

Envisioning Israeli Sovereignty Over Judea and Samaria

The Alternative to the Risks of Two States

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Samuel H. Solomon
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Breaking the Circular Reasoning Trap

It is a recurring point of conversation with well-intentioned and even well-informed supporters of Israel that they express their difficulty in “envisioning” an alternative to the Two State “Solution”. They are challenged to envision a reality where Israeli Sovereignty exists in Judea and Samaria. Their greatest difficulty seems to rest in the practical application of such an alternative: in particular, answering the simple question “what will you do with the Arabs living there?”¹

This lack of “envisioning” is completely understandable in spite of Israel’s historic, legal and security rights to Judea and Samaria as the heartland of the state of the Jewish people since it does not eliminate fears of elected officials of an impending demographic onslaught coupled with international judgement and overall Western discomfort with the notion of supporting a reality which includes the legally inappropriate designation of “occupation”. This creates heightened concern for any movement towards Israeli Sovereignty, including areas of current Israeli settlement where few Arabs are present today². It should be noted, that this state of discomfort is often the net result of turning a blind eye -- or even denial -- of the reality of Middle Eastern culture, corruption and violence that are exactly the rationale for the Sovereignty movement to protect Israeli and American interests in the first place³.

To begin with, the lack of Sovereignty generates numerous debilitating consequences for Israeli citizens living in Judea and Samaria and fosters an absurd condition where the Israeli government is not equally supportive of all citizens of the State regardless of where they live⁴. Case in point, Israeli citizens living in towns and villages built by successive Israeli governments are viewed, in many respects, as legal second-class citizens as compared to their compatriots

¹ Lindsey Graham

<https://www.axios.com/lindsey-graham-trump-white-house-peace-plan-9c5e69b1-a94f-48c8-b3b9-9d3373823896.html>

² There are less than 100k Arabs in all of area C (The number is probably less but no one knows for sure. There were less than 30k just a few years ago, however, anti-Israel NGOs, with support of the EU, have been illegally moving Arabs into area C to change the facts on the ground) compared to over 500K Israelis and counting (not including Jerusalem).

<https://www.jewishpress.com/news/analysis-so-how-many-arabs-live-in-area-c/2016/01/10/>

³ Yoram Ettinger

<https://www.israelhayom.com/opinions/golan-heights-in-israeli-hands-further-us-interests-to-o/>

⁴ Caroline Glick

<https://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/Caroline-Glick-Its-time-to-apply-Israeli-law-to-Area-C-of-the-West-Bank-584466>

“inside the green line”. This structure is clearly unsustainable and yet is a net result of official government policy in Judea and Samaria to this day ⁵.

In this short overview, we articulate how Sovereignty is not only a viable alternative to the two-state solution, but in fact -- regardless of international preference and pressure on Israel to abide by a two-state “solution” – is a superior framework for the region.

Why Consider an Alternative

To envision a different future, one must first assess the risks and returns for each approach and understand them in the broader context of the Middle East society, culture and values.

When one approaches the Israeli Palestinian conflict in the present era, the appropriate approach should utilize, as a foundation, the facts on the ground as opposed to a “belief”, as it is usually articulated, in the two-state solution. The correct course of action cannot be based on some form of reliance on failed theories, talking points and banalities ⁶, rather a solution must be evaluated through a “risk-adjusted” perspective in order to compare Sovereignty versus any road map for a two-state framework, as this decision will have severe strategic consequences if it fails. As in any accepted scientific study, evaluating risks of each approach must be done through a clearheaded recognition of its inherent downsides and not just how wonderful everything will be if we just “believe”.

With that said, it is clear that the international community consensus on these issues are indeed a factor in the formulation process but should not be a determining factor to this strategic debate as the “status quo” and various approaches have failed in the past and have no track record thereby prompting a desire for reevaluation ⁷. The “international community” is, in fact, influenced by factors that do not even come close to considering Israel’s best interests despite their protests to the contrary ⁸. Two simple examples should suffice – and there are many. They are the recent series of votes by the “international community” at UNESCO to rewrite World and Jewish history and the obsession of the U.N. Human Rights Counsel on Israel

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/plan-to-apply-israeli-law-in-west-bank-equal-rights-or-creeping-annexation/>

⁶ Jared Kushner

<https://www.jta.org/quick-reads/two-state-solution-has-failed-jared-kushner-says>

⁷ Much akin to the Trump Administrations approach to this matter see Abramson and Balabon for more

