

PAST PEACE PROCESSES & THEIR CHALLENGES A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

PASSIA

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The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains one of the most protracted and emotionally charged disputes in modern history. Over the past several decades, numerous peace initiatives have been launched in an effort to resolve the conflict and establish a framework for coexistence. From the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference and the Oslo process to the Annapolis Conference and subsequent negotiations, each attempt has offered moments of both cautious optimism and deep disillusionment. This briefing paper provides a historical overview of key peace processes, examining their objectives, achievements, and the persistent obstacles that have undermined their success. Understanding the patterns, shortcomings, and shifting dynamics of past efforts is essential for informing future strategies toward a long overdue just and lasting resolution.

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PRIOR TO 1991

Before 1991, no formal Palestinian-Israeli peace process existed due to a number of factors. Firstly, after 1948, Palestinians were largely represented by Arab states in international diplomacy, and earlier peace initiatives focused on Arab-Israeli conflicts (i.e., between Israel and Arab states, like Egypt and Jordan), not on the Palestinians as a distinct negotiating party. In addition, Cold War dynamics blocked meaningful third-party engagement. When the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded in 1964, Israel refused to

recognize it as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, considering it a terrorist organization, and the PLO's official position also rejected Israel's right to exist and called for armed struggle. Moreover, international efforts (e.g., UN Resolution 242 after 1967) addressed mainly territorial issues and treated Palestinians as part of the broader refugee problem, but did not create a peace process. Conditions for peace talks began to change with the PLO's 1988 Declaration of Independence, which implicitly recognized Israel by accepting UN Resolutions 242 and 338; the 1991-1991 Gulf War, which reshaped regional alliances; and the collapse of the Soviet Union, which ended the global Cold War. Last but not least, the First Intifada, which began in late 1987, placed the Palestinian cause at the center of international attention. It demonstrated that Palestinian national aspirations could not be silenced by military means alone, and it helped shift Israeli public opinion toward supporting negotiations, as many came to see the ongoing occupation as unsustainable.

THE MADRID MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE – 1991-1992

Background: The convergence of several geopolitical factors: In the wake of the First Palestinian Intifada, that erupted in late 1987, the 1991 Gulf War, which shifted regional alliances, and the waning of the Cold War, which opened venues for new diplomatic alignments, then US President George W. Bush called for a new order in the Middle East, with a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict at its core. In preparation for a multi-party conference to set off the envisioned process, US Secretary of State James Baker embarked on frequent shuttle trips to the region between March and October 1991.

Event: Madrid Middle East Peace Conference took place from **30 October-1 November 1991**, called for by the US and attended by Europe, Russia, Arab states, Israel¹ (then under Prime Minister Shamir), and Palestinians as part of a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation², marking the first direct negotiations between the two parties. The conference was based on the "land for peace" formula and inaugurated negotiations on both bilateral and multilateral tracks. It was followed by numerous meetings in Washington and elsewhere, which for the first time put issues such as borders, settlers, Jerusalem and refugees on the table. The Israelis tried to stick to the old "autonomy plan" of Prime Minister Begin, whereas Palestinian presented the "PISGA (Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority) Plan" in 1992, which Israel rejected.

Key achievements: The conference marked a major diplomatic breakthrough as it was the first time that Arab countries sat down with Israel in a public forum to discuss common concerns multilaterally. Although no formal agreements were signed at Madrid, the conference, by setting up bilateral tracks for talks between Israel and its direct neighbors and a multilateral track for talks on broader regional issues (e.g., water, environment, economic development, etc.), established a new framework, which laid the groundwork for later negotiations, including the Oslo Accords (1993) and the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty (1994).

Pitfalls and Limitations: The Madrid conference was more of a procedural step and failed to produce concrete agreements, binding resolutions or clear timelines. Furthermore, Israel's refusal to recognize the PLO as a legitimate representative and engage with it directly was a significant flaw as it limited the "weight" and

¹ Israel conditioned its participation on the revocation of UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 of 10 November 1975, which determined "that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination", which was done by Resolution 46/86 of 16 December 1991.

² Although the Palestinians were not allowed to participate as an independent delegation (due to Israeli objections), they were represented as part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, with the understanding that they would not be members of the PLO (although in practice, many were closely aligned with it).

credibility of the talks. The same is true for the existing power asymmetry between Israel and its Arab negotiating partners, especially the Palestinians, whose prime concern was to end the occupation. The conference also failed to address core issues like statehood, borders, and refugees, and there was a lack of (enforced) commitment, which allowed parties to delay or disengage from the process over time, which in turn led many of the bilateral and multilateral tracks to stall or even collapse altogether.

The bilateral Israeli-Palestinian track did not go well due to mutual distrust, lack of political will, and continued settlement expansion. Following the 1992 Israeli elections that brought Labor under Yitzhak Rabin to power, it was replaced by partially secret negotiation channels, one of which took place in Oslo.

THE OSLO PROCESS – 1993-2001

Background: One of the initially secret negotiation channels that developed from the Madrid conference framework was a series of peace talks between PLO members and Israeli officials in Oslo, Norway. These led to the drafting and signing of a Declaration of Principles in September 1993, which outlined the path for further bilateral negotiations to bring about a permanent solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Events:

1993

The **Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements** (DoP), signed on **13 September 1993** in Washington, D.C., provided the guidelines for future negotiations as well as for a five-year interim autonomy for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, followed by a permanent settlement based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The declaration postponed difficult issues such as Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, water, security, and borders to a later stage, and was accompanied by letters from PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat promising to change the PLO Charter, which called for the destruction of Israel, and from Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, proclaiming Israel's intent to allow normalization of life in the occupied territories. The signing of the DoP marked an historic turning point for Palestinians as they formally recognized the right of Israel to exist and reduced their claims to just 22% of the land of historic Palestine (West Bank, Gaza Strip & East Jerusalem). Continued negotiations led to the 1994 Oslo I and 1995 Oslo II Accords.

1994

The **Gaza-Jericho Autonomy Agreement**, also known as Cairo, Gaza-Jericho-First or Oslo I Agreement, was signed by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat on **4 May 1994** in Cairo. It outlined the first stage of Palestinian autonomy – on some 60% of Gaza and a 65 km² area in and around Jericho – including Israeli redeployment and the establishment of a Palestinian authority as the governing body in the evacuated territories. As part of the agreement, Israeli military forces were to withdraw from the said areas of Gaza and Jericho, in coordination with a newly established Joint Israeli-Palestinian Security Coordination and Cooperation Committee. Israeli forces were to be redeployed to specified areas only, such as the Military Installation Area along the Egyptian border and Israeli settlements. Also, a Palestinian police

force was set up in those areas and powers within five civilian spheres were transferred to the Palestinians³. Israel remained in control of the settlements, military locations, and security matters.

1995

The **Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip**, also referred to as Taba or Oslo II Agreement, was concluded in Taba on **26 September 1995** and signed by Israel and the Palestinians in Washington, D.C., on 28 September. It outlined the second stage of Palestinian autonomy, extending it to the remaining parts of the West Bank, divided the West Bank into Areas A (Palestinian civil jurisdiction and internal security), B (Palestinian civil jurisdiction, joint Israeli-Palestinian internal security), and C (Israeli civil and overall security control), and determined the election and powers of a Palestinian Legislative Council. During the interim period the difficult issues were to be discussed, i.e., Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security and borders. October 1997 was the target date for the completion of redeployment and October 1999 for reaching a final status agreement.

On **4 November 1995**, Israeli Prime Minister **Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated** by a right-wing Israeli extremist opposed to the Oslo Accords. This marked a turning point where public trust in the Oslo process began to erode, and the Israeli peace camp lost its most credible and security-minded leader. Thus, the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin had a profound and destabilizing effect on the continuation of negotiations and the broader Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Successive Israeli governments were either less committed or openly skeptical of Oslo, while violence on the ground (including suicide bombings and continued settlement expansion) further undermined faith in the agreements.

Key Achievements: The Oslo Accords' main achievements were the official mutual recognition of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for the first time ever, and setting the stage for a final status agreement and thus a framework for peace. The idea of a phased Israel redeployment from Palestinian areas as well as the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) as a governing body to administer Palestinian self-rule were – at least initially – promising steps.

Pitfalls and Limitations: One of the biggest weaknesses of the Oslo Accords was deferring core issues such as refugees, Jerusalem, and borders to a later stage, and not clearly defining what the outcome of the final status negotiations would be (the term Palestinian state or statehood has not been mentioned a single time in any of the agreements signed between Israel and the Palestinians!). This, along with the failure to include clear enforcement provisions if either party violated the agreement, led over time increasingly to uncertainty and mistrust. Furthermore, the international community, especially the US and Russia as signing witnesses to the Oslo Accords, failed to enforce the agreement due to their limited leverage over the parties, reluctance to impose consequences for non-compliance, and preference for facilitating rather than supervising/administering the peace process. This was seen at its most extreme in Israel's unmitigated settlement expansion.

