

**POSITION PAPER: CARTER'S ADVICE FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY**




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**Policy Recommendations for Canada**

The following policy recommendations derive from the summary discussion in former US President Jimmy Carter's book, Palestine: Peace not Apartheid. CJPME supports many of Mr. Carter's recommendations, and has adapted them to the Canadian context.

- A. The sovereignty of all Middle East nations, and the sanctity of international borders must be honoured. Carter cites "Israel's continued control and colonization of Palestinian land" as the primary obstacle to a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. He points out how continued disrespect for the national aspirations of the Palestinian people has perpetuated the regional violence and instability.
- B. Canada and the West must maintain a single standard, and must not overlook illegal Israeli actions. Carter is critical of the way in which the West turns a blind eye to Israeli violations of international law and Israel's own negotiated agreements. He is especially critical of blind US support for Israel in the UN, and the West's acquiescence to Israel's unilateral action.
- C. Israel's permanent legal boundary must be established according to Resolution 242. Carter is consistent in his call for Israel to define its borders according to Resolution 242 (1967), thus relinquishing the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan and East Jerusalem. Carter points out that within Israel, there is a lively debate – lacking in the West – on Israel's territorial ambitions.
- D. The security of all nations and peoples – Palestine, Israel, and others – must be guaranteed. Fear, caused by a lack of secure and recognized borders for all peoples, has fostered an acceptance of the use of violence in the region. Security for all must be guaranteed.
- E. The humanitarian and human rights concerns of Palestinians must be addressed. Among other things, Carter dedicates an entire chapter of his book to condemn the Wall that Israel is building, addressing the social, economic, and psychological impacts of the Wall on Palestinian communities.

**A: The sovereignty of all Middle East nations must be honoured**

1. Israel must cease control and colonization of the Palestinian territories. Carter points out that, in fact, Israel has been acting in direct conflict with the positions of the international community (including the US and Canada) for decades. E.g. Israel's continued military occupation in territories invaded in 1967 violates hundreds of UN resolutions; Israel's continued colonization of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Golan violates Canadian and US policy; Israel's continued construction of the Wall on Palestinian territory violates Canadian and Western policy; etc.
2. The 2003 Road Map Peace Plan – eviscerated of any meaning. Although positive toward the Quartet's Road Map, Carter points out that Israel's 14 caveats and prerequisites to the Plan make it all but irrelevant. Carter points out that Israel's caveats explicitly preclude any discussion of the removal of its illegal colonies, the softening of the military occupation, or the applicability of Resolution 242. Carter reminds the reader that the Palestinians, for their part, accepted the Plan in its entirety.
3. The importance of the Arab League peace offer in 2002. In March, 2002, at the "Beirut Summit," 22 Arab nations endorsed a resolution introduced by Saudi Arabia. In Carter's words, "It offered Israel normal relations with all Arab states if Israel complied with UN Resolutions 194 and 242." While the Bush White House encouraged the initiative, Israel responded by destroying the office compound of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah the next day.
4. Barak's Camp David offer in 2000 did not honour Palestinian national aspirations. Carter points out that Barak's "generous offer" at Camp David would have led to the removal of less than half of the illegal Israeli colonists that were planted in the Palestinian territories during Barak's tenure alone. Carter also criticized Barak's offer for failing to address any aspects of Israel's web of control in the

occupied Palestinian territories, which includes Jewish-only roads, non-access to the Jordan valley, and expansive buffer zones around Israeli colonial institutions, among other things.

## **B: Canada and the West must uphold the standard of international law**

1. Unacceptable acquiescence to illegal Israeli actions. Carter was extremely critical of the “powerful political, economic, and religious forces in the United States” which stifle any American debate on Israeli policy. Carter pointed out that the US has used its veto in the UN Security Council over 40 times to prevent the passage of resolutions critical of Israel. In recent years, Canada too has started to change its voting at the UN, and no longer leverages international law as the basis for its voting. Carter suggests that the lively debate on such questions in Israel be allowed to thrive in North America too.
2. A double-standard of international behaviour. Carter is very disappointed by the US’ (and Canada’s) attempts to isolate and destabilize the elected government of the Palestinian Authority. Carter believes that refusing to communicate with leaders with whom we disagree is counterproductive. He also decries Israel’s conduct since the January, 2006 Palestinian elections: the arresting of Palestinian legislators; the denial of travel permits to Palestinian legislators; the blocking of humanitarian funds; the prevention of commercial trade and employment; the denial of access to the outside world; etc.
3. Unilateral Israeli action should not be accepted by the international community. Carter concludes that “Israel has decided to avoid any peace negotiations... by taking unilateral action... to carve out for itself the choice portions of the West Bank, leaving Palestinians destitute...” Unilateral policies in occupation violate UN Charter principles (Art. 2), and also violate the Oslo Accords and the Road Map Peace Plan, illustrated by Carter in a number of ways.

## **C: Define Israel’s permanent boundary according to Resolution 242**

1. Israel’s border should be defined along the 1967 borders, according to Resolution 242. Carter shows, both through the text of Resolution 242 and the comments of Israeli and international leaders, that Israel should relinquish all territory occupied in 1967. While Carter admits that a withdrawal to the 1967 borders might require “mutually agreeable land swaps,” this interpretation aligns with the historical context of the Resolution. Carter also shows how the Geneva Initiative of 2002 made clear that such land swaps could be made to work.

## **D: The security of Palestinians and Israelis must be guaranteed**

1. Canada must call for a stop to the sustained violence, oppression and apartheid. Carter summarizes saying, “It will be a tragedy – for the Israelis, the Palestinians, and the world – if peace is rejected and a system of oppression, apartheid, and sustained violence is permitted to prevail.” To Carter’s recommendation, no country – Canada included – should put preconditions to the opening of relations, and the stimulation of negotiations with the elected representatives of either people.
2. Canada should not condone violence, and must promote respect of international law. Carter writes, “Peace will come to Israel and the Middle East only when the Israeli government is willing to comply with international law... by accepting its legal borders. All Arab neighbours must pledge to honour Israel’s right to live in peace under these conditions.”

## **E: The human rights and humanitarian concerns of Palestinians must be addressed**

1. Canada’s refusal to deal with the elected Palestinian Authority is a “crime.” In an interview with CBC Television in December, Carter described Canada’s broken relationship with the Palestinian Authority as a crime on the part of Canada. As Carter pointed out, Canada is party to the punishment of millions of Palestinians based on the democratic choice of a minority – 42 percent – of the Palestinian population. Canada must restore international programs and funding to the intended sources within the Palestinian Authority, and must encourage other governments, notably the US and Israel, to do the same.