<https://www.dailywire.com/news/39819/abramson-and-ballabon-realist-plan-arabisraeli-bruce-abramson>

⁸

<https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Top-EU-foreign-policy-nominee-has-record-of-slamming-Israel-praising-Iran-594633>

by some of the most oppressive human rights violators in the world. International consensus needs to be taken with a grain of salt and is just one factor and clearly not the most important one. Moreover, since Israel's continued security is paramount in this risk analysis, its security concerns should be at the top of the agenda, specifically for United States interests in the region⁹. Lastly, everything that happens in other parts of the Middle East such as Syria, Libya and Lebanon reaffirm that the Palestinian issue has never been the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict, nor the crown-jewel of Arab policy makers, nor the core of Middle East turbulence¹⁰.

At the heart of this matter is assessing risks of both approaches and it is here that the rubber meets the road. As a policy director in the Sovereignty movement succinctly put it: there are risks to a two-state plan and there are risks to Sovereignty plan, however, if the state of affairs takes a downturn, the risks of Israeli Sovereignty are more manageable. This simply stems from the fact that any potential downsides to Sovereignty offer an exit strategy in clear opposition to the two-state approach which essentially has no real "recovery plan" short of invasion and war.

Case in point, Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005¹¹ clearly demonstrates to this day the inherent risks of any attempt to transfer land to the Palestinian Authority. Within two years from the disengagement, Gaza became a Hamas-based pseudo terror state which has wrecked death and destruction to Israeli border communities and Palestinians within Gaza as well. With no recovery plan other than to invade Gaza the present status quo remains an ongoing crisis from one ceasefire to the next¹². Additionally, even without an active invasion, Israel has since been under constant international pressure to avoid any form of conflict, hence, placing Israel in an unsolvable dilemma¹³; the mere thought of such an outcome for Judea and Samaria is chilling as the risk would be orders of magnitude greater in complexity and risks. Only a masochist would attempt the same approach twice and expect a different result.

Evaluating the Risks

The analysis presented here is just a summary and touches a few key points in order to spark an honest discussion as to envisioning a Sovereignty strategy. Behind this analysis there is much

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<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/friends-with-benefits-why-the-u.s.-israeli-alliance-is-good-for-america>

¹⁰ Jason Greenblatt

<https://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Greenblatt-Israeli-Palestinian-conflict-is-not-the-core-regional-problem-566414>

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_disengagement_from_Gaza

¹²

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/05/world/middleeast/gaza-rockets-israel-palestinians.html>

¹³

<https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/russian/en/audiotrack/international-pressure-israel-over-gaza-shootings-increasing>

detail and proof and I invite the reader to reach out to the author of this paper in order to offer additional background information ¹⁴.

If we adopt a risk balancing approach, which ‘solution’ is less risky to Israel? Without going into each factor of our comparative risk analysis, let’s just illustrate three.

- **The Two State Roadmap:** The first is simple: in a 2-state approach – whether it is a full state or a state minus certain features such as control of the Jordan Valley, air space and the communications spectrum, Israel will be prevented from interfering in the internal security affairs of this rump state and subject to constant pressure by the international community to avoid intervention. This has been conclusively demonstrated in numerous situations around the world as well as Gaza. Such a reality begs the basic question, why would Israel not be vilified on a regular basis? It should be noted that the chorus of politically motivated military and security experts supporting separation and a two-state approach have no answer to this fundamental problem.
- **Sovereignty:** The risk-balancing perspective offers a credible alternative or solution that is usually dismissed by the international, namely, Jewish Sovereignty over Judea and Samaria annexing the territory to be part of the state of Israel. *Only in such a reality Israel only has the appropriate tools to deal with Terrorism and address its future security* ¹⁵. Keep in mind that in the event of a two-state solution, Terrorism would be conducted from the high ground overlooking 70% of Israel’s population and all Israeli major infrastructure and transportation systems. Moreover, extending this perspective more broadly to US national security interests, Israel on the mountain ridges of Judea & Samaria extends the strategic hand of the US, sparing Washington the need to deploy additional military divisions and aircraft carriers to the Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and the Middle East at-large, which would cost the US taxpayer \$15BN-\$20BN annually. This will enhance the survivability of the shaky, pro-US Hashemite regime, and therefore the survivability of the highly vulnerable pro-US regimes in the Arabian Peninsula (hence their unprecedented cooperation with Israel), while an Israeli withdrawal from Judea & Samaria would doom these regimes, add much fuel to the highly unstable, violent Middle East. It would also be undermining vital US interests and according Iran, Russia and China a huge bonanza. In other words, *Israel on the mountain ridges of Judea & Samaria is a geo-strategic lucrative asset for the US, while Israel off the mountain ridges of Judea & Samaria would become a costly and risky liability* ¹⁶.
- **Engaging the Clans:** A third factor of this risk-balancing approach is the engagement of the local Arab family clans otherwise known as Hamulot. These groups dominate all social and political activities in the Arab Middle East and not just Israel. Presently and

