

# *Regional Security: President Trump's Peace To Prosperity Plan For Israel-Palestine*

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**Abstract** – Over the years, the Middle East has been a serious matter for the U.S. in order to maintain regional security. Involved in a long-standing dispute, the U.S. has become the mediator for peace between Israel and Palestine. As regards, President Donald Trump showed the enthusiasm to achieving solution through his plan officially entitled “Peace to Prosperity”. In the making of the peace plan, there have been contributions of Arab states which help to expand the vision of Trump administration in seeing the conflict. Despite of the number of articles arguing on the bias of the U.S. foreign policy towards Palestine, the Peace to Prosperity plan appeared to be the clear solution to end the ongoing conflict. The proposal attempts to project social potential and economic opportunity in order to bring peace to Palestinians, Israelis and the region as a whole. It also sought for the improvement of the Palestinian people living standard and social situation including self-determination. The purpose of this article is to examine the effectiveness of the newest Trump’s Middle East plan that has involved Palestinian aspirations. This research will use Neoliberalism’s perspective to analyze the approach of Trump’s Mideast plan that is arguably providing more development than his predecessors for the peace process of Israel and Palestine. The result of discussion indicates that peace will arrive with this proposed plan which does not only rely on the use of military power.

**Keywords** – Trump; Israel; Palestine; Peace; Middle East

## I. INTRODUCTION

After the end of World War II, the international community has recognized the vast growth in economic, geopolitical, and political matters of the Middle East (Lenczowski, 1984). The land lies in a strategic region which consist of three major continents: Africa, Asia, Europe, and holds vital resources such as a large amount of oil and water routes located there, making the land attractive to world’s great powers including the United States. The Middle East is appealing and strengthened by the fact that the area contains an abundant oil and gas. Consequently, due to these promising resources, the region has encountered threats. In this case, traditional conflicts happened among the states thus it makes the Middle East still vulnerable. In a world full of clashes of interests, only some rise to the level of wars or violent battles. Among those crises arose in the Middle East, the conflict between Israeli and Palestinian still takes charge as world’s most famous dispute. The conflict has taken place in international community for its complexity which driven by various factors including religious and historical dimensions. The dispute of Israel-Palestine is essentially a modern international politics which began since the end of the nineteenth century. The roots of this conflict include the competition on historical claims to the same land that they believe it belongs to one of them.

During World War I, policies by the European countries, mainly British, played an important role in shaping a conflict between Arabs and Jews in the Middle East. The United Nations declared to adopt the Partition Plan in which the aim was to divide the British Mandate of Palestine into Arab-Jewish states. Due to this matter, the declaration of Israel as a statehood happened in 1948. Ever since the sovereignty, there have been massive attacks by Israel to Palestine in favor to fully claim the land. Both Israelis and Palestinians have suffered tremendously as a consequence of their long-running and seemingly endless conflict. International leaders, diplomats, and academics have discussed the problems and sought to resolve the conflict for

almost a century. One of these was the Oslo Accords, the purpose was to achieve peace between Israel and Palestine based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 which includes the agreement to give Palestinian people their political rights to self-determination (The State of Israel, 1993). Thus, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) recognized the State of Israel and the recognition of the PLO by Israel as a partner in negotiations which also means the organization is a representative of Palestinians.

The Oslo Accords, once seen as a breakthrough moment in history, sparked hope by acknowledging Palestinian aspirations for statehood. The Accords, however, did not fully materialize due to Israel's inability to fulfill its responsibilities. The Oslo Accords' failure could be linked to three key factors: First, the Accords were hampered by ambiguity and a lack of a properly established international legal foundation. The Accords required to engage a third party to control the peace process impartially utilizing certain methods for monitoring and accountability in order to promote clarity and justice (Boatman & Martin, 2019). Insecurity, de-facto annexation of land (the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem are formally occupied), and high levels of aid dependency in the OPT have been devastating for Palestinian civilians, boosted by an enduring military occupation and expansion of settlements that together damage livelihoods and drive poverty and retardation (Boatman & Martin, 2019, p. 4). All of these issues have played a role in the collapse of the democratic institutions that Oslo was supposed to foster.

