

The Strategic Challenges Facing the Palestinian Negotiation Policy

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The Palestinian National Movement in a Cul-de-sac

The first half of 2011 has witnessed a set of decisions by the PLO leadership perhaps unprecedented since the dawn of the era of the Oslo peace process:

- Throughout these six months, the PLO has refused to resume negotiations with the government of Israel absent a freeze in settlement construction and without something that at least resembles terms of reference for those negotiations.
- On February 15, 2011, the PLO pursued a settlements resolution at the UN Security Council despite pressure from the USG to withdraw that resolution or to agree to a watered down Security Council statement – leading to the US vetoing that resolution.
- On May 4 in Cairo, in a ceremony addressed by PLO Chairman Mahmoud Abbas and Head of the Hamas Political Bureau Khaled Meshaal, and with other leaders of Palestinian factions in attendance, a new Egyptian-brokered national reconciliation agreement was launched.
- On June 26, in Ramallah, an expanded meeting of the PLO Executive Committee reaffirmed its intention to pursue the advancing of a Palestinian statehood at the United Nations in September.

And yet even in the context of the PLO taking these steps, there has not been any clear articulation of a new Palestinian strategy for achieving freedom and basic rights. And the international communities, including friends of the Palestinians, seem unable to answer the question – where do the Palestinians want to get to and how are they planning to get there? This is because the second element that has characterized this unusual half-year has been a sense of hesitancy, lack of conviction, and discomfort by the very PLO leadership that has found itself on this new path. Various members of the leadership have frequently hinted http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/post/the-palestinians-trick-answer-to-obama/2011/04/19/AGbpwMLH_blog.html that they would be willing to resume negotiations in exchange for very little.

Indeed, the oft-cited formal leadership position is a preference, first and foremost, for renewed negotiations with the Netanyahu government. The unity agreement exists on paper but there has been little progress in implementing its provisions and a distinct lack of enthusiasm surrounds the power-sharing process.

The build up to a Palestinian move at the UN appears confused, and there is an almost total absence of planning for the morning after. It is hard to discern a strategic logic or conversion to a new strategic path that has been guiding the positions taken by the PLO in recent months. If anything, this appears more like a series of circumstantial, tactical moves.

Of course, there is one other feature to these Palestinian realities of the first half of 2011 – they have taken place against the backdrop of the so-called “Arab Awakening,” an awakening in which, for many, the absence of a Palestinian component <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/12/weekinreview/12palestinians.html?ref=helenecooper> is perplexing

The difficulty of discerning a Palestinian strategy is hardly unique to recent months. Most observers would point to a consistent and troubling lack of recognition by the PLO leadership of the cul-de-sac they are stuck in, and the accompanying lacunae of there being any alternative path.

This paper will not revisit the many, often piercing, critiques of the decisions taken by the Palestinian leadership in recent decades, or since Oslo. Suffice it to note that the most basic equation underlying the Oslo process was proven to be fatally flawed. That equation was:

Israeli rational self-interest in a two-state outcome (Jewish/democratic tension)
+ Palestinian minimalism on the substance of permanent status asks across all issues and
exclusive reliance on negotiations
+ American appreciation for Palestinian moderation and encouragement of Israeli pragmatism
= **Two-state outcome, with sufficient OPT Palestinian buy-in/de-occupation**

At the very least, its reading of the American and Israeli realities has not been born out. While the golden cage that the PLO leadership now finds itself in is not entirely of its own making, its continued pursuit of the above equation (in the face of consistent evidence of its flaws) has greatly exacerbated this predicament.

The current reality is far from encouraging on almost any front:

a. Internal Palestinian Predicament

Despite the March agreement, the Palestinian national movement is still more than anything characterized by division, which in terms of the Fatah-Hamas split has become more entrenched and debilitating for Palestinian national goals since 2007. The PLO remains unreformed, unrepresentative, unable to mobilize Palestinian communities worldwide, and bereft of a political platform relevant to the 21st century. To the extent to which Palestinian democratic structures are still in existence, those are mostly part of the Palestinian Authority, exist under occupation, and have been largely dysfunctional since the last Palestinian Legislative Council elections.

