

THE DYNAMICS IN ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT:
FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND INTIFADA

EMRE UTKUCAN
104605004

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SOLİ ÖZEL
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The Dynamics in Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: From the First to the Second
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Emre Utkucan
104605004

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Abstract

The Israeli – Palestinian conflict, also known as the Israeli – Arab conflict, is the basis of debate within the Middle East. Throughout the ages, major powers have tried to take control of the Middle East, which eventually lead to conflict between nation states. Control in the region has passed from one dominant power to the next over the course of time. Each transitional period left a power vacuum in its wake that was filled by the next dominant power. First the British took control of the region. Afterwards U.S. policies shifted its focus on the Middle East. The Cold War clash between the U.S. and Soviet Union had increased the importance of the region. However there was no peace, at this point the Intifada began to materialize and was an important factor for the Palestinians to make their voice heard and influence world public opinion, The Intifada is not only a process which includes political and military facets, additionally it is concerned with the social and humanitarian dimensions of the Palestinian plight, to show the realities of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict which were left behind in the background. On the other hand, the Intifada is a symbol of the Palestinian resistance and rebellion to their situation in the region. The Intifada had directed the process of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict since the time it began which was towards the end of the 1980s. In 2000, the situation had not changed and the efficiency of the Intifada had rarely increased. The Intifada is the centerpiece of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict and it is the most important instrument on the Palestinian side and it will never belong to a specific terrorist group. So, the Intifada is an important, valuable, and multidimensional issue which will be seen in the next lines of this research.

Between this historical period, Israel's foundation and the Arab opposition to its presence, emerged a different type of conflict and is the basis of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. The problems in the Middle East had reached a different and long term clash

environment at truth. The footprints of this historical conflict, affect the Israel – Palestine conflict today.

Özet

İsrail – Filistin sorunu, bilinen diğer adıyla İsrail – Arap çatışması, uzun yıllardır süre gelen bir çekişmenin eseri olan, çözümsüz kalmış bir konudur. Bu sorun, Orta Doğu politikalarının ve siyasi aktörlerinin içerisinde bulunduğu çekişmenin de temelini oluşturur. Uzun yıllar boyunca Orta Doğu bölgesi, farklı güçlerin elinde bulunmuştur ve bu güçlerin varlığı, bölgede bir otoritenin varlığından ziyade, otorite eksikliği ile birlikte, çözümü olmayan sorunları da beraberinde getirmiştir. Öncelikle İngiltere, daha sonra Amerika ve son olarak da Soğuk Savaşın varlığı ile ortaya çıkan Amerika – Sovyetler Birliği çekişmesi bölgedeki çözümsüz yapıyı körüklemiştir. Bu çözümsüzlüğün içerisinde, İsrail’in politik ve askeri etkinliğine direnen Filistin halkının bir sembolü olarak görülen “İntifada” olgusu, konuya farklı bir boyut katmaktadır. İsrail tarafının var olan etkinliği her ne kadar sınırsız olsa da, İntifada meselesi Filistin’in kendi haklarını savunması, varlığını sürdürebilmek adına kendini dünya kamuoyuna gösterebilmesi ve de olayın, zaman içerisinde insanlık boyutlarını da aşan noktalarını insanların gözü önüne serebilmesi açısından ciddi bir önem taşımaktadır. İntifada’yı sadece bir kesime ya da dünyada yaygın görüş olarak benimsenen bir “terör örgütüne” mal etmek, onunla özdeşleştirmek ve de bir kesimi bunun için suçlamak yanlış olacaktır. İntifada, nasıl İsrail’in, konu ile ilgili askeri boyutlarda kendini savunma hakkını kullanırken elinde bulundurduğu yollar ve haklar varsa, o da, Filistin halkının elinde bulunan imkânlarla sürdürdüğü bir süreçtir.

Tüm bu tarihsel sorunlu sürecinde arasına sıkışan İsrail – Filistin sorunu da, genel olarak bu çekişmelerin izlerini taşır ve bugün hala varlığını sürdürmektedir. Bu tartışma ile 20. y.y.’in ortalarından bu yana her geçen gün turmanan bölgesel gerginlik, Orta Doğu’nun bugünkü durumuna gelmesine neden olmuştur. Geçmişten gelen çekişmeler, bugün, İsrail – Arap sorununda vücut bulmaktadır.

1. Introduction

The problematic structure of the Middle East region has a historical context. However, there is a serious error right in the middle of this problematic structure: The Israeli – Palestinian conflict. That conflict is not only about political reasons; it also includes different problems such as social, cultural and historical facts. On the other hand, the common belief is that the Israeli – Palestinian conflict is the basis of peace in the Middle East and if peace is possible between the two sides, it will be easier to provide a welfare environment for the region which tries to get over bloody and serious conflicts. Therefore, the possibilities do not seem easy to come to reality for the near future (Owen, 2004).

The historical roots of the conflict started with the occupation by Israeli forces with the support of the U.S. government. When the occupation was completed, Israel had taken the territory which Jews considered to be the Promised Lands according to ancient Jewish doctrine. Being a weak and an undefended state, Palestine had accepted the results of the occupation and Israel's pressure ended. Palestine's only wish was to have independence in its domestic relations and to be independent of Israel. Palestine accepted to give some parts of its territory to Israel legally. However, during that agreement between two sides, a civil war had started in Palestine between two political and armed forces El-Fatah and Hamas. El-Fatah had peaceful relations with Israel. This situation was a disturbing issue for Hamas. So, Hamas started a civil war against El-Fatah and the Palestine government. That civil war was the problematic side for the Palestine's domestic structure and it would drain the political and armed power of Palestine against Israel (Harms and Ferry, 2008).

According to the legal sharing of land between the two sides, when the new Israeli state was founded in May 14, 1948, the response of the Arabian states was hard against that political move. One day later, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq declared war against Israel. However, at the end of the war, although there was an agreement in 1949, it was not

about the welfare of Palestine. That agreement's effects still continues on Palestine (Dowty, 2008).

The 1949 war was not the only one; there were three clashes between Israel and the Arabian states in 1956, 1967 and 1973. The 1956 war was between Egypt and Israel. In those days, the leader of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918 - 1970) had decided to nationalize the Suez Canal and his decision was met with a great response from Western states such as Britain and France, which indirectly caused the 1956 war. Israel's effect during the war had seen a resistance from Arabian forces. During the war United Nations (UN) forces had been sent to the region in order to stop the clashes between the two states. Israel then decided to withdraw its forces from the occupied regions (Dowty, 2008).

The second war in 1967 is generally known as the "6 Days War"; when Israeli forces tried to push forward into Syrian territory, the great states had halted their attacks after six days. However, because of continuing clashes between Arabian and Israeli forces throughout the 7 year period eventually lead to a new war in 1973. Although there was no clear victory for either side, Arab or Israeli, the efficiency of Israel had shown itself and the presence of Israel had become absolute. Indirectly, the power of Israel against Palestine was certain in the region and the pressure of Israel had found a possible sphere for the next years (Harms and Ferry, 2008).

Because of its weak situation, during all of those wars, Palestine had to stay ineffective. Palestine could not provide a complete political structure and the armed forces in the country were separated from each other region by region. The absence of unity in Palestine was the basic reason of increased power and efficiency of Israel at the same time (Dowty, 2008). Besides all of this, Israel had a secure financial structure and its rival Palestine had no financial power. On the other hand, the Arab nations which protested the presence of

Israel did not support Palestine financially. It was one of the serious dead-ends of Palestine's problematic situation in this conflict (Beinin and Hajjar).

The U.S. had a major responsibility in regards to the Israeli – Palestinian conflict since the beginning. It is not hard to understand the situation of the U.S. during that period. Israel is an important and powerful ally and Palestine is the most valuable resistance of Arab society against the Western forces. So, the U.S. did not want to lose Israel's position in the region, on the other hand, the U.S. did not want to increase adverse reactions against itself in the Middle East. If all those conditions developed against the U.S. profit, the U.S. could lose its all important plans for the Middle East. The situation is such that if the Arab-Israeli peace process meets a serious deadlock again today, after the Arab-Israel War, the Middle East can be transformed into a battlefield (Mark, 2005).

The basic mistake of U.S. policy towards the Israeli – Palestinian conflict was that the U.S. could not provide a balance between the two sides. While the U.S. was using the resources of Arab states, it refused to provide and to protect regional peace. Yet, the U.S. has enough power and efficiency to make it possible. However, because of the effectiveness of the Israeli lobby in the U.S. Congress, it became a major obstacle for the U.S.'s peaceful attitudes towards the Middle East in regards to the debate over Palestine (Owen, 2004). Today, the US aims to create a new area between Arab states and Israel. For a long time, according to American policy discourses, the priority of American politics in the Middle East was to provide a democratic environment and to bring peace to all the states of the region. However, as we can see in the Israeli – Palestinian conflict, it was not possible.

The U.S.'s general attitude against that conflict is a reason to be concerned for the other regional states. Lebanon, Kuwait and Syria had the most extreme view against the U.S.'s approach to the Palestine's historical situation. On the other hand, the majority of Muslim nations expressed their opposition over the issue, according to Muslim authorities, the

U.S. could not manage the process well in the past and they made the possibilities for peace impossible. So, the U.S.'s general mistake about the Middle East peace was that they could not get over the Israeli – Palestinian conflict in basic. For the Palestinian authorities, the U.S. had to plan their policies during the conflict by listening and understanding the Palestinians, because Palestine was the weakest and the most aggrieved side of the issue. If American and Israeli policies were about providing welfare, democracy and peace environment in the region, Palestine's situation in regards to those issues must be the priority of their plans. In truth, the U.S. and Israel's common matter was about that they met serious actions for their equal attitudes to Palestine (Dean, 1999). The U.S.-Israel alliance basic reason was to make Palestine society furious against that cooperation. The most important factor, because of the powerful Jewish lobby in the American Congress, the U.S. could not make any radical change on its Palestine issue during the conflict. However, the other thing is that the U.S. and Israel were aware of this, if they changed their approach to that conflict right before the First Gulf War, the peace for the conflict could be possible in the next years (Mark, 2005).

2. The First Intifada and Afterwards

2.1. The First Intifada and the declaration of the Independent State of Palestine

Intifada means Palestine's resistance to Israel in history. But, it is not only a simple resistance or clash between two sides. According to Palestine society and the Islamic Jihad organizations, Intifada was the symbol of Palestine soul, honor and historical spirit. Intifada is the complete attitude of Palestine people and their beliefs on the Palestine state (Harms and Ferry, 2008). So, Intifada is the most valuable political and a social fact in brief Palestine history.

The first Intifada's reasons are complicated. According to those terms' records, both sides state that they are the innocent side of the problem. In December 1987, there were ongoing battles between Israeli forces and Palestine resistance forces. During all of those clashes, there were two Israelis killed and four Palestinians. It was hard to understand the situation and it was not clear to tell who was guilty or innocent. However, four Palestinian deaths were enough to start a war between the two sides. First, the Israel soldiers had tried to stop Palestinian preparations for the demonstration against Israel forces. Right in this point, the highest feelings of Palestine people had come out. The demonstration had transformed a clash between Israel soldiers and people from the every part of the Palestine society. The Intifada began that day (Christison and Christison, 2009).

