

Shaul Arieli



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Some of his recent publications:

"The Territorial Aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian Permanent Status Negotiations", with Ron Pundak, Published by the Peres Center for Peace, 2004.

"Going for all, Leaving with Nothing - On the struggle for the borders of the State of Israel", Carmel Books, 2006.

"Injustice and Folly - On the Proposals to Cede Arab Localities from Israel to Palestine" with Doubie Shwartz and Hadas Tagari, a Floresheimer Institute publication, 2006.

"The Wall and Folly, The Separation Fence - Security or Greed?", with Michael Sfard, Aliyat Hagag and Yedioth Books Publishing House, 2008.

"A Border Between Us and You: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Ways to its Resolution", Aliyat Hagag and Yedioth Books Publishing House 2013, winner of the Chechik Award for research on Israeli security 2013, published in English by Aliyat Hagag and Yedioth Books Publishing House, 2021.

"All of Israel's Borders - 100 years of struggle for independence, identity, settlement and territory", Aliyat Hagag and Yedioth Books Publishing House, 2018.

"Is that how it happened? 12 Israeli myths about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict". Aliyat Hagag and Yedioth Books Publishing House, 2021.



The writing on the wall

Shaul Arieli

The writing

on the wall

Collection of articles
2018-2020



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To all the lovers of democracy in the State of Israel who have gone out in these years to defend it and protest against those who seek its destruction.

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Collection of articles

Sixth in a series 2018-2021

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Introduction

This collection brings together various articles written by me that have been published in the last three years (2018-2020). They were written during the time that Donald Trump served as President of the United States and Benjamin Netanyahu as Prime Minister of Israel. Two personalities who created and encouraged “Fake News” and “Fake Realty” and contributed greatly to the decline of truth, democracy, global and internal solidarity and distanced the two-state solution from public discourse and the global agenda.

The articles express and reflect first and foremost my understanding, insights and attitudes towards the processes we have witnessed in these years, and have the potential to represent social action in Israel within non-institutional organizations.

This collection, in contrast to its two predecessors, is organized according to the main themes that accompanied public discourse during this period: society and democracy, Israel and the Palestinians, settlements, annexation and the Trump plan. All of the articles in this collection are new and have not been published in previous collections. I have chosen to add maps to clarify and present some of the areas and concepts that appear in the articles. And at the end of the collection, I have added the main milestones of the conflict in order to sort out the chronology of events.

I hope that this collection will contribute to the existence of a factual discourse about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israeli society.

Shaul Arieli

February 2021

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Society and Democracy

The Public Must Protect its Gatekeepers – Haaretz October 21, 2018

Power struggles between politicians and the professional ranks, along with fruitful cooperation, are not foreign to any governmental system. The ideological and personal agenda, and the political plans of the elected representatives, often encounter the constitutional, budgetary, political, security and social constraints imposed by the gatekeepers of Israeli democracy: the heads of the civil service, the judiciary, the heads of the security establishment and the media.

In recent years, these struggles between the two spheres have been taking place over the future of the West Bank and the conflict with the Palestinians, and over the Israeli society and government, in three domains: the political-security domain, the legal and the social. The gatekeepers are now threatened, in contrast to the past, not because of professional disagreements, but because they are the last obstacle to the collapse of Israeli democracy and the loss of a Jewish majority in the State of Israel as we know it.

In a war that was enforced by ministers and MKs from the coalition, the Israeli public is absent in most cases, and has seem to have forgotten Plato's ancient warning: "The price people pay for their indifference in public affairs is to be governed by bad people."

It is unnecessary to overstate the prime minister's war on the gatekeepers, as it is based largely on his agenda of political survival, which is threatened by corruption, and which the police saw fit to recommend for prosecution, causing Netanyahu to launch an unprecedented attack on the police commissioner. The prime minister's damage to Israeli democracy is that he himself is a partner and a coalition sponsor to the most dangerous threats on Israeli democracy; Those who try to defeat the gatekeepers by replacing them with "their own people", and if they do not succeed, then by a system of denial, bribery, incitement and defamation that is well orchestrated and uninhibited.

In the years 2011-2016, six chiefs of staff, six Shin Bet chiefs and five former heads of the Mossad declared in various interviews that separation into two states was a critical interest to the future and security of the State of Israel and warned against Netanyahu's policy. The response came from the chairman of the coalition at the time, David Bitan, in The Shabat Tarbut panel on June 25, 2016, who "explained" the reason, while sparing no personal defamation: "Over the years, Shin Bet chiefs and Mossad leaders have become leftists. Former head of the Mossad, Meir Dagan was an extreme right wing, and after he served in the Mossad, he came

out the opposite way. Dagan overstepped his authority". He continued to "explain" the change in the views of defense ministers as well: "Who do you want me to believe, Ya'alon?" Two months ago, he said that the Prime Minister is good and excellent, and today he is changing his mind. Barak was a failed Prime Minister, he was a political Chief of Staff, he lives in New York, comes here and runs his mouth. Gabi Ashkenazi wanted to be prime minister back when he was Chief of Staff".

The insistence of Netanyahu, Lieberman and Bennett to present Mahmoud Abbas as fulfilling their claim that "there is no partner" and that he is a "terrorist" during the political mission of US Secretary of State John Kerry in 2014 was categorically denied by the Shin Bet chief, Yoram Cohen, who told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the chairman of the Palestinian Authority "does not encourage violence" and "does not want terror" and "does not lead to terror, nor does he do it under the table." Recently, in November 2017, at a closed conference in Doha, Kerry completed the picture of truth when he stated: "The Palestinians did a great job and remained committed to nonviolence. In fact, when the Intifada started, they did not use violence in the West Bank. The public ignored it. He does not discuss it. Why? Because most members of the current cabinet of the Israeli government publicly declared that they would never be in favor of a Palestinian state".

In the summer of 2017, the Shin Bet recommended removing the metal detectors placed on the Temple Mount following the murder of the two police officers in order to calm the Arab and Muslim street to avoid changes in the status quo on the Temple Mount. Bennett saw this as a "diplomatic-security weakness." He recommended "removing from the table plans of easements and carrots for the Palestinians and instead present operational plans for thwarting terror, because "they smell weakness - they raise their heads". Bitan summarized by calling the Shin Bet "cowards" and "in all their recommendations they just want to return home safely". This month, Defense Minister Lieberman chose to "correct" the chief of staff, who relied on detailed reports from the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories and others and warned that the Gaza Strip was on the verge of collapse. "There is no humanitarian crisis," Lieberman said. "We are witnessing the flow of a lot of information, especially disinformation to all the media outlets regarding the Gaza Strip".

The struggle against IDF commanders was not only fought in the political-security domain, but also in the domain of values. When Netanyahu spoke about Elor Azaria, he said: "We are now investigating what happened there and maybe we will discover new things. It's not

hermetic, Chief of Staff Eizenkot did not remain in debt. In the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee he said: "The recent statements made on operational issues under investigation in the IDF's command and legal system are not desirable", and continued: "Many statements were made without the knowledge of the facts, in order to promote agendas that have nothing to do with the IDF. We want the IDF to operate according to orders, fire procedures, the spirit of the IDF and IDF values. If someone wants the ethos of a gang, let him say".

The deputy chief of staff, Yair Golan, chose to give up the clichés and present a true mirror to Israeli society and said at the Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony that he "now identifies processes that took place in Germany 80 years ago". Netanyahu and his colleagues did not waver to portray Ahmadinejad and Arafat as Hitler, compare the Oslo accords the Munich agreement, the Bush speech to the Czechoslovakia speech and Obama's speech to the Chamberlain speech, but in Golan's words, Netanyahu saw "an injustice to Israeli society and the trivialization of the Holocaust". Netanyahu, the king of falsifying reality, ruled that "Golan statements are fundamentally baseless". That in turn enabled his veteran shofar, Culture Minister Miri Regev, to call for the removal of the general from his position.

MK Bezalel Smotrich called the Chief of Staff's words on the joint service of men and women in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee "slogans". In response to the IDF Spokesperson's Office, he wrote that the latter was conducting a campaign against elected officials: "an orderly announcement of the media, a timed embargo, a provocative headline and mainly lies. What great democracy". The Supreme Court is the preferred target for attack by members of the Jewish Home Party and their likeminded members in the Likud, supported by members of the national-religious divisions at the center committee of the party. These are the products of "Gush Emunim" through all its year, for which Yitzhak Rabin has written in 1979, the warning that resonates even more today: "In Gush Emunim, I saw a very serious phenomenon – a cancer in the body of Israeli democracy - against their basic concept, which is contrary to Israel's democratic basis, was a necessity to wage an ideological struggle that exposes the true meaning of the bloc's positions and methods of action".

These individuals repeatedly charge the Supreme Court with a wide verity of accusations that are liable to prepare public opinion for the support of laws that will undermine its status and powers, and to motivate individuals to engage in violent action against judges. In 2014, after the Supreme Court rejected one of the most stringent versions of

the Anti-Infiltration Law, Zeev Elkin claimed that “the Supreme Court preferred the benefit of illegal infiltrators over the safety of hundreds of thousands of law-abiding citizens in Israel”, and Yariv Levin determined that the judges gave “a kosher approval for terror”. “The Supreme Court has trampled the legislative branch”, added Ayelet Shaked and Moti Yogev summarized: “The intervention of the Supreme Court is a serious violation of the principle of the separation of powers and the democracy in Israel”.

“The place of the trial is where evil resides”, tweeted Yinon Magal (while still an MK) following the Supreme Court’s decision to evacuate the Drainhof project in Beit El while his fellow party member, Yogev tweeted: “The time has come to put the judicial authority in its place and show it who is the sovereign”¹⁸. On another occasion, Yogev ruled in a post on Facebook that the security of Judge Uzi Fogelman was increased due to his own deeds as the judge has “put himself on the enemy’s side” and Regev had already prepared the indictment: “If the Supreme Court does not allow us to strengthen our deterrence and severely punish the murderers, it will bear the responsibility for the continued wave of terror (after delaying the demolition of terrorist’s home). Last, the Jewish Home party member Smotrich, after the decision to demolish a synagogue in Givat Ze’ev, stated that “it is unfortunate that the court has given a shot of encouragement to the Arab enemy and to the terror machine it is using against us”.

These public officials “know” exactly why this happens: The Supreme Court is anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist, supports terrorism and undermines the security of the state - simply because it is “leftist”. Just as the heads of the Security establishment were “accused” by Bitan. Levin said that in the Supreme Court of Justice, “there is a strong foothold of the radical left - not just the left - that behaves in court as if it has a state and not the other way around”. Smotrich added that “the Supreme Court is being consciously and willingly used as a punching tool by extreme left-wing organizations”.

Therefore, “the time has come to restore the Supreme Court to its original place and function”, suggests/threatens Smotrich. Bennett proposes a version aggressively implemented by Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked: “We will act to curb this activism”. Levin also proposes “taking action in order to change the method of judges’ selection to ensure that the composition of the Supreme Court is balanced and pluralistic”. And he detailed “It is time to fundamentally change the method of selecting judges so that people who sit on the seat of judgment will be committed to the State of Israel and to the Zionist idea”.

In overcoming the media, Netanyahu conducts the orchestra. “Israel Hayom” newspaper, his alleged moves with Noni Mozes of Yedioth Ahronoth, his wife’s comment on the “Walla” website, the plot to dismantle the Broadcasting Authority, the announcement of his activities to close Channel 10, and more, led to the creation of the atmosphere suited to the phenomenon of appeasement by the media personal, to aligned themselves with the clear messaging, as Regev well concluded: “What is the corporation worth if we do not control it?”

The Israeli public must understand that it is the gatekeeper as well as the guardian of the other gatekeepers of Israeli democracy, of the future and security of the State of Israel, its identity and its character. The mobilization of the public in the social protest of 2011 and its struggle against the phenomenon of corruption that pervades every corner of the spheres of our lives is important but not sufficient in order to protect the State of Israel from the fulfillment of the warning of Lord Nathaniel Rothschild, who wrote to Herzl in August 1902: “Dear Mr. Herzl ... I shall tell you with absolute sincerity: I will view as appalling the establishment of a Jewish colony in the full sense of the word. Such a colony would be a ghetto, with all the prejudices of a ghetto. A small Jewish state, petty, observant and non-liberal that would reject the Gentile and the Christian”.

Look for the Override Clause in Rabbi Kook – Haaterz, May 14, 2018

The addition of the override clause to the Basic constitutional Law of Human Dignity and Liberty does not stand alone. The addition of the mechanism that enables the Knesset to re-enact a law that bypasses the High Court of Justice, which overrides the Basic Law, effectively nullifying the High Court's ruling, is a significant milestone in the social-legal political mosaic that has been accumulated for years in accordance to the nationalist and anti-democratic agenda of the "Jewish Home" party. Beyond the megalomania and belligerence that characterize the party's leaders, ministers Naftali Bennett and Ayelet Shaked, this legislative move derives its inspiration from a 100 year old ideology, from the teachings of Rabbi Yitzhak Avraham Hacohen Kook, and even more so from the teachings of his son, Zvi Yehuda Kook, The spiritual father of Gush Emunim throughout the generations.

A glance beyond Bennett and Shaked's shoulders, to the beginning of Zionism's modern history, can clarify and remind them where they come from and where they want to lead. To understand what they perceive as a deterministic move in which we are subjected, as Rabbi Yitzhak Avraham Hacohen Kook wrote about the Balfour Declaration: "The beginning of redemption must be before us ... Every person who has the ability to penetrate and observe what is beyond the apparent external phenomenon knows that the hand of God is being seen leading history and will lead this process to its completion".

The national movement of the Jewish people, Zionism, in its demand for self-determination in the Land of Israel, restored to the Jewish people the need for a political system related to the use of force: It's leaders, Herzl, Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, Jabotinsky and others, believed that the use of power requires faith in the justness of the road ahead and its moral values, determined under the assumption of equality between peoples and states, according to universal principles and agreed international rules.

The use of governmental power internally, must be based on the Zionist vision of a democratic state for the Jewish people that maintains equality for all its inhabitants. The weight and recognition given to the diversity of ideologies that ran through the Jewish camp prevented the constitution of the State of Israel from being established at the time of the state's establishment, but its laws were designed by the Supreme Court to uphold the spirit of the Declaration of Independence. In other words, Zionist nationalism, like any other nationalism, sought to strengthen the

collective aspect of the Jewish individual, but not at the expense of his individual values and rights, and without limiting his unique personality and the values that comprise it.

Religious Zionists throughout the generations turned in a different direction and introduced nationalism and territoriality to the Jewish religion, thereby turning it, naturally and comprehensively, under the assumption of "the chosen people" into nationalistic and messianic Zionism. In the words of Prof. Moshe Halbertal: The Gush Emunim movement is the conduit that transferred the European cesspool - nationalism, the organic vision of the nation - to the heart of Judaism". An approach that sees the values of the nation as superior to other human values, such as those belonging to the individual, and which conflict with them. These followers are at peace with the nationalist approach, which separates the Jewish people from others on the basis of inequality and even among individuals in the Jewish people who do not identify with this concept.

At the basis of the nationalist worldview is the assumption that any relationship is a power struggle. The same applies to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The conflict is a zero-sum game, and the Palestinian other must be subdued. There is a demand to deny recognition of his nationality and his right to self-determination in the Land of Israel, as well as a demand for acceptance of the Jewish-nationalist narrative, which is mainly expressed by the claim that "the Jewish people's right to the Land of Israel is absolute". The purpose of this approach is to prove superiority over the other, as is the attempt to dictate a surrender agreement, such as the "Stability Initiative" of the "Jewish Home" or the "Decision Plan" of the "National Union". Any other approach would be seen as weak, as a "Munich agreement," naive, one that "does not really understand the Arabs" as inviting new demands from the Palestinians: "Whatever you give them will not be enough".

In contrast, other parties, and especially human rights and peace organizations in Israel, are working to present an alternative to the current government and its policy towards the conflict. Eighty years ago, Hans Cohen, one of the most important researchers of nationalism, was able to offer an alternative to an approach that sees power in a conflict as the essence of everything. Cohen estimated that the Jewish community had only two ways to deal with the conflict: "Either to oppress and subdue the Arabs by perpetuating the use of the worst kind of military force, or to try as much as possible to find routes to the Arabs and completely change the face of Zionism, on the basis of values such as pacifism, anti-imperialism and democracy". These, Cohen believed, are the essence of

the true spirit of Judaism. Various parties and peace organizations are convinced that today, more than ever, we must adopt the alternative approach.

The members of The Jewish Home party, reject any alternative because they see themselves chosen by the heroism to lead the "chosen people," as MK Bezalel Smotrich wrote in an article entitled "We deserve more": "The State should invest more of its budget in the education of the Religious Zionists. Why? Because their sons were entrusted with the task of leading the people of Israel". This leadership, which is guaranteed by their faith, is not the result of democratic elections, but because only "our people" have the ability to decipher God's will and the course of history.

These followers believe and claim that they only can understand the political reality and reveal to the people of Israel that it carries a Messianic message. That all the politics of the earth are led over the one above, and that there are those who are "the Messiah's donkey" even without their knowledge. This is how Rabbi Kook explained in 1917 at a public meeting in London, the role of Britain in the Balfour Declaration: "I did not come to thank the British monarch but to congratulate him on the fact that the Holy One, blessed be He, chose him to be the messenger, in order to fulfill his promise to return us to the land of Israel". This is how Smotrich recently explained the partition plan: "The UN resolution is the expression of God's will and the way he chose to realize it in our generation". It is not inconceivable that this is how they view the Trump Declaration, recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and transferring the American embassy to it.

These followers proclaim the primacy of Judaism over democracy. "I would say that today, Israeli democracy has one central role: to disappear from the field ... Israeli democracy has finished its role, and it must disintegrate and bend towards Judaism", ruled in 2012 Benny Katzover, one of the leaders of Gush Emunim. Therefore, in recent years, we have been witnessing a trend led by Bennett, Shaked, Ariel, Yogev, Smotrich and others, whose main points are weakening of the opposition, the alternative, the supervision and control over the Knesset and the government.

It is long a list to mention all the slander and incitement against the Supreme Court and against the movements and organizations of civil society that express this line. We will suffice with noting the words of Shaked: "The High Court of Justice has trampled on the legislative branch," after the Supreme Court overturned the amendment to the Anti-Infiltration Law, and Yogev followed suit: "The High Court's intervention is a serious violation of the principle of the separation of

powers and democracy in Israel". Add to that the Nationality Law, which requires explicitly adding the principles of Jewish law to the state's law, as distinct from the "principles of liberty, justice, integrity and peace of the heritage of Israel", as well as the NGO law and the organizations oriented legislation such as the V15 law. We must not forget the limitation on the acceptance of National Service volunteers to certain organizations only, as part of the amendment to the National Service Law. Recently, her perception of the nature of democracy and its public role has led the justice minister to view as unnecessary the practice of inviting an opposition representative to a committee for the appointment of judges.

Where do they want to lead in their own name? The people of national-religious Zionism believe that "the ingathering of the exiles, the establishment of the state and its security, are but the first layers ... We have before us other monumental goals that are an integral part of Zionism, first and foremost: the establishment of a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, returning the Shekhina to Zion, establishing a kingdom of the house of David, and building the Temple - as a key point in repairing the world in the kingdom of Shaday"- as former MK Hanan Porat, a disciple of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook and one of the founders and founders of Gush Emunim, wrote in 2008.

Herzl was the first in modern Zionism to discern the potential threat of religious involvement in politics even before Rabbi Kook's doctrine was formulated, and in "The Jewish State" he warned: "Will we have a theocracy? No! Faith binds us, while science makes us free. Therefore, we will not allow for the theocratic tendencies of our clerics to raise their heads ... They must not intervene in matters of state - with all our respect for them - lest they bring about difficulties from within and from without".

The first to warn against the radicalization led by Zvi Yehuda Kook in his father's teaching was Yeshayahu Leibowitz, who argued that "the messianic teachings of Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah will lead to the transition from humanity through nationalism to animalism and turn the people of God into Am Ha'aretz". Yitzhak Rabin, in his first term, called to fight the followers of Tzvi Yehudah who, in 1974, had established Gush Emunim and said: "In few cases in the history of Judaism has such a wild group taken on a mandate in the name of God ... All under the abysmal guise of love of the Land of Israel and bursts into the streets rudely to install fear and terrorize". And later: "In Gush Emunim I saw a very grave phenomenon - cancer in the body of Israeli democracy. Against their basic concept, which is contrary to Israel's democratic basis, there was a necessity to wage an ideological struggle that exposes the true meaning

of the group's positions and methods of action".

The override clause is not the beginning, and to our sorrow is not the end. But it is a black flag waving over the future of democracy in Israel. The fertile soil that Netanyahu grants in his government to this nationalistic and messianic agenda, allows it to drag the indifferent society in Israel far from the Zionist vision of the founders of the state.

What did Israeli Students Learn this Year? The Least Possible – Haaretz, June 12, 2018

If one looks at the education system in Israel through the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) glasses, the situation is not encouraging. Every year, the OECD examines the level of literacy of students aged 15-16 in reading, mathematics, and science, and has been predicting for years that in Israel, the proportion of high school graduates who will find it difficult to integrate into the society and the economy is one of the highest in the OECD. Teachers' achievements in Israel are also not high.

The severity of the situation is greater in light of the fact that in 2006-2016 the education budget increased by 30 billion NIS, and since then it has continued to grow. But all these billions resulted in an increase of only 13 points in the PISA exams in the sciences, and another 28 points in mathematics.

The explanation for this is neither new nor surprising. "We need to understand that we are educating students towards their future - not our past", says Prof. Andreas Schleicher, the OECD's education minister, following the low achievements of Israeli students and their teachers. "Pedagogy in Israel is very traditional and standard. It is not oriented towards development of students' skills; it does not focus on creative thinking and problem solving ... Your education system has too many studies based on memorization ... It does not work that way anymore. In the modern world you are not rewarded for what you know - but for what you can do with the knowledge you have accumulated.

This is not new. Like others, I published an article in 2005 ("Why study? – memorize) which read: "We were informed that from now on, part of the matriculation grade in Bible studies, will include memorizing the verses and reading them aloud. The goal behind the decision of the coordinator of Bible studies is to "bring the Bible closer to the students and improve their ability to read texts aloud." In the era of information and technology, the innovation of the Ministry of Education is expressed in the emphasis not on the ability to understand the text, nor on critical thinking or even on the ability to understand the Bible, but on the ability of Israeli students to present a suitable Zionist response to the church choirs - and to sing according to the cantillation of the Bible a number of selected verses". And later: "The cultural richness of Judaism was born of criticism and wonder, controversy and daring - not from memorization and reading aloud ... intellectual curiosity must be created".

It is not surprising that Minister of Education Naftali Bennett chose in

September 2016 to announce at an honorary event for the fund for the reinforcement of Jewish studies that: "Studying Judaism and excellence in it is more important in my eyes than mathematics and science studies", repeatedly rejecting criticism of this position. Such criticism was made by Rachel Elior, a professor of Jewish philosophy who wrote a short while beforehand on Facebook: "The most important is the study of human dignity, of which the universal sanctity of his life is not dependent on religion or nationality".

It should be remembered that Bennett's party education clause ignores the diversity of society and seeks to apply to all children a Jewish (religious) Zionist (nationalistic) education. The love of the homeland that the "Jewish home" party seeks to educate for, involves the annexation of the West Bank, the continued domination of another people, and international isolation until we "habituate the world". Its educational model ignores commandments such as "Love the stranger". It offers the educational world on which Yeshayahu Leibowitz wrote the sharp warning: "When one accepts the view that 'the state', 'the nation', 'the homeland', 'security' etc. are the supreme values and that the unconditional loyalty to these values is an absolute holy obligation - he will be able to commit any abomination for this sacred interest, without any pangs of conscience".

This is reflected in the allocation of greater resources for the religious-nationalist-messianic education, to which, and it must be admitted, Gideon Sa'ar and Shai Piron were also partners. According to Ministry of Education data, between 2012 and 2016, the Ministry of Education increased the budget for religious high school students at the sharpest rate compared to other sectors, reaching a peak of 33,000 NIS per student per year. This amount is 22% higher than the budget allocated to high school students of the general state funded sector, and 67% of the budget allocated to Arab high school students.

Bennett knows that shaping the political position of the youth will affect the political system, its character, and the regime of the State of Israel in the coming years. This insight is not hidden from those who wish to "settle in the hearts" and promote nationalistic messianic ideas.

But the educational disaster of Israeli society is even deeper and is touched by the characteristics of fascism. "Anti-intellectualism" has always been a symptom of fascism. The persecution of liberal intellectuals for their betrayal of traditional values or of the ideology that aspires to rule was the guiding principle of the thinkers of the Fascist elite. Leah Goldberg explained this by saying that intellectuals and artists threaten dictatorships and worldviews that suppress human freedom by "teaching

humanity to say 'no' with bitter mockery when the time demands it".

The "ethical code" for university lecturers, formulated by Prof. Asa Kasher at Bennett's request, is perceived as such by many, as by Deputy Minister Tzipi Hotovely, who wrote on her Facebook page in September 2014 on the core of Israeli high-tech, the engine of economic growth: "The insubordination of 8200 officers is a social explosive belt and reflects the moral bankruptcy of the educational system in which they were raised. They are not worthy of serving in the most moral army in the world. The chief of staff must act for their dismissal immediately".

The Israeli failure in the literacy tests also attests to the "degeneracy of the language", which we can find among many elected officials. But no one comes close to the culture minister. All the fascist textbooks used a limited vocabulary and very basic syntax, reducing the tools for critical and complex thinking. In a five-minute speech given to high school students, Miri Regev announced that Stav Shafir is a Communist and Shelly Yachimovich, voted for "Hadash" pointed out that "Miri Regev is no thief" and that "Jerusalem is forever and forever – clap!".

In this culture, which sanctifies the contemporary and the specific, we find it difficult to follow and understand processes that take place over many years until a specific cut of the picture of reality reflects the full strength and ramifications of the process in which we were subjected to. This is not the first time that the truth is revealed in its nakedness in relation to the teachers of Israel. This happened two years ago, in the case of the teachers of Israel and the history of Zionism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Suddenly, the gloomy picture was revealed to us: In a survey conducted by "Israel Hayom" newspaper, 69 percent of the teachers did not know what happened on November 29, 1947, while 57 percent did not know what the "green line" was and how it was determined. In other words, what is to be memorized is carefully chosen – "the prayer for rain", because it is one of the factors affecting the decline in rainfall according to the Ministry of Education, and not defining events in the history of Zionism.

This ignorance of the issues that determine our fate is not coincidental. It is the result of recent years, as the education system is under the leadership of ministers from the nationalist and religious-messianic camp. The process that takes place in the state education system consists mainly of two important trends that determine the political culture and the one that exists in the public sphere.

The first, and most important trend of the two, is the one that insures, in the absence of familiarity with the main milestones, that the curriculum

will not establish a set of concepts and facts and a sketch of historical processes that can serve as a basis for a fuller understanding of Zionist history and the conflict with the Arabs. The gap of knowledge created makes it easier to cast “historical truths” and change them according to one or other political need, as demonstrated by the comparison made by the Prime Minister between Hitler and the Mufti.

The second trend relates to removing the old ways to the new. The introduction of nationalist, religious, and messianic content into the curriculum, as Education Minister Bennett does covertly, is easy and convenient when there is no other solid basis of knowledge to deal with. This is another expression of Bennett’s plan, which claimed that for the sake of the Land of Israel, the people of Israel and the State of Israel must be changed. He and his colleagues focus today on “settlement in the hearts” after a series of theological traumas originating in the messianic crash on the rocks of reality, primarily the Disengagement Plan, the evacuation of Amona and Migron, and the cessation of construction in the settlements as a result of international pressure.

This evil spirit, which is sweeping Israel’s educational system, completely contradicts the spirit of its founders who sought to secure the future more than to preserve the past, as David Ben-Gurion and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi wrote in their book “Eretz Israel” in 1918: “If we seek to establish the borders of the land of Israel today, especially if we see it not only as the inheritance of the Jewish past but as the land of the Jewish future ...”.

Even worse, if these trends are not blocked and the process does not reverse, Israel will fulfill the warning of Lord Nathaniel Rothschild in his letter to Herzl in 1903: “I will tell you with utter sincerity: I would be appalled to see the establishment of a Jewish colony in the full sense of the word. This colony would be a ghetto, with all the prejudices of a ghetto. A small, petty, religious and non-liberal Jewish state that would reject the Gentile and the Christian”.

Gadi Taub Surrenders to the Tyranny of the Contemporary – Haaretz, July 18, 2018

In his article, Gadi Taub (Ha’aretz, July 6) argues that the end of the conflict between us and the Palestinians depends solely on the Palestinians, and that they do not intend to give up their great dream of destroying the State of Israel. In so doing, he adopts the basic claims of the nationalist right and cuts himself off from the camp that believes that achieving a political separation is possible, but depends on both sides, and more so on Israel. He also cuts himself off from the camp, which believes that in the absence of a Palestinian partner, Israel must take its fate into its own hands and pursue independent and controlled measures, in accordance with its security needs, to ensure future separation between itself and the Palestinians.

Taub accuses Noam Sheizaf (Ha’aretz, June 15) of describing the “situation” in Gaza as if “there was no history and no reasons”. In the same paragraph Taub seeks to go deeper in history and notes that the Palestinians “succeeded in thwarting Israel’s repeated attempts to end the occupation”. Taub thus commits the same sin as he succumbs to the tyranny of the contemporary, which characterizes the Israeli discourse of historical dishonesty in examining the processes and attitudes of the parties to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It can be assumed however that we will not want to go back in history to the biblical period and argue with the absurd Palestinian claim, which was often presented to the League of Nations and the British (1921), that “the first to settle in Palestine from time immemorial are our forefathers, the Amalekites”.

The “opening shot” of the conflict is recognized in the Balfour Declaration and in the 1922 Mandate issued on its basis. Twenty-five years later, the partition report (1947) states that “the principle of self-determination did not apply to Palestine when the Mandate was created in 1922”. This confession serves as the keystone of the Palestinian narrative that a historic and legal injustice was done to the Arabs of Palestine Which in 1922 accounted for more than 90% of the population, owned more than 90% of the private land, and were deprived of the right to self-determination “due to the desire to allow the establishment of a Jewish national home”.

The Palestinians have held to this argument for decades and rejected all proposals to divide the land between themselves and the Jews, as Mahmoud Abbas admitted (2008) “the opportunity for the partition of 1947 was lost, and before that the Peel Commission’s partition was

lost". Those proposals it must be noted, were accepted by the Zionist movement, which recognized the right of the Arabs of Palestine, as Ben-Gurion declared (1924), "The Arab community in Israel must have the right to self-determination and self-rule. And as he continued to suggest (1947), "the only possible immediate arrangement with a foundation of finiteness is the establishment of two states, one Jewish and one Arab (in the land of Israel)."

Taub and his ilk ignore the dramatic change that occurred in the Palestinians' position in 1988 during the geopolitical changes that took place in the global and regional systems. The Palestinians, who maintained a discourse based on fundamental rights in which they claimed they were deprived of the right to self-determination, understood that this position, which is unacceptable to the international community, led them to the Nakba, to protracted refugee-hood and to the absence of an independent state. They were forced to move into a discourse based on legitimacy and international resolutions, headed by resolution 242, as Abbas continues: "We do not want to miss another opportunity, so we accepted the division of 1948 and 1967, which do not include more than 22% of historic Palestine". This position led to the mutual recognition with Israel in which the Palestinians declared (1993) that "the PLO recognizes Israel's right to exist in peace and security, recognizes UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338"

This change in attitude, it should be noted again, was not due to "the love for Mordecai", and even the use of the term "historical Palestine" attests to their position that they "gave up 100% of the Palestinian homeland in exchange for a Palestinian state of 22%". Nevertheless, historical fairness requires that all the proposals and the willingness of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel to partition the land stem not from "the love for Ishmael", but from the realization that the Arab majority between the sea and the Jordan does not allow the establishment and existence of a democratic and Jewish state - the Zionist vision.

From David Ben-Gurion, who wrote (1937) "What we want is not that the land be unified and whole, but that the unified and whole Land be Jewish. I do not have any satisfaction with the entire Land of Israel - when it is Arab", to Yitzhak Rabin (1995) "I view the separation issue a central issue", Ehud Barak (2000) "I view separation as a supreme national need for Israeli demography, identity and democracy", and Ariel Sharon, who initiated the Disengagement Plan (2003), "I believed and hoped that we could hold forever (onto the land)... but the changing reality in the land, the region, and the world requires me to evaluate differently and change positions".

When you know the history of the conflict, the Palestinian narrative, and the international resolutions, it is not too difficult to understand why Arafat rejected Barak's proposal at Camp David in 2000. The one which asked him to return home without a capital in East Jerusalem, with recognition of Israeli sovereignty on the Temple Mount, to agree to an Israeli annexation of 9-11% of the West Bank without receiving land from Israel in return, for a long period of leasehold of a quarter of the Jordan Valley and other areas, without an external border with Jordan and more.

The attempt to define the Annapolis negotiations of 2008 between Mahmoud Abbas and Ehud Olmert as a failure is bordering on deception. The Palestinians proposed an exchange of territories that would allow the majority of the settlers to remain under Israeli sovereignty, the annexation to Israel of Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem (without Har Homa), Jewish sovereignty over the Western Wall, the Jewish Quarter, half the Armenian Quarter and the rest of Mount Zion. A demilitarized Palestinian state and a symbolic "return" with compensation to the Palestinian refugees.

As a forward-looking observer, Olmert took the trouble of making clarifications (2012) for the sake of Taub and his kind: "I was within reach of a peace agreement. The Palestinians never rejected my proposals. And even if for the 1,000th time, people will try to claim that they rejected my proposals, the reality was different. They didn't accept them, and there is a difference. They did not accept them because the negotiations were not over, it was on the brink of completion ... If I had stayed prime minister for another four or six months, I believe that it would have been possible to reach a peace agreement. The gaps were very small, we had already reached the last stretch".

In these positions, the Palestinians demonstrated a very flexible interpretation in favor of Israel, above and beyond the decisions and positions of the international community. The main points of these positions appear in the "Palestinian position document" distributed by Abbas' bureau. But for Taub's information, of these generous positions, Netanyahu said, "under the conditions they want at the moment, a Palestinian state is out of the question" (2015).

Taub continues to argue that the Palestinian strategy is "the destruction of the Jewish nation-state", thereby aligning himself with Netanyahu who claimed (1993) that "the PLO's policy is the doctrine of stages and its goal is to destroy the State of Israel and not reach an agreement with it". If so, why not for Taub to remain faithful to all of Netanyahu's 2015 promises "If I get elected, there will not be a Palestinian state in my term," and "We will forever preserve a united Jerusalem under Israeli

sovereignty,” as well as “I am committed to building throughout Judea and Samaria” (2014). Taub must internalize what the Prime Minister’s father, Ben-Zion Netanyahu, understood and said in response to the Bar-Ilan speech (2009), “Benjamin does not support a Palestinian state, but only on conditions that the Arabs will never accept. I heard it from him” or read what the Prime Minister himself wrote about resolving the conflict (1995) “The autonomy plan under Israeli control is the only alternative to preventing these dangers, which are inherent in the ‘peace’ plan of the Oslo Accords”.

“The end of the occupation, actually, does not depend on us”, Taub concludes finally. But the end of the occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel depends on both us and the Palestinians: Israel must return to the negotiating table on the basis of the parameters on which the negotiations in Annapolis took place and stop dreaming that the Palestinians will accept the Trump proposal. If the Palestinians refuse, then Israel must, through initiatives, maintain its identity and regime by itself. When Ariel Sharon claimed in 2003 that “there is no Palestinian partner with whom it is possible to advance peacefully toward an agreement ...”, he continued and concluded “I have decided to initiate a process of gradual disengagement ...”.

As opposed to him, Netanyahu and his government are doing everything to further lubricate the slippery and dangerous slope in which Israel is marching toward the loss of the Zionist vision and the establishment of one state, which will begin its path as an apartheid state and end as an Arab state. A process from which Sharon warned (2003): “We do not want to control forever millions of Palestinians who multiply their number every generation. Israel which seeks to be a model democracy cannot endure such a reality for a long time”.

Netanyahu heads a government whose members and members of the coalition have laid out many plans and bills for the annexation of the entire West Bank or parts of it. A government that expands the isolated settlements and avoids separating the populations by continued refusal to complete the security fence. A government that works tirelessly to preserve the Palestinian split and strengthen Hamas’ status in the Gaza Strip. If for Taub this is the way to eliminate the Palestinian “resistance”, then it is fitting that he internalizes that this is the way to eliminate the Israeli and Palestinian hope for a resolution of the conflict.

Goodbye democracy, Hello Jungle - Haaretz, July 24, 2018

The severe reactions to the “Nation State” law “whistled up” those who support the law, discount it or are ignorant of its details, to complain about the damage to “pluralism” that has become so precious to them. They accuse the critics of refusing to accept the results of the democratic process, which they were so careful to devalue and undermine, and finally, criticize the critics on the grounds that they oppose viewing Israel as the Jewish nation-state.

It would not be right to respond to these baseless claims without emphasizing that the Nation State law cannot be discussed as an exceptional phenomenon in and of itself. This is a single scene out of a horror movie that has been produced for several years by the Israeli government headed by Netanyahu and led by the Jewish Home party and their troops in the Likud. It contains dozens of anti-democratic, nationalistic, discriminatory and racist scenes against the national gatekeepers, the legal system, Israeli Arabs, LGBT’s, refugees, seculars, non-Orthodox, and others.

The inequality that the law expresses has no place under the wings of pluralism, because these are two concepts that contradict each other. Pluralism is one of the basic values of liberal democracy, since it recognizes the rights of the minority. According to pluralism, equal rights and freedom of expression must be granted to different groups in society, so that they can express their differences and unite in different frameworks. The authors of the Nation State law, in complete contradiction to the Declaration of Independence, chose not to mention the word “equality” in spite of all the proposals and reservations that were raised on the subject.

In a pluralistic society, groups espouse values of equality and tolerance and a willingness to live together in mutual respect, mutual recognition and agreement. The Nation State law ignores the value of equality, and most of its initiators are known for their intolerance, for showing disrespect towards various populations in Israeli society and for trying to impose their views on them.

The word democracy, like in the Declaration of Independence, is absent from the Nation State law. The entire emphasis is on a “Jewish state”. Those who argue for the righteousness of the law did indeed add the words Democratic and Jewish in their speeches, but ignored the fact that the coexistence of the Jewish and Democratic identities in the State of Israel are conditioned by withstanding several tests: the status of religion in state and politics, the rights of minorities and women, and

the right to hold a public struggle over these issues. For years, the Israeli government has been determined to fail Israel in those tests through legislation and discriminatory policies.

Nationalism is based on the idea of self-determination of peoples, and on the right of all peoples to liberty. Nationalism is compatible with democracy and human rights. It sees value in a variety of cultures, languages and peoples. Zionist nationalism, like any other nationalism, sought to strengthen the collective aspect of the Jewish individual, but not at the expense of his individual values and rights, as well as of the non-Jewish citizen, as proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence, and without limiting his unique personality and the values that comprise him.

The emphases in the Nation State law and its spirit show that its initiators are loyal to the nationalism that sees the values of the nation as superior to other human values, such as those belonging to the individual, especially the non-Jew, and which are in conflict with them. These followers are at peace with the nationalist approach, which separates the Jewish people from others on the basis of inequality and separates even between individuals in the Jewish people who do not identify with this concept. In the nationalist approach, the nation and the state become a target rather than a means, and stand above humanistic universal values.

The initiators of the law and the Prime Minister supporting it are often photographed with the picture of Ze'ev Jabotinsky in their background. Had they bothered to read his article "On nationalism", written in 1903, they would discover that "nationalism is the individuality of nations, no nation should oppress the national character of another people". Jabotinsky also writes that there is nothing more absurd than the assumption that the Jews "need their state so that they can suffocate and oppress other peoples".

The arguments of the legislators of the Nation State law are the opposite of the spirit of Zionism and the spirit of the Declaration of Independence. They represent anti-democratic trends that say: If you are unable to convince - slander, silence and outlaw. These trends are driven by politicians who interpret democracy as the right of the majority to reach any decision. They reject the principle that in a democracy the majority is entitled to rule only on the condition that it guarantees the rights of the individual - the essence of democracy. The world is perceived as a jungle, the logic of which is a zero-sum game - less for the other camp means more for my camp. Whoever does not support me is necessarily against me. There is no room for the other and the different, on both the social and political levels.

The increase of these phenomena in the governmental and public spheres precludes the possibility of recognizing the two identities of Israel - Democratic and Jewish - as complementary and not contradictory, and are in a sense the "writing on the wall". The Israeli public must understand that there is no need for hatred towards feminism, Arabs, supporters of a political agreement or the leaders of the social protests in order for such things to continue to happen - its indifference is enough to enable their continued existence.

A Day Must Not Pass Without Protest Against this Government – Haaretz, August 27, 2018

The end of August. Summer vacation is over. The public protest against the Netanyahu government's policies is likely to fade away. Leaving the squares and intersections and going back to normal is a disaster because it ignores the height of the struggle in which Israeli society is subjected - the struggle for the regime, character and image of the State of Israel. A struggle whose fate will be decided in the upcoming Knesset elections. Israel will choose whether to follow the path of nationalism and annexation of the West Bank, or to U-turn and return to policy in accordance with the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, while striving for a two-state solution. There is no other alternative, a third way, or a "more central" way.

In June 2001, in a Channel 10 report, Netanyahu, in the status of "the concerned citizen", boasted to the bereaved family of Hershkovitz, "I stopped the Oslo agreement". Since his re-election in 2009 until the election of President Trump, Israeli governments under his command have been vanquishing all the lights of hope of the peace process that have hitherto dominated Israeli consciousness (the Arab League initiative, the road map, the Annapolis process). Even worse, most of Netanyahu's governments efforts were spent on blocking any attempt to revive the process, resume negotiations and allow the necessary unification of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (opposition to the four French initiatives to renew negotiations, opposition to cooperation with the Quartet, ignoring the proposal of The European Union, opposition to General Allen's security plan as part of John Kerry's mission, etc.).

When the denial, concealment, and containment stages were completed, Netanyahu's last government, with its establishment in 2015, moved to the last stage. Education Minister Bennett declared to the Amona evacuees in an event commemorating Hanan Porat - and in response to the American condemnation of the government's decision to establish a new settlement (Amichai) - "We will lead a strategic solution to settlements arrangement... About the Land of Israel, we need to move from a halt to a decision. We have to mark the dream, and the dream is that Judea and Samaria will be part of the sovereign land of Israel". Bennett and Justice Minister Shaked conducted the strategic solution together with their ideological partners in the Likud. In order to maintain his chair, the "Pied Piper of Balfour" made sure to incite, split, lie, debase the memory of the Holocaust and fulfill all the budgetary and other whims of the coalition partners. This is the only strategic plan implemented by the "right-wing government with the two left hands," as

Ehud Barak recently called it.

The main strategic solution was to shatter the judiciary "glass ceiling", which the Supreme Court sought to place in order to limit governmental power, on the basis of the laws of the democratic-liberal state and in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, while respecting international law - in order to reject messianic whims and prevent harm to minorities. The court rejected in most cases the claim that these actions were the "will of the people," under the anti-democratic view that democracy is simply the majority's rule. The rationale of the legal basis for the decision stage in the struggle for the future of the State of Israel has been built from various laws, first and foremost the Law of Regulation, the Nation State Law, the Override clause and the decision of the Ministerial Committee on Legislation to approve that every bill passed by the government must indicate how it will apply to Israelis living in the West Bank. All these were meant to ensure that an absolute and sole priority would be given to Jewish settlement throughout the land, and that private Palestinian land could be expropriated in order to legalize dozens of outposts without the High Court's ability to prevent this.

Until the legislation is completed, and against the background of the public protest the Nation State law, Netanyahu is in no hurry to move to the "decision stage". He managed to block many proposals by Knesset members from the Greater Israel lobby, headed by Smotrich and Kish, who wanted to annex various parts of the West Bank to Israel (Ma'aleh Adumim, Greater Jerusalem, Jewish settlement areas and the Jordan Valley). Despite his promise to raise these proposals in the upcoming Knesset session, it appears that Netanyahu will ask to do so only after the elections. Until then, he must persuade President Trump not to subject his proposal to renew negotiations with the Palestinians, even if it appears that this proposal meets most of the whims of the Israeli government.

In the matters of territory and a permanent settlement, differences of opinion and small gaps may crack and overthrow the current coalition. Netanyahu and Bennett - and those who want to succeed them - prefer to go to elections on time, while no clear plan, which requires a decision in national terms, is placed before the Israeli voter. They prefer to win them based on the prevailing atmosphere in the Israeli public, without any public protest, and to reestablish the nationalist-messianic coalition. The worst might still be ahead.

In the absence of external restraining factors to the Israeli government, and under Trump's umbrella, the upcoming elections are undoubtedly the final line of supporters of the liberal democracy of the Jewish people

against the completion of the Netanyahu and Benet moves. Every day until the elections, when there is no significant protest and no clear rival political agenda put in place, will weaken this camp and reduce concern from the Israeli government. The victory of the nationalist and messianic parties in the Knesset elections will put an end to most of the complaints and protests that accompany us today. The new government will be able to claim that the public supports its policy and its recent decisions to achieve the dream of Bennett, Shaked and their colleagues. The State of Israel will move forward, with many of its citizens not even looking up from Facebook and the "Big Brother" show, to the proposed annexation processes, at the end of which, will be establish a "Jew-deo-acratic" state based on the current model in Jerusalem – ultra-Orthodox, nationalist, with an anti-Zionist majority, poor and upholding a discriminatory regime against non-Jewish residents, which will become a majority within a few years.

It can be assumed that in the 21st century this regime will not last for many years. Contrary to the claims of Bennett and his colleagues, the government's new PR campaign - which makes Israel's contribution to the world stand on cherry tomatoes, pipettes, Waze and disk on key - will not succeed in persuading the developed Western world to accept the State of Israel, which maintains an apartheid regime. The road to the international leper's position will be short, even if there is a pause in the company of Netanyahu's new friends from Eastern Europe and South America. The road to a bi-national state, which will soon become an Arab state, will be short. The revolution, which in recent years has been led by the nationalist-messianic minority, is fueled by the infuriating indifference and the growing ignorance of the majority. When it is completed, it will dissolve the Zionist vision and throw it into the dustbin of history, and to the head of the list of missed opportunities of the Jewish people.

If the Left Doesn't Want to Write the Epilogue of the Zionist Story – Haaretz, January 4, 2019

The 2019 election period has begun, and it seems that Benjamin Netanyahu and the members of the coalition have already won the most important campaign in Israel's history. They continue to determine the nature of public discourse. The fact that their adversaries adopt their behavior gives them a built-in advantage, which will be almost impossible to overcome.

Each of us possesses a conceptual framework through which he interprets reality, shaped by his values and beliefs. Like the value of freedom, and like the difference between those who believe that the world is a jungle in which the weak must be devoured, those who believe that it should be domesticated and make way to a social order based on equality between individuals. This framework explains the events that make up reality, determines the positions and creates the identification with the person who represents them. The complexity of reality makes it difficult for us to fully understand and act accordingly. Therefore, we seek "anchors" that will facilitate labeling the events as "right" and "wrong", "good" and "bad", and "just" or "unjust". These anchors are made up of opposites. Netanyahu, more than anyone else in the political system, was able, first, to remove from this set of values and beliefs, social solidarity, fairness, transparency, peace, coexistence, natural rights, universal values. Secondly, he maintained and strengthened the "anchors" in the form of the rifts in Israeli society and the rift between it and the Arab and international sphere: between Jews and Arabs, between the religious and the secular, between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, between the periphery and the center, between Orthodox and Reform Jews, between Israel and the Arab world, and between Israel and Western Europe. He cultivated these rifts by controlling the hegemonic instruments of the government and labeling all the former in the above pairs as belonging to the "right" and all the latter as belonging to the "left".

In order to maintain the beliefs that nourish and shape this interpretative framework, the Netanyahu government adheres to a complementary policy on two levels: On the political-security level, it frightens the public and convinces it that it is "a people that shall dwell alone" and that the entire world is anti-Semitic. On the domestic level, it demands that the "unity of the people" be demonstrated by unqualified support for the leadership and full backing from the judicial system and the media. Creating such a reality ensures that the opposition will not have the necessary conditions to replace the government. To this end, Netanyahu has carefully chosen ministers who will undermine the pillars of Israeli

democracy, and they have performed their duties faithfully.

Ayelet Shaked was placed before the Supreme Court and civil society organizations and laid the anti-constitutional foundations for future annexation. Miri Regev promoted culture on the scale of her own values, as she said: "I look up and ask for truth, and it works for me." In other words, the Minister commissioned for ensuring pluralism believes that she has a monopoly on the truth as she receives it from on high. The Ministry of Communications is held by the Prime Minister - the man who initiated the previous elections because he detests free media. Naftali Bennett has been placed for Minister of education, ignoring the diversity of society and applying the educational model on which Yeshayahu Leibowitz wrote the sharp warning: "When one accepts the view that the 'state', 'nation', 'homeland', 'security' etc. are the supreme values, and that unconditional loyalty to these values is an absolute and sacred duty - one will be able to commit any abomination for this sacred interest, without conscience".

What do those who seek to replace Netanyahu and his colleagues in the coming elections offer? On the grounds that most of the Israeli public belongs to the "moderate right," the candidates - old and new - adopt Netanyahu's conceptual framework. They believe that clever use of it will lead the public to choose them, as those who symbolize the "moderate right," or even move from "moderate right" to "moderate left".

There is no chance for this approach. It is hard to define "moderate right," "moderate left," or "center." These camps are the result of the influence of a vocal minority, which fights for its views. Moreover, it is impossible to turn a "moderate right" into a "moderate left" by presenting the positions of a fictional "center." We must present clear leftist positions for this purpose. Those who want to replace Netanyahu must return to the set of values and beliefs that he and his friends have removed. A final status agreement cannot be reached while excluding the value of "peace" from the discourse. At the same time, they must instill in the public a different conceptual framework of reality that will rely on other "anchors" and heal the rifts.

The first and most important anchor that must be instilled is the distinction between "Zionist" and "anti-Zionist" - between the "left" who believes that every nation has the right to liberty and independence, and believes that the two-state solution will fulfill the Zionist vision of a democratic state with a Jewish majority, full equality for all its residents, and Netanyahu's "right," which seeks to grant the Palestinians only an autonomy or of Bennett's, which proposes annexation of Area C; or of Yoav Kish and Orly Levi-Abekasis, members of the Greater Israel Lobby,

or Uri Ariel and Bezalel Smotrich, who believe that the Arabs deserve only the right to be uprooted or to live under a discriminatory regime.

The "left" raises the banner of social justice and solidarity, unlike the "right" of Bennett, who opposed supervision on the price of basic goods; or of Regev, Yariv Levin, Tzipi Hotovely, Moti Yogev and Shaked, who opposed the promotion of the Prohibition on Housing Discrimination Law - and lastly even the Fair Rental Law. The "Left" supports the separation of powers and the maintenance of the independence of the Supreme Court, which upholds the rule of law and protects the rights of minorities and the weak, in contrast to Regev, Ze'ev Elkin, Oren Hazan, Levin, Shaked, Samotrich, Bennett and Yogev, who accused the court of a number of baseless accusations: detachment from Jewish society, malice, immorality, elitism, anti-Zionism, anti-Judaism, anti-democratic, and undermining security.

The "left" places man at the center and believes that all human beings are equal before the law, contrary to Regev, Levine, Hazan, Hotovely, Elkin, Yogev, Shaked and Bennett who voted against a bill to add the principle of equality to the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty. The "left" seeks to separate religion and state, in contrast to Yogev's view that the Chief of Staff's intention to limit the authority of the military rabbinate is of "harm to the strength of the IDF, to the spirit of fighting and to Israel's security." The "left" recognizes the freedom of religious worship for all, in contrast to Regev, Hotovely and Yogev, who promoted a bill prohibiting the use of a public address system in prayer houses directed against Muslims. The left recognizes religious pluralism as opposed to Levin's view of the Reform movement in the US. The Left views the right to property as a basic right reserved for everyone, contrary to Yogev and Hazan's approach to the construction of settlers on private Palestinian land to the approach of the initiators of the "Regulation Law".

The "left" believes in freedom of art and culture, as opposed to Regev's "right," which initiated the "Loyalty in Culture" bill, which will support cultural institutions in their show of loyalty to the state. The "left" believes in the freedom of expression and the right of the minority to conduct a public struggle for public opinion, in contrast to Shaked, who initiated the NGO Law.

The Left believes that Israel should be a member of the family of nations and respect international law and practice, as opposed to Bennett and his colleagues, who are interested in accustoming the world to Israeli annexation of Area C and the West Bank. Or Hotovely, who announced the suspension of political dialogue with the European Union in response to the marking of settlement products. The "left" strives to maintain a

pluralistic and liberal society, in contrast to the “right” that seeks to exclude minorities and women from the public sphere.

The Netanyahu government has written a sad new chapter in the history of Zionism, which is liable to become the final chapter of the Zionist vision. Those who seek to replace it must not maintain their interpretive framework or their “anchors”, because even if they win the elections, they can only write the epilogue of the Zionist story in the Land of Israel. If they are the “left” as mentioned above, they must announce a new conceptual framework, shaped by a different set of values and beliefs, and promote it with civic courage.

Israel Will Simply Collapse – Haaretz, June 13, 2019

The dispersal of the 21st Knesset and the declaration of re-election are nothing but a ritual for the ultra-Orthodox parties. This requires them with organizational effort but does not threaten them. The trend is clear: their political power is intensifying, and with it the ability to appoint prime ministers. Today they might support one prime minister or another in return for their budgetary demands and recognition of their separatism. Tomorrow they might appoint themselves a “puppet” who will do their bidding.

This trend expresses the realization of the first condition in the warning of the Book of Proverbs: “For three things the earth is perturbed, for four it cannot bear up. For a servant when he reigns”. The warning refers to the rise of the power of a person who was of inferior status, and after his rise he behaves cruelly and rudely. Similarly, to the behavior of the Jewish immigrants towards the Arabs of the land, which Ahad Ha’am condemned in his 1891 essay, Truth from the Land of Israel: “What do our brethren do in the Land of Israel? They were slaves in the land of their exile, and suddenly they find themselves in unlimited freedom ... as always happens to a servant when he reigns, they walk with the Arabs with hostility and cruelty. Shamefully beat them with no good reason... and no one will stand in the breach and stop this nasty and dangerous tendency”.

More important is the warning against the rise to power of those who have not learned the ways of managing a “kingdom”. To this we must add that what the author of the book of Proverbs wrote seems to be taken for granted: the need that those who rise to power, identify with the police and the character of the kingdom.

Are the ultra-Orthodox in Israel preparing themselves and their leadership for the enormous task of preserving and managing a developed and militarily powerful country like Israel, or will the trends that characterize them deteriorate Israel into the dark and poor state of Third World countries?

The path of the Haredi population to power, as long as democratic elections are held in Israel, is paved by its high natural increase (4.4% per year). According to the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) forecast, its share is expected to rise from 12% of the total population to 20% in 2040, and to 32% in 2065. Of the total Jewish population in Israel it’s expected to rise to 24% in 2040, and to 40% in 2065. In 50 years, the proportion of Jewish children from among all Israeli children will increase to 84%, with 49% of them ultra-Orthodox. This is even though in recent

years there has been a decline in the fertility rate among ultra-Orthodox families, which is now 6.9 children per woman (in 2002-2005 it was 7.5).

The good news is that the rate of Haredi participation in the labor market rose from 59.4% in 2000 to 63.9% in 2018. The main change stems from an increase in the participation rate of ultra-Orthodox women. According to the CBS forecast, while in 2015 the share of Jews in the labor market was 81.2%, of which 7.5% were Haredim, at the end of the projection period (2065), the share of the Haredim is expected to rise sharply to 26%.

Reuven Gal, head of the "Integration of Haredim" project at the Samuel Neaman Institute for National Policy Research, frequently presents the great gaps between Haredi society and the rest of the public, and the trends in reducing them in various areas. In 2016, 54% of the ultra-Orthodox reported using the computer, compared to 44% in 2007. The gap with the non-ultra-Orthodox population is large (70% and 80%, respectively). More ultra-Orthodox women (58%) than men (49%) use computers. The change stems mainly from the increase in the rate of employment and entrance to academic studies among ultra-Orthodox in general, and ultra-Orthodox women in particular. The rate of those holding a driving license in 2015-2016 was 42%. This is much lower than the non-Haredi population (81%). Only 29% of ultra-Orthodox women hold a license, compared with 56% of men (and 72% and 90% of the general population, respectively). The rate of private car ownership is 41%, much lower than among the non-Haredi population (79%). Gal's conclusion is that 30% of Haredi society is open and undergoing changes.

Thus, Haredi society gives only a partial answer to Ze'ev Jabotinsky, who, in 1919, demanded in an article in the newspaper *Hadashot Ha'aretz*: "To establish an order that distances the non-productive element (the old Haredi Yeshuv) from any interference in national building matters. This is what they would undoubtedly have done in any European country, had there been an element that publicly rejected the very notion of civilian life - especially labor".

Only one out of every 10 ultra-Orthodox is entitled to a matriculation certificate. The average salary among the ultra-Orthodox is almost 50% lower than the average salary in Israel, and most of the ultra-Orthodox are ranked at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder (cluster 1-2), this without taking into account the "black market", the popular interest-free loans and the reparations from Germany.

Haredi participation in public systems, such as security, law, and the economy in the business sector, is negligible. According to Knesset reports, there has been a decrease in the number of exemptions from

military service and the postponement of service given to the ultra-Orthodox between 2014 (42,004) and 2017 (30,286), and between 2013 and 2016 there was a 45% increase in the number of Haredi recruits from 1,972 to 2,850.

At the same time, there was a decline in the proportion of Haredim who enlisted relative to their annual enlistment targets, and the number of Haredim who enlisted in national civil service in the years 2014-2016 dropped from 744 to 571. Most importantly, 80% of the Haredi recruits, serve in designated frameworks, and do not climb the chain of command.

Although there are thousands of ultra-Orthodox lawyers in the Israeli market, their representation in the Israel Bar Association, the Judicial Appointments Committee, and judicial positions on almost all levels are negligible. It is also hard to point out ultra-Orthodox tycoons in Israel, and as it was published on the website "Behadrei Haredim", it is also known that 50 wealthy Jewish families from around the world hold the Israeli world of yeshivas, Hasidic organizations and charities.

The rate of Haredim among the settler population is approaching 40% and is expected to reach 50% within a decade. Although according to all proposals for territorial exchanges presented in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, a decisive majority of the ultra-Orthodox are supposed to remain under Israeli sovereignty, surveys conducted by Prof. Tamar Hermann of the Israel Democracy Institute show that their support for the two-state solution is lower than in any other sector of Jewish society, and reached a low of 11% in 2018. This explains why the ultra-Orthodox parties support those who oppose a political agreement with the Palestinians.

The most serious thing is that the democracy that serves Haredi society is not at the top of its agenda. In his book "Haredim of the People's rule", Prof. Benjamin Brown describes the claims made by ultra-Orthodox speakers against the democratic regime in general and Israeli democracy in particular: "In their opinion, there is no legitimacy for a regime that is not according to the Torah. For among the people of Israel the creator is the sovereign, not the people. According to the ultra-Orthodox view, the basic values of democracy, which are in fact the basic values of Western culture in general, are unacceptable to Judaism, and most of all, the value of freedom is unacceptable. Man, and especially the masses, are not worthy of in their opinion of trust, and they call to entrust the decision to the great Torah scholars. But beyond all these fundamental principles, the ultra-Orthodox attack those who are perceived as the living representatives of democracy - the judicial system and the enforcement of the law, particularly the Supreme Court, the media and the secular left.

In the ultra-Orthodox press, the argument is frequently made that Israeli democracy is merely an instrument in the hands of these forces; That is, the principles of democracy are an instrument to them, and they bend them to their will". Brown believes that the Haredim's claims are "more of an intellectual challenge than a real political threat". Is it? When we see their attitude toward granting immunity to Netanyahu, who stood at the center of the failed negotiations to form a government, in return for a bribe and the acceptance of their coalition demands that are expected to impose darkness on 88% of Israeli society?

President Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence and one of the Founding Fathers of the American Nation, argued that democracy and the sanctification of the past are incompatible. The core of democracy is the promotion and nurturing of the present and the future. Therefore, those who seek to impose on society the values of the past are undermining democracy. In this field, Haredi society did not meet the challenge presented by Jabotinsky in the article mentioned above, in which he wrote: "There are those who are in the camp and those outside the camp ... Why should we miss such partners, what is the use of their participation, as long as there is no common language, and there is no common ideal, and what need do we have for such burden on our tiny boat?" But it must be remembered that the situation has turned on its head, and the ultra-Orthodox are now the camp that will grow stronger as the liberal democratic camp is becoming a minority.

People behave in accordance with the reward given to them, and therefore the budgets that the Netanyahu government recently granted the ultra-Orthodox, strengthen their separatist tendencies and prevent the development of positive trends which have not yet been translated into a substantive change. The current Netanyahu government is one of the most favorable governments to Haredi society. An analysis published by the journalist Adrian Filot in 'Calcalist' (March 5, 2008) shows that the total value of the demands of the ultra-Orthodox parties that the government agreed to - whether intended solely for the benefit of the ultra-Orthodox sector or those intended to benefit the general public - is 19.7 billion NIS.

Since its formation in 2015, the government, headed by the Finance Ministry led by Moshe Kahlon, has agreed to budget demands of the ultra-Orthodox parties culminating to 4.2 billion NIS, to the benefit of the ultra-Orthodox public only: from the subsidy budget of ultra-Orthodox yeshivas, reaching a record of 1.3 billion NIS, to 2.2 billion NIS to ultra-Orthodox education networks, and 107 million NIS to the budget of Agudat Israel's independent education network, which is

expected to reach 1.4 billion NIS; Shas' Ma'ayan Torah Education network will receive an additional 104 million NIS, and its budget will reach 800 million NIS. During its term of office, the government raised the yeshiva budget three times, and in 2019 it is expected to reach an all-time high of 1.27 billion NIS. To this must be added the fact that the ultra-Orthodox managed to curb the struggle to reduce the use of cash in the economy, which costs the state about 500 million NIS a year in loss of income. They also blocked the cuts in child allowances, which in effect gives them a budget increase of 1.5 billion NIS.

If Israeli governments continue to ignore the long-term trends, and Haredi society will continue to adhere to the values and approach that characterize it today towards Zionism, Labor, the IDF, women, minorities, democracy and the rule of law, the State of Israel "cannot bear up" as is written in the book of Proverbs. It will collapse and will become a fundamentally different state in its essence and purpose from what was the vision of the founding fathers of Zionism. Israel's challenge today is to connect ultra-Orthodox society to the state. Poverty figures prove that the policy of the ultra-Orthodox ghetto is collapsing. It is beneficial only for the yeshivas and politicians - who hold the channels of power, status, influence and money - but not for the Haredi public and the future of the state. Israeli governments should stop granting the ultra-Orthodox the budgets that strengthen their separatism and instead transfer budgets to projects that will integrate them into society as a productive and contributing factor. For 71 years this was not done. It's time to start.

How to Make an Israeli Arab's Joke about Netanyahu's 'Concessions' Come True – Haa`retz, July 26, 2019

One hope as we head toward a repeat election is that a Jewish-Arab partnership will arise that could help form a different government. Ayman Odeh's amusing speech in the Knesset before it was dissolved in late May, in which he listed the "offers" he had received from Benjamin Netanyahu in the prime minister's bid to obtain 61 MKs to form a coalition, can teach us something about the chances for a Jewish-Arab partnership and the necessary compromises.

Odeh began with Netanyahu's "promise" to leave the West Bank. This position aligns with his party's platform in the previous Knesset, which says: "The Joint List is fighting for a just peace in the region based on the UN resolutions ... ending the occupation of all the territories conquered in 1967, dismantling all the settlements and the racist separation wall, and establishing a sovereign independent Palestinian state in the June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital".

Ehud Barak, Benny Gantz and Yair Lapid must realize that this is a necessary condition for Joint List's participation in a government formed by them, or at least for supporting that government from outside the coalition. It wouldn't be hard for Odeh to forgo the rest of the demands: He would have to adopt the land swaps that the PLO has agreed to, which don't include Israeli Arabs and would allow a majority of the settlers to remain under Israeli sovereignty. In any case, the separation barrier would be dismantled and rebuilt on the new agreed-on border.

This first demand illustrates Israeli Arabs' priorities; first, resolving the conflict between Israel and their people in the territories. This would let them concentrate on the fight for equal civil rights and dissolve the tension that Israeli Arabs currently face between "my people" and "my state".

Odeh then cited a "promise" to annul the law that declares Israel the nation-state of the Jewish people. In this case, Barak, Gantz and Lapid have already expressed a willingness to go halfway. They promise to amend the nation-state law to include the value of equality for all Israeli citizens. If so, they would also have to change the wording from "the development of Jewish settlement" to "the development of settlement for all citizens".

Bear in mind that since the state's founding, 700 new communities have been built in Israel, not one of them for Arabs. There are now 930 communities where Arab residents are essentially not permitted, while

the jurisdictions of the Arab communities have not been expanded at all. Also, the nation-state law would have to be amended, in the spirit of the first "promise" above, to say that Jerusalem, without the Arab neighborhoods in the east, is Israel's capital, and that Arabic is an official language.

Odeh would also have to agree to a declaration stating that Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people in which the Jews are exercising their natural right to self-determination, just as the Palestinian people will realize their right to self-determination in a future State of Palestine. With the resolution of the conflict and his demand for equality, Odeh would have to drop the demand in his party's platform for "canceling the mandatory draft of Druze Arabs and rejecting all plans for a military draft and national service for Arab young people".

In his speech, Odeh cited consent for national and not just civic equality, though he did not elaborate. Here, too, in the party platform, we see that the reference is to "full equality, national and civil, for Palestinian Arabs in Israel ... and a demand that this group be recognized as a national minority with the right to self-management in the fields of culture, education and religion".

In other words, his aim is not for Israel to become a binational state or power-sharing democracy, as the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee demanded a decade ago. Odeh and friends appear to recognize international law and understand that when a people dwells inside a state, it does not have the right to establish its own state if that means the breakup of the existing state. This is because the principle of respecting a state's territorial integrity and sovereignty outweighs the right to self-determination. Therefore, for example, the Catalonians don't have a right to break up Spain, and the Kurds don't have a right to break up Iraq or Turkey.

Odeh concluded with Netanyahu's "promise" to "recognize the Nakba and end the historical injustice". Here, too, he did not elaborate, but we can assume that recognition of the Nakba mainly relates to the refugee issue. The party platform is enlightening here as well: "a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem that ensures the right of return on the basis of the UN resolution".

There is nothing here that would alter the Palestinian and Arab position presented in negotiations with Israel and in the Arab Peace Initiative: absorbing refugees in the State of Palestine, not in Israel, with additional compensation. Odeh probably also had in mind compensation for the "internal refugees" – Arabs who fled or were expelled but remained in

Israel at the end of the War of Independence. This community was not discussed in the negotiations between Israel and the PLO.

At first glance, the challenge appears too large, but if both sides moved toward each other without a substantial concession on key principles, a government could be established with a basis unlike any other during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Barak made a first step when he took responsibility for the events of October 2000. A similar intention can be seen among the Arabs in the Zionist parties. It remains unclear what Gantz, Lapid, Amir Peretz and Odeh will do.

Have We Reached the End of the Secular Zionist Dream? – Haaretz, September 11, 2019

A perception has taken root in Israeli society that canonical, secular Zionist and nationalist, messianic religious Zionism can live side by side in this country. The two are perceived as nuances of one shared ideology, like the differences between spiritual cultural Zionism and political Zionism, or between them and practical Zionism. However, the two are actually different national visions that contradict one another and compete over the determination of the character, identity and regime in the State of Israel; moreover, their ability to coexist is conditional upon the identity of the controlling worldview.

Five fundamental characteristics differentiate the two. First, canonical-secular Zionism saw the need of the Jewish people for a safe shelter as the motivation for establishing the state. "Let sovereignty have granted us over a portion of the globe adequate to meet our rightful national requirements; we will attend to the rest," Theodor Herzl wrote in "The Jewish State." Nationalist-messianic Zionism, however, sees the divine commandment to fulfill the biblical promise as the motivation for establishing of the state. "We settled ... because we were commanded to inherit the land that God Almighty gave to our forefathers", Menachem Felix, a leader of Gush Emunim, declared in a hearing at the High Court of Justice regarding the settlement of Elon Moreh in 1979.

The second characteristic: Canonical Zionism saw in its vision of Jewish settlement a Jewish majority next to an Arab minority. "I consider it utterly impossible to eject the Arabs from Palestine," Ze'ev Jabotinsky declared in "The Iron Wall" in 1923. Messianic Zionism welcomes settlement in a biblical fashion: "As it is written, 'And you shall take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have assigned the land to you to possess.' About which Rashi interpreted to mean 'You shall take possession of the land from its inhabitants and then you will settle in it,'" Felix explained.

The third characteristic: Canonical Zionism saw international legitimacy as the political legal foundation for establishing the state and sought to rely on the "natural rights" to self-determination that every nation has. "By virtue of our national and historic right and on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly," David Ben-Gurion read in the Declaration of Independence, on May 14, 1948. But Messianic Zionism negates this and claims the land on the basis of "historic rights" while denying political, spatial and demographic changes that have transpired in the Land of Israel since the destruction of the Second Temple. "It is important to

remember that the UN decision is not the source of our right to Israel, but rather the Bible and the promise of the Holy One, Blessed Be He," Bezalel Smotrich declared two years ago. Rabbi Shlomo Aviner added this year that "the land lay fallow before Zionist settlement".

The fourth characteristic: Leaders of canonical Zionism sought to set borders while considering the future state – mainly in relation to its economic needs. "If we seek to set the borders of the Land of Israel of today, mainly if we see it not only as the heritage of the Jewish past but rather as the future Jewish country – we cannot take into full account the ideal borders, which were promised to us according to tradition, which are too broad given the conditions of today," Ben-Gurion and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi wrote in their 1918 work "The Land of Israel: Past and Future".

In the eyes of nationalist-messianic Zionism, the borders are the heart of the matter. Every time canonical Zionism sought to decide between its three supreme goals – a Jewish majority, democracy and the entire Mandatory Land of Israel – in favor of the first two, messianic Zionism resorted to extreme nationalism and belligerence to prevent this. The first time the Zionist movement accepted the idea of partitioning the land, in the wake of the Peel Commission Report in 1937, in order to establish a state in part of the land and to absorb European Jewry, members of the Mizrahi movement declared: "The Jewish people will never accept any attempt to shrink the historic borders of the Land of Israel, as was promised to the people of Israel, by divine word".

The Arabs' rejection of partition and the British withdrawal postponed a decision on the matter. A decade later, when canonical Zionism accepted the decision to partition the land and establish the State of Israel, Jews gathered in Rome for a prayer of thanksgiving in front of the Arch of Titus, a symbol of the destruction of the Land of Israel. At the Great Synagogue in Tel Aviv, they wrote a prayer of national thanksgiving to the nations of the world "who voted on the decisive day for the failing one among the nations, to give it a name and the remainder of the inheritance of its forefathers" – but the Mizrahi movement rejected the partition vote.

The agreements on separation and disengagement of forces after the Yom Kippur War gave rise to Gush Emunim, based on the declaration of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook that, "for Judea and Samaria, for the Golan Heights ... someone asked me if I wanted a 'civil war' ... It won't come to pass without a war! With our bodies! All of us!" The peace agreement with Egypt gave rise to the Judea, Samaria and Gaza Regional Council, which at its founding convention in 1981 asserted: "The council considers any proposal whose purpose is to hand over parts of the Land of Israel to a foreign sovereign ... an illegal act".

This was the impetus for the activity of the Jewish underground, which even tried to blow up mosques on Jerusalem's Temple Mount to stop the process. This was also the approach of Rabbi Shlomo Goren, the late chief rabbi of Israel. In 1993 he rejected the legitimate right of the international community and elected institutions in Israel to give up territory on behalf of other values, such as achieving peace, saying, "No national or international law has the power to change our status, our rights".

All these historical decisions were implemented, as were interim accords between Israel and the Palestinians, and the disengagement from the Gaza Strip – despite heavy pressure from followers of nationalist-messianic Zionism. That was mainly due to the support of the public and the determination of prime ministers, who thought separation from the Palestinians would keep Israel democratic and help maintain its Jewish majority.

And the fifth characteristic: Canonical-secular Zionism saw Israel as a country whose character and regime were democratic and liberal, as Ben-Gurion declared at the founding of the state: "The State of Israel will be ... based on freedom, justice and peace ... will ensure complete equality of social and political rights ... will guarantee freedom of religion ...". In the eyes of messianic Zionism, the democratic regime is nothing more than a platform for fulfilling their vision.

"There is no ingathering of exiles, no revival of the state and its security, but only initial stages ... we have before us tremendous additional goals that are an integral part of Zionism, and first and foremost: establishing 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation,' bringing the Shekhina (the divine presence) back to Zion, founding the kingdom of the House of David and building the Temple – as a key point for Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) in the kingdom of God," wrote settler leader Hanan Porat in the introduction to the book "Against All Odds".

Until recently the political system in Israel was led by canonical-secular Zionism, and the reigning ideology, which defines what is good and what is bad, gave preference to democracy, a Jewish majority, security and membership in the family of nations – not Greater Israel. In that context it enabled nationalist-messianic Zionism to challenge the existing order.

Today, due to the revolution undergone by the Likud movement, the successor of Herut and the Revisionist movement, by adopting the ideology of national-messianic Zionism and joining forces with it – the order of priorities in the three supreme goals of Zionism has changed. Likud together with the nationalist-messianic parties, headed by

Benjamin Netanyahu, Naftali Bennett and Ayelet Shaked, are leading the battle to undermine the Supreme Court, the gatekeepers, the rule of law, civil and human rights, Israel's relationship with Diaspora Jewry, the status and image of the country – and all for the sake of the illusion of Greater Israel, in which there is no Jewish majority at present.

"We have to mark the dream", declared Bennett in October 2016, "and the dream is that Judea and Samaria will be part of the sovereign Land of Israel." In September 2017, Bezalel Smotrich said: "There is room here for the definition and fulfillment of national aspirations of only one people: the Jewish people ... National aspirations? Palestinians? Not here. Not at our expense." And last July the prime minister summed up: "We will go on to the next stage, gradual Israeli sovereignty in the territories of Judea and Samaria".

Next week's election is likely to bring about the death of the dual identities, Jewish and democratic, of the State of Israel – in light of the policy adopted by the government in connection with the diplomatic process for separation from the Palestinians; the status of religion in the state and in politics; minority rights; the rights and status of women; the status of civic-social organizations; and the right to engage in a public battle over all those things.

These trends are being advanced by politicians who interpret democracy as the right of the majority to determine every issue. They reject the democratic principle that the majority can rule only on condition that it guarantees the rights of the minority and the individual – the objective of democracy. The world is seen as an arena in which the prevailing logic is a zero-sum game. Less for the other camp means more for my camp; anyone who doesn't support me is by necessity against me. There is no room for those who are different, both socially and politically. This is an anti-democratic government campaign, which believes: If you don't succeed to convince others – then vilify, silence and outlaw.

For over 100 years canonical-secular Zionism was dominant in Israeli society. It enabled the existence and development of its rival: nationalist-messianic Zionism. Today, when nationalist-messianic Zionism is gradually taking over the birthright, thanks to public apathy, it considers shared existence as *Shatnez* (a prohibited mixture), demonstrates zero tolerance and declares that canonical-secular Zionism must be destroyed.

When Shlomo Goren was asked in an interview with the daily *Yedioth Ahronoth* on April 16, 1965, how he saw the State of Israel in terms of the vision of the messianic redemption of the Jewish people, he said:

"Halakha [religious law] rejects the possibility of an interim situation in the historical process, and recognizes only three periods: the first, from the conquest of the land by Joshua bin Nun until the destruction of the Temple; the second, the period of exile; the third, the messianic period. I believe that we are now at the beginning of this period ... I believe with total faith that we will be privileged to see the building of the Temple".

