

Peace for Apartheid: The Oslo Accords and Orientalism in Liberal American Foreign Policy  
1991-1996

Dutton Crowley

Honors Thesis in History  
Dr. Urbanski & Dr. Bet-Shlimon  
March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Take up the White Man's Burden --

And reap his old reward:

The blame of those ye better

The hate of those ye guard --

The cry of hosts ye humour

(Ah, slowly!) towards the light:

“Why brought he us from bondage,

“Our loved Egyptian Night?”

-Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man's Burden”

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1993, Prime Minister of Israel Yitzhak Rabin and Chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Yasir Arafat shook hands on the White House lawn, beginning the official ‘peace process’ between Israel and the Palestinians. Representing the United States, President Bill Clinton stood between the two ostensibly as the neutral mediator, making sure to give Rabin a slight push to encourage the handshake [see Image 1 below]. This highly choreographed event marked the official beginning of the Oslo Accords, a series of diplomatic agreements that was to end the century-old confrontation between Zionism and the stateless Palestinians. For these efforts, Rabin and Arafat would win the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize [see Image 2 below]. However, by March of 1996 it was clear that peace was not on the horizon. Following four suicide bombings in Israel within a span of eight days, Shimon Peres, the new Prime Minister, declared that Israel was at “war in every sense of the word,” leaving many asking the question, what happened?<sup>1</sup>

The answer to this question is better captured by what did not happen. After two years of negotiations and the opening of a secret back-channel through Oslo, Israel and the PLO formally agreed to a five-year negotiating period in which both sides would work towards peace and Palestinian sovereignty through the two-state solution. This is known as “land for peace”: in return for the withdrawal of the military occupation of the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank of the Jordan River, the Palestinians would agree to share the land of historic Palestine with Israel. However, leading up to and throughout the Oslo process, Israel was moving in the radically opposite direction. In continuation with state policy going back to 1967 and the beginning of the occupation, the Israeli Labor government continued to expand civilian settlements in the West Bank. This policy deliberately sought to provide *de facto* annexation of portions of the West Bank to Israel in order to make Israel’s civilian and military presence a *fait accompli*. The issue with the peace process was that it never began.

---

<sup>1</sup> “The Declaration by Peres: ‘War in Every Sense of the Word’,” *New York Times*, Mar. 4<sup>th</sup>, 1996.



[Image 1]: A photo of the handshake between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (left) and Chairman of the PLO Yasir Arafat (right), with President Clinton in the middle.<sup>2</sup>



[Image 2]: A photo of the recipients of the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize: from left to right, Yasir Arafat, Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Gary Hershorn, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-oslo-accords/twenty-five-years-on-oslo-accords-peace-hopes-a-fading-memory-idUSKCN1LS2MP>, retrieved 2/27/19.

<sup>3</sup> Government Press Office (GPO), retrieved via [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr\\_-\\_Government\\_Press\\_Office\\_\(GPO\)\\_-\\_THE\\_NOBEL\\_PEACE\\_PRIZE\\_LAUREATES\\_FOR\\_1994\\_IN\\_OSLO.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr_-_Government_Press_Office_(GPO)_-_THE_NOBEL_PEACE_PRIZE_LAUREATES_FOR_1994_IN_OSLO.jpg), 2/27/19.

Rather than a process towards peace through Palestinian *sovereignty*, Oslo began a period in which the Israelis were to incrementally grant the Palestinians *autonomy*. Given the settlement policy of the Israeli state, either outcome was to leave the Palestinian area as non-contiguous and without access to the majority of the natural resources in the West Bank—an unjust paradigm that is comparable to the structural inequality of post-war South Africa. Rather than “land for peace,” Israel demanded peace and in return offered the normalization of apartheid. By relegating to final status negotiations all issues that would determine the question of sovereignty—borders, the occupation, and resource rights—Israel refrained from making any major concessions and thereby allowed its territorial expansion to continue unabated. Furthermore, by participating in the spectacle of a peace process, Israel was able to reconcile its image within the international community. Whereas before Oslo Israel’s expansionist policy left it relatively isolated, by September 1995 and the signing of Oslo II the international community came to support Israel behind the ‘peace process.’ This notwithstanding, Israel’s tactics for annexation remained virtually unaltered; the difference was merely the public image it projected.

I will argue that although they insisted their role was merely to ‘enforce the terms of the deal,’ the United States acted decisively on behalf of the Israelis by providing them ideological and political support. They did so first by extolling Oslo as a peace process and then by blaming the lack of peace on the Palestinians while ignoring the fact that Israel refused to abide by the fundamental terms of the agreement. This narrative was rooted in the foreign policy planners of the Clinton administration, whose ideology and relationship to the state were equivalent to that of modern Orientalists, as described by Edward Said. For its part the *New York Times* repeated the narrative of Clinton’s advisers by describing Palestinian terrorism in a manner that ignored the socioeconomic and political factors of the conflict, thereby absolving Israel of any wrongdoing. Through this concerted effort the United States was integral to reshaping opinion of Israel within the international community.

## Theory, Assumptions, & Methodology

In 1978 Edward Said published his landmark study, *Orientalism*. Orientalism is a centuries-old field of study that bifurcates the world into two distinct groups: the Western Occident and the Eastern Orient. As a result of its superior military power—which is a complex product of history rather than a preordained fact—the Occident began to study the Orient, creating an academic *representation* that suited the needs of the ‘West,’ namely declaring the ‘East’ as a monolithic, static, and inferior civilization. This ideology is a product of the strain of history known as historicism, which holds that the role of the historian is to abide by scientific objectivity in pursuit of knowing the past ‘as it truly transpired.’ However, Orientalist distinctions between East and West are entirely arbitrary and subjective: what makes *them* Eastern? *they* are not western; what makes *us* civilized? we are not *them*, who are uncivilized.<sup>4</sup> This pattern of circular reasoning came to support an entire field that would perpetuate itself for centuries.

From Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798 through the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire following World War I, the Orientalist took on a formal political role. Once merely academics, Orientalists began to justify empire and its “civilizing mission,” which was to elevate the Orient to “modernity.”<sup>5</sup> After World War II and the relative decline of the British and French Empires, the United States rose to global prominence, inheriting this Orientalist tradition. Now known as the ‘regional expert,’ American Orientalists continue to work for the state and justify imperialism.<sup>6</sup>

Far from a simple academic exercise, Orientalism is a system of hegemony that continues to shape the American outlook towards the East. Drawing on the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault, Said argues that because all humans are a product of their historical moment, all knowledge is to some degree partial and political; history, then, must be something more than ascertaining and

---

<sup>4</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 54-55.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 87, 223-224.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 290-291, 322

consolidating ‘the true facts,’ contrary to the fundamental premise of historicism.<sup>7</sup> For Orientalists, this renders their body of knowledge not scientific and objective but tinged and distorted by their beliefs about civility and backwardness.<sup>8</sup> If the facts challenge these preconceptions, they have no issue creating their own justification through what Orwell described as doublethink.

With regard to Israel and the Palestinians, this leaves most liberal Americans believing in the reductive dichotomy of a democratic, peaceful Israel and the authoritarian, terrorist Palestinians.<sup>9</sup> In turn, Americans are predisposed to exaggerate Palestinian terrorism without discussing its roots, especially if doing so would challenge the notion of a democratic Israel. Hence, Orientalists will occasionally acknowledge and criticize the expansion of settlements in the occupied territory, but they reduce the conflict down to Palestinian violence and Israeli’s refusal to withdraw the military occupation, which, they argue, is merely a reaction to the violence. Ideally Israel would end settlement expansion, but this is a negligible detail so long as the threat of violence remains.

While in *Orientalism* Said describes the relationship between academics and the state, in 1981 he published *Covering Islam*, which demonstrates how Orientalism affects journalism and the media. Like Orientalists, the media claim that their reporting is objective and impartial. When it comes to terrorism, however, Said has shown that this is not the case. Rather than attempting to explain the reasons why criminals resort to terrorism, the media tend to display this violence in a manner that repeats Orientalist stereotypes.<sup>10</sup> Although Said focuses specifically on how they craft reporting in terms of the “Islamic terrorist,” as if modern issues take root in the Qur’an, through the Oslo period the media criticized Palestinian terrorism by focusing on the idea that ‘they oppose peace.’ This seems irrefutable, but when one considers the fact that Israel too opposed the terms of peace, this becomes merely an Orientalist trope that foregoes any considerations of Israel’s role in fomenting violence.

---

<sup>7</sup> Here I wish to thank Dr. Urbanski, our Honors in History Cohort Advisor. Her guidance in completing a paper of this length was indispensable, especially to this section.

<sup>8</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 10-11.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 27; See also, Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 37.

<sup>10</sup> Edward Said, *Covering Islam* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981).

The tactics of Hamas and Islamic Jihad between February 25<sup>th</sup> and March 4<sup>th</sup> certainly conform to any objective definition of terrorism, but they are far from the only party to resort to violence.<sup>11</sup> In a serious study of history, there could be no doubt that both Israelis and Palestinians have resorted to violence, including terrorism against innocent civilians.<sup>12</sup> If any agreement is to be worthy of the term ‘peace process,’ both sides must make active efforts towards peace. At Oslo all parties agreed to the two-state solution, so that must be the standard for an analysis of this time period.

As I will discuss, *the* two-state solution is a defined concept that enjoys a consensus within the international community, save for the United States and Israel. It specifically entails two separate and fully sovereign states that exist within and fully inhabit their respective pre-1967 borders, prior to Israel’s occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, with only minor and mutual border adjustments. This is established within international law by United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, which calls for the “Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in [June 1967]”—the Withdrawal Clause.<sup>13</sup> The standard attempt to reinterpret the resolution is rooted in the fact that the English version does not *explicitly* call for Israel to withdrawal from ‘all territory’ occupied in June of 1967, potentially allowing for Israel to annex East Jerusalem and additional settlements during final status negotiations. Although the International Court of Justice in 2004 declared this interpretation to be superfluous, I will argue that this was still an erroneous interpretation at the time of Oslo, one that the United States invoked to permit Israel to pursue territorial expansion in defiance of the Oslo agreement, which formally endorsed the Resolution.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> There is no internationally recognized definition for terrorism, but most apolitical definitions resemble the belief that terrorism is the use of force to indirectly achieve a political goal. When internationally recognized states resort to these tactics, it does in fact constitute terrorism. See C.A.J. Coady and Igor Primoratz, *Terrorism: The Philosophical Issues*, ed. Igor Primoratz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 3-30, 113-127.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine*, x.

<sup>13</sup> Although the Resolution does not explicitly call for a Palestinian state, it does call for sovereignty of states within the region, and related resolutions and the international consensus make clear that this entails a Palestinian state, such as General Assembly Resolution 181.

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix I for text of the Resolution; for an in-depth discussion of the history of the resolution’s creation and interpretation, attempts to reinterpret it, and the court’s ruling see Norman Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 287-291.

However, the purpose of this thesis is not to answer *why* the United States assisted Israel in opposing the two-state solution but *how* they justified it. To ground their position in its Orientalist influences, I will describe the relationship between President Bill Clinton and two academics at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), Martin Indyk and Dennis Ross. Both also held influential roles in the Clinton administration, and I will draw on their memoirs to illustrate how they perceived the Oslo process as it unfolded. Ross and Indyk enjoy prestige within liberal academia as credible witnesses to history, but I will read their memoirs through a more critical lens. Rather than assume that these texts are constative description of ‘true history,’ I will analyze them within their historical moment, as a product of a discourse that relegates the Palestinians to an inferior status *vis-à-vis* Israel and the West. Less known than the memoirs of Ross and Indyk is that of Yitzhak Rabin. This is likely due to the fact that, as I will show, Rabin was quite candid with his plans for Israel and the Palestinians, and his account belies the idealistic position of the United States. As for the media, I will focus on the *New York Times*, for in liberal U.S. journalism international news is little more than what the *Times* validates as such.<sup>15</sup> While I will criticize their coverage of terrorism, it is my position that violence against non-combatant civilians is *never* justified; however, if one does not believe that the actions and motives of the United States are beyond reproach, they must attempt to understand terrorism in its historical complexity rather than uncritically support the interpretation of the state.<sup>16</sup> Before making the argument that Oslo was a continuation of longstanding Israeli policy, a review of the history is necessary.

### **Historical Context**

One of the earliest political Zionists was Theodor Herzl, author of *The Jewish State* (1896). Writing at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he unapologetically extolled the idea of establishing a settler-colonial Jewish state in Palestine. The goal of Zionism as he envisioned it was to “form a portion of a

---

<sup>15</sup> Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 43.

<sup>16</sup> Noam Chomsky, *The Responsibility of Intellectuals* (New York: The New Press, 2017).

rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism.”<sup>17</sup> Clearly, the idea of an Occidental Israel against the Oriental Arabs has deep roots in Zionist thought. Also notable in his writings is the fact that the Palestinian population warrants but the slightest of mention.

