

Trump's First Offer was a Better Deal for Palestine — and Israel

In early 2016, then-candidate Donald Trump pronounced himself “neutral” in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. He also expressed pessimism that a deal between the two sides was even possible: “I have friends of mine that are tremendous businesspeople, that are really great negotiators, [and] they say it’s not doable.”

It didn’t take Trump long to reverse himself — when it was explained to him that \$100 million in campaign assistance from casino magnate Sheldon Adelson depended on such a reversal, he re-booted as “the most pro-Israel presidential candidate in history,” which in Adelsonese means “the most pro-Likud/pro-Netanyahu/anti-Palestinian candidate in the election.”

Nearly four years later — after numerous sops to Likud and favors to save Netanyahu’s premiership amidst his indictment on corruption charges, including moving the US embassy to Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem — Trump unveiled his “deal of the century.”

The deal, in summary: The Israeli regime gets everything it wants; Palestine’s Arabs get to keep some, but not all, of what they already have while giving up quite a bit.

They supposedly get a “state,” but that’s neither Trump’s nor Israel’s to give: The State of Palestine already exists and is already recognized by most other countries.

They get a “capital” in a sliver of East Jerusalem, but Israel will annex even more Palestinian land.

The new, fake, quasi-state of Palestine will be required to “demilitarize” and trust Israel to defend it, and Israel will exercise veto power over both its foreign policy and its internal security policy.

Trump’s offer is quite a shift from his former “neutrality.” As Lando Calrissian said in *The Empire Strikes Back*, “this deal is getting worse all the time.” Worse for the Palestinians, obviously, but worse for Israel as well.

US aid and military support have turned Israel into a spoiled child among states. It does what it wants and gets what it wants, not because it deserves to or because it’s able to itself, but because it has a generous and muscular big brother doling out money to it and threatening to beat up anyone who questions its entitlement.

At some point, that relationship will end as all relationships do. The longer that relationship continues, the weaker, more vulnerable, and more over-extended Israel becomes.

If Israel's regime was interested in peace, or even in its country's survival, it would unilaterally withdraw to its 1967 borders, begin negotiating administration of Palestinians' "right of return" to their stolen land, and recognize the existing State of Palestine.

And if Trump was really "pro-Israel," he'd return to his position of "neutrality" in the matter. Even if it meant refunding Sheldon Adelson's bribe, eating a little crow, and explaining another change of heart to his confused evangelical supporters.