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Reports

Who will Save Jerusalem:

The Dichotomy of Arab Politics in Trump's Era!

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Chairman Abbas and President Trump [Getty]

With yet a new American political gambit, the Trump Administration has sparked a cold war of sorts between its own Arab allies in the Middle East. The US-Israeli politicking aims at more than normalizing the Israeli occupation. It also intends to change the status quo of Arab centers of political and spiritual power as well. This could shatter long-standing alliances between Arab countries that have historically been perceived by the US as the ‘moderates’. Jordan has every reason to worry that Washington’s game could jeopardize its standing in Palestine, especially in Jerusalem, in favor of the Saudis, an act that could undermine the Hashemite Kingdom and its claim of regional leadership. In the meantime, the unveiling of the long-awaited “Deal of the Century” has been, once again, postponed until the fall of 2019.

Introduction

Since the early decades of the 20th century, Palestine has served as a meeting point for all Arabs, a just cause for their collective fight and a rally cry against western colonialism and its direct spawn, the Zionism movement.

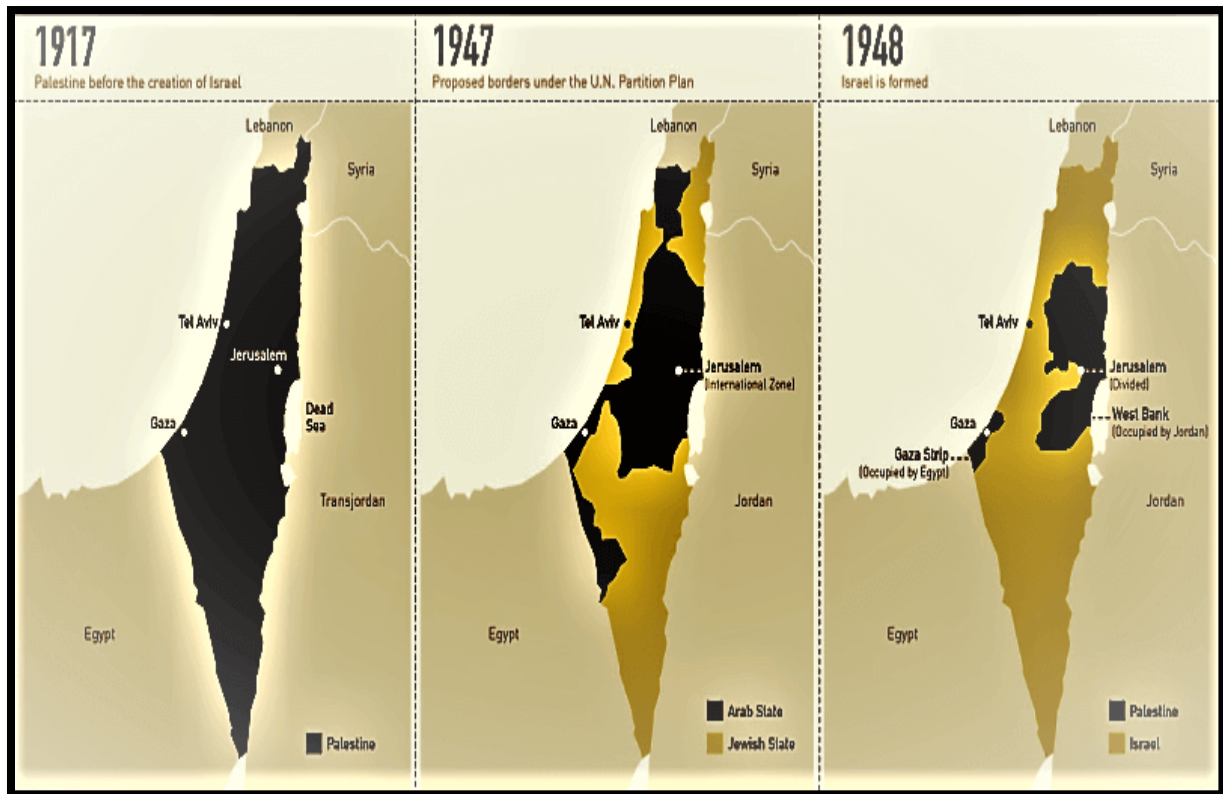
Cognizant of the depth of meaning that Palestine symbolized to Arab masses, Arab rulers used and misused the Palestinian struggle to achieve a degree of political validation, especially as their regimes often lacked any democratic legitimacy. Thus, since the establishment of Israel on the ruins of the Palestinian homeland in 1948, freeing Palestine became a common official Arab mantra, even when Arab regimes conspired with the very colonial powers (1), and oftentimes with Israel itself against the Palestinians.

