

Asymmetrical Dynamics in the Israeli – Palestinian Peace Process: Who Determines What States, Why and How?

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Abstract

The age-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict has raised global security concerns and attracted solution trajectories which emphasized two-state solution and ignored policy framework towards “one-state” solution, especially based on the new dynamics in the aftermath of U.S. declaration of Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel. The U.S. declaration introduced unequal relationship between Israel and the Palestinian Authority at the Washington peace negotiations. Consequently, the Palestinian Authority protested that the U.S. acted in self-interest based on her historical relationship with Israel rather than for peace and security in the Middle East and the world. The Palestinian Authority withdrew from direct negotiation with Israel and questioned U.S. moral ground to act as an 'honest broker' in packaging a new peace plan. As a reprisal, the U.S. cut all aid to Palestine, except some \$42 million for security cooperation, and closed down Palestinian Liberation Organization liaison office in Washington. Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas reacted and cut off security cooperation with the U.S. Israeli-Palestinian relationship demonstrates that where parties play it dirty, morality is hardly the option. The objective of this paper is to analyze the opportunities and challenges in the Israeli-Palestinian two-state, one-state and no-state solution within the rubrics of global *realpolitik* of asymmetrical relationship between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The specific aim is to recommend policy solution for enduring peace and stability in the Middle East region and the world at large.

Keywords: peace process, security, one-state solution, two-state solution, no-state solution

Introduction

There have been many trajectories of advocacy to resolve Israeli-Palestinian persistent conflict of competing claims and nationalisms over historical title to land which was, after the 1948-49 war, divided into three parts: the State of Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip (Beinin and Hajjar, n.d., p. 1). There are four distinct trajectories for resolving Israeli-Palestinian age-long conflict which include the “no-state” solution, the 'one-state” solution, the “two-state” solution, and the “three-state” solution. Of the four, emphasis was placed on the two-state solution more than the one-state or no-state solution, ignoring the three-state solution as polemic.

However, there has been increasing hopelessness and fear that the non-realisation of a two-state solution may dove-tail into a de facto one-state thus the new vision of “one-state, from the Jordan to the Mediterranean” (Frieden, 2015, p. 2) to bring all the protagonists in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict together and shore commitment in one sovereign entity. The call for one-state solution was given a boost following the United States government's declaration of Jerusalem as the capital city of the State of Israel on the 6 December 2017, closure and transfer of responsibility of American consulate to its embassy in Jerusalem in 2018, the clamour of Israeli Arab-Palestinians to retain Israeli citizenship and the Palestinians thinking to over-run the Jewish state through demographic- and vote-majority.

Further, the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, on 18 October 2018, announced the closure and transfer of responsibility of American consulate to its embassy in Jerusalem arguing that the step was to “achieve significant efficiencies and increase our effectiveness”. The announcement of closure of U.S. Consulate in Tel Aviv and transfer into an embassy in Jerusalem ended U.S. support for the division of Jerusalem into West and East, by Israel and Palestine, respectively and made America the first state to recognise Jerusalem as the capital city of the State of Israel (Fulbright, 18 October 2018).

In spite of Trump administration's spirited defence that it acted in line with U.S. long-standing national goals for global peace and security based on the prevailing realities, critics insisted that the U.S. acted in self-interest even though it was the peace-broker between Israel and Palestinian Authority (PA). Consequently, the PA broke off direct negotiations with Israel and questioned U.S. moral ground as an honest broker, insisting that the U.S. cannot be trusted to package a new Israeli-Palestinian peace plan. Typical of hegemonic power, the U.S. cut all aid to PA, except some \$42 million for ongoing security cooperation and closed down Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) liaison office in Washington.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this paper is to assess the prospects of a two-state solution vis-à-vis one-state solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the dynamics of global *realpolitik*; and, the U.S. broker-role in the peace process within the rubric of the asymmetrical power relationship between the State of Israel and a putative Palestinian Authority. The specific objectives of the paper are: to analyze the opportunities and challenges in the two-state, one-state and no-state solution between the state of Israel and the autonomous administration of Palestinian Authority, highlighting the most vexatious issues in Palestinian self-determination, including: ownership of Jerusalem, final borders, Jewish settlements in West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the return of Palestinian refugees.

This is an analytical research and which relies on existing literature drawn from the rich history of the adversaries for data. Our analysis takes place within the environment of the dynamics of the U.S. broker-role in the peace process and the rubrics of global *realpolitik* of the asymmetrical power relationship between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

The rest of this paper is divided into five sections: one, background to Israeli-Palestinian Conflict; two, Trajectories to Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process; three, Analysis of Israeli-Palestinian Two-State Solution; four, A One-State Panacea to Israeli-Palestinian Conflict; and five, Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations.

Background to Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Israeli-Palestinian conflict stems from competing claims over historical title to the land. The Jews claim the land based on the biblical promise to Abraham and his descendants; as the historical site of the Jewish kingdom of Israel (which area was destroyed by the Roman Empire); and, in the modern times, as a place to serve as a protective haven for the Jews, from European anti-Semitism. On the other hand, the Palestinians' counter-claim is based on their aboriginality for hundreds of years on the land; their demographic majority; and, their rejection of the thesis that the biblical inheritance of the kingdom excludes them in any way since Palestinians are also among the descendants of Abraham (Beinin & Hajjar, n.d., p.1).

