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FOR THE STUDY AND RESOLUTION OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

The Reverend Dr. Richard L. Pearson Annual Lecture
featuring

Husam Zomlot, Head of the Palestinian Mission to the UK and Strategic Affairs Advisor to the Palestinian President

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Full Transcript

Sheila Kohanteb: Hello. Hi, everybody, and thank you for joining us today. On behalf of The Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts, I'd like to welcome you. I have a very brief announcement before I invite Dean Baker to take the stage. Due to some unfortunate circumstances, Ambassador Zomlot is not able to be with us here today in person. He will be able to join us today virtually, hence the very big screen. He will also address the reason why he is not able to be with us here today, so I will leave that for him to elaborate on further. But without any further ado, I'd like to welcome Dean Baker to the stage.

Dean Baicker: Good afternoon. I am Dean of the Harris School of Public Policy, and it is my pleasure to welcome you today to the third annual Rev. Dr. Richard L. Pearson Lecture. This event provides a wonderful opportunity to bring policy-makers and peace leaders here to campus, to the University of Chicago, to share their experiences with you in working to resolve some of the world's toughest problems and pervasive conflicts.

The Pearson Institute for the Study and Resolution of Global Conflicts was founded in 2015. It's led by our very own, world-renowned James Robinson. He's right there. And it has worked to fulfill its mission in many different ways that are enriching to our campus and that bring new hope to resolving conflicts. The Pearson Institute sponsors faculty and student research and funding graduate student research project around the world. It offers classes through our faculty to those at the Harris School and around the university campus. It offers international experiential opportunities through the Pearson International Conflict Seminar trips. It sponsors fellows and scholarships to bring students to campus to study these issues.

So, through all of these different avenues, the Pearson Institute is enriching our opportunities to bring cutting-edge research and the dedication of our student body and our faculty to bear on these problems. Today we're honored to host Husam Zomlot, head of the Palestinian mission to the U.K. and strategic affairs advisor to the Palestinian president. To untangle problems as thorny as this conflict and conflicts around the world requires fortitude, insight, expertise that leaders like Dr. Zomlot have and that they can bring to bear on these conflicts and share with us.

He served as ambassador to the United States and head of the PLO general delegation to the United States, but in September 2018, this delegation was shut down, stymieing progress on this conflict and derailing the peace process. He was able, however, to continue his work at the U.K., serving in the U.K. I'm going to get to his next role. We have the opportunity to hear from him about his experience in working with the U.S. and U.K. delegations, and gain insight about what it really means to dive into these conflicts, and how we can all participate in making a difference there. He can talk about his experiences as a negotiator, and a participant in an ongoing conflict in an era of rising populism, and how that affects possibilities for peace in the future.

Before we turn to him, though, I'd like to introduce Marissa Block to offer a few remarks. Marissa is a second-year M.P.P student at Harris, and a Pearson Fellow. She recently returned from one of the Pearson International Conflict Trips to Israel and Palestine, where she had the opportunity to meet with locals on the ground to better understand the causes and consequences of this conflict, and to bring those experiences back to the University of Chicago to share with her colleagues and to share with you all today. So, please join me in welcoming Marissa to the stage.



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Marissa Block: Thank you Dean Baicker, and good afternoon everyone. As an undergraduate, my regional focus was the Middle East. I studied Arabic, and I took various classes on the history, religion, and politics of the region. So, I knew about the Arab-Israeli conflict ostensibly. One summer during college, I had an Arabic tutor. During one of our first sessions, we were getting to know each other, asking the common beginner language-learner questions, “Where are you from?” “What is your occupation?” and so on. My instructor, Jamila, said she was from Haifa, from Palestine.

I went home and I Googled Haifa, and I was surprised to learn that Haifa is not in the West Bank or Gaza, areas currently considered as part of Palestine, but rather, Haifa is clearly in Israel, along the northwest coast. Haifa has not been part of Palestine since 1947. Although it may sound like a subtle change of words, it was the first time this faraway issue felt real, and I could put a face to the conflict.

Just a few weeks ago, I was fortunate to visit Israel and Palestine through the Pearson Institute to learn about the conflict and realities on the ground. We were encouraged to forget any previously held notions and observe the conflict from the human perspective and understand the element of fear. That means considering it from the viewpoint of one Israeli mother who recalled how she was afraid to put her children on buses in Jerusalem in the second intifada, representing the broader Jewish perspective of yearning for a safe place after the Holocaust. But it also means recognizing the perspective of my Palestinian Arabic tutor, forced to flee her home, or the Palestinian mothers we met in the West Bank whose children are harassed along their walk to school by Israeli settlers and must now be escorted, sometimes by soldiers.

Even with this short anecdote, I hope you can see that this conflict is by no means black and white, but rather, many, many shades of gray. And the realities on the ground are very different to what many of us, even those of us who are well-informed and well-traveled may hear. Many of you might think, “Why should I care? This is an old conflict.” But I learned that time is not on the side of peace. Rather, as time goes on, the facts on the ground are changing and settlements are growing, making it harder and harder to achieve peace. If you are coming to this lecture with a previously held opinion on this conflict, I encourage you to listen to Ambassador Zomlot with an open mind. And if your knowledge of this conflict is limited, I encourage you to use this lecture to expand your awareness.

With this, I am pleased to introduce Dr. Husam Zomlot. Currently he serves as ambassador and head of the Palestinian mission to the U.K. and strategic affairs advisor to the Palestinian president. Prior to his appointment to the U.K., Dr. Zomlot served the United States as the head of the PLO general delegation. Dr. Zomlot held a public policy professorship at Birzeit University where he co-founded and chaired the Birzeit School of Government. He has held a number of other teaching and research positions at Harvard University and the University of London. His professional background includes working as an economist at the United Nations, an economic researcher with the London School of Economics, and the Palestine Policy Research Institute.

Before welcoming Ambassador Zomlot, I would like to welcome Professor James Robinson to the stage. Professor Robinson is the Institute Director, and the Rev. Dr. Richard L. Pearson Professor of Global Conflict Studies, and university professor. Please join me in welcoming Professor Robinson.

James Robinson: Okay, thank you very much. Thanks very much for coming and I’m sorry that Dr. Zomlot won’t be here in person, but we’re all looking forward to what he has to say. Just a few things very briefly about this lecture.