The results of the upcoming election, more than all its predecessors, and the government that will be formed, will prove whether the ideological war between canonical-secular Zionism and nationalist-messianic Zionist has been decided. In such a case, those believing in canonical Zionism will be required to give up their dream, and only one of three possibilities – which already taking shape at differing intensities – will be left for them: a struggle that is likely to lead to a civil war as well, emigration from the State of Israel or life as *Anusim* (the forcibly converted).

Don't Count on the Ultra-Orthodox - Haaretz, September 12, 2019

Avigdor Lieberman along with "Blue and White" party leaders, have announced they will strive to establish a secular unity government. Presumably, if the conditions are created, they will continue to treat the ultra-Orthodox parties as the deciding factor of the coalition building, who's power will be determined according to the political and budgetary conditions proposed by the blocs - left or right - to allow them to pursue their social isolationism.

This assumption is incorrect as it ignores a process that ultra-Orthodox society has undergone - and especially its members and ministers on its behalf - during Benjamin Netanyahu's years in office.

The ultra-Orthodox public, who for centuries, his consciousness has been shaped, in the diaspora and in Israel, by its religious beliefs - has experienced a transformation. The favorable governments, the friction with the coalition members who run a nationalist discourse, the cultivation of the ultra-Orthodox population in the West Bank by the government, and the deaths of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef and Rabbi Elazar Menachem Shach, who held moderate positions in the political sphere (the first allowed the return of territories for peace and the second resisted the establishment of settlements) - All of these, created the conditions to encourage the introduction of the messianic-nationalist ideology on which Netanyahu's governments is based, to the ultra-Orthodox society, and to the development of the ultra-Orthodox-nationalist group within it. Priorities in ultra-Orthodox society - the Torah of Israel and the people of Israel before the land of Israel - are shifting in a similar order to that of the nationalist-Messianic society, Rabbi Kook's adherent, who gives priority to the land of Israel over the Torah of Israel and the people of Israel.

The process most indicative of this is the attitude of the ultra-Orthodox society to the "three oaths" - a nickname referring to the teaching of Hazal in the Babylonian Talmud (tractate Ketubot) in their Midrash on the verses in the Song of Songs. According to the Midrash, God has sworn Israel and the nations regarding exile and Sliyah to Israel as follows: "One, that Israel should not storm the wall [Rashi interprets: forcefully]. Two, the Holy One adjured Israel not to rebel against the nations of the world. Three, the Holy One adjured the nations that they would not oppress Israel too much".

According to various rabbis, such as Zvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook and Yitzhak Isaac Halevi Herzog, the prohibition to "storm the wall"

(prohibition of immigration to Israel by force) is repealed when there is a sign of a "visit" of the Almighty on Israel. The Almighty may "visit" the people of Israel in one of four ways: the first, the support of the international community. The Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, in which an international commitment was made to establish a national home for the Jewish people in Israel, removed the central obstacle of the rebellion against the nations. The second mode of the Almighty "visit" is in an awakening in the people of Israel to return to the land of Israel. Once the people of Israel are determined to immigrate to Israel, the oath is repealed. According to these rabbis, the Zionist movement and the various Aliyah's prove this determination, although the historical facts show that most of the Jewish people preferred not to immigrate to the land of Israel until World War II. The third way of "visit" is that the nations of the world violated their oath, when they pursued persecution, pogroms, riots, holocaust, and thus repealed the oath of validity. The fourth and most important way is the revelation of the signs of the "revealed end", namely the revelation of the end and the coming of redemption.

This fourth "visit" is the heart of Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook's "Kookism" and especially that of his son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook. The latter was the spiritual father of Gush Emunim and the Messianic settlement enterprise in the Territories, who saw the secular state as an instrument for bringing salvation by gaining control and sovereignty throughout the Land of Israel.

The Balfour Declaration was the signal for "the revealed end," as Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook stated in 1917 in his London speech: "Atchalta De'Geulah [the beginning of the redemption] is undoubtedly coming about before us... and the eyes of every imbued with a spirit of knowledge were always risen, for the hand of God directs all actions of generations, will amaze us with its wonders to praise this beginning to great heights".

Since then, the signs of "the revealed end" have been noted by the Rabbi's followers who consider themselves "imbued with a spirit of knowledge". For example, Bezalel Smotrich explained two years ago that "the 1947 United Nations decision is the expression of God's will and the way he chose to fulfill it in our generation." His followers further explain Israel's victories in the War of Independence and the Six Day War as the sings of the time of redemption.

It seems that some in the ultra-Orthodox public are adopting the belief that the oaths have expired over time. Although all nations of the world oppose Israeli occupation and do not see the West Bank as part of the State of Israel, the percentage of ultra-Orthodox in Israel living across the Green Line is 43%, and within a decade it is expected to grow to about

50%. That is, even though the repeal of the oath prohibiting “rebellion against the nations” is not valid beyond the 1967 lines, because the territories are considered to be occupied by the United Nations, the Arab world and the Palestinians - the ultra-Orthodox public there is growing, and its housing shortage in the State of Israel is not enough to explain the oath’s breach.

How can this be explained in the context of the Nationalist-Messianic interpretation? Contrary to the explanation of Satmar’s Rabbi, Joel Teitelbaum, according to whom the Holocaust was a punishment for violating the oath by the Jewish people in the context of the Zionist movement and the establishment of the State of Israel, the explanation of the Nationalist-Messianic Society relies on the oath which appears in the Gemara: “That the end (Ketz) should not be revealed”. That is to say, acts that will lead to salvation should be avoided, such as failure to immigrate to Israel even though God desires our ascension.

Therefore, according to these interpretations, the Holocaust occurred because, while the High Providence opened the gates through the Balfour Declaration and showed its desire for immigration, the Jews did not immigrate to Israel. In doing so, they violated the above oath and were punished. Therefore, today, the people of Israel must understand that “You cannot settle in learning Gemara. You have to go out into the field. There, especially there, the religion will be revealed, holiness will be revealed ...” (Gideon Arn’s book, “Kokism”). That is to say, one must go and settle throughout the Land of Israel. Here we must ask the ultra-Orthodox who live beyond the Green Line, is their living there, not a provocation to the nations of the world, as Rabbi Shach stated? Does the breach of oath by the people of Israel not exempt the nations of the world from their oaths? Does this not, in their logic, justify imposing boycotts and penalties on Israel?

According to surveys conducted by Prof. Tamar Herman of the Israeli Democracy Institute, 68% of Torah Judaism supporters support the application of Israeli sovereignty to the Territories, and the support of all the ultra-Orthodox for the two-state solution is only 11% - the lowest among all political groups in Israel. Don’t they understand that annexation means the cancellation of the Oslo Accords and Palestinian recognition of the State of Israel, and a complete disregard for 138 countries recognizing the State of Palestine on the 1967 lines - and thus a jarring rebellion against the nations, which would inevitably result in punishment?

To this should be added whether these positions originate in the belief that the Trump administration’s declarations, such as the statement by

the US ambassador to Israel David Friedman about the possibility of annexing parts of the West Bank, recognition of the Golan annex, transfer of the US embassy to Jerusalem and continued Netanyahu’s leadership are sings of “the revealed end”? The answer seems to be positive. In a May 2019 poll, 72% of Shas and Torah Judaism voters - more than all other parties - expressed agreement with the sentence: “Netanyahu’s victory in the elections shows that the public wants him as prime minister, and therefore the investigations against him should be stopped”.

If the ultra-Orthodox want to understand the process they are involved in, it would be appropriate for them to look at the answer of Isaiah Leibowitz in November 1979 to Naomi Shemer’s question, if he considers Gush Emunim (Rabbi Kook’s followers) to be the group that could lead the revolution in making Israel a Jewish state in its constitution and way of life. First, Leibowitz reiterated that a state is a governing mechanism and only humans have a way of life. Second, he said, “Gush Emunim is not at all interested in Jews and Judaism, but only in the state. It is not about Judaism and the Jewish way of life of Jews it struggles, but only on the governing interest of the state. Therefore, it also goes hand in hand with unbelievers - mainly Sabbath desecrators, treifa eaters, paramour of Nidah and prostitutes - so that together they can take over foreign land and a foreign nation”.

It seems that the process of change that has taken place in most of ultra-Orthodox society - despite its religious contradictions - creates a reality that is comfortable for the ultra-Orthodox. In another survey conducted by the Gutman Center for Public Opinion and Policy Studies in 2019, it was found that 94% of the ultra-Orthodox - more than any other group - prefer to live in Israel, and most importantly, they oppose any change in the status quo. Only 10% of Torah Judaism voters and 30% of Shas voters supported the establishment of a unity government of Likud and Blue and White. These positions, on the one hand, allows for the majority needed to fulfill the will of the Messianic right, led by the Likud, to annex the West Bank and create a different Jewish state than the existing one; and on the other hand, they greatly reduce the possibility that the ultra-Orthodox will agree - not even for an inflated sum - to participate in a center-left government that seeks to advance a political solution, which will inevitably involve a concession of territories.

Bennett's Suicide Attack – Haaretz, January 19, 2020

Defense Minister Naftali Bennett's announcement at a The Kohelet Policy Forum conference regarding the initiation of a mechanism for establishing settlements in Area C, indicates that since launching his plan for annexing Area C in 2012, he has learned nothing and forgotten nothing. All his words on the matter are a series of continuous lies and deceptions, meant to justify a messianic move that lacks any political and practical feasibility.

Unlike what Bennett told EU ambassadors at a meeting two weeks ago - Area C is not a "State of Israel territory" but occupied one. Thus, reiterated in 2005, the Israeli Supreme Court - which is itself a target for defrauding by Bennett, Ayelet Shaked and their friends - "First, the law, jurisdiction and administration of the State of Israel do not apply in these areas. They were not "annexed" to Israel. Second, the applicable legal regime in these areas is governed by public international law dealing with belligerent occupation".

The same goes for the common misconception about "state lands." These do not belong to the State of Israel, but to the state that is to be established in these territories. Israel's duty is to preserve the land until that moment comes, and it is not within its power to annex it. According to the United Nations resolutions of November 29, 2012, and November 29, 1947, these will be the territories of the Palestinian state.

Bennett also told the ambassadors that he wanted to curb "the Palestinian takeover of Area C. That this is an orderly and well-funded plan to rob us of land". Rob who? Had the Minister contacted the Coordinator of Operations in the Territories, he would have invariably informed him that 52 percent of Area C is Palestinian privately-owned land that Israel recognizes. The rest of the area is "state land", and it is largely used for IDF firing exercises areas in the Judean Desert and in the Jordan Valley. The minister has a peculiar claim, since his words imply that the Palestinians are stealing their own land, that is duly registered as theirs.

The Coordinator of Operations in the Territories could at the same time make it clear to the Minister that, according to the Interim Agreement, the status of the small Palestinian villages in Area C is different than he believes. Had he bothered to read the binding interim agreement, as long as it had not been abolished, he would have found - in the Appendix "List of the small villages in Area B" - that no less than 83 such villages are in fact Area B status.

In other words, Bennett wants to annex Palestinian villages that are

in Area B, which have been transferred to the Palestinian Authority's jurisdiction. He also would have learned that 24 personal and functional civilian powers in respect of Palestinian residents of Area C were transferred to the Palestinian Authority 25 years ago. A simple aerial photograph would have revealed to the minister another fact - most of the construction in Area C is a product of the inevitable "overflow" of construction in villages bounded by Areas A and B 25 years ago. Most of it on privately owned Palestinian land. One can assume that the Minister has heard of the concept of an increase of population and of the natural increase in the Palestinian population. Perhaps he will recognize that 25 years ago, when the Interim Agreement was signed, only 115,000 Israelis lived in the West Bank, and there are currently 427,000. 80% of the population growth is a product of natural growth. In addition, the Coordinator should remind the Minister that Israel has undertaken to transfer most of Area C to the PA within 18 months. It began the process, but it was completely discontinued in a 1998 decision by the first Netanyahu government. Until then, Israel has also pledged that it will review security arrangements every six months, "with due consideration of Palestinian plans for the establishment of economic ventures".

Bennett and Shaked's call to annex C areas shows how little they value the Israeli public's wisdom. Unlike the ridiculous video released by the two titled "The Stability Initiative" - with Areas A, B and C presented as three perfect rectangles - the reality on the ground shows that Area A and B are made up of no less than 169 "islands" devoid of any territorial continuity, separated by dozens of corridors under the status of Area C, where Israeli settlements are scattered. Any attempt to create a road system that connects these areas, as Bennett suggested in his plan, will require tens of billions of dollars in Israeli investment.

Presumably Bennett does not seek to annex Area C in order to leave them beyond the security fence. That is, Bennett's Israel will have to dismantle the fence, where more than 20 billion NIS of Israeli taxpayer money has been invested to date, and build a new fence - this time along the new border, which will stretch for about 1,800 km (!) - at a cost of 32 billion NIS, and will be maintained at a fixed annual cost of 4 billion NIS, all from Israeli taxpayer money, of course.

Bennett also pledged at the time, in a television interview, that he would not take the land of the Palestinians in the annexed territory and allow them to go out to cultivate the land in Israel. This means building hundreds of agricultural gates at the cost of hundreds of millions of dollars and assigning dozens of Armies fighting companies to manage these gates daily.

There is no underestimating the nationalist-messianic determination of Bennett and his team of aides, who he chose to surround himself with, and dismiss it on the grounds that this was an election ploy for his voters. Approved programs, even on very shaky legal basis, are just waiting for the right time to run under the title "An Appropriate Zionist Response." Until then, the determined team surrounding the minister, with his full backing, and in complete paralysis of the prime minister, will make the overall mechanism it proposes to establish the settlements in Area C to the actual annexation of Area C.

In the current era of Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, there is no telling what the magnitude of the security, political and legal implications Israel will face from the Palestinians, the Arab world and the international community, in response to these moves. At any rate, Bennett and his Nationalist- messianic followers are unmoved by this. Bennett sees the regional and international situation today as an opportunity to be exploited. We will all pay the price - the blind, the foolish and the stupid, as well as the handful of sober.

The War for Democracy – May 6, 2020, On the left side magazine

There is an internal war in Israel. Not a military coup, and not yet a civil war. This is a war for regime and political culture. It is a struggle between two worldviews in relation to the political framework and the rules that apply to its participants, and in relation to the role and status of the citizen in a democratic society.

The struggle has broken out between a minority of citizens, who are fighting for the existence of a liberal democracy and the rule of law - and the majority of subjects, which is working to create a new set of rules moving between ethnocracy and dictatorship;

Between those who fight to maintain the conditions that will allow any political minority to become a majority and form a government (because a practical possibility of a change of government is a necessary condition for democracy) - and those who, for the most part, work to build a governmental and social reality that perpetuates their control;

Between those who fight for a pluralistic culture, rights for minorities, education for an "open Judaism" which sees human beings as the source of authority to manage their lives and defines Judaism as their national identity, which gives preference to present and future generations, and sees Israel as a part of the family of nations - and those who

accept the "Jewish people", the "biblical homeland", and the "divine promise" as supreme and indisputable values, for which all means are permissible — occupation, discrimination, governmental corruption, violence, and incitement; Believers in "closed Judaism" that gives God the source of authority to manage their lives, that defines Judaism as their religious identity, that gives primacy to past generations, that bases its culture on the religious sources, and sees Israel as "a people that shall dwell alone".

It is a struggle between the camp that seeks to ensure the civil rights of each and every citizen of the country, in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, and to uphold the rule of law over all systems and individuals in society. That sees democracy as it is called - Demos Kartus: the rule of the people - which is conducted according to the decision of the majority while preserving the rights of the minority. A camp that does not interpret its citizenship only by voting at the ballot box, but by an ongoing promise to express its position within the law. This camp opposes anything that goes beyond this definition of democracy.

On the other hand, there is the camp that believes that Israel is under existential threat (Iran, the Arabs, terrorist organizations, Israeli Arabs,

the Corona, the anti-Semites) and in a constant state of emergency, which justifies the occupation and the denial of Palestinians national rights, justifies contempt for international decisions and international institutions, justifies a disproportionate violation of the basic rights of minorities and vulnerable groups. Anyone who opposes this madness of a people under siege inevitably becomes a “traitor” and a “fifth column,” who is sentenced to deportation to Gaza or death from Corona. This imaginary state of survival needs a “strong leader” whose election by the Jewish majority frees it from obedience to the law, from telling the truth, from personal example, from fulfilling obligations, from criminal proceedings, and from anything that interferes with his path to demotatorship.

Three election campaigns this year indicate that no camp seeks a compromise, but an unconditional win. One camp fights for the existing political framework, which organizes the power relations and diversity of opinions in society in a democratic spirit. The other struggled to change it. The propaganda videos and speeches of the transition Prime Minister and his ministers are not a lip service to the election, but the construction and institutionalization of the new system.

Netanyahu orchestrates over the horribly cohesive and disciplined “subjects” camp in a sober and planned way. In the last decade, Netanyahu has placed his “vassals” to take down the foundations of liberal democracy, and the political and legal culture that governs it.

The worse is yet to come. There is a possibility that the “subjects” camp will reach a victory and turn Israel into an “Israel-bluff democracy”. If the power of this camp increases, the cynical use made so far by Netanyahu and his emissaries of the rules of democracy may give way to yet more anti-democratic and violent moves in various arenas in the struggle against the citizens of the country.

Give Separation a Chance – The Israeli Peace Camp In the 21st Century – From Peace to Separation - June 25, 2020

In Israel, the “peace camp” is a collective moniker for a variety of organizations and activists who all believe it is in Israel’s strategic interest to resolve the Israeli-Arab- Palestinian conflict, as this will improve security, the economy and social development, and ensure the country remains Jewish and democratic. The camp’s heyday was in the 1990s, under the umbrella idea of “two states for two peoples” – Israelis and Palestinians living side by side and cooperating on a broad range of issues. A tiny minority within the camp believed that forming a single state in all Mandatory Palestine and welcoming refugees back to it was the best solution.

Some 25 years after the Oslo Accords, Israel and the Palestinians have failed to reach a permanent agreement – despite talks at Camp David in 2000, in Taba in 2001 and Annapolis in 2007 – this goal seems further away than ever. The current relationship between the two parties is based on the 1995 Interim Agreement. Due to shared interests, this agreement centered on security and economic coordination. By now, mutual distrust, the stalled negotiations, Europe’s weakness in the face of a growing right wing, civil wars in the Arab world and Trump’s leadership have combined to drive the Israeli “peace camp” into an ideological shift: from seeking a peace agreement with the Palestinians, to bilateral or unilateral separation from the Palestinians in the West Bank. This separation would center on security arrangements, as a temporary stopgap until a permanent agreement is reached, or as a new state of affairs that may last many years. At the same time, ideas such as a federation, a confederation or a single state in the entire area are gaining traction among Israelis.

The Four Faces of the Israeli “Peace Camp”

Israel’s “peace camp” consists of dozens of organizations, nonprofits, foundations and centers that cannot all be mentioned here, although omission in no way indicates the merits of their work. They can broadly be classified into four groups, based on their approach to the key issue – resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Within this rough division, various nuances are detailed further on. It is also worth bearing in mind that within every organization, members and activists hold varying opinions. In addition, some of these nonprofits focus on civil rights and the human rights of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories; while they maintain working ties with the leading organizations, they do not engage in political activity themselves. Others are ‘niche’ NGOs devoted

to a single issue.

The Israeli Peace Camp can be broadly divided to four groups of organizations according to their approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The first group of organizations supports the formula of “two states for two peoples” and ending the occupation. It is spearheaded by the Geneva Initiative and Peace Now organizations. In 2003, the Geneva Initiative published a detailed outline for a permanent agreement formulated by unofficial Israeli and Palestinian actors; since then, both parties to the initiative have worked in unique collaboration to advocate for a permanent agreement on both sides. Peace Now has largely adopted the basic tenets of the initiative but focuses on ending the occupation, much like fellow members of this group. Currently notable among these are Breaking the Silence (veteran soldiers raising awareness about daily reality in the Occupied Territories and highlighting the moral price of military control over a civilian population), Yesh Din (working to defending human rights of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories), B’Tselem (also using legal means to defend the rights of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories), and Machsom Watch (women promoting freedom of movement for Palestinians). The organizations in this group support the two-state solution, largely according to the parameters that served as the basis for peace talks, which rely on international resolutions – primarily 242 and 338 – and the 2000 Arab League peace initiative.

The power of these organizations lies in their independent research, conducted by likeminded academics or independent researchers and published on various platforms. They invest heavily both in social media and in field activities such as demonstrations, conferences, joint seminars, tours, lectures in Israel and abroad, press articles and interviews, and appearances on international stages.

The second group of organizations works to establish broad coalitions in the Israeli society that reach beyond the traditional “peace camp” of the 1990s and is headed by Women Wage Peace and “Darkenu” (Our Way). The former refrains from presenting an action plan or support a particular solution. This intentional ambiguity allows women with a wide range of identities to unite: right, center or left; religious and secular; Jewish, Arab, Druze and Bedouin; young and old; more and less privileged. Women Wage Peace are an especially active grassroots movement. They hold conferences, marches and assemblies, and also promote legislation to further a political solution. Darkenu, meanwhile, champions national unity and the “moderate majority”, calling for a government that will work towards a political solution to the conflict without specifying a

plan. This movement, too, holds activities such as rallies and seminars.

The third group advocates for “separation now and peace later”. Its most notable proponent is the organization Commanders for Israel’s Security, who operate differently from their forebears, the Council for Peace and Security. This movement supports a two-state solution but does not believe it is feasible at present. Despite detailed plans concerning borders and security in the two-state scenario, these former top security officials believe the most pressing need is to curb current trends concerning settlement expansion and annexation of the West Bank, to strengthen the governance of the Palestinian Authority, and to create the necessary political conditions for renewing negotiations by engaging moderate Arab states and the US. Commanders for Israel’s Security is not a grassroots movement. It focuses primarily on social media, campaigns and rallies, and strictly refrains from cooperating with Palestinians.

The fourth group believes in “one homeland”. It is best represented by the organization “A Land for All”, which stresses the confederative aspects that must be taken into account in implementing the two-state solution based on the 1967 borders. This Jewish-Arab movement publicizes its ideas in conferences, meetings and websites, but has not presented a detailed plan for fulfilling its principles.

Within every group there are other, smaller nonprofits that also work abroad, primarily in the US. There are also research centers and think tanks that engage with various aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The largest of these is the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), which publishes an annual review on Israeli-Palestinian relations, periodically issues studies and position papers, and holds conferences on the subject. An enduring and especially interesting institution is the Economic Cooperation Foundation, which was behind the first steps taken towards the Oslo Accords, the Geneva Initiative, the Disengagement Plan, the Seam Zone, and others. The foundation has extensive and effective ties with the establishment in Israel, the US, Europe, Jordan, Egypt, with the Palestinians and others. The members of these various institutes mostly identify with the first or third groups of organizations.

The “peace camp” also has quite a few centers, such as the Peres Center for Peace, which run projects to develop Palestinian society and bring Israelis and Palestinians together. Another sub-group is nonprofits devoted solely to Jerusalem, such as Ir Amim and Terrestrial Jerusalem. These organizations focus on daily reality in the city in the context of the national conflict and tensions between communities. Their proposals for a permanent agreement relate to urban functioning and connecting between communities. Another notable player in the municipal context

is the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies.

Pulling in Different Directions

These four groups differ, first and foremost, in their belief whether the two-state solution is at all possible. Three conditions must exist for this solution to come about:

1. Separation must be physically feasible, based on the usual parameters (1967 borders with agreed land swaps, a demilitarized Palestinian state and added security arrangements, a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem and a special regime in the holy places, resettling refugees in Palestine and compensation).
2. It must be politically feasible on both sides;
3. Both Israeli and Palestinian societies must be willing to accept it.

The first group believes that creating two states and ending the occupation is physically possible, as Israel can evacuate 30,000 families, mostly from isolated settlements, and reabsorb them. However, they see no political feasibility, as Netanyahu's government refuses to resume negotiations and has convinced Israelis that there is "no partner" for peace on the Palestinian side. They invest in preparing both societies for the idea that there is "a partner" on the other side. As a rule, this group objects to a single state or to a "harsh" federative or confederative outline, given economic, social, security and cultural disparities between Israeli and Palestinian societies and the repercussions of more than a century of violence.

The second group, which seeks to build a broad coalition in Israel to advance a solution to the conflict, refrains from taking a clear stance on the two-state solution.

The third group, which calls for separation first, also believes this is physically possible. However, the split between the PLO and Hamas reduces the political feasibility of effective negotiations. This group is gravely concerned with the public opinion aspect, given the shift to the right in Israel and decline of trust in the Palestinian side. Therefore, it centers on curbing rightwing trends and enlisting the Arab world and the US administration to further the process. This group invests considerable effort in warning Israelis of the consequences if these trends reach the point of legally annexing parts of the West Bank, as this will eventually turn Israel into a bi-national or Arab state.

The fourth group believes that separation is physically impossible based on these parameters, especially regarding the evacuation of settlers. Its

objection to separation with or without an agreement is also a matter of principle: both nations are deeply connected to the whole of Mandatory Palestine and are entitled to free movement and habitation throughout the area.

Borders and Walls

Another point of contention is the Separation Barrier and security concerns. The barrier, most of which had been built between 2002 and 2007, is 500 kilometers long and runs mostly along or near the Green Line. It remains incomplete in the following key areas: East Jerusalem-Ma'ale Adumim, Gush Etzion and the southeastern Hebron Hills. The two 'fingers' of Ariel and Kedumim are also incomplete. The 'seam zone' (the area between the barrier and the Green Line) currently comprises only 4% of the West Bank.

Organizations in the first group have a complicated view of the barrier. They do not rule out the need for its construction, given the terror attacks during the second intifada, but criticize the route initially approved and the fact that it was built unilaterally and not as part of an agreement with the Palestinians. They do, however, recognize the barrier's advantage in demarcating a possible border between Israel and a future Palestinian state as part of a permanent agreement. Another consideration for these organization's support of the separation wall is that the route of the barrier undermines Israelis' motivation to move to the West Bank; both secular and ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) Israeli citizens do not wish to relocate to areas beyond the barrier.

The security experts of the third group are the most deeply engaged in the development of the barrier. In 2000-2002, members of the Council for Peace and Security were particularly vocal proponents of constructing the barrier, contrary to government and IDF opinion. More importantly, they played a key role in modifying the route to have it primarily address security concerns, and render it a possible alternative for a permanent border. Recently, the organization Commanders for Israel's Security (CIS) published its plan for the interim period titled "Security First". The plan calls on the government to immediately complete the barrier (without the "fingers" of Ariel and Kedumim) along a security-oriented route, in order to stop Palestinians from illegally entering Israel for work or to carry out attacks.

The second group is indifferent to this issue, while the fourth believes that a permanent agreement cannot include physical separation, as both peoples will eventually be allowed to reside and move freely throughout the area.

Gaza

Another divisive issue is the future of the Gaza Strip and the evaluation of the political processes around it over the past 15 years, namely the evacuation of the settlements in 2005 and the forceful takeover by Hamas in 2007.

Another divisive issue within the Israeli Peace Camp is how to deal with the Gaza Strip.

The first group sees Gaza as integral to the two-state solution and to the Palestinian state. However, fulfilling Israeli commitments (land swaps, a corridor between Gaza and the West Bank, establishing an airport at Dahaniyeh, constructing a seaport and opening the Rafah border crossing with Egypt) must be contingent on full, effective control of the Palestinian government in Gaza, especially regarding weapons and armed organizations.

The third group seeks a long-term arranged ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, along with significant economic measures to prevent a functional collapse in Gaza. In this context, it is worth noting Gisha – an organization that advocates freedom of movement for Palestinians in general, and in Gaza in particular.

From Peace to Separation

Overall, the Israeli “peace camp” seems to be increasingly toeing the line with positions represented on the political level and edging to the right. We are witnessing a shift from support for the two-state solution – an idea based not only on mutual cooperation and recognition, but also on acknowledging that it can serve the essential national needs of both parties – to bilateral or unilateral separation based solely on Israel’s security interests.

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In their attempt to increase their engagement with Israeli society, some of these organizations are now adopting political parties’ communication strategies; to avoid confrontation with a right-leaning public or being labelled “left-wing traitors”, they are falling in line with the choice of political parties to no longer use terms such as “peace”, “coexistence” or “human rights”. Some are even presenting the public with action plans stemming from the right end of the political spectrum, but none have succeeded, as yet, in bringing this to fruition given the public’s short attention span, competition with the government’s control over the hegemonic media, and the lack of massive resources needed to do so.

Some nonprofits are even avoiding funding from European countries that criticize Israel’s policy in the Occupied Territories, or from Israeli sources regularly maligned by the country’s right-wing government such as the New Israel Fund – despite the NIF’s profound contribution to Israeli society and its careful fundraising from individuals in Israel and abroad and not from foreign governments.

Like the peace process itself, the Israeli peace camp apparently needs a serious jolt to revive.

In the long term, this conduct is weakening the impact of the “peace camp” on decision makers and on Israelis at large. Given the stalemate with the Palestinians, public opinion now portrays the conflict as irresolvable. This has dramatically reduced donations and many of these nonprofits have had to shut down. The Israeli “peace camp” is gradually spiraling out of existence. Like the peace process itself, this camp apparently needs a serious jolt to revive – yet may receive one from precisely the kind of political or security trauma it seeks to prevent.

An Exercise in Awakening – Telem - a magazine for the Israeli Left, June 30, 2020,

Since the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, Israeli government ministers and coalition members flooded the Knesset table and public discourse with plans and bills to annex the West Bank. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu halted these moves and argued that annexation is a historic move that must be coordinated with the United States, and it should be promoted by government - and not private - legislation on the matter. Now, with the passage of three Knesset elections and the announcement of the Trump initiative, it is the prime minister who is leading the annexation program and pledging to implement it, in coordination with the Americans, starting in July 2020. To understand the implications of annexing the West Bank and the possible consequences that may result from the move, one must first know the facts.

The legal status of the West Bank has not changed since it was occupied by Israel during the Six Day War in June 1967 and is considered occupied territory by the international community. This is in contrast to Israel's official position. Immediately after the war, Israel annexed about 70 square kilometers from the West Bank into Jerusalem, including about six square kilometers from the area of East Jerusalem (al-Quds). This move was not recognized by the international community and Israel was condemned in a series of decisions against it. Years later, as part of the Oslo process between Israel and the PLO, which began with the signing of the "Declaration of Principles" in September 1993, 40% of the West Bank (areas A and B), where 2.85 million Palestinians now live (about 90% of the population), moved to the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority, established in 1994. In the rest of the area (Area C), which covers 60% of the West Bank, at the end of 2018, about 430,000 Israelis lived in 128 Jewish localities and about 300,000 Palestinians.

The relationship between Israel and the PA is based on the 1995 Interim Agreement, which was part of the Oslo process. For years there has been extensive and effective security cooperation between the security forces of the parties, and the economy is governed according to the "Paris Agreement" (1994). However, the two parties do not abide by different parts of the agreement, but neither do they propose to annul it altogether.

Gaza, which has been under Hamas control since being taken over by force in 2007, is under partial blockade by Israel. Since the disengagement plan in 2005, there have been four military clashes between Israel and

Hamas ("Summer Rains", "Cast Lead", "Pillar of Defense" and "Protective Edge"). In the Palestinian arena, the reconciliation processes between Hamas and the PLO, which involve accepting the PA's responsibility for Gaza and the unification of political forces, are not bearing fruit.

In the broader, Middle Eastern arena, there is open security cooperation between Israel, Jordan and Egypt, alongside covert security cooperation with other Arab countries based on a set of common interests. These relate in particular to concerns about the intensification of the power and influence of Iran and Turkey, and the need for a joint confrontation in the fight against Islamist-jihadist organizations. It is worth emphasizing that in recent years there have been significant changes in Saudi Arabia's attitude toward Israel and in particular on the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Saudi Arabia has made it clear that it is ready to move forward with normalization processes with Israel, provided that it demonstrates a clear commitment to a two-state solution. The Arab League's Peace Initiative (2002), which contains the parameters on which the Annapolis negotiations took place in 2008, still serves as the basis required by the Arab Quartet (Egypt, Jordan, the Emirates and Saudi Arabia) to negotiate and sign a permanent settlement between Israel and the PLO.

In terms of the international system, the United States has been on Israel's side for many years when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The relocation of its embassy to Jerusalem and its recognition as the capital of Israel are two clear examples of the strength of the relationship and its strengthening in the Trump era. Moreover, the United States' withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran - which Israel has sharply criticized throughout - is another example of the strong relationship between the two countries. At the same time, however, the United States is withdrawing from the region (regardless of Israel) and this trend is affecting the countries' strategic considerations and relations. To this can be added the considerable erosion of support of the two American parties, the Republican and the Democratic, in Israel. Russia, on the other hand, is deepening its presence in the Middle East and strengthening its relations with Iran and Syria.

Israel has several goals that it seeks to preserve: its continued control of the West Bank (at least until a permanent settlement is reached); Strengthening ties with Sunni Arab states; Ensuring US support for neutralizing UN Security Council resolutions that are inconsistent with Israel's position; agreements with the United States on the Iranian nuclear program; and avoiding escalation in the West Bank and another round of violence in Gaza, which could - among other things - also damage Israel's

relations with Egypt and Jordan.

The PLO, the Palestinian sovereign to conduct negotiations with Israel, does not agree to resume with discussions without obtaining Israeli consent to the principles and parameters agreed upon by the parties in the past, and in particular in the Annapolis process.

Moreover, since Trump's announcement on the move of the US embassy to Jerusalem, Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas has denied US mediation in negotiations, and has been pivoting to European countries and to the United Nations, while trying to secure backing for the struggle he is managing, including the internal one with Hamas, from the moderate Arab states.

A rolling snowball

If the annexation initiatives and the plans that follow them become legislation in the Knesset, this will be evidence of a dramatic change in the policies of the Israeli governments. Until now, these have operated in the form of a "creeping annexation", but the new bills that have come up in the Knesset indicate the intention to move to a policy of annexation *de jure* - that is, the application of Israeli law to large areas in the West Bank.

Annexation moves will severely harm the two-state solution and may actually lead to its final abolition. This is the wish of many in the current government and of parts of the opposition. Advocancers of annexation suggest taking advantage of the current political opportunity, reflected in, among other things, the Trump administration's unprecedented support for Israeli policy, the weakness of the European Union and the United Nations, and the civil wars within the Arab world. But a decision to annex area C, all or parts of it, could generate many risks for Israel, which the "annexationist" position, imbued entirely with nationalist messianism, tends to underestimate. In practice, although no in-depth and orderly staff work has been done by any state-professional body on the issue of annexation, proponents of the idea praise it while ignoring that its implementation could lead, for example, to the re-establishment of military administration in Areas A and B in its first phase, and later, necessarily to their annexation.

Many are trying to conceive of possible responses to unilateral annexation. Some argue that the international reality works in favor of the advocates of annexation. They highlight the possibility of Trump being elected to a second term, the instability of Europe, the rise of extremist Islamic movements, the rise of nationalist parties across Europe, and, of course, the Corona crisis and its fateful consequences that are now the

focus of global attention. But all of this is analyzed from the point of view of the existing reality, the one in which Israel has enjoyed for many years, an international disregard and a practical separation between what is happening inside Israel and what is happening in the West Bank. The unilateral annexation will undermine this reality.

Even if the advocates of annexation, at least in public, did not present a concrete proposal for the annexation of Areas A and B - as soon as the snowball begins to roll, new realities will be created and it is not known where things will end. Therefore, the annexation of parts or all of area C and the possibility of annexation of the entire West Bank should be treated as one complete process. It begins with a turning point that will be marked by a government's decision to implement a unilateral annexation and the legislative procedures that will accompany the process - with its end unknown. The multi-stage process described here will be an exacerbating nightmare scenario. It is not a prophecy or a prediction. The deep contradiction between the Israeli interest and the realization of this scenario exists and is clear, and therefore the chances are that even if it starts progressing, it will not be fully realized. However, this is an important thought exercise for those who within the current reality find themselves indifferent to the issue or are only theoretically concerned about it, for anyone who thinks that the only actions to be taken, abstract to thought as they are now, will not be realistic for this other reality, and for decision makers, some of whom understand the meaning of things on the ground will not necessarily analyze the process with all its scenarios.

The unilateral annexation of part of the West Bank will be the starting point of the process in question and is highly likely to occur in one way or another. The turning point - to Israel, the Palestinians and to the whole region - will be the abolition of the Palestinian Authority's role as the liaison between the Israeli government and the Palestinian population in all areas of its life, as stipulated in the Oslo Accords. The dissolution of the PA in its current form will require Israel to return and bear overall security and civilian responsibility for the residents of Areas A and B by establishing a military administration in the West Bank. This occurrence also has a relatively high probability and the phrase "military administration" is enough to imagine the possible Palestinian response. The next phase, if the collapse of the PA is complete, will force Israel to take a few more steps forward, annex the entire West Bank and perhaps even accept partial responsibility for Gaza. The probability of the occurrence of this phase is low, because it requires the existence of many conditions. And yet, if it happens then it would be a point of no return.

Exit Points

Since Israel does not want to re-establish a military administration in the West Bank, certainly not to annex it all, it will be able to use along the way some “exit points” that will be available to it even after partial unilateral annexation. But as the snowball becomes larger, it will be more difficult to reach an exit point and its use will be more costly to Israel.

The main and first exit point in the process, which is a clear Israeli interest, is the attempt to prevent the collapse of the authority. In order to do so, it will be necessary to take moderate and compensatory measures in order to soften the reactions to the annexation, especially with the Palestinians: Transfer of authority in the areas connecting the isolated Palestinian localities in Area C to the PA; Transfer of authority over built-up areas in Areas A and B - which have slipped into Area C to the PA; Building a transport infrastructure to ensure territorial and traffic continuity for the Palestinians; and more. But even if all these steps are possible, it should be said that at this stage none of them are feasible, because they require preparation processes, and the Israeli government does not implement such.

If the unilateral annexation leads to the collapse of the PA, Israel's second exit point will be to try and avoid the need to renew the military administration (and even more so, the annexation of the entire West Bank) by establishing Palestinian governmental alternatives for administration of Palestinian life in Areas A and B: for example, by reviving the village associations and turning them into a kind of local councils. However, the success of the move depends on a number of factors: the willingness of Palestinian residents to cooperate in the post-Palestinian Authority era; The level of violence and pressure exerted by various Palestinian organizations on the alternative authorities; The possibility of the establishment of a “united leadership” by the Palestinians, including all the organizations in the West Bank (and Gaza), with an emphasis on Fatah and Hamas; In the early preparation of the Palestinian leadership to provide basic services to the population without Israeli involvement for long periods of many months; and more.

If these conditions are not met and the governmental alternatives do not arise, Israel will be forced to re-establish a military administration in the West Bank, while trying to avoid its full annexation. This reality may seem distant now, but it is possible if some conditions materialize: Palestinian governmental anarchy; A fundamental change in the Palestinian position regarding the two-state solution and a demand for equal rights in one state; Extensive Arab and international backing and support for the new Palestinian position; Pressure from Israeli political

elements interested in annexation alongside passivity on the part of the Israeli public. There is no doubt that the probability of the materialization of all these conditions is extremely low, so the annexation of the entire West Bank is a scenario of relatively low probability. Still, it is possible and should disturb every Israeli.

Full annexation of the West Bank poses questions to the Israeli-Jewish public regarding the identity and regime of one state. If initially Israel will deal with practical questions such as the application of the Absentee Property Law, addressing Palestinian residents' applications for citizenship, and comparing services according to the East Jerusalem model in which Palestinian residents of Jerusalem formally enjoy all rights but are practically discriminated against in under-budgeting and sub-services - then in the future it will not be possible to avoid dealing with material questions regarding the composition of the security forces in general and the IDF in particular, or the future of Palestinian refugees, the applicability of the Law of Return and more.

Israel's third exit point, if the first fails and the PA collapses and if the second fails and there is a need to reinstate the military administration to Areas A and B - Israel will try to avoid full annexation of the West Bank by “turning the clock back in time”. This will be an effort that will involve very significant Israeli concessions. The cumulative experience of 25 years since the Oslo Accords, and more than 30 years since the first intifada (1987-1993), shows that Israel has chosen to emerge from crises and escalations with the Palestinians in one of three options: (A) Renewal of negotiations and signing of an agreement (Oslo Agreement following the first intifada, Hebron Agreement in 1997 following the events of the Western Wall Tunnel); (B) Establishing an international framework for the resumption of negotiations (Sharm Treaty in 1999, the Roadmap in 2002 and the Annapolis Conference in 2007); (C) A unilateral move aimed at separation (the disengagement plan in 2005 and the construction of the security fence from 2002 onwards).

If Israel tries to turn the clock back by resuming negotiations with the Palestinians, it is likely that the parameters that will guide it will be those of the Annapolis process. The problem with this is that after the Trump plan and after a move of unilateral annexation, the Palestinians will not come to the table as they did in Annapolis. It is very possible that the hegemonic Palestinian position will also be stricter than what is prevalent today in relation to the four core issues (borders, security, Jerusalem and refugees), including the future of the settlements. Recognition this possibility must accompany the leaders of the Israeli opposition in formulating their position towards any move of unilateral

annexation, however small. This is because the change in Palestinian positions as a result will make it very difficult for an effective negotiation process in the future, even if another Israeli government sits on the other side of the table, one that supports the two-state solution with the acceptable parameters. Israel may prefer the second option to turn back the clock and try to launch a new "road map" that will be coordinated with the United States, the European Union and the "Arab Quartet", which will represent - albeit with reluctantly - the exiled Palestinian leadership. The first step in such a plan would include a sort of "convergence plan" of settlements across the West Bank; The second will include signing a permanent agreement with regional involvement; And the third will include the gradual, conditional implementation and Arab and international involvement of the Permanent Agreement. The third option, a unilateral Israeli move aimed at separation, would be a far-reaching choice in the current scenarios and would have to include evacuating settlements in the West Bank and recognizing Palestine within some temporary borders as a basis for resuming permanent settlement negotiations.

A Different Country

The unilateral annexation is expected to shake the core of the State of Israel in the areas of security, economy, political relations, legal systems and in addition to all these, also in internal social threats that will cast a heavy shadow on its image, regime and status in the family of nations. The more numerous and extensive the annexation measures, the more difficult it will be for Israel to turn back the clock. It is possible that at some point in time, all the exit points will be closed and it will find itself a different country than it was before the annexation process in composition, economy, status and regime.

The policy of annexation will bring about a dramatic change in three principles that belong to the Zionist movement: a democratic state, with a Jewish majority, in the Greater Land of Israel. The historical demographic reality in which Jews are a minority in the Middle East, and the international recognition of the Palestinians' right to self-determination in their homeland, have led the Zionist leadership and later the Israeli governments for generations to understand that it will never be possible to adhere to all three principles simultaneously. A Jewish state in the Greater Land of Israel can only exist under an apartheid regime or after a transfer of the Arab population. A democratic state in the Greater Land of Israel can only exist if Israel becomes a bi-national state or an Arab state and thus does not fulfill its mission as the national home of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. Thus, the decision was made to establish a

democratic state with a Jewish majority with the clear understanding that in order for the full realization of these two principles, the division of the land will be necessary, whether in an agreement or unilaterally. The dream of a Greater Land of Israel became a distant and utopian one, and like any utopia, was not intended to become a practical policy. The process of annexation means a change in national priorities: The Greater Land of Israel at the expense of Israel's democratic character in the first stage. And if the process continues, in the longer term the principle of the Greater Land of Israel will also come at the expense of the principle of the Jewish majority.

The first possibility is that following the implementation of unilateral annexation, Israel will become a binational state. Millions of Palestinians will become Israeli citizens at the end of the process, with equal rights, including the right to vote and be elected to the Knesset. This will be a different country, different from Israel established by the founding fathers in 1948. Opposition to this possibility will be so great that it can be determined with certainty that the Jewish public will prevent its realization.

The second possibility is that two civil classes will be created, one for Jews and one - inferior - for Arabs. The existence of both classes will initially be declared a temporary thing. Palestinians who will swear allegiance to the State of Israel and receive additional stipulations will be able to receive political civil rights. The Palestinians will reject the demands outright and thus allow for the justification of long-term political discrimination. The world, including Diaspora Jewry, will not accept the Israeli arguments and the state will be perceived, and rightly so, as an apartheid state.

The third possibility is that following the political and security crisis created by the annexation, Israel will be swept into a civil war. A new wave of violence will take place, and this time it will involve not only Palestinians, but also some of the Arab citizens of Israel. In such an extreme case, it can be assumed - even if it is very difficult to put it into words - that the response of the Israeli security forces, according to government policy, would be to expel hundreds of thousands of Palestinians currently located west of Jordan - and perhaps even those in Israel - east of the border. Some of them are likely to flee before being deported. This reality has already occurred twice in the short Israeli history: In the War of Independence, without being accompanied by a global shock (and it is this that created the refugee problem) and in the Six Day War, with a minor global response (then the issue of the displaced persons was created). This time, it is worth considering that Israel will be accused, and rightly so, of ethnic cleansing.

The price of the idea of unilateral annexation outweighs its benefit tenfold, and its application through the application of Israeli law to part of the West Bank will be completely rejected by the international community, including by the United States. They will continue to see the West Bank as an occupied territory, whose Palestinian inhabitants are protected under the Hague Convention and the Fourth Geneva Convention and are entitled to self-determination in the form of an independent Palestinian state with its capital in East Jerusalem. As the multi-stage process described here progresses, it is expected to undermine peace agreements with Jordan and Egypt and the security cooperation with them and to cost Israel in the loss of the potential for regional alliances with Arab countries to halt the Iranian axis (including the loss of existing minor security cooperation), in the ascendance of the Russia, Iranian and Turkish involvement in the region, in damaging relations with European countries, and given another American administration - also in the irreplaceable strategic relations with the United States. Israel may also get into a sharp armed conflict with the Palestinians under the joint leadership of Fatah and Hamas, which will also abolish security cooperation with Israel and at the same time intensify its struggle on the international level. The broad annexation scenario will also have economic consequences, including Israel's expulsion from the OECD and dramatic damage to the quality of public services provided to Israeli citizens, with an emphasis on welfare, health and education. In the end, Israel may be swept into a civil war that at its aftermath Israel will be a different state than it was in the beginning - a state which between it and the Zionist vision on which it was established there will be few, if any, similarities.

Has Netanyahu Become an Anti-Zionist?- Haaretz, October 29, 2020

For more than a century, the leaders of the Zionist movement worked to turn the Jews scattered around the world - in communities that did not have much in common between them except their Judaism - into a public with characteristics of a common national life: land, society, language and culture. Their activities were not free from mistakes, injustices and discrimination but had a clear direction and purpose. For the past decade, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been pursuing a policy that contradicts the founding idea of Zionism and is disintegrating Jewish (and Israeli) society for his rule and personal survival.

The aspiration of the Zionist movement "to establish a home for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel, which will be guaranteed in the law of the peoples", was based on the argument that the Jews scattered around the world are a people like all peoples, entitled to self-determination in their homeland. The huge challenge facing the leaders of the Zionist movement, who chose not to wait for the religious-Messianic redemption and to act as the other emerging peoples, was to engrave this argument among the Jews themselves in parallel with their existence among the nations of the world. In the beginning of Zionism, the ultra-Orthodox communities denied the national and territorial elements, the heart of modern Zionism. In Munich, ahead of the convening of the First World Zionist Congress, the "General Rabbinical Association of Germany", which included Orthodox and Reform rabbis, published in several newspapers on August 25, 1897, a resolution stating that "The aspiration of the those who call themselves Zionist to establish a national Jewish state in the Land of Israel is contrary to the Messianic vocations of Judaism... The Jewish religion requires the faithful service of the state in which the Jews live (in the Diaspora)".

In 1917, during the discussions leading up to the Balfour Declaration, Edwin Montague, the only Jewish minister in the British government, claimed that "there is no Jewish people in the sense that my family has nothing to do with a Jew living in another country except that they are of the same religion. A Christian Englishman and a Christian Frenchman belong to the same religion but not to the same people. So to the Jews scattered around the world". The ultra-Orthodox community of London even published an ad in the Times stating that "Judaism is not a nationality, only a religion".

Opposition to Zionism was also widespread among the Jewish

community in Israel. Herzl wrote, during his visit of Emperor Wilhelm II in Jerusalem, in October 1898: "I was not at the gate of the Jews [Jaffa Gate] ... since according to what I was told, the Hakham Bashi (Rabbi of Ottoman Jewry) in Constantinople suggested to the chief rabbi here to impose a boycott on me - I preferred not to even approach these oriental opponents".

The ultra-Orthodox public's opposition to Zionism and its separation from the Jewish community that began to develop, raised the question of whether there was any point in trying to recruit it to the Zionist-nationalist idea, as Zeev Jabotinsky wrote in *Haaretz News* ("Outside the Camp", 1919.10.22): "There is no new and old Yeshuv here, there is the camp and which is outside the camp. And if for some reason now, if those who were born and have died outside the camp want to participate in our election and assemblies - I do not understand the reason for the embarrassment. Why would we miss such partners? What is the use of their participation, as long as there is no common language - and there is no common ideal?... Who knows, it might have been worthwhile, even before the conflict over the right of women [to vote in elections], to make an order that removes this infertile element from any intervention in national building matters. This would undoubtedly be done in any European country, if there was an element of public heresy, in the essence of citizenship - especially of labor".

The internal Jewish debate was in line with the position of the Palestinian Arabs, who denied the Jewish people the right to self-determination. As later written in the Palestinian National Convention: "The claims about the historical or spiritual connection of the Jews to Palestine are inconsistent with the truth of history, or with the elements of the state in their true meaning. Judaism as a celestial religion is not a self-sustaining nationalism, and likewise the Jews are not one people, with a national character, but are citizens of the countries to which they belong".

The debate was decided by the international community. Winston Churchill, the minister of the colonies at the time, emphasized in a memorandum of March 1919: "It is absolutely right that the Jews scattered all over the world should have a national center and a national home, where they can unite. And where can this be if not in the Land of Israel, to which they have been associated for over 3,000 years in such deep and close relationships?" The mandate written in 1922 by the League of Nations states: "The historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine, and the right to re-establish their national home in this land, is hereby recognized". And in the report of the Partition Committee

from 1947: "Both the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate included an international commitment to the Jewish people as a whole".

Although the vast majority of the Jewish people refrained from immigrating to Israel, the Jewish Yishuv succeeded in establishing a state and winning the War of Independence. The Holocaust, in which six million Jews were exterminated, the vast majority from Europe, diverted the young state's efforts to instead bring the Jews of North Africa, Babylon and Iran. The challenge of nationalizing the immigrant community only intensified. It was the first and most dominant prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, who saw the IDF as the national melting pot. In a speech in the Knesset in August 1952, he said: "And I am a Zionist all the days of my life and I do not deny, God forbid, the existence of the people of Israel. But ... even the English people were not always this people ... but consisted of different tribes, strangers to each other and fighting each other. And only in the development of hundreds of years have they become one people ... We have no time for hundreds of years, and without the military device ... we will not be a people in time". Under this policy, Israel absorbed the waves of mass immigration, which became a process accompanied by many difficulties to Jewish society. Unfortunately, this society has not been able to achieve a more successful integration of the remaining Arab minority in the country.

Israel Eldad, one of the leaders of the revisionists and the Greater Israel movement in particular, emphasized the success of this policy in an interview in the *Haaretz* supplement (1985.8.30): Our hatred of Mapai dazzled us from seeing that a state would not have been built without what the left and the pioneering movement did ... We would not have established a state ... Begin would not have brought a million Jews from the countries of the East ... The two basic concepts of Betar, a Jewish state and a Hebrew army ... Who established them if not Mapai?"

Even after the change of government in 1977, waves of immigration from the former Soviet Union, in the 1970s and especially in the 1990s, were absorbed as part of a policy of integration by leaders from left and right. Israel did not bridge all ethnic, national, social and religious gaps. But intended to get there.

Netanyahu, on the other hand, saw the unraveling seams and the cracks between the groups that make up Israeli society as a political opportunity to be elected for prime minister. He was not the first to do so, but unlike his predecessors who contented themselves with winning the election, he continued to deepen the cracks, to stop the process of social and national integration, and even managed to completely reverse its direction. For him, in a divided, conflicted and sectoral society

it will be easier to maintain his rule.

Netanyahu and his allies could not have implemented such a policy without the political support of part of Israeli society. Netanyahu has built and nurtured his political base among the groups that were perceived as “second Israel” (the Mizrahim), or that were on the margins of the elite (religious-national), or on the margins of society (the ultra-Orthodox). Those who sought to move to the forefront and push the elite that had represented Israeli society for many years, and held a democratic, liberal and social value system.

Netanyahu was careful to give the leaderships of these groups the social, economic, and religious reequipments they demanded, as long as they served the basis of his political power. The first around Netanyahu to ignite the fire of incitement and slander are Likud ministers and Knesset members, who label Netanyahu’s opponents on an ethnic basis as “left-wing Ashkenazim”. They are followed by representatives of the ultra-Orthodox society. These pursue a narrow sectoral policy, of which the Zionist vision of the founding fathers is not a part, and label Netanyahu’s opponents on a religious basis as “Hebrew-speaking Gentiles”. And the latter are the leaders of the nationalist-messianic, anti-democratic society, which labels Netanyahu’s opponents on the nationalist basis as “leftist traitorous”.

The real threat to Netanyahu’s personal - legal and political survival - intensified his dependence on these leaderships, and accelerated his damage to cohesion and solidarity between the various components of Israeli and Jewish society. Depending on the loyalty of the three leaderships, he rewards them with a changing mix of similar resources. He rewards the former mainly with ministerial jobs enabling them to undermine the values of canonical Israeli culture and the rule of law; He rewards the ultra-Orthodox mainly with huge budgets, freeing them from participating in the labor force, carrying the security burden and dealing with the corona crisis; And the latter are mainly rewarded with huge budgets for the settlement enterprise, halting any political process, attacks on the Supreme Court and the religiosity of the education system.

In other words, as long as the ultra-Orthodox wait for the Messiah, the Messianic nationalists believe they created the conditions for his coming, and “Second Israel” serves as the Messiah’s donkey - Netanyahu will continue to survive in his chair to destroy Israeli society and democracy. After his departure, Israeli society will remain divided, conflicted and weak. Each of his future heirs, who would be faithful to the national Zionist vision, would need a miracle to mend the unraveling seams.

Ignoring the Elephant in the Square – Haaretz, December 27, 2020

Saturday night at Balfour Street. I listen to the 10th speech, read the signs of the numerous organizations. And finally, ponder the meaning of the various protesters’ ignoring the elephant in the room (in this case, Jerusalem’s Paris Square).

The elephant, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, stands there in all its might, filling the square. It enables the despicable rule of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his flock of loyalists. Leaving the State of Israel without permanent borders for more than 70 years now. Trapping it in a reality of state and society that don’t know where they begin and where they end, who is within them and who is outside, what their identity is and what their regime is. A collection of warring tribes without a single, unifying idea.

A state is a spatial entity with recognized borders and a permanent population that maintains a single, independent central government. The territory is the spatial manifestation of the state, and it has great importance in the eyes of those who live in it – it is the heart of their identification with the state. A diplomatic border is a fundamental component of the modern state, and its stability has supreme importance politically, economically and militarily in terms of how the state is perceived by other states, and by its own citizens. The border marks the separation between the “self” and the “other.” Depending on the relationship, it is sometimes perceived as a barrier, one that protects us from the “others” who are beyond that boundary, and sometimes as the point of connection with them.

Because of the conflict, the State of Israel and the society that lives in its sovereign territory (within the Green Line) is not bounded by diplomatic borders and is not separated from the Palestinians who live in the West Bank. There is no line where the Israeli “self” ends and the Palestinian “other” begins. And with each passing day, Israel penetrates deeper into this area, where the vast majority of the population is Palestinian, chopping it up and harming its fabric of life – but cannot vanquish it demographically or spatially. It has no defined territory in which all its members can consolidate their modern national identity. It is not a society that sees all of its members as equal before the one law that exists there, nor do all of its members belong to it of their free choice.

In the absence of agreed-upon territory and borders, Israeli society cannot overcome the rifts among its members, who live as separate groups, each adhering to a different territorial conception – to which it believes

its identity is tied and in which it sees this identity being fulfilled. The society that currently lives “between the river and the sea” is replete with rifts: Israeli-Palestinian, Arab-Jew, religious-secular, democratic-fascist, Greater Land of Israel versus “Two States for Two Peoples,” a Jewish state versus a state of all its citizens, and more. Only an agreed-upon territory could negate some of these rifts and heal or contain the others.

Netanyahu is doing his utmost to preserve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and prevent the drawing of a diplomatic border between Israeli and Palestinian society. The lack of a border enables him – through oppressing some of the groups on the one hand while paying “protection” to other groups that live between the river and the sea – to preserve his rule.

Netanyahu opposes ending the conflict and setting a border, because a border would separate the five million Palestinians who live in the territories from the nine million Israelis who have national aspirations of their own, for with the absence of a border, the Palestinians are, against their will, members without rights in the society between the river and the sea. A border would prevent Netanyahu from continuing to drive a wedge between Israelis and Palestinians with the baseless threat that “a PLO state would be a mortal threat to Israel”. A border would seriously reduce the Jewish-Arab rift in Israel by moderating the national component in society and would ultimately promote civic equality.

A border would pull the carpet out from under the messianic nationalists, depriving them of the platform on which they wage their war over the face of Israeli society, its government and values. It would force them and Netanyahu to say goodbye to the “fees” that include huge amounts of funding for the settlements and their institutions, harming the rule of law, increasing religious indoctrination and racism. A border would also cancel the budgetary and social “fees” to the ultra-Orthodox and force them and the government to advance their full integration into society in terms of employment and education.

A border would remove the “security mask” behind which Netanyahu hides all of his dark attributes – corruption, fraud, deception, breach of trust, incitement, lies, greed, hedonism at the public’s expense – from his voters who still believe that, for the sake of Israel’s security, he may be forgiven everything. A border would nullify all the ideas of establishing a binational state and would enable Israel to remain a democratic country that ensures equality to all and with its symbols, culture and way of life, fulfills the right of the Jewish people for self-definition in its homeland.

As we head toward yet another election, the Balfour protesters should put forward a complete – diplomatic, security-related, social and economic

– ideological conception that offers an alternative to Netanyahu’s policy. An accord and permanent borders are the heart of the change needed to unify Israeli society within a political framework, to produce a society whose members, out of free choice, would be obliged to recognize it as defining them and their identity more than all the other different characteristics.

Perhaps then, all the politicians who wish to unseat Netanyahu will muster the courage to echo the comments of President-elect Joe Biden, who stated at a J Street reception in September that “the two-state solution is the only way to ensure Israel’s long-term security while preserving its Jewish and democratic identity... And it is also the only way to ensure the Palestinians’ right to a state of their own”.

The Left Border - Telem - a Magazine for the Israeli Left, February 2020

The Zionist movement, with its main secular currents - socialist and revisionist - has since its inception established three national-strategic goals for the Jewish people: (1) a democratic regime, even dictated by the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, with (2) a Jewish majority (3) throughout Mandatory Palestine. The three were considered what I would like to call "the internal truth" of Zionism - the ultimate goal to strive for and reach, as Menachem Begin put it "... Zionism... These are its foundations in the Land of Israel, for which our right cannot be challenged, there will be a Jewish majority, an Arab minority, and equal rights for all. We have not deviated, nor will we deviate, from this "Torah", in which the justice of our cause is folded".

This vision of the "the internal truth" has had to deal from the beginning of the conflict to the present day with the demographic reality of an Arab majority and the political reality of the growth and existence of a recognized national movement of the country's Arabs. This forced the leadership of the Zionist movement to set the priorities between the above three goals, and gave birth to what I would call "the truth in its time" - the temporary goal, which currently serves only some of the goals, but does not close the door to change the final goal.

1897—1947- From one state to two states in the land of Israel

In his book *The State of the Jews*, Herzl addresses the territorial issue functionally and writes "We will be given sovereignty in some part of the world on earth that will suffice for the justified needs of our peoples, we will take care of the rest ourselves". The achievement of the three goals, after international recognition and support for the establishment of a state for the Jewish people and the determination of the borders of the Land of Israel, was seen by Herzl, as the natural fruit of a mass Jewish Aliyah that would overwhelm the absolute Arab majority in the land (95% of the population) that will become a minority with equal rights.

This is how Ze'ev Jabotinsky defined it. "What does the practical meaning of a 'Jewish State' mean? When can we say about "Palestine" that it has become "the Land of Israel"? - Only when more Jews live in our country than non-Jews. The first condition for a national state is a national majority - the first goal of Zionism is to create a Jewish majority in the land of Israel.

The Zionist Organization's first and most extensive proposal ever for the borders of Israel, presented at the Paris Peace Conference in February

1919, included an area of 45,000-50,000 square kilometers, which included, in addition to what later became Palestine-Israel, also southern Lebanon the Golan Heights and the Strip past the east Jordan, west of the Hijazi Railway. The proposal was based on the practical rationale designed by Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi in 1918: "If we seek to determine the borders of the Land of Israel today, especially if we see it not only as the land of the Jewish past but as the land of the Jewish future, we can not fully take into account the ideal borders, which are traditionally promised to us and that are too wide in terms of today. Nor can we just stick to the historical boundaries, which have changed so many times by chance and are for the most part too narrow". But at the end of a process that ended in 1923, the borders of Palestine-Israel were set by the world powers over 27,000 square kilometers.

It should be emphasized that the Zionist demand to formulate the Balfour Declaration as "His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that the Land of Israel should be re-established as the national home of the Jewish people" was rejected, and Colonial Minister Churchill stated in the White Paper in June 1922 that "His Majesty's Government Attention is drawn to the fact that the wording of the international declaration [Balfour] does not mean that the land of Israel in general will become a Jewish national home, but that such a national home will be established in the land of Israel".

The 'truth in its time' first took over the 'the internal truth' in Churchill's first White Paper publication, and the approval of the 1922 Mandate, which set out Article 25 that allowed the British move to exclude the east Jordan from the scope of the Balfour Declaration and give it to Abdullah from the Hashemite family. The leadership of the Zionist Organization was then forced to decide between its demand to include in the Mandatory Palestine-Israel part of the eastern Jordan crossing (about 20% of today's Kingdom of Jordan), and the British threat that if it did, Article 4 of the mandate would be repealed - which states that the Jewish Agency is the representative of the Jewish community - which would have allowed the Arab residents of the country to demand the establishment of an indigenous government. The Zionist Organization ruled in favor of Article 4, and the East Bank moved out of its 'basket' of territorial claims, as Weitzman described it at the 14th Zionist Congress in Vienna, on August 25, 1922 "... The White Paper, which the Zionist Executive, together with those members of the Executive Committee who were within reach, agreed to accept". And Jabotinsky joined him "I fully share the responsibility of the management in London to sign our agreement to the White Paper".

The Phil Commission in 1937 was the next stop, where 'truth in its time' overcame 'the internal truth', forcing the Weizmann-led Zionist Organization and the Ben-Gurion led Jewish Agency to determine its official position on the division of the land, and the priorities between the three goals. The desperate need to establish an independent political entity, capable of absorbing the Jews of Europe following the threat of the Nazi rise in Germany, overcame the dream of a Greater Land of Israel. Mordechai Namir explained the demographic and political reasons for this at the Mapai Conference of 1936: "Reduction of land - this is the price we must pay for the fatal delay of the Hebrew people in building the country, and for the rapid growth of the Arab movement"; and a year later, David Ben-Gurion added to this, in his letter to his son Amos on October 5, 1937: "What we want is not for the land to be whole, but for the whole land to 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 staged plan for achieving the internal truth. Namir added: "The next generations ... will find the way to correct the distorted", 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, will serve as a powerful lever in our historic efforts to redeem the land in its entirety".

In contrast to the Jewish Agency led by the Labor parties, the official representative of the Zionist movement and the Jewish Yishuv, several Zionist and Jewish elements rejected the 1937 partition proposal for various reasons. The first of these were those who believed that the right to Israel was enshrined in religious axioms. The official position of Agudat Yisrael, given by the Council of Torah Scholars, stated that "the borders of the Holy Land are bounded by a landlord in his sacred teachings and established for generations to come. It is impossible therefore for the Jewish people to give up in any way on these borders. Any such waiver has no value".

There were those who saw in the territory the identity of the nation. In June 1937, a proclamation was published "against any partition proposal" on behalf of the two chief rabbis, Yitzhak Herzog and Yaakov Meir, and representatives of the Histadrut HaMizrachi and the Histadrut Hapoel HaMizrachi. The proclamation stated: "We hereby declare our firm and absolute position against any proposal that has the effect of reducing the borders of the Land of Israel or dividing it in any way [...] We strongly declare the full and complete eternal right of the nation to its homeland within its historical borders. We absolutely reject any attempt to consent to the division of the land or other proposals that violate our rights".

There was the revisionist current that opposed the division and adhered to the position of attaining the two banks of the Jordan. Jabotinsky, who formulated the territorial foundation of the Zionist movement in 1926, argued before the Royal Commission that "we can not agree to divide the land into cantons" and that "only the Land of Israel as a whole, east and west of Jordan, can absorb the millions of Jews begging for entry."

It should be added that in order to achieve a Jewish majority in a democratic state in the territory proposed by the Phil Commission, this ideological current of the labor movement did not reject, but supported, the British idea of a voluntary transfer of Arabs from the territory allocated for the Jewish state, as Berl Katzenelson says in his speech at the committee for the "Union of workers of Zion" - In 1937: "... The issue of population transfer has provoked a debate among us: allowed or forbidden. My conscience is completely quiet about it. Better an enemy that is far away than a close one. They will not lose by moving, and we certainly will not. Lastly, this is a local political reform for the benefit of both parties. I have long thought that this is the best solution ...".

Against the background of the Nazi moves in Europe (the Anschluss in March 1938), Ben-Gurion says in relation to the British proposal at a meeting of the Jewish Agency's management on June 12, 1938: "I require a forced transfer. I do not see anything immoral". Jabotinsky adds in the early 1940s, writing "If the Arabs do not want to stay, the author does not see any tragedy or disaster in their willingness to immigrate ... If it turns out that the Arabs would prefer to immigrate, then this possibility can be discussed without a trace of sorrow".

In 1947, the historical circumstances again overwhelmed 'the internal truth'. The loss of six million Jews in the Holocaust was "... the annihilation of Zionism" because "there will be no one to build the country with" Ben-Gurion wrote in 1943. Ben-Gurion's fear of returning the British Mandate to the UN, and preventing hundreds of thousands of Holocaust survivors from immigrating to Israel, prompted him to present in a letter in February 1947 to British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bowen the position of the Zionist movement, chairing the Jewish Agency and the Zionist Organization:

"The only possible immediate arrangement that has an element of finalism to it is the establishment of two states, one Jewish and one Arab". This was the official and binding position of the Jewish Yishuv in terms of "the truth in its time," but at the same time, Ben-Gurion voiced and planned the achievement of the "the internal truth". On May 22, 1947, at the Jerusalem General Assembly, Ben-Gurion asked rhetorically: "Is there anyone among us who disagrees that the original intention of

the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate ... was to eventually establish a Jewish state throughout the land of Israel?”.

The partition decision was made by Ben-Gurion thinking the ‘glass is half full’. At the Mapai Center, at the beginning of December 1947, he said, “We have not been given everything we wanted and the territory of the State of Israel has been reduced. I do not know what these mourners mean by “the integrity of the whole land”. The land was whole only at the hands of foreign invaders who ruled the land as well as its surrounding lands... It is clear, however, that the area to which the Balfour Declaration applied thirty years ago was four times larger. And even the area of the “National Home” according to the mandate of 1922 was almost twice the area now allocated to the Jewish state ... but otherwise I do not know a greater achievement than the Jewish people achieved in its long history since becoming a nation.... The new State of Israel will extend From Dan to Eilat ...”.

The War of Independence that broke out at the initiative of the Arabs created the opportunity to achieve the three goals. This is what Ben-Gurion told the People’s Administration (May 12, 48) regarding his decision not to declare the borders of the State of Israel: “We have decided to evade (I deliberately choose this word) this question for the sake of simplicity: if the UN upholds its decision - then we, for our part (I am stating the public opinion) will respect all the decisions. So far the UN has not done such a thing ... so not everything obliges us and we have left this matter open. We haven’t said “NO to the UN borders”, we have also not said the opposite. We left it open for development”. And on June 16, 1948, Ben Gurion added at the cabinet meeting, “The decision of November 29 is dead. The war will determine the borders of the state”.

Reactions to the decision to divide the land by the various factions in the Jewish community were varied. The “Observer” newspaper, a magazine of the Revisionist party, declared: “The masses of Israel will not accept a 85 percent cut off from their homeland”. Menachem Begin, the Irgun commander, declares on November 30, 1947, “The dismemberment of the homeland is illegal. It will never be recognized. The signing of an agreement by institutions and individuals is in-valid ... the land of Israel will be returned to the people of Israel. All of it. Forever”.

In Hashomer Hatzair’s official paper it said: we welcome the decision of the United Nations ... however, we expresses deep pain that the progress towards the independence of the Jewish people and the Land of Israel was bought at the cost of further division of the Land of Israel. Hashomer Hatzair will not stop striving to establish the integrity of the land ... The only way to unite the fragments of the land is to increase cooperation

between countries, deepen cooperation and peace between peoples on the basis of national and political equality...”.

Agudat Israel, was surprising with posters with the following wording: “To the ultra-Orthodox public for the word of God! He has acquitted us, and the nations of the world confirmed our right to independence in our own country in a part of the Land of Israel. As a result, the entire settlement, in all its strata, is ready for a great deal of preparation and defense against rioters and attackers. God will strengthen the defenders of Israel who are in the battle. We therefore call on all our male friends aged 17-25 to report to the commander’s offices for the service of the people, in accordance with the instructions of the local institutions ...”.

Indeed, due to the Arabs’ refusal to the partition and their declaration of war to cancel it, circumstances changed in a way that allowed the newborn Israel to add to the 55% of the territory allocated to it in the partition plan another 23% of the Land of Israel. But even at the end of the war, the ‘truth in its time’ took over again.

Ben-Gurion preferred not to conquer the entire territory of Israel, and justified this 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 existing reality ... is impossible, if it is to be democratic, because the number of Arabs in western Israel is more than the number of Jews”.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the leadership of the Labor movement, which also served as the leadership of the “state on the way”, chose to give up parts of the Land of Israel in exchange for the establishment of a state with a Jewish majority because it was required to be democratic.

1949-1967 - Drafting plans

At the end of the war, Israel hurried to annex the territories it had captured. About four months later, on September 22, 1948, the Jurisdiction and Powers Ordinance of 1948 was enacted, in which section 1 states that “any law applicable to the entire State of Israel shall be deemed to apply to the entire territory, including the territory of the State of Israel,” and in addition , on any part of the Land of Israel that the Minister of Defense defined in the proclamation as held by the Israel Defense Forces (and the Minister of Defense did sign two proclamations under this section that extended the application of Israeli law to certain territories in the land). The wording of the law may seem somewhat vague, but it is the one that has given a seal to future moves that will expand the borders of the State of Israel, as far as it was possible.

However, the ceasefire agreements and the establishment of the armistice lines continued to be a source of unrest. The person who actually embodied this in his character was Ben-Gurion. At the Lausanne Conference in 1949, a proposal was made that the State of Israel take over the Gaza Strip with all its residents who would become citizens of Israel. The proposal naturally provoked sharp controversy. Ben-Gurion supported this proposal, arguing for it on military, strategic, political and economic grounds.

Ben-Gurion's statements regarding the armistice lines showed two contradictory trends: on the one hand, there are many official and public statements that the State of Israel considers the armistice lines its border lines and is prepared to anchor them in peace agreements with Arab countries. On the other hand, in various statements, usually implicit and indirect, the view is often expressed that the armistice lines cannot be considered the permanent borders of the State of Israel.

In one of his speeches, he says: "The State of Israel is not identical in two fundamental aspects, in which every other country is more or less identical. This country is not identical to the land, this country is not identical to the people [...] This country is not stable within its borders [...]. He adds: "Every strategist will say that in order to preserve the land it is necessary to reach the top of the mountains next to the land, because it is the best shield for the land [...] and that the river that passes somewhere near this land [the Jordan River] is the natural border, and it is what separates this country and its neighbors".

The discomfort did not just remain a feeling, but translated into operative planning. In 1954, a document was formulated in the IDF's Operations Directorate bearing the code name 'Nevo' and refers to the borders that are desirable from a security point of view, as well as the demographic problem involved in expanding to them. "The borders that are desirable from a security point of view," it read:

"There should be positive power relations in the Middle East for the long-term, by providing maximum security to the country with means and manpower it can set aside for security purposes without harming its internal balance ... Israel's current border is a negative factor that weighs heavily on power relations with Arab countries and on peaceful life within the inhabited borders [...] The overall "natural" border that will meet security needs is the Sinai Desert in the south, the Saudi Desert in the south-east, the Syrian Desert in the south, the Laja areas east of the Horn, Mount Hermon and the Litani. The problem of the Arab population sitting in the desired annexation areas reduces the security added value of the proposed border improvements. Possible political-

military solution to the problem can be dilution by evacuation, transfer or the creation of a neutralized political enclave".

A year later, Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan proposed at a cabinet meeting to occupy Lebanon, turn it into a Maronite state and annex it south to Israel. The cynical reaction to the proposal was formulated by the then Prime Minister, Moshe Sharett, on May 16, 1955, in his diary: "All that is needed is to find an officer [...] to capture his heart or buy him with off with money, in order that he may declare himself the savior of the Maronite population. Then the IDF will enter Lebanon, occupy the territory [...] and establish a Christian government, that will have an alliance with Israel. The area south of Litani will be completely annexed to Israel, and everything will be at peace". Despite the imaginary ease of implementation, the proposal finally fell with a government vote. It returned from the dead a quarter of a century later, with the IDF invasion of Lebanon in 1982, as part of "Operation Peace of the Galilee", and the anointing of Bashir Jumail as president of Lebanon. The adventure turned into a nightmare: Jumail was killed, the IDF was stuck in the Lebanese mud until it withdrew to the security zone in 1985 and from the entire country in the summer of 2000. Hezbollah, proxy of Iran, took over the territory.

Even on the eve of the Kadesh War, a few months after Dayan made his proposal, Israel and its leader, Ben-Gurion, had far-reaching plans for expansion and the re-shaping of the Middle East. In October 1956, at the opening of the secret conference in Sever, a suburb near Paris, Ben-Gurion voiced the following proposal to the French Prime Minister, who, together with Israel, waged the war on Egypt: "Conquer Lebanon to the Litani, establish north of the river a Christian Stat, annex Sinai and divide the 'artificial state of Jordan' between Iraq and Israel".

At the end of the fighting in Sinai, on the occasion of the 9th Brigade's victory parade held in Sharm el-Sheikh on November 6, 1956, Ben-Gurion handed over a letter to Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan, stating: You brought to a successful conclusion [the] largest and most glorious military operation in the history of our people and one of the most marvelous operations in the history of nations ... Eilat will once again be the main Hebrew port in the south, and Yotvat, known as Tiran, will once again be part of the Third Kingdom of Israel". A few months later, Israel, as is well known, withdrew to the 1949 armistice lines under pressure from the world powers.

This war was the (almost) ending chord to Ben-Gurion's expansion plans, as he explained in an interview with Haaretz on October 2, 1959, "He who believes that today it is possible to solve historical questions between

peoples with military force alone, does not know what world we live in. Every local question now becomes international, and therefore our relations with the peoples of the world are no less important than our military strength, which we must continue to cultivate, in order to deter attacks and to win if we have to fight”.

1967- 2020- From the (almost) whole Land of Israel to two states for two peoples

An opportunity for the realization of the ‘Internal truth’ followed the conquest of the entire Land of Israel in the Six Day War, but the demographic reality, in which there was an Arab majority in the Land of Israel, again overtook the full Zionist vision of the entire Land of Israel. Israel, led by Levy Eshkol, like all other governments after it, refrained from annexing the territories, even if it reiterated its intention to annex the Gaza Strip, and contented itself with applying Israeli law to East Jerusalem (70 square kilometers) in 1967.

With regard to the West Bank, the debate erupted within the labor movement that then led the country. The camp, which sided with Israeli control of the territories, with economic integration between the two peoples, was headed by Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, one of the leaders of the Rafi party, which was supported by his party colleague Shimon Peres. Opposite them were the opposers of integration, the heads of Mapai and Ahdut HaAvoda, including the Prime Minister Levy Eshkol, Minister of Finance Pinchas Sapir, Minister of Information and Chairman of the Ministerial Committee on Settlement- Israel Galili, and even Yigal Alon.

