

A Guide to Preparing International Arab-Israeli Summits

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On November 27, 2007, Arab, Israeli, Palestinian and U.S. delegations met, alongside representatives from the international community, in Annapolis, Maryland, with the hope of reviving a peace process that had laid dormant for seven years. Both sides hoped to embark on a path toward peace that would eventually lead to the creation of an Arab-Palestinian state by 2011 – a state that would enjoy peaceful bilateral relations with the neighboring Jewish state of Israel. While Israeli and Palestinian officials are now currently holding meetings in pursuit of this goal, there are many other actors in the peace process that greatly affect its outcome – in particular, the United States. The United States has been the crucial third-party actor in each of the three former Israeli-Arab peace conferences, including the first Camp David summit in 1978, the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, and the second Camp David summit in 2000. During each of these conferences, the United States played a powerful role in facilitating negotiations between the sides.

This paper will begin by presenting a guide to direct U.S. actions in any future U.S.-sponsored Israeli-Arab peace summit. The paper argues that: (1) U.S. negotiators should prepare extensively before the summit, (2) all countries with vested interests, including Arab delegations, should be included in the summit and (3) throughout the negotiations at the summit, the United States must take the foremost leadership in bridging divides between the parties. This paper will examine these ideas along with their counterarguments. It will also discuss the extent to which each of these factors played a role in the success of the last three conferences. Even though each summit differs in its eventual success, these summits provide illustrative and crucial insights into the proper U.S. role in diplomacy.

METHODOLOGY

While there have been additional Israeli-Arab conferences in the past, only the three aforementioned conferences will be discussed due to their crucial difference from the others. Camp David I, Madrid, and Camp David II are unique in that they served as the starting point for new negotiations between

Israel and Arab delegations.

The 1978 Camp David summit began the process that eventually led to the 1979 Israel-Egypt peace treaty; the Madrid Conference began bilateral negotiations between Israel and Jordan, Israel and Syria, and Israel and the Palestinians; and the 2000 Camp David summit revived the stalled Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. These conferences differ from the 1993 Oslo meetings, the 1998 Wye River negotiations, and the 2001 Taba summit in that each of those conferences acted as follow-up meetings based on advancing a peace process that had already begun at an earlier summit. Because these meetings were secondary negotiations, rather than founding talks, they will not be discussed here.

Discussing founding negotiations is crucial in the present day, as the peace process has stalled for the past seven years. While the U.S.-sponsored Annapolis summit in late November 2007 has revived Israeli-Palestinian bilateral negotiations, it is too early to assess its success. Only after months or even years will scholars be able to truly assess the possible achievements of the summit. Consequently, this paper will not discuss Annapolis itself, but instead will focus on each of the former conferences. These summits highlight the need for the United States to facilitate negotiations between Israel and the surrounding Arab states.

EXTENSIVE PREPARATION BEFORE THE SUMMIT

A U.S.-sponsored summit can only be successful if the American leadership undertakes extensive preparation beforehand. This paper defines “extensive preparation” as a long-term commitment to serving as a mediating party between the sides, which includes but is not limited to shuttle diplomacy, ministerial negotiations, and research of divisive issues. The United States must follow these steps in preparation for a summit, because the summit itself cannot begin the negotiations; each side must already demonstrate a willingness to work together. In addition, this preparation will educate the administration as to what issues it can be forceful on, and what issues will not be compromised.

There are critics who argue that the United States should not prepare extensively for negotiations; instead, they say that it must respond to improved diplomatic relations between the opposing sides. These critics believe the United States must wait for the two parties to be willing to cooperate before the administration begins to facilitate negotiations. A vocal proponent of this ideology is Martin Indyk, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel and director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP) from 1982-1990. In

1988, WINEP produced a report for the White House which stressed that the administration should only respond to, instead of initiating, dialogue. Kathleen Christison accurately characterizes the report, stating, “ ... the report was a blueprint for inaction. Concluding the United States should shun efforts to achieve a rapid breakthrough, the report urged the administration to engage in a drawn-out ‘ripening process’ that would gradually create an atmosphere conducive to negotiations.”¹

