

Palestinians' pointless boycott

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- 25

US Vice-President Mike Pence's announcement that Washington is expediting the relocation of its embassy to Jerusalem should help Palestinian leaders understand the speed with which they are being outpaced by events. Their refusal even to meet Mr Pence during his just-completed visit to Israel showed political ineptitude and ossified thinking that undermined their cause and the cause of restarting negotiations on a two-state solution.

The Palestinians' determination to maintain the rage and their pretence that Donald Trump's decision to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital has dealt the US out of the peace process is absurd. Chief spokesman Saeb Erekat's claim that "the US administration is part of the problem rather than the solution" reflects their muddle-headed thinking.

Mr Pence's presence in Israel and his offer to travel to Ramallah to meet Palestinian leaders should have been a golden opportunity for the Palestinians to discuss the embassy with the US. They now face a speeded-up process for the highly symbolic relocation, which Mr Pence has said will be completed by next year rather than in several years, as previously expected.

In the Israeli Knesset, Mr Pence made a powerful plea for Palestinians "to return to the table", reminding them "peace can only come through dialogue". It was a plea for good sense Palestinian leaders should heed, rather than pursuing their pointless boycott of the Trump administration.