



ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF PALESTINIAN  
OFFICIALS IN THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI PEACE  
NEGOTIATIONS 2001-2009

BY

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the Palestinian official perspective on the Bush administration's role and position in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations during 2001-2009 particularly with reference to the 2003 Road Map and whether the US was serious in resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It discusses the reasons, according to the Palestinians, behind the US intervention in the conflict and the Palestinians' acceptance of the US mediation. In addition, it focuses on the reasons for the failure of the US mediation in achieving the desired goal of the negotiations: the two-state solution. The study used a survey and interviewed Palestinian officials. It also used official documents and secondary sources. It used William Zartman's approach of third-party role in the negotiations as the framework of analysis. The study found that George W. Bush's administration was biased and its policies were prejudiced in favour of the State of Israel. The respondents overwhelmingly supported the view that the US was not a serious, credible or effective mediator in resolving the conflict. The research also found that the US imposed itself on the parties to mediate the conflict while Palestinians accepted its mediation as a result of lack of other influential mediators and their fear that the rejection of the US mediation would lead to negative consequences on the Palestinians. The study found that the US and Israel are mainly responsible for the failure of the negotiations since they only wanted to negotiate the Palestinian's rights but did not achieve them. The study recommends that the US, as the leading mediator in the peace process for decades, should play an effective role in the peace process by putting pressure on the conflictants to observe their obligations. The study concludes that for a just and durable resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the US should take into consideration the interests of the Palestinians besides that of Israel's in any final agreement and allow other powers or states such as Russia, the EU, the Arab and the Muslim World to play a serious role in the peace process.

## خلاصة البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة وجهة النظر الفلسطينية تجاه دور إدارة الرئيس الأمريكي جورج دبليو بوش وموقفها من المحادثات الفلسطينية-الإسرائيلية خلال الفترة (٢٠٠١-٢٠٠٩م) -خاصة- بالإشارة إلى خارطة الطريق عام ٢٠٠٣م، وفيما إذا كانت الولايات المتحدة جادة وصادقة لحل الصراع الفلسطيني-الإسرائيلي. وتناقش الدراسة الأسباب التي أدت إلى التدخل الأمريكي في الصراع الفلسطيني-الإسرائيلي، وقبول الفلسطينيين للوساطة الأمريكية. كما وتركز الدراسة على أسباب قصور الوساطة الأمريكية لتحقيق الأهداف المرجوة من المحادثات التي تمثلت في تحقيق حل الدولتين. وأجرت هذه الدراسة مقابلات منظمة ومقابلات وجهاً لوجه مع فلسطينيين رسميين، بالإضافة إلى وثائق رسمية ومصادر أخرى ثانوية. واستخدم هذا البحث منهج وليام زارتمان في دور الوسيط في المفاوضات وموقفه بوصفه إطاراً نظرياً تحليلياً. وتوصلت الدراسة إلى أن دور إدارة جورج بوش كان متحيزاً لصالح دولة إسرائيل. حيث رأت الأغلبية الساحقة للمستجيبين أن الولايات المتحدة لم تكن جادة وصادقة لحل الصراع الفلسطيني-الإسرائيلي، وأن دورها لم يكن فاعلاً للتوصل إلى حل نهائي له. وتوصلت -أيضاً- إلى أن الولايات المتحدة، فرضت نفسها على أطراف الصراع؛ لأداء دور الوسيط في المحادثات، في حين قبل الفلسطينيون بالتدخل الأمريكي لعدم وجود دول أخرى مؤثرة في الصراع بوصفها بديلاً عن الولايات المتحدة، وتخوف الجانب الفلسطيني الرسمي من أن رفض التدخل الأمريكي سيؤدي إلى نتائج عكسية وخيمة على الفلسطينيين، وتوصلت الدراسة إلى أن الجانبين (الإسرائيلي والأمريكي) كانا السبب الرئيس لفشل المفاوضات؛ لأنهما هدفا إلى التفاوض عن الحقوق الفلسطينية، وليس تلبيتها أو تحقيقها. وبناء على ذلك توصي هذه الدراسة بأنه يجب على الولايات المتحدة -باعتبارها دولة تترعب على قيادة العملية السلمية- أن تؤدي دوراً فاعلاً في عملية السلام، عبر الضغط على أطراف الصراع لتنفيذ التزاماتهم، وتختتم الدراسة أنه من أجل تحقيق حل عادل ودائم للصراع الفلسطيني-الإسرائيلي، فإنه يتوجب على الولايات المتحدة أن تأخذ بعين الاعتبار المصالح الفلسطينية، إلى جانب المصالح الإسرائيلية في أي حل نهائي للصراع، وأن تسمح للقوى الأخرى مثل روسيا ودول الإتحاد الأوروبي والعالم العربي والإسلامي لأداء دور جدي في عملية السلام.