b. The Palestinians and Israel

With the occupation in its 44th year, soon to eclipse the longevity of the Apartheid regime in South Africa, Israel still enjoys a remarkable degree of impunity in the face of its consistent violations of international law, and correspondingly assumes a complacency in its dealings with the Palestinians. Under the Oslo arrangements, realities in the OPTs have settled into a familiar pattern, and the structures created are a convenient management tool for Israel. East Jerusalem remain terra-incognito for any formal Palestinian political presence, Gaza is under closure, and the West Bank continues to be governed by the Area A/B/C regime of Oslo, in which 60 percent of land and most natural resources are out of bounds for the Palestinians. Settlements expand and settler violence has surged in recent years. The Palestinian community inside Israel is even having its limited and tenuous democratic rights further squeezed and challenged by the more openly and unabashedly racist policies pursued by the government and Knesset.

c. Continuity and Change in the Region

The surrounding states and the broader Arab and Muslim world continue to pay lip service to the Palestinian cause without, at a state level, being enlisted to challenge Israeli policies or take steps that would entail any sacrifice on behalf of the Palestinians or assistance in creating leverage for the Palestinians (to be fair, they are not really being challenged to do so by the PLO leadership). When it suits them, Arab regimes will still instrumentalize filially to the Palestinian cause in a grandstanding fashion (a recent op-ed http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/palestinian-rights-wont-be-denied-by-the-united-states-and-israel/2011/06/07/AGmnK2OH_story.html by Saudi Prince Turki suggested that fundamentals in the US-Saudi relations would

be threatened were America to veto Palestine's membership to the UN later this year. There is, however, nothing concrete or real behind this threat). The Arab Awakening certainly contains hopeful signs for changing this equation, but that too will require a new strategy led by the Palestinians themselves.

d. No Real Progress at the International Level

Meaningful acts of solidarity at the state level barely extend beyond the occasional declaration or routine votes in the UN and other international forums. Yet any punitive measures to reverse Israeli practices are not part of this mix (nor have they been advocated for by the PLO leadership) and the provisions of international law tend not to feature in Western policy discourse regarding Israel-Palestine.

It was Israel under a government led by Netanyahu and Lieberman that was welcomed into the OECD club of nations. Sanctioning of Israel at the popular level and the progress made by the Boycott, Divestments, and Sanctions (BDS) movement is on occasion impressive, but it remains piecemeal and has yet to impact Israel in meaningful ways. Its growth trajectory is unclear, but likely to be painfully slow absent other changes. Israel's narrative on a range of issues, from negotiations being the only legitimate route to resolve the conflict, to the legitimacy of a Jewish state that pursues structural discrimination or indulgence for Israel's security narrative continue to carry great currency, especially in Western official circles. Violations of international law and human rights law by Palestinian factions, in particular the use of terror and indiscriminate violence against civilians continues to undermine this aspect of the Palestinian struggle.

A world in which governing structures and influence begin to shift from G8's to G20's and BRICS type formations may offer more hope, but that prospect remains theoretical rather than operational to date.

In short no one is going to navigate the Palestinians out of this cul-de-sac. The Palestinian national movement will first have to find a way out by itself, and a strategy for doing that is still impossible to discern. A one-off vote at the UN absent a broader strategic context will not change that fact.

Key First Step: Acknowledging the Difficulty of Change

The entrenchment of the Oslo model, and in particular of the role assumed by the Palestinian Authority, poses powerful challenges to implementing any new Palestinian strategy. Just bemoaning the trap that Palestinians find themselves in is not enough. The depth of this challenge needs to be understood, and there is a need to acknowledge that it will not be easy to break out of this golden cage

From the beginning, a sharp critique was leveled at the fundamental structure of the Oslo process – including the notions of incrementalism, confidence building, and the PLO's assumption of partial self-governance responsibilities under an overarching regime of occupation. As the various deadlines built into the Oslo agreements had expired, were extended, and then expired again, the core residual of those agreements increasingly centered around a set of arrangements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. And particularly under the leadership of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, Palestinian state-building became a flagship project of the entire PLO/PA edifice.

The expressed logic of that approach, as defined by its architects, was as follows: the establishment of reliable, transparent, and internationally-endorsed institutions of Palestinian self-governance, including in the security arena, create an irresistible reality for Israel and the international community, leading to ongoing transfer of powers by Israel to these institutions, to Israel's withdrawal, and to the realization of Palestinian sovereignty.