The ploy worked to a certain degree, up until the Arab defeat at the hands of Israel and its western backers in June of 1967. Prior to that humiliating defeat, where the entirety of historic Palestine fell under Israeli control, Arab governments continued to lay claim to Palestinian solidarity. After the war, however, as it became clear that the Arabs were not able to retrieve Palestine through force, Palestinians were largely left alone. A growing disconnect in the last five decades made Palestine a mere symbol. For Arab masses, the Palestine struggle represented the impotence of their rulers. For Arab leaders, “solidarity with the Palestinian people” became a fixed cliché, aimed at winning validation from their people.

A new kind of Arab discourse on Palestine replaced the old one. True, Arab rulers spoke passionately about supporting the Palestinian people in public. But at the same time, they denied them any form of tangible support on the ground(2). Even Palestinian factions that employed armed resistance against Israel were curtailed, contained and eventually purged in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, starting in the early 1970’s and ending with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

While Israel occasionally raged against Arab ‘incitement’, using official Arab discourse to further illustrate its point of being a perpetual victim of Arab hostility, both Tel Aviv and Washington were unperturbed by the new status quo. As long as Israel was able to enrich its military occupation unhindered, through the construction of more illegal Jewish settlements, the Arabs could carry on with their harmless tirade and claims of Palestinian solidarity. The barter suited Arab rulers well.

The United States, on the other hand, which became more actively involved in the Middle East region starting with the massive military buildup preceding the Kuwait war in 1990-91, understood that normalization between Israel and its Arab allies should top its regional priorities. These efforts indeed succeeded to an extent, culminating in the direct Arab-Israeli peace talks in Madrid in 1991, then the Oslo Accords in 1993 and the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty in 1994.



Jerusalem over time [Global Research]

Normalization efforts continued afoot since then, sometimes openly in the form of Arab-Israeli exchanges of sports and business delegations(3), and sometimes secretly involving diplomats and intelligence chiefs (4).

The Palestinian uprising - the Second Intifada of September 2000 - shifted normalization momentum and distracted from the US-led campaign. Thousands of images of killed or wounded Palestinians beamed throughout the Arab world, making it impossible for Arab governments to draw closer to Tel Aviv, not out of any strong moral conviction, but for fear of popular backlash.

The American invasion of Iraq in March 2003(5) made matters even worse for the advocates of normalization. The US devastated Iraq and destabilized the whole region for years to follow. If there was any illusion regarding the destructive role of the US in the region, the Iraq war made things crystal clear. It was obvious, once more, that the US' colonial approach in the region was guided by two overriding objectives: protecting Israel and the strategic management of the oil fields.

During this time, Palestine fell further off the Arab radar, as the region sank into a multitude of other conflicts. The bloody invasion of Iraq sent the region into a whirlwind from which it is yet to recover. Arab revolts and upheavals(6) beginning in 2011 in Tunisia, then spreading across the Arab world, forced an American rethink, generated new alliances and stoked old fears. With Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states fearing that their regimes could face the same humiliating end as those of Tunisia,

Egypt and Yemen, they sprang into action. This sense of vulnerability, strengthened by the fact that Saudi Arabia's arch-enemy, Iran was rising in its regional import - thanks to its intervention in Syria - presented Washington with a new opportunity to change the rules of the game in the region: by irreversibly erasing Palestine from the Arab political equation, fostering new and open alliances between its Arab allies and Israel, and making Iran, not Israel, the new enemy of the Arabs (7).

