

Trump's Middle East Peace Plan: Prospects and Challenges



Pages: 1 – 11

Vol. V, No. II (Spring 2020)

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Abstract *President Trump's Middle East Peace Plan is tilted in favour of Israel. The prime motivation behind it is to put a favourable end to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Peace Plan has drawn great global response with those terming the Peace Plan as unreasonable outnumbering those who claim that the Peace Plan is devised to perfection. Despite the negative public opinion, President Trump still happens to be very confident about the prospects of his Peace Plan. The Peace Plan has very conveniently diverted attention from the domestic politics of both, President Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and is thereby, suspected to be a part of another possible political strategy. With a multitude of players in action, this paper shall attempt to draw a comprehensive account of all the prospects of Trump's Middle East Peace Plan.*

Key Words: Israeli-Palestine Conflict, Biased Approach, International Public Opinion, Turbulent Middle East, Consolidated Muslims.

Introduction

In early 2017, upon taking charge of the White House, President Donald Trump declared that he would be devising a scheme that would put a peaceful end to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Accordingly, on 28th January, 2020, President Trump revealed a plan titled 'Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinians and Israeli People' (Federal Government of the United States 2020). The main architect of this plan is Senior Advisor to the President, Jared Kushner, who also happens to be Trump's son-in-law. Jared Kushner hails from a Modern Orthodox Jewish family and the Kushner clan apparently has time-honoured amicable ties with the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (Kantor 2017). Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stood next to President Trump as he revealed the master plan. There was no representative from the Palestinian side present at the press conference and this lack of representation serves as a symbol of how partisan this whole formula or plan happens to be. Over the past few weeks, the plan has been named as the Trump Middle East Peace Plan and its prospects are widely and extensively debated. To do so effectively, the propositions are dissected and thorough comparisons to past peace efforts are drawn. Furthermore, the chances of successful implementation of the Trump Middle East Peace Plan are critically evaluated and the probability of its ability to bring forth sustainable peace is persistently questioned.

This article will bring to light how Trump's Middle East Peace Plan has been received by Israel and Palestine, in particular, and the world at large. Additionally, the article will discuss how the Trump Peace Plan has garnered both controversy and accord at the same time and it would

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attempt to unveil the reasons that have fuelled the different reactions. Furthermore, the article would explore the causes behind Trump's adamant stance regarding the chances of success of the Trump Peace Plan. The article would also draw parallels between the Trump Peace Plan and past US peace efforts regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Moreover, the article would attempt to evaluate and analyse the probable consequences of the Trump Peace Plan. The evaluation of the possible consequences would not only be confined to the conflict area, but it would attempt to encompass the impact on the credibility of the United Nations (UN), the impact on the rise and relevancy of religious extremist groups, the potential effect on Trump's election and the possibility of triggering an Islamic resurgence in Muslim majority population states.

Main Components of Trump's Middle East Peace Plan

Before formulating the research questions and discussing the prospects of the Trump Middle East Peace Plan, it is imperative to have an insight into what the plan propagates. Therefore, the following paragraphs would provide a brief overview of the Trump Middle East Peace Plan and discuss some of its main components.

The 181-page Trump Middle East Peace Plan is evidently focused on furthering the Israeli interests. The Peace Plan is tilted towards Israel to such a far extent that it can be termed as a surrender document for the Palestinians which they ought to sign as a gesture to accept the victory of Israel. Hitherto, all the efforts made by the US to broker peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have catered to the wishes and constraints of Israel, yet, no peace effort has come out so fully in support of Israel like the Trump Middle East Peace Process.

