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The US Role in the Arab- Israeli Peace Process

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The US Role in the Arab-Israeli Peace Process

The Arab-Israeli peace process is one of the most difficult problems in international relations, and one where the US role has often led to unfair criticism. There is much to criticize—this is not a perfect world, the US is scarcely perfect in any aspect of its diplomacy, and there have been many times when the US should have done more or done better. Americans need to admit that they have had a “dual standard” in their approach to the Arab-Israeli peace process, although there are good reasons for such a dual standard as well as bad ones:

- First, the US does support its allies far more than it support neutrals or enemies, and Israel has long been an US ally. The US does not exist in some political or moral vacuum of perfect objectivity, any more than any other nation.
- Second, US domestic politics are influenced much more by a Jewish vote than by an Arab or Islamic vote. This, however, is more because of a long history of Jewish political activism in many of the most progressive political causes in US domestic politics than because of any single-minded focus on Israel. Although there is an inevitable bias to Jewish politics in America, the stereotype of seeing Jewish politics as rigidly Zionist, unfair, or inflexible is wrong. I seriously question how many of our peace initiatives would ever have taken form if it had not been for pro-peace Jewish activists, and Jewish-American diplomats and policymakers. In fact, while there are hard-line Zionists in the US Jewish community—many of the most active, dedicated, and articulate spokesman for peace and for fair treatment of the Palestinians are also Jewish.
- Third, a US bias towards Israel does not mean blindness towards the Palestinian plight, or towards the fact that Israel’s security ultimately depends on its ability to create a just peace, rather than its military strength. The tragedy of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that has escalated since September 2000 came in spite of the most intensive peace effort the US ever made. It has gone on in spite of renewed US peace efforts and in ways the US has had every humanitarian, political, and strategic incentive to avoid.
- Fourth, it is a fact of life that when peace does not seem possible, and progress is difficult to make, US politics tend to turn towards other missions and tasks, and US domestic politics take on more importance. The Bush Administration inherited both a developing war and the failure of the most advanced Israeli-Palestinian peace effort since 1967 – an effort where President Clinton had devoted immense effort and political capital. Furthermore, another US failing is pragmatism; Americans go where the opportunity is, not simply where the need is.

It is also a fact that the US record of involvement in the Arab-Israeli peace process has often been far better than many understand, and particularly on the issue of how to shape a decent future for the Palestinians, rather than to re-fight the past. The following annotated chronology of US efforts and the other developments in the Arab-Israeli peace process shows how US policy evolved and changed in the context of events. It is scarcely an ideal record, but it is one of continuing effort, and sometimes one of considerable leadership and courage.

The Pre-Israeli Independence Era

- **1917 Balfour Declaration** is issued by British government during World War I. The Statement proclaims British support for “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” Before it is issued, US President Woodrow Wilson tells the British government he supports the proposal, encouraging them to issue it.
- **1919 President Wilson sends the King-Crane Commission** to the Middle East. It concludes that if the Zionist program called for in the Balfour Declaration is implemented, it will lead to the “complete dispossession of the present non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine” and be a “gross violation” of the concept of national self-determination. Nevertheless, that year the Wilson administration endorses League of Nations decisions that call for Palestine to become a British mandate and for the British to implement the Balfour Declaration in this territory.

Creation of Israel

- **January-March 1946 A special Anglo-American commission studies the Palestine issue and recommends the Morrison-Grady Plan** as a solution. The plan calls for Palestine to become a bi-national federal state made up of loosely linked, semiautonomous Arab and Jewish cantons. It also suggests that all future Jewish immigration into Palestine should have to be approved by both Arabs and Jews. **Both Zionists and the Arabs reject the plan.**
- **November 1947 The UN General Assembly approves the partition plan. Despite the State Department’s objection, US President Harry Truman instructs the US Ambassador to the UN to vote in favor of the partition plan.** Before the vote, White House advisors Clark Clifford and David Niles meet with several other nations’ UN delegations, pressuring them to vote in favor of the plan. Cases in point: they suggest to Latin American delegations that construction of the Pan-American Highway might be halted if they vote against partition and tell the Philippines that US aid might be reduced if the country refused to switch its position.
 - According to a January 1948 State Department policy study: “As a result of U.S. sponsorship of UN action leading to the recommendation to partition Palestine, U.S. prestige in the Moslem [sic] world has suffered a severe blow....”
- **Fighting breaks out between Zionists and Palestinian Arabs** after the UN narrowly approves the partition plan. Zionists begin to gain the upper hand in early 1948.
- **On May 14, 1948 the Zionists declare the independent state of Israel. President Truman extends immediate recognition to Israel. The armies of the Arab states of Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon, and Iraq invade Palestine to try to prevent Israel from coming into being.**
 - The Arab states attack using largely British and French supplied arms against an Israel armed largely with arms smuggled in from the Soviet bloc.

- As the Israeli forces gain the upper hand in the fighting, thousands of Palestinian Arabs begin fleeing the Jewish controlled areas. The war marks the beginning of refugee problem and right of return debate which has now lasted well over 50 years and is still counting.
 - The end result is a transfer of some 100,000 Palestinian refugees to Lebanon, 4,000 to Iraq, 75,000 to Syria, 70,000 to Transjordan, 190,000 to Gaza Strip, and 7,000 to Egypt. A total of 252,000 Arabs leave “Palestine.”
 - Yet, this dislocation is scarcely one-sided. The flow in the other direction includes some 260,000 Moroccan, 14,000 Algerian, 36,000 Libyan, 56,000 Tunisian, 129,000 Iraqi, 30,000 Egyptian, and 51,000 Yemeni Jews during 1948-1972. A total of 576,000 Jews leave Arab countries.
- **In January 1949 wartime boundaries are accepted for a ceasefire.** Israel retains control over much of the area allotted to the projected Arab state under the partition plan. Jordan effectively unilaterally annexes the remaining Palestinian area (i.e. the West Bank and East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip comes under Egyptian rule. No legal borders are agreed upon, there are simply a series of individual armistice agreements. None of the Arab states accept Israel’s right to exist and a continued state of belligerency remains between.

1956 Suez Canal War

- Eisenhower threatens to support the implementation of UN economic sanctions on Israel if it does not withdraw its forces from Egypt. Israel gives Sinai back. Eisenhower also stops all shipments of oil from the Western Hemisphere to Europe, forcing Britain and France to stop their attack.
- The Suez war marks the turning point when the United States replaces the United Kingdom as the preeminent Western power in the Middle East—a role the US has maintained to this day

1967 Six Day War

- **1966 Nasser forces King Hussein to accept United Arab command of Jordanian forces.**
- **May 1967 Nasser reinstates a blockade against Israeli shipping through the Strait of Tiran**
 - President Johnson tries to organize an international flotilla to challenge the closure. Israel agrees to refrain from attacking Egypt to give this alternative a chance. However, the US effort fails because almost no other countries would allow their navies to participate and Johnson knew he could not gain

Congressional authorization to oppose the blockade unilaterally due to the deteriorating situation in Vietnam.

- President Johnson uses Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas, a close friend and advisor, as a backwater channel to inform the Israeli ambassador in Washington that he would not strongly object if Israel started a war (because the US attempt to find a peaceful alternative had failed); however, he also cautions that the US would not be able to intervene on Israel's behalf if it ran into trouble.
- **June 1967 On June 5, 1967 Israel launches a successful surprise attack on Egypt.** Nasser lies to King Hussein about damage caused by initial Israeli attack (in fact almost entire Egyptian air force was destroyed on the ground), demands Jordan attack Israel.
 - Nasser publicly accuses the US air force of participating in the attack (a false charge he maintains for several months) and breaks off diplomatic relations with the United States. U.S.-Egyptian relations are not formally restored until 1974.
- Israel tells King Hussein his forces will not be targeted unless Jordan attacks Israel. Jordan enters the conflict anyway and loses the West Bank and Jerusalem. A new flow of refugees takes place to Jordan and Lebanon. Many return but:
 - The total number of refugees has now doubled, plus many "Palestinians" born outside Gaza and West Bank.
- On June 11, 1967 President Johnson calls for a "cease-fire in place" to end the hostilities. This allows Israel to keep its forces in the newly occupied territories.

UNSCR 242

- ***November 22, 1967 UNSCR 242: Calls for withdrawal of Israeli forces occupied in the recent conflict" but not the territories. It is not drafted with the assumption that Israel would go back to all of the 1949-1967 armistice lines.***
- Affirms that the fulfillment 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:
 - Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict; and termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force
 - Affirms further the necessity: for guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area; for achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem; and for guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political

independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones

- Lord Caradon, chief architect of the resolution, has said, “It would have been wrong to demand that Israel return to its positions of June 4, 1967, because those positions were undesirable and artificial. After all, they were just the places where the soldiers of each side happened to be on the day the fighting stopped in 1948. They were just armistice lines. That’s why we didn’t demand that the Israelis return to them.”
- George Brown, Britain’s Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in 1967, stated in 1970 “The proposal said, ‘Israel will withdraw from territories that were occupied,’ and not from ‘the’ territories which means that Israel will not withdraw from all the territories.”

