

EU and Trump plan: Keeping it off the table

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Executive summary

This Q&A note addresses possible European and international diplomatic engagement following the publication of US President Trump's plan for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While framed as a "vision for peace", the plan lays the ground for annexation of large parts of the West Bank and perpetual Israeli domination over the Palestinians. The plan has led to contradictory European reactions: on one hand, reaffirming existing EU positions, two-state solution parameters and international law; on the other hand, calling for some form of a diplomatic process in response to the US plan.

While the COVID-19 epidemic has put much diplomatic work on hold, the US plan and the prospect of annexation are not going away. This pause is an opportunity for Europeans to rethink their approach before the issue returns to the agenda.

This paper warns that the European impulse to promote diplomacy and dialogue following the release of the Trump plan could do more harm than good. Arguments that diplomatic engagement could lead to meaningful negotiations, substantially improve the US plan or avert annexation do not stand up to scrutiny. Instead, any negotiations or multilateral discussions involving the US administration, such as in the Quartet, are likely to play into the US strategy of changing the international paradigm on the conflict and establishing the Trump plan as the new international terms of reference. Given the United States' outsized power, any multilateral initiative involving the US is likely to drift in the American direction and breathe life into the Trump plan as a legitimate proposal, rather than constraining it. No amount of declaratory support for a two-state solution and international law will compensate for the damage done to them if the EU falls into the trap of negotiations centred around the US plan.

Further, the paper argues against putting the onus on the Palestinians – the only party committed to the two-state solution in line with agreed international principles – to re-engage the US or to present a counterproposal. Instead, Europeans should take up their own responsibility, state clearly that they only support negotiations on the basis of agreed parameters and back the Palestinians in their legitimate opposition to the Trump plan.

Instead of promoting negotiations, multilateral diplomacy or Palestinian re-engagement – and thus probably making things even worse – Europeans have a number of more productive options, detailed in the final section. On the diplomatic side, Europeans should engage Arab countries and potentially others to demonstrate a united front around the internationally agreed parameters. They should help divert blame from the Palestinians by acknowledging the PLO's peace-oriented approach in line with agreed international principles, in contrast with the Israeli and American positions. On the operational side, the EU and member states should develop measures addressing annexation, including through further differentiation between Israel and the settlements. Beyond reaffirming existing positions, the EU should shift its approach towards greater emphasis on equal rights for all inhabitants under Israel's effective control.

1. What is the problem with the Trump plan?

US President Trump's "peace plan" for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict represents a radical shift away from internationally agreed parameters for the two-state solution and from the EU's position on the conflict. It also clashes with basic international norms on state sovereignty and non-acquisition of territory by force. While ostensibly promoting a Palestinian "state" with a "capital in Al Quds", the plan proposes a fragmented Palestinian entity without East Jerusalem proper, having a mere autonomy under Israel's overarching security control, and subject to a list of difficult-to-meet conditions to achieve within four years. In contrast, it opens the door for Israel to annex large parts of the West Bank unconditionally and without Palestinian consent and to perpetuate its occupation of the whole territory. While the US has put the brakes on immediate annexation, it has set up a joint US-Israel committee to map out the areas to be annexed.

The plan reflects views that have been publicly and consistently espoused by Trump's senior advisers Jared Kushner, David Friedman and Jason Greenblatt and that correspond with the ideological narrative of the Israeli right. While purporting to be based on a pragmatic assessment of the realities on the ground, the plan is grounded in a deeply biased view of the situation, contains no acknowledgement of the reality of occupation and proposes a Palestinian "state" that is unviable and subject to an unrealistic set of demands. The plan is a product of a determined effort of the above figures to use Trump's time in office to achieve a maximum shift away from the two-state paradigm, replace it with their vision and make it as irreversible as possible.

The plan has been widely criticised by experts, commentators, US Democrats, former European leaders and pro-peace Israelis, in addition to Palestinians and many Arabs.¹ This note does not provide another critical assessment of the plan but instead examines possible European and international diplomatic engagement following its publication. However, grasping the anti-peace nature of the US plan and the ideological determination of the Trump administration is important in order to understand why negotiations in the current context are unlikely to make progress towards peace or improve the plan.