When we conceived of this lecture, we’re a bunch of academics. Me and Chris and Roger and Oeindrila unfortunately can’t be here today. The professors who associate with the Pearson Institute. And the idea of this lecture was really to bring in a practitioner, someone who’d been dealing with the problems of negotiating peace and confronting the



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challenges. And the first two lectures we had were really success stories, although we've also learned how complicated success is in both of those cases.

Sergio Jaramillo, the Colombian High Commissioner for Peace, who came and talked about – who spearheaded the successful peace process in Colombia. Jonathan Powell, Tony Blair's former chief of staff who spearheaded the successful negotiation in Northern Ireland. And the interesting thing, of course, about both of those, is we introduced them as success stories, and in many ways they are. But they are actually both success stories which as we speak are extremely vulnerable to the domestic politics of both Colombia and England and Wales, I should say, since in Northern Ireland they voted to remain in the European Union.

So, it's interesting how the world changes, and how the challenges to even a successful peace story recur. So, today, we wanted to do something completely different – or, maybe not so completely different. But bring someone who'd wrestled with a peace process which had been unsuccessful in most peoples' metrics. And I think that's sort of – that's what we want to hear, because it's not just a matter of learning from success, but you need to learn from failure also in trying to think about how to bring peace to the world.

I should say a few personal things. I share a few things in common with Dr. Zomlot. We're both alumni of the London School of Economics. He did his PhD at the School of Oriental and African Studies, and I have to say that when I was an undergraduate, my ambition in life was to become a professor at the School of Oriental and African Studies. I thought that this was the coolest place on the planet, and I'd spend every night in the bar where they had the A-Z of Jamaican reggae stars every week, somebody different. Now, I've mentioned this to President Zimmer several times, but I have to say there is a lamentable dearth of Jamaican reggae stars at the University of Chicago, and I'm still trying to do something about that.

I also have a bit of a history with the Palestine-Israel conflict. I spent four or five months living in Jericho in 1985, and various parts of the West Bank thereafter. And I've seen a lot of the deterioration in the situation since then. Back in 1985, before the first intifada, there were no walls, and it was a lot easier to move around, even to get into Jericho today is quite a challenge. So, I witnessed personally all of the challenges that have been faced there. I had friends at Birzeit University, I've actually lectured at Birzeit University, they're now in Qatar and Cairo because academic life became so difficult on the West Bank. And so, I have a little bit of a personal interest as well as a practical and intellectual interest.

So, anyway, I've talked far too much as usual, and now we're delighted to have Dr. Zomlot to give his lecture.

Dr. Zomlot: Hello everybody, good afternoon. And I would like to start by thanking the speakers preceding me. The Dean, Professor Robinson, and Marissa, who has really touched my heart with her remarks, and, of course, Professor Robinson. I promise you, Professor, that there may be one day, given the state of affairs with the peace process, you and I will serve as professors and enjoy the Jamaican music there, hopefully very soon.

Now, I am really grateful to be asked to give the Pearson Annual Lecture today at the world-renowned Harris School of Public Policy. It is a particular honor to be speaking at the University of Chicago, knowing your motto, "Where fun comes to die," I regret not being with you in person today for many reasons, but one of them is missing out on getting the t-shirt with this famous motto on it. Hopefully I'll do that on my next visit. Academic and intellectual rigor does not reduce the level of fun, I am certain, and it is inspiring to learn that the University of Chicago has the highest Nobel Prize laureates of all universities worldwide. You even insisted that President Obama was only an adjunct professor – thankfully, he added another Nobel Prize.

I know you have previously heard here about the successful conclusion about the Colombia conflict, the Irish peace



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process, and from those who were close to the heart of those negotiations. I am absolutely honored that you have chosen a Palestinian, perhaps as a counterpoint for the third annual lecture in this very prestigious series. Ours, after all, has the dubious distinction of being one of the longest running international conflicts in the world today. And unlike Colombia or Ireland, ours seems to be as far away from resolution as ever. Which is strange, because it is not that complicated, actually. In fact, ours is unique, too, because nowhere else has there been such broad international consensus for so long about what resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would look like. And still, no resolution is in sight.

It is exceptional. And for us, the people of Palestine, it is absolutely tragic. If Chicago is the city of broad shoulders, Palestinians have had to be a nation of broad shoulders. Much has been placed upon us. Whatever we have gained, we have had to work hard for it – even official recognition. And we seem to be moving backwards, unfortunately. The reason I cannot be with you in person today is that our relations with the U.S. administration have regressed.

Since I had to leave the U.S. last year, the Trump administration has been in a relentless campaign to de-recognize and de-legitimize the Palestinian people and its leadership. This has reached a point where we need to pause after legal advice that has been given to us before traveling to the U.S. to accept your generous invitation to address an important American audience and be part of this very promising debate in the U.S. about Palestine. That is why I speak to you today from London.

And my friends, ladies and gentlemen, as we have seen with the recently concluded Israeli elections, only two days ago, these are indeed transformative for us all. Benjamin Netanyahu will almost certainly lead the far-right Israeli coalition government. It is clear that a majority of Israelis have voted for the status quo. They have voted for continued and deepening occupation. They have rejected what passes for the left in Israel and voted instead for far-right ideologies that mirror populism and phobic votes elsewhere in the world today. They have voted against their fellow Palestinian citizens. They have rejected any kind of peace process that factors in the Palestinian side. With it, they have rejected the two-state solution.

The fact that until Netanyahu vowed to annex more illegal settlements in the occupied territory, the Palestinian issue was not even a factor in the election campaign proves this very point. We are, therefore, facing challenges that are striking, and that are asking us very fundamental questions. They are asking fundamental questions of all of us, but Palestinians are at the tip of the needle. The Trump administration has proven to be intrinsically and ideologically unilateralist on foreign policy. This is a serious challenge to the post-WWII rules-based global order. It is an acute and immediate challenge to the Palestinian people. Why of all the conflicts in the world is it ours where there has been unprecedented global consensus for so long that remains for so long?

Is the problem with the international order itself? We are asking. Is it the problem, our adherence to it? Is that the problem? Our adherence to international order? Or is it about exclusion? And these are very relevant questions today. And in light of the U.S. Secretary of State's, Mike Pompeo, silence this last Tuesday, on whether – he was asked in the Congress – on whether the U.S. would recognize any illegal annexation by Israel of the West Bank settlements as promised by Netanyahu only two days earlier, in light of this and his utter silence and not responding.