War of Attrition, 1968-1970

- **September 8, 1968** Egyptians begin bombarding Israeli positions on the east bank of the Suez with artillery fire. Israeli forces retaliate in kind and begin conducting commando raids into Egypt. Artillery exchanges continue into 1969. In July 1969, the IAF begins conducting air strikes on Egyptian military forces in the canal zone. In January 1970 the IAF begins deep bombing raids on military and industrial targets in Egypt. Nasser responds by asking the Soviets to take over Egypt’s air defense systems. In late July Israeli fighters ambush and shoot down 5 Soviet-piloted MiGs, leading the U.S. to step in and broker a cease-fire less than a week later.

The Rogers Plan

- **Alarmed by the escalating violence in the war of attrition, US Secretary of State William Rogers unveils a major new Arab-Israeli peace initiative (dubbed The Rogers Plan) on December 9, 1969.** The plan calls for the Israelis to withdraw from almost all of the territories it occupied in the 1967 Six Day War in exchange for peace agreement and official recognition from the Arab states.
- Full-text of Rogers Plan: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/rogers.html>
- **Israel immediately rejects the plan.** On 22 December, the Israeli Cabinet issues a statement explaining why. It includes: “The Cabinet rejects these American proposals, in that they: Prejudice the chances of establishing peace; Disregard the essential need to determine secure and agreed borders through the signing of peace treaties by direct negotiation; Affect Israel's sovereign rights and security in the drafting of the resolutions concerning refugees and the status of Jerusalem, and contain no actual obligation of the Arab States to put a stop to the hostile activities of the sabotage and terror organizations. If these proposals were to be carried out, Israel's security and peace would be in very grave danger. Israel will not be sacrificed by any Power policy, and will reject any attempt to impose a forced solution upon it.”
- For the full text of the official Israeli response see: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/rogers1.html>

- Egypt also refuses to endorse the Rogers Plan (although it does not outright reject it) on the grounds that it demands unacceptable concessions from Egypt (i.e. demilitarizing segments of the Sinai Peninsula).

Paralysis and Division in Arab World over Palestine and Jordan

- **September 1970 Black September.** Civil war in Jordan, PLO flees to Lebanon. Creates a climate that paralyzes peace efforts. After Syria intervenes, King Hussein asks for direct US intervention, but says he is willing to accept Israeli assistance if the US cannot be directly involved. The US asks Israel to intervene on Jordan's behalf; IAF jets fly over advancing Syrian tanks, which retreat shortly thereafter (due to threat of Israeli attack and/or Jordan's counteroffensive). President Nixon has Henry Kissinger deliver a personal message to the Israeli government thanking them for intervening in the crisis. It reads: "The president will never forget Israel's role in preventing the deterioration in Jordan and in blocking the attempt to overturn the regime there. He said that the United States is fortunate in having an ally like Israel in the Middle East. These events will be taken into account in all future developments."
- **October 1974 The Arab League recognizes the right of the PLO to establish an independent state on the West Bank for the first time at the October 1974 Rabat Summit Conference:** The Rabat Summit conference in October 1974 brings together the leaders of twenty Arab states and representatives of the PLO, whose leaders threaten a walkout if their demands for unconditional recognition are not met. The PLO requires a statement from the conference that any Palestinian territory liberated by Arab forces will be turned over to the "Palestinian people" as represented by the PLO. Jordan protests, pointing out that recognition on these terms would give the PLO sovereignty over half of the population in the East Bank and that in fact the annexation of the West Bank by Jordan had been approved by popular vote.
 - A compromise solution is adopted that favors PLO interests. The conference formally acknowledges the right of the Palestinian people to a separate homeland, but without specifying that its territory would be restricted to the West Bank. Most important, the PLO for the first time is officially recognized by all the Arab states as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people."
 - The Arab heads of state call for close cooperation between the front-line states and the PLO but prohibit interference by other Arab states in Palestinian affairs. The Rabat Summit declaration confers a mantle of legitimacy on the PLO that was previously absent. It gives official Arab recognition to PLO territorial claims to the West Bank and unambiguously puts the fate of the Palestinian people solely in the hands of the PLO. Jordanian King Hussein opposes the declaration, although he eventually signs it under intense Arab pressure and after the Arab oil-producing states promised to provide Jordan with an annual subsidy of \$US 300 million.

- Jordan, however, continues to fund social and economic development and pay the salaries of territorial servants in the West Bank through June 1988.

1973 Yom Kippur War

- **October 6, 1973 Egypt and Syria launch a surprise attack on Israeli positions on the east bank of the Suez Canal and Golan Heights.** Within several days of the attack, the US begins undertaking one of the largest airlift operations in its history (1,000 tons of military equipment per day) to help Israel fend off the Egyptian-Syrian offensive. In response, many prominent oil-producing Arab states impose an oil embargo on the US and segments of Western Europe from mid-October until March 1974.
- Egyptian and Syrian attack pushes Israel to accept possibility of a peace process. Anwar Sadat makes first serious Arab peace initiative: *Nearly 30 years after partition.*
 - The world of 1949 already no longer exists in terms of agriculture, urbanization, demographics, and water.
 - Two thirds of refugees outside Israel, Gaza, and West Bank have now been born outside the area and in Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon.
- *October 22, 1973: UNSCR 338. Calls for end to fighting, calls for all parties to implement UNSCR 242, calls for negotiations between all parties immediately after ceasefire, to establish a just and enduring peace.*

The 1978 Camp David Agreement

- **March 9, 1977** Recently inaugurated US President Jimmy Carter outlines his concept of an Arab-Israel settlement at a press conference. It is the first time an American President publicly states his concept of a resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. President Carter also proposes holding an international conference in Geneva to comprehensively deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict.
 - “We’re going to mount a major effort in our own Government in 1977, to bring the parties to Geneva. Obviously, any agreement has to be between the parties concerned. We will act as an intermediary when our good offices will serve well.... There are three basic elements: One is an ultimate commitment to complete peace in the Middle East; second, border determinations which are highly controversial and not yet been defined by either side; and, third, dealing with the Palestinian question.” For the full-text of President Carter’s speech see: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Foreign%20Relations/Israels%20Foreign%20Relations%20since%201947/1974-1977/200%20Press%20Conference%20by%20President%20Carter-%209%20March>

- **March 16, 1977** At a town meeting in Clinton, Massachusetts, **President Carter declares “there has to be a homeland for the Palestinian refugees** who have suffered for many, many years.”
- By the fall of 1977 Israeli objections and domestic pressure force President Carter to abandon his plans for a Geneva conference. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat decides to unilaterally jump-start the peacemaking process by offering to travel to Jerusalem for direct negotiations. Although Sadat’s visit to Israel receives worldwide attention, the two sides can only agree on the need for peace and not on any formula for achieving it, and little substantive progress is made over the months following his visit.
- **September 5-17, 1978 Camp David Accords** *Under the auspices of U.S. President Jimmy Carter, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat negotiate framework agreements for (1) an Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, and (2) a format for negotiating the establishment of an autonomous Palestinian regime to govern the West Bank and Gaza.*
 - In the Israeli-Egyptian part of the agreement, Israel agrees to withdraw its troops and settlers from the Sinai and restore it to Egyptian control in return for normal diplomatic relations with Egypt, guaranteed freedom of passage through the Suez Canal and other nearby waterways (i.e. the Straits of Tiran), and a limit to the number of Egyptian troops stationed on the peninsula.
 - The part of the agreement discussing the future of the West Bank and Gaza is less clearly defined, later causing it to be interpreted differently by Israel, Egypt, and the U.S.
 - See <http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/22578.htm> for the full-text of the Camp David Accords

The 1982 Israeli-Lebanon-PLO-Syria Conflict

- **March—July 1981** U.S. Ambassador Philip Habib attempts to defuse Israeli confrontation with Syria and PLO elements in Lebanon, and then mediates an Israeli-PLO ceasefire agreement in July.
- **Spring 1982 Israeli invades Lebanon; PLO forced out and to Tunisia**
- **December 1982 Palestine National Council accepts original U.N. partition plan (U.N. General Assembly Resolution 181)**, Israel's right to exist, and U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and renounces terrorism. The PLO charter is not revised, however. The U.S. opens dialogue with the PLO, the first formal contacts with the PLO in 13 years. The dialogue lasts two years.
 - It is now 33 years after partition, 15 years after 1967

- **May 1983 U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and Ambassador Habib mediate a peace/withdrawal agreement between Israel and Lebanon.**

The Reagan Plan

- **September 1, 1982** U.S. President Ronald Reagan announces a new U.S. initiative to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict. Reagan says that the Lebanese war: "...has left us with a new opportunity for ME peace."
 - According to Barry Rubin, "The **Reagan plan approach grew out of the belief that the US must show progress towards solving the Arab-Israeli issue--or, at least, make energetic attempts in that direction--to retain US influence in the Arab world.** The policy was meant to show the Arabs that America was trying to respond to their grievances. There was also an important domestic component since dramatic action was deemed necessary to Prove that the Administration's ME policy was under control."
- President Reagan's speech offers the most detailed prescription of a proposed solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict to date. He calls his position the "next step" in the Camp David autonomy talks.
- **The "specific new American positions" it offers are:**
 - Hold free elections for a self-governing Palestinian authority and then implement a five-year period of transition to self-government and full autonomy for Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza. The "purpose of this transition period is the peaceful and orderly transfer of domestic authority from Israel to the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza."
 - This "transfer must not interfere with Israel's security requirements."
 - The United States "will not support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza" and "will not support annexation or permanent control by Israel"
 - "Self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan offers the best chance for a durable, just and lasting peace."
 - "The United States will not support the use of any additional land for the purpose of settlements during the transition period. Indeed, the immediate adoption of a settlement freeze by Israel, more than any other action, could create the confidence needed for wider participation in these talks. Further settlement activity is in no way necessary for the security of Israel and only diminishes the confidence of the Arabs and a final outcome can be freely and fairly negotiated."

