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Trump's Peace Plan

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Abstract. Since the 1960s, the US foreign policy has been characterized by relative stability in interaction with the dynamics of the Palestinian conflict. Well-established American institutions, legal, constitutional and political restrictions, and various groups of interests and pressure, especially the Jewish lobby, research centers, media, and American public opinion, which mostly support the Israeli point of view, are the important factors in developing and defining the foreign policy of the United States. One more factor relates to international and regional shifts. As the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was going on, and since the signing of the Oslo Accords in the early 1990s, the first issue among the priorities of successive US administrations in the Middle East until regional developments imposed other priorities as a result of the events of September 2001, and the subsequent occupation of Iraq in 2003. The emergence of Al Qaeda, the turmoil of the Middle East region and the disturbance of its political, social and religious structure coincided with the emergence of the so-called Arab revolutions of 2011 and extremist jihadist organizations such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Therefore, the role of Trump administration was determined by developments within the US on the one hand, and by the interaction of events in the Middle East region on the other hand.

Keywords: Middle East, Israeli–Palestinian conflict, Trump Peace plan, deal of the century, conflict management, two state solution

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Мирный план Трампа по Ближнему Востоку

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Аннотация. Исследование посвящено анализу предложенного Вашингтоном в 2020 году плана урегулирования длящегося уже более 70 лет палестино-израильского конфликта. В основе плана лежит взаимное признание двух государств. Территорию Палестины,

состоящую из сектора Газа и Западного берега реки Иордан, предлагается неразрывно связать транспортным сообщением и таким образом, по словам Трампа, территория арабского государства должна увеличиться вдвое. В то же время США намерены признать законными еврейские поселения на оккупированных палестинских землях на Западном берегу реки Иордан, то есть таким образом признать за Израилем земли, захваченные им после 1967 года. Автор рассматривает позиции конфликтующих сторон, их реакцию на документ, мнение мирового сообщества о «сделке века», а также перспективы урегулирования конфликта.

Ключевые слова: Ближний Восток, палестино-израильский конфликт, мирный план Трампа, урегулирование конфликтов

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Introduction

During the early 2000s, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict witnessed a state of stagnation and a failure of diplomatic initiatives. Seventy years after the conflict began, the progress toward a two-state solution, by most measures, is more challenging. Political trends on all fronts have weakened the ranks of advocates of peace, talks falter, and historical models about negotiations and final status issues are brought into question.

The 1967 Middle East War, gave rise to a new profile of mediation efforts, given the risk of direct superpowers' involvement within the conflict [2]. A quite number of mediation initiatives were taken by the USA in order to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

More than twenty-five years of diplomacy have failed to curb this negative and volatile situation – including the Oslo Accords, the Camp David summit, the Clinton Parameters, the Taba summit, the Arab Peace Initiative, the Middle East Road Map, Abbas and Olmert's talks in the context of the Annapolis process, Kerry's efforts to achieve peace and others. A brief description of specified agreements is provided below.

1) Camp David Agreement 1978.

It's an agreement between Israel and Egypt signed on 17 September 1978 after 17 days of talks brokered by which gathered Israel's Menachem Begin and Egypt's Anwar Sadat in Camp David. The talks resulted in an accord, "The Framework for peace in the Middle East", summarized in three main parts:

- A process for Palestinian self-government in the West Bank and Gaza.
- A framework for the conclusion of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.
- A similar framework for the peace treaties between Israel and its neighbors [3].

2) Oslo Accord: Day of awe [4].

For nearly thirty years, Palestinian-Israeli peace diplomacy has been based on the Oslo Accords. As a result of secret meetings held in Oslo in 1993 after a series

of independent negotiations between Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, initiated by the United States, presided by the President Clinton and sponsored by the Norwegian government, the Oslo Declaration (DOP) was announced on September 1993 as a political settlement for the Israel-Palestine conflict [5. P. 115]. Upon signing the Oslo Accords, Israel recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization for the first time, and the organization recognized Israel.

The Oslo Accords or the Declaration of Principles were not a peace treaty, but rather a means of establishing interim governing arrangements, and a framework to facilitate subsequent negotiations to reach a final treaty at the end of 1999. The Oslo Accords were to last for only five years. However, two decades later, little progress was made [6].

Oslo negotiations resulted in a second agreement signed in 1995. This agreement stipulated the division of the occupied West Bank into three non-contiguous areas. The Oslo Accords left numerous key issues unresolved pending the completion of permanent status negotiations, including, among other items, borders, security, refugees and Jerusalem. Those agreements did not create an effective path for neutralizing the kinds of crises that emerged during the implementation of Oslo, including waves of terror and violence. Many intelligent and dedicated people have devoted lifetimes in search of the "ultimate deal", but what is required, a comprehensive agreement has been elusive, and waves of terror and violence have set back the process significantly. Only a comprehensive agreement, coupled with a strong economic plan for the Palestinians and others, has the capacity to bring lasting peace to the parties [7].

