



CYPRUS

An Arab-Israeli Peace Plan

2nd edition, October 3, 2003

Allan Johnstone



LEBANON

Beirut ■

■ Damascus

SYRIA

Golan Heights

West Bank

■ Amman

Jerusalem ■

Gaza Strip

ISRAEL

JORDAN

EGYPT

■ Cairo

SAUDI ARABIA

An Arab-Israeli Peace Plan

In observing the Arab-Israeli conflict, particularly since the beginning of the al-Aqsa Intifada, and even more since the terrorists attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, I have increasingly felt that all parties involved in this conflict are adopting increasingly aggressive and forceful strategies for dealing with this growing crisis. While such stances may be emotionally satisfying and politically popular, they increase the likelihood of a regional war and decrease the chances for establishing a viable and balanced peace. This peace plan, while it may be imperfect, is at least an attempt to put forward an innovative, constructive, and—hopefully—a mutually beneficial plan that can meet the needs and respect the values of all of the parties involved in this conflict.

As long as this conflict continues, the world's progress will be arrested to some degree, as this is easily the most pressing single problem in the world today. Other issues are fast developing that will prove to be even more dangerous and destructive to the survival, peace, and prosperity of the world's people—poverty, disease, hunger, and environmental degradation—that are not being adequately addressed because of the pressing nature of this conflict. This plan is, therefore, also an attempt to lay the foundation for a solution to those growing problems.

If my proposed solution is seen as not being viable, then I hope that it at least provides a model for the sort of mutually beneficial and innovative solution that I believe is necessary to bring about a successful solution to this crisis and to move forward with the other pressing issues facing all humanity.

October 3, 2003,
Allan J. Johnstone
Vancouver, Canada
ajjstone@telus.net

Note: The ideas expressed in this proposal are entirely my own. I do not represent any government, organization, or political faction. Furthermore, these ideas are based on my own understanding of international relations, therefore this proposal represents a unique perspective.—AJJ

Contents

Overview	pg. 1
Proposal 1: Creating a New State of Palestine in Sinai	pg. 3
Proposal 2: Transforming Sinai into Arable Land	pg. 5
The Transformation Technology	pg. 5
Researching and Managing the Transformation	pg. 7
Governing Sinai	pg. 10
Proposal 3: Creating a Jordan-Litani Buffer State	pg. 11
Proposal 4: Governing the Jordan-Litani Buffer State	pg. 13
Conclusion	pg. 15

Overview

A just and lasting resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict will not be found until the key issues have been dealt with in a manner that is satisfactory to all interested parties. These key issues derive from the history of the conflict and the core values of the peoples involved. The key issues are as follows:

1. The right of the state of Israel to exist versus the Arab extremist desire to destroy the state of Israel or even the Palestinian desire for the right of return.
2. The extent and location of the borders between Israel and a Palestinian state, as well as the borders between Israel and other neighboring Arab states.
3. Control of the city of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount or al-Haram al-Sharif.

This conflict has been so very difficult to resolve because of the core values behind these key issues. For the Israelis, the core values are as follows:

1. The Jewish people are intent on securing their homeland as a result of both nearly two millenia of violence against them in Eastern and Western Europe that culminated in the genocidal program of the Nazi regime in the 1940s, and because of the violent opposition to the establishment of the state of Israel by the Palestinians and the neighbouring Arab states.
2. Jewish religious tradition teaches that the land of Israel has been given to the Jews by God, and that, while they may be ousted occasionally, they will always be able to return to claim their land.
3. Jewish religious tradition insists that only after *all* of the land of Israel has been reclaimed by the Jews can they reconstruct their temple. That temple was originally built on a hill within Jerusalem, has been rebuilt in the same location, and that location has thus become a site sacred to the Jewish people. It is, therefore, the natural site for an eventual third temple.

For the Palestinians and Arabs, the core values are as follows:

1. The land that the Israelis claim is land that the Palestinians have occupied for almost two thousand years with only a very small minority of Jews in the population. It is some of the most fertile land in the region as it receives more precipitation than the surrounding lands, with the exception of Lebanon. From the Palestinian perspective, European Jews poured into their land unbidden, then unjustly and violently took it as their own state in 1948.
2. Despite recognition of the state of Israel by Western nations, the Palestinians and other Arab peoples have felt justified in seeking to take this contested land back from the Jews. However, due largely to Western military and economic aid and assistance, the Israelis have instead taken even more land and settled it in contravention of even those international agreements that the Arabs and Palestinians saw as being already unfavorable and unfair.
3. Al-Haram al-Sharif is the site from which the spirit of the Prophet was lifted to heaven to hear the recitation of the Koran. It has been a sacred site of Islam for 1365 years, since the Arab conquest in 638CE, and several important historical mosques have been built there, so the expected Jewish ambitions for the site would threaten this, the third most holy site of Islam.

