

UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) Background/Talking Points

UDI Process

- On September 23, Mahmoud Abbas will formally ask the UN for recognition of a Palestinian State.
- When Abbas approaches the UN Security Council (UNSC), which is the necessary first step for full member state status, then the US will veto the bid. Additionally, China and Russia, who are also permanent members of the UNSC and therefore have veto status, may consider vetoing the proposition. Neither of these countries is in favor of the UDI, since they have similar problems at home, so it is likely they will either abstain or veto the bid.
- A veto in the UNSC forces the Palestinians to water down the language when they go to the General Assembly (UNGA), especially since the Palestinians would want it to pass with European support.
- Since the Palestinians will not get member status without the UNSC, Tony Blair, representing the Quartet, recently met with Abbas to work on creating a deal that would lead to negotiations and avoid the statehood bid.

US Plan

- The US has announced it will veto a bid in the UNSC.
- The US has been lobbying other diplomatic missions to get them on board with not approving this bid for statehood.

EU Plan

- The EU is divided and it is likely that votes will go in both directions, however that will ultimately depend on the exact text of the resolution (if it is tamer and simply encourages further consideration towards a state, more will sign on, but if the resolution has specific borders suggested, then there will be less European support).
- Favoring a UDI: Scandinavian countries, Spain, Portugal, possibly France (though unannounced)
- Opposed to a UDI: Germany, Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, possibly UK (though unannounced)

Concerns with UDI

Contradicts UN Resolutions & Existing Agreements

- The Roadmap to a Two-State Solution, adopted by the Quartet (UN, US, EU, and Russia) and endorsed by the UN Security Council in UNSCR 1515 explicitly states that, “a settlement, negotiated between the parties, will result in the emergence of an independent,

democratic, and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbors.”

- UN Security Council Resolutions 242 (passed in 1967 after the Six Day War), 338 (passed in 1973 after the Yom Kippur War), and 1850 (2008) all call for a peace deal achieved through direct bilateral negotiations between the parties involved.

Hamas, Iran, and the Lack of PA Governance

- Creating a state with the unity government coalition of Hamas and Fatah is problematic, since Hamas is considered a terrorist group by the US, Israel, and most Western countries.
- Hamas, who is supported by Iran, gained control in Gaza through a violently bloody coup (during an *election*) after Israel’s disengagement from Gaza. Hamas continues to encourage terrorism and repress its own people.
- A unilateral declaration not only rewards Hamas - although it has not recognized Israel or renounced terrorism – but also essentially encourages this unity government with Hamas and Fatah.
- In next year’s upcoming elections, there is no way to ensure that Hamas will not simply take over in the West Bank area as it has done in Gaza. This is especially problematic given the relationship between Iran and Hamas – it could result in yet another Iranian puppet state in the region, which is horrendous not only for Israel, but the entire region’s stability. (Syria, which exercises significant amounts of control in Lebanon, particularly through Hizballah, is already a terrorism-supporting Iranian puppet state.)

Internationalization of the Conflict Hinders Steps Towards Peace

- Any resolution passed in the UNGA is political, rather than legal, but a nonmember Palestinian state could still use some of the UN’s bodies, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- The greatest concerns regarding the ICC are:
 - it could allow any Israeli to be brought to The Hague for alleged war crimes
 - Israel could be considered an invader on sovereign territory
- Internationalizing the conflict not only rejects previous agreements to negotiate a settlement, but it hardens each side significantly, giving more power to extremists in each camp, which hampers any chance of having effective negotiations in the future. Essentially this step towards unilateral declaration kills negotiation possibilities.