- “U.N. Resolution 242 remains wholly valid as the foundation stone of America's Middle East peace effort. It is the United States' position that - in return for peace - the withdrawal provision of Resolution 242 applies to all fronts, including the West Bank and Gaza.”
- “When the border is negotiated between Jordan and Israel, our view on the extent to which Israel should be asked to give up territory will be heavily affected by the extent of true peace and normalization and the security arrangements offered in return.”
- “we remain convinced that Jerusalem must remain undivided, but its final status should be decided through negotiations.”
- **Israeli Reaction to the Reagan Plan:**
 - Although Labor leader Peres expresses support for the plan, Prime Minister Begin and the Likud Party oppose it. When Israeli Prime Minister Begin first learns of the plan his reaction is negative. He says, “It is the saddest day of my life” and rejects the plan as not being even a basis for negotiations. Begin calls the plan “national suicide for Israel.”
 - In September Begin writes to Ronald Reagan: “What some call the 'West Bank,' Mr. President, is Judea and Samaria, and this simple historic truth will never change.... In 1967, after being attacked by King Hussein, we liberated, with God's help, that portion of our homeland.... An ally does not put his ally in jeopardy. This would be the inevitable consequence were the 'positions' transmitted to me on August 31, 1982, to become reality. I believe they won't.”
- **Arab Reaction to the Reagan Plan:**
 - The Palestine National Council rejects the Reagan Plan at a meeting in February 1983 and Arafat refuses to back it even after Jordan's King Hussein offers additional concessions to him.
 - April 11, 1983 Jordan's King Hussein announces his decision not to accept the Reagan plan or participate in negotiations based on its parameters.
- **Aftermath of the Reagan Plan**
 - The Palestinian decision not to support the plan leads to renewed US denunciations of the PLO and “an even sharper turn toward improved relations with Israel.”
 - According to Dennis Ross, “The Reagan Plan and Lebanon failures damaged America's credibility in the region.” Therefore, in its second term the Reagan Administration addressed the peace process issue with caution, focusing on achievable matters and trying to avoid more failures.

Intifada and failed peace plan; status of Palestinians clarified

- **February-April 1988: The Shultz Initiative** Due to the outbreak of the first Intifada, Secretary of State Shultz conducts shuttle diplomacy promoting plans for an international conference and subsequent bilateral Arab-Israeli talks to discuss proposals for solving the West Bank/Gaza occupation. He fails to gain the support of all key parties involved.
 - On March 4, 1988 Secretary Shultz sent a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Shamir outlining the US peace proposal. Its salient points include:
 - “...Negotiations will be based on the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, in all their parts.”
 - “As concerns negotiations between the Israeli delegation and the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, negotiations will begin on arrangements for a transitional period, with the objective of completing them within six months. Seven months after transitional negotiations begin, final status negotiations will begin, with the objective of completing them within one year. These negotiations will be based on all the provisions and principles of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242. Finally status talks will start before the transitional period begins. The transitional period will begin three months after the conclusion of the transitional agreement and will last for three years. The United States will participate in both negotiations and will promote their rapid conclusion. In particular, the United States will submit a draft agreement for the parties' consideration at the outset of the negotiations on transitional arrangements.”
 - See http://www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/press/appendix/appen_i.htm for the full-text of Shultz's letter.
- **July 1988 King Hussein officially renounces Jordan's claim to the West Bank:** In July 1988, in response to the accumulated pressures and the months of Intifada demonstrations by Palestinians in the West Bank, King Hussein of Jordan cedes to the PLO all Jordanian claims to the territory. Any hopes of a Jordanian-Israeli resolution to the Palestine problem effectively end. He dissolves the Jordanian parliament, half of whom were West Bank representatives, and stops paying salaries to over 20,000 West Bank civil servants. When the Palestine National Council recognizes the PLO as the sole legal representative of the Palestinians, Hussein immediately gives them official recognition. It is now some 40 years after the 1949 partition and 22 years after 1967 Israeli conquest of West Bank.
- **November 1988** Arafat holds a press conference and meets US Secretary of State Shultz's three conditions for US-PLO dialogue: (1) he recognizes Israel, (2) he accepts UN Resolution 242; and (3) he says that the PLO renounces terrorism. Shortly thereafter, the **US opens dialogue with the PLO**. The George H.W. Bush administration is inaugurated less than two months later and assigns dialogue with the PLO a low priority (the chief US interlocutor is the ambassador to Tunis, no higher level official is authorized to take part in the talks). In **May 1990 the US suspends dialogue with the PLO** after Arafat refuses to condemn an unsuccessful attack on a Tel Aviv beach that was attempted by members of the Palestine Liberation Front, a splinter group of the PLO.

The Road to Oslo

- **May 1989 Israeli Prime Minister Shamir announces a four-point plan intended to produce an agreement on interim self-rule for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and eventually lead to talks on a permanent solution.** President Bush and Secretary of State Baker begin working as mediators to renew the peace process.
- **October 1989 Secretary of State Baker offers five-point Middle East peace plan. Prime Minister Shamir rejects it after he forms a right-wing coalition in June 1990.**
 - **Full-text of the Baker plan:**
 1. The United States understands that (because) Egypt and Israel have been working hard (on the peace process) [and that] there is [now] agreement that an Israeli delegation will conduct a dialogue with a Palestinian delegation in Cairo.
 2. The United States understands that Egypt cannot substitute (itself) for the Palestinians [in that dialogue] and [that] Egypt will consult with the Palestinians on all aspects of that dialogue. Egypt will also consult with Israel and the United States.
 3. The United States understands that Israel will attend the dialogue (only) after a satisfactory list of Palestinians has been worked out. Israel will also consult with Egypt and the United States [on this matter.]
 4. The United States understands that the government of Israel will come to the dialogue on the basis of the Israeli government's May 14 initiative. The United States further understands that (the Palestinians will come to the dialogue prepared to discuss) elections and negotiations [will be] in accordance with the Israeli initiative. The United States understands, therefore, that the Palestinians will be free to raise issues that relate to their opinion on how to make elections and negotiations succeed.
 5. In order to facilitate the process, the United States proposes that the foreign ministers of Israel, Egypt and the United States meet in Washington within two weeks.
- **November 1989 Syria reestablishes relations with Egypt**, broken off after Camp David conference in 1978; Secretary Baker proposes another plan for launching Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. – 22 years since 1967 War.
- **March 6, 1991 President Bush declares that the recent victory in the Gulf War has opened a “window of opportunity” for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict.**
 - “... In the conflict just concluded, Israel and many of the Arab states have for the first time found themselves confronting the same aggressor. By now, it should be

plain to all parties that peacemaking in the Middle East requires compromise.... A comprehensive peace must be grounded in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of territory for peace. This principle must be elaborated to provide for Israel's security and recognition, and at the same time for legitimate Palestinian political rights.” For more of President Bush’s speech see: http://www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/press/appendix/appen_1.htm

- **March 1991 Secretary of State Baker embarks on the first of eight peace missions in the Middle East.**

The Madrid Conference

- **October 18, 1991 Secretary of State Baker announces that President Bush and Soviet President Gorbachev are inviting Israel, the Arab states, and the Palestinians to attend a Middle East peace conference scheduled to begin on October 30 in Madrid.** Baker suggests the conference should lead to further “direct negotiations to achieve real peace.”
 - For the full-text of the joint US-Soviet invitation to the Madrid peace conference addressed to Israel, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinians see: http://www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/press/appendix/appen_n.htm
- **October 30, 1991** During his opening remarks at the Madrid conference, President Bush says the objective is to achieve “real peace...security, diplomatic relations, economic relations, trade, investment, cultural exchange, even tourism. We seek a Middle East, where vast resources are no longer devoted to armaments. Outsiders can assist,” he says, “but in the end, it is up to the peoples and the governments of the Middle East to shape the future of the Middle East.” For more excerpts from President Bush’s speech see: http://www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/press/appendix/appen_o.htm
- **October 31, 1991** A joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation attends the talks between Jordan, Syria, Israel and Lebanon. Israel starts holding direct bilateral talks with Syria Lebanon, Jordan and Palestinians; and multilateral negotiations on arms control, security, water, refugees, the environment and economic development begin.
- **November 1, 1991** During closing remarks at the Madrid conference, Secretary of State Baker states that the talks have achieved a significant breakthrough—the start of “direct bilateral negotiations.” Over the following two years Israeli-Arab/Palestinian representatives hold eleven rounds of negotiations.
- **February 20, 1992** Secretary of State Baker says the U.S. is deeply concerned about the escalating conflict in southern Lebanon and urges Israel, Syria and Lebanon to exercise “maximum restraint.”

