

**US MEDIATION IN WEST ASIA:
CAMP DAVID-II SUMMIT**

**Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
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This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**US MEDIATION IN WEST ASIA: CAMP DAVID-II SUMMIT**”, submitted by **S. J. Kuruvilla**, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**, is his own work, and to the best of our knowledge has not been submitted for the award of any degree of this or any other university.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Dr. V.K.H. Jambholkar
(Supervisor)

Prof. Alokesh Barua
(Chairperson)

Dedicated

to

my Mother

Whose selfless love has
always been the guiding hand
on my life

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Preface

The Middle East-West Asian region has always been a boiling cauldron of conflicting forces at any time in its history. The present conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians must be seen in this context. The bitter stand off between Arafat's beleaguered forces and the mighty Israeli army has all the signs of a long disturbance in the making. The controversial visit by the present Israeli premier Ariel Sharon to the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount region of Jerusalem in September 2000 was the flash that sparked off the al-Aqsa intifada (named after the holy Islamic site of al-Aqsa and the 'Dome of the Rock' mosque situated on top of the Temple mount). This area is holy also to the Jews. Some critics have argued that after the failure of the Camp David summit meeting between the then Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak and the Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat, it was a matter of time before an uprising would burst out in the occupied territories.

The aim of this study is to analyse the Camp David-II Summit and to try to ascertain the causes of its failure. This has been done in the context of American mediation in West Asia, particularly in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The study takes into account the post-Cold War status of the US as the sole superpower capable of influencing either of the parties (especially the Israelis) in their conflictual situation. An attempt is made to study the various factors like

domestic, external, personality etc. that influenced the various Arab-Israeli peace negotiation efforts, starting with Camp David-I in September 1978 and ending at Camp David-II in July 2000. In this context, focus is kept on Bill Clinton's tenure as US president during the 1990s to assess the pattern of US mediation and its implications in the changed scenario of Palestinian-Israeli relations. Finally an attempt is made to delve into the issues involved in the negotiations, particularly at Camp David-II, that succeeded in keeping the two parties from reaching a final settlement. The study follows the historico-analytical method of research in trying to understand these issues.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to my guide, guru and supervisor, Prof. V.K.H. Jambholkar, for his help and advice in making this study a success. He has been immensely patient and understanding during my whole stay at JNU and contributed in no small way towards resolving the problems and tensions faced by me, a South Indian in my fresher year in the North.

I must not forget the constant help extended to me by Dr. K.D. Kapur, former chairperson of the centre, Prof. Pushpesh Pant and last but not least, Dr. Vinayak Rao, my fellow South Indian who could well understand my problems on first coming to Delhi.

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My family has been wonderful in their constant prayers, advice and help in enabling me to pursue higher studies here in Delhi. All credit for getting my M.Phil Degree certainly must go to them.

Joby and co. have done good work in preparing this dissertation by the requisite deadline. Thanks to them. I submit this work to the reader in the humble hope that it will open your eyes to a highly interesting field of study which if pursued will certainly yield rich dividends. Finally all glory to God. Praise His Holy Name!

New Delhi

S.J. Kuruvilla

19-07-2002

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

US DIPLOMACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

'Diplomacy is the management of international relations by negotiations; the method by which these relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys; the business or art of the diplomatist'.

-Oxford English Dictionary, quoted by

Sir Harold Nicolson, 1939.

'Negotiation may be called the process of combining divergent viewpoints to reach a common agreement.

I. William Zartman, 1974.

Diplomacy and Negotiation Defined : the American Perspective

Negotiation is the central function of diplomacy, and diplomacy the carrying out of foreign policy. Diplomacy and Negotiation are thus interrelated terms that describe one of the primary functions of the nation- state; namely, to carry on the business of state in international relations. Again, negotiation is specifically the bargaining process used in adjusting differences within relations, and so, it is the most important task of diplomacy.

A couple of interesting definitions of the term negotiation are given below:

'A negotiation is a cunning endeavor to obtain by peaceful maneuver and the chicanery of cabinets those advantages which a nation would otherwise have wrested by force of arms- in the same manner as a conscientious highwayman reforms and becomes a quiet and praiseworthy citizen, contenting himself with cheating

his neighbour out of that property he would have formerly seized with open violence.’¹

Washington Irving, noted early American writer and diplomat

‘Negotiation is an enduring art form. Its essence is artifice, the creation of expedients through the application of human ingenuity. The synonyms of the word “art” are qualities we have long since come to admire in the ablest of negotiators : skill, cunning and craft. We expect negotiators to be accomplished manipulators of other people, and we applaud this aspect of their art when we observe it in uncommon degree. Negotiation is considered to be the management of people through guile, and we recognize guile as the trademark of the profession’².

- **Gilbert A. Winham, 1977.**

‘Diplomacy is usually defined as the practice of carrying out of a nation’s foreign policy by negotiation with other nations. This definition correctly stresses that diplomacy is an instrument- not policy itself; the procedures of foreign policy and not the substance.’³

- **Ivo. D. Duchacek, 1960.**

To quote Zartman again, “negotiation may be called the process of combining divergent viewpoints to reach a common agreement.”⁴

¹ Gerald L Steibel, ‘How can we Negotiate with the Communists?’ (New York, National Strategy Information center, Inc., 1972), p. 1. Quoted in Joseph. G. Whelan, ‘Soviet Diplomacy and Negotiating Behaviour : the Emerging New Context for U.S. Diplomacy’, (Colorado, Westview press, 1983), p. 4.

² Gilbert R. Winham, ‘Negotiation as a Management Process’, World Politics, Vol. 30, No.2, October 1977, p. 87.

³ Ivo D. Duchacek, ‘conflict and cooperation among nations’ (New York, Harcourt, Brace and company, 1939), p. 15. Quoted in Whelan, ‘Soviet Diplomacy and Negotiating Behaviour’, p. 4.

⁴ Zartman, ‘Political Analysis of Negotiation’, p. 386, Quoted in Whelan, p. 5.

'Negotiation is a process in which explicit proposals are put forward ostensibly for the purpose of reaching agreement on exchange or in the realization of a common interest where conflicting interests are present'⁵.

- **Fred Charles Ikle, 1964.**

Another American authority on international politics, Charles Burton Marshall, stresses the importance of "terms" in negotiation. Thus, for him "negotiation is the process of talking about terms, the achievement of terms, and the terms".⁶

In the end, diplomacy can be defined as the management of international relations by negotiation. Negotiation is diplomacy's principle instrument – a continuing bargaining process for adjusting conflicting interests in order to reach a common agreement. The aim of both is to seek solutions, adjust differences, establish a harmony of interests among conflicting parties – in short, to create international stability. This would, by and large, define the American perception of negotiation.

The Question of Palestine : The standpoint of the United Nations.

When the Second World War ended, Palestine was a territory administered by the United Kingdom under a mandate from the League of Nations. Faced with escalating violence resulting from increasing Jewish immigration to Palestine and strong Arab opposition to such immigration, the United Kingdom brought the matter before the UN in 1947. The General Assembly then established a committee of 11 states to investigate all matters relating to the question of Palestine and to recommend solutions. The majority in the committee recommended that

⁵ Fred Charles Ikle, 'How Nations Negotiate', (New York : Harper and Row, 1964),p. 3-4.

⁶ Charles Burton Marshall, 'The Problem of Incompatible Purposes', In Duchacek, 'Conflict and Cooperation among Nations', P. 519. Quoted in Whelan, P. 5

Palestine be partitioned into an Arab state and a Jewish state, with a special international status for Jerusalem. A minority of three favoured a federated state comprising Arab and Jewish components, with Jerusalem as its capital. After intense debate, the Palestine Partition Plan as given by UNGA resolution 181 (II) was approved on 29 November 1947 with 33 votes in favour, 13 votes against and 10 abstentions. Significantly both the USA and the USSR supported the partition resolution while the mandatory power UK abstained from voting.⁷ The Jewish leadership accepted the Assembly's resolution while the Arabs rejected it, stating their opposition to any scheme which would dissect, segregate or partition their land and give preferential treatment to a minority. Fighting intensified between Arab and Jewish communities in Palestine.⁸

In May 1948, the UK gave up its mandate over Palestine and the Jews promptly proclaimed their state of Israel in the territory identified under the partition plan as belonging to them. The Arabs contested this and full scale fighting broke out as neighbouring Arab states sent their armies into Palestine. Fighting continued despite the efforts of a UN mediator. By the time a truce called for by the Security Council came into force in July 1948, Israel controlled much of the territory allotted to the proposed Arab state. Jordan and Egypt respectively administered the remaining portions of the West Bank and Gaza strip. In December 1948, the Assembly declared that refugees must be permitted to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbours, and that those choosing not to return should be compensated. Under resolution 194 (III), the Assembly also called for the demilitarization and internationalization of Jerusalem. The resolution was never implemented, but its provisions on the special status of Jerusalem and the right of Palestinian refugees to

⁷ <http://www.rte.ie/news/mideast/resolutions.html>

⁸ United Nations, For the Rights of the Palestinians – The Work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, (New York, United Nations Dept. of Public Information, DPI/1304 – 98093 – April 1997), P. 7

return have been reasserted by the Assembly almost every year since 1948.

Israel was admitted into the United Nations in May 1949. Between February and July of that year, under the auspices of the UN, armistice agreements were signed between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Notably the agreements accepted establishment of the armistice as an indispensable step towards the restoration of peace in Palestine. The conflictual situation in Palestine/ Israel continued over the next three decades, erupting into open hostilities in 1956, 1967 and in 1973. A turning point in Middle Eastern affairs was reached with the Six Day war of 1967 between Israel and Egypt, Jordan and Syria. By the time a cease – fire took effect, Israel had occupied Egyptian Sinai, the Gaza strip, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and part of the Syrian Golan Heights. The Security Council, in resolution 237 (1967), called upon Israel to ensure the safety and welfare of inhabitants where military operations had taken place and to facilitate the return of displaced persons. The warring parties were asked to abide scrupulously by the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in times of war.⁹

The Security Council again adopted resolution 242 (1967), laying down the principles for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East . It stipulated that just and lasting peace in the region should include the application of two principles:

1. “Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict”, and
2. Recognition of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

⁹ Ibid, P. 8.

When another Arab – Israeli war broke out in October 1973, the council unanimously adopted resolution 338 (1973), calling for an immediate truce and asking the parties to start immediately after the ceasefire the implementation of resolution 242 (1967) “in all its parts”. Following the 1967 war, the question of Palestine began to be understood in a broader political context than as a matter which related only to refugees. In November 1974, the General Assembly reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self – determination without external interference, the right of national independence and sovereignty, and the right to return to their homes and property. This resolution 3236 (XXIX) has been reaffirmed by the Assembly every year since. It was also in 1974 that the Palestine Liberation Organization, the primary Arab movement for the liberation of Palestine was invited by the Assembly to participate as an observer in its proceedings. The item entitled “The Question of Palestine” has remained on the Assembly’s annual agenda since 1974.¹⁰

American perspectives on Zionism and the Palestine question.

Early History :

American involvement in Palestine dates back to 1832 when the first American consular agent in Jerusalem was appointed. The end of the nineteenth century saw Palestine emerge as an issue engaging the attention of world Jewry and also the State Department (Foreign ministry) of the United States. This was as a result of the establishment of a new political creed called Zionism in 1897 at Basle, Switzerland. The World Jewish Conference comprising 104 delegates from 15 countries agreed that “Zionism aims at the creation of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine to be secured by public law” and accordingly

¹⁰ Ibid, P. 9.

they would encourage immigration to Palestine.¹¹ At that time, Arabs represented 95 percent of Palestine's roughly half – million people and they owned 99 percent of the land.¹² The first Zionist Federation was established in New York in 1897. Zionism openly rejected assimilation and the whole melting pot metaphor dear to American hearts. Theodore Herzl widely regarded as the founder of the Zionist idea stated in his seminal pamphlet 'Der Judenstaat' :

“we have sincerely tried everywhere to merge with the national communities in which we live, seeking only to preserve the faith of our fathers. It is not permitted us.”¹²

The fundamental rationale of Zionism was a profound despair that anti – Semitism could not be eradicated as long as Jews lived among gentiles(non-Jews). It was out of this dark vision that grew the belief that the only hope for the survival of the Jews lay in the founding of their own state. The state department at first dismissed Zionism as merely a minority political group advocating an issue that was essentially an internal Jewish affair. But as Zionism increased in influence in Europe in the first decade of the twentieth century, it also began attracting a select group of new converts in the U.S. By the start of world war I, the American Zionists had in their ranks influential men like lawyers, professors and businessmen. The American State Department established a Near East Division only in 1909. This new division covered an enormous region that included Russia, Germany, Austria- Hungary, the Balkans and the Turkish Ottoman Empire along with all the out lying areas that stretched from Persia to Abyssinia (Ethiopia). Rising Zionist

¹¹ Howard M. Sachar, A History of Israel : From the Rise of Zionism to our Time (Tel Aviv: Steimatzky's Agency Ltd., 1976), P. 44 – 46 , Quoted in Donald Neff, Fallen Pillars : US Policy towards Palestine and Israel since 1945, (Washington, D.C., Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), P – 7.

¹² Walid Khalidi (ed.) from Haven to Conquest : Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948 (Washington, D.C., Institute for Palestine studies, 1987), P. 12. In Neff, Fallen Pillars, p. 7

demands for support of a Jewish nation were increasingly resented among U.S. diplomats, who saw such requests “as an illustration of the purely Hebraic and un – American purposes for which our Jewish community seek to use this government” to quote a U.S. diplomat of that period¹³.

The First World War and After

The First World War and subsequent developments changed the states of the Middle East profoundly. During the war an important factor was Turkey’s involvement as an ally of Germany, Austria and Bulgaria against the allied powers – Russia, Britain, France and other nations. Palestine, because of its strategic location, assumed great importance in the allied war strategy, especially for Great Britain whose predominant concern was the security of the Suez Canal.¹⁴ The British instigated the Arabs of the Ottoman Empire to revolt against the Turks thereby compelling the British and French to invade and occupy Syria, Palestine and Iraq. In 1917, the British Govt. issued the Balfour Declaration, stating that it viewed ‘with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people’.¹⁵ Again in 1922, the League of Nations under British influence recognized ‘the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine’ and ‘the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country’.¹⁶

In contrast, the U.S. State Dept. defined its chief function as the protection and promotion of American interests abroad, not in endorsing or encouraging the efforts of a small group of Americans to help found another nation in a foreign land. It was against U.S. policy to interfere in

¹³ Sachar, P. 40. In Neff, p 8

¹⁴ Frank E. Manuel, The Realities of American – Palestine Relations ; (Washington, D.C. : Public Affairs press, 1949), P – 11.3. In Neff, P-9.

¹⁵ Barny Turner (Ed.), The Statesmen Year book 2000 (London, Macmillan Reference Limited, 2000), P. 915

¹⁶ Europa Publications 2001, ‘The Middle East and North Africa 2002 (48th Ed.) [London, Unwin Brothers Limited, 2001], p. 62 – 65.

another country with out any obvious American interests at stake and with a good chance of worsening relations. US- Ottoman relations were never quite easy and Zionist agitation against Ottoman rule in Palestine raised suspicions in Istanbul about broader US policies and goals in the region. At the Paris Peace Conference that convened in 1919, one of the most contentious issues was the future of the Fertile Crescent in general and Palestine in particular. The first action taken by the peace conference with regard to Palestine was to invoke article 22 of the Covenant of the League calling for the mandate system. Both the Arabs and the Zionists sent their respective delegations to the conference to plead for their cause before the Supreme Council. The Zionist delegation demanded before the conference the inclusion of the Balfour Declaration in the peace treaty and the British being given the mandate over Palestine instead of making it on independent Arab state. The Arab delegation led by Emir Feisal (son of Sharif Hussein of Mecca and accompanied and helped by T.E. Lawrence of Arabia) demanded Arab independence as promised by the British during the course of the war. Feisal also urged that a commission of Inquiry be sent to Syria and Palestine to know the wishes of the people. This proposal was supported by President Wilson. The Supreme Council, assigned the mandate for Palestine (including Tranjordan that was later formed into the separate state of Jordan) to Great Britain on 25 April, 1920. The final draft on the terms of the mandate was concluded by the League council on 22 July, 1922.¹⁷ This decision was a victory for the Zionists and their compulsive diplomacy to keep the region open to Jewish settlement.

The last action America took with regard to the Palestine question, before returning to its traditional isolationist policy that continued till the

¹⁷ See Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA), "Great Britain and Palestine, 1915 - 1945" (London, 1946), p-6. In Bansidhar Pradhan, From Confrontation to Hostile Intimacy : PLO and the US, (New Delhi ,Shyog Prakashan, 1994), p.- 12.

second world war, was to sign the Palestine Mandate Treaty (Anglo-American Convention) with great Britain on 3 December 1924 whereby it recognized the legality of the British Mandate over Palestine. So from then until 1939, Britain ruled Palestine on its own. As stated earlier, the League mandate not only recognized the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine but also make it the responsibility of the mandatory power “ for placing the country under such political, administrative of a Jewish National Home”. (article 2). It also provided for the recognition of the Zionist Jewish Agency “as a public body” to advise and cooperate “with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish National Home.”[Article 4]Again the mandatory power was ordered to facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions” (Article 6).¹⁸ So Britain assumed the mandate over Palestine pending the establishment there of such a national home. It was in accordance with this mandate that Jewish settlers were admitted to Palestine under the direction of Zionist settlement agencies. Naturally the native Palestinian Arabs resented this influx and there were anti-Zionists riots in 1921 and 1929. During the period 1938 – 1939, a major Arab rebellion against the policies of the mandatory power viz-a-viz the Zionists was brutally suppressed by them

The Second World War and After

During World War II, Palestine remained by and large peaceful. The moderate Jewish community supported the British. In September 1944, a Jewish Brigade attached to the British 8th Army was created. A total of 27,000 Jews enlisted in the British forces to fight against Rommel's Africa Korps in the North African desert.¹⁹ Equally important was the support won by the Zionists in the U.S., to which they

¹⁸ Ibid, p.12.

¹⁹ Encyclopaedia Britannica (15th Ed.), Macropaedia, Vol.25, p.420

had shifted their major political effort after 1939. In May 1942, at a Zionist conference held at the Biltmore Hotel in New York City, David Ben - Gurion, the future prime minister of Israel, gained support for a program demanding unrestricted immigration and a Jewish army and the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth. Known as the Biltmore Programme, two of the eight resolutions adopted deserve special mention. Resolution 6 called for the fulfillment of the original purpose of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate which "recognizing the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine was to afford them the opportunity, as started by President Wilson, to found there a Jewish Commonwealth". Resolution 8 pleaded that:

"the gates of Palestine be opened, that the Jewish agency be vested with control of immigration into Palestine ... and that Palestine be established as a Jewish commonwealth integrated in the structure of the new democratic world. Then only then will the age- old wrong to the Jewish people be righted."²⁰

An increasing number of U.S. Congressmen and politicians started making pro - Zionist statements. In August 1945, President Harry S. Truman requested Clement Attlee, the British prime minister, to facilitate the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews into Palestine, and in December the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives asked for unrestricted Jewish immigration to the limit of the economic absorptive capacity of Palestine. All these measures contributed to the internationalization of the question of Palestine, already under way with the involvement of the Arab states since the 1930s. The Arabs of Palestine had remained largely neutral during the war, although some supported the Axis powers while others enlisted in the British forces. After the war, the neighbouring Arab countries began to take a more

²⁰ Bansidhar Pradhan, n - 17, P 40.

direct interest in Palestine. In March 1945, the covenant of the League of Arab States was drawn up with an annex emphasizing the Arab character of Palestine. Again in December, the Arab League declared a boycott of Zionist goods. The pattern of the post war struggle for Palestine was slowly emerging.

The Proposal for Partition and After

“ ... the creation of a viable Jewish state ...in an adequate area of Palestine instead of in the whole of Palestine (would be acceptable)”

President Harry S. Truman, 1946. ²¹

In November 1947, the UNGA passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish and an Arab state in Palestine. Some after the UN resolution, communal fighting broke out in Palestine. The Zionists took all possible measures to increase their strength and to bring in new immigrants. In December 1947, the Arab League pledged its support to the Palestinian Arabs and organized a force of 3000 volunteers. Civil war spread and external intervention increased as the dismantling of the British administration progressed.. By mid-January 1948, some 2000 casualties had resulted from the fighting. During this conflict, American policy in Washington and New York underwent changes that often alarmed the Zionist leadership and influenced their conduct of military operations in Palestine. At first, both the State Department and President Truman were of the view that the type of partition approved by the UNGA as per the recommendations of UNSCOP (United Nations Special Commission on Palestine) would be impossible to impose except by military force. The American leadership was very much afraid that the former Soviet Union would seek to influence such a situation. Cold war calculation were already being imposed on every possible

²¹ William Roger Louis, 'The British Empire in the Middle East 1945- 1957', (Oxford : Clarendon press, 1988) P. 439. In Neff, P- 27.

international affair. Yet the U.S. would not and could not commit its own troops to Palestine, nor would the British do anything, but continue with their plans for withdrawal. The only solution seemed to lie in the U.N. Security Council and the means it might utilize for implementing the partition vote. In March, the UNSCOP reported its inability to implement Partition because of Arab resistance and the attitude of the British administration. The US immediately called for the suspension of UNSCOP. On March 30, 1948, they appealed for declaration of a truce and the further consideration of the problem by the General Assembly.²²

US Recognition of Israel.

The Zionists insisted that partition was binding on both parties to the dispute. As the date for the British withdrawal approached, they were busy in preparing for the Proclamation of their own independent state. The White House, on the other hand was confronting the issue of providing recognition to the emerging Jewish state. On May 14, the last British High Commissioner, General Sir Alan Cunningham, left Palestine. On the same day, the State of Israel was proclaimed. The Truman administration decided to immediately extend 'de facto' recognition to the provisional govt. of Israel. When it became clear that the new state had secured her future borders, 'de jure' recognition was given on 31 January, 1949.²³

The US recognition of Israel just eleven minutes after the latter's formation was quite an unprecedented step. It was felt to be quite "inconsistent with accepted principles of diplomacy".²⁴ There had been a divergence of opinion between the White House and the State Department on this issue. Truman's hasty and enthusiastic recognition of Israel was guided more by domestic political considerations (gaining a strong political base in the American Jewish community), then by

²² Encyclopaedia Britannica, n. 19, p.421.

²³ Harry S. Truman, 'Memoirs: Years of Trial and Hope', vol. 2, p. 194.

²⁴ Richard P. Stevens, 'American Zionism and U.S. Foreign Policy 1942 - 1947' (Beirut, 1970), pp 1-2. In Proghan, n. 17, p. 49.

accepted principles of diplomacy and foreign policy calculations. It was also a reflection of the success of the Zionist lobby in influencing American decision making with regard to Palestine. This in turn had a definite bearing on future American policy towards Israel, first in the Arab – Israeli conflict and later in the Palestinian- Israeli conflict. It also affected the PLO perception of the US for years to come.²⁵

The *raison d'être* of American interactions with Israel can be traced back to some aspects of the collective American psyche in the immediate wake of world war II.

Guilt: about the Nazi holocaust that nearly exterminated European Jewry while America and the western nations pretended that they did not know anything about it.

Humanitarian impulse: the sense of guilt helped to ignite a general American humanitarian impulse towards arranging the resettlement of thousands of refugees displaced from the concentration camps of central Europe. This impulse did not however extend towards settling the refugees in the US. A second option such as Palestine was preferred by the American establishment and supported by the people.

Duties: Jewish donors and voters were very influential in American political life, particularly in the democratic party. Given the huge Jewish community in the U.S., American interest in Palestine was natural. American Zionist committees were among the largest benefactors of Jewish settlement projects in the 'promised land'. Allied to these were the activities of Zionist lobbies in Washington such as the America-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) which were constantly pressuring Congress and the Administration to be generous towards Israel. It was, in fact, during the administrations of F.D. Roosevelt and Harry. S.

²⁵ Pradhan, n. 17, p. 49.

Truman that Zionist leaders were able to penetrate key White House departments and sensitize the America ruling elite about the plight of Holocaust survivors.

Idealism : admiration for the founding of a new democratic state which proclaimed a Declaration of Independence complete with phrases drawn from that of the United States.

Religion : a common Judeo – Christian bible and heritage fired the enthusiasm of fundamentalist American Christians for this return to the holy land by an ancient nation of wanderers.

Ignorance : American have generally been ignorant of the region and its original inhabitants, in particular the Arabs, a phenomenon that has continued for the last 50 years and is now again witnessed in the post September 11th scenario.

Containment of Communism[Strategic Relationship]:

The so – called “strategic relationship” between Israel and the U.S. did not emerge as an openly declared policy statement till the 1970s and the Nixon era. Even then, it was only tacitly acknowledged for many years, developing slowly into today’s virtual military alliance.²⁶ It was in October 1947 that American and British officials first met at the pentagon to sketch out a geopolitical blueprint for the Middle East in the light of the new threats of Soviet expansionism and communist ideology. The “reverse Monroe doctrine” of the interwar period had been finally abandoned. Though Britain still held the upper hand in the Middle East, U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall was already contemplating on eventual American leadership role in the region. It was for such on eventuality that support for the new state of Israel was deemed

²⁶ Samuel W. Lewis, ‘The United States and Israel. : Evolution of an Unwritten Alliance’ The Middle East Journal, Vol.53, No.3, Summer 1999, p.365.

important. But in the 1940s and 1950s the Israel angle was not been projected by the state department.²⁷

At the geostrategic level, the U.S. sought to contain the Soviets in the Middle East through military alliances, similar to NATO in Europe. This approach failed mainly due to American insensitivities about the area. Even the Baghdad pact (1955) generated more animosity than security in the Arab world. Looser political/economic umbrella projects like the Eisenhower Doctrine (1957) were no more successful. The Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact nations by securing arms deals with countries like Syria and Egypt, were able to bypass American defences in the region. For most Arab governments, the real threat was Israel and not the Soviet Union. And it was here that American diplomacy viz a' viz the Arabs always tended to malfunction. The rise of Arab nationalism under the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser further complicated affairs for the Americans. Astute U.S. field diplomacy and the respected non-governmental American presence to the region hoped to lessen the state departments confrontation with Arab Nationalism. The Palestine problem lay at the heart of the pan -Arab cause, and American support for Israel was too big to allow for a compromise solution, a 'modus vivendi'. American diplomats always tried to avoid a head on collision with the nationalist forces. The U.S. tried to deal with the Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser. On the other hand, the U.S. actively worked to suppress Iranian nationalism and also opposed the nationalist upheavals in Syria and Iraq. Even though communism and Arab nationalism did not mix well together, Soviet patronage enabled the nationalist anti - Israel camp to pose a serious challenge to US interests in the region.²⁸

²⁷ Michael C. Hudson, 'To play the Hegemon : Fifty years of US policy towards the Middle East', The Middle East Journal, Vol.. 50, No. 3, Summer 1996, P. 330.

²⁸ Ibid , P. 332.

Oil :

Oil was another major reason for American interest in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia alone possesses some 25 % of the world's known petroleum reserves. More may be waiting to be discovered. Combine this with the oil wealth of Kuwait, Iraq, the Gulf Emirates, Iran etc, and a formidable source of carbon energy comes into the picture. Oil did not acquire a strategic dimension until world war II. By then the Americans had started to see middle East oil as a cheap supplement to their own declining reserves. Middle East oil become essential for the western world's post - war economic development. Oil politics played a major role in post - war U.S. strategy in the region.²⁹ The Americans were determined to exclude the Soviets from gulf oil. They were also dead against the nationalization of western oil companies operating in the region. This would result in the economics of price and production going out of their hands.³⁰

So, the Americans and West Europeans always played their hand in such a manner as to maintain their influence in the region. This frequently included propping up authoritarian regimes (like the Shah of Iran) and despotic rulers (like Saddam Hussain before the Gulf war). The Middle East was a battlefield for Cold war forces. Both sides pumped an incredible amount of arms into the region. This resulted in many military conflicts that caused terrible sufferings to hundreds of thousands of civilians The Palestinian struggle for self determination can only be seen in this context. It was essentially a victim of cold war machinations.

