

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Hamma Lakhdar University of El-Oued
Faculty of Arts and Languages
Department of Arts and English Language**



**The United States' Role in Peace Negotiations Between Israel and
Palestine: Examining Achievements, Setbacks and Difficulties**

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Master's degree in literature and Civilization**

Submitted by:

AISSAOUI Salsabil

HAMIED Bouchra

CHETEHOUNA Nadjla

Supervised by

Dr. CHOUCAHNI ABIDI Mohammed

Board of Examiners:

Dr. ANAD Ahmed

President

University of El-Oued

Dr. CHOUCAHNI A. Mohammed

Supervisor

University of El-Oued

Dr. ATIK Z. Ouahid

Examiner

University of El-Oued

Academic year: 2024/2025

Dedication

This work is dedicated to our families, especially our dear parents, whose unwavering support, guidance, and sacrifices have been instrumental in our academic journey.

We also express our appreciation to our brothers and sisters for their encouragement and patience throughout this endeavor.

Sincere thanks are extended to our teachers and colleagues for their valuable contributions, collaboration, and motivation.

In deep solidarity,

We also dedicate this work to the resilient Palestinian people, whose struggle for dignity, justice, and freedom continues to inspire conscience and courage around the world.

This dissertation is respectfully dedicated to all those who supported us along the way.

With sincere acknowledgment

May 2025

Acknowledgements

It is an honor for us to be students of such an elite mentor Our Dear Supervisor:

"Dr. CHOUCHANI ABIDI Mohammed".

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to him for his valuable guidance, constructive feedback, and unwavering support throughout every stage of this research and his wisdom and dedication the cause of knowledge that led us to the accomplishment of this humble work.

We also extend our thanks to all the faculty members and staffs of the Department of English for creating a supportive academic environment and enriching our learning experience.

Our sincere thanks to the members of the jury for agreeing to discuss and evaluate this humble dissertation.

Abstract

Covering the years 1948 until the present, this dissertation provides a critical examination of America's multilateral role during peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine. The primary purpose is to assess the successes, failures, and disappointments which have guided American mediation. Utilizing historical and analytical methods, the research utilizes a qualitative study design guided by policy briefs, official declarations, UN decisions, and scholarly literature. The research conclusions indicate that while the U.S. has performed an invaluable role of a mediator, its strategic alliance with Israel has always worked against its neutrality and detracted from its capacity to exert evenly balanced pressures on both parties. Bilateral achievements such as the Camp David Accords and Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty were quite bilateral and never addressed the key issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict i.e., borders, Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, and security. Concurrently, failures were routinely associated with erratic policies, political diplomacy, and weak enforcement. The dissertation concludes that American diplomacy has primarily held back but not resolved the conflict at the expense of long-term justice in favor of short-term stability. It demands a rebalanced American strategy with an anchor in multilateralism and international law. Subsequent research could analyze different mediation models and quantify the influence of U.S. domestic interest groups on Middle East policy.

Keywords: Camp David Accords, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Mediation, Middle East Peace Process, U.S. Foreign Policy.

List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

AIPAC	American Israel Public Affairs Committee
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (may appear in historical/geopolitical references)
EU	European Union
GOP	Grand Old Party (Republican Party, indirectly referred to under Bush/Trump)
HBO	Home Box Office (mentioned in context of media but not central to thesis theme)
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (contextual, not a major focus)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PA	Palestinian Authority
PBS	Public Broadcasting Service
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
U.S.	United States
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
USC	University of Southern California (in citations or film school references)

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Boundaries and demarcation lines, Jerusalem, Palestine question.....22

Figures 2.2: The expansion of Israeli settlements between the years 2000-2006.....39

Table of Contents

Dedication	I
Acknowledgements.....	II
Abstract	III
List of Abbreviations & Acronyms	IV
List of Figures	V
Table of Contents	VI
General Introduction	10

Chapter 1: The Camp David Accords and Early U.S.

Mediation

Introduction	8
1.1 Historical Background & American Interests.....	8
1.1.1 American participation in the establishment of Israel (1948).....	8
1.1.2 Geopolitics of the Cold War and Support for Israel	9
1.2 Key Peace Accords Prior to 2000	11
1.2.1 Camp David Accords (1978).....	11
1.2.2 Madrid Conference (1991).....	14
1.2.3 Oslo Accords (1993–1995).....	15

1.3 Successes & Failures17

1.3.1 Early negotiating successes.....17

1.3.2 Setbacks resulting in ongoing hostilities.....21

Conclusion.....23

Chapter 2: American Peace Efforts After 2000:

Obstacles and Setback

Introduction26

2.1 The United States' Reaction to the Second Intifada.....27

2.1.1 Clinton’s last attempt for peace (2000)27

2.1.2 The Roadmap for Peace and the Bush administration (2003)32

2.2.1 Obama's strategy (Israeli settlements, two-state solution).....36

2.2.2 American Policies Under Obama and Trump52

2.3 Regional Reactions & Diplomatic Failures44

2.3.1 Palestinian opposition to US-led talks45

2.3.2 Israel's changing political landscape affecting the prospects of peace.....47

Conclusion.....50

Chapter 3: Current and Future Prospects for U.S.

Mediation

Introduction	52
3.1 The Biden Administration's Strategy	52
3.1.1 Return to conventional diplomacy	55
3.1.2 Israel's normalization with Arab Countries (Extension of the Abraham Accords)	56
3.2 New Difficulties in Peace Negotiations	58
3.2.1 Regional Influence (Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE).....	58
3.2.2 Hamas, Fatah factions, and Palestinian internal conflicts	69
3.3 Prospective Situations and Suggestions for American Strategy.....	60
3.3.1The Role of International Organizations (the UN, EU).....	60
3.3.3 Possible changes to American foreign policy	61
Conclusion.....	62
General Conclusion	64
References	66
الملخص	68

General Introduction

1. Background of the Study:

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict defines the modern Middle Eastern geopolitical scene and is a constant challenge to world peace and security. Rooted in opposing historical narratives, searches for national self-determination, and irredentist territorial claims, this conflict has produced major worldwide diplomatic activity for almost seven decades. Since the middle of the 20th century, the United States of America has become a particularly powerful and consistent mediator in this convoluted diplomatic field. Far from monolithic, American involvement has been shaped by a complex interaction of perceived national interests—including strategic regional calculations during and after the Cold War, firmly anchored commitments to Israel's security, changing humanitarian paradigms, and the more general quest of global influence and regional stability. Comprehending the past mistakes and future possibilities of attaining a long-lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians depends on an awareness of the trajectory, motives, and influence of this continuous American participation.

2. Statement of the Problem:

Despite decades of U.S. diplomatic involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a just and lasting peace remains elusive. While successive American administrations have publicly committed to the two-state solution and supported negotiation frameworks, their approaches have often lacked consistency, neutrality, or tangible results. There is a clear contradiction between the declared intentions of the United States as a peace broker and the realities on the ground, where settlement expansion, political asymmetries, and unmet Palestinian demands persist.

This study seeks to examine how and why U.S. peace initiatives have failed to resolve the conflict's core issues. It investigates whether American mediation has been genuinely balanced or whether political alliances—especially with Israel—have hindered the possibility of an equitable outcome. The need to reassess the credibility and impact of U.S. diplomacy becomes more urgent in light of the ongoing stagnation and shifting regional dynamics.

3. Research Questions and Research Hypothesis

The following guiding central research questions direct this work:

- What are the major achievements and setbacks of U.S. mediation in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process since 1948?
- How have U.S. administrations from Bush to Biden differed in their approaches to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly in response to the Second Intifada and unresolved final-status issues (Jerusalem, settlements, borders, and security) and how have these approaches influenced the prospects for a lasting peace?
- To what extent has U.S. policy contributed to the stagnation or progression of negotiations?
- How have U.S. diplomatic efforts addressed Palestinian demands and aligned with international legal norms in the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

The following are the hypotheses suggested to answer each of the research questions presented above:

- U.S. mediation has produced limited and short-lived achievements, while long-term failures stem from a lack of sustained pressure on both parties and an imbalanced policy favoring Israel.

- Variations in U.S. administrations' policies reflect shifting domestic and strategic priorities, but most have failed to apply consistent pressure on Israel regarding final-status issues, thereby reducing the prospects for a lasting peace.
- U.S. policy has largely contributed to the stagnation of peace negotiations due to inconsistent engagement, lack of enforcement mechanisms, and prioritization of Israeli security over Palestinian statehood.
- U.S. diplomatic efforts have consistently fallen short in addressing core Palestinian demands and have often diverged from international legal standards, undermining its credibility as a neutral peace broker.

4. Aims of the study

Closely related aims of the study following the lines of the research questions, the main objectives of this project are: To examine closely the historical development of U.S. participation in negotiations on Israeli-Palestinian peace, spotting significant policy changes and their underlying reasons. Different U.S.-led diplomatic projects and peace plans should be assessed in terms of their efficacy by separating apparent successes from noteworthy failures and ongoing difficulties. To investigate how U.S. foreign policy choices affect the fundamental problems of the conflict as well as more general political dynamics between Israelis and Palestinians. To pinpoint and examine the recurring challenges—internal to the U.S. policy-making process and outside the regional setting—that have prevented the realization of a thorough peace. By providing insights into the U.S. experience, so helping to contribute to a sophisticated knowledge of the difficulties of international mediation and to subtly imply possible factors for future diplomatic initiatives.

5. Significance of the Study

Still a major focus of international relations and a major cause of regional unrest with worldwide consequences, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is as the most powerful outside actor in this conflict, the United States performs a role deserving of ongoing academic investigation. For many different reasons, this study is important. First of all, by offering a detailed study of one of the most ongoing and sophisticated mediation initiatives in modern history, it adds to the scholarly debate on international mediation and conflict resolution. Second, for students, scholars, and legislators trying to grasp the subtleties of American diplomacy in the Middle East, it provides a thorough historical overview and critical assessment of U.S. foreign policy in that area. Thirdly, the study seeks to offer lessons that might guide future U.S. and international approaches to this conflict and maybe other intractable conflicts by looking at both successes and more critically the setbacks and challenges.

At last, for a readership in Algeria and the wider Arab world, this dissertation presents an academically grounded view of a topic of great regional relevance, dissecting the actions and motivations of a major world power from a scholarly point of view.

6. Research Methodology

This study primarily employs a historical-analytical method, which is particularly well-suited for understanding the evolution of political strategies and peace mediation efforts. The nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—and the U.S. role in it—requires a method that not only reconstructs key historical events but also critically examines the motivations, shifts, and consequences of foreign policy decisions.

The historical method enables the researcher to trace the trajectory of U.S. mediation across different administrations and peace initiatives, from 1948 to the present. It also allows for

contextualizing each phase within broader international and regional developments. In parallel, analytical techniques are employed to identify recurring patterns, contradictions, and policy shifts over time.

Rather than simply summarizing existing literature or compiling events chronologically, the study engages in critical synthesis and interpretation. This involves comparing the official U.S. discourse with outcomes on the ground, analyzing the consistency of diplomatic strategies, and assessing how different peace plans addressed (or failed to address) core issues like settlements, Jerusalem, refugees, and borders.

The term “critical interpretation” in this context refers to evaluating U.S. peace efforts not at face value, but through a lens that questions underlying intentions, biases, and impacts. It also means contrasting declared objectives with actual diplomatic behavior, particularly in relation to international legal standards and human rights principles.

Primary and secondary sources are both utilized. These include U.S. government documents, presidential speeches, UN resolutions, historical treaties, policy papers, as well as peer-reviewed scholarly literature and expert analyses. Together, these sources support a qualitative understanding of American mediation strategies and their implications for peace and justice in the region.

7. Structure of the Study

This dissertation consists of three main chapters, in addition to a general introduction and a general conclusion. Chapter One, titled The Camp David Accords and Early U.S. Mediation, provides a historical overview of early American involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, covering key developments from the establishment of Israel in 1948 to the major peace initiatives

of the late twentieth century, such as the Camp David Accords, the Madrid Conference, and the Oslo Accords. Chapter Two, *American Peace Efforts After 2000: Obstacles and Setbacks*, analyzes U.S. engagement in the twenty-first century, focusing on the policies of the Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations, the response to the Second Intifada, and the significant diplomatic challenges encountered during this period. Chapter Three, *Current and Future Prospects for U.S. Mediation*, examines the recent efforts of the Biden administration, the ongoing difficulties in peace negotiations, and potential future directions for U.S. policy based on historical patterns and shifting regional dynamics. The structure of the study enables both chronological and thematic analysis of the U.S. role in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Chapter 1: The Camp David Accords and Early U.S. Mediation

Introduction

This chapter provides a historical overview of early U.S. engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, from the beginning with the founding of Israel in 1948 through the major peace initiatives of the late 20th century. Starting with the first decades of American engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In a world where the United States found itself juggling its own geopolitical interests, Cold War reality, and the aspirations and grievances of Israelis and Palestinians, its diplomacy grew central to the process. Early periods mark with central events covered in the chapter: the founding of Israel, the influence of Cold War politics, and significant peace initiatives including the Madrid conference (1991) the Camp David Accords (1978), and Oslo (1993–1995). And although it emphasizes triumphs such as bilateral peace pacts, it assesses fiascoes particularly regarding efforts to solve the Palestinian problem that sustain the present conflict. Ultimately the chapter examines America's ambiguous legacy in this era, weighing significant diplomatic achievements against the draw-backs of Cold War politics at home and abroad.