The former saw economic integration and the granting of freedom of movement for Jews and Arabs in all areas of the land, a way to realize Zionist national goals, while respecting the Palestinian culture and personal and communal freedom, without recognizing their right to self-determination by an independent Arab state. The Mapainiks, on the other hand, sought to separate from the densely populated territories of the Palestinians and return the West Bank to Jordan, without the territories required for Israel’s security.

Alon believed that “one should not retreat to the 1967 borders because returning to unsafe borders is a safe-bet on war in the not-too-distant future”. Alon’s conclusion was that the only logical solution that could solve Israel’s security problems on its eastern sector was the establishment of a Palestinian state in most of the West Bank. “I am taking the maximum option. Not a canton, not an autonomous region, but an independent Arab state agreed between us and them in an enclave

surrounded by Israeli territory ... even independent in its foreign policy”. Prime Minister Levy Eshkol and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan also opposed negotiations with King Hussein, and supported the possibility of implementing an agreement based on the “Palestinian option.” In this spirit, Alon formulated his plan, and submitted it to then-Prime Minister Levy Eshkol on July 26, 1967.

Golda Meir, who succeeded Levy Eshkol as Prime Minister after his death in February 1969, began her term by saying, “I have set myself some milestones. First of all, what not to give up in any way: not Jerusalem, not the Golan, not Gaza, not Sharm el-Sheikh. The Alon plan appeals to me, because it does not include the large part of the Arab population”. With regard to Jewish settlement in the territories, she stated that “no government in Israel will ever be able to commit to a perpetual ban on the settlement of Jews anywhere in the Holy Land”. She later restated her position on the future of the territories in a meeting with US President Nixon in Washington on March 1, 1971. “In the territory that was once the Land of Israel, there are now two countries, one Jewish and one Arab, and there is no room for a third. The Palestinians must find a solution to their problem together with that Arab country, Jordan, because a Palestinian state between us and Jordan can only become a base from which it will be even more convenient to attack and destroy Israel”.

A distinction must be made between the policy of Levy Eshkol, who saw the territories as another bargaining chip in the political negotiations, which ended in their return, with the exception of Jerusalem, and Golda Meir, who saw no point in returning the conquered territories. “Drawing maps” she claimed “does not bring peace closer”. She announced that Israel seeks peace but does not believe in the peace plans that have been proposed. Although Rabin began his tenure with the Eshkol’s concept, he later preferred gradual agreements. “I prefer interim arrangements, with a trial period between stages, based on the (failed) attempt to move at once to a comprehensive arrangement”, and “transitioning to true peace is a process rather than a one-time act”.

The Likud government led by Menachem Begin first replaced the Labor government in 1977, but also refrained from annexing the West Bank and Gaza Strip because of the demographic balance and the US’s negative position, and in 1981 contented itself with annexing the Golan Heights. In a government debate on June 18, 1967, Minister Begin opposed the idea of autonomy, arguing that “the concept of autonomy leads to a Palestinian state in the logic of things [...] If we say autonomy, it is an invitation to an independent Palestinian state”. Nevertheless, on December 28, 1977, Begin presented his autonomy plan, the main

points of which were:

In Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, an administrative autonomy of the Arab residents in these areas will be established by their residents and for them. They will elect an administrative council whose seat will be Bethlehem, and will be in charge of administrative matters concerning the Arab residents of the Judea, Samaria and Gaza Strip areas. Security and public order will be entrusted to the Israeli authorities; Residents of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, regardless of citizenship, or without citizenship, are given the free choice to obtain Israeli or Jordanian citizenship; Israel reaffirms its right and claims to sovereignty over Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip.

In the first of two framework agreements signed in Washington on September 17, 1978 between Israel and Egypt at the conclusion of the Camp David Summit (1978), the autonomy plan looked different. The first part was devoted to the Palestinian cause and stated that "Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the representatives of the Arabs of the land of Israel should participate in negotiations on a solution to the problem of the Arabs of the land of Israel in all its aspects. In order to achieve this goal, negotiations must be conducted on Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip in three stages". Main points: Establishment of an elected self-administration authority for a transition period of 5 years. The existence of negotiations for a permanent settlement no later than three years from the beginning of the transition period, negotiations on the final status of the territories and negotiations for a peace agreement between Israel and Jordan based on the final status of the territories to be agreed upon.

The framework agreement dealing with autonomy failed to reach the status of a permanent agreement. Shimon Peres' attempt to reach an agreement with Jordan in 1987 - the 'London Agreement' - was sabotaged by Yitzhak Shamir. The opportunity came only a year later. The PLO, for its part, declared in 1988 that it was giving up on the whole of Palestine dream, in exchange for a state in 22% of mandatory Palestinian.

In 1993, after the mutual recognition between Israel led by Rabin and the PLO, the Oslo Accords were signed. The signing of the Oslo Accords was perceived by all parties - Israelis, Palestinians and the nations of the world - as saying that 'the truth in its time' became 'the internal truth', due to an Israeli will both to a democratic state with a Jewish majority and to the end of the conflict and the end of all claims.

Israel has handed over responsibility for 40% of the West Bank and 90% of its Palestinian population to the Palestinian Authority, as an

intermediate step on the road to a two-state solution. Following the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, Benjamin Netanyahu, who was elected in 1996, was forced to align himself for a time, due to the binding force of international agreements spawned by the "truth in its time", and to transfer Hebron to the Palestinian Authority (1997), as well as other territories under the "Wye River Memorandum" (In 1998).

With regard to the permanent settlement, Israel, led by Rabin and Barak, entered the political process with a different view than the Palestinian seeking a state on 22% of Mandatory Palestinian. It demanded the translation of its three interests beyond the Green Line - security, holy sites in Jerusalem and settlements - to unilateral annexation - free of charge. On October 4, 1995, Yitzhak Rabin presented his doctrine to the Knesset, according to which "we see the permanent solution within the territory of the State of Israel, which will include most of the territory of the land of Israel ... and alongside it a Palestinian entity that will house most Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. We want it to be an entity that is less than a state".

Ehud Barak, the first to start negotiating a permanent settlement, saw things in a similar way. At Camp David 2000, he proposed that "no less than 11% of the territory, where 80% of the settlers live, be annexed to Israel", without an exchange of territories, and that "for a few years Israel will control about a quarter of the Jordan Valley in order to monitor Jordan-Palestine crossings". With regard to Jerusalem, Barak proposed that "the external Muslim neighborhoods be transferred to Palestinian sovereignty (the 22 villages that Israel annexed in 1967), and the interior Muslim neighborhoods (original East Jerusalem), remain under Israeli sovereignty". Following the publication of the "Clinton Plan" in December 2000, Barak took another step toward the Palestinian position in Taba in 2001, but still insisted on annexing 6% -8% of the West Bank with no reciprocal concession.

In 2005, Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip, for the reason that Ariel Sharon mentioned at the Likud faction meeting on May 26, 2003: "Holding 3.5 million Palestinians under occupation is a bad thing for Israel, for the Palestinians, and for the Israeli economy ... Today there are 1.8 million Palestinians funded by international organizations. Do we want to take it upon ourselves? take medicine? Health? Education? Students? Let's take care of our students ... Do we want to stay in Jenin forever?, Nablus, Ramallah and Bethlehem? I do not think so". Sharon added about the disengagement from Gaza: "I believed and hoped that we could hold on forever ... but the changing reality in Israel, in the region and in the world

required me to have a different assessment and a change of attitude”.

The first to understand the proper scope of the negotiations was Ehud Olmert, who was elected as Kadima leader in 2006. Olmert’s understanding was not a product of sincere recognition of the Palestinian right, but a sober view of the existing reality. “Of course, if I could live in any part of the land of the Land of Israel, and also live in peace with our neighbors, and also preserve the Jewish character of the State of Israel, and also preserve it as a democratic state, and win the backing of the entire international community - then I would do it. But it is impossible, and when it is impossible, responsible leadership must recognize it... to reject a policy of cheap populism and to act responsibly and seriously”. That is, if Israel had been able to achieve the three national goals - the ‘internal true’ - then it would have done so. But this is not possible.

Mediated by Condoleezza Rice, the US Secretary of State in the Bush Jr. administration, the parties agreed on the following principles: Borders - ‘67 lines as a start (with a 1: 1 exchange of territories); Security - the demilitarization of the Palestinian state and extensive security arrangements; Jerusalem - division of East Jerusalem into two capitals without changing the status quo of the holy places; Refugees - Solving the refugee problem by return to the state of Palestine and compensating all refugees. Both parties submitted their proposals, which had very small gaps between them, and negotiations ended without the signing of an agreement.

Netanyahu, who was re-elected prime minister in 2009, halted any attempt to resume negotiations with the Palestinians, and encouraged further divisions among them. Netanyahu holds a position that is far from the parameters agreed upon in Annapolis. Trump, Jared Kushner and David Friedman were perfect for cultivating his conception, formulated together with the Messianic-nationalist right led by Naftali Bennett and Ayelet Shaked. The American team went for it and published his proposal.

Although the drafters of the “Deal of the Century” have chosen the title “two-state solution”, the proposal is a fatal blow to everything that has been achieved to date. It withdrew back the political discourse in Israel 15 years, to the illusion that an agreement without a concession on the West Bank is possible; and the Palestinian discourse is likely to be withdrawn by a century - to strive for a single state with an Arab majority (even before the return of refugees).

The proposed Palestinian “state” is a territory with no continuity and no external borders of its own, and these characteristics make it one large

enclave with a border almost 1,400 km long - 1.5 times the length of all Israeli borders today. Within this enclave there will be 15 Israeli enclaves (settlements), and within Israel there will be 54 Palestinian enclaves (villages). The IDF will become a defense army for enclaves, and the winding border will not allow for separate economic systems, nor will it allow the Palestinians to break away from the restrictive customs policy that exists today.

The “Deal of the Century” must be shelved and gone. It does not and will not have an Arab partner. The global reactions indicate that it does not support any Israeli annexation. Its consequences could cause great harm to Israel. It seeks to legitimize the existing situation, in which two different legal systems exist in the same area on the basis of ethnic criteria, and to add annexation to this situation, which will make it apartheid, or in the words of David Ben-Gurion from 1949, a “dictatorship of the minority”.

The initiative fatally hurts the PLO, which since 1988 has been trying to lead a political dialogue to resolve the conflict at the expense of the armed struggle. It will push for the abolition of security coordination with Israel.

It harms the value of citizenship in the proposal to transfer the Arab citizens of Israel to Palestine. It violates the rule of law and the right to property in the legalization of illegal outposts built on plundered Palestinian land. Finally, it will encourage the emigration of Palestinians from the neighborhoods outside the wall into the city of Jerusalem, and will accelerate negative Jewish immigration and the change in the demographic balance that has been developing to the detriment of Jews for the past 52 years.

Some would like to see Trump’s proposal as a kosher mark for annexation - after all, unilateral partial annexation by Israel will eventually force it to annex the entire West Bank, and degenerate into an ongoing military and political conflict, a deep rift in Israeli society and to severe damage to its economy.

In these years, from the opposition benches, the Labor Party platform stated in relation to its political position “the party will work to renew the political negotiations in a bilateral, regional and international framework to reach a permanent settlement based on the principle of two nation states for two peoples”. The parameters were similar to those agreed in Annapolis 2008. The Meretz party declared its political platform “a comprehensive regional peace plan, based on the outline of the Arab Peace Initiative from 2002”, and adopted the 2003 “Geneva Initiative” outline based on the same parameters.

In December 2015, Labor Chairman Amir Peretz launched the National Separation Plan, which was also based on the parameters that guided Mahmoud Abbas and Ehud Olmert in the Annapolis process in 2008. Since then, the chairmen of the Labor Party and Meretz have declared the same policy positions, and both parties were united in the March 2020 elections.

Conclusion

The leadership of the labor movement of the Zionist movement in the years before the establishment of a state is characterized by pragmatism that is required by the very position of leadership and responsibility, in contrast to other currents in Zionism, which in the absence of leadership, allowed themselves the position of opposition.

The desire to establish a state for the Jewish people was greater than the dream of the entire Land of Israel. Even if at first it was a step-by-step program in which “the truth in its time” was to be replaced by “the internal truth”, at the end of the founding war in 1948 the demographic and political reality prevailed in favor of a democratic state with a Jewish majority in parts of the land of Israel (78 percent).

The Six Day War and the intoxication of power it provoked rekindled the dream of ‘the internal truth’ but this too was forced to dissipate against the backdrop of demographic and political realities and motivated the leadership of the Labor movement to adopt a two state solution, ultimately based on international decisions, especially 242.

A decade in which the Zionist leftist parties were absent from state leadership left Netanyahu at the head of nationalist and messianic governments willing to begin annexation processes through law even at the cost of changing the order of priority between the three Zionist goals - from a Jewish-majority democracy to a Jewish Ethno-cracy and apartheid in the whole land of Israel.



The Goal: Greater Israel. The Means: the Dissolution of Democracy – Haaretz, February 19, 2021

The Yesha Council is currently marking 40 years since its establishment amid fears of the implementation of the autonomy agreement signed between Israel and Egypt at Camp David in 1978, and as an institutional continuation of the Gush Emunim movement. Its essence, and the danger inherent in it for the democratic regime of Israel, are reflected in its charter.

The Council, headed by Israel Harel, has renounced the authority of the elected institutions of Israeli democracy to decide on the issue of territories in exchange for peace agreements. The charter states: "The Council denies the establishment of a non-Israeli sovereign administration in parts of the land of Israel ... considers any proposal aimed at handing over parts of Israel to a foreign sovereign ... an illegal act".

This approach is a natural continuation of the teachings of the father of Gush Emunim, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, who claimed: "This land is ours ... and it belongs to the rule of Israel in all its biblical borders". He therefore added to the three offenses of "be killed and not pass (the commandments)" the return of territories. In an interview with Maariv in 1974, he said: "On this land, for all its borders ... we are all obliged to be killed and not to pass!".

Indeed, the Israeli leadership saw the people of Gush Emunim and their perceptions as a danger to Israeli democracy. In 1979, Yitzhak Rabin wrote about them (in "Service Book"): "Such a wild gang, taking a stand in the name of heaven ... all under a disgusting guise of love of Israel, breaking into the streets rudely to inflict fear and terror". And: "In Gush Emunim I saw a very serious phenomenon – a cancer in the body of Israeli democracy". Menachem Begin wrote in December 1977: "I once said this in an argument to the people of Gush Emunim ... You have one weakness - you have developed a complex of messianism among you".

The political home of religious Zionism, the National Religious Party, was also taken over by these members. They pushed the moderate founders and put the land of Israel above the people of Israel, and gave the Torah of Israel a metaphysical interpretation, according to which the times of redemption began, but this is conditional on the conquest of the land and the expulsion of the Palestinians from it. They turned Zionist nationalism into a messianic nationalism, and even went so far as to adopt Meir Kahana's racist doctrine. In an interview with 'Davar' in September 1994, the chairman of the National Religious Party, Yosef

Burg, said: They glorify the integrity of the land, and forgot the integrity of the state, forgot the integrity of the Torah, forgot the integrity of the camp. If through the idea of the integrity of the land it is possible to reach Kahana mentally, it is a great fault".

The great sin of those leaders, secular and religious, was that they believed that it would be possible to separate the "security settlements" in the Jordan Valley and the Jerusalem Envelope (Alon Plan) from the Messianic settlements in the West Bank, and to control the Messianic settlements over time. And so, Rabin stated in his first government: "To the heart of the West Bank, densely populated by the Arabs, we must not push Jewish settlers ... there is no need for it from a security point of view".

The Levy Eshkol government, which started the settlement project, knew that both types and areas of settlements are invalid. A telegram sent from the Foreign Office to Ambassador Rabin in the United States in March 1968 states: "Our consistent line has been and still is to evade discussion with foreign parties on the situation in the territories ... An explicit recognition on our part of the applicability of the Convention (Geneva) will highlight serious problems in terms of the Convention regarding ... settlement and more".

The defense establishment cooperated with the attempt to deceive the world, which later turned out to be self-deception. In a secret telegram sent on September 27, 1967, by Shlomo Gazit, chairman of the Political-Security Coordination Committee in the Territories, to Chief of Staff Rabin regarding the "holding on to Gush Etzion," he wrote: "As a 'cover' for the needs of the political campaign, the holding of the religious youth in Gush Etzion will appear as a holding of a military Nahal (Brigade) (acronym for Fighting Pioneer Youth). Instructions in this regard will be given to the settlers in the area. There is no intention to take practical steps, by the IDF, to implement this 'cover'". The move was approved by Prime Minister Eshkol, although he said: "These 'kids' will become bucks", and didn't know how right he was. The head of Yesha Council did not distinguish between the "security spaces" set by the government and the West Bank as a whole, did not attach importance to the binding international conventions, or to any commitment of theirs, which contradicts their long-term goal of "inheriting the whole land". Rabbi Shlomo Goren, one of the leaders of the camp, stated: "There is no force of any national law (Knesset Law) or international law, to change our status, our rights ... The law of these areas, according to Torah law, is Israel under Jewish rule and there is sovereignty, property and Jewish ownership throughout".

When the Rabin government decided in 1992 to stop establishing new

settlements, the Yesha Council moved to establish illegal outposts with the assistance of the Settlement Division and budgets from unruly government ministries. Even when its people pledged to evacuate some of the outposts in an agreement with the Ehud Barak government in 1999, they never implemented it. Today they call it in evasive language the “young settlement”. A report by Supreme Court Justice Edmund Levy (2012) states: “A phenomenon has been revealed to us regarding Israeli settlement in Judea and Samaria that is not appropriate for a state that advocates the rule of law ... It should be clear to the followers of the settlement as well as to the political echelon that they are commanded to act only within the framework of the law, and that state institutions have a duty to act in the future with determination to enforce the law”.

When the Sharon government implemented the disengagement plan from Gaza and northern Samaria in accordance with Knesset legislation, the heads of the Yesha Council did not honor the agreements they signed as individuals. Plia Albeck, lawyer of the Ministry of Justice explained in an interview with Haaretz in March 2005: “There is no property right (for the settlers, because it was provided with the restriction that they might have to return the land, if the military administration ends ... the land agreements signed by each of the settler families ... include clauses that allow the agreements to be revoked”.

The heart of the Yesha Council’s struggle is to prevent any permanent agreement with the Palestinians - which in their eyes will hurt the deterministic process determined by God for the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the “House of David”. As part of the struggle, they deny the legitimacy of the Israeli government to reach a permanent agreement. In 1986, the Yesha Council decided that “the return of territories in Judea, Samaria and Gaza is a crime”, and that “any government in Israel that commits one of the above crimes will be treated as an illegal government ...”.

Following the Oslo Accords, Menachem Felix, one of the settler leaders, wrote in the newspaper “Nekuda” in December 1993: “The current government in the State of Israel has no authority to continue to govern the Jewish state ... it is an illegitimate government”. Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, a student of Rabbi Kook, even denied the legitimacy of a majority decision in his book “The People and Their Land, the Resurrection of the Nation in the Land” (1999): “And even if the majority of the people support this shameful and dangerous course (evacuation of territories) - there is no moral justification for this. It is not enough for the decision to be reached by a political apparatus in order for it to be moral”.

The Yesha Council continues to lead its messianic vision for Israel, which

is “all ours”, even at the cost of the loss of Israeli democracy, as Bnei Katzover, chairman of the Samaria Settlers Committee, told Haaretz in January 2012: “Israeli democracy has ended its role, and it must disintegrate and bow to Judaism”.

The messianic stance also led to opposition to the outgoing US President Donald Trump’s initiative, as stated on the Yesha Council website, “Trump’s plan and the map alongside it promote the dangerous establishment of a Palestinian state. The land of Israel belongs to us”.

The messianism of the members of the Yesha Council, and their denial of the authority of the elected institutions of Israeli democracy, do not stop in the West Bank. In addition to the ongoing attempts to violate the Disengagement Law and take over the Chumash and Shanur lands in northern Samaria, which were evacuated in 2005, it is interesting to read in the council’s website in its answer to the question, “Why was the letter Ayin left in the council’s name?”. The explanation: “The letter Ayin, that represented the Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip - has remained and will remain, and not by chance ... This is a signal for the future: we, with God’s help, will return and see Gush Katif rising from its ashes”.

Even today, on the eve of the Knesset elections, the appropriate answer to the Yesha Council and its supporters among the right-wing candidates for prime minister, remains Rabin’s will: “Against their basic view, which runs counter to Israel’s democratic foundations, it was necessary to fight an ideological struggle, revealing the true meaning of their positions and ways of operating”. Otherwise, the fate of the State of Israel will be sealed, and as Isaiah Leibowitz predicted, “the Messianic doctrine of Rabbi Kook will cause the transition ‘from humanity through nationalism to animalism’ and turn ‘the people of God’ into the ‘people of the land’ (Am haaretz - uncivilized, ignorant)”.

Israel and the Palestinians

Rehavam Ze'evi, your Prophecy will Soon Come True - Haaretz, January 2, 2018

In the coming weeks, Rechavam Ze'evi ("Gandhi") is expected to win the status of prophet or at least the fortune teller of the new Jerusalem. The prospective candidates to reward him this prize are ministers Naftali Bennett and Zeev Elkin. They managed to hold a lengthy debate in the Knesset before the final approval of the law, which would allow the separation of the Palestinian neighborhoods beyond the separation barrier from the Jerusalem municipality and their transfer into a new Israeli local authority.

Ze'evi, a central figure on the committee that was appointed immediately after the Six-Day War by the Eshkol government to determine the new borders of Jerusalem, was asked by Justice Minister Yaakov Shapira what logic is behind his new proposed boundaries. Ze'evi's reply is about to become prophetic: these were aimed at "maximizing the area added to Jerusalem, allowing it to become a large metropolis" but added: "If it becomes clear in the future that we have gone too far in including territories and population, then Jerusalem proper could be separated from the outlying areas, which would receive the status of a regional council."

This answer, which was given exactly 50 years ago, naturally raises the memory of another, truly important "prophecy"- the decision to establish the State of Israel, exactly 50 years after Benjamin Ze'ev Herzl envisioned it. But with the dimension of time the similarity between the two ends.

Ze'evi's original proposal was to expand Jerusalem by no less than 200 square kilometers, a vast area east of the city that extends to Wadi Kelt. This decision would have led to the loss of the precious Jewish majority in Jerusalem that had been created there for the first time since 1870. This was a such a messianic proposal that even Ze'evi himself doubted. At the cabinet meeting, it was Defense Minister Moshe Dayan who knew how to block the destructive idea: "I know the Jewish appetite, if you add the airport and Ein Prat, rather than annexing the other half of Jerusalem, we would be dividing the West Bank in half and I am against it."

It turns out that the government's decision to be content with the annexation of "only" 70 square kilometers did not render Ze'evi's prophecy irrelevant. We still went too far by annexing 11 times the area of Jordanian East Jerusalem, which covered only 6 square kilometers. We went too far by turning 70,000 Palestinians into Israeli permanent residents, who constituted 26 percent of the united city's population and have now grown to almost 40 percent. We went too far by coveting

the territories while ignoring their Arab residents for 50 years, as the mayor and former prime minister, Ehud Olmert, admitted in an interview in 2012: “No Israeli government since 1967 has done anything to unify the city ... Although we invested in Jerusalem, we consciously invested mainly in the western part of the city and in the new neighborhoods like Har Homa, Pisgat Ze’ev, Ramot and Gilo, and we did not invest in the areas that in my opinion will not be under Israeli sovereignty in the future.”

We went too far by making “united” Jerusalem into a city characterized by negative security, economic and social trends that harm all its residents and threaten to turn the capital of Israel into a poor, terror-stricken city with a weak Jewish majority. We went too far by creating a situation that causes an average of 8,000 Jews to leave the city each year.

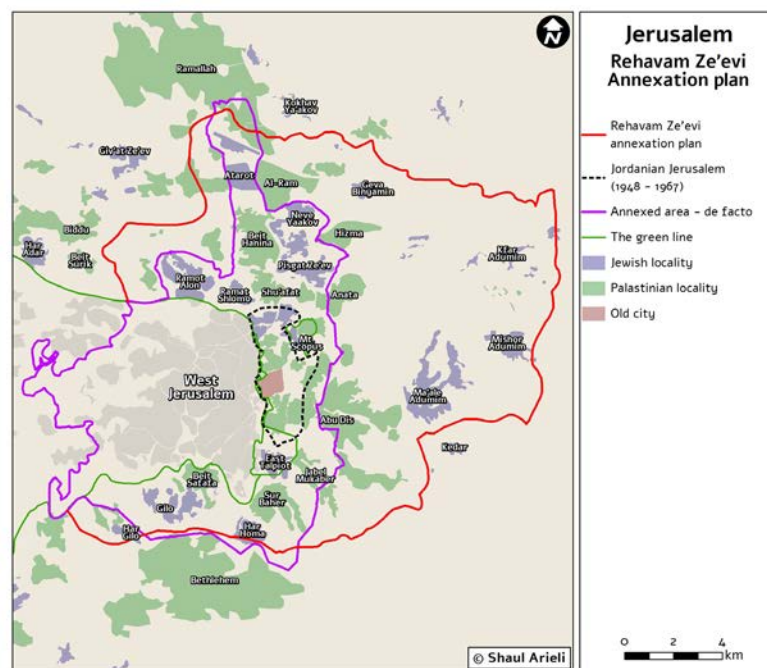
50 years before the decision to establish the Jewish state, Herzl concluded the First Zionist Congress thus: “Zionism aspires to establish a home for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel, which will be guaranteed by public law.” In other words, the Jewish state will be built on the basis of international recognition, both political and legal, of the justice of its demand to establish a national home for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. Therefore, it was Ben Gurion who insisted on adding the following sentence to the Declaration of Independence: “On the basis of the resolution of the United Nations Assembly.” On the other hand, recognition of the annexation of East Jerusalem and other areas of the West Bank was then and now denied by the entire international community. Even Trump’s last statement does not relate to the current boundaries of Jerusalem.

While the Zionist movement was certain of the justice of its claim and morality, the Israeli government tried at the time to conceal the act of annexation with all sorts of pretexts. As Foreign Ministry official wrote to Prime Minister Eshkol’s chief of staff: “I suggested to Dr. Herzog (the governor of the West Bank) that immediately after the adoption of the law for the unification of municipal areas, a number of villages would be annexed to Nablus or Bethlehem, for the sake of ‘administrative efficiency’, in order to camouflage the main intention.”

The Zionist movement saw the state as being democratic and liberal, but Ze’evi and his current heirs regard the Palestinians as stateless and underprivileged people, whose sole purpose is to disappear from the Promised Land. After all, there is no municipal logic in establishing an authority consisting of two refugee camps, neighborhoods and villages that are miles apart. The messianic and racist ideology of these thinkers prevents them from considering transferring these neighborhoods to the

jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority under a fair, ongoing program of rehabilitation, development and compensation program. There is but one logic: “let them go to hell” and not influence our municipal elections.

The lesson of Dayan’s “Jewish appetite” has apparently not been learned. Evidence of this was given to us this week when about 1,500 members of the Likud Central Committee voted in favor of a resolution requiring the party to support the application of Israeli sovereignty in Judea, Samaria and the Jordan Valley. The political, demographic, economic, social, and moral realities are transparent and have no effect on these voters. All warnings of the forced annexation of millions of Palestinians with national aspirations recognized by the international community fall on deaf ears. Not even half a prophet is needed to understand that if this move is adopted, it is the end of the State of Israel we know and want to raise our children and their children in.



Peace Plan Fantasies-Haaretz January 23, 2018

"So what do you suggest?" For many years, this was the question that shattered the arguments of the nationalists and the messianic who opposed a permanent status agreement, trying to convince the public of the dangers of two states. Despite the passage of over two decades since the Oslo Agreement, the question remains valid. However, in recent years, the leaders of this camp have sown sand in the eyes of some of the public by spreading "ideas" and "plans" for an alternative solution, even if baseless and with no practical and political feasibility.

In contrast to those who deny and ignore the history of the conflict and the contradictory narratives of the parties, who seek a federation, a confederation or a state of all its citizens, this camp is careful to show its awareness of the impossibility of annexing the entire West Bank to Israel. Its ideas are brimming with "solutions" to the tension between the desire to annex the land and the threat that granting citizenship to Palestinians poses to Israel's Jewish identity.

To these thinkers - Benny Begin and his emphasis on the status quo, Mordechai Kedar and his "emirates", the National Union's "Decisive Action Plan", the Jewish Home's "Lull Plan", and the Likud Central Committee's resolution on annexation – we can now add President Trump, who adopted and promotes Prime Minister Netanyahu's vision. Even if it boils down to the slogan "two states for two peoples," it ridicules the Palestinian Authority, and like others, it is based on ignorance, detachment from reality, aggression, disregard for international law and the rest of the international community, and a slippery rewriting of history.

Benny Begin is not asking for revolutions. Last October, he wrote: "The establishment of foreign sovereignty should not be permitted west of the Jordan ... As much as possible and dependent on us, within the limits of the security risk, we should allow the Arab residents of Samaria and Judea to live in comfort, including the right to work in Israel, and in the future enable their social and economic development." He concluded that "in these matters there is of course nothing new, and innovation is indeed impossible." In other words, as long as the Palestinians struggle for their right to a state as recognized by the international community, Israel will prevent them from attaining social and economic welfare and development through continuing control and occupation.

Mordechai Kedar, who serves as the "shofar" of the camp in the Arab world, admitted in an interview in July 2016 that "I am not concerning myself with the technical details ... I'm just laying out the general model." That did not stop him from drawing up an illogical plan that includes

Jericho, Hebron, Tulkarm, Qalqiliya and Gaza, "each of which is a kind of city-state." For example, "Nablus and its nearby towns would have their own passport and government, and a political and economic structure." Could it be that Kedar is not aware that this model was appropriate for antiquity and the Middle Ages? That apart from a few unique examples, this model simply does not exist in the 21st century? Even if we assume that Kedar deliberately ignores East Jerusalem and its 350,000 Palestinian residents, who will probably acquire Israeli citizenship, we cannot refrain from asking: Has he not heard of the 200,000-strong Bethlehem, Beit-Jala, Beit-Sahour conurbation, excluded from the proposal? Has Kedar forgotten Jenin, where there are a quarter of a million Palestinians living without Jewish settlements?

Kedar continues: "The rural area slated for Israeli annexation will include about 10 percent of the Arab residents, who will be given the possibility of obtaining full Israeli citizenship." Has Kedar failed to notice that in fact, the rural areas surrounding his "emirates" include about 70 percent of the Palestinian population? Kedar remembers to state that "the crossings between Israel and each of the countries will be a kind of border crossing, and movement in the area will be possible through visas." Does he realize that in order to enforce this, a security barrier must be built around each "emirate"? That Israel would be required to construct and maintain hundreds of gates in order to allow the cultivation of Palestinian-owned fields? That it would have to monitor hundreds of kilometers of inter-emirate routes, since he would generously allow the emirates to form a federation?

Bezalel Smotrich and Uri Ariel have moved farther into the past than Kedar, and as a model of the desired treatment for Palestinians today, they launched a program based on the days of Joshua bin Nun. According to the Midrash, he sent three letters to the inhabitants of the land on the verge of entering it: "Whoever want to acquiesce - will acquiesce" - that is, to the annexation of the West Bank to Israel and the establishment of six administrative districts for the Palestinians (suggestive of Kedar's "emirates"); "Whoever wants to go - will go" - that is, regardless of the Palestinian ideal of Sumud, receive compensation in exchange for emigrating; "Whoever wants to fight - will fight" - "We will fight the Palestinians who choose to continue the armed struggle against the State of Israel, and follow the normal conduct of wars." In other words, a golden opportunity for a second Nakba.

Naftali Bennett and his colleagues from the Jewish Home Party have exceeded all others with their sophisticated smoke-and-mirrors "Lull Plan". Bennett admits that "the full annexation of Judea and Samaria

and their two million Arab residents" is not feasible and "jeopardizes" the future of the State of Israel for security, demographic and moral reasons. Therefore, he seeks to "present a sober solution that serves the interests of the State of Israel," in the form of Israel's annexation of Area C, which covers 60 percent of the West Bank, and maintains Palestinian autonomy over Areas A and B. Is that so?

A quick glance at the map of the interim agreement reveals that Areas A and B are not the two virtual areas appearing in the video explaining the plan, but in reality, are made up of about 169 isolated Palestinian blocs and settlements. So too, Area C is made up of dozens of narrow corridors that crisscross the entire West Bank. How does Bennett intend to keep his promise to create a "full transport continuum for the Palestinians," one that allows "Arab residents to reach any point in Judea and Samaria, without checkpoints or soldiers?" By building dozens of connecting roads, interchanges and tunnels worth billions? By using hundreds of roadblocks, UAVs and IDF patrols for supervision?

Does he really intend to grant citizenship to Palestinians in Area C? Even if the dry facts count 300,000 people living there and not 50,000, as the plan notes? How does he plan to supervise entry into Israel from the territories of autonomy? By dismantling the existing security fence, in which NIS 15 billion was invested, and the construction of a new 1,800-kilometer fence at a cost of NIS 27 billion, involving an annual maintenance cost of NIS 4 billion, with a couple of army divisions for security?

How does he intend to secure the property rights of the Palestinians who own more than half of the Area C annexed to Israel? Is it by opening hundreds of agricultural gates to 350 Palestinian communities in the Autonomy, some of whose land has been annexed to Israel? Is he aware of the thousands of soldiers who will be required for such a routine task? Perhaps he is not aware of the threat posed by any such gate, as the IDF wrote to the High Court of Justice: "Every crossing point increases the risk involved in the infiltration of terrorists into Israel and constitutes a point of friction that increases the risk to the security forces in charge of the crossing point."

The Likud Central Committee unanimously approved the proposal to apply Israeli sovereignty to settlement areas - the "blocs" of Jewish settlement. Do the members know that with the exception of Gush Etzion (and the evacuated Gush Katif), the settlements have never been built in this pattern? In the Jordan Valley "bloc", the average distance between the settlements is 21 kilometers, 60 percent of the settlements are isolated, one-third of the settlements live about 60 families, and half

of them have a population of less than 1,000, and the vast majority of the 15 largest settlements are located on the Green Line or near Jerusalem.

The final participant in this parade of illusions is Benjamin Netanyahu, who enjoys the support and encouragement of the American administration. It was hard to miss the enthusiasm in the Prime Minister's voice when he announced during Vice President Mike Pence's visit that he would support Trump's efforts for peace, and it is even more difficult to assume that the source of the enthusiasm is his lack of knowledge of the details of the proposal being formulated. The document submitted by Saeb Erekat to Mahmoud Abbas reveals content suitable for Netanyahu's school as a glove for the hand, relying on the tremendous effort invested by ambassadors Ron Dermer and David Friedman in formulating and marketing them. And for those who have forgotten, the latter believes that Israel occupies only two percent of the West Bank.

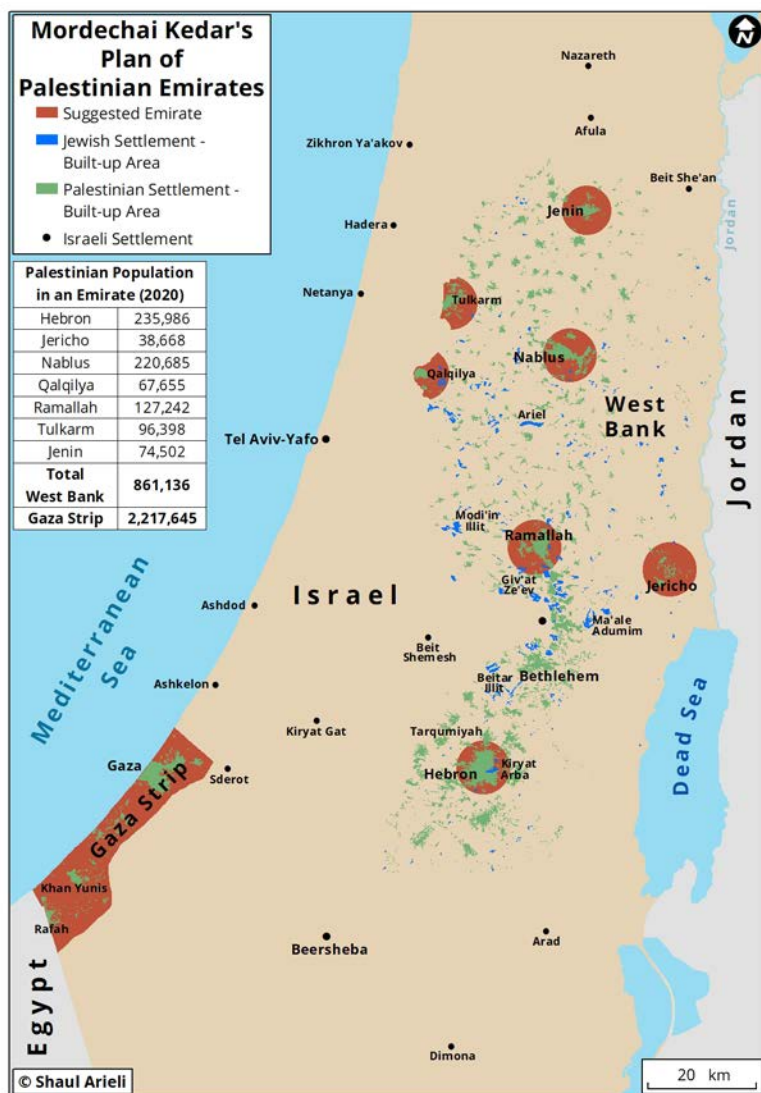
An "American plan" that rejects the 1967 lines as a starting point and enables Israel to annex 10 percent of the West Bank without territorial exchange, is quite removed from the international consensus and the Palestinian position. Foregoing the possibility of a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem can only make the Arab and Islamic World stand by the Palestinian "refusenik" approach. The possibility of Israeli military intervention in the demilitarized state of Palestine presents a new definition of the term "sovereignty". Therefore, the chances of acceptance of this plan, which undermines international resolutions and is based on forcefulness and the existing balance of power between Israel and the Palestinians, are no higher than the chances of the "Emirates Plan" being adopted. On the other hand, the chances that a Palestinian refusal to a proposal would legitimize the adoption of one or similar other plans by Israel (annexation of Ma'aleh Adumim or Greater Jerusalem) are much higher.

This line of thought reflects the approach espoused by the person who suggested making do with one railway track. To those who asked how the train could go both ways on one track, he replied: "I'm only making a proposal." It was Yehoshafat Harkabi who wrote about the fall of Masada and warned that "the greatness of the vision, upon which its realization is conditioned, is its realism: although the vision seeks to transcend reality, its legs are always planted in it. That is what separates a vision from a fantasy, floating on the wings of illusion."

Hopefully, these words are sufficient to demonstrate that these "plans" are not visions, but hallucinations, ignoring reality and its urgency. The hope that ideas without any feasibility will shape a desired reality is a proven recipe to a deterioration into a disaster. Let us hope that we will

not need the fan of reality to spread messianic dust in all directions, and rediscover the conflict with all its sharpness, and the necessary insight that the chance to settle it lies in the idea of separation and the establishment of two states.





What Ben-Gurion Understood about Gaza that Netanyahu does not Understand, - Haaretz, April 12, 2018

The events on the Gaza Strip border re-ignite the fundamental tensions that exist between the military echelon, the IDF and the political echelon, the Israeli government. One tension emanates from the military's commitment to defending the borders of the state and its inhabitants, in war and routine, in order to ensure the political echelon full freedom of action to achieve its political goals, and the other hand the government's commitment to establish clear political directives and end goals for every war and operation. Second tension emanates from the military's commitment to provide the security required for the stability and development of the Israeli economy, and on the other hand the government's commitment to provide the military with the necessary budgets to build, prepare, and operate in order to grant security.

It seems that 70 years after its establishment, the State of Israel returned to deal with the Gaza Strip in patterns that characterized its policies and activities in the first years after the War of Independence. It turns out that despite the differences in the characteristics of the periods, it can be stated that the Netanyahu government did not forget anything and did not learn anything. Like later governments – Eshkol's, Golda's and Begin's - the first, led by Ben-Gurion, sought to annex the Gaza Strip to Israel.

At the Reconciliation Conference in Lausanne, Ben-Gurion sought to accept the proposal for the annexation of the Gaza Strip, with its many refugees, and in his diary summarized his considerations:

- The Gaza coast is extremely important.
- The land is good, and it is possible to establish (there) fishing villages - which have both economic value and security value.
- Avoid Egyptian presence in this place – its potential presence there in the future could become a serious military danger - on land, and even more at sea
 - Avoid the presence of Abdullah (Jordan) in the Gaza strip that might bring in the British again. That will inevitably lead to a territorial conflict - if Abdullah rules Gaza, he (or his successor) will have to demand a corridor from the Gaza Strip to Jordan.

Like most Israeli governments, the Ben-Gurion government did not see the armistice lines signed in 1949 as the final borders of the State of Israel. Ben-Gurion did not seek peace agreements with Arab countries

and waited for an opportunity to expand the country's borders. After meeting with Abba Even, he writes in his diary, 'War Diary III, 996': "Sees no need to run for peace. The armistice is enough for us ... we will wait a few years".

The unwillingness of Arab countries to reach permanent agreements with Israel served Israeli policy and led to a political stalemate. The burden of maintaining the new border line with the Gaza Strip, which, in addition to its original 100,000 residents, was also crowded with about 200,000 refugees, was placed on the young IDF. The main mission was to deal with those refugees who wanted to return to their ruined villages, save property details, harvest grain or sow for the next year.

In the years 1956-1948, Israel fought against 10,000-15,000 infiltration attempts of refugees every year. To these were added professional infiltrators, who dealt with robbery (of an annual average of several hundred thousand Israeli pounds) and murder (about 200 civilians and dozens of Israeli security personnel) and later also sabotage and espionage in favor of Jordan and Egypt.

Due to this activity, the major threat to Israel was the abandonment of the settlements in the periphery, as the departure of the Israeli residents could have undermined Israel's claim to concurred areas that were designated, according to the partition plan, for the Arab state. The poor state of Israel was forced to spend 1.5 million pounds a year in the 1950s in order to fund the guard alone.

The IDF, which lacked sufficient forces, adequate weapons and a separating physical barrier, was forced to establish strict opening fire regulations, as it appeared in the Givati Brigade in 1953: "The fight against infiltrations in the border area, at all hours of the day and night, will be carried out mainly by opening fire, without warning, on any individual or group who is not remotely identified as our forces or as Israeli citizens, and who is present at the moment of their discovery in the territory of Israel".

In this resolute policy, in the years 1949-1956, the IDF killed between 2,700 and 5,000 infiltrators, most of them unarmed. The Foreign Minister of the Israeli government, Moshe Sharett, brought the harsh international moral criticism of this policy to a cabinet meeting. The Commander of the Southern Command, Moshe Dayan, answered in a way that described both the difficult reality in the Gaza Strip, the characteristics of the "infiltrators", the patterns of IDF action and the impossible conditions under which IDF soldiers had to operate:

"If we take the moral standard, which Moshe Sharett mentioned, then I

want to ask: If the Arabs crossing [the border] reap the grain they sowed in our territory, with their wives and children, and we open fire on them, will it withstand moral criticism? [...] If there are large areas, more than 10 km deep, that a Jewish foot does not step on, and the grass has risen in them, and on the other side sit 200,000 hungry Arabs, and they cross the fields and we shoot them, will it withstand the criticism? If the Arabs pass by to take out the grain they left in the abandoned villages and we hit them by mines and they return amputated with no hand or foot [...] Will it withstand the criticism? [It may be that] it will not stand up to criticism, [but] I do not know of any other method of maintaining boundaries. If shepherds and reapers are allowed to cross the borders, then tomorrow there will be no borders for the State of Israel".

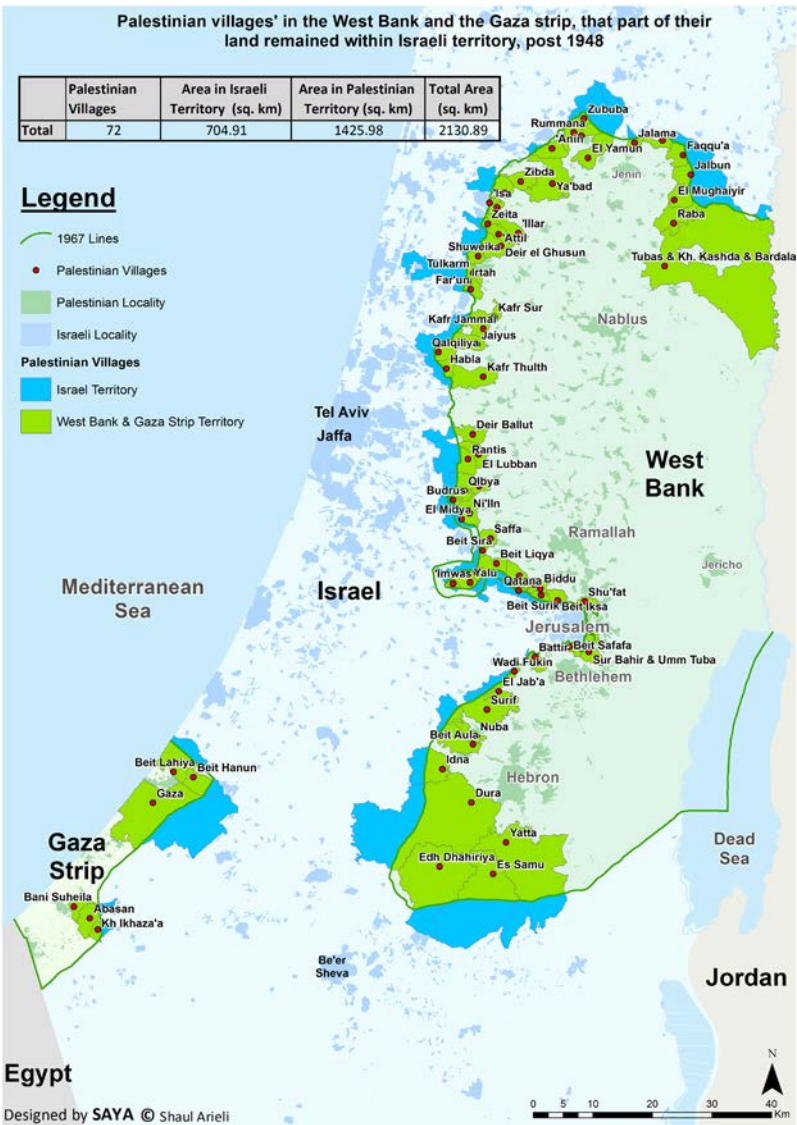
Ben-Gurion's disillusionment, which is so much needed today, occurred after the Sinai War in 1956 and the IDF's withdrawal to the Green Line under pressure from the United States and the Soviet Union. In an interview with Haaretz on October 2, 1959, he said: "Anyone who believes that today it is possible to solve historical questions between peoples with military force alone, does not know in which world we live". "Every local question now becomes international, and therefore our relations with the peoples of the world are no less important than our military strength, which we must continue to cultivate, in order to deter attacks and to win if we have to fight".

The Netanyahu governments of the past decade, like its predecessors, have not sought to occupy or annex the Gaza Strip. Hamas' refusal to recognize Israel and its takeover of the Gaza Strip, serve the Israeli position seeking to maintain the political stalemate, the closure of Gaza and the "creeping annexation" policy in the West Bank, while crippling Mahmoud Abbas' status.

Although the government provides the IDF with the necessary budgets for maintenance of security against the Gaza Strip - an "obstacle" above and below ground, many forces, special weapons, the Iron Dome and more - it does not consider any other political alternative, in stark contrast to the recommendations that appeared in the State Comptroller's report on Operation Protective Edge. Despite the statements of the chief of staff, the IDF and former heads of the defense establishment regarding the limitations of power and the need for a political process, the Netanyahu government repeatedly rejects any comprehensive and acceptable political way of resolving the conflict through two-states for two peoples.

The violent events taking place today on the Gaza border teach us once again that this policy has no use, even if it enjoys the support of the

Trump administration. The burden of guarding the Gaza border is falling again today, on the eve of the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the state, on IDF soldiers and snipers and on the instructions given to them to open fire. The chief prosecutor of the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Pato Bensuda, announced that the tribunal is monitoring what is happening in the Gaza Strip and stressed that instructions for live shooting at protesters may be considered a crime under international law.



It is Better to Learn One Thing From Abbas's Speech, Its Conclusion – Haaretz, May 7, 2018

Jewish messianism, redemption by heaven, served as an excuse to explain the Jewish people's failure to take responsibility for their fate and as a justification for their inability to transform their status from a collection of dispersed and largely devoid communities to a sovereign people in their homeland. The belief was that with the coming of the messiah all the problems of the Jewish people, and the entire world, will come to their solution and the kingdom of Shadi will have to take its place on earth. Very comforting, very liberating, but impractical as a solution. Modern Zionism - Herzl, Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, Jabotinsky and others - against the background of the dramatic changes in the world, especially in Europe and the Middle East, mainly the growth of national movements and the formulation of the new world order after the First World War based on the principle of self-determination, pushed back against the excuses, and gave birth to the State of Israel. It was not deterred by a tremendous, stubborn, sophisticated effort that exacted a heavy toll on it until its success. Zionist leaders generally read the political, security, settlement, demographic and social maps and adapted the path to achieving the goal - the establishment of a democratic state with a Jewish majority, even at the cost of giving up part of the Land of Israel.

Similarly, to the messianic vision for the future, where the 'wolf lives with the lamb', so to, many of the advocates of the two-state solution have recently sought to establish the one state in which Jews, Arabs and others will live in equality. In their distressed messianic dream of the one state - a federation, a confederation, a state of all its citizens, and so forth - they seek to remove from themselves the sense of responsibility and commitment to achieving the only possible solution by agreement. To justify their new position, they do not place the universal value of the human being above the national and religious value, but relay on practical grounds. They adopt the mantra of the opponents of compromise, partition and separation, which holds that the demographic and spatial reality in the West Bank is irreversible, or that 20 percent of Israelis living beyond the Green Line cannot be evacuated, and sometimes they will argue that at this stage there is no Palestinian and / or Israeli partner for the two states solution.

There is no need to repeat the entire factual argument, based on the parties' proposals in negotiations, which shows that the lie has no legs and indicates that there is full feasibility for a two-state solution based on the known parameters. Allowing Israel to maintain four of five Israelis living beyond the Green Line in a territorial swap of only 4 percent, to improve

Israel's security situation, to make most of Jerusalem its recognized capital by the entire world, to resolve the issue of the Palestinian refugees without returning to Israel, to declare an end to demands and the end of the conflict, to sign a peace agreements with the Arab world, and to create a new coalition of alliances to curb the influence of the Shiite axis led by Iran and the strengthening radical jihadist organizations. The infeasibility of reaching a final status agreement today stems from the lack of political readiness and capacity in Israel, much more than on the Palestinian side, and from the strengthening of the ethos of the conflict on both sides at the expense of the ethos of peace.

In other words, the new one-state messengers have despaired of achieving the possible not because of the political and social impossibility of solving their preferred two-state solution, but because of the baseless claims about its physical-spatial feasibility. Instead of continuing to maintain the great effort for the necessary change in the political system and in Israeli society, they prefer to succumb to the imaginary reality that the anti-two states solutionists have planted in their minds, to sink into helplessness and passivity while presenting a utopian goal that lacks any practical feasibility. The new messianisms, like the old ones, ignore in their proposal four main factors that make their dream impossible: the lessons of 100 years of history of the conflict, the social rifts in Israel and the ethos of the conflict, fueled by Netanyahu and his government, the processes of post-territorial nationalism and the growing religiosity of Jews and Arabs.

History is fraught with insights into the cultural differences between the peoples and especially their opposite national aspirations. In 1919, Ben-Gurion stated that "there is a national question here: we want the land to be ours ... The Arabs want the land to be theirs." Later, in his testimony to the Peel Commission in 1936, the Mufti Hussein argued that "it is impossible to bring two peoples so different from each other to live in one country, and every attempt will be declared a failure." In January 1937, Lord Phil concluded his report with the words "A conflict that is impossible to suppress had erupted between two national communities .. There is nothing in common between them. They differ in religion and language. Their cultural and social lives. Their ways of thinking and their way of life are as far from each other as their national aspirations ...".

This was also agreed upon in the partition report of 1947: "Today there are about 650,000 Jews in Palestine and about 1,200,000 Arabs, different in their way of life and in their political interests". These aspirations were translated into two national narratives that contradict each other and negate the right of the other to self-determination in Palestine / Land

of Israel. For example, Abbas referred to the Balfour Declaration in his address to the United Nations General Assembly last year: "... 100 years have passed since the infamous Balfour Declaration. If this were not enough, the British Mandate turned its decision into policy and measures that contributed to the most severe crimes inflicted upon a peace-seeking people in their country".

More blatant, sharper, and more determined is Musa Abu Marzuq of Hamas who wrote in 2007: "Why should anyone recognize Israel's 'right' to exist when it never recognized the basic crimes of genocide and ethnic cleansing as the means by which it took control of our towns and villages, farms and orchards, and turned us into a nation of refugees? Why should the Palestinians 'recognize' the monstrous crime committed by the founders of Israel, which continues to exist through its distorted and modern state of apartheid ...". On the other side is Netanyahu, who rejected the Oslo Accords in 1993, claiming that "this is not what the Jewish people have been fighting for, this piece of land, for three thousand years. That is not why Zionism was founded, in order to establish a state for Yasser Arafat and his cronies, in the cradle of our homeland", he added in an interview in 2015: "Under the conditions they want now, a Palestinian state is out of the question". The national narratives are neither inclined to complete each other, nor conciliatory to form the common basis for the establishment of one political framework of any kind.

The Peel Commission was the first to point out the disillusionment required from the one-state idea because it was "a struggle between two national movements whose demands are valid and cannot be reconciled with each other ... except division ...". On the same insight, the 1947 Partition Commission repeated that: "the basic assumption behind the partition proposal is that the claims on Palestine, both of the Arabs and of the Jews, are both valid and cannot be reconciled with each other". That is, the solution cannot be just, because each side has its own justice. It must be practical and fair in which each side remains with half of his glass empty.

The partition resolution determined a political division but economic unity in all areas of the economy, infrastructure and development, similar to some of the proposals today. Paul Mohan, the deputy representative of the Swedish delegation to the Partition Committee, who was in charge on the maps, explains the rationale for the division of the two countries into three regions: "I tried to unify two irreconcilable ideas: hope for Jewish-Arab cooperation and fear of Jewish-Arab hostility ... if the sides would have wanted to live in peace, it could have been realized

with my partition plan ... ". But it did not happen. Fear and hostility overcame hope and the War of Independence broke out. The fear and hostility of today, which are constantly being nurtured, surpass those of the time, because of the remnants of the War of Independence and its ramifications to this day. "... Our refusal to abandon the victims of 1948 and their descendants is not a rejection of its sake" Abu Marzuq wrote. Hope and desire for cooperation are much lower than those of 1947 because of Israel's economic superiority and its lack of dependence on Palestinians in every area.

Since its establishment, Israel has been accompanied by various social rifts, but its leaders, even if they have sometimes exploited them for their own benefit, have generally sought to contain them in order to achieve the solidarity and cohesion of a "mobilized society" required to realize the goals and challenges of Zionism in the areas of security, economy and settlement. This equation reversed itself during Netanyahu's governments. The prime minister, more than his ministers, does not reject any means or any rift to deepen and exploit in his favor, at the appropriate political moment, through lies and incitement. Netanyahu, who adopted Arthur Finkelstein's distinction regarding the political significance of the difference between "Jewish" (right) and "Israeli" (left), is not resting for a moment from deepening the secular-religious rift. In 1997 he whispered to the Kabbalist Rabbi Kaduri that "the left has forgotten what it is to be Jews"; In October 2014 he overthrew the Conversion Law; In March, he attacked the artist Yair Garbuz and said, "I heard someone talking about the mezuzah kissers with some contempt." And in September 2017 he told of the Reform movement that "they wanted to get recognition through the back door."

The Ashkenazi-Mizrahi divide, Netanyahu usually leaves for Miri Regev who excels at it. He knows how to take advantage of the rift, as he admitted to MK Moshe Kahlon in 2016: "You will never get the Mizrahi voters, I only know how to bring them in. I know who they hate: they hate the Arabs, and I know how to bring them the goods". Above all, Netanyahu likes to incite the Jews against Israel's Arabs. In December 2003, at the Herzliya Conference, Netanyahu (who was then finance minister) claimed that there was no demographic danger from the Palestinian but from the Arabs in Israel. In March 2015, on election day, he stated "The right wing government is in danger, the Arab voters are moving in droves to the ballot box, the leftist organizations are bringing them on buses ..." Recently, in April 2018, he spread a lie according to which that local Arab fans (of Bnei Sakhnin soccer team) were booing at the moment of silence in memory of the flood victims in Tzaft stream.

The deepening of these divisions has divided Israeli society into camps and disintegrates its ability to deal with sectarian challenges such as the conflict with the Palestinians. In addition, the camps that benefit today from the division of power and sectoral resources as Netanyahu steers them will not want to introduce another sector, the Palestinians, who will compete through demographics over the distribution of resources, and will easily be able to join forces with their brethren in the State of Israel. The tense tensions between the camps require a constant investment of resources in order to maintain their place, leaving no room or ability to contain any emotional or physical change, such as reconciliation and coexistence with the Palestinians. Netanyahu mobilizes all means of hegemony, primarily the media, in order to preserve the ethos of the conflict that ensures the preservation of his throne.

Danny Bar-Tal presents the minimal conditions required to start a peace process and argues that the Israeli leadership is working to prevent their achievement. An examination of Netanyahu's statements reinforces this claim. The first necessary condition is recognition of the enemy's legitimacy. Netanyahu consistently presents the opposite, which is expressed in statements such as: "If I get elected, there will not be a Palestinian state in my term." A second condition is recognition of the enemy's humanity. Here, too, Netanyahu's statements are far from it: "A deep wide moral abyss separates us from our enemies, they sanctify death - we sanctify life, they sanctify cruelty - and we sanctify mercy." A third condition is the recognition that the adversary has needs perceived as legitimate by the majority of the opposing group and the international community, and that if the conflict is not answered, it will not be resolved. The Prime Minister of Israel said in this context: "Under the conditions they want at the moment, a Palestinian state is out of the question"; According to Netanyahu, the sides must understand that "the autonomy plan under Israeli control is the only alternative to preventing these dangers, which are hidden in the 'peace' plan of the Oslo agreement." A fourth condition is that the parties must recognize that they must separate from some of their goals, which must be compromised. On one such target, the Israeli prime minister said, "We will forever preserve a united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty."

In recent years, the Palestinian leadership has also manifested itself in a way that is not aimed at creating an atmosphere of peace. For example, in August 2014, Jibril Rajoub said: "There is nothing to prevent the slaughter of settlements ... Any resistance is allowed to bring an end to the occupation."

Saeb Erekat, compared in December 2015 between ISIS and Israel: "In

fact, there is no difference between what ISIS is doing in Syria and Iraq and the killing and burning of children by the settlers in the West Bank." In an interview with Palestinian TV, he said: "The Israeli prime minister is like the leader of ISIS Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi". Abu Mazen stated in 2016: "Israel has turned our country into an open-air prison... Israel's actions encourage the terrorists ... They give them all the reasons to act." In a different speech he continued: "Palestine and the Palestinian people experience a mass murder on a historic scale and unmatched attacks under the eyes and ears of the international community". In a speech to the European Parliament in June 2016, Abu Mazen said: "They [the Israelis] say 'The Palestinians are inciting, the Palestinians are inciting' ... Only a week ago several rabbis rose up in Israel and issued a clear declaration demanding that the government poison the water to kill Palestinians. Is this not clear incitement to collective murder of the Palestinian people?"

The one-state proposers must address at least four challenges posed by the idea of a single democratic state in relation to the Zionist vision: Is it possible to avoid the annexation of the Gaza Strip in addition to the West Bank?, what will the IDF and other security bodies look like and what goals will be designated for them? How will the absorption of the Palestinian Authority, which has the characteristics of a third world country, be carried out into the social economic mechanisms of the State of Israel? How will the one state cope with the absorption of the refugees who return to its territory? Finally, one state will bring the process of post-territorial nationalism to which Yoram Peri refers, to its highs. The struggle to define the "I" versus the "other" in the new society, which lacks physical, legal and territorial separation, will necessarily focus on the cultural characteristics and will lead to a radicalization of the differences between them. We can expect an intensifying and worsening of the processes of religiosity of the two peoples, in which both sides will be able to use violence in the name of religion. This process and the above challenges are certainly a recipe not only for the disappearance of the Zionist vision, but also for a constant and cruel civil war.

It would be better for the one-state dreamers, as well as the leadership in Israel, to learn one thing from Abbas's speech to the National Council, which was steeped in historical fabrications and anti-Semitic statements, which is its conclusion: "We say: we will live together with them on a two-state basis." Achieving this solution will require an Israeli, Palestinian, Arab and international effort by all those who understand that in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the right solution is the simplest and most difficult to achieve, because it is the only possible and practical one.

Israel Should Listen to What Sinwar Says – Haaretz, June 5, 2018

The damage caused by Hamas to the Palestinian national interest, as dictated and led by the PLO headed by Arafat and Abbas since 1988, has been discussed extensively: the division and control of the Gaza Strip, which undermines the PLO's status as the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people, as the Arab League recognized in 1974, followed by the United Nations and Israel in 1993, and in the preservation of the ethos of the conflict with regards to the "right of return", as reflected in the events of last month, labeled as the March of Return. At the same time, many shades of gray can be seen in statements made by Hamas leader Sinwar, who is in line with the PLO's position on this issue as well, but the chances of reaching an agreement in its regard depends mainly on Israel and the US, which backs Israel unconditionally.

In 1948, the Palestinians, like the entire Arab world, rejected Resolution 194, which serves as the basis for their claim of the right of return. In contrast to Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, they again rejected Resolution 242, adopted in 1967, because these two UN resolutions referred to their individual rights as refugees and completely ignored their collective right to self-determination and to establish an independent state.

In 1988 there was a dramatic change in the attitude of the PLO, which did not concede on the refugee issue as it did on other core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (borders, Jerusalem and security). This change was part of a package deal whose main thrust was to concede 100% of the homeland of Palestine in exchange for the state of Palestine in 22% of it. As Abbas said in an interview with Al-Arabiya television channel in 1988. "The opportunity of the partition of 1947 was lost, and before that the opportunity of the Peel Commission was lost. But we do not want to lose another chance. Therefore, we have received the partition of 1948 and 1967, which do not include more than 22% of historic Palestine".

The change in attitude toward the refugees was the result of the realization that giving up the return, which threatens the Jewish character of Israel, is the price required for the right to an independent state. In the same year, Abu Iyad, Arafat's deputy, replied as follows, to The 15-point Letter sent to the PLO by the US State Department, which sought to examine the possibility of integrating the PLO into a political process: "The right of return cannot be realized while harming Israel's interests, but have to take into account the situation created since 1948 ... We understand that total return is no longer possible ... We are not completely unrealistic when we consider how to realize this right ... It

must not be an unbridgeable obstacle".

This new position of the PLO was presented in the context of all negotiations with Israel. Prior to the Camp David Summit in July 2000, the research division of the Intelligence Branch gave the decision makers a clear picture of the Palestinian position that "Arafat and the Palestinian leadership intend to exhaust the political process with the aim of reaching a two-state solution based on the established and recognized Palestinian political position adopted by the PLO in 1988: A state within the 1967 borders, including Arab Jerusalem, on the basis of UN Resolutions 242 and 338". The Military Intelligence emphasized that "the issue of territory is the most important issue in the eyes of the Palestinians, while the right of return constitutes an important bargaining chip against Israel". Over the years, the Conversion Deal was formed between the four core issues, including the refugee issue. The first couple of issues were made up of the issue of borders, in which Israel, in the Annapolis process headed by Olmert, agreed for the first time to accept the parameters of the 1967 lines as a basis and exchange of territories. In return, the Palestinians agreed to demilitarize their state and extensive security arrangements. The second couple of issues included the refugee issue, in which the Palestinians were required to give up the return to Israel but demanded a capital in East Jerusalem.

The Arab League accepted this deal at its meeting in Beirut in 2002. Even in two articles regarding the refugee issue that was adopted at the meeting, there was nothing in it to change the basics of the deal: The first, the most significant of which is "a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem, which will be agreed upon in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194". The second section added the reservation that "the council is guaranteeing its refusal to any form of permanent settlement of the Palestinian refugees that contradicts the special circumstances in the host Arab countries".

As long as Israel sought to avoid this Conversion Deal, the Palestinians responded on three levels. First, in the course of the negotiations, they relinquished and further conditioned their concessions, as the July 23, 2008 email from Ziad Klut, the legal advisor for the Palestinian negotiating team in the Annapolis process, states: "Strategically, our interest is to postpone the discussion of the refugee issue until we know what we will get on other issues, especially Jerusalem ... it should be made clear to the United States and Israel: we will not discuss the refugee issue as long as the Israelis are not ready for a serious discussion on Jerusalem".

Second, when the negotiations failed, the PLO leadership again sought the support of the Palestinian street in declarations regarding the right

of return, but without turning it into an obstacle to the agreement, as Nabil Sha'ath said at the end of the Camp David Summit: "We are at the stage of obtaining every right that was stolen from us in 1967, and every right that was stolen from us in 1948 - at least as far as the rights of the refugees are concerned. These rights brought us back in Camp David to the 'Nakba' - to our right that stems from the Nakba and not from the occupation of 1967".

Third, when Israel led by Netanyahu withdrew completely from this deal, by refusing to discuss the issue of Jerusalem and refusing to accept the 1967 lines as the basis for the border, the PLO chose not to renew negotiations at all.

Hamas' position was completely different in those years. On the eve of the Annapolis conference in 2007, Musa Abu Marzuq, deputy head of the Political Bureau, said: "Why should anyone recognize Israel's 'right' to exist when it never recognized the basic crimes of genocide and ethnic cleansing as the means by which it took control of our towns and villages, farms and orchards, and turned us into a nation of refugees? Why should the Palestinians 'recognize' the monstrous crime committed by the founders of Israel, which continues to exist through its modern and distorted state of apartheid, when the Palestinians are living ten people in a room, in concrete huts with UN tin roofs? These are not empty questions, and our refusal to abandon the victims of 1948 and their descendants is not a rejection for its own sake".

The beginning of the events was accompanied by belligerent declarations and fantasies about placing the return above everything else, and were replaced by the pragmatic demand for lifting the blockade on the Gaza Strip.

This change may indicate the additional step in Hamas' slow march towards acceptance of PLO's positions, first and foremost recognition of international resolutions on the Palestinians, as stated by Hamas leader Sinwar: "We are very sorry about the inability of the international community to enforce the decisions it made Previously. To this day, the Palestinians have no recognized state as other states are. Our people demand their right to implement UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (which also includes recognition of the State of Israel). And he adds: "The Palestinian people want to restore their rights and solve their problems peacefully, even if we are forced to turn to armed resistance of the kind that the international law allows us".

Hamas, like the PLO, has never renounced its belief in the right of return, but Hamas, under Sinwar's sober and pragmatic leadership, seeks to

follow the PLO's footsteps and receive compensation to the concession of not returning to Israel, in the form of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. In his view, he cannot repeat what the Palestinians perceived as the PLO's strategic mistake: recognition of Israel, renunciation of 78% of the homeland, renunciation of the implementation of the return, agreement on the demilitarization of Palestine, the agreement to exchange territories in which Israel will retain the vast majority of Israelis living beyond the Green Line, the agreement to preserve 80% of united Jerusalem as the capital of Israel without accepting in advance the clear consent of Israel to the establishment of a Palestinian state with its capital in East Jerusalem and the settlement of the refugee issue through return to the state of Palestine and compensation.

The latest ceasefire strengthened Hamas' status as the governing authority of the Gaza Strip both in the eyes of Israel and Egypt, who did not bother to "whitewash" the understandings through the PA and in the eyes of the Palestinian and Israeli publics. As long as Israel continues to maintain the political deadlock and erode what remains of the authority of the PA, it will not be long before Hamas's former leader Khaled Mashaal's ambition ("Hamas aspires to take over the affairs of the Palestinian people in all its places of residing and assume national responsibility within the framework of the Palestinian leadership"), will become the harsh and uncompromising reality with which Israel will have to contend.

They Thwarted the Construction of the Security Fence - but Blame Others - Haaretz, September 2, 2018

The story of the security fence in Gush Etzion is a climax in the cynical and irresponsible use of the concept of security. In the past, it was used to justify the fence's routes based on considerations "alien to security", later, in order to leave a loophole for the expansion of settlements and today, to bring about the canceling of the possibility of even building the fence. Recently, the confrontation between the Head of the Fence Administration in the central command, Col. Ofer Hindi, and the Etzion bloc's representatives regarding recent construction plans reveals the many lies presented to the High Court of Justice, the repetition of past mistakes, and especially the cheating of the public in Israel, which is abandoned to terror attacks, agricultural theft and property offenses.

In an affidavit submitted to the High Court of Justice in 2003 by the defense establishment to justify the route of the fence in Gush Etzion, a route annexing five villages, tens of thousands of Palestinians and tens of thousands of dunams, there were many "security" arguments, fundamentally different from those presented by the IDF in other cases.

After three years of legal proceedings, and after realizing that the series of arguments "alien to security" would not convince the High Court of Justice, the defense establishment was required to decide whether to adopt the security fence route proposed by "the Council for Peace and Security", by virtue of its status as "a friend of the court" (*Amicus curiae*) as it did in other cases (Beit Sourik, Zufin, Hirbet Jabara, Hashmonaim and others), or to give up on the fence all together in Gush Etzion, as the head of the Gush Etzion council and head of the Efrat council preferred.

Unfortunately, like the petition for a fence in the Ma'aleh Adumim area, the defense establishment, despite the fact that part of the route of the security fence (east of Efrat) was almost completed with an investment of tens of millions of shekels, was forced to inform the High Court of Justice in 2006 that it would not build the fence at all "for the time being, due to budgetary constraints and other needs required by the defense establishment. The construction of the fence along the route in question is not a high priority for the respondents (the defense establishment) regarding the completion of the construction of the security fence throughout Judea and Samaria". It later announced it will reconsider the resumption of construction at the end of 2012.

These facts did not prevent the Bloc's advocates from blaming others, as Yaron Rosenthal, head of the Gush Etzion Field School recently said "The construction of the fence around the bloc did not end because of High

Court petitions that actually torpedoed it".

In a recent meeting, the head of the Fence Administration, Hindi clarified that the request to expand the settlement of Bat Ayin would be approved only if all construction plans will end 50 meters away from the route planned for the security fence. "The permit can be examined under the condition that the border of the plan will be limited to a minimum of 50 meters from the Seizure order intended for the security fence". A similar response was given at a meeting regarding the settlement of Migdal Oz, where a concrete plan was rejected for not meeting the conditions.

This decision led Rosenthal, who chooses to serve as an unofficial spokesperson, to acknowledge their responsibility for the failure to build the security fence and the real purpose behind the move that denies the security of Israeli residents, as reported in "Makor Rishon" newspaper. "We were able to eliminate the threat of the fence in Gush Etzion for over a decade, after a series of legal and public battles. Now we must fight that the area designated for the construction of the fence will be liberated from the military concept, and we will be able to expand the Gush Etzion settlements ..." In conclusion, he added the false "historical" addition ... "So that the Gush Etzion residents will be able to return to the place where they and their parents were born".

The IDF Spokesperson stated in response: "The route of the security fence in the Gush Etzion area was determined by the government of Israel. Since the security need for the future construction of the fence along the planned route still exists, applications for construction near the route are examined in light of the security needs in the area and the examination of each case on its merits".

There is no doubt that the IDF Spokesperson, like the head of the administration, is not aware of the fence's history and exposed in its response the cynical use made by the defense establishment of security itself by presenting the opposite arguments, each time according to the current need. If "the security need for the future construction of the fence along the planned route still exists"... why doesn't the defense establishment complete the fence?! the year 2012 has long passed and the position of the defense establishment has been and remains that the security fence must be completed.

Why has the fence not been built since then? Although the IDF has asked several times to complete the security fence, all these attempts have been torpedoed by political pressure exerted by the Gush Etzion bloc leaders on the political echelon, including through tours they conducted to the head of Knesset, Prime Minister and Defense Minister. For example, in

2016, when Prime Minister Netanyahu announced the completion of the fence, the head of the Gush Etzion council, David Pearl, objected to it "We oppose the fence" and added a false claim "... because it separates us from the State of Israel. For us it's very bad". Pearl was not bothered by the prime minister's statement because he said that it would not become a reality. "I think there will not be a fence, because unfortunately the prime minister has said a lot and done a little lately, he only acts when there is a sword on his neck, I do not believe it will happen, but time will tell". Pearl was right!!!

This ongoing decision not to build the security fence completely contradicts the position of the IDF and the National Security Council's staff's work that unequivocally determined that a non-continuous security fence does not meet its security purpose and must be completed.

The position of the IDF and the National Security Council did not impact the Bloc's leaders "We are truly against the fence" they admitted, "because as we have proven, it does not help against terrorism". In other words, they "proved" something that is in complete contradiction to the position of the IDF and all the security forces in relation to the tremendous contribution of the security fence to the prevention of terrorism! "Since the closure of the Tarqumiya- Meitar section, there has been a significant drop in the number of incidents, and we hardly get calls from the Tarqumiya checkpoint" said Chief Superintendent Etti Buchnik, commander of the Kiryat Gat station.

And what about the budgetary limitations? In a tour conducted at the beginning of the year by the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee in the South Hebron Hills, Shai Gilad, of the National Security Council, stated: "We have completed the administrative work that the prime minister instructed us to carry out, and the cost is NIS 1.3 billion for the entire seam line, and at the moment it has no specific budgetary source". Avi Dichter, chairman of the committee, summed up and said: "Throughout the discussion there were compliments about the implementation of the wall between Tarqumiya and Meitar. The gaps in the indicative fence, which is the vast majority of the barrier around Judea and Samaria, are a mirror image of that. Not only has nothing been done to fix them, even 8 months after the committee demanded it ... It was never presented to us as a committee, and to the best of my knowledge, neither to the political echelon nor to the chief of staff, such a strategic change". We shall hold a discussion at the committee to understand how billions of shekels were lost on the indicative fence... and we will have something to say as a committee that only a budgetary issue is delaying the construction of the barrier". We can tell Avi Dichter that this is nothing new, that

already in 2007, the Brodet Committee declared that the conduct of the construction of the security fence is "another example of poor and wasteful thinking and conduct".

To the head of the Fence Administration we can tell the real-estate story of the fence in Ni'lin. The route of the barrier near Na'alim and Hashmona'im was approved by the government in October 2003, but was changed by the IDF a year and a half later, after a judgment was given in the Beit Surik case in 2004. The new route was removed farther from Palestinian homes. When new generals came to the Central Command, it was decided to change the route again, claiming that it was now too close to the homes of the Hashmonaim community and that it should be removed by hundreds of meters.

The petitioners to the High Court against the new "amendment" rejected this argument. As evidence, in the course of the court hearing, a letter that was sent by the Ministry of Defense was presented, signed by the IDF representative, to the contracting company, which owns the new area that was to be transferred to the Israeli side of the fence. In the letter, the IDF representative allows the company to plan the project, "provided that the future houses are 150 meters away from the future fence's route".

Supreme Court President Dorit Beinisch accepted the petition, rejected the new route, and suggested that the IDF reintroduce the previous route: "The strangeness regarding the changed position of the security establishment is reinforced by the fact that the military commander approved in principle the planning of a new neighborhood in which the houses in the neighborhood will be built 150 meters away from the security fence ... We have not been told how this fits in with the security concept regarding the need for a warning and pursuit space hundreds of meters away from houses of Israeli residents".

Today, contrary to its position in other petitions, the IDF has decided that the distance between the fence and the future neighborhoods will be 50 meters in order to partially succumb to the pressure of the settlers. It is clear to everyone that if the fence is to be built in the future, pressure will be put in place not to settle for 50 meters and to re-add hundreds of meters at the expense of the Palestinians. The lesson presented by Major General Moshe Kaplinsky in an interview with Nahum Barnea on the occasion of the end of his term in 2005 will also be forgotten. When the journalist asked, "What was the biggest mistake you made regarding the fence?" Kaplinsky replied, "In retrospect, I think the biggest mistake was that we did not take into account the fabric of Palestinian life". "The Supreme Court," Barnea said, "understood better than you", and Kaplinsky

confirmed: "The Supreme Court put a mirror in front of my eyes, it taught me a lesson in proportionality, I accept it".

