Israel's Peacemaking under Security Challenges: Implications of a Retrospective Outlook

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Israeli Involvement in Peace Processes

Israel's first conflict began as a state-in-the-making in 1947 and intensified with its establishment as a state in the War of Independence in 1948, involving all of its neighboring states of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon, which were supported by Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and others. The war came to an end with the 1949 armistice agreements. These established the armistice lines including the Green Line, and an end to the war, but not a formal peace as no state yet recognized the State of Israel. Conflict continued throughout the 1950s between Arab troops and *Fidayeens* and Israeli forces but did not escalate into full-scale war. In 1956, the Suez crisis resulted in an Israeli invasion of the Sinai Peninsula, allowing Israel to reopen the Straits of Tiran. Israel subsequently retreated from the Sinai Peninsula, only to recapture it a decade later in the Six-Day War of June 1967. Attacked by five Arab states, which were supported by eight additional ones, Israel swiftly conquered the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria. As a result of the war, Israel expanded its territory significantly, but the admirable victory of the 19-year-old country fighting for its life has not been translated, as of yet, into serving the core values of a Jewish-democratic state.

In an attempt to regain their lost territories, Egypt and Syria in October 1973 launched a surprise attack on Yom Kippur, the most sacred holiday in Judaism. The fighting lasted less than three weeks and ended with an Israeli victory and no major territorial changes.

The end of the Yom Kippur War marked the start of the first major peace process in Israel's history. After a summit conference in Geneva aimed at resolving the conflict collapsed with Syria's refusal of attendance, the U.S. began acting as mediator, concluding an Israeli-Syrian Agreement on Disengagement in May 1974 and establishing a channel of communication between Israel and Egypt. Two years of indirect negotiations, punctuated by a change in Israeli leadership in the election of Yitzhak Rabin as Prime Minister, resulted in an interim agreement reached in September 1975. The agreement secured Israeli use of the Suez Canal, an Israeli withdrawal in the Sinai Peninsula, and the establishment of a demilitarized buffer zone between the new borders. This agreement laid the foundation for a full framework for peace reached in 1978. Following the unprecedented November 1977 visit to Israel by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, U.S. President Jimmy Carter offered to facilitate negotiations between the two nations at Camp David. Intense negotiations resulted in two documents: the Framework for Peace in the Middle East[1] and the Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty[2]

[1] "Camp David Accords: The Framework for Peace in the Middle East - Research." *Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum*, The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/research/framework_for_peace_in_the_middle_east.

between Egypt and Israel. The Framework for Peace in the Middle East set forth a plan for reaching a final status settlement between Israel and the Palestinians, which led the foundations to the subsequent September 1993 Oslo Agreement[3] a decade and half later. The second document, however, facilitated the conclusion of a formal peace treaty between the two nations the following year. The agreement formalized borders and returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egyptian control, marking a milestone in Egypt's recognition of the State of Israel. American contribution of aid to Egypt also served to help facilitate the peace agreement. Egypt suffered consequences including severing of relations with Syria and outrage across the Arab world, especially in the Palestinian population. The agreement also inspired internal dissent in Egypt culminating in the assassination of Sadat in October 1981.

After the failure of the Palestinian chapter in the Framework for Peace in the Middle East, more than a decade passed before efforts resumed to reach a peace settlement with the Palestinians. A range of factors accounted for the first step taken in the Madrid Conference of 1991. Most directly, the First Intifada had been sparked in 1987 and began a years-long popular uprising against Israeli rule, drawing international attention to the need for progress on an Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Although leading a right-wing government, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir remarked that he felt there was 'no choice'[4] but to agree to the Madrid Conference. The Madrid Conference marked several milestones in paving the way for progress on peace negotiations. Although Israel refused to negotiate with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), it held talks with Palestinians as part of a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation. The conference also resulted in the U.S. declassifying the PLO as a terrorist organization. The conference focused on the fulfillment of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, both interpreted by many as requiring 'land for peace' agreements. PM Shamir, however, expressed resistance to the idea of giving up land, preferring a 'peace for peace' equation. In fact, most Israeli successive leaders after Shamir who were more forthcoming in peace negotiations would have subscribed to a 'peace **and security** for peace' as the credo of their policy vis-à-vis Israel's neighbors.

