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Peace Requires New Approaches

Friends of Israel Initiative

Paper No. 39
July 2016

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Introduction

“Insanity: Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

Albert Einstein

The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has been going on for more than six decades. Over this long period of time, dozens of international peace summits have been held (Madrid, Camp David II, Annapolis, Sharm el-Sheikh, Geneva, Washington, Amman, etc.), and several peace plans have been designed by external actors (the Roadmap, the Arab Peace Initiative, etc.) with the noble purpose of having both parties sign, once for all, a just and lasting peace.

However, and despite some progress, no initiative, conference, plan or negotiation has led to peace, mainly due to Palestinian intransigence to coexist with Israel, which has always resulted in the most indiscriminate and infamous terrorism. Nonetheless, this is not the only reason why all the conversations and peace plans have failed. Palestinians need better institutions, non-corrupt leadership, and a developed economy. The two-State solution does not seem to be the best formula to end the conflict at the moment because, among other reasons, Palestinians do not meet the minimum requirements to establish a State today.

Perhaps, after the unsuccessful outcomes of diplomatic intervention, now it is the moment to innovate; or more concretely, to delve into why the Palestinian side is unwilling to achieve peace and unable to establish a nation-state.

The strategy must obviously change. The international pressure should be redirected to other major issues that Palestinians need to solve if they want to establish a viable nation. Peace, in sum, requires new approaches.

Peace Process Timeline: Internationalization Of The Conflict

The timeline of the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians reveals the need to change strategy. Wars, intifadas, indiscriminate terrorism, talks, incitement, unilateral moves, clashes, asymmetric warfare, etc., neither has solved the core issues of the conflict nor has it led to the establishment of a democratic and peaceful Palestinian State. Quite the opposite, Palestinians are divided and ruled by leaders that are not ready to accept Israel's existence.

1917- The Balfour Declaration recognizes and salutes the right of the Jewish People to establish a homeland in historic Palestine.

1937- David Ben Gurion accepts the recommendations of the official British Peel Commission report as a basis for negotiations. The Arab governments, as well the Arab leadership in Palestine, reject it.

1947- Jews in Palestine and the Zionist movement accept the Partition Plan. Arab governments and the Arab leadership in Palestine reject it.

1948 – Implementation of the Partition Plan. Israel declares its independence on May 14, Arab governments (Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Liberation Army, a force formed by 6,000 volunteers from Turkey, Yugoslavia, Germany, and British deserters) and the Arab leadership of Palestine start a war against the newborn State of Israel.

1949 – The Independence War ends with an Armistice. Gaza is left under Egypt's administration. The West Bank and East Jerusalem are left under the administration of Jordan. 150,000 Arabs become Israeli citizens.

1964 – The establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The PLO begins its terrorist attacks against Israel and Israelis worldwide in 1965 as a way to achieve its political aims.

1967 – The Six Day War. Israel wins a self-defense war against Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq. Israel takes over East Jerusalem, Gaza, the West Bank, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. Israel offers the captured territories

in exchange for peace treaties. In September, eight Arab countries (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Algeria, Kuwait, and Sudan) issue a resolution in the 1967 Arab League Summit in Khartoum: No peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiations with Israel.

1967- Resolution 242. The UN Security Council approves Resolution 242: Israel is commanded to withdraw from the captured territories (without specifying which ones) in exchange for peaceful and safe borders.

1970 – Black September. In September the Jordanian Army kill between 7,000 to 20,000 Palestinians and King Hussein expels the PLO to Lebanon. In the wake of this conflict, a new Palestinian terrorist group called Black September initiates a bloody campaign against Israel abroad. One of the most infamous attacks was the massacre of Israeli athletes during the celebration of the Munich Olympic Games in 1972. Black September was always supported by the PLO.

1973 – The Yom Kippur War. Also known as the 1973 Arab–Israeli War, Egypt and Syria launch a surprise attack on Israel. Israel wins again and Egypt starts changing its policy to one of coexistence with the Jewish State.