3) Camp David Summit (2000).

The Camp David summit took place from July 11–14, 2000 at the presidential retreat in Camp David, which ended without reaching a final agreement. The Camp David proposals were inconvenient for the Palestinians, they were viewed as inadequate as it was silent on the question of refugees, the land exchange was unbalanced, as well as the question of the Arab East Jerusalem [8].

4) Taba negotiations, 2001.

US President Bill Clinton led attempts to revive the deadlock between the Palestinians and Israel through negotiations held in the Egyptian Taba region which failed.

5) Road Map, 2003.

A peace plan was prepared by the Quartet that includes the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations. This plan did not carry details regarding a final settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as much as it searched for ways to reach a solution, but it also failed and did not last for more than a year.

6) Annapolis conference, 2007.

In his second term, US President Bush held a conference at the naval base in Annapolis, Maryland, to resume the peace process between the Palestinians and Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas participated in the talks, along with officials from the Quartet and representatives of several Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia and Syria. Regular meetings were held between Olmert and Abbas. At the time, there was

news that it had made progress on border issues but had failed after the start of the Israeli war on Gaza in late 2008 [9].

7) Barack Obama's peace settlement.

Barack Obama was unable to reach a solution during his eight years in office, although on September 2, 2010, he launched direct talks in the White House that brought President Mahmoud Abbas together with the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, but the end of the partial settlement freeze on September 26 led to the collapse of the negotiations [10].

Then one hundred years after the Balfour Declaration was issued, Trump fulfilled his campaign promise in 2016 to move the American embassy to Jerusalem and recognize it as the eternal capital of Israel. At the end of January 2020, US President Donald Trump, and with Palestinians absence, unveiled his peace plan for the Palestinian-Israel conflict "Peace to prosperity" [11] known as well as "Deal of the Century". He was hardly the primary US president to tackle this monumental challenge. He insisted that his "win-win" proposal was quietly different, and it would benefit both Israelis and Palestinians. Trump said: "The vision gives the Palestinians the time needed to rise up and meet the challenges of statehood…"

What is the two-state vision based on?

The vision of the two-state solution, that is Israel and Palestinians coexist in peace, is based on the establishment of a Palestinian state within the borders drawn in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, which includes the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. The "Deal of the Century" announced by US President Donald Trump brought back to mind the controversial speech made by the late Tunisian leader, Habib Bourguiba in 1965 in the Palestinian city of Jericho, in which he called on the Palestinians to accept the two-state solution proposed by the United Nations [12].

In 1988, the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat issued the Declaration of Independence in which he spoke for the first time of "two states for two peoples", thus recognizing the State of Israel and its sovereignty over 78% of historic Palestine.

Trump plan opened up the opportunity for Israel to annex the Palestinian territories in the West Bank and extended its sovereignty to the Jordan Valley, as well as recognizing Jerusalem as its one and indivisible capital. With regard to Palestine, the "deal of the century" provides for the creation of a demilitarized state, devoid of control over borders and airspace [13].

Elements of the Deal

The 181-pages Trump's plan dealt with various issues in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that have impeded peacemaking for decades: from the borders, sovereignty, refugees, security, Jerusalem, and up to the shape of the Palestinian economy [14].

The core of a realistic two-state solution would address the following tenets:

– "Peace for Prosperity" calls for setting a four-years' time frame for the establishment of a Palestinian State provided an explicit rejection of terrorism.

It stipulated giving the Palestinians a demilitarized state without borders after the fulfillment of several conditions, including: not evacuating any settler, disarming Hamas and Gaza , recognizing the Jewish state, abolishing the right of return, working against terrorism, recognition of the eastern borders as Israeli while the Jerusalem will remain the united capital of Israel and must be accessible to all due to its religious aspects.

– The Palestinian state will include sections of land in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on the Mediterranean coast, and two extended strips of land in the Negev desert in southern Israel.

– Israel will retain "overall responsibility for the security of the Palestinian state", including the international border crossings of the State of Palestine. The division and planning of the border areas between Israel and Palestine "will be subject to the overall security responsibility of the State of Israel". The Palestinian state will not be allowed to form an army or conclude security or intelligence agreements with any state or organization that could negatively affect the security of Israel.

– Israel will retain the right to "enter" the state of Palestine to ensure that it "remains demilitarized and does not represent a threat".

– Israel will retain control over "the airspace and the electromagnetic spectrum west of the Jordan River".

– It foresees recognition Israel's sovereignty over the Jordan Valley, which represents 30% of the occupied West Bank, and will become therefore part of Israel's Eastern Border.

