In an interview with the Palestinian newspaper Al-Quds, the son-in-law and advisor to the US president, Jared Kushner said, following his recent visit to the Near East, an American plan for Palestinian-Israeli resolution will soon be published, named in advance the “deal of the century.” Immediately there was talk that this plan would become one of the themes of the upcoming summit of the presidents of Russia and the USA, V. Putin and D. Trump, in Helsinki on July 16. It’s no coincidence that before the Russian-American summit, Palestinian President M. Abbas and possibly, Israeli Prime Minister B. Netanyahu, are expected to visit Moscow. Although the Russian MFA claims to not know the details of the “deal of the century,” Arabic sources say that Moscow is in the loop on the main framework of the deal and reportedly does not object to the USA’s latest attempt to reconcile Palestinians and Israelis. That’s not to mention that supporting the attempt is not the same as supporting the actual plan.

As is well known, still in 2016 the US president said in an interview that he approaches resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict like a business deal, the realization of which he entrusted to J. Kushner and Special Representative of the US President J. Greenblatt. For a year and a half, they made a series of trips to the region, discussing the “deal’s” possible parameters. Their last visit took place in mid-June, during which they discussed their plan with the leadership of Israel, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Jordan. The Palestinians were left out of the “contact process” because the PNA declared that they refused to negotiate with the Americans after the USA’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and move their embassy there.

In any case, J. Kushner said in the Al-Quds interview that the American plan will be announced regardless of whether
The first point is the USA’s recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel and the relocation of the American embassy there from Tel Aviv. This means the refusal of the USA and Israel to discuss with the Palestinian side this key issue of the status of Jerusalem.

The second point is the creation of a future capital of the State of Palestine on the edge of Eastern Jerusalem in the small Palestinian village of Abu Dis, which now belongs to the so-called Area B, which is under the joint control of Israel and the PNA. To increase its size, the US president’s administration intends to appeal to the Israeli government with a request to transfer control to the PNA of four districts of Jerusalem, which are now primarily populated by Palestinians: Abu Dis, Jebel Mukaber, Isaaq and Shufat (note- the Palestinian refugee camp, located within the modern municipal boarders of Jerusalem).

The third point is the annexation of the large Jewish blocks of settlement Gush Etzion, Ma’ale Adumim, Modi’in and Ariel to Israel. In this way, according to the Trump’s plan, approximately 10% of the territory of the West Bank and 69 settlements with a population of 470 thousand people will transfer to the sovereignty of Israel, and 71 settlements and 118 thousand settlers will be subject to evacuation. This de-facto signals the USA’s refusal of the measures accepted by all members of the UNSC in resolutions No. 242 and 338, which assert, “that the fulfillment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles: 1) Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict; 2) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.”

The fourth point is developing of a general conception of the Israeli and Palestine safety by US administration on the basis of which, both states will act as partners “on the road to peace.” This conception includes four important elements: 1) a demilitarized Palestinian state with police forces. There is no mention at all of a demilitarized Israel; 2) the establishment of a bilateral regional and international process of collaboration in security matters with the participation of Jordan, Egypt, and the USA, and to which other countries will be invited; 3) maintaining an Israeli military presence in the zone of the Jordan River valley and the Samaria Highlands (Taking into account the third point, this is at least 11% of the territory of the West Bank); 4) maintaining Israel’s responsibility for the security of both states in emergency situations.

The fifth point provides for the gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from beyond the borders of Area A (totally controlled by PNA) and B (jointly controlled by PNA and Israel) on the West Bank and from several territories in Area C. Later (the date is not named at all, which implies Israel’s approval) within the limits of these borders will be a declaration of the creation of a Palestinian state.

The sixth and seventh points, respectively, stipulate the mutual recognition of the State of Israel as the national homeland for the Jewish people and the State of Palestine as the national homeland for the Palestinian people.

The eighth point calls for Israel to guarantee the preservation of the status quo around Christian, Jewish, and Muslim holy sites that existed before Israel’s creation, providing free access to holy sites to believers of all religions.

The ninth point requires Israel to allocate spaces in the region of the Ashdod and Haifa ports, as well as Ben Gurion airport for the use of Palestinians, but at the same time, only Israel will control the security of these air and sea harbours.

The tenth point entails the creation of a safe transport corridor between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which will be fully controlled by Israel and placed under its sovereignty.

In accordance with the eleventh point, Palestinian security services can be placed in areas provided by Israel for the use of citizens of the State of Palestine.
The twelfth point states that territorial waters, air and electromagnetic space will be under total control of Israel “without infringing on the requirements” of the State of Palestine.