## APPROVAL PAGE

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## DECLARATION

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

US	The United States
EU	The European Union
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict became an international issue before the British departure from Palestine in 1948. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 181 on 29 November 1947 recommended partition of the historic Palestine into two states (Arab and Jewish state) and the Resolution was rejected by the Arabs.<sup>1</sup> After the British departure, the Jews declared the establishment of the State of Israel on 14 May, 1948 which led to the outbreak of the 1948 War between the State of Israel and some Arab forces from Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Iraq. This resulted in Israeli occupation of most of the historic Palestine except the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> In addition, thousands of Palestinians became refugees in the Arab countries. The UNGA Resolution (194) in 1948 called for resolving the Palestinian refugees' dilemma and their right of return to their homeland.<sup>3</sup> In the 1967 War, Israel occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip, and Arab territories which include Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula. The UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 242 in November 1967 asked Israel to withdraw from these areas. This resolution was supported with the UNSC Resolution (338) in 1973.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jamil Hilal, "Palestine: The last colonial issue", in *Where Now for Palestine? The Demise of the Two-State Solution*, edited by Jamil Hilal (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2007), 1-29.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Oberschall, *Conflict and Peace Building in Divided Societies: Responses to Ethnic Violence*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 129.

<sup>3</sup> Selikhtar Ofira, *Doomed to Failure?: The Politics and Intelligence of the Oslo Peace Process*, (California: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), 9.

<sup>4</sup> Arthur J. Goldberg, "What Resolution 242 Really Said", *American Foreign Policy Interests*, vol. 33, no. 1 (2011): 41-46.

The Israelis and Palestinians began to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the dispute in the late 1980s.<sup>5</sup> The Palestinian-Israeli peace process was the result of changes in the international, regional and domestic environment. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the victory of the United States (US) and its allies in the war against Iraq in 1991, the decline of the Arab support for the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the Palestinian uprising in 1987, and the division within the PLO were the important factors which had a significant effect on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the US found itself facing a new reality which required a different strategy for the Middle East.<sup>7</sup> The US put pressure on the State of Israel to negotiate a settlement with the Palestinians in the beginning of the 1990s leading to the Madrid Conference in 1991. The negotiations began between the (PLO) and the State of Israel after the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising in 1987 which was known as the first *intifada*.<sup>8</sup>

After the 1991 Madrid Conference, Norway sponsored the secret negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians which led to the 1993 Oslo Accord (the Declaration of Principles) that called for the resolving the conflict within five years based on the UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338. The conflicting parties agreed that negotiations were the only method for the settlement of the conflict which has remained unresolved until today.<sup>9</sup> The US has been playing an essential role of a mediator in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. The negotiations reached an impasse during President Bill Clinton's administration where the five-year term agreed in 1993

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<sup>5</sup> Ilan Pappé, "Zionism and the two-state solution", in *Where Now for ...*, 30-47.

<sup>6</sup> Naseer H. Aruri, *Dishonest Broker: The U.S. Role in Israel and Palestine*, translated from English by Munir al-'Aksh (Bayrūt: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Wiḥdah al-'Arabiyyah, 2007), 49-51.

<sup>7</sup> Gawdat Bahgat, "Saudi Arabia and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in the Last Years of the Bush Presidency", *Israel Affairs*, vol.15, no.2 (April 2009): 180-189.

<sup>8</sup> Gilead Sher, *the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations, 1999-2001*, (the USA and Canada: Routledge, 2007), 11-16.

<sup>9</sup> Mazin B. Qumsiyeh, *Sharing the Land of Canaan: Human Rights and the Israeli-Palestinian Struggle*, (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 155-159.