It might be thought that these key issues are unresolvable given that each one of them is contradictory, and each issue is derived from some of the most vital values and historical events of the peoples party to this conflict. I believe, however, that innovative solutions can be devised to address each of these issues, solutions that can be both satisfactory and advantageous to all of the concerned parties of the conflict. This plan offers four proposals that are intended to address these key issues and to establish peace between Israel, the Palestinians, and Israel's neighboring Arab states. These four innovative proposals do not relate to the key issues on a one-to-one basis; rather, each proposal addresses aspects of one or more of the key issues. These four proposals are as follows:

1. A new state of Palestine should be created in the Sinai.
2. The territory of this new state of Palestine should be transformed into a fertile land by developing technologies of mass-scale desalinization and advanced hydrological and ecological management that will not only make this land arable, but will also become the model for a highly profitable and sustainable economy for the entire world.
3. A new buffer state between Israel and its northern neighbours should be created in the Jordan and Litani valleys.
4. The government of this buffer state in the Jordan and Litani valleys should:
 - equally represent the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths and peoples, and their interests
 - actively promote peace, understanding and cooperation between these three peoples and religions
 - include all of Old Jerusalem in its territory
 - provide protection for, and access to, the sacred sites that are within its borders to the peoples of all three religions
 - provide and oversee an innovative management of the Temple Mount or al-Haram al-Sharif that will allow both the preservation of al-Haram al-Sharif, as well as permit the excavation of the site or the rebuilding of the Jewish temple if the Jewish people choose to rebuild it on that site.

Each of these proposals, and the reasoning behind them, is discussed in detail in the four sections of this plan.

Proposal 1: Creating a New State of Palestine in Sinai

The basis of the conflict in the Middle East is the impossibility of two peoples occupying the same land, which each feels completely justified in claiming.

This, the first proposal of this plan, seeks to address the underlying problem of how these two peoples can make their homelands in this region by creating a new state of Palestine in the El Arish basin of the Sinai.

Given the horrific experiences of the Jewish people, and given their beliefs, there is no place in the world other than the current state of Israel in which they can build their own state. Given the debt of empathy that Western society owes to the Jews because of the centuries of occasional mistreatment that the Jewish people have endured for centuries, culminating in the atrocities of the Nazis in Germany during World War II, the West will continue to support the state of Israel and ensure its survival. Given these factors, it is not surprising if many Arabs and Muslims see the existence of the state of Israel and Israel's continuing support from the West, as well as this proposition that the Palestinians should find a new state in Sinai, as anti-Arab or anti-Muslim actions; yet, if they can find a way to accept this accommodation of the Jewish need for a secure homeland, such an agreement could form the basis for an unprecedented, powerful, and mutually prosperous alliance between the peoples of this region, peoples who share so much in terms of their beliefs and their history.

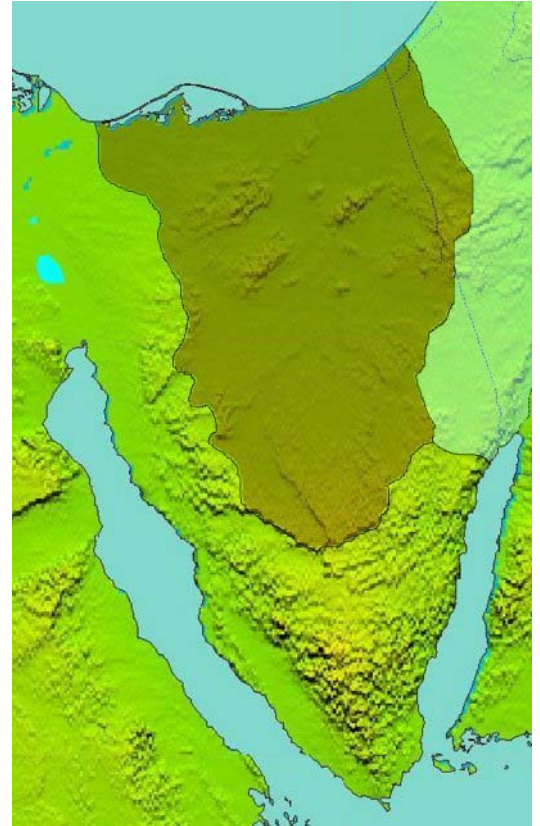
The Palestinians might see the desert land of Sinai as a poor replacement for the fertile land of Palestine; however, the second proposal of this plan is to transform Sinai into a lush and fertile territory, making it a superior home for the Palestinians. Also, the third proposal of this plan is to create another state in the Jordan and Litani valleys, including much of the territory of the West Bank, and that this would be a state in which Palestinians who are willing to work toward the peaceful coexistence of the peoples of the three religions of the region would be welcome citizens.

The Egyptians might see this proposal as an undeserved loss of their lands; however, the development of the technology required to transform this land would be fully shared with the Egyptians to compensate them for the contribution of this territory, including the transformation of an area equal to that conceded for this peace plan from desert into fertile land at the expense of the international coalition involved in the plan, which should have the considerable side effect of greatly boosting Egypt's economy and propelling Egypt into the role of a regional power in the Arabic, Middle Eastern, and possibly African spheres, with the foremost responsibility of all the states in the region for ensuring the successful implementation of this plan. The technology used to transform Sinai will be of great benefit both to all of the world's desert areas, as they will be partially transformed into arable land, and to the world's non-desert areas, as this technology will have vital and economically beneficial applications in areas of moderate and even high precipitation.