²⁹ Bruce R. Kuniholm, 'Retrospect and Prospects : Forty years of US middle East policy', *The Middle East Journal* Vol. 41, No. 1, Winter 1987, P. 11

³⁰ *Ibid.*

The Suez War of 1956

Egyptian President Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal prompted a chain of events that eventually led to the joint Israeli-French-British attack on Egypt. Due to various reasons, all stemming from a violent hatred of Nasser and his policies, each of these powers were waiting for an excuse to attack Egypt. The Israelis under David Ben Gurion held Nasser to be their worst enemy, not the least because of his demagogic popularity with the Arab masses and his equally scathing verbal attacks on Israel. The French held Nasser responsible for their Algerian problems. The British felt that his calls for Arab nationalism and unity were undermining their traditional power base in the Middle East. All these factors come to a head in July 1956 when Nasser nationalised the Anglo-French owned Canal thereby breaking Egypt's last colonial bondage. The British and French immediately decided to attack Egypt and depose Nasser if possible. Israel on invitation was fully prepared to join them. The war started with an Israeli invasion of Gaza and the Sinai on 29 October 1956. War planning and co-ordination between the three allies called for a joint Anglo-French ultimatum to both on 31 October to ceasefire and withdraw ten miles from the bank of the canal. This call would, in effect give the Israelis the right to continue their attack until they reached that boundary, while the Egyptians would withdraw all their forces from the Sinai. Nasser would naturally not agree to the ceasefire and both the British and French could then blame him for continuing hostilities and thus justify their attack on him.³¹

America against the Suez War

The Israeli forces occupied Sinai and the Gaza strip as scheduled. Nasser's refusal of the Indo-French ultimatum on the 31st resulted in

³¹ Joseph S. Nye, 'Understanding International Conflicts : An Introduction to Theory and History' (3rd ed.) [New York, Long man, 1999] p. 158.

British aircraft from Cyprus attacking Egyptian airfields. This in turn caused Nasser to withdraw forces from the Sinai to defend mainland Egypt. The Egyptian withdrawal allowed the Israelis to occupy almost the whole peninsula by November. A combined Anglo-French invasion of Port Said and Alexandria took place on November 6. The Americans had been totally against this operation from the very beginning. They preferred to deal with Nasser through peaceful means. Both President Eisenhower and his Secretary of State Dulles were indirectly responsible for the Egyptian nationalisation of the Suez when they had earlier refused Nasser any financial help from the West in the construction of the Aswan High Dam. Both were now infuriated by what they considered the appalling deception and stupidity of their allies. Although they disliked Nasser, they did not believe that armed force would resolve the matter. The situation was all the more serious because the rebellion in Hungary had taken place around the same time as the Suez crisis. Washington now found itself on the defensive viz-a-viz the Soviets who soon invaded Hungary and crushed the uprising. Dulles, the great purist and anti-communist moralist found himself unable to use the Hungarian crisis to prove the immorality of communism and the need for all nations to rely on the West³². America too found itself appealing alongside the Soviet Union to the warring parties to end the crisis. British and French forces were forced to withdraw from Port Said by 23 December. The Israelis however were determined to remain in the Gaza strip and at Sharm el-Sheikh. Pressure from the US finally forced them to withdraw but only on the condition that a UN force known as the United Nations Emergency Forces (UNEF) patrol the land border between Israel and the Gaza strip as well as the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh. This was ostensibly to prevent fidayeen attacks from these regions into

³² Charles P. Smith, 'Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict', (2nd ed) [New York, St. Martin's Press, 1992] p.172.

Israel. Whereas for the British and French, Suez was an unmitigated disaster, the Israelis considered it to be a major success. They had achieved a significant military victory with relatively few casualties. They were able to free Israeli shipping from the blockade imposed by the Egyptians in the Red Sea. Finally, they secured for the next ten years a de-facto peace along the Israeli-Egyptian frontier which remained relatively quiet and patrolled by UN forces.

Nasser also emerged a victor despite the military defeat he had suffered against obviously unassailable odds. Israel aligning with France and Britain to attack Egypt was again proof to the Arab world of the continuing Western collusion to try and impose outside control on developments within the Arab world. Nasser's defiance of the West during the Suez crisis only increased his hero status in the Arab world. The Suez War increased US influence in the Middle East. America now embarked on a period of active intervention in Arab regional politics that in the long run brought it closer to Israel³³.

Rise of Palestinian Nationalism

After the 1947 - 48 war, the Palestinian people become refugees in their own home land. Over 75% of them had to leave their homes and flee. They went to all the neighbouring Arab countries and also to the Egyptian controlled enclave of Gaza and the Jordanian West Bank. Here these people were herded into squalid refugee camps that soon become more like concentration camps for the displaced people. The host states frequently placed these unwelcome guests under all sorts of inhuman restrictions. Many were even forbidden from leaving the camps. Political activity was also strictly prohibited. The refugees themselves trusted in Arab Nationalism and in the ability of the Arab states to eventually defeat Israel and regain Palestine for them. Thus it was only after both the

³³ Ibid., p.174.

1956 and the 1967 Arab - Israeli wars resulted in bitter defeat for the Arabs, that the Palestinian people decided to take the full responsibility for struggle against Israel on their shoulders. The Algerian revolutionary struggle that culminated in victory for the revolutionary forces, despite their defeat on the battlefield against the colonial French forces, was an eye - opener for the Palestinians. It revealed that an armed struggle, whatever the cost would be ultimately successful even in the face of overwhelming odds. In this context, it might be noted that it was Nasser's Egypt that gave a helping hand to Palestinian nationalism when they conspired in the setting up of an organization known as the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1964 with Ahmed al - Shukairy as its first chairman. The PLO was meant to be an outlet for the legitimate political aspirations of the Palestinian people, especially in the face of Western apathy and disinterest in their fate.

American attitudes towards the PLO till the 1970s

In the early years of the formation of Israel, the Americans seemed quite satisfied to leave the Palestinian refugees to the care of the United Nations Relief And Works Agency (UNRWA), the official UN body charged with looking after those people who had fled Palestine following the 1948 war. This body had been created with full US support. The Americans however did very little in the way of putting pressure on Israel to accept the refugees back. In this case, they fully supported the argument of the Israelis that to do so would be to negate the Jewish character of the State of Israel. After the formation of Israel, the US deliberately abandoned the UN partition resolution on Palestine. The creation of a Palestinian state was now out of the question, not the least because no Arab state (Jordan was violently opposed to such state for historical reasons) was willing to support the idea of two states - Jewish and Arab, existing side by side. Moreover, American officials established a linkage between the refugee problem and the dispute between Israel and the Arab states. Thus former

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Under-Secretary of State, Walter Bedell Smith stated very clearly in 1953:

“The refugee problem is the principal Unresolved issue between Israel and the Arabs; outstanding issues are generally listed as compensation to the refugees, repatriation of the refugees, adjustment of boundaries, and the status of Jerusalem and the Holy places. None of the issues can be separated from the refugee problem.”³⁴

This American approach was based upon the premise that solving the refugee problem would automatically lead to a solution of all the other issues, thereby bringing about a final settlement. This approach continued till 1967. At first, the Americans did not take the creation of the various Palestinian organizations seriously. They were just seen as isolated terrorist organizations. In this context, the US supported Israel's right of retaliation against these groups, but was frequently forced to protest the massive scale of revenge. In 1966, the US Congress passed a resolution after PLO Chairman Ahmad Shukairy's disclosure that Palestinian commandos were being trained by the People's Republic of China. The passing of the PLO leadership into the hands of the commando groups and their spectacular operations against Israel and other targets, compelled the Americans to take note of the existence of the Palestinian resistance movement. Naturally the view they took of this movement was a strongly pro – Israeli one. The PLO was perceived as a potential threat to vital American interests in the area, representing the faces of radicalism and anti – Westernism. It was definitely viewed as a terrorist organization with links to international terrorist networks.³⁵

The guerrilla organizations, on the other hand, rejected any political settlement that did not include the total liberation of historic

³⁴ Dept. of State Bulletin, (Washington D.C.), vol 28, no. 728, 8 June 1956, p. 823. in Pradhan, n. 17, p. 69

³⁵ Pradhan, n. 17, p. 70

Palestine and the return of refugees to their homes. PLO spokesmen always emphasized that their war was against the Zionist entity, Israel, and not against the Jews. The Charter of the PLO stated the aim of the organization in establishing a secular non- sectarian state in Palestine where Jew, Christian and Muslim would live in absolute equality . The Zionists and their American backers did not believe in the practicality of this goal and viewed the PLO as terrorists aiming to eliminate Jews .

The US followed three main policies in dealing with the PLO.

1. Unless the Palestinians “renounce terrorism”, the Americans would have no direct contact or dialogue with it.
2. Non – recognition of the PLO while simultaneously fully guaranteeing the security and survival of Israel.
3. Full support (both military and political) for pro – US Arab regimes that were threatened by militant Palestinian movements within their borders.³⁶ US support for Jordan during the black September crisis was on the basis of this strategy.

These policies lasted till the early 1970s. In January 1970, Assistant Secretary of State, Joseph Sisco ordered a “reevaluation of major assumptions about American strategy” in the area because these assumptions had all turned out to be wrong. Some of these assumptions related to the Palestinians. To quote Henry Kissinger:

“We had assumed that the Palestinians could be dealt within a settlement purely as a refugee problem. Instead they had become a quasi – independent force with a veto over policy in Jordan, and perhaps in Lebanon”.³⁷

³⁶ Ibid, p. 71

³⁷ Henry Kissinger, “White House Years”, (Boston : Little Brown, 1979), p. 573.

It was thus clear that the Americans would have to conduct a major reworking of their tactics and strategies viz-a-viz the Palestinian people and their armed groups in the Middle East.

The 1967 war and After

The war of 1967 was to prove as decisive in its consequences as that of 1948-49. All the land of original mandatory Palestine as well as the Egyptian Sinai peninsula and the Golan Heights of Syria passed into the control of the Israelis. The balance of power in the Middle East tilted firmly in the direction of Israel. The most important outcome of the war as far as the Zionists were concerned was the capture and annexation of the old city of Jerusalem. A new concept of security took hold in the minds of the Israelis encompassing the whole Levantine area. The new 1948 armistice lines became as obsolete as the old UN partition borders. Again Jerusalem disappeared from the agenda as a negotiable item after the "de facto" annexation of the former Jordanian sector. The problem of the 1948 refugees whose population had become double due to natural increase, was made more severe due to a fresh exodus from the west Bank.

The humiliating defeat of the combined Arab armies at the hand of the Israelis again exposed the weakness of the Arab world viz-a-viz Israel. The 1967 war was the final blow to Nasser's pan-Arabism. Henceforth, Jordan and Syria were to deal with Israel on their own calculation of interests and issues. The fate of the Palestinians changed radically as a result of the 1967 war. Till 1967, there was only a small marginalised Palestinian minority within the borders of Israel proper. After 1967, over a million Palestinian Arabs found themselves under Israeli control. In the new circumstances, the PLO sensed the possibilities of new forms of action, strategy and tactics. The war resulted in a marked increase in the degree of independence and broad based support that the PLO movement enjoyed. The Palestinian people

also come to realize that their fellow Arab nations could and would do very little for their cause. They realised that the fight for their home land would be solely on their own shoulders. Consequently some Arabs concluded that armed struggle in the form of guerrilla warfare and terrorism had become a more plausible course of action.³⁸

By the mid 1960s the French had started to withdraw finally from Algeria. General de Gaulle therefore decided to end the special relationship that he had fostered with Israel to counter alleged Egyptian Nasserite support of the Algerian revolutionaries. The Germans also were stopping their postwar Holocaust victims compensatory packages to Israel. The arena was thus becoming clear for a closer US- Israeli relationship. The US drew closer to Israel and began to play a more important role in assisting it. The US-Israeli relationship soon developed into a virtual alliance. Thus the Arab - Israeli problem moved to the center stage in the Middle East policy of the United States. At a strategic level, the decision of the British in 1968 to withdraw from the area 'East of Suez' by 1971 posed new problems for the US. The Americans were compelled to fill what was perceived as a power vacuum. Thus from 1967 onwards, the US was to take on the mantle of a semi- permanent peace-maker, at first under a multilateral UN umbrella in more or less cooperative ventures with the Soviet Union. From the early 1970's, America relied on its own diplomacy viz-a-viz the Middle East with minimal attention to the UN security council and the Soviets.³⁹

Importance of UNSC Resolution 242

The October war of 1973 was the fourth war between the Arabs and Israel since 1948. At the end of August 1967, Arab leaders meeting

³⁸ Alain Gresh, 'The PLO : The Struggle within - Towards an Independent Palestinian State' (London, Zed Books, 1983), p. 3

³⁹ Samuel W. Lewis, 'The United States and Israel : Evolution of an united Alliance', The Middle East Journal Vol. 53, No. 3, Summer 1999, p. 367

for a summit conference in Khartoum, Sudan had reiterated their opposition to recognition or direct negotiation with Israel. Naturally lack of negotiations would only lead to war. Israel's prime minister Levi Eshkol meanwhile declared that Israel would refuse to withdraw from any of the Arab territories occupied in June, 1967 without negotiations leading to peace treaties with all the parties concerned why differences between the two parties prevented any of the early attempts by the UN security council to agree on resolution to address the crisis. The Arab world backed by the former USSR was determined that the UN should demand the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied Arab territory. On the other hand, Israel and the Americans were opposed to draft resolutions that did not provide adequate guarantees of Israeli security. The minimum demands of both sides eventually found expression in UNSC resolution 242. Adopted unanimously by the security council on 22 November 1967, it underlined the 'inadmissibility' of the acquisition of territory by war; and called for a 'just and lasting peace in which every state in the area can live in security' and for a settlement of the 'refugee problem' ⁴⁰. Resolution 242 also called on Israel to withdraw from territories occupied in the recent conflict, but strategically did not specify the extent of the withdrawal. The ambiguities and omissions in resolution 242 were to be a major source of conflict in the Arab - Israeli debate for years to come.

US position (1967-1973)

The United States fully backed Israel's stand of 'no withdrawal without peace agreement' following the 1967 war. However both the Johnson and the later Nixon administrations expected Israel to withdraw from nearly all the lands it occupied in 1967, subject to minor border changes. Nevertheless, the U.S supported the UN resolution

⁴⁰ Paul Cossali, 'Arab - Israeli relations 1967 - 2001'. In Surveys of the world : The Middle East and North Africa 2002 (48th Ed.) [London, Europa Publication Ltd, 2001] p. 26

condemning Israel for unilaterally annexing East Jerusalem. After the 1967 war, there was a tremendous outburst of sympathy and support for Israel among the American public. American Jews were totally engaged in a 'Support Israel' campaign, both monetarily and politically. The American government was thus forced to express in public full support for Israel while at the same time privately trying to moderate its position. U.S diplomatic initiatives undertaken unilaterally (but also in cooperation with the USSR), frequently achieved terms that were usually closer to the Arab stand than the Israeli.⁴¹

In late 1968, Israel presented a nine-point plan for Middle East peace to the UNGA. The Levi plan as it came to be known (after the then Israeli PM Levi Eshkol) did not directly offer on Israeli withdrawal, but proposed mutually agreeable 'boundary settlements'. The Arab world made no response to this plan. Arab public opinion had again hardened after the Jerusalem annexation as well as the establishment of the first settlements in the occupied territories (OT) in September 1967. In fact, in July 1969, after continued fighting along both the Suez and Jordan fronts (the so-called War of Attrition), Egypt's President Gamal Abd al-Nasir publicly gave up hope of a peaceful settlement and predicted that another war would be necessary to dislodge Israel from the territories occupied in 1967. Attempts by the USA, the USSR, France and the UK to obtain an agreement from the warring parties on the implementation of resolution 242 made little progress. In December 1969, the US secretary of state, William Rogers, produced a set of proposals designed to steer a middle course between the two parties. Known as the Rogers plan, its most important aspect was that it made clear the American stand that there should only be minor adjustments to the pre-June 1967

⁴¹ Michael Brecher, 'Decision in Israel's Foreign Policy.' (New Haven, Conn., 1975), p. 444.

boundaries. In July 1970, Nasser accepted the Rogers proposals. The Israeli government followed suit a week later. Negotiations between the two parties were to be mediated by the UN through a Special Representative, Norway's Gunnar Jarring. The Jarring talks were suspended after a single meeting following Israeli withdrawal over a trivial military issue.⁴²

Diplomatic initiatives between 1967 and 1975 were seriously handicapped by governmental and organisational factionalism among all the parties concerned. Israeli governments were often paralysed by differences over what territories should be retained and what offered in exchange for peace. Nasser, in turn, attempted to balance his hope for negotiations with his army's desire for another deciding war. At the same time, he had to face increasing domestic unrest over the lost Sinai peninsula. The PLO opposed all efforts to attain peace, as it feared that its political objectives would be ignored. The Nixon administration's approaches to the Arab-Israeli conflict were severely affected by the rivalry between national security adviser Henry Kissinger and the secretary of state William Rogers. The state department, headed by Rogers viewed the issue mainly as a regional problem that should be solved through negotiations as soon as possible, along with the Soviet Union, if necessary. Kissinger had another view about the whole process of negotiations. His view was closer to the Israeli's, in that he was primarily interested in ousting the Soviets from the region before undertaking any such talks. He wanted to establish total American dominance of the negotiating process which would in turn benefit Israel alone.⁴³

⁴² Cossali, n.40, p.26.

⁴³ Charles. D. Smith, 'Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict' (Second edition) (New York, St. Martin Press 1992)) p. 205.

Regional developments also seemed to be helping Israel, if not in the long run, at least in the short run. In September 1970 (known as Black September in Palestinian diaspora terminology), civil war broke out in Jordan between the King's forces and the P.L.O fighters. Jordanian- Palestinian strife served to indirectly confirm Israel's value as an arm of American policy in the region, especially in the context of excluding the Soviets from the area. The Nixon administration took a secret decision that no further efforts would be made to stage Arab-Israeli peace talks until the Egyptians rid themselves of the Soviets and accepted U.S. Influence in the region. This policy which had a classic Kissingerian touch (he had become secretary of state in 1973), remained unofficial US policy until the October 1973. The new Egyptian President, Anwar al-Sadat played along with the US by expelling all the Soviet advisers in his country in July 1972. The outbreak of war changed all Kissinger's plans. He was forced to start talks between Israel and Egypt. These discussions and later negotiations between Israel and Syria led to agreements in 1974-1975 to disengage forces on the Golan Heights and in the Sinai. This also eventually resulted in the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel in 1978.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER-II

The Camp David- I Process

The Camp David Accords, signed by the President of Egypt and the Prime Minister of Israel on September 17, 1978, were an event of great historical importance in the modern Middle East. These agreements which were the result of the negotiations conducted over a period of some eighteen months, eventually resulted in the signing of a formal treaty of peace between Egypt and Israel on March, 19, 1979. As a result, the strategic map of the Middle East was fundamentally altered.

Prelude to the Accords

The process that culminated in the 1978 Camp David Accords had their origins in the Yom Kippur (Ramadan) War of 1973. This war which resulted in the Arab states of Egypt and Syria attacking Israel to avenge their 1967 defeat, changed the negotiating strategies of almost all the major players in the Middle East, except perhaps the Soviet Union. Israel won this war but only after almost succumbing to a Syrian invasion and ultimately losing a lot of strategic Suez canal territory to the Egyptians. It was left to the Nixon administration and in particular to his secretary of state, Henry Kissinger to broker a ceasefire between the two warring groups. The US was ultimately able to use the dominance that it had established during the war to broker three agreements among the combatants- two between Israel and Egypt and the third between Israel and Syria. These agreements established dividing lines between the military forces of both sides and strict limitations on their frontline deployments to reduce the danger of surprise attack.¹ In fact, the Sinai II Accord between Israel and Egypt in 1975 was an important step on the path that culminated in the Camp David Peace Treaty of March 1979. This second Sinai agreement

¹ Henry Kissinger, 'Does America need A Foreign Policy: Towards a Diplomacy for the 21st century', (New York, Simon and Schuster, 2001) p. 168.

contained political elements that dealt with a durable peace between the two parties. However the commitment to non-recognition was still so great that the entire negotiations process had to be conducted entirely through an American mediator (Kissinger). The two sides never met except at the military level at the very end of the negotiation to sign the documents. The Sinai- II agreement had political leaders signatures which were added to the document separately in each country.²

The Arab Oil Embargo

It was the Arab world that was considered to have gained the most politically from the conflict. The war had convincingly demonstrated that the gap in military strength between Israel and the Arab countries had narrowed. The 1973 war also added a new dimension to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Soon after the outbreak of the war, there were demands from within the Arab world to deny oil to Israel's supporters in the West. In mid-October, Arab oil exporters, meeting in Kuwait, agreed to cut production, while the UAE took the lead in halting the export of oil to the USA. Western nations were soon experiencing rising fuel prices and growing shortages, showing the extent of their dependency on oil produced in the Arab world. In early November, the member states of the European community (EC), the forerunner of the present European Union (EU), endorsed a statement calling for an Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967 and asserting the need for a settlement in the Middle East that did not ignore the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.³ It was the first time such a statement endorsing the right of the Palestinians was made by the Europeans. An outraged Israel accused Europe of surrendering to Arab 'blackmail'. Before they could accuse the US of the same, President

²Ibid.

³ Paul Cossali, 'Arab-Israeli relations 1967-2001' in 'Survey's of the world : The Middle East and North Africa -2002' (48th ed), (London, Europa Publications Ltd., 2001, p. 27.

Nixon quickly deputed his Secretary of State, Kissinger to the region on a series of visits to Middle East capitals. It was the start of Kissinger's legendary shuttle diplomacy. In June 1974, Nixon himself embarked on a tour of the region. America, inspite of having huge oil reserves, had experienced more inconvenience than expected by the Arab oil boycott. Nixon reassured Israel of continued US support. He was also able to please the Arabs by forecasting a new era of cooperation between the U.S and the Arab world. Arab leaders welcomed Nixon's overtures, believing that at last US influence would be used to promote on equitable settlement of the long festering Arab-Israeli dispute. American overtures resulted in the revoking of the embargo on the export of Arab oil to the US. Diplomatic relations between Syria and the USA were also re-established. Israel's international position, on the other hand, was considerably weakened by the revelation of the extent to which the world was dependent upon Arab goodwill. ⁴

The P.L.O in the 1970s

The 1970's were a period during which the P.L.O made many sterling successes. In fact, by the end of the decade, the organisation had representatives, some with full Ambassadorial position, in more than 80 countries. On September 22, 1974, the UN General Assembly disregarding virulent Israeli and American objections, included on its agenda for the first time 'the Palestine question' as a subject for debate rather than as part of the general question of the Middle East. And on November 13, 1974, the Assembly in a historic more, heard Yasser Arafat, the head of the PLO, plead for the Palestinian people's right of

⁴ Ibid, p.28.

self-determination in his much quoted 'gun and olive' branch speech.⁵ International recognition of the PLO had an important effect on the intra-state politics of the Arab world. The effect was felt at the Rabat conference of the league of Arab states in Morocco, in October 1974. The main item on the agenda was Palestinian representation at the proposed Geneva peace talks. Prior to this, in November 1973, the Arab states excluding Jordan recognised the PLO as 'the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.' The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, previously known as Transjordan till 1967 when it had also included the West Bank and East Jerusalem, had always been unwilling to allow the establishment of a Palestinian state on the occupied territories. Coupled with this was the traditional role of Jordan's monarchs as the custodians of all major Muslim holy places in Jerusalem, prime of which was the Al-Aqsa mosque, third holiest in Islam. The mosque itself was located on a raised platform called the Haram Al-Sharif, worshipped by Jews as being the site of their lost Temple, built by King Herod over 2000 years ago. Again the site was revered by Muslims as the place from which the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) ascended to heaven. Naturally the ruling elite of Jordan were reluctant to give up all of this.

At Rabat, however, King Hussein was under the combined pressure of all the Arab states to accept the PLO's right to represent the Palestinians at all international fora. Finally, Hussain accepted a resolution that said that any liberated Palestinian territory "should revert to its legitimate Palestinian owners under the leadership of the PLO". This resolution helped to strengthen the position of moderate PLO elements led by Chairman Arafat since they now had the backing of all the main Arab states to participate in negotiations as the

⁵ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia, vol.25, p. 422.

legitimate voice of the Palestinian people. The elevation of the PLO to the state of a principal player on the Middle East stage was welcomed by the Arab people. The Israeli Government however refused to have any dealings with the PLO, dismissing it as terrorist organisation responsible for the deaths of many of its citizens. The PLO's majority position on Israel itself underwent considerable change during the 1970's. Though committed by its charter to the destruction of the Jewish Zionist state and its replacement by a secular democratic Palestinian state, the middle of the 1970s itself saw the majority of PLO members willing to accept the idea of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In late 1975 and early 1976, the international position of the PLO was further legitimised though a series of discussions at the UN. In November 1975, the General Assembly adopted three resolutions concerning Palestine.

I. establishment of a 20-nation committee to devise plans for the implementation of Palestinian self-determination and national independence.⁶

II. Invitation to the PLO to take part in future debates on the Middle East⁷

And III. Defining Zionism as a form of racism and racial discrimination.⁸

The United States by prior agreement with the Israelis (c/o Kissinger) was committed not to recognise or to negotiate with the PLO. They therefore repeatedly blocked and vetoed resolutions aimed at affirming the Palestinians right to establish their own state. The Israelis

⁶ Ibid., p.423.

⁷ Cossali, n. 3, p.28.

⁸ Ibid.

themselves were not interested in the PLO at the moment. Their eyes were set on Egypt and Nasser's successor as president, Anwar el-Sadat. Sadat had evinced more than enough inclination that he was primarily interested in his land of Sinai and he was quite willing to sacrifice the Palestinians by establishing peace with Israel for the sake of that land.

Sadat, Egypt and the United States

When Sadat succeeded Nasser, who died in September 1970, he was a totally unknown quantity in the West. In appearance and nature, he seemed to be quite the opposite of Nasser. He lacked the pan-Arab aura of Nasser. Even his own people did not know him. Within three years of his rule, however, he was to change this perception completely by his momentous decision to attack Israel. Egypt and Syria's combined attack on Israel resulted in changing the negotiating spectrum of the Middle East considerably. Israel was brought down from a position of unassailable strength to that of a very vulnerable state committed to finding a durable peace with its neighbours. The 1973 War and subsequent oil embargo resulted in a much more heightened consciousness among the world community about the plight of the Palestinians. Even before the war started, Sadat had showed his sense of realpolitik by ditching the Soviets for the Americans. He carried this further in 1975 after the various withdrawal and military standstill agreements were negotiated with the Israelis by abrogating the Soviet - Egypt Treaty of Friendship signed in 1971. Sadat risked enmity with the Arab world and particularly from Syria, by aligning himself with the US. He knew that the Americans were committed (again c/o Nixon and Kissinger) to pursuing a hands-off policy viz-a-viz the Middle East. This action of Sadat resulted in Syria assuming temporary leadership of the Arab world.

