Study Guide - Week 18

UNGA - Trump's 'Model UN': The Board of Peace

1) TLDR:

On 19 February 2026 the first meeting with members of President Donald J. Trump's Board of Peace took place at the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, DC. The Board of Peace (BoP) was first introduced in Trump's 20-point Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, which outlined steps for hostages to be returned, reconstruction of Gaza, and economic incentives such as new infrastructure and trade zones.

Point 9 explains how Gaza will be governed under the temporary technocratic, apolitical governing Palestinian committee, with oversight and supervision by a new international body — the 'Board of Peace'. The BoP will be headed and chaired by Trump, assisted by the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom — Tony Blair.

This plan was announced in the White House in the presence of the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The plan was partially accepted by both Israel and Hamas in October 2025. This was a revolutionary moment, especially given the content of The Plan. However, the BoP Charter itself does not mention Gaza anywhere. Article 1 states the following: 'The Board of Peace is an international organisation that seeks to promote stability, restore dependable and lawful governance, and secure enduring peace in areas affected or threatened by conflict.'

What does the establishment of such a body mean for the international order based on collective decision-making and the future of the UN Security Council?

The General Assembly meets to discuss this question, including the implications of the BoP and its compatibility with UN principles.

2) Backgtound:

The Gaza conflict is a humanitarian catastrophe that has led to widespread destruction. Because the conflict is so complicated and extensive, it is difficult to bring an end to it. Upon Trump's return to office last year, multiple ceasefire attempts have failed.

Trump seeks to achieve a ‘strong, durable, and everlasting peace’ in the region. On 29 September 2025 Trump unveiled his 20-point Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict.

This Plan requires Israel to return all hostages, forbids it to occupy or annex Gaza, and demands that its Defence Forces withdraw upon agreement from both Israel and Hamas. Nevertheless, this body will set the framework and handle the funding for the redevelopment of Gaza until such time as the Palestinian Authority has completed its reform programme. The nature of this plan sparks debate about a new era of modern imperialism.

The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2803 on 17 November 2025 welcoming the plan and endorsing the BoP for a time-limited role in Gaza's stabilisation, including coordination with a National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG) and an International Stabilisation Force (ISF). The goal of the resolution was to emphasise Palestinian involvement and UN-coordination to bring an end to the conflict. The mandate of the Board, approved by the Security Council, is limited to Gaza and only until the end of 2027.

On 22 January 2026 the BoP's Charter was signed by 25 countries including: Argentina, Türkiye and Qatar, at the World Economic Forum in Davos (Switzerland), establishing it as an official international organisation. Nevertheless, the Charter omitted specific references to Gaza, granting the board unlimited global scope to ‘secure enduring peace’ in any conflict. Trump was named Chairman for life, with sole authority over membership, decisions, and successors. Permanent seats require a $1 billion contribution. Membership is granted solely upon approval by the Chairman.

The inaugural meeting on 19 February 2026 saw pledges of $10 billion from the U.S. and $7 billion from others for Gaza, alongside troop commitments from several nations. These contributions undoubtedly strengthen the Board’s status as an independent and self-sufficient entity, raising questions about its future role in international relations. With this in mind, the General Assembly convenes to discuss the changing landscape of diplomacy.

3) Key Issues:

3.1) Real Peace vs National Interests

The BoP may achieve what the Security Council has not been able to do so far. Trump has invited a diverse number of countries, each with their own unique geopolitical positions. Both Ukraine and Russia have been invited to become members, and there has been controversy surrounding the membership of Israel, who has also noted that it does not agree with the membership of Türkiye and Qatar. While a diverse set of countries, including those that are in conflict, can have a positive effect on achieving peace through diplomacy, the following question still arises: How much actual peace can be achieved when the alleged aggressors are sitting at the same table? How will the BoP balance global and national interests? What concerns might the possible internal division raise? How should the UN ensure that global needs are not threatened?