1.1 Historical Background & American Interests

1.1.1 American participation in the establishment of Israel (1948)

Established in 1948 in the last days of the British Mandate in Palestine and following World War II and the Holocaust, the State of Israel is Though internally conflicted, the United States was a major player in the diplomatic initiatives resulting in Israel's independence declaration. With Jerusalem designated as an internationally governed city (Contested Histories, n.d.; Sperling, 2024), a major turning point was the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of Resolution 181 on November 29, 1947, which suggested partitioning Mandatory Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish states. The Truman government actively

promoted the acceptance of the resolution, so attesting to a major step toward worldwide acceptance of the future Jewish state.

While the Truman administration played a decisive role in the early recognition of Israel, its internal deliberations reflected a deep divide. Key figures like Secretary of State George Marshall warned of the geopolitical risks of partitioning Palestine, citing potential alienation of Arab allies. On the other hand, advisors such as Clark Clifford advocated for recognition based on humanitarian grounds and domestic political factors (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005). This internal debate illustrates the complex interplay of moral imperatives and strategic interests that would shape future U.S. policy in the region (Khalidi, 2013).

In the end, Truman's decisions were shaped by a confluence of strategic perspective of Israel as a possible democratically, moral imperative following the Holocaust, and domestic political considerations (Chomsky, 1999; Miller, 2008). President Truman gave de facto recognition just moments after David Ben-Gurion announced the founding of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, so rendering the United States the first nation to do so. As the fledgling state battled invasion by surrounding Arab armies, this quick recognition provided vital political support and confirmed the impression of American backing from the start (Contested Histories, n.d.; Quandt, 2005). Although motivated by a complicated interaction of elements, this act of recognition signaled the start of a multifarious and sometimes complicated relationship that would become central to American diplomacy in the area.

1.1.2 Geopolitics of the Cold War and Support for Israel

The ideological and strategic rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union greatly shaped American support for Israel, particularly after it was founded. Although President Truman's acceptance of Israel in 1948 was motivated by several elements, the Arab-Israeli conflict was progressively shaped in

the bipolar dynamics of the Cold War in the next decades (Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008). The United States first aimed for a careful balance, trying to keep relations with newly formed Arab nationalist governments while honoring its obligations to Israel. But as important Arab countries like Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser and Ba'athist Syria developed closer political, economic, and military ties with Moscow, Israel's strategic relevance to the United States became rather clear (Quandt, 2005). Many times, this change was seen through the prism of containment as governments looked for regional allies to offset supposed Soviet expansionism (Sperling, 2024).

One important turning point was the 1967 Six-Day War. Washington's view of Israel's capacity and influence in the region was changed by its quick and forceful triumph against forces supported by Egypt, Syria, and Jordanian armies (Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008). Israel proved itself to be a strong military force able to forward its interests as well as maybe coincide with American strategic objectives in the area. This show of military might combined with the losses suffered by states with Soviet alignment enhanced the strategic alliance between the United States and Israel (Contested Histories, n.d.). Critics contend that this alignment frequently produced U.S. policies strongly favoring Israel, so presenting America less as an unbiased mediator and more as "Israel's lawyer," especially in negotiations involving Palestinian rights under international law (Chomsky, 1999; Khalidi, 2013; Miller, 2008). This point of view contends that occasionally attempts toward balanced diplomacy were subordinated to Cold War priorities (Khalidi, 2013).

Particularly following the Yom Kippur War in 1973, when it conducted a major airlift to resupply Israeli forces, this strategic alliance saw the U.S. greatly increase military and financial support to Israel (Quandt, 2005). This help was offered not only as support for a beleaguered state but also as an investment in a major ally able to share intelligence, challenge Soviet-aligned governments, and provide a stable democratic base in the area (Miller, 2008; Chomsky, 1999). But this increasing support for Israel

sometimes strained U.S. relations with strategically important, oil-producing Arab governments like Saudi Arabia, which opposed Israeli policies but stayed allied with the West (Quandt, 2005). Diplomatic challenges demanded careful maneuvering, such as supporting limited peace efforts like the Camp David Accords, which brought peace between Israel and Egypt—formerly a Soviet client—while leaving the Palestinian issue unresolved (Carter, 2006; Quandt, 2005.). According to some studies, among important players including the United States, military power frequently dominated over diplomatic solutions throughout this age (Pressman, 2020).

Although the Cold War gave U.S. support for Israel a strong justification, it also solidified the Arab-Israeli conflict inside the global superpower rivalry, so complicating efforts toward complete regional peace until the geopolitical changes brought about by the fall of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008).

1.2 Key Peace Accords Prior to 2000

1.2.1 Camp David Accords (1978)

A turning point in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Camp David Accords of 1978 also mark a major, if debatable, turning point in American diplomacy under President Jimmy Carter. Inspired by Egypt's President Anwar Sadat's historic 1977 visit to Jerusalem and by the Yom Kippur War's impasse, the accords emerged from thirteen demanding days of negotiations. Carter personally mediated these talks at the presidential retreat in Maryland (Carter, 2006; Quandt, 2005). Drafting proposals and traveling between the two leaders, Carter took an active, hands-on approach to close the significant differences between the originally strict positions of Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005). Reflecting his great personal commitment, he saw the search of peace as a moral obligation rather than only a strategic goal (Carter, 2006; Miller, 2008).



Figure 1.1: Boundaries and demarcation lines, Jerusalem, Palestine question

Two separate frameworks were signed when the negotiations ended on September 17, 1978. Originally titled "Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel," the first set the groundwork for the historic 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty. This agreement helped Israel to phase out from the Sinai Peninsula, establish full diplomatic ties between the two countries, and create security

protocols, so removing Egypt—then the biggest Arab military power—from direct confrontation with Israel (Carter, 2006; Quandt, 2005). Considered as the most concrete outcome of Camp David, this bilateral peace treaty changes the Middle Eastern strategic scene (Miller, 2008).

Drawing on UN Security Council Resolution 242, the second framework the "Framework for Peace in the Middle East"—addressed the Palestinian component of the conflict. It suggested a five-year transition whereby Israeli forces would leave and a "self-governing authority" would be created in the West Bank and Gaza by means of elections (Quandt, 2005; Carter, 2006). But this structure was vague and finally far less successful. Critics point out its offer of limited autonomy under continuous Israeli control, its neglect of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—acknowledged by the Arab League as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people from the negotiations, and its denial of Palestinian rights to self-determination or statehood (Chomsky, 1999; Khalidi, 2013). Further eroding confidence were variations in how Israeli settlement policies were interpreted; Carter thought Begin had agreed to a freeze during the autonomy negotiations, while Begin claimed the freeze limited the three months following Camp David and before the Egypt-Israel treaty was signed (Carter, 2006; Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008). This uncertainty combined with ongoing settlement building seriously eroded Palestinian confidence in the autonomy process (Contested Histories, n.d.; Chomsky, 1999).

Supported by large U.S. aid to both Egypt and Israel, Camp David marked a historic breakthrough in Egyptian-Israeli relations; yet, its influence on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains divisive. While some see it as a pragmatic advance, others attack it as a "separate peace" that ignored important Palestinian aspirations (Khalidi, 2013; Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005).

1.2.2 Madrid Conference (1991)

Driven by a special alignment of geopolitical conditions and significant American diplomatic activities, the Madrid Peace Conference in October 1991 marked a clear procedural change in Arab-Israeli diplomacy. Sponsored by the United States and the declining Soviet Union, the conference occurred soon after the Persian Gulf War of 1991 (Quandt, 2005). While American influence and credibility among important Arab governments that had allied with the U.S.-led coalition grew, the war changed regional dynamics and undermined the position of the PLO, which had sided with Iraq (Miller, 2008). Seizing this chance, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker used American influence to bring reluctant parties to the table by means of constant shuttle diplomacy (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005). The end of the Cold War further eliminated the superpower rivalry that had historically hampered peace initiatives, so improving the international environment for direct negotiations (Sperling, 2024).

The conference was carefully set up to negotiate ongoing political obstacles. Starting with a ceremonial plenary session in Madrid, it gathered officials from Israel, Syria, Lebanon, and most importantly a combined Jordanian-Palestinian delegation—their first public, direct interaction (Quandt, 2005). Baker came up with the joint delegation plan to allow Palestinian involvement while yet addressing Israel's long-standing refusal to negotiate directly with the PLO (Miller, 2008; Khalidi, 2013). Following this opening session, the process split into two tracks: bilateral negotiations between Israel and its neighbors (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan/ Palestinians) hosted in Washington D.C., and multilateral talks including regional and international stakeholders, concentrating on more general issues including arms control, water resources, refugees, and economic development (Quandt, 2005; Indyk, 2009).

The Madrid Conference's importance rested in its precedent-setting character even if it did not produce quick decisions or innovations. It broke the long-standing ban against direct, face-to-face negotiations between Israel and Arab countries, so opening important lines of communication (Miller,

2008; Quandt, 2005). Despite the restrictions of the joint delegation structure, the bilateral track opened official channels of contact, especially between Israel and the Palestinians. Critics contend that American compromises to Israeli objections about direct PLO involvement limited advancements on important Palestinian concerns and that the process gave procedural elements top priority over substantive progress (Khalidi, 2013; Chomsky, 1999). Although the official Washington bilateral negotiations produced few concrete outcomes, the Madrid Conference's opening is generally seen as crucial in allowing the secret backchannel talks between Israel and the PLO in Norway, leading to the Oslo Accords (Indyk, 2009; Quandt, 2005). Thus, Madrid stays a major turning point in the complicated history of Arab-Israeli peace attempts, mostly procedural, molded by American diplomacy.

1.2.3 Oslo Accords (1993–1995)

Designed by secret negotiations between Norwegian intermediaries, the Oslo Accords represented a sea change in the direction of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict between 1993 and 1995. These covert negotiations allowed Israeli officials to personally interact with members of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), outside the official post-Madrid negotiations and first outside American diplomatic control. Given Israel's long designation of the PLO as an illegal terrorist organization as well as the United States, this was revolutionary (Quandt, 2005; Indyk, 2009). The process resulted in the famously signed Declaration of Principles (DoP), at the White House in September 1993. The mutual respect between Israel and the PLO was its main achievement—a radical break from the ingrained non-recognition policies that had defined earlier years (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005). The DoP suggested a five-year transitional phase targeted at establishing temporary Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza, so leaving unresolved the fundamental final status questions including Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders, and security for future talks (Indyk, 2009; Khalidi, 2013). Originally taken aback by the success of the Norwegian channel, the Clinton government—especially President Clinton himself—quickly embraced

the breakthrough, using the United States' reputation to host the signing ceremony and pledging major political and financial support to maintain the process, which Clinton considered as an amazing opportunity (Miller, 2008; Indyk, 2009). This meant that the United States moved from being a possible facilitator imagined at Madrid to become the main mediator and keeper of the Oslo framework (Quandt, 2005).

Under the direction of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, the first phase of implementation consisted in the signing of the Gaza-Jericho Agreement in Cairo in May 1994, operationalizing the Dope by means of Israeli troop withdrawals and so creating the Palestinian Authority (PA). Next signed in September 1995, the more complex Interim Agreement, sometimes known as Oslo II. Oslo II formally divided the West Bank into Areas A, B, and C (Quandt, 2005; Indyk, 2009), so extending the administrative reach of the PA. Whereas Area B placed civil authority under the PA but kept shared Israeli-PA security control, Area A gave the PA complete control over civil and security issues in important Palestinian cities. Comprising more than 60% of the West Bank and housing military zones, Israeli colonies, and vital water aquifers, Area C stayed under exclusive Israeli control (Khalidi, 2013; *Contested Histories*, n.d.). Critics contend that rather than promoting true Palestinian sovereignty, this arrangement institutionalized Israeli dominance, resulting in fractured Palestinian enclaves surrounded by infrastructure controlled by Israel (Chomsky, 1999; Khalidi, 2013). While Oslo II helped the first Palestinian legislative elections in 1996, the PA's actual power remained limited and depended on Israeli cooperation for movement, trade, and security coordination; core issues were postponed to future negotiations (Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008). Some contend that this structural disparity ingrained a dynamic slanted in Israel's advantage from the beginning (Chomsky, 1999; Khalidi, 2013).