Oslo Accord ended without achieving the required progress. Thus, President Clinton held the Camp David Conference in 2000 (Camp David II) prior to leaving the White House. The basic suggestions called for a Palestinian State on 91% of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but the plan did not materialize because of the existence of great differences between the views of the two parties to the conflict. The Taba Conference in January 2001 also failed as it did not approximate the views of the conflicting parties.<sup>10</sup>

After assuming office in 2001, George W. Bush offered his vision in June 2002 to resolve the conflict based on the two-state solution. This led to the 2003 Road Map which was designed by the Quartet Committee comprising the US, UN, Russia and the European Union (EU). The Road Map called for the establishment of a Palestinian State by the end of 2005. It also asked the Palestinians to fight terrorism, corruption and embrace democracy while Israel was asked to halt building settlements and withdraw from the West Bank cities which they occupied in 2002. Bush called for a new Palestinian leadership for the success of the Road Map, adding that the Palestinian President Yasser Arafat did not believe in peace and encouraged violence and supported armed movements, while the US claimed that Sharon, the Israeli Prime Minister at that time, was a man of peace.<sup>11</sup> It was clear that Bush wanted to revive the Road Map during the Annapolis Conference on 27 November, 2007, but the negotiations after the Conference did not achieve the desired goals. Eventually, Bush

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 40-41.

<sup>11</sup> Augustus R. Norton, "U.S. Presidents and the Arab-Israeli Conflict" *In Israel and Palestine: Two States for Two Peoples if not Now, When?* edited by Alan Berger, Harvey Cox, Herbert C. Kelman, Lenore G. Martin, Everett Mendelsohn, Augustus Richard Norton & others (Boston Study Group on Middle East Peace, 2010), 57-74.

left the white House and the Road Map did not achieve a final solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.<sup>12</sup>

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The US has been playing the key role in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process since the first stage in late 1980s.<sup>13</sup> The 1993 Oslo Accord, Camp David II, and the Clinton Principles did not resolve the conflict because the initiatives showed profound disparities between the conflicting parties on the central issues such as borders delineation, the issue of the Palestinian refugees and the status of Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, George W. Bush initiated a Road Map which called for a resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict within three years. But at the end of his Presidency, he declared that the peace would not be achieved in his tenure and urged the conflicting parties to take serious efforts to resolve the conflict by negotiations.<sup>15</sup>

The purpose of this research is to analyse the role of the US and its attitude in the negotiations from the Palestinian official perspective during the George W. Bush administration; 2001-2009 and the challenges which faced the role of the administration. Thus, the study examines the Palestinian official opinion towards the US position, behavior and its strategy in resolving the conflict particularly with reference to the 2003 Road Map, and it analyses whether the US was serious in resolving the conflict based on justice. This study attempts to answer the following questions:

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<sup>12</sup> Gawdat Bahgat, 187-189.

<sup>13</sup> Ifat Maoz, "The Impact of Third-Party Communications on the Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations", *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1999): 11-25.

<sup>14</sup> Efraim Inbar, "The Rise and Demise of the Two-State Paradigm", *Orbis*, vol. 53, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 265-283.

<sup>15</sup> Harvey Sicherman, "New Policies and Old Realities in the Middle East", *Orbis*, vol. 55, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 390-397.

1. How did the Palestinian officials view the US role and position as a mediator in the Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations from 2001 to 2009?
2. What are the factors that shaped the Palestinian officials' view on the role and attitude of the US as a mediator?
3. Why did the US mediation, according to the Palestinian officials, fail to achieve the desired goal (two-state solution)?

### **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

There are several studies addressing the US role and its position in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict including its role in the negotiations before and during the 1993 Oslo Accord and Camp David II. Studies such as Naseer H. Aruri's *Dishonest Broker: The U.S. Role in Israel and Palestine* and Ibrāhīm 'Alāwneh's *the Road Map and al-Aqsa Intifada and the Missing Peace* are examples of such works. However, this study investigates the US role in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations in terms of the Palestinian official attitude during the tenure of President George W. Bush; 2001-2009. This study, therefore, is significant for the following reasons. First, the George W. Bush administration initially was not interested to intervene in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. But soon the Bush administration intervened and began to mediate between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The available literature does not explain the Palestinian official's opinion on the US interest to mediate a settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli dispute and the Palestinian official's perspective on the US position and behaviour in the negotiations between 2001 and 2009. Moreover, the literature does not explain the factors that can affect the Palestinian official's perception on the mediation process. Second, the literature does not discuss the importance of the Road Map negotiations according to the Palestinians as an alternative to the 1993 Oslo

