THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS AND ITS POSSIBLE FUTURE

By

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my dearest wife ***Tiebe Negash*** *and my loving daughter* ***Intisar Sarmaei****; my inspiration, and my light.*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

PLO - Palestine Liberation Organization

UN - United Nations

PNA - Palestinian National Authority

PNC - Palestinian National Council

UNEF - United Nations Emergency Force

PPA -Palestinian Preparatory Authority

ABSTRACT

A critical analysis of the Middle East peace process reveal that its future is linked to the commitment by all parties in the conflict to implement the resolutions of the UN and its agencies and to accept a peaceful settlement of the conflict. While these would, as a general observation, act contrary to the interest of certain categories of actors, it emerges as the realistic possible way of resolving the conflict in the Middle East. This study presents an examination of the factors that led to the Arab-Israeli conflict, possible options and future to the peace process and the impact of the conflict on the Middle East Region in a web that concretises the emerging ideas to policy formulation and implementation at the state levels with respect to political and military policies.

The study provides a resume of political analysts, experts in conflict management, researchers and documents that have precipitated the present study. A review of these researches reveals that the future of the Middle East Peace process has not been dealt with in an exhaustive study. The study also reveals that the various perspectives on the future of the peace process have not been fully explored. It is also revealed that there can be no solution to the Middle East peace process in the near future as long as Israel does not abandon its ambition to establish a greater Israel state in the occupied land, and that no solution to the Middle East conflict can be arrived at as long as the parties involved in the conflict aim at annihilating each other

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The concept of the Middle East is a vague one. However, for the purpose of this study, it means Arab states that are members of the Arab League, Iran and the state of Israel. Countries such as Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union are not included.

For over eighty years Arabs in the Middle East have lived in the belief that the Arab-Israeli conflict is the mother of all other conflicts in the region. Since the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 and the Balfour Declaration of 1917 all conflicts against external powers have been shifted into a conflict between the Arabs and the Israelis. The declaration, initiated by the British, called for the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.[1]

Between 1916 and 1993 all regional, and internal conflicts in the Middle East were blamed on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The perceptions concerned parties in the Arab- Israeli conflict led to the consolidation of Arab political positions against Israeli; it also led the Israelis to adopt a unified position against the Arabs.

Between 1948, when Israel was established, and 1978, when the Camp David accords were signed, the Arab-Israeli conflict played a major role in unifying Arab positions and stands against Israel. Following the Camp David

[1] George Jabour and Burhan Al – Daijjan , Arabs in the Face of Israel: Future Possibilities, Part 2 (Beirut: The Arab Unity Studies Centre 2000),p.235.

accords of 1978 things began to change; reproachment took place between Egypt and Israel. The Arab region became divided and consensus was lost. However, Egyptian-Israeli interaction was not developed into real normalisation process. All that happened was the creation of a state of no war, no peace.

The Palestinian Israeli Declaration of Principles in 1993 and the Cairo Declaration on the implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles are some attempts to resolve the conflict and hence reduce tension in the area.

Statement of the Problem

The fundamental principle in the concept of peaceful settlement of any conflict stems from the ability of the two warring parties to find a solution to the issues that led to the differences between them and abide by the agreements reached. Issues in this conflict include the issue of borders, rights et-cetera. Given that border and rights issues are unlimited and without a defined end, any settlement of the same is subject to –first the balance of power between the parties in conflict.[2] Basically, the acknowledgement in principle that there can be a compromise to the Arab-Israeli conflict is an acknowledgement of the principle of the existence of each party, with defined borders and rights. The problem between the sides in conflict is a problem of fundamental disagreements between the two over the existence of each side and not just disagreements over the borders and

[2] Ibid.

rights. Each party must accept the legitimacy of the other party without which no true and final solution can be attained to the problem. Consequently, there is no quick or easy solution to the problem.

Davin Ben Gurion[3] was the first person to express this fact when he said. "There is no solution to the Arab–Israeli conflict... the land is one and it is not possible to divide it, and the conflict over land is between two sides, yet the land can only belong to one side, which must be the Israeli people. Therefore the only available solution to the Israeli people is to strive by all means, including the use of force, politics and even deceit, to make the other side renounce its claim."[4] Israel will continue to change the basis of negotiations with the Arab side which was "Land for Peace" to "Peace for Peace" by excluding the issue of the occupied land from the equation yet this issue is the essence of the Arab–Israeli Conflict and which again is the basis of any peaceful political settlement. This means that Israel aims, behind all efforts and endeavours to make the Arab side renounce its right in Palestine.

The problem caused by Israel's refusal to continue pursuing a peaceful settlement to the Arab–Israeli conflict on the basis of the Madrid agreements and to address what was agreed towards the Palestinian perspective in the first and second stages of the negotiations marks the end of the process. The Arab accused

[3] David. Ben-Gurion: Founder and Head of he Jewish Ageny and a member of the International Zionist Movement, and First Prime Minister of the Jewish State.

[4] Mohammed H. Heikal, The Arab-Israel Conflict and Settlement Issues. Journal of the Future of the Arabs, Vol 31,Spet, 1981,pp.111-135.

Israel for its refusal to discuss the issues of refugees, borders, the occupied lands and the status of Jerusalem in addition to its call to uphold the right of Jews to settle in all occupied Arab land and its call to reach a settlement with Syria and Lebanon on the basis of the principle of "peace for peace" and "security for security" without withdrawing from the Golan Heights. This is considered backtracking on international commitments on the peace process sponsored under the auspices of the US and Russia. This backtracking by Israel on commitments and agreements signed with international guarantees is likely to be met with stiff opposition from the Arabs and the region may slide back into the pre-Madrid state. Given that the previous waves of events that led to the friction, war and conflict were contained relatively fast, the changes witnessed in the region and the facts on the ground will make it difficult to contain any forms of violence which may erupt at any time. Israel continues to enter the areas under Palestinian Authority using different excuses as opposition to Israel mounts in Northern Lebanon and the Golan Heights and if these events continue uncontrolled, they may lead to the eruption of violence afresh in the entire region which will undoubtedly harm the interests of all the international and regional forces in the region and it will be difficult to predict what direction the process will take.

In effect, the continued process of attaining a peaceful settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict depends on the ability of both sides to conduct the process on the basis of agreements reached previously, whether with regard to the Palestinian perspective or on the basis of the principle of "Land for Peace" with the

neighbouring Syria and Lebanon. Any backtracking from any side will lead to violence inside Palestine and Israel Blocking the peace process with Syria and Lebanon, hence scattering what has been achieved in the past years at all levels.

Objectives of the Study

a. To examine the factors that led to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

b. To crystallize the available and possible options to the Middle East peace process.

c. To explore the future of the peace process from different perspectives.

d. To examine the impact of the Arab–Israeli conflict on the Middle East region.

Hypotheses

1. The future of the Middle East peace process is linked to the commitment by all the parties in the conflict to implement the resolutions of the UN and its agencies and to accept a peaceful settlement of the conflict.
2. There can be no solution to the Middle East conflict in the near future as long as Israel does not abandon its ambition to establish the greater Israel in the occupied land.
3. There is no solution to the Middle East conflict as long as the parties involved in the conflict aim at annihilating each other.

Justification of the Study

This study can be justified on policy and academic grounds. The policy justification is in the significance of this study, which stems from the fact that it explores the future of the peace process in the Middle East, one of the most important regions in the world. The international community attaches great significance to the region and that is why all efforts are being made to try and find a lasting solution to the conflict. This is because the region is regarded as the source of all the three divine religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This is evident in the existence of holy places to all the three divine religions, which have great emotional attachment to the world population. Similarly, the region has strategic importance economically, politically and militarily.

The study is also justified in the sense that it creates the foundation for other future studies to be made in the social sciences, an area of study given a lot of attention by the developed world. This study is devoted to exploring the future and making decisions at the states level as well as with respect to political, economic and military organisations. The developing countries have not been very lucky to have predictive studies since not very many people have undertaken such studies. Consequently, the contribution of these studies to the processes of planning and decision-making is still very weak. Against this background, there is increased importance to employ such studies in the developing countries with the aim to achieve their goals, which are represented in the processes of planning,

decision-making and exploration of the future. And this is what the study strives to make clear.

Academically, the study can be justified in the fact that although a number of scholars have written on the Middle East conflict and its peace process, there is no known significant study that has attempted to analyse in depth the future of the peace process. This study therefore hopes to fill the gap in the literature on the Middle East peace process.

Literature Review

This literature review is divided into two parts. The first part examines literature on conflict. The second part looks at literature on Arab-Israeli conflict and the future of the Middle East peace process.

Literature on Conflict

This first part of literature is reviewed with the aim of understanding conflict and conflict management. Although a lot has been written on conflict and its management, conflict as a term still continues to mean different things to different people.

Many scholars like Nicholson, Dougherty and Pfalzgraff, Lewis, Zartman, Mwagiru, and others have defined conflict differently. Michael Nicholson argues that conflict is a situation where two or more people or states carry out acts, which are mutually inconsistent.[5] Dougherty and Palzgraff view conflict as the condition which exists when one group of human beings whether tribal, ethnic, linguistic,

[5] Nicholson, M., "Conflict Analysis," (London: The English University Press, 1998) P. 15.

cultural, religious, socio-economic or political is engaged in conscious opposition to one or other identifiable human groups, because these groups are pursuing what is or appear to be incompatible goals.[6] Lewis proposes that conflict is a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aim of the opponent is to neutralise, injure or eliminate the rival.[7] William Zartman holds that conflict refers to the outbreak of armed hostilities between parties.[8] Mwagiru and Zartman are examples of scholars who have written later in contrast to the traditional view of conflict. Attributing to the new understanding of conflict, Mwagiru defines conflict in terms of values, wants and interests. This new understanding of conflict sees it as a multi-dimensional social phenomenon that is an integral feature of human existence, essential to the ongoing process of history, social change and transformation.[9] Zartman posits that it is something, which is common. It is therefore natural and unavoidable, a social fact which all have had a direct experience with. And provided it can be expressed constructively, it can be desirable.[10]

A definition of conflict that is adopted here sees conflict as arising when parties disagree over values, wants and interests. For conflicts to occur, there has to be a situation in which power can be exercised. Conflict occurs when two or

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[6] Dougherty, J.E. and Pfaltzgraff R. L., "Contending Theories of International Relations". (New York: Haper and Row Publishers, 1990) p.182.
[7] Lewis, A. Coser, "The Function of Social Conflict." (New York: Free Press, 1956) p. 3.
[8] Zartman, I. W., Ripe for Revolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa. (New York: Oxford University Press. 1985), p. 8.
[9] Mwagiru M., The International Management of Internal Conflicts in Africa: The Uganda Mediation 1985. (Ph.D. Dissertation: Kent University, 1994).
[10] Zartman I. W., Conflict Reduction: Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa, (Washington: Brookings Institute, 1991), pp. 299-318.

more people want different and mutually exclusive things and are capable of bringing to bear persuasive strategies to get their way. It is the individual or groups' perception of incompatibility and the behaviour, whose results are important. Therefore from these explanations and definitions, we can distinguish two types of conflicts: violent conflict and structural conflict.[11]

In any study of conflict in the international system, one will definitely deal with inter-state and intra-state conflicts. "Inter-state conflicts involve conflicts between sovereign states while an intra-state conflict is a situation where the parties are drawn from within the borders of a sovereign state."[12] In the study of international conflicts, a researcher comes across several theories, which attempt to explain the causes of conflict. One such theory is the human needs theory,[13] which sees conflicts as emanating from human needs. These needs include identity, security and recognition. The needs are universal and are not negotiable. They must be satisfied if human development and social stability is to be achieved. Human beings, the theory observes, may seek to satisfy these basic needs or violate them. This quest for satisfaction or violation will give rise to protest, rebellion and violence.[14]

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[11] Mwagiru, M, Understanding Conflict and its Management: (Nairobi: Centre for conflict Research. 1998), pp 4-9.
[12] Mwagiru, M., Conflict: Theory, process and Institutions of Management (Nairobi: Watermark Publication, 2000), p.3.
[13] Burton John, Conflict Human Needs Theory, (London: Macmillan, 1990), P.75.
[14] Len Dogal and Ian Gough, A Theory of Human Need, (New York: The Guilford Press, 1991), pp 38 – 40.

This means that violent conflict cannot be solely explained in social psychological analysis of a political or economic elite. The solution it offers is the development of an ethos of pluralization with new discourses of differences and diversity.[15]

Another theory that is employed in explaining conflict is the structural theory, which assumes that the organisation of society itself creates causes and conditions for conflict. This explanation is based not on one single conflict case but on the general forces and dynamics at play, which make a society prone to different levels of conflict and violence. Galtung argues for the structural theory, which is, based on the notion that violence inbuilt in social structures.[16] The structural theory can be critiqued in the sense that it attempts to explain the causes of conflict in general and therefore fails to explain why particular conflicts occur and why they take on violent forms. The proponents of this theory also tend to diminish the role of human agency and blame society for conflict, thereby vindicating individuals. The theory explains conflicts that emanate from the colonial legacy and the subsequent post–colonial government structures which are at the very core of conflicts in many countries.

Each of these approaches accounts for the protracted, deep rooted and intractable conflicts that exist all over the world but while each captures the causes of individual conflicts, they fail to fully address instances of complex forms of

[15] Mwagiru, M., Conflict: Theory, Processes. op., cit., p. 69.
[16] Galtung, J., Essay in Peace Research, Vol. 1, (Copenhagen: Christian Eljers, 1975).

conflict which take international dimensions. The Middle East conflict is such a conflict, having had a humble beginning but currently having assumed an international dimension.

Literature on Arab-Israeli Conflict

This part of the literature review aims at introducing the actors and issues in the Middle East conflict.

It is prudent to state the fact that the current process of reaching a settlement in the Middle East needs to be looked at in the framework of the underlying conflict in the region. The underlying conflict here is represented by the conflict between Arabs and the Western world. Religion has played a fundamental role at various stages of the conflict, the most important stage being before the Balfour Declaration, where two prominent English scholars namely Joanna and Elenezer, presented a memorandum from Holland to the British Government. In the memorandum, it was demanded that

"the English people have the honour of transporting the sons and daughters of Israel in their ships to the promised land (Palestine); the land which God promised their forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and which was granted to them as eternal heritage."[17]

The memorandum was important in two respects: firstly, the extent to which there was a radical shift towards Palestine and particularly Jerusalem since

[17] Charles Douglas, Arabs and Israel, Translated Works, (Cairo: State Information Service, 1969), PP. 119-120.

it was now considered the Holy land of the Messiah and therefore the new home for all the Jews all over the world. Secondly, there was a shift in the belief that the return of the Messiah must be preceded by the return of the Jews to Palestine and that the two returns (of the Jews and the Messiah) shall not be achieved except through divine intervention. There was a shift from this position to a new position – that the two returns can be realised through human intervention and action.

If this constitutes the historical roots of the Middle East conflict, then it can be said that the period after World War one was extremely important in determining the conflict, for this period witnessed the origin of the current conflicts whose consequences were the imposition by the West of a peaceful settlement in the region. On the one hand, this is seen in the phenomenon of partitioning the Arab world in accordance with the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 (Territorial Act) and on the other hand, the Balfour Declaration (Zionist Act) enacted in November 1917.

Magdi Hamad argues that the Sykes-Picot agreement and the Balfour Declaration were established through a decision by the West in order to achieve its own goals, that is the fragmentation of the Arab world and hegemony of the West over the region. The West established the two Acts under the auspices of colonisation and the continued conflict between them and thereafter in the search for a process of settlement within the colonial framework itself.[18] Magdi

[18] Magdi Hammad , Experience of the Existing and On-Going Settlements. (Beirut, Cairo: Dar-Al-Shorouk 1999), p. 20.

Hammad goes on to say that at the end of the first Zionist conference in 1897, the head of the conference, Theodore Herzl announced that "now, the Jewish state has been founded ... and after 50 years from now the state of Israel will be established."[19]

The establishment of the state of Israel in 1947, that is after 50 years, did not come as a historical coincidence for there were efforts made throughout the 50 years during which subsequent Zionist conferences were held until the Jewish state was established. After another 50 years, the Jewish state is on the verge of attaining absolute control over the region, as it strives to gain complete hegemony over the region vis a vis the weaknesses of the Arab world.

Heikal says that this great Zionist achievement needs to be looked at in the framework of the Arab-West conflict in the region, because the Zionist scheme was founded on the account of vast colonial interests and the two issues got intertwined right from the beginning.[20] Its worth mentioning that Zionism has kept on changing its role depending on the Jewish interests. According to Maalum and Alexander, this was to guarantee the interests of the British Empire during the promulgation of the Balfour Declaration after World War 1 and to guarantee the

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[19] Ibid, pp. 25– 26.

[20] Mohammed H. Heikal, Secret Negotiations between the Arabs and Israel , (Beirut, Cairo: Dar Al-Shorouk, 1996), p.13.

American interests after World War I as well as to guarantee sanctions against the Communist and Arab nationalism during the Cold War.[21]

Samaha sees Israel as the vanguard of the world against Islamic terrorism and fundamentalism as was claimed by former Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres during a European Union meeting in Spain in 1992. He said: "The West must stand behind Israel and support it since it is the strongest obstacle to Islam and a protector of Europe against Islamic enmity."[22]

Maalum and Alexander hold the view that the Arab-Israeli conflict has its origin in the Palestinian problem, which is considered a key priority issue to the Arabs.[23] What Maalum and Alexander do not recognize is that the Palestinian problem is undoubtedly an important issue, yet by and large, it remains a secondary issue to the Arabs, and which is considered not fundamental to the Arab Israeli conflict. If indeed the fundamental problem was the Palestinian issue, the Arabs should have been capable of turning their back against the Palestinian problem and subsequently live in peace with Israel, as long as Israel reciprocated. However, the fundamental problem in the Arab–Israeli conflict is the problem of Israel as an entity and as a role player in the region. It may be difficult to co-exist, with an entity, but it is possible. However, it is impossible to co-exist with a role player who aims not just at expanding geographically but also at the subjugation

[21] Hussein Maalum and Amin Alexander. Across a Debacle (Limasoul : Cyprus: Dar Al-Muitaqa Printers and Publishers 1997), p. 30.
[22] Joseph Samaha, Passing Peace : About the Arab Solution to the Jewish issue , Beirut: Dar Al- Nama Publishers, 1993, pp.19-20.
[23] Hussein Maalum and Amin Alexander, Across a Debacle. (Limasoul, Cyprus: Dar Al - Maltaqa Printers and Publishers 1997), pp. 20-33

of the Arab world and the thwarting of any possible growth and development of the Arab world. This is done in the interests of the larger colonial powers to guarantee continued under-development, dependence and fragmentation of the Arab world.

Ahmad Amin is of the view that the awakening of Arab nationalism in the early 1930s crystallised the nationalistic plan in the form of ideological and faith (spiritual) waves as well as political movements, all of which were aimed at achieving independence and unity. This had the purpose of gaining emancipation from the western powers' control in the region as well as to prevent the west from pursuing their interests in the fragmentation of the Arab world.[24]

However, the author did not take note of the fact that the success of the western powers in the fragmentation of the Arab world led to the attainment of individual political independence and there was no relationship between independence and actual Arab Unity. Therefore, Arab nationalistic struggles were replaced by individual state struggles, thereby confiscating traditional bourgeoisie Arab classes which gained from the Arab struggle despite the fact that these classes countered the groups that struggled for independence.

According to Frantz Fanon[25] the new bourgeoisie classes neither founded a new national system to protect and guarantee freedom and equality among the citizens nor did they tackle the great challenges that faced the nation, but in

[24] Ahmed Amin., Arab intellectuals and Israel. (Beirut, Cairo: Dar-Al-Shorouk, 1998), pp. 88-110
[25] Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth , Translation by Sami Al-Darubi and Jamal Al-Atasiy. (Beirut: Dar Al-Taliah, 1966), p. 76.

contrast this resulted in dependence, fragmentation and underdevelopment. He therefore asserted, "the interests and gains of the nation are stolen from the sons of the nation."

After World War II, the US took upon itself the role of the protection of the systems of government in the Independent Arab states, on condition that they abandon the Palestine issue. The presence of colonisation in the region began to manifest itself through the imposed political fragmentation and dependence of the Arab world and the nurturing of the Zionist entity amongst the Arabs.[26]

Heikal argues that the fast move by the U.S to recognise the state of Israel only a few minutes after its declaration, even before the establishment of a strong Zionist lobby and its intensive activities in the US and this confirms that the Jewish State was originally a western and American investment.[27]

As for the existing and on-going compromise efforts to the Arab-Israeli conflict, it can be said that the efforts emerged from specific Arab ruling classes, which are an exudation of a complete political programme forwarded on a real political spectre imposed by Israel in the region. The Arab side gave too many concessions to the Israeli side in the interest of Israeli under the guise of being realistic, yet this realistic policy was imposed on them by Israel due to its military superiority. Even these concessions made by the Arab world never received acknowledgement from the Israeli side. In this regard, Al-Dajani says "The

[26] Jamil Matar and Ali Al-Deen Halal .The Arab Regional System: A study of the Arab Political Relations (Beirut: Centre of Arab Unity Studies, 1983), pp. 50-62.
[27] Mohammed H. Heikal, Egyptian Foreign Policy . The Foreign Affairs Journal. Volume 56, No. 11 July. 1978, pp.14-27.

refusal by Israeli to acknowledge the Arabs' concession can be explained not by virtue of the nature of what the Arabs offer and their readiness to offer even more concessions for the sake of peace, but due to the nature of the fundamental disagreement between the Zionists ambitions and the requirements of real peace.[28]

After the defeat of the Arab armies by Israel in 1967 and the subsequent great blow that Arabs suffered, realism began to be applied in Arab politics in the guise that the ideology of Arab–nationalism and the ambition and the dream of the Arabs had led to the 1967 destructive military defeat and economic crises as well as sharp differences amongst the Arabs themselves. It was also argued that this caused enmity in the Arab-US relations.[29] The Arabs soon realised that Israel had gained superiority over them economically, technologically and militarily.