But early Zionists were certainly aware of an Arab population in the land they sought to colonize. In 1940 Ze’ev (Vladimir) Jabotinsky, the political predecessor of Prime Minister Menachem Begin, published a book outlining his plan for creating a Jewish state in Palestine, *The Jewish War Front*. Jabotinsky rejected the ‘senseless’ idea of partition in favor of a Jewish state that stretched from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River. For him it was permissible that some Arabs would remain, perhaps two for every five Jewish residents. If this meant that some Arabs would have to emigrate, their fate would be better than that of the Jews because, according to Jabotinsky, the Palestinians would be at home in any of the other Arab states.<sup>18</sup>

The establishment of the state of Israel on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1948 partially achieved this goal. Israel’s first Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion shared Jabotinsky’s dream of complete control over the land of Palestine, but he was also aware of Israel’s need to appease the British. This led him to a more pragmatic approach, one that envisioned Jewish sovereignty over eighty to ninety percent of the land.<sup>19</sup> However, in November 1947 UN General Assembly Resolution 181 called for the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Palestinian states, with the land divided relatively equally and Jerusalem as an independent, international entity.<sup>20</sup> This was insufficient for Ben-Gurion, and in order to make Israel an expansive, purely Jewish state, in December 1947 Israel began to implement “Plan Dalet,” the ethnic cleansing of Palestine. Throughout 1948 this catastrophic event dispossessed no less than 750,000 Palestinians of their land, men, women, and children. After a review of Israel’s military archive, Israeli

---

<sup>17</sup> Here I wish to thank Dr. Bet-Shlimon for her contribution to this thesis and my education, including leading me to and helping me better understand this source. She will notice that her influence pervades this text in its entirety. However, all errors in judgement and reasoning are my own; Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, “The Jewish Question”, 1896 (Jewish Virtual Library: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/quot-the-jewish-state-quot-theodor-herzl>).

<sup>18</sup> Yosef Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs: 1882-1948, A Study of Ideology* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987), 267-271.

<sup>19</sup> Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2006), 25-26.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-33.

historian Ilan Pappé concluded that this operation was the product of a methodical, preconceived strategy ordered by Ben-Gurion and executed by the Haganah, the predecessor of the Israel Defense Forces. The result was Israeli control over approximately eighty percent of Jerusalem and seventy-five percent of historic Palestine, with the Green Line as the boundary of separation and Israel in brazen defiance of the partition plan.<sup>21</sup> [see Images 3 and 4 below] Yitzhak Rabin has described his role in this operation, but he reserves his sympathy for the “great suffering” of the *Israeli* soldiers who were ‘obliged’ to participate in ethnic cleansing.<sup>22</sup> Although they fell short of their original goal, from 1947 through Oslo, Israel has sought to solidify its control over the full territory Ben-Gurion desired.

The second displacement of Palestinians came in June 1967 with the Six Days War. In a swift and decisive victory, Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank, beginning the occupation and the settlement endeavor [see Image 5 below]. Although not to the level of 1948, this included a mass exodus of more than 200,000 Palestinians from their land. After occupying Palestine in its entirety, Israel had control over all of the territory, but much of the “demographic problem” remained.

The most influential plan to isolate the Palestinians from Israeli territory was the Allon plan, named after Yigal Allon. The main tactic of the plan was to create wedges, strands of settlements and access roads that penetrate the West Bank for Israel to annex.<sup>23</sup> As for the Palestinians, he recommended that Israel provide them with some form of autonomy or annex them to Jordan [see Image 6 below]. Although never formally adopted, this plan has since served as a blueprint for expanding Israel’s sovereignty over the West Bank.<sup>24</sup> This began with the expansion of the municipality known as “Greater Jerusalem.” Construction around Jerusalem had two goals: in East

---

<sup>21</sup> It should be noted that the Palestinians too opposed the partition plan and at times resorted to violence in doing so. But they did nothing equivalent to Israel’s Plan Dalet, nothing that rises to the level of ethnic cleansing. They also constituted a vast majority of the population but were expected to settle for just under half of the land; Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, 39-85.

<sup>22</sup> Yitzhak Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Berkeley: The University of California, 1996), Appendix A.

<sup>23</sup> Ilan Pappé, *The Biggest Prison on Earth*, 95.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 89-92.

Jerusalem, Israel sought to surround and evict the Palestinians to de-Arabize the city; and beyond Jerusalem's original boundaries, Israel built settlements, so-called "neighborhoods," meant to bisect the West Bank, making any potential Palestinian state non-contiguous [see Image 7 below]. Between the Allon Plan and an ever-expanding Greater Jerusalem, Israel made clear from 1967 that they would not support a Palestinian state with a meaningful capital in East Jerusalem. Instead, they resolved to confine the Palestinians to an open-air "mega-prison," the largest the world has ever seen.<sup>25</sup>

In the aftermath of 1967, the international community condemned Israel's occupation. On November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1967, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 242, which, as all agreed, called upon Israel to withdraw from the entirety of the occupied territory with only minor and mutual territorial adjustments—the essence of the of the two-state solution.<sup>26</sup> Although the Resolution does not explicitly prescribe for a Palestinian state, General Assembly Resolution 181 does, and the two-state solution entails that the second state will be Palestinian.<sup>27</sup>

The election of Menachem Begin and the formation of the first Likud government in 1977 began an era of more overt hostility, but the goal of policies pertaining to the occupied territory remained virtually the same. Begin was quick to sign a 'peace treaty' at Camp David with the Egyptians in exchange for the return to Egypt of the Sinai Peninsula, and after removing the largest Arab state from the conflict, Israel was free to pursue its expansionist policy in the West Bank.<sup>28</sup> The Likud wasted little time and formally annexed East Jerusalem on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1980. For the West Bank, building on the Allon Plan, Ariel Sharon designed a strategy to legalize settlement wedges on land designated as 'dead' or vacant. The Israeli Supreme Court upheld this practice under an old Ottoman law that allowed the state to acquire lands left vacant for three years.<sup>29</sup>

---

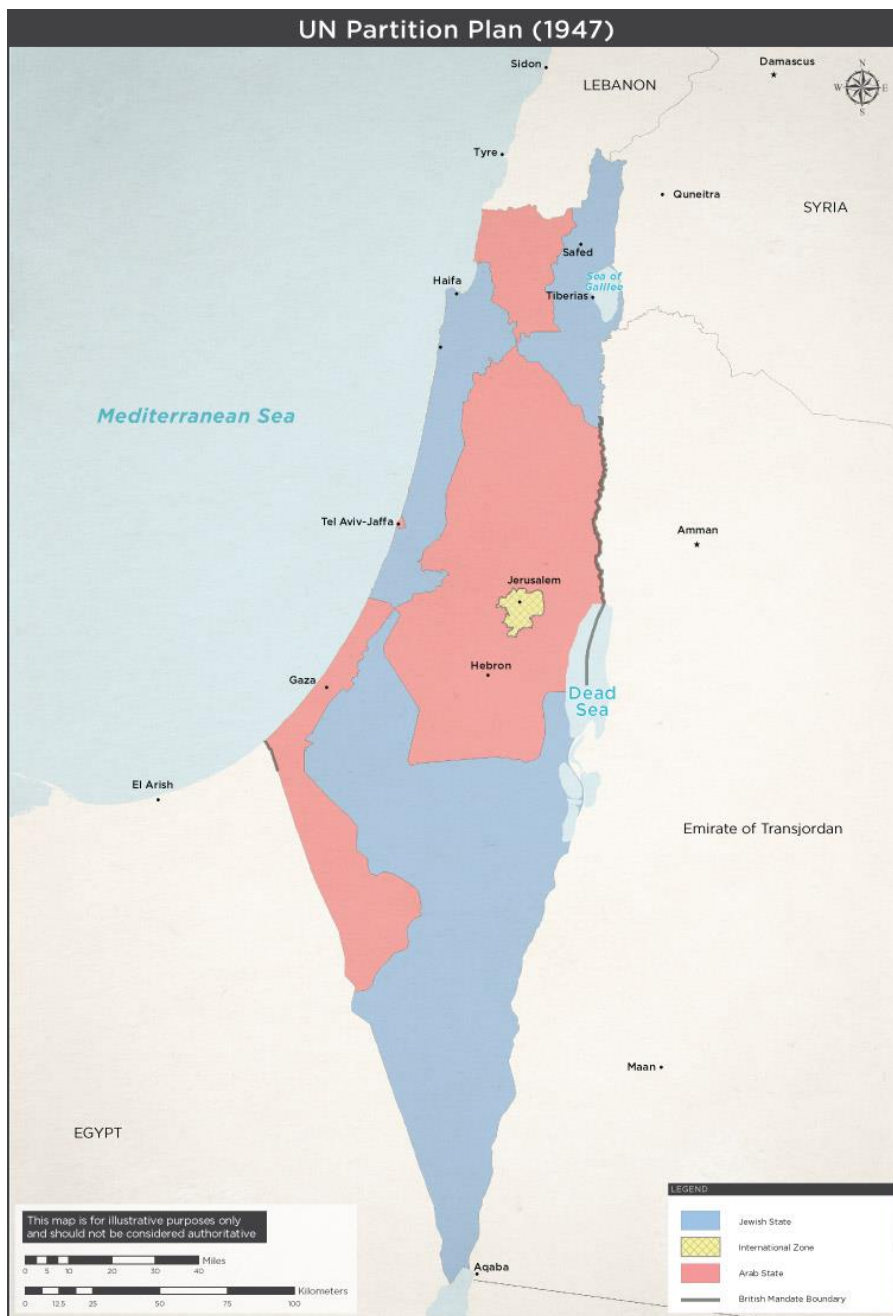
<sup>25</sup> The concept of a legitimate "Greater Jerusalem" enjoys a virtual consensus among Zionists in Israeli politics. They see it as a part of "Small Israel"; see Ilan Pappé, *The Biggest Prison on Earth: A History of the Occupied Territories*, 79-88.

<sup>26</sup> I will discuss these ideas further on page 33 and 43; for the text of the Resolution, see Appendix I..

<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of General Assembly Resolution 181 see page 8.

<sup>28</sup> Ilan Peleg, *Begin's Foreign Policy, 1977-1983: Israel's Move to the Right* (New York: Green Wood Press, 1987), 97-98.

<sup>29</sup> Ariel Sharon was at times the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Defense, and the Minister of Housing. It is not worth tracking the development of his formal position between 1977-1992; rather, of importance are his polices; Ilan Pappé,

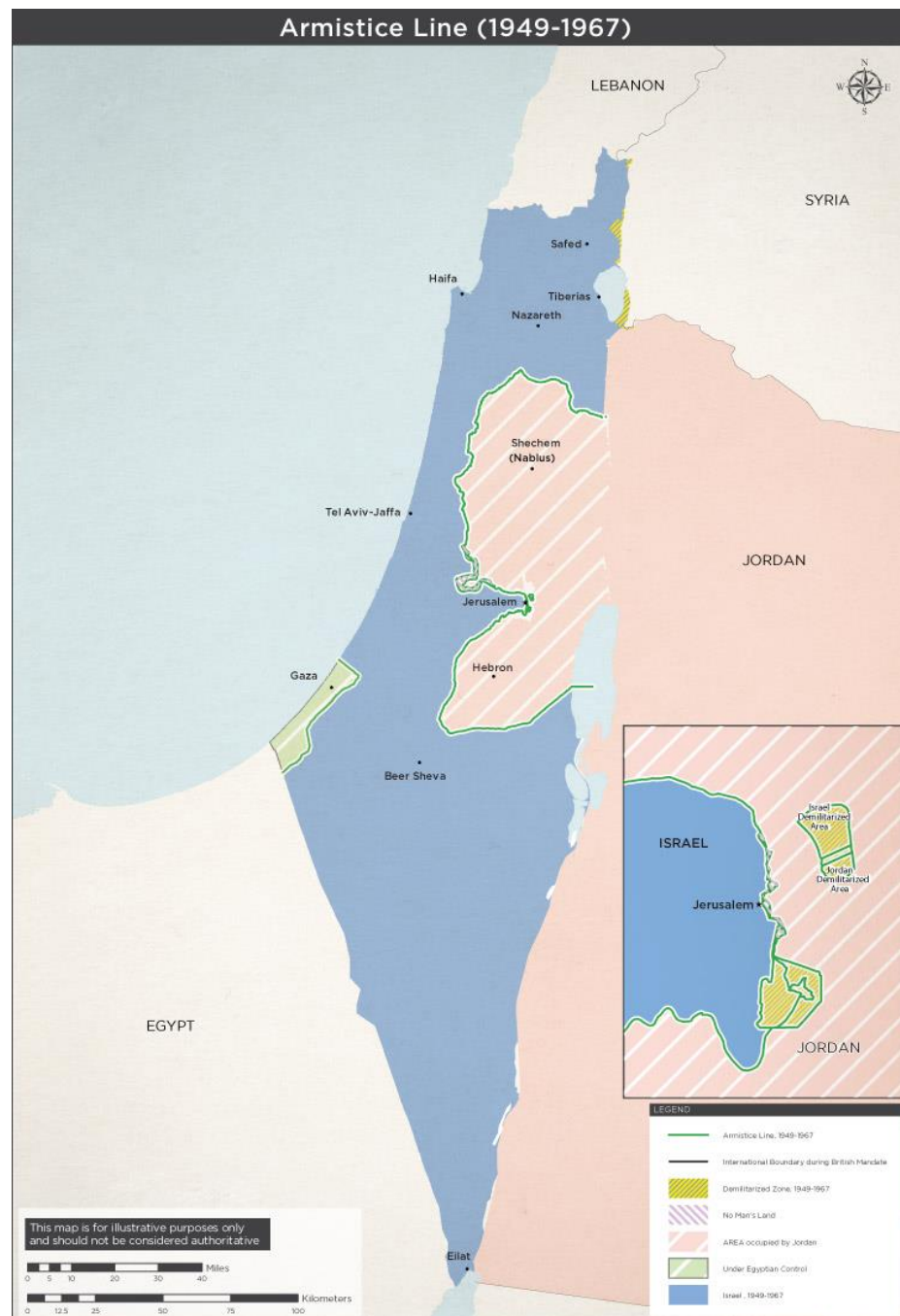


[Image 3]: A map of the Partition Plan of 1947 as created by UN Resolution 181. The land is almost evenly distributed between Israeli, the blue areas, and the Palestinian state, the red areas. An international body would have administered Jerusalem, the yellow area.<sup>30</sup>

*The Biggest Prison on Earth*, 162-164; for a political biography of Sharon, see Baruch Kimmerling, *Politicide: Ariel Sharon's War against the Palestinians* (London: Verso, 2003).