A less naïve subtext of the approach argued that removing the excuse from Israel of Palestine not being "state-ready" would help the international community overcome its allergy to pushing Israel to take the steps needed to complete the transition from state-building to actual statehood (notably, removing Israel's continued physical presence in the OPTs). What appears to have been lacking was any attempt to address the question of: "and if not, what next"? What would the PA/PLO do if Israel and the international community did not act according to this logic – a rather predictable outcome.

This is, of course, where the PA finds itself in the summer of 2011. The two year state-building plan launched by PM Fayyad in August 2009 has won gushing praise and a ringing endorsement from the international community.

In the spring of 2011, the World Bank <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/AHLCReportApril2011.pdf>, the IMF <http://www.imf.org/external/country/WBG/RR/2011/041311.pdf>, and the UN http://unispal.un.org/pdfs/AHLC-Apr2011_UNSCOrpt.pdf all released reports with the bottom line attesting to Palestine's "state-readiness," a language echoed with certain nuances by the Quartet, the EU, and the U.S. government. Were Palestine under an international mandate, the terms of which included a transfer of full sovereignty upon the attainment of certain institutional and governance benchmarks, then Palestine (or at least the West Bank part thereof) would be celebrating its full independence and sovereignty sometime this fall.

But that is very evidently not the case. The OPTs are under a hostile foreign occupation which has set no such terms for its own withdrawal and the transfer of sovereignty. If anything, the PA is an Israeli protectorate not a UN protectorate. In addition to this logical flaw, and the non-existence of a plan B, the PA state-building effort also suffers from a problematic premise. The suggestion inherent in this approach is that continued occupation is somehow legitimate or justified for as long as the Palestinians fail to meet institutional benchmarks, which Israel will have the final word in defining.

What was, at least according to its own architects, intended to be a virtuous cycle of Palestinian assumption of self-sufficiency toward independence has over time become a vicious cycle that presents one of, if not the, major obstacle to the pursuit of an alternative and more realistic Palestinian strategy of de-occupation, freedom, and rights.

The list of obstacles works across several levels that need to be identified and understood if they are to be overcome and transcended. It is a list that should include:

- a. The Palestinian Economy:** The structure of the Palestinian economy created around the PA makes for a dramatically high degree of donor dependency. The PA is the largest employer of Palestinians in the OPTs, paying out approximately 180,000 salaries. This in turn, once heads of families and their beneficiaries are taken into account, totals c. 1 million dependents from employees of the PA. The PA budget was \$3.17 billion out of a total Palestinian GDP of \$7.39 billion, in 2010. Of that \$3.17 billion, the donor contribution was \$1.2 billion. This degree of donor dependency has a suppressive effect on possible Palestinian political strategies and a pacifying effect on the population at large.

International aid can sometimes be a good thing, but the context here, despite being called “state-building” for over 17 years, is that the aid is serving to sustain, normalize and even indirectly fund a regime of occupation that denies basic freedoms. In addition, loans and mortgages on favorable terms are provided by the international community, including through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), an “independent” U.S. Government agency. For instance, the partnership between OPIC and the Palestinian Investment Fund provides a \$228 million loan program geared to “improving Palestinians’ quality of life.” This has a similarly restricting effect on the prospects for popular mobilization. Finally the Palestinians (and here they are not alone) are force-fed a neoliberal model of economic life without having been democratically consulted on the matter.

The result is an artificial reality whereby the economic conditions for Palestinians in the West Bank (Gaza is different) and the relative improvement there, as World Bank reports <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/AHLCReportApril2011.pdf>, would not be sustainable without the donor monies.

Having created these structures, it must be recognized that PA/PLO leaders (whatever motives might be attributed to them) are faced with a painfully acute dilemma. How does one weigh a struggle for freedom and dignity, necessitating a break with the PA as it currently functions, versus the responsibility to avoid the potential impoverishment of one’s own people, the withdrawal of services, and creation of mass unemployment?

b. Donor Dependency Undermines Political Flexibility: What has followed from the above is a structuring of Palestinian relations with the international community that places an emphasis on the maintenance of donor assistance to the PA, at the expense of possible political asks (for instance, diplomatic support for Palestinian rights in international forums, or for punitive measures against Israel for denying those same rights). While in theory, in any social or political setting, party “A” can make more than one ask or request of party “B,” in practice, if party “B” has a menu of ways from which it can assist party “A” and be seen as doing its duty to party “A,” then it will naturally gravitate towards paths of least resistance. And money can often be the cheapest of commodities. In short, the checkbook offers an easy way out, and hard political choices can be deferred indefinitely. This obviously introduces a precarious vulnerability to the PLO’s political maneuvering space.

