Abstract

After decades of conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian issue has still found no resolution. This proposal argues that a significant impediment to a resolution is a lack of trust; a lack of trust between Palestinians and their leadership and a lack of trust between Palestinians and Israelis. This proposal calls for a strategic increase in aid to the Palestinians that will improve their quality of life and nurture further collaboration between Palestinians and Israelis in an effort to build the trust that is currently missing.
Table of Contents

I. Action Forcing Event ................................................. 1
II. Statement of the Problem ........................................... 3
III. Historical Analysis .................................................. 9
IV. Policy Proposal ...................................................... 19
V. Policy Authorization Tool ........................................... 19
VI. Policy Implementation ............................................... 21
VII. Policy Analysis ........................................................ 24
VIII. Political Analysis .................................................... 29
IX. Recommendation ......................................................
MEMORANDUM

To: President Donald Trump
From: Idan Scher
Subject: Building towards Middle East Peace.
Date: 4/30/2018

On February 7, 2018, the Israeli Defense Force announced that it was deploying additional battalions to the West Bank to properly respond to an uptick in Palestinian attacks against both civilians and security forces of the State of Israel.¹ Reasons for this uptick stem from President Trump’s declaration of Jerusalem as the capitol of the State of Israel as well anger at the Palestinian Authority’s security forces continued cooperation with Israel and frustration with the continued humanitarian hardships for the Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem declared that the Palestinian people were not going to carry out a “lone wave” of rage but rather this was the beginning of an ongoing intifada.²

Since the beginning of the Second Intifada in 2000 at least 9,565 Palestinians have been killed by Israelis and 1,251 Israelis have been killed by Palestinians from the other side since 2000. The majority of those killed have been civilians on both sides; and many children as well. The number of Palestinians injured by Israelis since the beginning of the Second Intifada is at least 101,585 people and the number of Israelis injured by Palestinians is at least 11,962 people.


It is important to remember, that being “injured” includes paralysis, losing limbs, and other inflictions that permanently diminish one’s quality of life.³

The financial cost of this conflict for both Israel and the Palestinians is astonishing. It is estimated that over 100 billion USD has been spent by Israel between 1970-2008 on the West Bank settlements and the security in that area alone. This is besides for the regular military and security costs that Israel must budget for on an annual basis.⁴ For example, the recent one-month long mini-war with Hamas in 2014 was estimated to cost Israel 3.6 billion USD.⁵

The financial costs of this conflict for the Palestinians are agonizing as well. It is estimated that due to the constraints imposed the Israeli security apparatus, Palestinian unemployment increased by more than 10 percent between 1999 and 2008 to reach 32 percent. 57 percent of Palestinian households were living in poverty in 2007, compared to 20 percent in 1998. The trade deficit as a ratio of GDP for the Palestinians reached 79 percent in 2007. It is clear that without International support both Israel and the Palestinian Authority would have gone bankrupt years ago.


⁶Elkhodary, Taghreed. Costs of Israeli Occupation,
Statement of the Problem

It goes without saying that trust is an integral component of conflict resolution. Without trust, negotiations can only go so far.

Parties to a conflict will have a difficult time compromising or committing to peace plans if they do not have trust in each other and a final resolution will be constantly out of reach. It seems very clear that the parties involved in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict suffer from a deep lack of trust for one another.7

For example, Israel has feared that any agreement with the Palestinians was just part of a “Phased Approach.” Israel has suspected that any compromise or concession they have made or will make in the pursuit of peace is in reality a gift to the Palestinians that will be to the Palestinian advantage in an eventual and inevitable war.8

Israel also does not trust the Palestinian Authority as a true peace partner. The Palestinian Authority provides a stipend to the families of individuals incarcerated in Israel for criminal actions taken against Israel. Israel views this as the Palestinian Authority supporting terror against Israel.9


Another reason Israel does not have trust in the Palestinian Authority is due to their belief that the Palestinian Authority incites terrorism. Netanyahu publicly called on the world to tell Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas to stop inciting terrorism.\(^{10}\)

A more recent example of Palestinian Authority incitement was in December 2017, when Mahmoud al-Habbash, Abbas’s advisor on religious affairs, incited Palestinians to religious war during his Friday sermon at the Palestinian Authority headquarters. In response to President Trump’s declaration of Jerusalem as Israel’s capitol, Al-Habbash called on Muslims the world over to give their “souls and bodies” as “martyrs” for Jerusalem.\(^{11}\)

This lack of trust goes both ways. The Palestinians fear that Israel is not a true partner for peace and that Israel does not believe it is in their best interests to compromise for the sake of peace.\(^{12}\) President Trump echoed this in a recent interview with Israeli daily, Israel HaYom, when he said he is “not necessarily sure” that the Israelis are sincerely seeking a peace treaty with the Palestinians.\(^{13}\)


The Palestinians also believe that Israel reneged on its Oslo commitments and cannot be trusted to honor future commitments. A huge erosion of trust has come as a result of continued Israeli settlement building in the West Bank. The Palestinians also feel that Israel is actively trying to undermine the peace process by building settlements and stifling Palestinian growth.14

The Palestinian argument is that Israel’s declared support for a two-state solution must be dishonest. How can Israel declare genuine support for a Palestinian state in the West Bank while simultaneously building Israeli homes in the area that will definitely be a part of a Palestinian state upon reaching a deal?

