Israel Palestine

POLICY PAPER ON ISRAEL / PALESTINE

PRESENTED TO: The Green Party of Michigan

DATED: April 26, 2018

I. Executive Summary

This memo recommends a 1-County, 4-State Solution.

The current conflict in the Middle East between Israelis and Palestinians is both historic and modern. In recent days and weeks, Israeli soldiers have shot and killed unarmed Palestinian protesters who are living in inhumane conditions, and have been for many years. The catalyst of this modern crisis has roots in colonialism, and has turned into a proxy war as the United States supplies arms to and uses Israel to keep its empirical hold on other countries in the Middle East and Russia and Iran supply arms to and use the Palestinian people in a similar manner.

The current diplomatic option of a two-state solution is one that has allowed this conflict to escalate as a war between two countries over borders, with terror attacks and military actions that are seen as justified by those choosing one side over the other as retaliatory actions between two opposing sides. This leaves innocent civilians too often as the victims, as right-wing governmental leaders continue to gain power and potential peace negotiations seem to grow further and further away from possibility.

Measures of feasibility are based on stakeholder support including potential for further violence, while evaluating the potential effectiveness of the decisions including civil and human rights. Stakeholders are defined as governmental leaders and citizens of Israel and Palestine. Keeping of this status quo is causing further deaths, further conflict, and allowing for hatred to build long-term, creating a higher potential for long-term violence. The option of a 1-Country solution with either Israeli or Palestinian control is just as damaging, causing a full displacement of citizenry on either side, and this paper proposes the option of a 1-County, 4-State Solution.

The option of a 1-County, 4-State Solution is both a controversial new option and is one that has the greatest potential for a peaceful solution. This paper is a preliminary suggestion, and one that will need further study, including the fleshing out of ideas and implementation steps, and discussion before being considered as a full policy proposal.

II. Issue Overview: A History of War

The State of Israel was created on May 14, 1948, a result of the aftermath of the Holocaust in Europe, a fulfillment of the Balfour Declaration of 1917, and Arab connections to Axis powers during World War II (ProCon.org Staff). At the time of recognition by the United Nations, the population of the Palestine Partition was 65% Arabs and 33% Jews (ProCon.org Staff). While the modern beginnings of the fight over control of this area of land between Arabs and Jews in Palestine began almost immediately after the Balfour Declaration, Palestinian Jews and Arabs have been clashing and fighting with each other since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (and, truly, historically, for much longer) (History.com Staff, 2010). The British government had control of a portion of the Middle East after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, encompassing modern-day Israel, Jordan, and Iraq, while France controlled Syria and Lebanon both per the mandate of the League of Nations after World War I (ProCon.org Staff). Based on this prior history and information, what these conflicts also stem from are the aftermaths of colonialism. Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria all became independent nations prior to Jordan, initially called Transjordan, and Israel (ProCon.org Staff). In the early 1920’s, Britain divided the land of Palestine into two, split by the Jordan River, causing the beginning of the fight over the modern-day border lines today known as Israel and Palestine (ProCon.org Staff). To the east of the Jordan River was the Emirate of Transjordan, to the West, Palestine, and initially the United Nations split the territory into three, with Jerusalem having its own separate international jurisdiction (ProCon.org Staff). The United Nation’s drawing of the territory included a new Arab state encompassing Gaza, Jaffa, and the West Bank, while the Jewish state included the Negev Desert, parts of the northern Galilee, and the coast between Tel Aviv and Haifa (ProCon.org Staff).