The latest American ploy can be summed up in the phrase: The Deal of the Century.

The Reordering of the Middle East

The 'Deal of the Century' is not a peace plan, nor was it ever intended to be. It is a last-ditch American effort, aimed at maintaining its hegemony in the Middle East. It is a massive, colonial undertaking that is driven by the same misguided notion that in order for the United States to maintain a semblance of relevance, let alone leadership in the region, Israel must remain the regional hegemon, and that Iran must be contained, and eventually totally subdued. It is nothing more than "declaring "mission accomplished", as other invading armies have done in the Middle East. History teaches us that such pronouncements are premature", as David Hearst argues.[8]

It is worth noting that analyzing Trump's new political doctrine in the Middle East against the backdrop of the failed peace process or the defunct two-state solution is hardly helpful. It retrospectively validates the erroneous assumption that the so-called peace process ever intended to achieve a genuine peace and that a Palestinian state was ever truly a serious option as far as Tel Aviv and Washington were concerned [9].

But more importantly, such mistaken contextualization serves as a diversion from a far more relevant and urgent discussion: The Deal of the Century is a regional plot that aims at refashioning a new Arab leadership that operates based on a whole different agenda. If the Deal of the Century is to succeed, Iran would become the new common enemy facing both Arab regimes and Israel. The center of Arab power would continue to shift eastward, and Saudi Arabia, The United Arab Emirates and other Gulf states would normalize relations with Israel – a process that has in fact already begun. Those who dared to reject the new normal in the Middle East would face the dire consequences of political isolation, destabilization and worse. Those who agreed to play along would be welcomed to the new alliance of Middle East 'moderates'.

This new American plan for the region is clearly not open for negotiation and would be determined entirely by Tel Aviv and Washington, whose political symbiosis has never been so synced as it is now, especially as both regimes are more empowered than ever before. The fact that US President Donald Trump has survived the consequences of the Mueller Report - which looked into possible collusion

between his administration and Russia - has breathed new life into his embattled leadership. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has too been emboldened, emerging from the April 9, 2019 legislative elections unscathed, if not even stronger.

The announcement of the new plan was postponed. During the Jerusalem Post conference in New York in mid-June 2019, the US Middle East Envoy Jason Greenblatt announced "the logic would still dictate that if we wanted to wait until a new (Israeli) government is formed, we really do have to wait until potentially as late as November 6."

Trump and Netanyahu are now ready to lay down and enforce the law, and Palestinians and Arabs are expected to obey or, otherwise pay the price for any possible resistance. In fact, the series of US financial sanctions and withholding of funds from the Palestinian Authority (PA) starting in September 2018 is a case in point.

The new American-Israeli approach is the antithesis of Washington's 'soft power diplomacy' – a progressive, long term approach to achieving political ends based on enticing and co-opting rather than forcing and coercing. Evidence of that approach has been demonstrated in both words and action. For example, the US decision to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in December 2017, the carrying out of that decision in May 2018 and the declaration that Jerusalem is altogether "off the table" as far as any future political arrangement is concerned. These measures were accompanied with the closure of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) office in Washington (8), the massive financial cuts of American aid to the PA, and the defunding of organizations that provide direct support to Palestinian refugees, including the UN Palestinian refugees' agency (UNRWA).



No deal [MEM]

The same pattern is underway regarding the Israel-occupied Syrian Golan Heights. These dramatic events, a major American departure from decades of Middle East diplomacy, have empowered Netanyahu to declare his intentions to annex Jewish settlements, colonies that are built illegally in the occupied Palestinian West Bank. Indeed, while Trump is changing the rules of the game on a regional level, Israeli right-wing extremists, now defining mainstream Israeli society, are hoping to translate the bold American policy into territorial and political gains in Palestine. Long gone are the days of shuttle diplomacy, 'painful compromises' (9) and the pretense of US pressure on Israel. Trump is now an American genie, and the Israeli wish list is growing.

