

II. Strategic

Jacques Cheminade

An Oasis Plan for the Mutual Development of Southwest Asia

The following is an edited transcript of the March 18, 2025 address by Jacques Cheminade, president of Solidarité & Progrès, made to academics at the [Académie Géopolitique de Paris](#). The presentation was broadcast live and posted on the Academy's YouTube page and webpages.

Thank you, Mr. Ali Rastbeen [President of the Académie], and thank you to everyone who is here, because together we must help address a challenge that is fundamental to humanity.

Peace is not simply the rejection of war. It requires an agreement to bring together the conditions of power, or rather of a potential to live together. It is from this human conviction, which was that of the authors of the Treaty of Westphalia in Europe in 1648, that a solution can be found. A difficult solution, but a real one—not only for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but to avoid the conflagration of the whole of Southwest Asia.

This is the basis of the Oasis Plan proposed by our International Peace Coalition and the Schiller Institute. It is a plan for mutual development and growth, an economic development project based on three interdependent key factors in this part of the world: water, energy, and food. Not some nice words, but water, energy, and food! This does not mean putting aside the political conditions to achieve this, but rather creating the framework and economic conditions to achieve a political solution. This should be Europe's plan, and France's first and foremost.

An oasis is not just a place where one passes, but, when the oases are many, they become sources that bring together the caravans. It was the American economist Lyndon LaRouche who conceived this project

from the year 1975, following interviews with the leaders of the Iraqi and Syrian Ba'ath parties, and of the anti-colonial tendency of the Israeli Labor Party represented then by Abba Eban. I myself met on several occasions Maxim Ghilan, who directed in Paris the magazine *Israel & Palestine* condemning the Israeli colonial excesses, and was a back-channel interlocutor of Yasser Arafat and his friends.

I will describe this plan here, the basis of develop-



Paris Academy of Geopolitics

Jacques Cheminade speaks at a meeting of the Paris Academy of Geopolitics in March. His speech was titled, "Which EU Diplomacy for Palestine?"

ment and mutual security that must therefore benefit the entire region, as was equally the intention of Bashar al-Assad's Five Seas Plan. I wanted to show you that this is not a chimerical project, coming from nowhere, but the fruit of a dialogue between adversaries in search of a common good.

After describing its foundations, I will show you the various trial projects that preceded it, and how the three wars fomented by oligarchies from outside the region—

the Suez War in 1956, the Six-Day War in 1967, the Yom Kippur War in 1973—all these wars were operations launched to sabotage the plans for peace through mutual development. And then, of course, comes the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's suppression of the intifadas and the rise to power of Benjamin Netanyahu, his alliance with the Israeli settlers in the West Bank and the racists Bezael Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir, who organized the genocide in Gaza and the crimes of the occupiers in the West Bank.

Dynamics of the Oasis Plan

The Oasis Plan is based on the reparation of these crimes, the offenses inflicted on others, and the implementation of major projects for mutual benefit, initiating and expanding a dynamic. It therefore provides for water, energy, and food.

Water: Israel has to give up its exclusive control over water resources, in favor of an agreement for the equitable sharing of resources among all countries in the region. This means the immediate installation of a floating, underwater, or offshore desalination plant on the coast of Gaza.

Currently there are very few, small desalination units. And as you know, two weeks ago, by cutting off electricity to two desalination plants in the Deir Al-Balah area of central Gaza, Israel is condemning Gaza to not have drinking water. Our plan is the creation of a water supply system: water galleries [conveyance systems] from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea, and from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea, composed of tunnels, pipelines, pumping stations, and hydroelectric power.

It's also energy. Before being desalinated, the seawater arriving at the Dead Sea will enter into a dam reservoir. Then, it will fall into a 400-meter vertical shaft—you know, the Dead Sea is 400 meters below sea level—allowing with turbines the creation of hydroelectric energy. Once down, the salty seawater will be desalinated.