The Roman Empire destroyed the Jewish kingdom and caused the dispersal of the Jews across the world. With the political developments in Europe, particularly the Westphalia principle and the demand for national rights to self-determination and sovereignty, the Jews and Palestinians joined other parts of the world in developing national consciousness along competing lines of Zionism and Arabism to mobilize their peoples to achieve national goals. Zionism was established in 1889 by an Austro-Hungarian-born Jew, Theodor Herzl as a tool for Jewish mobilization, identification, immigration and settlement in Palestine as “a national home of the Jewish people secured by

public law” (United Nations, 1978; Simpson, 1944, p. 63; Klausner, 1960, p.129) and to unite Jews in Diaspora. Though the term 'Zionism' was not mentioned in Herzl's 1896 pamphlet, *Der judenstaat*, or “The Jewish State”, which proposed a sovereign Jewish state as the lever and guarantor of Jewish life and liberty from the anti-Semitism in Europe, it derived from Zion, the hill on which the Temple of Jerusalem was located which symbolizes Jerusalem; Zionism was first applied to the Jewish movement in 1890 by the Austrian Jewish philosopher Nathan Birnbaum. Zionist leaders pressed the claim of “‘historical connection' since their ancestors lived in Palestine two thousand years earlier before dispersing in the Diaspora” (United Nations, 1978).

Towards the tail-end of the World War I, it is argued, Britain entered into three agreements respectively with three parties 'regarding the final status of Palestine in anticipation of the impending division of the Ottoman Empire” (Neal, 1995, p. 2). First, the British High Commissioner of Egypt Henry McMahon, in a correspondence of 1915-1916, promised Sharif Hussein of Mecca that the Palestinian territory would become an independent, Arab Palestine in return for Hussein's encouragement of Arabs to revolt against the Ottoman Empire. Second, the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement divided the Levant area comprising modern-day Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel and the Occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank into British and French “spheres of influence,” with Palestine placed under “international administration” based on its special religious inclination (Geddes, 1991, p. 29). Third and finally, the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917 expressed British support for the Zionist Jews and the creation of a Jewish state in the area (Geddes, 1991, p. 35). The expression of intent by the Balfour Declaration was favoured by the League of Nations after the end of the World War I, thus the British was awarded a territorial Mandate in Palestine in order to facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the Balfour Declaration.

The term “National Home for the Jewish people” was first introduced into international law in 1917 by the Balfour Declaration (Frankenstein, 1948, p. 27) and created in the Jews Diaspora apocalyptic orthodoxy of the coming Messiah, a savior from God to deliver them, through the teachings of two radical rabbis, Jehuda Aikalai and Zevi Hirsch Klisscher. Zion connotes Jewish religious attachment to Jerusalem and Land of Israel (Eretz Israel). Following the Basel Programme formulated at the first Zionist Congress in 1897 organised by Herzl, the goal of Zionism was to create “for the Jewish people of a home in Palestine secured by public law.”

Zionism propelled the first wave of European Jewish immigration and consequently, opened the floodgate of Jewish immigrations and population growth in Palestine. Although the Palestinians refused to accept the Jewish immigration, some other factors such as the pogroms of the Jews in the Russian Empire which was influenced by the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881,

including the loss of over 2 million European Jews in the Nazi genocide during the Second World War facilitated international support and partition plan (under UN Resolution 181) for the creation of a Jewish state and an Arab state but the partition plan was rejected by the Arabs and led to first Arab-Israeli War (1948-49) in which the Palestinians faced *Nabka*, or Catastrophe which has kept the Arab-Israeli relations at fever-pitch. In the aftermath of the first war, Jordan took control of the West Bank and Egypt, the Gaza Strip. Israel took the opportunity of the Six-Day War in 1967 to take control of the Gaza Strip, West Bank, East Jerusalem and Sinai Peninsula and expelled some 430,000 Palestinians which served as *Naksa*, or setback for the Palestinians (Najjar, 20 November 2017) both in their resistance against the Jewish State and in the opinion of the international community.

Israel has continued to expand its settlement as outcome of time and space created by Palestinian recalcitrance; Palestinian Arabs inheritors of Islam, the great conquering civilization now live under humiliation of hostile Jewish colonists – the 'infidel' race they had dominated for centuries – backed by other infidel powers (Mandeville, 23 March)

Relations between Israel and Jordan improved with the signing of “Treaty of Peace between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan” on 26 October 1994, by which Jordan, after Egypt, became second Arab country to sign permanent settlement of disputes. In the treaty, the two states agreed to adjust land and water boundaries as well as not to allow parties' territories to be used for military attacks by a third country (Haberman, 27 October 1994). A decade later Israeli-Jordanian relations thawed in the early September 2015 over Al-Aqsa mosque which led to the “Stabbing Intifada” by the Jordanians against Israelis in the West Bank. The thaw in Israeli-Jordanian relations led to Jordan's refusal to renew land lease West Bank to Israel.