Referring to its outstanding power and large influence which also known as one of the war victors, the United States provided a solution as a negotiator between the conflicting states. During the administration of President Donald Trump, the U.S. has been focusing its foreign policy to the Middle East. Donald Trump made a number of bold claims regarding the Middle East during his presidential campaign in 2016, claiming that he would negotiate a great peace deal to end one of history's most intractable conflicts (Sokolsky & Miller, 2016). However, such policies made by Trump administration has provoked debates, mainly because it favors Israel and denying the Palestinian people's rights, specifically the right to self-determination. By coordinating its stance with Israel and enabling it to dictate the negotiation timeline, the US failed to serve as a credible mediator (Rynhold, 2008). Therefore, Trump publicly announced his long-awaited Middle East Peace Plan or "Peace to Prosperity" on January 28, 2020, to end the seven-decade-long Israeli- Palestinian conflict which attended by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (Aljazeera, 2020). The peace proposal was drafted by a team led by Jared Kushner, Donald Trump's son-in-law and advisor (BBC News, 2020). The plan divided into two frameworks; political and economy. On the political front, the proposal offers a Palestinian statehood model that is connected to a set of requirements that Palestinians must accomplish over the course of four years (Harkov & Keinon, 2020).

On the economic front, the agreement provides a ten-year investment of more than \$50 billion in the Palestinian economy, society, and governance (The White House, 2020). The plan also calls for a low-tariff policy with decreased trade barriers and strategic infrastructure investments to boost private sector growth and resolve the current jobless crisis (The White House, 2020, p. 19). In addition, the treaty mandates that the West Bank and Gaza Strip be connected by an access route that crosses through Israel. The Trump administration appears to be shifting its attention from Palestinians' political and national problems and more towards their economic objectives, suggesting economic cooperation and development in Palestinian territory, in other words, following Netanyahu's "economic peace" plan. This strategy is predicated on the notion that Palestinians will give up their right to self-determination inside a sovereign state in exchange for material benefits like investment and free market.

The launch of Trump's Peace to Property Plan is regarded as a promising approach toward resolving the Israeli-Palestinian issue and bringing peace to the area, however the response that followed is not aligned with Donald Trump's primary aims. The initiative was met with a lot of criticism from many sources. That does not, however, imply that no one is in favor of the proposal. Jordan David Elhayani, the Chairman of the Yesha Council, rejected the idea to create a Palestinian state, claiming that it would represent a threat to Israel (Magid, 2020). The Yesha Council is a non-profit organization that was created in the 1970s to encourage Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The denial was based on the fact that Jewish settlement sites were included in Trump's Peace to Property Plan when allocating land to Palestine. Elhayani's rejection as leader of the Yesha Council, however, is not complete, as not all leaders of Israeli communities in the West Bank have declared their disapproval. Shaviro, the mayor of a settlement in the northern West Bank, stated that they could coexist with Palestinians (Magid, 2020).

Based on the introduction, this article examines the proposed Peace to Prosperity plan for the future situation of Israel and Palestine. There have been discussions on the imbalance of this newest Middle East peace plan by Trump administration, yet,

there is still a little research on the potential of this plan in order to end the conflict. In the result and discussions, the paper will explain some points stated in the proposal and discuss to what extent the efforts could bring progress for peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

## **II. METHODS**

The type of research that the author intends to use is the descriptive research method. Within it, qualitative approach will be taken with the characteristics as follows: analysis is based on data mostly from secondary sources such as book, journals, publications, research reports and credible online news reports. Yet primary resources such as government official documents or statements will be included, necessarily to strengthen the evidence of such events. The analysis of the research is limited to particular foreign policy which is "Peace to Prosperity" formulated under President Trump administration in 2020. The results of these data will help the author to draw the conclusion. Later in the article, the researcher will also use neoliberalism theory, which emphasizes on the international cooperation between states. Neoliberalism is an international relations theory which argues that international cooperation among governments is possible and durable, and that such collaborations could minimize conflict and competition. The function of international institutions and regimes in fostering inter- state collaboration is emphasized by neoliberals (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985). Neoliberalism includes a wide range of ideas and arguments regarding how international cooperation, behaviors, and economic relations limit and minimize states' violent power. Neoliberalism's primary concern is how to achieve cooperation among states and other actors in the international system (Baldwin, 1993). Neoliberalism performs as a revised version of liberalism.

