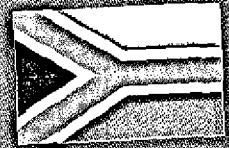# SAIIA REPORTS

Report number 24

Poles Apart or States Together?
Israel, South Africa and the Middle East Crisis

Tim Hughes and Greg Mills

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THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Poles Apart or States Together?
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Tim Hughes and Greg Mills[1]

Executive Summary and Acknowledgements

The contemporary South African domestic debate on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is shaping perceptions of that region. It is largely dominated by the fraternal ties established by the liberation movements of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), as well as diasporic and religious sentiments in South Africa.

This report examines the impasse from both Israeli and Palestinian perspectives, highlighting the lessons of conflict resolution from South Africa and how they might be applied to the Middle East. It concludes with an assessment of the implications of and benefits for South Africa and Africa of peace in that region.

The report concludes that:
- Peace between Israel and Palestine has to address core long-term dilemmas for both parties: security through wide acknowledgement of the right to exist for Israel; and similar right of recognition and respect for Palestine as a political entity. In the short-term, the end of Arab terrorism, the resolution of Jewish settlements, as well mediation and trust building have to go hand-in-hand.

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- The South African conflict resolution experience and its political transition offers lessons to both parties, notably in the importance of the regional environment in pushing the conflicting parties to the negotiating table, the role of civil society in urging compromise and the value of continuity of dialogue between protagonists. To an extent, however, the validity of the South African message is undermined by Pretoria's perceived bias towards Palestine, the controversy surrounding the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) and also, importantly, by its failure to uphold core governance and democratic values in similar dealings with African states, notably Zimbabwe.

- In a post-settlement phase, there is a great deal of potential in deepening ties between Israel and Africa, notably in the fields of technical assistance, agriculture, food security and military co-operation. It is likely that an Israel at peace with Palestine and its neighbours will focus much greater attention on Africa than hitherto, potentially both in co-operation and competition with South African business interests.

Introduction

[S]outh Africa's policy, in respect of its relations with Israel and its support for the achievement of a Palestinian state, are predicated upon the fundamental principle of unequivocal and unchanging support for the right of the state of Israel to exist with defined borders, in full peace and security with its neighbours. This fundamental position has been the long-standing policy of the ANC, both in exile and now in government. It has not changed and it will not change in the future.

<div align="right">

South African Deputy Foreign Minister, Aziz Pahad, 10 March 2002[2]

</div>

[I]n the Middle East, where acts of terror have triggered mounting violence, all parties have a choice to make. Every leader, every state must choose between two separate paths: the path of peace or the path of terror. In the stricken faces of mothers, Palestinian mothers and Israeli mothers, the entire world is witnessing the agonising cost of this conflict. Now, every nation and every leader in the region must work to end terror.

<div align="right">

President George W Bush, Virginia, 17 April 2002

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We want to see an independent Palestinian state successful, flourishing. We think that the better the Palestinians have it, the better neighbour we shall have.

<div align="right">

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres[3]

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On 14 May 1948, the state of Israel came into being. In the same year, the National Party took power in South Africa, a coincidence that is sometimes used to draw historical parallels between the struggle of black South Africans for equality and the experiences of Israelis and the Palestinian people. Yet it was the international outrage at the atrocities committed principally against Jews in Europe during the Second World War that provided the moral framework for the human rights movement that was critical to the prosecution and success of the liberation struggle in South Africa.

Parallels have recently found further expression in two ways. First, in terms

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[2]   Address by Aziz Pahad, South African Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the South African Zionist Conference, 10 March 2002.

[3]   Cited in *The Sunday Independent*, 9 December 2001.

of what is perceived as the similarity of the actions of the apartheid regime and those, particularly, of the government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in apparently seeking to forcibly separate Israelis and Palestinians as an attempt to solve the current violence. Hence the description of Palestinian conditions as 'Palestans, dreadfully reminiscent of the Bantustans established in the most repressive days of white rule in South Africa'.[4]

But, second, there are more positive similarities between contemporary South Africa and Israel. These speak of the rewards of political negotiation and compromise, of the need for prescient leadership and timing, and of the importance of international and regional dialogue and consensus in achieving peaceful solutions. As the former South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo reportedly noted:[5]

> Jews in South Africa should be able to practice their Zionism, religion and culture without hindrance or questions being raised about their patriotism and love for South Africa...Jews are free to love South Africa, their homeland and also to love Israel, the Jewish state, and to manifest freely their support for the well-being of the peoples of South Africa and the Jewish people of Israel...there is a close linkage existing between the state of relations between South Africa and the state of Israel.

Associated with this, he acknowledged that good relations between both states naturally provide an enhanced sense of well-being to the Jewish community in South Africa.

This understanding is underscored by the commitment made by South Africans to the establishment of the state of Israel, from the considerable part played by South African pilots in the creation of the Israel Air Force in 1948,[6] to the contemporary economic, investment and trade linkages

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[4] This phase was coined by Knesset member, Naomi Chazen. See Chazan N, 'Disengagement not separation', *The Jerusalem Post*, 14 June 2002.

[5] Pahad A, *op. cit*

[6] For details on the contribution of South Africans who have made Aliyah to Israel, see Gillon P, *Seventy Years of Southern African Aliyah*. Israel: Adar Publishing, 1992. By 1992, 66 Southern Africans had fallen on active service in Israel. These are not the only Southern Africans to have died on military duty in the territory. Some 59 South Africans, mainly of the Cape Corps, are buried in the Jerusalem Military Cemetary, part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) in the First World War. Another three are listed among those with no known grave.

between the two countries and South Africa's 80,000-strong Jewish community[7] and the 20,000-plus former South African Jews living in Israel. The importance of this contemporary parallel of conflict management and resolution is even more important in today's political, economic and security environment in Israel and the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza. From the start of the *intifada* in September 2000, to June 2002 more than 1,712 Palestinians and 579 Israelis have lost their lives. For the first time more Israelis' (75) have been killed in a month (June) than Palestinians (34). The Israeli government has responded to the wave of bombings and attacks by a mixture of economic sanctions and escalating military actions, culminating in the launch of 'Operation Defensive Shield' on 29 March 2002 and military re-occupation of selected West Bank towns in June 2002. The debate today is less about conflict resolution than management; and more about unilateral withdrawal than negotiated settlement.

Current opinion

While Israeli support for these security actions (and Prime Minister Sharon) has remained high, opinion polls indicate similar levels of support for a final Palestinian settlement and pragmatic acceptance of the likelihood of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Public opinion polls amongst Israelis and Palestinians are strongly influenced by the immediacy and intensity of the conflict, but the most recent polls are instructive.[8]

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[7] At its peak the Jewish community in South Africa numbered some 125,000.

[8] Data taken from Maariv Polls conducted in May and June 2002 by Market Watch. The authors acknowledge the assistance of Mr Trevor Cooperman of the South African Embassy in Tel Aviv in the provision of this and other data. A pattern of hardening Israeli attitudes to security actions is supported by the fact that nearly 87% of Israelis believe that Operation Defensive Shield contributed to the security of the country. A full 90% of Israelis believe the decision to embark on Operation Defensive Shield was correct. However, support for Ariel Sharon's performance is more mixed. Asked in mid-June 2002 whether Israelis were satisfied with the Prime Minister's performance in general, the overall approval rate was 51% (compared with 59% two weeks previously). Some 42% (34% previously) were dissatisfied and 7% didn't know. This decline in support may be interpreted as reflecting disappointment in the failure of Operation Defensive Shield to eradicate suicide bombings, as well as antipathy to budget cuts on social services to fund the emergency security operation and a decline in the value of the shekel.
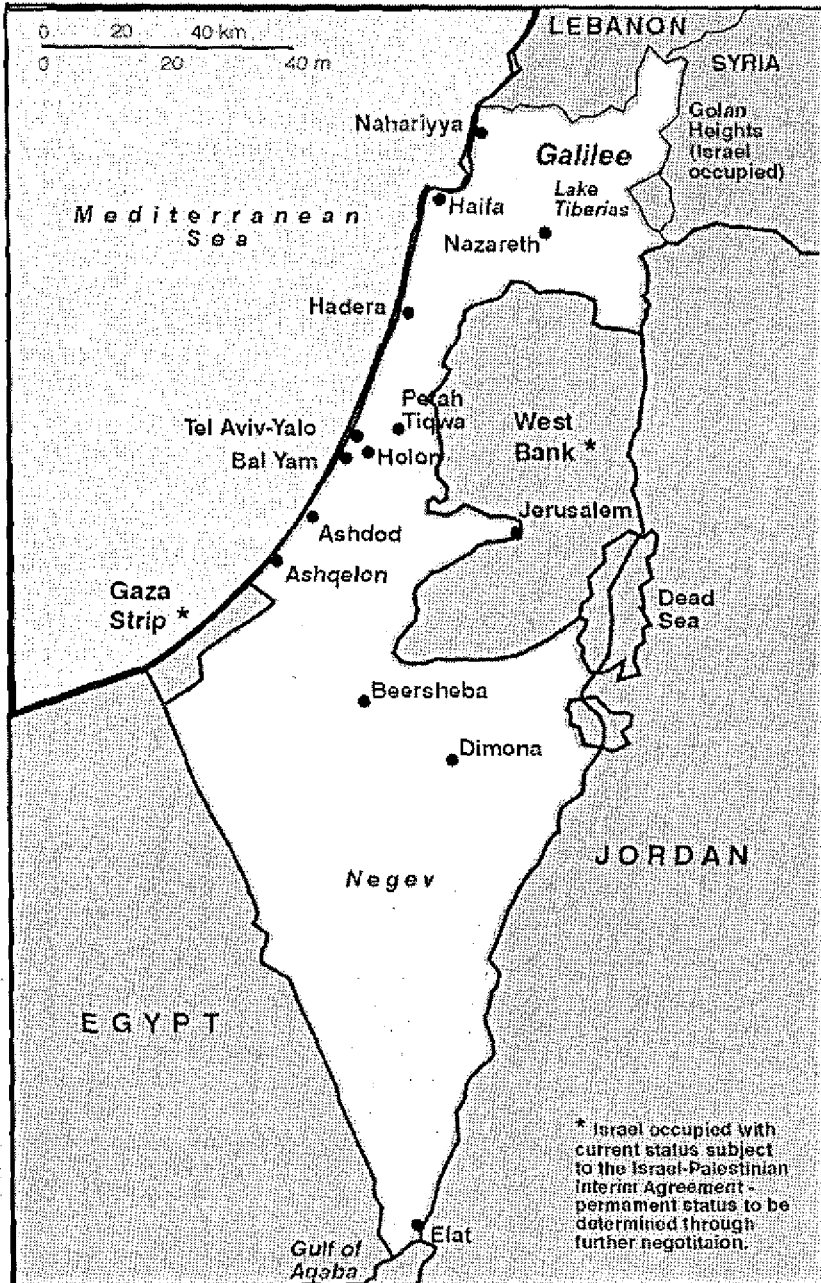
Despite the recent crises in Israeli–Palestinian relations, almost one in two Israelis (45%) remains optimistic about the situation with 52% pessimistic. A slightly declining number of Israelis now support the establishment of a Palestinian state, with 48% in favour and some 40% against. Significantly the number of Israelis polled who are unsure about the establishment of a Palestinian state doubled from 6% to 12% during May 2002. However, a full 64% of Israelis are of the opinion that a Palestinian state will be established.