Trajectories to the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process: Challenges and Opportunities in the Different Prospective Solutions Put Forward or Canvassed by Different Interests:

The conflagration that attended the creation of the State of Israel has raised trajectories of solution such as: a no-state solution; one-state solution; two-state solution; three-state solution, four-state solution and five-state solution.

- **The Five-State Solution**

The five-state solution was canvassed by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia (Friedman, 27 February 2009). Advocates of five-state solution, however, list Hamastan, Fatahland, Palestine, Haredia, and Israel, as the possible states (Gordis, 25 June 2010).

- **The Four-State Solution**

The four-state solution gained ground under U.S. President Barack Obama. Obama spoke of four-state solution on logical premise of territorial

contiguity which will give Palestinian corridor connecting Gaza with Judea and Samaria. Obama pulled the rabbit foot out of his cap and revealed:

Gaza is going to happen in stages.. a peace deal will involve an Israeli withdrawal from Judea and Samaria. A post-Israel Judea and Samaria will be so wonderful that the azans will decide to join it...If there is a model where young Palestinians are looking and seeing that in the West Bank Palestinians are able to live in dignity with self-determination, and suddenly their economy is booming and trade is taking place because they have created an environment in which Israel is confident about its security and a lot of the old barriers to commerce and educational exchange and all that has begun to break down, that something that the young people of Gaza are going to want (Glick, 12 September 2013).

It was, however, understood that Obama's four-state solution was meant to frame up logic to pressurise Israel to surrender its strategic and historic heartland.

The Obama plan laid foundation for other four-state proponents, like Joe Settler who rationalized that advocates of two-state solution are not being honest to admit that:

a Palestinian state already exists, more than one in fact: 75% of Mandatory Palestine which was promised the Jewish State was ripped away and given to the Hashemite invaders (renamed Jordan); some 80% of Jordan's citizens self-identify as Palestinian; put Jordan aside, then there's Gaza [100% Arab rule, 100% self-identified Palestine population, and Zero Jews]. Gaza is the second Palestinian state in existence; for the two-staters, the two existing Jew-free Palestinian states just are not enough, they want Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem, including Jewish holiest sites, as the third; and retaining the autonomous Palestinian Authority which could be grow larger to eventually outnumber the Jews, creating a fourth Palestinian state (Settler, 25 May 2016).

- **The Three-State Solution**

The three-state solution also called the Egyptian-Jordan or the Jordan-Egypt option proposes the return of control of the West Bank to Jordan and Gaza Strip to Egypt. Three-State Solution was as an alternative to the fledgling and interminable two-state solution (Slackman, 12 January 2009). The proposed major states-structure is for Jews in Israel; Hamas in Gaza; and Palestinians in the West Bank (Ben-Ami, 18 January 2019). The three-state solution promises one state for the Jews and two, for the Palestinians. Palestinian optimists of the three-state structure hope that a Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip and northern Sinai, from Rafah to El-Arish, will have the latter territory

leased to the Palestinians (Hacohen, 19 June 2018). Any option that includes relinquishing West Bank territory to Palestinians for peace excludes Israel's security thus Israel cannot give in to any bizarre initiative which returns to “Jordan is Palestine” of the earlier decades (Danon, 2 June 2014).

Analysis of Israeli-Palestinian Two-State Solution

A two-state solution was proposed by the leader of PLO Yasser Arafat in 1974, first articulated by Said Hammani in the mid-1970 (Āghā et al, 2003, p. 11), and anchored on the logic of “two states for two nations” (Lintl, 2018, p. 5). The two-state blueprint was prepared by Former Israeli Justice minister Yossi Beilin and Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei (Beillin, 9 September 2019; Sherwood, 24 April 2012) and assented to by Yasser Arafat but was refusal approval, on presentation, by Shimon Peres who insisted that he must first, have a personal mandate. The prospect of a two-state solution encouraged Israeli administration to sponsor the Oslo Accord in early September 1993, supported by U.S. President George W. Bush. The Oslo Accord elevated PLO to PA and adopted a United Nations Security Council resolution on the “peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine” of 1974, for an independent State of Palestine that exists side by side with the State of Israel “within secure and recognised borders”.

Under the fog of war, the State of Israel became *sui generis*, a “special” or a unique case and consequently adopted the principle of statism to, among others, deal with its uncompromising neighbours in the Arab world. The Jewish political system seized control of the economy first, through the Labour Party and later the “Histadrut (federation of labour unions) who then transferred their power to the government of the newly born state (Nitzan and Bichler, 2002, p.7). The factors of “exogenous” and “original sins” facilitated Israeli hegemonic stability through a “nation in arms” and a “barrack democracy” (Ben Dor, 1977, p. 431) and diminished the clout of PA in the Washington negotiation.

In spite of Israeli hegemonic power status, it submitted to numerous diplomatic efforts toward realizing two-state solution. Some of the efforts include the Madrid Conference in 1991 which opened diplomatic dialogue and represents the first time all stakeholder-countries to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process had been gathered “face-to-face” (Harms and Todd, 2005, p. 153) leading to promise by Yitzhak Shamir and the head of the Palestinian delegation to work together with exchange of letters and subsequent signing of the Oslo I Accord in white House on 13 September 1993. The Clinton administration tinkered with the process through the Wye River Memorandum in 1998.