A book by Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony*, published in 1984, used insights from new institutional economics to argue that the international system could remain stable even without a hegemon, rejecting the hegemonic stability theory. Keohane demonstrated that international collaboration can be sustained via regular encounters, openness, and oversight (Keohane & Martin, 1995). In making relations, international regimes play an important role in interdependence-based cooperation among states. States connect in various methods which leads to interdependence and is divided into three primary elements, including economic, financial, and cultural means. Security is rarely a priority in state-to-state interactions and military forces are rarely deployed. If a country attempts to approach others by using international diplomacy to encourage governments in order to engage openly and promote peaceful solutions to issues could be highly beneficial (Shiraev & Zubok, 2014). International cooperation, according to neoliberalism, is the correct solution to the anarchic society. In an anarchic international system, neoliberalism, in contrast to liberalism, believes that international cooperation is essential. Cooperation can open up opportunities for international peace. Neoliberalism is focused not just to the economy but also with human rights (Lamy, 2001).

## **III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In line with neoliberalism, the author aims to analyze the possibility of cooperation between two states, Israel and Palestine within the effort of the peace plan made by the administration of President Trump called Peace to Prosperity. During his 2016 presidential campaign, Trump brought up the agenda to provide peace for Israel and Palestine (Ningsih, 2018). Trump declared that he had reached an "ultimate deal" to end the conflict and began announcing proposals on Israeli-Palestinian peace (Asseburg, 2019). The plan is referred to as a solution, in which the states of Israel and Palestine coexist as sovereign states. Many parties, including the United Nations, the United States (pre-Trump presidency), and several other countries, including Indonesia, support this idea. Peace to Prosperity plan is divided into two frameworks which the main purpose is to officially announce Israel and Palestine as independent states. Washington stated that, "this vision would achieve mutual recognition of Israel as the Jewish people's nation-state and the future state of Palestine as the Palestinian people's nation-state with equal civil rights for all its citizens". Trump's Peace to Prosperity Plan Political Framework, which was published at the end of January 2020, intends to 1) recognize Israel and Palestine as independent states, and 2) secure the civil rights of Jews in Israel and Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (The White House, 2020).

First, based on the general acknowledgement, a state must have territory or simply called a land for its people. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the proposal in which includes territorial agreement. Trump's Peace to Property Plan defines land west of the Jordan River as Israeli territory and allocates land roughly similar to the size of the West Bank and Gaza Strip as Palestinian territory (The White House, 2020). The segment of the regional map between Israel and Palestine implies that Trump's Peace to Property Plan intends to generate certainty in the State's territorial boundaries between Palestine and Israel, which has been a source of tension, in the expectation that the practices regarding the territorial borders between the two

countries will provoke a sense of peace. The proposal does provide for a Palestinian capital to be located beyond the Separation Barrier, east and north of it, in the area of East Jerusalem encompassing Kafir'Aqab, as well as the eastern refugee camps of Shuafat and Abu Dis. During his administration, there have been changes because the previous administrations did not truly consider Palestinian concerns or support the Palestinian stance. With the newest proposal on the attempt of establishing Palestine as a sovereign state, Trump has taken a step nearer to peace. Also, the recognition of Israel rights will put Palestine on secure position because Israel will engage in non-violence actions and accept prior agreements and obligations between the parties (The White House, 2020, p. 26).

The plan also includes the duty for Israel to protect Sacred Sites and guarantee the freedom to worship (BBC News, 2020). This will give Palestinian rights to pray in worship places which could gain public trusts and is a road to cooperation. The decreasing of tension is needed to build connection between the two states since after the Oslo Accords, Israelis and Palestinians has always been involved in disagreements and attacks. The agreement over land boundaries could step up the peace progress into collaboration and the absolute gains of human rights. The shift of territorial agreement would benefit Israelis as well. They would accomplish security, stability, and growth while avoiding international and regional isolation and reversing the ethical degradation that has formed Israeli society as a result of the occupation. They would also maintain connections to religious and historical sites in the existing Palestinian areas.

