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The Demise of the Two-State Paradigm: Consequences for Jordan

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Abstrac

It has become an axiomatic to argue that the only way for solving the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict is by the way of establishing an independent Palestinian state on the basis of the 1967 borders. And yet, the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians has been stymied. The mantra of the two-state solution has yet to be associated with effective steps to make it a reality. A key question raised in this paper is the following: will the collapse of the two-state solution prejudice long term vital interests of Jordan? This paper assumes that the collapse of the two-state paradigm will most likely pose unprecedented challenges for Jordan's stability and identity. Key players may ask Jordan to step in and play a role in the West Bank. These uncharted waters can be detrimental to Jordan's vital interests. This paper employs insights derived from international relations theories to explain how the failure of the two-state paradigm may affect Jordan's national interests. To the vexation of Jordan, Israel has shown no sign that it has grown enthusiastic about jettisoning expansion. For this reason, Jordanians have left no stone unturned as a means to get them out of a no-win situation and preempt the realization of a situation fraught with genuine danger for Jordan's national security.

KeyWords: Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the two-state solution, identity, Jordan, Israel

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ملخص

لقد أصبح من البديهي القول إن الطريقة الوحيدة لحل النزاع الإسرائيلي الفلسطيني طويل الأمد هي عن طريق إقامة دولة فلسطينية مستقلة على أساس حدود عام ١٩٦٧. ومع ذلك، فقد تم إعاقة عملية السلام بين إسرائيل والفلسطينيين إذ لم يتم ربط شعار حل الدولتين بخطوات فعالة لجعله حقيقة واقعة. السؤال الرئيسي المطروح في هذه الورقة هو التالي: هلس يؤثر انهيار حل الدولتين على المصالح الحيوية طويلة المدى للأردن؟ هذه الورقة تفترض أنه من المرجح أن يطرح انهيار نموذج الدولتين تحديات غير مسبوقة لاستقرار الأردن وهويته. فقد يطلب اللاعبون الرئيسيون من الأردن التدخل والقيام بدور في الضفة الغربية. ويمكن لهذه الخطوة المجهولة أن تعود بالضرر على مصالح الأردن الحيوية. سيتم تحديد ذلك من خلال مفاهيم من نظريات العلاقات الدولية لتوضيح كيف يمكن أن يؤثر فشل نموذج حل الدولتين على المصالح الحيوية للأردن. ما يثير حفيظة الأردن أن إسرائيل لم تبد أي إشارة إلى أنها اضحت متحمسة للتخلي عن التوسع. ولهذا السبب، لم يترك الأردنيون حجرا لم يقلبوه للخروج من حالة اللاربح ولاستباق تجسيد موقف محفوف بخطر حقيقي على الأمن القومي الأردني.

الكلمات الدالة: الصراع الإسرائيلي–الفلسطيني، حل الدولتين، الهوية، الأردن، اسرائيل

Introduction:

The demise of the two-state solution has long been heralded by observers. The running theme is that the model of having an independent Palestinians state that exists side by side with Israel is not viable anymore. As one scholar observes, the two-state solution was always an illusion.[1] Since the election of Donald Trump on November 8, 2016 as a president of the United States, he has pushed forward a hardline policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In an unforeseen move, Washington recognized Jerusalem as the eternal capital for Israel. Besides, the American administration defunded the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The proposal of disrupting the UNRWA, which is charged with providing protection and assistance to Palestinian refugees, is a move that is interpreted as an attempt to circumvent the right of return for Palestinians refugees.

Trump's hardline policies mean that the two-state solution to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict has taken a back seat. Not surprisingly, settlers and opponents of the idea of establishing a Palestinians state in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are upbeat. The then Israeli Education Minister, NaftaliBennet, (the leader of the pro-settler Jewish Home Party) said "The era of the Palestinian state is over".[2] This ideologically driven position underestimates the ramifications of foiling the two-state paradigm. Soon, Israel will have to grapple with an explosive issue which is; what about the Palestinians who remain in the occupied territories? Notwithstanding the bifurcation view among Israelis politicians with regard to the best approach to solve the conflict with the Palestinians, the prevailing opinion is shaped through and filtered by a series of visions which determine its approach vis-à-vis the Palestinians and their call for an independent state. Jewishness and Zionism remain the key lenses through which Israelis perceive the idea of two-state solution.

Integral to the understanding of the resilience of the conflict is that the minimum demands of the Palestinians for solving the conflict and that of the Israelis are incompatible. Israel's expansion and assertive settlement policy chip away at the Palestinians ability to establish their own state. While the Arabs argue that settlement policy is detrimental to the viability of the two-state

(1) Munayyer, Yousef (2019) There Will Be a One-State Solution but What Kind of State Will It Be? Foreign Affairs

(2) Tamkin, Emily (2016) Israel's Naftali Bennett: With Trump, 'The Era of the Palestinian State Is Over' Foreign Policy. Available under: https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/11/14/israels-naftali-bennett-with-trump-the-era-of-the-palestinian-state-is-over/

solution. However, effective forces driven by ideological consideration use the security pretext to justify this policy. "It is therefore self-evident that the state's identity and culture, as derived from inherent cognitive and motivational biases, clarifies the Israelis conception of security".(1)

This paper delves into the realm of the consequences of the failure of the two-state model for Jordan. Short of establishing an independent Palestinian state, Jordan will suffer and it seems that Jordan's allies do not fully internalize the gravity of the situation. For this reason, any role assigned to Jordan to pull the chestnuts out of the fire is, to say the least, naive. In fact, Jordan's disengagement from the West Bank was strategic. For this reason, the King made it perfectly clear that the two-state solution is the only game in town. And yet, a twist of events may force Jordan to deal with the failure of the two-state model in a way that would jeopardize its national interests. This paper addresses this particular issue.