The above-mentioned grievances from both sides combined with the broad demonization of the “other” and all of the tragic ramifications of the failed peace process and its accompanied rhetoric, have led to the point where trust between the two parties is virtually non-existent.

A recent poll from February 2017 conducted jointly by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research and the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research polled Israelis and Palestinians about their opinions of each other and the data is disturbing. Among Palestinians 86% of those polled feel Israeli Jews are untrustworthy. On the Israeli Jewish side 71% indicated that Palestinians cannot be trusted.

Palestinians and Israeli Jews were also asked about fear of each other. Among Israeli Jews, 66% indicate they feel fear toward the Palestinians although only 43% of Palestinians indicate that they fear Israeli Jews. To make matters worse, it seems that the distrust is growing, as the younger cohorts of adults (18-36) on each side both professed a greater level of distrust than those of a generation earlier.15

Faith is missing in a second essential area as well; between the Palestinian public and the Palestinian leadership. The peace process has not been successful in transforming the Palestinian grassroots into people ready to act for peace. The lack of improvement in the quality of Palestinian life and what is perceived as a fruitless negotiation project with Israel, has left the Palestinian public disillusioned with the viability of a peace process and their leaders’ ability to bring about change.16 This lack of faith entrenched in the Palestinian public has weakened the Palestinian leadership’s ability to compromise and make necessary concessions. As far back as the Camp David negotiations, Yasser Arafar would frequently claim that he could not make certain concessions because he feared for his life.17


Sadly, this inability to be flexible is the cause of a vicious cycle. It has kept the Palestinian leadership from making effective decisions which has been a contributing element to the failure of the peace process, which in turn has eroded the Palestinian leadership’s credibility with their constituency, which has contributed to Palestinian violence and terror as well as many Palestinians seeking alternative leadership the likes of the terror group Hamas to perhaps deliver what the PA could not.\(^\text{18}\)

These concepts play out very clearly in several different polls conducted in the past couple of months. For starters, a recent poll conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center in cooperation with the German foundation Friedrich Ebert Stiftung found that over 52% of Palestinians do not have trust in any current Palestinian political personality and 53% of Palestinians do not have trust in any existing political or religious Palestinian faction.\(^\text{19}\) A poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research showed that an unprecedented 70% of Palestinians want Palestinian National Authority Mahmoud Abbas to resign.\(^\text{20}\)


And Palestinian distrust goes further than just lack of trust in their political representation. Polls by data analytics project Arab Barometer show that Palestinian trust in Palestinian institutions, such as courts and the police, has drastically declined over the past ten years for every age group. Just as indicated in regards to Israeli-Palestinian mistrust, the decline in trust for institutions was most drastic for the younger age cohorts between the ages of 18-35.

One clear example of this staggering institutional mistrust is from Palestinians between the ages of 26-35. Only 31% of respondents in this age cohort trust their courts and only 39% of respondents trust their police force.21

This lack of trust between the two parties and this lack of faith the Palestinian public has in its leadership are two key components in explaining why this conflict has not been resolved and why it cannot be resolved under the current circumstances. If not resolved the cycle of hate and violence will continue.

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Historical Analysis

These two trust issues that play key roles in holding back a resolution to the conflict are the results of specific conduct over many years. The lack of faith the Palestinian population has in its leadership can be explained rather simply. In every previous peace process there has been no incorporation of the Palestinian public, rather just their leaders. The various elites of Fatah/Palestinian Authority would take part in peace summits and negotiation platforms while the “average” Palestinian had virtually no input in any of the processes.\(^{22}\)

To make matters worse, while the elite have been engaged in what is now a peace process that has continued for two decades, the Palestinian people have seen no real correlation between the many negotiations and an improvement in their quality of life. It can be argued that for the average Palestinian, quality of life has been diminished rather than improved by the peace process. These factors have been clear contributors in creating a Palestinian lack of faith in their leadership.

