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SIX BROADSIDES FOR PEACE IN PALESTINE

Debates about the Israel-Palestinian Conflict in both Europe and the US most often take a familiar reified form. Israel's opponents attack the Jewish state and its defenders defend it. Then the cycle repeats itself. And this goes on for months and years. Even severe critics of Israeli government policy who support the existence of a Jewish state find it difficult to escape this dynamic. The stalemate neither promotes understanding nor advances the cause of peace.

In some ways the consequences are increasingly severe. The endless cycle of attack and defense makes it difficult for people in the international community to promote solutions or encourage others to think about them. The PACBI/BDS opposition to any interaction that promotes "normalization" exacts yet a further price: it becomes difficult to advocate for improvements in the daily life of Palestinians because they require that the parties to the conflict work together in good faith and without hatred.

A good deal of work has been going on in Israel and the US over several years to put flesh on the two-state solution, turning it from a slogan into a program, and to identify positive steps that could be taken now both to build trust and to keep the final goal alive. Despite a largely depressing political context for action, impressive progress has been made in analyzing the two-state goal and in proposing fresh, detailed, and very practical solutions to the challenges two-state advocates confront. Yet to become familiar with the work done on either of these fronts takes a fair amount of reading and study. This document is designed to condense this work into the numbered equivalent of bullet points.

The challenge is to change the character and focus of the conversation not only on campus and in local communities but also in governments. Perhaps this can help by getting people interested in reading more widely and by establishing a series of talking points, discussion topics, and actions to promote. Too much emphasis for years—often an exclusive emphasis at the governmental level and in the international community—has been placed on final status negotiations. Action instead is needed soon on urgent needs in East Jerusalem, Gaza, and the West Bank.

If people find these suggestions worth further action, then they should advocate for them in their communities. They should also organize to urge their elected representatives in Congress or Parliaments to promote them and urge Israel to act on them. In some cases the recommendations that follow entail reversing the Israeli government's current positions; in most cases, however, it is a matter of doing things not presently being done. Promoting practical solutions, I would argue, could do more good than voting for academic boycotts or building apartheid walls, both examples of symbolic politics that promote hostility and have no practical effect.

But conceptualizing and carrying out a relevant, strategic, and effective politics that promotes the agenda outlined schematically in these fliers will not be an easy task. It will require a far more fine-grained conversation than we are having now. It will require abandoning and going well beyond the well-worn slogans that have energized constituencies in the West so far. Yet it is not an insurmountable challenge to differentiate between short-term and long-term priorities in what follows. The immediate task is to identify priorities and promote them both individually and in collaborative

political action. Instead of succumbing to despair at the political prospects for a formal two-state solution, we need to educate and promote and organize for its realization.

1. GOVERNING PRINCIPLES FOR A TWO-STATE SOLUTION

1.) As part of a two-state agreement, Israel would (1) explicitly abandon all ambitions to establish a Greater Israel encompassing the West Bank; (2) commit itself to accepting a modified version of the pre-1967 borders; and (3) agree to the division of Jerusalem with East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state. The Palestinians would (1) specify that a final status agreement would settle all issues and end the conflict; (2) recognize Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people, and agree that the right of return for Palestinian refugees would be limited to returning to a Palestinian state except for those who have family members who are Israeli citizens; and (3) accept a form of non-militarized sovereignty consistent with restrictions to guarantee Israel's security. Despite public posturing by both parties, there is already basic agreement on these points.

2.) Even with a final agreement in hand, achievement of a Palestinian state could not be fully realized overnight. Full implementation could take a decade, though progress toward its realization should begin now, even before formal negotiations commence.

3.) Implementation would occur as “a conditions-based, performance-dependent area-by-area phased redeployment of Israeli security forces with target timetables, benchmarks, and an effective remediation process.” The first area targeted for redeployment might be the northern area of the West Bank—between Jenin and Nablus—given the relative lack of Israeli settlements to be evacuated and the economic and political practicality of anchoring the target area with two Palestinian cities.