<sup>30</sup> UN Partition Plan – Resolution 181 (1947), Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

<https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/maps/pages/1947%20un%20partition%20plan.aspx>, retrieved 2/25/19.



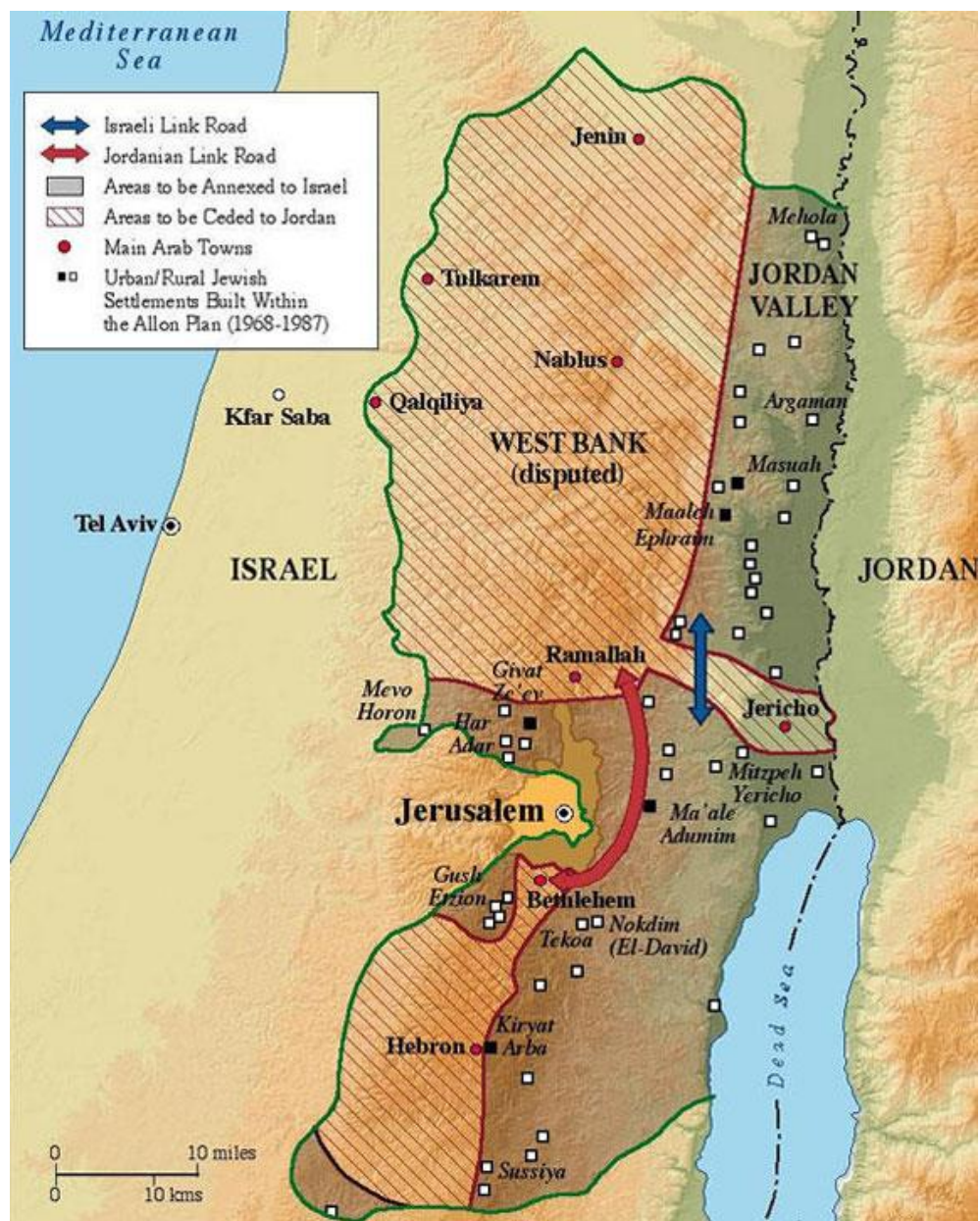
[Image 4]: A map showing the Armistice Line at the end of the war in 1949. The blue area is Israel. The green area with white stripes is the Gaza Strip under Egyptian occupation. The red area is land controlled by Jordan, and the white stripes designate the Jordanian-occupied West Bank (Palestine). This includes a portion of East Jerusalem. The blatant disparity between this map and the Partition Plan does not require further elaboration.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Armistice Lines (1949-1967), Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/maps/pages/1949-1967%20armistice%20lines.aspx>, retrieved 2/25/19.



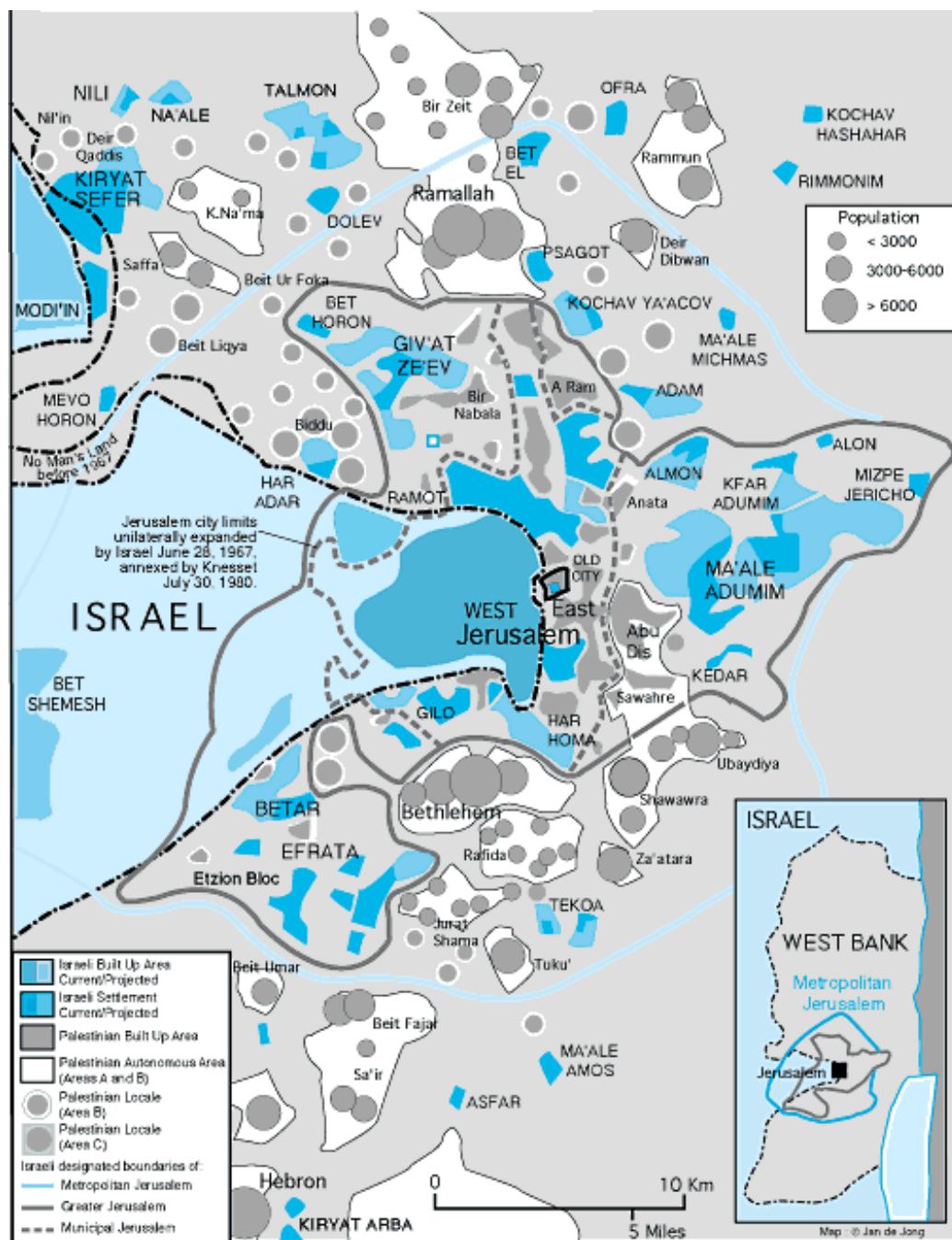
[Image 5]: A map of Israel and the occupied territories following the war of June 1967. The dark blue area is Israel proper, while the light blue is the seized territory. The map shows that Israel was in control of all of historic Palestine, and no designated Palestinian land existed.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Israel After the Six Days War (1967), Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/maps/pages/june%2010-%201967-%20israel%20after%20the%20six%20day%20war.aspx>, accessed 2/25/19, retrieved 2/25/19.



[Image 6]: A Map of the Allon plan and its proposed annexation to Israel. The shaded area is land that was to be formally annexed by Israel, and the red-striped area is the land for the Palestinians. Although the map says the Palestinian areas were to be annexed by Jordan, it was also permissible that the Palestinians would receive limited autonomy.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Maps of the Palestinian Territories: The Allon Plan, the Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/map-of-the-allon-plan>, retrieved 2/25/19.



[Image 7]: A map of “Greater Jerusalem.” The black line shows the distinction between West and East Jerusalem. The blue areas indicate Israeli municipal structures, including in West Jerusalem and Greater Jerusalem. The bottom-right portion of the map demonstrates how Greater Jerusalem acts as a wedge that almost completely bisects the West Bank.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Jerusalem: “Greater” Jerusalem, the Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/quot-greater-quot-jerusalem>, retrieved 3/1/19.

The logic of this Sharon's plan was clear: expel the Palestinians from their territory; deem the land uninhabited; and then annex it through a pseudo-legal framework and settlement construction.

However, this was just the beginning of Israeli aggression under Likud. To install an Israeli-friendly Maronite regime and crush the PLO, Israel in 1982 escalated its invasion of Lebanon, leading to the siege of Beirut. This coincided with the implementation of an aggressive settlement policy in the occupied territory. Whereas before the Likud came to power there were twenty-four Israeli settlements in the West Bank, by the time Begin left office there were ninety-eight. Although the Likud increased the rate of settlement construction, the goal remained the same as that of Labor: to make Israel's annexation of what they refer to as "Judea" and "Samaria" the only realistic option.<sup>35</sup>

Although Israeli forces were again militarily superior, their policies proved to be untenable. International criticism of Israel peaked in September 1982 with the slaughter of more than one-thousand innocent Palestinians in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila in Beirut, perpetrated by the Israeli-backed Phalange.<sup>36</sup> Despite his previous support for Israel's invasion of West Beirut, the massacres 'horrified' President Ronald Reagan, causing him to demand an immediate Israeli withdrawal.<sup>37</sup> Although this outburst of criticism eventually subsided, Israel's image within the international community remained tarnished. As a formal protest to settlements, the Bush administration in 1991 froze ten-billion dollars' worth of loan guarantees to Israel meant to provide housing for an influx of refugees from the former Soviet Union.<sup>38</sup> After thirty-four years of occupation,

---

<sup>35</sup> Ilan Peleg, *Begin's Foreign Policy, 1977-1983*, 109-111; Noam Chomsky, *The Fateful Triangle* (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 143-152, 103-122.

<sup>36</sup> The number of victims of the massacres is difficult to discern. British journalist Robert Fisk recalls a Phalangist officer telling him that over two-thousand Palestinians were murdered in Chatila alone. The minimum figure given by Israel's director of military intelligence was seven-hundred. It is also notable that Israel had knowledge of the massacres and stood by. Furthermore, this massacre was the culmination of a ruthless invasion marked by indiscriminate bombing and rampant civilian casualties; Robert Fisk, *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002), 385, 389-390.

<sup>37</sup> Reagan's support for Israel's invasion of Beirut came in an offhand remark when he said 'there may be justification.' The White House argued after the massacre that his views were consistent with his statements calling for an immediate withdrawal; Bernard Gwertzman, "REAGAN 'HORRIFIED': He Demands Immediate Withdrawal by Israelis From the City Area," *New York Times*, Sep. 19<sup>th</sup>, 1982.

<sup>38</sup> See page 22.

the United States, often Israel's lone supporter, was unable to fully endorse Israel's policies—at least not formally. Israel would either abandon its bipartisan policy of territorial expansion, or they would have to pretend.