Following the Madrid Conference, two main tracks of negotiation emerged, in Moscow and Washington, DC: a bilateral track focused on peace deals with Israel's neighbors and with the Palestinians, and a multilateral track made up of various international committees focused on issues from refugees to water. The multilateral tracks did not produce significant results. The bilateral talks, however, evolved into what would become, via a secret backchannel, the Oslo process, indirectly promoting the Israeli-Jordanian peace process and culminating in the signing of the peace treaty in

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[2] "Camp David Accords: Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel." *Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum*, The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/research/framework_for_the_conclusion_of_a_peace_treaty.

[3] "Declaration of Principles." *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20principles.aspx.

[4] Jonathan Rynhold, "Cultural Shift and Foreign Policy Change: Israel and the Making of the Oslo Accords." *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 42, no. 4, Dec. 2007.

October 1994. While the Oslo process was closely intertwined with Jordanian peace, negotiations with Syria also continued throughout the 1990s on a separate track, while peace processes with other Arab states stalled. The Oslo negotiation process began in secrecy in 1992 between Israel and the PLO. It resulted in two significant milestones: mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO in 1993 (the Oslo I Accord), and an interim self-government agreement signed in 1995 (the Oslo II Accord). The interim self-government agreement established, *inter alia*, a plan to create the Palestinian Authority. It also divided the West Bank into areas A, B, and C, with area A under full Palestinian control, and area B under Palestinian civil control and an overriding security authority for Israel. Together, these areas made up roughly 40 percent of the West Bank, with Israeli-controlled area C accounting for the remaining 60 percent. This arrangement was meant to last for a maximum 5 years, during which time the two sides would negotiate a final status agreement.

In addition to the mutual recognition and the 1995 interim agreement, several additional agreements in the following years sought to facilitate the implementation of the Oslo Accords. The Gaza-Jericho Agreement of 1994 officially established the Palestinian Authority, while the Hebron Protocol of 1997, the Wye River Memorandum of 1998, and the Sharm El Sheikh Memorandum of 1999 all sought to implement the Oslo Accords architecture. Despite the intention for Oslo II to mark an interim agreement lasting no more than 5 years, Israel and the Palestinians remain in the Oslo system, 24 years into the interim agreement rather than 19 years into an initially desired final status agreement. While negotiations have stopped and started numerous times, the breakout of the Second Intifada in September 2000 and subsequent rounds of bloodshed until 2005 marked the end of productive negotiation.

Prior to that, the two sides came close to progress at talks facilitated by the U.S. in Camp David in July 2000. Distrust and disagreements, mainly over the Jerusalem issue, prevented the talks from reaching a deal. Several months later, in the final weeks of both the presidency of Bill Clinton and the government of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, the two sides met in Taba for six days of negotiations aimed at providing an agreed-upon set of understandings to facilitate the transition in government, which would allow continuity in the talks. Ariel Sharon's election as Israel's Prime Minister days later precluded further negotiation attempts after a campaign run on dealing harshly with Palestinians. The escalating violence of the Second Intifada also served to make resumption of negotiations impossible.

In November 2007, the Annapolis Conference marked the first effort to renew talks after the end of the Second Intifada. President George W. Bush facilitated negotiations between PM Ehud Olmert and PA President Mahmoud Abbas, ending in a joint statement committing both sides to further bilateral talks, targeting an agreement by the end of 2008. The talks would be based upon the roadmap drafted by U.S. President George W. Bush in 2002 and endorsed by representatives from the Quartet of the

European Union, Russia, the UN, and the U.S.[5] The roadmap outlined three phases ideally leading toward a two-state solution. Negotiations after the conference were well-structured and intense in all three levels: the leaders', the ministerial, and the working committees. However, from the start, they suffered from the weak domestic positions of both leaders: Hamas resisting Palestinian participation and Olmert's government leading a feeble coalition. Talks also did not involve a third party to mediate and produce concessions and trade-offs, hampering progress toward many issues. In practice, talks lasted until the eve of Olmert's resignation as PM, making significant progress despite an ultimate failure to produce an agreement. In 2013, U.S.-sponsored efforts brought the two sides together again and they discussed the contentious core issues until talks crumbled, due to a lack of confidence on both sides in their respective negotiation partners. Abbas was suspicious of Israel's stalling behavior, while his blunt reconciliation talks with Hamas, simultaneously with his resorting to a pre-meditated international warfare to delegitimize Israel, ended the round.