¹⁴ Sam Solomon at sam@arizal.biz

¹⁵ http://jcpa.org/defensible_borders_to_ensure_israels_future/

¹⁶ For more information see here https://ips-dc.org/why_the_us_supports_israel/

historically, these clans are connected by blood and typically dominate a town or distinct area. As a rule, they deeply resent the oppressive and non-democratic Palestinian Authority and prefer Israel Sovereignty over a corrupt PA. Hamulot leaders represent as much as 70% or more of the Arab population and their honor was impugned and their leaders deeply shamed by Israel's decision to empower "outsider Arabs" who were invited back from Tunis exile resulting in the Hamulot's degraded status under the Oslo accords. Their natural alignment with Israel Sovereignty places this risk assessment in favor of Israel¹⁷.

With just assessing these three critical risk factors it is clear that pursuing a two state solution for the region would not only put Israel security at risk but truly harm American interests in the region as well.

¹⁷ See more here <http://www.palestinianemirates.com/>

Envisioning a Different Future

With the reengaging of local Hamulot, Israel can in fact create a joint vision with their Arab partners on how to build the economy and support the local populations of both peoples. We contend that the Hamulot are the real “address” for any integration with the Arabs living in the area and this process has already begun in earnest between Israeli and Hamulot leaders in Judea and Samaria who meet regularly and are further encouraged by the Trump administration¹⁸. It goes without saying that the single biggest obstructionist in this process of ground-up coexistence is the Palestinian Authority¹⁹. They actively threaten, harass and arrest anyone who attempts coexistence or collaboration with Israel. Case in point, the recent arrest of Palestinian businessman who attended the Bahrain conference²⁰. In contrast, the Hamulot leaders understand the difference between Civil and National Rights and will be amenable to Israel Sovereignty and autonomous rights for their communities, like residency status now in place for Jerusalem Arabs, with a long-term highly vetted and controlled path to citizenship as the best pathway to mutual co-existence and understanding²¹.

Examining Two-Staters Concerns

It becomes clear that a paradigm shift is possible when the appropriate factors are presented in a risk-adjusted model. The Sovereignty alternative to the two-state solution does elicit some concerns from two-staters that we should not ignore:

1. **The local population will resist Sovereignty** - We believe resistance will come from a small group within the PA who have a personal stake in the continued shake-down of Western democracies. This is less of a problem than withdrawing and the substantial risk of a Terror sponsoring state on the high-ground overlooking Israel – we are highly skeptical that any other scenario is possible given the 70 years of delegitimization and incitement against Israel by all PA institutions. We also see the Hamulot as a critical path to acceptance of Israel Sovereignty.

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<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/miriamberger/ashraf-jabari-palestine-profile-kushner-peace-conference>

¹⁹

<https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/.premium-joint-gaza-west-bank-conference-amps-criticism-of-abbas-and-hamas-1.7451598>

²⁰

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/29/world/middleeast/palestinian-authority-arrest-bahrain.html>

²¹ Frankly, it is foreign interference by groups such as the EU who clearly do not understand what is really happening socially on the ground and instead are just fixated on forcing the Arabs to agitate for National Rights – all in support of a corrupt and ineffectual PA.