However, the Oslo Accords led to the Camp David Summit in 2000 and the follow-up negotiation at Taba in January 2001. There were the Arab League proposal under Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia which was refused by Israel, and the Annapolis Conference in November 2007 which also provided the

fulcrum for the agreement by the PLO, Israel, and the U.S. on two-state solution. Suffice it to argue that Israeli prime ministers – Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon, Ehud Olmert, and Benjamin Netanyahu accepted the two-state solution, except differences in details, (Shindler, 17 February 2017), Israel does not welcome any land-for-peace chemistry which detracts from its security solution.

In the Washington negotiations, the two-state solution assumed a hopeful and popular paradigm. David Unger, for instance, wrote that by 2033, “Israel and Palestine will be living side-by-side in an uneasy peace, with the risk of war between them and terrorism across their common border diminishing year by year (Unger, 2008, p. 59). Israel with the foreknowledge of Arab terrorism is under security-state dilemma although at the core of the two-state option is that:

Israelis and Palestinians want to run their countries differently; Israelis want a Jewish state, and Palestinians want a Palestinian one. Because neither side can get what it wants in a joined state, the only possible solution that satisfies everyone involves separating Palestinians and Israelis (Beauchamp, 14 May 2018).

It is quite open and understandable that the two nations do not want marriage in a one-state solution but divorce through amicable separation into two discrete national entities to solve their problem of proximity which, in the words of Benjamin Franklin, “breeds contempt”. The challenges of Israeli security have made the two-state solution too big and cumbersome to succeed. Israeli Minister Moshe Ya'alon buttressed the security concern in 2010, when he stated, *inter alia*, that:

Just as Arabs live in Israel, so, too, should Jews be able to live in Palestine. ...If we are talking about co-existence and peace, why the [Palestinian] insistence that the territory they receive be ethnically cleansed of Jews? (Keinon, 16 April 2010)

Israelis feel; “We left Gaza to Palestinians so they could prosper in peace, and all they did was fire rockets at us. That's what happens when we give up territory” for a Palestinian state (Macintyre, 2018: 28)

In the face of lack of security guarantees from the Palestinians and prevailing situation where Palestinians reduced Gaza, “the territory they receive”, into an Afghanistan-type enclave for ethnic cleansing of the Jews, logic of proactive security measures and self-preservation expects that Israel would not only block any negotiation on land give-away, but reinforce its policy tactic of encirclement and expansion of settlements to deprive the aggressive Palestinian Arabs right of neighbourliness which endanger Israel's security, worse in the Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh Hamas-led PA regime of terrorism.

The study of RAND Corporation on the costs of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict recommended five scenarios and seven cost-implications to achieve a two-state solution. The scenarios include a two-state solution by bilateral agreement, coordinated unilateral withdrawal; uncoordinated unilateral

withdrawal; non-violent resistance; and violent uprising (Anthony et al, 2015, p. 5). The seven cost-implications are that:

- a two-state solution provides best economic outcomes for both Israelis and Palestinians with Israel enjoying more than double of Palestinians gains over a projected ten-year period;
- the Palestinians gain more proportionately than Israelis over what it would have been in 2024;
- a return to violence would have profoundly negative economic consequences for both Palestinians and Israelis;
- in most scenarios, the value of economic opportunities gained or lost by both parties is much larger than expected changes in direct costs;
- unilateral withdrawal by Israel from the West Bank imposes large economic costs on Israelis unless Israel coordinates with the Palestinians and the international community, and the international community shoulders a substantial portion of the costs of relocating settlers;
- intangible factors, such as each party's security and sovereignty aspirations are critical considerations in understanding and resolving the impasse; and
- taking advantage of the economic opportunities of a two-state solution would require substantial investments from the public and private sectors of the international community and from both parties (Anthony *et al*, 2015, p.xx).

However, the RAND's study, though critical and revealing, proffered altruistic and unrealistic steps for solution when situated with the core issues in the Israeli-Palestinian incompatibility vis-à-vis global *realpolitik*. For instance, on the security front, in 2019 alone:

- IDF alleged Iran-Hezbollah precision-missile project in Lebanon targeted against Israel which prompted warning from the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of *Dir balak*, connoting, 'Watch out' for a disproportionate response for any Hezbollah attack on Israel from Lebanon (Gross, 29 August 2019);
- Russian supply of S-300 anti-aircraft missile system to Syria against Israel which also prompted Israeli government to warn: "You know, we have stealth fighter, the best planes in the world. These batteries (S-300) are not even able to detect them" (Weapons of the World, 6 October 2018; UAWIRE, 6 October, 2018); and
- Iranian downing of a U.S. drone in June 2019 and U.S. President Donald Trump warning that the U.S. military was "cocked and loaded" to strike against Tehran (*The Times of Israel*, 22 June 2019).