The story of the security fence in the Etzion bloc joins a series of serious incidents that accompanied the construction of the extremely important security fence, which cannot be reconciled – presenting of false, partial and misleading information to the High Court of Justice, repeated contempt in the execution of the Supreme Court's judgments, political greed, Institutional delinquency, a terrible waste of public money (more than 2 billion NIS of the Israeli taxpayer!), and above all, lawlessness resulting in the deterioration of security. This week, another unfortunate and humiliating chapter was written in the story of the security fence, but the Israeli government is not working to relinquish the breaches in that fence.



The Netanyahu Government is Dragging Us Back a 100 Years – Haaretz, September 12, 2018

The pathetic attempt by the American President Donald Trump and his emissaries to remove the refugee issue from the agenda of any future negotiations between Israel and the PLO by ending UNRWA's American funding and closing the PLO offices in Washington breaks the record of ignorance, arrogance and aggressiveness, which was placed only a few months ago when this group sought to remove Jerusalem from the agenda by recognizing it as the capital of Israel.

This group - Trump, Kouchner, Greenblatt, Friedman - shares the same approach and policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with Prime Minister Netanyahu, Gideon Sa'ar, who aspires to be his successor, and the Nationalist-Messianic coalition of the Israeli government. The Netanyahu gang, drunk with power, fears losing what it perceives as a "historic opportunity" that the Trump administration ostensibly provides, raises various "ideas" for the "solution" of the conflict - from annexation of territories in the West Bank, or all of it, granting of limited autonomy to the Palestinians in Areas A and B, or alternatively Israeli residency and Jordanian citizenship, a Palestinian confederation with Jordan, to finally the expulsion of Palestinians to Jordan, the "alternative homeland" in their opinion.

In the course of the negotiations between the governments of Israel and the PLO on the final status agreement, a "package deal" was established, which meets the most important needs of both sides. Israel's demand for security was met by the Palestinians in a nine laired "envelope": a security fence on an agreed route in a controlled and flexible border regime; the demilitarization of Palestine from an army and heavy weapons; a Palestinian police force that fights terrorism and enforces law and order; the deployment of multinational forces to enforce demilitarization, control borders and execute special missions; temporary Israeli deployment in the Jordan Valley; warning stations and Israeli controlled airspace; trilateral activity on the borders of Palestine-Jordan; conditional strategic depth (Such as the prohibition on Palestine, similar to the peace treaty with Jordan, to forge military alliances with countries and organizations hostile to Israel); and regional security agreements against the Iranian-Shiite axis. In return, Israel headed by Olmert accepted US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's formula that Palestine would cover 6,205 square kilometers (22% of Mandatory Palestine) in order to allow the exchange of territory that would leave Israel with the vast majority of Israelis living beyond the Green Line.

Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the PLO and president of the Palestinian Authority, agreed to settle the refugee issue through a symbolic and limited return to Israel, with the consent and approval of Israel, in a way that does not threaten the demographic balance in Israel and compensation. Positions he repeated last week to a delegation of Israeli peace activists in Ramallah. In return, Israel agreed to a Palestinian capital in Arab East Jerusalem (which would change the status of 350,000 Palestinian residents of Israel to the citizens of Palestine), the annexation of Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem to Israel, and a "special regime" in the historic basin, where the status quo has been preserved for years.

Against the background of these historical facts, which have been presented countless times to Jared Kushner, Trump's advisor and son-in-law, and to Jason Greenblatt, his emissary to the conflict, the new formula presented by the Trump administration attests to a deep failure in the basic understanding of the package deal, which can promise two partners in its implementation. For the time being, the Trump administration has only dealt poorly with the second issue (Jerusalem-refugees), and absurdly sought to resolve the tension between the demands of Israel and the Palestinians by awarding Israel with a technical victory (2:0) without having it come and face the negotiating table. Israel receives what it wants on the refugee issue - in the throes of one presidential decision, the Palestinian refugees cease to exist, ostensibly there is no one to return and no one will receive compensation. On the issue of "united" Jerusalem, which over the past 50 years has become more Arab, more ultra-Orthodox, more anti-Zionist, poorer, more discriminatory and anti-democratic, will remain the "eternal capital of Israel". A forceful attempt to make crazy delusions, without any historical grasp, into a reality.

The Netanyahu-Bennett-Shaked-Samotrich gang adopted for itself the issues of borders and security. The Minister of Justice, together with the "Land of Israel lobby" headed by Kish and Smotrich, succeeded in laying down the legal, anti-liberal and anti-democratic foundations for the future bills to annex various areas of the West Bank. Some, like Bennett, seek to enjoy the dowry (Area C) and foolishly assume that the bride (millions of Palestinians in Areas A and B) will continue to maintain security cooperation with Israel within the framework of cultural autonomy. To call this proposal "a plan" is insulting and pretentious to the point of absurdity because it does not provide a political, security, and economic response to the reality of 169 "islands" of areas A and B that are surrounded by dozens of corridors of Area C.

Others, more modest, seek to annex “only” all areas of Israeli settlement, or “Greater Jerusalem” or the Jordan Valley. All of these proposals, without exception (none of them accompanied by a map), as promised by their thinkers, will ultimately bring about the fulfillment of the divine promise to grant the Land of Israel (whose borders were determined on the basis of the interests of the victorious powers in World War I) to the Jewish people. Many of them go a step further and consider it the creation of the necessary conditions for the coming of the Messiah, the establishment of the kingdom of David and the construction of the Third Temple. With the Greater Land of Israel, the State of Israel, according to their position, will also enjoy absolute security both because it sits on the Jordan River and because the Divine Presence rests above it, even if hundreds of millions of Palestinians with no rights are breathing down its neck.

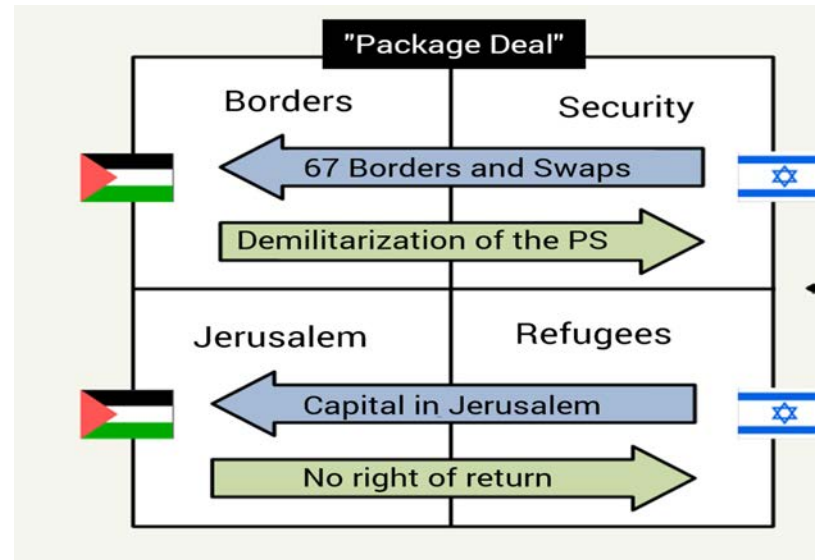
Trump’s ultimate deal, if based on the current policies and statements of his administration, is bound to fail. There is no Palestinian or Arab partner for plans that are detached from the history of the conflict and from international legitimacy in the form of UN Resolutions 242 and 338. If no alternative financial sources are found, the UNRWA decision may rekindle the Gaza Strip due to the failure of Hamas’ latest move to reach an agreement with Israel on the lifting of the blockade, a long-term ceasefire and rehabilitation of systems that have been on the brink of collapse for a long time. Jerusalem is liable to stir as well with the cancellation of American aid to hospitals in East Jerusalem.

These can stir up the existing relationship between Israel and the Palestinians and could endanger the delicate balance in which it resides in today, but it cannot take it outside the framework of existing agreements and into a completely new reality.

On the other hand, the way the Netanyahu-Bennett-Samotrich gang leads Israel is the most dangerous. The Netanyahu government wants to throw out the nine-lair security plan and transform it into annexation maneuvers that will escalate relations into internal war between Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Arabs, Jews and Jews, and Arabs and Arabs. Israel will watch the collapse of the peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan and the creation of an extremist religious terror front fueled by the support of Iran, Turkey and Qatar and riding on the waves of hatred from the Arab street.

In its first stage, the Netanyahu government is dragging Israel into an apartheid state on the basis of a “plan”, disconnected from reality that the professional establishment has never taken part in and which is to be followed by a collapse accompanied by violence which will bring about

a single state, quickly to be replaced by an Arab state with a Jewish minority which is religious and poor, just as the Land of Israel was the eve of the launching of the Zionist enterprise more than a hundred years ago.



The Trust that has been Worn and Eroded Between Israel and the Palestinians – Haaretz, October 8, 2018

The issue of trust between Israel and the PLO shows the failure of the parties to reach a permanent settlement 25 years after the signing of the Oslo Accords (Declaration of Principles). The loss of trust is the product of the two sides' serious violations of the agreement. It is reflected in the increase in the number of pages added to each agreement in order to prevent activity based on an interpretation that deviates from the spirit of the agreement; In the addition of agreements (The Hebron Agreement, the Wye Memorandum) in order to rephrase in more detail issues already agreed upon; And with an expansion in the timetable set for the implementation of each of the milestones in the process.

At the same time, in articles and interviews to mark a quarter of a century for the agreement, those who oppose any diplomatic process with the Palestinians attempt to describe the Oslo Accords as a deliberate plot of Arafat from the outset, and in so, are committing a political rewrite of history. The claim that this conspiracy was intended to buy the trust of Rabin and Peres, and that the Palestinians' negotiations for the establishment of a Palestinian state were intended only to bring Israel back to "the narrow borders that preceded the Six-Day War and then to renew from these borders the attack of destruction on the Jewish state", as Netanyahu has written, is nothing but the inversion of history.

The central problem of the Oslo agreements is that it is a gradual and multi-stage framework, lacking the parameters for the definition of a permanent status, apart from UN Security Council Resolution 242 ("Land for Peace"). In other words, the parties signed a "perforated Swiss cheese" agreement, which took them on a journey without defining their destination. The different interpretation that each party gave to the agreement and the permanent status that they envisioned gave rise to the violations of the parties and undermined the trust between them. Violations that were mainly the attempts of the parties to shape a reality that would serve their perception.

The official representatives - the Israeli government and the PLO - took part in this struggle, but they allowed the opponents of the arrangement to take part in it under the false assumption that they would be able to control them and the "height of the flames" that they would awaken. Thus, in a circular process, the violations strengthened the power of the opponents to the agreement (Hamas' victory to the Palestinian Authority elections and the establishment of Messianic-nationalist governments in Israel), who further worsened the violations until the loss of confidence

and the cessation of the political process.

Contrary to the arguments of the opponents of the agreement, that the gradual nature of the process and the absence of a final outline for the permanent status served the Palestinians to revive their "phases doctrine" - the historical truth is to the contrary. The choice of a gradual process was Rabin's doctrine since his first term, about two decades before Oslo. In 1977, he declared: "I prefer interim arrangements, with a test period between stages, rather than the attempt to move forward at once into a comprehensive settlement", and that "a transition to real peace is a process rather than a one-time act". This approach was adopted by his successor, Menahem Begin, who signed the Framework Agreement for Palestinian Autonomy in 1978 at Camp David with Sadat, remarkably similar in detail to the Oslo Accords. Two years later, it was unfortunate to learn that Rabin had chosen to examine the Palestinians, but was blind to the possibility that opponents of any compromise would exploit the gradualism to poke at the wheels of the process, and one of them even added three bullets to his back.

What is more important is the fact that the ambiguity and absence of the final objective imposed on the PLO, which was at a low point in its status and capabilities, were intended to serve Israel's perception of the final status agreement, which was opposite to the Palestinian one.

As far as the Palestinians were concerned, they have already given everything and made the main historic national compromise in 1993. They recognized Israel and gave up 100 percent of the homeland of Palestine in exchange for a 22% of that land in a Palestinian state. Similarly, to the world the PLO interpreted Resolution 242 as a complete Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in the Six-Day War. It therefore viewed Israel's agreement to "lead to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338", as set out in the Oslo Accords, as the ultimate goal that would lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital. In other words, Israel's part in the realization of the compromise begins only after the Palestinians have given everything they can, according to their position, and are left to only hope that Israel will maintain its share of the agreement.

On the other hand, the Israeli side, which advocated the establishment of a limited state authority, demanded that the basis for negotiations be the principle of fair compromise, which considers the reality that has emerged since 1967 and considers Israel's security and settlement interests. Israel sought to disengage from the "international legitimacy" set by Resolution 242 in the form of "peace for all the territories". It

emphasized another section of the resolution, which deals with “secure and recognized borders,” in order to demand that large parts of the West Bank be left under its sovereignty.

In his October 1995 speech to the Knesset, Rabin said: “We want this entity to be less than a state ... The borders of the State of Israel, at the time of the permanent solution, will be beyond the lines that existed before the Six-Day War”. Netanyahu, who was elected in 1996, wrote a year earlier that “the autonomy plan under Israeli control is the only alternative”. Barak, who ousted him in 1999, refused to use the term “Palestinian state” and considered the goal of the agreement “to reach a fair division of Judea and Samaria”.

The negotiations on the final status agreement, which began only at the end of 1999, sharpened the fundamental difference in the perception of the parties and confirmed the claim regarding the basic Israeli interest in ambiguity and refraining from establishing the permanent outline. As far as the Palestinians are concerned, the negotiations were intended to lead to the realization of their rights according to “international legitimacy” and not as a result of the asymmetry that exists vis-a-vis Israel. Therefore, they demanded that the negotiations start by agreeing on the principles that were based on international resolutions, and to deal with the details only at the second stage. Israel, on the other hand, demanded to agree first on the details, even in a manner inconsistent with international resolutions, and in the second stage to determine that the agreements reached nevertheless reflect international resolutions.

This approach led to negotiations in which the Palestinians remained adhering to their principled position, while Israel changed its proposal in every round. This quickly led to a myth among the Israeli public that “every time the Palestinians were given more, they demanded more”.

The Palestinians did not demand more, but constantly the same thing until their position was accepted by Israel and the US during the 2008 Annapolis process. In the second stage, they demonstrated flexibility in the details and accepted the idea of an exchange of territories that would enable the majority of Israelis living beyond the Green Line to remain under Israeli sovereignty. In addition, this pattern of negotiations wasted precious time and enabled opponents on both sides to erode the trust of the other by murderous terror and expansion of settlements.

The absence of the permanent plan in Oslo and the steps taken by the parties to shape the reality according to their outlook have exacted a costly and unnecessary price of blood. The current reality, even if it is not possible to know how long it will last, is more beneficial to the interests

of the Israeli opponents of the agreement.

Israel disengaged from responsibility for managing the lives of the Palestinians and transferred it to the Palestinian Authority, where only 40 percent of the territory is under its responsibility and its budget is based on the generosity of donor countries. Israel has tripled the number of Israelis in the West Bank and controls its economy. Recently, it enjoys the unreserved support of the American administration and coalition members are pushing for the annexation of large parts of the West Bank and the destruction of the two-state solution.

Some believe President Trump’s “ultimate deal” will be able to settle the conflict. Among other lessons from the Oslo process, this lesson, in relation to the final goal and the building of trust between the sides, must also be a pillar of any future attempt.



The Netanyahu Government is Endangering the Peace Treaty with Jordan – Haaretz, October 25, 2018

Many of the media outlets chose to define Jordanian King Abdullah II's decision not to extend the validity of two appendices to the peace treaty with Israel, with regard to Israeli use of the land of the Tzofar enclave in the Arava (2,000 dunams), and the "island" area of Naharayim (about 800 dunams), as "canceling part of the agreement". The surprise soon turned into an accusation against the Jordanians' "ingratitude" and furious calls against the kingdom.

In practice, however, this move complies with the peace treaty signed between Israel and Jordan in 1994. More importantly, it reiterates the Israeli moves that created the need for these appendices, and the generosity, understanding and patience shown by King Hussein who agreed to them. This process also shows the close connection between the Jordanian and Palestinian issues and reveals how the Netanyahu government's political freeze on the process with the Palestinians could threaten the agreement with Jordan that has been beneficial to us for a quarter of a century.

Following the signing of the 1949 armistice agreement, in which the border was reestablished in this area as was determined in 1922 by the British, approved by the League of Nations in 1923 and became international in 1946, upon the independence of Transjordan, Israel began to establish agricultural settlements in the Arava (such as Yotvata in 1952). Due to the fact that the land and water reservoirs were located on the Jordanian side of the border, Israel opted for a policy of "creeping annexation" and took over land in Jordan's sovereign territory, which it allocated to settlements such as Yotvata, Lotan, Ketura and Grofit. In addition, 2,000 dunams were allocated to the settlement of Tzofar, which was established in 1976, far from the border.

In addition, Israel drilled 22 water wells in the territory of Jordan, which supplied about 15 cubic meters of water per year. In order to complete the "invasion", Israel has further blurred its intentions in building the security fence to protect these settlements within Jordanian territory. In practice, Israel annexed a Jordanian area of almost 400,000 dunams - larger than the Gaza Strip.

The armistice agreement left the "island" in Naharayim, 830 dunams, on the Israeli side, created as a result of the construction of the Rutenberg electricity plant in 1927, east of the Jordan River, which was defined as a boundary in 1922. Immediately after that, the kibbutz farmers began farming the land. Jordan's complaints to the UN that Israel had taken

control of the territories did not produce any action.

The cancellation of the annexation of the West Bank by King Hussein in 1988 and the signing of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO in 1993 paved the way for negotiations on a peace agreement between Israel and Jordan.

In the course of the negotiations, the Jordanians demanded the return of "every grain of land" in the Egyptian model, and clung to the 1949 armistice line, which in this area resembled the line set in 1922. Israel, which was burned in the arbitration case with Egypt on the Taba issue, feared a similar result. After the Jordanians rejected the legal maneuvers that were presented by it, such as the claims that it is not clear what is the Wadi Arava and what is "the middle of Wadi Arava", terms that appeared in the British declaration from 1922, Israel moved to seek creative solutions that would prevent its return of the land.

In order to bridge the gaps between the sides, there was an idea of an exchange of territory, which would later be used more widely in negotiations between Israel and the PLO. King Hussein agreed, and the lands cultivated by the Arava settlements east of the border remained in Israel's hands, and Jordan received in return rocky lands in Israeli territory, on the back of the Arava, west of the border. Approximately 16.5 square kilometers were replaced by a one-to-one ratio, and the rest of the area was adapted to the Mandate line by returning to Jordan 300 square kilometers that Israel took over between the 1960s and the 1980s. The question of the exchange of territories is not mentioned in the peace treaty, but it contains references to aerial photographs that were attached to it.

As for the area of the "island" in the Naharayim in the north, a "special regime" was established there for 25 years, in which Jordan's sovereignty over the area was recognized, as well as the development of land and the tourism from Israel in the "island" area by the residents of Kibbutz Ashdot Yaakov, according to special legal arrangements, with an option to extend an additional 25 years. In the area of Moshav Zofar in the Arava, whose cultivated land was east of the established line, a similar special regime was agreed upon, in order to enable further agricultural cultivation.

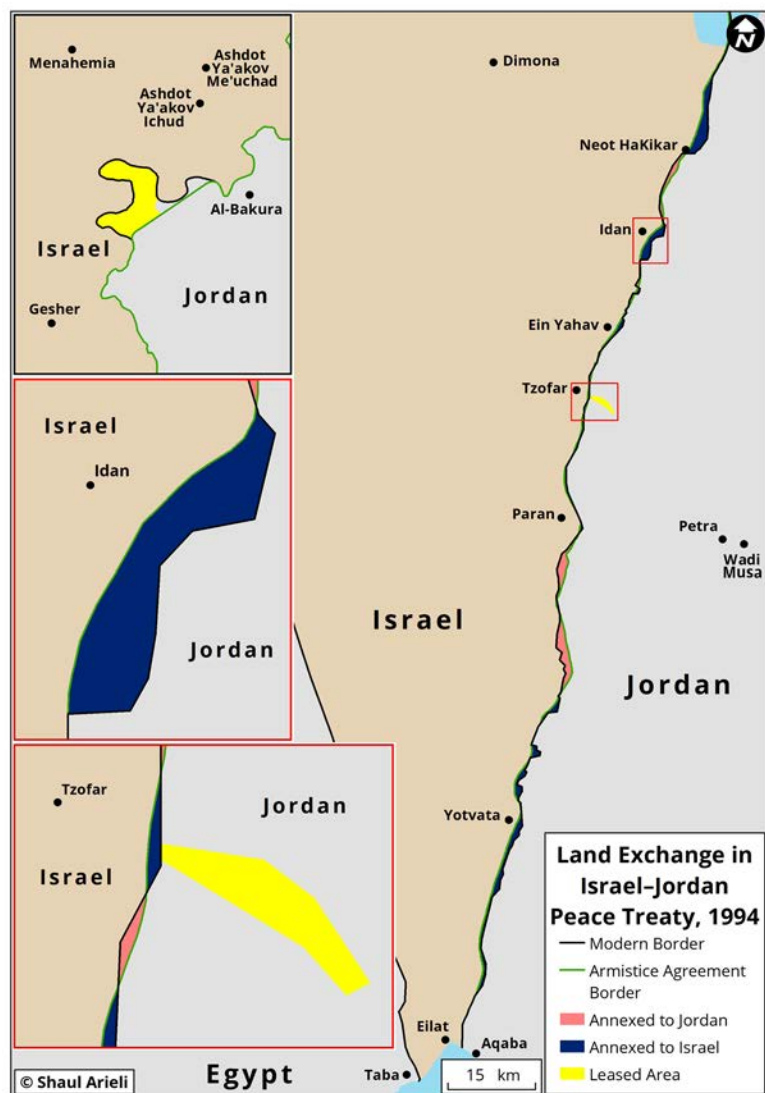
In both cases, it is not a lease, and Israel or the settlements do not pay Jordan for the use of these areas. It was also agreed that Israel would transfer to Jordan 50 million cubic meters of water per year from the Sea of Galilee, in exchange for the possibility of pumping water from drillings carried out in Jordanian territory.

It is sad to discover that new residents who joined Tzofar, such as Erez Gibori, did not know of these agreements. Gibori, who has been cultivating 80 dunams of the Tzofar enclave for 10 years, explained in a conversation with Haaretz that he believed that these territories had been moved to Israel in according to the peace agreement. "Today I understand that this is not true," he said.

Even if Netanyahu succeeds with American aid to remove this evil decree, it is sadder to discover that Israeli governments have not bothered to prepare in advance for this possibility, which they signed to in the agreement. Just as the Netanyahu government rejected the central recommendation of the state's commission of inquiry into the disengagement plan, which stated in its report in 2010 that "the most important lesson of the commission of inquiry is to instruct the Prime Minister to plan today a comprehensive national plan for a possible future evacuation of 100,000 people from the West Bank in order to reduce the personal, collective and national trauma and in order to save costs and to absorb people in the responsible and proper manner, as this country absorbed a million immigrants in the 1990's".

The Netanyahu government had cast its faith on Jordan's goodwill. This "strategy" had a better chance in the Rabin-Hussein relationship, or when Israel sought a permanent agreement with the Palestinians in the days of Barak and Olmert. The voices in the Israeli Knesset and the government calling for "Jordan as the Palestinian homeland" to grant Jordanian citizenship to residents of the West Bank and even mass expulsion in the heat of the next war are perceived in Jordan as an infringement on the Peace agreement and a threat to its future, and as a result, as undermining the stability of the kingdom and its shaky economy.

The Netanyahu government's policy of strengthening the "creeping annexation" on its way to annexations in the West Bank unproved by law, will force the king to suspend and even cancel the peace treaty with Israel, which provides it with strategic depth against threats from the east and preserves Israel's eastern border against radical terrorist movements of political Islam on the border of Iraq and Jordan.



Ehud Barak, the Palestinians and the Historical Truth - Haaretz, December 10, 2018

In an article criticizing Ehud Barak's autobiographical book, Adam Raz makes it clear: the book, he says, does not add new information regarding Barak's history and his contribution to Israeli political history. Furthermore, "there is a great gap between what people think about Barak and the historical truth". In other words, there are no new revelations in the book, but rather a different interpretation of seemingly known facts. Similarly, to Raz, I will focus on the last part of the book, which deals with Barak's political activity.

Raz writes; "in Barak's book it is not the small facts that are important, but the general outlines". To this I would like to add three things: first, indeed, the broad conception of the political process is important. However, Barak was not prepared to understand and accept, then and now, the outlines of the solution that guided the PLO headed by Arafat, the partner and rival with whom he conducted the negotiations. Barak chose to ignore them in a manner that necessarily led to the failure of his "efforts" and to the re-instilling of the ethos of the conflict in Israeli society.

Second, Raz in his article did not confront Barak's "facts", which are not minor at all but fundamental, with the abundance of information written by many of those involved in the negotiations, which ridicules part of his conclusions that are based upon the "historical truth," as he wrote.

Third, as a rule, the facts regarding concrete moves and positions in the negotiations must serve the general outlines, and in contrast to Raz's opinion, Barak's moves were almost identical to the general outline of his conception of the solution to the conflict with the Palestinians.

Raz's explanation to that part of the book because it "contributes to the understanding of both current events and history", is, by ignoring these three arguments, rendered empty, and a basis for another missed opportunity to outline for any future Israeli Prime Minister the possible "package deal" required to solving the conflict with the Palestinians.

To Barak's credit it should be noted, that when he was elected as Prime Minister, he did indeed seek to define as soon as possible the outline of the final status agreement. He wanted to replace Rabin's "theory of stages" (not Arafat's), which preferred "interim arrangements, with a test period between stages, over the attempt to move toward a comprehensive settlement at once". Therefore, the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, signed by Barak in September 1999, stipulated that the parties would

reach a framework agreement, and only then would they complete the full agreement. In this act, Barak wanted to release both sides from the curse of the extremists who dictated the pace of the negotiations, led to toughening of positions and to a loss of trust.

In this context, Barak misinforms the reader when he “often notes in his book that Netanyahu has presented himself for years as a stubborn opponent of the agreement, but at the time of his first government (1996-1999) he continued to fulfill the stages that were included in it”. In practice, the assassination of Rabin in November 1995 prevented the implementation of the interim agreement in Hebron and the first “redeployment” planned for August 1996, two months before the planned elections. Netanyahu, who beat Peres in the elections, conducted the redeployments in Hebron only in February 1997, after the Western Wall Tunnel riots. The rest of the stages he wanted to “kill” along with the entire Oslo agreement. He stopped the entire process for two and a half years, until the Wye Memorandum was signed in October 1998. On December 12, 1998, the Israeli government decided to stop implementing the Wye Memorandum. If the redeployments were to be fully implemented and timed, it can be assumed that they would have created a new reality on the ground.

Barak and Arafat took a different view of the political-legal framework for conducting the negotiations and achieving a permanent solution. Each defined the goals of the final-status agreement differently and created a different set of expectations among his public. Without acknowledging it, Barak in his book preserves the Israeli narrative that hardly meets with the Palestinian and prevents us from understanding the immediate history and preparing for the future.

Barak interpreted Resolution 242 (Land for Peace), which served as the basis for the entire Oslo process, in line with the old Israeli interpretation, which focuses on “withdrawal from the territories” to “secure and recognized borders”. This despite the fact that Israel adopted the Arab and international interpretation when it signed the peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan, and succeeded in finding functional and non-territorial solutions to security needs in the form of demilitarization, the deployment of international forces and the prohibition of military alliances with countries and organizations hostile to Israel. Based on this view, Barak saw the final goal of the agreement with the PLO as “a just division of the territories of Judea and Samaria” and the future Palestine as “a political entity that is less than a state” as Rabin defined it in 1995.

Arafat, on the other hand, who cannot be absolved of responsibility for not preventing Hamas’s terrorist activities, and his critical mistake of

choosing to “ride the back of the tiger” of the second Intifada, reached Oslo after the adoption of the PLO’s understanding that 242 is the only way to establish an independent Palestinian state. To him, the concession of 78% of historic Palestine (Israel in the 1967 lines) is the most significant, historic and only possible one for the Palestinians in return for the establishment of a Palestinian state on 22% of the land (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital). The Oslo Accords were designed to realize this in a gradual five-year process.

The Israeli contours gave rise to ridiculous Israeli proposals from the Palestinian perspective. Barak spent his first year on “Persian Bazaar” style proposals that did not include 80 percent of the area on the eve of Camp David. Raz writes: “This fact should not be blurred, and it takes great weight in the book, that Barak offered Arafat the best offer ever made to the Palestinians. In fact, any real future negotiations with them will be based on the outlines of Camp David, since Barak was willing to transfer to the Palestinians more than 90 percent of the occupied territories (and land swaps) and reach agreements on joint sovereignty in Jerusalem”. However, the historical facts were different.

Danny Yatom, who was then head of the political-security headquarters, describes in his book “Partner for Secret” the Israeli proposal that Barak dictated: “An area of no less than 11%, in which 80% of the settlers live, will be annexed to Israel. In addition, we will not transfer sovereign territory (swaps)”.

Even regarding Jerusalem, the facts are contrary to what is written in Raz’s article, as Yatom continues: “The Temple Mount will be under Israeli sovereignty, with a kind of Palestinian custody and a permit of prayer for the Jews. In the Old City, Arafat will have sovereignty over the Muslim Quarter and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Possibly the Christian Quarter as well. The sovereignty of the Jewish and Armenian quarters will be Israeli. The external Muslim neighborhoods will be transferred to Palestinian sovereignty (those that Israel annexed in 1967 and were not part of Jerusalem) and the Muslim internal communities will remain under Israeli sovereignty”. Meaning, East Jerusalem and the Temple Mount will remain under Israeli sovereignty. Barak is not content and adds: “For a few years, Israel will control a quarter of the Jordan Valley, in order to ensure control of the crossings between Jordan and Palestine”. In other words, Arafat had to return home with a state of about 80 percent of the territory without a capital in East Jerusalem and giving up nearly 1,300 years of Muslim control over the Temple Mount. Therefore, Barak and Clinton’s claim that “we assumed a proposal based on Resolution 242 and 338 that are very close to Palestinian demands” has no factual

basis.

Arafat's rejection of the proposal should not have surprised Barak, because he chose to ignore the assessment of the IDF's intelligence branch that "an agreement can be reached with Arafat under the following conditions: a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, Palestinian sovereignty over the Temple Mount, 97 percent of the West Bank, plus a one-to-one exchange of territory regarding the remaining area". Head of Intelligence, Maj. Gen. Amos Malka briefed the cabinet on Arafat's positions a few weeks before Camp David and said that "there is no chance that he will compromise on 90 percent of the territories or 93 percent". If so, then Barak did not 'expose' Arafat's at Camp David because his positions were known to the Military Intelligence and were presented to Barak.

Barak was certain that the balance of power between the two sides, which had been favoring the Israeli side, would dictate the patterns of the agreement. He was not prepared to understand and accept that Arafat cannot accept less than what the international community interprets 242 to be - an Israeli withdrawal from all the territories. The only flexibility that Arafat could demonstrate was the exchange of territories. Barak was so sure that he refused to prepare the issue of Jerusalem for negotiations, and when it came up against his will, the Israeli delegation was almost helpless.

Raz continues to wrongly argue that: "any real negotiations with them will be based on the outlines of Camp David". Clinton was wise enough, albeit too late, to alter his parameters in December 2000, which were different from Barak's outline at Camp David. Barak himself sent the Israeli delegation to Taba in January 2001 with various proposals, including the division of East Jerusalem and Palestinian sovereignty in the Jordan Valley. More importantly, the negotiations conducted by Olmert and Abbas during the Annapolis process in 2008 were the first to bridge the gaps in the parties' basic understandings and build common contours to the agreement.

There is no doubt that the book is aimed at public opinion and the political system on the eve of the next elections. Barak, in fact, leads and expresses, more than anyone else, the sober, clear and eloquent view of the required change in Israel, but it cannot come at the expense of past mistakes that forgetting them will harm Israel's future prospects. Barak has many achievements and contributions in the history of the State of Israel but negotiating with the Palestinians two decades ago is not one of them.

If Barak sticks to his interpretation in the book to the political process he has conducted, he reiterates the claim that "there is no partner" - but together with Raz, he forgets to point out that "there is no partner" for his plan, and to Netanyahu's plan today; A plan that no Palestinian, even the greatest supporter of the two-state solution, can accept. And the world will continue to stand by the Palestinians, at least in words.



Benny Morris's Mistakes – Haaretz January 25, 2019

In an article by Benny Morris, published here a week ago, he correctly describes the past in the context of the War of Independence and the issue of the Palestinian refugees. It is therefore fitting that what he wrote would be studied and we could all avoid ignorant minded articles (Ha'aretz, 18.1). However, Morris interprets the present one-sidedly, misrepresenting the "facts" and perceiving the century-old conflict as one historical continuum without changes - the sea is the same sea and Mahmoud Abbas is Haj Amin al-Husseini. More so, in it he helps in advancing his own dire outlook for the future - the collapse of the State of Israel and its transformation into an Arab state, as was the case of this land a century ago.

Morris mistakenly believes that the Palestinian refusal to compromise in 1937 and 1947 is identical to the Palestinian refusal in 2000 and 2008. In their first refusals, the Palestinians conducted a discourse based on their interpretation of justice. In their view, the right to self-determination in Palestine which was theirs at the end of the First World War (because of their dominance in more than 90% of the land's population, their ownership of all of its private lands, and their 1,300 years of territorial ties to the land), was unjustly denied to them. Therefore, the Palestinians rejected the international resolutions that recognized and supported the Zionist claim to establish a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine: the Balfour Declaration, the San Remo Conference, the Mandate of the League of Nations and the UN Partition Resolution.

The latest rejections are different. In a long process, culminating in 1988, the Palestinian leadership, the PLO, changed its approach and moved to a discourse of claims based on international resolutions, primarily UN Resolutions 181, 194, 242 and 338. In Abbas's own words in an interview with Al-Arabiya in 2008: "The opportunity for the partition of 1947 was lost, and before that the opportunity for the partition of the Peel Commission was lost. We do not want to lose another opportunity. Therefore, we accepted the partition of 1948 and 1967, which does not include more than 22% of historic Palestine". The refusal of Yasser Arafat in 2000 stemmed from the fact that Israel headed by Ehud Barak sought to impose a permanent agreement that was different from the accepted interpretation of international resolutions – a Palestinian state on less than 22% of the land, without a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem (al-Quds).

Morris interprets the present one-sidedly, misrepresenting "facts" and perceiving the century-old conflict as a historical continuum deprived of any changes.



Accusing Abbas of recalcitrance is a one-sided presentation of reality. First, as a historian, Morris cannot ignore Abbas's statements regarding two states for two peoples. For example, in his September 2005 speech in Gaza, he said: "The traces of the Nakba must be eradicated through a permanent solution based on the principle of two states for two peoples". The establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel will lead to a historic reconciliation between the two peoples". This statement and others turn Morris's claim that Abbas merely uses deception to absurd. Secondly, at Annapolis in 2008, Ehud Olmert and Abbas agreed that international resolutions would be the basis for negotiations. Abbas indeed rejected Olmert's proposal, but on the other hand, Olmert also rejected Abbas's proposal, which was most generous in Palestinian eyes: Leaving most of the settlers under Israeli sovereignty in the framework of land swaps, demilitarized Palestine, Jewish Jerusalem that includes neighborhoods in the eastern part of the city, the Western Wall, the Jewish Quarter, half of the Armenian Quarter, the rest of Mount Zion, and a symbolic and demographically insignificant return of refugees. Why does Morris ignore this refusal? Why doesn't he see it as a historic missed opportunity? Had Olmert accepted this proposal; wouldn't an agreement have been signed?

Regarding the present, Morris maintains his claim that the PLO is not prepared for territorial compromise, that he does not recognize the right of the Jewish people to the land and desires the destruction of Israel. Morris claims this because he assumes that a peace agreement between Israel and the PLO must be the product of reconciliation and sincere recognition of the right of the other, but this is not what the history of the conflict teaches us.

Morris refrains from noting that the Jewish community's willingness to compromise territorially since 1937 was not a result of recognition of the right of the Palestinian people but of the realization that in the demographic reality and spatial balance that clearly favored the Arab side, which had national aspirations of its own, a democratic and Jewish state in all of Palestine could not be established.

"Reduction of land - this is the price we must pay for the fatal delay of the Hebrew people in building the land and for the rapid growth of the Arab movement ..." Mordechai Namir said at the Mapai Conference in June 1936. This, too, was a temporary compromise, a stage in the Jewish Stage Theory, as David Ben-Gurion added: "A partial Jewish state is not an end, but a beginning" (in a letter to his son, Amos, 1937).

The same is true of the Jewish demand for partition in 1947. In a letter sent by Ben-Gurion to the British Foreign Secretary in February of that

year, Ben-Gurion wrote: "The only possible immediate arrangement that is fundamentally lasting, is the establishment of two states, one Jewish and one Arab". In other words, a democratic state with a Jewish majority can arise only if an Arab state is established in that land. Although Ben-Gurion claimed at the end of the War of Independence that "the IDF had the power to occupy the whole area between the sea and the Jordan River," he refrained from such a step, because "a Jewish state, in the existing (demographic) reality ... Is impossible, if it is to be democratic". This decision also guided Yitzhak Rabin to begin the Oslo process, and Barak and Olmert to strive for a final status agreement at Camp David and Annapolis. Not because of the Palestinians' right but to keep Israel "Jewish and democratic".

The same applies to Palestinians. Due to the global and regional changes that predated the Oslo Accords - the fall of the Soviet Union, the peace with Egypt, the first Intifada, the emergence of competing leaderships for the PLO, the exile in Tunisia and the economic crisis - they were forced to recognize in 1988 the partition resolution recognizing a Jewish state and in resolutions 242 and 338, leaving the Palestinians only 22% of Mandatory Palestine. That is, the first stage of an agreed political separation that leaves each side with partly what they wanted can be realized without full reconciliation, but this creates the conditions for future reconciliation and familiarity with the other's narrative.

Morris admits that "the current Israeli leadership also rejects the idea of two states for two peoples and therefore increases settlement in the territories, but he omits all its declarations regarding the annulment of the Oslo Accords, the dismantling of the Palestinian Authority and the transformation of Jordan into Palestine. This seems to balance the picture, but it is misleading. Because who is the one controlling the dynamic between the two refusing sides? Has Abbas changed his positions since 2008? In a document entitled "The Position," which is distributed in the Muqata (PA headquarters) in three languages, it is written: "In Algeria in 1988, the Palestinian leadership announced the acceptance of the principle of a two-state solution of June 4, 1967 lines as a basis for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" - yes, "to end the conflict!" And later on, it reads: "The establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 lines, with small and agreed upon border adjustments". Does Morris not know that Netanyahu has withdrawn from the principles agreed upon during the Annapolis process?

"The position" also states that the capital of Palestine will be in East Jerusalem, as agreed at Annapolis. What is Netanyahu's position on the matter? "We will forever preserve a unified Jerusalem under Israeli

sovereignty," he stated in 2015". In this way, Morris prevents Israelis from recognizing the present reality and working to change it and implement the two-state solution. In any other scenario, Israel will be the bigger loser in the long term.

One must listen carefully to Morris's warnings, which reject the one-state solution, and the vision of "and the wolf shall dwell with the lamb", of those who call for the establishment of one state and ignore the history of the current conflict and conflicts elsewhere in the world. Any arrangement of a one state will only lead to civil war and eventually to an Arab state.

Morris supports the two-state solution based on territorial compromise, but believes it is not feasible. But his non-feasibility argument is weak, and his main concern is the absorption of Palestinian refugees. As Morris notes, this is the absorption of the Palestinian refugees from Syria and Lebanon, since half of all the refugees have lived in the West Bank and Gaza since 1948, and most of the rest in Jordan. The negotiations between Israel and the PLO stipulated that refugees would be given the right to choose their place of residence. One option would be to stay where they currently are and receive compensation. In the surveys conducted, most of the refugees in Jordan chose this option. The number of refugees in Lebanon, according to the last census there, is only 174,000, and only 45% of them live in refugee camps. In Syria, following the civil war, the number of refugees dropped by half and is estimated at 250,000. Therefore, even under the strict assumption that all these refugees will seek to return to the State of Palestine in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and will not the option agreed at the negotiation to go to a third country, their absorption in a multi-year plan is not expected to pose a major challenge to the State of Palestine or to the international mechanism that would be established in favor of that.

The feasibility of a two-state solution exists and is based on the basic package deal of Annapolis. The current Israeli leadership refuses to re-adopt it and is doing all it can to move from a creeping annexation to the full annexation of the West Bank or parts of it through Knesset legislation. Unfortunately, most of the candidates who want to replace Netanyahu are not yet ready to adopt it either. On the Palestinian side, the growing schism between the PLO and Hamas, and the despair gripping every corner of Gaza and the West Bank, are urging many Palestinians to adopt the one-state dream. The US's exit from the status of fair mediator and Europe's weakness ensures that salvation will not come from outside, and the scenario that Morris describes - and that others described before him - may come true.

The Land of Israel: Settlements by Social Economic Cluster

Legend

Jewish Settlements by Social Economic Cluster

- Clusters 1-3
- Clusters 4-6
- Clusters 7-10

Arab Israeli Settlements by Social Economic Cluster

- Clusters 1-3
- Clusters 4-6
- Clusters 7

Palestinian Settlements - Cluster 1

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Confederation is a Disaster - Haaretz February 8, 2019

In recent years we have witnessed the publication of various ideas for settling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which are not based on a two-state solution: federation and confederation. Their raise is driven by two main working assumptions: One, the relative mix of populations between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea undermines the feasibility of a two-state solution. In this view, the two-state solution has finally been terminated due to the Israeli settlement enterprise in the West Bank and because Israel cannot evacuate the 30,000 families living in the isolated settlements and absorb them in Israel. The two-state solution can not lead to the end of the conflict because of the affinity of each of the two sides to the entire territory, and because of the need and the right of each side to move and settle in its entirety.

In previous articles I published here, the first assumption was refuted by a systematic presentation of the spatial-physical feasibility of the two-state solution, in a scenario of a 4% territorial exchange. A scenario of such an agreement would allow 80% of the Israelis living beyond the Green Line to remain under Israeli sovereignty, with reasonable and tolerable damage in three aspects: the contiguity and fabric of life of Palestinian communities that will lose some of their land, the fabric of life of Israeli settlements whose land will be transferred to Palestine in exchange, and the fabric of life of the settlers who will not be included in the exchange of territories, and will have to be reabsorbed in Israel.

Dealing with the evacuation and the absorption of 30,000 families requires national preparations, as determined in 2010 by the state's commission of inquiry into the disengagement, headed by Justice Eliahu Mazza:

"The most important lesson of the commission of inquiry is to instruct the Prime Minister to plan today a comprehensive national plan for a possible evacuation of 100,000 people from the West Bank in order to reduce personal, collective and national trauma, save costs and absorb people in the responsible and proper manner, as this country absorbed a million immigrants in the 1990s".

In this context, Israel must practically prepare itself for two challenges: jobs and housing. In such a scenario, during the evacuation phase, Israel must produce about 20,000 new jobs over five years (it should be remembered that 60% of the Israeli workforce in Judea and Samaria works within Israel). This is a marginal challenge, because today Israel produces more than 80,000 new jobs each year.

Four in-depth studies conducted in recent years to locate housing potential in Israel have found that there is an available potential for the realization of 100,000 new housing units within three years in areas relevant to evacuated Israelis.

It should be emphasized that there is currently no political feasibility for implementing such a scenario of agreement, both because of the Palestinian political split and because of the principled position of the Israeli Government, as described by John Kerry, the former US Secretary of State, in November 2017 in Dubai: "Most members of the Cabinet of the current Israeli government have declared that they would never be in favor of a Palestinian state". However, the political impossibility of a two-state solution does not make the ideas of federation or confederation viable. Implementing these solutions will be like attempting to extinguish a fire with a gasoline barrel.

Because none of the conceptual thinkers of the Federation and the Confederacy have bothered to publish a detailed plan that can be tested by scientific standards - only general principles have been published so far - the differences between the various ideas raised cannot be addressed.

In every possibility of federation and confederation, we will have to deal with it on many levels: security, political, historical, religious, social, and so on. Due to the limited space, I will focus on the socio-economic level, in order to examine whether it is possible to avoid a full political division between the two societies, and a border between them in the form of a physical barrier.

First, we will use the socio-economic index of localities in Israel, published recently by the Central Bureau of Statistics, if the border between the two political entities will pass along the 1967 lines, except for the Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. About the "Jewish state," we receive the grim picture that we are witnessing today. In the lower third (clusters 1-3), 9% of the 170 Jewish localities, where 16% of Jewish citizens live, are located. In contrast, 82% of 85 of the Arab authorities are in this third, with no less than 89% of the Arab citizens. In other words, the country is economically polarized by national affiliation.

In the "Arab state" the picture is opposite in terms of numbers, but similar in terms of polarization and gaps in favor of the Jews. The entire Arab population in the West Bank and Gaza (5 million), living in close to 1,000 localities, corresponds to the data at the bottom of cluster 1, where only 120,000 Jews are classified (in Modi'in Illit and Beitar Illit), which constitute only 29% of the Jewish population in Judea and Samaria.

Second, we will address the data of the two economies (in 2016). GDP per capita in Israel is 38,000 dollars, while in the territories it is close to only 3,000 dollars. Per capita consumption in Israel is about 32,000 NIS, and in the territories, less than 4,000 NIS. In Israel there is almost no unemployment, only 4%, while unemployment in the territories is approaching 30%. The average daily wage in Israel is 470 NIS, whereas in the territories it is only 110 NIS.

Third, we shall examine the national infrastructures: Located in the "Jewish State", are all the air and sea ports (excluding Gaza's fishing port), all the power stations, all the desalination facilities and the national carrier, all the railway tracks, all the highways (except roads 60, 443), all nuclear reactors, all major industrial zones and all international trade centers. In other words, proponents of the ideas of the Federation and the Confederation see in their vision an Arab society of millions of poor people who enjoy freedom of movement throughout the country, albeit gradually, and live in peace and with no friction with a Jewish society that is ten times richer.

The impact of such a reality on the technology and industrialization of the Israeli economy will be devastating". The Israeli Police has no chance of dealing with the expected number of property and drug offenses, even if it triples its manpower, and we will see the construction of ghettos that are fenced and guarded by private security companies. Confrontations between extremist gangs on both sides will become common, with the addition of modesty patrols, "guardians of racial purity," and so on, which will deteriorate the situation into civil war. "An Arab state", established in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with a capital in East Jerusalem, or part of a confederation with Jordan, with Arab and international support, would have a higher chance of building its economy and maintaining a stable state alongside Israel than a country whose Arab residents would serve as labor force for the "Jewish state".

And if that is not enough, the ways of absorbing the refugees, offered by the advocates of the Federation or the Confederation, are highly problematic. Some consider them to be absorbed in the Arab state alone, but some believe that it is right to absorb several refugees in Israel parallel to the number of Israelis who choose to live in the Arab state. In this spirit, and in today's data, if all Jews in Judea and Samaria choose to live in the Arab state, Israel will be required to absorb some 400,000 refugees in its territory. In other words, those who are deterred from absorbing 100,000 Israelis who are connected to their fabric of life in Israel will be forced to absorb four times more Palestinian refugees from Lebanon and Syria. If, as expected, most of the Jews (especially the ultra-

Orthodox and the secular, who constitute 70% of the Jewish population in the territories) prefer to move to the Jewish state, implementing the ideas of a federation or confederation will be the climax of Israeli foolishness, because of the loss of the central benefit that might have been derived from the idea of a confederation - refraining from evacuating a significant number of settlers.

A leadership that lacks the national responsibility necessary to resettle less than 1.5% of the Jewish population in the Land of Israel - including the use of force if necessary - thereby ensuring the future of the State of Israel as a democracy with a Jewish majority within secure borders, in the family of nations, will not be able to cope with the far greater challenges involved in realizing the idea of federation or confederation, that will eventually lead to an Arab state.

The realization of the two-state solution, which must include some confederation elements, for example in the historic basin of Jerusalem, will not be easy, and will require the commitment of both sides, as well as the Arab world and the international community. But there is no viable alternative to the conclusion reached by the partition committee in 1947, the only thing that needs to be updated is the population data: "The basic assumption behind the partition proposal is that the claims on Palestine, both of the Arabs and of the Jews, are both valid and cannot be reconciled. Of all the proposals that have been proposed, the partition is the most practical one ... and it will allow some of the national demands and aspirations of both sides to be provided ... there are now about 650,000 Jews in Palestine (currently 6.5 million), and 1.2 million Arabs (currently, some 7 million) different from each other in their way of life and in their political interests. Only through partition can these two opposing national aspirations come into real expression and allow both peoples to take their place as independent nations in the international community and the United Nations".

Israel: Vital Infrastructures

- Legend
- 1967 Line
 - Road
 - - - Railroad
 - National Water Carrier
 - Water Pipeline
 - National Water Carrier
 - Industrial park
 - Desalination Plant
 - Power Station
 - Harbor
 - Airport
 - Nuclear Plant

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Netanyahu is Trapped in a Cattle Corral of the Messianic Right - Haaretz, April 19, 2019

The new government, expected to be similar to the current one and headed by Benjamin Netanyahu - as we heard in the election campaign regarding the declarations for the expected Trump Plan - will continue to push the messianic-nationalist dimension of the conflict forward so as to be a fundamentally territorial national conflict. It will carry the flag of annexation and at the same time will advance the struggle for Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount, as a preliminary stage in the building of the Temple. These two components - sovereignty over all the Land of Israel and the establishment of the Temple - are the necessary conditions for the coming of the Messiah and for the redemption of the Jewish people according to the Mishnah of the followers of Rabbi Kook in the different parties. From the Likud to the United Right.

In their understanding, these components are needed in order to prove who are the chosen people that hold the true religion, which assures them the land, in accordance to the verse "To your offspring I will give this land" (Genesis 12: 7). An assurance that will be realized through the settlement enterprise, as commanded, "See, the Lord your God has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it" (Deuteronomy 1:21) and is needed in order to reject the Islamic claim that "My righteous slaves shall inherit the land" (Sūrat Lanbiyāa 21:105), which holds that the land was indeed given to the children of Israel, but they turned their backs on the prophets of God (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Jesus, and Muhammad - the last prophet), and therefore that right was transferred to the Muslims.

The plans and proposals for the partial annexation of the West Bank, raised at an unprecedented rate since Donald Trump's election as president, seek to advance a further step towards fulfilling the messianic vision. This, with the establishment of the right-wing government and after Netanyahu has pledged to stop blocking them as he did in the outgoing Knesset and to adopt them as his own. The initiators of these plans and proposals seek to exploit the situation in which they see an opportunity for political power: the victory of the right-wing bloc for the fourth time in a row, the unprecedented support of the Trump administration, the weakness of the European Union, the weakness of the United Nations, the wars in the Arab world, the split in the Palestinian camp and more.

Implementation of the process of annexation will reflect a fundamental change in the policy of action of the recent Israeli governments, which made a point of "creeping annexation" policy in a series of steps: The

expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, in accordance to Israeli law (in the settlements) and in its violation (in the outposts), de facto annexation through the “security fence”, building in Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, paving of bypass roads, restricting Palestinian development in Area C and demolishing unauthorized houses there, and recently, the deepening of the distinction between the Jewish residents and the Palestinians through a series of legislative steps.

The Netanyahu government is no longer seeking to distinguish between the areas agreed upon by the sides in the context of an exchange of land - the “settlement blocs” and the Jewish settlements adjacent to the “Green Line” - and the isolated Jewish settlements on the mountain and in the Jordan Valley. Last week, for example, Defense Minister Netanyahu authorized the construction of the Hawara bypass road at a cost of NIS 260 million for the four isolated settlements around Nablus, home to only 7,500 people, as part of a broader program costing NIS 5 billion. In addition, the Council for Higher Education approved this week the establishment of a Medicine Faculty at Ariel University.

An approval of the annexation proposals - whether it will be made in the wake of the expected Palestinian refusal to the Trump Plan, any coalition crisis, or security escalation – will indicate that the Israeli government intends to change its policy to “de jure annexation,” as Bennett declared in 2016: “On the subject of the Land of Israel, we have to move from a halt to a decision. We have to mark the dream, and the dream is that Judea and Samaria will be part of the sovereign land of Israel”. This is a dramatic change in the context of the decisions that the Zionist leadership was required to make during this century of conflict between the three main goals of Zionism: (A) To be a Jewish state (a state for the Jewish people in which they will be a majority), (B) to be a democratic state, and (C) to be a state over all of the Mandate’s territory (of Greater Israel). As he recognized the essence of Zionism, former Prime Minister Menachem Begin declared in 1972: “Zionism ... these are its foundations in the Land of Israel, in which our right is indisputable, there will be a Jewish majority, an Arab minority, and equal rights for all. We did not deviate from this Torah, and we will not deviate from it, in it is curtailed the righteousness of our case”.

Due to the fact that in most of the years of the conflict there was a non-Jewish majority in Palestine, the Zionist leadership was forced to choose two of the three goals and decide between three options: (A) A Jewish state that extends over the whole of Palestine but is not democratic - in contrast to the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate, the Partition Plan and

the Declaration of Independence adopted by it, and the political and legal basis for the establishment of the State of Israel. (B) A democratic state that extends over all the Land of Israel but is not Jewish. (C) A Jewish and democratic state in part of the Land of Israel. The third option was the strategic choice of the Zionist leadership and the governments of Israel up to the current government.

The elimination of the feasibility of a two-state solution through limited means of annexation is now Netanyahu’s goal and as well as of a number of ministers and MKs; But they would avoid the threat of annexation of Areas A and B or the re-establishment of a military government there. They believe that they will be able to manage the annexation according to their wishes, but the assessments and forecasts of former senior officials in the defense establishment, in foreign policy and in the economy are completely different. The annexation of Area C or some of it will lead to the official death of the Oslo Accords, the dismantling of the Palestinian Authority, the loss of security coordination and to the a severe wave of violence. All these will force Israel to re-take control of Areas A and B, reestablish the Civil Administration to manage the lives of 2.6 million Palestinians, and later even apply Israeli law to that territory and people; first according to the model of East Jerusalem residency, and then fully including citizenship.

Thus, for Netanyahu, the two-state solution and the political and physical separation from the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which underpinned the political security outlook of former Israeli Prime Ministers (Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert) will be replaced with annexation, by means of a law that may lead to the annexation of the entire West Bank. This is a change in the order of priorities of the Zionist goals: giving priority to Mandatory Israel over and at the expense of a solid Jewish majority and a democratic regime in the State of Israel. This will cause a storm, of which scope and speed will be determined by regional and global factors. But if Israel chooses to initiate it, it will eventually bury the Zionist vision.

The Israeli government has the authority to promote annexation as part of the realization of its ideological position. However, the government is expected to adopt such a decision as part of a comprehensive policy aimed at improving the country’s strategic position, preserving its identity and police, and promoting the components of its national security. This is after a serious strategic discussion that examines all the implications that are expected to result from annexation steps.

The flow of proposals for annexation, which all share a non-use of data, the lack of professional staff work and the use of laundered language,

all of which indicates the intentions and objectives of the proposers: to promote a messianic nationalist ideology in which personal political interests are intertwined at the expense of the state's overall interests. The increase in the power of the nationalists in the future government will increase the number of those who underestimate the potential threats to Israel as a result of annexation, and therefore may not hesitate to change the current situation in order to realize their vision.

Israel will find itself deep in a gloomy reality without a Palestinian Authority, a severe crisis with Egypt and Jordan, and a political confrontation with the Europeans. If it comes to its senses, it will seek to get out of the situation. The historical experience of the 25 years of the "Oslo process" teaches us that Israel has chosen to emerge from a crisis and violent escalation in one of three ways:

One, it will almost certainly want to act independently to promote physical separation without compromising the extent of its security control over the external perimeter of the Palestinian area and its ability to intervene in it and implement a "disengagement / convergence plan". In other words, the evacuation of isolated Jewish settlements into the "settlement blocs", completion of the "security fence", maintaining the security presence on the Jordanian border, and the ability to intervene in all areas of Judea and Samaria. This plan is likely to face many difficulties due to the absence of a Palestinian government body that can take responsibility for the Palestinian territories. Its advantages include separating the populations by reducing friction and maintaining the conditions for agreed separation, maintaining Israel's security, preserving the vast majority of Israelis living beyond the Green Line in their homes, separated and protected by the security fence and maintaining the present status of all of Jerusalem.

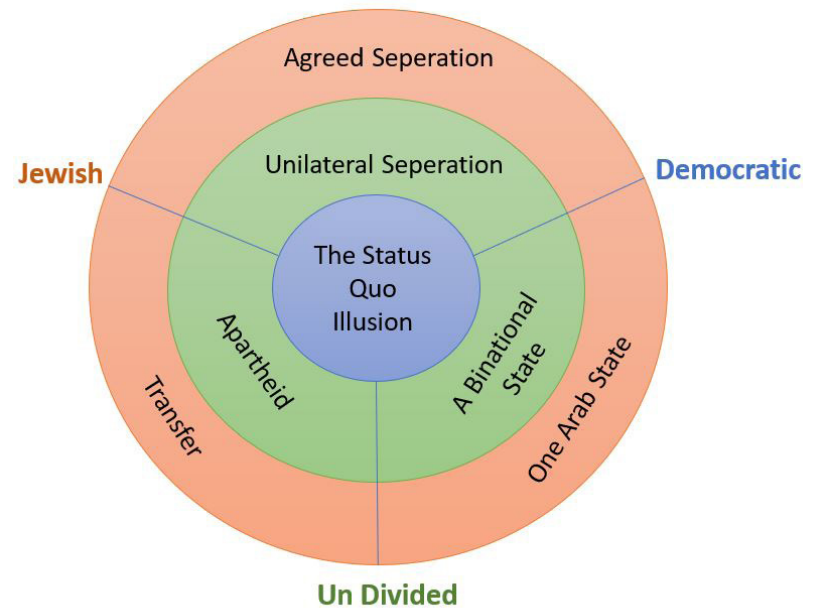
Two, Israel will renew its negotiations with the Palestinian leadership in accordance with the existing parameters. It can be assumed that the Palestinians may adopt a position that is far more rigid than today's position on the four core issues (borders, security, Jerusalem and refugees), including on the future of the Jewish settlements. This insight must be addressed by the Israeli opposition leaders in formulating their position on any move of annexation, however small.

Three, Israel will launch a new "road map" of three phases that will be coordinated with the United States, the European Union, the Arab Quartet (Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) and the Palestinian leadership in exile. The first stage may include a convergence plan or implementation of parts of it, the recognition of Palestine with provisional borders and the renewal of permanent status

negotiations. In the second stage, a permanent agreement will be signed that will include regional involvement. The third stage will be the gradual implementation of the permanent status agreement, with Arab and international involvement.

Netanyahu can choose otherwise to save the trouble that is in the process of annexation, and to adopt one of the three options now. But it seems that he prefers to march in the cattle corral corridors of the messianic-nationalist right and drag the State of Israel together with him.

Regime Identity and Borders



Netanyahu is Pulling the Rug Out from Underneath Our Feet - Haaretz October 10, 2019

Two historic announcements made in November forced the Zionist movement to decide and determine its position on the conflict with the Palestinians. While its position in relation to the Balfour Declaration of 1917 enjoyed legitimacy and support from the international community, its position under Netanyahu's rule regarding the PLO's 1988 recognition of UN Resolution 242, which includes recognition of the State of Israel, is contrary to the international community's position, and even threatens to sabotage the very legitimacy that was given to the Balfour Declaration.

The Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, which is also according to Edward Said, who was a member of the PLO Executive Committee, is "The Legal Basis of the Zionist demand of Palestine" (in his 1978 book "Orientalism"), forced the Zionist movement to define the essence of its political claim. Indeed, in the decision of the First Zionist Congress in Basel, 1897, it was stated that "Zionism seeks to establish a Jewish home for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel," but the substance of that home was not established.

Until the occupation of the country by the British, the Zionist movement refrained from presenting clear claims. The Ottoman government rejected all the generous suggestions offered by Herzl and others. In October 1898, Herzl wrote in his journal of the trip to the land of Israel about the concern of the old Jewish Yeshuv with supporting Zionism: "the Sephardi Rabbi Meir made it clear to me what the position of the chief rabbis here is; that they do not want to jeopardize their relationship with the Turkish authorities".

Until and shortly after the Balfour Declaration, some of the leaders of the Zionist movement continued to conceal or obscure their goal: the establishment of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel. When Haim Weizman arrived in the land of Israel after the Balfour Declaration, in which the concept of a "National Home" was first established, David Ben-Gurion asked him why the Zionist Organization did not demand "simply a Hebrew state in the land of Israel?", Weizman answered: "We didn't demand... because we wouldn't have gotten it. We only demanded conditions that would allow for a Jewish state in the future. This is a question of tactics".

Ze'ev Jabotinsky explained in a cynical tone in his 1923 "Iron Wall" article, what do the words "conditions that would allow" mean for Arabs and Jews, and first and foremost, concerning Jewish immigration: "Many of us still believe in our innocence, as if some misunderstanding occurred: the

Arabs did not understand us, and only for that reason, they are against us, but if we could explain to them how modest our intentions are, they would immediately reach out to us. This is a mistake that has already been proven ... Of course, the Zionists do not now dream of the expulsion of the Arabs, neither of oppressing them or of a Jewish government; Of course, now, they want only one thing - that the Arabs will not interfere with immigration. The Zionists promise that they will immigrate to Israel only according to the economic absorption capacity of the Land of Israel. But in this regard, the Arabs never had any doubts: ... "Only this" do the Zionists want; And precisely this is not what the Arabs want, because then the Jews will become the majority, and then a Jewish government will be established, and then the fate of the Arab minority will depend on the good will of the Jews".

Later, the Arabs prophetically explained their opposition "only" to this important condition: "the day is not far when Zionism will succeed in wiping the footprints of the Arabs from the land," the newspaper Al-Jameh al-Arabiya stated in an editorial from July 10, 1936, adding: "Will the establishment of the Jewish National Home be complete when the number of Jews in Palestine reaches five hundred thousand, one million ... or ten millions, or after the Jews purchase all of Palestine?"

Others in the Zionist leadership demanded a position to be made clear, even if it leads to a struggle with the Arabs of the land. On January 2, 1918, Elijah Golomb said at the first Constituent Assembly of the Yeshuv in Jaffa: "After the Declaration (Balfour Declaration) we can no longer deny our desire for governance over the Land of Israel. And the Arabs will not give up the land in which they are the majority of inhabitants. We need to make our ambition a real right by action, and by strength to support our historical and moral rights and give them a realistic existence". Ben-Gurion also clearly stated the purpose, in the Third Constituent Assembly, on December 20, 1918: "Our national demand ... has one name only, it is the same name that Dr. Herzl called his notebook: 'The State of the Jews.' Although for political reasons, the explicit name was not pronounced in the Basel platform (in the Zionist Congress), but now that the political conditions have changed, the movement must not give up its two-thousand-year-old dream, and so "a Hebrew state - this is our demand".

Jabotinsky found in the international commitment a "Zionist answer" to the expected Arab opposition: "Why do we need the Balfour Declaration? What do we need the mandate for? Their significance for us lies in the fact that an external force has undertaken to create such conditions of administrative support and security in the land, where the local

population, despite all its wishes, is denied the possibility of interfering with our settlement administratively or physically. And we all, without exception, urge this external force, every day, to play its role firmly and without hesitation”.

PLO's November 15, 1988, acceptance of UN Resolution 181 (Partition) as part of the Declaration of a Palestinian State, and its continuation by Yasser Arafat in December 1988, at a Geneva Press Conference, states: “We ... recognize 242 and 338 as the basis for negotiations with Israel”. His successor, Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), also said more clearly, in an interview he gave to the Al-Arabiya channel on April 23, 2008: the 1947 opportunity for division (of the land) was lost, and beforehand the opportunity during the Phil commission. We do not want to miss another opportunity. We therefore received the 1948 and 1967 divisions, which do not include more than 22% of historic Palestine”. Later, in an interview he gave to Channel 2 in Israel, on November 2, 2012, he said: “Palestine is now within the 1967 borders and its capital is in East Jerusalem. Now and forever. Only the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are Palestine”.

This dramatic change in the Palestinian leadership's position, at once removed the basis for the claim that no Palestinian partner recognizes Israel and is ready to accept international decisions, and thus refuted Israeli justification for continued control of the occupied territories. The decision again forced Israel to decide whether, as it has declared for decades, it seeks to resolve the conflict under international decisions or not.

The Israeli response began with the Oslo Accords, led by the Labor Party, headed by Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, aimed at settling the dispute in a final settlement on the basis of Resolution 242. Ehud Barak was far from meeting the international interpretation of that resolution in his proposals at Camp David 2000 and Taba 2001 and the only one who made the historic “leap of faith”, which left only technical gaps between the parties, was Ehud Olmert in Annapolis 2008.

On the other hand, the rejecters of compromise based on international decisions, led by Benjamin Netanyahu and the Nationalist Messianic parties, had to seek and present other reasons for their principled refusal to establish a Palestinian state. Their refusal was absolute. The basic lines of Netanyahu's first government in 1996 read: “The government will oppose the establishment of an independent Palestinian state,” and no mention was made of the implementation of the pending clauses of the interim agreement. In response to criticism coming from right-wing circles about his transfer of Hebron to the Palestinian Authority, Netanyahu said on September 6, 1997: “There will be no Palestinian state

... There will be no foreign sovereignty between the Jordan and the sea. Jewish presence and Jewish settlement in all of Judea and Samaria will live, prosper and will exist forever”.

In his recent governments, Netanyahu maintained the same policy. In March 2015, he promised, “If I get elected, there won't be a Palestinian state in my term”; and he kept his promise. In March 2019, Netanyahu said at a Likud gathering: “Anyone who opposes a Palestinian state needs to support the transfer of funds to Hamas. Maintaining the separation of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza helps us to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state”.

In order to rationalize his recalcitrant position, Netanyahu had to re-adopt the concept of “the phases theory”: “the PLO's policy is built on gradual phases and its purpose is to destroy the State of Israel and not reach a settlement with it ...”, he wrote in his book “A Place under the Sun”; he threatened that “The PLO state, which will be transplanted 15 km off the coast of Tel Aviv, would be an immediate threat of death to the Jewish state”. In 2001, Israel's channel 10's microphone captured Netanyahu's remarks during a consolation visit to Ofra settlement, recounting how he procured from the Clinton administration a written statement that Israel alone would set the boundaries of its “military sites” in the West Bank that would remain in its hand. By defining the entire Jordan Valley as a security site, Netanyahu explained: “I stopped the Oslo Accords.” In other words, without the valley, no agreement will be signed with the Palestinians and no Palestinian state will be established. Netanyahu clung to that line in the 2019 election, announcing his intention to annex the Jordan Valley.

His natural partners of Gush Emunim's successors remained true to the position of their leader, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, who stated after the Six Day War: “This land is ours, there are no Arab territories and Arab lands here, but the lands of Israel, the eternal inheritance of our ancestors, and it, in all of its biblical boundaries belong to the rule of Israel”. They were quick to reveal their goal - the realization of the messianic dream. In September 2016, the head of the Jewish Home party, Naphtali Bennett said: “On the subject of the Land of Israel, we need to move from containment to decision. We need to mark the dream, and the dream is that Judea and Samaria will be part of the sovereign land of Israel”.

With Donald Trump's election to the US presidency, all inhibitions and pretending were removed: “There is room here for defining and realizing the national aspirations of only one people - the Jewish people. This hope, which is the mother of all sin, I kill to them. National aspirations? Palestinians? not here. Not at our expense”. Betzael Smotrich announced

in September 2017.

In February 2019, dozens of coalition ministers and Knesset members signed a statement in this language: "I hereby pledge to be loyal to the Land of Israel, not to give up on our ancestral inheritance... I pledge to cancel the declaration of two states for two peoples, and replace it with this statement: Eretz Israel ... - One country to one people!" Netanyahu did not linger behind, announcing in April 2019: "We will gradually apply Israeli sovereignty over parts of Judea and Samaria".

With these intentions and declarations, if they are fulfilled, Netanyahu and his partners take away the political-legal groundwork for the establishment of the State of Israel. First, in the absence of any intention to grant full civil rights to the people of the West Bank (and the Gaza Strip), they violate the Balfour Declaration which read: "His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people... it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine. Second, the denial to the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state in the Land of Israel is contrary to the partition decision, which is the legal basis for declaring the State of Israel, which states explicitly that the State was established "on the basis of the United Nations Decision".

The Israeli leadership would do well to adopt Abbas' sober approach to these two historic declarations. In his address to the UN assembly on September 16, 2016, he began with the words: "100 years have passed since the infamous Balfour Declaration", but he continued: "Therefore, we ask Britain to learn the lessons and be responsible in all areas for the implications of the Balfour Declaration ... including the establishment of a Palestine state. This is the least that Britain can do".

In the same vein, Abbas wrote in The Guardian in November 2017: "The physical act of signing the Balfour Declaration has taken place in the past and cannot be changed. But it can be repaired. It requires humility and courage. It will require dealing with the past, recognizing mistakes made, and taking tangible steps to correct those mistakes. This is the time for the British government to play its part, in taking concrete steps to end the occupation on the basis of international law and international decisions ... Recognizing Palestine in the 1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital may bring about the political rights of the Palestinian people".

One law for Itamar and One for Shaykh Muwannis – Haaretz, November 14, 2019

This month will mark the 72 anniversary of the partition resolution (181) approved by the UN General Assembly on November 29, 1947. The important part of it stated that two states, Jewish and Arab, would be established, "two months after the evacuation of the Mandatory Armed Forces, and in any case no later than October 1, 1948". However, the borders of the division of the Land of Israel, the object of the Jewish-Arab conflict, to which a detailed description was given, were not to be counted upon, both by the Arabs who rejected the resolution and for the Jews who accepted it.

Both sides were intended on changing the borders, each according to his perception and needs. Today, while the Arabs have align with international decisions - first with 181, and later with 242 and 338 based upon the June 1967 lines - Israel led by Benjamin Netanyahu seeks to maintain the illusion of a Greater Israel, that threatens Israel's future as a democratic state with a Jewish majority, that is safe and a member of the family of nations.

The boundaries of the division were determined mainly by Dr. Paul Mohan - the Swedish Deputy Representative to the UNESCO Committee, who had one week to complete the mission. His working assumption was optimistic, and did not match the history of the conflict between the peoples. "I tried to integrate two ideas that cannot be settled: hope for Jewish-Arab cooperation, and fear of Jewish-Arab hostility", Mohan wrote in his diary (Ofer Aderet, Haaretz, November 24, 2017). "If the parties wanted to live in peace, it could have materialized with my partition plan". Mohan was also aware of the opposite possibility, writing "if they would like to separate and turn their backs", but assumed that the possibility of realizing it was only theoretical.

The silent Zionist Swede who divided the Land of Israel became a little less mysterious and indeed, the committee's intention to establish a state with a Jewish majority, while rejecting the idea of a transfer, was required to deal with the constraints created by geographical spread of the Jewish and Arab populations in the land.

Only the division into regions - three for the Jewish state and three for the Arab state, which were connected to each other in a way that maintained territorial continuity - and the separate body of Jerusalem under international control, could have created a meager 55% Jewish majority in the Jewish state. The need to provide space for future Jewish immigration and to provide a way out to the Red Sea added to the

Jewish state the vast majority of the Negev, which, according to Mohan, the Jewish settlement there was an “extraordinary success”, placing it at about 55% of the land.

The Arabs rejected the decision to establish a Jewish state in the Land of Israel. Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini declared that “a nation that desires life does not reconcile with the division of its homeland”, and ‘Abd al-Qader Husseini added in January 1948: “It is impossible for Palestine to be for Arabs and Zionists together - it is either us or them”. The explanation for the refusal is given in the “Palestinian Convention”: “The division of Palestine from 1947 and the establishment of Israel is fundamentally wrong ... because they contradict the will of the Palestinian Arab people and their natural right to their homeland, and because they contradict the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter including the right for self-determination”.

The Palestinians justified their opposition by having a two-thirds majority in the land’s population. According to the 1945 British Census and Survey, they enjoyed a majority in five of the six Mandatory districts, and owned 89% of the private lands. Walid al-Khaleedi wrote in 2007 that the Palestinians “could not understand why it was not unfair for the Jews to constitute a minority in one undivided Palestine, while it was considered fair that the Palestinians living in Jewish territory, almost half the population, the indigenous majority in its ancestral land is - will overnight become a minority subject to foreign rule ... While 37% of the population in Palestine [Jews], who own only 7% of the land, received 55% of the land for their sovereignty, the Palestinians are unable to understand why they should pay the price of the Holocaust”.

Thus, the Arabs started a war for their stolen rights. Jamal al-Husseini, a representative of the Supreme Arab Committee, explained in his speech to the Security Council on April 16, 1948, that “a representative of the Jewish Agency told us yesterday that they are not the aggressor side, because it was the Arabs who started the fighting, and because as soon as the Arabs stop firing, the Jews will do the same. In fact, we do not deny this fact ... we have said never ... that we do not agree that little Palestine will be divided ... and that we intend to fight against it”.

The Jewish community, led by David Ben-Gurion, was aware of the Arab refusal to the partition and its intention to abolish it by force, and prepared for it even before Musa al-Alami, head of the Arab League’s information department, announced that “the Arabs will oppose by all means to the UN’s special recommendations (UNSCOP), and the attempt to impose the partition plan will lead to war in the Middle East”. The most important thing for the Jewish community was to win an international

decision on the establishment of the state before the position of the world powers changed. Outwardly, there was a willingness to pay for this decision even at the cost of dividing the land and establishing an Arab state. In February 1947, Ben-Gurion wrote to Foreign Minister Berry Tea: “Without finitude, fear, tension, unrest, and perhaps even the fighting, will continue in the Land of Israel and will be a source of trouble in the Middle East ... The only possible immediate arrangement that has an essence of finality is the establishment of two states, one Jewish and one Arab”.

The Declaration of Independence on May 14, 1948, stated that the state was established “on the basis of the United Nations General Assembly resolution”, and that “this recognition of the United Nations’ right of the Jewish people to establish its state is irrevocable”. However, Ben-Gurion understood that the obligation to implement the decision rested with the Jewish community and the Jewish people, as he explained in his December 1947 speech: “A great decision was made at the UN General Assembly ... but this recognition requires implementation. And the implementation is not only in the establishment of an executive committee by the UN, or in the establishment of a temporary Jewish government, or in the convening of a constituent assembly and constitution, or in its declaration of independence and acceptance to the UN as an equal member. The state will not be established only with these”.

At the same time, privately, Ben-Gurion made other statements as well. On May 13, 1947, at a meeting of the agency’s board in the United States, he declared: “We want the land of Israel in its entirety. That was the original intention... in the area in which there is a Jewish majority a state will be established... and in the rest of the territory there will be a British mandate”. On September 17, 1947, at the Mapai conference, he stated that “a Jewish state should be established in the part where there is a Jewish majority ... and in the second part we should wait until a Jewish majority develops”. And on the day of the decision, November 29, 1947, he stated in the Mapai Secretariat: “Who said that if you establish a Jewish state, you must establish an Arab state?”. In practice, the Hebrew Yeshuv reached an agreement with King Abdullah of Transjordan, that was reached at a meeting in Naharaym on November 17, 1947, on the division of the land at the expense of the planned Arab state, similarly to the lines Ben-Gurion presented to the British cabinet in April 1947 and to the Armistice lines agreed upon at the end of the war. On May 12, 1948, on the eve of the declaration of the state, in his meeting with Golda Myerson, Abdullah withdrew from the agreement and sought to

annex the entire Land of Israel to his kingdom.

Thus, Mohan's working premise regarding Jewish-Arab cooperation collapsed on the day the UN resolution was adopted, and with it the illusion that the "economic unity" required in infrastructure, currency and development could be maintained for the political division into seven regions. The Arabs threatened and sought to abolish the partition by force, and the Yeshuv had to create other borders, demarcating territory with territorial continuity and short internal lines of defense, to ensure the establishment and survival of the state. To this must be added the basic desire to expand the territory of the state to the entire territory of the Mandatory Land of Israel.