³ The Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities (also known as Early Empowerment Agreement) was signed by Israel and the PLO at the Erez Crossing on 29 August 1994. It put into effect the next phase (early empowerment) of the DoP, i.e., the transfer of powers to the PA within the following spheres: (1) Education & Culture (carried out on 29 August 1994); (2) Social Welfare (13-14 November 1994); (3) Tourism (13-14 November 1994); (4) Health (1 December 1994); (5) Taxation (1 December 1994). On 27 August 1995, another Protocol on Further Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities was signed transferring additional spheres to the PA, including labor, trade and industry, agriculture, gas and gasoline, insurance, statistics, postal services, and local government.

1996

On **4 May 1996**, the DoP deadline for the beginning of the final status talks (Agreement to determine the nature of a final settlement, including Jerusalem, settlements, borders, security, refugees, and external relations) passed, and on **29 May**, Israeli elections brought Likud back and with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu an outspoken Oslo-opponent to power.

On **24 September 1996**, Netanyahu changed the status quo and opened, against the warning of his security advisers, an ancient tunnel under Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, which triggered Palestinian protests that quickly spread to the West Bank, where the Palestinian police used their guns against the Israeli army for the first time. A total of 64 Palestinians and 15 Israelis were killed and an estimated 1,600 were wounded throughout the Occupied Territories.⁴

Palestinians got increasingly disillusioned as Israel refused to withdraw from the OPT as agreed and to freeze its settlement construction. Further negotiations on the implementation of Oslo II (1997 Hebron Agreement, 1998 Wye River Memorandum, 1999 Sharm Al-Sheikh Agreement) did not achieve anything.

1997

Under Oslo II, which had divided the West Bank into Areas A, B, and C, with varying degrees of Palestinian and Israeli control, Hebron, due to its religious and political sensitivity, was left unresolved. With the coming to power of Oslo-opposer Netanyahu, the peace process stalled, but under international pressure and US mediation, his government agreed to negotiate the terms of Israeli redeployment from Hebron. The **Hebron Agreement (or Protocol)**, which was reached between Israel and the PLO on **15 January 1997**, divided the city into two zones – H1 and H2. Israel agreed to withdraw from 80% of the city (H1), while retaining control over an enclave of 500-800 settlers living among tens of thousands of Palestinians in the city's center (20%, H2). H2 included the Old City, Ibrahimi Mosque, and seven settlement structures (Abraham Avinu, Bet Haddassah, Bet Romano, Bet Hashasha, Ramat Yashai-Tel Rumaida, Nahum House/ Yehuda Barqoush, Rachel Saloniq).⁵ Palestinians cheered the withdrawal, but Jewish settlers felt betrayed by Netanyahu.

Tensions increased again in **March 1997** when construction began on the Har Homa settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim, a hill in Jerusalem adjacent to Bethlehem – although Rabin had promised that no additional settlements would be built.

Key Achievements: As part of the Hebron Agreement Israel withdrew from 80% of Hebron (H1 area), transferring control to the PA. International pressure succeeded in forcing the Netanyahu government to uphold previous commitments.

Pitfalls and Limitations: The biggest flaw of the agreement was allowing Israel to maintain control over the H2 area in the midst of Hebron and the resulting division of the city. This created a complex and volatile situation with two authorities in a city of high religious and political significance. The presence of extremist settlers in H2 caused continued friction and frequent violence between them and the Palestinian residents.

⁴ <https://pchrgaza.org/the-clashes-of-september-1996-documented-investigation-and-analysis-summary-of-findings/>.

⁵ Following the signing of the Hebron Agreement, the two sides also signed, on 21 January 1997, an 'Agreement on the Temporary International Presence in the city of Hebron' setting out the arrangements for the 'TIPH,' to be made up of 180 persons from Norway, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey, tasked to monitor and report the situation in Hebron, with Norway being responsible for the overall coordination.

The talks aimed to restore momentum by agreeing on concrete security measures, further Israeli redeployments from the West Bank, and steps toward final status negotiations. The memorandum was intended as a confidence-building measure to reestablish trust and demonstrate commitment to the peace process.

1998

With the peace process stalled due to growing mistrust between Israel and the PA, ongoing violence, and the emergence of the anti-Oslo Netanyahu government, there was an urgent need to revive it and address especially unfulfilled commitments from the 1995 Oslo II Accord. Under intense US pressure and mediation by President Bill Clinton, Israeli and Palestinian leaders met at the Wye River Plantation in Maryland to break the deadlock. The outcome was the **Wye River Memorandum**, which was signed by Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat on **23 October 1998** at the White House. It provided for the implementation of the Oslo II Agreement and the resumption of final status talks. The memorandum divided the 2nd redeployment provided by Oslo II, which was to be completed in April 1997, into three phases totaling 13% of the West Bank. Other main points were changes to be made in the PLO Charter, opening the Gaza airport and the safe passage corridor, reducing the number of Palestinian police, and releasing Palestinian prisoners. Subsequently, Israel withdrew from only 2% of the West Bank near Jenin and some detainees were released, most of them criminals rather than political prisoners. The **December 1998** Knesset vote for early elections in May 1999 suspended further implementation of the agreement. Nevertheless, the Palestinian National Council met in Gaza from **12-14 December 1998** and took a historic step by voting – in the presence of US President Clinton – to rescind the clause in the PLO Charter that called for the destruction of the State of Israel.

Key Achievements: Although it was long overdue, the high-level mediation by President Clinton renewed international focus and commitment to the process. The Wye River agreement made Israel agree to transfer more Area C land to Palestinian control (in stages).

Pitfalls and Limitations: Ongoing accusations of bad faith on both sides hindered execution. Israel used the pretext of alleged Palestinian non-compliance on security. The memorandum emphasized the importance of Palestinian security reforms and cooperation with Israel to combat terrorism without acknowledging Palestinian security needs in the face of Israeli army and settler violence. The Wye River Agreement also did not include an official map detailing the areas to be transferred by Israel to PA control.

1999

By 1999, the peace process was stalled due to delays in the implementation of Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank, security concerns, and ongoing violence. In an effort to revive the negotiations, a summit was hosted by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak at the resort of Sharm El-Sheikh. The resulting **Sharm El-Sheikh Memorandum on Implementation Timeline of Outstanding Commitments of Agreements Signed and the Resumption of Permanent Status Negotiations** was basically a follow-up to the **Wye River Memorandum** and aimed to address outstanding commitments from earlier agreements under the Oslo process. It was signed on **4 September 1999** by Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Chairman Yasser Arafat, overseen by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and witnessed and co-signed by President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and King Abdullah of Jordan. It was yet another agreement for the implementation of Oslo stipulations, specifying Israeli withdrawal in three stages from another 11% of the West Bank, release of some 350 Palestinian political prisoners, opening the safe passages between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and commencing permanent status talks on 13 September 1999 to reach a framework for a settlement of the conflict by February 2000 and a final peace agreement by September 2000. Israeli redeployments were split as follows, however again without an official map:

- Transfer of 7% from Area C to B by 15 September 1999;
- Transfer of 3% from C to B and of 2% from B to A by 15 November 1999;
- Transfer of 1% from C to A and 5.1 % from B to A by 20 January 2000.

The **five-year interim period** stipulated in the Gaza-Jericho Autonomy Agreement ended on **4 May 1999** and triggered a heated debate among the Palestinians as to whether to declare a Palestinian state unilaterally. On **17 May 1999**, Labor Party head Ehud Barak won a landslide victory, becoming Israel's new prime minister.

Key Achievements: At least in theory, the Sharm El-Sheikh Memorandum revived the Oslo framework by reaffirming previous agreements, setting a timeline for further Israeli withdrawals, release of Palestinian prisoners, and other obligations as well as for implementation and resumption of final status negotiations, and putting September 2000 as the horizon for reaching a permanent agreement.

Pitfalls and Limitations: As in previous agreements, the Sharm El-Sheikh Memorandum failed to provide concrete redeployment maps, leaving much of the agreed land transfers for interpretation. Deadlines were not met by Israel and most of its commitments were delayed or only partially implemented, adding to rising frustration and public disillusionment.

THE CAMP DAVID AND TABA SUMMITS, 2000-2001

2000

By 2000, both sides had become increasingly frustrated with the slow pace of the peace process and lack of progress on the permanent status negotiations, and the collapse of the **Wye River Memorandum** had deepened mistrust. US President Bill Clinton, seeking to push for a final settlement, invited both leaders, Yasser Arafat and Ehud Barak, to **Camp David**, a secluded retreat in Maryland, hoping to broker a historic peace agreement. The summit was a high-stakes attempt to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, building on the momentum of earlier peace efforts. It took place from **11-25 July 2000** and aimed to resolve key issues left outstanding by the Oslo process, particularly the final status questions of Jerusalem, borders, refugees, and security. Despite intense negotiations, the summit did not bring the hoped-for breakthrough, but collapsed especially over the Jerusalem and refugee issues.⁶ The failure of Camp David was a major setback for the peace process and contributed to the outbreak of the **Second Intifada** later that year,⁷ which underscored widespread Palestinian frustration over unmet aspirations.