Palestine's roads and streets were like battlefields and the clashes were not fair. Israeli soldiers were using bullets while Palestinians were throwing stones. Particularly, the children were first on the scene during the clashes. Their stones had become the symbol of the Intifada and the Palestinian resistance (Smith, 2009). They were under pressure from Western forces and Israeli attitudes towards the Palestinians were painful, hard and unfair. The Intifada's exit point includes all these things. It was a general serious reaction of Palestine. The laborers had gone on strike, people had left their homes and they had run to the streets to

fight. It was like an awakening more than a resistance. At the same time, the Intifada was not only about adults, there were a lot of kids that were throwing little stones at Israeli tanks. They were too young, but they had faith in their future for a Palestinian homeland (Christison and Christison, 2009).

The First Intifada is known as the starting point of modern Palestinian history. So, the general view about the First Intifada is important in Palestine. Israel had not wanted to create a serious error about a simple issue, but, they could not get over the Palestinian presence. Palestine's weak resistance in the past had become a national war against Israel after December 1987. In truth, the First Intifada was a war between stones and bullets. Even this simple example is enough to understand the unfair and unbalanced situation between Israel and Palestine. The Arab world was not happy about Israel's attitudes in the Middle East (Smith, 2009). The Intifada was the clearest sign of that discontentment, unfortunately only Palestine was brave enough to express their discontentment.

The Palestinian resistance would cause a new and even bloodier action from Israel. The Intifada was not a good beginning for Palestine, because Israel had only focused on the Palestinian attack against itself. In other words, Israel was waiting for a serious reaction from the Palestinians, in order to conduct its operations on Palestinian territory. The Intifada had made stronger Israel's reasons to protect itself from any danger. Israel had not wanted to lose that chance (Beinin and Hajjar). So, Intifada was the symbol of Palestine maybe, but it had become a valid reason for Israel to action against Palestinians.

The Intifada's the other important reflection to history is about Hamas. This Islamic organization was on the first sides of Intifada and Hamas' power had come out in those years. However, Hamas did not stay same; it changed its tactics and today, Hamas is most effective political and armed group in Palestine. The Intifada's historical soul and its memories make Hamas valuable for resisting Palestinian civil society. When we thought about the militarist

and armed side of Hamas, we can say that the other harm of Intifada is about that it has created terrorist group at the same time (Smith, 2009).

The Intifada created new political and armed organizations with it. One of them, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad Organization (PIJO) was the symbol of the Palestine's political and armed resistance against Israel and its Western supporters such as the U.S. With the leadership of Fethi Şikaki and Abdülaziz Avda, the PIJO was very effective in determining the political and armed road map of the country. Palestine survived throughout the years because of the efficiency of the PIJO. However, after coming out the new political and armed Western formations, the PIJO started to lose its position in its own region. So, it pushed them into different and long term clashes within their lands (Christison and Christison, 2009). These clashes did not help the development of Palestine; in contrast, the situation became more problematic. The PIJO is no longer a political movement today in present-day Palestine, but the Islamic structure retains the same meaning.

The most important result of the First Intifada is about declaring an independent Palestinian state. The Intifada created a national consciousness for the first time in Palestine. Right at this point, the name of Yasser Arafat (1929-2004) showed itself in the political history. Arafat was the leader of El-Fatah which is a part of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Arafat was seen a leader and founder of the Palestinian struggle against Israel and the other Western states. At the same time, he was a valuable person in the Arab world. When he read the Declaration of Palestinian Independence and the foundation of the Palestinian state was almost completed in 1988. It was the turning point for Palestine's own history. Arafat was the leader of that movement. In those days, he was selected as the chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (Beinin and Hajjar).

Independence for Palestine was not a good move for Israel situation in the region. Palestine's resistance had almost made it a half-state right next to Israel. It meant that

Palestine did not see Israel as a legitimate state. Likewise, Israel and the other countries did not see Palestine as a legal state. On the other hand, Palestine's political future was not bright; because, Palestine had no political support from the Arab world or other nations. Arafat's efforts were just about to keeping Palestine alive. That declaration was only a legal and political sign of Palestinian independence (Smith, 2009).

2.2. The Effects of the First Gulf War (1990-1991) on the Israel - Palestinian Conflict

As every simple man who lives in the world knows that the Jewish Diaspora and the U.S. have enjoyed a long period of friendly relations since the 19th century. It means that the roots of the Jewish traditions and culture helped the American founder fathers victorious against their enemies, on the other hand, that situation had continued during the construction period of America. These historical roots of the relationship between Israel and the American founding fathers created the basis of today's communication between both sides. These relations are powerful in every meaning; the political, economical and social mutual effect is absolute between both sides. During the foundation period of the Israel, the U.S.'s basic role was to support Israel and make a serious lobbying effort that states all across the world recognize Israel. In the first days of the Israel, the U.S.'s effort meant that the U.S. would support Israel until the end and their relations would be a great cooperation in every issue (Owen, 2004). The most known and discussed topic in recent years, is the U.S.'s "Great Middle East Project" which is a prime example of that cooperation (Dean, 1999).

The U.S.'s Palestine approach no different from the other issues; there is a good relationship between the U.S. and Israel. So, that friendship rebounds to the Israel – Palestine conflict. A example of this was seen in the First Gulf War between 1990 and 1991. In truth, the connection between the First Gulf War and Israeli – Palestinian conflict is not easy to

understand at first. However, the situation is not far away from reality. There are some reliable points to know what the connection is (Owen, 2004).

First, the U.S.'s success during the war and increasing efficiency in the region was an encouraging issue for Israeli posture in the region, because Saddam Hussein's power and his future aims were disturbing facts for Israel's future in the Middle East. The U.S. and Israel did not want to face a danger like this. So, being a great world power, the U.S., after defeating the Soviet Union wanted to prove itself again and attack Iraq. It was an easy operation for the U.S. and after the operation Israel felt itself more comfortable after four serious wars against Arab nations. American policies decided to leave the region's administration to Israel.

Second, this power transition from the U.S. to its ally made Israel a legal and more powerful state in the region. So, it meant that Israel's posture against Palestine would be more troubling. The First Gulf War was a sign of the U.S.'s leading and the other regional countries weakness at the same time, Israel could benefit from that. Thus, Israel's operations had started after the First Gulf War.

Third, the presence of the American forces in the region had minimized all Arab countries' efficiency. The support of the other Arab nations towards Palestine was not visible during the first periods of the problem. And the four wars between Arab forces and Israel had not affected the Palestinian situation positively. In contrast, the failure of the Arab union had failed to materialize any support for the Palestinians. So, after the First Gulf War, Palestinians were pretty much alone, its destiny was in Israel's hands. The American and Israeli union slowly began to create their own order in the Middle East. The Palestinian resistance would not be effective enough to stop Israel's advancement into their territory. Israel's objective was to isolate Palestine from any support around the state (Owen, 2004). Palestine had to use its own forces like terrorism groups to resist against Israel. In truth, by the U.S.'s support, Israel was the new leader of the Middle East after the First Gulf War (Mourad, 2004).

Generally, the First Gulf War was the starting point for Israel's rise in the Middle East. However, it was a new period which included important, great, and bloody clashes. Israel's leadership in the region against Palestine was not a message of peace; in contrast, Israel wanted to administer all of Palestinian territory (Mark, 2005). Israeli power in the region was a new reason in the creation of new Islamic terrorist groups within Palestine. In other words, the process had started with the Arab-Israeli process had created its own resistance groups in the Middle East. However, during this long time period, these resistance groups had been turned into the terrorist groups and their efficiency on the region has increased after the Iraq War of the US. So, the continuity of Israel's presence in the region is a reason to make the extreme groups alive in the Middle East; because, they introduced themselves as the protector of the Arab and Muslim people all around the region. The First Gulf War's results were like a call to Jihad for every Palestinian citizen. The existing terrorist and resistance groups were fed by this belief and this approach after the war. Indirectly, the war in the gulf could not serve peace; it had created a new struggle environment and battlefield in the Middle East. This time, Israel and Palestine were all alone against each other (Ashrawi, 1995).

The end of the Cold War and the Gulf War and its aftermath were significant factors along with the Intifada in altering the prospects for a settlement of the outstanding issues of the Israel – Arab conflict. While the Soviet Union voted with the majority in the UN and supported the U.S. led coalition against Saddam Hussein in 1991, Moscow did not send troops to the Gulf and even after the war had continued to advocate a negotiated settlement. In that point, Gorbachev needed to retain the support of conservatives and military leaders and wished to demonstrate that the Soviet Union still had a role to play. On the other hand, he desperately needed Western goodwill and financial aid from the U.S. To this end, he had already begun to move the Soviet Union away from too close an association with the radical

Arab regimes and to make overtures to both the more moderate Arab states and Israel. In response, in November of 1990, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states offered Moscow several billion dollars in loans and financial aid. Thus, the Soviet Union ceased acting as a boss of the radical states like Syria and it left the U.S. as the only viable superpower player on the scene. Israelis hoped that the American – Arab alliance would enable the U.S. to press the Arab states to lessen their hostility towards Israel. Israelis wanted pressure taken off them, particularly in regard to Palestinians and continued to insist that the core issue was Arab recognition and acceptance of the Jewish state. For their part, the Arabs believed that their cooperation and partnership with the U.S. would be rewarded by the U.S. placing greater pressure on Israel to return land for peace and to allow self-determination for the Palestinians in the occupied territories (Ashrawi, 1995).

Most commentators agreed that Israel, in the short term at least, benefited from the Gulf War. The military capability of its most powerful Arab enemy, Iraq was seriously damaged and the Intifada was brought almost to a halt. Furthermore, the Gulf War and especially Israel's restraint in not responding militarily to Iraq forces' attacks consolidated American support for Israel. Prior to the war, relations between the Bush administration and Israel had been at low ebb. Direct contact between Washington and Jerusalem had been infrequent and Secretary of State Baker had increasing pressure on Prime Minister Shamir to move forward in response to PLO peace initiatives. The war changed the equation at least temporarily. Israel was subjected to more than forty Iraq forces' attacks and although few deaths resulted and damage was minimal, Israelis were shocked and outraged. The Bush administration appealed to Israel not to respond with military action, in order to keep the Allied coalition together. Israel reluctantly complied and as a result the U.S. indicated it would provide Israel with \$13 billion in aid to assist in the settlement of Soviet Jewish immigrants over the next five years. There was an implicit understanding that the U.S. aid

would not be used to settle new immigrants in the occupied territories; nevertheless, Shamir continued to approve the establishing of new Jewish settlements in the territories. Although Bush and Baker repeatedly called new settlements an obstacle to peace, U.S. protests immediately after the Gulf War were muted (Altınoğlu, 2005).

2.3. Oslo Peace Accords (1993)

In the middle of August 1993, there were published reports that the PLO wanted to develop recent contacts with Israeli officials into a secret but full-fledged channel for direct negotiations. On August 21, Bassam Abu Sharif who was the senior Arafat aide said he expected direct talks soon between Israel and the PLO (Harms and Ferry, 2008). As the world now knows, these talks had in fact been going on for several months and they resulted in perhaps the most surprising, remarkable and significant breakthrough in the history of the Arab – Israeli conflict (Cornish, 1997).

