Israel/Palestine: Will it ever end?

Welcome to day 6
(last day)!!

Peter Larson
Israel/Palestine: Can it ever be solved?
Outline - (six 2 hour lectures)

1. Tuesday, Sept 11th, Introduction

2. Tuesday, Sept 18th, Who are the Palestinians, why are they unhappy and what do they want?

3. Tuesday, Sept 25th – Who are the Israelis, where do they come from and what do they want?

4. Tuesday, Oct 2 – What does it mean to be a “Jewish State”?

5. Tuesday, Oct 9th - The issue of the Palestinian refugees

6. Tuesday, Oct. 16 – Canadian policy/Conclusion/discussion
What should our Canadian objectives be?

Canada should encourage progress toward a solution which:

1. Ensures the physical safety and security of everyone living in the region, irrespective of religion or ethnicity

2. Appreciates the psychological trauma of both Palestinians and Israelis and their attachment to a common territory

3. Recognizes past injustices and works toward a reasonable restitution and accommodation for those who have been wronged

4. Ensures equality, human rights and democracy for all those living in the region

5. Protects the religious, language and civil rights of various minorities
The Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today released the following statement:

“Canada is concerned by the continued violence in Israel and the West Bank. The violence has persisted for over 100 days.

“Canada believes strongly in a two-state solution and that negotiations provide the only viable path to peace. As a steadfast ally and friend to Israel, Canada calls for all efforts to be made to reduce violence and incitement and to help build the conditions for a return to the negotiating table.

“Unilateral actions, such as Palestinian initiatives toward statehood in international forums and continued Israeli settlements, are unhelpful and constitute serious obstacles to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.”

Contact: Media Relations Office Global Affairs Canada 343-203-7700
The “two state solution” is the preferred solution for the entire international community
• USA
• EU
• Arab states
• United Nations

Even the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority claim to support it.

BUT – in 50 years, nobody has been able to make it work. Why not?

“a negotiated two-state solution remains the only viable option to prevent perpetual conflict and to achieve the legitimate aspirations of both peoples.” – Ban Ki Moon, UN Sec. Gen.
The two-state solution is already dead - Opinion - Israel News ...
www.haaretz.com/Opinion
Jan 2, 2017 - Supporters of a two-state solution respond aggressively to anyone who tries to undermine their magical faith in a miracle that what is dead will ...

Amazon.com: Is the Two-State Solution Already Dead ...
https://www.amazon.com/Two-State-Solution-Already-Dead/dp/0875867928
Written by a Palestinian with intimate knowledge of the political and physical landscape of the region, at its basic level the book advocates for a just peace based ...

Mr. Kerry, the 2-state solution isn't at risk, it's already dead | The Times ...
www.timesofisrael.com/The Blogs
Dec 29, 2016 - Twelve years later, the two-state solution is dead. It is no longer realistic. It's over. Because of Israel, because of the Palestinians, and, yes, ...

The two-state solution is dead. Let's move on | +972 Magazine
https://972mag.com/the-two-state-solution-is-dead-lets-move-on/122752/
Oct 23, 2016 - Millions more live under two different systems, including one in which democracy has ...
My friends, the two-state solution is dead, buried, and it has ..... The Land of Israel belongs to us – not the arabs who already own 10% of ...

Is the two-state solution dead? (opinion) - CNN.com
www.cnn.com/2017/02/16/opinions/trump-israeli-palestinian-departure-miller/
A permanent solution needs to address the main concerns of all the key groups in the region

Palestinians
• Under occupation in West Bank and Gaza
• Refugees in surrounding countries
• Living inside Israel

Israeli Jews
• Living inside Israel
• Living in (illegal) settlements in the West Bank

• A “race-based” 2 State solution cannot do this.
What is the 2 state solution?
The broad parameters for a 2 state solution (the “Clinton parameters”)

- Two independent states
- Safe and secure borders based on pre ’67 lines
- 3% land swaps
- Israel to maintain military bases in Palestine
- Palestinian state to be “non militarized”
- East Jerusalem to be Capital of Palestine
- Refugees to have right to “return” to new Palestinian state
- Israel recognized as legitimate
- All other claims dropped
Why has there never been a 2 state deal in 50 years?
The Zionist (or Jewish, or Israeli) Narrative

• Our people originated in Israel and we were driven out

• We have always been a tiny, persecuted people.

