

The Israeli “Deal of the Century” Won’t Go Through: Extremism Dominates the Knesset, Splits within the Palestinian Leadership

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Global Research, April 17, 2019

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

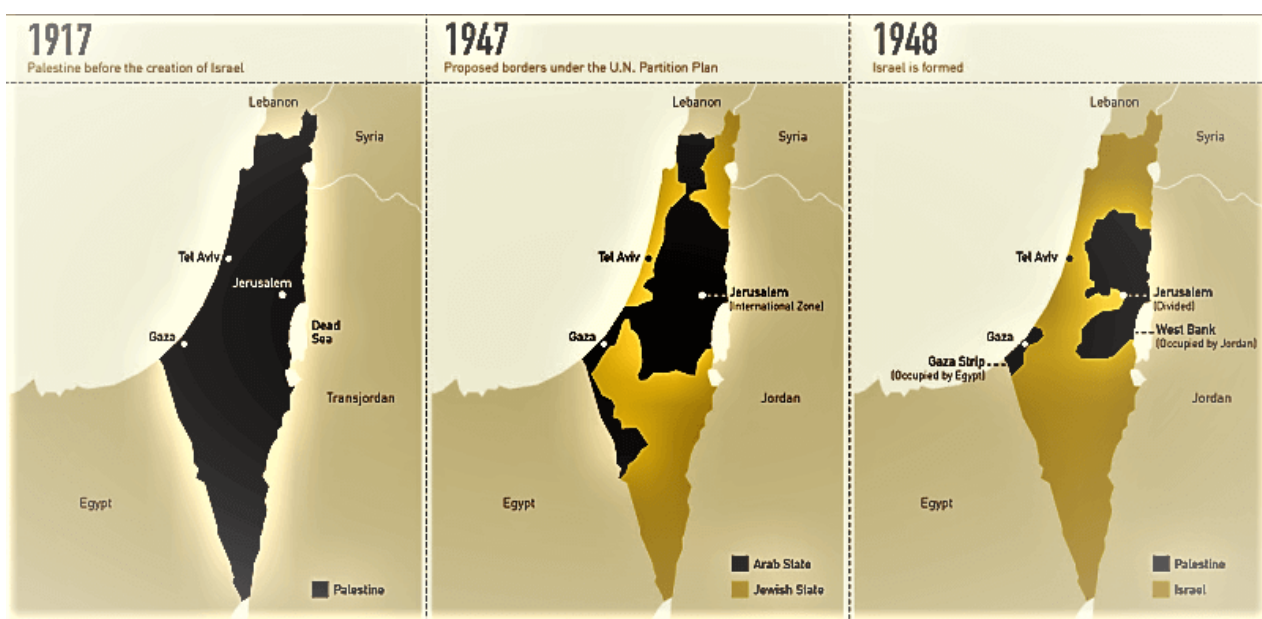
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For over a year now, the Israeli “Deal of the Century” for Palestine has been endorsed by the US establishment and is now echoing to the four corners of the world. The two novices in foreign policy, US President Donald Trump and his son-in-law Jared Kushner, manoeuvred by Israel from behind the scenes, are trying to promote it among Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt, the three countries who are supposed to exchange territories to further Israel’s plans in Gaza and the West Bank. It remains improbable that the US and Israel can impose this plan that has taken shape under the watchful but impotent gaze of Europe and the Arab nations.

