

Abstract

Analysis of Water Sharing Agreement signed by Israel, Jordan & PA

This book investigates the background of the water sharing Agreement between Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority signed on December 9, 2013. It was aimed at developing a station for water desalination in Aqaba on the Red Sea, so that the water would be shared between the first two parties. In addition, more water shall be released by Israel from Lake Tiberias to be used in Jordan. Furthermore, 20 million cubic meters shall be sold by Israel Mekorot water utility to the PA. Finally, the brine shall be moved from Aqaba to the Dead Sea through a pipeline. The agreement is explored from historical, technical and environmental perspectives, as well as in terms of its real motives.

According to the book, the current discussion of a Red Sea-Dead Sea canal revives old ideas previously raised with the creation of Israel. It is also similar to ideas of connecting the Dead Sea with the Mediterranean even before the creation of Israel. Therefore, the agreement is not a result of momentary economic or water needs, but is first and foremost politically motivated.

The two-sea canal has shifted from an Israeli national project to a regional one joined by other parties, based on a number of peace treaties. The scheme is believed to compensate for the imbalance Israel has caused in the composition of the Dead Sea and the River Jordan.

Due to the various environmental threats resulting from such projects, it is argued that the only solution to the Dead Sea lies in returning the River Jordan to its nature as well as halting its contamination committed by the exhausts of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. This fact raises questions over the environmental justifications of the agreement.

The book attempts to address some sensitive controversial points in the recent agreement, such as its connection to the Israeli settlement plans, Red Sea-Dead Sea canal and Israeli political targets of controlling water sources as a strength in the negotiations with the Palestinians. There is also the

Israeli normalization policy by creating common interests within the New Middle East.

One of the major Israeli objectives of the accord is to enhance the spread of settlements in the West Bank and Negev at the expense of the Palestinians. The settling of Jews in Negev is currently facing problems of scarce water resources and lack of large-scale projects which would provide them with job opportunities. The sharing would also provide huge quantities of water to the Israeli nuclear reactors, make up massive water barriers close to the extended borders with Egypt and Jordan and boost tourism at the expense of Aqaba and Sinai.

The agreement takes place while the states of the region are busy with their internal affairs. Jordan, for instance, is suffering from severe economic crises, other than the old and aggravating water problem due to the Israeli policies.

A connection is established in the book between the agreement and the alleged Israeli-Arabian Gulf rapprochement under the umbrella of economy to which the present and other projects would be supportive. Some of these are the railway linking Israel and Jordan and heading to Iraq and the Gulf as well as the development of the Israeli ports to become an East gate to replace the unstable countries of the region. That would force the Arab World to deal, and make partnership, with the Hebrew State.

Finally, the accord is not far away from the plans of Kerry and the US administration to achieve stability in the region from the gate of economy. On the other hand, the Palestinians would be further undermined so that they live in an entity which is dependent on Israel in all fields.