A summit held on **16-17 October 2000** in **Sharm Esh-Sheikh**, attended by Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, US President Bill Clinton, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the EU Council Javier Solana, Jordanian King Abdullah, and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, attempted to find ways to halt the violence. The meeting established a committee, headed by former US senator and Special Envoy to the Middle East, George J. Mitchell (hence the "**Mitchell Commission**") and with former senator Warren Rudman, EU representative Javier Solana, former Turkish President Suleiman Demirel, and Norwegian Foreign Minister Thorbjørn Jagland as members, to investigate the events leading to the

⁶ Foster, Zachary, "A Brief History of Peace Talks, Israel, and the Palestinians," Palestine Nexus, 23 December 2023, <https://palestine.beehiiv.com/p/brief-history-peace-talks-israel-palestinians>; Hanieh, Akram, "The Camp David Papers," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, XXX, no. 2 (Winter 2001), pp. 75-97.

⁷ Triggered by Ariel Sharon's visit to the Haram Ash-Sharif on 28 September 2000.

Al-Aqsa Intifada and explore how to restore security cooperation and return to peace negotiations. (The commission's report was published in May 2001).

Negotiations continued from **18 to 23 December 2000**, followed by US President Clinton's presentation of his "parameters", in a last attempt to achieve peace in the Middle East before his second term ended in January 2001. *Inter alia*, the **Clinton parameters**⁸ proposed two independent states and borders based on 1967 with 3% land swaps, and served as basis for the talks in Taba in early 2001.

Key Achievements: At the Camp David summit, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat engaged for the first time in intensive face-to-face negotiations, under the direct mediation of US President Bill Clinton. The contentious issues of Jerusalem, borders and refugees were for the first time on the table and exposed or clarified the respective positions of both sides. Even though the summit did not produce an agreement, it demonstrated that a framework for a two-state solution was still possible, and the outlines of such a solution were more clearly understood by both sides.

Pitfalls and Limitations: The summit failed to produce the necessary compromises on the unresolved fundamental issues of refugees, borders and Jerusalem, with the latter remaining the most intractable issue. Israel/Barak's "offer" on Jerusalem (Palestinian control over parts of the city's eastern part) was a non-starter for Arafat/Palestinians. The right of return for Palestinian refugees created another seemingly unbridgeable impasse. In addition, both Arafat and Barak were under intense domestic political pressure. Palestinians felt that Clinton's mediation was biased in favor of Israel, and Arafat had to balance the demands of his people, many of whom viewed any compromise on Jerusalem or refugees as a betrayal of Palestinian rights. The coalition of Barak, meanwhile, had crumbled as he lost the support of three parties over his participation in Camp David.⁹ In addition, he faced criticism from Israeli right-wing factions, including settlers, who opposed concessions on land and Jerusalem. This led to a situation where neither leader could afford to make the necessary compromises, which led to a sense of betrayal after the summit.

2001

To follow up on Camp David and to reach an understanding prior to the Israeli elections in February 2001, Israeli and Palestinian delegations met again at the **Taba Summit** from **21-27 January 2001** to discuss the outstanding issues. However, sizable gaps remained, particularly regarding refugees and Jerusalem, and the talks ultimately failed when a final bridging document presented by President Clinton was not accepted.

Negotiations were halted altogether following the election of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who defeated Barak in a landslide on **6 February 2001**.

⁸ The parameters included: (1) the establishment of a non-militarized "sovereign, viable Palestinian State that would accommodate Israel's security requirements and the demographic realities" in most of the West Bank and Gaza Strip with few land swaps; (2) a solution for the refugees that would allow them to return to a Palestinian state, resettlement in their current locations, or in third countries, as well as compensation from the international community for their losses and assistance in building their new lives; (3) an international presence to provide border security and monitor implementation of the final agreement; (4) "fair and logical propositions" regarding Jerusalem to remain an open and undivided city with assured freedom of access and worship for all with incorporation of the principle 'what is Arab should be Palestinian' and 'what is Jewish should be Israeli'; and (5) an official end to the conflict.

⁹ Sontag, D., "Barak's Coalition Crumbles on Eve of Summit Talks," *The New York Times*, 10 July 2000; https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/world/mideast/071000israel-politics.html?utm_source=palestine.beehiiv.com&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=a-brief-history-of-peace-talks-israel-the-palestinians.

Key Achievements: The Taba talks made some progress on several core issues, including Jerusalem, borders, security arrangements and refugees. On Jerusalem, both sides reached a general framework for sharing the city, with proposals for Palestinian sovereignty over East Jerusalem while allowing Israel to maintain sovereignty over the western part. The issue of access to holy sites was also discussed, with compromises proposed, though no final agreement was reached. On borders, the negotiators agreed on the concept of a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, with mutually agreed adjustments to accommodate Israeli settlements and security needs. Regarding the refugee issue, talks revolved around compensation, resettlement, and some form of return, but the right of return remained unresolved. Despite the Second Intifada raging back home, both sides showed a willingness to engage and compromise in a way that was more constructive than previous talks. The US remained highly engaged and the talks were the closest the two sides came to achieving a final status agreement at the time, with both sides reportedly only a few outstanding issues away from a full agreement. This created hope that a final peace agreement could still be possible if talks resumed in the future.

Pitfalls and Limitations: Despite progress, the Taba Summit did not result in a final peace agreement. While many key issues were addressed, the parties failed to address important long-term issues, particularly regarding refugees, settlements and Israeli security guarantees. Palestinian concerns about the extent of Israeli control over Jerusalem and the right of return for refugees remained unresolved, and there was no definitive resolution on security arrangements and the future of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. The summit took place during the Second Intifada, which was marked by hostilities and violence, and just weeks before Israel's national elections, with Ehud Barak facing growing opposition from right-wing political factions. Barak was also politically constrained by his fragile government and thus unable to make the necessary concessions for a final deal. Likewise, President Arafat faced internal pressure and needed to balance the demands of his people and various factions, including hardliners who rejected compromises on Jerusalem and refugees. Last but not least, the transition from Clinton to George W. Bush interrupted the momentum for an agreement, as the Bush administration did not prioritize the Middle East peace process.

While Taba's achievements were notable, the failure to finalize the deal was a major setback in the peace process and marked the last serious attempt at final status negotiations before the onset of further violence and the collapse of the peace process.

On **20 May 2001**, the **Mitchell Commission** published its **report** on the causes of the Al-Aqsa Intifada and ways forward. Recommendations included a “freeze of all settlement activity, including the ‘natural growth’ of existing settlements”, a call on both sides to reaffirm their commitment to existing agreements, and an immediate, unconditional ending of violence, and resumption of security cooperation.

A few weeks later, the Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire and security plan proposed by then CIA director George Tenet to end the violence in the region was published. The **Tenet Plan** took effect on **13 June 2001** and envisaged the resumption of Israel-PA security cooperation, measures to enforce a ceasefire in the Second Intifada, the sharing of information on terrorist threats, and efforts to prevent acts of violence by both sides, followed by Israeli army redeployment to positions held before 28 September 2000 and the lifting of internal closures and border crossings.

2002

Although direct talks had come to an end, diplomatic attempts continued. The **Saudi peace initiative** was announced in **February 2002**, developed initially by Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, and then adopted slightly modified by the Arab League summit on **28 March 2002** in Beirut. It aimed to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, particularly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It offered Israel recognition and “normal relations” with the Arab world in return for full Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied since 1967, a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem, and recognition of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. Palestinians supported the initiative, which was also widely endorsed by Arab nations, but Israel dismissed it, citing security concerns and ambiguity regarding the refugee issue.

Achievements: The Saudi peace initiative brought together 22 Arab states under a single peace proposal, offering, in a historic shift, normalization in exchange for Israeli concessions, and receiving endorsement from the UN, EU and various international actors as a viable framework for peace.

Pitfalls and Limitations: Israel objected primarily to the refugee return clause and to the demand for full withdrawal, viewing it as a “take-it-or-leave-it” deal. Terms like “just solution” were seen as ambiguous and open to interpretation. The initiative was a proposal rather than a negotiable plan, with no clear process for implementation. The plan’s timing was bad as it was released during the height of the Second Intifada.

Also in **March 2002**, **UNSC Resolution 1397** marked a crucial milestone by reiterating UN commitment to the two-state solution, by “Affirming a vision of a region where two states, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders.” In **April 2002**, the so-called **Middle East Quartet** was formed – comprised of the US, Russia, UN and EU, and tasked to help mediate negotiations towards an Israeli-Palestinian permanent status agreement. (It later opened an office in Jerusalem, but has been criticized for its ineffectiveness in promoting the peace process). In **June**, on the pretext of security, Israel began constructing the **separation barrier**.