• We have learned through painful experience that we can’t depend on others to protect us.

• We have now returned to our ancestral lands, it is ours, all of it, and we plan to stay there.

• All we want is for our neighbours to accept our right to exist as a Jewish state.
The Palestinian narrative

- Palestine is our ancestral land. Christian, Muslim and Jews have lived and farmed here side by side for centuries.

- Christian countries oppressed European Jews, encouraged them to leave Europe and helped them colonise our country.

- Those European Jews took over our land, expelling many of us, confiscating our property and creating the Jewish State of Israel, in which Jews now have more rights than we do.

- We want an admission that what was done to us was wrong and those wrongs have to be righted.

- Palestine is ours, and we want it back. All of it.
Both narratives claim historic rights to the land

- Both narratives are deeply held by the respective groups, which strongly reject the idea of dividing Israel/Palestine
- Very few Palestinians or Israelis, “want” a 2SS or think that it is fair.
- It is a race-based model that does not address the deep seated “trauma” and “fear’ or hostility
- At best will be a temporary unstable solution until the relation of power changes

Tel Aviv taxi service showing Erez Israel

Sign in Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon
Geographic obstacles to a 2 state deal

Current borders (pre ‘67 borders)
- 78% Israel
- 22% occupied Palestinian Territories
Geography – topography

- Not all of the land is of equal value
- Most of the best agricultural land has been taken into Israel
- WB total area small (3 x Ottawa)
- mostly high and mostly a desert
- Limited agricultural/industrial potential
- WB is landlocked and dependent on Israel for world access
- Gaza is an environmental catastrophe
- Unclear how Gaza would be linked to WB
Water is a limited, strategic resource in the region
Much falls in West Bank, but flows to Israel
Israel depends on West Bank for water, but Palestinians are dependent on Israel to give it back
Inevitable tensions over water
Above: Water flows down through limestone mountains from West Bank to Israel

Left: Israel has “moved” the Jordan River!! Over 50% of historic outflow from Sea of Galilee now moves through Israeli National Water Carrier.
The geographic differences between Israel and the proposed new “State of Palestine” are striking.

Left: A view of the Galilee, in Israel

Right: Samarian desert in the West Bank
Geography – cont’d

How could you make East Jerusalem the capital of a Palestinian state?

“Jerusalem undivided is the eternal capital of Israel”
Demographic considerations

Where are Palestinians and Israelis today?

Inside Israel and “the territories”
- 6.5 million Jews
- 6.5 million Palestinians
Demography

But, in the near region (250 km of Jerusalem)

- Israeli Jews (6.5 million)
  i. 5.9 million inside Israel
  ii. 0.6 million in West Bank

- Palestinians (10.2 million)
  i. 4.8 MM live in the West Bank or Gaza
  ii. 3.8 MM refugees (Lebanon, Jordan and Syria)
  iii. 1.6 MM live inside Israel
What do they need?

**Jewish Israelis (6.5 million)**
- security
- Freedom to be Jewish

**Palestinians (10 million)**
  i. 4.5 MM under Israeli occupation need to have freedom – end to occupation and blockade of Gaza
  ii. 1.6 million Palestinian Citizens of Israel need an end to discrimination as non Jews in a Jewish State
  iii. 5.5 million refugees need a solution: restitution or compensation for goods taken, citizenship and resolution of legal status and economic opportunity (right to return)
(i.) Occupied Palestinian Territories

West Bank
• Population 2.7 million
  • 2.1 million Palestinians
• Israel took over in 1967 ("6 day war")
• Martial law for Palestinians, Israeli citizenship for Jewish settlers.
• Economy strangled
• GDP/person 1/10\textsuperscript{th} of Israel
• Physically separated from Jerusalem by the "wall"
• Huge growth of settlements which UN calls "illegal"

Need => “end to the occupation”
West Bank Checkpoints
Gaza (1.8 million)

- Repeatedly bombed and under siege since 2007
- Hamas government
- Total blockade
- Soaring unemployment
- UN says “unlivable” by 2020

Need => End to the blockade
(ii) Palestinian citizens of Israel (1.5 million)

Israel defines itself as a “Jewish and democratic State”

All citizens of Israel have equal **citizenship** rights (e.g. right to vote, passport, etc.)

