



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on September 3, 2018

Abbas Open to Trump Peace Plan Between Israelis and Palestinians

“His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”



This was the Balfour Declaration, issued by the British government in 1917. Over one hundred years later, that Jewish home has been established, but the “rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine” are still in dispute, as is the very existence of the state of Israel, created in 1948.

The declaration of independence by Israel in 1948 led to its immediate attack by many of its Arab neighbors, and since that time there have been “wars and rumors of wars” in the region. Several efforts have been made over the years to mediate a settlement between Israel and its neighbors, and to solve the problems of Palestinian Arabs.

According to a Sunday report by the Israeli organization Peace Now, the United States has presented Mahmoud Abbas (shown), the president of the Palestinian Authority, a peace deal that has been described as “thinking outside the box” — the box being that the only solution to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute is a “two-state solution” — complete with East Jerusalem as the capital city of the Arab state. The “deal” would include a Palestinian Authority with a confederation with Jordan.

The confederation idea is not original with the Trump administration. In 2012, the Palestinian Authority told the *Jerusalem Post* it was studying the idea. The confederation concept would mix sovereign statehood with some aspects of shared governance.

Abbas spoke with U.S. envoys Jared Kushner (President Trump’s son-in-law, who is Jewish), and Jason Greenblatt. Abbas told the *Post* that the envoys “asked me whether I believed in confederation with Jordan. I said, ‘yes,’ [but] I want a triangular confederation with Jordan and Israel.”

While Abbas has indicated his openness to such a bold plan, Jordan quickly rejected the idea. Jumana Ghunaimat, speaking for the Jordanian government, said Sunday that their position on the Palestinian cause remains unchanged, which is based on the two-state solution, using the pre-Six Day War 1967 borders for the new Palestinian state, and making East Jerusalem the capital.

Two members of the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) were present for the meeting — Mossi Raz of the Meretz Party and Ksenia Svetlova of the Zionist Union — but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had no immediate response to the proposal. Abbas said that Netanyahu has refused to even meet with him. “I have a problem [solely] with Netanyahu, but not with the Likud [the political party of Netanyahu].”

Abbas said he supported Israel’s concerns for security and stability, and claimed that a Palestinian state



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would “promote peace in the world.”

Abbas has expressed a variety of views over the years, and in the past, he too has refused to recognize Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state. In fact, the Palestinian National Charter, adopted in the aftermath of the 1967 war, expressly denied the right of Israel to exist, and pledged to continue an “armed struggle” to liberate all of Palestine from Israeli control. According to the charter, “Palestine, with the boundaries it had during the British Mandate, is an indivisible territorial unit.”

But Abbas blames his fellow Arabs for the situation, as well. He has accused them of abandoning the Palestinians after they “forced them to emigrate and to leave their homeland and threw them into prisons similar to the ghettos in which the Jews used to live.”

There is little doubt that most Americans would love to see peace come to the Middle East, with Israel having amiable relations with its Arab neighbors. Many Israelis and Arabs in the region probably want that, as well. However, considering that an Israeli prime minister (Yitzhak Rabin) and an Egyptian president (Anwar Sadat) were assassinated for making peace (in the case of Sadat) or even considering a peaceful solution (in the case of Rabin), it may be very difficult for a political leader in that part of the world to move too quickly in that direction.

To bring these two sides together may be too much, even for the author of *The Art of the Deal*.

Photo of Mahmoud Abbas: United Nations



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