2003

Concluding that a bi-national state will not be acceptable for Israel and the ongoing occupation will not ever bring stability, the Quartet came up with a new political formula on **30 April 2003**: the “**Performance-Based and Goal-Driven Road Map**”, commonly referred to as the Road Map, with a phased approach towards a final, comprehensive settlement within three years, based on a full two-state solution. The plan demanded PA reforms, a settlement freeze, an end to incitement and violence on both sides (phase 1), the establishment of a Palestinian State within provisional borders (phase 2), and final status negotiations on outstanding issues (phase 3). The plan was performance-based, meaning progress to the next phase depended on meeting specific obligations. It was discussed at the three-way **summit** held in **Aqaba**, Jordan, on **4 June 2003** between US President Bush, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, and Palestinian Prime Minister Abbas, which ended with Abbas vowing an end to terrorism and the militarization of the Intifada, Sharon promising the immediate dismantlement of settler outposts and reiterating his commitment to a two-state solution, and President Bush stressing his commitment to “Israel’s security as a vibrant Jewish state” and to “freedom and statehood for the Palestinian people.”

Achievements: The Road Map's strong point was that it unified major global powers under a common two-state solution framework for peace. Together with its initiation of PA reforms it helped calm the situation on the ground, at least early on.

Pitfalls or Limitations: As previous schemes, the Road Map lacked enforcement as it had no mechanism to penalize violations by either side. Persistent mutual distrust and deep skepticism led to delays and unilateral actions (settlement expansion, militant attacks). Shifting leaderships and the election victory of Hamas in 2006 disrupted implementation and the plan largely stalled in Phase 1.

In **November 2003**, **UNSC Resolution 1515** reiterated the commitment to a two-state solution (per UNSC Resolutions 242, 338, 1397), urged an end to violence and endorsed the Road Map. Also in 2003, two grassroots peace initiatives consistent with the Road Map and the "two states for two peoples" notion were launched: in June the **People's Voice** initiative with six principles that address the core issues of a two-state solution, and in December the **Geneva Accord** with a detailed blueprint of a final status agreement, including arrangements for Jerusalem and Al-Haram Ash-Sharif (which Israel, however, condemned right away).

2004

In **February 2004**, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon introduced his unilateral **Gaza disengagement plan**, effectively ending the era of talks and attempts to negotiate a solution. A revised version of the plan was enacted in 2005.

After the killing of 13 Israeli soldiers in Palestinian attacks, Israel conducted "Operation Rainbow" in Rafah, Gaza, from **18-23 May 2004**, destroying "terrorist" infrastructure and smuggling tunnels, and killing over 60 Palestinians.

On **9 July 2004**, the **International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion** concluded that construction of the separation barrier was illegal and "contrary to international law", and that Israel must "cease forthwith the works of construction," return seized property, and compensate Palestinian landowners whose interests have been damaged. The ruling was confirmed by UN General Assembly Resolution ES-10/15 of **20 July 2004**.

After spending almost three years confined to his compound (Al-Muqata'a) in Ramallah, President Arafat died on **11 November 2004**.

2005

On **9 January 2005**, Mahmoud Abbas was elected the new PA president. On **8 February**, Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Sharon announced a ceasefire, effectively ending the second intifada.

A revised version of Sharon's disengagement plan was enacted during **August-September 2005** through the removal of some 9,000 Israeli settlers and all settlement/military installations from the Gaza Strip and four settlements in the northern West Bank. After withdrawal, the Israeli military still remained in charge of Gaza's airspace, coastline and borders – except for the Gaza-Egypt border, which Egypt was in charge of.

2006

In early January 2006, Sharon suffered a stroke and fell into coma. Ehud Olmert took over as prime minister. On **25 January 2006**, **Palestinian legislative elections** were held. Hamas (as "Change and Reform" party) won a clear victory (74 out of the 132 seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council), defeating Fatah. Subsequently,

Hamas formed a new PA unity government with Ismail Haniyeh as Prime Minister, which, however, was widely boycotted by the international community. In **April**, the US and the EU suspended aid to the Hamas-run Palestinian government citing Hamas' refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist.

On **25 June 2006**, in an attack on an Israeli army outpost near Kerem Shalom, Israeli soldier **Gilad Shalit** was **kidnapped**; for his release, Hamas demanded that all Palestinian female and under-18 prisoners be freed from Israeli jails. Three days later Israel launched military "**Operation Summer Rains**" with the goal of releasing Shalit and preventing future rocket attacks into Israel. It lasted until October and was widely condemned for its disproportionate use of force.

On **1 November 2006**, Israel began another week-long ground invasion operation – "**Operation Autumn Clouds**" – that targeted the Beit Hanoun area in Gaza and left over 50 Palestinians killed.

2007

An attempt was made to revive the peace process by convening the **Madrid + 15 Conference**, which was organized by Spain with the support of the EU. The conference was held in Madrid on **11 January 2007** – 15 years after the Madrid Conference – and attended by representatives from Israel, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Palestine. It called, unsuccessfully, for an official international Middle East peace conference as a first step to revive momentum towards a comprehensive agreement for peace in the Middle East. Seeking to reinforce the principles of the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, it promoted multilateral diplomacy and regional cooperation.

Achievements: The conference somewhat reinforced international support for informal dialogue and a peaceful resolution and helped, to a certain extent, set the stage for the US-hosted Annapolis Conference later that year.

Pitfalls or Limitations: As a symbolic and unofficial conference, which did not include current Israeli or Palestinian leaders, it was more of a commemorative event than a negotiation platform and produced no binding agreements or actionable policies.

After months of infighting in Gaza, Fatah and Hamas signed an agreement in Mecca on **8 February 2007** to form a government of national unity, which then took office on **17 March**.

On **28 March 2007**, the Arab League adopted the 2002 Saudi Peace Initiative (now: **Arab Peace Initiative**) at its summit in Riyadh, which was also attended by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, calling for an end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and normalization of Arab-Israeli relations. While the Palestinians endorsed the initiative, Israel mainly rejected it, although some political leaders expressed reserved support for certain aspects of the plan.

In **June 2007**, clashes with Fatah, whom Hamas claimed was trying to launch a coup, ended with **Hamas seizing control of the Gaza Strip**. Subsequently, Israel imposed a land, air and sea blockade on Gaza that remained in force ever since.

Efforts to revive peace talks and establish a Palestinian state through the Road Map for Peace continued with the US-sponsored **Annapolis Conference**, which was held on **27 November 2007** in Annapolis, Maryland, with the aim to set up a timetable for final status negotiations along the guidelines of the 2003 Road Map. The

goal was to restart direct negotiations and reach a peace agreement by the end of 2008, based on a two-state solution. The conference was attended by President Abbas, Prime Minister Olmert, and representatives from over 30 nations, the UN Security Council and the Middle East Quartet. It resulted in a joint understanding where both sides agreed to begin continuous bilateral negotiations and implement their Road Map obligations.¹⁰

Achievements: Annapolis was the first high-level Israeli-Palestinian talks since 2000 (Camp David), enjoyed broad international support, including from the Arab League, and had both parties publicly reaffirm commitment to the two-state solution. It also created a structure for ongoing negotiations and monitoring by the US.

Pitfalls or Limitations: Both parties were weakened (due to Olmert's resignation and the Fatah-Hamas division as well as skepticism from both populations) and continued violence and settlement expansion undermined trust and progress. This, along with the lack of clear deliverables, resulted in the initiative's failure to produce a final peace deal by the end of 2008.

2008

The next significant round of Israeli-Palestinian talks took place in September 2008 between Ehud Olmert and Mahmoud Abbas, who came even closer to reaching a deal than had Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat, but ultimately fell short. Some progress was made on Jerusalem, where Olmert accepted that Jewish neighborhoods should remain under Israeli sovereignty and Arab neighborhoods under Palestinian sovereignty. Regarding refugees, Olmert acknowledged "the suffering of" – but not "responsibility for" – them, and would only admit a symbolic number. In terms of borders and security, Olmert proposed annexing at least 6.3% of Palestinian territory in exchange for 5.8% of Israeli land in the Negev, adjacent to the Gaza Strip, as well as a territorial link, under Israeli sovereignty, between Gaza and the West Bank.¹¹

Achievements: There was some optimism regarding compromises on the issues of Jerusalem, refugees and land swaps.

Pitfalls: Israel expected to be allowed to pursue "terrorists" across the new borders and move its army into the West Bank if it sensed threats coming from Jordan. Both of these expectations were unacceptable for Palestinians as they implied continuation of the occupation. There was also no consensus over what would happen with Ariel or Ma'ale Adumim, two of the largest settlements in the West Bank.¹² Another problem was that Olmert thought he could put an end to violence without engaging with Hamas, which had won the 2006 elections and taken over the Gaza Strip in 2007. This was absurd, as even if Olmert and Abbas had reached an agreement on the final status issues, it would not have ended violence.¹³

¹⁰ "Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process: The Annapolis Conference," *CRS Report for Congress*, December 7, 2007; <https://www.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Annapolis-all-doc.pdf>.

¹¹ For a summary of Olmert's "Package" Offer to Abu Mazen see "Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process: The Annapolis Conference," *CRS Report for Congress*, December 7, 2007; <https://www.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Annapolis-all-doc.pdf>, p. 15.

¹² Avishai, Bernard, "A Plan for Peace That Still Could Be," *The New York Times Magazine*, 7 February 2011;

https://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/13/magazine/13Israel-t.html?utm_source=palestine.beehiiv.com&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=a-brief-history-of-peace-talks-israel-the-palestinians.