It is very instructive to note that the Iranian and Russian militarization of the Middle East region to arm the Palestinians and Israeli Arab-neighbours as well as attacks on the U.S. mediator-role in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations puts Palestinians and their interests on harm's way and constitutes a great minus for a diplomatic course in the two-state option. These realities, *inter alia*, have made the peace process a one-way street which depends on what Israel wants.

The RAND team erroneously believed that direct costs are the ultimate consideration for peace through a two-state solution whereas the indirect political costs – Jerusalem, settlements (Israeli structures and Palestinian refugees), water resources and security (Sher, 2018, p. 9) are primary drivers of the direct economic costs in the Israeli-Palestinian conundrum.

The argument that a two-state solution provides best economic outcomes is fluid and complex when situated with the historical circumstances of the Israeli-Palestinian incompatibility. Israeli withdrawal from substantial portion of West Bank, particularly Area C which hosts Jerusalem, either by coordinated or uncoordinated unilateral measure, would amount to rare altruism never known by a country whose statehood was achieved through force and its continued existence depends on superior force against surrounding uncompromising and antagonist neighbours.

Worse case scenario is that West Bank which was conceded by Israel under the Oslo accord to boost the newly upgraded PA's participation in the negotiation for two-state solution, turned into Palestinians' terrorist 'haven' and Gaza, the Middle Eastern Afghanistan. The sordid security outcomes of Israeli gesture have increased Israeli anxiety and led to Israeli abandonment of the Oslo framework and all it represented, including administrative control of West Bank, withdrawal of PA legitimacy to negotiate without Israeli consent, halted construction of over 12,000 planned housing units in the occupied territories, etc. With these presentiments, therefore, it becomes illogical in power transition to think of Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories when, like the fight between the Octopus and midget, it has completely encircled West Bank and control security in Gaza which was left under Israel's control since the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement of 1979.

These developments conferred legitimacy on Israeli settlement programme as an outcome of a well-rehearsed policy of self-defence and self-preservation through colonization, forced displacement, restriction, limitation of freedom and access to resources, structural inequality, etc., in anticipation that the Palestinians would be forced to renounce violence and return to the negotiating table, after 53 years' refusal to accord Israel right to statehood and two decades the PA leader Arafat refused Barak's offer of 97% of West Bank and a two-state solution in 2000.

Jewish Settlements in Occupied Territories:

For purposes of emphasis, the settlements in occupied territories followed historical precedent. The historical origin of Jewish settlement was through the

“Kibbutzim” and “Moshavim”, particularly the first Kibbutz Degania was established in 1909 by European Jewish colonists, including Tel Aviv which altogether was an approach to “creating facts on the ground”. The historical Jewish settlements formed the basis of the map of the UN Partition Plan for Jewish and Palestinian states in 1947. Israelis understand more than the Palestinians, how to lay “a stake in an area” to ensure that it will be part of a future home and difficult to rid of later on (Tahhan, 21 November 2017). Since over 50 years, Israel has transferred between 600,000 and 750,000 Jewish Israelis to West Bank (Shafir, 2017) thus laying a stake in the area, particularly Area C.

The most populous among the five political camps in the 2015 Israeli 120-member Knesset, the 44-member Right-Wing, hold that occupied territories belong to Israel. It would be unthinkable for Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories which are used by Israel as a necessity for reasons of security (Naor, 1999). Israel adopted forward strategy of 'waiting game' – the paradox of abstract support for negotiation but *de facto* rejection by failures of peace talks - to achieve zero-sum outcome through encirclement, expansion and colonization of territories while the Palestinians rejection of offers and withdrawing from negotiations simply play into the hands of the Israeli policy.

Consistent with Israeli forward strategy, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir chose “to drag out the Washington negotiations for ten years, by which time the annexation of the West Bank would be an accomplished fact.” The succeeding administration of Yitzhak Rabin reinforced the strategy and stalemated the Washington negotiations in 1992 with the expulsion of hundreds of Palestinians residents of Israeli-occupied territories on charges of radical Islamist activism and thus limited human and economic rights of the Palestinians and the legitimacy of the PA delegation to the Washington negotiations.

Rabin's further limitation of the putative PA's legitimacy to the Washington negotiations completed PA's dysfunctionality and took the rug off the feet of Palestinians' two-state framework. Recognizing this dysfunctionality of the PA in a negotiation meeting between the Israeli negotiator Tzipi Livni and Palestinian counterpart Saeb Erekat,

Erekat reportedly told the Israeli side that we [Palestinians] are here to negotiate in the name of the UN-recognised State of Palestine, not in the name of a Palestinian Authority whose inputs and outputs are controlled by Israel.... The PLO would go after Israeli officials as war criminals in international institutions (Ben-Gedalyahu, 4 April 2014).

Erekat's twisted and belated allegiance to the United Nations' authority, howbeit, indicates admission of failure and change of tactics which could further polarise the Palestinians' nationalist goal and favour Israel's 'no-state' deal.