Desalination will create fresh water that can go to Jordan, Palestine, and Israel. The brine will be used to *save the Dead Sea*, and that is essential; we must save



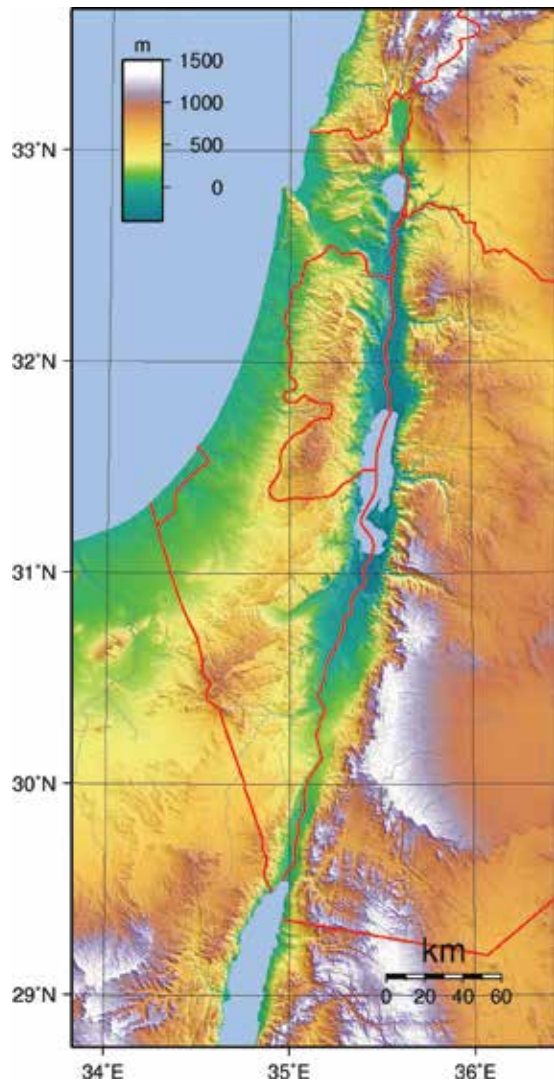
Karel Vereycken, May 2024

Map of the Oasis Plan for Israel, Palestine, and Jordan.

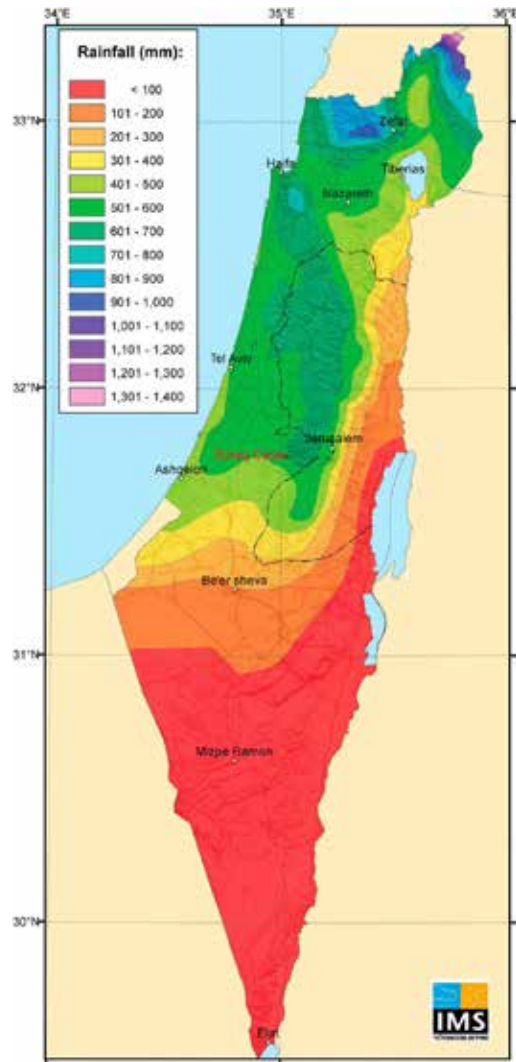
this body of water in this region. Some of the water passing through the Mediterranean–Dead Sea water supply system could be desalinated in Beersheba, the capital of the Negev, whose population could double thanks to the new freshwater reserves.