One in four Israelis believes that a Palestinian state will not be established and some 11% are unsure.

Encouragingly, the overwhelming majority (73.8%) of Israelis see themselves as supportive of the peace process, with some 15% opposed. Yet 70% of Israelis do not feel that the Oslo Agreement of Principles will bring about peace for Israel. Broadly, Israelis are evenly split regarding international intervention in the conflict, with some 44% in favour and 50% opposed, with 56% believing that the Palestinians would gain more from international intervention.

Recent Palestinian opinion polls reveal a hardening of attitudes, particularly in relation to Operation Defensive Shield. The security conundrum is best captured by the fact that, whilst Israeli opinion is strongly supportive of the recent military security operations, these actions have generated an equally acute response from Palestinians. A number of significant trends are illustrated.[9]

Despite Prime Minister Sharon's claims of Arafat's 'irrelevance' and President Bush's call for Arafat's replacement, the PLO leader remains the most popular Palestinian figure and the one most claim they would vote for in any forthcoming election. Some 47.5% of Palestinians expect Yasser Arafat to be re-elected in any future election. Public opinion in this regard is likely to be put to the test in January 2003 when elections are scheduled to be held by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

More broadly, some 60% of Palestinians are pessimistic about the future

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[9]   Data taken from Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre Public Opinion Poll No. 45, 29–31 May and 1–2 June 2002.

and 40% claim to be generally optimistic. In terms of the peace process, 64% of Palestinians oppose the Oslo Agreement, with only 31% in support. Some 45% of Palestinians are in principle in agreement with peace negotiations with Israel, but a higher number, 54%, are opposed. However, an overwhelming 75% of Palestinians are pessimistic about reaching a peaceful solution with Israel. An even higher number 77%, support the continuation of the al-Aqsa *intifada*, with 50% believing that both the *intifada* and negotiations simultaneously are the best way of achieving Palestinian goals. Highlighting the long-term challenge in the region, over 50% of Palestinians believe that the end goal of the *intifada* ought to be the liberation of the traditional area of Palestine, whereas 40% believe that the goal ought to be to achieve the provisions of UN Resolution 242 and the establishment of the Palestinian state. On the most recent Saudi peace initiative, only 13% believe it to be a good initiative congruent with Palestinian goals.

Highlighting the current hardening of attitudes and most disturbingly, over 66% of Palestinians support suicide bombings against Israeli civilians.[10]

Challenges of conflict resolution

Thus the challenges for conflict resolution between Israel and the Palestinians are colossal. However, for both communities, South Africa's

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[10] In terms of 'domestic' approval ratings, criticism of the performance of the PNA is widespread. About 43% of Palestinians are critical of the PNA's performance during the recent Israeli incursions, whilst 29% are critical of Arafat's role. A further 26% have mixed feelings. Whilst the Israeli incursions slightly increased Arafat's personal support, they markedly increased the support for Fatah. The single biggest increase in support however (58.9%) was for Hamas. Palestinians are also critical of the negotiations with Israel over the detention and handing over of guerrillas and terror suspects. Some 60% felt that support for the PNA had dropped because of this. Furthermore, there is also a strong body of opinion (57.6%), that believes the time is right for internal reforms of the PNA, with 41.7% believing that there is a need for new elections. For Palestinians, Yasser Arafat remains the most trusted leader (25%), scoring three times higher rating than his nearest rival Hamas leader Ahmed Yassin at 8.8%. However, some 24% of Palestinians polled replied that they 'did not trust anyone'. Furthermore, the trust differential between Arafat's Fatah movement and Hamas is narrowing with 27% trusting Fatah and 22% trusting Hamas.

political solution, leading to its post-apartheid democracy, might illustrate how two previously diametrically opposing forces can, despite years of opprobrium, come together to build a stable and more prosperous future.

Viewed from outside, for this to occur demanded a recognition of past

Israel: Basic economic facts and figures	
Population, million	6.5
GDP ($ billion), 1999 (per capita)	100,5 ($18,440)
Economic performance (GDP per capita growth, %), 1975-99 (1990-99)	2.0 (2.3)
FDI (% GDP), 1999 (1990)	2.3 (0.3)
Unemployment (%)	9
Inflation (average annual change, %), 1990–99	10.5
Human Development Index Rank, 2001	22/162
Manufactures % of exports, 1999	93
High tech %/manufactured exports, 1999 (1990)	31 (19)
Main exports, 1995 ($m)	Diamonds: 4,921 Chemicals: 2,370 Agriculture: 740 Machinery and equipment: 960.
Trading partners, 1995 Exports

Imports | US: 30%; UK: 6%; Germany: 5.5%; Belgium: 5.4% US: 18.6%; Belgium: 12.1%; Germany: 9.7%; UK: 8.3% |
Armed forces (navy, air force, army), 1999	172,500 (6,500, 36,000, 130,000)
Military expenditure ($ billion) 1999 (% if GDP)	7 (8.1%–12.3% in 1990)
Foreign debt ($bn.), 1996	34
Aid per capita ($), 1998 (1990)	179 (294)
Overall tourist flows to Israel, 2001 (2000)	1.3 million (2.4 million)

injustices and the equal right of all parties to determine their respective futures. This could not be a zero-sum equation, but had to be one in which both sides became winners, and both had more to gain from compromise.

Successful conflict resolution is dependent too, on the role played by regional leadership in urging parties to the negotiating table and narrowing the options to do otherwise. However, today Israel finds itself in an underdeveloped and potentially violent neighbourhood in which religious extremism and exclusion, rather than democratic inclusivity and respect for differences, is widespread. Only one of its four neighbouring countries, Egypt, could claim to be a functioning democracy.

South Africa is also apparently aware of the complexity and difficulty in dealing with those states with dissimilar political systems and values within its own region. These problems have been manifest over the crisis in Zimbabwe, and are a key tenet in the approach behind the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The parallels go beyond politics. Israel's heterogeneous social make-up has highlighted both the potential costs of fractured societies and the importance of the creation of a sense of national identity. And its economic turnaround offers both lessons for development and opportunities for closer bilateral ties. Between 1965 and 1997, its economy grew at an average of 2.5% per capita per year, increasing income from $2,000 per capita in 1970 to over $16,000 today. The world (real) GDP growth average over the same period was 1.4%, and 0.1% in the Middle East and North African region.

Israel's economic success has been built on the nexus of high skills and external trading and investment links. For example, it possesses one of the most sophisticated agro-industries worldwide, one of the many areas where closer regional and African co-operation could bear fruit.

It also enjoys well-developed and highly sophisticated information technology and military-industrial sectors, the latter bear fruit. It also enjoys well-developed and highly sophisticated information technology and military-industrial sectors, the latter having a long-term association with South Africa and increasing involvement in Africa. The Israeli economy has transformed itself from 400+% inflation in the 1980s to one of the fastest growing Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

states in the 1990s on the back of an influx of skills from one million immigrants (mainly from the former Soviet Union), the rewards of the peace process, the liberalisation of tariffs, a reduction in public expenditure, the establishment of a multitude of free trade areas (FTAs),[11] and the reaping of earlier investments made in education and high-tech. Israeli research and development expenditure (R&D) is among the highest in the world, at 3.5% of GDP in 1999, compared to that of 2.5% in the US and 1.5% in the UK. The economy averaged more than 6% growth in the period between 1990–96, with inflation falling from 10.6% in 1996 to zero in 1999, and foreign direct investment (FDI) increasing from around $400 million in 1994 to a peak of $3 billion in 2001. While the Israeli economy has suffered both from the global high-tech downturn and the impact of the *intifada* since 2000, both the transitional lessons and intrinsic capacity still exists.

> With this backdrop in mind, this report is divided into four sections:
> - First, the Israeli, Palestinian and South African positions on the current conflict.
> - Second, the lessons from South Africa's own transition experience.
> - Third, the applicability of this experience to the Israeli-Palestinian situation.
> - Fourth, in conclusion, the report speculates on the nature of post-crisis bilateral and regional relations.

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[11] Including with the European Union, the NAFTA states of US, Canada and Mexico, the Asian Free Trade Area (AFTA), Turkey, and EU candidate states including Rumania, Poland, Bulgaria, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. Around 70% of exports are with FTA countries; and 80% of imports.

Section One: The Politics of Insecurity

Background

The war with the neighbouring Arab states of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia that followed the creation of the state of Israel in May 1948, lies at the heart of contemporary political difficulties. The unwillingness of the Arab states to accept the UN partition plan and the resort to force was predicated on an all-or-nothing approach to Israel. This simultaneously polarised and militarised the nature of regional relations, and, critically, has served to continuously undermine Palestinian and Arab legal arguments about the borders of both Israel and Palestine. Had attempts been made in 1948 for peaceful co-existence, rather than the eradication of Israel, how history and the region might now be different.

The outcome of the 1948 war—the creation of a Jewish state—was the moment of greatest historical achievement for the Jewish people. Correspondingly, it was a great disaster for the Palestinians—what is termed *al-Naqba*, the catastrophe. But it also served to shape the identity of the Palestinians and give focus and purpose to their future struggle. Indeed, the exodus following the war of 1948 may be regarded as one of the key markers of Palestinian national identity.