Accord and the Arab initiative in 2002. Third, for the Bush administration, the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was the key to stability in the Middle East. This view was also supported by the 2006 Baker-Hamilton Report. In this regard, the literature, according to the Palestinian official's perspective, does not explain the obstacles that hindered the implementation of the 2003 Road Map which then prevented the implementation of the two-state solution. Hence, this study contributes to the existing literature on the US mediating role in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, and how the Palestinians view the US behavior and its attitude in the negotiations.

#### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Investigate the US role and strategy in the Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations from 2001 to 2009 from the Palestinian official view.
2. Explore the factors that shaped the Palestinian official view on the role and attitude of the US as a mediator.
3. Investigate why the US mediation, in the view of Palestinian officials, did not achieve the desired goals (i.e. the two-state solution)

#### **1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study focuses on the role of the US as a broker in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations from the perspective of the Palestinian officials during the period 2001-2009. The literature is divided into three sections. The first section reviews studies dealing with the third party and negotiation process. The second section deals with the

Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and the US role while the third section deals with the Palestinian view of the American role in the peace negotiations.

## 1.6 THE THIRD PARTY AND NEGOTIATION PROCESS

Celik and Shkreli,<sup>16</sup> Wetzstein,<sup>17</sup> and Wall and Druckman<sup>18</sup> define the mediation process as the process by a mediator intervention without forcing an agreement on disputants to resolve their dispute without violence. Liu and Wilson,<sup>19</sup> Sharkey and Sharples<sup>20</sup> define negotiation as the process which occurs between disputants because of conflicting interests. Frazierilan explains that the superpowers are more likely to intervene in the conflict to maintain their interests.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Elgström argues that the third-party mediators cannot be partial because they want to maintain their interests.<sup>22</sup> Gewurz explains that the role of third parties in the negotiation processes is very important particularly after the Cold War.<sup>23</sup> Poitras and Rains argue that the essential task of a mediator is to help conflicting parties by pushing them to reach an agreement peacefully. For this, the broker has to be neutral in order to gain the

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<sup>16</sup> Ayse B. Celik & Alma Shkreli, “An Analysis of Reconciliatory Mediation in Northern Albania: The Role of Customary Mediators”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 62, no. 6 (August 2010): 885–914.

<sup>17</sup> Irmgard Wetzstein, “Mediated Conflicts: Capacities and limitations of ‘Meditative Journalism’ in Public Diplomacy Processes”, *the International Communication Gazette*, vol. 72, no. 6 (2010): 503–520.

<sup>18</sup> James A. Wall & Daniel Druckman, “Mediation in Peacekeeping Missions”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 47, no. 5 (2003): 693-705.

<sup>19</sup> Meina Liu & Steven R. Wilson, “The Effects of Interaction Goals on Negotiation Tactics and Outcomes: A Dyad-Level Analysis across Two Cultures”, *Communication Research*, vol. 38, no. 2 (2011): 248–277.

<sup>20</sup> Siobhan Sharkey & Anne Sharples, “From the Beginning: Negotiation in Community Evaluation”, *Evaluation*, vol. 14, no. 3 (2008): 363–380.

<sup>21</sup> Derrick V. Frazierilan, “Third Party Characteristics, Territory and the Mediation of Militarized Interstate Disputes”, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, vol. 23, no. 4 (September 2006): 267–284.

<sup>22</sup> Ole Elgström, “The European Union as a Leader in International Multilateral Negotiations – a Problematic Aspiration?”, *International Relations*, vol. 21, no. 4 (2007): 445–458.

