

FROM NEGOTIATION TO INTIFADA: UNDERSTANDING THE COLLAPSE OF THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT 2000 AND THE AL-AQSA INTIFADA

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Abstract

The year 2000 marked a turning point in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Camp David Summit, convened in July by U.S. President Bill Clinton, brought together Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat in an attempt to resolve the core issues of the conflict. This article aims to analyze the 2000 Camp David Summit and the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The article examines the political and structural circumstances that hindered the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It shows that Camp David's failure ended the Oslo peace process and contributed to political radicalization, mistrust, and instability in Israeli-Palestinian relations. Several peace initiatives during this period aimed to advance a two-state solution through territorial compromises and security guarantees. The article analyzes their specificities and limitations, which were unacceptable both to the Palestinian and Israeli sides. The breakdown of negotiations and the absence of regulatory mechanisms deepened mistrust between the parties and creating the basis for recurring violence and instability.

Keywords: *Israel, Palestine, Al-Aqsa Intifada, Camp David Summit, Road Map, Geneva Initiative*

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Introduction

This article examines why the Camp David summit failed to produce a peace agreement and how this failure contributed to the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, with its wider consequences, including the collapse of the Oslo peace process, the radicalization of Palestinian society, the return of militarized confrontation, and the long-term erosion of trust between the parties.

The failure of the 2000 Camp David summit and the subsequent Al-Aqsa Intifada reveal an important analytical framework for understanding recent developments in the modern Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly the relationship between the Abraham Accords (2020) and the Gaza War of October 7, 2023. This historical analysis reveals a recurring cycle in the Middle East diplomacy according to peace initiatives that fail to address foundational grievances often precipitate renewed violence and further destabilization. The sequence of Camp David to the Intifada formed a paradigm that continues to influence Israeli-Palestinian relations, showing how the failure of the 2000 negotiations led to the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada and, years later, to the signing of the Abraham Accords an agreement that bypassed Palestinian interests and contributed to the structural and political conditions that ultimately culminated in the Hamas-led attack on October 7, 2023, and the ensuing Gaza War.

This recurring cycle manifests through a number of interrelated dynamics that testify to the structural limitations of exclusionary peace processes. First, the impact of marginalization: The issues discussed at Camp David, in particular the status of Jerusalem, the right of return for refugees, and the recognition of full sovereignty, were severely neglected, leading to a deep sense of political neglect and historical injustice. The Abraham Accords also pushed Palestinian interests to the sidelines by focusing on broader regional geopolitical changes, which deepened feelings of abandonment and intensified existing frustrations. In both instances sidelining Palestinian agency not only weakened the legitimacy of the agreements but also contributed to the conditions that fostered renewed cycles of conflict.

This research is based on two theoretical approaches to understand the reasons for the failure of the 2000 Camp David peace talks and the Al-Aqsa Intifada: Conflict Transformation Theory, advanced by the scholar Lederach and Constructivism, developed by Alexander Wendt. These approaches help to examine both the negotiations' political structure and the deeper emotional and symbolic elements that influenced public and political responses.

Conflict Transformation theory suggests that long-standing conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are not merely about political disagreements. They are deeply rooted in issues such as power imbalances, and historical injustices. Lederach notes that real peace involves not only signing agreements but also changing the systems and relationships that have generated and sustained conflict over time [28: 24].

At the same time, constructivism emphasizes that ignoring identity, memory, and symbolic meaning in negotiations can lead to a loss of trust, even when some issues may seem close to resolution. At Camp David, negotiators essentially treated the issues as bargaining chips or matters for political compromise. However, from a constructivist perspective, the issue of Jerusalem, the right of return for Palestinian refugees, and the establishment of a state were deeply symbolic and presented as historical justice for a people deprived since 1948 [52: 225]. Israel had offered limited or vague solutions to these issues, creating a sense that Palestinian identity and historical experience were being ignored, and the failure of Camp David in this regard led to war. The Camp David talks failed because they addressed the core issue from a narrow perspective. The Palestinians were offered a state with limited control over territory, borders, water, and movement, terms that reinforced, rather than resolved, a sense of ongoing occupation and inequality. The demands of the people were not part of the process, and many Palestinian concerns, such as the right of return or the status of Jerusalem, were ignored.

The first section of the article examines the Camp David summit as a turning point in Israeli-Palestinian relations. It analyzes the proposals made during the negotiations, focusing on the contentious issues of Jerusalem, refugee return, territorial and security settlements.

The second section examines the origins, causes and course of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. It examines the failure of the negotiations, the deterioration of Palestinian socio-economic conditions, and the expansion of Israeli settlements. The chapter examines the international response and attempts to establish a ceasefire.

The third section presents an analysis of regional and international conflict resolution initiatives. It examines the significance of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, which called for Israel to normalize relations with Arab states in return for withdrawing to the 1967 borders and addressing the refugee issue. It also examines the 2003 Middle East Quartet peace roadmap, proposing a step-by-step plan for establishing a Palestinian state.

The fourth section highlights how regional interference and deep internal Palestinian divisions created structural conditions that undermined the peace process

and contributed to the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. It shows that external support for militant groups, combined with the absence of a unified Palestinian leadership and ideological cohesion, made negotiated compromises nearly impossible to achieve or sustain.

The dynamics and consequences of the Camp David Summit and the Al-Aqsa Intifada highlight key paradigms that continue to shape the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today. These events illustrate that peace efforts are unlikely to succeed when they overlook the deeper causes of the conflict such as the questions of identity, competing historical narratives, unequal power relations, and the exclusion of Palestinian voices from meaningful decision-making. The repeated failure of negotiations and the return to violence highlight the limitations of peace processes that primarily focus on technical or territorial issues. Instead, the approaches that recognize the emotional and symbolic weight of core issues lie at the heart of Palestinian collective identity. Examining past diplomatic breakdowns helps explain why today's efforts often face the same obstacles. Furthermore, future peace frameworks must include perspectives that address both the political realities and the human dimensions of the conflict drawing on insights from conflict transformation theory and constructivist thinking to offer more inclusive and lasting solutions.

