



AFRICAN NARRATIVES

Trump's Approach: Displacing Palestinians and the Dynamics of American Political Decision-Making



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Introduction:

U.S. President Donald Trump's approach to political decision-making presents an exceptional case study, particularly in understanding the complexities of his administration's foreign policy initiatives. His style, characterised by its personal influence and divergence from traditional norms, played a significant role in shaping policies such as

the proposed plan to displace Palestinians. Understanding Trump's unique approach is crucial to grasping the dynamics at play during his presidency and their subsequent impact on both domestic politics and public awareness.

Trump: An Exceptional Model in American Politics and His Personal Impact on Political Decision-Making

Donald Trump represents an unconventional figure in American political history, distinguished by the degree to which his personality and individual preferences influenced policy. Seen as an exceptional model, Trump often made decisions independently of the constraints and principles that guided previous U.S. administrations. His direct and often provocative approach led him to depart from many established political norms that traditionally shaped how U.S. presidents handled both domestic and foreign affairs.

From the outset of his electoral campaign through his presidency, Trump relied heavily on his distinctive personality, polarizing style, and decisions rooted in his personal analyses or consultations with a close circle of advisors. He often disregarded established political institutions and traditional sources of expertise. This individualistic approach amplified his influence beyond that of governmental institutions, and many of his decisions appeared to reflect personal inclinations rather than carefully coordinated policy.

Unlike U.S. presidents who typically consulted with Congress, military advisors, and political experts, Trump operated differently. His highly individualised decision-making process, driven by his personality, led some observers to characterise his rule as approaching absolute power. Despite the legal and constitutional limitations on the U.S. president's authority, Trump frequently challenged and weakened these constraints through his assertive approach to confronting opposition, whether from within the Republican Party or from opposing parties .

Public opinion also played a crucial role in Trump's approach. He believed that his substantial popularity among a dedicated base of supporters gave him a mandate to make decisions independently, without necessarily responding to broader public demands or engaging with traditional political actors. While polling data sometimes indicated fluctuations in his overall popularity, the exceptional loyalty of his base reinforced the perception that he could act freely, without heeding the political or social forces opposing his policies.

This sense of unwavering support bolstered Trump's conviction that his decisions would be embraced by his followers, even if they contradicted prevailing opinions or long-held principles of democratic governance. This belief manifested in various policies, both domestic – such as his immigration policies – and international, including his withdrawal from international agreements like the Paris Climate Agreement and the Iran nuclear deal.

However, this style of governance also prompted criticism. Many argued that Trump's insistence on a personal vision, often disregarding traditional expertise, represented a departure from established norms in U.S. politics. His decisions were frequently perceived as targeted primarily at his core base, often overlooking dissenting voices from within his own party or other segments of American society. His approach fuelled a sense of division and polarisation within American society.

(1) The Displacement of Palestinians: A Maneuver by Trump or an American Strategy? Report, Sky News Arabia, January 29, 2025
<https://2u.pw/rN6TRjB1>

Polishing Trump's Policies: Reframing Sensitive Positions in the Middle East through "Real Estate Development"

Under the administration of President Donald Trump, American foreign policy underwent a notable shift. This involved efforts by several officials to refine certain stances and statements that had generated considerable controversy, particularly concerning the Palestinian issue. The administration, along with advisors, sought to "polish" rhetoric surrounding sensitive topics, such as the potential displacement of Palestinians, and mitigate the negative reactions these statements provoked.

One issue that sparked significant criticism was Trump's proposed plan to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, often termed the "Deal of the Century." The plan included proposals for relocating Palestinians or making significant alterations to their geographical and social circumstances. These suggestions triggered international division, with numerous countries and human rights organisations viewing them as amounting to the forced displacement of Palestinians, a violation of international law. Consequently, Trump administration officials attempted to reshape these positions in response to international criticism, softening the tone and modifying certain aspects of the plan to garner broader acceptance .



The Trump administration introduced an approach that could be described as a "Real Estate Development Policy." This policy, inspired by Trump's background in real estate, sought to apply his business acumen to resolving international crises. Some observers believe that the administration attempted to apply this framework to international conflicts, including the Middle East issue. Initially, Trump believed that problems could be resolved through developmental projects and "real estate development" initiatives in conflict zones, such as the establishment of economic zones or investment projects as solutions to these crises.