The plan starts rather reasonably as it advocates the often presented two-state solution and announces that \$50 billion would be dedicated towards the economic and social uplifting of the citizens of the two newly established states. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes apparent that the Trump Middle East Peace Plan vehemently advocates the interests of Israel even if that comes at a massive cost to be rendered by Palestine. Unlike a balanced deal, Palestine happens to be the only party that is expected to resort to extensive concessions. Palestine has very little, if anything at all, to gain from the proposition and thus, the Trump Middle East Plan can be termed as a gamble for Palestine because whatever it opts for, it will still be destined to compromise on its fundamental claims. The scheme asserts that there would be a period of four years where Israel would not establish their settlements in the regions of the West Bank that have been pronounced as part of the modified Palestinian territory. Following recognising Israel as a Jewish State, Palestine shall be under compulsion to compromise over four other cardinal points. These include:

Jerusalem as the Undivided Capital of Israel

The Trump Middle East Peace Plan discloses its discriminatory incentives when it terms Jerusalem – which is considered by both Israel and Palestine as their capital – as the undivided capital of Israel. Trump takes Jerusalem away from Palestine and hands it over to Israel as if that is not at the heart of the Israeli-Palestine conflict. With no regard for the religious sentiments and historical affiliations that Palestine has with Jerusalem, the Trump Middle East Plan provides for permanent Israeli sovereignty in the holy city:

Jerusalem will remain the sovereign capital of the State of Israel, and it should remain an undivided city. The sovereign capital of the State of Palestine should be in the section of East Jerusalem located in all areas east and north of the existing security barrier, including KafrAqab, the eastern part of Shuafat and Abu Dis, and could be named Al Quds or another name as determined by the State of Palestine. [\(Federal Government of the United States 2020\)](#).

As mentioned in the extract from the Trump Middle East Peace Plan provided above, it becomes clear that the proposed plan not only strips Palestine of its proclaimed capital, Jerusalem but also confines the new Palestinian capital to a village on the eastern outskirts of Jerusalem. This portrays the significance that Palestine holds under the Trump Middle East Peace Plan.

West Bank Borders and Annexation of Settlements

The Trump Middle East Peace Plan provides Israel with the formal framework to annex its settlements in the West Bank and the Jordan Valley which have been the apparent goal of Israel for some decades now. In addition to this, the plan entails the consent of the US regarding Israel's proposition of altering national borders to serve to their purpose. As a result of the annexation of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank, Palestine would be left with only 75% of the West Bank which would be scattered and heavily surrounded by Israeli territory. Additionally, under the Trump Middle East Peace Plan, Israel shall also enjoy permanent sovereignty over the Jordan Valley:

The Jordan Valley, which is critical for Israel's national security, will be under Israeli sovereignty. Notwithstanding such sovereignty, Israel should work with the Palestinian government to negotiate an agreement in which existing agricultural enterprises owned or controlled by Palestinians shall continue without interruption or discrimination, pursuant to appropriate licenses or leases granted by the State of Israel [\(Federal Government of the United States 2020\)](#).

Thus, Israel's forced military occupations would be granted permanence under the Trump Middle East Peace Plan and they would no longer be out of the confines of a state's sovereignty and hence, would become legal in the realms of International Law as well. Whereas, the new Palestine would be under the constant surveillance of the new Israel and would have very little breathing space.

Palestinian Refugees

According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), there are more than 50 million Palestinian refugees as a result of the three Arab-Israel wars [\(UNRWA 2020\)](#). The UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (II) which was endorsed in 1948 states that:

The refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible [\(UN General Assembly 1948\)](#).

The UN General Assembly Resolution has been ironically extracted from the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel and provides clear instructions that refugees should be given the option to return if certain requirements are fulfilled. Yet, the Trump Middle East Peace Plan bars the Palestinian Refugees from returning to their lands. The plan provides alternatives which include:

This plan envisions three options for Palestinian refugees seeking a permanent place of residence: absorption into the State of Palestine; local integration in current host countries (subject to those countries consent); or the acceptance of 5,000 refugees each year, for up to ten years (50,000 total refugees), in individual Organization of Islamic Cooperation member countries who agree to participate in Palestinian refugee resettlement (subject to those individual countries' agreement) [\(Federal Government of the United States 2020\)](#).

Therefore, it can be deduced that the Trump Middle East Peace Plan neither allows Palestinian refugees to go back nor does it provide for any sort of compensation. Once again, the Palestinians are demanded to compromise.