Though at first optimistic—symbolized by the Nobel Peace Prizes given in 1994—the Oslo framework soon encountered major obstacles that finally reduced its efficiency. Many analysts pointed

out as a major problem the lack of a freeze on the growth of Israeli settlement in occupied territories during the interim phase (Miller, 2008; Khalidi, 2013). Palestinians saw ongoing settlement expansion—especially around East Jerusalem and inside Area C—as evidence of Israeli insincerity and an attempt to predetermine final status negotiations about borders (Contested Histories, n.d.; Chomsky, 1999). This increased mistrust and drove Palestinian society's opposition to the accords. A tsunami of extreme violence simultaneously seriously disrupted the process. Especially, the Hebron massacre in February 1994—in which an Israeli settler, Baruch Goldstein, killed 29 Palestinian worshippers—and later retaliatory suicide bombings mostly directed by Hamas generated cycles of violence and fear that undermined public support for peace on both sides (Quandt, 2005; Indyk, 2009; Pressman, 2020). The process suffered greatly when an extreme opponent of Oslo killed Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995, eliminating the leader most closely linked to the peace effort and driving Israeli politics farther to the right (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005). The agreements' ambiguities, unresolved core issues, continuous settlement expansion, and destabilizing effect of violence left the Oslo process buried in mistrust and fragmentation, setting the stage for the troubled final status talks that would follow (Khalidi, 2013; Miller, 2008; Indyk, 2009). Deeply involved in the process, the U.S. progressively found itself mediating crises instead of guiding the area toward a permanent and comprehensive resolution as tensions grew (Indyk, 2009).

1.3 Successes & Failures

1.3.1 Early negotiating successes

Though the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is generally intractable, the years 1948 to 2000 saw several notable, if usually inadequate, negotiating successes driven mostly by strong American diplomatic intervention. Agreements on disengagement negotiated by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger following the Yom Kippur War of 1973 were among the first clear victories the United States helped to bring about. By constant shuttle diplomacy, Kissinger landed agreements between Israel and Egypt (Sinai I in 1974

and Sinai II in 1975) and between Israel and Syria (Golan Heights Disengagement Agreement in 1974) and between Israel and Egypt (Sinai I in 1974 and Sinai II in 1975). These agreements effectively de-escalated military tensions, created buffer zones watched by UN forces, and showed the possibility for U.S. mediation to turn battlefield stalemates into tangible, if modest, diplomatic advancement (Quandt, 2005). But personally brokered by President Jimmy Carter, the most revered and maybe most significant early success was the Camp David Accords of 1978. This directly led to the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, a historic accomplishment that resulted in Israel's total withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula, Israel's complete change in the regional strategic scene, and the establishment of normalized relations, so transforming the regional strategic scene (Carter, 2006; Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008). Supported for decades, this treaty is evidence of the possibility for focused, high-level U.S. mediation to produce historic breakthroughs even between firmly rooted enemies (Miller, 2008; Carter, 2006).

With the Madrid Conference in 1991 and the later Oslo Accords, the diplomatic scene saw even more political and procedural triumphs. Under Secretary of State James Baker's direction in the particular geopolitical setting following the end of the Cold War and the Gulf War, the Madrid Conference accomplished the unheard-of success in bringing Israeli, Syrian, Lebanese, and joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegations together for direct, public peace talks for the first time (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005). Madrid unquestionably broke long-standing taboos against direct engagement and established the crucial bilateral and multilateral negotiating paths that would shape diplomacy for the next decade, while criticized by some for prioritizing process over substance and for adhering to Israeli conditions regarding Palestinian representation (Khalidi, 2013). Building on Madrid's political opening, the 1993 Oslo Accords—the mutual recognition between the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—marked still another major triumph (Indyk, 2009; Quandt, 2005). This was a historic political revolution, apparently changing the basic parameters of the conflict and opening the path for the founding of the

Palestinian Authority, so giving Palestinians a real, if limited, measure of self-governance for the first time (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005). The first wave of hope accompanying Oslo highlighted its view, at the time, as a major negotiating triumph, highly approved and supported by the Clinton administration (Indyk, 2009).

Beyond these significant anniversaries, the era also witnessed other notable diplomatic successes. Signed in 1994, the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty settled long-standing border conflicts, handled water sharing concerns, and helped to normalize relations between the two neighbors (Indyk, 2009). The good environment created by the continuous Oslo process greatly helped this success as well as quiet American encouragement and support (Quandt, 2005; Indyk, 2009). Taken together, these several agreements and innovations—from the post-1973 disengagements, through the transforming Egypt-Israel treaty and the Israel-Jordan treaty, to the procedural advances of Madrid and the political sea-change of mutual recognition attained via Oslo—constitute the key early negotiating successes within the timeframe of this chapter. Though none reached a complete resolution, especially on the core Israeli-Palestinian issues which often faced setbacks (as discussed in the next section), they showed that diplomacy, often underwritten by major U.S. political and economic capital, could yield significant results, lower hostilities, and fundamentally change relationships between former enemies (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005; Carter, 2006; Indyk, 2009). These achievements, however, usually came bilaterally or focused on particular disengagement problems, leaving the central Palestinian question as a recurring, unresolved problem (Khalidi, 2013; Chomsky, 1999).

From 1948 to 2000, the history of Arab-Israeli peace efforts is much defined by noteworthy negotiating benchmarks, major defeats, unresolved issues, and failures that routinely fanned conflict and inhibited forward development towards a long-lasting solution. After the UN Partition Plan was rejected and partially carried out, Israel's formation took place within the bloodshed of the 1948 war, displacing

hundreds of thousands of Palestinians—a tragedy remembered as the Nakba. This episode became a basic grievance that successive diplomatic efforts mostly failed to significantly resolve (Contested Histories, n.d.; Khalidi, 2013). Although direct hostilities were ending, the 1949 armistice accords fell short of creating permanent peace treaties, leaving disputed borders that contributed to decades of sporadic violence, cross-border conflicts, and full-scale wars in 1956, 1967, and 1973 (Quandt, 2005; Pressman, 2020). Even the venerable Camp David Accords had major problems, particularly the delayed "Framework for Peace in the Middle East," supposed to address the Palestinian issue. Its implementation was impeded and promised autonomy was unmet by different interpretations, especially on Israeli settlement practices and the exclusion of the PLO, hence intensifying Palestinian resentment (Carter, 2006; Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008; Chomsky, 1999). This failure established the scene for the events that at last set off the First Intifada (Contested Histories, n.d.).

The First Intifada (1987–1993) emphasized the disparity between high-level diplomatic attempts and the real conditions Palestinians under occupation suffer (Quandt, 2005; Contested Histories, n.d.). It was a generally peaceful grassroots rebellion against Israeli occupation. Though the second Madrid Conference marked the beginning of direct negotiations, its complex structure and inability to transfer procedural reforms into practical advantages infuriated and mistrustful people notably among Palestinians (Miller, 2008; Khalidi, 2013). Though originally hopeful, the Oslo Accords revealed structural flaws that proved main obstacles. Deferred basic issues including Jerusalem, refugees, borders, and settlements let these contentious subjects become even more embedded and complex (Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008). Moreover, clearly observed by Palestinians and foreign visitors as a breach of the spirit—if not the letter—of the agreements is the continuous growth of Israeli settlements during the Oslo years, particularly in Area C, which stayed under Israeli authority. This ongoing settlement activity was clearly perceived to substantially impede a workable two-state solution (Khalidi, 2013; Chomsky, 1999; Indyk, 2009;

Contested Histories, n.d.). The impossibility to stop the expansion of settlement turned into a frequent source of discontent and despair.

The Oslo process itself was plagued by devastating setbacks that raised tensions and eroded confidence. Extremist violence aimed at undermining the peace efforts—including suicide bombings by Hamas and other Palestinian factions targeting Israeli citizens, as well as events like the Hebron massacre carried out by an Israeli settler—fueled an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, so magnifying the impact of hardliners on both sides (Quandt, 2005; Indyk, 2009; Pressman, 2020). Eliminating a significant participant dedicated to the peace process and altering Israel's political landscape towards less Oslo-aligned leadership, the murder of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by an accords opponent in November 1995 inflicted a grievous blow (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005; Indyk, 2009). Missed implementation dates, delayed or limited Israeli force redeployments, and stagnate economic situations for many Palestinians all further erode faith in the process (Khalidi, 2013; Miller, 2008). Moreover, the unwillingness of American mediators to hold both parties totally accountable—particularly with regard to the spread of Israeli settlement—fanned public cynicism. These combined losses created a volatile environment that led to the fall-off in the Camp David II negotiations in July 2000 and the beginning of the far more violent Second Intifada later that year, so ending this chapter of peace efforts (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005; Khalidi, 2013).

1.3.2 Setbacks resulting in ongoing hostilities

Though there are notable negotiating benchmarks, major setbacks, unresolved issues, and failures that regularly stoked conflict and hampered forward movement toward a permanent peace profoundly shapes the history of Arab

-Israeli peace efforts from 1948 to 2000. Israel's founding occurred among the carnage of the 1948 war, displacing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians—a tragedy known as the Nakba—after the UN Partition Plan was rejected and partially executed. This incident turned into a basic grievance that later diplomatic initiatives mainly failed to meaningfully address (Contested Histories, n.d.; Khalidi, 2013). While ending direct hostilities, the 1949 armistice agreements failed to develop into permanent peace treaties, leaving disputed borders that helped to cause decades of intermittent violence, cross-border conflicts, and full-scale wars in 1956, 1967, and 1973 (Quandt, 2005; Pressman, 2020). Even the historic Camp David Accords had serious flaws, especially the delayed "Framework for Peace in the Middle East," meant to handle the Palestinian problem. Different interpretations, particularly on Israeli settlement policies and the exclusion of the PLO, hampered its implementation and left promised autonomy unmet, so aggravating Palestinian discontent (Carter, 2006; Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008; Chomsky, 1999). This failure prepared the ground for the circumstances that finally set off the First Intifada (Contested Histories, n.d.).

A mostly nonviolent grassroots revolt against Israeli occupation, the First Intifada (1987–1993) highlighted the discrepancy between high-level diplomatic efforts and the actual conditions Palestinians under occupation experience (Quandt, 2005; Contested Histories, n.d.). Though the next Madrid Conference signaled the start of direct negotiations, its convoluted framework and failure to translate procedural changes into real-world benefits caused frustration and mistrust especially among Palestinians (Miller, 2008; Khalidi, 2013). Though at first optimistic, the Oslo Accords exposed structural weaknesses that became major challenges. Deferred core concerns including Jerusalem, refugees, borders, and settlements let these divisive topics become even more ingrained and complicated (Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008). Furthermore, widely seen by Palestinians and foreign observers as a breach of the spirit—if not the letter—of the agreements, is the ongoing expansion of Israeli settlements during the Oslo years, especially

in Area C, which remained under Israeli control. A viable two-state solution was seen to be seriously hampered by this continuous settlement activity (Khalidi, 2013; Chomsky, 1999; Indyk, 2009; *Contested Histories*, n.d.). The impossibility to stop the spread of settlement grew to be a regular cause of conflict and disappointment.

Devastating losses that heightened tensions and undermined confidence marked the Oslo process itself. Extremist violence targeted at defraying the peace efforts—including suicide bombings by Hamas and other Palestinian factions targeting Israeli civilians, as well as events like the Hebron massacre perpetrated by an Israeli settler—fueled an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, so amplifying the impact of hardliners on both sides (Quandt, 2005; Indyk, 2009; Pressman, 2020). Removing a major player committed to the peace process and changing Israel's political environment toward less Oslo-aligned leadership, the murder of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by an accords opponent in November 1995 dealt a terrible blow (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005; Indyk, 2009). Further erasing confidence in the process were missed implementation deadlines, delayed or limited Israeli troop redeployments, and stagnant economic conditions for many Palestinians (Khalidi, 2013; Miller, 2008). Furthermore, the inability of American mediators to hold both sides entirely responsible—especially with relation to the expansion of Israeli settlement—fanned general cynicism. These combined losses produced a volatile environment that resulted in the fall-off in the Camp David II negotiations in July 2000 and the start of the far more violent Second Intifada later that year, so ending this chapter of peace initiatives (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005; Khalidi, 2013).

Conclusion

From 1948 to 2000, the United States established itself as a major but nuanced participant in Arab-Israeli peacemaking. First swayed by Cold War geopolitics, Washington saw Israel as a strategic tool

countering Soviet influence. Landmark successes including the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty from the Camp David Accords and the procedural innovations of the Madrid Conference underlined U.S. diplomatic power. With mutual respect between Israel and the PLO and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, the Oslo Accords also signalled important advancement. Still, the era was rife with difficult problems including political violence, Israeli settlement growth, and unresolved fundamental concerns including Palestinian autonomy. Notwithstanding achievements in state-to-state agreements, the U.S. struggled to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, so leaving a mixed legacy that affected next peace initiatives.

Chapter 2: American Peace Efforts After 2000: Obstacles and Setback

Introduction

Following the dawn of the new millennium, the United States continued its long-standing involvement in attempting to broker peace between Israel and the Palestinians, a central tenet of its Middle East policy. The US administrations have engaged themselves more in diplomatic efforts especially since "The 1967 Six-Day War" with efforts such as the step-by-step diplomacy launched by Kissinger after "The war of 1973", "the 1978-1979 Camp David Accords" and the resulting peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, and "The 1991 Madrid Conference"." The Oslo peace process" in the 1990s, while brokered by Norway, also enjoyed firm American support and endorsement.