This was especially urgent in the context of the first *intifada* in December 1987. Despite the occasional strongly worded statement, it was clear to the Palestinians that Israel could do nothing to prompt the Reagan administration to withhold military support and aid. After twenty years of being understood as a “demographic problem,” with no relief coming from abroad, the Palestinians took matters into their own hands through a relatively restrained campaign of civil disobedience. As a direct result of this peace initiative, the Palestinian National Council, the legislative body of the PLO, met in Tunisia in November 1988. There they established their new position regarding Israel by forswearing all forms of terrorism, affirming Resolution 181 and Resolution 242, and thus acknowledging Israel's right to exist—the Algiers Declaration. What began as a spurious movement of peaceful protest caused the PLO to formally commit to peace, and Israel and the United States had to respond.<sup>39</sup>

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and the subsequent war provided the perfect scenario to manufacture a ‘peace process’ in the Middle East. For the first time the Arab states broke solidarity when Syria supported the American-led coalition. Given the waning status of the Soviet Union, this enabled the United States to unilaterally forge international policy as the sole global superpower. Yasir Arafat did not join the coalition and supported only a diplomatic settlement through the Arab League, leaving him relatively isolated on the international stage. Moreover, Arafat was facing challenges to his leadership from other rising figures in the Palestinian nationalist movement.<sup>40</sup> Through the Oslo Accords Israel took advantage of his weakened position and offered him a deal that would solidify his power over the Palestinian people—but only if he was willing to accept Israel's terms.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Edward Said, “Intifada and Independence,” *Social Text* 22, Spring (1989): 23-39.

<sup>40</sup> Edward Said, *Peace and its Discontents* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 181.

<sup>41</sup> Contrary to what some may say, Arafat did not support Saddam Hussein; Sara Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 30, 33.

## The Oslo Accords

The process known as the Oslo Accords began on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1991 with preliminary negotiations. Following the Gulf War of 1991, the efforts of Secretary of State James Baker led to a conference in Madrid, attended by Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and a faction of Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. At the time, Israel would not negotiate with the PLO, which was located in exile in Tunisia. Although largely in co-ordination with the PLO, Dr. Haidar Abd-el Shafi led the internal Palestinian delegation, which exercised autonomy to negotiate. However, the Palestinians refused any agreement that did not address Palestinian sovereignty, the settlements, and the occupation, causing negotiations at Madrid and subsequent talks in Washington to stall.<sup>42</sup>

As a result, Israel turned to the PLO and Yasir Arafat to find a new negotiating partner. While talks proceeded in Washington between the Israelis and the internal Palestinians, in January of 1993 the Norwegians opened up a secret back-channel for negotiations between Israel and the external Palestinians, the PLO, under the assumption that any progress would revert back to the official channel in the United States. As seen in Madrid, the PLO was not Israel's only option, but it offered to the Israelis a negotiating partner who might compromise where Dr. Shafi would not. This channel remained secret until it produced the terms for the official agreement.<sup>43</sup>

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1993, Israel and the PLO signed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, Oslo I. This came just four days after the two parties exchanged letters recognizing Israel's right to exist and the PLO as the "representative of the Palestinian people."<sup>44</sup> The

---

<sup>42</sup> A precondition of Israel and the United States was that negotiations only address interim Palestinian autonomy, and the Palestinians agreed. But at the conference, the Palestinian faction insisted on addressing Palestinian sovereignty through the two-state solution; Thomas Friedman, "A STEP AHEAD IN MADRID: At Last, all the Players in the Middle East Have Sat Down and Talked to Each Other," *New York Times*, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1991; see also Noam Chomsky, *Who Rules the World?* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2016), 119.

<sup>43</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the Oslo back-channel written by the historian given access to Norway's classified documents, see Hilde Henriksen Waage, "Norway's Role in the Middle East Peace Talks: Between a Strong State and a Weak Belligerent," *Journal of Palestinian Studies* XXXIV, no. 4 (2005): 6-24.

<sup>44</sup> The term "mutual recognition" is often used to describe this exchange, but it is not mutual in that Israel does not reciprocate by recognizing any Palestinian rights.

salient difference between Madrid and Oslo was that the latter postponed any discussion of the occupation and settlements. As stipulated in Article I, the aim of these negotiations was to lay the groundwork for “final status negotiations” which would “lead to the implementation of Security Council [Resolution] 242.” To facilitate this goal, the parties agreed to a five-year interim period in which they would work towards the formation of a Palestinian government and, ultimately, the two-state solution. As a preliminary step, Israel agreed to “withdraw from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area” while maintaining control over “security, settlements, Israelis [and] foreign relations.”<sup>45</sup>

This five-year period began on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1994 with the creation of the Palestinian Authority through the Gaza-Jericho Agreement. To replace the Israelis in Gaza and Jericho, the agreement designated power to the Palestinian Authority to create a police force. The Accord also established a committee to facilitate ‘cooperation’ between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, including economic cooperation and management of natural resources such as water.<sup>46</sup>

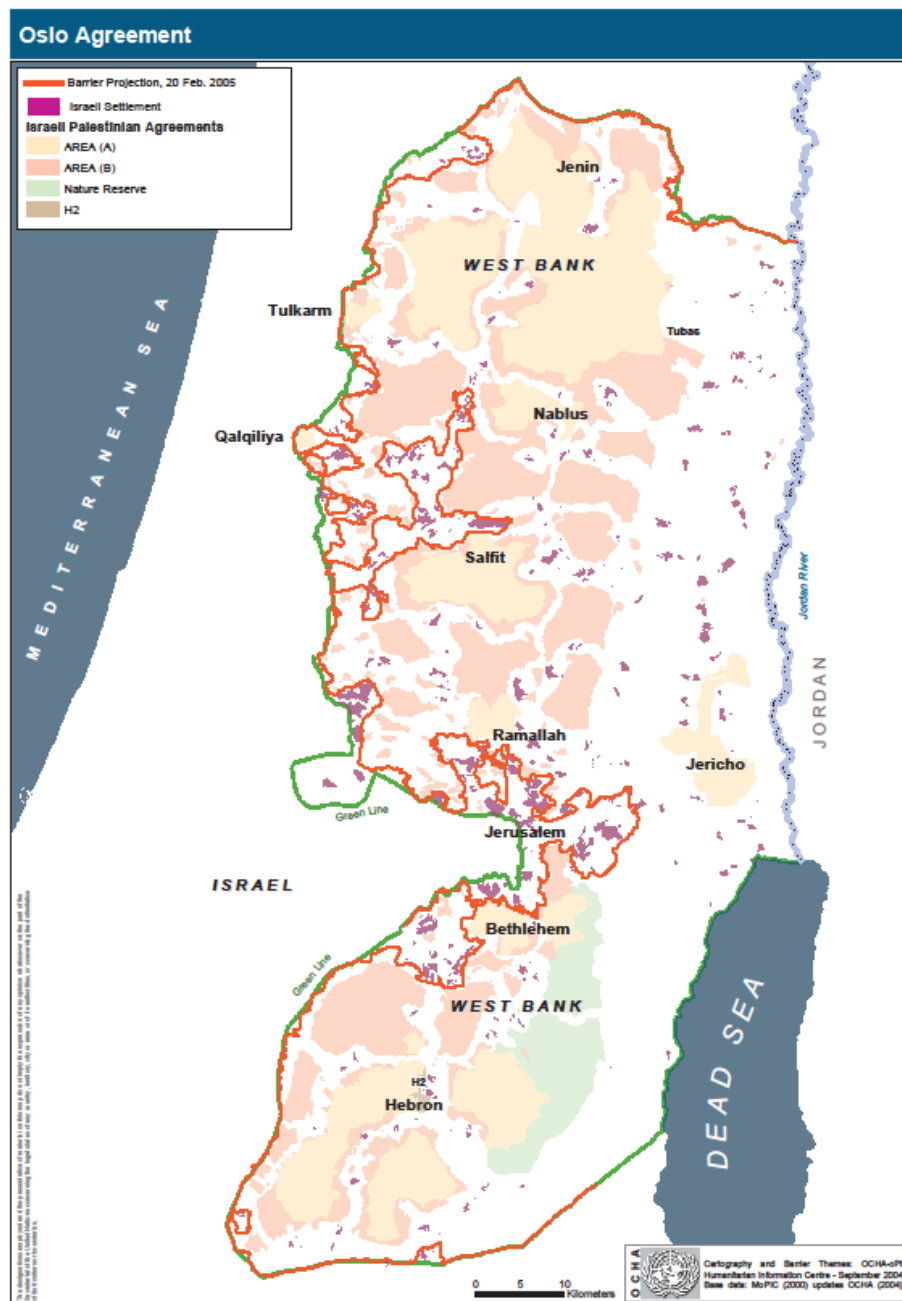
The next Accord was the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Oslo II, which the parties signed on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1995. Oslo II is especially notable for its fragmentation of the West Bank. Chapter Two divides the West Bank into three sections: Areas A, B, and C [see Image 8 below]. The agreement stipulates that Israel would transfer authority of Area A to the Council, the legislative body of the Palestinian Authority, redeploying the Israeli military to Area C, which contains the settlements. By the end of the interim period (May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1999) Israel was to transfer full authority over civil and security matters in Areas A, B, and then C, which would leave the Palestinian Authority with full sovereignty over most of the West Bank.<sup>47</sup> Both parties agreed to begin final status

---

<sup>45</sup> Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, Sep. 13, 1993, signed in Washington D.C., United Nations Peacemaker, <https://peacemaker.un.org/israelopt-osloaccord93>, Article XIV and Annex II.

<sup>46</sup> Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, May 4, 1994, signed in Cairo, Egypt, United Nations Peacemaker, <https://peacemaker.un.org/israelopt-cairoagreement94>, Article XXIII Section 3, Article III Sections 1 and 5, Article IX and Annex II.

<sup>47</sup> As I will discuss, Israel created a loophole to potentially exempt the settlements from Area C, as agreed to in final status negotiations; The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Sep. 28, 1995, signed in Washington D.C., Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs,



RefWB\_OsloGov&Brr220705

[Image 8]: A map that depicts the provisions of Oslo II to divide the West Bank into Area A, B, and C. One will notice that Area A which is controlled by the Palestinians, the tan, is non-contiguous and surrounded by Israeli settlements, Area C, the white. This map includes the Separation Barrier, the red line, which was not present during the time of Oslo II.<sup>48</sup>

<https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Peace/Guide/Pages/THE%20ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN%20INTERIM%20AGREEMENT.aspx>, Chapter 2, Articles X, XI, and XII.

<sup>48</sup> West Bank: Oslo Agreement & Barrier Projection – 20 Feb 2005, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/west-bank-oslo-agreement-barrier-projection-20-feb-2005>, retrieved 2/19/19.

negotiations no later than May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1996 in order to establish the details of the Israeli withdrawal from Area C with the stated goal of implementing Security Council Resolution 242.<sup>49</sup> However, negotiations have yet to produce this outcome or Palestinian sovereignty.

### **The Israeli Perspective**

By the late 1980s, Israel's expansionist policy left them virtually isolated within the international community. While they could have addressed this issue by ceasing to expand settlements, they elected instead to continue building. By 1991 even the United States had to formally express concern for Israel's policies, and hence, in 1992 Yitzhak Rabin and the Labor party began to rebrand Israel's settlement policy while maintaining previous goals and tactics. At Oslo in 1993 this allowed Israel to project itself as the party dedicated to peace.

The process of Rabin's return to power began in 1977 with the victory of Menachem Begin and the Likud over the Labor party. Two years later, Rabin published his memoir, in which he outlines three potential plans for, as he puts it, "the Palestinian problem." The first, which he disavows and attributes to the "Palestinian extremists," is the creation of a "sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip." Those who are committed to international law refer to this as the two-state solution. The second plan, which he also rejects, is that of the Likud, to annex the occupied territory and integrate the Palestinians under Israeli sovereignty. Rabin endorses only the third plan, one of two 'states': Israel, the Jewish state, and "to the east of it, a Jordanian-Palestinian state that would include considerable portions of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (mainly the densely populated areas)."<sup>50</sup> His justification is straight-forward, if still crude. He argues that this is an "eminently just and reasonable proposal" because the "single largest concentration" of Palestinians is found beyond the West Bank, in Jordan, such that four-fifths of the Palestinian population already resides within the envisioned borders

---

<sup>49</sup> I will argue below that agreeing to withdraw from only parts of Area C would not be a true implementation of the two-state solution or Resolution 242. For Israel there is no paradox. That the two parties agreed to negotiate these issues can be seen in The Interim Agreement, Preamble.

<sup>50</sup> Yitzhak Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs*, 332.

of the Jordanian-Palestinian state.<sup>51</sup> As a former military commander who participated in the ethnic cleansing of 1948, Rabin otherwise spends no time explaining why there are so many Palestinians living in Jordan. Nevertheless, this was the same logic as the post-1967 Allon Plan. The Palestinians were but a “demographic problem,” and the Israelis should corral them into isolated enclaves in order to achieve Ben-Gurion’s goal of an Israel that extends over virtually all of Palestine yet contains no Palestinians. Despite these procedural differences, Rabin makes clear that Likud and Labor both opposed “in the strongest terms the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.”<sup>52</sup> Idealism aside, in his memoir Rabin was perfectly forthcoming with his rejection of the two-state solution and, implicitly, Resolution 242. His idea of confining the Palestinians to the “densely populated areas” of the West Bank would serve as the governing logic for Oslo.

Rabin began to implement his policy following the Israeli election of 1992 when the Labor party returned to power. On July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1992, Rabin reaffirmed his position regarding the occupied territory in a speech to the Knesset by stating that Labor would “continue to reinforce and strengthen Jewish settlement” and that Jerusalem was “not a subject for bargaining.”<sup>53</sup> Although they abandoned the prospect of annexing the Palestinians to Jordan, Labor altered the Likud’s settlement policy in a way that would continue settlement expansion in a more ‘clever’ fashion. This became necessary after international pressure on the Likud led to the suspension of ten-billion dollars in loan-guarantees that were to help Israel provide housing for a new wave of immigrants from the former Soviet Union.<sup>54</sup> To appease the Americans, Labor promised a settlement freeze, although this was “at best a ‘slight cooling.’”<sup>55</sup> The motivation for this ostensible freeze was political necessity: Israelis had to refine the

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 333.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 334.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 389.