- **June 15 - July 1, 1993** During the tenth round of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the Clinton Administration produces a document to help identify their differences. Both sides reject the suggestion.
- **September 13-14, 1993 Oslo Declaration of Principles Israel and the PLO agree to formally recognize each other.** Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat meet and watch Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres PLO Executive Council Member Abou Abbas sign the agreement. President Bill Clinton, former presidents George Bush and Jimmy Carter, and 3,000 dignitaries witness the signing — on the same desk used in the signing of the Camp David accords 15 years earlier. President Clinton calls the Oslo agreement “a bold breakthrough.” “Today marks a shining moment of hope for the people of the Middle East; indeed, of the entire world,” he says, pledging continued direct engagement of the United States in the peace process.

Israeli-Jordanian Peace Treaty

- **September 14, 1993 the Israel-Jordan Common Agenda** is agreed in Washington, DC, paving the way for talks leading to a formal peace treaty. The document reaffirms the 1967 international border and contains sections on security, water, refugees and displaced persons, borders and territorial matters, bilateral cooperation on natural and human resources, infrastructure, and economic areas. Israel also commits to pull out of two small strips of land it seized in 1968.
- **July 25, 1994** The Washington Declaration, embracing the underlying principles of the Israel-Jordan Common Agenda, is signed in Washington, DC. It ends the state of belligerency between Israel and Jordan. King Hussein declares an end to the state of war at the signing ceremony.
- **October 26, 1994 A Treaty of Peace between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan** is formally signed at the White House.

The Years of the Peace Process: 1993-2000

- **September 28, 1995 The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip**, containing 31 articles and seven annexes (redeployment and security, elections, civil affairs, legal matters, economic relations, cooperation programs, and prisoner release), is signed in Washington, DC. Following the signing, King Hussein, President Mubarak, Prime Minister Rabin, and Chairman Arafat attend a summit, hosted by President Clinton, to discuss progress towards achieving a comprehensive final settlement.
- **September 29, 1995 The first meeting of the U.S.-Israel-Palestinian Trilateral Committee** is held. U.S. Secretary of State Christopher, Israeli Foreign Minister Peres, and Palestinian Chairman Arafat reach agreements on joint-efforts attempting to enhance economic development in the West Bank and Gaza and increase water resource usage.

- **January 15, 1997 The Hebron Protocol**—PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu request the United States' Special Middle East Coordinator, Dennis Ross, to prepare a Note for the Record clarifying Israeli and Palestinian responsibilities and redeployments during the interim period of the Oslo peace process. The Notes for the Record details security arrangements. It also includes agreements on Israeli release of prisoners and to resume negotiations on safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank, Gaza Airport and port, economic, and other issues. The Palestinians reaffirmed their commitment to revise their Charter, to fight terror, and to keep police force size in line with the Interim accord. It set the stage for permanent status negotiations to resume within two months after implementation of the Protocol. Shortly thereafter, US secretary of State Christopher writes a letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu, stating that “it remained U.S. policy to promote full implementation of the Interim Agreement” and that he had advised Arafat that “Israeli redeployments would be completed no later than mid-1998—defined by U.S. Special Envoy Ross as August 1998.”
- **September 10 - 12, 1997 Madeleine Albright travels to the Middle East for the first time as U.S. Secretary of State.** She urges the Israeli government to refrain from actions that may pre-empt final status negotiations and asks Palestinian leaders to increase their efforts to stop terrorist attacks. Her efforts bear little fruit.
- **January 20 - 22, 1998 President Clinton attempts to re-energize the peace process** by holding separate meetings with Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat in Washington DC.
- **January 31 - February 1, 1998** Secretary Albright travels to the Middle East to issue a proposal calling for the Israelis and the Palestinians to simultaneously take steps to get the peace process back on track (Israel on further redeployment and the Palestinians on security).
- **May 3 - 5, 1998** In another effort to renew the stalled peace process, Secretary Albright holds meetings with Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat in London
- **September 27, 1998** Secretary Albright again meets with Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Netanyahu at the U.N. General Assembly.
- **September 28, 1998 President Clinton meets with Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat** at the White House to try to jump-start direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.
- **October 5 -7, 1998** Secretary Albright and Special Middle East Coordinator Dennis Ross meet repeatedly with Israeli and Palestinian leaders in Israel and the West Bank to prepare for the resumption of face-to-face talks between the two sides later in the month.

- **October 15 - 23, 1998 Wye River Memorandum** U.S. officials—including President Clinton and, Secretary Albright—mediate Israeli-Palestinian Authority negotiations at the Wye River Conference Center in Maryland. The talks produce an agreement on continuing the peace process, the Wye River Memorandum, which is formally signed at the White House on October 23.
- **December 12 - 15, 1998** President Clinton visits Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. After addressing the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), he watches the PLC vote to “fully and forever” reject conflict with Israel and to revoke the articles of the Palestinian Charter that call for Israel to be destroyed.
- **February 3 - 4, 1999** President Clinton and Secretary Albright meet with PA Chairman Arafat in Washington DC to discuss implementing the measures called for in the Wye Memorandum.
- **March 22 - 23, 1999** During another Washington meeting with Chairman Arafat, both Secretary of State Albright and President Clinton reaffirm U.S. opposition to Arafat’s proposal for a unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood.
- **September 1 - 5, 1999** First Sharm El-Sheikh Memorandum—Secretary Albright travels to Morocco, Egypt, Israel, the West Bank/Gaza, Damascus and Beirut to discuss recent developments in the peace process with regional leaders. On September 4 she attends the signing of the Sharm El-Sheikh accord.
- **October 12, 1999:** President Clinton writes to President Assad, attempting to clear the way for progress on an Israeli-Syrian peace.
- **November 2, 1999** After a ceremony in Oslo commemorating the anniversary of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, President Clinton meets with Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat, who agree to try to develop a framework agreement on permanent status issues by February 13th.
- **December 5 - 9, 1999** Secretary Albright travels to Israel and the West Bank to assess the progress toward an Israeli-Palestinian framework agreement for permanent status (FAPS).

The Collapse of the Peace Process

Syrian-Israeli Talks

- **December 27, 1995** Israel and Syria resume direct peace talks under U.S. auspices in Maryland.
- **March 1996** Israel withdraws its team negotiating team from the talks with Syria.

- **July 1996** US Envoy Dennis Ross travels to Damascus to try to revive Israeli-Syrian peace talks; the attempt fails.
- **December 15, 1999** President Clinton welcomes Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al-Shara to the White House prior to the resumption of direct negotiations suspended in 1996. The parties hold two days of talks and agree to a second round in January.
- **January 3, 2000** Delegations from Israel and Syria, again led by PM Barak and Foreign Minister Al-Shara, gather in Shepherdstown, West Virginia for a further week of talks. Differences remain, and Secretary Albright announces the postponement of a third round of talks.
- **March 21, 2000** The U.S. facilitates a week of Israeli-Palestinian talks at Bolling Air Force Base to discuss how the parties could reach a comprehensive agreement on permanent status issues by September 13, 2000.
- **March 26 2000 President Clinton's personal effort at Geneva to persuade Assad to compromise on an Israeli-Syrian peace fails. Talks collapse.**
 - President Clinton proclaims that the “ball is in [Syrian President Hafez al-] Assad’s court,” after presenting him with an Israeli proposal to trade most of the Golan Heights in exchange for a peace treaty with Syria, Syrian willingness to give up a small amount of land near the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, and a small Israeli presence on the east bank of lake, 100-200 meters wide.
 - Syria categorically rejects the Israeli proposal, and several weeks later releases a statement in the state-run al-Ba’ath newspaper suggesting that “the few meters of Syrian soil that the Barak government refuses to give back will cost it dearly.” The statement also accuses the Clinton administration of “abandoning the peace process” and “adopting the stance of the Barak government.”

Almost Peace?: Camp David II

- **July 5, 2000** Based on discussions with Israeli PM Barak and PA Chairman Arafat, President Clinton announces that a trilateral summit is “the best way—indeed, ... the only way—to move forward” with the peace process.
- **July 11-25, 2000 Camp David II—President Clinton hosts meeting between Israeli and Palestinian leadership, with the objective of attaining agreement on the core issues still precluding a final settlement such as Jerusalem, security, borders/territory, and refugees.**
 - Immediately following the conclusion of the summit, President Clinton issues a public statement in which he endorses the proposals offered by PM Barak and criticizes Arafat for not accepting them.

