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# Mirror Imaging and Ideology in Palestine

Editor

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Abstract. This article identifies ideological mirror imaging on the part of most United States (US) policymakers concerning the political cognitions of many Palestinian National Authority leaders, PNA supporters, and Arab and Islamic supporters and exploiters of the construct of Palestinian self-determination.

Are public statements of policymakers a window on their political cognitions? If so, there appears to be a tragic disparity between what most US policymakers believe to be the political cognitions of many supporters and exploiters of the construct of Palestinian self-determination and what these supporters and exploiters do, indeed, believe.

Most US policymakers believe the construct of Palestinian self-determination denotes the components of human and civil rights as embodied in the context of a representative democracy based on some notion of a liberal tradition. From this belief come concerns for parsing just the right amount of territory for the people who are presently termed Palestinians, where this territory should be, how contiguous, coherent, and anti-Bantustan-like it should be, what sort of responsibility should be awarded for self-security and what assets allowed to carry out this responsibility, and a host of fair and equitable compromises concerning historical grievances and present contentious Issues. Signposts in process and substance comprise "agreeing to disagree"; a "Golden Mean"; "reason and logic" tempered with individual rights; and a secular cast to governance with the sacred remaining in the private, not public, sphere.

But, many supporters and exploiters of the construct of Palestinian self-determination among the PNA, PNA supporters, and various Islamic and Arab populations view the construct as an exemplification of two competing and orthogonal worlds. The political conflict is about which of the competing worlds will be victorious and which will not. Political contention, then, is not about a significant and salient co-existence, containment, and a parsing of this existential contract but, instead, about a fight to the death. Disagreement among these populations becomes one of means not of ends.

A number of factors influence the mirror imaging of US policymakers. The most common factors appear to be (1) an ignorance of history, (2) a belief in the irrelevance of history, (3) a belief in the robustness of one's own views that are believed to be causally related to the outcome of becoming a policymaker even if such views are only illusorily correlated, and (4) beliefs that representative democracy and the liberal tradition are overtly or covertly desired by virtually all people throughout the world. Interestingly, the mirror imaging adds fuel to the fire as it exemplifies a cultural imperialism of political cognition and renders it ever more difficult for US policymakers to be perceived as "honest brokers." Even more interestingly, through adding fuel to the fire, mirror imaging can generate consequences that ultimately may cause its own demise. Eventually, US policymakers would then reject the alchemy of reconciling opposites and instead feel impelled to decide between two irreconcilable weltanschauungs in terms of US strategic, moral, and domestic political interests. Eventually, all but the truest of True Believers would put their mirror--scorched and broken--aside. (See Berrien, F. K. (1969). Familiarity, mirror imaging and social desirability in stereotypes: Japanese vs. Americans. International Journal of

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Psychology, 4, 207-215; Gerecht, R.M. (October 14, 2000). The price of America's naivete. The New York Times, p. A31; Jensma, J. L. (1993). Kohut's tragic man and the Imago Dei: Human relational needs in creation, the Fall, and redemption. Journal of Psychology and Theology, 21 288-296; Krebs, D. L., & Denton, K. (1997). Social illusions and self-deception: The evolution of biases in person perception. In J.A. Simpson & D.T. Kenrick, (Eds.). Evolutionary social psychology (pp. 21-48). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.; Marin, G., & Salazar, J. M. (1985). Determinants of hetero- and autostereotypes: Distance, level of contact, and socioeconomic development in seven nations. Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 16, 403-422; McFarland, C., & Miller, D. T. (1990). Judgments of self-other similarity: Just like other people, only more so. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 16, 475-484.) (Keywords: Israel, Mirror Imaging, Palestinian, Palestinian National Authority.)