4.) The Palestinian Authority would maintain an enhanced security force equipped with mutually agreed upon weapons. It would include an elite counter-terrorism unit capable of handling internal threats both to its own and Israel's security. That security force would be composed of “vetted and protected personnel, including intelligence officers to detect terrorist activity, counter-terrorism forces to raid sites and arrest perpetrators, forensics experts for site exploitation, pretrial detention officers to ensure prisoners do not escape, prosecutors and judges to conduct trials and issue warrants, and post-trial detention officers to ensure prisoners are not released early; and stand-alone detention facilities.” The security force would be equipped to handle potential terrorist attacks by spoilers opposed to an agreement and strong enough to prevent the overthrow of the legitimate governing authority by force. Although cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian security forces has generally been effective for some time, the full spectrum of Palestinian capacities listed here does not yet exist; it would have to be developed and strengthened over time.

5.) Israel would not continue to limit Palestinian mobility within an established Palestinian state and would not intrude on Palestinian territory short of a grave emergency.

6.) Israeli settlers would be financially rewarded for willingly leaving areas east of the security barrier and physically removed by the IDF from a future Palestinian state in a

staged process as necessary. Israel needs to pass legislation to enable the first of these goals.

7.) The overall goal is a single Palestinian state composed of both the West Bank and Gaza and governed by the Palestinian Authority, but a condition for its realization is a complete dismantling of Gaza's offensive military capacities, including all rocket systems.

8.) Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Security Forces would share data from a detailed traveler database encompassing watch lists and biometric data for secure identification. This would ease the transit across borders for pre-approved travelers.

9.) In the interim period prior to the establishment of a Palestinian state, Israel must enforce law and order on the West Bank, prosecuting violations by both Israelis and Palestinians.

10.) In the interim period prior to the establishment of a Palestinian state, Israel must take responsibility for restoring law and order to Palestinian villages and neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, meanwhile upgrading municipal and welfare services there and making them comparable to those available in West Jerusalem. Economic investments in East Jerusalem should be encouraged both regionally and internationally. A continuous police presence needs to be established so illegal weapons can be eliminated and criminal activity curtailed. The goal is to increase personal security for both East and West Jerusalem, while giving economic hope to those who presently lack it.

Adapted from two June 2016 reports: *Security First: Changing the Rules of the Game* (http://en.cis.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/snpl_plan_eng.pdf), issued by Commanders for Israel's Security, and *A Security System for the Two-State Solution* (<http://www.cnas.org/sites/default/files/publications-pdf/CNASReport-2StateSolution-FINAL.pdf>), from Washington, D.C.'s Center for a New American Security, and from Cary Nelson, "Multi-stage Coordinated Unilateralism: A Proposal to Rescue the Two-State Paradigm," *Fathom* (Summer 2015), available online at <http://fathomjournal.org/multi-stage-coordinated-unilateralism-a-proposal-to-rescue-the-two-state-paradigm/>. Some pro-boycott "anti-normalization" constituencies will oppose the dialogue and collaboration between Israelis and Palestinians necessary to achieve the goals above.

2. SOLUTIONS TO TWO-STATE PROBLEMS

This is not intended to be a comprehensive nor fully detailed list of problems and solutions, but rather a representative list of frequently raised issues.

1. PROTECTING BEN-GURION AIRPORT. Border areas near Ben-Gurion airport would not transition to Palestinian control until some years into the implementation of the two-state process. Construction would be restricted in sensitive areas. Building and even agricultural crop height would be restricted. Confidence in the enhanced counter-terrorism capacities of the Palestinian security forces would be a precondition for the final phase of Israeli withdrawal from areas near Israel's airport.

2. THE JORDAN VALLEY. The rise of ISIS has contributed to increased Israeli concern about the security of the Jordan Valley under a Palestinian state. Proposals to answer these concerns include establishment of a 2-kilometer wide security zone along the Jordan River. It would parallel and be comparable to the security zone Jordan has established on its side of the Jordan Valley. Palestinian security forces would monitor their side of the border but with participation of American military and limited presence of nonuniformed Israelis. Given Israeli lack of confidence in the United Nations, American military representatives would be the international force of choice. A physical barrier would supplement the monitoring personnel. Discussions with Palestinians suggest that they would not find construction of such a barrier to be politically acceptable until a final status agreement were signed. The multi-layered physical barrier would be supplemented by electronic surveillance.