In conclusion, this article reveals how these events marked a significant turning point in Israeli-Palestinian relations, indicating the collapse of the Oslo peace process. The conflict entered a new phase, culminating in the 2007 Hamas takeover of Gaza, which began a chain of conflict with Israel that has resulted in a series of military operations with Israel and this transition has shaped the current unresolved and unstable situation.

Historical context

The 1948 Arab-Israeli War led to the creation of the state of Israel and the displacement of approximately 750,000 Palestinians.

This phase of the conflict created an important geopolitical reality, dividing the historical territory of Palestine into three parts: Israel, the West Bank under Jordanian control, and the Gaza Strip under Egyptian control.

The occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem by Israel following the 1967 Six-Day War changed the geography of the Arab-Israeli conflict. UN Security Council Resolution 242 called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories and advocated the "land for peace" doctrine, but its implementation remained incomplete for decades [48].

The First Intifada was a mass uprising by the Palestinian population against Israeli control. It broke out in 1987 and included civil disobedience, economic boycotts, and social mobilization, capturing international attention and laying the groundwork for the 1993 Oslo peace process. Oslo I in 1993 and Oslo II in 1995 established the Palestinian Authority and divided the West Bank into Areas A, B, and C, with varying degrees of Palestinian and Israeli control [11: The Oslo Accords 1993; 1995]. However, the agreements deliberately delayed resolving the most sensitive issues of the conflict: Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security, and borders. Between 1993 and 2000, a number of interrelated factors significantly undermined the implementation of the peace process. Hamas's terrorist acts, the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin, and Israeli settlement expansion fragmented the Palestinian territories and deepened public disillusionment. The economic situation in the Palestinian territories deteriorated significantly as a result of Israel's blockade policy, which led to a decline in living standards by about 30% and a sharp rise in unemployment [40: 11-12].

Both sides repeatedly missed essential deadlines set by the Oslo process, which worsened the situation. Although the five-year interim period was supposed to end with a comprehensive agreement by May 1999, the process stalled and failed to deliver meaningful results.

While formulated as a phased resolution, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process of the 1990s failed to resolve the conflict's core issues. The constant postponement of these issues and the deepening mistrust surrounding them created a build-up of tension that led to the 2000 Camp David summit as an attempt to fill these gaps. Still, it was these unresolved issues that led to the failure of the negotiations.

The Camp David summit of 2000: negotiation dynamics and failure

In July 2000, U.S. President Bill Clinton facilitated two weeks of intensive negotiations at Camp David between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat. These talks, however, ended without an agreement. Despite US efforts, which included final proposals from both sides and a US plan presented later on December 19, 2000, the parties failed to reach or accept a final agreement.

The Camp David summit was convened to analyze the final status negotiations following the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles. The parties engaged in intensive negotiations that were unprecedented in their scope and

details, discussing all major aspects of the conflict, including border and security issues, the status of Jerusalem, and the issue of return for Palestinian refugees. Negotiators primarily focused on territorial and border dimensions related to a future Palestinian state. Israel proposed the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state that would include 82-88% of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, covering almost all of the territories that existed before 1967 [38: 8-9]. However, several areas near East Jerusalem, where 90% of Israeli settlements were located, would remain under Israeli control. In exchange, the Palestinians were offered land in the Negev Desert, located near Gaza.

The most contentious issue in the Israeli- Palestinian negotiations is the issue of Jerusalem which has deep spiritual and emotional significance for the three religions: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The negotiators suggested to divide Jerusalem into Western and Eastern parts. This arrangement included not only West Jerusalem but also the Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem that had been established since 1967, which would remain under Israeli control. U.S. mediators proposed a complex system for determining sovereignty over the Temple Mount in the Old City. The Muslim and Christian quarters of the Old City would fall under Palestinian control, the Jewish and Armenian quarters would be under Israeli sovereignty. Additionally, the possibility of establishing a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem was also considered [53: 11].

Palestinian refugees' "right of return" is another key issue in the final status process. Palestinians claim that refugees should have the right to return to the homes they lost in 1948, mentioning UN General Assembly 194 Resolution. Israel considered the return of 3 million refugees harmful, which would undermine the foundation of the Jewish state, and proposed only 10,000 people return under a family reunification program. Given almost a century of mutual violence and hatred, US negotiators focused on providing compensation and resettling the refugees.

During the negotiations, the parties discussed the issue of access to and control over water resources. The expansion of Israeli settlements had led to the fact that most of the water sources in the West Bank were under Israeli control, creating a dependence on Israel supplies for water in the Palestinian territories [29: 3]. Although the Israeli prime minister offered cooperation regarding water resources, the actual sources would remain mainly in the territories annexed by Israel. Moreover, keeping even 5% of the "strategic areas" under Israeli control would allow it to control the borders, water, airspace, and communications of a future Palestinian state, severely limiting Palestinian sovereignty and economic stability.

Ehud Barak's delegation did not present the Palestinians with any official document Tel Aviv's positions. According to Robert Malley, a member of Clinton's negotiating team, "all attempts by members of the American delegation to force the Israelis to state their positions in writing before or during the negotiations were unsuccessful. Israeli officials shared proposals only orally, fearing that written concessions could set a precedent" [33: 69-70]. On July 25, 2000, the summit concluded without a final agreement.

According to Akram Haniyeh, Yasser Arafat's immediate aide and editor-in-chief of Al Ayyam newspaper, the mandates for the peace process established by the US administration in Madrid in 1991, specifically UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of "peace on land", were undermined by the US administration at Camp David [18: 32].