Against these backdrops, Former Knesset speaker and chair of the Jewish Agency for Israel Avraham Burg expressed the frustration in the Oslo Accords peace process and poignantly posited:

...the two-state solution is dead. A quarter of a century on from the Oslo Accords, the two-state solution lies in tatters. There is no peace process. There is very little hope left. And yet somehow, we must still find a way for Israelis and Palestinians to live side-by-side, with equal rights within a single international border. It is time for a progressive one-state. I accept that this view is as unpopular among Israelis today as the two-state solution was long ago. But, as I shall explain, it is our only hope (Burg, 2018, pp. 20-25).

Burg stated that it was difficult for him to ask Palestinians, in the light of present realities on the ground, to “give up their dream for a two-state solution” because the dream, like tomato in the supermarket, had expired, unlike before “when we had a lot of hope and talked about it”, today, “we still have hope, but don't talk about it” (Cashman, 19 June 2019). Two major architects of the two-state solution, former Israeli justice minister Yossi Beilin and former Palestinian prime minister Ahmed Qurei view the two-state proposal *inrequiem*: Yossi reasoned that both the government of PA and the two-state have become fig leave and a farce; whereas Qurei agreed that the two-state solution is defunct and a fantasy (Sherwood, 24 April 2012).

From the historical antagonism between the Jews and Palestinians, the international support for two-state that was rejected by the Arabs, the incidental redistributive justice, U.S. mediator-role which is anchored on principle of realism – and, by extension *realpolitik* of self-interest – and the obvious Israeli superior influence and bargaining power over the PA in the Middle East and the world at large, new dynamics including the annexation of Jerusalem by Israel with the approval of global powers, the popular view that a two-state solution had faded into waiting-game polemics to afford Israel time and resources to accomplish a no-state solution, explain why the two-state is no longer an option and why the need to examine a one state solution by agreement becomes necessary and urgent.

A One-State Panacea to Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Israeli-Palestinian one-state solution, sometimes referred to as bi-national state was proposed by the Libyan Leader Muammar Ghadaffi as a soft-landing and face-saving alternative to the fledgling two-state solution. It was proposed in order to assuage the decade-long humiliation, shame and sadness of the Palestinians and resolve the endemic conflagration between Israel and the Arabs which began with the history of Jewish immigration (*aliyot*) and the sectarian conflict in mandate Palestine between the Zionist Jews and Arabist Palestinians in the mid-20th century (BBC News Online; Neal, 1995).

It will be remarked that more Palestinians than Israelis favour the one-state solution on a number of self-interests, including that with higher birth rate, Palestinians will deny Israelis demographic-majority. In a one-state with potential Palestinian vote-majority with democratic tenet of one person, one

vote (Shikaki, 2018, p. 13), Israel would no longer be a Jewish state. Revealing the demographic dilemma as a political propaganda, PA Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh remarked euphorically:

Israel stands, today, before a big challenge – Either the two-state solution or a demographic death; either the two-state solution or no democratic or Jewish state; either the two-state solution or a racist regime in practice and law; either the two-state solution or no peace (Rosgon, 30 July 2019).

Shtayyeh's comment reinforced Jews' belief to ascribe great importance to the fact that any increase in the demographic balance in favour of Palestinians in Israel or parts of the Israeli-occupied territories is an 'existential threat to the Jewish State of Israel (Kartin and Schell, 2008). More so, facts that Palestinian Arabs, about 20% of Israeli population, don't want to lose Israeli citizenship and the prospect of corruption and fragmentation in Gaza which could turn a Palestinian state into the Afghanistan of the Middle Eastern region, help to reinforce support for one-state solution.

Few Israeli Jews who believe in the one-state solution think more of how much of the Palestinian territory and people can be annexed to easily navigate the existential threat of Palestinian demography-majority. Some others dismiss the report of Palestinian demographic-majority as a ruse contending that the Palestinians padded and falsified the 1991 census figure by 50%. As at mid-September 2019, Israel's population was 8,546,394, out of which 1,890,000 are Palestinians. When Arab-Palestinian population in Israel is added to the Palestinians' official population of 5,006,400, the comparative population statistics for Israel and Palestine stood at 6,656,394 and 5,195,400, respectively. This group thinks of Israeli algebra of isolation or delayed annexation of Gaza in the short run, immigration of Jews into Israel, restriction of Palestinians in Gaza from entering West Bank in the guise of sourcing medical attention, emigration of Palestinians from Gaza into countries that are willing to take them in, etc. before annexation of Gaza, in order to solve the existential challenge of possible Palestinian demographic time bomb in an Israeli-majority one-state equation.

It will be recalled that although Palestine was divided into the State of Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, the U.S. declaration and recognition of Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel has reinforced:

- Israel's claim of Jerusalem as 'indivisible' capital of Israel with the annexation and total control in West Bank;
- denial of cultural and political identity to the Palestinian Arab citizens in territories controlled by Israel; and
- the policy of encirclement and policing of Gaza whose Arab inhabitants are being depopulated through increased Jewish immigration and

foreseeable Palestinian emigration, many years after Israel withdrew its settlements from Gaza in 2005 and Sinai Peninsula in 1982.