¹ See for example:

- Geneva Initiative: [The Trump Plan versus a Realistic Plan](#), 13 February 2020.
- Daniel Levy: [Don't Call It a Peace Plan](#), *The American Prospect*, 30 January 2020.
- Letter by 50 former European foreign ministers and leaders: [Grave concern about US plan to resolve Israel-Palestine conflict](#), *The Guardian*, 27 February 2020.
- [Letter](#) to President Trump by 107 US Congress Democrats, 6 February 2020.

2. What is the risk of promoting negotiations and diplomatic engagement under Trump?

The problem is that any negotiations between the parties or multilateral discussions involving the current US administration would legitimise the status of the Trump plan as a relevant international baseline for the conflict, thus effectively undermining and replacing the international framework based on the two-state solution, agreed parameters, UN resolutions and international law.

This outcome is likely even if the negotiations or multilateral discussions do not explicitly endorse the US plan and if Europeans and other parties continue to profess their commitment to the two-state solution and international law. Merely putting the Trump plan on the table and treating it as a relevant proposal worthy of consideration already provides a partial endorsement. From its side, the US, and particularly the Trump administration with its unilateralist bent, has no reason to accept any diplomatic process that does not serve the promotion of its own plan.

Creating diplomatic traction around the Trump plan would make it harder for future US and Israeli governments to ignore the Trump parameters as a mere historical blip. It would also make it more difficult for Palestinians and others to appeal to international principles, such as with regard to the illegality of settlements, which are normalised in the US plan.

The US plan has created a major fracture in the international consensus that supports the two-state solution and international law. Instead of inadvertently enlarging the fracture through its reflexive pro-negotiation bias, Europe should be working to restore the international framework. (It is worth adding here that most of the same international principles are equally relevant for the pursuit of a one-state solution with equal rights.)

3. What are the arguments *in favour* of negotiations and diplomatic engagement?

In EuMEP's perception, virtually no European diplomats think that the Trump plan is good for peace. But many people argue in favour of diplomatic engagement following the plan, e.g. through the Quartet or by encouraging the Palestinians put forward a counterproposal.

Besides general political deference to the US, proponents of diplomatic engagement variously argue that:

- This is an opportunity to restart negotiations. The stalemate has gone on for too long.
- The US plan does not have to be the point of departure for negotiations.
- Negotiations could at least improve the US plan.
- If there is no process or counterproposal, the US plan will be the only game in town.
- A diplomatic process could buy some time and thus avert or at least delay annexation.
- The US plan is bad, but it is better than nothing. Time is not on the Palestinians' side.

All of these arguments are highly questionable. They are addressed one by one in the next six sections (4 – 9):

4. Is there a possibility of restarting meaningful negotiations?

Any legitimate solution to this conflict must be negotiated. But at least as long as President Trump is in the White House, there is *zero* possibility of negotiations achieving progress towards a viable resolution of the conflict, as the administration's plan promotes the opposite: perpetual occupation. Of the three key parties to negotiations – Israel, PLO and the US – only the PLO is supportive of the two-state solution in line with agreed international principles, while the other two parties are currently decidedly against these principles.

Supporting negotiations on the basis of the Trump plan is not only futile but counterproductive if the goal is a viable and genuinely negotiated solution.

5. Could there be negotiations without the Trump plan as a starting point?

There is no way that the Trump administration and Israel under Netanyahu would agree to negotiations that are not led exclusively by the US and based on the Trump plan. There is no incentive for either the US or Israel to agree to any other less favourable arrangement. Thus, advocating for negotiations at this time is implicitly helping establish the US plan as a basis for negotiations.