Carter and the Arab-Israeli Dispute

The late 1970's were a period of more active negotiations on Arab-Israeli disputes. The Arab states supported Palestinian participation in an overall settlement providing for Israeli withdrawal from areas occupied since the 1967 war and establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza strip. The U.S. position towards the Palestinians also was changing. The new administration of President Jimmy Carter identified the Middle East conflict as a major foreign policy concern and promised more direct involvement in the region. In February 1977, President Carter sent his Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, on a tour of the Middle East and invited Israeli and Arab leaders to visit him in Washington.⁹ In March 1977, Carter spoke of the need for a Palestinian homeland. He later stated that it was essential for the Palestinians to take part in the peace process. These were positions that were unthinkable during the Kissinger era. The Israelis in turn continued to reject direct participation of PLO representatives in the peace process but were willing to allow Palestinians to sit in other Arab delegations like that of Jordan.¹⁰

Begin And The Palestinian Issue.

The May 1977 elections in Israel resulted in the victory of the rightwing Likud party headed by the former Yishuv era (prior to the formation of the state of Israel) Jewish terrorist leader Menachem Begin. Begin as an individual and Likud as a party were committed to maintaining Israeli control over the West Bank and Gaza, renamed in Biblical Jewish terminology as Judea and Samaria. In the approach to the 1977 election, Begin had campaigned hard for the expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories and permanent Israeli

⁹ Ibid, p.29.

¹⁰ Britannica, n.5, p. 423.

control over the West Bank. Begin was violently opposed to negotiation with the PLO which he dubbed a 'terrorist' organisation and refused to accept the notion of an independent Palestinian state. Begin was a Polish Jew who had been imprisoned in a concentration camp by the Nazis where he had lost almost all of his immediate family. This experience coupled with his later experience in Israel's war of independence served to create in him a tremendous desire for security. For him, no amount of sacrifice was sufficient to safeguard the security and territorial integrity of the Jewish state. He was also imbued with an equally great suspicion for the 'goyim' [non-Jews]. He saw all land, whether of Israel proper or the occupied territories including the Golan Heights captured from Syria, as the same sacred and holy part of the Biblical land of the Jews. Begin's long exclusion from governance in Israel and Israeli Labour's treatment of him as pariah made him very bitter and created in him a burning determination to leave his mark on the polity of the Holy Land. Almost immediately after the Begin govt. assumed office in 1977, it announced the extension of health, education and welfare services to the Palestinian populations of the West Bank and Gaza.¹¹ Till then the Egyptians and the Jordanians along with the UNRWA had been fulfilling these needs of the Palestinian people. Arab fears that this was in fact the precursor to Israeli annexation of the two territories were deepened by the announcement of an accelerated program of Jewish settlement building on the West Bank along with the unveiling of a Israeli draft proposal for a territorial settlement that envisaged the maintenance of the occupation through out the West Bank and Gaza. To counter the unnecessarily aggressive new Israeli government and to mollify the Arab world, the USA and the USSR issued a joint statement on 1st October 1977 urging a Middle East settlement that would ensure 'the legitimate

¹¹ Cossali, n. 3, p. 29.

rights of the Palestinians'. The inclusion of such a phrase signalled an important shift in the official U.S. attitude to the Arab – Israeli conflict and clearly troubled the Begin regime.¹²

Sadat's Attitude towards Israel

Egyptian President Anwer el-Sadat made the decisive break through in peace diplomacy with a dramatic visit to Jerusalem in 1977. He decided to take this radical and quixotic step because of his extreme dissatisfaction with the progress of the American mediated peace process in the Middle East. He was also afraid of what steps the rightwing Likud government would take with regard to the Sinai, in particular, to expand and increase the existing number of settlements there. In a speech to the Egyptian parliament on 9 November, Sadat expressed his frustration with the lack of progress towards a peace settlement and announced that he would be prepared to go to Jerusalem to negotiate direct with Israel. His offer was immediately taken up by Israel and on 19 November, Sadat flew to Tel Aviv.¹³ His initiative was welcomed in the West where it was regarded as a bold attempt to break with the sterile attitudes of the past. Within the Arab world however, Sadat's visit was seen with both scepticism and hostility. There was a general feeling that Sadat was prepared to undermine the cause of Arab unity for his own selfish purposes. Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs Ismail Fahmy resigned in protest at the proposed visit. In fact, Sadat's visit to Jerusalem had been planned a few months before during a secret meeting between Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan of Israel and Deputy Prime Minister Hassan Tuhamy of Egypt in Morocco. This meeting was primarily meant to explore the negotiating positions of both Egypt and Israel. President Sadat wanted

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid.

to explore Israel's willingness to make serious concessions.¹⁴ As a case of pronegotiation, this meeting helped to increase the confidence of both sides that negotiation was a credible option. At the meeting, Tuhamy told Dayan that Sadat was ready to meet with Begin, provided Israel gave a prior commitment to full withdrawal from all Arab territory. Moreover, he gave indication that the Egyptian President was ready to negotiate secretly and not in a multilateral forum like Geneva. Israeli leaders, on their part, stated a readiness to withdraw from almost all of Egyptian territory but were not prepared to return all Arab lands captured in 1967 (West Bank and Gaza).¹⁵ The subsequent failure of three months of direct negotiations between Egypt and Israel in which the United States was an observer rather than a participant helped to convince both parties that any further process of negotiation must involve the US as a full participant, if it was to succeed.¹⁶

American Mediation in the Camp David Peace Process

Jimmy Carter was unique among American presidents in his deep concern to find a solution to the issues dividing Israel from its Arab neighbours. In his first speech to the United Nations General Assembly in October 1977, he made these concerns clear:

'Of all the regional conflicts in the world, none holds more menace than the Middle East. War there has already carried the world to the edge of nuclear confrontation. It has already disrupted the world economy and imposed severe hardships on the people in the developed and developing nations alike'.¹⁷

¹⁴ William. B. Quandt, "Camp. David : Peacemaking and Politics", (Washington : Brookings institute , 1986)", p.111.

¹⁵ Cossali, n.3, p.29

¹⁶ Quandt, n. 14, p 10 7

¹⁷ 'United Nations': Address before the General Assembly, October 4, 1977, 'Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States' : Carter, 1977, Vol. 11, p. 1720. Quoted in Janice Gross Stein, 'Pronegotiation in the Arab - Israeli conflict ; the paradoxes of success and failure', International Journal, Vol. XIIV, No. 2, Spring 1989, p. 413.

When Carter came to the white House, he brought little more than a strong biblical knowledge and affection for the Holy Land. Being a devout evangelical Christian, he had a deep affinity for the state of Israel and the Jewish people. On the other hand, he had next to no knowledge about the Palestinians except for the fact that they were obviously Arab. Throughout his tenure, his inability to deal with moderate Israelis as well as Palestinians coupled with absolutely no first hand knowledge of the conditions in the occupied territories made him blind to many facets of the dispute. It was only after his 1983 visit to the West Bank and Gaza that he could fully understand the Palestinian side of the argument. As far as American politics was concerned, Carter was an 'outsider', relatively new to Washington and its ways. He had been the former Governor of the state of Georgia.¹⁸ So as far as he was concerned, it was a quick transition from local issues to those of great international significance.

Carter knew well enough that American interests would be best served if peace was brought to the Middle East. He came to know many of the leaders in the Middle East personally and established close relations with them. Most important of all, while showing a sympathetic face towards Israel, Carter was able to handle the Jewish lobby in New York and Washington relatively firmly. It must be acknowledged that Carter's achievements in the Middle East were built on the firm foundations laid by Henry Kissinger in brokering three Arab-Israeli agreements during 1974-75.¹⁹ Carter was also officially served by his Secretary of State Cyrus Vance who helped in drafting the Camp David Accords and the text of the peace treaty.

President Carter's original aim had been to promote a comprehensive Middle East peace that would be achieved through a

¹⁸ Quandt, n. 14, p. 30

¹⁹ Ibid. p.320.

series of negotiations that could conclude with the convening of a peace conference at Geneva. This was a highly controversial approach, especially after the failure of the 1973 Geneva Conference. A major point of discord about this approach was that Carter wanted to take the Soviets along, something that the Kissinger Doctrine strictly forbade. The negative response to his policies, both at home and abroad forced Carter to reassess his priorities in the Middle East. He was forced to give up the Geneva conference paradigm of peace negotiations. Sadat's visit to Israel in November 1977 again forced the Carter Administration to change its' Middle East policies.²⁰ The US concentrated now on meditating a bilateral peace agreement between Egypt and Israel. Ironically this was the very approach that Kissinger had always dreamed of. Carter who had always been a critic of Kissinger finally ended up fulfilling the task left behind by him.

President Carter's decision to invite Sadat and Begin to Camp David was the result of his frustration at the slow pace of the Middle East peace negotiations during the later part of 1977 and early 1978. The two main actors, Begin and Sadat showed no signs of dropping their traditional animosity and sitting down to serious peace talks. At the same time, Carter realized that his continued involvement in the Middle East morass was costing him political breathing space and votes at home. With his re-election bid fast approaching, he could illafford this. Moreover, Carter firmly believed that Middle East Peace, or at least an Egyptian-Israeli settlement, was both obtainable and necessary.²¹ He felt that the Egyptian and Israeli leaders suffered from distrust and lack of confidence which could be overcome by helping each to understand the other better. Carter felt that a summit meeting at Camp David would provide an ideal setting for Begin and Sadat to get to know

²⁰Ibid. p.18.

²¹ Ibid. p. 206.

and trust each other. Invitations were therefore issued to both parties in early August 1978 for a summit in September. Both Sadat and Begin immediately accepted Carter's invitation to Camp David.²²

Camp David: The Course of the Negotiations.

The main Camp David negotiations took place over a 13 day interval. During this time, both the Israelis and the Egyptians were kept negotiating in good faith by the presence of the Americans alone. The success of Camp David does not belong to Sadat or to Begin, but to President Carter and his team of mediators. Only Carter had the patience and influence to force two men who were of diametrically opposite nature to sit together and agree to a common purpose. The peace treaty between Egypt and Israel that arose out of the Camp David talks is a tribute to the skill and mediation of President Carter, his Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance and National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski.

The Camp David talks lasted from 5 to 17 September, 1978. Two sets of agreements were produced. One established arrangements for determining the future of the West Bank and the Gaza strip. The other elaborated principles whereby an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty could be formulated bringing to an end the state of hostilities and establishing normal relations between the two countries. The entire process was characterized by ups and downs. The progress of the negotiations was mostly related to Begin's ability to compromise. His tenacity in holding on to each and every bargaining point ensured that success came only at the very end. After ten days of intense discussion and negotiation, almost everyone at Camp David believed that the talks had reached an impasse.²³ Faced with the prospect of failure,

²² Ibid. p.207.

²³ Ibid, p. 234

Carter was obliged to reconsider his initial strategy. The political costs of leaving the summit empty-handed must have been apparent not only to Carter and Sadat, but also to Begin. If agreement was to be reached, one if not both parties were going to have to make major concessions.

One of the main areas of disagreement between the two sides related to the military/civilian settlements that Israel had planted in the occupied Sinai peninsula. Egypt naturally insisted that these should be dismantled along with the airfields and all other infrastructure that Israel had built in the Sinai during their occupation. Begin refused throughout the negotiations to withdraw the Sinai settlements. He had made his political career protecting Jewish settlements on occupied lands. So he could not be seen as compromising on this very emotive issue. Finally, all that he would agree to was that the issue would be put to vote in the Knesset (Israeli parliament).²⁴

The Camp David Accords involved enormous skills on the part of all those involved in the negotiations. The talks would have achieved nothing had the participants not been able to demonstrate the will and ability to move away from extreme opening positions and compromise on the issues that sharply divided them. For example, President Sadat began the Camp David Conference on September 6, 1978 by presenting the text of a proposal entitled "Framework for the Comprehensive Peace Settlement of the Middle East Problem". It contained an eight-clause preamble and two articles. The major provisions of the plan were: -

- a. Withdrawal of Israel to international boundaries and armistice lines (the pre-1967 borders) in the Sinai, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and Jerusalem.

²⁴ Charles. D. Smith, 'Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict.' (2nd Ed.)(New York, St. Martins' Press, 1992), p. 225

- b. Removal of Israeli settlements from the occupied territories.
- c. Supervision of the administration of the West Bank by Jordan and of the Gaza strip by Egypt "with the collaboration of the elected representatives of the Palestinian people for a period not to exceed five years (the interim period).
- d. The establishment of a national entity for the Palestinian people-linked to Jordan if the inhabitants so choose-after they exercised their right of self-determination six months prior to the end of the interim period.
- e. Recognition of the right of the Palestinian refugees to return or to claim compensation in accordance with UN resolutions.
- f. Formation of a committee composed of equal number of resident Palestinians and Israelis to administer the Holy city of Jerusalem.
- g. Implementation of these points within a framework of peace recognizing the principles of "non-acquisition of territory by war".
- h. Finally, payment by Israel of full compensation for all damages caused by the operations of its armed forces and the exploitation of natural resources in the occupied territories.²⁵

As far as Begin was concerned, he was quite willing to sacrifice the Sinai for the sake of peace with Egypt (subject to negotiated conditions), but was totally unwilling to compromise on the status of

²⁵ Farah Naaz, 'United States and the Camp David Agreement, 1978: Its Impact on West Asia' (JNU, Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation, 1991), P. 58 - 59

the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) and Gaza strip. For him, these areas formed part of Eretz Israel (Great Israel-the original home land of the Jewish people). He was unwilling to even grant the indigenous Palestinian people basic human rights in their own land. Begin also refused to talk about Jerusalem, holy city of three religions, but holiest for the Jews. Jerusalem was a non-negotiable issue. It was the eternal and indivisible capital of the Jews.

Thus Carter's role in helping to broker the agreements was central. Left to themselves, Sadat and Begin would never have overcome the accumulated legacy of decades of hatred and mistrust and would have broken off their talks over any number of issues. Carter's position on many issues influenced the final outcome. He wanted an Egypt-Israeli agreement on the Sinai, and he was prepared to press the Israelis hard on withdrawal and on the settlements to get it. However Carter was less concerned about an agreement on the West Bank and Gaza (especially when he understood the strong Israeli and American-Jewish dislike for such an agreement). He did not think that any explicit linkage between Egyptian Sinai and the Palestinian question was desirable or necessary.²⁶

William D. Quandt has stated that,

“in the end, it was Carter who made the final judgements on what to accept and what not to accept, and it was Carter who used his influence with Sadat to get him to stay and to sign on agreement that both men knew was imperfect”.²⁷

Egyptian gains and losses

Egypt's most important gain from Camp David was an Israeli commitment to full withdrawal from Sinai, including the oilfields,

²⁶ Quandt, n. 14, p. 257

²⁷ Ibid.

settlements and airfields. To get this commitment, Sadat had offered a period of three years to complete the withdrawal, security arrangements that would be monitored by the US and the UN, and a promise to “normalize relations” with Israel once the first phase of withdrawal had been reached. The Accords contained general principles referring to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the right of the Palestinians to choose their own form of government. All the details dealt with the procedures and arrangements for the transitional period and not for the final status of the occupied territories.

Again to quote Quandt:

“Israel had made no commitment to eventual withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza; nothing was said about Jerusalem; and settlements in the Palestinian occupied territories were nowhere mentioned, though the Americans were telling everyone that Begin had in fact agreed to a freeze in settlement construction for the duration of the negotiations on autonomy”.²⁸

Sadat thus gained for Egypt, but lost on the Palestinian cause. The Camp David accords finally ended Egypt’s campaign on behalf of the Palestinians and Arab national unity. The Nasserite legacy was broken. It was revealed that on vital national issues, Egypt, like any nation, would only defend its own rights and not the rights of others, however just their cause may be.

Israeli gains and losses

The Camp David agreements were greeted in the West as a triumph of US diplomacy. There was also cautious approval in Israel, where there was satisfaction that a peace treaty could be completed with Egypt without

²⁸ Ibid. p,255.

substantial concessions on the issues of Jewish settlements and the continued Israeli control over the Palestinian and Syrian territories conquered in 1967. This view was reinforced by a speech made by Menachem Begin on the anniversary of the creation of the state of Israel in 1949, in which he asserted that no border would ever be drawn 'through the land of Israel' and that 'we shall never withdraw from the Golan Heights'.²⁹

Begin has been conceded by all to be the most able negotiator at Camp David. This former terrorist leader, associated with some of the most despicable war crimes committed during Israel's war of Independence, made sure he fought over every word at the negotiating table. Begin had to concede the Sinai to Sadat, thus giving up something that for Israel was very valuable. There were extensive oilfields in the Sinai that were being utilized by Israel for their domestic oil needs. In return, Begin not only won a durable peace with Egypt, but also a comparatively free hand for Israel in dealing with the West Bank and Gaza. Begin protected himself from considerable US and Egyptian pressure on the key issues of the future of the Palestinian territories, and on any form of linkage between the Egyptian - Israeli agreement and the Palestinian question. Crucial to Begin's victory was the fact that the Accords contained no controversial language like the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war", the applicability of the principles of UN resolution 242 "to all fronts of the conflict", and the need for eventual Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. Israel's claim to sovereignty over all of undivided Jerusalem was not contested in the accord. Finally, begin had only to promise a three month freeze on settlement construction in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel's ultimate victory lay in that within 9 months of signing a peace treaty with Egypt,

²⁹ Cossali, n.3, p. 30

and with Israeli troops still in the Sinai, diplomatic relations between Egypt and Israel were established and ambassadors were exchanged.³⁰

The Camp David Accords and the PLO.

The Camp David accords was the first ever Arab –Israeli agreements that spelt out specific conditions for solving the Palestinian issue. Given the complexity of the issue, the only realistic approach to a solution was felt to be the establishment of a five – year transitional period for the West Bank and Gaza. The first part of the Accords, entitled, “The Framework for Peace in the Middle East” stated that Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the representatives of the Palestinian people would participate in three – stage negotiations to determine the area’s future. (1) Cairo and Jerusalem would negotiate and then supervise transitional arrangements for a maximum of five years. The current Israeli military and civilian administration would withdraw when the inhabitants of the areas had elected a self – governing authority in free elections.

(2). Egypt, Israel and Jordan would determine the powers and responsibilities of the elected self – governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza strip. Israel would withdraw the IDF into specified locations. Local constabulary forces consisting of Israeli and Jordanian forces would patrol and thereby ensure proper border control.

(3) After the establishment of the self – governing authority a transition period of five years would begin. Negotiations to determine the final status of the territories would begin no later than the third year. These talks must include Egypt, Israel, Jordan and elected representatives of inhabitants of the West Bank and the Gaza strip. The talks would be based on provisions of UN Resolution 242 and include discussions of boundaries and future security arrangements. It was specified that the

³⁰ Naaz, n. 25, p. 61 - 62

final “solution would recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements”.³¹

On 18 September 1978, an enlarged emergency session of the PLO – EC(Executive Committee) met to discuss the Camp David accords. The EC session gave a call to all Palestinians, inside and outside the occupied territories, to observe a general strike on 20 September to express “resolute resistance” to the Camp David “conspiracy”. Arafat in a message to the US President stated that the signing of the Camp David accords signalled the “loss of US interests in the Middle East”.³² To the PLO leaders, the accords only served to undermine the aim of Palestinian self-determination and their hopes of creating an independent state. In the eyes of the PLO, the United States position on the question of autonomy had become a decisive factor. Thus after Camp David, the most important aspect of Palestinian diplomacy was to counter the American design to get closer to Jordan. This was to strengthen Jordan’s opposition to Camp David as well as to strengthen the struggle in the occupied territories.³³ They also targeted Western Europe. The ground realities in Western Europe vis-a-vis the Palestinian question and the PLO were quite different from those in the US. The Europeans had supported the Camp David accords as a process though they had reservations over the provisions related to the Palestinian question. The European states had realized that their interests were being threatened by the continuing failure to solve the Palestinian problem. The European countries recognized that their economic interests were tied to developments in the region. In July 1979, Arafat met with the Austrian Chancellor, Bruno Kreisky and the Chairman

³¹ M.A Friedlander, ‘Sadat and Begin : The Domestic Policies of Peace making’. (Colorado : Westview press, 1983) p. 229. In Naaz, n. 25, p. 65

³² Bansidhar Pradhan, ‘From Confrontation To Hostile Intimacy: PLO and the US’(New Delhi, Sehyog Prakashan, 1994), p. 157

³³ Alain Gresh, ‘The PLO: The Struggle Within-Towards an Independent Palestinian State’(London, Zed Books, 1983), p. 219

of the Socialist International, Willy Brandt, in Vienna. Following talks, they issued a joint statement in which the Palestine question was regarded as “the central problem in the Middle East conflict”.³⁴

The Arab governments' opposition to Camp David was coordinated in the Ninth Arab summit meeting in Baghdad in November 1978. The final communiqué rejected the accords on the ground that these agreements “had taken place outside the framework of collective Arab responsibility” and had harmed the Palestinian cause by violating the resolutions of the Algiers and Rabat summit conferences. It called for “a just peace based on the total Israeli withdrawal from Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Arab Jerusalem” and for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. The fourteenth PNC that met in Damascus in January 1979, also unanimously condemned the accords as “a conspiracy that should be rejected and resisted by all means”.³⁵

Ultimately the US mediated initiative for a lasting peace in the Middle East met only with partial success. The Americans in the immediate post – Camp David era did try to formulate a more specific peace formula that would help the Palestinians to achieve their aims short of an independent state. The Carter administration's frequently stated policy was that the Palestinian people must have the right for themselves and their descendants to live with dignity and freedom, and with the opportunity for economic fulfillment and political expression. In a speech made before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 27th May 1979, Secretary of State Vance stressed that the Camp David accords recognised the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements.³⁶ What prevented the US from recognizing the PLO was the American stand on UN resolutions No. 242 and 335 and Kissinger's

³⁴ Pradhan, n.32, p. 167

³⁵ Ibid., p. 157

³⁶ Middle East Review (Washington, DC), Vol. 19, 1979, p. 27.

famous pledge to Israel not to deal with the PLO unless Israel did so first, as a guarantee for Israel's security and sovereignty.

The US, by allowing its policy on the issue of contacts with the PLO to be dictated by Israeli policy, ruled itself out as a credible actor in the search for solution to the Palestinian problem. Another reason why the Camp David framework was totally inadequate in dealing with the Palestinian issue related to the ambiguities surrounding the concept of autonomy. Negotiations between Egypt and Israel over the format of autonomy for the West Bank that began in May 1979 continued for over a year without any agreement. The Begin govt. reasserted its claim to the West Bank and Gaza as an indivisible part of 'Eretz Israel' and stated that any 'autonomy' would not apply to land and water rights which would continue to belong to Israel. Israel announced plans in May 1979 for an ambitious programme of settlement construction in the West Bank and Gaza, and in September the ban on Israeli citizens purchasing Arab land in the occupied territories was ended.³⁷ Sadat, on the other hand, called for full governing autonomy for the occupied territory, within a Jordanian entity, a stance that had the moral support of the Americans. The official American position at the end of the Carter presidency remained that Israeli settlements in occupied territory were illegal and that East Jerusalem was considered to be occupied territory despite its incorporation into Israel.³⁸ The problem in American politics was that any party who stated this view openly would be sure to lose the influential Jewish vote and backing, thereby weakening their chances in any elections in the US. Carter achieved the Camp David accords and the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, holding to established American positions that, when declared openly, destroyed his chances for a second term. It was the costs of peace that he had to pay.

³⁷ Cossali, n.3, P. 30

³⁸ Smith, n. 24, P. 257

CHAPTER-III

THE PEACE PROCESS FROM REAGAN TO NETANYAHU

The Reagan Era

Ronald Reagan was elected U.S. President at the end of 1980. Strongly sympathetic to the Jewish state, his appointment of a team of pro-Israeli foreign affairs advisers caused protest from the Arab world. His assumption of the Presidency in January 1981, coincided with a time of increased regional strife through out the Middle East. The Islamic Revolution in Iran during the last days of the Carter administration was followed by the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan which was again followed by the Iran-Iraq war in September 1980. Reagan administration saw the Soviet Union as an 'evil empire' which should be neutralized or eliminated if possible. All their actions were geared towards this perspective. After the fall of Shah's Iran, Israel was seen 'as perhaps the only remaining strategic asset in the region on which the US can truly rely.....'.¹

Reagan showed very little concern for the Palestine cause and had an entirely negative perception of the PLO. While the Carter administration had tried to involve the PLO in the peace process, the Reagan regime did the opposite by rejecting any PLO role in future negotiations. Reagan followed the typical Israeli line of discriminating between the PLO and the Palestinians, trying to marginalize the PLO.

The Reagan Plan

In September 1982, President Reagan formulated new proposals to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict on the PLO-Israeli conflict as it would be more precise to term it. The 'Reagan Plan' envisaged the restoration of the occupied Territories (OTs) to their Arab populations, but

¹ *Washington Post*, August 15 1979. In 'Charles D. Smith, Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict'. (2nd ed) [New York St.Martin's Press 1992],p.257.

denied the creation of a Palestinian state. Instead it proposed Palestinian self-government in association with Jordan. The plan also called for a freeze on Israeli settlement in the West Bank and denied Israeli claims of sovereignty over either that area or Gaza. It called for 'full Palestinian autonomy', to be realised through confederation with Jordan in such a manner that the legitimate rights of the Palestinians would be realized without compromising the "legitimate security concerns of Israel'. Reagan, infact, denied both the basic PLO and Israeli positions. He stated that in America's view, "the withdrawal provision of Resolution 242 applies to all fronts, including the West Bank and Gaza".² He also argued that Israel could not be expected to return to the narrow and indefensible borders it had before 1967. The Reagan plan was formulated in the background of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. They carried out this invasion with the purpose of destroying the PLO HQ in that country. The Israelis had secret American backing for their plans. Both the Americans and the Israelis were demanding the withdrawal of the PLO from Lebanon as the price for ending the invasion. The PLO, on the other hand, was demanding American recognition of the movement as the price for its departure. This position had strong support from many members in the Reagan administration. Reagan however refused to recognize the PLO as anything but a terrorist organization.

The plan aroused so much expectation among the Arabs that the 12th Arab League summit at Fez, Morocco (6-9 September, 1982) made it the prime focus of their deliberations. The Reagan plan was believed to be important because it was put forward by a state that was considered to be one of the most important actors in the region. In addition, the US was the sole country that was able to influence and pressurize the

²Charles .D.Smith, 'Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict', (2nd Ed.), [New York, St. Martins Press, 1992], p.268.

Israelis to make the necessary compromises for the sake of peace. In spite of all this, the Israelis rejected the plan outright.

Fahd Plan.

On 7th August, 1981, the Saudi crown prince, Fahd bin Abdel Aziz, declared on eight-point plan as a basis for a "Middle East peace settlement". The plan was prefaced by a declaration in which the Saudi prime expressed regret for the support extended to the Camp David accords by the US. He stated that "we are not quite happy with the overall US policy in the Middle East, especially with regard to the Palestinian issue." The "Fahd Plan" called for an Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967 and the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza with its capital in Jerusalem(East). There was also a mention of the right of all states in the region to live in peace. The plan also provided for the recognition of the Palestinian peoples right to return (to their homeland) and compensation for all who did not wish to do so.³

The 'Fahd plan' has been seen as an attempt to take over the mantle of leadership of the Arab world from Egypt after it was expelled from the Arab league following the Camp David accords. The plan contained no new provisions. What attracted everyone's imagination and aroused expectation was that it carried the name of the Saudi crown prince. The Arab world's richest and most influential nation was calling for a negotiated settlement between Israel and the Palestinians.⁴ Interestingly, the plan envisaged placing the West Bank under United Nations supervision for a transitory period not exceeding a few months. This was in direct opposition to the Camp David accords and the so-called Reagan plan that fixed a transition period of not less than five

³ Bansidhar Pradhan, 'From Confrontation to hostile Intimacy : PLO and US' (New Delhi, Sehyog Prakashan, 1994), p.387.

