

Point of View

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What Follows the Disengagement Plan?

On the eve of the visits of Sharon and Abu-Mazen to the United States, the question of what follows the Disengagement Plan becomes acute. Below are five policy-options.

What's the Issue?

- Israel's Disengagement Plan does not offer guidelines for the ensuing political process aside from a reference connecting it to the Roadmap.
- PM Sharon reiterates his commitment to the Roadmap and to the idea of a Palestinian State with Provisional Borders (**hereinafter "PSPB"**) before discussions concerning Permanent Status.
- However, it appears that the Roadmap is heading towards an impasse:
 - Israel maintains that a PSPB will be established in the Second Phase of the Roadmap without discussions on Permanent Status issues e.g. borders; refugees/right of return; Jerusalem or Holy Places;
 - Palestinians demand that PSPB *not* be established *without* assurances regarding the Third Phase (Permanent Status).

Why is this Important? Why Now?

- Sharon and Abu-Mazen are scheduled to visit the United States. On the top of their agenda will be the question of what follows the Disengagement Plan.
- The Palestinians fired the first shot concerning the aftermath of the Disengagement Plan:
 - The Palestinians said they wanted to skip the Second Phase of the Roadmap (PSPB) and advance directly to the Third Phase (Permanent Status);
 - Israel is adamant that a PSPB be established in the Second Phase of the Roadmap.
- Under these circumstances, which currently lead to a deadlock, on the one hand, and Palestinian pressure to advance directly to discussions on Permanent Status, on the other hand, it is likely that pressure will be placed on:
 - Israel to present a viable political process following the Disengagement Plan;
 - Palestinians to adhere to the Roadmap, based on the idea of a PSPB that comes into being before a comprehensive agreement.

Policy Options

- An **additional Disengagement Plan** that ends Israeli permanent military and civil presence (responsibility) in other parts of the West Bank.
- Implement the **First Phase of the Roadmap** – focusing on the mutual obligations of both sides (primarily fighting terror and a freeze on settlement building).

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- Move quickly to the **Second Phase of the Roadmap** –
 - **PSPB through Negotiations** – seeking Israeli-Palestinian agreement concerning PSPB. This path is likely to lead to a deadlock;
 - **PSPB through Unilateral Recognition** – A series of steps to **upgrade** the political status of the **Palestinian Authority** to that of full-fledged statehood.
- **Skip to the Third Phase of the Roadmap to conclude a** Permanent Status Agreement addressing all historical issues (permanent borders, refugees, etc.) and defining all aspects of Israeli-Palestinian relations in Permanent Status as was provided for by the Oslo Agreements.

End.

For additional sources check www.reut-institute.org (under “Publications”):

- Point of View #3: “Is Abu-Mazen Driving the Political Process to a Deadlock?”
- Policy Paper: “What Follows the Disengagement Plan?”
- Concept: “Unilateral Recognition of a Palestinian State”
- Terms: “Roadmap”, “Disengagement Plan” and “Exchange of Letters Concerning the Disengagement Plan”.

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