20th and 21st century timeline	
2 November 1917	Balfour Declaration. 'His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for Jewish people...it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non–Jewish communities in Palestine...'.
December 1917	UK military forces take over Jerusalem.
1920	San Remo conference grants UK 'mandate' for Palestine.
1919–23	Third Jewish *Aliyah* ('going up') to Palestine: 35,000 Jews arrive in Palestine, increasing the population to 120,000. Arab population around 500,000.
1924–28	Fourth *Aliyah*—60,000 new Jewish immigrants

20th and 21st century timeline (continued)	
1929–39	Fifth *Aliyah*—165,000 Jewish arrivals, mostly fleeing Nazism
1937	Peel Commission partition plan—proposing Arab state, Jewish state (just 20% of territory) and British mandated sphere. Rejected by Arabs and overtaken by events in Europe
17 May 1939	British White Paper: Outlines independent Arab Palestine within which a Jewish 'National Home' would be created. Limits places on Jewish immigration
1939–47	Arrival of greater numbers of Jewish refugees; increase in Zionist underground military activity against British forces
1947	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) recommends end of British mandate, and partition into independent Jewish and Palestinian states.
29 November 1947	UN General Assembly votes 33:13 in favour of UNSCOP partition plan.
14 May 1948	British Mandate ends; David Ben-Gurion proclaims State of Israel, prompting invasion by the armies of Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq with the aim of 'driving the Jews into the sea'.
1948–49	War in two phases: May-June 1948; July 1948-January 1949 when a truce was signed. 500,000+ Palestinian refugees created from the State of Israel
1949–56	Consolidation of State of Israel; massive Jewish (600,000+) immigration
October 1956	Suez Crisis. Despite UK and French political defeat, Israel gained control of Sinai peninsula and Gaza Strip.
5–10 June 1967	Six-Day War. Israel controls all of Sinai, the Gaza Strip, the entire West Bank (including Jerusalem) and the Golan Heights. The resultant UN resolution (242) has been open to interpretation, but remains the basis for subsequent negotiations.
1969	PLO re-launched under Yasser Arafat. Increase in armed struggle against Israel.

20th and 21st century timeline (continued)	
6 October 1973	Yom Kippur War. UN ceasefire accepted on 22 October.
1978	Camp David Accords negotiated between Israel (Begin) and Egypt (Sadat). Signed on 26 March 1979; under which Egypt recognised Israel's 'right to exist' and Israel undertook a phased withdrawal from Sinai to current *de facto* borders. UNSC Resolution 338 called for talks based on UNSC Resolution 242.
June 1982	Operation 'Galilee': Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Increase in Israeli domestic resistance to the war. International perceptions of Israeli actions worsened after massacres at the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps.
December 1987	First Palestinian *intifada* (uprising or 'shaking off')
November 1988	Algiers Declaration of PLO. Envisaged bi-national state and negotiations on basis of UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338. Arafat renounces terrorism and recognises the right of existence of the state of Israel.
Nov 1991–July 1993	Madrid talks open
30 August 1993	Oslo I Agreement signed
February 1994	Massacre of Hebron worshippers
28 September 1995	Oslo II signed
November 1995	Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin assassinated
29 May 1996	Benjamin Netanyahu elected prime minister.
23 October 1998	White House brokered Wye River Accord signed; Israel yielded more West Bank territory in exchange for security guarantees.
17 May 1999	Ehud Barak takes over as prime minister
24 May 2000	Israel pulls troops out of Lebanon.
11–25 July 2000	Camp David talks—end in failure.
September 2000	Second *intifada* commences
23 December 2000	Clinton proposals issued
February 2001	Prime Minister Ariel Sharon elected.

The purpose of this *SAIIA Report* is not to lament the fate of history, but rather to seek ways forward and to aid dialogue and better relations. Neither is the purpose to provide a detailed overview of the military and political actions that have led to the current impasse, but rather to view future possibilities. It will suffice to say that since the 1967 war, the diplomatic focus has shifted from the right of existence of the state of Israel to the right of existence of the state of Palestine. The path to the latter is the focus of contemporary peace efforts.

Core contemporary peace attempts

The events surrounding the second *intifada* have made it difficult for both sides to conceive of the time when meaningful negotiations can re-start, or indeed the basis for those negotiations. Trust between both sides is in critically short supply. Even some informed and reflective opinion on both sides argues that the principles agreed to in the Oslo and Camp David accords are dead and require a completely fresh start.[12] This viewpoint has grown as security imperatives have hardened and as the peace movement in Israel has been steadily eroded by the brutality of the conflict and rapidly polarising opinion. However, despite the intensification of the current conflagration, there has over the past fourteen years, been a progressive convergence of opinion on the basis of a final settlement between Israel and Palestine. Yasser Arafat's recent (June 2002) declaration of support for the Clinton proposals which, in turn, are similar to the 2002 Saudi peace proposals, would suggest that the future negotiations and peace proposals are likely to build on the framework thrashed out in the Camp David and Taba meetings, rather than there being a wholesale re-drafting of principles. (Although, of course, this does raise the point of why he has waited over 18 months to accept Clinton's proposal.) Additionally, amongst moderates on both sides of the conflict, there is a pragmatic belief in the workability of a mutually agreed solution. Significantly, those who have been party to previous negotiations and have seen them fail hold this view most fully.

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[12] A recent motion before the Knesset sought to establish a committee of inquiry to investigate the potential criminality of those responsible for the Oslo Accords, but was rejected.

Oslo Accords

The advent of the first *intifada* in 1987 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip led, in turn, to the acceptance, in 1988, by the Palestinian National Council of a UN partition, Israel's right to exist and a renunciation of terrorism. This sparked a new dialogue on the peace process and paved the way for a major all-party summit in the form of the 1991 Madrid conference, organised by the United States and the (then) Soviet Union, including Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestinian representatives. This three-day meeting resulted in a series of bilateral talks. Key to its facilitation was US Secretary of State James Baker's 'shuttle diplomacy'.

From 1992, the sides commenced a series of discussions focusing on Israeli relations with its neighbours and the Palestinians. Although the Madrid framework had been embarked on by Likud, the process gained momentum after the election of a Labour government in Israel in June 1992, which had campaigned on a 'peace ticket'. The eleventh round of such talks commenced in secret in Oslo, Norway. in January 1993, going public in August 1993. The full series of agreements (the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements or DOP) became known as the Oslo Accord, signed in Washington on 13 September 1993, following the famous handshake between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat on the lawn of the White House. This agreement contained the key elements of:[13]

- Immediate self-rule in Jericho and Gaza.
- Recognition of the PLO and the state of Israel by the two parties.
- 'Early empowerment' for Palestinians in the rest of the West Bank.
- An interim agreement on the West Bank and Gaza.

Reaction to the deal was mixed. Many Palestinians rejected it on the grounds that they were excluded from the peace process. Israeli opposition to the agreement surfaced *inter alia* in the massacre of Muslim worshippers by a right-wing extremist in a Hebron mosque in February 1994. Oslo I was followed by Oslo II, signed in Washington on 28 September 1995.

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[13] For the full principles on the Accord, see *http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa go.asp?MFAH00q00*.

Central to this agreement was the phased withdrawal of Israeli troops, elections of a Palestinian Legislative Council, economic co-operation, and the prevention of terrorism. Key issues around refugees, settlers, water, borders and the future status of Jerusalem were deferred to so-called final status talks.

The peace process was halted by a series of events, including, first, the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin by a right-wing extremist in November 1995. Second, the continuation of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza which was related to the apparent lack of commitment by Rabin's elected successor Benjamin Netanyahu to the peace process. Finally, but arguably most important, there was an erosion of trust between the two sides, partly through the death of Rabin, and partly due to the apparent inability or unwillingness of Arafat to reign in radicals.

The Barak era

In May 1999 after the freezing of the peace process and three years of bitter internal political division in Israel under the Likud Party, Ehud Barak was elected as prime minister in place of Benjamin Netanyahu.

As Israel's most decorated soldier and former Chief of Staff, Barak came to office with impeccable military credentials. After joining the Labour Party in 1995, the former military general had later styled himself as a protégé of assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and had campaigned under a 'One Israel'[14] mantra of peace and negotiations. Drawing large support from Tel Aviv, secular Israelis, reform Jews and Russian immigrants, Barak defeated Netanyahu convincingly by 56% to 43.9%. Upon his election Barak claimed, 'The people want to see change, unity and hope'. Barak placed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the centre of his campaign and made no secret of his belief in revitalising the negotiating process, the probability of territorial compromise and the negotiating process, the probability of territorial compromise and the possibility of the establishment of a Palestinian state. Barak had also promised to successfully disengage Israeli troops from Southern Lebanon within a year of taking office and to negotiate with Syria.

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[14] Barak had apologised to Sephardic Jews for the perceived discrimination against them and for Ashkenazi elitism within the Labour Party.

Within six months of taking office the Barak administration entered into discussions with the Palestinians on the 'final status' of the Israeli-held territories. The November 1999 Ramallah discussions took place within the framework of the Oslo Agreements and the Wye River Accord. The Ramallah talks acknowledged the progress made by both parties commencing with the 1991 Madrid Conference framework and served to enhance a climate of confidence building. But whilst the language and approach used at the Ramallah talks was conciliatory and constructive, it was not until President Clinton's invitation to a Peace Summit at Camp David in July 2000 that the peace process gained its greatest momentum.

Camp David

Prior to his departure at President Clinton's invitation to Camp David, Prime Minister Barak outlined his government's 'red lines' or points 'not for negotiation', namely:[15]

- No return to the 1967 lines;
- A united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty;
- No foreign army west of the Jordan River;
- A majority of the Jewish residents of the West Bank and Gaza will remain in settlement blocs; and
- No Israeli recognition of legal or moral responsibility for creating the refugee problem.

At Camp David, Barak however made the following concessions:[16]

- He surrendered the Jordan Valley that buffers Israel from its Arab neighbours.
- He gave Arafat control over much of the Old City, contrary to his promise never to re-divide Jerusalem.
- He conceded the principle that Israel should receive and resettle Palestinians who left their homes as refugees, although this was not clearly defined.

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[15] *http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0hli0*.

[16] See Krauthammer C on *http://www.netanyahu.org/barakslastchip.html*.

18

There are essentially four views as to why the talks failed to produce a peace agreement. One, Barak had gone far beyond his popular mandate. Such far-ranging concessions would most certainly have been rejected had they been put to the Israeli electorate. Barak's advisers had gambled that by moving quickly to a final and highly concessionary all-or-nothing position, this was more likely to be accepted by the Palestinians and that consequentially, a final peace deal could have been 'sold' to the Israeli electorate. However, the level of domestic antipathy to Barak's concessions is in part measured by the fact that Likud hardliner Ariel Sharon swept to power in the election of February 2001. The former general campaigned strongly against Barak's peace negotiations and won in a landslide, thereby terminating the peace process.