There are several areas that are particularly significant when discussing Palestinian quality of life that have a severe impact on Palestinian trust in their leadership and institutions. One area is in the state of law and order and security in the Palestinian Territories. There is currently a very high level of collaboration and cooperation on the security level between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. In fact, Israeli army officials estimate that Palestinian security is responsible for thwarting 30-40% of attacks in the

\(^{22}\)Braunold, Joel, Sarah Yerkes. *Is a Peace Deal Possible if Israelis and Palestinians Simply Don’t Trust Each Other?*
West Bank. However, there are many Palestinian towns in the West Bank that suffer from a lack of healthy collaboration. They are the areas in which the PA security forces, the NSF, are not allowed to have a permanent presence. This means that Israel is supposed to be policing these areas. But Israel, focusing on counter-terrorism, neglects to properly police these towns and as a result crime has flourished in many of these areas. Recently, one of these towns was granted a permanent NSF presence and crime rates have dropped dramatically. This in turn created a situation of better quality of life for the Palestinian populace, more trust in their leadership, and a lessening of hostility against Israel who are seen as allowing crime to run rampant in Palestinian towns. As well, as Israelis see the PA police the Palestinians more comprehensively, their trust in the PA increases.23

Another gap, is in the number of police cadets the NSF has available.24 The United States Security Coordinator(USSC) has successfully trained many Palestinian police cadets.25 However, more need to be hired. These gaps lead to a diminished quality of life for the “average” Palestinian populace.

A second area in which Palestinian quality of life is quite poor is in healthcare. Currently, it is a long and arduous process for a Palestinian resident to gain access to healthcare in Israel, and in the Palestinian Authority, healthcare is severely lacking.26


The difficult process of accessing healthcare in Israel is explained as a repercussion of Israel’s security concerns. This means that Palestinians are often not accessing proper healthcare within the Palestinian territories or within Israel. There are several NGO’s currently working on taking Israel’s world-class healthcare and bringing it to the PA through training of Palestinian healthcare professionals in Israeli hospitals as well as sharing of cutting edge research and best practices. Two such NGO’s are Project Rozana and the Israel Palestine Cooperative for Economic Expansion. This type of work both betters the quality of life in the Palestinian territories and potentially increases trust between Israel and the Palestinians.

The third area pertaining to Palestinian quality of life that is very significant is economic development. In a poll taken in 1993, Palestinian respondents ranked job availability and standards of living ahead of repression, violence and corruption, as the greatest concern in the potential transition to self-government. There are currently collaborative efforts between Israelis and Palestinians, actively working on joint projects to increase the economy and job market of both the Palestinians and Israelis. A prominent actor in this realm is the Israel-Palestinian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This is another key area in improving Palestinian quality of life while at the same time seeing an increase in collaboration between Israelis and Palestinians. The deep mistrust between Israel and the Palestinians is the result of a very long and unsuccessful peace process. For a period of time Israel would not even come to the negotiating table with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

Even after the Rahab Arab Summit of October 1974, where the PLO was declared the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and a month later Yasser Arafat, the President of the PLO was invited to address the United Nation’s General Assembly, Israel still refused to directly negotiate. In fact, President Reagan’s 1982 “Fresh Start Initiative” peace plan based on the Land-for-Peace principle as set out in UNSC Resolution 242 never went anywhere for this very reason. Due to Israel’s refusal to interact directly with the PLO, Jordan was to represent the Palestinians in the process. But the PLO walked away from the table refusing to allow Jordan to negotiate on their behalf.

The reason that Israel refused direct negotiations with the PLO is because the PLO refused to accept UNSC Resolution 242 and recognize Israel’s right to exist. In fact, at the time, even the moderates among the PLO advocated for a peace plan only to better enable them to regain the entire Mandatory Palestine. They felt that accepting a partition was the wisest step towards regaining control of the State of Israel and the West Bank.28

Throughout the 1980’s this stance of the PLO gave Israel reason to have faith in the Palestinians as a legitimate peace partner and ruined the possibility of direct negotiations with Israel. At the same time the PLO was committed to this hardline position, there was also gridlock within the Israeli Knesset. The governments in power were unable to commit to any real concessions due to the refusal of the right-wing factions of these governments to support any such compromises;

28 Reich, Bernard. Arab-Israeli Conflict and Conciliation: a Documentary History
this obviously made Palestinians working towards a deal lose faith in Israel and their commitment to finding a just resolution. In December 1987, a mostly grassroots protest, referred to as the Intifada, was initiated by the Palestinians. Palestinian frustration with Israel and their lack of self-determination came to the fore and manifested itself in the form of demonstrations, labor strikes, and violence. The Intifada was as much a protest against Israel as it was a demonstration against the PLO who were seen by the Palestinian grassroots as corrupt and disconnected from the “average” Palestinian.

One of the results of the Intifada was the Palestinian issue shifted from a focus on the Palestinian refugee camps outside of the West Bank to the plight of the Palestinians living within the West Bank and Gaza. These were people who just wanted a better quality of life and who would be far more open to compromise with Israel. Accordingly, a year after the Intifada started PLO president Yasser Arafat renounced terrorism and declared a commitment to finding a solution based on the two-states-for-two-people concept; these were necessary steps towards bringing Israel into negotiating directly with the Palestinians.

This finally happened in September 1993 through the Israel-PLO Letters of Recognition. Yasser Arafat, on behalf of the PLO, recognized Israel’s right to exist, accepted UNSC Resolution 242 as the basis of negotiations, and renounced violence against Israel.