Study Objectives:

Numerous competing explanations for the failure of the two-state solution do not examine the consequences for Jordan. The key objective of this study is to examine whether the failure of the two-state paradigm is going to have an impact on Jordan at all and if yes in what way. In this paper, we intend to take the debate to a different arena by focusing on the relationship between depriving The Palestinians from exercising their right to self-determination and the national security of Jordan. To be more specific, this study examines how a possible failure of the two-state solution will shape the internal debate and threat perceptions among Jordanians.

While this paper focuses mainly on the link between Jordan's national interests and the establishment of the Palestinians state, it delves into the dynamics of the alternatives to the two-state solution. Various scholars address the issue but they focus on the impact of these alternatives on either the Palestinians or the Israelis. This paper, however, tends to focus on how these alternativeswill impact Jordan.

A final objective is about how Jordanians perceive threats linked to the failure of the two-state solution. There is an inherent tension between the Jordanian identity and the Palestinian one in Jordan. This study examines this tension by focusing on whether identity still shapes the threat perception of Jordanians. To be more specific, the study scrutinizes the consequences of denying the Palestinians the right to self-determination and exercising the right of return for refugees on Jordan's internal stability.

(1) Barari, Hassan (2006) Israel's Security: Another Perspective, Dirasat, Human and Social Sciences, Volume 33, No. 3, p.629

Study Methodology:

This paper employs a qualitative approach based on examining previous studies and published interviews with various experts and politicians. For the purpose of this paper, it is significant to go beyond the well-established realist approach that has maintained that there is no need to unpack the state. Postulating Israel as nothing but a rational actor that speaks as one voice, fails to capture the complexities of its domestic politics and how the latter inform much of its foreign policy particularly vis-à-vis the occupied territories.

More importantly, the dominant approach in studying the foreign policy of Israel has no theory of preferences. It fails to take into account the impact of identity in formulating preferences for various decision makers in Israel. Indeed, the ontological foundation of this paper is anchored in the assumption that reality does not exist independently of peoples' knowledge. Therefore, the theory of identity as the main cause of states' preferences can help enrich our understanding of the dynamics of the impasse in the peace process. The use of theory in this case can help identify the research questions and hypothesis.

This approach is of great utility for our understanding how Jordanians construct their threat perception. As the paper assumes, the failure of the two-state solution can pose a threat to Jordanian identity, a matter that has received little attention recently. Concepts and insights derived from various fields of social sciences – particularly from international relations – are employed by analysts to explain how the failure of the two-state paradigm is going to affect Jordan internally.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

This paper presents a systematic framework for the analysis of the consequences of the failure of the two-state model for Jordan. Any inquiry into the substance of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is anchored on the following components. Will Israel allow the Palestinians to establish their own independent state? Will Israel evacuate the settlements to give way for the set-up of a state for the Palestinians? Will Jerusalem be partitioned? Will there be a just solution of the refugee problem? If the answers are negative, then how will this affect Jordan's vital national interests?

This paper advances the following hypothesis: first, as President Trump has pushed back on the idea of the two-state solution, Israelis will harden their position with regard to the notion of an independent Palestinians state. Second, time is ticking on the establishment of a Palestinian States. Third, Jordan's national interests are to suffer. The question of identity speaks volumes. Therefore, the paper examines the impact of the failure of the model of two-state on Jordan's identity.

Literature Review:

The mutual recognition between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel and the subsequent signing of the Oslo accord on September 13, 1993 raised the Palestinians' hope that they would eventually enjoy the right to self-determination and establish their own independent state. In other words, the Oslo accord came as a game changer. It triggered an extensive debate on the prospects for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Scholarly work that examines the two state solution is abundance. Interestingly, the notion of two-state solution gained currency during the second term of President Bill Clinton after the signing of Oslo as many scholars started writing about the feasibility and desirability of the implementation of the two-state solution as a means of solving the Israeli-Palestinians issues once and for all.(1)

In "Israel, Jordan, and Palestine: The Two State Imperative,"[2] Asher Sussertraces the origins of the two-state solution. He provides an in-depth discussion of the notion since its appearance for the first time in 1937. On the heels of the Palestinian Revolt of 1936, Britain came to the conclusion that reconciliation between the Jews and the Palestinians was hardly possible. To avert further riots, the Peel Commission recommended partitioning Palestinian into two states: one for the Jews and the other for the Palestinians. And yet, the idea lost its appeal after the 1948 war as the West Bank and East Jerusalem became part of Jordan.

