



Seven Years Later The Israel-Palestinian Conflict – An Interim Assessment

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September 2007 marked seven years since the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. There is no end in sight to this round of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which since its eruption has continued in waves. Consequently, the key developments and trends of the confrontation cannot be summarized definitively, and at best they can be illustrated in terms of an intermediate balance sheet. At the same time the bottom line of this balance sheet, which addresses the major aspects of a multifaceted, implication-laden conflict, is clear, unequivocal, and distressing. It indicates a considerable worsening of conditions for laying the foundations of an Israeli-Palestinian compromise based on political and territorial separation and the establishment of a viable Palestinian political-economic entity alongside the State of Israel. The Palestinian institutional system has disintegrated, the camp espousing compromise has lost its leading status, and the militant opposition has strengthened. For its part, Israel has recoiled from deeming reciprocity and coordination as necessary conditions for redeploying in the territories. Attempts to revive the political process to advance an Israeli-Palestinian settlement – as a goal unto itself and as a way to stabilize the Middle East by lowering the profile of this locus of regional instability – have recurred repeatedly since this round of the conflict erupted. Following seven years of upheaval, communication between the sides has been renewed of late with an increasing sense of urgency. But deteriorating circumstances, which are the direct background of current efforts to renew negotiations towards a settlement, threaten to rob these attempts of any relevance to the reality as it evolved in the scene of conflict over the past seven years.

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Confrontation

The visit to the Temple Mount by then opposition leader Ariel Sharon on September 28, 2000, against the backdrop of a tense deadlock in Israeli-Palestinian relations following the failure of the Camp David summit, was the trigger that set off rioting in the territories. The riots drew a harsh response from the Israeli security forces, which sought to curb their spread and stop them from evolving into an organized violent revolt. The first goal was successfully met. The second was only partially achieved and that at a heavy cost – in terms of lives, mostly Palestinian; in terms of the destruction of Palestinian institutional and economic infrastructures; and in terms of the belief by the two sides that concrete talks on a settlement could be renewed. Many of the confrontation's manifestations that can be represented statistically attest to its severity, including: the extent of terrorist attacks carried out by Palestinians, the number of casualties incurred by terrorist attacks and Israeli responses, and the scale of economic damage to the Palestinian economy.

Once the initial rioting ebbed, militant factions from various ideological and political currents positioned themselves at the forefront of the Palestinian struggle. The Israeli counter response, which over time reduced these factions' freedom of action, included aerial attacks, ground incursions, artillery fire, and pursuit of activists.¹ A turning point occurred following Operation Defensive Shield, which began in April 2002 and saw the IDF retake control of Palestinian cities in the West Bank. The separation fence, erected following a government resolution also of April 2002, was likewise considered a factor that helped reduce the extent of terrorist attacks. The number of shooting, grenade throwing, and bomb planting incidents dropped signifi-

cantly, as did the number of suicide attacks in populated areas within the Green Line. This trend fed into assessments that the uprising was fading. However, the violence did not die out; it merely changed its principal mode, since once Israeli civilian targets were more difficult to access, there was a shift in patterns of action. Since 2005, the suicide attacks – the most blatant expression of the struggle against Israel and the focus of Israeli counter activity – have been largely replaced by the ongoing mortar and Qassam rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into the western Negev.²

The extent of casualties also fluctuated along the timeline, but its significance went beyond periodic measurements. The loss of life resulting from the conflict following years of Israeli-Palestinian relations that at least in theory relied on a mutual willingness to compromise was from the beginning of the confrontation the main obstacle to a resumption of purposeful discussions on compromise. In the period between September 29, 2000 and October 31, 2007, a total of 4,304 Palestinians were killed by Israel security forces; 1,433 of them were directly involved in warfare against Israel. A total of 41 Palestinians were killed by Israeli citizens. A total of 323 Israeli security personnel and 704 Israeli citizens were killed by Palestinians – 471 of the latter within the Green Line and the rest in incidents and attacks in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.³