The Arab states rejected any partition of Palestine to be given to Jewish leadership, and declared war as soon as the UN announced this plan (ProCon.org Staff). Ongoing, both sides of this conflict have targeted civilians, the sick, and children, and have continued to break truces throughout the years (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). Leaders on both sides who have been brokering peace and were willing to create peace have also been assassinated throughout the years (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). Starting in 1949, the Arab states refused the new Jewish state as a legal entity was both in warfare and in the denial of existence to the point of refusal to use the name Israel, or mark it on a map (ProCon.org Staff). This first war with Israel raged on, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs left as refugees due to the fighting (History.com Staff, 2010). Split into thirds, they fled to the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and other countries like Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria while being promised a swift Arab victory and their ability to return home quickly, causing 700,000 Palestinians to become refugees (ProCon.org Staff). The Arab states immediately called for a boycott when this first war ended with their loss, closing lines of economy via trade bans, including bans on companies doing business with Israel and refusal of any shipping passage through the Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran (ProCon.org Staff). In the 1950’s, Gaza was used as a spot for guerrilla warfare, and Israel did not withdraw from Egyptian territory after the 1956 war until there was a ceasefire and a right of passage through the Gulf of Aqaba (ProCon.org Staff).

After that war, the United Nations Emergency Forces (UNEF) was stationed along the borders of Egypt (now including Gaza) and Israel (ProCon.org Staff).

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was created in 1964, and began training men to conduct regular raids against Israel, creating violent clashes between those crossing from the Syrian and Jordanian borders and the Israeli military forces (ProCon.org Staff). On May 16, 1967, the Egyptian Commander-in-Chief of their armed forces ordered the UNEF to withdraw and Egypt closed the Strait of Tiran to Israeli commerce commencing the War of 1967 (ProCon.org Staff). It was during this war that Israel took control of the Sinai Peninsula,
The golan Heights, and the West Bank, which had been respectively held by Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, all entities that had been involved in that war (ProCon.org Staff). Weapons for the 1973 war were supplied to Syria by Russia, with Egypt also involved in fighting at Israel's southern border (ProCon.org Staff). At this time, the United Nations passed Resolution 242, used henceforth to justify Israeli borders prior to 1967 as non-defensible (Gold, 2016). The United States worked to negotiate a peace, with concessions from Egypt and Syria, including Syria agreeing to stop allowing Palestinians from continuing to attack Israel at their borders in exchange for diplomatic relations with the US (ProCon.org Staff). The PLO moved their operations then to Lebanon, causing raids and a subsequent invasion of Lebanon by Israel in retaliation for those attacks in 1978 (ProCon.org Staff). The UN then sent troops to the border of those two countries in order to get Israel to agree to a ceasefire and withdrawal from Lebanon, whose government then disavowed connection to the Palestinian attacks at their border (ProCon.org Staff). In 1979, a peace treaty was signed between Egypt and Israel, with the concession of the Sinai Peninsula and new formal borders were drawn, with Gaza and the Jericho Area drawn as Israeli territory, officially becoming part of Israel in the Cairo agreement in 1994 (ProCon.org Staff).

In June of 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon again in order to stop the attacks by the PLO from the Lebanese border, and by May of 1983, a peace agreement between the two countries had been signed with UN forces staying as peacekeepers between their boundaries as part of the concession (ProCon.org Staff). By the late 1980’s, the PLO had begun an Intifada against Israel from within the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, while Jordan officially renounced their claim to the West Bank with an announcement that if the PLO was successful in their efforts against Israel, that they could become their own country (ProCon.org Staff). Hamas was founded soon after the first Intifada began, with a set goal of destroying Israel, and soon after the PLO declared an official Palestinian state after Jordan renounced their claim to the territory (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). Suicide attacks by Hamas begin against Israelis in 1993, and in the same year, Palestinian and Israeli leadership agreed to the Oslo Declaration of Principles, with a revision of the PLO charter which removed references to the destruction of Israel, and Israel withdrew from some areas of the West Bank giving the Palestinian Authority control (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). Jordan withdrew citizenship status from its Palestinian citizens who had Jordanian nationality (potentially because of a failed coup in 1970 by Palestinians against the royal family, resulting in their expulsion from the country), finally signing a peace treaty with Israel in 1994 (Wilcke, 2015).