Two recent examples are noteworthy in this respect: (i) With the expiration of the two-year PA state-building project, the PA has already declared its intention to pursue continuity by proposing to the international donor community a new two-year plan entitled, “The Palestine National Program” (PNP) for 2011-2013; (ii) the focus on financial as opposed to political requests extends beyond Western donor states, and has also become a defining feature of the PLO’s interaction with Arab states. With the PA offers running short, an appeal has again been made to the Arab states to make good on financial commitments to the PA in order to demonstrate their loyalty to the Palestinian cause. This ask was not matched – let alone superseded – by requests for hard, political action.

c. Dependence on Israel: At the most fundamental level, the PA depends for its very functioning on cooperation with Israel. This relationship of dependence touches on almost every area of PA action one might care to think of -- from movement of PA

officials to the maintenance of the population registry. Some areas of unavoidable cooperation have a particularly egregious impact on the terms of Palestinian political engagement. Security cooperation is the one most often highlighted, especially in the context of PA security forces playing a role that in addition to maintenance of law and order, and basic domestic policing functions, includes both a prohibition on protecting the Palestinian population from either Israeli military incursions or settler violence, and preventing mobilization for popular struggle to advance Palestinian rights, or what is legitimate self-defense under international law.

Another key area is again in the realm of the economy, where according to the continued regime of the Paris Protocol signed in 1994, Israel is responsible for collecting all customs and VAT revenues for the PA, a mechanism that Israel has (ab)used on a number of occasions (to withhold the transfer of those revenues in violation of that agreement), as a further pressure lever against the PLO/PA (the Palestinians' economic dependence on Israel is of course felt in other ways, including the employment of Palestinians in the settlements, and the now largely informal employment of Palestinians in the Israeli economy).

The net effect of this staggeringly lop-sided relationship is that a Palestinian strategy of challenging and confronting Israel -- and creating leverage in diplomatic and popular struggle (non-violent) means -- simply cannot co-exist with a PA which continues to function in its current form.

To cite one obvious and colorful example: imagine a Ramallah-based Palestinian leader returns from a series of international diplomatic gatherings seeking to sanction Israel, further to a UN resolution on Palestine. S/he arrives at the Allenby Bridge to present an Israeli-government issued VIP pass. There are any number of directions that scenario could go in, whichever one comes into play, at its core this is an absurd reality.

d. Fighting Over the PA Crumbs: The extent to which the spoils of the PA itself (rather than the PA as a means to an end) have become central to Palestinian political thinking and decision-making was once again on display when Fatah and Hamas reached a new unity agreement in May. The clauses of that agreement were far more focused on dividing the crumbs of the PA cake than on anything to do with a platform or vision for a national liberation struggle. All of the main Palestinian factions, therefore, appear to have bought into and been gripped by the embrace of the PA spoils system. The unity deal addresses the new PA government, modalities for elections for PA bodies, and PA security forces -- with the PLO only making a brief appearance and a political platform being conspicuously absent.

e. Excluding Palestinians: With its narrow remit for the OPTs, a PA-centric Palestinian decision-making system and set of considerations by definition excludes the Palestinian diaspora both near and far (in the camps in neighboring countries and beyond), and the Palestinian community inside Israel. Reintegrating a movement that begins to shape afresh a degree of collective buy-in to a platform, a set of tactics, and sufficient shared legitimacy cannot be done for as long as the PA continues to assume its current role.

f. Solidarity with What? The cumulative effect of all of this is that there is no Palestinian national liberation movement, platform, or struggle, with which friends (whether they be states or in civil society) can identify and around which they can mobilize. This is not to suggest that the answer lies in a return to an armed struggle which violates international law and indulges in self-defeating and indefensible acts

of violence. It does though mean that a situation today exists in which supporters and allies when they are expressing solidarity with the Palestinians are expressing solidarity with the plight of the Palestinians, rather than with a visible struggle of the Palestinians. This is a crucial difference.

This also does not ignore the ongoing popular mobilization in villages in the West Bank and occasionally East Jerusalem, the ongoing harassment faced by the courageous leaders and participants in that struggle (in Nabi Salih, Bil'in, Ni'lin, etc.), or the attempts at direct nonviolent action by the Nakba day marches from neighboring countries or the flotillas. However, the official address recognized in the international community of the so-called Palestinian Liberation Movement is absent from this struggle. The quasi-state resources that are at the disposal of the PLO are not brought to bear in support of any struggle, including the option of lobbying or embarrassing state actors into action, including the Arab states. When Greece bans a flotilla from sailing at the request of Israel and the US, it faces no countervailing state pressure, to name just one recent example.