With the advent of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Palestinians felt empowered enough to call for the liberation of all of Palestine. But later on, the PLO settled for the 1967 border and called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state within these borders. For almost the last two decades, the two-state paradigm has been held up as the only optimal outcome to put an end to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The basic tenet is two states – Palestine and Israel, living peacefully side by side on the basis of the 1967 border. Many Israelis adopted this notion as a means to secure a Jewish and democratic Israel. All along, Israelis have sought to maintain a Jewish but democratic state. And yet, demography has become the focus of Israelis across the political spectrum. Having lodged itself high on the national agenda, the issue of demography has become at the heart of public debate in Israel.

(1) See for example Shitrit, Lihi Ben&Jaraba Mahmoud (2013) Death of the Two-State Paradigm? Foreign Policy

(2) Susser, Asher(2011) Israel, Jordan, and Palestine: The Two-State Imperative, Brandeis University Press; 1 edition.

In a pamphlet entitled "Israel, Demography 2000-2020,"(1) Professor ArnonSoffer from Haifa University, frames the demographic changes in the area that stretch from the Mediterranean and the Jordan as an existential threat. Soffer forecasts that Jews would constitute only 40% by 2010. To avoid a bi-national one-state, the Israeli left supports the notion of separating Israel proper from the occupied territories. For this reason, the idea of empowering the Palestinians to have their own state gained currency in Israel especially in the second half of 1990s. A central narrative among Israelis is that Israel must maintain its Jewish/democratic nature.

In the same vein, former American President Jimmy Carter took interest in the debate about the best solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Obviously he is sympathetic to the Palestinians right to self-determination. In his book, "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid,"(2) Carter sketches his assessment of the steps to be taken for Israel to make peace with the Palestinians. He delves into the requirement for peace thus offering insights into how Israeli sovereignty and security can coexist peacefully with Palestinian nationhood. Obviously, Carter's book did not resonate well in the United States. But the book was fully devoted to presents facts about the conflict that are almost unknown for many Americans. To avert the transformation of Israel into an apartheid states, peace based on two-state solution should be implemented. This is exactly the main idea of the book.

While the expectations of having a two-state solution were high, a twist of events has hardened the position of the Israeli public. The failed attempt to have a final resolution in Camp David in July 2000 has deepened the mutual distrust between the Palestinians and Israelis. With the eruption of the al-Aqsa Intifada in the wake of the failure of the Camp David summit, the Israeli society has shifted rightward. After almost two-decade since the outbreak of the Intifada and Israel's insistence that there was no Palestinian to talk to, the conditions required for a peace process are all but absent. The continuation of the settlement activities has shrunk the Palestinian land and the number of settlers has increased to the level that evacuating them within the context of a peace agreement is politically impossible.

There is of course a plethora of literature addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict especially when it comes to the likelihood of an independent Palestinian state as a final form of settlement. In his highly cited work

(1) Soffer, Arnon (2003) Israel: Demography 2000–2020: Dangerous and Options, Haifa: Haifa University; National Security Studies Center. See alsoBystrov, Evgenia&Soffer, Arnon (2008). Israel Demography and Density 2007-2020, Haifa: University of Haifa.

(2) Carter, Jimmy (2006). Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid, U.S: Simon & Schuster.

"Regional Alternatives to the Two-State Solution,"(1) GioraEilandattacks the central tenets of the notion of the two-state solution. He suspects that this option is no longer possible and that there is a need to rethink the whole approach and try to come up with a holistic paradigm that can result in peace. While he acknowledges that the two-state parameters are essentially dead, he devises a different regional approach, one that envisions a role for Jordan in the West Bank.

For others, the two-state paradigm was dead long before it was announced. Even Palestinians lost hope in peace based on this paradigm. Jamil Hilalstated in his introduction of "Where Now for Palestine? The Demise of the Two-State Solution"(2) that both Israelis and Palestinians came to the realization that "the Oslo process has collapsed and the two-state solution has reached an impasse". The book is devoted to find a new solution as it details how and why the two-state paradigm has collapsed. This book critically revisits the two-state approach and indeed maps the consequences of both local and international political changes for the Palestinians and their quest for a state. Interestingly, the book advocates a one state solution as an alternative.

In his book, Hassan Barari examines the dynamics of the failure of two-state solution and the challenges with which Jordan may contend. Jordanians, according to the author, have been suspicious about the hidden agenda behind Israel'sintransigence with regard to the peace process as a whole. Implicit in Israeli's evasiveness is the desire to derail the peace process to create new environmentwhere Israel can further expand. Barari also argues that from an identity perspective, Israelis policies have been detrimental to the Jordanian identity(3). In the same vein, Ian Lustickargues that the two-state solution is no longer a viable political objective or a practical, useful plan for thinking about the problem. Lustick's book is an important addition to our understanding of the failure of the two-state solution. He claims that Israel has destroyed the one option available for a negotiated compromise and that the failure of the two-state solution is primarily a function of Israel's behavior that set the stage for new struggles and more problems for both Israel and the Palestinians.He emphasizes democratic competition between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs within a one-state reality. Drawing on such analysis, Lustickmakes that case

(1) Eiland, Giora (2010) Regional Alternatives to theTwo-State Solution, Bar-Ilan University, The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.
(2) Hilal, Jamil. (2007). Where Now for Palestine? The Demise of the Two State Solution, London: Zed Books.
(3) Barari, Hassan (2014). Israel and Jordan: A Trouble Relationship in a Volatile Region, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Jordan & Iraq.

that it may be high time for shifting gears and rethinking the two-state model as a practical response to the unfolding reality.(1)

Not surprisingly, the peace process was fraught with problems from the get-go. The final attempt to salvage the process was made at the Camp David summit which ended in a disastrous failure. If the two-state solution was no longer viable, then a one-state solution should materialize. Of course this idea is sensitive in Israel therefore writing about it is an audacious plunge into boiling waters. In his book, "The One-State Solution: A Breakthrough for Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Deadlock,"(2) Virginia Tilley makes the case that the extensive presence of settlements has made the two-state solution hardly possible. No one thinks seriously that the presence of a great number of settlements and settlers will be reversed. He advocates a one-state solution. His book addresses the daunting impediments to a one-state solution and offers ideas about how to overcome these obstacles.

