

For the Palestinians and Israel, the Trump pea

History shows that radical overreach on the part of the 'strong' has grim implications.

HUSSEIN IBISH

The 21st century is starting to look a lot like the 19th century. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have formed a joint American-Israeli committee to carve up the occupied West Bank with zero Palestinian input. It recalls the starkest days of predatory colonialism such as the Berlin Conference of 1884-85, which regulated European colonisation and trade in Africa. It also echoes ancient tragedies.

Mr Trump's proposal, roundly rejected by the Palestinians and the Arab League, encourages Israel to annex vast tracts of occupied Palestinian land in stark contradiction to the United Nations charter and numerous other international prohibitions against the acquisition of territory by war, including all relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

It shreds the 1993 Declaration of Principles which Israel and the US signed along with the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Russia. Article V specifies "final status" issues to be decided only through direct negotiations, including borders and settlements.

So much for that. Like an imperial power, Mr Trump is claiming the right to authorise Israel to disregard international law and its own treaty commitments. Further, he believes that the areas Israel may annex remain to be nego-

tiated between Israel and the US, rather than with the Palestinians.

So, the US and Israel have formed a joint "mapping committee" to determine, based on Israel's territorial ambitions and Mr Trump's political interests, exactly which areas Israel will annex and what will be left for a phony Palestinian state that would strongly resemble an apartheid-era South African Bantustan.

The brazenness and brutality of the plan was eloquently expressed by Mr Netanyahu during a February 16 speech in Jerusalem to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations.

He flatly stated that such annexations are "not conditional in any way on Palestinian acceptance of the Trump plan. Whether they accept it or not, it's going to happen".

"The weak don't survive," he declared. "Only the strong survive."

Students of history will immediately recognise in this speech, and the broader plan, the attitude that the 5th century BCE historian Thucydides attributed to the Athenians in the Melian Dialogue: "The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must."

Mr Trump and his adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner defend their annexation initiative by claiming it "recognises reality", meaning that Israel is simply unwilling to compromise and



Yasser Arafat, right, shakes hands with Yitzhak Rabin in Bill Clinton's presence after signing their peace accord in Washington.

be able to profit from you," the Athenians warned the Melians. That is also the clear message of Mr Kushner's document and Mr Netanyahu's comments.

When the US-Israeli-Palestinian summit at Camp David failed in 2000, it was clear that the most likely outcome was that Israel would eventually try

to impose by force the kind of partial, highly circumscribed "statehood", combined with annexation, formula that the Palestinians rejected at the ne-

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We must put an end to bullying in school

The case of a child in Australia and a TV presenter in the UK have started conversations

JUSTIN THOMAS

A mother's love for her child is one of the most potent forces in nature. Last week, Yarraka Bayles posted a video of her nine-year-old son, Quaden, distraught after yet another "freaking" day of being bullied at school. The footage shows the bullied schoolboy crying his heart out while voicing ideas about harming himself. Posting this video was a mother's sincere and desperate cry for help.

The clip has been viewed more than 16 million times and offers of support for Quaden have flooded in from around the world.

A similar case was recently reported in the UAE too. A video of a young girl being bullied at her school in Dubai was posted on the internet. After viewing the clip, a concerned schoolgirl, Jawaher Wejdan, bravely sent the footage on to the Knowledge and Human Development Authority, declaring that she always wants to "speak up for the voiceless". The bullies were later identified and removed from the school.

These, however, are just two instances where concerned citizens

and the power of social media helped bring about potentially useful outcomes. But more often than not, bullying goes unreported and unresolved.

How many children like Quaden cry themselves to sleep harbouring ideas of self-injurious behaviour? A study by Unicef, including more than 100,000 participants across 18 nations, reported that two-thirds of schoolchildren had been victims of some form of bullying.

We are in the midst of a global mental health crisis, and being bullied during childhood is a key contributor to this sorry state. Childhood victimisation experiences such as bullying have a direct relationship with the development of severe mental health problems.

A study published in Schizophrenia Bulletin, suggests that the strength of this association is in the same ballpark as the link between smoking and lung cancer.

Unfortunately, bullying doesn't stop in the schoolyard. Earlier this month, Caroline Flack, presenter on the popular TV show, Love Island, took her own life.

The British tabloid press has been

heavily criticised in this case, over its relentless negative and, at times, cruel coverage of Ms Flack's personal life.

In many ways, this is similar to the hounding that the late Princess Diana experienced, and the more recent harassment of the Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle.

Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, described his wife's treatment by sections of the British media as "bullying". He went on to say: "We won't and can't believe in a world where there is no accountability for this."

After Flack's death, the British Government have called for social media to help prevent bullying.

Members of the business community have asked businesses to rethink advertising in certain British tabloids. Flack's suicide has also prompted several hair salons across the UK to launch a systematic boycott of "toxic" celebrity-gossip magazines.

In the world of sport too, cases are on the rise of players being bullied, racially taunted and abused by supporters.

Last week, the Porto striker, Mousa Marega, left the pitch after a large section of the opposing team's (Vito-



Quaden Bayles runs onto the field before the NRL match between the Indigenous All-Stars and the New Zealand Maori All Stars at Cbus Super Stadium.

ria de Guimaraes) fans began chanting racist abuse.

Despite the support of his team-

mates, it was just too much for the French-born Malian striker who eventually left the pitch, in his own words, hurt and h across Europe rot similar harassmer