The BDS movement can in one sense be seen as an alternative to struggle at home, rather than a derivative of that struggle. When BDS seeks to win adherents, it is largely mobilizing in opposition to Israeli misbehavior, rather than in support of a Palestinian struggle and platform. It is reasonable to speculate that this has a powerful impact on the trajectory of BDS's likely success or lack thereof.

In acknowledging the need for a clean break with the tenets that have guided the Palestinian leadership in recent years – whether that be the reliance on negotiations without having created leverage, or a faith in American and Israeli goodwill – the challenges posed in making that break must also be acknowledged and practical solutions found to work around those challenges.

The prospective PLO political effort at the UN this September would be most meaningful and effective were it to be conducted in this context and as part of a clean break with past strategy. As a standalone and symbolic gesture, any resolution at the UN is of limited utility. However, if upgrading the status of Palestine is part of a conscious effort to create Palestinians leverage, assert Palestinian rights (for instance, by pursuing new opportunities that would be created in the International Criminal Court), and to establish avenues for more effective political and state acts of support for Palestinians, then the UN move becomes a powerful new point of departure.

Sketching Out Elements of a New Strategy

a. Easing the Restrictive Burden of the PA: This flows from the above. Can a post-PA strategy be teased out and what would that look like? Initial moves might involve maximum de-linkage between the PA's functionality as a service provider and its political role.

The downgrading of that political role would need to address, at a minimum, the following:

- The PA as a political state-building project in which there is a symbiotic relationship between progress of PA reform and political progress.
- The dual role played by Palestinian political leaders as office holders in both the PLO and the PA.

- The role played by Palestinian political factions as participants in the PA, including the integration that has developed between Palestinian democracy and PA institutions (PLC, municipal governance, etc).
- The political-security role played by PA forces.

Two paths might be pursued in this regard. One would involve a sharp cut, what is sometimes called the disbanding of the PA – to take such a drastic step, the leadership making such a decision would have to gain popular legitimacy for the move and have an alternative ready to put in play. The other path to the PA’s rapid demise would be something approximating a surge of people power from below, demanding and achieving this goal.

For the reasons outlined in part 2 of this note, neither of these scenarios appears imminent. Another option, perhaps more feasible, could be the gradual downgrading of the PA, which over time could address points i-iv above. The politics of such a move would, of course, be intensely tricky. The PA would divest itself of all political functions and become a technical service provider, whereby any functions that it could not continue to perform – either due to Israeli interference or to donor drawdown – would be closed and responsibility assumed by Palestinian civil society, by international NGOs/agencies, or by the occupying power.

Palestinians would not divest themselves of PA responsibilities, but they would also not make a political sacrifice or be politically pressured on account of PA needs. If the threat of moving to this PA model can be credibly made and implemented, then it should be deployed.

Half-way houses might also be considered, such as:

- The conditional withdrawal of security cooperation;
- The PA's de-politicization in party terms and in terms of dual-holding of office between the PA and the PLO;
- Demanding an alternative tax and customs revenue mechanism to the Paris Protocol arrangements, cutting out Israel and involving third parties as a condition for maintaining the PA;
- Refusing donor assistance that carries political conditionalities, or that is not matched by specific benchmarks of political support for the Palestinians (the PA might preemptively tell the U.S. Congress that it is not interested in receiving money from a body that has taken such unequivocally hostile positions against Palestinian rights, freedom, and democracy).

In this context, funding for Palestinians could be directed to alternative structures. The intention here is not to advocate for a premeditated lowering of Palestinian living conditions or to suggest that suffering should be induced in order to inspire revolt. It is rather to create less politically restrictive structures and for financial subsidies in support of the Palestinians to serve a nationalist agenda rather than an agenda of the occupying forces. Assistance could go directly to civil society or through relevant international agencies, to the PLO, or could utilize clandestine channels. But it would not continue to go through Israel, or be driven by donors that are hostile to Palestinian rights. This might be particularly relevant to assistance from Arab states.

b. Reconstructing a Palestinian Liberation Movement: The focus here would be on a national platform and strategy, albeit one that need not go into painstaking detail on every issue. Currently there is no Palestinian freedom charter, no political platform or the equivalent thereof. There is also no agreed commitment to operating within the framework of international law, including all of the tools which that provides, and clearly desisting from actions – notably violent actions – that are in contravention of that framework, nor a commitment to resisting from failed compromise of the past.