The failure of Camp David summit has a number of reasons. Firstly, each side held a different attitude to the negotiations. Both parties believed that they had made significant concessions and assumed that the opposing side would need to make additional compromises to achieve peace. However, the Palestinian and Israeli delegations hesitated to take the necessary risks for a historic reconciliation. For the Israeli side, domestic politics, personal interests, and electoral calculations overshadowed the pursuit of peace agreement. From the Palestinian perspective, Israel's proposal for limited Palestinian control over certain areas of East Jerusalem was unacceptable. Palestinian officials insisted that they were willing to accept Israeli sovereignty over the Western Wall, the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, and surrounding settlements. However, they made it clear that they would agree to such concessions only if both parties officially recognized East Jerusalem as the capital of future Palestinian state.

In late September 2000, the United States made another attempt to restart Israeli-Palestinian negotiations regarding a final settlement. Delegations from both sides gathered in Washington, D.C., and met separately with Dennis Ross, the U.S. coordinator for the Middle East peace process, and other State Department officials. These flexible negotiations with both sides raised hopes that a final status agreement might be reached but they also failed.

The Camp David summit highlighted the deep disagreements between Palestinians and Israelis. The lack of trust between the parties, political divisions in Israel, and the rise of radical sentiments among Palestinians contributed to a new escalation.

From a Constructivist point of view, the negotiations missed the emotional and symbolic meaning of issues like Jerusalem and refugees. For Palestinians, these

matters represent more than just political concerns, they are deeply tied to dignity, identity, and historical justice. But the negotiations have treated them as the subject of the deal. This has left many Palestinians feeling invisible, and this failure has helped pave the way for a new round of violence.

The Al-Aqsa Intifada: causes and consequences

On September 28, 2000, Ariel Sharon, leading a right-wing Likud parliamentary faction delegation, ascended the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem. Sharon claimed the visit was necessary to emphasize Israel's sovereignty over the holy site, as E. Barak was ready to negotiate the city's status. [4: 25]. This visit deeply offended the religious feelings of the Palestinians. The situation in Jerusalem immediately turned into clashes. Violent clashes broke out between Palestinian demonstrators and armed Israeli police, resulting in the deaths of five Palestinians and injuries to about 300 others. [23: 24]. This event marked the most intense wave of clashes in the Palestinian territories since the start of the peace process, and the violence soon spread to Israeli territory.

The situation quickly escalated into a new general Palestinian uprising, known as the "Second Intifada" or the "Al-Aqsa Intifada."

In contrast of the first intifada, there was a large supply of artillery and ammunition among the Palestinians. These weapons entered the Palestinian territories through the three main channels: Israel officially supplied some ammunition to Yasser Arafat in the 1990s to equip the Palestinian police, smugglers regularly transported additional arms from Egypt into the Palestinian Authority through the Gaza Strip, and local groups manufactured handmade weapons and ammunition within the territories [32].

Most Palestinian and Israeli observers agree that Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount was the trigger for the Intifada, as the real reasons for the uprising were deeper. For Palestinians, the Intifada represented not just a reaction to a provocative incident, but also a clear position about the ineffectiveness of the negotiation process and the complete rejection of Israel's overall policy [25: 188-190].

Since the Oslo peace process, dissatisfaction among Palestinian society had grown, as the reality did not correspond to the expectations formed by the peace agreements. From 1993 to 2000, Palestinians expected an improvement in living conditions, especially regarding freedom of movement and socio-economic conditions, but their deterioration caused widespread dissatisfaction. These

sentiments, deepening by 2000, the failure of the Camp David summit in July, laid the foundation for growing public support for a confrontational strategy. Both sides of the conflict were preparing for violence, expecting the use of force by the other side.

Ehud Barak's policy in Israeli-Palestinian relations was contradictory. All his promises to the Palestinians were verbal and inconsistent. He often referred to the West Bank as "Judea and Samaria, part of Greater Israel [46: 179-180]. This policy made it impossible to reach any territorial solution to the Palestinian issue. In addition, the Palestinian position was also ambiguous. Yasser Arafat and his supporters repeatedly questioned the legitimacy and right of the state of Israel to exist. Although the Palestinian leadership publicly continued to speak of a two-state solution, Arafat never provided a final clarity on his vision for peaceful coexistence with Israel. Many Israelis believed that the Palestinians were deliberately using violence as a tool in the negotiation process, claiming that Arafat was rejecting on his commitments under the Declaration of Principles by attempting to revive international sympathy for the Palestinian cause through act of violence.

On October 7, 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1322, which called on the parties to cease the violence immediately, and emphasized the importance to establish a mechanism for an immediate and objective investigation into the tragic events that occurred in Jerusalem. It also called for the immediate resumption of negotiations in the Middle East peace process [50].

On October 17, representatives from Egypt, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the US, the UN, and the EU gathered in Sharm el-Sheik for the Middle East Peace Conference to discuss the tense situation in the region and find solutions based on the recent increase in violence [3: 91-92]. The conference led to the creation of a fact-finding commission, chaired by former Senator George Mitchell, tasked with investigating the causes of the violence and proposing solutions.

In the early months of the intifada, both sides suffered heavy casualties, particularly among children and young people. Violent demonstrations erupted across East Jerusalem, the Old City, the West Bank, Judea, and Samaria.

The well-known document, called the "Clinton Proposals," included several provisions regarding the establishment of Palestinian sovereignty, the status of Jerusalem's holy sites, and the return of refugees. According to this document, a future Palestinian state would include about 94-96% of East Jerusalem and the West Bank territories. The documents also suggested the return of 100,000 refugees through the family reunification program [10]. Overall, these proposals improved

upon the solutions discussed in previous negotiations, especially during the 2000 Camp David Summit, by offering a broader framework for a peaceful settlement.

On December 28, US attempts to convene a summit were canceled at the last minute when it became clear that the Israeli prime minister would not attend without Arafat's explicit approval of Clinton's proposals. Just hours after the announcement of the summit's cancellation, a series of bombings occurred in Tel Aviv and the Gaza Strip, resulting in the deaths of two Israeli soldiers and injuring fifteen others [14]. A few days later, a bombing in Netanya wounded at least forty Israeli civilians [2]. In response to that incident, Israeli security forces killed several Palestinians during the violence in the West Bank.