Beyond the Palestinian sphere, as briefly mentioned above, Israel has also conducted both successful and unsuccessful bilateral peace negotiations with neighboring states. Following mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO, Jordan's attitude warmed significantly toward Israel. After a year of negotiations, the two sides signed the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty. The treaty established official borders and diplomatic relations, cooperation on solutions to refugees and on combatting terrorism, and an agreement on the sharing of water resources. Israel also acknowledged the special role of the Hashemite Kingdom in the Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem. In contrast to the success of Israeli-Jordanian negotiations, Israel and Syria engaged in indirect and direct bilateral talks from 1992 to 2000, failing in this time to reach an agreement. After Syrian President Hafez al-Assad's death in June 2000, no progress toward a peace treaty has been made. Indirect talks brokered by Turkey in 2008 were constructive but did not attain conclusion.

Relations with Israel's fourth neighboring state, Lebanon, mark an arena of even less progress. After the 1982 Lebanon War, the two countries never signed a formal peace agreement. While Lebanon attended the 1991 Madrid Conference along with Israel's other neighbors, talks did not reconvene. Israel unilaterally withdrew its troops from Lebanon to the international border in May 2000, ending an 18-year presence in the Southern security strip. Syria's dominance in Lebanon, heightened tensions in the ensuing years, and the Second Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006 have further prevented any progress. Hezbollah's strong influence in Lebanon's government and military continue to make peace negotiations between the two countries a near-impossibility.

Characteristics of Israeli Behavior in Peace Processes

To examine to what extent Israel has a national strategy for peace, it is first important to determine what peace describes in each sphere of negotiations. Rhetoric surrounding peace efforts is often intertwined with seeking an end to violence and

[5] Sharon Otterman, "MIDDLE EAST: The Road Map to Peace." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, Feb. 7, 2005, www.cfr.org/backgrounder/middle-east-road-map-peace.

security rhetoric. However, many of the actions taken in pursuit of security, such as movement restrictions in the West Bank and the construction of the security fence, serve also to weaken trust and move the two sides further away from a peace deal. Such an emphasis on security over peace negotiations, which, ultimately, has the potential for lasting security solutions, has failed to result in a secure and safe Israeli society. The 2006 war with Hezbollah, frequent violent clashes with Hamas in Gaza, and the 2015 'Intifada of Knives' all point to the fact that a strategy failing to emphasize peace efforts bodes ill for national security.

As John Kerry emphasized during his failed attempt to broker a peace deal in 2013, the goal of the peace process should entail "not just the absence of conflict, but a full and a lasting peace with Arab and Muslim nations, an end once and for all to the pernicious attacks on Israel's legitimacy."[6] In the opinion of the United States, the international community, a majority of the Israeli society, and many past Israeli Prime Ministers, a two-states-for-two-peoples solution represents the only viable path to such lasting peace and legitimization. In achieving a two-state solution, Israel might live up to the vision outlined in its Declaration of Independence, to extend "peace and good neighborliness" to the rest of the Middle East. More importantly, a partition of the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea into two nation-states with a border between them will secure the future of Israel as the democratic nation-state of the Jewish People while providing self-determination to the Palestinians. Hence is the indispensability of a consistent peace strategy.

Israel's behavior in negotiations with the Arab states and Palestinians during the past half-century would be better described as motivated primarily by security considerations and status quo maintenance rather than based on a coherent, comprehensive peace strategy. Peace *per se* does not seem to be a consistent pillar in Israeli policy making. The continuous repercussions and negative trends of the protracted conflict on the Israeli society do not often express themselves in the strategic planning.

Several factors serve to explain Israeli behavior in peace processes aside from a desire for peace. In explaining Israeli peacemaking behavior, the U.S. influence looms large in pressuring Israel into negotiations. This trend is evidenced through U.S. mediation of talks with Egypt in 1974-75, facilitation of Camp David negotiations in 1978, as well as the Madrid Conference of 1991, the Oslo process throughout the 1990s, the 2003 'road map' for peace, the Annapolis Conference of 2007-08, and the 2013-14 peace talks. The influence of domestic political changes as well as the use of stalling and preference for the status quo mark frequent trends. Finally, the influence of experiences with terrorism on Israeli decision making must factor into any analysis of Israeli behavior. According to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 161 people were killed in terrorist attacks in Israel between the signing of the Declaration of Principles in

[6] "Middle East Peace Negotiators Come To Washington." *National Archives and Records Administration*, National Archives and Records Administration, obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2013/08/01/middle-east-peace-negotiators-come-washington.

September 1993 and 2000.[7] Since September 2000, 1,357 people have been killed by Palestinian violence and terrorism in Israel.[8] Lack of trust in Palestinian negotiation partners resulting from such violence marks a key challenge to the peace process.