¹³ Foster, Zachary, "A Brief History of Peace Talks, Israel, and the Palestinians," *Palestine Nexus*, 23 December 2023, <https://palestine.beehiiv.com/p/brief-history-peace-talks-israel-palestinians>;

An Annapolis follow-up conference of the Quartet took place in **Sharm Esh-Sheikh** on **9 November 2008**. There, it was decided to hold a meeting on the Middle East peace process in Moscow in spring 2009 (never materialized) and that a comprehensive agreement addressing all issues was needed (nothing would be considered agreed until everything is agreed).

UNSC Resolution 1850 of **16 December 2008** further underscored the importance of international and regional efforts to support a two-state solution and bring an end to the protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, shortly afterwards the PA halted all negotiations in protest of Israel's massive military "Operation Cast Lead" in Gaza that began on **27 December 2008**, allegedly in response to Hamas rocket attacks, and involved aerial bombings, the use of phosphorus bombs, and ground invasions.

2009

Taking office in **January 2009**, US **President Obama** made the peace process one of his top priorities. In a speech in Cairo in June 2009, he put pressure on Israel to accept a two-state solution and urged the Palestinians to renounce violence and recognize Israel's right to exist.

On **18 January**, "Operation Cast Lead" ended with a ceasefire agreement; by then, at least 1,387 Palestinians had been killed and thousands more wounded.¹⁴

Israeli early elections were held on **10 February 2009**, returning Netanyahu to power. The newly-elected prime minister insisted on a demilitarized Palestinian state and recognition of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people. The new US administration pushed hard to revive the peace process and managed to host a **meeting** between Obama, Netanyahu and Abbas on **22 September 2009** at the UNGA in New York. The unrealistic goal was to lay the groundwork for renewed talks on a final agreement on forming a two-state solution within one year.

On **29 September 2009**, the **Goldstone Report** (of the UN Fact Finding Mission to investigate Israel's 2008/2009 "Operation Cast Lead" in Gaza) was presented. It urged the international community to put an end to impunity for violations of international law in Israel and the OPT, accusing both Israel and Hamas of war crimes, though clearly stating that Israel had intentionally targeted civilian sites.¹⁵

After Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, under US pressure, imposed a partial 10-month settlement freeze on **25 November 2009**, President Abbas, under US pressure, agreed to resume talks.

2010

Seven rounds of indirect meetings took place through US intermediaries¹⁶ before US-brokered **direct negotiations** began in Washington, D.C., on **2 September 2010**, which dealt *inter alia* with the issue of land swaps.

¹⁴ B'Tselem, <https://statistics.btselem.org/en/all-fatalities/by-date-of-incident?section=overall&tab=overview>. In April 2009, the UNHRC appointed a fact-finding mission to investigate the offensive, headed by Richard Goldstone.

¹⁵ The UNHRC voted on 16 October 2009 in favor of a resolution endorsing war crimes charges as spelled out in the Goldstone Report, and the UNGA adopted on 5 November a resolution calling on the UN Secretary-General to transmit the report to the UN Security Council which has powers to refer the situation in Gaza to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. However, after being heavily pressured, Goldstone, on 1 April 2011, retracted his claim that Israel deliberately targeted citizens – a move rejected by the other authors of the report.

¹⁶ Although the process was repeatedly interrupted, e.g., by Israel's approval of 1,600 units in the Ramat Shlomo settlement in East Jerusalem on 10 March 2010 and Israel's raid on the Gaza flotilla on 31 May as well as a series of attacks by Palestinian militant groups.

However, the Knesset passing a law on **22 September 2010** requiring a referendum and the votes of at least 60 Knesset members ahead of any withdrawal from East Jerusalem or the Golan Heights, as well as Israel's refusal to expand its settlement freeze, which ended on **26 September 2010**, brought all activity to a halt.

2011

The Palestinian leadership subsequently embarked on a new strategy trying to gain international recognition of an independent state. It succeeded especially with some South American countries following a call for recognition of Palestinian statehood in late 2010 and 2011 – which was met by fierce Israeli opposition. In **January 2011**, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman proposed an interim deal in which a Palestinian state would be established initially on 50% of the West Bank, which the Palestinians rejected.¹⁷

In **March 2011**, after a new round of meetings and in the midst of the Arab Spring, the Quartet declared that they held little hope for the resumption of talks as the differences between the two sides were far too wide.¹⁸

2012

In **January 2012**, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators met for the first time in over a year in Amman, but failed to revive peace talks. In **May**, then Israeli Defense Minister Barak suggested bypassing the stagnant talks with an interim agreement by imposing the borders of a future Palestinian state.¹⁹

In **April 2012**, President Abbas sent a letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu reiterating that for peace talks to resume, Israel must stop settlement building and accept the 1967 borders as a basis for a two-state solution. In his response, Netanyahu, for the first time, officially recognized the right for Palestinians to have their own state, albeit demilitarized.²⁰

On **14 November 2012**, Israel launched a new military offensive on the Gaza Strip ("Operation Pillar of Cloud"), starting with the assassination of Hamas military commander Ahmed Jabari. It set off over a week of Palestinian rockets and Israeli airstrikes, which left five Israelis and 177 Palestinians killed.²¹

Despite Israeli and US opposition, Palestinians distributed a draft resolution to the UN seeking 'non-member state' status. Israel warned that it would consider partial or full cancellation of the Oslo Accords if the resolution was adopted. On **29 November 2012**, the UN General Assembly voted to grant Palestine non-member observer state status, while also expressing the urgent need for the resumption of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians leading to a permanent two-state solution.

2013

On **29 July 2013**, Israeli and Palestinian delegations discussed in Washington renewing peace talks under the auspices of US Secretary of State John Kerry. Direct negotiations on all final status issues resumed on **13 August 2013** with 29 April 2014 set as deadline for establishing a framework agreement. The Israeli side was led by Justice Minister Tzipi Livni and the Palestinian side by PLO official Saeb Erekat.²² After years of stalled

¹⁷ Levy, Elinor, "Erekat on Lieberman plan: No partial state", *Ynet*, 23 January 2011; <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4017562,00.html>

¹⁸ Ravid, Barak, "Quartet 'Giving Up Hope' of Renewing Israeli-Palestinian Talks," *Haaretz*, 17 March 2011.

¹⁹ Rudoren, Jodi, "Israeli Official Weighs an Imposed Palestinian Border," *The New York Times*, 30 May 2012.

²⁰ Winer, Stuart and Raphael Ahren, "PM promises Abbas a demilitarized Palestinian state," *Times of Israel*, 14 May 2012.

²¹ "After eight days of fighting, ceasefire is put to the test," *Times of Israel*, 21 November 2012.

²² Cohen, Tom, "Israel, Palestinians launch sustained peace talks," *CNN*, 30 July 2013.

negotiations, the talks intended to address all core issues and included confidence-building measures such as the release of Palestinian prisoners. They continued in the following months but with no progress, *inter alia* due to ongoing settlement expansion, which prompted the Palestinian team to temporarily quit the negotiations on **14 November**.

2014

In **January 2014**, hardliners in Netanyahu's coalition threatened to withdraw from the government if he accepted the 1967 borders as a baseline for talks. After Israel's failure to release the agreed fourth tranche of Palestinian prisoners on **28 March 2014**, President Abbas signed 15 international conventions regarding adhesion to human and social rights. In response, Israel took measures against the PA.

When Hamas and the PLO signed a unity accord on **23 April**, just before the set deadline, **Israel suspended the talks** on the grounds that it would not negotiate with any Palestinian government "backed by" Hamas and accused Abbas of sabotaging peace efforts by reaching a unity agreement. Abbas said the deal did not contradict their commitment to peace with Israel on the basis of a two-state solution and that any unity government would recognize Israel, be non-violent, and heed previous PLO agreements. US Special Envoy Indyk blamed mainly Israel for the collapse of the negotiations, while the US State Department insisted no one side was to blame but that "both sides did things that were incredibly unhelpful."²³

Achievements: The main success of the Kerry Initiative was that it restarted direct talks after a 3-year hiatus and saw intensive US mediation efforts. The inclusion of confidence-building measures, like the phased release of prisoners by Israel, was a positive element, as was the presentation of Kerry's comprehensive framework proposal – after years of temporary, interim, or partial approaches.

Pitfalls or Limitations: Both leaderships faced internal political constraints and did not make the necessary compromises. Ongoing Israeli settlement activity during talks undermined Palestinian trust, and there were mutual accusations for violating the terms. The surprise reconciliation between Palestinian factions further strained the talks, as Israel objected to negotiating with a government that included Hamas.

