

III. Interview

Interview: *Ambassador Prof. Dr. Manuel Hassassian*

Palestinian Ambassador: Oasis Plan Is Essential Now for Peace

The following is an edited transcript of the Oct. 19, 2025 interview with H.E. Ambassador Prof. Dr. Manuel Hassassian, the Palestinian Authority's ambassador to Denmark, conducted by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute. The video of the interview is available [here](#).

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Hello, Ambassador Hassassian. I'm very happy that you have found, in this very crucial moment, the time to give us an interview. Obviously, the whole world was extremely happy and relieved when the 20 hostages were released, and I think, altogether [almost 2,000] Palestinian prisoners. So, my first question to you is, do you think this is the beginning of peace? Or do we have to worry, is this just a pause and the fighting will resume? Please tell us what your view is?

Ambassador Prof. Dr. Manuel Hassassian: First of all, I think it is a breakthrough, after two years, to have this war stopped. And it seems that President Trump has flexed his muscles on Israel to accept the ceasefire. Of course, the efforts of those who were trying to broker the peace between Israel and Hamas have borne fruit. So, from the outset, I would say this has been a relief, first of all for the people of Gaza, to stop this carnage and the killing, and to stop the destruction and the flattening of Gaza.

So, the people in Palestine are relieved of this war,



Courtesy of the Mission of Palestine in Denmark
H.E. Ambassador Prof. Dr. Manuel Hassassian.

and they believe that this might start a new era in the Middle East, where peace is possible, after so many years of conflict, and after so much destruction. That we have reached a point where the only resort to solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, is through peace negotiations, because both parties have understood the repercussions of such wars. And Israel has spared no moment and kept on using military force, in suppressing the Palestinian demands for self-determination. Now, they realize that a military solution is no solution! We need to go back

to the negotiation table, and try to flesh out, first, the details of President Trump's peace deal; and then, how we can move forward in achieving a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, by the implementation of Palestinian self-determination, *and* the formation of our independent Palestinian state.

This is the beginning and the prelude of a bigger picture in the Middle East, where everybody now knows that the military conflict in our part of the world is the essence of insecurity, is the essence of instability in the Middle East region. And to address this question, there must be recognition by all the parties, by the stakeholders, and especially Israel should understand that they cannot continue with the occupation; that the occupation has to end; and that Palestinians should have their inalienable right to self-determination and the formation of their independent Palestinian state, with the 1967 borders, as it is legitimized by the



The Oasis Plan.

international community and by the UN resolutions.

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, I think the plan, which was negotiated between the team of President Trump and various Arab governments—Egypt, Qatar, and so forth—looks very promising. But I, personally, think, and the Schiller Institute thinks that this is a very precious moment to really cause a fundamental change in the whole dynamic. As you know, and you participated

in some of our conferences on the idea of changing the parameters in the entire region, not just Israel/Palestine, but to transform the desert into a green area of forests, of agriculture, by putting the Oasis Plan, which was conceived by my late husband, Lyndon LaRouche, already in 1975, and which we have actualized in the recent period—that this is now the moment to put the Oasis Plan on the agenda. And I, personally, think that, given the fact that the neighbors of Israel are acutely aware that something has to be done to cause a steady basis for peace: How do you see the chances that the Gulf Cooperation Council, the OIC [Organization of Islamic Cooperation], the Arab League, and such organizations, would be willing to consider the Oasis Plan at this moment?

Seize the Moment for the Oasis Plan

Ambassador Hassassian: I think this is the right time for your organization to push forward and to market the Oasis Plan, because, as I said earlier, and on several occasions, I boosted the Oasis Plan as a prelude toward economic development, toward infrastructural development. I think this is a recipe that is ready for international donors and stakeholders to use in the process

of the national reconstruction, and infrastructural development of Gaza. I think this is the time to market the Oasis Plan, to be factored in by those who are going to be involved in the reconstruction of Gaza, as a plan that could help with other plans, merging them together, and being a major partner in that developmental process.

So, the Oasis Plan is now becoming more and more visible to stakeholders, to factor into any development

process, in terms of infrastructure, etc. I think this is the opportune moment for your organization to play an imperative role in that development. And by being more active in trying to reach those donor countries, which already have vowed, basically, to join in the reconstruction of Gaza, and this is the ample time given to you, to promote that kind of a plan, which has been around for three or four decades now!

