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Trump Would Make Palestinian Subjugation Permanent



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The fundamental flaw at the heart of Trump's Palestine/Israel plan, presumptuously titled Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People, is that Trump — like his predecessors — believes that the Israelis are the aggrieved party and the Palestinians are the not-fully-human aggressors inherently unworthy of even the minimum trust accorded fellow human beings. You can see this premise throughout Trump's corrupt blueprint for the future of Israel and Palestine.

But this premise has the aggressor and the victim roles switched in defiance of the facts. The Palestinians are the aggrieved party. They were dispossessed in 1948 and 1967 and

then denied full and equal rights within Israel and all rights in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. We see Trump's attitude in a key part of Peace to Prosperity, namely, section seven on security and the associated appendices.

Before we get to that, let's start by recognizing that although Trump brags that the Palestine he envisions would be bigger than what the Palestinians now control under the Oslo Accords, he is blowing hot air in his typical way. The Palestinians control nothing. Whatever internal security the Palestinian Authority (PA) administers in part of the West Bank is merely the result of Israel having subcontracted to the Palestinian elite the dirty internal-security work that Israel used to have to do itself. But Israel is free to override the PA whenever it sees the need and take internal security into its own hands. This is not autonomy.

So if Palestinian control is to be doubled, as Trump says, it would be a doubling of zero. Moreover, as Jonathan Cook writes, Trump's plan misleads when it touts that Palestine would consist of 70 percent of the lands Israel has (illegally) occupied since the 1967 war. Several decades ago the main Palestinian organization and spokespeople agreed to reduce their claim to only the occupied territories, a mere 22 percent of the Palestine they had inhabited for millennia. That stunning concession never got the notice it deserved. (Only Israeli "concessions" are described as generous.) Yet Trump is demanding that the Palestinians accept only 70 percent of the 22 percent — which comes to 15 percent of the original territory the Israelis (that is, Zionists) took by force in what is called the Nakba, or catastrophe. And, Cook adds, that's "after Israel has seized all the best agricultural land and the water sources."

The security section and associated appendices make clear that in Trump's (and Jared Kushner's and Benjamin Netanyahu's) eyes, the Palestinians are the bad guys who deserve nothing less than the closest surveillance lest they commit mass murder because they (so it is alleged) hate Jews qua Jews. So, despite the apparent creation of a sovereign State of Palestine, the Trump plan in reality would create a gerrymandered archipelago of Palestinian towns that nevertheless would contain many "Israeli conclave communities" (see the map above) and be surrounded by the State of Israel. Palestinians would have highly limited home-rule, but ultimate control would remain with Israel. That state would have complete authority over Palestine's borders, airspace, and even the electromagnetic spectrum. Palestine would have no access to the Jordan River, because Israel would annex the Jordan Valley (as it's about to do), or the Dead Sea. To quote the plan:

Upon signing the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Agreement, the State of Israel will maintain overriding security responsibility for the State of Palestine, with the aspiration that the Palestinians will be responsible for as much of their internal security as possible, subject to the provisions of this Vision. The State of Israel will work diligently to minimize its security footprint in the State of Palestine according to the principle that the more the State of Palestine does, the less the State of Israel will have to do.... [Emphasis added.]

As you can see, any so-called concessions are for Israel's convenience and not out of respect for the Palestinians' long-denied rights.

Of course, the Palestinians would be watched closely. Appendix 2B sets criteria for "Palestinian security performance," and they contain an inducement: "As the State of Palestine meets and maintains the Security Criteria, the State of Israel's involvement in security within the State of Palestine will be reduced." That sounds like the League of Nations' old mandate, that is, colonial, system under which Great Britain ruled Palestine after World War I.

But as we'll see, those criteria are hardly objective and leave plenty of leeway for Israel to give Palestine a failing grade — which is exactly what we can expect.

We read that the "State of Palestine will have security forces capable of maintaining internal security and preventing terror attacks within the State of Palestine and against the State of Israel, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Arab Republic of Egypt," except that "these specific capabilities (i) may not (A) violate the principle that the State of Palestine in all its territory, including Gaza, shall be, and shall remain, fully demilitarized or (B) derogate the State of Israel's overriding security responsibility, and (ii) will be agreed upon by the State of Palestine and the State of Israel." (Emphasis added.)

And the kicker:

Should the State of Palestine fail to meet all or any of the Security Criteria at any time, the State of Israel will have the right to reverse the process outlined above. The State of Israel's security footprint in all or parts of the State of Palestine will then increase as a result of the State of Israel's determination of its expanded security needs and the time needed to address them. [Emphasis added.]

Just in case, of course, "the State of Israel will maintain at least one early-warning stations [sic] in the State of Palestine as designated on the Conceptual Map, which will be

run by Israeli security forces. Uninterrupted Israeli security access to and from any early-warning station will be ensured.”