The Arabs continue to feel that superiority every time Israel stretches out its long and strong hand to hit at them and occupy their land, with the occupation stretching even wider. The new paradigm explicitly admits that a large chunk of Palestine was lost and shall never be repossessed, though some proponents of the paradigm argue that some occupied land shall be repossessed and that the important thing however, is first to repossess non-Palestinian land and then demand that Israel returns the rest of the occupied land. It is therefore clear that the Realist Paradigm can be applied in making peace with Israel and thereby pay the price of peace by Arabs committing themselves to guarantee peace and

[28] Ibid., p. 139.
[29] Ibid.,p.140.

security to Israel. The Realist Paradigm was applied in the early 1970s when President Anwar Sadat intentionally went ahead to open a channel of secret communication with Israel through the US and to offer peace to Israel. His offer was however met with resistance and Israel made it clear that it was not ready to make peace with any individual as long as the conditions for peace were strange to it.[30] Israel stressed that it cannot sign a peace agreement except in a comprehensive form and not with an individual.

President Sadat of Egypt understood Israel's message very well and made a decision to immediately initiate the greatest move ever witnessed in the Arab-Israeli conflict which changed the environment of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Again, the road to Camp David went through three major stages-first, the shaping of the internal environment in Egypt to suit the agreement that was largely expected to be reached; second, a re-arrangement of the environment of the region and of the Arabs and third, a change in the international alliance.[31]

The existing and on-going compromise efforts in the region reveal the continued Zionist scheme based on expansionism and settlement in the face of the Palestinian people and Arab countries which refuse to accept this comprise since, according to Israel, reaching peace, particularly with Egypt, Jordan and Palestine means a substantial reduction in the amount of potential danger and threat in the

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[30] Mohammed H. Heikal, The Story of the Peace Initiative 6th edition (Beirut, Abu Dhabi, Publishers and distributors 1985), pp.119-121.

[31] Ahmad Sidqi Al- Dajani, Developments in the Palestinian Issue Journal of the Future of the Arabs No. 123 May 1999, pp. 112-136.

event of continued conflict. In this regard, Harkabi says "The recognition of Israel by the Arab countries, and the achievement of a comprehensive settlement both meant the acknowledgement by the Arab countries of the right of Jewish nationalism to exist on Palestinian land.[32]

Against this background, the recognition of the state of Israel by Egypt, Jordan and Palestine must involve the decision of the Arab nations to recognise the right of Jews to exist on Palestinians land. President Sadat had made great strides towards Israel's position when he pointed to the need to establish a state of Israel during his address in the

Knesset when he said, "if you find it legally and morally justifiable to establish a state on the land which was not wholly yours, then it's only proper that you understand the determination of the Palestine people to also establish a state in their land and country."[33]

Harkabi further argues that "the recognition of the state of Israel by the Arab countries must move from a mere recognition of the existence of Israel as an accomplished fact, to a recognition of the same in legal terms and the establishment of the state of Israel."[34]

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[32] Yehoshafat Harkabi, Arab Strategies and Israeli Response, (New York: Free Press 1977), pp.X –XII.
[33] See President Sadat's letter in an address to the Israel Knesset in Qatar News Agency and Documents on the Issue of Peace in the Middle East:, (Doha: Qatar News Agency 1979-1983 Part 1), pp. 6-7.
[34] Harkabi, Arab Strategies and Israel's Response, op. cit., pp. XII.

Magdi Hammad says, "here, the absolute defeat of the Arabs exists, and yet an absolute defeat, like an absolute crime rarely occurs.[35] Any defeat is exemplified by abandoning a tactful or strategic goal for some time depending on the circumstances.

But surrender is a situation where abandoning a tactful or strategic goal is accepted altogether. The first instance represents a defeat of the side that abandoned its goal, but the second instance of surrender represents absolute defeat. The difference between surrender and defeat is well illustrated in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict when Israel dealt a humiliating military defeat on the Arabs in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1982. In contrast, the Arabs knew that those were tactical defeats and subsequently the armies on both sides were preparing to resume war.

Commenting on this, Maalum and Alexander quote President Jamal Abdel Nassir's speech after the 1967 defeat when he said that "a portion of our land may fall under Israel's occupation but no portion of our determination shall be occupied.[36] Again during meetings of the Arab summit in Khartoum in 1967, there was a slogan that "whatever was taken by force shall not be claimed without force." There was a general consensus among the Arabs over four Arab "Nos"

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[35] Magdi Hammad: The Experience of the Existing and on-Going Settlement ,op. cit., p. 146.
[36] Hussein Maalum and Amin Alexander Across the Debacle , op. Cit, p. 13.

namely: "No negotiation with Israel, No reconciliation, No recognition and No dispensing with the Palestinian issue."[37]

They further quote former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban who on being asked in the same year, what the Zionists would do if the Arabs succeeded in destroying Israel? He said, "that is not easy to happen, and if it does, we shall start to establish the state of Israel from the beginning."[38] The two statements express a tactical characteristic in the victory of Israel and the defeat of the Arabs in 1967, except that events do not always develop in this way. In the October 1973 war, Arabs achieved victory over Israel in a tactical war but the conflict has never ceased at the strategic level, but paved the way in the interest of the Arabs. However, instead of the Arabs pursuing the efforts to achieve a strategic goal, they have turned from a tactical victory to surrender at the level of principle, providing a strategic opportunity to Israel in the conflict at the strategic level. In this way, the absolute defeat of the Arabs seems to have been achieved.

The Arab-Israeli conflict thereafter entered the stage of settlement, with the beginning having depicted disengagement-of-forces agreements in 1975 between Egypt and Israel on the one hand and Syria with Israel on the other.[39] This was followed by the visit of President Sadat to Jerusalem in 1977 resulting in the Camp

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., p. 14.
[39] Facts about Israel. Israel Information Centre 1992, p. 42.

David Peace Treaty of March 1979 between Egypt and Israel. With this treaty, Egypt recognised the State of Israel.[40]

During the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991, it became clear that the Arabs did not have a clear or defined goal in managing the conflict with Israel. Again, there was no strategy agreed upon by all the Arabs. The goals of Arabs ranged between the absolute elimination of Israel and the mere repossession of some of the seized land. Subsequently, the Arab goal in this conflict has remained largely ambiguous and short of an agreement and the will. The result is an ineffective strategy and goal. The Arab side has therefore completely been over shadowed in the efforts to reach a peaceful settlement given that it fluctuates between sudden and swift operations to slow and inflexible movements.

Zartman observes that at the strategic level, the Arab side has failed to define the ripe moment of the conflict, a moment where it can accept to get involved in the negotiations where there is a greater possibility for mediation and to reach a solution than at any other time.[41] Often, the Arabs have rejected the best conditions for negotiations and have accepted what is less thereafter.

Whereas they have keenly refused to accept the best conditions, they have hurriedly accepted the worst conditions. The Arabs rejected negotiations at the appropriate time, that is after the October 1973 war and went on to accept the middle solution and negotiations with Israel in 1991 with the excuse that

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Zartman I. W., Ripe for Resolution. Conflict and Intervention in Africa (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) p. 236.

continued conflict is not in their interest. Israel on the other hand felt that the continued conflict did not affect its interests and it had nothing to lose and therefore it had no reason to accept the middle solution and negotiations particularly since there was no Arab military threat to Israel especially after the collapse of Iraq's military power, and with no other power for the Arabs to turn to in the international arena after the collapse of the Soviet Union. There was a strategic flaw in the Arab positions after the second Gulf war and the subsequent international mediation was biased towards Israel and not in the Arab interest.[42]

The Middle East peace process took off without defining the terms of the negotiations that is, the general rules, principles and guidelines agreed upon by the Arab side in the negotiations with Israel. As a consequence of the absence of defined terms for the negotiations, the Arab side made many mistakes, among them, missed priorities at the various stages of the negotiations when Israel insisted that before the negotiations start, the nature of the peace to be sought must be defined. Issues of occupied land, boundaries, refugees and Jerusalem as well as military issues were skipped – the most important being the possession by Israel of nuclear weapons – in addition to other previous issues which represented the core of the conflict.[43]

In addition, Arabs made a mistake in accepting direct bilateral negotiations with

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[42] Salah S. Zarnuqah, The Experience of the Arab-Israel Negotiation , (Cairo: Dar Al-Mustaqbal Arabiy; 1998), pp. 111-117.

[43] Gassan Salama, Pan-Arabism, the Middle East and the Search for Identity Journal of Arab ideology, No. 12, Sept. 1999.pp. 133-148.

Israeli, for this meant the fragmentation of the Arab capacity and the break-up of the Arab world into groups, thereby giving Israel an upper hand over any other Arab country, and this tilted the balance in favour of Israel. Again, by engaging in direct negotiations with Israel this meant implicit recognition of the state of Israel.[44] Lastly, there is the lack of defined legal terms for the negotiations where Israel has refused to comply with the UN resolutions especially those issued by the UN General Assembly.[45]

In Fayad's view, Israel's refusal to comply with the UN General Assembly resolutions automatically means abandoning some of the Arab rights in the conflict to eave the negotiations subject to the balance of power between the two sides in favour of Israel.[46]

At this juncture, it is enough to first examine the Gaza–Jericho agreement to illustrate why Mohammed Haikal describes it as an agreement of submission.[47] The agreement made the Palestinian Authority responsible for Israel's security for it was a requirement that the authority hunts down the Palestinian resistance groups. Later, this became a condition to be fulfilled before negotiations could go on in the Palestinian Perspective. Anis Saik says that the Oslo agreement was worse not just because it did not reclaim the Palestinian rights but it also granted

[44] Awni Farsakh. Fragile Plnner: The Modern Mustaqbal Al Arabiy 1995, pp. 120-123.
[45] Ibid, p.125.
[46] Ali Fayad, Experience of the Palestinian Negotiation, Middle East Affairs, No.74, August, 1998, pp.40-59.
[47] Mohammed H. Heikal, Gaza-Jericho Agreement Beleaguered Peace: Facts at the moment and Historiacal Facts (Beirut Institute of Palestinian Studies, 1994, p. 20.

Israel more power and ability to strengthen its position and expand its hegemony over the occupied Arab land.[48]

Magdi Hammad says that when a political decision gets to a point where there is no other alternative but what is being proposed or imposed, then the political event loses its capacity and legal basis. Therefore, the criterion for the value of a decision is to have a choice among alternatives, but if there is only one choice and no alternative and that is the issue proposed or imposed on the Arabs, then there is no running away from the acceptance that this is "submissive peace" and not courageous peace.[49]

Douglas says that "Israel's military security has not been exposed to grave danger and Israel must feel that it is the only country among many countries in the region which enjoys security and that if any agreement is reached, it must guarantee security to Israel and that the agreements reached at so far have overlooked the fundamental differences that exist between the two sides.[50]

Douglas seems to suggest that peace in the context of Israel's control and domination is in reality peace but Peace of victors, vis-à-vis losers and that the only available option will be to reach a compromise based on Israeli conditions. What Douglas ignored is the fact that such a compromise is essentially an official admission of the accomplished fact and the status quo, that is the current compromise will be devoted to the Israel side.

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[48] Anik Saik, The most dangerous side of the Oslo Agreement, Safer Magazine, October 1998, p. 22.
[49] Magdi Hammad, The available options for the Arab countries in the resolution of the conflict, Journal of Arab Affairs, No. 34, Dec. 1993, pp. 8-25.
[50] Charles Douglas Hayumi, Arabs and Israel, op. cit., p. 150.

Eliyas Sahab says in this regard that Israel and International Zionism knows more than any body else that what has been achieved to date is not an historical Arab acceptance of the state of Israeli but just official Arab recognition emerging from the fact that the Arab side is unable to withstand the Zionist movement. The Zionist movement continues to build its scheme and measure the real possibility on the basis of Arab incapacitation.[51] Again, the Arab weakness is a situation that cannot be able to continue except by consolidating the circumstances that allow for this incapacitation to continue.

Theoretical Framework

The process of putting together bits and pieces of information to explain some aspects of practice is known as theorising. There is always a relationship between practice and theory and according to Scuttle, "while practice deals with the descriptive world, theory attempts to explain that world.[52] The theoretical framework that this study adopts as its explanatory tool is Realism. Hoffman defines a theory as 'a systematic study of observable phenomena that tries to discover the principle variables, to explain behaviour and reveal characteristic types of relations among national units."[53] A theory plays the role of explaining

[51] Eliyas Sahab, Palestinian Liberation is more realistic than the recognition of Israel, Arab Affairs, No. 7, Nov. 1999, pp. 25-46.
[52] Scuttle B. B., Adult Educaation: No need for Theories, Adult Educational Journal, 1982 Vol. 32, No. 2 pp. 105-108.
[53] Hoffman S., Theory and International Relations, in R. N. Rosenau (ed), International Politics and Foreign Policy 2nd ed., (New York: Free Press, 1969), p. 30.

phenomena and making predictions and in research to organise knowledge. formulate priorities and select methods of carrying out research.[54]

The realist theory is based on the assertion that international relations is a study that concerns inter-state relations. States are perceived as the dominant players in the international system. States are also conceived of being well integrated internationally and act externally as clearly defined units. States are ideally regarded as being equal in terms of their mutual relations and with regards to the disposition of their internal affairs, they are sovereign, yet the Realists refute the fact that sovereign equality exists in practice. According to the Realist, both sovereignty and equality are severely circumscribed by an amalgam of pressure known as power. Indeed, there is a hierarchy of states; with the great powers collectively, through the medium of the balance of acting, acting as guardians of world order. Lesser powers are obliged to act within those constraints or suffer the consequences. Those at the top of the hierarchy are assumed to have the power and the responsibility to impose their will whereas minor powers and non-state actors are more likely to be the objects of power politics than independent actors within the system.[55] According to Hans Morgenthau, widely regarded as the

[54] T. Colombis and J. H. Wolfe, Introduction to International Relations: Power and Justice. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1987) p. 16.

[55] Groom A. J. R. Paradigms in Conflict: The Strategist, the Conflict Researcher and the Peace Researcher in J. Burton and F. Duke (eds), Conflict: Readings in Manage[illegible]t. (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 93.

founder of Modern Realism, "each state strives for dominance in the international system as a means of achieving and attaining security and national interest."[56]

Morgenthau's argument is based on power politics. The strategy adopted is that of manipulating and applying threats and intimidation in a bid to preserve or change the status quo. The Realist paradigm gains acceptance given that states are perceived as the principal actors in conflict. The relationships of states are exclusively coercive either actively or in latent fashion. The Realist paradigm holds that states are the major actors

since they have a plenitude of means of coercion available to them and the right to go to war and defend their interest. However, the manipulation of threats is pursued not only to secure domination for one state, but it is also the currency for seeking a period of order based on a stable and recognised balance of forces.[57]

The opinion of the strategists towards states is that states have sovereign equality, but that this is differentiated by the power available to various states. Relations in the international system are defined by powerful states. These proponents of the Realist paradigm also argue that states, especially the weaker ones accept the status quo because they have no choice. Peace is a result of the power configuration ceasing when this changes. To the strategists, aggression and aggressive relations are central. They see the drive to dominate as being instructive and which can only be managed through threats and sanctions. They

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[56] Morgenthau H. J. Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace, (New Delhi: Kalyani Publishers, 1995), pp. 3-16.

[57] Groom A. J. R. Paradigms in Conflict: The Strategist, the Conflict Researcher and the Peace Researcher, op. Cit., pp. 82-83.

argue that states contain the potential for conflict both at the national and international levels.

Therefore, the adoption of the Realist framework will serve as a useful guide in the study and analysis of the future of the peace process in the Middle East conflict, because the conflict involves states and aggressive relations, which are central in the Realist framework.

Methodology

The study will use both primary and secondary sources of data. Most of the information will be obtained from secondary sources.

Primary data collection will involve fieldwork and interviews with scholars, diplomatic and political analysts of the Middle East and officials of the UN.

Secondary data will include library research both published and unpublished works. This will include books, journals, periodicals, newspapers, magazines, seminar papers, UN reports, encyclopaedias and other relevant materials.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One:	Introduction
Chapter Two:	Historical Background to the Arab–Israeli Conflict.
Chapter Three:	Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process
Chapter Four:	The Syrian-Israeli Peace Process
Chapter Five:	A Critical Analysis of the Middle East Peace Process and its Future.
Chapter Six:	Conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

Introduction

The Middle East is considered the cradle of the three celestial regions; namely; Islam Christian and Judaism. Consequently, religion has played a critical role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Muslims claim the right to the holy sites in Jerusalem known as Al-Quds Al-Shareef as do the Jews who attach reverence to the temple of the Mount, and Christians. Zionists claim that the Jewish people-even after they were dispersed all over the world never abandoned the hope of returning to the "holy land" of their forefathers. They adduce evidence of the presence of Jews in Palestine after 135 AD, though the extent of their presence after the 5th century A.D is in dispute. It is also acknowledged by historians that Muslims re-conquest of Palestine in 1921 and the tolerance they showed stimulated Jewish migration to Palestine from European countries due to anti-Jewish persecution there which had reached alarming proportions. As suggested in the following parts of this chapter, the religious factor played a major role in the crystallization of the Arab-Zionist conflict, especially during the pre-Balfour Declaration, the Balfour Declaration, the Sykes-Pilot Agreement and the Present.

The Pre-Balfour Declaration Period 1649-1917

Religion has played a fundamental role at various stages of the conflict, the most important being the pre-Balfour Declaration period where two prominent English scholars, Joanna and Elenezer, presented in 1649 a memorandum from Holland to the British Government. In the memorandum, it was demanded that: "*The English people have the honour of transporting the sons and daughters of Israel in their ships to the promised land (Palestine); the land which God promised their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and which was granted to them as their eternal heritage.*"[1]

Cromwell was the first prominent British politician to adopt the contents of this memorandum. He was the then head of the Puritanic Assembly and was one of those who called for the 1655 London Legislative Conference to return Jews to Britain and demanded the annulment of the British Law to deny Jews the right to belong to Britain; a law decreed by King Edward.[2] Those who attended the conference, beside Cromwell include a British Scholar, Manasseh bin Israel, who worked hard to associate Zionist interests to British strategic interest to achieve, through this association, a Jewish settlement Act in Palestine.[3] This association led to the use of a religious motive to attain political gains with a strategic dimension

[1] Douglas C. Arabs and Israel translated works, Cairo: State information service, 1969,pp.119-120.
[2] Ibid., P. 130.
[3] Jabour G: Arabs in the Face of Israel: Future Possibilities, part 1.(Beirut : the Arab unity studies centre, 2000), p. 100.

based on a firm Zionist foundation, first in Europe as a whole and specifically in Britain and later in the United States.

As an offshoot of these ideo-political and religious foundations, the London Association for the Strengthening of Christianity among Jews was founded in 1807 with Lord Shaftesbury as one of its most distinguished forces. In 1839, Lord Shaftesbury published a long article in which he emphasized that Jews shall remain strangers until they return to Palestine and that a human being is capable of realizing God's wish by facilitating this return, and that Jews were the hope in the restoration of Christianity and the return of the Messiah. Yet Lord Shaftesbury was not alone in making the call at this very formative stage, but had a big number of politicians and other Lords who joined him. This was intended to provide opportunities to facilitate the return of Jews to Palestine and guarantee Britain's strategic interests and protect the route to India. This was a kind of marriage between Zionist interests in Palestine and British interests in India.[4]

The then British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston adopted Lord Shaftesbury Act which designed Britain's foreign policy on the basis of the inheritance of the Ottoman Empire in competition with France and Russia. [5]

France wanted to protect Catholic minorities in the East, and Russia, the Orthodox minorities. Then, the Anglican branch of Christianity had not reached

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Heikal M.H. Secret Channels : The Inside Story of Arab- Israeli, Peace Negotiations(London ; Harper Collins Publishers , 1996), pp. 16-17.

the East yet and naturally, Lord Palmerston had to look out for minorities whom Britain would claim to protect. Britain found in Jews their desired goal and in this way, British strategic interests were integrated with Zionist interests. Religious forecasts were employed to build a political situation and achieve these strategic interests. On this basis, in 1838, Lord Palmerston established the first British consulate in Jerusalem to protect the Jewish minority and appointed William Young, a Christian Jew and a friend of Lord Shaftesbury the first British consul in Jerusalem. [6]

The Balfour Declaration Period 1917-1922

The Declaration of a political platform at the first Jewish-Zionist conference which called for Jewish combat for the sake of establishing a country for the Jewish people in Palestine coincided with the influx of Eastern Europe Jews into Britain and the US . The British government was disturbed by this influx and feared the negative repercussions on the economy of Britain and competition for cheap labour from Jewish immigrants on the working class in Britain. The British government also found, in the adoption of the Zionist Act, a means of turning the Jewish immigrants from Britain to other parts of the world, so as to solve the problem of Jewish immigrants from Russia and countries of Eastern Europe without triggering effect for the problem of Jewish settlement in Britain.[7]

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[6] Jabour G, Arabs in the face of Israel, op. cit, p.102.
Heinkal M.H Secret Channels: The Inside Story of Arab-Israeli Peace negotiations op.cit, pp.23-24.

Within this framework, several meetings of British government officials were held with leaders of the Jewish Zionist Federation in London to express the need to reconcile the interests of the British government with those of the Jews in anticipating common goals. These meetings were a breaking-ground for subsequent meetings to be held later on between Lord Arthur Balfour, the then British Foreign Secretary and Chaim Weizman, Chairman of the Zionist Organization who came after Theodore Herzl. As a result of the meeting, Balfour became the first British official to offer land to Jews. He proposed the establishment of a Jewish state in Eastern region of Uganda.