BUT Jews have “national” rights, which gives legal preference to Jews in housing, employment, etc.

“Nation state” law – “Jewish” more important than “democratic”
The “Forgotten Palestinians” or “Israeli Arabs”

Need => equality and human rights
(iii) Palestinian refugees

Distribution

- Lebanon: 450,000
- Syria: 250,000
- Jordan: 2,200,000
- West Bank: 700,000
- Gaza: 1,400,000

Total: 5,000,000
Palestinian refugees – a 70 yr old problem

450,000 Lebanon
520,000 Syria
2,097,000 Jordan
762,000 West Bank
1,258,000 Gaza

5,150,000 TOTAL

Source: [http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work](http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work)
Palestinian refugees

Left: women at women’s shelter in Baq’a Camp, Jordan, look at pics of my grand daughter

Below left: kids huddle in the street in Gaza

Below: woman shucks vegetables for evening meal in Lebanese camp

Need >= a solution to their refugee status
Let’s imagine a 2 state Trump deal following the “Clinton” parameters.
What does a 2 state “deal” do for:

- The 5 M refugees?
- The 1.4 M Palestinians inside Israel?
- The 4 M Palestinians in the new “State of Palestine”
  - In West Bank?
  - In Gaza?
- Israeli Jews?
What does a 2 state “deal” do for:

The 5 M refugees – in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, or even WB?

- Officially gives up the right to return to Israel
- Offers right to “return” to West Bank
- Possible financial compensation? How much? Who would pay?
- For refugees in Gaza, or Lebanon what has changed?
What does a 2 state “deal” do for:

The 1.4 M Palestinian citizens of Israel (PCI)?

- Israel now recognized by international community as a “Jewish State”
- As non-Jews, PCI’s lose right to aspire to equality
- Likely to face increasing pressure to leave
What does a 2 state “deal” do for:

The 4 M Palestinians in the new “State of Palestine”

West Bank
- 2.7 million now (plus up to 5 million refugees)
- tiny, arid, impoverished, landlocked, non-militarized
- Israeli troops on its land
- Current GDP 1/20th that of Israel

Gaza
- 1.8 million – now “Citizens of Palestine”
- Ecological disaster impending
- Some compensation
- But even poorer than West Bank
What does a 2 state “deal” do for:

- **Israeli Jews?**

- They now have a “small” internationally recognized race/based Jewish fortress Israel
- Israeli troops stationed in Palestine
- Many Israelis will be enraged at “treason” and “sell out” by their own leadership
- On their their borders will be 9 million Palestinians angry over “treason” and “sell out” by Palestinian leadership
- And behind them another billion Muslims who wont think this is fair.
Conclusion

There could be a 2 state deal

However, if it is based on anything like the “Clinton parameters” it will not satisfy the most elementary economic or psychological demands of:

• The refugees
• The Palestinian citizens of Israel
• The Palestinian citizens of Jerusalem
• The citizens of Gaza, or even,
• The citizens of the West Bank

As a result, it will not provide security for the Jews.

More unhappiness and conflict will ensue. A 2 state deal is not likely to provide a solution.
Interesting question: Why do all these people support a two state solution?
More interesting question: Why do these two people say they support a two state solution?

I think you have to examine carefully the interests and options of
• Netanyahu
• Abbas
“WE CANNOT SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS WITH THE SAME THINKING WE USED WHEN WE CREATED THEM”

What to do???