⁴ Dr. Y. Refeek Ahmed, 'West Asia peace plans : Camp David to Fez' in Dr. A.K Pasha, 'Arab-Israeli peace process : An Indian Perspective' (New Delhi, Manas Publications, 2000) p.277.

years. The plan got a positive response from most of the moderate Arab states, Western Europe and even the US. However, the Arab summit called at Fez, Morocco, in November 1981, failed to endorse the plan.

The Fez Charter

The Reagan plan gave the Arabs the necessary impetus to come up with a plan of their own. The 12th Arab League summit held at Fez in Morocco brought all the Arab league states (except Libya) together to produce a plan known as the 'Fez Plan'. It was essentially a reiteration of the Fahd Plan with minor amendments.⁵ The text of the new plan was adopted by consensus of all the leaders including Arafat and Assad. It called for the creation of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza with Jerusalem as its capital. The Palestinian right to self-determination was mentioned along with the central role of the PLO in all future negotiations. The controversial reference in the original Saudi proposals to "the right of all countries in the region to live in peace" was changed into a formula under which "the UN security council will guarantee peace for all the states of the region, including the independent Palestinian state".⁶ This clause actually underlined the fact that for the first time the whole Arab world including the PLO agreed to a statement which recognized Israel's right to exist. The plan was thus a carefully drafted proposal fashioned to take into account the concerns of all including Arab moderates, radicals and the PLO. Israel again flatly rejected the plan, vehemently against the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.⁷

If it was at Fez in 1982 that the Arab leaders endorsed the concept of guaranteed peaceful relations with all states in the Middle East, then it was at the Casablanca summit of the Arab league in 1989 that they

⁵Ibid., p 283.

⁶ Pradhan, n. 3, p.198.

⁷ Ibid.

approved the concept of partition (a two state solution) for the first time since 1947 (the original UNGA resolution 181(II) on the Arab Israeli conflict had been in favour of partition and the creation of a Jewish and Arab state). The Arabs had rejected this then. This naturally implied that UNSC resolution 242 was also collectively approved by the Arab Heads of State for the first time since it was passed by the council in 1967.⁸

Hussein-Arafat Accord

Meanwhile, repeated attempts throughout the 1980s by the PLO and Jordan to form a joint negotiating team to face Israel were blocked by the Israelis, who refused to deal with the PLO. Various American initiatives launched by successive Secretaries of State, George Shultz and James Baker failed to make any head way in the face of Israeli intransigence as well the inability of the US to engage in any meaningful dialogue with the PLO. No forward movement in solving the Israel-Palestine problem was possible until the PLO was recognized as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. The Hussain-Arafat Accord of February 1985, provided for Palestinian self-determination within the framework of a Jordanian-Palestinian federation. It also called for peace negotiations including all parties to the conflict along with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. However general disapproval of the accord in the Arab world compelled the king in February 1986 to announce the end of political co-ordination with the PLO. The reasons he gave for this was the reluctance of the PLO to meet US pre-conditions for a dialogue-that it accept resolution 242 and ultimately recognize the state of Israel.⁹

⁸ Walid Khalidi, 'The Half-Empty Glass of Middle East Peace', Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol.14, no.3, Spring 1990, p.15.

⁹ Paul Cossali, 'Arab-Israeli Relations 1967-2001' in 'Surveys of the world : The Middle East and North Africa-2002' (48th Ed) (London, Europa Publications Ltd, 2001), p. 33.

Start of Intifada

An intensified civil war in Lebanon during late 1985 and 1986 resulted in heavy fighting between the PLO and pro-Syrian militias. This in turn paved the way for the re-unification of the PLO which had been heavily ridden with factionalism. The 18th session of the PNC (Palestine National Council) held in Algiers in April 1987 resulted in Arafat re-establishing his authority over all the groups. Throughout 1987, there was a steady rise in political tension in the Occupied Territories (OTs). A large - scale uprising by the Palestinians in the OTs began on December 8, 1987. This 'Intifadeh' came after more than 20 years of Israeli occupation when the Palestinians felt that there was no other way to accomplish their goals of self-government and national independence other than to rebel. Israeli reaction was to try to suppress the rebellion using lethal force which soon came under international condemnation.

The Shultz Plan

In February 1988, the US Government announced a new plan for the resolution of the Palestinian issue. The 'Shultz Plan' as it came to be known was presented at the fag end of the Reagan administration. It called for negotiations between Israel and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to determine an interim form of autonomy for the OTs. The proposed transitional arrangement would last for three years and would provide for an Israeli military withdrawal from the West Bank and for municipal elections of Palestinian officials. Negotiations for a final settlement would run concurrently with the transitional arrangement and if necessary would be paralleled by an international conference including the five permanent members of the security council and all other parties to the conflict. All the negotiations would be conducted on the basis of UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338. It also emphasized that

negotiations between the Israeli and Jordanian-Palestinian delegation would proceed independently of any other negotiations.¹⁰

This plan had the distinction of being rejected by all the parties concerned, including the Palestinians. The PLO rejected the plan outright because it failed to make provision for a Palestinian state or for their own participation in the peace process. King Hussain meanwhile announced in July 1988 that he was severing all official links, whether legal or administrative with the West Bank. His action paved the way for the PLO to emerge as the sole legitimate authority to represent the Palestinian people. As a result, in November 1988, the 19th session of the PNC culminated in the declaration of the independent state of Palestine, with the Holy city of Jerusalem as its capital. The Declaration of Independence cited UNGA Resolution 181(II) of 1947, which partitioned mandate Palestine into two states, the Arab and the other Jewish, as providing the legal basis for the right of the Palestinian Arab People to national sovereignty and independence.¹¹

The Israeli Peace Initiative

By the middle of 1988, the Intifada had spread through out the OTs. The Israelis were determined that the intifada must be suppressed before any changes took place in the status of the occupied territories. Addressing the UNGA in December 1988, Arafat announced his recognition of Israel and renunciation of 'terrorism'. He also repeated his call for an international peace conference to be held on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338. The Reagan administration acknowledged the PLO's 'concessions' by holding the US's first official talks with Palestinians representing the movement. Under pressure to the PLO's diplomatic offensive, the Israeli government of Yitzhak Shamir which was

¹⁰ 'Documents on Palestine. In Joanne Maher (ed), The Middle East and North Africa 2002 (48th Ed), (London, Europa) publication, 2002), p.81.

¹¹ Ibid.

a Liquid-Labour coalition came out with its own peace initiative in April 1989 for a negotiated end to the conflict. The so-called 'Shamir proposals' provided for elections in the West Bank and Gaza in return for an end to the Intifada. The elections would produce a Palestinian delegation to conduct negotiations on a final settlement. The delegation so elected should comprise solely of non-PLO members. A transitional authority was also envisaged during which a self-ruling authority might be established. The transitional period would serve as a test of co-operation and co-existence. Israel emphasized its willingness to discuss any option when negotiations on a final settlement were held. It soon became clear that Shamir was offering little more than recycled Camp David proposals. The Shamir plan was naturally unacceptable to the PLO and the Arab League. Attempts made by Egypt's President Mubarak as well as US Secretary of State, James Baker, to make the Israeli proposals more acceptable to the Arab world were not successful.¹²

The Madrid Peace Conference

Theoretically, the Oslo Accord signed between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel on 13 September 1993 was preceded by a long series of negotiations between the two parties dating back to the Madrid conference held on 30 October 1991. This conference established a new framework for multilateral negotiations that replaced the 1973 Geneva conference as the roadmap for future negotiations on the Arab - Israeli conflict. It was for the first time that all the parties to the Arab - Israeli dispute, namely, Israel, Syria, Lebanon and a Jordanian delegation that was openly acknowledged to comprise of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, sat down face to face for talks. Israel-Palestinian negotiations on the official Madrid track typically encountered many obstacles mainly due to the political fallout

¹² Cossali, n.9, p.34.

of Arab terrorist attacks and Israeli military incursions in the occupied territories. These factors influenced both parties to try out secret track-II model diplomacy similar to that carried out between Egypt and Israel in the late 1970s, that led to the signing of the first Camp David accords. The Israelis and PLO emissaries carried out secret talks in Norway under the able guidance of Terje Roed Larsen, a Norwegian social scientist. These highly secret negotiations led to the conclusion of a peace deal between the PLO and Israel known as the 'Declaration of Principles for Palestinian Self-Rule' in Washington on 13 September 1993.¹³

The Oslo Accords

'but if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou also incline towards peace, and trust in God.'

The Holy Qur'an(Sura'8:61)

This verse is frequently quoted by Yasir Arafat to explain his reason for entering into a peace process with Israel. Another of his statements is as follows:

"The Revolution will go on until an independent Palestinian state is established with Jerusalem as its capital We will struggle on all fronts to prove that this land is Arab, Arab and Arab; we will defend every particle of Palestinian soil, and we will wage the battle of building a Palestinian state as we waged the liberation and peace battle."

Interview in Saudi journal **al-Wasat**, Jan 9 – 15, 1995.

Yasir Arafat has for many years been making statements like the above, mixing the language of peace and compromise in his declarations in the Western languages, while saying in Arabic that Jerusalem is totally Palestinian and that not one acre of historic Palestine belongs to

¹³ Abul Kalam Azad, 'The Middle East Peace process and the Palestinian Statehood', BISS Papers, no. 18, April 2000, p. 69.

the Jews.¹⁴ In spite of all this, however, Arafat's stature as the undisputed leader of the Palestinian people began to slip after the signing of the 1993 Oslo Accords. The Accords formalized the legitimacy of Israel and ended Palestinian claims to Israeli land. The P.L.O. also had to give up their claim to 30% of the territory that the original 1948 UN partition plan had defined as Palestinian. The so-called future state of Palestine was to comprise of little more than 20% of what was once the British Mandate of Palestine.¹⁵

The US role in the Oslo Process

'----the relationship between the United States and Israel is a special relationship for special reasons. It is based upon shared values, interests and a common commitment, to democracy, pluralism and respect for the individual.'

-US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, February 1993.

This statement by the top foreign policy official of the Clinton administration reveals the tilt, bias and interest of the Americans in any deal involving the prospect of a long term peace between Israel and her neighbours. The Clinton Presidency itself when it took office was hailed as one of the most pro - Israel governments. to come to office in Washington for a long time. As an election candidate, Clinton had criticized the Bush administration for linking peace talks to humanitarian efforts to resettle Soviet immigrants. He often praised the Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin for the steps he had taken to revive the peace process (the same Rabin who had brutally tried to crush the first intifadeh) and publicly appealed to the Arab side to respond. He was also quoted as repeatedly asking the Arabs to end their boycott of Israel.

¹⁴ Arthur Hertzberg, "A small peace for the Middle East", Foreign Affairs, vol. 80, No. 1, Jan/Feb 2001, p. 141.

¹⁵ Chris Hedge, 'The New Palestinian Revolt', Foreign Affairs, vol. 80, No. 1, Jan/Feb 2001, p. 134.

He promised to help Israel maintain its qualitative military balance in the Middle East.¹⁶

In March 1993, while meeting the Israeli Premier Rabin officially for the first time, President Clinton promised that he would prevent any measure to cut US military and economic aid to Israel. Clinton's affection for the Jewish state was best expressed in an interview given to the New York Times, the day before the Israel - PLO agreement was signed in Washington.

"The only time I went to Israel was with my pastor, who told me after I got back that he thought one day I would be president..... and he said 'Just remember, God will never forgive you if you turn your back on Israel' ".¹⁷

The above statement not only revealed Clinton's almost religious affection for the Jewish state (a must for all American presidents in their first term if they harboured ambitions for a second term) but also his almost childlike ego, a point that would again come to light at the end of the Camp David II summit. The Americans, however had no direct role in the Oslo negotiations. They were only brought into the picture towards the end when it was sure that a deal could be signed. This in turn reflected the extreme secrecy under which the negotiations were conducted in Oslo. When the Israelis first intimated the Americans about the Oslo process, veteran Israeli politician and the then Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, reportedly told the US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, that Israel was willing to publicly attribute all credit for the breakthrough to the Americans. More than making peace with the PLO,

¹⁶ Ziva Flamhaft, 'Israel on the Road to Peace : Accepting the Unacceptable' (Colorado : Washington Press, 1996).

¹⁷ *New York Times*, September 12, 1993, p. 10. In Flamhaft, n. 4, p. 98.

the Israelis wanted to get any commitment they made guaranteed by the US.¹⁸

The Oslo Accords consisted of two parts.

1. Mutual recognition between the PLO and Israel and.
2. Declaration of Principles (DoP) on interim Self-Governing Arrangements for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

It was the second part that was signed in Washington on 13 September 1993. The DoP was signed on the White House lawns by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and PLO Executive Committee member Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazin) in the presence of the US President Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat. It was witnessed by the US Secretary of state Warren Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev. The first part was in the form of two letters signed by Arafat and Rabin. Arafat's letter made far reaching commitments to Israel. The PLO recognised Israeli right to exist in peace and security, accepted Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, committed itself to the peace process and to a peaceful resolution of conflict between the two sides, renounced the use of terrorism and other acts of violence, and agreed to assume responsibility of all PLO elements and personnel to ensure compliance.¹⁹ The PLO also agreed to change the relevant articles of the Palestine National Charter(PNC) denying Israel's right to exist and any other provision against the above stated commitments. Rabin's letter to Arafat stated that in the light of the PLO commitments, the government of Israel had decided to recognize the organization as the representative of the Palestinian people and to begin negotiation with it within the Middle East peace process.

¹⁸ Warren Christopher, 'Chances of a Lifetime – A Memoir' (New York, Scribner Books, 2001), p. 200.

¹⁹ Bansidhar Pradhan, 'Terrorism as an Instrument of Armed Struggle and Diplomacy', International studies (JNU), vol. 138, no. 4, 2001, p. 415.

A Palestinian Interim Self – Governing Authority (PISGA) which later come to be known as Palestinian Authority (PA) was to be set up in the territories of Gaza and Jericho (West Bank) following the withdrawal of the Israelis from these areas. The authority was to be extended to other areas of the West Bank later. To facilitate the extension of the PLO's power base, the projected agreement provided for a five – year programme of Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and troop redeployment. Negotiations on critical issues like the right of return of Palestinian refugees, the future borders of the projected Palestinian state, the future of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories and the question of Jerusalem were all deferred, but it was specified that they should begin not later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority.²⁰

Palestinian Statehood and the Oslo Accords

It is interesting to note that nowhere in the wording of the accords does the question of Palestinian statehood figure. This was quite contrary to the PLO's oft- stated sole ambition of establishing a sovereign, secular state in historic Palestine or at least on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. UNGA resolution 181 that clearly defines the legitimacy and necessity of a Palestinian state was never alluded to in the Oslo accords, where as, UNSC resolutions 242 and 338 that refer to the Arab –Israeli conflict without any reference to the Palestinians, have constituted the base of the Oslo peace process. While no mention is made about a 'national home for the Palestinians' in the Oslo process, there is a reference to the so called 'mutual legitimate and political rights of the Palestinians' in the preamble to the DOP. There is no reference to the right of return of Palestinian refugees as enshrined in UN resolutions. Concurrently, no mention is made of an end to the Israeli military occupation of the OTs. The so – called Israeli withdrawal from the West

²⁰ Azad, n.13, p. 70.

Bank city of Jericho and the Gaza strip was not a complete process in that the IDF was just redeploying from crowded population centres. As a result Israel would continue to maintain its status as a de facto sovereign even in Gaza and Jericho.²¹

Israel, on the other hand, managed to get much more out of the PLO. Thus the PLO's recognition of Israel removed the *raison d'être* for the other Arab states to continue to withhold their recognition of the Jewish state. As a result of the Oslo accords, the PLO got official recognition from the US and European states. It also qualified for international assistance from donor organisations like the World Bank. Indeed as former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has recently pointed out, "the outside world would increasingly endow that autonomous entity with attributes of statehood".²²

Cairo Agreement

The Cairo Agreement also known as the Gaza -Jericho Agreement was signed on 4 May 1994. This provided for Palestinian self - rule in Gaza and Jericho as given in the DOP. It also required the Palestinians to accept a system of dual rights in the territories. A right for the settlers and a lesser right for the Arabs. The Cairo accords enshrined the Israeli right to fortify and defend its settlements in Gaza and Jericho, to reserve roads and highways for its exclusive use and to restrict the Palestinian population to strictly defined areas.²³ The US was supposed to have played the part of honest broker in these negotiations. In addition, a protocol on economic relations was agreed in Paris on 29 April 1994, and was added to the Cairo Agreement in may 1994 .The new 'economic agreements' served to reduce the Palestinian economy to vassal status of the Israelis with import tariffs, trade taxes, import licensing and high

²¹ Ibid, P. 71.

²² Mark. A. Heller, "Towards a Palestinian State", *Survival*, vol. 39, no. 2, Summer, 1997, p. 6.

²³ Sukumar, Muralidharan, 'Peace and war', *Frontline* (cover story), November 10, 2000, p. 16.

standards being imposed on goods produced by the Palestinians. Israel could virtually dictate to the Palestinians in the economic field and bring about its unequal integration into a highly advanced Israeli economy.²⁴

The Cairo agreement contained detailed arrangements for Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho and the deployment of a 9000 strong Palestinian police force. A newly appointed Palestinian National Authority (PNA) would be responsibly for managing Palestinian affairs with the exception of security and foreign affairs. Elections were to be held in July 1995 in Gaza and the whole of the West Bank to choose members to a Palestinian Legislative Council.

The Israelis also made a promise to extend self - rule to the remaining parts of the West Bank. Following the establishment of self - rule in Gaza and Jericho, Israel's position in the Arab world improved considerably. A formal peace treaty come into place with Jordan. This was followed by consular relations with other Arab countries like Morocco, Tunisia, Qatar, and Oman.²⁵

Clinton and the Arab - Israeli peace process

The Clinton administration's first term in office did not produce anything remarkable in the volatile peace making arena of the Middle East. The relationship with Israel was close but not to the extent of distancing Arab states and the Palestinians. The visibly genuine participation of Israel in the peace process further improved the US - Israeli relationship. Both Prime Ministers, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres enjoyed a good working relationship with the Clinton administration. In April 1996, President Clinton along with Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, issued a joint statement that set their 'strategic partnership' in two main principles.

²⁴ Dr. A.K. Pasha, 'Conflict Resolution and the Palestinian Peace Process', in A.K.Pasha(Ed.), 'Arab - Israeli Peace Process : an Indian Perspective' (New Delhi, Manas publications, 2000), p. 254.

²⁵ Azad, n. 3, p. 82

1. The natural US commitment to Israel and
2. A mutual determination to achieve a comprehensive peace settlement.²⁶

The United States is the only outside power that both Israel and the PA recognize can play a key role in the peace process. Israelis depend on the will and ability of the US to intervene even militarily if necessary should things 'go wrong' for the Jewish state. American wealth and leadership are necessary for the international arrangements to maintain a peace agreement. The Palestinians on the other hand see an active American role as the only way to maintain same sort of status quo in a situation greatly favouring Israel.

The Syrian Angle

After the beating that Iraq received in the Gulf war, Syria alone remained as the main threat to Israel in the neighbourhood. Both the Israelis and the Americans were determined to bring Syria also into the peace fold on their terms. But their calculations were all foiled by the sphinx of Damascus, Hafiz al -Assad. For the United States, an Israel - Syria agreement would not only remove a major threat to Israel, but would improve the American strategic position in the region as well. While pursuing a dual containment policy vis-a-vis Iran and Iraq, the Americans were trying to improve their relations with Syria, banking on the recent Syria participation in 'Operation Desertstorm' against Iraq. In addition to sending his Secretary of State, Warren Christopher to Damascus many times on shuttle diplomacy between Syria and Israel, Clinton himself met Assad twice in 1994. But he could not influence him to change his mind.²⁷ The main issue for Assad was the Golan Heights

²⁶ Robert Rabil, 'The ineffective role of the US in the US- Israel- Syrian Relationship,' Middle East Journal, Summer 2001, p. 431.

²⁷ Christopher, n. 6, p. 223.

that Israel had occupied in 1967. Assad rightly demanded a full and unconditional withdrawal by Israel from the area. Israel, on the other hand was only interested in security guarantees from the Syrians which Assad was not prepared to give unless and until a withdrawal took place.

Oslo II Accord

It required a lot of prodding and mediation by the Americans as well as the Egyptians for the Israelis and the Palestinians to agree to the next stage of their peace process. Meeting in Washington on 18 September 1995, the Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and the PLO leader Yasser Arafat put their signatures to a document known as the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza strip or Oslo II. This agreement committed Israel to withdraw from 440 villages of the West Bank and six of the seven cities, including Hebron. Civil authority would be transferred to the PNA in all these areas, but Israel would reserve the right to intervene militarily in the villages. In other words, no area in the West Bank was to witness Israeli withdrawal in the true sense as subsequent Israeli redeployment was to occur in the OTs. Oslo II was silent on the question of dismantling the Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Such a dismantling was antithetical to the Jewish conception of security. A major feature of Oslo II was the division of the West Bank into three zones. Zone A consisted of the main towns (2.8 % of total land area with 28% of the population) to be placed under direct Palestinian control. Zone B was to comprise of the remaining Palestinian population centers where civilian control resides with the PA and security control with Israel. This effectively placed Area B under Israeli jurisdiction. Zone C was composed of mostly rural land comprising nearly 70% of the total West Bank that included Israeli settlements and areas reserved for future Israeli infrastructural projects and military zones. In spite of so called re-deployment, Israel always controlled over 80% of the land area in the West Bank. With the Oslo-II agreement, Israel gained legal control

over a majority of the West Bank. This was an aim, it had sought since 1967. Infact, the territorial divisions agreed to in the Oslo II accord, established the framework for a final settlement in the West Bank that would deny any territorial continuity to a future Palestinian state. Moreover, by accepting the division of the West Bank according to the provisions of the accord, Yasir Arafat accepted the legitimacy, of Israeli settlement in the occupied territories.²⁸

Arrival of Benjamin Netanyahu

The Clinton administration actively supported Shimon Peres in the May 1996 general elections in Israel that followed the assassination of the former Israeli premier Yitzhak Rabin. Clinton lived up to his promise of being the most liberal US President viz- a-viz Israel by granting huge amounts of military and technological aid together with the establishment of a formal defence treaty when premier Peres visited Washington in April 1996. Arafat also helped the Peres campaign by presiding over the 21st session of the PNC (Palestine National Council) at which, the articles in the Palestinian National Charter denying Israel's right to exist were formally abrogated.²⁹ But none of this could save Peres from being defeated by Netanyahu. Netanyahu's election represented a watershed in Israeli politics as it was for the first time that the people had directly elected a Prime Minister. Eventhough 'Bibi' Netanyahu won by a slim margin, he was able to claim a political mandate independent of the outcome of elections to the Knesset (Israeli Parliament). Netanyahu's approach to the peace process was to modify it by the induction of two important concepts, that of security and reciprocity. Thereby he was aiming at bringing the Oslo process much more to the advantage of Israel. The underlying aim of

²⁸ Sara Roy, 'Why Peace Failed : An Oslo Autopsy', Current History, vol. 101, no. 65, Jan. 2002, p. 12.

²⁹ Paul Cossali, 'Arab- Israel Relations 1967 – 2001', in 'Surveys of the world: the Middle East and North Africa 2002' (18th Ed.) [London, Europe publications Ltd, 2001], p. 40.

this strategy was to prove that Israel would have the absolute right to stop withdrawing and if necessary re-occupy the territories on the pretext of lack of security.³⁰ In this context, it may be noted that more than half of the West Bank was designated by the Netanyahu cabinet as necessary for Israel's security.³¹

Hebron Protocol on Oslo-III

Netanyahu's first foray into the previously untouchable field of Oslo negotiations was the Hebron Protocol-signed January 15, 1997. This introduced some important changes from earlier accords and set new precedents for future negotiations. According to the protocol, the city of Hebron in the southern part of the West Bank was divided into two parts, H1 and H2. There was a redeployment from 80% of Hebron where 100,000 Palestinians lived. However Israel retained full control over the remaining 20% or H2, where some 400 militant Jewish settlers, protected by the IDF, lived among 30,000 Palestinians. These people were kept under almost continuous curfew, just for the sake of a few fanatic settlers. The Hebron protocol contained no reference to UN resolution 242 or 338 as the legal framework for negotiations. Hebron's division into two parts created a new precedent for the further division of Palestinian lands into isolated enclosures. The PA's acceptance of an armed settler presence in a predominantly Arab population center established another precedent for the permanence of Israeli settlement throughout the West Bank and Gaza and also for the bifurcation of Palestinian lands to make way for these settlements.³²

³⁰ Azad, n. 3, p. 87.

³¹ Strategic Survey 1997-1998, p.145, in Azad p.88.

³² Roy, n. 16, p. 12

The Wye Memorandum (Oslo -IV)

In early 1998, the Clinton Administration proposed that that Israeli forces vacate 12-15% of the West Bank subject, of course, to commitments from the Palestinians to 'fight terror and prevent violence'. The Palestinians were expecting a redeployment of 30% - 40% to make up for Oslo's missed deadlines. Netanyahu however, stated that a redeployment of more than 10% would jeopardize Israeli security. He refused to listen to Clinton's proposals for well over half a year, stating that they were 'neither desirable nor viable'³³ Increasingly concerned by the lack of progress in the peace process, Clinton hosted a bilateral summit meeting between the Israeli Prime Minister and the PNA President Yasir Arafat at the Wye Plantation, Maryland on 15 October 1998. The aim of the summit was to reach agreement on all the outstanding provisions of the interim phase of the Oslo accords, as defined in the Interim Agreements of September 1995 (Oslo II). Negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinian teams concluded on 23 October with the signing of the Wye River Memorandum. This committed Israel to withdraw from 13.1% of the West Bank in three phases, contingent on the security situation in the West Bank, Negotiation on the 'final status' issues-refugees, settlements and Jerusalem-were to commence in November 1998 and go on till Oslo's scheduled expiry date of May 1999. The PLO on its part agreed to weapons collection, security cooperation and other security measures in the occupied territories. A joint Ad -Hoc committee was established to deal with certain bilateral economic issues. Discussions were started regarding the opening of the Gaza Sea Port. Israel also agreed to release Palestinian detainees in their jails and to facilitate the opening of Gaza International Airport as well as the Gaza -West Bank

³³ Cossali, n. 17, p. 41.

corridor. The terms of the Wye Memorandum were much more favourable to the Israelis than the Palestinians. Thus Palestinian negotiators were very much concerned that they had committed themselves to enter 'final status' talks with Israel still in control of over 80% of the OTs.³⁴ They need not have worried. Within a month of signing the Wye accord, and after only a minor transfer of land, Netanyahu suspended implementation of the agreement, under pressure from ultra-right parties and also in anticipation of Israel's national elections on 17 May 1999.

Thus with each backward step, the dilemma produced by the Oslo Accords deepened. For over a decade, the Arab-Israeli peace process has been based on the concept of building trust and keeping commitments albeit hesitantly. This gradualist approach had, in fact, been the original idea behind Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy in the mid-1970s. It resulted in two disengagement agreements along with a partial Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai. The Oslo agreements had seemed to be the logical endgame of this approach. However, as progress had slowed down, the old concept was challenged. Ironically, the challenge had been first issued by Henry Kissinger. He had argued in 1996 that the time had come to 'face the facts, namely, statehood for the Palestinians; the definition of Israel's final borders; and the status of Jerusalem.'³⁵ To quote him,

"This US must shift the discussion from procedures to goals. Israel must face the implications of its own policies, and the Palestinians, perhaps intoxicated by the heady wine of global solicitude must be reminded that they have no military prospects

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ W.G. Hyland, 'Clinton's world: Remaking American Foreign Policy', (New York, Praeger Press, 1999), p. 161.

and that their people require not just co-existence but Israeli cooperation in day-to-day living".³⁶

As both sides came closer to the core issues, slowing down of the Oslo process was inevitable. Frustration at this in Washington ultimately came to center more on Israel than on the Palestinians. This again was a natural result of the intransigence of the Netanyahu government viz-a-viz the peace process. Clinton was regarded as a friend of Israel, but he was openly hostile to its government under Benjamin (Bibi) Netanyahu. Finally the general elections held in May 1999 resulted in the defeat of Netanyahu and the victory of the pro-peace Ehud Barak as Prime Minister of Israel.