The fourth Zionist conference held in 1903 rejected this British proposal and held on to their demand for Palestine. Balfour swiftly responded to the Zionist objection and prepared a memorandum on Jewish settlement in Palestine in which he stated:

> *" It is not our intention even to get concerned with the feelings of the Palestinian Arabs since the great powers are committed to Zionism, irrespective of whether Zionism is on the right or wrong, good or bad, for its deeply entrenched in ancient traditional roots, the present and future, and its significance far exceeds that of the wishes of 700,000 Arabs presently living in this ancient land."*[8]

With respect to the settlement of Jews in Palestine, Balfour recommended in the final part of his memorandum that:

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[8] Jabour G, Arabs in the face of Israel, op. cit, p.102

"if Zionism is to influence the Jewish problem in the world, then Palestine must be made accessible to the largest number of Jewish immigrants. It is therefore desirable that Israel has control over water resources to be possessed either through the expansion of its borders in the north or through signing a treaty with Syria which regards water from Harmoun heights in the south valuable to it and for the same reason, Palestine should expand to cover areas located east of River Jordan." [9]

In what is clearly seen as a direct involvement of the British government in the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, Arthur Balfour sent a letter to Lord Rothschild (a prominent British Jewish Zionist) dated November 2, 1917 in which he stated:

"I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His majesty's government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by the Cabinet. His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political

[9] Ibid.

status enjoyed by Jews in any other country. I shall be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation". [10]

This Balfour Declaration, also approved by the French government and reflected by the League of Nations is seen by Jews as a cornerstone of the legitimacy of the eventual establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.[11] However, Palestinian Arabs rejected it as a colonialist instrument. Even then a decision by Britain had been made in 1916 during the tenure of Lloyd George, only that then, Britain was unable to occupy Palestine militarily for this would have negated the new spirit embodied in the Wilson Woodrow Principle, the American President which prohibited military occupation. It was not also possible for the Jews in Palestine at that time to declare their own state. The British and Zionist interests were to be taken care of when the Palestine mandate was given to Britain in preparation for the appropriate time when Britain would withdraw and impose the Jews who would then declare their state.

After the Balfour Declaration on 2 November 1917, Palestine was assigned to Britain at a conference in San Remo in April, 1920. In 1922, the League of Nations officially granted Britain mandate over Palestine, in a deliberate decision to include in the declaration, the establishment of a nationalistic Jewish country in Palestine for all the Jews in the world.

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[10] Day A.J Border and Territorial Dispute ,2nd edition, Longman Group (UK), Essex, 1987, p.199.
[11] Gresh A and Vidal D, A to Z of Middle East. (Translated work) Zed Books Ltd London & New Jersey, 1990, p.189.

The Post Sykes-Picot Agreement Period 1916-1947

The Sykes-Picot Agreement was a secret agreement reached in 1916 between France and Great Britain and subsequently ratified by Russia to share out the Ottoman Empire between Britain and France. It sought to create Palestine alone without the other parts of Arab land in the empire and under international control. This was an early and clear sign to delink the fate of Palestine from that of the rest of the Arab world. France appropriated Silesia and Vilayet of Aden, the Syrian-Lebanese coastal strip and a zone of influence corresponding to present day Syria, while Britain took the Eastern part of Mesopotamia, the western parts being included in its zone of influence and the territory of present-day Jordan, these two zones being intended to form a state or a confederation of Arab states. Palestine was to be internationalized, only the ports of Haifa and Acre falling to Britain while the Arabian Peninsula, under Hashemite leadership, remaining independent.[12]

Immediately after the Balfour Declaration, Jews moved to implement it. In 1918, a Jewish delegation arrived in Palestine led by Weizman to act as a link between the Jewish Zionist Agency and the British mandate. The number of Jews then was around 55,000 that is about 8 percent of the total Arab population of 700,000. The British mandate in Palestine appointed a Jewish Zionist, Herbert Samuel as High Commissioner in Palestine. His main goal was to settle in

[12] Ibid.

Palestine more than 5 million Jews and to do this, Arab land was confiscated from its owners and turned into Jewish settlements.

With Samuel's assistance, the Jewish Zionist Agency in Palestine, whose role was to guide Jewish settlers socially and economically, was turned to a state inside a state. Consequently the population of Jews increased from 55,000 to 170,000.[13] When the Arabs resisted the Jewish migration and confiscation of Arab land Jews established three terror organizations, Stern, Irgun Zvie and Leumi, which then became the first nucleus of the Israel army after the declaration of the Israeli state in Palestine in 1948.

The Present period 1947-2002

The 1947 Partition Plan and the Establishment of the Jewish State

The current period of the Arab-Israeli conflict can be traced to the United Nations Partition Plan recommended by the UN Special Committee, which sought to partition Palestine into seven sections of which three would be controlled by Arabs and three by Jews. The seventh section would include Jerusalem and Bethlehem, which was to be administered by the UN. (See Map 1). The details of the UN partition plan were as follows:

[13] Goldschmidt,Jr.A. A Concise History of the Middle East, 4th ed,West View Press, Inc, Boulder USA (1991) p. 255.

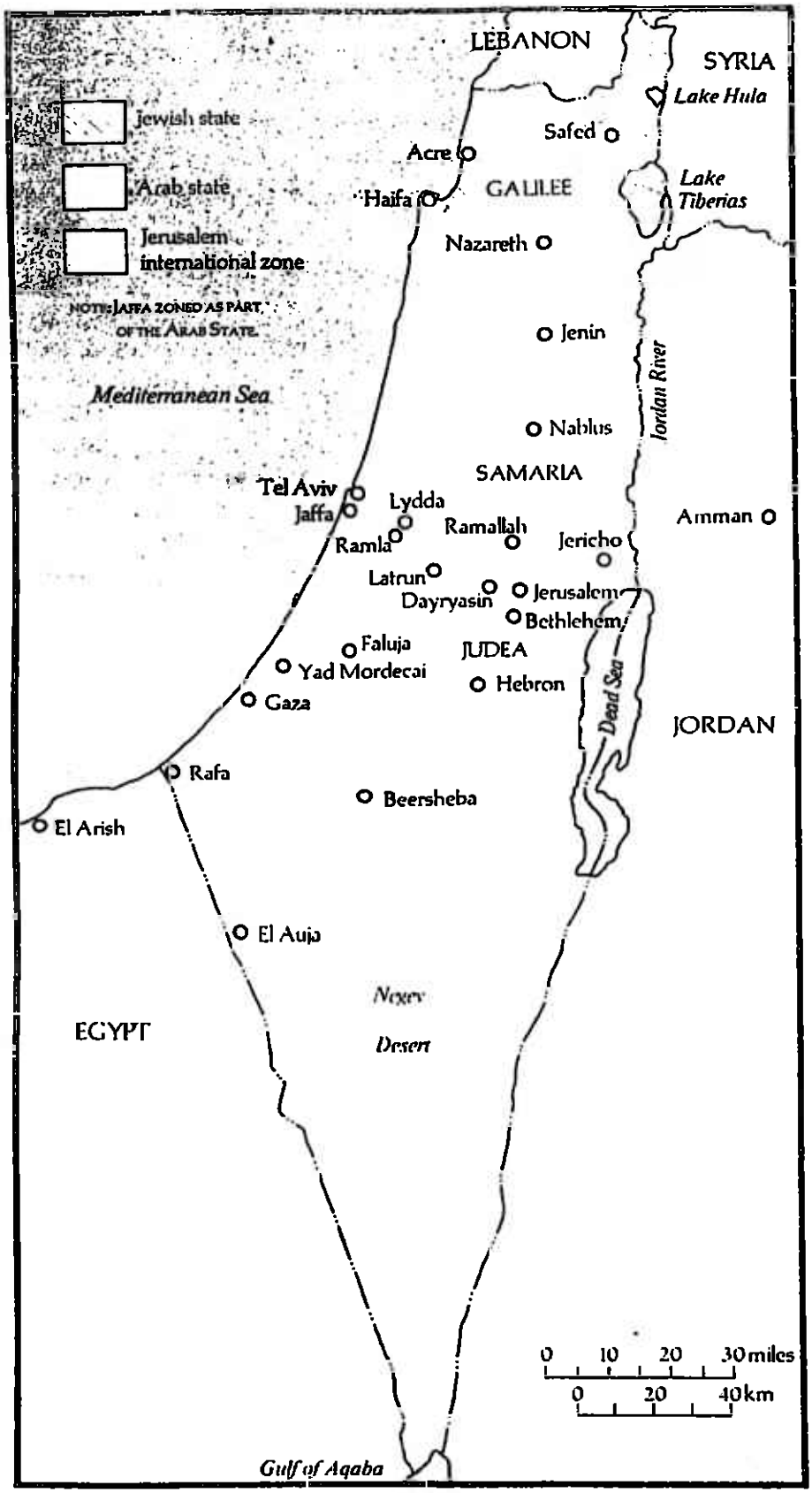
i. A Jewish state be created in Eastern Galilee in the North. the Coastal plain from Haifa south of the Rehovoth area except Jaffa and most of the Negev desert in the south.

ii. An Arab state be established in Western Galilee, Central Palestine and the southern part along the Egyptian border into western Negev desert with Jaffa as a Coastal Arab part.

iii. Jerusalem and Bethlehem remains an international zone to be administered by the UN.

iv. An economic union be created between the mentioned three parts.[14] The UN General Assembly also resolved that the British mandate be terminated.

[14] Ibid



MAP 1 The United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine, 1947

Source: Goldschmidt, Jr. A., A Concise History of the Middle East, op. Cit., p. 254

Palestinian Arabs and the neighbouring Arab countries outrightly rejected the plan to establish an alien state in their midst, because accepting the plan meant accepting to lose their land and recognizing Zionists as their colonial masters. However, the United States supported it and the plan was passed by the General Assembly. Zionists on the other hand did not like most aspects of the plan, especially the establishment of an Arab state besides an Israeli state, for the simple reason that they could not imagine the existence of an Arab state in their "promised land". However, they accepted it as a first step towards the establishment of a Jewish state. Even though Arabs threatened to go to war to block the implementation of the plan, Jewish paramilitary groups moved into lands not allocated to them.

Violence followed and many Arabs and Jews were killed in the ensuing violence. The British did little to stop the escalating violence while the US representative at the UN "suggested in March 1948 that the partition plan be put off for a 10 year cooling off period under a UN trusteeship."[15] President Truman, under heavy pressure from American Jews finally reaffirmed his support for a Jewish State. More violence followed and large numbers of Palestinian Arabs fled for safety to nearby countries. Finally, the British troops pulled out.

The Jewish Agency Executive Committee, a committee meant to solve Jewish economic and social problems, met in TelAviv on May 14 and formally declared

[15] Goldschmidt, Jr. A: A Concise History of the Middle East, 4th ed, West Press, Inc. Boulder US, p. 256.

that those parts of Palestine under Jewish control were now the Independent State of Israel.

This Declaration, in the words of David Ben Gurion announced to the world from the foyer of the Museum of TelAviv stated that:

> *"On this day that sees the end of the British Mandate and in virtue of the natural and historic right of the Jewish people and in accordance with the Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, we proclaim the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine."*[16]

This Declaration was met with resistance from the Arabs and the next day, five Arab governments sent their armies to Palestine to fight against the new state of Israel.[17]

The 1948 Arab–Israeli War

Following the declaration by Ben Gurion of the State of Israel at midnight on May 14-15, 1948, Egyptian and Iraqi forces backed by Saudi Arabian units and Syrian and Lebanon forces invaded Israel. After several months[18] of fierce fighting interspersed by periods of truce, the Israeli occupied the whole of Galilee, part of central Palestine connecting the coastal area with Jerusalem and the whole of the Negev. Jerusalem was divided and the area Israel controlled in 1949 was larger than the area that had been allotted to the Zionists in the partition resolution

[16] Gresh A. and Vidal D. A to Z of Middle East, op. cit., p.86.
[17] Ibid., p.88.
[18] Ibid.

181 of 1947. Somehow, the Arab invasion had played into the hands of the Jews and about one million Arabs were rendered homeless. Palestinian resistance groups emerged and the bloody establishment of the state of Israel set the stage for a mortal conflict between two nationalisms; Arab nationalism and Zionism.

The role of foreign powers in this war also needs to be explained in perspective. The Great Powers did little to assist both sides, but Arabs suffered more due to the lack of sufficient military power occasioned by the loss of their land to the Israelis. Immediately after the declaration of the state of Israel, the United States and the Soviet Union gave Israeli state diplomatic recognition. Communist Czechoslovaks sold huge quantities of weapons to Israel. The Soviets backed Israel in 1948,

> *"partly on memories of their recent war against Nazi Germany and the destruction of European Jewry, but pragmatic reasons for their policy were their desire to weaken Britain's influence in the Middle East, their hope being that the new Jewish State would adopt socialism or even communism and their need to discredit "feudal" and "bourgeois" Arab regimes."*[19]

The UN stepped in after the war and attempted to mediate the Arab-Israeli conflict through a mediator, Folken Bernadotte, of Sweden who convinced both sides to accept a month-long ceasefire in early June. One of his proposals was the return of Arab refugees to their homes in cities and villages, then under Israeli

[19] Goldschmidt, Jr. A: A Concise History of the Middle East, op. cit., p.259.

control. Israelis did not want to see this happen and Bernadotte was murdered probably by the Stern Gang in September 1948. [20]

The 1956 Arab -Israeli War

Efforts to achieve peace were made by the UN after the 1948-49 Arab-Israel war. On Dec. 11, 1948, the UN General Assembly established a Palestine Conciliation Commission charged with the responsibility of assisting governments concerned with achieving a final settlement to the problem. The UN resolution 194 was made that "refugees wishing to return to their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable moment and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage of property. "[21]

Under the auspices of the Commission, representatives of Israel, Egypt, Trans- Jordan, Lebanon and Syria began indirect negotiations in Lussiane in April 1949. In May the same year, they signed a protocol where it was agreed that the November 1947 UN Partition Plan should be the basis for negotiations on the refugee and border issues. Israel refused to budge on the refugee issue and after being pressurized by the US government, it made certain concessions among them the "Gaza Plan" in which 500,000 Arab refugees would be resettled in the Gaza Strip provided Egypt transferred this area to Israel and 100,000 refugees would be repatriated to Israeli territory. These were out rightly rejected by the Arabs who

[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.,p.260.

demanded the return of all refugees to areas allotted to Arabs under the UN Partition Plan and the establishment of an Arab State. The Lussiane talks subsequently collapsed.

What followed was a strain in economic relations between Egypt and Israel where the former, in 1949, denied the latter the use of the Suez Canal reasoning that the two countries were still in a state of war. Israel denounced this as illegal. Egypt went ahead to restrict Israel sea-borne trade at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba. Arguing that Egypt was supporting *fedayeen*, one of the Palestinian resistance groups, activities in the Gaza Strip and angered by Egypt's economic blockades, Israel launched an attack on Egypt in October 1956 in collusion with Britain and France. On October 29, 1956, the Israeli army attacked Egyptian positions in the Gaza Strip and Sinai with the aim of destroying *fedayeen* bases. On October 30, Britain and France issued 12-hour ultimatums to both Israel and Egypt to cease hostilities and withdraw troops from around the Suez-Canal and also requested Egypt to allow Anglo-French forces to be stationed temporarily on the canal to separate the belligerents and safeguard shipping. Egypt rejected this: In July 1956 Egyptian President Gamel Abdel Nasser nationalized the Anglo-French Suez Canal Company, contravening the 1954 Anglo-Egyptian treaty. This angered Britain and France, who then launched air offensives.

In the meantime, Israeli forces overran the Gaza strip and most of Sinai including Sharm el-Sheikh and the Island of Tiran at the entrance of the Gulf of Aqaba. Through the pressure exerted by the US government on Britain, the 1956

Anglo-French-Israel plan came to a halt. The country that benefited most from the Middle East conflict then was the Soviet Union, which managed to forge relations with Egypt, Syria and Iraq through the supply of arms and economic aid agreements. The US joined the power politics of the region "principally as a supporter of Israel but also as the dominant external power on the Gulf and the ally of conservative Arab states such as Saudi Arabia. The basic Arab-Israeli conflict thus became interwoven with great power rivalries and ambitions which increasingly threatened to transform Middle East instabilities into a wider conflict."[22]

The 1967 Arab-Israeli War

The Six-Day war of June 1967 can be discussed against the backdrop of mounting tension between Israel and the Arab neighbours. In April 1967, there was a major clash on the Israeli–Syrian border. Six Syrian MIG fighters were shot down by Israel. Al-Fatah (conquest); the principal guerrilla arm of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) which had been formed by the Palestinian National Council (PNC) launched ferocious raids against Israel and on 14th May 1967, the Israeli Prime Minister Eshkol warned that a serious confrontation would be inevitable if those raids continued. A wave of emotion rose across the Arab world from Casablanca to Baghdad with demonstrations against the Jewish state being held in virtually every Arab country.

[22] Day A.J. Border and Territorial Disputes. op. cit, p.209.

The Six-Day war was ignited on the morning of June 5 when Israel's air force made a pre-emptive attack on Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Iraq and destroyed all their air defense capability on the first day of the war. After gaining control of the air in the first hour, Israel sent its army units into Sinai and after four days of fighting, took the whole Peninsula. Israeli forces achieved a rapid and complete victory. By June 10, when hostilities eased, Israel had "captured the Gaza Strip, over run the entire Sinai Peninsula to the Suez Canal including Sharm el-Sheikh, gained control of the Old City of Jerusalem, over run all of Jordanian territory west of the Jordan, captured the Golan Heights from Syria and penetrated some 12 miles into Syrian territory."[23]

The October 1973 Arab - Israeli War

After the 1967 war, Israel started to demand that Arabs denounce their avowed declaration for the elimination of the Jewish state. It stressed that a final settlement of the Arab-Israel conflict depended on direct peace talks with the Arab neighbours to establish definitive boundaries which took into account Israel's security interests. Israel also refused to withdraw from the areas it had captured in the 1967 war. At an emergency session of the UN General Assembly held between 19th June–21st July, Israeli Foreign minister Abba Eban rejected a Soviet demand that Israel should withdraw to the 1949 lines and argued thus; *"what the Assembly should prescribe is not a formula for renewed hostilities but a series of principles for the construction of a new future in the Middle East. History*

[23] Ibid.

summons us forward to permanent peace and the peace that we envisage can only be elaborated in frank and lucid dialogue between Israel and each of the states which have participated in the attempt to overthrow her sovereignty and undermine her existence. We dare not be satisfied with intermediate arrangements, which are neither war nor peace.... The Arabs can no longer be permitted to recognize Israel's existence only for the purpose of plotting its elimination. They have come face to face with us in conflict. Let them come face to face with us in peace.... "[24]

On the other hand, Israeli Prime Minister vowed that Israel would not allow the situation that existed before June 5 to be restored. He enumerated five points on which Israel's policy was based on:

i) Permanent peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

ii) The achievement of peace by direct negotiations and conclusion of peace treaties between Israel and its neighbours.

iii) Free passage of Israeli ships through the Suez Canal and the straits of Tiran

vi) Agree and secure borders between Israel and its neighbours

[24] Ibid..p 214.

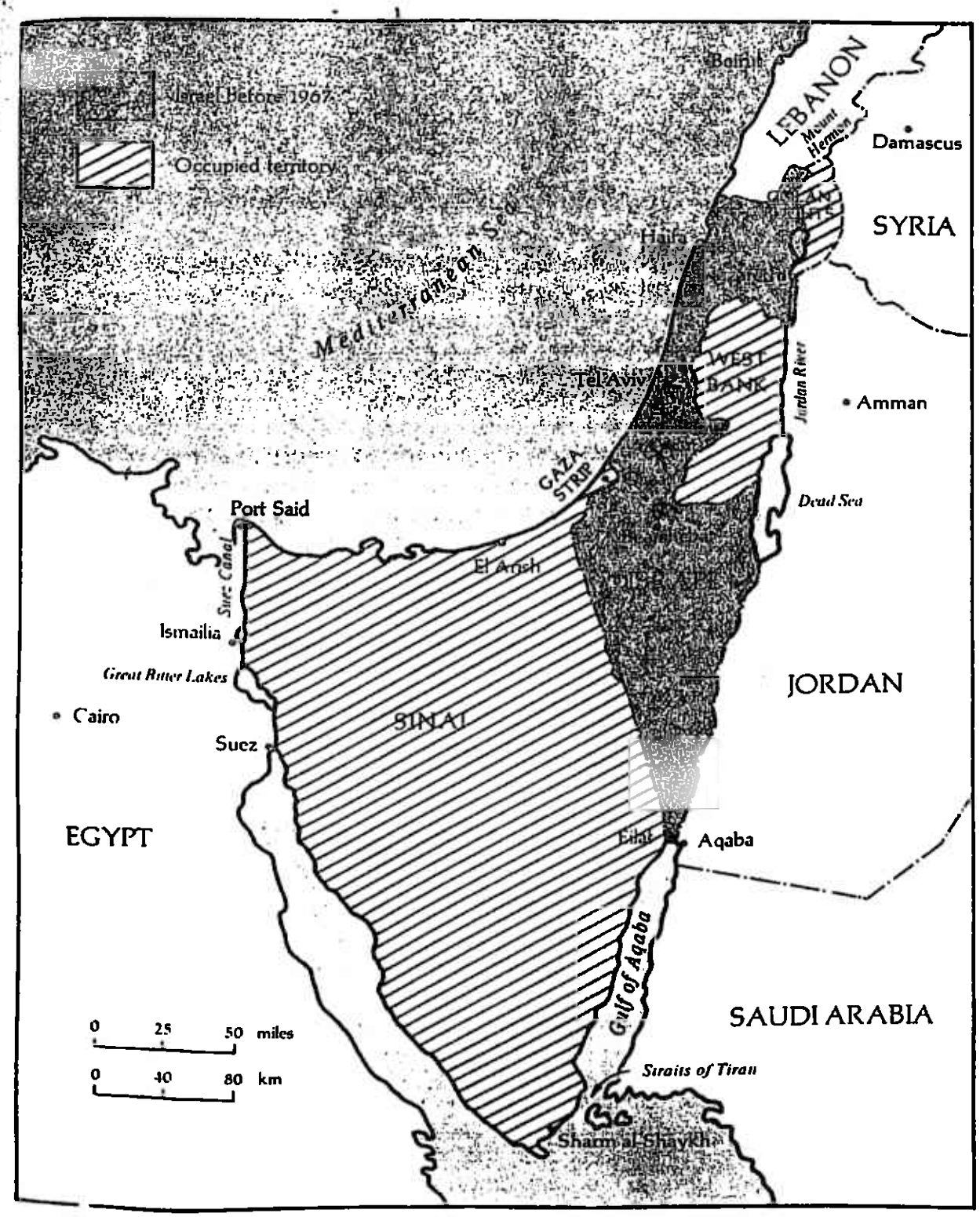
iv) A settlement of the refugee problem "within a regional and international context" following the establishment of peace in the Middle East.[25]

This position was met with resistance from Arabs who continued to refuse to recognize Israel resulting in increased hostilities. The UN stepped in and passed resolution (242) on November 22, 1967 proposed by Britain which stressed "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every state in the area can live in security". The resolution called for the application of the following principles.

i) Withdrawal of Israel's armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict.

ii) Termination of all claims on states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

[25] Ibid.