These events emphasized the political tensions in the region and the ongoing peace negotiation process. The failure of diplomatic efforts directly resulted in an escalation of violence, which highlighted the fundamental differences between the parties.

Concerns over further escalation in the region have intensified due to the release of Hamas and Islamic Jihad members from Palestinian prisons [20]. On October 26, 2000, Islamic Jihad carried out its first suicide bombing. In November and December, Hamas and Islamic Jihad bombings killed Israeli civilians and injured dozens more. In early 2001, Palestinian militants established the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades. Its leader, Nasser Abu Hamid, publicly declared the group as the military wing of Fatah [44: 212]. Years later, Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei confirmed that the group had operated under Fatah's auspices [15].

The Palestinian leadership perceived the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada as a lever to pressure Israel to gain an advantage in the negotiation process through security challenges. The start of the Intifada significantly impacted on the political dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, marking a phase of stagnation in the Oslo peace process.

From 21 to 27 January, 2001, the US attempted to revive Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in Taba, Egypt, with the active mediation of third parties, based on the "Clinton proposals". According to the EU envoy Miguel Moratinos, both sides approved the principle of the redistribution of their territories. However, their size and the principle of division remained a matter of discussion. Both parties approved that the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem would fall under Palestinian sovereignty, while the Jewish neighborhoods under Israeli control. However, the issue of Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem remained unresolved. The parties agreed in principle to maintain control over their holy sites in Jerusalem but did not establish clear

borders or control mechanisms. The Taba talks did not produce any conclusive results [36].

In February 2001, President George W. Bush's administration took office in the United States, and Ariel Sharon became Israel's prime minister. Sharon rejected further concessions to the Palestinians, winning strong support from right-wing religious voters and many disillusioned with the peace process. He made it clear that he would not resume negotiations based on previous agreements and emphasized that the commitments made at Taba were not binding on his administration [42].

The failed negotiation process and deepening fundamental differences between the conflicting parties significantly contributed to the intensification of armed confrontations and the activation of terrorist activities.

At first, Yasser Arafat seemed to be using the situation to put pressure on Israel, but things quickly got out of control and turned into a cycle of violence. [41: 203; 34]. The strong mistrust between both sides and the limited influence of mediators meant that attempts at dialogue didn't achieve significant results.

Since 2001, a wave of terrorist attacks by Hamas and Islamic Jihad has deepened the security crisis. The wave of terrorist acts spread throughout both Israel and the Palestinian territories, aimed at terrorizing Israeli society, contributing to growing public pressure and anxiety. These events forced the Israeli government to reconsider its policy on the Palestinian issue, responding to public concerns and the need to ensure security.

The leadership changes marked a turning point in the peace process, introducing a new dynamic into the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. The new leaders adopted a more hardline stance, making it difficult to reach compromise. Consequently, hopes of reviving the peace process began to fade, which contributed to the escalation of the conflict.

The outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada was not a spontaneous act of violence. It resulted from years of growing frustration, broken peace talks, and worsening daily life under occupation and was sparked by a politically provocative visit to a highly sensitive religious site. The initial protests escalated into a large-scale and protracted uprising that deeply affected both Palestinian and Israeli societies. This movement exposed the deep roots of the conflict in the daily lives of people on both sides and the fragility of peace efforts. Both sides became increasingly polarized as the violence spiraled into a destructive cycle of attacks, military intervention, and political stalemate. The intifada ultimately signaled the end of the Oslo era and the negotiation process reached a deadlock.

Diplomacy during the Al-Aqsa Intifada: missed chances and strategic gaps

On April 30, 2001, the Mitchell Commission released its report on achieving peace in the Middle East. The report emphasized that the conflicting parties must take decisive actions to end the violence and restore trust between them highlighting the need for the Palestinian Authority to take steps to prevent terrorist acts and to hold those responsible obligated for their actions. The plan proposed that Israel should refrain from excessive actions against unarmed demonstrators, as such actions often result in civilian casualties. The commission recommended halting settlement construction in Palestinian territories and highlighted the importance of resuming negotiations to foster progress and stability in the peace process [35: 2-3].

On June 13, 2001, CIA Director George Tenet introduced the "Security Implementation Work Plan" to restart the stalled peace process, with the United States taking on the role of mediator. The plan emphasized several key goals, including the implementation of security measures outlined in the earlier Mitchell Report, the resumption of direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians, and the promotion of peaceful coexistence as the basis for a long-term resolution [47: 2].

During the Al-Aqsa Intifada (2000–2005), the Israeli authorities conducted a series of targeted assassinations of Palestinian armed and terrorist groups' leaders aimed at preventing terrorist acts and ensuring the safety of Israeli citizens [9]. However, the targeted assassinations did not lead to a long-term solution to the Palestinian conflict.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, profoundly reshaped the United States' policy priorities in the Middle East, placing national security and the fight against terrorism at the forefront. [8]. In this context, the US viewed Israel as a key regional ally, and efforts to combat Palestinian militant groups became integrated into the framework of its global counterterrorism strategy [24: 353-354].

On March 28, 2002, at the 14th Arab League Summit in Beirut, Saudi Arabia's Prince Abdullah ibn Abdulaziz proposed the Arab Peace Initiative amid regional tensions and the stagnation of negotiations. It called for a framework of mutual obligations, where Israel and Arab countries would take specific actions to achieve regional peace. The Initiative aimed to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestinian issue, by applying principles of international law. It primarily drew on relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and General Assembly Resolution 194. The Initiative also called for Israel to withdraw completely from the borders established on June 4,

1967. This withdrawal would encompass the Palestinian territories, the Golan Heights, and parts of southern Lebanon [13].

The Arab world also expected Israel to recognize the State of Palestine, comprising the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital and comprehensive resolution to the Palestinian refugee issue, rejecting any solution that involved resettling Palestinians outside their homeland, in accordance with UN General Assembly resolution 194.