U.S. Influence

U.S. influence has been a key catalyst to progress on negotiations throughout Israel's history. The Camp David Accords, the first significant milestone in peace progress, were made possible by U.S. pressure, facilitation, brokerage, mediation, and offers of aid. After the Yom Kippur War illustrated[9] Israel's dependence on the U.S., Israel felt pressure to please the U.S. through negotiations with Egypt in order to obtain further security aid to rebuild its forces. Additionally, U.S. mediation in negotiations helped to secure desirable terms for Israel with the help of the promise of American foreign aid to Egypt. Beyond negotiations with Egypt, American influence has focused predominantly on seeking peace with the Palestinians. The participation of Israel in the Madrid Conference despite the right-wing leadership of Prime Minister Shamir at the time owed a lot to American pressure. Shamir "later admitted that his participation was motivated by the will to please his American ally and the conviction that the experience would stop there."[10] Scholars point to the end of the Cold War, and the possible decrease in the importance of the Israeli ally for the U.S., as another driver of Shamir's desire to please the U.S.[11] Despite the conviction that participation in the conference would not entail large changes in policy, the conference paved the way for the declassification of the PLO as a terrorist organization and the start of the Oslo process shortly afterwards.

The U.S. was also heavily involved in the peace efforts of the 1990s, and subsequent efforts to restart negotiations, albeit in a grim political climate. However, despite the resistance of the Benjamin Netanyahu governments to progress on a final status agreement, his governments nonetheless entertained the efforts of both Presidents Clinton and Barack Obama to try their hand at moderating negotiations. While one might not expect this attitude from a leader insistent that Palestinian statehood would "endanger

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[7] "Suicide and Other Bombing Attacks in Israel Since the Declaration of Principles (Sept. 1993)." *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, Suicide and Other Bombing Attacks in Israel Since the Declaration of Principles (Sept. 1993).

[8] "Victims of Palestinian Violence and Terrorism since September 2000." *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Palestinian/Pages/Victims%20of%20Palestinian%20Violence%20and%20Terrorism%20sinc.aspx.

[9] Louise Fischer, "Turning Point on the Road to Peace: The Government of Yitzhak Rabin and the Interim Agreement with Egypt (Sinai II)." *Israel Studies*, vol. 19, no. 3, 2014, pp. 55–80, doi:https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.2979/israelstudies.19.3.55.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A6d2246bc72c3cb45a2f9a085807c71cd&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

[10] Marwa Daoudy, "A Missed Chance for Peace: Israel and Syria's Negotiations Over the Golan Heights." *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2008, pp. 215–234, doi:https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/24358120.pdf?ab_segments=0%2Fdefault-2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3A30a25416bc5d99d580c5d1ee9518eea8&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

[11] Ibid.

our existence,"[12] this entertainment of U.S. peace efforts displays the continued influence of U.S. policy goals on Israeli Peace progress.

In fact, in all peace agreements and in negotiations that did not attain an agreement, American involvement has been instrumental and, in most cases, critical to obtain results. In 1974, the U.S. mediated the Israel-Syria Disengagement Agreement, and several years later the 1978 Camp David Accords. The U.S. was also instrumental in bringing all parties to the table at the 1991 Madrid Conference, facilitating the Oslo process from 1993 to 2000, in addition to further rounds of talks at Camp David and Taba in 2000-2001. In recent decades, subsequent U.S. presidents have continued to seek Israeli-Palestinian peace, George W. Bush's attempt materializing in the 2007-08 Annapolis talks, and Obama sponsoring talks in 2013-14. President Donald J. Trump's promised 'Deal of the Century' will mark yet another American attempt at Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Status Quo Leading to Stalemate

Israeli negotiation behavior is also often characterized by moving at a very slow pace, employing stalling as a tactic to maximize gains. Despite commitment to advance the Palestinian track made in the Camp David agreements, Israel used the symbolic achievements of Camp David "as a shield against any movement toward resolving the other issues."[13] In playing up achievements, some Israeli governments have sought to lessen pressure to make advancements on issues it would rather ignore, such as the Palestinian issue. Following the Camp David Accords, little emphasis was placed on peace efforts in either the Palestinian or the Arab state sphere. The decade was rather marked by the First Lebanon War of 1982 and growing discontent in the Palestinian population, culminating in the breakout of the First Intifada in 1987. Such discontent led eventually, with international pressure, to the Madrid Conference that, in turn, allowed for the commencement of the Oslo process.