MAP 2 Israel and the Occupied Territories, 1967–1973

Source: Goldschmidt, Jr. A., A Concise History of the Middle East, op. Cit., p. 297.

That resolution linked a promise of secure and recognized boundaries to Israel with a promise of withdrawal from occupied territories to the Arabs. However Resolution (242) triggered more actions from Israel. In the Knesset on June 28, 1967, Israel empowered the government to apply the law, jurisdiction and administration of the state of any part of Eretz Israel ("Land of Israel"–which signified the whole territory of Palestine) and merged the Israeli New City of Jerusalem with the Old City and declared in July 1967 that Jerusalem was henceforth "one city, indivisible, the capital of the state of Israel". Although this was condemned by Arabs and the UN General Assembly on July 4 by 99 votes to none with 20 abstentions, the Israelis went ahead to establish controversial Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

After six years of an uneasy ceasefire, the fourth Arab-Israeli war broke out on October 6 1973, when Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and the holiest day in the Jewish year, Syria and Egypt launched a well coordinated surprise attack. Syria attacked Golan Heights while Egypt attacked across the Suez Canal capturing positions in the eastern bank and sending Israel's forces backward into the desert. The Jordanian army units entered the Syrian front with Iraqi, Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti units involved though moderately. Egypt also received active military support from Morocco, Algeria and Iraqi forces. The war was aimed at recovering the Arab territories lost to Israel in 1967.

The US and Soviet Union supplied arms to Israel and the Arabs respectively. On October 21, the Soviet leadership agreed with Secretary of State

Henry Kissinger on a formula for a ceasefire resolution. The resolution was rushed through the UN Security Council under joint Soviet-American sponsorship. A binding ceasefire came into effect on October 24 in response to two successive UN Security Council resolutions. Egypt had gained control of the Eastern bank of the Suez Canal north of Ismailia as well as a narrow strip of Sinai. Israel on its part had under their control 500 square miles of Egyptian territory west of the Great Bitter Lake and the town of Suez. Syria had recaptured much of the Golan Heights lost in the 1967 war and advanced to the edge of Galilee plain. However, the Syrians were driven back and by the time the ceasefire took hold, Syrians had surrendered all their initial gains to Israelis.

One positive result of the October war of 1973 was that under super power pressure, Israelis and Arabs agreed to meet at a peace conference in Geneva in December 1973; their first face-to-face diplomatic encounter in a quarter of a century. In this respect, Abba Eban the Israeli Prime Minister quipped, "for something to be born the parents have to meet at least once". Chastened by four wars, Arabs and Jews began to feel that reason and wisdom must prevail. The conference, which called for "a just and durable peace", was to involve Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Israel. However, Syria refused to attend and with the PLO uninvited, the conference was adjourned inconclusively on January 9, 1974. The Soviet Union played little direct role in the overall Middle East negotiating process particularly after President Sadat of Egypt reversed President Nassers' policy of close alignment with the Soviet Union. The United States therefore

played a leading role during and after the October war through Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger whose efforts yielded the first fruit being the signing by Egypt and Israel three military disengagement agreements. Each side also promised:

> *"to refrain from the use of or threat of use of force or military blockage, to observe the ceasefire scrupulously and to renew the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) mandate annually, that non-military cargoes moving to and from Israel in non-Israeli vessels would be allowed to pass through the Suez Canal and that the United States would provide up to 200 civilian technicians to man electronic early-warning stations in the area of Mitla and Giddi passes."*[26]

The Camp David Agreement and Egyptian -Israeli Treaty

Menachin Begin, the Israeli Prime Minister, Anwar Sadat, Egyptian President and US President Jimmy Carter, together with many cabinet officers and advisers from all three countries met at a spectacular summit at Camp David in September 1978. After 21 days of intense deliberations, these talks resulted in the signature in Washington on September 17 of two framework agreements, one on the overall Middle East settlement and the other specifically on the conclusion of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel within three months.[27]

Two documents were produced called "A Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel". One of the agreements was aimed at

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[26] Gresh A. and Vidal D. A to Z of Middle East, op. cit., p.28.
[27] Ibid.

granting "full autonomy" to the Palestinian Arab inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza Strip where:

i) The inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza would elect a "self-governingauthority" whose powers would be defined in negotiations between Israel, Egypt and Jordan in which the delegations of Egypt and Jordan would be open to Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza and other Palestinians as mutually agreed.

ii) The self-governing authority would replace the existing Israeli administration in these areas.

iii) A five-year transitional period would begin when the self-governing authority had been established and would be marked by the withdrawal of Israeli forces or their redeployment into "specified security locations."

iv) Not later than the third year of the transitional period, negotiations would take place between Israel, Jordan, Egypt and elected representatives of the West Bank and Gaza inhabitants "to determine the final status of the West Bank and Gaza by the end of the transitional period."[28]

v) Among the contentious issues that remained unresolved at the Camp David included the future of Jewish settlements in the Israeli occupied territories and the status of east Jerusalem. This meant that the

[28] Ibid., p.220

December 17, 1978 deadline for Egyptian Peace treaty could not be met. However, it took some personal Middle East shuttle diplomacy by President Jimmy Carter on March 8 – 13 1979 for the signing of the first-ever Arab Israeli peace treaty in Washington by President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin on March 26, 1979. The main provisions of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty were:-

i. Israel would evacuate its military forces and civilians from the whole of the Sinai Peninsula in a phased withdrawal over a three-year period.

ii. agreed security arrangements would be instituted involving the establishment of limited force zones and the stationing of UN forces in key border areas while the US Air Force would continue its surveillance flights over the area to verify compliance with the treaty terms

iii. Egypt undertook to end its economic boycott of Israel and to sell oil from the Sinai oil fields to Israel on a non-discriminatory basis.

iv. Within a month of the exchange of ratification instruments, Egypt and Israel would begin negotiations with a view of implementing the provisions of the first Camp David framework agreement concerning the granting. of "full autonomy" to the Palestinian Arab inhabitants of the West

Bank and the Gaza Strip and the establishment of a "self-governing authority."[29]

With regards to the successes or failures of Camp David, Gresh and Vidal say thus: "Aborted or not, Camp David had at all events, significant consequences for the Middle East, whose landscape it completely overturned. The most densely populated; the most economically powerful, the strongest military power of the Arab countries, Egypt, now found itself isolated, excluded by its 'peers'. Israel on the other hand, with its southern flank now safe, felt its hands free to act in the north and east.

At the same time, the Palestinians now faced a foe more sure of itself since its allies were divided. In short, with lured sight, it seems clear that the Camp David Accords delayed the hour of a global solution more than they advanced it, as was frequently claimed at the time."[30]

Conclusion

It is important to underscore the fact that the history of the Middle East conflict is surrounded by lots of incredible events. Jews and Arabs have common traits; both are descendants of one forefather, Abraham, they both speak Semitic languages and often look alike. Yet they remain avowed enemies. Certainly there are other issues and interests at stake and the hand of foreign powers cannot be ignored in the ignition and exasperation of the world's worst conflict. One

[29] Gresh A. and Vidal D. A to Z of Middle East, op. cit., pp.28-29.
[30] Ibid.,p. 31.

question keeps begging an answer. Is Israel just a Jewish state? Israel is inhabited by Jews and Arabs who must find a basis of coexistence without domination or repression of one side by the other. Yet Arab-Israelis - not to mention Palestinians under Israel's administration - do not enjoy the same rights, power and status as Jewish Israelis. Zionists who ignore the feelings of a large segment of the Israel population impede the quest for peace. And if peace is defined as a condition of harmony within and between every person, every group and every nation in the world, then a country ridden with factional, sectional and ethnic hostility cannot be at peace with another state. Jews and Arabs must find a way of resolving the conflict and this can only be done in the framework of the UN resolutions which expressly demand the withdrawal of Israel from Palestinian occupied areas. Arabs must also renounce their non-recognition of Israel and it is only through these actions that the "Promised Land" can once again see peace.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS

Introduction

The Palestinian–Israeli negotiations are the most sensitive in the Middle East region. This is due to the religious, ideological and security claims and allegations made by Israel over the West Bank, Jerusalem and other Palestinian areas. Israel considers these areas as part of the Promised Land and of the larger Israel. This is what makes the dismantlement of Jewish settlements built on Palestinian land impossible due to ideological and security considerations. This, in addition to the fact that most Israelis vehemently oppose the dismantlement or abandonment of any Jewish settlement built on Palestinian land irrespective of its size makes the problem even more complex. The Israelis also oppose the withdrawal of Israeli forces from any area in the occupied Palestinian territories since these territories are regarded as part of the larger Israeli.[1]

In general terms, Palestinian–Israeli negotiations can be classified–on the basis of the Declaration of Principles–into two successive stages:-

The first stage is the foundation stage, also known as the interim stage whose presumed period is five years. It started six months after the Declaration of Principles and has continued to date. During this period, negotiations were

[1] Abdel Jawad J: The Ultimate Negotiations; In the Strategic al – Ahram Dossier, Cairo, December 1999, Volume 60, p. 123.

completed on the transfer of some authority to the Palestinian side. in line with scheduled redeployment of Israeli forces from some Palestinian areas.

The second stage deals with negotiations about the establishment of a Palestinian state, which was supposed to have started at the beginning of the third year of stage one. However, negotiations have not started to date and all the issues that were considered by the Palestinian side to be crucial to the solution of the Palestinian issue–for example sovereignty, borders, status of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Jewish settlements, distribution of natural resources and water–have, according to the Declaration of Principles been deferred and cannot be discussed except during the final negotiations which are yet to start.

This chapter generally focuses on the Palestinian–Israeli peace process and examines the reasons that led to the Palestinian–Israeli negotiations, the stages of the negotiations, the strategies used in the conduct of the negotiations and the problems encountered.

The Road to Palestinian–Israeli Negotiations

The establishment of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in May 1964 marked the beginning of a formal Palestinian struggle through the 60 years of the existence of the Palestinian problem. The PLO became an important instrument of liberation for the Palestinians.

Since its inception, The PLO has become the main legal representative of the Palestinian people in the sense that its choices have been synonymous with the choices of Palestinians. It has also set the means to achieve the Palestinian goals

and has determined the alliances that ensue in the struggle. The PLO continued to play these roles until the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), which was a product of the Madrid-Oslo Peace Settlement.[2]

Deriving its mandate from the Palestinians, the PLO played a pivotal role in the identification of the goals of the Palestinian resistance and the means to achieve them, the principal goals being the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state and the settlement of all Palestinians in the Diaspora. Generally, the 1964-1968 period (that is the period between the Declaration of the PLO's nationalistic Charter and its revision to a national Charter) witnessed many activities and the changes in the PLO.[3]

The defeat that Arabs suffered at the hands of Israel in 1967 and the absence of the leadership of the PLO's founder Ahmad Al-Shaquiry contributed to a change in the structure and substance of the organization. Fundamental changes occurred in the revision of its Charter to what came to be known as the 1968 National Charter. In the revised Charter, emphasis was laid on the complete liberation of Palestine and on the employment of armed struggle as the only strategic method to achieve the objective. This was confronted by the wide spread

[2] Shahain, A: The PLO from Guardianship to Independence, Palestinian Issue Journal,Vol. 142,1995. p.55.
[3] Al – Shughary, A: Foundations of the PLO's Establishment, Cairo, Information Agency' Palestinian Documents Dossier, Vol. 2, 1966, p. 136.

all to reach a political settlement in the Arab-Israeli conflict after the 1967 Arab defeat.[4]

There emerged amongst the new leadership ranks the conviction of the difficulty of pursuing the set PLO goals. In this framework, the organization adopted a motto, which it declared in January 1968 on the establishment of a 'secular democratic state' a state in which Jews, Christians and Muslims live harmoniously and equally and where the idea of Jewish nationalism is recognized.[5]

Another change, which occurred simultaneously with the proposal of the new goal and the means to achieve it. At the 8th session of the Palestinian National Council in 1971, it was stipulated that "armed struggle is the main form of struggle" and not the only form as had been the case before. Consequently, other forms of struggle for example negotiation and peaceful demonstrations were to be reconsidered. It was also stipulated that "all forms of struggle must run parallel with the armed struggle stead fastly and with probity."[6]

The PLO did not last long before there emerged a debate on the two positions, that is, the need to split Palestinian national goals because of the inability to realize a comprehensive strategic goal at the same time, and secondly, the need to stick to the full liberation of Palestine and the establishment of an

[4] Hawraani, F: Palestinian Political Ideology 1964 – 1975; A Study of Major PLO Charters; Beirut Centre For Research, 1980, p. 141.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Hamid, R; Resolutions of the Palestinian National Council 1964 – 74, Beirut Centre for Research 1975, p. 177.

independent state in all Palestinian national territories. This debate ended with the adoption of a new goal, that is, "the establishment of an independent people's authority in any part of Palestinian land to be liberated". In real terms, the differences occurred between those calling for complete liberation and those calling for the splitting of the initial goal on interim basis started before 1971. The former were referred to as the movement of refusal

while the latter were called the movement of approval.[7] And their differences intensified after the October 1973 war.[8]

At its 12th session, the Palestinian National Council resolved to accept the strategic goal and this decision was tied to alternate resolutions that focused in the meaning of the concept "interim" in the pursuit of goals. It was also tied to the rejection of resolutions 242 and 338, as well as the refusal to recognize Israel and to abandon armed struggle. Among the most important reasons that led to the interim goals include:

i) The international environment, which could not allow the elimination of the state of Israel, although the Palestinians were for its elimination.

ii) The establishment of a Palestinian state in any part of Palestinian territories will open the field to the coming together of the Palestinian people on their land and the recognition of their right to self–determination. Again, it may be possible to pursue the implementation of UN resolutions passed since 1947.

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[7] Hawraani F; Palestinian Political Ideology 1964 – 1975; A Study of Major PLO Charters, Beirut Centre For Research, 1980, p. 181.

[8] Ibid.,p.185.

iii) An interim solution will give Arabs the chance to devote themselves to rebuilding and self-strengthening which will in turn bolster the Palestinian issue.[9]

There are those who point at the fact that the declaration of the Palestinian state in

exile during the 19th session of the Palestinian National Council in November 1988 represents the most distinct stage in the change of strategy on the part of the PLO with respect to its goals and the means to achieve them.[10] At the top of these goals, the PLO adopted a strategic goal, that is, the establishment of the independent Palestinian State on the basis of the partition resolution of 1947. The PLO substituted the historical basis of this goal with a legal resolution 181 of the UN. And with respect to the means (to achieve the goal) the PLO committed itself to engage in negotiations with Israel and was prepared to stop all forms of violence just to start off negotiations.

The continued changes in the PLO strategy since the 1960s was not unexpected as signs continued to point towards such changes from 1976 when the organization resolved to "establish an independent state on the Palestinian national territories". The widespread interpretation of that goal was that the PLO accepted the establishment of a state in any part of Palestinian territories.[11]

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[9] Ibid., pp. 190 – 193.
[10] Mutaz S., Arab Resolutions In Their Participation in the Madrid Conference 1991, A Study of the Syrian and Palestinian Resolutions, Cairo, Centre for Research, 1997, p. 175.
[11] Sabri G., Palestinian Natiaonal Council, on an Independent Palestinian State, Palestinian Affairs, 1988, Vol. 66, pp. 18-20.

The abandonment of armed struggle as 'a means to achieve the goals did not come abruptly in the pursuit of the establishment of an independent state on the basis of the UN partition resolution. This occurred at different stages including for example 'The Cairo Declaration' in January 1985 which was issued by the leader of the organization.[12] In the declaration, the PLO decided to reduce its military operations in the West Bank and Gaza
strip only. What this meant–with respect to military operations – was that the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories were left out on the Palestinian armed resistance.

Among the most important reasons which led to a change in the PLO strategy and its resolution were the consequences of Israel's war in Lebanon in 1982 and the uprooting of Palestinian military resistance bases and camps in Lebanon which served as Palestinian refuge and security bases. These were used to launch military and commando operations against the military and economic targets of Israel.[13]

Again the PLO leadership felt isolated regionally and internationally. It was also convinced that the Arab–Israeli conflict was limited to a Palestinian–Israeli conflict especially after Egypt left the equation of the armed conflict against Israel as a result of the Camp David agreement and the inability of Syria to come up with a military miracle alone against Israel. The fall of the Soviet Union and its allies

[12] Samee S., The PLO and its Interaction in the Official Arab Environment. Nicosia, Cyprus, Sharq Press 1988, p. 19.
[13] Ibid.,p.20.

who supported the Palestinian resistance and the intensification of settlement assaults after the expansion of Jewish emigrants from Russia and Eastern European countries and central Asia also led to change of strategy. The Palestinian leadership also realized that the PLO and its nationalistic issue might attract less regional and international attention in particular, the eruption of the 1987 *Intifada* (uprising) was not capable of realizing the two strategic or interim goals, because received no international support.

Also, the PLO faced a logistic problem when it moved its bases from Lebanon to Tunisia after the Israeli invasion to the Palestinian military bases in Lebanon in 1982. It became impossible to wage any form of military resistance from Tunisia because of the distances. The only more appropriate thing to do was to hold press conferences and organize political negotiations. Consequently, it was extremely difficult to continue with armed struggle as a tool to liberate Palestinian occupied territories annexed after the 1967 war, let alone to liberate all the Palestinian occupied territories.[14]

All these facts enabled the emergence of a new thinking representative of the independent Palestinian State based on the UN resolution 181 and the use of negotiations to reach a political settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

[14] Mutaz S., Arab Resolutions In Their Participation in the Madrid Conference 1991, A Study of the Syrian and Palestinian Resolutions, Cairo, Centre for Research, 1997, p. 175

The stages of the Palestinian–Israeli negotiations

The Geneva Statement

Since 1985, the PLO embarked on a peace process through the renunciation of violence outside the occupied territories. By 1988 the PLO leader, Yasser Arafat was ready to accept Israel's 'right to live in peace', although he knew that his decision, together with resolution 242 still represented a hurdle for his colleagues in the PLO because they meant Palestinian recognition of Zionist colonialism.[15] With caution, Arafat authorized his press secretary Bassam Abu Sharif to write a position paper hinting at a willingness to remove the remaining obstacles of negotiations. This paper, entitled 'PLO View: Prospects of a Palestinian–Israeli Settlement' was distributed to delegates at an Arab summit in June 1988, and superseded any previous statement issued by the PLO. The paper outlined the willingness' of the PLO to negotiate with Israel.

The paper was widely accepted, particularly by the Western, Israel and Egyptian media since it was indication of peace initiated by the Palestinians.[16] Through the paper, the PLO moved towards the US requirements for commencement of peace talks because Washington's terms for talks with the PLO since 1975 required the PLO to acknowledge Israel's right to exist and accept resolution 242.[17]

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[15] Mohamed, H. Heikal., Secret Channels: The Inside Story of Arab – Israeli Peace Negotiations. (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996), p. 388.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Quandt William, Peace Process. (California: University of California Press, 1993), p. 366.

However, despite the above Palestinian initiative, the US did not endorse the Palestinian right to self-determination, a major expectation of the PLO. Instead, the US maintained that the Palestinians had to be settled by negotiation, rather than by prior US approval of a Palestinian state. Later in September 1988, the PLO made another attempt to draft a document that would meet all the conditions set by the US. The Secretary of State, Schultz, was ready to open a dialogue at that stage, but ran into opposition from the White House Chief-of-Staff, and from Shamir. Republican campaign managers feared that anything, which upset American Jewish opinion, could work against Vice President George Bush, the republican candidate to succeed Ronald Reagan. The Secretary of State therefore delayed his reply to the PLO initiative until after the presidential elections.

Meanwhile, Arafat began planning for a meeting of the Palestine National Congress in November, at which he hoped to secure approval from Palestinian legislators for accepting UN resolutions. He invited a small working group, which held discussion for two days in Geneva, and later in Tunis. There were differences of opinion with many of the participants opposing Arafat's view, but the PLO chairman seemed determined to follow his chosen course. He planned to put to the congress a resolution based on accepting UN Resolution 181, the original UN partition of and resolutions 242 and 338.[18]

[18] Mohamed H. Heikal, Secret Channels: The Inside Story of Arab – Israeli Peace Negotiations. op. cit., p. 390.

As all Arabs had rejected Resolution 181 in 1947, Arafat's opinion was also bound to be rejected. To avoid an impression of retreat, Arafat proposed that the concessions be accompanied by the declaration of an independent state of Palestine in the West Bank and Gaza. He was sure that the declaration of a state, with himself as president would overshadow the acceptance of resolution 181., by the PLO. Although many Palestinians were almost certain that Israel was willing to hand over Gaza because of its dense and uncontrollable population, doubts were cast on the willingness of Israel to budge from the West Bank.

