



# UNDERSTANDING **THE TRUMP PLAN**

A Comparative Analysis of the Trump administration's  
Peace to Prosperity Plan and the Two-State Option

Executive Summary by Dr. Col. (ret.) Shaul Arieli

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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**Dr. Col. (ret.) Shaul Arieli** is one of Israel's leading experts on the demarcation of the future Israeli-Palestinian border and the route of the Separation Barrier. Arieli served as commander of a brigade in the Gaza Strip As part of his military service he was responsible for the preparation of the official negotiations with the Palestinians, as head of the Interim Agreement Administration under the Rabin government, and head of the Peace Administration in the Barak Government. Since retiring from the IDF in 2001, Arieli has dedicated himself to advancing an Israeli-Palestinian permanent status agreement, and was amongst the leading negotiators in the process that brought about the Geneva Initiative in December 2003.



# AN OVERVIEW OF THE TRUMP PLAN

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United States President Donald Trump published his "Vision for Peace, Prosperity, and a Brighter Future for Israel and the Palestinian People" (Peace to Prosperity) in January 2020. The plan was prepared over the preceding three years by the US Middle East peace team, led by Jared Kushner.

The Vision for Peace presents a declaration of intentions and a basic plan for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in cooperation with some of the Arab states and under the leadership of the US. The plan essentially calls for a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine based on the adoption of the Israeli narrative; the prioritization of Israeli positions regarding security, Jerusalem, West Bank settlements, and Palestinian and Jewish refugees; a distinct interpretation of UN Security Council Resolution 242 that contradicts other resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the UN General Assembly; and complete disregard for the achievements and conclusions reached in previous rounds of negotiations.

The following are the key points of Trump's vision on the main issues:

## **Borders**

- Palestine will not have any borders with neighboring countries (Egypt to the west and Jordan to the east) other than Israel, save a small stretch on the Egypt-Gaza frontier. Its territory will otherwise be surrounded entirely by Israel; the total length of the border between the two entities will be 1,700 km.
- Within the territory of Palestine there will be 17 Israeli enclaves with a population of 16,500 Israelis, who will enjoy exclusive access to 130 km of roads connecting the enclaves to other annexed areas.
- Within the territory of Israel there will be 43 Palestinian enclaves with a population of 106,000.
- Land swaps will be based on a ratio of 1:2.13 in Israel's favor and will include the transfer of some 250,000 Arab citizens of Israel, together with the communities in which they live, to Palestinian sovereignty, although both the government of Israel and the Trump administration have since distanced themselves from this provision.
- The West Bank and the Gaza Strip will be connected via a land corridor.

## Security

- Israel will enjoy superior security powers, while Palestine will not have a military and will not be permitted to possess heavy weapons.
- Israel will maintain security control in the Israeli enclaves in Palestine and in the Palestinian enclaves in Israel, as well as along the access roads leading to these enclaves.
- Israel will control the borders of Palestine, including all of its border crossings. Israel will also control Palestine's airspace, maritime area, and electromagnetic space.
- The Separation Barrier will be dismantled and a new barrier, four times longer than the original, will be built along the new border lines.

## Jerusalem

- The unified city of Jerusalem inside the Security Barrier will remain entirely under Israeli sovereignty, including the Old City and the Temple Mount (93 percent of the current area of the city), but will exclude the neighborhoods beyond the Separation Barrier.
- Freedom of worship and access to the holy places will be maintained under Israeli security control.
- The Palestinian capital will comprise Kufr Aqab, Shuafat Refugee Camp, and Abu Dis, three geographically separate areas, all of which lie outside the area considered "al Quds" by Arabs and Muslims (the historical city of Jerusalem).

## Refugees

- Palestinian refugees will not return to Israel.
- Israel will have a veto over the identity of refugees who will be permitted to settle in Palestine.
- An international mechanism will deal with the issues of housing and compensation.
- A separate international mechanism will deal with the issue of compensation for Jewish refugees from the Arab countries.





