**Israel's Phased Plan**

**Shaul Arieli,Haaretz, January 31, 2020**

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The statements regarding the intention to annex the Jordan Valley and the settlements to Israel, made by "Blue and White" party politicians and any other party to the right of the political map in Israel, against the backdrop of President Donald Trump's "deal of the century", cast a heavy shadow of doubt on Israel's honest intention when declaring its will in ending of the conflict. They testify that those who disqualify the Palestinians from being a partner to the two-state solution - claiming that this solution will fulfill their "phased plan" for establishing a one state of Palestine from the river to the sea, as Netanyahu declared in 1993: "the PLO policy is a phased theory, and its goal is to destroy the State of Israel and not come to an agreement with it. " – in fact disqualify themselves.

Since the dawn of the Zionist movement, three strategic national goals were conceived for the establishment of a state for the Jewish people: a democratic regime, including a Jewish majority, throughout the territory of the Mandatory Palestine. The three were considered at the outset, what I would call "the ultimate truth" of Zionism - the ultimate goal to be pursued and reached. Their achievement, as Herzl has determined, will be the result of two conditions: a mass Jewish immigration that will overwhelm the absolute Arab majority (90% of the population in 1922) living in Israel and that will become an equal minority, and international support, as realized after his death, by the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the approval of the Mandate at the League of Nations in 1922.

This vision of "the ultimate truth" was forced, from its inception until today, to recon with the demographic and political realities of the land. They forced the Zionist movement to prioritize the above three goals, and gave rise to what I would call "the truth in its time" - the temporary goal, which for now serves only some of the goals, but as circumstances change, it leaves an opening for the ultimate goal. "The truth in its time" was first ruled over "the ultimate truth" in the publication of Churchill's first White Paper, and in the approval of the Mandate in 1922.

The Zionist Organization then had to decide between its claim of inclusion in Mandatory Palestine, part of the East Bank (about 20% of today's Jordan Kingdom) and the British threat that Article 4 of the Mandate be repealed - stating that the Jewish Agency is the representative of the Jewish community - which would allowed The Arab residents to demanded the establishment of an indigenous government. The Zionist Organization decided in favor of Article 4, and the East Bank moved out of its territorial claims.

The Phil Commission in 1937 was another moment in which the truth in its time prevailed over the ultimate truth and forced the Zionist movement to determine its official position on the partition of the land and the prioritization of the three goals. The desperate need to establish an independent political entity that could absorb European Jewry following the threat of the Nazi raise in Germany overwhelmed the dream of a greater Israel.

Mordechai Namir explained the demographic and political reasons for this at the Mapai conference in 1936: "Reducing the territory - this is the price we must pay for the fatal overdue delay of the Jewish people in building the country, and for the rapid growth of the Arab movement"; a year later Ben Gurion, wrote in a letter to his son Amos: "What we want is not that the land be complete and whole, but that the complete and whole land be Jewish. I have no satisfaction from a whole land of Israel - when it is Arab". But both Namir and Ben-Gurion saw this decision as a temporary decision, and formulated the Zionist phased plan to achieve the ultimate truth. Namir added: "The next generations ... will find the way to repair the deformity," and Ben-Gurion wrote in his letter: "A partial Jewish state is not an end, but a beginning ... Establishing a state - even a partial one - is a maximum reinforcement during this period, and it will serve as a powerful lever in our historic efforts to redeem the land in its entirety". The Arab rejection of the Phil plan spared the Yeshuv the need to prove it.

In 1947, historical circumstances again prevailed over the ultimate truth. Ben Gurion's concern over the return of the British mandate to the United Nations, preventing hundreds of thousands of Holocaust survivors from immigrating to Israel, prompted him in February 1947 to present to the British Foreign Minister Ernst Bevin the position of the Zionist movement, as chair of the Jewish Agency and the Zionist Organization: "The only possible immediate arrangement [in Israel], which has a foundation of finitude, is the establishment of two states, one Jewish and one Arab." This was the official and binding position of the Yeshuv in terms of "the truth in its time", but at the same time, in private, Ben-Gurion voiced and planned the achievement of "the ultimate truth". On May 22, 1947, at the Assembly of Representatives in Jerusalem, Ben-Gurion rhetorically asked: "Is there anyone amongst us who disagrees that the original intent of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate ... was eventually to establish a Jewish state in all of Israel?" And on September 17, 1947, during a Mapai meeting, Ben-Gurion declared that "a Jewish state must be established in a part that has a Jewish majority ... and in the second part, wait for a Jewish majority to develop".