It was hence clear that if Israel refused to hand over the other areas, the PLO would clash with Hamas. The ensuing clash would give Israel an excuse to interfere. However, Arafat was ready for the negotiations and contended for talks between Washington and Israel. It was clear that the PLO was ready to accept resolution 181 and the subsequent formation of a Palestinian state. In December Arafat, signed a unilateral document (the Stockholm Declaration) which was meant to meet US conditions for talks with the PLO. The statement, containing only three points read thus:[19]

"(i) That the PLO executive committee is prepared to negotiate with Israel within the framework of an international conference a comprehensive settlement of the

Arab – Israeli conflict on the basis of UN resolutions 242 and 338.

[19] Ibid., p. 395.

(ii) That it undertakes to live in peace with Israel and other neighbours and respect their right to exist in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders as will the democratic Palestinian state which it seeks to establish in the Palestinian occupied territories since 1967.

(iii) That it condemns individual and state terrorism in all its forms and will not resort to it."[20]

The signing of the document drew mixed reactions. The Arab world felt that the PLO had paid a high price to draw the US into talks. Besides, there was no guarantee that Israel would accept anything the PLO would agree with Washington.

The US, through the Secretary of State, James Baker asked Israel "to lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a greater Israel, stop settlement activity and allow schools to reopen."[21] Israel's intransigence attracted international criticism, while Arafat found himself the centre of flattering attention. While, once the western media had portrayed the PLO chairman as a gang leader; he was now branded as the leading moderate of a noble cause.

Israel maintained its anti-negotiation stance on the basis that the Geneva Declaration

[20] Ibid.
[21] Edward, w. Said, Peace and Its Discontents: Gaza-Jericho 1993-1995, (London: Vintage Publishers, 1995),p.85.

was against the spirit of negotiation. Israel drew attention to the declaration's article 9, which said: "Armed struggle is the only way of liberating Palestine and is thus strategic, not tactical," and article 10. "Commando action constitutes the nucleus of the Palestinian popular war of liberation". With this escalating mistrust, therefore the Geneva statement ended up in futility.

The Madrid Conference

After the Geneva statement, the PLO realized that for any meaningful negotiation, there was need for several representatives rather than its Chairman alone. It went on with its attempts to make itself acceptable to Washington. In response to its attempts, James Baker announced in October 1989, the resumption of Israel–Palestinian talks, scheduled for Cairo.

The reaction in Israel was against Washington's plan. The proposal to hold Israel – Palestinian talks sparked months of infighting between Shamir on one side , and Ariel Sharon, David Levy and Yitzhak Modai on the other. The three insisted that the 140,000 Palestinians living in east of Jerusalem be excluded from elections to select a Palestinian negotiating delegation, that the Palestinians who had been deported from the occupied territories should be ineligible; and that the lessening of the *Intifada* be a precondition for elections.[22] Their aim was to block the peace process. By June 1990, when Washington broke off the talks, the peace process was back to where it had started before 1988. Also,

[22] ibid.,p.400.

the intransigence of a fundamentalist Israel government, the territorial erosion of the West Bank and the flood of soviet Jews contributed to a feeling among Palestinians that the declarations made by the PNC and Arafat in 1988 had been premature.

Between June and August 1991 Syria, Jordan and Israel agreed to a US proposal that a peace conference be held in October 1991 in Madrid. The co-sponsors of the conference (the US and the Soviet Union) sent invitation letters to Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and the Jordanian–Palestinian delegation.

The Palestinian side reluctantly accepted the invitation. Its chosen delegate Faisal Husseini replied thus: *"During the conference and negotiations the Palestinians should have the right to raise any issue they feel important"*[23]. He also stated that the exclusion of the PLO would not affect the organization's status as the 'sole representative of the Palestinians.

Before the conference, the United States presented the Palestinian delegation with a set of proposals. The key element was establishment of Palestinian Preparatory Authority. The paper said that a PPA would secure international recognition and would mark the start of *"the countdown to the beginning of final status negotiations"*[24]. The Madrid conference was indeed a landmark experience, not only to the parties but also to the whole world because

[23] Ibid.. p.80.
[24] Edward, W. Said, Peace and Its Discontents: Gaza – Jericho, 1993 – 1995, (London: Vintage Publishers, 1995), p. 85

for the first time in forty-three years of conflict, Palestinians sat at the negotiating table with Israelis.

During the conference, President Bush called on the Arabs to answer Israel's sense of insecurity, and on Israelis to show fairness, respect and cooperation in dealing with Palestinians. Prime Minister Shamir did not, however, rise to Bush's appeal. Instead he reiterated his rejection of the principle of land for peace and of demands for a halt to settlement construction, and his refusal to negotiate with PLO representatives.

The Washington Talks

After the Madrid conference it became clear that the Shamir government's main objective was to buy time, rather than to reach an agreement with the PLO through negotiation. Israel wanted time to build more settlements, time to quell the *intifada* and time to wear down Arab expectations. Despite this stance, the Bush administration pressed for further negotiations, hence the Washington talks.

The first round of the Washington talks were marred with doubts about who should talk to whom. The Israelis would not go to a negotiating room with Palestinians alone. Nearly one month was spent arguing in the corridors of the State Department, with the Israelis insisting that the Jordan–Palestinian delegation participate as a single body, while the Palestinians and Jordanians wanted separate sessions. The Israeli rationalised that the only way to end the conflict was by transferring the Palestinians to the Jordan from the "Promised Land".

In the corridor "talks", it become clear that Israel was not ready to give political rights to Palestinians. In the words of Rubinstein, head of the Israeli delegation, "if Palestinians wanted to talk about political rights, they should talk to Jordan, because that was their own country. Israel would be happy to see them depart to Jordan, but neither Amman nor any other Arab capital wants them. So, we are obligingly keeping them in Judea and Samaria."[25]

With these remarks, the Palestinians found themselves in a trap. The Palestinian and other Arab delegates had hoped for American help in persuading Israel to make concessions. However, none seemed forthcoming. It was not until the end of 1991 that, after the second round of talks, Egypt, Jordan and the United States urged the Israeli government to reconsider its refusal to talk to the Palestinians other than as part of the joint Jordanian–Palestinian delegation. An agreement was reached in January 1992. Nonetheless, the agreement was that Israel was to negotiate with a delegation with a reduced number of Jordanian delegates but not a purely Palestinian delegation. Later, the delegates discussed the proposed interim agreement on Palestinian autonomy. But even after negotiations, the gap between Israeli and Arab positions on all the main issues remained as wide as ever.

Amid rumours that the talks were close to collapse, the Americans urged all delegations to stay at the table, despite lack of progress. Many of the Arabs were

[25] Edward, W. Said, Peace and Its Discontents: Gaza – Jericho, 1993 – 1995, (London: Vintage Publishers, 1995), p. 85.

ready to go along with the American request, with the rationale that President Bush could not afford a failure of the talks during an election year. They therefore thought that Bush would be obliged to put pressure on Israel to make concessions.[26]

The Israelis knew this motive and were quick to reply that it was ill timed and futile. They also suggested moving the talks to the Middle East to reduce costs. The Arabs refused to move the talks, but gradually realized that they had overestimated the ability and willingness of Washington to pressure Israel. In a press report Majali, one of the Palestinian delegates argued that the American Jews were behind the talks impasse, since "many of the state department coordinators were American Jews."[27]

When the Bush administration left office in January 1993, the Washington process had achieved nothing tangible. Fifteen months had passed, yet nothing substantive in the form of peace had been achieved.

The Oslo Agreement

Throughout the fifteen months since the Madrid conference, a second set of negotiations had been underway between Israel, the Arab states and Palestinian representatives. The talks were held in Moscow, Rome, Ottawa and Brussels, but attracted little media attention because the issues were practical and economic rather than political. An important secret channel that later developed out of a joint

[26] Ibid.,p.87.
[27] Hanan, Ashrawi, This Side of Peace, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996) p. 274.

initiative from Norwegian academicians was the Oslo secret channel, which transformed into a fully-fledged meeting on 19 January 1993.

Running alongside the Washington talks, the Oslo secret channels brokered a deal between the Israelis and the Palestinians. An Israeli team was to formally negotiate with a Palestinian delegation in Oslo. Abu Ala and Yuri Savir together with their assistants found themselves in strong disagreement on numerous points of detail, especially the issue of settling Palestinian refugees. The teams talked all night, but no progress could be made. Both teams then headed home, thinking the negotiations had broken down. However, on arrival in Tunis and Israel respectively, they were instructed by Arafat and Peres to go back to Norway and try again.

Both Peres and Arafat were determined to reach an agreement, with Peres accepting the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and Jericho. In this commitment, an initial batch of 1200 PLO command had already began a training course organised by the PLO to serve as policemen after the withdrawal.[28] The agreement was arranged in two parts. The first was a plan for Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho and a timetable for the hand-over, to be achieved within four months of signing. The accord guaranteed safe passage between Gaza and Jericho, but the connecting road did not become Palestinian territory. As the Israelis withdrew from the autonomous areas, they were to be replaced by Palestinian policemen and administrators.

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[28] Ibid.

Israeli forces were to remain in control of all parts of the occupied territories except Gaza and Jericho, pending the election of a Palestine interim self-government authority within nine months. The agreement was to last for not more than five years, and by the end of the second year, negotiations were to start on a final settlement. By the time of the initial ceremony, the issue of mutual recognition had been partly negotiated. However, the commitment was not yet in writing. In addition, both sides knew that the agreement had been possible only because matters of principle had been set aside. The agreement gave the Palestinians no guarantee of an eventual state, failed to address the issues of Jerusalem, frontiers and settlements and failed to deal with the crucial question of refugees.[29]

The PLO had also made major concessions limiting the autonomy of the Palestinian interim self–government Authority. The procedure for electing the authority, its structure, the number of its members, its powers and many other important details were to be negotiated with Israel. This meant that only an Authority broadly acceptable to Israel could emerge.

The agreement was a surprise to the rest of the world, since it was a secret affair, both sides felt that it was logical for the agreement to be stage- managed to look like an American initiative, perhaps through a gathering similar to Camp David. It was agreed that a month would be necessary to make all the arrangements in Washington. This supposed a need to maintain silence while

[29] Ibid.

preparations were made, but the news broke out prematurely. A Jerusalem newspaper published the fact that a meeting between Peres and the PLO had taken place in Norway. Once the story began to leak, the information burst very quickly.

The premature disclosure angered Arafat and wrecked his hopes of using Washington to absorb or deflect Arab criticism. Hamas, Hezbollah, Syria and Iran were unanimous in denouncing the agreement as a sell out. Members of the PLO executive committee expressed astonishment and anger over the lack of advance consultation. Many of the members threatened to resign because only a handful of them had been told about the agreement before the announcement.[30] Arafat was not surprised by the negative reactions, but thought he could get away with the agreement because the Arab world was in disarray. Some Palestinians wanted peace at any price, while others were determined to resist.

The reaction in Israel was little more enthusiastic. Anxious that the plan should be well received in the occupied territories, the Israelis at first allowed demonstrations to let off steam. Until then, anyone who waved a Palestinian flag or displayed a picture of Arafat had been liable to detention without trial, but these rules were relaxed.[31] The result was an explosion of euphoria by some and demonstrations against the agreement by others, with clashes in some places between the two groups. After twenty four hours, the Israeli authorities decided

[30] Mohamed H. Heikal. Secret Channels: The Inside Story of Arab – Israeli Peace Negotiations, op., cit., p. 456.
[31] Ibid.,p.457.

that the euphoria was running out of control and used police forces to break up the demonstrations.[32]

Within days of the agreement, critics on both sides began to point out that the Oslo negotiators had left a vast range of points unsettled. Among the issues was whether the Palestinian authority could be represented at crossing points from Jordan and Egypt into the occupied territories. Another serious omission was that Jericho had not been defined: for administrative purposes, was unclear whether the area to be under Palestinian control was the town centre or the administrative district. The agreement also aroused controversy within Israel as to which government departments were responsible for certain questions. For example Lieutenant General Ehud Barak complained to Rabin that the agreement treated the territorial question as a political rather than a security issue. Transferring areas to Palestinian control, in his opinion, was a security question, and hence lay within the competence of the ministry of defence. This too was Rabin's view.[33]

Ten days from the formal signing of the agreement, Israel and PLO had not reached an agreement on mutual recognition. However, the Norwegian foreign minister using his good offices made a series of calls to Arafat on behalf of Peres, trying to bridge the gap. Some days later, the PLO and Israel teams met at Paris and reached an agreement on a mutual recognition pact. In Tunis, Arafat signed a letter, recognizing the right of the state of Israel to exist in peace and security. On

[32] Hannan Ashrawi. This Side of Peace, op. cit.,p.278.
[33] Ibid.

the same day, Rabin signed a letter recognizing the PLO as the representatives of the Palestinian people and promised commencement of negotiations with the PLO within the Middle East peace process.

Arafat's letter amounted to the final abandonment of the Palestinian struggle. As it contained no definition of the Israel that the PLO was recognizing,. The effect of this unspecified territory left Israel free to claim that its sovereignty extended beyond the 1967 borders. Opposition the agreement arose from several Palestinian quarters but Arafat chose to go ahead with the signing. On the day of signing, the whole world witnessed a uniquely new event. For the first time, Arafat and Rabin shook hands at the White House, as the agreement was signed by Abu Mazen on behalf of the PLO and Peres for Israel.

The Cairo Agreement

After the signing of the Oslo agreement, efforts were made for its implementation. In January 1994, a liaison committee headed by Abu Mazen and Shimon Peres met in Cairo. Some of the PLO personalities had patched up their quarrels with Arafat. In the meeting a compromise on the size of the autonomous area of Jericho was reached. A provisional accord was reached, pending approval at higher levels, that the area from which Israel would withdraw would be about double the original offer of twenty-seven square kilometres. Some of Israel's security worries were eased by the understanding that settlers would be protected by Israeli forces inside the settlements, and responsibility for their security when

in other parts of the West Bank and Gaza would be shared by Israel and Palestinian patrols.[34]

Arafat was not satisfied with the Jericho offer. He also complained that the Cairo meeting had not settled the questions of Palestinian border guards and flags. Rabin then accused Arafat of backtracking on the peace process and suspended the negotiation.[35] However, the Egyptian government managed to convince him to allow the resumption of talks. Shimon Peres and Arafat held meetings in January 1994, in addition to sessions with Warren Christopher. An agreement in principle was reached that Israel withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho would be achieved by 13 April, subject to setting the remaining problems.

Later, Israeli and PLO delegations held talks in Cairo on 26 January, hoping to prepare a draft agreement for Arafat and Peres to sign at the end of the month. Both leaders had been invited to the World Economic forum at Davos, and had arranged to hold a bilateral meeting at the same time. Although nothing was signed, understandings were reached at Davos on numerous issues. For example, Arafat accepted Israel's offer of fifty-four square kilometres for the autonomous area in Jericho. The Israelis agreed that checks on Palestinians at the frontiers be carried out by electronic scanning instead of physical searches. The Palestinians dropped their insistence on the withdrawal of Israel troops from settlements in

[34] Ibid., p. 292.
[35] Mohammed H. Heikal, Secret Channels: The inside Story of Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations, op.cit.,p.465.

Gaza. Israel patrols and mixed Israel-Palestinian patrols would control three roads leading to the Gaza settlements.[36]

When Peres and Arafat met again in Cairo a week later, a few issues remained to be settled. For example, the Israelis were prepared to accept a Palestinian observer at each border crossing, while Arafat continued to insist on the principle that arriving visitors would be met by a Palestinian officer before seeing any Israeli. After the first day of talks on 4th February, it was clear that Peres was being held back by Rabin, who telephoned Peres and restrained him from signing. On the second day, President Mubarak intervened repeatedly with both Arafat and Peres to urge flexibility, while further pressure came from the US administration. Finally, on 9th February 1995 the text was ready for signing. After thorough verification of the maps of Jericho and Gaza, Peres and Arafat agreed to sign at the Presidential Palace.

In essence, the Cairo Agreement was an attempted compromise between Arafat's desire for the visible trappings of statehood and Israel's anxiety about security. This involved arrangements which were widely attacked in the Arab world as degrading, since the agreement left overall control of security at border crossing points in Israel's hands, while the detailed arrangements amounted to a single terminal containing a Palestinian section and an Israeli section, a pretence of dual control. For example, Palestine residents of the West Bank and Gaza were

[36] Ibid.

to first undergo Palestine check-ups before proceeding for Israeli check-ups. Thus, Israel was the ultimate authority for people entering the terminal.

After the Cairo Agreement, negotiations continued in Taba on the powers of the Palestinian authority and on hand-over arrangements. On 23 February an agreement was reached on the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Jericho and Gaza, starting 17 March. The withdrawal was to end by 12 April, a day before the target which Arafat and Peres had set in Oslo.[37]

The Strategy of Negotiations and its Problems

The Palestinian strategy with regard to its negotiations with Israel is based on the return of territories occupied in 1967 (that is, the West Bank and Gaza strip) and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Palestinians call for the implementation of UN special resolution on Palestine, in particular, the 1947 international resolution 181 which involves the creation of two states in Palestine, one Arab and the other Jewish and the internationalisation of Jerusalem, that is the reservation of Jerusalem as a territory under UN administration, and in addition, the implementation of resolutions 194 of 1948 and 237 of 1967 which call for the acceptance by Israel that Palestinian refugees return to their homeland.

On the other hand, the Israeli strategy in its negotiations with Palestine is to be found in the strategy of James Baker during his shuttling in the Middle East which was bent on meeting three Israeli conditions to start the Middle East peace

[37] Mohamed H. Heikal, Secret Channels: The Inside Story of Arab – Israeli Peace Negotiations, op. cit., p. 469.

process.[38] First, the substitution of the UN as the international reference point in finding a solution to the Middle East conflict with an international conference to be held once. This was to be followed by giving the US the mandate to take full charge of the process. This was to ensure that all international resolutions on the Palestinian problem would be put aside as a basis for solving the conflict.

Secondly, a dimension that a guarantee to fragment and dismantle the Arab position on the Palestinian issue before proceeding to the negotiating table was to be adopted. This was to be achieved through the refusal by Israel to negotiate with Arabs as one negotiating delegation. Instead, negotiations were to be conducted with parallel Arab sides.

Lastly, the purpose of the negotiations was to find an appropriate mechanism to attract Palestinians to the negotiating table. The mechanism was to take into account the importance of the presence of Palestinians in enabling the opening of negotiations with Israel in the presence of other Arabs. Secretary of State Baker guaranteed the three Israeli conditionalities. The Palestinian leadership was apprehensive on whether it was capable of sacrificing itself by excluding other parties by continuing to participate in the negotiations by providing a new leadership in the Palestinian negotiating delegation from the occupied territories. What increased this apprehension was Israeli's insistence on separate negotiations which could further provide a chance for any Arab side to enter into separate

[38] Al – Hassan B., The Lacking and the Required in the Palestinian-Israeli Peace Negotiations, Journal of Palestinian Studies, Cairo, Vol., 13, 1993, pp. 56 – 58.

negotiations with Israel thus jeopardizing the interests of other parties and in particular the Palestinian side. Concession to Israeli's conditions threatened the PLO's authority. To circumvent this, the PLO adopted a framework with two directions: to consolidate its position with regard to the kind of delegation it wanted and to ensure it was not dislodged from any side. It also had to strengthen the Palestinian position to ensure that it was not disregarded by any quarter.

The PLO could not achieve this except through its acceptance to officially participate in the negotiations. Consequently, the Palestinian leadership in Tunisia faced an impasse in its bid to coerce Israel to open direct dialogue with it. And when Israel found that the leadership of the Palestinian negotiating delegation from the occupied territories was incapable of surpassing the Palestinian leadership in Tunisia, it opened a secret channel with the PLO in Oslo. The result was the realization of an agreement of the Palestinian–Israeli Declaration of Principles.

All that transpired in the negotiations after the signing of the "Declaration of Principles" can be summed up as a succession of the harsh Israeli conditionalities, which were met with continuous Palestinian compliance. The Palestinian dilemma has existed from the beginning in the implicit imbalance in the "Declaration of Principles" Two negative factors affected the Palestinian side:[39] first, the Palestinian side utilised non-professional negotiators who were picked on the basis of political and other organisational considerations, rather than

[39] Ibid.

on the basis of their competence. In contrast, the Israeli delegation comprised of professionally competent individuals who had a good grasp of legal issues. As a result the Palestinian side gave unnecessary concessions during negotiations that preceded the signing of the "Declaration of Principles".

Secondly, the Israeli delegation was sly and coercive in dealing with the Palestinian side. This was manifested in their use of legal and linguistic terminology that were mis-intepreted by the Palestinian and also in the way the Israelis coerced the Palestinians to sign the declaration of principles."

The former meant that the Israeli were better equipped with negotiating power and skills, focusing on detail and the legalities of the negotiation processes, this, at the disadvantage of the Palestinians who lacked technical expertise to focus on the same. The later, combined with the former, led to the Israelis making more weighty demands to the Palestinians and the Palestinians, on the other hand making weaker, and less weighty demands to the Israelis. This established an imbalance in terms of power relations with the Israelis wielding more based on their technical expertise.

Conclusion

After the official mutual recognition of the PLO and Israel, one of the significant mistakes that were made by the Palestinian leadership was the signing of the Palestine –Israeli Agreement of "Declaration of Principles". This agreement stipulated the postponement of discussions on fundamental issues, which focused on Palestinian demands in its conflict with Israel. The Declaration of Principles

dealt more with simple issues rather than substantive ones. The Palestinian leadership also completely ignored the importance and influence of the differences in power balance between it and Israel and which was in the interest of Israel in the negotiation process and on its future consequences. The Palestinian side expected–after the official mutual reciprocal recognition of each side–that entering into peace negotiations based on bringing about a political settlement to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict and the establishment of a Palestinian state in Palestinian territories would finally lead to the realization of the Palestinian strategic goal which embodies the end of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. By extension they anticipated the attainment of freedom and complete independence as well as securing the right of return of Palestinian refugees and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

However, the negotiations tumbled to a complete halt leaving Palestinians suffering. This was only aimed at consolidating materialistic realities in Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 and in particular the West Bank and Jerusalem. From this, we can deduce that this trend of peace will not lead to a political settlement, which realises the Palestinian strategic goal.

