

**Opinion**

# Israel Is Fast Becoming a Rogue State. And Trump Is Complicit in That Downfall

America has always acted as a brake on the Israeli right wing's more destructive moves to sabotage peace. Trump has ended that

Stephen Robert Feb 22, 2018 1:11 PM

Many, including myself, fight ferociously for a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. We give of our voices, time, money and risk our standing in our communities.

Now, however, Israel's extreme right-wing government and the cynically political calculations of the current American administration have driven a stake through our goal of a sustainable future for both Israelis and Palestinians.

What has been lost? Israel will be neither a democratic nor Jewish state. It will eventually have an Arab majority, ruled by a Jewish minority. The Arab population will not have equal rights, opportunity or a sovereign government by the consent of the governed.

Israel will be undisputedly an apartheid state, a rogue state in the eyes of much of the world. Like Iraq under Saddam Hussein, Syria under both Assads and South Africa before Nelson Mandela, a very large or majority societal group will be deprived of its rights.

A 50 year occupation is already eroding democracy within Israel itself. Reuven Rivlin, Israel's President, recently [warned](#) that "statesmanship has disappeared" and that Israel was witnessing a "counterrevolution" in political leaders were interfering in the legal system. President Rivlin continued that those in power are working to "delegitimize the gatekeepers of Israel's democracy," no doubt referring the right's continuous attacks on the Supreme Court and Israel's justice system.

Israeli NGOs funded by foreign entities are being harassed. Support for annexation is rising. Former Shin Bet chief Yuval Diskin [recently wrote](#): "We



have good reason to be terrified by the ethical and moral rot that leads us damaging the separation of powers in the country and trying to infiltrate the process by which our elected officials are investigated."

Israel and the United States are operating in perfect synchrony.

[Donald Trump](#) declares Jerusalem the capital of Israel, taking it off the negotiating table. Netanyahu pre-emptively declared that the Holy Sites will be [forever be under Israeli control](#), enraging many Muslims and Christians (while stating on the record: "Fifty years ago, we didn't occupy, we liberated.") His patron in Washington [threatens to cut off aid](#) to Palestine if they continue to shun now-hopeless negotiations.

U.S. President Donald Trump shakes hands with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, May 23, 2017 Sebastian Scheiner (AP)

What changed? Israel has been moving to the right, propelled by the huge block of pro-settler votes, and the failure of the left to produce an effective leader. Their protests to the contrary, this extreme right-wing government has never supported a Palestinian state.

Until now, however, the United States has acted as a brake on the right wing's more destructive moves to sabotage peace, under a litany of Democratic and Republican presidents.

But Trump pampers his powerful constituency among our country's 40 million Evangelical Christians. Tortuously [complex Biblical interpretations](#) cause many Evangelicals to believe Israel must control all the land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River before the second Messiah can arrive. Some interpretations suggest the Jews would then be eliminated, but that isn't causing Netanyahu to lose sleep.

Moreover, the Republicans receive enormous contributions from the conservative sector of American Jewry. One such donor, casino magnate [Sheldon Adelson](#), declared years ago that not only are Palestinians a

made-up nation existing solely to attempt to destroy Israel, but that Israel need not be a democracy: "So Israel won't be a democratic state, so what?"

"Realpolitik" has caused Trump to abandon the historic American role as an evenhanded mediator for peace.

What could happen next? Predicting anything in the Middle East is precarious.

The United States will likely introduce a peace plan giving Israel most of Area C, sixty percent of the West Bank, reducing Palestine to about 9% of the land available prior to the United Nations partition in 1947. Israeli settlements will proliferate. The so called Palestinian state will consist of a few noncontiguous parcels. The Israeli military will retain its presence. The Palestinian capital will not be East Jerusalem. Access for Palestinians to the Holy Sites will be as severely restricted as they are now.

A Palestinian girl sits on a couch after Israel troops destroyed a Palestinian structure in the village of Al-Eizariya, in the occupied West Bank, east of Jerusalem. February 20, 2018\ AMMAR AWAD/ REUTERS



The administration likely believes they can force this abysmal deal on the hapless Palestinians whose existence depends on foreign aid. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates and other Sunni Arab States might well endorse this plan.

An alliance with military, nuclear powerhouse Israel

would tip the scales relative to arch enemy, Shiite Iran. For this, some Arab states appear ready to throw Palestine under the bus. Such stress might cause the Palestinian Authority to dissolve itself, throw the keys in Netanyahu's lap, and wish him luck in governing his creation.

All these outcomes portend disaster for both parties. Only a peace approximating the pre-1967 Green Line and Jerusalem the capital of both states is sustainable. There are good reasons various United Nations

resolutions, the Clinton plan, the Quartet plan, the Arab League proposal all endorse such an accord.

Lamentably, Trump and Netanyahu are proceeding with dazzling immoderation. For the moment, those us who long for a democratic, Jewish state, true to the values of our ancient seers, are treated as pariahs.

We should remember, though, that the sober man always looks awkward at a drunken party.

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