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Partition plans, 1946.

EFFECT OF BRITISH PARTITION PLAN
ON PALESTINE DEVELOPMENT

by

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Previously I have classified land use* in
Palestine as follows:

	Ha.
Irrigable lands -----	470,000
Cultivable lands -----	761,400
Grazing and Forest -----	251,000
Unclassified dunes and desert -----	1,133,400
Total -----	2,615,800

To irrigate this amount of land requires full conservation and use of all water, river, spring and well (underground reservoir) water, and surplus water from adjoining Lebanon and Syria. Already it involves the making of cooperative agreements with adjoining Arab lands for the advantage of all. Besides it necessitates the damming of the two large rivers, the Jordan and Litani, both for irrigation and hydroelectric power. Under the favorable condition of full use of the water, a rural population (inclusive of 52000 nomads) of 1,319,675 can be supported in Palestine and a total population of 5,000,000.

The British ~~proposed~~ partition throws the lands in the three principal zones into the following categories:

Lands	Arab	Jewish	British
	Hectares	Hectares	Hectares
Irrigable	288,400	181,600	-----
Cultivable (a)	411,686	(a) 48,338	
(b)	95,380	-----	(b) 206,000
Grazing & Forest	216,777	34,723	
Desert, dunes	<u>243,700</u>	<u>22,500</u>	<u>867,200</u>

This division as far as irrigable lands is based on full use of the waters, which under this partition becomes impossible because of greatly increased complications. Assuming the same basis for rural population estimates as used for the land as a whole, it would give the following rural population figures: Arab 892,000, Jewish 401,000 and British 46,000. In the Jerusalem-Bethlehem enclave there is an estimated 185,000 urban population.

If each of these zones has to depend on its own water and no interuse of same is practical, the total land use and hence rural population falls greatly below figures given because of the large use factor in irrigable lands, cutting rural population possibilities at least 250,000 for the Jewish zone, and 300,000 for the Arabic.

This partition results in:

(1) Enormously complicating an already complicated handling of all matters relating to irrigation and power development by increasing the number of authorities to be dealt with.

(2) Putting all important reservoir sites into the Arab zone, except for a few for development of the Negev which would fall into the British zone.

El Battauf so necessary for storage of Jordan water falls into the Arab zone, as do all the small reservoirs to conserve the flood waters of the Judean hills, and for storing of winter deep well water. Irrigation, including canalization which also would be greatly split, can only be handled successfully as a joint undertaking beneficial to all, both Jew and Arab.

(3) All the important springs excepting only Ras el Ain (at the head of the Auja river) and some of the Esdraelon and Beisan springs, are in the Arab zone. Development of springs is very important and such a partition would inevitably delay it.

(4) The Mediterranean diversion plan would be impeded since the main reservoir, the power sites and part of the canal would be in the Arab zone; the present Jordan power plant likewise.

(5) Most of the stone quarries, excepting possibly some in the Jerusalem enclave and the cement quarry at Haifa, would be in Arab hands. The Potash plants, phosphate rock deposits, and the limited oil possibilities would be in the Arab zone, except for any limited oil possibilities in the British zone.

(6) The splitting of the Haifa Bay area makes

difficult further industrialization, especially with the additional proposed use of this area for a great British naval base. The development of the Aqaba harbor will likewise be for British account only.

(7) Taxation will be greatly complicated, and to this there may be added interzonal customs. Roads will be necessarily split in this scheme and their upkeep become more difficult.

(8) In the earlier, 1937, partition, the greater part of Galilee was left in the Jewish zone. This had the advantage of supplying some uplands for growing cereals. The present scheme leaves in the Jewish zone almost exclusively land requiring expensive irrigation, with practically no cereal lands.

As reported in the New York Times, Aug. 18, 1946, the Jewish Agency has made a counter proposal essentially as follows:

(1) That Palestine be divided, separate Arab and Jewish states be set up, each under its own sovereignty, and each granting Britain military and naval bases.

(2) This plan would add to the Jewish area the following previously included in the Arab area by the British plan:

- (a) Gallilee uplands and the Acre plan.
- (b) The Central Jordan plan.

(3) It would grant the Arabs the port of Jaffa and use of a corridor across the Jewish area so as

to give the Arab area, Transjordan, and Irak direct contact with the Mediterranean at the Jaffa port.

(4) It would allot the Negev previously set aside for retention as a military base for Britain to the Jewish State, but allow use of the area by Britain for such purpose.

(5) It would add certain potentially irrigable lands between Gaza and Beersheba.

This partition plan would result in the following allotment of lands:

Lands	Arab State Hectares	Jewish State Hectares
Irrigable	124,850	345,150
Cultivable (a)	297,327	161,793
(b)	95,380	206,000
Grazing & Forest	201,400	49,000
Desert & Dunes	226,570	884,330

This would give the Jewish State 2367 square miles X of which 2113 would be cultivable and irrigable much of it ultimately at great cost; plus 4147 square miles of the Negev consisting of 20% low grade cereal lands , with balance, desert; a total of 6,514 square miles as against about 3,486 square miles for the Arab State. This would allow for an ultimate Jewish State rural population of 827,000 and an Arab State ultimate rural population of 455,000.

This division retains in Jewish lands the proposed El Battauf reservoir site, and two-thirds of the land over

which the Mediterranean diversion plan works would be built, also the Jordan hydroelectric power plant. Irrigation plans would still have to have the cooperation of both Arab Palestine and of the adjoining Arab States, and Arab Palestine would retain most of the smaller reservoir sites so necessary for conserving winter flood waters of the Judean hills. The South Potash Plant would be in the Jewish area. However, the new plan does simplify considerably the building of irrigation works over the British plan.

If this new plan is accepted, Britain should join the Jewish State in the further development of harbors at Acre, Haifa and Aqaba, since it would have use of them for naval bases.

The Jewish proposal would assure caring ultimately for 3,100,000 population in the Jewish area and 1,600,000 in the Arab area, together with an ultimate Jerusalem-Bethlehem population of 300,000. In addition, the Arabs not only have Trans Jordan (in excess of 34,000 square miles) to develop, and to which Arab Palestine will probably attach itself. Also greater possibilities exist in Irak where irrigated lands can be acquired and developed at one-fifth the cost and good lands are assured for a very large Arab population in the Tigris-Euphrates valley as proposed by Mr. Herbert Hoover.

Under this scheme taxation would be greatly simplified and each state make use of its own taxes.

Were the 10,000 square miles originally allotted under the mandate given the Jews, it would represent only

one-half percent of the total of middle East Arab lands -- and if the Jewish proposal is accepted it would be one-third of one percent, surely a small amount to allot to a people who have so greatly suffered and whose losses have been the greatest proportionately of any people in World War II. Certainly the Jewish proposal is both the minimum conscionable and minimum practical partition plan.

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Arthur Hays Sulzberger

