

## Canadian Recognition of Palestine

by David Matas

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Should Canada recognize now Palestine as a state? My answer to that question is no. I have twenty reasons why.

The first set of reason is that the claimed state does not meet the legal criteria for statehood. The 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States<sup>1</sup> sets out four criteria for statehood. They are

- i) a permanent population,
- ii) a defined territory,
- iii) government, and
- iv) a capacity to enter into relations with the other states.

Canada is not a state party to the Convention. Yet, this particular component of the Convention is binding on Canada as customary international law.

What is claimed to be the state of Palestine meets none of these criteria. The population of the claimed state is unclear. Does it exclude or include Palestinians living outside the West Bank and Gaza? Does it exclude or include residents of the West Bank who are nationals of Israel, Jordan or other countries?

The territory of the West Bank is not defined. East Jerusalem is part of Israel, but the Palestinian Authority claims it. Does recognition of Palestine as a state means acceptance of this claim? The territory of the West Bank, according to the Oslo Accords, is divided into three components, one of which is controlled by the Palestinian Authority, one of which is

controlled by Israel and the third of which is jointly controlled. Does the claimed state of Palestine include territory that the Palestinian authority has agreed is to be controlled exclusively by Israel?

The claimed state of Palestine does not have a fully-fledged government. Even if the areas of the West Bank under sole Israeli control by virtue of the Oslo Accords are considered part of the territory of the claimed state of Palestine, the Palestinian Authority does not now govern these areas. Does recognition of Palestine as a state mean rejection of the Oslo peace accords?

Even in the areas the Palestinian Authority does control, it does not control its borders. Recognition of Palestine as a state would not change this fact. Gaza is ruled, functionally, by Hamas and not by Fatah which is the predominant component of the Palestinian Authority. Is the Government of Gaza Hamas or not?

As for the capacity to enter into relations with the other states, the claimed state of Palestine does not have that either. There are a lot of international activities legally in which the claimed state of Palestine can not engage because the entity does not have the requisite degree of control for its engagement to have substantive meaning.

A pre-trial chamber of The International Criminal Court in February of this year ruled that Palestinian Authority, which had signed on to the Court statute in the name of the state of Palestine, had the legal capacity to do so. The Court based that finding not on the Montevideo Convention criteria for statehood, but rather on the vote of the United Nations General Assembly which gave Palestine non-member observer status.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Situation in the state of Palestine Court number ICC-01/18 Pre-Trial Chamber I, 5 February 2021 [https://www.icc-cpi.int/CourtRecords/CR2021\\_01165.PDF](https://www.icc-cpi.int/CourtRecords/CR2021_01165.PDF)

Canada is not bound by a vote of the United Nations General Assembly. The decision whether to recognize Palestine as a state is a sovereign prerogative of Canada, untethered by a UN General Assembly vote.

A fifth reason why Canada should not recognize the State of Palestine is that the Palestinian Authority does not recognize the State of Israel. The Hamas Charter rejects the existence of Israel. It refers to Israel as "the land of the Arab Palestinian people". It vows to continue "resistance" until "liberation" is accomplished. "Resistance" is a euphemism for terrorism. "Liberation" is a euphemism for the destruction of the State of Israel.<sup>3</sup>

The Palestinian National Charter adopted in 1964 and amended in 1968 called for the rejection and destruction of Israel. The Palestinian National Council in 1993 and 1998 issued statements that the provisions of the Charter inconsistent with the existence of Israel are nullified. To date, the Palestinian National Council has not formally adopted an amended Charter which incorporates these commitments. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, stated in September this year that the Palestinian Authority would withdraw their acceptance of Israel in a year if Israel in the interim does not withdraw from the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup>

This very statement highlights the unreality in which the Palestinian Authority operates. Israel withdrew from Lebanon in 2000 and was replaced by Hezbollah, which used its proximity to Israel to engage in terrorist attacks against Israel. Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, with the same result, an onslaught of terrorist attacks from Hamas. When

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/hamas-2017-document-full>

<sup>4</sup> Al Jazeera, "Abbas gives Israel 'one year' to leave Palestinian territory" 25 Sep 2021 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/25/abbas-gives-israel-ultimatum-to-quit-palestinian-territory>

Israel withdrew from Gaza, it felt it necessary to remove all Jewish Israeli residents for their own safety. All businesses these residents had run, which could have been run by the Palestinians who remained, were destroyed by Hamas.

