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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/20/israel-new-settlement-benjamin-netanyahu-jared-kushner-amichai-amona>

Israel begins work on first settlement in 25 years as Jared Kushner flies in

Netanyahu announces ground-breaking at Amichai, which will house 300 hardline residents of illegal outpost of Amona

Peter Beaumont Last modified on Saturday 24 June 2017 05.46 AEST

Construction work commences at Amichai, a new settlement which will house 300 people
Photograph: Ronen Zvulun/Reuters

Israel's prime minister, [Benjamin Netanyahu](#), has announced the beginning of building work on the first new Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank in 25 years, a day before a visit by Donald Trump's son-in-law and envoy, Jared Kushner, aimed at reinvigorating the stalled peace process.

The new settlement, known as Amichai, is being built to house about 300 hardline residents of the [illegal West Bank Jewish outpost of Amona](#) who were evicted by police in February after a court ruled their houses were on privately owned Palestinian land.

The timing of the announcement was condemned by a Palestinian official who suggested it was designed to undermine peace efforts.

Announcing the beginning of ground-breaking work at the new settlement, Netanyahu wrote on his Twitter feed: "Work began today on-site, as I promised, to establish the new settlement," with a photograph of a mechanical digger working at the site north of Ramallah:

The construction work comes despite a request by Trump at a meeting between the two men in Washington this year to "hold back on settlements for a little bit" – a comment seen as part of an effort to build trust with the Palestinians, but greeted by many with deep scepticism.

Netanyahu said: "After decades, I have the privilege to be the prime minister who is building a new community in Judea and Samaria [the Israeli name for the occupied Palestinian territories]."

Amichai will be the first entirely new state-approved settlement constructed in the [Palestinian territories](#) since the Israeli-Palestinian Oslo peace accords were signed in 1993, although illegal outposts have been constructed in that period and other settlements have expanded.

Nabil Abu Rdainah, a spokesman for the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, called the ground-breaking “a grave escalation and an attempt to foil efforts by the American administration to revive negotiations, especially [before] the arrival of the US envoys”.

A settler is removed by police from one of the houses in Amona in February. Photograph: Peter Beaumont for the Guardian

Jewish settlements in the West Bank are regarded as illegal under international law and are considered one of the main obstacles to a two-state solution, taking land claimed by Palestinians for a future state.

On Monday the White House announced that Kushner as well as Jason Greenblatt, a top US national security aide, would meet Israeli and Palestinian leaders this week.

Kushner and Greenblatt will sound out both sides “about their priorities and potential next steps” as part of Trump’s attempt to “spearhead a peace effort” that collapsed in 2014, a White House official said.

“Those who want to make it harder rather than easier to make peace, whether by their statements or their actions, must be prevented from subverting the chances for peace,” the official said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jun/21/kushner-arrives-in-israel-tasked-with-progressing-trumps-ultimate-deal>

Kushner arrives in Israel tasked with progressing Trump's 'ultimate deal'

Little to suggest breakthrough imminent in Israeli-Palestinian relations as US president's son-in-law touches down

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Jared Kushner meets the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. Photograph: GPO/ Getty Images

Donald Trump's son-in-law and chief Middle East adviser, [Jared Kushner](#), has arrived in [Israel](#) and the occupied Palestinian Territories for a whistlestop visit aimed at restarting the long-dormant Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Kushner's carefully managed visit – conducted far from media scrutiny and lasting less than a day – comes amid scant indication of any imminent breakthrough between the two sides in a peace process that has been moribund since 2014.

The US president has tasked Kushner with the ambitious goal of laying the groundwork for what he calls the “ultimate deal”, but deep divisions remain, clouding chances of a significant breakthrough in one of the longest Middle East crises.

Kushner, a 36-year-old former real-estate developer, arrived a day after the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, announced [work had begun on the first new Israeli settlement in 25 years in the occupied Palestinian Territories](#), being built to house evicted Jewish residents of the illegal outpost of Amona.

Kushner's first act on arriving in Israel was to pay a condolence visit on behalf of Trump to the family of Hadas Malka, an Israeli policewoman [killed during an attack by three Palestinian assailants](#) on Friday in Jerusalem.

The visit was in keeping with the low profile that the president's son-in-law has kept, rarely speaking in public and operating largely behind the scenes.

Israeli and US officials gave no details of what was due to be discussed.

A video released by Netanyahu's office showed the Israeli prime minister – a friend of Kushner's father – embracing him and saying: "This is an opportunity to pursue our common goals of security, prosperity and peace.

"Jared, I welcome you here in that spirit. I know of your efforts, the president's efforts, and I look forward to working with you to achieve these common goals."

Kushner replied: "The president sends his best regards and it's an honour to be here with you."

However, journalists were prevented from even filming Kushner's arrival at Netanyahu's office. The Associated Press said one of its cameramen was prevented from filming the arrival of his convoy while another was ordered to delete his memory card of all images of the prime minister's office.

Kushner remained with the Israeli prime minister for about three hours, before heading to the West bank city of Ramallah for a late-night meeting with the Palestinian president, [Mahmoud Abbas](#).

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<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/the-times/arab-version-of-the-six-day-war-the-great-lie-that-refuses-to-die/news-story/3bc210996fff468a6cd4576e1d812f89>

Arab version of the Six Day War: the great lie that refuses to die

Ben Macintyre 12:00AM June 6, 2017



Israeli defence minister Moshe Dayan, centre, with General Rechavam Zeevi in the town of Hebron during the Six Day War. Picture: AFP

On June 5, 1967, Israel destroyed Egypt's air force and attacked the planes of Syria and Jordan. Then Israeli forces advanced on Sinai, Jerusalem's Old City, Suez and the Golan Heights. Six days later Israel had achieved a stunning victory over the encircling Arab armies, and the map of the Middle East was redrawn.