An additional casualty of the conflict was the prospect for growth in the Palestinian economy. To be sure, the offensive and defensive efforts against the uprising demanded the allocation of multiple resources from the Israeli economy, yet this investment could be charted in terms of monetary cost. In contrast, the Palestinian economy, which was never rooted on independent founda-

tions, collapsed, clearly interrupting the trend of growth evidenced during the years preceding the outbreak of the confrontation.⁴ A report published by the World Bank in September 2007 indicated a slump in Palestinian GDP, dropping from \$1,612 in 1999 to \$1,129 in 2006. Construction projects and economic initiatives were paralyzed, foreign investment in development ceased, and commerce was severely disrupted. Due to closures, imposed in response to attacks, and the difficulties in transit between areas in the territories and into Israel, export of goods from the territories was interrupted and from time to time stopped completely. The entry of workers into Israel thinned out to the point that it ceased almost entirely. In the absence of local employment alternatives, unemployment in the territories spiraled. Most of the external aid sent to the territories – intended for humanitarian support and alleviation of hardship caused by the collapse of the health and welfare systems – was used to pay the salaries of public workers so as to ease unrest, or to strengthen the Palestinian Authority security forces in confronting militant factions. The economy of the territories would have remained dependent on foreign connections and massive aid even if the confrontation had not erupted. However, during this round of the conflict a crisis developed, and deliverance demands a huge and concerted investment of resources. Yet even this would be pointless without a dramatic political change that strengthens the Palestinian camp supporting compromise and weakens the ability of the militant opposition to continue provoking Israeli counter responses.

The Palestinian Arena: A Fight on Two Fronts

With the outbreak of the uprising, the Fa-

tah-led PA encouraged the participation of its forces in the rioting. In the absence of any political achievement it could register and in light of the developing struggle, this policy was intended to preserve its status at home. But this lawlessness turned out to be a double-edged sword that brought ruin to the PA as the armed struggle went out of control. Organizational boundaries were breached. Militant factions that organized locally, including those that bolted from Fatah ranks, built independent operational infrastructures and agendas. Ties with radical elements in the region, primarily Iran and the Lebanese Hizbollah, strengthened. As time went by, and particularly following Operation Defensive Shield, the PA leadership acknowledged increasingly the threat to its status, which stemmed from the political deadlock and from the strengthened unauthorized factions. But when the leadership attempted to restore the original mandate of the police and security forces, it was too late. The PA itself – its institutions, facilities, and political status – became the object of a sweeping Israeli offensive. In addition, the PA became the focus of international criticism for its part in the confrontation and of domestic criticism for its helplessness in the face of the harsh Israeli response.

Still, the approach of the leadership to what was required for limiting the militant factions' freedom of action, particularly for structural reform of the security forces, was clearly ambivalent. President Yasir Arafat blocked the creation of coordinating mechanisms between the various security branches because this would perforce create a local hub of power and erode the status of Fatah's veteran leadership. And so, aside from the direct hit absorbed by PA institutions at the hands of Israel, the lack of coordination between se-

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curity forces prevented a deployment that at least in the first stages of the uprising would likely have helped to subdue the militant factions. Most of all, the accelerated weakening of the PA reduced the possibility, limited anyway, of restraining the continual violent efforts by Hamas to escalate the struggle and thereby prevent Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, i.e., what would help allow the rehabilitation of the legal and political base underlying the PA.

Given the internal strife, a *modus vivendi* between Fatah and Hamas became a condition for easing the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation, stabilizing the Palestinian arena, and preparing for Palestinian representation in any eventual political process. The effort to reach an understanding between the rival movements proceeded along three channels: direct contacts between Fatah and Hamas, elections in the PA, and establishing a unity government. All of these failed.