Clear Palestinian adherence to international law would strengthen the Palestinian political capacity to make political asks of the international community that seek to force Israel into adherence of those same laws. A freedom charter might, for instance, declare that Palestinian freedom and rights can be attained in a truly sovereign Palestinian state alongside Israel on the 67 lines, with Jerusalem as its capital, and addressing all outstanding issues including refugee rights, or by according Palestinians full citizenship and equal rights in a single political territorial unit consisting of all historic, post-1922 Palestine.

A pre-requisite for this approach would of course be a thorough makeover for the PLO, with an agreed system for a new and democratically elected PNC or new body, open to the free and fair participation of the entire Palestinian community.

While some of this might appear politically counterintuitive the current cul-de-sac might just make this viable. A coalition would be needed of open-minded existing political figures, civil society, diaspora activists, business, intellectual and sectoral leaders coming together to envision such an outcome.

A reconstituted liberation movement would, amongst other things, have to assess the possible need for a political leadership in exile and the leadership role – symbolic and substantive – of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

c. A Sustainable Popular Struggle: Successful civil disobedience movements tend to be the product of a bottom-up approach to political organizing. In the Palestinian case, such organizing has not only had to contend with the expected opposition and sabotaging of the Israeli authorities, but also with the indifference, and sometimes active hostile interference, of the existing Palestinian national institutional structures.

Ideally a reconstructed liberation movement would be suited to actively integrate itself with and embrace a strategy of nonviolent popular struggle. At a minimum, and until new national structures exist, the established Palestinian political institutions should cease to act as an obstacle to popular mobilization and should provide support as appropriate and as requested.

It needs to be recognized that Palestinian popular nonviolent mobilization will take place under fundamentally different circumstances to those prevailing elsewhere in the “Arab Awakening,” but also this form of struggle probably holds out the single greatest potential to be a game-changer in advancing Palestinian rights, in breaking the Israeli-dominated status quo, and in creating circumstances that could lead Israel to recalibrate its posture. In particular it might shake up Israel's crucial external support structures in Europe, the Jewish communities and even the U.S.

To be successful, this popular mobilization:

- Will have to be based on a broad Palestinian political consensus.
- Will have to overcome the challenges of remaining disciplined in its adherence to nonviolence -- notably in the face of Israeli provocations and of opportunist actions by Palestinian factions and their external benefactors.
- Will have to build on existing strategy used in villages in the West Bank and by the popular resistance committees and others, and be sustainable, including economic sustainability.
- Will have to be part of an overall Palestinian strategy that focuses on the local nonviolent struggle, draws international attention to Israel's response (already there are nonviolent protest leaders in prison and largely ignored, including by the institutional Palestinian leadership), and matches international diplomatic asks to that local struggle.

d. Meaningful Support and Solidarity: What naturally follows from the above is an entirely revised basis from which to mobilize and to realize international support and, in particular, to focus on creating consequences for Israel for its continued denial of Palestinian freedoms and to therefore create an ingredient that has been so sorely missing, namely Palestinian leverage. This would create the circumstances for a more meaningful diplomatic challenge to Israel and for more meaningful international solidarity, rather than support for the Palestinians coming in the form of donor conferences.

Over time, new openings would be created for such a strategy, and initially realistic but substantive asks from friends – even friends that need to be embarrassed into action – should be explored, notably with Arab and Muslim states (for instance, could the Gulf sovereign wealth funds be brought to bear on this issue, can structures be created and financed to replace the western donor led PA?).

Israel's friends in the international community would become increasingly conscious of the costs associated with continuing to treat Israeli denial of Palestinian freedoms with impunity.

There are no easy paths and there are no silver bullets, and the above only begins to sketch out directions for a new strategy and the difficulties and challenges such a strategy would encounter. But it is written in the hope of advancing a conversation that is already taking place in multiple spaces, Palestinian and non-Palestinian, that are committed to a more just and free future, not only for the Palestinians but also for Israel's Jewish community and much of the broader Jewish world trapped in their own undemocratic and ultimately untenable place.