Instead of promoting negotiations now, the EU should state clearly that it *only* supports negotiations on the basis of internationally agreed parameters and principles. There is currently no realistic prospect of talks happening on those terms – any such proposal would be inevitably ignored or rejected by both Israel and the US. However, the goal is to protect those terms of reference for a future beyond Trump and Netanyahu.

6. Can the Trump plan be improved through negotiations?

The real discussions are already taking place in the joint US-Israel committee, led by David Friedman, mapping out the areas to be annexed. There is no way this US administration will agree to amend significantly its plan in favour of the Palestinians, given that it is firmly grounded in the ideological view of Friedman, Greenblatt, Kushner and the Israeli right.

If the Palestinians provided input as suggested by Kushner, they might at best achieve limited cosmetic changes in the exact demarcation of the areas to be annexed – at the cost of entirely giving up the integrity of their position by accepting the plan as a legitimate basis. With the Trump plan proposing to annex 30% of the West Bank, there is currently no way to scale it back to anywhere close to the 2% – 6% range that was discussed between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas in 2008. Given the likely pressure from Israel and settler leaders to further enlarge the areas to be annexed and shrink the areas for the Palestinians by employing “security” justifications and given the record of the Trump administration in siding with Israeli positions, the final demarcations may be even more detrimental to the Palestinians than the initial US map. The same goes for other aspects of the plan: Jerusalem, security, refugees and the conditions for the Palestinian “state”.

7. Could a diplomatic process provide an alternative to the Trump plan?

It is true that in the absence of another diplomatic initiative, the Trump plan may appear to be the only game in town. The Europeans together with Arab states, Russia or the UN could promote a diplomatic initiative based around internationally agreed parameters for the two-state solution in order to create a sense of an alternative to the US plan. However, the only way this could have a positive effect is if the involved players are willing to act in opposition to the US rather than bridge their differences with the Americans. They would have to be willing to hold the line in the face of US pressure, even if the US refuses to take part. The Trump plan would have to remain off the table. There should be no illusions that this could lead to actual negotiations because Israel and the US will clearly not engage in a process on terms that they have worked to get rid of.

The ambivalent European and Arab reactions to the Trump plan so far do not inspire much confidence in their readiness to push back on the US. The lack of unified support for the [failed Palestinian resolution](#) at the UNSC in February provides a note of caution. In the absence of a firm line, any initiative is more likely to drift in the US direction and breathe life into the Trump plan, conferring legitimacy on it instead of constraining it.

8. Could a diplomatic process avert or delay annexation?

There is an argument that drawing the US into a diplomatic process could buy some time and delay unilateral annexation until there is a new administration in the US or a different government in Israel who might change the course.

The first objection to this argument is that the Trump plan paves the way for annexation rather than being an alternative to it. A US-Israel committee has been established to map out the areas to annex. The timetable is likely to be determined primarily by political considerations such as the US election and Israeli government coalition dynamics rather than external factors.

That said, it *is* conceivable that the Trump administration would postpone annexation if there is a possibility of bringing Arab, European or other countries behind a diplomatic process centred around the US plan. In the US and Israeli calculus, a diplomatic breakthrough in shifting the international paradigm could be worth delaying formal annexation. This could be the case in particular if Trump is re-elected and Netanyahu holds on to power in Israel, which provides more time to carry out annexation.

However, shifting the international consensus is not a price the Europeans or others should be willing to pay. If the choice is ultimately between immediate US-backed Israeli annexation and an internationally endorsed plan that allows for the same annexation a bit later, then the latter is clearly a worse outcome. Buying into the plan means endorsing annexation, as well all the other deeply problematic elements of the plan (Israel's security control over the Palestinians, unworkable conditions for the Palestinian "state", the biased narrative denying the reality of occupation and any injustices against the Palestinians). Moreover, legitimising the US scheme, which conflicts with basic international norms, would be a greater blow to the global legal order, the preservation of which is a core EU interest, than unilateral Israeli annexation supported by the US alone.

Conversely, it is *not* conceivable that the Trump administration will delay or abandon annexation for the sake of a diplomatic process centred around the two-state solution based on internationally agreed parameters. There is no way to square this circle.