The period after 2000 was marked by a series of significant obstacles and diplomatic setbacks, that further entrenched the conflict, underscoring the profound difficulties inherent in resolving this deeply rooted and multifaceted issue .Yet the failure of the Camp David II summit in July 2000 and the ignition of the Second Palestinian Intifada in September of that year ushered in a new and challenging era for American peace-making efforts. since the years post-2000 were characterized by dramatic geopolitical transformation, most dramatically the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, which rebalanced American foreign policy interests toward counter-terrorism and regional security in its broadest sense. Regional tensions continued, punctuated by cycles of violence and fluid politics both in Israel and in the Palestinian territories, most prominently the rise of Hamas. American domestic politics, including electoral cycles and various presidential styles, also made the consistency and level of American engagement more complicated.

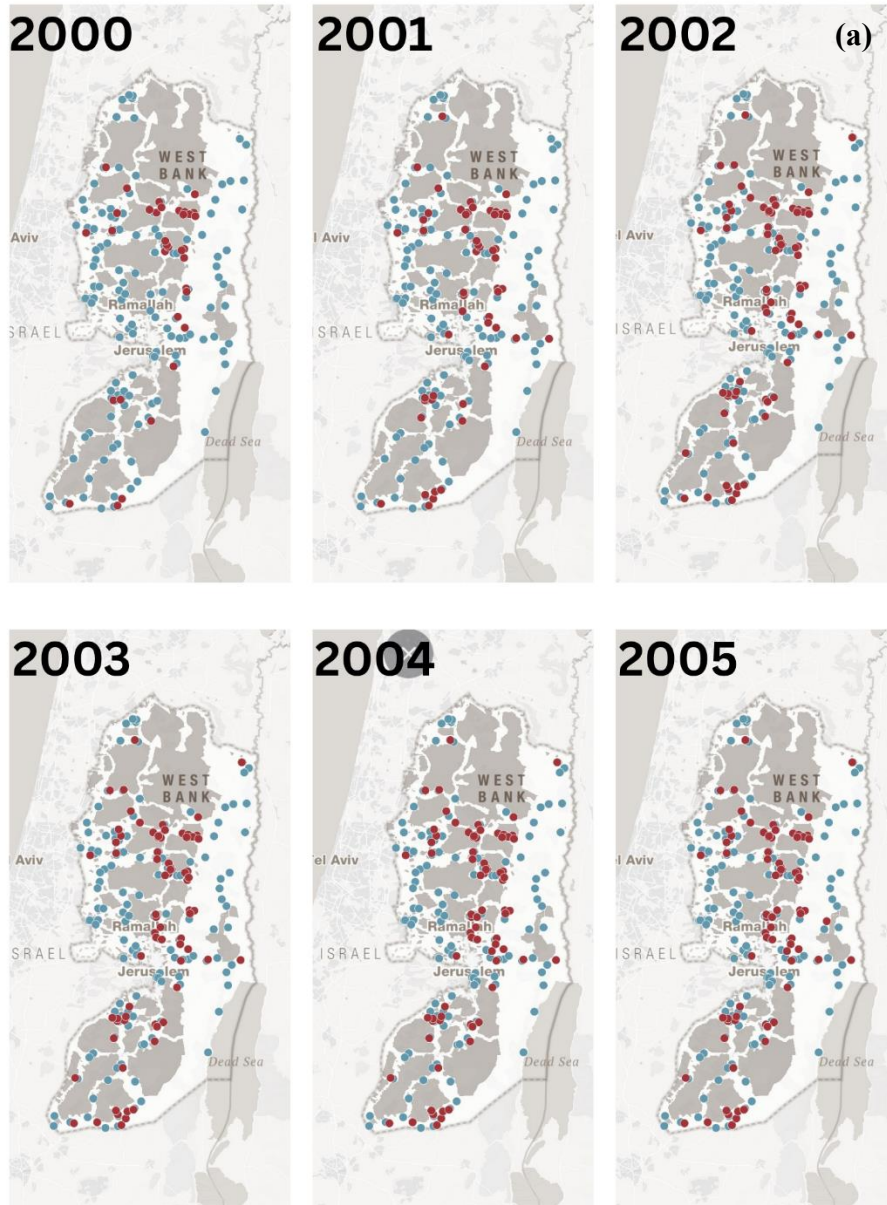
This chapter considers United States peace-making challenges and setbacks in the post-2000 era between Israel and Palestine. It will consider failed diplomatic initiatives, exploring why they failed and the implications they have had for the prospects for peace.

The chapter will also consider American policy shifts with changing administrations, evaluating their success at being attuned to the essentials of the conflict. Furthermore, it will analyze regional reactions to the American initiatives and the role of other global actors. Lastly, the chapter aims to illuminate the persistent issues that have continued to hamper progress towards a lasting and comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, contributing to the overall understanding of the difficulties of the United States' role as a lead mediator.

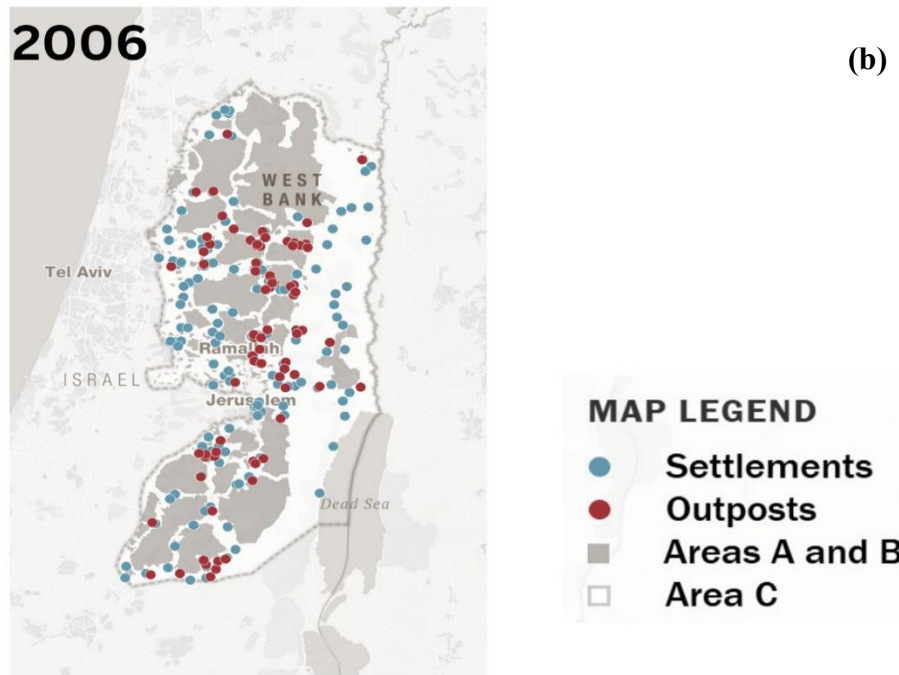
2.1 The United States' Reaction to the Second Intifada

2.1.1 Clinton's last attempt for peace (2000)

The year 2000 marked a watershed moment in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, characterized by President Bill Clinton's final effort to achieve a comprehensive agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Building on nearly eight years of U.S. involvement and the stimulus generated by the Oslo Accords, the Clinton administration initially concentrated on the Israeli-Syrian track. The 1999 Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's election revived hopes of progress, and by early 2000, a draft Israel-Syria treaty was allegedly being negotiated. Nevertheless, the initiative collapsed following the failed Clinton–Assad Geneva summit in March 2000 (Quandt, 2005). Despite assertions of only limited differences between the two sides, the talks broke down, shifting the administration's priority attention to the more vital and protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Miller, 2008).



The expansion of Israeli settlements between the years 2000-2006



The expansion of Israeli settlements between the years 2000-2006

Figures 2.2: The expansion of Israeli settlements between the years 2000-2006

In July 2000, President Clinton convened a high-stakes summit at "Camp David "of high stakes between Palestinian and Israeli delegations headed by Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat, in hopes of a breakthrough (Eisenberg & Caplan, 2010) (CHAPTER9:Camp David II and the Second Intifada). This Camp David II attempted to bridge the big gaps remaining between Israeli and Palestinian positions on issues of permanent status such as Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees' right of return, independence and borders for Palestine, settlements for Israel, and security (Eisenberg & Caplan, 2010). The use of the term "Camp David" itself evoked the successful precedent of the 1978 Carter-Begin-Sadat breakthrough. Clinton had even read William B. Quandt's book on the first Camp David summit as part of his preparation (Eisenberg & Caplan, 2010). But again, as was the case in the first Camp David summit, the agenda of Camp David II was much more contentious

(Eisenberg & Caplan, 2010). Where Egypt and Israel were able to translate the 1978, "Framework for Egyptian-Israeli Peace" into a bilateral treaty, the "Framework for Peace in the Middle East," for the Palestinian issues, was still unrealized. Some analysts have taken Clinton to task because he was too soft since Israelis and Palestinians lacked an even-sided power relationship (Eisenberg & Caplan, 2010) (conclusion peace as a process / 269). Ross, who had wished to postpone the summit, believed that it was necessary to present an American draft text, a tactic used at the initial Camp David (Quandt, 2005). However, the proposed American draft was strongly objected to by Barak, and so Clinton did not proceed. Instead, a draft titled "Israeli-Palestinian Framework Agreement on Permanent Status" was drawn up, which outlined both parties' positions (Quandt, 2005).

Ultimately, the July 2000 Camp David summit broke down without a breakthrough (Eisenberg & Caplan, 2010). Clinton himself had, as reports went, told Arafat, "'Mr. Chairman,' I replied, 'I am not a great man. I am a failure, and you have made me one'". Despite the breakdown, Palestinian-Israeli negotiations continued in various locations for the final six months of Clinton's term (Eisenberg & Caplan, 2010).

As soon as Camp David II concluded, there was a major incident occurred: the outbreak of the second Palestinian Intifada in September 2000. This involved Palestinian-Israeli confrontations that were violent in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza. The second Intifada began on 29 September 2000, shortly after a garden meeting between Arafat and Barak. Yesterday, Likud chairman Ariel Sharon's visit to Jerusalem's Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, accompanied by a massive group of Israeli police, it is broadly seen as the spark that set it all off. Palestinians interpreted this as a demonstration of determination to retain all of Jerusalem within Israeli control. Enraged Palestinians later rioted at the al-Aqsa and Dome of the Rock mosques, opening fights

with Israeli police and widespread violent demonstrations. Israeli soldiers repelled it with live ammunition (Eisenberg & Caplan, 2010).

The second Intifada ended the Oslo process with an absolute conclusion. It convinced most Israelis that there was not a peace partner. The violence eclipsed Israeli and Palestinian delegations' negotiations in "Tel Aviv, Jerusalem", "Washington", and "Taba, Egypt", between July 2000 and January 2001 (Pressman, 2020). The second Intifada lasted from 2000 to 2005, adversely impacted the Palestinians to a great degree, worsening day-to-day life and rendering self-determination less likely. Despite Israel having withdrawn its settlements from Gaza, it continued to tightly govern Gaza's borders. The overall impact of the second Intifada is seen as a defeat for the Palestinian movement. There are assertions that an unarmed movement for protest would have been more effective in advancing Palestinian interests, with comparison to the comparatively less violent first Intifada (Pressman, 2020).

Following the breakdown at Camp David and follow-up negotiations at Taba in January 2001, the outbreak of the Second Palestinian Intifada in September 2000 was a significant reversal, shattering the fragile momentum of the Oslo years and plunging the region into fresh strife. Likud party chairman Ariel Sharon's visit to Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, a highly inflammatory religious site, was the main instigator, provoking mass Palestinian rioting and confrontation with Israeli troops, and second catalyst. Each side advanced competing explanations for how the violence occurred, as Israelis accused Arafat of commanding it to occur, and Palestinians averred that it had been spontaneous, all the frustrations of years finally coming to a boil. Regardless of the immediate cause, the Intifada revealed the underlying anger and the failure of the peace process to deliver any tangible benefits to the Palestinian people.

Once Clinton left, the new Bush administration-maintained distance from direct involvement in the peace process (Eisenberg & Caplan, 2010). The new administration, especially after 9/11, had priorities in the area other than peacemaking (Quandt, 2005). Some commentators blame Arafat for letting diplomacy collapse during Clinton's last days in office (Quandt, 2005). The Bush administration viewed the Arab-Israeli conflict as less important to American interests than had the Clinton administration (Miller, 2008). The Roadmap, which followed later, in 2003, was designed to revive the peace process but had a utopian timeline (Quandt, 2005).

2.1.2 The Roadmap for Peace and the Bush administration (2003)

The election of George W. Bush as US President in January 2001 introduced a change in American policy. The Bush administration initially showed less overt involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Dennis, 2005), especially after accusing Arafat of the failure of the Clinton-era initiative (Miller, 2008). Nevertheless, the mounting violence of the Second Intifada and the wider implications for regional stability ultimately led to renewed, if cautious, American intervention. His administration had an early strategy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict that contrasted with his predecessor, Bill Clinton, and was characterized by a decision to disengage. The term "peace process" was even avoided during the administration's early stages. In 2003 the Bush Administration, European Union, Russia and United Nations began the Roadmap to Peace. His administration has articulated an early vision for U.S. policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict named in contrast to the dovish administration of Bill Clinton and was marked by an explicit intention to abandon. Even the process of "peace" was not used during the administration at its outset. Bush in 2001 casually mused "two states -- Palestine and Israel... living side by side" stabilizing the Arab-Israeli conflict during his early presidency. President Saddam Hussein left no doubt in his most informal of comments on this subject when Secretary of State Colin Powell

announced, on 19th November 2001 that this new American policy was enunciated as a result of the two-state formula. Finally, evidence of the shift in this policy arose on 12 March 2002 when the US voted to adopt UN Security Council Resolution 1397, which specifically recognized the coexistence of two states, Israel and Palestine in a peaceful manner. The resolution referred past UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338 but made some of their ambiguities explicit by stating support for a Palestinian state. (Eisenberg and Neil Caplan, 2010)

President Bush set the stage for this with a speech on June 24, 2002, where he enunciated his two-state vision conditional upon a new, democratic Palestinian leadership (Eisenberg and Neil Caplan, 2010). A few saw it as an Arab-Israeli ceasefire speech until the war in Iraq was over. This vision however was followed up by the Roadmap for a Solution of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (Miller, 2005).