There may have been a strategic justification for these withdrawals, because the Israeli military was safer not having to police these territories. However, it is impossible to justify an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank on that basis.

Hamas, in the name of resistance, began, after the Israeli withdrawal, almost daily rocket, fire balloon and fire kite attacks into Israel, leaving Israeli farms on the other side of the border a burned out mess. These sorts of attacks emanating from the West Bank directed to the Israel international airport or Jerusalem after the withdrawal that the Palestinian Authority requests would be intolerable. A peace agreement could set up preventive practices and systems. Withdrawal without a peace agreement is not a serious option.

A sixth reason why Canada should not recognize the state of Palestine is that it is unhelpful to the aim of realization of peace between Israelis and Palestinians. The Palestinian Authority wants Palestine to be recognized as a state. Peace negotiations which would end in that result incentivize the Palestinians to engage in those negotiations. Recognition of Palestine as a state before a peace process which leads to that result removes that incentive for engaging in the peace process. Recognizing Palestine now as a state means undermining the resumption and successful conclusion of the peace process.

Seventh, even if one puts the disincentive to one side, the discussion about whether Canada and other states should recognize Palestine as a state is a diversion. The real problem both Palestinians and Israelis face is the absence of peace. That is a matter which Canada can not resolve. Only Israel and the Palestinians can do so. Canadian recognition of the claimed state of Palestine, even if it does not push peace further away,

does nothing to bring it closer.

An eighth reason why Canada should not recognize the state of Palestine is that the recognition, outside of the peace process, rewards terrorism and accepts as a state an entity dedicated to the destruction of Israel through terrorism. Despite the change of the Charter of Hamas in 2017, Hamas remains a terrorist entity. The Palestinian Authority continues to propagandize for terrorism, including through the school system, reward terrorism, through payments to families of detained terrorists, and honour terrorism, through the naming of streets, buildings and monuments after terrorists.

Canada lists as terrorist entities the Palestine Revolutionary Council (which also uses the names Abu Nidal and Black September), the Palestine Liberation Front, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Hizballah and Hamas.<sup>5</sup> The Palestinian Authority does not ban any of these entities, allowing terrorist entities to take part in Palestinian elections. If free and fair elections were held in the West Bank and Gaza today, the likelihood of Hamas winning that election is significant.

The concern about terrorism is more than just theoretical. In Israel it is a frequent daily occurrence. In September of this year, the last month for which statistics are available, the Israel Security Agency reported 251 terrorist attacks in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza or an average of slightly more than eight a day.<sup>6</sup> Peter Larson has pointed to United

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<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrt/cntr-trrrsm/lstd-ntts/crrnt-lstd-ntts-en.aspx>

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<https://www.shabak.gov.il/SiteCollectionDocuments/Monthly%20Summary%20EN/Monthly%20Summary/2021%20%D7%93%D7%95%D7%97%20%D7%97%D7%95%D7%93%D7%A9%D7%99%20%D7%A1%D7%A4%D7%98%D7%9E%D7%91%D7%A8%20-%20%D7%90%D7%A0%D7%92%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%AA.pdf>

Nations statistics which indicate a lower figure for terrorist incidents.<sup>7</sup> Yet, as noted, anti-Zionists classify all terrorist incidents as resistance. The UN figures are clouded by the anti-Zionist terminological obfuscation.

There are several reasons why Canada should not recognize Palestine as a state which are answers to the claim of statehood based on the right of self-determination of people. The Palestinian people, as indeed all people, have a right to self-determination. However, that right does not translate always to a right of statehood.

There is already a Palestinian state, named Jordan. The Ottoman Empire ruled what is now Jordan, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza until World War I. Great Britain, which as a result of the War ended up in control of this territory, committed, in 1917, through the Balfour Declaration, to use its best endeavours to establishing a national home for the Jewish people, without prejudice to the rights of existing the non-Jewish communities in Palestine.

The victorious World War I allies, at the San Remo conference of 1920, determined who would be mandated to govern the territory conquered by the Allies. Britain was mandated to govern the territory called Palestine, which included what is now Jordan, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. In the next year, Britain carved out of Palestine the territory of what was then called Transjordan and is now called Jordan.

The League of Nations, in 1922, mandated Great Britain to govern as one unified whole what is now Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. The mandate recognized the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country. The part of Palestine which was earlier Transjordan

became an independent state under the name of Jordan in 1946.