While this argument correctly identifies the willingness of the two sides to cooperate as a prerequisite for negotiations, the argument ignores the need for the United States to aid the cooperation process between the parties. Christison moves on to explain the reality of the ripeness argument, stating, “ ... [it] holds that the United States should do virtually nothing to move the peace process along until the parties themselves are ready.”² The subsequent conferences discussed in the paper each demonstrate the faults in the “ripeness” argument. These events highlight the need for the United States to prepare extensively before a summit. If the United States had not lain the foundation for these conferences, they likely would have never taken place, and accordingly the past breakthroughs in the peace process might never have come about. In other words, the two sides cannot do it alone. At least one longtime U.S. official eventually changed his opinion and came to this conclusion, as William Quandt states: “[Jim] Baker [Secretary of State, 1989-1992], who had always maintained so firmly that the United States could do nothing until the parties were ready, finally recognized that, while the United States could not make peace for Arabs and Israelis, only the United States could get them started.”³

Camp David I

From September 5-17, 1978, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and U.S. President Jimmy Carter met on the grounds of Camp David to seek a resolution to the Israeli-Egyptian and Israeli-Palestinian disputes. This meeting came about only after extensive preparation on the part of President Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. Beginning in 1977, Vance made multiple trips to the Middle East, and in addition, Carter sent five personal letters to the Israeli and Egyptian leaders. As the summit approached, President Carter asked the National Security Council to prepare profile reports of the Israeli and Egyptian delegations in order to familiarize himself with the negotiating parties.⁴ He also requested that the State Department identify the divisive issues between the two parties and construct compromise solutions which he could present at the conference.⁵ This preparation demonstrated the administration’s willingness

to spend a great deal of time laying the groundwork for the summit. Carter and his team met numerous times with Israeli and Egyptian officials while also taking the time to prepare themselves for inevitable disagreements.

This preparation came to fruition during the twelve days at Camp David as the two sides were able to formulate an agreement. Carter understood where each leader would eventually have to make concessions and did not allow setbacks and frustrations to break down the process. By the end of the conference, the two sides had produced two documents, “A Framework for Peace in the Middle East” and “A Framework for the Conclusion of the Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel.” The latter document eventually led to the forging of the Egypt-Israel Peace Accords on March 26, 1979. This document, signed on the north lawn of the White House, has led the two countries to live relatively peacefully, side-by-side, for over 28 years.

Madrid Peace Conference

While the 1978 Camp David summit led to the framework of an Israeli-Egyptian peace accord, the Palestinian issue was ultimately left unsettled. It would take another twelve years before the sides would meet to attempt to resolve the issue. Again, the United States acted as the primary third-party negotiator and facilitator. In October 1991, delegations from Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinians, led by the U.S., met in Madrid, Spain to create further frameworks for negotiations. Similar to the first Camp David summit, the United States prepared thoroughly for this conference – a preparation that was crucial to its success.

This work began in March 1991, just weeks after the end of the Gulf War. Between March and October, Secretary of State James Baker made eight trips to the Middle East, and President George H.W. Bush sent personal letters to the Egyptian, Israeli, Jordanian, Saudi Arabian and Syrian leaders.⁶ Baker spent countless hours in his meetings with officials from each of these countries while at the same time meeting with individuals with links to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Initially, Israel was hesitant to join an international conference as it believed that joining would place undue pressure on Israel to make painful concessions.⁷ Baker’s tireless efforts, however, eventually persuaded each of these countries to send a delegation because “[i]n his talks with leaders in the region, Baker urged each one not to be responsible for the breakdown of the peace process. He made it clear that he was prepared, in his words, to leave the ‘dead cat on the doorstep’ of the intransigent party if the talks failed.”⁸ The United States used its newfound influence after the Gulf War to encourage each of countries to participate in the conference.

While the summit lasted only three days, it was nonetheless successful, as it created bilateral and multilateral negotiations between Israeli and Arab participants. These separate negotiations eventually led to the signing of the Oslo Accords in August 1993, which represented the first mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO. In addition, the conference led to the signing of the Israel-Jordan peace treaty in 1995. Finally, the conference led to five multilateral working groups for security cooperation, refugees, the environment, water distribution and regional economic development. If Bush and Baker had not put forth extensive efforts in persuading each of the countries to attend, the likelihood of these successes would have decreased greatly.⁹

Camp David II

Even with the successes of Madrid in 1991 and the Oslo process that began in 1993, an independent Palestinian state had not been created by the turn of the century. President Bill Clinton finally sought to conclude a framework for an Israeli-Palestinian final status agreement by July 2000. From July 11-25, Clinton met with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat at Camp David in hopes of forming a final settlement between the Israeli and the Palestinian leaderships.