In contrast to the Palestinian position, the Israeli position is not determined by conditionalities and restrictions related to negotiations. In fact, the Israeli position has dominated them and the trend of peace has been engineered right from the beginning by Israeli interests and demands, and it is likely to continue to the end, and the expected end is one that favours Israel.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SYRIAN-ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS

Introduction

The Syrian track is considered the least problematic in comparison with the Palestinian in achieving progress. This view is based on the fact that the Golan Heights are not part of the territories claimed by Israel. There are no religious or ideologicalclaims to the Golan Heights as compared to the West Bank. This fact makes the dismantling of Jewish settlements on the Golan Heights or their incorporation into Syrian sovereignty easy and this would not constitute any religious problems for Israel. The main reason Israel has retained the Golan Heights is security. This can be resolved through an accord on security arrangements between Syria and Israel.

However, the practical reality is that the situation is the opposite of what is anticipated with regards to Israel. A great number of Israelis are strongly opposed to Israel withdrawing from the Golan Heights. Equally in their broad outline, all Israel political parties active in the political arena stress their rejection of any compromise or withdrawal from the Golan Heights in the belief that this is the only minimum condition guaranteeing security for the state of Israel. All Israel parties unanimously supported a special legislation in 1980 to implement Israeli laws in the Golan Heights. There is a hard line and extremist group within Israeli

parties, which continues to do all it can to abort any initiative to bring about compromise or withdrawal from the Golan Heights.[1]

Concerning Syria, there are some who argue that the regime in power is not ready or capable of reaching a peaceful settlement with Israel. The dictatorial nature of the regime makes it permanently in need of a foreign enemy in order to justify its subjugation of the Syrian people. The disappearance of a foreign enemy will lead to the fall of the regime.[2]

Among the indicators that confirm this assertion is the fact that some senior officials of the regime have shown their strong opposition to Syria's participation in the process of peaceful settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict that began in October 1991 in the city of Madrid. This opposition became intertwined with and constituted the main causes of the succession of President Assad, involving important personalities and leaders in the military intelligence community, the Special Forces and the national army. These figures expressed fear at the possible impact of accepting to participate in the numerous peace conferences – its ramifications for Syria's foreign policy and the ruling regime's constituency. Consequently, some analysts suggest that Syria was left behind and failed to respond to the invitation to join the Madrid conference aimed at bringing about a

[1] Mohammed Muslih. The Golan: Israel, Syria and Strategic Calculations, Middle East Journal. Vol. 47. No. 1993,pp. 611–630.
[2] Daniel Pipes, Greater Syria: The History of an Ambition, (London and New York: Oxford University Press,1992),p.130.

peaceful settlement owing to the sharp differences within Syria's ruling clique.[3] On the other side, there are those who argue that Syria's foreign policy is based on the reality that the main aim of the policy makers in Syria is to place importance to the national interest of Syria and to opt for those different choices and alternatives that would achieve those interests. These options and alternatives they argue are, to be developed on the basis of precise analysis of the balance of power. Those who support this view argue that Syria is capable of reaching peace with her neighbour, Israel.[4] Generally, the focus of this chapter is to investigate Syria's negotiation strategy with Israel, and to identify this strategy besides attempting to find out the future of the peace process as far as the Syrian perspective is concerned.

The Road to Syrian–Israeli Negotiations

Any process of negotiation requires the fulfilment of some conditions to facilitate it and these are:[5]

1. A great sense of obligation and willingness to take risks to change the status quo.
2. The existence of points agreed upon by the sides with could form points of departure and on which the negotiations could be built.

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[3] Raymond Hinihebusch, Syria: Politics of Peace and Regime Survival, The Middle East Policy Journal, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1995, pp.74-87.

[4] Asad Abu Khalil, Syria and Arab-Israeli Conflict, Current History Journal ,Vol. 93, No. 580, 1994, pp.83-86.

[5] William Zartman, The Negotiation Process in the Middle East, in steven L.S.(ed.) The Arab-Israeli search for peace , (Boulder:Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), p.63.

3. The existence of a clearly formulated list of the issues that need to be tackled in the negotiations and the mission to be undertaken.
4. Readiness on the part of the concerned sides to listen to the arguments of their adversaries and interlocutors and to take into consideration each other's views.
5. The provision of local or international support, or both, for the negotiations in order to help resolve the problems that exist between the concerned parties.

The total fulfilment of these conditions in any relationship means the relationship is ripe for the stage of negotiations.[6] However, the most important condition for negotiations is the realisation by the parties to the conflict that the status quo needs changing.[7] It will become clear in the course of this chapter that some of these conditions were not met in the Syrian-Israeli negotiations. The absence of these conditions slowed down the negotiations between the two sides and eventually led to stagnation.

The end of cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union is the principle element that paved the way to the start of the current peace process in the Middle East since the Madrid conference. The withdrawal of the Soviet Union from the arena of international conflict with the US had a great impact and motivated Syria to join the negotiations. Consequently, the change in the Soviet Union foreign policy objectives led to the loss of Syria as a strategic ally in any possible

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[6] Ibid..p.64.
[7] Wadud, Badran The Current Arab-Israeli Negotiations and Resolution of International Conflict, (Cairo :Cairo University, Centre for Research and Political Studies, 1994), pp.40-46.

confrontation with the USA in the Middle East.[8] Similarly the Soviet Union interest in the Middle East dwindled and the volume of trade with Syria and soviet sales to Syria dropped. These factors made possible the need for an alternative ally especially in the light of existing balance of military power.

The end of the bi-polar system increased the risk of military confrontations, since under the bi-polar system there was the possibility of resorting to the mechanisms of resolving regional conflicts existing under this system, whereas there was now the danger that that these regional conflicts could become a confrontation between the two chances of Israel exploiting its military superiority to inflict heavy defeat on Syria. This situation has changed since then, and the search for alternatives to military option has increased since the use of the military option to achieve certain objectives has become very much limited compared to the past periods. This is what has led Syria to increasingly respond positively to the option of negotiations even if it would not help to achieve all of Syria's interests.

On the other hand, having become the sole dominant global power and as a result of the outcome of the Gulf war, the USA sought to resolve that Arab- Israeli conflict peacefully and thereby bring the region under the unipolar system and tackle the effects of the liberation of Kuwait. Equally, the war gave Syria an important opportunity to review its relations with the US and the international

[8] George Mirski, Triangle of Tension, in Steven L. Spiegel (ed.), Conflict Management in The Middle East, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), p.313.

alliance against Iraq by way of its active involvement in the war. Consequently this made the US to become keen in providing a space for Syria in the process of bringing about a settlement – part of the accord reached between the USA and its Arab allies who fought on their side in the war against Iraq. The American effort was geared towards bringing about a peaceful settlement in order to compensate its allies and help to boost their legitimacy in the eyes of their people, a section of which was affected by the propaganda of the Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein.[9] Similarly such American endeavours will be viewed as helping to bring about a degree of balance in the demands of the Arabs vis-a-vis that of the Israelis something which strengthened Syria in its positive dealings with the efforts started by the US.

However, Syria's entry into the peace process went against Syria's traditional views before the second Gulf war. For a long time, Syria refused to engage Israel in serious talks in the belief that Syria would not be able to achieve more than what it possibly could achieve on the battlefield and that Israel only understood the language of force.[10]

The military balance between Syria and Israel was heavily tilted in favour of Israel. Syria refused to join the talks to bring about a settlement until such a time as it would at least, strike a balance in her military might compared to Israel. For many years, Syria has been striving to achieve a strategic balance between the

[9] Mustafa Al. Alawi, The Great Powers and the Current Peace Negotiations (Cairo:Cairo University, Centre for Research and Political Studies, 1994), p. 48.
[10] Ibid., p.51.

Arabs and Israel. However, Egypt's peace treaty with Israel in 1979 and Egypt's exit from the Arab-Israel conflict made Syria to change this objective into one of a search for a strategic balance between Syria on its own and Israel.[11]

Generally speaking, three stages can be distinguished in the context of achieving this objective. The first stage is to enable Syria to acquire the capacity to defend itself against any Israeli invasion and to build its capacity to repulse any Israel attack. The second stage is to enable Syria to negotiate with Israel from a position of military strength that would enable it to achieve its objectives through negotiations. The third stage is to build Syria's capacity so that it is able to use military force to achieve its objectives, if those objectives can not be achieved through negotiations. However, reports by the relevant international experts on military estimates indicate that Syria has not been able to achieve anything beyond the objectives set out in the first stage.[12] According to the Syrian view, it is difficult for Syria to achieve its objectives in the conflict as long as it is far from the second and third stages of achieving a strategic balance with Israel.

Consequently, regional and educational developments have forced Syria to accept to join the negotiations without guarantees that Syria would be able to achieve all its demands. This fact in itself is worth analysing.

On this particular issue, there are some who believe that Syria has entered negotiations not with the special aim of liberating the occupied Golan Heights but

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[11] Jabir Said Awad, Syria's Foreign Policy Between Illusion and Reality, (Cairo:Cairo University, Centre for Research and Political Studies, 1994), p. 600.
[12] Ibid., p.607.

to avoid losses that could possibly be suffered by any one refusing to join the talks. Syria felt the danger of isolation after the collapse of the Soviet Union its strategic ally in the world, and after the US took upon itself the task of trying to bring about a peaceful settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The possibility of Syria's isolation regionally and internationally increased further after Egypt walked away from the Arab-Israel conflict, after Iraq's destruction in the Second Gulf War and after Jordan's decision to join the negotiations.[13] This view appears to tally with the views of those who argue that Syria joined the negotiations not for the sake of a settlement but rather for the sake of avoiding the threats that may result from not co-operating. The goal of entering serious negotiations are an aspired for goal, but the reaching of an accord is something secondary.[14] The view also tallies Syria's conduct in negotiations during which Syria displayed keenness to maintain and leave all its options open. Syria was engaged in talks with Israel while at the same time continuing to provide unlimited assistance to radical Palestinian and Lebanese groups.[15] To be precise, Syria merely displayed that degree of seriousness sufficient enough to enable it achieve its demands and reach an accord with Israel.

[13] Mohammed Zuheir Diab, Syria's Security Demands and A Peace Settlement with Israel. Palestinian Studies Journal, 1995, Vol. 23. p.59.
[14] Ibid., p.62.
[15] Moshe Ma'oz, Syria and Israel: From War to Peace-Making,(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 202.

The stages of the Syrian–Israeli Negotiations

The Syrian - Israeli negotiations that had been under way since the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991 can be divided into four stages that chronologically follow one another. It will become apparently clear that the division of these stages into a chronological, and successive periods, coincide most of the time, with changes in government in Israel. It is worth recalling that these stages is the change in the governing party or the person of the Prime Minster, to the extent that political or personality factors, the nature of the party or the Prime Minister in power tends to have a bearing on the course of the negotiations between the two sides.

The First Stage:

This stage covered five round of bilateral talks and went on until 1992 during the Likud government of Yitzhak Shamir. During this stage no important progress was made owing to Israel's tactics to prevent the discussion of any subject relating to the core of the conflict and Syria's except Israel's pull out from the Golan Heights.[16] The Syrian negotiator sought to know the view of the Israeli negotiator regarding the implementation of the UN Resolution 242. The Israeli negotiator's response to the Syrian attempt was to raise secondary issues such as the condition of Syrian Jews, Syria's links with Hezbollah and the drugs trade in

[16] Mohammed A. Said, Arab Strategic Report 1992, (Cairo: Centre for Political and Strategic Studies,1993), p.210.

the Beqaa valley.[17] However, despite the attempt by the two sides to avoid a discussion of the crucial issues in the conflict, this stage witnessed some progress at least at two levels: An improvement in the atmosphere under which Syrian and Israel negotiators were facing each other in direct talks for the firs time.

Second, a movement by the two sides towards familiarising the other side to its position something which served as a harbinger of the possibility of compromise by each side. In this respect, the Syrians indicated the possibility of recognising Israel and signing a peace territories. The Israelis also indicated the possibility of changing their previous position ruling out any possibility of pulling out of the Golan.[18]

The Second Stage:

This stage comprised six rounds of negotiations and the Syrians this time held talks with the representatives of the Israeli Labour government under the leadership of Yitzhak Rabin. Both sides exhibited some degree of seriousness in these talks although Rabin's concentration after his election on the Palestinian track raised Syrian fears. This led to Egypt's intervention and Egypt sought to convince Israel to give equal attention and move forward with the Syrian track. Egypt also called on Damascus to activate the meetings of the joint Arab committee set up to co-ordinate between Arab states involved in the bilateral negotiations. The aim of this move was to prevent Israeli manoeuvring whose

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[17] Ibid., p.220.
[18] Moshe Ma'oz, Syria and Israel: From War to Peace-Making, op. cit., pp.205–209.

objective was to break up the Arab front by suggesting there is inadequate progress on the different tracks.[19]

The Syrian-Egyptian moves succeeded in achieving the specific goal of pushing Israeli in the direction of giving more attention to the talks with Syria and make progress in the Syrian perspective. However, this move did not succeed in making Israel to give equal attention to the various Arab tracks in the bilateral talks. To prove this, Israel concentrated on and sought to make progress in the Syrian track. Israel strove to reach an accord on a declaration of principle with Syria, a move that Syria responded to positively. The Syrian delegation to the sixth round of talks carried with it a document in which Syria expressed its readiness to sign a peace treaty with Israel, if the other side accepted the principle of pulling out of the Golan Heights. Syria issued a timetable for the implementation of the pullout. Israel welcomed a Syrian document and declared that it represented positive elements and other elements, which needed more discussion and consultants.[20] Despite the fact that the Syrian and Israeli sides failed owing to the disagreements over the link between a pullout from the Golan and a peace treaty, a disagreement that continued up to the end of the 10th round of talks, some progress was achieved in sense that both sides had now moved to a stage of tackling issues crucial in the conflict, something that had not happened before.[21]

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[19] Mohammed A. Said, Arab Strategic Report 1992, op., cit., p.222.
[20] Moshe Ma'oz, Syria and Israel: From War to Peace-Making, op., cit., p.221.
[21] Mohammed A. Said, Arab Strategic Report 1992, op. cit., p. 230.

In early 1993, the Israeli side began issuing optimistic statements suggesting that a peace deal with Syria was near. However, some reports suggested that the statements by Israeli officials reinforcing the hope that important steps had been made in the Syrian track were specifically aimed at the Palestinian side. The objective the reports suggest was to force the Palestinians to abandon their handling stance on the problem of Palestine, which was far from the Israeli position and return to the negotiations.[22] Israel was aware that the most important tracks on the Arab-Israeli negotiations were the Syrian and Palestinian tracks and that any progress in the Lebanese, Jordanian tracks were dependent on progress in the first two tracks and in that order. The two main tracks had their own order of priority, which distinguished one track from the other. From a strategic point of view Israel preferred a treaty with Syria, because peace with Syria was urgent and achieving it would guarantee an end to the most serious threat facing the Israel State.[23]

However, the agreement with Syria was beset by difficulties coming in the shape of removal of Israel settlement on the Golan Heights. It was equally beset by difficulties such as the failure by Syria to offer any important concession to Israel, which would make the latter end. Its wavering in the negotiations on the Palestinian and Syrian tracks something contained in the document submitted by

[22] Mohammed A. Said, Arab Strategic Report 1993, (Cairo: Centre for Political and Strategic Studies. 1994), pp.202–203.
[23] David Makovsky, Making Peace with the PLO: The Rabin Government's Road to the Oslo Accord. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), pp.18–25.

the Syrian delegation to the previous round of talks. Syria merely expressed readiness to end the state of war and enmity and establish normal ties with Israel in the event of Israel pull out from the Golan Heights. Syria did not express its vision of the nature of the relations between the two in the future, something which Israel saw as unappealing given its experience of the Cold Peace with Egypt.[24] For this reason, Israel saw the accord with the PLO as one that offered more concession. Israel saw the accord as a golden opportunity that was unexpected given the fact that the conditions set forth in the Oslo Accord had, to a great extent, satisfied Israeli demands and concerns, that the PLO had rejected for a long time.[25]

The Third Stage:

The Syrian–Israeli negotiations did not achieve tangible results in the period following the signing of Israeli-Palestinian declaration of principle and even after a Jewish extremist assassinated Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995. This was so because Israel lost the enthusiasm to continue talks with Syria and its previous energetic spirit after winning important success in the Palestinian track. However, the negotiations went on between the two sides and concentrated on the issues of withdrawal, security arrangements and normalisation, although there was less enthusiasm when compared to the enthusiasm with which the Syrian memorandum was met when it was submitted at the previous round of talks.

[24] Ibid., pp.107–110.
[25] Mohammed A. Said, Arab Strategic Report 1993, op., cit., p.230.

Israeli negotiators made attempts to concentrate on the differences between the two sides. Israel negotiators raised the issue of phased withdrawal, establishment of observation posts, the designation of demilitarised zones, international observers, the determination of forces in the region, and the establishment of comprehensive cordial relations at all levels between the two states, besides the issue of security arrangements after Israel pull out of the Golan. This provoked Syria's anger because it saw the issues; concerns raised by the Israeli negotiators as touching on Syria's national sovereignty over the Golan and endangering Syria's national security.[26]

In an attempt to resolve this problem, the US proposed that the political and security issues should be dealt with separately in the negotiations. It urged talks at a senior military level to concentrate on the issue of security. This American initiative appeared to have paid off when two rounds of talks were held between the Syrian and Israeli army chiefs of staff in December 1994 and June 1995.[27] However, differences remained over an Israeli demand seeking to limit Syrian security arrangements along the border and calling for an extension of the security arrangements in areas well beyond the Golan Heights deep inside Syria. Differences also remained over Israel's reservation over the issue of observation posts and early warning stations on the Golan Heights, and the reduction in the

[26] Mohammed A. Said, Arab Strategic Report 1994. (Cairo: Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, 1995), p 166.
[27] Ibid., p.170

number of Syrian soldiers. Syria rejected these Israeli demands and on its part called for balanced bilateral security arrangements on both sides of the border.[28]

The fourth stage:

This stage coincided with Shimon Peres' rise to the premiership of Israel following the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995. During this stage, the negotiators held several rounds of talks in Wye River Plantation, Maryland, USA at the invitation of the USA. The two countries' delegation comprised diplomats and army officers, among others and concentrated on security arrangements.[29] It is possible to say that the Wye River Plantation talks were a continuation of the two round of talks between the army chief of the two states in the previous stage. The Wye Plantation talks however reached a dead end as a result of the strong differences between the two sides on the issue of security arrangements. Israel's demands in the sphere of security were too exaggerated to an extent that it was difficult for Syria to accept them. Israel's demands besides what has already been pointed out, are:

1. That Syria should cut off all links with Iran;
2. Syria should disarm Hezbollah;
3. Syria should cut down the number of its armed forces and its deployment restricted to the area between Damascus and the Israel border and that the bulk of Syria's armed forces should be stationed on the border with Iraq and Turkey

[28] Israel Shahak, The Real Problem Between Israel and Syria. Middle East International Journal, April 1999, p.18.
[29] Mohammed A. Said, Arab Strategic Report 1994, op. cit., p.169.

4. Syria should use its influence over the Lebanese government to allow Israel's South Lebanese Army allies to be integrated into the Lebanese National Army.[30]

Consequently, Israel's decision to stick to these demands during the Wye Plantation negotiations made the talks to break down. Israel ended the negotiations in reaction to the suicide operations conducted by the Palestinian group, Hamas, inside Israel in March 1996.

The Strategy of Negotiations and Its Problems

Syria's negotiation strategy is based on the view that the liberation of the Golan Heights is the first objective and the second objective which Syria hopes to achieve in the negotiation is to bring about security. Syria does not want a situation where those security measures agreed with Israel, could create new threats against the Syrian state. Syria wants to maintain and protect its role and regional status attained in the course of the past three decades-a role and status that constitutes an essential actor in regional politics. This strategy enables Syrian decision-makers to deploy a number of power cards in the negotiations and enables them to put pressure on Israel in the following ways:

Radical Alliances

Syria, in the 70's wielded immense political clout in the region. During this period, Syria achieved an undisputed status in Lebanese politics, thanks to Syria's

[30] Israel Shahak, The Real Problem Between Israel and Syria, op. cit., p.19.

intervention in Lebanon. Equally, Syria was able to wield great influence over Palestinian affairs and their freedom to make decisions. This policy was widely accepted in the Arab world. Consequently, for the first time, Syria attained a regional status widely accepted, something it never achieved in the past.[31] Since Egypt was regarded one of the sides providing a military balance in the Arab-Israeli conflict, this new found Syrian promise in the region, constituted an added advantage for Syria. This was so despite the fact that subsequent developments were to weaken Syria's power cards. Egypt dropped out of the military equation in the Arab-Israeli conflict after the signing of the Camp David Treaty in September 1978. The Palestinian card was snatched out of Syria's hands, when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982. The PLO escaped Syria's powerful grip when it relocated its headquarters to Tunis following the invasion. To compensate for these weaknesses, Syria began to strive to cultivate ties with radical Palestinian and Syrian organisations. This had the negative effect of dragging Syria into the Lebanese civil war to help the right-wing forces. This alliance was influential in forcing the Israeli backed forces to pull out, with Syria providing great support for the Lebanese and Palestinian resistance.