The new Palestinian unity government was sworn in on **2 June 2014**. Ten days later, three settler youth were kidnapped in the West Bank. During Israel's subsequent search "**Operation Brother's Keeper**", several Palestinians were killed and hundreds imprisoned. The campaign was seen by many observers as an Israeli attempt to spoil any opportunity for progress which may have come from the recent unity agreement between Fatah and Hamas. After the settler's bodies were recovered on 30 June 2014, Israeli extremists kidnapped Mohammed Abu Khdeir, 15, from Shu'fat, and burnt him alive in a suspected revenge killing. This triggered more clashes as well as rocket fire from Gaza, which in turn led to a major Israeli military offensive on the Gaza Strip ("**Operation Protective Edge**" / **2014 Gaza War**). The offensive, which lasted from **8 July-26 August 2014**, included a ground invasion and left over 2,000 Palestinians killed and half a million displaced.²⁴

Nevertheless, Abbas presented a new proposal to Kerry on **3 September 2014**, which called for nine months of direct talks followed by a three-year plan for Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines, on the condition of a settlement freeze and the release of the pending batch of prisoners. The plan was rejected by Israel as well

²³ AFP, "US denies dismantling peace negotiators team," *Ynet*, 6 May 2014.

²⁴ <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/gaza-operation-protective-edge>.

as the US administration, which said it would not support a unilateral initiative.²⁵ In response, Abbas signed the treaty to join the ICC in December 2014, which Israel answered by freezing millions of dollars in Palestinian tax revenues, in response to which the PA banned the sale of products of six major Israeli companies.

2015

The period from September 2015 to June 2016 saw a wave of uncoordinated violence, especially “lone wolf” stabbing attacks (thus dubbed ‘Knife Intifada’), which was widely seen as an outburst of frustration and hopelessness by (young) Palestinians as tensions over Al-Aqsa Mosque grew and prospects for peace further vanished.

2016

International efforts renewed in 2016 for the first time since the end of the Kerry Initiative with **France hosting a meeting** of 28 delegations on **3 June**, which reaffirmed support for a two-state solution and ended with a vague call to work on a package of economic and security incentives. Israel boycotted the initiative, rejecting it as an international imposition and insisting that peace must come through direct bilateral negotiations, while the PA supported it but also did not participate. On 1 July, the Middle East Quartet outlined key threats to the two-state solution and urged the parties to make progress, and on **23 December, UN Resolution 2334** reiterated the condemnation of Israeli settlements as “flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution”.

2017

In yet another attempt to revive the peace process, over 40 foreign senior officials (but neither Israelis nor Palestinians) convened an **international conference in Paris** on **15 January 2017**, which ended with a Joint Declaration reaffirming the two-state solution as the only way to achieve enduring peace and condemning settlements. However, obstacles were put in this way in **December 2017**, when President Trump announced the **US’s recognition of Jerusalem** as the unified capital of Israel, a move seen by the Palestinians as a destruction of the two-state solution and peace process. In response, the PA cut ties with the Trump administration.

Achievements: The French peace initiative of June 2016 and January 2017 was driven by concern over the lack of progress toward a two-state solution and the risk of escalating violence. In an effort to revive the stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace process, it brought together representatives from around the globe, including the US, EU, Arab League and UN, emphasizing the need for multilateral diplomacy. It reaffirmed international consensus on the two-state solution as the only viable resolution to the conflict.

Pitfalls or Limitations: The absence of Israeli and Palestinian representatives weakened the effectiveness of the initiative from its outset and reduced it to a symbolic rather than substantive event. The initiative did not address structural issues impeding negotiations and produced neither binding resolutions nor a road map. It also lacked enforcement mechanisms or follow-up strategies to compel or incentivize the parties to return to negotiations. The timing was also unfortunate as it coincided with the incoming pro-Israel Trump administration, which later even unilaterally recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.

²⁵ Khoury, J. & B. Ravid, “U.S. Raps Abbas’ Diplomatic Plan as ‘Unilateral,’ Palestinians Say,” *Haaretz*, 6 September 2014.

2018

On **30 March 2018** – the anniversary of Land Day – civil society activists in Gaza launched the “**Great March of Return**” as a non-violent form of protest which called for the Palestinian refugees' right of return and an end to the Israeli blockade on the Gaza Strip. The campaign, which was initially planned for six weeks to culminate in the Nakba Day anniversary in mid-May, included protest camps set up near the border fence with Israel and walks towards the fence, attended by thousands of people and met with indiscriminate force by Israel, killing 17 Palestinians and injuring over 1,400 on the first day alone.²⁶

On **14 May 2018**, the US moved its embassy to Jerusalem and cut its annual aid to the Palestinians as a punishment for the PA's refusal to support Trump's “peace initiative”. Meanwhile, encouraged by the friendly US administration, Israel adopted its “**Nation-State Law**” (formally: *Basic Law: Israel – The Nation-State of the Jewish People*) on **7 July 2018**, which places Israel's Jewish character before its democratic character, declaring that “The Land of Israel is the historical homeland of the Jewish people, in which the State of Israel was established” (Art. 1a) and that “the exercise of the right to national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish People” (Art. 1c), and downgrading the Arabic language from being one of the country's official languages to one holding “special status” (Art. 4a and b).²⁷

2019

On **26-27 June 2019**, the economic part of Trump's “deal of the century” was revealed at a two-day conference, titled ***Peace to Prosperity: The Economic Plan***, that took place in Manama, Bahrain, with the aim to encourage investment. Palestinians boycotted and condemned the event.²⁸

2020

On **28 January 2020**, the “Trump Plan” or “**Deal of the Century**” (formally “Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People”) was publicized, drafted together with Israeli officials. Under the plan, Israel would have had sovereignty over all existing settlements and been permitted to annex up to 30% of the West Bank as part of the suggested two-state solution, with Jerusalem as capital of Israel only.²⁹ Israel welcomed the plan while the Palestinians firmly rejected it and President Abbas halted almost all bilateral contacts with Israel in response. Israeli settlers and right-wing extremists also opposed the plan due to its envisioning a Palestinian state.

In **February 2020**, on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, the foreign ministers of Egypt, France, Germany and Jordan, since then referred to as the **Munich Group**, discussed peace efforts. In **July**, they declared in a statement that “any annexation of Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 would be a violation of international law” and “constitute a major obstacle to efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive and just peace.” Meeting again on **24 September** in Jordan, the group called for resumption of negotiations towards a two-state solution.³⁰

²⁶ “Gaza protests: 17 Palestinians killed in confrontations with Israeli forces,” *CNN*, 30 March 2018.

²⁷ <https://main.knesset.gov.il/EN/activity/documents/BasicLawsPDF/BasicLawNationState.pdf>.

²⁸ <https://www.dohainstitute.org/en/Lists/ACRPS-PDFDocumentLibrary/The-Manama-Workshop-Trump-Middle-East-Peace-Plan-Plummets-before-Lift-Off.pdf>.

²⁹ *Peace to Prosperity – A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People*, January 2020; <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Peace-to-Prosperity-0120.pdf>.

³⁰ <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/2447100-2447100>.

Meanwhile, Israel signed the US-mediated “**Abraham Accords**” – bilateral normalization agreements that bypassed Palestinian-Israeli negotiations – with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain on **15 September 2020**. Additional agreements were reached with Sudan (**23 October**) and Morocco (**22 December**).³¹ While these were seen as a major success by Israel, Palestinians felt sidelined and deplored Arab states’ prioritization of their own interests over Palestinian sovereignty.

With the US election won by Joe Biden in **November 2020**, who had reiterated his commitment to a two-state solution during his presidential campaign, a little hope returned. In one poll, a majority of 57.4% of the Palestinian respondents thought that Biden’s election might open the door for the resumption of talks on the two-state solution, while 36.5% did not think so.³²

2021

On **11 January 2021**, the Munich group met in Cairo to discuss ways to revive peace talks and a month later on **19 February**, at the Munich Security Conference, they condemned Israel’s settlement expansion and the ongoing Palestinian displacement in East Jerusalem.³³ Meeting again on **11 March 2021** in Paris, with UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland and the EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process, Susanna Terstal, they stressed the importance of confidence-building measures to promote dialogue and the two-state solution.³⁴

Ahead of an Israeli court ruling that could evict Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah in favor of Jewish settlers – fueling Palestinian protests and confrontations with Israeli police throughout April – Israeli police also raided the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound on 10 May 2021 after weeks of rising tension, triggering clashes with Palestinian protesters and injuring hundreds. In response, Hamas fired rockets from Gaza, drawing Israeli airstrikes in return. After 11 days, an Egyptian-brokered truce ended the violence which left 261 Palestinians and 13 Israelis killed.³⁵

Soon after, in **June 2021**, Netanyahu was ousted from power after a 12-year run as prime minister. The Knesset approved a new “government of change” led by nationalist Naftali Bennett’s and Yair Lapid’s coalition of left-wing, centrist, right-wing and Arab parties.

2022

In response to a series of stabbing and shooting attacks against Israelis, Israel launched Operation Break the Wave on **31 March 2022**, targeting resistance movements in the West Bank with raids in Jenin and Nablus.

On **5 August 2022**, Israel launched “Operation Breaking Dawn” against Gaza after capturing Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s West Bank chief Bassem Saadi four days earlier. The stated objectives were protecting Israeli civilians from PIJ rockets, striking infrastructure in Gaza, and eliminating senior officials. Israeli forces conducted some 147 airstrikes in Gaza, resulting in the death of at least 48 Palestinians, including 17 children. The operation ended on 7 August with an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire.³⁶

³¹ <https://www.state.gov/the-abraham-accords>.