The political standstill spurred Egypt to pressure Fatah and Hamas to coordinate conditions for a ceasefire. Since late 2001 the talks between them were held in Cairo. The PA sought to use the calm for security and administrative deployment, while for its part Hamas was prepared to risk the strengthening of the PA in exchange for the prospect that calm would allow itself to garner strength under the relaxation of Israeli military pressure. These common-opposed interests brought the sides back to the negotiating table from time to time, despite the growing competition between them for national leadership. Agreement regarding the strategic goals of the struggle was not on the agenda. The historic conflict, especially the escalation phase that began in the fall of 2000, lent the internal Palestinian struggle an unending general rationale and a plethora of renewed pretexts.

Israel's policy of fighting the armed uprising and setting firm conditions, particularly a total cessation of violence, for any resumption of negotiations influenced the course of the intra-Palestinian talks. In turn, the failure of the talks to lay the groundwork for calm presented Israel with ongoing security challenges. Israel itself, however, was neither a party to the talks nor to the understandings achieved through them, rather an interested spectator only.

Three times the talks concluded with understandings. In July 2003 a *hudna* (cease-fire) came into force, but the grace period was short. Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), who waved the banner of a halt to the violence, was appointed a number of months prior in an attempt to achieve, even for appearance's sake, reform in the PA. He resigned, effectively admitting failure in bringing about a breakthrough. His replacement, Ahmed Qurei (Abu Ala), fared likewise. In March 2005, Hamas once again agreed to a relaxation of fighting in exchange for the consent of Abbas, elected as PA president two months previously, that Hamas participate in elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). But the shooting from the Gaza Strip continued; at this stage it was meant to demonstrate the contribution by Hamas and Islamic Jihad to Israel's decision to withdraw from the Gaza Strip. In November 2006, after another round of escalation in the conflict with Israel, a further period of relaxation was declared, yet Israel's operations against the armed infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza continued to serve as a motive and pretext for continued shooting. This dynamic, spurred by the intensifying dispute between Fatah and Hamas over control of PA security apparatuses, caused this attempt at any semblance of calm to fail as well.

The Hamas victory to the PLC elections in January 2006 reflected two interwoven trends, evident in the days of the first uprising and maturing during the second: the erosion of the status of the PLO and veteran Fatah leadership in the Palestinian political system, and a shift in the center of gravity of the Palestinian national struggle from the diaspora to the territories. It was a moot point whether the national struggle meant the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, according to Fatah's declared policy, or the liberation of Palestine in its entirety within the framework of regional Islamization, according to the official policy of Hamas. Local forces with diverse ideological affiliations claimed for themselves the political assets that for years were the unshakable domain of the Fatah-led PLO – representation of the Palestinian national movement. The locally rooted Hamas gained the victory. This achievement was aided by the movement's administrative deployment coupled with a split between the veteran Fatah leadership and the younger Fatah generation, which was also locally rooted. A qualification to Hamas's achievement was the election of Abbas to the presidency by a majority of approximately 60 percent. Still, Hamas gained the electoral right to establish the government, an achievement that bypassed Fatah's persistent refusal to consent to the 40 percent representation in PLO institutions as demanded by Hamas.

Yasir Arafat died in November 2004. He was the one considered primarily responsible for the failed functioning of the PA since its establishment, the spread of corruption in its ranks, and the unleashing of the violent uprising. Arafat's death was therefore perceived as the development that would remove obstacles to reform in the PA, help



institutionalize calm, and perhaps even enable a political breakthrough. Consequently, this was one of the factors that encouraged the call for elections in the territories. Israel and the Fatah leadership feared that Hamas participation in the elections would officially validate its broadening influence, but the American administration upheld the plan for elections as part of the democratization process for the Middle East, intended to help bring stability to the region. In any event, the results of the elections dashed hopes for a new order in the PA. The Hamas platform emphasized promises of change and reform, but did not include renewed negotiations with Israel. The movement affirmed its refusal to recognize Israel and its commitment to the struggle for the liberation of Palestine, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. Thus even the consolidation of Hamas rule would not have paved the path to dialogue, at least not in the short term.