2. **Israel will be an international pariah** - This has been repeatedly demonstrated as false – countries ultimately operate out of self-interest as demonstrated by the growing support and engagement with Israel by our traditional partners as well as Sunni countries where we have shared strategic concerns within the Middle East. This interaction is both overt and covert.
3. **The Demographics** - The persistent myth of the demographic timebomb between Jews and Arabs in Israel has been a talking point of two-staters from the beginning²². This myth is based upon intentionally misleading and politically charged demographic data produced by the PA where not a single audited and monitored census has occurred in years and current data is based upon a clearly biased and politically motivated PA Census Bureau. Israel disbanded its Census of Judea and Samaria years ago and relies upon this politically driven PA census. We saw a similar scenario recently played out in Lebanon where the population supported by UNWRA was discovered, in reality, to be less than 175k “refugees” instead of the “official” tally of over 450k.²³ The second part of this false narrative is negated by the fact that Israeli Jews now have the highest fertility rate in the developed world and have overtaken the Arab fertility rates in Israel, Judea and Samaria. This has been extensively studied by Amb. Yoram Ettinger and his detailed and credible analysis is easily accessible on-line²⁴.
4. **What about Gaza** - Divided by culture, family ties and religion, Gaza is a separate world from Judea and Samaria where the Arabs living in these two regions abhor each other²⁵. Combining them into one State is absurd as anyone who speaks to Arabs in Judea and Samaria will inform you. When one considers the economic ties between Israel and the Arabs in Judea and Samaria, Sovereignty is their most desirable path for their freedom and economic security. With the support of the international community and clan leaders, Israel can provide economic incentives to encourage financial prosperity coupled with incentivized emigration frameworks for those who wish to do so²⁶. Certainly, those who do not want to participate or feel that violence is the only path forward, we will insist that they not remain. With the understanding that this process will take patience, as part of any deal with surrounding Sunni states, they will be required to take a certain number of Arabs from Judea and Samaria, or alternatively, for Arabs who do not prefer Israeli residency status, a certain number of citizenships from these Sunni countries will be available resulting in local Arabs becoming foreign

²² In many cases due to faulty information provided the Israeli statistics bureau

<http://jcpa.org/article/no-arab-demographic-time-bomb/>

²³

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/palestinians-lebanon-less-half-previous-estimate-census-shows>

²⁴ See link in footnote 22

²⁵ Mordechai Kedar <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/21801>

²⁶ Martin Sherman <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/20585>

nationals living with permanent residency permits in Israel. It is necessary to embed this demand in any bilateral negotiations. As it is both reasonable and necessary.

5. **What About the PA** - We must be honest about the PA and its reputation for being moderate party in the broader Palestinian-Israeli saga. It is remarkable how many friends of Israel consider the PA in such a way and the fact that the Trump administration still has a “warm view” of Palestinian authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas is puzzling²⁷. Clearly such sentiment is based upon wishful thinking and an attempt to compare the PA to Hamas and Hezbollah when the difference is just one of means and not ends. The PA’s history of incitement, its condemnation of any form of normalization with Israel and its policies supporting violence, such as their pay-to-slay for convicted or killed Terrorists, all demonstrate the true nature of PA’s ideology and intent. Even within the more secular PA elements, Israel is not just at war with Arab Nationalism but also Islamism. This is both a nationalistic and religious conflict even though this has not been well understood in the West where a conflict of this complexity is very unusual²⁸.

In Conclusion

The combination of cooperation with Hamulot, municipal autonomy for Arab areas, a highly vetted and controlled path to citizenship and economic prosperity makes the alternative to a two-state solution, quite viable and fair. From a security perspective, Sovereignty is the only approach that mitigates the very serious downside risk of another failed Arab state engaged in Terror on Israel’s boarder (as if Syria, Lebanon and Gaza were not enough) without the legal recourse of recapturing those territories in the future once more. From a US security perspective, Israel on the mountain ridges of Judea & Samaria is a geo-strategic lucrative asset for the US while Israel off the mountain ridges of Judea & Samaria would become a costly and risky liability for the US. Moreover, such a framework confronts the common charge that Israel will become -- with Sovereignty -- an “apartheid state” as being totally sophistic and not comporting to the realities on the ground. In fact, such a reality would in fact resolve the serious issue of two different sets of laws for different Israeli citizens while, once and for all, dealing with the PA’s culture of conflict, incitement and corruption, while constantly engaging in “anti-normalization” to the detriment of their compatriots.

²⁷ Jared Kushner

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/07/kushner-trump-fond-palestinian-president-mahmud-abbas-190703154225268.html>

²⁸

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/fikraforum/view/religion-and-the-israel-palestinian-conflict-cause-consequence-and-cure>

I invite you to consider this risk-adjusted approach envisioning Sovereignty and to reach out if you want additional background and evidence to the position we are presenting.

Sam Solomon is an independent strategy analyst on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Sovereignty approach to risk mitigation in the Middle East. Former Founder and CEO of a Litigation Strategy firm in the U.S., Sam is active in pro-Israel organizations and is the Chairman of the Israel Sovereignty Movement as a project of Women in Green.