



Media release

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Trump's 'plan' for peace in the Middle East

Following the unveiling of President Trump's lopsided and ignoble plan for an Israeli-Palestinian peace, it is clear that any serious and peace-focused individual or government cannot endorse it. As many have already pointed out, it's too far off the tracks to be taken seriously.

Because so much is lacking (and most of what's there runs contrary to international law and ignores the decades-long position of the UN), to give it a nod of approval, or to urge the Palestinians to at least consider it, would be to signal that a global consensus and numerous Security Council resolutions can be simply overridden when two international pariahs get together and demand that they have it their way.

If the rules-based international order is to have any value – and if Australia is to retain its right to criticise countries that show contempt for or breach it – then the Morrison government should view Trump's misconceived set of proposals with scepticism and concern. We call on it to do this much.

The question isn't whether the so-called 'deal of the century' has some chance of success, but rather what more the Palestinians would have to sacrifice in order to be granted some scrap of apartheid-like autonomy. The answer: far too much.

What's most obvious in all of this is that the 'plan', even if it were to somehow get off the ground, wouldn't be sustainable. Limited autonomy exercised within a chain of enclaves surrounded by a permanent Israeli presence doesn't spell longevity. Also, it would do nothing to soothe regional friction – something that a fair and viable plan could achieve.

Countries like Australia will have to make a decision: either lend support (however mild) to an inadequate and unjust vision that contradicts their principled and long-standing positions, and, further, is eerily reminiscent of 1980s South Africa, or stand by international law, preserve their moral authority and insist that, if the US wishes to be heavy-handed and dictate the terms of a settlement, its offer be equitable and recognise the core, legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

We urge the Australian government to make the right decision.