- **September 2000: Sharon visits Temple Mount; riots lead to the start of the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict**
- **October 4, 2000** Secretary Albright and French President Chirac meet with Barak and Arafat in Paris.
- **October 17, 2000 *Second Sharm El Sheikh Memorandum*** President Clinton and Egyptian President Mubarak arrange for Arafat and Barak to meet in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt to try to negotiate a cease-fire and discuss a pullback of Israeli forces.
- **October 17, 2000: Birth of Mitchell Report:** At the conclusion of the Middle East Peace Summit at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, President Clinton announces that the United States will lead the development of a fact-finding committee to investigate the recent outbreak of renewed Israeli-Palestinian violence and how to mollify the situation.
- **November 7, 2000 President Clinton asks former U.S. Senator George Mitchell to chair a fact-finding commission** to investigate the causes behind the escalating violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Almost Peace?: Taba

- **December 23, 2000 President Clinton hosts Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington DC.** He presents both sides with a bridging proposal to bring an end to the “second Intifada.”
- **January 21-27, 2001 Taba Conference** Clinton’s proposal is considered by Israeli and Palestinian delegations during marathon talks at the Egyptian resort of Taba.
 - The US does not participate in the talks because the Clinton administration has just left office and the Bush administration has yet to engage in the peace process.
- **The Taba conference ends with the release of a joint statement describing the talks as positive, but inconclusive.** The joint statement notes that “the political timetable prevented reaching an agreement with regard to all the issues,” alluding to Israel’s prime ministerial elections scheduled for February 6, 2001. **This effectively marks the end of the entire Oslo peace process that started in Madrid in 1991.**
- **The tragedy of Camp David and Taba is that they were the right solution, but the Palestinians were now committed to struggle and Israel’s main voice for peace had been defeated. The US had tried its best and had failed. This does not, however, mean that the Bush Administration gives up.**

New Bush Administration's Peace Efforts: February 01-April 03

- **February 25, 2001** Secretary of State Powell meets with Prime Minister Sharon in Jerusalem and Chairman Arafat in Ramallah.

Mitchell Report

- **April 30, 2001: The full text of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee's final report on how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict might be solved is completed.** It calls for an immediate cease-fire, a renunciation of terrorism, a resumption of peace talks, and a construction freeze on Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. The Israelis and Palestinians are given until May 15 to respond.
 - **Excerpts from the Mitchell Report's Summary of Recommendations:**
 - The Government of Israel (GOI) and the Palestinian Authority (PA) must act swiftly and decisively to halt the violence. Their immediate objectives then should be to rebuild confidence and resume negotiations.
 - During this mission our aim has been to fulfill the mandate agreed at Sharm el-Sheikh....Our principal recommendation is that they recommit themselves to the Sharm el-Sheikh spirit and that they implement the decisions made there in 1999 and 2000.
 - The restoration of trust is essential, and the parties should take affirmative steps to this end.... This can be decided only by the parties.
 - **END THE VIOLENCE**
 - The GOI and the PA should reaffirm their commitment to existing agreements and undertakings and should immediately implement an unconditional cessation of violence.
 - The GOI and PA should immediately resume security cooperation.
 - **REBUILD CONFIDENCE**
 - The PA and GOI should work together to establish a meaningful "cooling off period" and implement additional confidence building measures, some of which were detailed in the October 2000 Sharm el-Sheikh Statement and some of which were offered by the U.S. on January 7, 2001 in Cairo (see Recommendations section for further description).
 - The PA and GOI should resume their efforts to identify, condemn and discourage incitement in all its forms.
 - The PA should make clear through concrete action to Palestinians and Israelis alike that terrorism is reprehensible and unacceptable, and that the PA will make a 100 percent effort to prevent terrorist operations and to punish perpetrators.

This effort should include immediate steps to apprehend and incarcerate terrorists operating within the PA's jurisdiction.

- The GOI should freeze all settlement activity, including the "natural growth" of existing settlements.

- The GOI should ensure that the IDF adopt and enforce policies and procedures encouraging non-lethal responses to unarmed demonstrators, with a view to minimizing casualties and friction between the two communities.

- The PA should prevent gunmen from using Palestinian populated areas to fire upon Israeli populated areas and IDF positions. This tactic places civilians on both sides at unnecessary risk.

- The GOI should lift closures, transfer to the PA all tax revenues owed, and permit Palestinians who had been employed in Israel to return to their jobs; and should ensure that security forces and settlers refrain from the destruction of homes and roads, as well as trees and other agricultural property in Palestinian areas. We acknowledge the GOI's position that actions of this nature have been taken for security reasons. Nevertheless, the economic effects will persist for years.

- The PA should renew cooperation with Israeli security agencies to ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that Palestinian workers employed within Israel are fully vetted and free of connections to organizations and individuals engaged in terrorism.

- The PA and GOT should consider a joint undertaking to preserve and protect holy places sacred to the traditions of Jews, Muslims, and Christians.

- The GOT and PA should jointly endorse and support the work of Palestinian and Israeli non-governmental organizations involved in cross-community initiatives linking the two peoples.

- **RESUME NEGOTIATIONS**

- In the spirit of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreements and understandings of 1999 and 2000, we recommend that the parties meet to reaffirm their commitment to signed agreements and mutual understandings, and take corresponding action. This should be the basis for resuming full and meaningful negotiations.

- **May 15, 2001: Israel and Palestinians Reply**

- **The Israelis issue a 16-point reply.**

- It states: "Israel considers that the Committee's Report provides a constructive and positive attempt to break the cycle of violence.... Israel will continue to study the Report closely with a view to assessing how it might assist in opening a pathway back to bilateral negotiations within the framework of the signed agreements."

- For the full-text of the Israeli response see: <http://www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/pal/mitchell2.htm>
- **The Palestinians issue their reply.**
 - It states: “Although the Report does not fully address all of the concerns that we have raised with the Committee, we believe that it provides a balanced assessment of the facts, and we fully support the implementation of all of the Committee’s recommendations as a comprehensive package.”
- **June 7-12, 2001 The Tenet Plan**—DCI George Tenet presents a plan for renewed security cooperation and an Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire during a visit to the Middle East.
- **June 26-30, 2001** Secretary of State Powell visits the region to shore up an Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire and to compel progress on implementing the Mitchell report’s other recommendations.
- **June 26, 2001** President Bush and Prime Minister Sharon discuss implementation of the Mitchell Report at a meeting in Washington DC.
- **October 2, 2001:** The Washington Post and New York Times report that the 9/11 terrorist attacks have caused the Bush Administration to postpone new Middle East Peace initiatives that include U.S. backing for a Palestinian State. President Bush confirms their reports following a meeting with Congressional leaders later that day, but states that: “The idea of a Palestinian state has always been part of a vision, so long as the right to Israel to exist is respected.”
- **November 26-December 15, 2001** Assistant Secretary of State William Burns and Special Presidential Envoy to the Middle East General Anthony Zinni go to Israel and the West Bank and Gaza to press for the resumption of negotiations over implementing the Tenet plan and the Mitchell Committee’s recommendations.
- **January 3-7, 2002** General Zinni returns to Israel for further negotiations.

Saudi Peace Plan

- **February 17, 2002** A new peace plan is offered by Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah. The proposal he outlines calls for the establishment of a Palestinian state, and for the members of the Arab League to offer Israel full diplomatic relations, normalized trade, and security guarantees in return for a total withdrawal by Israel to the June 4, 1967 borders.
- **March 29, 2002:** The Beirut Arab Summit Negotiation endorses the Saudi plan and issues a formal Arab Peace Initiative.

- **Calls for full withdrawal to all 1967 boundaries on Golan and West Bank, but with some flexibility. Cites UNSCR 242 and 338**
 - **Capital in East Jerusalem.**
 - **Ambiguous on right of return. Calls for just solution based on UN General Assembly Resolution 194**
 - **Now 50 years after partition; 35 years after 1967**
 - **Faces reality after 5 wars, six-fold increase in population affected, massive economic changes, and in course of ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict**
- This first serious Arab effort to bring peace on terms that might be acceptable to Israel does not bring about a new phase in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and has little more than symbolic impact.
 - **March 10-18, 2002** Vice President Cheney meets with the leaders of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait during a visit to the region.
 - **March 12, 2002** The United Nations Security Council adopts Resolution 1397, introduced by the United States, endorsing a “vision of a region where two states, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders.” It is the first Security Council resolution to refer to Palestinian statehood.
 - April 4, 2002: President Bush: “The United States is on record supporting the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for a Palestinian state.... The outlines of a just settlement are clear: two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side, in peace and security.”
 - **March 14-April 14, 2002** General Zinni visits Israel and the West Bank in another attempt to negotiate a cease-fire and the resumption of security cooperation between the Israelis and the Palestinians.
 - **April 7-17, 2002** Secretary Powell visits Morocco, Egypt, Spain, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, and Syria in an attempt to achieve a cease-fire, or at least reduce the level of violence to facilitate the resumption of a political process leading to peace. He meets with Prime Minister Sharon, Chairman Arafat and others.
 - **June 4, 2002** DCI Tenet travels to Ramallah and meets with Arafat to discuss renewed security cooperation.