It could be argued that this latest American design will too fail, since after all, the US no longer holds all the cards. The Middle East region, in fact the world is changing and rapidly so. Iran which once braced itself for a US invasion after the US occupation of Iraq is now a force to be reckoned with(10), with its presence and influence felt throughout the region, especially in Iraq and war-stricken Syria. Its power is particularly highlighted if juxtaposed with the demise of once relatively strong Arab countries. Egypt is no longer a regional force (11) and is, at best an American-Israeli-Saudi lackey; Libya is a failed state, lying in ruins amid a seemingly perpetual war. And the rest of the Arab world is undergoing unprecedented suffering, war, revolts and political instability.

Russia has once again managed to insert itself as a relevant party in the Middle East after a prolonged absence starting with the calamitous collapse of the Soviet Union (12). Those days are also long gone. Russian President Vladimir Putin is the go-to address of Netanyahu (13) as far as the future of Syria and its impact on Israel's strategic and security interests are concerned. Russia's influence is also visible in Libya, Egypt and elsewhere. In fact, on February 11, feuding Palestinian factions met in Moscow (14), to sort out their differences. Unsurprisingly, they failed, but the fact that their conference was even held at all under Russian auspices is telling of the future role that Russia envisages for itself.

Learning from the Past: A Paradigm Shift

The Deal of the Century proposes a new approach to the Middle East that differs from all others. Unlike previous US doctrines, this one doesn't propose to solve a conflict, but to sort it out through cordial arrangements between Arab rulers and Israel. While the US spent billions trying to fund its failed past doctrines, the Deal of the Century is likely to be funded by Arab-owned oil largess.

"A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm" (15) was a strategy composed mostly by an American study group, led by former neo-conservative leader, Richard Perle, for the benefit of Netanyahu in 1996. It aimed at envisaging a future for Israel that would help it break free from its historic dependence on the US as a power player in the Middle East. Many of the objectives of "A Clean Break" were incorporated in the philosophy of the once powerful US-based think tank, The Project for the New American Century (PNAC) (16). Founded in 1997 by arch neocons, William Kristol and Robert Kagan, the group aimed at shaping future American policies in the Middle East and the world. Arguably, PNAC's most important document was "Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategies, Force and Resources for a New Century." Israel's security was also featured as a focal point in the US vision for the Middle East.

The catastrophic outcomes resulting from that failed doctrine forced PNAC's neocon leadership into early hibernation, but its impact didn't evaporate altogether. While the Iraq war eventually destabilized the region, it forced new thinking in Washington that a wholesome approach to the Middle East is essential to guarantee long-term US domination.

In 2006, then US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice began promoting the New Middle East (17), a political notion that was introduced during the Israeli war on Lebanon in 2006. "As we deal with the current circumstances, we need to always be cognizant of and looking to what kind of Middle East we are trying to build. It is time for a New Middle East," she said during a trip to Prague.

The assumption then was that an Israeli victory over the Lebanese resistance was most assured. The Americans rallied against the international community's attempt to achieve a quick ceasefire, hoping that the delay would give Israel the time needed to achieve its regional objectives, thus allowing both Washington and Tel Aviv to reconfigure the region in accordance with their long-term policies. That too failed, since Israel was taught a hard lesson and forced out of Lebanon in one of its greatest military setbacks to date. The "New Middle East" doctrine wasn't scrapped, but it was shelved since many of the prerequisites were still not in place.

In 2011, the US declared the end of its withdrawal from Iraq, leaving the country with a whole new political makeup, which is influenced by sectarian politics more than by any democratic values. Worse, Iran became a major player in the country, which is hardly the outcome expected or desired by the neocons and their allies in Israel and the rest of the region.

Arab revolts and upheaval starting in Tunisia in 2011 (18) soon engulfed many Arab countries. It was the first time in many years where political outcomes in the region were determined by forces other than US-Israeli political schemes. Symbols of Arab regimes fell, only to be replaced by military dictatorships - as in the case of Egypt, proxy wars or utter chaos – as in the cases of Syria and Yemen. Western attempts at regaining the initiative in Libya turned the country into a failed state. Even American attempts at "leading from behind" (19) during the Barack Obama Administration backfired. Instead of creating a "New Middle East" controlled from Washington and Tel Aviv, the region persisted in a state of bedlam. This political uncertainty invited new players into the region that was, at least since World War II, under the spell of US influence.