The Quartet subsequently proposed "Performance-Based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-State Solution" on 23 July 2005 two days following Bush's 24 June statement. Initially the Bush administration had been slower to treat UN, Europeans and Russians as third parties on a par. However, after a few iterations, the final version of Roadmap was published on 30 April 2003 (Eisenberg and Neil Caplan, 2010).

The roadmap was based upon the foundations of Madrid Conference, The land for peace principle, Art. 242, 338 & 1397 UNSCRs [15], and Previous agreements by the parties.

A Saudi Crown Prince Abdallah initiative (endorsed by the Beirut Arab League Summit), urging an acceptance for Israel as a neighbouring State willing to live in peace and security within the framework of a comprehensive settlement This was seen as a critical input into international efforts to advance comprehensive peace on all tracks, especially the Syria-Israel and Lebanon-

Israel tracks (Eisenberg and Neil Caplan, 2010). That part of the reception of Roadmap can be described as the "yes, but" dynamic. The Palestinians (formally) but with a large number of express reservations. Neither side demonstrated any confidence in the other to actually live up to its obligations and neither was willing to offer any degree of good faith.

Under the observation of others, the Bush administration (which was spending much time and energy in Iraq) either failed to note or cared little that an internecine battle for power between Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Chairman Yasser Arafat made both parties reluctant to move quickly in implementing the Roadmap.

It is Roadmap reformulated, was never engaged in intensive manner with either side by Bush administration (Miller, 2005). Aaron David Miller describes the most authentic catalyst for the creation of the Roadmap as actually coming out of the Arabs, king Abdullah from Jordan. Israeli Foreign Minister, Marwan Muasher earlier (2002) met with an action plan with US officials. He was later scheduled, in July 2002 for instance together with Egyptian/Saudi foreign devise to meet with President Bush who sounded open to something downrange. Within the beginning of August, the King visited Bush for a deal on any action (if not exactly knee-deep, then definitely on top). When asked at first, President Bush basically poo-pooed the king's idea he has "given this nation the vision. Nonetheless, when the Jordanians clarified they wanted a specific roadmap of making Bush's vision happen, by a process President George W. Bush was more willing to listening to creating the Roadmap exercise. Although stillborn, Miller writes that it was a regular affair. According to one story, President Bush was persuaded by his friend Tony Blair to believe the Roadmap would do both in the case of Iraq; it was then officially proclaimed 'the document to unravel need variations of a not quite comic form. Originally Bush was hoping to travel into the Middle East for an official introduction of the roadmap, meeting foreign Arab leaders in Egypt and

the newly elected Prime Minister of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and subsequently attending a summit in Jordan with both its Israeli and Palestinian Prime Ministers (Miller, 2005). After Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) became first Palestinian Prime Minister in April 2003. Same month, the Quartet (U.S.-Russia-UN-EU) formally released "Roadmap" peace initiative. Sharon and Abu Mazen met for a meeting in Aqaba, Jordan in June 2003 (Eisenberg, 2010). There Bush is said to have made his mark in Jordan inscribing a strong resolve to Sharon: "I've taken a lot of shit for calling you a man of peace. We've got to find a way to move ahead". However; this meeting did not translate into substantive advancement like the post-first gulf war diplomacy (Miller, 2005).

The Roadmap promised a three-part timeline that most viewed as immediately unattainable. The first phase of this process was to last until a ceasefire and an end of new Israeli settlement activity. It added that as security improves the IDF is supposed to gradually cede areas that have been occupied since September 28, 2000 and the peace becomes applicable to that prior time. The redeployment of Palestinian security forces from the areas vacated by the IDF will go into effect. Phase 2, which would be the interim phase, was to consist of an international conference to set the objective of a Palestinian state and hasten construction of the Palestinian Authority institutions. Palestinian elections were set for late 2003 and a foresight of a state with provisional borders and attributes of sovereignty. It was expected to be Phase three, 2004-05 in a final agreement between the fledgling state and Israel (Quandt, 2005). Within hours of its publication, the roadmap started to falter as a result of the necessary ceasefire not being enacted. Palestinian Extremists wanted it to collapse and Abu Mazen had nothing to gain by working with them. Israeli Hardliners kept Sharon on a tight leash in the face of continued Palestinian terrorist threats. An Israeli assassination attempts on a Hamas leader in June attacked AMB with rare Bush criticism 15 Israelis were killed by bomb in Jerusalem center a few days later the Palestinian security forces were Mickey Mouse

and shattered from within. Bush realized the following day that he could not blame Israel for “deal harshly” its position on Hamas, amidst efforts to broker a truce of Palestinian factions. In parallel, Israel was wary (Quandt, 2005). The Roadmap was widely perceived to be dead by late 2003. The Geneva Accord unofficial Palestinian and Israeli nationalist negotiators were made public in October 2003 The UNSC Resolution 1515 of November 2003 backed the roadmap and hence there was no two-state solution (Eisenberg, 2010). However, symbolically and despite these legitimations, the implementation of the roadmap remained frozen.

In a speech to the National Endowment, for Democracy in November 2003, Bush said that he wanted to encouraging Palestinian reform and solidifying the dichotomy vision of two democratic states, side by side in peace (Quandt, 2005). Still by the end of this year, it seemed clear that the Roadmap was dead though not on Bush's watch, due to a lack of real dialogue from all sides and the brutal violence in the interim. Analysts also noted that the Bush administration was being bogged down largely in Iraq and was not devoting the necessary attention or resources to moving the Arab-Israeli peace process forward through the roadmap. (Miller, 2008).

2.2 American Policies Under Obama and Trump

2.2.1 Obama's strategy (Israeli settlements, two-state solution)

Prior to his presidency, Barack Obama's public involvement in Palestinian-Israeli affairs was limited, based largely on his 2004 United States Senate election campaign. His political career was confined mainly to the United States domestic arena. During the period from approximately 2003 until his election in November 2008, his publicly stated opinions showed a high level of consistency, frequently based on an Israel-centered narrative. In June 2008, after securing the

Democratic Party presidential nomination, his AIPAC speech recycled motifs of the "*Israeli playbook*" (Khalidi, 2014).

2.2.1.1 Early Hopes and Initial Approach (2009)

Upon entering the White House in 2009, President Barack Obama was seen as having a more nuanced understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian issue and greater confidence in his ability to resolve the conflict than his predecessors. As an Illinois state senator, He grew into empathy with the Palestinian-American community and its story instigated from what he knew he was wrong on US policy and wanted fair. On the campaign trail, however, he appeared ready to sacrifice these criticisms for the presidency, including calling for Jerusalem to be the undivided capital of Israel and condemning on BDS at an AIPAC in 2008; unabashedly; Nevertheless, early in his presidency, Obama began to signal an intention to take a more concerted and balanced approach to peace-making. Nevertheless, less than few weeks after taking the office, he vowed to actively and aggressively seek lasting peace and appointed former Senator George Mitchell as Special Envoy for Middle East Peace. Mitchell's selection, as an Arab-American who had authored a report calling for Israel to freeze its illegal settlements, inspired hope among Palestinians that the pro-Israel bias of previous administrations would change (Ruebner,2016). In his speech of June 4, 2009 at Cairo University, Egypt, President Obama stated that "*the suffering of the Palestinian people is intolerable*" and he declared that America would not abandon the Palestinian quest for dignity, opportunity and hope in their own state. Obama made it quite plain to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas that "the establishment of a Palestinian state is a personal necessity for me" and assured him that they would "get to the two-state solution" in short order (Ruebner, 2016). He reiterated U.S. policy that the Palestinian people would have their own state on terms of an independent Palestinian entity within the borders of, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip under "land

for peace" as called in UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338. The only answer, he said: was two states: One for Israelis to live in peace and security, and one for Palestinians to live in peace and security. He said he would stand by it with patience and resolve. He also noted that Hamas had a short-term base among Palestinians, but only because they agree to the "Quartet Principles": cessation of violence, commitment to previous agreements, and recognition of Israel's right to exist. Some observers believed he wanted to set markers for evaluating the parties' readiness for negotiations before presenting a framework (Zanotti, 2010).

2.2.1.2 Prioritizing Settlements and the Initial Negotiations (2009–2010)

Under the Roadmap, settlement freeze became one of the pillar that Obama administration built its approach around to revive peace process. There was U.S./Israeli public controversy over settlement freeze legitimacy this summer and into fall 2009. The administration was unable to broker an Israeli freeze on settlement construction or an agreement by key Arab states to move more rapidly in normalizing relations with Israel (Zanotti, 2010).

On September 2009, Obama convened a trilateral meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and PLO Chairman Mahmoud Abbas in New York. At the meeting, he indicated that final-status negotiations should not be delayed further, despite the lack of resolution on preliminary issues such as the possible freeze of Israeli settlement building or gradual normalisation by Arab states. However, he nevertheless reaffirmed the importance of "real action" on restraining settlement activity. He reportedly laid out a vision for negotiations that the ultimate territorial outcome would almost certainly be found within the 1967 borders (Zanotti, 2010). The administration also encouraged Arab nations to proceed toward systematic normalisation of their relations with Israel, suggesting steps such as permitting civilian aircraft over-flight rights, establishing commercial ties, and making other low-level contacts. Some small Gulf Arab and

North African states were reportedly willing in summer 2009 to renew ties if Israel implemented a settlement freeze, but other Arab states, like Saudi Arabia, insisted that the focus must be on the final settlement outlined in the Arab Peace Initiative. This debate over normalisation and settlements risked overshadowing the goal of resuming final-status negotiations and draining political capital (Zanotti, 2010). In a December 2009 "non-paper" presenting ideas for a negotiation framework, the administration defined the goal as reconciling the Palestinian goal of an independent and viable state based on the 1967 lines, with agreed swaps, and the Israeli goal of a Jewish state with secure and recognised borders. This formulation-implied equivalency between the two sides, which the Palestinian negotiating team found aggrieved, arguing it misrepresented the situation of an occupying power imposing policies on the other side.

Despite knowing the Palestinians' deep misgivings, Mitchell pushed ahead with a short-lived round of negotiations in September 2010. These talks collapsed quickly, opening just weeks before Israel's temporary settlement moratorium expired. Mitchell publicly stated that negotiations should be "without preconditions" and jettisoned UN resolutions and international law as bases for negotiations (Ruebner, 2016).

2.2.1.3 Shifting Stance, Reversion to Conventional Policy and Stalled Negotiations (from late 2010_2011 onwards)

Despite initial forceful insistence on a settlement freeze, Palestinian hopes were quickly deflated as the administration reverted to the more familiar tropes of pro-Israel orthodoxies (Ruebner, 2016). The issue of freezing the expansion of Israeli settlements remained deeply divisive, and Netanyahu resisted the president on this from 2009 until Obama was forced to back down starting in late 2010 (Khalidi, 2014). According to one source, Obama received a message that he was not being "*evenhanded*" and subsequently appointed Dennis Ross, described as a

quintessential Israel-firster, to quarterback Middle East issues, undermining Mitchell's efforts to freeze settlements. Obama reportedly apologized in a meeting with Jewish American organizations in July 2009, stating, "Abe, you are absolutely right and we are going to fix that". From this point forward, it became clear that despite strong rhetorical support for Palestinian rights, there would be no consequences for Israel's continued violation of those rights. The possibility or threat of sanctions was never on the table. Instead of balancing incentives and punishments, the Obama administration perversely inverted the relationship: the more Israel defied the U.S. on settlements, the more "*goodies*" Obama tried extending to Tel Aviv. For example, after Israel's temporary "faux moratorium" on settlement building expired in September 2010, Obama pleaded with Israel to extend it in exchange for F-35 fighter jets and diplomatic protection at the UN. Netanyahu rejected the request, knowing these could be obtained anyway (Ruebner, 2016).

By spring 2012, the Obama administration was perceived to have dramatically shifted, with all efforts at balancing rhetoric being substituted with rhetoric more befitting Likud or AIPAC leaders (Khalidi, 2014). Although he had articulated to the Palestinian rights forcefully, he failed in translating these sentiments and words into policy changes, prominently in his reluctance to confront the Israel "*lobby*" and not even entertain the idea of punishing Israel for its refusal to adhere to the settlement freeze objective (Ruebner, 2016). He has had to deal with some specific setbacks, such as the rise to power of Netanyahu's hardline pro-settler government in 2009, the 2010 Republican takeover of the House that provided additional strength for Netanyahu, and the persisting Fatah-Hamas division (Khalidi, 2014).

