



Published on *The American Task Force on Palestine* (<http://www.americantaskforce.org>)

[Home](#) > [Printer-friendly PDF](#) > [Printer-friendly PDF](#)

Cooperation Could Limit Damage After UN Palestinian Vote: View

Bloomberg (Editorial)

September 15, 2011 - 12:00am

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-09-16/cooperation-could-limit-damage-after-un...> [1]

September 16, 2011

Media Outlet: Bloomberg

Article Type: Editorial

Date: September 15, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-09-16/cooperation-could-limit-damage-after-un...> [2]

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is like a boat sailing at full speed toward a waterfall, with the whole world watching from the shore and afraid to intervene. Western governments must act now to minimize the damage.

Palestinians seem determined to push for a resolution in the United Nations General Assembly that recognizes an independent Palestinian state. In our view, this is a tragic mistake that could end up hurting Palestinian and Israeli interests, set back efforts to restart negotiations and endanger an already unstable region.

The irony is that we agree with Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. He has distanced himself from the resolution, sensibly arguing that a UN vote won't change the reality of Israeli occupation. Instead, Fayyad has focused on building the institutions needed for statehood and cooperating with Israel against terrorist groups whose murder of innocent Israelis only undermines the Palestinians' cause.

The day after the resolution passes -- and it will pass -- many Palestinians will surely realize that Fayyad is right, that nothing has changed, and that they are further away than ever from achieving their legitimate goal of an independent state. In their frustration and anger, there is a substantial risk they will lash out against Israel, the U.S., Europe and President Mahmoud Abbas's government. If that anger gives terrorist groups new reason for violent attacks on Israeli settlements or within the recognized borders of Israel, the prospects for peace will be set back and more people on both sides will suffer.

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak rightly fears the UN vote will unleash a "diplomatic tsunami" against Israel that will deepen its international isolation. Yet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has done little to prevent this mess, telling his U.S. allies time after time that their suggestions could upset his center-right coalition government. In conjunction with new hostility from Egypt and Turkey, the UN vote promises Israel the most comprehensive

diplomatic isolation it has faced in many years.

The U.S. and its European allies should be most concerned about the effect that an outbreak of violence in the West Bank would have on the region. They have lived with conflict between Israelis and Palestinians for more than 60 years. But the popular demonstrations that are sweeping the Middle East have created a new dynamic. The Sept. 9 attack on the Israeli Embassy in Cairo by an Egyptian mob might be the harbinger of things to come. Nightly television images of Israeli troops armed with American weapons and shooting Palestinian demonstrators could well spark new waves of anti-Western violence. The popular uprisings in the Arab world this past year have been a reason for hope. Left alone, the Israeli-Palestinian issue could change that into something dark and dangerous.

The Quartet of the U.S., the European Union, Russia and the UN should be working to contain the damage caused by the Palestinian resolution. Security cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian defense and police forces is the best way to avoid anti-Israeli violence and demonstrate to both sides the value of working together. That is why members of the U.S. Congress who are friendly to Israel are misguided in their threats to cut off assistance to Abbas's government, including its security forces. On the contrary, those Palestinian police who have won the trust of the Israeli defense establishment should be given additional riot-control training and equipment.

On the diplomatic front, outside powers should press now for a commitment from the Palestinian leadership that Abbas will issue an unequivocal statement -- immediately after the General Assembly approves the resolution -- supporting negotiations with Israel as the only way to create a Palestinian state.

Furthermore, the Palestinians will gain nothing from forcing the U.S. to veto a resolution. That's why diplomatic efforts should urge the Palestinians to avoid the UN Security Council. A resolution in the UN General Assembly is bad enough.

At the same time, the Quartet should urge Netanyahu to resist pressure to respond to events at the UN by increasing settlement construction or by refusing to transfer Palestinian tax revenue, collected by Israel, to pay Palestinian civil servants. Making life harder for the average Palestinian will only increase the likelihood of a violent reaction.

There is much blame to go around. Israel, the Palestinians and the Quartet are all partially responsible for the current predicament. But finger-pointing will achieve nothing. The best that can be achieved is to limit the damage and set the stage for a new effort at peace once this diplomatic disaster has played out.

TAGS: [International Community](#) ^[3] [Palestinian Statehood](#) ^[4]

[Events](#) | [Daily News](#) | [About Us](#) | [Resources](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Donate](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

 [Front Page Features](#)  [World Press Roundup](#)  [ATFP in the News](#)  [Policy and Analysis](#)
 [Briefing Summaries](#)

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 8 2020 - 8:54pm):

http://www.americantaskforce.org/daily_news_article/2011/09/15/1316059200_25

Links:

[1] <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-09-16/cooperation-could-limit-damage-after-united-nations-palestinian-vote-view.html>

[2] http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-09-16/cooperation-could-limit-damage-after-united-nations-palestinian-vote-view.html#1_undefined,0_

[3] http://www.americantaskforce.org/international_community

[4] http://www.americantaskforce.org/palestinian_statehood