It's not something new. It's something that has been tested and tried, and has been successful. So why not now, also using the Oasis Plan, as part of this redevelopment, or the reconstruction of Gaza, which has unfortunately been flattened—80% of Gaza is flattened now—and this is the time where such models of development should be factored in any kind of future reconstruction and development plans in Gaza.

Zepp-LaRouche: As you know, the program is supposed to start with a system of canals between the Red Sea and the Dead Sea, and then the canal to the Mediterranean, and that way, basically using desalination of large amounts of ocean water, to create a whole new water irrigation system for the entire region, including artificial rivers. And eventually, it is not only supposed to be for the reconstruction of Gaza, but it's a vision, whereby the entire region, actually, from India to the Mediterranean, from the Caucasus to the Persian Gulf, could be transformed. And in a certain sense, this region already was the hub of the ancient Silk Road, and in that way, connected Asia, Africa and Europe, and it could play that role again.

What is your view about this?

Ambassador Hassassian: Well, I understand what you're saying, and I think governments should be involved in this process, because it's not something that is a private thing, to be done by a company. So, I think this is a long-range project that has already been tested, and there should be more elaboration of the Oasis Plan, and to put it in a [developed] form, when it is going to be marketed, for Gaza as a specimen. Everything you have mentioned now is so important—that the benefits won't only go to the Gazans and to the Palestinians. The region will be transformed to another level to create a certain kind of communication, in terms of having trade relationships. And that, in itself, will produce a momentum for regional cooperation that will basically promote regional stability. Because this kind of economic

development will benefit the region itself, and that should be something to be considered as a macrocosm, rather than only a microcosm, in terms of development, etc.

I totally believe that the Oasis Plan should really be considered seriously now, at this time, where regional security will also be dependent on economic stability through a plan that will bring all these stakeholders together to form that kind of security and stability in the entire Middle East. As you know, security is not only political: The major trump card here is economic stability! Economic cooperation would also lead to political stability, in the context that both Israelis, Palestinians, and the region, now, I think, should be ready for a new dawn in the Middle East. That can only be based on the synchronization of the political stability, to be catalyzed by the economic stability as well, through an economically sound plan, and that will bring benefits to all the stakeholders, in order to entrench stability, once and for all, in this long, long, long conflict in the Middle East, that has been going on for the last ten decades now.

China Could Build It

Zepp-LaRouche: You mentioned that it requires governments to make that decision. We had several conferences about the Oasis Plan. You participated in several of them, and these conferences always concluded with the recognition that it required governments to take up this plan. Now, at one of our conferences, there was a Chinese economist, Prof. Zhang Weiwei, who said that China has the scientific and technological capability to implement that plan, given the fact that they have big experience with fighting the desert in Xinjiang, and also a region in the northeast of China with a territory the size of Germany, actually, which used to be desert and now is gardens, and forestry and agriculture, and the peasants have become wealthy.

Now, President Xi Jinping had already announced in 2015, when he was in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, that he would be willing to extend the Belt and Road Initiative to the entire region. President Trump, on the other side, has taken great pride that he is the one who brought about this peace deal. So, why not suggest that when, hopefully, President Xi Jinping and President Trump meet in South Korea, at the upcoming APEC summit, that if they would join hands, you could really resolve this problem for good. Because then all the

neighbors would agree, and I think also the population in Israel would see the benefit of having a peaceful environment, and neighbors who are not hostile, but, actually, that a friendship could develop. What do you think about all of this?

Ambassador Hassassian: I think what you have said is absolutely true, and of course, there is a precedent for the Oasis Plan, and the Chinese could, as part of getting closer to dialogue now with the Americans, I think that would be a very important opportunity for it to be discussed during the upcoming meeting in South Korea. And I think President Trump should basically try to tell that to Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff, and those who have been involved in the Gaza negotiations, and try to bring in all countries that could help in the reconstruction of Gaza, especially in the Arab world—that could be a great opportunity for President Trump to acknowledge the Oasis Plan, that had proved to be successful, and try to implement the Oasis Plan, which could merge with the other plans, and work as one entity toward the development of the region and the reconstruction of Gaza. And of course, the Israelis, eventually, if they agree to accept peace as the finality of the conflict, then they will be potential partners in facilitating the process of the whole plan. So, I think, in general, the world owes it to the Middle East, for the conflict to be settled, to be secured, and to be stable, economically, as well as politically.