No Sovereignty in Real Terms for Palestine

The Trump Middle East Peace Plan enlists the prerequisites that Palestine will be expected to meet before being recognized as a state. Israel and the US would be to judge if the criteria are met or not. Therefore, it would be nearly impossible for Palestine to gain genuine recognition as

a state because the judges of the criteria are the other party to the Israeli-Palestine conflict. The complex conditions to be met include:

The Palestinians shall have implemented a governing system with a constitution or another system for establishing the rule of law that provides for freedom of press, free and fair elections, respect for human rights for its citizens, protections for religious freedom and for religious minorities to observe their faith, uniform and fair enforcement of law and contractual rights, due process under law, and an independent judiciary with appropriate legal consequences and punishment established for violations of the law. [\(Federal Government of the United States 2020\)](#).

Upon going through the list present in the plan, it can safely be assumed that the prospects of Palestine's recognition as a state are very bleak because the prerequisites to be met are those that are mostly, if not always, found in the developed countries. Establishing Palestine's new capital and then achieving this level of effective governance would be a far-fetched plan for Palestine.

Additionally, Palestine will not only be geographically surrounded by Israel, but Israel would be dictating its existence. The Trump Middle East Peace Plan further squeezes the potential authority of Palestine by enacting the following provisions:

The State of Israel will continue to maintain control over the airspace and the electromagnetic spectrum west of the Jordan River. The Israeli Navy will have the right to block prohibited weapons from entering the State of Palestine. The State of Palestine will not have the right to forge military, intelligence or security agreements with any state or organization that adversely affects the State of Israel's security. The State of Israel will maintain the right to dismantle and destroy any facility in the State of Palestine that is used for the production of prohibited weapons or for other hostile purposes. [\(Federal Government of the United States 2020\)](#).

Under the pretext that the Palestinians will get the state that they long for, the Trump Middle East Peace Plan would be providing Israel with everything that it has ever longed for as Palestine's sovereignty can be called limited or conditional at best.

Research Questions

1. How did the parties to the conflict in particular and the world at large react to the Trump Middle East Peace Plan?
2. Why is President Trump so certain that the Peace Plan would be the 'deal of the century' when all the past efforts to install peace have failed?
3. What are the possible consequences of the Trump Middle East Peace Plan?

Reactions from the World Over

The Trump Middle East Peace Plan was received differently by all key stakeholders as well as by bystanders. A wide range of emotions and concerns were expressed through all forms of media. The following paragraphs would discuss how different groups reacted differently.

Israeli Reaction

Considering the inherent bias for Israel that lies at the heart of the Trump Middle East Peace Process, it would come as no surprise that the Peace Plan was warmly welcomed by Israel, as well as, Jews residing inside and outside Israel. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stood alongside President Donald Trump during the press conference in which the master plan was unveiled. Beaming from ear-to-ear, Prime Minister Netanyahu aptly represented the sentiments of his party to the conflict. Prime Minister Netanyahu was the only party to the conflict that was present at the important press conference. The fact that no representative of the Palestinian side was invited, let alone a representative to similar or equal stature to Prime Minister Netanyahu, speaks volumes about how the Peace Plan was actually devised to facilitate Israel.

Following the revealing of the Trump Middle East Peace Plan, Trump's guest of honor, Prime Minister Netanyahu took center-stage and termed 28th January 2020 as a historic day. He drew an analogy between Trump's Peace Plan to the recognition of Israel by the United States President Harry Truman in 1948 (Farrell 2020). To further express his gratitude, Prime Minister Netanyahu claimed that President Trump had the pioneer honor of recognizing the newly annexed Israeli territories. He further thanked the US for its peacebuilding role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which has spanned over a few decades.

The Trump Middle East Peace Plan was highly appreciated by the citizens of Israel who felt that this came as a marker of their ultimate victory over Palestine. Rightly so because the Peace Plan provides for everything that Israel could have ever wanted. It entails all the minor and major goals that Israel has always strived towards achieving. The Trump Middle East Peace Plan favors Israel to such a far extent that there are apprehensions that the Israeli Jews assisted the US government in drafting and laying out the Peace Plan.

Palestinian Reaction

The propositions of the Trump Middle East Peace Plan are extremely harsh towards Palestine. They are not neutral but in fact, go fully against the interests of Palestine. Therefore, the reaction from the Palestinian camp was highly foreseeable. The Palestinian government and the Palestinian people were for once united on something: the fact that they would not agree to the terms of the Peace Plan.

The Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas called the Trump Middle East Peace Plan as the 'slap of the century' and not the 'deal of the century' as touted by President Trump himself (Reuters DAWN 2020). The Palestinian President further expressed his anger by saying that the Peace Plan belonged in the dustbin and that the Palestinians would make sure that that is where it lands. He further added that the rights of the Palestinians are not up for trading or bargaining and that Palestine shall not shy away from taking any step, no matter how drastic in nature, to protect its people and their fundamental interests.

The Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas was not invited to the press conference at the White House in which the Peace Plan was announced yet, he was quick enough to voice his concerns to the world and made sure that he was heard. The President termed President Trump as a criminal for putting the rights of his people at stake. Furthermore, Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas added that Palestine shall not accept the role of the United States in any future peace process regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. According to the President, the US shot its last shot at the Israeli-Palestine conflict with this highly tilted and flawed Peace Plan and thus, the President took it binding upon itself to keep the US as far away as possible from any future peace processes.

Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri was of the same views as the President and expressed his anger. Sami Abu Zuhri's grievances were mostly centered around the declaration of Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem. The Hamas official pledged that the Palestinians and the Hamas would fight hand-in-hand, if need be, to keep Jerusalem under the sovereignty or partial sovereignty of the Palestinians. It can easily be assessed that the stance of Hamas regarding the Trump Middle East Peace Plan has been triggered by religious sentiments. Whatever the reason behind the out lash may be, one thing is for certain and that is that every single Palestinian is united against the proposed Peace Plan.

Just like the Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas and the Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri, every common Palestinian has expressed anger in their respective capacities. Some aggrieved masses took to the streets and marched while chanting against the US and holding it responsible for the widespread turmoil in the Middle East. Others voiced their anger by chanting derogatory remarks regarding Trump. The Palestinian diaspora highlighted that the Palestinians do not need a Peace Plan, but they need basic human rights (Alshaikh 2020). All in all, Palestine witnessed

widespread protests at every level possible and on every forum imaginable which made it certain that enforcing the Trump Middle East Peace Plan would be not short of a challenging assignment.

Positive Reactions

Since the Trump Middle East Peace Plan was widely criticised and termed as unjust, therefore, the positive reactions that it received were very few. The British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, substantially applauded President Trump for his peace efforts ([Mason 2020](#)). Prime Minister Johnson, during a House of Commons question session, vowed the US of any kind of assistance that it may require to peacefully implement this Peace Plan. The lower house of the British Parliament was well aware of the compromises that the Palestinians would be expected to make, yet, they commended the painstaking efforts taken by the US, especially, President Trump who was attempting to broker peace in the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates was present at the press conference where the Peace Plan was announced. The following day, the Ambassador, Yousef Al Otaiba's statement on the Peace Plan was tweeted from the official and recognised Twitter account of the UAE Embassy US. The Ambassador, on behalf of the US, appreciated the efforts of the US to install peace and fully endorsed the propositions presented in the Trump Middle East Peace Plan ([UAE Embassy US 2020](#)).

Additionally, the ambassadors of Bahrain and Oman were also invited to the press conference. Bahrain, like the UAE, had a positive reaction and validated the components of the Trump Middle East Peace Plan. Oman followed suit and appreciated the continuous efforts of the US to broker peace globally. Moreover, Morocco's Foreign Ministry also appreciated the Peace Plan. Thus, it can be deduced that hardly a handful of states reacted positively upon the announcement of the Peace Plan.

Negative Reactions

Unlike the positive reactions that very only a few, the negative reactions following the unveiling of the Trump Middle East Peace Plan were numerous. Statements in favour of the Palestinians and against the supposed US-Israel alliance came from every corner of the world regardless of a state's geographical location or religion. A clear majority of those who reacted negatively was of the view that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be resolved bilaterally and that under no circumstances should the rights of the Palestinians be infringed.