1979 – The Camp David Peace Treaty. Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin sign the first, and the most stable, Arab-Israeli peace treaty. Israel agrees to withdraw from the entire Sinai Peninsula, an area almost three times the size of Israel. The Treaty sets key points regarding the West Bank and Gaza, although there is no mention about the status of Jerusalem on the right to return of the refugees. The PLO rejects this historic treaty.

1982 – Israel invades Lebanon in order to stop the PLO attacks against the northern cities. The PLO moves out to Tunisia.

1987 – The First Intifada. A wave of violence starts in the West Bank and extends to all Israel, promoted by terrorist groups. The terrorist attacks and the clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinians raise concerns in the international community to solve the conflict.

1988 – The PLO recognizes Israel's right to exist and support the two-state solution.

1991 – Madrid Peace Conference. After the end of the First Intifada, an international conference is celebrated in Madrid, which lays the foundations

of the Oslo Accords. Palestinians were represented by the Jordanian delegation.

1993 – Oslo Accords. They mark the birth of the Palestinian Authority (PA), the division of the West Bank and Gaza civil and military administrations between Israel and the PA, and set the rules for future negotiations between the parties on all major disputes: direct and bilateral. Yasser Arafat returned to the West Bank and headed the government of the PA until his death in 2004.

1994 – Israel and Jordan sign a peace treaty. Jordan abandons its claims over the West Bank. In Article 9 Israel recognizes the special role of Jordan in Muslim holy shrines in Jerusalem and commits to give high priority to the Jordanian historic role in these shrines in negotiations on the permanent status. The treaty also mentions the Palestinian refugees issue. Israel and Jordan agree to cooperate to help the refugees, including a four-way committee (Israel, Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinians) to try to work towards solutions.

2000 - Camp David II. Arafat rejects a historical proposal designed by Israeli PM Ehud Barak and backed by US president Bill Clinton. Barak offers 90 percent of the territory claimed by Palestinians. He proposes that major Jewish settlements will be exchanged by land swaps. In regards to Jerusalem, he suggests total partition – including the Old City. It is the most ambitious peace plan so far. Arafat rejects the plan and launches the Second Intifada.

2000-2004 – The Second Intifada. Palestinian members of Al-Fatah with Hamas and the Islamic Jihad jointly launch the worst wave ever known of indiscriminate terrorism against Israeli civilians. Terrorists detonate suicide bombs in buses, coffee shops, restaurants, hotels, and main streets in Israel killing 731 civilians and 332 members of the security forces. Despite it all, Israel's peace efforts never stop.

2001 – The George Tenet Plan. The then CIA Director, George Tenet, introduces a plan for security and a ceasefire between the Government of Israel and the PA. It did not succeed. It was followed by the fact-finding report on the Second Intifada elaborated by US Senator George Mitchell, which also included recommendations similar to Tenet's. Both Israel and the PA reject the plan.

2002 - March. Arab Peace Initiative. Saudi Arabia leads a plan, which encourages Israel to withdraw to pre-1967 borders in exchange for recognition between the Arab region and Israel.

2002 – April. The establishment of the “Quartet on the Middle East”, formed by the US, the EU, the UN and Russia. The main task of the Quartet has been the application of the Road Map for peace, an initiative launched by former US president George W. Bush later in June. The Road Map set the parameters to create a Palestinian State alongside with Israel with safe and defensible borders. The Road Map is based on the Tenet Plan for peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

2004 – Yasser Arafat dies. Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, replaces Arafat as president of the PLO. Abbas won the legislative elections; however, due to concerns about a Hamas eventual victory, he has not held elections ever since.

2005 – February. Sharm el-Sheikh Summit. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, and King Abdullah II of Jordan gathered in Sharm el-Sheikh in order to declare the end of the Second Intifada. The leaders read statements reaffirming their commitment to continued efforts to stabilize the situation and to move on in the process in accordance with the Road Map.