In January, 1993, the Knesset had repealed the PLO contact ban law, so contacts of individuals with PLO members were now no longer illegal. The Israelis kept in touch with Beilin who took the information to Peres and in April, Peres informed Rabin. In April, Abu Alaa also insisted on dealing directly with an Israeli government official and in May, the director general of the Foreign Ministry, Uri Savir, assisted by Yoel Zinger, a legal counsel for the Foreign Ministry took charge (Cornish, 1997). From that point until late August, there were eleven more meetings, with Abu Alaa joined by Taher Shah, a PLO legal advisor. The talks in Norway bypassed the major players in Washington, including the United States. It was a mistake that Palestine and Israel had wanted to continue the process on their own. However, they had forgotten the American factor during the talks. Washington had importance in three points; first of all the US policies had not wanted to any conflict, clash or struggle between two sides on the region; because the US had wanted manage the region

under the control of Israel in peace. Secondly, American power on the region had increased after the Gulf Wars in the first years of the 1990s and that efficiency was an unavoidable truth for the political situation of the relations. Lastly, particularly Palestine had needed the American administration during the talks with Israel. In late August 1993, newspapers around the world began to report that a series of at least fourteen secret meetings between Israeli and PLO officials had been held in Norway since January. On August 20, while visiting Oslo, Foreign Minister Peres witnessed as Abu Alaa and Savir initialed the Declaration of Principles that had finally been hammered out. That document is now sometimes referred to as the Oslo I accord (Said, 2000).

Peres and Holst flew to California on August 27 and briefed as the American secretary of state. Warren Christopher telephoned Rabin for details on Israel's position and then talked to President Clinton who immediately supported the accord. On Tuesday, August 31, the Washington talks resumed but were completely overshadowed by news of the direct talks that had been going on between Israel and the PLO.

On September 1, after a five hour debate, sixteen members of the Israeli cabinet voted in favor of the draft declaration with two abstentions. Elyakim Rubinstein, Israel's chief negotiator with the Palestinians said that the accord enshrined fundamental changes in Israel's position to date, including a readiness to discuss the return to the territories of refugees from 1967 war. The opposition Likud leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, blasted the accord and said "It is not just autonomy and it is not just a Palestinian State in the territories but the start of the destruction of Israel in line with the PLO plan". Former Likud Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir lamented that the peace plan was the brainchild of deluded Israelis who failed to see the threat still posed by the PLO. "The old Testament prophets said it then: Neither Babylon nor Persia presents the danger, but you, the sons of Israel. I am beginning to understand the prophets better" (Harms and Ferry, 2008). Thousands of Jewish settlers and their supporters chanted

“traitor” as they battled police outside Rabin’s office. Arafat over the next weekend after bitter and acrimonious debate secured the backing of the Fatah central committee, in a vote of 10 for to 4 against. Critics charged that the agreement offered the Palestinians much less than the Camp David accords, at least initially. Hamas leaders called Arafat a pimp and a traitor and George Habs said that Arafat could no longer be considered the head of the PLO. Although the Jordanians and Syrians expressed chagrin that they had not been consulted, King Hussein soon voiced his support and it was expected that if the agreement were indeed signed between Israel and the Palestinians, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon would eventually hammer out their differences and sign a statement of principles at least. For months, Israel and Jordan had had an agenda containing the framework of a peace agreement and Peres appearing on American television commented that the differences with Syria were paper thin (Said, 2000).

In addition to the Intifada, the Gulf War of 1991 played a major part in the instigation and fashioning of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict peace process. Aside from confirming the supremacy of American power in the Middle East, the victory of the coalition forces over Saddam Hussein once again split those Arab nations which had formerly been united. With Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia backing the winners and Lebanon, Jordan and the PLO supporting Saddam, further evidence had been offered that there was no natural Arab consensus on regional issues (Mattar 1994, p. 33). With an eye to this division, the US and Israel were quick to seize the opportunity to launch a new diplomatic process. As before, Israel would negotiate with each side separately, making a series of single deals rather than an agreement amenable to all the parties. Since Israel’s closest enemies, Jordan and the Palestinians had backed the wrong horse, Israel might hope for a more favorable resolution in the light of these parties’ embarrassing mistake (Kagan et. Al. 1999).

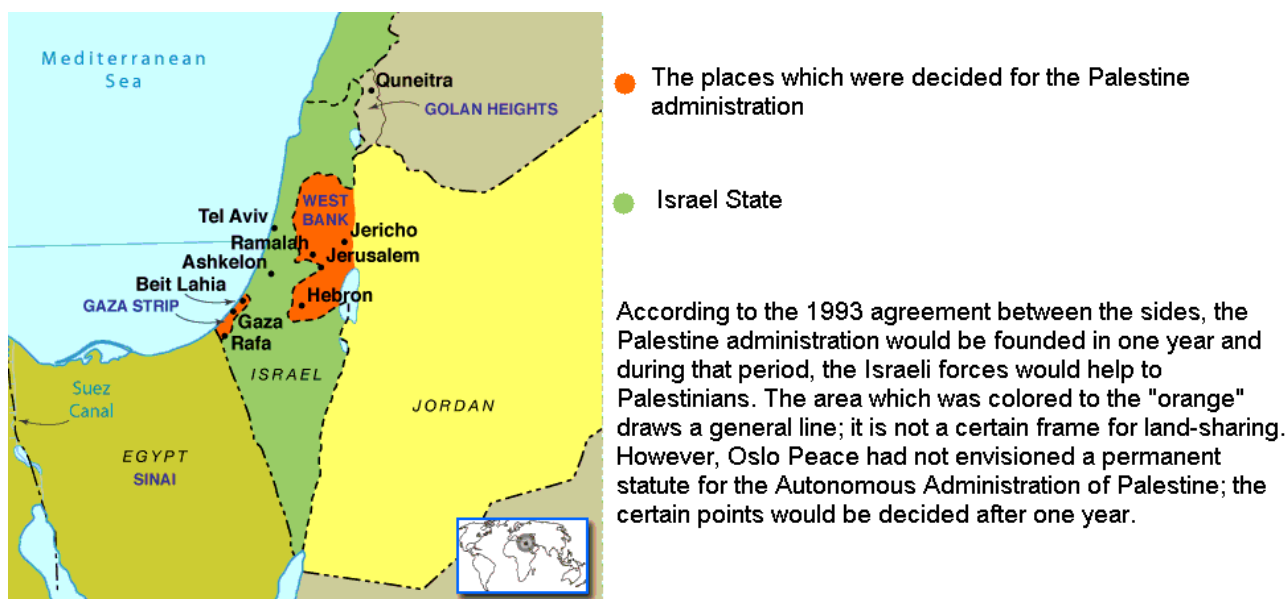


Figure 1: The map which was envisioned by the Oslo I Peace Accords between Israel and Palestine.

(See <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/israel502/additional.html>)

The road to an agreement was a long and hard one for the Palestinians. The most public element of their leadership, the PLO had been on the run from Israel for more than twenty years, condemned generally in Israel and the US as terrorists or worse. Only after elaborate arrangements for indirect talks had been made did Israelis and Palestinians begin to negotiate in earnest. One of the legacies of Israel's occupation had been the expulsion of the PLO; first to Jordan, then to Lebanon and finally North Africa. The absence of the PLO had inevitably distanced the movement from the people living under occupation and a new cadre of political leaders, people like Hannan Ashrawi, Faisal Hussein and Haidar Abdul-Shafi had come to prominence at the head of NGOs, educational or charitable institutions. It was these people who went to Madrid to conduct the negotiations well versed in the actual situation in the occupied territories by virtue of their own experiences there during the decades of Israeli rule (Mattar 1994, p. 39).

By all accounts, the Madrid negotiators concentrated on the realities of Israel's presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and showed a reluctance to become involved in any peace process which did not promise an immediate and substantive withdrawal by the Israeli army. Israel's response to this principled stand, however, was to find other Palestinians that it could do business with. The need to find someone who would do things differently and would make less of an issue of standing on principle, best explains the re-emergence and rehabilitation of Yasser Arafat. The exiled PLO leader was a much better prospect as a negotiating partner than the internal leaders who had taken charge at Madrid meetings since Arafat was considerably more naïve and out of touch than those who had stayed in the territories; not to mention his substantial personal interest in returning from exile to reestablish his own political career in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Kagan & Ozment & Turner and Frankforter, 1999). Thus Israel sent another team of negotiators to begin talking to the PLO in Oslo, unbeknownst to the Palestinian team in Madrid meetings and later in Washington. Arafat's representatives were more open to Israel's suggestions for a protracted withdrawal, alongside various trust building measures which would act as a precondition for the continuation of the process (Ashrawi, 1995). Whereas the Palestinians in Madrid and Washington were unlikely to accept anything other than clear guarantees of Israel's intentions to leave the occupied territories, the Oslo negotiators accepted Israel's jargon of flexibility and mutuality, leaving an enormous number of vital Palestinian claims at mercy of interpretation and most dangerously of all, Israeli good intentions. An ominous note of what was to follow was struck as the Madrid team distanced themselves from Oslo and Arafat's new approach thinking aloud that the Palestinians had perhaps signed up to the wrong kind of peace (Çubukçu, 2002).

Of course, these events seem clearer in retrospect than they did at the time. When the first phase of the Oslo process, the Declaration of Principles was presented in September

1993, many Palestinians imagined that the long Israeli occupation would soon end. The Declaration of Principles contained many statements of good will and intent, but explicitly committed the parties to a solution based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338. Issued by the Security Council after the 1967 and 1973 wars respectively 242 and 338 had long called on Israel to leave the occupied territories in return for recognition from and peace with its neighbors. However, a crucial shift in the interpretation of 242 had taken place after 1971 when Anwar Sadat's apparent willingness to make peace with Israel on the basis of a full withdrawal from the occupied territories threatened to call Israel's bluff and to force an abandonment of land which was already being expropriated and settled. From this time onwards, both Israeli and U.S. officials stressed that 242 urged Israel to leave not the occupied territories but simply occupied territories a semantic evasion which might allow Israel to give back all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip or a mere fraction of it. Although this research hardly represented the original intent of those diplomats who had framed 242 at the UN or even the U.S. position before 1971, the provisions of 242 would always be conditioned not by an authentic interpretation but by the will of the strongest powers (Chapman, 1983).

As we have already seen, Israel's hopes for peace at the outset of Oslo were rather different from those of the Palestinians. By 1993 almost 300,000 settlers were living on land conquered in 1967. The success of the settlement program had made compliance with 242 virtually impossible. More than one half of these settlers lived in Palestinian East Jerusalem, illegally annexed by Israel just after the Six Day War. 242 had been drafted at a time when there were no settlements in place and envisaged a solution to the conflict as it was then. Unfortunately, the Israeli action addressed by 242 had mutated into something immeasurably worse by 1993, making a solution based on a simple Israeli withdrawal both anachronistic and impracticable (Chapman, 1983).

The solution to this difficulty was thus to reinterpret 242 as allowing for only a limited return of parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip a strategy which would isolate Israel within the international community, but which might still succeed given the support of the U.S.. In the drafting of the Declaration of Principles, therefore, the U.S. and Israel cleverly installed 242 at the centre of the peace process and simultaneously excluded from Oslo the many other UN resolutions on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Those resolutions were ignored and 242 were left as the sole guarantor of Palestinian rights. Given the extent of the Israeli settlement program and the proven ability of the U.S. and Israel to advance an interpretation of 242 that was entirely at odds with a full Israeli withdrawal the foundations of the peace process were far from secure (Ashrawi, 1995).

