

2600-word version

The Only Remaining Possible Solution to the Palestine Problem

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About 2600 words, necessary so that anyone, even with very little prior knowledge, can follow the argument. Deliberately written in non-academic, occasionally folksy language so as to address the largest-possible reading audience, and not the diplomats and egghead analysts, who will defend to the death their supposed Middle East expertise, despite the irrefutable fact that in 75 years they have utterly failed to solve or even mitigate the problem.

Part One of Three: The Only Remaining Possible Solution to the Palestine Problem

By J. Manuel González

Given the ongoing turmoil in Palestine, almost all countries on earth now support The *Two-States-Side-by-Side Solution*.

All of them are wrong.

STATESPERSONS advised by EXPERTS started the Palestine Problem 110 years ago. For 75 years *STATESPERSONS and EXPERTS* have tried to solve it, and have failed miserably. Now let an outsider point out the Obvious and Only Remaining Possible Solution.

But first, a little history is needed.

Jewish people inhabited Palestine since before 1200 BCE. ("Palestine" is derived from "Philistines", who were probably Greek, unrelated to the Palestinian Arabs of today.)

Following a failed revolt against the Roman Empire, by around 100 C.E. the Jews almost all abandoned the region but preserved their culture in widely-scattered communities.

Around 1500, Palestine and adjacent regions, now occupied by Arabs, were subjugated by the Ottoman Empire. Then, during the First World War, the British promised the Palestinians independence if they would support the Allies against the Ottomans.

The British never intended to honor this promise. Under the 1922 Palestine Mandate after World War I, they began a long-term project to bring in Jewish immigrants and eventually establish a separate Jewish state in Palestine.

Almost exactly the same time in 1922, the British government was also carving out six Pro-English counties to keep as Northern Ireland, while giving the rest of Ireland independence. Thence the cumbersome official name, "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland". This led to 80 years of guerrilla warfare in Ireland, mass incarcerations and executions, terrorist bombings, and political animosity up to today — thereby proving conclusively that whoever was in charge in Britain around 1922, they and their experts were very, very stupid.

The movement for a Jewish homeland had arisen in the 19th Century and was called Zionism. It drew support for reasons ranging from the sincere "Jews should have a homeland" to the strategic "Give the Arabs something to worry about", to the sneaky "We don't want them either, let's send them somewhere else".

For 30 years after World War I the entire Arab world resisted the Zionist movement. But in 1947, with many countries feeling guilty or sorry about the Jewish Holocaust, Presto! Israel was born, and given roughly half the land area of Palestine.

This was a Huge Injustice to the Palestinians, and (as proven by the past 75 years) a Very Grave Mistake from the viewpoint of world peace.

The Palestinian half of Palestine was casually gerrymandered in unconnected halves and quarters. Today, Palestinians now have just the Gaza Strip (2000 sqk), run by a Palestinian organization (Hamas, an Iran-backed terrorist group not especially popular even among Palestinians), and the unconnected West Bank (5800 sqk), run by Israel. Israel now has 22,000 sqk, plus the West Bank plus about 1000 sqk in the Golan Heights, both seized in the 1967 Six-Day War, and occupied ever since. (30,000 sqk total area for Palestine makes it about the size of Taiwan.) Against international law, Israel has encouraged settlement in both areas.

On October 7, 2023 Hamas conducted a Raid that killed or took hostage almost 1500 innocent Israelis. This was inexcusable. But the original dispossession of the Palestinians in 1947-48 was also inexcusable, as is Israel's punitive war that has already destroyed over half of Gaza and killed over 30,000 people, mostly civilians. EVERYONE is at fault.

Apparently unable to learn from history, most world leaders are seeking a truce based on the so-called Two-State Solution, the creation of an independent Palestinian nation within Palestine.

Translation: Re-divide Palestine AGAIN, by convincing Israel to cede territory it currently controls, for the purpose of creating a hostile sovereign state right beside it.

This is just a repeat of past peace plans, which ask both sides to make major concessions against their self-interest.