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) represents 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide and comprises of 57 member states one of which happens to be Palestine. The OIC thus blatantly rejected the Trump Middle East Peace Plan and claimed that its members would not help implement it ([AFP 2020](#)). These claims were made at an emergency meeting called at Jeddah specifically for this purpose. The united stand of the OIC against the Peace Plan is proof of how the Muslims stand united over this cardinal issue.

Secondly, a draft expressing concern over the biased Peace Plan was circulated to the United Nations Security Council by Tunisia and Indonesia. Thirdly, Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad strongly criticised the Trump Middle East Peace Plan and urged the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to actively promote peace and justice in Palestine ([Izhiman 2020](#)).

The European Union, unlike Great Britain, announced that it would not support anything that goes against the rules of International Law such as the annexation of territories and redefining of boundaries in this case ([Letters to Editor 2020](#)). Moreover, Pope Francis also criticised the Trump Middle East Peace Plan as he believes that peace cannot be enforced and it certainly should not come at the expense of the infringement of human rights of the less powerful party ([Reuters DAWN 2020](#)).

Furthermore, China, Russia, Egypt and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia urged both the parties to the conflict to devise a more viable solution bilaterally and the Trump Middle East Peace Plan did not seem to a carrier of sustainable peace. Iran, Turkey, Jordan and Hezbollah took a more stringent stance in favour of Palestine and offered their support to the Palestinians should there be any possibility of further infringement of their rights. Lastly, the United Nations (UN) clarified that it continues to propagate its stance which roots from the UN Resolutions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict [\(AFP 2020\)](#). Therefore, it can be concluded that the backlash that the Trump Middle East Peace Plan received is far greater than the appreciation.

'Deal of the Century' or a Cynical Attempt to Divert Attention?

Ever since the Peace Plan has been announced, a wide range of assumptions and assertions have been made of varying natures. Some support the stance that the Peace Plan is what it appears to be on the face of it, while others agree to differ and attempt to read between the lines.

Difference between the Trump Middle East Peace Plan and Earlier Peace Efforts

The Trump Middle East Peace Plan undoubtedly rang the greatest number of alarm bells across Palestine and rightly so. The Peace Plan is devised per the demands of Israel and does not take into account the basic rights of the Palestinians, let alone their say. Ruthless for the Palestinians, the Trump Middle East Peace Plans demands the Palestinians to compromise over what had formerly been unnegotiable. The Peace Plan enters uncharted waters while demanding the Palestinians to surrender to the victory of Israel in essence.

By declaring Jerusalem as solely the capital of Israel, the Trump Middle East Peace Plan has already gone an extra mile because none of the past peace efforts dared to touch this highly sentimental and sensitive aspect. Resultantly, Jerusalem continued to be the capital of both Palestine and Israel. Secondly, the nature in which the West Bank settlements and the Jordan valley are to be annexed speaks volumes of how President Trump means business by presenting a very rigid Peace Plan.

Thirdly, the Trump Middle East Peace Plan shows no mercy to the Palestinian refugees unlike the Clinton Parameters of 2000 and the Annapolis Negotiations of 2007-08 where some refugees were allowed to come back as a goodwill gesture [\(Wikipedia 2020\)](#). Under this Peace Plan, refugees stand no chance of going back to their lands. Additionally, Israel has been granted full surveillance over Palestine and the supposed sovereignty promised to Palestine is merely conditional. Unlike the past peace efforts brokered by the US regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, only one party was taken on board and that too, very publicly. Therefore, to believe that the Trump Middle East Peace Plan would put an end to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict would require great optimism because none of the odds seems to be in its favour.

What makes President Trump So Confident?

President Trump, in whatever policy decision or statement that he makes, is always found to be beaming with self-belief. Making claims regarding your state or your own decisions with such certainty might even make sense at times, but claiming that the Trump Middle East Peace Plan would be nothing short of the 'deal of the century' requires some assurance stemming from research. Regarding what seems to be a disastrous plan, President Trump is fully confident that the Peace Plan would be a success. Only one thing makes sense here and that is the widespread unrest and turmoil in the Middle East.