The Arab League called on the Israeli government and all Israeli citizens to accept this initiative to protect the prospects for peace and stop further bloodshed, enabling Arab countries and Israel to coexist peacefully, promote good neighborly relations, and ensure security, stability, and prosperity for future generations. Instead, all Arab states must recognize the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict and commit to recognizing Israel's independence, establishing diplomatic relations, normalizing trade and providing security guarantees. This announcement coincided with a Hamas terrorist attack in Netanya that resulted in the deaths of 29 Israelis [17].

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres acknowledged the significance of the Saudi proposal in response to the Arab Peace Initiative. However, he emphasized that its implementation was impossible as long as terrorism continued in the region [37].

Despite the initiative's comprehensive and legal foundation, it remained unacceptable to Israel, mainly due to concerns over the issues of refugee return and the status of Jerusalem.

This situation underscores that even when the Arab side demonstrated a willingness to pursue mutual recognition and peace, the core problems, particularly regarding territorial and demographic matters, remained unsolvable. As a result, the Arab Peace Initiative functioned more as a symbolic diplomatic gesture than a practical roadmap toward a lasting solution.

From March 29 to May 10, 2002, Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield in the West Bank in response to ongoing terrorist attacks. This operation resulted in Israeli forces taking control of the West Bank, sealing off Gaza, and surrounding Yasser Arafat's compound in Ramallah. As a result of Operation Protective Shield, the Israeli army significantly weakened the Palestinian security forces, dismantled the security services, and destroyed most of the infrastructure [19: 236]. Israeli leadership indicated that the documents seized during the operation confirmed the ties between the Palestinian Authority leadership and terrorist groups. However, with the assistance of UN mediation, Israel lifted the blockade on 10 May.

Despite these actions, terrorism persisted in Israel and the Palestinian territories while Israeli troops continued their presence in the West Bank.

In April 2002, Israel began constructing a Separation Wall along the West Bank, citing ongoing military operations and an increase in terrorist attacks as justification to prevent attacks by terrorist groups. In July 2004, the UN International Court of Justice ordered Tel Aviv to dismantle the wall, stating that its construction violated international law and the fundamental rights of Palestinians. However, Israel refused to comply with this ruling, arguing that the wall was built for national security reasons. Furthermore, Israel constructed the wall with the explicit intention of defining future borders between itself and Palestine.

In April 2002, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, with representatives of the United States, the Russian Federation, and the European Union, formed the Middle East Quartet to resume the peace process and achieve a final and comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict [49]. The Quartet's goal was to establish a multilateral framework for negotiating a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian question based on UN Security Council resolutions 242, 338, and 1397, along with the "land for peace" principle outlined in the Oslo process. It aimed to support the creation of two states, Israel and Palestine, within secure and recognized borders. The Quartet representatives urged an end to violence, a rejection of terrorism, and reforms within the Palestinian leadership, which include elections, economic development, and the establishment of transparent institutions [51: 253].

The initiative drew from a speech by US President George W. Bush on June 24, 2002, in which he outlined his vision for peace in the Middle East, proposing the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel and calling for the peaceful coexistence of the two nations. He urged an end to violence, a rejection of terrorism and called for reforms of the Palestinian leadership, including elections, economic development, and the establishment of transparent institutions [7]. President Bush stressed that the United States and the international community would support the establishment of a Palestinian state if the government implemented specific reforms and continued to fight terrorism. He also called on Israel to take steps toward peace, such as halting settlement expansion and easing restrictions on Palestinian movement, while emphasizing that the two sides must resolve core issues such as borders, Jerusalem, and refugees to achieve a permanent solution [6].

In April 2003, the Middle East Quartet introduced the "Roadmap for Peace," a well-structured plan to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and promote the coexistence of two states. The plan outlined three main phases designed to lead the process toward a comprehensive peace gradually [1]. The first phase called for an

immediate halt to terrorist activities by Palestinian armed groups, alongside the implementation of political and socio-economic reforms within the Palestinian Authority. Israel had to withdraw its troops from their positions by September 28, 2000, and stop the construction of new settlements to facilitate the resumption of the peace process. The second phase aimed to establish the necessary conditions for the formation of an independent Palestinian state, recognizing it with preliminary borders and some aspects of sovereignty. The Quartet members supported the drafting and adoption of a new constitution and promoted international recognition of Palestine, including its potential membership in the United Nations. The third and final phase aimed to establish a comprehensive peace agreement by directly addressing the core issues of the conflict, including the final status of Jerusalem, the fate of Palestinian refugees, the future of Israeli settlements, and the provision of security guarantees. It also aimed to promote peace negotiations between Israel and its neighboring countries, Lebanon and Syria, to ensure regional stability.

The "Roadmap for Peace" established a phased approach for resolving conflicts, including security and statehood elements. However, the execution of this plan encountered significant political and military obstacles that hindered its likelihood of success [12: 10-11].

The deep-rooted mistrust between the parties contributed to the failure of the peace roadmap, exposing stark differences in their political and military capacities and highlighting the absence of effective implementation mechanisms. Israel continued its settlement expansion and security policies, further eroding mutual trust. At the same time, internal divisions within the Palestinian leadership hindered the fulfilment of essential commitments. Furthermore, the Quartet, especially the United States, did not maintain balanced and consistent pressure on both sides, transforming the Initiative into a declaratory framework instead of a binding roadmap.

In response to the escalating violence in the region, several Palestinian and Israeli political and civil society leaders launched the Geneva Initiative in 2003. This movement aimed to move past the unsuccessful phased approaches by directly negotiating a final status agreement. The Initiative, led by former Israeli Justice Minister Yossi Beilin and former Palestinian Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo, proposed a detailed peace plan involving mutual concessions based on the Clinton parameters from 2000.

The informal Geneva Accords, presented on December 1, 2003, proposed a two-state solution that included mutual recognition between Israel and Palestine. The accords called for Israel to withdraw from most of the West Bank and Gaza, the

dismantling of settlements, and the demilitarization of a future Palestinian state. The proposed Palestinian state would encompass approximately 97% of the West Bank and Gaza, with land swaps designed to compensate for the annexation of certain settlement blocs.