The suggested territory for the new Palestinian state and its boundaries with Egypt and Israel, as well as the modified boundary between Egypt and Israel are described on the following page.

This plan proposes that Egypt offer the El Arish drainage basin in the Sinai peninsula for the new state of Palestine. Also, because of the increased importance of drainage basins for the second section of this plan, it is suggested that borders be aligned to the height of land separating drainage basins wherever possible. Therefore, it is suggested that Israel's territory should include the Besor and Paran basins, and the adjacent lands that drain directly into the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Aquaba. The borders in Sinai would be:

1. Israel's new south-western border with the new state of Palestine and with Egypt, would extend:
 - from a point on the Gaza coast approximately midway between Nuseirat and Deir el Balah
 - along the height of land between the Besor basin on the Israeli side and the El Arish basin on the Palestinian side
 - along the height of land between the Paran basin on the Israeli side and the Wadi Watir on the Egyptian side
 - to a point on the Gulf of Aquaba coast probably just north of "the Fjord."



2. The new state of Palestine would occupy the Sinai peninsula's El Arish drainage basin and the adjacent lands draining into the Mediterranean Sea, but not those lands draining into the Suez basin, the Red Sea, or the Gulf of Aqaba.

Palestine's borders would be:

- the Mediterranean coast from a point on the Gaza coast approximately midway between Nuseirat and Deir el Balah to the western end of the Sabkhat al-Bardawil
- the height of land that separates the El Arish basin on the Palestinian side from the Suez and Red Sea basins on the Egyptian side, extending from the western end of the Sabkhat al-Bardawil to Ras el Gineina
- the height of land that separates the El Arish basin on the Palestinian side from the Gulf of Aqaba coast from Ras el Gineina to Gebel Sha'ira then to a point on the Gulf of Aqaba coast probably just north of "The Fjord."

Again, it must be noted that the successful allocation of this land in Sinai to create a new state of Palestine is dependent upon the successful transformation of these lands into well-watered, fertile lands, which is the subject of the next proposal of this plan.

Proposal 2: Transforming Sinai into Arable Land

Transforming Sinai into a well-watered arable land for the new Palestinian homeland is a much more important objective of this peace plan than is the rearrangement of borders. By developing the technology to transform Sinai into arable land, multiple benefits are realized:

- a worthy homeland will be created for the Palestinians
- a lucrative business venture will be developed that can transform currently bitter rivalries into a mutually beneficial partnership
- new technologies will be developed that can reclaim arable land from desert
- alternative sustainable technologies will be developed that can reduce dependence on oil as the basis of our economy, thus allowing the world to reserve oil supplies for vital uses for which alternatives are not yet feasible.

This proposal is presented in three parts, Transformation Technology, Researching and Managing the Transformation, and Governing Sinai.

The Transformation Technology

This section presents a sketch of one approach to transforming Sinai into arable land. This approach is speculative in that it has not been fully researched, nor have its costs been assessed. This approach has been submitted to experts in the relevant fields for comment and contribution, and these comments and suggestions will be considered in possible future editions of this plan.

The proposed principles for this transformation technology are as follows:

1. **Energy generation**—The energy required for the transformation technology should be drawn from low-capitalization renewable sources (such as solar, wind, inter-tidal, and geothermal sources). Reliance upon oil would be an economic drain on the future Palestinian state and increased tensions between the Western and Middle Eastern states over competition for the dwindling resource. These generation sources should be built throughout Sinai, creating a peninsula-wide power generation and distribution network.
Research: The most economically efficient means of generating this energy must be found, with additional research into means of increasing output and decreasing costs, including research into the efficiency of the power network.
2. **Desalination**—The primary use of the energy should be to producing fresh water in numerous small scale desalination plants along all the Sinai coasts.
Research: In addition to assessing and researching improvements to the most cost effective established means of desalinating seawater, low-tech alternatives could be examined. For example, the natural water cycle is initiated by evaporation and transpiration. The latter method would seem to offer greater results as plants are actively involved in activating this process. Salt water marshes could be cultivated along a coastal area, and covered with greenhouse structures that prevent the escape of the resulting water vapour. These greenhouses could be open on the seaward side to allow free access by wildlife, and they could have screened fans on the landward side that both minimize water vapour escape through the open side and direct the water

vapour rich air onto moisture collectors. The coolants in the moisture collection system could be run through deep ground heat exchange systems to minimize energy use in the cooling process. The moisture reduced air could be rehydrated with seawater sprays to minimize fresh water evaporation. Also, transpiration rates might be maximized through genetic modification.

3. **Terracing and water flow control**—Much of the land in Sinai should be terraced. Along the coastal areas, this would facilitate terrace-to-terrace lifting of the water to the high points of land surrounding the El Arish basin, which would be the secondary use the generated energy. In the El Arish basin, terracing would allow maximized water utilization in the downward flow. The result of these first three technologies would be to create a power generation and distribution grid across the entire Sinai peninsula that drives a flow of water from the surrounding coastlines, up to the height of land, then down through the El Arish basin.