The existence of one Palestinian state does not preclude the existence of a second. The issue today is not whether there should be a Palestinian state, but whether there should be a second Palestinian state. That issue could and should be resolved through peace negotiations

A tenth reason why Canada should not recognize Palestine as a state and the second connected to the right to self-determination of peoples is related to the delegitimization campaign against Israel. From the moment of its inception Israel was invaded by Arab states claiming that Israel occupied Arab land, as if land itself had ethnicity. This rejection of a Jewish state initially pursued a military course. Following on the invasions of 1948 were invasions of 1967 and 1973.

These invasions having failed, the anti-Zionist camp split into two factions. One faction continued to espouse violence - what they called armed struggle or resistance and what in reality was terrorism, including suicide bombings and human shields. The other faction shifted to delegitimization - going to the UN to use antidemocratic majorities to condemn Israel for virtually every human rights violation known to humanity, using universal standards adopted after the Holocaust and because of the Holocaust, distorting them and turning them against its surviving victims.

The Palestinian Authority under Fatah is laser focused on this delegitimization campaign. Recognizing Palestine as a state would only put the wind in its sails as it pursues this campaign against Israel at international instances, giving it more status to do so.

Eleventh and related, this anti-Zionist delegitimization campaign for which the Palestinian Authority is a spearhead, is not only harmful to the peace process. It is harmful to all international instances which are embroiled in it. It is harmful not just in dealing with Israel/ Palestinian issues, but also in realizing their overall mandate.

The United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, is diverted from addressing education, science and culture while spending time on the efforts of anti-Zionists to condemn Israel. The World Health Organization is diverted from addressing global health issues while spending time there too on anti-Zionist delegitimization initiatives. The United Nations Human Rights Council spends an enormous amount of time unnecessarily debating anti-Zionist delegitimization efforts, time that could be a lot better used in addressing human rights violations in countries which have no effective internal mechanisms for remedying them.

We need to forestall this effort to recognize Palestine as a state not just to keep the hope of Israeli- Palestinian peace alive, important as that is. We need the forestalling in order to stand up for the integrity generally of international institutions.

A twelfth reason why Canada should not recognize Palestine as a state is the undermining of the Canada's ability to defend against this delegitimization campaign. One component of the campaign is an attempt to engage the International Criminal Court against Israel and in support of the claimed violations of international human rights which anti-Zionists shop around generally. One would hope that this effort at the International Criminal Court would go nowhere, as much for the sake of the Court as for the sake of peace between Palestinians and Israelis. However, should there be actual Court initiatives, Canada is a lot better equipped to stand against them if the Canada has not recognized Palestine as a state than if it has.

Canada, as a state party to the Court treaty, is obligated to cooperate with the Court. However, that obligation, in my view, does not go so far as to cooperate in prosecution of crimes where the Court assumes jurisdiction based on recognition of a state that Canada does not recognize. State recognition is a sovereign act and resides in Canada. The Court can not foist state recognition on Canada, particularly when the Court recognition is political, based on a vote of the United Nations General Assembly. However, should

Canada recognize Palestine as a state, its ability to resist the anti-Zionist efforts to corrupt the Court as it has already corrupted so many other international institutions in favour of the anti-Zionist lobby, would disappear.

Practically, Canadian recognition could have disastrous consequences. If the Court goes ahead with politically driven anti-Zionist prosecutions, it would mean that Israeli officials could not visit Canada for fear that Canada would, in pursuance of its obligation to cooperate with the Court, arrest the officials and send them off to the Hague for trial. That is a consequence, I suggest, Canada would want to avoid.

A thirteenth reason why Canada should not recognize the claimed state of Palestine is also related to the connection between the right to self-determination and the right to statehood. Whether the right to self-determination means a right to statehood depends on how badly the people is treated in the state or states where they live. In general, the right to self-determination of a people coalesces into a right to statehood where the human rights of the people are consistently and flagrantly violated in the state or states in which they currently live, provided, of course, the state of the victim people seeking recognition itself respects human rights.<sup>8</sup>

Palestinians are victims of human rights violations that are at one and the same time real and engineered. Claimed Israeli human rights violations are, in large part, Israeli self defense measures decontextualized from the anti-Zionist terrorism and threats of terrorism which precipitated them. Security measures are criticized as if the threat of terrorism did not exist, as if the imposition of these measures was just discrimination.