It employed its diplomatic influence to allow Israel to escape accountability for its conduct in Gaza, including vetoing a UN Security Council referral to the International Criminal Court. It mobilized resources to defeat the PLO's statehood bid and UN full membership, with Obama

himself admonishing Palestinians for pursuing this as part of an effort to "delegitimize" Israel (Ruebner, 2016). Obama did not depart from Washington's conventional wisdom or embrace a fresh paradigm for the peace process, others believed had become a status quo management device. His policy tracked in the same direction as some of his predecessors (Carter, Reagan, Bush senior, Clinton), straining tentatively beyond the status quo but being overcome by Israeli resistance, domestic US political considerations, and the lack of counterweights (Khalidi, 2014).

2.2.1.4 Second Term Negotiations and Collapse (2013-2014)

Obama dispensed with the facade of evenhandedness in his second term by appointing Martin Indyk, a figure with ties to the Israel lobby, as special envoy. From July 2013 to until 2014, Secretary of State John Kerry presided over intensive U.S.-mediated negotiations. However, the terms proposed largely resembled warmed-over ideas from failed past talks. The outline included annexing 75-80% of settlers to Israel, chopping up the Palestinian state. Palestinians would have no sovereignty in Jerusalem, only future "aspirations". The Palestinian state would lack control over its border with Jordan, which would be patrolled by a joint U.S.-Israeli force. Gaza was not on the agenda. At Netanyahu's request, Kerry introduced a new demand for Palestinians to recognize Israel as the "nation-state of the Jewish people," a demand Kerry later conceded was a "mistake". When these negotiations collapsed in April 2014, Indyk irascibly blamed the Palestinians for not accepting the offer and criticized them for advocating an alternative strategy of appealing to international bodies for justice and rights (Ruebner, 2016).

2.2.1.5 Later Years and Legacy (2014-2016)

After the collapse of Kerry's efforts, the Obama administration seemed to recognize that the prospects for a Palestinian state emerging were negligible. Kerry warned that in the absence of a two-state solution, a unitary state risked being an "apartheid state" or destroying Israel's capacity

to be a Jewish state. Rather than grappling with this implication, the administration in its last two years preferred to keep the Israeli-Palestinian issue on the back burner and hand the conundrum to its successor. The article argues that Obama's willful policy choices abetted and facilitated Israeli rejectionist, contributing to the dim prospects for a negotiated two-state resolution.

The overall assessment argues that despite Obama's strong rhetoric, U.S. official policy heavily skewed in favor of Israel. This was demonstrated by his administration's determined actions to perpetuate Israeli impunity in international fora and the hefty U.S. taxpayer subsidy of the Israeli military machine, which ensured no progress could be made towards a two-state resolution. The U.S. solidified its role as a biased mediator, served as Israel's protector at the UN, supported the blockade of Gaza, and boosted military aid to unprecedented levels. By 2016, with hopes of a negotiated two-state solution described as shattered, predicting Obama's successor will face an entirely new paradigm, partly due to the gathering momentum of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. Obama's legacy on the Israeli-Palestinian issue is described as not being a peacemaker, but rather having a tarnished legacy due to facilitating the decline of the two-state solution prospects. He will likely go down in history as the president who had the last shot at brokering a two-state resolution, leaving his successor to grapple with a new paradigm (Ruebner, 2016).

2.2.2 Trump's "Deal of the Century" and transfer of the American embassy to Jerusalem

President Trump formally named Jerusalem the capital of Israel in December 2017 and declared the American embassy would be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Reversing long-standing U.S. policy, this action drew strong worldwide censure (Kurtzer & Lasensky, 2008). Many saw this as a provocative action aggravating regional tensions and so compromising the already precarious peace process. Palestinians considered this as a major blow to their hopes for

statehood and as unambiguous evidence of American prejudice in favour of Israel (Khalidi, 2020). Some saw the action as tacit endorsement of Israel's illegal under international law act of annexation of East Jerusalem.

Key U.S. allies among others expressed worry that the embassy action would compromise the result of final status negotiations, so complicating the process of reaching a long-lasting peace agreement (Quandt, 2001). Given Palestinian aspirations to East Jerusalem, which they see as the capital of their future state, the move was seen as especially detrimental.

Dubbed the "Deal of the Century," the Trump government released its much-awaited peace proposal in January 2020. Designed without much Palestinian influence, this proposal offered a structure for peacemaking. It promised Palestinians little autonomy in a divided territory but envisioned major Israeli territorial gains including the annexation of the Jordan Valley and major settlement blocs. Viewed as an attempt to justify the status quo of Israeli occupation and deny them their rightful claims, the plan was turned down by the Palestinian leadership (Khalidi, 2020) across the political spectrum. Critics claimed that the proposal would leave Palestinians with a patchwork of non-contiguous territory, so rendering a viable and sovereign Palestinian state impossible. Many international observers, including human rights organizations and some U.S. allies, also attacked the proposal for straying from international consensus on the criteria for a solution, such UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 339, so undermining the chances for a just and lasting peace (Finkelstein, 2007).

Palestinians saw the "Deal of the Century" as an attempt to ignore their fundamental issues, including the right of return for refugees, the ultimate fate of Jerusalem, and the founding of a really sovereign and contiguous Palestinian state. The plan's suggestion for major territory to Israel, so undermining the pre-1967 borders' basis for a two-state solution, Based in the West Bank,

the Palestinian Authority rejected the proposal as a breach of international law; Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, denounced it as a "conspiracy" (Khalidi, 2020). The rejection of the plan widened the gulf between the two groups and demoralized Palestinians even more.

2.3 Regional Reactions & Diplomatic Failures

Beginning in 2000, United States diplomatic involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict grew more active; yet, these initiatives were regularly undermined by complicated regional responses and finally resulted in major diplomatic failures. The U.S. strategy, especially its apparent partiality, combined with the unstable political environments in Israel and Palestine, and the reactions of the larger Arab world, produced an environment in which sustainable peace stayed elusive.

The fall of the Camp David II summit in July 2000 and the Second Intifada's following start marked a dramatic turn in the peace process and a growing Palestinian mistrust (Indyk, 2009; Miller, 2008). Critics of the U.S. mediation at Camp David, such as Finkelstein's (2007) deconstruction of Dennis Ross's powerful narrative, question the claim that Palestinian intransigence was the main factor of failure. Rather, Finkelstein (2007) contends that the negotiating process itself was fundamentally defective and biased against the Palestinians since it gave Israeli-defined "needs" top priority over Palestinian rights under international law. This view of the U.S. as a "dishonest broker" (Khalidi, 2013, p. ix) emerged as a recurrent motif driving Palestinian opposition to U.S.-led negotiations.

Later U.S. diplomatic projects under the George W. Bush presidency, most notably the Annapolis Conference (2007) and the "Road Map for Peace" (2003), also fell short in producing

notable breakthroughs (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005). These setbacks were partially related to ongoing challenges including ongoing Israeli settlement expansion—a practice generally denounced as detrimental to a two-state solution (Carter, 2006; Kurtzer, 2013)—and an Israeli political scene progressively dominated by right-wing coalitions less inclined toward territorial concessions (Miller, 2008). Reflecting a lost chance for more general regional involvement, the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002, a major proposal from the Arab League offering complete peace in return for full Israeli withdrawal, got little traction from Israel and the US government (Kurtzer, 2013; Quandt, 2005).

The Israeli government and major domestic political headwinds inside the United States greeted the Obama administration's first attempts to re-energize the peace process—including a demand for a freeze on Israeli settlements—with great opposition (Khalidi, 2013). This era underlined even more the difficulties confronting American diplomacy as reported by Khalidi (2013), who criticizes the consistency of U.S. policy in compromising Palestinian rights despite changes in presidential speech. Furthermore challenging unified Palestinian representation and strategy were internal Palestinian political divisions, especially between Fatah and Hamas following the 2006 elections (Carter, 2006; Khalidi, 2013).

2.3.1 Palestinian opposition to US-led talks

After 2000, Palestinian opposition to U.S.-led peace negotiations started to play a major role determining the diplomatic scene. This resistance was not monolithic but rather a complex reaction stemming from persistent complaints about the alleged partiality of the United States as a mediator, the content of the proposals offered, and the U.S.' inability to stop Israeli actions thought to be undercutting a viable Palestinian state.

Deeply ingrained American bias was a main cause of Palestinian opposition. Many studies point to the U.S. acting more often in line with Israeli interests than as a neutral arbiter (Finkelstein, 2007; Khalidi, 2013; Miller, 2008). Khalidi (2013) characterizes this position as that of "Israel's lawyer," contending that such partiality methodically erased Palestinian confidence in U.S.-led operations and their possible results. This point of view was especially noticeable after the divisive Camp David II summit in 2000, when some detractors claimed that American policy was intrinsically favoring Israeli "needs" over Palestinian rights based on international law (Finkelstein, 2007).

Because they were sometimes seen as failing to satisfy basic Palestinian needs, the substance of U.S.-brokered or endorsed proposals routinely encountered Palestinian resistance. Usually, these criteria included full sovereignty, a state based on the 1967 borders with mutually agreed equivalent land swaps, a resolution for Palestinian refugees in line with international law (such as UNGA Resolution 194), and a capital in East Jerusalem (Carter, 2006; Finkelstein, 2007). Plans that fell short of these standards or seemed to support the spread of Israeli settlement naturally drew rejection from Palestinian leadership and popular unhappiness (Indyk, 2009; Miller, 2008).

Moreover, the ongoing inability or unwillingness of the United States to properly pressure Israel to stop activities judged illegal under international law, most notably the continuous growth of colonies in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, seriously damaged Palestinian faith in American mediation (Carter, 2006; Khalidi, 2013). The inability to hold Israel responsible for such acts was seen as a green light for the production of "facts on the ground" that distorted the outcome of final status negotiations, so fueling increasing mistrust of U.S.-led talks (Khalidi, 2013). This was exacerbated by a history of what Palestinians considered as unmet U.S. guarantees, a pattern

established even before 2000 but which still shapes opinions (Khalidi, 2013, talking on the legacy of the Madrid-Washington negotiations).

There were different ways this opposition manifested itself. Partially a violent expression of great disillusionment with the diplomatic path following the Camp David II collapse, the Second Intifada (2000–2005) reflected the later emergence of Hamas and its triumph in the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections posed a major political threat to the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority and its approach of participation in U.S.-led negotiations (Carter, 2006; Khalidi, 2013). Often advocating several kinds of resistance, Hamas and other groups expressed strong doubts about the value of negotiations conducted under American authority. More recently, under the Obama administration, Palestinian leadership investigated other diplomatic channels, including seeking increased recognition at the United Nations, partly in response to the alleged shortcomings and prejudices of the U.S.-led framework (Khalidi, 2013).

Driven by a consistent view that American partiality towards Israel compromised these initiatives, failed to sufficiently address fundamental Palestinian rights and territorial requirements based on international law, and was ineffective in stopping Israeli actions that prejudiced a just and lasting peace, Palestinian opposition to U.S.-led talks after 2000 was in essence a multifarious phenomenon. Popular upheavals, changes in political orientations, and alternative diplomatic approaches all reflected this resistance, so augmenting the larger background of diplomatic failures in the region.

2.3.2 Israel's changing political landscape affecting the prospects of peace

Major changes and consolidations defined the post-2000 era and greatly affected the chances for a diplomatic peace with the Palestinians inside Israel's political environment. These events sometimes resulted in hardy negotiating positions, an ongoing focus on security-centric policies, and continuous settlement expansion—all of which severely hampered U.S.-led peace initiatives.

Right-wing and nationalist political coalitions' ascendancy and ongoing impact defined this period (Khalidi, 2013; Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005). Under administrations headed by leaders like Ariel Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu, governments sometimes relied on, or ideologically matched with, parties that opposed major territorial concessions and supported the increase of Israeli presence in the seized areas. This political reality directly affected Israel's negotiating strategy, often restricting the range of what Israeli officials were ready or able to offer (Indyk, 2009; Miller, 2008). As Khalidi (2013) points out, successive U.S. administrations frequently found themselves caving in to Israeli positions firmly anchored in these domestic political configurations, so sustaining a framework that was fundamentally limiting for Palestinian aspirations.

Direct results of Israel's political environment and ideological commitments, the West Bank's and East Jerusalem's policy of settlement expansion remained a major barrier to peace (Carter, 2006; Khalidi, 2013; Kurtzer, 2013). Though U.S. calls for freezes, several Israeli governments kept supporting and growing colonies, so changing the territorial reality on which a two-state solution would rely. Often motivated by the demands of coalition partners and a nationalist voter base, this relentless commitment to settlement growth greatly reduced the credibility of peace negotiations in Palestinian eyes and complicated U.S. diplomatic efforts (Khalidi, 2013, especially concerning the Obama-Netanyahu dynamic).