Research: Again, the most energy efficient and cost effective methods for lifting the water from the surrounding coasts to the height of land must be determined and improved. The ridge of the height of land surrounding the El Arish basin should be engineered to provide a fresh water caching and distribution system for water management throughout the peninsula. Also, any water falls of significant height on the downward side of the water flows should be equipped with appropriate small-scale hydro-electric generation systems that can contribute energy back to the network.

4. **Agriculture and Environmental management**—Water and land usage must be carefully managed to transform the ecology of much of the Sinai peninsula while still preserving significant areas of the original niches:
 - There must be a plan to develop viable soils,
 - Existing Nile and Mesopotamian agricultural crops can probably be used,
 - Anti pollution measures, such as safe waste disposal techniques must be developed, as well as careful management to prevent water stagnation,
 - There must be a careful and deliberate plan to preserve wilderness areas.

Research: All of the points above should be researched and developed.

5. **Energy priorities and storage**—As indicated in items 2 and 3 above, the primary and secondary energy allocations should be to desalination and lifting fresh water to the height of land, respectively. The third priority for energy allocation should be for residential and industrial use, with additional power generating facilities constructed as required. Any excess power should be used to create hydrogen fuel for transportation and storage. Any surplus stores of hydrogen fuel can be used for generating power for industrial uses or may be exported. If additional power generating plants that use hydrogen fuel cells are developed, they should be located near the height of land so that the recovered water is immediately available for distribution without expending additional energy to lift it.

Research: Continuing efforts to improve the applications, efficiency, and cost effectiveness of hydrogen fuel cell technology should also be furthered.

Initial implementation of the suggested technology may not be profitable, but with increasing efficiencies and cost effective techniques, profitability will follow.

Researching and Managing the Transformation

Although the preceding section roughly sketches the transformation, both the technology and the economics and management of the project must be researched in detail. Also, the involvement of the contributing parties must reflect their future roles. The purpose of these roles is to provide an integral function for each major player in the region in a business venture that will both bring these states together in a cooperative enterprise, and bring them all greater prosperity. None of the individuals, organizations, or businesses of any of these or other states in the region should be excluded from participating in other aspects of the venture: lead roles are meant only to provide each of these three states with a direction for focusing their energies and an objective for developing their long term expertise in this, a mutually beneficial venture; success in each role after the initial Sinai transformation project should be open to competitors world-wide to ensure that superior competitive performance guarantees future successes. The roles for each of the main participants in this proposal—the Palestinians, the Israelis, the Egyptians, and the Saudis—and the specific steps that should be taken to research and manage the Sinai transformation project are as follows:

1. A research and teaching university should be established in Palestinian Sinai with the primary objective of researching and developing the technology by which the land can be transformed into a well-watered fertile land, as well as the economics and management of the technology. The Palestinian location represents the original purpose of this project, and it is centrally located between the major contributors of Egypt, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. It also provides a basis for permanent Palestinian involvement in the project.
2. The research effort, as well as the sales and marketing of the technology to other states and regions, should be led by Israelis, both at the new Palestinian university and at institutions within Israel. The Israelis have already proven to be world leaders in irrigation technologies; however, they should also seek and accept researchers and experts from throughout the world in the wide range of technologies required to enable this project.
3. The overall project management and the implementation—including the contracting for putting this technology in place—should be researched and carried out by the Egyptians. The work to put this technology in place should be fairly labour intensive, and Egypt has a large, idle labour force that is available to do the work. Also, Egypt's very significant contribution of the land for the Palestinian state must be rewarded with a prominent role in the benefits of that peace. Egypt's role should not be limited to supplying labour, however. Their supervision of every aspect of the implementation of the transformation technology should be their responsibility.
4. Organizing the financing and the financial management of the project, as well as for subsequent projects, should be the primary responsibility of the Saudis. It is hoped that the Saudis will invest in this initial project, but it should be funded by all of the interested parties in this peace process, including the United States, the European Union, other advanced economies, and the other states in the Middle East, particularly OPEC member, as well as the large oil companies, as each of these (OPEC members and the oil

companies) should be involved in the technology that may be the future of the energy industry. The intended future Saudi role is that of bankers and financial facilitators for implementation of this technology in other areas.

Note: Primary involvement in the development and implementation of this technology has been suggested for Palestine, Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia; however, should any of these states refuse to abandon belligerent postures during the progress of this peace plan, alternative players should be considered and, if necessary, replace them. For example, Iraq could replace Egypt, the United States or the European Union could fill any of the roles outlined above, as could research or business coalitions from throughout the Muslim world.