– On the issue of Palestinian refugees, Trump's vision focuses on ending the right of return and depriving Palestinians of any financial compensation and resettling them in the Arab countries in which they reside. That is with the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Agreement, the Palestinian refugee status will end as an international legal capacity, and that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) will be dissolved. The economic part of the plan will work to replace and dismantle refugee camps in the Palestinian state to build new residential areas [15].

According to the provisions of international law, the entire US peace plan is an illegal document, as it is based on the principle of force, a de facto policy, non-compliance with international legitimacy decisions, and contains serious violations of the provisions of international humanitarian law, international human rights law, international criminal law, and law Customary International.

The plan, in its political and economic aspects, is 181 pages, and includes 22 sections covering a wide range of issues, such as: the legitimate aspirations of the two parties, the concept of a two-state solution, the status of Jerusalem, sovereignty, borders, security, refugees, detainees, crossings, the Gaza Strip, and exchange Commercial. As for the economic aspect, it refers to its endeavor to secure international investments worth more than 50 billion dollars over ten years, as part of an approach to achieving regional economic integration. The plan has four notable elements. First, it argues that there can be peace only if the Palestinians

reform their political institutions under new leaders willing to end the conflict and accept Israel as permanent. The second notable element, original to this administration, is a warning: if the Palestinian side continues to support terrorism and reject peace, its cause will suffer. For decades, Palestinian leaders, while refusing peace offers seen as reasonable by top US officials, demanded that the status quo in the territories be frozen pending a peace deal. Democratic and Republican administrations backed that demand. But no longer. The Palestinians are now being told that, if they continue to be unreasonable, the United States will not block Israel from advancing its own claims to areas that, in the administration's view, realistic peace talks would leave to Israel.

Those areas, according to the peace plan's Conceptual Map, include not just the major settlement blocs, but also the Jordan Valley. Publication of that map is the peace plan's third notable element. No prior administration ever defined the territory that Israel could have US support to hold permanently, with or without a peace agreement. The fourth notable element is the plan's idea that Israel can dramatically improve its relations with Arab states before a peace agreement with the Palestinians. The plan envisions advancing US interests on Iran, oil and other issues through expansion of Israel's ties to Arab states and, in turn, using Israel's increasing integration into the region to help resolve the conflict [16].

Netanyahu made clear in the White House what this meant: "On this day," he said, addressing Trump, "you became the first world leader to recognize Israel's sovereignty … in areas of Judea and Samaria" – the biblical terms for the West Bank commonly invoked in Israel – "that are vital to our security and central to our heritage." The American vision offers the Palestinians far less than previous US plans or Israeli proposals. Palestinians angrily rejected Trump's plan. "After the nonsense that we heard today we say a thousand no's to the 'deal of the century,' " said Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas referring to the plan as " the slap of the century". "We will not kneel and we will not surrender" [17].

International Reacts

The deal of the century announced by US President Donald Trump sparked wide reactions, the most prominent of which ranged from complete rejection or reservation to what was stated on it, but there are those who consider it as an initiative that can be negotiated. The rejectionist position was based on the fact that the US administration's plan, titled "A Vision of Peace, Prosperity and a Brighter Future," ignored the basic demands of the Palestinian people, most prominently their right to establish their independent state on the borders of June 4, 1967, as called for by all legitimacy decisions. The relevant international community, in addition to the contents and other provisions contained in the deal, does not fulfill the basic conditions for resolving the conflict in a just and comprehensive manner, and is fully biased in favor of the Israeli side [18].

In unveiling his plan to settle the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, President Trump declared, with confidence, that Arab countries would play a key role in its success [19].

In a brief statement issued, United Nations has rejected US President Donald Trump's 'deal of the century' and reiterated that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be solved based on UN resolutions and international law [20]. "The Secretary-General has seen the announcement of the United States' Middle East plan. The United Nations position on the two-state solution has been determined, over the years, through relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. Committed by the General Secretariat".

The official UN spokesperson affirmed that the United Nations remains "committed to supporting the Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict on the basis of United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements, and to achieve the vision of two states – Israel and Palestine – living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, on the basis of the lines a year ago. 1967", However, what the US plan offers is "a one and half state solution" [21].

And following the emergency meeting of the League of Arab States held at the level of foreign ministers, the American Israeli Deal of the Century was rejected unanimously, as it does not meet the minimum rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people and contravenes the terms of reference of the peace process based on the law International and United Nations resolutions" [22].

Jordan and Egypt were the only two Arab countries at that time that had a peace agreement with Israel, and their reaction to the plan came as an attempt to announce rejection without publicly showing an angry protest. The Jordanian authorities affirmed that the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, according to the two-state solution and on the lines of June 4, 1967, is "the only way to peace". The Jordanian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that "the two-state solution that meets the legitimate rights of the brotherly Palestinian people, especially their right to freedom and the state on the lines of June 4, 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, to live in peace and security alongside Israel in accordance with approved references and international legitimacy decisions is the only way to achieve comprehensive and lasting peace" [23].

