Reaction to the Steps Taken by Washington to Reconcile Israel and the Arabs

Sundown on September 18th marked the start of Rosh Hashanah 5781, the new year according to the Hebrew calendar. According to Jewish tradition, the New Year predetermines people’s fates and the events that take place over the entire following year. Jewish people believe that many important events are associated with Rosh Hashanah, which symbolizes the sixth day in the process of creating the world, when the Creator created mankind’s progenitor: Adam. Since then, God has been passing judgment on humanity on this day, and determining people’s fates for the subsequent year.

That is why the eve of Rosh Hashanah was not chosen by the Donald Trump administration by accident as the time to urgently formalize the normalization of relations between the Muslim world and Israel, and to sign a trilateral agreement between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain in the White House on the establishing full-fledged diplomatic relations; this has already been dubbed the "Abraham Accords", in honor of the father of the monotheistic religions that took root in the Middle East: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

In accordance with this agreement, Israel will suspend claiming sovereignty over the West Bank regions, and annexing Palestinian lands, until at least 2024; this was stipulated in the plan for the Middle East from the U.S. administration that Donald Trump made public in January this year. The agreement also provided Muslims with greater access to the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem’s Old City, and allows them to fly non-stop, round-trip from Abu Dhabi to Tel Aviv.

The UAE and Bahrain became the third and fourth Arab nations to sign these kinds of agreements with Israel, after Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. Thirty predominantly Muslim countries do not recognize Israel out of a feeling of solidarity with the Palestinians, and the main conflict of this post-war period has been going on for several decades.

As Al Akhbar newspaper reported on September 16, the leaders of the UAE and Bahrain, after signing the “Abraham Accords”, are executing a mission whose goal is to pull Trump through the upcoming elections and absolve Netanyahu from penalty in his corruption cases. The two previous models for normalizing relations with Israel — the Egyptian and Jordanian ones — were striking examples that rendered the “peace for peace” formula invalid.

In many Arab countries, experts note that Donald Trump will position the agreement as a “definitive success” in his foreign policy when seeking re-election to the presidency in the November 3 elections. In support of this tactic, in his speech the U.S. President repeated the statement - one made even before the signing ceremony - that “the UAE and Bahrain will be followed by five more Arab countries, as well as an agreement with the Palestinian Authority”.

However, despite the attempts on the part of Israeli and U.S. authorities, through propaganda apparatus that they control, to amplify the significance of signing of the “Abraham Accords” for “peace in the future Middle East”, assessments about this event by the international community are by no means that unequivocal.

For example, the Palestinians announced that it was a "black day", and warned of a new intifada. Gaza-based Hamas has delivered threats to Israel about “intensifying” its attacks on the Jewish state, Israeli media reported. Ramallah’s official statement affirms that the Palestinians will not recognize any peace agreement until a decision is made to establish a Palestinian state in the bounds of the 1967 borders. Saleh al-Aroui, the head of Hamas’ political bureau, described the “normalization” accords as a lamentable event for Arab and Islamic countries and, above all, for the people in the UAE and Bahrain. In a televised speech, the politician acknowledged: “The King (of Bahrain) and the sheikhs (in the Emirates) are blind and deaf, they do not know, do not feel the peoples they have taken it upon
themselves to rule. This so-called ‘normalization’ with Israel does not reflect the living conscience of the Arab peoples.

In contrast to the relatively positive public reaction in the United Arab Emirates, the reaction in Bahrain has been harsher, including sharp criticism leveled at the government for negotiating the agreement with Israel. Bahrainis reportedly rose up in protest in the northern villages of Karrana and Abu Saiba, the north-central village of Shakhurah, the village of Sanabis in the capital city’s suburbs, and the village of Sadad on the country’s west coast. The citizens of Bahrain, ruled by the Sunni Al Khalifa ruling royal family but whose population is majority Shia Muslims, expressed serious displeasure with the agreement to normalize relations with Israel, which many called "an act of high treason". The Bahraini opposition came out on social media, launching a campaign on Twitter dubbed “Bahrainis Against Normalization”, which became the most popular tweet in recent times, and also included criticism of, and a general feeling of disappointment in, the US administration.

According to Arab observers, there was never any war between Israel and the UAE, so therefore the agreement signed on August 13 cannot be called "a peace agreement". This is rather a strategic alliance between the two countries, whose purpose is to change the region’s geopolitics, and so that the following this deal the UAE can secure American F-35 fighter jets with the support of the Israeli lobby in Washington. In addition, it is reported that the Emirates need this to help cover up their crimes in Yemen, Libya, Egypt, and other countries. For its part, Israel, having gained access to the Persian Gulf, will find itself on Iran’s western border, something that will pose a real threat to Tehran.

The agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates that was developed by the U.S. presidential administration not only takes a step in an anti-Iranian direction, but has another latent goal, believes the Italian publication Terrasanta.net: to prevent China from moving into the Middle East.

According to The Times of Israel, the agreements signed by Israel with the UAE and Bahrain in the White House, although they signify a new era for Jerusalem, do not resolve the problems that it has with its closest neighbor. The Palestinian Authority has reaffirmed its position: there will be no peace in the region until Israel and the United States recognize the right of the Palestinian people to create their own independent state.

Netanyahu's foreign policy success in the form of a normalization process with two Arab countries in the Persian Gulf did not improve the position held by the Likud. The government’s administrative failure during the pandemic continues, apparently outweighing all other factors, israelinfo reports. According to a poll commissioned by Israel’s Channel 13, after the signing the agreements the Likud still continues to lose votes and, if the elections were held today, would receive 30 mandates - 1 less than the previous poll indicated.

A reaction that is far from unambiguous could be seen in the United States itself, where opponents gathered together in front of the White House on September 16th, chanting various slogans in protest. According to a website run by the Arutz Sheva media network, protesters paraded in front of the White House in keffiyehs, carried Palestinian flags, and chanted slogans such as "Free Palestine", proclaiming: “This is a blow to the Palestinian people. What they call a peace agreement is actually an endorsement of occupation and apartheid.”

Against this backdrop, the proposals that have already been put forth to nominate Donald Trump and Benjamin Natanyahu for the Nobel Peace Prize in many countries are perceived very critically - and not only in Muslim countries.

There was one clearly negative omen concerning the steps taken by Washington on the eve of Rosh Hashanah to reconcile the Arabs with Israel that stood out: the American media reported that 24 hours after the ceremony to sign the peace agreements between Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, several White House employees were diagnosed with the coronavirus...

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