The Geneva Accords envisioned Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, assigning the Jewish quarters to Israeli sovereignty and the Arab quarters to Palestinian control. They proposed a 'safe passage' corridor under Israeli sovereignty but administered by the Palestinians to connect the West Bank and Gaza. The refugee issue would be addressed through a limited return mechanism, allowing Israel to determine the number of returnees. In effect, the Palestinians would forgo the full right of return in exchange for an almost complete Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders [5].

Although the Geneva Initiative lacked formal status, the international community welcomed it as a constructive step in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. While Clinton's parameters acknowledged that Israel accepted responsibility for the moral and material harm inflicted on Palestinians during the 1948 war, the Geneva Document omitted this issue.

The international community gave significant attention to the Geneva Accords and welcomed them as a valuable contribution to the Palestinian-Israeli peace discourse.

The agreements faced significant criticism in Israel from Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and right-wing politicians and analysts [45]. They viewed the agreements as excessive concessions to the Palestinians, arguing that they legitimized violence and undermined Israeli foreign policy. Ariel Sharon maintained that any concessions involving the division of Jerusalem were unacceptable to him.

The reaction from the Palestinian side was mixed. After some initial uncertainty, the Palestinian Authority leadership, including Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas, and Ahmad Qurei, expressed conditional support for the agreement. However, there were disagreements within Fatah. Specifically, the party's parliamentary faction and central committee accused the signatories of renouncing the right of return for refugees, recognizing Israel's Zionist nature, and legitimizing resettlement in Jerusalem.

In 2004–2005, the negotiation process had effectively stalled as the Middle East Quartet limited its role to issuing appeals for peace without implementing practical measures to reduce tensions. Meanwhile, ongoing military operations in the Gaza Strip continued to deepen instability across the region.

In March and April 2004, the Israeli air force carried out targeted assassinations of two Hamas leaders, Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Aziz Rantisi, which further worsened the situation. In response, in June 2004, the Israeli Prime Minister adopted a path of unilateral disengagement, primarily driven by security considerations. This plan involved the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Gaza Strip and the evacuation of four settlements in the West Bank [39].

This plan emerged as an alternative to the "Road Map" peace initiative, which had already reached a deadlock. Many reasons contributed to the Road Map's had collapsed. Jerusalem's status and refugee return issues were serious obstacles to implementing the Road Map. Israel firmly rejected the resettlement of Palestinian refugees within its borders and insisted on recognizing Jerusalem as its united and indivisible capital. Without addressing these core issues, the Road Map lacked viability. Sharon had already appended 14 reservations to the plan, significantly weakening its core provisions [43]. His vision of a 'future Palestinian state' remained fundamentally unacceptable to the Palestinian leadership.

In January 2005, following the death of Yasser Arafat on November 11, 2004, Mahmoud Abbas, a candidate from Fatah, won the Palestinian presidential election. As one of the architects of the Oslo Accords, the International community generally accepted him. However, his domestic support was limited. His moderate political stance was often perceived as a weakness in Palestinian politics, which undermined his authority and restricted his influence among Hamas and other factions. Hamas, questioning the legitimacy of the elections, refused to cooperate with the newly elected president, deepening Palestinian political polarization. These contradictions became a systemic crisis, hindering the centralized and effective power management.

On the eve of the planned meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, the Israeli side took a unilateral step to build confidence by announcing the early release of 900 Palestinian prisoners [22]. However, the widespread tension in the region limited the effectiveness of this gesture.

On September 12, 2005, Israeli forces completely withdrew from the Gaza Strip, but retained control of the borders, airspace, and surrounding maritime areas creating a complete blockade of the Gaza Strip, which contributed to the growth of the popularity of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. This situation ultimately led to the tragic events of the fall of 2023, the consequences of which continue to this day.

After the Intifada, several peace initiatives were launched and offered promising solutions. But in practice, they failed to bring real change. Conflict Transformation Theory explains that without addressing the root causes, such as the

occupation, everyday injustices, and deep power imbalances, these efforts were bound to fall short.

A Constructivism suggests that lasting peace isn't simply the result of political deals or technical compromises. Instead, it depends on addressing the deep-rooted beliefs, historical narratives, and identities that shape how each side sees the conflict. In the case of Israel and Palestine, international efforts have struggled because they couldn't bridge these clashing identity-based claims like the Palestinians' demand for the right of return and Israel's insistence on being recognized as a Jewish state.

Regional interference and the fragmentation of Palestinian politics

The failure of the Camp David Summit and the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada require analysis beyond the Israeli-Palestinian context, as the collapse of the peace process had multiple causes, with both regional dynamics and internal Palestinian developments playing a significant role. External interventions like support for militant groups in the competitive atmosphere of neighbouring states, led to extreme internal political polarisation within Palestine. This situation created a military-political environment where achieving compromises became nearly impossible.

Iran has consistently supported Palestinian armed struggle as a key part of its foreign policy since the 1979 revolution. This stance, which is rooted in the ideological vision of Ayatollah Khomeini, has formulated the liberation of Palestine and the elimination of Israel as a religious and political imperative [27: 392]. The Islamic Republic expanded its regional influence through proxy forces and declared armed resistance as a legitimate and necessary instrument for confronting the Israeli occupation.

Iran provided significant financial and military support to the Hamas and Islamic Jihad groups, which fundamentally rejected any negotiation process with Israel. The support included arms smuggling, training of militants, and financial assistance estimated at tens of millions of dollars annually [26: 1051]. Iran's strategic interest in continuing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its support for Hamas serve several purposes. This support allowed Iran to preserve its revolutionary credibility in the Muslim world, resist the normalisation of relations between Arab states and Israel, and position armed groups along Israel's borders. The Islamic Republic's support for Hezbollah in Lebanon created a northern front that kept Israel in a state

of constant security anxiety, making territorial concessions in the West Bank politically more difficult for Israeli leaders.