Now, we are living in a very interesting time, where there is global participation in trying to resurrect the Middle East, from conflict to peace. It is the right time now for everybody to synchronize their efforts, to put their heads together, and come up, not with a magic wand, but with a reality on the ground, by trying to realize the benefits of the Oasis Plan. Also, the insinuation of the Gulf countries and the Arab world and Islamic world, as well as the European Union, in trying to inject resources into this, not only materially, but also mentally. Because that will bring about peace, and the longevity of peace will be basically reaped by Europe, and by world trade, etc.

Zepp-LaRouche: I think this plan must be considered very rapidly, because I think this present situation has enormous potential, but it can also be wasted. There are many analysts who are actually concerned that a war against Iran would be possible. There is, for ex-

ample, Alastair Crooke, who is a former British diplomat and very knowledgeable about the Middle East: He just thinks that a new attack on Iran would occur, or could occur, rather sooner than later. I mean, obviously, given the fact that Iran just suspended the collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in reaction to the renewed sanctions, I think this is an incredibly dangerous moment, because if it would come to a new attack on Iran, I think Iran has in the meantime been reinforced by its friendly states, in terms of the air defense and so forth; I think that danger of a renewed war against Iran which could involve the entire region, eventually going completely into a global war, that danger should be a motive to move on the agenda of the Oasis Plan as a peace plan, very, very rapidly.

Ambassador Hassassian: Well, actually, there is a potential for the eruption of conflict, again, between Iran and Israel. But I think President Trump is aware of that, and he knows that everything would be blown into the air if Israel attacks Iran now. And, as we know from the press, President Trump is planning to go to Iran. That trip, in itself, is a clear message that there is an open dialogue between the Americans and the Iranians on the issue of nuclear weapons, or the installation of nuclear technology in Iran. So that, in itself, would help defuse the tension between Israel and Iran, if President Trump goes there and tries to get guarantees that the Iranians will succumb to the regulations issued by the Atomic Agency [IAEA], let alone that all the negotiations that took place on the reduction of nuclear development in Iran will come to fruition. I believe that President Trump does not want to solve one problem, and let the other problems damage all his strenuous efforts in bringing peace to the Middle East.

I think the question of war is always there, but the potential of making peace is becoming stronger now, especially with Iran considered to be a powerful country in the Middle East that has the capability of responding to any kind of aggression by Israel. And this time, I think the Iranians will be more serious about really damaging Israel, if the war takes place.

But we don't think that the Iranians are interested in attacking Israel. On the contrary, we see that the Israelis have always threatened Iran, and they have always wanted the Americans to be part and parcel of bombing Iran, and that's why President Trump must be

very careful and cautious in dealing with the Iranian issue.

If we look into the future, I think Israel will be a loser, if they open another front with Iran—that the entire region will be at stake, and that, in itself, does not really bring peace and stability. Then, the interpretation of all this is that there is a potential for it to become something called “global war.”

But nobody wants war anymore. *Nobody wants war anymore!* We need peace and security, and stability. And Iran would be accepted, not only in the Arab world and the Islamic world, but also by the Europeans and others, because Iran is not thinking of attacking Israel—it’s the other way around.

So, I think Trump should be stricter with Israel, in not promoting and not motivating the entire world to be on its side in fighting Iran. And Iran knows the limitation of its nuclear capabilities, and I think there has been an understanding as to what extent Iran could develop its nuclear capabilities, to use them for peace, rather than to use them for war.

And so: The buck stops in Israel. And as the Americans have great influence on Israeli politics, especially President Trump now, I also think it’s an opportune moment to have a peace deal between Israel and Iran.

End the Occupation To Begin Reconciliation

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, then there is also the question of the relationship between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Now, after various wars, it would have been completely unthinkable that the relationship between the French and the Germans would ever develop into a normal relation, or even friendship. I think it is important to consider Avrum Burg, who is the former President [of Israel] and speaker of the Knesset, just gave an interview in which he said there are moments in the history of every country, where that country has to confront its own identity. There was such a moment for Germany in 1945; there was such a moment for the United States at the end of the Vietnam War; and there is such a moment for Israel today—that he thinks the Israeli soul is shattered right now. And he also called for a Global Jewish Fund for the Reconstruction of Gaza, which I think would be a very important element for the implementation of the Oasis Plan.

But I think, more fundamentally, can you imagine

that a real dialogue between the Palestinian people and the Israeli people could start, whereby one would somehow put all the crimes which have happened, all the terrible suffering, all the terrible, unbelievable horrors which occurred—if they would be put to the side, and each side would take out the best memory of their best traditions, Jewish culture, Palestinian culture, and that a dialogue of civilizations would occur between these two. Do you see such a potential?