Formerly, Palestine would get support in every form from the Middle Eastern states which would not only put the Palestinians on a stronger footing but would all land them in a better negotiating position. Currently, the Palestinians have a lot to fight for on their own and very little left to fight with. Iraq and Syria used to actively support Palestine in all arenas especially regarding

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but with a regime change in the former and widespread unrest in the later, Palestine's allies have lost strength.

The US has tactfully discarded the possibility of any potential inconvenience orchestrated by the Middle Eastern states by making sure that they are over occupied while dealing with their internal unrest. According to "A Clean Break," the US intended to change regimes in seven countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Lebanon, Somalia and Sudan, over five years. (Blumenthal 2019). On the pretext of humanitarian assistance, the US through covert operations or overt invasions destabilized entire regions. States across the Middle East who had served as mere pawns in the game of the US are still struggling to eject the jihadist groups from areas destabilized by western interventions. Formerly prosperous and stable states are now intertwined in a forever war as the CIA struggles with its disposal problem of not being able to effectively hunt down the enemy it has itself created. As a result, jihadism has been bred and spread to an extent where it bleeds the Middle Eastern countries. Therefore, it serves as an explanation for President Trump's unwavering confidence regarding the success of his Peace Plan.

A Cynical Attempt to Divert Attention

One way to look at the Trump Middle East Peace Plan is to think that the US wants to put an end to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and is willing to do so at any cost. Another way to look at it is to assume that the current Peace Plan is not something different or unanticipated, but rather, it is the climax of decades of American policy and that is what makes President Trump so confident that it would succeed.

However, there is an unorthodox way of perceiving the Trump Middle East Peace Plan too which infers that the Peace Plan was merely announced to divert attention from the domestic politics of both President Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. President Trump being so effortlessly confident about the prospects of his Peace Plan only serves the purpose. The Trump Middle East Peace Plan is labelled as political presents for Prime Minister Netanyahu because it unrolled just at the right time when it was needed the most. (NYT Editorial Board 2020).

The setting, timing and substance of the Peace Plan make one ponder if it is about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at all. It happens to very conveniently divert attention from the legal and electoral challenges that both President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu have to deal with. President Trump is facing an impeachment trial whereas, Prime Minister Netanyahu is facing trial for corruption charges. Both the leaders have their re-elections scheduled for this year and both of them need to play this card very carefully and skilfully. So far, they have both succeeded in putting up a fairly good show. Therefore, the possibility of the Trump Middle East Peace Plan being used as a cynical attempt to divert attention cannot be ruled out.

Possible Consequences of the Trump Middle East Peace Plan

Trump's Middle East Peace Plan would have widespread consequences as a multitude of players having different affiliations, such as geographical, religious and cultural to name a few, are involved. The Peace Plan is expected to bring about long-lasting impacts. The installation of perpetual peace in the conflict-torn region of Palestine and Israel remains a question. However, one thing is for certain and that is the fact that the effects of the Trump Middle East Peace Plan would not be confined solely to the borders of the Middle Eastern region.

Challenging the Credibility of the United Nations and the Legitimacy of International Law

The Trump Middle East Peace Plan does not act per the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 (II) which gives the Palestinian refugees the right to determine their future homeland. The current Peace Plan strips the Palestinians of this choice. Additionally, Israel which has already violated thirty-two UN resolutions since 1968, will be further violating UN resolutions while acting in adherence to the Trump Middle East Peace Plan. By occupying Jerusalem as the sovereign capital of Israel, Israel will be violating the UN resolutions.

Moreover, by annexing settlements on the West Bank, Israel would be violating International Law. Both of these occurrences would have repercussions for the UN resolutions as well as clauses of International Law. The UN resolutions would lose their standing in the international arena and the example of Israel may be used as a wrong deterrence to avoid acting per the UN resolutions. As for International Law, it would lose its reliability and applicability. If Israel manages to get away with conveniently breaching the International Law, it would become further apparent that might is right and it is indeed only the weak that are subjected to law. The precedent set would not be right and it would, in all likelihood, foster complications in the long run.

Providing a Cause to Extremist Groups

In light of the discussions above, one thing is certain: no matter how deep-rooted and extensive the differences among one another, all the Muslims have, over the years, united and will unite if it comes to preserving the sacred land of Jerusalem. Hitherto, mostly all of the Islamic states, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Arab League, Hezbollah, Hamas as well as Muslims living in Muslim minority states have pledged their full support to the Palestinians regarding the protection of *Bait-al Maqdas*.

