

The Joke [Not Deal] of the Century

by Jeremy Salt via jane - AHT *Tuesday, Jun 11 2019, 10:26pm*

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With fresh elections called by Benjamin Netanyahu for September, it is possible that the 'deal of the century' may never see the light of day. Condemned across the board by Palestinians, even supporters are backing away. Mike Pompeo, Trump's Secretary of State, said recently it was a deal "only the Israelis could love" and possible was "unexecutable." Still, for what it reveals of the minds that could come up with such a scheme, the 'deal of the century' is still worth examining.

The 'deal' would be the joke of the century were it not so seriously intended. Whether deal or joke, however, the bottom line is blackmail and even murder. If Hamas and Islamic Jihad don't accept this deal, the US will allow Israel to "personally harm" their leaders, in other words, kill them.

The full package is to be unveiled in late June but these are some of the details, as leaked from the Foreign Ministry to Sheldon Adelson's newspaper, Israel Hayom, a propaganda conduit for the Netanyahu government. Adelson's wife Miriam, Israel Hayom's chief executive, is one of the richest women in the world, with an estimated personal fortune of \$22 billion. She and her husband have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into their pet causes, the Republican Party and the state of Israel. Described in the US media as an 'humanitarian' and 'philanthropist,' this sponsor of Israel's racist war on the Palestinians was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2018, the highest US award that can be conferred on a civilian.

Some of the detail in the Jared Kushner 'deal of the century' may be kite-flying, to be modified before the formal release of the plan, so that it won't look so bad after all, but the deadly intent, to erase Palestine forever and replace it with a strangulated state of 'New Palestine,' is not to be doubted.

As outlined in Israel Hayom, Israel would annex all the West Bank settlement blocs. Together with the isolated settlements to be brought within this land grab, Israel could be expected to seize most if not all of Area C of the West Bank, as assigned to full Israeli control in the long-moribund 'peace process.'

This would give it up to 62 percent of the West Bank. 'New Palestine' would consist of Area A (about three percent) and presumably most of Area B, consisting of 24 percent, to make statehood even remotely plausible. The territory taken by Israel would include the fertile and well-watered Jordan Valley. Overall, the Palestinians would be left with about 12 percent of their stolen homeland. In practice, there would be no real change from the present situation. The 'deal' would simply ratify Israeli settlement and land seizures in a new pseudo-legal arrangement.

The West Bank would be connected to Gaza by a highway, to be funded mainly by China but with smaller financial contributions from South Korea, Australia, Canada, the US, and the EU. Egypt would lease land to 'New Palestine' for the construction of an airport and an industrial zone in Sinai. The Palestinians would also have a port. This and other infrastructural and administrative costs would be covered by \$30 billion paid by the oil-producing Gulf states (70 percent, the US (20 percent) and the EU (10 percent).

A time frame of five years would provide plenty of room for the freezing of grants if the Palestinians misbehave, in the event of rockets still being fired into Israel or through their perceived failure to comply with the terms imposed on them, as interpreted by Israel, of course.

Israel would continue to oversee the 'security' of 'New Palestine's' land and sea borders, so no change here either except the semantic. As the trump hand in negotiations would always be held by someone else - Israel, the US or Egypt or the donors to the various projects - the Palestinians would be perennially open to threat and intimidation and the withholding of financial grants.

'New Palestine' would have its capital in Jerusalem, most probably in the village of Abu Dis, which was brought within the municipal boundaries by Ehud Barak during the Camp David negotiations to create the fiction of a shared capital. In fact, Jerusalem would remain under the full control of the Israeli municipality and government. Palestinians would have no say at all in how the city is run.

East Jerusalem Palestinians would remain the citizens of 'New Palestine' but Israel would control their daily lives as before. Restrictions would be formally applied to real estate deals, so that Israelis could not buy Palestinian houses and Palestinians could not buy properties sequestered by Jewish settlers. In practice, given Israel's determination to turn Jerusalem into a wholly Jewish city, except for Palestinian remnants, it is difficult to see this restriction being applied to the settlers, whom the occupier's law allows to seize Palestinian property by the most dubious means.