Beyond Sinai—As the expectation of applying this technology to other regions around the world has been raised in this plan, some possible scenarios for this application in different regions and circumstances is outlined in the following:

1. **North Africa and the Middle East**

Technology—Although the climate and the geography are similar to the Sinai Peninsula, the extent of the desert areas is massively greater, which means that evaporation becomes a serious problem due to build up of mineral salts poisoning the soil. (Sinai avoids this problem only if it can realize an eventual ocean drainage of the irrigated lands.) Research for applying this combination of technologies would have to address this problem, whether by limiting the the land irrigated to areas where runoff into the ocean can be realized or by finding a means to remove the mineral salts from the irrigated lands. There is ample archeological evidence that ancient civilizations experienced this kind of failure of some of their irrigation projects.

Investment—While the business case for the required investments may be rather low as agriculture is not a lucrative market, the political case is more compelling: states in this region could support larger populations with greater self-sufficiency in food and water supplies by implementing this technology. States with large oil earnings, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and even Libya may choose to invest in implementing such technology to varying degrees.

2. **Western Africa**

Technology—The southern half of Western Africa, from Mali to Niger along the northern bounds and from Nigeria to Guinea along the Atlantic coast, have an area of high rainfall along the coasts of Guinea, Sierra Leone, and la Côte d'Ivoire that partially drains directly into the Atlantic ocean. These waters could be diverted uphill in the same manner that water is lifted from the coastal areas of Sinai to the height of land surrounding the El Arish basin. In this case, however, the waters of Guinea, Sierra Leone, la Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and Benin that drain into the Atlantic are lifted to drain into the interior Niger river in southern Mali and Niger, and into western Nigeria. No desalination is required, but different crops and ecological niches must be adapted to this technology. Also, as per the problem of evaporation and the build up of mineral salts in northern Africa and the Middle East, the southern Sahara can not be fully irrigated without over-extending the capabilities of the irrigation system. A bigger challenge is the funding for this project.

Investment—With the exception of Nigeria, which has some income from oil, none of these states has money to invest in such a project. The only possibility of funding must come from contributions from governments, NGOs, and businesses willing to aid or invest in the economies of these states. For businesses, even though the highly expensive need for desalination isn't required, the price of the investment might not be very appealing to the states involved: the degree of involvement in these states' economies that businesses would demand might seem too high a price to these states.

3. **Western Canada**

In both the original project of Sinai, in which a troubling international conflict might be resolved through international investment, and in the first "out of area" project in states in northern Africa and the Middle East, there were reasons to expect that the highly expensive application of desalination technologies might be funded despite the cost. In the second, preceding "out of area" project the great expense of desalination was not necessary, but the funding remained uncertain due to the poverty of the nations concerned. In this third proposed "out of area" project, the governments in question should be able to fund the project, but the need for such a project is unclear: western Canada has massive fresh water reserves. In this suggested project, I hope to demonstrate that this technology can have attractive dividends for even the most well-watered environments.

Technology—Western Canada, although it has enormous water reserves, still has water management challenges. Drier than normal weather patterns lead to extensive costly forest fires, crop losses (including livestock feed crop failures), and subsequently to both poor crop and livestock yields. Also, western-style agriculture, which is derived from the agricultural practices of the semi-arid steppes of eastern Turkey and northern Syria and Iraq has been applied to large areas of western Canada that are normally partially marshlands. This has meant the draining of massive tracts of wetlands with the consequence of greatly reduced fresh water reserves across this region. Massive reduction in the population of wetlands amphibians and waterfowl, which may or may not be related to this development, have also occurred. One technological challenge of applying this technology to this region would, therefore, be adapting indigenous species to agricultural production in a wetter than normal environment for traditional western agriculture. For example, wild rice could be cultured throughout much of the prairie areas, and trout and pickerel, as well as moose and beaver, could be examined as species for food production. Unfortunately, most trout farming that has been done so far has endangered the health of the fish and radically altered the quality of the foodsource. Less disruptive methods of farming must be developed.

In addition to addressing these problems, there are considerable potential benefits to implementing the intensive energy production networks envisioned for the Sinai project in high precipitation regions. Although maintaining an even more abundant fresh water supply is a benefit that would help stave off the negative effects of dry weather cycles, the resulting hydro-electric generation network would build massive energy reserves that could be used for very cheap and environmentally healthy manufacturing. If

the world begins moving toward implementing this technology globally, then very high rainfall areas such as the Pacific coast of Canada may be natural choices for locating energy intensive industries. The top energy consuming industries, listed in order from the most intensive energy consuming manufacturers are: bulk chemicals, petroleum refining, paper, steel, food, cement, aluminum, and glass, according to the US Energy Information Administration study, *Annual Energy Outlook 2002*.

The three examples given above demonstrate a range of possibilities to which the suggested combination of technologies can be applied, but they are certainly not the only regions for which these technologies are appropriate, nor are they the only possible applications. It is such applications that are expected to be the basis for the transformation of the Arab states' economies and which the Arab-Israeli business consortium that would evolve from the Sinai project would sell to other states and regions around the world. Every region of the world has potential applications for this set of technologies. In each case, the economic advantages of pursuing these projects must be evaluated, including the costs of developing any necessary technologies specific to their situation. This is this role that the Israelis would initially lead, as the Saudis would initially lead the provision and management of the financing, and the Egyptians would initially lead the implementation and project management. As with all global business enterprises, national specialties would give way to the eventual participation of people from many nations in each role. In fact, the greater the interaction is between Israelis and Arabs, and the more successful this business venture is, the greater will be the rewards of peace and prosperity for the region.