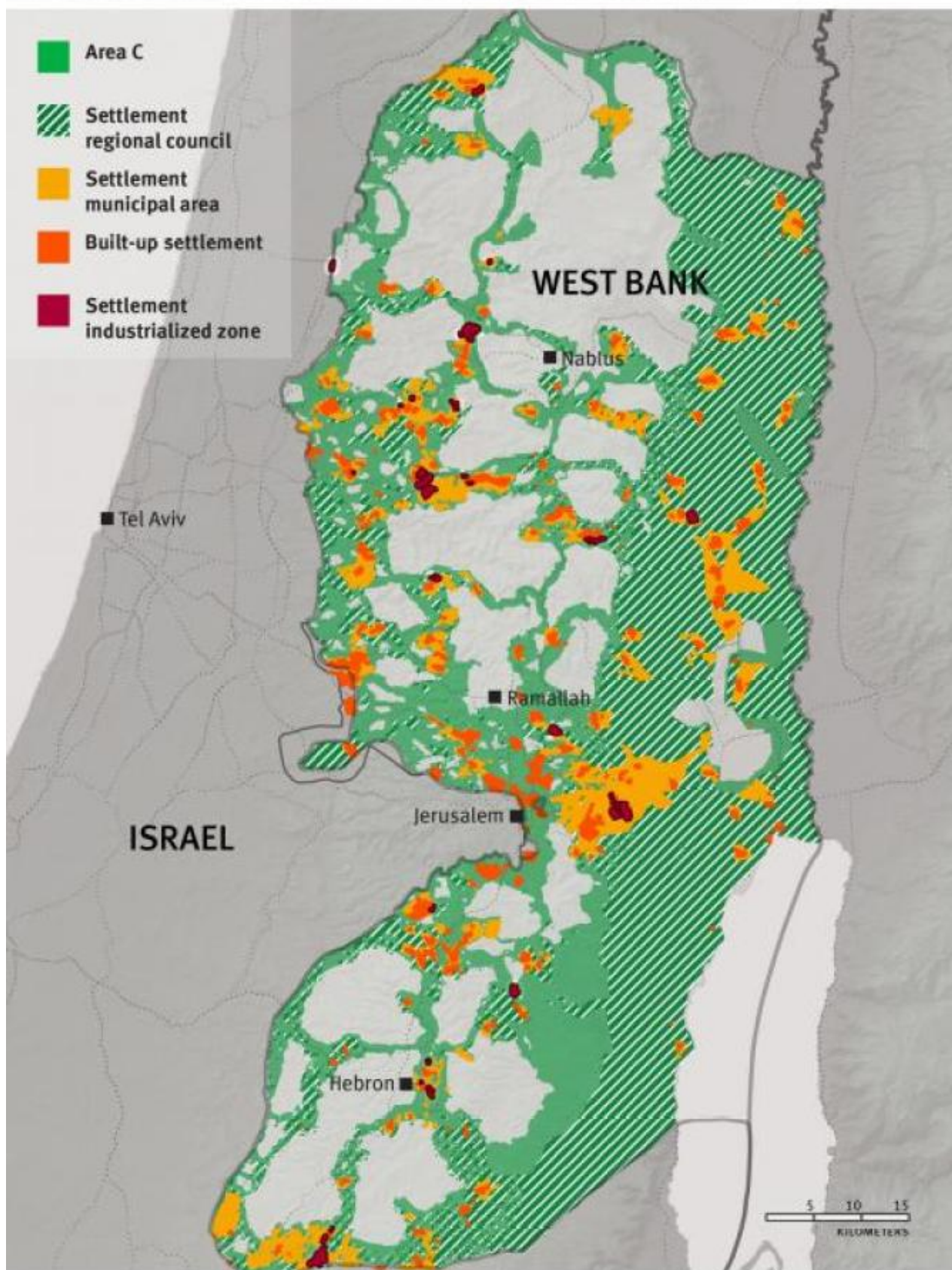
Notwithstanding US-Arab-Israeli initial approval of this deal, the ultimate decision is in the hands of the Palestinian people. Although bickering and serious [splits](#) are omnipresent among the Palestinian leadership, all (including the President [ad interim](#) Mahmoud Abbas) have agreed to [reject the Israeli-US deal](#). Thus, the “Deal of the Century” is expected to fall through because the Palestinians will never again make the mistake they made in [1948](#), and will hold on to their territory. They will not agree to exchange Palestine for parcels of land in Egypt and Jordan as written in the plan leaked by the same US establishment.



Palestinian officials said

“the Deal of the Century was launched by Israel in [1956](#) when, for nine days, Israel was committing genocidal massacres against Palestinian civilians and refugees in the Gaza strip and in particular in Khan Yunis and Rafah. The objective then was to push the Palestinian refugees toward an exodus so Israel could annex Gaza without refugees. The Palestinians who sought shelter in Gaza escaped the Israeli killing in 1948 from Akka, Haifa, Yafa, Safad, Gallilea, al-Led, al-Ramla, Nablus, al-Quds and Bir el-Sabe’. Today, Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu is trying to accomplish what David-Ben Gurion, the founder of the Zionist state and the first Prime Minister of this state, [failed to achieve](#)”.

There are now more than 500,000 Israeli settlers living in 237 settlements in the Israeli-occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem. Israel prohibits Palestinians from developing the areas it designates for settlement regional councils, which make up 70 percent of the part of the West Bank under its administrative control, called Area C.



Source: Btselem, February 2008, except the settlement industrial zones, which are based on geographic coordinates Israel's Civil Administration provided to Dror Etkes in November 2014.

"Today [Netanyahu feels euphoric](#) following the victory of the extreme right-

wing parties in the last elections. Extremism in [Israel dominates the Knesset](#). The classic right-wing party has a share in power but centrists like Labour went from 42 seats to 6 in the last legislative elections, its [worst showing](#) in its 71 year history. Thus, most of Israeli society has decided to vote for the extremism that is now overwhelming Israeli culture together with the armed forces. It is time for the Palestinian Authority (PA) to realise that Israel is not willing to give a state to the Palestinians and will always reject the right of return. No one today except President Abbas holds to [the Oslo agreement](#) (signed between Israel and the PLO in 1993 in Washington). Thus, it is time to reject every single article in the Oslo treaty and refuse any deal with Israel. President Abbas (Abu Mazen) believes in peaceful resistance and in “talking-resistance” at the United Nations and Europe, both of whom are impotent in the face of Israel’s plans and those of Trump. For this reason, we believe that armed resistance is the only way to get our state, because we reject any deal and any swap of territories”, said the source.