9. Is the Trump plan better than nothing?

Some argue that the US plan is better than the status quo or unilateral annexation, that time is not on the side of the Palestinians and that there is no alternative. This argument may get further traction in the case of Trump's re-election. But it does not stand up to scrutiny.

As argued above, if the choice is between US-backed Israeli annexation unrecognised by the rest of the world and an international endorsement of the Trump plan that allows for the same annexation, the latter is clearly a more fatal outcome for the Palestinians. This is because the latter would give an international seal of approval for permanent Israeli domination over their lives and because the plan combines annexation with an additional load of anti-Palestinian policy shifts. It would leave the Palestinians with nothing in the international realm to hold on to in challenging the status quo in the future.

It is also highly questionable whether the Trump plan would improve Palestinians' lives. While the plan envisions enlarging the areas under Palestinian administration to 70% of the West Bank, this is conditional on meeting a set of difficult, if not impossible, demands, with the US and Israel serving as the arbiters of Palestinian compliance. Given the record of the Trump administration in siding with Israel and never criticising its policies towards the Palestinians, it is hard to imagine it exerting pressure on Israel to really hand over those areas. Early indications are proving this point. While the Trump plan proposes to establish a Palestinian tourism zone in Atarot, Israel approved plans to build 9,000 settlement units in that area in February, less than two weeks after the US plan's publication. While the plan expects Israel

to halt demolitions of pre-existing structures in areas allocated to the Palestinians under the plan, Israel has continued demolitions in those areas since the publication. In neither case was there any sign of US protest.

Likewise, the economic component of the US plan is so detached from the reality on the ground that it is clearly not something that could be implemented in earnest. Contrary to the rhetoric about enhancing Palestinian prosperity, the US plan allows for Israel to annex the Jordan Valley, which has always been considered a vital area of major agricultural and economic potential for the future Palestinian state. And while the US has cut its own funding for the Palestinians, the plan does not even provide clarity as to where the promised USD 50 billion for the economic part would come from – besides vague [comments](#) made by US officials in the media pointing to the Gulf states, Europe and Asia.

Rather than improving Palestinian lives, the US plan is likely to worsen the situation of the Palestinians on the ground significantly further: undermining Palestinian land ownership in the areas to be annexed by Israel, jeopardising their movement within the West Bank through these areas, increasing pressure on Palestinian communities located inside the annexed areas to move out, and more. By further skewing the Israeli-Palestinian power asymmetry, the plan is likely to embolden Israel and the settlement movement to expand further and restrict the Palestinians even more – which is likely to fuel more conflict and violence in the future. It signals that Israel can do anything it wants in the occupied territories and that the Palestinians do not count. International endorsement of the plan would only amplify this message.

Conclusion: The Trump plan is even more detrimental for peace and Palestinian future than the continuation of the status quo or unilateral annexation alone.

10. What about a diplomatic process in the Quartet or another multilateral forum?

The problem is that if the Trump plan is on the table in the Quartet or any other such forum, even alongside another proposal for a two-state solution based on internationally agreed parameters, it will help legitimise the plan as a relevant proposal deserving at least equal consideration.

The only way the Quartet could help rather than hinder the goal of genuine peace is if the three non-US members use it to jointly push back on the US plan rather than working towards a compromise or promoting direct negotiations between the parties. The non-US members would have to be prepared to hold the line in the face of US pressure and not budge even if the US refuses to attend, as it is extremely unlikely the US will agree to hold multilateral meetings on terms that are not to its liking, i.e. in a way that does not promote its plan.

