

Rubio Shuttters 'Palestinian Embassy,' Restoring Jerusalem Policy

Secretary of State Marco Rubio will dissolve the State Department's Office of Palestinian Affairs (OPA), dismantling a Biden-era initiative that operated independently of the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem.

The move, confirmed by U.S. officials and congressional sources, reflects a broader effort to restore President Donald Trump's first-term foreign policy framework, which recognized Jerusalem as Israel's undivided capital.

Rubio has directed U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee to absorb the OPA's responsibilities into the embassy. The change ensures all diplomatic outreach to the Palestinians is conducted under the authority of the Jerusalem-based ambassador, ending OPA's autonomous status.

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Created in June 2022 under President Joe Biden, the OPA quickly drew criticism for allegedly undermining the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995. The law mandates a single U.S. embassy in Jerusalem. Republican lawmakers, including Rubio, accused the Biden administration of establishing a de facto U.S. consulate to the Palestinians.

"Let there be no misunderstanding: this unprecedented arrangement... is an effort to open an unofficial and de facto U.S. consulate to the Palestinians in Jerusalem," Rubio and fellow lawmakers warned in a 2022 letter.

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The OPA sparked outrage in October 2023 when it called on Israel to forgo retaliation after Hamas launched a brutal terror attack. Lawmakers intensified efforts to rein in the office, requiring oversight of its public diplomacy. The decision to dissolve it follows that backlash and aligns with President Trump's emphasis on undivided U.S. support for Israel.

Rubio will also eliminate the position of Special Envoy to the Palestinians, further cementing the rollback of Biden-era policies.

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Senator Bill Hagerty (R-TN) applauded the decision. "I welcome Secretary Rubio's efforts... to fully implement the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 and relocate the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Israel's eternal and indivisible capital of Jerusalem," Hagerty told the Free Beacon.

House Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R-LA.) echoed that sentiment.

"I am glad to hear that the Trump administration plans to reverse course and restore the vital role of Ambassador Huckabee and important policy coordination in Jerusalem," he said. "Under President Trump's leadership, the United States is once again a nation that promotes democratic values, stands up for our allies, and projects strength on the world stage."

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