In negotiations with Syria throughout the 1990s, perceptions of time also played a large role. "Refusing pressure and short-term gains, Hafez Assad appeared to have a long time horizon from 1991 to 2000, while Rabin, Peres, and Barak felt the heat of elections and opinion polls."[14] At the end of the decade, facing illness, Assad desired a quicker agreement, but it was Israel that slowed progress in hopes of extracting greater concessions. In the end, no agreement was reached after a decade of negotiations, partially due to stalling behavior at different points by both sides. In Lebanon, status quo favoring and lack of progress on negotiations led to an Israeli occupation of Southern

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[12] Judah Ari Gross and David Horovitz, "Netanyahu Rules Out a Two-State Solution." *The Times of Israel*, Apr. 7, 2019, blogs.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-rules-out-a-two-state-solution/

[13] Shlomo Avineri, "Beyond Camp David." *Foreign Policy*, no. 46, 1982, doi:10.2307/1148366.

[14] Marwa Daoudy, "A Missed Chance for Peace: Israel and Syria's Negotiations Over the Golan Heights." *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2008, pp. 215–234, doi:https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/24358120.pdf?ab_segments=0%2Fdefault-2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3A30a25416bc5d99d580c5d1ee9518eea8&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

Lebanon for nearly two decades following the First Lebanon War. Israel opted to unilaterally withdraw troops and end its occupation of southern Lebanon in 2000 in compliance with UNSC Resolution 425.[15] In the absence of secured peace and the presence of instability in the region, Hezbollah's growth in Southern Lebanon culminated in the Second Israel-Hezbollah War in 2006, following a cross-border attack on Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah.

In the Palestinian sphere, those against the two-state solution in Israel stood to gain by delaying and prolonging negotiations. As Prime Minister Shamir remarked of his participation in the Madrid Conference after leaving office, "I would have carried on autonomy talks for ten years meanwhile we would have reached half a million Jews in Judea and Samaria."[16] As his comment displays, each delay of final status agreement talks makes the potential for a two-state solution a more distant reality as the population of Jewish settlers in the West Bank grows. This tactic of delaying negotiations, while refusing to freeze growth of settlements, has eroded trust in negotiations on the Palestinian side.

During the left-wing government of Yitzhak Rabin, more rapid progress was achieved with the signing of the Oslo I and II accords and achievement of peace with Jordan. In the mostly right-wing governments that have succeeded Rabin after his assassination, however, the multiple agreements aimed at implementing the Oslo framework in the ensuing years have not achieved its implementation. The delays in implementation and advancement of the Oslo process mark perhaps the most significant example of such stalling behavior. Partially in response to international pressures in the absence of active negotiations, the Israeli government led by Ariel Sharon made the decision[17] in 2005 to 'disengage' from the Gaza Strip, evacuating roughly 8500 Israeli settlers and establishing a blockade preventing trade or travel between Gaza and Israel. A decade and a half later, some blame the disengagement for the humanitarian distress in the Gaza Strip, the dismal economic situation, and the growth of Hamas' power.

In 2014, the last serious efforts to restart peace negotiations crumbled in part due to the PLO's appeals to join international organizations in contrast to Israel's demands. When Tzipi Livni, the head Israeli negotiator, asked her PLO counterparts why Abbas had made this move, they responded that Abbas felt the Israelis were stalling.[18] Disregarding continuous Palestinian rejections, this stalling tactic has had far-reaching consequences in eroding trust in Israeli commitment to peacebuilding.

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[15] "Israel's Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon (2000)." *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/Maps/Pages/Israel%27s-Withdrawal-from-Southern-Lebanon.aspx.

[16] Jonathan Rynhold, "Cultural Shift and Foreign Policy Change: Israel and the Making of the Oslo Accords." *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 42, no. 4, Dec. 2007.

[17] "Israel's Disengagement from Gaza and North Samaria (2005)." *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/Maps/Pages/Israels%20Disengagement%20Plan-%202005.aspx.

[18] Roger Cohen, "Why Israeli-Palestinian Peace Failed." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, Dec. 24, 2014, www.nytimes.com/2014/12/24/opinion/roger-cohen-why-israeli-palestinian-peace-failed.html.