Europeans should also bear in mind that the Quartet or any other multilateral forum is not an academic seminar in which different proposals are assessed on their merits but an asymmetric power game in which the Americans call most of the shots. In the history of the Quartet since its establishment in 2002, the EU, Russia and the UN have rarely succeeded in counterbalancing the pro-Israel bias in US foreign policy. The Quartet has never brought about multilateral mediation; more often, the US has successfully used it to obtain a multilateral cover for its unilateral policies. While the EU has been the principal driver behind the Quartet, the US has always been the *primus inter pares*, around which everything revolves.²

The experience of the Paris peace conference that was held with the participation of US Secretary of State Kerry in the last days of the Obama administration in January 2017 demonstrates a similar point. The French had to bend over backwards and make a number of adjustments to the terms of the meeting and the joint statement in order to keep the US on board. As a result, the US effectively dictated the terms, even under a much friendlier and more closely aligned administration than the current one.

² Nathalie Tocci, [The EU, the Middle East Quartet and \(In\)effective Multilateralism](#), Mercury e-Paper, 2011.

11. But don't the Palestinians support a Quartet initiative?

In his UNSC speech on 11 February, Palestinian President Abbas called on the Quartet and other UNSC members to “convene an international peace conference” on the basis of existing UNSC resolutions, a two-state vision and the Arab Peace Initiative and for “the establishment of an international mechanism with the Quartet and any other countries to oversee negotiations between the parties”.

For the reasons described above, the Palestinians risk shooting themselves in the foot with this idea. If the US takes part, it is unrealistic to have a Quartet-led peace conference or mechanism on the terms stated by Abbas and without effectively promoting the US plan. The Palestinians are in a very difficult position and have few options left in the international arena. Their support for a Quartet initiative is partly a result of pressure from all relevant sides – Arabs and Europeans – to engage. Instead, Europeans committed to the two-state solution and international law should back the Palestinians in their rejection of the US plan and ask their representatives hard questions as to what they realistically want to achieve via the Quartet.

12. Can the UNSC statement of 24 February in support of a two-state solution be a model?

It is possible that a Quartet meeting would produce a similar statement to the UN Security Council [press elements](#) released by the Belgian presidency of the Council on 24 February with the approval of all members, including the US. This is the only multilateral statement on MEPP since the release of the Trump plan. However, it is very doubtful that this is a win.

The press elements reiterate support for a “negotiated two-state solution”, using terms such as “international law”, “secure and recognizable borders”, “just, comprehensive and lasting peace” and “credible negotiations”, while asking the parties to “refrain from undermining the viability of the two-state solution”.

On the positive side, the statement does not mention the US plan, which reflects the lack of international support for it. On the other hand, the UNSC agreed to remove the word “sovereign” from the language about two states and the statement only “recalls” rather than “reaffirms” past UN resolutions. This closely follows US [red lines](#) in discussions on a possible UNSC resolution, which failed earlier in February.

In the context of a UNSC that is increasingly divided on multiple issues globally, the statement may be perceived as an accomplishment in bridging (or glossing over) the divide between the US and the rest of the members. However, it also risks emptying the language in the statement of any meaning. Given that the US plan goes directly against the established meaning of the above-mentioned concepts, creating a pretence of agreement around them does more to erode the international consensus than to restore it. Furthermore, it plays into the US tactic of dressing up the Trump plan as a two-state scheme promoting a Palestinian state with a capital in East Jerusalem, which the Trump administration has employed to help bring other players on board (see e.g. Jared Kushner’s [presentation](#) to the UNSC and Congress).

While a case could have been made for such a statement in the UNSC to improve broader dynamics in that body, it is hard to see any benefit of a Quartet meeting coming to a similar sort of fictional consensus.

13. Should the Palestinians re-engage the US?

The PLO leadership made an active effort to engage Trump and his “peace advisers” at the beginning of his term in 2017, even as the new administration already signalled a sharp “pro-Israel” turn. Irrespective of Palestinian engagement, Trump announced his decision to recognise Jerusalem as Israel’s capital in

December 2017 – without consulting the Palestinians or addressing their concerns in any way. That illustrates about how realistic it is to think that Palestinian engagement could have a positive effect.