3. INTERNAL SECURITY OF THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY. See the GOVERNING PRINCIPLES flier.

4. A PALESTINIAN AIRPORT. It would be a matter both of pride and economic opportunity for a Palestinian state to have its own airport. Given restrictions necessary to Israel's security, arrangements for an airport in the Jordan Valley and on an offshore port facility for Gaza are possible. The airports would be restricted to licensed commercial carriers, as well as medevac flights, helicopter airlift, and use by counterterrorism units. Private civilian flights would not be allowed. Palestinians could exercise sovereignty from the ground to 10,000 feet, with Israeli Air Force planes free to traverse Palestinian territory above that level. Palestinian pilots and air traffic controllers would be carefully vetted and monitored for security thereafter. Regional coordination of flights would be maintained, with provision for Israel taking temporary control of Palestinian airspace in the case of a national defense emergency.

5. JERUSALEM. Israel must revise its policy by stating clearly and unequivocally that it has no claims to sovereignty over the Palestinian neighborhoods and villages of East Jerusalem. In 1967, "Israel annexed the Palestinian neighborhoods and villages surrounding Jerusalem to the city's municipal jurisdiction, despite the fact that they had not previously been part of the city. This hasty and coercive move was an error of historic proportions."

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3. IMPROVING WEST BANK PALESTINIANS' LIVES

Both for humanitarian and strategic reasons there is cause for Israel to move efficiently to improve the quality of daily life and economic opportunity on the West Bank.

Unemployment is currently estimated at 18 percent. Reducing resentment, tension, friction, and antagonism can counteract the impulse toward violence and help build the trust and sense of hope necessary to resolve the continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A short-term decrease in tensions, it is important to realize, will not reduce the Palestinian determination to achieve their national ambitions through statehood. Improving the prospects for statehood, however, depends on an internationally supported project to improve the Palestinian economy by developing concentrated Palestinian industrial zones, including zones near the border with Israel. As of 2015, international priorities had shifted and West Bank economic growth had declined. The Syrian refugee crisis led to further shifts in international priorities. It should be noted that there is strong support in the Israeli military for improvements in West Bank infrastructure. Here are ten steps Israel can take that could reduce conflict and lead to increased support for a two-state solution:

- 1.) Announce a formal policy decision ending settlement expansion east of the security barrier.
- 2.) Issue a firm declaration that Israel has no permanent territorial ambitions east of the security barrier.
- 3.) Strengthen the formal commitment to maintaining the status quo on the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif.
- 4.) Expand the collection of biometric data for Palestinians seeking to work in or visit Israel. Use that data to vet and pre-approve thousands of Palestinians for rapid entry into Israel. Establish separate fast lanes at checkpoints to make transit for those Palestinians much easier and more efficient.
- 5.) Issue tens of thousands of additional work permits for Palestinians seeking employment in Israel proper. The February 2016 decision to issue 30,000 additional permits is an important first step. Unemployment is a major source of suffering and discontent, and the West Bank economy is intricately bound up with Israel. Those Palestinians who want to work in Israel should be able to do so. Unlike the 40,000 Palestinians who work in Israel illegally, Palestinians with work permits can easily return to their homes at the end of the day.
- 6.) Complete the missing sections of the security fence, making adjustments as appropriate. Violence is consistently perpetrated by Palestinians passing through gaps in the security barrier, not by those Israel approves for passage from the West Bank. Gaps in the security fence also make it possible for Israelis to smuggle weapons onto the West Bank. Reducing Palestinian violence would not only reduce support for punitive actions against them but also potentially increase confidence in the peace process. Reducing the

flow of weapons into Israeli settlements should help curtail Israeli violence as well. If the fence can assume more of the burden of guaranteeing security it should be possible to reduce the level of Israeli intrusion into Palestinian life.

7.) Assist with laying down new water lines in the West Bank to help further develop Palestinian agriculture. Increase water allotments for Palestinian farmers, and encourage use of recycled water, a practice that works very well for Israeli agriculture.

8.) Make it easier to ship Palestinian agricultural products and manufacturing goods across the West Bank into Israel and to port facilities for shipment elsewhere, including to countries that do not trade with Israel. Additional paved roads should be constructed in Palestinian areas.