³⁶ Henry Kissinger, "The Mideast Deal", *Washington post*, November 7, 1996.

CHAPTER-IV

THE CAMP DAVID-II SUMMIT

Victory of Ehud Barak

Clinton's exasperation with the policies of Netanyahu and his Likud party led him to openly back Barak in the May 1999 elections. He had made no secret of his inability to deal with 'Bibi'. The Netanyahu period had been one time when Clinton's traditionally close relations with the Israelis had come under tremendous strain. Traditionally American Presidents had faced problems from Likud premiers in Israel. Barak, on the other hand, as a former Chief of Staff of the Israeli Army had impeccable labour party credentials. During the election campaign, Barak worked on a platform guaranteeing both the security of Israel and the struggle against terrorism. Barak also promised to completely withdraw the Israeli Army from Lebanon and also to seek peace with the Syrians. He stood for the formation of a Palestinian state. In all his campaign speeches, he laid much emphasis on the concept of physical separation between Israel and the Palestinians in order to foster 'good-neighbourly relations and mutual respect'.¹ Barak's IDF - inspired obsession with strategic security was evident by all his pre-election emphasis on the conventional and nuclear strike capabilities of the Syrians, Iranians and Iraqis rather than on the Palestinians. Barak's role model was the former Israeli premier Yitzhak Rabin. He had served under him both in the Army and later as a Minister in his cabinet. Barak promised to secure peace with the Palestinians based on four security red lines.

¹ Farah Naaz, 'The Israeli - Palestinian Track : Recent Developments', Strategic Analysis, vol. 26, no. 1, April 1, 2000, p. 117.

1. A united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty as the capital of Israel forever.
2. No return to the 1967 borders.
3. No foreign army would be allowed west of the Jordan river.
4. Most of the settlers in Judea and Samaria (West Bank and Gaza) would be consolidated into settlement blocs under Israeli sovereignty.

Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum (Wye - II Accord).

Though an admirer of Rabin, Barak had always been against the Oslo process which he felt compromised Israeli security. He sought to replace Oslo's 'step by step' format with a direct all-encompassing deal that would solve the problem once and for all. In this, he was supported by the Americans, in particular, President Clinton with the experience of the successful 1995 Dayton peace Accord behind him. Barak, however, was more interested in brokering deals directly with the Arabs without the help of the Americans. In his first trip to the US, Barak is said to have asked Clinton to keep off unless asked to help out. It was in this context that the Sharm el-Sheikh summit cropped up, which was meant to get the suspended Wye agreement back on track. The Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum signed on 4 September 1999, committed both parties to achieve a framework agreement on permanent status issues by February 2000. Israel also pledged to redeploy from 13% of the West Bank by January 2000. 'Final Status' negotiations were also scheduled to be completed by September 2000. The two sides also agreed on the starting of certain vital Palestinian infrastructural projects like the seaport at Gaza. Two 'safe passage' routes were also provided between the Gaza strip and the West Bank. On the

security front, both sides decided to act to ensure the immediate, efficient and effective handling of any incident involving a threat or act of terrorism, violence or incitement whether committed by Palestinians or Israelis. To this end, they agreed to cooperate in the exchange of information and coordinate policies and activities.² The Memorandum also included a joint appeal to the international community to continue their support, both moral and economic to the Palestinian reconstruction efforts as well as the Israeli- Palestinian peace process.

As President Clinton approached the end of his second term in office, his desire to leave behind a legacy as a peacemaker propelled him ever deeper into the Arab - Israeli conflict. His first term in office brought the first major peace making success in the Balkans, when the three warring parties signed the Dayton peace accords.. As far as the Middle East was concerned, Oslo I and II, the Israel-Jordan peace treaty and some minor advances on the Syrian front was all that took place in Clinton's first term. The American role in all these affairs was relatively modest. The U.S acted more as a facilitator than as a mediator. Prior to Oslo , the Clinton administration never once forgot the Kissingerian dictum of avoiding all contact with the PLO unless otherwise authorized by the Israelis. Even after Oslo, the US refused to predict that a Palestinian state would rise out of the ongoing peace process.³

The Camp David II Summit

The Camp David - II Summit represented a radical break with the past as the Barak Govt. finally decided to jettison the moribund

² Ibid, p. 118 - 119.

³ William B. Quandt, 'Clinton and the Arab - Israeli Conflict: The Limits of Incrementalism', Journal of Palestine Studies, vol. 30, no. 2 , Winter 2001,p.--

and unworkable Oslo peace process for a more radical 'make or break it' summit. The mood in which the summit was approached by all parties, including the hosts, can be gained from Clinton's statement on the eve of the summit: "We may not succeed but we're sure going to get caught trying".⁴

Prelude to the Summit.

It was Barak's refusal to carry out the third stage of the army redeployment, he himself had re-negotiated under the Sharm el-Shaikh agreement of September 1999 that acted as the main catalyst for the talks. Barak insisted on moving directly to final status talks. The summit model for these final status talks was itself a change in Barak's earlier stand that so-called 'final status' negotiations, might result in a series of long-term interim arrangements rather than a permanent settlement.⁵ Initially Barak's idea was to clinch a deal with the Syrians before ever turning to the Palestinians. To his military mind, the Palestinians were the lowest of the low, virtual scum because as an organized military force, they were almost nil. The Americans as always were more than willing to facilitate an Israeli-Syrian dialogue. This was in spite of the fact that they had burned their fingers in their previous attempt during Clinton's first term in office. US intermediaries were informed by the Syrians that negotiations would be resumed on the basis of the understanding that Israel was committed to withdraw from the Golan Heights.⁶ In December 1999, US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright met with Israeli and Syrian leaders during a regional tour. Her visit was followed by an announcement that the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, and the

⁴ *International Herald Tribune*, April 25, 2001.

⁵ Paul Cossali, 'Arab-Israeli relations 1967-2000', in *Surveys of the World: The Middle East and North Africa 2002* (48th Ed.), (London, Europa Pubs. Ltd., 2001), p.42..

⁶ *Ibid.*

Syrian Foreign Minister, Faruk al-Shara', would be restarting negotiations from the point at which they had ended in February 1996. The two delegations met at Shepardstown, West Virginia from 3-10 January 2000. President Clinton played an important part in these talks literally shepherding the two sides along to a mutually agreeable solution. The talks ended on 10 January with a mutual commitment to resume discussions on key areas of borders, water, security and diplomatic relations on 19 January. Following some misunderstanding, the negotiators never returned. Another meeting that Clinton had with Asad in Geneva also ended in failure. Thus ended the Syrian track of Barak's ambitious peace programme.

Clinton's Gamble at Highwire Summitry

In mid May 2000, it came to light that both the PNA and the Israeli government had been involved in a secret dialogue in the Swedish capital, Stockholm. The negotiations were facilitated by a US administration anxious to conclude a peace settlement before the US presidential elections in November 2000. Clinton's plan was to invite both parties, Barak and Arafat to a brain storming session at Camp David, the presidential retreat situated in a secluded part of Maryland. If necessary, he would follow the pattern first practiced at Dayton and later finessed at Wye, namely, to apply intense pressure on the participants to conclude their negotiations in a successful manner. In mid - October 1998, both Arafat and Netanyahu were invited to meet Clinton for a couple of days at the Wye River Plantation in eastern Maryland. The plan was to resort to the Carter model of summit diplomacy. The President and his officers decided to play a direct role, even to the extent of full scale mediation, to bring the two parties to an agreement.⁷

⁷ Quandt, n. 3, p. 28

However unlike Carter at Camp David, Clinton did not bother to remain at the negotiating site all the time. That was definitely not his style. After days of mutual recrimination and bickering, Clinton threw himself into the fray. He “pulled an all- nighter”, meaning he spent a whole night alternatively meeting each of the parties in the fray trying to get some sort of an agreement from them. The result was the Wye River Accord, signed on 23 October 1998 by Arafat and Netanyahu in the presence of Clinton and king Hussein of Jordan who had been quite literally plucked out of his deathbed to help in the process. Clinton decided to repeat this process with Arafat and Barak. The only change he made was in the venue, choosing to go to Camp David with all its famous memories of another summit twenty years ago when two bitter enemies had concluded a successful peace treaty. Clinton was evidently hoping to repeat Jimmy Carter’s epoch making summit meeting at Camp David with Egypt’s Anwar el – Sadat and the Israel’s Menachem Begin in 1979.

Ehud Barak’s role in the Arab – Israeli Peace Process

Ehud Barak was elected prime minister of Israel in May 1999 on a platform of coming to peace with all of Israel’s neighbours including the Palestinians. He was immediately interested in a peace with the Syrians. But talks with the Syrians floundered over the conditions under which Israel was to withdraw from the Golan Heights. Barak then turned his attention to the Palestinians. It was Barak who signaled to Clinton his interest in a summit meeting with the PNA president Yasir Arafat. His aim was to reach an agreement with Arafat by 13th September 2000, which was the seventh anniversary of the Oslo Accords. Clinton, also was eager to seize upon this virtually last opportunity for him to make an impact on the Middle East peace process. Arafat, on the other hand, was quite unwilling to appear for a summit meeting where he knew that he and his team would be forced to make compromises by the Israelis and

the Americans. Arafat did not believe that the time was ripe for historic compromises, even for the sake of peace. The issues at stake were too vast and emotive for that. They involved the ambitions and aspirations of millions of Palestinian people, both resident and displaced refugees scattered around the world. In spite of his objections, Clinton and Barak decided to go ahead with the summit to be convened on 11 July, 2000 at the Camp David presidential retreat outside Washington.⁸

As per the Sharm el – Sheikh agreement of September 1999, Barak was committed to a phased 13% Israeli redeployment in the West Bank to be committed by January 2000. Final status negotiations were scheduled to be completed by September 2000. When it was decided to go ahead with the Camp David talks, all the revised Oslo deadlines were thrown into the dustbin. Barak also refused to carry out the redeployment that he had agreed to at Sharm el – Sheikh under the excuse that all these issues would be dealt with at the final status talks at Camp David. Thus at the camp David summit, the Palestinians were forced to negotiate permanent status issues with only 42% of the 22% of historic Palestine that it was claiming, under its full or partial control. Also the PA had full control of only 18% of the 22% - the so-called area A. The remaining 24% was under joint control, constituting the so-called area B. In the pre- negotiation phase leading up to Camp David, the original Oslo understanding that withdrawal from the majority of the OTs during the five years transitional period (extended to seven years by the inaction of successive Israeli governments) was a prerequisite to final status negotiations, now became linked to major Palestinian concessions on final status issues.⁹ In short, the Barak Government seemed out to kill two birds with one stone in the run up to the Camp David II summit.

⁸ Cossali, n. 5, p. 43.

⁹ Rema Hammami and Salim Tamari, 'The Second Uprising : End or New Beginning', Journal of Palestine Studies, vol30., no. 2, winter 2001, p. 7

One was the slow moving Oslo peace process based on a graduated process of incremental concessions by both sides. The second was the ability and power of the Palestinians to negotiate from a position of some strength having at least a majority of the land they were demanding. The Israelis from the very beginning itself seemed to have intended to impose the peace of the strong on the weak at Camp David. In this brute process, they had the full support of the Americans.

During the seven long years since the signing the Oslo Accords, the Palestinians had been forced to make innumerable concessions. They were witnessing the ongoing confiscation of Arab lands in the West Bank and Gaza. The existing Israeli settlements were being continuously expanded while new settlements were being established, contributing to the vivisection of Palestinian territory. The settler population had doubled in the last 10 years to over 200,000. The West Bank had been clearly divided into three distinct cantons by the Israelis, disconnected from each other by Jewish settlements. Gaza was home to 6000 settlers occupying 40% of the territory, while the remaining 60% was populated by over 1.1 million Palestinians. Bypass roads built for use by the settlers alone, again served to further truncate Palestinian areas. The 'closure' policy in the West Bank and Gaza has become an institutionalized fact, thereby restricting the movement of the Palestinians and locking them into enclaves, besides totally destroying the economy. Again, the establishment of literally hundreds of police barricades and army checkpoints throughout the West Bank and the Gaza strip was a deliberate policy to further restrict and control the movement of the Palestinian people. In the creation of all these policies, Israel also indirectly relied on the PA and its huge 40,000 men strong

security department to maintain control of the population and literally act to provide protection for Israel actions.¹⁰

Given all these “facts on the ground”, as the Israeli right was so proud of stating, the establishment of an adequately sovereign, resourced state in July 2000 was practically impossible. At Camp David, for the first time since the Oslo process began, the Palestinians refused to make any further concessions. The Palestinians had always made a stern distinction between the concessions they were forced to make during Oslo’s transitional phase and the positions they would take on negotiating the ‘final status’ issues with the Israelis. Evidently the Israelis and Americans believed that the ‘final status’ talks would also witness heavy concessions by the Palestinians.

Palestinian negotiating positions at the start of the Camp David- II Summit were geared towards satisfying a people that had been tormented by any lack of progress in their liberation, years after the so-called Palestinian ‘autonomy’ had been established. In the popular perception, Palestinians had entered the peace process on the understanding that,

1. it would bring about concrete improvement in their lives during the interim period,
2. the interim period would be relatively short in duration, i.e., five years, and
3. that a permanent agreement would implement UN resolution 242 and 338 relating to the return of the refugees and the establishment of a secure state

The peace process ,as we have seen, did not deliver any of these things. On the contrary just before entering into the Camp David

¹⁰ Sara Roy, ‘Why Peace Failed : An Oslo Autopsy’, Current History, vol. 101, no. 651, January 2000,p.14.

process, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak publicly and repeatedly threatened the Palestinians that his “offer” on the final status issues would be Israel’s best and final offer. If not accepted, he said that Israel would seriously consider “unilateral separation” by which he meant that Israel would forcefully impose a settlement rather than negotiate one.¹¹

The Final Status Issues

Jerusalem

The stand of both the Israelis and the Palestinians on Jerusalem was radically different. Thus the Israeli proposal at Camp David virtually required the Palestinians to give up any claim to the occupied portion of Jerusalem. The aim was to get Palestinian recognition of Israel’s annexation of all of Arab East Jerusalem. In short, Israel wanted to annex the main settlements in and around East Jerusalem and would expand the greater Jerusalem area as far south as Gush Etzion near Hebron. They were prepared to grant full Palestinian sovereignty to the outlying Arab suburbs of East Jerusalem while the Arab neighbourhoods immediately outside the old city would get on ‘expanded form of autonomy’. The walled city of Jerusalem would remain firmly under Jewish sovereignty with the Muslim and Christian holy sites as well as the Arab neighbourhoods inside the old city coming under the ‘expanded form of autonomy’ scheme. Metropolitan Jerusalem would again be divided into an Arab and an Israeli municipality within one open city with no borders or checkpoints marking the ethnic boundaries.¹²

The Palestinian reply to this Israeli formulation was clear and forthright. Arafat declared that he would not be the first Palestinian

¹¹ ‘Camp David Peace Proposal of July, 2000: Frequently Asked questions’, In website of PLO Negotiations Affairs Department. website : <http://www.nad-plo.org/eye/new>, p. 3 to 4

¹² Rema Hammami and Salim Tamari, ‘The Second Uprising: End or New Beginning’, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol.30, No.2, Winter 2001, p. 6

leader to surrender Jerusalem.¹³ He also stated that Jerusalem was equally sacred to the Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim. For them, East Jerusalem including the walled city and the Arab districts must form the capital of their new state of Palestine. As part of the territory occupied in 1967, East Jerusalem in the Palestinian perspective is subject to UNSC resolution 242 (in admissibility of territory acquired by force or war). The Israelis and the Palestinians agreed on one point that Jerusalem should be an open city and that there should be free movement of people within the city. The future state of Palestine would be committed to maintaining the sanctity and dignity of the religious sites in the old city that make Jerusalem so important. Freedom of worship and access would be guaranteed.¹⁴

At Camp David, the Israelis and Americans come up with a new proposal regarding the Haram al – Sharif (Temple Mount) which was the site of the al- Aqsa mosque as well as that of the Jewish Temple, destroyed during Roman times. It was known as “vertically divided” sovereignty in which the Muslims would control the ground level and the Israelis would control the area below the surface. This proposal was striking given that no previous Israeli administration had ever advanced such a notion.

Settlements and Borders

These constitute a major point of disagreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Settlements had been built in the OTs since 1967 and now many extended right through the West Bank and Gaza. The Israelis wanted to annex three main settlement blocs (Ariel, Etzion

¹³ Akram Hanieh, 'The Camp David Papers,' Special Document, Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol.30, No.2, Winter 2001, p.85

¹⁴ 'Camp David peace proposal of July, 2000: ', Frequently Asked Questions. In www.nad-plo.org/permanent/sumpalpo. p. 1

and Ma'ale Adumim) which together had a combined population of some 250,000 settlers.

The Palestinians were against this as around 80,000 to 100,000 Arabs in these areas would effectively become part of Israel and would be disenfranchised. Such an arrangement would bring about the complete encirclement of East Jerusalem by Jewish settlements, sealing off the city from its Palestinian hinterland. It would also contribute towards effectively splitting the West Bank into two. They demanded the total withdrawal of all settlements in the West Bank and Gaza and the full restoration of the pre- 1967 borders. At Camp David, the Israelis were talking about annexing 10-13% of the West Bank. They had no equal land swaps to offer to the Palestinians. In addition, the Israelis were interested in annexing West Bank land in such a way that all water resources would be under their control.

As far as the Palestinians were concerned, accepting the January 4, 1967 borders itself constituted a major compromise on their earlier demand of all of historic Palestine. They were not willing to accept the further cutting up of this territory, effectively rendering their claim to statehood null and void. In addition, the Palestinians opposed all Israeli demands for maintaining military infrastructure consisting of bases, troops and early warning stations and border posts along the Jordan river and in Gaza. A future Palestinian state was perceived by the Israelis to be essentially demilitarized with just lightly armed police forces.¹⁵ The Palestinians based their arguments on the promise that security relations between the future state of Palestine and Israel should be structured to reflect also the rights and interests of the Palestinian people.

¹⁵ Hammami and Tamari, n.12, p. 9.

Refugees

The Refugee problem was a highly controversial issue for both sides! The Israelis were not even willing to acknowledge the issue. They saw the problem as not created by them. Instead they blamed the Arabs themselves, particularly the neighbouring Arab states for creating this issue. The Israelis were 100% against the return of the former Arab residents of Israel. This was perceived as a threat to the Jewish character of the state of Israel. In addition, they were also not willing to provide compensation to the refugees that were staying in miserable camps in the surrounding countries as well as in the West Bank and Gaza. The Israelis always linked any question of compensation to similar demands that the Jews that migrated from Arab states after the formation of the state of Israel be compensated.

For the Palestinians, the refugee issue was the primary issue. Without at least a symbolic acceptance by the Israelis that the refugees can return, a mutually acceptable compromise would be very difficult from their perspective. The Palestinian position on refugees was based on UN General Assembly resolution 194 (1948) that called for the return of the refugees and their compensation.¹⁶

Camp David II – Venue and Conditions

Clinton's choice of Camp David as the venue for the peace talks between the Israelis was quite symbolic. Located over 50 hectares of forest land in the hills of west Maryland, Camp David has been a summer retreat for US presidents since 1942. It is at a distance of just 70 miles from the white house. Camp David has been the role of many historical international meetings. During world war II, British prime minister Winston Churchill and US president Franklin .D. Roosevelt planned the

¹⁶ Mahmud Abbas, 'Report on the Camp David Summit, Gaza, 9 September 2000', Document B1, Journal of Palestine Studies . vol. XXX, no. 2 winter 2001, p. 169.

allied invasion of Europe while staying here. In 1978, President Jimmy Carter chose Camp David for the meeting of two Middle East foes, Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Within six months of this meeting, the first Arab – Israeli peace treaty was signed. Clinton evidently believed that the tranquil and peaceful surroundings of Camp David would help both parties arrive at a deal over the fateful issues concerning them. Towards this aim, the Americans took a number of steps to isolate the delegates that arrived to take part in the summit. They also wanted to ensure that all meetings took place in a friendly and informal manner. All delegates, upon their arrival, were assigned to cabins scattered around the thickly wooded retreat. The Americans expected nobody to wear suits and ties but only formal clothing. The Americans seemed to have assumed that the absence of formalities would break down barriers between the two sides. Meals were generally taken together, allowing the delegations to mingle and chat informally. Even the negotiations leisure time was utilized to provide opportunities for informal meetings. The Americans hosts also attempted to build social relations between the negotiators. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright once invited delegates to a movie and on another occasion, the two sides were invited to play a basket ball game.¹⁷

Another main condition of the summit was to impose a near total media block out to ensure the secrecy of the negotiations. There was only one telephone for each delegation and external calls were rarely transferred to the delegations. Telephones in cabins other than those of the leaders were for internal use only. The only official source of information was a White House spokesman and sometimes a State Department spokesman who held daily press conferences at a press center some thirty minutes from Camp David. Palestinian and Israeli

¹⁷ Hanich, n.13, p. 77.

legal advisers and experts were not allowed to stay with the official delegations. A restricted number of them were permitted to travel daily to Camp David to meet their respective delegations for a specified amount of time. The work format at the summit was quite interesting. There were full committee meetings, meetings consisting of two negotiators from each side, and meetings between Secretary of State Albright and each delegation on specific topics. The Americans also utilized informal contacts between members of their own peace team and delegates of both sides to explore positions on specific issues and try to bring about an agreement. They seemed confident that all the above conditions would create strong pressure on the negotiators to succeed in reaching an agreement. They just did not seem to realize that the reality of the conflict going on in the Israel/Palestine region was much more potent than the unreal world that they had created at Camp David.¹⁸

The Camp David II Summit: Proceedings on a day-to-day basis:

Israeli and Palestinian leaders began their summit at Camp David on Tuesday, July 11, 2000. The first day was given over to opening formalities with President Clinton as the host dominating the proceedings. Clinton, who was seeing visions of a Camp David -1978 repeat, ushered the leaders into the Presidential retreat. He certainly hoped that the chemistry of the place would induce a spirit of 'principled compromise' that would yield a substantive peace agreement. Mr. Clinton's speech on the occasion was couched in idealistic terms about securing a "just and enduring end" to the conflict and about the "gift of peace" that the leaders could give their children. Clinton tempered his speech by acknowledging that there was no guarantee of success. He however emphasized the point that "not to try is to guarantee failure". Officials on all sides acknowledged that a good

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 78.

partial agreement would represent a significant accomplishment and could in all probability mark the only realistic end to this rapidly scheduled summit meeting.¹⁹

Both Barak and Arafat had given strong indications of the highly principled and determined stand that each intended to follow at Maryland. Barak himself had come to the summit emphasizing his oft-repeated four red lines beyond which he was not prepared to budge. Another statement that he found himself constantly repeating was that "it takes two to tango". He was implying that without further Palestinian concessions, it would not be possible for the Israelis to conclude a peace agreement with the Palestinian Authority.

The negotiating table prepared by the Americans in the inaugural day of the summit was a rectangular one around which 21 American, Israeli and Palestinian delegates sat to open the talks. At the end of the day, all that the White House spokesman would say was that "the atmosphere is good and the mood is serious". This was because both the principal actors in this drama (in addition to President Clinton), were under tremendous stress from their domestic constituencies to prevent a possible sell-out deal that could either side. At the press conference just prior to the start of the summit, both gave contrasting opinions of the projected summit that were intended as messages to placate their respective political constituencies. Thus Mr. Shlomo Ben-Ami, the Israeli internal security minister, said on Monday that he felt confident that an agreement could be reached. In direct contrast, Mr. Abu Ala', Speaker of the Palestinian legislature, said that he did not comprehend how Mr. Ben Ami could speak with such confidence. In an interview with the 'Voice of Palestine' radio, Mr. Abu Ala' commented that "The Palestinian position will never change. And the

¹⁹Deborah Sontag, 'Israel, Palestine Summit under way' *Deccan Herald*(Bangalore) July 13, 2000.

Israeli positions has its well known 'no's'. So how can the minister talk about a agreement?"²⁰

The special nature of the Camp David summit was that it was expected to put all the highly controversial issues in the Israel-Palestine conflict on the negotiating table. Thus the future borders of the Israeli and 'projected' Palestinian states, Jewish settlement in the West Bank, form of Palestinian statehood, water, the fate of the Palestinian refugees and the future status of Jerusalem were to be discussed at the talks. It would be the first time in seven years that Jerusalem, a seemingly irresolvable point of contention would be on the table, since the Israelis and Palestinians began talking publicly to each other.

Mr. Clinton was prepared to allow the two leaders to talk to each other for the first few days before engaging in any direct mediation. So he was unlikely to offer any specific proposals for the first few days, hoping instead to spend the first sessions airing all the issues. Administration officials have stated that they expect the really important days for negotiations to be one week after the start of the talks, just before Clinton's scheduled departure for Okinawa to attend a summit meeting of the G-8 industrialised nations.²¹

After two days of concentrated summiteering, Clinton on Thursday took a break by relinquishing authority to his Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright. The Americans continued to persist with their steadfast refusal to discuss the substance of the talks. Joe Lockhart, Clinton's chief spokesman, described Wednesday's meeting "as a busy day between all parties, a day of engagement without any claim of progress". Without any claim of progress, Lockhart warned against drawing any conclusions as to whether gaps were being narrowed in the

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

talks. Without elaborating, the spokesman said that the two sides had been concentrating on core issues. Lockhart stressed that he did not expect any loss of momentum due to Clintons absence from Thursday's deliberations, pointing out that Albright had already held talks with both leaders and presided at meetings of delegates from both sides.²²

The Palestinians seemed to resent the enforced isolation more than the Israelis. Palestinian sources stated that Arafat wanted to hold a 'leadership meeting' with Palestinian officials who were not part of his delegation at Camp David. The rules of engagement laid down by the U.S. State Department at the summit stated that each side could be permitted to bring in technical experts and lawyers as needed. Mr. Lockhart meanwhile stated that he knew of no planned arrivals at Camp David being cleared by security.²³

Meanwhile in a bid to inject more momentum and urgency into the summit, President Clinton delayed his departure to Japan to attend the G-8 summit, by a day. Apparently the main sticking point at the moment was the status of Jerusalem. According to an agency report Mr. Barak has apparently told Mr. Arafat that Israel would not recognize a Palestinian state unless the Palestinians acknowledged total Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem.

Mr. Arafat, on the other hand, has threatened to unilaterally declare a Palestinian state by September 13. He insists on Arab East Jerusalem being the capital of the new Palestinian state. The Palestinians are however willing to cede to the Israeli's the Jewish Quarter and the Western Wall in the old city of Jerusalem.

²² Anon., 'Albright takes over reins of West Asia Summit', *News time* (Hyderabad) July 14, 2000.

²³ Ibid.

