

Jared Kushner hints Palestinian Authority corrupt

According to Kushner, the Trump administration's decision to cut aid came after years of unsuccessful and inefficient programs at much cost and after the Palestinian Authority suspended talks with Washington and insulted the United States

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Trump Senior Aid Jared Kushner hinted Thursday, that there has been corruption among the Palestinian leadership because as he said "historically, large sums of money have flowed into this region and there are few results that reflect the impact of this aid".

Following the Bahrain workshop Kushner sat down with London based Arabic language, Asharq al-Awsat news publication, to respond to some of the criticism directed at him and at what he calls the "opportunity of the century".

Palestinian leaders, who have boycotted the conference called the administration's plan an attempt to bribe them into accepting a pay-off in exchange for giving up their national aspirations.

Kushner lammed the charge and said "I do not think the economic plan is a bribe, I think it is an opportunity to enable people to overcome problems that have plagued them for a long time. The plan will not be implemented unless there is a political solution, but at the same time we cannot just settle for a political solution without improving people's lives, because that will hinder the political solution."

Kushner added "Everyone is trying to blame the Israelis," for the condition Palestinians find themselves in "but many Palestinian problems lie with the Palestinian government as well.

Jared Kushner, the primary architect of the Bahrain conference said of the event "I think that the workshop was a huge success" and added "the gathering of the business community is a new approach". And that participants all said that "the shift in the Palestinian economy is possible."

When asked if his economic plan drew inspiration from the 1948 Marshall plan to rebuild Europe after WWII Kushner replied "We did not draw inspiration from the Marshall Plan, but we were inspired by the need to focus on people. I looked at all these issues and asked: What do people (Palestinians) want? Politicians look at political issues, while keeping people restricted. What we want to focus on is the opportunities, security and dignity that people want."

The Arab states initiated their own peace initiative in 2002 why then Kushner was asked, could that not be a basis for an ultimate end to the conflict? "Everyone I talk to in the region says that if it was possible to reach an agreement based on the Arab Peace Initiative, it would have been achieved 17 years ago. The Arab peace initiative was a good effort, but it was rejected. In order to reach an agreement, concessions must be made by both sides, and the possible political solution is somewhere between the Arab Peace Initiative and the Israeli position."

The Trump administration has suspended aid to the Palestinian authority earlier this year and even before that, in 2018 had cut support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) tasked with providing aid to Palestinian Refugees.

Jared Kushner reflected on the move and said " we looked at all the programs that were launched over the past 25 years, by UNRWA and found many examples programs that were wasteful, inefficient, and corrupt. There are also examples of very good programs that have achieved results. What we are trying to do is integrate all successful programs into the economic plan, look for new programs that we expect will succeed, and then launch them simultaneously to form a suitable platform for building a sustainable economy.

As far as **freezing aid to the PA**, this decision was made because the Palestinians suspended the talks with the United States and insulted our country. There are many countries around the world that would be happy to receive this kind of aid and to behave more appropriately.

In his closing remarks to the conference, Wednesday Kushner said, "We're going to stay optimistic," adding "We have left the door open the whole time."