Unlike his predecessors, Clinton chose to forego high-level diplomacy in preparation for the summit. During June and July, then-U.S. chief negotiator Dennis Ross along with Chairman Arafat both expressed their desire to postpone the summit in order to narrow the large gaps between the sides.¹⁰ Clinton, however, preferred to stick to the schedule. As a result, Barak and Arafat entered the summit with important issues largely unsettled.¹¹ Much of the first two weeks at Camp David was spent on negotiating basic issues, such as the removal of roadblocks within the Palestinian territories and determining post-settlement bilateral security arrangements. These issues were easier to negotiate than the final status issues because each delegation's constituencies would be more willing to accept compromises on these arrangements. The negotiating teams were primarily concerned with the final status issues of Jerusalem, borders, refugees and settlements. The discussions of secondary issues unfortunately took up a great deal of time, which forced final status negotiations to be continually delayed. Even in the last days of the summit, the critical issues had not been discussed at great lengths. By the time the summit had concluded, the sides had been unable to come to an agreement over these key issues.

There were many factors that led to the breakdown in talks, including Barak's difficult bargaining style, Arafat's unwillingness to give up a greater

percentage of land to Israel, and many others.¹² However, the United States' lack of preparation cannot be overlooked; William Quandt describes: "If there were a criticism that seemed valid, it would be ... that so little time in the preceding seven years had been used to lay the basis for the substantive discussions of the issues [final status issues] that finally came in focus at the summit. Clinton's penchant for relying on all-nighters had perhaps served him well in the past, but not this time."¹³ Clinton had pushed for the summit as a last resort, but had not adequately prepared for negotiations.

START WITH EVERYONE WITH A VESTED INTEREST

In addition to extensive preparations, the United States must include all countries and organizations with vested interests in the summit itself. In the past, these representations were often limited to regional Arab countries, such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. This group has now expanded to include the entire Arab world, along with international organizations such as the International Quartet on the Middle East, the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund. Each of these delegations benefits from a resolution to the Israeli-Arab conflict, and thus has an interest in bringing the two sides together.

There are critics, however, who claim that a conference, inclusive of Arab states, will place undue pressure on Israel to make dangerous concessions; "Israel ... saw in a UN-sponsored conference a venue in which the world tribunal would impose an unpalpable settlement on Israel."¹⁴ In addition, critics argue that Israel will be unable to concede to the demands of the international community, which will inevitably lead to an outbreak in violence. These pundits cite the beginning of the second Intifada as a direct result of the failure of Camp David II. These ideas can be seen through the words of former Washington bureau chief for Haaretz newspaper Nitzan Horowitz; when asked about the possible outcome of Camp David II, he stated, "There is great fear, at least in Israel, from break of violence and bloodshed if there is no agreement." He continued, "This is why there is really a heavy burden on both Arafat and Barak to reach an agreement, because otherwise, there is going to be bloodshed."¹⁵ Horowitz believes that renewed violence is more likely than a negotiated settlement in the post-conference period.

Horowitz, similar to other critics, chooses to focus on the dangers of including outside countries while ignoring the numerous potential benefits. In terms of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, a Palestinian state will be dependent on international foreign investment to improve its judicial system, support the budget of Palestinian Authority (PA) and improve internal infrastructure.¹⁶

Israel will also rely on foreign aid to the Palestinian government, because the PA must be able to carry out its own security measures to protect its own people and to prevent attacks on Israel. A summit must include outside countries, consequently, in order to protect both Israeli and Palestinian interests.

Israel also shares security concerns with neighboring Arab states. These countries, in particular Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, no longer threaten the destruction of Israel; instead, they are themselves threatened by the growth of internal radical Islamic groups, international terrorist organizations and the Iranian regime.¹⁷ Charles Kupchan, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, states, “A truculent Iran poses a potent obstacle to developing a cooperative security order for the Gulf. If the regime in Tehran continues its belligerent rhetoric and proceeds with its nuclear program, the GCC would have to focus on collective defense against Iran instead of focusing on the collective security of the region.”¹⁸ Times have changed – the Arab world no longer calls for the destruction of Israel, but instead these countries fear their own political survival. These states have a vested interest in participating in international conferences as they hope to reap its benefits; as Quandt states, “A solution to the Palestinian question will not guarantee a moderate political order in the Arab world, but it could be a positive development.”¹⁹ Once a peace treaty between Israel and the Palestinians is signed, the rest of the Arab world will be able to forge diplomatic ties with Israel,²⁰ after which these states will be able to negotiate more beneficial arms agreements with Israel and the United States, similar to those of Turkey and Egypt. In 2005, Turkey signed a \$200 million arms agreement with Israel, while in 2007, the U.S. finalized an agreement that will provide Egypt with \$13 billion in economic assistance over ten years.²¹