Domestic Politics

In analyzing to what extent Israel has displayed a national strategy for peace, the dramatic effect of leadership changes on negotiation progress displays the degree of individual control that Israeli politicians hold over national policy, in contrast to a consistent, strategic, and comprehensive national vision. The effect of domestic politics made itself abundantly clear in preventing Israel and Syria from reaching a final peace agreement. In the first few years of negotiations, Rabin had made a verbal commitment[19] to withdraw to the 1967 borderlines as a part of a peace agreement if other terms and Syrian commitments were favorable. With an agreement not reached before the end of Rabin's term, Shimon Peres showed hesitation to making the same commitment, though reluctantly agreed to honor it. The effect of this change, however, served to erode trust and further delay progress.

Several months later, when Netanyahu succeeded Peres as Prime Minister, he refused to build upon previous progress and demanded a resumption of talks on his terms.[20] Assad refused, delaying negotiations again. Toward the end of the Syrian negotiation track in 2000, Prime Minister Barak was concerned with public opinion and political criticism. When the Israeli working paper for the agreement prepared by Barak's staff leaked to the Israeli and Arab press, Assad cancelled the talks due to his own public opinion concerns.

The dramatic effects of the leadership changes of the 1990s illustrate the difficulty of adhering to any consistent strategy for peace, even if one were apparent. Despite the strong rightward shift in Israeli politics in recent years, public opinion has not exhibited a strong shift in regards to either normalization of relationship with Arab states or Palestinian issues. In 1996, 48 percent of Israelis supported the creation of a Palestinian state.[21] In February 2019, one poll found that 42 percent of Israeli Jews currently support a two-state solution.[22] Nevertheless, it is still the widely preferred option over all others. While a notable decline in support, it does not account for the strong opposition to productive dialogue exhibited by the Netanyahu government. With Israeli society not yet firmly swayed away from peace, future political shifts could again create fertile conditions for negotiations.

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[19] "The Madrid Peace Conference." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1992, pp. 117–149, doi:10.1525/jps.1992.21.2.00p0105y.

[20] Marwa Daoudy, "A Missed Chance for Peace: Israel and Syria's Negotiations Over the Golan Heights." *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2008, pp. 215–234, doi:https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/24358120.pdf?ab_segments=0%2Fdefault-2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3A30a25416bc5d99d580c5d1ee9518eea8&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

[21] SaritYalov, "A Palestinian State and Israeli Public Opinion." *Ariel Center for Policy Research*, 2001, www.acpr.org.il/publications/books/25-Zero-yalov.pdf.

[22] "Nearly Half of Israeli Voters Back Two-State Solution: i24NEWS Poll." *i24NEWS*, Feb. 21, 2019, www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/politics/195730-190221-nearly-half-of-israeli-voters-back-two-state-solution-i24news-poll.

Impact of Terrorism

A final crucial factor to consider in explaining Israeli actions in the peacemaking sphere is the influence on Israel's political climate of terrorism and lethal attacks targeting Israel's civilian and residential centers. The more that Israelis view Palestinians as threats to their safety and as untrustworthy negotiation partners, the more resistant they will be to parties advocating peace efforts. The Second Intifada, the violent uprising by Palestinians that left over 1,100 Israelis dead and 8,000 wounded and 4,907 Palestinians dead and 8,611 wounded,[23] is perhaps the most important moment in understanding the current (nonexistent) state of peace negotiations. Violence erupted after the collapse of peace talks at Camp David in 2000, a one-before-last attempt by the Clinton Administration to broker an Israeli-Palestinian permanent peace deal. In the Israeli account, Israel offered the Palestinians a fair deal, which Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat rejected altogether, going on to orchestrate a breakout of hostility and terror. In the Palestinian account, Israel offered a deal that no Palestinian would accept.

Many Israelis, in placing personal blame on Arafat for the violence, took the Intifada as proof that Palestinian leadership could not be relied upon as a trustworthy negotiation partner, resorting to an orchestrated violence in order to obtain more leverage around the negotiation table. This belief subsequently served as an excuse for a lack of negotiation progress in the ensuing decade and a half. This narrative deserves questioning, especially given the opposition that Mahmoud Abbas, current President of the Palestinian National Authority and Chairman of the PLO, voiced to the violence both at the time and in the years since.[24] However, the impact of the memory of terrorism and the perception of current threats remains strong. It is even more accentuated by the 14 years of Hamas' and other factions' thousands of ruthless attacks on Israeli civilians by way of rockets, missiles, flying explosives, and terror tunnels, despite Israel's 2005 disengagement from the Gaza Strip. Fear of terror reinforces support for the right-wing parties that assert the unviability of a two-state solution. One 2014 study found that people living in areas within the range of rocket fire from Gaza voted for right wing parties at rates 2-6 percent higher than those living outside this range.