9.) Increase ease of financial exchanges between Israeli and Palestinian banks and provide for improved internet connections and wireless communication on the West Bank. A November 2015 agreement between Israel and the Palestinians is supposed to enable Palestinian telecom companies to provide 3G service to the West Bank.

10.) Arrange for approval of Palestinian building permits and begin planning for the transfer of 1% of Area C to Palestinian control under Areas A & B, thereby linking the fragmentary segments of Areas A & B into continuous territory. Transferring this small amount of territory to Palestinian Authority control will legalize some 11,000 homes currently under threat of demolition. New Palestinian cities—including a second model city like Rawabi—should be approved.

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4. WHAT GAZA NEEDS

A group of over 200 former Israeli generals, security officials, and high level police officers have confirmed a United Nations warning supported by a number of international sources: without significant interventions, the Gaza Strip will be unfit for human habitation by 2020. Nearly 20,000 apartments or houses were destroyed during the summer of 2014. The electrical grid is disintegrating and only intermittently functional. Sewage treatment is inadequate, with substantial raw sewage deposited in the Mediterranean. The shortage of drinkable water is acute. Unemployment is at nearly 50%. Unless averted, this humanitarian crisis is likely to produce a political crisis of considerable dimensions. While Hamas is often uninterested in improving residents' lives, the Palestinian Authority is reluctant to enhance Hamas's status, and Egypt is unwilling to open the Rafa crossing on Gaza's southern border and assume responsibility for Gaza's humanitarian needs, Israel has a vested humanitarian and security interest in ameliorating what appears to be an impending disaster. Although Israel left Gaza in 2005, it still controls access by sea, supplies the area's energy needs, and oversees its northern and eastern borders. A coordinated effort to improve Palestinian lives in both the West Bank and Gaza will help convince people that Hamas is not being rewarded for its pursuit of violence. Meanwhile the humanitarian crisis in Gaza opens opportunities for still more violent actors, especially ISIS, to seek advantage there. Israel should:

- 1.) Increase the number of trucks delivering basic goods that pass through the Kerem Shalom Crossing from Israel into Gaza.
- 2.) Encourage internationally supervised expenditures on reconstruction of Gaza housing so diversion of materials into Hamas' tunneling activity can be curtailed. The UN has so far failed to enforce the 2014 Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism that was designed to prevent repurposing materials for military use.
- 3.) Help fund the reconstruction of Gaza's electricity infrastructure by international aid organizations, including upgrading transmission lines and expanding the capacity of Gaza's power station. Israel on its own should increase the electrical power it supplies to Gaza and connect Gaza to its natural gas transmission network. International aid should facilitate the Gaza power station's transition to natural gas. Gaza's small power plant is supplemented by Israeli and Egyptian electricity, but the combined electricity supplies less than half the need.
- 4.) Help establish desalinization capacity in Gaza. The European Union is scheduled to fund the second stage of the Deir al-Balah desalinization plant, announced in June 2016; Israel is to assist with coordination.
- 5.) Issue additional permits for Gazans to work in Israel, with thorough security vetting.
- 6.) Encourage additional agricultural and manufacturing exports from Gaza to Israel and elsewhere. Imports and exports do not present comparable security risks for Israel.

Although transport of goods from Gaza has been substantially increased since 2011-2014, the 2016 level is still only 15% of what it was in 1999.

7.) Expand Gazan fishing rights in the Mediterranean to twelve miles. The distance has been set at 6 and 9 miles more recently.

8.) Begin planning for an offshore Gaza port based on an artificial island in the Mediterranean. Israel would monitor and inspect all shipping and approve all human entry. The Israeli government has begun serious consideration of this option.

9.) Urge the Palestinian Authority to accept and cooperate with the necessity of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

10.) Upgrade the security barrier along the border with Gaza and continue to develop tunnel construction detection technology. Successful interdiction of Hamas violence decreases the need for military responses that put ordinary Gazans at risk.

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5. THE TEN WORST THINGS ABOUT THE BDS MOVEMENT

1. BDS demonizes, antagonizes, and delegitimizes one of the two parties who have to negotiate a solution to the conflict by working together and uncritically idealizes the other.