And in light of the Trump administration's lack of support for a two-state solution, you might well think that I should simply be saying goodbye to you today. I should be saying goodbye to the two-state solution. Goodbye to the 25 years of peace efforts. 25 years of state building achievements, and goodbye to the international order, perhaps, altogether. But we are not willing to do that. We are not willing to give up and wind the clock backward. We are not willing to abandon international law or international order.



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I am simply here to explain what our strategy is and what it has been for some time. First, let me make one thing absolutely clear. We know nothing of the Trump administration's so-called activity. We can draw our own conclusions, but we are not privy to any specific proposals coming out of Washington. The Palestinian leadership under President Mahmoud Abbas took strategic decision back on December 6, 2017 to not work with this administration. We did so after first trying to engage at the highest level with this administration. President Abbas met President Trump in Washington in May 2017, only in the preceding four months, our President Abbas met President Trump three times – more than the first time in May.

We met the President and his team four times in a period of a few months, engaging at the highest level, making sure that our voice would be heard. We met the team of President Trump numerous times. We lost count. Perhaps more than 30 times. I myself as the Ambassador in Washington and my colleagues from Palestine have been engaging with you. I was, in fact, sent to Washington shortly before the visit of our President with the very express brief to engage this administration in order to secure a commitment to international law, a commitment to all that we have built. A commitment to the long-held U.S. policy.

Unfortunately, it was to absolutely no avail. It was clear we were too late. This administration's mind was made up from Day One, before we even had the chance to engage them. The final straw for us was when, despite assurances just a week earlier, the White House announced it would move the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. Before that, we had been informed that the U.S. would close the PLO mission in Washington, the mission I used to head in Washington. Just shortly before that, in November 16, 2017. That was right at the height of our engagement. At the height of our honeymoon, if you will.

We have no trust in this administration. We do not want to be part of a cover-up. We do not want to grant this administration's plans for our conflict and illegitimacy by engaging it. If and when this administration activity is revealed, it must clearly and unambiguously be understood for what it is: devised only with Israel, devised only with Netanyahu himself. Unilaterally, illegally. We are not obstructionist, however. At every turn, at every turn we seek to be constructive.

In February of last year, our President, President Abbas, traveled to New York, to the security council to make specific proposals to the U.N. on how do we move forward. He called for an international conference to implement international law, and above all, the preservation of the two-state solution and the two-state principal. His proposal included a number of specific steps, including the convening of an international conference to stimulate the rights and duties of each party based on the principal of mutual recognition. Mutual recognition. And a multi-lateral mechanism to help the parties abide by and implement international law.

And, my friends, in short, President Abbas, on behalf of the people of Palestine, called for internationalizing peacemaking. That was called the Palestinian Peace Plan, PPP. We did so in support of the two-state solution. We are keeping our commitments under international law. We are keeping our commitments to international order. We want the international community to keep its commitment to us.

And, ladies and gentlemen, the Trump administration has pursued four policies that have pulled the rug from under any meaningful peace process. And let me name and explain these four policies that have been pursued by the Trump administration. Number one, it has sought since day one to legitimize the illegitimate, legalize the illegal. Not only has it moved the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem and recognized the city as Israel's capital in contravention to international law and international consensus, but also has recognized Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights. It has done so unilaterally. It has set up unprecedented for Palestinian occupied territory, where Netanyahu has promised he will extend Israeli sovereignty to more illegal settlements and occupied territories. Of course that would encourage Netanyahu and add



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to his expansionist and territorial appetite.

Number two of such policies of the Trump administration, it has sought to de-nationalize and de-recognize the Palestinian people and our leadership. It has closed the PLO mission in Washington, severing decades-long relationships, historic relationships. It has ignored us and misled us since we have engaged them. It has de-funded UNRWA, the U.N. agency that serves the Palestinian refugees, trying to impose a definition and who and who cannot be called a Palestinian refugee. Not to mention the number of Congress's resolutions again the people of Palestine and their representatives in the last months alone.

Number three of these policies, it has sought to de-internationalize the conflict. I repeat, de-internationalize the conflict. The administration has treated international law with contempt. By recognizing the annexation of the Golan Heights, it has undermined one of the foundation stones of the post-WWII order, the inadmissibility of acquiring land by force. It hardwires open hostility to the U.N. and any other international law. Former U.S. envoy to the U.N., Nikki Haley, was explicit about wanting to punish any U.N. agency that wanted anything that could be perceived as holding Israel accountable. I mean, she spent two years just primarily about dismantling the international framework that governs the Palestinian [inaudible].

The U.S. pulled out of UNESCO because we joined UNESCO. It pulled out of the U.N. Human Rights Commission because the U.N. Human Rights Commission is doing its responsibility and its work. Just last week, the U.S. revoked the visa of the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. All this is an attempt at rendering international mediation and law irrelevant. All this is only to protect Israel and put it above the law.

Number four of these policies, which, in my opinion, is becoming absolutely clear and perhaps most astonishing, is trying to turn our conflict into a purely domestic Israeli issue. May I repeat this? It's trying to reframe the conflict from an Arab-Israeli conflict – not even a Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but the whole Palestinian issue, the 13 million Palestinians, is an internal issue of Israel. Israel has publicly distanced itself from the two-state solution. I mean by Israel, the Israeli government. There has been no protest from the administration whatsoever. Instead, the administration has decided to abandon the long-held U.S. position in support of the two-state solution.

And hear this, please. The U.S. Consulate General to Palestine in Jerusalem, in East Jerusalem, which was established in 1844, to be precise, 1844, has now been relocated to the U.S. Embassy in Israel, which in turn was illegally relocated to Jerusalem. So, they have closed the U.S. Consulate General, which has served for many, many years, almost two hundred years, as the key point of contact between the U.S. government and the Palestinian government, between the U.S. people and the Palestinian people. And now relocated to the U.S. Embassy to Israel. What is it called now? It is now called the Palestinian Affairs Unit. So, we are an affair of the U.S. Embassy to Israel. The intention is absolutely obvious.

It's clear. Before we broke off contacts, I was told by a senior, very senior, without naming names, very senior administration official that we were only bringing old ideas, he told me. And just talking points to the table. The fate, my friends, of six million Palestinian refugees is not a talking point. We told them that and we tell them that now. Ending the injustice of five million Palestinians living under military occupation and enduring a separate military legal system to those around them is not an old problem. This is not an old problem. The fate of two million Palestinians in Israel whose status as second-class citizens was cemented with the passing of Israel's nation-state law are not a talking point.