Then there's *food, living conditions, and transportation*. New cities and development corridors will have to be organized around the new water supply system. It's about managing water in development corridors, for human beings, for industries, for services.

This water management involves the recovery of surface water and rainwater, drip irrigation, drip fertigation, and desalination, of course—and this will lead



Topographic map showing Israel, Palestine, and part of Jordan.



Courtesy of the Israeli Meteorological Service
Mean annual rainfall (in millimeters, mm) across Israel and Palestine from 1981 to 2010.

to rapid agricultural development. Israel today has water beyond its needs—which must be shared.

An end to the settlement policy in the West Bank: Settlers must be encouraged, either fiscally or by more direct means if required, to reorient themselves to the Negev, where they can, working and living in harmony with the Bedouins, Palestinians, and others, take on productive jobs and make the desert flourish. There is room for everyone in the region.

Finally, there is the reconstruction and economic development of the Gaza Strip, including Yasser Arafat International Airport, which was inaugurated in 1998, bulldozed by the Israelis in 2002, and which will have to be rebuilt; and a large seaport, serving a hinterland

equipped with transport, industrial and agricultural infrastructure.

So, is it idealistic? Is it impossible? First, there is no other choice than a win-win agreement for the people if we truly want to achieve peace. Only a dynamic of mutual development can escape a dynamic of war.

This is the Oasis Plan method. Let's be frank, it has characteristics specific to this region of the world, but to ensure its lasting success, it must be situated within the context of an international architecture of mutual peace and security, beyond this region. The only war worth winning is the war against the desert.

Today, the win-win system of the BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, supported by

what is becoming the global majority, is laying the foundations for this new architecture of peace on a scale that is itself global.

Necessary Political Conditions

There remain two political conditions attached to the Oasis Plan. Immediate recognition of the Palestinian state, by all, so that there can be two official interlocutors. The Oslo Accords failed because it did not foresee this from the outset.

Freeing Marwan Barghout, who is recognized as the leader who is capable of bringing together all Palestinian factions, and a commitment for each party to work for the benefit of the other, without seeing each other as an existential enemy—as Carl Schmitt¹ wanted—not only on the scale of Europe, but also on the scale of the Middle East. So, once again, utopia? No, it is the result of the implementation of multiple effects.



CC/David Shankbone

The Dead Sea, 420 meters below sea level, is highly saline.

There are a few key facts for this region that I want to point out. If you look at the region's overall geological relief, you see that there is the Sea of Galilee, 200 meters *below* sea level; the Dead Sea, 420 meters *below* sea level; and the coasts.

The Dead Sea has a salinity (fraction of the total mass of the water, including the dissolved salt, which is salt) of 27%, while the Mediterranean has a salinity of 2 to 4%. So, we can create the conditions to revitalize the interior. We have water resources and we can develop the region. This is an axis that would first be the Mediterranean–Dead Sea, and then the Red Sea–Dead Sea. It's a huge challenge because of this terrain, but also an opportunity for the entire region.

Then there's the inequality of natural water resources in the region. There are favored regions—Türkiye, for example, has more water per capita—while Jordan is at the bottom, and Palestine, too, both having extremely limited resources. While in Israel and the settlements, 47% of the

land is irrigated today; it's only 6% in Palestinian land.

Then there are the efforts that were made to resolve the issue. First, there was the Johnston-Eisenhower Plan, as early as 1953. The aim was to undertake development between Israelis and Palestinians, taking the



CC/Borisshin

Israeli drip agriculture using Netafim technology.

1. Carl Schmitt (1888–1985), a German jurist, political theoretician, and prominent member of the Nazi Party under Hitler, was known for espousing the views of English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). Hobbes promoted the idea that mankind is in a perpetual war of “each against all,” and that only a strong governing authority (i.e., dictatorship) can maintain peace.

water resources of the Jordan Valley, irrigation, hydroelectricity. Israel and the Arab League did not support this agreement, because there were wounds from Israeli colonization that had not yet healed.