30 ibid
31 ibid
At the same time Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.\(^{32}\)

The Letters of Recognition formed part of the Oslo Accords. These accords set up a transitional Palestinian government in the West Bank and Gaza known as the Palestinian Authority (PA). This government was intended to take control of the West Bank and Gaza over a five year period during which final status issues were to be negotiated and settled.

From the very beginning of this seemingly promising plan, that had the support of a majority on each side, there were major setbacks. The extremists on both sides actively worked to destroy the peace process. Israel began to lose faith in the PA as they seemed unwilling to actively subdue the terrorism coming from the West Bank. Furthermore, very important steps were consistently being implemented behind schedule. The Israeli withdrawal took six months longer than proposed. An interim agreement, known as Oslo II, took two years to implement instead of the projected nine months.\(^{33}\)

Eventually the Oslo Accords fell apart. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by an Israeli extremist, terror attacks against Israeli civilians continued, and in 1996, right-wing politician Benjamin Netanyahu was elected as Israel’s prime minister. The willingness for peace on both sides came into question and the Oslo approach was derailed.


\(^{33}\) Dowty, Alan. *Israel/Palestine.*
In July of 2000, US President Clinton hosted a direct negotiations summit at Camp David with the goal of reaching a resolution to the conflict. This time, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak made considerable concessions, but Arafat demanded a right of return for refugees to all parts of Historic Palestine. Barak could not agree to this demand because such a move would have erased the Jewish majority in Israel and effectively ended the Jewish state.\(^{34}\)

Although Arafat’s all-encompassing demand seems unrealistic and perhaps a sign that he was not negotiating in good faith, the Palestinians made the same claim against Barak and Israel. The Palestinians were wary to make real concessions to Israel as they saw Barak support continued development of Jewish West Bank settlements which made them question his commitment to a peace plan based on the concept of two-states-for-two-peoples. During this time, Palestinian terrorism was still a constant factor in Israeli life and most Israelis felt that the PA was giving the Palestinian people permission to carry out these attacks if not actually inciting them.\(^{35}\) After the lack of success at Camp David, President Clinton put together a “take it or leave it” deal and presented it to both parties. Israel eventually accepted the deal but Arafat, after stalling and proposing amendments, never accepted the deal. In 2014, President Clinton laid the blame for the lack of success of his plan on Yasser Arafat.\(^{36}\)


\(^{35}\) Ben-Ami, Shlomo. *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli-Arab Tragedy*

And back then, many Israelis took Arafat’s refusal to sign the deal as a clear signal that the Palestinians would never compromise for peace.

Right after this, the Second Intifada broke out. This was a more organized protest and terror campaign than the spontaneous, grassroots led First Intifada. In response, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon made it very clear that he refused to negotiate with the Palestinians while the violence continued. As a result of this, the peace process was put to rest for a while. Furthermore, in an effort to stem Palestinian violence, in 2002, Israel reoccupied the West Bank and Gaza, after having previously left as part of their commitment to the Oslo Accords.

Israel saw the Second Intifada as a clear declaration by the Palestinians that they were not a serious peace partner and they refused to deal with Arafat any longer. In 2003, the Bush administration announced the Quarter Roadmap for Peace, together with the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations. It was the newest peace plan presented to the parties to the conflict. Israel accepted the general principles of the proposal but would not agree to phase one of the plan, which called on Israel to withdraw from the areas it occupied during the Second Intifada, unless all Palestinian violence ceased. Then Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, also refused to freeze settlement construction as a pre-condition to getting negotiations started. The Roadmap for Peace ended in failure.

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37 Dowty, Alan. Israel/Palestine.

In 2005 two major occurrences took place that continue to significantly impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today. Prime Minister Sharon announced the unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and four West Bank Settlements. As well, the Israeli Defense Force announced the imminent building of a security barrier along the Gaza border as well as on the border between Israel and the West Bank.

The unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Gaza was criticized by the Palestinians. They felt that the unilateral nature of the move showed an Israeli rejection of the legitimacy of the PA. As well, Israelis on the left and on the right criticized the move. The right lambasted the withdrawal because of their opposition to giving up any part of Historic Palestine and the left argued that Israel was only doing this to strengthen their position in the West Bank.39

The security barrier was a terrible setback in the eyes of the Palestinians. Israel argued that it was necessary to ensure Israeli safety. However, the critics of the barrier argued that it made the lives of Palestinians even more difficult than they already were. They argued that it often made it impossible for Palestinians to maintain jobs in Israel and that it separated Palestinian communities and even families and that it was a true sign of Israeli oppression.40

39 Dowty, Alan. *Israel/Palestine*.


https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/israel/2017-02-17/israels-walls
In 2010, then Prime Minister Netanyahu implemented a ten-month settlement construction freeze, at the urging of President Obama, as a goodwill offering in an effort to re-start the peace process. The PA though did not engage in negotiations until the last month of the freeze. Then the vicious cycle set in again. The Israelis refused to continue the freeze unless the PA recognized Israel as a Jewish state which the PA was unwilling to do, and because the PA was unwilling to negotiate unless Israel continued the freeze the peace process fell apart yet again.

