

You deserve a factual look at . . .

Should the U.N. Declare a Palestinian State?

Palestinians have asked the U.N. for statehood recognition, but would this really lead to an Israeli-Palestinian peace—or to a viable Palestinian state?

In 1947, the United Nations proposed independent states for Arabs and Jews, but the Arabs rejected this plan. Since then, Israel has made many offers of land for peace and a Palestinian state, all of which the Arabs rejected. In 2013, Arab Palestinians again walked out of peace talks and instead recently approached the U.N. to recognize their state. But can the U.N. dictate an Israeli-Palestinian peace . . . or create a Palestinian state?

What are the facts?

Over the past 66 years, since Israel's formation, the Palestinians have had numerous opportunities to create a sovereign state. Following Israel's repulsion of three invading Arab armies in 1967, the Jewish state offered to negotiate peace with the Arabs and to return land captured during that war. The Arabs rejected this overture with their famous Khartoum Resolution: "No peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel and no negotiations with it." Decades later, during U.S.-sponsored peace negotiations with the Palestinians in 2000, 2001 and 2008, Israel offered the Palestinians most of its ancient Jewish lands, Judea and Samaria (the West Bank), plus Gaza, plus a capital in Jerusalem for their state, but the Palestinians rejected each of these offers. At the heart of the Palestinians' refusal to accept a lasting peace is their steadfast rejection of the demand that they accept Israel as a Jewish state.

Would it bring peace if the U.N. were to unilaterally recognize a Palestinian state? A peace accord between Israel and the Palestinians must resolve many thorny issues for both sides. What should the borders of a new Palestinian state be, since no borders ever existed? How should the nations share Jerusalem? How can Israel be assured of security in light of existential threats from the Palestinian terror group, Hamas, which insists that Israel must be destroyed, as well as from terrorists such as the Islamic State and al Qaeda, both based in nearby Syria? If Israel relinquishes the territories it controls, what guarantees does it have that the Palestinians will finally accept its existence—and not continue the six-decade Arab effort to obliterate the Jewish state? Unfortunately, a recent poll shows that a 60% majority of Palestinians still believe their goal should be to conquer all of Israel, from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. Surely a U.N. resolution

recognizing a Palestinian state cannot possibly address, let alone resolve these issues. Rather, Israel and the Palestinians must continue the arduous path to peace—and to a Palestinian state—that can be achieved only through negotiations.

Would U.N. recognition lead to a secure and viable Palestinian state? Palestinian institutions are currently so weak that it's doubtful their state could survive on its own. Despite tens of billions of dollars donated primarily by the

A majority of Palestinians still believe their goal should be to conquer all of Israel.

U.S. and European nations to aid the Palestinians, their economy is in shambles, with few viable industries and a crumbling infrastructure. Indeed, without continued international aid of more than a billion dollars annually, the economy would likely collapse. In addition, the Palestinian political system is dysfunctional, riven by corruption and in-fighting verging on civil war. Because the Palestinians have held no elections since 2005, President Mahmoud Abbas is now in his tenth year of a four-year term. According to a 2013 European Union audit, some \$2.7 billion in international aid to the Palestinians is unaccounted for, believed to have been siphoned off to corrupt leaders within Abbas' ruling Fatah party. Billions more aid dollars have been diverted to help Hamas build rockets and tunnels used to attack Israeli civilians. Finally, continued violent disputes between Fatah in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza make their "unity government" incapable of governance. In fact, most analysts believe that if Israel were to withdraw its security forces from the West Bank, Hamas would quickly seize control there, too, turning the Palestinian territories into another terrorist state. In short, no decree by the United Nations can give the Palestinians the strength and stability necessary to manage the rigorous, high-stakes demands of statehood.

A unilateral U.N. declaration of Palestinian statehood cannot resolve the fundamental disagreements between Israel and its Arab neighbors, especially the requirement that the Palestinians accept the Jewish state. In addition, such a U.N. resolution will not address the disarray and instability within Palestinian society that makes statehood functionally unrealistic at this time. Perhaps most importantly, a U.N. declaration would only encourage Palestinians to believe that negotiations with Israel are unnecessary to reach their goals—that they can achieve statehood without resolving the tough issues that have to date made it elusive. Thus the U.S. and other U.N. Security Council members must continue to vote against and, if necessary, veto attempts by the Palestinians to avoid good-faith peace talks with Israel.

This message has been published and paid for by

FLAME

Facts and Logic About the Middle East
P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco, CA 94159

Gerardo Joffe, President ■ James Sinkinson, Vice President

FLAME is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational 501 (c)(3) organization. Its purpose is the research and publication of the facts regarding developments in the Middle East and exposing false propaganda that might harm the interests of the United States and its allies in that area of the world. Your tax-deductible contributions are welcome. They enable us to pursue these goals and to publish these messages in national newspapers and magazines. We have virtually no overhead. Almost all of our revenue pays for our educational work, for these clarifying messages, and for related direct mail.

145

To receive free FLAME updates, visit our website: www.factsandlogic.org