Nearly half a million Palestinians in Jerusalem are not a figment of our imagination. They own every home, they own every shop, they own every mosque, they own every church. This is not a figment of our imagination. It's reality. When President Trump said that America was recognizing reality, that was a dis-recognition of reality. Reality is that the half a million Palestinians living there for millennia must be respected. These are real people. They have real rights. They, we,



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must be heard.

What is old? The only thing that is old is our connection and our attachment to the land that goes back millennia. But let me borrow, since this administration is very fond of their own terminology and language, let me borrow the terminology of the administration and talk about what I will call the five ultimates.

The first is the ultimate promise. This promise, my friends, was made in the 70s and the 80s by the U.S.-led international community. It was made to us, the Palestinians. This promise was, and it was held out, that the prospects of the two-state solution with the creation of a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders. The promise was, should we accept international legitimacy, should we accept international resolutions, should we accept the state of Israel inside the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital and a just resolution to the issue of refugees, should we accept all that, the U.S.-led international community will deliver the two-state solution, will deliver the end of Israel's occupation. Will deliver the event of a sovereign, independent state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. That was the ultimate promise.

This has been, and continues to be, the international consensus up until today. Then, as a result of that ultimate promise, came in the late 80s, to be precise in 1988, the ultimate compromise. By us, the Palestinians. The international promise, the ultimate promise, paved the way for the ultimate compromise on our part, when in 1988 the PLO recognized Israel inside 1967 borders, formalizing that recognition formally in 1993 at the event of the peace process. Which, that moment in 1988, to declare a state on the West Bank and Gaza, which is 22% of the land, indicated to the world our acceptance of international resolutions, our acceptance of international promise.

And it led, that ultimate compromise did lead to the Madrid peace process and the Oslo process in the early 90s. So, for the first time, Israel recognizes that Palestinians had a right to represent themselves, which was an achievement. Like all other peoples, that meant they had the right to self-determination. Regrettably, after that ultimate promise that was followed by the ultimate compromise, which was essential for the cause of peace, painful for the Palestinians. Forgoing 78% of your land – of the land you considered your own, before even achieving agreement was definitely an ultimate compromise.

But then, we signed the Oslo process, and that only can be called, in retrospect, the ultimate failure. The process was flawed, unfortunately. It was flawed because it foresaw a resolution being reached in direct negotiations between the two parties, ignoring the vast imbalance of power between the two. By definition, international conflicts are not solved locally. They are international because there are other actors involved in that and sustain it. They need international mediation. And look all over – look at all conflicts. You will find that they were only resolved when there was a genuine, sustained, meaningful international mediation. We didn't get international mediation. We got the U.S. acting as the sole arbitrator. Those, my friends, those flaws led directly to the failure of this process.

Regrettably, unfortunately, we live today to pick the pieces. This failure has been picked over many times; I don't wish to dwell too long. But let me here just point out two major failures. The first is the U.S. should not have been trusted as a sole mediator, should not have been left alone as a sole mediator. The U.S. failed as a mediator. It failed because it couldn't succeed. Not because it didn't want to, but it couldn't succeed. Israel is not a foreign policy issue in the U.S. I will repeat this. Israel is not a foreign policy issue in the U.S. It is a domestic issue.

This administration is a perfect example of what I'm talking about. Then, of course, there was the expansion of Israel's settlement project. That was number two major reason, major factor behind our failure. This expansion happened from day one of the peace process and continued throughout this very day. It continues at unprecedented pace today. It had a direct, material consequence since 1993. If Israel continues to build settlements in occupied territory, a war crime, by



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the way, under international law, how could it be seriously negotiated, the status of that same land?

You know, let me use this very simple example. If you and your colleague decide to actually share a piece of pizza, and then you sit around the table and discuss how you share that piece of pizza, and your opponent started eating that piece of pizza, I don't think. Any sort of negotiation would make any sense by then. And this simple example is exactly what has been happening over the last 25 years. We were discussing to share that piece of land when that piece of land was being grabbed as we speak. And if Israel continued cutting off East Jerusalem from its West Bank hinterland, how could we believe that this would become the capital of our independent, sovereign state? If Israel continued building colonial settlements in the Jordan Valley, deep in the West Bank, along the borders with Jordan, how could we ever assume control of our own borders? This expansion was a direct result of the format of the peace process.

Never was Israel sanctioned. The U.S. approach to mediation was always one of offering incentives to Israel, rather than holding it accountable. That was in stark difference to how the Palestinian side was treated, how we were treated. We had to prove our state's worthiness. I repeat this. We had to prove, every step, our state's worthiness. We had to earn our independence. We, the victims, were expected to protect the occupation and the victimizers. By the way, which we do. It was unprecedented that Israel, as the occupying power, demand protection from and by the victim.

I repeat this. Israel, as the occupying power, in full control of our land, resources, people in captivity, demand protection from and by the victim. Yet, we had to do it under such process. But all that has brought the fourth ultimate, which is the ultimate retraction.

What we witness today, since at least the beginning of 2017, since President Trump took office, what we have been following is the ultimate retraction. Successive U.S. administrations may have only paid lip service to the framework for talks, that is, the international law and legitimacy. But at least there was a yardstick, a very clear yardstick. The Trump administration has thrown away the yardstick. It is siding with a vision of Greater Israel that precludes not only, by the way, Palestinian national rights, but even Palestinian individual rights. It is not siding with Israel itself.

All previous administrations have sided with Israel. All previous administrations have given sustained military and political and legal and economic support and financial support. But this administration is siding with Israel's illegal settlement project. This is the real change. It is unravelling the ultimate promise. And widening the clock, and I may have said, even putting the clock backward to a time when there was no engagement with the legitimate representatives of the Palestinians.

We are accused of holding on to outmoded ideas, but it is the U.S. that is trying to turn back time. We reject this. We do reject this attempt. Everything this administration has done has served the settlement project. But it does not serve peace. It does not serve the cause of peace. Not in Palestine, and, I assure you, not anywhere.

And this brings me to the fifth and last ultimate, which is the ultimate consequence of all of this, which is what I have been thinking about over the last few days. How do I present to you, such a distinguished audience, in such a renowned platform, and people of good brains and good hearts who have been part of the lively discussion about conflict resolution? What would be the ultimate consequence of this severe, transformative moment we witness? Be it in Israeli elections, be it in the White House and this hostility by the Trump administration and be it our inability to actually see clearly ahead.