The Islamic revolution in Iran, provided a new opportunity for Syria and added a new card to its power, besides compensating for Egypt's withdrawal from the military equation that underpinned the Arab-Israeli conflict. Despite its distance from the heart of the Middle East which includes Israel and its Arab

[31] Mohammed A. Said, Arab Strategic Report 1994, op., cit., p.170.

neighbours, Iran had some qualities which Syria realised it could use to increase its influence in the region. The first quality was the ideological zeal of Iran's Islamic Revolution, which made it incapable of making compromises. Iran's revolutionary ideology placed Israel at the heart of its concerns. It made clear its absolute rejection of the Jewish State, and saw the liberation of Jerusalem and Palestine in its entirety as the most important political objective.[32] Syria felt it was possible for it to depend on Iran and obtain vital political, economic and military support. This would in turn, enable Syria to support its allies. The improvement in Syrian-Iranian relations also enabled Syria to improve her ties with Shiite groups in Lebanon, considered the largest segment of Lebanese society, and which showed great enthusiasm for the new revolutionary ideology in Iran. Iran was capable of disseminating her ideas and setting up bases within Shiite societies in neighbouring Arab states. The creation of Hezbollah in Lebanon was a reflection of the Iranian capability.

Syria managed to take advantage of Hezbollah's radicalism in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Syria's strategy has registered a great degree of success in the period extending from Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 to date. It is common knowledge that Hezbollah's operations along the border and its attacks on northern Israel enjoys Syria's blessing, given Syria's control of Hezbollah supply lines and the fact that it is the dominant military power in Lebanon. Syria also

[32] Walid M. Abd-Al-Nasir: The Three Axis of Iranian Regional Foreign Policy, Strategic Studies 2000, (Cairo: Centre for Political And Strategic Studies), p.38.

depended on Hezbollah to stabilize the situation in the region and to put pressure on Israel with the aim of softening Israel's position in the region. Syria continued with this policy even after the Madrid Conference in order to force Israel to show some degree of flexibility in the negotiations.

The Lebanon Card

Syria's intervention in Lebanon in 1976 was part of its policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict. Syria's intervention in the Lebanese civil war was aimed at obtaining the Palestinian card and to prevent the PLO from becoming free to singularly run the affairs pertaining to the Palestinian–Israeli Conflict. Syria also aimed to use the military operations being launched by Palestinian forces and the Lebanese resistance to consolidate its role in the wider Arab-Israeli Conflict. Consequently, Syria was able to succeed in retaining the Lebanese card, despite Israeli's invasion of Lebanon. Equally, Syria managed to restore its role in Lebanon and to curtail Israel's influence on the border.

One of the effects of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was the decision by Syria to join the international coalition led by the US to liberate Kuwait. This offered Syria conducive regional and international conditions to end the civil war in Lebanon and a chance to re-order the situation so that Syria could enjoy undisputed dominance over Lebanon. Soon, the consensus in Lebanese politics was that Syria had the power of decision making and had the last word on issues regarding the Arab-Israeli Conflict. Syria began to exploit these conditions to increase its influence and bargaining power in the negotiations. All parties to the conflict

regionally and internationally realised that a settlement with Syria meant, ipso facto, a settlement with Lebanon.

Improved Ties with the US

Another direction in which the Syrian leadership began to move was to seek better ties with the US. Actually, the signs of this began to emerge in the late 80's following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the resultant process of reform, which saw the erstwhile power retreat from its traditional role of being a bloc in the Arab-Israeli Conflict. This affected the Soviet Union's ability to continue arming Syria, something then regarded as vital if Syria was to achieve a military balance with Israel. This change in the Soviet Union foreign policy pushed the Syrian leadership towards seeking better relations with the US.[33] Therefore, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, gave the Syrian leadership a golden opportunity, considering that the US was at the time in need of the widest possible Arab support to give its military intervention to free Kuwait political legitimacy. The Syrian leadership offered the US the support it needed. This in turn helped to a great extent to remove the causes of disagreement between the two countries.

The Problems of the Negotiation Strategy

Syria entered the Madrid Peace process armed with considerable military clout, regional alliance of radical nature, almost complete dominance over the Lebanese card, and open channels of contact with the US. However, despite all these, the Syrian-Israeli negotiation track, has shown that all the above Syrian

[33] Mohammed Zuheir Diab, Syria's Security Demands and A Peace Settlement With Israel, op. cit., p.62.

power cards are not sufficient to convince Israel to conclude a peace treaty with Syria. This indicates that there are problems, which hinder the deployment of these cards to achieve Syria's objectives. It is possible to discuss this by identifying the weak points and problems in Syria's power elements as discussed previously.

The basic problem took the shape of Syria's inability to confront Israel and win her demands despite its efforts to obtain maximum and regional support from the various sides. It was common knowledge that Syria intimated those regional quarters that sought to deal with Israel with some leniency, since it could not deal with Israel in the same way given the geostrategic significance of the occupied Golan Heights. Therefore, it was hard for Syria to feel comfortable in a moderate regional alliance with Egypt or the PLO. Rather it was the radical alliance that appeared suitable to Syria despite the fact that these groups were often inflexible and hard line even when Syria prodded them to show a degree of flexibility. This indeed happened during the periods when Syria sought to establish a positive rapport with Israel during the negotiation process. For example, when Syria accepted to begin talks with Israel sponsored by the US, Syria's relation with Iran and Hezbollah soured and became tense.[34] This problem intensified and began to appear more visibly in Syria's ties with Hezbollah regarded by Syria as a tool to put pressure on Israel. Hezbollah was not purely a Syrian card for two main reasons. First, Hezbollah was not merely an armed gang at the beck and call of anyone who would provide support, protection or funds. Hezbollah was a radical

[34] Ibid., p.63.

ideological organisation with its own unique vision of the future of Lebanon and the region in general and for which it strive to concretise. Second, is Hezbollah's solid tie with Iran.

Indeed, Hezbollah represented an aspect of Iran's revolutionary Islamic ideology. This radical ideology was ultimately the source of guidance for the organisation. Iran was also the principle financial backer of the organisation. The relationship between Iran and Hezbollah is a model of intricacy. Continued Iranian support for Hezbollah represents a vital symbol of the spread of Iran's revolutionary ideology.[35] This serves Iran's vital interest in maintaining its influence over supporting radical Islamic movements that enjoy intensive influence across the region.

Hezbollah's continued active and effective actions further constitute an important asset in Iran's regional and international policies that can be deployed to bring about great achievements.[36] Numerous subsequent developments indeed proved that Iran had greater influence on Hezbollah than Syria. For instance, in December 1995, a high powered Hezbollah delegation visited Iran after it became apparent that there would be developments in the Syrian-Israeli talks following the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the installation of Shimon Peres as the new Israeli premier. The delegation visited Iran to conduct discussions with Iranian leaders on the course that the organisation should take in the event of progress

[35] Walid M. Abd-al-Nasir, The Three Axis of Iranian Regional Foreign Policy, op.,cit., p.39.
[36] Ibid.

being made in the Syrian-Israeli negotiations. Hezbollah was given Iranian reassurances and pledge that Iran would continue to provide support to the organisation whatever the outcome of the negotiations.[37] One of the most significant developments in this regard, was Hezbollah's intense attacks on northern Israel using Katyusha rockets in March and April 1996. In response to these Hezbollah attacks, Israel launched an operation in Lebanon Code named Operation Grapes of Wrath – a retaliatory response to Hezbollah attacks. Israel's escalations eventually brought to the fore the issue of Syria's military presence in Lebanon as Israeli warplanes intensified their bombardments of Lebanese targets. This led some Lebanese to come out more openly to discuss the price Lebanon was paying as a result of Syria's presence in Lebanon.[38] These events prove that Syria was not agreeable to Hezbollah's operations and Iran's conduct during the crisis. Syria was unhappy with Iran's determination to chart out a course of action independent of Syria and whose aim was to consolidate and enhance Iran's role in Lebanon.[39] The basic problem was that Syria could not play the two cards–Iran and Hezbollah. The way it wanted Syria's choices and interests did not always concede with the ideological choices, interests and links of these two sides. For Syria to effectively and continuously use the radical card in the conflict, it had to have the power to hem in and control the radical forces or the ability to have its way if and when a divergence of interests with these groups arose. Perhaps it

[37] Mohammed A. Said, Arab Strategic Report 1995, (Cairo: Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, 1996), p.213.
[38] Basim Al-Jasr, Is Lebanon Will Pay The Price Again, *Al-Hawadith* Magazine 1999, Vol.268, p.25.
[39] Ibid.

would have been better for Syria to wave these cards rather than use them. To wave these power cards would have been beneficial for Syrian interests and would have, in another respect, allowed it to avoid any weaknesses that may emerge in using them. In another respect, Syria would still retain other pressure cards that it could deploy if there was great need for it. To be precise, it is possible that in some situations, the threat of force is more effective than the act of carrying out an act of force. The threat of force can also act as a deterrent, something that can be lost when threats are carried out and confrontations occur. Therefore Syria's problem considering it is the weaker power in the conflict compared to Israel, was its dependence on regional alliances, something that mortgaged Syria's polices to other quarters that it had no ability to fully control to achieve its objectives. This limited Syria's freedom to make decisions, which raises the further prospect of Syria's plans going off track or becoming unachievable. These numerous problems which Syria encountered eventually pushed it to seek a strategic balance with Israel by improving its ties with the US, the one power with ability to put pressure on Israel despite the apparent obstacle to this strategy being the signs evidently emerging that the US is not able to bring the necessary pressure to bear on Israel to force it to deal positively with Syrian demands. This can be attributed to Israel's power in its own right and the great influence of Jewish lobby groups in the US. However, it would be wrong to assume that to gain the US affection would be an alternative to the search for ways of influencing Israel itself directly.

As for the Lebanese card, it must be said that Syria can ill afford to depend on it too much, because the repeated use and dependence on Lebanon as the scene of the conflict between Syria and Israel has the danger of threatening Syrian influence in Lebanon and inflaming Lebanese sentiments against Israel. Equally, the deployment of a significant contingent of Syrian troops in Lebanon has the effect of considerably weakening the offensive capability of the Syrian armed forces, the prospect of Syria launching an attack on Israel besides weakening Syria's defensive capability.[40]

Indeed, some Israeli reports suggest that Israel does not favour a total Syrian troop pullout from Lebanon. Syria's presence in Lebanon could help check the conduct of hard-line groups. Perhaps what Israel favours is an understanding with Syria, which would allow the latter to maintain a military presence in Lebanon but away from areas along the common border between the two countries.[41]

Both the US and Israel had in the past proposed to Syria to agree to a peace treaty with Israel in return for a recognition of Syria's place in Lebanon.[42] This proposal seems to a large extent to tally with Israel's project to unilaterally pull out its forces from southern Lebanon. This Israeli action pulled the Lebanese carpet from under the feet of the Syrian negotiators. It also allowed Israel to respond with greater force to the attacks launched from southern Lebanon against

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[40] Teddy Purvis, Damascus is Not Responding, Israeli Options Journal, 1995, No. 5, p.32.
[41] Jacob Edelshtein. What Does the Syrian Leader Want, Israeli Options Journal, 1995, No. 6, p.27.
[42] Ibid.

targets in northern Israel besides removing the bone of contention and target, which made Lebanese resistance groups launch attacks on Israel in the first place.

Conclusion

The determinant strategic principle of Syrian negotiations up to now is the principle of double tracking where it seeks to conduct negotiations in more than one axis at the same time, the extreme axis which embodies a number of elements in the form of providing military support and entering into alliance with Iran and other radical groups. It also involves supporting these groups' military activities against Israel. The other axis is the bargaining axis, which entails entering into negotiations and demonstrating limited capacity for flexibility in the negotiations.

The relationship between the two axes is that of employing extremist factors to pressurise Israel so as to compel it to present concessions in the negotiations.

In general terms, this strategy is characterised classically and with simplicity, and conforms to the classical model of realism. Again positions taken by States and decisions made are not only based on pressures and seduction that go on between them, but are also governed by internal considerations. This has been applied to a large extent in the Syrian-Israeli negotiations. Negotiations between the two states have been influenced by politics as well internal considerations, which are in turn influenced by psychological and ideological dimensions to an extent not anticipated in state relations. Israel's policy is influenced to a large extent by internal politics and Israel places great emphasis on

public opinion, which continuously determines the kind of policies adopted. Israel's public opinion surveys have shown that there is a great deal of opposition to the withdrawal of Israel's army from the Golan Heights. Thus, the Prime Minister of any Israeli government would declare that any agreement with Syria would have to be subjected to a public referendum before implementation.

The same is the case with Syria where there is also great opposition in Syria's public opinion to reaching any agreement with Israel without Israel's withdrawal from the Golan Heights and all occupied Arab territories. Consequently, these extreme positions present what is acceptable in the public opinion of the two countries. The political price for changing these positions will be too high. Therefore, it will take a long time before the two countries can reach an agreement to resolve the intricate issues between them. Even then, time should not be viewed as a neutral factor, for it could play a role in the interest of one side and not the other.

CHAPTER FIVE

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

Introduction

In the framework of the analysis of the Middle East peace process and its future, we could say that Israel, led by Menachim Begin, the then Labour Party leader reached a peace accord with Egypt at Camp David in March 1978.

However, it is not predictable if the same will recur with other Arab countries it being that the regional and international factors and variables that existed then are radically different from the present. Israel may have withdrawn voluntarily from Egypt's Sinai, but this was not out of love or honour of Egypt as a major player in the region but this was done for the sake of retaining other areas that were more strategic and important to the state of Israel ideologically, religiously and in terms of security.[1] In addition, another very important factor was to remove Egypt from the Arab–Israeli conflict, because Egypt was considered the largest and most powerful Arab country in the region.

The current Middle East Peace process started with the convening of the Madrid Conference in Spain in October 1991[2] as a result of pressure from the US and the international community. Subsequently, Israel signed agreements with the

[1] Reddleman, M. , U.S. Foreign Policy , (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1983), pp. 80-81.
[2] Mohammed, H. Heikal , Secret Channels: The Inside Story of Arab-Israel Peace Negotiations (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996), p. 410.

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The coming to power in Israel of the Labour Party led by

Yitzhak Rabin in 1992 paved a way of some sort for the peace process and gave some optimism that peace would be achieved. But the victory of Benjamin Netanyahu, leader of the Likud Party thereafter in 1996, as well as the attainment by religious and right-wing parties[3] of majority seats in the Knesset (Israel Parliament) and again the victory of Ariel Sharon, leader of Likud Party over Ehud Barak, leader of the labour Party in the 2001 elections dealt a blow to the Arab world, particularly given that both elections had been preceded by such wide press coverage never seen before in the Arab world.

Any internal changes in Israel impact positively or negatively on the peace process, which is the only strategic option for the Arabs currently. The coming to power of the Likud Party, with its extremist and intransigent programme and the formation of a coalition government with other right wing and religious forces, which are more extremist and intransigent, casts doubts and several questions on the future of the Arab-Israel peace process. This is illustrated by the disclosure of

[3] The classification of political parties in Israel into right and left wings is based on two criteria, first the position taken on the issue of the occupied Arab land and the Palestinian people. The right wing rejects the ideal of returning even an inch of the occupied land and affirms the idea of "the larger Israel" and that this is crucial for the security of Israel. This position ranges from giving the Palestinian autonomy under Israel's authority to threats of mass expulsion, exile or annihilation. For the left wing, the position ranges from returning part of the occupied land in the framework of "Land for Peace" without allowing the establishment of an independent Palestinian state but as a confederate state of Jordan to the return of all occupied Arab land and the establishment of a semi-autonomous Palestinian state. A second criterion deals with the relationship between religion and the state. The right wing's position ranges between non-delinking of religion from the state and the full application of the Principles of Jewish law to the Society to establish a Jewish religious state. (Israel religious parties). The left wing wants to delink religion from the state and the non-interference with the secularity of the society but affirming the importance of religion in society.

the extensive plans the Likud Party has in their programme which are an expression of its contradictory view to the basis of the peace process that started in October 1991 in Madrid.

Israeli is adopting a new approach to the basis of negotiations with the Arab countries, that is, to replace the principle of "Land for Peace" by "Peace for Peace." This is meant to keep away from the negotiations the issue of the occupied land, yet this is the core of the Middle East conflict and the basis of any peaceful political settlement. The result of this, and which will be blamed on the new position, is the collapse of the peace process and the return of the state of affairs that existed in the region before Madrid and maybe even before 1973. Stakes will be high in the region since whatever has been done to the Palestinian course is enough to explode uncontrolled into tension and conflict.

Thus, if Israel does not adhere to the tentative agreements, which it instead considers final, the realities that dominated the region before 1991 will cease to exist. All these will be reflected in the way Israel interacts with the Arab world whether on terms that led to what was attained previously (with Egypt and Jordan) or a peaceful settlement that was being waited for from a political decision to be made by Israel (towards Syria and Lebanon).

An Analysis of the Palestinian Peace Process

The PLO, in its recognition of Israel has not achieved anything except accepting the Israeli solution to the Palestinian issue. This required that the PLO offer prior official Palestinian recognition of the right of the State of Israel to exist

in peace and security as well as offer official commitment to renounce and prohibit seeking refuge in terrorism and other violent activities. The PLO also committee itself to take disciplinary measures against Palestinians who break Israeli law and revoke all clauses I the Palestinian natural Charter which reject the right of Israel to exist in the region. All these were enunciated in a letter by Yasser Arafat[4] to the Israeli government consequently, the PLO – as the legal representative of the Palestinian people – recognized the Israeli government, according to a letter sent by Rabin[5] to Yasser Arafat in reply to his (Arafat's) letter in which the recognized the State of Israel.

In contrast to the non-commensurability seen in the two letters and Israel, there was an uneven situation in the balance of power between the two sides. The PLO's history predestined it as a terrorist organization, even after its recognition of Israel. The best Israel could do was to recognize it Israel as a representative of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian side made an official recognition of Israel, yet the latter still occupied Palestinian territories demanded by the Palestinian side. Further to the official Palestinians recognition of Israel, the latter closed the face on the Palestinian issue up to 1967 in its interests, turning the occupation to a legal issue and went ahead to restrict the Palestinian issue to the post-1967 period.[6]

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[4] See Index, Correspondence between Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ahmed S. Al-Dajani, Developments in the Palestinian Issue, Journal of the Future of the Arabs, No. 123, May 1999, P.140.

As a result, Palestinian territories occupied by Israel forcefully between 1956 to 1967 are not considered occupied territories, but have become – on the basis of Palestinians acceptance – controversial territories between Israel and the PLO. Instead of the Palestinian negotiators. Starting at the top of the issue, that is demanding the implementation of UN resolution 181 which deals specifically with the partitioning of Palestine into two states, Arab and Jewish; the negotiators started at the lowest point, with the demand of the return of Palestinian land occupied in 1967.[7] The negotiation process was hinged on the basis that the negotiating sides cannot achieve all. To forego some of its demands and facilitate a compromise with the Israeli sides, the Palestinian side decided to achieve minimal results. Consequently, the Palestinian side was unable to demand the return on the land occupied in 1967 (West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza strip) to return all these areas in full since the negotiation process itself compels the Palestinian side to give concessions on some of its demands. The demands get renewed every time because of the balance of power,[8] which affects the negotiation, process itself.

By virtue of the fact that Israel is the stronger and dominant party in this balance, the final settlement shall be determined by Israel's criteria. The cost of recognizing Israel by the PLO is big and in contrast, what the Palestinian side received is very little and unguaranteed. Thus the negotiation process, which was

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[7] Ibid.
[8] See Chapters Two and Three.

determined by the Declaration of Principles, did not have any clear direction or defined goal.

The opinion of Rabin, upon signing of the Declaration of Principles in 1993, was based in the creation of a greater Israel. He argued that "we are looking at the final solution in the framework of a state of Israel which will comprise most of Israeli land as it was during the British mandate, and by its side a Palestine entity that fashions a home for most Palestinians we want this Palestinian entity to be very much less than a state which will operate independently with regard to issues of Palestinians living within its authority. The boundaries of the state of Israel during the final solution will be at the boundaries, which existed before the 1973 October war. We shall not return to boundaries that existed before 4th June 1967. The secure boundaries of the state of Israel shall be on River Jordan...own goal being – before anything else – to lessen as much as possible the existence of Palestinian an Israeli land. We want a large area of the land with the least possible existence of Palestinians."[9]

This is how Rabin wanted Israel expanded at the expense of the rights of the Palestinian people. He envisaged same form of self-rule but not a complete sovereign Palestinian state. He also envisaged the attainment of a geographical portion between/Israelis and Palestinians through extending the scope of full Israeli control over the Jewish settlements. This portion was to be created to

[9] Burhan Al-Dajani, The peace process at crossroads. Journal of Palestinian Studies, No, 17, 1998, P. 98.

ensure a secure and permanent boundary between Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan.

This is an indication that, Israel shall resist the heavy establishment of an independent Palestinian state with full sovereignty on the west of River Jordan (West Bank). It may also fence all the remaining Jewish settlements in this area and protect their security and link to the state of Israel.[10] With the knowledge that Israel shall not give up any part of the Jewish settlement which in fact were built with Palestinian consent,[11] it is clear that the legality of the existence of two different population ethically and legally in the west Bank would have been granted. The Arab population, governed by the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority while the Jewish, governed by the jurisdiction of Israeli Authority. The State of Israel has managed to legalize itself in the West Bank through the cover of peaceful negotiations. By extension, Israel has defined and determined its own map that is to be the basis for a future final solution for the Palestinian issue.

The Palestinian entity, which was approved by Israel, will provide two separate solutions for the status of Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, respectively. This is because Israeli witness in the West Bank cannot be compared to hose in Gaza Strip.[12] In this regard, if Palestinian issue cannot be settled without the establishment of a Palestinian state and a particularly since

[10] Ibid., p. 99.
[11] Ibid., p. 100.
[12] See David Makovsky, Making Peace with the PLO: the Rabin Government's Road to the Oslo Accord, Boulder: Westview Press, 1996, p.30.

international support for the same is continuously mounting the Israeli solution may be to allow for the establishment of a Palestinian state in Gaza Strip only. However, since the West Bank has Jewish settlements, agricultural projects and road networks that have separated Palestinian towns and villages, this area may remain without sovereignty. As such, its administration shall be under Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip.