2005- August. Disengagement from Gaza. Israel withdraws unilaterally from Gaza and removes all citizens and soldiers. The year after, Hamas wins the legislative elections in the Gaza Strip and after a civil war against Al-Fatah and expels the entire PA. Hamas has made Gaza a rocket-launcher center against Israeli cities.

2007- Annapolis Conference. The International Peace Conference in Annapolis restarts the negotiations on a final status agreement that addresses all core issues and the establishment of a Palestinian State through the Road Map for Peace. The Conference had big international support (Russia, China, the EU, the Arab League, the UN). The Annapolis efforts lead to the next summit in Geneva.

2008- Geneva Conference. Ehud Olmert offers Mahmoud Abbas a similar proposal to Camp David I, but even bolder. Olmert offers 100% of the claimed territories by Palestinians under the formula of land swaps, including a

security corridor between the West Bank and Gaza. Mahmoud Abbas rejects the offer and this leads again to the stagnation of the peace process.

2012 – Amman Meetings. Jordan hosts peace conversations between Israelis and Palestinians. Both parties, due to the Palestinian attitude, are not even able to sit at the same table.

2013-2014 – Kerry's Initiatives. The US Secretary of State John Kerry tries to get both parties to sit at the negotiation table with a framework deal. Israel agrees; however, at the last minute, Mahmoud Abbas torpedoed the peace talks by submitting a list of demands for the continuation of the negotiations. Among other unacceptable requirements, Abbas demands the written commitment of Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu establishing that the borders of the Palestinian State will be along the pre-1967 borders, that the capital will be in East Jerusalem, and the release of 1,200 Palestinian prisoners. In addition to such demands, Abbas applies to join 15 UN organizations and conventions, thus violating his commitment not to do so while the peace talks are in progress.

An Internationalized Conflict

As we can appreciate in the timeline, it is an internationalized conflict from the beginning. The main powers of the world have engaged both parties since it began – particularly the US and the EU.

In this sense, Palestinians have sought to go global in their fight and their claims from the very beginning. From aircraft hijacking, the hosting of the PLO in Jordan, Lebanon or Tunisia, to the membership in the ICC, or the bid for statehood in the UN, the Palestinian leadership has always looked for international impact and international allies. This strategy used to be successful because the West needed the oil flowing from Middle-Eastern countries, which are supportive of the Palestinians. The conflict became a very sensitive issue and the international involvement has increased.

Today international involvement in the conflict is two-fold.

On the one hand, we have diplomatic efforts from the UN, the US, the EU, and other major players seeking to reach lasting peace. In general terms, this involvement has brought some progress for both parties; however, it has not achieved the final goal.

On the other hand, the international involvement of the conflict is being waged by the Palestinians and their allies (other countries such as Iran, anti-Israel NGOs, and international bodies such as the UN Human Rights Council) in order to obtain results against Israel that they are not able to get by using force. They exploit international law and international institutions – what it is internationally known as lawfare.

In spite of this two-fold approach, again, after six decades, there is no peace on the horizon. Nonetheless, the internationalization of the conflict should be channeled to other projects and initiatives – more effective than peace talks and lawfare.

The French Conference: A Distraction

As noted above, international summits have done little for peace. As an example, the French Conference held in Paris in June 3-4 has not produced any significant outcome. On the contrary, it has undermined prospects for peace once more.

First, the French Conference did not gather the main players: Israelis and Palestinians. Without them, the conference lacked legitimacy and the power to attain real commitments for peace. By celebrating this conference, the attendees have moved Israelis and Palestinians away from the negotiating table.

First, Israelis are feeling more isolated due to the fact that the international community is putting all the pressure on Israel while forgetting to require efforts to the Palestinians. On the other side, Palestinians have felt they are supported in their strategy not to yield in the previous negotiations; they have even refused to sit with Israelis without preconditions. They will not solve all the problems they have to achieve peace (the incitement against Israelis, corruption, conflict with Hamas, etc.)