In May 2005, members of various Palestinian factions imprisoned in Israel formulated a national reconciliation document. It outlined principles for the establishment of a unity government and a proposal to limit the struggle against Israel to the territories. But the prisoners' document turned into a further arena of power struggle for Fatah and Hamas. Abbas adopted it fully, with an eye to preserving the remnants of Fatah's strongholds. Hamas rejected the document out of adherence to the movement's strategic objective – institutionalization as a governmental alternative. Contacts between the movements were suspended due to fierce clashes between their activists, which evoked an atmosphere of impending civil war in the territories and a renewed escalation of clashes with Israel. This was evident in the resumption of Israeli military action in the Gaza Strip following persistent shooting into the western Negev and the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier by a cell of an Islamic faction that crossed the Gaza border. The principles of national reconciliation formulated by the prisoners lost their significance following the escalation on the two fronts that the document sought to restrain.

A regional diplomatic move once again placed the entry of Fatah into the Hamas government on the agenda. The principles of a unity government were finalized at talks held in Mecca brokered by Saudi Arabia. Riyadh's intention, shared by the rest of the members of the Arab League, was to establish Palestinian representation at regional talks based on the Arab peace initiative. This initiative emphasized resolving the Israeli-Palestinian dispute over borders and refugees as the key to establishing relations between them and Israel and thereby shaping a new regional order. The unity government was sworn in

on March 17, 2007, against the backdrop of preparations for the Riyadh summit in June at which members of the Arab League ratified the initiative. The government's platform did not include an acceptance of the demands made to Hamas for gaining recognition by Israel and the Quartet: recognizing Israel's right to exist, adopting past agreements signed by Israel and the PLO, and abstaining from terror. Therefore, the establishment of the government did not constitute an opening for renewed dialogue. Still, this was not the reason for the breakup of the unity government approximately three months following its formation. Institutional coordination, as far as Fatah and Hamas were concerned, was meant to both remove the boycott imposed on the PA following the establishment of the Hamas government and stop the spread of anarchy in the territories. Renewed dialogue with Israel was the secondary goal, even if only from Fatah's standpoint. In any event, the unity government did not function due to disagreements over the division of responsibility and because clashes between activists from both movements continued and even escalated.⁵ In June, with the surrender of Fatah-manned security forces, the Gaza Strip fell to Hamas rule. Abbas dissolved the unity government and set up an alternative government in the West Bank. Added to its geographic and economic isolation, the Gaza Strip was now politically cut off from the rest of the PA territories.

In light of this development, Fatah suspended its efforts to restore its domestic status by reaching an accommodation with Hamas, and cast its fortunes once again with the political process. Control of the West Bank remained in its hands, but relied on Israeli support and hopes for a political settlement and economic rehabilitation. If these hopes

are punctured, Israel's backing will impede Fatah's ability, in any case limited, to mobilize public support in its struggle against Hamas, which seeks to expand its hold to the West Bank as well.

The Israeli Arena: Political Separation, Physical Disengagement

The failure of efforts to calm the violent confrontation prevented progress along the Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East, adopted in July 2002 by the Quartet, and later, notwithstanding concerns and reservations, by Israel and the PA as well. The roadmap specifies three stages preceding a final settlement: (1) halting the violence and instituting reform in the PA; (2) holding general elections in the territories and establishing a Palestinian state within provisional borders; and (3) drafting a permanent settlement in 2005. General elections in the territories were indeed held, albeit late. The other stages were not implemented, and the two sides supplied contrasting explanations for the link between the political deadlock and the cycle of violence. The PA refused to commit to total calm, claiming it could not do so as long as the Israeli military and civilian presence in the territories continued, which was portrayed as an insurmountable obstacle to security and administrative reform. On the other hand, so long as the violence was not contained, the Israeli government did not feel obligated to: ease its military and economic pressure on the PA; withdraw from territory in which it had expanded its control in response to terrorist attacks; stop the settlement enterprise; and follow the timetable specified in the roadmap.