Two, Arafat could not apparently accept a deal which, while favourable to those in the West Bank and Gaza, largely excluded the interests (the right of return) of the Palestinian diaspora and ignored the sentiments of Arafat's Arab sponsors on this issue. In doing so, it would not end violence and, if he accepted the deal, would have undermined Arafat's (already limited) authority. It is also clear that Arafat was neither politically nor tactically ready for Camp David and had not prepared his own constituency for such a far-reaching and final peace position and potentially a politically unpopular decision. Neither was the Palestinian Administration prepared, nor had the capacity, to take on the consequent interim arrangements. Arafat had all along claimed that he required more time for preparation, but such extended time frames did not coincide with the personal and domestic political imperatives of the Clinton administration.

Three, the Palestinian side reportedly[17] maintain that Israel's Camp David proposals denied the Palestinian state viability and functional independence. The Camp David proposal also denied Palestinians control over their own border, airspace and water resources, whilst at the same time legitimising and expanding illegal Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory.

They maintain that Israel's Camp David proposal presented a 're-packaging' of and not an end to military occupation, with Barak's proposal

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[17] See *http://www.mediamonitors.net/pmt1.html.*

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dividing Palestine into four separate cantons surrounded by Israel: the Northern West Bank, the Central West Bank, the Southern West Bank and Gaza. Under such a balkanised state, going from any one area to another, the Palestinians maintain, would have required crossing Israeli sovereign territory and subjected movement of Palestinians within their own country to Israeli control.

Fourth, questions have been raised about the American management of the process of the Camp David negotiations. In contrast to the personal (ised) role played by President Carter in the Begin-Sadat Camp David negotiations, it is contended that President Clinton failed to bring together Arafat and Barak in a manner that would have fostered personal chemistry and engagement. Others have argued that the impersonal and blunt style of Barak was also an impediment to inter-personal engagement. Clinton was reportedly too involved in the detail and minutiae of the arrangements and relative negotiating positions, for him to act as senior partner, peace broker and elder statesman.

Despite the failure of Camp David, secret second-track negotiations immediately commenced thereafter, resulting in some 40 meetings in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Egypt and the United States between representatives of both sides. The outcome of these discussions was a meeting between Barak and Arafat on 25 September 2000 at which teams of negotiators were tasked with drafting a comprehensive peace agreement. Three days later, however, on 28 September 2001 Likud Member of Knesset Ariel Sharon walked to the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif accompanied by some 1,000 Israeli police officers. Sharon ostensibly embarked on his visit to the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif to assert the right of Jews to worship wherever they chose in Jerusalem.

However, Sharon's proposed visit had been well publicised, leading to requests from the Barak administration not to proceed. Whilst Sharon's provocative act achieved its goal of embarrassing the Barak government and galvanising internal support for Likud and religious hardliners, it also had the effect of providing the perfect pretext for the second Palestinian uprising, to become known as the al-Aqsa *intifada*.

The Mitchell Report into the causes of the *intifada* could find no evidence

that the Palestinian violence had been pre-planned, but it is widely held by Israeli military and intelligence reports that violence had already been planned by Palestinians and Arafat's Fatah movement prior to Sharon's visit. The intensity and sequencing of the violence strongly suggests some pre-planned violence. Indeed, senior Israeli negotiators expected violence to accompany the post Camp David negotiations as a means of forcing further concessions from the Israelis, but not on the scale witnessed from September 2000.

Despite the violence, talks continued into December 2000, notably in the Egyptian town of Taba. The significance of the Taba talks was that they began to tackle the thorny question of the right of return in detail. Numbers of returnees, new incentives and compensation were discussed, as well as time frames. This added to the already agreed to question of the establishment of a Palestinian state, land swaps and some symbolic re-unification. It was the declared position of both sides that the Taba talks took Israel and Palestine closer than they had ever been to a final settlement. The ongoing *intifada* and the related election of Ariel Sharon in February 2001 however brought the curtain down on the most far-reaching period of peace talks.

The Clinton peace proposal

The Clinton peace proposal of January 2001 went further than any other before it and sought to boldly tackle the divisive sticking point of the sovereignty of Jerusalem, a major stumbling block at Camp David. Under the proposals the old city of Jerusalem would be divided as follows:

The Muslim, Christian and Armenian quarters would be ceded to a Palestinian state, with the Jewish quarter going to Israel. An Israeli corridor would be established through the Armenian quarter from the Jaffa Gate, which would allow access from the west of Jerusalem to the Jewish quarter. The Haram al-Sharif area or Temple Mount, which includes the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, would go to a Palestinian state.

Everything below the lip of the Haram al-Sharif that is within the Jewish quarter, including the Western Wall, would be under Israeli sovereignty.

Under the plan the right of return of Palestinian refugees is to be foregone in return for the Israeli concessions on Jerusalem. This is the most contentious of the proposals from the Palestinian perspective and indeed the radical opponents of Arafat and Fatah. Palestinians insist that the *right* of return cannot be given up, even if it is not exercised. The continued insistence on this right presents a real long-term demographic threat to a Jewish Israel however. The plan permits up to 100,000 refugees to return to the Jewish state, but the remainder are to be settled in other Middle Eastern countries and Palestine with the support of an international compensation fund.

The Clinton plan holds that Israel should cede 95% of the West Bank and all of the Gaza Strip. A land swap compromise is also proposed that would see some West Bank settlement land retained by Israel in return for more land in the Negev desert.

There are problems with both the formulation and implementation of this proposal however, particularly regarding Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, but also the balkanisation of the Palestinian land were Jewish settlements to remain in place. The Palestinian claim is that should any Jewish settlements remain in place east of Jerusalem that this would effectively cut off Palestinian East Jerusalem. Israel plans to retain at least the Ariel block near Nablus in the north, the Maaleh Gush Adumim corridor between Jerusalem and Jericho in the centre and Etzion, near Bethlehem, in the south.

The US proposal allows for an international force to supervise the implementation of the final agreement, during which time Israel would have three years to withdraw, but would still be permitted to retain a limited force in the Jordan Valley for another three years, and three early warning stations for 10 years.

The Saudi plan

The Saudi Arabian plan of 2002, spearheaded by its foreign minister, Crown Prince Abdullah, essentially proposes a return to the 1967 borders in accordance with Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and reaffirmed

by the Madrid Conference of 1991 and the land-for-peace principle. It calls for Israel's acceptance of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, in return for the establishment of normal relations in the context of a comprehensive peace with Israel.

Positively, the Saudi initiative, espoused as the Beirut Declaration, notes that a military solution to the conflict will not achieve peace, nor provide security for the parties. Upon adherence with Resolutions 242 and 338, as well as the brokering of a 'just solution' to the Palestinian refugee problem in keeping with UN Resolution 194 and the establishment of East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state, the Arab countries undertook to:

- Consider the Arab-Israeli conflict ended, and enter into a peace agreement with Israel, and provide security for all the states of the region.
- Establish normal relations with Israel in the context of this comprehensive peace.

The Declaration called upon the government of Israel and all Israelis to accept the initiative in order to safeguard the prospects for peace and stop the further shedding of blood, enabling the Arab countries and Israel to live in peace and good neighbourliness and provide future generations with security, stability and prosperity.

To this end, the Arab League Summit mandated the establishment of a special committee composed of some of its concerned member states and the secretary general of the League of Arab States to pursue the necessary contacts to gain support for the initiative at all levels, particularly from the United Nations, the Security Council, the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the Muslim states and the European Union.

The Bush proposals

On 25 June 2002 President Bush announced his much-awaited Middle East peace proposals. Whilst the 'end game' of Bush's proposal is unoriginal and deliberately vague, the means for achieving a solution are not. Central to the Bush vision is the removal of Yasser Arafat from a leadership role. For Bush, Arafat has been 'compromised by terror'. Furthermore Bush

UN Security Council 242 of 22 November 1967

The Security Council,
Expressing its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East.
Emphasising 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.
Emphasising 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:
    (1) Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;
    (2) 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 recognised boundaries free from threats or acts of force;
2. *Affirms further* the necessity
    (1) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;
    (2) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;
    (3) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every state in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarised 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

called for the establishment of a fully functioning, practising democracy amongst Palestinians.

In summary, Palestinians are called upon to elect 'new and different Palestinian leadership' and adopt a new constitution with a fully empowered parliament, local-level governments and independent judiciary. The United States in turn commits to assist in the organising of multiparty local elections followed by national elections.

Palestinians are also called on to implement financial reforms, including independent auditing to ensure 'honest enterprise'. The United States offers increased humanitarian aid in return. Additionally, an externally supervised overhaul of security and police forces that can dismantle terrorist groups is called for.

Upon meeting these criteria the Palestinians are assured of American support for a provisional state of Palestine whose final borders, capital and other aspects of sovereignty would be negotiated between Israel and Palestine within three years.

The Bush plan calls for Israel to withdraw its forces to positions it held on the West Bank until September 2000 and to cease Jewish settlements on the West Bank and in Gaza. Ultimately, Israel should agree to pull back to the pre-1967 Six Day War borders. This means a settlement negotiated between the parties, based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338, with Israeli withdrawal to secure and recognised borders. Additionally Israel is called upon to restore freedom of movement in the Palestinian areas and release frozen Palestinian revenues 'into honest, accountable hands.' The thorny questions surrounding the status of Jerusalem and the right of return for Palestinian refugees are to be left to negotiation.

Acknowledging the critical regional dimension to the peace process, President Bush called for closer Arab diplomatic and commercial ties with Israel, leading to 'full normalisation of relations between Israel and the entire Arab world'. Vitally, however, Bush called for the cessation of the flow of money, supplies and recruits to terror groups such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah and the blocking of shipments of Iranian weapon supplies to these groups. Syria is called on to close terrorist camps

and expel terrorist organisations.

