**Why not, you can arrange a "Luxurious" annexation**

**Shaul Arieli, Haaretz, October 16, 2018**

[**https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/.premium-1.6566773**](https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/.premium-1.6566773)

Two years following Trump's election to the United States' Presidency, it can be determined that his government's policy toward Israel and the conflict with the Palestinians is a catalyst and provides the political umbrella for a revolution that is liable to occur in Israel.

We are witnessing two contradicting trends that characterize the activities of the Netanyahu government during the Trump era: The first is a cooperation, with the effort of Jason Greenblatt and Jared Kouchner, to formulate the "ultimate deal" for resolving the conflict, which according to Trump will be "prioritizing the two-state solution". The second trend is to the contrary. It is the efforts of government ministers and MKs from the coalition to promote and implement the vision of annexation of parts of the West Bank or all of it.

The promoters of the annexation, headed by Naftali Bennett, Ayelet Shaked and Uri Ariel, and the MKs of the Land of Israel Lobby, the overwhelming majority of whom are from the Jewish home and the Likud (and also Orly Levy-Abeksis), as well as less active supporters like Gideon Sa'ar, Tzipi Hotovely and others, see the current reality as a window of historical political opportunity. One that would enable Israel to move from the vision of two states to the dream of Greater Israel, against the background of three characteristics external to Israel:

The first characteristic is the weakness of the Arab world, which is experiencing four difficult civil wars and seeks cooperation with Israel in the face of the Iranian threat and the threat of violent political Islam. The second characteristic is the weakness of the Palestinians in mobilizing the international community and the Arab world for effective moves against Israel and the destructive division between the West Bank and the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. To those familiar and old characteristics joins a third and decisive one - The policy of the Trump administration, shaped by the messianic perceptions of the American Ambassador David Friedman and with the help of the Israeli Ambassador Ron Dermer, both of which have turned the relationship between the US and Israel into a partisan affair of the former.

When the appropriate external environment becomes clear to them, the annexation messianics act in the internal system in order to prepare the ground for the transition required from the "creeping annexation" policy to de jure annexation, ie, the transition from the "containment stage to the decision stage" as Bennet declared in November 2016. No longer a struggle over any illegal outpost or building in East Jerusalem, but rather making all these legal and part of the national narrative and consensus.

In order to realize this strategy, they operate in the legal and practical spheres in three main areas. First, creating the basis for the preference of Jews through the Nation State Law, undermining the ability and legitimacy of the gatekeepers by circumventing the Supreme Court's ability to repeal laws that are contrary to the values ​​of liberal democracy, the spirit of the Declaration of Independence and the state's Basic Laws (The cessation clause), and by weakening civil society (the Boycott Law and the NGO Law).

The second area: preparing the expansion and takeover of the settlements and the illegal outposts (the Regulation Law) and laying down bills to annex large parts of Judea and Samaria (about 10 such proposals). And the third area: creating a public atmosphere through activities designed to portray settlers as legal and as those who serve the Zionist vision. From the decision of the Ministerial Committee to allocate "required treatment" in new laws for Israelis living in Judea and Samaria, through the appointment of judges, and the decision of the Minister for Social Equality to allocate 1.5 million NIS to document the settlers' history as "a step towards the annexation of Judea and Samaria".

The bills submitted by members of the Land of Israel Lobby are lacking any preliminary work, and do not contain a single map. Netanyahu halted their promotion at this stage; he argues that this is not the right time due to the relationship with the US administration, and a government bill is required in order to dramatically change Israel's policy - from creeping annexation to de jure annexation. Despite the intention to raise the proposed annexation, the Prime Minister has not yet found it appropriate to appoint a professional body to examine all the political, social, security, economic and legal implications of this dramatic unilateral move on the security, polity and identity of the State of Israel.

The process of annexation is led by a minority of Knesset members, and is directed at the religious-messianic aspirations of a small part of the Israeli public. Surveys show that a majority of the public opposes annexation and prefers separation from the Palestinians, even if unilaterally. Detailed plans for how to do so, to preserve the conditions for a two-state solution, were published long ago by the "Commanders for Israel's Security" movement and just recently by the "Institute for National Security Studies" (INSS).

The composition of the current coalition and the basic principles of its establishment, as well as the threat to Netanyahu's continued tenure due to the investigations into his case, enabled this minority to capture the coalition, leading it to annexation, even against the position of the majority of the public. Their messianic belief also includes the claim that they were chosen to "lead the people of Israel" (even against their will), as expressed by Bezalel Samotrich, chairman of the lobby.

This messianic minority is not interested in a first stage annexation of the entire West Bank, but believes that Israel can only annex Area C and leave a Palestinian autonomy in Areas A and B under the civilian responsibility of the Palestinian Authority. In other words, not only a "Luxurious occupation" as it is today, but also a "Luxurious annexation". Any violent Palestinian resistance will be quickly and effectively suppressed, and some see it as an opportunity for a mass expulsion in the heat of the war (the "decision plan"), assuming that their efforts to instill the spirit of the "army of God" among IDF commanders and soldiers will bear fruit.

In the event that the bills for annexation will be eligible for a vote and will be passed as required, Israel is expected to witness a political, security, social, economic and legal collapse that could lead to the dissolution of the state in its current form and lead to the establishment of one state with an Arab majority, most of whom will lacks rights. If so, then it can be determined that Israel is in the midst of a historic and dramatic change in the vision and goals of the Zionist movement: The choice of the Zionist leadership since the Peel Commission in 1937 is a democratic state with a Jewish majority that determines its identity over the Greater Land of Israel. That is replaced by the choice of a "Greater Israel" over a Jewish majority and a democratic regime.

This dramatic change will accelerate the tension that the liberal sections of the Jewish public in Israel and the Jewish communities abroad face. They will also have to decide whether to support Jewish dominance based on a discriminatory regime or to remain loyal to the values ​​of liberal democracy and the spirit of the Declaration of Independence. It can be assumed that, like the younger generation in the United States, which has already become indifferent to the State of Israel and its Jewish identity in favor of the values ​​of democracy and human rights, we may foresee the disengagement of most Jews from their involvement in and interest in the future of the State of Israel, and the abandonment of the Zionist enterprise that has been destroyed for them, of those who live in Israel.

The clear statements made by supporters of the annexation regarding the undemocratic future of the State of Israel must serve as a wake-up call. If indeed a majority of the public opposes annexation and supports separation, it can not rely on Trump's "ultimate deal", whose content and timing are unknown. Although its publication prior to the elections in Israel can place it at the heart of the required decision of the elections. It can be assumed that Netanyahu, who is not interested in any additional obstacle prior to the elections, will dissuade Trump from presenting the deal that could lead to the most severe confrontation in the current coalition.

When the country is flooded with a sea of ​​hatred, nationalism and racism, in which some people, including old and new politicians, prefer to wear swimsuits and swim with the stream, those afraid for the country's future must begin building a dam and running pumps. The public that supports separation must separate from the indifference and despair and ask for a dramatic change in Israeli policy in the upcoming elections. Firstly, with the cleansing of the poisoned atmosphere generated by Netanyahu and his followers vis-à-vis the Palestinians and with regard to Israeli Arabs and supporters of a final status agreement, and then with the implementation of the two-state vision.