That being said, most scholarly work does not examine how the failure of the two-state solution will negatively impact Jordan, a gap that this paper will fill. Even the Jordanians government prefers not to talk about this scenario clinging, instead, to the mantra of two-state solution.

The Context of the Collapse of the Two-State Model

The signing of the Oslo accords helped inspire many politicians to think that a two-state solution was within reach.[3] Despite the ups and downs of the peace process, the contending parties met at Camp David in July 2000 to find a common ground for a final resolution to the conflict. The broad contours of a two-state solution have been laid out by President Clinton in the aftermath of the failure of the Camp David summit. Clinton envisioned the establishment of an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 border with mutually agreed upon land swaps. And yet, the road was not taken.

Interestingly, both Israeli and American officials blamed the Palestinian for missing a historic opportunity at Camp David. The ripple effect of such narrative took hold firmly. For Israelis, there was no Palestinian partner to talk

(1) Lustick, Ian S. (2019) Paradigm Lost: From Two-State Solution to One-State Reality, University of Pennsylvania Press.

(2) Tilley, Virginia (2005) "The One-State Solution: A Breakthrough for Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Deadlock," University of Michigan Press.

(3) Sher, Gilad (2001) The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations 1999-2001: Within Reach (Tel Aviv: Miskal-YediothAhronoth Books and Chemed Books (2001) Reviewed by: ManarMakhoul, British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies Vol. 36, No. 2 (August 2009), pp. 326-328.

to[1]. The mantra of "no partner" serves as a smokescreen that conceals behind it a rather grim reality: Israeli society is yet to be ready for peace[2]. Explicit and implicit is the Clinton's parameters is a recognition that Israel's only way of overcoming the demographic problem is through enabling the Palestinians to establish their own independent state. Even former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak admitted this sensible logic. In an interview given to Benny Morris, Ehud Barark said, "It is true that there are demographic threats to its existence. That is why a separation from the Palestinians is a compelling imperative. Without such a separation there is no future for the Zionist dream".[3]

Israel's identity – defined as a Jewish democratic state – makes Israel loath the idea of bi-national state. For this reason, they seek to get rid of Palestinians as they pose a demographic threat. In his book about the two-state delusion, Padraig O'Malley addresses what he calls "Demographic: The Enemy Within." Put simply, O'Malley[4] asserts that Palestinians "either will outnumber Jews within a few years or already have." In Herzliya conference held in 2000, Israeli elites warned from the demographic threat and the need to preserve the Jewishness of the state. ArnonSofferargues that the only way to secure a Jewish and democratic Israel is by effecting the separation between Jews and the Palestinians.[5] And yet, this is easier said than done.

Given the gravity of the evolving demographic reality, Israeli Jews have only three choices[6]. The first choice is to agree to the principle of a two-state solution, which allows Israel to keep a roughly 75% Jewish majority in Israel proper. Second, a bi-national state in which a minority of Jews rule over the majority of the Palestinians. If Israel refuses to extend the voting franchise to the Palestinian, Israel will turned into an apartheid state. Finally, Israel may become a democratic state thus allowing the Palestinians to rule.

To avert the last two choices, the only way for Israel is by allowing for a two-state solution. On the whole, Israelis understand this logic. The irony, and herein lies the crux of the matter, is that Israeli domestic politics does not allow for peace coalition to rule effectively. Israel, Henry Kissinger once said, has no

(1) Malley, Robert&Agha Hussein (2001) Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors, August 9, 2001, TheNew York Review of Books.
(2) Barari, Hassan (2014). Op. Cite
(3) Morris, Benny (2002). Camp David and After: An Exchange (An Interview with Ehud Barak). New York Review of Books, 13 June 2002.
(4) O'Malley, Padraig (2015) The Two-State Delusion: Israel and Palestine--A Tale of Two Narratives, Penguin Books (Viking). P. 264
(5) Soffer (2003) Op. Cite
(6) O'Malley, Padraig (2015) Op. Cite. P. 264

foreign policy, only domestic politics[1]. Perhaps, Kissinger oversimplified the Israeli situation, and his remark should be taken in the proper context. In his capacity as a Secretary of State, he experienced how difficult it was for the then prime minister Rabin to agree to the Sinai II agreement.

The role of domestic politics in Israeli's foreign policy is well documented. In his seminal article, Robert Putnam argues that a head of a state have to negotiate internally so that he or she can secure a ratification of any deal struck with another country.[2] In the Middle East, this cannot be clearer than the case of Israel. An Israeli prime minister cannot possibly sign a deal and implement it without domestic support. Over the last two decades and in particular since the eruption of the second Intifada, Israelis have hardened their position vis-à-vis the peace process. Seismic shifts during the second intifada have heralded a major realignment in Israeli politics in the right's favor.

