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1. I have been an active member of my school’s Model UN since my freshman year in 2011. Since then, I have attended three collegiate tournaments each year (Brown, Johns Hopkins, and George Washington University), one local high school tournament (Horace Mann), and chaired a committee in Stuyvesant’s conference in all three years. I usually participate in crisis committees, and have won three outstanding delegate awards and one best delegate award;
2. In order to build a lasting framework for peace, the issue of Palestinian who still live in refugee camps must be dealt with, whether they return to their own state or are resettled in other nations. Next, the status of East Jerusalem and other areas subject to land swaps must be settled. Finally, the military relationship between the two eventual states must be settled, creating some security agreement that can keep the Israelis comfortable.
3. The unification of Fatah and Hamas gives Abbas a stronger platform from which to negotiate, because he can now more easily claim to represent the whole of the Palestinian people in negotiations. Unfortunately, the merger, which in reality does little to empower Hamas, can be used by the Israeli government as political fodder. Thus it can be used as a tool to postpone negotiations on the Israeli part.
4. Theoretically, there could be a “one-state solution” with the two peoples co-existing in one nation. Whereas more extreme Israeli groups, including many in the right-wing Jewish Home party, argue that Palestinians could become residents without becoming citizens, unless the one-state solution were created as a result of unilateral annexation, all residents would probably need to become full citizens. Thus, it would create a nation filled with animosity between two peoples, that has already fueled riots in many Arab neighborhoods this summer. Furthermore, it would threaten Israel’s ability to be a Jewish state, due to demographic trends that would swell Arab populations in the coming decades. On the other hand, this one-state solution could benefit Palestinian Israelis economically, giving them freer access to one of the strongest economies in the region.

A two-state solution, which could be created either by unilateral withdrawal from the West Bank on the Israeli part or by negotiations with Abass’ government, would be much better for the Israeli state. As a result of Arab League resolutions from several years ago, Israel would be recognized by several Arab states in the region. Furthermore, it would put to rest an issue that has marred the nation’s reputation recently. Finally, it could give Palestinian citizens the full democratic rights and respect for which they have been yearning. On the downside, this could result in the rise of an authoritarian regime in Palestine or, even worse, an Islamic regime. Further, Palestinian citizens would lose out economically, as they would probably suffer from the corruption for which Fatah is famous and would also not see the fruits of the much stronger Israeli economy.. Unilateral withdrawal by Israel, though politically risky, could become necessary should the negotiations not yield successful results anytime soon.

1. For now, Israel is a rather democratic state, especially when compared to its neighbors. Despite issues relating to the status of certain residents, such as Palestinian Israelis living in East Jerusalem, it does give nearly all rights to its Arab citizens (key word being citizens). However, Israel’s need to remain democratic puts pressure on the negotiation process. So long as Israel occupies Palestinian lands, it cannot be a fully democratic state. If it does not succeed in withdrawing from those lands, it will eventually be forced to make the choice between a state that oppresses some of its citizens or that is no longer dominated by Jews and Jewish culture, and thus is no longer a Jewish state.