Both Israel and the Palestinians immediately claimed Bush's plan was supportive of their respective positions and indeed there is much that can be supported by both sides. However, the call for the effective removal of Arafat from Palestinian leadership has the potential to backfire on the US administration and to paradoxically enhance the aging leaders' support locally and regionally.[18]

The contemporary Israeli position

The government of Israel contends that the catalyst for the current violence was the breakdown of the Camp David negotiations on 25 July 2000. It believes that the Palestinian *intifada* was planned by the Palestinian Authority leadership as a means of regaining the diplomatic initiative.[19] In November 2000, under severe pressure from the opposition within the Knesset, Ehud Barak called for fresh elections and resigned as Prime Minister in December 2000. Barak was trounced by Ariel Sharon together with the *intifada*, effectively bringing a halt to the peace process in the short term.

Prime Minister Sharon was elected on an anti-Oslo platform and the Arab world greeted his election with outrage. Since Sharon's election both the Israeli and Palestinian positions have hardened to the point that Sharon's major domestic political challengers come from the right of the Israeli political spectrum and in particular Benjamin Netanyahu. The Likud Party had consistently emphatically rejected the establishment of a Palestinian state, ironically despite Sharon's protestation that this would hinder his negotiating mandate. In June 2002 the Sharon administration ordered a military call-up and promised to deliver the Palestinian Authority a 'crushing blow'. This entailed the re-occupation of towns in the West Bank

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[18] Answering a question in the South African parliament on 25 June 2002 relating to the Bush proposals, Deputy President Jacob Zuma was critical of the 'removal of Arafat' element of the plan.

[19] For an explanation of these two positions, see the Sharm El-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee Final Report (*The Mitchell Report*), 30 April 2001 on *http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/nea/mitchell.htm*.

and Gaza as well as the arrest of PNA officials and policemen. Once again the Ramallah headquarters of Yasser Arafat were surrounded and the IDF appeared to be digging in for a protracted operation in the occupied territories. It is clear that the Sharon government will not enter into discussions with the Palestinians whilst the terror campaign is in progress. The government's position is equally clear that if the PNA cannot, or will not, halt the terror campaign then Israel will act unilaterally to do so. Thus from the Israeli perspective, until the current terror campaign is halted, a political solution is not part of the agenda. It is also unclear how the Sharon government can proceed with negotiations at any future date given the total absence of trust between Sharon and Arafat. The seizing of Iranian arms shipments destined for the Palestinians, together with the documentary evidence captured by the IDF implicating Arafat in the direction and funding of terror activities, has perhaps finally eroded any hope from the Israeli government perspective that the Palestinian leader could be a 'partner for peace'. The question now beckons, with whom would you negotiate?

The contemporary Palestinian position

Palestinians see the cause of the current violence in the visit by Member of the Knesset (now Prime Minister) Ariel Sharon to the Haram al-Sharif/ Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Despite the urgings of Washington and the Palestinian government to Prime Minister Barak to prevent the visit, Sharon went to the Temple on 28 September 2000 accompanied by over 1,000 Israeli police officers. Viewed as highly provocative by Palestinians, the following day, a large number of unarmed Palestinian demonstrators and a large Israeli police contingent confronted each other. Police used rubber-coated metal bullets and live ammunition to disperse the demonstrators, killing four and injuring about 200 people. Several demonstrations took place over the following several days, starting what has become known as the al-Aqsa *intifada*.

The Palestinian position on the current violence is thus, put simply, an unequivocal Israeli commitment to full withdrawal and peaceful relations with an independent and viable Palestinian state, going back to the 1967 border including all of the West Bank, all of East Jerusalem, and the Gaza

Strip—essentially UN Security Council Resolution 242.

But is this what they really want now that positions have hardened on both sides? Is not the very existence of the state of Israel under discussion? Is Israel prepared to contemplate land for peace, ending the settlements, and abandoning the Zionist ideal of a greater Israel? What does this mean for the Palestinian cause, and Palestinians' relationship with (and within) Arab states? And what is the South African position on the current crisis? These issues are examined below.

Restoring the balance?
South African foreign policy initiatives and standpoints

The South African Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has stated simply the shift in government policy towards Israel and the region that has taken place since the end of apartheid:[20]

> Before 1994, South Africa's relations with the Middle East were characterised by a lack of region-wide representation with a concentration only on links with Israel. After the advent of the new government in 1994, this has changed significantly to the point where today South Africa is accepted as a meaningful political interlocutor in the region.
>
> South Africa supports and encourages a just and equitable solution to the Middle East peace process that involves Palestine and Israel as well as Israel's two northern neighbours, Syria and Lebanon. Based on its own experiences, South Africa continues to maintain that violence can never provide solutions to intractable conflicts. In as much as this applies to Palestine and Israel, it is also applied to the situation in Iraq.

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[20] South Africa has diplomatic missions in Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iran and Kuwait. It has non-residential accreditation to Bahrain, Yemen, Qatar, Syria and Oman. With the exception of Bahrain, all the countries in this region are now diplomatically represented in South Africa. The South African Consulate-General in Jeddah, in addition to performing important functions related to the promotion of trade, also serves the South African Muslim community on their annual pilgrimage to Mecca. See *http://www.gov.za/yearbook/ 2001/foreign.html#AsiaMiddle*.

Officially, the South African government position is to call on Israel to implement and observe UN Security Council Resolutions 1402 and 1403. As Deputy Minister Pahad noted early in 2002:[21]

[T]he South African government believes that the conflict in the Middle East constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security. The government of South Africa unequivocally condemns the continuing attempts by the state of Israel to destroy the infrastructure of the Palestinian National Authority, its legitimately elected leadership and the loss of many innocent lives. Similarly, we strongly condemn the actions of the Palestinian suicide bombers against civilians. Like the rest of the world, it is impossible to insulate ourselves from the deepening crisis.

The death and destruction of both Palestinians and Israelis must stop. Violence only begets more violence. Both groups have the right to live in conditions of safety and security. Fundamental to the resolution of the conflict is the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. The incontrovertible reality is that the conflict will not end until this objective is achieved. No amount of violence directed at the Palestinians will stop their struggle for the establishment of their own independent homeland. We unequivocally support this objective of the Palestinians and will continue to support international solidarity and endeavours in this regard. South Africa will also make particular efforts to create and exploit opportunities to strengthen pro-peace lobbies, even beyond Israel and Palestine, in follow-up to the successful Spier Presidential Peace Retreat Initiative.

Simultaneously, we unreservedly recognise the right of the Israelis to live in their own state within secure borders. South Africa welcomes the proposal made by Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia that Israel

should withdraw to the 1967 borders in exchange for recognition by the entire Arab world, as well as the decision taken by the Arab League in this regard. This proposal creates the possibility for an historic process that could end the tensions and conflict in the Middle East. Everything humanly possible must be done to restart the political process to find a negotiated settlement of the fundamental causes of this conflict. The argument that there will be no substantive negotiations until peace is

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[21] Foreign Minister's Annual Address to SAIIA, 18 April 2002.

achieved is unsustainable. Peace negotiations are necessary to end the conflict and violence!

On paper and in terms of the frequency and levels of rhetoric directed against Israel, it would appear that the South African government is pitted against Israel. As Deputy Minister Pahad put it in his budget speech of 28 May 2002:

> The government of South Africa unequivocally condemns the collective punishment imposed against the Palestinians and continuing attempts by the state of Israel to destroy the infrastructure of the Palestinian National Authority, its legitimately elected leadership the extra-judicial killings and the loss of many innocent lives. ... [A]''Seek and destroy' policy [is] doomed to failure. The leaders of Israel must appreciate the basic truth that fundamental to the ending of terrorism and conflict is the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. No amount of violence against the Palestinians will stop their struggle for the establishment of their own independent homeland.

Or as Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma argued in her budget contribution of the same day:

> The situation in the Middle East demands the world's urgent attention. Whilst accepting and recognising the state of Israel, the world must address the right of Palestinians to live in their own sovereign state. The world must make them understand that they have a common destiny and that Israel's security is linked to the security of the Palestinians. We need to build and encourage a peace movement that will eventually put a stop to the flowing of the blood of the innocent.

But as she put it more stridently after meeting Yasser Arafat in June 2002 when an official South African statement after her meeting expressed 'outrage' over what was described as the 'intensification of the illegal Israeli occupation, killing, vast destruction, the economic strangulation, and other atrocities committed against Palestine and its people'. Pretoria said that the statement was 'forward looking' and aimed at encouraging peace.[22]

The foreign minister's sentiment appeared, however, to run counter to

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[22] 'Diplomatic focus is on Israel', *Business Day*, 3 June 2002.

UN Security Council Resolution 1402 (2002)
Adopted by the Security Council at its 4503rd meeting,
on 30 March 2002

The Security Council, Reaffirming its resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, and the Madrid principles, Expressing its grave concern at the further deterioration of the situation, including the recent suicide bombings in Israel and the military attack against the headquarters of the President of the Palestinian Authority,

1. Calls upon both parties to move immediately to a meaningful cease-fire; calls for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah; and calls upon the parties to co-operate fully with Special Envoy Zinni, and others, to implement the Tenet security work plan as a first step towards implementation of the Mitchell Committee recommendations, with the aim of resuming negotiations on a political settlement;
2. Reiterates its demand in resolution 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002 for an immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction;
3. Expresses support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and the special envoys to the Middle East to assist the parties to halt the violence and to resume the peace process;
4. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

an earlier statement made by her deputy when he noted: 'South Africa has been as unequivocal in its condemnation of the military policies of the government of Israel, as it has been of Palestinian terrorist attacks against the citizens of Israel'.[23]

The government response to current events both reflects and is shaped by an ongoing and, at times, vitriolic, debate on the issue within the South African media. While the Muslim Judicial Council has expressed its support for the radical Islamic groups of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah,[24]

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[23] Zionist Conference, 2002, *op. cit.*
[24] See 'Jews deplore SA Muslims' backing for Hamas, Jihad', *The Star*, 15 March 2002.