The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement (Oslo II) was signed in 1995 between the PLO, the Palestinian Authority (PA), and the Israeli government, giving the Palestinians sovereign control of parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (ProCon.org Staff). This agreement was never fully implemented due to terrorist attacks by Israelis and Palestinians against each other throughout the 1990’s, and the Palestine National Council (PNC) rejected the agreement officially in 1998 (ProCon.org Staff). In 2000, Israel officially withdrew from Lebanon and in the same year peace talks failed between Israel and Syria (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). The Second Intifada began in 2000, causing further violence and thousands of deaths of Israelis and Palestinians (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). Palestinian leadership kept a hard line on their ask for Right of Return for refugees from the wars of the creation of Israel, which was rejected by Israel, and has kept peace talks in a state of limbo ever since (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). A call for a new boycott of Israel began by the Arab League after their 2001 summit, and right-wing leaders continued to succeed in elections in Israel (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010).

Suicide bombings continued throughout the 2000’s carried out by both Hamas and Hezbollah further hindering peace talks, Israeli withdrawals, and negotiations (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). In 2002, Israel escalated further military activity towards the Palestinians, beginning the construction of a border wall along the West Bank with reasons given of reducing suicide bombings, but causing further hardships to the Palestinian people (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). Throughout the 2000’s the US and the UN began calls for recognition of a Palestinian State, and Israel stepped up its military force against the people of Gaza as rocket fire on Israeli citizens continued to originate from there, also demolishing Palestinian homes in the West Bank (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). In 2005, leaders from Egypt and Jordan joined with Israeli and Palestinian leaders to announce an end to violence and Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian cities (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). The Israeli withdrawal was not implemented after a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv only weeks later (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). Further peace talks failed, and violence escalated on all sides with Israeli and Palestinian civilians as the main victims (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). Hamas won power in 2006, coinciding with further rockets launched at Israel, with Israel responding with further military action (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). This then created further tension on the Lebanese border between Hezbollah and Israel, with civilians again falling victim (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). Suicide bombings continued throughout the year, with one state or a two state solution, and the status of Jerusalem. The Palestinian people are still technically refugees, and their leaders have continued to call for recognition of their own state with a goal of having that state encompass all of Israel/Palestine. The Israeli government has continued to become more and more right-wing, due to the nature of theocracies coupled with the state of fear the Israeli people have lived in since the country’s birth. As shown in Figure 1, in recent years peace talks have failed, the Israeli government has become increasingly brutal to Palestinian citizens, and the United States has sent and continues to send billions of dollars worth of weaponry and military support.

1) The Modern Day Dilemma for Peace

What this history shows is that colonialism coupled with the Cold War has created the tensions today, and this conflict of Israel/Palestine is now used as yet another proxy war between the United States and Russia. The victims being harmed the most are Israeli and Palestinian citizens. Over the years, the United Nations has changed their tune somewhat on Israel’s right to their current borders, on whether Zionism is racism, and has disavowed the current status of the Palestinian people as a violation of their human rights. There have been questions from world leaders throughout the years on what solution would bring peace, with a one state or a two state solution, and the status of Jerusalem. The Palestinian people are still technically refugees, and their leaders have continued to call for recognition of their own state with a goal of having that state encompass all of Israel/Palestine. The Israeli government has continued to become more and more right-wing, due to the nature of theocracies coupled with the state of fear the Israeli people have lived in since the country’s birth. As shown in Figure 1, in recent years peace talks have failed, the Israeli government has become increasingly brutal to Palestinian citizens, and the United States has sent and continues to send billions of dollars worth of weaponry and military support.
2) Factors that Contributed to Modern Conflict

Today's conflict stems from infighting between Hamas and Fatah in the Palestinian territories, with Hamas pushing for militancy and Fatah pushing for peaceful resolutions. The geographical split between Gaza and the West Bank also contributes to this split within the Palestinian people and their governance. These conflicts are reflected on the Israeli side by right-wing leader and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has spoken openly many times about his wish for the removal of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, that he does not support a two-state solution, and his open support for illegal Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories. Of course, further factors stem from the historical background of colonialism, the formation of Israel/Transjordan, and historical claims to the land prior to World War I.