Based on this Israeli solutions, Israel shall maintain full responsibility over security matters foreign affairs, defence against external threats, international trade relations, international boundaries distribution of natural resources as well as security of Jewish settlements.[13] As for the Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip, it will be given authority to set up a police force and other security forces for the sake of public order and cooperation with the Israel police to direct the security of Israel and have direct responsibility to stop Palestinian resistance activities against Israel, for example uprisings, surrendering those wanted by Israel for trial, and to work to the dissolution of the foundations and infrastructure of Islamic movements like Jihad movement and Hamas, in addition Palestinian Authorities will take charge of the least 30% of the West bank and 70% of the Gaza Strip.[14]

Israel can achieve a number of advantages and by imposing hero solutions on Palestinian. The solutions may include the establishment of a quasi-Palestinian state with limited sovereignty and independence on the least possible area of

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[13] Ibid., p.32.
[14] Magdi Hammad, Experience of the Existing and on-Going Settlements (Beirut, Cairo: Dar Al-Shorouk, 1999), p.35.

Palestinian land and without endangering Israeli's security. This is possible because the Gaza strip is isolated geographically and is closed in terms of security.[15]

Secondly, Israel may choose to annex the Palestinian population in the West Bank to the Gaza Strip and then dispose of the full responsibility over the Palestinian population. In this way, the more than one million Palestinians in the West Bank shall continue inhabiting the Best Bank but will be legally under Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip such that these residents will be inhabitants of the west Bank but legally, they will under Palestinian Authority in Gaza.[16] Again, the capacity to expand the state of Israel with two nationalities in future will not be possible.

Lastly, Israel may opt to put the West Bank under its control without establishing a Palestinian state in it. Irrespective of the negotiations conducted to complete the process of redeployment of the Israel military in the West Bank, the situation continues to gravitate automatically towards the Israel solution. The pointer to this is that Israel has not withdrawn from the West Bank unlike. The Gaza Strip, having adamantly and continuously refused for nine years to open a security corridor between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.[17] Even though the Declaration of Principles emphasizes the geographical unity of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with a corridor linking them, and in spite of the negotiations

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[15] Ibid., p.40.
[16] See Chapter Three.
[17] Magdi Hammad, Experience of the Existing and on-Going Settlements,op.cit.,p.45.

concluded between the two sides to achieve this Israel has refused to open the corridor which shows that it has strategic considerations to impose separate solutions to the West Bank and Gaza Strip respectively. What reinforces this pointer is that Israel announced, its decision to change the Ezra crossing point (which separates Gaza from the state of Israel) from an ordinary security check point to an international boundary and that it will also change- before the end of 2004- from the Israel military to the Israel checkpoint authority. 2). And actually in May 2000, Israel changed its military security checkpoints which separate the West Bank from the Kingdom of Jordan to become international bounder point.[18] Also, Israel announced that it will soon change the supervision of the border point from the Israeli military to the Israeli check point Authority.[19] This was realized in May 2000, when Israel changed its military security checkpoints which separate the West Bank from the Kingdom of Jordan to the West Bank from the Kingdom of Jordan to become international crossing boundary points supervised by Israel Crossing and Checkpoints Authority.[20]

In addition to previous Israeli indicators, there are also other Palestinian indicators, which point, in the same direction. After mutual recognition by both Israel and the PLO, and after signing the Declaration of Principles, it seems that the Palestinian side is contented to accept the status quo, that is, the establishment of Palestinian state on a small part of Palestine, specifically Gaza Strip.

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[18] Ibid.
[19] A Civil Authority which Supervises External Crossing Points for the State of Israel.
[20] See Ali Jarbawi and Ziad Abur-Amr (eds.), the Struggle for West Bank Leadership, op. cit, p.20.

In this respect the Palestine Authority president Yasser Arafat may visit the West Bank but not stay there. Also the Palestinian Authority may put up an international authority may put up an international airport in Gaza as well as other government offices despite the limited area in Gaza Strip but not in the West Bank.

All identification and travel documents are issued in accordance with the Declaration of Principles from Gaza Strip only but not any other area in west Bank again some major Palestinian towns in the West Bank shall be under the administration of the Palestinian authority.[21]

The definition of areas where Palestinian documents are issued from conforms to the Israeli solution, which will in future recognize Palestinian sovereignty over Gaza but not the West Bank. If Israel is capable of imposing solution such that the Gaza Strip is placed under the control of Palestinian sovereignty while the West Bank remains without sovereignty, then all Palestinians in the West Bank will be legally (by virtue of them carrying Palestinian documents from Gaza), citizens of neighbouring country (Gaza) living with other citizens of another neighbouring country (Israel) in an area with no sovereignty and under a functional supervision divided between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Again, Israel will directly grant equal legal citizenship between the Palestinian citizens the Jewish settlers and by this, Israel will have achieved what

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[21] Ibid., p. 23.

may be alleged to be legal movement of West Bank Palestinians without physically moving them from where they stay. The result will be the absolute domination and control of Israel over the West Bank through the imposition of the Israeli solution. By that, Israel will have achieved under the guise of peace-what it would never, have achieve through its continued victories in wars against Arabs.

Despite this, the state of Israel will soon encounter a Palestinian course, a situation in which is difficult to ignore in the West Bank and Gaza ship. The Palestinian course will be represented by legislative council; coupled with a number of agreements signed by successive Israeli governments with the PLO. Consequently, it is expected that Israel will commit itself too some of the agreements it signed with the Palestinians and be contented with the fact that they will be implemented. The Palestinian side will make efforts to fulfil the conditions of the agreements in a bid to obtain more concessions. This will be as a result of pressure from Israeli security and intelligence organs in the context of commitments made in the agreements signed by both sides to guarantee continued cooperation between Israeli security organs and Palestinians security and police forces. The cooperation was meant to frustrate the activities of Hams and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad groups. It should be noted that this cooperation has had very tangible results[22] and particularly given that the Oslo agreements exempted from financial and administrative responsibilities over Palestinian affairs in

[22] Shahain. A., The PLO from Guardianship to Independence, the Palestinian Issue Journal, vol. 142, 1995, p.57.

densely populated towns while at the same time allowing Israel to keep its forces in those areas due to their significance.

In the long run, the Palestinian side will be the most regarded just one of the losing Arab side in the event of a hand line Israeli government coming to power and changing its policy towards the peace process in the event of this, the possibility of completing the peace process in the Palestinian perspective shall be impossible. This is so especially after the Palestinian leadership offered a series of important concessions in favour of the Israeli side, which bore no fruits. As a result, Israel's position will continue to control the peace process due to the following considerations: -

a) Lack of negotiations of any kind on Jerusalem and more so its deletion from negotiations on the final settlement.

b) Providing the Palestinian Authority with limited power in areas of security as well as economic and cultural relations in the framework of an expanded quasi self-rule.[23]

It is therefore expected that the tumbling of the peace process between the two sides will lead to the status quo being maintained, where Israel will still control 70% of the West Bank and 30% of Gaza ship and a number of separate Palestinian administrative organs in the West Bank coexisting side by side with Jewish settlements. There will also be one independent administration in the Gaza strip with Israel insisting on giving the Palestinians economic and trade advantages at

[23] Ibid., p. 58.

the expense of their political rights. However, this is likely to lead to the escalation of violence and the renewal of the '*Intifada*' (upraising) by Palestinians, which started in 1987 and which will after Israel will have managed to control violence in the occupied territories.

An Analysis of the Syrian Peace Process

The Israeli Syrian peace process is theoretically considered the least problematic in terms of ability to achieve peace negotiations compared to the Israeli Palestinian peace process. This argument is based on the fact that the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel, are not part of the "promised land" and there are no religious claims attached to them. However, the reality points to the opposite, because of the security considerations between the countries. The current statement in the Israeli-Syrian negotiations shows that it will take a relatively long time before the two countries find a solution to the unresolved issues, for example security, guaranteeing water and mineral sources. Even then, it is not possible to use time as a neutral factor since it will play a role in favour of one of the sides and not the other. And certainly, the passage of time is not in favour of Syria due to the following factors.

a) The new generation in Israel is leaning towards adopting hard line positions in comparison with the old generation.[24] The old generation, which had the responsibility of establishing Israel in the middle of a sea of Arab nations,

[24] See Asher Arian, Security Threatened: Surveying Israeli Opinion on Peace and War, Jeffee Centre for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv, 1995, p.3.

saw this as a miracle, which Israel must defend and protect at all costs. However, the new generation, which consists of more youth and new immigrants from the Russia and Eastern Europe, see the existence of Israel as a fact and a reality. They demand that Syria pays a substantive material price before Israel can withdraw from the Golan Heights.[25] This means that public opinion and the elite in Israel will take hard-line positions on issues that have been suggested to enable the attainment of compromises. This will only make the work of Syrian negotiations more difficult.

b) The balance of military power between Syria and Israel tilt in favour of Israel due to the weakening of Russia as a source of Syrian's arms and the fact that Israel now depends on sophisticated American weapons.[26] Again, if Syria had entered the convent negotiations with considerable defence capacity, the effectiveness of such capacity would weaken with the passage of time, which would reach peaceful settlement with Syria.

c) The progress made in achieving a peaceful settlement in the Egyptian, Jordanian and Palestinian sides is threatened by leaving Syria in a state of conflict and negotiation with Israel. This is certainly not in favour of Syria.

In addition to the factors maintained above, there is another strong psychological basis for the dominant position found amongst Israelis about Syria.

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[25] Ibid., p. 5.
[26] Ibid.

The picture many Israelis have of Syria in the long-drawn Arab-Israeli conflict is tainted [27] since Syria was the main centre of Arab nationalism in all its stages. Syrian were in fore front of all Arabs against Jewish ambitions in Palestine, cultivating feelings of Arab nationalism which regard Palestine as part of Arab land with the northern part of Syria being an off short of Palestine. Thus, there is a great interest among Syrians in Palestine as part of the conception of Arab nationalism. Syria was the first Arab country to cut economic ties with the Jews in 1947 as well as refusing the migration of Syrian Jews to Palestine. It also refused the migration of foreign Jews to Israel through its territory[28] and these greatly affected relations between Arab nationalism and Jewish Zionism as manifested in the Israeli-Syrian relations.

Syria is regarded as one of countries, which are hostile to the Zionist movement, readily accepted the idea of allowing Palestinian militants to stage attacks against Israel from its territory. The tension on the Syria-Israel border was the most violent compared to other Arab frontlines areas in northern Israel were always targets in the intense bombardment that was done from the Syrian territory.[29] These military tensions and clashes on the Syrian-Israeli frontlines led

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[27] See for example Chapter Four.
[28] Moshe Ma'os, Syria and Israel: From War to Peace-Making, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 200-203.
[29] Ibid., pp. 33.

to the development among Israelis of a negative picture about Syria as the enemy most determined to destroy Israel.[30] This negative picture of Syria amongst Israeli was corroborated by the hard line speeches regularly made by the Syrian media reiterating the Arab-Israeli Conflict. The conception of Arab nationalism Syria was the first Arab country to cut economic ties with the Jews in 1947 as well as refusing the migration of Syrian Jews to Israel through its territory and this greatly affected relations between Arab nationalism movement as manifested in the Israeli-Syrian relations.

In addition to this, Syria continued to embrace the most radical Palestinian and Lebanese organizations in a strategic framework meant to achieve military balance between the two neighbours.[31] Therefore, the problems that face Syria are such that peace with Israel is not an issue that is agreed upon by both sides. For example Israel hard lines hold the view that real power is the only means of guaranteeing the security of Israel and not by making peace with Syria. Others see that the existing situation on the Syrian-Israeli frontline is not that bad to the extent of risking to change it.[32] Also, making peace with Syria is regarded as one of the hard options that Israel may have to take. In spite of this peace with Syria is

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[30] Aryeh Shalev, Israel and Syria: Peace and Security on the Golan. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994, p. 32.
[31] See Chapter Four
[32] Aryeh Shalev, Israel and Syria: Peace and Security on the Golan. op.cit., p. 36.

considered most important to Israel[33] for the sake of creating a buffer zone that separates Israel from the more extremist enemies like Iraq and Iran.

Yet peace with Syria is not option open to Israel. There is already the Palestinian and Lebanese option. Given the difficulty of making progress in the Syrian-Israeli negotiations, Israel started to focus on Palestinian where some tangible progress was made with Palestinians.[34] Israel still has the option of negotiating with Lebanon too, which in considered more appealing to Israel in many ways; the most important being that there are no significant pressure groups in Israel that consider the Israeli army in Southern Lebanon to be of any vital significance to Israel. In addition, Lebanon is a country with limited military and economic capacity that cannot be threat to Israel's security.[35] The only obstacle is the insistence of Syria and Lebanon that all parties be committed to the terms of negotiations with Israel. Any progress that is to be made on the Lebanese side is fully linked to on the Syrian side. It is not expected that there will be progress in the Lebanese side where the Syrian-Israeli negotiations would have flopped. This correlation between the two sides explain Syria's determination to dictate the terms of the negotiations manifested in the full withdrawal of Israeli army from the Golan heights and other Palestinians territories occupied in 1967 as well as from Lebanese territories occupies in 1982 in accordance with UN resolution 425.

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[33] See Chapter Four.
[34] See Chapters Three and Four.
[35] Avi Shilaim, Israeli Politics and Middle East Peace-Making, Journal of Palestinian Studies, Vol.24, No.4. 1995, p. 20.

It is therefore expected that the two countries must maintain negotiations with Israel and make some initiatives which do not ignore of partial comprises like agreement with Syria on issues of security, water as well as radical Lebanese and Palestinian movements

Israel will try to obtain some concessions from the Syrian side on the process of searching a compromise. The most that Israel can offer to Syria is a partial compromise like normalization of diplomatic and economic relations and a guarantee that Israeli forces remain in the Golan Heights. However, this offer will most likely be rejected by Syria. The escalation of tension and counter accusation between the two countries can also not be ruled out, especially if that coincides with escalation in military activities of Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon and northern Israel.

In the long run, it is expected that there will be some alternatives by both countries to solve the pending issues between them through diplomatic means and the need to maintain negotiations between them. In this negotiations Israel may offer some concessions like partial withdrawal of its military from the Golan Heights but keep some other strategic areas, especially these areas considered by Israel as vital for its security. Israel will also want a guarantee to continue controlling water sources in the Golan and be allowed to put in place early washing mechanism.[36] It is expected that this partial withdrawal of Israeli forces will guarantee a comprehensive deal that includes receiving concessions from the

[36] See for example Chapter Four.

Israeli side, for example guaranteeing water source from the Golan to Israel and normalization of trade and cultural relations. Other concessions may include and agreements on resolving the issue of southern Lebanon while guaranteeing complete elimination of the militant Hezbollah.

Most likely, Syria will reject the Israel alternative of a partial withdrawal form the Golan Heights and probably take refuge in the alternative of war if peaceful means fail to achieve complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights and the areas occupied in 1967. The frustration that may result from continued Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights and the building of Jewish settlements in those areas, as well as the use of water and minerals in the Golan Heights by Israel, may lead to Syria making a decision to launch an abrupt war on Israeli forces stationed in the Golan Heights. Many risks are expected from such invasions, especially with the widespread circulation of sophisticated weapons possessed by both sides involved in the conflict.

Conclusion

The conflict by the Zionist movement against Arab nationalism is based on myth and crime; the myth of the promised land and the crime of annihilation and complete expulsion of the Arabs from their homeland using various extreme means, followed by the importation of other people to replace them. Yet there is nothing in the current settlement to show that this myth has been done away with and the crime eliminated. Instead, the settlement itself is based fundamentally on

devotion to this "promised land" myth and the crime of complete annihilation and expulsion of the Arabs.

This is a conflict directed at sanctifying Israel as a great country in the Middle East, provided with all means of power and domination in the midst of an Arab would controlled by a continuous mechanism of destruction and corrosion. There is nothing in the settlement process which points Israel's abandonment of this goal of destruction. However, it is not possible for any my to be used as a basis of building the truth neither can it be the foundation upon which to build legality.

The victory of the Zionist movement in the Seizure of official's Arab recognition may not necessarily mean the end of the struggle between the Zionist movement and Arab nationalism, even by imposition of a comprehensive means of settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The basis of this is that the imagined co-existence between the Zionist movement and Arab nationalism will only be possible under Zionist conditions, and not through consensus and peace between the two sides. It is assumed that any settlement reached with Israel must reflect the reality of the historical victor of the Zionist movement on Arab nationalism. Thus, any settlement Arab-Israel conflict must express the victory of Israel and its Zionist belief. This is evident in the dominant feature of the issue Israel's security in all agreements reached between two Arab countries (Egypt and Jordan) with Israel, and also between Israel and the PLO. The agreements are paradoxical as

they present a case where non-nuclear Arab states have to guarantee the security of nuclear state-Israel!

Again the tendency of national liberation and social change in the region will fund itself hostage of Zionist victory and Israel's conceptualisation of peaceful settlement under the auspices of the victory of the Zionist movement over Arab nationalism. This is not in reality but peace and settlement of consequences over the conquered.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The protracted Arab-Israeli conflict affects a very important area, a common meeting ground for the three major religions of the world- Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Also the Middle East has strategic importance to the world economically, politically and militarily. In these lights, the Middle East conflict has affected the social, economic, political and cultural sustainable development of the region. As noted in chapter two, the origin of the conflict can be traced to religious factors, which cited by both conflicting sides, have been used to sustain the conflict on both sides and despite the efforts on peace negotiations, a permanent solution to the conflict is yet to be arrived at. The millions of refugees who have left the conflict torn region attest to the magnitude of the problem.

The Fundamental principle in the concept of peaceful settlement of any conflict stems from the ability of conflicting parties to find a solution to the issues that led to the differences between them and abide by the agreements reached. The Arab-Israeli situation is a unique case in the sense that it is a conflict of two communities struggling over each other's inalienable rights to exist in one territory. Historically, this poses a very rare and challenging experience. The difficulties in resolving the conflict primarily lie in the fact that there exist major differences in the interests of the conflicting parties. Secondly, the external actors have played a major role, based on their interests in the region, fuelling and sustaining the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This study set out to examine the factors that led to the Arab-Israeli conflict with a view of crystallising the available and possible options to the Middle East peace process. It also set out to explore the future of the peace process while examining the impact of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the Middle East region. The study firstly established that, the Middle East being a rich ground of the three major religions of the world, religion has played a fundamental role at various stages in initiating the Arab-Israeli conflict. This conflict has led to the displacement of millions of refugees fleeing the conflict-torn region to other safer grounds therefore affecting sustainable social, economic, political and cultural development in the region.

Secondly, it established that the available options to the Middle East peace process include: the concession of each party to recognise and accept the legitimacy of the other party and the acceptance by both conflicting sides, based on resolution 181 of 1947of the UN partition plan; and the Oslo agreements of 1993, which gives legitimacy to the establishment of an Arab state and Jewish state in the contested region and peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict respectively.

Thirdly, the study established that the possible future of the Middle East peace process lie in the acknowledgement of the principle of the coexistence of each party, with defined borders and interests. It established that the problem between the sides in conflict is a problem of fundamental disagreements between the two over the existence of each side and not just disagreements over the

territory. Further, that no true or final solution can be attained to the problem as long as the conflicting parties refuse to recognise and accept the legitimacy of each to co-exist in the same territory, and for the external actors to recognise and respect the UN resolution aforementioned and above all, equally empower and support the conflicting parties without applying double standards.

Israel geographically stands out as surrounded North, South, and East by Arab State. Its supremacy in the region has largely been out of its military vantage over the surrounding states. In conclusion, the existence and future of an Israeli state in the sea of Arab states cannot be guaranteed through military power. The existence and future of an Israeli state can only be guaranteed through the review of its foreign and domestic policy with its surrounding neighbours.

Studies into the peaceful settlement of the Arab-Jewish conflict through creating a democratic state in Palestine based on justice and equality where the followers of the three religions live in peace and security remain a rich area to be explored. As has been seen in the latter arguments, religion acts as a potential originator of conflicts where different faiths converge in disputable territory. This is seen in the Middle East crisis, But the communities cannot achieve sustainable development by annihilating each other, necessitating a study on how further conflicts in the region can be averted through creation of a democratic state that allows for each faith to accommodate the other to arrive at the optimists vision of one land, two communities, three religions.

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CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN YASSER ARAFAT, CHAIRMAN OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION, AND YITZHAK RABIN, PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL.

1. Letter from Yasser Arafat, Chairman of Palestine Liberation Organization to Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister of Israel.

September 9, 1993

Mr. Prime Minister,

The signing of the Declaration of Principles marks a new era in the history of the Middle East. In firm conviction thereof, I would like to confirm the following PLO commitments:

The PLO recognizes the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security.

The PLO accepts United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

The PLO commits itself to the Middle East peace process and to a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the two sides, and declares that all outstanding issues relating to permanent status will be resolved through negotiations.

The PLO considers that the signing of the Declaration of Principles constitutes a historic event, inaugurating a new epoch of peaceful co-existence, free from violence and all other acts which endanger peace and stability. Accordingly, the PLO renounces the use of terrorism and other acts of violence and will assume responsibility over all PLO elements and personnel in order to assure their compliance, prevent violations and discipline violators.

In view of the promise of a new era and the signing of the Declaration of Principles and based on Palestinian acceptance of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the PLO affirms that those articles of the Palestinian Covenant which deny Israel's right to exist, and the provision of the covenant which are inconsistent with the commitments of this letter are now inoperative and no longer valid. Consequently, the PLO undertakes to submit to the Palestinian National Council for formal approval the necessary changes in regard to the Palestinian Covenant.

Sincerely,
Yasser Arafat,
Chairman.
Palestine Liberation Organization.

2. Letter from Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister of Israel, to Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

September 9, 1993

Mr. Chairman,
In response to your letter of September 9, 1993, I wish to confirm to you that, in light of the PLO commitments included in your letter, the Government of Israel has decided to recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and commence negotiations with the PLO within the Middle East peace process.

Yitzhak Rabin,
Prime Minister of Israel.
Source: Government of Israel, Prime Minister's office, 9 September 1993.