South African Jewish groups, including the Jewish Board of Deputies, have engaged in public debate increasingly hardening their support for Israel and condemnation of suicide bombings. But there has been considerable division within South African Jewry, most notably over the 'declaration of conscience' launched in December 2001 and written by the South African Minister of Forestry and Water Affairs, Ronnie Kasrils, and Max Ozinsky, Western Cape Member of the Provincial Legislature (MPL). Launched with more than 220 signatures including those of Nadine Gordimer and the Rivonia trialists Arthur Goldreich and Denis Goldberg, the document asserts that 'the fundamental causes of the current conflict are Israel's suppression of the Palestinian struggle for national self-determination and its continued occupation of Palestinian lands'.[25] Calling on the Israeli government 'to redress justice, uphold human rights and satisfy legitimate claims, without which peace and negotiations will fail', it 'recognises that such negotiations require that the western powers, the Arab states and the non-aligned states, through the aegis of the United Nations, guarantees the mutual security of the state of Israel and the state of Palestine'. Noting that 'repression intensifies resistance' and that 'the security of Israelis and Palestinians is inseparable', the declaration argued that there is 'consequently no alternative to a negotiated settlement that is just, that recognises both Palestine and Israel as fully independent states and that provides for peaceful co-existence and co-operation between these states'. It calls on the resumption of negotiations 'in good faith' and within the framework of UN resolutions, and for Israel to conduct its security operations 'with restraint and in accordance with humanitarian law' and 'to work in partnership with the Palestinian leadership and the international community to build a lasting peace on the basis of reconciliation'.[26]

There is no doubt that the South African government sees itself playing an important role in mediating the crisis, partly, as a recent ANC document put it, because the ruling party sees the Israeli government as 'racist',[27] partly because of South Africa's desire to play a role as a good global citizen,

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[25] In response, more than 10,000 South African Jews reportedly signed a petition fully supportive of Israel.
[26] 'Kasrils's declaration of conscience on the Mideast conflict', *Sunday Independent*, 9 December 2001.
[27] 'ANC sees Israel as racist—Zuma', *Citizen*, 27 September 2001.

and partly to attempt to export and replicate the South African conflict resolution and political transition experience. Hence the attempt to develop common ground through the Spier Presidential Initiative held near Cape Town in January 2002. To quote Deputy Minister Pahad again:[28]

> The government of South Africa cares deeply about the need for peace and security for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. That is why the South African government has devoted considerable time, effort and resources to try and keep the hope for peace alive for Israelis and Palestinians in this terrible time of crisis.
>
> It was precisely the commitment to this principle of keeping the hope for peace alive between Israelis and Palestinians which prompted President Mbeki to invite Israeli and Palestinian leaders, who have shown an unswerving commitment to an unconditional dialogue about peace between both peoples to South Africa to attend the Spier Peace Retreat...

He went on:

> The South African government does not share the view of Israel's Prime Minister, Mr Ariel Sharon, that 'only after (the Palestinians) are beaten will we be able to hold talks.'
>
> The South African government has never believed that an army can defeat by military might, the striving of a people for freedom. This is the fundamental point of difference in approach between the government of South Africa and the government of Israel on the extent to which the use of armed force can be deployed to try and restore peace and security against the wishes of dogged people committed to their own liberation.
>
> Equally, the South African government does not believe that the Palestinian people will achieve their dream of liberation and the dignity of statehood, through brutal and horrendous acts of terrorism committed against the citizens of Israel in their streets, suburbs and cities.

The South African government supports the unequivocal recognition of a Palestinian state as a prerequisite for achieving conditions of security for

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[28] Zionist Conference, 2002, *op. cit.*

Israel. At the same time, South Africa applied a strong measure of critical engagement with Israel to express its objections to those of Israel's policies seen as fundamentally inimical to the peace process such as continued settlements. It does not support the Israeli position that the current *intifada* was planned, but was rather a spontaneous uprising to repression by the Israelis. But it also recognises that engagement with both sides is a prerequisite to assist in the peace process.

In the capacity of Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) the South African Foreign Minister Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma led a delegation in June 2002 to express solidarity with Palestinian leader Arafat, which whilst carrying out the mandate of the NAM, was also seen as further proof of South Africa's *de facto* bias towards the Palestinians. Additionally Archbishop Desmond Tutu's recent call for economic measures to be considered against Israel adds grist to the mill of those arguing that South African public opinion is not only pro-Palestinian, but also increasingly anti-Israel. This perception was fuelled by the debate in and around the 2001 World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in Durban, which compounded the increasing political discomfort of many in the South African Jewish community and strained the bilateral South African–Israeli relationship.

The Spier initiative

The most direct and public facilitation of peace talks by South Africa was initiated by President Thabo Mbeki at the Spier wine estate near Cape Town on 9–11 January 2002. The talks were attended by a number of high profile personalities from both Israel and Palestine. The most senior Palestinian delegates were Minister Saeb Erekat and Minister Zaid Abu Ziad. Israeli delegates included former Justice Minister Yossi Beilin and Speaker of the Knesset, Avraham Burg. Present and former South African cabinet members also attended the meetings.

The retreat had three ostensible aims, namely:
- To support the ongoing initiatives towards the creation of a favourable environment to restart peace negotiations;
- To share South African experience in negotiations, peacemaking and

transition to democracy; and

- To support the strengthening of the peace camps in Palestine and Israel as well as the general dynamic towards peace in the region.

The Spier communiqué issued at the closing of the talks noted the following conclusions emerging from the talks:

- The conflict cannot be resolved through violence and military means and the only guarantee for stability and security is peace.
- The maintenance of effective channels of communications at all times and under all circumstances is a vital requirement.
- The legitimate representative of each side is a partner, and the peace camps need to strengthen and mutually empower each other.
- There is a need to take into consideration the fears and concerns of the other side and to engage seriously with them.
- Negotiations should not be approached from the perspective of a winner or loser. It is in each party's self-interest that its interlocutor is satisfied by any agreement reached.
- The process should at no point be held hostage to extremists or their actions.

Delegates to the Spier discussions argued that the most valuable insight gained from the South African experience was the need to strengthen, rather than weaken and demonise, the respective negotiating partners. The South African experience of establishing a 'hot line' between leaders and for the need to continue dialogue regardless of the external environment were regarded as vital lessons for the management of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as furthering the peace process.

However, the Spier initiative was limited in its value due to the fact that it failed to attract participants from either the Israeli or Palestinian political mainstream, let alone extremists. None of the participants were power brokers, nor did they attend the talks with any popular mandate. Indeed, follow-up talks will be measured largely by the degree to which protagonists can be brought into the realm of such discussions. There are question marks too, particularly from the Palestinian side, on the value of such meetings being held outside of the region. Talks held in the Middle East clearly have more resonance with domestic constituencies than talks held far from the terrain of conflict.

South African-Israel economic linkages	
Trade with South Africa (Rm), 2000 (1999)	Imports: 1,505 (1,004) Exports: 3,552 (2,829)
Composition of South African exports, 2000	Machinery: 31% Diamonds: 30% High-Tech: 45%
Composition of imports from South Africa, 2000	Coal: 60% Base Metals: 15% Paper: 8%
South African tourists in Israel, 2000 (1999)	10,000 (15,000)
Israeli tourists in South Africa, 2001 (2000)	13,255 (20,470)

There are other positive determinants of South African policy, however, including the role of diaspora and the trade and investment links that exist. South Africa is Israel's largest trading partner in Africa (receiving 92% of its African imports from the Republic); and 42.6% of its African exports went to South Africa in 2001. However, Africa only accounts for 1% of Israel's total imports, and 2% of its exports.

In summary, contemporary South African policy is shaped by a combination of ten factors:

- First, the role and sentiment of key personalities, notably President Mbeki and Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad, who have taken lead roles on the issue. President Mbeki has implemented a dialogue with Middle Eastern leaders and arguably as Africa's leading statesman, carries the authority of the continent's people. Deputy Minister Pahad, as a Muslim with impeccable liberation movement credentials, has built trust and confidence with the Palestinian Authority. Additionally Deputy Minister Pahad has maintained an (at times strained) dialogue with Israeli representatives and the South African Jewish community. Thus the Deputy Minister's role is both unique and pivotal.
- Second, fraternal liberation movement-to-liberation movement ties between the ANC and Palestinians.
- Third, the need to remedy the imbalance of the apartheid government in favour of Israel. Despite a downgrading of relations pursuant to two Israeli cabinet decisions taken in March and September 1987 and the imposition of sanctions against South Africa in accordance with EU guidelines, perceptions of a pro- pre-democracy South Africa persist

domestically.

- Fourth, linkages, party and state, between South Africa and the Arab states.
- Fifth, a strong commitment to 'global good citizenry' through multilateral political engagement by South Africa, particularly the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).
- Sixth, the importance of the Jewish and 800,000-strong Muslim populations in South Africa.
- Seventh, trade and investment ties. Israel is South Africa's 16th largest trade partner. South Africa's exports to Israel totalled $345.54 million in the period January-December 2001 compared with $271.55 million in the same period in 2000—a 27.2% increase. Israel's exports to South Africa totalled $158.38 million in January–December 2002 compared with $235.42 million FOB in the same period in 2000—a decrease of 32.7%. Coal accounted for 63.5% of exports, precious stones accounted for 10.35%, base metals accounted for 5.8%, and paper and paper products—5.07%. Israel's major exports to South Africa are precious stones and metals and machinery.
- Eighth, the funding relationship of the ANC *vis-à-vis* Gulf and Arab states.
- Ninth, a commitment to transplanting the South African conflict resolution experience. As Foreign Minister Zuma contended in her budget speech: 'Our key objective is to achieve a better life for South Africans and a better world for humanity'.
- Tenth, and finally, the continued commitment of the ANC leadership to revolutionary change, if not in their own country and region, to those causes which draw attention to this cause elsewhere.

In spite of the political tensions, what are the areas of mutual interest between South Africa and Israel? Is there a possible symbiosis between the South African conflict resolution and negotiation experience and that of Israel-Palestine?

Section Two: The Parallels of Conflict Resolution

South Africa's own transition and its experience in African conflict mediation illustrates that successful resolution of inter-communal problems rests on the need for communities to recognise the rewards of

co-operating—and, conversely, the costs of not doing so. From the South African and other experiences *ten ingredients for successful mediation* can be identified:

First, there has to be a real basis for an internal settlement, where the parties want peace rather than war, and compromise rather than continued conflict.

Thus peace settlements must not be viewed as a *zero-sum* equation, and a way has to be found in which the major conflicting parties can both simultaneously achieve essential elements of what they want. If the settlement merely puts off the day of reckoning (as, for example, it has done in Angola), then mediation efforts are not going to progress far, or any agreement stick, for a prolonged period of time.

In South Africa, it could be argued that while the ANC wanted to be in government, it recognised, too, that it required the white governmental and business establishment if it was going to make a success of things. At the same time, the white establishment wanted to preserve its position in South Africa, but needed the involvement and support of the ANC government in order to prosper and achieve this goal in the long term.