Bush Calls for Palestinian Statehood

- **June 24, 2002: In a White House speech, President Bush states: “My vision is two states, living side by side, in peace and security.” He suggests peace requires a new and different Palestinian leadership, so that a Palestinian state can be born.** Bush also calls for an end to terrorism, increased humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, and the normalization of relations between Israel and the Arab World. Excerpts from his speech:
 - “I call on the Palestinian people to elect new leaders, leaders not compromised by terror.”
 - “I call upon them to build a practicing democracy based on tolerance and liberty.”
 - “If the Palestinian people actively pursue these goals, America and the world will actively support their efforts. If the Palestinian people meet these goals, they will be able to reach agreement with Israel and Egypt and Jordan on security and other arrangements for independence.”
 - “And when the Palestinian people have new leaders, new institutions and new security arrangements with their neighbors, the United States of America will support the creation of a Palestinian state, whose borders and certain aspects of its sovereignty will be provisional until resolved as part of a final settlement in the Middle East.”
- **July 16, 2002** Secretary of State Powell meets with other Quartet representatives (the European Union, Russia and the United Nations) in New York to discuss how they should support Palestinian security and reform efforts that could lead to a Palestinian state within three years.
- **July 18, 2002** Secretary of State Powell meets with the foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia to follow up on the Quartet-endorsed plans for Middle East peace.
- **August 8, 2002** Secretary of State Powell meets with Palestinian Chief Negotiator Saeb Erekat, Interior Minister Abdel Razak Yehiyeh and Economic and Trade Minister Maher Masri in Washington DC.
- **October 16-30, 2002** Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs William Burns travels to Paris, Cairo, Riyadh, Damascus, Beirut, Tel Aviv, Sanaa, Muscat and Doha to talk about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with Arab and Israeli leaders.

Bush Administration's Involvement in Peace Process: May 03-Present

The Roadmap for Peace

- **April 30, 2003 The Roadmap for Peace**—The U.S. State Department releases the text of a "roadmap" to a permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The roadmap specifies the steps for the two parties to take to reach a settlement, and a timeline for doing so, under the auspices of the Quartet—the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, and Russia.
- Bush quotes on Roadmap:
 - **May 29, 2003** “[W]e all have got to work together to make security real -- not only for Israel, but for the Palestinian people.”
 - **May 9, 2003** “Some believe that democracy in the Middle East is unlikely, if not impossible. They argue that the people of the Middle East have little desire for freedom or self-government. These same arguments have been heard before in other times, about other people. [e]very milestone of liberty over the last 60 years was declared impossible until the very moment it happened. The history of the modern world offers a lesson for the skeptics: do not bet against the success of freedom”
 - **April 30, 2003** “I urge Israelis and Palestinians to work with us and with other members of the international community, and above all directly with each other to immediately end the violence and return to a path of peace based on the principles and objectives outlined in my statement of June 24, 2002. Both Israelis and Palestinians have suffered from the terror and violence, and from the loss of hope in a better future of peace and security. An opportunity now exists to move forward. The United States will do all it can to seize this opportunity. To that end, I have asked Secretary Powell to travel to the region to begin working with the parties so that we can take advantage of this moment.”
- **June 3-4, 2003 Sharm el-Sheikh and Aqaba Summits on Road Map**—On June 3, Bush holds a multilateral meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Jordan's King Abdullah, Saudi Crown Prince Abdallah bin Abdulaziz, Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, and Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas at Sharm el-Sheikh. On June 4, another summit meeting to begin implementing the road map is held in Aqaba, Jordan. Hosted by King Abdullah of Jordan, it is attended by President George Bush, Ariel Sharon (the Israeli prime minister) and Mahmoud Abbas (the Palestinian prime minister).
 - At these summits, Bush states that both sides in the conflict have responsibilities to achieve the goal of a Palestinian state and that the United States will continue to support the Israeli government, the Palestinian Authority and neighboring Arab

states in the fulfillment of their commitments to end conflict and establish a Palestinian state.

- **July 25-29, 2003 President Bush meets separately with Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon** to discuss efforts to advance peace between Palestinians and Israelis.
- **November 4, 2003 State Deputy Spokesman Adam Ereli on Israeli Security Fence:** "...we've made it known to the Israelis privately that, number one, the President doesn't really believe there needs to be a fence, and number two, if they want to talk about a fence, they should do it in a way that does not infringe upon the lives of the Palestinian people or try in some way to prejudice the outcome of a final status agreement."
- **November 14, 2003 The U.N. General Assembly approves a U.S.-initiated resolution on assistance to Palestinian refugees.**
- **24 February 2004 Powell on Israeli Security Fence:** "We have said that the wall is a problem. We can't say that a nation is not able to build a wall or a fence of whatever one wishes to call it on their territory. It is a problem for us when it starts to go out into Palestinian territory in a way that may prejudice the outcome of negotiations, the outcome of the roadmap."

The Sharon Plan

- **April 14, 2004 In a joint press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Sharon at the Whitehouse, President Bush endorses Israel's claim to parts of the West Bank seized in the 1967 Middle East war, asserts that Palestinian refugees cannot expect to return to their homes inside Israel and expresses support for Sharon's plan to withdraw unilaterally from the Gaza Strip.**
 - April 16, 2004 President Bush:
 - "On Wednesday, the Prime Minister of Israel presented his plan to withdraw from Gaza and some parts of the West Bank. I support the plan. It's a good opportunity. It gives the Palestinians a chance to create a reformed, just and free government. Palestinian leadership must rise to the challenge. It gives all sides a chance to reinvigorate progress on the road map. I'm committed to the vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side, in peace and security."
 - April 15, 2004 Colin Powell:
 - "The reason we were supportive of Prime Minister Sharon's plan is that, finally, we are getting settlements out of occupied territories...It is not the end of the process; it's the beginning of the process."
 - April 15, 2004 State Department Spokesman Richard Boucher:

- “It's a part of the process of resolving issues in order to achieve the President's vision of two states living side by side, and the very real prospect that Israel would withdraw from the settlements in Gaza and withdraw military from Gaza is where we think the focus should be. And that's the settlement policy that did change.”
- “It changed with Prime Minister Sharon's statements, and with the effort that the United States is making and has made to make those statements a reality. And we think the focus right now ought to be on making a reality of the prospect of Israeli withdrawal from settlements and withdrawal from Gaza.”
- “I mean, that's where the United States' focus is right now. And we will work with the Israelis. We will work with others. We will work with the Palestinians to make this a reality and make it really happen. So for the first time, Israel will, in fact, withdraw from some settlements because we've always recognized that settlements were one of the principal difficulties in a negotiation. And we think the prospect of Israeli withdrawal from settlements in Gaza and some in the West Bank is, in fact, the most -- the clearest step forward, in that regard, that was part of yesterday's discussion.”
- June 6, 2004 White House Press Secretary releases a statement welcoming the Israeli Cabinet's decision to approve Prime Minister Sharon's Disengagement Plan:
 - “...We view the Prime Minister's plan to withdraw all settlements in Gaza and certain settlements in the West Bank as a courageous and historic step. We urge that practical preparatory work to implement the plan now proceed as rapidly as possible in Israel. We also urge that the international community, working through the Quartet and with the governments of Egypt and Jordan, engage in rapid and continuing consultations with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to help prepare for these withdrawals and make them a successful step toward peace.”
- **May 4, 2004 The Quartet releases a statement saying that “any final settlement on issues such as borders and refugees must be mutually agreed to by Israelis and Palestinians”** based on a long list of U.N. resolutions and other diplomatic initiatives. The Quartet also stresses at several points that Israel must freeze settlement growth, that it “must end the Israeli occupation that began in 1967,” and that “no party should take unilateral actions that seek to predetermine issues that can only be resolved through negotiation and agreement between the two parties.”
- **May 6, 2004 Bush holds a news conference with Jordan's King Abdullah at his side in the White House's Rose Garden.** Bush agrees to write a letter to Palestinian Prime Minister Qureia.
 - **Bush declares:** “We will expand dialogue between the United States and the Palestinians...[and] make sure the Palestinians understand my desire for a just peace, my desire for there to be a prosperous country, my desire that the Palestinian people have a chance to realize their hopes and aspirations.”

