

Fundamental Early Warning

The Final Act of the Two State Solution?

Essence of Warning

A Palestinian inversion towards principle of a Two State Solution is likely to happen in the coming months. This is due to a combination of the sides' inability to reach an agreement in the framework of the Annapolis process, the upcoming elections in Israel, the legislative crisis that is expected to engulf the Palestinians from January 2009 and an increase in voices calling for the adoption of the One State Solution.

Israel thus finds itself at a critical strategic juncture towards what may become the final act of the Two State Solution. A Palestinian inversion towards this principle and the adoption of the One State Solution as *the* strategy for the Palestinian National Movement would constitute an 'earthquake' for Israel's national security.

Introduction and Contents

1. In recent weeks, due in part to the lack of progress in negotiations and the improvement in Hamas' status, senior Palestinians in the West Bank have threatened to invert their position regarding the Two State Solution and demand a One State Solution to the Israeli – Palestinian conflict (hereinafter 'Palestinian Inversion'). This trend reached its peak with recent statements by Abu Mazen¹ and Abu Ala in which they suggested considering dissolving the Palestinian Authority (PA) and demanding a binational state.
2. The agreed parameters of the political process are negotiations over an agreement of principles on Permanent Status that deals with all outstanding issues between Israel and the Palestinians. However, the upcoming elections in Israel and the weakness of the Palestinian political system increase the prospects of failure.
3. In this document, the Reut Institute warns that without a political breakthrough, there is a possibility that a Palestinian Inversion could take place before January 2009, with an unequivocal Palestinian demand for the establishment of one state in all of 'Mandatory Palestine' on the basis of 'one man one vote'.

Trends Eroding Support for the Principle of Two States

4. The principle of the Two State Solution was first anchored by UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (11/47) that called for partitioning the Land of Israel into two states – Jewish and Arab. Since the Declaration of Principles (9/93), it has been the underlying principle for the political process between Israel and the Palestinians.
5. The PLO first recognized the principle of partition in the Algiers Declaration (11/88). Since then, the Two State Solution² has been considered to be the declared goal of the Palestinian National Movement and has served as the basis for the Oslo Process (93-01), the Roadmap (4/03) and the current Annapolis process.
6. In recent years however, the political stalemate, continued violence between Israelis and Palestinians and the rise of Hamas has eroded this principle. This comes against the background of claims by different

¹ [Ha'aretz](#), 7/31/08.

² The Palestinian declaration of independence (11/88) is based on UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (the Partition Plan). In the announcement, Yasser Arafat also mentioned UN Security Council Resolution 242 and called for resolving the Israeli – Arab conflict based on territorial compromise.

sources that the geographical distribution of Israeli and Palestinian communities, the total area of the territory involved and the issue of water do not facilitate the creation of a viable Palestinian state.³

7. At the same time, there has been an increase in calls by prominent international intellectuals⁴ to adopt the One State Solution. (See: [Promotion of the 'One-State Solution'](#))
8. Moreover, the PLO's legitimacy to determine the aims of the Palestinian National Movement has recently been undermined due to the rise of Hamas and other movements that are not integrated into its institutions.
9. Some Palestinian groups are working both militarily (through terrorism) and politically to foil any steps aimed at ending the occupation, because they believe that the political, economic, military, administrative and demographic burden it generates may bring about Israel's collapse from within (See [Logic of Implosion](#))
10. In light of the lack of progress in the current negotiations and the consolidation of the Hamas regime in Gaza, there have been increased threats in recent weeks from senior 'pragmatic' Palestinians regarding the demand for a One State Solution to the Israeli – Palestinian conflict.⁵

³ In recent years, the concept 'Viable Palestinian State' has become a prerequisite for the establishment of a Palestinian state. The concept was adopted by major actors in the international community, despite the absence of any joint understanding as to its precise meaning. This ambiguity may turn the concept into a point of future friction and an obstacle towards establishing a Palestinian state on the principle of 'two nation states'. (See [Viable Palestinian State](#)).

⁴ See for example, Edward Said, **From Oslo to Iraq**, 2004; Virginia Tilley, **The One State Solution**, 2005, Asad Ghanem, One State is Enough, [Ha'aretz](#) (In Hebrew) 6/12/08.

⁵ The freeze in negotiations has caused Palestinian leaders from the 'moderate' camp to warn (or threaten) that the failure of the political process will cause the collapse of the PA. It seems that some of them are even laying the groundwork for a Palestinian demand for one state and a return to the armed struggle against Israel.

- Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat warned that the PA will collapse unless a peace deal is achieved in 2008, with dire consequences for the region ([AFP](#) 3/19/2008).
- The former head of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade in Jenin, Zakariya Zubeida warned that unless a Palestinian state is created by the end of 2008, the Palestinians will throw out the PA ([Ha'aretz](#), 4/4/08).
- Ziad Abu Zayyad, a former minister in the PA and veteran peace negotiator warned that "there are only two or three years left. If this [the Two-State Solution] doesn't work then everyone will be arguing for a one state solution ([Atlantic Magazine](#) 5/2008).
- Abu Mazen recently said that he does not rule out a return to armed struggle ([Ha'aretz](#) 2/28/2008).
- PA representative in Lebanon Abbas Zaki, recently said that "the use of politics without weapons will not bring results" and emphasized the 'Phased Plan' - that a Palestinian state in the West Bank would be the first phase towards Israel's destruction. ([Memri](#) 4/9/08).
- Ahmad Khalidi, a close aide to Abu Mazen, claimed that statehood does not offer an equitable and fair solution for the Palestinians and that they should consider calling for a resolution based on "mutual respect, equality and mutuality, and a sense of genuine partnership in sharing the land" ([Guardian](#) 12/13/07).
- One [Fatah](#) member involved in the [Geneva Initiative](#) told Ha'aretz journalist Akiva Eldar that unless progress is made by the end of 2008, he will demand the IDF re-take responsibility for controlling the PA and move the struggle from one over independence to one over equal rights. ([Ha'aretz](#) 2/22/08).
- Abu Mazen was reported to have distributed copies of an article by a former Jordanian minister calling for the unilateral dissolution of the PA on two separate occasions - during the last PLO Executive Committee meeting and during a discussion with prominent Palestinian journalists and columnists (Khatib, [Bitterlemons](#) 3/10/2008).

Why is this Important?

11. The statements of Abu Mazen and Abu Ala indicate that the Palestinian inversion has also permeated into the heart of the Palestinian 'moderate' camp, among those who doubt the practicability of the establishment of a Palestinian state and the utility of current negotiations. Israel's indirect talks with Hamas over a prisoner swap coupled with the beginning of an election period only strengthen the feeling within Fatah ranks that contacts with Israel are futile.
12. Therefore, if the political process fails or continues to show no results, the Palestinian inversion may become official with an unequivocal call for the creation of one state in all of Mandatory Palestine on the basis of 'one man one vote'.⁶
13. The Palestinian inversion will be an 'earthquake' to Israel's national security as it may bring leading international organizations or states to change their position regarding the proper solution to the Israeli – Palestinian conflict.
14. Moreover, if the Palestinians officially demand the establishment of a binational state and work towards dissolving the PA, the burden of responsibility towards the Palestinian population may fall squarely on Israel's shoulders, as it is difficult to imagine international organizations continuing their involvement in the West Bank without a Palestinian 'invitation'.

Why might the Palestinian Inversion happen before 2009?

15. *Prima facie*, the erosion of the Two State Solution is a slow 'linear' process and it is therefore preferable for the current Israeli government to 'pass the buck' to the next administration rather than adopt an alternative political strategy that may turn out to be hasty.
16. However, the Reut Institute contends that Israel finds itself at a critical in what might be the final act of the Israeli – Palestinian political process based on the Two-State principle. This is due to several reasons:
 - a. **The end of the Annapolis timetable** – At the Annapolis Conference, the sides announced their aim to complete Permanent Status negotiations by the end of 2008. Palestinian disappointment from negotiations may create pressure on the PLO to re-evaluate the Palestinians' political strategy.
 - b. **Another rug pulled from under Abu Mazen's legislative legitimacy** - In January 2009, the Palestinian system is expected to enter a 'political tailspin' due to the conclusion of Abu Mazen's official reign as President of the PA. Despite Abu Mazen's announcement that he will continue to serve an extra year until the elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council, Hamas has already declared that it will not recognize him after the 9th January.
 - c. **The Inversion idea's 'maturation'** – in other words, the growing popularity on the Palestinian street that the Palestinian interest lies in continued Israeli 'occupation' and demands for a One State Solution.

The combination between these trends as well as the political stalemate, continued violence and Hamas' growing popularity may significantly increase the erosion of the Two State Solution. (See: [Inversion towards the Occupation: Challenge to Israel's National Security Concept](#)).

⁶ See [Failure of the Political Process: The Danger of Dissolution of the Palestinian Authority](#)

Policy Options

17. The State of Israel needs to reevaluate the current potential political alternatives which seem to be:
 - a. **Continuing attempts to reach a Shelf Agreement (Agreement on Principles) over Permanent Status** – such a decision means continuing the political track by negotiating over one comprehensive Permanent Status Agreement until elections in Israel.
 - b. **Anchoring the heretofore agreements with the Palestinians** in a document that will serve as a starting point for negotiations under the next Government.
 - c. **Upgrading the PA in preparation to recognizing it as a State by the end of 2008** – this alternative focuses on strengthening PA institutions with the help of the international community and systematically transferring powers and authorities to the PA, either by agreement or unilaterally. This will bring the PA's status nearer to that of a sovereign state by the end of 2008 (See: Building a Palestinian State).
18. **Evaluating possible strategies for dealing with a possible Palestinian inversion occurs.**

End.