The Arab states immediately began looking for reasons to explain their defeat, and loudly claimed British and US troops, planes and aircraft carriers had taken part in the fighting on Israel's side. Thus was born one of the oldest and most intractable conspiracy theories of modern times, one that has coloured Middle Eastern politics for half a century.

The Six Day War was only a day old when Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt called King Hussein of Jordan on a crackling telephone line to cook up the fake news of Anglo-American military involvement. What they did not know was that two veteran officers of Israeli military intelligence were eavesdropping, using bugging equipment left over from World War II.

The conversation went as follows:

Hussein: Hello. I do not hear, the connection is the worst ...

Nasser: How are you? Do you know that the US is participating alongside Israel in the war? Should we announce this? Should we say that the US and Britain (are participating), or only the US?

Hussein: The US and England.

Nasser: Does Britain have aircraft carriers?

Hussein: (Unclear)

Nasser: Good. King Hussein will make an announcement and I will make an announcement, and we will see to it that the Syrians make an announcement that American and British aeroplanes are taking part against us from aircraft carriers.

The taped conversation is proof that the accusation of Anglo-American collusion was a falsehood, yet it took root in the Arab world, with long-term consequences: the rise of anti-Americanism in the Middle East, the spread of terror tactics against the West, even Gaddafi's coup in Libya, can all be linked back to the myth that Britain and America helped Israel to win the Six Day War.

Half a century later, it is surely time for Israel's Arab neighbours to acknowledge that what British diplomats called "the big lie" was exactly that.

The war was still under way when Arab state-run media launched a co-ordinated propaganda campaign, reporting that British and US troops were fighting alongside the Israelis and British and American planes were attacking Egyptian positions from aircraft carriers. Radio Cairo reported that British bombers had taken part in airstrikes on Sinai. Radio Damascus claimed that 3000 British troops had arrived in Israel from Cyprus.

In a speech on June 9, Nasser insisted: "What is now established is that American and British aircraft carriers were off the shores of the enemy helping his war effort ... British aircraft raided, in broad daylight, positions on the Syrian and Egyptian fronts."

The allegations of a "tripartite plot" were emphatically denied by the US and UK. Britain may earlier have supplied arms to Israel, but after the debacle of Suez in 1956 there was no appetite for another military collusion. Britain insisted there was "not a grain of truth" in the claims, pointing out that the only British aircraft carriers in the region were in Malta and Aden.

But the myth was too attractive, and too consoling, to be undermined by mere facts. It helped to explain and excuse the Arab military defeat, painted Israel as an imperialist stooge and played into an established narrative of Western aggression in the Middle East. Like most conspiracy theories, it was firmly embedded in wishful thinking; in the Arab world, it hardened into "fact". The truth — that Israel had defeated three Arab states without Western military assistance — was too shameful to accept.

A telegram from the Foreign Office to Middle East posts noted that the Arab reaction was a function of mass psychology: "The Arabs' reluctance to disbelieve all versions of the big lie springs in part from a need to believe that the Israelis could not have defeated them so thoroughly without outside assistance."

The allegations of Anglo-American collusion with Israel were largely dismissed outside the Arab world. Nasser himself eventually retracted the claim, and within a month of the war King Hussein announced he was satisfied that "no American planes took part, or any British planes either".

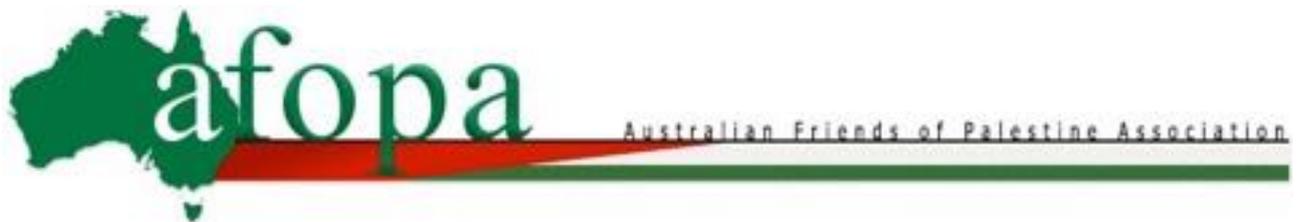
Yet the myth refused to die. Long after the war was over, it continued to be repeated as accepted truth, not just in the Arab media but in school textbooks. According to the Israeli

historian Elie Podeh: “The repetition of this fabricated story in all history textbooks means that all Egyptian schoolchildren have been exposed to, and indoctrinated with, the collusion story.”

Half a century later the legacy of a lightning war continues to bedevil the Middle East. Israel tripled its territory in under a week, but the conflict over the conquest, and the subsequent occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, has defined Israel’s politics and international relations ever since. Underpinning this is the long-running, persistent and untrue claim that Israel achieved victory with direct British and American military assistance.

Conspiracy theory, to which the Arab world is notoriously prone, is usually a reflection of political weakness and a shield against unpleasant reality. Formally repudiating the big lie on the 50th anniversary of the Six Day War would be a clear sign of historical maturity on the part of Arab states, and perhaps a step towards peace.

The Times



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“Why Palestine? Because it is a just cause, a noble ideal, a moral quest for equality and human rights” – Edward Saïd