Fear of terror also has the effect of radicalizing the political dialogue in Israel, with a trend over the past few years of de-legitimization of peace advocates in Israeli society. Violent opposition to peace efforts manifested itself most clearly in the 1995 assassination of Prime Minister Rabin. Those working with civil society groups advocating peace efforts, and even moderate politicians, are frequently labeled 'traitors' for advocating negotiation with the 'enemy.' However vague or inconsistent a national goal toward peace has appeared in the past, the current political climate has rendered it nearly impossible to prioritize peace efforts on the national agenda. Barring a severe

[23] See Jewish Virtual Library, "Vital Statistics: Total Casualties, Arab-Israeli Conflict (1860 - Present)," https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/total-casualties-arab-israeli-conflict.

[24] Glenn E. Robinson, "Al-Aqsa Intifada 10 Years Later." *Foreign Policy*, Oct. 18, 2010, foreignpolicy.com/2010/10/18/al-aqsa-intifada-10-years-later/.

upset in the next round of elections to capitalize on the 42 percent[25] of Israelis who still support a two-state solution, progress toward peace seems a distant prospect.

What Might a Renewed Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process Look Like?

While Israel still lacks normal relations with many Arab states in addition to the Palestinian issue, progress in the Palestinian front is most crucial. This is due to the persistent terror threat, the low quality of life in the Palestinian territories, and the requirement of progress in the Palestinian sphere as a prerequisite of progress with Arab states.

In order to improve prospects for the success of any future peace negotiations, trust building must occur between the two sides. Trust is crucial not only before and during time of negotiations, but also for the implementation and lasting vitality of any peace agreement. While peace negotiations might not occur soon, other opportunities exist for the growth of trust.

For instance, recent developments in water technology make Israel more water-secure, meaning that negotiations to improve water sharing in the West Bank and in Gaza might prove mutually beneficial.[26] Given the worsening water crisis in the Palestinian territories, such cooperation could improve stability and prospects for peace in the entire region. Progress on water negotiations – or other issues that the two sides might be willing to discuss outside the framework of final status talks -- could help to build a cooperative relationship in anticipation of peace negotiations. Renewable energy, tourism, healthcare, and agriculture are spheres in which such negotiations based on mutual interests could pave the way to the resumption of talks on the more inflammable core contentious issues.

Despite delays in the political component of President Trump's peace proposal, his administration correctly recognizes that economic development in the Palestinian territories is indispensable for shaping the region's stability. A 'Marshall Plan' for Palestinian development, preferably led by the U.S., should invite Sunni-Arab states, the "Arab Quartet," to be partners of Israelis and Palestinians. It should also promote meaningful economic access for Palestinians to Area C in the West Bank, making up 60 percent of the West Bank territory. Additionally, it should cement plans for the reconstruction of Gaza, based on rock-solid security arrangements and within the framework of a regional diplomatic effort.

Israel has yet to see whether President Trump will follow American presidential tradition in attempting to mediate renewed talks between Israel and the Palestinians

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[25] "Nearly Half of Israeli Voters Back Two-State Solution: i24NEWS Poll." *i24NEWS*, Feb. 12, 2019, www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/politics/195730-190221-nearly-half-of-israeli-voters-back-two-state-solution-i24news-poll.

[26] Oded Eran et al., *Israeli Water Diplomacy and National Security Concerns*. EcoPeace Middle East, Institute for National Security Studies, 2018, *Israeli Water Diplomacy and National Security Concerns*.

outside of the economic plan. Even without such an effort by the Trump Administration, all five of the leading democratic candidates in the 2020 Presidential race support a two-state solution,[27] foreshadowing a renewed American attempt at brokering peace in the Middle East within the next few years. Upon the renewal of the peace process, it is essential to change the "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed" paradigm of Camp David, Taba, Annapolis, and the Kerry round into "what has been agreed or mutually coordinated should be implemented." Such an approach would provide the basis for an agreement on boundaries, security, statehood, and economy. The process should include also coordinated, independent Israeli and Palestinian steps in line with a two state reality. Subsequently, the negotiations over Jerusalem and the refugees issue will continue in a state-to-state fashion as well as within a regional framework.