Already at the stage of the Civil War, before the establishment of the state, Israel Galili, Chief of Defense, stated at the end of an officers' course on April 8, 1948, that "we are fighting and will fight for all the territories conquered by Hebrew settlement to this day ... our borders will be determined by the limits of our power ... The political borders will overlap with the borders of the territories that will be liberated from the enemy, the fruit of our conquests".

Later, in his speech to the People's Assembly on May 14, 1948, Ben-Gurion explained the decision of the People's Council not to declare the borders of the state: "We have decided to evade (I deliberately choose this word) this question for the sake of simplicity: if the UN upholds its decision - then we, for our part (I am stating the public opinion) will respect all the decisions. So far the UN has not done such a thing ... so not everything obliges us and we have left this matter open. We haven't said "NO to the UN borders", we have also not said the opposite. We left it open for development". And finally he concluded, on June 16, 1948, at a cabinet meeting: "The decision of November 29 is dead. The war will determine the borders of the state". And indeed, these were set out in the ceasefire agreements signed in 1949 (the Green Line), which gave Israel 78% of the Mandatory Land of Israel, with a 84% Jewish majority due to the flight, deportation and prevention of the return of Palestinian refugees.

72 years have passed since the "November 29 decision", and the reality has changed: Israel is now a regional, military and economic power, enjoys peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan and has had the Arab League peace offer for 17 years. It has been recognized by the Palestinians and maintains a solid Jewish majority. of 79%. However, similarly to the reality at the end of the War of Independence, the demographic balance between the

sea and Jordan tends to develop into a non-Jewish majority, and since 1967 the countries of the world have not recognized Israel's annexation of the territories occupied during the Six Day War as we found out again this week, when the European Court of Justice repeatedly ruled that food products from the settlements should be labeled.

Despite all this, Israel, led by Netanyahu, seeks to annex the West Bank, as he has repeatedly promised in the past year - "We will gradually impose Israeli sovereignty over the territories of Judea and Samaria". Therefore, anyone who inherits Netanyahu will be required to repeal the dream of the Greater Land of Israel, for the same reasons that Ben-Gurion stated in an interview with Haim Guri in 1968, when he explained why he signed the ceasefire agreements: "The fear of the abolition of democracy, the loss of the Jewish identity of the State of Israel and a confrontation with the international community. Entanglement in a hostile Arab space would have forced us to make a choice that we could not, and would not want to, face: the use of Deir Yassin's methods to deport hundreds of thousands of Arabs who at that time would no longer leave their homes and flee from us, or accept them into the country. They would have blown up the young country from within. Such a move would inevitably lead to a difficult conflict with the world powers".

So, perhaps, in the Israeli education system, which according to the 2015 survey by the New Wave Institute, 69% of teachers did not know what the November 29 date symbolizes and only 43% knew what the Green Line was, would know how to teach about both, and especially about the differences between them.



The End of the Two States Solution is Just a Myth - Haaretz November 22, 2019

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's statement that the West Bank settlements are not necessarily "inconsistent with international law," as UN Security Council resolutions and the International Court of Justice have determined, is — like the proposals for West Bank annexation raised by some Israeli lawmakers and cabinet members — a pathetic attempt to give political and legal validity to a demographic and territorial situation in which annexation of the settlements makes no sense.

Every year, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics discloses the truth about the settlements in the West Bank and in Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. This year, the disappointment for annexation adherents is greater than ever, thanks to the expectations stirred by Israel's most messianic-ultranationalist government ever and the unprecedented support of the Trump administration. The figures again show that any annexation would harm Israel's democracy and its Jewish identity, and that the settlements' existence does not preclude a two-state solution — if and only if both sides and the U.S. administration have a sincere, responsible political will to achieve it.

Even after 10 years of Benjamin Netanyahu heading religious-Haredi-ultranationalist governments including ministers who ruled out a two-state solution and were capable of advancing the settlement enterprise, the situation on the ground is as miserable as ever, contradicting the myth they cultivate. Opponents of a final arrangement were not aided by housing ministers responsible for development plans; defense ministers responsible for issuing building permits and for not evacuating illegal outposts; justice ministers responsible for the nation-state law, the economic arrangements law; the Supreme Court override clause and the Ministerial Committee for Legislation resolution requiring every law to address the settlements; the education ministers responsible for removing content on peace and Zionism from the increasingly religious curricula or the finance ministers responsible for the unprecedented allocations for settlements.

Let's start with the idea of a "united Jerusalem" that is "above our highest joys." Well, it turns out that the Trump administration's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and its relocation of the U.S. embassy did not unite the city, judging by data issued by the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research (as of December 2017). Jerusalem remains split into an Arab city and a Jewish one, by population distribution. Of the 347,000 residents of West Jerusalem, 97 percent are Jewish. In the Jewish neighborhoods

of East Jerusalem live 209,000 Jews and only 4,200 Arabs, half in Givat Shapira and nearly all the rest in Pisgat Ze'ev.

The mirror image is identical. The Arab neighborhoods and villages have 338,000 Arab residents and just 1,770 Jewish ones (0.5 percent of the total). This situation reinforces the feasibility of dividing the city – whose Jewish majority has declined to 62 percent, from 74 percent in 1967 – in accordance with the Clinton Parameters of December 2000, the basis for the talks in Taba in 2001 and Annapolis in 2008. That is, the 12 Jewish neighborhoods would be under Israeli sovereignty and the 28 Arab villages and neighborhoods would be under Palestinian sovereignty.

The Old City has 34,000 inhabitants, 11 percent of whom are Jews. Jews comprise 59 percent of the population of the Old City's Jewish Quarter and 49 percent of the Armenian Quarter. The interspersed Jewish, Muslim and Christian holy sites throughout the Old City, and in particular the Temple Mount, preclude partition. Special shared, international agreements on the administration of the Old City without altering the status quo on the Holy Places are necessary, as Ehud Olmert proposed in 2008.

And in Judea and Samaria? The territory's Israeli population rose by 14,395 this year. At the end of 2018, the number stood at 427,000, less than 5 percent of Israel's total population. This year the proportion of Palestinians in the population of Judea and Samaria rose to 87 percent, making any attempt at annexation a security, economic and social nightmare. This year, again, the growth rate for the Jewish population in the district was higher than for Israel as a whole, but the multiyear trends show that this is having no effect on the Palestinians' demographic and territorial dominance (98 percent of the land in Judea and Samaria is owned by them).

First of all, the annual growth rate for Jews declined to 3.48 percent, from 3.52 percent. This is a continuation of a trend that began past 25 years ago, with the signing of the Oslo Accords, when the growth rate was close to 14 percent. Second, as has been the case since 1990, the growth can be attributed to ultra-Orthodox Jews, who account for 42.8 percent of the total rate; 85 percent of this population lives in the two largest Jewish towns in Judea and Samaria that are situated on the Green Line: Modi'in Ilit (population 73,080) and Betar Ilit (population 56,746). These two towns account for more than a third of the Israelis in the district (which comprises 128 settlements). They also hold the dubious honor of being among the poorest municipalities in Israel (out of a total of 255, ranked 7 and 10). In any Israeli and Palestinian proposal, these towns would be annexed to Israel as part of a final status accord.

Third, of the two, smaller, secular cities in Judea and Samaria: Ma'aleh Adumim (population 38,193) has for more than a decade been growing at a rate of less than 1 percent (including 64 Arabs who are registered as living there). Ariel (population 20,456) remains the smallest of the four cities and has not seen any significant change in its population over the last two decades (and currently has 590 Arabs registered as residents).

The Netanyahu government can point to one "achievement" in its attempt to create an irreversible reality: the fact that 57 percent of the annual growth rate in Judea and Samaria this year occurred outside of the settlement "blocs" adjacent to the Green Line (not including Ariel and Kedumim, which are more than 20 kilometers from the Green Line). Until a decade ago, this figure had not exceeded 25 percent.

This change is connected with growth in the populations of Gush Emunim settlements over the years, which are deliberately outside of the "blocs."

But this trend does not change the overall picture, because outside of the four cities, only a little more than half (55 percent) of the district's population lives in the other 124 settlements. And nearly half of these locales (47 percent) have fewer than 1,000 residents. Only 10 of these settlements have more than 5,000 residents. Most of the Israelis live close to the Green Line.

Thus, the feasibility of a final status accord based on an exchange of 4 percent of the territory next to the Green Line was not seriously dented this year either. Israel would retain under its sovereignty 80 percent of the Israelis who live beyond the Green Line without overly harming the Palestinians' territorial contiguity and fabric of life, or seriously hurting the Israeli communities within the Green Line that would have to relinquish some of their land as part of the territorial exchange.

This year, once again, the "Jewish people" voted with their feet against Jewish settlement in the West Bank. Only 20 percent of the annual growth rate there was due to migration from inside the Green Line to Judea and Samaria.

Nevertheless, unfortunately, the myth that the settlements have created an irreversible situation that precludes the two-state solution will not be easily dispelled. Many supporters of the two-state solution believe that it is no longer possible because of the settlements, yet they are not aware of their geographic distribution, location and size.

The American declaration does not contribute to the advancement of a diplomatic solution. Like the declarations regarding Jerusalem and

the Golan Heights, it only distances the Palestinians and the Arabs from negotiations, with the backing of most of the international community.

97 percent of Israelis, who live inside the Green Line and in the “settlement blocs,” are being held captive, willfully or otherwise, to a small but influential, loud, organized and militant group in the Knesset and the government, and are not mustering the courage and the strength to say “enough.” Enough of dragging all of Israel into ultranationalism, racism, violence, fiscal irresponsibility, continued erosion of the rule of law, repeated and useless rounds of violence in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and enough to making the country reviled throughout the world.

Israel's Phased Plan – Haaretz, January 31, 2020

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 it 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 rise 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 newborn 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, considering 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.

Peter Beinart Doesn't Realize That the Israeli-Palestinian Divide Is Too Wide to Bridge - Haaretz, July 24, 2020

Last week Gideon Levy heaped praise on Peter Beinart's New York Times piece in which the American columnist wrote that the two-state solution was dead due to the irreversible number of settlers in the West Bank. The two pundits conclude that one state should be established since, as Beinart says, "The goal of equality is now more realistic than the goal of separation."

The contribution of journalists of Beinart's caliber is often expressed as a simple description of a complex reality. But in this case his statement is tantamount to an attempt to explain why people on the other side of the earth don't fall off, using the argument that the world is flat. It's catchy, simple, but in no way reflects reality, which should include better knowledge of the situation on the ground rather than the embracing of official data.

Beinart's argument includes two complementary arguments. The first is that the number of settlers has made the two-state solution impossible. The second is that one state is the desirable solution. Regarding the first claim, here are some facts.

First, the Israeli settlements are not integrated with the population of the West Bank. Sixty-two percent of the settlers work in Israel, and 25 percent work in their own communities' school system, which is disproportionately subsidized. Only a few percent are employed in agriculture and industry, where 99 percent of the labor is provided by Palestinians; the road system serving the settlers is almost separate, lacking any logic in terms of planning.

There is no common web of interactions between adjacent settlements save for a few exceptions, with no social or cultural interaction between Palestinians and Jews.

Second, there's the demographic and spatial reality. The Gaza Strip, with a population of 2.1 million Palestinians, has not one Israeli resident. In other words, there is total separation. For 20 years, the number of Israelis in the West Bank has constituted 18 percent of the population, similar to the percentage of the Arab minority in Israel on the eve of the state's establishment.

With a two-state solution, Israelis who wished to do so could receive the choice of staying put as Palestinian residents. In the southern West Bank, south of the Gush Etzion settlement bloc, and in the north, north of Nablus, the ratio of Arabs to Jews is 40 to 1. In other words, they are

segregated in those areas.

Ninety-nine percent of private land in the West Bank is owned by Palestinians. The built-up area of all the settlements doesn't reach 2 percent of the West Bank. Half the settlers live in three large cities that hug the 1967 border, the Green Line, or Jerusalem. With a land swap of less than 4 percent of the total area, one could leave 80 percent of Israelis now living beyond the Green Line under Israeli sovereignty, excluding the city of Ariel.

Thus, there already is separation. Israel certainly has the ability to absorb the rest in terms of housing and employment.

Regarding the argument that a one-state solution is desirable, I'd like to pose several questions. How can a country with a per capita GDP of \$40,000 absorb a population less than one-tenth as rich? Would the Jewish population accept the intolerable drop that would occur in health, welfare and education services with the absorption of a population equal in number where 98 percent occupy the lowest socioeconomic strata? Or would we witness a brain drain and an emigration of young people?

Would Palestinians serve in the army of "Isra-stine"? What would happen with Palestinian refugees – would they return to "Isra-stine," giving the country a substantial Arab majority? Who would shoulder the financial burden of absorbing and rehabilitating them?

Has Beinart seen the results of a survey by the Institute for National Security Studies showing that 78 percent of Israelis are unwilling to grant residential or civil rights to Palestinians living in areas Israel might annex? These people support apartheid and oppose any relinquishing of control by Jews.

More than 70 years since a UN committee's 1947 report on partition determined that Palestine contained Jews and Arabs different in their lifestyle and political interests, this statement is still valid. These differences fuel the struggle between two national movements, both of which have valid claims that are irreconcilable other than by partition, as stated in 1937 by the Peel Commission.

Yes, the feasibility of a two-state solution is currently very low, but not because of the number of settlers. The settlement enterprise in the last two decades has seen a dramatic drop in the number of Israelis moving to the West Bank; the increase in settler numbers stems largely from natural growth in the ultra-Orthodox community in two cities along the Green Line. Meanwhile, the socioeconomic ranking of the West

Bank Jewish community has gradually declined. All this shows that this enterprise isn't powerful enough to stifle the two-state solution.

As I've shown repeatedly in the past, there is a physical-spatial feasibility for such a solution in terms of the four core issues plaguing this conflict: borders, Jerusalem, security and refugees.

The low feasibility of a two-state solution stems from the lack of political feasibility, mainly on the Israeli side. It's enough to note the declaration signed last year by more than 40 ministers and lawmakers on the right; they committed to block a two-state solution and establish one state for one people in the Land of Israel.

Beinart's lack of familiarity with the spatial-demographic-social reality and Levy's sincere yearning for equality have led them to conclude that a single state is possible without examining the diplomatic, cultural, security and economic aspects.

Levy must know that it's impossible to impose communal life on peoples that don't desire it and don't respect each other. Beinart, as a political scientist, should focus on explaining the absence of political feasibility, since that's where his strength lies. Let him propose moves that would effect change.

Netanyahu's 'Normalization' Policy Will Turn Israel into an Arab State- Haaretz, August 24, 2020

The normalization agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates – like Benjamin Netanyahu's 2009 Bar-Ilan speech and President Donald Trump's peace vision earlier this year – is nothing but the same dame in different clothes when it comes to the prime minister's Palestinian policy.

Netanyahu uses accepted and recognizable concepts from previous diplomatic moves with the Palestinians and Arab nations, but intends the opposite of what the international community and previous Israeli leaders sought to achieve. His goal is not to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with the help of Arab states, but to decide the outcome on the basis of their support and setting impossible terms for the Palestinians, or their continued indifference to the existing situation.

The short-term victory of Netanyahu's policy will ultimately result in defeat for the Zionist movement in the long term.

Any diplomatic entity involved in an unresolvable conflict with another entity has the option of involving a third party to try to break the "stalemate." This strategy can be utilized with the aim of achieving two opposing goals: Mobilizing the third party to force the hand of the other side in the conflict; or mobilizing the third party to increase the "basket of benefits" and divide it up among all parties involved in reaching a compromise.

History is full of examples of the first option, so I'll suffice with just three from our region.

The first would be how Arab states joined the effort to decide the Jewish-Arab conflict in the Independence War and afterward.

The second would be the strategic concept adopted by David Ben-Gurion at the end of the 1950s to achieve special ties and alliances at every possible level – strategic, intelligence, economic – with countries or groups that opposed the Arab policy led by then-Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. This concept gave rise to the so-called Periphery Alliance of Turkey, Iran, Ethiopia, the Kurds and the Christians in Lebanon.

The third example – one that influenced then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's choice of diplomacy with the Palestinians in 1993 – was the understanding that such a process was the quid pro quo Israel would need to give Sunni Arab nations in order to enjoy any strategic alliance with them, for the sake of curbing an increasingly strong Iran and its

Shi'ite satellites.

There are many examples of the second option, too, but I'd like to focus on the Israeli-Arab-Palestinian conflict from the start of the diplomatic process with the Arab world, in 1974.

Israel's peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan are bilateral, but achieving them required U.S. involvement. For Egypt, U.S. military aid and the return of the Sinai Peninsula was a generous enough quid pro quo to suffice with an autonomy agreement for the Palestinians and demilitarization of Sinai. The same was true of Israel. The civilian and military aid the Americans provided (which has thus far totaled about \$200 billion) and deployment of a multinational observer force while removing Egypt from the conflict was an appropriate exchange for Israel's full withdrawal from Sinai.

It was a similar story with Jordan. U.S. civilian aid and an Israel Defense Forces "umbrella" against external threats to Jordan, the supply of water from Israel and granting special status for the Temple Mount, plus economic promises for the future, worked their magic and led the Jordanians to sign a peace treaty.

The situation between Israel and the Palestinians is more complex. It took both sides and the United States more than a decade (1993-2007) to understand that they had to expand the boundaries of the system. Then-Prime Minister Ehud Barak's arrogance that he'd "seal it all within two hours in the same room with [Palestinian Authority President Yasser] Arafat" at Camp David in 2000 gradually led to increased cooperation with others.

First, Israel wanted gestures from Arab countries that didn't require any actual investment – mainly pushing the Palestinians to agree to concessions Israel was demanding on various issues (security, borders, refugees and Jerusalem) – in exchange for U.S. aid. Egypt's readiness did not require any investment on its part. However, Israeli ideas such as three-way territorial swaps with Egypt and Palestine were rejected outright.

Second, there were European and other countries whom Israel asked for money to support an agreement, specifically with regard to compensating refugees and building a Palestinian economy. That was how the Quartet (the United Nations, Russia, the United States and European Union) was born. The Americans and other Quartet members were at the Annapolis talks in 2007, in addition to representatives of the Arab League. These included Egypt and Jordan, as well as countries without diplomatic ties with Israel such as Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Sudan,

Lebanon and even Syria.

The Netanyahu method

Netanyahu preferred a different approach. He declared that he would implement another option: Expanding the boundaries of the system for the sake of both sides and resolving the conflict, but in effect only operating according to the first option – recruiting players to force the Palestinians' hand by dictating terms.

For years, Netanyahu blocked attempts to resolve the conflict via the second option. He rejected the Arab League's Arab Peace Initiative of 2002 and declared arrogantly in June 2016 that "if the Arab nations grasp the fact that they need to revise the Arab League proposal according to the changes Israel demands, then we can talk."

He opposed four French initiatives, including setting up an international support group to accompany negotiations with the Palestinians and convening an international conference by the end of 2016. He objected to cooperating with the Quartet to prepare a report on the diplomatic stalemate.

He ignored the EU's proposal in December 2013 to upgrade its relations with both the Israelis and Palestinians if they signed a peace agreement. He demanded that the Obama administration preserve the status quo. For example, he opposed Gen. John Allen's security plan (Allen had been working as an emissary of then-Secretary of State John Kerry in 2014). Netanyahu also openly expressed concern that President Barack Obama might present a peace plan toward the end of his term in office.

Kerry, meanwhile, was recorded as saying in Dubai sometime in 2017 that Israel had "leaders who don't want to make peace" and that "the majority of the cabinet in the current Israeli government has publicly declared they are not ever for a Palestinian state."

Netanyahu was waiting for his chance, which came in 2016 in the form of Donald Trump. This granted him the opportunity to advance his old plan to give the Palestinians limited cultural autonomy in the West Bank – which he called a "state" – and to get the U.S. president to propose a plan in which he would effectively dictate unconditional surrender terms to the Palestinians.

Trump's "peace vision" joined the Bar-Ilan speech, about which Netanyahu's father, Benzion Netanyahu, said on Channel 2 a month later: "Benjamin doesn't support a Palestinian state, only on terms that the Arabs will never accept. I heard him say this."

The peace vision, like the Bar-Ilan speech, is full of concepts that characterized the negotiations before Netanyahu's return as prime minister in 2009. From "Palestinian state" through "Palestinian contiguity," to "Palestinian capital in Jerusalem." But in reality, an examination of the details in the vision's proposals shows that none fulfill any of those promises.

Netanyahu presents to Arab countries, with the help of the Americans and the common Iranian threat, the need to reconsider: Whether to adhere to the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, which rests on the legitimacy of international decisions and parameters that guided the Annapolis talks, or to distinguish between the normalization process and the diplomatic controversy with Israel, in accordance with Netanyahu's aspirations.

In other words, to enjoy U.S. investment and military aid in exchange for exerting pressure on the Palestinians to accept Israel's positions, or at least not oppose them. Netanyahu is interested in Arab countries knowingly adopting the policy of Europe and other countries: recognizing Israel, full normalization in parallel with denial of the occupation and supporting a two-state solution – but without advancing any plans to carry that out, and without the imposition of sanctions for their non-advancement.

Those who enthuse over Netanyahu's policy should heed what Ze'ev Jabotinsky wrote in his 1923 essay "The Iron Wall":

"A plan that seems to attract many Zionists goes like this: If it is impossible to get an endorsement of Zionism by Palestine's Arabs, then it must be obtained from the Arabs of Syria, Aram-Naharaim [Iraq], Hejaz [Saudi Arabia] and perhaps of Egypt." He added that "even if this were possible, it would not change the basic situation. It would not change the attitude of the Arabs in the Land of Israel toward us."

Back to the current reality: The Palestinians have already recognized Israel within its 1967 borders, in the Oslo Accords. Arab recognition of Israel beyond the 1967 borders will not change their position.

It's difficult to know whether other Arab countries will follow in the footsteps of the UAE and accept Netanyahu's policy, especially as Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah al-Sissi and Jordan's King Abdullah were burned back in 2016 when they tried to help him establish a government with then-Labor Party leader Isaac Herzog that would support the diplomatic process – an attempt that ended with hard-liner Avigdor Lieberman joining the government.

If they do so, then the "success" of Netanyahu's policy will greatly enhance the chances of moving toward a single-state solution, with an interim

stop of a long apartheid regime.

The Palestinians have already responded to the Trump vision by saying that they don't intend to raise the white flag and accept the initiative. The loss of all hope for a two-state solution will turn the Palestinian national struggle into a civil rights struggle, which may at some stage be accompanied by violence and terrorism. The "fruits of normalization" in the short term – from military cooperation to a concert by Omer Adam – will in the long term transform into the end of the Zionist dream and the establishment of an Arab state on its ruins.

Givat HaMatos Connects the Points on the Way to the Crash - Haaretz, November 27, 2020

The publication of the tender for the construction of 1,257 housing units in the Givat Hamatos neighborhood in south Jerusalem completed a move, which began in 2007, when the Jerusalem municipality began promoting a plan to vacate the caravan site established there for immigrants in the 1990s, and build a 2,610-unit neighborhood. The historical truth is that the construction of the neighborhood will in effect complete a 53-year-old plan of the Israeli government, which is actually a product of a 107-year-old plan of the Zionist movement, to ensure its control of Jerusalem and its security, by controlling the mountain range in the areas around the city.

The leaders of the Zionist movement at the beginning of the 20th century dreamed of the emigration of millions of Jews to Israel, but were able to adopt a practical settlement policy. The absolute demographic and spatial control of the Arabs in Judea and Samaria motivated the Zionist leaders to make do with strengthening the city of Jerusalem, which had enjoyed a Jewish majority since 1870, and creating "defense blocs" around it.

In 1914, a proclamation published by Menachem Ussishkin "For the benefit of Jerusalem" called for encircling the city with Hebrew localities. It was followed by the establishment of the northern bloc of Atarot and Neve Ya'akov in 1919, and in 1927 the first attempt to build the southern bloc, Gush Etzion, began with the establishment of the settlement "Migdal Adar". The blocs were intended to break the Palestinian continuum from Hebron to Nablus. The two "blocs" - Atarot and Etzion - fell in the War of Independence, and in the armistice agreements signed in 1949, Israel contented itself with control of West Jerusalem, which was established as its capital, and was surrounded by Jordanian territory from three sides.

The occupation of the West Bank in 1967 brought the plan back to life. Prime Minister Levy Eshkol, together with Mayor Teddy Kollek, launched a for Jewish construction in East Jerusalem. In the first phase, in the years 1967–1972, the Mount Scopus enclave was connected to West Jerusalem in a territorial sequence that included six new neighborhoods. In the second phase, they sought to surround Arab Jerusalem with an urban Jewish ring and cut it off from Ramallah and Bethlehem. For this purpose, the northern neighborhoods were established: Ramot Alon, Neve Ya'akov, Pisgat Ze'ev and finally Ramat Shlomo. And in the south, the Gilo neighborhood was established.

Less than a decade later, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Defense Minister Shimon Peres sought to re-establish the buffer zones around Jerusalem, writing: "The government has adopted a defined defense policy where it is appropriate to settle ... in the Jerusalem area and in Gush Etzion" (Rabin, "Service notebook"); and "Fortification of Jerusalem and the mountains ... by establishing suburban cities and settlements - Ma'ale Adumim, Ofra, Gilo, Beit El, Givon" (Peres, "Now Tomorrow"). Gush Etzion was re-established and expanded 35 times the area of its jurisdiction, to separate Hebron from Bethlehem and Jerusalem through a chain of settlements - from Beitar Illit on the Green Line, through Efrat, which dominates the main 60 road, to Tekoa in the Judean Desert. Ramallah was cut off from Jerusalem through the chain of settlements from Beit Horon west of the drainage divide, through Givat Zeev to Kochav Ya'akov, Psagot Ofra and Beit El east of the drainage divide.

The adoption of UN Resolutions 181, 242 and 338 by the Palestinians in 1988, and their recognition of the State of Israel in 1993 prompted Peres and Rabin to sign the Oslo Accords in which they, like the Palestinians, undertook to refrain until the Permanent Agreement from unilateral measures that could change the status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Benjamin Netanyahu, who was elected Prime Minister in 1996, chose to ignore political developments and Israel's commitments.

The international criticism for the construction of Givat HaMatos neighborhood stems from the view that it violates the Oslo Accords and harms the feasibility of a two-state solution. In 1997, during his first term, Netanyahu decided to build the Har Homa neighborhood, which Rabin refrained from building.

The neighborhood added a tier in the pursuit of creating a Jewish urban buffer between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. 23 years later, Netanyahu wants to complete the last step of this buffer by closing the open space between Kibbutz Ramat Rachel and Har Homa to the east, and the Gilo neighborhood to the west, by building a neighborhood on the hill of Givat Hamatos.

This move is in line with the Israeli position presented at Camp David, Taba and Annapolis regarding the division of Jerusalem, and included the area of Givat Hamatos in Israeli territory - although Ehud Barak, Ehud Olmert and even Ariel Sharon refrained from building the neighborhood. The Palestinians, who agreed to the annexation to Israel of all the Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, beyond the Green Line, opposed the annexation of Har Homa, claiming that it was a violation of the contractual obligation and that it would cut off Bethlehem from East Jerusalem.

In addition, the Palestinians insisted that the Palestinian village of Beit Safafa in south Jerusalem be transferred to their sovereignty, according to the demographic principle for the division of neighborhoods in the east of the city, proposed by President Bill Clinton in December 2000 and accepted by the parties. The international criticism for the construction of Givat HaMatos rests on this Palestinian claim and views the neighborhood as a violation of the Oslo Accords and a threat to the two-state solution.

But the actions of the Netanyahu government in the Jerusalem area are not limited to the construction of Givat Hamatos neighborhood. They are continuing with plans to build a huge tourist complex along the Hebron Road, to build the Mevaseret Adumim neighborhood (E1) in Ma'ale Adumim, which blocks East Jerusalem from the east, and to build the Har Aitam neighborhood in Efrat (E2), which blocks Bethlehem from the south.

In fact, with the completion of these moves, there will be three alternatives for Israeli and Palestinian leaders who will be interested in resuming negotiations. The one, unrealistic in the foreseeable future, is that under certain conditions Israel will give up these neighborhoods for the Palestinians. Such a move would mean that billions of Shekels would go down the drain and tens of thousands of Israelis would be required to relocate to Israel. The second, more plausible possibility is that for significant compensation in other areas, the Palestinians will accept Israel's position and give up these neighborhoods and Beit Safafa, and they will have to build an expensive and complex road network that will connect Bethlehem to East Jerusalem east of Mount Homa. The third, most likely in my opinion, is that this step will join other steps that Israel has taken in recent years to abolish the physical separation that still exists between Jewish and Arab neighborhoods, and force the parties to accept the option of one city with two municipal authorities. Historical experience shows that the realization of this possibility will become the seed of the next calamity between the parties due to the security, economic and social aspects required in such a pattern of city management.

Netanyahu, as the Moshiach's donkey, and as someone who, for his own survival, is willing to pay any price (that is, Israeli society will pay any price), in realizing the Gush Emunim nationalist messianic delusion. The hallucination of those who cannot distinguish between the possible and the Messianic, between the moral and the greedy and the oppressive, between the legal and the illegal. They are pushing Israel to cross these lines in order to realize the messianic illusion as described by Hanan

Porat (from the introduction to Hagai Huberman's book, "Against All Odds"): "Kibbutz Galuyot (Gathering of the Jews), the restoration of the state and its security, are all but first pillars ... great challenges that are an integral part of Zionism are still ahead of us, and above all: the establishment of a 'kingdom of priests and a holy nation', bringing back Shekhinah (dwelling) to Zion, the establishment of the kingdom of the house of David and the Building of the Temple - are key points for the repairment of the world in the kingdom of God.



The Trump Plan

Trump's New Deal for the Middle East and Netanyahu's Fingerprints – Haaretz, June 24, 2018

Netanyahu's fingerprints in the Trump Plane Outline for Middle East peace, which is taking shape these days, cannot be mistaken. It is easy to recognize the similarity between Netanyahu's positions and the expected American proposal - but this is a typical surrender to the totalitarianism of the now. Netanyahu's positions are nothing more than a repetition of Israel's positions presented since 1967 regarding the future of the West Bank. But while most of these positions eroded as starting points and were adapted to possible areas of agreement in order to reach a historic compromise, in the past 25 years Netanyahu has been stubborn in his positions, which not only prevents the settlement of the conflict but also reversed the progress achieved by his predecessors.

According to various sources, Trump's "ultimate deal" will include the following principles: united Jerusalem as the capital of Israel (while "conceding" by Israel of four or five neighborhoods outside the separation barrier), as Netanyahu promised in the 2015 elections ("We will forever preserve a united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty"). The Jordan Valley will remain under Israeli control, as Netanyahu announced in October 2017 ("The Jordan Valley will always be part of the State of Israel, we will continue to settle it"). The number of Israeli settlement blocs will rise and expand, as Netanyahu promised his ministers in June 2011 ("the blocs of the national left are not my blocs"). On the issue of security, Netanyahu's position, which was presented in his speech at the Saban conference in December 2015, was adopted ("The only solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state") and Palestinian refugees will not return to Israel at all, as Netanyahu declared in his 2009 Bar-Ilan speech ("The refugee problem must be resolved outside the borders of Israel").

The first that sought to settle the conflict with the Palestinians after the Six-Day War, not through Arab countries, was Minister Yigal Allon. In the Eshkol government debates, he objected to the Jordanian option, saying: "We played with the Hashemite House and paid for it dearly. I am afraid it is repeating itself, the last thing being the return of one inch of the West Bank to Jordan". Alon proposed a Palestinian state in the West Bank, without an external border controlled by Israel. "I take the maximum possibility, not Canton, not an autonomous region, but an independent Arab state agreed between us and between them in an enclave surrounded by Israeli territory ... even independent with its own foreign policy". The united Jerusalem that was just created will remain the capital of Israel. Gaza will be annexed to Israel immediately after its

refugees are resettled outside of the Land of Israel, as one of Defense Minister Dayan's proposals states: "Take them and resettle them in East Jordan".

Second was Prime Minister Menachem Begin, who signed with the Egyptian president, Anwar Sadat, at Camp David in 1978, the framework agreement for Palestinian autonomy, the principles of which are identical to those of the Oslo agreement signed in 1993. Although Begin argued that at the end of the interim period of Palestinian autonomy, he would demand an annexation to Israel, at a cabinet meeting on June 18, 1967, about a week after the Six-Day War, he opposed the idea of autonomy on the logical grounds that "the concept of autonomy leads to a Palestinian state in the hard logic of things ... If we say autonomy, it is an invitation to an independent Arab-Palestinian state, typical of how the goyim will understand it".

Yitzhak Rabin's speech in October 1995 presented his view of the permanent status agreement with the Palestinians, which fits Trump's initiative like a glove: "We see the permanent solution within the territory of the State of Israel including most of the territory of the Land of Israel ... and next to it a Palestinian entity ... that is less than a state ... The borders of the State of Israel, at the time of the permanent solution, will be beyond the lines that existed before the Six-Day War ... First and foremost a united Jerusalem, which will also include Ma'aleh Adumim and Givat Ze'ev as the capital of Israel ... The security border will be placed in the Jordan Valley. (And also) changes that will include the inclusion of the Gush Etzion bloc, Efrat, Beitar and other settlements, most of which are located east of what was the Green Line ... and settlement blocks"

At the same time, it should be remembered that Rabin then tried to approve the Interim Agreement in the Knesset on the weight of a single vote. More important is the fact that Rabin's approach was gradual, and it is reasonable to assume that he understood the prices required to settle the agreement, as he wrote: "I prefer interim agreements with a period of testing between stages, based on the (negative) experience of advancing all at once for a final agreement". Also, "the move to real peace is a process, not a one-time act". But his murdered a month later by a Jewish fanatic, prevented him from holding any negotiations on a final agreement.

Netanyahu, who was elected in 1996, had already published in 1995 that "the autonomy plan under Israeli control is the only alternative to preventing these dangers, which are hidden in the 'peace' plan of the Oslo agreement". He conducted a successful battle for withdrawal from and delay of the Oslo Accords, paying for it in the concession of Hebron

in 1997 and others in Area C under the Wye Memorandum in 1998, as he explained during his visit to the home of a bereaved family during the second intifada. That same year Netanyahu managed, in a cheap political maneuver, to approve in the government the "map of national interests" that Israel would not give up in a permanent settlement that covered half of the West Bank.

Ehud Barak offered a similar proposal at Camp David in 2000 to that of Rabin in 1995: "An area of no less than 11% (including the Jordan Valley and the outer border), in which 80% of the settlers live, will be annexed to Israel, and we will not transfer sovereign territory (There will be no exchange of territory) ... for a few years, Israel will control about a quarter of the Jordan Valley, in order to ensure control over the crossings between Jordan and Palestine". In Jerusalem, he made do with suggesting to Clinton that "in the Old City, Arafat will have sovereignty over the Muslim Quarter and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher ... possibly the Christian Quarter as well" and the Palestinian villages annexed to Israel in 1967 without East Jerusalem.

Barak changed his position, and in 2001 in Taba spoke in different terms after he adopted the Clinton proposal of December 2000. The Israeli proposal spoke of the annexation of 6 percent of the West Bank, the partition of Jerusalem, the demilitarization of the Palestinian state and the return of the Palestinian refugees to it.

Ehud Olmert continued this trend, and in the Annapolis process he completed it into agreed parameters with the Palestinians for a final status agreement: 1967 lines and agreed territorial swaps, dividing Jerusalem into two capitals, a demilitarized Palestinian state and the settling of the refugee issue by their return mainly to the state of Palestine.

At the point at which negotiations were stopped, at the end of 2008, the Palestinians proposed an exchange of between 1.9% to 4% of land, annexing to Israel 63-80 percent of the Israelis, which would be able to stay in their homes: annexation to Israel of Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem (excluding Har Homa), the Western Wall, the Jewish Quarter, half of the Armenian Quarter, and the rest of Mount Zion, a demilitarized state and the return of 80,000 to 100,000 refugees to Israel.

Netanyahu, who was reelected, reversed the progress in one stroke. The false Bar-Ilan speech in June 2009, which brought hope to many who did not bother to go into detail, received the best interpretation from the Prime Minister's father, Ben-Zion Netanyahu, who said a month later: "Benjamin does not support a Palestinian state but only on conditions that the Arabs will never accept. I heard it from him". Later on, his son

ruled that Jerusalem would not be up for negotiation and that the 1967 lines would not serve as a basis for the exchange of territories. In an interview in 2015, he declared that “under the conditions they currently want, a Palestinian state is out of the question”.

It seems that Trump chose to ignore the progress made during the negotiations at Camp David, Taba and Annapolis, as Jason Greenblatt must have shown him and Jared Kouchner, and as outgoing Foreign Secretary John Kerry summed up in a closed speech in Dubai last year: We must have will in order to make peace... Olmert, Barak, Rabin and Peres have indicated ways to achieve it”. Trump ignores what Kerry went on to say: “Israel doesn’t have leaders who want to make peace ... Most members of the current cabinet of the Israeli government have declared publicly that they will never be in favor of a Palestinian state”, and he wishes to enlist the government of Israel through an unacceptable proposal made by ambassador David Friedman’s doctrine of illusion.

In order to resolute the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, mediators are certainly needed as well as two sides who are interested in solving it. The American proposal, if there is one, will be “fanning the flame” and push both sides to barricade themselves in their positions. The Palestinians will reject it outright and the Israeli government will use it to the fullest in order to “prove” that there is no partner. Therefore, the Israeli and Palestinian publics have no choice but to hope that Trump will present a fair proposal based on the negotiations, similar to previous proposals by US presidents - Carter, Clinton and Bush junior - or that he will keep his proposals to himself.



This is How the Deal of the Century Should Look Like - Haaretz, May 8, 2019

If Jared Kushner's recent statement about Donald Trump's "Plan of the Century" is more serious than its predecessors, we are likely to be exposed to it starting June. The leaks and denunciations related to its content focus mostly on sub-details rather than on its essence and its underlying assumptions: Will the plan rely on the history of the conflict? Will it be based on the decisions of the international community? Will it continue the negotiations from the point reached by the sides in the past, or will it be a blue-and-white-painted barrel that pours gasoline on the whispering coals of the sense of injustice that pervades the Palestinians and the Arabs - rekindle resistance and terrorist activity among the Palestinians, and push them and Israel into another round of the violent and futile fight that has been going on for more than a century? Will we be dragged to all this just to return and adopt the basic understandings of the resolution of the conflict - as Chaim Weizmann told the Anglo-American Committee in 1946 - adopted in the 1947 UN partition report: "The claims on Palestine, both by the Arabs and by the Jews, are valid and cannot be reconciled with each other. Of all the proposals that have been proposed, the partition is the most practical ... and it will allow some of the national claims and aspirations of both sides to be provided".

The answer lies in understanding the basic tensions experienced by both sides regarding the core issues of the conflict. The plan will have a chance of being accepted only if it offers a response to these tensions and reduces their power. History shows that when all parties contribute fairly to resolving tensions, an agreement can be reached. In the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, the main tension was on the issue of security. Israel was torn between the desire to draw out Egypt, the largest and most important Arab state, from the cycle of war, and the fear of deploying the Egyptian army along its western border because of its lack's strategic depth. The Egyptians, on the one hand, wanted to return of the Sinai to its last grain, and on the other hand they feared that their sovereignty would be violated, for example if Israeli intelligence facilities were left there. The solution was in the implementation of Article 242 of the UN Security Council, which states that means, "including the creation of demilitarized zones", will be used. The demilitarization of the Sinai Peninsula answered both the Egyptian need for a demonstration of sovereignty and the security need of Israel. The same applies to the 1994 peace treaty between Israel and Jordan. Both wanted a peace agreement, but Israel - which drew water in Jordanian territory and

took control of lands in it - wanted to avoid a mortal blow to the Israeli settlements that cultivated those lands; Jordan, on the other hand, did not want to give up the land under its sovereignty. The solution was in the form of an exchange of territory of 16.5 square kilometers and the transfer of water from Israel to Jordan.

In the Palestinian context, the main tension that Israel is experiencing is between its desire to remain a democratic state with a Jewish majority and in the family of nations - which requires political separation from the Palestinians on the basis of the 1967 lines - and three important interests that concern areas beyond these lines: security, the holy places in Jerusalem, and the challenge of evacuating hundreds of thousands of Israelis.

The border issue is the biggest challenge among the four core issues. The Palestinians, it should be emphasized, see their demand for the 1967 lines as the great concession they have already made. In other words, they relinquished 78% of the land of Mandatory Palestine (Israel within the Green Line), which they considered to be solely theirs, in exchange for the establishment of a state on the remaining 22% - the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. They demand in principle that the permanent border be determined in accordance with UN resolutions, as the Committee on Interaction with the Israeli Society established by the PLO under Mahmoud Abbas's instructions wrote: "[UN] Resolution 242 in 1967 determined the inadmissibility of taking over territory of another by means of war, and [Resolution] 67/19 in 2012 recognized the State of Palestine within the June 4, 1967 borders, and [Resolution] 2334 in 2016 stated that all the steps Israel has taken in the Occupied Territories since the 1967 war are void and illegal" (In a booklet entitled "The Palestinian Position on the Core Issues").

In the Judea and Samaria District live 425 thousand Israelis and in East Jerusalem live 220,000 more - Israel cannot cope with an evacuation of this magnitude. The formula found for this tension is the familiar parameter of the 67 lines as the basis for an exchange of territories on a 1: 1 ratio. In other words, according to the mentioned Palestinian booklet, "some 80% of the Jewish settlers in the West Bank live in settlements near the Green Line, i.e. in the area that is expected to be included in the exchange of territories ..." I would add that this is 4% of the West Bank, for which Israel is supposed to transfer uninhabited land of similar size to Palestinian sovereignty. This scope of land swaps will constitute the optimal balance point for both sides in terms of the prices that will be required to pay in an agreement.

In addition to the border issue there is the issue of security. The

instability in the region and the rise of radical Islamic elements under Iran's patronage, along with topographical control that the West Bank provides on Israel's coastal plain, will not allow Israel to withdraw to the border, which is primarily the Green Line, without extensive security arrangements. On the Palestinian side, any reduction in the territory of the Palestinian state or unreasonable damage to its sovereignty is unacceptable. The response to this was through the demilitarization of the Palestinian state from an army and heavy weapons, and its reliance on security forces aimed at enforcing law and order and fighting terrorism. In addition, as stated in the booklet: "The Palestinian leadership announced that it would not enter into any military alliance that would undermine stability and peace in the region". In precise terms, according to the draft negotiated at Annapolis in 2008, "Palestine is prohibited from signing military alliances with countries and organizations hostile to Israel, it must not allow the passage of their forces on its territory or their parking in it". This clause, in addition to the same clause that was signed in the peace agreement with Jordan, gives Israel a "conditional strategic depth" up to the eastern border of Jordan. Later on, it said in the booklet: "The Palestinian leadership also expressed willingness to agree to security arrangements that meet the security needs of Palestinians and Israelis alike".

It is easy to understand that this is a "give and take" relationship between the parties regarding these two issues. While Israel is required to agree that the territory of the Palestinian state will be, after the exchange of territories, in the size of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip occupied in 1967 (6,205 square kilometers, as was agreed at Annapolis in 2008, with the mediation of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice) the Palestinians are required to demilitarize their state, in addition to other extensive security arrangements. Today, while the Palestinians adhere to this agreement, Netanyahu has completely withdrawn from it. He demands the annexation of all the settlements, without territorial exchanges, and the right to security intervention in the Palestinian state.

The question of Jerusalem is first and foremost the question of the historic basin and its holy sites, all of which are located beyond the 1967 lines. The Palestinians are careful to mention UN Security Council Resolution 252 of 1968, which states that all steps taken by Israel regarding the status of Jerusalem are null and void, Resolution 476 from 1980, repeats its predecessor 252, and even Resolution 2334 of 2016, which refers to Jewish neighborhoods as illegal settlements. Nevertheless, the parties agreed to divide East Jerusalem (annexed to Israel in 1967) on the border between the Jewish neighborhoods and the Arab neighborhoods, as

part of the exchange of territories described above. I.e. the Palestinian capital will be established in the eastern part of the city and the Jewish neighborhoods will be annexed to Hebrew Jerusalem. The Palestinians added in the booklet that "the official Palestinian position does not oppose the fact that the city of Jerusalem will remain open to the believers of the three religions, that everyone will have the freedom to worship in their holy place". As for the historic basin, there are two possibilities: first, a division on a demographic basis that will leave the Western Wall, Mount Zion, the Jewish Quarter and half of the Armenian Quarter under Israeli sovereignty. Second, joint management or management through a third party of the entire historic basin, while maintaining the administrative status quo of the holy places.

The refugee issue is fraught with tension, which is a product of on one hand, the Palestinian demand for the implementation set forth in Article 11 of UN Resolution 194 in 1948, whereby "refugees who wish to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbors should be allowed to do so at the earliest practicable date"; and on the other hand, the threat to the Jewish identity of the State of Israel due to the return of millions of Palestinian refugees. The answer to this tension lies in the continuation of Article 11: "Compensation shall be paid for the property of those who choose not to return and for loss or damage to property." In other words, the refugees who wish to do so can be absorbed into the Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where 40% of them already live. The rest may choose to remain in their host countries or to emigrate to a third country and receive compensation. The number of refugees returning to Israel will be minimal and therefore meaningless. The maximum Palestinian demand never exceeded 100,000, while the Israeli proposal was at most 5,000.

Here too, it is easy to identify the reciprocal relations between the two issues - the refugees and Jerusalem. Israel must recognize a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem (annexing the Jewish neighborhoods and instituting special arrangements in the holy places); and in return the Palestinians must give up the actual realization of what they call the "right of return" to Israel. In this sub-deal, Israel enjoys an improvement in the demographic balance in favor of the Jews despite the absorption of refugees (it is estimated that tens of thousands of refugees will eventually be absorbed), thanks to the revocation of Israeli residency to the 350,000 Palestinians living in East Jerusalem in exchange for Palestinian citizenship. Even in this context, the Palestinians are now clinging to the package deal, while Netanyahu refuses to put Jerusalem to negotiation.

Donald Trump therefore has to save up piles of economic and social programs, and to refrain from presenting plans for interim agreements. The Palestinians are fed up with the continuation of the “interim period” in which the number of Israelis in the West Bank rose from 225,000 to 645,000. Trump cannot accept in full - or in part - Netanyahu's position on borders and Jerusalem. If he will accept, it will be as if international decisions and law had no weight, and force was the sole criterion for just agreements.

Trump should present the parties with a formula that includes the parameters agreed upon in the four core issues: the 1967 lines as a basis, and a 1: 1 ratio agreed upon territorial exchange; A demilitarized Palestinian state and additional security arrangements; Two capitals in Jerusalem and special arrangements for the holy places; The absorption of most refugees in the state of Palestine and the granting of compensation. Agreeing on the details of these issues in the negotiations will make it possible to determine if the agreement marks the end of the conflict and the end of the claims, and that Israel and Palestine are the Jewish and Palestinian nation-states, respectively, while maintaining full equality of rights for all their inhabitants. To this end, Trump is required to enlist the support of the Arab world in the process, advance rapid promotion of normalization with Israel, and the commitment of the international community and the United States to fair mediation and military and economic support for Israel and Palestine. Remove the demon of violence from the bottle again. Any other route will have high chances of failure, and worse, it will bring the genie of violence back out of the bottle.

Netanyahu and Trump will Fulfill the Palestinian Dream – Haaretz, May 31, 2019

President Donald Trump, who embodies the violation of the legitimacy of international resolutions, was warmly adopted by Benjamin Netanyahu, his government and all those who reject a political agreement with the Palestinians. After the recognition of Jerusalem and of the annexation of the Golan Heights, in sharp contrast to Article 2 of the UN Charter, which prohibits the acquisition of territories (the application of sovereignty) by force, and to UN Resolutions 242, 252, 476, 338, and others, Netanyahu and his partners are waiting for the “deal of the century”. Its anticipated rejection by the Palestinians will be perceived by the Israeli government as an opportunity to unilaterally annex the settlements in the West Bank, in contrast to the 1991 US guarantees letter to the PLO, and in complete contradiction to UN Security Council Resolution 2334 (from 2006) which ruled that the settlements were illegal (the resolution was supported by 14 of the 15 council members and the United States abstained).

Such a move would be another expression of Israel's disregard for the international community and its exclusive reliance on the aggressive Republican Trump administration in an unprecedented manner. The Netanyahu coalition sees Trump's support as an opportunity to expand Israel's sovereignty beyond the 1967 lines (and East Jerusalem); This is despite the fact that the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is more than a century old, teaches us other things about the influence of the international position on the recognized borders of the State of Israel and on the division of the land.

The 1922 Mandate was seen by the Zionist movement as a confirmation to the establishment of a national home in all the western land of Israel, even if the Balfour Declaration and Churchill's White Paper (the first) explicitly stated otherwise. On the other hand, the Arabs, who constituted 90% of the population, rejected the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, and demanded that they establish their state in 100% of British Mandate Palestine. The British, emissaries to the League of Nations, rejected the Arab demand.

The Arab revolt in 1936 and the demographic balance, which was still clearly in favor of the Arabs (70:30), and the political developments in the Middle East and Europe, led to the Peel Commission's (1937) proposal to establish a Jewish state on only 17% of the land. The Zionist movement, led by Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion, adopted the proposal, but the Jewish Agency presented a partition plan that required a doubling of the area to 34% of the land. The Arabs rejected it completely

and the proposal was eventually removed.

The partition plan of November 1947 granted the Jewish state 55% of the territory and the Arab state 45% of the territory, with the “separate entity” of Jerusalem under the control of the United Nations. The Jewish community, which numbered only a third of the land’s population, warmly embraced the partition proposed at the beginning of that year by Ben-Gurion. Ben-Gurion stated, “the only possible immediate arrangement with an essence of finality is the establishment of two states, one Jewish and one Arab,” and declared in May 1948 the establishment of the state “based on the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly”. The Arabs continued to reject the partition and the mufti Haj Amin declared: “A nation that aspires to a life, does not accept the division of its homeland”. Later, the Palestinian charter stated: “The partition of Palestine from 1947 and the establishment of Israel are fundamentally mistaken”.

The War of Independence broke out at the initiative of the Arabs, as Jamal Husseini, the representative of the Arab Higher Committee, defiantly declared to the Security Council in April 1948: “The representative of the Jewish Agency told us yesterday that they are not the aggressive side ... that the Arabs are the ones who started the fighting... we do not deny this fact... we told the world ... that we do not agree that little Palestine will be divided ... and that we intend to fight”. At the end of the war, the Palestinians became a nation of refugees and were absent from the political discourse regarding their future, while their representation was transferred to the Arab states. The young Israel expanded its borders to 78% of the land and applied the Israeli law on to it. The international community recognized these borders as armistice lines.

The 1967 Six-Day War gave rise to Resolution 242 (“land for peace”) that implicitly recognized Israel’s 1967 lines, but the UN continued to ignore the Palestinians, who rejected any recognition of Israel. Only the PLO’s decision to recognize the partition resolution and Resolution 242 at the end of 1988, led to a series of UN resolutions that led in 1988 to the recognition of Palestine in the 1967 lines as a non-member state. In other words, 22% of Mandatory Palestine.

Since 1967, Israel - immeasurably stronger than it was in 1948 and enjoying military supremacy over the Palestinians and the surrounding Arab states - has not received international recognition for a single step it has unilaterally taken to expand its borders - annexing East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. Its borders with Egypt and Jordan, both of which adopted Resolution 242 and recognized Israel, were established in peace agreements according to the Mandatory borders of the Land of Israel.

From South Lebanon Israel withdrew under UN Resolution 425 (1978) and from the Gaza Strip it unilaterally withdrew to the Green Line.

These historical milestones of the past century teach us that both sides have embarked on this conflict, each claiming “it is all mine”, and the international community has generally sided with the Zionist movement. The basic insight that permeated the consciousness and the position of the international community, that it is “a struggle between two national movements whose claims are valid and cannot be reconciled with each other ... apart from partition ...” opened the door to the Palestinians as well; However, their continued refusal to recognize the right of the Jewish people to a state in the Land of Israel and to accept the decisions of the international community, gradually reduced the area designated for the Arab state: In the Peel Commission’s proposal, the Arab area (under Abdullah I, Amir Transjordan) stood at 70% of the land, in 1947 at 45%, and in 1988 at 22%, as Mahmoud Abbas admitted in an interview in 2008: “The opportunity of the 1947 partition was lost, and before that the opportunity of the Peel Commission was lost. But we do not want to lose another opportunity. Therefore, we accepted the division of 1948 and 1967, which does not include more than 22% of historic Palestine”.

The Zionist movement, under the leadership of Weizmann and Ben-Gurion, who cooperated with the international position, increased the area of the Jewish state respectively from 17% to 55%, and eventually to 78% of the land. The conclusion is clear - the side that sticks to international resolutions eventually wins the greater part of the country.

Drunk with power, the Netanyahu coalition, backed by the Trump government, does internalize this insight. Naftali Bennett, who launched his plan for the annexation of Area C at the beginning of 2012, referred to the international community with contempt and arrogance: “The world will not recognize our sovereignty there, as it does not recognize our sovereignty over the Western Wall, Ramot and Gilo in Jerusalem and in the Golan Heights. Never mind. It will get used to it over the years”. Many of the members of the coalition, who are demanding the annexation of most of the West Bank, often mention the final line in Defense Minister Ben-Gurion’s speech at the IDF’s march on Independence Day, April 27, 1955: “Our future depends not on what the goys say but on what the Jews will do”, and reference to the words of Prime Minister Moshe Sharett, who said that the Partition Plan established the State of Israel at the cabinet meeting held on March 29, 1955: “Only the daring of the Jews established the state and not the United Nations resolution”.

All this ignores Ben-Gurion’s position, in most cases, of the importance and weight of the international community, as he explained in 1956:

"It will be a mistake if someone says that there is no real value to the UN. The United Nations is the supreme stage of human public opinion today ... and the enormous value of this public opinion should not be underestimated". It also ignores Ben-Gurion's disillusionment after the Sinai Campaign, from his quest to establish the Third Kingdom of David, which included not only Sinai but also half of Jordan, the Golan Heights, and southern Lebanon. This aspiration was replaced after Israel's withdrawal from Sinai, which was imposed by the superpowers, with a different insight, as Ben-Gurion said in an interview with Haaretz in October 1959: "Anyone who believes that today only military force can solve historical questions among nations does not know in what world we live in". He added: "Every local question is now internationalized, and therefore our relations with the peoples of the world are no less important than our military power, which we must continue to nurture, in order to deter attacks and to win if we have to fight".

If Israel is not freed from the illusion of annexation and does not remove its opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside it, the international community will stand by the Palestinians when they change their position and demand equal rights in one state. It would be sad to discover that after a little over a century, the Palestinian aspiration for one Arab state between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River with a diminishing Jewish minority will be fulfilled by the Israeli government itself.

The Ignorance of 'Trump's Envoy Greenblatt is Just the Tip of the Iceberg – Haaretz, August 9, 2019

In the ocean of international relations, "icebergs" have always popped up that threatened the post-World War II world order and sought to dictate an order based on force rather than decisions by the international community as expressed in UN conventions on issues like occupied territories, human rights, nuclear proliferation and ballistic missiles.

These icebergs, usually in the form of tyrants in Africa, Asia and South America, have largely melted, some sooner and some later, in the warm currents of the international community under the leadership of the United States and Western Europe. This has happened even though these leaders too sometimes sinned by using arbitrary force. Given the growing weakness of Europe, which is coping with economic crises and an immigration crisis accompanied by the rise of nationalist and racist forces, President Donald Trump's shirking of the U.S. commitment to be the international community's "Gulf Stream" once again leaves international relations to the forces of aggression. The Trump administration even switched sides and became a giant iceberg threatening an ice age on the existing order, which is based on the lessons from the world wars.

The July 23 speech to the UN Security Council by Trump's special envoy to the Middle East, Jason Greenblatt, perfectly reflected the president's outlook. Though the talk focused on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it also showed the U.S. administration's take on the international community's role, and on international law and decisions. Greenblatt asserted that the three bases of the world order – international consensus, international law and UN Security Council resolutions – aren't relevant to an Israeli-Palestinian accord. He said: "This conflict will not end based on an 'international consensus' about who is right and who is wrong This conflict is also not going to be resolved by reference to 'international law.' ... This conflict will not be resolved by constantly referencing the hundreds of UN resolutions on the issue".

Greenblatt went on to mix truth with ignorance about Jerusalem's history – who ruled it? When? How did the city's borders develop? "There is no international consensus about Jerusalem. And no international consensus or interpretation of international law will persuade the United States or Israel that a city in which Jews have lived and worshipped for nearly 3,000 years and has been the capital of the Jewish state for 70 years is not – today and forever – the capital of Israel". According to Greenblatt, Islam didn't rule in Jerusalem for 1,300 years, and the Palestinians have no rights in Jerusalem, only aspirations. "It is true that the PLO and the

Palestinian Authority continue to assert that East Jerusalem must be a capital for the Palestinians,” Greenblatt said. “But let’s remember, an aspiration is not a right.” Jerusalem, including the Palestinian villages that were annexed to it in 1967, was and will forever be Israel’s capital.

Blind to history I wonder if Greenblatt, who is Jewish, is familiar with the resolution of the 1897 First Zionist Congress that says: “Zionism seeks to establish a home for the Jewish People in Palestine secured under public law.” In his historical blindness, he ignores that the Zionist movement’s call for a homeland for the Jewish people was based on two things: the concept of national aspiration and conditioning its fulfillment on international law and resolutions. As it says in Israel’s Declaration of Independence, the state was founded “on the basis of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly.”

Greenblatt also confused 1967’s UN Resolution 242 with 1948’s UN Resolution 194 regarding the Palestinian refugees: “That debate has not even bridged the gap between those who construe Resolution 242 to call for the so-called right of return and compensation for displaced Palestinians, and the fact that the world covers its eyes to the fate of the roughly equal number of Jews who were expelled or forced to flee their homes in Arab countries in connection with Israel’s War of Independence.” If Israel really wanted to resolve the issue of Jewish property, it would stop ignoring the Arab Peace Initiative that has been on offer for 17 years.

Greenblatt, an attorney, tries to blur the legal terminology that applies to the occupied territories, saying that talk of an occupation only makes a solution harder to reach. In his view, which doesn’t distinguish between a legal situation and a diplomatic claim, the territory isn’t occupied but rather disputed. Both sides have claims to it. He is critical of those who say the territory is occupied – the definition also accepted by Israel’s Supreme Court. He said: “Many would rather rail against the supposed evils of what they routinely call an ‘illegal occupation’ than engage constructively on the disputes that characterize the conflict today. That’s not a productive dialogue.” But from the start, the Trump administration has tried to sweep off the negotiating table the disputes about Jerusalem, refugees and settlements.

Greenblatt asks us not to forget Israel’s generosity: “Let us not lose sight of the fact that Israel has already conceded at least 88 percent of the territory captured by Israel in the defensive war it had no choice but to fight in 1967.” Is this request designed to obtain approval for annexing the remaining 12 percent, following the Trump administration’s recognition of the annexation of the Golan Heights?

Greenblatt forgets that the peace treaty with Egypt is based on Resolution 242, which opens with an affirmation of Article 2 of the UN Charter, which states that the obtaining of territory by conquest is unlawful, including in a defensive war. He also forgets that, because Israel returned Sinai, it removed the threat of a wide-scale war, has since received \$200 billion in military and civilian aid from the United States and opened the door to further agreements.

Greenblatt apparently doesn’t know that the international commitment to a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine after World War I was based on three things. The first was the founding of the League of Nations, which was meant to preserve the peace and protect the weaker nations. The second was the denial of occupation and territorial expansion not keeping with the free will of the peoples involved (the imperialist principle). The third was the principle of self-determination, which affirms the natural right of every nation, even if its majority is scattered around the world like the Jews, to establish its own political entity.

Netanyahu à la Trump Greenblatt was very thorough in his effort to promote Trump’s outlook. He referred dismissively to other international initiatives, declaring: “Unilateral steps in international and multilateral fora will do nothing to solve this conflict.” In other words, unilateral measures are possible only in forums such as the Knesset, which is preparing to legislate annexation of parts of the West Bank, or in the form of the PA’s dismantling by Mahmoud Abbas under the misguided notion that this would free Israel from the fetters of the Oslo Accords.

Greenblatt urges that “the only way ahead is direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.” Negotiations from scratch. The way he sees it, there is no history, there are no understandings, no Bill Clinton, George W. Bush or Barack Obama. Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu – these two are the embodiment of the start of history and human progress. He crudely ignores the only possible basis for negotiations, the UN resolutions, especially 242, as the sides have agreed countless times, and ignores the negotiations of the past, most importantly the Annapolis process in which parameters were agreed on to resolve the four core issue: borders, security, Jerusalem and refugees.

It’s not surprising that someone who went from being the leading envoy to the emissary of ambassadors David Friedman and Ron Dermer and the mouthpiece of Jared Kushner and Trump supports Netanyahu’s position. It’s the one Netanyahu announced in a July 10 speech marking the 40th anniversary of the Shomron Regional Council, when he said, “In any peace plan, not a single settlement or a single settler will be uprooted.

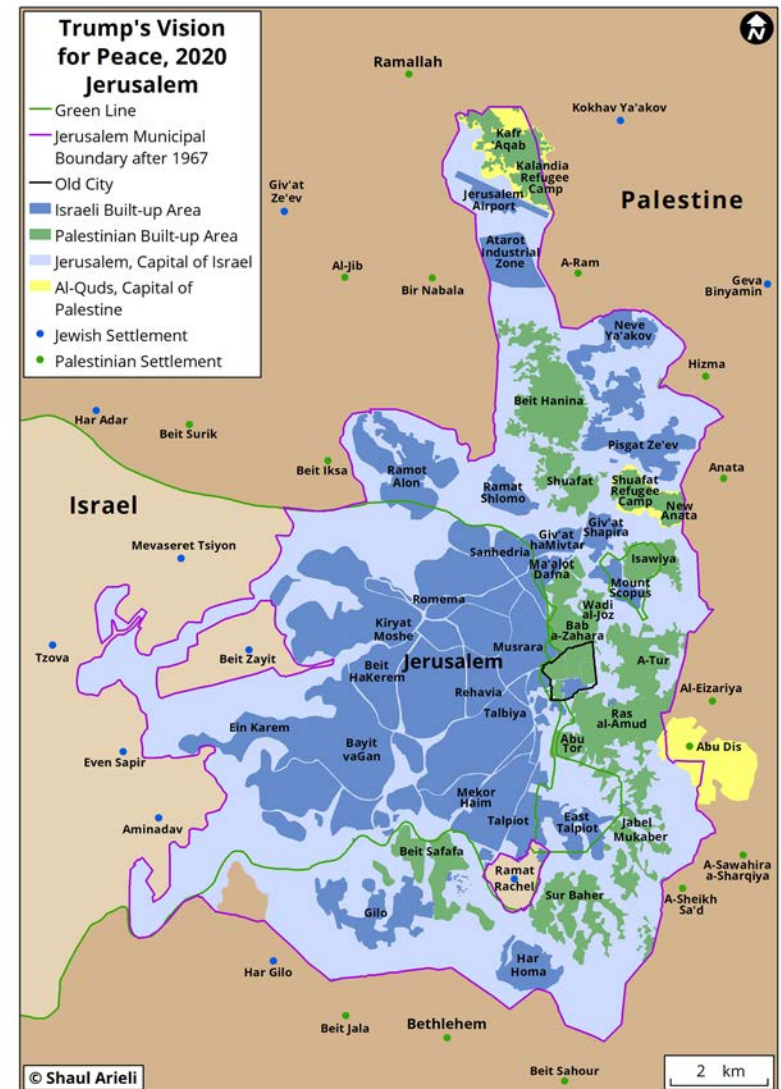
The army and the security forces will continue to control all the territory up to the Jordan River, and Israel's capital Jerusalem will remain united".

It's not surprising that Netanyahu's true position came out during the Trump era after it was carefully hidden from Clinton and Obama. It matches Trump's position and is based on force alone, as Netanyahu said in that speech: "Look what we did in the Golan Heights, what we did in Jerusalem. More to come".

It's no wonder that of all the leaders he could have picked for his election campaign, Netanyahu chose a picture of himself with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who shares his worldview. This is the man who, according to the Russian opposition, foreign ministries and Western intelligence agencies, has suppressed his political opponents, the Russian media and civil society organizations. Meanwhile, LGBT groups in Russia are subjected to violence and oppression. There are serious suspicions that Putin was behind the murders of leading opposition figures and journalists. Just last week, hundreds of people protesting the disqualification of opposition candidates from local elections were brutally beaten and arrested.

The icebergs Trump and Putin, like other bad leaders whom Netanyahu has chosen to ally himself with and show reverence for during his latest term, view human society as a jungle where the weak are to be devoured, not as a unique society whose order should be based not on force but on equality, solidarity and partnership.

The 2020 election in the United States will determine which way the world is heading – toward an ice age in international relations or a thaw. In next month's election, Israel can divorce itself from the belligerent worldview and go back to respecting the rules that won its establishment and international recognition.



Deal of the Century? More Like the Dealer of the Century – The Forum for Regional Thinking, August 25, 2019

Netanyahu called on Arab countries to “peace talk” but does not offer any concrete diplomatic plan and refuses to acknowledge all prior understandings reached with the Palestinians. Meanwhile, he is leading the Israeli public astray by hinting that a “regional initiative” that replaces negotiations with the Palestinians is possible.

The political plan of the Trump administration, the main component of the Deal of the Century, was eventually not presented in the economic workshop in Bahrain. The leaders of Arab states did take part, without much excitement, in the workshop. They did so because they need the United States for their contestation with Iran, and because they are trying to prevent the Trump administration’s adoption of the plans of the right-wing Israeli government to annex the occupied territories. Yet despite this participation, they are refusing to embrace the mirage known as the Deal of the Century. Arab leaders, and other leaders around the world, remember well the illusion that was the Bar Ilan speech by Netanyahu, delivered in 2009, and was perceived by most listeners as supportive of the establishment of a Palestinian state. These leaders do not intend to eat the warmed-up leftovers, this time presented as Trump’s Deal of the Century.

To his credit, Netanyahu has remained consistent with regards to his approach to the Israeli -Palestinian conflict. His late father, the historian Ben Zion Netanyahu, knew this well when he stated that “Benjamin does not support a Palestinian state, except under conditions that the Arabs will never accept. I heard this from him.”

It is not a coincidence that in the Bar Ilan speech Netanyahu adopted the “vision” of Begin and Sadat, which is autonomy – and not a state – for the Palestinians. In his 1995 book, Netanyahu presents an autonomy under Israeli control as the only alternative to preventing the dangers “inherent in the ‘peace’ plan of the Oslo Accords”. Three years later, as prime minister, he affirmed that he offers the Palestinians an autonomy covering 40% of the West Bank. “The map of vital Israeli interests” that Netanyahu presented at the time does not differ from the current deal being offered by Trump, Friedman, Dermer and Netanyahu.

Netanyahu has repeatedly urged Arab leaders to “meet” and “talk peace”. He forgets to mention that he never agreed to even discuss the Arab League initiative that has been realizable for the past 17 years. Why would Arab leaders agree to meet with him and provide him with a triumph without anything in return, meaning, normalization before

peace – exactly the opposite of what the Arab League Initiative offers?

After the Bar Ilan speech, the Arab leaders were briefly enamored with Netanyahu and his plan. In 2016 they even stepped up to bolster the “economic peace” approach he was trying to promote. International and regional actors knew that Netanyahu cannot lead a serious peace process after shackling himself with a right-wing coalition, and asked Herzog, the chairman of the center-left Zionist union bloc, to join the government to pull the rug under the feet of the far-right. U.S. Secretary of State Kerry, Abdullah, the King of Jordan, and the Egyptian President, Sisi, were involved in the effort to launch a regional initiative for peace with the Palestinians. This move would have entailed a recognition of Israel as a Jewish state and restarting the negotiations with the Palestinians, with the support of Arab states. Netanyahu, however, refused to offer anything in return to the Palestinians, in part due to the opposition of the Jewish Home party, a far-right coalition partner.

In his article “the Iron Wall,” published in 1923, Zeev Jabotinsky, the Revisionist Zionist leader, wrote that even if the larger Arab world was to recognize Zionism “it would not change the basic situation. It would not change the attitude of the Arabs in the Land of Israel towards us”. Netanyahu, as well as the Israeli political center, are leading the Israeli public astray when they hint that a “regional initiative” that would replace negotiations with the Palestinians is possible. Since 1988, the basic position of the Palestinians has been a Palestinian State based on the 1967 lines with east Jerusalem as its capital and a just and agreed-upon solution to the refugee question. Israel launched the negotiations process with the intention to end it with a political entity that is less than a state, as prime ministers Rabin and Barak said, and ran the negotiations as if it is haggling in a market, particularly when it comes to the issue of borders. Only in 2008 did Israel reach agreed upon parameters with the Palestinians that are in line with international resolutions.

Netanyahu is constantly offering the Palestinians negotiations “without pre-conditions”, but what he means is that all that has been agreed between the two sides will be cast aside, while his own conditions will serve as the ground for negotiations. He is refusing to abide by the four agreed-upon parameters of that served as the basis for the 2008 Annapolis negotiations between Israel and the PLO: the 1967 lines as the basis with agreed-upon territorial swaps equal in size, a demilitarized Palestinian state, the establishment of a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem, and a solution for the refugees based on compensation and return mostly to the Palestinian state.

Netanyahu has also declared that he is “committed to building in all parts

of Judea and Samaria” (contrary to his statements in his Bar Ilan speech). In 2016, he established the Amichai settlement for those evacuated from Amona, thus becoming the first to violate the 1992 governmental decision to not establish new settlement. Among other steps, he also allowed for the legalization of dozens of outposts (illegal even under Israeli law) and approved the decision of the outgoing Minister of Justice, Ayelet Shaked, to apply all new laws on the settlements.

Netanyahu is not satisfied with the 1993 declaration of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to “recognize the right of Israel to exist in peace and security” and demands that the “Palestinians must clearly and unambiguously recognize Israel as the state of the Jewish people”, which raises justified concerns about the status of Israel’s Arab citizens. Netanyahu states that “Jerusalem must remain the united capital of Israel,” thus contravening not only international resolutions, but also the Oslo Accords. He demands that the future Palestinian state will be demilitarized and bound by endless security arrangements, although the Palestinians have already agreed to the demilitarization of their state and extensive security arrangements.

In response to all their demands, Netanyahu and Trump offer “economic peace”, which will benefit Israel to a much greater extent than it will benefit the Palestinians. Although Netanyahu claims that “an economic peace is not a substitute for political peace,” he does not offer any realistic political plan and denies all previous understandings reached between Israel and the Palestinians in the multiple previous rounds of negotiations. Alongside economic peace, Netanyahu generously vows to “discuss” the borders of the final solution: without offering a map, an outline, principles or parameters. Truly, what a great deal.

Netanyahu’s endless manipulations of public opinion concerning his position on the two-state solution is also apparent in his approach toward Hamas. He opposed reconciliation between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, although such a reconciliation would allow Mahmoud Abbas to contain Hamas within the PLO and force it recognize the Oslo Accords. Netanyahu had a decade to “overpower Hamas,” as he has vowed to do, but he is not interested in doing so. On the eve of the first round of elections in 2019, he told a meeting of the Likud party members: “those who oppose a Palestinian state should support the transfer of [Qatari] funds to Hamas. Maintaining the separation between the [Palestinian] Authority in the [West] Bank and Hamas in Gaza is helping us prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state.”

Israel and the United States must realize that the road to Riyadh and Doha passes through Ramallah. Israel need to propose a deal that

will be fair by the Palestinians and would entail compromises on both sides. This compromise is preferable to the alternative, which is the loss of the national vision of both sides – for Israelis, a democratic country with a Jewish majority, acceptable by the international community and existing in peace and security; for the Palestinians – an independent country based on the 1967 lines with east Jerusalem as its capital, and a settlement of the refugee issue.

The Deal of the Century Takes Israel and the Palestinians Decades Back – Haaretz, February 2, 2020

It took the Palestinian national movement 71 years to join the international community by recognizing its decisions. It took Israel 15 years to accept UN resolutions as a basis for resolving the conflict with the Palestinians. Under President Donald Trump, Israel led by Benjamin Netanyahu took only four years to go back on it. The 'deal of the century' takes the conflict a hundred years back, to the days of the Balfour Declaration and the beginning of the conflict itself.

The Balfour Declaration in 1917 and the Mandate in 1922, which called for the establishment of a Jewish national home, led to Palestinian policy seeking to redress the historical injustice done to the Palestinians, in their view. This is because "the principle of self-determination was not applied to Palestine when the mandate was created in 1922, due to the desire to allow the establishment of a Jewish National Home", as stated in the 1947 Partition Committee report.

For 71 years, the Palestinians rejected any international decision that recognized Israel - from the Phill Commission in 1937, through the White Paper in 1939, the Partition Resolution 181, Resolution 194, to Resolutions 242 and 338. This policy, accompanied by war and terrorism against Israel, was disastrous for the Palestinians and led to the Nakba and to the absence of a state.

The peace between Israel and Egypt, the collapse of the USSR, the first Intifada, the growth of an alternative Palestinian leadership, the entry of Hamas as an opposition and more - brought about change. In 1988, the PLO first recognized Resolution 181, which means the partition of the land and a state for the Jewish people, and Resolution 242, which means that the state of Palestine "does not comprise more than 22% of historic Palestine", as Mahmoud Abbas declared in 2008. In other words, the Palestinians have agreed that their state will include the West Bank and Gaza Strip, its capital will be East Jerusalem, and an agreed solution to the refugee issue will be found in the spirit of Arafat's political deputy Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad) statement to the Americans in 1988: "The right of return cannot be exercised while harming Israel's interests ... it must not be an unbridgeable obstacle".

Israel entered the Oslo process in 1993 with a different view. It wanted to translate its three interests beyond the Green Line - security, holy sites in Jerusalem and the settlements - into the annexation territories from the West Bank with no return to the Palestinians. In 1995, Rabin presented his doctrine to the Knesset, according to which "We see the permanent

solution within the territory of the State of Israel, which will include most of the territory of the land of Israel ... and alongside it a Palestinian entity that will be home to most Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. We wish it to be an entity that is less than a state".

Ehud Barak, the first to start negotiating on a permanent settlement, saw things in a similar way. At Camp David 2000, he suggested that "an area of no less than 11%, where 80% of the settlers live, be annexed to Israel", and that "for a few years Israel will control about a quarter of the Jordan Valley to ensure security of the Jordan-Palestine crossings".

With regard to Jerusalem, Barak proposed that "the external Muslim neighborhoods be transferred to Palestinian sovereignty [the 22 villages that Israel annexed in 1967], and the internal ones [the original East Jerusalem], remain under Israeli sovereignty". Following the publication of the Clinton Plan in December 2000, Barak took another step toward the Palestinian position in 2001 at Taba, but still insisted on annexing 6%-8% of the West Bank without giving anything in return.

The first to understand the possible framework for negotiations was Ehud Olmert, in the 2008 Annapolis process, 15 years after the mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO. Olmert's understanding was not a product of a sincere recognition of the Palestinian right, but a sober view of the existing reality. In an interview with Maariv in 2012, Olmert explained: "Of course, if I could live in any part of the land of Israel, and also live in peace with my neighbors, and also preserve the Jewish character of the State of Israel, and preserve it as a democratic state, and also win the backing of the entire international community - then I would do it. But it is possible, and when it is impossible, a responsible leadership must recognize this ... reject a policy of cheap populism and act responsibly and seriously".

Through the mediation of Condoleezza Rice, the US Secretary of State in the Bush Jr. administration, the parties agreed on the following principles:

Borders - '67 lines as a starting point (with exchange of areas in a ratio of 1: 1).

Security - The demilitarization of the Palestinian state and extensive security arrangements.

Jerusalem - The division of East Jerusalem into two capitals without changing the status quo of the holy places.

Refugees - Solving the refugee problem by them returning to the state of Palestine and compensating all refugees.

Based on the above principles, the Palestinian proposal, which is currently not mentioned at all in the Israeli discourse, was:

Exchange of 1.9% of the land of the West Bank and Gaza that would have allowed 63% of Israelis living beyond the Green Line to be left in their homes (another proposal was given without a map that would have allowed about 75% of Israelis to be left).