Trump's Gaza Plan: Israeli Far-Right Seizes Opportunity Amid Palestinian, Arab Concerns

President Donald Trump's plan for managing the Gaza Strip, a component of the "Deal of the Century" aimed at resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, elicited strong reactions across various political circles, particularly in Israel, Palestine, and the broader region. Following its announcement, certain far-right factions in Israel appeared to capitalize on this U.S. proposal to advance their own agendas.

These factions viewed Trump's plan as an opportunity to broaden their influence and implement their vision for the future of Palestinians in the region. They began suggesting that the U.S. proposal offered a roadmap for resolving the Palestinian issue based on their own perspectives. This trend coincided with public statements by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that appeared to embrace ideas of settlement expansion and altering the existing reality in Gaza and other areas of the West Bank. Following Netanyahu's statements, it became apparent that the far-right in Israel was preparing for subsequent steps, potentially involving the displacement of Palestinians from certain areas or the imposition of geographical and social changes on the Palestinian way of life.

Critics argued that the primary issue with the U.S. plan was its perceived incompatibility with principles of international law and legitimate Palestinian rights. The plan faced significant opposition from the outset, as Palestinians viewed it as promoting their forced removal from their land, thereby contradicting their rights to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state. Egypt also took a firm stance against the plan, with Cairo asserting that it ignored fundamental Palestinian rights and failed to fulfill the aspirations of the Palestinian people to live in freedom and dignity. Arab support for Egypt's position was considerable, with many Arab countries expressing solidarity with Palestine and rejecting the proposed settlements as one-sided and dismissive of Palestinian rights.

This disparity between the Palestinian and Arab positions, on one hand, and the U.S. and Israeli proposals, on the other, underscores the challenges facing the peace process in the Middle East. Lasting solutions, it suggests, cannot be imposed without the consensus of the involved parties, particularly given the consistent Palestinian opposition to any plan that would lead to displacement or compromise Palestinian rights.

Trump's Palestinian Displacement Plan: Domestic Political Fallout in the U.S.

President Donald Trump's announcement of his plan to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which included proposals concerning the potential displacement of Palestinians, generated significant controversy within the United States, impacting political parties, social groups, and economic interests.

Political Impact

- **Sharp Political Division:** Trump's displacement plan created a sharp division within the U.S. political landscape. Some pro-Israel figures and groups on the right supported the decision, believing it would enhance regional stability. Conversely, members of the American left, including members of Congress and human rights advocates, sharply criticised the plan, viewing it as a contradiction of human rights values and international norms, and as promoting policies potentially amounting to ethnic cleansing.

Social Impact

- **Reactions from Palestinian and Arab-American Communities:** The Palestinian and Arab-American communities in the U.S. expressed anger and frustration over the decision, perceiving it as a blatant disregard for Palestinian rights by a nation that purports to champion human rights. They felt that Trump's policy harmed their political and humanitarian interests and increased the marginalisation of their concerns.
- **Rise in Anti-Decision Activities:** Major U.S. cities, including New York, Washington, and Los Angeles, witnessed protests and solidarity events with the Palestinian people, as well as demonstrations against Trump's policies. Human rights movements and civil society organisations launched campaigns on social media, demanding a reversal of the decision and urging a re-evaluation of U.S. policy on Palestine.

Economic Impact

- **Economic Consequences for U.S. Businesses:** The displacement plan could lead to indirect economic consequences for certain American businesses, particularly those engaged in trade with Middle Eastern countries or reliant on economic partnerships with Arab nations. The policy may reduce trade cooperation opportunities between the U.S. and key Arab partners. It could also lead to economic sanctions or diminished engagement with U.S. companies by countries in the region, based on objections to U.S. positions on the Palestinian issue.

Impact on U.S. Policy in the Middle East

- **Relations with Arab and Islamic Countries:** Trump's decision has escalated tensions between the U.S. and Arab and Islamic countries, with many nations expressing their opposition to U.S. policies in the region. This tension could negatively affect American support in other Middle Eastern issues, including counterterrorism efforts and backing for Arab governments in other conflicts, as well as potentially leading to shifts in regional alliances.
- **Impact on the Middle East Peace Process:** This decision could impede efforts to achieve a fair and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as Palestinians view it as undermining their legitimate rights to establish an independent state. It is likely to exacerbate regional instability, negatively affecting U.S. interests.