Instead of endlessly repeating the same old mantra that:

“the 2 state solution is the only possible solution because Israel will never let the refugees return”

We should ask a different question:

“How can we ensure the safety and security of Jewish Israelis while resolving the legitimate grievances of the 3 major groups of Palestinians?”
What should Canada do?

Stop promoting the creation of a RACE-BASED microstate based on religion/ethnicity (i.e. “we strongly support the two state solution”)... as the only solution...

Instead Canada (and the international community) should:
• recognize that both peoples suffer from deep trauma and fears and have profound psychological in addition to physical needs
• Help them find a solution that addresses those needs, rather than promote a “territorial deal” which will leave lots of Palestinians profoundly unhappy and Israelis profoundly insecure
• Promote the values for which Canada is already widely respected:
  • Equality
  • Human rights
  • Democracy
  • Multiculturalism
  • Truth and reconciliation
Is there any hope for a solution?

Yes!!!!
... and Canada can help!

Peter Larson, Ph.D.
Chair
Canada Talks Israel Palestine
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Three keys to a possible successful outcome
The keys to a successful outcome

World community (including the US) has to say to Israel “stop” we can’t support you if you continue like this.
The keys to a successful outcome

Palestinian society has to say “Here is our vision of a post-Zionist Israel/Palestine”

“For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”
The keys to a successful outcome

Israeli Jews have to say “OK – we recognize that what we did to you was unfair. Let’s forge a new partnership based on equality and fairness.”
The three keys

World community (including the US) has to say to Israel “stop” we can’t support you if you continue like this

Palestinian society has to say “Here is our vision of a post-Zionist democratic Israel/Palestine”

Israeli Jews have to say “OK – what we did was wrong and unfair. Lets talk about a new deal based on equality and fairness.”
Seven specific steps Canada could take to promote a just solution:

1. Encourage Palestinian and Israeli representation at UN (and elsewhere) on an equal footing.

2. Endorse and implement UNSC resolution 2334 condemning the illegal settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

3. Provide support (financial and moral) to Israeli, Palestinian and international NGO’s which work towards equality and democracy in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel.

4. Increase our funding of UNRWA until a solution is found.

5. Offer scholarships to Israeli and Palestinian students to study in Canada.

6. Encourage discussions with Israeli and Palestinian political leaders (of all stripes).

7. Organize ‘fact finding’ trips for Canadian Parliamentarians to Israel/Palestine to see the whole picture including Israel, West Bank, Gaza and refugee camps.
A fair solution might not happen...

But I think it could

And if it did...
Thank you!!
Peter Larson, Chair, Canada Talks Israel Palestine
www.canadatalksisraelpalestine.ca
Imagine a 2 state solution along “Clinton” lines..
How well would it meet the needs of:
• the 5 m. refugees?
• the 1.5 m. Palestinian citizens of Israel?
• the 2.5 m. Palestinians in the West Bank?
• The 1.8 m Palestinians in Gaza?

A view of the West Bank – just 10 km east of Jerusalem
What this means in practice

- At the United Nations
  - Opposition to Palestinian membership in UN and its organs
  - Side with Israel/USA in annual November votes
  - Non compliance with Security Council resolution 2334

- Avoid comment on Israeli settlements

- Differential visa treatment
  - Israelis v Palestinians

- Non recognition of State of Palestine
- MP trips to Israel
- Differential treatment of charities
- Jewish National Fund vs. Irfan Canada
Summary of 5 key points of official policy

1. Canada is a “steadfast ally and friend” of Israel

2. Canada strongly supports a 2 state solution

3. Canada believes that the solution needs to be negotiated directly between Israel and Palestine

4. Canada opposes Palestinian recourse to international bodies, including the UN
The UNSG on Thursday also approved a resolution that condemned Israeli settlement activity and called upon it to withdraw to the pre-1967 line. (…) Some 157 nations voted in favor of the text, seven opposed it and eight abstained.

All the European Union’s member states voted to support the resolution. (…)

Those nations opposing the resolution were: Canada, Israel, Nauru, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and the United States.