## REACTIONS TO **THE TRUMP PLAN**

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- Israel welcomed the Trump administration's initiative, which was consistent with positions long promoted by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Moreover, a determined minority of supporters of unilateral annexation saw the plan as proof of their assumption that the Trump presidency offers an historic and possibly unique opportunity to realize their vision, although the plan also prompted a split in the settler leadership, with some opposing its provisions concerning the establishment of a nominally independent Palestinian state as going too far.
- The Palestinians under Mahmoud Abbas, who were excluded from the process from the outset and refrained from cooperating with the US administration team when invited to do so, completely rejected the plan.
- The reaction in the Arab world ranged from noncommittal reactions ("we'll read and study the plan") to subtle rejection (reaffirmed support for the Arab Peace Initiative) to complete rejection and support for the Palestinian position.
- The bottom line is that the initiative failed to recruit any Palestinian and/or other Arab partner.



## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

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This study concludes that the Vision for Peace uses key terms that were common during the preceding diplomatic process – two states, a Palestinian capital in Jerusalem, land swaps, territorial contiguity, demilitarization, and so on. However, it interprets these terms in a way that contradicts everything that was discussed and agreed to by the parties and the international community (led by the US) prior to its publication.

The guiding parameters (which were changed beyond recognition with the launching of the Trump Plan) behind the international consensus included:

- **Borders:** based on the 1967 lines, with land swaps at a ratio of 1:1;
- **Security:** a demilitarized Palestinian state and extensive security arrangements;
- **Jerusalem:** establishment of two capitals based on the demographic division, with special arrangements at the holy places;
- **Refugees:** the return of refugees to Palestine; compensation and additional arrangements.

The Vision for Peace is not a viable proposal in territorial, practical, or economic terms. It impairs the contiguity of the Palestinian state and does not allow the Palestinians to maintain a stable life in terms of law and order, the economy, and society. It requires the IDF and other Israeli state agencies to devote themselves to routine security needs throughout the Palestinian area. It violates international treaties concerning the property, freedom of movement, and other rights.

The Palestinian response following the publication of the Vision for Peace makes it clear that there is not – and for the foreseeable future will not be – any Palestinian partner who will be willing to negotiate with Israel and sign a permanent agreement on any basis other than the accepted interpretation of the UN resolutions and previous negotiations.

Although the authors of the Vision for Peace chose to describe their framework as a “two-state solution,” their proposal constitutes a serious blow to everything achieved to date. It has pushed political discourse in Israel back 15 years, to the illusion that it might be possible to reach an agreement without relinquishing the West Bank. The Vision is also liable to push Palestinian discourse back many decades, to the desire to create a single state with an Arab majority (even before any refugees return).

The details of the Vision for Peace differ significantly from the direction that emerged at Annapolis. The plan cynically uses terms that characterized peace discourse prior to Netanyahu's return to power in 2009: two states, land swaps, demilitarization, a Palestinian capital, and so on. The use of these terms in this context exposes professional ignorance in the fields of security, geography, and international law.

The plan also imposes serious security strains on Israel. The new borders envisioned for Israel leave as many as 17 Jewish settlements as enclaves within the proposed Palestinian entity, while a complicated and much longer border weaves around the other annexed territories. This would necessitate the creation of a byzantine infrastructure of new barriers around settlement enclaves and additional access roads. Alternatively, such an outcome might lead Israel to de facto annex the remainder of the West Bank after formally absorbing the 30% laid out in the plan, inviting all of the attendant costs associated with that. This would, of course, impede the activities of the Palestinian Authority and the PLO, as described below.

The plan has absolutely no chance of being implemented in the context of a peace agreement as it has been broadly rejected by the Palestinian, Arab, and international communities. Moreover, the plan is not feasible in spatial and physical terms, as has been made clear throughout this document. Any attempt to implement the Vision for Peace will create a much harder reality for both sides.