Solutions emerging in this way are more likely to result in a relatively peaceful transition, in which a critical mass of skills necessary for economic transition are retained (as in South Africa, for example) rather than scared off (as in Mozambique and Angola).

Thus, importantly, there has to be a link between the population and the negotiators. Civil society can play an important role in creating this 'middle-ground', providing the wider fabric—or normative values—which can serve to urge leadership towards compromise as well as assisting in the development of democratic practices and institutions. This factor raises, in turn, the relationship between external funding and civil society development. This is also related to the importance of so-called 'backdoor mechanisms', or second-track diplomacy via civil society.

Second, there has to be a sufficiently united international community, in which different outside parties can bring pressure on the rival domestic parties to settle.

As Thomas Ohlson has argued, power-related factors such as military, diplomatic and economic pressures tend to bring about peace settlements.[29] Apart from South Africa itself, the only post-Cold War case in which a negotiated solution to a Southern African conflict situation has thus far worked successfully, is Mozambique. There, as in the transfer from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe in 1979, the amount of leverage that the external mediators could bring on the domestic combatants was critical. The same could be said of the Namibian side of the Angolan-Namibian accords in 1988 which stuck, even if the Angolan part of that deal did not.

By contrast, in the turbulent transition from the rule of President Mobutu Sese Seko in the former Zaire in 1997, another unsuccessful attempt, Washington and Paris had their own (sometimes competing) agendas. It was clear, too, that Southern African leaders were also, often for reasons of personality and jealousies rather than policy substance, not in agreement over what to do in Zaire.

Third, there is a need for prescient leadership and timing. Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk were crucial figures in South Africa, in recognising the need for compromise and seizing the moment. They both also recognised, particularly the ANC, the need to know and strengthen your partner when necessary in order for them to deliver their constituency.

Fourth, the external community has to offer the necessary resources, particularly in the post-conflict peace-building phase. The provision of external facilitators or mediators may be important, but this should not obscure the importance of developing local talent. There is a need, in this regard, to distinguish between the use of prominent personalities as *patrons* of a peace process and the use of *facilitators*.

There is a danger also of expecting external agencies to take up the job of government, whether by design (such as in Sierra Leone) or default (in Angola) through a reliance on humanitarian assistance.

Fifth, there is a need to lay the foundations for the peace agreements to

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[29] See Ohlson T, *Power Politics and Peace Policies*. Sweden: Uppsala University, 1998. See also Crocker C, 'The varieties of intervention' in Crocker C & FO Hampson with Aall P (eds), *Managing Global Chaos*. Washington DC: US Institute of Peace, 1996, pp.183–197.

stick, or, as noted above, getting to know your enemy well enough to inculcate a sufficient degree of trust. In South Africa's example, the period between 1985-90, when feelers went out to between the ANC and Pretoria, was crucial in building the personal relationships and understanding necessary to move to the negotiating table.

Sixth, proper analysis is necessary to understand the causes of conflict and the possible means of resolution.

Seventh, trust building and the need for dialogue never ends. As delegates to the Spier talks noted, despite the acute setbacks in the South African negotiations, particularly between 1990 and 1993, there was always reasonable continuity of dialogue, either at the first- or second-track level.

Eighth, there is a need to follow the broad guideline of inclusivity, rather than exclusivity, in devising democratic solutions. There is, however, a need to make a clear distinction between the use of a government of national unity (GNU) as a means to a political end, rather than as an end in itself. There are dangers in using this as a way to legitimate fraudulent elections and outcomes rather than as a conduit for reconciliation.

Ninth, political programmes have to be accompanied by explicit plans and processes in government, including specifically in the armed forces through demobilisation and integration.

Tenth, elections should be seen as a necessary, but not sufficient, element in the process of democratisation. There is a need for a deepening of a 'culture' of democracy, beyond the creation of institutional democracy through elections. Until this forms part of the essence of African and Middle Eastern polities, the potential for political reversal remains, as does the danger of programmes such as NEPAD faltering when elite and local political interests are threatened by the implementation and operation of international norms, standards and, indeed, conditionalities. The setting and monitoring of such governance standards and establishment of such a culture has to be a bottom-up, civil society oriented process, rather than one that is commonly leadership-driven. A critical element to the future development of Israeli-Palestinian relations will be the need for a broadening and a deepening of both a democratic culture and a

strengthening of civil society in any Palestinian state.

While there are critical differences between South Africa and Israel-Palestine (not least the competing religious points of departure and the contrasting desired outcome of negotiations between the creation of one state—South Africa—and the establishment of two—Israel and Palestine), some of the above lessons may be applied to the case of Israel and Palestine.

Section Three:
Resolving the Dilemma of the Politics of Insecurity

In 1947, the first Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion reportedly noted that the state of Israel sought to achieve three goals: democracy, the establishment of a Jewish state, and residence in the historical biblical land.

Today, Israel can only achieve, at best, two of these goals. If, as many of the extremists demand, it occupies the biblical land, it will have to compromise on democracy, otherwise Jews will be outnumbered by Arabs. But herein lies a critical dilemma. If it offers land for peace, it has to be sure that peace will withstand political changes within the Arab camp—put differently, while peace can easily be withdrawn, land is much more difficult to reclaim. Land taken in the Six Day War in 1967 is a critical 'bargaining chip for peace', but Israelis are loath to cash it in lest it be lost forever. Peace with Palestine also does not necessarily mean peace first with the West Bank and Gaza.

Will peace with the refugees mean the end of the Jewish state? There is no credible Israeli opinion that is prepared to countenance the right and exercise the right of return of Palestinian refugees/exiles. It is a line no Israeli leader can cross, no matter the mandate, as this would be tantamount to the destruction of the Jewish state of Israel. Without a peace settlement and under the present land and demographic configuration, it is predicted that Arabs will outnumber Jews in Israel and the occupied territories by around 2010–15.

A further and more immediate critical challenge facing Israel, is the absence

The demographic conundrum	
Israeli Jews	5 million
Israeli Arabs	1.2 million
Palestinians in the occupied territories	3.5 million
Palestinians outside Israel	3-4 million
Israel total	6.2 million

of a single, credible negotiating partner or indeed single political enemy. The campaign to marginalise and discredit Arafat and, perhaps more importantly, the mounting evidence of involvement in the terror campaign being built against the PNA leader, leaves Israel with a negotiating vacuum. Such is the closed and authoritarian structure of the PNA that credible 'moderate' leaders have been marginalised or eliminated from the political stage. The only clear, identifiable and organised opposition to Arafat and Fatah is the radical Hamas, Hizbollah and Islamic Jihad groups. Furthermore, the events of 11 September 2001, the explicit identification of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by al-Qaeda leadership as a root 'driver' of their terror campaign and the increasing Islamisation of the Middle Eastern conflict has had the effect of sharply raising the temperature of the conflagration and making its resolution even more elusive.

On the Palestinian side, the core dilemma is perhaps more complex. Its leadership has to carry the support of the Palestinian diaspora (which is difficult to achieve with the Israelis, particularly over the right of return), the more immediate concerns of those in the direct firing line on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the support of the Arab states (which have agendas which themselves are not always consistent).

Can these differences be resolved within and between these groups?

Three inter-related aspects are deemed necessary for this to happen:
- First, the Israeli settlements in Palestinian territories will have to stop and the status of existing Jewish settlements resolved.
- Second, the Israeli and Palestinian leadership will have to carry important domestic and, especially in the case of the latter, external constituencies. Currently, Yasser Arafat does not justify the apparently unquestioning faith placed in him by South Africa and other external actors. He cannot currently deliver to Arabs, nor local and diasporic

Palestinians alike. His rule is currently characterised by allegations of massive corruption, authoritarianism and vicariousness which, whatever their veracity, undermine his authority.[30] But there is no presumption that any replacement would necessarily be able to do so or be any better.

- Third, there needs to be a climate of trust, to which end leadership and external partners are critical. Even modest confidence-building measures if they hold and are sustainable can serve as a solid platform for brokering peace.

The South African experience is applicable in the latter regard. But there is a need for process and a commitment to end violence without which faith in leadership cannot bloom. The cessation of suicide bombings and military de-escalation would signal a vital step in this regard.

What current solutions are proposed?

The **first option** is for Israel to maintain its current geographic and security integrity and not to accede to demands for Palestinian independence. This would amount to a position of occupation without responsibility. Whereas Ariel Sharon has stated on a number of occasions his acceptance of the establishment of a Palestinian state under tight conditionalities, his major political rival, Benjamin Netanyahu and indeed his own Likud Party have rejected this. Netanyahu has, however, accepted in principle self-rule of the occupied territories under strict security conditionalities. This option would find no support from any constituency outside of the Likud and parties to its right. Furthermore, this position would be unacceptable to the international community, in particular the Quartet (US, UN, EU and Russia) and the Arab states. This option is further undermined by President Bush's recently released peace proposal, which specifically supports the establishment of an independent Palestinian state subject to the holding of new Palestinian leadership elections and the sidelining of Yasser Arafat. Whilst the status quo option may prove popular with a significant number of Israelis, it would undoubtedly have acute implications for Israeli domestic security, would heighten conflict between the Israeli Defence Force and Palestinians

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[30] One leading Palestinian scholar remarked that, 'Arafat was becoming the Great Palestinian Mufti'.

and would continue to place a strain on the Israeli economy.[31] This option would also likely exacerbate the radicalisation of Palestinian opposition and resistance in favour of groups such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Tanzim.

The **second option** would be one of unilateral withdrawal from the occupied territories and disengagement. This position is predicated on two assumptions. Firstly that Israel lacks credible 'dialogue and negotiating partners'. The second assumption under this option is that the Palestinians cannot be trusted. The advantage of this option for the Israelis is that, in the short term, it would free Israel from the burden of political responsibility for the previously occupied territories. By definition too, unilateralism could take place virtually on Israeli terms and conditions. The commencement of the construction of the security wall along the Green Line is regarded by some as evidence of an intention to implement this option. The erection of the *cordon sanitaire* is seen as a precursor to the establishment of a *de facto* border between Israel and a self-governing Palestinian territory. It is perhaps more likely however, that the wall is both a short- and medium-term security measure that simultaneously serves to increase Israel's options and further isolate the Palestinian Authority. This unilateral option holds the potential for severe longer-term problems however. Any unilateral measure that *de facto* pre-determines the establishment and boundaries of an independent Palestinian state will lack legitimacy both from a Palestinian perspective, as well as in the eyes of the international community. Furthermore, this would simply be a recipe for heightened opposition and 'struggle' from the Palestinians and their allies against the illegitimacy of the Israeli position. It would furthermore, abrogate many of the principles enshrined in the accords and agreements brokered since Madrid. More immediately, the compartmentalisation of the Palestinian territory behind an Israeli-constructed security wall would entrench the perception of the creation of a balkanised, quasi-apartheid, 'Palestan'.