In a statement by its Foreign Ministry, Egypt as well called on Palestine and Israel to "carefully study" the US peace plan in the Middle East, after President Donald Trump revealed it: "Egypt calls on the parties concerned to carefully study the American vision to achieve peace, to stand on all its dimensions, and to open channels of dialogue to resume negotiations under American auspices, to present the vision of the Palestinian and Israeli parties towards it".

There was no coordinated response among states of the GCC. While Kuwaiti Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim threw a copy in the bin, emphasizing that it 'was born dead' and 'should be thrown in the dustbin of history' [24]]. UAE appreciated the plan and considered it as "an important starting point for returning to the negotiations table", stressing that it welcomed this "serious initiative" [25]. Saudi Arabia, a close ally of Washington, has praised the Middle East peace plan and declared its "appreciation for the Trump administration's efforts to draw up the plan" and encouraged "the start of peace negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinian sides" under American auspices

and for "any differences on any aspects of the plan to be addressed during negotiations". Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud stressed to President Abbas, that Saudi Arabia's position on the Palestinian issue would not change in order to preserve the rights of the Palestinian people [26].

While the Arab Gulf states urged negotiations, Turkey and Iran posture themselves in opposition [27]. Turkey's foreign ministry, in an official statement, described the plan as "stillborn agreement", saying that " this an annexation plan aiming at usurping Palestinian lands and killing two-state solution", adding that Palestinian people and lands cannot be purchased [28].

The Supreme Leader of the Revolution in Iran, Ali Khamenei, strongly denounced the peace plan which he described it as an evil policy pursued by the United States towards the Palestinians "the so-called deal of the century proposed by the US "will never bear fruit" by the Grace of God" [29]. Iran's foreign Minister Mohammad Java Zarif has dismissed the deal and asked US to accept the Iranian democratic proposal instead of promoting "delusional deal of the century which will be dead on arrival" and appealed the international community to respect the right of all Palestinians to self-determination [30].

While some European states have expressed support for the foreign policy chief's position, other EU countries, however, have been much more guarded in their reactions. The European Union announced its opposition to annexing areas in the West Bank to Israel, as stipulated in the "Deal of the Century". The European Union stressed in a statement that "progress on this issue will not pass quietly".

The statement emphasized that the European Union "does not recognize Israel's sovereignty in the areas occupied in the year 1967", which include the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights, in accordance with international law and UN Security Council resolutions. "The US initiative, as announced, goes beyond agreed international standards". Contrary to the general European position, some European countries have received the deal positively.

The Russian President's Special Envoy for the Middle East and North African Countries, Deputy Foreign Minister, Mikhail Bogdanov, confirmed that the Russian position on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict did not change and that Russia supports the two-state solution. The Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov affirmed that the Deal of the Century does not comply with a number of UN Security Council resolutions. Peskov added, in a statement published by the "Russia Today" agency, that the rejection of the Palestinians and the solidarity of the Arab countries with them against Trump's plan makes Moscow doubt the viability of this plan [31].

The Russian interest in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict comes in line with its diplomatic vision of the necessity to be an influential player in international issues, especially issues of the Arab region. In the same context, the Palestinian leadership seeks strong relations with Russia, to ensure support for the two-state solution and its support in international institutions, after Israel's intransigence and its refusal to implement the two-state solution, and the American bias towards it. Therefore, Palestinian diplomacy sought for Russia to have a greater role in the settlement

process in accordance with international legitimacy decisions and its membership in the Quartet [32].

Conclusion

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict poses a challenge to the democratic administration led by Joe Biden as it is preparing to begin its tasks in changing the American political compass and restoring what the Trump administration has undermined of the country's position in the international arena. Trump's legacy and achieving peace, not just trying to save the peace process, the report recommended a clear declaration confirming that Trump's peace plan does not represent the policy of the United States and that Washington does not recognize the annexation of any part of the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem.

The paper also referred to the reopening of the US consulate in East Jerusalem, which may later turn into an embassy in the prospective Palestinian state. It also called for an end to the blockade of Gaza and the achievement of security for its residents and the Israeli population on the borders of the Strip, in addition to reviewing the American aid allocated to Israel in order to comply with international human rights standards.

The Biden Administration's International Crisis Group addresses the internal Palestinian issue, calling for support for reconciliation between the Palestinian parties and the formation of a unified government committed to peace and the relevant agreements.

It is not known to what extent the new US administration might go in its approach to this thorny conflict, but there is no doubt that bold decisions will restore balance to one of the most turbulent regions of the world and this appears at the core of US national security and Biden's pledges to restore the credibility of his country.[33]. Biden does not carry a new peace initiative on the Palestinian issue, and he may know that a two-state solution is not possible in the current generation, but he will strive to keep the vision of the two-state solution alive.

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