Nonetheless, Israel cannot continue to deny the human rights of large groups of people indefinitely while claiming to be a normal actor of the international society. The existing apartheid system will eventually be exposed as it really is, and Israel's options will be completely obvious with either become a one-state country with equal human rights for all people, or become an isolated island known for its brutality. Although President Trump would never accept the idea of human rights equality for all citizens including Palestine, the situation is different with American voters. According to a study conducted by the University of Maryland last year, Americans are nearly evenly divided between those who prefer a two-state solution and those who want a one-state solution with equality of rights for all people. Nonetheless, when asked whether they supported the existing system or one state with equality of rights if a two-state solution was not feasible, they chose these by a two-to-one majority (Kyser, 2018). It would enable a future government to project the goals and expectations of the American public.

Second, in the economic framework discussed in the proposal, it believes that Peace to Prosperity plan is by far the most ambitious and comprehensive international initiative for the Palestinian people, with the potential to transform the West Bank and Gaza and lead to a new chapter in Palestinian history marked by freedom and dignity rather than poverty and loss (The White House, 2020). The phrase "economic integration" refers to the process of combining the economies of numerous sovereign nations and gradually decreasing economic barriers between them (Molle, 1997). According to Robson, the benefits of such integration in terms of economic welfare are absolutely important for the countries involved (Robson, 1998). Peace to Prosperity will place a solid basis for the Palestinian economy by improving property ownership, legal system, fiscal sustainability, capital markets, and anti-corruption policies, as well as generating rapid economic growth by establishing critical infrastructure, employment creation by promoting private sector growth, and strengthening regional integration by developing a business environment that gives shareholders confidence that their assets will be protected. The proposal intends to open the West Bank and Gaza by establishing new linkages between Palestinians and the area, which would boost commerce, lower costs, and improve regional collaboration.

By changing the current business environment, building institutions, and improving governance activities in collaboration with the Palestinian public sector, Peace to Prosperity motivates the Palestinian public sector to provide the services and administration expected for the Palestinian people to get a decent future. Eventually, this plan will reconstruct Palestinian governance that has been restricted before. Further, the addition of \$50 billion for Palestinian economy also could become a grant opportunity for its people and the government to boost their state finance and start to form cooperation with Arab states and Israel. Instead of disagreeing every peace plan either created by the institutions or one state actor such as the United States, Palestinians should perceive these offers as a second chance after the unsuccessful of the Oslo Accords. According to Oren Gross, economic integration is a method of achieving and sustaining long-term peace in the area (Gross, 2000). There was an economic peace effort which one of the components is hi-tech industrial parks, which Israelis and Palestinians could cooperate together in a collaborative environment. There is research discussing about the possible situation that would happen if Israel and Palestine could engage in economic integration but with the condition of free movement of production. Both

sides agree to enable free, normal, and mutual cross-border labor mobility, allowing Israeli and Palestinian people to access each other's territory to work or seek employment (ECF and DATA-HCIF, 1998).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Trump's Peace to Property Proposal is a peace agreement introduced by President Donald Trump in January 2020 to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The creation of this strategy is influenced by the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In early 2020, the proposal, which was considered as more appropriate in terms of peace than earlier peace plans, became a major innovation. The Political Framework and the Economic Framework are two frameworks proposed for Israeli-Palestinian peace within Peace to Prosperity plan. Moreover, the Trump's Peace Plan includes peace principles that govern a variety of issues, including the two nations' citizenship status, refugees, prisons, territories, borders, security, economy, Jerusalem, and holy sites. Although the announcement of the proposal was not smooth due to numbers of arguments and critics, in this research, it finds that the plan is a step up from the United States as mediator for Israel and Palestine peace progress. During President Trump's administration, the plan is arguably providing more development than the previous presidency. The release of Peace to Prosperity plan has shown that the U.S. takes the dispute between Israeli and Palestinians to its priority list. In terms of territorial agreements, the United States has created it without eliminating Palestinian rights over its land. It also has assigned Israel to perform the duty in order to sustain peaceful situation in sacred sites and worship places where both Palestine and Israel citizens would pray. However, there is still a lack of recognition of Palestine borders that the U.S. has ignored. Nevertheless, economic integration should be more beneficial for both states to engage. Such cooperation is extremely needed in the region to invite neighboring Arab states to establish alliances or collaborations with each other. This aims to improve the living standards of Arab states people including Palestinians which has been a subject of Israel's human rights violations.

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