The **third option** is negotiations leading to the forging of an internationally brokered and endorsed political settlement. This is the only option that has the potential to lead to a final agreement and indeed regional peace. The

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[31] The cost of renewing Israeli administration in the occupied territories has recently been put at NIS 3–4 billion per annum—some $800 million.

elements to such an option could include the following:

Firstly, the establishment of an international conference that would require the support and participation of the Quartet plus the Arab states. Both Palestinian and Israeli leadership attending the peace talks would need to approach them from positions of relative strength (or stalemate) and carrying a clear and sustainable 'domestic' mandate. This may require a coalition of moderates from both sides, as bilateral concessions would need to be yielded. Relatedly, both sides would need to prepare public opinion for the likely outcome that would suit neither side fully. By definition, peace negotiations will require compromise and indeed unpopular compromise to hardliners on both sides. Critically, the Palestinian Authority would need to be both politically and logistically prepared for the outcome of peace talks leading to a full-fledged independent Palestinian state, but with compromises on territory, right of return and security. In all likelihood there will be an insistence by Israel on some form of de-militarised Palestinian state. Furthermore, the regional Arab community would need to be politically prepared to accept a compromise position on the Palestinian refugees/exiles, perhaps most importantly, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt. Thus whilst the formal 'right' of return may not be negotiated away, an equitable and just compensation package would need to be agreed to for Palestinian exiles/refugees with the neighbouring states.

For its part, Israeli public opinion would once again have to be psychologically prepared and, indeed, logistically prepared for the evacuation of settlements, land swaps and the division of Jerusalem within an acceptable time frame. Furthermore, Israel would need to be prepared to accept the involvement of an international security and peacekeeping force to act as buffer between the protagonists. This is necessitated by the need for Palestinians to be protected, balanced with the right of Israelis to security, but is a proposal perceived by Israelis as one that would reduce their domestic security and favour Palestinian interests.

Finally, a negotiated settlement may require new, brave and politically deft leadership from both sides. Using the South African model, it could be argued that the hardline securocrat PW Botha may have acted as a political bridge that allowed the democracy reforms of his political successor FW de Klerk, but he could not have delivered the peace brokered

between de Klerk and Mandela. With Yasser Arafat a broadly discredited figure, arguably unable to deliver peace to the Palestinians and thus becoming more part of the problem than the solution, and Ariel Sharon a tainted and discredited leader amongst Palestinians and Arab states, a key step in any negotiated settlement may have to be the popular replacement of both leaders.

Conclusion: Past a Solution

That there will be a solution to the current conflict is, in time, inevitable. The form it will likely take, in all probability, will not substantively deviate from the Barak or Clinton plans or, for that matter, the Oslo Accords: of an independent Palestinian state co-existing side-by-side with Israel.

As is highlighted above, however, there is a need to get over three fundamental dilemmas:

- First, the acceptance of the existence of the state of Israel by the Palestinians and the Arab and other states.
- Second, the acceptance by Israelis of the right of establishment of a viable, independent Palestinian state.
- Third, compromise and *leadership* by leaders on both sides.

A peace of this sort contains costs as well as opportunities for South Africa. Israel's peace with Palestine and the Arab region will likely open up opportunities for the expansion of its foreign policy towards Africa. This offers the prospect of increased trade, co-operation and technical assistance programmes, where the Israelis have considerable experience, particularly in agriculture, information technology and health services.[32] Of cardinal importance to Israel's international development assistance programme is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Centre for Technical Co-operation.

Thus peace in the Middle East holds the promise of a considerable peace dividend for the countries of Africa and the NEPAD in particular. Perhaps no other country has had such marked success in converting arid land into fertile productive use. With drought and famine threatening Southern

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[32] See, for example, Aynor HS & S Avimor, *Thirty Years of Israel's International Technical Assistance and Co-operation*. Hebrew: The Harry S Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, September 1990.

Africa and the perennial threat of malnutrition on the continent, Israeli expertise and know-how could prove a considerable and sustainable benefit to the continent. MASHAV's on-site experience and the successes of its track record are exactly the kind of programmes needed to bring NEPAD to fruition.

Although there are a number of successful Israel-South Africa investments,

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Israel's technical assistance expertise

The Centre for International Co-operation (known by the Hebrew acronym as MASHAV), a section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been active in technical assistance programmes in the developing world since 1958. An initiative originally of then Foreign Minister Golda Meir, by 2000 MASHAV had trained more than 76,000 foreign personnel in Israel and sent a large number of experts abroad to train 97,000 others, mainly in the fields of agriculture and public health. MASHAV has a budget of some $17-18 million.

MASHAV has co-operated with more than 140 countries. In Africa these have included Senegal (Fossil Valley irrigation project), Kenya (Kibwezi demonstration farm), Malawi and Zambia (ophthalmology programmes), Morocco and Tunisia. MASHAV has also conducted programmes in Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkino Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, C'ote d' Ivoire, DRC, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. A number of the critical foci of MASHAV's African involvement are food security programmes, eye clinics and camps, integrated rural regional development programmes and women's entrepreneurial programmes. In 2000 alone some 4,252 trainees from around the world attended 150 MASHAV programmes in Israel.

The programme has suffered a downturn since the collapse of the peace process, with donor funding also in decline, but foreign ministry officials anticipate an increase in requests for assistance once peace is re-established. MASHAV officials have expressed considerable interest in the New Partnership for Africa's Development and have a wealth of valuable and appropriate experience that could contribute to the realisation of the NEPAD.

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including most recently those in the South African steel and mining industries, there is vast untapped potential for joint ventures between South African and Israeli firms. The successful conclusion of the peace process would establish Israel as an ideal 'stepping stone' for South African companies wishing to expand into Middle Eastern markets. Similarly South Africa is not only the largest market in its region, it is also the key commercial, industrial and infrastructural hub for business operations in sub-Saharan Africa.

Business in both countries has unique experience in their respective regional markets and both are *per force* exporting economies. South Africa enjoys a successful manufacturing sector, particularly in the automotive industry; Israel has become a world leader in ITC. These present but two areas where closer co-operation could lead to considerable continental, if not global, synergies. Both countries have developed unique and shared expertise in arms production and refurbishment and would stand to gain much from closer co-operation in a post-conflict resolution era. Food production and processing are other key areas where both countries are leaders, but where closer co-operation could take both countries more effectively into their respective regional markets. Furthermore, South Africa is rapidly developing a reputation for software excellence particularly in financial software and web-site design and maintenance. If this expertise can be harnessed with Israeli ITC technical expertise, it would make for a potentially formidable combination. At the less tangible level, both countries are highly entrepreneurial in outlook and spirit. This has, in part, been forged on the anvil of adversity and forced isolation, but is also a product of the respective regional environments in which both countries operate. Both countries are serious about 'doing business' and whilst this is facilitated by the extensive historical South African-Israeli ties, for the relationship to move forward in any meaningful manner will require the successful implementation of the Middle Eastern peace process. Paradoxically, an improved bilateral South African–Israeli relationship will enable Pretoria to play the type of constructive role it seeks. The point to be made is that it is very much in South Africa and the continent's interests that peace in the Middle East is achieved sooner rather than later.

Arguably the 'coup de grace' in galvanising any future Israeli-South African economic relationship would be the establishment of a free trade

agreement which would provide the institutional framework and incentive for markedly improved trade relations. Whilst there are five bilateral agreements signed between Israel and South Africa none have been ratified. These agreements include the areas of international co-operation, research and development, environment and tourism. It is held that the reason for the stalling of the ratification of the agreements is political in nature and has been exacerbated by the international fall-out from the *intifada*.

Peace could also remove the shackles from Israeli commercial operations in Africa, increasing both the opportunities for partnership with South African concerns but, in their absence, arguably also increasing competition. For example, Israeli firms have recently been involved in Ethiopia (refurbishing the air force), Eritrea, Angola and Zimbabwe. There is also ongoing involvement in diamond-exporting countries given the role of Israelis in diamond cutting and selling.

Israel's African diplomatic representation

Israel currently has thirteen diplomatic missions in African countries: Angola, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Zimbabwe.

Similarly, peace between Israel and the Palestinians will not, at a single stroke, resolve the complicated politics of the Middle East. Removing the core tension may well give rise to a variety of other problems, particularly in the relationship between the US and Arab states, and within the Arab community and its member-states, but perhaps most obviously, the challenges that an independent Palestine would present to Jordan.

The South African experience could serve to bring Israel and South Africa closer together. A failure to negotiate peace will conversely, in the short term, push them farther apart. Only one solution is ultimately possible: an independent Palestinian state, acceptable to the majority of Palestinians and Israel's Arab neighbours. To achieve this, consensus is necessary, between Israelis, Palestinians and Arabs but, critically, also among them. Leadership and compromise is essential. The degree to which Pretoria and Jerusalem are able to work together to address the crisis will partly

shape the nature of the post-settlement relationship.

Though there will inevitably be areas of commercial, trade and even military competition with South Africa in its engagement with African countries, an Israel freed of the political burden of Palestine could play an important role as a strategic continental partner of South Africa and NEPAD.

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The state of Israel emerged from the horrors of the Holocaust and the devastation of the Second World War. Indeed the international moral outrage against the atrocities of the holocaust established the broad framework for international condemnation of the apartheid system. Contemporary South Africa has itself emerged from a painful period in its own history at last as a single people, determined to take its rightful place on the international stage and among the family of nations. In spite of the current impasse, their respective experiences and the benefits of political negotiation offer a positive future together where co-operation not competition, and consensus, not conflict, are the bywords.

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The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) is a non-governmental foreign policy think-tank. Established in 1934, it is based at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, and its activities extend across six branches countrywide. It focuses on policy-relevant research and public education through its many international workshops, seminars, meetings and publications, including the *South African Yearbook of International Affairs, South African Journal of International Affairs, SAIIA Country Reports, SAIIA Reports, SAIIA Research News, SADC Barometer, De-mining Debate*, and the *South African Foreign Policy Monitor*.

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