It should be obvious to anyone who can read maps or Benjamin Netanyahu's lips that Israel's perceives a need to control all of Palestine, "from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea." Curiously, Palestinians have exactly the same slogan.

Israel might pause to negotiate for hostages or let world opinion cool down, but its long-term goal is crystal-clear, and that goal excludes the Two-State Solution as currently understood by world leaders.

As for the Palestinians, there is no reasonable chunk of Palestine where they can have a self-sustaining economy. Pre-Raid, the Palestine economy consisted largely of importing things with foreign aid, and charging taxes on those imports. Palestine has no mineral resources. There is practically no rainfall in the West Bank, and no way to impound rainfall in Gaza, whose coastal aquifer is badly deteriorated and polluted. That rules out agriculture, so a large part of a supposed sovereign Palestine's population will wind up performing menial jobs for next-door Israel. The state will be "independent" but it will be substantially dependent on continuous foreign aid and an inferior-client relationship with Israel. Sovereignty without self-respect is a sham.

It should also be obvious that with some 30,000 Palestinians killed and some 60,000 more injured or permanently maimed in the Israeli military response since October 7, a larger corps of Israel-haters is inevitably arising. Will a sovereign Palestine adjacent to Israel be allowed to arm itself? Whether Yes or No, that's the wrong answer.

Under the current paradigms, there is no Long-Term Peace possible. There may be temporary or even lengthy cease-fires, but the War will continue indefinitely, until one side is simply *eliminated*.

[Parts Two and Three follow]

Part Two of Three: The Only Remaining Possible Solution to the Palestine Problem

By J. Manuel González

STATESPERSONS advised by EXPERTS started the Palestine Problem 110 years ago, and for 75 years *STATESPERSONS and EXPERTS* have tried to solve it, but have failed miserably. Now let an outsider point out the Obvious and Only Remaining Possible Solution.

Any Two-States Side-by-Side Solution is a Non-Starter for more tangible reasons than mutual hatred and Jewish strategic preferences. Palestine is topographically an unpromising candidate for political subdivision. Though it slopes down toward the Dead Sea, the region consists of mostly flattish desert with no forest cover, and has no internal natural boundaries or military choke-points that could justify or define a secure, defensible territory carved out from within it. (Unlike, say, the mountains that permitted Switzerland to be carved out of the middle of Europe, and which are also the reason Austria — “the Eastern (Oster) Reich” — isn’t part of Bavaria.)

75 years have proven conclusively the foolishness of hoping that Palestinians and Israelis could happily share adjacent territory, once the Very Grave Mistake of dispossessing the Palestinians in 1947-48 was committed. Yet this is the “Solution” being flogged by countries such as the US, Russia, the UK, France, Canada, Germany, China, Singapore, Argentina, Nigeria, Indonesia, Australia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Mexico, most of the Arab countries — in fact almost every country on earth of whatever ideology or political persuasion.

EVERYONE refuses to see the obvious.

The Obvious and indeed Only Remaining Possible Solution is not *TWO-STATES-SIDE-BY-SIDE*, but *TWO-STATES-FAR-APART*.

One side must move. This is not an ideal solution morally, but it is the only solution now available.

The Palestinians inhabited Palestine for 2000 years and if anything have better claim than the Jews, who only provably inhabited Palestine for about 1300+ years, and whose claim was 2000 years stale-dated by 1947-48. However, the fact is that the Israelis won't leave, and the world can't make them.

Therefore, however unfair or unjust, it will have to be the Palestinians who move, who behave as the adults in the room. This is not a proposal for a forced ethnic relocation (as the US did with many Native Americans in the 19th Century, and as Canada did — for all its holier-than-thou posturing — with *its* indigenous citizens, as recently as 1967 (!)). (See https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/healing_historical_trauma/documents/relocation_of_aboriginal_communities.pdf.) Rather, it is a chance, for those who want it, to build a new life in peace somewhere else. If offered good-enough inducements, enough Palestinians might conclude that in their own self-interest they should move.