3) State of Policy

The state of policy today is at a stalemate. In recent years, peace talks have failed on the question of Jerusalem, the Right of Return for Palestinian refugees, and continued blockades and brutality of Israeli military forces against Palestinians. This, coupled with Hamas' refusal to end violent confrontations including launching rockets at Israeli towns, and continued attacks against Israeli's with knife attacks and suicide bombings have allowed right-wing Israeli leaders to keep power and continue this cycle of violence.

III. Alternative Policies

a) Policy Option I – Two State Solution

A two-state solution was part of a peace pact in 2008 under U.S. President George W. Bush, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Omert, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (ProCon.org Staff). This pact was violently rejected by Hamas leadership, leading to an Israeli invasion of Gaza and over 1,300 Palestinian deaths in 2009 (ProCon.org Staff). After this conflict, Benjamin Netanyahu came to power in Israel, beginning the modern era of further illegal settlements in the West Bank and a hardline stance against the Palestinian right of return in any negotiations between a Netanyahu government and the Palestinian leadership (ProCon.org Staff). Leaked Palestinian negotiation documents in 2011 showed a willingness of concessions including giving up rights to some settlement areas in the West Bank and the full right of return of refugees (ProCon.org Staff). Hamas and Fatah signed a reconciliation pact in 2011, which has continued to be precarious ever since (ProCon.org Staff). The idea of a two state solution continues to stall on the question of which country Jerusalem would belong to, or if it should be split in two (similar to how Berlin was after World War II) and has also been used to justify the ongoing conflict of Israelis and Palestinians as a war between two states including over the physical borders between the two.
b) Policy Option II – 1-Country Solution

There are two options under a 1-state solution, one with Israeli control and the other with Palestinian control. In both cases, one side would reject the other, and would lead to further potential conflict within the current political power struggles of both states. The right-wing Israeli position holds that the lands of West Bank and Gaza were won in war therefore the land should be under Israeli control, and is part of the justification for settlements in the West Bank. The right-wing Palestinian position holds that Israel should never have come into existence in the first place, and therefore all the lands should be under sole Palestinian control. In both cases, these positions stand against any citizens of the opposing side from residing on the disputed lands.

c) Policy Option III – 1-Country, 4-State Solution

This option also includes Jerusalem becoming an International City in the same vein as Vatican City. Since a two-state solution has been the continued cause of war and strife and a 1-country solution with full governmental control for only one side is certainly not a peaceful option, this is an alternative. This requires the 1-country portion of the solution to be secular and not a theocracy. The current status of Israeli theocracy has allowed right-wing religious leaders to impose brutal military might on the Palestinian people, has pushed (alongside with Arab states revoking citizenship status of Palestinians) them into refugee status, and has allowed for other right-wing religious problems within the governance of Israel. On the flip side of theocratic governance by Hamas, this has allowed, in a similar vein, right-wing religious leaders imposing violent solutions as the only solution. With both countries currently using a parliamentarian form of government, this style would not have to change. Splitting the full territories currently of Israel, West Bank, and Gaza into 4 states, allowing for local control and governance, alongside a new form of government coupling the benefits of a bicameral legislative body similar to the U.S. with a House and Senate while ensuring equal representation from all 4 states would help make a secular government with Israelis and Palestinians that could lead to all parties living in peace together as one country.