Ambassador Hassassian: There is a potential, but it has to take some time. I think it’s very early to talk about healing the wounds. And the Palestinians are still under Israeli occupation, where there has been no people-to-people interaction, as you know, for a long period of time. We had that during the Oslo Agreement, but then Oslo failed, basically, with the Palestinians not achieving their independence in 1999; so, we can talk about almost 26 years, where the Oslo Accords have not been implemented. We are at square one, now, where we are in a zero-sum conflict, and we just have a ceasefire. We hope that the ceasefire will be sustained up to a point where people would heal their wounds and get back to normal life. It will take some time. The psychological impact of trauma cannot be washed away with a ceasefire. It has to take its toll. It will take some time.

But I believe it will eventually happen, if people on both sides believe that coexistence is inevitable, since we are so close as neighbors. And that kind of thing won’t happen unless the occupation is ended! Until the end of the occupation, there will be this sense of insecurity among the Palestinians, because the occupation will continue ruling over them, and that, in itself, will be an impediment.

So, we can talk about the acceptance of each other, and coexistence after the Palestinians have their own, independent state, where they have to normalize relationships in terms of trade, in terms of culture, etc. This is the ideal type of situation, which will take place after finalizing this conflict. Without finalizing this conflict, by ending the occupation, I don’t see any kind of people-to-people interaction, for the time being, at least.

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, that underlines the importance of the approach of the Oasis Plan, which is based on the idea of peace through development. This was

actually the idea of Pope Paul VI, which he proposed already in 1967, in his Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, about the development of all people, where the idea was that if you have a long-term development perspective, which improves the life and the hope for the future of coming generations, so that the people who were in misery and exposed to all kinds of radical ideas, would see the benefit of becoming a scientist, of becoming an engineer, a teacher, of growing a family; and that way, you change the entire dynamic, which would only occur if you have a benefit for all sides through the Oasis Plan.

So, I would like to thank you for your time, and I can only tell you that we, from the Schiller Institute, are totally committed to doing everything possible to put the Oasis Plan on the agenda. So, thank you very much! Do you have any final words for us?

Ambassador Hassassian: First of all, thank you very much for hosting me, and thank you very much for our cooperation. This is not the first time I have addressed the Schiller Institute. It has been a long working relationship. I believed in the Oasis Plan, that's why I was among—maybe, the only ambassador of Pales-

tine, who has been promoting the Oasis Plan. It has been discussed thoroughly throughout our organizations in Palestine, and I also tried very much to bring this to the government, in a way that they might consider this as a potential plan in the future.

I believe that such an organization should be applauded for its contribution to world peace, and not only for the region of the Middle East. And I will be a strong supporter, whether I'm an ambassador or not, because I'm on the verge of retiring now, I will still carry the message of peace and development through the Oasis Plan. We will continue cooperating, regardless of my official position or not, as a professor, and as an influencer. I could continue and carry on in helping you, and helping this important Institute that has one noble cause of bringing peace and stability, and not only to specific geographic locations, but to the entire world. I commend you for your work, and I wish that God may bless you in your noble mission. And we hope that one day we will reap the benefits of the Oasis Plan! And thank you so much for hosting me.

Zepp-LaRouche: Thank you, very much.

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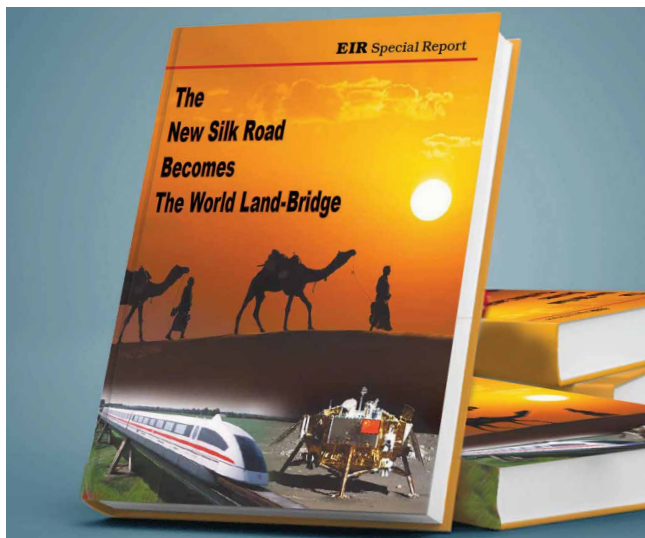
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