



Israeli-Palestinian Peace Perspectives

May 1, 2017 **Lawrence J. Haas** *U.S. News & World Report*

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The "moderate" Palestinian Authority, which runs the West Bank, continues to provide generous lifetime stipends, lump-sum payments, health care, tuition and other benefits to Israeli-killing terrorists and their families.

At the same time, that same entity is threatening to sue Britain's government for rejecting its request that London apologize for issuing the Balfour Declaration in 1917, paving the way for Israel's creation.

Meanwhile, facing pressure from the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, the terrorist group that runs Gaza, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East recently backed off its plans to revise the curricula of its schools in the West Bank and Gaza - which means that Palestinian children will continue to see maps that erase the Jewish state, thus defining an aspirational Palestine to include all land "from the [Jordan] river to the [Mediterranean] sea."

Those developments, along with the ongoing vows by Palestinian leaders to destroy Israel and the hero worship that they provide to Jew-killing "martyrs," make clear that Palestinian society maintains its broad-scale "rejectionism" of Israel: denying its right to exist as a Jewish state and dreaming of replacing it with a Palestine that would encompass all of what's now Israel and the Palestinian territories.

That's the backdrop to a controversial new idea for resolving the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict that Israel's government surely won't pursue but that, nevertheless, could contribute usefully to the stale debate over how to achieve peace. The idea: Rather than push for more negotiations as part of the "peace process," push instead for Israeli victory over Palestinian terror as a predicate for negotiations.

This new approach is the joint product of the Middle East Forum as well as a handful of Republican House members who, late last week, officially launched the House's new Israel Victory Caucus.

Together, these hard-line Israel backers argue that the "peace process" is woefully misguided because it focuses on Israel's need to make "painful concessions" without demanding that Palestinians accept the reality of Israel as a Jewish state and stop inciting Jew-killing through schools, mosque, TV, social media and other communications organs that shape minds across Palestinian society.

Only when, these hard-liners argue, the Palestinian leaders and people recognize that Israel isn't going away, that no new Palestine will stretch from Jordan to Egypt, that Israel will no longer face U.S. pressure to ease its crackdown on Palestinian terror - that, in essence, Palestinians accept defeat in their quest to destroy Israel - will they really be ready for peaceful statehood.

That would require, the Middle East Forum explained, not just the "tough" tactics that Israel uses to prevent or redress terror but "a long-term strategy that breaks the will and promotes a change of heart" of the Palestinian people. That, in turn, would require "closing down the [Palestinian] apparatus of war: shuttering suicide factories, removing the demonization of Jews and Israel, recognizing Jewish ties to Jerusalem and 'normalizing' relations with Israelis."

"Recognizing Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state is a condition precedent to achieving Middle East peace," Rep. Ron DeSantis, a caucus co-chair, said at the launch event. "The United States needs to be very clear that Israel is here to stay and those who seek Israel's destruction will earn the enmity of the United States."

"All side agree," added Daniel Pipes, the Middle East Forum's president, "that a quarter-century of 'peace process' has failed spectacularly. Perhaps it's time to try something new, namely focusing on the essence of the problem, which is Palestinian rejectionism... Perhaps it's time for our ally Israel to win" - which, he said, would improve the lives of not just Israelis but also Palestinians as the latter focused their energies and resources on nourishing their own society rather than destroying Israel's.

However much they might want to, Israeli leaders won't adopt this stark change in approach because they're sensitive to the opinions of influential leaders and groups in Washington, across Europe and throughout the Middle East who remain committed to the peace process and won't accept such a radical departure from it.

Israel's leaders also won't want to further fuel such global delegitimization efforts against the Jewish state as the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign that's spreading across college campuses in the United States and Europe.

Nevertheless, the Israel Victory Caucus could prove useful by at least balancing the debate over Israeli-Palestinian peace - somewhat offsetting the West's obsession with Israeli settlements and focusing refreshing attention on the far larger obstacle of Palestinian rejectionism, incitement and Jew-killing.

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