Governing Sinai

If the proposal for the transformation of Sinai into a Palestinian state with mostly arable land is accepted and implemented, there will obviously be a transitional period of at least several years before the land is able to support a large population. During that period of transition, the lands provided for the new Palestinian state should go through a political transformation as well, beginning as a province or department of Egypt and developing, through predetermined stages, into the sovereign state of Palestine. During that transition, as much of the Palestinian population as the land can support should begin to occupy the territory. These should be Palestinians who are unwilling to live in a territory shared with the Jews, yet it should not become a base for anti-Israeli hostilities. In fact, Egypt should ensure that no attacks are made on Israel from this territory, perhaps with the assistance of an international peace-keeping force along the Palestinian Sinai-Israeli border. This protection should be extended to the Palestinian as well, ensuring that they are not attacked from Israel.

As the transformation of the land progresses, the Palestinian population in the region should grow, and the autonomous rule of the Palestinians should increase, under Egyptian guidance with international assistance.

These transformations—environmental and political—should be completed as quickly as possible, but not so quickly that the stability of the fostered environment or the political stability of the Palestinian state should be imperiled.

Proposal 3: Creating a Jordan-Litani Buffer State

The third proposal of this peace plan is that a new buffer state be created in the Jordan and Litani river valleys. The creation of this state is intended to accomplish the following objectives:

1. It is intended to create a buffer state between Israel and its Arab neighbor to the north and east.
2. It is intended to neutralize the most volatile areas in the region: southern Lebanon, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank.
3. It is intended that the population and government of this new state equally represent Jews, Christians, and Muslims for the following purposes:
 - to assure security for, and unobstructed access to, the sacred sites of all three religions
 - to pursue an international role as peace broker between states of all three cultures
 - to pursue an international role of championing the development of a global culture of equal economic development and cooperative participation in international affairs by the states of all three cultures.

Given the importance of water-based technologies, as outlined in the previous proposal Transforming Sinai, the suggested borders for the new northern buffer state also should be based on drainage basins as much as is practical. It is suggested that the following territorial concessions be made:

1. Israel could give all lands of the West Bank and eastern and northern Israel that drain into the Litani, Lake Tiberius (the Sea of Galilee), the Jordan Valley, and the Dead Sea which lay north of—but do not include—the Mishmar and Ze'elim drainage basins, including all of the Old City of Jerusalem (regardless of its drainage) for the creation of the buffer state. Also, minor adjustments could be made on the northern border to align it with the height of land between drainage basins that are primarily in Israel and those primarily in Lebanon.
2. The Palestinians could agree to give all of their lands and abandon all of their claims on the West Bank to either Israel (for those lands that drain into the Mediterranean) or the new buffer state (for Old Jerusalem and those lands that drain into the Jordan Valley).



3. Jordan could agree to abandon all of their claims on the West Bank to either Israel (for those lands that drain into the Mediterranean) or the new buffer state (for Old Jerusalem and those lands that drain into the Jordan Valley).
4. Syria could give the Golan Heights—specifically those lands that drain into Lake Tiberius (the Sea of Galilee) and the Jordan Valley, except for those parts of the Raqqad drainage basin above Al Jamiah and the Yarmuk drainage basin above the confluence with the Raqqad. Also, minor adjustments could be made on the border with Lebanon to align it with the height of land between the Litani drainage basin and the Syrian drainage.
5. Lebanon is a special, problematic case:
 - from a hydrological point of view, the Litani basin and the adjacent areas that drain into the Mediterranean should be given to the new buffer state, while the northern drainage of Lebanon, which drains into Syria, should be given to Syria
 - from a political point of view, the northern Mediterranean drainage area contains a large Christian population who would be good candidates for the neutrality of the buffer state, while the northern Litani basin contains a Muslim population with radical elements that should not be part of the buffer state.

No clear solution exists for Lebanon; however, the following suggestion is presented for consideration: a referendum could be held to determine the portion and segments of the population that would choose to join the buffer state, join Syria, or remain independent.

- If the overwhelming majority want to stay independent, Lebanon could remain intact, although at the risk of continuing conflict with Israel.
- If there is a roughly equal split in the vote between all three options, the north could be offered to Syria, the Litani basin to the new buffer state, and the central Mediterranean slope could remain for those who want to remain independent.
- If there is a split between joining Syria and the buffer state, the north could be offered to Syria, the Litani basin to the new buffer state, and the central Mediterranean slope could be divided between Syria and the new buffer state in accordance with the proportions of the vote.

A range of permutations of these options are possible.

Note: Although keeping Lebanon intact could represent a serious threat to the peace of the region, partitioning Lebanon without wide agreement from the Lebanese people might represent a worse threat to peace. Also, if one of the partitioning options is the favoured choice of the Lebanese people, this would likely involve the relocation of significant segments of the population, which should be done with great care that it be done peacefully and equitably under the guidance and massive assistance of a multinational force.