Since Trump’s Jerusalem decision, Palestinian boycott of the US administration has been one of the main obstacles to the US’s paradigm-shifting strategy. It is the most important factor preventing the Trump plan from becoming the accepted new baseline. Had the Palestinians retained contact with Trump and his representatives, it would have merely facilitated a smoother and faster path towards the publication of the US plan. If the Palestinians re-engaged now, it would signal endorsement of the plan as new terms of reference replacing the agreed two-state parameters. It would also lead more Arab and European governments to see the plan as a workable baseline for negotiations. As argued in section 6 above, it is very unlikely the Palestinians could secure significant improvements of the plan through engagement.

The Palestinians have been bearing the brunt of boycotting the US alone, without much support from Arab or European countries. Instead of encouraging the Palestinians to talk to the US, the Europeans should take up their own responsibility, state that they only support negotiations on the basis of agreed parameters and back the Palestinians in their legitimate opposition to the US agenda.

14. Should the Palestinians present a counterproposal?

Some argue that the Palestinians need to put their own proposal on the table so that the Trump plan does not remain the only game in town. However, the Trump plan itself is a counterproposal to the long-standing proposal for a two-state solution based on internationally agreed parameters, UN resolutions, Arab Peace Initiative, etc. If the Palestinians restate a general proposal based on pre-1967 lines, it will bring nothing new to the table and will be dismissed by the US.

If the Palestinians present a more detailed proposal, reflecting the concessions they were contemplating in previous negotiations on land swaps, refugees, etc. (which are well known from, for example, the leaked [Palestine Papers](#)), that will formalise those concessions, which were supposed to be made as part of the give-and-take of reciprocal negotiations. If the Palestinians do this prior to any negotiations, they will give up their bargaining chips in advance and move the goalposts further in their disfavour, without getting anything in turn. Moreover, if such a Palestinian proposal is put forward alongside the US plan in the Quartet or another international forum, it will create a sense that the compromise lies somewhere in the middle (even if the Trump administration and Israel are extremely unlikely to agree even to such a half-way position).

Instead of putting the onus on the Palestinians to respond to the US plan, it is up to Europeans to acknowledge the PLO’s peace-oriented approach in line with agreed international principles, point out the Israeli and American rejection thereof and assert existing EU parameters and positions on the conflict as the EU’s own form of a “counterproposal”.

15. Could an outcome halfway between the two-state solution and the Trump plan work?

Some believe that negotiations could lead to an outcome somewhere between the Trump plan and the classical two-state solution. But even if such a half-way outcome were feasible (see section 6 for why it is extremely unlikely), it would not be a legitimate and viable solution. The problem is that the two-state solution under Clinton and Kerry parameters was already so weighted in Israel’s favour that there is simply no space for further concessions on the Palestinian side that would be compatible with the notion of a sovereign and viable state.

The Palestinian state, as envisioned under US Presidents from Clinton to Obama, would comprise 22% of historic Palestine, divided between the West Bank and Gaza, with land swaps allowing Israel to retain

some of its settlements stretching into the West Bank and encircling Jerusalem, and would not be allowed to have its own military. Palestinian refugees in the neighbouring countries would be allowed to resettle in the new Palestinian state, with only a small fraction allowed to return to their or their ancestors' homes in today's Israel.

Any further downgrade of the future Palestinian state, even if more moderate than the Trump plan, would cross the line between a sovereign state and a mere bantustan under effective Israeli control — and is certain to be rejected by the Palestinians, just as it would be by any other society in their place. Like the Trump plan, any plan that is less than the Clinton and Kerry parameters would also go against the basics of an international order composed of formally equal sovereign states.

To achieve peace, the Palestinians must either be allowed to have a sovereign state in a two-state model or be granted equal citizenship in a one-state model. Any form of permanent domination by Israel that gives them neither of these two options is unworkable and should be unacceptable.

16. Does it matter if the Trump plan is a starting point or the end?

In his [remarks](#) in the European Parliament on 11 February, HRVP Borrell dwelled on the question of whether the US proposals are a starting point for negotiations or the end. However, this is not the issue. Even if the plan were open for negotiations, accepting it as a point of departure would do away with the existing parameters which the EU professes to support. Moreover, given that the US and Israel already set up a committee to map out the areas to annex, the room for amending the plan in favour of the Palestinians is extremely limited, as argued in section 6 above.