<sup>54</sup> Awad Mansour and Sharif Jaradat, *Clever Concealment: Jewish Settlement in the Occupied Territories Under the Rabin Government, August 1992-September 1993* (Jerusalem: Palestine Human Rights Information Center, 1994), 7.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 10.

Likud's policy of settlement expansion to be more efficient and less brazen while still providing "irreversible *de facto* control" over the West Bank.<sup>56</sup>

To this end Israel implemented the Sheves Plan.<sup>57</sup> Named after its creator, Shimon Sheves, the plan disguised settlements in the occupied territory by breaking down the distinction between Israel and the West Bank, effectively erasing the Green Line. Israel reinterpreted the dichotomy by dividing the map of Israel and the occupied West Bank into Zone A, Zone B, Jerusalem, and low priority areas rather than Israel proper and the occupied territory [see Image 9 below]. Whereas the Israeli military governor had once administered the settlement policy in the West Bank, the Sheves plan designated this authority to the Israeli cabinet, 'cleverly merging Israeli settlement activity with overall Israeli housing development.' Although the plan clearly includes the occupied territory in its map for development, this nominal difference was enough to appease the Americans, who reinstated the loan guarantees.<sup>58</sup>

A deliberate effect of this plan was to cantonize the Palestinian population in the West Bank. Through the strategic placement of settlements and supporting infrastructure, Labor built strands of settlements to divide the major population centers of the West Bank in a way that makes Palestinian statehood nearly impossible. American anthropologist Dr. Clinton Bailey produced a map with three Palestinian cantons that illustrates the general goal of this policy [see Image 10 below]. This cantonization is essentially what Rabin envisioned when he described a Palestine that would inhabit only the "densely populated areas" of the West Bank. Furthermore, in January 1993 Israel created a committee to establish plans for Greater Jerusalem. This produced a three-year plan to formalize and increase the boundaries of the city through the building of "neighborhoods"—settlements, more honestly.<sup>59</sup> It goes without saying that this is not the two-state solution, one would hope, but apparently the distinction meant little to the United States.

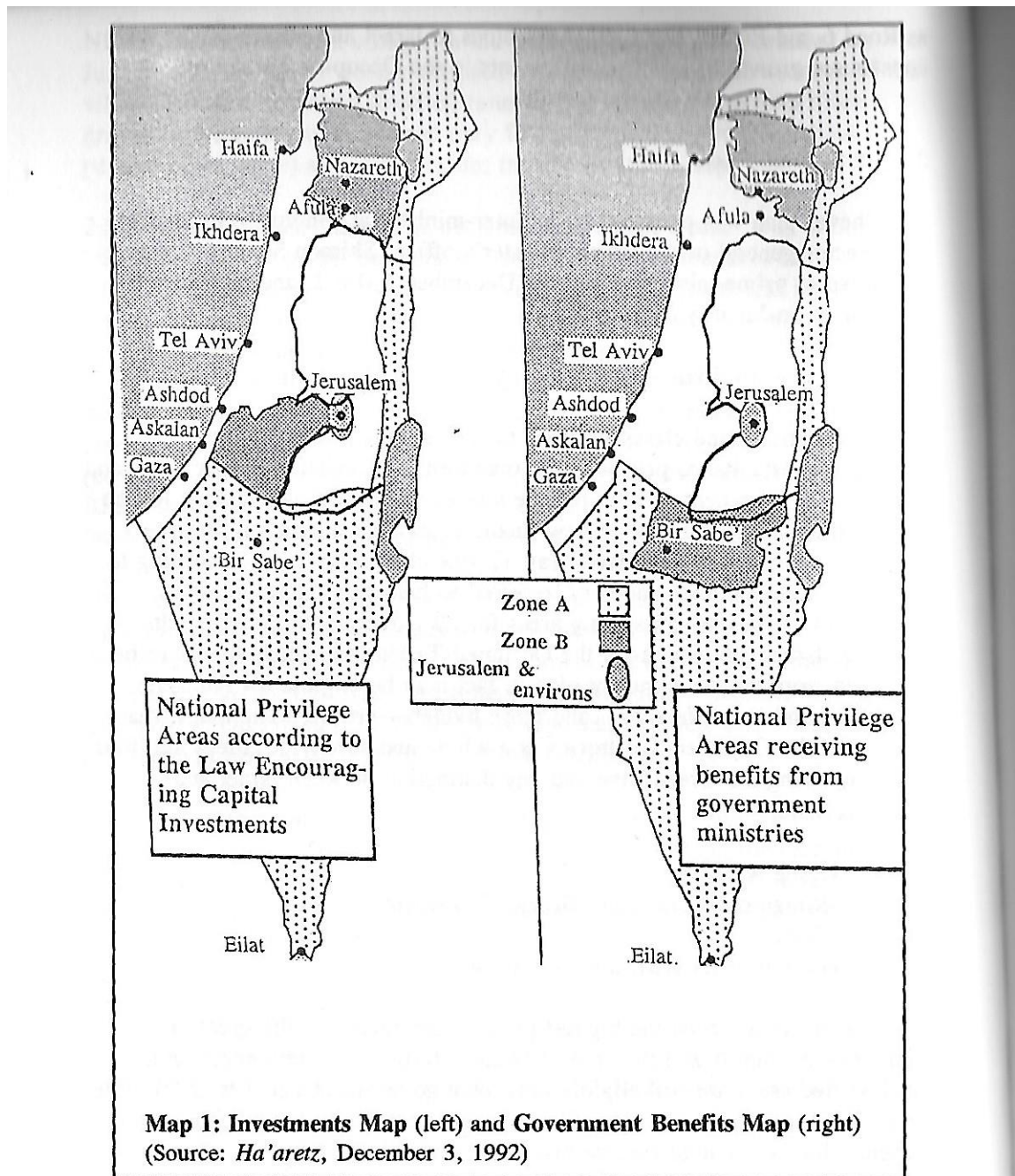
---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 4, 36.

<sup>57</sup> Although the name "Sheves Plan" is largely lost to history, I have chosen to retain it given the lack of an alternative widely-used term and indeed the unsurprising lack of discussion on the topic in general.

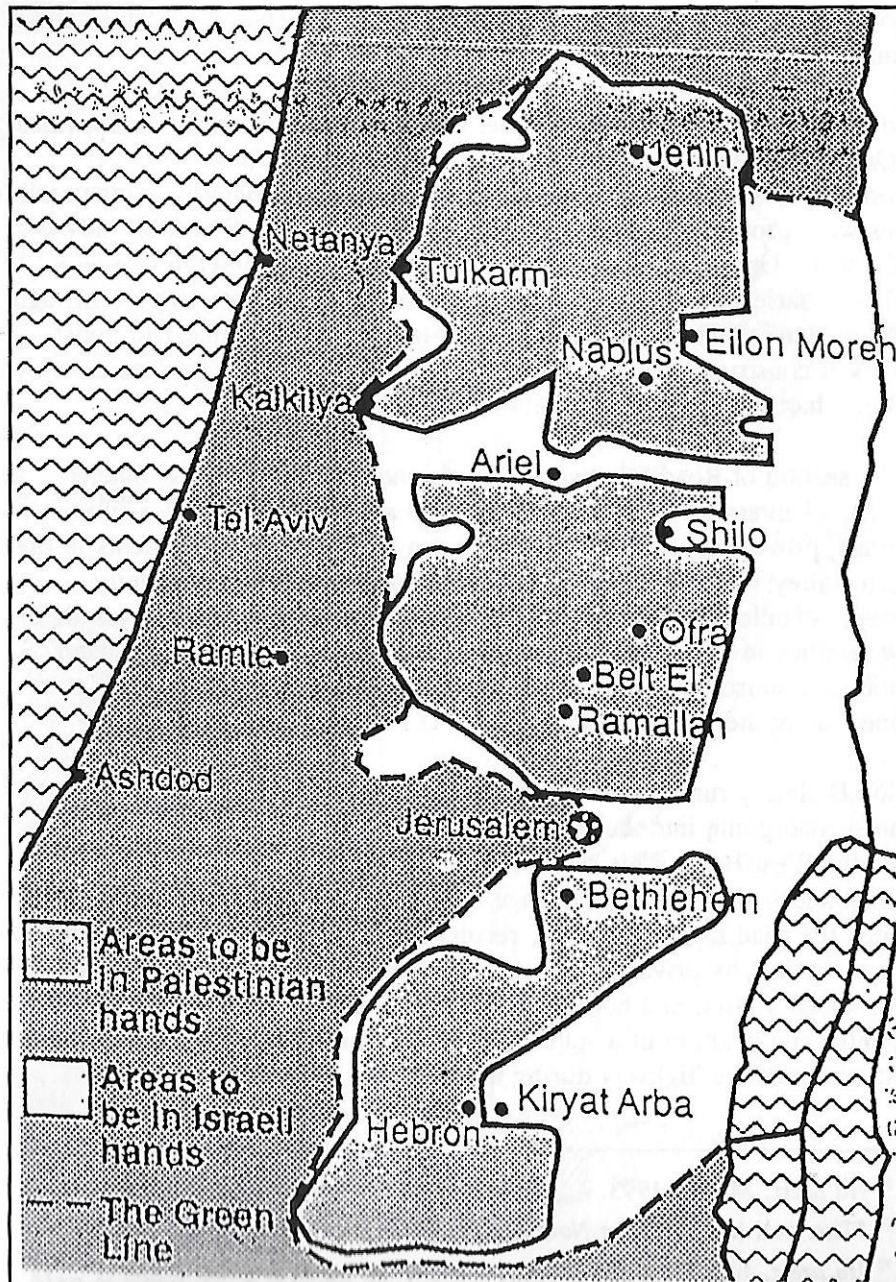
<sup>58</sup> Award Mansour and Sharif Jaradat, *Clever Concealment*, 11-17.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 32-34.



[Image 9]: Two maps for the Sheves Plan that show a continuous Israel within the full land of Palestine, divided into only Zone A, Zone B, Jerusalem, and unlisted 'low priority' sections. One will notice that absent are the Green Line and any distinction between Israel proper and the occupied territories.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Awad Mansour and Sharif Jaradat, *Clever Concealment*, 12.



Map 2: Clinton Bailey's Three-Enclave Map (Source: *Jerusalem Post*, June 18, 1993)

[Image 10]: A 1994 Map that shows the three enclaves articulated by Clinton Bailey, Nablus-Tulkarm-Jenin, Bethlehem-Hebron, and Ramallah. These are contained within the grey areas of the West Bank. The white area is land for Israeli settlements.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 27.

Throughout the ‘peace process’ Israel was deliberately working to entrench its presence in the West Bank and to preclude the possibility of Palestinian sovereignty. Despite the new description that came with this plan, the tactics of annexation remained the same: Rabin and the Labor party drew on the Allon Plan, the tactics of Sharon, and the construction of Greater Jerusalem to deny the Palestinians a state. The significant difference between Labor and the Likud was that Labor implemented their policy in a more subtle fashion, thereby alleviating international criticism.

### **The Palestinian Perspective**

When the Palestinians heard about the agreement between Israel and the PLO, many were excited. Following twenty-five years of occupation, a peace process had the potential to alleviate them of their despair. But ‘autonomy’ or ‘independence’ would not suffice without justice and equality, and Oslo did not provide a framework to achieve parity between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Rather, it solidified Israeli policy meant to subordinate the occupied territory to Israel while allowing expansion to continue throughout the West Bank. That is to say, before considering the role of Palestinian violence, Israel had already precluded the possibility of a true peace process. Therefore, any discussion of terrorism perpetrated by Palestinians must consider such actions in their historical context.

As previously noted, the emergence of Zionism as a political and military force upended Palestinian society. Following two waves of mass displacement, the remaining Palestinians lived under Israeli occupation and subordination. In Gaza this form of oppression has been historically unique. To enshrine Gazan subservience, Israel developed a policy that Dr. Sara Roy after years of firsthand research described as “economic de-development.” Markedly different from underdevelopment—the lack of development due to ignorance or neglect—de-development is an economic policy that deliberately seeks to reverse and prohibit the basis of the Palestinian economy. De-development further works to integrate all the natural resources of Palestine into the Israeli economy while undermining the prospects for a distinct, flourishing Palestinian society in order to maintain and enhance Israeli

sovereignty.<sup>62</sup> In December 1987 Palestinian resistance to such oppression culminated in the first *intifada*.

This movement of mass civil disobedience produced an environment in Gaza in which political Islamism was able to capitalize. In contrast to the secular PLO, Islamists hold that Islam should inform both politics and society. Islamist roots in Palestine go back to 1965 and the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza City. From what was originally a peaceful movement, the Islamic Jihad broke away in the early 1980s to pursue armed resistance against the Israeli occupation. During the first *intifada*, Hamas, a separate Islamist faction, rose to prominence as a political competitor to the PLO and secular nationalism.<sup>63</sup> When the PLO convened in Algiers in 1988 to recognize Israel and declare its support for the two-state solution, Hamas opposed the declaration and any settlement that would recognize a non-Islamic entity in Palestine. While the preceding ‘peace process’ was underway in Madrid, through armed attacks Hamas was able to gain legitimacy among some Palestinians by capitalizing on the blatant contradictions between the rhetoric of peace and the uninterrupted policies of Israel meant to deprive the Palestinians of their rights.<sup>64</sup>

Negotiations between the PLO and Israel led to the Accords known as the ‘peace process’—but not justice. Writing soon after Oslo I, Edward Said described the first Accord as “an instrument of Palestinian surrender, a Palestinian Versailles”: “by accepting that land and sovereignty [were] postponed [until] ‘final status negotiations’ the Palestinians in effect [discounted] their unilateral and internationally acknowledged claim to the West Bank and Gaza,” leaving the territories at best disputed.<sup>65</sup> Thus, by taking advantage of Arafat’s relatively weak position at the end of the Gulf War, Israel was able to obtain a deal in which the Palestinians became “Israel’s enforcer” without any

---

<sup>62</sup> Sara Roy, *The Gaza Strip: The Political Economy of De-development*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Washington: Institute for Palestinian Studies USA, 2016), 6, 324.