Hamas would have to hand in all its weapons immediately. New elections would be held in a year. 'New Palestine' would have no army, only a lightly-armed police force. Having spent more than seven decades destroying the old Palestine - the real Palestine - Israel would take responsibility for the defense of the new, but the Palestinians would have to bear the costs of their own protection as calculated by Israel.

The Palestinians would have to accept that they have no right of return and naturally there is no mention of the hundreds of billions of dollars that is their due from the theft of their land and the destruction of hundreds of their villages in 1948-9. Hot on reparations from Germany, Israel has never shown any interest in paying back the Palestinians for what it has stolen and the lives it has destroyed.

If the Palestinians do not accept the 'deal of the century' the US will do everything in its power to make sure that no institution or country in the world gives them any financial support. If the PLO accepts the deal but Hamas and Islamic Jihad do not, the US would support any Israeli attempt in times of conflict to "personally harm" their leaders. In other words, the US government would openly support their assassination.

As the US has always tacitly supported the murder of Palestinian leaders, the only change here would be the move from implicit to open support but either way, this is gangsterism pure and simple, put down in writing by the smooth-faced son of a property developer from New Jersey. Where is Tom Wolfe now that he is needed to put all of this into the only appropriate form, satire?

If Israel rejects the offer then it too would receive no more financial support from the US government. The notion that an Israeli government would reject an arrangement that gives it virtually everything it has ever wanted except the complete expulsion of the Palestinians is grotesque.

How astonishing it is that in the 102 dramatic years since the issuing of the Balfour Declaration, that after a century of massacres, murders and assassinations of Palestinians and other Arabs by the

Zionists and their 'western' sponsors, after the resistance of young and old Palestinians generation after generation, and against the background of the complete illegality of Zionist actions, that this squalid deal is the best Jared Kushner could come up.

He clearly has no grasp of history. No doubt he discussed this at length with Ivanka. That the fate of Palestine could come to rest in the hands of these spoilt American juveniles, these Ken and Barbie dolls, who could be stood next to their waxen simulacrum in Madame Tussaud's without anyone noticing the difference, is the measure of the complete bankruptcy of the United States in the Middle East.

How equally astonishing it is that Jared, or Ivanka, or Trump or his settler-supporting ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, could be so ignorant of history, so unaware of the human spirit as demonstrated not just by the Palestinians but by every occupied and oppressed people through the entire course of history, that they could have even thought the Palestinians would buy into this cheap realtor's stunt. Buy now, because tomorrow it's going to be twice as expensive. This is a bargain you Palestinians just can't afford to miss. The vendor can't hold off forever.

The racist, orientalist implications have been brought out by Haidar Eid and others. Dignity, honor, pride, justice, moral, legal and historical entitlement are all missing from Jared Kushner's calculations. The money deal is on the table and the native better pick it up because this is the best he's ever going to be offered and if he doesn't he's going to be whipped until he sees reason.

'I'm not here to be trusted,' Jared said of the Palestinians in an Axio-HBO interview. 'They're gonna judge it based on facts and then make a determination .. When I speak to the Palestinians what they want is the opportunity to live a better life They want the opportunity to pay the mortgage.'" Thus is the Palestinian problem reduced to the cash worries of a suburban American household.

In the Bible, an Esau returning hungry from the fields is said to have sold his birthright to his brother Jacob for a 'mess of pottage,' which seems to have been a plate of lentils. In a similar fashion, Jared is about to put his offer to the Palestinians on the kitchen table: they will have to forfeit their birthright, but do they want the lentils or not?

He is not even sure the Palestinians will prove capable of governing themselves. That was the British line when they took Palestine from the Palestinians in 1920. They said they would hold Palestine until the people are ready for self-government. In fact, these liars were holding Palestine in limbo until the Zionists settlers had built up the numbers and were ready for self-government without the Palestinians.

Over decades the Zionist line was that 'we have no negotiating partner.' In fact, it was the Palestinians who never had a negotiating partner and do not have one now. Israel has ignored, undermined or debauched every single peace offer ever made. It has chosen all of Palestine over peace every time. Now along comes the 'deal of the century' to close off all remaining options and deliver the Palestinians into a formally structured Babylonian life of bondage to the state of Israel.

Palestinians have already responded by signaling to Jared that he can put his 'deal of the century' in a place where the sun never shines. This struggle will continue, fought within Palestine and from beyond its borders.

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