Use of Military Force to a Restricted Geographic Area, Without Final Solutions in the Korean Crisis

During the Korean crisis, the United States rejected the demand of General MacArthur to carry out air strikes on Chinese military and industrial centers north of the Yalu River, so as not to provide the Soviets with additional justification for intervention and further escalation of hostility. Instead, the U.S. government dismissed General MacArthur from his position as commander of United Nations forces in Korea (Al-Halim, 2002, p. 199).

3.7 Policy of Preventing Mutual Collapse Without Final Solutions in the Cuban Crisis

During a crisis, the adversary suddenly becomes a partner in managing its resolution, as both sides must coexist for survival. The two parties are essentially in the same boat, each confronting turbulent waves while defending its own existence and, at the same time, teaching the other lessons in resilience.

Refusing to insist on maximalist demands can provide the opponent/partner with an acceptable exit from the crisis, allowing it to appear as though it has achieved a partial victory at both domestic and international levels. A rational solution can pave the way for a positive and constructive relationship between the parties, whereas the opposite leads to a destructive outcome for both.

During the Cuban crisis, both the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to a settlement. This crisis is considered one of the most dangerous in human history due to the real threat of nuclear war between the two superpowers (Zakaria, 2009, p. 210).

The dismantling and removal of Soviet missile bases from Cuba eliminated a direct threat to American security and interests, which was seen as an American victory. Meanwhile, the U.S. commitment not to invade Cuba and to lift the blockade allowed Khrushchev to claim that his primary objectives protecting Fidel Castro’s regime had been achieved. Moreover, the end of the Cuban crisis was considered by some as a turning point in the Cold War and a fundamental transformation in U.S.–Soviet relations.

3.8 Policy of Acting Outside International Law and Norms Without Final Solutions in International Crises

The United States directly intervenes in the management of international crises particularly in Islamic and Arab contexts according to its strategy and interests, by leveraging international

legitimacy through reliance on United Nations resolutions. On this basis, it intervenes militarily or non-militarily, using the political, economic, and military capabilities provided by regional organizations such as NATO, as well as international financial and economic institutions like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (Duwidar, 1996, p. 43), and the Group of Seven, to which Russia joined as an observer. This was especially evident after the United States positioned itself as the guardian of “global peace,” openly declaring that the protection of American national security is equivalent to protecting global security (Hajjaj, 1997, p. 73).

In other cases, it intervenes unilaterally, assuming the consequences of its actions and later justifying them. These American interventions have led many countries to demand reform of the United Nations Charter to expand permanent membership in the Security Council, so that it more accurately reflects the global political and economic landscape and current power relations. This reform is intended to serve humanity as a whole, taking into account all components of the international community, in both the Global North and South. The current structure of the Council is essentially a reflection of the post–World War II balance of power rather than today’s realities.

Expanding Security Council membership requires amending Articles 23 and 27 of the UN Charter, which were previously amended in 1963 when membership increased from 11 to 15 members.

3.9 Policy of Escaping Forward Without Final Solutions in the Palestinian Issue

The Palestinian issue has received attention from the United Nations since its establishment, which issued numerous resolutions and recommendations regarding it (including Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and General Assembly Resolutions 3089, 3236, 2646, 2672, among others), all affirming Palestinian rights.

The American role in this crisis has been present since the Cold War era. However, these resolutions and others have become largely ineffective because they have not been accompanied in most cases by practical enforcement measures, due to American complicity.

Between 1948 and 1989, the General Assembly and the Security Council issued approximately 300 resolutions condemning the Zionist entity. However, this entity disregarded them, relying on the absolute protection of the American veto.

During the same period, the Security Council condemned this entity 46 times. This number could have risen to 68 resolutions had the United States not used its veto power.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the outbreak of the second Gulf crisis, along with the deterioration of Arab national security, the decline of Arab solidarity and reconciliation, and the growing American dominance over international affairs, the role of the UN General Assembly and regional organizations in crisis management diminished. The Madrid Peace Conference was then launched under American sponsorship, while the United Nations became merely an observer after having been a central actor in the Palestinian issue for more than half a century (Others, n.d., p. 70). These negotiations were not based primarily on binding Security Council resolutions (242, 338, and 181), but rather were open-ended and eventually led to the Camp David II agreements, in which the former U.S. president played a direct personal role comparable only to Jimmy Carter’s role in the first Camp David Accords (President, 2007, p. 343).

In 1991, the United States succeeded in leading a campaign to cancel the UN General Assembly resolution that considered Zionism a form of racism. Several Arab states even voted in favor of this repeal.