And: “To the extent reasonably possible, solely as determined by the State of Israel, the State of Israel will rely on blimps, drones and similar aerial equipment for security purposes in order to reduce the Israeli security footprint within the State of Palestine.” (Emphasis added.)

What a relief to know that Israel’s security footprint will be reduced through Israeli aerial surveillance — solely as determined by the State of Israel.

Let’s move on to the appendices, where some details are filled in.

Appendix 2C states that “Palestine will not have the right to forge military, intelligence or security agreements with any state or organization that adversely affect the State of Israel’s security, as determined by the State of Israel.” (Emphasis added.)

Israel of course would be free to make whatever agreement it likes, no matter how much it adversely affects the State of Palestine.

Moreover, a “demilitarized State of Palestine will be prohibited from possessing capabilities that can threaten the State of Israel.”

That is obviously vague. Defensive (and deterrent) capabilities can be always be called threatening. Israel does this with Hezbollah in Lebanon all the time. I note for the record that Israel is not similarly “prohibited from possessing capabilities that can threaten” the State of Palestine.

Congruent with the above, “any expansion of Palestinian security capabilities beyond the capabilities existing on the date this Vision is released shall be subject to agreement with the State of Israel.” Thus the Israeli state would have to approve virtually any change inside Palestine because, after all, almost anything could be construed as related to Israeli security.

We are assured that “while the State of Israel will use its best efforts to minimize incursions into the State of Palestine, the State of Israel will retain the right to engage in necessary security measures to ensure that the State of Palestine remains demilitarized and non-threatening to the State of Israel, including from terrorist threats.” There’s another blank check.

Now regarding those criteria:

The State of Palestine's counterterrorism system must encompass all elements of counterterrorism, from initial detection of illicit activity to longtime incarceration of perpetrators. Included in the system must be: intelligence officers to detect potential terrorist activity, specially trained counterterrorism forces to raid sites and arrest perpetrators, forensics experts to conduct site exploitation, pretrial detention officers to ensure the retention of prisoners, prosecutors and judges to issue warrants and conduct trials, and post-trial detention officers to ensure prisoners serve their sentences. The system should include stand-alone detention facilities and vetted personnel.

I'm assuming, in light of Israel's and the United States' record in the matter, that "all elements of counterterrorism" include mass surveillance of all kinds, road checkpoints, torture, use of informants, and indefinite detention without charge, trial, or any reasonable notion of due process.

Just so the Palestinians are clear about what is expected of them, "the breadth and depth of the anti-terror activities of the State of Palestine will be determined [by Israel] by":

- + The extent of arrests and interdictions of suspects, perpetrators and accomplices;
- + The systematic and comprehensive nature of investigations and interrogations to root out all terror networks and infrastructure;
- + Indictments and the extent of punishments;
- + The systematic and comprehensive nature of interdiction efforts to seize weapons and explosives and prevent the manufacturing of weapons and explosives;
- + The success of efforts to prevent infiltration of terrorists and terror organizations into the security forces of the State of Palestine.

Apparently, the Israelis will know the appropriate extent of all those things. But how? That's not for us or the Palestinians to wonder about. But if the Palestinians fall short of expectations, you can bet the Israelis will maximize their "security footprint" inside the sovereign State of Palestine.

And speaking of vagueness, Palestine will be expected to "prohibit all incitement to terrorism." Considering what the Israelis have regarded as incitement in the past, this sounds as though the Palestinian government will be expected to limit free speech.

And just so there's no misunderstanding:

During the negotiations the parties, in consultation with the United States, shall attempt to create acceptable initial non-binding metrics with respect to the Security Criteria that are acceptable to the State of Israel, and in no event less stringent than the metrics used by either the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan or the Arab Republic of Egypt (whichever is stricter) with respect to the Security Criteria. Because security threats evolve, the metrics are intended to be used as a guide, and will not be binding. However, the establishment of such non-binding metrics will allow the State of Palestine to better understand the minimum goals they are expected to achieve, and take into account regional minimum benchmarks. [Emphasis added.]

To call the proposed Palestinian status one of indefinite probation with inherently subjective criteria interpreted by a sadistic probation officer would be a gross understatement

It's clear to see that Trump's plan is all about Israel (and its American partisans) and has nothing whatever to do with the rights of Palestinians to control their own destiny. All considerations appear subordinate to Israel's alleged security concerns, but in fact, what really counts (since Israel faces no existential threat) is a pseudo-ethnic chauvinism. (I write pseudo because Judaism is a religion, not an ethnic or racial group, that is embraced by people of many ethnicities. See my [Coming to Palestine.](#))

The Palestinians just don't count. To the extent they would get anything out of Trump's plan, it is to save Israel some trouble. Better to have Palestine elite do Israel's dirty work.

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