

The Jewish Democratic Initiative joins multiple Diaspora Jewish organisations in condemning the terms of US President Trump's plan, "Vision for Peace, Prosperity and a Brighter Future". Whilst we encourage negotiations for a peaceful and just resolution to the conflict over land and rights in Israel/Palestine, this plan is a blueprint for illegal annexation, permanent occupation and perpetual conflict.

The plan's policies are not visionary. They merely echo the Israeli Settler movement's ambitions for an expanded Israeli state by legitimising annexation, expropriation and expulsion of Palestinians. Negotiation requires respect be afforded to all participants. This unilateral plan was crafted without consultation with Palestinians, thereby ensuring its failure.

An enduring peace agreement cannot be achieved through threat and subjugation. Legitimising illegal settlement and annexation places the "Vision" in conflict with international law which developed in response to the horrors of the Holocaust and World War II. It is incumbent upon Israel as a State within the family of Nations to respect a rules-based international order. Unilateral annexation by Israel could attract UN sanctions and prosecution at the International Criminal Court.

Perhaps the most cynical part of the "Peace to Prosperity" vision is its failure to demarcate borders enabling a viable Palestinian state. "The Vision" contemplates a Palestinian region comprising several non-contiguous areas intersected by Israeli territory and including Israeli settler enclaves each connected to Israel by an exclusive highway. Capping this fantasy, the West Bank will connect to Gaza via a tunnel under Israeli territory. The result is a reduced Palestinian entity without control over its airspace, natural resources or borders thereby perpetuating Palestinian dependency on Israel.

As South Africans, we are aware of the dangers of imposing unilateral territorial constructs on ethnically determined groups. South Africa's Bantustan policy failed in terms of human rights and international law. Implementation drew international ire and eventually both internal and external pressure resulted in sanctions that helped to bring down the regime.

The State of Israel is courting danger internally and internationally by taking its lead from the Trump administration in ignoring long-standing international consensus on the outlines of an Israeli-Palestinian resolution to the conflict. Discarding Palestinians' rights violates deep values and principles of Judaism which regards human dignity as sacrosanct and justice as an imperative.

The Jewish Democratic Initiative is committed to working with Jews in Israel and internationally to reject this charade. We aspire to an authentic "Vision" of a viable state for Palestinians along-side Israel.