Canadian intelligence reported in 1999 that Palestinian police found documents showing a \$35 million transfer from Iran's MOIS to Hamas for attacks against Israeli targets. Palestinian sources similarly estimated Iran's aid at "tens of millions of dollars." Expert testimony in the *Diana Campuzano et al. v. The Islamic Republic of Iran* case shows that 1995 totaled \$30 million and ranged from \$20 million to \$50 million annually between 1990 and 2000 [31: 172].

Syria adopted a dual approach in the region, since it took part in peace negotiations, yet at the same time extending support to Palestinian resistance groups. This strategy allowed Damascus to apply pressure on Israel and strengthen its position in the negotiations. The presence of Hamas and Islamic Jihad leadership in Damascus, as well as control of arms supply routes from Iran, allowed these groups to operate outside the control of the Palestinian Authority. Egypt and Jordan, which had peace treaties with Israel, officially supported the Oslo process and peace initiatives, while some Arab states sometimes contributed to the continuation of the resistance. Saudi Arabia officially supported peace initiatives, most notably by presenting the Arab Peace Initiative in 2002. However, Riyadh did not tolerate or sufficiently regulate the activities of financial foundations that transferred significant funds to Hamas and the Islamic Jihad organization through charitable organizations and religious institutions [30].

This financial support enabled Hamas to simultaneously build its extensive social service network and strengthen military capabilities. Hamas's strategy involved integrating military activities with large-scale social programs, which made it difficult to distinguish between humanitarian aid and funds that supported terrorism and some Arab states found it either difficult or were unwilling to make this distinction with the necessary clarity. In this context, although concerns about the connection between charitable activity and political violence were legitimate, broad attempts to dismantle Islamic social welfare institutions would not significantly reduce Hamas's military operations and would likely worsen the humanitarian situation, increasing public support for the movement [21: 1].

As a result, while Arab governments publicly supported the peace process, private financial networks operating in their territories were maintained for the main opponents of the peace process. The Arab League's diplomatic initiatives, while symbolic, often lacked the tools to compel the Palestinians to accept more realistic compromises. The 2002 Arab Peace Initiative did not include provisions that would

pressure Palestinian factions to accept interim agreements or to restrain factions that continued their armed struggle.

Additionally, the support from Arab states for the Palestinian cause has often been more symbolic rather than substantive. While Arab leaders emphasized Palestinian rights in public, their diplomatic efforts to mediate between Palestinian factions or to establish favorable negotiating conditions were limited. The failure of Arab states to facilitate a reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas represented a significant missed opportunity that could have complicated the peace process.

External interference and Israeli policies significantly influenced the failure of the peace process while the underestimated internal Palestinian political dynamics also undermined negotiations and prolonged the conflict. The deep divisions within Palestinian society over strategy, ideology, and ultimate goals created structural obstacles to reaching and implementing any peace agreement.

The Oslo process brought forward two distinct approaches to ending the conflict with Israel, and these differences fundamentally influenced Palestinian political life. Fatah entered the negotiations through the 1993 Declaration of Principles under Yasser Arafat's leadership. Fatah acknowledged Israel's right to exist and formally rejected terrorism as a means of pursuing political objectives [16]. This decision represented a major shift from the position set out in the PLO's founding charter and demonstrated Fatah's strategic choice to seek a settlement through international recognition and diplomacy. Hamas, in contrast, maintained an ideological commitment to the "liberation" of all of Palestine and rejected any framework that involved recognising Israel, since it regarded the territory as part of the Islamic Waqf that could not be surrendered. Created in 1987 as a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas set out this position in its 1988 Charter, which demanded Israel's elimination and viewed the conflict in both national and religious terms. From this perspective, the Oslo process constituted a betrayal of Palestinian rights and Arab-Islamic principles, and Arafat's policies were portrayed as cooperation with Israel.

Hamas used violence as a strategic tool to disrupt peace negotiations, especially when they were close to making significant progress. They weakened the Israeli public's confidence in the peace process and strengthened the Israeli right-wing forces. Yasser Arafat adopted a dual, frequently contradictory approach during the Oslo years, and this ultimately weakened the peace process. In his statements to an international audience, he advocated a peaceful resolution. However, when addressing his domestic audience, he frequently used rhetoric that echoed themes of resistance and "martyrdom". Arafat's goal was probably to remain acceptable to all

camps while maintaining both diplomatic and armed struggle options. But this “dual strategy” destroyed Israeli confidence, undermined the institutional legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority, and, in the long term, became a factor of collapse. The creation of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades in 2001, which operated under the name of Fatah and carried out terrorist attacks, became the most apparent consequence of Arafat’s political ambiguity. Arafat refused to disarm the terrorist groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad as required by the Oslo accords. He created a far larger Palestinian army (the so-called police force) than was permitted by the accords.

After the Nakba of 1948, liberation ideology shaped Palestinian political thought. It rested on the principles of national self-determination and armed resistance to Israeli occupation. The nationalist line of the PLO gave little space to other opinions and approaches. A lack of ideological openness created an environment in which dissent was frequently equated with betrayal. Thus, political thought failed to develop a multifaceted, structured vision and remained confined to slogans. The first intifada, which began in 1987, revitalised Palestinian politics. Social movements, civil resistance, and widespread participation provided an opportunity to enter a new phase. However, this potential did not become a basis for sustainable political reconstruction.

The Oslo negotiations from 1993 to 1995 raised great hopes for the establishment of a Palestinian state. However, the outcome was the creation of the Palestinian Authority, which became more of an administrative unit under external and Israeli control. Palestinian politics gradually lost its focus on liberation and became a governmental mechanism unable to make independent decisions. The failure of the Camp David negotiations in 2000 revealed the limited resources and the Palestinian political elite’s unwillingness to respond to the new circumstances. The Al-Aqsa Intifada emerged as a mass uprising in reaction to this disappointment. However, this movement did not lead to any ideological renewal. Instead, it repeated previous methods of struggle without introducing new ideas.

