Recent political events in West Asia (and North Africa) have proven the thesis that West Asia is currently at the heart of global political and geo-strategy. A gaze at the Mediterranean confirms that fact when we view a flotilla of U.S. aircraft carrier groups (the Gerald Ford and the Eisenhower), two British warships and a German warship close to shore. NATO’s naval presence was quickly ramped up in a futile effort to deter the axis of resistance in the region from engaging the Zionist entity in support of the resistance in Gaza. As events have shown, the Lebanese resistance engaged the Zionist entity one day after October 7. The Iraqi resistance and the Yemeni resistance followed suit, all defying the U.S. and NATO threat in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Contrary to the claims of multiple analysts in both the East and West that the U.S. was about to leave the “Middle East” as it has bigger fish to fry in Southeast Asia; that its gaze is now on China, we see that the U.S. has increased its presence in West Asia and shall be here for a longer time than those analysts have predicted. Those analysts tried to convince themselves and the crowds around them about that false claim of withdrawal by pointing out that the U.S. had withdrawn from Iraq and Afghanistan. The fact of the matter, though, is that the U.S. was defeated in both Iraq and Afghanistan and was compelled to withdraw. Many analysts either did not pay much attention to those facts or were perhaps engaged in propaganda that served the interests of the West to dampen the effects of those and other defeats of Western imperialism in our region.

Regardless of whether one supports this or that state in the West Asia region, it is critical to look at the facts to determine where we are geopolitically and estimate where we might be headed. Facts do not lie. In this case, they demonstrate that the axis of resistance (Iran, Yemen, the Lebanese resistance in both its secular and religious wings, many of the Palestinian resistance groups and later the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces) had fought and defeated the U.S. and Zionist military onslaught to further divide the Arab world and end the Palestinian struggle for liberation once and for all.

The Russian Federation entered directly into the fight on September 30, 2015, which was a clear indication of the centrality of West Asia to Russian geopolitical strategy. It also had been able to tip the balance in favor of the Syrian state. It is critical to note that the defeat of ISIS in Syria and Iraq had foiled the U.S. strategic
plan of overwhelming Lebanon with ISIS/imperialist fighters recruited from all over the world to ultimately achieve the strategic goal of ending the Palestinian struggle for liberation and to try to reestablish its unilateral domination over West Asia.

For its part, China entered West Asia with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013 and more recently, through its diplomatic campaign in the Arab world and the rapprochement it has achieved between Iran and Saudi Arabia. China’s diplomacy in the region has been a huge success, something that the U.S. could not swallow. Hence, the U.S. diplomatic counteroffensive that followed and the destruction that the Zionist entity in Palestine has been conducting against the Palestinians in all of Palestine, especially in Gaza. In fact, the Zionist entity has committed genocide and other crimes against humanity in Gaza.

This rivalry among the big powers in West Asia (and North Africa) is further proof of the centrality of the region to global politics in the contemporary period. It is important to note that the U.S. is still fomenting trouble in Lebanon, Iraq and Syria and occupies Syrian territory rich in natural resources and a main source of agricultural production currently denied to the besieged Syrian people.

The spectacle of seeing the Zionist entity in Palestine providing shelter and medical treatment for ISIS fighters in Syria at the height of the war, was something revolting to any Palestinian who had been waiting for the day when the Zionist desecration of the Holy City, Al-Quds, and the land of the indigenous Palestinian people would end by the liberation of Palestine “from the River to the Sea.” The slogan essentially means a secular democratic state where Jews, Christians, and Muslims would live together with equal rights.

To Arabs, many of whom have fought the Zionists and imperialists on our lands, watching the Zionist entity aiding ISIS fighters was also revolting. This is the case for all Muslims who consider the Palestinian struggle for total liberation part of their duty. Here it is critical to differentiate between peoples and states, especially when we notice that a majority of the Arab states pay lip service to Palestinian liberation and over the years have successfully contained PLO figures such as its chairman, Arafat, who ultimately succumbed to Arab pressure leading him to compromise Palestinian national interests in favor of the Zionist entity.

The 1993 Oslo Accords, signed between the PLO and the Zionist entity, is clear proof of that. Oslo 1993 served the Zionists, the U.S. hegemon, and the West in general, but it also served those Muslim states, Arab and non-Arab, who still mouth Palestine, but deal Zionism.