Four years after the signing of the Declaration of Principles and two years after the Interim Agreement, the pattern of Oslo had become clear. Israel had succeeded in withdrawing from the most populous Palestinian area and had consolidated its grasp on the remaining territory of the West Bank. The Gaza Strip home to only 5000 Jewish settlers but containing valuable water resources desperately needed by its one million Palestinian citizens had been partitioned to allow one third of the land and all of the water to be controlled by Israel. If Palestinians had hoped that the momentum of a peace process would force Israel to end its occupation and recognize its Palestinians neighbors the experience of Oslo proved that such an outcome was fantastical. The Palestinian authority controlled less than two thirds of Gaza and only %3 of the West Bank; water supplies were still subject to military orders and controlled by Israel inequitably (Hilal, 1998). Meanwhile, settlement building throughout the West Bank and in East Jerusalem continued unabated whilst the newly completed by-pass roads stretched around the West Bank settlements choking the possibility of Palestinian sovereignty. The Palestinian population languished in the cities frequently confined there by Israeli border closures and always subject to the scrutiny of troops stationed outside each

town and the Palestinian leadership found that its own survival depended increasingly on the passage of a peace process which was anathema to the Palestinian people. With the continuation of terrorist attacks inside Israel, the ongoing repression of Palestinians by the Israeli army of the Palestinian authority and the accelerated construction of the settlements which had caused the conflict in the first instance, the Oslo process has actually worsened the situation in the occupied territories and confounded the possibility of a lasting peace (Hilal, 1998).

2.4. Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty (1994)

As the Palestinian authority began to take control in Gaza, Israel, and Jordan moved closer to ending the state of war between the two countries. King Hussein was determined to be a player in the peace process and to consolidate and protect his own interests in the wake of the accord between the PLO and Israel without waiting for similar progress in Israel's dealings with Syria or other Arab countries. He was also eager for American assistance in rebuilding the Jordanian economy, devastated by the consequences of the Gulf War. According to new reports that were not denied, Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and the king had met secretly in Washington in early June and agreed to reopen bilateral negotiations that had been suspended in February as a result of the Hebron mosque incident (Mattar 1994, p. 44).

In the middle of July 1994, Israeli and Jordanian negotiators met publicly for the first time in their own region at Ein Avrona, Israel, in a tent straddling their common desert border. Two days later, Israel foreign minister Peres crossed the border to meet Jordanian Prime Minister Abdul Salam al-Majali and U.S. secretary of state Warren Christopher. These unprecedented meetings paved the way for a ceremony on 25 July on the White House lawn where Prime Minister Rabin and King Hussein officially declared an end to the state of war that had existed between Israel and Jordan for forty-six years (Kupchan, 1998). The two

leaders appeared before a joint session of the U.S. Congress, the first time two world leaders had addressed a joint session and they pledged to work toward a peace treaty. As a result, on July 29, congressional leaders agreed to speed up relief of the approximately \$700 million Jordanian debt by up to \$220 million with future relief dependent on progress toward a final peace agreement support for ending the Arab economic boycott and full compliance with international sanctions against Iraq (Harms and Ferry, 2008).

The Washington Declaration, as the July 25 Declaration was called paved the way for cooperation between Jordan and Israel on several fronts, including opening direct telephone links and new border crossing points, establishing air service between the two countries and sharing in water resources, Jordan also agreed to seek an end to the Arab economic boycott against Israel and Israel agreed to respect Jordan's special role with regard to the Muslim Holy Places in Jerusalem, a move that greatly angered the Palestinians and other Arab leaders (Beinin and Hajjar).

These developments prompted terrorist incidents. A horrific bombing of a Jewish cultural center in Argentina claimed at least 100 lives and several bomb attacks occurred in London. Nevertheless, on August 3, the Israeli Knesset overwhelmingly approved the historic agreement with Jordan and Rabin personally informed King Hussein of the vote as the king, escorted by Israeli Air Forces F15s piloted his jet through Israeli airspace for the first time and circled Jerusalem on his way home to Amman from a trip to London. On October 26, 1994, a formal peace treaty was signed just north of Aqaba in Wadi Arav by Rabin and Jordanian foreign minister Majali with President Clinton as a co-signer. The two countries established diplomatic relations on November 27, 1994 (Smith, 2009).

As these events unfolded, other Arab countries, with the notable exceptions of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Libya also moved cautiously toward recognition of the Jewish state. As early as January 1994, Qatar's foreign minister held a secret meeting in London with Israeli

officials to discuss a \$1 billion gas deal with Israel. In September 1994, Israel and Morocco agreed to establish liaison offices and at the beginning of October, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain announced a partial lifting of the Arab economic boycott by canceling the boycott of secondary or tertiary parties doing business with Israel. That same month, Israel and Tunisia announced a low level exchange of representatives (Christison and Christison, 2009).

The Israel – Jordan Peace can seem like a new and positive period for the Israeli – Arab relations. At truth, it was useful for the future happenings between two sides. Rabin and Hussein's friendship and their mutual good will could be the first step of a permanent peace. However, it is important to see that the Israeli – Arab peace does not only depend on the Israeli – Jordan peace; because, with all facts, the Israeli – Jordan peace was a great step; but it was not a good sign for the future of the Israel – Palestine conflict (Smith, 2009). Generally, Palestine was out of that peace talks and the agreement was signed without any other Arab countries including Palestine.

In the region, the reflections of that peace agreement between Israel and Jordan had become in an unexpected situation. There were three basic problems after the agreement. First of all, the Israeli public opinion had divided into two opposite sides: some of the Israeli society was against any peace agreement with any Arab state. For the nationalist and extreme religious politicians were exactly criticized the situation of the peace process. The other part of the society had supported the peace agreement until the end because of that they had not wanted to see any clashes near their lands anymore (Ashrawi, 1995). Secondly, the Arab society and the other Arab states in the Middle East region had not welcomed the situation between Israel and Jordan; the peace was a great sign for the future, but, the peace process had been advanced secretly and the other Arab states had been externalized from the peace process. The last one, the extreme groups in Palestine had seen that incident a great chance for

their aims and profits to attack Israel. Particularly, the Islamic extreme groups had blamed Jordan as traitor for the Arab world (Said, 2000). The terrorism fact was one of the realities of those terms and the Israel – Jordan peace could not serve the peace on the region really. If we think about the political conditions of the term after the Gulf War, the political oppositions were in a sensitive balance and the Israeli – Jordan peace had damaged that balance situation.

2.5. Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the Assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (1995)

The incident of terrorism greatly eroded support throughout the Israeli population for the peace agenda. Israeli settlers motivated by religious and nationalist ideologies became increasingly angry and disillusioned with Rabin's attitude toward them and toward their objective of retaining all of Eretz Yisrael. Rabin denounced the settlers as a burden on the army in its fight against radical Palestinians. Rabin had said settlements added nothing absolutely to Israel's security. Nervous settlers had begun staking out claims to hilltops and lands they were afraid would be returned to the Palestinians and they and their supporters blocked Israeli highways to protest the planned expansion of Palestinian self rule. Ugly protest demonstrations were held in front of the prime minister's home and posters of Rabin in Nazi garb or wearing a kaffiyeh began to appear (Kupchan, 1998). A group of rabbis, called the refusal rabbis, issued a ruling that soldiers should disobey any orders to dismantle West Bank army bases. As the Israeli government continued to counter demonstrators, sometimes harshly, the Likud and other right wing opposition parties stepped up their rhetoric against Rabin and the peace process.

Palestinian and Israeli negotiators, however, continued to meet to try to hammer out the details of implementing the September 1993 accord. On August 27, 1995, the Palestinian authority and Israel signed an early empowerment agreement in Cairo, transferring

administrative power to the Palestine authority in eight areas like labor, trade and industry, gas and petroleum, insurance, statistics, agriculture, postal services and local government and Israeli and Palestinian negotiators continued discussions on the transfer of authority in more than twenty other areas. Previously, key differences had been reached on security and division of control over land and a compromise was reached on water allocation with Israel officially recognizing Palestinian rights to water sources in the West Bank. Israel agreed that Palestinians in East Jerusalem would be allowed to vote in Palestine elections. The Palestinians accepted that and IDF presence would remain in Hebron near Jewish areas and that Israel would continue to be responsible for security at the Tomb of the Patriarchs and for the traffic route between Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba and Hebron (Shlaim, 1995). Palestinian police would cover the rest of the city an overall agreement was finally reached at Taba on September 24, 1995 on the eve of the Jewish new year. It was signed in Washington on September 28, 1995, in a somber ceremony attended by Arafat, Rabin, Peres, Mubarak and Hussein that was in stark contrast to the celebration that had occurred two years earlier (Harms and Ferry, 2008).

The Israel – Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip known variously, as the Interim agreement or Oslo II or the Taba accord was the second phase of the process that had begun with the establishment of the Palestinian authority in Gaza and Jericho in May 1994 and it set the stage for the final status talks to begin by May 1996. The agreement provided for the Israel Defense Forces to redeploy from the cities of Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqilya, Nablus, Bethlehem and Ramallah and from 450 Palestinian villages. Elections would then be held for a Palestinian legislative council and the head of the council (Hilal, 1998). In Hebron, the army would redeploy, but special security arrangements would apply. Further redeployment from sparsely populated areas comprising state land, settlement areas and military installations would occur at the six month intervals and be completed

within eighteen months from the inauguration of the Council (Harms and Ferry, 2008). In these areas, Israel would retain full responsibility for security and public order. Other provisions concerned prisoner releases, the allocation of water resources and a commitment by the PLO to amend its covenant within two months after the inauguration.