But here is what I have, out of conviction, out of belief, out of my knowledge of our leadership and our people have come up with. If the promise has been retracted – and the promise has been retracted by the Trump administration – the compromise cannot last long. These ideas are hitting in our heads. They are being repeated. Many of our friends are



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telling us under such pressure, under such sheer pressure, if the party that has issued the promise is renegeing on that promise, how can you keep your compromise? Something has to give in there, they are telling us.

But here we go, my friends. We have only two options at this point in time. Either we can sink the boat – simply sink the boat. We can throw all the cards in the air, dismantle the Palestinian Authority and let the occupation take back its responsibility for all the occupied territory. Or, number two, we can affirm evermore strongly our commitment to international law and the two-state solution but change our strategy for implementing it.

Well, we choose, we choose as President Abbas has made abundantly clear, the latter. We choose the latter because this is not about rules. This is not about rules. There have only been ever two just resolutions to the Palestinian-Israeli question. And before I go on, my friends, let me stress these just resolutions that we accept. The first is Palestinians and Israelis, all Israelis, Jews and non-Jews enjoy full and equal political, national, civil rights in two democratic states on the territory of historic Palestine, divided according to international resolutions and law.

Number two option that is acceptable to us and would be a just resolution to the situation and to the issue is that Palestinians and Israelis enjoy full and equal, national, political, and civil rights in one democratic state on the territory of historic Palestine. This is not about discourse. We accept either, Israel rejects both. And, again, I need to remind you, when I mean Israel, and when I say Israel, it is the Israeli government. Israel rejects both, and this is a question of strategy for us. It is a pure question of strategy. This is not about the what. We know what is the what. It is about the how. How are we going to attain our rights and achieve our goals?

And we are clear about our [inaudible]. We have learned the lessons of 25 years of failed peace process. And let me tell you what we have learned. Number one, we can no longer accept to pursue a bilateral process with the U.S. as a sole mediator. The expansionism of Netanyahu and the general rightward shift of the Israeli public make it absolutely crystal-clear that Israel is not interested in finding a just solution. The unilateralism of the Trump administration demonstrates that the U.S. has abandoned any pretense of adherence to international law.

Instead, we must seek international support for a multi-lateral process that relies on the framework of international law and preserves the achievements we have made up to this very point. Why this, you may ask? And you should ask, why this? And everybody should ask, why to defer to an international community that so far has been toothless? What is the alternative, I ask? And we are asking, really, what is the alternative to the international order? What is the alternative to the international system? What is the alternative to our universal values?

Is there any other international order that we can appeal to? I want anybody to name for me any other international order that we can appeal to. Is there another international law to which we have recourse? No, we don't. And we don't need to. The post-WWII rules-based international order is fine. It's absolutely fine. It was not invented to serve us, the Palestinians. It was established after the carnage of WWII for one purpose, one purpose, never again. And we, the Palestinians, stand with the never again. After the horrors that happened during the Second World War and the First World War, it was established exactly to resolve conflicts like ours. The international order is fine.

What is lacking is the necessary international will to implement it. What is not lacking, however, is our commitment to it. And the worst kind of wound is going to be a self-inflicted one. And we would be inflicting one should we veer away from this international legitimacy. We will continue to bolster and defend the achievements we have made over the past 25 years. The institutions we have built, and the preparations for statehood we have made with the support, I may add, the generous support of the international community.

We have resisted the Trump administration's attempt at isolating us. We have done so successfully. We have the



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continued consensus of the international community behind us. Minus the Trump administration. We are not isolated in the world. The Arab League and Saudi Arabia last year, and in Tunisia this last month, has yet again affirmed its support for the right of the Palestinian people to a state with East Jerusalem as its capital and a just resolution to the issue of refugees.

And, by the way, the summit in Saudi Arabia last year was called by the Saudi king, King Salman, the Summit of Jerusalem, because Jerusalem to the Arab world, to the Muslim world, to the entire region, is the City of God. And it is a sacred city to the hundreds of millions of Muslims worldwide, what else the king of Saudi Arabia could have named that summit shortly after the announcement by President Trump? This issue remains of the utmost importance to the Arabs and Muslims across the world. And, of course, Christians and, of course, Jews. We are not alone. The Arab world and the international community as a whole remain committed to the two-state solution and to its own resolutions.

Number two of our strategy, we will continue, we promise you, to encourage a strategy of popular resistance. And this is a unique opportunity to really define what do we mean by popular resistance? People have a way of turning their weaknesses into strength. If we are fractured, and unfortunately under the sheer force of the military occupation, of the colonization, of the walls, of the siege in Gaza, we have become fractured as a nation. Geographically fractured. Fragmented if you may. But if we are fractured, our struggle becomes localized.

Witness, for instance, the thousands of Christians and Muslims who took to the streets in Jerusalem, bringing it to a standstill and reclaiming a right to their city and all their sites, defeating Netanyahu when he attempted altering the nature of the identity of their city and erecting electronic gates and imposing sanctions among them. They have won that battle peacefully, non-violently, by using the prayer mattress as a method of resistance. What a scene, what dignity of our people in Jerusalem.

Every week, there are unarmed civilian protests in the West Bank, all over the villages, against the theft of land, against the wall Israel is building up and down in the occupied territory. Every week, every week there are unarmed civilian protests in Gaza where people are marching to assert the right of return to where they came from, and where families came from, and also to protest the siege on Gaza which has left 2 million people on the brink of a humanitarian disaster. This is popular resistance.

But popular resistance, my friends, is also keeping Palestine's illiteracy rate to near zero, in spite of the enormous dangers every Palestinian child faces simply in getting to school. Dangers from armed soldiers at military checkpoints who think nothing of throwing children into prison. Dangers from armed settlers with a supremacist mentality answering to a different legal system. Those are dangers every Palestinian mother has to weigh every single morning before sending her children to school. And still, she sends them to school to learn, to help themselves.

This determination and perseverance is the reason Palestine has one of the highest PhD per capita holders worldwide. This is popular resistance. That is popular resistance. Popular resistance is surviving on our land despite all of the above. It is building all our institutions, like schools, universities, businesses, and industries. It is thriving in the face of adversity. It is not just the mass globalization of everyone everywhere, but that too, by the way, is also a matter of time.

This stage will see the PLO seek out new constituencies, new agencies, and new actors. Already, my friends, this process has begun. Last year, we re-convened the Palestinian National Council for the first time in 22 years. The Palestine National Council is the highest political institution. It is the Palestinian Parliament, if you may, in exile. It represents every Palestinian of the 13 million Palestinians inside the occupied territories, and in exile, and outside in the diaspora. This convening of our National Council for the first time in 22 years has resulted in the recent election of the Central Council, the PLO Central Council.