A sovereign New Palestine can be established, just not in the old Palestine.

Obviously there are enormous financial, logistical, and emotional hurdles in moving large numbers of people and building a New Palestine somewhere else. But this would still be

more feasible than building a new Palestinian state amidst the rubble (— who would provide funds for that proposition?), while 2 million Palestinians live in tent cities in Gaza for decades into the foreseeable future (if they are lucky), and 3 million other Palestinians live in the increasingly-contentious West Bank, constantly harassed by Jewish settlers. All would remain under constant threat from not just Israel but also Iran-funded Hamas, whose aim is not to serve the Palestinian people, but to keep making trouble.

Here are the relevant considerations for a *Two-States-Far-Apart Solution*.

1. Whatever practical problems are foreseen with a New Palestine Somewhere Else, the same or worse problems apply to a Palestine Rebuilt Amidst the Rubble.
2. Many Palestinians will resist moving, just as most people initially resist moving out of a hurricane's path.
3. Fortunately, majority Palestinian agreement isn't required, any more than it was necessary that a majority of the world's Jews move to Israel in 1948, or that they even be consulted. Israel was a case of "if we build it, they will come", and so is New Palestine. A few hundreds of thousands are enough for an economically and politically viable state. Iceland has a reasonably self-sustaining economy with 350,000 people. Israel declared independence in 1948 with 850,000 Jewish inhabitants. Today, there may be enough Palestinians tired of war and willing to try something else. Others will follow eventually.
4. No Peace Plan can come from or hinge on the US or anyone else in the West. Arab pride won't allow it.

5. Therefore, the initiative and the wherewithal for a *Two-States-But-Far-Apart Solution* must come from the Arab world.
6. Luckily, the oil-wealthy Arab states collectively have US\$ 4 Trillion in sovereign wealth funds, and a proven willingness to spend some of that wealth to enhance their prestige and influence.
7. Various Arab-ethnic countries have land they don't use or at any rate could easily spare.
8. In varying degrees, those countries could use some money.

As I learned as a banker peddling custom-made derivatives, there's nothing like a little healthy competition and Fear of Missing Out to arouse the deal-making urges of the most recalcitrant seller.

Let's make a deal.

Let's make a deal that's based not just on political wishful thinking, but on human nature, financial realities, self-interest, development economics, and the various arts of bargaining and persuasion.

More specifically, let's have a kind of auction.

[Part Three follows]

Part Three of Three: The Only Remaining Possible Solution to the Palestine Problem

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Unlike previous Peace Plans from Kissinger to Kushner, my *Two-States-But-Far-Apart* Plan does not ask both sides to make major concessions against their self-interest, but instead maximizes everyone's benefit, while limiting each party's perceived costs and concessions.

Plan A. Saudi Arabia allocates 10,000 sqk, 0.5% of its 2,150,000 sqk, plus US\$100 Billion, to establish a sovereign New Palestine. 5 million Palestinians into 10,000 sqk gives 500/sqk population density, similar to Israel's, ten times better than Gaza's 5500/sqk.

US\$100 Billion is arbitrary; perhaps US\$20 Billion will do. With sovereign New Palestine established, others will rush to fund further development — Brunei, Japan, China, Singapore, the EU.

Plan A would earn Saudi Arabia more world prestige and influence than all its sports-related schemes and Cities of Tomorrow in the sand. The Palestine Problem would be solved cheaply, easily.

But suppose the Saudis simply won't yield territory?

Plan B is Egypt, more expensive than Plan A, but still easily affordable: Oil-wealthy Arab states *buy* 10,000 sqk (1% of Egypt's area), then provide funds for infrastructure, etc. Egypt

has US\$165 Billion of foreign debt and a moribund economy. It might be tempted by a deal which pays off a chunk of debt while also reviving tourism and Suez Canal income.