3.2) Division of power

The Security Council has an uneven power division due to the veto. The veto allows its holder to block any resolution through a single vote. The five countries that have veto power in the Security Council are: China, France, Russia, the UK and the USA. This was meant to balance the powers of the big players and grant them equal footing. Nevertheless, it has become apparent that the system of the Security Council has shown some cracks. Decision-making is often delayed and sometimes even entirely blocked by the use of the veto. Trump is the only one who would have veto power in the BoP. This approach could result in faster and effective decision-making. However, there is a fear that if the Board grows into a more powerful entity, Trump's single veto could decide the fate of the world. Another issue is the fact that Trump holds the position of Chairman as a private individual rather than a head of state. This means that even after the end of his presidential term, he would continue to preside over the Board, which raises serious questions regarding authoritarianism. How does BoP's structure affect the current international order which relies on democratic principles? What stance must the UN take when rivalled by an entity that has a single individual holding immense global political power?

3.3) Aid vs Replacement

The BoP's structure raises a crucial question for the UN: Does the BoP undermine the UN's role in global peacekeeping? Trump previously stated at the meeting of 19 February 2026 that the board could potentially 'replace the United Nations', while at the same time being authorised by the UN. On one hand, the BoP's potential expansion to other 'hot spots' (e.g. Ukraine, Yemen) could aid international efforts, alleviating the burden carried by the UN. On the other hand, it could also hurt these international efforts, leading to fragmentation in global decision-making. This could complicate unified action as countries would struggle with competing forums, for example, decisions made by the UN Security Council vs BoP decisions. What role will the BoP play in international decision-making? How can the UN ensure that its mandate remains respected? Is there a way to split decision-making between the UN and the BoP?

4) What can the UNGA actually do?

The United Nations General Assembly is the main deliberative body within the UN. It's made up of all 193 Member States, with each state holding a single vote. While it does not have the same binding decision-making power that the Security Council has, it does have authority over the UN budget. The UNGA determines how much each state must pay in contributions. If a state does not fulfil its obligations, it can potentially lose its vote (Art. 19 UN Charter). Most UNGA decisions require a simple majority to pass, with some unique topics requiring ⅔ majority (Art. 18 (2) and (3) of the UN Charter). In summary, some of the UNGA functions include:

- Approving the UN budget and determining Member States' contributions.
- Passing resolutions on almost any international issue (non-binding recommendations).
- Setting standards and reaffirming rights under international law (including condemnation of violations).
- Requesting reports through UN bodies on specific topics.
- Creating temporary committees/organs on specific issues.
- Establishing frameworks and long-term action plans.

5) Major Stakeholders:

5.1) The US

Trump's administration defends the Board as a practical solution to inefficiencies in UN processes. In the meeting on 19 February 2026 the U.S. provided $10 billion funding to the BoP. The U.S. argues that the initiative aligns with national security interests and fosters regional prosperity under American leadership.

5.2) Russia

Criticises US-led initiatives in the Middle East as violations of sovereignty and multilateralism and often condemns American actions, labelling them as aggressive and destabilising. Russia has been invited to the Board and is considering participation, potentially to influence outcomes. Russia mostly opposes the Board's structure as bypassing the UN and advocates for UN-centred resolutions for global crises.

5.3) France and the UK

Both welcome the UN Security Council Resolution 2803 regarding the peace plan, but express caution about the Board's charter, due to the fact that it does not mention the UN. France and the UK have declined invitations to join, prioritising international law as a solution, they see the Board as one that undermines the UN's role in global security. Ultimately, France and the UK push for UN coordination in international issues.

5.4) Türkiye and the Arab States

View the Board as an opportunity to secure stability in Gaza and advance Palestinian rights. They welcome Trump's efforts to end the war and reaffirm commitment to Palestinian self-determination and statehood, in line with international law. Pledges include up to $1.2 billion from Kuwait and the UAE to the BoP.

6) Sources and Further Reading:

https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-charter-of-trumps-board-of-peace/

https://time.com/7379643/trump-board-peace-countries-joining-rejected-invitations-membership/

https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c70155nked7o

https://edition.cnn.com/2026/02/19/politics/trump-launches-his-board-of-peace-with-lofty-pledges-but-questions-remain

https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc16225.doc.htm