The result of these unequal negotiations marked by Arab and international weakness and American complicity was a continued stalemate, as the Zionist entity (Israel) persisted in obstructing the process under American silence, and even endorsement. Developments after September 11, 2001, further disappointed expectations, as the United States continued its unconditional support for Israel and its policies. It also, for the first time, placed several Palestinian liberation factions on its list of so-called “terrorist organizations,” and used or threatened its veto in the Security Council to prevent the deployment of protection forces for Palestinians or the establishment of fact-finding commissions regarding daily Israeli violations (Khashim, 1993, p. 87).

The situation worsened further with the U.S. Congress decision recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, a blatant deviation from its role as a peace sponsor and a clear violation of international law and relevant UN resolutions. This decision became enforceable law, accompanied by financial and military support to Israel.

Thus, the Israeli government intensified its restrictions on Palestinians, assassinated resistance leaders, bombed Palestinian Authority institutions, stormed cities, villages, and refugee camps, and besieged President Yasser Arafat under the pretext of “combating terrorism,” continuing until his controversial death amid allegations of assassination. Negotiations were reduced to matters prior to September 28, 2001.

The American role became central and necessary in managing this crisis. The United States succeeded in dragging the Palestinian side into unequal and ambiguous negotiations with a well-prepared adversary fully aware of American support and the deteriorating Arab and Islamic situation. The United States further reduced its engagement with the Palestinian Authority, freezing contacts under the claim that it was not a serious partner for peace.

Thus, it can be argued that this state does not act based on objective realities but rather on how these realities affect its interests. Whenever these interests become urgent, they rise in priority over all else (Sa‘b, 2002, p. 247).

Faced with the escalation of this issue to its most dangerous stage, the United States began seeking new partners to find a way out of the crisis resulting from the Israeli invasion of self-rule areas, in order to avoid bearing full responsibility for its consequences, with no solution in sight.

The recent war in Gaza after October 7 has further revealed and confirmed American, British, and German partnership in what can be described as a war of extermination against Palestinians, particularly civilians children, women, and the elderly. The number of victims exceeded thirty-eight thousand killed, in addition to crimes of starvation, forced displacement, destruction of infrastructure, and targeting of hospitals, the wounded, the sick, and medical teams in full view of the world. These constitute complete war crimes prohibited by international law. Yet the crisis has effectively persisted in reality up to the moment of submitting this article, due to the continued use of the veto against international efforts calling for a ceasefire, thus reflecting the determination of major powers to maintain the crisis and allow the continuous spilling of Palestinian blood without interruption.

Conclusion

The policy of international crises pursued by the great powers, foremost among them the United States of America and Russia (formerly the Soviet Union), is generally characterized by a realist

approach that takes into account considerations of gain and loss and seeks to select the most feasible option from among several available alternatives, even when all of them entail undesirable consequences or negative implications.

If international legal constraints are considered the last factor taken into account by these states when pursuing crisis policy, they nevertheless consider a set of decisive factors that shape the nature and effectiveness of such management (whether arbitrary or objective, etc.). These factors include the strength or weakness of the targeted party/adversary, the extent to which the crisis is linked to the vital interests of major powers, and its immediate or future impact on their leading role within the international system.

It is in the interest of major powers that a number of issues remain unresolved, leaving targeted populations trapped within them, as though in an open-ended temporal prison. The dominant feature of this type of management, in most cases, is that it reflects the “law of force” rather than the “force of law” (Al-Adli, 1997, p. 110).

The methods of international crisis policy that prevent the achievement of final solutions—sometimes referred to as “crisis-based management”—can be summarized in a set of policies as presented in this article:

- Policy of misperception
- Policy of objective attainment
- Policy of seeking broad support
- Policy of maintaining communication with the adversary
- Geographic containment of military force
- Policy of preventing mutual collapse
- Policy of acting outside international law and customary norms
- Policy of “escaping forward”

The last two policies clearly embody U.S. policy toward the Palestinian issue (Gaza) since October 7, where, despite numerous international resolutions against the occupying entity since 1948, it continues to defy the international will under open American support.

Recommendations:

The necessity of activating an ethical global conscience in international relations.

Commitment to international law under the framework of international organizations.

In cases of violations against the international community, firmness must be applied to ensure international peace.

Weak states should coordinate and form blocs in various fields to achieve protection and immunity from the violations of powerful states.

Regarding the Palestinian crisis, Arab and Islamic organizations must fulfill their role in protecting Palestinians from widespread destruction and genocidal war practices carried out by the Zionist enemy in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and other areas.

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