At the same time, Israel's recognition of its limited ability to subdue the Palestinian struggle by military, economic, and po-

litical means, extensive and forceful as they might be, drove it to a unilateral approach for tackling the immediate and long term challenges presented by the conflict. This approach was clearly expressed by then prime minister Ariel Sharon: "We wish to speedily advance implementation of the roadmap towards quiet and a genuine peace. We hope that the Palestinian Authority will carry out its part. However, if in a few months the Palestinians still continue to disregard their part in implementing the roadmap – then Israel will initiate the unilateral security step of disengagement from the Palestinians."⁶ The announcement of this proposed move in December 2003 coincided with Israel's undertaking what it defined and presented as a security measure – the building of a physical barrier (primarily fence, part wall) in the West Bank.

The security fence attested to the aim of creating a separation, here actualized in steel and concrete, between Israel and populated Palestinian areas. Changes in the fence's route were made during its construction in order to minimize the impact on the daily lives of civilians. However, these adjustments, adopted to alleviate criticism in response to petitions submitted by Israeli and Palestinian parties, did not blunt the fence's psychological-political implications or its tangibility. Parts of the barrier were built east of the Green Line, encircling settlements in such a way that Palestinian cities and villages alongside were divided or closed off into enclaves. In the Jerusalem area, the barrier attached some Palestinian neighborhoods to municipal territory while others were cut off from the city center or were divided. The imperative of tearing down parts of the fence that were completed, or at least correcting its demarcation so it would run along the

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Green Line, became a permanent feature of the demands to Israel presented by Palestinian spokespersons. Additionally, the erection of the barrier was a bone of contention between Israel and the American administration. Sources in the administration expressed concern that enclaves created by the fence would sabotage chances of establishing a Palestinian entity with territorial contiguity and a viable economic and administrative infrastructure.

The apprehension over the barrier, which countered the logic at the base of the road-map, intensified in light of Israel's plan for disengagement from the Gaza Strip, which was approved by the Israeli cabinet in October 2004. The American administration demanded that the plan be integrated with the intention to withdraw and dismantle settlements in the West Bank as well. However, neither the fence nor the disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip generated a crisis in US-Israel relations; this was due to the lack of any political or security alternatives. In a letter sent to Prime Minister Sharon in April 2004, amid preparations for disengagement from Gaza, President Bush expressed the wish that a Palestinian state be established as part of a settlement that would deny the return of Palestinian refugees to Israeli territory, leave blocs of Israeli settlements in the West Bank as they are, and be carried out in accordance with the pace and extent of Israeli pullbacks. The disregard of Palestinian fundamental demands in this position statement attested to the PA's political marginality.

As opposed to the barrier's route in the West Bank, which remained problematic due chiefly to the number and location of settlements scattered in the area, the Gaza disengagement plan did not involve any question of borders. In its political essence the Gaza

Strip is an enclave; therefore, the principle of separation would be applied to the letter. The disengagement plan aroused a stormy debate in Israel. Spokespersons from the ranks of the political establishment warned against a security vacuum in Gaza accompanied by an escalation in terrorism after the IDF's pullback. A vociferous public protest against the plan heralded the challenge of evacuating twenty-one settlements in the Gaza Strip and the simultaneous evacuation of four settlements, defined as illegal, from the northern West Bank. Nevertheless, the plan was executed in August 2005, though it was accompanied by mass protests and disturbances led by rabbis and leaders of the settlements in Gaza and the West Bank.

As those who doubted the political and security logic behind the disengagement had warned, Israel did not disengage from Gaza nor did Gaza disengage from Israel. Israeli control over Gaza airspace, sea access, and passage over land boundaries significantly qualified the potential of "disengagement." From the Palestinian side, the pullback from Gaza was not perceived as a gesture of goodwill – as indeed it was not—but rather an abdication by Israel, and a move intended for strengthening Israel's hold on the West Bank.⁷ The Gaza Strip did not become a model for Palestinian self-rule, but rather continued to constitute a hub of fighting on the intra-Palestinian front and on the front for the struggle against Israel. Israel's limited ability to thwart threats of rocket and mortar fire from across the border, as demonstrated after the withdrawal from Gaza and in even more pronounced fashion during Israel's war against Hizbollah in the summer of 2006, delayed further withdrawals under the realignment plan for the West Bank. The plan, originally dubbed the "convergence plan," was part of

the platform of the Kadima party, which several months earlier had emerged victorious in elections to the Israeli Knesset.