Proposal 4: Governing the Jordan-Litani Buffer State

One purpose of the Jordan-Litani buffer state is to ensure the security of Israel by buffering it from its Arab neighbors. However, this state is suggested to serve the needs of both parties in this dispute and all of the religions in the region. The suggestion of seeking a world order that seeks to establish economic and political equality for Christian, Jewish, and Islamic states is meaningless unless there are institutions put in place to actively pursue these objectives. Therefore, the following objectives are suggested for the Jordan-Litani buffer state:

1. Jewish, Christian, and Moslem populations should be balanced. This new state should adopt an immigration policy aimed at establishing roughly equal populations of each of the three religions to ensure that the government represents all three religions equally. These policies should include efforts to attract populations from any group that is poorly represented in the state. Certain populations should be targeted as the intended residents of this state. These populations should include:
 - a. the Palestinian Muslims, primarily, but also—secondarily—any Muslims throughout the world who are seeking to escape oppression, or devoutly religious Muslims who seek to live in this land for religious reasons
 - b. the Israelis who already live in this territory, primarily, but also—secondarily—any Jews throughout the world who are seeking to escape oppression, or devoutly religious Jews who seek to live in this land for religious reasons
 - c. the Christians of Lebanon, primarily, but also—secondarily—any Christians throughout the world who are seeking to escape oppression, or devoutly religious Christians who seek to live in this land for religious reasons
2. All candidate citizens of this state must be willing to live peacefully with the other citizens of this state of other religions and from sects of their own religion. This government should have a unique and extraordinary power to banish any citizen guilty of acts or advocacy of any form of religious intolerance or belligerence to their state of origin, or to any state that is party to this plan, which should include Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon (should it persist), the United States, the EU, and Russia. Individuals found guilty of such acts should be liable for prosecution for any misdeeds under the laws of both the Jordan-Litani state and the receiving state.
3. The state should have a bicameral legislature in which the upper house represents the Christian, Jewish, and Islamic religions and the lower house provides popular representation.
 - a. The lower house should be elected by the people living in the state and should address their concerns, with responsibility for business, taxation, social, and criminal legislation. Representatives in this house should represent an electoral district or riding whose borders should be as equivalent as possible to the borders of social communities, be they counties, towns, or urban districts.
 - b. The upper house should consist of an equal number of representatives from each of the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions, with the members representing each of the sects and denominations of these religions in

proportion to the numbers of their followers worldwide. The members of this upper house should be appointed by the President in consultation with a special ministry of the civil service that is responsible for determining the world populations of each religion's sects and denominations.

This upper house should be empowered to deal with the strictly religious affairs of the state. This should include the authority to protect, preserve, and maintain the holy sites within the state, as well as to ensure that people have access to them. A major part of this role will be dealing with the Temple Mount or al-Haram al-Sharif. This could take the form of permitting only non-destructive archeological surveying techniques, and ensuring that any future excavations or construction are permitted only if there is no threat or diminishment to the existing structures on the site, and that any such requirements are met to the satisfaction of the entire upper house.

In addition, the upper house should be responsible for developing a Code of Common Beliefs (a compendium of all the basic moral codes and beliefs about the nature of the world and of God that can be agreed upon by all three religions), as well as guides to the unique moral codes and beliefs of each religion and religious sect. These codices will serve as the ultimate reference for the state's judiciary and as a focal point for developing laws and government programs that promote cooperation and understanding between the peoples of these three religions. Each of these codes must be developed with the objective of guiding their readers to the respectful and tolerant coexistence with the members of each religion and sect.

- c. The President in Council should resolve any disputes between the lower and upper houses, with this council consisting of the leaders of the three religions from the upper house and his cabinet from the lower house. The President could also be given the power to veto any legislation from either house that he or she deems to be threats to the peace or to the interests of the state, its peoples, or any of the religions or sects represented in the upper house.
4. Internationally, this state should assume the roles of regional peacemaker and protector of religious groups and minorities. This could include hosting international organizations and international conferences as is done in Geneva, Switzerland; The Hague, the Netherlands; New York, USA; and Washington, USA.
5. Finally, this state should serve as a temporary home for the Palestinians until such time as the new state of Palestine is established and made viable, although many may choose and be welcomed to become citizens of this state.

Conclusion

This plan proposes some very ambitious objectives. It seeks to reshape the international order, at least in the Middle East, begin to change the energy source that is the basis of the global economy, radically modify the environment, rearrange borders, and end hostilities that are deeply ingrained by over fifty years of conflict. Every one of the proposals of this plan will have its critics and even determined opponents. This conclusion, then, is both a summary of what the consequences might be for each participant in this plan, as well as some contingencies should some of these proposals not be accepted or fail.

1. The United States of America

Contributions: The United States should make two major and one minor contribution:

- The first major contribution should be diplomatic support for the plan. It will be very unlikely that this plan will succeed with the formidable diplomatic influence of the United States.
- The second major contribution should be technological transfer in the form of researchers and technologists on loan to the new research university in Palestinian Sinai.
- The minor contribution should be a financial contribution to the establishment and transformation of the new Palestinian state in Sinai. The American contribution should not be the only source of funding, but it should be a contribution that demonstrates that the United States views this initiative as a vitally important contribution to the future peace and prosperity of the international order that it is seeking to build.