It would be interesting to note also that beyond the declaration of Jerusalem as capital of Israel, the U.S. President Trump took several stringent measures to make Palestinians return to the Washington negotiations, such as:

- the defunding of UNRWA, established by UNGA Resolution 302 and other UN resolutions, by U.S. ;
- closing down PLO office in Washington;
- cutting all aid to the Palestinians with exception of some \$42 million it gave them for ongoing security cooperation efforts.

However, reacting to these policy-steps which cast U.S.' 'honest broker' in doubt by the Palestinians, PA threatened to cut off security cooperation with the U.S. These events deteriorated ties between the PA and the U.S. to an “unprecedented nadir” (*Times of Israel*, 11 September 2018:10.53 PM). Political observers argued, more correctly, that President Trump's U.S. Jerusalem declaration which removed the defining city of Jerusalem off the negotiating table, defunding UN Palestinian Refugee Agency (UNRWA), and the 'Gazafication' of West Bank into Fatah and Hamas conflict make “a Jewish-majority state guaranteed in perpetuity” (Clark, 2018: 1).

Palestinians acknowledge the multi-factorial sources of Israeli power and tout the one-state plan as mere slogan that needs to be fine-tuned because of their anxiety and doubt that:

as long as Israel reigns supreme, and can violate Palestinians rights to the land and discriminate against them with impunity – whether they be disenfranchised people living under occupation, or Palestinians living as citizens within Israel itself – there is little likelihood that the present reality will change. Without outside pressure allied with fresh thinking, we are unlikely to get any closer towards finding an equitable way to share the land (Burg, 2018, p.18).

The thinking that Palestinians' anxiety in a one-state solution could be salvaged by “outside pressure allied with fresh thinking”, perhaps a reference to the Quartet who are inclined to “an equitable way to share the land” between Israel and PA, making PA retain the West Bank, is completely illusory against the background of Palestinian-Arabs' resistance to Israeli statehood.

In Israeli strategic thinking, any land-swap proposal in the peace process is both tantamount to a diplomatic conspiracy against Israeli existential rights and unacceptable. Israel as a regional military superpower, robust economy with other sources of state power can go it alone in a “unilateral fashion” without having to “listen to global institutions” (Mead, 2015) and, by logic, would most likely terminate collective diplomatic efforts in the peace process and put the Palestinians and their aspiration in harm's way.

Asymmetrical Dynamics in the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process

However, Burg stated with certainty that Israel will actualize its interest in the peace process with or without outside pressure “in some unspecified manner” perhaps using its aggressive defensive mechanisms. Burg rationalized that “Cancers left untreated on one side send secondary growths to the other, and there isn't a wall in the world that can stop them” (Burg, 2018, p.25). Palestinians once defied the position of global community to share the land with Israel on the basis of a two-state solution when it thought it could, today, the untreated cancer from the Palestinians has manifested secondary outgrowths in the Israeli position which has become difficult to cure.

After 25 years (1993-2018) of failure of the Oslo Accords to realize the dream of two states living in peace side-by-side, “the world needs to engage with new ideas for achieving a resolution” (*Prospect*, 2018, pp.19-30). The twist in Israeli-Palestinian peace trajectory calls for careful approach. The one-state solution became manifest based on new realities of:

Israel's historic leaders, alliance formation, convergence of interests with the U.S., diplomatic fortitude, pragmatism of international law, economic power, and defence and security strategy, in the face of Arabs' conspiracy and terrorism under GWOT point to the fact that any real negotiation for solution between Israel and Palestine... places Israel on the path of victory... it negates international law principles of *pacta sunt servanda* for Palestinians and their supporters to cling on to purist claim to East Jerusalem, as capital of not-yet created State of Palestine to sustain Arab-Muslims' polemics, distraction, and terrorism against the State of Israel, people and cherished values. The international community should embrace the American pathway and Israeli diplomatic finesse towards quick, real and enduring resolution that will put the Palestinian-Israeli conundrum behind humanity for regional and global security (Eke, 2018, pp.1-8).

Burg reinforced that “Israel now enjoys 100 per cent of the privileges between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea - freedoms, resources, power, political rights and industrial clout: all of these things are monopolized by us [Israelis].” The pre-condition to progress in the peace process is not negotiation, “in the old sense of one side swapping some cards for the other's, but rather one side – Israelis – becoming ready to relinquish some of the deck of cards on which it has an exclusive grip” (Burg, 2018, pp.20-21). Burg maintained that only by taking these steps can Israel start thinking about moving from a monopolized space to a shared one, as Israelis know in their hearts that one day they must do to enjoy the real security that can only come through a just and durable peace.

Burg's strategic views re-enacted the assertion made by American President Dwight D. Eisenhower on 11 September 1956 that:

If we are going to take advantage of the assumption that all people want peace, then the problem is for people to get together and leap governments, if necessary to evade governments, to

work out not one method but thousands of methods by which people can gradually learn a bit more of each other” (Eisenhower, 1956, p.750).

In the one-state blueprint proposed by Burg, the idea is a union of two “nations,” that is a bi-national state (in place of states), modeled on the U.S., with 50 individual states, but the new nations would be formed of 30 cantons – 20 with a Jewish majority, 10 with an Arab (or Druze) majority – the Arabs who remained in Israel after the 1949 armistice treaty that delineated the State of Israel. Each would manage its internal affairs in the American federalist model comprised of Jewish majority, Arab majority, Druze majority, Greater Jerusalem (West and East), and Gaza Strip.