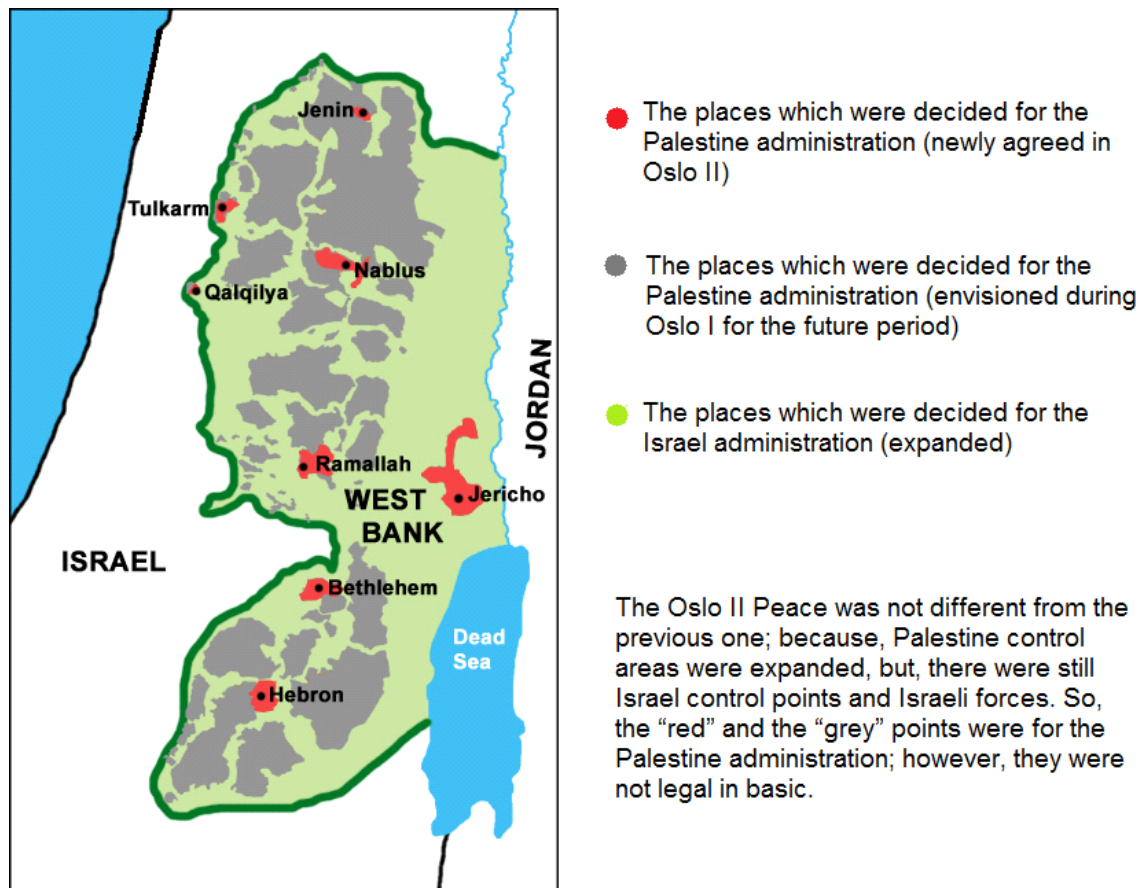


Figure 2: The general view of the Interim Bank Agreement which was also called as Oslo II.

(See <http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=000754>)

Israel began its pullout from some smaller West Bank villages in early October and on October 25 the IDF began to withdraw from Jenin, the first large Arab population center named in the agreement. Despite what seemed to be a promising step toward the implementation of peace between Israel and the Palestinians, there were many on both sides that saw the situation in a different light. Palestinian negotiators and much of the ordinary Palestinian population were suspicious of the agreement’s provisions for the step by step

transfer of land and power. They were dismayed that Israel would continue to occupy large parts of the West Bank while the Palestine authorities would only gradually assume administrative and security functions. They also feared that Israel intended to provide long term protection for Jewish settlers and would never withdraw fully to allow the creation of Palestinian state. In attempting to reassure Israelis, Foreign Minister Peres noted that under the accord, Israel would maintain control of 73 percent of the land, 80 percent of the water and 97 percent of the security arrangements a statement that only intensified Palestinian anxiety (Said, 2000). The Islamic militants were violently opposed to anti accommodation with Israel and their terrorist attacks were directed not only against Israel but against the credibility of Yasser Arafat.

For their part, many ordinary Israelis had misgivings about entrusting their security to a man that seemed incapable or unwilling to deal decisively with the extremist groups. For the right wing religious and nationalist extremists in Israel, the Oslo II provisions had made the possibility of giving up part of biblical Israel very real and as Israeli soldiers prepared to turn over villages, towns and cities on the West Bank to the Palestinian authority, they increasingly branded Rabin a traitor. There were even some rabbis who called for his death (Beinin and Hajjar).

On November 4, 1995, a Jewish zealot, Yigal Amir, assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Amir, from the town of Herzliya and a law student at Bar-Han University said that he was acting on God's order to prevent the land of Israel from being turned over to the Palestinians. Ironically, this murder, the first political assassination of a Jew by a Jew in Israel's modern history, occurred just after Rabin had addressed a huge peace rally in Kings of Israel Square in Tel Aviv, where over 100,000 Israelis had gathered to support the peace process and to sing a song of peace. For the first time, anyone could

recalled, Rabin himself had sung along a sheet with the bloodstained words of this song was found later in his jacket pocket (Harms and Ferry, 2008).

All of Israel and much of the world was stunned. At first, many thought the assailant had acted in revenge for the murder of Fathi Shqaqi, the leader of Islamic Jihad who had been killed in Malta in late October, probably by agents of Mossad. When it became clear that Rabin's assassin was a Jew, even most of his political opponents were horrified and the nation was plunged into grief and soul searching. For most Israelis, even those who disagreed with the course he had embarked upon, Rabin had brought credibility to the peace process that no other Israeli leader possessed. His life and career had been concerned with the defense of the state: As a young commander in elite commando unit, Palmach, during Israel's war for independence; as army chief of staff in 1967; as authorizer of Israel's stunning raid on Entebbe in 1976 and as a defense minister during the Intifada (Smith, 2009). Known as "Mr. Security" it was almost universally believed that he would never jeopardize Israel's security in any kind of territorial compromise. He had outraged Jewish extremists, however, by his conversion, from defense minister who advocated breaking the bones of the young rock throwers of the Intifada to prime minister who came to believe that Israel could not preserve its Jewish and democratic character while continuing to rule over almost 2 million Palestinians who loathed Israeli occupation and sought to determine their own destiny.

An astonishing array of heads of state and other dignitaries, including several from Arab countries, arrived in Jerusalem for Yitzhak Rabin's funeral on Mount Herzl on November 6. Obvious affection for Rabin was illustrated by the moving words of President Clinton of the United States and King Hussein of Jordan who called him his brother. Mubarak's speech was respectful, if detached; the president of Egypt was making his first trip to Israel since the signing of the Egyptian – Israeli peace treaty in Washington in 1979 (Beinin and Hajjar). Although Yasser Arafat did not attend for security reasons, he paid a

condolence call to Leah Rabin and her family in Tel Aviv and publicly expressed sorrow over the assassination.

No doubt this incredible gathering of world leaders and the outpouring of condolences from capitals throughout the world reassured Israelis that their state was recognized as a nation among the nations and that Rabin's path to peace was supported by the world community. And yet, even as Shimon Peres pledged to continue the process there were many questions being asked about the acting prime minister's ability to do so and the process itself. Granted, Benjamin Netanyahu and the Likud were on the defensive, at least temporarily as critics including Rabin's widow, Leah, excoriated the opposition parties for condoning the rhetoric of hatred which they blamed for poisoning the atmosphere of civil discourse and leading to Rabin's murder. After Israeli president Weizman asked Peres to form a new government Netanyahu pledged to support him as prime minister until new elections were held and polls taken shortly after the assassination showed that 70 percent of Israelis were in support of the peace process. But the political divide appeared to be deep and it widened in the coming months (Harms and Ferry, 2008).

Would Shimon Peres be able to unify the nation and move ahead in implementing the peace accords? Although Peres had been responsible for building up Israel's military industrial complex and had initiated its nuclear program, he had never served in the military and was perceived as an urbane intellectual, a dreamer and visionary, as different in personality and appeal from the blunt, earthy, soldier hero Rabin as night and day. Peres are often considered the architect of the peace process, but he and Rabin eventually came to share the common goal of peace with the Palestinians. Whether he was the person to guide that dream to fruition remained to be seen (Harms and Ferry, 2008).

2.6. Maryland Summit and the Wye River Memorandum (1998)

Back in the Middle East, Netanyahu and Arafat broke bread together on October 7, 1998, as Netanyahu crossed for the first time to the Palestinian side of the Erez checkpoint near Gaza in an impromptu end to Madeleine Albright's two day trip to the area. An announcement was also made that talks would begin on October 15 at the Wye River plantation in Maryland, the same location where Israel-Syria talks had been held three years before (Said, 2000).

Meanwhile, Arafat had set up three committees like political, economic and legal to prepare for a possible declaration of statehood. Israel continued to create facts on the ground by consolidating the settler presence at Tel Rumeida, for example, a small Jewish enclave in Hebron. Settler numbers had continued to rise and work continued on a ring road around Jerusalem to connect settlements south of the city with those in the north (Peleg, 1998).

Interestingly, Netanyahu named Ariel Sharon as Foreign Minister on October 10, possibly to mollify his right wing supporters or to provide a broader base of support for concessions he might have to make during the Wye talks. It is not clear why Sharon accepted the position, although he said it was to be in a better position to fight for the Land of Israel. Both, Sharon and Netanyahu talked tough before the Wye conference, but it was widely expected that some agreement would be signed.

Talks began at Wye on October 15, 1998, with Netanyahu, Arafat, Albright and CIA Director George Tenet as full time participants. President Clinton made it clear that he would not try again if the talks failed. Polls in Israel also indicated that over 80 percent wanted some agreement to be reached at Wye and 57 percent supported an additional withdrawal. Arafat had to show that he was not simply a pawn of the United States and Israel. And he could deliver for the Palestinians. Although appearing weak and physically ill, he had the May 4 card in his pocket to play if necessary (Cleveland, 2000). Netanyahu had to be able to satisfy

his critics that gains in security justified the surrender of more territory. Both leaders ran the risk of alienating their most right wing opponents: For Netanyahu, the settlers and the parties supporting them and for Arafat, if he accepted a strict security agreement, elements of Hamas and other groups.

The Wye talks proceeded slowly and in an atmosphere of mutual distrust. Appearances by Clinton and King Hussein of Jordan who traveled to the conference site two times from the Mayo clinic where he was undergoing treatment for cancer, helped keep the talks moving, but hardliners on both sides condemned the negotiations and a grenade assault in Beersheba by Hamas militants wounded 67 Israelis. Although the main outlines of an agreement had more or less been a given, the key elements did not fall into place until October 22 (Said, 2000). Netanyahu demanded and gained Israel's defensive and deterrent capabilities and upgrading the strategic, military and technical cooperation between the two countries. His last minute unsuccessful attempt to secure the release of convicted spy Jonathan Pollard, however, almost derailed the proceedings. On October 23, 1998, in a White House ceremony, Wye River Memorandum was signed.

At Wye, both sides bowed to the inevitable and accepted what was possible rather than what was desired. The two sides agreed upon an Israeli redeployment plan and a security cooperation plan. The agreements also included a provision for the PNC to eliminate articles in the Charter calling for Israel's destruction. It mandated that the PA imprison thirty murder suspects and make sure they remained in prison and that the PA confiscate illegal weapons and reduce the Palestinian police force to the size agreed upon in the Oslo II accords. Following compliance, Israel would carry out in phases the first and second of three additional redeployments called for in previous agreements. A combined 13 percent of the West Bank would be transferred from Area C. twelve percent would become Area B which 3 percent would be designated as a nature reserve and 1 percent would become part of Area A.

In addition, 14.2 percent of Area B would be transferred to Area A. Israel would also release 750 Palestinian prisoners who were not Hamas members and who did not have Jewish or Israeli blood on their hands (Shlaim, 2001). Negotiations on a third redeployment would be deferred until a later date. Under these arrangements, Israel retained full military and civilian control of 60 percent of the West Bank. The Palestinians increased the area of full control from their present 3 percent to about 18.2 percent and shared with Israel control of 21.8 percent (Peleg, 1998).



Figure 3: The map which was envisioned during the Wye River Memorandum.