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<sup>8</sup> There is a significant body of literature and jurisprudence on this subject. See for instance the concurring opinion of Judge Wildhaber, joined by Judge Ryssdal in the case of *Loizidou v. Turkey*, European Court of Human Rights, application no. 15318/89, 18 December 1996

Israel has an independent judiciary which respects due process and the rule of law. Claims of human rights violations can be adjudicated within Israel. There is no need to go outside Israel to do this and certainly no need to recognize an independent state to do this. Indeed, given the authoritarian trends within Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, there is every risk that the quality of justice in an independent Palestinian State would fall below the quality of justice Palestinians now receive in the Israeli courts.

Palestinians claim to be refugees. Yet, legally, almost entirely they are not.<sup>9</sup> The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) definition of refugees is an artificial concoction that has more or less nothing to do with the definition of refugees found in the United Nations Refugee Convention.

The UNRWA definition of refugees includes nationals of other states, those with substantive rights of nationality in other states, temporary workers in the territory that became Israel, those who have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, crimes against peace, serious non-political crimes, and acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, those who have local integration as a durable solution, and who refuse to renounce armed activity. The definition also includes those who have ceased to be refugees and hereditary status - descendants of all of this artificially enlarged class of refugees, merely because they are descendants. None of these fit within the UN Refugee Convention definition of refugees.

The right of return that anti-Zionists claim has no basis in international law. Descendants generally do not have a right of entry, let alone nationality, in a country which now has

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<sup>9</sup> David Matas "Learning from the past: Palestinian and Jewish refugees" Remarks prepared for a delivery to a conference on Justice for Jews from Arab countries, Jerusalem, Israel, 10 September 2012

jurisdiction over territory in which one of their ancestors once lived. But, even if one puts that absence of legal foundation to one side the very claim of wanting to return, not eventually when the situation changes, but immediately, in the current situation, is inconsistent with a claim to refugee status.

The very assertion that there now exists a Palestinian state is inconsistent with the claim of refugee status for citizens of this asserted new state. Yet, even after the assertion of the existence of this Palestinian state, the claim that its population are refugees persists.

One durable solution for refugees, promoted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, is resettlement. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in April 2000 and Foreign Affairs Minister John Manley in January 2001 offered to resettle Palestinian refugees in Canada. PLO spokesman Ahmed Abdel Rahman rejected the Prime Minister's offer. He said: "We reject any kind of settlement of refugees in Arab countries, or in Canada."<sup>10</sup>

John Manley, in response to his offer, was burned in effigy near the West Bank city of Nablus.<sup>11</sup> Hussum Khader, head of the largest Palestinian Fatah militia in Nablus, "If Canada is serious about resettlement, you could expect military attacks in Ottawa or Montreal".<sup>12</sup>

The narrative of expulsion of Palestinians from Israel in anti-Zionist mythology is incomplete. As I had previously written, the Palestinian refugee population was created

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<sup>10</sup> Robert Fife, "Policy chaos as PM stumbles again", National Post, April 13, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Mike Trickey "Angry at a reported offer of a home, Palestinians burn Manley in effigy" Ottawa Citizen, January 19, 2001.

<sup>12</sup> "Canadians might understand now" Canadian Jewish News, February 22, 2001.

by the wars for Israel's existence. Without the attacks by Arab states against Israel from its very beginning, there would have been no Palestinian refugees. Arab governments and leaders called on Palestinians to get out of the way while Arab armies expelled the Jewish population from British mandate Palestine. Some Palestinians fled because they heeded those calls. Others fled simply to avoid the cross fire of war.<sup>13</sup>

There were more Jewish refugees from Arab countries and Iran created by the anti-Israeli wars, expelled from those countries because they were Jewish, than Palestinian refugees from Israel. Yet, these refugees have now become completely resettled. The reason there is no comparable development for Palestinian refugees is that for anti-Zionists the well being of Palestinians comes second to hatred of Israel.

Another form of engineered victimization is the boycotts divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel. In December 2013, Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas stated that the Authority did not support a boycott of Israel,<sup>14</sup> but does support a boycott of Israeli goods produced in the West Bank, including goods produced in area C, the part of the West Bank which, according to the Oslo Accord, remains under the sole control of Israel. Yet, the production of goods in the West Bank employs Palestinians. The BDS campaign results in unemployment and poverty of Palestinians.