As Iran gained greater influence, and with Russia staking new claims in the region, Washington was accused of failing its allies. Long before early signs of normalization began appearing between Saudi Arabia and Israel, both countries had one cause in common, immense frustration with the Obama Administration that seemed to operate in the region with an indecisive doctrine of crisis management and bashful interventions (20).

Netanyahu and his Washington allies found it shocking that Obama was still talking of illegal settlement freeze rather than preparing for war against Iran. The Saudis shared that sentiment. Wary of Iran's growing influence, Saudi rulers understood that any change to the status quo in the Middle East, which has prevailed since the Roosevelt-Ibn Saud agreement (so-called Quincy Agreement) in 1945 (21), represented a direct threat to their power.

The advent of Trump, an impulsive, erratic and opportunistic president, represented the perfect opportunity for the understated Saudi-Israeli anti-Iran alliance to take shape. His visit to Saudi Arabia

on May 20, 2017, and astronomical financial military deals signed with the Kingdom (totaling \$350 bn) (22), as well as other Gulf monarchies was the price required for the US to re-engage with the region, this time not driven by any particular American priorities or illusions, but by the stated desire to recreate a Middle East region where Israel, Saudi Arabia and their allies are the main centers of power.

In this new paradigm, Palestine is set to lose any claim of relevance to its old status of being a cause celebre in the Arab world, Egypt is to be pushed further away from the center of Arab politics and Jordan is set to lose its historic ties to Occupied East Jerusalem. All the keys are to fall in the Saudi's hands, and behind it other Gulf states. Those who disagree, per Saudi Arabia's de-facto leader, Mohammad bin Salman can either "put up or shut up." (23)

Kushner and Saudis

Arabs were already divided, but a new schism is now being created by US diplomacy in the region as exemplified in the slick and secretive style of Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and top advisor. The Kushner family relationship with Netanyahu goes back years (24), and the man's affinity with Israel is very deep-rooted and well-known. But more recently, Kushner began building bridges with young and ambitious Arab leaders that soon developed into close relationships, which he hopes to utilize in his Deal of the Century stratagem.

An example (25) of how Kushner employs personal touches, as opposed to grand political gestures, which serve as the foundation of US politicking in the region, can be understood through how the young American developed a friendship with the young Saudi prince, heir apparent and de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia, Mohammad bin Salman. It was Tom Barrack, a long-time friend of Trump who introduced UAE ambassador to the US, Yousef al-Qtaiba to Kushner. After the two forged a friendship, al-Qtaiba, in turn, introduced Kushner to bin Salman, who, at the time was KSA's minister of defense. It was through that friendship that bin Salman received the green light to go to war against impoverished and conflict-torn Yemen and carry out purges against his opponents in the country, in exchange for bin Salman's agreeing to be part of Kushner's regional scheming, involving Israel and the Palestinians. Not even the gruesome murder of Saudi dissident and journalist, Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi embassy in Istanbul on October 2 would endanger this 'friendship.' (26)



Kushner at the Warsaw Ministerial Meeting [Getty]

Soon after, on February 26, Kushner was in Saudi Arabia forging ahead with his regional plan. While Trump explained the need to maintain the US-Saudi alliance based on business interests, supposedly to benefit the US economy (27), Kushner had something else in mind. Bin Salman's consent is an essential piece of the new American great game. Without Saudi agreement to play its required role, it would be difficult, if not impossible for the Deal of the Century to actualize. While it is true that bin Salam confessed that he "permanently stands by Palestine(28) and its people's right to an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital," there are little evidence to suggest that the verbal assurance will be backed by any tangible steps. To the contrary, the lack of any palpable Saudi resistance to the Trump anti-Palestinian measures indicate official Saudi agreement with US policy.