Speaking of settlement construction, the Palestinians do not just see it as a signal that Israel is not a true partner for peace, it has raised the level of Palestinian frustration and anger for other reasons as well. The IDF has to take certain security measures to protect Israeli settlers from Palestinian violence. Whether it be security checkpoints, restrictions on Palestinian travel, late night raids, or responses to clashes between settlers and Palestinians, the Palestinian people suffer the consequences of these security activities which are only necessary because of the Israeli settlements on land that the Palestinians think is theirs.

From the very beginning of direct negotiations, it seemed clear that each side was wary of the other’s sincerity and legitimate willingness to compromise for peace. As one peace plan after another has failed, each time with devastating repercussions, it would seem that the trust between the two sides has eroded completely.

Couple the failed peace process and its repercussions with some of the parties’ respective policies, the conflict seems to have no final resolution in sight. To make matters worse,
the conduct of the Palestinian leadership has ruined the faith the Palestinian people have in it, which makes a peace deal even further out of reach.

**Policy Proposal**

The goal of the policy proposed below is to properly manage the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to bring the parties to a place in which a resolution becomes more of a concrete reality due to an increase in trust between Israelis and Palestinians. Implementation of this policy will create more trust between Israelis and Palestinians at a grassroots level, activate the general Palestinian public to become more involved in resolving this conflict and narrow the trust gap that exists between the average Palestinian and his or her leadership. The increase in trust that is developed can be measured through future polling. The above-mentioned polls reflected the dismal state of trust both between Israelis and Palestinians and Palestinians and their leadership. This policy will lead to an increase in trust reflected in future polling of the same nature.

**Policy Authorization Tool**

The United States provides aid to the Palestinians in three ways. The first is through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); this is the way the State Department provides aid to countries all over the world. USAID is an independent agency of the US government that works very closely with the State Department and receives overall guidance from the Secretary of State.\(^{41}\)

In 2016, USAid to the Palestinian Authority was $232 million. One of the portfolios in the USAID contributions to the PA is “Economic Growth and Infrastructure.” USAID should increase its support to that portfolio, with the increase allocated specifically for collaborative projects between Israelis and Palestinians focusing on economic development.

Another portfolio of USAID to the Palestinian Authority is “Human Capital and Social Impact.” Part of this portfolio goes to bettering healthcare in the Palestinian territories. USAID should increase its support to the healthcare portfolio, and the extra funds should be used specifically on healthcare collaboration projects between Israel and the PA.

The second way the US provides aid to the Palestinian Authority is through INCLE(International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement). This is a fund that is both guided closely and whose budget is proposed by the State Department and then of course Congress must pass the State Department’s budget proposal.

In 2016, the United States donated $70 million to the PA from this fund to support law and order. The State Department should increase their support of law and order through this fund with a specific portfolio designated to help fill gaps in the PA’s policing program. Of course, this aid must be contingent on continued security cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.
The third way the United States financially aids the Palestinians is through the United Nations Relief and Work Agency in the near East for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA). However, this type of aid is not relevant to this paper.42

**Policy Implementation**

It is too late to implement this proposal for fiscal year (FY) 2019 as the budget the Department of State and USAID has already been requested for FY2019 with the necessary Congressional Budget Justification.43 However, the State Department should add these proposed additional allocations to the budget for FY2020 with the appropriate explanation given in the Congressional Budget Justification for FY2020. This will allow the increase to happen on the ground in 2020.

Being that there are already actors on the ground effectively creating collaboration between Israelis and Palestinians in the areas of economic development and healthcare, the new funds should be allocated directly to those actors. In economic development the Israeli-Palestinian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is the NGO that should receive the new funding and in healthcare the Israeli Palestinian Forum for Economic Expansion and the Rozana Project are two NGO’s making a huge impact through collaboration and they should split the new healthcare allocation.


With regard to the security segment of this proposal, it is more complicated. As explained, investing in permanent NSF presences in areas that need them, is not a strategy that can be counted on as many areas that desperately need a permanent presence are forbidden from having one. The existence of permanent NSF presences in areas where this would have been otherwise forbidden are the result of years of joint Israeli-Palestinian security coordination and a specific decision by the Israeli Defense Force. Filling the necessary gaps for Palestinian security, therefore, is not always straightforward.

However, the United States Security Coordinator (USSC) has a deep knowledge of the gaps in Palestinian policing and are the appropriate way to allocate funds to the NSF to better erase the crime vacuum that exists in many towns with large Palestinian populations.44

These investments will incentivize Israeli-Palestinian collaboration and help create a situation where the quality of life for the average Palestinian is improved. The collaboration and the improvement of the quality of life will help build trust between Israelis and Palestinians and as well will create a newfound faith for the Palestinian populace in their leadership.

