

Grandstanding to defy Israel

written by David M. Weinberg | 25.05.2024

Purportedly, Washington has sewn up a Saudi-Israel normalization deal, enabling construction of a more potent regional coalition against Iran.

All Israel must do is end its war against Hamas and offer a “credible pathway” to Palestinian statehood including Palestinian Authority governance in Gaza as an alternative to Hamas.

And then, presto, the Israeli hostages held by Hamas will be released, Hamas’s Nukhba elite terrorists will disappear never to fight another day, Palestinian terrorist strongholds in Jenin, Nablus, and more will dissipate into thin air, Hezbollah’s Radwan forces will retreat from Israel’s northern border, the Houthis of Yemen will end their assault on global shipping lanes, and good old Yuletide cheer will wash over the Middle East.

What could be better? How can Israel say no? What could go wrong?

Well, the main problem with the Pollyannish American package is its insistence on Palestinian statehood, which after 30 years of Oslo process failures and the October 7 attack flies in the face of logic, justice, history, and basic security realities.

The Palestinian national movement, Fatah and Hamas wings alike, largely has shown itself to be committed to Israel’s debilitation and destruction, not to a peaceful two-state solution.

Until Palestinian political culture matures towards accommodation, no rational Israeli government will consider ceding parts of Judea and Samaria to any Palestinian faction. And until the military power and political sway of Hamas (and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Fatah’s al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, and more) is crippled, no peaceful and responsible alternative Palestinian leadership ever will emerge.

And therefore, the war against Hamas and its satellites in Gaza and the West Bank cannot end now. That’s an Israeli consensus; rare, but real and valuable.

Alas, the Biden administration and much of the international community, still with

messianic devotion think that the establishment of a Palestinian state must be diligently pursued post haste via pressure on Israel, regardless of the circumstances or the complete lack of interest in truly implementing such a scheme on the part of the Palestinians.

Some, like the European countries that this week unilaterally “recognized” Palestinian statehood, seek to dictate from above. They grandstand to defy Israel, no less, pretending to be advancing peace when in fact they are knowingly weakening Israel.

Snootily, they “will no longer wait for Israel.” They opine that Palestinian independence cannot be dependent on Israel; it is imperative to be forced on Israel.

And thus, rewarding violent Palestinian “resistance” is no problem for them. Funding the recalcitrant Palestinian Authority or irredentist UNWRA is good too. Facilitating the survival of Hamas is fine, as long as Israel is forced to buckle.

And to prove their defiant fealty to the shibboleth of Palestinian freedom – costs to Israel be damned – they castigate Israel via labeling schemes, trade and arms boycotts, and outrageous court indictments. One gets the sense that these European freedom fighters for Palestine are but a hair’s breadth away from promoting the so-called one-state solution, meaning the dissolution of Israel.

BUT FOR people claiming to be friends of Israel, this path must be rejected. The rush to ersatz recognition of Palestinian statehood runs contrary to the experience-based views of the vast majority of Israelis and Israeli political leaders. It is not consistent with friendship for the Jewish state.

The sad fact is that the only Palestinian state that might arise at the moment would permanently be at war with Israel. A state that supports and glorifies Palestinian suicide-bombers, missile launchers, and rapists against Israel’s civilian population; a state where the airwaves and newspapers are filled with viciously antisemitic and bloodthirsty anti-Israel propaganda; a state whose leaders crisscross the globe and lobby every international institution to vilify and criminalize Israel.

The only Palestinian state that might arise at the moment is, in fact, a state like the current Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, aside from being corrupt and

tyrannical towards its people, commits all the above crimes against Israel; or a state like "Hamastan" in Gaza that would repeat the October 7 massacres one thousand times over.

And therefore, the war against the Palestinian threat in Gaza and the West Bank cannot be cut short. That's an Israeli consensus; rare, but real and valuable.

NEVERTHELESS, the asinine storyline being sold in Washington and endlessly echoed in media around the world is that Israel is being offered a US-Saudi "lifeline," and that Prime Minister Netanyahu is spurning it because of his far-right coalition partners. This is poppycock.

Netanyahu is completely within the consensual tradition of all Israeli leaders in insisting that Palestinian terrorism be crushed, not coddled; that a peace process be toughed out the old-fashioned way - by building confidence between the parties through measured, verifiable, and concrete steps along a long-term road map towards stability.

And Netanyahu is completely within the consensual tradition of all Israeli leaders in insisting that only clear commitments from the Palestinians that the conflict is fully and permanently over might merit the ceding of territory by Israel.

Moreover, Netanyahu is correct that a realistic peace process must consider the Iranian hegemonic drive across the region, including Iranian takeover of vast swaths of Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, with Jordan in sight too; imperial conquests that are being aided and abetted by the Biden administration's quite clear acquiescence in Tehran's status as a nuclear threshold state.

Peace processors must take into account this changed situation so that neither a second Hamastan can arise in the West Bank nor draw in al-Qaeda and ISIS elements, nor open the door to the destabilization of Jordan via the West Bank.

This means that Israel must militarily control the broad security envelope, fully. It means that hackneyed notions of withdrawal to anything reminiscent of the 1967 lines should be set aside.

In short, dismissal of the American-brokered "Saudi lifeline" involving a "pathway" to Palestinian statehood has nothing to do with Itamar Ben-Gvir or Bezalel Smotrich, the Israeli far-right. Benny Gantz and Yair Lapid in the Israeli

Center and Left are no more likely to countenance the establishment of runaway Palestinian statehood over the next 50 years than Netanyahu is – again, especially after October 7.

The international community must roll back triumphalist Palestinian maximalism, not chop away at logical Israeli conservatism. If over Israel's objections, the international community rushes to recognize revanchist, extremist, and unfettered Palestinian statehood – true peace will be pushed ever-so-much farther away.

What the supposedly pro-peace international community ought to be doing is backing Israel's legitimate war goals until their complete execution and demanding vast reform from Palestinian leaders.

How about some sustained peace education and deradicalization programs for "Palestine"? Without that, diplomacy that demands two states (in any contours) will fail, sinking into the quicksand of Palestinian rejectionism and annihilationism.

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