A demilitarized Palestinian state ("restricted in its armament").

The annexation of the Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem to Israel, with the exception of Har Homa, as well as the annexation of the Western Wall, the Jewish Quarter, half of the Armenian Quarter and the rest of Mount Zion.

Return of up to 100,000 refugees to Israeli territory and compensation for refugees.

The Israeli proposal was:

Exchange of territories amounting to 6.5% of the West Bank and Gaza leaving to Israel the territory where 85% of Israelis living beyond the Green Line live.

The annexation of all the Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem and the Arab Beit Safafa, and the establishment of a special regime in the "historic basin".

Return of 5,000 refugees and compensation for refugees.

Regarding the gaps between the Israeli and Palestinian proposals, Olmert said in 2012: "I was within touching distance of a peace agreement. The Palestinians never rejected my proposals. And even if for the 1,000th time there will be those who would try to claim that they rejected my proposals, the reality was different. They did not accept them, and there is a difference. They did not accept them because the negotiations were not over, they were on the verge of ending. If I had remained prime minister for another four months or six months, I believe a peace agreement could have been reached". Olmert said similar things again this week (February 2020) in a lecture in the north of the country.

Netanyahu opened his second term in the famous Bar Ilan speech in 2009. A speech that many did not understand, including his father, Ben Zion Netanyahu, who said that his son "does not support a Palestinian state, only on conditions that the Arabs will never accept. I heard it from him" (Channel 2, July 8, 2009). Netanyahu chose to ignore the whole process and the changes described here, and adhered to his position from 1993, according to which "the conflict is not over certain areas of the

land but over the whole land, the conflict is not territorial but existential. The issue at hand is not whether the border will cross on one route or another, but Israeli national existence. They do not want a Palestinian state alongside Israel, but a state instead of Israel" (in Ari Shavit's book, *Halukut Ha'aretz*, 2005).

It is not surprising that Netanyahu has never presented his own map and plan to President Barack Obama. His position was far from the parameters agreed upon in Annapolis. Trump, Jared Kushner and David Friedman were the perfect people to nurture his conception, formed with the Messianic-nationalist right led by Naftali Bennett and Ayelet Shaked. The American team went for it and published its plan.

Although the drafters of the "deal of the century" chose the title "two-state solution", the proposal is a fatal blow to everything that has been achieved to date. It withdrew the political discourse in Israel 15 years back, to the illusion that an agreement without a concession on the West Bank was possible; And the Palestinian discourse is likely to retreat in a century – to the striving for a single state with an Arab majority (even before the return of refugees).

In the details of the proposal, which are fundamentally different from the contents of Annapolis, the terms that characterized the peace discourse until Netanyahu's return to power in 2009 were cynically used: two states, exchange of territories, demilitarization, Palestinian capital, and more. This indicates professional ignorance in the fields of security, geography and law.

No American professional from the National Security Council or the State Department was involved in the preparation of the proposal. The proposed Palestinian "state" is a territory with no territorial continuity and no external borders of its own, and these characteristics make it one large enclave with a border of almost 1,400 km - 1.5 times the length of all Israeli borders today. Within this enclave will be 15 Israeli enclaves (Settlements), and within Israel there will be 54 Palestinian enclaves (villages).

Global experience shows that, except in the case of the Netherlands and Belgium, enclaves are not a viable solution between parties with a history of violence. The IDF will become a defense army for enclaves, and the winding border will not allow for separate economic systems, nor will it allow the Palestinians to break away from the restrictive customs policy that exists today.

Half of the land that will be annexed to Israel is privately owned by Palestine, which will require arrangements that will be beyond Israel's

ability to manage. The suggestion that the Palestinian “capital” will be in neighborhoods outside the wall in Jerusalem - Kfar Akev, Smirmis, Shuafat refugee camp, the town of Abu Dis - is not appropriate in any way. In these neighborhoods, construction is without planning or standards, they lack infrastructure and public institutions, and do not sit on relevant traffic routes and economic centers.

The ‘deal of the century’ must be shelved and be gone. It does not and will not have an Arab partner. The global reactions indicate that it does legitimate any Israeli annexation. Its consequences could cause great damage to Israel. It seeks to legitimize the existing situation, in which two different legal systems exist in the same area on the basis of ethnic criteria, and to add annexation to this situation, which will make it into apartheid, or in the words of David Ben-Gurion from 1949, a “dictatorship of the minority”.

The deal fatally hurts the PLO, which since 1988 has been trying to lead a political dialogue to resolve the conflict at the expense of armed struggle. It will push for the abolition of security coordination with Israel. It harms the value of citizenship in the proposal to transfer the Arab citizens of Israel to Palestine. It violates the rule of law and the right to property in the legalizing of illegal outposts built on plundered Palestinian land. Finally, it will encourage the emigration of Palestinians from the neighborhoods outside the wall into the city of Jerusalem, and will accelerate negative Jewish immigration and the change in the demographic balance that has been developing to the detriment of Jews for the past 52 years.

Trump’s plan can be seen as an approval stamp for annexation - after all, a partial unilateral annexation by Israel will eventually force it to annex the entire West Bank, and degenerate into an ongoing military and political conflict, create a deep rift in Israeli society and damage its economy.

The disillusionment must come. Anyone who considers himself an alternative to the current government must raise his voice and adopt the principles agreed in Annapolis, 2008 that will enable the resolution of the conflict.



The One-Sided Narrative of the Vision Known as the “Vision of Peace” – The Democracy Institute, April, 16 2020

Donald Trump's vision of peace was published in January 2020, after three years of formation by the American team, led by Jared Kushner. The vision of peace is a declaration of intent and a basic plan for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with the participation of Arab states and with the leadership of the United States, the main concept being the realization of a two-state solution, Israel and Palestine. In this article, I will seek to show that the vision prominently adopts the Israeli narrative, while giving top priority to Israeli positions regarding security, Jerusalem, settlements and refugees, a different interpretation than the accepted one for the Security Council resolution 242. This interpretation is characterized by a complete disregard for the achievements of previous negotiations and their end points.

Israel, led by Benjamin Netanyahu, who was a key partner in formulating the plan, welcomed it. Moreover, the determined minority of supporters of the unilateral annexation saw it as a confirmation of their assumption that President Trump's tenure was a historic opportunity which may not return to realize their vision. The Palestinians, led by Mahmoud Abbas, who were excluded from the process at the outset and refrained from cooperating with the US administration staff when invited to do so, rejected the initiative outright. The response of the Arab world and the international community ranges from a lack of commitment (“learn and see”), to a delicate rejection (sticking to the Arab peace initiative) and a complete rejection and backing of the Palestinian position.

Few see the initiative as a primary basis for negotiation. By the majority, it is perceived at most, as an American kosher stamp for the current situation or for the annexation of parts of the West Bank, common in the political and public discourse in Israel. In order to implement unilateral moves, a joint Israeli-American mapping team began working on the eve of the third round of elections in Israel.

What exactly does the ‘vision of peace’ offer us?

The political-legal basis

The US and Israel claim is twofold: First, in their view, the vision implements Security Council Resolution 242. Second, the two argue that this decision does not mean that Israel must withdraw from all the territories occupied in 1967. Is that so?

UN Security Council Resolution 242, adopted after the Six Day War, does indeed states that Israel must withdraw from territories and not from the

territories. In practice, Israel implemented Resolution 242 in returning the entire Sinai to Egypt as part of the peace agreement. Also, in the 1994 peace agreement with Jordan, and even negotiations with Syria, were based on the 67 lines.

The UN considers the West Bank an occupied territory for all intended purposes to which the laws of war of the 1907 Hague Convention and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 apply. The Israeli Supreme Court has also ruled “... The territories of Judea and Samaria are held by the State of Israel in a belligerent conception [...] The law, jurisdiction and administration of the State of Israel do not apply in these territories. They were not “annexed” to Israel. The legal regime applicable in these areas is governed by public international law dealing with belligerent occupation ...”.

The historical and legal arguments seem unnecessary, as there is no speech to better reflect the worldview and the Trump administration's position on the weight and role of the international community, and on its attitude to international law and decisions then that of Jason Greenblatt before the UN Security Council on July 23, 2019. Greenblatt stated that the three bases of world order - international consensus, international law, and UN resolutions, including those of the Security Council - are irrelevant to the settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. He stressed that “This conflict will not be resolved on the basis of ‘international consensus’ about who is right and who is wrong... the conflict will not be resolved even by referring to ‘international law’ ... This conflict will not be resolved by constantly referring to the hundreds of UN resolutions on the subject”.

Greenblatt asks that we not forget, and this is repeated in the “Vision of Peace” in the same words, the “generosity” of Israel that “has already given up at least 88% of the territory it conquered in a defensive war”. But he ignores the fact that the peace agreement with Egypt is based on Resolution 242, which opens in Article 2 of the UN Charter, according to which: “Acquisition of territory by war is unlawful” (even in a defensive war). He also ignores the fact that the return of Sinai by Israel has led to the removal of the threat of a full-scale war from Israel, the receipt of some \$ 200 billion in US military and civilian assistance, and the opening of the gates to further agreements. The American envoy further states that “the only way before us is direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians”. Negotiations based on the ‘vision of peace’ only. In his view, there is no history, no understandings, no Clinton parameters, no Bush or Obama visions. He seeks to ignore all rounds of negotiations that have taken place in the past, chief among them the Annapolis process,

in which the agreed parameters for resolving the core issues were set.

It is clear that the concept underlying the “vision of peace” is in fact Netanyahu’s perception of the conflict and the way to settle it. Let us mention three prominent examples that indicate this:

The first refers to the claim regarding the Israeli need for security control of the Palestinian state. The “Vision of Peace” states that “as dangerous as Hamas-controlled Gaza is for Israel’s security, a similar regime that will rule the West Bank will pose an existential threat to the State of Israel”. These statements are very similar to Netanyahu’s words written in 1995, according to which: “A PLO state that will be planted 15 km off the coast of Tel Aviv will pose an immediate danger of death to the Jewish state”. On the same matter, it was written in the “Vision of Peace”: “Israel also had the bitter experience of retreating from territories that were later used to attack it”. This too, similarly to Netanyahu’s speech in March 2015 that: “Anyone who is going to establish a Palestinian state today is giving way to radical Islam. The left is ignoring this and is burying its head in the sand”. Both Trump and Netanyahu ignore the fact that this claim is not valid regarding the peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan, but is the complete opposite. From the territories used by the terrorist organizations to act against Israel, southern Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, Israel has chosen to withdraw unilaterally and not through an agreement. This strengthened the position and power of the terrorist organizations, with the withdrawal seen as their achievement.

The second example concerns Jerusalem. The “Vision of Peace” reads: “We believe that a return to a divided Jerusalem, and especially the holding of two separate security forces in one of the most sensitive areas on the planet, would be a grave mistake”. And that “the State of Israel was a good guardian of Jerusalem. Israel kept Jerusalem open and safe”. These words are completely reminiscent of Netanyahu’s promise in 2015, during his speech at the State Assembly at the ‘Ammunition Hill’ to mark the 48th anniversary of the unification of Jerusalem: “We will forever preserve a united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty. 48 years ago, the rifts of our capital, Jerusalem, were reunited, and it returned to being a city that was united together, its division caused its degeneration - its unification led to its flourishing. Therefore, Jerusalem will no longer become a wounded and dismembered city”. The two declarations ignore the existence of two almost separate cities in Jerusalem. Separated by discrimination, violence and friction, Jerusalem is deteriorating into the poorest city in Israel, with negative immigration of Jews and a dramatic change in its demographic balance.

Finally, the third example refers to the Arab world. The “Vision of Peace”

states that “it is also the hope of the United States that Arab states in the region that have not yet reached peace with the State of Israel will immediately begin to normalize relations with it and eventually negotiate peace agreements with Israel”. This statement ignores the Arab League’s peace initiative, which has been available to Israel for almost two decades, and demands that the Arab world accept Netanyahu’s demand, stated at the Likud ministers’ meeting in June 2016 that “if Arab states understand that they need to update the Arab initiative according to changes Israel will demand, then we will have something to talk about”.

It seems clear, therefore, that the authors of the vision have adopted Netanyahu’s solution, which was stated as early as 1995 that “the autonomy program under Israeli control is the only alternative to preventing these dangers, which are enshrined in the ‘peace’ process of the Oslo Accords”. The vision seeks to fulfill Netanyahu’s promise declared on September 6, 1997: “There is not and will not be a Palestinian state. [...] There will be no foreign sovereignty between the Jordan and the sea. The Jewish presence and Jewish settlement throughout Judea and Samaria will live, prosper and exist forever”.

Borders

The territory of the Palestinian state, which constitutes 22% of the territory of Palestine-land of-Israel and includes the territory of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, was agreed upon by Israel, the PLO and the United States as part of the Annapolis process in 2008, and is set at 6,205 square kilometers. In the “Vision of Peace”, the territory of Palestine, after the exchange of territories - 1,775 square kilometers for Israel versus 833 square kilometers for Palestine (ratio of 1: 2: 13) - will stand at 5,263 square kilometers. In other words, the Palestinians are required to make do with 19.5% of Palestine-Israel and not the 22% that have already been agreed upon by Israel.

The Vision of Peace states that “the exchange of territories will provide the State of Palestine with lands that are reasonably similar to the territories of the West Bank and Gaza before 1967”. However, the lands annexed to Israel - in the Jordan Valley, the Jerusalem Envelope and Western Samaria - are clearly fertile and enjoy immeasurable natural water resources more than the lands offered to Palestine - most are in the western Negev, on the border of the Sinai Desert (569 square kilometer that constitutes 71.5% of the total area), in the Arad Valley, on the border of the Judean Desert (176 square kilometers, which constitutes 21% of the total area), and a minority of quality lands (8%) belong to the Arab localities in Israel. Moreover, the length of the Green Line in the West Bank is 311 km, and in the Gaza Strip 56 km. At the Annapolis Conference (2008) the border

was required to be extended to 727 km. In the Vision of Peace, however, it was determined that the border would stand at 1696 km. To this must be added another 176 km to the border between Israel and Jordan in a section of the West Bank that was not included in the peace agreement signed in 1994. That is, 1872 additional kilometers on the border that Israel had with Jordan (and with Egypt in the Gaza Strip) until 1967. 5.1 times the Green Line, and 2.57 times the Israeli proposal in Annapolis.

The "Vision of Peace" also propose that 17 Israeli settlements, with 16,500 residents, remain as Israeli enclaves in Palestine and be connected to Israel on roads under Israeli security responsibility. It was also proposed that 43 Palestinian enclaves with 106,000 residents with access routes to Palestine remain in Israeli territory, and that the possibility be considered that seven Israeli-Arab communities, which do not appear on the perceptual map, with a population of about 150,000, be annexed to Palestine. The location of these communities in Israel requires that they be seen as additional enclaves.

It is important to understand - enclaves survive when there are normal relations between the countries concerned. However, when the relationship is hostile there is a tendency to cancel them. Therefore, given that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the longest-running conflicts in modern history, saturated with violence and bloodshed, and based on conflicting narratives, it must be assumed that these charged starting points will not allow the enclaves to exist properly on both sides. The many arrangements required to secure the movement, infrastructure, agricultural cultivation and more, would be unreasonable, given the ongoing hostility between the parties. Especially when these are enclaves populated by Messianic right-wing voters in Israel.

The vision carries severe damage to the Palestinian fabric of life. Palestine will lack territorial continuity and will be divided into five main areas: Jenin-Nablus (1692 square kilometers), Ramallah (838 square kilometers), Bethlehem-Hebron (1571 square kilometers), the Gaza Strip (363 square kilometers) and the western Negev (597 sq.km). The connection between these areas is based on roads that cross Israeli territory, two of which stretch over tens of kilometers and a significant part of which does not exist. Of the area annexed to Israel, 1,775 square kilometers, 34.4%, is privately owned Palestinian land belonging to about 150 Palestinian localities. The degree of damage to the localities' lands ranges between different rates. The proposed road system in contrast to the existing one is not hierarchical, does not match the nature of the area and its construction will severely damage the landscape and environment. It will require the construction of 252 new kilometers and another

9 bridges / tunnels out of the 15 proposed. The proposed corridor to connect the two parts of the replaced area in the western Negev, and their connection to Gaza, requires the construction of a 65 km long road that bypasses the 8 Israeli settlements located beside it. The set of roads in the northwestern West Bank will need to be rebuilt.

Israeli Arabs

The placement of the idea of transferring Arab Israeli citizens to Palestine on the internal political agenda in Israel, even before it became part of an Israeli position in any negotiations, has many implications for Israeli society in general, and for Arab society in particular. It seems that such a proposal will eliminate the remaining feelings of belonging of the Arabs in Israel to the state and the chances of success of their integration trends in Israeli society. The Arab population in Israel is consistently working to achieve equality and increase its integration into Israeli society as a whole. A plan to transfer territories inhabited by Arab citizens may be the last step in a political and social process of civil de-legitimization and their exclusion from Israeli society.

This proposal, which seeks to transfer an Arab population to Palestinian sovereignty, should be seen as part of a political process in Jewish society in Israel today, in which new political agreements and coalitions are formed between left and right (which were not possible in the past), on the basis of the assumption that accepts the principle of dividing the land into two nation states. The discussion of this idea is in fact part of a discussion on extending public legitimacy to the proposed permanent arrangement. Part of the debate over the future of the settlement blocs and the shaping of the character of the Jewish nation-state in the post-peace era. This discussion is important and legitimate as long as it is presented as it is and not through a decision in advance with moves that are inconsistent with international and Israeli law, which have no demographic significance in practice, and which will come at the expense of the rights and future of the entire Arab public in Israel, while fatally damaging Arab-Jewish relations, and the democratic nature of the State of Israel.

Security

The security zone on the eastern slopes of Samaria and the Jordan Valley was born out of the Israeli fear after the Six Day War of a ground invasion of a "potential Eastern Front" composed of the armies of Jordan, Syria and Iraq. This front has disappeared. Every beginning intelligence officer knows that Iran has no intention or ability to send armored troops toward Israel, and to cross 1,500 kilometers of the Arab Desert, exposed

to the Israeli Air Force, in an area mostly populated by Sunnis.

The peace agreement between Israel and Jordan includes Article 4, which prohibits Jordan and Israel from signing military alliances with states or organizations hostile to the other side, or “allowing their entry, deployment or operation in or through their territory... in circumstances that may impair the security of the other side”. In other words, Israel’s real security border is not the Jordan River, but the borders of Jordan that pass more than 300 kilometers from the population centers in Israel. The threat to Israel is indeed defined today as the intrusion and “leakage” of terrorism from Jordan through the Jordan Valley to the future Palestinian state and from there to Israel. To this the commanders of the Jordan Valley Brigade and the commanders of the Central Command would testify that the Jordanian army deployed east of the Jordan River is doing its job faithfully, and beyond.

According to the Vision of Peace, the length of the border between Israel and Jordan will be 1696 km. This border has the following disadvantages:

The existing security barrier along about 600 km, in which more than 20 billion NIS have been invested to date from the state budget, will be dismantled. It will be rebuilt on the new route between Israel and Palestine. The construction cost of this barrier is estimated at 30 billion NIS. To this must be added an annual maintenance of 4 billion NIS.

The main difficulty in the length of the border lies in the extent of the forces that will be required to operate along the barrier. This includes an increase of at least 60 companies, which is an increase of 200%. Due to the addition to the border with Jordan, the IDF will have to keep the spatial division in the Jordan Valley intact. The many crossings that will be required to ensure Palestinian continuity, to monitor the residents of the enclaves, will require the Ministry of Defense to multiply by several times the manpower of the land crossings authority responsible for them today. In addition, the IDF will have to invest increased forces in the defense of the 17 Israeli enclaves and even the 43 Palestinian enclaves. The IDF will also be required to deploy many forces to secure the axis for both the Israeli enclaves, 126 km long, and the Palestinian enclaves. In order to meet all the additions to the above forces, it must be assumed that the IDF will be required to invest in the regular army in its ongoing security activities and to mobilize a large reserve force, which will impair the IDF’s preparation and readiness for combat.

Jerusalem

The vision proposes to establish the Palestinian capital in the town of Abudis, which is not part of united Jerusalem and the villages left

outside the security barrier in Jerusalem: Kfar Akeb, Samiramis, Matar neighborhood, Shuafat refugee camp (without Walaja). That is, in numbers: out of the area of united Jerusalem of 126,400 dunams, 111,725 (93%) will remain under Israeli sovereignty and 3,483 (2.75%) will be given to the Palestinian capital. Undoubtedly a “division of Jerusalem”.

It should be emphasized that the Palestinians and the Arab world do not see these villages as part of Jerusalem. These villages / neighborhoods do not have minimal institutional, urban, infrastructural, economic or transportation infrastructure to serve as any major Capital. On the other hand, all the holy places in and around the Old City, including the Temple Mount and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, will remain under Israeli sovereignty. The urban center of life, public institutions, hospitals, etc. will all remain under Israeli sovereignty.

The call to recognize this area as ‘Al-Quds’ (the Arabic name of Jerusalem), cannot reconcile - both historically and religiously - with the meaning of the term in Arab culture and history and with the religion of Islam.

First and foremost, because this area does not include the Temple Mount on which the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock are built, which placed Jerusalem under the wings of Islam.

Second, because it does not include a single part of the Old City and the ‘historic basin’ - Jerusalem until the middle of the 19th century.

Finally, it does not include any of the neighborhoods that made up East Jerusalem until 1967. This vision therefore calls on Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims to deny their religion and history.

Palestinian residents are given three options to choose from, one of which is citizenship. But it is not at all certain that things will come true, given the experience of the last half century. Continued discrimination and neglect of Palestinian East Jerusalem is expected to continue. This is how the mythical mayor, Teddy Kollek, admitted, “We have repeatedly said that we will compare the rights of the Arabs to the rights of the Jews in the city. Empty talk ... they were and remain second- and third-class citizens ... For Jewish Jerusalem I have done something in the last 25 years. For East Jerusalem? Nothing! what did I do? schools? Nothing! Sidewalks? Nothing! Cultural houses? Not anything!”.

Finally, the meaning of prayer for Jews is to build a synagogue. This is in contrast to the law that determines the area of the Temple Mount as forbidden for the Aliyah of Jews (“fear of the Temple”). Isn’t this an invitation to daily friction that will lead to outbursts of violence?

Refugees

The proposal presented in the "Vision of Peace" gives Israel the right to veto the return of Palestinian refugees to the State of Palestine and even limits the number of Palestinians to be absorbed into third Islamic states to 50,000. Thus, it cannot serve as an appropriate interpretation of UN Resolution 194, Article 11.

The annexation of the Jordan Valley to Israel robs Palestine of the only area that had the potential to absorb refugees (mainly from Lebanon). The territories that Israel is supposed to transfer from the western Negev do not have the capacity to absorb a significant number of refugees. In other words, according to the vision - the refugees will all remain in their place of residence.

In conclusion, although the drafters of the Deal of the Century chose the title "Two-State Solution", the proposal is a fatal blow to everything that has been achieved so far. It withdrew the political discourse in Israel 15 back, to the illusion that an agreement without a concession on the West Bank was possible; And the Palestinian discourse is likely to retreat by a century - to the strive for a single state with an Arab majority (even before the return of refugees).

In the details of the proposal, which are fundamentally different from the contents of Annapolis, the terms that characterized the peace discourse until Netanyahu's return to power in 2009 were cynically used: two states, exchange of territories, demilitarization, Palestinian capital, and more. This indicates professional ignorance in the fields of security, geography and law. No American professional from the National Security Council or the State Department was involved in the preparation of the proposal. The proposal lacks any feasibility of implementation because the Palestinian, Arab and international positions generally reject it. The proposal even lacks spatial-physical feasibility as we have seen. Attempting to implement it will create a much more difficult reality for both parties.

The 'deal of the century' must therefore be shelved and gone. It does not and will not have an Arab partner. The global reactions indicate that it does not legitimize any Israeli annexation. Its consequences could cause great damage to Israel. It seeks to legitimize the existing situation, in which two different legal systems exist in the same area on the basis of an ethnic criteria, and to add annexation to this situation, which will make it into apartheid, or in the words of David Ben-Gurion from 1949, a "dictatorship of the minority". On top of that - the deal fatally hurts the PLO, which since 1988 has been trying to lead a political dialogue to

resolve the conflict at the expense of the armed struggle. It will push for the abolition of security coordination with Israel. It harms the concept of citizenship in the proposal to transfer the Arab citizens of Israel to Palestine. It violates the rule of law and the right to property in the legalizing of illegal outposts built on plundered Palestinian land. Finally, it will encourage the emigration of Palestinians from the neighborhoods outside the wall into the city of Jerusalem, and will accelerate negative Jewish immigration and the change in the demographic balance that has been developing to the detriment of Jews for the past 52 years.

Trump's proposal is in fact a kosher stamp for annexation - a unilateral partial annexation by Israel will eventually force it to annex the entire West Bank, and degenerate into an ongoing military and political conflict, a deep rift in Israeli society and into damaging its economy.

The resumption of negotiations from the point where it ended in Annapolis 2008 is the way to strive for a permanent agreement and a settlement of the conflict that has long since crossed its centenary year.



Trump's "Vision of Peace" as Opposed to Two States – On the Left Side Magazine, June 12, 2020

The essence of the "vision": the realization of a two-state solution, Israel and Palestine, through the adoption of the Israeli narrative; Giving top priority to Israeli positions in relation to security, Jerusalem, settlements and refugees, in contradiction to Security Council resolutions and the UN General Assembly, and in complete disregard of the achievements of previous negotiations and their end points.

The "vision" presents the following principles:

On the issue of borders:

- Palestine will have no borders with neighboring countries (Egypt to the west and Jordan to the east). Its area will be surrounded by Israeli sovereign territory, with the border between them being 1,700 km.
- There will be 17 Israeli enclaves in Palestinian territory, including 16,500 Israelis who will enjoy 130 km of designated roads that will connect them to the other annexed territories.
- There will be 43 Palestinian enclaves in Israeli territory, with 106,000 inhabitants.
- The exchange of territories will be in a 1: 2: 13 ratios in favor of Israel, and will include the transfer of approximately 250,000 Arab Israeli citizens, with their localities, to Palestinian sovereignty.
- The West Bank will be connected to the Gaza Strip by a land corridor.

On the issue of security:

- Israel will have increased security authority in Palestine, which will be demilitarized of an army and heavy weapons.
- Israel will bear security responsibility in the Israeli enclaves in Palestine and in the Palestinian enclaves in Israel, and in the routes leading to them.
- Israel will control the external borders of Palestine and all its border crossings, airspace, maritime space, and the electromagnetic medium.
- The security barrier will be dismantled and a new barrier will be built 4 times in length, in accordance with the new border.

On the issue of Jerusalem:

- United Jerusalem will remain entirely under Israeli sovereignty, including the Old City and the Temple Mount (93% of the city area), with the exception of the neighborhoods outside the security barrier.
- There will be freedom of worship and freedom of access to the holy places, under Israeli security responsibility.
- The Palestinian capital will consist of 3 separate geographical units, outside the area defined by the Arab and Muslim world as "Al Quds" (historic Jerusalem).

On the issue of refugees:

- Palestinian refugees will not return to Israel.
- Israel will have a right to veto on the refugees wishing to settle in Palestine.
- The issue of housing and compensation will be addressed by an international mechanism.
- A separate international mechanism will be established to regulate compensation for Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

Reactions to the plan:

- Israel, led by Netanyahu, who was a key partner in formulating the plan, welcomed the it. The determined minority of unilateral annexation supporters saw the plan as a confirmation of their assumption that President Trump's tenure was a historic opportunity which may not return to realize their vision.
- The Palestinians, led by Mahmoud Abbas, who were excluded from the process and refrained from cooperating with the American team when invited, rejected the initiative outright.
- The response of the Arab world and the international community ranges from a lack of commitment ("learn and see"), to a delicate rejection (sticking to the "Arab peace initiative") and a complete rejection and backing of the Palestinian position.
- Bottom line: the plan failed the test of the ability to produce another Palestinian and / or Arab partner.

This study shows that the "Vision of Peace" uses the best concepts prevalent

in the political process that preceded it (two states, a Palestinian capital in Jerusalem, exchange of territories, territorial continuity, demilitarization, etc.), but gives them content that contradicts everything discussed and agreed between the parties and the international community, led by the United States.

The concepts that correspond to the international decisions that guided the parties and were changed beyond recognition with the launch of the "Vision of Peace":

Borders: based on '67 lines and exchange of territories in a 1: 1 ratio;

Security: a demilitarized Palestinian state and extensive security arrangements;

Jerusalem: the establishment of two capitals based on the demographic division, and special arrangements in the holy places;

Refugees: the return of refugees to the State of Palestine, and the provision of compensation and other arrangements.

The "vision of peace" lacks feasibility, both on the ground, and from a practical, and economic viewpoint. It undermines the continuity of the Palestinian state, and does not allow life for the residents in terms of law and order, economy and community; It enslaves the IDF and the State of Israel to the ongoing security needs of the Palestinian space; it violates international conventions for the right to property, freedom of movement and more.

The Palestinian position indicates that there is not and will not be in the foreseeable future a Palestinian or Arab partner for the resumption of negotiations with Israel and for the signing of a permanent settlement, except on the basis of the accepted interpretation of UN resolutions and previous negotiations.

An alternative to the "vision of peace" is presented in my research, based on international decisions and the concepts that guided the parties in previous negotiations.

The alternative's main points:

- An exchange of territories of about 4%, in a 1: 1 ratio, which allows 80% of the settlers to remain, without harming the Palestinian continuity and the lives of the residents on both sides.
- A demilitarized Palestinian state with extensive and detailed security arrangements, balancing Israel's security needs with respect for Palestinian sovereignty.

- A Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem, in two alternatives: division, or an "open city".
- Resolving the refugee issue according to President Clinton's parameters from 2000.

Some see the initiative as a primary basis for negotiation. Its failure to produce a Palestinian partner indicates that justice is with those who see it as American an kosher stamp for the current situation, and even for the annexation of parts of the West Bank. This position is strengthened by the establishment of the Israeli-American "Sovereignty Team" for the mapping of annexation, which began its work on the eve of the third election in Israel; from the position of the issue of annexation as a central demand of Netanyahu in the negotiations for the formation of the government.

The research presents the expected developments of a unilateral annexation, which begins with the annexation of parts of Area C, and possibly ends with the annexation of the entire West Bank. The study analyzes the factors that may lead to this result, the possible exit points for Israel from annexation, the end scenarios of the process, and their serious consequences for the security, economy, image, identity, values and the regime of the State of Israel.



You have been Warned: the Nationalist-Messianic do not Work for Trump – Haaretz, June 26, 2020

The Messianic-nationalist right-wing parties and Yesha Council leaders, as well as Likud members, oppose Trump's plan and re-expose themselves and anyone who opposed the two-state solution under various pretexts, sometimes with rolling eyes. Their rejection of the two-state solution stems from their messianic faith, and therefore, in their view, there is no condition or agreement that can allow its existence. It is no coincidence that throughout the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians they have adhered to their position, and have never proposed an alternative, other than one that undermines the Zionist vision of a democratic state with a Jewish majority.

In principle, Jared Kushner, Donald Trump's adviser and son-in-law, gave Benjamin Netanyahu, Ambassadors David Friedman and Ron Drummer and their advisers from the settlements, an open check signed on behalf of the President of the United States, and they only had to write whatever they wanted. The Trump plan, based on the nationalist-settler narrative, is responsive to all the arguments and demands made by the Messianic nationalists during the Oslo process - which did not reconcile with the parties' positions and the purpose of the negotiations, but many who are gullible in the Israeli public easily believed them.

Messianic nationalists have argued that the Jordan Valley cannot be given up for security reasons - and Trump, blind to the security benefits of the peace agreement with Jordan, suggests that the entire valley be annexed to Israel. They argued that Israel's security could not be entrusted to the Palestinians or to a third party - Trump, who does not know the "inherent rights" granted to any state by virtue of being a state, left Israel control of all Palestinian borders, overall security authority in all territories, the security responsibility for the Israeli enclaves that will remain in Palestinian territory and also for the Palestinian enclaves that will remain in Israeli territory that will be annexed, including the traffic routes to them, including four strategic sites (Ba'al Hatzor base, Mount Ebal, the Masada area of Judea, and Mount Gilo). He also left Israel in control of all airspace and maritime space, the electromagnetic medium and in full control of all border crossings.

They argued that Jerusalem was indivisible - Trump, for whom the history of Jerusalem dates back to 1967, left the two parts of the city under Israeli sovereignty, including the Old City and the Temple Mount, and even separated from it 100,000 Palestinians living in the neglected neighborhoods beyond the security wall, which he ignorantly called "Al-

Quds" (East Jerusalem).

They claimed that the country would be flooded with Palestinian refugees - Trump, who completely ignores the Palestinian narrative, denied any return of refugees to Israel and even left Israel the right to veto the number of refugees returning to the Palestinian territories. They argued that no settlement should be evacuated - Trump, who does not recognize international decisions, proposed annexing to Israel 30% of the West Bank with 96% of settlers (the rest would be annexed as enclaves), in exchange for only 14% within the Green Line; this is while creating a new border with Palestine, three times longer than all of Israel's borders, which will force the entire IDF to become the Border Police. They argued that the Arab minority in Israel should be part of the deal - and Trump, who does not understand the essence of the term "citizenship", proposed transferring 160,000 Arab Israelis to "Palestine", and according to his plan, another 150,000 are candidates for a transfer.

The pinnacle of cynicism - is the settlers' resentment that the deal Trump made with Netanyahu without the Palestinians is conditional on Israel recognizing a Palestinian "state". In his folly, Trump calls a "state" the imaginary Palestinian entity that is supposed to be established by the deal with no external borders, no air and sea control, no capital city, no security responsibility, no independent economy, and scattered over five areas that will have artificial transportation continuity. This is because the position of the Messianic nationalists is based on the exceptional interpretation of the Ramban, who interpreted the commandment of settling the land as conquest and Jewish rule "That we were commanded to inherit the land which God had given to our ancestors... We will not leave it in their hands or in the hands of others from the nations for generations".

No less outrageous is the transformation of the 17 tiny settlements located at the back of the mountain, with less than 17,000 residents - the entire purpose of which was to prevent Palestinian continuity - into Israeli enclaves, whose roads, which divide Palestinian territory, will remain under Israeli security responsibility. Friedman's response that it will be possible to build tall towers in the Israeli enclaves reflects the cultural and political blindness of the ambassador. Not only will these enclaves be like a thorn in the eye of Palestinian nationalism, according to Friedman these towers will also stick out in the distance.

The settlers are certainly concerned about the existence of 43 Palestinian enclaves in the area that will be annexed to Israel with 106,000 residents. They will surely be happy that these residents will be deported outside the annexed area, in the spirit of the explanation given by Menachem

Felix, one of the leaders of Gush Emunim, in the Alon Moreh High Court in 1979: "And ye possessed the land, and dwelt therein: for I have given you the land to inherit it.' And there Rashi interprets "and you inherited it from its inhabitants and then you sat in it".

There is nothing new under the sun – the refusal is nourished by Messianic nationalism. Yet ancient and modern history has taught us that its holders are willing to pay any price for the illusion of realizing their vision, including the destruction of the state and the people. They are not willing to give up even one inch of the Land of Israel, even though its boundaries have been endlessly defined in various periods, including in the Bible. They choose the most expanding definition that suits them. In 1937, in response to the report of the Phil Commission and the agreement of Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion to the idea of partition - for the establishment of a Jewish state, which could save European Jewry from the clutches of the Nazis - the head rabbis declared that "from a purely religious point of view... any deliberate concession (of territories in Israel) constitutes a deliberate desecration of the sanctity of the land and the Covenant of the pieces".

Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, the spiritual leader of Gush Emunim, even added the concession of territories to three offenses of "be killed and do not transgress" - bloodshed, Idolatry and incest. According to him, as expressed in an interview with Maariv in 1974: "And you inherited the land and settled in it ... It is a clear and absolute all-Israeli commandment of God, that we are committed with life-and death devotion to this land and to all its borders when there is a state of coercion, whether by Gentiles or, God forbid, by Jews due to political disruptions and disruptions of the mind - we are all committed to being killed and not to transgress! On Judea and Samaria, on the Golan Heights - it will not go without war! Someone asked me if I wanted to make a 'civil war', I will not go into terminology and I will choose names for what this thing will be called, but it is a fact: it will not happen, it will not happen without a war! On our bodies and limbs! All of us!"

According to the position of the Messianic settlers, the establishment of a Palestinian state will be a withdrawal from the divine promise "to inherit the land", and a violation of the oath to avoid acts that will delay the redemption, a violation that will inevitably result in punishment. The Holocaust was also explained in this way by them. The refusal of the Jews of the world to immigrate to the Land of Israel, even though the Supreme Providence opened the gates and showed that God desired it (in the Balfour Declaration and in the Mandate), was a violation of the above oath, and therefore they were punished.

Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook wrote in his book "Eretz Zvi": "The people of Israel were taken, cut from the depths of exile to the State of Israel. The bloodshed of the six million is a real cut in the national body. The whole nation receives a heavenly operation, by the destroyers Yimakh Shemam ... when God so clings to the impurity of the (foreign) lands of the peoples that they (the Jewish people) must be cut off from them with bloodshed when the end comes ... from the cruel cut ... The matter of our lives is revealed, of the resurrection of the nation and the resurrection of the land".

The secularists among those who reject the Trump plan because it supposedly recognizes a Palestinian state rely on the view of the poet Natan Alterman, one of the founders of the "Movement for a Greater Land of Israel". Alterman wrote in 1970, a month before his death, in his latest article, "The New Hobby": "From the moment we acknowledge the existence of Palestinian national fiction, from that moment on, Zionism as a whole becomes a matter of stealing a homeland from an existing people. And to the extent that we are currently helping the spreading of this idea in the world and in our inner consciousness, we are undermining the historical and human foundations of Zionism and making it dependent on our weapons only". Alterman saw the conflict as a "zero-sum game", and apparently could not accept the notion of "both", which means that both peoples have the right to self-determination in their homeland, and recognizing the right of one does not negate the right of the other.

All that is left for those faithful to Zionism is to hope that this refusal of the Messianic nationalists and their comrades will be helpful for their own position. It will save us from the delusional, impossible vision of President Trump, which will destroy every good part of the State of Israel and its relations with the Palestinians and with the whole world.



Annexation

What is the Meaning of the Flood of Urgent Annexation Proposals? - Haaretz, February 4, 2018

Israeli government ministers Knesset members from the coalition must be thinking the Messiah is coming. A Messianic call can explain, on the one hand, their complete disregard for the things that occupy the public in Israel, such as the protest against government corruption and anti-democratic legislation. On the other hand, the tide of annexation proposals for the West Bank or parts of it that floods the Knesset table and public discourse - from the decisions of the Likud for annexing Settlement Areas, through Ma'ale Adumim, Greater Jerusalem, Area C, the stability plan, the autonomy plan and more.

The shallowness and superficiality that characterize these proposals suggest that urgency grips their thinkers. Their fear of a historical miss, of what they identify as a political golden hour to complete their Messianic nationalist vision. Each of them who sees himself as "having a soul, who has the ability to observe what is beyond the visible external phenomenon knows and is sure that this 'hand of God' is leading history and will lead this process to its completion" - the Messianic realization of Israel's redemption.

Two processes, whose faith and position, have been led and accelerated in recent years by God in his regular game in earthly politics, create the opportunity for a dramatic change in the existing system: The growing support of the US administration for the Israeli government's policy, which has reached an unprecedented peak in Donald Trump's presidency, and the weakening of the Palestinian struggle for an independent state in the balance of interests of the Arab states.

Since the US's recognition of the State of Israel 70 years ago, the two have known ups and downs in their relationship - from Eisenhower in 1956, which at once dispelled the dream of the "Third Reign of David", through Johnson's first memorandum of understanding and his position in the Six Day War not to force Israel to withdraw to the 67' borders, the Nixon air train and the initiation of the peace process, peace with Egypt under Carter, the Reagan plan and more. The dragging of the Shamir government to the Madrid Conference by Bush Sr. was the "last stop" in which the Palestinians were not allowed to represent themselves. The mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO and the signing of the Oslo Accords during the Clinton era in 1993, completed the move, which led the Reagan administration in 1988, to the recognition of the PLO in resolutions 181, 242 and 338.

From the moment Israel and the PLO came to negotiate a permanent

settlement, the presidents of the United States, Clinton and Obama, unlike Carter in 1978, preferred the view of Israel, which insisted on conducting negotiations on the basis of a balance of power clearly in its favor, upon the Palestinian concept that demanded its conduct on the basis of international decisions, chief among them 242 in an interpretation adopted in the peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan - "territories for peace", or in Abbas' words "no more than 22% of historic Palestine", but no less.

It was Clinton who at Camp David saw Barak's offer of a Palestinian state on 92 percent of the territory whose capital is not 'Al-Quds', a fair offer. Even though he came to his senses, six months later he still offered to give Israel 3 percent of the territories without any reciprocal. President Obama also believed, with his envoy Kerry, that a permanent settlement could be reached that did not include a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem. Only President Bush Jr., through Condoleezza Rice, was able to determine the size of the future Palestinian state at 6,205 square kilometers (22% of Mandatory Palestine).

The Trump administration's moves, a year since he was elected, under the architect, Ambassador David Friedman, threaten all past mistakes and achievements. In his speech on the "state of the nation" before Congress, Trump did not include any mention of a political process or a deal in the Middle East.

He went on to say in his remarks to Prime Minister Netanyahu in Davos that "Jerusalem is not on the table." Also, the statements of Special Envoy Jason Greenblatt, who argued that the American plan is a "plan for implementation rather than a discussion", is progressing and will be presented at the appropriate moment, and that it is a "regional plan" that is not subject to Palestinian veto, and of which the Palestinians are a marginal part.

In other words, international decisions and the parameters for the final negotiations should give way to the power of Israel and its sole right to an independent state in the territories of the Land of Israel. The Palestinians must be content with a demilitarized entity over most of the occupied territories (without an exchange of agreed territories), which is less than a state and Israel has increasing authority for security, as Netanyahu declared, stating that Israel will retain security control west of the Jordan River regardless of arrangements. The capital of the Palestinian entity can be anywhere else except united Jerusalem and its refugees will only return to it.

The Palestinians' expected refusal of any proposal in this format or similar,

following their rejection of the United States as a mediator following Trump's Jerusalem declaration, will lay the first and most important basis for American support for the Netanyahu government's response in the form of annexation moves.

Arab countries underwent a reverse process in these 70 years. Their involvement in the War of Independence did not stem from their sympathy for the Palestinian cause, but from the pressure of the Arab street to preserve Palestine's Arabness and Islamic character, and the desire to enjoy at least some of the territories of the future Arab state. Despite their defeat, two of them achieved something - Jordan the West Bank and Egypt the Gaza Strip.

Until 1967, the question of Palestine was only a political tool for the advancement of those who dealt with it. After the further defeat in the Six Day War, which neither the Arab states nor Israel wanted, the order of priority of the three states that lost their land in favor of Israel was reversed. In a relatively rapid process, after the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the Arab states returned the sole representation of the Palestinian people to the PLO (Algeria 1974), and by 1988 legitimized its concession on "100 percent of the homeland of Palestine in exchange for the state of Palestine on 22 percent of it". In 1978, Sadat insisted on no more than an autonomy for the Palestinians to ensure that Sinai returned to Egypt to the last inch. Jordan, who gave up in 1988 on an agreement with Israel to reclaim the entire West Bank, chose to align itself with the Arab League's decision to give up what was not its own in the first place and abolished the annexation of the West Bank. In 2000, Syria sought to take over the entire occupied Golan Heights and later get rid of the Palestinian refugees within its territory. In 2002, the Arab League took another significant step towards peace and normalization with Israel, converting the "Three Nos" of the Khartoum Conference in 1967 (adopted due to the pressure of Palestinians) into a peace plan based on 242. During the negotiations between Israel and the PLO, Arab countries demonstrated support and restraint as long as the results did not threaten the status of the Temple Mount and Arab Jerusalem and the absorption of refugees outside their countries (Lebanon and Syria).

The Islamic winter that plagued the Arab world after the Arab Spring in the form of al-Qaeda, ISIS and the like, the four civil wars around the Arab world, the struggle against Iran's rise and against the influence of the Shiite axis, reaching as far as Hezbollah in Lebanon and Yemen, Turkey's aspirations under Erdogan's leadership, and the economic crisis plaguing Saudi Arabia, have greatly alienated the Palestinian interest from the leaderships of the Arab world, as Al Jazeera wrote "Another

thing Palestinians need to understand ... because it is foolish to ask another person to sacrifice his problems and national interests and help your problem”.

The focus of Arab states in their own problems will contribute the second basis to Israel's future moves in response to the expected Palestinian refusal of the American proposal when it comes.

These two processes are perceived by the Israeli government as an opportunity that won't return for the elimination of the idea of two states. Every member of the Knesset and a coalition minister seeks to be the first to correct the “historical wrong” of not conquering the entire Land of Israel during the War of Independence, by annexing parts or all of the West Bank. There is no room for other considerations except for the steps of redemption (and the primaries). Not the response of the Palestinians, who only recently understood that “the Palestinians must take care of the Palestinians”; not the response of the international community, nor the threats to the agreements with Jordan and Egypt. The Israeli government is confident that the weakness of all these, as demonstrated in recent years in various events, will not stand in the way of Israeli determination and American support.

The Israeli government seems to have forgotten or is ignoring a number of things. Firstly, these moves will testify that Israel has never given up on its aspirations for a Greater Land of Israel and the expropriation of the Arabs of the land, contrary to all the international decisions and commitments it has made. Which may push it by many countries to the pariah position, similarly to South Africa at the time or to North Korea and Iran today.

Secondly, Israel ignores, because it does not have the power, even with the support of the Trump administration, to stop the Palestinians from mobilizing the Arab street through the same method that has served them since the days of the Mufti, Haj Amin al-Husseini, to Mahmoud Abbas today - the threat to al-Quds's Arab and Islamic character and Harem a-Sharif at its head. There is nothing like these to serve as a common and unifying denominator of the Palestinians in particular and the Arab and Islamic world in general, in order to change the balance between the Palestinian interest and the particular interest in the eyes of the leaders of the Arab world.

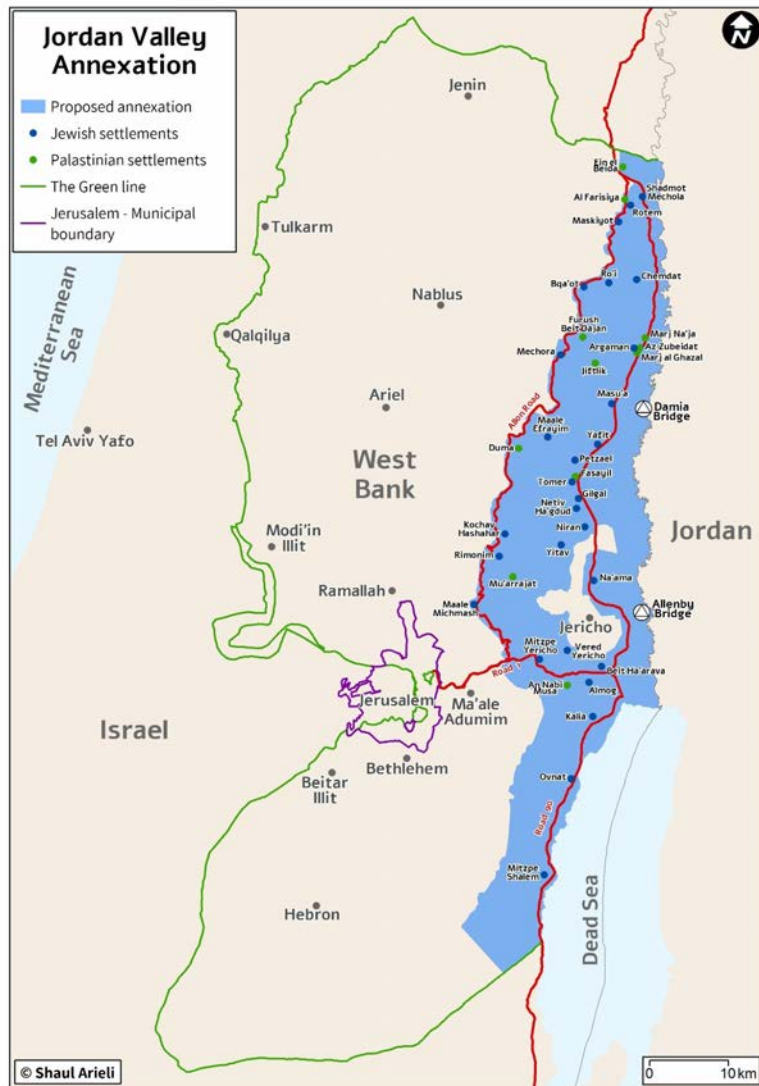
Third and most importantly, contrary to the consensus that prevailed in Jewish society regarding all annexation decisions since the War of Independence, the situation is different today. A little more than half of the public sees the reality that has been created as a golden opportunity

for an end to the Israeli-Palestinian-Arab conflict, for Israel's integration in the region and for its return to the international consensus. This is done by a permanent settlement establishing a demilitarized Palestinian state with its capital in East Jerusalem, which leaves most of the settlers under Israel's sovereignty as part of an exchange of territories based on the 1967 lines and settlement of the refugee issue by absorbing those interested in the Palestinian state or compensation.

This public is more concerned about the consequences of the continuation of the conflict and the occupation on the future of Israeli society. It is beginning to raise its voice against the religiosity process, the intensification of racism against Israeli Arabs and other non-Jews, the intensification of a culture of lawlessness, continued damage to democracy and institutions, the threat of politicians to the professional ranks in the civil service, and the distancing of Diaspora Jewry, especially the liberal-Zionists in the United States with an emphasis on the younger generation.

The lack of a national consensus on annexation also threatens the political system used in Israel. The ruling party's moves seek to curb mechanisms of criticism, the free press, protest groups, and even the parliamentary opposition. In the end, in light of the opposition of this part of the public, the ruling party marches on the basis of the tyranny of the parliamentary majority in order to change the democratic laws and rules of the game.

The current reality is not an opportunity to annex, but to advance a gradual, controlled, conditioned, regional and internationally supported political process, at the end of which an independent Palestinian state will be established alongside Israel. Netanyahu's position and the proposed annexation moves will push Israel into a reality that can be estimated to have signs, in whole or in part, of a civil war between and within the parties: partial governmental anarchy, violence on a personal and daily level, lack of police enforcement, constant tension between the political system and the professional levels, collapse of the status of the High Court of Justice, armed organizations, middle-class migration - especially of young people, and refusal of compulsory and reserve service. The Messiah will not come to this reality.



The Demographic Balance Sheet Bursts the Bubble of Annexation – Haaretz, March 28, 2018

The report of the Civil Administration on the demographic issue, which was presented to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee this week, bursts the bubble of the imagined reality build by the opponents of the two-state solution. Proponents of annexation have been spreading false facts for years to conceal the demographic balance, which maintains the basic tension that has accompanied the Zionist movement from the beginning of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the necessary decision that results from it. The demographic balance between Jews and Arabs that was presented, requires the Israeli leadership to re-determine the choice of two of the three fundamental goals of the Zionist movement and of Israel: to be a democratic state, to be a Jewish state in its national sense and to be in the entire territory of the Land of Israel.

The existence of a non-Jewish majority in the Land of Israel during most of the 100 years of conflict is not a product of an Arab demographic transformation but a product of the fact that when the Balfour Declaration was issued in 1917 and the Mandate was approved in 1922, And since then, the Zionist movement has failed to achieve a significant Jewish majority between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.

It was a tremendous and unprecedented challenge for the Zionist movement and the British to implement the two components of the declaration: the first, a Jewish national home, and the second that it would be established "on the clear condition that nothing would be done that might harm the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities in the Land of Israel." In other words, a democratic state for the Jewish people. Ze'ev Jabotinsky addressed this challenge in his address to the Eretz Israel Council in 1919: "In other countries, where all the people live in their land, all the citizens are sitting on their land, this building is simple and easy to establish. But it is not in our country, which is subject to special conditions, which is an 'abnormal' country, because most of its citizens are outside the borders of the country".

Max Nordau spoke of the importance of achieving a Jewish majority, at the Zionist Conference in London in 1920 and stated that "it is imperative that at least 500,000 Jews be found in Palestine when England receives the Mandate for Palestine. If not, Zionism is doomed to fail". But even though at the time of the Mandate the number of Jews was only 83,000, it did not happen. In order to implement the Mandate, which states that Britain must "create in Palestine the political, administrative and

economic conditions that will ensure the establishment of the Jewish national home," the British refrained from establishing an indigenous government that was naturally composed of the Arab majority. As was the case in all the other Mandatory states. The Mandate defined clauses (4,6,7) that gave clear priority to Jewish immigration, naturalization and Jewish settlement in order to generate the demographic and spatial transformation and to establish a democratic state with a Jewish majority.

In 1937, the Peel Commission laid down its proposal to divide the country between Jews and Arabs. Despite the small area allotted to the Jewish state (17% of the land), the Zionist Congress authorized Ben-Gurion, Chairman of the Jewish Agency, and Weizmann to negotiate with the British on the establishment of a Jewish state in part of Eretz Israel. It was a clear decision to favor a Jewish majority and a democratic state over the entire Land of Israel, because the Jews constituted only 30% of the land's population. This is what Ben-Gurion says to his son Amos: "What we want is not that the land be unified and whole, but that the unified and whole Land be Jewish. I do not have any satisfaction with the entire Land of Israel - when it is Arab". Mordechai Nemir, at the Mapai Conference in 1937, further explains the need for territorial concessions: "A reduction in the area is the price we must pay for the fatal delay of the Jewish people in building the land and for the rapid growth of Arab Movement".

The two men did not see the establishment of a small Jewish state as the end of the story and developed the "theory of stages". Ben-Gurion continues to write to his son: "A partial Jewish state is not an end, but a beginning ... The establishment of a state - even partial - is the maximum of our strength in this period, and it will serve as a powerful lever in our historical efforts to redeem the entire land". Namir sums up and says: "Future generations - whether before or after the socialist revolution - will find a way to correct the distortion".

The Holocaust, the great tragedy of the Jewish people, drives Ben-Gurion to demand that the British government partition the land, of which only a third of its inhabitants are Jewish. In February 1947, he wrote to Foreign Minister Bevin: "The only possible immediate arrangement with a basis of finiteness is the establishment of two states, one Jewish and one Arab".

The partition resolution, in November 1947, places the projected demographic balance in the Jewish state at 55 percent. Ben-Gurion is aware of the difficulty that this creates, and in his words at the Mapai Center in December 1947, he states that even those who are currently seeking

the annexation of the West Bank alone should internalize the following: "In this composition there is not even absolute certainty that the government will be governed by a Jewish majority. There is no stable and functioning Jewish state as long as it has a Jewish majority of only 60%".

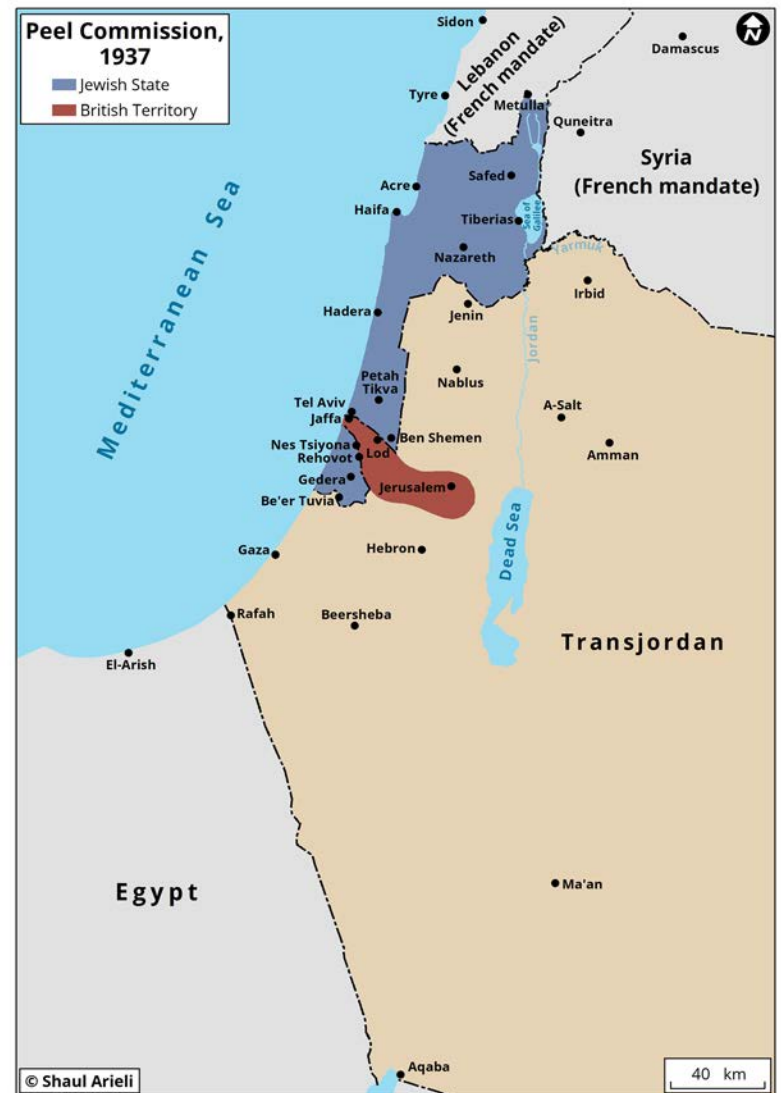
The War of Independence and the issue of the Palestinian refugees have revolutionized the demographic balance and placed the proportion of Jews in the State of Israel (inside the Green Line) at more than 80 percent. Ben-Gurion again decided to end the war in favor of a democratic state of the Jewish people at the expense of Greater Israel. To the criticism that he did not complete the conquest of the land he answers in the Knesset in April 1949: "A Jewish state throughout the country without using the methods of action taken in Deir Yassin can only be a dictatorship of the minority ... A Jewish state, in the present reality ... is impossible, if it will be Democratic, because the number of Arabs in the western part of the Land of Israel is larger than the number of Jews".

The Six-Day War and the conquest of Gaza and the West Bank reawakened the territorial objective of the Greater Land of Israel, but over one million Arabs who lived there blocked the Israeli government from all annexation except for East Jerusalem, as Levi Eshkol put it: "How will we live with so many Arabs?" Later, the Likud governments made do with annexing the Golan Heights only, where only Druze live in four small villages.

Israel's strategic choice to give up territory in return for preserving Jewish identity and democracy rose again in the 1990s, when Yitzhak Rabin declared that he "views the separation issue as a central issue" and chose the diplomatic path of the Oslo Accords. Later, it was Ehud Barak who defined the separation as "a supreme national need for Israeli demography, identity and democracy". Even Ariel Sharon, who did not believe in permanent agreements, said in a similar way: "The demographic consideration played an important role in determining the route of the separation fence because of the fear of annexing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who will connect with Israeli Arabs". Ehud Olmert concluded: "Either two states or Israel is finished".

The current demographic balance is a fact. It is sad to discover that after 100 years of conflict and decades of negotiations for an agreed political separation, the discourse in Israel still exists only inwards. There is no history, no international resolutions, no Palestinian people with national aspirations, and no agreements and declarations signed by the governments of Israel. Even sadder is the fact that many in the Israeli government are trying to hide the demographic truth because of aspirations for annexation and messianic visions.

This government, unlike all its predecessors, chose another strategic decision regarding the goals of Zionism: The Land of Israel in exchange for a democratic regime and a Jewish majority. This decision will remove international commitment, because Israel will not meet the democratic conditions, and will push it to the position of the leper, in which South Africa has spent many years. This irresponsible decision will trigger a process that could lead to civil war, Israel's internal collapse, the birth of an Arab state, and the disappearance of the Zionist vision.



The Land of Israel Lobby is Working to Abolish the Zionist Vision – Haaretz, August 5, 2018

For years, the nationalist and the messianic, those who rejected the two-state solution, were unable to present an alternative that would guarantee Jewish control of the Land of Israel without separation from the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. According to members of the coalition in the Israeli government, it seems that these days have passed, and that they have a worthy alternative, even at the cost of the democratic police of the State of Israel.

It is not coincidental that most of the initiators of the Nation State Law are members of the “Eretz Israel lobby”, which champions the idea of “strengthening the hold of the State of Israel throughout the Land of Israel, especially in Judea, Samaria and the Jordan Valley” - MKs Smotrich, Kish, Negosa, Yogev, Boker, Levi-Abekasis, Ilatov, Amsalem and Bitan. Even if this is not an organized plan, it is possible to identify in these MKs’ moves an alternative that includes two clear efforts: giving absolute superiority to the Jewish people in the State of Israel and in the Land of Israel at the expense of democratic values, primarily equality, through the Nation State law and other legislation (the override clause, the regularization law, anti-NGO legislation, etc.), and annexations in the West Bank that will eventually lead to a one state with an Arab majority, that would be subjected to the Jewish superiority of the Nation State law in an Ethnocratic state.

Ideas and plans for annexation in the West Bank have in recent years, accompanied Israeli political discourse, and since the election of Trump to the US presidency, initiatives in the Knesset and the Israeli government have been growing, to apply Israeli law to parts or all of Area C. Almost all of these proposals are initiated and supported by members of the “Eretz Israel lobby”, one of whose goals is “to promote legislation that will strengthen settlement in these areas and that will prevent any sabotage to it”.

Yoav Kish, chairman of the lobby, and his colleagues, submitted a bill for the annexation of Ma’aleh Adumim. An initiative to annex all areas of Jewish settlement is also being promoted by Kish and his colleagues and is based on the decision of the Likud Central Committee from December 31, 2017. MK Sharan Heschel of the Likud submitted two bills for the Annexation of the Jordan Valley. MK Yehuda Glick proposes creating “Greater Jerusalem”. Members of the Jewish Home propose annexing Area C on the way to the annexation of the entire West Bank, as Bennett told Netanyahu in 2016: “On the issue of the Land of Israel,

we have to move from a halt to a decision. We have to mark the dream, and the dream is that Judea and Samaria be part of the sovereign land of Israel”. Finally, the “National Union” party of Smotrich (also chairman of the lobby), which seeks to annex the entire West Bank in the “Decision Plan” and even more so, as evidenced by another goal of the lobby: “correcting the serious mistake of the disengagement and preventing its recurrence”.

This policy, promoted by the Prime Minister, willingly or involuntarily, to practical aspects by means of legislation, is a dramatic change in relations to the required decision by the Zionist movement and the governments of Israel that have been made for 100 years of conflict - a decision among the three main goals of Zionism: The first, to be a state with a Jewish majority that realizes the right of the Jewish people to self-determination. Second, to be a democratic state, as we undertook in the Declaration of Independence. And third, to establish a state on all the Mandatory territory. This is how Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, insisted in 1972: “Zionism has its foundations in the Land of Israel ... There will be a Jewish majority, an Arab minority, and equal rights for all. We did not deviate from this Torah, and we will not deviate from that in which the righteousness of our case is folded”.

Since in most years of the century long conflict there was a non-Jewish majority in Palestine, the Zionist leadership was forced to choose two of the three national goals. It could choose a Jewish state in the whole of Mandatory Palestine, but not enjoy a democratic regime. As Ben-Gurion explained in the Knesset at the end of the War of Independence: “A Jewish state ... in the whole land can only be a dictatorship of the minority”.

This option would have been contrary to the Balfour Declaration, which stated that the national home would be established “on the clear condition that nothing would be done that might prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities in the Land of Israel”; In contrast to the Mandate, which emphasized that the national home would be established “while preserving the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, regardless of race and religion”; And contrary to the Partition Resolution, which stated that “the Constituent Assembly of each State shall establish a democratic constitution for its State.” All these international resolutions serve as the political and legal basis for the establishment of the State of Israel.

The Zionist leadership had the option to choose two other goals: a democratic state in all of the land of Israel, but to lose the goal of a Jewish state, as Ben-Gurion emphasized in 1937: “I have no satisfaction

from the entire Land of Israel when it is Arab”.

The third option was a Jewish and democratic state in part of the Land of Israel, which was always the one chosen by the Zionist leadership (1937, 1947, 1949, 1993, 2005).

Thus, in light of the demographic, security and political reality, the two-state solution and the political and physical separation from the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were at the basis of the political-security outlook of the last Israeli prime ministers: Yitzhak Rabin, 1995 (“Israel will continue the peace process ... and will aspire for separation between Israel and the Palestinians”), Ehud Barak, 2003 (“Separation is a supreme national necessity of Israeli demography, identity and democracy”), Ariel Sharon, 2003 (“The demographic consideration played an important role in determining the route of the separation fence because of the fear of the annexation of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians”). And Ehud Olmert, (“The direction is clear, we are going to separate from the Palestinians, to determining a permanent border for Israel”).

The policy of the Netanyahu government, in which the Land of Israel lobbyists set the tone, systematically removes the solution of an agreed or independent separation from the national agenda. It creates a change in the order of preference in choosing the three goals, in favor of the whole of Mandatory Palestine at the expense of the democratic police of the State of Israel. This is a dramatic change taking place under the nose of the Israeli public, which is overfed and incited by those who pretend to be innocent, and by the nationalist and messianic, who are careful to hide the full and gloomy picture from it.

Under this charade, Netanyahu is leading the country in giant steps towards the abolition of the Zionist vision of the founding fathers and prime ministers of Israel throughout history: a democratic state with a Jewish majority and recognized borders that is a part of the family of nations.

Why Not, You Can Arrange a “Luxurious” Annexation – Haaretz, October 16, 2018

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 messianic 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 most 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 Bezael 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 lack 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 cannot 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 regarding Israeli Arabs and supporters of a final status agreement, and then with the implementation of the two-state vision.

Annexation will Undermine the Foundation Upon which the Jewish State was Established – Haaretz, November 4, 2018

It was a package deal in which its two parts are tied together. The Balfour Declaration, which this week marks 101 years, clearly emphasized the package deal proposed to the World Zionist Organization: the establishment of a Jewish national home "on the clear condition that nothing would be done that might prejudice the civil and religious rights of non-Jewish communities in the Land of Israel". In other words, the Jewish state will be a democratic state that grants equality to all its inhabitants. This is an inseparable package deal; The absence of the democratic party nullifies the international justification and support given to the establishment of the Jewish state.

The Balfour Declaration serves as the political-legal basis for the Zionist movement's demand for the establishment of a Jewish state in Mandatory Palestine: "His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people". Its inclusion in the British Mandate was completely different from the realization of the concept of mandates ("assistance and training" to the "weaker nations" in their own country), and legitimized the exclusion of Palestine from the principle of self-determination ("the land belongs to its inhabitants and not to its occupiers"). In other words, the Balfour Declaration gave the Jewish people, who did not live in their homeland at the time, the right to establish their own state, and this right was denied to the Arabs of Israel, even though they constituted more than 90 percent of the country's population, and controlled more than 90 percent of its private lands.

Almost a century later, in 2012, it was Edmond Levy, a Supreme Court justice who, in a report commissioned by the Netanyahu government, justified the construction of the illegal outposts "on state land." In his position, the Mandate text, with the Balfour declaration at its heart, is the last political-legal document valid for the West Bank. The Mandate states explicitly in Article 6 that "the administration in Palestine ... will assist in the proper conditions for the advancement of Jewish immigration, and will encourage, in cooperation with the Jewish Agency, a dense Jewish settlement on the ground, including state lands and lands that are not required for public use".

This presentation of things is heard and written at every opportunity by those who reject the final status agreement and the two-state solution. However, those who want to pass laws to annex large parts of the West Bank under the leadership of Bennett, Shaked, Smotrich and Kish,

present only half of the package deal of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate Charter, and are leading to their undermining as the political-legal basis of the Jewish state.

In October 2017, Jonathan Allen, the British deputy ambassador to the United Nations, referring to the fact that Israel has been in control of the territories for 50 years and is preventing residents from achieving equal rights, claimed that “remember there were two parts to the declaration, the second part has not been carried out”. Even if this statement can be rejected on the grounds that Israel, within the 1967 borders provides equality to its residents, the future plans for the annexation of territories from the West Bank, which will lead to an accelerated process of full annexation without granting citizenship to its Arab residents, will not meet this test

The Government of Israel, which is promoting a series of laws that are supposed to serve as legal foundations for the enactment of annexation and for the legitimization of illegal outposts established on privately-owned Palestinian land, ignores the clear stipulation in Article 6 of the Mandate: “The administration in Palestine will assist (the Jews) while ensuring that the rights and positions of other parts of the population are not harmed”. The law of regulation, which was denied by the Attorney General, was far from fulfilling this condition, but the government continues to act, and in June the preliminary draft for the completely discriminatory law of ‘the status of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency’ passed: Land in occupied territories will be managed by the Settlement Division and no payment will be made for rural land on which the houses of the settlements in Judea and Samaria were built from 1967 until now. That is, erase past debts of hundreds of millions of shekels, which will be taken from the public coffers.

These biased interpretations, which ignore the clear conditions set forth in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, critically injure the Zionist narrative and the foundations of Zionism, as Menachem Begin said in 1972: “Zionism ... its foundations in the Land of Israel are ... that there will be a Jewish majority, an Arab minority and equality for all. We did not deviate from this Torah, and we will not deviate from it, in which the justice of our case is folded”. The desire to expand the State of Israel into the entire Mandatory territory of the Land of Israel, without preserving the democratic police and its Jewish majority, ignores these principles and international conditions, whose realization justifies the unique process of the establishment of the State of Israel.

The Palestinian narrative sees the Balfour Declaration as “a declaration that cannot be forgotten and is not something to be celebrated,

especially when one nation experiences suffering and ongoing injustice. The establishment of a national home for one people has resulted in the dispossession and continued persecution of the other people”, as Mahmoud Abbas wrote last year in *The Guardian*. The Netanyahu government will turn this narrative into a historical truth with its own hands.

In order to ensure the validity and moral character of the Balfour Declaration, Israel must make a U-turn from the policy of annexation and return to the idea of two states for two peoples. The past 101 years have turned the Zionist vision of a democratic state with a Jewish majority into an existing fact. Now we must take the additional step to a solution based on a historic compromise that does not cancel the Balfour Declaration. As Abbas went on to write in the *Guardian*: “The celebrations should wait for the day when everyone who lives on this land will enjoy freedom, honor and equality. The physical act of signing the Balfour Declaration was in the past, and it cannot be changed. But it can be fixed. It requires humility and courage. This will require dealing with the past, recognizing the mistakes made, and taking concrete steps to correct these mistakes. This is the time ... concrete steps that will bring an end to the occupation on the basis of international law and international resolutions ... recognizing the state of Palestine within the ‘67 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital, may bring about the fulfillment of the political rights of the Palestinian people”.

Another Step Toward the Annexation of the West Bank – Haaretz, January 17, 2019

The opening of the new road northeast of Jerusalem between Hizma and Zayem, which features separate lanes for Israelis and Palestinians, was greeted with almost total silence by the Israeli media, even though the road illustrates the government's wanton spending in the West Bank and the Netanyahu government's policy of pushing for annexation.

The road was planned as part of Jerusalem's eastern ring road, but only this 3.7-kilometer section of the planned 15-kilometer road has been built, due to a February 2005 decision by the Ariel Sharon government to include the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim on the Israeli side of the separation barrier. From the end of 2000, Palestinians have been banned from entering Israel, including Jerusalem - leaving the only link between Ramallah and Bethlehem along roads that crossed the area of Ma'aleh Adumim. Without a road connecting Ramallah and Bethlehem that was open to Palestinian traffic, the separation barrier would have blocked these routes and divided the West Bank in two.

The Sharon and Ehud Olmert governments rushed to build the road to create a travel alternative for the Palestinians – one that would meet the High Court of Justice's test of proportionality – at a cost of 120 million NIS (33 million dollars), and it was completed in November 2007. But the road remained closed, due to the delays in the construction of the separation barrier and the road's checkpoint, which the police and the army could not agree on as each wanted the other to take responsibility for it, plus the fact that it affected only Palestinians, who would have to extend their travel time due to this road. The investment was abandoned for a decade to the forces of nature, which meant the state had to invest tens of millions of shekels more to repair the road that was never used.

Building the road was also meant to pave the way for the construction of the Mevasseret Adumim neighborhood, also known as E1, which was planned to create a continuum of Jewish construction between Ma'aleh Adumim and the capital. But the E1 plan raised the ire of George W. Bush's administration, given Palestinians claim that Israeli construction in E1 would partly cut off the northern West Bank from the southern part and make it more difficult to create a contiguous Palestinian state. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon promised that the neighborhood would not be built unless mutually agreed upon. Sharon kept his promise, but that didn't stop him from going forward with the enormous infrastructure plans for E1. Israeli governments invested a quarter-billion shekels in building infrastructure for a neighborhood that doesn't have a single home. Since

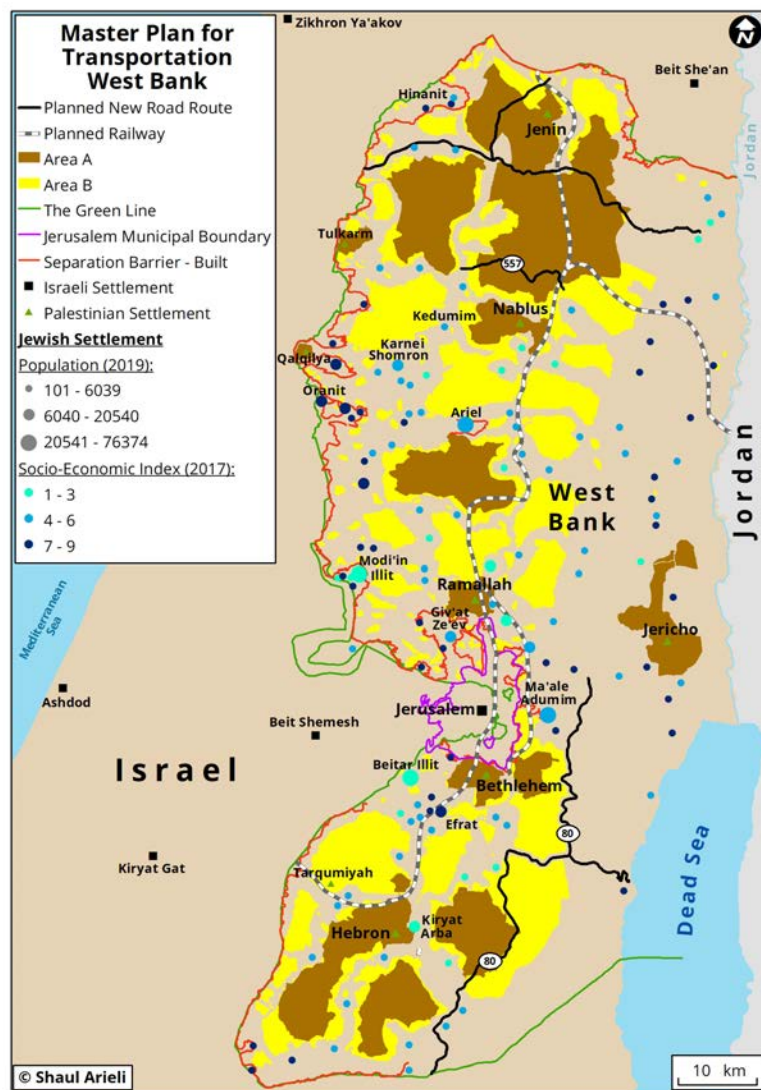
the infrastructure was completed, Netanyahu's governments have spent tens of millions of shekels maintaining them.

Indeed, the road that was opened will considerably shorten the travel time for Palestinians between Bethlehem and Ramallah and will even improve the safety of their journey. It will substantially improve access to Jerusalem from the Mateh Binyamin settlements. It may even lead to the removal of the A-Zaim checkpoint, which slows the traffic from Ma'aleh Adumim into Jerusalem.

However, there is no truth to the declarations by Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz that the road will bring a "strengthening of metropolitan Jerusalem". Apparently, the minister chose to ignore that in metropolitan Jerusalem, between Nablus and Hebron, 90 percent of the people are Palestinians who aren't allowed to enter Jerusalem.

This road is also a major step toward realizing the proposals made by members of the Knesset Land of Israel Caucus to annex the Ma'aleh Adumim district, which have the support of many ministers, most prominently Education Minister Naftali Bennett and Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked.