Tilting towards one-state solution, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu elevated the age-long discrimination into a constitutional ethnic hierarchy, asserting that “the right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel is 'unique' to the Jewish people” (Burg, 2018, pp.21). Netanyahu administration's force stature enjoyed constitutional backing by the Israeli parliament - Knesset -

- 50% (Jewish Home, Yisrael Beiteinu; and parts of Likud, Kulanu, and ultra-Orthodox parties) backed “force action”, including conflict management and aggressive annexation;
- 30% (the Labour Party, Yesh Atid and parts of Kulanu) are between and betwixt and back “conflict transformation” with the retention of Israeli-Palestinian asymmetrical power status-quo; and
- 20% (Meretz, United Arab List, parts of Labour Party) support negotiated settlement based on different demands.

The Knesset-majority support for force structure asks the question: are the two descendants of Abraham and Abrahamic faith moving into a no-state solution by annexation?

- **The No-State Solution**

A no-state solution was a plan drafted by Israeli Minister of Labour Yigal Allon and anchored on the doctrine that Israeli sovereignty over the occupied territories was necessary for Israeli's defence. It sought to partition the West Bank between Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan who were the aboriginal owner of West Bank, create a Druze state in Syria's Quineitra Governorate, including the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, and return greater portion of the Sinai Peninsula to Arab control. The Allon plan laid the foundation for Israeli settlement policy which was started under the Yitzhak Rabin's first administration, aimed at annexation of:

- West Bank and Gaza starting with the 'integration' of East Jerusalem and the surrounding parts of the West Bank into the administrative and

municipal areas of the holy places of Jerusalem in June 1967 (Amirav, 2009, pp. 53-54); and

- the Area C which includes Jordan Valley, part of Hebron, the northern Dead Sea region etc., and constitutes roughly 60 per cent of West Bank under Israeli external security control.

Though Area 'A' is 18% and Area 'B', 21% of West Bank, for PA's internal affairs such as education, health and economy, Israel holds sway over external security in these Areas.

It would seem that Israeli government is working to accomplish the no-state solution should Jerusalem administration yield to pressure to fully annex West Bank and finally bury the hope for a Palestinian state, which Israel resents as potential enemy within.

The basic difference between the one-state and the no-state solutions is that in the former the PA and what it represents would be accommodated/absorbed into a federation of Israel while in the latter it would be dissolved into the State of Israel after West Bank is partitioned between Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan. The problem is whether Jordan wants to add to its already extensive Palestinian population and attendant problem.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary

We have examined the Israeli-Palestinian peace process from the factors that generated the conflict, alternative peace solutions and situated the strengths and weaknesses of each of the multivariate trajectories as outcomes in the roadmap to peace. The two-state solution was the most popular paradigm at a time but has lost Jewish confidence when Palestinians have belatedly begun to ramp up pressure for it. Today, howbeit, one-state solution attracts support of fragments of Jewish and Palestinian population. The no-state solution which Israel is forging with parliamentary and executive drive lends to zero-sum in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiation. From the evidence-based study, it was logical to argue that, in each option on the table, Israel and the PA showed that the devil was in the details of how to remove mutual suspicion, fear, distrust and division among the two belligerent descendants of Abraham.

For the past half a century, the UN Security Council resolution has sustained the Jewish State of Israel and will not reverse itself in defending Israel howbeit the increasing 'occupation' power and prosperity in the region. It is the Palestinian fate that remains hanging in the balance as long as the peace process delays.

A one-state solution has greater potential of removing the critical challenges of mutual fear and distrust between Jews and Palestinians, disagreement over border demarcation, concern for national security, water rights, control of

Jerusalem, Israeli and Palestinians settlements and freedom of movement for all (West Bank) and Palestinians right of return. There is equally greater promise that if the issues that divide Jews and Palestinians are removed, a one-state solution, in the long run, would bring Israelis and Palestinians to live together, understand and cooperate in fostering aspirations for collective national identity, sovereignty and security. It should not, however, be taken for granted that lasting peace and security will depend on time to test Palestinians resolve to assimilate in the one-state solution.

Conclusion

One-state solution of federal arrangement in which part of Gaza would be a separate entity locked in with a Jewish majority would be acceptable to Jews and Palestinian majority with minimal resistance by the excludable fragment of the Palestinian population. The one-state solution which should, in a long run, guarantee equal rights and obligations to Israelis and Palestinians as citizens of the “State of Israel” offers relative win-win solution that could assuage Arab feeling of humiliation, shame and sadness and help to foster peace and security as the non-rival and non-excludable global public good in the Middle East, the Arab states, and the world at large.

Recommendations

It behooves on the PA and the United Nations to diligently galvanize support of the international community to proactively woo Israel to step down its “no-state” project and embrace “one-state” solution as a give-and-take outcome between the two polar opposites of two-state solution and no-state solution canvassed by the Palestinian-majority and Israeli-majority, respectively.

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