<sup>23</sup> Ilan G. Gewurz, “(Re) Designing Mediation to Address the Nuances of Power Imbalance”, *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Winter 2001): 135-162.

confidence of the conflicting parties.<sup>24</sup> Bercovitch agrees with Poitras and Rains in terms of neutrality and impartiality but at the same time, he focuses on utilizing the elements of power to put pressure on the conflicting parties. He argues that the task of the broker is to decrease tension and provide communication channels which facilitate negotiations between the conflicting parties.<sup>25</sup> Mccorkle, Alexander,<sup>26</sup> Mulcahy,<sup>27</sup> and Svensson<sup>28</sup> explain that the mediator should be unbiased because he or she cannot impose outcomes on one of the conflicting parties.<sup>29</sup> Crescenzi, Kadera, Mitchell, Thyne<sup>30</sup> and Beber<sup>31</sup> argue that successful third-party mediators should be “biased” and “powerful” since they can introduce inducements and influence the disputants' expectations. Bercovitch argues that the durable, effective and just peace can be achieved only by attaining satisfactory outcomes for all conflicting parties.<sup>32</sup>

Kelman argues that trust is very important among disputants, and mediators have to provide trust between them particularly in the first stages.<sup>33</sup> Bercovitch and Kadayifci-Orellana argue that the mediator should be trusted and credible to the disputants particularly when the mediator proposes suggestions for resolving the

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<sup>24</sup> Jean Poitras & Susan Rains, *Expert Mediator: Overcoming Mediation Challenges in Workplace, Family, and Community Conflicts*, (Maryland: Jason Aronson, 2013), 81-82.

<sup>25</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, “Managing International Ethnic Conflict: Evaluating the Role and Relevance of Mediation”, *World Affairs*, vol. 166, no. 1 (Summer 2003): 56-68.

<sup>26</sup> Nadja M. Alexander, *International Comparative Mediation: Legal Perspectives*, (New York: Kluwer Law International BV, 2009), 219-220.

<sup>27</sup> Linda Mulcahy, “The Possibilities and Desirability of Mediator Neutrality- towards an Ethic of Partiality?”, *Social and Legal Studies*, vol.10, no. 4 (2001): 505-527.

<sup>28</sup> Isak Svensson, “Who Brings Which Peace? Neutral versus Biased Mediation and Institutional Peace Arrangements in Civil Wars”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 53, no. 3 (June 2009): 446-469.

<sup>29</sup> Suzanne Mccorkle, “The Murky World of Mediation Ethics: Neutrality, Impartiality, and Conflict of Interest in State Codes of Conduct”, *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 2 (Winter 2005): 165-183.

<sup>30</sup> Mark J. Crescenzi, Kelly M. Kadera, Sara M. Mitchell, & Clayton L. Thyne, “A Supply Side Theory of Mediation”, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 4 (2011): 1069–1094.

<sup>31</sup> Bernd Beber, “International Mediation, Selection Effects, and the Question of Bias”, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, vol. 29, no. 4 (2012): 397–424.

<sup>32</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, “Overcoming Obstacles to Peace: The Contribution of Mediation to Short-Lived Conflict Settlements”, *International Studies Association*, vol. 50, no. 4 (December 2006): 819-840.

<sup>33</sup> Herbert C. Kelman, “Building Trust among Enemies: The Central Challenge for International Conflict Resolution”, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol. 29 (2005): 639–650.

conflict. The third-party mediator can be more credible, successful and legitimate if he or she is accepted by all disputants.<sup>34</sup> According to Gent and Shannon, scholars are divided about the mediator's behavior in terms of neutrality and impartiality in the mediation processes. However, they consider that the techniques they employ are the most important since binding negotiations cannot be forced on conflicting parties in light of the nature of international order.<sup>35</sup> Bohmelt, however, argues that a multilateral intervention is more effective because the resources will be more available and less biased.<sup>36</sup> According to Zartman, time is very important in the negotiation process since the long process undermines the chances of reaching an agreement.<sup>37</sup> Fridl emphasizes the importance of introducing incentives to the disputing parties in order to encourage and convince them to make renunciations. Any agreement however, should satisfy the needs and expectations of disputants.<sup>38</sup> Beardsley and Nigel Lo emphasize the need for the conflicting parties to change their behavior and make concessions to enable the third party attain acceptable progress.<sup>39</sup> Kyle Beardsley argues that a successful mediator should have substantial sources in terms of information and incentives.<sup>40</sup> Jacob Bercovitch and Julie Chalfin say that the

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<sup>34</sup> Jacob Bercovitch & S. Ayse Kadayifci-Orellana, "Religion and Mediation: the Role of Faith-based Actors in International Conflict Resolution", *International Negotiation*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2009): 175-204.