Still, the suspension of the realignment plan did not totally blur the historic quality of the separation fence or the Gaza disengagement. The intention to part from the territories, which was cultivated in Israel already during the first uprising, remained valid during the second uprising. The assessment that there was no Palestinian partner, which was totally unconnected with the details of one political solution or another, accelerated the search for a way to reduce the strife. The disintegration of the Palestinian Authority – in large measure due to the failure of the political process (for which it was among the responsible parties) and the result of Israeli moves against the PA due to its non-fulfillment of agreements – was accompanied by an increasingly powerful Hamas. This urged a renewed deployment that was independent of Israeli-Palestinian coordination; an end to the struggle against Israel in and from the territories; and intermediate moves as part of an agreed upon final status plan. That being the case, the main significance of the security barrier and the disengagement lay in how the solid foundation of Israel's handling of the conflict's immediate security challenges became more flexible.

Conclusion

In light of the failure to advance a compromise, let alone ensure its implementation, the political process was pushed aside from both the Israeli and Palestinian agendas. The alternatives adopted by the two sides, however, did not diminish the immediate challenges presented to them by the conflict. For the Fatah-led PA, renewing negotiations with Israel became an objective that could

be a possible outcome of calm in the confrontation, but was not its central purpose. Thus Fatah strove for tactical coordination with Hamas, yet without any calm in the intra-Palestinian conflict, no calm was possible in the conflict with Israel. Removing the obstacle of the armed struggle against Israel from the path to renewed dialogue was not possible, and the increasingly elusive hope for a settlement fed into the PA's disintegration. On the other hand, the fence in the West Bank and the disengagement, intended to help Israel confront security challenges, only partially fulfilled expectations. Accordingly, the breaking of the taboo that made these moves possible was not institutionalized as a policy guideline or as an indication of the near future.

As the seventh year of the confrontation drew to a close, contacts between Israel and the Fatah-led PA were renewed. This development did not stem from the acknowledgment of the limited advantages of a unilateral focus on urgent security problems. Nor did it stem from the pressure of Israeli and Palestinian public opinion, which throughout the years of conflict largely remained in favor of a negotiated settlement, despite increasing doubts as to its feasibility. The talks were necessary as part of a regional diplomatic move initiated by the US, meant to advance Israeli-Arab dialogue in the spirit of the Arab initiative and thereby assure regional legitimacy for an Israeli-Palestinian settlement. The renewed talks were guided by a common aspiration to ensure that the festive regional meeting, which took place under American auspices, would not be an exercise in futility and would not join the long list of disappointments that have fueled the conflict's escalation. Therefore Israel sought to avoid a commitment to link the talks with the sub-

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stance of a permanent settlement and conditions for its implementation, while the Fatah leadership sought to ensure that the meeting officially opens concrete discussions on core issues of the conflict – refugees, borders, and the future of Jerusalem.

But even if the renewed process gains momentum, the sides will quickly find themselves at the same point they were at on the eve of the present round of violence, i.e., facing the same disputes whose solutions are the conditions for a settlement and, in fact, the settlement itself. Ever since the start of the Oslo process, and especially during the course of the current confrontation, the intensity of these cores of the conflict has become clear. Contending with these disputes would remain problematic – even if the PA had not disintegrated as it did during this round of the conflict; even if Hamas had not garnered strength and influence; even if Israel had succeeded in enforcing calm; and even if the Palestinian economic infrastructure had not fallen into an unprecedented slump in its history. Certainly the confrontation did not come out of the blue. The primary forces that propelled it – violence and counter violence, the weakness of the institutional and economic system in the territories, the internal Palestinian struggle, and Israel's fear of committing to an agreement the PA could not honor – evolved in the years preceding the outbreak and accelerated its development. The split within the PA, between the government headed by Fatah and the Hamas government, did distinguish the camp seeking compromise from the militant camp, but did not break the vicious circle that has sabotaged attempts over the years to settle the conflict. As in the past, the struggle against militant Palestinian forces is destined to make the political process more difficult, while progress