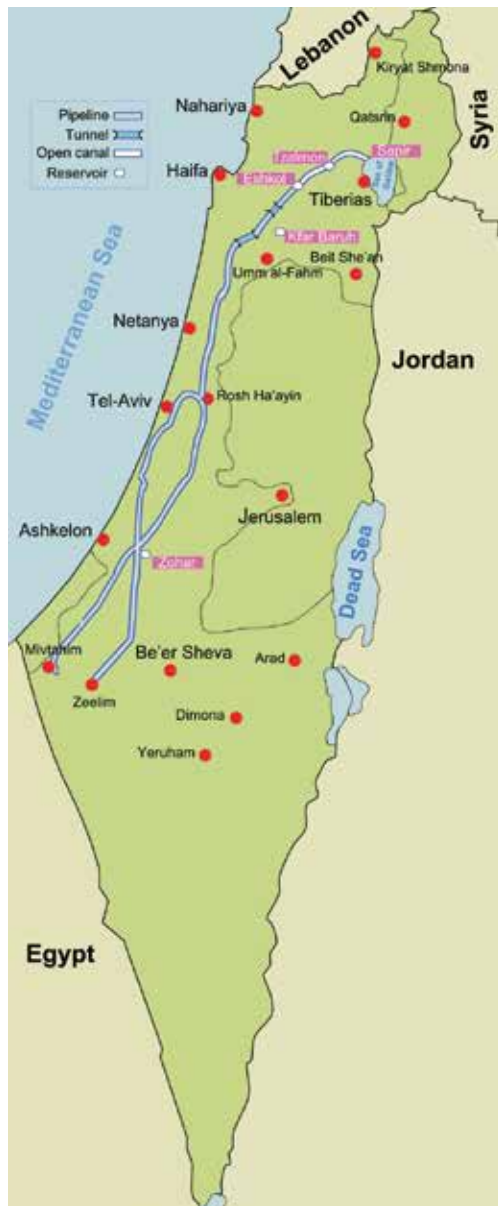
And then there was the Franco-Anglo-Israeli Suez expedition in 1956, which was due to water. It is said that it was Nasser who wanted to nationalize the Suez Canal, but that's not quite how it happened.

It was first John Foster Dulles and Allen Dulles who wanted to prevent the Aswan Dam from being built. Nasser said: If that's how it is, I'll nationalize the Suez Canal. And at that time there was the Anglo-French-Israeli expedition, which was stopped by the United States, at the time of President Eisenhower; and obviously at the time, in the USSR, Malenkov and, I believe, also Kaganovich, who stopped it. So, the war left its mark, and the already very fragile trust among Jews and Arabs completely disappeared.

Then there was the Six-Day War in 1967, and the Yom Kippur War in 1973. And despite that, in 1975 there was a plan by German engineers named Herbert Wendt and Wieland Kelm, which was the following: to build a water conveyance system from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea.

Taken from above the sea with a 7-km canal, then a 55-km hydraulic gallery through the relief, we arrive at a 3-km-long reservoir and then there is a 400-meter drop toward the Dead Sea, and we create hydroelectricity from there. This is how we can save the Dead Sea at the same time. It doesn't work, because obviously it was done unilaterally by Israel, and in any case a project developed in this way cannot be accepted.

On December 16, 1981, the United Nations General



The National Water Carrier of Israel (1964), has become less and less adequate as population grows. It pumps water from the Sea of Galilee in the north to the center and the dry south, with pipes, canals, tunnels, reservoirs, and pumping stations.

CC/NielsF

Assembly demanded that Israel halt construction of the canal linking the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea, and urged the Security Council to prevent the project from going ahead. It was therefore because of the conflict between the two parties, fomented from outside, and because the unilateral project was contrary to international law, that it was then stopped.