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The cost of the proposed program is a total of $15 million dollars. The allocation to the security portfolio is $3.5 million. A police station, on average, costs $2 million to build (in the United States, no data on police station construction in Palestinian territories was found)\textsuperscript{45} and an Israeli police salary is on average $75,000 a year (no data on a PA police salary can be found).\textsuperscript{46} The shortfall of police officers in the town of Al-Aram, one of the many that suffer from rampant criminal activity, is twenty police officers. At $75,000 a year this is a total of $1.5 million. The security grant for FY2020 should be $3.5 million.

The total spent on aid to the Palestinians in FY2016, besides for the security grant and the UNRWA allocation, was $231.7 million.\textsuperscript{47} A 5% increase targeting collaboration in economic development and healthcare is called for; a total of $11.5 million split evenly as grants for healthcare collaboration and economic development collaboration. The total additional funds to be allocated through the above proposal are $15 million.

\texttt{https://www.rsmeans.com/model-pages/police-station.aspx}


\textsuperscript{47} Zanotti, Jim, \textit{U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians}. 

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23
Policy Analysis

As stated above, this policy proposal is not intended to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict rather to manage the conflict; to bring the parties to a point where there is enough faith to have created an environment ripe for resolution. The effectiveness of the policy should not be determined based on a resolution to the conflict but rather an increase in trust between Israel and the Palestinians and between the Palestinian grassroots and their leadership.

The proposed policy takes several points into account. If there is more trust between Israelis and Palestinians there is a better likelihood of coming to a mutually agreed upon resolution the conflict. This supposes that under some set of circumstances both the Palestinians and Israel would compromise for a resolution.

This is an assumption. Several scholars of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict believe that a Palestinian leader would never make concessions for the sake of peace. Khaled Abu Toameh, writing for the Gatestone Institute, explains that if Yasser Arafat, who enjoyed more faith from the Palestinian grassroots than the current leadership does, was not able to accept the generous offer made by then Prime Minister of Israel Eud Barak at Camp David in 2000, because, as Arafat explained, he did not want to “drink tea with Mr. Sadat”, then certainly no Palestinian leader today would make concessions for the sake of a resolution to the conflict and peace between the two peoples.


There are also scholars that believe that although past Israeli Prime Minister Eud Olmert agreed to a resolution based on the “two state” model, that was an aberration and Israel will never again make concessions for the sake of peace based on the formula of “two states for two peoples.”

This policy also supposes that distrust is a key factor in the lack of a resolution to this ongoing conflict. This has been suggested by many scholars of this conflict. As well, a “lack of trust between the parties” was cited by Secretary of State John Kerry as the main reason for the failure in the round of negotiations he brokered in the winter of 2016/2017.

However, there are scholars and studies that suggest otherwise. One study suggests that trust is not a key factor in creating mutually beneficial agreements and healthy societal functioning. One scholar, Walid Salem, takes this concept and applies in to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He explains that trust between the two parties is not a necessary component in reaching a resolution to the problem. He argues that trust will be a by-product of an eventual agreement and what is necessary to reach a resolution is a trustworthy process in which the mediator or third party is someone who is trusted by both parties.

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See also: Karsh, Ephraim, *Belief In Palestinian Openness to Two-State Solution Amounts to Insanity*

See also: Braunold, Joel, Sarah Yerkes. *Is a Peace Deal Possible if Israelis and Palestinians Simply Don’t Trust Each Other?*


Another assumption made by this proposal is that if quality of life is improved for the Palestinians then they will have more trust in their leadership. This is what happened during the period of the Oslo Accords. One of the many parts of the Oslo Accords was a focus on the establishment of a strong Palestinian internal security apparatus that could independently enforce law and order in the Palestinian territories. This was to be done through strong collaboration with the Israeli Defense Forces. In the immediate post-signing of the accords it seemed very clear that both sides were committed to realizing this goal. Through intensive cooperation between the Palestinian Security Forces and the IDF, based on a complex structuring that assuaged the concerns of both sides, a palpable improvement in internal Palestinian security could be seen. In this new, unfortunately short-lived, reality, Palestinian grassroots developed greater trust in their leadership as they saw improvement in their quality of life.53

Another assumption made by this proposal is that collaboration between Israel and the Palestinians to further mutual interests will help create trust between them. As explained above, this proposal is not about resolving the conflict. It is about managing the conflict in a way that nurtures an environment that is ripe for resolution, through building trust between the two parties. There are five accepted modalities of conflict management. The modality of conflict management that effectively builds and builds off of trust is “collaboration”. There are two types of “collaboration” in the area of conflict management.

When parties to a conflict are ready to work together, “collaboration” is the term that refers to two parties working together to find a resolution to the conflict. However, there is an earlier stage of “collaboration.” Before parties are ready to work together to find a resolution, if possible, parties should work together to further mutual interests. This type of “collaboration” brings the two parties to a place of trust and connection in which second stage “collaboration” becomes a possibility.\textsuperscript{54}

The next assumption this proposal makes is that resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is one worthwhile to the United States to pour additional money into to help resolve. This is not a simple assumption. It is not as if once a resolution is agreed upon that then the US will be able to cut back their funding. If that would have been the case there would have been a compelling argument; spend a bit more money now because upon reaching a resolution the US will see big savings. But this is not the case.