in the direction of a settlement is destined to intensify the struggle of those seeking to obstruct it. This was the outcome of the Oslo process, whose launch marked the termination of the round of conflict that developed with the first uprising, and of the roadmap, intended for bringing an end to the round of conflict that developed with the second uprising.

Perhaps the way out of this entanglement involves a sweeping change of approach and a new direction – of seeking an agreement over the outline of a settlement while abandoning the effort, proven futile, of subduing violence as a condition for gradually building up willingness for a compromise. To be sure, this approach met with failure at the Camp David summit in 2000; but later, the costs of suspending dialogue and the renewal of the violent confrontation became clear. As time went on, the principles of a feasible settlement responding to the national and security demands and aspirations of both sides also became clear. These principles have been laid out in various formats at forums attended by unofficial representatives of Israel, the Palestinians, and international bodies. UN Security Council resolutions, the Clinton plan, and the Arab peace initiative could supplement these principles with political and formal legitimacy and thereby ease the task of garnering Israeli, Palestinian, and international support for an agreement formulated in their spirit. Alternatively, adhering to a roadmap plotted in stages, which postpones indefinitely a fundamental discussion of the principles of a settlement, would reflect a surrendering to the dynamic of the conflict, which has repeatedly brought the sides to a bloody impasse and has fanned the fires of its continuation.

Notes

- 1 The policy of targeted killings, employed frequently during the uprising, was symbolic of the seriousness Israel ascribed to Palestinian violence. This policy, which was integrated into the repertoire of Israeli counteractions in November 2000, became a focus of criticism in Israel and the international arena due to the collateral deaths that occurred more than once during pursuits of Palestinian activists.
- 2 The number of attacks (including firearms and light weapons, grenades, high trajectory fire, i.e., the launching of mortars and Qas-sam rockets, laying explosives, and suicide attacks) fell from 10,206 in 2001 to 2,135 in 2006. The number of firings of rockets and mortars reached 1,481 in 2004. In 2006 there were approximately 900 shooting incidents. The number of successful suicide attacks fell from 184 in 2003, to 15 in 2005, and rose to 71 in 2006. Source: monthly totals by *News on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, Israel Intelligence Heritage & Commemoration Center, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center.
- 3 Data from B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. Most of the Israeli casualties, were civilian victims of suicide attacks carried out in city centers within the Green Line. The peak of the suicide attack wave was in 2002–3.
- 4 Growth in the Palestinian economy was evident beginning in 1997, due mainly to a rise in the number of Palestinians working in Israel; the transfer of tax monies collected by Israel for the PA, and extensive international aid. See G. Feiler, *Economic Aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University, Mideast Security and Policy Studies 59 (2004).
- 5 In the period between September 29, 2000 and October 31, 2007, a total of 556 Palestinians were killed in inter-organizational clashes in the territories; according to B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories.
- 6 Herzliya address, December 18, 2003, http://www.herzliyaconference.org/Eng/_Articles/Article.asp?ArticleID=892&CategoryID=153.
- 7 “The disengagement is a preservative for the president’s formula (the roadmap). It is a bottle of formaldehyde in which you place the formula of the president (Bush) so it can be preserved for a very long time. Disengagement supplies the required amount of formaldehyde so that there will not be a peace process...it enables Israel to conveniently park itself in an intermediate situation that keeps political pressure away, as much as possible.” Dov Weisglass in an interview with Ari Shavit, *Haaretz*, October 10, 2004. This representation undermined the argument that the disengagement from Gaza was meant to respond to the demographic challenge, which remains essentially unchanged so long as Israel retains control of the West Bank.