By postponing his trip to Japan by a day, Washington is driving home both the seriousness and importance of the talks. Mr. Clinton, himself, has referred to the ongoing process as the "hardest ever" talks he had been involved in the last seven years of his Presidency.²⁴ Eventually he was aiming to wrap up the outline of a final peace agreement before leaving for Japan. The round-the-clock negotiations had entered "critical" stage on the seventh day of the summit at Camp David with Clinton almost continually involved in dialogue with Israel premier Ehud Barak and Palestine leader Yasser Arafat. Meanwhile speaker of the Israeli parliament, Arraham Burg told Israeli radio that Barak had told him that he was 'not really optimistic' about the summit's chance of success. The White House spokesman meanwhile commented that "the peace and intensity of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians have been stepped up in a bid to secure a West Asia peace agreement at Camp David by the Wednesday deadline". Joe Lockhart added that "there have been two straight very long nights between the sides working through the difficult issues here. There are a number of negotiators who have been awake for a long time over the last two or three days".²⁵ Clinton and his team seemed to be trying the famous 'Wye river technique' in which the delegates would be compelled to sign on the dotted line out of sheer tiredness and exhaustion. But Barak and Arafat proved to be more resistant than Netanyahu and Arafat in 1998.

For all practical purposes, the summit had failed by the time Clinton had to leave for Japan for the G-8 summit on the island of Okinawa. Before leaving, he persuaded the two leaders to stay on at Camp David. The US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright deputized for him. The last-ditch effort to save the talks began only after Clinton

²⁴ Sridhar Krishanaswami, 'Clinton delays Japan Trip' *The Hindu* (Madras) July 20, 2000.

²⁵ Anon., "Hard Bargaining begins at West Asia Summit", *News time*, July 19, 2000.

returned home. He immediately entered into intensive discussions with all the parties concerned. But the gaps between their positions was really too wide to be successfully or even partially filled. All this stage, Clinton even made proposals of his own to bridge the gap between Barak and Arafat. He even joined second-rank negotiations for an all-night session in the hope of formulating proposals that the two leaders might then consider. But that was not to be. The talks had to be abandoned after 14 long and strenuous days. In spite of this, both the leaders, the Israeli PM, Mr. Ehud Barak and the Palestinian Authority president, Mr. Yasir Arafat, have promised to work towards a negotiated settlement and to avoid violence.²⁶

It was not possible for either side to bridge the gap on core issues, none of which they had earlier discussed, in just 15 days. Also all the issues under discussions at Camp David were highly emotive and had the potential to trigger violence. The two leaders could not make any towards that purpose.

The Camp David II Summit Failure

Ehud Barak has blamed Arafat for the collapse of the peace talks and Arafat has declared that he cannot be forced to make any further compromises. He said that what the Palestinians were asking was only 22% of the historic Palestine that existed till 1948. Arafat's refusal to sign a peace deal and bow to the US-Israeli preserve was considered a Palestinian victory in the West Bank and Gaza and other parts of the Arab/Muslim world. Thus the Camp David outcome enhanced Arafat's prestige in the entire Arab World. Arafat had been under pressure from the entire Islamic Ummah not to cave in on the issue of Jerusalem, home of Al-Aqsa, Islam's third holiest site. It would have been politically suicidal for him to have compromised on

²⁶ Qamar Agha, "Peace in West Asia" *The Hindu* August 10, 2000.

Jerusalem, home to over 200,000 Palestinians. UN Partition Resolution 181 (II) of 1947 had granted special international status for the Holy city of Jerusalem to "protect the interests" of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities. After the creation of Israel in 1948, it occupied West Jerusalem. East Jerusalem remained with the Arabs till the 1967 war. Arafat was not prepared to sign a partial accord which did not give him full sovereignty over East Jerusalem which was envisaged as the capital of the future Palestinian state.²⁷

Another contentious issue between Israel and the Palestinians on which Barak and Arafat could not make much progress was the question of the 3.6 million UN registered Palestinian refugees scattered throughout the Middle East. The Palestinians wanted Israel to recognize UNGA Resolution 194 which demands for the refugees the right of return to their homes. Israel maintained that it would neither grant them the right to return, nor accept moral responsibility for them. Barak, however, stated that he was willing to accommodate 100,000 Palestinians back in Israel under a programme of "family unification". Israel also favoured an international fund to rehabilitate refugees in the countries they occupy now.²⁸

The issue of Jewish settlement in the occupied territories also remained unsettled at Camp David. There were over 200,000 Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza in 2000. Now there are over 300,000. The Israelis were not interested in pulling back the settlements. On the other hand, they were behaving as if the settlements were there to stay finally and for all time. The Palestinians were demanding the opposite. They insisted that under UNSC resolution 242, they had the right to all the Arab territory occupied by Israel in 1967. The Palestinians argued that Israel maintaining its sovereignty over the

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

settlement blocs, scattered all over the territories, would rob them of a state of geographical continuity.

Sharing of water and delineating the borders of the future Palestinian state were two of the other core issues that came up for discussion at Camp David. On borders, Israel demanded control over Palestinian borders with Jordan and Egypt. Israel also asked to control 15-20% of the Jordan river and a sector of the Jordan valley. This was in addition to a proposed annexation of around 10.5% of the West Bank to absorb the settlements. The Palestinians rejected any such moves. Minor borders changes and an exchange of lands equal in quantity and quality that did not exceed 2% was acceptable to them.²⁹

There were thus too many contentious issues to be discussed and resolved in too short a period of time. The negotiators found themselves dealing with extraordinary difficult issues that required a great deal of discussion and compromise. Ultimately they were not up to the mark. The failure of the Camp David-II summit must also be linked to the failure of the Oslo approach to Middle East peacemaking. The Oslo process was based on the premise that the way to peace was one step at a time. It was assumed that the experience of working together on each succeeding stage of agreement would create better chances for the next stage. The holistic successful culmination of this experiment was the hypothesis that by the time the two sides reached the hardest issues at the end, these would no longer be so hard after all.³⁰ The negotiators at Camp David -II from both sides of the spectrum have maintained that if the hard issues like Jerusalem had been active topics of discussions during the last seven years and not suddenly brought up as a serious topic on the penultimate day of the summit,

²⁹ Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazin), 'Report on the Camp David Summit, Gaza, September 9 2000 (Excerpts), Document B-1 (Arab), *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 30. No. 2, winter 2001 p.168-169.

³⁰ Flora Lewis 'Danger Mounts, but the Mid East Time Isn't ripe', *International Herald Tribune* (Bangkok), August 1, 2000.

the chances of a successful settlement would have been such higher. The understanding at Camp David that nothing was final until everything was agreed, ensured that no agreement was reached on anything. In actuality however, the conditional compromise positions that were considered and accepted at Camp David-II on many of the controversial issues ensured the prospect of a continuation of the dialogue process and a benchmark for negotiators whenever talks resumed.³¹

Clinton's Role at the Camp David II Summit

Did President Clinton play an important role at the Camp David -II summit, other than his natural role as the host, embellished with the theatrics that are a part and parcel of his nature. Or was he following Henry Kissinger's advice to:

"stay calm and just be available as a facilitator. And I would tell him not to be more interested than the parties themselves".³²

Clinton had been exploring the possibility of a three - way summit in early June when he met Arafat at the White House. Arafat intimated that he was not interested, but Barak seemed to be, given the fact that his coalition government seemed about to collapse, paving the way either for a national unity government or new elections. All accounts of the proceedings at the Camp David -II summit have agreed on one respect, that Clinton's own role there was surprisingly strong. Both parties to the conflict, namely the Israelis and the Palestinians had a large degree of confidence in him. For the Israelis, this was natural, given Clinton's traditional affinity for the Jews and the Jewish State. As far as the Palestinians were concerned, Clinton had been the only American president to date to show any genuine concern for their fate. His visit to

³¹ Quandt, n.3, p.28

³² Ibid, p. 30.

the territories in 1998 had been the first ever by a sitting American president. His address to the Palestinian National Council (PNC) during that visit helped him to gain many friends among the Palestinians. Moreover Clinton developed a personal relationship with Arafat since their first meeting in 1993 during the signing of the Oslo Accords. The Netanyahu interlude helped Clinton to draw much closer to the Palestinians than would ever have been possible given the normally close ties between Israel and the US.

Most important of all, Clinton remained hugely popular at home, which, given the fact that he was technically a lame – duck President at the fag end of his career, was a huge plus point. He was able to handle the all powerful Jewish lobby in Washington that was keeping an eagle's eye on the proceedings. In fact, Clinton could count on bipartisan support short of pressuring Israel on sensitive issues or asking Congress for a large aid package.³³³⁴ Given Clinton's history, he had avoided taking stands on many of the most controversial issues, urging the two opposing parties to reach compromises themselves. The two delegations went to Camp David sure in the belief that Clinton could be relied on to preserve the 'peace'. F.D. Roosevelt once said that "the President of the United states should also be the best actor in the country". All Clinton's acting skills were early visible at Camp David. However, from the beginning it was clear that the American President was determined to succeed and that he had done his homework. At the inaugural session itself, Clinton emphasized his determination to work intensively. Interestingly and perhaps amusingly, the American president started to apply pressure on the participants from the very beginning itself. He tried in his opening speech to create a link between Camp David and the G – 8 summit in Okinawa that he would be soon attending, promising huge

³³ Ibid, p. 31.

³⁴ Ibid.

financial support from the G – 8 for any agreement the two sides would reach. Evidently the ‘carrot and stick’ policy would be also be used at Camp David.

A Palestinian negotiator who was present at Camp David has described Clinton’s personality in the following words.

“Watching him (Clinton) in action, one also sees a man who is very intelligent, hardworking, persistent, and endowed with a strong memory and overwhelming charisma. Besides all this there is also a broad cultural background, numerous human interests, and a driving interest in a range of issues. He is also good at breaking barriers (cultural). He would carry his own tray at Camp David village’s Laurel restaurant, serve himself from the buffet, and sit – as he twice did – with members of the Palestinian delegation having dinner on the balcony. He would easily initiate conversations,”³⁴

As far as the Palestinians were concerned, they saw in Clinton a person who could listen and understand. In spite of the wholly pro – Israeli bias of the US Middle East team, they were banking on Clinton’s ‘objectivity’ and ‘neutrality’ to make Camp David succeed. Unfortunately they were soon to be terribly disappointed.

Talks opened at Camp David on 11 July 2000 and continued for 15 days. These fifteen days were characterised by exhaustive negotiations, brinksmanship and a virtual news blackout. Ultimately however all ended up in vain as the summit broke up in acrimony, with the Israelis and the Palestinians accusing each other about who was responsible for the failure. The Americans, supposed to be the hosts and impartial mediators clearly showed who they were partial to, by openly

³⁴ Hanieh, n.13, p. 78.

supporting the Israelis. After the end of the summit, President Clinton made it quite clear in numerous interviews and speeches that he believed Israeli PM Ehud Barak to have been more flexible in the negotiations, and that Chairman Arafat bore the greater responsibility for the collapse of the summit.³⁵ Significantly all parties in the process stated that permanent status talks had been adjourned rather than ended.

The collapse of the Camp David- II summit process can be attributed to three factors.

1. The inability of the American mediators, including President Clinton to understand the depth of feelings of the Palestinian side about the issues at stake.
2. Circumstances were not ripe and the Palestinian people or their negotiators, including Chairman Arafat, were not willing or capable to make any 'historic compromises' for the sake of peace.
3. The Israeli side come to Camp David in a 'Versailles' frame of mind, ready to impose the peace of the victors on the vanquished. They did not make any preparations to modify either their views or that of the Israeli public regarding any far reaching compromises that could be made for the sake of peace.

Ultimately only Arafat made any measure of gain out of the Camp David- II meeting. He was warmly commended both in the Arab and Muslim world and among his own people for having resisted US and Israeli pressure to conclude a 'dishonourable peace'.³⁶ Clinton soon had to vacate his post at the end of his second term and Barak was soundly defeated in the Israeli general elections paving the way for the rise of

³⁵ PLO negotiation affairs Dept. , 'permanent status issues'. In www.nad-plo.org/permanent/sumpalpo. p. 2 of 2.

³⁶ Cossali, n.5, p.43

Israel's greatest hard liner, Gen. Ariel Sharon, as the new PM of Israel.
All peace moves were conclusively at an end.

CHAPTER-V

CONCLUSION

An Analysis of the Summit

'A peace process is a mechanism or a set of negotiations where the parties involved attempt to avoid war or a war-like situation and wish to settle conflicts peacefully by using techniques such as diplomacy, bargaining, secret negotiations, open negotiation, trade offs and mediation'.¹

Moonis Ahmar, Karachi, 2001

The peace process is more than conventional diplomacy and negotiation. It encompasses a full range of political, psychological, economic, diplomatic, and military actions woven together into a comprehensive effort to establish peace between Israel and its neighbours. Progress towards peace depends on breaking down the barriers to negotiation and reconciliation - the other walls. If we ignore the politics of breaking down these barriers, the mediator and negotiator may never have a chance²

Harold Sanders, Princeton, 1991

"The peace process has been framed primarily on the political issues that lie at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict, namely territorial withdrawal, border demarcation, security arrangements, and the political rights of the Palestinians. The architects of the peace process, which opened with the Madrid conferences of October 1991, recognized the need to address simultaneously the economic, social, and environmental problems which cut across national boundaries. To this end, they created a set of multilateral talks to run in parallel with the bilateral negotiations. The aim was to bring together Israel, its immediate

¹Moonis Ahmar (ed.), *The Arab-Israeli Peace Process: Lessons for India and Pakistan*, (Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2001) p. 19.

²Harold Saunders, *The Other Walls: The Arab-Israeli Peace Process in a Global Perspective*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991) p. 3

Arab neighbors, the Gulf Arab states and the Maghreb to discuss issues of regional concern within a framework for dealing with the issues of mutual interests which might also serve as confidence-building measures and facilitate progress at the bilateral level'.³

C.F. Joel Peters, London, 1996

The Arab-Israeli peace process has seen many ups and downs since the 1973 Geneva conference and the 1991 Madrid Conference. However, it was the two Camp David Summits that focused full attention on the role of the US in the Arab-Israeli peace process. America was now the only power with sufficient leverage on both sides to have a say in the final solution. The role of the American government and bureaucracy in the Arab-Israeli peace process has always been a controversial one. Generally, the US Congress has always taken a pro-Israeli stand. This phenomenon has always forced US administrators to be sensitive to the possibility of adverse Congressional reactions if it seeks to pressure Israel.⁴

The US Presidency and Arab-Israeli Relations

Even a strong American President can find difficulty in dealing successfully with a Congress opposed to his views. In any crisis situation, he can appeal to the American public for support. The main power of Congress lies in its control of the federal budget. For example, US Congress must approve aid levels to Egypt and Israel. As a result of U.S. commitments to Israel and post-1979 (Camp David) obligations to Egypt, this aid programme has a net value of over \$6-7 Billion annually.⁵ When confronting issues of vital national interest, narrow domestic political considerations often lose much of their usual importance in decision making. The President can be assured of bipartisan support in Congress during such crises, especially if the issue involves friends and allies of the US like Israel. However, if the

³C.F. Joel Peters, *'Pathways to Peace: The Multilateral Arab-Israel Peace Talks'* (London: RIIA, 1960), P. 2

⁴William B. Quandt, *'Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics'*, (Washing D.C., Brookings, 1986), p.7

⁵Ibid.

crisis drags on for too long and especially if there is a military casualty dimension also, the president's room for movement will be drastically reduced. The standard case is Vietnam. In the Middle East, America's Lebanon policy has always suffered from this syndrome. In such circumstances, in addition to popular demand, Congress itself will take the lead in pressing for rapid disengagement.⁶

A US president will feel more ready to try new initiatives in the first year of his first term than he will in his fourth year. By his late second or early third year in office, a president will generally want to limit the effects of any partisan approach he is following on a foreign policy issue. This scheme of action has been visible in the Arab-Israeli context with successive Presidents from John.F.Kennedy following this pattern. Recently, this phenomenon was visible during the tenure of Bill Clinton. Clinton was by all accounts the most pro-Israeli US president ever, but even he felt the need to tilt towards the Palestinian side. He was compelled to follow this policy during the hardline Likud government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

Taken in this context, both the Camp David summits on the Middle East were similar. Both were held towards the end of presidential tenures. Unfortunately for Carter, his first tenure of service was also his last. The first Camp David summit held in 1978 was in the second year of the Carter Presidency. The success of this peace summit between Egypt and Israel was over shadowed by the failure of the Carter administration in dealing with the revolution in Iran and the subsequent hostage crisis. Carter thus lost his bid for re-election in 1979. The second Camp David Summit involving the leaders of the newly formed Palestinian Authority and Israel took place twenty years later in the last year of the Clinton Presidency. The main issue at stake for President Clinton here was the legacy he hoped to leave as the 'peace-maker' president of the USA.

⁶W.G. Hyland, 'Clinton's World: Remaking American Foreign Policy', (New York, Praeger Press, 1999) p. 138.

The Jewish lobby in New York and Washington is another factor that all American presidents have to actively consider and contend with. Some of American's most powerful non-governmental organizations are Jewish controlled. Active Jewish and pro-Israeli lobbying groups include the AIPAC (America-Israel Public Affairs Committee) and the Anti-Defection League. Coupled with this is the major stake that American Jews have in the business, entertainment and media scene. Major newspapers like the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal are Jewish owned and are virulently pro-Israeli in their coverage of the Middle East. The over six million strong Jewish vote is very crucial in American elections. The swing between the two major political formations in the U.S. is always decided by the minority vote, primarily Jewish.

In addition to all this, the massive financial clout that wealthy American Jews are willing to expend on election campaigns, make them very valuable participants in the American political process. 'Jewish power' is thus a very potent force in the U.S. All parties and their presidential or congressional candidates seek to gain by adopting a pro-Israeli stand, especially when an election is around the corner.⁷ Jewish lobbyists and pressure groups exert a lot of pressure on the government to support the state of Israel both politically and financially. US support for Israel is guaranteed in the UN. Massive yearly US military and economic aid to Israel are also guaranteed.

Corresponding Arab influence in American politics is very weak. Arab-Americans as a group are not powerful when compared to the Jews. Arab influence in US politics and foreign policy is primarily restricted to the Saudi Oil barons and their American collaborators. Arab -Israeli issues in American foreign policy consideration will be controversial because the stakes will be high and public interests will be equally high. Presidential involvement at the highest level are generally

⁷ Umut Uzer, 'The Impact of the Jewish Lobby on American Foreign Policy in the Middle East', Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs. Vol. VI, No. 4, December 2001-February 2002, p. 127.

required in the resolution of these issues. In a cyclic process, presidential involvement ensures that political considerations deeply influence the conduct of American Middle East policy. In short, American involvement in the Middle East (particularly in issues involving Israel) can not be separated from domestic political considerations.⁸ All the above factors must be taken into consideration when trying to analyse the Camp David-II summit.

Ultimately, it was Palestinian Authority President Yasir Arafat who made the most gain from the summit meeting. He was able to resist the combined pressure of both the US president and the Israeli prime minister to surrender to an unjust peace, by standing firm at Camp David. The compromises agreed to by the Palestinians during Oslo and after, had led them (the Judaeo-American lobby) to believe that the time was ripe for a settlement, naturally to be in favour of the stronger party (Israel) in the conflict. This led to the calling of the summit, the timing of which had virtually no support among the Palestinians. Indeed, the experience of Oslo, and post-Oslo had only served to legitimize the partiality and bias of Western, particularly American interlocutors in the minds of the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian Experience.

The Palestinian people's experience in the last ten years since the so-called peace effort started has been a rapidly progressing ghettoization that seems programmed to ultimately result in their being made prisoners or expelled from their own land. The Zionist land appropriation and settlement programme has been progressing at such a rapid pace that now almost every Palestinian city, town, village, refugee camp or rural community is cut off and isolated from each other. The Palestinian people are not longer allowed to travel on the main roads. All these are for the use of settlers only. The whole West Bank has been cut into parcels and strips of land by 'settler-only' roads. The Israeli army surrounds almost all Palestinian places of habitation,

⁸ Ibid. p. 136.

ready to impose a total blockade at short notice. Curfews can be imposed at any moment in Palestinian areas to add to the misery of the people. Even as Jewish settler homes spring up all over the place, Palestinians are subject to the strictest regulations in building houses or any other forms of normal developmental activities. Jerusalem, the focal point of all Palestinian aspirations is now out of bounds for people of the West Bank and Gaza. The Gaza strip has been separated from the rest of Israel and indeed Palestine by a electrified fence that effectively imprisons the 1.5 million people of this coastal desert area. The 4000 Jewish residents who control over 40% of Gaza along with the IDF are free to move anywhere. Israel have long been thinking of doing the same with the West Bank, i.e. building a fort-like wall to separate Palestinian populated areas from Israel proper and thereby deter suicide bombers from attacking the Jewish State. They are at the moment progressing in this project which also means virtually annexing many areas of pre-1967 Palestine to Israel proper. Coupled with all this is the rampant and shameless siphoning of the water and natural resources of the West Bank and Gaza for the use of Israelis alone. Palestinians have to put up with massive shortages so that their neighbors can enjoy all the luxuries that a European lifestyle requires in a traditionally parched land.

Barak's Dilemmas at Camp David

At Camp David, Yasir Arafat and his team fought tooth and nail to defend Palestinian rights.⁹ As a result when camp David II ended without an agreement, both Barak and Clinton raised questions about Arafat's willingness to negotiate in good faith. Still no one was ready to declare the peace process dead. Secretly (and in Public) all parties seemed to agree that some progress had been made. But this was not enough for the Americans and Israelis. Ehud Barak had staked his whole political future on making peace with the Arabs of whom the

⁹ Akram Hanieh, 'The Camp David Papers', Special Document, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 30, No.2, Winter 2001. p. 77

Palestinians were by far the smallest entity. But being small did not make them less conspicuous. They were, by far, the most painful thorn in Israel's side. In fact, Barak's decision to give more importance to the Syrian track of the peace process over the Palestinian one during his first year in office has been considered by many as one of the major mistakes he made in his foreign policy.¹⁰

The main problem for Barak was that Israel's political system made it next to impossible to make peace with the Palestinians. Over the years, Israel had developed a political system based on coalitions which gave a lot of power to small fringe parties. These parties were the main advocates of Israeli expansion and militarism, confiscation of Arab lands and building of settlements in the occupied territories. Whenever the chances of making peace with the Arabs arose, these ultranationalist organisations would withdraw their support to the Government. In the present context, no coalition in Israel can survive without the support of these groups. Just before leaving for Camp David, Barak's government was reduced to a minority in the Israeli parliament. Later, Foreign Minister David Levy, resigned accusing Barak of making too many concessions to the Palestinians. Even if an agreement was reached at Camp David, it would not have been ratified by the then Israeli parliament. It was to overcome this difficulty that a decision was taken to put a final peace accord to a referendum¹¹.

The turning point in Israeli-Palestinian relations in the present context, was the failure of the Camp David summit in July 2000. This was also the turning point of Ehud Barak's political career, in general. Barak risked his political future at Camp David and lost. It goes to the credit of Barak that he was not deterred by this and continued to determinedly pursue the goal of reaching a final settlement with the Palestinians till almost the end of his time in office. It can be said that Barak acted as a statesman and not a politician. He followed what he

¹⁰ Dov Waxman, 'A Tragic Hero: The Decline and Fall of Ehud Barak', *Perceptions* Vol. 4, No.2 June - August 2001, p. 77

¹¹ Qamar Agha, "Peace in West Asia", *The Hindu* August 10, 2000.

sincerely believed was in Israel's best interest and not his own. Unfortunately he was dealt the hard hand by history.¹² Barak was forced to leave office before he could recover from his loss of face at Camp David.

Clinton's Choice

US President Bill Clinton was certainly the most frustrated man to emerge from the Camp David - II Summit. His last hope of ensuring a 'legacy for all time' had been shattered. When Clinton called Arafat and Barak to Camp David, his personal experience at the successful Dayton talks between the warring Yugoslav factions was probably uppermost in his mind. He overlooked some crucial differences. The Yugoslav issue was a European problem and a leftover of the IInd World War and the Cold War. The Israel - Palestine issue on the other hand, was basically a neo-imperialist and colonial issue and something that grew out of deep-rooted regional politico-religious animosities and hatreds. By the time of Dayton in 1995, each side in the conflict had basically fought itself to a standstill. The peace that followed was the inevitable result of war exhaustion almost similar to the Taif Accords that ended the Lebanese civil war. Conversely, the multiple combatants in the Middle East were by no means exhausted and looked as though they were quite willing to fight for as many more years as it took to attain their 'legitimate' ends.

Clinton was ill advised on his decision to call the summit. There was no way that the Palestinian leadership, already discredited for submitting to the Israelis on a large number of issues that had brought only increased humiliation and suffering to the Palestinian people, would agree to further concessions. The Israelis on the other hand had nothing to lose and only to gain from such a summit meeting. If the combined Israeli - American initiative was successful in getting Arafat to agree to a settlement that would guarantee peace and security to the

¹²Bill Clinton, "Remarks by the President at the Israel Policy Forum Gala" The Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York, (Distributed by the Office of International Information Programs, US Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>), p.2

Israelis at the cost of just a few cosmetic changes in the political status of the West Bank and Gaza, so much the better. But Clinton and Barak just did not understand that the Palestinians were well prepared to deal with all their tricks. Before arriving at the summit, the Palestinian side led by Yasir Arafat had made the strategic decision to reject any all-embracing deal, if their basic demands were not considered.¹³ Even Clinton's 'Wye river' strategy could not break their determination. The Palestinians had after all not fought for a hundred years just to see all their bargaining chips disappear in a single summit meeting. Clinton himself is quoted as saying that:

"the Arab-Israeli conflict is not just a morality play between good and evil. It is a conflict with a complex history, whose resolution requires balancing the needs of both sides, including respect for their national identities and religious beliefs".¹⁴

He again adds that talks must be accompanied by acts which show trust and partnership. Goodwill at the negotiating table cannot survive forever with ill intent in the background. It is important that each side understands how the other reads actions.¹⁵

For Clinton, "Camp David was a transformative event, because the two sides faced the core issue of their dispute in a forum that was official for the first time. And they had to debate tradeoffs required to resolve the issues. Just as Oslo forced Israelis and Palestinians to come to terms with each others existence, the discussions of the past six months have forced them to come to terms with each others needs and the contours of a peace that ultimately they will have to reach".¹⁶

And, in fact, more than two years after Camp David, despite the bloody reality on the ground, many of the participants who negotiated at the summit and subsequently (until the arrival of Ariel Sharon), believe that a permanent peace agreement is possible in the not-so-

¹³ Michael Hirsh, 'Blowing the Best Chance' *Newsweek*, April 1, 2002, p. 33.

¹⁴ Clinton n. 12, p. 3

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

distant future. Such a peace agreement will no doubt be based on the proposals formulated at Camp David together with those put forward by President Clinton in December 2002 that were conditionally accepted by both Barak and Arafat. Arafat has since given an unconditional yes to these proposals.

American Diplomatic Priorities

One plus point of Palestinian - Israeli negotiations in the last decade has been 'reframing' of the conflict in nationalist terms. This was in direct contrast to the earlier ethno-religious (Arab-Jewish) prism through which events in the Middle-East were seen. It was the idea that the dispute was between a Jewish state, albeit, one accepted by the Palestinians and a Palestinian national movement seeking a state of its own that created the possibilities of territorial compromise as a solution for the problem. Full negotiations during the last ten years, including Camp David II have been based on this understanding.

Thus for American diplomacy, the priority should always be the preserving of the nationalist framework of the conflict and separation of religion from issues of political sovereignty. Even proposals to resolve core issues such as Jerusalem and the Palestinian refugees, should be made on the basis of the above conflictual framework, though agreement on these issues may not be achievable in the short term.¹⁷ The Camp David summit clearly showed that the peace envisioned by the Palestinians was not the peace Israel was prepared to offer. Israel was prepared neither to acknowledge the Palestinian right of return as laid out in UN resolution 194 (thereby accepting responsibility for the 'Naqba', the large scale expulsion of Arabs from Palestine in 1948 by the Hagannah and other Jewish militias), nor to accept more than a token return of Arab people to Israel under family reunification and not legal provisions). Israel insisted on maintaining sovereignty over most of East Jerusalem, including the old city. Most of the West Bank

¹⁷Shibley Telhami, "Camp David II: Assumptions and Consequences" *Current History*, Vol. 100, No. 642, January 2001 p. 14

Jewish settlements would not be dismantled but would be annexed to Israel thereby depriving the future Palestine state of territorial continuity.