With military and security issues usually taking front stage over diplomatic efforts, the Israeli approach was also quite security-centric (Pressman, 2020; Miller, 2008). Although security is a real issue, detractors contend that its broad interpretation by Israeli political and military institutions often helped to justify policies detrimental to peace, such the building of the separation barrier and strict movement restrictions (Carter, 2006). Pressman (2020) argues that a belief in military force's efficacy and an over-reliance on it limited diplomatic gestures and intensified the conflict by means of this.

Furthermore, showing a trend toward unilateral actions was the 2005 disengagement from Gaza (Pressman, 2020; Miller, 2008). Although the Sharon government presented as a path toward peace, many Palestinians and some analysts saw it as a calculated action to unite control over other areas of the West Bank and to avoid thorough negotiations on final status issues. Such acts reflected a political environment that, occasionally, favored imposing solutions rather than negotiating them jointly.

Moreover, during this time the positions of Israeli governments on fundamental questions—such as the future of Jerusalem, the resolution of the refugee issue, and the exact nature and degree of Palestinian sovereignty—often hardened (Finkelstein, 2007; Khalidi, 2013). For example, Finkelstein's (2007) study of the Camp David II negotiations shows how underlying political and ideological red lines limited Israeli conceptions of possible concessions. A theme hinted at in the Sperling (2024) syllabus readings, the weakening of the Israeli left and the peace camp further limited the political space for leaders who might have been ready to make more major concessions for peace.

The need of Israeli leaders to keep often delicate governing coalitions and appeal to a rightward-shifting electorate greatly affected their negotiating posture and ability to move boldly

towards peace (Indyk, 2009; Miller, 2008). These internal Israeli political realities often hampered American diplomatic initiatives since American demands for policies like settlement freezes collided with the political reality of current Israeli governments (Khalidi, 2013).

Israel's shifting political scene after 2000—one marked by the consolidation of right-wing power, a relentless commitment to settlement expansion, and a dominant security-oriented paradigm—created a challenging environment for U.S.-led peace efforts. Based on a two-state solution, as envisioned by succeeding U.S. administrations, these internal Israeli dynamics greatly reduced the prospects for a negotiated resolution and usually left American diplomacy battling to exert significant influence against firmly established political and ideological positions.

Conclusion

The main difficulties and disappointments of American peace initiatives in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after 2000 have been discussed in this chapter. From the fall of the Camp David II summit and the start of the Second Intifada to the failings of the Roadmap under the Bush administration and the meager development throughout Obama's presidency, U.S. mediation has regularly confronted political, structural, and regional challenges. Though still crucial in the peace process, the United States has found it difficult to offer a consistent and workable plan. These recurrent disappointments draw attention to how poorly American diplomacy can handle the asymmetrical and deep-rooted character of the war.

Chapter 3: Current and Future Prospects for U.S. Mediation

Introduction

Marked by strongly ingrained historical claims, conflicting national identities, and decades of instability and violence, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is among the most enduring and complex geopolitical challenges of the modern era. Rising as a major diplomatic player in the area since the middle of the 20th century, the United States has committed significant political, financial, and strategic resources to help to mediate between Palestinians and Israelis (Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008). A thorough knowledge of America's ongoing involvement provides important new perspectives on the possibilities and constraints of international mediation in resolving this extended conflict. Examining its development, motivations, and results from 1948 to the present, this dissertation explores the vast history of U.S. participation.

The United States has faced ongoing difficulties reaching a comprehensive and long-lasting peace agreement that satisfies the fundamental needs despite decades of continuous diplomatic attention and its global superpower status.

3.1 The Biden Administration's Strategy

Any modern U.S. government handling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has to operate against a backdrop of decades of diplomatic efforts, changing regional influences, and well-established American involvement pattern. Analyzing a possible "return to conventional diplomacy" calls for respect of the historical standards long guiding American policy. Historically, the United States has aggressively pursued a negotiated settlement—most usually aimed at achieving a two-state solution based on core international mandates such as UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338—by

exploiting its position as the main external mediator (Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008). Traditionally, this strategy entails constant, direct interaction between high-level American officials—including special envoys and occasionally presidents—with Palestinian leadership (post-Oslo, covering the Palestinian Authority). Such involvement has required careful navigation of complex internal politics on both sides, the creation of trustworthy channels of communication, and slow progress through structured negotiations built on frameworks developed during past diplomatic breakthroughs (Carter, 2006; Indyk, 2009; Quandt, 2005).

Furthermore, traditional American diplomacy in this field has usually demanded the expression of opinions that, at least theoretically, coincide with world consensus on important issues. These include problems including Jerusalem's situation, borders mostly mirroring the 1967 lines—subject to mutual agreed changes—and resistance to unilateral actions possibly endangering the chances for a negotiated peace. Previous administrations have, for instance, voiced worries about Israeli settlement activity in occupied areas, which has traditionally complicated efforts to reach a final agreement. One of the main traits of conventional diplomacy has been an attempt to preserve some sort of balance or "even-handedness," even while maintaining strong security obligations to Israel, so maintaining the credibility of the United States as a competent mediator for both sides. This measured approach contrasts sharply with times when U.S. policy seemed to support one side, so compromising its leverage and potency in the more general international scene (Khalidi, 2013; Miller, 2008).

A strategic turn back to these traditional approaches would probably entail the revival of bilateral dialogue channels, maybe via existing international frameworks like the Quartet—albeit with changing dynamics—and a recommitment to previously decided-upon values and roadmaps. Such a change suggests turning away from tactics thought to deviate from accepted international

consensus or from the fundamental ideas of bilateral negotiations. Rather, it would stress approaches anchored in clearly defined policy goals and international law, transcending simple facilitation to actively shape substantive outcomes, as advised by calls for a revised U.S. strategy (Kurtzer, 2013).

Regarding normalizing agreements between Israel and Arab states—such as those embodied in the Abraham Accords before 2021—historical background reveals that normalizing has long been a recurring component of U.S. strategic policy in the Middle East. Achieving normalizing is seen as a means to strengthen regional stability and secure alliances that advance U.S. interests, as shown by efforts like the Egypt-Israel peace treaty (Quandt, 2005; Carter, 2006). Historical studies, however, also highlight ongoing questions and criticisms on how normalizing agreements affect the Israeli-Palestinian process. Whether such agreements are sought mostly for more general geopolitical gains, possibly at the expense of progress on fundamental Palestinian issues like statehood and self-determination, there is ongoing conflict as to this (Khalidi, 2013). Managing the deepening or extension of normalizing initiatives effectively thus calls for balancing their strategic advantages against the risk of further marginalizing the central conflict—a difficulty past governments have faced (Miller, 2008; Indyk, 2009). Administrations dedicated to traditional diplomatic approaches have to make sure that efforts at normalizing based on a two-state framework support rather than undermine the chances for a complete Israeli-Palestinian peace based on a two-state framework—a balance that has proved challenging to regularly achieve (Khalidi, 2013; Miller, 2008).

Navigating the complicated terrain of today probably means balancing the subtle opportunities and challenges presented by continuous normalizing processes with the principles of conventional diplomacy—focusing on a negotiated two-state outcome through direct engagement.

Managing regional pressures and the legacies of past agreements and setbacks combined with bridging the ongoing differences between Israeli and Palestinian positions on important issues presents natural challenges (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005). Historically, advancing peace under these conditions has required not only enduring and high-level diplomatic engagement but also the ability to build trust and ensure that parallel strategic initiatives such as normalizing efforts actively contribute to rather than detract from, so ensuring a just and lasting resolution to the conflict (Indyk, 2009; Khalidi, 2013).

3.1.1 Return to conventional diplomacy

Within the framework of U.S. involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a return to traditional diplomacy marks a fresh respect for accepted diplomatic procedures and long-standing policy frameworks defining past American mediation. Historically, these strategies positioned the United States as the main external mediator, aggressively seeking a negotiated settlement—often concentrated on the two-state solution rooted in basic international resolutions (Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008). Usually involving high-ranking American officials including special envoys and, occasionally, presidents in dialogues with both Israeli and Palestinian leadership, this approach usually involved constant, direct involvement from these officials (Indyk, 2009; Quandt, 2005). Conventional diplomacy demanded careful handling of difficult internal dynamics on both sides, encouragement of channels of communication, and advancement of small-scale progress through methodical negotiations grounded on past diplomatic successes (Miller, 2008).

Furthermore included in traditional U.S. diplomacy were articulating positions consistent with international consensus on important issues, including the status of Jerusalem, borders mostly shaped on the 1967 lines with mostly agreed adjustments, and opposition to unilateral actions seen as detrimental to achieving peace (Quandt, 2005). This included expressing concern about Israeli

settlement activity in occupied territory, which many governments historically thought as a barrier to reach a final agreement (Miller, 2008; Carter, 2006; Chomsky, 1999). Though it maintained strong security promises to Israel, conventional diplomacy was notable for its attempt to maintain a perspective of balance or "even-handedness." This strategy aimed to maintain U.S. reputation as a competent mediator able to involve both sides significantly (Miller, 2008; Khalidi, 2013). Conversely, times when U.S. policy seemed to support one party usually reduced its leverage and compromised its efficacy in the perspective of the other party and the larger international community (Khalidi, 2013; Miller, 2008).

Returning to conventional approaches would probably involve revitalizing bilateral dialogue mechanisms, perhaps working within existing international frameworks, and recommitting to previously agreed-upon principles and roadmaps (Quandt, 2005; Indyk, 2009). Such a change would mean rejecting approaches thought to be avoiding direct negotiations on fundamental problems or trying unilateral solutions. Rather, it would center on the painstaking process of arranging direct talks, handling crises to stop escalation, and restoring confidence between the parties while attending to political and security issues crucial to both Israelis and Palestinians (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005). This approach naturally acknowledges the complexity and deeply ingrained historical grievances defining the conflict, requiring persistence and a long-term strategic vision—lessons underlined over decades of American diplomatic involvement (Miller, 2008; Kurtzer, 2013).

3.1.2 Israel's normalization with Arab Countries (Extension of the Abraham Accords)

Long a major and recurrent component of U.S. Middle East diplomacy is the quest of normalization agreements between Israel and Arab governments. Historically, American administrations have seen the development of diplomatic, economic, and security ties between

Israel and its Arab neighbors as a vital strategic goal as a challenge. Such initiatives have been seen as means of enhancing regional stability, bolstering alliances consistent with U.S. interests, and so changing the dynamics of the Arab-Israeli conflict itself (Quandt, 2005). Often reached by significant American mediation, financial resources, and security guarantees, landmark agreements such as the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty proved the viability of normalizing (Carter, 2006; Quandt, 2005). Such projects usually justified goals of conflict avoidance with more general geopolitical priorities, such coalition building against shared enemies or protection of important economic and energy interests (Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008).

Examining the expansion of normalizing initiatives—such as the Abraham Accords started in 2020—requires assessing the possibilities and drawbacks of past diplomatic practices. Expanding normalcy, according to supporters, can improve regional cooperation, strengthen economic ties, coordinate responses to common threats, and help to create an environment fit for more general peace over time (Indyk, 2009). Increased involvement and shared interests among regional players should help to moderate positions and encourage resolution of other conflicts, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Many times, these agreements are seen as pragmatic actions reflecting changing priorities among some Arab governments, which have turned away from demanding the resolution of the Palestinian issue as a prerequisite for relations with Israel.

But historical criticism emphasizes the complexity and dangers involved in normalizing projects, especially when pursued without significant advancement on the Israeli-Palestinian track (Khalidi, 2013; Chomsky, 1999). One major issue is that by reducing the leverage once possessed through united Arab solidarity, normalizing agreements could compromise Palestinian ambitions (Khalidi, 2013). Critics contend that these agreements would let Israel know that regional integration can be accomplished without major concessions about occupation or Palestinian

statehood, so lowering its incentive to resolve the underlying conflict (Chomsky, 1999; Khalidi, 2013). Furthermore, the quest of normalcy can strain Arab world internal relations and contradict with public opinion (Quandt, 2005). Good management of normalizing initiatives thus calls for cautious diplomacy, balancing the quest of strategic state-to--state relations against the risk of sidelining efforts to achieve a comprehensive and lasting resolution to the fundamental Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Miller, 2008; Khalidi, 2013).

3.2 New Difficulties in Peace Negotiations

Beyond the complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship and the difficulties confronting U.S. mediation policies, peace negotiations have historically been further hampered by a mix of external and internal elements posing significant difficulties. These comprise the great fragmentation of the Palestinian political scene and the destabilizing effect of regional players with different goals. These linked dynamics create an environment in which diplomatic efforts sometimes find it difficult to be successful over long run (Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008). Evaluating the chances of any revived peace process depends on looking at these ongoing obstacles.

3.2.1 Regional Influence (Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE)

The interests and actions of important regional powers have always shaped the Arab-Israeli conflict; their involvement often complicates efforts at peace. Although some regional players help, more general rivalries driven by states trying to change the status quo or increase their influence complicate negotiations (Quandt, 2005). Sometimes states opposing U.S. or allied interests have supported groups hostile to peace, so undermining agreements by violence and functioning as spoilers (Chomsky, 1999; Khalidi, 2013). Given Iran's support of groups hostile to Israeli-

Palestinian peace, its post-1979 role has often been emphasized (Indyk, 2009). Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, has taken complex stances, sometimes discreetly supporting American projects while juggling its obligations to Arab unity and the Palestinian cause. Other times, it has had political and financial impact in ways that compromise regional stability (Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008). The environment for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations is greatly changed by the deliberate actions of big regional powers shaped by their security concerns, rivalries like those with Iran, and internal political agendas. Still a major diplomatic challenge for the United States is effectively controlling these outside influences and promoting a unified regional approach to peace (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005). (Note: The pre-2021 sources do not provide specific modern roles of the UAE.)