Second, the international community has blamed Israel again for intransigence, while dismissing the hard situation Israel faces. If the trend to only accuse Israel for what happens in the conflict with the Palestinians continues, a diplomatic tornado can land on the Jewish State. As Eran Etzion, senior fellow of the Middle East Institute has pointed out¹, France

¹ “Netanyahu’s Risky Politics and the French Initiative”, Eran Etzion, Middle East Institute, June 6, 2016

could initiate a diplomatic move in the UN during the summer to recognize the Palestinian State in the Security Council— a move that could be backed by the US. If so, Western leading countries as the US and France would target Israel as the only responsible party for the stagnation of the process and reward the Palestinians for their unwilling attitude to sit with Israelis to negotiate.

Third, in the Joint Statement elaborated by the attendees, we can see that it puts settlement activity at the same level with the acts of violence, without specifying that it actually is indiscriminate terrorism carried out by Palestinian militants. There is no mention either about the incitement by the PA official media. The French conference has ignored the wave of knife and car ramming attacks against innocent civilians and has thus applied a double standard for Israeli victims. Peace cannot be forged if the Palestinians are not willing to coexist with Israel, a fact that the French Conference attendees have left out.

Forth, as the Oslo Accords have established, the negotiations have to be bilateral and direct. Furthermore, no solution should be imposed to the parties. If the French proposal aims to implement and prolong the Oslo spirit, it has failed from the first minute. The only measure that the Joint Statement suggests in order to rebuild trust is to end the “full Israeli occupation that began in 1967.”

Despite it all, Israel is committed to continue the peace talks, even to include Arab countries, as Netanyahu suggested when speaking about the Saudi Peace Plan as a basis of negotiation — something that has been celebrated by the attendees to the French Conference.

The Quartet For Peace Report

The much expected report by the Quartet for Peace, published July 1, did not provide any new formula to solve the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and it has used once again the same narrative regarding the obstacles to peace. In Elliott Abrams’s words; “This report actually has some very good aspects, but in the end does not manage to go beyond the conventional wisdom.”

<http://www.mei.edu/content/article/netanyahu-s-risky-politics-and-french-initiative>

The report truly highlighted the terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians, the incitement to violence and the hatred promoted by the Palestinian leadership – the first UN-led document to outline that – and it is undoubtedly a necessary step never taken before. As the Office of the Israeli Prime Minister stated after the release of the report; “Palestinian praise for murderers today inspires those who will strike tomorrow. This response reflects the moral bankruptcy of the Palestinian leadership and leaves little doubt about its true intentions.”

The Quartet for Peace also identifies in its report the high possibility of a next war in Gaza due to Hamas’s ongoing efforts to confront Israel again. The Quartet has checked that Hamas is still digging tunnels, smuggling weapons, and producing rockets.

However, the Quartet for Peace misses the following points, essential for achieving a lasting and fair peace:

- The report points out the policy of tribute and honor to the Palestinian terrorists, often glorified publicly as “heroic martyrs.” However, it leaves out the payments to families of terrorists usually covered by the Palestinian leadership.
- The report fails again in the comparison of killing and constructing. Under no parameter is the same to kill an innocent civilian by stabbing, shooting, or car ramming attacks, than to build houses or to set regulations and conditions over lands in dispute.
- The report also ignores the rejection of the Palestinian leadership to recognize Israel as a Jewish State.
- The report considers that 20,000 Jews living in East Jerusalem are settlers.
- The report forgets that the settlement activity is under accountability by military authorities and by the Courts in Israel, which constitutes total democratic control.
- The report relegates to the sixth place of the Quartet’s recommendations the strengthening of Palestinian institutions.
- The report sets as a recommendation “Gaza and the West Bank should be

reunified under a single, legitimate and democratic Palestinian authority on the basis of the PLO platform and Quartet principles and the rule of law, including control over all armed personnel and weapons in accordance with existing agreements.” Sadly, this is utopia nowadays.

In sum, the Quartet for Peace Report, although it recognizes all the deficiencies on the Palestinian side, keeps the narrative of equating the construction of settlements with terrorist attacks. It also forgets core issues that Israel cannot ignore, such as the Palestinian rejection of Israel as a Jewish State and the status of Israeli Jews living in East Jerusalem.