Viewed in each sides perspective, both Arafat and Barak made remarkable concessions at Camp David. Barak broke all previous records in agreeing to eventually withdraw from over 90% of the West Bank and to surrender control of some East Jerusalem neighborhoods. In return, Arafat can be said to have offered stunning concessions. The Palestinians allowed that most Jewish settlers on the West Bank could remain in settlement blocks in parts of the West Bank that would come under Israeli sovereignty. In exchange Palestinians should be compensated with new territories near Gaza. It was agreed to separate the issue of the "right" of the Palestinian refugees to return to their names from the actual settlement of such rights. On the highly volatile Jerusalem issue, the Palestinians agreed that the Jewish Quarter and the Western "Wailing" wall would fall under Israeli sovereignty.¹⁸

So where did the two sides go wrong?. One can only trace the failure of the summit to the negotiating tactics and strategy followed by the opposing parties and their 'neutral' mediator.

Barak's Failures

Ehud Barak had developed a deep dislike for the concept of gradual normalization that was the basis of the 1993 Oslo accords between Israel and the Palestinians. In his view, the recalling of Israeli forces from parts of Gaza and the West Bank along with the simultaneous partial rearming of the Palestinians during the last seven years had forced Israel to pay a heavy price without getting anything tangible in return (ie., peace in the territories and in Israel proper). The scope of the Palestinians final demands was also not clearly known (at least in the Israeli perspective). Barak also seemed to be under the delusion that the Palestinians would be willing to make a historic compromise for peace only after they had exhausted all other

¹⁸Ibid , p. 11

possibilities (other than the negotiation table). After the fatal Rabin experience, Barak's team had to be extra-sensitive to the domestic political scene in Israel. They were convinced that the Israeli public would ratify an agreement with the Palestinians (even one that provided for far reaching concessions), as long as it was final and brought peace to the country. It was thus necessary to minimize any domestic political tension before the conclusion of such an agreement. Keeping these principles in mind, Barak undertook a number of steps, that went against the provisions of various agreements concluded between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. These included a third partial redeployment of troops from the West Bank, the transfer to the Palestine Authority of three villages outside Jerusalem, and the release of prisoners imprisoned for acts committed before the Oslo agreement. But Barak's main failure was his inability to prevent the rapid spread of West Bank settlements. He apparently saw no reason to alienate the settler constituency. To Barak's mind, Arafat and the Palestinians had to be made to understand that there was no other way to peace. Oslo's 'interim' approach had been abandoned once and for all by the Israeli establishment. In front, there was now a corridor leading either to an agreement or to renewed confrontation.¹⁹

Barak's 'all or nothing' approach might have succeeded if it was accompanied by confidence-building measures towards the Palestinians (like keeping all previous deadlines and agreements) and building good relationships with Arab leaders, especially Chairman Arafat. During almost two weeks of talks at Camp David, Barak refused to hold even one personal meeting with Arafat. So under the circumstances, Arafat's distrust of Barak was not a fact to be astonished at. Arafat was even once quoted as saying that "Barak is worse than Netanyahu".

¹⁹Robert Malley and Hussain Agha, 'Camp David: Tragedy of Errors', New York Review of Books, 9 August, 2001. In Special Documents, Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 3, No. 1, Autumn 2001, p. 64

Like most Israelis' Barak remained highly suspicious of the Palestinians. He was unconvinced that Israel had a true partner for peace in the Arafat leadership. This made him unwilling as far as practical confidence on the ground was concerned to do what was necessary to prove his 'good' intentions to the other side. While Barak himself was prepared to go all the way to reach an agreement and to make the minimum concessions required for this, his political statements remained hardline.²⁰

Barak's negotiating strategy was completely wrong. There was also no clear Israeli negotiating position at Camp David. This was in direct contrast to the Palestinians who clearly knew what they wanted and the extent to which they were willing to make compromises to achieve their goals. Barak should have presented the principles underlying what eventually became his proposed solutions (primarily regarding the amount of territory Israel was willing to give to the Palestinians). Abu Mazen, the Palestinian architect of the Oslo accords, had repeatedly recommended that the general principles guiding the Permanent Status Agreement be established at the beginning itself. Unfortunately Barak refused to do so, fearing to 'expose' his positions too early in the game. However, doing so would have provided the Palestinians with an incentive to move forward and also have given the talks a sense of purpose and urgency. The trouble with Barak was that his long years in the army seemed to have programmed him to see civil political life also in military strategic terms. He treated the whole field of negotiations like a major military exercise in which he was the sole general officer commanding (GOC). When he exposed his masterstroke (the territorial compromise, including Jerusalem) at the end of the negotiations, it was too late. The Palestinians did not trust him and had no confidence in what he was offering. Barak ended up weakening the Israeli position by offering too many concessions for virtually nothing in return.²¹

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ron Pundak, "From Oslo to Taba: What Went Wrong?" *Survival*, vol. 43, No. 3 Autumn 2001, p. 39.

Palestinian Negotiation Positions

As far as the Palestinians were concerned, they had already made the most important territorial concession, that of accepting a Palestinian state on just 22% of British mandatory Palestine. In contrast to this, the initial Israeli offer at Camp David was based on a map which had included an annexation of approximately 12% of the West Bank without any compensation. Naturally, there was no way the Palestinians were going to accept such a proposal.

The Palestinian position at the Camp David talks was based on three basic realities:

1. They were not prepared to complete the final status negotiations in a single summit that took place three to five months before the date set in the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement for the end of negotiations. This was in direct contrast to Barak's ideas. The Palestinians were opposed to the proposed summit from the beginning and had to be virtually dragged into them by US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright and President Clinton. When forced into attending the summit, Arafat requested that it be the start in a series of such summits that would enable him to build a coalition for an agreement, within the Palestinian political class and the public at large. However neither the Israelis nor the Americans sufficiently appreciated this requirement.

- 2 The Israeli concessions offered (very far-reaching from the Israeli point of view) were far from the minimum that would have enticed the Palestinians to sign an agreement.

3. Trying to trap Arafat into conceding an agreement was a tactical mistake, almost certain to push him into actions at odds with the requirement for successful negotiations. Once he felt that a trap was being set for him by the Israelis along with their American allies, Arafat's primary objective became to cut his losses rather than maximize his gains. Reaching a final settlement became only the

second best option at that point of time. Arafat himself had been interested in attending a summit meeting scheduled for November 2000. In his point of view, July was too early to reach an agreement. His aim had been to continue with the secret negotiations till the end of summer 2000 in the hope of producing a joint document that would leave only a few issues for the leader's decision. Then he planned to hold a number of summit meetings with his Israeli partner that would have culminated after the American elections in December²² Unfortunately the Jewish-American alliance had other plans in mind.

The American Role at Camp David

America had many roles to play in the two week long 'drama' at Camp David. It had responsibilities as the chief broker of any future peace deal between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The US also acted as the guardian of the peace process. But America's main role was as Israel's one and only strategic ally and its cultural and political partner.

As the broker of the peace deal, Clinton was expected to present a final agreement that neither party, particularly the Palestinians could refuse. In practice, Americans proposals were so near the Israeli stand that it was next to impossible for the Palestinians to accept them even as the basis for negotiations. The Americans tended to have an acute sensitivity of Israel's domestic political concerns and a totally exaggerated appreciation of each and every Israel move. The US strategic relationship with Israel resulted in what was known in popular diplomatic parlance as the 'no surprise rule", namely an American commitment to vet each and every one of its 'ideas' with the Israeli's, in advance. As a result the Americans often ended up presenting Israeli negotiating positions as their own and underwriting them as red lines beyond which Israel would not go. This sort of negotiating behavior resulted in a substantial depreciation of the Palestinian's confidence in Clinton, U.S. credibility and America's ability

²²Ibid.

to exercise effective pressure.²³ Still the Americans had an important role to play in shaping the contents of the proposals. Frequently President Clinton would have to work to convince Ehud Barak to accept what he had refused till then, mainly issues like the principle of land swaps, Palestinian sovereignty over at least part of Arab East Jerusalem and the Haram ash-Sharif (this was after the camp David Summit) as well as a proposal to significantly reduce the area of Israeli annexation in Jerusalem and other parts of the West Bank.

Bill Clinton was known for his pro-Israeli views and he also had an almost Zionist devotion to the state of Israel. His two terms in office had seen American -Israeli relations flourish as never before. But Clinton was also the first US president to show himself to be openly sympathetic to the Palestinian cause and their desire for a separate state of their own. Ehud Barak once commented that, on matters of substance, the US was much closer to the Palestinians than to Israel. The relationship between Washington and Tel Aviv was a friendly yet complex one. The inability to understand this relationship cost Arafat dearly. Americans saw the Palestinian position in terms of foot-dragging, passivity and contradictory positions within their delegation. They were even described as exhibiting a 'bunker mentality' at Camp David. This behavior obviously left a bad impression on Clinton who contrasted it with the perceived huge steps taken by Barak, disregarding old Israeli taboos and at the risk of great personnel and political danger. Clinton's public statement at the close of the talks - openly blaming the Palestinian side for the failure seems to have been motivated by this impression, though there was also the aim of helping Ehud Barak to recover some sort of political mileage at home.²⁴

By failing to put forward clear proposals, the Palestinians left the Americans without any means for pressing the Israelis to compromise. This led them to question both the seriousness of the Palestinians and

²³ Malley and Agha, n. 19. P. 73

²⁴ Pundak, n. 20, p. 41

their genuine desire for a settlement.. The cut-throat attitude of the Israelis and their American cohorts at Camp David certainly played a major part in putting Arafat and his team on the defensive. Though Arafat had spent a decade building a relationship with Washington, he proved incapable of using it when he needed it most. As for the Americans, their performance at Camp David was certainly not up to the mark. Though the hosts, they never fully took control of the situation. Pulled in various directions, the Americans never fully figured out which way to go and instead of using their authority to good purpose, frequently allowed themselves to be used by others.

Ultimately the negotiation path set out by the Americans - to agree on a proposal with the Israeli's, present it to the Palestinians; get a counter-proposal from them; bring it back to the Israelis - just did not work. The Israelis were never willing to lay down their final proposal, the Palestinians never put a counter proposal and so finally no deal was able to be struck.

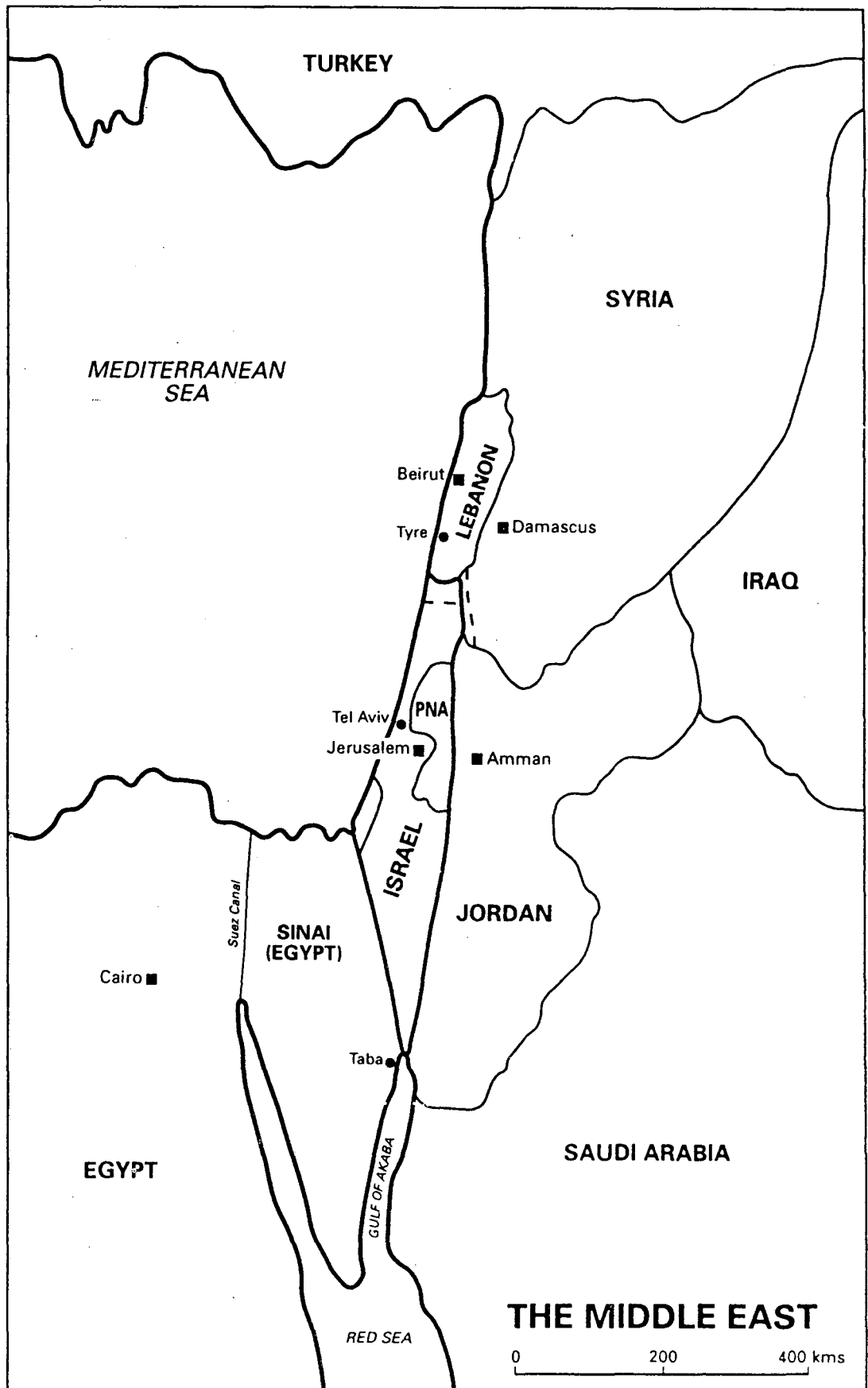
Whatever be the consequences and aftershocks, the negotiations that took place between July 2000 when the Camp David Summit was held and the final effort at finalizing a deal at the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Taba in January 2001 mark an indelible chapter in the history of the Israeli- Palestinian conflict. To quote an American participant at Camp David "taboos were shattered, the unspoken got spoken and, during that period, Israelis and Palestinians reached on unprecedented level of understanding of what it will take to end their struggle.²⁵

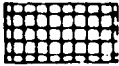
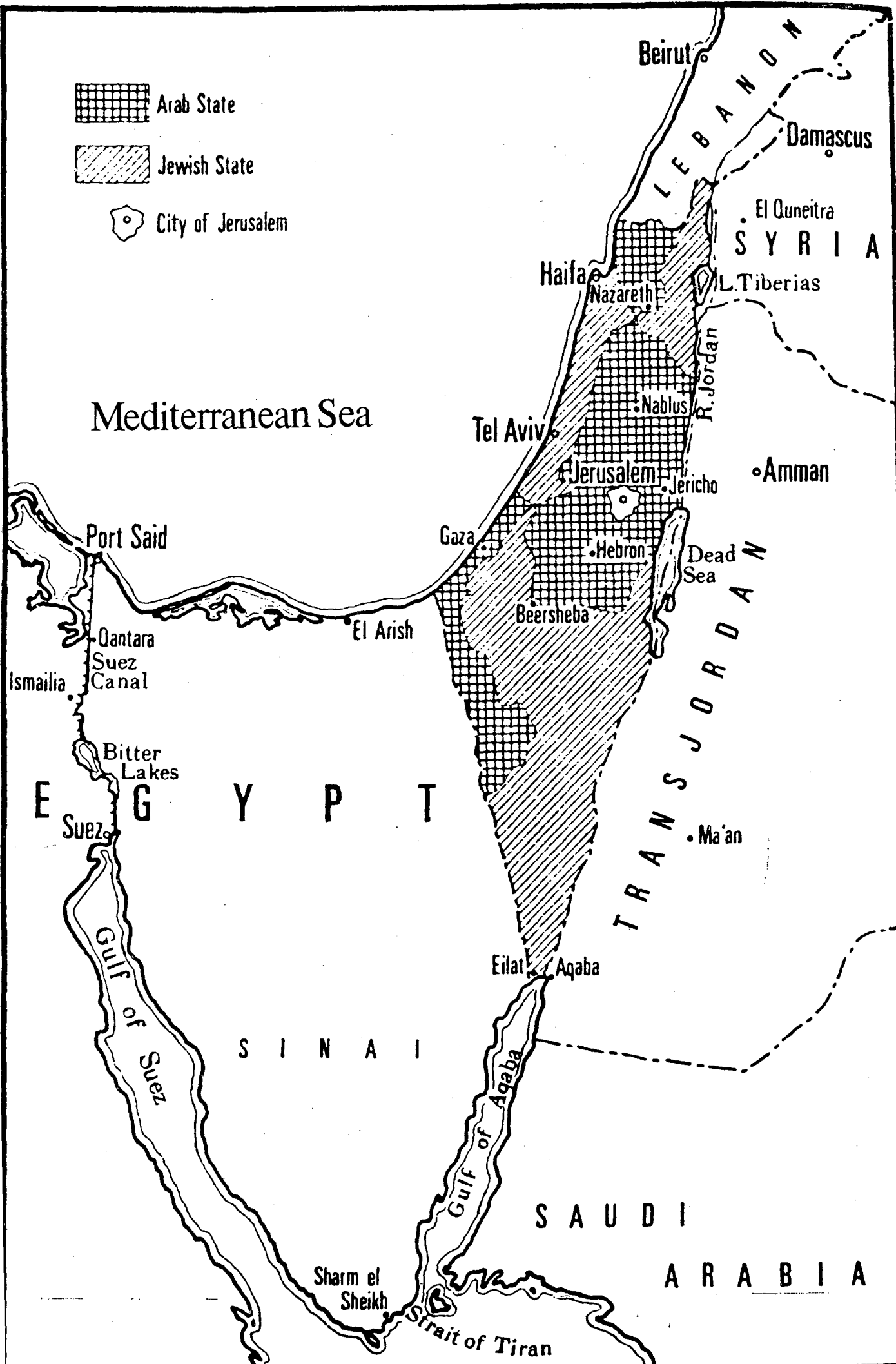
The beginnings of a foundation for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace have been laid. Poor management of the process alone has kept the Israelis and Palestinians from reaching the agreement. Bill Clinton's desired legacy, that of presiding over a comprehensive Middle East peace may ultimately be reflected in an eventual reconciliation

²⁵Robert Malley in Malley and Agha, n. 20., P. 75.

between those two peoples and peace and good harmony between their two states in the future.