(See “Christison, K. and Christison, B. (2009). Palestine in Pieces: Graphic Perspectives on the Israeli Occupation. Pluto Press, pp. 139)

The by now familiar pattern of extremist opposition greeted the Wye arrangements. In Israel, there were demonstrations against Netanyahu and talk of new elections. Not surprisingly, the prime minister found pretexts to stop the implementation of the agreement. Already within a few days of the signing, he persuaded Arafat to agree to a postponement of the start of the deal until the Cabinet and Knesset had ratified it. Finally, after a two weeks

delay, the Israeli Cabinet in an 8-4 vote, with 5 abstentions, ratified Wye but attached stipulations and threats (Said, 2000). It reiterated that the entire PNC should meet to revise the charter; that in a third redeployment, Israel would withdraw from no more than an additional 1 percent of territory and that the Cabinet would reconvene to reconsider approval after each phase of the twelve weeks implementation period.

It should be noted in passing that the agreement was based on reciprocity and a detailed outline of when commitments were to be fulfilled. If a stage were unfulfilled, the next stage would not be launched. Israel used the reciprocity clauses to delay compliance. Thus, although the United States approved the PLO security plan which was presented on time, Netanyahu on the excuse it did not contain a specific timetable for the arrest of thirty wanted men over the next twelve weeks, delayed presenting the accord to the Cabinet until November 5. Then a car bomb in Mahane Yehuda market killed the two assailants but wounded several people just in the midst of Cabinet discussions on implementation of Wye (Peleg, 1998).

The PLO faced similar problems. Leaders of radical Palestinian factions in Syria renewed their opposition to canceling articles in the Charter and called for elections of a new Palestinian parliament. The Hezbollah leader in Lebanon, Sheikh Nasrollah called for Arafat's assassination. Even Iranian president Khatami voiced his opposition to the Wye memorandum. Nevertheless, Palestinian police rounded up an estimated 300 Hamas followers and put Sheikh Yassin under house arrest after a thwarted suicide bombing on an Israeli school bus that he was released in December (Shlaim, 2001). There also appeared to be some disagreement between the lead Palestinian negotiator, Mahmoud Abbas and the head of Palestinian Security Services in Gaza, Muhammed Dahlan over the Wye arrangements signaling a potential post-Arafat leadership struggle. Both men would also have to combat the powerful head of the Palestinian Security Services on the West Bank, Jibril Rajoub and Hamas elements. Arafat faced a dilemma with Hamas and Islamic Jihad because of the social

services, free schools and clinics provided by those groups as compared to the minimum services offered by the PA. The PA legislature had enacted 59 laws since being established in 1996, but as of 1999 only a few had received Arafat's necessary signature. Corruption among the ministers also did not help relations with the legislature (Cleveland, 2000).

The first Israeli redeployment had been scheduled for November 16 but was delayed because the Knesset had not yet endorsed the Wye agreement. On November 17, the Knesset approved Wye in a 75-19 vote with 9 abstentions and the Cabinet in a 7-5 vote with 3 abstentions gave the go ahead to the first stage: Transfer of 2 percent from the Jenin area of the West Bank from sole Israeli control to joint Palestinian jurisdiction and 7.1 percent from joint jurisdiction to sole Palestinian control. This redeployment began on November 20 and resulted in the Palestinian controlled territory growing from 3 to 10.1 percent and Area B now standing at 18.6 percent. Israel released 250 prisoners, 150 of whom were mostly criminals, not political prisoners (Said, 2000).

There was also movement on the economic front. Trade talks commenced for the first time between Israel, Jordan and the PA. On November 24, a Palestinian international airport was opened in Gaza. At a donors' conference at the end of November, 43 nations pledged more than \$3 billion dollars to the Palestinians. The EU offered \$2 billion over 5 years and the United States indicated it would increase its contribution by adding \$400 million to the \$100 million it planned to donate over five years (Shlaim, 2001).

Both Clinton and Netanyahu were experiencing serious domestic troubles at this time. Clinton, in fact, flew to the Middle East to oversee the PNC meeting that would discuss the PLO Charter, just as the Judiciary Committee in the House of Representatives was meeting to decide whether to approve articles of impeachment against him. In Israel, the Knesset decided to hold a no-confidence vote against Netanyahu in two weeks' time. On December 7, Israeli lawmakers at the last minute postponed a vote to take a first step toward

dissolving parliament and calling new elections, as unrest and demonstrations broke out in the West Bank over the issue of the Palestinian prisoners. President Clinton whose trip had been written into the Wye memorandum was clearly sailing into muddy waters. The PA and the United States were closer, but some Palestinians as well as the Israelis were having problems with that connection because of U.S. bombing attacks not only in Iraq, but also in Sudan and Afghanistan because of their alleged connection with terrorist cells masterminded by Osama Bin Laden whom the United States hold responsible for embassy bombings in Tanzania and Kenya that killed over 200 people. Nevertheless, on December 14, with Clinton in attendance in Gaza, the PNC, in a show of hands, renounced those clauses in the PLO Charter offensive to Israel (Wasserstein, 2001). The President had flown into Jerusalem on Air Force One, but took a helicopter to Gaza, thus avoiding an official recognition of Palestinian sovereignty, although his appearance in Gaza came very close to doing just that.

Despite the PNC vote, Israel said it would not meet the December 18 timetable for the next pullback which made Netanyahu appear stand up to U.S. pressure in a kind of desperate bid to save his coalition. But he was in plenty of trouble anyway. His 1999 budget was stuck and his Finance Minister walked out. On December 21, 1998, an overwhelming majority, including the prime minister himself, voted to dissolve the government. May 17, 1999 was later set as the date for new elections. All this, of course, produced a stalemate in the peace process.

By the end of 1998, Netanyahu and the Likud could no longer claim to be upholding the ideology of Greater Israel. As New York Times editorialist Thomas Friedman wryly observed, after spending time not crossing the Rubicon so much as swimming laps back and forth in it, Netanyahu finally did cross the Wye River. Unlike the Hebron agreement which was a left over Labor legacy, the Wye agreement was his own, although the seeds for this ideological betrayal had perhaps been sown in 1978 by another Likud leader, Menachem

Begin. Despite his rhetoric to the contrary, Begin had refrained from annexing the occupied territories, proposed autonomy for the Palestinians and signed the Camp David accords. Wye may have expanded the political center in Israel, but it shattered the political right wing. But where else could the right wing turn? As for the Labor party led by Ehud Barak who had replaced Shimon Peres at its head in 1997, Netanyahu deal knocked it off its feet (Wasserstein, 2001).

2.7. The Camp David Summit (2000)

At Camp David on July 11, 2000, U.S. convened a summit to resolve, once and for all, one of the most momentous conflicts of the 20th century. The conflict involved a struggle between two nationalities for land and power as most wars do but it also involved on both a symbolic and material level issues that are central to the self-definition of the three great monotheistic traditions, Judaism, Islam and Christianity. A resolution to this conflict would require a resolution to the struggle over who would control Jerusalem, a holy city for all three religions, home to the Temple Mount for Jews, the Church for the Holy Sepulcher for Christians and the Haram al-sharif for Muslims all of which lie in an area occupied by Israel since 1967 and illegally annexed in 1980 (Chapman, 1983).

President Clinton would assume these heavy burdens and be expected, maybe unfairly to bring finality to the corollaries of two great injustices; namely, Christian Europe's persecution of its Jewish population, culminating in the extermination of six million Jews during the Holocaust and the concurrent creation of a Jewish haven in Palestine that trampled on the rights of the indigenous Palestinians, who like other people throughout history including the American Indians had had the misfortune of standing in the way of another people's settlement and conquest (Turhan, 2003).

Outside the confines of the president's official retreat in the deep woods of Maryland's Catoctin Mountains, the world below held its breath as decisions were being made about the future of the Middle East. Finding a solution to bridge the differences was the most unenviable task a leader could confront; for this reason Clinton deliberately set low expectations. But there was nothing he could say or do once the decision had been made to convene a summit that would undermine the dreams held by so many that maybe the elusive peace would be discovered in Maryland and later find its way to the people of the Holy Land.

Camp David is one of the most secure installations in the U.S. government arsenal. At all time, but particularly during the summit, concentric rings of security provide its occupants with the utmost protection; the outer layers with local police and deputy sheriffs, Secret Service agents and high tech surveillance equipment and fences. The inner layers with heavily armed, infantry trained Marines and a variety of Praetorian guards from multiple federal agencies charged with both protecting the leaders from physical harm or embarrassment and preserving the secrecy of what happens inside from the outside world's unwelcome penetration (Shlaim, 2001).

Steps were being taken to revive the stalled peace talks on the Israel-Palestine front which had been overshadowed by the events in Lebanon. In one development, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators met in Jericho to discuss release of the 1650 Palestinian prisoners. On June 1, after Israel agreed to allow more liberal family visitations, study through Palestinian universities, more telephone privileges etc., the 500 or so who had been on a liquid diet for a month gave up their hunger strike, thus averting a further round of street protests. There was no immediate resolution of this issue.

On June 5, 2000, Madeleine Albright began a 3 day Mideast swing that included a meeting with Barak, a conversation with Arafat and a meeting with Syrian and Egyptian officials in Cairo. Rumors began to fly that Barak was ready to relinquish over 90 percent of

the West Bank to the Palestinians including at least part of the Jordan valley and to grant them municipal authority over part of Jerusalem. This precipitated a parliamentary bill to dissolve the government and move to new elections. Clearly, Barak was on very shaky ground.

In the midst of this swirl of events came the startling news on June 10, 2000 that President Assad of Syria had died. There had been talk for years about his failing health and different scenarios had been posed for when the inevitable occurred, but the news still came suddenly and unexpectedly. Maybe, with some kind of premonition, Assad had planned to convene a meeting of the Baath party the next week in order to receive its endorsement of his son Bashar to succeed him. The night of Assad's death, the party's leaders met and unanimously nominated Bashar for the post of president and the parliament held a special session to amend the constitution, reducing the minimum age for president from 40 to 34 years of Bashar's age. Vice president Abdul Halim Khaddam appointed Bashar commander of the armed forces, after promoting him from colonel to lieutenant general and at the Baath party congress, the first in 15 years, held as scheduled by Assad the next week, Bashar was unanimously elected the party's secretary general and nominated formally by the entire membership to be president. He was then endorsed by the 250 member parliament and on July 10, 1999 in a "yes or no" vote, over 97 percent of the population confirmed him as a president (Shlaim, 2001).

Throughout June 2000, the U.S. was actively involved in trying to facilitate final status talks. With Ross in the area and Albright was expected, Barak began to push for a three way summit to achieve a framework agreement, but it was clear that the Palestinians resisted the idea of a summit because they feared the combined pressure upon them of the U.S. and Israel. Albright arrived on June 27; however, after intensive discussions with both sides, she announced that perhaps the time was not yet right for a summit.