<sup>63</sup> Sara Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society*, 19-26.

<sup>64</sup> Sara Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society*, 27, 31-32.

<sup>65</sup> Edward Said, *Peace and its Discontents*, 7.

definitive promises for self-determination in return, temporarily suspending their struggle for true independence.<sup>66</sup>

The Cairo Agreement, meant to promote economic ‘cooperation,’ only furthered this relationship. As Israeli political scientist Meron Benvenisti observed, ‘under the thin veil of an integrated economy,’ “the pre-existing economic relations [remained] almost unaltered” while the Palestinians continued to be “dependent on Israel in all spheres of economic activity.”<sup>67</sup> He went on: the asymmetry of power involved in this ‘cooperation’ perpetuated “the existing inequality in the distribution of common natural resources” and reemphasized “the impression of a victor’s peace.”<sup>68</sup> Thus, the occupation continued, “albeit by remote control, and with the consent of the Palestinian people, represented by their ‘sole representative,’ the PLO.”<sup>69</sup>

This form of autonomy is comparable to that of Bantu-speaking Africans under Apartheid South Africa. In 1948 the newly formed National Party came to power in South Africa determined to entrench racial segregation while retaining the African population as a ‘subservient part of the overall system.’ The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 created the basis for self-rule in Bantu homelands, Bantustans, by establishing under the control of whites a regional authority capable of undertaking public works and administering social institutions such as hospitals.<sup>70</sup> In 1957 the Transkeian Territorial Authority became the first nominally independent government, and they exercised the ability to develop their territory, albeit separate from the land of white South Africans. Transkei received a constitution in 1963, which outlined its rights to exercise autonomy but delegated to the white government the authority over national security, foreign affairs, and amending the constitution; Transkei thus received only autonomy. Although not originally popular outside of Transkei, by the 1960s there was a total of

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>68</sup> Meron Benvenisti, *Intimate Enemies: Jews and Arabs in a Shared Land* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 222.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 218.

<sup>70</sup> Jeffrey Butler, Robert I. Rotberg & John Adams, *The Black Homelands of South Africa: The Political and Economic Development of Bophuthatswana and KwaZulu* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 24, 28

eight regional authorities, all similar to the Transkei model.<sup>71</sup> The South African Government formally expressed its desire to give independence to the Bantustans, but their actions perpetuated systemic inequality and the subservience of the territories while denying black Africans a state.<sup>72</sup>

Like South Africa's Bantustan policy, Oslo II created for the Palestinians an autonomous Authority that remained circumscribed by Israeli sovereignty. For the interim period, Israel agreed to transfer authority over certain realms to the Palestinians, but only "civil powers and responsibilities."<sup>73</sup> Echoing the Transkei Constitution, Israel maintained their jurisdiction over external security and precluded the Palestinians from managing foreign affairs.<sup>74</sup> Israel recognized Palestinian 'rights' to water in the West Bank, but the two sides were to negotiate what Palestinian rights actually entail at final status negotiations; and for the interim period they established the Joint Water Committee to facilitate 'cooperation.'<sup>75</sup> On the crucial issue of land and the settlements, Israel agreed to eventually withdraw from Area C, except for the territory to be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations.<sup>76</sup> This again relegates the question of sovereignty over the West Bank to subsequent agreements and normalizes the premise that Israel has a legitimate claim to territory beyond its 1967 borders. By compromising on the issue of sovereignty, the PLO left the Palestinians with only autonomy over isolated enclaves.

The result was to entrench injustice and temporarily preclude the possibility of true Palestinian independence and sovereignty. Meron Benvenisti was patently correct when he described Palestinian and Israeli 'cooperation' as nothing more than "permanent Israeli domination in disguise," and Palestinian autonomy as a "euphemism for bantustanization."<sup>77</sup> In 1989 Desmond Tutu, a world-

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 29, 31-32, 33

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 36-41; Norman Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Brooklyn: Verso, 2003), 172-183.

<sup>73</sup> *The Interim Agreement*, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Annex III Article I Section 1.c.1.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., Chapter 2 Article X Section 4 and Chapter I Article IX, Section 5.a.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., Annex III Appendix 1 Article 40 Section 1 and 11.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., Annex III Article IV Section 2 and Article XI Section 3.c.

<sup>77</sup> Meron Benvenisti, *Intimate Enemies*, 232.

renowned leader in the struggle against South African Apartheid, described the resemblance of the occupied territory to South Africa as “uncanny” and “deeply, deeply disturbing,” and he reaffirmed this position post-Oslo in 2002.<sup>78</sup>

Despite this forfeiture of Palestinian rights, there was no coordinated violence against Israeli civilians following Oslo II, but that was not to last. Hamas’ leadership suspended attacks following the agreement, and there were no terrorist attacks against Israel between August 1995 and February 1996.<sup>79</sup> However, on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1995, Israel assassinated Fathi al-Shaqaqi, a leader of Islamic Jihad, and on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1996, Yahia Ayyash, a member of the military wing of Hamas. Both groups began plotting revenge, which led to the string of terrorist attacks from February to early March against civilians in major Israeli urban centers.<sup>80</sup> Dr. Sara Roy argues that these targeted assassinations “effectively extinguished any possibility of an agreement between Arafat and the Islamists over ending attacks against Israel, which may have been Israel’s intent.”<sup>81</sup> Israel’s motivation aside, it is clear that the conflict does not lend itself easily to a dichotomy of the ‘peaceful Israelis’ and the ‘violent Palestinians.’ Among other variables, one must consider Palestinian terrorism in the context of Israel’s policies of oppression, dispossession, and state violence. Those who cast Hamas and Islamic Jihad as the sole threat to the peace process fail to realize that there was never a peace to oppose.

### **The American Perspective**

Despite the fact that both sides did not uniformly abide by the terms of the agreement, the United States focused its criticism solely on the Palestinians. In doing so they helped to reorient the discussion of the conflict, shifting the blame to the Palestinians while portraying Israel as the party dedicated to peace. This support had two distinct yet intertwined elements: one ideological and the other political. The ideological support is rooted in Orientalist quasi-intellectuals, but it took on a

---

<sup>78</sup> John Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace: The Authorized Biography of Desmond Tutu* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 384-388

<sup>79</sup> Sara Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza*, 36.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

political element through their work for the state and then through the media, which uncritically propagated the Orientalist narrative. This left the United States, the ‘neutral arbiter,’ acting decisively on behalf of the Israelis.

The two main Orientalists whom I will analyze, Dennis Ross, and Martin Indyk, rose to prominence at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), a Washington-based liberal think-tank which Indyk co-founded in 1985. Its purported mission is to produce non-partisan scholarship that creates a “balanced and realistic understanding” of America’s interests and role in the Middle East while promoting “security, peace, prosperity, democracy, and stability.”<sup>82</sup> Ross joined WINEP shortly after its founding; and both maintained their connections to the think-tank during their tenures in the Clinton administration, where Ross served as special envoy to the Middle East, and Indyk first as the Middle East specialist on the National Security Council and then as Ambassador to Israel. While there is nothing that prohibits academics from working for the government, these roles match the evolution of the Orientalist from a mere academic to one who works for the state. This relationship could be perfectly benign and impartial but for their Orientalist perceptions and their justification of imperialism.

As seen in his memoir, Indyk’s Orientalist ideology is quite overt. Published in 2009, he entitled his book *Innocent Abroad*. Not only is this an attempt to absolve the United States of any wrong-doing, but it invokes the Orientalist tradition he has inherited. The title comes from Mark Twain’s *Innocents Abroad* (1869), a reflection on his 19<sup>th</sup> century trip through Palestine, which Indyk quotes to dedicate his own book: “These people are naturally good-hearted and intelligent, and with education and liberty, would be a happy and contented race. They often appeal to a stranger to know if the great world will not some day come to their relief and save them.”<sup>83</sup> The distinction between a civilized West and an

---

<sup>82</sup> Mission and History, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/about/mission-and-history/>, accessed 2/16/19.

<sup>83</sup> Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), n.p..

uncivilized East is clear, and this passage suggests that it is the ‘burden of the white man’ to ‘save’ the Orient through the implementation of Western education and tradition. Indyk also describes the dichotomy between the “authoritarian Arab leaders,” and United States and Israel, who share “democratic values” and a “Judeo-Christian ethic”—a concept also used by the prominent American Orientalist, Bernard Lewis.<sup>84</sup> Indyk’s ideology led him to perceive Oslo in these terms. He describes the Oslo I ceremony as a monumental moment in history, one in which the “descendants of the Israelites would give Jericho back to the modern day Canaanites.”<sup>85</sup> It is hard to imagine how one can conceptualize the withdrawal of a military occupation in such altruistic terms, but Indyk manages to do so by framing the two parties as God’s chosen people and the debased sinners of Jericho.

Compared to Indyk, Ross’ Orientalist influence is more subtle yet certainly present. He begins his memoir, *The Missing Peace* (2004), with a history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which serves to establish his Orientalist dedication to pseudo-objectivity. Ross describes the policy of Israel as one that is rooted in an “Israeli ethos” that supports a “deep-seated desire for peace in Israel—a desire that is commingled with fear and doubt about Arab intentions.” This uncertainty is justified by the perpetual violence of the Arab, a result of their “sectarian, tribal, and clanish differences,” which have subjected the Arabs to constant conflicts, foreign domination, and “robbed them of the glory that had once been theirs in history.” However, all hope was not lost, for the Arabs would modernize in the “Arab Awakening.” This phrase references George Antonius’ study of the emergence of modern Arab nationalism, which stresses the role of American and French Christian missionaries who “put a new premium on education, and contributed to the surge of interest in Arabic language, literature, ideas, and culture.”<sup>86</sup> If the Oriental Arabs and Palestinians had begun to rise to the level of Israel and the Occident, it was only the result of a civilizing mission of the West. Ross’ perceptions of the conflict

---

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 90; Edward Said, *Covering Islam*, xxxiii.

<sup>85</sup> Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 60.

<sup>86</sup> This quotation is Antonius’ argument in Ross’ words; Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 28-30.

thus mirror the centuries-old Orientalist narrative: the Orient is a static, uncivilized population; their issues are due to their sectarian strife and are a direct result of events in the 7<sup>th</sup> century; and only the West can save them. This ideology is not unique to Indyk and Ross; rather, it is the basis of the discourse within which they understood and described the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and WINEP was but one aspect of this influence.

In 1993 WINEP published *UN Security Council Resolution 242: The Building Block of Peacemaking*, which informed the American position on the Resolution. As a contributing author to the piece, Ross described an “inherent paradox with UNSC 242”: all parties agree that it is the “reference point” and a core principle for peace, but there is an “ambiguity with regard to its terms and its meaning.” This “ambiguity” is over the Withdrawal Clause, which in the English version does not explicitly call for Israel to withdraw from ‘all’ territories occupied in 1967. Allowing for such an ambiguity is highly significant: rather than defining terms for the Oslo Accords, in which both parties agreed to abide by Resolution 242, Ross argued that only the Israelis and the Palestinians could settle the ambiguity through an agreement.<sup>87</sup> This renders a tenet of international law that is integral to the conflict as nothing more than ‘however the Israelis and the Palestinians define it.’ The result was to allow Israel to claim to support the Resolution and simultaneously refrain from recognizing Palestinian sovereignty over East Jerusalem and the West Bank as a whole.

However, this is not a widely recognized ambiguity but one that the United States and Israel created. This is according to John McHugo, who in 2002 published a comprehensive analysis on the Resolution, including its wording and the intent of those who affirmed it. He argues that that the Withdrawal Clause “refers to a category of territories, namely those territories ‘occupied in the recent conflict.’” The resolution “treats these territories as a unity,” and a partial withdrawal would only be in “partial compliance with the principle.” That is, ‘the absence of the world all does not imply that some

---

<sup>87</sup> Dennis Ross, *UN Security Council Resolution 242: The Building Block of Peacemaking*, (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993), 60.

was intended.’ Furthermore, if one considers all clauses and the preamble, which emphasizes the “inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,” they can ‘extract a clear meaning’ from the Resolution, one that calls for complete withdrawal. According to McHugo’s analysis of the statements of all fifteen voting members, ten declared that the Resolution does call for a full Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territory, and none of the remaining five dissented from this position. It follows from this that ‘the requirement to withdraw does in fact extend to all territory occupied in the war of 1967.’<sup>88</sup>

However, this is of little significance for Orientalists, who first arrive at conclusions and then contrive the necessary evidence. Their conclusion is that any Palestinian sovereignty over the West Bank is too much, for God promised “Judea” and “Samaria” to the Jewish people, and it is Israel’s role to civilize the territory. Hence, they manufactured an “ambiguity” that would allow Israel to maintain the occupation and the settlements. Ross alleges that this position on the Resolution was necessary, for adhering to its coherent meaning and intent would be to “prejudge the negotiations,” which is ‘not what the American role was about.’<sup>89</sup> While the United States made claims to neutrality, the belief that the Resolution is entirely subjective is as absurd as a judge allowing two litigants, one far more powerful than the other, to abide by the law ‘as they agree to interpret it.’ Because the Palestinians had no power to force the Israelis to stop the expansion of settlements, American ideological support allowed Israel to brazenly defy Resolution 242 and thus the Oslo agreement.