A closer look at the internal dynamics of Israeli politics reveals another impediment for the acceptance, let alone the implementation, of a two-state solution. Of course, Israel's settlement enterprise would not have succeeded were it not for the imperative of domestic politics and the need for each prime minster to survive politically. Historically, settlement activities represent a classic tool to make the implementation of two-state solution almost impossible. On the eve of the Oslo accord of September 1993, the number of settlers living beyond the Green line was roughly a quarter of a million. Now the number is almost 700,000 thousands. Almost two third of them are concentrated in the areas around Jerusalem. Barring an effective international pressure, Israel will most likely continue the settlement activities in years to come. Much troubling is the role of domestic politics and financial cost for any government who may attempt to reverse the tide of settlement activities even in the context of permanent peace with the Palestinians.

While the international community is still wedded to the notion of a two-state paradigm, the fact remains that the changing reality has led to the collapse of this paradigm.[3] Worse, the two-state solution is no longer seen by the majority of Israelis as a pressing priority. With the Oslo peace process effectively dead, prospects for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian issue are dim.[4] Indeed, the Oslo process that began in 1993 had already

(1) Shlaim, Avi. (1995) Israeli Politics and Middle East Peacemaking, Journal of Palestine Studies Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 20-31.

(2) Putnam Robert (1992) Democracy, Development, and the Civic Community: Evidence from an Italian Experiment. In: Serageldin I, Taboroff J Culture and Development in Africa; pp. 29-76.

(3) See Lustick, Ian S. (2019) Op. Cite

(4) See Inbar, Efraim (2009) The Rise and Demise of the Two-State Paradigm, Orbis, Volume 53 Issue 2, pp. 265-283.

exhausted itself before President Donald Trump's arrival in the White House in January 2017. True, there are some forces that have kept the two-state model afloat, yet, influential players have been thinking of other alternatives.Casting aside the positions of various players with regard to the shape and content of a final resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Israeli strategists began thinking of the likely alternatives to the two-state model. Some strategists argue that the two-state solution, albeit desirable, is not possible. Worse, the best chance for the realization of such a model was in 2000 and it was missed(1). The conditions that once prevailed during the Camp David summit of July 2000 are non-existent today. Eilandexamines key areas that differentiate today's reality with that during the failed Camp David summit.(2) First, unlike Ehud Barark, Benjamin Netanyahu believes that it is neither necessary nor possible to reach a peace settlement with the Palestinian. Besides, the current Israeli leadership does not have a sense of urgency at all. Second, the Palestinians are divided. In fact, the current leadership never enjoyed the status and influence of Arafat. Third, unlike President Clinton who demonstrated a sense of presidential investment, other presidents lacked such urge. President Trump even went a step further by ditching the notion of two-state solution. Fourth, the gap between the two sides to the conflict is too wide to bridge. Therefore, the maximum that an Israeli government could offer the Palestinians will not meet the minimum that the Palestinians could afford to accept. In the same vein, the US efforts to influence Israel are diminishing. As SaebErekat mentions in an article published in Foreign Affairs that George W. Bush was the first U.S. President to support the establishment of a Palestinian state and he was the only president that forced Israel to remove settlements from land claimed by the Palestinians. On contrast, both Obama and Trump administrations have done little toward a Palestinian state.(3) Therefore, David Makovsky and Dennis Ross recommend in their Policy Notes that the U.S. should work to preserve the potential for a two-state outcome in the future by reaching an understanding with Israel.(4)

Over the course of the last decade, the Middle East underwent earth-shattering transformation. A set of events – such as the eruption of the Arab Spring, the Saudi-Iranian rivalry, and the realignment in Arab politics – has made the conditions for peace nonexistent. Worse, "Jewish Israelis and

(1) Eiland, (2010) OP. Cite.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Rumley, Grant &Tibon, Amir (2015) The Death and Life of the Two-State Solution: How the Palestinians May Eventually Get Their State, Foreign Affairs, July/August 2015
(4) Makovsky, David & Ross, Dennis (2017) Toward A New Paradigm for Addressing, the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Policy Notes For the Trump Administration, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy No. 32.

Palestinians went through their routine of familiar engagements, always with the same outcomes, entrapped by their various addictions to replay the past in new guises, ensuring that the mistrust of each for the intention of the other increased exponentially, deepening and hardening as though there were no bottom to arrest their descent".(1)

If the settlement activities continue unchecked, then the possibility of implementing a two-state solution is dim as Netanyahu declared that "All the settlements, without exception, those that are in blocs and those that aren't, need to remain under Israeli sovereignty."(2) President Donald Trump has announced a "deal of the century" to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict once and all. While the details remain a well-kept secret, the United States has already taken some steps that would eventually prioritize Israeli interests over Palestinian rights, snub fundamental principles of international law, and steer well away from the idea of two-state solution.

It remains to be seen if President Trump will ever manage to impose a solution that the Palestinians reject. That is being said, as the two-state solution is not possible these days; the question is how Jordan will be affected by this development. Next section examines how the emerging failure of the two-state solution will impact Jordanian vital national interests.