In 2015, the Rand Corporation published a study analyzing the costs of the conflict to the Israelis, Palestinians, and the international community. Part of the study showed current costs and compared them to what the costs would be ten years later in five different possible scenarios. The scenario of a resolved conflict was based on an agreed upon two state solution; the conflict solution against which all alternatives are generally measured.

In this scenario, Israel would see massive economic gains ten years down the line. The Palestinians as well would see very significant economic growth ten years later.

But the international community, in particular the United States, would need to shoulder over 100 billion USD worth of investment into the successful implementation of the resolution. The amount of money needing to be contributed would perhaps gradually decline as the resolution finds stability, but that is not a savings the US would see anytime soon.

This just begs the question, why has the US given so much to the Israelis and Palestinians, and why should they continue?

Some would argue that finding a resolution to the conflict is key to the United States achieving most of their goals for the Middle East.

Many scholars suggest that the violent anti-US ideology of many of the world’s arch terrorists, including Osama Bin-Laden, Khaled Sheikh Mohamed, and Ayman Al-Zawahiri, was formed because of the United State’s support for Israel’s “aggression against the Palestinians.” A resolution, then, becomes a matter of great national security importance for the United States.

The second half of this equation suggests that the prolonging of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict weakens the moderates in the Middle East, the very actors who are the friends and allies of the United States in the Islamic world.


57 ibid.
Another reason offered to explain why a resolution is in the best interests of the United States is that without a resolution it is only a matter of time before a destabilizing conflict explodes in the region, which would force the United States to invest exponentially more than they are currently investing into the region.

Furthermore, scholars argue that without a resolution to the conflict American power and effectiveness will be further undermined. Presidents of the United States have repeatedly stated certain goals or objectives in Iraq, Afghanistan, North Korea, Syria, and most glaringly in regards to the Middle East peace process and have not achieved them. The message being broadcast to the world is the United States are not as powerful as they once were. This is very problematic as other countries will behave accordingly.\(^{58}\)

**Political Analysis**

When contemplating this proposal, it is essentially about sending more aid to the Palestinians just in a strategic fashion. This is nothing new, just a specific type of increase. The political considerations this proposal presents include the public opinion of the taxpayers of the United States who will ultimately be funding this increase, and perhaps more importantly, the opinions of those who voted for the President of the United States which, as will be explained, means taking Israel’s response into consideration as well.

\(^{58}\text{ibid.}\)
As far as general public opinion in the United States goes, the United States has provided between $200 million and $500 million a year to the Palestinians between 2011 and 2017, with the lowest annual amount contributed in 2016.\textsuperscript{59} No data can be found on public opinion regarding these allocations. If the lack of data is at all indicative it would seem that general public opinion does not find these allocations bothersome.

In fact, it can be argued that this increase, due to its potential effectiveness, will be applauded by a US public that cares very much about a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Firstly, over 2/3 of the US public feel that violence in this conflict will likely increase support for ISIS and other radical terrorist groups as well as create even more of a focus on confronting Israel and the United States.\textsuperscript{60} With this in mind, a resolution to the conflict has become more urgent and critical to the US public and a small but strategic increase in aid would most likely be welcomed.

Furthermore, six in ten Americans rank the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as one of the top five issues for US national interests while one in three Americans rank it as one of the top three issues or the top issue. This would also make a small but strategic increase in aid seem like a welcome implementation for many Americans.

\textsuperscript{59} Zanotti, Jim. \textit{U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinian}  

\textsuperscript{60} Telhami, Shibley. \textit{American Public Attitudes Toward the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict}, Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland In Cooperation with the Program for Public Consultation, December (2014). Accessed April, 2018.  
https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/israel_palestine_key_findings_telhami_FINAL.pdf
Republicans, the President’s party and his main pool of supporters, rank the Israeli-Palestinian conflict higher in their top priorities than Democrats and Independents. For the President, therefore, this increase in aid would be a politically strategic response to the significance his supporters place on the conflict and a resolution.

Another important matter to take into consideration is the reason the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is of such concern to the US public. The most oft-given explanation given, by 31% of US citizens polled, was their concern for human rights. And in general, 53% of US citizens responded that human rights are either their top priority, or one of three top priorities, in terms of their priorities for US foreign policy. The beauty of the proposed policy is that besides for the potential impact it will have on building trust between the parties it will also have a direct positive impact on human rights hurt by the conflict, by the very nature of the specifics of the proposed aid.61

Focusing in on the potential reaction of the major voting blocs and donors who supported and voted for President Trump is of great importance when analyzing the political ramifications of this proposal. Some of the major voting blocs for Trump were Orthodox Jews62 and Evangelical Christians; the latter being a bloc responsible for Trump’s presidency.

61 ibid.