Camp David I

At the first Camp David summit, the United States, Israel and Egypt were the only negotiating partners. Even without the participation of regional Arab states, the opposing sides were able to commit to a framework agreement that eventually led to a full peace treaty. While this sequence of events appears to imply that the inclusion of regional countries in summits is unnecessary, a deeper study of the consequences of the summit reveals new information.

The 1979 Israel-Egypt peace accord benefited the respective nations greatly; however, the agreement produced additional repercussions. In the end, the Palestinian question remained unsolved and Egypt was suspended from the Arab League in 1979. Granted, any explanation of differing outcomes from Camp David is purely speculative, but it is nevertheless necessary to more

deeply examine the conference. To begin, the conference did not include delegations from Jordan or from the Palestinians. These countries had previously criticized the notion of a diplomatic summit; however, a stronger U.S. effort to include these countries may have produced results; as Quandt states, “... some significant mistakes could have been avoided and a serious bid for Jordanian and Palestinian involvement in the peace process might have been made in 1978. Their rejection of Camp David had not been immediate, total, or inevitable.”²² If these delegations were included, there would have been a greater likelihood that serious negotiations could have begun over the status of the Palestinians.²³ Including Jordanian and Palestinian delegations in the negotiations would not have undoubtedly solved the Palestinian issue, though their inclusion could have offered more of a chance for a solution. As a result of the exclusion of these countries, Egypt could only make limited headway on the Palestinian issue.

While the treaty resulted in the improvement of Israeli-Egyptian relations, it also led to the suspension of Egypt from the Arab League in 1979. The Arab League, which had sought a peace agreement with Israel just two years earlier, criticized Egypt’s decision to negotiate unilaterally with Israel. The League thought that Egypt had ignored the plight of the Palestinian people and had taken advantage of the situation to improve its own interests. It is impossible to predict whether Israel and Egypt would have been able to form a peace agreement if other Arab states were included in the negotiations; however, the United States could have made more of an effort to enlist support from these governments. If regional governments saw that Egypt – the leader of the Arab world at the time – was embarking on the path toward peace with Israel, these other countries might have similarly followed suit. If the other governments were not willing to follow Egypt’s lead, it would not have any worse effects on Israeli-Egyptian negotiations as Egypt’s actions would have already brought about political fallout in the Arab world. On the other hand, multilateral efforts by the United States could have motivated other regional governments to follow Egypt’s lead. This is not to say that an Israeli-Egyptian peace was not a desirable outcome in and of itself; however, it is to say that the Middle East will remain in conflict as long as the Palestinian problem remains. Therefore, Egypt could have been used to influence the decision of other regional governments.

Madrid Conference

In contrast to the trilateral meeting at Camp David, regional Arab states played a crucial role in the Madrid Conference. This summit included delegations from countries that were both allies and enemies of the United

States during the Gulf War, which lent credibility to the conference. The United States did not exclude its rivals from diplomatic negotiations; instead, President Bush and Secretary of State Baker parlayed its success in the war into persuading countries to work toward peace. Though various states held longstanding disagreements with Israel, these countries had mutual security and economic concerns that motivated them to work together.

In terms of security, the idea of an existential conflict between Arabs and Israelis no longer existed. From 1973-1991, a period of nearly 18 years, there had not been a single large-scale conflict between Israel and the Arab countries. Each of these countries was primarily concerned with continued internal violence and external threats emanating from Iraq and Iran. If the threat of Arab-Israeli violence were lessened, these countries would be better equipped to confront their respective problems. The United States capitalized on these mutual interests by discussing points for possible military cooperation; as Quandt states, "On May 29, the administration launched a proposal on regional arms control. This, it seemed, was designed to appeal to Israelis by drawing several Arab states, such as Saudi Arabia, into discussions on limiting arms control."²⁴ These countries realized that a regional arms control agreement would serve their own interests and were therefore willing to cooperate. By the end of the conference, thirteen Arab states, Israel and a Palestinian delegation had formed the Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) working group.²⁵ In addition to the ACRS, four other multilateral working groups dealing with refugees, the environment, water distribution and regional economic development were developed. Israel and the surrounding Arab countries shared mutual concerns over decisive issues and were willing to work together to solve them.

