

Palestinians Complain That Some Arab States Are Not Following Their Orders

by Hugh Fitzgerald



The Palestinians are enraged that the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain are attempting to block their resolution, to be voted on at the upcoming Arab League meeting, that condemns the UAE's "normalization" of relations with Israel. The story is [here](#).

The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and other Gulf states are trying to foil a Palestinian draft resolution that aims to prevent normalization between Israel and the Arab countries, Palestinian officials said Sunday.

Why should the UAE have its most important policies decided by the Palestinians? That is the question the Emiratis had been asking themselves, before they took the plunge and decided to

normalize relations with Israel. If the Emiratis can greatly benefit, as they believe, from closer – “normal” – relations with Israel, who is Mahmoud Abbas or Ismail Haniyeh to say them nay?

The draft resolution has been presented to the Arab League, whose foreign ministers are expected to hold a video conference on September 9 to discuss the latest developments concerning the Palestinian issue.

On Monday, Arab envoys to the Arab League will hold a meeting in preparation for Wednesday’s virtual conference.

The Palestinian draft resolution calls on all Arab states to adhere to the Arab Peace Initiative and United Nations resolutions pertaining to the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Adopted in 2002, the Arab Peace Initiative calls for normalizing relations between the Arab world and Israel in exchange for a full withdrawal by Israel to the pre-1967 armistice lines, a “just settlement” of the Palestinian refugee issue based on UN Resolution 194 and the establishment of a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital.

In 2002, the Arab Peace Initiative committed the Arab states to normalizing relations with Israel only after the Jewish state had been squeezed back within the 1949 armistice lines. But that was then, and this is now. Nearly twenty years have gone by. And the UAE has other, more important interests to consider, that weren’t of such significance in 2002. The UAE wants to strengthen its security ties to Israel, which is the Sunni Arabs’ most important and steadfast ally against an aggressive Iran, that is far more of a threat now than it was in 2002. The UAE would like to benefit economically, too, from normalizing relations with Israel, a country which, the Emirati bloggers on social media keep pointing out, has never been at war with the Emirates, nor ever threatened the

Emirates.

Israel today has become an economic powerhouse, as it was not yet in 2002, and now has much to offer the UAE. Abu Dhabi has money to invest; Israel has start-ups that would welcome that investment. The UAE can increase its involvement with Israel through trade, tourism and, above all, technology, where Israel's amazing achievements have earned it the title of Start-Up Nation. The Emirates can only benefit from Israeli advances in computer software, cybersecurity, solar energy, waste water management, medical equipment, medicines, and a dozen other fields, including defense, where Israel can supply the UAE with laser anti-missile devices, advanced drones, the Iron Dome batteries, and much, much more. Why, given all that, should the UAE not go its own way, make decisions strictly on the basis of furthering its national interest, instead of remaining stuck to the tar baby of an Arab agreement from 2002, reached years before Iran became such a menace to the Sunni Arabs of the Gulf, and before Israel pulled so dramatically ahead in so many fields?

The Palestinian Authority has accused the UAE of violating the terms of the Arab Peace Initiative by agreeing to normalize relations with Israel in exchange for nothing.

The UAE "agreeing to normalize relations In exchange for nothing"? The UAE managed to achieve something for the ungrateful Palestinians that they apparently have forgotten: a commitment by Israel to "suspend" the extension of its sovereignty to parts of the West Bank, including the Jordan Valley and the five major settlement blocs. Considering how the Palestinians have since been cursing the Emirates up hill and down dale, some Emiratis must no doubt be thinking that they ought not to have bothered.

Immediately after the announcement of the Israel-UAE deal, the PA called for an emergency meeting of Arab foreign

ministers to discuss the “dangers” of the normalization agreement and to stop other Arab countries from establishing relations with Israel. The PA has repeatedly accused the UAE of “stabbing the Palestinians in the back” and “betraying al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem and the Palestinian issue.”

The Arab League, however, did not comply with the PA demand and said the foreign ministers will hold their regular meeting on September 9.

According to some reports, Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit was behind the decision not to hold an emergency meeting of the foreign ministers due to current differences in the Arab world regarding the issue of normalization with Israel.