Risks: The United States faces only two minor risks from this plan:

- If the plan fails completely, the region remains locked in conflict. However, as the first steps of the plan should originate from Egypt, the United States will bear no appearance of responsibility for the outcome as long as they do not oppose or undermine the plan.
- Conversely, if the plan is a major success, the only risk for the United States is that they will lag behind in the technologies used to transform the desert into fertile land. This risk can be offset by the US deciding to begin to develop this technology locally should this technology begin to appear to be a threat to their own economic well-being, although it is hoped that they and others will allow this technology to remain primarily in the hands of the proposed Arab-Israeli consortium until such time as this venture succeeds enough to cement a budding partnership between these peoples.

Benefits: The United States could reap two very significant benefits from this plan, and one possible additional benefit:

- The most immediate benefit would be a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the implications that this would have for the United States in its relations with the rest of the world, particularly with Middle Eastern and Islamic states.

- The next significant benefit would be the spin-off benefits of the technology used to transform the Sinai. By applying these technologies within the United States, expected future water supply problems and currently experienced hydro-electrical supply problems could be resolved.
- A third potential benefit of this plan might be the beginnings of an alternate energy economy, with the associated implications for environmental health and reduced health care costs.

2. The European Union and Russia

As with the United States, the contributions, risks, and benefits are similar, though of somewhat less importance.

3. Other Muslim Nations

The majority of the funding for the research into the transformation of the Sinai into a well-watered land should come from the oil-rich Arab states. In payment for this investment, they should receive installations of the technology that is developed at much reduced costs. Additionally, all Muslim nations should provide support for this research project in the form of whatever technical expertise they can offer, which should be fairly considerable as they currently are the world's greatest users of desalination technology.

4. Lebanon

Risks: Lebanon's 16-year civil war ended in 1991. In May, 2000, Israel withdrew from its occupation of southern Lebanon. There is still pressure for Syria to withdraw its forces, but they have been in central and eastern Lebanon since 1976. The continuing Syrian occupation may actually encourage Lebanese Christians to consider the partitioning of their country.

Gains: Lebanon remains a country made up of a very diverse group of peoples. Syria remains in occupation to the east of Beirut and in the Bekaa Valley, and the Hizballah remains armed and powerful. This makes Lebanon potentially the most serious threat to Israeli security and peace in the region after the continuing conflict with the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. With partition as outlined in this plan, radical Islamist segments of the population could live in an Islamic state. Also, moderate elements wanting to rebuild the role that Lebanon had before the civil war would have the support of the international community in the form of the new buffer state.

5. Syria

Contributing the Golan Heights for the buffer state's territory might seem costly, but contributing that territory would free it from Israeli control and remove pressures on Syria to end their involvement in Lebanon. They might also expand their territory by gaining control of northern Lebanon with both Lebanese and international approval.

6. Israel

Israel could cynically agree to all of these measures to gain the security this plan offers, then make no effort to participate in the other aspects of the plan that benefit the Palestinians. The only great sacrifice would be giving up Old Jerusalem and the Galilee, although Israel would legally gain the Mediterranean slope portions of the West Bank, the northern portion of the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai portions of the Paran drainage basin, as well as a partial Jewish interest in the territory of the new northern buffer state. However, such a cynical approach would waste the opportunity to end their conflict with their Arab neighbors. History also teaches that no great power lasts forever. If the United States should someday decline, the small nation of Israel would face an enormous array of Arab enemies. This plan offers an opportunity to heal the divisions between Israel and its Arab neighbors. If this plan is embraced by the international community, then it would be the loss of an important opportunity to find long term peace.

7. The Palestinians

Under this plan, no group in the region has their future so heavily dependent upon their own attitude. The Palestinians could simmer in resentment that the Israelis have moved them from the lands of their birth; or they could accept the territorial arrangements offered by this plan but make no effort to take control of the effort to transform their land; however, if they enthusiastically embrace this plan, they could turn their new territory into the richest land in the Middle East and make theirs the most successful society. Letting go of bitterness and resentment and building on the opportunities offered in this plan will bring the Palestinians great success.

8. Egypt

Almost any of the nations that are party to this conflict can reject or oppose this plan without completely destroying its chances for success, but only Egypt can make the offer that can put this plan into action. Egypt risks losing part of Sinai, but Egypt's reward will be a major share in the technologies described in this plan and a leading position in both the business consortium that is proposed for the transformation of Sinai into arable land, and a role as a respected regional leader.



CYPRUS

An Arab-Israeli Peace Plan

2nd edition, October 3, 2003

Allan Johnstone



Beirut ■

**Proposed
Jordan-Litani
state**

■ **Damascus**

SYRIA

■ **Amman**

Jerusalem ■

**Proposed
state of
Palestine**

ISRAEL

JORDAN

EGYPT

■ **Cairo**

SAUDI ARABIA