2. BDS falsely claims to target institutions, not individuals, a distinction that is unworkable in practice.

3. BDS's academic boycott proposals would limit contacts with critics of Israeli policy.

4. BDS undermines academic freedom, limiting the free exchange of ideas and interpersonal and institutional contact that is basic to the academic mission.

5. BDS misrepresents its goal, which is, all its spokespersons emphasize, not changes in Israeli government policy, but rather the elimination of the Jewish state.

6. BDS misrepresents its conditions for a resolution of the conflict.

7. BDS demands an end to all efforts to build mutual empathy and understanding between Israelis and Palestinians, understanding that is necessary to a resolution of the conflict.

8. BDS offers no specific steps toward a resolution of the conflict; it has no agenda and no plan.

9. BDS falsely claims to imagine a nonviolent route to ending the conflict, but there is no nonviolent way of eliminating the Jewish state.

10. BDS offers nothing to the Palestinian people it claims to champion, no immediate assistance and no long-term solutions. Its anti-normalization agenda blocks the collaboration necessary for current and future efforts to improve daily life in Gaza and the West Bank.

6. WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Pressure the US government, Israel's main international government source of funds, to take stronger action opposing settlement expansion east of the security barrier; it presents the most serious danger to potential future negotiation. Organize to encourage other governments to do the same. The US has so far not been willing to focus its objections to settlement expansion on the area east of the barrier, a distinction that would acknowledge that the settlement blocs to the west are likely remain in Israel and be compensated with land swaps.
- Investigate, expose, and shame both private and foundation funding of West Bank settlements east of the security barrier. This continuing trend has been given a political free pass for much too long. It needs to become controversial and its damage to the potential for peace dramatized. Haaretz has published useful studies of foundations—like The Hebron Fund—whose activities are damaging the cause for peace.
- Support a carefully worded UN Security Council resolution laying out the principles of an agreement resolving the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. Such a resolution should not include a deadline. It should guarantee a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem, assure that a version of the Palestinian right of return to Israel proper that Israel cannot accept will not be imposed, specify that a Palestinian state will be nonmilitarized, outline land swaps that would enable Israel to retain the settlement blocs close to the Green Line, define appropriate levels of international support for economic development on the West Bank, and demand and enforce an immediate cessation of incitements to violence from all parties.
- Give public support to Israeli actions that would improve peoples' lives in Gaza, as listed in the *What Gaza Needs* broadside, from a loosening of the blockade that limits fishing rights to enhanced provisions for Palestinian exports to be transported and marketed both in the region and elsewhere. Such actions should not be tied to agreements with Hamas or to any requirements for reciprocity.
- Promote international requirements for greater financial transparency and accountability from the Palestinian Authority. That will be necessary if the PA is to regain the trust of its people.
- Publicize, celebrate, donate to, and participate in the many NGO projects designed to increase empathy and mutual understanding between Israelis and Palestinians, meanwhile widely condemning BDS's anti-normalization campaign.
- Study and promote the possibility of coordinated unilateral Israeli withdrawal from segments of the West Bank, beginning with the north central area.
- Promote the notion that the controversy over Temple Mount / Haram Al-Sharif will have to be resolved by granting Israelis sovereignty over the Western Wall and Palestinians sovereignty over the elevated platform. The inescapability of this solution needs to be established beforehand if any negotiations are ever to succeed.
- Promote nuanced teaching about both Jewish and Palestinian history and culture and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on campus and expose faculty efforts to demonize Israel in the classroom. Schedule individual campus events devoted to

either Israeli or Palestinian points of view but avoid debate formats that only exhibit hostility.

- Increase international participation in nonviolent protest in Israel and the West Bank.
- Propose and promote these and other actions as productive alternatives to the BDS campaign to delegitimize and dissolve the Jewish state.

Of course this agenda rejects fatalistic despair about the potential for progress, just as it rejects the various pathologies of hope and despair that have led to a number of unworkable, naïve, utopian, or hostile one-state solutions. There are no guarantees built into the proposals above. The fundamental question is what to do when you get up in the morning, not how to act with unqualified political confidence. We may remind ourselves of Antonio Gramsci's motto, pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will.