While the importance of the multilateral working groups cannot be overlooked, the symbolic presence of all the parties attending the conference may have been Madrid's biggest success; as Quandt states, "No one could ignore the symbolic presence – and therefore political – importance of the parties' sitting together at the negotiating table. And for the first time in recent history, the Palestinians were present, speaking on their own behalf."²⁶ The traditional view of an existential conflict between Israel and the Arab countries had ended. In its wake, Madrid left the realization that each of the parties had a vested interest in working together toward a common goal – peace.

Finally, it is important to highlight that Madrid was the first occasion where Palestinians represented themselves. Israel had ultimately accepted the idea that the Palestinians could not be dealt with via neighboring governments. The Palestinian problem would have to be negotiated directly with Palestinian

representatives, who looked out for the best interests of their own people. The summit had created an environment in which the Israeli government, the Palestinian people and surrounding Arab governments seemed willing to work together toward peace.

Camp David II

These common interests were ignored during the second Camp David negotiations as the U.S. chose not to engage neighboring Arab countries. The U.S., Israeli and Palestinian leaderships believed that the Israeli-Palestinian bilateral negotiations, which had begun at Madrid and continued through the Oslo process and 1999 Wye River summit, would serve as a solid foundation, and therefore, support from the regional governments was not needed. By 2000, each of the parties believed that the time was ripe to begin final status negotiations. The United States, however, chose not to call upon other countries in helping the two sides come together.

Using Camp David II as a case study to examine of the role of outside countries in an international summit can only be speculative, due to the absence of the these countries at the summit. As a result, this paper will not examine this theory at great lengths in terms of Camp David II. However, it is important to highlight Chairman Arafat's comments in the final days of the summit. In "The Camp David Papers," Akram Hanieh quotes Arafat as saying, "Jerusalem is not only a Palestinian city ... it is also an Arab, Islamic and Christian city. If I am going to make a decision on Jerusalem, I have to consult with the Sunnis and the Shi'a and all Arab countries. I have to consult with many countries starting with Iran and Pakistan, passing by Indonesia and Bangladesh, and ending with Nigeria."²⁷ In these last days, the final status negotiations, which included a discussion of the fate of Jerusalem and its holy sites, had finally begun. These negotiations would ultimately fail for many reasons, including the underlying problems of the absence of outside Arab delegations. While Arafat may have exaggerated the list of countries that had a direct claim in the negotiations, his basic message could not be overlooked: Outside Arab states have a stake in the peace process and cannot be ignored. These countries need to be included in negotiations as they have the ability to assist with or detract from the peace process.

U.S. CRITICAL ROLE IN BRIDGING DIVIDES

America must be willing to play a role in bridging divides between the negotiating parties. This paper defines "bridging divides" as: (1) the United States actively participating in negotiations by drafting compromise proposals

between the two sides and (2) the United States using its strong influence to help form agreements. To be an active participant, the United States must be at the center of negotiations, instead of allowing the two sides to negotiate between themselves. In each of these cases, the United States cannot overtly support one side and criticize the other.

Critics argue that these actions place undue pressure on the negotiating parties and could lead to the acceptance of undesirable agreements. This idea was illustrated by Congressman Mike Pence (R-Ind.) in a discussion with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert after the recent Annapolis conference. Pence asked Olmert “... [if the conference] put Israel under undue pressure to offer concessions which would not be in her long-term strategic interests.”²⁸ At the heart of Pence’s question is the underlying assumption that the United States pressured Israel to begin negotiations with the Palestinian delegation, which might ultimately lead to future problems for Israel. Similar to other critics, Pence believes that the two sides should be able to negotiate agreements on their own terms, if so desired, but the United States should not force leaders to accept unwise policy decisions.

The strength of this argument comes into question after examining the past inabilities of the opposing sides to carry out independent negotiations. William Quandt describes the need for a mediating party “... between Israel and its neighbors to help overcome deep distrust and historically rooted antagonism.”²⁹ He goes on to describe the need for the United States to place pressure on the two sides, as he states, “... negotiations require strategic thinking. Much more is involved than simply encouraging reluctant parties to talk to one another. Real influence has to be wielded in order to get Arabs and Israelis to modify their positions.”³⁰ Instead of looking at the possible problems resulting from U.S. pressure, as critics often do, there are many possible benefits for the negotiating sides’ ability to adhere to U.S. proposals. Quandt goes on to describe these benefits: “And the United States, with its vast economic and military resources, can help to change the calculus of benefit and risk for the parties of the conflict by making bilateral commitments to them.”