MAPS





Arab State



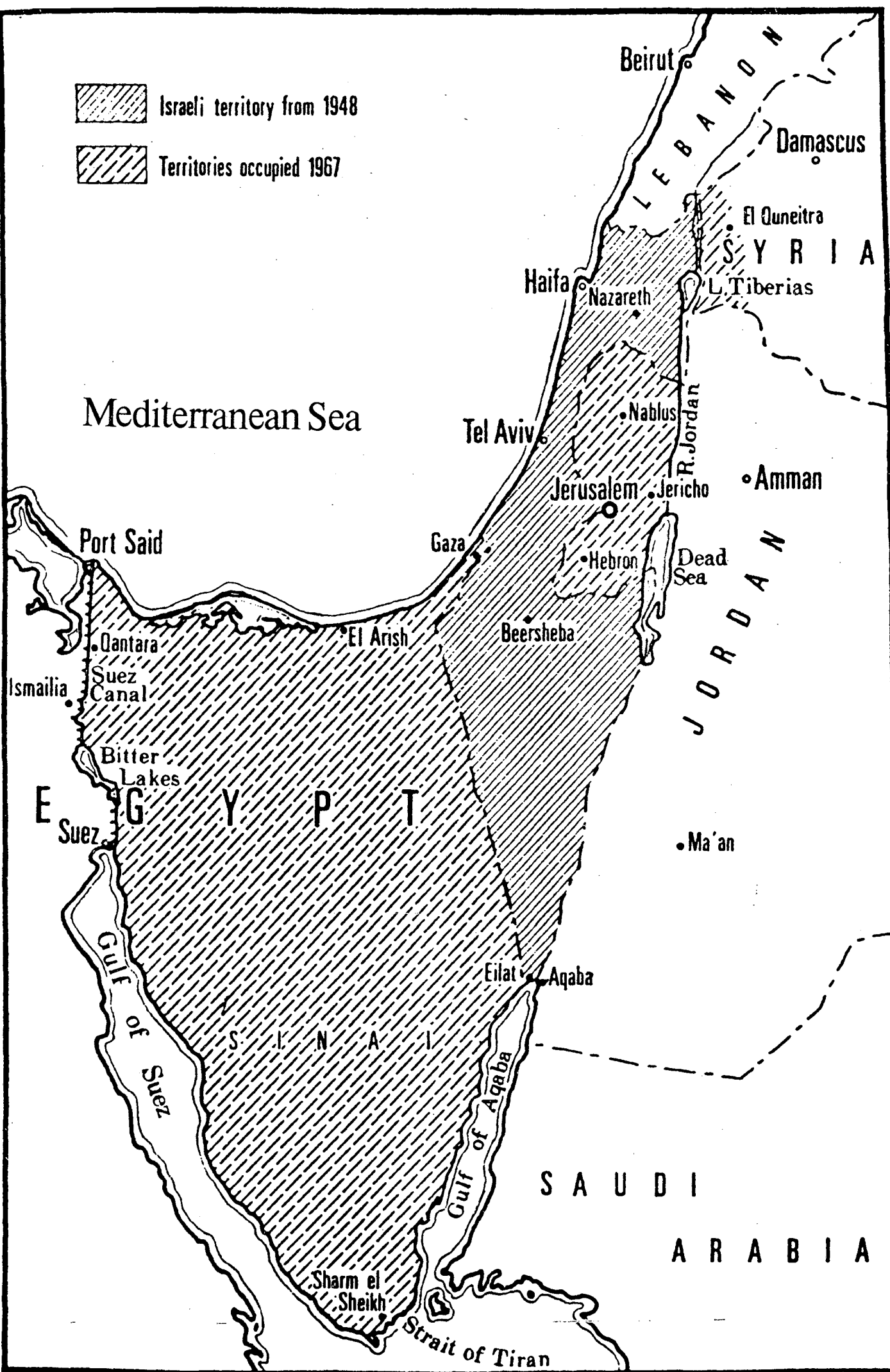
Jewish State



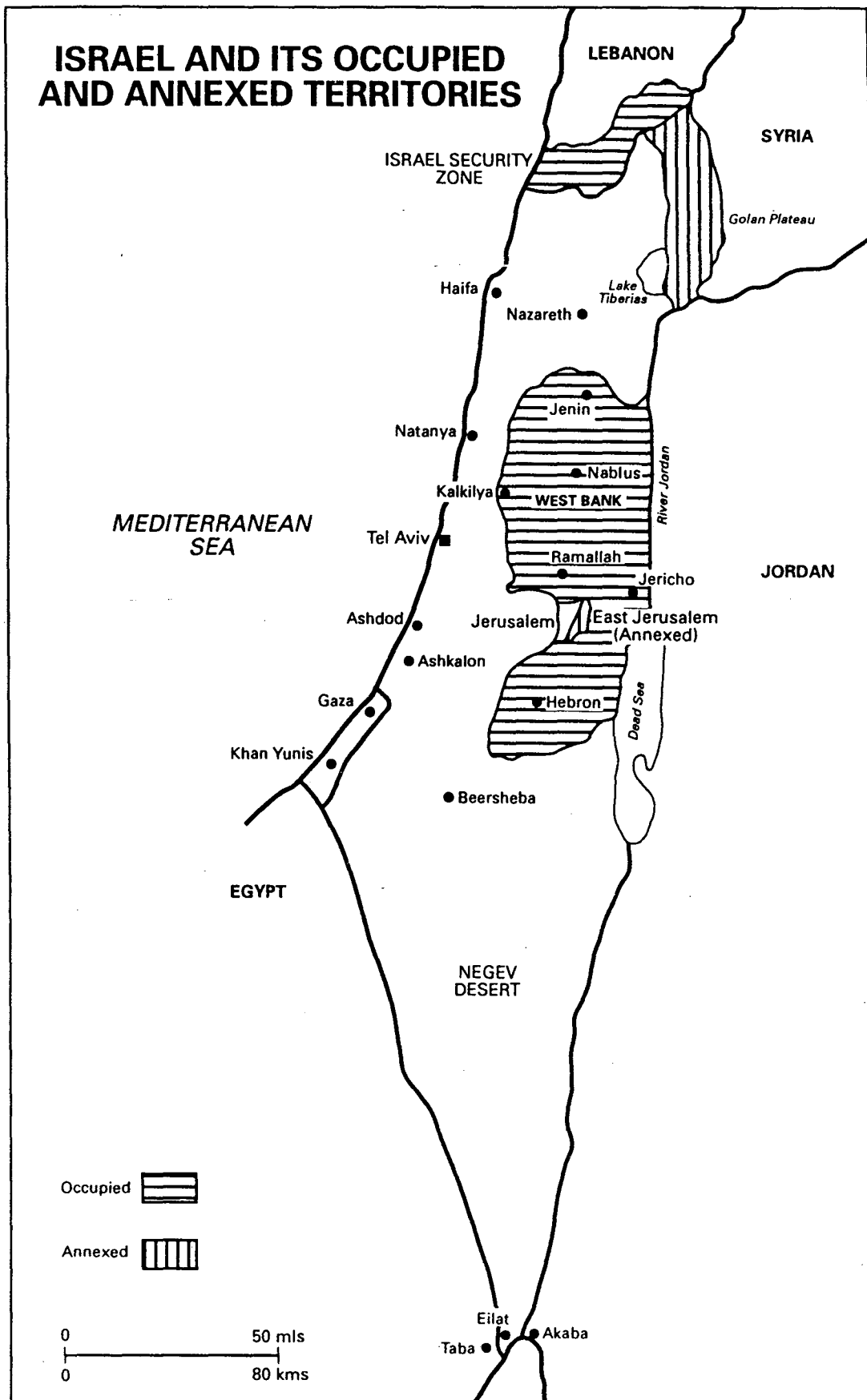
City of Jerusalem

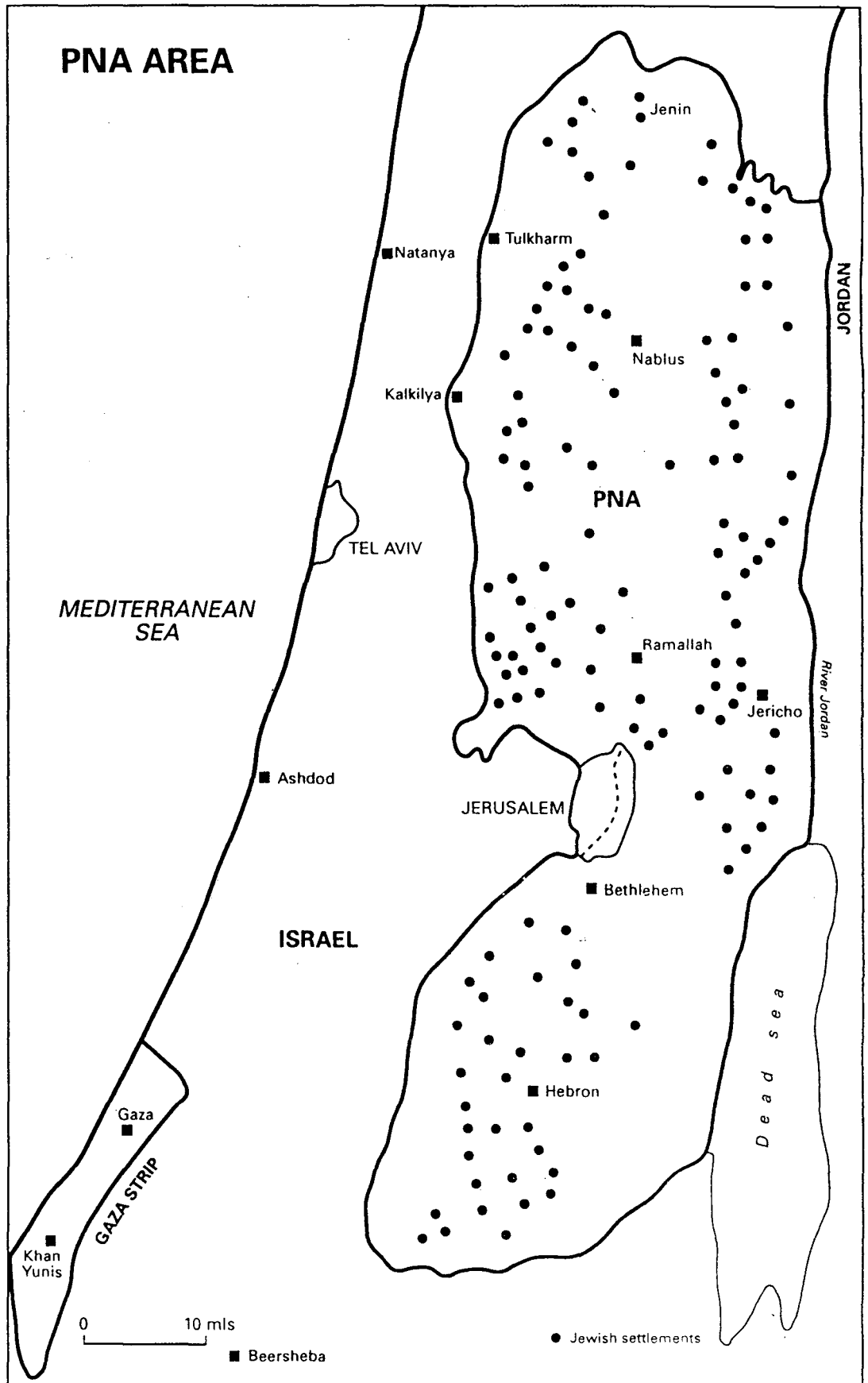
 Israeli territory from 1948

 Territories occupied 1967

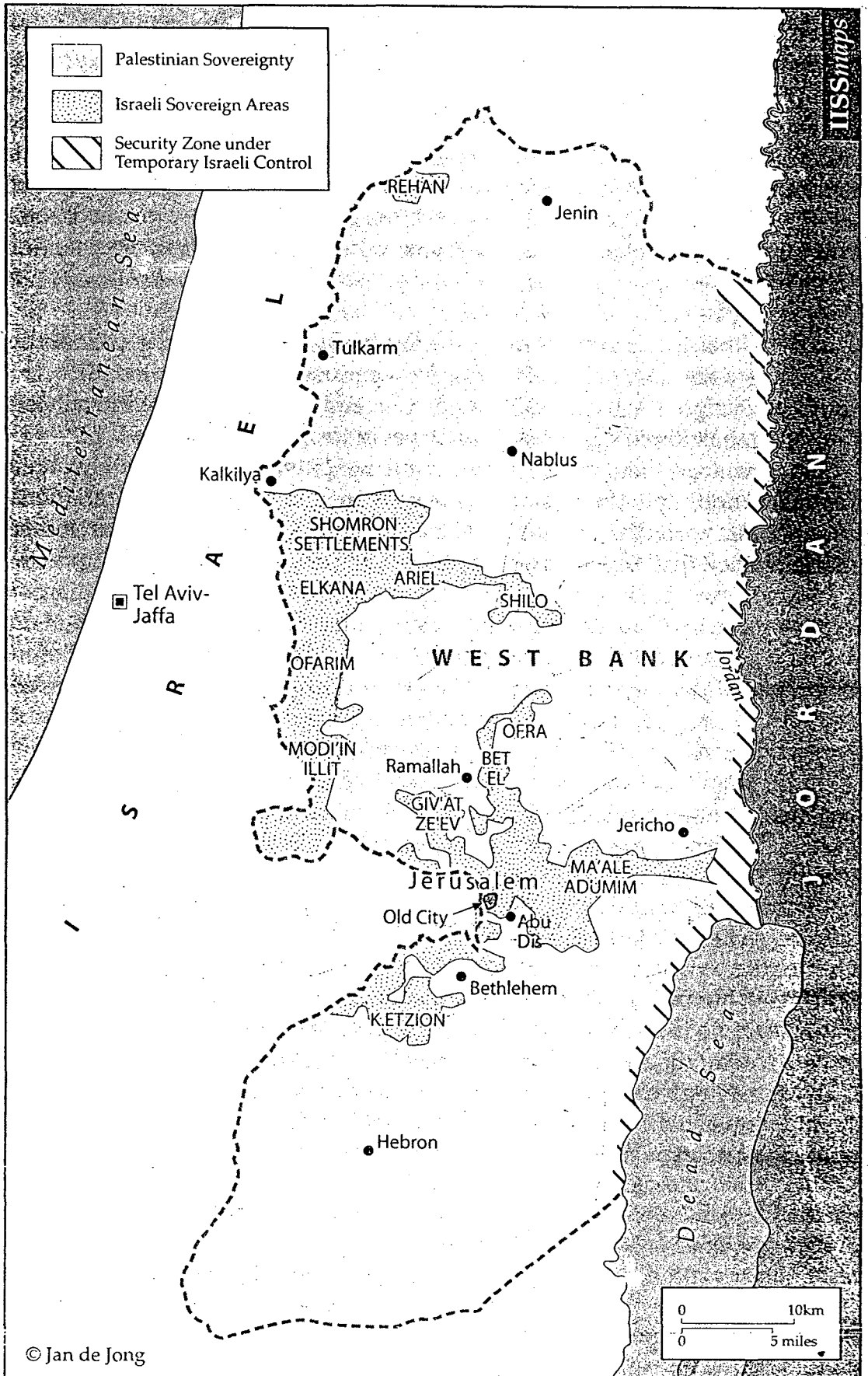


ISRAEL AND ITS OCCUPIED AND ANNEXED TERRITORIES





Projection of West Bank Permanent Status, Camp David, July 2000
 (Approximation based on Israeli and Palestinian sources.)



APPENDIX

U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338

U.N. RESOLUTION 242, NOVEMBER 22, 1967

The Security Council,

Expressing its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East,

Emphasizing 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,

Emphasizing further that all Member States in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter.

1. *Affirms* that the fulfillment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:

(i) Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;

(ii) Termination of all claims or 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;

2. *Affirms further* the necessity:

(a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;

(b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;

(c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to

achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles of this resolution;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of the efforts of the Special Representative as soon as possible.

U.N. RESOLUTION 338, OCTOBER 22, 1973

The Security Council

1. *Calls upon* all parties to the present fighting to cease all firing and terminate all military activity immediately, no later than 12 hours after the moment of the adoption of this decision, in the positions they now occupy;

2. *Calls upon* the parties concerned to start immediately after the cease-fire the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) in all of its parts;

3. *Decides that*; immediately and concurrently with the cease-fire, negotiations shall start between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty, March 26, 1979

TREATY OF PEACE BETWEEN THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL

The Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Government of the State of Israel:

Preamble

Convinced of the urgent necessity of the establishment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East in accordance with Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338;

Reaffirming their adherence to the "Framework for Peace in the Middle East Agreed at Camp David," dated September 17, 1978;

Noting that the aforementioned Framework as appropriate is intended to constitute a basis for peace not only between Egypt and Israel but also between Israel and each of its other Arab neighbors which is prepared to negotiate peace with it on this basis;

Desiring to bring to an end the state of war between them and to establish a peace in which every state in the area can live in security;

Convinced that the conclusion of a Treaty of Peace between Egypt and Israel is an important step in the search for comprehensive peace in the area and for the attainment of the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in all its aspects;

Inviting the other Arab parties to this dispute to join the peace process with Israel guided by and based on the principles of the aforementioned Framework;

Desiring as well to develop friendly relations and cooperation between themselves in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law governing international relations in times of peace;

Agree to the following provisions in the free exercise of their sovereignty, in order to implement the "Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty Between Egypt and Israel:"

Article I

1. The state of war between the Parties will be terminated and peace will be established between them upon the exchange of instruments of ratification of this Treaty.

2. Israel will withdraw all its armed forces and civilians from the Sinai behind the international boundary between Egypt and mandated Palestine, as provided in the annexed protocol (Annex I), and Egypt will resume the exercise of its full sovereignty over the Sinai.

3. Upon completion of the interim withdrawal provided for in Annex I, the Parties will establish normal and friendly relations, in accordance with Article III(3).

Article II

The permanent boundary between Egypt and Israel is the recognized international boundary between Egypt and the former mandated territory of Palestine, as shown on the map at Annex II, without prejudice to the issue of the status of the Gaza Strip. The Parties recognize this boundary as inviolable. Each will respect the territorial integrity of the other, including their territorial waters and airspace.

Article III

1. The Parties will apply between them the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law governing relations among states in times of peace. In particular:

a. They recognize and will respect each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence;

b. They recognize and will respect each other's right to live in peace within their secure and recognized boundaries;

c. They will refrain from the threat or use of force, directly or indirectly, against each other and will settle all disputes between them by peaceful means.

2. Each Party undertakes to ensure that acts or threats of belligerency, hostility, or violence do not originate from and are not committed from within its territory, or by any forces subject to its control or by any other forces stationed on its territory, against the population, citizens or property of the other Party. Each Party also undertakes to refrain from organizing, instigating, inciting, assisting or participating in acts or threats of belligerency, hostility, subversion or violence against the other Party.

suspendable freedom of navigation and overflight. The Parties will respect each other's right to navigation and overflight for access to either country through the Strait of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba.

Article VI

1. This Treaty does not affect and shall not be interpreted as affecting in any way the rights and obligations of the Parties under the Charter of the United Nations.

2. The Parties undertake to fulfill in good faith their obligations under this Treaty, without regard to action or inaction of any other party and independently of any instrument external to this Treaty.

3. They further undertake to take all the necessary measures for the application in their relations of the provisions of the multilateral conventions to which they are parties, including the submission of appropriate notification to the Secretary General of the United Nations and other depositaries of such conventions.

4. The Parties undertake not to enter into any obligations in conflict with this Treaty.

5. Subject to Article 103 of the United Nations Charter, in the event of a conflict between the obligations of the Parties under the present Treaty and any of their other obligations, the obligations under this Treaty will be binding and implemented.

Article VII

1. Disputes arising out of the application or interpretation of this Treaty shall be resolved by negotiations.

2. Any such disputes which cannot be settled by negotiations shall be resolved by conciliation or submitted to arbitration.

Article VIII

The Parties agree to establish a claims commission for the mutual settlement of all financial claims.

Article IX

1. This Treaty shall enter into force upon exchange of instruments of ratification.

2. This Treaty supersedes the Agreement between Egypt and Israel of September, 1975.

3. All protocols, annexes, and maps attached to this Treaty shall be regarded as an integral part hereof.

4. The Treaty shall be communicated to the Secretary General of the United Nations for registration in accordance with the provisions of Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Done at Washington, D.C. this 26th day of March, 1979, in triplicate in the English, Arabic, and Hebrew languages, each text being equally authentic. In case of any divergence of interpretation, the English text shall prevail.

For the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt:

A. Sadat

For the Government of Israel:

M. Begin

Witnessed by:

Jimmy Carter
Jimmy Carter, President of
the United States of America

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON PALESTINIAN SELF-RULE

13 September 1993

The Government of the State of Israel and the Palestinian team (in the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the Middle East Peace Conference) (the 'Palestinian Delegation') representing the Palestinian people, agree that it is time to put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict, recognize their mutual legitimate and political rights, and strive to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security and achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process.

Accordingly, the two sides agree to the following principles:

Article I

Aim of the negotiations

The aim of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations within the current Middle East peace process is, among other things, to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, the elected Council, (the 'Council') for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

It is understood that the interim arrangements are an integral part of the overall peace process and that final status negotiations will lead to the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Article II

Framework for the interim period

The agreed framework for the interim period is set forth in the Declaration of Principles.

Article III

Elections

1. In order that the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip may govern themselves according to democratic principles, direct, free and general political elections will be held for the Council under agreed supervision and international observation, while the Palestinian police will ensure public order.

2. An agreement will be concluded on the exact mode and conditions of the elections in accordance with the protocol attached as Annex I, with the goal of holding the elections not later than nine months after the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles.

3. These elections will constitute a significant interim preparatory step toward the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements.

Article IV

Jurisdiction of the Council will cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory, except for issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations. The two sides view the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit, whose integrity will be preserved during the interim period.

Article V

Transitional period and permanent status negotiations

1. The five-year transitional period will begin upon the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area.

2. Permanent status negotiations will commence as soon as possible, but not later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period, between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian people representatives.

3. It is understood that these negotiations shall cover remaining issues, including Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and co-operation with other neighbours, and other issues of common interest.

4. The two parties agree that the outcome of the permanent status negotiations should not be prejudiced or pre-empted by agreements reached for the interim period.

Article VI

Preparatory transfer of powers and responsibilities

1. Upon the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles and the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, a transfer of authority from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the authorized Palestinians for this task, as detailed herein, will commence. This transfer of authority will be of preparatory nature until the inauguration of the Council.

2. Immediately after the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles and the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, with the view to promoting economic development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, authority will be transferred to the Palestinians in the following spheres: education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation, and tourism. The Palestinian side will commence in building the Palestinian police force, as agreed upon. Pending the inauguration of the Council, the two parties may negotiate the transfer of additional powers and responsibilities as agreed upon.

Article VII

Interim agreement

1. The Israeli and Palestinian delegations will negotiate an agreement on the interim period (the 'Interim Agreement').

2. The Interim Agreement shall specify, among other things, the structure of the Council, the number of its members, and the transfer of powers and responsibilities from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the Council. The Interim Agreement shall also specify the Council's executive authority, legislative authority in accordance with Article IX below, and the independent Palestinian judicial organs.

3. The Interim Agreement shall include arrangements, to be implemented upon the inauguration of the Council, for the assumption by the Council of all of the powers and responsibilities transferred previously in accordance with Article VI above.

4. In order to enable the Council to promote economic growth, upon its inauguration, the Council will establish, among other things, a Palestinian Electricity Authority, a Gaza Sea Port Authority, a Palestinian Development Bank, a Palestinian Export Promotion Board, a Palestinian Environmental Authority, a Palestinian Land Authority and a Palestinian Water Administration Authority, and any other authorities agreed upon, in accordance with the Interim Agreement that will specify their powers and responsibilities.

5. After the inauguration of the Council, the Civil Administration will be dissolved, and the Israeli military government will be withdrawn.

Article VIII

Public order and security

In order to guarantee public order and internal security for the Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Council will establish a strong police force, while Israel will continue to carry the responsibility for defending against external threats, as well as the responsibility for overall security of the Israelis to protect their internal security and public order.

Article IX

Laws and military orders

1. The Council will be empowered to legislate, in accordance with the Interim Agreement, within all authorities transferred to it.

2. Both parties will review jointly laws and military orders presently in force in remaining spheres.

Article X

Joint Israeli-Palestinian liaison committee

In order to provide for a smooth implementation of this Declaration of Principles and any subsequent agreements pertaining to the interim period, upon the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, a Joint Israeli-Palestinian Liaison Committee will be established in order to deal with issues requiring co-ordination, other issues of common interest, and disputes.

Article XI

Israeli-Palestinian co-operation in economic fields

Recognizing the mutual benefit of co-operation in promoting the development of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel, upon the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, an Israeli-Palestinian Economic Co-operation Committee will be established in order to develop and implement in a co-operative manner the programmes identified in the protocols attached as Annex III and Annex IV.

Article XII

Liaison and co-operation with Jordan and Egypt

The two parties will invite the Governments of Jordan and Egypt to participate in establishing further liaison and co-operation arrangements between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian representatives, on one hand, and the Governments of Jordan and Egypt, on the other hand, to promote co-operation between them. These arrangements will include the constitution of a Continuing Committee that will decide by agreement on the modalities of the admission of persons displaced from the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, together with necessary measures to prevent disruption and disorder. Other matters of common concern will be dealt with by this Committee.

Article XIII

Redeployment of Israeli forces

1. After the entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, and not later than the eve of elections for the Council, a redeployment of Israeli military forces in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip will take place, in addition to withdrawal of Israeli forces carried out in accordance with Article XIV.

2. In redeploying its military forces, Israel will be guided by the principle that its military forces should be redeployed outside the populated areas.

3. Further redeployments to specified locations will be gradually implemented commensurate with the assumption of responsibility for public order and internal security by the Palestinian police force pursuant to Article VIII above.

Article XIV

Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area

Israel will withdraw from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, as detailed in the protocol attached as Annex II.

Article XV

Resolution of disputes

1. Disputes arising out of the application or interpretation of this Declaration of Principles, or any subsequent agreements pertaining to the interim period, shall be resolved by negotiations through the Joint Liaison Committee to be established pursuant to Article X above.

2. Disputes which cannot be settled by negotiations may be resolved by a mechanism of conciliation to be agreed upon by the parties.

3. The parties may agree to submit to arbitration disputes relating to the interim period, which cannot be settled through conciliation. To this end, upon the agreement of both parties, the parties will establish an Arbitration Committee.

11. A program for developing co-ordination and co-operation in the field of communication and media.
12. Any other programs of mutual interest.

PROTOCOL ON ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CO-OPERATION CONCERNING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

1. The two sides will co-operate in the context of the multilateral peace efforts in promoting a Development Program for the region, including the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, to be initiated by the G-7. The parties will request the G-7 to seek the participation in this program of other interested states, such as members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, regional Arab states and institutions, as well as members of the private sector.

2. The Development Program will consist of two elements:
- a) an Economic Development Program for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip;
 - b) a Regional Economic Development Program

A. *The Economic Development Program for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip* will consist of the following elements:

- (1) A Social Rehabilitation Program, including a Housing and Construction Program.
- (2) A Small and Medium Business Development Plan.
- (3) An Infrastructure Development Program (water, electricity, transportation and communications, etc.)
- (4) A Human Resources Plan.
- (5) Other programs.

B. *The Regional Economic Development Program* may consist of the following elements:

- (1) The establishment of a Middle East Development Fund, as a first step, and a Middle East Development Bank, as a second step.
- (2) The development of a joint Israeli-Palestinian-Jordanian Plan for co-ordinated exploitation of the Dead Sea area.
- (3) The Mediterranean Sea (Gaza)—Dead Sea Canal.
- (4) Regional Desalination and other water development projects.
- (5) A regional plan for agricultural development, including a co-ordinated regional effort for the prevention of desertification.
- (6) Interconnection of electricity grids.
- (7) Regional co-operation for the transfer, distribution and industrial exploitation of gas, oil and other energy resources.
- (8) A regional Tourism, Transportation and Telecommunications Development Plan.
- (9) Regional co-operation in other spheres.

3. The two sides will encourage the multilateral working groups, and will co-ordinate towards its success. The two parties will encourage international activities, as well as pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, within the various multilateral working groups.

AGREED MINUTES TO THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON INTERIM SELF-GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS

A. *General Understandings and Agreements*

Any powers and responsibilities transferred to the Palestinians pursuant to the Declaration of Principles prior to the inauguration of the Council will be subject to the same principles pertaining to Article IV, as set out in these Agreed Minutes below.

B. *Specific Understandings and Agreements*

Article IV

It is understood that:

1. Jurisdiction of the Council will cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory, except for issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations: Jerusalem, settlements, military locations and Israelis.

2. The Council's jurisdiction will apply with regard to the agreed powers, responsibilities, spheres and authorities transferred to it.

Article VI (2)

It is agreed that the transfer of authority will be as follows:

(1) The Palestinian side will inform the Israeli side of the names of the authorized Palestinians who will assume the powers, authorities and responsibilities that will be transferred to the Palestinians according to the Declaration of Principles in the following fields: education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation, tourism, and any other authorities agreed upon.

(2) It is understood that the rights and obligations of these offices will not be affected.

(3) Each of the spheres described above will continue to enjoy existing budgetary allocations in accordance with arrangements to be mutually agreed upon. These arrangements also will provide for the necessary adjustments required in order to take into account the taxes collected by the direct taxation office.

(4) Upon the execution of the Declaration of Principles, the Israeli and Palestinian delegations will immediately commence negotiations on a detailed plan for the transfer of authority on the above offices in accordance with the above understandings.

Article VII (2)

The Interim Agreement will also include arrangements for co-ordination and co-operation.

Article VII (5)

The withdrawal of the military government will not prevent Israel from exercising the powers and responsibilities not transferred to the Council.

Article VIII

It is understood that the Interim Agreement will include arrangements for co-operation and co-ordination between the two parties in this regard. It is also agreed that the transfer of powers and responsibilities to the Palestinian police will be accomplished in a phased manner, as agreed in the Interim Agreement.

Article X

It is agreed that, upon the entry into force of the Declaration of Principles, the Israeli and Palestinian delegations will exchange the names of the individuals designated by them as members of the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Liaison Committee.

It is further agreed that each side will have an equal number of members in the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee will reach decisions by agreement. The Joint Committee may add other technicians and experts, as necessary. The Joint Committee will decide on the frequency and place or places of its meetings.

Annex II

It is understood that, subsequent to the Israeli withdrawal, Israel will continue to be responsible for external security, and for internal security and public order of settlements and Israelis. Israeli military forces and civilians may continue to use roads freely within the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area.

Article XVI

Israeli-Palestinian Co-operation Concerning Regional Programs

Both parties view the multilateral working groups as an appropriate instrument for promoting a 'Marshall Plan,' the regional programs and other programs, including special programs for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as indicated in the protocol attached as Annex IV.

Article XVII

Miscellaneous Provisions

1. This Declaration of Principles will enter into force one month after its signing.

2. All protocols annexed to this Declaration of Principles and Agreed Minutes pertaining thereto shall be regarded as an integral part hereof.

Article XVI

Israel-Palestinian co-operation concerning regional programs

Both parties view the multilateral working groups as an appropriate instrument for promoting a 'Marshall Plan,' the regional programs and other programs, including special programs for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as indicated in the protocol attached as Annex IV.

Article XVII

Miscellaneous provisions

1. This Declaration of Principles will enter into force one month after its signing.

2. All protocols annexed to this Declaration of Principles and Agreed Minutes pertaining thereto shall be regarded as an integral part hereof.

Annex 1—protocol on the mode and conditions of elections

1. Palestinians of Jerusalem who live there will have the right to participate in the election process, according to an agreement between the two sides.

2. In addition, the election agreement should cover, among other things, the following issues:

- a. the system of elections,
- b. the mode of the agreed supervision and international observation and their personal composition, and
- c. rules and regulations regarding election campaign, including agreed arrangements for the organizing of mass media, and the possibility of licensing a broadcasting and TV station.

3. The future status of displaced Palestinians who were registered on 4th June 1967 will not be prejudiced because they are unable to participate in the election process due to practical reasons.

Annex 2—protocol on withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho Area

1. The two sides will conclude and sign within two months from the date of entry into force of this Declaration of Principles, an agreement on the withdrawal of Israeli military forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area. This agreement will include comprehensive arrangements to apply in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area subsequent to the Israeli withdrawal.

2. Israel will implement an accelerated and scheduled withdrawal of Israeli military forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, beginning immediately with the signing of the agreement on the Gaza Strip and Jericho area and to be completed within a period not exceeding four months after the signing of this agreement.

3. The above agreement will include, among other things:

- a. Arrangements for a smooth and peaceful transfer of authority from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the Palestinian representatives.
- b. structure, powers and responsibilities of the Palestinian authority in these areas, except, external security, settlements, Israelis, foreign relations, and other subjects mutually agreed upon.
- c. Arrangements for assumption of internal security and public order by the Palestinian police force consisting of police officers recruited locally and from abroad (holding Jordanian passports and Palestinian documents issued by Egypt). Those who will participate in the Palestinian police force coming from abroad should be trained as police and police officers.
- d. A temporary international or foreign presence, as agreed upon.
- e. Establishment of a joint Palestinian-Israeli co-ordination and co-operation committee for mutual security purposes.
- f. An economic development and stabilization program, including the establishment of an Emergency Fund, to encourage foreign investment, and financial and economic support. Both sides will co-ordinate and co-operate jointly and unilaterally with regional and international parties to support these aims.

g. Arrangements for a safe passage for persons and transportation between the Gaza Strip and Jericho area.

4. The above agreement will include arrangements for co-ordination between both parties regarding passages:

- a. Gaza - Egypt; and
- b. Jericho - Jordan.

5. The offices responsible for carrying out the powers and responsibilities of the Palestinian authority under this Annex II and Article VI of the Declaration of Principles will be located in the Gaza Strip and in the Jericho area pending the inauguration of the Council.

6. Other than these agreed arrangements, the status of the Gaza Strip and Jericho area will continue to be an integral part of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and will not be changed in the interim period.

PROTOCOL ON ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CO-OPERATION IN ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The two sides agree to establish an Israeli-Palestinian Continuing Committee for Economic Co-operation, focusing, among other things, on the following:

1. Co-operation in the field of water, including a Water Development Program prepared by experts from both sides, which will also specify the mode of co-operation in the management of water resources in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and will include proposals for studies and plans on water rights of each party, as well as on the equitable utilization of joint water resources for implementation in and beyond the interim period.

2. Co-operation in the field of electricity, including an Electricity Development Program, which will also specify the mode of co-operation for the production, maintenance, purchase and sale of electricity resources.

3. Co-operation in the field of energy, including an Energy Development Program, which will provide for the exploitation of oil and gas for industrial purposes, particularly in the Gaza Strip and in the Negev, and will encourage further joint exploitation of other energy resources. This Program may also provide for the construction of a Petrochemical industrial complex in the Gaza Strip and the construction of oil and gas pipelines.

4. Co-operation in the field of finance, including a Financial Development and Action Program for the encouragement of international investment in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and in Israel, as well as the establishment of a Palestinian Development Bank.

5. Co-operation in the fields of transport and communications including a Program, which will define guidelines for the establishment of a Gaza Sea Port Area, and will provide for the establishing of transport and communications lines to and from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to Israel and to other countries. In addition, this Program will provide for carrying out the necessary construction of roads, railways, communication lines, etc.

6. Co-operation in the field of trade, including studies, and Trade Promotion Programs, which will encourage local, regional and inter-regional trade, as well as a feasibility study of creating free trade zones in the Gaza Strip and in Israel, mutual access to these zones, and co-operation in other areas related to trade and commerce.

7. Co-operation in the field of industry, including industrial Development Programs, which will provide for the establishment of joint Israeli-Palestinian Research and Development Centers, will promote Palestinian-Israeli joint ventures, and provide guidelines for co-operation in the textile, food, pharmaceutical, electronics, diamonds, computer and science-based industries.

8. A program for co-operation in, and regulation of, labour relations and co-operation in social welfare issues.

9. A Human Resources Development and Co-operation Plan providing for joint Israeli-Palestinian workshops and seminars and for the establishment of joint vocational training centres, research institutes and data banks.

10. An Environmental Protection Plan, providing for joint and/or co-ordinated measures in this sphere.

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