This ideology informed the American political support for Israel, which diminished the harmful role of the settlement expansion. Resolution 242 calls for the end of the occupation, which revokes Israeli authority to build settlements on Palestinian land, but it is important to distinguish between the freezing of settlement expansion and the withdrawal of the military occupation. A settlement freeze is a

---

<sup>88</sup> McHugo refers to the ‘Right-Wing Israeli interpretation’ rather than the ‘American interpretation.’ However, the difference is a result of the fact that the Likud was in power when he was writing, whereas I am analyzing the ‘left,’ Labor, and the United States. The interpretation is in effect the same; John McHugo, “Resolution 242: A Legal Reappraisal of the Right-Wing Israeli Interpretation of the Withdrawal Phrase with Reference to the Conflict between Israel and the Palestinians,” *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (2002): 851-881. See also Norman Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpah*, 287-291.

<sup>89</sup> Dennis Ross, *UN Security Council Resolution 242: The Building Block of Peacemaking*, 60.

necessary first step towards the withdrawal, but a full military withdrawal is not necessary to cease construction. The issue of civilian settlements and Israel's 'security concerns' are therefore distinct. However, Ross and Indyk either conflate the two or ignore the possibility of a settlement freeze while justifying the occupation through Israeli 'security.'

Indeed, a discussion of Israeli civilian settlement expansion is absent from Ross' preliminary history of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He claims that in 1967, the "Labor-led government began to build military settlements in strategically important areas of the West Bank and Gaza," but the "principle consideration was security."<sup>90</sup> Whereas these "security *needs*" governed the Israeli approach to negotiations, the struggle "to end victimization and to be accorded dignity, respect, and genuine independence governed the Palestinians." However, this victimization left the Palestinians short of 'empathy for Israeli needs.'<sup>91</sup> This view is rooted in the Orientalist belief that by definition the "needs" of Israel are of paramount importance, whereas the wants of the Palestinians—their aspirations for "dignity, respect, and genuine independence," to use Ross' words—are at best secondary.<sup>92</sup> He goes on to support Israel's actions by claiming that Israel should not withdraw the occupation as a first step towards reconciliation because they "needed assurance that the formula was land for peace, not land for nothing."<sup>93</sup> This straw man argument assumes that the standard critique of Israel is that it did not withdraw the occupation as preliminary step and then refutes the criticism by invoking Israel's security. However, this ignores the entirely plausible scenario in which Israel ceases the expansion of civilian settlements at no real cost to its military position. His reasoning for this position is clear: the need to ensure Israeli security supersedes all other issues to the point that any criticism of the Israelis is unwarranted, even if their actions work to entrench the Palestinians in apartheid.

---

<sup>90</sup> Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 24.

<sup>91</sup> Emphasis added; *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>92</sup> For a discussion of the needs of Israel vs the wants of the Palestinians, see Norman Finkelstein, *Dennis Ross and the Peace Process: Subordinating Palestinian Rights to Israeli "Needs"* (Washington: Institute for Palestinian Studies, 2007).

<sup>93</sup> Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 44.

This is not to say that Ross never acknowledges Israeli settlements, but when he does, he reconciles them with his preconceived beliefs of a benevolent Israel. Describing the suspended American loan-guarantees, Ross states that “[n]owhere was the right-wing [Likud] agenda more costly than on the determination to spread Israeli settlements throughout the West Bank and Gaza.” This policy was rooted in Yitzhak Shamir’s inability to accept that “there was a difference between Israel within the ‘green line’ and Israel beyond it in the territories”—a distinction that in fact Rabin and the Labor party attempted to officially dissolve with the Sheves plan.<sup>94</sup> However, when Rabin defeated Shamir and the Likud in 1992, “it was as if a great weight had been lifted off the body politic. Hope was alive again,” and “[e]xpectations soared about peace being possible,” for “Rabin was “not interested in expanding Israel’s hold on the West Bank and Gaza.”<sup>95</sup> On the one hand, it is truly remarkable that with the benefit of hindsight Ross could make such a claim and ignore the settlement policy of the Labor government, but on the other it is perfectly in line with his Orientalist ideology: the Labor party was ‘liberal’; they matched ‘our Western values’; and thus it would be outrageous to even suggest that they could act in a manner antithetical to peace.

Indyk is more critical of Israeli settlements in his memoir than Ross, but his position during Oslo was not. “The flaws in the agreement are now quite obvious,” he writes in 2009, in part because they “made no mention of Israeli settlement activity during the interim period.” However, in 1995, at his Senate hearing to become the Ambassador to Israel, he argued that settlements “complicated” the negotiations, but “terrorism [had] a much more complicating impact.” When asked if Israel “had added to the settlements or permitted new ones since 1993,” allegedly, he replied, ‘No.’<sup>96</sup> It is nice that Indyk

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 84, 88.

<sup>96</sup> After contacting the National Archives Record Association, I found that the transcript of Indyk’s confirmation hearing is classified until the year 2045 (fifty years in total). Said’s article in which he quotes the hearing was originally published in *al-Hayat* in October 1995. There are other articles that corroborate some of what Said quotes, suggesting that it was possible that Said and others had access to parts of the transcript, but I have found no source to corroborate Indyk’s denial of settlement expansion since 1993; Edward Said, *Peace and its Discontents*, 154. For a partially corroborating article, see “Clinton’s Nominee for Israel Cautions Senators on Embassy, Troops,” *Jewish Telegraph Agency*, Feb. 2, 1995.

has since realized the detrimental role of settlements, but perhaps acting on this information in the 1990s would have been more productive. However, to allow the facts to inform his beliefs would have been to betray his Orientalist conviction, that Israel was the democratic, liberal state whose actions could only be conducive to peace.

After providing the ideology for Israel to defy Resolution 242 and then ignoring the role of the settlements, the United States provided Israel further political support that would reshape Israel's image within the international community. They did so by criticizing the Palestinians who resorted to terrorism without any discussion of Israel's role in fomenting violence, such as state policies meant to preclude Palestinian statehood. Although these policies predate the Oslo process by decades, and nothing had changed by 1993, Orientalists and the media first described Oslo as a 'peace process,' only to blame its eventual downfall on the Palestinians. These intellectuals and the media served to uphold the pro-Israeli position of the state despite their claims to neutrality.

As one of Clinton's main advisers for Oslo, Indyk perceived the Palestinians as a people with an inherent affinity for violence. He describes the scene at Oslo I: Rabin, who has discussed his role in the 1948 ethnic cleansing of Palestine, warrants only the description of a "shy man" with a 'passion for peace,' but Arafat receives the description of "arch-terrorist" for his relationship to violence.<sup>97</sup> Perhaps the biggest issue for Indyk during this first Oslo ceremony, a media and diplomatic spectacle, was "getting Arafat out of his uniform." Although he had originally agreed to join Rabin and Clinton by wearing a suit, an unmistakable sign of Western culture, Arafat refused to do so on the day of the ceremony. To Indyk this should have been a "warning sign" that signaled the lack of sincerity in "Arafat's commitment to renounce terrorism and prevent violence."<sup>98</sup> In other words, Indyk should have realized that Arafat was to remain stuck in his Oriental, violent ways, and therefore peace was

---

<sup>97</sup> Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 61.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 69-70.

unobtainable. However, at the time Oslo was to deliver peace—that is, if and only if the Palestinians complied.

*The New York Times* reflected these same sentiments. On the day of the signing, Anthony Lewis, a prominent liberal columnist, described Oslo as “the beginning of peace,” one that defied history and had potential to produce the “transformation of wider Middle East relationships.” Although there were risks, failure was unlikely, for peace “has too great a momentum when it becomes a reality for the grasping.” Despite the fact that all the issues pertinent to the occupation were pushed to final status negotiations, he referred to the agreement as a “compromise” and an “accommodation [of] each other’s dreams.”<sup>99</sup> A. M. Rosenthal claimed that Israel had “committed itself” to peace, that Oslo was “bound to lead to an independent Palestine,” but that remained “up to the Arabs”: “If [the Palestinians] will it, peace can happen. But they will have to reach for it, stretch for it, accept risks – as has the current Government of Israel in its own desire for an end to fear and killing.”<sup>100</sup> As far as the *NYT* was concerned, Oslo was promising, but the Palestinians and only the Palestinians could still get in the way.

The euphoria of 1993 continued into 1995 at Oslo II. Like Oslo I, all parties met at the White House to sign the agreement and celebrate the entrenchment of Bantustans in the West Bank. According to Indyk, this was “the high point of the peace process.” Diplomats from many countries attended, but unlike Oslo I, “Hosni Mubarak, the always-cautious president of Egypt, turned up this time to bear witness. King Hussein bin Talal of Jordan [also] stood proudly next to Rabin” and even “the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia... was there for the entire world to see.” Indyk goes on to describe the cordial laughter of the preceding party, which celebrated the belief that soon “a Palestinian state would be established in most of the West Bank and Gaza.”<sup>101</sup> This description could not have been further from the truth. What this represents, however, is the successful American effort to reorient the

---

<sup>99</sup> Anthony Lewis, “Abroad at Home,” *New York Times*, Sep. 13, 1993.

<sup>100</sup> A. M. Rosenthal, “On my Mind,” *New York Times*, Sep. 14, 1993.

<sup>101</sup> Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 1-3.

perceptions of the international community to that of the United States and Israel. While Israeli expansion and the cantonization of the West Bank continued unabated, the once-sympathetic international community converged as a herd to celebrate ‘peace.’ This is the key distinction between Apartheid South Africa and the occupied territory: whereas South Africa was internationally condemned, Israel is extolled as the hero and peace-maker.<sup>102</sup> Noam Chomsky described this abandonment of the goal of Palestinian sovereignty as a “triumph of the American indoctrination system,” a “successful power play of U.S. policy” that “has to be admired.”<sup>103</sup>

However, the optimism of the ‘peace process’ had dissolved by early 1996. A series of suicide bombings in late February and early March left scores of Israelis dead, shook the population, and captured the attention of the international community. *The New York Times* described these heinous acts completely devoid of context, as if they were the first events to derail peace. According to Anthony Lewis, although peace had seemed ‘inevitable’ only weeks ago, terrorism would threaten the peace process so long as the Palestinians could “not provide the quid pro quo of security.” Any further violence would justify Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, “however burdensome and corrupting that may be.” He did acknowledge that “Israel helped to build Hamas,” but those days were behind Israel, and it was time for the Palestinians to act accordingly.<sup>104</sup> Like Ross, Lewis completely ignored the fact that Israel continued to expand its presence over the West Bank through settlements. Thomas Friedman was just as partial in his condemnation. For him, there were individuals on both sides working to derail the agreement, but Israel as a whole had “shown a willingness and an ability to delegitimize its extremists,” whereas the Palestinians had not.<sup>105</sup> A. M. Rosenthal took an even more extreme stance. He declared that this situation was “foreseeable from the beginning,” but that had nothing to do with

---

<sup>102</sup> Norman Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 177.

<sup>103</sup> John Dirlík, “Chomsky Labels Oslo Accords ‘Triumph of U.S. Indoctrination System,’” *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* XIV no. 5, (1995): 30

<sup>104</sup> Anthony Lewis, “It’s Up to Arafat,” *New York Times*, Mar. 4, 1996.

<sup>105</sup> The Israeli extremist he refers to is Yigal Amir, who on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1995, assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in opposition to Israel granting partial autonomy to the Palestinians: Thomas Friedman, “Who Are You?,” *New York Times*, Mar. 6, 1996.

Israel; rather, to entrust Israeli security to Arafat was “self-destructive [and] fantasizing.” This jeopardized the ultimate Israeli withdrawal of the occupation, which would have been a “world class bargain for [the] Palestinians,” for Israel demanded “virtually nothing” other than security in return.<sup>106</sup> There is no doubt that these terrorist attacks were antithetical to peace, but this discussion of terrorism overlooks the fact that there was no genuine peace process to oppose. Save for wishful thinking, the belief that Israel was to ultimately withdraw from the West Bank is incompatible with the fact that they continued to expand their presence therein. However, this was irrelevant to the media, who cast Israel as the party ready to deliver peace, and the Palestinians as the sole aggressors.

Nevertheless, the international community again convened in support of Israel and condemnation of the Palestinians. This took place on March 13<sup>th</sup> in Sharm al-Sheik, Egypt, at the “Summit of the Peacemakers.” Twenty-nine world leaders attended, including representatives from fourteen Arab states, and, according to Ross, those who did not attend were left “with the other pariahs.”<sup>107</sup> President Clinton eloquently captured the theme of the summit in his opening remarks:

“From all around the world we have come to the Sinai to deliver one simple, unified message: Peace will prevail... To the forces of hatred and violence I say, and let us all say, you kill yourselves and others in the aim of killing peace. Yet today, as you see, peace survives. And peace will grow stronger. You will not succeed. Your day has passed. You have plowed the fields of hatred, but here we are coming to reap unity and new strength to defeat you and to keep the promise and hope of peace alive.”<sup>108</sup>

The coalition behind this message represents the international community endorsing the narrative of the United States, that Oslo was a genuine process towards peace, and when violence emerged, one could only blame the Palestinians. It goes without saying that there was never an analogous summit to call on Israel to abide by international law, accept Resolution 242, and cease targeted killings and settlement expansion in the occupied territory. In the minds of the Americans, such an event would have been

---

<sup>106</sup> A. M. Rosenthal, “Would We Do It Again?,” *New York Times*, Mar. 8, 1996.