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The PLO's supreme decision-making body, the Central Council, specifically, we reconvened and re-selected the Central Council specifically in order to prepare for possible national strategic decisions that only this body is empowered to make. The Central Council was the body that created the Palestinian Authority. It was the Central Council that can end it. And this year, the former technocratic government was replaced by one led by the Fateh movement. Now is not a time for technocrats, it is a time for political leaders with local constituencies and with the ability to guide and mobilize people.

Number three of our strategy, my friends, is this. The international community is not just responsible for peacemaking, but also for ensuring accountability. Ensuring scrutiny and accountability. The international system was established to make sure that countries would be held accountable. And why did the occupation hardly figure in Israel's recent elections, do you think? Why? Why was there no discussion of the control of more than – the lives of more than 5 million Palestinians? Why? Because it's too comfortable. The status quo is too comfortable. The occupation is too comfortable. The colonization is too comfortable. The besiegement of more than 2 million people, putting them in an open cage, open prison in Gaza for more than 12 years is too comfortable.

And it's more, it's more than comfortable, it is profitable for Israel. Let me give you some examples. Israel profits from the resources of 60% of land of the West Bank known as Area C, that is under its direct military and administrative control. Agriculture, phosphate mining, water, name it, are extracted from our land. There are some 2000 Israeli business and industries that operate illegally in this area. They don't pay taxes to the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian government, they pay taxes to Israel. The PA, the Palestinian Authority, loses some \$360 million annually in lost revenues, in direct contravention of the very Oslo agreements that we signed with Israel.

We are a captive market. Almost, by the way, the size of Israel's population itself. Journalists are fond of saying that if you want to know the real story, follow the money. And I invite you, my friends, to follow the money. By the same token, if you want to change the story, end the flow of money or at least alter its course. The biggest incentive for Israel to end this occupation is to end its profitability. We have to make it costly.

In 2018, the U.N. compiled a list of Israeli and international businesses that operate in occupied territory. That list is ready, but Israel and U.S. pressure has kept it from being punished, unfortunately. We believe its publication is essential. Businesses must be named and shamed for colluding with an illegal military occupation. Settlements are a crime of war, that is very well defined in international law in the full Geneva Convention. Their products must be banned, not only labeled as the European Union is trying to do.

The businesses operating in them must be sanctioned. Any strategy aimed at ending the occupation must target the economic interests that sustain it. If the money is targeted, the story will change. And I assure you the story will change. If you think the almost 700,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank are only there for ideological or political reasons, think again. And go visit some of the Israeli settlers. Some of TV programs and documentaries that have been conducted about settlements, all of them will tell you the prime reason why they are there is economic reason, material reasons, profitability.

And, ladies and gentlemen, I am by nature an optimist. I am. I think you can blame my mother for that. My president is, our people are. We have to be optimists. Seeking international support foments directly from our insistence on and commitment to international law. We believe it is more important than ever now, precisely because the international order is under direct threat from Trump's unilateralism.

We believe in this because we believe this is not just in our interest. This isn't just about Israelis and Palestinians. It is in



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the interest of the international community as a whole. It is in the interest of global peace. What happens in Palestine does not happen in isolation. We will reverberate far and wide, as has been the case all along. You undermine the international order at your peril. Open that door and see what happens in the South China Sea. In the Ukraine, in Kashmir, in Croatia, Slovenia. The list goes on, my friends.

Yes, the picture is not pretty at this moment. But we must also not lose sight of the upside. And there is an upside, and there are positives. Positives we can use in our favor. Chicago is known as the city that works. We too can make this work, my friends. The Trump administration has allowed us to escape the flaws of this peace process. It did allow us to escape the flaws of the peace process. To remove that fig leaf from a structurally failing peace process.

It has done so by outlining a stark choice for us all as we move forward. On one side, we have unilateralism, colonialism, and the law of the jungle. It is the side that is comfortable with a system of apartheid that sees three legal systems in the area of history Palestine. Three different legal systems. One for Israeli Jews, that is liberal democracy. One for Palestinian citizens of Israel, that is considering them as second-class citizens. And one for the Palestinians in the occupied territories, adopting military rules and not even abiding by international law that governs military rules.

It is the side of an administration, and I mean here the Trump administration, that is willing to undermine international law and international order for short-term political gain, very short-term political gain.

On the other side, it is our side. It is the side where there is multi-lateralism. Cooperation, international law, and the principal that all people are equal before that law. Not the stronger, not the one with the more connection in Washington, but all people are equal before that law. It is the side of those who believe there is and there must be such a thing as justice. That all are entitled to it, and that a rules-based international order is worth preserving. It is the side of the founding principles of the United Nations. It is the side of the founding fathers of the United States of America. It is the side we stand on, and we intend to move forward. Thank you very much.

James Robinson: Okay, thanks very much for that very passionate speech. We have a little time until 2:00, 25 minutes or something before we have to close the proceedings to ask some questions. Before we do that, I wanted to make a – thinking about the ambassador's speech, there's some interesting connections to what Sergio Jaramillo and Jonathan Powell were talking about. The ambassador emphasized we know what, we know what, we just can't get to what. There's been a lot of consensus in the international community for a long time about what the solution looks like. But we can't get there.

And Jonathan Powell made the remark last year that the thing about every conflict is most of the time you know what the solution is. You just can't get there. And he used this metaphor, that there's always light at the end of the tunnel, even, and in fact, he gave the example of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. There's light at the end of the tunnel, the problem is there's no tunnel. So, I think that's what we heard today. As the ambassador said, we know what, but there's no tunnel.

The other thing – and here's a way of saying what he was talking about. Both Sergio Jaramillo and Jonathan Powell made the point that peace in Colombia and peace in Northern Ireland was only possible when a sort of stalemate emerged. As long as one side thinks they're winning, you can't have a peace negotiation. A lot of what the ambassador was saying is a massive impediment to the peace is one side does think they're winning, and so then you can't have a peace agreement. So, that was just two thoughts relating it to what Sergio Jaramillo and Jonathan Powell said in the last two years of this speech.

So, let me just ask, I'm aggregating questions here from the floor. And so, I thought this would be a good way of doing



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this. So, a lot of people are interested in your reflections on the Obama administration, since you mentioned President Obama and he's a big fish in the University of Chicago. What are your reflections on what did the Obama administration get right or wrong in terms of trying to help the peace process in Palestine and Israel?