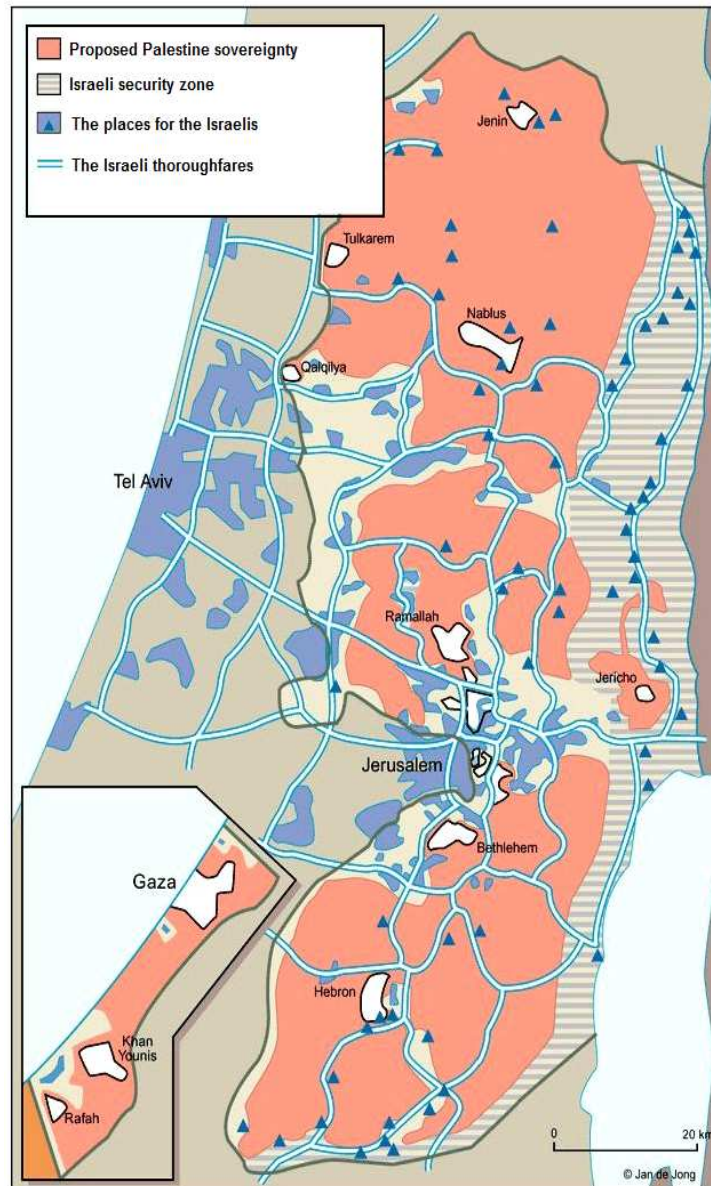


Figure 4: The reflection of Camp David’s results to the map.

(See <http://www.tomhull.com/ocston/projects/ajvp/wp7.php>)

Events then began to assume logic of their own. Frustrated with the lack of progress, Arafat began to renew threats of a unilateral declaration of statehood and to warn that violence could erupt if the September 13 deadline for a final peace agreement were not met. On July 3, 2000, the PLO Central Council, the chief policy making body of the Palestinians wrapped up two days of closed door meeting in Gaza and issued a statement telling the Palestinians to get ready for statehood by September 13 and stating their determination to

declare the independence by that time, whether or not a permanent peace deal was reached with Israel. It was clear that if a unilateral declaration of statehood were made, Israel might respond by annexing swaths of the West Bank and violence could result (Wasserstein, 2001).

With these developments, President Clinton, on July 5, said that he would summon Barak and Arafat to Camp David for summit meetings to begin on July 11 to arrive at a framework agreement for a final peace settlement. It was a grave risk for the president and also for the Palestinians and Israelis. The immediate response in Israel was the defection from Barak's coalition of Sharansky's party with its 4 seats, the NRP with its 5 seats and Shas with its 17 leaving Barak with a minority government of 42 of 120 members. On the every eve of the summit, Barak narrowly escaped a no-confidence vote in the Knesset. A summit also put pressure on Arafat who would be offered and pressured to accept significant concessions on Israel's part which fell short of Palestinian aspirations and declared positions (Wasserstein, 2001). With the American elections impending though failure would mean end of the whole process for the foreseeable future and unpredictable results should the parties take matters in their own hands.

The Camp David summit opened on July 11, 2000, but after 15 days of intense negotiations that often lasted well into the night, it ended on July 25 with no resolution of the issues. President Clinton was on hand, except for a brief trip to Japan to attend the G8 summit and took an active role, along with Albright, Sandy Berger, the U.S. National Security Advisor and Dennis Ross. Despite high hopes, the red lines of the two sides as they entered the talks were unbridgeable. On borders, Israel offered to withdraw from over 90 percent of the West Bank, exclusive of Jerusalem and its environs, but wanted to annex those parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip with major Jewish settlements closest to Israel proper and possibly retain part of the Jordan valley. Presumably, Israeli settlements not annexed by Israel would

be evacuated. The Palestinians insisted on Israel withdrawing from all the territory captured in 1967 War, including all of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem.

On Jerusalem, Israel would turn over Abu Dis and other suburbs of East Jerusalem to the Palestinians for the capital of a Palestinian state. Israel would also give Palestinians municipal autonomy in parts of East Jerusalem as well as the right to fly the Palestinian flag over the Muslim and Christian holy places. But Israel would not surrender sovereignty of East Jerusalem to the Palestinians as Arafat demanded the right of return of all the refugees and their descendants displaced by Israel's creation in 1948 and an admission by Israel of responsibility for their plight. Israel refused to accept moral or legal responsibility for the refugee problem and wanted it solved not by repatriation but by compensation through international aid (Shlaim, 1995). Despite the news blackout from Camp David, some give was reported on some of the issues; however, the talks foundered on the question of Jerusalem. There did not seem to be any way that Israel would share sovereignty over the city or give up parts of East Jerusalem to the Palestinians and no way that Arafat could accept less than full sovereignty over all of East Jerusalem which the Palestinians desire as the capital of a Palestinian state (Turhan, 2003).

However, there were some positive results from the Camp David summit. For the first time, the principal players, Arafat and Barak had meet face to face to discuss the most intractable issues including Jerusalem and there seemed a genuine desire to reach some kind of agreement. President Clinton praised Barak for the concessions he appeared willing to make, but both men were the clear losers at Camp David. Clinton did not get the breakthrough agreement he had hoped would cap his presidency and Barak returned to Israel to face another no-confidence vote which he survived, but only barely. In other embarrassment, the Knesset elected Moshe Katsav over Shimon Peres as the new president of the state to replace Ezer Weizman who had resigned over fraud allegations. Peres who was an architect of the Oslo

accords, former Prime Minister and Nobel laureate was the clear favorite of the Israeli public, but he was tainted with the failures and suspicions of the peace process. Katsav who was an Iranian born Likud legislator won the victory in a largely political vote in the Knesset. Despite these setbacks, however, because the Knesset began a three month recess until October; Barak was freer to pressure his own agenda and perhaps for the Palestinians there was an opportunity to continue negotiating since under a different presumably hawkish, Israeli government, they could not count on the same concessions offered by Barak.

Unlike Barak, Arafat returned to Gaza in a blaze of glory hailed as a new Saladin who had held his ground and had not given an inch on any of the Palestinian positions. He again reiterated that he would declare a state by September 13 with or without an agreement with Israel. But what kind of state would it be? And of what would it consist? And how would the Palestinians wrest control of the water supplies and other resources now controlled by Israel? And would Israel move in to annex portions of the West Bank? Would violence result? Would the armies of the other Arab states be involved? These were all worrisome questions.

3. The Second Intifada (Al-Aqsa Intifada) (2000)

In early September, the 129 member Palestinian Central Committee after a two day debate decided to postpone a declaration of statehood on September 13. However, Palestinian anger and frustration toward Israel, the Palestinian authority and the entire Oslo process simmered. Palestinians chafed under what they considered continued Israeli control over their daily lives and resented the expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. They also felt betrayed by the Palestinian authority which seemed to be in collusion with Israel and which they had been led to believe would result in the return of all the occupied territory including East Jerusalem. The impasse at Camp David seemed to bring the whole process to a halt. There were efforts to get the two sides together again and in late September Arafat traveled to Barak's home at Kochav Yair where the two evidently spent a pleasant evening together. Nothing substantive resulted, however and a few days later came the spark that ignited the tinderbox situation that had been in the making (Carey, 2004).

On September 28, Likud leader Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount-Haram Al-Sharif accompanied by a phalanx of Israeli police. Although Sharon did not enter the Al-Aqsa mosque of the Dome of the Rock, the Muslim sacred sites built on the Mount, he did make a speech in which he pledged that Israeli would never give up the Mount. This provocative act and the massive police presence touched off riots the next day in which Palestinian demonstrators were fired on by Israeli soldiers. The death of the young Palestinians had created the chaos area on the region again and this time the return from these violence incidents would not be easier than the other terms. The issue had lost its political side after the last incidents that around 3600 innocent people were killed. At first called the "Al-Aqsa Intifada" this new wave of violence resembled all-out warfare more than the shaking-off the original intifada. Rocks throwing Palestinian youths were joined by armed Palestinian police against Israeli soldiers hurling tear gas and firing rubber coated and sometimes live bullets

backed up by tanks and Blackhawk helicopter gunship. In Gaza, a twelve year old Palestinian boy was caught in the crossfire and killed by Israeli soldiers and in Ramallah, two Israeli reservists were murdered at a Palestinian police outpost and one was thrown out a window and his body beaten and trampled upon by the crowd. Murders of Israelis were avenged by rockets and bombs hitting Palestinian offices and targets in Gaza and the West Bank. In a disquieting development, Israeli Arabs were also affected, many joining in pro Palestinian demonstrations within Israel and several being killed. Joseph's Tomb in Nablus which housed Yeshiva of Israeli settlers was desecrated by Palestinians and Hezbollah in a well planned operation ambushed and captured three Israeli soldiers at the Lebanese border (Wasserstein, 2001).

Two weeks into the escalating violence in the middle of October, President Clinton was able to convene a summit at Sharm al-Sheikh, co-hosted by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in which the two sides by unwritten agreement decided to issue public statements calling for an end of violence. However, the cease fire agreement was never implemented as clashes continued and became even more deadly. As the Palestinian death toll mounted as a result of IDF attacks, the UN passed a resolution condemning Israel for the use of excessive force. In addition to its military response, Israeli imposed strict economic sanctions. Border closures, the blocking of roads in the Gaza Strip and the isolation of Palestinian towns behind IDF checkpoints, prevented imports, blocked exports and completely disrupted the Palestinian economy.

On the Palestinian side, paramilitary organizations linked to Fatah like the grassroots "Tanzim" with branches in nearly every town, village and refugee camp in the West Bank and Gaza cooperated with Hamas and Islamic Jihad in a loose group called the Nationalist and Islamic movement. Mohammed Dahlan who was the head of the Palestinian security forces in Gaza who until September had worked closely with Israeli security officials and the CIA to

thwart terrorist attacks confirmed that he was part of a tactical alliance among many Palestinian factions (Kimmerling, 2003). The result was sniper attacks and the planting of roadside and car bombs that blew up Israeli busses and shops and killed or injured Israeli children and adults.