Indeed, due to the Arabs' rejection of the partition plan and their declaration of war, circumstances changed in a way that allowed new born Israel, to add to the 55% of the land allocated to it in the partition plan, another 23%. But even at the end of the war, the truth in its time prevailed again. Ben-Gurion preferred not to conquer all of the land of Israel, reasoning in his speech at the Knesset in April 1949, saying that "a Jewish state in the whole land can only be a dictatorship of the minority. A Jewish state, in the present reality, even only in the west of the land of Israel, without Dir Ysin, is impossible if democratic, because the number of Arabs in western Israel is more than the number of Jews".

An opportunity to realize the ultimate truth came as a result of the conquest of the entire Land of Israel in the Six Day War, even though Ben Gurion's territorial ambitions were restrained in an attempt to make the armistice lines Israel's border. In an interview with Haaretz on October 2, 1959, Ben-Gurion said: "Anyone who believes that today only military force can resolve historical questions between peoples, does not know in which world we live in. Every local question is made international today, and therefore our relations with the peoples of the world are no less important than our military force, which we must foster, to deter attacks and to win If we have to fight".

The demographic reality, in which there was an Arab majority in the land, won over against the full Zionist vision of greater Israel. Israel refrained from annexing the Territories. The signing of the Oslo Accords was seen on all sides - Israelis, Palestinians and the nations of the world - as saying that the truth in its time became the ultimate truth, due to an honest Israeli will, for both a democratic state and a Jewish majority and for the end of the conflict and the end of claims.

The PLO on its part declared in 1988 that it was giving up on the one Palestine dream, in exchange for a state in 22% of Palestine. Israel transferred responsibility to the Palestinian Authority for 40% of the West Bank and to 90% of the Palestinian population there, as a first step towards realizing the two-state solution. Benjamin Netanyahu, too, had to aligned himself for a while, due to the binding force of international treaties that gave rise to the truth in its time, and transfer Hebron to the Palestinian Authority (in 1997), as well as other territories under the "Wye River Memorandum" (in 1998).

In 2005, Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip, which all Israeli governments sought to annex until 1993, for the reason that Ariel Sharon already stated at a Likud meeting on May 26, 2003: "Holding 3.5 million Palestinians under occupation is a bad thing for Israel, for Palestinians and for the Israeli economy. .. Today there are 1.8 million Palestinians who are funded by international organizations. Do you want to take it upon yourself? We will take medicine? Health? Education? Students? Let's take care of our own students ... You always want to stay in Jenin, Nablus, in Ramallah and Bethlehem? I don't think this is true." Sharon also said of the disengagement from Gaza: "I believed and hoped that we could hold on forever ... but the changing reality in the land, the region and the world required from me a renewed analysis and a change of position."

Netanyahu, who was re-elected prime minister in 2009, halted any attempt to resume negotiations with the Palestinians and encouraged fragmentation among them. Trump's 2016 election created for him and for Naftali Bennett and their friends an opportunity to bring back the old ultimate truth: "The dream is that Judea and Samaria will be part of the sovereign land of Israel," Bennett declared in 2016, demanding to annex C.

Since the basic conditions in the land have not changed since 1937 - the continuation of the Palestinian national claim to a recognized state in the international community, and the existence of an Arab majority (without refugees) between the sea and the Jordan - the current decision to annex the Jordan Valley and the settlements, with unilateral annexation or an annexation supported by the US government, is different from all the previous decisions of the Zionist leadership in the history of the conflict, in four aspects: First, this is not a response to a threat to the establishment of the state, or to a threat to the security and democratic police of Israel, but only an attempt of the realization of the Messianic-nationalist dream of creating Atchalta De'Geulah (the beginning of the redemption) by Rabbi Kook's followers which requires the "inheritance of the land from its inhabitants". Second, the required decision is not the result of a proposal by the international community, which does not support it (unlike the conclusions of the Peel Commission and UN Resolutions 181, 242, 338), but is the result of a unilateral initiative by the Israeli government seeking to exploit Trump's support in the face of weakness. By the Palestinians, the Arab world, the EU and the UN. Third, the annexation would violate all international resolutions on the conflict, the UN Charter and the agreements Israel signed with Egypt, Jordan and the PLO, and pledged to honor. It will eliminate any chance that the Palestinians will take a risk in the future on any matter (such as demilitarization), put Jordan and Egypt on their heels, and provide eternal ammunition to Iran and its proxies to justify the elimination of Israel, which is constantly seeking to expand. Most importantly, such a decision will, for the first time, give priority to the greater Land of Israel at the expense of democracy and a Jewish majority in the State of Israel. This was expressed by Netanyahu's patron Sheldon Adelson in his remarks: "It is not so bad if Israel is not a democracy, it is not written in the Bible". The Trump administration's plan will find no significant Palestinian or Arab partner. This natural refusal on the Palestinian side, in light of the adoption of the plan in Israel, will be seen as legitimizing deep annexation moves, which will in fact be the realization of Israel's phased plan.