Consequences for Jordan

No single issue in the Middle East has captured the attention of Jordanians more than the thorny Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Not surprisingly, Jordanians are not oblivious to the fact that a lack of solution to this conflict can be detrimental to the future stability of Jordan. Many Israelis have toyed with the idea of turning Jordan into a Palestinians homeland, which would help Israel enjoy a complete control of the West Bank. Phrases such as the "Jordanian option" and "alternative homeland" are often rehashed by the Israeli right as a final resolution of the Palestinian problem. These ideas are profoundly rooted in an Israeli misconception that Transjordan was an integral part of the historic Palestine.

Notwithstanding the Israelis' plans, in regards to Jordan, Jordan is a resilient state. Over the years, it has gained some sort of geopolitical centrality. Of course, this centrality has been both a liability and an asset(3). One the one hand, Jordan has always been vulnerable to the changing regional development but on

(1) O'Malley(2015) Op. Cite. P. 280

(2) Amr, Hady(2019) Did Israelis just vote to end the two-state solution? The Brookings Institution

(3) Susser, Asher (2015) Jordan Facing Up to the ISIS Challenge: A Net Assessment, No. 92. Crown Center for Middle East studies, Brandeis University.pp. 1-7

the other hand, Jordanians believe that no solution of the Palestinian problem is possible without Jordan's consent. Jordan's geo-strategic position has accorded it disproportionate importance. It follows that Jordan's engagement in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process has turned Jordan into a pivotal state(1). After years of wheeling and dealing with Israel and a marked degree of foot dragging, Jordan and Israel finally signed a peace treaty in 1994.

While Jordan agreed to sign a peace deal with Israel in the context of comprehensive regional peace, a twist of events has not been helpful in that regard. Jordanians pinned their hope that their peace with Israel would herald another important peace between Israel and the Palestinians. However, when the moment of truth came at the Camp David summit of July 2000, the two sides got cold feet and efforts to realize peace simply ran aground(2). If the long-standing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians follows its current trajectory, a Palestinian state surely will not see the light for years to come. For much of the past two decades, the failure of finding a common ground between the Palestinians and the Israelis has been a defining feature of the peace process. Despite the presidential investment on the part of President Bill Clinton in the process and the subsequent attempt to help bridge the gap between the two sides of the conflict, a permanent peaceful solution is yet a far-fetched hope(3).

On the whole, Jordanian politicians understand that the two-state solution is the ideal one because all other options being talked about are worse for this party or that. For instance, a one-state solution – though preferred by many Palestinian intellectuals – is contrary to Zionism's' raison d'être. Not only will Israelis refuse a democratic bi-national state, but they will also reject turning the Jewish community into a minority which will lead to them ruling over the majority, thus creating a kind of apartheid style of governance. A close look at the demographic trends among Jews and the Palestinians in historical Palestine reveals that Israelis will not settle for the changing demographic status quo. In effect, Israel is at a crossroad where it cannot have it both ways: occupying the Palestinian land and maintaining a democratic-Jewish state at the same time. Needless to say, the longer the occupation continues, the less likely Israel will find Arab leaders who will accept to cooperate.

(1) Susser, Asher (2000) Jordan: Case Study of a Pivotal State, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. P. xii

(2) Pundak. Ron. (2001). From Oslo to Taba: What Went Wrong? Survival, Volume 43 - Issue 3 The International Institute for Strategic Studies. PP. 31-45.

(3) Miller. Aaron David. (2008). The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace. New York: Bantam Books.

The apparent failure of the peace process poses the question as what role, if any, Jordan can play in the West Bank. For some Israelis, the failure of the two-state solution should lead, inter alia, to a direct or indirect Jordanian involvement in the West Bank(1). Some Israelis suggest a regional solution where Jordan can step in and interfere in the West Bank. Explicit in these suggestions is that Jordan would be better off if it accepts to play a role in the West Bank. That being said, the notion that the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan would not object to taking control of some Palestinian land in the context of peace is, to say the least, preposterous. Indeed, Jordan's position with regards to the Palestinian question has radically transformed since late 1980s. To be sure, it has ditched the previous Hashemite ambitions to bring the West Bank under Jordanian rule(2). By the end of the 1980s, the late King Hussein "realized that his objectives of preventing both the establishment of a Palestinian state and the annexation of the West Bank by the Likud-led Israeli government were incompatible(3). It was then that a new school of thought emerged in Jordan arguing that the Hashemite Kingdom would be better off with the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. This evolving thinking drove King Hussein's decision to sever administrative and legal ties with the West Bank"(4). Seen in this way, the old thinking – which viewed a Palestinian state a menace to Jordan because it would inevitably be irredentist – gave way to those who consider a Palestinian state to be in Jordan's best interest. There are many reasons for this sea change, but suffice it here to cite demographic concerns as the main catalyst of the rise of the two-state school of thought among Jordanian. These concerns had become particularly distressing in the 1980s and early 1990s, when many in Jordan took Likud's "Jordan is Palestine" slogan seriously. Indeed, it is hard to avoid the realization that Jordan's best interest can only be served when the Palestinians establish their own independent and viable state.