17. What are possible scenarios under different US administrations and Israeli governments?

- Democratic administration in the US: International diplomatic traction around the Trump plan will make it harder for a new Democratic administration to completely abandon and reverse Trump's policies.
- Gantz-led government in Israel: Appearance of wider international support for the Trump plan could reduce Gantz's room for manoeuvre and force him to follow the US plan more closely than he might otherwise want to.
- Second Trump administration + Likud-led government in Israel: Annexation seems inevitable. International engagement around the plan will effectively legitimise annexation and make it worse by also endorsing the rest of the plan, including its untenable demands on the Palestinians and its deeply biased narrative.
- Conclusion: Under any scenario, international traction around the Trump plan will do more harm than good. The more the EU does to hold the line on its positions, the more space it leaves for a potential US Democratic administration or a Gantz-led government in Israel to discard the Trump plan.

18. Positive agenda: What to do instead?

The Trump plan puts Europe into a difficult position, and there are no easy answers to the challenges it presents. However, instead of promoting negotiations, multilateral diplomacy or Palestinian re-engagement — and thus probably making things even worse — the Europeans do have a number of more productive options on diplomatic, declaratory and operational levels:

- 1) Engage Arab countries and potentially other powers in order to demonstrate a united front in support of agreed international principles and in opposition to annexation and the Trump plan. For example, organise an EU meeting with key Arab countries to publicly state these positions.
- 2) Defend the Palestinians against US efforts to blame them as rejectionists through public statements acknowledging Palestinian commitment to the two-state solution and willingness to negotiate on the basis of internationally agreed parameters, in contrast with Israel's rejection thereof.
- 3) State that the EU *only* supports negotiations on the basis of internationally agreed parameters, UN resolutions and international law, in order to protect those terms of reference for the future and not allow them to be replaced by the "Trump parameters".
- 4) Ensure that multilateral fora such as the AHLC donor group continue to operate exclusively on the basis of internationally agreed principles.
- 5) Develop concrete measures to address annexation (whether potential formal annexation or ongoing de facto annexation), including through further differentiation between Israel and the settlements:
 - a) Task an inter-service body in the European Commission and the EEAS to identify and prepare such measures at the EU level.
 - b) Launch a parallel discussion among Member States (Council working group or an informal coalition of the willing) to come up with measures to be implemented at the national level.
- 6) Consider recognition of the State of Palestine by a coalition of willing Member States. Unlike Sweden, make the recognition explicitly on pre-1967 lines in order to make clear the incompatibility of such recognition with the US notion of a non-sovereign and fragmented Palestinian "state".
- 7) Get serious about advancing intra-Palestinian reconciliation and democratic revival in order to strengthen the Palestinian ability to withstand harsh Israeli and US measures including potential annexation. Combine EU support for Palestinians with pressure on Ramallah in support of Palestinian unity and democracy.
- 8) Given the move towards perpetual occupation, call on Israel to ensure equal rights of all inhabitants under its effective control on the basis of IHL and IHRL. While retaining support for the two-state solution, declare that if it no longer proves feasible, the only alternative to ensure equality of both peoples would be through a single binational state.

The above requires both the EEAS and Member States to step up instead of hiding behind one another. Some of the recommendations also require Member States to take initiatives in smaller groups or coalitions of the willing instead of being hostage to the lowest common denominator.

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European Middle East Project (EuMEP) is a Brussels-based organisation focusing on European and international policymaking on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Combining the roles of analytical think-tank, advocacy NGO and coordination hub, EuMEP works closely with leading civil society organisations and experts in Israel, Palestine, Europe and worldwide. EuMEP promotes just, fact-based and effective policies by the EU, European governments, and the wider international community. It supports freedom, dignity and security for all Israelis and Palestinians. Website: www.eumep.org