The victory of Hamas in the parliamentary elections in 2006, and then the split between Gaza and the West Bank, deepened the political crisis. As a result, it became clear that neither Fatah nor Hamas had a political program that was relevant to the situation. At the same time, regional support was declining as some Arab countries began to normalize their relations with Israel. The Palestinian Authority became a structure heavily dependent on external funding and lacking absolute sovereignty.

Elections were continually postponed, political competition was constrained, and the voices of younger generations remained largely excluded. As a

result, Palestinian political thought reached a deadlock. Political actors did not introduce new ideological ideas, pursue institutional reforms, or develop a coherent strategy for responding to changing regional conditions. The political system became increasingly conservative and reactive, rather than proactive and innovative.

Conclusion

The failure of the 2000 Camp David Summit and the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada were pivotal turning points in a long-standing conflict characterized by unequal power dynamics, contested national identities, and the structural violence of occupation.

This article argues that the collapse of the negotiations and the Al-Aqsa Intifada outbreak signified the end of the Oslo era. These events marked the beginning of a painful new chapter, in which violence replaced dialogue, extremism filled the gap left by diplomacy, and the possibility of a just and lasting peace faded from the daily lives of both Palestinians and Israelis. This period set the stage for the rise of Hamas, the blockade of Gaza, and the cycle of wars that continues to this day.

The Camp David Summit failed because of differing political goals and a significant perspective divide. While Israel aimed for practical, strategic compromises, the Palestinian leadership focused on historical justice and statehood recognition, refused any agreement that stripped them of symbolic sovereignty over East Jerusalem and sidelined the refugee question.

International initiatives, despite their commitment to peace, have failed to change the situation. The Clinton parameters, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the Road Map all failed due to the same fatal flaws: the refusal to hold Israel accountable for its actions on the ground, the lack of enforcement mechanisms, and the international community's unwillingness to confront the reality of occupation and settlement expansion. The so-called peace process has become a means of reinforcing the status quo defined by control, division, and constant instability.

Constructivism reveals that inconsistencies between cognitive and narrative approaches have contributed to a legitimacy crisis, eroded trust, and raised public expectations. Conflict transformation theory helps explain why these failures did not produce sustainable resolutions and instead intensified existing dynamics, redirecting the focus from negotiated solutions to resistance-driven strategies.

This long history of diplomatic failures and resistance exploded again in 2023. Hamas's October 7 attack and Israel's military response did not happen suddenly. They were rooted in two decades of unresolved grievances, geographical

division, economic siege, and a complete collapse of the political landscape. Since the 2005 disengagement, Gaza has been isolated, transforming it into a region of despair and armed conflict. The 2023 escalation exposed the fragility of regional containment and the consequences of an unfulfilled peace process that failed to bring about real peace, instead managing the status quo.

Strategically, the 2023 war marks a turning point in the formulation of the conflict. The escalation is not seen as a diplomatic impasse, but as an open crisis of legitimacy for both the Palestinian Authority and Israel's unilateral security doctrine. It highlights the enduring centrality of Jerusalem, displacement, and sovereignty as unresolved core issues that continue to drive the conflict and impact those living under its shadow.

The cycle that began with the symbolic failure of Camp David and the physical resistance of the Second Intifada now culminates in an ontological conflict in which diplomacy is absent, and the Palestinian issue has been reduced to a minor role in the international political discourse.

The legacy of Camp David and the Al-Aqsa Intifada, particularly in light of the catastrophic events of 2023, emphasizes that achieving a lasting solution requires more than territorial concessions or security agreements. Negotiators will likely repeat past failures if they overlook structural inequalities and national identity issues, because these deeper factors lie at the core of the conflict.

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**Բանակցություններից Ինթիֆադա. Քեմփ Դեյվիդ 2000թ. գազաթնաժողովի
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Հրաչուհի Թուրվանդյան

Հիմնաբառեր. Իսրայել, Պաղեստին, Ալ-Աքսա Ինթիֆադա, Քեմփ Դեյվիդի գազաթնաժողով, Ճանապարհային քարտեզ, Ժնևյան նախաձեռնություն

Ամփոփում

2000 թվականը կարևոր շրջադարձ էր իսրայելա-պաղեստինյան հակամարտության մեջ: Հուլիսին ԱՄՆ նախագահ Բիլ Բլինթոնի նախաձեռնությամբ կայացավ Քեմփ Դեյվիդի գազաթնաժողովը, որը նպատակ ուներ լուծելու հակամարտության հիմնարար հարցերը: Գազաթնաժողովին մասնակցում էին Իսրայելի վարչապետ Էհուդ Բարաքը և Պաղեստինյան Ինքնավարության ղեկավար Յասեր Արաֆաթը: Սույն հոդվածի նպատակն է վերլուծել Քեմփ Դեյվիդի 2000 թվականի գազաթնաժողովը և Ալ-Աքսայի Ինթիֆադայի բռնկումը՝ դիտարկելով դրանք իսրայելա-պաղեստինյան հակամարտության քաղաքական զարգացումների համատեքստում: Հոդվածն ուսումնասիրում է այն քաղաքական և ինստիտուցիոնալ գործոնները, որոնք խոչընդոտել են հակամարտության խաղաղ կարգավորմանը: Քեմփ Դեյվիդի գործընթացի ձախողումը հանգեցրեց Օսլոյի խաղաղ գործընթացի կասեցմանը, խորացրեց փոխադարձ անվստահությունն ու նպաստեց կողմերի քաղաքական ռադիկալացմանը՝ ի վերջո նպաստելով իրավիճակի ապակայունացմանը: Հոդվածում անդրադարձ է կատարվում այն խաղաղարար նախաձեռնություններին, որոնք ուղված էին երկու-պետություն լուծման՝ տարածքային զիջումների և անվտանգության երաշխիքների հիման վրա: Բանակցությունների ձախողումն ու կարգավորող մեխանիզմների բացակայությունը խորացրեցին կողմերի միջև անվստահությունը՝ ստեղծելով բռնության նոր ալիքի և տարածաշրջանային անկայունության բարենպաստ միջավայր: