

PLANNED INJUSTICE: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON DONALD TRUMP'S PEACE PLAN FOR ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

For any peace process to be successful, the first step is to take all conflicting parties into confidence. By that standard, U.S. President [Donald Trump's peace plan](#) for Israel and Palestine is a failure from the start as the Palestinians rejected it even before the proposals were unveiled. The Palestinians believe that Mr. Trump, whose administration recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital in 2017, is not an impartial negotiator between the two sides. And the plan Mr. Trump unveiled on Tuesday in the White House seems to be confirming Palestinian concerns. Mr. Trump has thrown his weight behind the two-state solution. But to achieve the solution, the plan overly favours the Israeli positions and demands excessive concessions from the Palestinians. According to the plan, Israel can annex the Jordan Valley as well as the Jewish settlements on the West Bank. It also recognises Jerusalem as the "undivided capital" of Israel, while the Palestinian capital could come up in the eastern outskirts of the city. It proposes to enlarge Gaza and swap the Arab-populated towns in southeast Israel with Palestine for parts of the West Bank. In effect, the Palestinians would lose roughly 30% of the West Bank, their claim to Jerusalem and the right to return of refugees. In return, they will get an independent state in a shrunken West Bank and an enlarged Gaza connected through a tunnel that would practically be encircled by Israel.

[Explained | Trump's Israel-Palestine peace plan](#)

It is true that the Palestinians' negotiation powers are at their weakest point. Their leadership is divided and the support they once enjoyed in Arab nations is also eroding. Representatives of the UAE, Bahrain and Oman were present at the event in Washington in which Mr. Trump unveiled the plan. Egypt also offered its support, while Saudi Arabia cautiously welcomed talks between Israel and Palestine. But on what conditions? It's hard to overlook the injustice in demanding that the Palestinians accept further annexation of the West Bank. Issues such as the status of Jerusalem and the right to return of refugees, an internationally accepted right, and the final borders should be resolved through talks, not by dictating terms to one party. Even to achieve statehood under the proposed conditions, the Palestinian Authority (PA) is required to crack down on Hamas and Islamic Jihad (which is practically impossible as both operate from Gaza and the PA runs only West Bank territories), stop supporting families of those jailed or killed by Israel and stop challenging Israeli actions on international fora. It is virtually impossible for any Palestinian leader to sell these proposals to a people who have been resisting Israel's occupation for decades. Under the current conditions, it looks more like a plan for further annexation of territories by Israel than one that seeks constructive and lasting peace.

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