Furthermore, the President needs to be mindful of a small group of mega-donors to the Republican party and to his own campaign, which include the likes of Sheldon Adelson, Bernard Marcus and other pro-Israel backers.

Both the above-mentioned voting blocs and mega-donors are vehement supporters of Israel and citizens for whom the government of Israel’s opinion is of great importance.63 Because of this, it is important to know what the reactions of Israel would be to such a move.

One need look no further than the pages of the official Government of Israel website. On their website Israel boasts of the many projects they are currently investing in to improve the quality of life of the Palestinians and to increase cooperation between the two peoples.64 It is very clear that US investment in Palestinian quality of life and cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians would be embraced by Israel and that such an investment is an implementation of a policy that is already part and parcel of Israel’s foreign policy.

An area of political concern is the response of Congress. On March 24, 2018 the Taylor Force Act was passed into law.65

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65 Tibon, Amir, *U.S. Officially Cuts Funding to Palestinian Authority Over Payments to Terrorists and Their Families*, Ha’aretz(2018), Accessed April, 2018
This bill requires cutting aid to the Palestinians unless the Palestinian Authority ceases its payments to Palestinian assailants and their families responsible for attacks in Israel. The question to be considered is if this proposal will be blocked by the Taylor Force Act. Some of the proposed funding goes directly to NGO’s so those parts of the proposal would not be impacted by this new law. The healthcare and economic development investments of this proposal could proceed, unhindered by the Taylor Force Act.

The more complicated part of this proposal will be the payments to the United States Security Coordinator to invest in increased Palestinian Authority policing and security. The new law is vague regarding which aid, precisely, is illegal until the PA stops their “martyr” payments. The wording of the law refers specifically to funds that “directly benefit” the Palestinian Authority. Congress has left it up to the President to decide which aid “directly benefits” the Palestinian Authority.66

It can be argued that funds that are under the discretion of the United States Security Coordinator would not be considered funds that go directly to the Palestinian Authority and therefore they do not “directly benefit” the Palestinian Authority.

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**Recommendation**

It cannot be proven that increased trust between both Israel and the Palestinians and between the Palestinian grassroots and their leadership will certainly create an environment ripe for resolution. It also cannot be proven that the proposed policy, which will improve Palestinian quality of life and increase mutually beneficial cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians, will certainly create more trust between the two peoples and between the Palestinian grassroots and their leadership. However, it is clear that collaboration is a proven method to create trust in conflict and it is also clear that an increase in quality of life has bred increased trust in leadership.

This policy is also being proposed in a context in which a peace process has gone on for decades with no positive results, and for which many cite lack of trust as a key reason for the seemingly unresolvable nature of this conflict. The cost of this policy to the citizens of the United States is negligible when put in context of how much the US has spent and continues to spend on this conflict, and how much they will need to spend if a two-state solution is agreed upon. It also seems as if there is very little political risk in implementing this policy.

If the hoped results of this policy come to fruition, and an increase in trust is built, then it will have been worthwhile. If the results are not as hoped, then this policy will not have worked but that will basically be the entirety of what is at stake. It is therefore recommended that the President of the United States implement the proposed policy.

CURRENT:

Rabbi of Congregation Machzikei Hadas; the largest orthodox synagogue in Ottawa, Canada.

EDUCATION AND DEGREES:

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<th>Institution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ner Israel Rabbinical College</td>
<td>September 2011 –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters in Talmud</td>
<td>June 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisk – R’ Shalom Schechter</td>
<td>May 2010 – April 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeshiva Shaar HaTorah, Queens, N.Y.</td>
<td>Yeshiva Shaar HaTorah, Queens, N.Y.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelors of Talmud</td>
<td>September 2006 – March 2010</td>
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SEMICHA-RABBINIC ORDINATION

Yoreh Deah; Rabbi Gedalya Dov Schwartz; Av Beth Din of RCA - Beth Din of America
Yoreh Deah and Shabbos; R’ Zalman Nechemiah Goldberg
Yoreh Deah; R’ Kalman Epstein, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Shaar HaTorah

RELATED COURSEWORK:

Halacha
Contemporary Rabbinic Leadership Forum, Rabbi Hauer, Congregation Bnai Jacob Shaarei Zion
January 2012 – April 2013
Infertility in Halacha and Jewish Medical Ethics, American Society for Reproductive Medicine
2012

Other Coursework:

Fairleigh Dickinson University
Business courses
Indiana University
Courses in History and Government

RELATED EXPERIENCE:

The Jewish Collegiate Network, University of Maryland Baltimore County
September 2012 Present
Founder and Director

Bnai Jacob Shaarei Zion, Baltimore, MD
September 2012 - Present
Rabbinic Intern

Israel
Weekly class on Jewish thought to IDF soldiers (in Hebrew)       June 2010 – February 2011

Wilmette, IL (Hometown)
Educational programming for all ages                           2003– Present
Brought in, fundraised for, and coordinated Project SEED       Summer 2008