There is no need to prove that the U.S. has always sided with the Zionist entity. Suffice it to look at the U.S. veto power in the UN Security Council and how it has been used in favor of the Zionist entity, which clearly indicates that every time the
U.S. veto was used, it meant that the U.S. acted against the survival of the Palestinians as a people.

The U.S. goal to ensure the dominance of the Zionist entity in the region is strategic. Simply put, it intends to disintegrate as much of the region as possible and make it as weak as possible. In this manner, the Zionist entity could claim that it is the “Jewish state” and would then easily implement its genocide against the Palestinian people. The Zionists started their genocidal plan in 1948, which led to the establishment of the apartheid settler-colonial entity. Those practices continued in all of Palestine after the Zionist entity had won the 1967 war.

Turkey has been in the eye of the storm, i.e., it has been a candidate for disintegration as well. Witness how the U.S. conspired against the Turkish state on July 15, 2016. Had the military coup succeeded, no one could imagine what political and social abyss Turkey would have descended into. Notice that the U.S. did not care whether Turkey was a very important member of NATO or whether it had solid military, economic, and trade relations with the Zionist entity. The lesson from that? As Husni Mubarak, the deposed president of Egypt once said: “whoever thinks that he enjoys the warmth of the U.S. cover, would find that he has been in the nude all along.”

It appears, however, that the current ruling elite in Turkey has not learned the lessons of the July 15 coup and continues to perform political acrobatics between the U.S., on the one hand, and Russia and China, on the other. Given that the Zionist entity is under the protection of the U.S., Turkey has been mouthing support for Palestine to placate many Turks who genuinely support Palestinian liberation and who overwhelmingly vote for the current Turkish regime and also to gain support among Palestinians. Be that as it may, the current Turkish regime still maintains deep economic, political, military, and trade relations with the Zionist entity. Ultimately, The Turkish regime will have to make a choice, as much of Turkey’s political and economic future depends on its decision in this matter.

A final word about China’s BRI is in order. The BRI has been moving relatively fast since it was announced in 2013. Furthermore, the recent salvo of Chinese active diplomacy in the region is unparalleled and has been a factor in the U.S. decision to expand its presence in Northern Syria, East of the Euphrates. Fomenting trouble for the Russian Federation and China in West Asia and perhaps engaging the Russians in other theaters of war to scatter their focus on Ukraine appears to be the direction in which the U.S. is going. But this path is fraught with danger that could escalate into a regional or perhaps world war.

Finally, if there was any doubt about the centrality of West Asia to global strategy, Tawafan Al-Aqsa (the Al-Aqsa Deluge) was a wake-up call for all. The military operation by the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and its military wing, Al-Qassam Battalions, has been effective by all measures. It shocked to the core
the Zionists and their supporters all over the world. Multiple other Palestinian groups have joined the fight. Some from the first day in one capacity or another.

The pressure cooker that is Palestine exploded after having suffered oppression, repression, ethnic cleansing, genocide, and attacks on both Muslim and Christian holy sites in Al-Quds (Jerusalem) and other parts of Palestine. Palestine exploded after multiple fights by the U.S.-Zionists against the Palestinian people. The Gaza attacks in 2008–2009, 2012, 2014, 2020, 2021, and 2022 solidified the resolve of the Palestinian resistance movement to deal a heavy blow on October 7, 2023 to U.S. and Zionist designs on Palestine and, by extension, on the entire region.

Palestinians say: “If one is not with Palestine, then in this case that person is clearly with the U.S. and Zionists.” One can no longer hide in the gray zone. The East is the direction from where the sun rises every day. Arab and Muslim states have to answer a question that most of their populations have already answered in favor of Palestinian liberation: What is my position regarding the Palestinian struggle for liberation? One would hope that the answer would be: we are with our respective peoples in this matter and we not only condemn the massacres perpetrated by the Zionist entity and Western imperialism but will commit human and material resources to ensure that the Palestinian people triumph in achieving their ultimate goal: liberation.

Note
1. The essay is based on the keynote address given at the VIII Middle East Symposium held at Gelişim University, Istanbul, Turkey October 24–26, 2023.