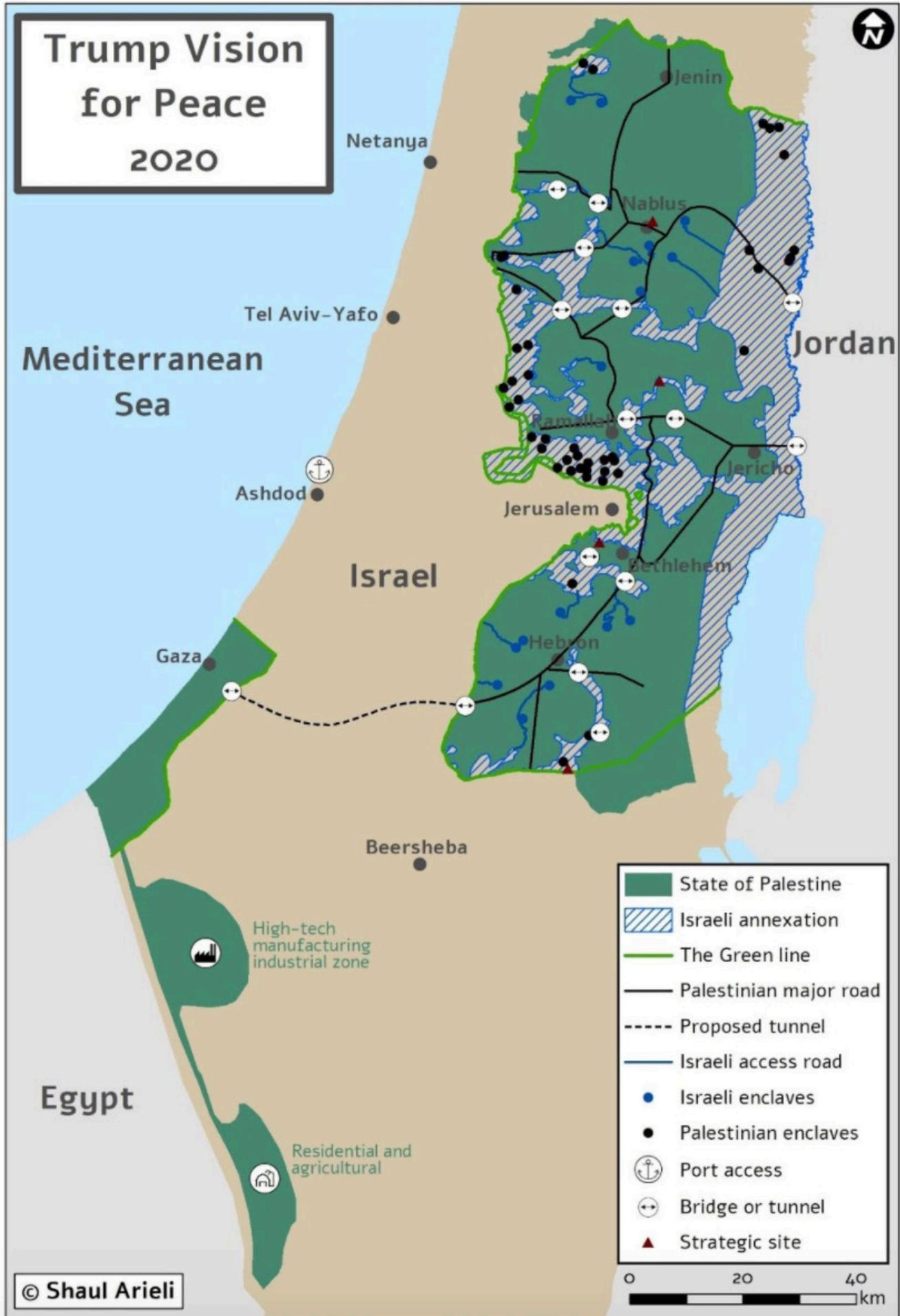
The Vision for Peace must be shelved. It does not and will not have any Arab partner. The global reactions show that it cannot be used to justify any Israeli annexation. Its consequences are liable to cause serious harm to Israel. The plan seeks to formalize the existing situation, where two different legal systems exist in the same area on the basis of an ethnic criterion, and to compound this by permitting an annexation that would create a reality of apartheid – or, to use David Ben-Gurion's words in 1949, "a dictatorship of the minority."

The deal may serve as a death blow to the PLO, which since 1988 has attempted to create a diplomatic discourse based on the resolution of the conflict in place of armed struggle. It will encourage the cancellation of security coordination with Israel. It damages the value of citizenship through the proposal to transfer Arab citizens of Israel to Palestine. It damages the rule of law and property rights by approving illegal outposts built on stolen Palestinian land. Lastly, it will encourage the emigration of Palestinians from the neighborhoods outside the security barrier in Jerusalem into the inner neighborhoods, thereby accelerating Jewish out-migration and escalating the shift in the demographic balance in favor of the Palestinians that has been underway for the past 52 years.

Those who view the Trump proposal as approval for annexation must understand that unilateral partial annexation will eventually force Israel to annex the entire West Bank. This will lead to a deterioration into protracted military and diplomatic conflict, accompanied by a profound rift within Israeli society and severe damage to its economy.



# Trump Vision for Peace 2020



# Trump Vision for Peace 2020 Jewish settlement in an Israeli annexed land







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