

# American Diplomacy and Israeli Intimidation: John Kerry Empowers Israel to Violate International Law

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Global Research, January 22, 2014

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Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon articulated publicly what Israeli leaders say privately: Give us your tax money, weapons and your veto power but “leave us alone.”

He called the US peace efforts “not worth the paper it is printed on,” and accusing US Secretary of State John Kerry of being a glory hound “messianic” and “inexplicably obsessive.”

His statement - likely with the tacit approval of Israeli prime minister - was quintessential Israeli tactics to publicly influence American policy, and it did.

Receiving the message loud and clear, Kerry cancelled a visit scheduled this week to the region. Failing to commit the Israelis on a written framework agreement, his aides are already talking about extending the negotiation past the April deadline.

Each of Kerry’s visits was greeted by an Israeli policy decision to undermine his efforts. Since last July it has authorised building 7,500 “Jewish only” homes on occupied West Bank and demolished 200 Palestinian residences. A ministerial committee led by the governing Likud party has overwhelmingly voted to annex the occupied Jordan valley.

Still, the administration wants to give Israel more time to add to its annexation’s menu. This is while it ludicrously claims to be impartial mediator when it empowers Israel, materially and diplomatically, to indulge in activities violating international law.

If one thing is very clear from past American diplomacy, the current efforts will most likely deliver on Israeli demands upfront, while suspending Palestinians’ concerns for a later date. At the signing of the Oslo Accord in 1993, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation recognised Israel over 78 per cent of historical Palestine while Palestinians were promised to negotiate a “five-year transitional period” for the remaining 22pc.

Almost 10 years later, president George Bush’s road map for peace called for “permanent status agreement” by 2005. To address one of Israel’s 14 reservations, Bush sent then prime minister Ariel Sharon a letter adopting one Israeli reservation - undermining his own plan - stating it would be “unrealistic ... of final status negotiations” to result in the return to the 1967 borders.

At the road map's onset, Israel "legitimised" its illegal "Jewish only" colonies, while Palestinians were promised an elusive future "agreement by 2005."

During his last visit, Israeli prime minister privately asked Kerry to annex additional 18pc of the West Bank as a "realistic" adjustment to the 1967 borders. Irrespective of Israel's "forthcoming" obligations causing Yaalon's anger outburst, Kerry - violating the mediator's role - has told the Palestinians that recognising Israel as a racist "Jewish state" was an American demand. Imagine if he publicly opined that compliance with UN resolutions were the bases of his impending framework. Israel will certainly cry louder accusing him of prejudging the negotiation.

Years after Kerry delivers another advanced instalment or extends the endless negotiation, Israel is unlikely to have ceased building illegal colonies. Meanwhile, the overdue promises to Palestinians will join the grave side with those from the Oslo Accord and Road Map. That, until a new US administration comes up with a fresh proposal requesting Palestinians, again, to comply with - yet to be conjured - Israeli condition in return for further suspended promises.

Sadly, the Palestinian government is almost totally dependent on US and European largess - a fraction of what Arab governments spend on the fratricide fight in Syria. This is while American policies are emboldening an Israeli occupation responsible for perpetuating the state of the foreign aid dependent Palestinian economy.

Palestinian leadership should not regurgitate a new xenophobic recognition of Israel in exchange for another American mirage. They should not entertain extending the amaranthine negotiation and demand an immediate US recognition of Palestine or else, a bi-national state is the only remaining realistic option.

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