

Headlines:

- **Trump Peace Plan Shrinks Palestine, Expands Jewish state**
- **Trump Tells Pentagon Chief He Does Not Want War with Iran**
- **Pakistan Agrees to 13th Bailout in 30 Years from the IMF**

Details

Trump Peace Plan Shrinks Palestine, Expands Jewish State

The plan calls for the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza and cedes all territory held by Israeli settlements and settlement blocs to Israel. Likely, this would mean the plan would annex a majority of Area C of the West Bank, around 62 percent. The entirety of the Jordan Valley, about 30 percent of the West Bank, will be annexed to Israel. It is unclear if the Palestinians who reside there, around 65,000, will become citizens of the state of Israel. The plan further states the main highway in the Jordan Valley, Route 90, "will turn into a four-lane toll road." It is unclear if Palestinians will have access to this road. The Palestinian state will control two international borders with Jordan, likely turning over the Israeli controlled Allenby crossing between the West Bank and Jordan. New Palestine will have a local police force who will be allowed to hold "light weapons." The new Palestinian state will be prevented from forming a military. Israel will be responsible for security for a fee paid by the Palestinian government. Jerusalem will be a shared capital for both Israel and New Palestine. The deal underscores that Jerusalem "will not be divided." Today Jerusalem is home to some 350,000 Palestinian residents who are neither citizens of Israel or West Bank residents, and 550,000 Israelis, including around 200,000 settlers in East Jerusalem. Under the agreement, all Israelis and Palestinians will be able to stay where they are living, but Israelis will no longer be able to purchase homes from Palestinians, potentially abruptly ending future expansion of East Jerusalem settlements. The deal would also bar Palestinians from buying homes from Israelis, which they are currently able to do. The Palestinians in Jerusalem would become citizens of "New Palestine," but receive the same services as Israeli residents of Jerusalem from the Jerusalem municipality, governed by Israel. The plan says the Palestinian Authority will be responsible for paying the municipality for services, with the exception of schools, which will be run by the Palestinian government. While previous peace accords have agreed to principles of land swaps between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the Trump deal reportedly calls on a lease of territory from Egypt for the creation of an airport and industrial zone. "Egypt will lease new land to Palestine for the purpose of establishing an airport for the establishment of factories and commerce, and for agriculture, other than housing," the plan said, "The size of the territories and the price will be determined between the parties through the mediation of the supporting countries." Under the deal, Gaza would significantly open up to the outside world, albeit with the removal of Hamas' military capabilities. Hamas would be required to turn over all weapons to Egypt. Within one year New Palestine would hold elections where "every Palestinian citizen will be able to stand for election." [Source: People's World]

Trump's peace plan is to force the people of Palestine to accept the status quo and make lie unbearable in new Palestine. This is deliberate to pave the way for the people of Palestine to be eventually resettled in Sinai and Jordan.

Trump Tells Pentagon Chief He Does Not Want War with Iran

President Trump has sought to put the brakes on a brewing confrontation with Iran in recent days, telling the acting defense secretary, Patrick Shanahan, that he does not want to go to war with Iran, administration officials said, while his senior diplomats began searching

for ways to defuse the tensions. Mr. Trump's statement, during a Wednesday morning meeting in the Situation Room, sent a message to his hawkish aides that he does not want the intensifying American pressure campaign against the Iranians to explode into open conflict. For now, an administration that had appeared to be girding for conflict seems more determined to find a diplomatic off-ramp. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called the leader of Oman, Sultan Qaboos bin Said, on Wednesday to confer about the threat posed by Iran, according to a statement. Long an intermediary between the West and Iran, Oman was a site of a secret channel in 2013 when the Obama administration was negotiating a nuclear agreement with Iran. Mr. Pompeo also asked European officials for help in persuading Iran to "de-escalate" tensions, which rose after American intelligence indicated that Iran had placed missiles on small boats in the Persian Gulf. The intelligence, which was based on photographs that have not been released but were described to The New York Times, prompted fears that Tehran may strike at United States troops and assets or those of its allies. Asked on Thursday whether the United States was going to war with Iran, Mr. Trump replied, "I hope not." The developments cast into sharp relief a president who is instinctively wary of military adventures and a cadre of advisers — led by the national security adviser, John R. Bolton — who have taken an uncompromising line toward Iran. The internal tensions have prompted fears that the Trump administration is spoiling for a fight, even if the commander in chief may not be. [Source: New York Times].

Trump's about turn suggests that America wants to place maximum pressure on Iran to withdraw from Lebanon to Yemen, and completely abandon its nuclear programme. This is likely to assuage the Jewish entity and encourage Netanyahu to support Trump's deal of the century.

Pakistan Agrees to 13th Bailout in 30 Years from the IMF

Pakistan will receive around \$6 billion in a bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) it was announced Sunday, the thirteenth time the South Asian country has received financing from the IMF in 30 years. The bailout comes despite new Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan previously saying he would not seek another bailout from the IMF, as he targeted alternative funding from the Middle East and China. "Pakistan is facing a challenging economic environment, with lackluster growth, elevated inflation, high indebtedness, and a weak external position," IMF representative Ernesto Ramirez Rigo said in statement. "This reflects the legacy of uneven and procyclical economic policies in recent years aiming to boost growth, but at the expense of rising vulnerabilities and lingering structural and institutional weaknesses. The authorities recognize the need to address these challenges, as well as to tackle the large informality in the economy, the low spending in human capital, and poverty." Khan met with IMF director Christine Lagarde in February, as he sought to secure funding from the agency despite being a longterm critic of its previous dealings in Pakistan. The IMF has been criticized in the past for imposing strict austerity on receiver nations, forcing governments to cut social programs and privatize national industries. Khan has spoken of the need for a major anti-poverty program to boost Pakistan's economy and help its worst off citizens, but this will involve considerable spending that is typically antithetical to the conservative IMF. These types of restrictions are one of the reasons Khan has been publicly attempting to avoid returning to the IMF to seek more funding. In October, Saudi Arabia agreed to advance Islamabad \$6 billion in financial support. But that has not been enough to plug the gaps in Pakistan's economy -- issues Khan inherited and has been struggling to get under control. The Pakistani Prime Minister has also turned to China for help. Beijing has invested heavily in the country under President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative. [Source: CNN]

Finally, Khan has capitulated to IMF demands. Now remains to be seen whether America uses the IMF bailout to rollback China's influence in Pakistan.