For the oil-rich Arab states it's an investment for their ethno-cultural legitimacy — particularly vis-a-vis non-Arab Iran, which funded much of the trouble. Would they part with 5% of their accumulated wealth (one or two years' worth of hedge-fund management fees) to establish peace, reduce uncertainty and risk, and quash Iranian ambitions too? Sure they would. If they didn't, it would cost them more in the long run. Once any of Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE, or Saudi Arabia plunked down serious money, the others would join in solidarity.

Addressing internal dissenters, they could also recall that they owe their sovereignty and their oilfields to serendipitous decisions by the same countries that spawned the Palestine Problem. Had it not been for the British, Kuwait would have remained a minor Iraqi tribe. And had it not been for the Americans, Saddam Hussein would have made it a minor tribe again, then swallowed the emirates and the Saudi oilfields on the Arabian Gulf (i.e., all of them). Repaying 5% of Divine Providence would not be unjustifiable.

Previous overtures asked Egypt to swallow yet more immigrants. It won't, so the time has come to talk not refugee tent camps but sovereign land. Not vague promises from the US and Kushner (who being Jewish was the wrong person to tell Muslims what to do — didn't anyone in Washington understand that?), but real money from brother Arabs, cash on the barrel.

Egypt's northern Sinai cannot be the site for New Palestine. It adjoins Israel. No one seems to have understood this, either. A more plausible location would be *southern* Sinai,

separated from both Israel *and* Egypt by empty desert plus mountains, and little use to Egypt as a country. How about a mixed flatland-and-mountain parcel around coastal El-Tor, population 30,000?

If Egypt balks, Plan C will cost less than B: Jordan (89,000 sqk, only US\$ 40 Billion of debt, same GDP/capita as Egypt, a respected UK-educated monarch in charge). Jordan's northeastern protrusion is essentially unoccupied. The entire protrusion was allocated to then Transjordan in 1921-22 solely so an Iraqi-oil pipeline could run to Palestine over British-controlled territory. This pipeline was closed in 1948, so the protrusion's rationale has long been moot, and Jordan has done absolutely nothing with it so far. Zip.

The biggest town, Ruwaished, has 15,000 people. The area has sparse rainfall (150 mm annually, but the terrain can be dammed *à la* Petra, better than the West Bank's 0 or Gaza's uncollectable 300 mm). It has pleasant sub-tropical temperatures (like Darjeeling, but arid), and better protection from sea-level rise (600+ meters elevation v. Gaza's 14). With intelligent development, an idyllic 10,000 sqk New Palestine could be situated in a corner of Jordan's protrusion.

Plan D is North Africa, somewhat further out but seven more countries where a New Palestine could conceivably be located, given the right custom-tailored inducements.

There are undoubtedly problems with each of these alternatives, but chances are that a practical deal can be found somewhere in this long lineup of possible New Palestines.

When it was the lone belle at the ball being badgered by Jared Kushner, Egypt resisted. With Plans B, C, and D, there would be eight belles (Egypt, Jordan, Western Sahara, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Sudan) and only one dance ticket to be punched. The chances are good that one of these countries will deal.

In a *Two-States-But-Far-Apart Solution*, Israel would have a 90% win, its sole concession being world sympathy. The Palestinians would also have a 90% win — living space, new infrastructure and buildings, and a sovereign New Palestine, just not inside the original Palestine. Unlike the every-man-for-himself philosophy of certain narcissistic breast-beaters, *that's* the real "art of the deal", and a genuine Win-Win-Win for Palestine, Israel, and the Arab World.

The *Two-States-Side-by-Side Solution* is supported by almost all the countries on earth. All of them are wrong.

For 75 years Palestine peace plans have been concocted by statespersons who can't see the obvious and who ask both sides for major compromises against self-interest. Many of them will object to my *Two-States-But-Far-Apart Solution* with all the specious logic and distorted facts at their command.

But the fact that they cannot distort is that all *their past solutions* have been unmitigated, unadulterated long-term failures. Meanwhile, *their present solution* ("Forgive, forget, just play nice from now on") is simply naive, not to say very, very stupid.

Time to end the Palestine Problem — *The Two-States-But-Far-Apart Solution*.