![Figure 2 Visual of a 1-Country, 4-State Solution](image)

The above map is a visual idea of what a 1-Country, 4-State solution could look like, but is not a suggestion of what actual borders should/could be as that warrants further study. Options of what 4 states could look like include being based on population density to ensure equal population sizes between all 4 states, portioning Gaza and West Bank each as individual states and splitting the current country of Israel into northern and southern halves, or other suggestions that could arise after further study. Options for governance of Jerusalem include a locally elected board of Trustees with a strong or a weak Mayor option, including a secondary board made of 3 religious leaders each representing Christianity, Judaism, and Islam appointed or elected, or other options that could arise after further study.

IV. Evaluation Criteria

a) Practical Criteria

I. Political Feasibility
Political feasibility will be determined based on stakeholder support. Stakeholders under consideration are the governmental leaders and citizens of Israel and Palestine.

II. Implementation Feasibility

Implementation feasibility will be determined based on the physical costs of the alternatives, including pushback from stakeholders, the effects of the decision on stakeholders, and the potential for further violence.

b) Evaluative Criteria

I. Efficiency Criteria

The Efficiency criteria will be evaluated on the cost-effectiveness of the alternatives and the costs/benefits of each.

II. Equity Criteria

The Equity criteria will be evaluated on the measure of civil rights of the people of Israel and Palestine.

V. Analysis

1) Two State Solution

a) Political Feasibility

There has been some stakeholder support for a two-state solution, but since this has been proposed violence has only increased and has allowed for a physical barrier to be created between Israel and Palestine. This has led to the Israeli government pushing sanctions on the Palestinian people as a hostile neighbor state, and has led to further violence being promoted and pushed by Hamas. This has also led to a stalemate on the issues of Jerusalem and the right of return of Palestinian refugees. While this solution looks good on paper, it has not been able to go any further.

b) Implementation Feasibility

The physical costs are high. Thousands of Palestinians and hundreds of Israelis have been killed in this conflict. Violence continues to escalate, the Israeli government is violating the human rights of Palestinians, and they are still living as refugees. On both sides right-wing governments have been gaining power, creating a black hole of seemingly never-ending violent conflict.

c) Efficiency Criteria

The cost-benefits are the potential for allowing Palestinians and Israelis each their own state, and control over their own governance. However, this has led to the rise of further right-wing leadership, escalating violence, and a stalemate of peace.

d) Equity Criteria

With the rise of right-wing governance, the Israeli government is imposing brutal military force on what they consider a hostile neighbor government. This has also manifested into the imposition of orthodox rules on secular and Arab Israeli citizens, including questions on the legitimacy of marriages not performed by orthodox rabbis, and other hardline religious laws. On the Palestinian side, this has created conflict in governance between Hamas and Fatah, and continued violent reprisals against Israeli military brutality.
2) 1-Country Solution

a) Political Feasibility

The citizens of Israel and Palestine wish to live in peace, but also wish for equitable representation in government. This solution with either full Israeli or Palestinian control does not give equitable representation in any potential form of government.

b) Implementation Feasibility

This option is the least feasible. There will be pushback from all sides in governmental leaders and citizenry, and the potential for violent confrontation is high.

c) Efficiency Criteria

There are few cost-benefits to the citizenry for the opposing sides in this solution, and the only benefit would be for the right-wing governmental leaders on either side, giving them further power.

d) Equity Criteria

This option disregards and negates the civil rights of the people of Israel or Palestine, and has the highest potential for violent conflict.

3) 1-Country, 4-State Solution

a) Political Feasibility

This solution has never been proposed, and political feasibility is both questionable, but has a high potential as both sides would have to make equal concessions. This would allow for full citizenship rights of Palestinians and secular/Arab Israelis to be free from right-wing religious leadership. This does not necessarily remove right-wing leaders from power, but would bring a secular balance of governance, give more representation to all peoples, and would remove the conflict of Jerusalem from the equation as it would become an International City.

b) Implementation Feasibility

There are numerous questions as to the full feasibility of this option, up to and including what a flag would look like, the name of this new country and four states, and how a merging of the Palestinian and Israeli leadership would happen. As with all potential solutions regarding peace between these two entities, there is a potential for violence, but potentially less as each state would be able to work through regional issues separate from military intervention questions of separate states or a 1-side control option. This would require desegregation of Palestinian and Israeli children in schools, and create the potential for systemic change over the next few decades for a full peaceful resolution.