Another Abbas, Mansour Abbas, the leader of the United Arab List in the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, and a component of support of the current Israeli coalition government has called on Palestinians to end their strategy of victimization. He has stated: "Victimization will get us nowhere". One of his supporters added "For seventy years, it got us

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<sup>13</sup> David Matas "Aftershock: Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism" Dundurn, 2005, page 166

<sup>14</sup> Liran Ofek "The Palestinian Authority, the BDS Movement, and Delegitimization" Memorandum No. 169, Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, September 2017, <http://www.inss.org.il/publication/palestinian-authority-bds-movement-delegitimization/>

nowhere."<sup>15</sup> Canadian recognition now of Palestine as a state would move in the opposite direction, a form of endorsement of the strategy of engineered victimization.

Fourteenth, let us suppose the opposite, that the victimization of Palestinians is everything that anti-Zionists says it is and that the anti-Zionists themselves are totally blameless. Even in that situation the right to self-determination does not coalesce for the Palestinian Authority into right to statehood, for two different reasons. One is, as noted, that a precondition of the coalescence is that the entity which requests statehood itself respects human rights.

Yet, with the Palestinian Authority, that is far from the case. The war and hate propaganda, the glorification of terrorism, the financing of terrorism, incitement to terrorism, the immunity for terrorists, the failure to ban terrorist organizations, and the daily onslaught of terrorist attacks is one facet of this denial of rights.

Another is the inability or unwillingness to hold free and fair elections. There has not been an election since 2006, and that is an election that Hamas won. Rather than refuse to recognize the results, the Palestinian Authority should have disqualified Hamas, as a terrorist organization, from the start. Yet, if the majority of the Palestinian population supports terrorism, what hope is there for any Palestinian entity to respect human rights?

The Palestinian Authority, through the Hamas victory, was reaping what it sowed through the terrorist propaganda, incitement, financing and glorification. To stand against terrorism while promoting it is for the Authority a self-defeating strategy undermining any

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<sup>15</sup> Ruth Margalit "The Arab-Israeli Power Broker in the Knesset" The New Yorker October 25, 2021

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/11/01/the-arab-israeli-power-broker-in-the-knesset>

claim to statehood.

Third, there is in the West Bank and Gaza intolerance, repression and persecution of anything Zionist or supportive of Israel. Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza who are even suspected, whether accurately or not, of doing anything to support Israel, run a grave risk of serious human rights violations against which the Palestinian Authority is either unable or unwilling to protect.

Fifteenth, let us put all these other objections aside. Even if one is convinced that Canada should recognize Palestine as a state, the question arises, why Palestine before the others? Whatever one thinks of the claim that the victimization of the Palestinians is the responsibility of Israel, there are populations which have suffered far worse than the Palestinians, where the responsibility for the victimization is a lot more clear-cut than the responsibility of the Israelis.

Canada can not, in good conscience, recognize Palestine as a state without first recognizing as a state East Turkestan, now called the Chinese province of Xinjiang, where the Uyghurs have suffered far worse than the Palestinians and where the responsibility of the Government of China for the victimization of the Uyghurs is a lot more clear-cut than the responsibility of Israel for the victimization of the Palestinians. One can say the same about Tibet in China or Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka, or Chechnya in Russia or Kurdistan in Syria or Rakhine, the territory of the Rohingya, in Myanmar.

Once Canada accepts the arguments for statehood that those claiming that Palestine is a state endorse, there is a long list of other entities which immediately jump ahead in the line. For Canada to accept Palestine as a state and not, before that, these others is hypocrisy. Yet, for Canada to accept all these many others as states would mean a substantial disruption of Canadian international relations.

Sixteenth, Canadian recognition of Palestine as a state now would not help the

Palestinians. A true friend tells his friend the truth. A real friend confronts his friend with reality. The truth is that the anti-Zionist strategy of the past seventy years has been harmful for the Palestinians. Anti-Zionism has led the Palestinians down a blind alley. Canadian recognition of Palestine as a state now would join the effort to keep them there. The only way out of a blind alley is to turn around and go back. That is what the Palestinians should do, abandon their anti-Zionist strategies of terrorism and delegitimization, their engineered victimization, turn around and go back to the peace negotiating table.

Seventeenth, Canadian recognition of Palestine as a state now would not help Canada. It would, to be sure, make Canada more popular with the anti-Zionist crowd. Yet, an abandonment of principle for expediency is hollow and, in the end, backfires. A state, like a person, who abandons principle for reputational gain loses both principle and reputation. In principle, Canada should not recognize Palestine as a state now, for the all the reasons stated here. And that is all that should matter.