<sup>107</sup> Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 248.

<sup>108</sup> Bill Clinton, “Remarks at the Opening of the Summit of the Peacemakers in Sharm al-Sheikh, Egypt,” *The Papers of The President*, Mar. 13, 1996.

outrageous and unnecessary. Their Orientalist convictions led them to believe that Israel was fully in compliance with Resolution 242; settlements were not expanding; and even if they were, Israeli security needs were so important as to render unworthy of discussion the Palestinian's just and ongoing struggle for dignity, respect, and statehood.

## **Conclusion**

By March of 1996 the resurgence of violence helped to seal the fate of the Labor Party and the 'peace process.' Two months later, in a close election the Likud returned to power under the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu. While the goals of both parties with respect to settlements have been virtually indistinguishable since 1967, the difference between the two is that Likud does not pretend that peace and *de facto* annexation of the West Bank are reconcilable; they simply embrace a cycle of Israeli oppression and Palestinians reprisals. Although Labor was only in power for four years, voters rejected their hypocrisy and thus closed a brief era of liberalism in Israeli politics.<sup>109</sup>

However, to describe the labor party as liberal is to ignore the fact that their policies as they pertain to the question of Palestine are no more than a continuation of Israel's policy of annexation, which goes back to Ben-Gurion and 1948. Although Israel then failed to gain full control over eighty to ninety percent of historic Palestine, the effort to make up the difference has since received bipartisan support. The Oslo Accords were but an attempt to normalize the annexation of Palestinian land in a way that addresses the "demographic problem" created by the Palestinian population. If this was the first formal 'peace process' between Israel and the Palestinians, Israeli tactics have remained the same through the Allon Plan and into the present. Furthermore, the Labor party has shown that like the Likud, it is willing to sacrifice peace for the expansion of settlements. Israel's choice of Yasir Arafat, a man with connections to terrorism, as a negotiating partner instead of Haidar Abd-el Shafi, a man of peace and charity, would be curious if one assumes that Israel prioritizes peace. However, it has shown

---

<sup>109</sup> Here I am referring to 1992-1996. Labor returned to power under the leadership of Ehud Barak from 1999-2001, and they again failed to deliver peace at the Camp David and Taba Summits from 2000-2001.

that it sees Resolution 242 and the end of settlement expansions as unacceptable, and it is willing to accept the continuation of violence if that is the cost.

Although Martin Indyk attempts to absolve the United States of any wrongdoing in the process, the reality is quite the opposite. In hindsight, the fact that settlements helped deter peace is beyond reasonable debate, and Indyk recognizes this. However, he claims that the United States was just the naïve victim of Rabin's nefarious plot to play the Americans: "Rabin had shown how effectively the Israeli tail could wag the American dog," he writes, and this "asymmetrical relationship between the American superpower and a small, dependent ally is not supposed to be that way."<sup>110</sup> However, such an argument ignores the role of the American's Orientalist ideology, which predisposed them to act decisively on behalf of the Israelis, dooming the process.

The unfortunate reality is that this ideology pervades two of America's most important democratic institutions, the press and academia. Despite their purported dedication to objectivity and non-partisanship, intellectuals served to justify the long-standing policy of the state towards Israel while wrapping it in diplomatic pleasantries. While one must commend the media for its outstanding coverage of the O.J. Simpson trial and the affairs of the President, with respect to Oslo they simply propagated the narratives of the state and failed to elucidate the perspective of the Palestinians. However, this is not to say that they doomed Oslo to 'failure'; on the contrary, I have shown that if one assumes that the goal of Oslo for the United States and Israel was to normalize the occupation within the international community, this process was entirely successful. To this end the state did not need to coerce America's free institutions to do its bidding; they were simply willing to support the 'peace process,' to pretend that black is white, because it conformed to the belief that America is an exceptional nation whose destiny it is to elevate the Orient to 'modernity.'<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, 89.

<sup>111</sup> See Noam Chomsky's discussion of these ideas in John Dirlik, "Chomsky Labels Oslo Accords 'Triumph of U.S. Indoctrination System.'" See also Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002).; Noam Chomsky, *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies* (Concord, Ontario: Anansi, 1989).

However, the issues with this belief are plain: black is not white; Israel's settlement policy is "antithetical to peace; and the United States is by no means an exceptional country. Indeed, the historical evidence overwhelmingly supports the fact that the United States is not a liberal Empire, that we are less concerned with human rights than whether an ally calls themselves "liberal." We unconditionally support Israeli policy; we are the ones who reject true diplomacy and the two-state solution; and thus we are not the neutral arbiter but a belligerent party directly engaged in the dispute. Israel has never supported a Palestinian state or an Arab East Jerusalem, and for the United States to suggest otherwise is at best reckless disregard for the truth. If we acknowledge these facts, then we can have a rational debate about the merits of such a position. But for now the only exceptional things about the United States is the disparity between the amount of freedoms we enjoy and the degree to which we use them to criticize the unjust policies of the state. Indeed, from Vietnam, to the invasion of Iraq, to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, intellectuals and the media have overwhelmingly supported the state, led by the belief that "American motives are pure and not subject to analysis."<sup>112</sup>

Although I have argued that the United States is not exceptional, this potential for individuals to speak freely shows that it is in fact already great a great country. What makes this country great are stories like that of Edward Said, who fled the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948 and eventually immigrated to the United States, where he received a world-class education. However, he did not use this opportunity to justify the actions of the state; rather, he spoke truth to power and stood up for the Palestinian people, his own compatriots. We should remember his warning, that "we [the United States] consume more propaganda and endure more official hypocrisy than any people on Earth."<sup>113</sup> Those

---

<sup>112</sup> Noam Chomsky, *The Responsibility of Intellectuals*, 31. For a discussion of the role of academics in Vietnam, see Noam Chomsky, *Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship* (New York: The New Press, 2003).; for a discussion of the invasion of Iraq, see the 2003 preface to Edward Said, *Orientalism*.

<sup>113</sup> Edward Said, *Peace and its Discontents*, 146.

who believe in the principles of peace, justice, and equality should follow his example, for he is the true embodiment of what it means to be a responsible intellectual.<sup>114</sup>

For those who seek to impart these values into the policies of the state directly, they should remember the lessons of Oslo and the imperial policies of the United States. Insofar as Oslo was a peace process, the goal was to manufacture peace without justice, which is an unobtainable prospect. However, if the United States was ever serious about world peace, it stands to hold a leadership role in a coalition dedicated to that goal, but this requires radical change, both political and ideological. A reasonable first step would be to end U.S. support for the illegal occupation of the West Bank, its accompanying system of apartheid, and the inhumane blockade of Gaza, in hopes that we will someday forget about Oslo as an absurd deviation on the road to a just and lasting peace.<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>114</sup> See Edward Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).; Noam Chomsky, *The Responsibility of Intellectuals*.

<sup>115</sup> Norman Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israeli-Palestine Conflict*, 183.

## Appendix I

**Resolution 242 (1967)****of 22 November 1967**

*The Security Council,*

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

*Emphasizing* the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security,

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

1. *Affirms* that the fulfilment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:
  - (i) Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;
  - (ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;
2. *Affirms* further the necessity
  - (a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;
  - (b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;
  - (c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones;
3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in this resolution;
4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of the efforts of the Special Representative as soon as possible.

*Adopted unanimously at the 1382nd meeting.*<sup>116</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup> Resolution 242, S/RES/242 (1967), [https://undocs.org/S/RES/242\(1967\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/242(1967)).

## Bibliography

**Primary**

- Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area. May 4, 1994. Signed in Cairo, Egypt. United Nations Peacemaker. <https://peacemaker.un.org/israelopt-cairoagreement94>.
- Clinton, Bill. "Remarks at the Opening of the Summit of the Peacemakers in Sharm al-Sheikh, Egypt." *The Papers of The President*, Mar. 13, 1996.
- Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements. Sep. 13, 1993. Signed in Washington D.C.. United Nations Peacemaker. <https://peacemaker.un.org/israelopt-osloaccord93>.
- Dirlik, John. "Chomsky Labels Oslo Accords 'Triumph of U.S. Indoctrination System'." *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* XIV no. 5, (1995): 30.
- Friedman, Thomas. "A STEP AHEAD IN MADRID: At Last, all the Players in the Middle East Have Sat Down and Talked to Each Other." *New York Times*, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1991.
- Friedman, Thomas. "Who Are You?." *New York Times*, Mar. 6, 1996.
- Gwertzman, Bernard. "REAGAN 'HORRIFIED': He Demands Immediate Withdrawal by Israelis From the City Area." *New York Times*, Sep. 19<sup>th</sup>, 1982.
- Lewis, Anthony. "Abroad at Home," *New York Times*, Sep. 13, 1993.
- Lewis, Anthony. "It's Up to Arafat." *New York Times*, Mar. 4, 1996.
- Indyk, Martin. *Innocent Abroad*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009.
- Rabin, Yitzhak. *The Rabin Memoirs*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Berkeley: The University of California, 1996.
- Resolution 242. S/RES/242 (1967). [https://undocs.org/S/RES/242\(1967\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/242(1967)).
- Rosenthal, A. M.. "On my Mind." *New York Times*, Sep. 14, 1993.
- Rosenthal, A. M.. "Would We Do It Again?." *New York Times*, Mar. 8, 1996.
- Ross, Dennis. *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.
- Ross, Dennis. *UN Security Council Resolution 242: The Building Block of Peacemaking*. Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993.
- "The Declaration by Peres: 'War in Every Sense of the Word'." *New York Times*, Mar. 4<sup>th</sup>, 1996.
- The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Sep. 28, 1995, signed in Washington D.C.. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Peace/Guide/Pages/THE%20ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN%20INTERIM%20AGREEMENT.aspx>.

**Secondary**

- Allen, John. *Rabble-Rouser for Peace: The Authorized Biography of Desmond Tutu*. New York: Free Press, 2006.
- Anziska, Seth. *Preventing Palestine: A Political History from Camp David to Oslo*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: 2018.
- Benvenisti, Meron. *Intimate Enemies: Jews and Arabs in a Shared Land*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Butler, Jeffrey, Robert I. Rotberg, and John Adams. *The Black Homelands of South Africa: The Political and Economic Development of Bophuthatswana and KwaZulu*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.

- Chomsky, Noam and Edward Herman. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2002.
- Chomsky, Noam. *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies*. Concord, Ontario: Anansi, 1989.
- Chomsky, Noam. *Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship*. New York: The New Press, 2003.
- Chomsky, Noam. *The Fateful Triangle*. Boston: South End Press, 1983.
- Chomsky, Noam. *The Responsibility of Intellectuals*. New York: The New Press, 2017.
- Chomsky, Noam. *Who Rules the World?*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2016.
- “Clinton’s Nominee for Israel Cautions Senators on Embassy, Troops.” *Jewish Telegraph Agency*. Feb. 2, 1995.
- Coady, C.A.J., and Igor Primoratz. *Terrorism: The Philosophical Issues*. Edited by Igor Primoratz. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Finkelstein, Norman. *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Finkelstein, Norman. *Dennis Ross and the Peace Process: Subordinating Palestinian Rights to Israeli “Needs”*. Washington: Institute for Palestinian Studies, 2007.
- Finkelstein, Norman. *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Brooklyn: Verso, 2003.
- Fisk, Robert. *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2002.
- Gorny, Yosef. *Zionism and the Arabs: 1882-1948, A Study of Ideology*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987.
- Henriksen Waage, Hilde. “Norway’s Role in the Middle East Peace Talks: Between a Strong State and a Weak Belligerent.” *Journal of Palestinian Studies* XXXIV, no. 4 (2005): 6-24
- Kimmerling, Baruch. *Politicide: Ariel Sharon’s War against the Palestinians*. London: Verso, 2003.
- Mansour, Awad, and Sharif Jaradat. *Clever Concealment: Jewish Settlement in the Occupied Territories Under the Rabin Government, August 1992-September 1993*. Jerusalem: Palestine Human Rights Information Center, 1994.
- McHugo, John. “Resolution 242: A Legal Reappraisal of the Right-Wing Israeli Interpretation of the Withdrawal Phrase with Reference to the Conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.” *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (2002): 851-881.
- Pappé, Ilan. *The Biggest Prison on Earth: A History of the Occupied Territories*. London: Oneworld Publications, 2017.
- Pappé, Ilan. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. London: Oneworld Publications, 2006.
- Peleg, Ilan. *Begin’s Foreign Policy, 1977-1983: Israel’s Move to the Right*. New York: Green Wood Press, 1987.
- Raz, Avi. *The Bride and the Dowry: Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians in the Aftermath of June 1967 War*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.
- Roy, Sara. *Hamas and Civil Society: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.
- Roy, Sara. *The Gaza Strip: The Political Economy of De-development*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Washington: Institute for Palestinian Studies USA, 2016.
- Said, Edward. *Covering Islam*. New York: Vintage Books, 1981.

Said, Edward. "Intifada and Independence." *Social Text* 22, Spring (1989): 23-39.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1977.

Said, Edward. *Out of Place: A Memoir*. New York: Vintage Books, 2000.

Said, Edward. *Peace and its Discontents*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.

Said, Edward. *The Question of Palestine*. New York: Vintage Books, 1980.

Shlaim, Avi. *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000.