Given the absence of American responsibility and the weakness of the European Union, the opening of the road may encourage the right-wing government to move from "creeping annexation" to actual annexation by passing the proposed Ma'aleh Adumim annexation bill. This move, which would violate the fragile status quo, could never be accepted by the Palestinian Authority, even under the moderate and nonviolent policy of PA President Mahmoud Abbas. Abbas will not be able to withstand the pressure that will come from "the street," from the Tanzim, from the ranks of Fatah, from the various fronts in the PLO and Hamas. Israel could expect serious political, security, economic and legal repercussions. But Bennett, Shaked and their colleagues believe that none of this will happen, because the world will remain indifferent, or because it needs Waze and cherry tomatoes.



Annexing the Jordan Valley Doesn't Make Security Sense - Haaretz, October 4, 2019

The 1994 peace treaty between Israel and Jordan included two clauses whose security importance is as great and perhaps greater than the demilitarization of the Sinai Peninsula in the peace treaty with Egypt. These clauses turn Kahol Lavan chairman MK Benny Gantz's intention and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's demand to annex the Jordan Valley to Israel into a tasteless joke showing a lack of national responsibility.

The first, Clause 4 of the fourth article, prohibits Jordan and Israel from signing military agreements with states or organizations hostile to the other party, or "allowing the entry, stationing and operating on their territory, or through it, of military forces ... in circumstances which may adversely prejudice the security of the other Party". In other words, based on the working assumption that the Jordanian army intends to or can threaten Israel, Israel's real security boundary is not the Jordan River, but Jordan's border with Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia, which are hundreds of kilometers away from Israel's population centers. This clause gives Israel greater strategic depth than what the Zionist Movement ever sought in any demand since the 1919 Versailles peace conference.

The security buffer on the eastern slopes of Samaria and the Jordan Valley was born out of Israeli fear after the Six-Day War of a ground invasion along the "potential eastern front" by the armies of Jordan, Syria and Iraq. This front eventually faded, beginning with the destruction of the surface-to-air missiles in Lebanon's Beka'a Valley and the downing of 86 Syrian aircraft in the First Lebanon War, through the cessation of free weapons shipments from Russia to Syria due to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1988, the peace treaty with Jordan in 1994 and the conquest of Iraq in 2003, and ending with the civil war in Syria since 2011.

Any rookie intelligence officer knows that Iran cannot and does not intend to send armored forces toward Israel, which would require crossing 1,500 kilometers of the Arabian Desert, exposed to the Israel Air Force, in an entirely Sunni area. And yet it turns out that in Israel, where half its teachers do not know what countries it shares borders with (according to a 2015 Gal Institute survey) and around a third of its students do not know what the capital of Syria is (based on a 2003 survey of junior high schools in Jerusalem), propaganda films can be successfully released portraying the Jordan Valley as a natural barrier to tanks from the east.

The threat against Israel is indeed framed currently as infiltration and a

trickling of terror from Jordan through the Jordan Valley to the future Palestinian state and from there on to Israel. This threat, too, has been met with very worthy responses, as elucidated in the second significant clause of the peace treaty with Jordan. To wit, Clause 5 of the peace treaty's article on security states: "Both Parties will take necessary and effective measures and will co-operate in combating terrorism of all kinds. The Parties undertake: to take necessary and effective measures to prevent acts of terrorism, subversion or violence from being carried out from their territory or through it and to take necessary and effective measures to combat such activities and all their perpetrators".

Brigade commanders in the Jordan Valley and chiefs of the Central Command will attest that the Jordanian army, deployed east of the Jordan River, is doing its work more than faithfully. This success has allowed and continues to allow Israel to enjoy a stable and calm border and to significantly limit the numbers of its troops along the border. Second, in the framework of negotiations between Israel and the PLO, the latter agreed that Israel could leave a military presence in the Jordan Valley for a few years, to allow, among other things, Palestinian security forces to organize throughout the West Bank after the IDF withdrawal and the evacuation of settlers as part of a permanent agreement. Thereafter, the Palestinians agreed that there be permanent third-party forces. Mahmoud Abbas proposed that armed American forces, acceptable to Israel, ensure the demilitarization of the Palestinian state and supervise its entry points.

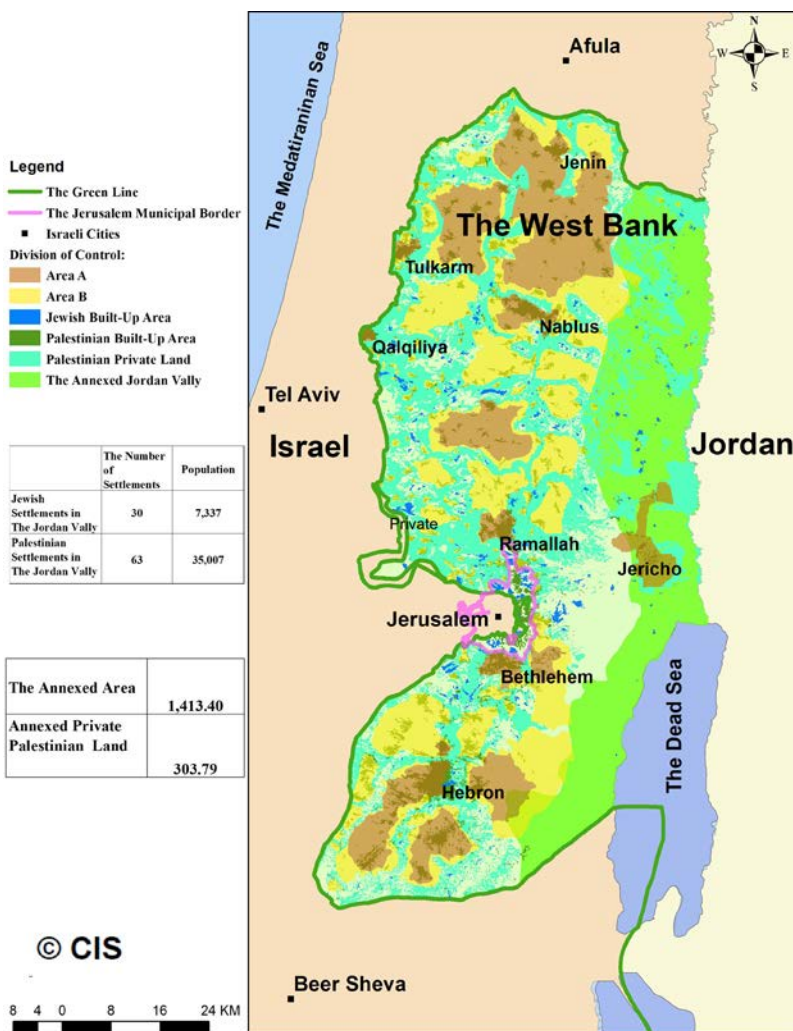
The claim that the Hashemite Kingdom's days are numbered has been heard for decades. Yigal Alon, who proposed immediately after the Six-Day War to establish a Palestinian state in the West Bank, ruled out talks with King Hussein because "Hussein shouldn't be seen as eternal... today it's Hussein, tomorrow [Jordanian leftist and former Prime Minister Suleiman] Nabulsi and the day after tomorrow some Syrian who will take them over." The lack of stability, as we see it in Syria, or we saw in the rapid regime changes in Egypt in 2012 with the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, is a very reasonable risk that is preferable to canceling the peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan – if Netanyahu makes good on his pledge to annex the Jordan Valley unilaterally.

Gantz should also know that the Palestinians don't want to and cannot give up the border with Jordan; they can't give up 30 percent of the West Bank for nothing in return, and they intend to settle in the Jordan Valley the few refugees who will return to the Palestinian state as part of a permanent agreement. He must work to reduce the pressure expected to be placed on the king, the public and Jordanian parliament against

the continued normalization and security cooperation Jordan maintains with Israel in the face of the lack of progress on the Palestinian track. He must work to stop calls in the Knesset and the government to see Jordan as the "Palestinian homeland," to give Jordanian citizenship to residents of the West Bank and even to expel masses of Palestinians in the heat of the next war – calls that are perceived in Jordan as a blow against the peace treaty and a threat to its future, because it will undermine the stability of the kingdom and its fragile economy.

And a word on the clause in the treaty relating to Moshav Tzofar in the Arava. Israel's conduct with regard to Jordanian land that Israel stole from Jordan, and yet has been allowed to farm without payment for 25 more years, shows lack of respect for the generosity toward it at the time demonstrated by King Hussein. How can a country as rich and powerful as Israel not have found an alternative to the 2,000 dunams (494 acres) cultivated by the members of Moshav Tzofar? It should suffice itself with adopting the method by which, in the 1960s, it moved 60 tons of soil from Jordan to Israel illegally in trucks, and move land from northern Israel to the moshav, which lies within Israel's international borders. How are the Palestinians supposed to approach ideas of temporarily leasing land that Israel proposed as part of a permanent agreement if Israel assumes that such leases are meant to last forever?

Without renewing negotiations with the Palestinians based on the parameters set by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Abbas in 2008 in the Annapolis talks, canceling the peace treaty with Jordan, which is good for Israel (and on some issues good for Jordan, too), could turn into the worst step in the parade of stupidity of Netanyahu and his successors with regard to Israel's security and integration into the region.



When Annexation Snowballs It Will Lead to Disaster - Israel Policy Forum - April 28, 2020

The Netanyahu-Gantz government, in coordination with the United States, intends to begin moves towards annexation this summer. This is a dramatic change from Israeli government policy since 1967. What should we expect? What are the possible consequences and effects?

The current government has operated so far within the format of creeping annexation, which is reflected by expanding Jewish settlements (in accordance to Israeli law and in conflict with it), by using the separation fence to create de facto annexation, by building in the Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, by paving national roads, by restricting Palestinian development and demolishing illegal homes in Area C, and by deepening the distinction between Jewish and Palestinian residents by several legislative measures.

Annexation legislation would indicate that the Israeli government intends to move to de jure annexation. As Minister Naftali Bennett said to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 2016: "On the subject of Israel, we need to move from containment to decision. We need to mark the dream, and the dream is that Judea and Samaria will be part of the sovereign land of Israel."

Eliminating the feasibility of a two-state solution by limited annexation measures and exploiting the perceived ability to flex political muscle—the unprecedented support from the Trump administration, the EU's weakness, the UN's weakness, the wars in the Arab world and more—are the passion of many in the current government. For them, this is removing an existential threat to the State of Israel, but so far, they have hesitated to take an operational step because of the threat that annexation of Area C, or parts of it, could escalate. An escalation may necessitate the re-establishment of a military government in Territories A and B, and perhaps their annexation.

Today, however, they are seeking to gamble and risk what is needed to drive forward annexation processes, in part for the fulfillment of their messianic-nationalist beliefs. Those who support annexation tend to underestimate the potential threats to Israel that will follow these moves, causing them not to shy away from changing the current situation to achieve this goal. This is despite the fact that there has been no professional, in-depth examination on annexation and all of its facets.

The annexation of Area C, or parts of it, and the annexation of the entire West Bank, should be seen as one process: its beginning is the turning

point in government policy, which can be decided by the Prime Minister and the Ministerial Committee on Legislation to bring one of the related bills to the Knesset for approval. The first stage of the process must be understood as the approval of the law in the Knesset.

It is difficult to estimate exactly what the reactions to annexation will be. It is impossible to know how severe they will be and how long they will last, so their impact on the parties' positions and the process of development cannot be assessed. However, it should be noted that the reactions may be softened by the overlapping interests of Israel and the US (especially if Donald Trump is elected for a second term), Arab states and other parties involved in deployment towards Iran, and Turkey and the movements of extremist political Islam. In the shadow of the Corona epidemic, common economic interests, instability in Europe due to an increase in the power of extremist Islamic movements and nationalist parties, or the mobilization of the Jewish lobby in the United States may moderate or even erode the reactions.

We are expected to see gradual annexation of Area C, which will undermine stability and substantially alter the existing situation. The point of change—the watershed moment of the process—is the dismantling or collapse of the PA following the annexation process. Such a result would require Israel, for security, economic and legal reasons, to be held accountable to Areas A and B and their Palestinian residents. In the first phase, this will be renewing the military administration, which will involve a hostile take-over of the West Bank, and then, if the situation deteriorates and given certain conditions, annexing the entire West Bank.

It is difficult to accurately estimate what will cause the snowball to grow and to precipitate a watershed moment, but it is possible to name a number of moderating principles: the risk of crossing the watershed decreases as the scope of annexation decreases, such as annexation of one or two settlement blocks at most. It will also help if the area to be annexed is within the territories offered by the Palestinians for land swaps, as well as if it is close to the Green Line and west of the security fence. Another important principle is that Palestinian localities or residents will not be annexed, and finally, that the fabric of Palestinian life will not be harmed substantially with no alternatives. But the Netanyahu-Gantz government seems to be doing the exact opposite.

The government could take compensatory measures to soften the response to the move, especially the Palestinian response. For example, in the first stage, it is possible to transfer authority in Area C in spaces connecting the isolated Palestinian communities to the Palestinian

Authority. As for the built-up areas of the Palestinian localities that have overflowed from Areas A and B into Area C, it can be assumed that they will not be annexed to Israel and that like Area B, control will be transferred to the Palestinian Authority. It is also possible to ensure the construction of a transportation infrastructure to ensure territorial and movement continuity for Palestinians. The Netanyahu government does not intend to do so, and it would not be possible to enact this by the summer.

If the PA collapses, Israel will work to establish governing alternatives for managing Palestinian lives in Areas A and B. But the success of such a move depends, among other things, on the willingness to cooperate with the Palestinians, and on the level and effectiveness of the pressure (including violence) that will undoubtedly be triggered by these governing alternatives. In such a case, united leadership of all Palestinian organizations in the West Bank and Gaza, with emphasis on Fatah and Hamas, will probably be established, and much will depend on its policy and early preparedness to provide basic services to the population, without Israeli involvement, for a relatively long period of time (many months). The chances of this succeeding are low to zero.

Israel will do everything in its power to avoid the application of Israeli law to the entire West Bank, but some cumulative conditions could force it to take this very fateful historical step: governmental chaos, a fundamental change in the Palestinian position (presented by a united leadership or an expat government) that would give up the two-state solution. And a demand for full equality of rights in one country; Arab and international support for the new Palestinian position, pressure from interested political parties in Israel and passivity from the Israeli public. The feasibility of accumulating all of the necessary conditions for annexing the entire West Bank is very low, making this scenario unlikely, but still possible.

In the case of annexation of the entire West Bank, substantial questions will arise regarding the identity and rule of the one state. Initially, the Israeli government may face practical questions such as the application of Absentee Property Law, requests by Palestinians for citizenship, comparing services according to the model in East Jerusalem. But later, the state will not be able to avoid questions about the composition of the security arms in general and the IDF in particular, the future of the Palestinian refugees, the applicability of the Law of Return and more.

Therefore, in a situation in which the PA has collapsed, given a reality which requires decisions by the state regarding the transition between the stages of annexation and the absence of the necessary conditions

outlined above, we foresee Israel's attempt to turn back the wheel. It will be an effort that involves making concessions that are more noticeable as the process progresses.

The historical experience of the 25 years of the Oslo process, and even of the first intifada, shows that in every violent escalation, Israel chose one of three options to exit the crisis: renewing negotiations and even signing an agreement (the Oslo Accord following the First Intifada, the Hebron Protocol following the events of the Western Wall tunnel); Establishing an international framework for continuing the political process (the Roadmap, Sharm el-Shaikh Summit, Annapolis Conference); And a unilateral move (disengagement and construction of the security fence).

The first option is to resume negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians on the existing parameters. However, it is possible that a Palestinian position may be much stricter than today's position on the four core issues (borders, security, Jerusalem, and refugees), as well as the future of the Jewish settlements. This could likely be a position that no Israeli government could accept, even one that supports the two-state solution in the accepted parameters. This insight must be present with the opposition leaders in Israel as they formulate their stance on any annexation process, however small.

The second option is that Israel would like to launch a new three-step roadmap that aligns with the US, the EU and the Arab Quartet (Egypt, Jordan, UAE, and Saudi Arabia), even if it is necessary, to represent the expatriate Palestinian leadership. The first phase can contain a plan to assemble at various levels (which may also be carried out in a unilateral Israeli move, if the entire outline is not reached), recognition of Palestine on temporary borders and the renegotiation of the final status agreement, and the second stage— signing a permanent agreement with regional involvement. In the third stage, a gradual application, conditional on the Arab and international involvement in the Permanent Agreement.

It seems that the only practical benefit of applying Israeli law to territories in the West Bank is the ability of the government to promote the expansion of the settlement enterprise under Israeli law, which allows the High Court and the restrictive occupation law to be circumvented—the regulation law and overriding clauses. For Israel, the possibility will open to expropriate large-scale territories and promote construction for Jews in the West Bank, as was done in annexed East Jerusalem after the Six Day War.

However, it may turn out that this advantage will be negated completely, given the Israeli immigration trend to the Occupied Territories, which is steadily declining. In addition, the international community will continue to see this as occupied territory in the West Bank, to which all relevant international conventions apply. Effective dismissal of the two-state idea is possible only by establishing one consensual state, which is in complete contradiction to the Zionist vision of a democratic state of the Jewish people, and which also contradicts Israel's interests.

Therefore, annexing Area C or substantial parts of it would be a dramatic step and potentially a change in the reality that would occur outside of the existing agreement framework which has regulated relations between the parties since 1993. Basically, the annexation process will hit hard at the balance that exists in the current situation and may move us from the fragile equilibrium to a different reality. This new reality will be much more threatening for Israel than the existing one, something which could deteriorate to the point of annexing the entire West Bank, despite Israel's wishes.

We can expect Israel to be rocked by very negative developments in the fields of security, economy, political relations, legal systems, and internal social threats, which will cast a heavy shadow on Israel's image and status in the family of nations. The more severe these developments are and the longer they continue, the more difficult it will be for Israel to put the genie back in the bottle, and it may find itself collapsing and giving rise to a different state from the state that began the annexation process in its composition, economy, status, and rule.

How will the current state of Israel collapse? The first option is the gradual establishment of a bi-national state, which will pose substantial questions about the identity and rule of one state. This means that millions of Palestinians will become citizens of Israel with equal rights at the end of the process, including the right to vote and be elected to the Knesset. It would be a different state from Israel established in 1948 by the founding fathers. The opposition to this will be so great that it can be determined with certainty that the Jewish public will not allow it.

The second option is to create two civilian classes—Jews and Arabs. This will, of course, be accompanied by efforts to endorse, falsify and conceal: It will be said that it is only for a transitional period that the Palestinians will be given the opportunity to obtain political rights if they swear allegiance to the state and agree to additional terms. The Palestinians will reject such conditions outright, thereby allowing Israel to justify political discrimination. But such conditions will also be rejected in the enlightened world, and Israel will be rightly labeled as an apartheid

state. The crisis will also cause a rift with diaspora Jewry and within Israeli society itself. Therefore, the chance of realizing this possibility is relatively low.

There is a third option. Following the security crisis created by the annexation, there will be a new wave of violence, involving not only the Palestinians but their supporters in the Arab and Muslim world, and in the storm of fighting, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians will be deported west of Jordan and possibly even of Israel to the east of the border.

What happened in the War of Independence and went without a global shock (though it created the refugee problem), and what happened for the second time in the Six Day War with almost no response (creating the issue of displaced persons), is likely to happen again. But this time Israel will rightly be accused of ethnic cleansing and will be treated as a leper state.

This new understanding of annexation, if promoted by legislative steps, could dramatically change the perception of the Zionist movement and the Israeli government, because of the necessary decision they will have made about the 100-year conflict between the three major goals of Zionism: to be a democratic state, with a Jewish majority, in all its territory in the land of Israel.

Due to the fact that for most of the conflict there was a non-Jewish majority living here, which was internationally recognized for its right to self-determination in the country, the Zionist leadership was forced to decide and choose two of the three national goals, and its choice to date has always been a democratic state with a Jewish majority in the Land of Israel.

In the process of annexing the North, there was a change in the order of priorities, to favor all land of Israel in the mandate, at the expense of democratic rule of the State of Israel in the first stage—and if the process continues, it will come at the expense of a Jewish state in the long run.

The cost of annexation is far greater than its usefulness, because any small process of annexation can evolve and bring about the need to annex the entire West Bank. The application of Israeli law in the West Bank will be rejected in the international community, including the United States, which will continue to regard it as an occupied territory whose Palestinian residents are protected under the Hague Convention and the Fourth Geneva Convention, and are entitled to self-determination in an independent Palestinian state whose capital is in East Jerusalem.

The expected implications in the political sphere can be summed up in violation of the peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt, the loss of the potential for regional alliances with the Arab states to curb the Iranian axis, an increase in the involvement of Russia, Iran and Turkey in the region, damage in relations with European countries, and also with other American governments—even in the good, strategic relationship with the United States.

In the diplomatic field, Israel is expected to enter into a fierce armed conflict with the Palestinians, and for their part, they are expected to push for joint leadership, abolishing security coordination, returning to armed struggle and intensifying their struggle on the international level. Existing security coordination with Jordan and Egypt will also be harmed, and the buds of cooperation with the Arab world will wilt away before they bloom. In the economic sphere, Israel will be pushed out of the OECD, which will dramatically damage the public services to the Israeli citizen, with emphasis on welfare, health and education. Israel could be swept up in a civil war, and in the end, a different country from the one that entered it might emerge.

This will be the Heavy Price of Annexation for the Israelis – Haaretz, May 22, 2020

With the government established and the subsiding coronavirus epidemic, and against the backdrop of U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's visit and the threats of the European Union, the issue of annexation has again been proudly hailed as the flagship of the new government. Most of the public, which may not know the practical implications of unilateral annexation on our daily lives, is not aware of the threats embedded in such a move, including destabilization and the almost certain escalation in Israeli-Palestinian hostilities.

More than 60 bills and plans for annexing territory in Area C have been brought before the Knesset since 2016, but only three of these included a map. I wish to analyze and assess Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plan to annex the Jordan Valley, which is based on U.S. President Donald Trump's plan. According to the map presented by Netanyahu, he intends to annex 1,200 square kilometers (463 square miles), which is 20.5 percent of the West Bank's area. What are the ramifications of this move for people's daily lives?

First, 23 percent of the area to be annexed, almost 70,000 acres, is privately owned Palestinian land. If Israel does not amend its laws regarding the property of "absentee" landowners, all of these Palestinians will lose their land, which will gradually be transferred to Israeli settlements. If Israel amends this law, as it did regarding East Jerusalem, it will still be able to expropriate land for "public use", which in this case will be exclusively the Jewish public. This is what happened in East Jerusalem, where the state confiscated around 7,000 acres, mostly under Arab ownership, and on this land built 60,000 housing units for Jews and only 1,000 units for Arabs.

Until the dispossession is enacted, Israel will have to give the Palestinian owners access so they can continue to cultivate their land, as is currently happening along the "seam" between East and West Jerusalem. This will be done by using dozens of gates; soldiers will be deployed to operate them.

For the sake of comparison, the land under private Palestinian ownership in the Jordan Valley is 7 times larger than all the private lands situated to the west of the separation barrier, which also relies on such gates. The Israeli Defense Force is already not excelling when it comes to responding to problems that require using these gates, despite all affidavits submitted to the high court of justice. A Palestinian battle over these lands will begin.

Furthermore, the map shows 12 Palestinian villages with 13,500 inhabitants in Area B, living on 1,050 acres. These will be annexed to Israel. The Palestinian Authority will instantly lose its authority and responsibility for these villages, and all the authority it received in the Oslo Accords will be assumed by Israel.

Israel will have to give these people resident status, as it gives Palestinians in East Jerusalem, followed by citizenship. It will need to provide all services for the villages as well. Israel is not prepared for this at this point. Another Palestinian battle over municipal services and transfers from the National Insurance Institute will commence. Thirdly, the area of Jericho (currently in Area A) and its environs will become a Palestinian enclave surrounded by an area that is under Israeli sovereignty. This enclave will cover 17,300 acres, on which 43,000 Palestinians live in six different communities. Every exit from and entry to the enclave will require passing through Israeli checkpoints, and people crossing through Israeli territory will be accompanied. Jericho, a tourist center and the West Bank's main area for growing dates, will in practice be cut off from the rest of the West Bank and will quickly decline economically. A Palestinian battle over livelihood will begin.

Fourthly, the annexation will add a new 124-mile-long border between the Jordan Valley and the rest of the West Bank. This is as long as Israel's border with Egypt. To these another 37 miles of border around the Jericho enclave will be added – almost the length of Israel's border with the Gaza Strip. In the absence of a fence, a chase after terrorists and illegal residents will begin.

A further point is that the annexed area is traversed by two main north-to-south routes – Highway 90 in the valley and Highway 80 (the Alon Road) – as well as by an east-to-west route, Highway 1, in its eastern-most stretch. All these will be removed from the Palestinian transportation network, which, in the absence of alternate routes, will be concentrated on Highway 60, on the ridge and its western slopes. A Palestinian battle over freedom of movement will commence.

Furthermore, West Bank residents traveling to Jordan, if allowed by the kingdom, will pass through territory under Israel's sovereignty, with all the security implications this has. Moreover, the Dead Sea, the cliffs along its coastline and the Ein Feshkha (Einot Tzukim) nature reserve will be removed from areas accessible by Palestinians for recreation and tourism. Their battle for some air to breathe will begin.

Where does Netanyahu and his associates' eagerness to annex come from? All the reasons they give are but pretexts that are ungrounded.

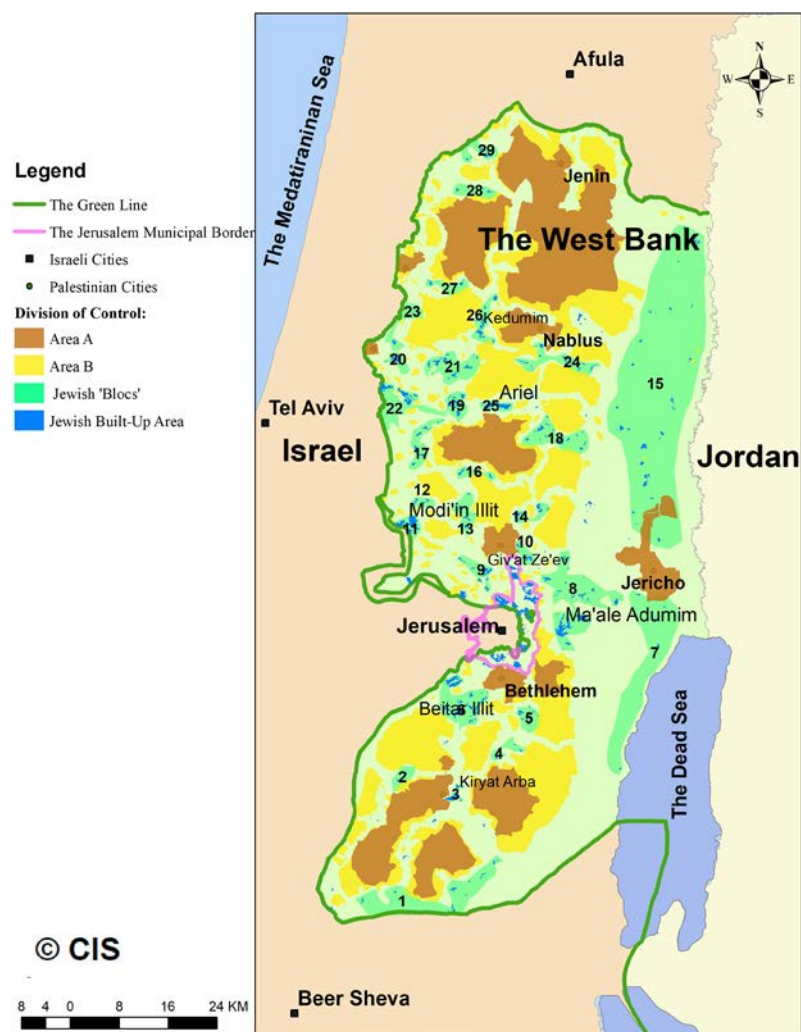
There has been no change in the security threat on our eastern border. Jordan is meticulously abiding by the peace treaty with Israel, continuing to provide Israel with quiet along the border, as well as strategic depth up to the Iraqi border. Syria and Iraq, which are contending with the results of the civil war, lack a significant military capability that threatens Israel, and they are not expected to have one in the short and mid-term range. The Palestinians are rigorously implementing security coordination with Israel.

There are 28 tiny settlements in the area to be annexed, home to 13,600 settlers. Their built-up area is very small, and they cultivate less than 20,000 acres, which they don't own. The average age is high because residents there are part of the first wave of settlement in the West Bank, arriving in the first decade that followed the Six-Day War. Surveys show that this population would prefer to leave if a peace deal were signed, in exchange for fair compensation, to the dismay of the head of the area's regional council, who is also the head of Yesha, the Judea and Samaria Regional Council. Annexation won't change their situation, except in terms of planning and construction. But so far, this is not what has stopped the growth of Jewish population in the Jordan Valley, which for 50 years has not numbered more than a few thousand residents.

The burden on the IDF will grow substantially and unjustifiably. The army will have to add substantial forces to secure borders and crossings between the valley and the rest of the West Bank, and around the Jericho enclave. It will have to accompany Palestinians entering Israel, operate gates to agricultural land and secure the border with Jordan due to a destabilization in relations with the kingdom.

The aim of those wishing to annex is clear. It is to annul the Oslo Accords and to foil any chance for a two-state solution for two peoples, in violation of international law and of treaties Israel has signed. It's obvious that their wish is to displace the Palestinians eastward to Jordan at an opportune moment and fulfill their messianic ultra-nationalist dreams. In the words of Naftali Bennett, the aim is "to make Judea and Samaria part of sovereign Israel".

The price Israel will have to pay in the short term for this messianic adventure, which is feeding on a sense of intoxication with power, will be intolerable for Israeli society. In the long run it will destroy the Zionist vision. The U.S. will lose the pillar supporting its Middle Eastern policy – stability, based on peace accords Israel signed with Egypt and with Jordan.



West Bank Annexation is Doomed to Fail. Just Look What Happened in East Jerusalem – Haaretz, June 5, 2020

One of the arguments made by those who support annexation and dismiss the idea of a final status accord is: “We annexed East Jerusalem and the world said nothing.” Some persist in praising the achievements of the annexation, citing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s remarks on Jerusalem Day 2015: “Our capital Jerusalem has been reunited.... Its division caused it to wither; its unification led it to prosper”.

After all the celebrating of Jerusalem’s “unification” and “prosperity”, the question must be asked: Was the annexation of East Jerusalem such a big success that it means we should take the risk involved in annexing territory in the West Bank? Or, as indicated by recently published statistics from the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, does Netanyahu’s proclamation reflect a false reality?

More importantly, perhaps, Jerusalem’s development and the city’s demographic and economic trends can tell us something about what Israel can expect should Netanyahu’s promise “to gradually apply Israeli sovereignty to parts of Judea and Samaria” be fulfilled, ultimately leading to annexation of the entire West Bank and to one state.

After the Six-Day War, the Levi Eshkol government chose not to suffice with the unification of the city that had been partitioned in 1949, but to add to the six square kilometers of East Jerusalem another 64 square kilometers that encompassed more than 20 Palestinian villages that had never been part of Jerusalem. This was in line with the explanation offered by Rehavam Ze’evi, head of the ministerial committee on expanding Jerusalem’s borders, to Justice Minister Ya’akov Shimshon Shapira, about the proposed annexation in 1967: “Adding extensive territory to be included in Jerusalem will enable its expansion ... into a metropolis.”

This was the opening shot in the process of transforming the Hebrew city, which had doubled its population within 19 years and had a 99-percent Jewish majority, into a city with an Arab minority comprising 26 percent (70,000 people) of the population that has since grown to nearly 40 percent (350,000) and is on track to become a majority 15 years from now. Some dismiss this concern by citing the decline in the fertility rate for Muslim women in the past 20 years from 4.5 children to 3.2 children, while the fertility rate for Jewish women has risen from 3.8 children to 4.4 children. But they fail to consider that, since 1992, “united” Jerusalem has seen a negative migration rate of 6,000-8,000 Jews per year. And 44 percent of those who have recently left the city are young people aged 20 to 34.

Most of the Palestinian residents of Jerusalem do not exercise their right

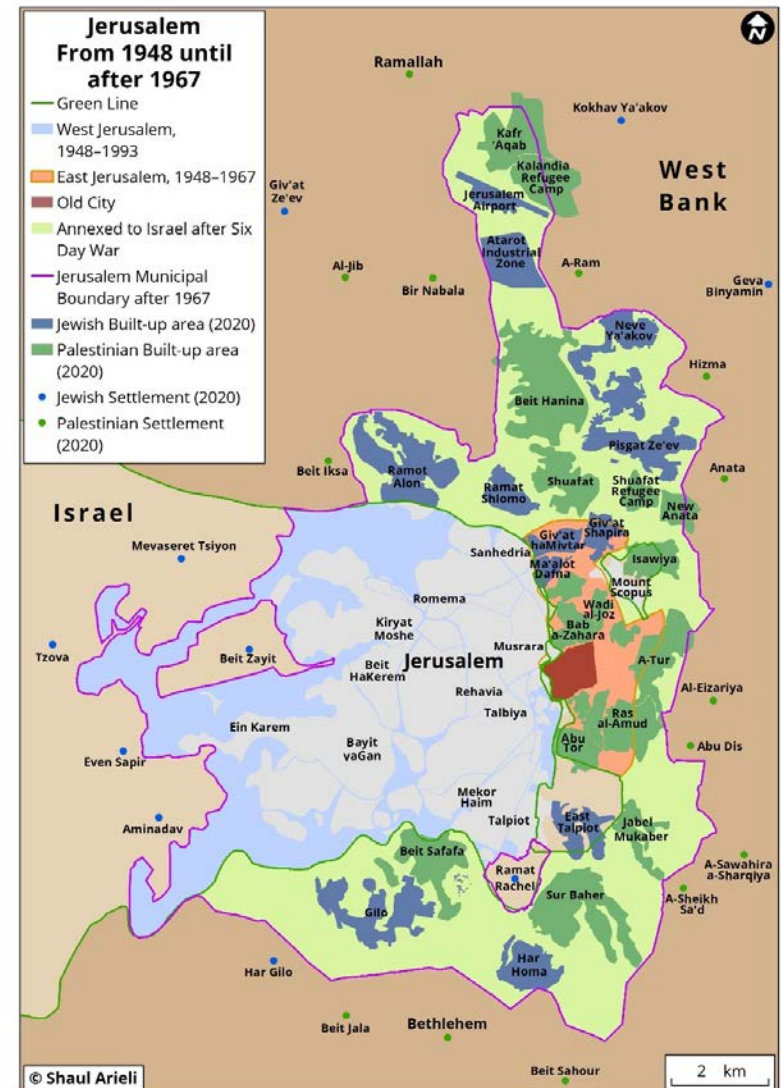
to vote in municipal elections and boycott them instead (the voting rate is less than 2 percent). Israel is trying to prevent a situation in which those who are interested in obtaining Israeli citizenship could participate in general elections – by rejecting their applications for citizenship. In 2019, there was a big jump in the number of citizenship applications that were approved, from an average of 300 a year to 1,200, but this was offset by a similar leap in the number of rejected applications – from a yearly average of 300 to 1,400. Only 20,000 Palestinians in Jerusalem hold Israeli citizenship.

Inside the Green Line (and with East Jerusalem), Israel has a solid Jewish majority of 79 percent. Any Jewish migration to the West Bank (though the Central Bureau of Statistics does not foresee any increase here) will not change the fact that, within the territory of what was Mandatory Palestine, there is a non-Jewish majority. If Israel annexes the West Bank (and later, possibly, Gaza), it would have to make one of two choices: to be a “dictatorship of the minority,” as David Ben-Gurion described the apartheid regime in 1949, or to become a democratic Arab state with a Jewish minority.

The two economically weakest groups in Israel, Arabs and Haredim, have gradually made Jerusalem the country’s largest impoverished city. The rate of participation in the workforce in Jerusalem is just 68 percent, compared to the national average of 81 percent. The average monthly wage in Jerusalem is 8,700 shekels (\$2,500), while the national average stands at 10,600 shekels. According to the CBS, the city is ranked at the second to-lowest socioeconomic level, and is among the 50 least livable cities, along with Bnei Brak and Jisr al-Zarqa.

The same would hold true if there is a one-state solution. Israel, a developed country, would have to absorb a population that lives at a Third World level. The difference in per capita GDP – \$45,000 versus \$3,500 – practically says it all. The annexed territories would most likely also suffer from the same kind of discriminatory policy that has been the lot of East Jerusalem, as Teddy Kollek admitted in a 1990 interview in Ma’ariv: “We said again and again that we would equalize the Arabs’ rights with the Jews’ rights in the city. It was empty talk. ... They were and they remain second and third-class citizens. ... For Jewish Jerusalem, I did something in the last 25 years. For East Jerusalem? Nothing!” To which Ehud Olmert added in 2012: “No Israeli government since ’67 has done even the slightest bit of what is needed in order to actually unify the city ... including the government that I headed”. And last month, when current Jerusalem Mayor Moshe Leon talked about upcoming development for Jerusalem, the Arab neighborhoods were hardly mentioned.

We must avoid having Israel's fate mirror that of a Jerusalem and not turn it into an impoverished country, beset by tensions and violence, with an Arab majority, and one that will become a pariah state due to the apartheid regime it will impose on the homeland of the two peoples, as it did in the capital.



A Journey to the Land of Annexation – On the Left Side Magazine, June 27, 2020

Surveys by the Institute for National Security Studies show two amazing phenomena: (1) 55% of the Jewish public still support the two-state solution. (2) 74% of Jews do not believe that there is a partner on the other side... and you find the same results in Palestinian society... I am concerned by two very difficult insights that emerge from these surveys: (1) that the majority of the public opposes unilateral annexation, but if annexation occurs, 78% of the Jewish public would rather have apartheid than give the Palestinians citizenship (2) Support for a two-state solution increases with age. At the age of 15-25, support for a two-state solution is nil. Why? Because this is Bibi's last decade. In this decade, that's all they've heard.

Israelis, as a rule, do not know what has been to date in negotiations with the Palestinians, and that there were negotiations in which maps were presented by both sides. When I show Israelis the Palestinian map of Annapolis in 2008 and the Israeli map, and show them how small the differences are, the people are shocked. And so they tell me, "But Olmert offered Abu Mazen, and Abu Mazen said no". And I answer: "I know that Abu Mazen offered Olmert an amazing package, and Olmert said no". To that they tell me: "that cannot be..."

In the Annapolis negotiations there was a Palestinian proposal and there was an Israeli proposal, the distance between them was very small, and each side did not accept the other party's proposals. And that's okay. Olmert himself says: "Even if you are told 1,000 times that the Palestinians rejected our proposals, it is simply not true". And Olmert is exceptionally brave on this matter.

I am talking about those who talk about the fact that "there is no partner", or about those who talk about the Jordan Valley as Israel's security border. With those I often manage to turn people's opinions, because they are with me on the intelligent, factual level. They cannot argue with my claims, with my maps. If we still hope to resolve the conflict by agreement, we must also take into account the Palestinian position, in which most Israelis are not at all interested.

From the Balfour Declaration of 1917 to 1988, for 71 years, the Palestinians clung to the claim that the whole land is theirs, that they have been deprived of the right to self-determination. And the world also admits that in the partition report, the Palestinians were deprived of the right to self-determination, which was given only to the Jewish people, who were then only a minority in the land of Israel. At that

time, about 675,000 Arabs and about 83,000 Jews lived between the sea and the Jordan. 90% Arabs, 10% Jews. That is why the Palestinians claimed that "everything is theirs". In retrospect, this was clearly a catastrophic historical mistake for them. In 1988, they "got a grip", in the Palestinian Declaration of Independence. They realized that their only chance of gaining an independent state was to enter the international community by adopting international decisions. They actually adopted UN Resolutions 181 and 242, which say that the Palestinians are entitled to only 22% of historic Palestine. For their part, in doing so, they have given up on the "historic homeland".

This is the basic formula. Either you accept it, or you reject it. If you reject it, do not think of any possibility of reaching an agreement with the Palestinians. That's why Trump's plan is completely stupid, because it has no chance. Not in the Palestinian world and not in the Arab world. Accept the basic formula, and then the Palestinians will be ready to make the necessary concessions as long as they remain in the realm of international decisions. They have already agreed to an exchange of territories, which will allow us to leave 80% of the settlers within Israel, with the neighborhoods and holy places in Jerusalem, without exercising the "right of return" but with something symbolic and meaningless.

The claim that the Jordan Valley must now be annexed, in order to prevent Palestinian refugees from flooding the territories of the weak Palestinian Authority and reaching Israel's narrow waist, is simply unfounded. Will the Palestinians flock in the hundreds of thousands? 50% of Palestinian refugees live in Jordan, and it is clear that they do not intend to come. The Palestinian refugees in Jordan are not going to come because they know they will not improve their economic situation. Apart from them, 40% of the refugees already live here anyway. Only 10% are outside the West Bank, Gaza and Jordan. Some in Lebanon and some in Syria. In all the surveys did in the refugee camps, when asked who wants to return to Palestine (not to Israel!), It is 11% -13%. Palestinian plans to return refugees to the Palestinian Authority: about 250,000, no more. No one returns to Israel. At most a few thousand, under special arrangements.

Israel has a clause in the peace agreement with Jordan that states: Jordan must not sign military alliances with countries or organizations hostile to Israel, and must not allow such forces to pass through its territory. Israel's security border is not the absurd Jordan River, but Jordan's eastern border with Iraq. It is a bad joke to assume that Sunnis from the Hashemite Kingdom will let Shiites from Iran enter. According to the agreement with Jordan, Israel can use all its forces 350 kilometers from the border. It is a conditional strategic depth. Every crossing of foreign

power across the eastern border of Jordan is considered a cause of war for Israel. The same clause was accepted by the Palestinians in Annapolis, and even earlier in Camp David. They accepted this principle, just as they accepted the principle that they would be a demilitarized state.

A key thing we took into account in all the negotiations: there will be no situation where if the Palestinian state collapses because of a civil war, we will be harmed by it. We have imposed a lot of security restrictions: the Palestinian state is demilitarized. If the Palestinian state decides that it is disrupting life in Israel, Israel will be able to respond.

Israel fears that what happened in the disengagement from the Gaza Strip will happen even if we evacuate the West Bank, because people do not understand that the withdrawal from Gaza was not in an agreement, not compatible with the Palestinian Authority. Israel cannot really respond in Gaza because it does not have the global legitimacy to do so. From a global perspective, Israel is still the occupying power in Gaza.

The thing that infuriates me the most: the impossible boundary now presented in Trump's proposal, and proves how amateurishly this proposal was made. One has to be dumb to believe that such a border can be maintained. According to the Trump map, it would be a border of 1,800-kilometers! It is three times the border of Israel with Jordan, with Syria, with Lebanon and with Egypt together! It's an abysmal lack of professionalism.

When you set a border between two entities, you need to set it so that it is stable, otherwise you are sowing the seeds of calamity for the next conflict. You need to look at how the new route of the border will affect the different population groups that will be affected by the border. The map we offered is one that was compiled after examinations:

On the Palestinian side, the examinations were done by Palestinian students I hired. I did the same thing on the Israeli side. All the data was checked with lots of workgroups, and so we formulated our map. The people who are dealing with it now, are not interested in the question of how to set a stable border. What interests them is only the Israeli interest. But the conclusions from all the research on this subject in the world, and for this I have also done my doctorate: If you set a border only according to the interest of the strong side, you make this border in advance an impossible one.

In less than 2% of the West Bank adjacent to the Green Line, with Palestinian consent I can annex 60% of Israelis living in the West Bank, without harming the fabric of Palestinian life. The problem: Bibi and the settlers are interested in only one thing: to prevent the establishment

of a Palestinian state. Because that way, for them, we can continue with the creeping annexation. Few are the individuals on the right that dare to say out loud their hopes - that someday Israel will have a chance for a second Nakba.

Some Inconvenient Facts for One-State Advocates - Times of Israel, 23, 2020

There are so many Jewish settlers the populations can't be separated -- wrong. The one-state solution is a viable option -- wrong again.

In the debate over how to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the contribution of one-state advocates is to oversimplify a very complex reality. Trying to explain how wrong they are can be like trying to explain to Flat Earthers why people on the other side of the world do not fall off into space. They may have a simple, catchy idea but it does not reflect the reality illuminated by research from the field and empirical data.

Two complementary arguments typically undergird positions against two states and in favor of one. The first is that the large number of settlers and their integration with the West Bank Palestinian population has rendered the two-state solution impossible. The second is that one state is necessarily a viable answer.

Here are a few useful facts relating to the first assumption:

- 62% of the Israeli settler labor force works in Israel-proper, another 25% work in the over-subsidized settlements' education systems, and only a tiny percent work in agriculture and industry, where 99% of their workers are Palestinian
- The roads servicing the settlements are in practice almost completely separate and do not observe any clear governing principle.
- There is no common fabric of life with nearby Israeli settlements.
- There is virtually no social and cultural connection between the two populations.
- Regarding the geographical and demographic realities (some presented in my new report released this week):
- In Gaza, where 2.1 million Palestinians live, there is not a single Israeli, in other words, separation.
- 99% of Israelis in East Jerusalem live in homogenous Jewish neighborhoods, in other words, separation.
- For more than 20 years, the number of Israelis living in the West Bank has remained proportionally steady at 18% of the total West Bank population, a rate similar to the Arab minority within Israel on the eve of the establishment of the state. South of Gush Etzion and north of Nablus, the ratio of Arabs to Jews is 40:1. In other words, separation.
- 99% of the private land is Palestinian-owned. The built-up area of all the settlements amounts to less than 2% of the West Bank.
- Half of all settlers live in the three major cities adjacent to the Green Line and Jerusalem, and within an area of land exchange of less than 4% of the area.
- This means that 80% of Israelis living beyond the Green Line can be retained (without Ariel). That is, separation.
- Israel has the full capacity to absorb the rest in terms of employment and housing.
- Now, to the argument that impediments to two states should lead us to embrace one. This line of thinking requires that we address a few little questions:
- How does a country with a per capita GDP of \$40,000 absorb a population with a per capita GDP of less than \$4,000?
- With the absorption of a population of a similar size, of which 98% will be ranked at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, will the Jewish population accept the dramatic and intolerable decline in health, welfare and education, or will we witness a brain drain, with young Israelis with the means to do so leaving?
- Will the Palestinians serve in Israel's security services?
- What will be the future of the Palestinian refugees? Will they return to "Isra-stine" and make the state a decisive Arab majority?
- Who will bear the economic burden of absorbing and rehabilitating them?
- Are one-staters familiar with the recent survey of the Institute for National Security Studies, which found that 78% of the Jewish population is unwilling to grant resident or civil rights to Palestinians in the territories annexed to Israel, preferring apartheid over loss of Jewish control?

Indeed, the feasibility of the two-state solution today is extremely low, but not for the reasons some one-state supporters may think. The trends that characterize the settlement enterprise in the last two decades — a dramatic decrease in immigration from Israel (any increase is based mainly on the natural increase of ultra-Orthodox in the two cities on the Green Line), a continuing decline in economic-social ranking and more — indicate that it poses no demographic obstacle to the two-state solution. Physical-spatial feasibility exists in relation to the four core issues of the conflict — borders, Jerusalem, security and refugees.

The impossibility stems from the lack of political feasibility, especially on the Israeli side. Suffice it to mention the “Shamir Declaration,” in which more than 40 ministers and MKs pledged to abolish the two-state solution and establish one state for one people in the entire Land of Israel. It’s a simple, catchy idea. The only thing it lacks is any grounding in facts that assess the political, cultural, security and economic implications of the creation of one state, and that demonstrate how such a move will not lead to civil war and the inevitable unraveling of the Zionist dream.

Biden Must Prevent Israel’s March Toward Annexation – Responsible Statecraft, February 11, 2021

Although former President Donald Trump no longer has the capacity to influence the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Israeli government continues to ride the wave of Trump’s “peace” plan and President Biden must take action to stop them.

Indeed, the Netanyahu government is still working to implement the plan’s vision, steadily paving the way to annexing vast swathes of the West Bank. In real and significant ways, this is progressing despite Netanyahu’s purported “postponement” of annexation as part of a series of normalization agreements.

Until the Biden administration articulates a new plan or map — or at least reveals consequences for Israel’s annexation projects — the Israeli government will continue to advance policies that entrench the occupation, expand settlements and lay the groundwork for unilateral, de jure annexation.

The Netanyahu annexation agenda is advancing in key three areas: The unlawful expansion of settlements and the “laundering” of illegal outposts, domestic legislation extending civilian law into occupied territories, and the construction of permanent transportation infrastructure designed to splinter any future Palestinian state.

As is becoming clearer, the only way for Israel to remain a democracy and a homeland for the Jewish people is to abandon the messianic plan of retaining control of the entire West Bank and allow Palestinians to live with independence and freedom in a state of their own. Each of these steps undermines that future.

In the first area, the expansion of settlements and the laundering of illegal outposts, Netanyahu recently approved the construction of nearly 6,000 housing units in settlements and outposts. The vast majority of permits have been given to the small and isolated settlements which are located outside all of the State of Israel’s policy proposals for a permanent border with Palestine. Obviously, this will only frustrate the success of any potential negotiations over borders, if such negotiations can occur at all following such acts of bad faith. This, of course, is the point.

Just over 60 percent of the approved housing units are outside the proposal presented by Israel at the Annapolis Conference in 2008, which was intended to allow Israel to retain under its sovereignty 85 percent of Israelis living beyond the Green Line. Nearly 90 percent

of the housing units are located east of the built security barrier, and 68 percent are located east of the planned barrier. Eighty percent are even east of the optimal permanent border formulated in an in-depth study by the Israeli group “Commanders’ for Israel’s Security,” which will allow 80 percent of Israelis across the Green Line to remain under Israeli sovereignty. This is in addition to the planned construction in the “Givat Hamatos” neighborhood in south Jerusalem, in “Mevaseret Adumim” (E1) in Ma’ale Adumim, and in “Givat Eitam” in Efrat, each positioned to cut off Arab Jerusalem from the surrounding Palestinian area.

These approvals continue to shift the goal-posts on territory and will continue to displace Palestinians and prevent them from achieving self-determination and independence. It’s perhaps the clearest policy to signal that Netanyahu has no genuine interest in securing a peace agreement and will continue to undermine the prospects for peace unless President Biden takes steps to reign in the behavior.

The advancement of civil legislation in the West Bank is the second plank of the plan. Recently, the *de facto* method of annexation has been deepened by promoting direct Knesset legislation in the occupied territories, in contrast to past use of military orders.

In 2017, the government determined that the Ministerial Committee on Legislation would not advance legislation without examining whether it is necessary to apply any proposed law to Israelis living in the territories, and how it can do so. In 2016, the Judea and Samaria Subcommittee was established in the Knesset, dealing with civilian issues concerning the territories and dealing with the advancement of settler affairs.

In the 20th Knesset, eight laws and legislative amendments were enacted which extend Israel’s civil, legal control of the occupied territories. From a legal standpoint, occupied territory beyond the Green Line is now becoming increasingly indistinguishable from territory within the border, and laws are being passed or modified with the expressed aim of benefiting the settler movement. Recently, a preliminary reading of the “Regulation of Young Settlement” law was also approved, which will operate to launder the illegal outposts as “young settlements.”

The third area, construction of transportation infrastructure, continues to advance despite a dire economic situation in Israel. Transport Minister Miri Regev announced a series of new transportation projects in the West Bank in December at a total cost of about 400 million NIS, or roughly \$120 million. This decision follows the strategic master plan for transportation, which Regev launched in November and includes large scale projects on occupied territory. There no longer seems to be any

facade about the true intention of infrastructure projects beyond the green line. “We are not taking our foot off the gas. We are applying *de facto* sovereignty,” Minister Regev said during the announcement.

These infrastructure projects often appear designed not to service a real need, but to further entrench Israeli control over strategic locations in the West Bank. Indeed, 60 percent of workers in Israeli settlements travel daily to work *within* the Green Line anyway.

These three elements of Israel’s annexation project will continue — just as they would under the Trump administration — unless the Biden administration advances a clear alternative plan and outlines consequences for the Netanyahu government’s annexationist agenda. The ultimate outcome of this creep toward annexation will be either an Israel that can no longer be accurately described as democracy, or a divided, one-state democracy which ceases to be a homeland for the Jewish people. Either way, this would mark the death of the liberal-democratic Zionist dream enshrined in Israel’s Declaration of Independence. If President Biden is a true friend of Israel, he must take action to protect Israel and advance Palestinian self-determination now.

Settlements

Do Not Evacuate Settlements Before You Know Weather the Borders are Realistic – Haaretz, August 20, 2018

Uri Mark and Gideon Levy discuss in their articles, the same subject, but each on a different level from the other. While the former is trying to get to the bottom of the feasibility of the two-state solution on a practical level, the latter goes on in an attempt to refute the other's claim on the level of consciousness and justice, and ultimately both are marching in good faith far from the target.

I would be the last to challenge Mark's factual assertion that the settlement enterprise failed to achieve its political goal: to create the physical and spatial conditions that would allow Israel to annex all the territories (Gush Emunim, the Likud) or some of them, (Alon Plan, Labor) without harm to the Zionist vision of a democratic state with a Jewish majority.

After the evacuation of the Gaza Strip, the question of separation of the Jewish population from the Arab in the West Bank, relates to the ability to implement it at a reasonable national price. The more the population manages a journal routine in the form of "two eggs" rather than an "omelet", it is easier to implement; Populations living in a common fabric of life (settlements, roads, labor, commerce, etc.) require complex, difficult and expensive solutions to the point they become impossible.

Due to concern over international criticism, the government blocks annexation attempts, but promotes the application of laws on settlements. An in-depth examination of the demographic and spatial data of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank reveals the following: The Palestinians enjoy a solid majority of 82% of the population, as well as in each of the "security zones" established in the Alon Plan (1967-8) and the Sharon Plan (1977); 109 out of 126 Jewish localities belong to regional councils, and are small in size and population. In half of them there are fewer than 200 families, and in the second half less than 1,000 families; 75% of the Israelis live on the Green Line, half of them in Modi'in Illit and Beitar Illit;

Israelis do not use two-thirds of the West Bank roads; 60% of the Israeli workforce in the Judea and Samaria District work within the Green Line, the Israelis process less than 100,000 Dunams, the vast majority of them in the Jordan Valley and with two exceptions, there are no significant Israeli industrial zones and in all of them, the workers are Palestinians; Israel's control of the area relies mostly on military closure orders in more than 50% of Area C, and on a permanent and mobile military presence, whereas in the Israeli "blocs" there is Jewish dominance in demography

and space, but these amount to only 4%-5% of the West Bank, while Palestinians enjoy demographic and spatial dominance in the rest of the territory.

Mark is wrong about two essential things. First, he repeats the common mistake among the Israeli leaders who conducted negotiations with the PLO on a permanent border: he and they seek to outline the border on the basis of Israeli interests and constraints. Most of them relate to the challenge of evacuating some of the settlers.

The Palestinians, on the other hand, sought to avoid harming the fabric of life of many Palestinian communities and Palestinian territorial contiguity. The border lines proposed by Israel, as well as by the Palestinians, have never been examined in depth, methodically and scientifically, and there has been no reference to all the implications of the new border.

A professional examination must focus on a border line that will enable stability and not contain the seeds of the next calamity. The guiding principle for determining the border is to deal with the question of the price of a final status agreement. Under the parameter that guided the Annapolis negotiations in 2008 - the "1967 lines" as a basis and the exchange of territories in a 1: 1 ratio - there are three central costs for territorial exchanges, which are interdependent:

1. Evacuation of Jewish settlements from the West Bank and the absorption of their residents in Israel.
2. Damage to the Palestinian fabric of life and Palestinian continuity as a result of Israeli annexation of "blocs" and "fingers" of Jewish communities entering the heart of the Palestinian territory.
3. Damage to Israeli communities residing close to the border, inside the State of Israel due to the transfer of the land they use to Palestine.

Any attempt to reduce the cost of the first component increases the costs of the other components: in annexing more Jewish communities, their agreed and forced evacuation is spared, and the cost of harming the Palestinian fabric of life and Israeli settlements close to the border rise; On the other hand, reducing the harm to Palestinians and Israeli residents means a wider evacuation of settlements.

The various costs must be recognized, understood and evaluated in depth, and optimal solutions should be proposed, in which the cost-benefit components will enable a reasonable coexistence of two states based on a border that enjoys structural stability.

From a close perspective of the costs of the three components against

the background of the spatial-physical situation, it can be determined that a separation based on territorial exchange of 4 percent is possible at a reasonable national price. This is not a matter of the evacuation of 46,000 Israelis, but rather of a number double in size, which from a practical point of view, Israel knows how to deal with their absorption in the aspects of decent housing and employment.

Mark is aware of this and states that "the evacuation of the 33 isolated settlements will not be sufficient to achieve a Palestinian agreement to end the conflict ... However, this is enough to draw a border between Israel and Palestine, unilaterally or by agreement for a limited period". Here lies his second mistake. All the political and social costs that will be required for a limited evacuation of the settlers without a permanent agreement and without any return on the part of the Palestinians are almost identical to the costs that will be required for a final status agreement. Therefore, there is no point in trying to "cross the abyss in two jumps". Moreover, the chances that the Palestinians will agree to another interim stage without the knowledge of the final map, 25 years after the Oslo Accords, are negligible.

At the same time, it is fair to note that this plan is binding, should Israel agree to negotiate with the Palestinians based on the parameters of Annapolis, and should the Palestinians change their position and refuse it.

I will not seek to also undermine Levy's statement that, contrary to the practical feasibility of a two-state solution, the political feasibility of implementing this agreement today is very low. This is mainly due to Netanyahu's withdrawal from the parameters of the negotiations set at Annapolis, and because his government is now led by the nationalist-messianic faction that aspires to annexation, and the political reality on the Palestinian side must be remembered for all its disputes, Gaza-West Bank, Hamas-Fatah And more. These do not contribute to presenting a unified Palestinian address to Israel and to the international community, which will be able to reach an agreement and primarily to implement it.

To this I would add that today, Israel's "awareness feasibility" of the two-state solution is also low. Public discourse in Israel is rooted in intimidation, incitement, lies and an ethos of the conflict. Without a drastic change in this discourse, the appropriate conditions cannot be created to enable the leaders to make the painful moves and compromises that are at the basis of a compromise-based solution, or of relative or historical justice.

Levy's mistake stems from his attempt to reach a solution based on justice, and worse, only on justice in accordance with the Palestinian

narrative. Each side believes that it is right, and that its claim to the Land of Israel or all of Palestine enjoys political, legal, historical and moral strengths. One common narrative cannot be created, based on sincere recognition by one side of the other's right to self-determination or reconciliation. Resolving the conflict is based on compromise, territorial division, in which each side remains with part of what it wanted but can still preserve its national narrative and territorial dreams.

The justification for a compromise on both sides rests on what I call "the consciousness of no choice". In other words, each side understands that it cannot achieve or maintain its most important national interests without compromise with the other. For the Jews, the interest is to maintain a democratic state for the Jewish people, and for the Palestinians - to establish an independent Palestinian state. This was stated in the partition resolution of 1947: "The basic assumption behind the partition proposal is that the claims on Palestine, both of the Arabs and of the Jews, are both valid and cannot be reconciled with each other. Of all the proposals that have been proposed, the division is the most practical ... and it will allow to satisfy some of the national demands and aspirations of both sides".

The Zionist movement agreed to partition (even if it had planned not to adhere to it) for the first time in 1937. The Palestinians refused all along, and therefore we cannot accept Levy's claim that "the land of the Palestinian people was stolen from them mostly in 1948". It is sufficient from the declaration of Mahmoud Abbas (2008): "The opportunity for the partition of 1947 was lost, and before that the opportunity for the partition of the Peel Commission was lost", in order to recognize the historical truth regarding the Palestinian refusal to establish an independent state on part of the land.

Therefore, a permanent agreement between Israel and the PLO must be based on the accepted interpretation of UN Security Council Resolution 242, which includes the formula "land for peace", meaning, Palestine the size of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, no more than that (6,205 square kilometers). Levy should not presume be more Palestinian than the Palestinians, as a sober Abbas continued: "We do not want to lose another chance; hence we accepted the division of 1948 and 1967, which do not include more than 22% of historic Palestine".

Mark and Levy must internalize that those who seek to find a solution to the conflict can not only ask for their interests or justice, but only a compromise based on the reality on the ground, on international decisions, on the existence of a stable border and on the political capabilities of the parties



The Settlers are Not Pioneers, Even if They Think They Are – Haaretz, September 20, 2018

The myth of the new “Zionist settlement” in the West Bank, which ostensibly continues the path of the pioneers prior to the establishment of the state and in its early years, is at the heart of the nationalist and messianic public claim to gain legitimacy in Israeli public opinion. This myth is fundamentally baseless, does a historic injustice to the first pioneers and ultimately conceals the truth from the public.

The waves of Jewish settlement to the Land of Israel in the modern era did indeed share the same national goal - the establishment of the “Jewish State” in as much territory as possible, but the vision, the political background, the challenges, the characteristics and the results were very different.

With regard to the expansion of the borders of the “Jewish state”, three main periods can be discerned in 120 years of Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel: the first, 1947-1981, is mainly a pioneering and voluntary settlement; The second, 1948-1967, is a forced settlement at its core; The third, 1968-2018, is mostly a convenience and real estate settlement.

The motives of the settlers in the first period differed among the “Aliyahs”, even if they were essentially based on a new national consciousness. As a rule, religious people, like the old “Yeshuv”, settled in the holy cities, where they could find a livelihood; Job seekers and socialists established the Moshavim and agricultural farms, the Kibbutzim and “groups”; and there were those who saw the establishment of cities as their contribution to the establishment of the Jewish National Home.

The challenges facing them were enormous: lack of knowledge and experience in agriculture, foreign climate, malaria, a competing Arab labor force, opposition from the Ottoman regime, and later, British restrictions on immigration and acquisition of land, harassment and violence from the local Arabs and more.

Until overcoming malaria in the 1920s, the Jewish settlers chose to cling to the “N settlement” - the coastal plain and valleys. The malaria-stricken lands were sold to Jews, and later these areas became the heart of the Jewish state, planned in the partition resolution in 1947.

The Royal Peel Commission in 1937 suggested that the Jewish state be extended to the “N settlement” and the Galilee - an approach that made it clear for the first time that in future proposals for the partition of the land, areas with Jewish presence would be included within the boundaries of the Jewish state. Therefore, the Jewish Agency decided to

increase the deployment of Jewish settlement. During the last decade of British rule, the momentum of Jewish settlement increased and spread to the Western Galilee, the Beit She’an Valley and the Negev (52 “Wall and tower” settlements, the three “look-outs” in the Negev, the “the 11 points” in the western Negev and more).

In the war that erupted as a result of the Arabs’ refusal to accept the Partition Plan in 1947 and their decision to fight in order to cancel it, half of the areas designated for the Arab state were concurred. The young Israel established a policy to prevent the return of the Palestinian refugees to the destroyed villages and to drop the borders of the partition resolution from the international agenda. At the end of 1948, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion formulated the policy of the second period: “A living, working and creating human wall, can protect the borders of the land”. Accordingly, between 1948 and 1967, 465 new settlements were established in the State of Israel.

In order to realize this concept, Israel adopted a policy of population dispersal. The main milestone was the “Sharon Plan - Physical Planning for Israel” of 1951; the architect Aryeh Sharon formulated the principles of population dispersal of the young state, which led to the State of Israel holding a world record of number of communities relative to the population.

The wave of mass immigration of 1948-1951, which numbered about 700,000 people from Asia and Africa, settled in the center of the country and dealt with the difficulties of absorption: language, labor and housing shortage, and negative cultural labeling. In these years, new kibbutzim were established in the border Strips. Thirty-five of them were established during the war until January 1949, but in the absence of a settlement nuclei of the pioneering youth movements, the population dispersal was subsequently made mainly by referring the 200,000 new immigrants who arrived from North-Africa in the mid-1950s to the border communities.

The IDF played an important role in the implementation of the policy, and in the 1950s and later, the General Staff of the “Settlement Bureau” operated, and the IDF determined the location of the new settlements according to security considerations only. This was a forced “pioneering” of immigrants who had to deal with all the hardships of their predecessors, which were exacerbated; In the establishment of the remote communities, no consideration was given to the creation of suitable sources of employment, education, health and welfare services. Worst of all was the security threat - during the period 1948- 1956, “infiltrators” killed about 200 civilians and dozens of security personnel,

stealing and sabotaging property worth an average of several hundred thousand Israeli pounds per year.

The new settlements established until 1967 were included in the regional councils of Beit She'an, the Jezreel Valley, the Sharon and Judea. In the north, the Beit She'an Valley and the settlements of the Ta'anach region were established, and in the East Sharon area 40 new settlements were established in these years, including the town of Rosh Ha'ayin.

The third period was marked by a decade of settlement in the Jordan Valley and the northern Dead Sea, which was defined as security settlement by the Ma'arach (Labor) governments. But the geographical conditions turned the aspirations of the plan's thinker, Yigal Allon, to bring a million Jews to the area into fantasies. The members of the kibbutzim and veteran moshavim who came to establish the 25 agricultural settlements, which were added to the cities, have not yet crossed 6,000 people.

The steeply sparsely populated eastern strip of the West Bank can be added to the ridge of the Judean and Samaria hills - a steep and rugged region where most of the large Palestinian cities are located. To this region, members of the national- messianic "Gush Emunim" (Block of the faithful) sought to push themselves in order to prevent Palestinian continuity and the division of the land, under the false declaration that the bloc was "a movement for the renewal of Zionist fulfillment".

The first decade saw the bloc's struggle against the IDF and the Israeli government, whose policy was clearly determined by Yitzhak Rabin: "To the heart of the West Bank, which is densely populated by the Arabs, we must not thrust Jewish settlers. Such dramatic settlement has in it signs of showmanship and provocation to Arabs and the United States, and there is no security need and justification. With the political upheaval of 1977, and in all the years in which Israeli governments invested tens of billions in the region, there has been no dramatic change in the settlement aspect, and in the region, there is a Palestinian demographic dominance of 92%.

The third and western strip is characterized by good agricultural soil and overlooks the coastal plain. This is the "high demand" area of the West Bank, where most of the Palestinian agricultural villages are located. In this area, which includes most of the "Jerusalem Envelope", live most Israelis who live beyond the Green Line (83%). 220,000 Israelis live in the 12 Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem and find their main source of income in the city. Most of them ultra-Orthodox and religious, who saw these neighborhoods as a solution to the housing shortage in

the city. Another 415,000 Israelis live in the Judea and Samaria region. About 40 percent of its residents are ultra-Orthodox who live in Modi'in Illit and Betar Illit, the poorest and most subsidized cities in Israel, are located on the Green Line and are far from participating in the messianic nationalistic vision of inheriting the land.

Most of the secular residents living in Judea and Samaria also share the perception of improving their quality of life. And so, another 30% of Israelis face westward (Alfei Menashe, Ma'aleh Adumim, Ariel, Oranit, Har Adar, Tzofim, Sal'it, etc.). Even among the Messianic nationalists there were many who chose the more comfortable places to live (Elkana, Mevo Horon, Shaarei Tikva, Efrat, Gush Etzion and more).

Jewish settlement in the 50 years since the war, with the encouragement of the government of Israel, in investments of huge capital, is not approaching its predecessors, no matter how much advances and subsidization the state has imposed: per capita budget is 280% higher than the average (Makro Institute, 2017); 137 million NIS for temporary evacuation of Amona; Nation State Law, the Regulation Law, grants, exemption from leasing fees, and more.

All these groups chose to avoid the challenging areas of the West Bank. In the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea area, only three out of a hundred residents are Israelis; south of Gush Etzion there are only two; and in northern Samaria only one out of every hundred. Israelis do not travel on two-thirds of the roads in the West Bank, there are no significant Israeli industrial zones there and even agriculture is carried only by a few residents in the Jordan Valley. Sixty percent of the workforce makes its way to Israel every morning. Jewish settlement gained Jewish dominance only in the "blocs" that cover only 4 percent of the West Bank, while the rest of the territory is controlled directly by the army (50% of Area C is closed by military order).

The security burden on the IDF in maintaining the settlements is heavy, and most of the forces are invested in securing the settlements, guarding the traffic arteries and worse still, confronting Jewish terror directed against Palestinians.

The Messianic nationalists, the group that leads the settlers of the third period, are charged with an ideology and vision different from those of their predecessors. While the former wanted to settle and establish a state that would serve as a safe haven for the Jewish people, the latter wants to "bequeath the land to its inhabitants". Menachem Begin confronted them at the end of December 1977: "You must remember that there were days when you were not yet born or were little children,

when other people risked their lives day and night, worked and labored, sacrificed, and did their duty without a shred of messianic complexity”.

The purpose and nature of the state are also different. While the former wanted a state based on “the foundations of freedom, justice and peace ... will uphold social and political equality ... will guarantee freedom of religion” (the Declaration of Independence), the latter wishes to establish a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation, the return of the Shekhina to Zion, the establishment of the kingdom of the House of David and the building of the Temple - as a key point in the improvement of the world in the kingdom of Shadai” (Hanan Porat).

In contrast to the success of the settlers of the early periods, the failure of the third period settlers’ echoes. The reasons for this are many. Whereas in the early periods the Jewish community and the State of Israel enjoyed the support of the international system and law (the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate, the Partition Resolution); succeeded in preventing the return of the Palestinian refugees; applied Israeli law to occupied territories; granted citizenship to Arab residents and maintained consensus and solidarity in Israeli society - in recent times the international system and law have rejected the settlement enterprise and the idea of annexing parts of the West Bank and recognizing the Palestinians’ right to self-determination in the territories; Israel has not applied Israeli law to the West Bank and maintains a discriminatory regime between the two populations; and suffers from a lack of consensus in Israeli society regarding the future of the territories, which divides it with the encouragement and incitement of the government.

The only option available to Israel to realize part of the massive investment in the settlement enterprise is to return to a policy of separation and division of land on the basis of the Green Line, with territorial exchanges of up to 4%. While this will not add one square meter to Israel’s territory, it at least allows 80 percent of the Israelis living beyond the Green Line to be held under Israeli sovereignty.

But this is not the intention of the Netanyahu government. Encouraged by the Trump administration, settlement continues under a policy of “creeping annexation” or annexation by law. But this will bring about the collapse of the Zionist vision - a democratic state of the Jewish people - in favor of an apartheid regime that will be replaced by an unstable bi-national state that will become an Arab state.

And Again, The Truth: There are No Half a Million People in the Settlements – Haaretz, November 19, 2018

Since the establishment of the last Netanyahu government, and even more so since Trump was elected President of the United States, we are witnessing a flood of declarations regarding the lifting of all political restrictions and barriers to the development of the settlement enterprise in the West Bank. Ministers and MKs on the right, members of the Yesha Council and hilltop youths, celebrated the flourishing of the settlements and the irreversible facts on the ground. To complete the euphoria, they presented dozens of bills and plans for the annexation of parts of the West Bank, and even all of it. All allegedly. An imagined reality of their messianic-nationalist faith and an attempt to justify the huge budgets spilled there.

The illusions and deceptions of the public, like every year in recent years, are shattered on the rocks of the Central Bureau of Statistics publications. The number of Israelis in the Judea and Samaria region grew in 2017, as in any of the past five years, by 14,000 residents. From 3,99,043 at the end of 2016 to 413,400 at the end of 2017. Yes, not half a million and certainly not 800,000 Israelis are living in Judea and Samaria, as the representatives of the nationalist-messianic right-wing often claim misleadingly. Only 13 percent of the total population of the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem).

This figure is the “brightest” for the supporters of the settlement enterprise. The annual growth in Judea and Samaria, which is still higher than the average in Israel, continues to decline almost every year. More importantly, the migration balance in 2017 is the lowest since 2005 and stands at only 1,300. Yes, only thirteen hundred more chose to move from Israel to Judea and Samaria than those who chose to return to the sovereign borders of the State of Israel. This figure points to the trend of “voting with their feet” of Israelis in the past 20 years, despite all the benefits that the government has spent on the residents of the district. The “wave” of immigration of 800 people from abroad who came directly to the settlements did not improve this grim picture.

Thus, as in the last two decades, the source of growth is natural increase. This figure relates mainly to the ultra-Orthodox population, most of whom live in the two poorest cities in Israel - Modi’in Illit and Betar Illit. The two are located on the Green Line, are not identified with the ideology of the messianic right, and their residents crossed the Green Line only because of the housing shortage of the Haredi society in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak (“settlers against our will”). Their residents now account

for 30% of the Jewish population living in the 127 settlements, most of which are isolated and small. This year, too, these two cities contributed almost half of the overall increase in the number of settlers (6,156).

As usual, most of the population (about 80%) is concentrated in the “first line” blocs and settlements, west of the route of the security fence. South of Gush Etzion, north of Alfei Menashe and east of Ma’aleh Adumim, the proportion of Israelis in the general population ranges from one percent in most of the area to 4% in its small area. Complete demographic and spatial Palestinian dominance that is interrupted by tiny and isolated settlements, illegal outposts, and primarily by IDF action that is required to protect them.

This is the fourth year in a row that the growth rate in isolated settlements has been declining, even though these are the homes of supporters of Greater Israel and of Gush Emunim throughout the generations, mostly “Jewish Home Party” voters. The settlement enterprise, which in it were invested hundreds of billions of shekels for five decades, was unable to achieve any Jewish dominance in space and demography except in the “blocs,” which cover less than 5% of the West Bank.

Despite the facts of a small Jewish minority in the West Bank that demographically controls a few percent of the West Bank, one third of which are the poorest in Israel (cluster 1) with 71% below the median of the socio-economic index in Israel, the opponents of a final-status agreement continue to sanctify the imaginary “status quo.” The illusion, which has not been realized for 50 years, that a transformation is nearing, does not stop harming Israel: the political stalemate that is deteriorating the status of the PLO, the Palestinian Authority and its leader, Mahmoud Abbas, may lead to the disintegration of the Palestinian Authority and to the return of responsibility for 2.6 million Palestinians to Israel, and the repeated rounds of violence with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, which exact a heavy price from the communities surrounding the Gaza Strip and the south, from Israel’s economy, the image of the IDF and Israel’s standing in the world.

This severe failure does not discourage the followers of illusions, who continue to fight against a two-state for two people’s solution that is needed for the future of Israel and Palestine. Deep inside they are aware of the failure to establish irreversible facts on the ground and to prepare the necessary conditions for the annexation of Judea and Samaria without harming the Zionist vision. Therefore, we are witnessing attempts to make imaginary “profits” by annexing parts of Area C or all of them to Israel, and moving from a “creeping annexation” that has failed to annexation by a law that will further drive Israel into a one state that

maintains an official apartheid regime or loses its Jewish character for an Arab majority.

The only chance of saving the Israeli settlement enterprise in the West Bank, while preserving the police and the identity of the State of Israel, is through a permanent agreement, even if it takes time to achieve it and gradually realize it. In any proposal for a permanent border, Israel will enjoy the preservation of 80% of the Israelis living beyond the Green Line under its sovereignty.

Indeed, for some Israelis, most of them belonging to the nationalist-messianic stream, it would be a bad ending, an evacuation and a severe faith crisis. Israel is better with a bad ending (that everything must be done in order to reduce it) to one percent of its population, than having a never-ending bad ending to all its citizens.

Hey Israeli Taxpayer, This is How Much the Settlements Cost You – Haaretz, December 22, 2018

All's by Israeli legislators, mainly from the Habayit Hayehudi party, for "a fitting Zionist response" to the recent terror attacks – in the form of building permits for settlements and the authorization of illegal outposts – are part of an attempt to conceal the bleak picture that is the messianic settlement project outside the settlement blocs and east of the security barrier.

The Central Bureau of Statistics' recently published socioeconomic index for the West Bank – covering 413,000 settlers in 127 settlements – once again reveals the poor socioeconomic status of most Israelis there. It reveals the burden on the Israeli economy and the gloomier economic future lurking around the corner.

The distinction between "settlement blocs" and isolated settlements underscores yet again the government's cynical exploitation of the weaker segments of Jewish Israeli society, which are being sacrificed to the disastrous nationalist messianic Moloch. These voices seek to present a false picture of the growing Jewish presence in the West Bank and justify the enormous budgets uselessly poured there without any chance of altering the spatial and demographic balance that clearly tilts in the Palestinians' favor.