The Dead Sea–Red Sea aqueduct project was also on the drawing board. Unilateral projects are doomed to failure.

Consequences of Rabin's Assassination

Then came the 1993 Oslo Accords. They included a little-discussed Annex 3, which provided for Israeli-Palestinian economic cooperation based on water and electricity, with a permanent committee for economic cooperation. This is why it was approved by the Palestine Liberation Organization, and in particular by Marwan Barghouti, of course, but it was never implemented; it was sabotaged.

On November 4, 1995, Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated. Despite the efforts of Shimon Peres, Yasser Arafat, and the King of Jordan, all that remains of this is the canal along the Jordan River, which is intended to supply Jordan with water and is on Jordanian territory.

Netanyahu wins: He was Prime Minister of Israel from 1996 to 1999, then from 2009 to 2021, and now from 2022. You have to see who Benjamin Netanyahu is. His father, Benzion Netanyahu, was the main collaborator and personal secretary of Vladimir Z. Jabotinsky, who was—let's be polite—a neo-fascist.

He is pushing the insane Ben Gurion Canal navigation project to beat Egypt. And now, the genocide in

Gaza is the political turning point of Israel.

With the Oasis Plan things can be turned around. You see, you have a vision—I don't have time to go into it, but we have all the elements of the Oasis Plan here [shows [38-page report](#)].

Let's end on a note of hope. The only alternative to the Oasis Plan is war, permanent war in the Middle East. Therefore, the Oasis Plan is an indispensable, safe, economic benchmark; it must be adopted by a desire for peace, therefore a desire that must come from within, a desire for internal peace, but also from the outside, it must be imposed by the United States in particular, with the leverage of Russia and China, Türkiye, and Iran playing a role.

So, let's remember that the Chinese government has managed to settle relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia; it is the same type of challenge, but much deeper, that we must face here. What this Chinese government shows is that the world can change if you change your way of thinking; if the obsession with geopolitical domination is replaced by win-win projects. This is not a matter of blissful humanism, but a necessity.

Today, there is the Cairo Plan. In Cairo, an extraordinary summit of Arab countries—the Arab League—united in denouncing the odious attempts to displace the Palestinian people and adopting the plan drawn up by Egypt for the reconstruction of Gaza in five years.

The first phase is the clearing of debris and landmines. The second phase involves providing temporary housing to 1.5 million people on these sites during the reparations period, as well as reconstruction, which is scheduled to last until 2030. It is planned to rebuild roads, networks, public services, and to implement the idea of mutual development, which was included in Annex 3 of the Oslo Accords and which has always been sabotaged.

So, this is a first step, but the foundation still needs to be established: water, energy, and food, which are found in the Oasis Plan, but not yet in Egypt's plan. There are people in France working on this—obviously with a pro-Israeli bias.

There's Ofer Bronchtein, who is Emmanuel Macron's special advisor on Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement, and he says we need to think in terms of generations, and certainly not elections, especially in Israel. And obviously, with this bias, he has a pessimistic view of a dialogue that, he says, will take generations. I don't

agree with that; I say we need to move much faster.

Finally, to those who keep saying, “they will never be able to agree,” or, “too many crimes have been committed,” I can tell you that the former South African Minister of Foreign Affairs—she was actually the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, and she was also a minister several times—Naledi Pandor, endorsed the Oasis Plan that I have just presented to you. She emphasizes that Nelson Mandela's approach, which avoided a bloodbath in South Africa by establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, would be an approach worth exploring for the Middle East.

Two-State Solution

Now I come to the subject that we always discuss to solve the Israel-Palestine conflict: two-state solution? One-state solution? Today, a two-state solution is necessary, because a Palestinian state must have its place immediately for the negotiations to have meaning; for them to be able to begin.

The Oasis Plan is therefore consubstantial with an immediate recognition of the right of the Palestinians to a state. Tomorrow, no doubt, a single state, because the dimensions of the territory are too limited, and Gaza and the West Bank cannot remain geographically separate. A single state, therefore, in the spirit of Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said's “Divan,” composing a political orchestra that can achieve, through the dynamics of its playing, a harmony of what are still dissonances.