<sup>35</sup> Stephen E. Gent & Megan Shannon, "The Effectiveness of International Arbitration and Adjudication: Getting into a Bind", *the Journal of Politics*, vol. 72, no. 2 (April 2010): 366-380.

<sup>36</sup> Tobias Bohmelt, "Disaggregating Mediations: The Impact of Multiparty Mediation", *Cambridge University Press*, vol. 41, no. 4 (2011): 859-881.

<sup>37</sup> William Zartman, "Negotiating Internal Conflict: Incentives and Intractability", *International Negotiation*, vol. 6, issue. 3 (2001): 297-303.

<sup>38</sup> Daniella D. Fridl, "Kosovo Negotiations: Re-visiting the Role of Mediation", *International Negotiation*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2009): 71-93.

<sup>39</sup> Kyle Beardsley & Nigel Lo, "Third-Party Conflict Management and the Willingness to Make Concessions", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 42 (January 2013): 1-31.

<sup>40</sup> Kyle Beardsley, "Intervention without Leverage: Explaining the Prevalence of Weak Mediators", *International Interactions*, vol. 35, no. 3 (2009): 272-297.

most important role of a mediator is to facilitate communication channels and providing arguments between disputants.<sup>41</sup>

### **1.7 THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS AND THE US ROLE**

The end of the Cold War and the accompanying collapse of the Soviet Union saw the ascendance of the US as the sole superpower in world politics. Part of the new challenges this development has thrown on its way is mediating the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The first initiative taken towards meeting this challenge was the 1991 Madrid Conference.<sup>42</sup> Oberschall argues that the United States played an essential role in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations from the beginning through applying pressure on the two conflicting parties to agree on the 1991 Madrid Conference that led to the 1993 Oslo Accord.<sup>43</sup> President Jimmy Carter blames the Palestinian, Israeli and American sides for the failure of the negotiations.<sup>44</sup> Mearsheimer and Walt argue that the Zionist Lobby plays a crucial role in the formulation of the US policy towards the Israeli-Arab conflict in favor of the State of Israel.<sup>45</sup> Sicherman says that the Zionist Lobby influences the US foreign policy towards the Middle East to act according to the Israeli interests. This complicated the US role as a mediator in the Israeli-Arab conflict.<sup>46</sup> Zallūm agrees with Sicherman that the United States cannot put pressure on the Israelis because of the influence of the Zionist Lobby in the US politics. On this account, the US tried to find a settlement that satisfied mainly the Israelis. Thus, the

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<sup>41</sup> Jacob Bercovitch & Julie Chalfin, "Contact and Conflict Resolution: Examining the Extent to which Interpersonal Contact and Cooperation can Affect the Management of International Conflicts", *International Negotiation*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2011): 11-37.

<sup>42</sup> Marian Leighton, "Middleman in the Middle East: America's Flawed Approach to the 'Peace Process'", *Orbis*, vol. 52, no. 3 (Summer 2008): 391-402.

<sup>43</sup> Anthony Oberschall, 150-153.

<sup>44</sup> Jimmy Carter, *Palestine Peace not Apartheid*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 11-19.

<sup>45</sup> John J. Mearsheimer & Stephen M. Walt, *the Israeli Lobby and the US Foreign Policy*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 6-19.

<sup>46</sup> Harvey Sicherman, "American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict", *Orbis*, vol. 55, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 438-449.

State of Israel reneged on its commitments to implement the Oslo Accord.<sup>47</sup> Zaki argues that if the US is interested to resolve the conflict, it should introduce a just settlement based on the UNSC Resolutions 242, 338 and the UNGA 194.<sup>48</sup>

Chomsky argues that despite the importance of the US role in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, Washington was not serious to settle the dispute fairly and went further to provide military, diplomatic and political backing to the Israeli side.<sup>49</sup> According to Kacowicz, because of the failure of Camp David II, Clinton formulated the so-called the Clinton's Principles according to which the parties met in Taba in 2001 for discussion. He says, the negotiations did not overcome the intractable problems.<sup>50</sup> Leep says that despite the changes in the international equation after the Cold War, the United States did not change its policy of supporting the State of Israel. In addition, the strong US-Israeli relations prevent the US from putting pressure on Tel Aviv.<sup>51</sup> Hancock and Weiss wrote that the world thought that the Oslo Accord was an important step that would lead to stability in the Middle East in general.<sup>52</sup> Leighton argues that the violence that erupted between the disputants further undermined the role of the US as a mediator. Interestingly, Harms sees the Camp David II (2000) as being forced on the throats of the Palestinians by Ehud Barak and Bill Clinton.<sup>53</sup> Schiff explains that as a result of the failure of all negotiations since the Oslo Accord