Thus, presenting Jordan as a fence-sitter, waiting to step in should the Palestinians fail in their state-building endeavor, fails to capture the complexity of Jordanians' threat perception(5). Now it is important to explain how Jordanians identify the threat posed by the persistent Israeli-Palestinian conflict or by any alternative to a two-state solution. Like the bulk of the Israeli society who pushes for an independent Palestinian state, as a means to avert a one-state solution and to ensure the Jewish democratic nature of Israel, Jordanians back a

(1) Eiland, (2010) Op. Cite.
(2) Barari. Hassan. (2004). Israeli Politics and the Middle East Peace Process, 1988-2002. (London and New York: Routledge).
(3) Ibid.
(4) Ibid.
(5) Barari(2019) Jordan and the wounds of peace, The Jordan Times, Nov 05, 2019

two-state approach in order to avert the likelihood of Jordanian-Palestinian unification. It is a running argument among Jordanians that unification with the Palestinians of the occupied territories would render Jordanians a minority in their own country – a gloom-and-doom scenario for many. Currently, the running belief in Jordan is that Israel seeks to resolve its demographic nightmare at the expense of Jordan.

The nightmare of the "alternative homeland" is a genuine one in the Jordan. With Trump's idea of a deal of the century, Jordanians across the board are apprehensive. The common understanding in Jordan is that resolving the Palestinian problem – according to the deal of the century – requires a role to be played by Jordan. This role has the potentials of changing Jordan's character and demography(1). Thus, any measure such as naturalizing Palestinian refugees in Jordan or having a confederacy with the Palestinians across the Jordan will transform Jordan into an alternative homeland for the Palestinians. Implicit in some American steps is the quest to naturalize Palestinians refugees in Jordan, which is home to almost 2.2 million Palestinian refugees. Though Jordan granted them citizenship for humanitarian purposes, they are still considered stateless and are waiting for repatriation. Founded in 1949, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) serves refugees with some services. For instance, in Jordan alone, the UNRWA operates around 170 schools and some 25 primary health care centers. The UN agency is funded by voluntary contribution from UN member state to serve the Palestinian refugees in Israeli-occupied West Bank, in Gaza, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

It seems that President Donald Trump's administration has been meticulously working to put an end to the refugee problem at the expense of one of its closest allies, namely Jordan. Jared Kushner, the President's son in law and the envoy to the peace process, has set a goal to "have an honest and sincere effort to disrupt UNRWA" and strip refugee status from all but the few living Palestinians who fled British Mandatory Palestine in 1948—a plan that reveals a profound ignorance of Jordan's current political and economic woes"(2). Obviously, Kushner lacks a proper understanding of the dynamics of peace and conflict in this part of the world. His half-baked plan could jeopardize the legitimacy and indeed the sovereignty of Jordan.

Unsurprisingly, Kushner failed to solicit Jordanian support for his plan. In a visit to Jordan in June of 2018, his plan to dissolve UNRWA at all costs has all

(1) Harel, Z. (2019) Concern in Jordan About 'Deal of the Century,' Possible Harm to Jordan's Special Status in Jerusalem, The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)

(2) Jahshan. Khalil (2018) Jared Kushner's Peace Plan Would Turn Jordan Upside Down, Foreign Policy

but failed. He offered to hand Jordan hundreds of millions of US dollars annually as a quid pro quo of assuming full responsibility for Palestinian refugees. In other words, he tried to seek Jordan's blessing for abolishing the UNRWA. His attempt to pull a stunt on Jordan did not resonate well internally. King Abdullah rejected the idea quite outright. Perhaps, Kushner, who successfully pushed for the United States to defund the UNRWA, acted upon his perception that Jordan's economic dependency on the United States would give him the leeway necessary to make Jordan complicit with such a plan.

That is being said; the American move struck a nerve in Jordan as the move demonstrated a bias and ineptitude that would eventually undermine the American credibility in the region. King Abdullah II warned against the failure of two state paradigm and he insisted on the centrality of the United States for the stability of the region. In his words, "Unless you solve the problem, you're going to have to come back and revisit it at a tremendous cost to everybody. And so again, the United States is in a unique position of being the most powerful, capable country in the world, and with that comes more responsibility to help stabilize the world. In my personal opinion, sometimes when you move out of a campaign before it's over, you're only going to be back tomorrow to try and fix it again, having lost all that ground"[(1)].

On various occasions, King Abdullah warned against the failure of the two state solution. Implicit in his warning is that Jews may lose the authority if a bi-national state is to follow. The King is hardly alone in this thinking. The Palestinians also believe that the lack of a two-state solution will lead to a one-state reality. The Palestinian chief negotiator, SaebErekat, argued that the Palestinians would rethink their approach. Erekat makes that case that Palestinians should transform the struggle for one state with equal rights for everyone living in historic Palestine[(2)].

Casting aside the romanticization of the one-state solution, Israelis have been working with the Trump administration to pull out a proposal on an ultimate deal. Leakage of the details shows that the two-state solution will not see the light. The American administration even organized an event in Bahrain in June 2019 to pave the ground for the implementation of the deal of the century. Jordan had to attend. It did so with gritted teeth because Jordanians believed that the workshop would "herald an existential crisis that will upend its stability in the coming years".[(3)]

(1) Jordan's King Abdullah II Addresses Key Mideast Issues in Exclusive Washington Institute Interview (2019) The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

(2) Avishai, Bernard (2018) The fight to define the very essence of Israel, The Guardian.

