

The 'Deal of the Century' Is Apartheid

The 'Deal of the Century' resurrects and restores grand apartheid, a racist political system that should have been left in the dustbins of history.

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With great fanfare, President Trump finally unveiled his long-anticipated Middle East peace proposal. The proposal was labeled 'The Deal of the Century' because it was supposed to offer an even-handed and just solution to one of the world's most intractable conflicts. Instead it does something very different. The 'Deal of the Century' resurrects and restores grand apartheid, a racist political system that should have been left in the dustbins of history.

Under President Trump's newly unveiled peace plan, the Palestinians will be granted limited autonomy within a Palestinian homeland that consists of multiple non-contiguous enclaves scattered throughout the West Bank and Gaza. The government of Israel will retain security control over the Palestinian enclaves and will continue to control Palestinian borders, airspace, aquifers, maritime waters, and electromagnetic spectrum. Israel will be allowed to annex the Jordan Valley and Jewish communities in the West Bank. The Palestinians will be allowed to select the leaders of their new homeland but will have no political rights in Israel, the state that actually rules over them.

President Trump's plan for racial control and segregation should sound disturbingly familiar. Indeed it should immediately bring to mind the Bantu homelands which were the cornerstone of South Africa's 'grand apartheid'. While 'petty apartheid' was the term used to describe racial segregation on buses and public facilities, 'grand apartheid' referred to the many laws which enforced territorial and political separation between black and white South Africans.

VISION for PEACE CONCEPTUAL MAP

The State of Israel



The Bantu homelands, which were key to the territorial and political separation of racial groups, had their origin in the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 which created reserves for the native black population. Then in 1970 the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act made the native population legal citizens of their Bantustans, denying black South Africans political rights in white South Africa. The South African government created Bantu homelands in order to claim that South Africa, a state with a majority black population, was actually a state with a majority white population. The Bantu homelands were political sleight of hand; a poorly veiled attempt to give racist ethnic rule the veneer of democratic respectability.

Like South Africa's grand apartheid, the Trump plan physically and politically separates Palestinians by placing them within a non-contiguous homeland (Areas A and B and Gaza), and declaring them citizens of that homeland. Like South Africa's grand apartheid, the Trump plan grants the Palestinian homeland autonomy over civil matters like education and healthcare, while critical areas such as trade, immigration, and security will remain under Israeli control. Like South Africa's grand apartheid, the Trump plan is political sleight of hand: a thinly veiled attempt to claim that Israel, a state that rules over roughly the same number of Jews and Palestinians, is actually a Jewish-majority state. Also like apartheid South Africa, the Trump administration claims the homelands are a temporary solution. Once the indigenous population proves itself ready for self-governance they will one day be granted something that resembles a state.

Using a combination of financial sticks and carrots, some of which were unveiled last June at the economic summit in Bahrain, the Trump administration will try to force Palestinians to accept the 'peace plan' and declare independence within their homeland, just as the apartheid South African government once tried to force the native black population to declare independence within their Bantustans. While the crony leadership of some Bantustans did indeed declare independence, South Africa's grand apartheid ultimately failed because local leaders, including the African National Congress and the legendary Nelson Mandela, waged a determined and powerful international campaign against apartheid.

President Trump's peace plan was labeled the 'Deal of the Century' because it was supposed to bring peace and dignity to the people of the Middle East. Instead the 'peace plan' does the exact opposite and resurrects apartheid, a racist political system that should have been left in the dustbins of history.

The Trump peace plan cannot, and should not be implemented because it gives Israelis the illusion of security while in reality trapping them within an unstable regime based on racial oppression. The Trump peace plan cannot, and should not be implemented because it gravely violates the rights and dignity of the Palestinian people and very likely constitutes a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute (1998). The Trump peace plan cannot, and should not be implemented because once we look past all the streamers and confetti, it turns out 'The Deal of the Century' is nothing less than Apartheid.

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Featured image: Map of a future Palestinian state in the Trump administration plan. (Source: Mondoweiss)

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