3.2.2 Hamas, Fatah factions, and Palestinian internal conflicts

Deep divisions inside the Palestinian national movement, especially between the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority (PA) and Hamas (Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008), create one of the most ongoing challenges to peace. Following the Oslo Accords, these inner conflicts—which grew more intense were exacerbated by Hamas's 2006 electoral triumph and later takeover of Gaza in 2007, so fragmenting Palestinian leadership both geographically and ideologically (Khalidi, 2013; *Contested Histories*, n.d.). Regularly using violence to disturb the peace process and question the legitimacy of the PA, Hamas has consistently rejected the Oslo framework (Quandt, 2005; Indyk, 2009). Consequently, the PA—known globally as the main negotiator—has battled to exercise power in Gaza; Hamas, in charge of Gaza and with great public support, has been left out of the U.S.-led diplomatic process embraced by Israel (Miller, 2008; Khalidi, 2013). When a Palestinian polity is fractured, this division compromises the general Palestinian negotiating posture, makes it difficult to implement agreements, and gives opponents on the Israeli side arguments against

concessions (Quandt, 2005; Miller, 2008). Long recognized as a necessary first step toward a sustainable two-state solution, resolving this internal conflict and attaining reconciliation still presents one of the most difficult tasks for mediators and negotiators (Khalidi, 2013).

Any U.S. diplomatic plan has to deal with the major obstacles these combined regional pressures and internal Palestinian divisions generate. They underline how resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict calls for bridging divides between the two sides while also negotiating a difficult matrix of regional interests and internal political constraints.

3.3 Prospective Situations and Suggestions for American Strategy

Building on the historical trajectory described in previous sections, investigating future scenarios and possible changes to U.S. policy calls for leveraging past successes as well as, more importantly, from recurrent failures. The knowledge and observations recorded in the current literature offer a spectrum of viewpoints on the roles international players could perform and suggest possible changes to U.S. foreign policy to better handle the ongoing complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Miller, 2008; Quandt, 2005; Kurtzer, 2013). Although forecasting particular results is difficult, a basis for evaluating future policies is provided by examining past contributions of international bodies and criticisms of past U.S. policies.

3.3.1 The Role of International Organizations (the UN, EU)

Historically playing significant, multifarious roles in the Arab-Israeli conflict, international organizations especially the United Nations and, more recently, the European Union often collectively or through key member states highlight paths for their ongoing or increased participation in U.S. policies. Though with different interpretations, the UN Security Council developed critical legal frameworks including Resolutions 242 and 339, which have become the

generally agreed basis for land-for-peace negotiations for decades (Quandt, 2005; Carter, 2006). Through organizations like UNRWA, which attends to the needs of Palestinian refugees, the UN has also been instrumental in humanitarian efforts and has sent peacekeeping forces in buffer zones following disengagement agreements (e.g., in Sinai and the Golan Heights) (Contested Histories, n.d.). From the 1990s forward, the European Union became a significant financial supporter of the Palestinian Authority and a frequent participant in diplomatic activities including the Quartet (though the specifics of the Quartet's involvement are few in earlier sources). Future U.S. policies might profit from using the legitimacy conferred by UN resolutions, working more closely with foreign partners to enforce compliance, or creating consensus around settlement parameters (Khalidi, 2013). Improved UN or EU participation in tracking agreements, bolstering security plans, or organizing reconstruction projects could also be highly important, so distributing the load and raising global investment in a favorable result (Miller, 2008). But historical constraints—such as Security Council vetoes (usually by the U.S. shielding Israel from criticism) and doubts about the enforcement capacity of international bodies—continue to lower expectations of their efficacy when faced opposition from main parties (Chomsky, 1999; Khalidi, 2013).

3.3.2 Possible changes to American foreign policy

When one considers decades of U.S. diplomatic activity, historical studies point to several possible adjustments or substitutes for American foreign policy. Anchored in international law and past frameworks like the Clinton Parameters (Kurtzer, 2013; Miller, 2008), one often recommended change is for the United States to move beyond merely facilitating open-ended negotiations and to adopt clearer, more definitive positions on fundamental final status issues—such as borders, security, refugees, and Jerusalem anchored in international law and past frameworks. Proponents contend that rather than open-ended procedural talks, delineating the parameters of a fair settlement

could offer a strong basis for meaningful negotiations (Kurtzer, 2013; Miller, 2008). Another suggested change is adjusting the U.S. posture from that of "Israel's lawyer" to a more balanced one that applies significant pressure on both sides to maintain commitments and international norms (Miller, 2008; Khalidi, 2013; Chomsky, 1999). Conditioning U.S. political or financial support on adherence to stated objectives, such as stopping settlement expansion (Carter, 2006; Chomsky, 1999), could involve some studies also advise reevaluating the focus on military solutions and unqualified security support and instead advocating diplomatic and political resolutions addressing the underlying causes of the conflict (Pressman, 2020). Another often-mentioned difficulty is addressing internal Palestinian conflicts; recommendations include changed plans to promote unity or involvement with a unified Palestinian government (Khalidi, 2013; Miller, 2008). Many retrospective studies ultimately show the need of the United States changing its perspective of influence, assuming a more targeted role, and matching its actions with its declared policy goals that is supporting a two-state solution (Miller, 2008; Kurtzer, 2013; Khalidi, 2013).

These comments on the functions of international organizations and possible changes in U.S. policy highlight the continuous search for a more efficient road to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. According to the historical record, success will probably call for a mix of strong international cooperation, consistent American leadership, and policy adaptation depending on lessons learnt from past initiatives.

Conclusion

Ultimately, this chapter has examined the complex issues facing modern U.S. mediation efforts in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, looking at strategic directions, overcoming challenges, and possible future paths guided by historical background and criticism. The conversation focused

on how present American policy seems to manage the consequences of Israel's normalizing agreements with Arab states while balancing a return to conventional diplomatic approaches—such as advocating a two-state solution and direct engagement. These agreements offer strategic possibilities as well as the chance to further marginalize the Palestinian issue (Quandt, 2005; Khalidi, 2013; Indyk, 2009).

Significant obstacles still exist, including the impact of regional players with competing agendas, which complicates the diplomatic environment, and the great internal divide between Fatah and Hamas, so compromising Palestinian negotiating capacity and providing great difficulties for the execution of any agreement (Miller, 2008; Khalidi, 2013; Quandt, 2005). Looking ahead, more use of international organizations like the UN and EU, or significant changes to U.S. foreign policy—such as articulating clearer positions on key issues or recalibrating American leverage as outlined in various analyses—offer potential, if challenging, paths for future strategy (Kurtzer, 2013; Miller, 2008; Carter, 2006).

In the end, the chapter emphasizes how firmly rooted the fundamental challenges to peace are even with possible changes in diplomatic approach or strategy. Overcoming the ingrained complexity of regional rivalries, Palestinian political fragmentation, and basic conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians calls for more than small-scale diplomacy or crisis management. A transforming change in U.S. policy, as advised by critical assessments of past initiatives (Miller, 2008; Khalidi, 2013; Kurtzer, 2013), could be crucial to set the stage for a just and long-lasting solution. Dealing with these complex issues creatively and maybe redefining U.S. goals will help to determine the likelihood of peace.

General Conclusion

This dissertation has explored the multifaceted and evolving role of the United States in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over more than seven decades. The research was driven by the core problem of understanding why, despite prolonged engagement and multiple diplomatic efforts, the U.S. has failed to secure a just and lasting resolution to the conflict.

This failure raised essential questions about the nature of U.S. mediation, the influence of domestic and strategic considerations, and the consistency of American policies with international law. The study sought to answer four central research questions: the achievements and setbacks of U.S. mediation since 1948; the differences between U.S. administrations from Bush to Biden, particularly regarding the Second Intifada and unresolved final-status issues; the extent to which U.S. policy has contributed to stagnation or progress in negotiations; and the degree to which American diplomatic efforts have addressed Palestinian demands and aligned with international legal norms.

To address these questions, the study adopted a historical-analytical method, allowing for a critical review of policy trajectories and diplomatic initiatives. Primary sources, such as official speeches and policy documents, and secondary academic literature were analyzed to uncover patterns, contradictions, and strategic tendencies.

The major findings indicate that while U.S. mediation occasionally yielded limited progress, such as the Camp David Accords and the Oslo Process, most efforts failed to achieve lasting outcomes due to structural bias favoring Israel, the prioritization of stability over justice, and the avoidance of pressure on key final-status issues.

Regarding the hypotheses, the study confirms that U.S. mediation has been characterized by temporary gains and long-term shortcomings (Hypothesis 1); that variations among administrations, though notable, rarely overcame systemic limitations (Hypothesis 2); that American policy has generally contributed to diplomatic stagnation (Hypothesis 3); and that the failure to align with international legal norms and address Palestinian demands has undermined U.S. neutrality and credibility (Hypothesis 4). The study concludes that for the U.S. to fulfill its role as a genuine peace broker, a fundamental strategic shift is required one that prioritizes justice, parity, and adherence to international law.

The research is limited by its reliance on publicly available sources and the absence of direct interviews with policymakers. Future studies could investigate alternative mediation models, assess the influence of lobbying groups on U.S. foreign policy, or explore the impact of recent regional shifts such as the Abraham Accords on the relevance of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Without a substantial recalibration of its approach, the United States risks perpetuating a cycle of engagement without resolution, undermining both regional stability and the prospects for a just peace.

References

Carter, J. (2006) *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. Simon & Schuster.

Chomsky, N. (1999) *the Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*. Haymarket Books.

Indyk, M. (2009) *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East*. Simon & Schuster.

Khalidi, R. (2013) *Brokers of Deceit: How the U.S. Has Undermined Peace in the Middle East*. Beacon Press.

Kurtzer, D. C., and Scott B. L. (2008) *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East*. United States Institute of Peace.

Miller, A. D. (2008) *the Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace*. Bantam.

Mitchell, G J., and Alon S. (2016) *A Path to Peace: A Brief History of Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations and a Way Forward in the Middle East*. Simon & Schuster.

Pressman, J. (2020) *The Sword is Not Enough: Arabs, Israelis, and the Limits of Military Force*. Manchester University Press.

Quandt, W. B. (2005) *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967*. Brookings Institution Press.

Ross, D. (2004) *the Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Ruebner, J. (2016). *Obama's legacy on Israel/Palestine*. **Journal of Palestine Studies**, 45(1), 50–64. Institute for Palestine Studies.

Zanotti, J. (2010). **Israel: Background and U.S. relations** (CRS Report No. R40092). Congressional Research Service.

المخلص

تسعى هذه المذكرة الى دراسة نقدية للدور المتعدد الأوجه الذي اضطلعت به الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية في مفاوضات السلام بين إسرائيل وفلسطين منذ عام 1948 وحتى الوقت الراهن. و تستعرض المسار التاريخي للمشاركة الدبلوماسية الأمريكية، وتُبيّن أبرز الإنجازات والإخفاقات المتكررة و كذلك التحديات المستمرة التي ميزت هذا الدور. كما تسعى إلى تحليل الدوافع الكامنة وراء السياسة الأمريكية، بما في ذلك المصالح الجيوسياسية خلال الحرب الباردة وما بعدها، مع تقييم تأثير الإدارات الأمريكية المتعاقبة على مسار عملية السلام . تتطرق المذكرة إلى أبرز المبادرات الدبلوماسية الرئيسية مثل اتفاقيات كامب ديفيد، ومؤتمر مدريد، واتفاقيات أوسلو، وجهود ما بعد عام 2000 بما في ذلك "خارطة الطريق للسلام" وسياسات إدارات أوباما وترامب وبايدن. كما تسلط الضوء على كيف أن الانتفاضة الثانية، والتوسع الاستيطاني الإسرائيلي المستمر، وديناميكيات القوى الإقليمية، والانقسامات الفلسطينية الداخلية التي شكلت عقبات كبيرة أمام تحقيق حل مستدام للقضية. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن الولايات المتحدة، رغم كونها فاعلاً دبلوماسياً محورياً، لم تنجح في تقديم تسوية عادلة ومستدامة للصراع، نتيجة انحيازها الظاهر في بعض الفترات، وافتقار سياساتها للثبات والتوازن المطلوبين. وبناءً عليه، توصي المذكرة بضرورة إعادة هيكلة النهج الأمريكي تجاه القضية، عبر تبني سياسة أكثر حيادية واتساقاً، قد تشمل تعاوناً دولياً أوسع، بما يعزز فرص تحقيق سلام عادل ودائم بين الطرفين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصراع الإسرائيلي الفلسطيني، السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية، عملية السلام في الشرق الأوسط، الدبلوماسية، الوساطة الدولية، اتفاقيات كامب ديفيد.