The signing of the peace agreement with Egypt under Menachem Begin is offered as a call for supporters of Benjamin Netanyahu and the broader right wing to reconsider before agreeing to cooperate with a plan that could undermine that agreement. It is argued that the cancellation of agreements with Egypt and Jordan could lead to the dissolution of the Abraham Accords, preventing the achievement of broader normalisation with Saudi Arabia.

Trump's Palestinian Policy: Examining U.S. Government, Civil Society, and Public Reactions

The Trump administration's decision to advance proposals potentially displacing Palestinians from some of their lands prompted a range of reactions within the United States, reflecting differing viewpoints within the government, civil society, and the general public.



Official U.S. Positions

- **Trump Administration:** The official stance of the Trump administration supported proposals to displace Palestinians as part of the "Deal of the Century," intended to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The administration regarded this plan, which included proposals to alter the geographical and social reality for Palestinians, as the path to peace. This strategy sought to create economic zones and reserves for Palestinians, while implementing changes to their social and geographic status. Several officials within the administration advocated for the plan, asserting that it offered a resolution to the protracted Middle East crisis and would contribute to building infrastructure and improving the future for Palestinians. They saw the proposals for displacement as part of a broader strategy to develop the region .
- **Congress's Position:** While the Trump administration strongly supported the plan, some members of Congress voiced objections. Regarding the Palestinian issue and human rights, some members expressed concerns about the humanitarian and legal implications of such a plan, warning that the proposals could constitute forced displacement and violate Palestinians' fundamental rights. Other members defended the decision, arguing that the plan could represent a step toward resolving the conflict, with Palestinians benefiting from developmental and economic projects.



Unofficial U.S. Positions

• **Civil Society and Human Rights Advocates:**

Human rights movements and U.S. civil society generally opposed the decision. Organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch rejected the policy, viewing it as a violation of human rights and of the Palestinians' right to self-determination and return to their lands. They regarded the plan as an attempt to illegally alter the region's demographic composition. Other organisations, such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), expressed concern that the policy could pave the way for the forced displacement of Palestinians, exacerbating their suffering. These organisations called for respect for Palestinian rights and rejected any plan that could contribute to displacement or the destruction of lives.

• **American Public Opinion:** Public opinion was deeply divided. While some right-wing sectors supported Trump's policies toward Israel and the peace plans advanced by his administration, left-wing circles and communities supporting the Palestinian cause strongly

opposed the displacement plan. Demonstrations took place in major cities like New York, Washington, and Los Angeles, demanding the cancellation of the plan and an end to the prospect of forced displacement. Several U.S. media outlets published reports critical of Trump's plan, suggesting it posed a threat to human rights.

• **American Jewish Communities:**

Jewish communities in the U.S. displayed varied reactions. Certain Jewish groups, particularly those strongly supporting the Israeli government, backed Trump's policy, considering it a step toward enhancing Israel's security and influence. Other Jewish organisations voiced concern that the plan could escalate regional violence and worsen relations between Israelis and Palestinians. More than 350 rabbis, along with additional signatories including Jewish creatives and activists, signed an advertisement in the New York Times condemning Donald Trump's proposal for the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from Gaza.

(5) Arab Americans for Trump" Changes Its Name After the President's Comments on the Displacement of Gaza's Population, Report, February 6, 2025, Monte Carlo International
<https://2u.pw/njqVFoS8>

(6) 'No to ethnic cleansing': over 350 rabbis sign US ad assailing Trump's Gaza plan, The Guardian, 13/2/2025,
<https://2u.pw/DO3tBIMa>



Conclusion:

The controversial decision reflects profound implications, both internationally and domestically. It has caused sharp divisions within American society, with supporters viewing it as a step toward Middle East security and stability, and opponents seeing it as a violation of human rights and international law. Domestically, the decision has intensified divisions between the two main political parties. Furthermore, the decision has impacted the image of the United States in the international arena, increasing criticisms of Trump's foreign policies.