

What Are The Political Implications of the Palestinian Web Suffix?

Last week Palestinian Prime Minister Abu Allah announced that the .PS suffix has officially been activated on the websites of the Palestinian Authority (PA). On the World Wide Web, the suffix .PS signifies that the Palestinian entity is a state. Although seemingly inconsequential, this development carries political significance.

What is the Issue?

- Israel and the Palestinians have recently inverted their stances regarding the political process:
 - In the *past*, Israel resisted the Palestinian demand for a state (even with provisional borders);
 - Now it is the Palestinians who resist a state with provisional borders, *while* Israel demands adherence to the Second Phase of the Roadmap, which calls for the establishment of a Palestinian State with provisional borders.
- **Background**
 - **In 1988** (Algiers Declaration) the Palestinians **declared the establishment of a Palestinian state** *despite* having **no formal presence in any part of Mandatory Palestine**. About a 100 countries recognized this declaration.
 - The framework of the **Oslo Process** (Palestinian State *after* a Permanent Status Agreement), on the one hand, and the shared interests of Israel and the PLO, on the other hand, **denied the PA power and responsibilities on many salient issues of international affairs** – foreign representatives to the PA, appointment of PA ambassadors abroad, PA membership in international organizations or even an international dial code.
 - *Throughout* the Oslo Process until 2000, the Palestinians demanded their right to establish a state, even with provisional borders, threatening to declare unilateral independence multiple times (5/99, 9/00, 11/00).
 - Israel threatened to actively prevent the declaration and realization of Palestinian independence.
- **February 2005 – The Inversion**
 - In February 2005, Abu-Mazen announced that a Palestinian State (with provisional borders) is a trap. The Palestinian side is now interested in **statehood only as part of a comprehensive Permanent Status agreement**.
 - Israel announced that it remains committed to the Roadmap - Palestinian State with *provisional borders before* Permanent Status). This is despite the appearance that the Palestinians will not agree to it.

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Why is this important? Why now?

- Activating the Palestinian internet suffix:
 - **Contradicts the *spirit of the Interim Agreement*** as it constitutes a symbol of sovereignty of Palestinian statehood; however
 - Coincides with the Roadmap i.e. with the idea of a Palestinian State in Provisional Borders/Roadmap;
- Therefore, apparently, the new web suffix:
 - undermines Israel's position and coincides with the Palestinians' *before* inversion;
 - undermines Abu-Mazen's new position and coincides with Israel's *after* the inversion.

Policy-Options

- Theoretically, the activation of a Palestinian web suffix is contrary to the spirit of the Oslo Process. However, it constitutes an additional sign that the Palestinian entity is a state-in-the-making albeit in provisional borders.
- In light of the inversion of positions between Israel and the Palestinians regarding the political process, does it make sense to maintain the restrictions placed on the powers and responsibilities of the PA in international affairs?

For additional sources see the Re'ut Institute website www.reut-institute.org:

- **Points of View**
 - "[Is Abu-Mazen Driving the Political Process to a Deadlock?](#)"
 - "[Is it Time to Upgrade the Political Status of the Palestinian Authority?](#)" (in Hebrew)
- **Concepts:**
 - "[Upgrading the Sovereign Status of the Palestinian Authority](#)" (in Hebrew)
 - "[Upgrading the Political Status of the Palestinian Authority](#)" (in Hebrew)
- **Terms**
 - "[Roadmap](#)"; "[Interim Agreement](#)" (in Hebrew); "[Oslo Process](#)" (in Hebrew)
 - "[Accession to Statehood](#)"; "[Status of Palestinian Statehood](#)"
 - "[Chairman of the PA](#)" (in Hebrew); "[PLO](#)" (in Hebrew); "[Palestinian Authority](#)" (in Hebrew)
 - "[Map of the Palestinian People](#)"

End.

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