Dr. Zomlot: Should I answer?

James Robinson: Yeah, sure.

Dr. Zomlot: Well, in theory, I think the Obama administration's intervention was spot-on, it was absolutely right on every single step, in terms of, number one, doing something that we were urging all previous administrations to do, which was starting early on the peace process, not waiting until the last year or the last month, as was the case during the Clinton administration, or even the Bush administration. And President Obama started very early on, literally the first day in office, he called our president and he called the Israeli prime minister, and he said he wants to intervene, and he wants to conclude a peace agreement. So, that was the first yes, the first right thing to do.

And the second thing, he appoints a mediator, Senator Mitchell, who is neither from this camp nor from that camp, and the man who was accredited with the success of the Northern Ireland. So, a man with clout, a man with experience, a man with passion, and, first and foremost, very closely and directly linked to the President. Number three, and, by the way, he appointed Senator Mitchell early on, as well. You're talking about the first days and weeks of the administration.

Number three, he presented a framework. He went to Cairo to present a framework for his resolution and remember fondly how excited we were to hear him saying these words: that peace cannot be sustained without justice. So, he wanted to link in our heads and in the heads of everybody that we must also attain justice for people for peace to sustain. And he outlined the implementation of the international resolutions will be his key framework.

Then, he did something also very important. He picked on the right thing that was killing the two-state solution, which was the settlements, and if you go back to his first remarks, he said that settlements must end immediately before we even start to talk. So, he was spot-on, he was right about every single count. He did it the right way.

Yet, he failed. Why did he fail? Because doing the right things on the book is something and actually implementing it is something else. President Obama has discovered firsthand that trying to be equal to the two parties, trying to draw the same distance between the two parties, trying to be truly a mediator is not possible in the U.S. He has the absolute pressure from all sides. And I must explain here, the one side that has been most damaging in this is not what is perceived to be the Jewish community in the U.S.

The Jewish community in the U.S. are mostly progressive. More than 70% are on the Democratic side. They have sided with the civil rights movement, they have been an integral part of the anti-war movement during Vietnam, and we know much of the activities now in the U.S. to support the two-state solution come from the Jewish community. The problem is, in fact, with the, let us call them the right-wing Christian evangelical movement, who are a major force in the U.S. who keep the pressure on any ability to deal with Israel as a foreign country that would be answerable to international laws and answerable to the U.S. interests to resolve the conflict, but is only seen from a divine perspective.

So, until we fix the issue of Israel being a domestic issue, I don't think any president could succeed. And therefore, we have two choices here, Professor. Either we live in defeat by either actually making Palestine a domestic issue or making both a foreign policy issue. You cannot have Palestine as a foreign policy issue under the calculations and the measurement of the U.S. national interests, which is correct, and then you have the other party as a purely domestic issue. And what is happening now, especially over the past few years, is that Palestine is turning into a domestic issue.



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And we are watching the debate, the discussion in the campuses and the universities all across the U.S., and the Congress itself, by the way.

With the new Congress elected, we are witnessing that Palestine is becoming, by the masses and through the public, a domestic issue everywhere in the U.S. So, perhaps that will help a new Obama one day.

James Robinson: Yeah. And so, that's a question that somebody else asked. So, on the one hand, you're emphasizing this multilateralism and commitment to international law and that's the crucial principle moving forward. But on the other hand, you want to engage in the pragmatic way with the U.S. politicians, with the Congress. And so, somebody asks where does that start? You have these grand objectives you want to obtain, but what would be small steps?

If you were going to engage with the Congress, what would be small steps? What would you advocate first? What would be constructive things that they could do on the road to this bigger goal?

Dr. Zomlot: You know, I have had this engagement with the Congress during the time I was in Washington as the envoy, and they – I must have visited the Congress on a daily basis, engaging senators and congress people. I found listening ears. And actually, I found also listening hearts, to tell you the truth, and minds. Because absent all these disturbances and all these propaganda all over us, absent all of that, the argument just makes sense.

Number one argument, make no mistake that the central conflict in the region is the Palestinian-Israeli. It is that issue. And no matter what you hear from this or that, this is the issue that either will continue making the entire region not sitting on an equilibrium, and the entire reason being sole source of lack of international security, because of that conflict. And whoever argues otherwise does not understand the region or is misleading. And if you really want to establish this region on the basis of a new security stability equilibrium, this conflict must be resolved. That's number one.

Number two is that we Palestinians are always a bridge. We have been a bridge throughout the millennia, by the way, because of our geographic location. Together with Israel, if we achieve peace, that bridge could be the bridge between East and West. The bridge together, if we have the potential of making peace, I mean, can you imagine the economic blast that will happen after the partnership between an economy in Israel that is high-tech, linked directly to NASDAQ, and is operating almost in the Silicon Valley as it is operating in Israel itself.

That partnership with the Palestinian, most educated society, most useful society, most talented society, look at everywhere you go. They are the best doctors here in the U.K. They are the best doctors there in America. Wherever they go in the Gulf, the Arab Gulf, they are the ones who end up being the leaders of their respective fields. Can you imagine the marriage of that and what can happen if we open up both to East and West? There will be an economic blast, technological blast, social blast in the positive sense of course. Don't misunderstand me here, blast – as a PLO official, I shouldn't use words like blast. But I mean, the full potential being reached.

And the third, and the last argument, here, the third and the last argument about why they should do that is purely an American – a U.S. interest. It is in the absolute U.S. interest – and this is not me saying – it's almost every single U.S. President before President Trump. Almost every single U.S. Chief of Staff. I remember Chief of Staff Petraeus a few years ago who said that this conflict is costing America dearly. He said that this conflict is costing American boys – the lives of American boys. And you know when a Chief of Staff uses the term boys, he means it.

And therefore, it is in the interest of Americans, it is in the interest of Palestinians, it is in the interest of Israelis – it is the core issue of the region. I saw eyes being opened, ears willing to listen in America. We just want to have that



opportunity to engage, that space to engage. And unfortunately, the decision to close our office was exactly to shut us down and to end our engagement with the wider American public and representatives.

James Robinson: Yeah. That lack of engagement doesn't just stop at that level. I used to have a colleague that taught Middle Eastern politics, and I asked her once, "How do you talk about the Israel-Palestinian conflict in your class?"

And she said, "Oh, I don't talk about that. It's much too controversial. You just cause trouble by talking about that."

I said, "So, how do you talk about Egypt?"

"I don't talk about Egypt."