Camp David I

Quandt accurately describes the inabilities of the two sides to negotiate an independent agreement, and the key role of the United States during Camp David I:

“For Egypt and Israel, it is fair to say that peace was possible, but not inevitable, after the 1973 war ... Left to themselves, they would probably not have found their way to agreement ... The U.S. role became crucial

because both Egypt and Israel wanted American involvement and hoped to win Washington to their point of view.”³²

During the first Camp David summit, President Carter successfully mediated between the two sides. From the first day of the summit, it became clear that the two sides would not be able to negotiate directly. As a result, Carter structured the negotiations so that he and Secretary of State Vance would meet separately with the Israeli and Egyptian leaders to formulate nonbinding drafts. Carter, Vance and an American delegation would then create a single compromise draft for the two sides. The leaders would return to their separate delegations with these new drafts, discuss possible disagreements with the American proposal, and formulate new proposals. This process was carried out over the following twelve days. This method of negotiations highlights the need for America to serve an active role in negotiations; America cannot always stand on the side and hope the negotiating parties can form their own agreement.

In addition to their participation in the negotiations, Carter and Vance wielded American influence at certain points. During the negotiations, Israel sought \$3 billion in aid to construct new airfields in the Negev desert, of which \$800 million would be in the form of grants, while Egypt requested \$1.5 billion in military aid over the subsequent three years. Carter chose not to sign these aid agreements until the Israeli and Egyptian leaders agreed to a final peace treaty, after which he signed off on both agreements.³³ Carter’s decision motivated the two sides to work together, and highlighted the benefits of pressuring the two sides at certain points; “Carter ... had been much more willing to take stands on substance ... He did not hesitate to use fairly blunt pressure to get them to budge from positions that he judged to be unreasonable.”³⁴ While Begin and Sadat would eventually be the ones to sign the final peace treaty, they could not reach these agreements on their own. These leaders needed both the support and motivation of the United States.

Madrid Conference

During the subsequent ten years following the Israel-Egypt Accords, the United States remained largely absent from the region. However, the Gulf War in 1991 presented a new set of circumstances in the Middle East. The Bush administration would not pass up this newfound opportunity and would go to great lengths to renew negotiations between Israel and the Arab states.

The Palestinian and Israeli leaderships entered into the negotiations hopeful for a renewal of the peace process. Yet two key obstacles stood in the way: continued Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank and the

Gaza Strip along with the PLO's refusal to recognize the State of Israel. At this point, the U.S. stepped in to break the political deadlock. In May 1991, the Israeli government had requested \$10 billion in American loan guarantees to help with the absorption of Soviet immigrants. The administration was hesitant to provide these funds as they would, in part, go toward expanding settlement construction in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. President Bush and Secretary of State Baker decided to use this request as a tool for leverage. Quandt describes this joint effort as he states, "Appearing before a House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on May 22, Baker labeled Israeli settlement activity a major obstacle to peace. Bush echoed this view the following day."³⁵ The administration then conditioned the \$10 billion loan agreement on a pledge by Israel to halt its construction of new settlements.³⁶ This hurt the Israeli government, and in particular Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, in the eyes of its people. Shamir was unable to overcome a continued barrage of criticism, and by June 1992, Shamir's Likud government suffered a dramatic defeat in the polls. Yitzhak Rabin's Labor party, one that pledged to end new settlement construction, reclaimed power in Israel for the first time in fifteen years. Shortly after Rabin was elected, the U.S. Congress approved the \$10 billion in loan guarantees. While the delay in the loan guarantee was not the sole reason for the fall of Shamir's government, it played an important factor in the Israeli elections. Christison describes aptly the role that the United States played in the Israeli elections: "The Israelis [voted out Shamir's Likud government] when they realized that there were limits to U.S. aid."³⁷