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<sup>47</sup> ‘Abdul Ḥay Zallūm, *al-Tārīkh al-Ḥaqīqi li Amrīkā fi al-‘Alam al-‘Arabī: Amrīkā Isrāīl al-Kobrā-Isrāīl Amrīkā al-Soghrā*, [The True History of America in the Arab World: The US Greater Israel-Israel Smaller US]. (Bayrūt: Al-Mo’assasah al-‘arabiyyah le al-Dirāsāt wa al-Nashir, 2009), 26-41.

<sup>48</sup> Mohammed Zaki, *American Global Challenges: The Obama Era*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 99- 114.

<sup>49</sup> Noam Chomsky, *Middle East Illusions: Including Peace in the Middle East? Reflections on Justice and Nationalism*, (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 159-232.

<sup>50</sup> Arie M. Kacowicz, “Rashomon in the Middle East: Clashing Narratives, Images, and Frames in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”, *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association*, vol. 40, no. 3 (2005): 343-360.

<sup>51</sup> Mathew C. Leep, “The Affective Production of Others: United States Policy towards the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 45, n. 3 (2010): 331-352.

<sup>52</sup> Landon E. Hancock & Joshua N. Weiss, “Prospect Theory and the Failure to Sell the Oslo Accord”, *Peace and Change*, vol. 36, n. 3 (July 2011): 427-452.

<sup>53</sup> Gregory Harms, *the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: A Basic Introduction*, (London: Pluto Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 2008), 164-172.

to Taba Conference in 2001, unofficial group from the conflicting parties tried to achieve progress in the negotiations based on the UNSC resolutions 242, 338 and the UNGA 194. The agreement was known as the Geneva Accord of 2003 which was rejected by the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.<sup>54</sup>

When President George W. Bush came to the White House in 2001, the violence between the conflicting parties peaked, and he called Arafat to stop terrorism as a pre-condition to fresh negotiations. After that he announced that Palestinians needed a new leadership for achieving peace. Bush introduced the Road Map in 2003 to resolve the conflict based on the UNSC Resolutions 242, 338 and 1397.<sup>55</sup> Fernandez argues that Palestinians called for negotiations before the Road Map while Sharon rejected them under the pretext that there was no Palestinian partner for achieving peace.<sup>56</sup> Ben states that Sharon was forced to accept the Road Map by the US with many reservations. While Bush tried to show himself as an honest broker, he asked Israel to halt settlement building and asked Palestinians to stop the violence in order to achieve peace. As an alternative to the Road Map and negotiations, Sharon withdrew from the Gaza Strip without coordination with the Palestinian Authority.<sup>57</sup> Hallward argues that George W. Bush called for the Annapolis Conference in 2007 to encourage the conflicting parties for implementing the principles of the Road Map. This did not attain the desired progress despite the hard work of President Mahmoud Abbas and the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.<sup>58</sup> Hemmer argues that the Arab countries think that the U.S can play an important role in the negotiations because of

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<sup>54</sup> Amira Schiff, ““Quasi Track-One” Diplomacy: An Analysis of the Geneva Process in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”, *International Studies Perspective*, vol. 11, Issue. 2 (May 2010): 93-111.

<sup>55</sup> Gregory Harms, 173-181.

<sup>56</sup> Erwin S. Fernandez, “The United States and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: (UN) Foreign Future Peace”, *International Social Science*, vol. 80 (2005): 41-50.

<sup>57</sup> Aluf Ben, “A Year of Opportunity in the Middle East”, *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 81-93.