(3) Shtayyeh, Mohammad (2019) Palestinians want freedom, not Trump administration bribes, The Washington Post

For Jordan, the consequences for a failure of a two-state paradigm are grave. The problem, and herein lie the crux of the matter, is one of national identity. For obvious reasons, Jordanians suspect that the implementation of the deal of the century would eventually transform Jordan into an alternative homeland for the Palestinians. The combination of mass resettlement and a confederation with whatever parts of the West Bank that Israel may relinquish means that Jordan that we now will cease to exist.

It is not as if Jordanians worries stem only from the region. In fact, there is a domestic dimension that is of great relevancy. Maintaining unity among Jordanians (including of those of Palestinian descent) has been at the heart of the Hashemite regime's policy. While the two key components of Jordanian population are living in harmony, still grievances of both sides should not be overlooked in years to come. Some even warn that the failure of the two-state solution and the acceptance of the yet to be announced "deal of the century" could garn Jordanians of Palestinian descent more political rights in a parliament titled in favor of native Jordanians. If this scenario materializes, it will be hard to avoid the possibility of internal backlash. On the whole, Jordanians have long feared the scenario of turning Jordan into a Palestinian state. In fact, the Israeli right has advocated this notion.(1) Besides, Jordanians suspect that there have been pressures to form a confederation between Jordan as a state and the stateless Palestinians across the Jordan. The deal of the century is perhaps the final blow. It is not a genuine attempt to solve the conflict between Israelis and the Palestinians as much as it is a buyout.

To sum up, despite the 1994 peace treaty, Israel and Jordan have two different priorities and perspectives about what constitutes a feasible solution to the conflict. Jordanians view Israel's stalling tactics and unwillingness to go along with the peace process as a threat to Jordan's national security. If Israel's current policy continued unchecked, worse is yet to come. In other words, the current Israeli policy will chip away at the prospects of the realization of the two-state paradigm. Therefore, Jordan and Israel have contrasting strategies that may put the two countries on a collision course in years to come. Continued contact between officials on both sides and the complimentary words exchanged by the leaders of both countries are in fact nothing but a smokescreen concealing deep divergences and distrust. In brief, the lack of a two-state solution will most likely lead to options and scenarios that would jeopardize the future stability of Jordan.

(1) Shamir, Yitzhak (1988) "Israel at 40: Looking Back, Looking Ahead," Foreign Affairs. Vol. 66, No.3, pp. 574-90

Conclusion:

This paper examines the consequences of the failure of the two-state model for Jordan. It assumes Jordan may not cope well with the fallout of Israel's leaning to the current policies. Israel has yet to internalize that its continuous evasiveness will make the peace process hardly a success. Over the years, Jordan has been consistent and emphatic that the two-state paradigm is the only one that could serve the vital interests of all parties concerned. Explicit in Jordanians statements is their insistence that their country is not Palestine. Jordanian officials have for decades argued that their country is not an alternative homeland to anyone. While Jordanians have walked a fine line in its relations with Israel and the United States, they pushed back on the idea of the deal of century.

At the heart of the Jordanian-Israeli differences is how to solve the Palestinian problem. Netanyahu's concept of the two-state solution falls short of the minimum condition of his Palestinians interlocutors. In other words, the maximum that Israel can offer in the context of peace is way less than the minimum of what the Palestinians can accept. As discussed above, the shifting status quo has made it almost impossible for an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital to see the light. If anything, the cantonization of the Palestinian land can only lead to a kind of autonomy over enclaves in the West Bank. Herbert Kelman quotes Netanyahu saying "If the Palestinians want to call it a state, let them call it a state."(1) Even if Netanyahu wants to help materialize a two-state solution, his political survival hinges on a right wing coalition that opposes the concept of an independent Palestinians state. For this reason, he publicly balked at the idea.

As discussed above, most observers and pundits concur with the notion that the two-state paradigm is fast becoming untenable. Even Israeli officials understand that Israel has to face a new reality. Notable absent from Israeli debate is the idea that peace with the Palestinians – based on a two-state model – is a matter of urgency. The alternative will be a single bi-national state that stretches from the Mediterranean to the Jordan. Simple as it may look, the realization of this scenario will be a nightmare for Israelis. Israel and afford neither a democratic bi-national state nor an apartheid regime where the minority Jews rule over the majority Palestinians.

(1) Kelman, Herbert C. (2011) A One-Country / Two-State Solution To the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Middle East Policy, Vol. XVIII, No. 1, Spring 2011, Middle East Policy Council P. 27

To be sure, Jordan suffers from a strategic vulnerability. Developments unfolded in the region over the last two decades have left Jordan weaker. Not only is Jordan hard-pressed financially but also the United States has undergone a radical change with Trump at the helm of politics. Jordan is yet to come with a plan to defend its interests in case pressures amounts. As the clock is ticking on the two-state solution, the threat posed by the revival of other detrimental options is all too real.

To sum up, the paper concludes that a peaceful resolutionon the basis of the two-state paradigm is highly unlikely to emerge in the foreseeable future. Indeed, the gap between the Israelis and the Palestinians has become almost unbridgeable. Hence, policy options available to Jordanian policymakers are very narrow. Simultaneously, a bi-national state, where Arabs and Jews live peacefully together is inconceivable. Sooner or later, Jordan will face the consequences of such scenario.