With the anti-American and anti-Jewish sentiments on the rise, the Trump Middle East Peace Plan provides enough reason of Islamic factions to unite against Israel or to unite for Palestine. Such spurge in Muslim unity does not come without its risks. It may serve as the driving force behind the establishment of potential extremist groups whose main aim is to fight for this holy cause. Additionally, it may also provide a basis to the already established extremist groups like the Islamic State (IS) which may result in a rise in their activity making it further harder to control. Similarly, new extremist groups that are formed solely for this cause would also emerge. Thus, it can be said that the Trump Middle East Peace Plan might have repercussions in the shape of increased religion-driven militant groups.

Potential Trigger for Islamic Resurgence

Of the many consequences that the Trump Middle East Peace Plan has for the Muslims, the main ones revolve around increasing hatred for the west and liberal values and the increasing level of responsibility towards religion. This might have a fallout in both secular and non-secular states. If we flip through the pages of history, we realise that big states such as Egypt and Turkey have been under Muslim rule and hence, the state used to be strictly non-secular. Iran enjoys a similar history.

The Trump Middle East Peace Plan is expected to benefit Islamist parties as they will have a cause and religion is a very effective tool when it comes to playing with the sentiments of the public. So, not only will the non-secular states serve as potential grounds for Islamic Resurgence, but the secular states would also provide ground for furthering the cause of religion. For instance, Indonesia which is a secular state has the largest Muslim population in the world. It would be only negligent to think that the wave of Islamic Resurgence, which will eventually be triggered by the Trump Middle East Peace Plan, would not have widespread consequences for the world.

US Election Year 2020

This year happens to be the election year in the US. With President Trump running for re-election, it is imperative to discuss the consequences of the Trump Middle East Peace Plan on the prospects of President Trump's election campaign. By openly and fully supporting Israel in the Peace Plan, President Trump has unveiled a well-known secret that the Jewish lobby enjoys a very primary role in the establishment of the US government. The US economy the global economy is highly reliant on the Jews. Throughout history, the Jewish lobby has played a substantial role in the installation of an American president. Support from the Jews comes not only in the form of votes but also in extravagant donations made to the election campaigns. It would be safe to assume

that without the support of the Jewish lobby, reaching the White House seems to be a nearly impossible task.

On the other hand, the Trump Middle East Peace Process has come at a cost too. The Peace Process completely neglects the rights of the Muslim party and thus, it has been subject to great criticism from Muslims all over the world. Unfortunately for Trump, these Muslims include those residing in the US as well. President Trump's opponent, Bernie Sanders is cashing this opportunity to the fullest (Khaleel 2020). Nearly all the Muslim Americans have redirected their votes to the Democratic candidate. Bernie Sanders speaks for the people and that is the reason why people believe that he happens to be their only hope if they belong to a different ethnicity or religion. The number of Muslims in the US is on the rise and that may serve as an electoral backlash for President Trump. However, only time will tell if gaining the support of the Jewish lobby would be worth letting go of the Muslim votes in the election. Therefore, it can be concluded that the prospects of the Trump Middle East Peace Plan are not just confined to the Middle East.

Conclusion

Palestine is not only the problem of the Palestinians, but it is rather the Achilles heel of the entire Muslims. The *Bait al Maqdas*, the centrepiece, is not only about territory, but it houses the *al-Aqsa* Mosque which is the third holy site in Islam and thus, the issue is not only a social, geographical, political and economic one but also a religious one. Due to *al-Aqsa*, the boundaries of the problem transcend national borders and that is the very reason why the prospects of Trump's Middle East Peace Plan will be widespread and ever-lasting. Religion will always continue to be a sensitive issue and as long as Muslim sentiments are not in tune, the prospects of any peace plan would be very bleak. President Trump claims that his mega plan is a win-win for the Palestinians when in reality, his argument is at best an assertion. The highly tilted Peace Plan is rather a step backward and not forwards.

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