The Quartet for Peace, following the French Conference, is trying to revive the two-state solution. Nonetheless, every major power or country involved in the peace process seems to ignore that it is impossible to create a Palestinian State under the current conditions.

The Need To Set The Conditions For Peace On The Palestinian Side

After the failed Camp David II Peace Conference, then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, who was devastated after Arafat’s refusal to sign the peace, was clear in regards to the attitude of the Palestinian leadership towards peace: There is no partner for peace on the Palestinian side. It is true and the reasons are quite clear.

Institutions, Economy, and Education

The Palestinian society is stuck between the corruption and incompetence of the Palestinian Authority leadership and the fanaticism of terrorist groups such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other jihadist groups — even ISIS-inspired ones.

In addition, there are not efficient institutions to promote the social and economic development of the West Bank, let alone the Gaza Strip. A Palestinian State cannot be built without a sustainable economy and strong institutions to ensure order and stability. In addition, the education of young people is contaminated by prejudice against Israel and the Jews and polluted in order to maintain a hostile and war-driven situation as a way to keep the privileges of the ruling class — in this case, held by Hamas and PA leaders.

The Palestinian State cannot become a possibility if other major issues are not fixed and improved first.

In this regard, in July 2012 the World Bank released the report *Towards Economic Sustainability of a Future Palestinian State: Promoting Private Sector-Led Growth*². This report stressed that, if the Palestinians want to build their State, they need first a robust and sustainable economy. Salam Fayyad, who used to be prime minister of the PA, did believe in the conclusions of the report and worked very hard to implement them. However, he was removed from his post at the request of Hamas.

Fayyad used to say that he did not mind to be called “the Palestinian Ben Gurion.” It was also said that Fayyad had as his bedside book the bestseller *Start Up Nation* by Dan Senor and Saul Singer, which explains Israel’s economic success. Fayyad understood that, in order to build a nation, strong institutions were necessary. As political scientist Francis Fukuyama has pointed out in his last book *Political Order and Political Decay*, strong institutions are essential to ensure the functioning of the State, the rule of law, and accountability. Nonetheless, building these institutions requires a viable economic structure, a critical and active society who interacts in politics, among other conditions, and this is something that the Palestinian leadership has not pursued. In this vein, a failing economy, two opposing governments—one corrupt and the other, terrorist—and an education in hatred are fatal ingredients to create a democratic and peaceful society.

The Current Impossibility of the Two-State Solution

On February 28, the leader of the opposition in Israel, Isaac Herzog, published an article in the *New York Times* about an urgent peace plan, endorsed by his party, called the “managed separation.”³

According to Herzog’s thesis, there is no trust between the parties, and therefore, pragmatic measures should be taken in order to build that trust — paradoxically, through the separation between Israelis and Palestinians. Herzog is right on several things, for example, recognizing that since the

² Towards Economic Sustainability of a Future Palestinian State: Promoting Private Sector-Led Growth, The World Bank, April 2012 <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/GrowthStudyEng.pdf>

³ “Only Separation Can Lead to a Two-State Solution”, Isaac Herzog, The New York Times, February 28, 2016

path followed so far has not led to peace, one must try something else; to innovate.

Herzog advocates a separation managed to build trust. It is one of the big problems, but we must look for creative solutions that go directly to the Palestinians once and for all. They must accept they have a neighbor living next to them.

Actually, Herzog and other experts in the conflict —and not precisely suspicious of being anti-two-State solution, e.g. Ian Lusting, Yossi Beilin, Ian Shapiro, or Nicolas Strong—consider that the two-State solution is totally unfeasible and, above all, unrealistic. Consequently, some new and alternative ideas and proposals have arisen.

However, the culture of coexistence and good governance are in huge shortage at the Palestinian side. There is important work to do with Palestinians, not only with its leadership.

Institutions and Education: Watch the Money.