Several Arab states are promoting the Israeli “Deal of the Century”. Oil-rich countries, i.e. Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, are trying to convince the Palestinians, Egyptians and the Jordanian leadership to swap territories to ease the deal and accommodate Israel.



According to well-informed sources, the “Deal of the Century” offers Egypt a sum between 65 and 100 billion dollars in exchange for offering part of Sinai (Sheikh Zuweid, Rafah and al-Aresh) to the Palestinian refugees in Gaza. In exchange, Jordan gives al-Baqoura and al-Ghamer to the Palestinians in the West Bank in exchange of “part C’. Amman would be offered around 50 to 60 billion dollars. Saudi Arabia is expected to offer Jordan a piece of Haql and Magna in exchange for the Egyptian islands of Tiran and Sanafir (the Saudis already paid for these Islands but an Egyptian court blocked the transfer of property). The Palestinians who remain in Palestine are expected, according to the deal, to receive tens of billions of dollars “to ease their life”. Also, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon are supposed to receive a handsome quantity of billions of dollars to naturalise the Palestinian refugees on the condition they never return to Palestine.

The above details of the “Deal” confirm that it will not go through for many reasons:

Lebanon and Syria will [never agree](#) to naturalise the Palestinian refugees. When young Palestinian teens living in Lebanon or Syria are asked where they come from, they immediately respond: "I am from Haifa, Yafa, Nablous, Quds, Safad..." They never say, even if they were born in Lebanon or Syria, that they belong to the country their parents or grandparents were forced to migrate to. They have never renounced their right to return and keep the key of their home hanging on the wall so as to never, ever forget where they belong.

Jordanian and Egyptian leaders will never dare offer territories to ease Israel's plan because the population will revolt and regimes will fall. These and many more reasons lead to one conclusion: the "Deal of the Century" was dead even before it was born.

At the heart of US efforts to promote the deal is the economic strangulation of a few Middle Eastern countries - i.e. Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Gaza - who are going through a [serious economic crisis](#). US forces are occupying [north-east Syria](#), an area rich in oil and gas and agriculture. US forces also block the main crossing between Syria and Iraq at [al-Tanf](#) in order to block trade and keep the area insecure for commerce between the two countries, with the goal of breaking the Syrian government's back. The US establishment is also putting pressure on the Arab Gulf States and has succeeded in [stopping](#) them from restoring a normal relationship with Syria, to prevent their participation in the reconstruction of the country. Israel and the US believe this is the best way to force Syria to the negotiation table- but this is not going to happen either.

Lebanon is going through a severe economic crisis but will never accept to naturalise the Palestinians for many reasons. First, the Palestinian cause will remain alive so long as Israel rejects a Palestinian state that meets the aspiration of the Palestinian population. Second, naturalisation would unbalance the country's demography and to the detriment of the Christians so that they eventually be marginalised in Lebanon.



Neither will Jordan ever exchange this territory, even for the billions of dollars the country is in need of. By taking the money the monarchy would lose the country.

Egypt rejected Trump's characteristic attempt at blackmail to force acceptance of the "Deal

of the Century". US officials threatened Egypt in reference to its military deal with Russia; in reality these threats were meant to force Sisi's hand into accepting the "Deal".

All these Middle Eastern countries are aware that geography moves history and changes regimes. This "deal" is not new at all. It started in 1956 and over the years Israel has contrived to create the conditions for its acceptance. It is exactly what Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice advocated in 2006 when she announced the creation of a "[New Middle East](#)". To support this plan, the US invaded Iraq in 2003; Israel declared war on Hezbollah in 2006 and half of the world gathered – but failed – to change the regime in Syria by means of terrorist proxies. His recent election victory is motivating Netanyahu to take advantage of a totally obedient President in the White House, and push him to endorse his "deal of the Century". The time is right, from Israel's point of view, to push through the deal. This Israeli insistence is forcing its neighbours to the opposite conclusion: it is proof to the "Axis of the Resistance" that no solution is possible in the Middle East but through resistance.

Note: The 1948 Palestinian exodus, also known as the Nakba (Arabic: النكبة, al-Nakbah, literally "disaster", "catastrophe", or "cataclysm"), occurred from December 1947 to January 1949 when more than 700,000 Palestinian Arabs were expelled from their homes, during the 1948 Palestine war. 600 Palestinian villages were sacked during the war, while urban Palestine was almost entirely extinguished.

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