Peter Larson suggests that Canada should recognize now Palestine as a state to compensate for the fact that Canada has not done enough to oppose the settlements. Yet, there is no more reason to oppose the residence of Jews in the West Bank than the residence of Arabs in Israel. There are more Arabs in Israel both proportionately and in absolute numbers than Jews in the West Bank. The settlements are not an obstacle to peace; it is intolerance of Jewish neighbours which is an obstacle to peace.

Eighteenth, Canadian recognition of Palestine as a state now would do nothing to combat antisemitism. Peter Larson noted a linkage between antisemitism and criticism of Israel. And there certainly is that link. But not the link that Larson suggests – a link between Israeli wrongdoing and antisemitism. Rather Israel is demonized with accusations and then Jews are demonized as actual or presumed supporters of this supposedly demon state.

Even when specific accusations are real, victims of prejudice should not be blamed for that victimization. The notion that the proper way or even a proper way to attack bigotry against a group is to combat the alleged misbehaviour of some members of the group is misplaced. The proper way to attack bigotry is to attack bigotry directly. Diverting the effort against bigotry to combating alleged misbehaviour of some members of the targetted group leaves the bigotry itself in place.

Moreover, the sequencing Larson suggests is wrong. Antisemitism does not exist, even in part, because of alleged misbehaviour of some Israelis. Rather, anti-Zionism exists because of antisemitism. Anti-Zionists oppose the existence of Israel because Israel is Jewish and not Arab. If Israel were Arab, anti-Zionism would not exist.

Nineteenth, recognition is not endorsement. Absence of recognition is not disapproval. Recognition means recognizing facts, good or bad. The fact is that Palestine right now is not a state. That should be the end of the discussion.

Peter Larson has said that recognition of Palestine as a state is aspirational. But to what does the Palestinian Authority aspire that they can not get through peace negotiations? What do they lose by entering into good faith negotiations with Israel?

The answer is the opportunity to pursue the end and the means, the end being the destruction of the State of Israel and the means being the continuation of the delegitimization campaign and the inciting, rewarding, propagandizing on and, in the case of Hamas, acting on terrorism. These are aspirations Canada should do nothing to encourage.

Anti-Zionists have, as their very name indicates, the goal of destruction of the State of Israel. In pursuit of that goal, they have used every military means, every national and international standard, institution and mechanism they can access for that purpose.

Is the existence of the Palestinian people anything more than that, an anti-Zionist vehicle, an attachment to the standards and mechanisms for self-determination in order to deny the existence of the State of Israel? If there is more, that should be recognized through the peace process. Circumventing that process through attempts at extraneous recognition looks to be just a continuation of anti-Zionist efforts to deny the existence of Israel.

Many Israelis have themselves given up on the peace process. One reason is that some of the Palestinian Authority and their supporters appear disinterested and disingenuous. Another reason is that even those elements of the Authority that are interested and genuine show no ability to exercise the control over terrorism necessary to make peace viable. For the peace process to work, the Palestinian Authority has to show both that they want it to work and that they can make it work.

There is a real prospect for success in peace negotiations, provided the Palestinians do exactly that, provided the Palestinian Authority shows both that they want it to work and that they can make it work. Peter Larson has claimed that Israel has nothing to gain from a peace process which leads to recognition of Palestine as a state. But yes, it does. An end to terrorist attacks against Israel is a gain. The cessation by the anti-Zionist crowd at international instances of its delegitimization campaign is a gain. The collapse of the BDS movement is a gain for both Palestinians and Israelis.

Twentieth, Canadian recognition of Palestine as a state does nothing to overcome obstacles to peace. Indeed, it has exactly the opposite effect. For the Palestinians to seek Canadian recognition outside of the peace process is not just extraneous to the peace process. It is antithetical to the peace process.

Even if Palestinians are attempting an end run around the peace process, and the Israelis have given up on that process because of the Palestinian disinterest in that process and/or their inability to control terrorism, Canada should not. Canada should be pushing the

Palestinians into the peace process rather than pulling them away from it. So, the answer to the question whether Canada should recognize Palestine as a state should be a clear and unequivocal no, that Canada will recognize Palestine as a state when the peace process ends with that conclusion and not before.

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