

# Trump's Skewed Vision Gives Israel Everything It Wants

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*Donald Trump's "Deal of the Century", his "vision" of an Arab-Israeli peace settlement, is, as expected, a boon for Israel and a trap for the Palestinians. Everyone knew this would be the case. His deal could never have been otherwise. It was concocted by a team of hyper-Zionists under the management of his son-in-law Jared Kushner in whose bed his family friend Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu often slept.*

During Tuesday's launch, standing next to a smirking Netanyahu, Trump announced that, under his "plan", Palestinians would, at long last, achieve their "state". But, not for four years and on condition Palestinians give up "terrorism", legitimate resistance to Israeli occupation, cease incitement against Israel, "negotiate", and, according to Netanyahu, accept Israel as "the Jewish State" despite the fact that 20 per cent of its citizens are Muslim and Christian Palestinians.

Negotiate what? Trump's "vision" gives Israel everything it wants on the issues meant to be negotiated with the Palestinians: Borders, Israeli colonies, Jerusalem and refugees. Under the 1993 Oslo accord, these issues were supposed to be negotiated by Palestinians and Israelis. Trump has unilaterally cancelled the land-for-peace formula, the 1993 Oslo Accord and the subsequent peace process. Trump is determined to dictate the outcome on these issues and to "legitimise" Israeli "acquisition of territory by force", which is inadmissible under the UN Charter and international law, and illegal colonisation of occupied Palestinian land.

What sort of "state" will the Palestinian entity be? If Trump's plan is implemented, this entity will be under Israeli security control, will host more than 600,000 Israeli colonists and will be totally surrounded by territory annexed by Israel, 30 per cent of the West Bank. This entity will be controlled by Israel from land, air and sea while Israel will have a recognised border with Jordan on the Jordan River.

Trump's "vision" would compensate Palestinians with isolated enclaves in the Negev connected to Gaza. East Jerusalem, the Old City of Jerusalem and its suburbs occupied by Israel in 1967, will not be the Palestinian capital but will be recognised as part of Israel's "undivided" capital. Palestinians will be able to establish their capital in the West Bank town of Abu Dis or overcrowded, impoverished Shuafat, on the edge of Jerusalem. Most Palestinian refugees will stay where they are, their right of repatriation revoked while some will receive compensation for losses inflicted when Israel was established. Israel's only concession will be to freeze expansion of colonies beyond their security borders.

Trump's "deal" was intentionally designed to be dismissed by the Palestinians who stand

accused of repeatedly rejecting “peace plans” which were unacceptable. The Palestinians, however, accepted and planned to build upon the Oslo accords. Their aim was to achieve an independent state in only 22 per cent of Palestine. But Israel did not negotiate fruitfully on the basic issues or abide by Oslo’s terms and redoubled colonisation of the land Palestinians expected for their state in the West Bank and Gaza with East Jerusalem as its capital. Under Trump’s plan, Palestinians lose control of security in the 18 per cent ruled by the Palestinian Authority according to Oslo, although Israeli forces constantly enter this area in violation of Oslo.

The Trump “vision” has been ready for roll-out for more than a year. Why did this happen now? Determined to win a second term in office in November, Trump has been in campaign mode ever since he moved into the White House. However, he has been impeached by the US House of Representatives for using his position for political gain and is under trial in the Senate. Trump would like to divert attention from his trial and proclaim a win-win foreign policy that is certain to win him votes from white Evangelical Christians.

Under indictment for accepting bribes and breach of trust, Trump’s chum Netanyahu is fighting an election in early March. If his Likud loses, he could go to jail. Although he heads a caretaker government which should not take any major political initiatives, Netanyahu is expected to declare Israeli annexation of the Jordan Valley and of all or some of the West Bank colonies.

The launch of his deal also took place on the day after ceremonies for the liberation by Soviet forces of the Auschwitz death camp in Poland where the Nazis executed more than a million Jews, Gypsies and others. The timing was meant to remind the world that Israel’s security must be guaranteed whatever the cost to the Palestinians. This is, of course, a false claim as nuclear-bomb-armed Israel has become by far the strongest military power in the region. Criticism of Trump’s deal will also be met by accusations of anti-Semitism, i.e. the anti-Jewish feeling that caused the Holocaust.

Trump’s vision was also revealed at a time the Palestinians, who have rejected it, are in their weakest ever position. The Arabs have become weary of the “Palestine Cause”. Palestinians remain divided between the West Bank enclaves administered by the Fateh-dominated Palestinian Authority and Hamas ruled Gaza. Although President Mahmoud Abbas responded to Trump by calling for unity, it is unlikely that he can bring this about. He has refused unity since Hamas won the 2006 parliamentary election and in 2007 took over Gaza. Furthermore, elected in 2005 as a peacemaker, Abbas’ term in office has long since expired and his efforts at conducting meaningful negotiations have been rebuffed by Israel, which has blamed him for refusing to carry on. The Trump administration and Netanyahu may be waiting for Abbas, now 85, to die or leave office so they can press for him to be replaced by a leader who will agree to capitulate to Trump’s skewed vision.

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