An Arab summit in Cairo condemned Israel and Arab countries with ties to Israel cut those ties. Egypt eventually recalled its ambassador and the new Jordanian ambassador to Israel delayed presenting his credentials. In early November, Barak reluctantly sent Shimon Peres to meet with Arafat; their basic aim was about to continue the process by talking about the priority issue the Sharm al-Sheikh. However, the truce that was to have gone into effect was sabotaged by a bomb in Mahane Yehuda market in Jerusalem (Carey, 2004). And shortly after Clinton met with Arafat and then Barak in Washington in the middle of November, a powerful roadside bomb ripped apart an armored settlers' school bus in Gaza killing two adults and maiming several children. Arafat attempted to internationalize the conflict. After he unsuccessfully lobbied the Security Council to authorize an international force to keep the peace, he traveled to Moscow to enlist the aid of Vladimir Putin. Putin did intervene getting Arafat and Barak to agree to some cooperation among their respective security forces, but this cooperation broke down as violent clashes continued to occur all over the West Bank and Gaza on a daily basis.

Meanwhile, the political situation in Israel became even more unstable, creating added uncertainty. Barak, who had failed to bring the Likud into a National Unity government, turned again to Shas which agreed in October to support Barak for at least a month when the Knesset reconvened in return for his dropping a plan to initiate a secular and civic revolution in Israel. His capacity to govern in doubt, however, Barak pre-empted his opponents and resigned in early December which meant that elections for a new prime minister would have to be held within 60 days. He may have taken this move to prevent

Benjamin Netanyahu, not currently a sitting member of the Knesset and therefore ineligible from running for office. Nevertheless, Netanyahu who had been cleared of corruption charges, publicly announced his candidacy for Prime Minister. Although public opinion polls indicated he would win overwhelmingly, he did not receive enough votes in the Knesset to amend the law to enable him to run (Carey, 2004). That left Ariel Sharon, the current Likud Leader and the Israeli figure most loathed by the Palestinians to face Barak in elections to be held on February 6, 2001.

In late 2000, with the dissolution of his government, Barak realized that his only hope of re-election depended upon ending the Al-Aqsa Intifada and reaching agreement with Arafat. As the election process began, he explored the basis of a possible agreement which Israel would offer concessions on the Jerusalem issue in exchange for Palestinian flexibility regarding refugee resettlement. Israel would agree to Palestinian sovereignty over the Temple Mount-Haram Al-Sharif and its mosques and Arafat would abandon dreams of attaining recognition for a right of return of the Palestinian refugees. Barak also publicly for the first time said that he would be willing to recognize a Palestinian state (Kimmerling, 2003).

While these events were occurring in the U.S. the November election for president produced no clear winner for weeks, creating a bizarre situation already compromised by the lame duck status of Bill Clinton that distracted to the attention of officials in Washington, Dennis Ross, Clinton's special Middle East envoy announced that he was stepping down and with George W. Bush having been declared President. It was clear the U.S. would not be directly involved in the Israeli-Palestinian situation. In December, Clinton, in his last weeks in office suggested some bridging proposals. Those included Israel's withdrawal from all of the Gaza Strip and 94 or 96 percent of the West Bank. For the 4 or 6 percent retained by Israel, the Palestinians would be compensated from the Israeli territory. Obviously, most of the Jewish settlements would be dismantled, except for those in the territory to be annexed to

Israel. On Jerusalem, Palestinians would have sovereignty over the Arab neighborhoods and Israel over the Jewish neighborhoods. Various options were proposed for the Old City and the Temple Mount – Haram Al-Sharif including Palestinian control over the platform itself and Israeli control over the West Wall and area below. There was even an idea to declare divine sovereignty over the area, with Palestinians continuing to exercise de facto control over the mosques as they have since 1967. There would be right of return for the Palestinian refugees, but, only to the areas of the West Bank and Gaza that would become the Palestinian state. These parameters became the basis for a last ditch and rather desperate effort to reach a settlement before the Israeli elections. The negotiating teams met at Taba in the middle of January, 2001 and reportedly came very close to an agreement, but the talks ultimately foundered on the questions of sovereignty over the Temple Mount – Haram Al-Sharif and over the right of return.

4. The General Views of the Intifada Events

At truth, Intifada had started as a rebellion against the US pressure and the Israel efficiency on the Palestine state and its people. However, it has been turned into a serious public movement against the oppressive forces on Palestine. Although there were killed too many Palestinians, Palestine community had seen that as a homicide and they had started their resistance against the presence of Israel. So, Intifada describes the complete feelings of a state, a nation, a society and a history. With these feelings, during the first Intifada, the Palestinians had attacked against the Israel forces to protect all those facts which belong to the Palestinians. On the other hand, the deaths of the innocent and young Palestinians had been added that rebellion and those complicated feelings of the people had rebounded to the first Intifada. That is why the first Intifada was not well organized; it was just a sudden impact to Israel. However, it was effective to make feel the presence of the Palestinians (Elveren, 2003).

The second Intifada was not organized well, too; however, Sharon's visiting was a piece of rising of the Intifada one more time. This time, Intifada was a serious attack and it was organized and it was supported by the extreme groups in Palestine; however, it was not like a terrorist attack. In contrast, it was an ordered resistance. Beyond it was a serious attack against Israel. In 2000, Intifada had completed its evolution and it had become a serious resistance instrument and a real union for the Palestine society (Çubukçu, 2002).

In other mean, Intifada is not just a military movement and it is not about an armed resistance. It is a show for a nation to prove its presence, its identity, its history and its future on a region. On the other hand, Intifada is a serious caution against an enemy to wake it up against some realities. So, it will be hard to see Intifada as only a simple resistance movement: it concerns so many valuable points (Altınoğlu, 2005).

5. Conclusion

The Israel – Palestine Conflict is a multidimensional issue as we can see. The most important one, the issue had started a debate between Jewish and Arab communities, however, the situation had changed its direction to the other societies and the states. Particularly, the American effect on the issue is certain and affair of the issue was determined by the common American-Jewish authorities' plans. It was the basic bother of the Palestine side; because the Palestine had felt itself alone and defenseless. It will be fair to say that Palestine could not see any actual support from the other regional and the Muslim states in the Middle East. At the same time, the Israel and the American politicians had used that method to make Palestine alone and defenseless. It means that the Israel plan was about constrain the Palestine authorities to accept their thesis on the regional lands. That method did not work, we can say; because, the hard attitude of the Israel side caused a terrorism authority in Palestine and the resistance of the country had transformed to an illegal way against Israel and all the Western states which supported the Israel plans. In brief, both sides could not reach a common point.

The terrorism fact is important in this issue because of the clashes between two sides. Defenseless foreign policy of Palestine increased the extreme groups in the country. But, we cannot limit those groups and organizations with Palestine; in the Middle East region, generally, there are a lot of extreme groups and they see own groups and organizations as a defender of Palestine and the other Muslim countries. So, their attacks and the plans were not limited with Israel; they choose the other Western countries as their target to attack. That is why the U.S. and Israel have faced a deadlock about the Israel – Palestine conflict. The worst one, absence of the democratic structure or absence of the authority in Palestine is the basic obstacle in front of those two countries to find a solution for the issue. Then, the elections and

the aims for finding a certain authority in Palestine faces serious resistances and rebellions by the extreme groups and the society; after all, the society is a tool for the extreme groups.

The extreme groups' presence is not just a threat for Israel; it also a serious frightening fact for the other developed countries. According to the approach of those groups and the organizations, the Palestine problem is the fault of American policies. So, the U.S. and Israel are their common enemies. On the other hand, the supporters of those countries are the other targets. Their approach makes them legal on their region. Directly, it makes the terrorism phenomenon a legal resistance way for the undeveloped and doubtful societies of the Middle East. If we can see the increasing efficiencies of those extreme groups and organizations on the region, it will be easier to understand the desperation of Palestine side about founding an authority in the country. Since the first period of the Israel – Palestine conflict, Palestine tries to create an order for own country, but it could not go beyond a dream.

The social development and the economical structure of Palestine are on of the triggering reasons of the Israel – Palestine conflict. Maybe, the Western forces and Israel could success increasing the welfare level and the living standards of Palestine and they could provide a peaceful environment with their existing economical and political power. However, their regional policies did not serve the profits of the both sides. Despite of their power, American and Israel policies for the conflict did not work for their profits, too. Especially, the Israel plans on the region damaged the Israel's identity and its view in front of the world public opinion. It means that the Israel's approach to the issues have kicked back. In common, Israel's aggressive attitude made the other regional states enemy for it. Particularly, attitudes of Turkey and Iran are sharp and hard against Israel on this issue. One year ago, during the Davos meeting, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan showed the aggression of his personal feelings and his country's personal action to Israel on the live broadcasting. In those

days, the Israel – Palestine conflict is all around the Middle East region and every issue have a connection with that debate.

So, what about the solution? Maybe, this is the most controversial issue on the international politics. As mentioned before between the lines of this research, there were a lot of ineffectual attempts for the peace between two sides. However, every term, there could be different obstacles and bloody results after the peace talks. Any of the searches for the peace could not reach the victory. According to the Eastern approach, the wrong side is Israel and its policies; they argue that if Israel could be fairer on this issue, the peace could be closer to the reality. But, Israel have chosen being aggressive. For the Western view, the Middle East is already uncivilized and it is not open to a democratic administration in general view. So, the general situation of the region makes Palestine favorable for the extreme groups for terrorism or political resistance. There is still a mutual blaming competition between two sides. In this view, it is clear to see that the Israel – Palestine conflict seems like a war between West and East more than a conflict between two countries.

In a situation like this, the peace is not closer for two states. When we thought about the present plans of the American foreign policy on the Middle East, Palestine can be more isolated from world society. It is natural that the people are sorry about the broadcastings about Palestine and they are not happy with it. However, except Muslim society, any state or any society does not want to care about the solution of that conflict. Unconcern situation of the world society has reflected to the Western states. They only care about the future situation of the international politics. They are not aware what the situation of the Israel – Palestine conflict will reach in the near future. At truth, American authorities are not happy with that situation. It has three reasons: First of all, oppositions against Israel create an American opposition directly. So, it obstructs the American policies negatively on the region. Secondly, the U.S. wants to see permanent peace all around the world and it want to provide all of them

by itself. The American government thinks that it would fix the existing American image on the world. However, the Israel – Palestine conflict provides a contrast situation for the American foreign policies. And the last one, the last financial crisis affected the economies of the U.S. and Israel deeply. And the investments of the American capital on the Middle East damaged by the financial crisis and the Palestine debate. The U.S. needs to fix it immediately, too.

When we investigated the existing situation from the Palestine view, they have no plan for the future at truth. Palestine has serious problems for the continuity of the country and the present situation of the country does seem like closer to the solution about the political peace. While Palestine is trying to be independent country, it has authority absence and terrorism fear at the same time. This view of the country makes the things easy for Israel to make interventions to this country's lands. So, Israel occupation continues in the Palestine lands.

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7. Appendix

Figure 1: The map which was envisioned by the Oslo I Peace Accords between Israel and Palestine (see pg. 19)

(Also available at: <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/israel502/additional.html>).

Figure 2: The general view of the Interim Bank Agreement which was called as Oslo II (see pg. 28).

(Also available at: <http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=000754>)

Figure 3: The map which was envisioned during the Wye-River Memorandum (see pg. 34)

(Also available at: Christison, K. and Christison, B. (2009). *Palestine in Pieces: Graphic Perspectives on the Israeli Occupation*. Pluto Press, pp. 139).

Figure 4: The reflection of Camp David's results to the map (see pg. 41).

(Also available at: <http://www.tomhull.com/ocston/projects/ajvp/wp7.php>)