The thirteenth point of the plan includes a call for a “fair solution to the refugee problem” within the State of Palestine. In doing so, it only speaks about refugees in camps on the West Bank and in Gaza. The Trump’s plan does not contain a word about the thousands of other disadvantaged and suffering Palestinians in exile. That is, there is no right for refugees to return, which would be purely declarative – to Israel, it will be suggested to recognize the refugee problem, but they will not be able to return to the territory, which is currently under Israeli jurisdiction, for example, Jerusalem and Haifa.

The “deal of the century” also entails the payment of compensation, both to Palestinian refugees and to Jews who were expelled from Arabic countries after the creation of the State of Israel. At that, it will be suggested that the refugee issue be closed. There is not a single mention of the United Nations’ solutions and resolutions.

As to the USA’s intention to “buy” Arabic countries, which, besides Saudi Arabia, will, naturally resist this option of solving the Palestinian question, can be plainly seen “Trump, the businessman,” rather than “Trump, the president.” Because of this, the deal is constructed with financial-economic elements, designed in the form of another Marshall Plan, but for the Near East, and largely at the expense of America’s Arabic allies from the GCC. The USA has already requested about $1 billion Arabic monarchies of the Persian Gulf for infrastructure projects in Palestine, including the Gaza Strip. This is, in particular, about the creation of a free trade zone in Sinai, where five large industrial projects will be launched, which will use workers from Gaza. There are also discussions about constructing a port, power station, and airport.

At the same time, in the Gaza Strip, the radical group Hamas could potentially remain in power. Moreover, the USA is ready to finance part of the project itself in exchange for the disarmament of Hamas. The realization of projects in the Gaza Strip without Hamas is simply impossible to imagine. Here is another question – is Washington ready to conduct business with a movement that it considers terrorist. It’s also hard to imagine that Hamas, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood would agree to lay down its arms.

For Palestinians, both in Gaza and on the West Bank, any compromises about Eastern Jerusalem and the issue of Palestinian refugees are unacceptable. Leaders of a number of Arabian countries, including “moderate” ones, such as Jordan and Egypt, hold similar positions. The later requested that the Americans not publish the plan, as it could lead to a sharp aggravation of the internal situation in their countries. The Arab street is just not ready for the concessions the USA can suggest.

In general, there is nothing new in this plan; many of its elements were spoken differently in various, earlier negotiations, including the Arab initiative. Another question, what is possible from all of this? The clear “naiveté” of Americans and their traditional misunderstanding of the region is evident in their attempts to present a new Marshall Plan for the Gaza Strip. If the plan presents economic assistance to the Gaza Strip while the Hamas movement remains in power, then it will only strengthen extremists and weaken those who have been fighting them for many years, including Israel itself. It is not constructive to exclude the Palestinian authorities on the West bank. Any initiative that does not consider the interests of the Palestinians is doomed to fail from the start. Moreover, this is not only about Palestinians, but also about Israelis, for example, those from the right wing. That which might seem too little to the Palestinians might seem too much for them. According to data from a poll recently conducted by the Israeli Democracy Institute, 74% of Israelis consider the chances of a “deal of the century” as low or very low. In any case, there is still no final plan. Too many nuances need to be taken into account.

Additionally, it is impossible to forget that that conclusion of the Arabic-Israeli conflict depends on the solution of the Syrian Golan Heights issue. As long as the Syrian War continues and in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan live hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees, there will be no peace in the Near East. No “deals” will work no magic wand either, even if Trump himself is a skilled illusionist. First the issue of Jerusalem must be resolved, taking into account the interests of the Palestinian people, but also all Arabs, resolve the issue with the Golan and create an independent Palestine with all the full attributes, not a semi colony of Israel, and only then raise the issue of economic prosperity in the region and the security of Israel. In Israel, many understand this, and in the Arabic world, almost all do, with the exception of the apparently “non-standard,” if not wacky, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and in Russia too, there are no illusions. However, these illusions are held by Trump, who steps on a rake everywhere he moves, whether it’s the Near East, Iran, Ukraine, or the European Union. Not everything can be decided in the style of a business deal. Trump, his son-in-law Kushner, and their team evidently do not have enough historical knowledge and understanding of the Near Eastern mentality. Ignorance, unfortunately, is too long and too
often inherent in American politicians who are at the top levels of power. From this ignorance come Iraq with Syria and Libya with Yemen. Mess things up, destroy millions of people, like in Vietnam and Iraq, and afterwards publicly repent and regret this is the style of the nation that considers itself the world’s messiah.

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