While Arab rulers continue to pay lip-service to Palestine, on February 13-14, Kushner, along with the ardently pro-Israel Special Middle East Envoy, Jason Greenblatt met in Warsaw with top Arab officials in one of the clearest signs of normalization (29). The Warsaw Middle East summit did more than merely demonize Iran, but it was an important step in the declaration of the new American order in the Middle East, one in which Israel and some Arab countries, under the leadership of Saudi Arabia will open a new chapter (30), one in which Palestine is no longer a priority.

But not all Arabs are consenting to the new American agenda. The Jordanian ruling elites are fuming.

Marginalizing the Hashemites

The US-Israel-Saudi plot aims at marginalizing Jordan. In their view, the country is militarily weak and financially reliant on foreign aid. While there is much truth to these calculations, Jordan is likely to put up a fight, for it stands to lose most.

Jordan's King Abdullah met with Kushner on several occasions to discuss the American plan. Kushner's approach to persuading Jordan to join the Deal of the Century camp is based on the understanding that money, and lots of it, should be enough to undermine any Jordanian resistance. But he is wrong. Jordan is driven by fears that the Deal of the Century will upset the delicate demographic makeup in Jordan and will downgrade Jordan's status in Jerusalem (31). Indeed, while the Saudi's used their custodianship over the holy Muslim shrines in Mecca and Medina to validate their spiritual leadership in the Islamic world, Jordan, and, to lesser degree Morocco, have achieved similar status through their ties to the holy sites in Jerusalem, Al Quds.

At the heart of Jordan's demographic concerns are the Palestinian refugees. Out of the 5.5 million Palestinians living in diaspora, an estimated 2.2 million live in Jordan alone, nearly 1.2 million of whom are registered refugees with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA.) In leaked emails obtained by Foreign Policy Magazine (32), Kushner wrote to Greenblatt that "honest and sincere efforts (must be taken) to disrupt UNRWA", so that eventually Palestinian refugees lose their legal status as refugees, requiring repatriation and compensations as dictated in international law.

Kushner's foolish disregard of international law is driven by the typical arrogance and ignorance of US foreign policy making. Aside from the illegality, let alone crookedness of Kushner's designs, he is unable to fathom the sensitivity of the subject in Jordan. To coax King Abdullah into accepting his initiative, Kushner offered to provide Jordan with the US financial contributions paid to UNRWA as long as it agrees to take over the international organization's work, and incorporate Palestinian refugees into Jordanian society. Eventually, the US cut off its financial contributions to UNRWA altogether, alleging that the organization's existence "perpetuates a status quo" and "doesn't help peace." (33) Expectedly, Jordan dismissed Kushner's offer. The swift Jordanian rejection is not at all surprising. "Jordan is not Palestine" is a notion that both Jordanians and Palestinians agree on since American and Israeli policy makers began waving the "Jordan option" to settle Palestinian refugees in Jordan as the alternative Palestinian state. (34)

But Jordan's concerns were compounded when the Israeli-American-Saudi designs in Jerusalem became clear. The Hashemite dynasty has served as custodian of Jerusalem holy places since 1924 (35), a fact that has allowed the family to further legitimize its political leadership for decades. The

1994 Israel-Jordan peace agreement maintained Jordan's status in Jerusalem as did a 2013 agreement between Jordan and the Palestinian Authority (36).

The US wants to destabilize that 'status quo' as well by getting other Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia involved in the oversight of Jerusalem's holy places. Such a move would undermine the Jordanian-PA alliance and offer further validation to the Saudi regional leadership, a cornerstone in the Israeli-US agenda.

King Abdullah moved quickly to confront US efforts. Both Abdullah and PA President Mahmoud Abbas understood the nature of the new ploy very well, and how it all links to the Deal of the Century. Israel has taken several decisions to further restrict Palestinian movement at al-Aqsa Mosque Compound. These measures include the installation of metal detectors at the gates leading to Haram al-Sharif last July 2017, and the shutting down of the Golden Gate, or Bab Al Dhahabi on March 16, 2018. Closer Jordanian-Palestinian coordination followed (37), including a visit by King Abdullah to Ramallah, and the expansion of the Council of the Islamic Waqf and the Holy Places in Jerusalem from 11 to 18 members in anticipation of the challenges that lie ahead.