- **July 9, 2004: The United Nations' International Court of Justice issues a non-binding ruling on Israel's West Bank security fence**, claiming that the construction of the barrier is illegal and should be halted.
- **July 16 The United Nations General Assembly convenes an emergency special session to examine the ICJ's advisory opinion on Israel's construction of the fence** and to consider adopting a non-binding resolution condemning the fence and demanding that Israel comply with the ICJ's rulings.
 - Excerpt from US Representative to the United Nations John Danforth's address to the UN General Assembly:
 - "...The resolution before us is one sided, and moves away from the political process that leads to a two-state solution. The resolution adopts a confusing and troubling interpretation of Article 51. The United States will vote against the resolution."
- **July 20 The General Assembly passes the draft non-binding resolution** with a vote of 150 nations in favor, 6 in opposition (Israel, the United States, Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Palau and Australia) and 10 abstaining (Canada, Uruguay, Cameroon, Tonga, Vanuatu, El Salvador, Uganda, Papua New Guinea, Nauru and the Solomon Islands).
 - Ra'anan Gissin, one of Prime Minister Sharon's senior advisors, responds to the ICJ ruling and the UN resolution on behalf of the Israeli government:
 - "Israel will not stop building it [(the fence)] or abdicate its inalienable right to self-defense."
- **September 21, 2004 President Bush appraises the status of the Middle East peace process** during his address to the United Nations General Assembly:
 - "...Commitment to democratic reform is essential to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Peace will not be achieved by Palestinian rulers who intimidate opposition, tolerate corruption, and maintain ties to terrorist groups. The long-suffering Palestinian people deserve better. They deserve true leaders capable of creating and governing a free and peaceful Palestinian state."
 - "Even after the setbacks and frustrations of recent months, goodwill and hard effort can achieve the promise of the road map to peace. Those who would lead a new Palestinian state should adopt peaceful means to achieve the rights of their people, and create the reformed institutions of a stable democracy. Arab states should end incitement in their own media, cut off public and private funding for terrorism, and establish normal relations with Israel. Israel should impose a settlement freeze, dismantle unauthorized outposts, end the daily humiliation of the Palestinian people, and avoid any actions that prejudice final negotiations. And world leaders should withdraw all favor and support from any Palestinian ruler who fails his people and betrays their cause."

- **September 22** Before a meeting of Quartet representatives **Colin Powell vows that the United States remains committed to the Road Map.**
 - “It [(the Road Map)] is the only way forward,” and President Bush “remains totally committed to the vision he laid out to the world on June 24, 2002, and we [(the United States)] will continue to pursue that vision as we meet with the Quartet.”
- **September 22** After the meeting, the **Quartet issues a communiqué suggesting that the Road Map is stillborn.**
 - “The situation on the ground for both Palestinians and Israelis remains extremely difficult and no significant progress [(on the Road Map)] has been achieved.”
- **September 23** During a news conference at the Foreign Press Center in New York Secretary **Powell appeals to Arafat to step aside.**
 - “Mr. Chairman [(Arafat)], how long can you wait? How long can you stay in this position where the Palestinian people are suffering, where it’s difficult to go forward toward the objectives of the road map, where it’s difficult to achieve what you say is your dream – a state for the Palestinian people?”
- **September 29** **In an interview** with Mohammed Alami that is broadcast on Al Jazeera, **Secretary Powell discusses the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the peace process.**
 - “We ... hope that in the near future, if we can get the Palestinian Authority to organize itself so that they are ready to take over Gaza and the four West Bank settlements when Mr. Sharon has gotten approval to move forward, then we can get the Roadmap process started again. ... We believe that with the disengagement from Gaza, we have an opportunity to get the roadmap moving forward.”
 - “... There are victims on all sides of this question [(the Israeli-Palestinian War)]. But what is the Intifadah in its five years of existence? What has it accomplished to the Palestinian people? Has it produced progress toward a Palestinian state? Has it defeated Israel on the battlefield?

So it is time to end this process. It is time to end the Intifadah. I mean, we want a Palestinian state. The President so desperately wants to help create a Palestinian state for the Palestinian people that will live side by side in peace with Israel. And this will only come about when terror is ended. And the Intifadah has spawned terrorism and it has not achieved anything in these years, except the economy of the Palestinian communities has deteriorated, life in general has deteriorated, the Israelis have built fences to deal with this question, It has stopped us from being able to move forward with the many peace plans that we have put forward.”

- **When asked what the US is currently doing to “concretely ... help the Palestinians” and why the topic has been absent from the US Presidential election campaigns, Powell responds:**

“It will be discussed, I think, in the course of the U.S. election campaign, but the fact of the matter is that we need to see some movement. The President of the United States went to Aqaba and Sharm el-Sheikh last June and committed the United States and got commitments from Israel and a new Palestinian Prime Minister, who we needed to give authority, authority that has to come from Mr. Arafat. but Mr. Arafat did not yield authority to Mr. Abu Mazen and he has not yielded authority to Mr. Abu Alaa so that the Prime Minister of the Palestinian people can bring order to the security organizations of the Palestinian Authority, so that the terrorism can be brought to an end, and has not done what we believe should be done in the way of reform.

We also, as the President has noted, have concerns about actions that the Israelis have taken with respect to settlement activity, with respect to not destroying all of the outposts that were supposed to be destroyed.

So both sides have commitments and obligations in the Roadmap and we are anxious to move forward. The Quartet met last week in New York at the UN, reaffirmed our commitment to the Roadmap, and called on both parties to do everything they could, just as the President did in his speech to the UN before.”

- **October 1** According to the Arabic newspaper Al-Arab Al-Yom, Arafat’s personal advisor, **Nabil Abu Rodeina, meets with senior Bush administration officials in Washington DC.** It reports that the officials tell Rodeina that the Bush administration will remove its objection to Arafat being expelled by Israel if he fails to implement the commitments he has made to the US as a part of the Road Map by the November elections.
- **October 4** The UN Security Council holds an emergency session at the request of a group of Arab states to discuss recent Israeli incursions into northern Gaza. **Algeria proposes a draft resolution that demands a cessation of military operations and withdrawal of Israeli forces from the area.** In his address to the attendees of the meeting, Ambassador **John C. Danforth, US Representative to the United Nations, states:**
 - “...The resolution that is being presented to us is not the roadmap to peace. It is yet one more step on the road to nowhere.

Many speakers today have spoken about the cycle of violence and that is exactly what it is. One side acts, the other side reacts, then more reaction and more violence. And round and round it goes. And unfortunately the United Nations, both the General Assembly and the Security Council, instead of saying stop it to both sides, acts as the adversary of Israel and the cheerleader of the Palestinians. That is not the way to peace. That is not the roadmap to peace.”

- "...It's the position of the U.S. delegation that we should not simply pass resolution after resolution, which are all one-sided, but that we should insist again that the roadmap is the way to peace. Obviously if Palestinian terrorists shoot at Israelis, Israelis are going to shoot back. And what the Security Council should say, if it says anything, should be said to both sides."
- **October 5** US Ambassador **Danforth vetoes the proposed Security Council resolution** calling for an end to Israeli military operations in northern Gaza. In total, 11 council members vote in favor, the United States votes against, and Germany, Romania and the United Kingdom abstain.
- **October 6, 2004** The Israeli newspaper **Haaretz publishes excerpts of reporter Ari Shavit's interview with Prime Minister Sharon's senior advisor, Dov Weisglass, on the peace process and Sharon's disengagement plan** The full-text of the interview is published in the October 8th edition of Haaretz Magazine. The following excerpts are taken from the full-text of the interview.
 - Weisglass on US support of Sharon's disengagement plan and its impact on the peace process:
 - "...In regard to the large settlement blocs, thanks to the disengagement plan, we have in our hands a first-ever American statement that they will be part of Israel."
 - Sharon "can say honestly that this [(the disengagement plan)] is a serious move because of which, out of 240,000 settlers, 190,000 will not be moved from their place. Will not be moved. ... Because in regard to the isolated settlements there is an American commitment stating that we are not dealing with them at the moment, while for the large blocs there is genuine political insurance. There is an American commitment such as never existed before, with regard to 190,000 settlers."
 - "...*What I effectively agreed to with the Americans was that part of the settlements would not be dealt with at all, and the rest will not be dealt with until the Palestinians turn into Finns.*"
 - "Effectively, this whole package that is called the Palestinian state, with all that it entails, has been removed from our agenda indefinitely. *And all this with authority and permission. All with a presidential blessing and the ratification of both houses of Congress.*"
- **October 6-7 Weisglass' comments draw international attention and widespread condemnation.**
 - Prime Minister Sharon tries to assuage the concerns that Weisglass' comments have raised by issuing a statement clarifying his positions on the peace process and the disengagement plan.