"How do you talk about Syria?"

"I don't mention Syria."

"What about Lebanon?"

"I don't mention Lebanon."

"What about Iran?"

"Oh no, don't go there. Don't even."

So, I said, "What do you talk about?"

And she said, "Turkey." She talked about Turkey. So, that just shows how complex it is, even in an academic environment, where we're supposed to hold free speech and no-holds-barred intellectual discussion, we can't even start thinking about the issues. Without which there's no hope of reaching a settlement or some kind of compromise.

Sorry, I'm just abusing my rights here as agenda-setting, as we say in political science. So, let me ask another question which several people have asked which is about – you're very clear that the position of the Palestinian Authority is to stick to international law, to look for multilateral solutions, the two-state solution. But several people have asked about is there consensus in Palestinian society about that? People are obviously interested in the difference between Hamas and Fateh and other groups. So, you're – is your view that there is a very broad consensus about this position that you're advocating or outlining?

Dr. Zomlot: Well, Professor, no one more than you knows that there is not such a thing as a consensus.

James Robinson: Yes, of course. Arrow's General Possibility Theory.

Dr. Zomlot: But if you mean majority, yes. There was an overwhelming majority for the political platform of ending Israel's occupation that began in 1967 or establishing an independent state of Palestine in that territory, which is 22% of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital and with a just resolution of the issue of refugees according to international standards and resolutions.

Now, I must admit that that overwhelming majority is receding under the pressure of the moment and the pressure



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coming from all directions. People are losing hope, hope is becoming a very precious commodity back in Palestine, in the hearts of many Palestinians. But still, a majority remain wanting to see a state of Palestine. Until now, all political parties within the PLO, including Fateh, the leading political party, is with the platform of a state of Palestine under 1967 borders. By the way, even opposition parties are still with this political program.

And why are people still with this political program? Because the whole discussion about the one-state solution, some people offer it now as if it's a new idea, as if they have just invented the wheel. Remember when I was talking about the ultimate compromise of Palestinians accepting international legitimacy, the ultimate compromise of needing the ultimate promise of the international community, before we did the ultimate compromise in 1988, our political program was one state. The PLO called for a one-state, democratic for all of its citizens.

So, we had to give up that political program and the sheer pressure of the U.S.-led international community, because of the Israeli pressure on the U.S. that we should forego a one-state political program and adopt a two-state solution. And that's why in my remarks I said we are fine with both. But this isn't about the goals, Professor, and my friends. This is about the means. We have not been able to attain our goals because we lack the sufficient means to get to where we want to go. So, to divert us at this point in time towards one-state, two-state, is going to be luxury, really. Missing the point, and actually arguing that the choice is between one-state and two-state.

Remember who said that? It was President Trump himself, early on. Either one-state or two-states, he doesn't mind. By the way, this is a talking point he had from somebody else, and this somebody else did not want Trump to adopt the one-state solution. I assure you, I don't think President Trump meant an egalitarian state for all of its citizens, we will take it now. We will seize it now. But it was meant primarily to abandon the two-state solution, that was the prime objective of that sentence. But we agree with that sentence. It is either the one-state or the two-state solution.

But you want to convince me, or we should convince ourselves that it is going to be shorter or nearer that we attend the one-state and the two-states in light of the nation-state law in Israel? In light of the election the day before yesterday, when the majority of the Palestinian citizens of Israel actually boycotted the elections because they feel now they are being institutionally discriminated against? And you think the current state of Israel, and the current political manifestation in Israel is going to really allow for a one-state in a generation to come, or two generations to come?

Those who want to see a two-state solution are those who are oriented towards a solution. We want a solution. And we believe that the two-states, if it means the best interests of Israel and Palestine, if it's must more plausible, possible, doable, then it might actually move towards a virtual border. If it has the consensus of the Arab world, the consensus of the international community backed by U.N. Security Council resolutions, and we didn't get it, then we will get something that is very controversial and a non-starter for Israel.

This is not to say that we shouldn't struggle for something we believe in, but we also have millions of our children who we are worried about their future. We want them to have a life. We want the people in Gaza to have an ordinary life, to be able to travel, to come to the University of Chicago and be educated. The most talented people on earth, and I'm not saying this rhetorically, are in Gaza, because suffering creates so much creativity. People who are born in refugee camps now are professors worldwide.

And once I was asked in Harvard, "How on earth did you make it from the Rafah refugee camp in Gaza to Harvard?" I said, "Wow, that was an upgrade to Harvard." To come all the way to Harvard. So, we need to give these people an opportunity. And we believe the two-state solution could actually allow the two people to engage on more sane sort of relationship and abandon the borders. Make it virtual borders between us and actually be able to interact almost like one state.



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The only choice we have now is between one-state and two states. The only choice we are offered by the Netanyahu government is either two states or an apartheid. This is the reality. And we reject apartheid in all of its forms.

James Robinson: Okay, maybe one last short question. It's a tough question, but it's a good question, I think. And then we should close. Somebody asks if you think about, if you reflect on the failed peace process or the process over the years, is there one thing that you regret? Is there something that the Palestinian leaders should have done differently or should have done better? I think that's a good – it's a hard question but it's a good question.

Dr. Zomlot: Yeah, it is a hard question. Do you have six hours for me to answer it? Because – we have made so many mistakes, my friend. We have really made so many mistakes. We have made strategic mistakes and we have made managerial, internal mistakes. The first, most hurtful mistake we made is that we accepted to start a peace process in Oslo by sending Israel a written letter, signed by President Yasser Arafat, the founder of the Palestinian National Movement, recognizing Israel fully, legally as a state under the 1967 borders without demanding reciprocal recognition. We should have started with leveling the field with reciprocity and both recognize each other. And then the peace process was a process to find the best way to actually implement that principal agreement and mutual recognition. We failed there and we should have accepted it.

James Robinson: That's a good answer. We – I know there's a lot to talk about, and we continue in June just the two of us. But now we should –

Dr. Zomlot: I told you we need six hours to tell you about our mistakes – we did many mistakes, including internal management as well.

James Robinson: Okay, great, so, let me bring the proceedings to a close. It's been super eye-opening, very passionate and full of information and things to think about and we are very grateful. It's terribly unfortunate you were not here in person. But we hope to rectify that in the future, and for now I'd just like to thank you very much for taking part.

Dr. Zomlot: Thank you, thank you very, very much. Honored and privileged and I hope I'll be back with you very soon.

James Robinson: And thank you so much for coming.