In order to realize a two-state reality in which other intractable issues might be solved, Israel must address the issue of settlements in the West Bank. It should consider abandoning sovereignty claims over the vast majority of the West Bank and freeze settlement construction eastwards of the security fence, and therefore outside the settlement blocks. It will be necessary for the government to create a national-scale plan for the relocation of the roughly 100,000 settlers currently residing east of the security fence, including compensation, promotion of voluntary evacuation, relocation, and absorption within the boundaries of Israel. To make possible such an undertaking, Israel must initiate a genuine, ongoing engagement with the Israeli public to promote understanding of the need to advance the two-state solution in order to preserve the goals of Zionism and the nature of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. As a part of this effort, it must combat the de-legitimization of peace advocates that has occurred in Israeli society in recent years. This can be aided through education programs in schools, training of peace advocates to better influence public discourse, and better online monitoring of de-legitimization efforts.

To promote the security of a two-state future, Israel should solidify security cooperation with the Palestinians and encourage the growth of stable governance, a viable economy, institution building, law enforcement, and improvement of Palestinian quality of life until an agreement is reached. With the support of the international community, Israel must initiate an effort to rehabilitate Gaza, including an international taskforce with special roles for both Egypt and the Palestinian authority. Such an effort must include alleviation of the blockade on the Gaza Strip alongside a long-term truce with Hamas, construction of a port, improved water, sewage and energy infrastructures, and a joint Israeli-PA-Egyptian crossing point. The other member in the equation would be a long-term truce provided by Hamas including a supervised disarmament.

Conclusion

Despite the commitment to peacemaking expressed in the Israeli Declaration of Independence, the more than seven decades of the State of Israel have not displayed a consistent Israeli strategy for peacemaking for a multitude of reasons. Israel has been

[27] Alan Langer, "2020: Where the Top 5 Democrats Stand on Israel." *The Times of Israel*, July 17, 2019, blogs.timesofisrael.com/2020-where-the-top-5-democrats-stand-on-israel/.

under tremendous security tension in most of the years it has existed. It has been forced by its circumstances to prioritize strategizing and planning for war and focusing on counterterrorism efforts. Obviously, in contrast to these pressing security demands, such pressure does not exist to force peace efforts. Consistent threats also contribute to an Israeli domestic political climate demanding a tough stance on security. With this in mind, Israeli governments have convenient pretexts for avoiding negotiations. In the presence of terror threats, why yield by making peace? However, if there is no terror, there is no pressing motivation to move toward peace.

When Israel has moved toward peace, international pressure and a desire for strategic gains have largely served as the main motivating factors. When pressured into negotiations, Israeli strategy has been defined by a tendency toward stalling and an excruciating pace of progress, in addition to the strong destabilizing effect of domestic political changes. To better advance the peaceful goals of the Declaration of Independence, several ingredients are needed. Israel requires the proper leadership committed to the peace process in order for real progress to be made. This, in turn, requires public opinion supportive of the peace process and demanding of progress. To this end, peace activists in Israel can help to mold the political climate by raising awareness of the losses to Israel caused by continued absence of peace, disrupting contentment with the status quo.

In addition to leadership and public support, the remaining elements of political constellation must be aligned to allow for firm resolve in pursuing peace. Israeli leadership must have a strong coalition committed to peace to withstand setbacks, spoilers, and difficulties in the process. Collective mindsets, not just on the Israeli side, must also be ripe for peace efforts to promote their success. Trust-building initiatives such as improving the quality of life for Palestinians in the West Bank, promoting increased contact and economic ties between Israelis and Palestinians, and cooperation over issues of pressing concern, such as water sharing, could help to shift mindsets toward ripeness for peace. Given the crucial nature of U.S. mediation in the past, international support and pressure for peace efforts are also essential in advancing a peace process. International and regional coalitions to support the effort for peace provide a crucial traction for progress. Finally and most importantly, guaranteeing security throughout the peace process and as a requirement of any final agreement will mark the cornerstone of any peace progress. Without guarantees of security from terrorism and from threats to Israel's right to exist, no peace will be possible.

Saving the Zionist enterprise requires courage, leadership, and national responsibility. Otherwise, Israel will face imposed arrangements, de-legitimization, demonization, international isolation, and the erosion of its core values. Therefore, the two-state-for-two-people reality is indispensable. It is attainable throughout a series of transitional phases, interim agreements, and independent steps, all compliant with a continuous negotiation process. An internal Israeli dialogue and a participatory process are also essential to amend schisms within the society. Despite many challenges inherent in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, only a two-state reality will work for the benefit of a Jewish-democratic Israel, consistent with the Zionist vision.