- Bush Administrations reaction to Weisglass' comments:
 - According to Haaretz, State Department officials report "the clarifications that the Bush administration sought from the government of Israel following the publication of excerpts of the interview with Weisglass on Wednesday have been received and proved satisfactory."
 - Haaretz also reports that Secretary of State Powell says, "the Bush administration does not doubt Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's commitment to the road map."
 - State Department spokesman Adam Ereli says that the U.S. has told Israel that "Weisglass' comments do not match Israel's official government position as presented to the Bush administration." Ereli also says "Israel [has] informed the U.S. administration that Sharon remains committed to the road map peace plan and to President George W. Bush's vision of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."
- Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia's reaction to Weisglass' comments:
 - "Weisglass' remarks oblige Israel to reconsider its policies in the territories, and the U.S. and international community to redefine their demands of Israel if they would like to see a genuine peace process in the Middle East."
- **October 25 National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice urges foreign leaders to pressure Arafat to step aside in an address at an AIPAC conference.**
 - There has to be a discussion with Arafat "to say, 'All right, land is now being returned to the Palestinian people. ... You said that's what you wanted all these years. Now is time to step aside.'" The conversation must be conducted "by those who still talk to him ... [and] we're [the US] not among those."
 - "Right now, the Palestinian security forces are not only corrupt and ... unable to participate in security on behalf of Israel, they're having trouble participating in security on behalf of the Palestinian people..."
- **October 26, 2004 Israel's Knesset (parliament) approves Sharon's disengagement plan** by a vote of 67 to 47.
 - Palestinian Reaction Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia's chief of staff, Hassan Abu Libdeh, states: "We welcome any Israeli withdrawal from any Palestinian land, ... [but to be successful it has to be a part of] a resumption in the peace process and implementation of President Bush's vision of a Palestinian State alongside an Israeli state.... [Instead, Sharon is] marketing the Gaza redeployment as a major Israeli step, when in fact it is a major initiative to take over for good much of the West Bank."

- **US Response State Department spokesman Richard Boucher comments on the plan's approval during a media briefing on October 27:**
 - "...We certainly welcome the steps that move towards the implementation of this plan. We think it's -- it offers an opportunity and we've long expressed our support for the disengagement plan that involves settlements in Gaza and four settlements on the West Bank that we think could represent a real opportunity for progress, for the Palestinians and progress along the lines of the roadmap."
 - "As we've said before, the Israeli disengagement from Gaza, if done in a way that's consistent with the roadmap, has the potential to move both parties closer to the realization of the President's two-state vision, of the realization of a Palestinian state. So the Palestinians need to control the violence. They need to take real steps to control the violence and organize themselves to take advantage of this opportunity in a peaceful way."
 - "We have supported the efforts that other governments have been making to try to help the Palestinians in that regard, but the Palestinians need to focus on this and they need to do what is necessary to ensure a peaceful transfer in Gaza and to ensure that the violence that's undermined all the peace discussions in the past is not perpetrated and kept going from after this."
- **US Response Secretary Powell discusses the plan's approval during an October 29 interview with Egyptian television:**
 - The disengagement plan "is part of the roadmap process, to bring out the settlements in Gaza, start with four settlements in the West Bank, and get into the roadmap where both sides, the Palestinian side and the Israeli side, will negotiate further reduction of settlements in the West Bank and resolve all final status issues between the two of them, not the United States resolving them, but only the two parties negotiating with each other."
 - "...Rather than argue what the original motives might have been or might still be on the part of the Israelis, it is an opportunity that I think the Palestinians should seize, by bringing control over security forces, reducing the number of forces, making sure that they are trained and equipped, and making sure that the Palestinian Authority is ready to provide political control over Gaza and security control over Gaza, working with the Egyptians and others, when these settlements are removed."
 - "The U.S. position is that what Mr. Sharon is doing and what he is now pushing through his government is part of the overall roadmap process, and it is an opportunity that the Palestinian Authority and the international community should use to further progress toward final status discussions."

The Death of Arafat

- **November 8, 2004** In an interview for Financial Times Secretary Powell addresses the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in light of Arafat's serious illness and incapacitation.
 - “We stand ready to move forward. We have been ready ever since the meetings at Sharm el-Sheikh and Aqaba last year with the roadmap. The roadmap is intact. The President is committed to the roadmap. He is committed to a two-state solution.... What we have been looking for for this whole period is responsible leadership on the part of the Palestinians so that we can get going. And we recognize that Israel has obligations as well with respect to outpost elimination and settlement activity. And in this period that we're in now, waiting to see what transpires with respect to Palestinian leadership, we hope that opportunities will come out of this transition period.”
 - “...We recognize that the Middle East is -- the Middle East peace process is one of the biggest overhangs on the -- our foreign policy and the way in which we are perceived in the world, and we want to do more about that. But we need responsible partners on the Palestinian side.”
- **November 11, 2004 Yasser Arafat dies in a Paris hospital.** The Whitehouse releases a statement by President Bush on Arafat. It reads:
 - “The death of Yasser Arafat is a significant moment in Palestinian history. We express our condolences to the Palestinian people. For the Palestinian people, we hope that the future will bring peace and the fulfillment of their aspirations for an independent, democratic Palestine that is at peace with its neighbors. During the period of transition that is ahead, we urge all in the region and throughout the world to join in helping make progress toward these goals and toward the ultimate goal of peace.”
- **November 12, 2004** President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair meet in Washington DC to discuss the potential impact of Arafat's death on the Middle East peace process.
 - In a joint press conference after the meetings **President Bush sets a goal to ensure the establishment of a peaceful, democratic Palestinian State before the end of his second term in 2009.**
 - “Our sympathies are with the Palestinian people as they begin a period of mourning. Yet the months ahead offer a new opportunity to make progress toward a lasting peace. Soon Palestinians will choose a new President. This is the first step in creating lasting democratic political institutions through which a free Palestinian people will elect local and national leaders.”
 - “We're committed to the success of these elections, and we stand ready to help. We look forward to working with a Palestinian leadership that is committed to fighting terror and committed to the cause of democratic reform. We'll mobilize

the international community to help revive the Palestinian economy, to build up Palestinian security institutions to fight terror, to help the Palestinian government fight corruption, and to reform the Palestinian political system and build democratic institutions.”

- “We'll also work with Israeli and Palestinian leaders to complete the disengagement plan from Gaza and part of the West Bank. These steps, if successful, will lay the foundation for progress in implementing the road map, and then lead to final status negotiations.”
- “I believe that the responsibility for peace is going to rest with the Palestinian people's desire to build a democracy and Israel's willingness to help them build a democracy. I know we have a responsibility as free nations to set forth a strategy that will help the Palestinian people head toward democracy. I don't think there will ever be lasting peace until there is a free, truly democratic society in the Palestinian territories that becomes a state. And therefore, the responsibility rests with both the Palestinian people and the leadership which emerges, with the Israelis to help that democracy grow, and with the free world to put the strategy in place that will help the democracy grow.”
- “There's no other way to have a lasting peace, in my judgment, unless we all work to help develop the institutions necessary for a state to emerge: civil society, based upon justice, free speech, free elections, the right for people to express themselves freely. The first step of that is going to be the election of a new president, and my fervent hope is that the president embraces the notion of a democratic state.”
- “I believe we've got a great chance to establish a Palestinian state, and I intend to use the next four years to spend the capital of the United States on such a state. I believe it is in the interest of the world that a truly free state develop.... I hate to put artificial time frames on things; unfortunately I've got one on my existence as President. It's not artificial, it's actually real. And I'd like to see it done in four years. I think it is possible. I think it is possible.”
 - The U.S. and U.K. issue a joint statement summarizing their commitment to the Peace Process. For the full-text of the Statement see: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/11/20041112-3.html>
- **November 15, 2004** Secretary Powell and Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom meet in Washington DC to discuss new opportunities for peace following Arafat's death.
 - At a press conference following their meeting, Powell says that the U.S. and Israel “are pleased by the responsible manner in which Palestinian leaders have started to come together and we are pleased that they have set a date for an election for the new president of the Palestinian Authority....”
- **December 8, 2004** During his opening remarks at the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee Meeting in Oslo, Assistant Secretary of State for Middle East affairs William J. Burns announces that the **Bush Administration will provide \$23.5 million in aid to the Palestinian Authority** to assist their election and security efforts and help them to meet

payroll and upgrade infrastructure in Gaza. He also highlights what is needed to promote economic recovery for the Palestinians:

- “The World Bank has laid out for us, admirably and clearly, the hard choices that must be addressed to promote economic recovery in Gaza and the West Bank. There are no shortcuts here, no evading plain truths about either the problems or the solutions. Both sides have obligations. For Palestinians, performance on security is absolutely essential. So is renewal of the democratic reform process, a serious drive against corruption and continuation of an already exemplary set of financial reforms. Such efforts are not a favor to donors; they represent goals deeply in the self-interest of Palestinians preparing for statehood. For Israelis, bolder measures to ease the movement of people and goods are vital. So are many other steps to create a sense of economic and political hope for Palestinians.”
- **December 8, 2004** In a speech at the German Marshall Fund’s Transatlantic Center in Brussels, Secretary Powell suggests how the European Union and the U.S., working through the Quartet, can ensure progress in the Middle East peace process.
 - “The United States and the European Union agree on the basic shape of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We both recognize that this conflict casts a shadow on all we try to do in the region. We both support two states, an independent Palestinian state and the State of Israel, living side-by-side in peace. We both support Israeli disengagement from Gaza and parts of the West Bank as part of the Road Map process, to get back in to that process. We both want free and fair elections for Palestinians, and we’re both ready to help assure that outcome.”
 - “How do we do all of this? We work through the Quartet, which combines the diplomatic power of the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations. Now, with changes in Palestinian leadership, President Bush is determined to seize this moment. We will be more active diplomatically, because we see an opportunity to make real, hopefully decisive, progress towards peace.”