In terms of the PLO's recognition of Israel, Bush and Baker chose to use their role as mediators to change the stance of the PLO. In 1991, there existed various Palestinian political and terrorist organizations; however, the PLO held the broadest and most widely recognized support among the Palestinian people. Therefore, the organization demanded that it be able to represent its own people. Still, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin would not negotiate with the PLO as it did not recognize the state of Israel. Baker negotiated an agreement between the two sides in early 1991 which complied with both sides' demands. The agreement followed that the PLO representation would be disguised through a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation with the Palestinians all coming from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and thus exiled PLO leaders in Tunisia would not be able to participate. The PLO agreed to this structure, as the organization was allowed to choose the list of people from the territories that would be their disguised representation.³⁸ This assured that the voice of the PLO would be heard in the discussions. Israel also agreed to this solution as they could claim that it was not directly negotiating with the PLO. The ability of the two sides to come together came

as a direct result of the efforts of Secretary Baker. If the United States had stood on the sidelines, it is less likely that Israel and the Palestinians could have negotiated a framework for the conference. Instead, the U.S. played an active role in negotiations, which helped the two sides to work out their differences.

Camp David II

The administration's active role in the peace process diminished over the course of the 1990s as a new emphasis was placed on the Oslo process of incremental negotiations. However, by June 2000, Clinton believed that the time was ripe for the two sides to reach a final agreement. Clinton summoned Barak and Arafat to the Camp David retreat in a repeat of the 1978 summit. Clinton, however, would play a much different role than Carter did in the negotiations.

While any explanation of the summit's failure is only speculative, it is nevertheless important to examine Clinton's role in either helping or hurting the negotiations. Unlike Carter, Clinton did not encourage the two sides to draft proposals. Instead, Clinton relied on informal verbal agreements as the basis for progress. Later in the summit this negotiating format detracted from the process as Barak and Arafat were hesitant to commit their proposals to paper.³⁹ Clinton also failed to put pressure on the two sides to come together; as Quandt states, "[Clinton] had avoided taking stands on many of the most controversial issues, urging the parties to reach compromises but hesitating to put forward an American plan ... but it was unclear if his more conciliatory manner would be enough to budge the parties from their firm positions."⁴⁰ The absence of a strong mediating party hurt the leaders' ability to reach agreements. While both sides desired the common goal of an independent Palestinian state existing next to the Israeli state, the sides seemed unwilling to make the needed concessions. If Clinton had put forward American proposals and used his influence to bridge divides between the two sides, there could have been a greater chance for success.⁴¹ Ultimately, however, Barak and Arafat would have to be the ones making concessions and signing the agreement.

CONCLUSION

The United States' economic and military global hegemony places it in a unique position of being able to facilitate negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The United States has, at times, successfully carried out its role as a third-party negotiator, while at other moments has failed to structure

productive diplomatic conferences. The outcomes of these meetings largely resulted from the extent of U.S. preparation before the conference, decision to include or exclude countries with vested interests in the conference, and actions as a mediating party during the negotiations. If the United States desires to make future progress in the Arab-Israeli peace process, it must learn from both its success and failures in the 1978 Camp David summit, 1991 Madrid Conference, and 2000 Camp David summit. In addition, it must examine the changing nature of the Middle East in the 21st century and take advantage of new opportunities that arise. Following a dual approach of learning from the past and adapting former policies to the present offers the greatest opportunity for the United States to successfully broker a final Arab-Israeli peace accord in the future.

1 Kathleen Christison, "Bound by a Frame of Reference," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 27 (1994): 55-56.

2 *Ibid.*, 56-57.

3 Kathleen Christison, "Splitting the Difference: The Palestinian-Israeli Policy of James Baker," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 24 (1994): 48.

4 William Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005).

5 "Policy Preparations – Briefings, Options, and Strategy," <http://www.ibiblio.org/sullivan/CDPrep-policy.html> (December 14, 2007)

6 Christison, "Splitting the Difference."

7 Quandt, *Peace Process*, 306.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Graeme Bannerman, "Arabs and Israelis: Slow Walk Towards Peace," *Foreign Affairs* (1993).

10 Quandt, *Peace Process*, 364.

11 *Ibid.*, 367.

12 *Ibid.*, 371-372.

13 *Ibid.*, 372.

14 David Bar-Illan, "Israel's New Pollyannas," *Commentary Magazine* (September 1993).

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16 "Palestinian Authority to ask for \$5.5b in aid at Paris donors conference," *Haaretz* (December 2, 2007).

17 Michelle Jacobson, "Arab States Efforts to combat Terrorist Financing," *Washington Institute* (April 16 2007).

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19 William Quandt, "Camp David and Peacemaking in the Middle East," *Political Science Quarterly*, 101 (1986): 373.

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