³² PCPSR, Public Opinion Poll #78, December 2020.

³³ <https://www.newarab.com/news/fm-quartet-slams-israel-settlement-expansion-evictions>.

³⁴ <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2021/03/the-middle-east-including-the-palestinian-question-briefing-and-consultations-2.php>.

³⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/overview-november-2021>.

³⁶ https://www.btselem.org/gaza/202302_broken_dawn_testimonies/

On **22 September 2022**, the Munich group – with Tor Wennesland, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – issued a statement calling for a "just, comprehensive and lasting peace on the basis of the two-state solution".³⁷

After the governing coalition had broken apart, new Israeli elections were held on **1 November 2022**, in which the right-wing national camp of Benjamin Netanyahu won a parliamentary majority. On 29 December, he was, once again, sworn in as prime minister of Israel's most right-wing government ever.

Meanwhile, the EU parliament passed a resolution on **14 December 2022**, *inter alia* urging to set up a European peace initiative with the end goal of a two-state solution and for the EU to "explore with Arab countries concerned how their respective normalization agreements with Israel could be conducive to the two-state solution."³⁸

2023

As talks on **normalization** with Israel advanced in **early 2023**, Saudi Arabia stressed that an agreement would not be reached without tangible and irreversible steps towards a two-state solution and a just arrangement for Palestinian refugees.

On **9 May**, Israel launched surprise strikes on Islamic Jihad in Gaza, igniting five days of violence that killed at least 31 Palestinians.³⁹ During **June** and **July**, Israeli raids on Jenin left numerous other Palestinians dead.⁴⁰ On **26 June 2023**, Netanyahu reportedly told the Knesset that Israel "needs the Palestinian Authority," but also "needs to crush [the Palestinian] ambition" for an independent state.⁴¹

On **7 October 2023**, Hamas launched a major attack on Israeli locations along the Gaza Strip border, killing around 1,200 people and taking over 240 hostages. In response, Netanyahu/Israel declared war on Hamas and started a retaliatory war first by airstrikes, and from **27 October** also with a ground invasion. Both sides implemented a temporary ceasefire starting on **24 November**, during which 102 hostages were released as were over 200 Palestinians from Israeli prisons, but the truce collapsed on 1 December with both sides blaming each other for its failure. On **29 December 2023**, South Africa filed a complaint with the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)**, accusing Israel of violating the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.⁴²

The Israel-Gaza War has brought the two-state solution back to the forefront – as the only way to lasting peace – advocated by a range of world leaders and organizations.

³⁷ <https://english.wafa.ps/Pages/Details/130958>.

³⁸ European Parliament resolution of 14 December 2022 on the prospects of the two-state solution for Israel and Palestine (2022/2949(RSP)); https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0443_EN.html.

³⁹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/6848/2023/en/>.

⁴⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/07/03/israel-jenin-military-raid-palestinians/>.

⁴¹ "Netanyahu said to tell MKs: Israel 'needs the PA,' must 'crush' statehood aspirations," *Times of Israel*, 27 June 2023; <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-said-to-tell-knesset-panel-that-israel-needs-the-palestinian-authority/>.

⁴² <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20231228-app-01-00-en.pdf>.

2024

On **26 January 2024**, in response to a case brought by South Africa, the ICJ ordered Israel to take specific measures to prevent the possibility of genocide in Gaza. A **10 May** US State Department report found it was “reasonable to assess” that Israeli forces had violated international humanitarian law using US-supplied weapons in Gaza,⁴³ but four days later, the Biden administration announced another \$1 billion arms sale to Israel. On **20 May**, the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) prosecutor sought arrest warrants for top leaders of Hamas and Israel – including Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Defense Minister Gallant, and Hamas’ leaders Ismail Haniyeh and Yahya Sinwar. On **24 May**, the ICJ ordered Israel to immediately stop its military offensive in Rafah. On **28 May**, Spain, Ireland and Norway formally recognized a Palestinian state.

LESSONS LEARNED

The early Palestinian-Israeli negotiations faced several "sticky points", starting with Israel’s initial refusal to negotiate directly with the PLO, and the subsequent asymmetric “mutual” recognition between the PLO, which Israel only recognized as sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and Israel, whose right to exist was recognized by the PLO. Thus, while Palestinians accepted Israel in 78% of their historic homeland, Israel did not recognize Palestine in the remaining 22% from which Palestinians sought Israeli withdrawal. Instead, Israel began to negotiate on that territory while at the same time continuing to expand its settlements there. Although the Oslo Accords implied to lead to a two-state solution, Israel knew how to carefully draft them with the result that a Palestinian state is not mentioned once in any of the texts, which, in turn, left many Palestinians doubting Israel's real intentions.

To date, there have been numerous attempts to end the Israeli occupation and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and to create peace in the region, in most cases on the basis of the two-state paradigm. None of these were successful and all the issues at stake remain unresolved. Among the reasons for this failure are some that were inherent in all attempts and ran like a common thread through them, including the asymmetry of power between the two parties, the deferral of key final status issues, the phased approach, the rather vague language used, the passive role of the mediators and the lack of any enforcement of the agreements reached, the lack of formal assurances and guarantors to monitor implementation, and the exclusion of major political actors such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad. All of these have resulted in repeated inconclusive breakdowns of talks and prolonging the conflict.

For negotiations to succeed, resuming talks will require addressing past pitfalls while leveraging existing areas of potential agreement. To overcome mistrust stemming from unfulfilled commitments, continued violence and unilateral actions that have so far undermined negotiations, key points of departure must include the following:

- There must be no power asymmetry between the weak, occupied party and a militarily powerful occupier, which left Palestinians in a disadvantaged position and focused negotiations on Israel's security-centric interests. This structural inequality must be overcome; negotiations towards a mutually beneficial agreement can only be done on equal footing.

⁴³ “Key Takeaways from Biden Administration Report on Israeli Use of US Weapons,” <https://www.justsecurity.org/95583/israel-weapons-hamas-us-report-takeaways/>

- There must be a clear final goal to the talks, such as ending the occupation, establishing a Palestinian state, etc. Core issues must be addressed early on with concrete proposals.
- Agreements reached must be clearly and unmistakably formulated so that they leave no room for interpretation.
- There must be clear timeframes and enforceable consequences for violations.
- There must be a truly neutral party monitoring and enforcing compliance with agreed upon terms, including matters related to redeployments and settlement freezes. External mediators must be credible and acceptable to both sides.
- Negotiations must include all parties to the conflict, including opposition parties and supporters of armed resistance to increase legitimacy. Without them, any potentially reached agreement is doomed to fail sooner or later.
- Understandings, compromises and (semi-)solutions (e.g., on land swaps, shared sovereignty in Jerusalem, and the refugee question) from previous rounds of talks could be used as starting points in future talks.
- Shared interests (e.g., security, economic prosperity, reducing regional tensions) should frame future negotiations to “incentivize” peace by focusing on mutually beneficial outcomes in the longer run, such as joint projects, open trade routes, water and resource-sharing etc.

CONCLUSION

The Israeli-Palestinian peace processes have been fraught with a complex interplay of factors, mutual distrust, unmet expectations, external influences, and geopolitical shifts resulting in repeated failures. Above all, the history of the peace process underscores the urgent need for a more equitable negotiation framework. Lessons from past failures have shown that without addressing structural power imbalances and halting the expansion of Israeli settlements, future initiatives risk repeating the same mistakes.

To Palestinians, the so-called peace process has so far served as a façade – used to legitimize and accelerate Israeli colonization, all while the occupation is subsidized under the banner of state-building, funded largely by the international community. Meanwhile, the prospect of a two-state solution has steadily faded into the distance, remaining a lip-service at best. Any future negotiations must genuinely embrace Palestinian aspirations for self-determination and meet both sides’ core national and security needs.

Western governments must end the practice of treating Israel as if it is above international law. They must abandon double standards and broaden the circle of mediation by meaningfully involving international actors – such as the United Nations and the Arab League – to counterbalance both perceived and actual biases.

For negotiations to succeed, they must reject unilateralism, rebuild trust, and center the core issues at stake. This requires building on mutual recognition, shared interests, and coordinated international support. Ultimately, sustainable peace depends on addressing both parties' existential fears and practical needs through a process that is transparent, inclusive, fair and accountable.

PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI PERSPECTIVES ON FAILURES OF PAST PEACE PROCESSES

	General Factors	Palestinian perspective	Israeli perspective
Recurring broader issues	• Inability to reconcile fundamental requirements of both parties/failure to address core issues. • Constructive ambiguity in agreements leading to conflicting interpretations. • Israel's security-centric approach. • Influence of extremists on both sides derailing progress. • Land swaps - Palestinians demanding a 1:1 ratio and equal quality, Israel offering less.	▪ Power asymmetry in negotiations between occupier and occupied. ▪ Absence of a credible mediator to balance power asymmetries. ▪ Lack of accountability for Israeli actions. ▪ Lack of implementation of signed agreements. ▪ Israeli settlement expansion erodes territorial viability of a future state. (Occasional "settlement freezes" were not genuine but due to US pressure and excluded pre-approved housing units, East Jerusalem, and settlement outposts). ▪ Lack of Israeli commitment to address historical injustices, such as refugee rights. ▪ Postponing the final status issues is a strategy to entrench occupation while offering symbolic gains.	▪ Security concerns due to violence and perceived Palestinian unwillingness to compromise. ▪ Distrust in Palestinian leadership's ability to unify and uphold agreements. ▪ Failure of Palestinian leaders to make necessary concessions. ▪ Religious and historical ties to disputed areas, especially Jerusalem.
		Failures	
Event		Palestinian perspective	Israeli perspective
Oslo Accords (1993-1995)	Established mutual recognition and a framework for a two-state solution, with the Palestinian Authority (PA) gaining limited self-rule in parts of the West Bank and Gaza.	▪ Continued Israeli settlement expansion undermined faith in a two-state solution. The accords did not address core issues like borders, Jerusalem, refugees and sovereignty. ▪ The PA viewed its powers as too limited and felt the economic dependency on Israel was exploitative. ▪ Disappointing extent of territorial control granted to the PA. ▪ Lack of a clear end goal and unmet deadlines.	▪ A surge in violence, including suicide bombings by Hamas, weakened Israeli trust in Palestinian intentions. ▪ Many Israelis believed the PA failed to curb terrorism, violating the agreements.

Camp David Summit (2000)	Talks facilitated by US President Bill Clinton between Israeli Prime Ministers Ehud Barak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.	▪ The “offer” was seen as insufficient, failing to guarantee full sovereignty over East Jerusalem and adequate territorial continuity. ▪ Israel proposed annexing 9% of the West Bank with inadequate land swaps. ▪ Refugees' right of return was largely excluded. ▪ While Arafat offered far-ranging concessions and was well prepared, Barak’s proposals were the opposite of generous, presented by US officials, were only oral instead of written proposals, and lacked detail. ▪ At the time of the summit, Barak had no more a majority in the Knesset.	▪ Arafat's rejection of the proposal without a counteroffer fueled Israeli beliefs that Palestinians were unwilling to accept a Jewish state. ▪ The subsequent Second Intifada (2000-2005) was seen as a betrayal of peace efforts. Lack of efforts to quell the Second Intifada. ▪ Arafat rejected the best offer of peace made by Prime Minister Ehud Barak.
Taba Talks (2001)	Final attempt to negotiate the stalemate	▪ Israel’s proposals still fell short on core issues like borders, Jerusalem and refugees. ▪ Talks were perceived as too rushed due to political pressures in Israel.	▪ Persistent violence and lack of mutual concessions created skepticism about the Palestinian leadership’s intentions. ▪ Acceptance of Palestinian demands without reciprocal concessions. ▪ Compromises beyond Israel's capacity, leading to diminished domestic support.
Roadmap for Peace (2003)	The US, UN, EU and Russia introduced a three-phase plan for a two-state solution.	▪ Israel’s precondition of ending violence was seen as unreasonable given ongoing occupation and settlement expansion. ▪ The PA felt undermined by Israeli unilateral actions and U.S. favoritism toward Israel. ▪ Transformed into a tool of conditionality for Palestinian politics.	▪ Persistent attacks and perceived failure of the PA to dismantle terrorist networks led to the process stalling. ▪ Israeli leaders doubted the Roadmap’s viability due to Hamas's growing influence. ▪ Objections to parallel obligations for both sides.
Gaza Disengagement (2005)	Israel unilaterally withdrew from Gaza.	▪ The withdrawal was unilateral, bypassing negotiations and leaving Gaza isolated and blockaded.	▪ The takeover of Gaza by Hamas in 2007 and rocket attacks into Israel were seen

		Many saw it as a way for Israel to tighten control over the West Bank.	as evidence that withdrawal led to more insecurity.
Annapolis Conference (2007)	US President George W. Bush hosted talks between Israeli PM Ehud Olmert and PA/PLO President Mahmoud Abbas.	- Settlement expansion during negotiations weakened the PA's position. - Proposals were viewed as noncommittal and failed to address long-term sovereignty issues. - Pressure to make more compromises without reciprocal Israeli concessions.	- Fatah-Hamas division undermined the PA's ability to represent all Palestinians. - Skepticism about Palestinian intentions persisted amid ongoing violence.
Obama-era Talks (2009-2014)	Efforts included a 10-month Israeli settlement freeze and the 2014 Kerry-led peace initiative.	- Settlement activity continued outside the freeze period, undermining trust. - Israeli proposals were seen as inadequate on Jerusalem, refugees and borders. - The Fatah-Hamas split has fragmented Palestinian representation, complicating the ability to present a unified stance in negotiations (e.g., Hamas rejected Kerry's initiative, stating that President Abbas has no legitimacy to negotiate in the name of the Palestinian people).	- Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state and ongoing incitement were barriers. - Hamas's control of Gaza posed security concerns. - The Israeli government publicly stated that peace couldn't exist even if both sides signed the agreement due to the stance taken by Hamas and Hezbollah. Israel for its part, was skeptical that if a final agreement was reached, the situation would change, as Hamas and Hezbollah would still get support to fuel new violence.

PAST PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI PEACE PROCESSES – COMPARATIVE TABLE

Aspect	1993/94 Oslo I Accord	1995 Oslo II Accord	1998 Wye River Memorandum	1999 Sharm El-Sheikh Memorandum	2000 Camp David Summit	2001 Taba Talks
Type	Initially secret negotiation agreement	Follow-up interim agreement	US-brokered Memorandum	Final status implementation timetable	US-hosted final status summit	High-level informal negotiations
Main Goal	Mutual recognition, Palestinian self-rule	Expansion of autonomy, setting groundwork for final talks	Implement Oslo II, security cooperation	Renew commitment to Oslo process & finalize pending issues	Achieve permanent status agreement (borders, refugees, etc.)	Finalize agreement based on Camp David progress
Participants	Israel, PLO (Rabin & Arafat, mediated by Norway)	Israel, PLO (Rabin & Arafat)	Israel (Netanyahu), PA (Arafat), US (Clinton)	Israel (Barak), PA (Arafat), US, Egypt	Israel (Barak), PA (Arafat), US (Clinton)	Israel (Barak), PA (Arafat), informal delegations
Achievements	- Mutual recognition - Established PA - Gaza & Jericho self-rule	- Division of West Bank (Areas A, B, C) - PA elections	- Security coordination - Israeli withdrawal commitments	- Updated withdrawal timetable - Focus on permanent status	- Detailed proposals on all final status issues	- Most detailed peace framework to date - Narrowed gaps
Limitations/ Pitfalls	- Left final status unresolved - Rise of violence	- Fragmented West Bank - Increased mistrust	- Limited implementation - Netanyahu's hesitation	- Delayed implementation - Political changes in Israel	- Failed to reach agreement - Second Intifada followed	- Talks ended with Israeli election - No formal agreement
Legal/Political Weight	Interim agreement with international recognition	Legally binding interim agreement	Memorandum of understanding	Political agreement reaffirming Oslo	High-level summit but no signed accord	Informal but significant diplomatic document
Legacy/Impact	Foundation for PA & peace process	Set framework for West Bank governance	Temporary progress, revived US involvement	Brief progress before Camp David	Last serious attempt at full peace under Clinton	Closest both sides came to a final deal

	2002 Saudi Peace Initiative	2003 Road Map for Peace	2007 Madrid +15 Conference	2007 Annapolis Conference	2013-2014 Kerry Initiative
Type	Arab League peace proposal	Quartet-led peace plan	Symbolic commemorative forum	US-hosted peace summit	US-led intensive mediation
Main Goal	Arab-Israeli normalization in exchange for withdrawal & statehood	Two-state solution via phased progress	Reflect on past efforts & encourage multilateral diplomacy	Resume Israeli-Palestinian final-status talks	Achieve a comprehensive final-status agreement
Participants	Arab League states	Israel, Palestinian Authority, Quartet	Former world leaders, peace experts	Israel, Palestinian Authority, Arab League, international actors	Israel, Palestinian Authority, US mediators
Achievements	- Unified Arab stance - Offered normalization	- Reaffirmed two-state vision - Some reform progress	- Promoted multilateral approach - Precursor to Annapolis	- Restarted direct talks - International backing	- Resumed direct talks - High-level US engagement
Limitations/Pitfalls	- Rejected by Israel - No mechanism for implementation	- No enforcement - Talks stalled early	- Lacked binding outcomes - No formal negotiations	- No final deal - Ongoing mistrust & instability	- Talks collapsed - Settlements, political divisions
Legal/Political Weight	Political declaration by Arab League	Internationally backed action plan	Symbolic and retrospective	Politically significant but non-binding understanding	Direct diplomatic effort with detailed proposals
Legacy/Impact	Reference point for Arab peace initiatives	Framework for later negotiations	Limited long-term effect	Last major peace conference with both parties	Demonstrated depth of divisions; no breakthrough achieved



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