The PA receives a huge amount of foreign aid every year. These billions of dollars have mainly been used to increase the bureaucratic aristocracy of PA officials, to spread a hate-and-incitement-based education among the youth, and to pay salaries to freed terrorists. This aid from foreign governments and international institutions is not properly monitored. Furthermore, Hamas is receiving a lot of money from Iran and the Gulf States, which it uses to launch rockets, to build terror tunnels, and to torture and kill Palestinians who presumably collaborate with Israel.

Innovative approaches to reverse this situation can be:

- To order an audit (by the Quartet for Peace, for instance) to check the books of the PA and the Hamas government in Gaza in order to guarantee that this foreign aid goes to the economic and social development of the Palestinian society. The audit reports should be public, especially for the Palestinian society.
- UNESCO has sadly an anti-Israel approach — as does the UNRWA. Otherwise, it would be a suitable agency to check on the education offered by the PA and to adapt it to programs that promote coexistence, democracy, and social responsibility.

- To set a minimum of conditions for the use of this money and to link aid to the fulfillment of these requirements. The compliance system can be led by a special task force of the Quartet for Peace.

Economy: Building Gathering Spaces

Another condition in order to reach a just and lasting peace is to rebuild the trust among the two parties.

It is true that Israelis do not want to sign something with Abbas today that Hamas can reject tomorrow. The Palestinians are divided between two antagonistic governments in Gaza and the West Bank. Fatah does not want to sign agreements with the Israeli government either, afraid that Hamas would seek total confrontation. Peace must be addressed gradually at low levels so that the creation of mutual trust through economic and social projects can work.

In this regard, there are several projects, promoted by the private sector, that are flourishing on fostering the relation between Palestinians and Israelis⁴.

The Palestinian situation does not mean they cannot work with Israelis on projects seeking to obtain economic and social returns. Peace through understanding and trust is possible – two essential ingredients for business. The method of constructing spaces of social and economic understanding, therefore, should lead Palestinians to have a strong and viable State. Said⁵ in 2009 by Tony Blair, the representative of the Quartet for Peace;

“... There they build from the bottom up and top-down negotiations ... because once the three courses remain: political, economic and security ... every one of these things ... require decisions ... which will become apparent, either because the Israelis are prepared to build from the bottom up, and because the Palestinians understand that Israel will only tolerate a safe and stable Palestinian state ...

... People ask me, why do you care if agroindustrial activity around Jericho? And I say, because it matters. The detail on the ground really matters. Just

⁴ Peace Through Profits? Inside The Secret Tech Ventures That Are Reshaping The Israeli-Arab-Palestinian World, Richard Behar, Forbes, July 24, 2013 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/richardbehar/2013/07/24/peace-through-profits-a-private-sector-detente-is-drawing-israelis-palestinians-closer/#7f2c780f797b>

⁵ Blair: We've reached 'moment of truth', The Jerusalem Post, May 10, 2009 <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Blair-Weve-reached-moment-of-truth>

suppose that have created the conditions in the Jericho area to exploit the tourism potential. You are creating a set of stakeholders, they have to deal with difficult concessions, they will say: “We want the state”. Then they will believe in a reality, and not a watchword. “

They have already tried too many diplomatic attempts to achieve peace and they have not worked. It is time to try something else, so far, it is succeeding: To build peace from below.

Innovative approaches in this matter can be:

- The international community should keep promoting joint Israeli-Palestinian private economic projects, such as the ones by big companies, e.g. Cisco, over recent years.
- To financially help companies willing to start projects that includes Israelis and Palestinians – for example, with tax exemptions.
- To create incubators and accelerators in order to help joint ventures with Israeli-Palestinian backgrounds to increase start ups and growth.

The Role Of Arab Countries

The attitude of Israel’s Arab neighbors has evolved throughout the years. Egypt and Jordan have accepted to coexist with Israel for long. While keeping the boycott and isolation of Israel, some Gulf States, led by Saudi Arabia, are starting to understand today that Israel can be an invaluable ally against Iran’s hegemony after the nuclear deal. Peace also has to consider the Arab neighbors in the Middle East.

In this regard, Benjamin Netanyahu has said that he accepts to engage the Arab world on the basis of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative (API), or Saudi Plan. The API is not perfect and it does not bring major issues for Israel’s security such as the situation of the final borders for Israel, the demilitarization of the future State of Palestine, and the return of the refugees. However, as Israel’s PM asserted, it can serve as a base to negotiate not only with Palestinians, but also to engage Arab countries in the very idea of coexisting with Israel. Egyptian president Al-Sisi has already offered his help to solve the conflict

once for all. He and the King of Jordan could have main roles in engaging other Arab countries to normalize ties with Israel.

Conclusions

Over more than six decades of political and diplomatic talks, negotiations, summits, plans, initiatives, and conferences have not produced peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Peace therefore needs new approaches. Along this line, in order to find and explore new solutions, trust must be rebuilt from the bottom. It is time to propose something new, something innovative, to start from the lower levels. It is time to try something new and efficient. It is time to make room for economic cooperation as a new answer and besides social and economic cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians is already happening at non-diplomatic levels.

The French Conference has been another futile international peace attempt. In Paris, the main players, Israelis and Palestinians, did not even meet. Thus, the conference lacked power and legitimacy to promote progress in the peace process. In addition, the participants rewarded Palestinian attitudes towards Israel. Among others, they did not condemn the incitement against Israelis; they did not mention the authorities honoring Palestinian terrorists; they did not warn Palestinians about not holding elections; they did not even mention the high levels of corruption in the PA. In Paris, the 26 countries gathered for the Peace conference only remembered recalled the construction of settlements as the main obstacle to achieve peace.

One month later, the Quartet for Peace Report finally recognized the incitement and the hatred against Israelis as well as the intolerable waves of terrorist attacks that Israeli civilians have been enduring. Furthermore, the report recommended, though tepidly, that Palestinians reinforce their institutions. Nevertheless, the much expected report failed in so many points, as noted above, such as the equivalency between killing innocent civilians and constructing houses, the lack of recognition of Israel as a Jewish State, the situation of Israeli Jews living in East Jerusalem, among others.

However, the main deficiency of the Quartet for Peace Report is that it does not provided any new or innovative solution in order to alter the stagnation between Israelis and Palestinians – just as the last initiatives throughout the years have not accomplished either. Indeed, all attempts to attain a political solution to the conflict for the past seven decades have failed. It is true that

some of the arrangements between both parties have been working out, but only about minor issues. The core issues are still unresolved and blocked.

In this regard, no initiative can be successful if the Palestinians keep using terrorism as a way to achieve political means.

Thus, in the pursuit of peace, Palestinians need to solve major internal problems to become a peace partner. There is not enough will to coexist with Israel on the Palestinian side. Terrorism and incitement are the result of it. The incitement and hatred against Israelis and Jews, fostered via the PA's education programs and its official media, has to stop immediately. As mentioned, there are international institutions that should review the Palestinian education system, which today is oriented to hate Israelis and Jews. Peace begins with the two sides accepting each other. In order to achieve this goal, education in coexistence is paramount.

Hence, Palestinians should foster a culture of coexistence, beginning with the Palestinian leadership – the main party responsible of the conflict. The attitude of the Palestinian leadership has rejected peace over and over again. The Palestinian leadership has answered with terror to all of Israel's peace proposals. It has repeatedly refused to recognize Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish People and has initiated a diplomatic and legal war against Israel (for example, its bid for statehood in the UN, membership in the ICC, etc.). The Palestinian leadership has also avoided building strong institutions necessary in statecraft. All these trends must be reversed. The rampant corruption in the Palestinian establishment must be stopped. As aforementioned, some measures can be adopted for this purpose, starting with promoting the audit of the foreign aid received by the PA and holding democratic elections as soon as possible.

Peace between Israelis and Palestinians requires new pathways. The conferences and negotiations have not provided them.

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