The vast majority of the terror attacks occur outside the main settlement blocs that are within the security barrier, or in the Gush Etzion settlement bloc, where the barrier was not completed due to pressure from the council heads there. Around 90,000 people currently live beyond the barrier in 49 isolated settlements. Some 93% of them fall into the bottom half of the socioeconomic rankings. The 2015 election results show that the poorest settlements are home to messianic, religious-Zionist, right-wing voters for Habayit Hayehudi and the Yahad party.

The Netanyahu government, led by the efforts of Habayit Hayehudi's Naftali Bennett and Ayelet Shaked, isn't stinting on funding for these areas. In almost 80% of the settlements that improved their situation, Habayit Hayehudi was the largest party. A 5-billion-NIS (1.3 billion dollars) plan to improve roads was also recently approved. The rate of government-ministry participation in the revenue of these communities is very high. For example, in the area governed by the Samaria Regional Council, home to just 41,000 people, this sum is 265 million NIS, or 84% of revenue.

Worse, these are the settlements that with the illegal outposts comprise

thousands of homes built on private Palestinian land, the situation that yielded the law that legalized settlements built on such land. Some of these settlements are the source of anti-Arab "price tag" attacks, as well as clashes with Palestinians and the army.

The communities located outside the barrier also include the Jordan Valley and northern Dead Sea settlements, which have a smaller number of residents – 6,451 people living in 26 settlements. They're largely associated with the Zionist Union party and fall in the upper half of the socioeconomic index. People settled here in the first decade after the Six-Day War mostly for security purposes. Some of these settlements, however, are in the bottom third of the index, with a majority of Habayit Hayehudi voters.

Along the western side of the security barrier the picture is totally different. The settlements here were built according to government plans that sought to avoid placing Jewish communities in densely populated Palestinian areas. This group, comprising 51 settlements with 316,608 residents, may be divided into three subgroups.

Ultra-Orthodox Israelis, or Haredim, who live in five settlements and account for 41% of the total, are the poorest of the three and almost all come in at the bottom of the index. The percentage of children is huge; 67% in Modi'in Ilit, for example. The percentage of 12th-graders who were able to earn a matriculation certificate and meet the basic admission requirements for university is scandalous – just 0.7% in Modi'in Ilit.

In other words, 90,000 children in this group, or nearly a quarter of the Israeli population in the West Bank, will continue to need government support and remain at the bottom of Israel's wage index.

Sixty percent earn up to the minimum wage, no further. These figures also explain the high rate of government participation in these areas' revenue – about 400 million shekels. These settlements' contribution to the messianic choir of Bennett, Shaked & Co. comes in the form of the false portrayal of population growth in the settlements, because nearly half the annual growth comes from these Haredi settlements, which are not aligned with Habayit Hayehudi's messianic-nationalist ideology.

Still in the bottom half of the index, to the west of the security barrier, is a group of 10 settlements home to less than 5 percent of the population, and where Habayit Hayehudi is the dominant party. Another 5 percent is in the settlement of Givat Ze'ev, where Likud leads.

The third and largest group falls in the upper half of the index and comprises 49% of the population living in 35 settlements. This group

includes many voters for Likud, Zionist Union, Yesh Atid and Kulanu. In these places, the percentage of children is lower at 38%. The percentage of students eligible for a matriculation certificate is high – 82%. Only one quarter of this population earns the minimum wage or less. Government participation in these localities' revenue is 40% on average, for a total of 300 million NIS.

The picture revealed by the socioeconomic index shows us what people making heated calls for a "Zionist response" are trying to hide from us. They want to bring more people to the poor settlements in the Gav Hahar area that were put there by Gush Emunim adherents and never took off. Instead, these places are simply in the heart of Palestinian areas and have been a constant cause of friction and violence.

A fitting Zionist response at this point would be an evacuation-compensation law, the evacuation of the isolated settlements, the completion of the security barrier around the main settlement blocs, and the finding of a way to resume negotiations with the Palestinians.

After all, only with a final-status accord will it be possible to make the strong settlements near the Green Line part of Israel proper and find a different way of handling the Haredim who were pushed over the Green Line due to the housing crunch.

Unfortunately, for this we need a government with a Zionist vision of a Jewish-majority democratic country that seeks peace with its neighbors, not a messianic-nationalist government.

From What is Happening in the Settlements – Haaretz, July 5, 2019

The results of the elections for the 21st Knesset in the settlements and within the Green Line once again reflect the permanent reality that no election campaign can escape: an extremist minority that believes that only the Jewish people has the right to self-determination in the Land of Israel, is undermining the chances of an overwhelming majority of the settlers of becoming a legitimate part of sovereign Israel. The settlers know to embrace a government that is favorable to them. The fact that the outgoing government and Knesset negates the two-state solution and the resumption of negotiations with the Palestinians, and the unprecedented support that the Trump administration gives the Netanyahu government, strengthened the nationalistic and messianic elements within it, (which are afflicted with fascism and leading the process of expanding religiosity in Israel) - as the leading voices. The lawlessness in the West Bank, the huge benefits, and the huge investments have made most Israelis living in the settlements more aware that the current reality is paying off. However, a slight exploration of the data exposes the unchanging truth: the part of the settlement enterprise that constitutes an obstacle to a permanent status agreement, is promoted by one party, which represents a very small minority of the settlers.

A comparison between the voting in the settlements in 2015 and the results of the last elections shows that the voting rate among the settlers jumped by almost 20%. The main reason for this is the increase in voter turnout among the Haredi population, which numbers about 40% of all settlers. The splitting of the "Jewish Home" party to the "unification of the right-wing parties" and "new-right" parties increased the number of voters from both from 37,550 to 53,161, maintaining the primacy of these parties in 62 of the 127 settlements (48.8% of the settlements). This is an increase from 1.14 mandates in 2015 to 1.5 mandates in 2019. As expected, Bezalel Smotrich's party led in 48 communities, while Bennett and Shaked (new right) led only in 14. The new right party contributed 19,964 voices, accumulating to 0.6 mandates, to the trash can of the parties that did not pass the electoral threshold, and to that the "identity" part added 9,064 votes (0.28 mandates).

The Likud was strengthened and climbed from one mandate in 2015 to 1.3 mandates - the largest party in Judea and Samaria. It continued being the most popular party in the third largest city, Ma'ale Adummim, and the fourth, Ariel, both of which have 60,000 residents. The same is true of the largest local council, Givat Ze'ev (17,000), and the smallest, Ma'ale Ephraim, as well as in 20 small settlements.

A similar climb was made by United Torah Judaism, which went from 0.8 mandates in Judea and Samaria to 1.1 and maintained absolute dominance in the two largest ultra-Orthodox cities in the settlements, Modi'in Illit and Betar Illit, with 125,000 residents - more than a quarter of the population in Judea and Samaria. This is also the case in Emanuel, Ma'aleh Amos and Little Me'ad. Shas, too, doubled its strength from a quarter of a mandate to about half a mandate and took the lead in Ganei Modi'in and Kochav Ya'akov, so that in the last elections, the ultra-Orthodox added to themselves about half a mandate only from Judea and Samaria.

The Union of Yesh Atid with "Resilience to Israel", which spawned "Blue and White", has raised the number of their supporters twelvefold in the settlements, from 0.04 mandates to nearly half a mandate. "Blue and White" took the lead from the Likud in the local councils on the Green Line, Oranit and Alfei Menashe, and from Labour in Har Adar (the three most well off settlements), as well as from Mekora, Tomer, Reihan, Salit and Nili. In 16 settlements, Blue and White led with the number of votes it received, compared to only one locality (Gilgal) in which Yesh Atid led in 2015.

Labor lost its lead in 12 of the 13 settlements in which it won a majority in 2015 (with the exception of Niran in the Jordan Valley). In most of the settlements in the Valley and the Dead Sea, the flagship of the Labor Party and the Allon Plan, a majority of voters supported Blue and White (Netiv Hagdud, Naama, Kalia, Almog, Mitzpeh Shalem) and the Likud (Beit Ha'arava). The rest of the settlements remained loyal to the Likud and the northern Jordan Valley to "unification of the right-wing parties".

These data point to a right-wing surge of the settlers: alongside the disappearance of the Labor Party, the right-wing parties grew, and the Haredi parties were strengthened significantly. Examining the demographic and settlement data will make it possible to better understand the results of the last elections.

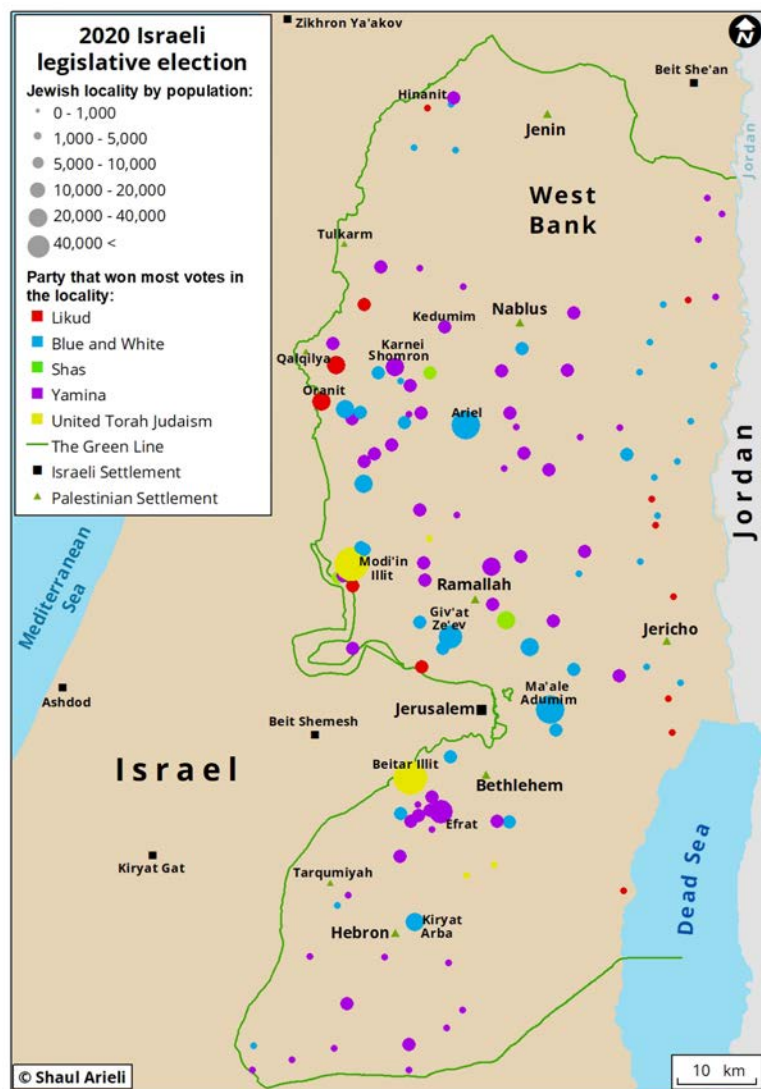
In 62 communities inhabited by supporters of the "unification of the right-wing parties" and "the new right" (Gush Emunim throughout the ages), live only 30% of all Israelis in the Judea and Samaria District. Most of them live on the mountainous side, in isolated settlements outside the main "blocs", (with the exception of Gush Etzion) and in illegal outposts. Residents of these settlements are the population segment that deliberately prevents the establishment of Palestinian continuity necessary for the establishment of a Palestinian state.

In the communities led by the ultra-Orthodox parties, the Likud and Blue

and White, 70% of the settlers live, most of them near the Green Line; and except for the Jordan Valley settlements, they all live in the "settlement blocs." In other words, within the framework of a permanent agreement, in which there will be exchanges of territory of no more than 4%, 80% of the Israelis living beyond the Green Line will be able to become an integral part of the State of Israel and be under its sovereignty, in a manner recognized by the entire world. In order to realize this possibility, in which the Palestinians led by the PLO would agree to, Israel will have to contend with re-absorption within the Green Line or in the annexed "blocs" of the residents of the isolated settlements and illegal outposts populated by voters of the "unification of the right-wing parties", "the new right" and "Identity".

The spatial political map has hardly changed in the 52 years of Israel's control of the West Bank. Likud and Labor voters, who transferred their support to Blue and White, live in the settlement areas that would be annexed to Israel in government plans - the Allon Plan (1967) and the Sharon Plan (1977) - and were considered necessary for security and for economic reasons. The voters for the ultra-Orthodox parties moved to the West Bank due to the housing shortage of the ultra-Orthodox community in Jerusalem, Bnei Brak and Beit Shemesh. In contrast, the Gush Emunim settlers throughout the generations have settled in the territories deliberately and openly - contrary to government's plans and in many cases against the law - in order to establish facts on the hilltop, densely populated by Palestinians; they wanted to prevent the continuity of Palestinian territory and the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

It is sad to discover, every time, how a small minority succeeds in shackling the majority and preventing it from acting for the general interest of Israel - a separation from the Palestinians for its identity, democracy and security, its rule of law and its membership in the family of nations.



Bennet, the Battle for Judea has been Decided – Haaretz, December 17, 2019

The imaginary “Kingdom of Judea” envisioned by Naftali Bennett and his pals from Gush Emunim, in all its transformations, has fallen. The truth is, it never really arose after its destruction following the failed Bar Kochba revolt.

The defense minister has known this for some time. His decision to expand the Jewish enclave in the old city of Hebron – by adding a neighborhood lying on the rooftops of stores in the former and now abandoned Hebron wholesale market – will not change reality, a gloomy one in his eyes. It will only increase the price Israel will have to pay one day for its restoration to sanity.

Just like the process of enhanced religiosity he sowed among Israeli pupils as minister of education, he is now sowing the seeds of the next calamity. He’s laying a minefield for anyone who may try and renew the diplomatic process, setting up a different kind of relationship with the Palestinians on the day he and his cronies, together with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – who appointed Bennett as payment for services, devoid of any security or national considerations – will release Israel from the ultra-nationalist-messianic chokehold they have over it.

Despite 52 years of Israeli occupation and the tens of billions of shekels invested, as well as an unbroken 10 years of a nationalist-messianic government headed by Netanyahu, a renewed Kingdom of Judea never really got off the ground.

In the area between the Etzion Bloc and the Green Line (1967 border) to its south (the Palestinian Hebron district), there are currently 800,000 Palestinians. Among them, according to Central Bureau of Statistics figures for December 2018, there are 9,980 Israelis, living in 15 tiny settlements belonging to the Hebron Hills Regional Council. To this one can add the Kiryat Arba Regional Council, in which 7,323 people live (fewer than last year).

In other words, for every Israeli living in this area there are 47 Palestinians, a demographic ratio of 98 to 2 in favor of the Palestinians. Most of the area is designated as Area A or B, according to the Oslo Accords designation, meaning that it is under Palestinian jurisdiction. The rest, Area C, consists mainly of narrow corridors providing access to these settlements.

Whereas the Arab population in this area contributes 40 percent to the Palestinian Authority’s GDP, the Jewish population, lacking any significant agricultural or industrial areas, is situated in the lower ranks

in the socioeconomic scale devised by Israel. Most people there work within the Green Line.

In general, the two populations, Israeli and Palestinian, are affiliated with religious and extremist organizations and parties. Support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad is higher in these areas than in other parts of the West Bank, with most Israelis in this area voting for nationalist-messianic parties to the right of Likud in the last election.

Thus, the battle over Judea, which was futile to begin with, has been decided. Not “in blood and fire Judea shall rise,” but for much fewer heroic reasons, grounded. Most Israelis who live within the Green Line understood that it would be wrong, for diplomatic, security, economic and social reasons, to settle amid a Palestinian population in the Hebron hills. Bennett knows that in the city of Hebron itself the battle has long been decided.

It happened even before the renewed battle commenced, when followers of Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook took over the Park Hotel there during the Passover holiday in 1968. At their head were Rabbi Moshe Levinger and the campaign’s instigator, Elyakim Haetzni, who “knew” what the people of Israel wanted and what its attitude to the rule of law was: “It was clear to us that the nation wishes to return to Hebron, and if the government doesn’t, it should be faced with a *fait accompli*. Even though I’m a meticulously law-abiding citizen, in this matter... we couldn’t accept any other ruling and decided to create facts on the ground. We had no hesitations”.

The 800 Jews now living in a city with 230,000 Palestinian residents attest to how much “justice” and “wisdom” there were in claims made by Haetzni and his associates.

So, what did Bennett decide to do? To add to these few Jews a few hundred more, in order to exact a stiffer price from a future government which will hold different political positions. In the short term, the planning and construction will pose a greater challenge for security forces – which already have to post one soldier for almost every Israeli living in Hebron – when they have to contend with the expected Palestinian response to this plan.

Perhaps Bennett believes that in the thick of battle it will be possible to do more than the IDF is currently doing to protect settlers in this part of Hebron. The IDF is already using extreme measures against Palestinian residents, including shutting down stores and businesses, closing off streets to traffic, with some streets closed to pedestrians as well.

In the long run, the idea is to create a diplomatic and social challenge for a different future government which will seek to resume the diplomatic process and negotiate a two-state solution, which will involve the evacuation of Israelis now living in isolated houses in the heart of Palestinian neighborhoods, maintaining a violent and hostile relationship with their neighbors. It is not something new or surprising to note that in earlier negotiations with the Palestinians, the Jewish settlements in the Hebron area were never included in any Israeli offer to swap territories, due to the demographic reality described here.

The seeds of calamity embedded in the projected new neighborhood, to be situated above the wholesale market in Hebron, are just the beginning. Anyone wandering the streets of Hebron these days can observe the full intent through signs hung up at every corner by Jewish residents: “From the Old City to Nofei Mamre [a distant neighborhood in the city], since our holy city Hebron only wishes to grow,” or “a fundraising campaign for saving the next batch of houses in Hebron”.

It must be explained to the people of Israel, who eschew visiting the city of our forefathers, that the intention is to create a contiguity of houses linking the main street in the pre-1948 Jewish quarter with Kiryat Arba to the east. This plan ignores the 90,000 Palestinians who own thousands of houses and 1,350 stores in this area. The chances of carrying this out within the confines of current Israeli law are the same as those of creating Jewish contiguity between Kiryat Arba and Be’er Sheva or the Etzion Bloc, namely zero.

However, Bennett’s declaration shows us that there is no limit to the social and moral callousness of the legal advisers in the Defense Ministry, who wrote the legal brief that legitimized the planning of a neighborhood on the rooftops of stores in that marketplace. These are stores that were owned by Jews until 1948 but where, since then, Palestinians have enjoyed protected tenancy rights.

According to the legal opinion, the stores may be demolished and then rebuilt, with no intention of reopening them. That way, a Jewish neighborhood can be built based on the claim that these stores have anyway been closed for 25 years. The defense minister and his carefully picked assistants don’t care that these stores were closed following the massacre perpetrated by Baruch Goldstein on Muslim worshippers at the Cave of the Patriarchs on Purim, 1994. Nor does it matter to them that Israel under Netanyahu signed the Hebron Protocol in 1997, which allows Palestinians to reopen the market on Shuhada Street, letting traffic through there again.

In this racist spirit, all the next government has to do, assuming it is made up of the same parties as the previous one, is to impose Israeli law on the area called Hebron II, controlled by Israel according to the Hebron Protocol. This law will include the “present absentee” law, which will overnight render Palestinian residents of the city “absentees.” Their property will be confiscated by Israel’s government and no High Court of Justice will be able to prevent it.

The temporary refugee status enforced on tens of thousands of Palestinians who lived in this area, who looked for temporary dwelling in parts of Hebron that were under the rule of the Palestinian Authority, hoping to make a living and move away from the humiliations and threats doled out by settlers enjoying the protection of the IDF, will become permanent, anchored in Israeli law.

Israel will continue to declare itself the only democracy in the Middle East, a law-abiding country, while Oded Revivi, the mayor of Efrat, will continue publishing articles about the parallel universe in which he coexists peacefully with the Palestinians, ignoring the fact that the relationship is akin to that of a rider and his horse.

The March of Folly in the Settlements Continues - Haaretz, October 15, 2020

About two weeks ago Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the convening of the supreme planning commission of the Civil Administration, with the aim of approving extensive construction in Judea and Samaria – to the extent of 5,400 housing units in dozens of locales. Clearly this move – after having suspended planning of construction in Judea and Samaria this past February so as not to damage the agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain – is a political payment aimed at his survival.

However, this is yet another step in the march of folly of the continued construction in the West Bank settlements. This is a tremendous waste of resources at the expense of Israeli society and deepens the illusion that it will be possible to dictate to the Palestinians a peace agreement and cessation of the conflict along with annexing all the settlements to Israel.

Few will attempt to explain the “logic” in the “Trump initiative” map that Netanyahu has warmly adopted – which saddles Israel and the Israel Defense Forces with building and securing a new border three times longer than all of Israel’s other borders – on security grounds that have become obsolete.

Many others will point to the main reason, which is the desire to prevent evacuation of any settlements or illegal outposts in order to thwart implementation of the two-state solution. This border stretches along an illogical route and to an illogical length in order to annex dozens of isolated and tiny settlements, creating 17 Israeli enclaves that are located inside the territory of Palestine that will be annexed to Israel. This hallucinatory border was born in order to bestow a political handout to the messianic-nationalists in Likud and to the right of it, who believe in the commandment to “inherit the land” and also in order to provide an answer to the fear held by part of the public of a “civil war” that would be ignited by forced evacuation of a large number of settlers.

This situation is encouraging the opponents of a permanent status solution to continue to invest large amounts of state money in expanding the settlements in general and in particular the isolated settlements that impinge on Palestinian territorial contiguity.

Until the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, most of the public saw nothing wrong with the settlements and even justified their construction because of the Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel on the basis of the international resolutions and to sign a peace agreement with it. Ever

since Israel signed the Oslo Accords, which is based on United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, the significance of which is a return to the 1967 lines, it was clear to all the prime ministers and cabinet ministers that when the Palestinians satisfy Israel's security requirements by means of functional arrangements, on the model of the agreements with Egypt and Jordan (as has indeed been done), the biggest challenge and obstacle to signing a permanent agreement will be the future of the settlements.

How, then, have the governments of Israel acted with regard to the obstacle of the settlements since the signing of the Oslo Accords? Have they, as the Palestinians claim, done everything in their power to make this obstacle even larger in order to increase the size of the territory annexed to Israel at their expense or, worse still – create a reality that will be perceived by the Israeli public as one that does not allow for any two-state solution at a reasonable national price? Or have they worked to reduce to the minimum the influence of this obstacle on the chance of reaching an agreement? We shall focus on this issue in Judea and Samaria as the Israelis were evacuated from the Gaza Strip in 2005, and in Jerusalem the two sides agreed in the past to divide East Jerusalem on a demographic basis.

In 1993, after 26 years of occupation and settlement, in Judea and Samaria there were 110,000 Israelis (2 percent of the total population of Israel), of whom 75 percent lived in the settlement blocs and adjacent to the Green Line. That is, under the working assumption of exchanges of territories, to which the Palestinians agreed, the challenge of the Israeli evacuation included only 27,000 people, or 6,500 families. This number constitutes about 0.5 percent of the population of Israel, or one third of the number of Palestinians currently living in Area C – to whom those who are demanding to annex them are also prepared to grant Israeli citizenship. Those were negligible numbers from the national perspective because during that decade Israel had absorbed one million immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

Post-Oslo spurt

How did the governments of Israel behave in the period between the signing of the Oslo Accords and the talks on a permanent status solution at the 2000 Camp David talks – seven years that were split between Prime Ministers Netanyahu, Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Ehud Barak? They brought an additional 80,000 Israelis to Judea and Samaria (an increase of 73 percent). Of them, 62 percent were accounted for by immigration from within the Green Line. At Camp David, Barak proposed annexing 13 percent of the West Bank, with 156,000 people, accounting

for 82 percent of all the Israelis in Judea and Samaria. That being the case, according to Israel's position and under its responsibility, a future evacuation would include another 7,000 individuals or 1,700 families (an addition of 20 percent).

By 2001, the number of Israelis in Judea and Samaria had risen to 201,000. On the backdrop of the second intifada, the number of those moving from inside the Green Line had plummeted to 30 percent of the annual increase in the number of Israelis in Judea and Samaria. At the Taba talks that year, Barak proposed annexing to Israel 6 to 8 percent of the territory with 145,000 Israelis (72 percent), which increased the number of expected evacuees to 56,000 – more than twice the number in 1993. The Palestinians proposed an annexation of 3 percent of the territory with only 96,000 Israelis and evacuation of the remaining 105,000.

At the talks in Annapolis in 2008, after seven more years that were split between Prime Ministers Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert, the number of Israelis in Judea and Samaria had soared by 90,000 (an increase of 44 percent relative to 2001) and had reached 291,000. Of them, 32,000 were accounted for by immigration from inside the Green Line (36 percent). In the negotiations, Olmert proposed annexing 6.5 percent of the West Bank with 211,000 Israelis and evacuating 80,000 settlers – three times more than what Israel was slated to evacuate in 1993. In the Palestinian proposal, the number of Israelis who were to be evacuated rose to 176,000.

The Netanyahu decade

An entire decade under Netanyahu increased the number of Israelis in Judea and Samaria by the end of 2018 to 428,000 – 47 percent more than there had been at the time of the Annapolis talks. Their proportion in the total population of Israel was 2.5 times higher than in 1993 and stood at 4.8 percent. It must be stressed that during the decade under Netanyahu, despite the relative quiet, the rate of immigration from within the Green Line to Judea and Samaria gradually dropped to 20 percent of the total increase while the natural increase in Judea and Samaria – half of that in the ultra-Orthodox towns of Modi'in Ilit and Betar Ilit had gradually risen to account for 80 percent of the total increase.

Ultra-Orthodox – or Haredi – society, which had only 6,000 of its members living in Judea and Samaria in 1993 (5.5 percent of all the Israelis there) had become the motor for growth for the settler population. In 2018, their number reached 150,000 (35 percent of the population of Israelis in Judea and Samaria) and within a decade it is expected to account for half of all the Israelis in Judea and Samaria. More than half the permits for new

housing units (2,929) will be allocated to the Haredi town of Betar Ilit.

If we examine Olmert's proposal in 2008 in light of the current situation, Israel would now be required in accordance with its position at the time and under its responsibility, to evacuate 114,000 Israelis. That is, a number greater than the total number of Israelis who were living in Judea and Samaria in 1993, and 4.2 times the number of Israelis who would have been required to evacuate in 1993.

From this analysis it emerges that Israel, under all its prime ministers, has chosen a policy that has led to magnification of the obstacle entailed in evacuating Israelis, by having encouraged immigration, construction and expansion of the settlements as a whole and in particular the isolated settlements outside the major blocs. The prime ministers did this for different reasons: Barak believed a permanent status solution could be achieved during his time in office and therefore there was no significance to an addition of thousands of evacuees, and Netanyahu saw the increase in the number of settlers as a tool to destroy a two-state solution and persuade the public that it is possible to impose on the Palestinians autonomy that is only cultural.

Since the Oslo Accords the number of Israelis living in Judea and Samaria has increased by 289 percent while the population of Israel as a whole has increased by 68 percent. In other words, in the 26 years that elapsed between the Six-Day War and the Oslo Accords, the number of settlers increased by an average of 4,000 annually and in the 27 years since the accords, by an average of 12,000 people annually. Israel has preferred the settlements even over East Jerusalem, where the number of Israelis in 1993 was 115,000, compared to 218,000 in 2018 (an increase of 89 percent).

In the past decade under Netanyahu, most of the construction has been in the isolated locales and the government has also approved billions of shekels to improve the access roads to them. In the context of the new authorizations, nearly 2,000 homes have been allocated to the isolated settlements deep inside the Palestinian area, among them Eli (629), Shiloh (141), Har Bracha (286), Pnei Kedem (120) Einav (181) and Shim'a (21).

Had Israel suspended expansion of the isolated settlements, it would face less of a challenge in negotiations to evacuate the inhabitants of those settlements, who would constitute a smaller portion of the Israeli population in Judea and Samaria. The number of inhabitants in the 17 Israeli enclaves in the Trump plan – which in any scenario will destroy Palestinian contiguity and had been intended for evacuation by Ariel

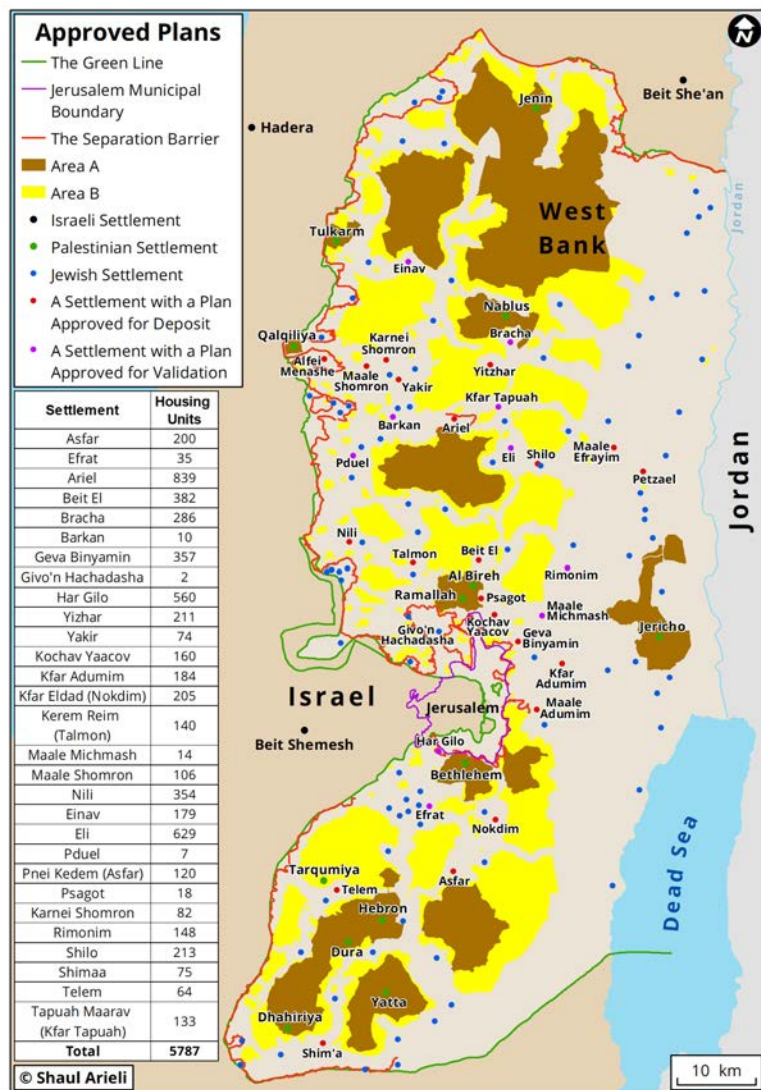
Sharon in the context of the disengagement plan – was 5,100 in 1993, and had more than tripled by 2018, reaching 16,400.

Two-state solution still feasible, but costlier

Despite all these moves, this policy, which is totally lacking in national responsibility, has failed to create a demographic and spatial reality that could dictate to the Palestinians the Trump initiative or any other proposal that is not based on a 1:1 exchange of territories — or prevents territorial contiguity in the Palestinian state and damages the fabric of the lives of its inhabitants.

Nor has this policy succeeded in changing the policy of the Arab countries, including those with whom we recently signed agreements, or of the international community. All of them still see the 1967 lines as the basis for the future border of Israel, with 1:1 exchanges of territories. Moreover, this policy has not succeeded in eliminating the possibility of the two-state solution, because Israel can keep under its sovereignty 80 percent of the Israelis who are living beyond the Green Line on less than 4 percent of the territory of the West Bank, and it has the ability to absorb the evacuees with respect to housing and employment.

The policy of expanding the settlements in Judea and Samaria was and remains hideously costly to the state of Israel with regard to its security, economy and society. Most of the security forces in the West Bank are invested in guarding the settlements and the roads to them, as well as in preventing "price tag" terror against Palestinians by Israeli extremists. And year by year, Israel has had to increase its subsidizing of the settlers, whose ranking is gradually dropping to the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. As time goes by, this policy is not achieving anything but rather is raising the price we are paying today and will have to pay in the future.



The Day Netanyahu Made a Laughingstock of Trump - The Forum for Regional Thinking – November 11, 2020

Netanyahu's approval, this month, of the building of, or the advancement of, 5,787 housing units in the settlements, makes a joke of the Trump Plan, and demonstrates the Prime Minister's unwillingness to keep his political commitments. As usual, he is being held hostage by the sectarian parties who hold the key to his continued survival.

It only took a few months for Prime Minister Netanyahu to show US President Trump and his Special Advisor Kushner clear evidence that he is untrustworthy, and unable to keep political commitments. This month Netanyahu provided an excellent example of this with the approval and advancement of a plan to expand the settlements and illegal outposts in the West Bank.

In President Trump's Peace Plan, Kushner and his staff made sure to break up Palestinian territorial continuity by annexing 87% of the settlements, 85% of which are small, isolated settlements, deep in Palestinian territory. Trump was not satisfied with that alone. He adopted the principle, established by Netanyahu and the US Ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, according to which, not one settlement would be evacuated, and therefore, the plan includes 17 settlements that will become "Israeli enclaves within continuous Palestinian territory". The plan also establishes that the 17,000 Israelis who live in those settlements "will be allowed to stay where they are, unless they choose otherwise, and keep their existing Israeli citizenship. They will be under Israeli civil administration...and the access routes to them will be under Israeli security control".

In order to compensate the Palestinians, the following sentence was added to the Plan: "Israel will avoid expanding the Israeli enclaves, mentioned in Paragraph 4, or promote any plan to expand the enclaves in those areas beyond their current borders".

The Trump Initiative did not make the heads of Yesha and the right-wing messianic-nationalist parties happy, and they published a plan that demands that all the Israeli enclaves be connected to the territory to be annexed to Israel, as well as the dozens of

illegal outposts close by, via corridors that would create continuous Israeli territory and would turn the Palestinian "state" into one big sieve.

In the approval, given recently, by Netanyahu and Defense Minister Gantz, to the building of, or advancement of, 5,787 housing units, one can see that the two preferred the "poor" of their own city, the settlers,

over the “poretz” Trump. 17% of the approvals were given to settlements that would become Israeli enclaves according to the Trump Plan, in addition to the illegal outposts. So, for instance, is the case in regards to the settlements of Yitzhar and Baracha, which are situated in the heart of the West Bank, near Nablus. They will enjoy 211, and 286 new housing units (respectively). This is also the case for Asfar (200), Pnei Kedem (64) and the isolated Telem (120). The outpost of Tapuach West, which is close to Kfar Tapuch, will remain an enclave, and got approval for 133 housing units.

Regarding the placement of these approvals, it is clear that there is no political agenda behind them in relation to the future of the settlements, if, in the future the Two State Solution is considered, but rather the opposite. The vast majority of the approvals were given to the small, isolated settlements that are beyond the pale of any of Israel’s political offers regarding a permanent border with Palestine.

64% of the housing units are beyond the route of the Israeli offer for the final border during the Annapolis Conference (2008), which allowed Israel to keep its sovereignty over 83% of Israelis living over the green line; 89% of the housing units are east of the already built security barrier, and 68% of them are east of the planned security barrier; 80% of them are even east of the optimal permanent border which was consolidated in in-depth research done by the “Commanders for Israeli Security” Movement, and which would make it possible for 80% of Israelis over the green line to remain under Israeli sovereignty. In the end, all approved housing units are beyond the potential area of Palestinian consent, suggested in the Geneva Initiative, with the exception of two housing units that were approved in New Givon.

Netanyahu has once again been exposed as someone who doesn’t hesitate to bite the hand that feeds him. He did so with President Obama, after he approved security aide to Israel in the unprecedented amount of 38 billion dollars, and so too to President Trump, who gave Israel a lot more than it asked for in his impossible plan.

These approvals once again show that Netanyahu can keep his seat only as long as he fulfills all the requests of the sectarian parties- that they are his political support, and they continue to do whatever they want in terms of the settlements. He cannot take any steps towards any significant process against their interests – from dealing with Corona to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In other words, the ability of Netanyahu to rule is like a cheap bright color on painted on disintegrating rust.

Yesha Council – You Have Failed – Haaretz, January 1, 2021

The publications of the Central Bureau of Statistics regarding the settlements should break the imaginary reality built by the prime minister and his ministers and emissaries, among other things in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Alongside the government, the Yesha Council is bringing “Fake Reality” to new heights. That fake reality creates a false image as if Jewish settlement is thriving, and is about to subdue the demographic and spatial dominance of the Palestinians in a way that will allow it to be annexed to Israel. However, the latest CBS publications regarding trends among Israelis in the “Judea and Samaria District” contradict the data and interpretations, which the Yesha Council hastened to publish as usual many months before the CBS finishes the professional preparation of its publications. Early advertising is aggressively marketed, and seeks to establish a false public consciousness regarding the true state of the settlements, and their impact on the feasibility of a two-state solution.

Let’s start with the simpler section: the facts. In February 2020, the Yesha Council published a position paper on the population data in the district at the end of 2019, all of which focus on its size. This is because, according to the Israeli government, the victory of Israeli settlement will be achieved in numbers: Yigal Alon spoke about the settlement of two million Israelis in the Jordan Valley, Ariel Sharon sought the settlement of one million Israelis in Judea and Samaria, Yitzhak Shamir thought that half a million would be enough to create an irreversible reality there, and last year more than 40 MKs and coalition ministers pledged for one million Israelis.

While the CBS has only 127 localities in Judea and Samaria, the position paper of the Yesha Council states that “the Israeli settlement in the area has about 150 localities, with 463,901 residents”. The number of localities includes the localities of Gush Katif and Northern Samaria, which were evacuated in 2005, neighborhoods that are counted as separate localities, and even outposts. And what about the number of residents? The CBS states that there are 441,600 residents in Judea and Samaria. 5% less.

The paper from the Yesha Council later states that in 2019 there was a 3.4% increase in the number of residents in Judea and Samaria, and “the increase in the number of persons ... stands at 15,229”. According to the CBS, there was an increase of 3.2%, an increase of only 13,800 people - a gap of more than 10%. There is other incorrect data in the paper, for example that in the four Jewish cities “202,177 inhabitants

live”, while their number is much lower - 194,339, or that “The locality of Beit HaArava has the highest percentage of growth, with 36.5%”. In practice, the growth rate there is 21%, and stems mainly from the joining of 13 families to the “locality” of Kedem Arava, which is actually a neighborhood of Beit HaArava.

Let’s continue with a more important aspect: what does not appear in the position paper of the Yesha Council. First, out of an increase of 13,800 residents, only 400 (!) Are a product of migration from the Green Line. For comparison, 25 years ago the migration balance to Judea and Samaria was summed up as 6,000–8,000 inhabitants per year. 1,000 residents are new immigrants who were directly located in the settlements and 12,400, i.e. 90% of the annual increase, is due to natural increase.

Examining the 2018 data, the gloomy picture in the context of immigration becomes clear: 49 (!) Settlements suffered from a negative migration balance. At the top of the list is Ofra, with a balance of 641 more leaving than entering, Ma’ale Adumim (235), Beit El (240), Kiryat Arba (216), Hashmonaim (135), Ali (144), Alon Shvut (138) and even the two ultra-Orthodox cities - Modi’in Illit (178) and Beitar Illit (131). The people of Israel are voting with their feet and are continuing to exclude themselves from Judea and Samaria for the past 25 years. Judea and Samaria are not an attractive location for any Israeli sector. Even for the ultra-Orthodox, Harish and Ramat Shemesh are more attractive destinations.

Second, 48.5% of the annual increase in Judea and Samaria is mainly due to a natural increase in settlements of ultra-Orthodox. The proportion of the ultra-Orthodox in Judea and Samaria, is three times higher than in Israel, which explains the naive boasting of the Yesha Council, “that 48% of the district’s residents are over the age of 18, while in Israel the figure stands at 71%”. The housing crisis in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak and the huge government subsidy pushed the ultra-Orthodox in the early 1990s to cross the Green Line, mainly to Modi’in Illit and Beitar Illit. If so, half of the annual increase in the Judea and Samaria district is a result of the high rate of ultra-Orthodox there. The other half stems from the national-religious sector, which enjoys unprecedented budgeting relative to other Israelis. According to a report published by the Adva Center in 2019, in the last 20 years the increase in the budget of non-Haredi settlements has been twice as large as the increase in the budget of development towns; at the same time the government budget for non-Haredi settlers is more than double then that given to a Haredi settler.

Third, the Yesha Council hides the true condition of the two major secular cities - Ma’ale Adumim and Ariel. The first, despite its close proximity to

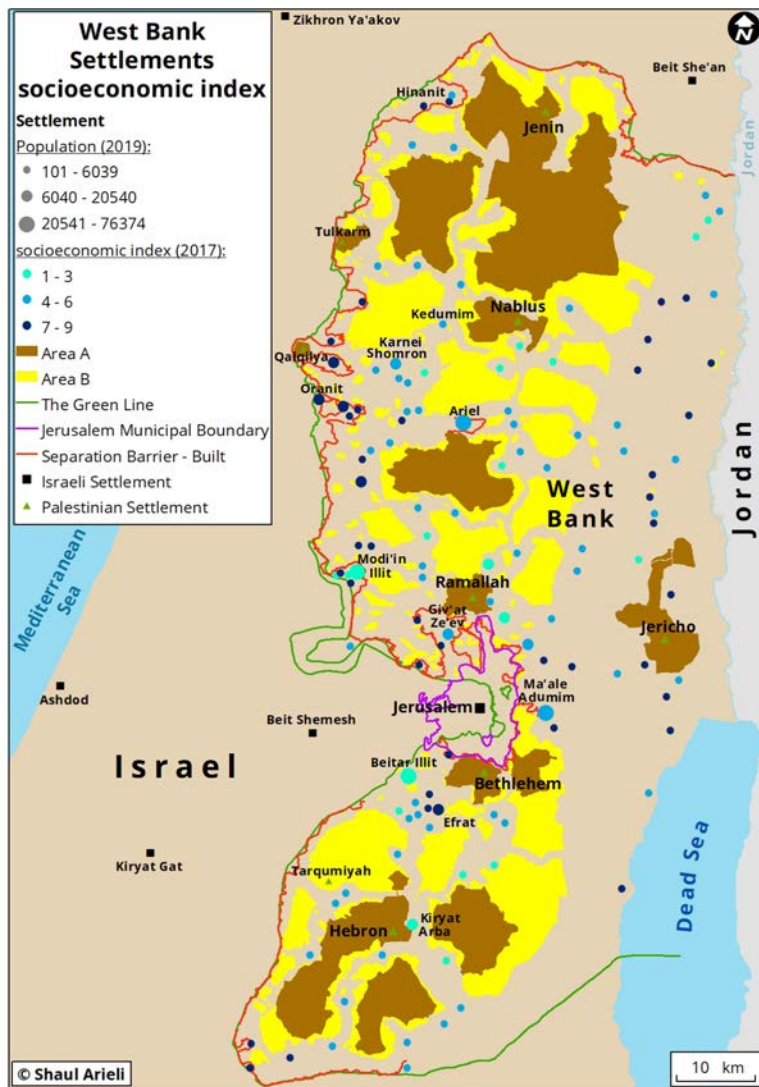
Jerusalem, has been stagnant for more than a decade, and has not grown. It suffers from a negative migration balance, and in 2019 its population decreased. But this trend did not stop the prime minister from promoting the construction of 3,500 new housing units in the Mevaseret Adumim neighborhood (E1). The same is true of Ariel, where the annual growth rate is only 0.4%. The smallest city in the district (20,000 inhabitants) suffers from negative immigration, and its population is not smaller just due to the absorption of new immigrants. Its population is relatively older - only 23.7% of its inhabitants are under the age of 18.

Fourth, except for Ma’ale Adumim, 17 settlements of the population shrank - including strongholds of Gush Emunim, such as the Beit El and Kedumim councils, Alon Shvut, Elazar and Karmeit Tzur in Gush Etzion; Settlements in the depths of the West Bank, such as Elon Moreh, and those on the Green Line, such as Kfar Oranim; Hamra and Tomer in the Jordan Valley and Mitzpe Shalem near the Dead Sea, and settlements adjacent to Jerusalem, such as the new Givon.

Fifth: On average, Israelis in Judea and Samaria are much poorer than Israelis in the Green Line, although some of the settlements have improved their rankings on the socio-economic scale of the CBS, published recently (for 2017). About 40%, almost all of them ultra-Orthodox living in 20 settlements, are ranked in the three lowest clusters. 90% of them are located in cluster 1. An additional 40% are ranked in intermediate clusters 4-6, and live in 61 other settlements. Only 20%, living in 46 settlements, are located in higher clusters, 7-9.

Sixth, place of employment: Significant Israeli industry and agriculture have not been developing in Judea and Samaria for years. This year, too, about 60% of the labor force is making its way to work in Israel. Most of the rest enjoy jobs in the education system and local authorities that receive exceptional and unprecedented budgets.

It has already been said that God is in the details. A well-managed and padded system of the Israeli government and its emissaries tries to hide them from the public and create a false, messianic and imaginary representation that denies the sad reality of the settlements and demands that Israeli society continues to sustain them contrary to the national interest of a Democratic state with a Jewish majority. Continued support for the ideas of annexation on the basis of these weak roots of the settlement enterprise is a bad and irresponsible gamble by the society in Israel.



Milestones

May 1840	Decree by Ottoman Sultan Abdulmajid I According Jews limited prayer rights at the Western (Wailing) Wall
20 Feb 1841	Firman (decree) recognizing Muhammad Ali as ruler of Egypt Establishing the Egyptian-Ottoman border at the Rafah-Suez line
1852-1853	Firmans regarding holy sites in Jerusalem Establishing the status quo in four Christian holy sites
30 Mar 1856	Treaty of Paris between Russia, Britain, France and the Ottoman Empire Endorsing the Ottoman status quo regarding holy sites in Jerusalem
13 Jul 1878	Treaty of Berlin between the Ottoman Empire and the European powers Endorsing the Ottoman status quo regarding holy sites in Jerusalem
1 Oct 1906	Border agreement between the Ottoman Empire and Egypt Establishing the Egyptian-Ottoman border at the Rafah-Taba line
1911	Resolution of the Provincial Council on holy sites in Jerusalem Limited rights for Jews at the Western (Wailing) Wall

1914-1918	World War I Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and British occupation of Palestine	28 Aug 1919	King-Crane Commission American commission calling for Syria, including Palestine and Transjordan, to be placed under a mandate aimed at establishing an independent Arab kingdom
1915	McMahon-Hussein Letters Exchange of letters suggesting Arab support of the British against the Ottomans in exchange for British recognition of Arab independence	19 Apr 1920	San Remo Conference Agreement between several WWI allies to establish mandates in Syria, Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine and implement the Balfour Declaration
16 May 1916	Sykes-Picot Agreement Agreement dividing Ottoman territories into British, French and Russian spheres of influence following the war	10 Aug 1920	Treaty of Sèvres between Turkey and WWI Allied Powers Giving force to the decisions made at the Paris and San Remo Conferences with regard to the former Ottoman territories
2 Nov 1917	Balfour Declaration Expressing British support for the establishment of a Jewish —national homel in Palestine	23 Dec 1920	Anglo-French agreement on mandatory borders Establishing the borders of Mandatory Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq following the San Remo Conference
27 Oct 1918	Establishment of Occupied Enemy Territory Administration-South (OETA-S) Institutionalization of British military rule in Palestine, replaced with civil administration in 1920	1 May 1921	Outbreak of the 1921 Palestine Riots Riots against Jews in and around Jaffa, causing the death of 47 Jews and 48 Arabs
1919	Paris Peace Conference Determining the political results of World War I, including the division of mandates in the Middle East	Oct 1921	Haycraft Report on the 1921 riots Attributed the outbreak of violence to Arab discontent with Jewish immigration and British policy
27 Jan 1919	First Palestinian-Arab Congress in Jerusalem Rejection of Zionism, the Balfour Declaration and foreign involvement in Palestine		

3 Jun 1922	Publication of the Churchill White Paper British policy document suggesting limits on Jewish immigration in accordance with the economic situation in Palestine and the separation of Palestine and Transjordan	25 Jul 1924	Palestine (Holy Places) Order in Council, 1924 Stating that claims regarding the holy sites shall be heard before the High Commissioner or a special commission and not civil courts
24 Jul 1922	League of Nations approval of the Mandate for Palestine Establishing Britain as the Mandatory in Palestine, with the goal of implementing the Balfour Declaration, and allowing for the separate administration of Transjordan	2 Feb 1926	"Good neighborly relations" agreement between Syria, Palestine and Lebanon Establishing functional arrangements as to the relations and borders between the three Mandatory territories
10 Aug 1922	Palestine Order in Council, 1922 Formalizing British civil administration of Palestine	23 Aug 1929	Outbreak of the 1929 Palestine riots Riots following tensions over the Western (Wailing) Wall, causing the death of over 200 Jews and over 100 Arabs, and ending the existence of Jewish communities in Hebron and Gaza
16 Sep 1922	Transjordan Memorandum British announcement on separate administration of Transjordan in accordance with Article 25 of the Mandate for Palestine	Sep 1929	Cust Report Comprehensive overview of the holy sites status quo in and around Jerusalem
7 Mar 1923	Newcombe-Paulet Agreement Anglo-French agreement establishing the borders of Palestine, Syria and Lebanon	Mar 1930	Shaw Report on the 1929 riots Charging the Arabs with direct responsibility, while noting discontent with continued Jewish immigration and land acquisition, and recommending changes to British policy
24 Jul 1923	Treaty of Lausanne (superseding the Treaty of Sèvres) Constituting an international recognition of Turkey's new borders in exchange for official Turkish renunciation of former Ottoman territories	1 Oct 1930	Hope Simpson Report Pursuant to the Shaw Report, containing policy recommendations later embedded in the Passfield White Paper

20 Oct 1930	Passfield White Paper British policy document calling for limits on Jewish immigration and land acquisition and emphasizing Britain's equal commitment to Jews and Arabs	1939-1945 28	World War II and the Holocaust
		Feb 1940	Land Transfer Regulations, 1940 Prohibition or limitation of land acquisition by Jews in 95% of Palestine
19 May 1931	Palestine (Western or Wailing Wall) Order in Council, 1931 Establishing Muslim control of the Western (Wailing) Wall along with prayer rights for Jews	11 May 1942	Biltmore Program adopted by a Zionist conference in New York Rejecting the MacDonald White Paper and demanding the establishment of a "Jewish commonwealth" in Palestine
1936-1939	Arab Revolt in Palestine Uprising by Palestinian Arabs against Mandatory authorities and the Jewish population, put down by force, causing the deaths of hundreds of Jews and British and thousands of Arabs	27 Sep 1945	Palestine Defense (Emergency) Regulations, 1945 According Mandatory security forces widespread powers in the fight against Jewish and Arab militant organizations
30 Nov 1937	Peel Commission Report In light of the Arab Revolt and the irreconcilable aspirations of the two communities, recommending the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state, a British-controlled area and territory to be annexed to Transjordan	30 Apr 1946	Anglo-American Commission Report Recommending the continuation of the Mandate, disarmament of militants, abolition of restrictions on land acquisition and acceptance of 100,000 Jewish immigrants
9 Nov 1938	Woodhead Commission Report Containing three detailed partition proposals according to the principles of the Peel Report and recommending an economic union	31 Jul 1946	Morrison-Grady Scheme Recommending the establishment of a federation under a British commissioner including four cantons: two British, one Jewish and one Arab
7 Feb 1939	St. James Conference in London Failed reconciliation conference including British, Jewish and Arab delegates	7 Feb 1947	Bevin Plan Calling for Palestine to be put under a trusteeship regime for five years towards the implementation of the Morrison-Grady Scheme
23 May 1939	MacDonald White Paper British policy document rejecting partition and calling for limits on Jewish immigration with the goal of Jewish population reaching one-third of the total		

9 Sep 1947	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) Report Containing the majority proposal for partition with economic union and the minority proposal for a federal state	Feb 1949	Government of Israel declares Jerusalem to be a part of Israel
29 Nov 1947	UN General Assembly Resolution 181 Approving the Partition Plan for Palestine, based on the UNSCOP majority proposal	24 Feb 1949	Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement Armistice line based on the 1906 border, with the Gaza Strip under Egyptian control
30 Nov 1947	Outbreak of the 1948 war Large-scale fighting between Jews and Arabs following the latter's rejection of the Partition Plan	23 Mar 1949	Israel-Lebanon Armistice Agreement Armistice line based on the 1923 border
25 Mar 1948	US President Truman's proposal for temporary UN trusteeship of Palestine Made in light of the infeasibility of partition during wartime and the imminent termination of the Mandate for Palestine	Apr-Sep 1949	Lausanne Conciliation Conference Failed UN-sponsored conference including Israeli and Arab delegates
14 May 1948	Termination of the Mandate and Israeli declaration of independence Seven Arab countries invade the newly-declared country	3 Apr 1949	Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement Creation of the Green Line, with several territories designated as No Man's Lands
28 Jun 1948	First Bernadotte Plan Reintroducing the idea of partition with negotiated borders	11 May 1949	Admission of Israel to membership in the United Nations
11 Dec 1948	UN General Assembly Resolution 194 Including the choice of repatriation or compensation for Palestinian refugees	20 Jul 1949	Israel-Syria Armistice Agreement Armistice line based on the 1923 border, including demilitarized zones; official conclusion of the 1948 war
		12 Aug 1949	Fourth Geneva Convention International convention regarding the protection of noncombatants in times of war
		5 Dec 1949	Government of Israel proclaims Jerusalem the capital of Israel Including a commitment to preserving the holy sites

13 Dec 1949	Knesset resolves to relocate to Jerusalem	31 Aug 1962	Johnson Plan UN Special Envoy's plan for repatriation and compensation of Palestinian refugees
22 Feb 1950	Modus vivendi to the Israel-Egypt Armistice Understandings limiting military presence along the border and effecting territorial exchange	13 Jan 1964	1st Arab Summit in Cairo Establishment of a joint Arab military command and call for the establishment of a Palestinian National Council
24 Apr 1950	Jordanian Parliament resolution on annexation of the West Bank In accordance with King Abdullah's announcement; only recognized by Britain and Pakistan	28 May 1964	Establishment of PLO and ratification of the Palestinian Charter Resolved by a Palestinian conference in East Jerusalem in accordance with the conclusions of the 1st Arab Summit
1953-1955	Operation Alpha Secret diplomatic initiative led by the US and Britain with the goal of attaining Arab-Israeli peace in exchange for partial Israeli withdrawal from the Negev and repatriation of 75,000 Palestinian refugees	2 Jun 1964	2nd Arab Summit in Alexandria Endorsement of PLO establishment and commitment to the destruction of Israel
Oct 1953	Johnston Plan Put forward by an American envoy and calling for joint administration of the Jordan Valley water resources by Israel, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon	8 Nov 1966	Abolition of military governance in Arab-populated regions of Israel Proclaimed by PM Eshkol in accordance with Defence (Emergency) Regulations, 1945
18 Apr 1955	Bandung Conference Conference of Asian and African countries considered a milestone in the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement and supporting the Arabs against Israel	5-11 Jun 1967	Six Day War Israeli forces take over the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Golan Heights
29 Oct – 7 Nov 1956	Suez Crisis Israeli occupation of the Sinai Peninsula in a joint operation with Britain and France, followed by Israeli withdrawal under intense American and Soviet pressure	19 Jun 1967	Government of Israel offers withdrawal from Golan and Sinai for peace Offer rejected by Syria and Egypt

27 Jun 1967	Enactment of the Israeli Protection of Holy Places Law Ensuring access to holy sites and criminalizing insults to religious sentiments
28 Jun 1967	Extension of Israeli law and jurisdiction to East Jerusalem
26 Jul 1967	Allon Plan Proposal by Israeli Labor Minister Yigal Allon to partition the West Bank between Jordan and Israel, with the latter in control of the Jordan Valley and the access to Jerusalem
1 Sep 1967	4th Arab Summit in Khartoum Adopting the —Three No's resolution: no peace with Israel, no negotiation with Israel, no recognition of Israel
26 Oct 1967	Israeli Labor Minister Allon orders Green Line removed from Israeli maps
30 Oct 1967	Government of Israel retracts offer of withdrawal for peace Following Arab adoption of the —Three No's"
22 Nov 1967	UN Security Council Resolution 242 Stressing —the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and calling on Israel to withdraw from territories occupied during the Six Day War as part of a comprehensive peace settlement

1968	Israeli Defense Minister Dayan's "Fist Plan" Suggestion the creation of five military and civilian outposts deep in the West Bank
10 Jul 1968	Amendment of the Palestinian Charter Stressing Palestinian identity at the expense of the pan-Arab idea
8 Mar 1969	Outbreak of the War of Attrition Low-intensity conflict between Egypt and Israel along the Suez Canal
9 Dec 1969	First Rogers Plan Seeking ceasefire in the War of Attrition and a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement based on Resolution 242
19 Jun 1970	Second Rogers Plan Another ceasefire initiative, bearing fruit two months later
7 Aug 1970	Israeli-Egyptian ceasefire and the end of the War of Attrition
Sep 1970	"Black September" Annihilation of PLO power in Jordan by the Jordanian Army
4 Feb 1971	Egyptian President Sadat's peace initiative Suggesting Israeli redeployment away from the Suez Canal and resumption of transit to promote the implementation of Resolution 242

8 Feb 1971	Jarring Plan UN mediator's plan calling for an Israeli withdrawal to the international border with Egypt in exchange for demilitarization of the Sinai Peninsula, freedom of navigation in Suez Canal and Tiran Straits and Israeli-Egyptian nonbelligerency	10 Jan 1974	Jericho Plan Israeli Foreign Minister Allon's plan to cede the Jericho area to Jordan as part of a disengagement agreement
4 Oct 1971	Third Rogers Plan Suggesting the reopening of the Suez Canal and promoting Israeli-Egyptian peace	18 Jan 1974	Israeli-Egyptian Disengagement Agreement Mutual redeployment away from the Suez Canal, supervised by the UN
15 Mar 1972	King Hussein of Jordan's United Arab Kingdom Plan Suggesting a Jordanian-Palestinian federation under the Hashemite kings	1 Apr 1974	Agranat Interim Report Made by the Israeli commission of inquiry investigating the 1973 War; mostly criticizing the military leadership, protests following its publication caused the resignation of Israeli PM Meir
6-25 Oct. 1973	1973 War Surprise Egyptian-Syrian attack on Israel, ending with no significant territorial gains for either side	31 May 1974	Israeli-Syrian Disengagement Agreement Redeployment with a UN-supervised demilitarized zone and prisoner exchange
22 Oct 1973	UN Security Council Resolution 338 Calling for ceasefire in the 1973 War and a viable and just peace settlement based on Resolution 242	8 Jun 1974	PLO adopts its Ten-Point Plan Recognizing the possibility for gradual liberation of Palestine and combining diplomacy with armed struggle
12 Nov 1973	Israeli-Egyptian Ceasefire Stabilization Agreement Allowing for prisoner exchange and establishing framework for disengagement talks	14 Oct 1974	PLO invited to participate in UN debate
21 Dec 1973	Geneva Peace Conference Arab-Israeli peace conference sponsored by the UN, US and USSR	26 Oct 1974	7th Arab Summit in Rabat Recognizing PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people
		22 Nov 1974	PLO granted observer status at the UN

4 Sep 1975	Israeli-Egyptian Interim Agreement Expressing both sides' commitment to preserve the ceasefire and launch peace talks	14-21 Mar 1978	Operation Litani IDF operation to remove PLO presence south of the Litani River in South Lebanon
10 Nov 1975	UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 Stating that —Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination and comparing it to the South African Apartheid regime	19 Mar 1978	UN Security Council Resolution 425 Calling for a ceasefire between PLO and Israel and an Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon and establishing UNIFIL to guarantee its implementation
2 Oct 1977	Sharon Plan Presented by Israeli Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon and calling for a massive expansion of Jewish settlement in the West Bank	17 Sep 1978	Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt Framework agreement for Israeli-Egyptian peace and the establishment of an interim Palestinian self-government, pending negotiations on a permanent settlement
9 Nov 1977	Egyptian President Sadat expresses willingness to speak before Knesset Followed by an official invitation by PM Begin to visit Israel	2 Nov 1978	9th Arab Summit in Baghdad Denouncing the Camp David Accords
20 Nov 1977	Sadat's visit to Israel and speech before the Knesset Calling for negotiations on a comprehensive Arab-Israeli settlement based on Resolutions 242 and 338	10 Dec 1978	Israeli PM Begin and Egyptian President Sadat awarded Nobel Peace Prize For their part in achieving the Camp David Accords
14 Dec 1977	Cairo Conference Launching Israeli-Egyptian peace talks	26 Mar 1979	Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty Including Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, completed in 1982, in exchange for its demilitarization
28 Dec 1977	Government of Israel's plan for Palestinian autonomy Suggesting the abolition of military governance in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the establishment of an elected Palestinian authority as part of Israeli-Egyptian talks	13 Jun 1980	Venice Declaration A call by leaders of the European Community for Arab-Israeli peace based on Resolutions 242 and 338, recognizing Palestinian right for self-determination

30 Jul 1980	Jerusalem, Capital of Israel Basic Law Israeli Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel Declaring —united and complete Jerusalem to be Israel's capital and seat of government	16-18 Sep 1982	Sabra and Shatila Massacre Perpetrated by Lebanese Christian militias against Palestinian refugees in Beirut
7 Jun 1981	Operation Opera Destruction of the Iraqi nuclear reactor Tammuz by the Israeli Air Force	7 Feb 1983	Kahan Commission Report Following Israeli inquiry into the Sabra and Shatila Massacre, recommended the dismissal of Israeli Defense Minister Sharon
7 Aug 1981	Saudi Crown Prince Fahd's Eight-Point Plan Including Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967, establishment of a Palestinian state and choice of repatriation or compensation for Palestinian refugees	17 May 1983	Israel-Lebanon Agreement US-sponsored agreement for Israeli-Lebanese nonbelligerency and phased Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon; failed to win wide support and annulled in Mar 1984
14 Dec 1981	Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights	21 May 1985	Jibril Agreement Prisoner exchange between Israel, releasing 1,150 Palestinian prisoners, and militant organization PFLP-GC, releasing 3 captive IDF soldiers
6 Jun 1982	Israeli invasion of Lebanon and start of the 1982 War Invasion targeted PLO presence in Lebanon, but involved IDF in Lebanese Civil War and fighting against Syria	Jun 1985	Israeli withdrawal to the South Lebanon Security Zone The zone, extending several miles deep from the border, was controlled by the IDF and allied militia South Lebanon Army (SLA)
1 Sep 1982	Reagan Plan US President's suggestion to establish an interim Palestinian self-government for five years, followed by the establishment of a Palestinian entity linked with Jordan	11 Apr 1987	London (Peres-Hussein) Agreement Understandings between Israeli Foreign Minister Peres and King Hussein of Jordan, rejected by Israeli PM Shamir, regarding a peace conference including direct talks between Israeli and Jordanian-Palestinian delegations
8 Sep 1982	12th Arab summit in Fes Calling for a Palestinian state to be established in the West Bank and Gaza Strip		

9 Dec 1987	Outbreak of the First Intifada Palestinian popular uprising costing the lives of around 160 Israelis and over 2,000 Palestinians, ending around the Madrid Conference and launch of the Oslo Process	10 Oct 1989	US Secretary of State Baker's Five-Point Plan Recognizing Israeli initiative as a basis for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in Cairo
4 Mar 1988	Shultz Plan US Secretary of State's proposal for negotiations between Israeli and Jordanian-Palestinian delegations for a permanent settlement based on Resolutions 242 and 338	17 Jan – 28 Feb 1991	First Gulf War Conducted by a US-led international coalition against the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait
31 Jul 1988	King Hussein's Proclamation on Jordan's Renouncement of the West Bank	13 Mar 1991	US President Bush announces Middle East peace initiative During speech summarizing the Gulf War, calling for Arab-Israeli negotiations based on Resolutions 242 and 338 and the —land for peace principle
29 Sep 1988	International Arbitration Award on Israeli-Egyptian Border in Taba Award given in favor of Egypt in arbitration made under the peace treaty	30 Oct – 1 Nov 1991	Madrid Conference Peace conference sponsored by the US and USSR and featuring a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, launching Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli talks
15 Nov 1988	Palestinian Declaration of Independence and PLO Acceptance of Res. 242, 338 PLO's UN designation changed to —State of Palestine the same day; declaration recognized by 82 countries by the end of 1988	23 Jun 1992	Yitzhak Rabin elected Prime Minister of Israel
14 May 1989	Israeli Unity Government's Peace Initiative Suggesting elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for an interim self-government, pending permanent status negotiations with Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinians, while ruling out full Palestinian independence	19 Jan 1993	Knesset repeals law against liaising with PLO personnel Allowing for open contact with PLO as part of the Oslo Process
19 Sep 1989	Egyptian President Mubarak's Ten-Point Plan Framework for elections for Palestinian self-government in the West Bank and Gaza Strip	25-31 Jul 1993	Operation Accountability IDF operation against Hezbollah in South Lebanon, ending with ceasefire understandings
		10 Sep 1993	Israel and PLO exchange letters of recognition Including Palestinian commitment to amend Palestinian Charter clauses calling for the destruction of Israel

13 Sep 1993	Declaration of Principles (Oslo I Accord) Framework agreement on the establishment of an interim Palestinian self-government for five years of negotiations, culminating in a permanent settlement based on Resolutions 242 and 338	1 Nov 1995	Beilin-Abu Mazen Document Informal understandings regarding a permanent status agreement concluded between Israeli Minister Yossi Beilin and senior PLO official Mahmoud Abbas
4 May 1994	Gaza and Jericho (Cairo) Agreement Constituting Israeli withdrawal from the Jericho area and most of the Gaza Strip and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority to administer these areas	4 Nov 1995	Assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin Perpetrated by an Israeli extremist with the goal of derailing the Oslo Process
25 Jul 1994	Washington Declaration on Israeli-Jordanian Nonbelligerency	29 Nov 1995	Second MENA Economic Summit in Amman
26 Oct 1994	Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty Based on the 1922 border, including functional arrangements in the Naharayim area	13 Mar 1996	Peacemakers" Summit in Sharm el-Sheikh International conference in support of the Oslo Process and counter-terrorism efforts
30 Oct 1994	First MENA Economic Summit in Casablanca	11-27 Apr 1996	Operation Grapes of Wrath IDF operation against Hezbollah in South Lebanon, terminating after the accidental bombing of a UN encampment
10 Dec 1994	Rabin, Peres and Arafat awarded the Nobel Peace Prize	29 May 1996	Benjamin Netanyahu elected Prime Minister of Israel
28 Sep 1995	Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement (Oslo II Accord) Establishing interim arrangements for the negotiations period, including division of the Palestinian Territories into three types of areas	14 Nov 1996	Third MENA Economic Summit in Cairo
25 Oct 1995	Israel-Jordan Trade Agreement Concluded pursuant to the peace treaty	15 Jan 1997	Hebron Protocol Protocol to the Interim Agreement involving Israeli withdrawal from most of Hebron
		22 Jan 1997	Beilin-Eitan Document Understanding between representatives from Israel's major political parties regarding consensus positions for permanent status negotiations

16 Nov 1997	US-Israel-Jordan Trade Agreement Establishing Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZ) exempt of American tariffs	24 May 2000	Israeli withdrawal from the South Lebanon Security Zone Unilateral withdrawal coinciding with the collapse of SLA
19 Nov 1997	Fourth MENA Economic Summit in Doha	11-25 Jul 2000	Camp David Summit Aimed at promoting Israeli-Palestinian permanent status negotiations
23 Oct 1998	Wye River Memorandum Promoting implementation of Israeli and Palestinian commitments under the Interim Agreement, including two further redeployments by Israel	28 Sep 2000	Outbreak of the Second Intifada Costing the lives of around 1,000 Israelis and over 3,000 Palestinians
17 May 1999	Ehud Barak elected Prime Minister of Israel	23 Dec 2000	Clinton Parameters US President's outline for a permanent Israeli-Palestinian settlement
4 Sep 1999	Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum Promoting implementation of Israeli and Palestinian commitments under the Interim Agreement alongside permanent status negotiations	21-27 Jan 2001	Taba Summit Israeli-Palestinian summit to contain the violence and promote permanent status negotiations
5 Oct 1999	Safe Passage Protocol Protocol to the Interim Agreement implementing a transportation corridor between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip	6 Feb 2001	Ariel Sharon elected Prime Minister of Israel
Dec 1999	Washington Talks Relaunching Israeli-Syrian negotiations, on hold since 1996	30 Apr 2001	Mitchell Report Concluding that neither side planned for the outbreak of the Intifada
3-11 Jan 2000	Shepherdstown Conference Israeli-Syrian talks revolving mainly around the issue of borders	26 Mar 2002	Zinni Plan Attempting to contain violence through an Israeli withdrawal and Palestinian assumption of security responsibility

28 Mar 2002 **Introduction of the Arab Peace Initiative at the Arab Summit in Beirut**

Saudi initiative, adopted by the Arab League, calling for full peace between Israel and the Arab countries in exchange for an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines and resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue

29 Mar – 10 May 2002 **Operation Defensive Shield**

IDF reoccupies West Bank cities following the deaths of dozens of Israelis

23 Jun 2002 **Government of Israel approves initial route for West Bank Separation Barrier**

24 Jun 2002 **US President Bush presents his vision for peace**

Including a two-state solution based on Resolutions 242 and 338, as well as Palestinian efforts at democratization and economic development

27 Jul 2002 **Ayalon-Nusseibeh Document**

Unofficial principles for a permanent status agreement put forward by Sari Nusseibeh, PLO representative in Jerusalem, and ex-Shabak head Ami Ayalon

Aug 2002 **Sher-Sagi Plan**

Unofficial plan for a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and most of the West Bank in order to promote permanent status negotiations

6 Mar 2003 **Sharm el-Sheikh Summit**

Arab-Israeli summit in support of the Road Map

20 Mar 2003 **US Invasion of Iraq**

Resulted in the collapse of the Saddam Hussein regime

30 Apr 2003 **Road Map for Peace**

Published by the Middle East Quartet and calling for —performance-based progress in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process with the goal of reaching a permanent status agreement by 2005

4 Jun 2003 **Aqaba Summit**

Israeli-Palestinian summit to promote the Road Map

19 Nov 2003 **UN Security Council Resolution 1515**

Endorsing the Road Map

1 Dec 2003 **Geneva Initiative**

Informal Israeli-Palestinian initiative drafting a detailed proposal for a permanent status agreement

18 Dec 2003 **Israeli PM Sharon's Herzliya Speech**

First mention of the Disengagement Plan

14 Apr 2004 **Exchange of letters between Sharon and US President Bush**

American recognition of Israel's retention of settlement blocs under any future deal

16 Apr 2004 **Sharon presents the Disengagement Plan**

Constituting a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and part of the northern West Bank

6 Jun 2004	Government of Israel approves Disengagement Plan in principle
30 Jun 2004	Israeli High Court's Beit Suriq ruling Ordering that the Separation Barrier route be revised to minimize effect on Palestinian civilian population
11 Nov 2004	Death of PLO Chairman and PNA President Yasser Arafat
14 Dec 2004	US-Israel-Egypt Trade Agreement Establishing Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZ) exempt of American tariffs
9 Jan 2005	Mahmoud Abbas elected PNA President Appointed PLO Chairman the previous month
7 Feb 2005	Sharm el-Sheikh Summit Israeli-Palestinian summit declaring the end of the Second Intifada and the launch of negotiations based on the Road Map
18 Feb 2005	Knesset approves Disengagement Plan Implementation Law
20 Feb 2005	Government of Israel approves settlement evacuation as part of Disengagement
8 Mar 2005	Sasson Report Israeli government report critical of illegal West Bank outposts

17 Mar 2005	Cairo Declaration Joint declaration by 13 Palestinian factions in favor of national unity and against Israeli policy
15-23 Aug 2005	Implementation of the Disengagement Plan Unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and part of the northern West Bank and relocation of around 9,000 settlers
15 Nov 2005	Agreement on Movement and Access (AMA) Israeli-Palestinian agreement on movement to and from the Gaza Strip following Disengagement
4 Jan 2006	Israeli PM Sharon falls into a coma and replaced by Ehud Olmert Olmert elected PM in his own right in Mar
25 Jan 2006	Hamas victory in Palestinian Legislative Council elections Followed by formation of a Hamas government led by Ismail Haniyeh
Mar-May 2006	Convergence Plan put forward by Israeli PM Olmert Calling for completion of the West Bank Separation Barrier and Israeli withdrawal from most of the West Bank
10 May 2006	National Accord (Prisoners' Document) Platform for Palestinian national unity drafted by prisoners from five factions
25 Jun 2006	IDF soldier Gilad Shalit abducted by Hamas

12 Jul - 14 Aug 2006 **2006 Lebanon War**
 Began following the abduction of three IDF soldiers by Hezbollah, causing the deaths of 165 Israelis and around 1,000 Lebanese

8 Feb 2007 **Fatah-Hamas Mecca Agreement**
 Reconciliation agreement to form a national unity government led by Haniyeh

27 Mar 2007 **25th Arab Summit in Riyadh**
 Leaders reaffirm commitment to Arab Peace Initiative

10-15 Jun 2007 **Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip**
 Followed by the formation of two rival Palestinian governments in the Hamas-led Gaza Strip and Fatah-led West Bank

27 Nov 2007 **Annapolis Conference**
 Summit launching new Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, cut short by Israeli PM Olmert's resignation in September 2008

27 Dec 2008 - 18 Jan 2009 **Operation Cast Lead**
 IDF operation against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, causing the deaths of 13 Israelis and over 1,000 Palestinians

10 Feb 2009 **Benjamin Netanyahu elected Prime Minister of Israel**
 Subsequently re-elected in 2013 and 2015

14 Jun 2009 **Netanyahu's Bar-Ilan Speech**
 Expressing willingness to recognize a Palestinian state under the following conditions: recognition of Israel as the Jewish state; Jerusalem united under Israeli sovereignty; no return of Palestinian refugees to Israel

Aug 2009 **Fayyad Plan**
 Platform of the 13th Palestinian Government focused on reforms with the goal of Palestinian independence and permanent settlement with Israel in two years

25 Sep 2009 **Goldstone Report on Operation Cast Lead**
 Appointed by the UN Human Rights Council, commission charged both Israel and Hamas with war crimes

31 May 2010 **Israeli commando raid on Turkish flotilla headed for Gaza**
 Nine Turkish citizens killed during raid

2 Sep 2010 **Washington Summit**
 Relaunching direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations

4 May 2011 **Fatah-Hamas Cairo Agreement**

18 Oct 2011 **Shalit Deal**
 Israeli soldier released from Hamas captivity in exchange for 1,027 Palestinian prisoners

7 Feb 2012 **Fatah-Hamas Doha Agreement**
 Aimed at reconciliation and the establishment of a unity government

23 Feb 2012	Bennet's Stability Plan Right-wing leader calls for unilateral Israeli annexation of most of the West Bank	8 Nov 2016	Donald Trump elected President of the United States
20 May 2012	Fatah-Hamas Cairo Agreement Failed attempt to establish a unity government and launch an electoral process	21 Nov 2019	Indictment against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu The Attorney General has decided to file an indictment against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and others in the so-called '1000', '2000' and '4000' cases.
21 Jun 2012	Levy Report Israeli government report stressing the legality of West Bank settlements under international law and calling for legalization of West Bank outposts	28 Jan 2020	Publication of US President Donald Trump's vision of peace
14-21 Nov 2012	Operation Pillar of Defense Israeli airstrikes against the Gaza Strip killing over 200 Palestinians	15 Sep 2020	Signing of the Abraham Accords The Abraham peace Accords were signed in the White House by the United States (as mediator), the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Israel. An agreement was subsequently signed with Sudan as well.
29 Nov 2012	State of Palestine accorded the status of non-member observer state at the UN	6 Nov 2020	Joe Biden's election to the presidency of the United States
23 Apr 2014	Fatah-Hamas reconciliation agreement Palestinian unity government established for the first time since 2007		
8 Jul – 26 Aug 2014	Operation Protective Edge Fighting between IDF and Hamas in and around the Gaza Strip causing the deaths of 72 Israelis and over 2,000 Palestinians		
17 Dec 2014	European Parliament resolution on recognizing Palestine Symbolic resolution adopted alongside similar declarations by national parliaments in Europe		