You will notice that I have said little about the European Union. It is not a nation, it has not played the role it should have played on the ground. It has given money, but it has not provided the means—physical or human—to establish peace. Today, I must say, neither has France. So, I hope that this Oasis Plan can be, for it, the inspiration, so that it contributes to establishing a spirit of national sovereignty that can combine patriotism and service to humanity.

[applause]

Answering a question following his presentation, Cheminade said the following:

You should never expect a solution from those who are the cause of the problem. There's something called the international community. Victor Hugo would have called it a “gang of criminals,” a “mafia” [laughs]. These are Western European powers that have fallen under the thumb of financial interests, and the “great laundry” of dirty money in the world—I

mean the City of London.

This is not a new phenomenon! Their enemy is the nation-state. Their enemy was Gamal Abdel Nasser and Egypt, and the Palestinian Authority—if it were a true Palestinian authority, that is; if it represented the interests of the Palestinian people.

So, this isn't new; it goes back to long before oil, to 1840 at a conference in London on how to contain what's going on. Why is that? Because Muhammad Ali and his son, Ibrahim Pasha, were in the process of founding a society that was a "Greater Syria," as it was called at the time. Whom were they working with? With immigrant French revolutionaries, who were highly skilled technically, and revolutionaries from other European countries. And they were forming an embryonic nation-state. It had to be destroyed!...

In London, they said, "How? Shiites versus Sunnis, that's a fine way to destroy them, but we need to add something else: the Jews in the middle, so we can use them to divide and rule." And that's really what formed the basis of what we now call a "rules-based order," which is both financial in its conception and imperialist in its ideology.

So, what about the European Union? I'll just say one thing: It has founded a European diplomatic school in Bruges, where they teach "European" diplomats, not nation-state diplomats, and the room where they meet is called "Madeleine Albright"²

So, there you have it.... That's all there is to it, and I'll say no more about the European Union.

I'll end on a note of hope: I think that today, Palestine can be a rallying point for change and transformation in the world. I mean, what is emerging, in this global majority, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the BRICS, all the people who are demanding the right to self-determination and also the right to economic development. So, I'm happy to see the reappearance of what de Gaulle called "La Détente," "L'Entente," "La Coopération" pour l'Avenir [Cooperation for the Future], around these people—but I hope it will happen in France.

2. Trained by geopolitician Zbigniew Brzezinski (himself a follower of Bernard Lewis), Madeleine Albright was Bill Clinton's Secretary of State. Faithful to her mentor, she pushed for NATO enlargement and invented the "color revolutions." Her disciples were at the center of the Anglo-American "war party": Hillary Clinton and Victoria Nuland.

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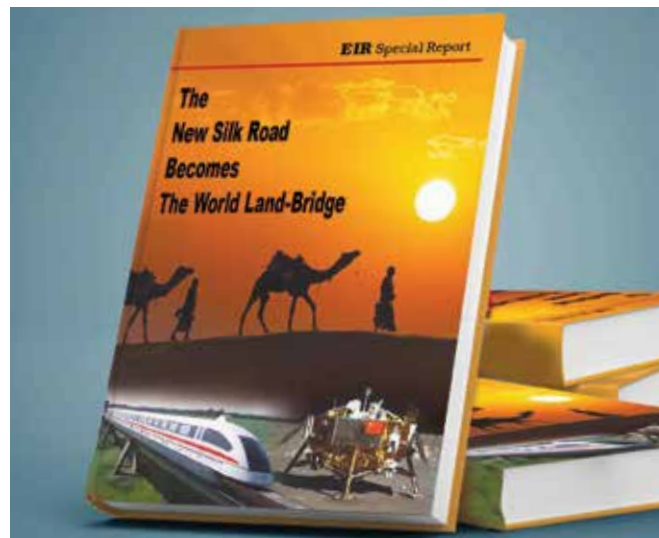
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