King Abdullah's diplomacy went further to include Morocco, which is also concerned with Saudi politicking and bin Salman's ambitions, including having a larger share in the control of Jerusalem's holy sites. In a meeting between King Abdullah and King Mohammed VI of Morocco in March, 2019, in the Royal Palace in Casablanca, both monarchs wanted to send a clear and unified message to the US, Israel and Saudi Arabia (38).

The Monarch's "reiterated their full support to the Palestinian cause, emphasizing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to establish their independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital," reported Morocco World News at the time. "Both monarchs condemned Israel's worrying policies in Jerusalem. They said Israeli authorities are undermining the city's's legal and historical status, as well as its demographic and spiritual make-up."



Kings of Jordan and Morocco

Most interesting in all of this is the notable absence of Egypt. Once upon a time, Egypt served as the center of Arab politics. With the exception of the few years following Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's signing of the unilateral Camp David Accords with Israel in 1979, Egypt has remained the main political leader of the Arab world, relegating to the Saudis the role of spiritual leadership. Things have shifted dramatically since Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi arrived on the scene through a military coup on July 3, 2013 (39). Not only is Egypt now an active participant in the Israeli siege on Gaza, but al-Sisi's government is expected to play a viable role in Trump's Deal of the Century, knowing full well that one of the aims of the deal is to launch Saudi Arabia as a new regional hegemon. That said, al-Sisi is also wary of the potential dangers lying ahead, as a deal that would concede Jerusalem to Israel could further delegitimize his already unstable regime (40).

Conclusion

Starting in February 2017, the Trump Administration made it clear that it was moving in an entirely different direction from all previous administrations when it dropped its long-standing commitment to the two-state solution. Trump's comments on the two-state solution were neither impulsive nor were they a one-off declaration. Indeed, his claims were followed by a massive shift on Palestine, Jerusalem especially (41). The fact that he selected his bankruptcy lawyer, a well-known Zionist and a strong supporter of illegal Jewish settlements, David Friedman as Washington's new ambassador to Israel is proof that the US administration was gearing towards recognizing a status quo as seen from an Israeli viewpoint.

As Washington began taking a series of measures to intimidate and collectively punish Palestinians at the behest of Israel, it also began forming a more comprehensive regional scheme that no longer sees an end to the Israeli occupation of a Palestinian state as prerequisites to solving the Arab-Israeli conflict. In fact, according to Kushner's vision, one that is supported by bin Salman, normalization between the Arabs and Israel can happen independent from any conversation on Palestine and with Occupied Jerusalem being "off the table" altogether.

Will Kushner prove capable of achieving his designs? Evidence points to the contrary. If a major US war on Iraq, promoted and defended by legions of neoconservative intellectuals failed to reconfigure the region in favor of Israel, how could Kushner - with the help of an inexperienced Saudi prince - succeed, especially at a time when the region has acquired new important players, including Russian and Iran?

The American-Israeli-American-Saudi gambit aims at more than normalizing the Israeli occupation. It intends to change the status quo of Arab centers of political and spiritual power as well. This could shatter long-standing alliances between Arab countries that have historically been perceived by the US as the 'moderates'. Jordan has every reason to worry that Washington's game could jeopardize its standing in Palestine, especially in Jerusalem, which could undermine the Hashemite Kingdom and its claim of regional leadership.

Considering the varied degrees of failure in all previous US initiatives, starting with Kuwait war in 1990-91, the Deal of the Century is likely to meet the same futile end, especially as it attempts to generate a new political map in a region that is experiencing its greatest upheaval in decades. At best, the Deal of the Century will allow Trump/Kushner, Netanyahu and bin Salman to merely buy time, each for his own domestic benefit. However, it is also likely to result in the splitting up of an Arab camp that has served as the American vanguard in the Middle East for many years. This could be the US's greatest political gamble in the region yet.

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