<sup>58</sup> Maia Hallward, “Pursuing “Peace” in Israel/Palestine”, *Journal of Third World Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1(Spring 2011): 85-202.

its robust relations with Israel.<sup>59</sup> The essential problem between the conflicting parties is that they define peace in different perspectives and they have divergent and different interests.<sup>60</sup> Kalin argues that the US should take into consideration the Palestinian rights in any agreement if it is interested in achieving a durable peace.<sup>61</sup>

## **1.8 THE PALESTINIAN VIEW OF THE AMERICAN ROLE IN THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS**

Qurei‘, a Palestinian negotiator, argues that the Camp David II negotiations reached an impasse and the US blamed the Palestinian side as the reason behind the failure of the negotiations. Camp David II led to the deepening of the crisis instead of resolving the dispute because of the descent of the US to the desire of the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak.<sup>62</sup> Qurei‘ agrees with this argument and says that the US was not fair and prevented other states to play an effective role in the negotiations. While the Palestinians expected from the US to achieve their interests based on the international legitimacy, the US, however, has opted not to put pressure on the Israeli’s side to implement the requirements for attaining peace.<sup>63</sup> With reference to the Road Map, Qurei‘ argues that the US ignored the Israeli violations and accepted the Israeli reservations while it asked the Palestinians to conduct political, security and economic reforms before starting the implementation of the Road Map.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, the Road

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<sup>59</sup> Christopher Hemmer, “Balancing, Bonding, and Balking: The European Union, the United States, and the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process”, *Mediterranean Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 47-61.

<sup>60</sup> Maia Hallward, 188-191.

<sup>61</sup> Ibrahim Kalin, Israel and Palestine: trauma, truth and politics” in *The Obama Moment European and American perspectives*, edited by Álvaro de Vasconcelos and Marcin Zaborowski (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, 2009), 167-187.

<sup>62</sup> Aḥmad Qurei‘, *al-Riwāyah al-Falaṣṭīniyyah al-kāmilah li al-Mofāwadāt- min Oslo ilā Khāriṭit al-Ṭariq: Al-Ṭariq ilā Khāriṭit al-Ṭariq, 2000-2006*, [The Complete Palestinian Account of the Negotiations- From Oslo to the Road Map: The Path to the Road Map, 2000-2006]. (Bayrūt: Mo’assasit al-Dirāsāt al-Falaṣṭīniyyah, 2011), 32.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-56.

Map served the Israeli security and increased the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.<sup>65</sup> Qurei‘ added that even the US prevented other actors in the Quartet to play an effective role in the negotiation process.<sup>66</sup>

Al-Ḥassan, another Palestinian leader, discusses the views of Palestinian officials about the US role in the Camp David II. He bases his arguments on the view of President Mahmoud Abbas and Akram Hanieh. According to Al-Ḥassan, Yasser Arafat was forced by the US to attend the negotiations and Clinton ignored Yasser Arafat's view that the Camp David Summit should be well planned before holding it.<sup>67</sup> In the same context, he argues that the US puts pressure on Yasser Arafat to accept his and Barak’s suggestions which were not based on the international legitimacy.<sup>68</sup> He adds that even the Clinton's principles were not based on the UN Resolutions specifically the UNSC Resolution 242 and were not based on the 1991 Madrid Conference negotiations which focused on the term of “land for peace”.<sup>69</sup> Qurei‘ agrees with al-Ḥassan that Yasser Arafat was not comfortable about the Camp David II negotiations since the Summit was hurriedly conducted and without agreement between the three actors on the outlines of the key issues.<sup>70</sup> ‘Alāwneh agrees with Qurei‘ and argues that; despite of the American insistence on the implementation of the Road Map within the Quartet, the US worked unilaterally on the settlement of the

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 253.

<sup>67</sup> Bilāl al-Ḥassan, *Al-Khidā‘ al-‘srāīli: Ro‘yah Falasṭīniyyah Lemofāwāḍāt Camp David wa Tawajjohātiha*, [Israeli Deception: Palestinian Perspective on the Camp David Negotiations and their Orientations]. (Bayrūt: Al-Mo‘assasah al-‘arabiyyah le al-Dirāsāt wa al-Nashir, 2003), 13-14.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 18-20.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>70</sup> Aḥmad Qurei‘, *Fi al-Ṭarīq ilā al-Dawlah al-Falasṭīniyyah (Al-Salam al-Mo‘allaq – 2)*, [On the Way to the Palestinian State: Readings in the Palestinian Political Scene (the Stalled Peace)]. (Bayrūt: Al-Mo‘assasah al-‘arabiyyah le al-Dirāsāt wa al-Nashir, 2005), 32.