What a drama queen the PA turns out to be. The UAE is “stabbing the Palestinians in the back”? But the Emirates have been the only Arab state to actually achieve something of value – that Israeli agreement to suspend its extension of sovereignty in the West Bank – for the Palestinians.

The PA hopes the foreign ministers will endorse the Palestinian draft resolution and reiterate the Arab world’s unwavering support for the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state based on the pre-1967 lines.

Arab League resolutions, if not passed unanimously, are binding only on the states that voted for them. If the UAE does not vote for the Palestinian resolution, it will not be bound by it. And it looks as if Bahrain certainly, and Egypt very likely, will either abstain or vote no on such a resolution, and possibly be joined by Oman and Morocco. That “unwavering support” looks pretty wavering to me.

Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates are trying to obstruct our draft resolution,” a senior PA official told The

Jerusalem Post. "The two countries are opposed to any resolution that opposes normalization with Israel."

Bassam Salhi, a member of the PLO Executive Committee, called on the Arab countries to abide by the terms of the Arab Peace Initiative. Those who oppose the draft resolution are "stabbing the Palestinians in the back," he said.

Hussein Hamayel, a senior member of the ruling Fatah faction, said Bahrain's opposition to the draft resolution "places it on the side of the enemies of the Arabs and Muslims."

How self-regarding and o'erweening these Palestinians are: those Arabs who refuse to submit to their dictates thereby become, in their arrogant view, not just their enemies but "the enemies of [all] the Arabs and Muslims."

Some Gulf states have been exerting pressure on the Arab countries to avoid adopting any resolution that condemns the UAE for its deal with Israel, another PA official said.

These Gulf states include not only the UAE, but also Bahrain, Oman, and perhaps even Saudi Arabia, which has remained silent on the UAE's "normalization," but – significantly – has approved the use of Saudi air space by Israeli planes flying to and from the UAE. Egypt, too, has expressed its approval of the UAE's normalization of ties to Israel. Given that Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE are the three most important Arab countries, the Palestinians are likely to be badly bruised – albeit "virtually" – at this Arab League meeting.

"Under the current circumstances, I doubt if the foreign ministers would be able to agree on a joint statement regarding the Palestinian issue," the official told the Post.

This P.A. official is at least a realist, unlike Mahmoud Abbas. He knows that it's not only the UAE, but several other

Arab countries that have moved beyond the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative and, exasperated with the refusal of the Palestinians to negotiate, have decided to ignore them, and following the UAE's example, may even make their own "normalization" agreements with Israel.

The PA also wants the Arab foreign ministers to discuss financial aid to the Palestinians, he said, adding: "The Arab countries haven't fulfilled their financial obligations to the Palestinians since the beginning of this year."

"The Arab countries haven't fulfilled their financial obligations to the Palestinians"? This is the kind of assumption by the Palestinians – that the Arab world owes them a living – that infuriates the other Arabs. The Arab states may, if they so wish, contribute to the care and feeding of the Palestinians in order to stave off chaos in Gaza and PA territories, but they are not pleased about discovering just how much of their aid has been pocketed by the corrupt and cruel Palestinian leaders who are indifferent to the well-being of those whom they pretend to care about. What were those two Hamas leaders, Khaled Meshaal and Moussa Abu Marzouk, thinking about during those years when they each managed to accumulate at least \$2.5 billion during their years of rule in impoverished Gaza? What was going through Mahmoud Abbas's mind when he amassed a fortune of \$400 million, much of it, as soon as it arrived at his office, being immediately deposited in accounts in the names of Abbas's grandsons? And here they are, these shameless Palestinian thieves – cronies of Abbas and the other bigshots – daring to complain about the Arab states' "financial obligations" to them.

The Arab League meeting in mid-September will provide the Palestinians with a salutary shock. Their leaders will learn that they are no longer the center of the Arab universe; that they are not "owed" anything by the Arab states, including those supposed "financial obligations"; that the UAE is not

about to change its mind, but rather, its businessmen have been signing deals with Israeli businesses, hastening the process of “normalization”; worst of all, there are several other Arab states that openly or silently approve of the UAE’s move and are even now considering when, and how, they should go and do likewise.

Yipping and yapping, yet again the PA and Hamas dogs bark, but the caravan moves on.

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