c) Efficiency Criteria

This solution would have a high initial financial cost in terms of the merging of governments, negotiations over state boundaries/names/flags/etc, and the formation of new governmental bodies including holding elections. The benefits of potential for a long-term peaceful solution are high, including the removal of refugee status of the Palestinian people, and the potential to remove right-wing religious governmental control on both sides.

d) Equity Criteria
Residents in the West Bank and Gaza have been suffering as refugees and have had their human rights violated by the Israeli military for decades. Giving full citizenship status and representative government will help restore their civil rights. On the Israeli side, creating a true secular state will remove the right-wing religious theocratic government, creating a potential for lasting peace with their Palestinian neighbors who will now be their equals as citizens of the same country, and will create the potential of lasting peace as Israeli and Palestinian children grow up together as equals in the same country.

VI. Recommendation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria Alternatives Matrix</th>
<th>Political Feasibility</th>
<th>Physical Costs</th>
<th>Civil Rights of Citizens</th>
<th>Health &amp; Well-Being of Citizens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two-State Solution (current)</td>
<td>Increased violence</td>
<td>Thousands of Palestinian deaths</td>
<td>Human rights violations against Palestinians</td>
<td>Israeli human rights violations against Palestinians including children and Palestinian terror/rocket attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hostile neighbor states</td>
<td>Hundreds of Israeli deaths</td>
<td>Civil rights violations by right-wing governance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peace stalemate</td>
<td>Right-wing governmental control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Country Solution</td>
<td>Increased violence</td>
<td>High potential for further violence, deaths, and war</td>
<td>High potential for further human rights violations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removal of citizenship on either side</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Country 4-State Solution</td>
<td>Requires compromises from both sides</td>
<td>Creates questions of drawing state boundaries</td>
<td>Creates full citizenship rights for all</td>
<td>Potential for long-term peaceful solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removes Jerusalem conflict</td>
<td>Flags/names/new elections cost money and negotiations</td>
<td>Would remove refugee status</td>
<td>Current conflict would stop as warring states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right of Return would be for all or for none</td>
<td></td>
<td>Creates a desegregated solution</td>
<td>Full equality could succeed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conflict in the Middle East between the Israelis and Palestinians is both ancient and modern, and the escalating human rights issues are dire. This paper is an introduction to a possible new solution towards long-term peace and many ideas introduced here need further study and fleshing out before being considered as a full policy solution. There are many Israeli and Palestinian citizens who are pushing for a peaceful solution to this conflict, and organizations are currently on the ground working to bring both sides together in non-violent manners. The movement of Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) is a non-violent response, but is not a policy solution. An economic boycott of Israel was imposed in the 1950’s, which led to the second Arab-Israeli war of 1956 (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). Furthermore, in 2001 when a second call for a boycott was declared, Israeli forces reacted with further violence on the ship Santorini, suicide bombings escalated, and even a 1-week call for peace was unable to be implemented (MidEastWeb for Coexistence R.A., 2010). Based on historical contexts and the new policy solution proposed in this paper, a further recommendation of support to any and all organizations that are working to bring Israelis and Palestinians together in non-violent coalitions is what has the best potential to bring about long-term lasting peace.

The most ethically responsible action, and the one that takes into account civil and human rights, non-violence, and compromise is a 1-Country, 4-State Solution. While this option is new, potentially controversial, and would require further discussion, study, and further fleshed out implementation steps, it takes into account civil and human rights of all citizens in Israel and Palestine including historical issues, acknowledgement of the damage of colonialism, and acknowledgement of the danger of theocracy and right-wing governance. After decades of war and escalating conflict, a review of a new non-violent solution is certainly warranted.

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COMMENTS